

**THE UNFINISHED BUSINESS OF DECENTRALISATION: POLITICAL
ACCOUNTABILITY OF LOCAL GOVERNMENT IN GHANA**

A case study of the Komenda-Edina-Eguafo-Abrem (KEEA) Municipality

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DEDICATION

TO MY WIFE

Mrs. HANNAH ARTHUR

AND

CHILDREN

ALBERTA ARTHUR

NANA ESI AHEMA ARTHUR

NANA YAW OPPONG ARTHUR

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LIST OF ACRONYMS AND ABBREVIATIONS

AFRC	Armed Forces Revolutionary Council
AM	Assembly Member
BECE	Basic Education Certificate Examination
CPP	Convention People's Party
CRC	Constitution Review Commission
DA	District Assembly
DACF	District Assemblies Common Fund
DCD	District Coordinating Director
DCE	District Chief Executive
DISEC	District Security Committee
DMTDP	District Medium-Term Development Plan
DPCU	District Planning Coordinating Unit
EC	Electoral Commission
GIMPA	Ghana Institute of Management and Public Administration
GMMB	Ghana Museums and Monument Board
GNAT	Ghana National Association of Teachers
GSS	Ghana Statistical Service
HIPC	Highly Indebted Poor Country
IDS	Institute for Development Studies
IGF	Internally Generated Fund

IHS	Institute of Urban and Housing Studies
ILGS	Institute for Local Government Studies
IMC	Interim Management Committee
KAAD	Katholischer Akademischer Auslander-Dienst (Catholic Academic Exchange Service)
KEEA	Komenda-Edina-Eguafo-Abrem
KNUST	Kwame Nkrumah University of Science and Technology
LATF	Local Authority Transfer Fund
MA	Municipal Assembly
MASLOC	Micro-Finance and Small Loans Center
MCE	Municipal Chief Executive
MDAs	Ministries, Departments and Agencies
MLGRD	Ministry of Local Government and Rural Development
MMDA	Metropolitan/Municipal/District Assembly
MP	Member of Parliament
NADMO	National Disaster Management Organisation
NDC	National Democratic Congress
NLC	National Liberation Council
NPP	New Patriotic Party
PM	Presiding Member
PNDC	Provisional National Defence Council
PP	Progress Party
RCCs	Regional Coordinating Councils
SHEP	Self-Help Electrification Project
SIF	Social Investment Fund
SMC	Supreme Military Council

TESCON	Tertiary Education and Students Confederacy of NPP
UCC	University of Cape Coast
UCM	Unit Committee Member
UG	University of Ghana

DEUTSCHE KURZZUSAMMENFASSUNG

Einleitung

Diese Dissertation untersucht die Ausgestaltung der staatlichen Dezentralisierung in Ghana und überprüft inwiefern und wem gegenüber politische Akteure in lokalen politischen Arenen Rechenschaft für ihr Handeln und ihre Entscheidungen ablegen müssen. In der Debatte über politische Dezentralisierung wird immer wieder die Wichtigkeit der bürgerlichen Kontrolle der Ausübung von institutioneller Macht und Autorität und die Bedeutung der Rechenschaftspflicht von Lokalpolitikern und –verwaltung betont. Es sollen Institutionen, Verfahren und Mechanismen geschaffen werden, die dazu da sind sicherzustellen, dass (lokale) Regierungen ihre Wahlversprechen erfüllen, dem öffentlichen Vertrauen gerecht werden, die Interessen der Bürger sammeln und repräsentieren, sowie auf aktuelle Bedürfnisse und Belange der Bürger eingehen (Brinkerhoff, 2001).

In dieser Studie werden bürgerliche Kontrollmöglichkeiten und politische Rechenschaftspflicht als zentrale Elemente effektiver politischer Dezentralisierung und bürgerlicher Teilhabe an lokalen politischen Entscheidungsprozessen verstanden. Um diese herzustellen sind drei Faktoren von zentraler Bedeutung: das lokale Wahlsystem, der öffentliche Zugang zu Informationen der lokalen Verwaltung, sowie ein regelmäßiger und offener Austausch zwischen Lokalpolitikern, Verwaltungsvertretern und dem Wahlvolk. Allerdings muss, auch im Falle Ghanas, in vielen Ländern in Frage gestellt werden, ob konkrete Dezentralisierungsvorhaben diesen Zielsetzungen tatsächlich gerecht werden. Oftmals können sie sogar kontraproduktiv wirken und Korruption und die Abschöpfung öffentlicher Ressourcen durch lokale politische und wirtschaftliche Eliten verstärken (Agrawal und Ribot, 1999; Aye, 2006; Crawford, 2008). So stellt sich etwa die Frage, wie die Kontrolle und Rechenschaftspflicht von Lokalpolitikern und -verwaltung sichergestellt werden kann, ohne dass eine volle Beteiligung der Bevölkerung an der Auswahl/Wahl der lokalen Abgeordneten möglich ist; ohne dass öffentlicher Zugang zu Verwaltungsinformationen besteht, und wenn nur wenig Austausch zwischen Politik, Verwaltung und Bürgern, Wählern und Steuerzahlern stattfindet.

Die heutige Dezentralisierungsgesetzgebung in Ghana geht auf das Jahr 1988 zurück. Nach beinahe zweieinhalb Dekaden der Implementierung stellen sich bei der Dezentralisierung des

Landes Erfolge ein. So sind mittlerweile, anstelle der ursprünglichen 110, 170 Lokalverwaltungen (MMDAs) geschaffen worden und die Budgetmittel, die die Distriktverwaltungen von der Regierung erhalten, sind von 5 auf 7,5% der staatlichen Gesamteinnahmen heraufgestzt worden. Das Problem der Übernahme politischer Rechenschaftspflicht lokaler politischer Eliten gegenüber Bürgern, Wählern und Steuerzahlern besteht jedoch weiterhin. Um also den Stand der Dezentralisierung und die Erreichung ihrer Ziele in Ghana zu untersuchen, überprüft diese Arbeit am Beispiel des Komenda-Edina-Eguafo-Abrem (KEEA) Distriktes in der Central Region Ghanas, die Durchführung von Lokalwahlen, wie Lokalpolitiker und Verwaltungsvertreter ihre Autorität und Amtsbefugnisse erhalten und ausüben, inwieweit Verwaltungsinformationen öffentlich zugänglich sind, wie diese Informationen von Bürgern genutzt werden, und ob effektive Kommunikationsstrukturen zwischen Politik, Verwaltung und Bürgern bestehen.

Die Arbeit verfolgt einen „akteurs-orientierten“ Ansatz und untersucht zusätzlich die rechtlichen und politischen Strukturen, die der Dezentralisierung in Ghana unterliegen, und zeigt so die Interessenlagen, Rechtsverhältnisse und Machtkonstellationen auf, die der vollen bürgerlichen Kontrolle und einer effektiven Rechenschaftspflicht der politisch Verantwortlichen des KEEA Distriktes Kommune im Wege stehen. Unter Zuhilfenahme der empirischen Befunde entwirft der Autor zudem politische Alternativen und Interventionsmöglichkeiten, die darauf abzielen die bürgerliche Kontrolle und Rechenschaftspflicht lokaler Politiker und Verwaltungsbeamter zu erhöhen und zu einer `echten´ politischen Dezentralisierung Ghanas beizutragen.

Überblick über die Kapitel und Forschungsergebnisse

Im ersten Kapitel reflektiert der Autor zunächst seine Rolle in seinem Forschungskontext. Das ist notwendig und hilfreich, da der Autor selbst vier Jahre lang als Verwaltungschef (District Chief Executive) dem KEEA Distrikt vorstand, und weitere vier Jahre als Regionalminister die Central Region Ghanas, in der die KEEA Kommune liegt, regiert hat. Diese Reflexion trägt einerseits dazu bei die besondere Ausgangslage dieses Forschungsprojektes, mit ihren potentiellen Gefahren für „objektive“ wissenschaftliche Arbeit und den Chancen, die in einem tiefen Verständnis des Forschungsgegenstandes liegen, zu verstehen. Andererseits erklärt sie wie der Autor versucht mit seiner doppelten Rolle als Lokalpolitiker und Forscher umzugehen und das eigentliche Forschungsinteresse des Wissenschaftlers klar. Als Wissenschaftler hat sich der Autor daas Ziel

gesetzt einige der Schwächen der Umsetzung von Dezentralisierung in Ghana, die der Politiker während seiner Amtszeiten erkannt hat, mit wissenschaftlichen Methoden tiefer zu ergründen.

Darüber hinaus werden in der Einleitung die Problemstellung und Ziele der Studie, sowie die wissenschaftliche Fragestellung vorgestellt und verdeutlicht welche Vorgehensweise und Methodologie der Studie zugrunde liegen.

Das zweite Kapitel gibt einen Überblick über die aktuelle Literatur zum Thema Dezentralisierung und erklärt wie genau der Autor für ihn zentrale Begriffe wie „Dezentralisierung“, „lokale Regierung“ und „politische Verantwortung“ versteht und verwendet. Zudem werden die unterschiedlichen Arten von Dezentralisierung, wie Dekonzentration (deconcentration), Delegierung (delegation) und Regionalisierung (devolution) vorgestellt. Der Autor zeigt auf wie, teils auf Druck von internationalen Geberorganisationen, teils als nationale Reaktion auf die verfehlte zentralistische Regierungspolitik der sechziger und siebziger Jahre, Dezentralisierungsreformen überall auf der Welt, und speziell in vielen Ländern Afrikas, seit den achtziger Jahren zur „stillen Revolution“ wurden (Campbell, 2001). Dabei unterscheidet sich die Umsetzung in unterschiedlichen Ländern beträchtlich. Es wurde jedoch zumeist versucht lokale Behörden zu schaffen deren Aufgabe es ist staatliche Dienstleistung lokal anzubieten und außerdem lokale Entwicklungsprozesse anzustossen.

In der Literatur wird häufig davon ausgegangen wird, dass Dezentralisierung die bürgerliche Kontrolle politischer Prozesse und die Rechenschaftspflicht von Politikern quasi „automatisch“ erhöht. Bei genauerer Betrachtung wird allerdings klar, dass bürgerliche Kontrolle und politische Rechenschaftspflicht komplexe Konzepte sind, die vor dem Hintergrund unterschiedlicher regionaler, sozialer und politischer Kontexte, unterschiedliche Bedeutung und Ausformung erfahren - und eher Prozesse als Zustände darstellen. Bei einer genaueren Durchsicht der aktuellen Studien zeigt sich, dass diese komplexen kontextabhängigen Prozesse bisher viel zu wenig empirisch erforscht sind. Um diese empirische Untersuchung voranzutreiben entwirft der Autor in Kapitel zwei einen konzeptionellen Rahmen, der ihm im Verlaufe der Arbeit erlaubt, Dezentralisierungsprozesse und die Herstellung von bürgerlicher Kontrolle und politischer Rechenschaftspflicht im KEEA Distrikt Ghanas zu verstehen und zu erklären. Dabei lastet das Hauptaugenmerk darauf wie lokale Wahlen, der öffentlichen Zugang zu und die Nutzung von Informationen, sowie Kommunikationskanäle zwischen Lokalpolitik und –verwaltung und Bürgern,

dazu beitragen eine öffentliche Kontrolle von politischen Entscheidungen und der Umsetzung von Entwicklungsmaßnahmen zu erhöhen oder zu beschränken.

In Kapitel drei werden die historischen und politischen Prozesse, institutionellen Entwicklungen und sozio-ökonomischen Rahmenbedingungen diskutiert, die zum gegenwärtigen Entwicklungsstand des Dezentralisierungsprozesses in Ghana geführt haben. Das Kapitel verfolgt die Dezentralisierungsgeschichte Ghanas von der Kolonialzeit mit ihrer „indirekten Herrschaft“ durch lokale Chiefs, bis hin zur gegenwärtigen Dezentralisierungspolitik. Es wird deutlich dass Ghana seit der Kolonialzeit eine turbulente politische Geschichte mit unterschiedliche Wellen der Dezentralisierung erlebt hat. Unterschiedliche (Militär-) Regierungen haben immer wieder erfolgreich versucht Macht und Ressourcen zu (re)zentralisieren statt sie auf sub-nationalem Level zu belassen. So ergibt sich das Bild eines Pendelns zwischen politischer Zentralisierung und Dezentralisierung, das in den gegenwärtig andauernden Dezentralisierungsprozess gemündet hat, in dem - bis zu einem gewissen Maße - Kompetenzen und Ressourcen der Zentralregierung den gewählten Bürgervertretungen (District- Municipal oder Metropolitan Assemblies (MMDAs)) in den Großstädten, den Kommunen und Distrikten übergeben worden sind. Gleichzeitig besteht aber weiterhin ein hoher Grad zentralstaatlicher Kontrolle, da es dem Präsidenten Ghanas vorbehalten ist, den Chef der Lokalverwaltung, den District - oder Municipal Chief Exekutive oder Mayor (in Großstädten), sowie 30% der Mitglieder der Bürgerverwaltungen zu benennen. Zudem werden zentrale Entwicklungsvorhaben in den Distrikten weiterhin über die lokalen Büros der zentralstaatlichen Behörden und Ministerien abgewickelt, was die Planungs- und Entscheidungshoheit der Distrikte deutlich reduziert.

Kapitel vier beschreibt die in der Studie angewandte Methodologie. Die vorliegende Arbeit beruht auf den Ergebnissen einer Feldforschung die zwischen April 2010 und Januar 2011 in KEEA-Distrkt aber auch in Ghanas Hauptstadt Accra durchgeführt wurde. Die Arbeit verfolgt einen „akteurs-orientierten“ Ansatz, der sich an die Arbeiten Giddens (1984) Longs (2001) und Thelens (1999) anlehnt, und erklärt wie verschiedene Akteure, die über unterschiedliche Ressourcen und Kapazitäten verfügen, mit dem Versuch bürgerliche Kontrolle und politische Rechenschaftspflicht herzustellen umgehen. Konkret geht es dabei um die Inanspruchnahme neuer institutionelle Räume durch die Bürger aber auch durch Lokalpolitiker, sowie die Ausgestaltung von Entscheidungsprozessen im Bereich der lokalen Regierung. Um diese Verhältnisse zu untersuchen wurde zunächst eine qualitative Forschungsstrategie verfolgt und Interviews mit

Schlüsselinformanten aus Politik, Verwaltung, traditionellen Autoritäten (chiefs), aber auch von lokalen Nichtregierungsorganisationen, Kirchen und Bürgervertretern vor Ort geführt. Um zudem einen quantitativen Überblick über die bürgerliche Wahrnehmung des Dezentralisierungsprozesse zu erlangen, hat der Autor eine Fragebogenerhebung unter der städtischen und ländlichen Bevölkerung des KEEA durchgeführt. Um die der Dezentralisierung zugrunde liegenden institutionellen Prozesse, die Bandbreite der verschiedenen Akteure, die aktuelle Rechtslage, aber auch übergeordnete Politikinteressen, die lokale Regierungsführung und Entscheidungsprozesse beeinflussen, zu verstehen, wurden zudem Experteninterviews mit ghanaischen Parlamentsabgeordneten, Vertretern der Zentralregierung, der Oppositionsparteien und Politikwissenschaftlern durchgeführt. Zudem wurde auf Sekundärliteratur zurückgegriffen. Die mit diesen Methoden gewonnenen empirischen Befunde werden in den Kapiteln fünf, sechs und sieben dargestellt.

Im Kapitel fünf erklärt der Autor warum er sich für den KEEA Distrikt als Forschungsregion entschieden hat. Zudem wird der ländlich geprägte Distrikt an der Küste der Zentralregion Ghanas genauer geographisch, demographisch, ökonomisch und sozio-kulturell vorgestellt und ein Überblick über die historische der Region gegeben.

Im folgenden werden die Forschungsergebnisse dieser Studie vorgestellt. Dabei wird nicht gänzlich der Struktur der Kapitel gefolgt, sondern die Befunde entlang der zentralen Forschungsfragen dieser Arbeit diskutiert. So werden die wichtigen Ergebnisse der Arbeit klarer und deutlicher herausgearbeitet.

Die Wahrnehmung lokaler Akteure der Beutung von politischer Rechenschaftspflicht

Die Wahrnehmung der politischen Rechenschaftspflicht im Kontext der gegenwärtigen demokratischen Dezentralisierung in Ghana durch unterschiedliche lokaler Akteure wird im Kapitel sechs der Arbeit diskutiert. Zunächst ist es wichtig zu verstehen, welche Bedeutung unterschiedliche lokale Akteure Begriffen wie „politischer Rechenschaftspflicht“ und „bürgerlicher Kontrolle“ wirklich zumessen (siehe dazu Abschnitt 5.6.1). Politische Rechenschaftspflicht hat nicht allein mit „answerability“ und „enforcement“ zu tun, wie in der Literatur zu „accountability“ häufig behauptet wird. Sondern politische Rechenschaftspflicht umfasst ein viel weiteres Feld der Bewertung von politischen Maßnahmen. Neben finanziellen und politischen Aspekten können auch emotionale Faktoren und die Art in der Politiker unterschiedliche Bedürfnisse ihrer Klientel

befriedigen eine wichtige Rolle spielen. Dies wird auch von Schedler (1999:13) bekräftigt, der argumentiert, dass "accountability (political) represents an underexplored concept whose meaning remains evasive, whose boundaries are fuzzy, and whose internal structure is confusing" und der argumentiert dass: "[p]olitical accountability refers to giving an account of how one serves his/her people financially, emotionally and physically during his/her term of office". Unterschiede in der Wahrnehmung und Bedeutung von „accountability“ die sich bei unterschiedlichen Akteuren im KEEA Distrikt feststellen lassen, hängen von deren Interessen, Absichten und Werten (Schutz and Luckman, 1973) ab, und wirken sich stark auf ihr tatsächliches Verhalten im politischen Prozess aus. So können etwa korrupten Politikern ihre Fehltritte verziehen werden, wenn Sie dafür große Anteilnahme an den persönlichen Problemen der Menschen ihres Wahlkreises zeigen und durchaus auch private Mittel nutzen um ihrer Wählerschaft zu helfen. Für den Forscher ist es daher wichtig in phänomenologischer Manier eine kritische Untersuchung von sozialem Leben, von den „Lebenswelten“ und der „bewohnten“ und „als selbstverständlich-hingenommenen“ Welt der sozialen Akteure vorzunehmen(Schütz 1962, zitiert in Long, 2001) um so lokale Bedeutungszusammenhänge auszuleuchten.

Lokales Wahlsystem

Die Beschaffenheit und Eigenschaften des lokalen Wahlsystems in der KEEA Kommune werden ebenfalls im sechsten Kapitel diskutiert. Zunächst wurde die Komplexität des Prozesses der Kandidatenauswahl untersucht. Anhand der angeführten Beispiele wird schnell klar, dass es bei der Konkurrenz um die in der Lokalregierung entstehenden Posten und Mandate vielfältige Prozesse der Verhandlung, Koalitionsbildung, Konkurrenz, Abgrenzung, des Manövrierens und des Aufschiebens gibt. Um diese Prozesse zu untersuchen, reicht die gängige Begrifflichkeit von „politischer Rechenschaftspflicht“ nicht aus. Es ist darüber hinaus nötig, die lokale Politik als einen dynamischen Prozess zu begreifen, in dem sich die Partikularinteressen Einzelner mit übergeordneten (nationalen) Parteiinteressen und den Entwicklungszielen der Lokalverwaltung mischen. Die Ergebnisse dieser Interessenkollisionen und der daraus resultierenden Verhandlungsprozessen scheinen nicht immer logisch und ziehen häufig unbeabsichtigte Konsequenzen nach sich. Durch die Dokumentation der Komplexität der Kandidatenkür für die Bürgervertretung und das Parlamentsmandat in der KEEA und der eigentlichen Wahlen, gelingt es dieser Studie aufzuzeigen das reine Abhalten von Lokalwahlen nicht notwendigerweise dazu führt dass politische Rechenschaftspflicht und eine Kontrolle der Amtsführung der Lokalpolitiker durch

die Bürger wirklich hergestellt wird. Es sind eben nicht immer Rechtschaffenheit, Bürgernähe und Fähigkeiten, die die Auswahl und Wahl von Kandidaten bestimmen, sondern häufig komplexe Gemengelage von persönlich, regionalen und nationalen Interessen die bestimmen wer als Kandidat in Frage kommt.

Aber nicht nur Auswahl und Wahlprozesse folgen nicht der einfachen Logik der accountability. Schon allein die Frage, wer sich für Politik interessiert und sich in die Lokalpolitik involviert hängt stark von der Geschichte, Kultur, und den Normen ganzer Gemeinden ab. Gleichzeitig aber auch von der individuellen Fähigkeit einzelner Personen sich soziale Netzwerk zunutze zu machen. Am Beispiel einiger lokaler Gemeinden und der Lebensläufe von dort tätigen politischen Akteuren gelingt es der Studie aufzuzeigen, wie lokale Partikularinteressen (etwa an Schulen oder Straßen) und die Fähigkeit von Politikern Gefolgschaft zu mobilisieren und eine Klientel aufzubauen wichtiger sind als ein abstraktes Interesse an politischer Rechenschaftspflicht.

Dennoch legen die in dieser Studie dokumentierten Befragung nahe, dass auch auf lokaler Ebene ein großer Bedarf für eine größere Beteiligung an politischen Entscheidungsprozessen gibt. Wie oben erwähnt werden die Chief Executives der Lokalverwaltung in Ghana vom Präsidenten ausgewählt. Unter den befragten Personen im KEEA Distrikt waren aber 67,6% der Meinung, dass eine Direktwahl des Chief Executive durch die Wahlbevölkerung erfolgen sollte. Sie glauben, dass so der Einfluss der Bürger, auf öffentliche Entscheidungsprozesse gestärkt werden kann. Die Lokalbevölkerung glaubt eine größere Handhabe über Politiker zu haben – und so politische Rechenschaftspflicht herstellen zu können – wenn Lokalpolitiker, die ihre Arbeit nicht gut ausführen, durch Wahlen abgestraft werden können. Viele Bürger kritisierten auch die Regel, dass 30% der Bürgervertreter vom Präsidenten bestimmt werden. Waren diese Stellen eigentlich für Experten, Technokraten und Vertreter der traditionellen Autoritäten bestimmt, zeigt sich in der Realität, dass die Posten zumeist strikt nach Parteizugehörigkeit an so genannte „foot soldiers“, Unterstützer lokaler Wahlkämpfe, vergeben werden. Obwohl die Lokalpolitik laut Verfassung eigentlich dem Einfluss der Parteien entzogen sein soll und Bürgervertreter öffentlich nicht als Parteivertreter auftreten dürfen, ist es in Ghana de facto aber so, dass die politischen Parteien einen entscheidenden Einfluss auf Lokalwahlen haben. Dies spiegelt sich auch in der Tatsache wieder, dass immerhin 43,6% der befragten Personen der Meinung waren, dass die Wahl der lokalen Abgeordneten in ein politisches Parteiensystem eingebettet sein sollte, da es scheinbar wäre zu behaupten, die gegenwärtigen Lokalwahlen wären frei von parteipolitischer

Einflußnahme. Die in der Studie vorgestellten Beispiele für Konflikte zwischen Politik und Bevölkerung zeigen, dass weite Teile der Bevölkerung daran zweifeln, Lokalpolitiker alleine effektiv kontrollieren zu können. Bei Unzufriedenheiten und Konflikten mit Lokalpolitikern wendet sich die Bevölkerung eher an die traditionellen Autoritäten (chiefs), damit diese Politiker maßregeln und politische Rechenschaft einfordern. Dies belegt die wichtige Rolle, die die traditionellen Autoritäten bis heute innerhalb der Institutionen der lokalen Regierung innehaben.

Öffentlicher Zugang zu Informationen und konsultativen Besprechungen

Der öffentliche Zugang zu Informationen und konsultativen Besprechungen mit Bürgern, Wählern und Steuerzahlern wird in den Kapiteln sieben und acht thematisiert.

Der öffentliche Zugang zu Informationen über Politikentscheidungen, Budgetangelegenheiten und die Umsetzung von Projekten ist in der KEEA sehr beschränkt. Obwohl die Dezentralisierungsgesetzgebung eine stetige Veröffentlichung solcher Informationen zum Beispiel über Aushänge in der Distriktverwaltung vorsieht, geschieht dies in den allerwenigsten Fällen. Zudem geben die meisten Befragten an, sich dieser Informationskanäle nicht bewußt zu sein oder sie nicht zu nutzen. Entmutigend ist auch der Informationsstand der lokalen Bevölkerung in Sachen Dezentralisierung. So wußten in den urbanen Zentren des KEEA Distrikts etwa 82% der Befragten nicht, dass ihr Distrikt über den District Assembly Common Fund am nationalen Budget beteiligt wird und so über eigene Finanzmittel verfügt, die wiederum die Hauptquelle aller Budgets für Entwicklungsprojekte und Programme in der Kommune darstellen.

Ohne ausreichend Informationen über Entscheidungen und deren Umsetzung, über die Vergabe von Aufträgen und Ausschreibungen, ist aber schwierig politische Rechenschaft der Lokalpolitiker und –verwaltung einzufordern. Zudem kommt es aufgrund von Informationsdefiziten immer wieder zur Verzögerung bei der Umsetzung von Infrastrukturprojekten. Häufig ist bei Entwicklungsprojekten ein aktiver Beitrag der Bevölkerung Bedingung für deren Förderung. Da die Bevölkerung aber in der Regel über die Finanzierung und Umsetzung von Projekten im Unklaren gelassen wird, führt dies oft zu Konflikten und Widerstand, wenn plötzlich Arbeitsleistungen oder Zahlungen eingefordert werden.

Die vorhandenen Informationskanäle werden von Politikern bewußt außer acht gelassen. Das gibt ihnen alleinige Kontrolle über Projekte und die Möglichkeit sich selbst oder auch ihre Klientel zu bevorteilen. Das Kapitel sieben zeigt Beispiele solchen Verhaltens, zeigt aber auch, dass solches

Verhalten leicht auf Widerstand stoßen kann. Die Bevölkerung kann kreativ darin sein, zum Beispiel über die Einbeziehung traditioneller Autoritäten, Transparenz und politische Rechenschaftspflicht herzustellen.

Um den Informationsfluss zwischen Politik und Wahlvolk zu verbessern scheint im Umfeld des KEEA Distriktes, wo Zeitungen so gut wie keine Verbreitung finden, vielen Befragten das Radio als das geeignete Medium. Etwa 70% der Befragten -sowohl im städtischen wie auch ländlichen Raum - beklagen, dass die Loklverwaltung und lokale Politiker das Radio, als das meistgenutzte Medium im KEEA Distrikt, nicht effektiv zur Information der Bevölkerung einsetzen.

Wie in Kapitel acht diskutiert wird, wären regelmäßige Treffen oder Konsultationen zwischen Verwaltung, Politik und der Bevölkerung für den beiderseitigen Informationsfluss wären äußerst wichtig. De jure ist es zuvorderst die Aufgabe der Bürgervertreter in der Distriktversammlung diese Aufgabe zu übernehmen. Assembly members sollen den lokalen Bedürfnissen und Interessen auf der Distriktebene Gehör verschaffen sowie wichtige Politikentscheidungen und Informationen über die Mittelvergabe in ihren jeweiligen Gemeinden kommunizieren. Aber ähnlich wie auf der Ebene der Chief Executives, sind auch die Assembly Member häufig versucht Informationen zu monopolisieren um so persönliche Vorteile zu erlangen. Dies ist für Teile der lokalen Bevölkerung akzeptabel, so lange ihre Partikularinteressen - besonders im Vergleich mit anderen Teilen der lokalen Bevölkerung ihrer eigenen Gemeinden oder des Distriktes - unberührt bleiben. Ist ein Assembly Member etwa in der Lage Entwicklungsprojekte für die eigene Gemeinde an Land zu ziehen, so wird ihm ein gewisser Grad an Vorteilnahme in der Regel nachgesehen. Insgesamt sagten 60,4% der Befragten aus, dass sie noch niemals ihren Chief Executive getroffen hätten; in Bezug auf die Mitglieder des Distriktversammlung waren es immer noch 49,6%. Gleichzeitig ist es jedoch so, dass, zumindest wenn es zu wirklichen Krisen und Konflikten kommt, die Bevölkerung durchaus in der Lage ist Treffen mit Lokalpolitikern zu erzwingen. Werden lokale Interessen zu sehr verletzt, so kann es zu Demonstrationen kommen, Chiefs werden als Vermittler zwischengeschaltet oder Beiträge in lokalen Radiosendern lanciert. Das zwingt die Politik dann den Austausch mit den Bürgern zu suchen.

Insgesamt ist die lokale politische Arena von einem Mangel an Informationsfluss und klar gestalteten Kommunikationsstrukturen geprägt. Dennoch beeinflussen eine Vielzahl lokaler Akteure, mit unterschiedlichem Bildungsniveau, unterschiedlichen Wertvorstellungen und unterschiedlicher kultureller Prägung, wenn auch nicht institutionell organisiert, informell und

über soziale Beziehungen den Dezentalisierungsprozess und die Ergebnisse lokaler Politikentscheidungen.

Politische Interventionen

Basierend auf seiner umfassenden Literaturrecherche und den Ergebnissen dieser Studie, hat der Autor dieser Arbeit mögliche Politikmaßnahmen identifiziert, die helfen können die in der KEEA im Speziellen und die im Bereich der Lokalverwaltungen Ghanas im Allgemeinen bestehenden Mängel betreffs bürgerlicher Kontrollmöglichkeit und politischer Rechenschaftspflicht zu beheben. Diese Politikmaßnahmen werden im Folgenden näher erläutert. Diese Empfehlungen sind in zwei Gruppen unterteilt: Änderungsvorschläge auf der Ebene des Zentralstaates und der Gesetzgebung und Änderung im Bereich der dezentralisierten Lokalpolitik – und verwaltung.

Um die die bürgerliche Kontrolle und die Rechenschaftspflicht lokalpolitischer Akteure herzustellen muss die Regierung Ghanas eine zentrale Rolle übernehmen. Dies bedeutet keinesfalls, dass Ghana sich (re)zentralisieren sollte, oder dass gar die DAs unter die direkte Autorität des Präsidenten gestellt werden sollten. Es bedeutet vielmehr, dass es notwendig ist, Verbesserung an der Dezentalisierungsgesetzgebung Ghanas vorzunehmen. Besonders wichtig ist dabei eine Überarbeitung des Local Government Acts, konkret die Überarbeitung der Bestimmungen im Gesetz 462 (1993) das die Auswahl und Einsetzung Chief Executives und Mayors durch den Präsidenten regelt. Weitere wichtige Änderungen betreffen die Auswahl von 30% der Assembly Members durch die jeweilige Regierung und die Zulassung von Parteien bei Lokalwahlen. Gleichzeitig wäre es von zentralstaatlicher Seite wichtig, den Distriktparlamenten mehr Autonomie zu gewähren. So verlöre die „eiserne Hand“ des Staates, die bis heute die Beziehungen zwischen Zentrum und den Distrikten prägt, und die über die Bestellung von Lokalpolitikern, Planungskontrolle und die Mandate der lokalen Büros der Ministerien stark in die Distriktverwaltung eingreift, ihren eisernen Griff.

Außerdem wäre es zu wünschen, dass die tragende Rolle der traditionellen Autoritäten, die in allen historischen Phasen der De- und Rezentralisierung als Mittler zwischen Politik und Lokalbevölkerung fungiert haben, zu institutionalisieren.

Zudem sollte die Zentralregierung über das Ministry of Local Government and Rural Development mit den verschiedenen MMDAs vertraglich festgelegte Pläne für eine Verbesserung der lokalen Informationspolitik und verbindliche Treffen von Vertretern der Lokalverwaltung und –

politik mit der Bevölkerung erarbeiten. Die Einhaltung dieser Pläne sollte vom Ministerium überwacht werden. Gleichzeitig sollten Qualitätskriterien für die Bewertung der Arbeit von MMDAs geschaffen werden, anhand derer die Arbeit der MMDAs jährlich überprüft werden könnte. Je nach Bewertung sollte diese Überprüfung positive oder negative(finanzielle) Sanktionen nach sich ziehen. Es wird empfohlen, diese jährliche Prüfungen von unabhängigen Beratungsfirmen durchführen zu lassen, um die parteipolitische Einflussnahme so gering wie möglich zu halten.

Ähnlich wie in Kenia und Uganda sollte die Zentralregierung zudem über die Tageszeitungen den jeweiligen Anteil der einzelnen MMDAs am DACF und den genauen Zeitpunkt der vierteljährlichen Auszahlungen des Fonds publizieren. Auf diese Art und Weise wäre die lokale Bevölkerung nicht nur in der Lage die Verwendung des Fonds zu überprüfen, sondern auch Missbräuche zu sanktionieren wenn sie auftreten.

Eine ganze Reihe an Empfehlungen die darauf abzielen die politische Verantwortung der lokalen Bevölkerung zu fördern richtet sich an die DA des KEEA Distriktes und die MMDAs im allgemeinen. Die MMDAs müssen die Teilhabe von Area Councils, Unit Committees, traditionellen Autoritäten und der Bevölkerung im allgemeinen an Planungs- und Budgetierungsprozessen stärken, so dass die unterschiedlichen Akteure ausreichend informiert sind und aktiv an wichtigen Entscheidungsprozessen teilnehmen können.

Wichtig wäre es zudem die internen Strukturen der MMDAs, neu zu gestalten. Bisher sind im Executive Committee der MMDAs, in dem alle wichtigen Planungs- und Budgetentscheidungen die Distrikte betreffend getroffen werden, nur der Vorsitzende der MMDA, ein Planungsbeamter, ein Budgetbeamter und der Chief Executive als Vorsitzender vertreten. Dies verhindert Transparenz, führt zu Cliquenbildung, und stärkt die Position des Chief Executive. Nur wenn die Vorsitzenden der einzelnen Fachausschüsse der MMDAs an Sitzungen des Executive Committee teilnehmen, kann eine größere Transparenz der Entscheidungsfindung und eine größere politische Rechenschaftspflicht der Chief Executives gewährleistet werden. In der bisherigen Praxis ist der Chief Executive zu mächtig und kaum zu überwachen.

Außerdem wird empfohlen, dass die regelmäßige Berichterstattung über die Verwendung der finanziellen Mittel der MMDAs, einschließlich der Mittel des DAFC, institutionalisiert wird. Diese Informationen sollten regelmäßig über beides, Printmedien und das Radio, veröffentlicht werden. Zudem sollten die wichtigsten Teile der Finanzplanung und -berichte über Aushänge in den

Distriktverwaltungen ständig öffentlich verfügbar gemacht werden um so die bürgerliche Kontrolle der Lokalverwaltung und -politik und ihre politische Rechenschaftspflicht zusätzlich zu stärken.

Die unvollendete Aufgabe

Die Besonderheit dieser Studie liegt darin, dass bürgerliche Kontrolle und accountability nicht allein am Maßstab der Zentralregierung oder internationaler Geldgeber gemessen werden. Das Hauptaugenmerk liegt im Gegenteil darauf, zu verstehen wie bürgerliche Kontrolle und politische Rechenschaftspflicht im lokalpolitischen Rahmen des KEEA Distriktes von verschiedenen Akteuren wahrgenommen, unterlaufen, aber auch durchgesetzt wird. Lokale Mechanismen der Politik werden detailliert portraitiert und es wird so verständlich gemacht welche Möglichkeiten zu einer weiteren Stärkung der zivilen Kontrolle lokaler Politikentscheidungen und ihrer Finanzierung und Umsetzung bestehen.

Wie aus den bisherigen Ausführungen klar wird, ist das Ziel eine weitgehende bürgerliche Kontrolle und die politische Rechenschaftspflicht der MMDAs, über das lokale Wahlsystem, umfassenden Zugang zu Informationen und regelmäßige Konsultationen mit der Öffentlichkeit herzustellen noch nicht vollständig erreicht. Um zu einer wirklich Umsetzung lokaler Bevölkerungsteilhabe and der Planung und Kontrolle von Politikmaßnahmen zu kommen, ist es in Ghana notwendig einige Herausforderungen zu meistern. Daher spricht der Autor von der „unvollendete Aufgabe der Dezentralisierung in Ghana“.

Um Dezentralisierung in Ghana effektiv umzusetzen, müssen die bestehend Strukturen der ghanaischen MMDAs ernsthaft umgebaut werden. Die andauernde politische Berufung von DCEs, die partei-unabhängigen Lokalwahlen, inadäquate Informationen über die Verwendung zur Verfügung stehender Ressourcen und inadäquate Bevölkerungsbeteiligung in Entscheidungsprozesse sind als die eigentlichen unvollendeten Aufgaben im Dezentralisierungsprozess in Ghana zu sehen. So ist es kein Wunder, das diese Themen, allen voran die Direktwahl der Chief Executives, die öffentliche politische Debatte in Ghana bestimmen und auch die, durch den aktuellen Präsidenten berufene, „Constitution Review Commission“ Änderungen in ebendiesen Bereichen vorschlägt.

Doch rechtliche Änderungen alleine werden nicht automatisch zu einer umfassenden n Dezentralisierung und einer vollständigen Herstellung von bürgerlicher Kontrolle und politischer Rechenschaftspflicht in lokalen politischen Arenen in Ghana führen. Dies wird nur dann gelingen,

wenn die Zentralregierung Lokalpolitikern und den Mitgliedern der Distriktversammlungen effektive Anreize bietet, damit diese ihrer fundamentalen Aufgabe nachkommen, die lokale Bevölkerung aktiv in die politische Entscheidungsfindung und Politikkontrolle einzubeziehen. In dieser Hinsicht ist es auch wichtig zu überprüfen ob Assembly Members weiterhin unentgeltlich Arbeiten müssen oder nicht vernünftige Aufwandsentschädigungen erhalten müssten.

Die beiden führenden politischen Parteien Ghanas, die NDC und die NPP, haben sich zu Dezentralisierungsreformen bereit erklärt und diese fest in ihren Parteiprogrammen verankert. Diese Tatsache und die Berufung der „Constitution Review Commission“ die auf den Bereich der Dezentralisierung fokussiert, lässt hoffen, dass weitere Reformen der Lokalregierungen Ghanas folgen und die aktive bürgerschaftliche Politikbeteiligung und –kontrolle gestärkt wird. Zu diesem Prozess möchte diese Arbeit einen Beitrag leisten

Weiterführende Forschung

Diese Arbeit trägt dazu bei lokale politische Arenen in Ghana und das ghanaische System der Dezentralisierung besser zu verstehen. Viele wichtige Themen waren angerissen und fügen sich so zu einem interessanten Gesamtbild. Nichtsdesto trotz wäre es wünschenswert einige Aspekte ghanaische Lokalpolitik noch genauer zu beleuchten. So wäre es zum Beispiel interessant das oft konfliktträchtige Wechselspiel zwischen District Assemblies, Chief Executives und Members of Parliament genauer zu beleuchten. Um die lokalen politischen Rationalitäten noch besser zu verstehen wäre zudem eine genauere Analyse der Wahlkämpfe, Parteifinanzierung, und von konkreten Wählerentscheidungen wichtig. Ein Thema das ebenfalls nur oberflächlich angerissen wurde ist die Frage der Legitimität politischer Amtsführung und Machtausübung. Rechtlich lässt sich zumindest theoretisch, politisches Handeln bewerten und so Rechenschaftspflicht herstellen. Lokale Vorstellungen von legitimem politischem Handeln und somit von Rechenschaftspflicht liegen damit jedoch häufig überquer, was die bürgerliche Kontrolle lokaler Politikprozesse komplex erscheinen lässt. Weiter Untersuchungen in diesen Bereichen würden helfen das lokale politische System Ghanas noch besser zu verstehen.

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

1.1 The Dilemma of a Politician and the task of a Researcher

The title of this introduction to my research, *the Dilemma of a politician and the task of a Researcher*; the intention is just not to introduce from the start but to re-position myself as a scientific researcher. What is very important is that it would be unrealistic not to acknowledge this fact from the outset. Before embarking on the journey to this doctoral research project, I served as a politician for eight (8) years in Ghana. I was appointed as the District Chief Executive (Mayor) of the Komenda-Edina-Eguafo-Abrem (KEEA) District Assembly¹ in the Central Region of Ghana from March 2001 to April 2005. In May 2005, I was again appointed to the position of the Deputy Central Regional Minister for a year and then the substantive Regional Minister from May 2006 to January 2009. Again I contested and lost as the Member of Parliament for the KEEA constituency during the keenly contested December 2008 Presidential and Parliamentary elections in Ghana. What this means is that I have been a major actor in government and at different levels, amongst which is the local level. Local here refers not only to geographical space, but also about identity (where I belong), scale (where decisions are taken) and a site of power (Goss, 2001: 26-27).

One may ask, as a known local politician, would that have any effect on my scientific research; in other words, will my past political position contribute to any form of bias to this research? These were very critical questions, and that is the *dilemma*, which had to be reflexively considered throughout the research. But, I am mindful of the proverbial “the problem identified is the problem solved” challenge. In essence, in identifying the real problem, I am certainly at the problem solving side of the equation. I therefore had to move beyond a politician, not in the sense that I will lose my political instincts but in the sense that I had to reason more scientifically as I pursued this research. In her lecture on Institutional Ethnography², Marie Campbell is categorical that “there is usefulness in knowing who you are and what you are doing”.

¹ At that time KEEA was a District until it was elevated to the Municipal status in 2007; and it is to be noted that a District Chief Executive is similar to what is referred to as Mayor in other parts of the World.

² Prof. Marie Campbell delivered a lecture on “**Institutional Ethnography: Understanding the World We Live** on March 23, 2011 during ZEFa research colloquium.

Admittedly, “knowing who you are” motivated me throughout the research period, particularly during the field data collection. As it later turned out, my political experience, skills, and social network with a cross-section of actors³ including academics and policy makers rather became a blessing during the field research. Not only appointments for interviews with key informants were on schedule, but various actors willingly provided the needed information. This also explains the view of how social networks help to unpack the assumptions that underpin this research. It brings together the integration of the politician into the scientific research arena which is needed to understand the dynamics of the decentralisation policy reforms that underpin the development strategies in Ghana.

1.2 Background of the Study

Decentralisation, the transfer of power and responsibilities from the central government to the sub-national level, has assumed an unparalleled popularity all over the world within the last two decades. Governments around the world are reforming and strengthening local government systems (Dillinger, 1994; Manor, 1999). Over the last two decades, 80 per cent of all developing and transition countries have undertaken some form of decentralisation (ICHRP, 2005 cited in Crawford and Hartmann, 2008:7). In recent decades, the decentralisation of government functions has at various times been declared “the latest fashion” (Conyers, 1983); “a fashion of our time” (Manor, 1999) and “a quiet revolution” (Campbell, 2001); in other words, decentralisation has become a global zeitgeist. Diamond (1999) explains that this wave of decentralisation has been induced by a variety of pressures, including poor governmental performance, urbanisation, democratic transition, shifts in international donor strategies and societal demands.

In developing countries, decentralisation and democratisation⁴ have been presented as conditions for good governance⁵ by the international donors and therefore might try to trigger decentralisation policy reforms. It needs to be recognised that the way the decentralisation

³ I use actors to refer to any individual or group functioning as a unit (Ostrom, 1998; North, 2009) in order to maximize their preferences (Hall and Taylor, 1996; Campbell, 1997)

⁴ Democratisation refers to a group of transitions from nondemocratic to democratic regimes that occur within a specified period of time and that significantly outnumbers transitions in the opposite direction during that period of time (Huntington, 1991:15); often referred to as a wave of democratisation.

⁵ I use good governance here to refer to the exercise of economic, political and administrative authority to manage a country’s affairs at all levels. It comprises mechanisms, processes and institutions, through which the citizens and groups could articulate its interest, exercise legal rights, meet legal obligations and mediate their differences (UNDP, 1997).

discourse has shifted within the last two decades is partly due to the emergence of new development thinking of good governance (World Bank, 1997; Osei-Kufuor, 2010). This renewed concern has emphasised on the concept of accountability and empowerment through greater participation as ideals of good governance. As a result, international donors have pushed more resources to the decentralised countries and also to the sub-national levels. Not only has decentralisation the potential to lead to the transfer of more resources from the center to sub-national levels, it also has the potential to allow local people to have bigger role in deciding how these resources are used (Debrah, 2009). This raises very important questions as to how the local actors can call their local representatives to account for the use of the resources. Agrawal and Ribot (2000) observe that with decentralised local government, the accountability of power-holding actors to their constituents is important indices as this broadens popular participation.

Debates about decentralisation have centered on political accountability of local governments so as to proffer restraint over the exercise of institutional power and authority. This has to do with institutions, procedures, and mechanisms that seek to ensure that (local) government delivers on electoral promises, fulfills the public trust, aggregates and represents the citizens interests, and responds to ongoing and emerging social needs and concerns (Brinkerhoff, 2001). But how can we enhance political accountability of local government without effective participation in the selection/election of local representatives; public access to information and local representatives' consultative meetings with the citizens, voters and tax payers? An important research question therefore concerns the link between decentralisation and political accountability of local government. These questions underscore the debate on the outcomes of decentralisation on local people about the political accountability of local government representatives on their constituents. This study contributes to such debates by exploring how decentralisation manifests in reality within the local context in Ghana.

Ghana embarked on a comprehensive programme of decentralisation policy reforms in 1988 and was subsequently incorporated into the 1992 Fourth Republican Constitution which marked Ghana's transition to multi-party democracy. With the Fourth Republican Constitution, the move towards decentralisation is linked to the current democratisation movement, which is concerned with bringing government closer to the people governed. Ghana's decentralisation which is devolution or democratic refers to a system of governance where responsibilities and functions are assigned to local governments, with some resources transferred from the center to carry out

these functions. As Ahwoi (2010:5) put it, “in Ghana’s decentralisation programme, local authorities are the destinations of the decentralised functions; and the programme seeks to transfer functions and powers in a programme of political decentralisation; to transfer skills and competencies in a programme of administrative decentralisation and decentralised planning; and to transfer means and resources through a programme of fiscal decentralisation”. The 1992 Constitution of Ghana and the Local Government Act (Act 462) of 1993 affirmed and institutionalized the Local Government structure as Metropolitan, Municipal and District Assembly (MMDA) of which currently stands at 170 MMDAs⁶.

Membership of the MMDAs is made up of the Chief Executive who is appointed by the President, 70 per cent of members who are directly elected; not more than 30 per cent of all the members appointed by the President; and the Member (s) of Parliament representing constituencies in the district. The MMDAs are officially designated the highest political, administrative, planning, budgeting and rating authority. This implies that they have political, executive and administrative powers. Elections at the local government level are state-sponsored, non-partisan and conducted by the Electoral Commission of Ghana in every four years. Most scholars including Ahwoi (2006) and Ayei (2008) writing on local government in Ghana posit that since 1988, the implementation of decentralisation policy where transfer of authority to plan, make decisions, and manage public functions from a higher level of government to lower level such as the MMDAs has witnessed increase in grassroots governance.

However, critics of decentralisation have argued that despite extensive strides of devolution of authority and resources to local governments, decentralisation has achieved little in improving service delivery (Crook and Sverrisson, 1999). Focusing on urban areas of developing countries, Mitlin (2000) comes to the conclusion that decentralisation has failed to meet many of the expectations of large sections of the population. Clearly giving authority to local governments that are not accountable to the local population may not improve outcomes. Rather, it may create powerful incentives for local elites to capture the local political process and divert public resources to match their own aspirations instead of that of the broader community. Agrawal and Ribot (1999) aptly state that “it is only when constituents come to exercise accountability as a countervailing power that decentralisation is likely to be effective”.

⁶ As at September 2011, the total number of MMDAs in Ghana was 170.

This study employs the actor-oriented approach for the analysis in order to understand how various actors of the local government institution are shaping the political accountability in the KEEA Municipality in Ghana. I consider this approach most suitable because it allows us to analyse the role of social actors and their ability to re-shape development interventions within the constraining and enabling social and political conditions (Irahola, 2005:18). In this sense, social actors are not depicted as simply disembodied social categories (based on class or some other classifying criteria) or passive recipients of intervention, but as active participants who process information, and strategise in their dealings with various local actors as well as with outside institutions and personnel (Long and Long, 1992:22-23; Long, 2001:13).

1.3 Statement of the Problem

Since 1988, Ghana has adopted democratic decentralisation as a policy reform which espouses strengthening and expanding democracy at the local level. Ghana's 1992 Constitution, particularly in Chapters 6 and 20, embodies many features that seek to foster accountable, open, transparent and participatory democratic governance. The decentralisation policy reform is presumed to have a number of benefits in democratic terms in the sense that those governed can influence the manner in which decisions affecting them are made. It also assumes that when there are local political representations, democracy will be deepened at the local level and that periodic elections will ensure government responsiveness and accountability.

However, it is argued that even though independent candidates are admitted to the local elections and the elections are non-partisan, there are many ways that the local elite, traditional authorities or political parties capture the electoral process. This process, in addition to the appointments of the District Chief Executives and up to 30 per cent of members of the Assembly by the President, brings the local accountability of political leaders and representatives into question (Crook and Sverrisson, 2001).

Also after two decades of decentralisation policy reforms in Ghana, other mechanisms of enhancing political accountability of local representatives to citizens, voters and tax payers still persist as the "unfinished business" of Ghana's decentralisation policy reform. For example, local actors' participation in decision making within the decentralised institutional arena is low. According to Thoni (2000:235), when respondents involving 3,482 households in 8 districts in Ghana were asked whether their elected Assembly members organise meetings with their

electorates, 48.1 per cent of the respondents did not know about such meetings. Similarly, although the MMDAs have witnessed increased share of the District Assemblies Common Fund (DACF) from 5 percent to 7.5 percent of the total national fiscal revenues, which is the major source of revenue from the central government for development projects and programmes, majority of local actors are not aware of its use. What this means is that even though more resources are increasingly being allocated to the MMDAs for the provision of public services from the center than before, local actors are not involved in the decision making. This raises a number of questions by the local citizens, voters and tax payers regarding the share, use and reporting on the DACF by the MMDAs.

Many critiques of the decentralisation policy reform in Ghana also highlight that as a result of inadequate information from the local government institution, it causes the local actors to be not only hesitant but also indifferent to participating in any political process (Ayee and Amponsah, 2003). There is therefore a gap evident between the actual practice of decentralisation and its intended outcomes such as accountability.

Globally, empirical evidence suggests that certain outcomes of decentralisation in Africa and elsewhere is quite difficult and therefore much of the evidence is anecdotal. For example, Campos and Hellman (2005:250) put it that though decentralisation, fundamentally, is a strategy for improving governance, its impact on governance outcomes is still largely unknown. Crook (2003) finds that in the sub-Saharan African countries, even when the interests of the poor have achieved some representation through democratic decentralisation, accountability mechanisms have not been strong enough to ensure that these interests are represented effectively in policymaking.

In the Ghanaian context, Debrah (2009) convincingly puts it that, there are disturbing aspects of accountable grassroots institutions within the new local government institutional arena. Therefore, it is largely unknown whether this form of democratic decentralisation in Ghana has enabled the local government institutions to be politically or downwardly accountable to the local actors in the KEEA Municipality. This is my intellectual puzzle and therefore requires empirical answers.

1.4 Objectives of Research

The overall objective of this study is to assess the political accountability of the local government in the KEEA Municipality of Ghana from the perspectives of the local actors. In other words, it seeks to understand within the framework of the ongoing democratic decentralisation in Ghana whether local government in the KEEA Municipality is politically accountable to the local citizens, voters and tax payers. The study aims to seek solutions to the real world problems and specifically to:

1. Provide an understanding of the political accountability of local government from the perspectives of local actors in the KEEA Municipality;
2. Examine the processes involved in the local electoral system in the KEEA Municipality;
3. Determine the local actors' access to information from the local government institution in the KEEA Municipality; and
4. Examine the processes and procedures for consultative meetings between the local representatives and their constituents in the KEEA Municipality.

On the other hand, positioning this study within the triad of local electoral system in Ghana as applied to the KEEA Municipality, public access to information and consultative meetings as mechanisms to assess political accountability of local government illuminates how local representatives acquire their authority and how that authority is exercised. This resonates with Crook and Manor (1997:7) claim of their means of assessing political participation of local government. Although Crook and Manor use the term "political participation", Crawford (2008) argument of which I support is that political participation is an "intermediate variable" of political accountability; and thus justifies the use of the triad in assessing political accountability of local government in the KEEA Municipality in Ghana.

1.5 Central Research Question and Sub Questions

This research uses a case study approach to explore the everyday practice of decentralisation in the KEEA Municipality in Ghana. It provides a meaningful understanding of the complex nature of the local government system. Based on the literature reviewed and the research gaps identified, the central research question is thus stated as follows:

With the wave of democratic decentralisation policy reform in Ghana, how do the local actors assess political accountability of the local government institution in the case of the KEEA Municipality?

In order to give some direction to this very general research question, the following four (4) critical sub-questions have been raised:

1. How do local actors in the KEEA Municipality perceive political accountability of local government within the ongoing democratic decentralisation in Ghana?
2. What the nature of the local electoral system in Ghana is as practiced in the KEEA Municipality?
3. What kind of local government information in the KEEA Municipality is publicly accessible by the local actors?
4. What are the processes and procedures for local consultative meetings between the local representatives and their constituents in the KEEA Municipality?

1.6 Significance of the Study

Since decentralisation has come to symbolize a new era of Ghana's socio-economic development, (GTZ and SNRD, 1996 cited in Asante, 2003), it has gained favour in both scholarship and policy circles. It is so important to the Government of Ghana such that upon coming into office of the NDC government in January 2009, it set up a Constitution Review Commission (CRC) to look into some of the inherent challenges within the 1992 Constitution of Ghana including the decentralisation policy reform that could be amended. A number of the 25 most popular issues tabled by the CRC after its in-depth analysis of the over 85000 submissions received from the public, borders on decentralisation and local government. With this study that provides empirical evidence on decentralisation and political accountability of local government, it would contribute immensely to the ongoing debate on the local electoral system in Ghana, which is one of the 25 most popular issues. It is very essential to rethink about the unfinished business of the decentralisation policy reforms in Ghana.

Additionally, although there have been a number of separate studies in Ghana on the participation of local actors in decision making (Thomi, 2000; Asante, 2003; Ayee, 2006; Crawford, 2008; Debrah, 2009) within the local government institutional arena, it is largely unknown whether the decentralisation policy reform in Ghana has enhanced political accountability at the local level. The study attempts to fill this gap. It would contribute immensely to the academic

debate on how local actors are shaping political accountability of local government within the context of the ongoing democratic decentralisation in Ghana. In the long term, this study would contribute to explore the major issues facing academics and practitioners working in the field of decentralisation and the local government.

1.7 Structure of the Study

The study is structured into nine chapters. Chapter One introduces the research and emphasizes the dilemma of the researcher from the outset. It then sets out the background of the study, research objectives and research questions and continues with the significance of the study. Chapter Two follows with the conceptual perspectives of decentralisation, local government and accountability. It critically examines arguments, both for and against, the decentralisation policy reform and its outcomes globally and continues with the forms of accountability and mechanisms for assessing political accountability. The chapter ends with the conceptual framework of the study.

Chapter Three looks at the contextual and historical trajectories of decentralisation policy reforms in Ghana since the colonial days. It shows that Ghana has a long standing reputation for practicing local government even though the current decentralisation policy reform dates back to nearly two and half decades. It presents a historical time line starting from pre-colonial, the colonial and to the post-colonial period and review of several reports of Commissions and Committees that were set up to look into the local government system in the Gold Coast which became Ghana. Chapter Four discusses the research methodology. It highlights the selection of key informants and respondents, field challenges, ethical issues addressed in the field survey and the basic characteristics of the respondents as well as the data processing and analysis approaches.

Chapter Five discusses the socio-politico-economic context of the study area. The chapter also presents the geographical location and size of the study area. It further highlights on both the political and administrative structures of the Assembly. Among the challenges identified within the political structure of the KEEA Municipal Assembly is the partisan nature of the performance of the key representatives which might have an impact on political accountability of the local representatives to its constituents. It also identifies another challenge in the administrative structure of the KEEA Municipality; that, some of the actors are not yet ready to accept the transfer of power following decentralisation.

Chapters Six, Seven and Eight are the empirical work and here I apply the contextual perspectives to political accountability across the three blocks identified in the framework; namely local electoral system, public access to information and local representatives' consultative meetings with the local citizens, voters and tax payers. These chapters provide the insight of decentralisation and political accountability of Ghana from the perspectives of the local actors of the KEEA Municipality. Finally, Chapter Nine gives a summary of the findings and conclusion of the study; policy interventions and the unfinished business of the decentralisation policy reforms as evidenced from the KEEA Municipality. In concluding this study, I recommend further avenues of research in the area of political accountability of local government in Ghana.

CHAPTER TWO

CONCEPTUALISING DECENTRALISATION, LOCAL GOVERNMENT AND ACCOUNTABILITY

2.1 Introduction

This chapter reviews literature on decentralisation and local government to identify various concepts that have shaped the thinking and practice of decentralisation by local actors and institutions. It will also attempt to explore the varied theories and perspectives that underpin contemporary practice and thinking of decentralisation and link to the concept of political accountability as a normative outcome of the decentralisation policy reform in Ghana. It highlights on typologies, drivers and abuses of decentralisation and basic models of accountability.

To gain further insights on the process of decentralisation, the role that power relations and other traditional structures play in shaping the outcomes of decentralisation will be illuminated. Specifically, this chapter will draw on actor-oriented perspectives and historical institutionalism (see section 4.7) of the decentralisation policy reforms that involve participation in decision making at the local level. Drawing on the limitations of the various perspectives on decentralisation, I argue that the access to the decentralisation arena depends on the differential ability of individual actors to draw on resources existing in social relations and therefore political accountability of local representatives to local actors within the local government arena is problematic.

As illustrated in the introductory chapter, within the last two decades, as a result of the unparalleled popularity of decentralisation as a policy reform, a number of scholars have been attracted to this field of study. In reference to its popularity, Manor (1999) declares decentralisation as “a fashion of our time” whilst Campbell (2001) refers to it as the “quiet revolution”. However, despite its popularity and the attraction of many scholars to this field of study, its precise meaning is still unclear. According to Mawhood (1983: 1), too often the word seems to convey only what the public relations department wants it to mean. This dilemma does not only hold for academics but governments as well.

The first section of the chapter conceptualises decentralisation, discusses the meanings, ideological underpinnings and the characteristics of local government. The second section gives a

brief introduction to power relations and authority of the decentralised local government. Finally, the chapter reviews literature on accountability and based on the gaps identified in the decentralisation, local government and accountability literature, the chapter offers a conceptual framework for the study.

2.2. Conceptualizing Decentralisation

Scholars have defined decentralisation in different ways and mean many different things with the term (Rondinelli, 1981; Litvack, et al., 1998; Mawhood, 1993). However, a number of scholars including Manor (1999) admit that decentralisation occupies an important conceptual position in development discourse. The importance of decentralisation is stated as *“it is being considered or attempted in an astonishing diversity in developing and transition countries, by solvent and insolvent regimes, by democracies (both mature and emergent), and autocracies, by regimes making transition to democracy and by others seeking to avoid that transition, by regimes with various colonial inheritances and by those with none. It is being attempted where civil society is strong, and where it is weak. It appeals to people of the left, the center and the right and to groups which disagree with other on a number of other issues”* (Manor, 1999).

Manor’s description of decentralisation emphasizes the rhetorical importance of the concept particularly in the developing world. He points out that the speed of decentralisation in the developing and transition countries has neither respecter for the type of government being practiced in that particular country nor the ideology of the political party in power. However, it fails to point out what decentralisation stands for. According to Rondinelli (1981) decentralisation is:

“the transfer of responsibility for planning, management and resource-raising and allocation from central government to (a) field units of central government ministries or agencies; (b) subordinate units or levels of government; (c) semi-autonomous public authorities or corporations; (d) area-wide regional or functional authorities; non-governmental organisations/private voluntary organisations” (cited in Asante, 2003: 7).

However, the most generalized definition of decentralisation as used by both political scientists and economists is that of Agrawal and Ribot (1999). Decentralisation is thus defined as an action by which the “central government formally cedes power to actors and institutions at lower levels in a political-administrative and territorial hierarchy” (Agrawal and Ribot, 1999). The action involves the creation of a realm of decision making in which a variety of lower-level actors can

exercise some level of autonomy. It is not only expected to increase resource use, efficiency, promote equity but decentralisation is also meant to ensure greater participation and accountability of the (local) government to local actors.

2.3 Typologies of Decentralisation

Based on the centralized government power relations of which I will turn to later in section 2.8, the most widely used types of decentralisation are deconcentration, delegation and devolution (Rondinelli, 1981, 1989). However, in recent literature, privatization or deregulation has been identified as another type of decentralisation which involves the transfer of responsibility to non-governmental organisations or the private sector (Cohen and Peterson, 1996; Lister and Betley, 1999; cited in Asante, 2003:8). Briefly I discuss the three types of decentralisation which are the most widely used.

1. Deconcentration refers to spatial relocation of decision making, that is, the transfer of administrative responsibility or authorities to lower levels within central government ministries or agencies. According to Litvack et al., (1998) this is unlikely to lead to the potential benefits of decentralisation. As a type of decentralisation, deconcentration is considered as very narrow as it separates state administration from society thereby failing to provide any meaningful role for local actors in the decentralisation reform process. In terms of accountability, its agents are only accountable to actors higher up the hierarchy of control.
2. Delegation refers to assignment of specific decision making authority, that is, the transfer of managerial responsibility for specifically defined functions to public organizations outside the normal bureaucratic structure of central government (e.g. local governments or parastatals). This is to say that delegation of authority does not include the powers of decision making (Malo, 1995). In some cases, this type of decentralisation is employed when central government shifts responsibility of producing goods and services that previously offered to parastatals or public corporations or to publicly regulated private enterprises. Local governments under this type of decentralisation generally provide certain specific services that are delegated to them by the central government or the next-higher level of government. Thus they become the recipients of delegated powers and resources.

3. Devolution which is generally referred to as the most advanced type of decentralisation refers to the transfer of powers and responsibilities for governing, that is, the creation or strengthening, financially and legally, of sub-national units of governments, whose activities are substantially outside the direct control of central government. In this case, the power and responsibilities of central government are often exercised indirectly. According to Sherwood (1969), the central government through devolution relinquishes certain functions or creates new units of government that are outside its direct control. These new units of government are what are referred to as local governments such as the MMDAs in Ghana. Some of the characteristics of devolved type of decentralisation are that the new units have legally recognised geographical boundaries, within which they exercise authority and perform public functions, have powers to source for funds for their functions, perceived as separate levels of government and also as institutions that provide public services to its local citizens.

Generally, this study understands decentralisation as a process that involves the relocation of political legitimacy, administrative responsibility and financial resources from the central government to the lower level of government and involves local actors in decision-making as well as the administration of public services at the local level. In the light of the foregoing, the concept of decentralisation can be advanced from three main perspectives. These are political, fiscal and administrative decentralisation.

2.3.1 Political Decentralisation

Political decentralisation or devolution or democratic decentralisation refers to the transfer of power and resources to sub-national authorities that are both (relatively) independent of central government and democratically elected (Manor, 1999). It occurs when the central government transfers authority for decision-making, financial allocations, and management to quasi-autonomous units of local government. The devolution process facilitates the growth of autonomous units of self-governance at the sub-national level. Dahal et al., (2002) argue that political decentralisation is the “transfer of decision-making authority to previously underrepresented or marginal group”. These underrepresented or marginal groups are usually at the local level and consist of the poor, illiterates, vulnerable groups like women and minority ethnic groups. The basic objectives of political decentralisation are to increase the efficiency of

local political units, citizen participation in decision making and their freedom of choice in the process of deciding the matter of their primary concern.

Blair (2000:21) refers to political or democratic decentralisation as a meaningful authority devolved to local units of governance that are accessible and accountable to local citizenry, who enjoy full political rights and liberty. It thus differs from the vast majority of earlier efforts at decentralisation which were largely initiatives in public administration without any serious democratic component.

Political decentralisation which is recognized as a more extensive form of decentralisation, usually transfers responsibilities for services to municipalities and districts that elect their own mayors and councils, raise their own revenues, and have independent authority to make investment decisions (Litvack et.al., 1998:6). In the case of political decentralization, the powers and functions of local governments are usually delineated in the country's constitution. Power and responsibilities so acquired are very difficult to be withdrawn since this will require a constitutional amendment. To measure the degree of political decentralisation, political scientists interested in democratisation and civil societies check in how far decision-making power has been transferred to lower-level governmental units or to citizens or their elected representatives (Cohen and Paterson 1998 cited in Dahal et al. 2002:62).

The positive attributes of political decentralisation are that it can revitalize political participation and enhance accountability on the part of governing bodies by expanding information flows, regular interactions and supporting the control of corruption. The argument here is that political decentralisation makes it possible to curb the discretionary powers of elected officials because it comes with greater competition (Dafflon and Madies, 2009). This competition can have two forms: first the mobility of individuals and economic activities between local government units, and second, the possibility for voters to compare the performance of their elected officials with the performances of elected officials in neighbouring local governments (yardstick competition).

Although these specifications of political decentralisation may be valid in theoretical or even in legal perspectives, that is not what is observed in many developing countries. Even where most of the theoretical and legal conditions are met, central governments in most African countries have many ways, whether formal or informal to make local governments act consistently with national development policies. In Africa, often devolving responsibilities and functions to the local

government is seen as shedding off responsibilities from the center often as a result of mounting demands from the public. Manor (1999) points out that many centralised regimes had to engage in some form of decentralisation as a response to the public's loss of confidence in their governments.

This study primarily focuses on political decentralisation where it understands the concept as the transfer of authority and power from the center to local government unit which affords the local people opportunity to elect their own representatives, political autonomy and has the potential to promote accountability. Electing representatives at the local level, Onyach-Olaa (2003) argues that a high turnover of councillors at local elections can be seen as a sign of accountability because those candidates who did not perform well are punished and voted out of office.

2.3.2 Fiscal Decentralisation

Fiscal decentralisation refers to the transfer of funds from the central government to local government or powers to the local government to generate its own revenues, commonly referred to as internally-generated revenue. It also includes the authority of the local government over budget and financial decisions. But many local governments have had difficulties with the raising of the internally-generated revenue. It is due to general low income levels in many local communities which are usually rural particularly in the developing countries. Also it is argued that the central states only pass on taxes that are very difficult for the state to collect to the local governments. Most revenues authorized to local governments in Africa (and among LDCs) generally raise only pennies (Wunsch, 2001). They are often market tolls, road tolls, basic rates, minor business taxes and the like.

The local fiscal problem could be attributed to the "tendency for central government to retain the bulk of the growth taxes that expand fastest when the economy grows and to the inability of local government to limit its range of responsibilities (Sharpe, 1981 cited in Kessey, 1995:2). However, the need to encourage local governments to raise local revenues has been re-echoed in the decentralisation literature lately (Kessey, 1995). A major reason assigned to this has been that the advantage in financing local development from below would lie in giving the local actors the opportunity to participate in decision-making and press for accountability from managers of the resources.

Mattinotti (1981) suggests that local fiscal problem could be tackled through allocating to local governments a larger share of the buoyant taxes to local governments, increasing the size of grants to local governments, and give localities greater chance to borrow to finance their activities. In the developing countries, some central governments have enacted laws that compel the state to transfer a sizeable share of the state's total annual revenue to local governments. In Africa, examples of this are the Local Authority Transfer Fund (LATF) in Kenya and the District Assemblies Common Fund (DACF) in Ghana. Also increasingly, as in the case of Ghana, development partners are channeling many resources directly to the local governments. This is meant to empower local governments and administrative units to fulfill their responsibilities of delivering public service to its citizens. The problem however is the low fiscal capacity at the local level to enhance accountability of the resources entrusted to the local governments in the developing countries (Kessey, 1995).

2.3.3 Administrative Decentralisation

Administrative decentralisation refers to transfer of responsibilities from the central government to local government officials who remain part of ministries, departments or agencies of government. In this case, most decisions are taken at the central government levels and the local government officials are only implementing those decisions. It underlines state control over territorial administration and seeks to encourage division of labour. In the Ghanaian context for example, technical personnel at the local level are employed by the central government and still remain employees of a central ministry, but are supposed to be accountable to locally elected government officials. However, Ayee (1997) finds that local government officials generally are quite frustrated with their lack of effective authority over the civil service personnel employed centrally. This approach is an attempt of maintaining the influence of the center over the periphery.

Administrative decentralisation is concerned with how political institutions, once determined, turn policy decisions into allocative (and distributive) outcomes through fiscal and regulatory actions (Litvack et al., 1998:6). Similarly, administrative decentralisation is defined as "the transfer of responsibility of planning, management, and the raising and allocation of resources from the central government and its agencies to field units of government agencies, subordinate units or levels of government, semi-autonomous public authorities or public corporations, area wide,

regional or functional authorities, or non-governmental, private or voluntary organisations” (Rondinelli and Nellis, 1986).

Following the above definitions, it is to be noted that decentralisation in practice is a strategy of governance. It can be referred to as a matter of degree and therefore no particular country could fit into one-size-fits-all typology of decentralisation. This is because it can vary substantially in scale and scope. It might also be possible to have two or more typologies, for example, a mixture of delegation and devolution in a particular country. While distinguishing among different types of decentralisation, it is also useful for highlighting its many dimensions and the need for coordination since these concepts overlap considerably; the complexity of which has not always generated the intended benefits to the local citizens, voters and tax payers in the local government arena. Equally, it is important that in understanding decentralisation, we must also understand how local government works. Faguet (2008) argues that the national effects of decentralisation are largely the sum of its local-level effects. The next section therefore deals with the concept of the local government institution.

2.4 Conceptualising Local Government

To understand decentralisation, we must also understand what local government is, how it works and more particularly when local government works well or badly. Since the last two decades, the need for strong decentralised local government has received considerable attention globally. This has been attributed to the realization that the centralized authority that characterized Africa in the 1960s and 70s has been ineffective in promoting political stability and national development (Diaw, 1997).

Various governments in Africa, faced by their inefficiencies in their centralized rule looked for other options. They hoped to find solace in local participation in decision making. This led to various local structures for local development. According to Mawhood (1993:7), the method was to create a mixed authority for operating local services and investing in local development – variously called *people’s executive councils* in the Sudan, *development committees* in Tanzania and the *district assemblies* in Ghana. These local governments were to use the authority granted them to raise funds, draw development plans and budgets for implementation. These became the lowest level of government which collect taxes, provide a limited range of services for their citizens, and represented by some elected personnel and career civil servants. Broadly defined,

Mawhood (1993:4) points out that local government is a unit of government that has its own budget and a separate legal existence, with authority granted to it by the central government to allocate substantial material resources on a range of different functions. In sum, local government is understood as a geographically defined sub-national unit of government legally created by the central government which has powers to plan, budget and implement its own decisions within the laws of the state and may consist of elected and/or appointed members and public officials. Table 2.1 shows some of the critical characteristics of local government across a wide range of countries.

Table 2.1 General Characteristics of Local Government

<i>Characteristics</i>	<i>Typical Signs</i>
A decentralised local body has:	
1. Its own budget	Balance estimates of revenue and expenditure. A separate bank account, with the cheque-book held by an employee of the local authority (not a central civil servant)
2. A separate legal existence	Corporate status, often with a common seal. Power to sue and be sued. Power to hold land and property as its own (not in the name of central government)
3. And the authority to allocate substantial resources	Quantity of finance handled. Number and qualifications of the staff employed. Power to decide over expenditure. Power to vary revenues. Decision over staff appointments, promotion, discipline.
4. A range of different functions	The function can vary widely, but a single purpose local body is not a local government
5. The decision made by representatives of local bodies	Different forms of election or appointment may serve, provided that people feel the policy-making body is really representative of them

Source: Mawhood (1993: 10)

This general characteristics of local government as observed by Mawhood (1993) is inherent in the political and administrative decentralisation policy reforms that transfer varying amounts and combinations of functions, responsibilities, resources, political and fiscal autonomy to lower tiers of the state (Ribot, 2002; Rondinelli, 2002). However, it is to be noted that in practice some of these characteristics in Table 2.1 are missing in many African countries. For example in Ghana, although from the table, local authorities must have authority for decisions over staff appointments, promotion and discipline, it is however not the case. Except the very junior staff like labourers and drivers, the local government staffs are recruited by the central government as well as their promotions. This suggests that staff of different departments look up to their parent

organisations for their career progression and this might have consequences on their working relations with the DCE as well as other local representatives and the local citizens.

A number of accepted theories provide a strong rationale for decentralised decision-making and a strong role for local governments, on the grounds of efficiency, accountability, manageability and autonomy (Shah, 2006). Among these principles are the subsidiarity principle and the decentralisation theorem. The principle of subsidiarity which evolved from the social teachings of the Catholic Church proposes taxing, spending, and regulatory functions that should be exercised by lower levels of government unless a convincing case can be made for assigning them to higher levels of government. The implication of this principle is that, for example, the basic education in Ghana could be the responsibility of the local government whilst the secondary and tertiary levels are the central government's responsibility. In fact the Maastricht Treaty has adopted this as a guiding principle for the assignment of responsibilities among the current 27 member states in the European Union. Also according to the decentralisation theorem advanced by Oates (1972 cited in Shah, 2006:4), "each public service should be provided by the jurisdiction having control over the minimum geographic area that would internalize benefits and costs of such provision". This is because:

1. Local governments understand the concerns of local residents;
2. Local decision making is responsive to the people for whom the services are intended thereby has the potential to promote accountability;
3. Unnecessary layers of jurisdiction is eliminated; and
4. Interjurisdictional competition and innovation is enhanced.

A critical assumption of the decentralisation theorem is that the central government has an informational disadvantage in the sense that it is insensitive to geographical varying preferences. Conversely, Steiner (2005) argues that the informational advantage of local authorities over the central government with regard to local conditions and preferences can lead to an improved political accountability.

Theorizing of local government in Bolivia, Faguet (2008:17) argues that local government's environment is defined by three distinct institutional relationships. The first of these, voting, occurs between voters and political parties or candidates who at times contest as independent candidates. The political parties usually campaign on electoral promises and ideas to attract individual voters, who vote for the party or individuals they prefer. Elections elect government,

and they are about the allocation of power – power to take future decisions that affect society’s welfare (ibid: 18). The democratic election of representatives is very important to create accountable local government. In this way, local representatives can be held responsible for their performance during their term. However, elections in Africa have often been politically influenced with money and gifts and therefore elections have failed to be open, free and fair in many countries. The other two relationships are lobbying and civil society groups, who depend on information necessary to the policy-making process, judge the efficacy of previous interventions and plan for the future (Bardhan, 1996). Conversely, politicians also depend on these relationships to gauge public satisfaction with their performance between elections, which also enhances political accountability.

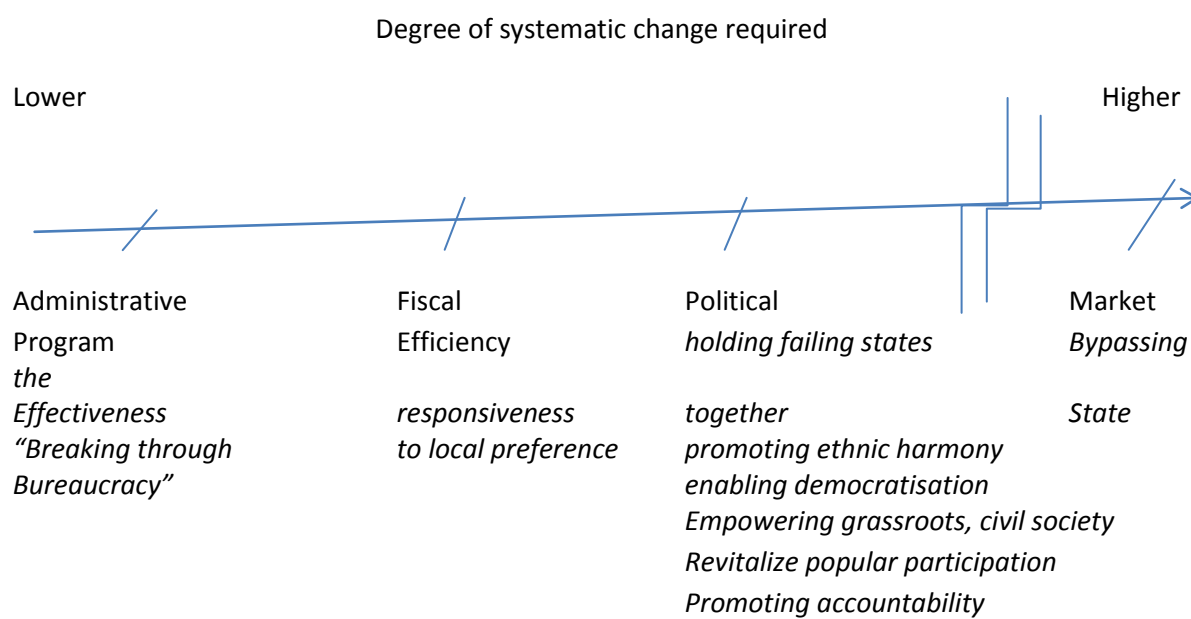
2.5 Ideological Underpinnings of Decentralisation

Various governments in the developing world have attributed various reasons to why they undertook decentralisation as a policy option. That is when the decentralisation is a deliberate choice since some countries adopt decentralisation policy by default. Many rationales for decentralisation may be discerned in the literature and in practice. Optimists (e.g. Ostrom et al., 1993; Putnam, 1993; UNDP, 1993; Wallis and Oates, 1988; World Bank, 1994) base their argument on the fact that decentralisation can make government more responsive to the governed by increasing “citizen participation and governmental accountability while improving allocative efficiency and equity in service delivery” (Faguet, 2008: 2). Pessimists (for example Crook and Sverrisson, 1999; Prud’homme, 1995) dispute this; arguing that local governments are susceptible to elite capture, and are also lacking the adequate technical, human and financial resources to provide a heterogeneous range of public services in a reasonably efficient way that is also responsive to local demands. Interestingly, neither side has been able to win over the other with convincing empirical evidence (Faguet, 2008). In other words, the lack of consensus is very striking.

Figure 2.1 shows some of the rationales typically associated with different types of decentralisation policy reforms in the developing world. Amongst them are the technocratic arguments for efficiency, activists’ concerns for participation and democracy and the neo-liberal interest in reducing state intervention in the economy. The neo-liberal position has also been described as the denationalisation, deregulation or privatisation and is a particular form of decentralisation that involves selling state-owned companies or assets to the private sector (or

giving away to the public or the workers). These policies are part of a larger neo-liberal model that has been implemented in many developing countries via structural adjustment programs of the Bretton Woods Institutions (World Bank and IMF) that include a wide range of economic policy issues and programs such as privatization, liberalization of trade, inclusive growth and strengthening of democratic institutions (e.g. parliamentary democracy and elections). It is to be noted from Figure 2.1 that a single or multiple of these underlying ideologies push governments in developing countries towards decentralisation policy reforms.

Fig.2.1: A spectrum of ideological underpinnings of decentralisation



Source: Adapted from Fritzen and Lim, 2006

2.6 The Driving Force of Decentralisation around the World

Decentralisation as a process that involves the relocation from the central government of political mandate, administrative responsibility and financial resources to the lower level of government as it emerged in the 1970 and 80s is occurring worldwide for different reasons, at different paces and through different means. First, the development community has generally welcomed decentralisation with some enthusiasm. In most countries, decentralisation reflects a broader process of political and economic reform (World Bank, 1997; Litvack et al., 1998). Within the last two decades, decentralisation policy reforms in developing and transition countries have become part and parcel of the broader public service reform programme being undertaken under the

auspices of the World Bank, UNDP, ODA and other donors. It has become conditionality for loans and grants from the international donor community.

Secondly, various countries in the developing world opted for decentralisation as a result of internal political upheavals in the late 1970s and 80s. This is due to the fact that the economies particularly in Africa have crumbled and there was agitation from trade unions, civil society, students etc. for a change. Again within that period, Africa as a region had fallen to the military junta of government and therefore civil society groups opined that decentralisation policy reforms might encourage democracy.

Another critical reason for countries such as Nepal in choosing decentralisation policy reform was partly due to the country's geography (Dahal et al., 2002). Since communication between the center and local governments is not smooth as it is with countries having inadequate infrastructure, one needs a measure of local autonomy to run local affairs, if only to avoid delays in decision-making.

In recent times, literature mentions the need for decentralisation in post-conflict state-building. In two post-conflict cases, Sierra Leone and Uganda, the World Bank has promoted decentralization (Zhou, 2009). Zhou notes that decentralization re-establishes state capacity and legitimacy as it helps rebuilding livelihoods and assets. In a study of the evolution of decentralization in Uganda and its impact on rural communities, Brett (1993) argues that in ethnically divided countries such as Uganda, peace and development crucially depend on the presence of effective local authority structures. This is because sharing power and resources among previously warring regional and ethnic forces may reduce regional and ethnic tensions and keep the country together. This sharing of power and resources has been the main driving force of decentralisation in Bosnia, Ethiopia, Herzegovina, and Sudan (Zhou, 2009).

Finally, as a form of decentralisation by default, the collapse of centralized planning and administrative structures has encouraged regional and local governments to participate in the political and economic process. Decentralisation thus became widely appealing to politicians in the developing world as a means of coping with eroding centralized systems, as it pushed the responsibility of responding to some of the public's mounting demands to lower levels of authority.

The five reasons enumerated above for the implementation of decentralisation globally may be summed up as: first, decentralisation is characterized as a process of democratisation, and particularly in the search for a more participatory approach to decision making. It is viewed as the key to improving the planning and implementation of lower level development and facilitating popular participation in the development process. Secondly, decentralisation has been regarded as an administrative reform, frequently driven by donor agencies that have seen it as a means of slimming down ineffective central administration; thirdly, bridging infrastructural disparities within countries as well as bringing warring factions together.

2.7 The Abuses and Conflicts of Decentralisation

Despite all the noble promises of decentralisation policy reforms, at least in theory, it may be abused and this is not an empty claim in practice, particularly in Africa. Decentralisation may be for extractionist ends, designed to transfer the financial responsibility for development project from the state to citizens. A case in point is in the District Assemblies in Ghana where in the name of community participation, millions of Ghana cedis are collected from the poor farmers and fishermen in rural areas for development projects. This comes at no or little cost to the District Assemblies particularly where the collection of these monies is done by the Assembly Members or traditional rulers. Some of these development projects are self-help electrification projects (SHEP) and the EU micro projects. The SHEP projects are implemented only in the rural communities while the national government finances the provision of electricity to the rather urban rich communities.

It is also possible that decentralisation might lead to local conflicts about the re-demarcation of administrative geographical boundaries and the siting of administrative capitals. A classic example in Ghana is the Biakoye District Assembly in the Volta region that was created in 2007 but still remains inoperational as a result of misunderstandings among the traditional rulers in the siting of the district capital in a particular area. Such conflicts may promote the fragmentation of traditional areas which might end up in secessions. Ribot (2002) observes that conflicts might arise particularly when decentralisation involves the transfer of ownership and use of valuable natural resources.

Also, much of the literature on the recent wave of decentralisation in the developing countries claims that decentralisation breeds corruption and lack of accountability of local governments'

representatives. For instance, Bardhan and Mookherjee (2006) argue that there are measures of corruption in the local governments that focus on bribes. In their theoretical model, decentralization results in the replacement of bribes charged by central government bureaucrats with elite capture of local governments. They further argue that the extent of corruption within local governments is related to availability of information to citizens concerning their entitlements. This often happens when citizens are not made aware of what they are entitled to, thereby short-chained or their entitlements entirely denied. Similarly, Waller, Verdier and Gardner (2002) show in a theoretical model that alternative measures of bribery produce different results when one studies the link between the number of vertical bureaucratic layers of government and corruption.

Another possible abuse of decentralisation is clientilism, in which politicians distribute publicly funded goods to selected members of the electorate in return for votes and political support and systematically weakens political accountability in a variety of ways (Campos and Hellman, 2005). Unlike a more diverse and competitive national playing field, patron-client networks are easier to build and maintain in more homogeneous communities. As such clientilism is generally associated with local politics of decentralisation.

Also decentralisation may lead to elite capture. In many developing countries local elites often take up leadership roles, and although this is not entirely wrong, this can result in the hijacking of resources unless transparency and accountability is somehow enforced (Narayan, 1998). Easier access to decision-making might again lead to long debates and end up in increased administrative costs due to endless meetings and may result in administrative paralysis. As a result, Liviga (1997) succinctly puts it that the critical aspect for a country opting for decentralisation has to be how much, where, when, under what conditions and towards what purpose and whose perspective decentralisation is implemented.

As decentralisation deals with the transfer of power, the concept of power relations becomes very relevant to the study. The next section therefore discusses power relations within the decentralised local government.

2.8 Power relations and authority of decentralised local government

As we understand decentralisation as the formal transfer of power and authority from the central government to actors and institutions at lower levels that involves the creation of a realm of

decision making in which a variety of lower-level actors can exercise some level of autonomy, this section briefly examines power relations and authority within the decentralised local government arena. Implicit in this definition of decentralisation is the concept of power and authority. Generally, autonomy is perceived as the rights that follow the delegation of authority from the central government to the lower government.

On the one hand, in order to bridge the politico-administrative divide of decentralisation, it is important to highlight the fundamental distinction between authority and power (Hutchcroft, 2001). Put in basic terms, whilst authority refers to the formal roles conferred upon individuals in their official capacities, power brings analysis into the far more informal means by which incumbents pursue values, interests, and goals of their choosing that may diverge from the formal structures of authority (Rudolph and Rudolph, 1979). The implication of this is that whilst administrative decentralisation is conceived of in formal terms, thus authority; political decentralisation is viewed more of informal networks that display their own dynamics of power. However in the real world, there is constant interaction between power and authority; indeed “the struggle for power is endemic in administrative relationships” (Hutchcroft, 2001:27). This has led to the interchangeability of the two concepts within the decentralisation arena.

On the other hand, according to Robbins (1998), power relates to the potential or capacity possessed by individuals or institutions to influence others’ behaviour; while authority is comprised regulated or legally founded functions, mandates, jurisdictions, tasks, responsibilities of an organisation or official. Within the decentralised institutional arena, local actors driven by different interests, capacities and strategies perform various skills to manoeuvre and exert power. As Villarreal (1994 cited in Long, 2001:185) argues, making room for manoeuvre implies a degree of consent, a degree of negotiation and a degree of power as manifested in the possibility of control, of prerogative, of some degree of authority and capacity of action, be it frontstage or backstage. This implies that power without doubt creates resistance, accommodation and strategic compliance as regular components of the everyday life of local politics.

According to Long (2001:71), power is the outcome of complex struggles and negotiations over authority, status, reputation and resources, and necessitates the encroachment of networks of actors and constituencies. And therefore such struggles depend upon how specific actors perceive themselves as capable of maneuvering within particular situations. With this in mind, this study illuminates how local representatives acquire their power and how that power is exercised in

exercising political accountability within the local government institutional arena. This brings me to the next section which discusses the concept of accountability.

2.9 Conceptualizing Accountability

Though it is argued that a long history of Western political philosophy attests to and underpins the centrality of accountability in liberal democratic systems, the concept of accountability defies a clear-cut definition (Gregory 2007 cited in Debrah, 2009:279). Eckardt (2008) argues that firstly, accountability is thought of as an inherently relational term; a person or an organization has to be accountable to someone else. Secondly, accountability includes the obligation of actors that are accountable to provide information and explanations for their actions, and thirdly, accountability requires the ability of those to whom these actors are accountable to apply sanctions when the actions of those being accountable are deemed unsatisfactory.

From the foregoing, Eckardt (2008) definition of accountability implies that it is important for one to know who he is accountable to and for what he is accountable. It requires establishing institutions that provide information to those trying to hold power-wielders accountable and that enable them to impose sanctions on the power wielders. Oakerson (1989:114) succinctly argue that “to be accountable means to have to answer for one’s action or inaction, and depending on the answer, to be exposed to potential sanctions, both positive and negative”.

Similarly, Grant and Keohane (2005) put it that some actors have the right to hold other actors to a set of standards, to judge whether they have fulfilled their responsibilities in light of these standards, and to impose sanctions if they determine that these responsibilities have not been met. The concept of accountability therefore implies that the actors being held accountable have obligations to act in ways that are consistent with the accepted standards of behavior and that they will be sanctioned for failures to do so. However, what makes this definition so problematic at the local level is the setting of the standards; whose responsibility is it to set the standards? According to Grant and Keohane, it calls for the authority of the parties to the relationship, that is, one to exercise particular powers and the other to hold them to account. Significantly, accountability mechanisms operate in two forms, *ex post* and *ex ante*. For example, when a DCE is perceived by the DA as non-performing and the Assembly decides to apply sanctions by passing a no-confidence vote in him, this accountability mechanism operates as *ex post*. On the other hand,

it becomes *ex ante* when there is an anticipation of sanctions which may deter the DCE from abusing his position in the first place.

From the foregoing, it is clear that accountability involves different kinds of organizational relationships. For example, Brinkerhoff (2001:5) distinguishes between *answerability* and *enforcement* as different types of accountability. Answerability refers to the obligation to provide information and explanations concerning decisions and actions. Enforcement is the ability to oversee actors and apply sanctions when they give unsatisfactory answers. He distinguishes between accountability that takes place within and outside the state which have different sanction capacities. Accountability within the state or *horizontal accountability* refers to separation of powers such as courts, parliamentary institutions, and anti-corruption agencies that defines a democratic system (Ribot, 2002:29; Lutz and Linder, 2004). The ability to apply sanctions from outside the state or *vertical accountability* involves means by which the public can sanction the state. Whilst Ribot (2002) refers to this phenomenon as *downward accountability*, Romzek (2000) puts it as political *accountability*.

Political accountability relationships, according to Debrah (2009), encourage officeholders to be responsive to the concerns of key interest groups such as the electorate. It therefore forms the cornerstone of democratic practice where the mandates of elected office bearers and public administrators reflect on the agenda and expectations of the public. Other scholars argue that accountability can take two or three forms. For example, Devas and Grant (2003:310) proposes three aspects of accountability. These are:

1. Horizontal accountability of local government officials to elected representatives;
2. Downward accountability of elected representatives and officials to local citizens; and
3. Upward accountability of local governments to central governments.

Devas and Grant (2003) argue that all the three depend on the availability of information, something which is seriously in short supply in many countries. However, Blair (2000:32) identifies different mechanisms and actors that can ensure political accountability to the public. These are elections, political parties, civil society, the media, public meetings, grievance procedures and

opinion surveys, though he agrees that each has its own problems. Seabright (1996) supporting this claim argues that only if local citizens have the opportunity to observe officials' performance and reward or punish them at upcoming elections can be assumed to have an incentive to act in their electorates' interest.

These different mechanisms could be discussed under three main blocks: elections whether political parties are involved or not; public access to information which is done best by the media and civil society; and consultative meetings where grievances could be aired. Goetz and Gaventa (2001) further identify numerous initiatives that attempt to engage citizens more intimately in the process of downward or political accountability. To them, public meetings (referred to in this research as consultative meetings) are very useful when carefully facilitated. However, these public meetings could also have their own problems. It could lead to elite capture or remotely-controlled by powerful local political actors. As Blair (2000) succinctly points out, councilors who fear public questioning can manipulate such meetings by, for example, holding them at odd times or in obscure locations.

2.10 Decentralisation, Local Government and Accountability Framework

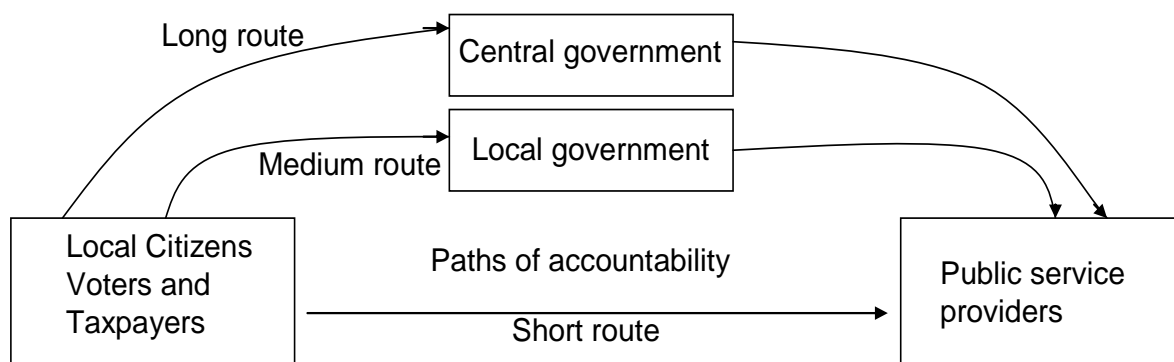
Decentralisation, it is argued, brings politicians closer to the people, by giving them better information about constituents' preferences and making it easier for constituents to monitor politicians' performance. One of the theoretical arguments supporting decentralisation is that at the local level citizens can more easily learn about activities and programs that their leaders have promoted. Although Litvack et al. (1998) argue that no serious research has been undertaken in this regard, there is however anecdotal evidence that decentralisation increases the availability of information at the local level (Crook and Manor, 1994). For example, in a paper on the experience of the Rakai district in Southern Uganda, Semukula (1999 cited in Golola, 2003: 263) is categorical that the institution of local government councils and committees with full authority over their jurisdictions has resulted in improved efficiency, accountability and transparency in the execution of local government business. He argues further that the fact that all public servants in the district and lower tiers are accountable to the local population via the local councils has been a crucial determining factor. The Ugandan case is particularly interesting as it illustrates clearly an innovation that has a potential for political accountability. The innovation is that the central government allocations to local governments (intergovernmental transfers) are published in local

newspapers. This enables the local populations to know what to expect in terms of service provision and acts as a deterrent to financial abuse (Golola, 2003).

In other words, the information that local citizens, voters and taxpayers need to make judgments is potentially more accessible under decentralisation, hence it strengthens political accountability (see Figure 2.2). The important assumption here is that proximity breeds accountability and that accountability is a function of information.

Campos and Hellman's (2005) simple model of decentralisation and accountability as adapted and modified in Figure 2.2 also shows that local government politicians who are usually closer to the service providers, such as a basic school, and have more interactions with these providers are potentially better able to monitor the performance of local agencies. Also with the short proximity to providers, local citizens will be more motivated to complain and demand improvements if services fail or decline in quality (Grindle, 2007: 8). Local citizens' power at the local level is therefore likely to be much greater, and citizens are able to communicate the nature and location of the problems to the local politicians.

Fig. 2.2: Decentralisation and Accountability Framework



Source: Adapted from Campos and Hellman (2005)

On the other hand, Faguet (2005) provides a dynamic model of local government responsiveness and accountability. He focuses on the actors' behavior over time and how the actions of some actors change the environment in the local level in which others operate. Following Faguet (2005), first, elections select governments, hence, the political competition at the local level, is the single most important determinant of a local government's responsiveness and accountability. The

underlying assumption is that the will of the majority, as expressed via an electoral process based on pluralist political systems for example, is cardinal (de Mello and Barenstein, 2001 cited in Hamdok, 2003: 17). But to always assume true democratic political competition is naïve. Political competition is often flawed in Africa where for example, in Ghana; local government is constituted of local elected representatives and usually more powerful government appointees.

In countries such as Cameroun, Ivory Coast, Niger, Senegal and Zimbabwe, candidates for local elections can only be chosen by political parties and may be more accountable to the parties than to the local populations that elect them (Ribot, 2001). The second reason is that whilst local governments are in office, both the public access to information and actors' consultative meetings could lead to extensive open debate and therefore influence their decision making, hence the second-order effects.

This section has illustrated the dynamics of decentralisation, local government and accountability. It reveals that the proximity of decentralisation to the local actors has the potential to enhance accountability. A clear example is the Ugandan case. The next section deals with the conceptual model of accountability.

2.11 Conceptual Model

There have been a number of studies that suggest models of accountability. For example according to Faguet (2005), the political accountability of a decentralised local government is conceptualized as determined by local-level political and institutional dynamics. It is argued that this is a significant departure from the bulk of decentralisation literature, where the analytical approach is top-down, treating the decentralisation policy reform as an essentially national phenomenon.

At the same time, two general models of accountability have been described by Grant and Keohane (2005). As illustrated in Table 2.2, these models are referred to as "participation" model of accountability and a "delegation" model of accountability. In this model, power-wielders are viewed either as instrumental agents of the public or as authorities with discretion. In addition, the two variants in each model are distinguished by different understanding of the relation between the powerful and the public they are meant to serve. Whilst the columns illustrate the familiar distinction between democratic participation and populist theories on one hand and

theories emphasizing on consent, legal authorization, and office on the other; the rows distinguish between discretion and control.

Table 2.2 Two general models of accountability

<i>Power-Wielders Regarded as</i>	<i>Who is Entitled to Hold the Powerful Accountable?</i>	
	<i>Those affected by their actions – Participation</i>	<i>Those entrusting them with powers - Delegation</i>
Instrumental agents	1.(a) “Direct Democracy” : Actions of power-wielders are what the affected electorates instructed them to do in this case	2. (a) Principal-Agent : Power-wielders act as close agents of principals who empower them
Discretionary authorities	1. (b) Populist : Policies followed by the power-wielders lead to outcomes approved by those affected, which leads those affected to confer additional powers	2. (b) Trustee : Power-wielders perform the duties of their offices faithfully

Source: Grant and Keohane (2005)

As argued by Grant and Keohane (2005), there are three fundamental principles with the participation model. These are:

- (1) Individuals ought to be free to make decisions for themselves since nobody can both know and care for your interest as well or as much as you do;
- (2) There is the need to treat people equally and that in taking collective decisions each person ought to have equal say; and
- (3) Public power is legitimate only to the extent that decisions serve the interests of the people as a whole, which suggests that outcomes of decisions must reflect what individuals’ desire.

Although the participation model suggests an ideal form of government on the basis of these principles, it illuminates a representative form of government. In the case of the populist model, the leader often speak for the whole and therefore direct participation of the governing institution is not seen as a primary goal. On the other hand, the delegation model is grounded in the notion that power is legitimate when it is authorised by the legitimating consent on those who delegate it. And since power is always delegated for a reason, it is legitimate so long as it serves its

“masters”, that is the appointing authority. The central principle of the delegation model is that people with power ought to be accountable to those who have entrusted them with it. The principles of the delegation model of accountability are based on the economic models of employer/employee relations that is, the principal-agent model (Pollack, 1997) and the trustee model. In the principal-agent model, the political leaders including the elected are understood as “employees” (“agents”) of their local citizens whilst voters and tax payers are understood as “employers” (“principals”). In sum, the two basic models, participation and delegation, lead to different strategies and mechanisms for accountability since they are grounded in different notions of legitimacy. Whilst in the participation model, those affected hold power-wielders accountable directly through participation, in delegation model, those delegating power hold power-wielders accountable through a variety of mechanisms for judgement after the fact.

Applying the basic principles in the two basic models as described by Grant and Keohane (2005), it can lead to conflicting political judgements as in the case of Ghana. For example, the President through the Ministry of Local Government and Rural Development and the Regional Coordinating Councils delegate their powers to the District Assembly particularly through the appointment of the DCE and some Assembly members. Similarly, through participatory means of elections, some Assembly members and Unit Committee members are directly elected to form the DAs in addition to the appointed Assembly members. In local politics, information is also important with regard to the monitoring of public service providers.

As a way of local citizens participating in local decision-making, consultative meetings have been identified as another source of participatory model of accountability. Mahama and Otten (2008:27) concludes in a study in four districts in the Northern Ghana that apart from participation in elections (voice) and referenda, other forms of participation that respondents expected local government institutions engaged in were attendance in public meetings, public hearings on local development plans and budget, community meetings and pre-budget consultations.

Conceptualising meetings, Goffman (1961) puts it that “a meeting is a specific type of focused interaction”. More specifically, Schwartzman (1987:274) notes that:

“A meeting is a social form that organises interaction in distinctive ways.. most specifically, a meeting is a gathering of three or more people who agree to assemble for a purpose ostensibly related to the functioning of an organisation or group, for example to

exchange ideas or opinions, to develop policy and procedures, to solve a problem, to make a decision or negotiate an agreement , to formulate recommendations among others”.

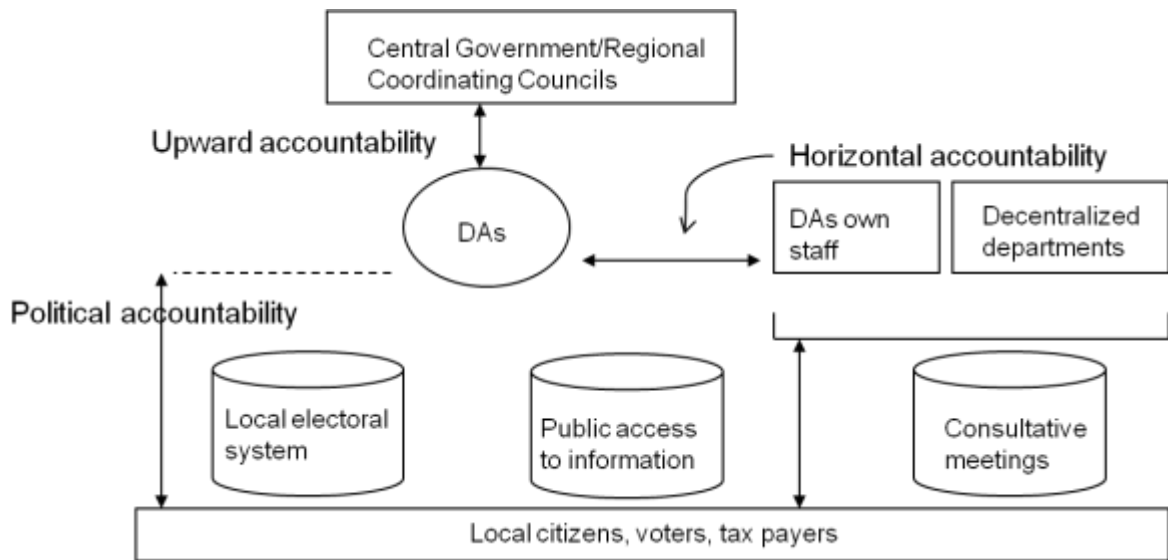
The above definition suggests that a meeting involves convergence, connection, or joining of people and/or things. The implication of this is that the form of the meeting and what takes place within the meeting in a community could become a way of DAs solving a development problem and also developing policies and plans. Similarly, it suggests that actors will have to focus on the form of the meeting as a social event and the actions and processes that must occur for participants in a community to produce results are very important. Schraven (2010) argues that in a community context, social action means social interaction with closer groups like kinship groups (e.g. nuclear family or kinship systems), local communities (e.g. neighbourhood, village communities) or spiritual groups like circles of friends or colleagues.

The idea that meetings are social events may also become a social validating mechanism. This is because a meeting requires the negotiation and ultimately the acceptance of a set of social relationships that defines someone’s right to call and arrange the meeting, to specify the time and venue, time to start and end and rules for the meeting (Schwartzman, 1989:41). In line with the participation model of accountability, Moore’s (1977) research among the Chagga of Tanzania concluded that political meetings constructed a sense of unanimity among community participants. On the other hand, Caplow (1976 cited in Schwartzman, 1987) argue that managers use meetings to let people “get things off their chest”, to study the behavior of subordinates, or to facilitate participative management. Unfortunately, getting things off the chest of local people in an arena of different actors may lead to open contradictions and conflicts among individuals in communities and also among social status such as political and traditional leaders, particularly in a public arena. As a result, critics suggest that meetings have become a primary context for proclaiming and reinforcing one’s social status and position in a community (Bloch, 1971; Duranti, 1984). This calls for the understanding of the ways in which meetings are regulated and how issues are addressed among diverse actors in the community.

Consequently, these theoretical principles and the analytical distinctions in the participation and delegation models will guide the theoretical framework. In doing that, we need to understand the local accountability chain in Ghana. As illustrated in Figure 2.3, there are three aspects of accountability as far as the DAs are concerned (Devas and Grant, 2003). These are accountability to the Regional Coordinating Councils and the Central government, the upward accountability; to

the local government’s own staff and decentralised departments, the horizontal accountability; and the political accountability which is to the local citizens, voters and tax payers.

Fig 2.3: Local Accountability Chain in Ghana



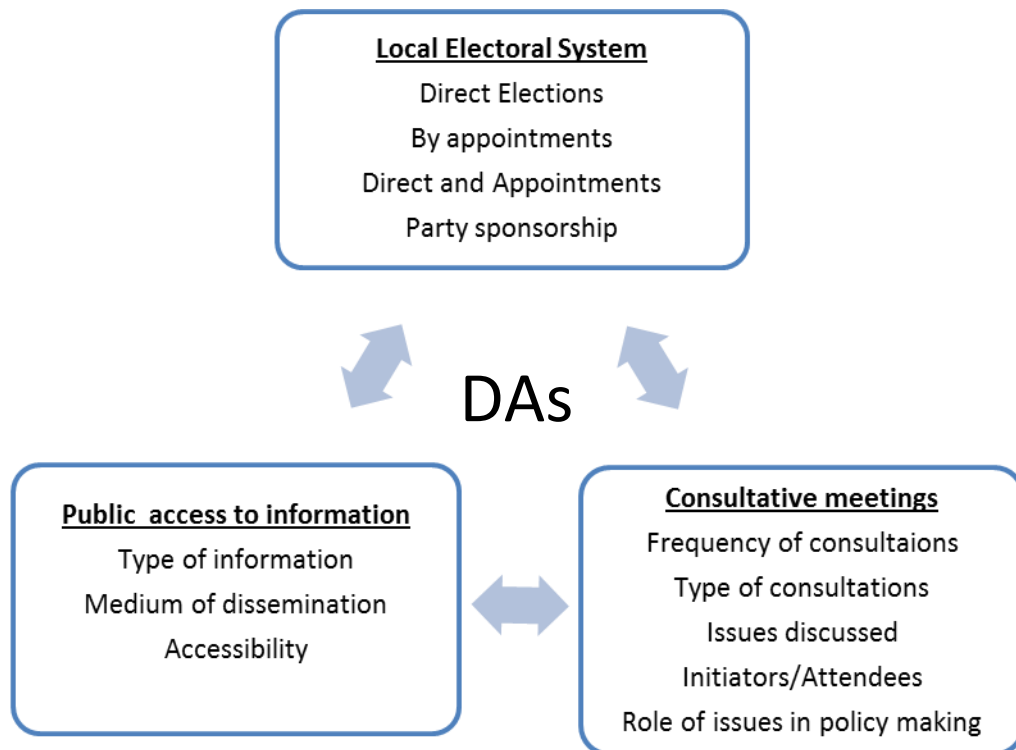
Source: Author’s Construct

However, this study focuses on the mechanisms that make local government accountable to local citizens, voters and tax payers. The main argument here is to assess the actions and processes involved at the District Assembly in offering political accountability to the local citizens, voters and tax payers as a normative outcome of decentralisation. Specifically, I will examine the dynamics of participation and the effects of power relations involved in the local electoral system, public access to information and consultative meetings within the decentralisation arena. This involves the KEEA Municipal Assembly represented by the MCE and the management staff, elected and appointed Assembly Members, Unit Committee Members on one hand and their accountability relationships with the local citizens, voters and tax payers on the other hand.

Thus from the foregoing, a systematic approach within the framework of the two basic models of accountability which is required in examining the actions and processes involved within the triad of local electoral system, access to information and consultative meetings within the decentralisation arena is illustrated in Figure 2.4. The triad focuses on three relationships of local electoral system, public access to information and representatives’ consultative meetings with the

local citizens, voters and tax payers. The first leg of the triad deals primarily with the processes involved in the selection/election of local leaders within the decentralisation space. The second leg deals with how information is exchanged between the local government representatives and the citizens in their exercise of power. Finally the third leg of the triad deals with the mechanism of consultative meetings between local government representatives and their constituents.

Fig. 2.4: Framework for Analysing Political Accountability



Source: Author's Construct

2.11.1 Local electoral system

Elections largely perform two functions, representation and accountability. Through elections, citizens elect the candidates who are considered best represent their preferences, and through the possibility of re-election, hold them accountable. Therefore, electoral systems shape the incentives of both the elected officials and the citizens and make the elected officials more responsive to citizens' preferences. In the view of Grindle (2007:10), the dynamics of party competition and elections explain variations in the performance of local government since democratisation and greater competition among political parties to win local mayoral and council elections increase the pressure of incumbents to perform effectively whilst in office. Also,

elections can act as an empowerment tool particularly for marginalized groups such as women, illiterates and the poor. However, within this decentralisation arena, the election processes have concentrated on the relational nature of power that involves negotiations, accommodation and struggles among multiple actors with diversity of interest (Hickey, 2006; Villarreal, 2002). These actors may comprise traditional authorities, local political leaders and local elites in the DAs.

On the other hand, critics suggest that when it comes to the question of accountability, it is not enough to encourage “citizen voice”; citizens’ voice must be “heard” by those who hold government power (Goetz et al., 2001). In the case of Ghana, it is particularly interesting as it illustrates clearly the proposition that “participation is a necessary but not sufficient condition for greater responsiveness”⁷ (Crook, 2003).

2.11.2 Public access to information

Making information available to the public is the starting point for many political accountability initiatives. Citizens require adequate information to be able to question the performance of local governments and therefore require local governments to disseminate information on their decisions and actions. Posting information on Assembly notice boards can be used to publicize and disseminate local government information. This is typically a Western approach where the media plays a significant channel for information dissemination. For example, the print media can be a source of highlighting issues of corruption, resource allocation and political decisions made by local politicians. Similarly, the use of local radio programs can ensure information dissemination and therefore encourage downward accountability. This could also be used for the Municipal Chief Executives to answer questions and respond to complaints of the audience. Particularly with the phone-in programs offered by local radio stations, local citizens will be able to raise questions on decisions by the local government officials. Citizens are given the time and opportunity to ask questions, raise concerns, and seek explanations from the local government officials during these phone-in programs. Conversely, disinformation on these local radio programs can negatively affect the ability of citizens to hold local government officials accountable.

In effect, the media plays an important role of making political or local government news public and also help to help to uncover some misdeeds of local government. It is only if people know what is going on, good or bad, can they hold their government accountable; without vigorous

⁷ Here the author attempts to link responsiveness with accountability.

media to spread it, political/local government news remains the “property of the inside few” (Blair, 2000).

2.11.3 Consultative meetings

It is equally important for the local representatives to undertake consultative meetings or community fora in the local communities with their constituents. This can be used to explain the decisions of the Assembly to local citizens including the budget process. It also allows citizens to monitor the local government budget. In addition, consultative meetings have been used by central governments including that of Ghana as a tool for the government to become “closer to its citizens”. It has been termed variously by different governments over the last couple of years. In the era of President Kufuor (2001-2009), it was termed “People’s Assembly” whilst the current President Mills’ government refers to the meetings as “Town Hall Meetings”. Also local government officials can use the meetings to report on the status of execution of the previous year’s commitments. As citizens gain ownership of the process, they are motivated to oversee the implementation of their approved projects. The deeper involvement of citizens in planning and budgeting creates conditions for them to demand more accountability. On the other hand, these consultative meetings might enable local representatives and politicians to learn, gain information and apply the feedback mechanisms to improve policy decisions to the interest of local actors.

2.12 Summary of the chapter

This chapter has attempted to conceptualize decentralisation, local government and accountability. The aim is to draw on other scholarly works done in the area of this research. It reveals the astonishing speed with which decentralisation has become a development policy strategy in the developing world over the past two decades.

Reasons for the astonishing speed can be summarised into two. First, decentralisation is characterized as a process of democratisation, and particularly in the search for a more participatory approach to decision making. Secondly, decentralisation has been regarded as an administrative reform, frequently driven by donor agencies that have seen it as a means of slimming down ineffective central administration as well as bringing warring factions together.

Though the concept of decentralisation has attracted a lot of scientific research since then, its precise meaning lacks clarity and largely differs in both academic circles and in practice. However,

theories on decentralisation agree that it brings politicians closer to the local people, by offering them the opportunity for better information about constituents' preferences and making it easier for constituents to monitor politicians' performance. Also the theoretical arguments support that at the local level actors can more easily learn about activities and programs that their leaders and representatives have promoted and therefore can lead to political accountability of local representatives.

The literature reviewed has illustrated that accountability can be viewed as a two-dimensional concept, namely answerability and enforceability. With the complexity of the concept, a systematic approach is needed in analyzing political accountability within the framework of decentralised local government institution.

I have therefore developed a conceptual framework based on local level elections, public access to information and local government representatives' consultative meetings with citizens, voters and tax payers in this chapter for examining political accountability of the decentralised local government institution. In this framework, I hope to contribute to efforts to analyse and reshape relations between decentralisation and political accountability.

Finally, evidence so far reviewed with a purposeful bias on Africa has shown very sketchy results of decentralisation policy reforms offering the promise of effective political accountability. This leads me to my next chapter which discusses the various decentralisation policy reforms and local government that have been adopted in Ghana since the colonial period and how the reform policies were rationalized by the various governments.

CHAPTER THREE

DECENTRALISATION POLICY REFORMS AND LOCAL GOVERNMENT IN GHANA: THE PENDULUM MODEL

3.1 Introduction

Ghana's decentralisation policy could be said to be much older than the country. Indeed, it dates back to the colonial days and has been inundated with often repeated and unsuccessful efforts to decentralise power and resources to the local level. In Ghana, like other African countries, decentralisation was part of the colonial legacy (Kasfir, 1983:25) and therefore as with many countries, decentralisation initiatives in Ghana are embedded in the country's history.

Although in most African countries, particularly the leaders from the British colonies chose to support the Western model of local government at the time of fighting for independence, conditions changed considerably after independence. Most of the African countries suddenly became one-party socialist states and their leaders chose to experiment with various forms of government structures. There were therefore many attempts to decentralise as well as (re)centralise among successive governments after independence in Ghana. The system of the decentralisation policy swung from one structure, number of districts, functions of the districts and its composition to another depending on which government was in power. In fact Ghana's experience of decentralisation offers a typical example of what Mawhood (1983:8) refers to as the "pendulum model", which was common to African countries.

The model saw in the terminal colonial period of the 1950s decentralised governments, through the 60s centralized planning and greater central control, belief in the value of participation and rural development in the 80s, and the re-establishment of various forms of decentralised governments in the 90s. It is therefore difficult to comprehend decentralisation in Ghana without reference to how the policy has evolved over the years. As North (1990) notes that, "today's and tomorrow's choices are shaped by the past ... and the past can only be made intelligible as a story of institutional evolution". My main argument here is that, decentralisation policy reform is a complex and dynamic process that transcends the technocratic and managerial approach pervasive in many policy documents (Olowu and Wunsch, 2004:3). It is therefore important to

highlight the historical and socio-economic approaches to decentralisation policy reforms in Ghana.

Specifically, this chapter traces Ghana's long journey towards decentralisation and greater autonomy for the Metropolitan, Municipal and the District Assemblies (MMDAs)⁸, with particular concern for ways in assessing local citizens, voters and taxpayers participation in local decision making and how local actors could promote political accountability in local government. Ghana is particularly deserving of study because even the current decentralisation policy reform is over two decades old and therefore quite stable. The rest of the chapter is organised as follows: First, the way decentralization developed in Ghana from colonial times, through independence and under successive governments, is reviewed. Secondly, the current local government system which came into effect in 1988 with the promulgation of the Provisional National Defence Council (PNDC) Law 207 as enforced by the 1992 Constitution of the Republic of Ghana and their accountability mechanisms will be described and analysed. The chapter finally explains the constraints of Ghana's current decentralised local government system.

3.2 Ghana at a glance

Ghana is located at the West Coast of Africa with a population of 24.23 million⁹ (GSS, 2010). It was the first country in Sub-Saharan Africa to gain independence from the British government on March 6, 1957 under Dr. Kwame Nkrumah and the Convention People's Party (CPP) government. After the overthrow of Nkrumah's CPP government on February 24, 1966 in a coup by a group of Ghanaian soldiers and police officers led by Colonel Akwasi Afrifa and Lt. Gen. Emmanuel Kotoka, Ghana was controlled by a succession of both democratic governments and military regimes until January 1993 when the Fourth Republican Constitution was promulgated. Before that, Ghana had experienced the second and the third republics, although both short-lived. Within the period 1966-1992, Ghana had its longest serving military leader, Flt. Lt. Jerry John Rawlings who ruled for about 11 years. This same leader retired from the military to contest for elections and J. J. Rawlings became the first two-term president of the Fourth Republican multi-party elections held

⁸ In this study MMDAs are at times interchanged with District Assemblies (DAs) for simplification

⁹ According to the provisional results of the 2010 Housing and Population Census of Ghana disclosed by the Government Statistician of the Ghana Statistical Service (GSS), Ghana's population stands at 24,233,431 of which 48.7% are males and 51.3% females.

in December 1992 and 1996 respectively, culminating in President Rawlings' 19-year rule in Ghana.

Since January 7, 1993, Ghana has been operating under the 1992 Constitution. The Constitution creates a hybrid presidential-parliamentary government structure with three distinct centers of power. These are the Executive, Legislature and the Judiciary. The Executive power is vested in the President whilst the Constitution gives to Parliament representational, legislative and oversight functions. The Constitution also guarantees an independent judiciary. Ghana has been touted as a shining example of the few successful cases of democratisation and good governance in Africa (Constitution Review Commission, 2009).

Ghana has held five successful elections since the return to multi-party democratic rule with the elections in December 1992. Two of those elections, 2000 and 2008 resulted in a political turnover, involving a switch in power of the sitting government and the largest opposition party. According to Huntington (1991), Ghana's case qualifies for what he refers to as democratic consolidation as the polity passes the "two-turnover test"; although the usage of the term 'democratic consolidation' has been criticized, citing Japan as a case (see Haynes, 2001:36). It is to be noted that the 2008 general elections was the most closely fought elections in the history of Ghana resulting with a winning margin of only 0.46 per cent after a second round of voting and a last contest in one of the constituencies, the Tain constituency, that did not participate in the second round of voting.

Apart from the 1988/89 local level elections that ushered in the current decentralisation policy reforms in Ghana, there have also been five local level elections in all the District Assemblies between 1994 and 2010. Unfortunately, some of these local level elections have produced very low voter turnout, for example, the 1994 and 2002 local elections recorded a national average of only 29.3 and 33.1 per cent respectively. Reasons for the low voter turnout have been attributed to a number of factors including the unattractive nature of the local level elections (Ayee, 1994). Among the reasons of the unattractiveness of the local level elections have been attributed to the non-involvement of political parties in the elections formally.

Ghana's economy is mainly based on agricultural production, with cocoa being the main export crop although gold has become one of the biggest sources of foreign exchange. With Ghana's oil find in commercial quantities in 2007, Ghana's economy is poised to grow steadily. This has the

potential of increased financial resources and among others might inject more discussions on issues bordering on political accountability at both national and local government arena in Ghana. The next section discusses the historical context of decentralisation in Ghana.

3.3 Decentralisation in Ghana – Historical Context

As pointed out earlier on, decentralisation is not new in Ghana. Local government existed before the advent of the colonial central government administration (Mensah and Kendie, 2008). However, this section discusses the evolution of the decentralised local government under the colonial era to the present-day decentralisation policy reforms in Ghana.

3.3.1 Local Government under the Colonial Era: Chieftaincy and the Indirect Rule

Ghana was known as the Gold Coast until it gained independence from the British government on March 6, 1957. Gold Coast obviously refers to the land of gold. The central institution around which the Gold Coast was organised was chieftaincy. This was an elective and limited magistracy which the colonial administration found to be useful as a “foundation on which to build the future” (Hailey, 1951 cited in Aye, 1994:10). Chiefs had various names depending on the different ethnic groups. The Akans refer to Chiefs as *nana*, the Gas as *mantse*, Ewes as *togbui* and the Dagombas as *naa*. There is however some level of distinction that exist within the ranking system at different levels of traditional authority (Adjaye and Misawa, 2006). For example, in the Akan area of Ghana, *nana* is distinguished as: *Omanhen* (paramount chief), *Ohen* (chief) and *Odekro* (village chief).

In 1878, the British government introduced a local administrative system that centered on so-called customary law and some hand-picked chiefs or unit of local royalty, popularly termed the “indirect rule” (Millar and Abazaam, 2008: 63). This was the first Native Jurisdiction Ordinance passed in 1878 which lasted until 1944. During this period the colonial administration ruled indirectly through the native political institution (i.e. the chiefs), by constituting the chief and elders in a given district as the local authority, with powers “to establish treasuries, appoint staff and perform local government functions” (Nkrumah 2000: 55 cited in Crawford, 2004: 6). Nkrumah also makes an interesting observation that, under the indirect rule, downward accountability of chiefs to the people was replaced by upward accountability to the colonial authorities:

“the democratic ideals underlying chieftaincy in Ghana, which made chiefs accountable to their peoples, began to suffer as the recognition by the central government was more crucial to the chief than the support of his people” (Nkrumah, 2000).

According to Ayee (1994), the indirect rule policy was aimed at providing a statutory basis for the exercise of local government functions by Chiefs and at effecting measures of reform designed to modify the indigenous system to suit modern conditions. In effect this system saw the marriage between the traditional and “modern” systems of government. It has been argued that the system of indirect rule was intended to imply three main efforts. The first was to maintain the traditional system and prevent it from being weakened by the disintegrating forces of Western life. The second was to educate the Chiefs and their councils to carry out new functions that were to provide in the Gold Coast a compromise in which neither African nor European culture was excluded and three, it was meant to reduce the cost and logistical issues associated with colonial administration. In short, the indirect rule was designed in the Gold Coast to show the greatest respect to the position and power of the Chief as a representative of the stool (Ayee, 1994: 14). However, other scholars hold different views. For example,

“The chiefs interpreted the alliance to mean additional authority for taxation. Therefore in 1852 when a legislative assembly of chiefs was inaugurated they passed a resolution to impose an annual poll (head) tax of one shilling on all African citizens. The colonialist later realized that the chiefs did not keep proper accounts of the revenues collected. Nor was there any evidence to show that the taxes were being used to promote direct public welfare. That coupled with public resistance to the tax led to its abolition by the colonial administration in 1861. Not unexpectedly, that action created a bad faith between the administration and the traditional authorities” (Kessey, 1995: 58).

Another explanation and the justification of development of the indirect rule system (Crook, 1986 cited in Ayee, 1994: 15) was that the development of the indirect rule system was undoubtedly the consequence of the failure of the Lands and Forestry Bills of 1894, 1897, and 1912. These bills were attempts by the colonial government to take over the administration and allocation of so-called unoccupied “waste land”, and to make “absolute” ownership of land more certain through a land certification scheme. The implication was that when the people had objected to the Bills, the colonial government thought that through the powers given to the chiefs as a result of the indirect rule, the Bills could be passed. However, the legislation was abandoned in the face of considerable

opposition from the chiefs, the Aborigines Rights Protection Society (APRS) and the local press, as well as European commercial interests (Kimble, 1963).

It is quite clear that on one hand, the relationship between the colonialists and the chiefs at this point had been marred with conflicts. On the other hand, feelings of disillusion with official policy on the chiefs were compounded during the Second World War by other problems of shortage of staff, low pay, lack of leave and lack of promotion prospects and this led to unprecedented petition of junior administrative officers in 1945 (Aye, 1994). As a result, the local government administration that was under the native political institution could no longer hold, thus the decline of the indirect rule.

The tension was further heightened by the agitation for political independence which led to the 1948 Accra riot where Sgt. Adjetey, Corporal Attipoe and others lost their lives. Following that, the Watson Commission was appointed to investigate the causes of the riots. But earlier in 1947, there had been the Colonial Office decision to introduce an “efficient and democratic system of local government in each British dependency” (Kasfir, 1993: 26-27). Through Arthur Creech Jones, the then British Secretary of State for the Colonies under the Labour Party Government, the dispatch¹⁰ produced fundamental changes in both the practice of government and the opportunity of the organization of nationalist movements. Arthur Creech Jones gave the rationale for decentralised governments and as Kasfir (1993) notes:

*“I use these words because they seem to me to contain the kernel of the whole matter: **local** because the system of government must be close to the common people and their problems; **efficient** because it must be capable of managing the local services in a way which will help raise the standard of living; and **democratic** because it must not only find a place for the growing class of educated men, but at the same time command the respect and support of the mass of the people”* (Kasfir, 1993; cited in Mawhood, 1993:27, emphasis in original).

Arthur Creech Jones’ dispatch was very concise and puts emphasis on the future decentralised local government, on local structures, and on an efficient and a democratic system. However, how these cardinal principles of local government were to be achieved in Ghana remained unclear. Aye (1994) appropriately argues that “the emphasis is entirely appropriate for the task of implementing a Western institution in a very different environment”. Based on the kernel of this

¹⁰ Colonial Office Dispatch from the Secretary of State for the Colonies to the Governors of the African Territories – February 25, 1947.

dispatch and the findings of the Watson Commission report on the Accra riots and later the institution of an all-African constitutional committee headed by Justice Coussey in 1949, declared:

“Native Authorities should be replaced by democratically elected councils, which should nevertheless retain a place for chiefs who were recognized as having important role in the Gold Coast” (Hicks, 1961 cited in Kessey, 1995: 59).

Consequently, the traditional councils¹¹ were side-stepped despite the recognition of their roles and the indirect rule came to an abrupt end resulting in a new local government system introduced in 1951. Of course, the traditional councils and the local people were least enthused by this decision and could not be identified with the new local government system since they saw it as alien. Aye (1994) argues that the chiefs saw the new local government system as adapting entirely English local government to the Gold Coast in a different environment rather than evolving new forms of local government that was based on traditions of the Gold Coast.

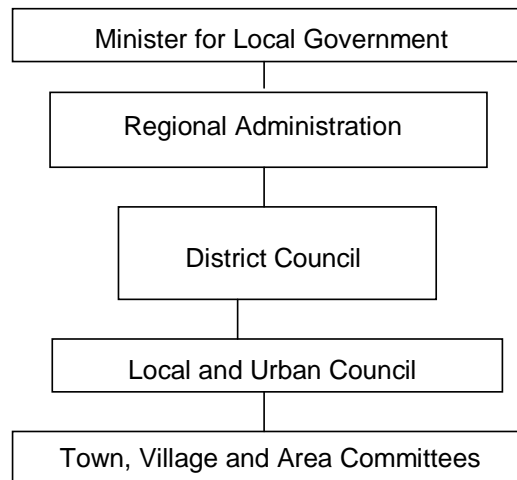
Following the recommendations of Coussey Commission, the 1951 Local Government Ordinance came into being. That was also the time that the first election in the Gold Coast was held and Dr. Kwame Nkrumah’s Convention People’s Party (CPP) came into power. The primary objective of the 1951 Local Government Ordinance was to provide opportunities and broaden the scope of participation for the majority of the people and to participate actively in decision-making. However, that was not the case. Although the CPP government campaigned for power with the support of the chiefs, the government turned their back against them upon coming into office. As a result the role of chiefs in local government was drastically reduced to the disappointment of the chiefs and the local people of the Gold Coast.

The 1951 Local Government Ordinance stipulated a four-tier system of local government. As illustrated in Fig. 3.1, at the lowest local government level was the Town, Village and Area Councils. Basically, they were responsible for mobilizing the local communities for communal labour and other self-help projects. They will then report through the Local and Urban Councils to the District Council, which was the highest decision-making body at the District level. At the regional level was the regional administration; however it was considered as part of the local

¹¹ A traditional council is an assembly of chiefs and queens in a particular traditional area with the paramount chief as the head. In other words, the paramount chief is the commander-in-chief of the traditional council.

government. Under the Local Government Act of 1951, the local government system consisted of 26 district councils and 252 local councils.

Fig. 3.1: Structure of local government under 1951 Ordinance



Source: Ayee (1994)

The first elections for the new local government councils came off in 1952 and the new local authorities comprised of two-thirds democratically elected and one-third traditional membership throughout the country. An astonishing feature of the new system was the many district councils that were created, particularly at the time that personnel and financial resources were in short supply. Not surprisingly, this structure resulted in frequent quarrels between the elected and the traditional members of the council. However, Kessey (1995) concludes that the colonial administration adopted this form of dual representation in order to “avoid ethnocentric conflicts and confrontation between itself and the traditional councils”. Similarly, Mr. Kwesi Plange, the Under-Secretary for Local Government at the time notes that the compromise was aimed at preserving as much as possible of the traditional forms compatible with modern democratic principles. He argues:

“The appointment of one-third traditional authority to the membership of the Local Councils is undemocratic because their traditional representation does not base its powers on the people and through the ballot paper they transfer this sovereignty to the elected representative who exercises this power for and on their behalf. But because we want to build on our heritage and tradition, we have the traditional representation to hold a watching brief for those who admirably tried their ignorance to lose sight of the traditions for our forebears (Padmore, 1953 cited in Ayee, 1994:39).

With the frequent conflicts and confrontations between the two parties the structure therefore could not effectively function in practice. It is argued that the colonial administration knew that the local government system was not going to work, not even the amalgamation of the total of 278 districts and local councils into 70 multi-purpose councils (Kessey, 1995). And such was the state of the local government system when Ghana attained independence on March 6, 1957. However, despite the conflicts, the implementation of the local government reforms was seen by George Padmore, one of the greatest Pan-Africanists living in Ghana at the time, as a signal that:

*“Modern political democracy had been brought right down to the common people in their rural townships, villages and hamlets. The chiefs no longer sit upon Official gazettes but have been restored to their traditional stools as Fathers and Elders of their people. And British district officers have ceased to be civil **masters** and have become civil **servants**”* (Padmore, 1953 cited in Ayee, 1994; emphasis in original).

Interestingly, the term “civil servant” has come to remain as it refers to officials working in government ministries, departments and agencies (MDAs) in Ghana today.

3.3.2 Local Government after Independence: *The First Republic*

The search for an appropriate local government continued after Ghana’s independence. This is evidenced by the number of commissions and committees which were appointed by successive governments during the post-independence period (see Table 3.1). It is argued that the main reason for all the successive governments showing concern for decentralisation is not only for social, economic and political development but also a way of recentralizing power. For example, the first all-Ghanaian government led by Dr. Kwame Nkrumah manipulated the already established strong central control on the local councils and reorganized the 70 multi-purpose councils in the pre-independence era into 183 (Kessey, 1995:60). Among some of the changes that took place was the abolition of the reserved seats for the traditional authorities on the district and local councils which resulted in protestations by the Chiefs.

As shown in Table 3.1, within a period of 25 years (i.e. between 1957 and 1982), there were as many as ten (10) Commissions/Committees that were set up by different governments to inquire into the local government reforms in Ghana. It is striking to note that as if by design, with the exception of SMC1, the other three governments had three Commissions/Committees each that they set up. What is quite common among the various reports that were issued by the Commissions/Committees was the recognition of the chiefs’ role in local government, although

not all the governments implemented the findings of the reports. For instance, the report of the Greenwood Commission which shaped the decentralisation policy reform of the CPP government identifies the chiefs' influence in the structure of local government as was evident in recommending the policy of organizing local councils along the lines of the former native authorities. But the CPP government failed to implement the recommendation. In addition, the final blow to effective local government that incorporated the chiefs was with the adoption of the one party socialist state by the Kwame Nkrumah's CPP government coupled with its centralized planning system.

On the other hand, Adjaye and Misawa (2006) observe that the Nkrumah's CPP government resentment for chiefs began on the eve of independence. The party's mouthpiece, *Evening News*, regularly branded chiefs as imperialist collaborators. This did not encourage the chiefs to be on the local councils; rather, it encouraged a form of central control through the appointment of district commissioners who represented the head of state at the local level.

Table 3.1 Commissions and Committees into local government reforms in Ghana, 1957-1982

<i>Regime</i>	<i>Head of State</i>	<i>Year</i>	<i>Name of Commission/Committee</i>
CPP	Dr. Kwame Nkrumah	1957	Greenwood
CPP	Dr. Kwame Nkrumah	1958	Van Lare
CPP	Dr. Kwame Nkrumah	1965	Boison
NLC	Gen. J. A. Ankrah	1967	Mills-Odoi
NLC	Gen. J. A. Ankrah	1968	Akuffo-Addo
NLC	Gen. J. A. Ankrah	1968	Siriboe
SMC1	Gen. I. K. Acheampong	1974	Okoe
PNDC	Flt. Lt. J. J. Rawlings	1982	Kufuor
PNDC	Flt. Lt. J. J. Rawlings	1982	Sowu
PNDC	Flt. Lt. J. J. Rawlings	1982	Kaku-Kyiamah

Source: Ayee (1994)

The consequence of the central control rendered the local councils the CPP ideological propaganda tools. Again, the traditional authorities' became inactive, local councils were weak and the local people very dispirited to local matters. As it later turned out, the Nkrumah government passed the Chiefs' Law that gave statutory recognition to the chiefs' ceremonial and traditional functions, but expelled them from the administration of local government. The exclusion of the chiefs from local government matters, Ayee (1994) observes, showed not only the populist tendencies of Nkrumah, but also his grudge against the chieftaincy institution. In the

words of Asibuo (1992), “local authorities during the CPP era were in a miserable state”. This miserable state of the local government at the time of Nkrumah’s CPP government affected the political accountability of the local government as the authorities and the chiefs resorted to the battle of control of the local people. Rathbone (2000) for instance concluded:

“This turbulent history suggests that the transformation of chieftaincy in Ghana was not the result of the kinds of organic change which result from the varied processes of modernization. It was in large measure the product of a battle for control of the countryside which was very clearly won by the governing political party.”

That explains the “miserable state” of local government and its attendant implications on political accountability of the local representatives under the Nkrumah’s CPP government before he exited.

3.3.3 Local Government under the succeeding governments: Post First Republic

The National Liberation Council (NLC)

The CPP government was overthrown through Ghana’s first coup d’état on February 24, 1966 which ushered in the National Liberation Council (NLC). Although a number of factors were attributed to the overthrow of the Nkrumah government, Ayee (1994) argues that the prolonged period of economic difficulties, accompanied by increasing encroachments on civil liberties and over-centralisation of government machinery led to the overthrow of Nkrumah’s CPP government. What this means is that the problems that confronted the CPP government regarding effective decentralisation contributed remarkably to its overthrow. On the contrary, the NLC introduced some measures so as to restore the image of the local government institutions. The guiding decentralisation policy of the NLC was not only to lay firm foundations for sound and effective system of government, but also to ensure effectiveness in the economy.

Consequently, the NLC passed Decree No. 26 of 1966 which collapsed the large number of former administrative districts to a new total of 47. The structure of the local government under the NLC consisted of a 4-tier system. It has the regional committees of administration on top in each of the nine regions at the time. As Ayee (1994) observes, a further boost to decentralisation was the institutionalisation of a broad-based but non-political planning committee in each region in October 1967. Below the regional committees were the district councils, local and urban councils and the town and area committees. Besides the town and area councils, the three above them were entirely left in the hands of civil servants to operate. This era brought in bureaucrats into

political positions as the regional and district administrative officers replaced the ousted regional and district commissioners. However, Ayee (1994) notes that the structure of the local government was overly bureaucratic for “good government was preferred over representation/participation”. This was because there was no elected membership to any of the councils. And that was the state of the local government in Ghana until August 22, 1969 when the Second Republican Constitution was introduced.

The Progress Party (PP) – The Second Republic

The Second Republic under Prime Minister Dr. K. A. Busia and his Progress Party (PP) government continued with the system that was operated by the NLC with the recommendations of the Mills-Odoi and Siriboe Commissions’ reports that had been incorporated in the Chapter 16 of the 1969 Constitution.

The 1969 Constitution provided a three-tier local government structure which consisted of regional, district and local councils. In 1971, the PP government passed a new Local Government Act (Act 359) and this was intended to change the perception of local government that had primarily become an administrative function. The Act 359 of 1971 provided for partial elected membership of local councils and appointed members by the traditional authorities. It was designed to have a political direction. The district elections were to be based on the philosophies of the political parties. Consequently, during the district elections, for the first time, political parties contested. However, this politicisation was criticised on the basis of the fact that the Busia government could manipulate the system of local government to its political advantage (Ayee, 1994).

Although the PP government was committed to rural development and accepted decentralisation in principle, Asibuo (1992) notes that it did not demonstrate the political commitment necessary to make it work. The argument was that although Dr. K. A. Busia was an ardent critique of Nkrumah’s centralisation of power and authority whilst in exile in Britain, within two years in office, his liberal democratic tendencies were replaced by increasing evidence of a return to centralisation, pointing to the pendulum model of decentralisation. It was also claimed that the decentralisation policies of Busia administration also followed that of his predecessors since the policies were not only aimed at administrative decentralisation but also at central control of the

local government units. Ayee (1994) convincingly sums up that “this is the pointer that the Busia government did not learn from the mistakes of the Nkrumah government”.

In the case of Busia’s PP government decentralisation policy, the fact that the discharge of the functions of the district council was subjected to the general guidance and direction of the Minister of Local Government acting through regional councils as well as the appointment of Chairman of the district council by the Prime Minister pointed to an attempt by the government to control the local government machinery. As a result, there was no effective, accountable and elected political authority established at the district level to oversee the structure (Millar and Abazaam, 2008). With the semblance of Nkrumah’s over-centralisation of power, coupled with economic crises at the time, and Busia’s PP government’s devaluation of the currency of Ghana by 44 per cent in 1971 culminated in increased consumer prices and unrest, and these events triggered the coup of January 13, 1972.

The National Redemption Council (NRC) and the Supreme Military Council (SMC1&2)

The second military coup in Ghana toppled the PP government and led to the establishment of the National Redemption Council (NRC) on January 13, 1972 under Col. I. K. Acheampong. On assumption of power, the NRC government provided a structure of local government that was a four-tier system. Unlike the Busia government’s three-tier system, the NRC went back for the recommendations of the three post-1966 coup commissions. What this meant was that the local government structure had warbled from the 4-tier Nkrumah’s CPP through the 3-tier Busia’s PP back to 4-tier in Acheampong’s NRC government, signifying another pendulum effect of the decentralisation policy reforms.

That came about as a result of the promulgation of the Local Government Decree (NRCD 258) of 1974 which sought to reactivate the regional and district councils. The four-tier system consisted of regional councils; district councils; area/city, municipal, urban, local councils; and the town/village development committees. The membership of the district councils was entirely a non-elective one; two-thirds of the councilors were central government nominees while the other third represented the traditional authorities. This local government composition of 1974 was meant to take away or minimize the politicization of the local councils as provided in the Busia’s local government Act (Act 359) of 1971. It was also because political parties had been banned during the military rule of Acheampong. However, a critical assessment of the 1974 system also

showed many problems. For instance, Ayee (1994) notes that the “intent of the decentralisation policies of the NRC seemed to give the appearance of merely a means to enhance control, similar to that of the CPP and PP manipulations”. The consequence of this was that political accountability of local representatives at the local level was virtually non-existent.

It is important to note that this was the first time the title District Chief Executive (DCE) came into the local level of government as the title District Administrative Officers (DAOs) who were chairpersons of the District Councils in the 1971 Act changed. On July 5, 1978, the NRC which had transformed itself midway into the Supreme Military Council (SMC) was overthrown in a palace coup and replaced by the SMC2 under General Akuffo. To give effect to decentralisation policy, the SMC2 government promulgated a new Local Government (Amendment) Decree, SMCD 194 of 1978. Although SMC2 retained the local government structure of SMC1 as a four-tier, the decree provided that the district councils should consist of two-thirds of the members elected, while the remaining third should be chosen by traditional authorities. A very significant event that happened during this period was the November 1978 district council elections that took place the first time in over twenty years in Ghana. Although the voter turn-out in the elections was as low as 18.4 per cent as national average, it had a major impact on decentralisation and national politics.

One of these impacts as a result of the low voter turnout and also obvious party affiliation in this election resulted in the change of date for the national elections. This was because there was the realization that the voter turnout was low since it was contested on non-partisan basis. Therefore the proposed candidates for “national government” during the national elections scheduled for September 1979 changed to be contested on a political party basis. However, Ayee (1994) observes that the local government elections which were held were an indication of the commitment of General Akuffo to offer Ghanaians some form of political decentralisation.

But, before the scheduled September 1979 general elections could take place, the SMC2 regime was also overthrown, after less than a year in office by the Flt. Lt. J. J. Rawlings’ Armed Forces Revolutionary Council (AFRC) on June 4, 1979. The AFRC did not play any meaningful role regarding the decentralisation policy reforms since their primary interest, according to the Chairman of the AFRC, was only to supervise the transition to a democratic multi-party system in a transparent manner. Barely four months in power, had the AFRC returned Ghana to Constitutional rule with the promulgation of the Third Republican Constitution on September 24, 1979. This Constitution re-introduced the Presidential system of government.

The People's National Party (PNP) – The Third Republic

President Hilla Limann and his PNP government came into office as the first president under the Third Republican Constitution of 1979. To ensure effective conduct of government business, the 1979 Constitution provided for the decentralisation of public administration machinery to the regions and the districts. The rationale of the drafters of the 1979 Constitution was to provide for an effective local government. This is contained in Article 7 of the 1979 Constitution that Ghana shall:

“Decentralise the administrative machinery to the regions and districts in order to permit, to the extent [...] consistent with sound and effective administration and control the transaction of government business at the regional and district levels” (Republic of Ghana, 1979).

As consistent with earlier local government structures, this Constitution also provided for a three-tier structure of Regional, District Councils and the Town/Village/Area Committees. The provisions in the Constitution were consolidated by the Local Government (Amendment) Act (Act 403) of 1980. According to the Act, the Regions were to be headed by Regional Ministers (RM) appointed by the President and at the district level a clerk to the district council as well as an elected chairman and vice-chairman for the council.

As a major departure from the previous local government structure, the DCE was no longer the chairman of the district councils but the council continued to consist of two-thirds of members elected on the basis of universal adult suffrage and one third of the members appointed by the traditional authorities. To show its commitment to decentralisation policy reform, the PNP government in August 1981 announced that it would create 40 more districts to bring the total number to 105. However, the decentralisation policy reform of the PNP government did not see the light of the day when the government was toppled. Therefore the total number of districts remained 65 as they were in 1974. On December 31, 1981, the Third Republican Constitutional arrangement was also abrogated by the coup d'état of the Provisional National Defence Council (PNDC), again under Ft. Lt. J. J. Rawlings but the search for an appropriate decentralised local government system in Ghana continued.

The Provisional National Defence Council (PNDC)

Rawlings' PNDC just like Museveni's National Resistance Movement (NRM) in Uganda saw decentralisation and the devolution of power as key means of introducing popular democracy and fostering local governance (see Golola, 2003: 259). "Power to the people" was a popular slogan used by the PNDC during the December 31, 1981 revolution. To pursue its populist policies of a new form of "people's democracy", "participatory democracy", or "power to the people", the PNDC established People's Defence Committees (PDCs) and Workers Defence Committees (WDCs). The PDCs and WDCs were the organs that the PNDC used to promote popular participation in both the urban and rural areas of Ghana as well as among workers. Rawlings' rationalized his decentralisation policy at the time on the populist sentiments against the Western investment, devaluation and trade liberalisation and an advocacy of self-reliance through popular mobilization and participation (Ayee, 1994).

According to Ahwoi (2010: 35), this commitment marked the transformation of the slogan into the administrative concept of "decentralisation" and was articulated in the first "Policy Guidelines" of the PNDC. The section of the Policy Guidelines of local government was summarised as:

- (a) *"the urgent need for participatory democracy to ensure that the bane of remote government that had afflicted Ghanaians since independence is done away with effectively, to render government truly responsive and accountable to the governed;*
- (b) *the assumption of power by the people cannot be complete unless a truly decentralised government system was introduced, that is, the Central Government, in all its ministerial manifestations, should empower Local Government Councils to initiate, coordinate, manage and execute policies and all matters affecting them within their localities" (ibid).*

Consequently, the PNDC dissolved the district councils elected in November 1978 under the leadership of General Akuffo as per PNDC Law 14 of June 1982. This allowed the PNDC nominating Interim Management Committees (IMCs) to replace the councilors in the district councils. However, Asibuo (1992) notes that the IMCs could not work mainly due to financial and personnel constraints in addition to the PNDC's trend towards centralization. The "power to the people" slogan used by the PNDC and the observation by Asibuo (1992) depicts a stark difference between rhetoric and policy.

Subsequently, the PNDC then had to look for an alternative path towards decentralisation and the accomplishment of their “power to the people” slogan. This led to the second launching of another PNDC decentralisation program in July 1987. The second decentralisation program document which became popularly known as the “Blue Book” as a result of its blue cover page was presented as the “critical building blocks for the construction of true democracy” (Ghana, 1987a). Among the main proposals contained in the Blue Book were:

1. The establishment of 110 instead of 65 non-partisan District Assemblies;
2. The creation of a three-tier system with Town/Area Councils and Unit Committees below the District level
3. The composition of the Assembly of the District Secretary, two-thirds elected and one-third appointed members, and
4. The proposition that Assembly deliberations could be in English and/or any Ghanaian language used in the district.

Making it a requirement of conducting Assembly deliberations in a language other than the official language, English, the idea was to avoid literacy in English as requirement for the participation of local people in decision making. The implication of this is an attempt to reduce elite capture of the district assemblies. These proposals were subjected to a nation-wide discussion and after some revisions by the PNDC, in November 1988; the Local Government Law was promulgated as the famous PNDC Law 207 of 1988. It is famous because the current local government system in Ghana under the 1992 Fourth Republican Constitution has its roots in the PNDCL 207. It is argued that the PNDCL 207 came about as a result of strong international donor pressure that advocated “rethinking the State” or minimizing government intervention in political, administrative and financial matters of the State (World Bank, 1991).

In effect, the policy objectives of the PNDC decentralisation programme of 1988 were geared towards both political and administrative decentralisation, a departure from those of previous governments. The objectives include popular participation, efficiency, effectiveness, accountability, responsiveness, stability and issues of development.

3.4 The Current Local Government Reforms - Under the Fourth Republic

Upon coming into force of the Fourth Republican Constitution on January 7, 1993, it became obvious that the District Assemblies required a Constitutional provision that would provide the

essential building blocks towards achieving decentralisation and guarantee that “the minimum gains of decentralisation under the PNDC government were not eroded” (Ahwoi, 2010). The broad framework for decentralisation is provided in two broad chapters, Chapters 6 and 20 of the 1992 Constitution. For instance, Chapter 20 of the Constitution, entitled, “Decentralisation and Local Government” recognizes the decentralisation of the machinery of government in Ghana. It provides in Article 240 (2) of the 1992 Constitution that:

- (a) functions, powers, responsibilities and resources should be transferred from the central government to local government units;*
- (b) measures should be taken to enhance the capacity of local government authorities to plan, initiate, coordinate, manage and execute policies in respect of matters affecting the local people;*
- (c) local government units should have sound financial bases with adequate and reliable sources of revenue;*
- (d) local government staff must be controlled by local authorities; and*
- (e) there should be popular participation in local decision-making*

Furthermore Chapter 6 of the Constitution which is the Directive Principles of State Policy provides that:

“make democracy a reality by decentralising the administrative and financial machinery of government to the regions and districts and by affording all possible opportunities to the people to participate in decision-making at every level in national life and government” (Ghana, 1992; Article 35: 6d).

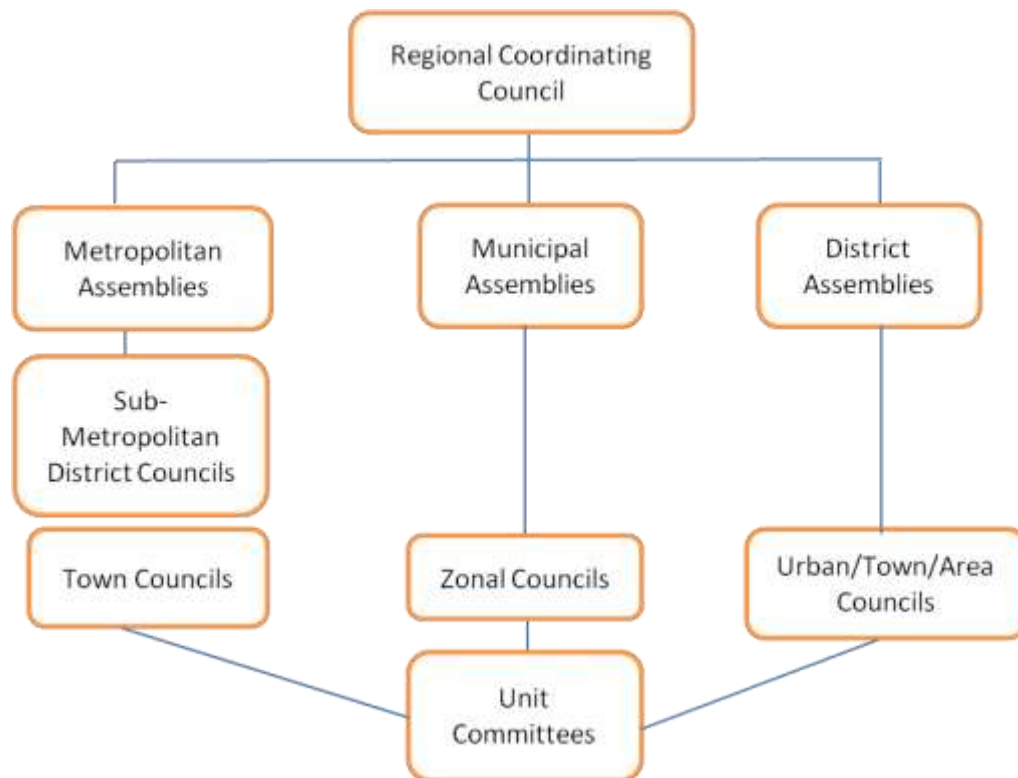
These key principles in the 1992 Constitution provide practical issues around which the state shows its commitment to decentralisation. The Metropolitan Assembly is established for districts with a population of 250,000 and over whilst the Municipal is established for single compact settlements with population of 95, 000 and over. The District Assemblies are established for geographically contiguous area with population of 75,000 and over¹². What this means is that the population threshold of 1988 was the criteria used in the creation of the MMDAs.

With the coming into force of the 1992 Constitution, the PNDCL 207 was repealed and a new Local Government Law (Act 462) of 1993 was passed by the Parliament of Ghana. In terms of the

¹² However, in practice, population threshold as criteria for the determination of a MMDA has not been strictly followed by various governments in their eagerness to create MMDAs. For instance, Tamale, Cape Coast and Tema with populations of 202,317; 82,219; and 141,479 respectively according to the 2000 housing and population census have been upgraded to the status of Metropolitan Assemblies.

structure of the local government system in Ghana, the Constitution retained the four-tier system for the Metropolitan Assemblies and three-tier for Municipal and District Assemblies respectively. As illustrated in Figure 3.2, the current (new) local government structure is made up of a Regional Coordinating Council, a four-tier Metropolitan and three-tier Municipal/District Assembly respectively.

Fig. 3.2: Structure of the New Local Government System in Ghana



Source: Ministry of Local Government and Rural Development (1996)

The Regional Coordinating Councils (RCCs)

The Regional Coordinating Councils (RCCs), one in each of Ghana’s 10 regions, consist of the Regional Minister as Chairman and his Deputy or Deputies appointed by the President; the Presiding Members and the District Chief Executives of each District Assembly in the region; two

chiefs from the Regional House of Chiefs; and the Regional heads of the Departments¹³ of the Regional Coordinating Council without voting rights. The Regional Coordinating Director is the secretary to the Council, and the Council is an administrative and a coordinating body rather than a policy-making body. It monitors and evaluates the performance of all the Metropolitan, Municipal and District Assemblies and resolves conflicts in the region as well as functions assigned to it by the Central Government. The RCCs also co-ordinate the plans and programmes of the DAs and harmonise them with national development policies and priorities to become a regional development plan.

The Metropolitan/Municipal/District Assemblies (MMDAs)

The MMDAs consist of MMDCEs appointed by the President, elected Member(s) of Parliament representing constituency or constituencies in the district, 70 per cent of members directly elected by universal adult suffrage on non-partisan basis, and not more than 30 per cent of members appointed by the President in consultation with the chiefs and other interest groups. However, within the last decade the appointment of the 30 per cent members to the Assembly has been fraught with a lot of controversies. In practice, the local constituency executives of the political party in power with the Regional Minister submit names of the nominees and approved/announced by the Minister for Local Government and Rural Development on behalf of the President. This has resulted in the paradox that it is mainly constituency executives, party faithful and foot soldiers of the party in power who become government appointees in the non-partisan Assemblies. At the same time, the chiefs and other interest groups in the district are hardly consulted during the appointments. Often what prevails is that the names of the appointees are submitted to the paramount chiefs for endorsement, including the traditional council representatives.

Whilst the MMDCEs appointed by the President are approved by two-thirds of the members of the DA present and voting, the Presiding Member (PM) of the DA, who is the chairperson, is elected from among its members by a minimum of two-thirds of all the members of the Assembly. The PM convenes and presides over the meetings of the Assembly and also doubles as the chairman of the Public Relations and Complaints Committee of the Assembly. The functions of the Presiding

¹³ These departments include the Ministries, Departments and Agencies of government in the region; for example regional directors of Electricity Company of Ghana, Ghana Water Company Ltd., Ghana Education Service, Ghana Health Service, Ghana Police Service, Ghana Immigration Service etc.

Member have been likened to those of the “Speaker” in a national legislature. The PM is expected to be the first recipient of the district internal audit reports on a quarterly basis and the first to check on the financial prudence of the Assembly. He is also the chairman and signatory to funds under various poverty reduction programs in the Assembly.

Currently, the number of districts in Ghana has been increased from 110 to 170 within the 10 administrative regions (see Table 3.2). As shown in Table 3.2, there are 6 Metropolitan, 40 Municipal and 124 District Assemblies totaling 170. Prior to that, the District Assemblies had been increased from 110 to 138 in 2003. Increasing the districts in Ghana in 2007 to 170, President J. A. Kufuor and the NPP government justified the action as improving administration; deepening democracy and governance; ensuring equitable distribution of national resources at the local level and accelerating overall national development.

Table 3.2: Breakdown of MMDAs in Ghana

<i>Region</i>	<i>Metropolitan</i>	<i>Municipal</i>	<i>District</i>	<i>Total</i>
Ashanti	1	6	20	27
Brong Ahafo	0	7	15	22
Central	1	6	10	17
Eastern	0	6	15	21
Greater Accra	2	6	2	10
Northern	1	1	18	20
Upper East	0	2	7	9
Upper West	0	1	8	9
Volta	0	3	15	18
Western	1	2	14	17
Total	6	40	124	170

Source: Ministry of Local Government and Rural Development (2010)

The Sub-Metro/Zonal/Urban/Town/Area Councils

The Sub-Metropolitan District Councils exists only in the Metropolis and the arrangement is dictated by the complex and peculiar socio-politico-economic characteristics, urbanisation and management problems confronting the Metropolitan Assemblies. The peculiarities in the Metropolitan Assemblies render the Sub-Metros with slightly different structures. The Zonal Councils exist in the Municipal areas and consist of not less than fifteen and not more than twenty members. These members comprise of not more than five persons elected from among the members of the Municipal Assembly, not more than ten representatives from the Unit Committees and not more than five persons resident in the area. The Urban/Town/Area Councils

exist only in the District Assemblies and are viewed essentially as rallying points of local enthusiasm (Ayee, 1996). Whilst the Urban Councils have members consisting of not less than twenty five and not more than thirty members; the Town/Area Councils consist of not less than fifteen and not more than twenty members.

The Unit Committees (UCs)

The Unit Committee, which is the first point of contact with the local people, consists of not more than fifteen members made up of ten elected persons ordinarily resident in the unit and not more than five other persons resident in the unit and nominated by the DCE on behalf of the President. However, most of the sub-structures particularly the unit committees have existed only by name and are not really functioning. In practice, there have been no activities by the unit committees within the last decade. One of the reasons for their non-performance has been the large number of units all over Ghana and the membership of the Unit Committees.

To respond to these criticisms, LI 1967 of 2010 reduced the total number of unit committees in Ghana from 16000 to 5000. There will be also no more government appointees at the Unit Committee level and the number of ten elected members reduced to five. This became effective in the 2010 local level (District Assembly) elections.

3.4.1 The Legal Framework

The legal framework underlying decentralisation and local government system in Ghana is provided for by the Local Government Law, Act 462 of 1993 which has its basis from the PNDC Law 207 of 1988. Apart from that, the 1992 Constitution of Ghana sets out clearly the main features of the decentralisation and local government. These are extensively provided for in two main chapters, Chapters 6 and 20 of the Constitution. Whilst chapter 6 deals with the Directive Principles of State Policy, chapter 20 is on decentralisation and local government.

Other pieces of legislation on decentralisation and local government include: the National Development Planning Commission (NDPC) Act, (Act 479 of 1994); National Development Planning (Systems) Act, (Act 480 of 1996); Civil Service Law (PNDCL 327); Local Government (Urban, Zonal, Town Councils and Unit Committees) (Establishment) Instrument, LI 1589; District Assemblies Common Fund (DACF) Act, (Act 455 of 1993); District Assemblies Election Act, (Act 473 of 1994); Local Government Service Act, (Act 656 of 2003); Local Government (Departments of

District Assemblies) (Commencement) Instrument (LI 1961 of 2009); and LIs establishing each of the Metropolitan, Municipal and District Assemblies and their Model Standing Orders.

Also included in these legislative framework of the decentralisation process are the Institute of Local Government Act, (Act 647 of 2003); Financial Administration Act, (Act 654 of 2003); the Internal Audit Act, (Act 658 of 2003); and the Public Procurement Act, (Act 663 of 2003). These three important legislations (Acts 654, 658 and 663 all of 2003) were sought among others to enhance efficiency, accountability and transparency in the management of resources in the public sector including the local government. In addition, as a measure to demonstrate the importance of decentralisation process and the national commitment to further decentralisation, provision is made for Parliament to enact laws for further decentralisation which must not be incompatible with the decentralised status of the District Assemblies (see Article 254 of the Constitution). Consequently, Parliament has passed several important legislations aimed at shaping the decentralisation policy reform in Ghana.

3.4.2 Functions of the DAs

The Assembly is the central institution within the district responsible for planning, implementation and management of development programs. The 1992 Constitution of Ghana provides the legal basis for the function of the District Assembly as deliberative, legislative and executive body. Specifically since the MMDAs are designated the highest political, administrative, planning and rating authorities, the Local Government Act, Act 462 of 1993 section 10 provides the functions as follows:

- (a) be responsible for the overall development of the district and to ensure the preparation and submission through the Regional Coordinating Council (RCC) for the approval of the development plan to the NDPC and budget to the minister of finance for the district;
- (b) formulate and execute plans, programmes and strategies for the effective mobilization of the resources necessary for the overall development of the district;
- (c) promote and support productive activity and social development in the district and remove any obstacles to initiative and development;
- (d) initiate programmes for the development of basic infrastructure and provide municipal works and services in the district;

- (e) be responsible for the development, improvement and the management of human settlements and the environment in the district;
- (f) in co-operation with appropriate national and local security agencies, be responsible for the maintenance of security and public safety in the district;
- (g) ensure ready access to the courts and public tribunals in the district for the promotion of justice;
- (h) initiate, sponsor or carry out such studies as may be necessary for the discharge of any functions conferred by the act or any other enactment; and
- (i) perform such other functions as may be provided for under any other enactment.

From the foregoing, it is clear that the Assemblies have an arduous task to perform as development agents and particularly as the highest political authorities at the local level. In doing that, the Assemblies work through the Executive Committee, five mandatory Sub-Committees¹⁴ and any other Sub-Committee of the Executive Committee that may be deemed necessary for their work as well as the decentralised departments. The next section discusses the decentralised departments in the MMDAs.

3.4.3 Decentralised Departments and their Role in Local Government

The Civil Service Law of 1993 (PNDCL 327) creates ministries at the national level, government departments in the regions under the RCCs and decentralised departments in the Districts. The decentralised departments in the districts are referred to as departments of the District Assembly. It is headed by a District Coordinating Director (DCD) of the rank of a Director, although there are DCDs who are of the rank of Assistant Director particularly in the rural Districts. This is mainly due to inadequate human resource personnel in the administrative class of the DAs and also failure of administrators in accepting postings to the rural DAs. As Mabiriizi (1997:20) identified in the Uganda, some of the actors in the decentralised departments are not yet ready to accept the transfer of powers following decentralisation, particularly some line ministry officials who are strongly opposed and resistant to changes brought by the policy.

In furtherance of consolidating the decentralisation programme, the Local Government Act, Act 462 of 1993 established 16 departments for the Metropolitan Assemblies, 13 for the Municipal and 11 for the District Assemblies (Table 3.3). The principal function of these decentralised

¹⁴ For details refer to the discussions under Chapter 4.2.4

departments is to serve as the technical wing of the DAs (Mensah and Kendie, 2008). By so doing, the heads of the decentralised departments in the DAs become members of the sub-committees of the DAs. For example, the District Engineer at the Works Department is the Secretary to Works sub-committee of the Assembly. In addition, as the technical wing of the DAs, the decentralised departments implement the decisions of the DAs as well as provide quarterly reports to the Executive Committee of the Assembly. In terms of accountability of these decentralised departments to the DAs, it has received a lot of criticisms from scholars and practitioners. Aye (1994) for example, observes that a more telling blow to the personnel aspect of the decentralisation policy reform is the inability of the departments to be placed under the guidance and control of the DAs. This has resulted in the decentralised departments' owing dual allegiance both to the parent ministry through their regional offices and the DAs. However, the passage of the Local Government Service Act, Act 656 of 2003, was meant to put all the staff of the decentralised departments under the Service (see section 3.4.3), thereby alleviating the problem. Its implementation has rather been very challenging since some of the line ministries are not ready to shed off the departments under them.

Table 3.3 Decentralised Departments under Metropolitan, Municipal and District Assemblies

<i>Metropolitan</i>	<i>Municipal</i>	<i>District</i>
Central Administration	Central Administration	Central Administration
Finance	Finance	Finance
Education, Youth and Sports	Education, Youth and Sports	Education, Youth and Sports
Metropolitan Health	Municipal Health	District Health
Agriculture	Agriculture	Agriculture
Physical Planning	Physical Planning	Physical Planning
Social Welfare and Community Development	Social Welfare and Community Development	Social Welfare and community Development
Natural Resources Conservation	Natural Resources Conservation	Natural Resources Conservation
Works	Works	Works
Industry and Trade	Industry and Trade	Industry and Trade
Disaster Prevention	Disaster Prevention	Disaster Prevention
Transport	Transport	
Urban Roads	Urban Roads	
Waste Management		
Budget and Rating		
Legal		
<i>Departments: 16</i>	<i>13</i>	<i>11</i>

Source: Local Government Act, Act 462 (1993)

3.4.4 Accountability Mechanisms in the District Assembly

Although there are limited accountability mechanisms in the DAs, the 1992 Constitution makes some provisions that ought to shape the performance of the actors of the Assembly. For example Article 240 section 2 (e) states that:

“To ensure the accountability of local government authorities, people in particular local government areas shall, as far as practicable, be afforded the opportunity to participate effectively in their governance”

This provision in the 1992 Constitution is pregnant with several implications. We could look at the effective participation in the governance at the local level in such ways as the planning process, decision-making and implementation of development projects. Particularly in relation to planning, the Assemblies are required to develop a 5-year District Medium-Term Development Plans (DMTDPs) based on development priorities generated from the communities through the sub-structures. What this means is that the planning process must be conducted with inputs generated through consultative meetings or public hearings.

However, according to Ofei-Aboagye (2008:250), it is not clear that public hearings have been effectively conducted, either through lack of technical capacity of district officials, time or resources. To ensure the accountability of the DAs to the local citizens, voters and taxpayers, there are broad set of responsibilities assigned to the members of the DAs. They are required to:

1. maintain close contact with their electoral area, consult their people on issues to be discussed in the DA and collate their views, opinions and proposals;
2. present their views, opinions and proposals to the DA;
3. attend meetings of the DA and meetings of sub-committees of which they are members;
4. meet their electorates before each meeting of the DA;
5. report to their electorates the general decisions of the DA and its Executive Committee and the actions that they had taken to solve problems raised by residents in their electoral areas;
6. maintain frequent liaison with organised productive economic groupings and other persons in the district; and
7. take part in communal and development activities in the district (*Source: Republic of Ghana, 1993*).

In short, Ayee (2003) notes that the DA members are required to discharge their responsibilities with due regard to the national interest and the interest of the people in their districts. As to whether these accountability mechanisms have been followed or not remain largely unknown (Ayee, 1996, 2003; Crawford, 2008; Ofei-Aboagye, 2008; Debrah, 2009). The next section discusses the national level institutions which are linked to the decentralisation policy reforms in Ghana.

3.5 Decentralisation and National Level Institutions

At the national level, the Ministry of Local Government and Rural Development (MLGRD) is the institution responsible for formulating and carrying out the current decentralisation policy reform. The MLGRD also operates as the link institution between the local government and international donors in their decentralisation support to Ghana. It is the secretariat for coordinating the decentralisation policy implementation. However, the implementation and effective coordination of the policy requires multi-institutional participation. Apart from the actual implementation, a wide range of relevant actors are required to generate policy insights and provide policy advice and direction. These are central government and non-governmental institutions that play a significant role in the implementation of decentralisation policies, with some institutions established by the 1992 Constitution. Among the institutional actors are the ILGS, NALAG, Local Government Service, Office of the District Assemblies Common Fund, National Development Planning Commission (NDPC) and the Chieftaincy Institution.

3.5.1 The Institute of Local Government Studies (ILGS)

Ghana's decentralisation policy arrangement has benefited immensely from the establishment of the Institute of Local Government Studies (ILGS) in May 1999. Its primary function is to sustain and coordinate capacity-building initiatives in the MMDAs (Ofei-Aboagye, 2000). The Institute's mandate covers all functionaries in local government and institutions that work in partnership with the district assemblies. Therefore, it also relates to local non-governmental organisations (NGOs), central government departments and foreign organisations. The Institute has three main departments: education and training; research, advisory services and consultancy; and information and documentation services.

To further champion its capacity building mandate, the ILGS in collaboration with the Center for Settlement Studies of the KNUST has established a Faculty of Local Government Administration on

the ILGS campus. This faculty will offer Master's degrees to career public and civil servants and politicians. This is an innovation since all over Africa, inadequate human and financial resources have been identified as one of the major concerns to decentralisation (Golola, 2003). Inadequate skilled staff at the local government level puts a limit on the amount of intervention that local governments can embark on successfully ... and also implies that important aspect of accountability such as keeping the books in order, refining policies or designing new ones cannot be undertaken successfully (ibid.).

3.5.2 The National Association of Local Authorities of Ghana (NALAG)

Originally known as the National Association of Local Councils, NALAG was established following the restructuring of the local government system in 1988. Its task includes:

1. promoting the development of local government administration in Ghana;
2. protecting the rights, privileges and interests of all District Assemblies;
3. assisting in maintaining high standards of local government administration and service delivery;
4. providing a forum for discussion and exchange of ideas; and
5. co-operating with other bodies and agencies both national and international.

In effect, NALAG operates as a non-partisan association that seeks to promote the welfare of all member MMDAs (local authorities). Membership of NALAG comprises all the District Assemblies established under the Local Government Act, Act 462 of 1993. Even though the executives of NALAG include regional representatives, Kessey (1995) argues that it is far removed from the assemblies by virtue of the fact that they do not have regional and district secretariats. For those objectives to be achieved, we need to set up desk offices in the regions. Again for effective administration, members of NALAG would have to dissuade from the election of DCEs as president of the National Executive Council (NEC), the governing body of the association. In this way, NALAG as an institution will be able to contest government on issues bordering on the development of local government institution, a role that a DCE as president of NEC cannot effectively perform as the DCE is an appointee of the President.

3.5.3 The Local Government Service

Established by the Local Government Service Act of 2003, Act 656, the object of the Service is to secure the effective administration and management of local government in Ghana. Apart from

Ghana Civil Service, this Act creates a Service whose membership comprise of persons holding non-elected office in the Regional Coordinating Councils and the MMDAs, sub-Metropolitan District Councils, the Urban, Zonal, Town, and Area Councils, the Secretariat of the Local Government Service and employees of the Local Government Service. The non-elected office holders refer to the staff of the RCCs and the MMDAs. However, the position of government appointees of the MMDAs remains unclear since they seem not to belong to the Local Government Service.

The Service is governed by a body of 15 members referred to as the Local Government Service Council. As spelt out in Section 4 of the Act, the Service is to provide technical assistance to DAs and RCCs in order to enable them effectively perform their functions, and also conduct organizational and job analysis for those institutions. Although this can be seen as an acceptance of the state's commitment to decentralisation as a development tool, other scholars such as Ahwoi (2010:149) argues that the Service has many re-centralising features, which are inconsistent with the constitutional provisions of decentralisation. He further argues that the Service strengthens the control of the Minister of Local Government and Rural Development not only over the Local Government Service Council but also over the District Assemblies. Much as one cannot deny Ahwoi (2010)'s argument, the establishment of the Local Government Service when effectively performing its functions might reduce the accountability challenges that face the DAs. This is because all the staff of the Assembly will now become appointees of the Service and therefore belong to the local government. There is also the possibility of curtailing the prevailing problem of dual allegiance of staff; for instance the staffs of the Finance Department of the DAs are under their parent Ministry of Finance instead of the Local Government.

3.5.4 National Development Planning Commission (NDPC)

The National Development Planning Commission (NDPC) provides guidance and assistance to the DAs in the preparation of their district medium-term development plans (DMTDPs). The guidance describes the format of the district development plans containing the district programs and projects using the mechanism of the composite budget. A further role of the NDPC is to co-ordinate district development plans into a national development plan after the RCCs have harmonized the district development plans in their respective regions. Although the NDPC as an institution is the think-tank for the government, it has become a dumping ground for dismissed ministers of state within the last decade. A number of examples abound both in the NDC and NPP

governments. This phenomenon appears to erode the importance of the Commission for which it was set up.

3.5.5 The Office of the Administrator of the District Assemblies Common Fund

The Office of the Administrator of DACF is attached to the President's office but works directly with the Minister for Local Government and Rural Development. It has the practical task of disbursing funds on a quarterly basis to each of the districts in Ghana. It also reviews the annual formula to determine the distribution of the District Assemblies Common Fund among the 170 districts with reports submitted to Parliament for consideration and approval. The Office in accordance with Section 9 of the DACF Act 1993, Act 455, then issues the Guidelines for Utilization of the DACF in collaboration with the Ministry of Finance and in accordance with the decision of the Cabinet. The guidelines for the utilisation of DACF serve as control as well as DAs use of funds in line with the national priorities.

3.5.6 The Traditional Authorities (Chieftaincy Institution)

The institution of chieftaincy in Ghana has been recognized as a powerful institution since the colonial days. The traditional authorities who represent the chieftaincy institution are not only the custodians of the land but also they settle disputes and are regarded as the spiritual leaders of the society. The idea that the chief *represents* his people is not based on Western representational government that presupposes free elections and universal suffrage; rather, it is grounded on a social and moral order of representation vested in the office he occupies (Adjaye and Misawa, 2006). Their primary role pertains to their function as custodians of "traditional" resources, institutions and values.

The traditional authorities are found in almost every hamlet, village, town and the city in Ghana. Territories of similar traditional roots form paramountcies which are headed by paramount chiefs. The paramount chiefs have bodies known as the Regional and National House of Chiefs respectively, established by the Chieftaincy Act of 1971. According to the 1992 Constitution of Ghana, Chiefs cannot engage in active party politics, although the meaning of "active" party politics still remains unclear. Notwithstanding whatever interpretation one gives to it, because of the traditional powers that the traditional authorities hold they often influence who becomes an Assembly Member or even a Member of Parliament, particularly in the rural communities. In

reality, local representatives and MPs pay homage to traditional authorities as a way of lobbying them and their subjects (people) for support particularly during political campaign for elections. To the extent that local representatives at the DAs often consult their chiefs before they could contest for DA elections.

A domain, in which chiefs have lost influence however, is the adjudication of many civil cases hitherto adjudicated at Chiefs palace but currently often at the DAs for arbitration. This on the one hand erodes Chiefs' traditional powers and on the other hand also erodes their financial basis as finances that normally would have accrued to them by way of fines during arbitration are no longer paid to them. With the 1992 Constitution barring the Chiefs in engaging in active politics, one will argue that there is the need for a common platform of various chiefs at the local level beside the paramountcy/traditional areas where local issues will be commonly deliberated. For instance, Komenda, Edina, Eguafo and Abrem traditional areas could form a Municipal House of Chiefs where they could play an advisory role to the Municipal Assembly.

3.6 Political Constraints on Ghana's local government

This section discusses political constraints on Ghana's local government system which is characterized by "political control than political commitment" (Crawford, 2008). It focuses on center-local relations that eventually lead to the center's spillover of power to the DAs.

3.6.1 Center-Local relations

According to Mawhood (1983:21), center-local relations as seen from the national center can be summarised under four headings: political control, economic regulation, minimum standards and administrative efficiency. He argues that political control covers the government's basic need for public order and a population of local actors that supports the regime and its ideology. One instrument to control Ghana's decentralised local governments is the appointment of the DCEs and the 30 per cent of the Assembly members by the president and the extreme powers to revoke any of these appointments at the will of the President. This invariably leads to a local government that will not attempt to have a long term development strategy for the Assembly, perhaps with the exception of the "Elmina 2015 Strategy" that was developed by the then KEEA District Assembly in 2002. This probably could be described as one of the DAs that had a long term vision for the Assembly. However, it is significant to point out that the fear of the DCE being fired

without notice by the President is a major concern to the Assemblies and that ultimately affect policy initiatives by these DAs.

The Ghanaian government also exerts economic control of the districts. Even though the economic regulation from the center was intended to operate in a positive way, to guide the spending of public funds and prevent the local authorities from balance of payment problems (Mawhood, 1993) in the Assemblies and, as a whole, creating national inflation, regulatory power has been abused by the center. For instance, government of Ghana's role in the allocation of the DACF to the DAs has been quite disturbing. It has led to the government ability of setting quite high ceilings as mandatory deductions of the DACF. For example, in some cases the annual guidelines from the Ministry of Local Government and Rural Development to the Assemblies pegs the mandatory deduction from the Assembly's share of DACF as high as between 41 and 49 percent¹⁵. This phenomenon is illustrated with the 2007 Guidelines for the utilisation of the DACF (Table 3.4). The DACF which is the main source of funding for the Assemblies are stipulated to be spent in four main areas, namely economic ventures, social services, administration and environment.

Table 3.4: 2007 Guidelines for the utilisation of DACF

<i>No.</i>	<i>Activity</i>	<i>Expenditure (%)</i>
1.	Human Capacity Building	2
2.	National Youth Employment Program (NYEP)	20
3.	Self-Help Projects	5
4.	District Education Fund	2
5.	Establishments and Strengthening of Sub-District Structures	5
6.	District Response Initiative on HIV/AIDS	1
7.	Malaria Prevention	1
8.	People with Disabilities	2
9.	Sports and Culture	3
	Total	41

Source: Data from DACF Secretariat – Guidelines for the Utilisation of DACF, 2007

However, it appears that this situation will continue for long since there seem not to be any institutionalised body to challenge the central government on this matter. As stated by a key informant:

¹⁵ Reference can be made to the Guidelines for the Utilisation of DACF for the period 2003-2007.

“We were contracted by the National Association of Local Authorities of Ghana (NALAG) to work as their consultants and we studied the problems in the area of their jurisdiction. One of the issues we identified with NALAG was to test the constitutionality of MPs taking part of the DACF. Our limited understanding of the constitutional provision is that the MPs share of the Common Fund was unconstitutional. It could have been done in a particular year as an isolated case, but now it has been institutionalized and the boldness of which they had it nobody could question. Amazingly, they have taken it to another level. They now take part of HIPC fund saying they will monitor HIPC projects, they get GETFUND saying they will monitor GETFUND projects and also HIV/AIDS fund which they do not account for. Yet when we told NALAG, some of the executives thought we wanted to make the NPP government unpopular and that they did not see the need to compel central government discharge its obligations towards local government” (Interview with KAB Governance Consult, 14/07/2010).

3.6.2 Center politics and the spill over

This section discusses the spillover of Ghana’s democratic decentralisation which is meant to insulate local governments from the political whims of the center. This has largely been contested with the reason that politics at the center tends to spill over to the districts in many forms. Here I illustrate with a publication (see Figure 3.3) in the Ghanaian Times of 2005.

Fig. 3.3 Center politics spills over to KEEA



Source: The Ghanaian Times: June 3, 2005

This article describes how, with the exception of the Presiding Member, the entire government appointees of the then KEEA District Assembly were dismissed by the President. During the confirmation of the President’s nominee for the position of the District Chief Executive for the

KEEA Assembly in June 2005, 15 government appointees were seen to be acting as “rebels”. What this meant was that these appointees had planned to vote against the president’s nominee for the DCE position. This is contrary to the perception of the Center since the appointees owe their positions to the President and therefore they were expected to demonstrate their loyalty. This apparent “disloyalty” shown by the appointees to the President resulted in their dismissals. Just before the confirmation process of the DCE in the KEEA Assembly Hall began, the 15 rebels were dismissed by the Regional Minister and the Minister of Local Government and Rural Development who were present for the confirmation exercise on behalf of the President.

This act raises two legitimate concerns. First, are the government appointees to Assemblies there to accept directives from the center without questioning and two; are the government appointees upwardly accountable to the center or downwardly/politically accountable to the local citizens, voters and taxpayers? It is however, significant to note that, there have been occasions where the President’s nominee for the position of the DCE has been rejected by the Assembly, often spearheaded by government appointees. For example in April/May 2001, two nominated DCEs in the Central region for the then Awutu-Efutu-Senya and Assin respectively were rejected outright by the Assembly for failing to secure 50 per cent of the votes of Assembly members present and voting. Among the reasons attributed to the rejection of the nominees vary from political, ethnic to chieftaincy. For example, in the case of the Awutu-Efutu-Senya District Assembly, it was revealed that whilst the nominee was seen as a supporter to one of the chieftaincy factions in Winneba, the capital of the district, a large number of the Assembly members including the appointees who were required to vote for his endorsement belonged to other faction.

Often, the role of the Regional Minister in ensuring that majority (if not all) of the President’s nominees for the MMDCEs positions in that particular region get approved is very paramount. Apart from the fact that it is seen as competition among the Regional Ministers, it is also used as a measure of a capable Regional Minister who has been able to lobby the DA members on behalf of the President. Politically, it also measures the type of relationship existing between the Regional Minister and the local executives of the political party in power. The argument here is that if the relationship between the Regional Minister and the executives of the political party were cordial, they will all agree on the candidates that had been submitted to the President’s office and therefore will all lobby for the endorsement of the nominee since both parties were involved in the selection process. These and other issues will continue to remain constraints of the local

government as we continue with the government appointee system in the District Assemblies in Ghana.

3.6.3 Decentralisation and Conflicts

With decentralised local government in Ghana, two important sources of conflicts can be identified and they relate to power and money. In recent years, there have been reported cases of DCE-MP conflict, DCE-DA, DCE-traditional authorities and the DCE-PM conflict. In the KEEA Municipality for instance, it was reported that the DCE claims she represents the President in the area whilst the MP sees himself as the representative of the people. This has resulted in the two personalities only appearing in public as if they “get on” but actually not. Commenting on the sources of the conflicts, an interviewee informed me:

“When you go deep into the conflict where it occurs the MCE also is trying to become an MP you see [.....] I mean when that interest is there then she tries to suppress the MP so that the MP becomes very unpopular before the electorates. If the DCE wants to stand as an MP then he/she must resign and contest; in that case you cut short your term of office if the primaries for the elections is conducted a year before the end of the term ... if you lose that is your problem. But where an MCE continues in the office and still be campaigning as a member of parliament is worrying. Another area of conflict is the MP’s share of the DACF. Because the MP’s share of the fund is routed through the DA, it is seen as “free money” to the MP. In this case the MCE who wants to contest the MP seat might refuse to release the fund to the MP for development projects”. (Interview with Assembly member, Elmina: 13/08/2010).

This interview has succinctly described how the issue of power and money induces conflicts between the DCE and the MP and this does not matter whether the two actors belong to the same political party or not. The consequences of these conflicts often lead to abuse of office by any of the actors by way of squandering monies to protect their seats rather than using them for development projects.

In connection with the DCE-traditional authorities’ conflict, it often occurs when the DCEs see themselves as having political power and therefore they could use resources such as land for government projects with or without the consent of the traditional authorities. However, the role of chiefs as custodians of land serves as the fulcrum of authority in rural and urban areas of Ghana since “land is one vital resource that determines the patterns of social and economic exchange” (Berry, 2001). As development takes place in space and among people, land remains central resource for development projects as well as for local communities, and that the influence and

power of chiefs in Ghana continue to grow. It is particularly so when the laws of Ghana empower the Chiefs as custodians of stool lands. For example, Article 267 (1) of the 1992 Constitution states:

“All stool lands in Ghana shall vest in the appropriate stool on behalf of and in trust for the subjects of the stool in accordance with customary law and usage”.

Another aspect of the conflict as a result of the decentralisation policy reform is the underlying tension between elected Assembly Members in most rural areas and Chiefs. In these rural areas, elected Assembly members could summon community members to meetings without the knowledge of the Chiefs, of which the Chiefs do not take kindly to such a practice. Such a practice is considered as a usurpation of chiefs’ powers by Assembly members.

Additionally, the concentration of power in the hands of an unelected DCE is further problematic from a democratic perspective, given a lack of checks and balances (Ayee, 1994)¹⁶. The conflicts between the DCE and the PM have been associated with control of the Assembly and its resources. Even though the PMs in the DAs are to serve as the counter forces to the DCEs, Ayee (2000: 22-3) states that, “In law and practice, the Presiding Member (PM) and the Member of Parliament (MP) do not represent any counter balance to the dominance of the DCE”.

It is argued that the District Assembly may seek to temper the actions of the DCE, but that would appear instead that the role of locally elected DA members is undercut by the power of the centrally appointed DCE. Eriksen et al. (1999: 102 cited in Crawford, 2004) confirm that the DCE has almost a free hand in exercising his/her authority at the District Assembly. And such a practice tends to have an inherent principle of administrative deconcentration in contrast to the democratic decentralisation which has been espoused by the Local Government Act, Act 462 of 1993. This again raises the question of whether the current system of unelected DCEs is upwardly accountable to central government or downward to the local citizens, voters and taxpayers.

3.7 Summary of the chapter

This chapter has given an historical account of the development of decentralised local government in Ghana. I have illustrated that the development in Ghana falls in line with the pendulum model of the decentralisation policy reforms and local government in Africa in general. The picture vividly

¹⁶ See Chapter 4 for the role, mandate and responsibilities of DCE, MP, PM, Assembly members and other actors of the Assembly

illustrated in the chapter has confirmed that decentralisation is a “process that unfolds over time” (Grindle, 2007); and that of Ghana has gone through a long tortuous journey which was not embraced easily or quickly.

The chapter has also shown that Ghana’s decentralisation history since the colonial days is a story of repeated and usually successful efforts to (re)centralise power instead of decentralising power and resources to the sub-national level. This has at various times resulted in struggle for power between the central government and traditional authorities that generally tended to marginalize chiefs. A clear case in point is the era of Nkrumah’s CPP government and the traditional authorities which became a “battle of control for the countryside” (Rathbone, 2000). In this way, political accountability of the local governments became messy since the local governments were turned into local propaganda tools of the various governments. The pendulum model of the decentralisation policy from the colonial era to present was also demonstrated in the way where partisan politics in the local government arena were encouraged at one point in time or another depending on which government is in power, whether military or civilian.

On the one hand, I have demonstrated in this chapter that the 1992 Constitution of Ghana has provided practical issues around which the state shows its commitment to decentralisation and that, Chapters 6 and 20 explicitly lay the legal framework for the decentralisation and local government in Ghana. Although the District Assembly is the institution within the district which is responsible for planning, implementation and management of development programs, it is clear that they have an arduous task to perform as development agents and particularly as the highest political, administrative, planning and rating authorities at the local level. This is again amplified by the dual allegiance role of the decentralised departments of the Assembly. However, there are a wide range of relevant actors that generate policy insights and provide advice and direction to the District Assemblies apart from the Ministry of Local Government and Rural Development which is responsible for formulating and carrying out the current decentralisation policy reforms.

On the other hand, this chapter also illuminates how the center-local relations have often led to political confrontations at the center, at least their results, and have tended to spill over to the District Assemblies. This has vividly been illustrated with the dismissal of 15 government appointees who were perceived as “rebels” from the then KEEA District Assembly in 2005 during the approval of the President-appointed DCE.

Finally, the chapter has also shown that in ensuring accountability of the DAs to the local citizens, voters and taxpayers, there are broad sets of responsibilities assigned to the local representatives of the DAs. The DA members are to discharge their responsibilities having due regard to the national interest and the interest of the local actors in the DAs. As to whether these accountability mechanisms have been followed in practice, given the contestations, struggles and conflicts among the various actors in the decentralisation arena, are largely unknown and therefore remain the subject of this study. The next chapter presents the methodology employed in the study.

CHAPTER FOUR

THE RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

4.1 Introduction

Having presented the conceptual perspectives on decentralisation and the decentralisation policy reforms in Ghana in the two previous chapters, this chapter presents how the research was conducted – data generated, analysed and interpreted. The first section of the chapter highlights the data gathering techniques used in the field. This includes sources of data, training of field assistants, and instruments used for the survey. It further presents ethical issues that guided the study and the socio-political environment at the time of the fieldwork. It ends with the data processing and the analysis approaches used in the study.

4.2 Research Design and Methods

This section discusses the research design and the methods used for the study. This research employed a case study method (Yin, 1984) in order to gain a good understanding of the decentralisation policy reform in Ghana. The case study method also helps to get a detailed understanding of local politics and how it shapes political accountability of local government. Kessey (1995:14) puts it that a case study method is “chosen to enable an appreciable level of detailed investigation within the resources available”. Similarly, Stein (1948 cited in Adedeji and Hyden 1974: 21) is categorical that “it is useful for the student ... to become immersed in the multifarious aspects of the process so that an awareness of its richness and variety becomes second nature”. In the light of this case study, both qualitative and quantitative methods were employed and were based on an empirical field research. The rationale for both the qualitative and quantitative method of study was to ensure that the weakness of one method will be offset by the strengths of the other (Ellis, 2000; Young, 2006).

4.2.1 Entering the Field

Before actively engaging in the fieldwork, I was offered the opportunity to present my research proposal at the Faculty of Social Sciences, University of Cape Coast (UCC) in May 2010. This was meant to clear some “clouds” surrounding my intended fieldwork. The clouds could be

summarised as the dilemma of the politician and the task of a researcher earlier discussed in the introductory chapter. The main questions were: As a known politician in the locality, how was that going to affect the scientific research? Again, to what extent was I going to guarantee the objectivity of the research? These were very critical questions that came from the audience after my presentation. It however enabled me to have a better insight as to how I could enter the field. Two main suggestions from the audience were that, first, in addition to my original research proposal which was only a qualitative method of research; I needed to employ field assistants to undertake a survey that would be quantitative as well. In this way, the methods would complement each other whilst reducing possible biases from the qualitative interviews that I personally conducted.

Second, there was the need to design consent forms for both the respondents and the key informants. This enabled them to appreciate that the research was primarily for academic purposes; and that they (research assistants, respondents and key informants) voluntarily participated. Also they were assured of confidentiality and anonymity of any information that would be provided (see Appendices 4-6). The presentation at the UCC was very useful as I received good ideas as well as constructive criticisms for the intended work.

Permission to enter the communities was obtained through letters to the traditional leaders (*Nananom*) and as *Akan* culture demands, bottles of schnapps¹⁷ drinks had to be added as a matter of protocol. Personal contacts were made with the Municipal Chief Executive before the Municipal Coordinating Director, the Finance Officer and other officers of the Municipality were interviewed. These personal contacts were done in order to gain the “blessing” of the MCE for the interviews not only to be granted but also as a way of paying courtesies to the MCE. These earlier personal contacts and the letters were in addition to an introductory letter issued by the Coordinator of ZEF, University of Bonn, indicating that I was a doctoral student undertaking my research in the KEEA Municipality (see Appendix 7). With this approach, a number of the respondents from the communities assisted the field team to conduct the interviews and also administer the questionnaire (see appendices 1-3) on schedule. However, in spite of all these tools, there was an initial shock:

¹⁷ Schnapps are a brand of dry gin originally produced from the Netherlands which has traditionally become the most appropriate and “official” drink to the Chief’s palace, particularly in the Southern Ghana.

"I recall the day I went to interview both the Municipal Finance Officer (MFO) and the Municipal Coordinating Director (MCD) of the KEEA Municipal Assembly. The interview with the MFO came off first. As it was early in the morning, 9.43am, a number of his staff entered his office to confer with the boss their assignment for the day. Earlier, the MFO had consented for the interviews to be audio-recorded. But anytime a staff entered the office, I had to pause the recording. This made the MFO lock his door for the remaining period that the interview lasted in order to avoid further obstruction. After the interview, I moved straight to the MCD's office. With the lesson learnt from the interview with MFO, after the MCD had voluntarily accepted to participate in the interview, I requested if his office could be closed for the interview period. He accepted my request and the interview went on uninterrupted. Thereafter, I headed for Komenda, which is about 20km from Elmina, to conduct my third scheduled interview for the day with a government-appointed Assembly member. The interview went on quite well. After that he asked, is it the same kind of interview you conducted with the MCD? I responded in the affirmative, and then he continued, did you lock the door? I again said yes and then the shock. Oh, I see why they are saying that you came to plot a coup against the Municipal Chief Executive (MCE). Actually there was no coup plotted at the MCD's office. At this point, I felt like a stranger in my own backyard. And as a researcher it reminded me to reposition myself in order to understand the vested interests of local politics". (Field notes, Informal discussion: 18/08/2010). This is what Bayart (1993) refers to as the "politics of survival" or the "politics of the belly" in African states.

4.2.2 Data and Sources

The study made use of both primary and secondary data that were collected in Ghana between April 2010 and January 2011. With respect to the secondary sources of data, it included Ministry of Local Government and Rural Government (MLGRD); Institute of Local Government Studies (ILGS); KAB Governance Consult; Department of Political Science, University of Ghana; Decentralisation Secretariat and the National Association of Local Authorities of Ghana (NALAG) at the national level. At the regional level were Central Regional Coordinating Council and the Electoral Commission. At the local level were data from the KEEA Municipal Assembly including the Central Administration, Electoral Commission, Information Services Department and the decentralised departments such as Education, Health and Agriculture. Both published and unpublished sources of data provided the base for the secondary data in addition to journal articles and related publications retrieved from the internet. The following documents were the main sources of information:

1. The 1992 Constitution of Ghana;
2. Local Government Laws, Bulletins and Model Standing Orders;
3. Population Census Reports;
4. General and District Assembly Electoral Results;

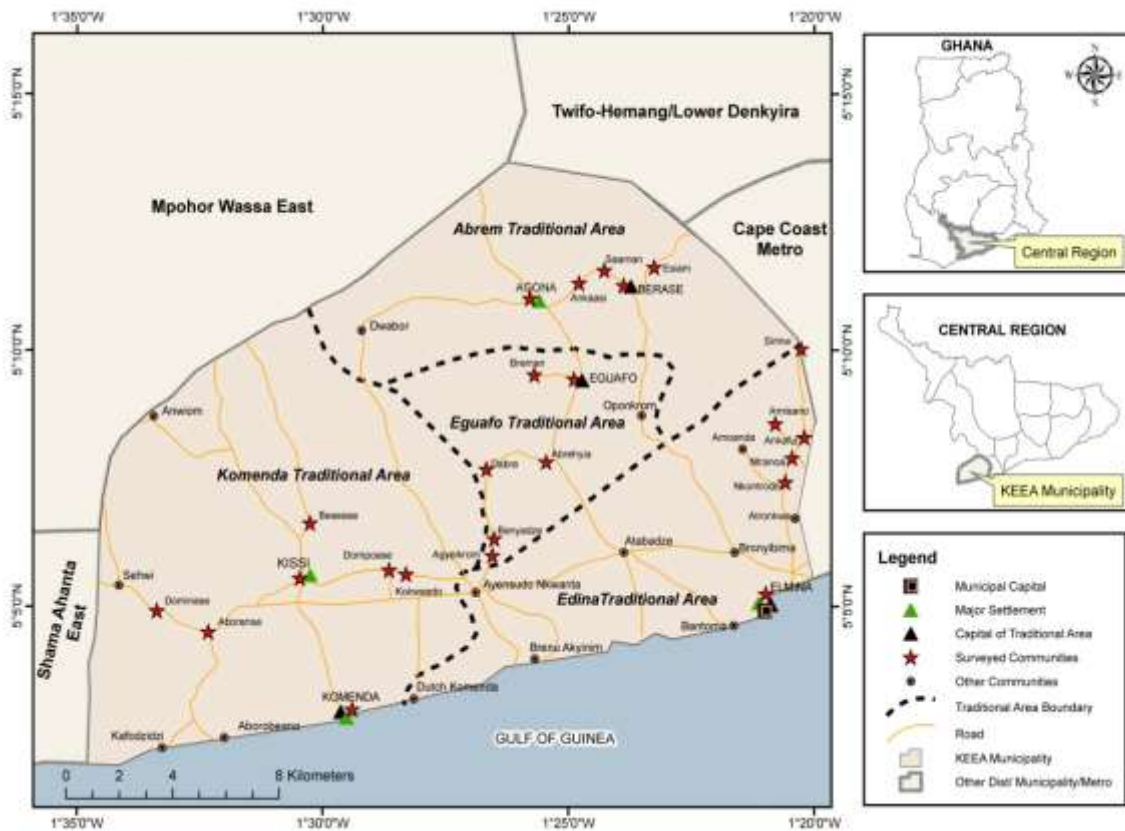
5. Monitoring Reports on MMDAs in the Central Region;
6. Elmina 2015 Strategy document; and
7. KEEA MA Annual Reports.

Since this study adopted an actor-oriented approach (see section 4.6) which sees “meanings, values and interpretations as culturally constructed (Long, 2001:50), the primary data collection exercise used multiple methods including participant observation, interviews and group discussions. The interviews were mainly grouped into two, namely the In-Depth Interviews (IDI) and interview schedule (survey). The IDIs were conducted in the Municipality and Accra, the national capital and administrative headquarters where all the Ministries and the University of Ghana are located. The IDIs made use of key informants from various institutions such as traditional (chieftaincy), local government etc. whose permission was obtained through personal contacts. On the average, IDIs and the survey lasted for forty and thirty five minutes respectively.

The quantitative study (survey) was conducted based on the assumption that local actors’ perception might be affected by location, availability of information and experience (Ayee, 1996; Thomi, 2000). As a result, the perception of the Municipal Assembly’s performance based on the political accountability issues investigated might differ by different localities. In order to consider this aspect, communities purposively selected for the survey was chosen based on the following categories (see Fig. 4.5):

1. Municipal capital as center of information;
2. Three other urban settlements of major economic importance besides the municipal capital;
3. Four settlements along the major roads in the Municipality; and
4. Sixteen settlements in remote rural areas.

Fig. 4.1: Map of Surveyed Communities in the KEEA Municipality



Source: GIS/Cartography Unit, Department of Geography and Regional Planning, UCC

4.2.3 Training of Field Assistants and Pre-testing of Instruments

After the interview guide and schedule respectively have been finalized, a team of five field assistants who were selected from the Institute for Development Studies (IDS), University of Cape Coast (UCC) were trained in the art of conducting a social science survey. Consent was first obtained from these field assistants before the training sessions were conducted in two-half days in July 2010. The main items discussed were concepts and issues in undertaking the survey and the use of consent forms. The training also involved the translation of concepts and words into the *Fanti* language, a predominant local language of the people of the KEEA Municipality. The assumption is that some of the interviewees might be unable to speak the English language and therefore meant to ensure common understanding of the concepts in the *Fanti* language. In order to ensure data accuracy, quality and reliability, these field assistants (four males and a female) who were all university graduates were primarily selected based on their expertise since they have

earlier been involved in this kind of research with the IDS. Another criterion was their ability to speak both English and *Fanti*. Thereafter, a date was fixed for the pre-testing of the instruments. Essentially, the pre-testing was to test the suitability of the questionnaire, or to test the target group's attitudes or reactions to the impending survey (Kumekpor, 2002). In addition, the pre-testing was also meant to test the instruments that were to be used for the main field survey, then correct all the anomalies or problems that may arise. Based on the similar characteristics of the KEEA Municipality, residents from the Cape Coast Metropolis were used for the pre-testing of the research instruments. The pre-testing was important in providing useful feedback on the field survey and therefore called for reframing of some of the questions to bring out their meanings clearly.

4.2.4 Key Informants' Interview and Survey Instruments

The main research instruments used for the data collection were questionnaire, group discussions, workshop and participatory observation. For the key informants interviews, interview guides and semi-structured questionnaire were used to solicit views from them. Some of the questions were probing in nature as they were meant to gain detailed additional information from them. For instance, after some key informants had been asked to share their personal experience on decentralisation and political accountability of local government in Ghana, there were questions such as: "could you tell me more about ---"; you mentioned situation X earlier, could you tell me more in detail, what exactly happened"; and "can you recall a situation ---". The response success rate was exceptionally high as all the key informants except one scheduled for the study was available for the interview.

The exceptional case was the Member of Parliament (MP) for the Municipality who could not be reached to concretize our appointment after the initial discussion with him on my research project during the Komenda *Nyeyi* festival which both of us attended. But that was understandable. This is the MP who had contested with me and won in the December 2008 elections; and that could be described as the "display of local politics". However, since it required that an MP had to be interviewed in order to complete the cycle, I interacted with three other MPs from various parts of Ghana. Even though they were informal conversational interviews, they were very resourceful, since it gave me the opportunity to solicit other views from the MPs from Northern Ghana.

Additionally, the quick review of the entire completed questionnaire during the research period made it possible for possible gaps to be filled before the end of the fieldwork.

A structured questionnaire was used for the survey in order to solicit views from the respondents. The questionnaire had a preamble introducing the research assistants and the objectives of the survey. This was to assuage fears of any political motives. Then it had five main sections. Section one was for the personal data, where questions such as age, sex, level of education, current occupation and religion were solicited from the respondents. This was meant to know the backgrounds of the respondents. Section two dealt with soliciting views on local electoral system, whilst three and four dealt with public access to information and consultative meetings respectively. The last section, section five had what was termed local priority goals; in effect soliciting views in prioritizing the key areas in the previous sections, mainly open questions.

Within the standardized questionnaire of the survey in sections two to five, respondents were asked to rate their responses on a likert scale on the basis of common prejudices of respondents. This ranged for example from “strongly agree”, “agree”, “neither agree nor disagree”, “disagree” to “strongly disagree”. As Thomi (2000:86) argues, this approach was chosen in order to avoid courtesy answers and to ease or facilitate a more critical assessment from the respondents.

There were three main group discussions during the field research period. The first one took place at the Institute of Local Government Studies (ILGS) in Accra where the Director and seven other researchers on her staff had about one and half hours with me to discuss my methodology. The discussions were very fruitful since it not only enabled me to assess the research instruments already employed but also allowed me space to sharpen the tools for the remaining interviews. The others were workshops that were held in Elmina and Kumasi respectively. The workshop in Kumasi was organised by the Faculty of Local Government Administration of the Institute of Local Government Studies (ILGS) and the Centre for Settlement Studies of the Kwame Nkrumah University of Science and Technology (KNUST). Under the theme *Accelerating National Development through Decentralisation and Good Local Governance*, I had the opportunity to present the emerging findings of my field work. This allowed me the opportunity to share with a wide range of relevant actors such as academics and practitioners including the Minister for Local Government and Rural Development, Hon. Yieleh Chireh.

The Elmina workshop consisted of queens, religious leaders, educationists, beauticians, Assembly Members and the three women organizers of NPP, NDC, and CPP, the three main political parties in the Municipality. This workshop primarily was to cross-check views on the local actors' perception of political accountability within the democratic decentralisation in Ghana.

Plate 4.1: Workshop in Elmina



Source: Own Photo: Fieldwork, 2010

Plate 4.1 shows some of the participants of the workshop in Elmina. Workshops like focus group discussions place the individual in a group context. In the individual interviews, the individual usually has the freedom to express his or her opinions without challenge. In the group context, however, individual's opinions and beliefs can be examined or contested by others in the group. This technique is particularly useful for exploring actors' knowledge and experiences and can be used to examine not only what people think but also how they think and why they think that way (Kitzinger, 1995). In this workshop, I was able to elicit their views on local actors' understanding of political accountability of local government in the KEEA Municipality.

Additionally, workshops enable the researcher to explore how meanings and experiences are negotiated and contested between actors. It also provides efficient way of comparing the different views from different actors. Therefore, workshops are good way of testing the attitudes of one actor or group of actors that they display towards another (Limb & Dwyer, 2001). Finally, my participatory observation technique led me to observe the 2010 District Assembly Elections. My

observation began with the filing of nominations, mountain of platforms¹⁸ by the aspirants and the elections. These are what Ostrom et al., (1994) refers to as the “action arenas”. These were different actors with different agenda, interests, and positions engaging the communities in order to influence them for their votes.

4.2.5 Sampling, Sample size and their Characteristics

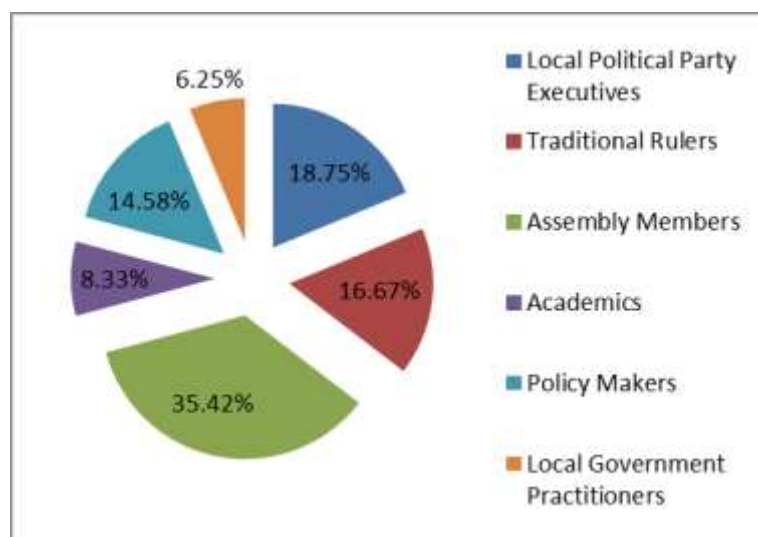
A purposive sampling method was used to select the key informants. In all, 48 key informants were interviewed. These comprise local political leaders, traditional rulers, Assembly Members, academics, policy makers and local government practitioners¹⁹; the distribution of which is shown in Figure 4.2. It shows that 85.42 per cent of the key informants comprising local political party executives, traditional rulers, Assembly Members and policy makers are all within the KEEA Municipality. Only 14.58 per cent of the key informants namely the academics and the local government practitioners’ are however outside the Municipality.

The academics that were purposely selected for the in-depth interview are those who have published extensively on decentralisation and local government in Ghana. This includes researchers from the Political Science Department of the University of Ghana, Ghana Institute of Management and Public Administration (GIMPA) and the Institute of Local Government Studies (ILGS). They were identified mainly by using the snowball method. On the other hand, the selection of the Assembly members as key informants was based on a number of factors. The first stage looked at the stratification of the Municipality into the four traditional areas, Komenda, Edina, Eguafu and Abrem respectively in order to ensure that all major demographic segments of the population are covered.

¹⁸ I use this term to mean the act of campaigning by the candidates contesting the Assembly elections

¹⁹ Although the policy makers, who are staff of the Municipality as well as the Assembly Members could qualify in broader terms as local government practitioners, this term was used for those from the Decentralisation Secretariat of the MLGRD, NALAG and ILGS for easy identification.

Fig. 4.2: Distribution of Key Informants



Source: Field survey, 2010

Also there was the need to involve Assembly Members from both the urban and rural communities. Then a purposive sampling method was used to select 17 out of the total 52 Assembly Members as key informants. The Assembly Members interviewed consisted of 12 elected and 5 appointed Members respectively (see Table 4.1). The selection of the elected members from the four traditional areas was not proportionally represented. Rather, it was based on a number of factors. These were the length of period an Assembly Member has served at the Assembly, attendance at assembly meetings, how active the Assembly Members are in legislative business and also contribution during assembly debates. This data was provided by the Presiding Member of the Assembly. In this way, the Assembly members selected were perceived to have some appreciable knowledge (see Thomi, 2000) in decentralisation and local government issues. Although all the appointed Assembly members were new in the current Assembly since they were all appointed after the 2008 general elections, three out of the five had served in the Assembly previously as elected Assembly members.

Table 4.1: Assembly Members' Sample

<i>Traditional area</i>	<i>Assembly Members</i>		<i>Total</i>	<i>Sample</i>		<i>Total</i>	<i>% of Sample</i>
	<i>El.</i>	<i>App.</i>		<i>El.</i>	<i>App.</i>		
Komenda	11	5	16	4	2	6	35.3
Edina	17	9	26	4	2	6	35.3
Eguafo	3	0	3	2	0	2	11.8
Abrem	5	2	7	2	1	3	17.6
TOTAL	36	16	52	12	5	17	100.0

Source: Field Survey, 2010

Note: El=Elected; App=Appointed

Regarding the survey for the quantitative aspect of the study, a random sampling design was applied. Although the estimated population of the KEEA Municipality is 141,557, the issues under investigation merited that the target population must be a voter or a tax payer, and therefore the target minimum age that was considered for the interview was 18 years (see 1992 Constitution of Ghana). With the estimated 70 per cent of the population who are eligible, that is, 18 years and above, the required sample size is 384, based on the population proportion of 0.5 and the degree of accuracy set at 0.05 (Sarantakos, 2005:173). According to Sarantakos (2005), this statistical method employed is to define the “right” size of the sample of the target population in order to ensure representativeness. However, since this study is mainly based on qualitative data, in addition to constraints with time and finance, a sample size of 250 was randomly interviewed from the Municipality; the proportional distribution of which is shown in Table 4.2.

The distribution of the respondents was based on the estimated proportion of population per traditional area. As shown in Table 4.2, as a result of the proportional representation, out of the total of 250 respondents, Komenda had an allocation of 75, Elmina 100, Eguafo 35 and Abrem 40 respondents respectively. They were selected through systematic sampling.

Table 4.2: Selection of Survey Respondents

<i>Traditional Area</i>	<i>No. of Respondents</i>	<i>Proportion of KEEA population (%)</i>	<i>No. of Selected Communities</i>	
			<i>Urban</i>	<i>Rural</i>
Komenda	75	30	2	5
Edina	100	40	1	5
Eguafo	35	14	0	6
Abrem	40	16	1	4
Total	250	100	4	20

Source: Field survey, 2010

The background characteristics of the respondents that comprise locality of respondents, age, status, sex, level of education, religion, place of birth and occupation are summarised in Table 4.4. Whilst 55.6 per cent of the surveyed sample is from the rural communities, 44.4 per cent are urban. This depicts the relative rural nature of the Municipality (GSS, 2000). As shown in Table 4.3, 52.3 per cent of the respondents were males whilst 47.2 percent were females.

Table 4.3: Characteristics of Survey Respondents

	<i>Category</i>	<i>Frequency(N=250)</i>	<i>Percentage</i>
Locality	Urban	111	44.4
	Rural	139	55.6
Status	Youth	152	60.8
	Adult	98	39.2
Sex	Male	132	52.8
	Female	118	47.2
Level of Education	None	27	10.8
	Basic	133	53.2
	Secondary	54	21.6
	Tertiary	36	14.4
Religion	Christian	225	90.0
	Moslem	16	6.4
	Traditional	9	3.6
Place of Birth	KEEA	197	78.8
	Other district in CR	26	10.4
	Outside CR	25	10.0
	Outside Ghana	2	0.8
Occupation	Traders	75	30.0
	Artisans	48	19.2
	Farmers	39	15.6
	Fishermen	20	8.0
	Students	27	10.8
	Government Workers	29	11.6
	Others	12	4.8
		Others	

Source: Field survey, 2010. Note: CR is Central Region; N=total number of respondents

Furthermore 60.8 per cent of the respondents fall within the age 35 who are classified as youth²⁰ whilst 39.2 per cent are adults. This result indicates the youthfulness of the people in the Municipality. Looking at the educational background of the respondents, an appreciable

²⁰ According to the 2007 Ghana's National Youth Employment Programme, youth is defined as age between 18 and 35.

proportion of 53.2 per cent had only basic education and 10.8 per cent had none; whilst 21.6 per cent had secondary education and 14.4 per cent are of tertiary status. The religious affiliation of respondents, as captured by the survey, reveals that 90 per cent are Christians whilst Moslems 6.4 per cent. It also revealed that almost all the respondents were born in Ghana; and this comprises of 78.8 per cent who were born in the KEEA Municipality, 10.4 per cent born in other districts in the Central Region whilst 10 per cent were born outside the region but in Ghana. This implies that the perception of political accountability of local government as viewed by local actors largely reflect the views of the actors born in the KEEA Municipality.

4.3 Ethical Issues Addressed

Issues with accountability have always been associated with political witch hunting not only in the KEEA Municipality in particular but in Ghana in general, notwithstanding the factors under consideration. For that matter, people will either decline to speak or speak with caution particularly at the local level where the implementation of state policies often rested with middle or local-level administrators, who found themselves in a critical position (Migdal, 1988 in Laube, 2007:26). We also need to acknowledge the fact that “local politics” will be at play within this local political arena as alluded to in the introductory chapter, particularly considering the researcher’s earlier political position in the locality.

In order to assuage these fears, consent forms were designed and signed by both the research assistants and the respondents. First of all, it was important for them to read the contents, understand before accepting to participate in the research. The research assistants were also required to translate to those who were unable to read. Basically the respondents were to understand that participation was voluntary and also the study was entirely for academic purposes without any political undertones. In this way, respondents were free to participate and also their responses, to the best of their knowledge, were right and objective. Having cleared these bothering issues the field work took off with a high sense of confidence.

4.4 Socio-Political Environment during Fieldwork

At the time of the fieldwork, the main issues dominating the news in Ghana were as follows:

- (1) The 2010 FIFA World Cup in South Africa: Ghana as a football loving country participated in the 2010 FIFA World Cup that took place between June 11 and July 11, 2010. The

national football team, the Black Stars, was able to make it to the last eight (8) out of the thirty two (32) nations that participated in the tournament.

- (2) The NPP Presidential Congress: The main opposition party, NPP, had settled for its presidential candidate for the 2012 general elections on August 7, 2010. This was a very historic process of electing a flag bearer of a political party with about 115,000 delegates that formed an electoral college. It is historic because for the first time in the political history of Ghana and Africa, party delegates in 230 constituencies across one country held separate contests on the same day to select a presidential candidate for a general election.
- (3) The 2010 National Housing and Population Census: As mandated by the Government of Ghana to undertake a Population and Housing Census every ten years, the 2010 Population and Housing Census took off in earnest on September 26, 2010. The Census Night, September 26, 2010 witnessed a number of activities throughout Ghana. In a number of communities in the KEEA Municipality, some of the activities on the Census Night included fireworks, bonfires, brass band music, blowing of sirens and ringing of church bells. This is as a result of the fact that this Census Night was very special and that residents in Ghana were to be conscious that all the information required by the enumerators will be referenced to the Census Night.

It is important to note that this socio-political environment at the time of the fieldwork culminated largely to what I have described as field challenges in the next section.

4.5 Field Challenges

A number of challenges were encountered during the fieldwork. The 2010 FIFA World Cup in South Africa, NPP polling agents' attendance to political rallies for the party's primaries coupled with the 2010 Population and Housing Census caused some of the interviews to be postponed. This culminated in delays in both the in-depth interviews and the survey. Again, the enormity of problems associated with political accountability of local government cannot be doubted, particularly with staff of the Assembly such as Municipal Finance Officer providing information to a "politician turned researcher". As a result, a number of the staff particularly those of the decentralised departments in the Municipality spoke with caution. This was in addition to the vested interests of local politics within the KEEA Municipal Assembly.

In terms of finance, numerous trips to the Ministries and the Department of Political Science in the University of Ghana in Accra coupled with the cost of accommodation in Accra became quite burdensome. Also the researcher had to cope with a huge financial outlay during the field interviews and the resultant transcriptions of the audio-recorded data.

Furthermore, there was a semblance of research-fatigue in the KEEA Municipality. Since the Municipality is close to the UCC campus, a number of students conduct their research projects there. This had led to complaints by a number of residents any time they are confronted with such a scenario. In an interview a leading figure in a rural community close to Elmina, expressed his frustration in this way:

“You researchers always come here to ask us questions for your project work. You only use us for your degrees and after that we do not hear from you again; meanwhile with the exception of you, a lot of the people who come here are not from the KEEA Municipality. Still we do not have any improvement in our communities; I wish you had been here last week when it rained heavily; this road was rendered impassable. Will you be different from them?” (Interview in Elmina-Atonkwa: 10/08/2010)

This was partly due to the time consuming nature of such interviews and the fact that in my case the leading figure in this community had an appointment with me just after a long meeting with the community about the impending Population and Housing Census. However, in spite of the challenges encountered in the field during the data collection, it must be emphasized that the quality of the data was not compromised; the data collected were reliable and therefore appropriate for the study.

4.6 Data Processing and Analysis approaches

Data processing including coding, data entry and analysis was facilitated with the help of the Statistical Package for the Social Scientists (SPSS) software. This was carried out for the quantitative analysis. A code book was purposely designed to assist this process. The SPSS facilitated the generation of simple descriptive statistical measures such as the cross-tabulation for the categorical data. It also led to the production of relevant charts, graphs, tables and pie charts. The qualitative analysis took the form of transcribing recorded tape, content analysis of interviews and documents such as newspapers and with the use of NVIVO software. This software enabled the transcribed data sorted into distinctive categories of the respondents as well as keeping track of the specific themes of local electoral system, public access to information and consultative meetings.

On the other hand, two approaches formed the basis for the data collection and analysis of the data. These are the actor-oriented approach and historical institutionalism.

The Actor-Oriented Approach

A number of local actors are shaping political accountability of local government within the context of the ongoing democratic decentralisation in Ghana. In the KEEA Municipal Assembly these are the policy makers and the Assembly Members. In this study, though the local actors are inter-related, it could be divided as higher (macro) and lower (micro) levels. The MCE, MP, and local government officials are classified as macro level whilst the Assembly members (both elected and appointed) with their Unit Committees are at the micro level. In order to understand how these various actors of local government are shaping the political accountability in the KEEA Municipality, an actor-oriented approach is deemed most suitable. Like Aviles Irahola who found the actor-oriented approach equally suitable in her study *Popular Participation, Decentralisation and Local Power Relation in Bolivia*²¹, the actor-oriented approach, first, allows us to analyse the role of social actors and their ability to re-shape development interventions within the constraining and enabling social and political conditions (Irahola, 2005:18). In this sense, social actors are not depicted as simply disembodied social categories (based on class or some other classifying criteria) or passive recipients of intervention, but as active participants who process information, and strategise in their dealings with various local actors as well as with outside institutions and personnel (Long and Long, 1992:22-23). Such outside institutions and personnel that fall within the study are the Regional Coordinating Council, Ministry of Local Government, the traditional authorities and the academic.

Following Long and Long (1992), the local actors have constraints, abilities, weaknesses, responsibilities, interests and obligations; and all these lead to series of decisions that they take in the Municipal Assembly. Second, because of the complexity of the nature of decisions taken daily at the Municipal Assembly, it reveals meanings to daily definitions of development issues by local actors. The fact is also that the policy decisions require that they are consistent with the technical and financial resources available at the KEEA Municipal Assembly. Thirdly, it analyses actor linkages and their impact on the decentralisation policy options.

²¹ Denis Lucy Aviles Irahola is a Center for Development Research (ZEF), University of Bonn alumnus.

According to Long (2001), we view interventions as a multiple reality made up of differing cultural perceptions and social interests, and constituted by the ongoing social and political struggles that take place between the various social actors involved. This study then looks at the process of acquiring power and the exercise of power by the local representatives, their interactions with local citizens and how this interaction between various actors affects accountability.

The actor-oriented approach has also an upper hand in explaining the different patterns of social organizations that result from the interaction, negotiations and social struggles that occur between different actors. It has also a paramount importance in mapping out not only those actors that are discerned in a given 'face-to-face' encounters but also those who are absent (the unseen) yet nevertheless influence the situation, affecting actions and outcomes (Long, 2001). Although mapping out of actors is not considered in this study, this study looks at the unseen actors in the local government arena as the traditional rulers, the media, ministers of state, political leaders and the presidency. The other merit of the actor-oriented approach is its emphasis on the detailed analysis of the life worlds, struggles and exchanges within and between specific social groups.

However, in spite of its strengths, the actor-oriented approach is not well articulated in the ingredients of time and space concepts. In order to fill this gap, I introduced the historical institutionalism approach in order to find explanations about how decentralisation has evolved over the years in Ghana.

The Historical Institutionalism²²

According to Thelen (1999) historical institutionalists see institutions as enduring legacies of political struggles. The suggestion is that the macro-historical analysis of critical junctures that set countries along different developmental paths has long been the bread and butter of historical institutionalism (see Katznelson, 1997). What this means is that historical institutionalism looks for historical events or critical junctures that establish connections between them and their aftermaths. The advantage here is that it also allows us to conceptualise decentralisation as a dynamic ongoing process that is shaped and reshaped by social actors (Thelen, 1999).

²² Two other types of institutionalism are the rational choice institutionalism and sociological institutionalism (Hall and Taylor, 2006) which shall remain excluded in this study. These three approaches are referred to as the "new institutionalism" and they all seek to elucidate the role that institutions play in the determination of social and political outcomes.

Historical institutionalists define institutions as the formal or informal procedures, routines, norms and conventions embedded in the organisational structure of the polity or political economy (Hall and Taylor, 1996). This implies that institutions can range from the rules of a constitutional order or the standard operating procedures of a bureaucracy to the conventions governing various unions and local government-citizens relations.

According to Hall and Taylor (1996), historical institutionalism has four distinctive features. First, historical institutionalists tend to conceptualise the relationship between institutions and individuals behaviour in a relatively broad terms. Second, they emphasise the asymmetries of power associated with the operation and development of institutions. Third, they tend to have a view of institutional development that emphasizes path dependence and unintended consequences. Fourth, they are especially concerned to integrate institutional analysis with the contribution that other kinds of factors can make to political outcomes.

In the historical institutionalism analysis, the argument is that it is through the actions of individuals that the institutions have an effect on political outcomes. In broad terms there are two kinds of approaches to the behaviour of actors in this new institution namely, the “calculus approach” and the “cultural approach”. Whilst the calculus approach focus on those aspects of human behaviour that are instrumental and based on strategic calculation, the cultural approach stresses on the degree to which behaviour is not fully strategic but bounded by an individual’s worldview (Hall and Taylor, 1996). In the calculus-based approach, institutions affect behavior primarily by providing actors with greater or lesser degrees of certainty about the present and future behavior of other actors. More specifically, institutions provide information relevant to the behavior of others, enforcement mechanisms for agreements, penalties for defection, and the like. On the other hand, the cultural approach to historical institutionalism suggests that individuals turn to established routines or familiar patterns of behaviours to attain their purposes and that it turns to see individuals as “satisficers rather than utility maximizers” (ibid). Also the argument here is that the choice of a course of action largely depends on the interpretation of the situation rather than on purely instrumental calculation.

In an attempt to explain some of these mechanisms of change, other scholars have presented historical institutionalism approach like the historical analysis or path dependency approach. Ikenberry (1994) for example, captures the essence of a historical institutional approach to path dependency in his characterization of political development as involving “critical junctures and

development pathways” (cited in Thelen, 1999:387). He further argues that this approach involves two related but analytically distinct claims. The first deals with arguments about crucial founding moments of institutional formation that send countries along broadly different development paths; the second suggests that institutions continue to evolve in response to changing environmental conditions and ongoing political maneuvering but in ways that are constrained by past trajectories.

It is these arguments that I find the historical institutionalism approach very convenient in complementing the actor-oriented approach, for this study. This is also based on the fact that decentralised local government in Ghana since the colonial period, as illustrated in Chapter 3, has taken different developmental paths as a response to changing environmental conditions globally.

4.7 Summary of the Chapter

The chapter has provided a vivid description of the research methodology employed in the study. It can be discussed in five aspects.

First, it has illustrated how the data for the study was generated, analysed and interpreted. The study made use of both primary and secondary data which was collected in Ghana between April 2010 and January 2011. The study used both qualitative and quantitative methods and the rationale for the use of both methods were to ensure that the weakness of one method will be offset by the strengths of the other.

Second, whilst relevant secondary data were obtained from institutions such as the ILGS and MLGRD that concern themselves with decentralisation in Ghana, the primary data source relied on key actors within the decentralisation institution as key informants. These include decentralisation policy makers and scholars, traditional rulers, political party executives and Assembly members.

Third, among the multiple methods of data collection used in the study were interviews, group discussions, workshop and participatory observation. In order to corroborate the relevant information from these key informants, a survey involving a sample size of 250 respondents was undertaken in the study area.

Four, the chapter has also illustrated how the data collected was processed and the analytical approaches used. Whilst the quantitative data was processed with the help of the SPSS software,

the qualitative analysis took the form of transcribing data from audio-recorded tapes, content analysis of interviews with the use of NVIVO software.

Finally, two approaches that framed the collection and analysis of the data are discussed. These are the actor-oriented approach and historical institutionalism. The next chapter presents a brief description of the study area where the research methodology was employed.

CHAPTER FIVE

THE STUDY AREA

5.1 Introduction

This section begins with the rationale for the selection of the study area. It then presents the geographical location and size of the KEEA Municipality in the Central Region of Ghana (see Fig. 5.1). It further highlights both the socio-cultural and economic characteristics of the KEEA Municipality. Finally it ends with the political and administrative structures of the Municipality.

5.2 Rationale for the Selection of the Study Area

My interest in the study area began when I was appointed as the District Chief Executive of the then KEEA District Assembly of the Central region of Ghana in March 2001. I noticed that local level elections in 2002 were being influenced by institutions such as chieftaincy and political parties. What was clear particularly in the rural electoral areas was that chiefs played a major role in the selection/election process of the local level elections contrary to the 1992 Constitution of the Republic of Ghana. It was also evident that as a result of the influence of some of the chiefs in the KEEA Municipality in the selection/election of who becomes an Assembly Member, local residents' demand for accountability from Assembly Members was a challenge. I became fascinated with the way local political and traditional leaders could influence the local level elections through various mechanisms.

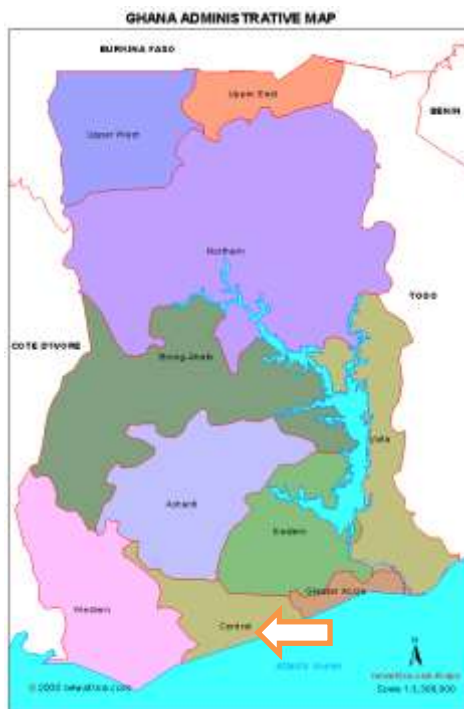
Another area that guided the choice of the study area is the way political pressure is exerted on Assembly Members during the endorsement of the DCE for the KEEA District Assembly in 2005 which led to the revocations of membership of some Government appointees (see section 3.6.2). Similarly, Nyendu (2012) notes that these revocations were not only in the KEEA Municipality but also occurred in the Dangbe East District Assembly in the Greater Accra region, and the Jasikan District Assembly and the Ho Municipal Assembly, both in the Volta region as well. This suggests that the revocation of membership of government appointees was countrywide. My understanding was that revocations of membership of these government-appointed Assembly Members were meant to give way to appointed members who will *en bloc* endorse the presidential nominees for the position of DCEs without questioning.

Additionally, throughout my tenure of political office both as the DCE of KEEA Municipality and the Central Regional Minister, I noticed that access to information as well as regular consultative meetings with local citizens in the KEEA Municipal Assembly was problematic. However, what aroused my interest was that local actors found the decentralisation policy reforms quite appealing and that it had the potential for them to participate in decision making.

Furthermore, the KEEA District Assembly was one of the 110 MMDAs in Ghana that were created in 1988. This renders the study area one of the oldest districts in Ghana with decentralisation practiced over the last two decades and therefore relatively well established.

Finally, the choice of the KEEA Municipality for the study was accentuated by the fact that as with the practice in research approach that seeks to generate primary data from respondents and key informants, I had to consider easy access to the key informants and the respondents that are likely to be helpful for the study. These factors guided the choice of the KEEA Municipality as the study area.

Fig. 5.1: Regional/Administrative Map of Ghana



Source: <http://74.15.19.227/GHP/img/pics/59387424.gif>

5.3 Location and Size of the KEEA Municipality

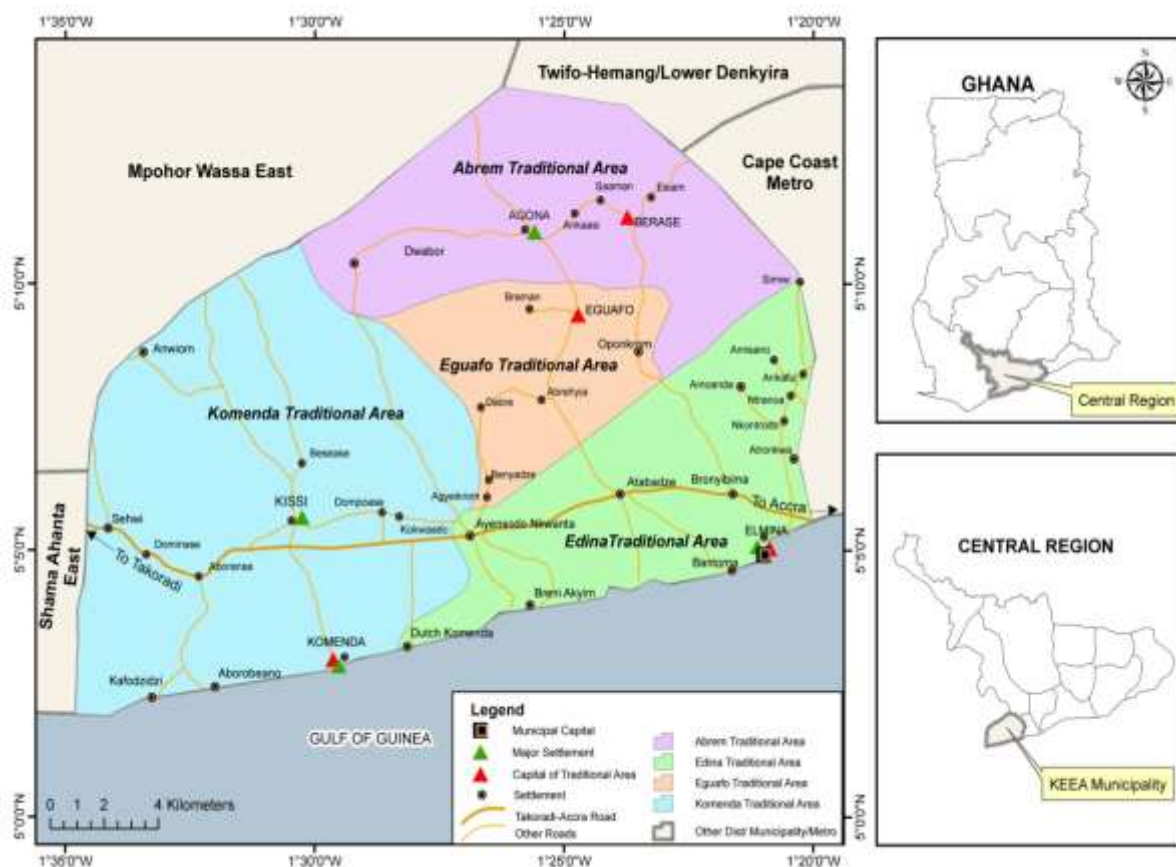
The KEEA Municipal Assembly is one of the 17 decentralised MMDAs in the Central region of Ghana. The Central Region, which is one of the 10 administrative regions in Ghana, possesses a long history of both native and European influence. The region prides itself as the first point of call by the Europeans in the then Gold Coast (Ghana today) where the Portuguese touched and settled during their exploration tour of Africa. Politically, the region played a very important role during the colonial period. Its capital, Cape Coast, was the first capital of the then Gold Coast and the seat of the British colonial administration until the capital moved to Accra in 1877. The region is both the educational and tourism hub of Ghana. It boasts of five out of the ten topmost second cycle institutions²³ in Ghana as well as two public universities and a polytechnic; and hosts a number of forts and castles which are dotted along the region's coastline.

²³ The top five second cycle institutions are Mfantsipim School, St. Augustine's College, Adisadel College, Wesley Girls High School and Holy Child School; former UN Secretary General Kofi Annan attended Mfantsipim School.

Geographically, the KEEA Municipality is bounded on the South by the Atlantic Ocean (Gulf of Guinea), the East by the Cape Coast Metropolitan Assembly, the North by the Twifo-Heman-Lower Denkyira District and the West by the Mpohor-Wassa East District. It is located between longitudes 1° 20' and 1° 40' West and latitudes 5° 05' and 5° 15' North (see Fig. 5.2). Until it was elevated into a Municipal Assembly status in 2007 per Legislative Instrument (LI 1857), the KEEA District Assembly was one of the 110 MMDAs in Ghana that were created in 1988. It is of interest to note that KEEA Municipal Assembly is the Assembly with the longest name in Ghana and therefore many people (both Ghanaians and foreigners) prefer calling it KEEA. Interestingly, the KEEA represents the four traditional areas, Komenda, Edina, Eguafu and Abrem, which make up the Municipality.

The traditional capitals of the traditional areas are Komenda, Edina, Eguafu and Berase respectively. The traditional capital of the Edina traditional area, Edina – the local version of Elmina, doubles as the capital of the Municipality. In Ghana, Elmina is almost synonymous with tourism. This is where the Portuguese merchants under the command of don Diego d'Azambuja arrived in 1482 in their search for gold, ivory and spices. Incidentally, the name Elmina was derived from the Portuguese language, *La Mina* meaning "the Mine" because the whole coast was rich in gold, thus the Gold Coast (Ward, 1966). By 1482, the Portuguese had built a castle in Elmina for the purpose of trading and as a defence post (Agbesinyale, 2003:105).

Fig. 5.2: Map of the KEEA Municipality in the National and Regional Context



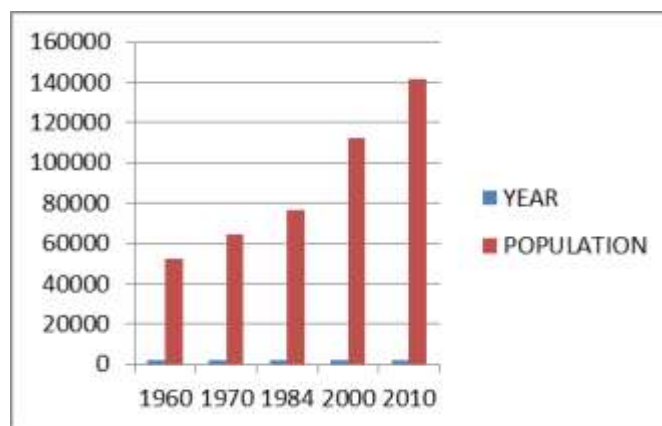
Source: GIS/Cartography Unit, Department of Geography and Regional Planning, UCC

The Municipality covers an area of 372.45 square kilometers (919.95 square miles) with about 150 settlements. The population of KEEA Municipality was 52,216 in 1960 and 64,383 in 1970 producing an inter-censal increase of 23.3%. The average growth rate during that period was 2.33%. In 1984, the population of the Municipality was 76,462 which produced an inter-censal increase between 1970 and 1984 of 18.8%. During the 2000 Population and Housing Census, the population of the Municipality was 112,435 and an annual growth rate of 2.3%. Currently, the population of KEEA is projected to be 141,557; the graphical presentation for the period shown in Figure 5.3. A rather probable explanation in the increased population between 1960 and 1970 was the construction of the Komenda Sugar Factory that attracted a number of workers from all over Ghana. Triggers for population increase after 1984 could be attributed to the decentralisation in 1988, which attracted staff to the “new” district. In addition is the in-migration of fishermen to Elmina due to the safe landing beach and relatively improved infrastructure such as the Social

Security and National Insurance Trust (SSNIT) housing scheme for workers in Elmina and Cape Coast.

There are four (4) urban²⁴ communities in the Municipality, namely Elmina, Komenda, Abrem Agona and Kissi (KEEA District Assembly Report, 2005). Most of the settlements in the Municipality have a population of less than 500 people.

Fig. 5.3: Population Growth of KEEA Municipality, 1960-2010



Source: Author's Construct. Data Base- Ghana Statistical Service. Note- 2010 figure is a projection

The population of the KEEA Municipality constitutes approximately 8 per cent of that of the Central Region, whilst the land area is about 4 per cent. The basic characteristic of KEEA in the context of the Central Region and Ghana is illustrated in Table 5.1.

Table 5.1: Basic characteristics of KEEA Municipality in 2010

Characteristics	Ghana	Central Region	KEEA Municipality
Capital	Accra	Cape Coast	Elmina
Population (million)	24.23	1.7	0.141
Size (sq. km.)	238,500	9,826	372.45
Growth Rate (%)	2.4	n.a	2.3

Source: Data from Ghana Statistical Service

²⁴ I use urban communities to refer to communities with population of 5000 and above, according to the 2000 housing and population census.

5.4 Socio-Cultural Characteristics

The people of the KEEA Municipality are mainly *Fantis*. The *Fantis* are believed to have migrated from the Techiman area of Brong Ahafo Region in Ghana and settled along the coast in the Central Region. The language spoken by this group of people is *Fanti* and it is spoken by majority of the people in the Central Region. Languages such as *Ga*, *Ewe*, *Nzema* and *Twi* are also spoken by a number of migrants in the Municipality. These migrants are mainly government workers, farmers, fishermen and traders. A number of foreigners from Niger, Mali and other parts of West Africa, who are mainly traders in clothing, wood products and fuel retail, can also be found in the Municipality.

The extended family system, also known as *Ebusua* or clan is the basis of the Municipality's social structure. The system of inheritance in the Municipality is matrilineal²⁵ and the chiefs and queens are the traditional heads of the towns or villages. As discussed in Chapter 3, their primary role pertains to their function as custodians of "traditional" resources, institutions and values. Festivals that are celebrated in the Municipality include *Bakatue* and *Edina Bronya*. Both festivals, which are among the well patronized festivals in Ghana, are celebrated in Elmina annually and are held in July and January respectively. The *Bakatue* festival symbolizes the beginning of the fishing season for the people of Elmina whilst the *Edina Bronya* is the native version of Christmas. Interestingly, the people of Elmina are the only in Ghana among its estimated 70 per cent Christians that has its own traditional Christmas. Other festivals such as *Nyeyi* and *Adwedzi* are also celebrated annually in other towns and villages in the Municipality. The dominant religion in the Municipality is Christianity, accounting for approximately 92 per cent of the population.

It is believed that the traditional Christmas in Elmina was instituted as a result of Elmina's long standing diplomatic relations with the Dutch which dates back to about 400 years ago (see Elmina Cultural Heritage and Management Program, 2002). The Dutch-Elmina diplomatic relations began after the Dutch fought the Portuguese and captured from them the Elmina Castle (St. George's Castle) and other Portuguese possessions between 1637 and 1642.

²⁵ The system of inheritance among Akans in Ghana and it is the inheritance of property and titles through the female line only; in other words inheritance through the mother to her children or uncle (mother's brother) to the nephew.

5.5 Economic Characteristics

Agriculture is the mainstay of the economy of the KEEA Municipality. More than 85 per cent of the labour force is engaged in agriculture-related activities. These include food and cash crop cultivation as well as fishing and fish smoking. Major food crops cultivated in the Municipality are plantain, cassava, maize, cocoyam and yams. Cocoa and oil palm plantations are the main cash crops in the Municipality, though the acreages of average holdings are relatively smaller than in other adjoining districts such as the Twifo-Heman Lower Denkyira. Fishing is done along the 30km coastal stretch of the Municipality whilst farming is in the inland areas of the Municipality. The Municipality and especially Elmina is the leading exporter of smoked fish into the inland part of the country (Amoah, 1998). This might be attributable to the safe landing Benya beach which has attracted a number of fishermen from other parts of the country with their catch; and also the fact that cold storage facilities are not developed in the Municipality, fishmongers and traders have therefore resorted to fish smoking. With the dredging of the Benya Lagoon and the construction of a fish landing bay in 2007, Elmina has the potential of becoming the leader with regard to the inshore light trawlers and canoe fleet in the country. It is estimated that total fishing fleet of Elmina is second to Tema, the leader in the fishing industry in the country.

With the two UNESCO-recognized fort and castle, namely, St. George's Castle and Fort St. Jago, Elmina is recognized as a major tourism hub in Ghana and attracts over 100,000 tourists annually of which 50,000 are foreign tourists (GMMB, 2008). Tourism has therefore become one of the major economic activities in the Municipality. This rakes in a reasonable amount of revenue into the Municipality although the revenue generated from the tourism industry is paid into the consolidated²⁶ fund, which is not part of the Municipality's internally generated revenue. The Municipality's developments blueprint, the *Elmina 2015 Strategy* estimates that by the year 2015 the tourism industry will receive a major boost in the Municipality and in the country at large (KEEA DA Annual Report, 2003).

Development of salt vats for mining is also fast developing in Elmina since the Government of Ghana invested three billion cedis in the industry in 2003 (KEEA DA Annual Report, 2003). There seems to be potential increase in demand for salt especially since oil has been discovered in Ghana in commercial quantities in June 2007 at Cape Three Point, some 160km southwest of Elmina. By

²⁶ Consolidated fund is the centrally controlled fund under the Ministry of Finance and the Fund is the main bank account of the Government of Ghana.

virtue of its size, population, infrastructure as well as its history and opportunities (tourism, fishing and salt industries), Elmina is not only the capital but also the hub of development of the KEEA Municipality.

5.6 The Political Structure of the KEEA Municipal Assembly

As mentioned in Chapter 3, the Assembly is hierarchical and works through the Executive Committee and Sub-Committees. The five mandatory sub-committees of the Assembly are Development Planning, Social Services, Works, Finance and Administration, and Justice and Security (Act 462, section 17). In addition to the five mandatory sub-committees, other sub-committees that have been set up by the KEEA Assembly are Revenue Mobilization, Environment and Sanitation, Women and Children, and Education. This brings the total number of sub-committees in the KEEA Municipal Assembly to nine. The non-mandatory subsidiary sub-committees of the Assembly vary from time to time. This depends on the priorities of the Assembly at a given point in time. For example, it was reported that between 2002 and 2009, the Municipal Assembly had a Tourism sub-committee (see KEEA Municipal Assembly Report, 2003-2009). This was attributed to the Elmina 2015 strategy that placed Tourism and Local Economic Development as one of the five development pillars of the assembly. The remaining four thematic areas of the Elmina 2015 Strategy are Waste Management and Drainage; Fishing and the Fishing harbor; Education and Health²⁷.

There is also the Public Relations and Complaints Committee which falls under the chairmanship of the Presiding Member who is also the head of the General Assembly. The head of the Executive Committee is the Chief Executive who is in charge of the day-to-day administration as well as the implementer of all resolutions of the Assembly. The conveners of each sub-committee are elected among the Assembly Members. As illustrated in Chapter 3, below the Municipal Assembly are two further tiers, the Zonal Councils and the Unit Committees. Even though the Zonal Councils are required to establish development services sub-committees, finance and administration and other ad hoc committees as required by law, they are quite inactive in the KEEA Municipality. Throughout Ghana, both scholars and practitioners have argued for the “rethinking” of the unit committees because their membership is too large (Ahwoi, 2010), and this is the expectation of the actors in the KEEA Municipality, as it was evident during the fieldwork.

²⁷ For details see the Elmina 2015 Strategy of the KEEA Municipal Assembly which was developed in partnership with the Institute of Housing and Urban Studies (IHS), Netherlands in 2001-2002.

5.7 The Administrative Structure of the Municipal Assembly

The KEEA Municipal Assembly, of which the office is shown in Plate 5.1, consists of the Municipal Chief Executive who is the chief representative of the central government, 36 elected²⁸ and 16 appointed Assembly members and the Member of Parliament (MP). Both the MCE and the MP are non-voting members of the Assembly, as prescribed by the local government law.

Plate 5:1 Office of the KEEA Municipal Assembly



Source: Own Photo: Fieldwork, 2010

The Municipal Coordinating Director is the secretary to the Assembly and chairs all the Municipal Planning and Coordinating Unit (MPCU) meetings and sessions. With the new local government system, the planning, budgeting and legislating at the DAs and sub-district levels have been transferred to the DAs, thereby making the assembly the planning, budgeting and legislating authority. Implementing decisions taken by the MA, the MPCU is responsible for Planning, Budgeting, Coordination, Monitoring, Reporting, Managing Information and Advice to the Assembly. This therefore makes this unit very important for efficient and effective local development especially within the framework of Ghana's decentralisation policy reform.

²⁸ LI 1983 which was passed in November 2010 has increased the electoral areas in the KEEA Municipality to 37; however the first Assembly under this legislative instrument is yet to be inaugurated after the 2010/2011 DA elections

With the exception of the Department of Urban Roads which is yet to be established, the KEEA Municipal Assembly has the compliments of all the decentralised departments. In addition, there are other government agencies and units that are operating in the Municipal Assembly. Some of these are the Municipal Offices of the Electoral Commission (EC); Information Services Department (ISD); National Commission for Civic Education (NCCE); National Service Secretariat (NSS); Ghana Water Company Limited (GWCL); Non-Formal Education Division (NFED); Commission for Human Rights and Administrative Justice (CHRAJ); Ghana National Fire Service (GNFS) and Ghana Immigration Service (GIS).

5.8 Summary of the Chapter

The chapter has provided a vivid description of the research area. It is located in the Central Region of Ghana and one of the 17 MMDAs in the Region. The population of KEEA Municipality currently stands at 141,557. The people of KEEA are mainly Fantis and more than 85 per cent of the labour force is engaged in agriculture-related activities.

The chapter has demonstrated the rationale for the selection of the study area as the case study. It was motivated by the researcher's political work both as the District Chief Executive for the KEEA Municipality and the Central Regional Minister and the challenges confronted. Among the challenges were the pressures that the center exerts on the Assembly Members when it comes to the endorsement of the President-appointed DCE. Added to this, is the way political party and traditional leaders influence the selection/election of AMs and UC members.

Also, it has become evident that the KEEA Municipal Assembly has both the political and administrative structures for decentralised local government. Politically, the KEEA Municipal Assembly works through an executive committee, five mandatory sub-committees as well as four other sub-committees. These committees are designed as a way of promoting participatory decision making by the grassroots thereby enhancing political accountability of the local government.

The next chapters, 6, 7 and 8 present the empirical findings from the study. It is structured to illustrate the three blocks of factors that framed the analysis of political accountability of local government (see Fig. 2.4). This is aimed at engaging the reader into the peculiarities of the local actors in the KEEA Municipality in their practice of the decentralisation policy reforms and how it has shaped political accountability of the local government in the Municipality.

CHAPTER SIX

DECENTRALISATION POLICY, LOCAL ELECTORAL SYSTEM AND IMPLICATIONS FOR POLITICAL ACCOUNTABILITY

6.1 Introduction

The previous chapter focused on the KEEA Municipality of the Central Region of Ghana where the research was undertaken. This chapter aims to present the empirical results from the study. The chapter, in addition to the survey, explores the claims made by individual actors who are either practicing or have written extensively on the decentralisation policy reform and therefore are able to sufficiently engage in public decision-making and negotiations to shape the intended outcomes such as political accountability of the decentralisation policy reform in Ghana.

Decentralisation in Ghana since 1988 has institutionalized a local electoral system otherwise known as the District Assembly Elections. As mentioned earlier in the introductory chapter, the District Assemblies comprise both elected and appointed members as well as an appointed District Chief Executive. The argument for the local level elections theoretically was that when people choose their own leader democratically, the leaders tend to be more accountable (Ayee, 1994). Furthermore, the requirement for office holders to be answerable is at the very root of representative democracy particularly when the legal provisions of decentralisation in Ghana lay claim to a democratic and devolved form of decentralisation in which popular participation was encouraged (Crawford, 2008; Government of Ghana, 1992).

As a result of possible power corruption, the argument by liberal theorists is that leaders are to be placed under the control of the popular will so that the interest of the electorates may be satisfied in policy decisions (Ayee, 1996; Olowu, 1999). This implies that political accountability will be meaningful in the context of local level election contests. This is particularly so when local leaders are aware that elections remain the practical instrument to discipline them through the electorate resorting to the ballot box to hold their leaders accountable (Debrah, 2009).

With empirical evidence from the KEEA Municipality, this chapter analyses the local electoral system and how it affects political accountability of local representatives. The analysis which is both qualitative and quantitative is based on the key informants' interviews and the field survey which were conducted in the study area.

Specifically, I intend to find out how different actors with varied resources and capacities act to access the new institutional spaces, shape decision-making processes in the local government arena to offer political accountability to local citizens, voters and tax payers. I argue that factors shaping actors at the local level work in similar ways on different actors manifesting in varied outcomes. I draw extensively from the works of Giddens (1984), Long (2001) and Thelen (1999) to explore the scope for different actors in the new spaces of decentralisation policy reform over the past two decades. Long (2001) illustrates how social actors are locked into a series of intertwined battles over resources, meanings and institutional legitimacy and control. He argues further that social life is heterogeneous and that it comprises a wide diversity of social forms and cultural repertoires, even under seemingly homogeneous circumstances such as that of the KEEA Municipality. Giddens (1984) illustrates the recursive relationship between agency²⁹ and structure and argues that the existing inequality is produced and reproduced through individual actions of local people. Thelen's (1999) work on historical institutionalism allows us to have a deeper understanding of conceptualizing decentralisation as a dynamic ongoing process that is shaped and reshaped by social actors; and that institutional arrangements cannot be understood in isolation from the political, cultural and social setting in which they are embedded.

The first section of this chapter focuses on the broad framework of the Local Government Act, Act 462 of 1993 and local level elections. It follows with the local government representation to specifically find out the reality of who gets elected or appointed into the new institutional spaces, what are their characteristics and what resources and opportunities they draw on to get elected or appointed. The role of political parties and traditional leaders and their influence in the selection of representatives in the new local government spaces is discussed to highlight the differing levels of advantage for individuals. The complex nature of the decision-making process in the Municipal Assembly and the diverse motivations shaping action are also discussed. It further highlights the effects of the complexity of the selection/election process on political accountability as well as the perceptions of local citizens on political accountability. The last section of the chapter discusses the demand for political accountability at the local level.

²⁹ The notion of agency attributes to the individual actor the capacity to process social experience and to devise ways of coping with life, even under the most extreme forms of coercion; and within the limits of information, uncertainty and other constraints (eg. physical, normative or politico-economic) that exist, social actors possess knowledgeability and capability (Long, 2001:16)

6.2 The Local Government Act and Local Level Elections

In the KEEA Municipality, as with the broad framework for decentralisation policy in Ghana, it provides for the institutionalisation of participatory forms of governance which is stipulated by the Local Government Act, Act 642 of 1993. It involves the creation of new local level governmental bodies to which citizens are formally elected or appointed. The Act seeks to reshape power relations among diverse stakeholders within the locality. It also emphasizes fair 'rules of the game' so that new local level leaders can emerge through competition. According to the Act, Act 462 section 7(1):

"A candidate seeking election to a District Assembly or to any lower local government unit shall present himself to the electorate as an individual, and shall not use any symbol associated with a political party"

The provision of this Act offers equal opportunities to individual actors in the local political arena to compete for positions at the local level. According to the Act, section 6(1):

"A person qualifies to be elected or appointed to a District Assembly if he (a) is a citizen of Ghana of not less than 18 years of age (b) is a registered voter (c) is ordinarily resident in the District in which he seeks election and (d) has paid all his taxes and rates or made arrangements satisfactorily to the appropriate authority for the payment of his taxes and rates"

Among other provisions that border on criminality, these provisions define the mode of seeking elections to the District Assembly as non-partisan in a homogeneous local arena. However the provisions fail to take into consideration the multiple local actors with varied resources and capacities competing for access into the new institutional spaces of local government. Therefore it inadequately captures the complexity of decentralisation in practice, whereby diverse structural factors and multiple processes shape the active participation of a variety of actors with different interest and values (Osei-Kufour, 2010). Similarly, the role of local political parties, the ruling governments and traditional authorities in determining the outcome of local elections, the complexities of social relations and individual differences in negotiating access to District Assembly are not adequately taken into consideration (Mosse, 2003; Wong, 2007). In the case of the District Chief Executive, Act 462 section 20 (1) states:

"There shall be District Chief Executive for each district who shall be appointed by the President with the prior approval of not less than two-thirds majority of the members of the District Assembly present and voting at the meeting"

The process of selecting DCEs reveals the way power is institutionalized in the office of the President. Similarly the Act also provides that not more than 30 per cent of the members of the District Assembly shall be appointed by the President in consultation with the traditional authorities and other interest groups in the district. However, various arguments have been raised about this appointing system. The concerns raised by scholars including Ayee (1994), Debrah (2009) and Ahwoi (2010) question the political accountability of local politicians appointed in this way to the local citizens, voters and tax payers. What does the evidence from the KEEA Municipality show?

6.3 Election and Appointment of Representatives to the KEEA Municipal Assembly

This section discusses how access to the new decentralised institutions at the local level is practiced at the KEEA Municipality. The argument here is that becoming a representative (Unit Committee, Assembly member or District Chief Executive) to this new local government institution depends on various factors. This includes allocative and authoritative resources that the individual actor is able to deploy, and their links to local and external power structures. The aim is to find room for a multiplicity of rationalities, desires, capacities and practices, including of course those also associated with various modes of instrumentalism (Long, 2001). This is what the actor-oriented concepts literature suggest, thus a dynamic process in which contextual and structural factors shaped access and outcomes differently (Osei Kufuor, 2010). In the light of this, I will begin with the appointment of DCEs through the election and appointment of Assembly Members to the Unit Committee members.

6.3.1 Appointment of District Chief Executives (DCEs)

Basically, I argue that in the KEEA Municipality, appointment to the Municipal Assembly either as included in the 30 per cent government appointees or the Municipal Chief Executive depends on the differential ability of individual actors to draw on resources such as social networks. Evidence from the KEEA Municipal Assembly abound that social relationships with local leaders of political parties and traditional rulers play a key role in becoming an appointed member of the Assembly. And this evidence logically has implications on political accountability particularly when the perception is that the process of appointment of DCEs has been manipulated. As my informant informed me:

“When it comes to the appointment of DCEs, I will say that it has not been the best, simply because the process has always been manipulated. There are people in the district who can perform better as DCEs but because they do not belong to the ruling party they may not have the opportunity to serve their people and then when it comes to even selecting from people who are members of the ruling party, it becomes “whom you know”. (Interview with Former Presiding Member of KEEA MA: 16/08/2010)

This statement from the Presiding Member illustrates that before one becomes a DCE, he must belong to the ruling party although the position is a non-partisanship position. Again, there is an admission of manipulations involved in the process of selecting a DCE. These manipulations will be made clearer if we understand the process of selecting the DCEs.

The process of selecting a DCE begins right from the constituency level, although this became prominent after the elections in December 2000. Hitherto, it was more of a top-down approach. At the constituency level, the constituency executives of the ruling party are asked by the Office of the President to nominate at least three candidates to the DCE position. According to my informant, the procedure in which circulars are sent to the constituency chairmen in the various districts for the application for DCEs position is not transparent (Interview with a Political Science Lecturer, UG: 13/07/2010). In addition, there are no clear indications as to the qualification of candidates to such an important and high position as the DCE. The list of candidates is then passed on to the regional executives of the ruling party for scrutiny.

When a Regional Minister has been appointed and already in office, the list again goes through the Regional Minister’s office for comments. What becomes quite interesting here is that the regional executives of the party or the regional minister often do not know the prospective candidates. Meanwhile the regional minister is required to pass judgement on the candidates before the list gets to the Office of the President. This confirms the assertion that access to external networks of power facilitated access to the new institutions. This could lead to clientilism, corruption and other forms of manipulations. It is significant to note that like any high position in the corporate world, the DCE’s position is a very responsible one. In fact he/she is the Chief Executive Officer of the District Assembly and performs all the executive functions as required by a chief executive in any public organisation.

In an interview with an Assembly Member, the chain of manipulations in the selection of a DCE is endless. According to him:

“It varies from season to season. In the year 2001, there were no interviews at the constituency level and you can imagine how the constituency executives ranked the prospective candidates to the region. Either a candidate has more resources to pay to the executives or is a relative of someone higher in the party. In 2005, since it was the same party in government, most of the DCEs were retained so we did not witness much of the political struggle unless in a few of the DAs including the KEEA DA where the DCE was promoted to the position of the Deputy Central Regional Minister. In 2009, the interviews took place at the regional coordinating council and I can tell you the difficulties involved in getting one’s name move up from the constituency level to a higher level” (Interview with a three-term Assembly Member from Elmina: 17/09/2010).

The views of the three-term Assembly member from Elmina illustrate the frustrations prospective candidates will have to endure if they want to serve their people at the level of a DCE. Further checks from Assembly member indicate that the seasonality he referred to connotes the amount of money that a prospective candidate will have to pay to the constituency executive members before one gets his name on the list. According to him, it ranges from **GH¢ 2000 to GH¢ 5000** at the constituency level depending on the season³⁰. This has not taken into consideration what happens at the higher level. In his view, there are also some powerful individuals within the new institutional arena who play a key role in getting some prospective candidates onto the list of candidates to be considered for the position of DCE by the President. They serve as middlemen in this new local government institutional arena and offer their support in the political competition to those who are able to pay them. Despite the illegal character of their activities, these middlemen continue to play a key role in influencing decisions particularly at the local level (Tsuma, 2009:53).

Another anomaly has been identified by a number of scholars. For example, Ayee (2000) and Crawford (2004) argue that the concentration of power in the hands of unelected DCEs and a lack of effective checks and balances are problematic from a democratic perspective. This fact has received increasing attention and provided impetus for the rethinking of the local government system. As succinctly put by one of my informants:

“The general feeling of Ghanaians as it became evident in the Presidential Interministerial Committee on Decentralisation is that the present appointment of DCEs by president, endorsed by the Assembly does not encourage accountability. When the DCE is appointed, he comes to believe that he owes his position as a DCE to the President and that there is

³⁰ The equivalent value is from EUR 935 to EUR 2336 as calculated with the exchange rate for June 17, 2011; based on information from <http://www.ghanaweb.com/GhanaHomePage/business/>

nothing anybody can do to remove him as far as his relationship and loyalty to the President remains intact” (Interview with Lecturer, UG:13/07/2010)³¹.

Although these appointments by the President are backed by the 1992 Constitution of Ghana, it is argued that local citizens’ direct involvement in electing their leaders is more likely to improve government efficiency and responsiveness, which are likely to ensure accountability (Antwi-Boasiako, 2010).

However, in contrast to the view shared by my informant on the general feeling of Ghanaians about the election of DCEs, Mr. Kwamina Ahwoi, a former local government minister in the Rawlings’ PNDC/NDC regime and a decentralisation expert supports the reasons for the continuous appointment of DCEs. Although he agrees that direct election of DCEs will allow for accountability to the electorate (Ahwoi, 2010:88-89), he argues that the DCEs role as an appointed official offers avenues and opportunities for some level of central control of the Assembly. Also the Assembly will become insulated from political considerations and will avoid security threat since the DCE by his position is the Chairman of District Security Council (DISEC). Delivering a lecture in Cape Coast on *“one step forward, the significance of Legislative Instrument (LI) 1961 in MMDAs capacity building”*, Mr. Ahwoi further stated that the proposal to elect DCEs is dangerous to development and that under such circumstances, the allegiance, discipline and respect for authority might be compromised (Daily Graphic, July 26, 2010:14).

In a related study conducted by KAB Governance Consult on the legal and institutional framework for district level elections, it reported that in a unitary system of governance as practiced in Ghana, the president had to have a presence in the local government environment by nominating and appointing a DCE (KAB Governance Consult Workshop Report, 2003:6). Similarly, the position of Kwamina Ahwoi was somehow supported by my informant at the Decentralisation Secretariat of the Ministry of Local Government and Rural Development. As my informant informed me, the election of DCEs is a complex issue and needs consideration of democratic principles as well as quality services.

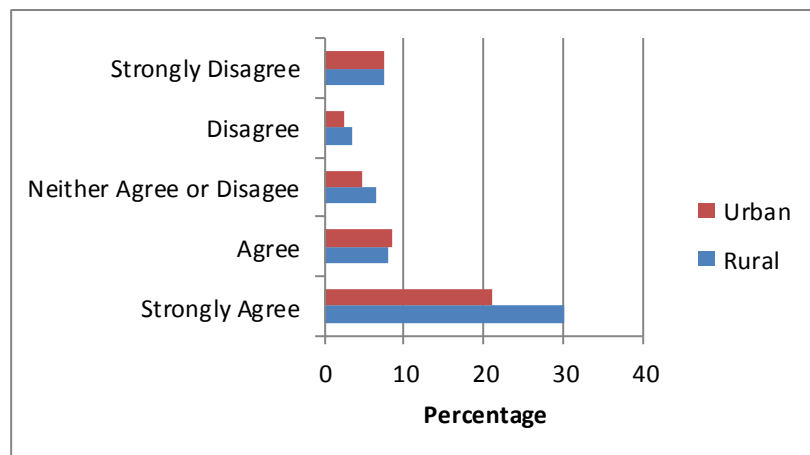
“The question of DCEs’ elections is quite complex. Are we looking for an efficient or popular DCE? As you are aware, elections will deliver a popular DCE but not necessarily an effective

³¹ The informant was a member of the Presidential Interministerial Committee on Decentralisation set up by the President in 2009 and the report of the Committee was yet to be made public at the time of the research and therefore the anonymity.

and efficient well informed DCE. The argument could also be stretched as to whether in Ghana we need to elect DCEs just for the sake of meeting democratic principles where through the elections there could be mistrust and poor service delivery” (Interview, Decentralisation Secretariat: 20/07/2010).

These divergent views on the election of DCEs are also reflected in my quantitative data. As evident in Figure 6.1, 67.6 per cent of the respondents (both rural and urban) agreed³² that DCEs should be elected whilst 21.2 per cent disagreed. There seems to be the tendency that respondents from the rural communities support the election of DCEs more than their urban counterparts. This is supported by the fact that 30 percent of the respondents from the rural areas strongly agreed that DCEs should be elected as compared to the 21 per cent of the respondents from the urban areas. The results from this study, which is 67.6 percent of respondents who agreed to the election of DCEs, although lowers the scale further, is comparable with an earlier study in two rural districts in Ghana, where 74 per cent of the respondents supported an elected DCE (Crawford, 2008:129).

Fig 6.1 Election of DCEs and location of Respondents



n=250 X² exact p-value = 0.187

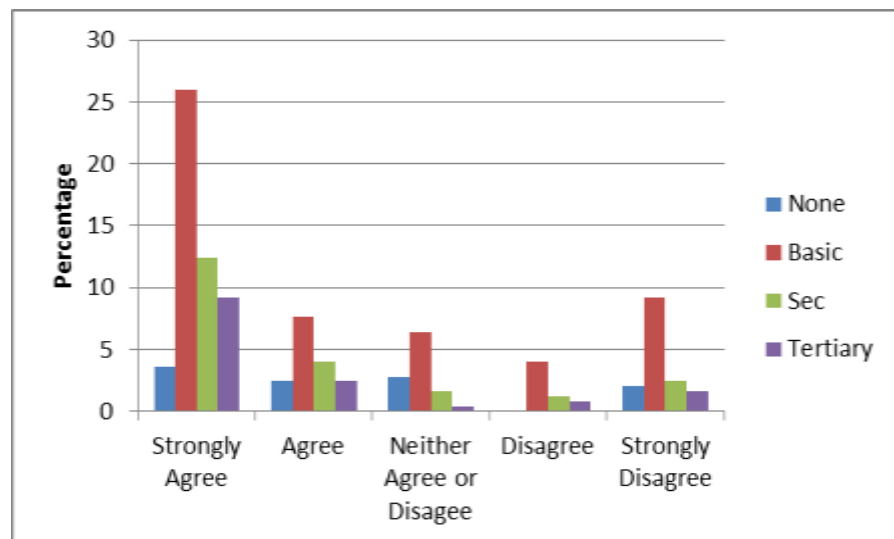
Source: Field survey, 2010

³² As indicated in Chapter 3, the percentage (51.2+16.4= 67.6) referred to is the total of strongly agree (SA) and agree (A), that is (SA+A). In other words, the two positives are grouped together as well as the two negatives, that is, disagree and strongly disagree (SD+D), and then that of the borderline; thus three groups. (see Thomi, 2000).

The analysis appears to show a tendency of a relationship between the location of respondents and the election of DCEs, although strictly the p-value (0.187) is above the chosen significance level³³ of 0.10. This observation confirms Thomi (2000) assumption that perception might be affected by location of the respondents.

In order to have a more detailed picture of the perception of respondents, I continued to have a closer look at those who are in support of the election of DCEs or in opposition based on educational level attained. The argument here is that those who are more educated might be more familiar with the issue of electing DCEs and vice versa. In other words, lack of understanding and maybe lack of information might not support the election of DCEs thus support the status quo.

Fig.6.2 Election of DCEs and Educational Level



n=250 X² exact p-value= 0.172

Source: Field survey, 2010

Looking at the educational background of the respondents as shown in Figure 6.2, it appears that those with basic qualification are more critical against the new local government institution. Whilst 33.6 per cent of the respondents with basic education responded that DCEs should be elected, 16.4 per cent had secondary education and 11.6 per cent tertiary education. Only 6 per cent of the respondents who had no education agreed that DCEs should be elected. The

³³ For significance level in social sciences the p-value is set at 0.10, and that the relationship between the variable “locality” and “election of DCEs” becomes significant when the p-value is less than 0.10.

significant relationship follows the same pattern as that of the location of the respondents since it was found that the p-value (0.172) was more than the significance level (0.10).

The high percentage of respondents with basic education is partly due to the fact that as high as 53.2 per cent of all the respondents had basic education. There seems to be a tendency that those with basic education are more involved in the performance of the local government institution. Among those respondents with basic education as high as 30 per cent are traders and it seems that traders are more critical against the current local government institution than other occupations (Thomi, 2000:88). Another possible explanation for this is the failure of the KEEA Municipal Assembly to respond to the needs of the traders. It was revealed that traders in Komenda complained about the state of the market in Komenda where effort was made by the Assembly in 2004 to rehabilitate the market but was never completed as at the time of the field research. Also in Kissi, a market that was constructed in 1998 was yet to be allocated to the traders. According to another informant in Elmina:

“We have complained about the Elmina market for long. Nobody listens to us. Apart from the fact that most of the roofs are badly leaking, just about three months ago, thieves broke into Auntie Esi’s store³⁴ where she had a consignment of cloth. Even though there were security men here at the time, nobody was arrested and the KEEA Assembly continues to collect market tolls from us” (Interview with Cecilia, Assembly member and Trader in Elmina Market: 10/08/2010).

In effect both the quantitative and the qualitative data point to the fact that most people in the KEEA Municipality support the election of DCEs. The next section illuminates further with evidence from the KEEA Municipal Assembly on that of the Assembly members.

6.3.2 Who gets elected or appointed as Assembly Member and Unit Committee representatives in the KEEA Municipal Assembly?

The process of engaging Assembly members and Unit committees in the KEEA Municipal Assembly as representatives reveals the ways in which social institutions, habits, routines and ‘right way of doing things’ mediate individual choices, and decision making to access these new institutions (Berry, 2002; Juul and Lund, 2002 cited in Osei-Kufuor, 2010) and therefore have consequences on political accountability of local actors. This section discusses how access to the new decentralised institutions at the local level is practiced in the KEEA Municipality as regards the election and

³⁴ Auntie Esi, a cloth seller owns the store number A5 in the Elmina market.

appointment of District Assembly or Unit Committee members. The claim here is that getting elected or appointed as an Assembly member or a Unit Committee member is a dynamic process in which contextual and structural factors shaped access to the new institutions and therefore might affect outcomes such as political accountability differently. I intend to support my argument by providing the profile of some past and present elected and appointed Assembly and Unit Committee representatives to the KEEA Municipal assembly over the period. It cuts across the four traditional areas and shows that local actor's ability to become a representative of the District Assembly or Unit Committee is shaped by the kind of allocative and authoritative resources that the individual is able to organise than the claims to citizenship rights. In terms of local participation in local matters, Chapter 20, Clause 249, 2 (e) of the 1992 Constitution states:

"To ensure the accountability of local government authorities, people in particular local government areas shall, as far as practicable, be afforded the opportunity to participate effectively in their governance" (Republic of Ghana, 1992)

However, evidence from the KEEA Municipality suggests that both traditional and political "forces" had a role in selecting people either to contest or be appointed as a representative. Often, the candidates are people that the traditional or political leaders can easily work together. They are usually professionals such as teachers; friends of political leaders and traditional authorities, relatives and party members who find themselves onto these new institutional spaces. It is of significance that at the local arena, the dominant professionals are teachers. The examples which follow show how people become community representatives in the DAs or the UCs. They involve both elected and appointed members in the KEEA Municipal Assembly and these examples will illustrate my argument. The argument here is that the process of an individual getting selected/elected to the new institutional space is problematic as it may fail to enhance political accountability, particularly when the selected/elected appear to favour the preferences of the local power structure. Significantly, the life history approach was adopted so as to trace the changes or otherwise that has evolved in the life of social actors.

Example 1: Mr. Louis Oppong, 60. Former Headmaster, Saaman-Berese Catholic Primary School and Assembly Member, Abrem Berese Electoral Area (2006-2010)

Mr. Louis Oppong hails from Abrem Berese. He completed Abrem Agona Catholic Middle School in 1967. At that time there was no Middle School at Abrem Berese, and therefore pupils from the

nearby communities attended Middle School at Abrem Agona. He continued to the Teacher's Training College where he passed out as a Certificate "A" Trained Teacher. He taught in several schools until he was transferred to the Saaman-Berese Catholic Primary School in 2004. He retired in 2008. He has six children from two different marriages. He got married to the current wife after a divorce from the previous marriage. He worships with the Methodist Church and is a leading member of the Methodist Church Choir. He is also the "*anona ebusua krakye*", which refers to the secretary to his clan. He was elected as the Assembly Member of Abrem Berese electoral area in 2006. He claimed that he was approached by the then Central Regional Minister who happens to be a citizen of Abrem Berese to contest the elections there. The contestants were three but one of them dropped to throw his support to Mr. Oppong's opponent a couple of weeks before the elections. Mr. Oppong won by about 81 per cent of the votes cast. He explained that during his tenure as the Assembly Member he had disagreements with the chiefs of Berese. Mr. Oppong gave the reason as the chiefs belonging to different political party. He decided not to contest again for the 2010 District Assembly elections because of his age. Currently he is on contract as a teacher at the same school from where he retired and a farmer.

The example of Mr. Oppong illustrates the diverse social networks of local actors and their social positioning and relationships that shape their ability to become an Assembly Member. This brings out the point of how social networks play a major role in shaping different people's ability to access the institutional spaces of representation. The fact that Mr. Oppong was approached by the Regional Minister at the time illustrates how close he was to political power. This supports Williams et al (2003: 186) observation that maintaining 'good relationship' with power brokers in the community was of 'strategic importance to the poor'. This example entails the generation and use or manipulation of networks of social relations and the channeling of specific items such as claims and information through certain nodal points of interpretation and interaction (Long, 2001:17). It also explains how local "benevolent elites" (Platteau and Abraham, 2002)³⁵ find themselves in the new institutional space since he was a teacher as well as "*ebusua krakye*". Further checks revealed that he was co-opted by the Regional Minister since none of the few professionals who hail from Abrem Berese was prepared to contest as an Assembly member and also the fact that he was known to belong to the same political party as the Minister. Although the District Assembly elections are non-partisan in nature, the other contestant who stepped down for Mr. Oppong's opponent claimed that he did so to support his "party man". This illustrates that the candidates for the DA elections belong to different political parties and the acts of both the

³⁵ In contrast to the elite capture, Platteau and Abraham (2002) argue that not all elites are bad, and that some can play a constructive role in community development. It also assumes that power is not a "zero-sum" game and a pragmatic use of elites' networks and resources can channel resources to the poor (Wong, 2010).

opposing candidate of Mr. Oppong and that of the Minister indicate that in practice the DA elections are not free from partisan politics.

On the other hand, further checks in the community revealed that the disagreements that ensued between the chiefs and the Assembly Member, Mr. Oppong were not only political but the chiefs realized that Mr. Oppong was usurping their powers. He could beat *gong gong*³⁶ or make an announcement on the community radio that he was meeting the people of Abrem Berase without the knowledge of the chiefs, who own the land (informal discussion with the Chief: 10/08/2010). This may be supported by the words of a former Secretary of Local Government in the PNDC era, that “some assemblymen have claimed to have the power to destool chiefs and others have actually gone ahead and attempted to do this” (Ghanaian Times, 1989:3 cited in Ayee, 1994:165). Long (2001) puts it that it is essential to take account of the ways in which social actors engage in or are locked into struggles over the attribution of social meanings to particular events, actions and ideas. The question is, how does access to the new institutional spaces through such social networks limit or promote the intended outcomes of the decentralisation policy reform such as political accountability.

Example 2: Mr. Francis Baidoo, 58, Catholic Church Catechist and three-term (1995-2006) Elected Assembly Member, Abrem Agona

Mr. Francis Baidoo, aged 58, hails from Abrem Agona. He completed Abrem Agona Catholic Middle School. He worked at Abrem Agona State Farms for 4 years and then joined Tarkwa State Gold Mining Corporation in the Western region. He worships at Abrem Agona Catholic Church where he has been their Catechist for the past 14 years. By his position, he visits members of the Church anytime a member was sick or absents him/herself from church service for more than two consecutive Sundays. He also worships with communities in the Abrem Traditional Area (ATC) anytime their Catechist was indisposed. He claims he is the most senior Catechist in the Abrem Traditional Area and that he often represents the Reverend Father in most of the church meetings. He is married to Mrs. Margaret Baidoo with three children. His wife was the immediate past Church President of the Abrem Agona Catholic Church. Between 2002 and 2006, he was the first vice Chairman of the Convention People’s Party (CPP) in the KEEA Constituency. He defected to the NPP and joined their 2008 campaign team in the constituency. He was elected as an Assembly Member for the Abrem Agona Maana Electoral Area for three terms, which is 1995-2006; a period of 11 years³⁷. Being a three-term assembly member, he served on a number of sub-committees.

³⁶ *gong gong* is a term for a kind of a bell which is often in the custody of a chief or his representatives and used to call rural communities to assemble for meetings or communal labour. It is increasingly being replaced by the use of community radios in many rural communities today.

³⁷ Although the three-term period of an Assembly member by law is 12 years, the first term of Mr. Baidoo was through a bye-election after the death of his predecessor who had then spent a year in the Assembly.

Among them were Finance and Administration; and Development sub-committees in addition to being an executive member during his first term as an Assembly member. He claimed to be a hardworking person and was very instrumental during the implementation of the Self-Help Electrification Project (SHEP) in the KEEA Municipal Assembly during the first term of the NPP government under President Kufuor. He participates in communal labour and other collective activities in Abrem Agona. He did not contest for elections in 2006 but lost the elections in 2010 when he decided to contest again.

The account of Mr. Baidoo clearly shows the multiplicity of rationalities, desires, capacities and practices (Long, 2001:15) that people deploy to get their representatives elected. It also shows how personal integrity, hard work and experience are valued by the electorates of Abrem Agona. Clearly Mr. Baidoo did not belong to the elite class of Abrem Agona neither was he closer to the “powers that be”. However, further checks revealed that the local people identified him with his God-fearing instincts. His vocation as a catechist led him to pray for the sick in his electoral area anytime he was called upon. They claimed that he had time to visit people whether they belonged to his church or not. He was also able to accompany elderly and sick people to the Abrem Agona Health Centre which is situated in his electoral area. He settled disputes among people in his church and within the electoral area. By his role, his second and third terms of contesting as an Assembly member in 2002 and 2006 were no matches for him at all. This may be explained by Bebbington et al. (2004:190) argument that “people mobilise around practices and institutions that are particularly meaningful to them”.

After Mr. Baidoo had led in fixing electricity meters in various homes in the KEEA constituency under the SHEP project, he was approached by traditional elites to contest for elections again in 2006 but he declined. On the one hand, his refusal to contest the 2006 DA elections when he was needed most partly was the reason why the electorates rejected him in 2010 when he decided to contest the 2010 DA elections (interview with a Youth leader, Abrem Agona: 02/01/2011). On the other hand, interviews at Dwabo, a farming community within the same electoral area revealed that since the NDC is currently in power they wanted to try one of the contesting candidates who is a known supporter of the NDC, particularly when this candidate had presented the community with four shovels prior to the elections³⁸ (Interview with Dwabo youth leaders: 27/12/2010). The interview with the Youth leaders at Dwabo has not only shown how candidates linked to the ruling

³⁸ The District Assembly elections for this electoral area came off on December 28, 2010 although there were postponements in some of the electoral areas in the KEEA Municipality.

government are favoured in DA elections but also how resources influence elections at the DA level.

Example 3: Mr. Ebo Dadzie, 55: Staff of National Commission for Civic Education (NCCE), three-term (since 2002) Elected Assembly Member, Sybil Awenee Electoral Area, Elmina

Mr. Ebo Dadzie comes from Elmina and he is 55 years old. He had his basic education at Bibiani Catholic School in the Western region of Ghana. From there, he made it to the Jamasi Technical Institute after which he had a short stint with a construction company in Takoradi. He joined the National Commission for Civic Education (NCCE) in Sekondi with the then Shama Ahanta East Metropolitan Assembly (SAEMA) in 1994. His work took him to the Cape Coast Municipal Assembly (CCMA)³⁹, and currently a staff of the KEEA Municipal Assembly office of the NCCE. He has worked in the KEEA office for the past 10 years. His schedule includes educating the people in the KEEA Municipality on their civic responsibilities. He is married to Cecilia Entsuah for the past 30 years with whom he has two children. He claims he is a staunch member of the Catholic Church. He worships with the St. Joseph's Minor Basilica Catholic Church in Elmina. He belongs to a number of associations in the Church. Among these are the President of the Elmina Catholic Youth Council; Vice President of the Cape Coast Archdiocese Youth Council; Executive Member of the Cape Coast archdiocese of Justice and Peace Commission and a Protocol Officer of the Church. He is also a member of both the Laity Council and the Liturgical Committee of the Elmina Minor Basilica Catholic Church. He was first elected as an Assembly member for the Elmina Sybil Awenee Electoral area in 2002. He is in his third term as a representative of the Electoral Area in the Assembly. At the KEEA Municipal Assembly, he has served on a number of sub-committees including Tourism; Education; and Justice and Security. Mr. Ebo Dadzie was a former activist of the Rawlings' Provisional National Defence Council (PNDC) that governed Ghana from 1981-1992. He is also a known sympathizer of the National Democratic Congress (NDC) party, the current ruling government. However, Mr. Ebo Dadzie claims he does not state his political party affiliation since he is a staff of the NCCE.

The example of Mr. Ebo Dadzie clearly depicts the case of a local actor's host of interconnected social, religious and political resource components in getting into the local government arena. As with the case of Mr. Baidoo, it suggests how social networks play a major role in shaping different people's ability to access the institutional spaces of representation. Mr. Ebo Dadzie is not only known in Elmina where majority of the Christian community are Catholics but also in the entire Cape Coast Archdiocese of the Catholic Church. He voluntarily supports the church in many youth activities and an asset to the church, judging by the various important church groups to which he belongs. In an interview with a member of the church choir, Mr. Ebo Dadzie's role in the church is much felt particularly at the time that the church organised programmes such as the feast of the

³⁹ At that time, Cape Coast was a Municipal Assembly; however, since 2007 it has gained a Metropolitan status.

*Corpus Christi*⁴⁰ and youth conferences (Interview with Alice: 17/09/10). He was actively involved in the erection of canopies for the programme and other related activities. He was always ready to serve the church. Similarly, the example of Mr. Ebo Dadzie depicts how close affinity with a political party and the centers of power as well as experience facilitates access to the new institutional spaces. He was a known sympathizer to the NDC in Sybil Awenee Electoral area where results from the past general elections show that majority of the residents vote for the NDC. As a result of Mr. Ebo Dadzie's experience gained over the period, he won the elections even at the term of the NPP government.

With his position as a staff of the NCCE he was always close to the DCE, partly as a result of the fact that he is their communicator. To the people of Sybil Awenee, it illuminates how the notion of agency, "knowledgeability" and "capability" (Long, 2001) attributes to the individual actor the capacity to gain access to local government institutions. They claim it was always better to have a knowledgeable person to be their representative and also someone who will be able to bring development to the community (interview with a Teacher at Sybil Awenee: 17/09/2010). The teacher continued *"how do you facilitate development projects to your electoral area when you cannot talk in the Assembly?"* The question put to me by the teacher indicates that representation at the new institutional spaces becomes meaningful when the Assembly member can bring development projects from the DA to the community. In other words, the representative at the Assembly should have individual characteristics as a problem-solver. This supports Giddens (1984) observation that social actors attempt to solve problems, learn how to intervene in the flow of social events around them, and to a degree they monitor their own actions, observing how others react to their behavior and taking note of the various contingent circumstances.

Example 4: Mr. Bartholomew Bennett Bonku, 40, Teacher and currently University Student, Dompooase-Kokwaado-Kwahinkrom Electoral Area Elected Assembly Member (2006-2010)

Mr. Bartholomew Bennett Bonku comes from Dompooase in the Komenda Traditional Area. He is 40 years of age. He had his Primary and Middle schools education at Dompooase and Dutch Komenda respectively. After that he gained admission to the Nsein Secondary School in the Western region of Ghana. Currently he is a final year student at the University of Development Studies, Wa campus. He is married to Mrs. Charlotte Bonku and they have a daughter. They have

⁴⁰ Corpus Christi is one of the important festivals on the calendar of the Catholic Church, and in the KEEA it is normally organised in a form of "outside" gathering that rotates from community to community.

been married for six years. He claims he is a staunch Catholic. He is a younger brother of the *Omanhen* (paramount chief) of the Komenda Traditional Area, Nana Kojo Kru VI and Mr. Bonku is a known supporter of the NPP. In 2006, he was elected as the Assembly member for Dompooase-Kokwaado-Kwahinkrom Electoral Area. During his tenure as an Assembly member, he served on Education; Finance and Administration; and Agriculture sub-committees. He did not contest again in the 2010 DA elections.

The case of Mr. B. B. Bonku supports the earlier argument that access to traditional networks of power facilitated access to the new institutions. He is a brother to the Omanhen of Komenda Traditional Area, Nana Kojo Kru VI, and lives in the same building with Nana Omanhen anytime Nana visits their mother at Dompooase. Although Mr. Bonku claims that Nana did not play much role in getting him elected in 2006, my informant thought otherwise (interview with youth, Kokwaado: 23/08/2010). According to the interviewee, “When it comes to politics, *Nananom* (chiefs) do not operate in the day, they do that in the night”. What this means is that since chiefs in Ghana are barred from indulging in active politics, they will campaign under cover. And that was the case of Mr. Bonku’s elections in 2006 (same interview: 23/08/2010).

Similarly Mr. Bonku, being known as an NPP supporter influenced his access to the new institutional space at the time the NPP was in power. Further checks revealed that in contesting for the elections in 2006, there were two other candidates from Kokwaado and Kwahinkrom respectively who were known to be NDC members. The electorates claimed that they needed development in their area and that since the NPP was the ruling government at the time it will be prudent to vote for Mr. Bonku. The implication is that it is only the ruling government that can ensure the needed development projects. Furthermore, Mr. Bonku’s profession as a teacher in a local rural community puts him as an elite in the community; however it does not confirm the decentralisation literature of the “elite capture”.

Example 5: Nana Efua Badu, 55, Queen mother, Kissi, Government-Appointed Assembly Member (2001-2005)

Nana Efua Badu, aged 55, hails from Kissi near Komenda. She attended Kissi “A” Primary and Middle Schools. Thereafter she gained admission to the Amaniampong Secondary School. She proceeded to the School of Forestry where she graduated with a Diploma certificate. She worked at the Department of Forestry, but later decided to join the Ghana Education Service (GES). She taught at the Catholic Nursery School at Kojokrom near Sekondi in the Western Region of Ghana. The school is a private school which is owned by the Kojokrom Catholic Church where Nana worships. In 2003-2005, Nana was the president of the Kojokrom Catholic Church. She is married to Mr. Augustus Kweku Moses, a retired staff of Ghana Cocoa Board. They have married for 15

years and they had two children, but the elder daughter passed away two months ago. On May 1, 2000, Nana was enstooled as the Queen mother of Kissi and by her position she became the *Adontenhemaa* of Komenda Traditional area. Her relationship with the paramount chief of the Komenda Traditional Area is impeccable. In 2001, during the first term of the NPP government, she became a government-appointed Assembly member in the KEEA Municipal Assembly. Nana was a representative of the Komenda Traditional Area in the Assembly. She claims that she distinguished herself while in the Assembly and therefore served on a number of sub-committees of the Assembly. These were the Justice and Security, Sanitation, and Women and Children sub-committees.

The example of Nana Efua Badu also supports the earlier argument that access to traditional networks of power facilitated access to the new institutions. In her case, Nana claims she was in the good books of the paramount chief of Komenda Traditional Area, Nana Kojo Kru VI. This is because when the paramount chief was approached by the then District Chief Executive of the KEEA District Assembly on behalf of the President to nominate a queen mother who will represent the traditional area, he could have made a different choice. Not only that the paramount chief could have chosen another queen mother but out of male chauvinism, he could have nominated a chief instead. Culturally, as a queen mother of Kissi, Nana serves under the paramount chief, who is the president of the Komenda Traditional Council. Nana Efua Badu again claims that besides her traditional networks, her personal relationship and the great respect for the paramount chief facilitated her appointment as a representative. Nana Efua Badu explained her appointment by the paramount chief with a Cameroonian proverb that “the goat eats where it is tethered” which simply means that Nana Kojo Kru VI chooses someone who is closer to him. Nana’s mode of appointment by the paramount chief representing the traditional authorities in the Komenda Traditional Area is in line with Article 242 (d) of the 1992 Constitution which states:

“A district assembly shall consist of other members not being more than thirty per cent of all members of the District Assembly, appointed by the President in consultation with the traditional authorities and other interest groups in the district” (Republic of Ghana, 1992).

The case of Nana Efua Badu’s nomination as representative in the new institution also illustrates how individual actors who in the perception of the traditional authorities are in their “good books” also constrained the ability of other disadvantaged queens. The implication however is that, within a social structure, what may be constraining for some people might be enabling for others within the same context. Her case with the traditional institution may be supported by the fact that “institutions are socially constructed in the sense that they embody shared cultural

understandings of the way the world works” (Meyer and Rowen, 1991; Scott 1995: 33; Zucker 1983: 5 cited in Thelen 1999:386).

Example 6: Mr. Michael Botsio, 24, University Student, Eguafo-Breman Elected Assembly Member (since 2010)

Mr. Michael Botsio, aka PK, was born on February 26, 1986 at Breman in the Eguafo Traditional Area. He attended Edinaman Secondary School in Elmina from where he continued to the University of Cape Coast (UCC). He is in his final year at UCC. He belongs to the Tertiary Education and Students Confederacy of the NPP (TESCON⁴¹) of which he is the organiser. He was elected the Assembly Member of Eguafo-Breman Electoral Area during the December 2010 District Assembly Elections. He claims that he has the support of the youth in the three communities that constitute the electoral area. Besides he is a close friend of the former Central Regional Minister and the 2012 NPP Parliamentary Candidate for the KEEA Constituency. He is a member of the Central Regional NPP Youth Forum. His father is the KEEA constituency financial secretary of the NPP.

The example of Mr. Michael Botsio’s election as the Assembly Member for Eguafo-Breman electoral area brings to mind multiple reasons why local actors make decisions. He is very young and very close to the youth. Interview with the youth in Eguafo revealed that they wanted someone of their “own”. For them what they need is someone who can bring them development. They claim most of them had no jobs after school and that if PK will be able to help secure jobs for them, he is their “man”⁴² (interview with a Youth leader, Eguafo: 12/08/2010). This confirms Long (1996:47) claim that, “local actors never simply adopt technologies and development projects, but, they appropriate and transform them to solve the problems they face and to advance their own particular needs”.

Again, PK’s selection as an Assembly member has some historical antecedents. It was revealed that as a way of informal local arrangements, the selection of the Assembly member rotates between the two communities, Eguafo and Breman. In the period 1998-2002, the representative was from Breman, and then moved to Eguafo in 2002-2006. When the people of Breman thought they could win it in 2006-2010, it again went to Eguafo. So this time round the people of Breman saw it to be their turn. The electorates of Eguafo-Breman again revealed that they wanted an elite to follow the immediate past Assembly Member who was a Science Tutor at Apam Secondary School. Ato, a youth leader in Eguafo informed me:

⁴¹ TESCON is the student associations of NPP on campuses of tertiary institutions

⁴² Man in this context refers to the one they know best

“We want someone who can speak English and that when Nana Omanhen (paramount chief) sends him to a higher office he could talk with confidence” (Interview with youth leader, Eguafo: 12/08/10)

On the other hand, PK's close relationship with the former Regional Minister also brings to the fore his closeness to political power. Further checks revealed that his closeness with the former Minister who happens to be the 2012 NPP Parliamentary candidate will bring them development projects when the Parliamentary candidate wins elections in the December 2012 general elections (same interview: 12/08/2010). According to the youth leadership, it will be easier to reach the Member of Parliament through PK and that their major problem which is the road linking Eguafo and Breman will be tarred. The implication of this is that the youth looks at the future for their developmental needs. Although the selection of PK may smack of some nepotism particularly by his relationship with the Parliamentary candidate and the father being the constituency financial secretary of the major opposition political party, interviews with the youth suggested that they consciously voted for someone who represents the community's interest and their development needs. But the question still remain, will local representatives such as PK's social network with the corridors of political power for his election limit his political accountability to his electorates?

Turning my attention to the Unit Committee (UC) level, there have also been instances where some candidates who are unsuccessful in the Assembly member elections are approached by the traditional authorities and/or the winning candidates for the loser to serve on the UC as an appointed member, even at times to the extent that he is promised the chairmanship position. This is done so that there will not be divisions in the communities after the elections. To support his argument, the Assembly member for Eguafo-Breman electoral area, referred this practice to “all hands on deck” project (interview with Assembly member, Eguafo-Breman: 04/01/2011). He claims that in order for the whole community to accept and work with the Assembly member, there was the need for all the factions to be united. There was also the fear that supporters of the losing candidate will not cooperate with the newly elected Assembly member in carrying out his duties. In this way, not only the initiatives that will come from the Assembly member will be opposed but they will make his work very difficult, thereby affecting the development of the community. This form of arrangements in the KEEA Municipality can be described as the integration of traditional consensual values into the new institutional framework.

On the other hand, there have also been situations where a youth leader or a development chief⁴³ of a community is approached by the traditional authorities to serve as a member or chairman of a unit committee. Evidence in the KEEA Municipality suggests that “backdoor” negotiations between the traditional authorities and the earmarked person take place prior to the elections. It is only when he accepts the nomination that the name will be made public after the elections. This goes to show how community actors respond to change by drawing on and adapting existing norms and mechanisms in ways that modify or negate the intended outcomes (Barnes and Prior, 2009). What this means is that once a set of institutions is in place, local actors adapt their strategies in ways that reflect but also reinforce the logic of the traditional system. Zysman (1994 cited in Thelen, 1999: 393) captures the essence of this argument when he states that “the institutional structure induces particular kinds of ... behavior by constraining and by laying out logic to the market and policy-making process”. In order to understand this process of selecting representatives at the unit committee level, I elucidate briefly with the case of *Safohen*⁴⁴ Kojo Antwi, a government-appointed unit committee member, to support my argument.

Example 7: *Safohen* Kojo Antwi, 45, Farmer, Government-appointed Unit Committee member, Abrem Berase (2006-2010)

Safohen Kojo Antwi, aged 45, was born at Abrem Berase. He completed elementary school Form Four but did not continue to the secondary school. He is married with three children, two of whom are in the Secondary School. His father, Opanyin Kwesi Arhin was a Safohen at Abrem Berase until his death some 25 years ago. He was chosen among his four brothers to succeed the father when he was 30 years old. He claimed that the selection process took a while after the death of his father. By his position, Safohen Kojo Antwi serves in the palace of Omanhen (paramount chief) of Abrem Traditional Council, Nana Agyeman Kyiwia Kodie Ababio IV. He is very influential and vocal among the youth of Berase. He is courageous and a hardworking person. He participates in communal labour and in other collective activities in the community. He claims he played a leading role in organizing the youth at Berase to plant the low tension poles from Abrem Essiam to Berase in 2000, a distance of about four kilometers, during the time of the extension of electricity to Abrem Berase and beyond. He attends the Pentecost Church at Berase, where his late mother was one of the founding members. Safohen also intervenes and solves petty conflicts among the youth

⁴³ A development chief is any influential or resourceful person appointed by the chief in a community to lead in the development effort of the community. It is not hereditary and that one cannot pass it on to his/her relative when the seat becomes vacant. It is a common phenomenon today in Ghana, and has resulted in a number of foreigners including Europeans being installed as development chiefs in a number of communities.

⁴⁴ *Safohen* is a title given to a traditional warring factional leader. It dates back to the olden days when communities, families and tribes were engaged in wars. It is hereditary and normally through patrilineal inheritance. This is unlike the matrilineal line of inheritance associated with the chieftaincy institution largely practiced in the Sothern Ghana.

especially among those who live around his area, *Garden, at Abrem Berase*. He was invited to join the Berase East Unit Committee as a member by the chiefs in 2006 where he served until 2010. He explained that besides being a hardworking person and actively participating in communal labour, his position as Safohen were the main factors why the chiefs invited him to serve on the UC. He is a farmer with about 8 acres of oil palm and 10 acres of rubber in addition to some food crops.

The case of Safohen Kojo Antwi is a clear manifestation of the dynamics and the multiple nature of different arena in which Safohen was embedded. Besides his cordial social relations with the chiefs, his position as being “one of them” provided a useful and enabling resource for him. Further checks at the chief’s palace revealed that he was to serve as a link between the UC and the traditional authorities (informal discussion with the Chief: 10/08/2010). Safohen’s engagement in multiple arenas with diverse social actors in addition to his individual capabilities enabled him to seek greater decision-making role in the new institution. On the other hand, the role played by the chiefs may be explained by the dynamics of cultural accommodation (Long, 2001:72) that made it possible for Safohen to find himself in the new institutional space. What this means is that once Safohen was introduced by the Chiefs, it will be deemed as rude for the youth or anyone to challenge the decisions of the Chiefs. However, in an interview with a friend of Safohen, he hinted that he would not have voted for him if he was to go through the UC elections. In his words:

“Safohen is someone who never buys drinks for friends anytime we find ourselves in a drinking spot; instead he will drink to his satisfaction when someone else buys, particularly if it is the drink he likes best, Alomo Bitters⁴⁵” (Interview with Samuel, Berase Garden: 17/09/10).

This supports the view that someone can be voted for to the Assembly because he buys drinks for his friends. However, notwithstanding the views of Samuel, this case of Safohen also draws us to the role that social relations and embedded networks played in shaping his ability to act in gaining access into the new institutional space. Safohen claimed in an interview that he was impressed upon by the chiefs before he accepted to be a member of the UC. He said he had to consult the wife and some friends before he accepted the nomination as an appointed UC member due to the way people hurl insults at their local leaders.

The central importance of the findings of the different case studies in the KEEA Municipality is attributed to a multiple of factors in getting representatives into the new institutional arena. Among the dynamics are social networks, capabilities and experience of candidates, and the local

⁴⁵ *Alomo Bitters* is a locally manufactured alcoholic drink in Ghana with a mixture of different concoctions often patronized by the youth.

consensual culture of the people in the Municipality. In addition are political patronage of candidates and the traditional power of the Chiefs in the KEEA Municipality. Whilst the case of Mr. Opong can be attributed to social networks and his closeness to local political power, that of Mr. Baidoo is attributed to hard work, personal integrity and experience. For Mr. Ebo Dadzie, is who can bring development to the electoral area, social network as a pious Catholic in Elmina and his political weight as an NDC coupled with his professional experience as a communicator with the NCE. In the cases of Nana Efua Badu, Mr. Bonku and Mr. Botsio (PK), the attributes are very similar in the sense that local political and traditional support facilitated their selection/election to the new institutional space. What has come out from the examples from the KEEA Municipality quite clearly suggests lack of competitive local level elections which as Ayee (2008) observes is a factor for promoting political accountability from the local government actors. The analysis so far has illustrated that decentralising to the DAs and UCs through selection/election of individuals to represent their electorates at the local government arena in order to among others promote accountability has rather reinforced the power of local political and traditional leaders.

With these examples in the KEEA Municipality, I have tried to explain the election and appointment of representatives to the new local government institution. These examples point to the importance of examining (local) politics as a dynamic process that frequently produces unintended consequences as different ongoing processes interact. These illustrations have taught us a great deal of lessons about the dynamic processes that help to explain how stable patterns of (local) politics persist and indeed reproduce themselves over time; this is what Ikenberry (1994) refers to as the “developmental pathways”. This again brings into question the extent to which power relations have transformed as a result of the introduction of the new local government institutions and its intended outcomes as far as the political accountability of the local leaders to the local citizens, voters and tax payers is concerned. The next section discusses participation of local people in the local level elections.

6.3.3 Local participation in local level elections

As pointed out in the previous section, the 1992 Constitution offers the local people the opportunity to participate effectively in their local governance and that local actors are to compete for positions. This section discusses local participation of people in the various local level elections as a measure of political accountability. My argument here is that participation, as Steiner (2008:37) notes, is a precondition for (political) accountability. This is because without the

engagement of local citizens, there will be no demands to hold officials accountable. Indicators used to assess the level of participation of the people in the local level elections include voter turnout and attendance at meetings. This section considers only the voter turnout since frequency of and attendance at meetings are discussed under consultative meetings in the next chapter. This is a departure from the other studies where most of the studies focused only on voter turnout as the proxy basic measure of participation. As Ayee (1999) rightly notes, the mere act of voting may not be a good indicator of political participation. However, this is a crucial aspect of the decentralisation-local population nexus as it is intended to increase popular participation in public decision-making. Kelly and van Vlaenderen (1996) suggest that participation in essence expresses a form of co-operative action between a community and an outside resource or agent, in the hope of improving the conditions of existence of the community. This implies that communities will participate in the new institutional space when they are offered the needed development that the communities have been alienated for long. As observed by Kumi-Kyereme (2004), the nature of this alienation invariably involves marginalization of the community from the means of exercising power (political, economic, technical and intellectual) to bring about changes, and the participatory process is seen as a way to correct it.

With regard to electoral forms of participation; local level elections have taken place in Ghana in 1988/99, 1994, 1998, 2002, 2006 and 2010. This is held midway in the 4-year term of the presidential and parliamentary (general) elections. The midway term of the general elections began after Ghana ushered in the fourth republican constitution in 1992. For example, between 1992 and 1996 when presidential and parliamentary elections were held, the local level election came off in 1994. It is argued that local level elections held midway in the President's term of office could be a barometer to measure the performance of the ruling government.

With this background, I collated views in the KEEA Municipality on election behavior since 1988 when the decentralisation policy began. In a similar study in Uganda for instance, Onyach-Olaa (2003) notes that a high turnover of councilors at the local elections can be seen as a sign of accountability because those candidates who did not perform well are punished and voted out of office. Similarly in the case of Ghana, Ayee and Amponsah (2003) argue that the voter turnout as a measure of political participation is important because it gives a better indication of the preparedness of people at the local level to demonstrate their readiness to participate in collective decision-making on issues concerning them. The study revealed that voter turnout in the local

level elections (district assembly elections) in Ghana generally and that of the KEEA Municipal Assembly have not been encouraging, as shown in Table 6.1.

Table 6.1 Comparative Percentage of Voter Turnout in Elections

Presidential and Parliamentary Elections (%)	-	1992	1996	2000	2004	2008
		42.64	78.20	61.74	81.16	69.52
				60.62		72.91
				(Runoff)		(Runoff)
District Assembly Elections (%)	1988/89	1994	1998	2002	2006	2010
	59.2	29.3	41.6	33.1	39.4	n.a.
KEEA MA Elections (%)	n.a.	25.95	n.a.	40.36	45.64	n.a.

Note: KEEA MA voter turnout – own computation

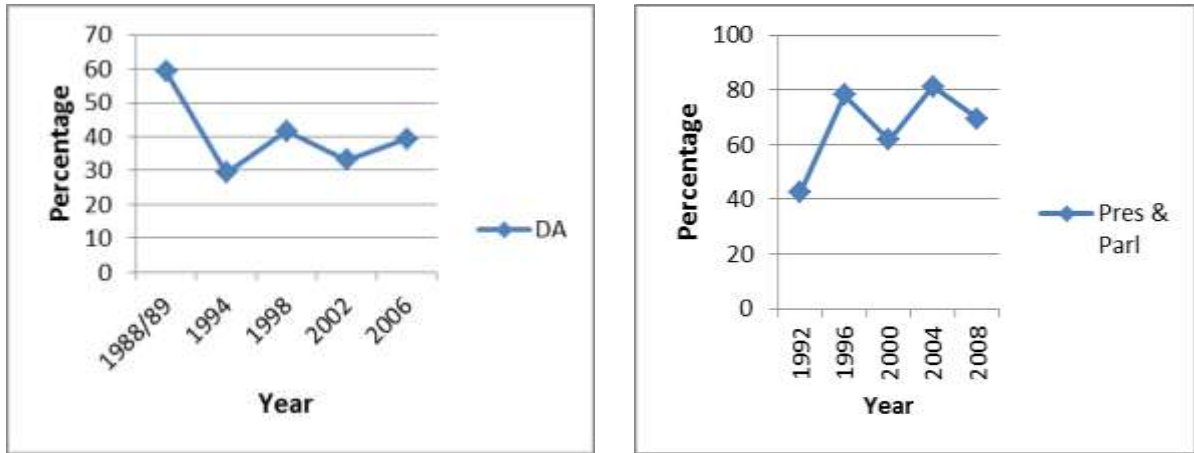
Source: Electoral Commission, Cape Coast and Accra

As evident in Table 6.1, whilst the presidential and parliamentary voter turnout in 1992 when Ghana had just ushered in the fourth republican constitution after 11 years of military rule was 42.64 per cent, the District Assembly elections in 1994, two years later, recorded only 29.3 per cent. This is quite disturbing because the argument was that two years after the multi-party elections in 1992, people had begun to appreciate basic civic responsibilities such as voting during elections and that the expectation was that many more people would have participated. It was rather on the contrary. It is also significant to note that the turnout in the KEEA Municipality was further reduced from the national average of 29.3 per cent to only 25.95 per cent.

Again the 2000 presidential and parliamentary elections in Ghana recorded a voter turnout of 61.74 per cent whilst the District Assembly elections in 2002 recorded only 33.1 per cent, a negative variance of 46.39 per cent. However, that of the KEEA saw an improvement from the national average of 33.1 per cent to 40.36 per cent. This might be attributed to the fact that the interest of the people in KEEA in participating in collective decision making in the new institutional space and consensus building was gradually and significantly building up among the local people (interview with NPP Chairman, KEEA: 23/08/2010).

Similarly, as evident in the graphical presentation in Figure 6.3, the interest of Ghanaians to participate in the Presidential and Parliamentary elections soared from 42.64 per cent in 1992 to 78.2 per cent in 1996. It however dropped in 2000, soared again in 2004 and dropped in 2008.

Fig.6.3: Voter Turnout in the DAs; Presidential and Parliamentary Elections



Source: Electoral Commission, Accra

This sinusoidal semblance of the election behavior in Ghana may partly be explained by a number of factors. This includes unreliable voter registers and voter apathy. In the 1992 elections for example, the flagbearer of the NPP, Prof. Adu-Boahen used the bloated voter register as one of the reasons for what they called the “stolen verdict” when he lost to Mr. Rawlings’ NDC. But it is significant to note that voter turnout drops drastically at the end of the second term of the president. It happened both in 2000 and 2008 when both Presidents Rawlings and Kufuor had spent two terms of office respectively and they were exiting as the law requires. In the era of President Rawlings, it dropped from 78.2 per cent in 1996 to 61.74 per cent in 2000; whilst Kufuor’s era of 81.16 per cent in 2004 dropped to 69.52 per cent in 2008, in which both political parties lost to their opponents respectively. This low voter turnout could be explained by low investment in voter education when the Presidents are exiting and voter apathy within their political support base due to internal wrangling associated with the selection of their parliamentary candidates. A clear example is the wrangling within the NPP’s selection process of their parliamentary candidates in 2008 which resulted in a number of candidates who lost the parliamentary primary elections contesting as independent candidates.

Although the voter turnout in the DAs follows the sinusoidal pattern of the general elections after 1994, the change is not as appreciable as that of the general elections. For example, whilst in 1992 the general elections recorded 42.64 per cent, it almost doubled to 81.16 per cent in 2004; whilst the DA elections only increased from 29.3 per cent in 1994 to 39.4 per cent in 2006. This is partly

due to the inability on the part of the Assemblies to whip up enthusiasm and reduce apathy on the part of the local people (Ayee, 1996).

In a related study, Ayee and Amponsah (2003) showed empirical evidence to the effect that a significant large group (44.1 per cent) of the respondents in Ghana indicated that people at the local level may be less inclined to actively participate in local governance processes because they do not trust the political leaders due to their poor performance. Although other reasons regarding low voter turnout in the local level elections as compared to that of the general elections include the fact that the role of the media in the lead up to and participation in district level elections have not been encouraging (KAB Governance Consult report, 2003:10), my informant holds a different view. He attributes the low voter turnout in the DA elections to the apparent non-partisanship of the exercise. In his words:

“I think that we should do away with the hypocrisy; that is why we are having the low patronage in the DA elections. I can tell you that the Assembly elections even though on paper are non-partisan; in practice political parties actually influence DA elections. First, they normally go in for people they believe will serve their interest when they get to the Assembly so they sponsor such people on the quiet. In that way when they get to the Assembly, they will sing to their masters’ voice. Secondly, when political parties participate and their people get to the Assembly, it will serve as a training ground for the political parties to the national parliament because the DA is the “parliament” at the local level. Thirdly, another way that will encourage local people to participate in the elections is that when political parties participate we will be able to know which political party has a following at the grassroots level” (Interview with former Presiding Member, Cape Coast: 16/08/2010).

Despite the fact that the 1992 Constitution bars the political parties to campaign for members during the District Assembly elections, the interview with the Presiding Member shows clearly that in practice the DA election is partisan. He goes further in the interview to say that the political parties’ influence transcends through to the Unit Committee elections in the communities. However, since this practice by the political parties is unofficial and does not openly involve political party supporters, the open mobilizing role that political parties’ play during elections does not occur. In confirming the Presiding Member’s statement, a former MCE succinctly puts it that “at the local level elections, we play virtually the ostrich”. In other words the District Assembly election in Ghana is not free from partisan politics; rather we attempt to cover it. This point has been re-echoed by President Kufuor in an address read on his behalf at the inauguration of the various MMDCEs throughout the country on September 16, 2002. President Kufuor pointed out

that it became clear during the district elections of 2002 that the concept of non-partisan elections at the local level is a “charade” (Ayee and Amponsah, 2003).

Similarly, the then Attorney General, Nana Akufo Addo, addressing the mid-year conference of MMDCEs at Ho in the Volta Region at the end of June 2002, he charged them:

“To ensure that majority of elected Assembly and Unit Committee members belong to the ideology and vision of positive change District and Unit committee level elections have always been partisan, consequently DCEs must attach serious importance to it since it would be used to measure how the NPP would fare in the 2004 general elections” (Ghanaian Times, July 1, 2002:10).

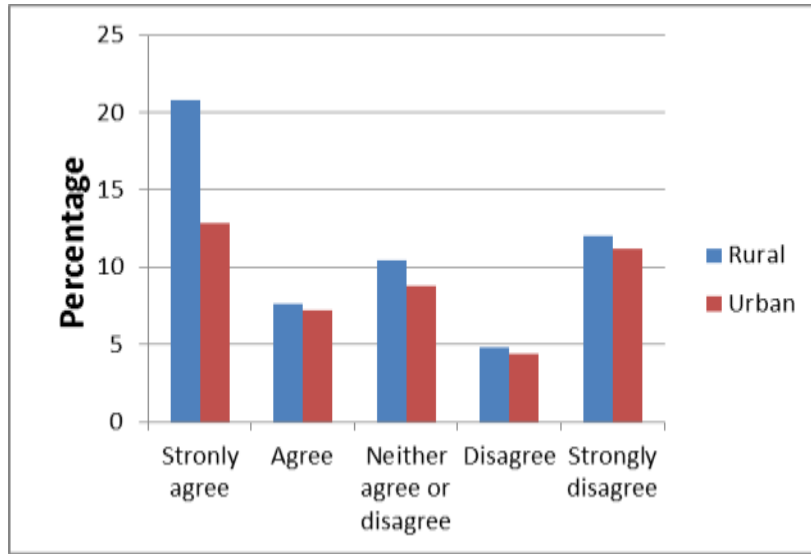
More recently, addressing the NDC party delegates in Sunyani on July 9, 2011, the NDC’s General Secretary, Mr. Asiedu Nketsiah⁴⁶ stated that “overall, NDC sympathisers scored over 60 per cent countrywide” in the DA elections held in December 2010. What has been said so far confirms what my interviewees, the Presiding Member and the MCE variously described as the “hypocrisy” and the “playing of the ostrich” that have characterized elections within the new local government institution.

In a survey where respondents were asked whether DCEs elections should be political party-based, 43.6 per cent (SA+A)⁴⁷ agreed whilst 32.4 percent (SD+D) disagreed (Figure 6.4). The study revealed that respondents from both rural and urban areas had either extreme judgments (strongly agree or strongly disagree) or indifferent in the DCEs elections based on party politics. But then in the rural areas, it has an additional tendency to have a more extreme (strongly agree) positive judgement on DCEs elections based on political parties. In the rural areas 28.4 per cent (SA+A) agreed to the political party-based DCEs elections whilst 20 per cent (SA+A) were from the urban areas. Although these conclusions do not have a strong significance statistical value, because of the p-value 0.123 (more than 0.1), the tendency is quite clear.

⁴⁶ See <http://www.ghanaweb.com/GhanaHomepage/NewsArchive/artikel.php?ID=213634&mode=enlarge> of 14/07/2011

⁴⁷ See explanation in Chapter 4; note: SA=strongly agree; A= agree; SD= strongly disagree; D = Disagree

Fig. 6.4: Election of DCEs based on partisan politics and location



n=250 χ^2 exact p-value=0.123

Source: Field survey, 2010

Similar to that of the DCE, the perception of the people in the Municipality was sought on the appointment of the Assembly members. As far as the appointment of the 30 per cent of Assembly Members which is normally referred to as government appointees are concerned, the fact that they are political party supporters was very evident. In an interview with a Queen mother, she mentioned that the “politics of the appointment of AMs have been highly evident in both 2001 and 2009 when Ghana had change of governments” (interview with a Queen: 10/08/2010). When President Kufuor took office in January 2001 just like President Mills in January 2009, all the District Assembly appointees had their term of office immediately revoked although their terms had formally not expired. Their terms of office were to run to mid-2002 and mid-2010 respectively. However, a new set of government appointees were put in place, with party loyalists (supporters, foot soldiers) favoured, a blatant travesty of the provisions in the 1992 Constitution that membership of District Assembly is non-partisan. In support of the Queenmother’s position, an interviewee mentioned that:

“The 30 percent appointees at the local level do not help anybody; at least we have had the chance to witness how the two major political parties who have governed the country between 1993 and 2009 have abused it. Loyalty to the “powers that be” has become more important than competency to the extent that a democrat like President Kufuor will fall for definitely a bad practice of revoking the mandate en block of government appointees just

before confirmation of an MCE” (Interview at KAB Governance Consult, Accra: 14/07/2010).

Although my informant did not specify where the bad practice of the revocation of the government appointees by President Kufuor took place in Ghana, he made it clear in a follow up question that he was referring to the revocation of the members that incidentally occurred in the KEEA Municipal Assembly as reported in the Ghanaian Times of June 3, 2005 (see Fig. 3.3). This confirms the decentralisation literature on how the center politics spills over to the local institutional arena and also illuminates the role of external actors in the local government institution. Another interviewee puts it:

“The appointed members have no role with the local electorates ... the 30 per cent appointment of assembly members is a form of the recentralisation of the decentralisation policy reform and that it must be scrapped. This practice weakens accountability at the local level and that government takes away accountability from the grassroots (Interview with a lecturer, Department of Political Science, UG: 14/07/2010).

The above quote contains two remarkable issues, to which I would like to draw attention. First, the appointment of the 30 per cent by the President is seen as a form of recentralisation because it is an external agency outside the local government institution making the decision, a notion that goes to confirm Crawford (2008:131). Gordon Crawford notes that the mechanism of presidential powers of appointment is characterized more by political control of decentralisation than political commitment. Second, that if we continue to appoint our local representatives into the local institutional spaces, then political accountability at the grassroots level will be weakened.

In contrast to the views expressed above on the appointment of Assembly members by the President, an interviewee mentioned that the 30 per cent appointment were for a purpose. She informed me that:

“It was realized that there will be under representation in the Assemblies, particularly with women who will not want to contest elections or even if we do contest we do not get people to vote for us. In addition is the opportunity to make room for disabilities. In order to take care of all these kind of representation at the Municipal Assembly, that was partly the reason why this percentage was allotted to us so that by the appointment mechanism some of us will be able to get to the Assembly”. (Interview with female Assembly member, Amissano: 30/11/2010)

Essentially, it can be inferred from this quote that this kind of structural arrangement in the local government institution will be seen to have fulfilled one side of the equation that deals with the

representation at the DAs but it fails to achieve the other side of the equation that borders on political accountability. Directly related to the local level representation and its consequence on political accountability is also the role of political party in power and the outcome of the DA elections. The next section discusses the elected representation in the KEEA Municipal Assembly over time and how the three dominant political parties in the Municipality have fared.

6.3.4 The KEEA Municipal Assembly and the political parties

In the previous sections, I have given evidence from the KEEA Municipal Assembly, how social networks of local actors, traditional powers of Chiefs, political patronage among others facilitate the access of local actors onto the local government institution. This section discusses the composition of the elected representatives in the KEEA Municipal Assembly based on their political party affiliations. According to Article 248 (2) of the 1992 Constitution:

“A political party shall not endorse, sponsor, offer a platform to or in any way campaign for or against a candidate seeking election to a District Assembly or any lower local unit”
(Republic of Ghana, 1992)

However, as earlier elucidated, this provision in the constitution has not been respected by various political parties. Several interviewees in the field could point out quite easily the composition of various political parties’ members in the Municipal Assembly. This is judged by the Assembly members’ previous positions in the political parties in their locality. For instance, when the NPP chairman of Bronyibima/Sanka Electoral area contested and won in 2002 to represent his people in the KEEA Assembly, he is seen as belonging to the NPP. Not only their positions in the political party alone, in the local communities, it is not very difficult to determine which political party the contestants belong because of the proximity and the dense network that pertains between the local people and the contestants. Confirming this position, Mr. Ato Bonsu, a three-term elected Assembly member of Market Square electoral area in Elmina said “in this electoral area that I live, everybody knows that I belong to the NDC”.

Also in an interview with a former Presiding member of the KEEA Municipal assembly, it became evident that election of a Presiding member in the Assembly could also give an indication of political party affiliations of Members present in the Assembly and voting since most of the members often vote on party lines when the contestants for the position are from different political parties. It was further revealed that this phenomenon has been observed for some time in

the KEEA Municipality. He supported his argument with a case in 2006 when he contested with someone perceived to be an NDC sympathizer who only secured 10 votes out of the total of 52 members (i.e. 19.2 per cent). At that time, the perceived NPP elected members were 26 in addition to the 16 government appointees, resulting in the PM, also seen as an NPP sympathiser, securing 42 votes (80.8 per cent). These were the indicators used as proxy for the determination of Assembly Members' affiliation with a particular political party in the KEEA Municipality.

Accordingly, in 1998, as shown in Table 6.2, as high as 61.11 per cent of the Assembly members had affiliations with the NDC whilst 27.78 per cent were for the NPP. This was the period when the NDC had been in power since 1992. When the NPP won elections in December 2000 and therefore were in power as at 2002, the number of Assembly members affiliated to NPP doubled from 27.78 per cent to 55.55 per cent whilst that of the NDC reduced from 61.11 to 38.90 per cent. By the next DA elections in 2006, this figure of 38.90 has again reduced to 25.00 percent whilst that of the NPP had shot to 72.22 per cent.

When the NDC took over power after the December 2008 general elections, the trend of the outcome of DA elections that favour political parties in power continued. In the KEEA Assembly which had a quarter (25 per cent) of NDC Assembly members as at 2006 suddenly shot to more than two-thirds (70.27 per cent); whilst that of the NPP members slashed from nearly three-quarters (72.22 per cent) to a little over a quarter (27.03 per cent) in 2010. This phenomenon could be explained by the fact that a lot of resources are pushed into the DA electioneering campaign by ruling governments as well as electorates' hope of voting for members affiliated to ruling governments in anticipation for development projects in their communities.

Table 6.2 Party Affiliation of KEEA DA Elected Members since 1998

<i>Pol. Party Year</i>	<i>NDC</i>	<i>NPP</i>	<i>CPP</i>	<i>TOTAL</i>
1998	22 (61.11%)	10 (27.78%)	4 (8.33%)	36 (100%)
2002	14 (38.90%)	20 (55.55%)	2 (5.55%)	36 (100%)
2006	9 (25.00%)	26 (72.22%)	1 (2.78%)	36 (100%)
2010	26 (70.27%)	10 (27.03%)	1 (2.70%)	37 (100%)

Note: LI 1983⁴⁸ (2010) increased the number of electoral areas by 1.

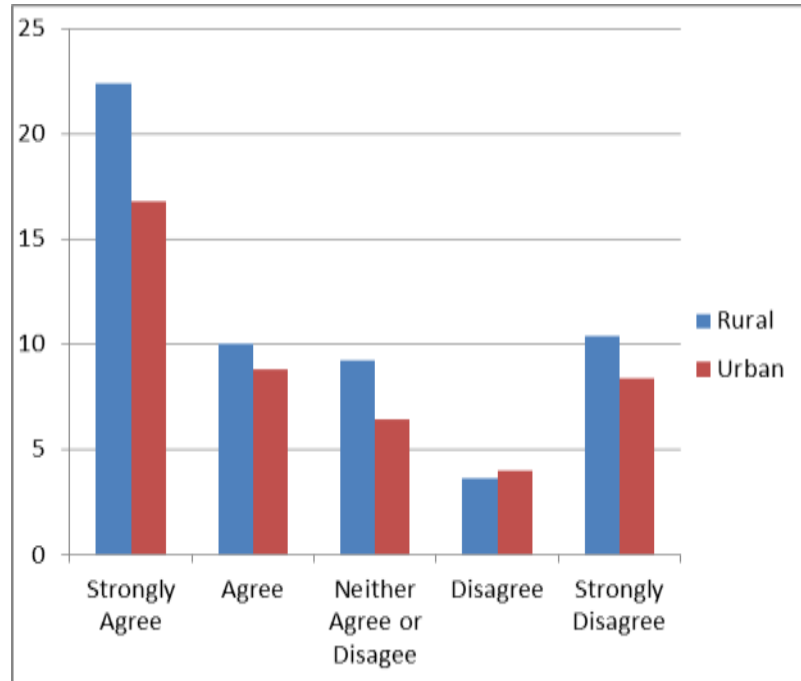
Source: Fieldwork, 2010

It is significant to note that the results of CPP has shown a decrease from 8.33 per cent in 1998 to 2.70 per cent in 2010, indicating that the NDC and NPP are the dominant political parties when it comes to local level elections in the KEEA Municipality. The decreasing rate of the CPP in the local level elections may also partly be explained by the fact that the CPP has since 1992 not been able to form government. Since 1992, the NPP has ruled for eight years and NDC on the other hand is in its 11th year with a year to the 2012 general elections. However, the CPP has remained weak after the death of Dr. Kwame Nkrumah, the first president of Ghana. The analysis so far reveals that political parties have always competed for representation in the new institutional space and ruling political parties have had influence in the DA elections, thus affecting its outcome.

In a survey when respondents were asked to indicate whether political parties in power affect the outcome of the DA elections, as high as 58 per cent of the respondents agreed (SA+A) whilst 26.4 per cent disagreed (SD+D) as shown in Fig. 6.5. The trend shows that the perception of the rural respondents has the strongest tendency that political party in power affects the outcome of the DA elections. This is supported by the fact that whilst 22.4 per cent of the rural respondents strongly agree to the political parties in power affecting the outcome of DA elections, those from the urban areas were 16.8 per cent.

⁴⁸ Legislative Instrument (LI) 1983 is the Local Government (Creation of new districts Electoral Areas and Designation of Units) Instrument, 2010 which was made on October 19, 2010; and was used for the 2010 DA Elections.

Fig. 6.5: Political parties in power affect outcome of the DA elections



n=250 X² exact p-value=0.338

Source: Field survey, 2010

In an interview with the KEEA Constituency secretary of the CPP, he explained that two main factors influence this trend of voting in the DA elections in the KEEA Municipal Assembly. First, he confirmed that Assembly members invest a lot of money during their electoral campaigns which some of them derive from the state resources. Those who are likely to access the state resources are those who are known to belong to the political party in power. There are occasions that “food items are given to candidates to distribute to the electorates for their votes” (interview with KEEA CPP Secretary: 17/09/2010). This confirms Muhumuza (2003) observation in Uganda, where he reports that the most affluent candidates often receive most votes because they can distribute monetary or in-kind benefits to the constituency in the run-up to the elections. Related to this, the CPP Constituency secretary referred to the phenomenon in the KEEA Municipality “where candidates for local level elections distributed cutlasses (machetes) to farmers during the run up to the DA elections whilst fishing nets are either sold at reduced rates or supplied freely”. These materials are supplied to the candidates either through the DCE or the MP who has the ambition to contest for elections again. This was evident during my fieldwork. I recall:

“On December 27, 2010 at about 5:45pm a vehicle with two bags of rice from the KEEA Municipal Assembly visited a chief⁴⁹ at Abrem Berase with two constituency executives of the ruling party on board. When I approached the driver, who was very well known to me, he said they were sent by the MCE to send a Christmas present to the chief. But this gesture could as well be an “election motivation” to plead with the chief as a way of directing his subjects to vote in a particular direction in the impending DA elections which had been fixed for the following day December 28, 2010. This was in the full glare of one of the contestants and he rhetorically asked why should the MCE come with a Christmas present to a chief on the 27th, the eve of the elections, but not before the 25th, the Christmas day?” (Field notes: 27/12/2010)

My observation as well as the rhetorical question from one of the contestants for the DA elections suggests that the Christmas present from the KEEA Municipal Assembly to the chief was delivered at a “wrong time”. It was interpreted more of attempted bribery than a normal Christmas present. Admittedly nothing was heard from the contestants that there had been any form of malpractice from the chief during the elections.

It is significant to note that MPs who do not belong to the political party in power could also support candidates with some resources. Obviously the MPs that belong to the ruling party will appear to be more resourceful. Furthermore, the interview with the CPP Constituency secretary revealed that voting at the local level elections seem to tilt towards political parties in power. This is often attributed to the promise for the provision of development projects by ruling governments. Corroborating this view, an interviewee mentioned that in Ghana every development project is thought to be executed by the government. In his words:

“You see, over here in Ghana every development project is thought to be done by the government. When there is an election whether local or general, government in power tries as much as possible to influence the election with the candidates of their choice. For instance at this DA elections, if there is any development project here in Komenda, they will allow their favourites to be at the forefront; if it is electric bulbs that they are distributing, they will allow such favourites to lead so that the electorates will see who is providing those things” (Interview with a former government appointee at Komenda: 23/08/2010).

Evidence from the field also revealed that political clientelism is practiced in the KEEA Municipality by favouring the demands of communities which voted for political parties in power. Supporting this argument, an Assembly member for Amissano electoral area mentioned to me that a 6-unit classroom block at Abee and Nkontrodo and a 20-unit toilet facility at Abreshia for example were

⁴⁹ Name of the chief is withheld for ethical reasons because I do not have the informed consent of the chief to use the real name

constructed in 2005 by the KEEA DA as a way of rewarding the people in the three communities for massively voting for the NPP during the December 2004 general elections (interview with Amisano Assembly member: 30/11/2010). She further mentioned that there were reports of uneasiness in the Municipal Assembly among the NPP members as to the reason why the KEEA Assembly constructed a 6-classroom block at Komenda-Sehwi, a farming community in 2006/7, when the people in the community voted against the NPP in the 2004 general elections. Essentially, this phenomenon implies that there is a wide scope for corruption, patronage, clientelism, elite capture (Steiner, 2008:58) and the abuse of public resources for political party purposes in the run up to both the local and general level elections.

However, contentions that corruption is higher at the local level may be influenced by perceptions, since local corruption may simply be more visible (Martinez-Vazquez et al., 2004). Contrary to the argument of the wealth factor, Saito (2003) notes that at the lower level of elections, Councillors (Assembly members) generally tend to be characterized by a certain status in the community, for example long residency in the locality, maturity, marriage and good behavior. Saito's argument therefore not only challenges the dominant thinking of monetisation on local level elections but also highlights the importance of social reputation, as in the case of Mr. Baidoo, a 3-term elected Assembly member of Abrem Agona Maana electoral area, in shaping access to the KEEA Municipal Assembly.

In the KEEA Municipal Assembly, it was evident that very often political parties also influence the assignment of human and economic resources. When the NDC government took office in 2009 for instance, the Municipal Director of Education was transferred from the Municipality. In an interview with the Director, she mentioned that the transfer was partly due to the fact that she had contested before on the ticket of the NPP during their primaries to select the Member of Parliament for the Weija constituency in the Greater Accra region. Also the KEEA Municipal Scheme Manager of the National Health Insurance Scheme was transferred to Cape Coast whilst the Public Relations Officer was forced to resign. According to the Scheme Manager, the transfer took place after his office had been locked with a second padlock in addition to the original lock by the MCE (interview with Scheme Manager: 23/08/2010). These agitations for the change of these officers were at the instance of the foot soldiers of the NDC when they argued that similar events of dismissals and transfers were recorded in 2001 when NPP took over power from the NDC in 2000. This argument by the foot soldiers implies that various political parties have interfered in

the local level administration when they were in power. Also evidence from the field revealed that financial resources such as Social Investment Fund (SIF) and Micro-Finance and Small-Loan Center (MASLOC)⁵⁰ that were managed at both the DA and regional levels were channeled to areas where the political party in power will maximize votes. In an interview, the Presiding Member of KEEA mentioned that before the resources are distributed, the District Assembly takes control of the resources. And that is the reason why political parties are keen with the local level elections. When a political party has a majority in the Assembly, they can facilitate approval of any policy that comes from the Regional Coordinating Council, Ministry of Local Government and Rural Development or the Office of the President. According to the Presiding Member:

“The political parties will always make sure that they get a lot of their members in the Assembly. For those in power, this is because they can actually push and facilitate speedily their policies whether good or bad. The opposition also wants representation in the Assembly because it is only through this that they can measure how popular and vibrant they are in the locality (Interview with Presiding Member of KEEA MA: 23/08/2010).

In summary, I have demonstrated in this section with both the qualitative and quantitative data that political parties including those in government have always influenced the DA elections. As a result, local people are able to affiliate elected members of the KEEA Municipal Assembly with political parties. In the KEEA Municipality, this phenomenon has resulted in abuse of incumbency, abuse of resources for purpose of political parties, corruption, patronage and clientilism.

Besides political parties that have influenced the local government institutional space, it is argued that, traditionally, the traditional authority is the leader of his people and that despite the decline of chieftaincy as an institution; traditional authorities still command great influence in their areas of jurisdiction (Ayee, 2007). This reinforces the point where in some communities, contestants for Assembly and Unit committee members seek the views of community elders and traditional authorities before they can contest the DA elections. This can be considered as informally seeking endorsement from the traditional authorities before the candidate can contest for the DA elections. The next section discusses how traditional authorities affect the outcome of the selection of the District Assembly members.

⁵⁰ The SIF and MASLOC as the names imply are loans from the government that are offered to people as seed money for farming, fishing, trading and any other type of business as a way of poverty reduction strategy that began in 2003 and 2007 respectively.

6.3.5. The KEEA Municipal Assembly and Traditional Authorities

In the preceding sections, I have illustrated how social network with traditional authorities have propelled local actors to the local government institutional spaces. For instance, I used the case of Mr. B. B. Bonku, an elected Assembly member for Dompase-Kokwaado-Kwahinkrom electoral area in the Komenda Traditional Area to support my argument. This section discusses the role that the Traditional authorities play in getting the Assembly members selected. It also illustrates how the traditional authorities affect the outcome of the DA elections, both factors having implications for political accountability.

To understand this we may have to consider from the colonial times how traditional authorities have been involved in local governance in various capacities. These ranged from the “indirect rule” approach adopted by the British colonial government (see Chapter 3) to the current day where they are appointed as DA members. In the DAs, they form a link between the local government and the people and also assist local government in implementing their development projects. They sometimes initiate development projects in their communities and lead them to organise fund raising activities for the implementation of such projects. The point here is that most chiefs today are development-oriented and hence are very active in mobilizing their people to initiate and implement self-help projects as well as facilitate the implementation of projects from the District Assemblies (Yankson, 2000). I support my argument with the quote from the Asantehene, Otumfuo Osei Tutu II (2002):

“Our predecessors engaged in inter-tribal wars, fighting for conquest over territories and people. Today, the war should be vigorous and intensive against dehumanization, poverty, marginalization, ignorance and disease Chieftaincy must be used to propel economic development through proper lands administration, through facilitating investments in our communities, and through codification and customs and traditions making it impossible for imposters to get enstooled and creating unnecessary situations for litigation” (cited in Ayee, 2007).

Although there are inter-tribal wars in some parts of Ghana, such as Bawku and Dagbon in the Northern Ghana, the quote above explains why the Asantehene, Otumfuo Osei Tutu II and the Okyenhene, Osagyefo Amoatia Ofori Panin, the Paramount Chief of Akyem Abuakwa have instituted projects aimed at promoting local governance and development (Ayee, 2007). As a result of the new role of modern day chiefs, the leading role of the traditional authorities in the selection process of who becomes their Assembly member in the local government institutional

space is very apparent in the KEEA Municipality. Consequently, evidence from the KEEA Municipality suggested that the traditional authorities either handpicked candidates to contest or they influence the nomination process. This is to get representations that the traditional authorities could best work with as their preferred candidates. It also highlights how traditional rulers who the Constitution of the Republic of Ghana bars from engaging in active politics consciously recruit certain individuals who represent their interest to occupy the new spaces of the DA structures. The examples of Mr. B. B. Bonku who stood as an Assembly member and got elected as well as that of Safohen Kojo Antwi who was appointed as a Unit Committee member support this argument.

The decision of traditional authorities controlling the selection process was informed by earlier contestations between DA members and traditional leaders. An example is the case of Mr. Opong, the Assembly member who arrogated to himself some of the duties of a chief where he could summon the people of Abrem Berase to a meeting without the knowledge of the Chief. This practice often leads to conflicts between the Assembly members and the traditional authorities. It was evident that some of these conflicts also emanate from the fact that some of the DA contestants who seek informal endorsement from the traditional authorities and did not get their “blessing” for the bid decide to contest the DA elections. This becomes more disturbing when such a candidate finally wins the DA elections. Therefore access to the new local government institutional spaces is negotiated through “sanctioned social arrangements” (Osei-Kufuor, 2010) that may end up reproducing conflicts. However, in an interview with a divisional chief in the Komenda Traditional Area, Nana emphasized that:

“I need development projects for my people I need to be interested in who will be in a position to bring projects to my people; someone who can deliver. It cannot be someone who does not even attend communal labour in my community because if he wins, nobody will be prepared to participate in communal labour. Again why chiefs must be involved throughout the local level elections is that as local elections are approaching now, if there should be a bad incidence during the campaign, my palace here will be the first point of call before it gets to the police station... so in the whole process of local level elections from beginning to the end, chiefs should not be left out” (Interview with a Divisional Chief: 11/08/2010).

In a similar vein, one Mr. Alex Aidoo, a member of the 1978 Constitutional Commission, while contributing to a debate on chieftaincy, he notes:

“You cannot go to any village and ... start propagating an ideology or political programme or anything in the air ... the chiefs are very important if we are going to think about participation of all chiefs in government, we have to use them from the grassroots level to the national level” (Aidoo, 1978:48 cited in Ayee, 2007:2).

The import of the views from both the Divisional Chief and Alex Aidoo suggest that in Ghana one could not realistically implement successfully a program of empowerment without the involvement of the traditional authorities. On the other hand, it was evident in the KEEA Municipality that the influence of traditional authorities in controlling the selection process was more prominent in the rural areas. This is because people in rural areas still turn to the chiefs as their point of remedy in areas where the central government, the DAs and the sub-district structures have failed (Ayee, 2007). In line with Ayee’s position, a former Assembly member in Elmina revealed that it would be difficult for the paramount chief, Nana Kodwo Conduah VI, to control who becomes an Assembly member in Akotobinsim electoral area for instance where Nana Conduah resides since Elmina is an urban area (interview with Akotobinsim Assembly member: 23/08/2010). He supported his argument by quoting extensively from the 1992 Constitution of the Republic of Ghana. According to Article 276 (1) states:

“A chief shall not take part in active politics; and any chief wishing to do so and seeking election to Parliament shall abdicate his stool or skin” (Republic of Ghana, 1992).

That notwithstanding, the fact that the traditional authorities are competing for resources from the District Assembly as well as the government has resulted in compromising their neutrality in the selection process to the local government institutional spaces. In an interview with a paramount chief in the KEEA Municipality, he was categorical that as far as resources are limited, it will be very difficult for the traditional authorities to be neutral in the selection of DA members. The paramount chief also claims that the traditional authorities are “politicians”. What this means is that their subjects are expecting them to bring development projects into their communities as well as ensuring that there is peace amongst their subjects. In the words of the paramount chief:

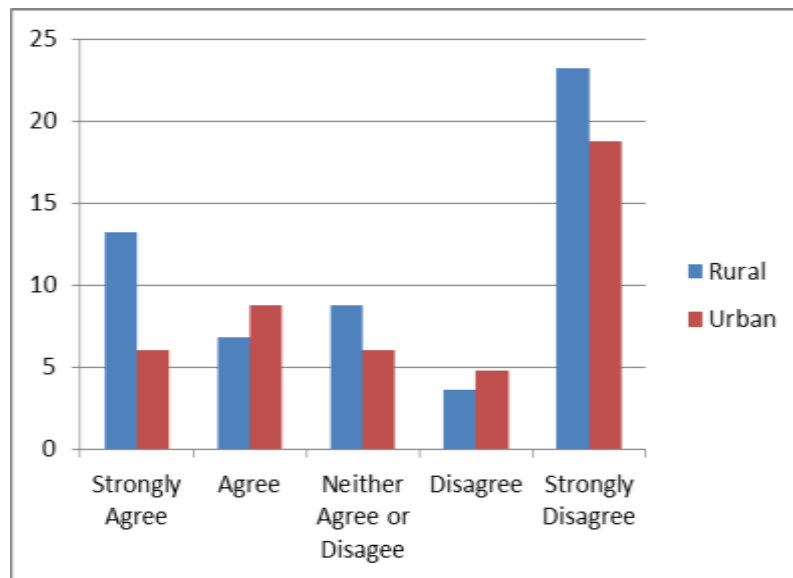
“The traditional authorities must show interest in who becomes our Assembly members because the chief is a politician whether you like it or not. He has influence over his people and for me as a paramount chief; I know for sure that I have authority over the people in my village. I am their leader and so naturally they will follow me.... will follow my ideas as their leader” (Interview with a paramount chief in the KEEA MA: 12/08/2010)

Evidence from the field revealed that during the DA elections, the Chiefs are able to influence the DA elections by showing their preference of the candidates through the elders of various clans in

the communities. Often the elders of the clans are summoned to the palace of the Chiefs when they are directed who to vote for. However as the 1992 Constitution of Ghana bars the chiefs in engaging in active politics, this information is often passed on to the elders through spokespersons and linguists. This is done so that when the issue of preference among the candidates comes to the public, the Chiefs could distance themselves.

Interestingly, results from the survey revealed a stark contradiction to the statements from my key informants. As shown in Figure 6.6, when respondents were asked whether traditional authorities affect the outcome of DA elections, 40 per cent (SD +D) disagreed as compared to 33.8 per cent (SA+A) of the respondents who agreed. Whilst 23.2 per cent of the respondents from the rural communities strongly disagree that traditional authorities affect the outcome of DA elections, those from the urban communities were 18.8 per cent. This appears to contradict the literature that the traditional authorities have more influence in the rural areas than in the urban areas (Ayee, 2007). Significant relationship was established between the traditional authorities affecting DA elections and the location of communities. The finding was supported by the fact that the p-value (0.005) was found to be less than the significance level (0.10).

Fig. 6.6: Traditional Authorities affect the outcome of DA elections



n=250 χ^2 exact p-value=0.005

Source: Field survey, 2010

The conflicting results observed in the two approaches may be explained by Goffman's (1959) position on the issue of sincerity of presentational behavior: *region behavior* and *audience segregation*⁵¹. According to Ervin Goffman:

"When one's activity occurs in the presence of other persons, some aspects of the activity are expressively accentuated and other aspects, which might discredit the fostered impression, are suppressed ... there may be another region – a "back region" or backstage" – where the suppressed facts make an appearance (Goffman, 1959:114 cited in Tseelon, 1992: 115).

Thus, according to Goffman, "region behavior", "audience segregation", as well as techniques of emphasis are designed to conceal irrelevant information, not necessarily the real truth. And that people offer definitions of themselves in various interaction contexts which the audience either accepts or challenges. This appears to be the scenario of the traditional authorities and that of the survey respondents. Jones and Pittman (1986) note the difference between the two revelations from my fieldwork in the KEEA Municipality as the "difference between actors' *expressions* and the actors' attempt to create *impressions*". These expressions and impressions of local actors support David Hume's famous 1739/40 "is-ought" treatise of "what is, but not what ought to be" (Alexander and Porter, 2001:109).

In sum, the qualitative and the quantitative data from the KEEA Municipality reveal some inconsistencies. Whilst the traditional authorities claim that they have influence over their people and that their influence affects the outcome of the DA elections in several ways, the survey respondents have a different view. This goes to demonstrate the complexity of the selection of the DA members in the KEEA Municipality.

I will now follow up at the next section with the summary of the complexities of the selection process to illustrate the accommodations, negotiations, struggles, postponements and rejections that take place at the KEEA Municipal Assembly. I argue that local actors, for variety of reasons, may not act in rational strategic ways as expected of them to become representatives at the new local government institutions as a result of social, cultural, historical and other contextual factors.

⁵¹ "Region behavior" refers to the discrepancy between one's behavior with different kinds of audience (eg. strangers, own team members) whilst "audience segregation" refers to a device for ensuring that those before whom one plays one of his parts won't be the same individuals before whom he plays a different part in another setting (Goffman, 1959:57 cited in Tseelon, 1992).

6. 4. The Complexity of the selection process of the DA candidates

The provisions in the 1992 Constitution attempts to draw on democratic mechanisms to gain access to the new local government institutions in Ghana. Also a number of provisions in the Local Government Act, Act 462 of 1993 prescribe mechanisms for those seeking election/selection into the DAs. However, very little attention has been paid to these provisions by various institutions. Evidence from the KEEA Municipal Assembly shows that in reality, representation at the new institutional spaces are quite complex and there requires negotiations and struggles. To the extent that appointments to DCE positions lead to postponements and re-appearances at the Municipal Assemblies before a DCE can be endorsed.

When nomination forms for the DA elections were opened by the Municipal Electoral Officer (MEO) in the KEEA Assembly in 2006 for instance, a number of candidates went for the forms. It was revealed that some of the candidates had to negotiate with local elites, traditional leaders and political party leaders to get the “clearance” before they could fill the forms. This exercise was also to court these local leaders to support their bid. As earlier stated, there was evidence to the effect that some of the traditional leaders did not act in the open since the 1992 Constitution of Ghana prohibits them to actively participate in partisan politics. But they needed development projects so they acted from the “backstage”. An example is the case of Mr. B. B. Bonku who contested as an Assembly member and got elected as the Dompooase-Kokwaado-Kwahinkrom electoral area. The result of the 2006 exercise led to only 85 per cent of filled and returned forms to the MEO in 2006 (interview with KEEA Municipal Electoral Officer: 29/11/2010). This implies that 15 per cent of those who collected the nomination forms were either persuaded upon by elders, Chiefs and political leaders not to contest the elections or they realized later on that they could not win the elections and therefore dropped the decision to contest.

On the other hand, a lot of negotiations became evident in the electoral areas that consist of two or more communities. The negotiations take several forms; among those perceived from the same party, same religious background and same community. If more than one contestant from the same political party were seeking elections, there were arrangements for the political parties to first employ negotiation skills to ask for some withdrawals. This also applied to those found to belong to the same church or from the same community. If the negotiations failed, all the candidates met at one point for elections, referred to as the “primaries” to select one candidate.

The essence is that they would split votes and the “opposition” would then win the elections if they were all allowed to contest the elections.

In the last DA elections held in December 2010 for instance, there were primaries in a number of electoral areas to select “political candidates” (interview with Assembly member, Eguafu-Breman: 04/01/2011). For example at Bantuma electoral area in Elmina where there were three NPP and two NDC candidates respectively contesting, primaries were conducted to select one for each political party. This is not to suggest that interested candidates could easily accept the outcome of the primaries. That is how we see struggles, compromises and deferrals occurring among diverse social actors in the selection process. It also leads to local actors going against local arrangements. There, to get a preferred candidate for the local level elections, it involved a lot of negotiations and contestations among various local actors of which if not well managed, could lead to unintended consequences. In fact, during the 2010 DA election, it was revealed that one of the contestants from the NPP who lost during their primaries failed to step down and resulted in two contestants from the NPP submitting their forms to the MEO as against the only NDC candidate so that they could all contest the elections. At the end of the day, the NDC candidate won the elections to represent the Bantuma electoral area during the KEEA Municipal Assembly elections in 2010.

In other instances, if the incumbent Assembly member is perceived to have performed well during his first term as an Assembly member and wanted to contest again, other candidates are prevailed upon not to contest. An example is Mr. Baidoo of Maana electoral area at Abrem Agona who stood unopposed during his second term of elections in 1998. He was perceived to have lobbied the KEEA Assembly in putting up a 20-seater KVIP⁵² toilet in the area. Further check revealed that those who wanted to contest him were prevailed upon and that the effect of exercising agency to contest Mr. Baidoo was not successful. Therefore the Maana electorates had to accommodate Mr. Baidoo and the other candidates had to defer their ambitions to get access to the DA.

Evidence in the KEEA Municipality also suggested that history played a role in gaining access to the new institutional space. For example there was an “unwritten” pact between Eguafu and Breman that together with a very small community, Ponkrom, constitute an electoral area. The unwritten pact suggests that the representation to the Assembly will alternate between the two bigger and

⁵² Kumasi Ventilated Improved Pit (KVIP) is a type of public toilet developed at the Kwame University of Science and Technology in Kumasi.

more populous communities, Eguafo and Breman. In 1998, the Assembly member came from Breman whilst the Eguafo candidate won in 2002. When in 2006, Breman thought it was their turn; again the Eguafo candidate won the elections. This infuriated the people of Breman and decided overwhelmingly to vote for a candidate from Breman in the next elections, referring to “how things have always been done in the past” (Osei-Kufuor, 2010). This was the case of PK from Breman who contested and won in the 2010 DA elections to represent Eguafo-Breman electoral area. Interestingly, it was evident that the decision to vote in the example of PK had more to do with the community which he comes from, and therefore the electorates preferred to moderate the political affiliation aspect. What that meant, in the case of PK, was that whilst voters in Eguafo mainly voted for the candidate from Eguafo that of Breman concentrated on voting for PK.

There was also a “traditional area locational factor” when it came to the appointment of the DCE by the President as it was revealed in my study. This was a case of employing the principle of equity among the four traditional areas that constitute the Municipality. If the elected MP for instance comes from Elmina in the Edina Traditional Area, attempts were made to search for the DCE from one of the remaining three traditional areas. It was revealed that three out of the five DCEs who have been in office since 1988 were residents of Elmina just as the MPs at the time. However, the two others were appointed partly because of the equity factor of where they reside. These traditional areas were Komenda and Abrem respectively whilst the two MPs at the time were both from the Edina Traditional Area.

Relating to the selection to the local government institutional space, it was evident from the study that monetisation played a role particularly when it comes to the approval of the DCEs. To understand this, we may have to refer to Act 462 section 20 (1):

“There shall be District Chief Executive for each district who shall be appointed by the President with the prior approval of not less than two-thirds majority of the members of the District assembly present and voting at the meeting”

Respondents indicated that, it often becomes a negotiation between the appointed DCE and the members of the Assembly before the DCE will be approved by the Assembly members. If a DCE were able to pay much money or other “presents” to the Assembly members he got the approval without much opposition. On March 10, 2001, for instance, the nominated DCE did not get the approval on the first round of voting. However, the President re-nominated him to the Assembly

for consideration as the law⁵³ requires. After negotiations with party executives and traditional leaders to impress upon the Assembly members who were considered very adamant, he got the approval when he re-appeared a week later.

It was also revealed that in 2009, Assembly members in the KEEA Municipality demanded **GH¢ 1000** (EUR 467) each from the appointed MCE. However, they finally settled on **GH¢ 500** (EUR 233.50) each before the President's nominee got the approval to become the MCE. Further checks revealed that, failure on the part of the MCE or her agents to pay that amount would have resulted in her re-appearance or face total rejection if she failed to secure the two-third majority required by law. Obviously, the Assembly members would have negotiated for higher amount if the MCE had re-appeared for the second time for approval. Although these financial inducements may be termed as a corrupt practice which is being institutionalized in the DAs, an Assembly member interviewee indicated that the amount was seen as their "end of service benefit" (ESB) since they hardly receive ESB after their 4-year service unlike the Members of Parliament and the Ministers of State (interview with Assembly member, Elmina: 16/08/2010)⁵⁴.

The complexity of how local actors get access to the new institutional spaces and its attendant corrupt practices might have effects on political accountability of local actors towards the electorates. I have so far attempted to disentangle the complexities of the negotiations, struggles, deferrals and the re-appearances of the representations at the KEEA Municipal Assembly. The next section discusses political accountability from the perspectives of the local citizens of the KEEA Municipality and the effects of election/selection process of the DAs on political accountability.

⁵³ Act 462 (1993) requires that when the President's appointee to the position of DCE fails to get two-thirds of Assembly members present and voting but more than 50 per cent of votes, the President has the right to re-appoint the same candidate within ten days to be considered. He is rejected on the first round of voting when he fails to secure 50 per cent or more. When he again could not go through on the second time of appearance if he is re-nominated by the President, he is deemed to have been rejected by the Assembly.

⁵⁴ All office holders who fall under the Section 71 of the 1992 Constitution including MPs and Ministers receive ESB at the end of their term of service paid from the Consolidated Fund. However DAs are asked to decide and pay ESB from their internally generated fund to Assembly Members as their budgets could accommodate, but it often end up not paid.

6.5. Unpacking political accountability and Effects of election/selection process on political accountability

As argued by Faguet (2005), local level elections are at the center of participatory local government and it is the most important determinant of local governments' responsiveness and accountability. The local elections are also supposed to facilitate the exercise of voice mechanism by the electorates and the hearing of those voices by those in authority. The assumption is that by the voice mechanism as a way of building popular participation, government at the local level will become more responsive to citizens desires and more effective in service delivery because individuals can act to bring service providers and leaders to account (Blair, 2000; Ribot, 2002). Moreover (political) accountability increases the likelihood of the improvement of public services if citizens have the political scope to hold politicians and administrators accountable, and potentially sanction them (DIE, 2011). This section explores the understanding of political accountability from the perspectives of local citizens in the KEEA Municipality and the effect of the complex nature of selection/election process of local level representation at the DAs on political accountability of local government leaders.

My objective here is to argue that despite the formal constitutional provisions guiding access to represent institutions at the local level, evidence from the KEEA Municipality suggests that the local actors in the KEEA Municipality had their "own ways of doing things". This, to a large extent is based on the perception of political accountability which extends to how the local government laws have been "localized" in order to suit the traditional authorities and local political leaders. Going by the nature of relationships, I will limit my discussion to vertical accountability linkages in local government as shown in my local accountability chain framework (see Fig. 2.4). Using the data from the KEEA Municipality, I will focus on the relationships among the Municipal Assembly represented by the MCE and the Assembly staff; Assembly members; and Unit Committee members on one hand; and local citizens, voters and tax payers on the other hand. But to do that, we need to understand how the local people of the KEEA Municipality perceive political accountability of local government. The next section therefore discusses political accountability from the perspectives of the actors in the KEEA Municipality.

6.5.1 Unpacking Political Accountability – Perspectives from the KEEA Municipality

Evidence from the KEEA Municipality regarding the understanding of political accountability varied amongst the local citizens, voters and tax payers. This is clearly reflected in the statements from the four different groups of local actors comprising traditional leaders, assembly members, and constituency executives of the three major political parties. The fourth group comprised teachers, traders and religious leaders who participated in a workshop in Elmina held on November 30, 2010 (see Plate 4.3). Specifically, in the selection of local actors to represent the KEEA Municipality in this workshop, I placed emphasis on institutions involved in the local government arena and whose local leaders have basic knowledge on decentralisation. The question to the groups was *what is your perception of political accountability of local government in the case of the KEEA Municipality?* The following are the perceptions of political accountability of local government from the four groups of local actors from the KEEA Municipality:

GROUP 1:

“It is a means of how those elected into power will be able to hold local government leaders to account for whatever they have been entrusted with. It is also about how MCE, MCD and the MFO will be transparent financially to the Assembly Members and then to the grassroots. The Assembly members should also be in a position to disseminate whatever discussed, for example, any government policies or developmental projects to the electorate for them to get involved”.

As observed from the analytical findings, the implication of the perception of group one indicates that political accountability of local government involves elections. It is also about how those elected are able to demand from the local leaders to account for what they have been entrusted with whilst it is expected that the MCE and his administrators must become financially transparent. The group also by implication identified three key local actors at the Municipal Assembly, namely the Municipal Chief Executive (MCE); Municipal Coordinating Director (MCD; and the Municipal Finance Officer (MFO) who are expected to be transparent in their financial management of the Assembly. There is also the requirement of the electorates getting information for them to participate in government policies or development projects which is also in line with the analytical findings. Deducing from this narrative, demanding accountability at the local level suggests a very difficult task.

On the one hand, as discussed in section 6.4, regarding the complex nature of the selection of DCEs and Assembly members, demanding accountability at the local level might be constrained by social networks of the local actors. With the nature of social relationships of the Assembly and UC representations with the traditional authorities and political leaders, there might be a lot of compromises. In addition is the potential danger of the inability of Assembly members in demanding accountability from the DCEs. The reason could be attributed to the financial inducements that some Assembly members receive in the KEEA Municipality before the approval of the MCE. These financial inducements which the Assembly members consider as their end of service benefit (ESB) might resist their effort to demand accountability as well as impeding the “right questions to be asked at the right time”. This may potentially limit the effect of Assembly members as individual agencies to demand accountability.

On the other hand, there was the fear that if an Assembly member demanded accountability from the MCE, he might incur the displeasure of the local government leader. Similar to the observations of Wong (2010:9) often this will “upset interpersonal relationships in the entire community” where the Assembly member represents. Some of the consequences will be that the Assembly member’s electoral area might suffer or denied of development projects and therefore they are not prepared to “face” the DA authorities individually contrary to the institutional theories that individuals purposively bargain to negotiate final decisions.

GROUP 2

“Political accountability of local government is a means of how those in key local government positions, whether elected or appointed into power, are able to disseminate information, policies or developmental projects to their electorates. It also talks about regular meetings with the people, financial transparency, control and information to citizens; what those in key positions have been able to do, where they have reached and the way forward”.

The perception of political accountability of local government by the second group as indicated above agrees with that of group one that the concept involves elected members, but expands to include appointed members of the local government institution. As in the case of elected Assembly members so it is with that of the appointed members. As was evidenced in the study where Assembly members and Unit Committee candidates seek prior permission from traditional authorities before filling their nomination forms, meant to seek approval for their bids, the

process had already been compromised. Again with the indication that the traditional authorities will at the “backstage” campaign for who they can best work with, it will constrain the agency to demand accountability from the Assembly and Unit Committee members. I draw on the case of Safohen Kojo Antwi who the traditional authorities saw as “one of their own” and got selected to the UC as a clear example to support my argument.

In the case of Safohen Kojo Antwi, the decision to become a member of the UC was negotiated upon by the traditional authorities. The fear that he might resign from the UC might constrain the traditional authorities to demand accountability. On the other hand, apart from the principle of financial transparency introduced into the concept, accountability was likened to the concept of monitoring and evaluation (M&E) of the performance of local leaders. Although the concept of M & E is applied mainly for projects and development programs, it can provide public an internal accountability and help demonstrate impact, which increasingly are important functions in the current climate of budgetary constraints (Hockings et al. 2000; Sawhill and Williamson, 2001). Applying the same principle, the group mentioned that there was the need to monitor those in key positions of local government what they have done, currently doing and plans for the future. In essence, M & E can be used to form the basis for improved decision making. But from the statement by group two, there was also the need to provide necessary information to the local public officials as well as regular meetings with the people of the KEEA Municipality. It is evident from this group that it is through the local actors having the required information that they can demand accountability from their local leaders (this is discussed in the next chapter).

GROUP 3

“Political accountability of local government refers to the act of accounting to the local populace the stewardship of a leader/manager/supervisor periodically on work or projects done at the Assemblies. This implies that heads of various sectors within the Assembly should have a breakdown and report on what happens during their tenure of office in a fair and transparent manner”.

The underlying inferences from the perspectives of the third workshop group was that political accountability was perceived more to do with giving account of the stewardship of a leader, manager, or a supervisor. But this concentrated more on development projects undertaken by the DA and the expectation of the political leader, the DCE, to render account on his/her stewardship. This is not surprising judging from the fact that in the KEEA Municipality, local people look up to

the Assembly, particularly the MCE, as the provider of development projects. It was revealed from this workshop that, details of the cost of development projects are concealed from the local people including Assembly members. An assembly member mentioned:

“What happens is that within our local institutional arena, people feel that when you go to the Assembly and you begin to ask questions... you demand certain level of accountability, you create some level of ill-will for the DCE or you create it against the ruling party, so they are not interested” (Interview with Assembly Member: 30/11/2010).

On the one hand, evidence from the Municipality showed that with the appointment of the DCE by the President, his loyalty to the appointing authority could strategically constrain him from accounting to the electorates. As earlier mentioned, as far as he remains loyal to the President, it will be enough reason to ensure his position as a DCE. The effect is that if there will be any semblance of accountability, it will be upward instead of downward or political accountability to the local people, voters and tax payers as argued by several authors on decentralisation (Aye, 1996; Ribot 2002; Crawford, 2008). On the other hand, the DCE is also constrained from accounting to the local citizens in order not to create antagonism towards the appointing authority.

GROUP 4

“Political accountability refers to giving an account of how one serves his/her people financially, emotionally and physically during his/her term of office”.

The notion of political accountability of local government as perceived by the fourth group was quite intriguing. In addition to what is common with the other groups' perception of political accountability, the term “emotion” is introduced. Pressed further on the motivation for the term, it was revealed that two weeks before the workshop was held, there was a heavy downpour of rains in the Municipality. As a result there were floods that rendered some people in communities such as Abee, Amissano and Nkontrodo displaced. The expectation of the people in the affected communities was that the MCE or her representatives will visit the victims. All that they heard was that a team from the National Disaster Management Organisation (NADMO)⁵⁵ had gone to the communities to assess the extent of the damage. This provoked the affected communities the more because they felt that as usual “nothing good” will come from the NADMO team.

⁵⁵ NADMO is the organisation responsible for the management of disasters and other emergencies in Ghana

As the MCE and her team failed to pay a visit to the victims, it was interpreted to mean that the Assembly was not accountable to the affected communities. If they were, they would have been “touched” by the predicament of the affected people. It therefore meant that the political leadership of the KEEA Municipal Assembly was not politically accountable to the local citizens. This seems to confirm Schutz’s phenomenological view that an understanding of social life should center on the notion of *lifeworlds*; depicting the “lived-in” and “taken-for-granted” world of the social actor (Schutz, 1962 cited in Long, 2001).

Essentially, these perspectives of political accountability from the KEEA Municipality suggests an actor-defined phenomenon, since it entails practical actions shaped by a background of intentionality and values (Schutz and Luckman, 1973). What this shows is that the practical actions of the floods in the KEEA Municipality have shaped the local actors’ perception of political accountability of local government; illustrating the “emotional, cognitive and physical experience” (Wong, 2010:5) of the people of the Municipality. Relating the perceptions of political accountability from the KEEA Municipality with my analytical findings, it has illustrated the internalization of external interventions such as decentralisation which has become negotiated accommodated and contested (Long, 1992:25) by the local actors in the KEEA Municipality. Significantly, this approach is a useful method to assess how the local citizens perceive political accountability within the decentralised local government of the KEEA Municipality.

Furthermore, the local actors’ perception of political accountability is shaped by the questionable behaviour of their local representatives. In effect, the perceptions of the four working groups in the KEEA Municipality have illustrated that various actors understand the concept of political accountability differently. Although the perceptions of the actors in the KEEA Municipality confirm the two-dimensional concept of accountability, that is, answerability and enforcement (Schedler, 1999), it goes further to introduce another dimension that borders on the emotions of the local actors. This resonates with Schedler (1999:13) where he argues that due to its novelty, accountability represents an underexplored concept whose meaning remains evasive, whose boundaries are fuzzy, and whose internal structure is confusing. Hence, this research contributes to the debate by exploring local actors’ perception of political accountability.

Having illustrated how the actors in the KEEA Municipality perceive political accountability, I will now turn my attention to the demand for political accountability at the local level.

6.5.2 Demanding political accountability at the local level

Evidence revealed in the KEEA Municipality (see example 3: section 6.3), the local citizens look up to the traditional leaders to demand accountability from the local government officials on their behalf. This implies that instead of the Assembly and UC members demanding accountability from the District Assembly as the local government law require, they were mediated through existing authority structures that were conceived as capable and legitimate to do so (Osei-Kufuor, 2010). This was seen in two ways: first the traditional authorities demanding accountability from the DCE and his staff and secondly, from the DA and UC members. In an interview with an Assembly member he mentioned that:

“As you know, Chiefs are often seen as ‘fathers’ of the communities. And as fathers, whether a DCE, Assembly or Unit Committee member, you will honour his call. It even becomes very pertinent when the Chiefs are seen not to be dabbling in partisan party politics” (Interview with Assembly member, Aboransa: 18/08/2010)

This view was corroborated by a number of my informants since the traditional authorities are a “very potent force and that they could have their own way of using the traditional institution to do so” (interview with KAB Governance Consult: 14/07/2010). However, the interviewee further notes that in reality we do not see the traditional authorities demanding political accountability on behalf of their citizens due to a number of limitations. In his testimony:

“We have not had much of that because a number of traditional rulers are more interested in what they get from the Assembly than what they can do for the Assembly to sit up. In fact there are cases where a traditional leader travelling to Accra or the regional capital goes to the DA for a fuelled vehicle. So if you are a smart DCE you will identify the critical traditional leaders in the district and you find a way to “settle” them. Therefore the question of thorough accountability will never be a major issue... the traditional authorities will start complaining that you are not accountable, only when you do not give them what they want from the Assembly” (Interview with KAB Governance Consult: 14/07/2010).

On the one hand, drawing on the social networks of Mr. B.B. Bonku, the Assembly member for Dompoase-Kokwaado-Kwahinkrom with the paramount chief of the Komenda Traditional Area as an example (section 6.4.1), it was difficult for the paramount chief to demand accountability when it concerned Mr. Bonku. This might lead to troubles in the family when the family members interpret the action to be that the Chief would want to publicly expose the Assembly member which can lead to the Assembly member incurring the wrath of the entire community. Therefore it blurs the boundaries between the new institution and socially embedded accountability structures at the local level.

On the other hand, the inability of the traditional authorities' demanding accountability from the DCE is that they might be branded "opposition" members. Evidence from the field for example, revealed that there were two camps in the KEEA Municipal Assembly; the MCE and the MP camps respectively although they both belong to the same political party (interview with Head of Decentralised Department: 28/10/2010). When you are perceived to be in the camp of the MP, you cannot think of demanding accountability from the MCE whether you are an Assembly member or a Chief. This will be interpreted to mean acting in a way against the common practices of loyalty to the ruling government. In this case, because the DCE is the representative of the President at the local level, he is seen as belonging more to the ruling government than the Member of Parliament who has been elected by the people on the ticket of the same political party with the President. Again, if you are perceived to belong to the camp of an opposition MP, then demand for accountability from the DCE and staff is unjustifiable; it is "opposition" as usual. The story of the DCE-MP sordid relationship that often leads to Chiefs' inability to demand accountability is succinctly captured in an interview with an MP from Northern Ghana:

"The DCE has not campaigned in the constituency on any party's manifesto, neither has he promised the electorates of any development projects, unlike the Member of Parliament (MP). In other words, he has no social contract with the local people. The issue is that when the DCE and the MP comes from the same political party, the DCE is interested in the parliamentary seat at the next elections. When from different political parties, he is either working for himself or his political party to win the seat in the next elections. And therefore there is a calculated attempt from the DCE and the Assembly to ensure that the MP is not recognized in the constituency. This phenomenon becomes more prominent when the MP and the DCE are from different political parties. Another point is the issue in my constituency where the DCE was a sitting MP who lost the parliamentary seat to me and was compensated with the position of the DCE when his party won the general elections. Any Chief who goes to his office will only be entertained based on the parliamentary results of the 2008 elections from his community. If the community voted for the DCE during the parliamentary elections, the request is honoured. If not, you are directed to see the one you voted for, the MP. This makes it very difficult for the Chiefs to demand accountability from the DCEs" (Interview with MP from Northern Ghana: 10/10/2010).

Evidence from the field also revealed that the local people entrusted the question of accountability to the media. In an interview it was mentioned that the 1992 Constitution enjoins the media to generally promote the provisions of the constitution and to uphold accountability of the (local) government to the people of Ghana. Although the media have a constitutional backing to demand accountability on behalf of the people, the interviewee pointed out that the media need to improve. He cites three reasons:

“Firstly, the media houses are not well represented at the district level; secondly, the people in the media are themselves not knowledgeable on the decentralisation process; and thirdly, when the people in the media go to do stories in the DAs, they look for things that border on blackmail and sensationalism so that they can comfortably sell their newspapers” (Interview with KAB Governance Consult, 14/07/2010)

Besides demanding accountability through the traditional authorities, politicians and the media, evidence from the KEEA Municipality also revealed that withdrawing from communal labour particularly among the youth was a reflexive way of getting Assembly members render accounts for their stewardship. For example, when Mr. Opong was the Assembly member at Abrem Berase, he collected financial contributions from the community towards the extension of electricity to a community clinic, popularly referred to as Community Health and Planning Service (CHIP) zone (interview with a Chief: 28/10/2010). After a while, the community demanded from the Assembly member to render accounts on the contributions collected and how the funds have been utilised. When he failed to do that in a given period, the youth decided not to participate in any communal labour that was organised by the Assembly member. When the decision by the youth got to the paramount chief, he summoned the whole community to his palace and the settlement was that a new date be fixed for the Assembly member to render the accounts. This action by the youth resulted in Mr. Opong rendering the accounts to the community. The example reveals that exercising agency to exert accountability from local representatives is a relational activity (Eckardt, 2008).

6.6. Summary of the Chapter

As a way to summarise this chapter, it is important to highlight the following five aspects. First of all, drawing on local actors in the decentralisation arena, I have demonstrated that access to the new institutional spaces in the KEEA Municipality depends on the differential ability of individual actors to draw on resources existing in social relations. I provided deep insights into how culture, history, norms and other contextual factors shape the action of individuals into the decentralisation arena. The examples given point to the importance of examining local politics as a dynamic process that frequently produces unintended consequences as different ongoing processes interact.

Second, I have shown the complexity of the selection/election process to illustrate the accommodations, negotiations, struggles, postponements and rejections that take place in the new institutional space.

Third, it has become evident in this study that 67.6 per cent of the respondents agree to the election of the DCEs as it will increase popular participation of local citizens, voters and tax payers in public decision-making. At the local level, it is seen as a mechanism for political accountability because local leaders who did not perform well were punished and voted out of office. The study also showed empirical evidence to the effect that a significant large group (43.6 per cent) of the respondents in the KEEA Municipality indicated that local level elections should be political party based. This is illustrated with the voting patterns in the KEEA Municipal Assembly where local citizens can easily tell the party affiliations of the members in the Assembly. It has also become evident that lack of political party based elections is the major reason for the low turnout in the DA elections over the period in the Municipality.

Four, I have also highlighted on the understanding of political accountability from the perspectives of the local people in the KEEA Municipality. Essentially, these perspectives of political accountability from the KEEA Municipality illuminated the actor-defined phenomenon since it entails practical actions shaped by the background of local actors and the questionable behaviour of their local representatives. The perspectives of political accountability from the KEEA Municipality have furthermore illustrated the critical examination of the taken-for-granted aspects of the everyday life of local actors.

Finally, in questioning the political accountability of local leaders in the KEEA Municipality, it was evident that the decentralisation institution suggests of an upward instead of downward accountability.

CHAPTER SEVEN

PUBLIC ACCESS TO INFORMATION AND POLITICAL ACCOUNTABILITY

7.1 Introduction

This chapter builds upon the conclusions derived from the previous chapter which analysed the local electoral system in Ghana and how it affects political accountability. Although 67.6 per cent of the respondents supported an elected DCE and should be political party based, considering the complexity of the selection/election process, an elected DCE is insufficient in enhancing political accountability. Taking into account similar complexities associated with the selection/election of other local representatives and also the fact that elections are periodic, it calls for the opportunity in exploring other political accountability mechanisms in the new institutional arena.

In view of the imminent increase in information technology all over the world, the African Media Development Initiative in 2008, notes that public access to information will encourage people's participation in debates and contribute to the agenda-setting of a local community. In this way, public access to information will contribute to general information flows across society and give a voice to the local people. In a conference on "ICT in Africa: Boosting Economic Growth and Poverty Reduction" organised by the Africa Partnership Forum (APF) in Tokyo in April 2008, it concluded that sharing of information as well as encouraging increased participation, particularly by the poor, enhances empowerment and transparency (APF, 2008), both of which play a key role in enhancing political accountability of local government. This has therefore led to the growing international recognition of the importance of public access to information by local government actors as political accountability mechanisms. There is currently a global recognition that information technology is the key to future vitality in society and the means by which the future of nations would be determined (Kyem and Kyem, 2006), and this includes both national and local governments.

It has been argued that public access to information improve local actors' active participation in the activities of local government which is "reliant on the intermediate variable of accountability" (Crawford, 2008). The implication is that adopting a new approach in expanding access to information to the public will lead to more focused policies. This is because it enhances the participation of the local people in the political process (Ayee and Amponsah, 2003) and creates

feedback mechanisms (Moncrieffe 2001). However, the question arises as to how local citizens can meaningfully express their views about what the local government is engaged in if they do not know what the local government is doing? How can they participate meaningfully in decision-making? How can they participate in the agenda-setting within the local government arena, check abuses and apply sanctions when the abuses occur?

To give answers to these questions, this chapter presents my research findings regarding information sharing by local government actors and public access to information in the KEEA Municipality. Specifically, I intend to analyse the extent to which local citizens, voters and tax payers access information from the local government institution. Conversely, since information is not only unidirectional, I also intend to find out how local government actors access information from the public thereby shaping decision-making process in the local government arena. Florini (2007:1) notes that the disclosure about (local) government practices and policies is an essential step in the exercise of political and economic power.

The first section of this chapter focuses on the accountability mechanisms provided in the legal framework of the DAs. In what follows, it will discuss how far these provisions are followed in practice. The discussion will then focus on the local government media of providing information to the public and assesses local representatives' use of various media to disseminate information.

7.2 The DA Legal Framework and Accountability mechanisms

This section focuses on the provisions of accountability mechanisms that are inherent in the local government act, Act 462 of 1993, the 1992 Constitution of the Republic of Ghana and other relevant Acts. It does so by examining the mechanisms of access to information between local government representatives and citizens; and assesses how these spaces of citizen engagement have been recognised in reality as far as the KEEA Municipality is concerned. Although there are a number of legal provisions on accountability, two main aspects will be discussed in this study. In line with the participation model of accountability, these are the accountability of DA representatives (District Chief Executive, Assembly Members, Unit Committee) to the public (their constituents); and the accountability of local executives to elected representatives. According to Act 462, section 16 (1) (a):

“A member of a DA shall... maintain close contact with his electoral area, consult his people on issues to be discussed in the DA and collate their views, opinions and proposals”
(Republic of Ghana, 1993)

The provision quoted above describes aptly the basis of the political accountability being discussed. This implies that DA members, both elected and appointed representatives ought to avail themselves to the electorate through frequent interaction, consultations, mobilization of local opinions/demands, among others (Moncrieffe, 2001 cited in Debrah, 2009:283). Similarly, the Assembly member is expected to present the views, opinions and proposals of the people to the District Assembly; attend meetings of the DA and meetings of sub-committee of the DA of which he is a member; and meet the electorate before any scheduled meeting of the Assembly. Also the Assembly member is expected to report to the electorates’ general decisions of the DA and its Executive Committee and the actions he has taken to solve problems raised by the electorates. Furthermore, the Act requires the Assembly member to maintain frequent liaison with organised productive economic groupings and other persons in the district and to take part in communal and development activities in the district. Additionally, the sub-district structures such as the area councils and unit committees offer another important means of directing community needs and demands from the grassroots upwards to the DAs.

In the case of the District Assembly, Act 462 (1993) section 10(4) provides among others that, it is the responsibility of the DA to:

- (1) guide, encourage and support sub-district local government bodies, public agencies and local communities to perform their roles in the execution of approved development plans;
- (2) initiate and encourage joint participation with other persons or bodies to execute approved development plans; and
- (3) promote and encourage other bodies to undertake projects under approved development plans.

On the other hand, with regard to the planning functions of the District Planning Authority, Act 480 (1994) section 3(1) states that:

“A District Planning Authority shall conduct a public hearing on any proposed district development plan and shall consider the views expressed at the hearings before the adoption of the proposed district development plan” (Republic of Ghana, 1994).

It is clear from the provisions above that, the legislative framework of the DAs requires that the District Assembly represented by the District Chief Executive and the District Planning Coordinating Unit (DPCU), Assembly and Unit Committee members are expected to perform their

functions in consultation with local citizens, voters and tax payers. To be able to do this, the Institute of Local Government Studies (ILGS, 2006) notes that the DAs are required to provide information to the public through the use of notice boards, information vans, newsletter, radio and video presentations etc.; consultations through meetings, public hearing, public forum; collaboration with partnerships, neighbourhood watchdogs⁵⁶, private enterprises and NGOs among others.

The ensuing sections discuss the extent to which opportunities for political accountability⁵⁷ are actually available and practiced in the KEEA Municipality and these will be explored by assessing public access to information.

7.3 Information from the KEEA Municipal Assembly

This section discusses results about public access to information from the KEEA Municipal Assembly and its relevance to political accountability. Diamond (2005:8) notes that effective oversight requires open flow and citizen's access to information, so that the local citizens monitoring their leader can discover facts and mobilise evidence against their representatives. It is the duty of the accountable actors (local representatives) to make information available in order to enable the overseeing actors (local citizens) to articulate demands, investigate and denounce wrongdoing, enforce standards of conduct, and provide commentary on the behavior and actions (Brinkerhoff, 2001:4) of local representatives. Also in Ghana and the KEEA Municipality, this is seen as very relevant as a former MCE informed me in an interview. In the words of the MCE:

“Access to information is a key to the new development issues of accountability and it is very important because it is only when the local people understand the issues at stake that they will be willing to contribute to whatever is at stake and therefore hold their leaders accountable” (Interview with former MCE of KEEA MA: 17/08/2010)

This statement from the former Municipal Chief Executive illustrates how local people will participate in the activities of the Municipal Assembly when they get to understand the issues at stake. Although this statement by the MCE was confirmed by a number of other key informants,

⁵⁶ Neighbourhood watchdogs are often civilians who voluntarily come together in their neighbourhoods to provide security for themselves and their property.

⁵⁷ In addition to local level elections discussed in the previous chapter, these three means of assessing political accountability are similar to that of Crook and Manor (1998:7). Although Crook and Manor used the term political participation, Crawford (2008) argument of which I agree is that political participation is an “intermediate variable” of political accountability.

access to information at the local level is so difficult to attain. This is confirmed by the results from the field survey. As shown in Table 7.1, 80 per cent of the total respondents from the KEEA Municipality reported that they have no access to information from the Municipal Assembly. From the table, whilst 19.4 per cent of the rural respondents claimed they have access to information from the Municipal Assembly, those from the urban areas were 20.7 per cent. This was in reaction to a question whether or not the respondents have access to information from the Municipal Assembly. Although the difference is minimal, the result of the study appears that access to information from the Municipality favours the people in the urban communities than their counterparts in the rural communities. This confirms Thomi (2000) observation that access to information might be affected by the location of the citizens.

Table 7.1: Locality and Information from Municipal Assembly

<i>Information from Municipal Assembly</i>	<i>Rural</i>		<i>Urban</i>		<i>Total</i>	
	<i>No.</i>	<i>%</i>	<i>No.</i>	<i>%</i>	<i>No.</i>	<i>%</i>
Yes	27	19.4	23	20.7	50	20
No	112	80.6	88	79.3	200	80
Total	139	100	111	100	250	100

Source: Field survey, 2010

The ILGS (2006) notes that in 2003, the Municipal Assemblies were directed by the Ministry of Local Government and Rural Development to make use of Assembly notice boards in providing information to the public. Specifically, the MMDAs were directed to provide information on fee-fixing resolutions⁵⁸; bye laws; internally generated revenue; details of on-going projects for the year; mission and vision statements; and annual audited accounts. This directive to the DAs to provide information on notice boards, particularly the mission and vision statements was seen in Ghana as a move towards a new concept of injecting business management practices into local government. This appears to be the situation also in the South-East Asia where for example, Evers and Gerke (2005:10) report that in Malaysia and Indonesia, it has become fashionable to pronounce “missions and visions” as a first step in national and local plan process.

⁵⁸ These are rates that are deemed to have been made and levied by the publication in pursuance of a resolution of the rating authority for the time being prescribed (Act 359 section 97); and this is fixed by simple majority of the Assembly.

Against this background, respondents were asked to rate information provided on the KEEA Municipal Assembly notice boards based on the fact that the Assembly was responding to the directive from the Ministry and also as the cheapest means of providing information to the public. Out of the 250 survey respondents, 27 could not rate the information provided on notice boards since they had no formal education. This was based on the premise that at one point or the other, they have all visited the Municipal Assembly before.

Therefore, as shown in Table 7.2, with the remaining 223 respondents, evidence revealed that only 14.3 per cent (i.e. High + Very high) rated the use of notice boards to provide information in the KEEA Municipality high whilst 65.5 per cent rated it to be low (i.e. Low + Very Low). 46.3 per cent of respondents with secondary education rated the use of notice boards to provide information as very low whilst only 9.3 per cent rated it very high. For respondents with tertiary educational background, only 5.5 per cent rated the use of notice boards for the provision of information very high whilst 27.8 per cent rated it very low. This situation only reinforces the perception that citizens' access to information at the local government institution is extremely difficult (Debrah, 2009).

Table 7.2 Rating of Information on Assembly Notice Boards

<i>Level of Education</i>	<i>Very High</i>		<i>High</i>		<i>Average</i>		<i>Low</i>		<i>Very Low</i>		<i>Total</i>	
	<i>No.</i>	<i>%</i>	<i>No.</i>	<i>%</i>	<i>No.</i>	<i>%</i>	<i>No.</i>	<i>%</i>	<i>No.</i>	<i>%</i>	<i>No.</i>	<i>%</i>
None	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Basic	8	6.0	8	6.0	26	19.6	38	28.6	53	39.8	133	100
Secondary	5	9.3	5	9.3	9	16.6	10	18.5	25	46.3	54	100
Tertiary	2	5.5	4	11.1	10	27.8	10	27.8	10	27.8	36	100
Total	15	6.7	17	7.6	45	20.2	58	26	88	39.5	223	100

Source: Field survey, 2010

Also, as shown in Table 7.3, respondents were asked to rate information on the Assembly projects for the year, that is, whether they find information they require on the Assembly notice boards or not. 44 per cent claimed it was low as compared to 17.6 per cent high, whilst 38.4 claimed it was average. Whilst only 4 per cent claimed information provided on the Assembly projects for the year was very high, 30.4 per cent claimed it was very low. This was worse in rural areas where 37.4 per cent claimed that they did not receive any information on the ongoing projects. In the

urban areas 21.7 per cent were of the same opinion. This appear to be worrying because if the local people have no or scanty information on the Assembly’s project for the year, it will be very difficult for them to participate. This is particularly disappointing when local citizens are required to contribute between 20-25 per cent of the total cost of the projects by cash or in kind as part of community ownership strategy. Projects with community contribution include the European Union (EU) micro projects⁵⁹ and water facilities implemented by the Community Water and Sanitation Agency (CWSA). The very low payment of the community share of their contribution in the EU micro projects in the KEEA Municipality could be explained by the low degree of information people actually receive.

Table 7.3: Locality and Rating of Information on Assembly Projects

<i>Respondents rating of information on Assembly projects for the year</i>	<i>Rural</i>		<i>Urban</i>		<i>Total</i>	
	<i>No.</i>	<i>%</i>	<i>No.</i>	<i>%</i>	<i>No.</i>	<i>%</i>
Very High	10	7.2	0	0	10	4.0
High	5	3.6	29	26.1	34	13.6
Average	67	48.2	29	26.1	96	38.4
Low	5	3.6	29	26.1	34	13.6
Very Low	52	37.4	24	21.7	76	30.4
Total	139	100	111	100	250	100

Source: Field survey, 2010

A clear example was a 3-unit classroom block EU micro project at Abrem Agona Methodist School which the community was required to provide communal labour in 2004. But the people of Abrem Agona refused to provide labour as a result of inadequate information. Interviewees at Abrem Agona explained that they were not aware that they had to provide labour for the project particularly when a 6-unit classroom block at the nearby Abrem Berase had been awarded on contract without any contribution from the people of Abrem Berase. The result of this was that the Municipal Assembly had to pay the share of the people of Abrem Agona before the project could be completed. It was also revealed that the construction of this particular project which was to be completed within a period of 8 months took over 15 months thereby increasing the total

⁵⁹ The EU micro projects are projects such as basic school infrastructure, community market sheds, boreholes which are implemented with the DAs and local communities of which the recipient communities are required to contribute about 20 per cent of the total cost of the project. The contribution could be financial or in the form of communal labour.

project cost. In addition, an interviewee attributed the inadequate information to the communities to the shoddy works that are associated with some of the projects under construction. Furthermore he states that because the Assembly and Unit Committee members do not have adequate information on how some of the projects are awarded on contract, the contractors will not listen to them when they attempt to offer suggestions. As for the traditional rulers, evidence from the field revealed that they have been strategically sidelined from the KEEA Municipality. Perhaps this can be attributed to the fact that the 1992 Constitution of Ghana prohibits chiefs in engaging in active politics. According to a Divisional Chief from the Komenda Traditional Area:

“We have been left out in local government issues; how will we ask questions if we do not have access to information even about the projects in our communities; but the judgment day will come when they will need our votes” (Interview with a Divisional Chief: 11/08/2010).

The judgement day referred to by the Chief is the period of general elections when presidential and parliamentary candidates and their political parties solicit votes from the Chiefs and their subjects.

Similarly, in an interview with a lecturer from the University of Ghana, he mentioned that chiefs, students and particularly local contractors have all complained that they do not have access to information of the DAs. Students are dissatisfied with bursaries and scholarships administered by the Municipal Assembly; whilst local contractors are not content with the way contracts are awarded. Concerning the students, the informant states:

“Many assemblies feel that they want to support education and so they offer scholarships and bursaries to students in secondary and tertiary institutions. However, the way in which it has been implemented has brought more grievances to the students. The Assemblies pay only the fees for the first year and that is all although the student has been awarded a scholarship for three years. Some of the students think that the Assemblies have the resources; and that they are only refusing to pay the fees. This is simply due to the fact that they do not have the adequate information on the financial flow of the Assembly, the financial difficulties and constraints and therefore do not understand why the Assembly cannot pay the fees” (Interview with a Lecturer, UG: 13/07/2010)

The local contractors’ grievances are also attributed to inadequate access to information and how contracts are awarded at the KEEA Municipal Assembly. When they visit the Assembly they hardly find information on notice boards or advertisements in newspapers on the development projects for the year. Yet, you always find contractors from Accra and Takoradi working on projects in the

Municipality when there are qualified local contractors. This position was reinforced by an Assembly member who mentioned that they only get information from the Municipal assembly only during regular Assembly sessions. However, he pointed out that, that was not adequate since the sessions are only thrice in a year. He lamented that there could be projects under construction in the electoral area of an Assembly member, yet he will not be aware of the source of the project let alone the cost. He succinctly puts it that:

“Several projects will be springing up in your electoral area, yet, you will not be aware of them. When you go to the Assembly to ask, it is often said this is a national project. Sometimes the Assembly will admit that it is a mistake and that it will not be repeated but they always continue to do that” (Assembly member, Komenda: 23/08/2010).

This view by the Assembly member in Komenda was supported by a number of Assembly members interviewed. In fact, 8 out of the 12 elected Assembly members interviewed expressed similar disappointments. In an interview with an Assembly Member in the Eguafu Traditional Area, he also corroborated that:

“It is only when we attend Assembly sessions that we get information from the Assembly; but this is only three times in a year. This is a problem; we have been hammering on that at any time we go to the Assembly. I think any project going on in the community must be known to the Assembly member. For example, just about two months ago, I noticed that contractors who had been engaged by the Electricity Company of Ghana (ECG) have brought some low tension poles to my community and I asked them where they were coming from. The contractor told me that that was a project from China. But I was not aware. Then an ex-assembly member came to tell me that madam⁶⁰ is asking that when the engineers come I should direct them to see him for the needed information although I am the current Assembly member” (Interview with Abrehyia Assembly member: 13/08/2010)

This is the kind of frustration that elected Assembly members go through in accessing information from the Municipal Assembly. However, it is significant to observe here that this case at Abreshia might be attributed to “local politics”. It was realized that the current Assembly member does not belong to the same political party of the MCE and therefore she preferred to inform the ex-Assembly member who is a party member about the project. Evidence from the field also attests to the pervasiveness of the complaints about inadequate access to information at the local government institution by appointed Assembly members as well. An appointed Assembly member claimed that they have been sidelined because they are seen by the DA of not representing

⁶⁰ Madam refers to the KEEA Municipal Chief Executive at the time of the survey, Rev. Mrs. Veronica Essuman Nelson. Incidentally she resigned from the position as MCE for KEEA MA on August 4, 2011.

electorates. But then, he went further to state that even if that assertion was the case, they would expect that as government appointees, they would have access to information on contracts, source of funding and completion periods of government projects and programs that are being implemented by the Municipal assembly. This practice by the DAs has resulted in local citizens becoming unaware of source of funding for many projects in the Municipality, and that might be the reason why the Assembly member of Abreshia accepted the position of the ECG contractor who said that the project was from China.

Related to this, in a study in Uganda, Steiner (2008) for example, reports that some people appear to be completely unaware of the responsibility and the source of finance for local projects as a result of inadequate access to information at the local government institutions. Titeca (2005) confirms this, noting that in the Kasese district in Uganda, local people do not perceive services or projects as services rendered to the community by an independent agency, and that all the projects are from the central government.

On the other hand, evidence at the Municipal Assembly revealed that local citizens' inadequate access to information has resulted in the Assembly's delays in the submission of statutory reports to the Regional Coordinating Councils and the Ministry of Local Government and Rural Development. For example, a former Municipal Planning Officer (MPO) intimated the fact that submission of annual development plans to the National Development Planning Commission (NDPC) through the Central Regional Coordinating Council often delay for over 3 months. This is because local citizens often feel hesitant to participate in the process of preparing the annual development plans.

The MPO explained that in the preparation of the annual development plans, the Municipal Planning Coordinating Unit (MPCU) is required to undertake needs assessment of communities through the provision of adequate information and community durbars. In addition, they sometimes prepare questionnaire and submit to the Chiefs, Assembly members and identifiable groups such as the Ghana National Association of Teachers (GNAT) and various traders associations for their input. This information from the communities then becomes the core issues for the annual development plan preparation. But many of them do not respond for "they feel it is a payback time to refuse to provide the required information to the Assembly, since they do not have adequate information from them as well" (Interview with MPO: 18/08/2010).

Most strikingly, the local citizens' increasingly inadequate access to information at the KEEA Municipality has not gone without reaction from the public. In the KEEA Municipality, a number of associations such as the Elmina Youth Association have emerged as the "voice for the voiceless". These groups often behave as the "knowledge elite" or "strategic groups" (Menkhoff and Evers, 2005) who are contracted either by the political parties or powerful chiefs to defend their position.

As my informant, the former MPO informed me, a clear case of the behaviour of these strategic groups was manifested in 2003 when the Elmina Youth Association invited the DCE and the DPCU to explain why a technical delegation that went for a 6-week study tour to the Institute of Housing and Urban Studies (IHS) in the Netherlands were not citizens of Elmina. This trip was in response to the request from the IHS for the KEEA DA technical team to participate in a 6-week strategic planning program in the Netherlands. The MPO attributes the invitation from the Elmina Youth Association to inadequate access to information to the local citizens. In the words of the MPO:

"During the period of the Elmina Cultural Heritage and Management Program, a team of us were invited based on the KEEA Assembly departmental head criteria to study in the Netherlands. Being the head of the planning department, I was a member of the delegation. Just upon our arrival back in Ghana after the training program, the Elmina Youth Association summoned us with our DCE to appear before them to give meaning to our action" (Interview with MPO: 18/08/2010).

The agitation of the Elmina Youth Association was based on the fact that the sister-city partnership which in collaboration with the Dutch Government supported the Elmina Cultural Heritage and Management Program (ECHMP) was between the cities of Gouda in the Netherlands and Elmina (KEEA) in Ghana. Therefore the community members did not understand why if there is a delegation from the KEEA Municipality to the Netherlands they should not be citizens of Elmina. In their estimation, majority of the 6-member delegation were not from Elmina; rather from different districts of Ghana; and therefore it called for answerability from the DCE and the Assembly. The concern of the MPO was that if the members in the community had been provided with the criteria for the selection of the delegation to the program, that public reaction would have been avoided. The youth's disappointment with the Assembly's information strategy is reflected in the following quote from an interview with a Youth leader in Elmina:

“They have blocked all the channels of communication, which is why we rain insults at the leadership of the Municipal Assembly on the Ahomka FM⁶¹ radio programmes anytime we get the opportunity” (Interview with Elmina Youth Leader: 11/08/2010)

On the one hand, this confirms how in demanding political accountability from local representatives, the extent that local citizens can yearn for increased access to information (Reinikka and Svensson 2004, 2005; cited in Steiner, 2008:61). On the other hand, the inadequacy in the access to information from the Municipal Assembly to the local citizens led to the attempt of the youth sanctioning the DCE and his staff in this example if the explanations were not convincing. This approach emphasizes the taken-for-granted aspects of the political life of these local actors such as the youth associations in the new local government institutions, which suggest that outcomes of decisions must reflect the local actors’ desire. The mention of the radio as a medium of information and communication by the youth leader leads me to the next section that examines other media for providing information to the public in the KEEA Municipality.

7.4 Use of public media for the provision of information

As earlier pointed out, available literature suggest that major channels of information used by the local government institutions include television, radio, information vans, loudspeaker systems, print media, computer and the internet (Nguyen, 2010:156-157). For example, the anti-cocaine information campaigns in the mid-1980s in the US ran during periods of intensive news coverage of the spread and consequences of cocaine use (Shoemaker, 1989 cited in Weiss and Tschirhart, 1994). This section discusses how the KEEA Municipal assembly uses public media in providing information to the public and how local citizens’ perceive their representatives’ use of these public media.

It is evident from the field that the use of radio and assembly vans is the main medium of providing information to the public. The use of radio as the major medium of providing information in the KEEA Municipality cannot be surprising. According to the Africa Media Development Initiative that studied radio-use in 17 African countries including Ghana, it found out that radio is the most accessible and the most consumed media in all the countries (APF, 2008). In an interview, the Municipal Director of the Information Services Department (ISD) of the KEEA Municipal Assembly explained that:

⁶¹ Ahomka Radio which broadcasts on 99.5 FM is a privately-owned radio station that is directly broadcast from Elmina.

“With the media liberalisation policy since the late 1990s in Ghana, it has led to the proliferation of national and sub-national private radio stations. It is also very appropriate for farmers, fishermen, traders, teachers and many other people. Also on so many commercial vehicles today, you can listen to a radio program; at the same time farmers and fishermen go to work with their portable radio sets; therefore it is very appropriate to use radio as the channel for information spread. Even among the youth, they use their mobile phones to connect to radio stations” (Interview with Municipal Director of ISD: 17/08/2010).

What the Municipal Director means in effect is that the use of radio has become a very appropriate medium for communication in the Municipality. Similarly, radio is pervasive and readily accessible to all. The APF (2008) puts it that local radio is a medium particularly suited to promoting empowerment, as it is affordable and accessible to listeners and also demands few skills.

The growth of radio stations including community radio within the past two decades in Ghana is phenomenal. According to the National Communications Authority (NCA), as at the first quarter of 2010, Ghana had 217 authorised Vhf-FM radio stations. However, 60 per cent of these radio stations are based in only 4 regions⁶² namely Ashanti, Greater Accra, Brong Ahafo and Western. Although 32 stations out of the total number are based in the Greater Accra region, most of the widely-listened-to radio stations that are based in Accra have affiliations with other local radio stations all over the DAs. It is estimated that not less than 32 radio stations in Ghana are affiliated to either Peace 104.6 FM or Adom 106.3 FM, both based in Accra. In Elmina for instance, a local radio station, Ahomka FM which is within the reach in every corner in the Municipality is affiliated to Adom 106.3 FM for some of their programs, particularly the morning programs from 6 to 10am, referred to as *Dwasonsem*. These programs which are very much listened-to in the country are mainly in the political content of the media which involve reading and discussing newspaper articles and interactive live phone-in talk shows in the *Twi* language.

This view is shared by most communication scholars who have considered that the potentials of radio can be fully exploited for development⁶³ objectives, if they can be localized as much as

⁶² Regional distribution of Vhf-FM radio stations in Ghana as at the first quarter of 2010 is as follows: Ashanti 36; Greater Accra 32; Brong Ahafo 32; Western 30; Central 20; Northern 20; Eastern 17; Volta 13; Upper East 10; Upper West 7. (See NCA homepage).

⁶³ Development in this sense refers to a widely participatory process of social change in a society, intended to bring about both social and material advancement (including greater equality, freedom, and other valued qualities) for the majority of the people through gaining greater control over their environment (Rogers, 1976 cited in Ansah, 1979)

possible so that local cultures and usages can be integrated into programming, and local issues more comprehensively and more effectively handled (Ansah, 1979). Such an arrangement also promotes direct interest and relevance from the core of programming to the target audience on a regular basis. Evidence in the KEEA Municipality revealed that with the *Ahomka – Adom FM* arrangement, majority of the local citizens listen to the Ahomka FM radio for long hours daily. Although statistical data in the Municipality is not available, it is likely to be comparable to the case of South Africa where APF (2008) reports that the average person listens to radio for more than four hours every day. This is because it deals with issues of direct relevance to the local people, especially as local people are fully used to the discussions on the radio, can ask questions through the live phone-in talk show programs and share experiences with their local government representatives.

What is very significant with some of these affiliate stations is that they broadcast in the major indigenous Ghanaian languages such as *Twi* both at the national and local levels. In an interview, the producer of the Ahomka FM morning program mentioned to me that “there are offers for devoted airtimes for the representatives of the KEEA Municipal Assembly to appear on their programs anytime they want to communicate with the local people, particularly on Tuesdays⁶⁴ the day on which the fishing communities do not go fishing”. According to the producer, this is what the management of Ahomka FM can offer to the Municipality as a way of their corporate social responsibility.

However, despite the explosion of FM radio stations in Ghana, the motivation of the local citizens in the KEEA Municipality to listen to programs from radio stations such as the Ahomka FM radio and the devoted airtime offered to the local representatives, it is evident from my respondents that the rating of information on radio as a means of communication between the local government representatives and their constituents is not encouraging.

As indicated in Table 7.4, only 1.4 per cent of the respondents in the rural areas rated the MCE’s use of radio as a medium for communication with the local citizens as very high, whilst 61.2 per cent rated it very low. As for the urban respondents, none rated the use of radio by the MCE to communicate with the local citizens as very high as compared to 55.9 per cent who rated it very low. Put together, whilst 10 per cent of both rural and urban respondents claimed the use of the

⁶⁴ Tuesdays are taboo days for fishermen all over Ghana and for that matter they do not go fishing. They often use this day to mend their fishing nets and also attend other collective activities in their communities.

radio by the MCE as a medium of communication with the local citizens as high, 74 per cent claimed it was low. This shows that despite the availability of adequate radio programs and enough air time for local officials, the flow of information on local issues to the public is very low.

Table 7.4: Respondents' perception of information on Radio phone-in programs by MCE

<i>Respondents perception of information on radio phone-in programs by MCE</i>	<i>Rural</i>		<i>Urban</i>		<i>Total</i>	
	<i>No.</i>	<i>%</i>	<i>No.</i>	<i>%</i>	<i>No.</i>	<i>%</i>
Very High	2	1.4	0	0	2	0.8
High	14	10.1	9	8.1	23	9.2
Average	20	14.4	20	18.0	40	16.0
Low	18	12.9	20	18.0	38	15.2
Very Low	85	61.2	62	55.9	147	58.8
Total	139	100	111	100	250	100

Source: Field Survey, 2010

Similarly, as shown in Table 7.5, the performance of Assembly members who appear on radio programs to communicate with the public is also not satisfactory. Although in the rural areas the same 1.4 per cent of respondents as that of the MCE claimed that Assembly members' use of radio as the medium of communication with the public is very high, the 61.2 per cent of respondents who rated the MCE very low reduced to 55.4 per cent. This implies that the performance of Assembly members regarding the use of radio to communicate with the public is relatively better than that of the MCE. However, it is still very significant to note that whilst 70 per cent of both rural and urban respondents (i.e. low + very low) claimed that the use of radio by Assembly members is low, only 8.4 per cent (i.e. high + very high) claimed it was high.

Table 7.5: Respondents' perception of information on Radio phone-in programs by Assembly Members

<i>Respondents perception of information on radio phone-in programs by Assembly members</i>	<i>Rural</i>		<i>Urban</i>		<i>Total</i>	
	<i>No.</i>	<i>%</i>	<i>No.</i>	<i>%</i>	<i>No.</i>	<i>%</i>
Very High	2	1.4	1	0.9	3	1.2
High	8	5.8	10	9.0	18	7.2
Average	30	21.6	24	21.6	54	21.6
Low	22	15.8	20	18.0	42	16.8
Very Low	77	55.4	56	50.5	133	53.2
Total	139	100	111	100	250	100

Source: Field Survey, 2010

This disturbing picture implies that local citizens will find it difficult to have very important information such as the fee-fixing resolution of the Assembly, development projects for the year and abuses of the Municipal assembly. A clear case in point is “where the market women in the Municipality sent a delegation to the MCD’s office in 2009 in protest of exorbitant market tolls and property rates when they felt that they do not have adequate information on the fee-fixing resolution of the Assembly” (interview with KEEA MCD: 18/08/2010) .

Although the use of radio as a medium for providing information by local representatives is generally recognized as a powerful and effective medium for assisting in enhancing political accountability and the local development process, one of my informants had some criticisms. In an interview with the Municipal Director of Education, he informed me that the way in which some people call into live phone-in radio programs in the Municipality to rain insults on local leadership is worrying. In his words:

“At a time that some political activists who call themselves ‘serial callers’ phone into radio programs to insult local leadership does not encourage the leadership to be attracted onto the radio stations. The phone-in programs are being abused. Many a time these serial callers might not have any idea about what is being discussed on the radio. In fact most of these serial callers are stark illiterates. Rather radio programs must be used to educate the public” (Interview with KEEA Municipal Director of Education: 17/09/2010).

Interviewees confirmed that these serial callers are mainly supporters of the two major political parties, the NPP and NDC. It becomes very disturbing when these serial callers attack the leadership of these major political parties on radio. It was also evident from the interviewees in the Municipality that some of these serial callers receive recharge top-ups for their mobile phones

so that they will be able to make the calls on regular basis. In addition, some of the callers are paid monthly by the leaders of these political parties to do that kind of operation. In other words, this phenomenon has become a propaganda tool for both political parties particularly during an election year. The implication of this phenomenon is that it endangers local cohesion which is required for the development of the locality.

Even though a lecturer at the University of Ghana (UG) does not approve of the use of foul language on the local leadership on radio, he explains that it occurs because all the avenues of communication at the DAs have been blocked to the local people. He claims:

“If you look at the way people travel to the cities to speak on the radio when they hear their DCE is on a particular FM station you will understand their frustrations. In the Western Region for instance, they come to FM stations in Takoradi from the various districts to heap insults on their local leadership. This shows the extent to which the Assemblies have literally blocked all the avenues for communication. If people can articulate their grievances directly to the Assembly, they will not do so on radio, I think it’s a major problem” (interview with Political Science Lecturer, UG: 13/07/2010).

Conversely, the KEEA Municipal Assembly appears to be doing well with the use of their information van in providing information. Respondents in the Municipality rated the use of information vans as a medium of providing information to the public as high. As shown in Table 7.6, in the rural areas, whilst 43.2 per cent rated the use of information vans as very high, 10.1 per cent rated it very low. Also 24.3 per cent of the urban respondents rated it very high whilst 13.5 per cent rated very low. It appears that the use of information vans for the provision of Assembly information is more appreciated in the rural areas. This is as a result of the fact that 43.2 per cent in the rural areas rated it very high as compared to 24.3 per cent in the urban areas. In both the rural and urban areas, 62 per cent of the respondents rated the use of information vans high whilst 22.8 per cent rated low.

Table 7.6: Respondents' perception of the use of information vans

<i>Respondents perception of information vans for information from the Assembly</i>	<i>Rural</i>		<i>Urban</i>		<i>Total</i>	
	<i>No.</i>	<i>%</i>	<i>No.</i>	<i>%</i>	<i>No.</i>	<i>%</i>
Very High	60	43.2	27	24.3	87	34.8
High	33	23.7	35	31.5	68	27.2
Average	19	13.7	19	17.1	38	15.2
Low	13	9.4	15	13.5	28	11.2
Very Low	14	10.1	15	13.5	29	11.6
Total	139	100	111	100	250	100

Source: Field Survey, 2010

Evidence from the field indicates that information provided through the use of the information vans are more specific than that on the radio. For example, information vans are used for the policy goals of the Assembly such as family planning, promoting National Health Insurance Scheme (NHIS), increasing school enrolment and the prevention of HIV/AIDS; whilst the radio programs are more of general discussions on local government. In other words, information vans are used mainly for announcements than communicating with the public.

However, the opinion of a traditional ruler for not endorsing the use of radio or the information van by the local representatives in communicating with their constituents was rather more on economic issues. He based his argument on the affordability of mobile phones of his subjects, judging by the socio-economic conditions of his area of jurisdiction and also the need to personally interact with the local leadership of the Assembly. This is how he explains the issue:

“I will not go for phone-in programs on the radio from the local leadership or the information vans. In my village here, a lot of people cannot afford the cost of mobile phones, so they cannot communicate with the MCE on radio. Also since many of us do not know our MCE we find it difficult to appreciate what she says on the radio or what her staff, the ISD, informs us with their vans. The MCE should rather embark on a familiarization tour to all the traditional areas so that people in the communities can interact with her happily in a face-to-face manner” (Interview with a Chief in the Komenda Traditional Area: 11/08/2010)

On the other hand, evidence from the field revealed an important insight gained from the key informants. This relates to the use of computer and internet technologies as a medium for providing information to the public. This is found to be “something far away from the KEEA

Municipality” (interview with Presiding Member, 23/08/2010). In fact in the offices of the KEEA Municipal Assembly itself, there were not more than 4 operational computers in use. At best some of the old desktop computers were only displayed on officers’ desks just to show that the Assembly was in the “computer age”. But they were all not functioning. In an interview, the Presiding member of the Assembly informed me that:

“These computer and internet technologies are modern gadgets. We do not have the required skill and therefore we see them as something far away from us. As many of our people are farmers and fishermen, we do not know what the benefits of the computer and internet technologies bring to us; maybe for our children who are now in school” (Interview with Presiding Member, KEEA MA: 23/08/2010)

Interviewees confirmed that there are a number of obstacles facing both rural and urban residents in gaining access to the Internet, the major source of digital information. In the rural areas, most of the residents are illiterates and even those who are literate in the rural areas cannot access Internet services. Besides that, even in the urban areas such as the Municipal capital, Elmina, there is only one commercial internet café with a seating capacity of only 12, which is woefully inadequate.

Similarly, it was revealed that television sets (TVs) as a medium for providing information in the KEEA Municipality was not common. This is because there is no local TV station in the Municipality and the fact the national GTV⁶⁵ hardly report on local issues. In an interview, an informant mentioned that “most of the people in the KEEA Municipality are also too poor to own TVs although the TV signals are quite strong even in the rural areas” (Assembly member, Eguafo-Breman Electoral area: 04/01/2011). The strong TV signals in the Municipality are attributed to the Ghana Broadcasting Corporation (GBC) television booster station at Kissi which is located within the Municipality. The evidence in the KEEA Municipality partly confirms Weiss and Tschirhart (1994:86) observation that television campaigns, especially in the Third World countries, do not reach audiences who are too poor to own televisions or who live in areas remote from television signals.

Other reasons that are attributed to a large number of people in the KEEA Municipality preferring other media than TVs for the provision of information are that most of the TV programs are in

⁶⁵ The Ghana Television (GTV) is the only state-owned national TV station headquartered in Accra operated by the Ghana Broadcasting Corporation although there are few other private TV stations such as Metro TV and TV3

English rather than local languages in addition to the inappropriate times of their programs, particularly for the farmers and fishermen. With a significant proportion of the population in the KEEA Municipality being illiterates, they have their educational limitations and that unless a TV program is broadcast in the local languages; it cannot reach the target audience.

In other words, television still remains an urban and elitist medium and still reaches fewer people in Ghana (Ansah, 1979). Similarly, the use of newspapers in providing information to the local people is not common in the KEEA Municipality. A major factor again has to do with the high illiteracy rate in the Municipality. This therefore limits the local people the capacity to read the newspapers. In addition, since all the newspapers are published in the nation's capital, Accra, they hardly report on local issues in the daily newspapers. The implication of this is that even the literate citizens in the Municipality may not have access to local KEEA Municipality issues in the national newspapers. Debrah (2009) notes that although there is media liberalisation policy in Ghana since the late 1990s, controlled dissemination of information by media owners and anchors have starved the local citizens of the right community information.

The discussion on this section focused on the public media for the provision of information from the local government institution to the public. In line with the findings of the Africa Media Development Initiative that studied radio-use in 17 African countries including Ghana, the use of radio in providing information to the public is the commonest medium among the public media but the local representatives of the KEEA Municipality have not taken advantage of that. Their performance with the use of radio to reach the public has not been satisfactory.

7.5 Summary of the Chapter

This chapter has illustrated that enhancing political accountability within the decentralised local government institutions is a complex process. With the complexity of the selection/election process of the local representatives and the fact that elections are periodic, the local electoral system is found to be inadequate and therefore there is the need to explore other political accountability mechanisms. Lessons that can be distilled from this chapter are the following four aspects.

First, there are legal provisions in the current DA laws that offer opportunities to local actors to participate in decision making at the local government arena, and therefore demonstrates that

spaces for citizen engagement is recognised as far as public access to information is concerned. This suggests the importance of having in place a supportive legal and institutional framework that (local) actors can rely on to demand accountability successfully (Brinkerhoff, 2001:4).

Second, notwithstanding the legal provisions, I have illustrated that access to information at the local level is so difficult. I have demonstrated that within the decentralisation arena, the authority of local representatives is not simply enacted based on legal statutes of the state. Rather it is socially enacted among diverse social actors over time which could lead to negotiations and contestations. A number of examples have been provided as to how local representatives have blocked available channels of communication from their constituents.

Third, I have illustrated that the blockage of the available channels for communication in the KEEA Municipality has not gone on unchecked. It has led to sanctions from the local citizens by way of questioning the political accountability of their representatives. A clear example is the case between the Elmina Youth Association and the staff of KEEA Municipality when the former summoned the latter on the basis of the fact the Youth were not properly informed on the 6-member delegation to Gouda, Netherlands. Hence, suggesting that the KEEA Municipality was not accountable to the constituents.

Four, although it is evident in the KEEA Municipality that the use of radio is the main medium of communication, the perception of the performance of the local representatives is not satisfactory. This is shown by as high as 70 per cent of both rural and urban respondents who claim that the use of radio by their local representatives is low and has therefore led to the failure of local representatives to inform their constituents appropriately. It has also resulted in political protests in the DAs.

CHAPTER EIGHT

CONSULTATIVE MEETINGS AS A POLITICAL ACCOUNTABILITY MECHANISM

8.1 Introduction

In the previous chapter, I questioned public access to information from the KEEA Municipality and how it enhances political accountability of the local government. This chapter builds upon the arguments in the previous chapter to interrogate the extent of consultative meetings between local government representatives and their constituents as a mechanism for political accountability. Taking into account similar challenges and complexities associated with the public access to information in the decentralised arena and the fact that it has been evidently shown that channels for communication has been blocked in the KEEA MA, it further calls for the opportunity to explore other political accountability mechanisms in the new institutional arena.

In the previous chapter, I discussed the provisions in the Local Government Act, Act 462 of 1993 that offers opportunities for political accountability. I made reference to Section 16 (1) that enjoins both elected and appointed members of the Municipal Assembly to avail themselves to the electorate through frequent interactions and consultations among others. The first section of this chapter discusses in reality frequency of consultative meetings between local representatives and their electorates. It follows with the initiators of such consultative meetings and further highlights on issues discussed and the attendees to the meetings.

8.2 Frequency of Consultative Meetings

This section examines how well the political accountability mechanisms such as community meetings before and after assembly sessions by the elected Assembly members are working in the KEEA Municipality. It will also include frequency of MCE's meetings with the local constituents that would enable constituents both to channel views and demands to the DA through their political representatives and to hold them to account for (non-) actions taken (Crawford, 2008:125). As Moncrieffe (2001) notes, consultation and the use of feedback mechanisms can assure the citizens that their interest will reflect in policy decisions.

Reviewing the performance of Ghana's DAs in an earlier study, Ayee (1996) recorded the abysmal performance of the Assembly members, particularly the lack of consultation with the electorates.

Field evidence from this study confirmed that this phenomenon still persists. In an interview with a Chief in the Eguafo Traditional Area, he informed me that there is hardly any meeting between the Assembly member in his electoral area and the electorates. The Chief claims that the lack of meetings in the community has resulted in non-participation of the people in communal labour which hitherto had been used to clean their environment. He puts it:

“For the four years that the assembly member was in power, 2006-2010, I cannot count of even four meetings throughout his tenure of office. His responsibility includes the mobilization of the youth in the community for communal labour, yet nothing goes on. You have seen how weedy the road between Eguafo and Abreshia is but because we do not have an active Assembly member to champion this project, we shall witness this kind of scenario until perhaps we have a new Assembly member” (Chief: 12/08/2010).

Like all Assembly members, one of their cardinal responsibilities is to mobilise their people for communal labour. This could be for the construction of basic school infrastructure, sanitation or clearing the shoulders of farm/feeder roads. What my informant did not mention however, was where the Assembly member of Eguafo resides. Further checks revealed that this was an elected Assembly member who was a tutor in a senior high school in Apam, a distance of over 40 km from Eguafo. He comes to Eguafo once in a month, only on weekends; thus an “absentee” Assembly member. His visit on weekends to Eguafo is purposely to attend to family issues and funerals. Meanwhile the taboo day for the Eguafo community is Wednesday where they use for communal labour. Under this circumstance, the community is unable to undertake any communal labour because on weekends that the Assembly member is present, majority of the people in the community attend church service on Sundays rather than using the day for communal labour.

This picture, according to my informant, is no different from what is happening at the nearby Abrem Berase. In the last District Assembly elections in 2010, it resulted in another “absentee” candidate winning the Abrem Berase electoral area seat. He lives in Cape Coast, the regional capital, which is about 20 km away from Berase through Abrem Essiam-Efutu road. For that matter, he finds it difficult in mobilizing the community for communal labour. In an interview with a youth leader at Berase, he informed me:

“The reason why our road between Abrem Essiam and Berase is so weedy is that the Assembly member has failed to turn up after he won the elections. It is a pity, for we are told that the Metro Mass Transit (MMT) service (otherwise known as Kufuor bus) that plies between Elmina and Essiam through Berase will soon desert us because the road is so weedy. The drivers complain that it becomes so dangerous to use the road when the bus meets an on-coming vehicle. But we have to wait for the next four years again before the

next District Assembly elections. It's quite a worry to some of us" (Youth leader⁶⁶, Abrem Berase: 25/05/2011)

The sentiment of the youth leader from Abrem Berase is so pathetic. This area is described as the bread basket of the KEEA Municipality and farmers need the services of the MMT bus to convey their food stuff to the Elmina market particularly on the Tuesday and Thursday market days. Although there are other commercial vehicles on that road, the MMT fares are cheaper and therefore farmers and traders prefer to use the MMT bus services. Thus, if the bus service is terminated as a result of the weedy road which the two communities, Essiam and Berase, cannot assist to weed, it will result in more economic hardships for them.

The two examples illustrated so far are cases that are found in the rural communities in the KEEA Municipality. The underlying inferences in these two cases above highlight how "absentee" elected Assembly members find it difficult to mobilise their electorates to participate in their core functions. These cases also confirm the complexity of how local actors get access to the new institutional spaces and its attendant factors that inform decision-making choices of electorates, as discussed in the preceding chapter. Thus, the main argument unfolded here is that of how exactly institutions and the cognitive patterns of actors interrelate depends on a variety of factors: the setting or context, including assumptions about options, resources and motives of alter, but also the respective external factors at play (Mielke et al., 2011:15). In both cases at Eguafu and Abrem Berase electoral areas respectively, financial resources as motives of change and external factors such as political pressures from the "powers that be" cannot be ruled out in the elections of these absentee Assembly members.

This situation of lack of meetings in the rural areas is however more pronounced in the urban communities. In an interview in Elmina with a market woman, she informed me that there has never been a meeting at the Bakaano electoral area of Elmina where she lives, let alone the Assembly member mobilizing the community for communal labour. In her words:

"I do not know how the market tolls for instance are fixed by the Assembly. Our Assembly member never consults us to know our views on any issue. All that we hear is that market tolls have been increased by 20 per cent from that of the previous year. Even if you have to see him for further clarification on the increases, you will be told that he has travelled out of town" (Interview with a Market woman at Bakaano, Elmina: 17/09/2010).

⁶⁶ This interview took place on my second visit to Ghana from April 22-June 1, 2011.

Similarly, as shown in Table 8.1, when respondents were asked, how often their Assembly members (AMs) meet the constituents to discuss local issues, 49.6 per cent of the respondents said their Assembly members never met with their constituents although they are mandated to call meetings regularly.

Table 8.1: Frequency of Meetings of Assembly Members with Constituents

<i>Frequency of Assembly meetings with constituents</i>	<i>Rural</i>		<i>Urban</i>		<i>Total</i>	
	<i>No.</i>	<i>%</i>	<i>No.</i>	<i>%</i>	<i>No.</i>	<i>%</i>
Once per fortnight	26	18.7	6	5.4	32	12.8
Once per month	26	18.7	16	14.4	42	16.8
Once per quarter	10	7.2	5	4.5	15	6.0
Once per half year	5	3.6	10	9.0	15	6.0
Once per year	12	8.6	10	9.0	22	8.8
Not at all	60	43.2	64	57.7	124	49.6
Total	139	100	111	100	250	100

Source: Field Survey, 2010

The result of this study is comparable to a related study conducted in 8 districts⁶⁷ in Ghana by the EPAD Research Project in 1997/98 where they concluded that 48 per cent of the sampled household heads said their Assemblymen and women never met their constituents (Yankson, 2000:201). Another study conducted in Ghana by the Department of Political Science of the University of Ghana in 2002 concluded that out of the 1500 respondents, more than two-thirds (66.7 per cent) claimed that they had not seen or heard from their Assembly member since the last district level elections in 1998 (Amponsah and Boafo-Arthur, 2003; cited in Debrah, 2009). Although the results from the Amponsah and Boafo-Arthur (2003) study appear to raise the scale far higher than the results from the EPAD and this study, they reflect the general trend that local representatives are evading the power of their constituents to ensure that they become unaccountable.

⁶⁷ These districts are Twifo-Heman-Lower Denkyira, North Tongu, Atebubu, Bongo, Bole, Asante-Akim North, Juabeso-Bia and New Juaben Municipal Assembly. The survey was carried out between September 1997 and August 1998 under the EPAD (Endogenous Potential and Decentralisation) research project – a collaborative research project between Prof. P. W. K. Yankson of the Department of Geography and Resource Development, University of Ghana and Prof. W. H. Thomi of the Department of Economic Geography, University of Mannheim, Germany under the sponsorship of German Ministry of Economic Co-operation and Development, through GTZ and the German Research Council.

The non-holding of direct consultations through community-organised meetings, however, has some spatial variation which also confirms that of the study of the EPAD Research Team. Whilst 43.2 per cent of the rural respondents claimed they never met their Assembly members, in the urban communities they were 57.7 per cent. In the rural communities, 18.7 per cent of the respondents claimed that the Assembly members met their constituents every fortnight whilst it was only 5.4 per cent in the urban communities. The results of the study suggest that the Assembly members representing the urban communities have less contact with their constituents than that of the rural communities. However, further checks in communities such as Abrem Essiam and Aboransa where respondents claim that there are meetings between AMs and the electorates every fortnight are mainly through informal meetings. In an interview, an informant claims that such informal meetings take place among relatives of the Assembly members and youth associations during market days and funerals. What this means is that, important community decisions have been made without consultation with majority of those likely to be affected by the decisions (Debrah, 2009).

Interviews with Assembly members confirmed that they hardly meet with their constituents. Explaining why they had not been able to live up to their obligations, an Assembly member, who was my informant, claimed that:

“It is not that we do not know we need to meet our people before and after assembly sessions; we know, but we are not paid. At any time I try to meet my constituents they ask for refreshment in the form of at least sachet water and/or soft drinks. I cannot afford that; even the T & T⁶⁸ allowance for our last Assembly sitting has not been paid; that was some two months ago” (Interview with Assembly member, Abrem Agona: 17/09/2010).

This response portrays some of the disincentives of being an Assembly member. For instance, Assembly Members in Ghana are not paid at all. They only receive T&T allowance when they attend assembly sittings and the amount which is not uniform across the DAs is paid from their internally generated funds (IGF). And the quantum of the allowance depends on how resourceful is the DA. In a relatively less endowed district, the allowance is as low as GH¢10 (approximately €5) per Assembly sitting whilst that of the endowed districts pay GH¢100 (approximately €50) per assembly sitting. In the KEEA Municipal Assembly it was found that the sitting allowance paid to members was paltry GH¢20 (approximately €10). This means that Assembly members have been

⁶⁸ T&T refers to Travel and Transport and it is an amount that Assemblies pay to its Members as allowance to defray their transport cost.

imposed with duties by the state but resources have not been provided for its facilitation. And therefore the Assembly members' withdrawal from their constituents might be attributed to the growing financial demands their constituents make to them. Crawford (2008) cites the 'unmet expectations regarding payment of sitting allowance' and the 'sacrificial' or voluntary nature of the community representative's role' as some of the main reasons for the non-functional nature of the local government sub-structures in Ghana.

Although some of these rational factors may account for the (non-) performance of the Assembly members' assigned duties; some scholars do not want to attribute that to their inability to hold community meetings; they argue that lack of resources is not necessarily the problem. For instance, Debrah (2009) puts it that the non-holding of the direct consultation through community-organised forums was a calculated strategy by the Assembly members to "escape the wrath of the electorates". The wrath referred to by Debrah might be as a result of the unfulfilled electoral promises made to the communities by the Assembly members during their campaigns.

As far as the consultative meetings with the local citizens are concerned, the MCEs' situation is more disappointing. An interviewee stated that there is hardly any consultation between the MCE and the local citizens. Referring to the current and past DCEs, an interviewee describes this as follows:

"They do not have the district at heart. There are no consultations on local issues with us at all. What baffles me is that if you hear the DCE on air, he/she will be talking about what the president promises; what their political party manifesto offers etc. They should be able to talk about what they have agreed with Chiefs, Assembly members and the community to do in the district without always mentioning the name of the president. I expect them to talk about armed robbery in the district, poor Basic Education Certificate Examination (BECE⁶⁹) results, inadequate flow of water, erratic power supply, poor sanitation etc. It's all because they do not meet us" (Interview with a Queenmother: 10/08/2010)

The issues raised by the Queenmother point to the fact that the priorities of the local communities are in some cases different from those considered to be important by the national governments. At the local level, poor health and sanitation as well as poor BECE results continue to be major issues. Some of my respondents argue, for instance, that education in the KEEA Municipality is deteriorating. An informant mentioned that within the last six years, not less than four schools out of the total of 76 government and private Junior High Schools in the Municipality have been

⁶⁹ BECE is the examination written by Junior High School (JHS) students - considered as basic education - which allows them to gain admission into Senior High School (SHS).

recording zero per cent in the BECE. Among teachers, parents and the staff of the Municipal Assembly, they claim that this situation is unacceptable. Assessing this situation, a teacher at the Elmina Catholic Boys attributed this unacceptable situation to lack of consultative meetings between the MCE and the teachers in the Municipality. In an interview she cited a situation where between 2001 and 2005, the Assembly instituted a program of meeting all the teachers in the KEEA Assembly Hall to look into improving education at the basic level since that is the foundation. This led to the institutionalisation of an award scheme to schools and students that produced very good results in the BECE. This was able to motivate teachers to go an “extra mile” in the performance of their duties thereby improving the examination results of the students. A classic case was the BECE results of three students from the Oxford Preparatory School at Kissi and one in Elmina Catholic Girls JHS who were judged among the best students in the Central Region in 2004. However, evidence from the field revealed that since 2006 succeeding MCEs have failed to organise various fora with teachers to discuss community concerns.

Field evidence from the survey also confirmed the claim that MCEs hardly meet with their constituents. As shown in Table 8.2, when respondents were asked how often their MCE meet with the constituents to discuss community issues, 60.4 per cent of the respondents claimed the MCE has never met their constituents. Like the results of the frequency of AMs’ meeting with the constituents, this also suggests a spatial variation.

Table 8.2: Frequency of Meetings of MCE with Constituents

<i>Frequency of Assembly member meetings with constituents</i>	<i>Rural</i>		<i>Urban</i>		<i>Total</i>	
	<i>No.</i>	<i>%</i>	<i>No.</i>	<i>%</i>	<i>No.</i>	<i>%</i>
Once per fortnight	0	0	0	0	0	0
Once per month	0	0	0	0	0	0
Once per quarter	1	0.7	1	0.9	2	0.8
Once per half year	10	7.2	15	13.5	25	10.0
Once per year	37	26.6	35	31.5	72	28.8
Not at all	91	65.5	60	54.1	151	60.4
Total	139	100	111	100	250	100

Source: Field Survey, 2010

In the rural communities, 65.5 per cent of the respondents claimed that the MCE has never met the constituents as compared to 54.1 per cent from the urban communities. Also whilst 26.6 per

cent of the rural respondents claimed the MCE meet the constituents once yearly, the urban respondents were 31.5 per cent. Compared with the results of the frequency of Assembly members' meeting, this result suggests that the MCE has more contacts through community meetings in the urban communities than that of the rural communities. Further checks revealed that the MCE's meeting with the constituents once yearly was mainly through invitations for annual festivals in the Municipality. What this means is that since these festivals do not offer the opportunity to local people to ask questions or present community issues to their MCE except the paramount Chief who happens to be the host of these festivals. As such, the development in the KEEA Municipality reflects a trend where MCEs are increasingly becoming unaccountable to their citizens, voters and tax payers.

As mandated by the Municipal Planning and Coordinating Unit to involve the local citizens in the preparation of the District Medium Term Development Plans (DMTPs) and subsequent Annual Development Plans, evidence from the field indicates that there is some level of consultations with the constituents. In line with the principles of participation model of accountability discussed Chapter 2, this is by way of the DAs consulting with their citizens through participatory process to identify local priorities to be included in the annual development plans. Whilst 75.5 per cent of rural respondents indicated that the MPCU meets the local citizens once a year, the urban respondents were 88.3 per cent. The results suggest that the MPCU has more contact with the urban communities more than the rural communities. In an interview with a former MPO, he mentioned that the MPCU was constrained with inadequate staff, inadequate funds and logistics.

The former MPO gave reasons, for example, in 2007/2008, with the exception of the MCD, other members of the unit had no transport facilities and perhaps what was more intriguing was that, as at December 2010 when this research was ongoing, the MPO who was transferred to the Western region in 2009 from the KEEA Municipality had not been replaced. This means that for over one year the Municipality had no planning officer. This has affected the performance of the MPCU in the Municipality, particularly with the submission of the 2010 annual development plan, since the MPO is a key member of the Unit. In fact apart from the MCD who theoretically is the Chairman of the MPCU, it is the responsibility of the MPO to initiate the preparation of the annual development plans of the Assembly.

Significantly, the practice of the once-a-year meeting between the MPCU and the local citizens is inadequate. Granted that this meeting is meant for public hearing for the preparation of the

Annual Development Plan, how will the local citizens appreciate the final adopted plan of the Assembly particularly where this study has established that both the MCE and Assembly members who could have explained the plan to the constituents hardly meet them? In effect, the implication of this picture is that local citizens will not only find it difficult to participate in the implementation of the development plans but also not be able to hold the local leadership to account for their stewardship.

Turning to the Unit Committee members who are at the grassroots whose duty is to channel community needs and demands upwards through the Assembly members, the picture is similarly discouraging. As evident in Table 8.3, 30.2 per cent of the rural respondents claim that they have never met the unit committees when they were asked how often they meet their Unit Committee representatives. This figure more than doubled when 62.2 per cent of the urban respondents claim that they have never met the Unit Committee members. Again this result depicts the spatial variation in the frequency of meetings between the local representatives and their constituents.

With over 62 per cent of urban respondents claim that they have never met the UC members, it suggests that the UC has virtually broken down in the urban communities. This confirms the findings of other researchers who claimed that the unit committees in the various DAs are virtually redundant, most of them have been polarized around local disputes and therefore have effectively ceased to function (Ayee, 2000; Crawford, 2008). The virtual collapse of the UCs in the KEEA Municipality largely explains why most of the local people find it difficult to participate in activities such as communal labour. This is because the Unit Committees are the “rallying point of local enthusiasm and participation in support of the development objectives of the DAs” (Ayee, 2000).

Table 8.3: Frequency of Meetings of Unit Committee Members (UCM) with Constituents

<i>Frequency of UC members meetings with constituents</i>	<i>Rural</i>		<i>Urban</i>		<i>Total</i>	
	<i>No.</i>	<i>%</i>	<i>No.</i>	<i>%</i>	<i>No.</i>	<i>%</i>
Once per fortnight	19	13.7	6	5.4	25	10.0
Once per month	23	16.5	10	9.0	33	13.2
Once per quarter	7	5.0	5	4.5	12	4.8
Once per half year	24	17.3	8	7.2	32	12.8
Once per year	24	17.3	13	11.7	37	14.8
Not at all	42	30.2	69	62.2	111	44.4
Total	139	100	111	100	250	100

Source: Field Survey, 2010

These illustrations have given us an insight that consultative meetings between the local representatives and their constituents have been discouraging in the KEEA Municipality. This is because the 13.7 per cent claim that Unit Committees meet their electorates fortnightly was found to be mainly informal meetings. This occurs where friends of these Unit Committee members sit at *akpeteshie*⁷⁰ or local drinking bars. Drawing from the above, the results of the study found three worst scenarios; one in the rural communities and two occurred in the urban communities. As high as 65.5 per cent of rural respondents never met their MCE; whilst in the case of urban communities 57.7 and 62.2 per cent of respondents never met their Assembly and Unit Committee members respectively.

Although a decentralisation expert at the Decentralisation Secretariat of the MLGRD was not against the consultative meetings between the local representatives and their constituents, he cautioned that the meetings must be well-structured. In an interview, he explained further that “he was referring to the situation where we can address the issue with the elite capture of the consultations” (Interview at Decentralisation Secretariat: 20/07/2010). These elites could be the powerful political leaders and traditional rulers; rich and the businessmen and women who could monopolize the consultative meetings to their favour. The favour could be political where some of these leaders could be appointed to serve on boards of public corporations or economic where they could be offered contracts for projects. I turn to this question of initiators of the consultative meetings in areas that they occur later in the next section.

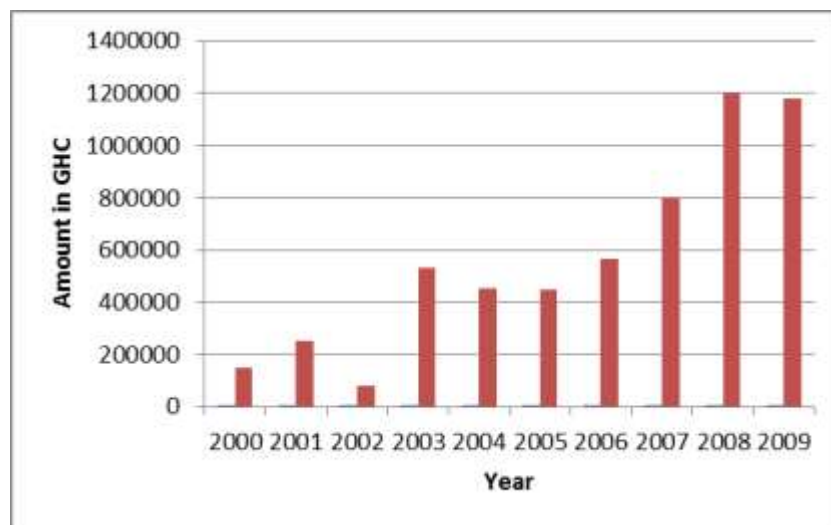
However, in terms of the decision-making in the Assembly, one important issue that came up among the majority of the informants is the use of the District Assemblies Common Fund (DACF) in the KEEA Municipal Assembly. This seems to be worth mentioning since it is the major source of revenue in the DAs and therefore the accountability of this fund is of much concern to the local citizens. Evidence from the field indicates that the DACF constitutes about 72-75 per cent of the annual revenue of the KEEA Municipality. Generally this percentage could have been higher but with Ghana taking the initiative of becoming a Highly Indebted Poor Country (HIPC)⁷¹ in February

⁷⁰ *Akpeteshie* is a local name for a locally-brewed gin usually prepared from oil palm

⁷¹ This is after a preliminary assessment of Ghana’s eligibility for assistance under the enhanced Initiative for Heavily Indebted Poor Countries. The findings are based on two joint missions of IDA and IMF in March and May 2001. Together with the Ghanaian authorities, the missions conducted the debt sustainability analysis (DSA). The preliminary results show that Ghana could qualify for debt relief under both the NPV of external debt to fiscal revenue and the NPV of external debt to export criteria, which were 557 percent and 152

2002, DAs began to benefit from the HIPC debt relief fund; and this in addition to other central government transfers have all contributed to the total revenue of the DAs. Nevertheless, the DACF has enabled the DAs to provide basic infrastructure in the field of education, health, water and sanitation which had been neglected in the past (Asante and Ayee, 2003). The graphical presentation of the DACF releases to the KEEA Municipal Assembly since 2000, as shown in Figure 8.1, will elucidate the quantum of the share of the KEEA Municipal Assembly annually and therefore its importance to the local citizens.

Fig. 8.1: District Assemblies Common Fund (DACF) Releases to KEEA, 2000-2009



Source: Data from Central Regional Audit Service, Cape Coast

Within the last ten years, the KEEA Municipal Assembly's share of DACF has grown from GH¢ 148,366 (approximately €74,183) in the year 2000 to GH¢ 1,177,702 (approximately €588,851) in 2009, which is an increase of about eight fold. The releases however peaked in 2008 when the Assembly's share was GH¢1,200,121 (approximately €600,060). Undoubtedly, part of the explanation for the substantial rise beginning from 2007 is the increase from 5 to 7.5 per cent of the total national revenue that statutorily goes to the DACF. Although the real value of the releases is not computed here, the financial health of the Municipal Assembly has improved dramatically over the last 10 years under review. Because of the significance of the DACF to the

percent respectively at the end of 2000 after the application of traditional debt relief mechanisms. (Source: <http://www.imf.org/external/np/hipc/2001/gha/gh>).

effective development of the local communities, one should expect that the local people would be interested in the way it is managed or utilised.

Evidence from the field, however, indicates that with such huge financial disbursements into the Municipal assembly, many of the respondents do not know how decisions were made in connection with the use of the DACF. On the question, to what extent do you agree that the Municipal Assembly consults the people in the community on the use of the DACF, as high as 82 per cent (i.e. disagree + strongly disagree) of the respondents disagreed that they were consulted whilst only 4.8 per cent agreed (i.e. agree + strongly agree), as depicted in Table 8.4. In the rural communities, whilst 64 per cent strongly disagreed that they were consulted only 0.7 percent strongly agreed. In the case of urban respondents whilst 62.2 per cent strongly disagreed, only 0.9 percent strongly agreed that they were consulted. This result clearly shows that majority of the people in the KEEA Municipality are sidelined from the decision-making when it comes to the use of the DACF. This confirms Steiner (2008) findings in Uganda when she reports that “local officials generally do not provide sufficient space for citizens to get involved in decision-making”.

Table 8.4: Respondents’ Extent of Agreement/Disagreement on use of DACF

<i>Respondents’ extent of agreement that Assembly consults on use of DACF</i>	<i>Rural</i>		<i>Urban</i>		<i>Total</i>	
	<i>No.</i>	<i>%</i>	<i>No.</i>	<i>%</i>	<i>No.</i>	<i>%</i>
Strongly Agree	1	0.7	1	0.9	2	0.8
Agree	8	5.8	2	1.8	10	4.0
Neither Agree/Disagree	18	12.9	15	13.5	33	13.2
Disagree	23	16.6	24	21.6	47	18.8
Strongly Disagree	89	64.0	69	62.2	158	63.2
Total	139	100	111	100	250	100

Source: Field Survey, 2010

Besides the local citizens’ being unaware of the use of the DACF, what is more worrying the fact that many of the respondents do not even know or aware of the Municipality’s annual share of the DACF which is contrary to the case in Kenya. In Kenya, Balakrishna et al. (2008) reports that one of the main approaches to promoting local accountability is in respect of financial reporting where the Municipal authorities are required to publish their summary budgets in the national daily

newspapers in compliance with the Local Authorities Transfer Fund (LATF⁷²) Act. Similarly, an example comes from Uganda, where budget information on government's sectoral disbursements is published in the newspapers. At the local level in the education sector, this information is posted on school bulletin boards, so that citizens can verify whether what they see happening in their schools reflects what local government says it is spending (Robb, 1999). This increased accountability of budgetary processes has increased citizen participation and equitable use of resources.

However, when respondents were asked whether they were aware of the KEEA MA annual share of the DACF, 81.6 per cent disagreed whilst only 3.6 per cent agreed. The rural respondents who disagreed were 79.8 per cent whilst the urban were 83.8 per cent. The view that local people are not given the opportunity to be participants in deliberating on crucial matters appears to continue to persist. In a similar study (Ayee and Amponsah, 2003) report that overwhelming majority of people interviewed, 87.9 per cent said they had not attended any forum organised for the purpose of deliberating on the utilisation of the DACF. Given the variety of context in which the KEEA Municipal Assembly is exercising its powers over the grassroots, it clearly illustrates that the Assembly's political interests subsumed the popular grassroots interest making political accountability of local representatives to the citizens very pretentious.

The fact that over 80 per cent of all the respondents are not aware of the Assembly's share of the DACF, let alone its use, puts under question the local level planning and financial information for implementing and monitoring of development projects and programmes by local citizens. Again, it questions the legitimacy and validity of the current decision-making structures of the new local government institution. In other words, when the people of the Municipality on whom the local government institution exercises its authority does not know the use of its major financial resources, how will they accept "its right to rule"? The implication of this is two-fold: potential for fraud and unrest. In an interview with an Assembly member in Komenda, it was revealed that the fraudulent means associated with the lack of transparency in the DAs result in DCEs allegedly bloating contract sums and thereby pocketing the difference and also ensuring that only the "friendly" contractors who can pay "kickbacks" to the authorities are paid whether project

⁷² The Local Authority Transfer Fund (LATF) like the DACF in Ghana was established through an Act of Parliament, Act No. 8 in 1998 in Kenya and came into effect during the 1999 fiscal year. It is meant to provide resources and incentives to enable local authorities to (i) improve local service delivery, (ii) strengthen financial management and accountability and (iii) eliminate all outstanding current local debts.

certificates have been raised for payment or not. With the unrest, a number of instances abound in the DAs particularly since 2009 where there have been reports of irate NDC foot-soldiers⁷³ calling for the removal of DCEs for not being accountable to them. The powers of the youth, for instance, in Kadjebi in the Volta region exercising oversight functions were manifested on July 31, 2010 when about 500 irate NDC youth besieged the offices of the Kadjebi District Assembly with intentions to remove the DCE from office (Daily Guide, July 31, 2010:3). In effect, the section has demonstrated that political accountability of local representatives to their electorates has been difficult in the KEEA Municipality due to the infrequent consultative meetings. The next section deals with the initiators of the consultative meetings in the communities where they occur.

8.3 Who initiates the consultative meetings?

This section discusses the initiators of the consultative meetings in the communities where they occur. As alluded to in the previous section, the argument here is to elicit from my respondents who the initiators of such consultative meetings are so that we can address the issue of the elite capture of the consultations. These elites could be the powerful political party leaders and traditional rulers; rich and the businessmen who could monopolize the consultative meetings to their favour. However, according to Steiner (2008), although this might seem to be a sign of low levels of participation and representation by the poor, it must be interpreted with caution. As explained by Crook and Manor (1998), in some countries it is culturally expected that the elite groups participate in the development of their home regions through the involvement in the local councils; DAs as in the case of Ghana. Perhaps some of the actors who are appointed as part of the 30 per cent government appointees to serve in the DAs in Ghana fit well in the Crook and Manor's case of conscious elite group participation. Similarly, in a recent study, Wong (2010:14) reports that in the trans-boundary water project that involved Ghana and Burkina Faso, they adopted the "co-opt-elite" approach and deliberately absorbed local elites into the water committees for the sake of project efficiency.

Basically, the claim here is to argue that initiating a consultative meeting between the local representatives and the citizens is a dynamic process in which contextual and structural factors are involved and therefore might affect political accountability differently. Initiators' actions are

⁷³ These are often youth who see themselves as not only political party supporters but have campaigned so much for the ruling party whilst in opposition such that they see themselves as deserving much more stake in government, whether at the national or local level.

shaped by social relationships and the dynamics of the context in which they are positioned (Toner, 2008; Cleaver, 2009). I will consider three main consultative meetings within the local government arena. These are meetings between the following actors: MCE and the constituents; AM and the constituents; and UC members and the constituents. Here, I intend to support my argument by providing the profile of some of these initiators of the consultative meetings in the KEEA Municipality over the period.

Evidence from the KEEA Municipality indicates that both traditional and political leaders have a role in initiating the consultations. Often, they are people who themselves are local representatives and therefore hold political power or those outside the local government institution but command a modicum of respect in the society. Among the local actors outside the local government institution are traditional rulers, political party leaders, professionals and religious leaders. It is significant to note that consultative meetings serve both as decision-making on policies, as well as occasions during which citizens can demand accountability from their local representatives. I draw on the following selected cases that are variously described as response to community demand for meetings, reputation of a religious leader and links with traditional and political spaces of the local government institution to illustrate the situation in the KEEA Municipality.

Example 1: *Response to Community-Demand: Hon. George Frank Asmah, 53, MCE, KEEA Municipal Assembly (2005-2009)*

Hon. George Frank Asmah hails from Elmina. He holds Master of Arts in Development Studies from the University of Cape Coast (UCC). He is a journalist by profession and has over 20 years of experience. Hon. Asmah was the news editor of the Ghanaian Times and Vice President of the Ghana Journalists Association. From June 2005 to March 2009, he was the Municipal Chief Executive of the KEEA Municipal Assembly. He relinquished his position upon the coming into office of the NDC government in January 2009 since he was appointed by President Kufuor's NPP government.

As has been shown in this study, consultative meetings between the MCEs, both past and present, with the local citizens in the Municipality are not happening regularly. However, that does not mean that there are no meetings at all. In order to show how meetings are held, I will discuss a particular case. This meeting was organised at *Ebuw enyim* at *Bakaano* in Elmina by the MCE in March 2007. The meeting was about the Elmina Benya Lagoon Restoration Project that involved the dredging of the 1200-metre long lagoon and breakwater. The meeting was between the

Elmina Bakaano community who are mainly fishermen and the Assembly. This meeting came off as a result of some agitations from the Elmina Traditional Council and fishermen. Their complaint was that a sub-committee that had been formed by the Assembly to liaise with the contractor on the project on behalf of the Assembly did not include any member from the lagoon area. Their claim suggests barriers of participation in decision-making and that they felt they had been marginalized and excluded by the Assembly.

The narration points out a fact, that, consultative meetings at the Municipality have come about as a result of agitations from the public. Furthermore, the fact that it took the MCE to initiate this meeting with the local citizens depended on the local actors involved. This is the case where all the members of the traditional council in conjunction with the fishermen were angry with the decision of the Assembly. Further checks revealed that if there had been any other person who initiated this meeting and represented the Assembly in this meeting, the chiefs would have turned that person away. That would have been interpreted as lack of respect for the traditional authorities by the Assembly. Not only that, the community also felt that the only personality at the local government institutional arena who had the “right” information is the MCE.

The example entails the generation and use or manipulation of networks of social relations and the channeling of specific items such as claims and information through certain nodal points of interpretation and interaction (Long, 2001:17). Similarly as Azfar et al. (2001) found out, citizens obtain most information on local issues from their local leaders. Therefore, since the information was from the MCE it was regarded as the “right” and very important information because of the source.

Example 2: *Reputation*: Evangelist Eric Essel Lartey, 56, Komenda Methodist Church and the Founder of the Zion Prayer Fellowship Center

Evangelist Eric Essel Lartey is a seasoned and experienced servant of God and deeply involved in evangelism and church growth. He is 56. Evangelist Essel Lartey had a three-year training from 2000–2003 at the Freeman Centre for Mission and Leadership Development in Kumasi. Thereafter he became a trained and commissioned evangelist in the Methodist Church Ghana. He is the founder of a renowned prayer center known as the Zion Prayer Fellowship Center in Komenda where he organises monthly all-night programs for over 1000 faithful. He is currently the Circuit evangelism coordinator for the Komenda Circuit of The Methodist Church Ghana and stationed at Aboransa. He has been initiating meetings between the former DCE and the Assembly member of Aboransa, Mr. Ebo Awotwe, on the one hand and the Assembly member and the constituents on

the other hand. He claims that among his responsibilities in the local community is to ensure that local representatives are accountable to their constituents if that will reduce conflicts in the area.

The example of Evangelist Essel Lartey illustrates the diverse social networks, status and relationships of people and their ability to initiate consultative meetings among local representatives. This illustrates how personal integrity enables leaders to initiate consultative meetings. Clearly Evangelist Essel Lartey does not belong to the class of the local elites. Rather he is seen as a very humble man, not as rich and “powerful”. He is a man who a number of local people hold in high esteem because of his religious beliefs. He is seen as a very religious and kind person. He prays for the sick and during his monthly all-night programs, a lot of worshippers travel to Komenda from near and far, particularly the Western region of Ghana. The local people claim that he has time to interact with many people in and around the Komenda Traditional Area. He also settles disputes among local representatives. A female teacher in Komenda justified this action: “people respect Evangelist Essel Lartey” (interview: 28/08/2010).

In his role as an evangelist and a servant of God, it becomes quite acceptable for him to initiate consultative meetings in the Municipality. The leading role of Evangelist Essel Lartey in bringing various actors together in decision-making processes is very apparent in the Komenda Traditional Area. A clear case in point was how the Evangelist was able to convince the seven (7) communities around Aboransa to contribute towards the purchase of a water pump to maintain their community water project. Earlier, the people in the communities had refused to honour their part of the contribution towards the purchase of the water pump which provides them with potable drinking water despite the interventions from the DCE. As a result, there was no flow of potable water in the 7 communities for almost 4 months, between February and June 2004. In order to solve the problem and since there was the fear of a cholera outbreak in the area, the Assembly decided to postpone the commencement of other projects in some communities in the Municipality so that the pumps could be purchased. With the intervention of the Evangelist, after his meeting with the leadership of the communities involved, they agreed to contribute towards the purchase of the water pump. This not only eased the financial burden imposed on the assembly but also potable water was restored in the seven communities. Furthermore, evidence from the field indicates that when all efforts had failed to bring the appointed manager who misapplied some funds belonging to the 7-community small scale water scheme, the Evangelist was able to get him account for the funds to the community.

The capability of the evangelist to initiate consultative meetings among different actors and to succeed at building consensus between the local representatives and the citizens shows that one way to demand accountability is to go through a person in the community who is respected by all the actors involved. Eckardt (2008) refers to this phenomenon when he argues that accountability is inherently relational. The reputation of Evangelist Essel Lartey as a trusted and respectful member in the Komenda Traditional Area made him the obvious choice as an initiator of very important meetings in the Municipality.

Example 3: *Traditional Leadership: Nana Kwahinkrom, 55, Chief, Komenda Traditional Area*

Nana Kwahin is a chief of Kwahinkrom, a farming community in the Komenda Traditional Area and thus one of the divisional chiefs of the Komenda Traditional Area. He is a teacher by profession. Currently he teaches at the Edinaman Senior High School, a public secondary school in Elmina. He served as a government appointee, representing the Komenda Traditional Area, in the KEEA Municipal Assembly from 2006-2010. He was the Chairman of the Justice and Security sub-committee of the Assembly. He is pursuing an MA sandwich program in Governance at the Institute for Development Studies (IDS) in the University of Cape Coast. He is known to have been involved in initiating meetings between the Assembly member of Dompoase-Kokwaado-Kwahinkrom and his community. He claims it is his immediate responsibility to demand accountability from both elected and appointed representatives of his area. Nana cites instances where he initiated a meeting between the Assembly member and the community on the site for the construction of a borehole at Kwahinkrom. Similarly he claimed that when some representatives allegedly embezzled some funds in his community, he initiated a meeting with the Assembly member and they both ensured that the amount was refunded to the community.

As illuminated in the previous chapter, at the local level, people look up to other actors such as the Chiefs to demand accountability on their behalf (see section 5.5.2). The example above nicely illustrates the Chief's role of initiating meetings between the Assembly/Unit Committee members and the constituents. This is because in the DAs the process of demanding accountability from local representatives is mediated through existing structures that are conceived as capable and legitimate to do so (Osei-Kufuor, 2010).

In an interview with Assembly and Unit Committee members, they stated that they allow the Chiefs to play this role because of the legitimacy they derive from their social position. This role of Chiefs is rather enshrined in social norms, culture and history than in formal rules. Although the local government act, Act 462 of 1993 fails to recognize such a function of the traditional authorities, evidence from the field indicates that the local representatives often responds to the call of the Chiefs when it comes to accountability. The local representatives could even ignore the

formal structures such as the DA when it comes to accountability. Culturally, the belief is that the Chiefs occupy a supernatural authority and therefore “the belief of a supernatural authority demanding accountability on behalf of individuals shapes the actors’ intentions to hold leaders to account” (Osei-Kufuor, 2010).

Interestingly, some respondents at Kwahinkrom have a belief that at the Chiefs palace, some misfortune could befall on a local representative if he is found to have embezzled community funds. The misfortune referred to could be in the form of the invocation of gods or ancestral spirits to punish offenders. This largely explains why the Assembly and Unit Committee members will respond to the call of the Chiefs, particularly in the rural communities. Other interviewees also said that the Chiefs own the lands and therefore whether as an Assembly or Unit committee member, you are a subject of the Chief. This also explains how local actors respond to change by drawing on and adapting existing norms and mechanisms in ways that modify the intended outcomes (Barnes and Prior, 2009).

Example 4: *Both political and traditional space*: Mr. Gabriel Aidoo, 53, former Assembly member, Ankaasi-Saaman-Essiam Electoral area and secretary to the Chief of Abrem Essiam

Mr. Aidoo was a two-term elected Assembly member of the Ankaasi-Saaman-Essiam Electoral area until 2006. He was a former activist of the Provisional National Defence Council (PNDC) that governed Ghana from December 31, 1981 to January 6, 1993 and an active member of the NDC in the KEEA constituency. He hails from Abrem Essiam and worships with the Abrem Essiam Catholic Church. He holds a Middle School Leaving Certificate (MSLC) and worked with the Non-Formal Department of the Ministry of Education at the office of the KEEA Municipal Assembly. At the same time, he serves at the palace of the Chief of Essiam as the secretary. He is married with children. He characterizes himself as neither rich nor poor although he owns a 10-acre citrus farm and a motor bike. He often mobilized his constituents particularly at Essiam for communal labour and other collective activities. In addition, it was evident that during his tenure as an Assembly member, he often met with his constituents before and after Assembly sessions. In 2004, he was voted the best performing Assembly member of the Municipality.

The narration of Mr. Aidoo illustrates the role of the traditional and political context in giving certain people the opportunity to initiate consultative meetings in their electoral areas. He draws on his power both as an Assembly member and a close aide to the Chief of Essiam to facilitate consultative meetings with the electorates. Mr. Aidoo shows a rare example of an Assembly member in the KEEA Municipal Assembly who used to initiate consultative meetings with his constituents at his own initiative. The consequence of the consultative meetings brought the people of Essiam together to organise end-of-year community harvest. This harvest, which was the only one in the Abrem Traditional Area at the time, brought all the citizens from Essiam together

annually to raise funds for the community. He was very active during his tenure as an Assembly member, an interviewee claims. No wonder he was adjudged the best performing Assembly member in 2004.

During interviews with the people of Abrem Essiam, it was revealed that Mr. Aidoo's consultative meetings with the constituents have shaped positively the decision to access a number of development projects from the Municipal assembly. Among the projects are a 3-unit classroom block, a 10-seater KVIP toilet facility and a market shed at Abrem Essiam in addition to similar projects at Ankaasi, Kwesi Edum and Saaman respectively. In an interview with the Unit Committee members at Abrem Saaman, they categorically mentioned the participatory role of the community in deciding the site for the HIPC-funded 20-seater KVIP toilet facility at Abrem Saaman in 2003 which came about as a result of the untiring effort of the Assembly member.

Furthermore, the case of Mr. Aidoo reveals the dynamics and the overlapping nature of different arenas in which he was embedded and this provided a useful and enabling resource for him. He was engaged in multiple arenas with diverse social actors. It suggests how multiple networks shaped the agency to seek greater decision-making roles within the local government spaces of public participation.

Drawing on the characteristics of the individuals who have initiated consultative meetings in the communities where they occurred, they could be summarised as response to community demand as in the case of the MCE; reputation of an evangelist; and links with traditional and political spaces of the new institution as with the Chief and the Assembly member. These examples illustrate how network and social relationships shape people's ability to initiate consultative meetings within the new institutional spaces of representation. The analysis reveals that an individual's ability to initiate consultative meetings is shaped by the various bundles of allocative and authoritative resources that such individuals can invoke. Clearly the elite capture phenomenon that is so pervasive in the decentralisation literature cannot be said to be the case here in the KEEA Municipality as far as initiating consultative meetings is concerned. This is because empirically, there is no indication from the field that these actors who initiated the consultative meetings did so to manipulate the decision-making arena and agenda and obtain most of benefits (Wong, 2010). I now turn to some of the issues that are discussed during such meetings.

8.4 What are the issues discussed and who attends such meetings?

In Chapter two, I pointed out the essence of meetings in my conceptual framework. Drawing on Schwartzman's (1987) observation on meetings, she explains that meetings are used to exchange ideas, solve problems, develop policy, negotiate agreements and/or formulate recommendations. This section discusses the issues raised in the communities where the consultative meetings between the local representatives and constituents occurred and how those issues were considered as development policy issues of the Municipal Assembly. It also highlights on the attendees to such meetings. The argument here is that it is through such consultative meetings with local citizens that local representatives are held responsible for their actions (Steiner, 2008). In other words, without the engagement of the local citizens, there will be no demands to hold representatives accountable.

As illuminated in the examples in the previous section, evidence from the field indicates that issues discussed varied from decisions to site development projects through accounting for embezzled funds to solving problems in the various communities where the meetings occurred. For instance, in an interview with a former MCE, he stated:

"We put up a toilet facility at the Java Hill in Elmina; consultations went on including the siting of the project before the project began. After the construction of the project, we kept on consulting the people when the issue of the management of the facility arose because they did not understand certain issues. To them we should give them the facility to run but the Assembly realized that they did not have the capacity. If they had we would have been happier, so we moved on a number of times consulting them in order that we will reach a consensus on the management of the facility" (Interview with former MCE: 17/08/2010).

The quote from the MCE indicates how important it is for local representatives to meet their constituents. Since the people of the Java Hill heard that the management of the toilet facility will be handed over to them, it does not matter whether they needed to be trained before the handing over or not. It took the engagements through consultative meetings for them to understand the issues.

Furthermore, the MCE indicated that issues that were raised in some of the meetings they had in the Municipality border on education, sanitation and health. A clear example is the falling standards of education in the KEEA Municipality as judged by the unsatisfactory BECE results of the basic school students and how local representatives and actors find solution to the problem.

Similarly, in an interview with a former Municipal Planning Officer (MPO), he stated that basically the people in the communities will want to have good roads, schools, toilet facilities, good sanitation, and better living conditions. Therefore these projects are what engage them anytime they meet the communities for the preparation of the Annual Development Plan of the assembly. He further stated that the issues are deliberated upon at the Assembly. When they are approved, they then become a development policy of the Assembly. However, the challenge with the engagement of the local citizens in making decisions on development projects was real. There are instances from the field where respondents revealed that local people perceive that once their concerns regarding development projects have been captured in the Annual Development Plan of the Assembly, the projects have to be implemented. But that is not the case. It depends on the availability of funds. The inadequate funds in the Assembly coupled with the barriers set by the National Development Planning Commission (NDPC) guidelines to the DAs may limit the number of development projects that the DA can implement in a given year. This has often led to confrontations between the local representatives and their constituents.

On the other hand, the Assembly and Unit Committee members considered the meetings in their communities as local internal issues. They mostly regard development activities in their communities, the mobilization of citizens in the communities for communal labour as well as the solution of local problems. However, the field work revealed that during these meetings, some local actors particularly women often do not make conscious effort to publicly contest or challenge decisions arrived at. This illustrates how the decision-making process on issues raised in these consultative meetings is shaped by traditional codes of conduct in the public sphere particularly by women in the KEEA Municipality. During an interview with a woman leader in the Pentecost Church, she succinctly put it:

“I will attend such consultative meetings, but as a Christian, I need to respect the elders in my church and the community at large particularly the Chiefs. Also at times, I need the permission of my husband before I can contribute to certain issues in public; particularly when it comes to asking a local representative to render accounts to the community, it can be misconstrued to mean embezzlement” (Interview with a Deaconess, Dominase: 04/01/2011).

This situation in the KEEA Municipality confirms the observation in Tanzania where Cleaver and Franks (2005) report that despite the nominal specification of rights of all adults to participate in local decision making; social relations and imbalances of power ensure that people with particular social identities may find such participation difficult.

The quote from the Deaconess from Dominase also offers a hint about the attendees to such meetings and their level of participation, although the participation to such meetings is voluntary. It has demonstrated that women who attend such meetings look up to their husbands before they can contribute to the discussions. Religion also plays a role, for example, some Christian women are very cautious about what they can say in public and what they cannot say, as the interview with the Deaconess illustrates. A Christian mother responded in an interview that they are guided by what the Holy Bible teaches, that “women have to be submissive to their husbands”. Evidence from the KEEA Municipality revealed that such meetings are dominated by men and they mainly contribute to the discussions most of the time. Although children under 18 years may attend such community meetings, particularly at the time that they are not in school, local culture makes it difficult for them to make contributions in public. Culturally, there are instances that claim that they are not “of age” and also for the respect to the elderly, children remain as observers during such meetings in the Municipality. The children must “allow” their parents to talk in public, an interviewee claims.

Usually meetings involving the Municipal Chief Executive, a religious leader or the MP in the communities are attended by traditional leaders, Assembly members and the unit committee members. In order to show solidarity with the ruling political party (often the party of the MCE), and the MP, the constituency executives of the political party of the MCE and/or MP also attends such meetings. Such meetings where the MCE and/or MP is attending, is considered to be a very important and therefore all the key local actors will attend. An interviewee claims that “it is during such meetings that the Chiefs can make requests for projects for their communities directly from the DCE or the MP without going through the Assembly member” (interview with Assembly member, Ampenyi: 04/01/2011). However, unless the Chiefs are invited, Assembly and Unit Committee members hold meetings in the communities with the youth and other members of the community but such meetings will have to be sanctioned by the Chiefs and proceedings of the meetings are reported back after the meeting to the Chiefs by the Assembly members. This is done in order to reduce the frequent conflicts and struggle for control in the communities where some Assembly members have usurped the powers of the Chiefs, as the pendulum model of local government in Ghana has referred to in Chapter 3. The situation in the KEEA Municipality where the meeting is held in public places and the fact that attendance is voluntary runs contrary to Blair’s (2000) observation that councilors who fear public questioning can manipulate such meetings by, for example, holding them at odd times or in obscure locations.

8.5 Summary of the Chapter

This chapter has illustrated that enhancing political accountability within the decentralised local government institutions is a complex process. With the complexity of the selection/election process of the local representatives and the fact that elections are periodic, the local electoral system is found to be inadequate as well as the blockage of channels of communication in the Municipality. Hence, we need to further explore other political accountability mechanisms such as consultative meetings. Lessons that can be distilled from this chapter are the following five aspects.

First, the chapter has revealed how local actors use multiple institutional channels such as the traditional authorities, political and other associational spaces to initiate consultative meetings. However, the illustrations have given us insight that consultative meetings between the local representatives and their constituents have been appalling. For instance, as high as 82 per cent of the respondents either disagree that they were consulted on the use or not aware of the Municipality's share of the DACF which is the major source of revenue for all the development projects and programmes in the Municipality. This phenomenon questions the extent of political accountability between the local representatives and the local citizens in the Municipality.

Second, I have highlighted in the chapter that local representatives consultations and the use of feedback mechanisms that is to assure the local actors that their interest is reflected in policy making is circumvented in the Municipality.

Third, drawing on the characteristics of the actors who initiate the consultative meetings in the communities where they occur, the issue of the elite capture which is so pervasive in the decentralisation literature is not the case in the Municipality. Rather, factors such as reputation of local actors, links with traditional and political spaces of the local government institutions are the characteristics of those who initiate the consultative meetings in the Municipality.

Four, as illustrated in the examples, evidence from the field has provided some specifics on what local representatives are accountable for, and these form the basis of the issues of the consultative meetings in the Municipality. These can be characterized as policy and program decisions; use of the Assembly's share of DACF, planning and budgeting of the Assembly and appropriation of funds by the local representatives.

Finally, I have demonstrated that majority of the attendees to such meetings are men. Although women participate in such meetings, they find it difficult to contribute to the decision-making in public. This apparent ineffectiveness in local participation in decision making by women in the KEEA Municipality is as a result of religious beliefs, social relations and imbalances of power. However, contributing to the complexity in thinking about political accountability is the fact that the local representatives who are the accountable actors are sometimes the very same actors also exercising oversight functions. For example, the Assembly member who is to exercise oversight functions of accountability on the MCE is the same actor who is politically accountable to the electorates; and therefore when the AM is perceived not to be politically accountable to the electorates, he/she will find it difficult to demand same from the MCE. In this way, political accountability to local citizens, voters and tax payers become quite distant or diffused. The next chapter which is the final chapter offers the summary, conclusions and recommendations from the study.

CHAPTER NINE

THE UNFINISHED BUSINESS: POLITICAL ACCOUNTABILITY OF DECENTRALISATION

9.1 Introduction

This concluding chapter presents the summary, conclusions, policy interventions and recommendations from this study. The study questioned the political accountability of local government in the KEEA Municipality within the context of the current democratic decentralisation policy reform in Ghana. This is situated in the claim in literature that decentralisation is seen as a means to increase opportunities for political participation and therefore enhance political accountability (Agrawal and Ribot, 1999; Ayee, 2006; Crawford, 2008). Specifically this study positions decentralisation within a particular context in order to illuminate the triad of local electoral system; public access to information; and consultative meetings between the local representatives and citizens, voters and tax payers as mechanisms for enhancing political accountability. The key idea of the triad is to illuminate how the actors within the local government institutional arena acquire their authority and how that authority is exercised.

Debates about decentralisation have emphasised on political accountability of local governments as a result of the shift in development thinking particularly with the emergence of the concept of good governance. It is to proffer restraint over the exercise of institutional power and authority. This has to do with institutions, procedures, and mechanisms that seek to ensure that (local) government delivers on electoral promises, fulfills the public trust, aggregates and represents the citizens interests, and responds to ongoing and emerging social needs and concerns (Brinkerhoff, 2001). Usually in experiences of political accountability, all the three dimensions namely, information, justification and sanctions through elections are present (Schedler, 1999). But how can we enhance political accountability of local government without effective participation in the selection/election of local representatives; public access to information and local representatives' consultative meetings with the citizens, voters and tax payers? Drawing extensively on the actor-oriented approach, the study examines the "participation" model of accountability and explains why political accountability at the local government arena in the KEEA Municipality is so problematic. With empirical evidence from the KEEA Municipality, we hope to suggest alternatives

as policy interventions, hence the unfinished business of the decentralisation policy reform in Ghana.

Decentralisation has been implemented in Ghana since 1988. Nearly two and half decades of implementation, it has chalked some successes including the creation of 170 MMDAs from the original 110 and the increase from 5 to 7.5 per cent of total revenue of Ghana set aside as the DACF which is shared among the DAs for development projects and programs. However, issues of political accountability of local representatives to citizens, voters and tax payers still persist as the unfinished business of Ghana's decentralisation policy reform. It has become clear from this study that decentralisation and local government is still a viable approach to securing grassroots participation in decision making but the unfinished business needs to be addressed in policy circles using KEEA Municipality as a case study. To this end, I present the summary, conclusions, policy interventions and recommendations derived from this study in the ensuing sections.

9.2 Summary and Conclusions

In Chapter 1, I began by repositioning myself as a scientific researcher in my "own backyard" after serving as the District Chief Executive of the KEEA District Assembly for four years and subsequently another four years in the Central Region within where the KEEA Municipality is located as the Regional Minister. This is meant to take cognizance of the practical gaps identified during my political work period and also analyse issues more thoroughly from a different scientific perspective. I also discussed in this chapter the problem statement, objectives of this study, research questions, significance and structure of the study.

Chapter 2 explores the literature with the aim of searching for theories and concepts that adequately explain decentralisation, local government and political accountability. The chapter demonstrates that in reference to its popularity, decentralisation policy reforms all over the world, particularly in Africa, in the last two decades have become the "quiet revolution" (Campbell, 2001). However, exploring the decentralisation literature, it revealed that political accountability of local government within the context of decentralisation is under explored. The chapter also highlights types of decentralisation as deconcentration, delegation and devolution. Firstly, I demonstrated that multiple ideological underpinnings push governments in the developing countries towards decentralisation policy reforms. From the review, I identified that various governments in Africa, faced by their inefficiencies in their centralised rule at the time of

independence looked for other options; and they found solace in local participation in decision making. This led to various local structures for local development which were meant to create a mixed authority for operating local services and investing in local development, thus the institutionalisation of local government.

The chapter also highlights the research debates around the issue of political accountability. From the review, it illustrates that political accountability is a complex and multi-dimensional concept. This study has contributed to such debates by placing strong emphasis on the specificities of context to demonstrate that political accountability mechanisms within the decentralised local government institution are a complex and dynamic process. On the other hand, literature point to the direction that political accountability represents a broad two-dimensional concept: answerability and enforcement. A conceptual framework based on local level elections, public access to information and local government actors' consultative meetings with citizens, voters and tax payers is also provided in this chapter for analyzing political accountability of the decentralised local government institution in the KEEA Municipality.

Chapter 3 discusses the historical and socio-economic conditions that guide contemporary approaches to decentralisation in Ghana. It illustrates the general picture of the pendulum model of the decentralisation policy reforms and local government and shows how decentralisation in Ghana has gone through a tortuous journey. The chapter also demonstrates that Ghana's decentralisation history since the colonial days is a story of repeated and usually successful efforts to (re)centralize power instead of decentralising power and resources to the sub-national level. It traces Ghana's long journey from the colonial days of the "indirect rule" towards the present decentralisation policy reform. The current decentralisation policy reform is envisioned to be devolution; and it is the transfer of functions, means and competencies from the central government to the Metropolitan, Municipal, and District Assemblies.

Chapter 4 describes the methodology employed in the study whilst Chapter 5 situates the study within the context of the KEEA Municipality in Ghana. The analysis which is both qualitative and quantitative is based on the key informants' interviews and the field survey conducted between April 2010 and January 2011 in the study area. I used actor-oriented approach to find out how different actors with varied resources and capacities act to access new institutional spaces, shape decision-making processes in the local government arena to offer political accountability to local

citizens, voters and tax payers. I have demonstrated that factors shaping actors at the local level work in similar ways on different actors manifesting in varied outcomes. I draw extensively from the works of Giddens (1984), Long (2001) and Thelen (1999) to explore the scope for different actors in the new spaces of decentralisation policy reform over the past two decades.

Against this background, I now move on to the empirical chapters which are chapters 6, 7 and 8 respectively. These three chapters illustrate how I used the actor-oriented approach in this study with clear examples cited. I have organised the summary and conclusions around the discussions of the four sub-research questions presented in chapter 1. Apart from the fact that such organisation will refresh memories on the main issues from the sub-research questions in chapter 1, these summaries are also meant to set the stage for policy interventions for political accountability within the decentralised local government institution in Ghana.

9.2.1 Local actor's perception of political accountability

As my first objective of the study, I discussed the local actor's perception of political accountability within the context of the ongoing democratic decentralisation in the KEEA Municipality of Ghana as part of chapter 6. The findings from this research have highlighted two main issues of theoretical importance, relevant to the perception of local actor's understanding of political accountability in the KEEA Municipality.

First, it highlights the need to understand the multiple ways local actors define political accountability (see section 6.6.1). This is not in terms of answerability and enforcement concepts alone as is pervasive in the accountability literature. But it goes on to impute emotional aspects as a way of local representatives exercising political accountability; confirming Schedler (1999:13) argument that "accountability (political) represents an underexplored concept whose meaning remains evasive, whose boundaries are fuzzy, and whose internal structure is confusing". What this shows is that the practical actions of the floods in the KEEA Municipality shaped the local actors' perception of political accountability of local government. This again illustrates the "emotional, cognitive and physical" experience (Wong, 2010:5) of the people of the Municipality. This is in respect of one of the working group's perspectives of local actors understanding of political accountability. As earlier stated, they claim:

"Political accountability refers to giving an account of how one serves his/her people financially, emotionally and physically during his/her term of office".

The perspectives of political accountability from the KEEA Municipality suggests an actor-defined phenomenon, since it entails practical actions shaped by the background of intentionality and values (Schutz and Luckman, 1973).

Second, on the conceptual level, the perspectives of political accountability from the study have contributed to the critical examination of the taken-for-granted aspects of everyday life of local actors. This finding again resonates with Schutz (1962 cited in Long, 2001) phenomenological view that an understanding of social life should center on the notion of lifeworlds; depicting the “lived-in” and “taken-for-granted” world of the social actor.

9.2.2 Local Electoral System

I discussed the nature of the local electoral system in the KEEA Municipality in chapter 6 as my second objective of the study. Drawing from the analysis, I identify the following five issues as very relevant. Firstly, I have shown the complexity of the selection/election process with clear examples to illustrate the accommodations, negotiations, struggles, postponements and rejections that take place in the new local government institutional space. It illustrates the importance of examining local politics as a dynamic process that frequently produces unintended consequences as different ongoing processes interact. With the complexity of the selection/election process of the local representatives in the KEEA Municipality and the fact that elections are periodic, this research has empirically contributed to the debate that local level election is necessary but not sufficient mechanism to institutionalize restraint over the exercise of local government power and authority. It therefore renders political accountability of local government in the KEEA Municipality quite problematic.

Second, I have demonstrated that there are legal provisions in the current District Assembly laws that offer opportunities to local actors to participate in decision making at the local government arena, and therefore demonstrates that spaces for citizen engagement are recognised in the KEEA Municipality.

Third, drawing on local actors in the decentralisation arena, I have illustrated with examples that access to the new institutional spaces in the KEEA Municipality depends on the differential ability of individual actors to draw on resources existing in social relations. I provided deep insights into how culture, history, norms and other contextual factors shape the action of individuals into the

decentralisation arena. Regarding history and norms in the selection/election process in the KEEA Municipality, I demonstrated this with the case of the DA Elections in the Eguafu electoral area.

Fourth, it has become evident in this study that 67.6 per cent of the respondents agree to the election of the DCEs as it will increase popular participation of local citizens, voters and tax payers in public decision-making. At the local level, it is seen as a mechanism for accountability because local leaders who do not perform well are punished and voted out of office. Similarly, 43.6 per cent of the respondents agree that election of local representatives must be political-party based and that it is only hypocritical to think that the current local level elections is non-partisan. Rather, the local level elections today in the KEEA Municipality are influenced by partisan politics. I have also demonstrated that the two major political parties, NPP and NDC, who have governed Ghana since 1992 have abused the current DA system where not more than 30 per cent of the entire Assembly members are appointed by the President, otherwise referred to as government appointees.

Finally, the study has revealed that the local citizens look up to the traditional leaders to demand political accountability from their local representatives on their behalf. Hence, it suggests the dominant role of the traditional authorities within the local government institutional arena.

9.2.3 Public Access to Information

I discussed public access to information and political accountability of local government representatives in chapter 7 as my third objective of the study. Over here, I identified three main issues which are of relevance.

Firstly, although there are legal provisions for citizen engagement in the local government arena, I have illustrated that public access to information at the local level is so difficult. I have demonstrated that within the decentralisation arena, the authority of local representatives is not simply enacted based on legal statutes of the state. Rather it is socially enacted among diverse social actors over time which could lead to negotiations and contestations.

Secondly, I have provided deep insights as to how local representatives have blocked available channels of communication from their constituents. On the other hand, this has not gone on unchecked; it has led to sanctions from the local citizens by way of questioning the political

accountability of their representatives in public. This therefore resonates with the enforcement dimension of accountability (Schedler, 1999) that is pervasive in literature.

Thirdly, it is evident in the KEEA Municipality that as high as 70 per cent of both rural and urban respondents claim that the use of radio in communicating with the constituents by their local representatives is low and has therefore led to political protests which in turn have contributed to low political accountability of local government representatives in the KEEA Municipality.

9.2.4 Consultative Meetings as Political Accountability Mechanism

I discussed the Consultative Meetings as a Political Accountability Mechanism in Chapter 8 as the fourth objective of the study. Drawing from the analysis, four main conclusions can be drawn. First, I have demonstrated that local representatives hardly meet their constituents. Whilst 60.4 per cent of the respondents claim they have never met their MCE, on the part of the Assembly members, it was 49.6 per cent. However, the situation with the Assembly members from the urban areas was more discouraging than that from the rural areas. Similarly, I also illustrated that as high as 82 per cent of the respondents either disagree that they were consulted on the use or not aware of the Municipality's share of the DACF which is the major source of revenue for all the development projects and programmes in the Municipality.

Second, the study has revealed how local actors use multiple institutional channels such as the traditional authorities, political and other associational spaces to initiate consultative meetings in the KEEA Municipality. This suggests that at the local level, there is a diversity of actors with different values and interests who are involved in the decentralisation process.

Third, I have highlighted that local representatives' consultations and the use of feedback mechanisms that is to assure the local actors that their interest reflect in policy making have been circumvented in the Municipality.

Finally, I demonstrated that inadequate consultative meetings between the local government representatives and their constituents led to delays in the implementation of development projects particularly the EU micro projects and others that the local citizens are required to contribute either in cash or kind. It also amounted to non-payment of the contributions by the local actors towards the implementation of such projects.

9.3 Policy Interventions

Based on the comprehensive analysis of literature and discussions of the findings of this study, a number of policy interventions have been identified and recommended for consideration. These recommendations are grouped into two: the state and the municipal assembly. This aims to clarify where the action is to originate from.

The State

First, in enhancing political accountability within the decentralised local government institution using the KEEA Municipality of Ghana as a case study, the state must take a center stage. This is not to suggest that Ghana should (re)centralise or the DAs must be put under direct presidential authority. Rather, it necessitates some amendments in the local government laws and the legislative instruments that established the DAs. A very critical issue is that we need to revisit the provisions in the Local Government Act, Act 462 (1993) that prescribes the appointment of DCEs by the President, the 30 per cent government appointed Assembly members as well as the non-partisanship local level elections. There is also the need for greater autonomy for the Assemblies; in this way the “one-way iron hand” of the center-local relations where the center can revoke the appointment of DCEs as well as Assembly members particularly at the point of confirming DCEs will be removed.

Second, with the dominant role of traditional authorities within the decentralised arena and just as the pendulum model of the historical paths show, it is recommended that a strong cooperation between the local government as an institution and the Traditional Councils be institutionalised. A related approach to this point is the finding that social actors do not subscribe solely to formal institutions to mediate their everyday interactions. Hence, existing socially embedded institutions need to be adequately understood and considered for an active role in the decentralisation policy reforms.

Third, the state through the Ministry of Local Government and Rural Development should institute a performance contract scheme with the DAs where public access to information and periodic consultative meetings between the local representatives and their citizens will be monitored. At the end of the year, it is recommended that DAs that are rated high in performance must be rewarded whilst poor performers will be sanctioned. However, it is recommended that the

performance monitoring and evaluation role be removed from the responsibilities of the Ministry of Local Government and Rural Development so as to avoid “government business as usual”. Rather, private consultancy firms can be hired through competitive bidding process by the Ministry to undertake this important assignment.

Fourth, as in the case of Kenya and Uganda, the state through its agency, the District Assemblies Common Fund Secretariat must be mandated to publish in the daily newspapers each DA’s annual share of the DACF as well as the dates for the quarterly releases of the fund. In this way, local citizens will not only be able to monitor its use but also sanction abuses when they occur.

Municipal Assembly

In enhancing political accountability to local citizens, the following set of recommendations is directed at the KEEA Municipal Assembly. First, the KEEA Municipal Assembly must strengthen its participatory planning and budgeting process so that there will be active involvement of the sub-district structures, local citizens and the Traditional authorities. This suggests that the KEEA Municipal Assembly must provide sufficient space for local citizens to get involved in decision-making.

Second, the role of the Presiding Member in the DAs must be critically looked at in order to play the expected role as the “speaker” of the Assembly. It is recommended that a sub-committee of the Assembly consisting of the chairpersons of various sub-committees to be chaired by the Presiding Member needs to be instituted so as to hold the DCE to account. The present system of the Executive Committee of the Assembly which is chaired by the DCE is ineffective in holding the DCE politically accountable to the Assembly and local citizens and therefore needs to be looked at.

Third, it is recommended that regular reporting on the use of financial resources of the DA including the DACF must be instituted. Both the print and the electronic media must be used in communicating with the public. Relevant sections of these reports must be displayed at the notice boards of the DA where the public can have access in addition to “feedback” or complaints boxes where the public can also communicate with the KEEA Municipal Assembly.

9.4 The Unfinished Business

This study has demonstrated its strength with its emphasis of political accountability based on local actors’ views rather than that of government, donors or the private sector. It represents a

broader or more detailed comprehension of political accountability mechanisms within the context of decentralisation in the KEEA Municipality of Ghana.

The analysis and conclusions have revealed that there are a number of challenges that need to be addressed by policy makers. I refer to these challenges as the unfinished business of decentralisation in Ghana. Drawing from the summary and conclusions of the study, it suggests that political accountability in the KEEA Municipality viewed from the lens of local electoral system, public access to information and representatives' consultative meetings with local citizens, voters and tax payers has not been enhanced within the decentralisation policy reforms. This means that for political accountability to be enhanced within the decentralisation discourse there must be serious attempts to change the existing local government structures in Ghana. The continuous appointment of DCEs, non-partisan DA elections, inadequate information on the use of Assembly resources, and inadequate consultative meetings need to be considered as the unfinished business in Ghana's decentralisation process and must be revisited with all the seriousness it deserves. No wonder the election of DCEs has become a public debate in Ghana and also one of the key issues that the Constitution Review Commission appointed by the current President will be considering for possible amendment in the 1992 Constitution of Ghana.

At this point, I must point out that finishing the "unfinished business" within the context of the decentralisation policy reform in Ghana will not automatically lead to political accountability. This requires designing new local government structures in such a way that they are compatible with the development thinking of good governance. To facilitate that, the State in playing its catalyst role as suggested in the policy interventions above, must also provide incentives to the Assembly Members to play their fundamental role of mobilizing local people for participatory decision making as way of enhancing political accountability of local government representatives. The current practice of voluntary service by the Assembly members after nearly two and half decades of decentralisation policy reform in Ghana needs to be considered by policy makers.

To this end, the anticipation is that with both major political parties, NPP and NDC, committed to the decentralisation policy reforms, the unfinished business of decentralisation in Ghana will be highly considered as part of the manifestoes of these major political parties. This is based on the argument that all the perspectives from the KEEA Municipality have wider implications for enhancing political accountability of local government. Besides, I anticipate that these issues of unfinished business with decentralisation will contribute to the ongoing work of the Constitution

Review Commission as far as decentralisation as a tool for enhancing political accountability of local government in Ghana is concerned.

9.5 Further Research

Admittedly, based upon literature and empirical evidence from this study, further research opportunity has been identified and recommended for attention. We need to address the issue of the capacity of local actors to exercise oversight functions on their local representatives. I anticipate that this research area will attract the attention and interest of researchers into political accountability within the decentralised local government in Ghana.

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APPENDIX 1

INTERVIEW GUIDE FOR ACADEMICS, POLICY MAKERS AND LOCAL GOVERNMENT PRACTITIONERS
A. Issues About *Local electoral System*

1. In your opinion, how would you explain the current local electoral system in Ghana?
2. How would you describe the processes for the appointment and confirmation of DCEs?
3. What are your views about the current process of selecting DCEs?
4. Do you think that DCEs should be elected? Yes { } No { }
 - 4.1. If yes, can you specify why?
 - 4.2. If no, can you specify why?
5. Should political parties participate in local level elections? Yes { } No { }
 - 5.1. If yes, can you specify why?
 - 5.2. If no, can you specify why?
6. In your opinion, do the ruling governments affect the outcome of local level elections?
 - 6.1. If yes, can you specify how?
 - 6.2. If no, can you specify why?
7. In your opinion, do the traditional authorities affect the outcome of local level elections?
 - 7.1. If yes, can you specify how?
 - 7.2. If no, can you specify why?
8. How can we improve upon the current local electoral system?

B. Issues About *Access to Information*

9. Describe how you provide information to the citizens?
10. What information do you provide?
11. Do you provide all the information that is requested from you?
12. Has there been an occasion that you did not provide the information that was requested? Yes { } No { }
 - 12.1. If yes, can you specify the occasion and why?
 - 12.2. If no, can you specify the occasion and why?
13. How do citizens access information from the Assembly?
14. What are the reporting procedures?

15. Describe some instances where the public felt that you did not give them adequate information and what was their reaction
16. How can we improve upon the current access to information at the Assembly?

C. *Issues About **Consultative Meetings***

17. In your opinion, should the MCE consult the electorates?
18. What type of consultations should that be?
19. How often should the consultations be within a year?
20. Who should be the initiator of such a meeting (s)?
21. What kind of issues must be discussed at such meetings?
22. How do the issues discussed at such meetings become a policy issue?
23. How do the communities participate in planning and budgeting of the Assembly?
24. Describe the processes involved in drawing of development plans of the Assembly.
25. What improvements could be made towards MCE and Assembly Member consultative meetings with the electorates?
26. Finally, which of the three areas discussed should be of very top priority of local government?

Thank you very much

APPENDIX 2

INTERVIEW GUIDE FOR LOCAL POLITICAL LEADERS, TRADITIONAL AUTHORITIES AND ASSEMBLY MEMBERS

A. *Issues About Local electoral System*

1. In your opinion, how would you explain the current local electoral system in Ghana?
2. How would you describe the processes for the appointment and confirmation of DCEs?
3. What are your views about the current process of selecting DCEs?
4. Do you think that DCEs should be elected? Yes { } No { }
 - 4.1. If yes, can you specify why?
 - 4.2. If no, can you specify why?
5. Should political parties participate in local level elections? Yes { } No { }
 - 5.1. If yes, can you specify why?
 - 5.2. If no, can you specify why?
6. In your opinion, do the ruling governments affect the outcome of local level elections?
 - 6.1. If yes, can you specify how?
 - 6.2. If no, can you specify why?
7. In your opinion, do the traditional authorities affect the outcome of local level elections?
 - 7.1. If yes, can you specify how?
 - 7.2. If no, can you specify why?
8. How can we improve upon the current local electoral system?

B. *Issues About Access to Information*

9. Describe how you access information from the Assembly?
10. What information do you access?
11. Do you access all the information that you request from the Assembly? Yes { } No { }
 - 11.1. If No, where else do you access information?
12. Has there been an occasion that you were not provided with the information you requested? Yes { } No { }
 - a. If yes, can you specify the occasion and why?
 - b. If no, can you specify the occasion and why?
13. How do citizens provide information to the Assembly?
14. What are the reporting procedures?
15. Describe two instances where you felt that you were not provided with adequate information and what was your reaction
16. How can we improve upon the current access to information at the Assembly?

C. *Issues About Consultative Meetings*

17. In your opinion, should the MCE consult the electorates?
18. What type of consultations should that be?
19. How often do you meet your Assembly Members?
20. How often should the consultations be within a year?
21. Who should be the initiator of such a meeting (s)?

21.1. Meeting with MCE

21.2. Meeting with Assembly Member

22. What kind of issues must be discussed at such meetings?
23. How do the issues discussed at such meetings become a policy issue?
24. How do the communities participate in planning and budgeting of the Assembly?
25. Describe the processes involved in drawing of development plans of the Assembly.
26. What improvements could be made towards MCE and Assembly Member consultative meetings with the electorates?
27. Finally, which of the three areas discussed should be of very top priority of local government?

Thank you very much

APPENDIX 3

INTERVIEW SCHEDULE (SURVEY) FOR LOCAL CITIZENS, VOTERS AND TAXPAYERS

Date of Interview-----Name of Traditional Area -----Community-----House No. ----

Time Interview Started ---- ----

PREAMBLE: Good day. My name is ----- . I am from the Institute for Development Studies (IDS), University of Cape Coast (UCC). I do not represent the government or any political party. The study is primarily for academic work, and therefore you are assured of confidentiality and anonymity of any information that you provide. The purpose of this study is to assess political accountability of local government in the KEEA Municipality of Ghana. The research is interested in learning about all your experiences and opinions about this topic. We would like you to participate in the interview; however, participation is entirely voluntary. Thank you sincerely for agreeing to participate.

SECTION 1: PERSONAL DATA

1.1	Age	Actual
	≤ 20 yrs	
	21-30 yrs	
	31-40 yrs	
	41-50 yrs	
	51-60yrs	
	≥61 yrs	

1.2	Sex	
	Male	
	Female	

1.3	Level of Education	
	None	
	Basic School	
	Secondary School	
	Tertiary	
1.4	Current Occupation	
	Traders	
	Artisans	
	Farmers	
	Fishermen	
	Students	
	Government Workers	
	Others	

1.5	Place of Birth	
	KEEA Municipality	
	Other districts within Central Region	
	Outside Ghana	

1.6	Your mother Tongue (local language)	
	Akan (Fante, Twi, others)	
	Ga/Adangme	
	Ewe	
	Guan	
	Mole-Dagbani	
	Grussi	
	Gruma	
	Hausa	
	Other(please specify)	

1.7	Your religion	
	Christian	
	Moslem	
	Traditionalist/Spiritualist	
	Other (Please specify)	
1.8	Which of the following identifiable groups or associations do you belong to?	
	Church associations (choir, fellowship, Knight etc.)	
	Youth Club	
	Women's group	
	Farmer's group	
	Fishermen group	
	Asafo company	
	Market Women's group	
	Unit Committee	
	Football Team	
	Professional Body (such as Ghana Bar Association, Ghana National Association of Teachers, Ghana Institutions of Engineers, Ghana Medical Association,	
	Pensioner's Association	
	Other (Please specify)	

1.9	Can you tell me the name of	Correct Name ⁷⁴	Incorrect Guess	Know but Cannot Remember	Do not Know
	Your Municipal Chief Executive (MCE)				
	Your Member of Parliament (MP)				
	Your Regional Minister (RM)				

SECTION 2: LOCAL ELECTORAL SYSTEM

	To what extent do you agree or disagree with each of the following statements?	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neither agree or disagree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
2.1	Elected representatives maintain close contact with the electorates					
2.2	District Assembly elections should be political party based					
2.3	DCEs should be elected					
2.4	DCE elections must be based on political parties just like that of MPs					
2.5	Election of DCE and Assembly Members should be on the same day as the national elections					
2.6	DA should consist of only elected Assembly Members					
2.7	Appointment of 30% Assembly Members should continue as it is currently					
2.8	Political Party in power affect the outcome of DA elections					
2.9	Traditional authorities affect the outcome of DA elections					
2.10	Elected representatives should work in collaboration with traditional authorities					

⁷⁴ MCE is Mrs. Veronica Essuman Nelson; MP is Dr. J.S. Annan; RM is Madam Ama Benyiwa Doe

2.11	Elected representatives do listen to the people					
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About Elections		Yes	No	Reason		
2.12	Did you vote in the last local level elections in 2006?					
2.13	Do you intend to vote in the 2010 local level elections?					
2.14	Did you vote in the 2008 general elections					
2.15	Do you intend to vote in the 2012 general elections?					
2.16	Which political party did you vote for in the 2008 general elections?	NPP	NDC	CPP	Other (Specify)	Cannot disclose
	Presidential					
	Parliamentary					

2.17	Reason for your choice in Q2.16	Presidential	Parliamentary

SECTION 3: ACCESS TO INFORMATION

	Have you been to the Assembly for any information?	Yes	No			
3.1	If no, Skip 3.2-3.5					
	If yes, how do you rate the following?	Very High	High	Average	Low	Very Low
3.2	Information on Assembly Notice Board					
3.3	Information provided on past performance of the Assembly					

3.4	Information provided on Assembly projects for the year					
3.5	Information provided for planning and budgeting					

	How do you rate the following methods and types of information from the Municipal Assembly?	Very High	High	Average	Low	Very Low
3.6	Radio station phone-in program by MCE					
3.7	Radio station phone-in programme by Assembly staff					
3.8	Radio station phone-in program by Assembly Member					
3.9	Radio station phone-in program by MP					
3.10	Use of Assembly information vans					
3.11	Reports from the print media					
3.12	Campaigns for political parties during general elections					
3.13	Campaigns during local elections					
3.14	In your opinion, how do you assess the Assembly's performance as far as access to information from the Assembly is concerned?	Very Good	Good	Average	Poor	Very Poor

3.15	What other improvements should the Municipal Assembly make in relation to access to information from the Assembly?
------	--

SECTION 4: CONSULTATIVE MEETINGS

	How often do you or your community meet with the following representatives to discuss local issues (such as development projects, elections, planning and budgeting)	Once per fortnight	Once per month	Once per quarter	Once per half year	Once per year	Not at all
4.1	Unit Committee Member (UCM)						
4.2	Assembly Member (AM)						
4.3	Municipal Planning and Coordinating Unit (MPCU)						
4.4	Municipal Chief Executive (MCE)						
4.5	Member of Parliament (MP)						
4.6	Traditional Ruler - Chief/Queenmother (TR)						

4.7	Who initiates such meetings involving the Municipal Assembly and the communities to discuss the following local issues:	UCM	AM	MPCU	MCE	MP	TR
	Development Projects						
	Local Elections						
	General Elections						
	Planning and Budgeting						
	Communal Labour						

4.8	What other issues of development are discussed during such consultative meetings?
-----	---

	To what extent do you agree to the following statements?	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neither Agree or Disagree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
4.9	The Municipal Assembly consult our community on projects approved for us by Assembly					
4.10	Our community is consulted by the Assembly on the location of development projects					
4.11	Our community is consulted by the Assembly on the preparation of Assembly's Medium Term Development Plan (MTDP)					
4.12	Our community is consulted by the Assembly Member before Assembly sessions					
4.13	Our Assembly Member reports back to the people decisions of the Assembly and the actions taken to solve problems raised by residents					
4.14	The Assembly consults us on the Assembly's share of DACF					
4.15	The Assembly consults us on the use of DACF					

4.16	In your opinion, how do you access the Assembly's performance as far as consultative meetings with the local people are concerned?	Very Good	Good	Average	Poor	Very Poor
	Unit Committee Member (UCM)					
	Assembly Member (AM)					
	Municipal Planning and Coordinating Unit (MPCU)					
	Municipal Chief Executive (MCE)					
	Member of Parliament (MP)					
	Traditional Ruler - Chief/Queenmother (TR)					

4.17	What other improvements should the Municipal Assembly make in relation to consultative meetings with the local people?
------	--

SECTION 5: LOCAL PRIORITY GOALS

	Which local government activity must be promoted as a priority?	Very Top priority	Top Priority	Low priority	Very low priority
5.1	DCEs' direct elections				
5.2	Partisan DA elections				
5.3	Easy access to information from DA				
5.4	Assembly's consultation with local people on local issues				
5.5	MCE's meetings with people in their communities				
5.6	Integration of Traditional Authorities on local government				
5.7	Elected Assembly Member - Traditional Authorities relations				
5.8	MCE - Traditional Authorities relations				

Time of End of Interview -----

Thank you very much

RESEARCH ETHICS COMMITTEE

APPENDIX 4

CONSENT FORM – SURVEY RESPONDENTS

The purpose of this study entitled “Decentralisation and Political Accountability of Local Government in Ghana – A Case Study of the KEEA Municipality” is to assess the political accountability of local government in the KEEA Municipality of Ghana. The study is primarily for academic work, and therefore you are assured of confidentiality and anonymity of any information that you provide. The research is interested in learning about all your experiences and opinions about this topic. We would like you to participate in the interview; however, participation is entirely voluntary. Thank you sincerely for agreeing to participate.

I have read the purpose of this interview has been explained to me in a language that I understand and that I agree to participate voluntarily in the interview (Please sign, write your initials below or thumb print)

(Respondent-Signature/Initials/RTP)

(Date)

I read the information above to the potential respondent and he/she consented voluntarily

(Signature of interviewer)

(Date)

RESEARCH ETHICS COMMITTEE

APPENDIX 5

CONSENT FORM – KEY INFORMANTS

I, the undersigned, declare that I am willing to take part in this research project entitled “Decentralisation and Political Accountability of Local Government in Ghana – A Case Study of the KEEA Municipality”. The purpose of this study is to assess the political accountability of local government in the KEEA Municipality of Ghana.

- I declare that I have been fully briefed on the nature of this study and my role in it and have been given the opportunity to ask questions before agreeing to participate
- The nature of my participation has been explained to me and I have full knowledge of how the information collected will be used
- I am also aware that my participation in this study may be recorded (audio) and I agree to this. However, should I feel uncomfortable at any time I can request that the recording equipment be switched off. I am entitled to copies of all recordings made and I am fully informed as to what will happen to these recordings once the study is completed
- I fully understand that there is no obligation on me to participate in this study
- I fully understand that I am free to withdraw my participation at any time without having to explain or give a reason
- I am willing/not willing to be identified as a participant in this study.

Signature of Participant

Date

RESEARCH ETHICS COMMITTEE

APPENDIX 6

CONSENT FORM – RESEARCH ASSISTANTS

I, the undersigned, declare that I am willing to take part in this research project entitled “Decentralisation and Political Accountability of Local Government in Ghana – A Case Study of the KEEA Municipality” as a research assistant in administering a questionnaire for household interviews in the KEEA Municipality. The purpose of this study is to assess the political accountability of local government in the KEEA Municipality of Ghana.

- I declare that I have been fully briefed on the nature of this study and my role as a research assistant
- The nature of my participation has been explained to me and I have full knowledge of how to collect the information, using a systematic random sample approach
- I have been fully briefed on the regulations guiding the survey, that is, using a bilingual language approach in administering the questionnaire; English and Fanti, where appropriate
- I fully understand my responsibility to maintain a standard of accuracy and efficiency as prescribed by the researcher in administering the questionnaire
- The survey data are confidential. They should not be discussed with anyone and under no circumstance should the information be passed on to third parties.

Signature of Research Assistant

Date

APPENDIX 7

INTRODUCTORY LETTER



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Bonn, 22.04.2010

To whom it may concern:

Mr. S. Nana Ato Arthur is a PhD student at the Bonn Interdisciplinary Graduate School for Development Research (BiGS-DR), Centre for Development Research (ZEF), University of Bonn. He will be conducting the field research required for his PhD thesis in Ghana. The working title of his thesis is: *“Decentralisation and Political Accountability of Local Government in Ghana - A Case Study of the KEEA Municipality”*.

Mr. Arthur will be in Ghana conducting his field work starting in May 2010 for a period of nine months.

We appreciate any assistance rendered to him in executing his research.

Yours sincerely,

Dr. Günther Manske