GEOPOLITICS AND THE LEGACIES OF CLASSICAL ATHENS: CRITICAL INSIGHTS FOR DEVELOPING NATIONS SUCH AS GHANA

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ABSTRACT

This thesis critically examines the geopolitical dimensions underpinning selected legacies of Classical Athens, addressing a notable lacuna in existing scholarship. While scholars have extensively analysed Athens' political, intellectual, and cultural achievements, the specific role of geopolitical strategy, both as a source of strength and a source of vulnerability, remains comparatively underexplored. Through a comprehensive investigation of Athens' engagement with its geopolitical environment, this study argues that strategic geopolitical statecraft was integral to Athenian flourishing and its eventual decline.

Drawing upon classical sources including Thucydides, Herodotus, and Xenophon, alongside modern theories of geopolitics, this thesis reconstructs Athens' foreign policy and imperial strategies within a broader analytical framework. It re-evaluates key historical phenomena, such as the leadership of the Delian League, the Peloponnesian War, and patterns of Athenian expansionism, to demonstrate the complex interplay between geopolitical strategy, cultural efflorescence, and political (in)stability.

In parallel, the thesis examines the relevance of these classical experiences to the contemporary challenges faced by developing nations, such as Ghana. Recognising the profound differences in historical and political contexts, the study does not propose direct replication but rather suggests that the critical analysis of Athenian geopolitical practice offers valuable analogical insights for modern statecraft. Specifically, it highlights the importance of

prudent alliance-building, resource management, and strategic positioning within an increasingly globalised world order.

Ultimately, this research contributes to Classical scholarship by repositioning geopolitics at the heart of Athens' historical narrative, while simultaneously reaffirming the enduring relevance of Classical studies for contemporary governance and development discourse. It argues for a critical engagement with the past, demonstrating that Classical legacies continue to provide fertile ground for rethinking the complexities of modern national strategy and international relations.