

Regionalism and Urban Development Planning in Africa: Towards A Collaborative Framework for Decentralized Planning in Ghana

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Abstract

The development planning and management of cities have evolved in theory and practice. Decentralized planning and regionalism are among such evolved concepts. With Ghanaian cities rapidly urbanizing, the transcendence nature of urbanization challenges continues to tests the responsiveness of the nation's decentralized planning system-after its implementation more than two decades ago. Key among such tests is how the decentralized planning system can effectively promote collaborative planning among contiguous urbanizing local planning jurisdictions. This demands not only the regional coordination of development plans but also responsive "regionalism" among neighboring local planning and/or government authorities for them to; identify common development challenges, the impacts of their individual planning decisions on each other, and how to collaborate to mitigate the impacts of their decisions on each other. After examining the decentralized planning drawbacks and the Ghana's urbanization challenges, this paper ends with a framework for effective regional planning collaboration among neighboring urbanizing local government areas.

Keywords: Urbanization, Centralized and Decentralized Planning, Regionalism, Regional Planning, Collaborative Planning

1. Introduction

The shift from "centralized" to "decentralized" planning and the emergence of terms like "participatory" and "collaborative" planning marked a decisive move in Ghana's development planning and governance practices (Ahwoi 2011). Ghana's institutional frameworks were changed to emphasize the decentralized or "bottom-up" idea of planning in 1988 and was given legal backing in 1992. Community engagement, community self-help initiatives, have all become key operational words that the central government and donor agencies look out for in distributing aids to local planning authorities.

Two of the key planning implications of Ghana's shift to a decentralized system are: the authority for planning decision-making; and inclusivity in the planning process. Ahwoi (2011), notes that Ghana's decentralization is seen to be that of devolution and not deconcentration or delegation. Decentralized planning authorities have some decision-making powers in their planning and other decision-making functions (Gregersen et al, 2004). However, the realization of the transcendent nature of planning decisions and actions still makes local planning decisions subject to the directives of regional and national planning institutions under the new decentralized planning system (Botchie, 2000).. Such decision-making arrangement under the new decentralized planning system in Ghana only exist to acknowledge –at least implicitly- the need for collaboration in achieving what this paper refers to as "regionalism" in planning or "regional planning"- a more popular term.

Despite acknowledging regionalism, Ghana's planning efforts do not adequately reflect regionalism -at least based on the development outcomes of local level planning over the years (Aryeetey, 1987). Contiguous urban cities are concerned about the waste disposal actions of their neighboring cities since they are also impacted by them. Prevailing economic hardships in other cities (especially in the northern part of Ghana) has led to southern part cities finding means of increasing the economic opportunities for the labor migrating from these northern cities.

Inclusivity in the planning process as the other implication of the decentralized planning system deals with adopting and promoting a "bottom-up" approach (vertical inclusivity) to planning. Ensuring such vertical inclusivity in the planning process has also not been a success under Ghana's decentralized planning system. Acknowledging this as a planning challenge, the Chief Director of the Ghanaian Ministry of Local Government and Rural Development in a 2011 "Special Session of Ghana Urban Forum on Planning for Ghana's Urban Future" stated that; *"We need to engage in dialogue, raise the issue so that policy makers and planners are hearing the concerns of the people... the whole idea of urban development is inclusivity"* (World Bank, 2011).

The need for an appropriate method to involve the increasing number of people in the local planning process still lingers on in the minds of development practitioners. Horizontal inclusivity-collaborations among institutions-also then become crucial for an effective regional planning. The shift from centralized to decentralized planning

was seen to offer both vertical and horizontal inclusivity (at the regional level and not the local level) in the planning process. The fact that it still remains a challenge raises the issue of how the nation can move beyond ensuring not just the vertical but also, horizontal inclusivity especially among local planning authorities as cities rapidly urbanize.

The discussion in this paper therefore highlights the still existing planning paralysis in the local planning decision-making authority as well as vertical inclusivity (bottom-up approach) in the planning process. It also brings to the fore the issue of limited or absence of horizontal inclusivity - collaborative efforts- among the local planning authorities. By elucidating the often transcendence nature of development challenges in rapidly urbanizing cities in Ghana, the paper leans toward the stance of advocating for a decentralized planning framework which supports a more collaborative local planning approach as localities urbanize. This is done by propositioning a collaborative planning framework which properly treats regionalism in the existing decentralized planning model.

2. Regionalism and Local Planning Inter-relationships

A region is defined spatially in terms of the definite physical boundaries of an area or based upon the nature of the particular research problem being studied (Isard, 1975; p.11-13). The definition of a region for planning purposes (e.g. transportation planning, watershed management, and other socio-economic issues) is often viewed not only in terms of physical boundaries but also, the spatial and aspatial extent of the problem being studied. Thus, the definition of a region must clearly establish the locus of planning and also support inclusivity in the process. The essence of defining a region must be to clearly establish who has the authority to do what, who should be involved, and how should they be involved.

Friedmann and Weaver (1979) discuss the evolution of ideas in regional planning espoused in writings by first regional planners like Benton Mackaye, Lewis Mumford and Howard Odum, who were influenced by the ideas of Patrick Geddes, Ebenezer Howard, Peter Kropotkin, Pierre-Joseph Proudhon, Charles Fourier and Robert Owen (Stohr and Taylor, 1981). Economic development concerns are also highlighted by Stohr and Taylor (1981) as that which brought about a paradigm shift in how regional planning was originally conceived by the early regional planners. This shift according to them ushered in "Regional Science" (Friedmann, 1955; Isard, 1956; and North 1955) and "Spatial Development Planning" as a discipline which combines such concerns for economic development with theories explaining the location of economic activities.

Even as the concept evolves, it generically deals with a multi-jurisdictional approach in addressing development issues. Therefore, regionalism or regional planning as a concept explored by planners, economists, geographers and other allied professionals (Clark and Christopherson, 2009; Erickcek et al, 2008; Miura, 2011) used in describing such multi-jurisdictional development complexities assumes diverse definitions, without any widely accepted definition (Isard, 1975; and Mansfield and Milner, 1999). The science of studying such multi-jurisdictional complexities –Regional Science- is defined by Isard (1975; p. 5) as the "joint interaction of social, political, and economic behaving units and the physical environment within meaningful regions and systems of regions". Stohr and Taylor (1981) explore -with relevant case studies from developing countries- how the "from below" or "bottom-up" approach in regional planning, along with the necessary collaborative measures among local jurisdictional institutions ensures development in developing countries. The idea of how regional planning can be made to strengthen collaborative planning among local planning institutions is what this paper explores in the Ghanaian case.

The myriad of definitions for regionalism includes that of Porter (1990) where regionalism is defined in terms of economic regionalism by focusing on "coordinated economic development activities tied to a comprehensive economic development strategy for a geographically contiguous region" (Erickcek et al, 2008, p. 9). The Western Carolina University's Regionalism and Clusters for Local Development Project also defines "economic regionalism" as an understanding of the linkages and collaborations that exist among stakeholders within an economic region of geographical proximity. Miura (2011, p. 4) defines regionalism from the International Relations perspectives as the "intensifying political, economic, and cultural processes of cooperation among states and non-state actors in particular geographic regions".

The key issue in these definitions as earlier indicated is the *collaborations* between the public and non-public (Erickcek et al, 2008), formal and non-formal organizations in harnessing the potentials of each jurisdiction in addressing development issues of multi-jurisdictional dimensions (see Figure 1). Regionalism as a concept in planning therefore serves as the framework for addressing socio-economic and environmental challenges of multiple jurisdictions. Whether economic and equity values can be achieved concurrently in regionalism is still a grey area for debate (Brenner 2002; Clark and Christopherson, 2009; Imbroscio, 2006; and Markusen 1999). The multi-jurisdictional nature of regionalism makes its success dependent on capable institutional frameworks (Erickcek et al, 2008). Thus, for regionalism to be seen as "progressive", Clark and Christopherson (2009, p. 341) expect policies to; "build an institutional framework that supports civic participation and representation, and

produce effective economic growth strategies while promoting equity".

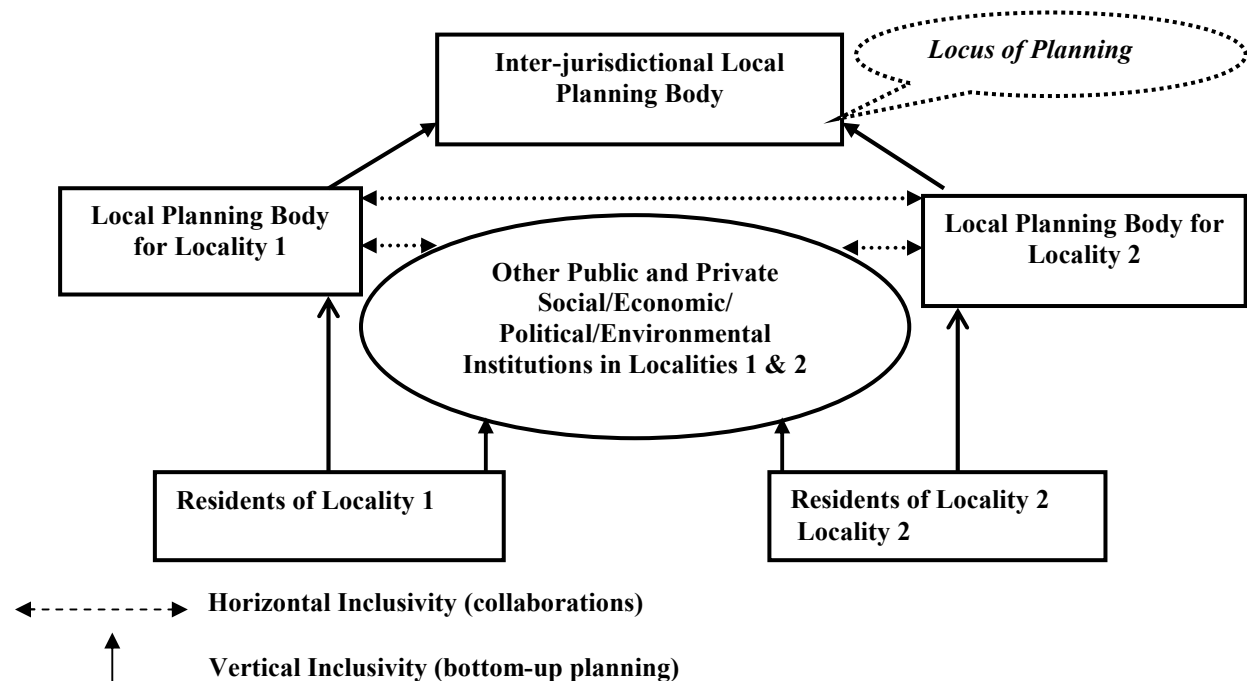


Figure 1: Regionalism and Local Level Planning for Two Localities

Source: Authors' Construct, 2013

Regionalism as used in this paper is thus seen as the *joint action by jurisdictional authorities to formulate and enforce policy decisions in resource and growth management options that go beyond jurisdictional boundaries and to also complement existing regional and national development initiatives*. Explaining this definition, Berke and Conroy (2000) talk of the need for communities to: pursue their interests but not at the detriment of others; and be responsible for their own actions by minimizing the harm it imposes on others. Ensuring local participation in the planning process (vertical inclusivity) is one thing, but making local planning authorities collaborate in dealing with common developmental challenges (horizontal inclusivity) is another. Drawing on some key issues in the discussions on regionalism, this paper presents a framework –which integrates regionalism in Ghana's decentralized planning model- as it deals with its urbanization challenges.

3. Study Context

With a total land area of 238,533 sq km and located between latitudes 4°45' and 11°11' North of the Equator and 3°07' West and 1°14' East of the Greenwich Meridian (Source, Date), Ghana is located at the heart of Western Africa (see Figure 2). It is bordered to the North, South, East and West respectively by Burkina Faso, Gulf of Guinea, Togo, and Cote d'Ivoire. There are 10 regions with each having its capital and 216 Metropolitan/Municipal/District Assemblies (MMDAs) with their respective capitals as at 2012. Ensuring homogeneity among large cultural groups and also promoting administrative efficiencies are seen to be reasons for establishing these regions (Dickson, 1971 and Owusu, 2005).



Figure 2: Ghana in Africa and West Africa Context

3.1 The Urbanization Experience of Africa and Ghana

The UN-HABITAT (2008a, p. 15) projects Africa's urban population as reaching 1.2 billion, "or nearly a quarter of the world's urban population" by 2050. At a growth rate of 4.02, West Africa, where Ghana is located, is rated as one of the two fastest urbanizing regions in Africa (UN-HABITAT, 2008b.p.4); the other region being Central Africa. Ghana on the other hand has 51 per cent of its population living in cities and towns, and is projected to double its urban population between 2000 and 2025. The country's rate of urbanization is estimated at 4 per cent, and that makes it one of the most rapidly urbanizing countries in Sub-Saharan African (World Bank, 2011). As many as 55.4% of Ghana's population are projected by the National Population Council (NPC, 2011) to reside in urban areas by 2015. The United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA, 2007) estimates this number as rising to 58.5% and 64.8% by 2020 and 2030 respectively. Having almost a quarter of its population living in urban areas in the 1960s (NPC, 2011 and Owusu, 2010), the nation's urbanization is characterized as "rapid", as a little over half its population are now urbanized (see Figure 3).

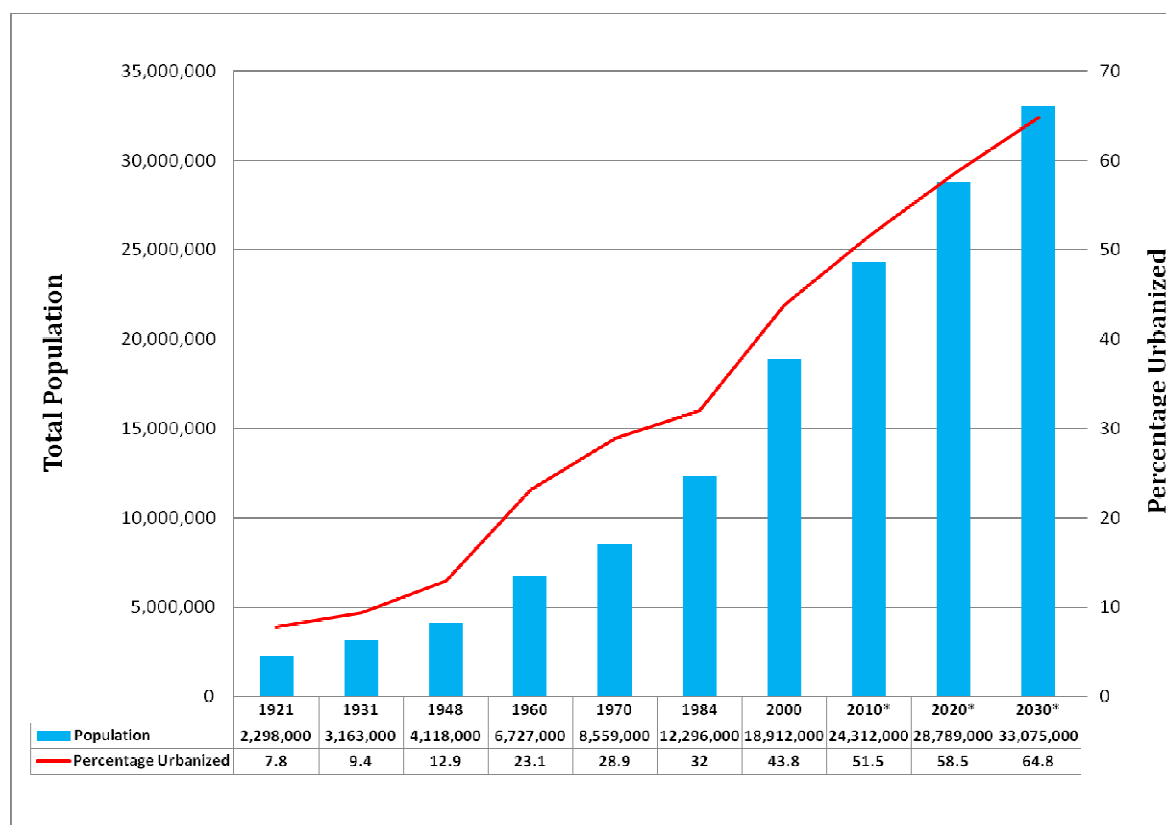


Figure 3: Urbanized Population Trend in Ghana

Source: Adapted from Owusu, 2010

*Projected estimate (UNFPA, 2009)

However, such rapidity in Africa, and for that matter Ghana's urbanization experience has not been coterminous with the rate of economic development (White, Mberu, and Collinson, 2008; and World Bank, 2000). Urbanization is therefore manifested as increases in population without commensurate economic growth, resulting in "demographic urbanization" as the typology for Africa's urbanization instead of an "Economic Urbanization"¹ (Clarke, 1993, p. 265; Gould 1998, p. 175; and Songsore, 2003, p.2). Gough and Yankson (2006) therefore aver that there have been some socio-economic, environmental and institutional challenges for urban residents and local authorities as these Ghanaian cities urbanize. The conversion of lands (primarily agricultural) lands to residential uses at the urban peripheries due to the sprawling nature of cities have been cited as one of the major challenge (Cobbinah and Amoako, 2012; Gough and Yankson, 2000; and Owusu-Ansah and O'Connor, 2010).

Migration is identified as key cause of urban growth in Ghanaian cities. Among the four identified migration patterns - rural to rural, rural to urban, urban to urban and urban to rural- the NPC (2011) recognizes the rural-urban typology as having the most significant socio-economic impact on the nation's development. Owusu (2005) therefore notes that to meet some acceptable level of socio-economic standards, there needs to be collaboration between the rural and urban areas to ensure regional development. Such collaboration should aim at a regional planning framework (institutional and legislative restructuring) which realizes the need for coordination in local planning decisions among neighboring rural and urban planning areas.

4. Planning and Regionalism in Ghana's Decentralized System

Planning in Ghana is known to have been started by its British colonial authorities (Oppong-Aboagye, 2007) through the first plan prepared by the then governor -Guggisberg- to span the 1920 to 1930 epoch (Greenstreet, 1964;Vordzorgbe and Caiquo, 2001.). Historically the top-down approach to planning was the unique characteristic of planning during the colonial and some 27 years after the nation's independence (Inkoom, 2009; and Owusu, 2005). Prior to the 1992, the nation's development plans, which were either long or medium term and interspersed with short term plans was symptomatic of a process which suffered from continuity as a result of frequent coup d'états (Owusu, 2009). For instance, the coup in 1966 ushered in two military regimes from

¹ Economic Urbanization looks at the consequential economic growth as population increases.

1966 to 1970, and then came an acting president from 1970 to 1971 who was also deposed through a coup d'état. Hence, notwithstanding the 7-year plan from 1963 to 1970, this period also saw two short term plans - from the 1968 to 1971-, reflecting the plan changes as a result of changes in government.

The planning dilemma in this era had to do more with plan continuity (Botchie, 2000) than with plan's ability in tackling the prevailing development gaps. Identifying how long to plan in such politically fragile moments was of importance, but that could hardly be perceived when the practice became the puppet of politicians. Apart from destabilizing the planning process, such political instability also transformed planning into a political tool in the propagation of political agendas, thereby alienating the planning practice from its ordained purposes. Arguably, the nation having transitioned into a much democratic and very stable political era after the 1992 elections, made possible the necessary reformations in ensuring "bottom-up" rather than the "top-down" planning approach.

4.1 Planning Paradigms, Legal and Institutional Frameworks, and Draw backs

The "what" such as national and sectoral planning vs. local and comprehensive/master planning, "how" that is centralized and top-down approach vs. decentralized and bottom-up and "who" which deals with central government and its agencies vs. decentralized local governments, has characterized the evolution of Ghana's planning paradigms. The advent of the decentralization policy in 1988 initiated the paradigm shifts from the centralized, top-down, sectoral planning (Botchie, 2000; Owusu, 2005) -which was a trajectory of the colonial planning model- to the decentralized, bottom-up and comprehensive planning model.

As Ghana's local governance evolved, so did its planning process. Planning in the colonial as well as the era prior to 1988, was basically a function performed by the central government while some local governance structures helped in the implementation of national goals and projects. Kessey (2001, p. 6) in his chronological presentation of the institutional and legal frameworks for such a center-based planning model in this era avers that:

- a. The sidelining of the traditional authorities from the traditional councils - established by the colonial powers from 1852 to 1940- led to the enacting of the 1951 Local Government Act, which created a two-tier system - District Councils and Local Councils- to help implement national agenda at the local level; and
- b. The enactment of another local government law in 1971, which changed the two-tier to a four-tier system - Regional Councils on the second level, District Councils on the third, and Local, Urban, or Town Councils on the last based on the population and geographical location of the area.

Promoting inclusiveness of the local people (vertical inclusivity) and ensuring multi-jurisdictional collaboration among planning institutions (horizontal inclusivity) were significantly missing in the nation's centralized planning model prior to 1988. Inkoom (2009, p. 10) also cites some drawbacks in the centralized model to include:

- ❖ Insensitivity to community aspirations and opportunities for local level development initiatives (also cited by Owusu, 2005);
- ❖ Difficult to integrate analysis, synthesis and action and represents a limited and partial approach to solve development problems;
- ❖ Difficulties in exploring interactive nature of development; and
- ❖ Lack of participation of the local people in the planning process.

The impacts of these drawbacks were highlighted in Botchie (2000) as:

- ❖ Absence of a coordinating framework in allocating resources or other policy decisions especially at the rural districts level;
- ❖ Direct and excessive control of local development actions at the regional and national levels by imposing policies, programmes, projects and human and financial resources on local planning authorities; and
- ❖ Non-consultative and non-collaborative functioning of the district branches of central governments agencies in promoting local development.

He therefore sums it all up by stating that: "Consequently, there existed a glaring contrast between the level of development of the country and development proposals documented in all the development plans" (Botchie, 2000; p. 20).

4.1.1 Ghana's Decentralized Model: The New Planning Paradigm for Local Planning Locus, Inclusivity and Regionalism

The Act 462 of 1993, which amended the 1988 Local Government Law 207 -the law establishing the decentralized local governance system- created what is currently known as the "New Local Government System" (Kessey, 2001). With this system also comes the "New Planning System" backed by: the 1992 Constitution of the Republic of Ghana; Local Government Act, 1993 (Act 462); National Development Planning (Systems) Act 479; National Development Planning Commission Act 480, sections 1, 2 and 9 to 15; Local Government Act 462, Part II; and the Civil Service Law 327, sections 11 to 14 (Inkoom, 2009).

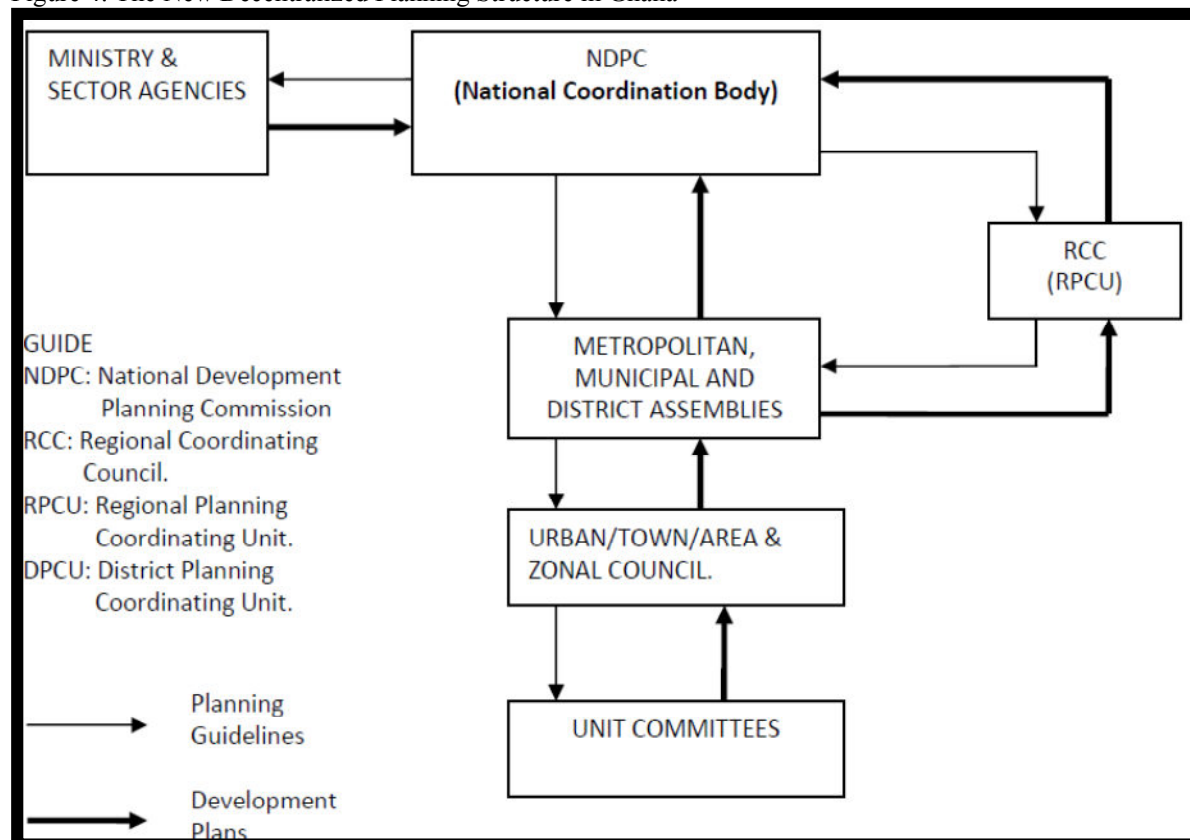
The new planning system in attempting to remedy the drawbacks of the centralized planning model establishes the National Planning Commission to guide the planning process in Ghana. The commission sets the broad planning policy guideline for planning at the local levels (see Figure 4). The Regional Planning Coordinating

Units (RPCUs) under the various Regional Coordinating Councils (RCCs) harmonize the plans from the districts in their jurisdictions. Due to the limited technical capacity of the unit committees and some Urban/Town/Area/Zonal Councils, the Metropolitan/Municipal/District Assemblies (MMDAs) prepare the plans for these smaller jurisdictions and harmonize them.

Inkoom (2009, p. 10) succinctly outlines the objectives of the new decentralized planning system as follows:

- ❖ Create an institutional framework for public and community participation in national development to ensure optimal resource mobilization, allocation and utilization for development;
- ❖ Provide opportunities for greater participation of local people in development planning and efficient management of local resources; and
- ❖ Establish effective channels of communication between the national government and local communities and increase administrative effectiveness at both levels.

Figure 4: The New Decentralized Planning Structure in Ghana



Source: Adapted from NDPC, 2002 in Inkoom, 2009

The decentralized planning model, building on the deficiencies of the centralized model, revolved around the realization of a core objective of ensuring local participation in the development planning of especially the rural areas (Ayee 1996, 2008; Crook and Manor 1998; Yankson, 2004; and Owusu, 2005).¹ The paradigm shift in planning approaches, dealt more with restructuring the "locus" of planning authority (Owusu, 2005) which was to have a cascading effect of affecting the "what, how and who" of planning. As Inkoom (2009, p. 11) rightly opines". The new planning system evidently sought to vest authority for the implementation of national development with decentralized institutions". The planning failures in the centralized model was thereby conceptualized as that which emanates from the "planning locus". By given greater planning authority to the local planning institutions, the decentralized model was seen as a remedy to the drawbacks in the centralized model.

Whether centralized or decentralized planning, the question of; "should any particular planning style have preference in the overall guidance system of society?" (Friedmann, 1973, p. 83) is of particular relevance to the

¹ Owusu (2005) cites Razin and Obirih-Opareh (2000) who opine that the shift from centralized to decentralized was just "the logical extension of the structural adjustment effort – that is, a reaction to the changes in the broader economic and ideological environment at the global level"

nation. These planning styles establish the locus of planning authority as well as the planning process towards the improvement of people's welfare. As to whether the planning paralysis in the centralized model had to do with the planning "locus", can only be answered as one identifies the emerging planning issues confronting the nation. And even if it was, does the new decentralized planning have what it takes to handle the former drawbacks and still meet the planning issues as cities rapidly urbanize, is also another noteworthy issue. In all the above raised concerns, this paper alone cannot do enough justice in answering them. However, a much generalized discussion will be offered here by identifying some of the emerging planning challenges as the nation quickly urbanizes. Based on such emerging issues, the linkage between planning, urbanization and regionalism is discussed to serve as the foundation for the propositioning of a collaborative framework for local planning in Ghana.

5. Urban Governance and Regional Planning under Ghana's Decentralized System

5.1 The Nexus between Planning, Regionalism and Urbanization

In realizing the local participation challenges posed by the centralized model, the decentralized planning model was hence introduced as the remedy to the planning paralysis. The planning challenges in practicing the centralized model were at least therefore seen to have been ameliorated by introducing the decentralized planning process. Key among such challenges was the issue of limited local participation in the planning process. Planning therefore evolved based on the identified paralysis of an absence of local participation in the process. Local, Regional and the National Planning agencies were thus reformed to ensure that planning decisions became more participatory. Thus, the vertical planning line which was hitherto downward facing - top-down - became an upward facing one - bottom-up.

The issue of how to promote local participation in the decentralized planning system is still a common theme in planning literature even after the introduction of the new decentralized planning model. A study in 2000 on "Rural District Planning" in Ghana, prepared by a team (led by Botchie) from the Institute of Statistical, Social and Economic Research (ISSER) and International Institute for Environment and Development (IIED) points out the inability of local governments to promote participatory democracy due their limited financial resource and technical capacity to design, implement, monitor and evaluate plans (see also Ayee, 1996). There is also the issue of no clear horizontal planning line at the local level, specifying the collaborative planning efforts expected from local planning authorities as they dealt with planning issues transcending their local boundaries (ibid). It is thus argued by ISSER and IIED report that the dependence -mainly for resources- of the decentralized government departments on their central departments still creates a vertical institutional relationship, thereby weakening "potentially useful horizontal integration of institutional responsibilities" at the local level. Such horizontal integration -being the focus of this paper- also refers to collaborations by multi-jurisdictional decentralized departments, responsible for local planning decisions and implementation.

The argument by the ISSER and IIED team thus presents the issues of: the vertical lines existing between decentralized agencies and their parent departments; the non-existence of horizontal lines among these decentralized agencies; and the weakening impact that these vertical lines have on any possible horizontal lines that could have existed among these decentralized departments. Having a narrow scope to planning -i.e. dealing with the challenges of my jurisdiction- often characterizes local planning efforts.

Consequently, who identifies the impacts (economic, spatial growth and land use, environmental) of one jurisdiction on another, and what planning and legislative resorts are available to local agencies to ensure planning checks and balances among themselves emerge to be addressed. In effect, the issue of how do we make our local planning authorities, regionally responsible for their planning actions clears the path in identifying whether our new decentralized planning can meet the spatially extensive issues of urbanization in Ghana. By making our local planning bodies regionally responsible for their actions through their collaborations, what we could have been exploring now may be: employing multi-jurisdictional land use and spatial analysis in dealing with the issues of sanitation, zoning and attending perennial flood cases in highly urbanized areas like Accra; and an inter-districts socio-economic analysis and economic development strategies in tackling rural and urban poverty issues.

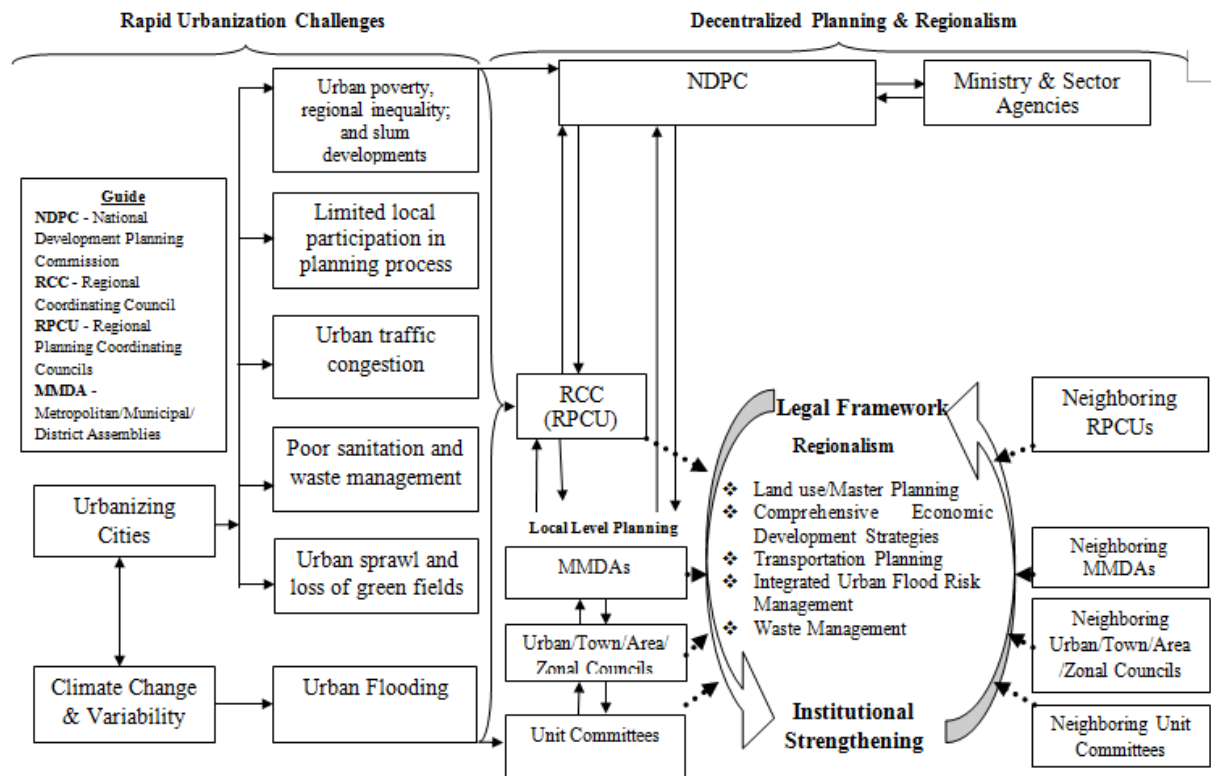
5.2 Emerging Planning Challenges in an Urbanizing Ghana

Due to the cross-cutting nature of these emerging challenges, most authors although focusing on some key challenges still touch on bits and pieces of some of these challenges. These challenges have been documented as follows:

- ❖ Urban poverty, regional inequality; and slum developments (Adarkwa, 1981; Amoako and Cobbinah, 2011; Owusu and Afutu Kotey, 2010; Aryeetey, Owusu and Mensah, 2009; and Ravallion, 2001);
- ❖ Urban flooding (Afeku, 2005; Nyarko, 2002; Karley, 2009; and Institute of Local Government Studies (ILGS) and International Water Management Institute (IWMI), 2012)
- ❖ Poor sanitation and waste management (Post, Broekema and Obiri-Opareh, 2003; Fobil, 2008; and Oteng-

- Ababio, 2009);
- ❖ Urban sprawl and loss of green fields (Cobbinah and Amoako, 2012; Gough and Yankson, 2000; Owusu, 2008, 2012; and Owusu-Ansah and O'Connor, 2010);
- ❖ Urban traffic congestion (Agyemang, 2009; Armah, Yawson and Pappoe, 2010; and Oteng-Ababio and Agyemang, 2012); and
- ❖ Limited local participation in local development planning and governance process (Ahwoi, 2011; Ayee, 2000, 2008; Nkrumah, 2000; and Owusu and Afutu Kotey, 2010;).

Central to each of the above discussions on the emerging challenges are the interrelated issues of uncoordinated land use planning (Oteng-Ababio and Agyemang, 2012) and limited institutional capacity and legislative frameworks for planning and managing the cities. Coordination is needed in land use and other planning interventions since most of these challenges are created as a result of the movement of people to these urban areas. The impact of an intervention in the urban area also affects the neighboring cities. Planning will then "live to fight another day" if it fails to consider the impacts of its interventions on adjoining communities, hence the need for coordination and comprehensiveness. Such coordination as illustrated by Figure 5 is however dependent on a strengthened -technical, financial and logistical resources- local planning institutions. It is also dependent on enacting the required legislative instrument to support collaboration among local planning authorities while also enforcing the existing decentralized planning policy.



Source: Authors' Construct 2013

Figure 5: Collaborative Framework for Ghana's Decentralized Planning

5. A Framework for Ghana's Urban Development Planning

The local planning authorities make plans to meet the requirements as stated in the broad planning guidelines provided by the NDPC. Especially in urbanizing cities, planning processes becomes much complex as the scope and scale of their development challenges widens. These complexities as cities urbanize is what Friedmann (1973, p. 143) define as "collective phenomena" -"the most probable outcome of a set of institutional arrangements that impose constraints on (or provide incentives for) individual decisions". He suggests that "they appear as the unintended by-product of many individual decisions". The challenges of urbanization at the very minimum, relates to the individual decisions of people and institutions within and close to the urbanizing area.

For instance, flooding in Accra - Ghana's capital city- has poor waste management as one of its causal factors (United Nations Environmental Program and UNCHA, 2011). Households and businesses living in the city of Accra and in other neighboring cities discharge their solid waste into the local storm water channels which are also connected to the Odaw river (ibid) passing through the city. As the storm water channels and river clogs

from these waste materials, the storm water overflows help creates the perennial flooding that the city authorities are trying to tackle. Since waste dumping in the storm water channels is action by both residents in the city and those in neighboring cities, planning interventions will always require some form of collaboration with all surrounding local planning authorities. So is the case for traffic congestion, urban sprawl and the other urbanization challenges.

Friedmann (1973) is therefore of the opinion that changing the institutional arrangements is the means of influencing the "collective phenomena". Formalizing procedures for collaboration among local planning authorities -enacting and enforcing the appropriate legislation, and strengthening the capacity of local planning authorities- (see Figure 5) makes the new decentralized planning function like a system -planning authorities support each other and the impacts of planning actions on other cities are also identified and mitigated in the planning process. This can be done by making it a requirement for local planning authorities to establish a "Bi or Multi District" Economic Development or Land Use/Transportation Zonal Boards responsible for developing annual strategies for the purposes to which they were established.

The above proposition reflects two key points (out of the 11 points) that Stohr and Taylor discuss as the needed socio-cultural, historical and institutional conditions needed for development "from below" (see Stohr and Taylor, 1981). The first out of the two points calls for "territorially organized communal decision-making structures" established at different territorial levels and must operate "on a mutual contracting basis" (Friedman, 1978, 1979). The second point emphasizes on "egalitarian societal structure and a collective consciousness". In the end, Stohr and Taylor presents that the territorially organized decision-making structures must have the ability to exhaust all avenues (including collaborations with other territories) in making decisions before higher levels can be involved in their affairs. Hence, establishing sub-regional structures like the MMDAs is one thing, but putting in the required legal and institutional measures for their collaboration is also another. Having put in place the necessary legal and institutional measures for these MMDAs to operate and collaborate effectively, one of the useful avenues by which the central government can become involved in their operations is to establish competitive grant programs to fund the activities of the MMDAs and their Joint Boards.

6. Conclusion

Planning responses to development challenges have evolved and will continue to evolve as urbanizing cities especially in developing countries like Ghana strive to better the lots of its people. Having moved from centralized to decentralized, planning in Ghana is adapting to ensure equitable interventions among its diverse populace, especially in the urbanizing cities. The now bottom-up approach to planning -as a reformation of the vertical line among planning stakeholders in the planning process- also depends on collaborations -horizontal lines- among local planning authorities for the new decentralized planning to meet the challenges in the urbanizing cities. Collaborative planning practices among local planning authorities must be firmed with the enactment and enforcement of the appropriate legislations and strengthening the capacity of existing institutions.

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