

Social Democracy; the AFRC & PNDC Ideals: The Ideological Identity of the National Democratic Congress (NDC)



Probity



Accountability



Social Justice



Freedom



Justice



Solidarity



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Support and
Cooperation



Democracy
and Pluralism



Knowledge and
Life-Long Education

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Content

Foreword	i
Acknowledgment	iii
1 Introduction	1
2 Theoretical Perspective	4
3 The Armed Forces Revolutionary Council (AFRC)	6
4 The Provisional National Defence Council (PNDC)	7
5 The Ideological Drivers of the AFRC & PNDC Regimes	10
6 The Ideological Identity of the National Democratic Congress (NDC)	18
7 Relationship between the Revolutionary Ideals of the AFRC, PNDC and Social Democracy	23
8 Ideology, Policies and Programmes	24
9 Concluding Words and Recommendations	26
10 References	28

Foreword

Contrary to assertions by critics that ideological differences in developing countries are irrelevant in the face of massive development deficits, political traditions founded on defined approaches have become central to reducing existing levels of deprivation in poor countries and indeed enhancing the pace of situation-driven development policies. Ghana's current political stability is grounded in the events that occurred almost four decades ago. To some, the period is a reminder of pain and grief, but for many others, it represents a dogged determination to sanitize a political system that provided an unclear direction of where Ghana was going. It was intended to stop the decay in the body politic and engender a sense of patriotism in a people who had become despondent and extremely apathetic. The spontaneous acclamation of those events reflects the long standing desire of a people to take control of their own destiny.

It is also significant to note the transformational impact of the events on Ghana's effort to create a model democratic system that grew from the aspirations of ordinary Ghanaians. A political system albeit military that preceded the peoples' revolution in the late seventies had shut out political spaces for popular participation in governance which in itself undermined the tenets of democracy.

Grafting a new political system over a decadent one could have predictable outcomes. First, the old system would initially resist the change and eventually absorb the new one or second the new system will resist integration. The June Four revolution was strong enough to persist. This is attributable to its values and underlying principles, universal in character but peculiar to Ghana's political context. The values of probity, accountability and transparency in political administration resonated with both the ordinary person and with a growing middle and intellectual class. Support was spontaneous.

The return of the Rawlings in 1981 consolidated the process of putting Ghana on a sustainable path of democratic growth. Creating a sanguine political atmosphere under the Fourth Republic for the emergence of competitive politics was a natural consequence of the appetite that had been raised for the adoption of competing political identities and postures that could further promote the growth of Ghana. It led to the coalescence of different political forces and the emergence of two dominant forces.

The National Democratic Congress assumed the natural left and adopted a social democratic ideology to guide the development of its policies and programs aimed primarily at the underprivileged. It recognized the role of the market in the generation of national wealth but it did not and does not discount the role an activist state can play in promoting development with equity and in restraining unbridled mercantilism.

These factors have been well discussed in this work by the author. It is a good read and very instructional as well. For the Ghana Institute of Social Democracy, this book will add to our collection of reading material and will enlighten the members of the NDC further on the historical path of the Party. It is also highly recommended for persons from the liberal democratic tradition.

Dr. William Ahadzie

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1 Introduction

1.1 Background

The National Democratic Congress (NDC) is so far the biggest and most successful political party in Ghana. It remains the only political party that has served four (4) out of seven (7) terms (1992 -1996, 1996 – 2000, 2008 – 2012, and 2012 – 2016) in Ghana's recent democratic history under the 4th Republic. The NDC has its roots in the web of the Provisional National Defence Council (PNDC). In other words, the values and principles of the PNDC birthed the NDC. The PNDC, which ruled Ghana for a decade (1981 – 1992), has a historical connection to the Armed Forces Revolutionary Council (AFRC) which was formed immediately after some of its members successfully staged the June 4th 1979 uprising. The June 4th Uprising therefore ousted the Supreme Military Council II (SMC II), another military regime, from political power.

Historically, the connecting factor between the NDC, PNDC and the AFRC revolves around the vision, ideals and leadership of Flt. Lt. Jerry John Rawlings¹. The interventions by the AFRC, PNDC and the NDC have all been guided and governed by some ideological beliefs and values. These ideological beliefs and values share fundamental commonalities across the board. The commonalities also share striking relevance to the tenets of good governance and social democracy.

The AFRC and PNDC periods were underscored by the values of probity, accountability and social justice. The NDC on the other hand, has been governed by egalitarian values which find reflection in her social democratic ideology. The June 4th Uprising (AFRC) had an anti-corrupting ideology and a philosophical orientation, that the military hierarchy should not have participated, supervised and materially enjoyed from the moral decadence that engulfed Ghanaian society at that time. Hence, the ultimate objective of June 4th was “the cleansing of Aegean Stables” under the then military government.

¹ Flt. Lt Jerry John Rawlings was the leader and Chairman of the AFRC and PNDC regimes. He was later elected as the President of Ghana in a civilian democratic election for two (2) consecutive terms (1992 – 1996, 1996 – 2000).

The 31st December Revolution (PNDC) saw an unfinished business and, therefore, expended the June 4th principles to embrace the peoples' right to demand probity, accountability and social justice from elected and appointed leadership. It is instructive to note that both June 4th and 31st December principles did not only informed the foundation of the NDC but also became enshrined values of the 1992 Constitution as found in the Preamble.

It is, therefore, complementary that the NDC as a social-democratic party embraced the principles of probity, accountability and social justice since, Social Democracy aims at the progressive and universally beneficial change through power acquired by multi-party competition for "mass electoral support", rather than the Socialist credo of "power through the crucible of class conflict".

1.2 Statement of the Problem

From the time of its formation (1992) to date, the membership drive of the NDC as a Congress of persons with different political/ideological backgrounds also attracted "carpetbaggers" and materialistic opportunists. As a result, and, for example, the electoral platform of "continuity" in both the 1992 and 1996 election campaigns did not deliberately provide a need for in-depth ideological thinking and propagation, even though that platform implied a socialist albeit pragmatic social intervention policies and programmes.

Also, the sidelining of the Committee for the Defence of the Revolution (CDR) in the 1992 electoral campaign (for fear that its pre-constitutional 'high-handedness' would not encourage mass support for the Party), did not encourage ideological propagation. The NDC lost the 2000 and 2004 general elections. The party came back strongly and won the 2008 and 2012 elections, and, unexpectedly, lost the 2016 elections in the face of unprecedented infrastructural developments.

The NDC's defeat at the 2016 polls may be attributed to a confluence of factors. One of the factors is the disconnect between the party (as an organisation and in government) and her base or grassroots which led to apathy within the party base. Chiefly amongst them also is the neglect of or lack of a working relationship between the party in government and

her intellectual base as stated by the Botchway Committee². The cardinal effect of this broken relationship is the lack of space and platforms for intra-party intellectual engagements. Hence, the low understanding of the party's ideology and her ideological identity by party actors including the rank-and-file.

A number of the NDC members, especially, the current political generation, do not seem to fully appreciate the historical ideological journey of today's NDC. The knowledge and understanding of the very ideals that underpinned the AFRC and PNDC seem to be lost on most of them. To such extent that, some actors in today's NDC question the relevance of the AFRC and PNDC ideals in contemporary scheme of things while appearing not fully armed with the nexus between the AFRC ideals, PNDC ideals and Social Democracy. While others are yet to assimilate these ideals in the scheme of the party's management and governance in general, others are veering off from the very ideals.

It is the case, that, many confuse the political ideology – social democracy - of the NDC with that of socialism. These two - social democracy and socialism - albeit, forms part of the leftist class on the ideological spectrum, have glaring differences both in form and substance. It is commonplace however to hear party officers and members classify themselves as socialists instead of social democrats.

1.3 Objective

This paper seeks to establish the relationship between the ideals of AFRC and PNDC to Social Democracy – the current political ideology of the NDC. It also seeks to examine the nexus between the AFRC and PNDC ideals and the concept of good governance. The paper further seeks to make the case that the very ideals of the AFRC, PNDC - yet to be fully deepened in the fibre of the party - find relevance in social democracy, hence the character and identity of NDC.

It is my contention that, to the extent that the very ideals of the AFRC and PNDC regimes find permanent expression in good governance and social democracy, the utility of same is paramount and relevant in our

² The Kwesi Botchway-Id fact finding committee was commissioned by the NDC after the 2016 elections defeat to among others, investigate what led to the abysmal performance by the NDC in the general elections.

contemporary governance and quest for achieving a truly developmental state.

1.4 Structure

The paper begins with a theoretical discussion of the concept of ideology. Also, some historical account, formation and theoretical perspectives on the ideals – probity, accountability and social justice – of the AFRC and PNDC regimes are explored.

The formation of the NDC including the adoption of her political ideology – social democracy - is given some exposure. More importantly, the relationship between the core values of social democracy (freedom, justice and solidarity) and the ideals of the AFRC and PNDC regimes (probity, accountability and social justice) are examined within the parameters of the 1992 Fourth Republican Constitution of Ghana and good governance principles.

Finally, the relevance of the ideals of the AFRC and PNDC regimes vis-a-vis the political ideology – social democracy – of the NDC is established. Conclusions are drawn and recommendations made on how the ideological identity of the NDC can be deepened to fully reflect social democratic ideals and principles.

2 Theoretical Perspective

Since the term was coined in the aftermath of the French Revolution by Antoine Destutt de Tracy (Hoffman and Graham, 2006) to denote the 'science of ideas', 'ideology' has received many academic (sometimes, political) exchanges on its utility, relevance, form and substance in the political arena. Till date, the debate on the relevance or otherwise of ideology in the scheme of governance and national development continues unabated. There are different typologies of ideology: liberalism, conservatism, Pan Africanism, socialism, anarchism, nationalism and fascism among others. Owing to the evolving and contextual nature of ideologies, many contemporary types have emerged. These include social democracy, liberal democracy, democratic socialism, feminism, multiculturalism, ecologism, and even pragmatism.

Human needs are insatiable. The quest to meet the expectations or needs of society is always challenged with scarcity of or limited resources.

Hence, the need to, critically consider the resource distribution pattern in order not to leave, especially, the have-nots behind, is, imperative. This fundamentally helps to define the way we want to live in society. The definition of the way society should live is driven by frameworks and perspectives that are ideological. Ideologies are a set of values and principles captured within a particular framework or outlook that is expected to define the character of a phenomenon or how things are done.

Values and principles, simply put, are the basis of ideology. Political ideology therefore reflects the beliefs, traditions and philosophies of political parties (Wayo-Seini 2006). Ideologies are underpinned by sets of principles that set them apart and unique in comparative terms with others. Liberation movements, political parties, social groups and even individuals function within certain values and principles that holistically form their ideological identity.

The above perspectives on ideology appear to look at it from the supply side – what ideology is and the role it plays. However, the demand side – actions and inaction of persons subscribing to a particular ideology being in conformity (deliberately so) to same appears to be the missing link.

Unlike the current material-benefits-driven kind of politicking, the demand side, in my view, makes a call on persons to act in ways that conform to the particular ideology they have adopted within a specific period. In other words, though the ideology sets the basic rules of engagement within, for instance, a political party, the actions and inaction of party persons must be deliberate and conformed to the dictates of the ideology. Thus, it's a two-way street.

For the purposes of this paper, the focus will be on social democracy since that represents the political ideology of the NDC. And the succeeding sections would show the rational justification for social democracy in Ghana, judging from the evolution of the Fourth Republic and the concepts that have guided her. Chapters Five (5) and Six (6) of the 1992 Fourth Republican Constitution fundamentally sets out the rationale for social democratic praxis in Ghana. It must equally be noted that the framers of the constitution were heavily influenced by the AFRC

and PNDC ideals as enshrined in the preamble and the issues of social justice that fraught previous Republics.

3 The Armed Forces Revolutionary Council (AFRC)

The June 4th Uprising which was led by Flt. Lt. Jerry John Rawlings was triggered by a combination of persistent corruption, bad governance, lack of discipline and frustrations in the army and among the general public. It was primarily a 'housecleaning' exercise against corruption and maladministration in practically every aspect of the state structure under the Supreme Military Council II regime. Nunoo-Mensah³ (2018) maintains that the June 4th uprising was a 'mutiny' and never a coup. It was an uprising triggered by the junior ranks of the military against the senior military leadership as a result of, especially, the worsening conditions of service.

According to Shillington (1992), Rawlings was convinced that after one year of the General 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" (cited in Adedeji, 2000 p.1). In recent times, some politicians from the other political divide including the New Patriotic Party (NPP) have heralded the achievements of the AFRC; topmost by commending them for minimising *corruption*⁴ notwithstanding the fact that corruption since the early 2000s has featured prominently as a campaign and governance issue before and after every general election.

The Armed Forces Revolutionary Council (AFRC) stayed in power for only three (3) months and chartered the path to democratic rule as had already been planned before the uprising was staged. This ushered Ghana into her Third Republic.

³ Brigadier General Joseph Nunoo-Mensah is a former Chief of Defence Staff of the Ghana Armed Forces. He was a member of the original seven-member leadership of the PNDC. He resigned from the PNDC a year after.

⁴ <https://www.ghanaweb.com/GhanaHomePage/NewsArchive/NPP-MP-defends-AFRC-s-house-cleaning-exercise-279499>

The short lived AFRC era (June – September 1979) coupled with the deliberate design and return to democratic governance is highly commendable and evidence of the fact that the AFRC's 'house cleaning' exercise was really and only intended to weed out the saboteurs of Ghana's development agenda.

Nunoo-Mensah (2018) avers that apart from the attempt to punish persons believed to have corrupted themselves in the SMC II regime, the AFRC could not achieve anything significant as it was equally guided by the thought to hand over power to the Liman Government. According to Dadzie and Ahwoi (2010), June 4th was a period of hoisting and weaving "probity and accountability" into the national ethos and the national motto of "Freedom and Justice" to read "Freedom, Justice, Probity and Accountability". For the AFRC regime, the guiding principles and values were probity and accountability. These ideals would be further scrutinised in the preceding sessions.

4 The Provisional National Defence Council (PNDC)

"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 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 popular democracy. 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 the 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 a part of the decision-making process of this country" (J. J. Rawlings, January 1st 1981 Edition of Daily Graphic).

It is important to begin from the note that, as could be derived from the above statement, unlike the June 4th Uprising, the PNDC-led 31st December Revolution gave much meaning and impetus to people power. It was a revolution and not a coup (as would be proven later) in the sense that, the 31st December Revolution was a mass-driven action unlike the

June 4th Uprising which involved only a small membership of the military fraternity. Critics including Owusu (1989) have questioned the revolutionary quality of the ouster and suggested that the revolutionary tag was adopted by the architects after the ouster in order to win the whole-hearted support of students and youth organizations across the country, and successfully mobilized them for involvement in their programmes.

The term 'revolution' has received several intellectual interpretations in an attempt to unpack what does or does not constitute a revolution. There are many different typologies of revolutions in social science and literature. For example, Huntington (1962) has suggested a classification of revolution in which four categories are enumerated: (1) the internal war, (2) the revolutionary coup, (3) the reform coup, and (4) the palace revolution. Also, Epstein (2006) differentiated between (1) political revolutions (2) sudden and violent revolutions that seek not only to establish a new political system but to transform an entire society and (3) slow but sweeping transformations of the entire society that take several generations to bring about. It is imperative to mention that the differences in the definitions and categorisations are generationally influenced by the prevailing circumstances and worldview. Goldstone (2001) for instance defines revolution as an effort to transform the political institutions and the justifications for political authority in society, accompanied by formal or informal mass mobilization and noninstitutionalized actions that undermine authorities. Other characteristics include (1) the scope of the change that the revolution seeks to effect and (2) the time frame. Following from the above perspectives, and for the purposes of this paper, a revolution can be said to have occurred when, (1) the desire and justification for a political or societal change, coupled with (2) a mass-driven agenda or large citizenry involvement are both present.

The inherent collective-citizenry burning desire for a significant change in the social, political and economic order in the country (Ghana) and the subsequent open support for the actions of the architects of the 1981 31st December ouster were necessary and sufficient grounds to qualify the event as a revolution.

The denominator is the extreme and overwhelming involvement of the generality of the masses to bring about a significant and fundamental change in the way the Ghanaian society had operated. According to Adedeji (2001), 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. Such was the calibre and nature of the 31st December Revolution. The realisation and acceptance of the people power – the people's participation in decision making and the equitable distribution of the wealth, resources, public goods and services – has been the basis for the principle of social justice.

The specific character of the 31st December Revolution fundamentally and naturally redefined and gave meaning to the concept of people's power and participatory democracy in Ghana. It is very interesting how Agyeman-Duah (1987) asserts without any shred of evidence that in order to rid itself of the 'military burden' the PNDC from the beginning labelled itself as a 'people's government'. In any case, the PNDC never denied its military identity and had always stood for and defended the actions of the hitherto AFRC regime. It is equally revealing that in Agyeman-Duah's (1987) "Ghana, 1982-6: the politics of the PNDC" though he classified the 31st December event as a coup d'état (p. 617), he on successive sessions labelled same event as a revolution (p. 620). This clearly reveals the hitherto conflicting thoughts and unending debate on whether or not the event was a coup or revolution. What was equally necessary to find out was whether or not the concept of 'people's government' ever materialized? Rawlings averred immediately after the revolution that "to many of us, if not all of us, democracy does not just mean paper guarantees of abstract liberties" but also involves the provision of basic human necessities such as food, clothing, shelter and social justice "in the absence of which life is not worth living"⁵ (31st December, 1981).

On the other hand, the absence of democratic elections – at the national level – as a result of the ban on multiparty politics during the PNDC regime was an affront to democratic governance. This, to some extent defeated the people's participation concept adopted by the PNDC regime, especially at the national levels since the freedom of association and participation in political parties was curtailed. Ironically, the PNDC

⁵ excerpts from the official speech read by J.J Rawlings immediately after the 31st December, 1981 Revolution

regime started laying plans and structures for a true political participation within the framework of the local government system.

It is instructive to note that while many regard Rawlings as the face and epitome of the 31st December Revolution, “civilians Chris Bukari Atim and Joachim Amartey Kwei as well as soldiers Sergeant Daniel Alolga Akata-Pore and Warrant Officer Joseph Adjei-Buadi . . .” alongside “. . . Brigadier Joseph Nunoo-Mensah and Reverend Dr. Kwabena Damuah” (Dadzie and Ahwoi, 2010, p. 26) constituted the leadership of the PNDC Revolution.

5 The Ideological drivers of the AFRC & PNDC Regimes

The 1979 June 4th Uprising was guided largely by these two principles – probity and accountability. It was fundamentally undergirded by the desire to protect the public purse, curb corruption and demand accountability from office holders. The June 4th Uprising and the 31st December Revolution were driven largely by the desire to bring sanity into the system of governance, weed out corrupt persons from government and to give more power and voice to the people of Ghana. University Students who were in support of the revolution equally championed these principles.

It is important to state that the AFRC regime (June – September, 1979) was primarily guided by two basic principles - probity and accountability - whereas the PNDC regime (December, 1981 – December, 1991) was governed by the principles of probity, accountability and social justice. Social Justice, as a principle, was adopted and given life and action during the PNDC administration. It is instructive to note that both June 4th and 31st December principles did not only informed the foundation of the NDC but also became enshrined values of the 1992 Constitution as found in the Preamble.

5.1 Probity

Fraser and Tripodi (2016) define probity as the *quality of having strong moral principles, honesty and decency*. To them, it also means uprightness of character or action. They further indicated that honesty implies the refusal to lie, steal or deceive in any way. Probity ergo makes

a call for strict adherence to a code of ethics based on undeviating honesty, especially within the political space.

It is the template that dispels and serves as a watchdog against corruption. In fact, probity gives meaning to transparency and requires that governance is conducted in an ethical, honest and fair manner.

Probity is at the heart of any constitutional and governance system. Indeed, it has been the bedrock of all of Ghana's constitutions including the current – the 1992 Republican Constitution. The whole of chapters eighteen (18) – Commission on Human Rights and Administrative Justice and Twenty-Four (24) – Code of Conduct for Public Officers - of Ghana's 1992 Constitution are rested on the philosophy or ideals of probity. In other words, probity remains the substratum of any real democratic society.

In summary, probity implies;

1. Articulating and enforcing expected and upright behaviours. For example, involving the right persons for the job – positive attitude, skilled, knowledgeable and experienced.
2. Implementing appropriate checks and balances at various stages in the governance process, especially the procurement processes.
3. Articulating and clarifying the concept of conflict of interest and implementing strategies – codes - to identify and manage potential conflict issues.
4. Making certain that officers are not compromised in their ability to act, or to be seen to act, impartially.

5.2 Accountability

Accountability may simply be referred to as assumption of responsibility for actions, decisions and policies including the administration, governance and implementation within the scope of the role or employment position. It also implies the candor and obligation to report, explain and be answerable to the people. Accountability equally expects politicians, public officers and servants to publicly account for their decisions and take responsibility for the achievement of outcomes and failures.

The principle of accountability is integral to Ghana's 1992 Republican Constitutional architecture. Chapters Six (6) – Directive Principles of State Policy (DPSP), Ten (10) – Legislature, Thirteen (13) – Finance, Fourteen (14) – Public Service and Eighteen (18) – Commission on Human Rights and Administrative Justice, etc are all premised on the notion of accountability. For instance, Article 34 under the DPSP of the 1992 Constitution states that; (1) the Directive Principle of State Policy contained in this chapter *shall guide* all citizens, Parliament, the President, the Judiciary, the Council of State, the Cabinet, political parties and other bodies and persons in applying or interpreting the constitution or any other law and in taking and implementing any policy decisions, for the establishment of a just and free society. And, (2) The President *shall report* to Parliament at least once a year all the steps taken to ensure the realization of the policy objectives contained in this Chapter; and, in particular, the realization of basic human rights, a healthy economy, the right to work, the right to good health care and the right to education.

Clearly, Article 34 (1) and (2) enjoin the Executive to report, or in other words, *account* to the people of Ghana, the steps taken by government to achieve the provisions of Chapter Six (6). This has been duly observed by all governments under the 4th Republic and has given the opportunity for the people, through their elected Members of Parliament to interrogate governments' programmes and reports in relation to this Chapter.

Again, in addition to the power of the legislature to make laws as conferred on it by the 1992 Constitution, article 103 (3) of the Constitution provides that; "Committees of Parliament shall be charged with such functions, including the *investigation* and *inquiry* into the activities and administration of ministries and departments as Parliament may determine; and such investigation and inquiries may extend to proposals for legislation". By this, the people's representatives are charged with the mandate to interrogate the activities of the executive – ministries and departments – in the bid to ascertaining whether or not they are working in the best interest of the people of Ghana. For example, the duty of the Public Accounts Committee is to examine the audited accounts showing the appropriation of the sums granted by

Parliament to meet the public expenditure of the government as presented to the House by the Auditor-General of Ghana⁶.

This acts, responsibility and answerability of the executive to the legislature and the people find expression in the concept of accountability.

Also, the principle of accountability is a good governance indicator. In the World Bank 1992 "Governance and Development Report," the Bank defined good governance as the manner in which power is exercised in the management of a country's economic and social resources for development⁷. Indeed, many governance indices recognize accountability as a key instrument in the governance process of society.

For example, the World Bank Research Institute's Aggregated Governance Indicators include (a) voice and *accountability* (b) political instability and violence (c) government effectiveness (d) regulatory burden (e) rule of law and (f) *graft* – speaks more to the issues of probity. Also, the Ibrahim Index of African Governance⁸ has four broad indicators with sub-indicators. The four include (a) safety & rule of law (b) participation and human rights (c) sustainable economic opportunity and (d) human development. Not surprisingly, the (a) safety & rule of law indicator has four sub-indicators namely; (i) rule of law (ii) *accountability* (iii) personal safety and (iv) national security. It can be deduced and irrefutably proposed that the principle of accountability is sine qua non to any real sustainable governance system.

Accountability also draws from the social and political contract. Inherent in the political contract between the politician and the electorate (citizen) is the duty to account. The duty to account is a two-way relationship.

In summary, accountability ensures;

1. Clearly identifying and demarcating lines of responsibility through decision-making to the implementation and evaluation of public policies and projects.

⁶ <https://www.parliament.gh/committees?com=27>

⁷ <http://documents.worldbank.org/curated/en/604951468739447676/pdf/multi-page.pdf>

⁸ <http://mo.ibrahim.foundation/iia/g/>

2. Maintaining and giving adequate records and information to enable external scrutiny of decisions by other interested stakeholders in the governance process including the citizens.
3. Complying with laid down rules of engagements.
4. Intermittently engage in debriefing exercise by giving accounts on ones activities and operations for feedback and complaints.

5.3 Social Justice

The notions of social justice and solidarity gained currency during the French Industrial Revolution. According to Jost and Kay (1998), social justice refers to *the state of affairs – actual or ideal – in which (a) benefits and burdens in society are dispersed in accordance with some allocation principles (or set of principles); (b) procedures, norms and rules that govern political and other forms of decision making preserve the basic rights, liberties and entitlements of individuals and groups; and (c) human beings (and perhaps other species) are treated with dignity and respect not only by authorities but also by other relevant social actors, including citizens.* These principles – equality, distribution and redistribution, solidarity, subsidiarity, inclusion, fairness, equity and nation building - cut across the various discussions and debates on social justice (Taylor 2013). Social justice therefore simply connotes a situation in which every citizen is treated fairly and everybody has equal access to the public goods and services of the institutions of state including facilities and amenities. It fundamentally aims at equal opportunities regardless of one's background within the framework of societal development and nation building.

Social Justice is one of the foremost functions of the 1992 Constitution of Ghana. Chapters Five (5) – Fundamental Human Rights and Freedoms and Six (6) – Directive Principle of State Policy are very fundamental and give meaning to the concept of social justice. Largely, all the articles therein Chapter Five (5) speak to the equal and fair treatment of all persons. Specifically, article 17 (1) provides that; all persons shall be equal before the law. In *Nartey v Gati*, the Supreme Court of Ghana averred that article 17 “certainly does not mean that every person within the Ghanaian jurisdiction has, or must have, exactly the same rights as all other persons in the jurisdiction. Such a position is simply not practicable. Soldiers, policemen, students and judges, for instance, have certain rights that other persons do not have. The fact that they have such rights does not mean that they are in breach of article 17. The crucial issue is whether the differentiation in their rights is justifiable, by

reference to an object that is sought to be served by a particular statute, constitutional provision or some other rule of law”⁹. This, basically, calls for the realization and treatment of certain persons or class of persons including the poor, vulnerable and disadvantaged on justifiable (otherwise, fair) grounds – major tool for protecting the rights and improving the life of the poor in society.

Among others, article 35 (3) under chapter six (6) - The Directive Principles of State Policy – enjoins the state to promote just and reasonable access by all citizens to public facilities and services in accordance with law. The notion of just and reasonable access to facilities and services – education, healthcare, housing, transportation, poverty alleviation schemes, etc – suggests a deliberate plan to ensure no one is left out in the development process.

Social justice therefore makes a mandatory call on the state to give preferential and affirmative opportunities to the marginalized and disadvantaged in society – equitable distribution of resources, wealth, goods and services.

Indeed, social justice also undergirds the equality before the law principle. It ensures the State’s provision of needed social interventions to ameliorate the plight of the masses since it forms part of the duty of the State. Social Justice therefore gives birth to the *welfare state*, a concept associated with social democracy than no other contemporary political ideology.

In summary, social justice ensures;

1. Equal and fair treatment of every citizen by the law.
2. Equity in the provision of public goods and services through positive discrimination and affirmative action policies.
3. A welfare state concerned about the welfare of the people, especially, the disadvantaged and marginalized.
4. Opportunities for participation in decision-making by all regardless of one’s race, place of origin, political opinion, colour, religion, creed or gender.

⁹ T. T. Nartey v. Godwin Gati [7/07/2010] Ref. No. J6/1/2010

Though the above ideals – probity, accountability and social justice – may not be necessarily hardcore constituents of social democracy save for social justice, one can safely make the case that the pronouncements, actions and inaction of the leading political actors within the AFRC and PNDC regime were social democratic. This statement by Rawlings - "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 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 popular democracy. 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 the 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 a part of the decision-making process of this country" (J. J. Rawlings, January 1st 1981 Edition of Daily Graphic) – echoes the social democratic value of social justice and inclusion. Generally, a linear thinking exists, that, a party or government that is military-oriented or has a military background cannot be people-centred at the same time. This thinking is not entirely accurate. In such cases, it is usually the overwhelming actions and inaction of the party or government that defines their policy posture and identity.

The call for the reigns of governance to be a mass or popularly-driven enterprise and not only a right for the privileged few capitalists in society was a clarion call for the equal participation and ownership of the democratic system; including the means of production and distribution. This is particularly striking since you have an ironical situation where a military regime on one hand makes an appeal for, on the other hand, an approach that would recognise and entrench people's participation in the governance process – a cardinal feature of any democratic society. It is same principles that governed the preference for a consultative assembly in June 1991 as against a constituent assembly in the bid to give more participatory space to the commoners, have-nots and vulnerable in society.

Also, the personality traits of the persons that were attracted or invited to work for the AFRC and PNDC regimes spoke volume of their ideological beliefs and roots in socialism and social democracy. For instance, Brigadier General Joseph Nunoo-Mensah, Justice D.F. Annan, Captain Kojo Tsikata, Alhaji Iddrisu Mahama, P.V Obeng, Dr. Mrs. Mary Grant,

etc, become members of the leadership of the PNDC regime due to their personal egalitarian beliefs. The point on personality trait tends to breathe life into my postulation on the demand-side of political ideology. The demand-side, as I argued earlier, makes a call on persons to act in ways that conform to the particular ideology they have adopted within a specific period. In other words, though the ideology sets the basic rules of engagement within a political party, actions and inaction of party persons must be deliberately conformed to the dictates of the ideology.

It is instructive to note that, these persons did not, at least, openly associate themselves to or profess any known political ideology like socialism, social democracy, liberalism, etc. However, by their beliefs and deeds, one can reasonably conclude that they were adherents to the social democratic ideology.

According to Nunoo-Mensah¹⁰ (2018) their generation was socialised with and lived the ideals of probity, accountability, integrity and social justice.

This buttresses the fact that while the PNDC regime professed the ideals of probity, accountability and social justice, key elements of the regime equally lived, and either, by design or accident, applied the very ideals in their mundane engagements. Nunoo-Mensah further added that, though such was the case, some of his colleagues, especially, from the military were not modest and did not live up to expectation.

The transition from the PNDC to the now NDC occurred in the year prior to general elections of 2000. The next section would focus on the contemporary ideological identity – social democracy - of today's NDC and situate their relevance within the architecture of Ghana's 1992 Constitution, exact the existing correlation between the social democratic ideals and the principles of good governance.

¹⁰ Brigadier General Joseph Nunoo-Mensah is a former Chief of Defence Staff of the Ghana Armed Forces. He was a member of the original seven-member leadership of the PNDC. He resigned from the PNDC a year after.

6 The Ideological Identity of the National Democratic Congress (NDC)

6.1 NDC as a political party

The popular and mass-driven nature of the June 4th and 31st December Revolutions characterized the formation of the NDC on 10th June, 1992. The name National Democratic Congress ends with the word 'congress' owing to the fact that the NDC "was made up of an amalgam of persons from the different political traditions" (Dadzie and Ahwoi 2010, p. 88). Some were from the United Party (UP) stock, the Convention People's Party (CPP) tradition and the military bloc. The NDC is therefore the "coming together of groups and individuals from diverse backgrounds who share a common determination to build a stable, just and democratic society, and who believe that the principles of development through the united participation of all Ghanaians remains the foundation of our democratic programme" (NDC Undated Publication).

The NDC, an offshoot of the PNDC, is credited for Ghana's fourth republican democratic governance dispensation. Ali Mazrui (2002) averred that *Rawlings begun with a 'coup' in 1979, came back with 'military take-over' in 1981, won power through the ballot box in 1992 and again in 1996 and stepped down in 2000 without manipulating the system to his personal or his party's advantage*. He further mentioned that *not only did Rawlings step down from power, but he allowed the electoral process to be transparent to the extent that his own party was defeated in the 2000 elections* (ibid). One can infer from the account of Ali Mazrui that Rawlings and his NDC understood the times and had wholeheartedly embraced the wave of democratic culture and good governance; especially, in a period when Rawlings's counterparts in other African countries have relentlessly held unto political power.

It is however interesting to note that though the ideals of probity, accountability and social justice were adopted and given life during the AFRC and PNDC regime, it was highly regarded as the defining character and philosophy of the new NDC between 1992 to 2000, albeit, underpinned by egalitarian principles. The exit of the NDC from government in the 2000 elections put the party in the deliberative mode as to which official political ideology to adopt from the traditional political ideologies – communism, socialism, social democracy, liberalism, capitalism. Unsurprisingly and with some laden connection to the ideals

of the AFRC and the PNDC, Social Democracy was ultimately adopted by the NDC in 2002 as the party's official ideology. This led to the party's affiliation and partnership with international bodies and development partners like the Socialist International (SI), Friedrich Ebert Stiftung (FES) Ghana, Labour Party (UK), including other sister social democratic parties and organisations across the world.

6.2 The ideological underpinnings of the NDC

The NDC's Constitution provides that the party is a social democratic party that believes in the equality and the egalitarian treatment of each person irrespective of their social, cultural, educational, political, religious and economic relations in a multi-party environment¹¹. The belief in the equality and egalitarian treatment of all has been expressed in the various election manifestos of the NDC post 1992. The National Democratic Congress is committed to building a just and equitable society in which citizens are empowered to seize on opportunities to improve themselves (NDC Manifesto 2016).

The NDC over the years, demonstrated that its objectives of empowering the ordinary people, equitable distribution of public goods, improving access to social services and pursuing economic development in partnership with the private sector are consistent with the core values of social democracy to wit, equity, equality before the law, social justice and freedom (Ahadzic, 2017). The NDC today is gradually, albeit at a slower pace, redefining and deepening her social democratic identity. The calls by the middle class members including the founder of the party for the NDC to redirect, re-integrate and deepen the ideals of the revolution and social democracy in her policies, programmes and actions has gained much currency today. This has become relevant since it appears the main rival party of conservative and a capitalist leaning is widely perceived to be implementing more social democratic initiatives.

The highly competitive nature of political activism between the NDC and the New Patriotic Party (NPP) for political power is driven by the agenda to bring development to the people of Ghana.

The fierce competition for power presents an opportunity for the NDC to practically re-orient and entrench her historical ideals and the social democratic

¹¹ Article 5 of the NDC's Constitution.

identity through the conceptualiaion to implementation of party and government policies and projects.

6.3 Social Democracy

It has become standard to speak of 'freedom, justice and solidarity' as the core values of social democracy (Kastning 2013: p. 10). Social Democracy, which finds its space on the center-left of the ideological spectrum, is referred to as welfare capitalism or social market economy. It "is a capitalist, free market enterprise system, which has been modified considerably in the direction of egalitarian principles, such as equality of opportunity, social security and participation in decision making" (Ahadzie 2017: p. 39).

The role of the state in the production and distribution of public goods and services is to the extent of defining the parameters within which the private players or markets engage including the provision of a deliberate design that seeks to protect and promote the interest of the working class, vulnerable, disadvantaged and poor in society through a welfare and protectionist mechanism.

6.3.1 Core Values – Social Democracy

The values of social democracy – freedom, justice and solidarity – have undergone series of changes and modifications hinged on the circumstantial societal exigencies at particular points in time. Nonetheless, freedom, justice and solidarity remain the core values of social democracy till date. These values have varying renditions or interpretations owing to the particular ontological belief. It is therefore appropriate for such values to be defined as according to the organisational goals and, within a contextualized sense. Context, especially, is, key.

6.3.1.1 Freedom

Fundamentally, every individual should be able to decide how he or she lives without the arbitrary interference by the State and society. Freedom is living one's life without coercion. Right from the Age of Enlightenment (17th – 19th Century) through the era of philosophers like John Locke (1632 – 1704), Jean-Jacques Rousseau (1712 – 1778), Charles de Montesquieu (1689 – 1755), John Stuart Mills (1806 – 1873), Immanuel Kant (1724 – 1804) and John Rawls (1921 – 2002), the concept of freedom have received detailed philosophical surgery, examination and redefinition. However, according to Kastning (2013), freedom refers to

free persons having the possibility to make un-coerced decisions. Freedom therefore basically implies exercising ones choice and in decision-making freely and willingly.

The whole of Chapter Five (5) – Fundamental Human Rights and Freedoms - of the 1992 Republican Constitution of Ghana is premised on the concept/value of freedom; the freedom of any Ghanaian to conduct his or herself in a manner to fully realize her personal desires and aspirations. Though such freedoms are guaranteed in the Constitution and the law, their manifestation in the lives of the people cannot be automatically guaranteed hence the deliberate role of the State to provide institutions that would see to the realization of these freedoms. For the concept of freedom to be realized, social democratic states or parties are under obligation to provide services like education, healthcare including avenue for democratic participation so citizens can take advantage of, be informed, equipped, participate and enjoy their freedom to the fullest.

It is important to state that freedom anywhere in the world is not absolute. Freedom has limits. And, Ghana's Constitution provides in article 12 (2) that; "every person in Ghana, whatever his race, place of origin, political opinion, colour, religion, creed or gender shall be entitled to the fundamental human rights and freedoms of the individual contained in this Chapter *but subject to the respect for the rights and freedoms of others and for the public interest*" (emphasis mine). However, the reality appears to be in the opposite direction. The Ghanaian society is fully yet to come to terms with, appreciate and manifest the respect for the right of others.

6.3.1.2 Justice

The concept of justice has received various definitions. It is construed, largely, in two folds; (1) Equality before the law irrespective of one's origin, colour, race, background or sex and (2) that same opportunities, be it political, social and economic, are given to all citizens like any other else taking into account their aspirations and requirements. Equality is justice. Social Democrats are therefore mindful of the need to; for instance, redistribute wealth through taxation in order to meet the needs and aspirations of the "have-nots".

The "have-nots" and poor in society are citizens and clothed with constitutional guarantees of legal, political, social and economic rights.

The State has a constitutional and moral responsibility towards all, including the “have-nots”, poor, marginalized and disadvantaged in order to realize and make manifest those rights.

The duty of and undergirded by fairness and what is just towards the collective is what is termed by social democrats as social justice. The concept of social justice shifts attention from the single individual to the collective or generality of the people. The right to food, water, healthcare, education, shelter, public transportation and employment is independent on one's status; and hence, governmental support is imperative for those who are unable to afford or enjoy these rights.

Similarly, the 1992 Constitution of Ghana upholds the principles and values of equality, justice and social justice under chapters five (5) – Fundamental Human Rights and Freedoms and six (6) – Directive Principle of State Policy. There are other international obligations Ghana has signed onto including the 1948 Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR) that enjoin her to uphold and promote the values of justice within the overarching objective of meeting the aspirations of the people and the provision of public goods and services.

6.3.1.3 Solidarity

In as much as social justice draws inspiration from the social contract theory, solidarity in my view, also finds expression in the social contract theory¹². The social contract basically explains the situation where the governed willingly give out their mandate and rights to the governor(s) for the benefit of political order. It underpins the sense of collectiveness and the willingness to help each other within society. It is the glue that holds society together. Social insurance schemes like pensions and unemployment benefits are undergirded by the principle of solidarity. Kastning (2013) asserts that solidarity describes the will to assist each other because one sympathizes with others and to provide support between the generations and people (p. 13).

¹² The Social Contract theory as coined by Hugo Grotius (1625), Thomas Hobbes (1651), Samuel Pufendorf (1673), John Locke (1689), Jean-Jacques Rousseau (1762) and Immanuel Kant (1797) fundamentally refers to the situation where rights are traded for mutual benefit including the protection and advancement of society's interest.

Chapter Six (6) – Directive Principles of State Policy – of the 1992 Constitution of Ghana lends to the spirit of solidarity. Specifically, article 35(2) provides that ‘the State shall protect and safeguard the independence, unity and territorial integrity of Ghana, and *shall seek the well being of all her citizens*’ (emphasis mine). The seeking of the well being of the citizens invites the State to solidarise with the people and the people amongst themselves within the framework of providing support for each other.

7 Relationship between the Revolutionary Ideals of the AFRC, PNDC and Social Democracy

Ideological definitions are context based. The context is so defined by the circumstances of the era and as such contextual narrative of the June 4th and 31st December ideals must be objectively defined by the NDC. In as much as the ideals are positive values in themselves that any organisation would jealously and relentlessly protect, its positive fruits – anticorruption, wealth and resource redistribution, economic development, social equalities and peoples political participation – under the AFRC and the PNDC are not in doubt. The objective reality today is that through the engagements of neoliberal actors and capitalists, the poor are getting poorer and rich richer (Heynen, N., McCarthy, J., Prudham, S. and Robbins, P. 2009); hence, the need for some social mechanism or pad to support and propel the poor in society. It is in this regard that social democracy is most relevant and imperative in the scheme of things.

It is not in contention, that, the ideals of June 4th and 31st December – probity, accountability and social justice – find permanent expression in democratic values, good governance and social democracy. Thus, whereas probity and accountability ipso facto form the soul and nature of any democratic organisation or society, social justice remain the bedrock of social democracy. The pictorial reality is that the ideals of June 4th and 31st December whether by design or default appears interwoven in the ideological fabric and identity of today’s NDC. Clearly, any attempt at disintegration, dissociation or mockery of the very ideals becomes a contradiction and a case of identity crisis.

Social democratic parties and governments are expected to be democratic in nature, function and identity. The ideals of probity and accountability as well as social justice form the character of any democratic identity. These ideals can never outlive their relevance so far as society and development remains relevant. The NDC as a social democratic party therefore is clothed with the very critical ideals – probity, accountability, social justice, freedom, solidarity and justice – necessary for the party to attract huge membership and remain arguably the biggest political party in Ghana.

As has been palpably established in the preceding sessions, the NDC's social democratic ideology lends itself and roots to the ideals of the June 4th and 31st December Revolutions. The AFRC and PNDC revolutionary ideals – probity, accountability and social justice - equally find credible expression in the tenets of good governance and democracy. Since political ideologies, are, largely, contextual, a careful evaluation of the NDC's ideological identity implies that the individual values or ideals that form their political ideology – social democracy – include; freedom, solidarity, social justice, probity, and accountability.

A true democrat, and for that matter a true member of the NDC would not reasonably be expected to disregard or subject to mockery, these ideals.

8 Ideology, Policies and Programmes

Ideological identity and disposition are best seen or expressed in policies (actions, inaction, regulations and laws) and programmes (interventions and activities) of the actors that profess the ideology. Though adherents of different ideologies largely have in common the desire for societal progress and development, the specific ideology practiced defines and determines the approach to arriving at the desired goal – societal progress and development. Therefore the primary record or evidence for ascertaining whether or not an organisation or political party lives up to their ideological standard is simply by evaluating their actions and inaction – policies and programmes – vis-a-vis the ideological dictates.

Although this is not the focus of this paper, it is nonetheless important to mention that a thorough assessment of the policies and programmes of

the political parties in Ghana's Fourth Republic vis-a-vis the ideological posturing of the political parties is necessary in situating the whole debate on ideology and public dividends in a proper context. In Ghana, the two major parties, the National Democratic Congress (NDC) is to Social Democracy whereas the New Patriotic Party (NPP) is to the Liberal Ideology. The NPP equally practices the Conservative Ideology and what has been known as Property Owning Democracy. Liberal, conservative and property owning democratic ideologies are right of center on the ideological spectrum and ideologically not expected to really bother themselves with major social interventions or welfare policies. However, the narrative in the intellectual and public domain lends considerable credit to the NPP for having significantly introduced, developed and sustained the social welfare agenda in Ghana (Grebe, 2015). This calls for some scrutiny of the very 'social welfare' policies introduced to ascertain whether or not they are - by their nature, scope, targeted beneficiaries, etc. - really typical social welfare programmes. Clearly, this needs further interrogation in subsequent publications.

It is a conspicuous fact that the PNDC regime significantly entrenched the concept of people power in our body polity. What the regime termed as 'true democracy' – granting power and political participation to the people – was rolled out on a national scale which served as a blue print and has resulted in today's local government and decentralisation agenda. The era of the AFRC, and, especially, the PNDC and NDC has experienced some social democratic-driven policies and programmes including the provision of social amenities and services.

Under the PNDC, the principle of social justice strongly guided and dictated the social welfare policies and programmes that were rolled out. For instance, the Intestate Succession Act, 1985, P.N.D.C.L 111 was enacted to protect the interest of the bereaved spouse and the children in the estate of a deceased spouse who died without making a will on the estate in question. This, by far, is one of the major welfare mechanisms that protects and safeguards the property and economic rights of, largely, the disadvantaged and vulnerable – children and spouses. Again, driven by the social justice principle and the central concern to protect the interest of the working class as against the owners of capital, the PNDC regime enacted the Workmen's Compensation Act, 1987, P.N.D.C.L 187. The Act sought to address matters of compensation – livelihood and economic rights - to the working class in an equitable and fair manner.

Again, under NDC1 (1992 – 1996, 1996 – 2000), the Commission on Human Rights and Administrative Justice Act, 1993, 456 was enacted and sought to protect and safeguard the interests of the working class and the citizens in general against human rights abuses and administrative injustices. One can argue that, the protection of the rights – economic, social and political - of the working class received extreme attention by the P(NDC) regime through several enactments. The Children’s Act, 1998, Act 560, Community Water and Sanitation Agency Act, 1998, Ghana Education Trust Fund Act, 2000, Act 581, etc all take breathe from the social justice principle of the PNDC regime. NDC2 (2008 – 2012, 2012 – 2016) equally experienced the enactment of some policies and laws that find expression in the party’s ideological identity. As indicated early on, all these policies and interventions ought to be critically examined vis-a-vis the ideological dictates of the political parties that implemented them.

9 Concluding Words and Recommendations

The contemporary identity of the NDC is yet to fully assimilate these ideals into a working culture and identity of the party. Though the party professes these ideals in ‘disunity’ and documents like the party’s constitution and manifestos, it is yet to fully operationalise same in the management of the party and the scheme of general governance.

This has resulted in a seeming lack of a coherent and well-coordinated ideological posturing for the party. Unsurprisingly and ironically, the property owning-conservative-capitalist oriented New Patriotic Party has been associated and credited with contemporary social democratic policies and interventions. This, clearly, has perceptively and in reality impacted negatively on the support base and the election-winning ability of the party.

The NDC must therefore first and foremost come to terms with the reality that the ideals of June 4th and 31st December are her lifeblood and forms the very image and identity of the party.

"The NDC came into existence on the trail of the PNDC which was founded on the principles of probity and accountability, the Party must

recognise this fact and work towards eliminating corruption in all forms, be it institutional or those that can be traced to party leaders; the issue of individual life-style of government appointees must also be thoroughly addressed" (NDC Congress Report, 1998). This is imperative because, it is contradictory to be birthed from the ideals of AFRC and PNDC; profess to be a Social Democrat and exhibit a lifestyle that does not find expression in those ideals.

Also, the National Executive Committee (NEC) and Functional Executive Committee (FEC) must take deliberate and practical steps to fully weave these ideals into the contemporary fabric of the party: national, regional, constituency and branch levels. The Ghana Institute of Social Democracy (GISD), the NDC's party school is a sustainable and convenient vehicle for the 'ideologisation' agenda.

More importantly, party leadership at the various levels – national, regional, constituency and branch - must live the ideals and manifest same in the management and administrative duties of the party. The party, should as a matter of policy and checks, be influential, commanding and exact more – actions and inactions of government functionaries - on matters of ideology when in government.

Ideological discussions should be encouraged at the party branch levels. This can be done by encouraging branch executives and members to, at every branch meeting, discuss pertinent community issues – sanitation, employment, immotorable roads, unemployment, etc – and come up with their grassroots-based proposed social democratic interventions to address these issues. These proposed interventions should be collated at the constituency and regional offices for further deliberations with the national ideology and manifesto committees of the NDC.

The party's Ideology Committee should be clothed with a constitutional mandate and resourced (dedicated percentage of the internally generated revenue) to create intermittent dialogue platforms among party members in the bid to entrenching the ideological culture and identity of the NDC

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