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Administrative Decentralization: Should Districts and Regions elect their own Leaders in Ghana?

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Abstract
Decentralization, leadership accountability, and empowerment of local leaders in Ghana are the main focus of this analysis. The paper discusses the complexities of decentralization and leadership responsibilities to effect changes toward a better path to socioeconomic development. It examines the problem with the Ghana Constitution as it pertains to local government elections and advocates for a constitutional amendment to empower districts and regions to elect their own leaders so that local governments in each district can be efficient and accountable to the electorate.

Keywords: Political decentralization, deconcentration, delegation, devolution, leadership

Introduction

Decentralization is an essential component of democratic societies, which is widely being adopted in emerging democracies, especially in African countries, to make their administrative systems more efficient (Dillinger, 1994). However, there is a large body of scholarly literature that provides conflicting effects of decentralization on effective public administration (Faguet, 2008; Kim et al., 2005). In Ghana, politicians who advocate for decentralization are sometimes skeptical of giving or sharing power with their subordinates as the concept is not well understood.

In fact, the literature on decentralization, according to constitutional law specialists, tries to avoid the problem of confining decentralization to "legal models of government relations" (Cohen & Peterson, 1999, 19). The authors define it along the principal distinction between unitary and federal based systems like federation, confederation, unions, and leagues. Decentralization, according to this school of thought, is a community having legally specified sovereignty over the identified public sector tasks in a well-defined territorial jurisdiction (Cohen & Peterson, 1999, 19-22). Ghana's political structure falls into the unitary political category, where the executive holds the power of nominating district and regional leaders.

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Hence, the governed in these units have no choice but to live with the selection of the executive.

Since the Fourth Republic of Ghana (1992-present), despite the accusations of electoral frauds by the two leading political parties (New Patriotic Party [NPP] and National Democratic Congress [NDC]) in the country, Ghana has enjoyed four successful general elections. This feat, undeniably, makes Ghana a more politically and economically stable country compared to some of its neighbors over the same period (Callmachi, 2008). The irony of Ghana's political system is that notwithstanding the form of government the country is—military or democratic—the role of the executive remains the same regarding the appointments of the heads of local governments. This practice, arguably, provides little or no local power to the grassroots. It, therefore, minimizes the otherwise political difference between a military and democratic regime.

This analysis advocates for a constitutional amendment to allow local government empowerment for the districts and regions in Ghana to elect their own leaders. It maintains that by continuing the current process where regional and district administrators are appointed by the central government, the locals are deprived of the opportunity to elect leaders of their choice. Additionally, this argument "stems largely from the ideal that decentralization will promote better governance as local officials are supposedly more aware of, and more responsive to, local needs" (Ducan, 2007, 713). Decentralization, as has been argued by proponents, is more likely to encourage and promote not only democracy but also provides locals with the chance to have control over their own governance.

The article is organized into five main sections: First it provides an overview of theoretical considerations underlying the argument for decentralization followed by a brief history of Ghana's political system. It then addresses the issues of effective leadership and decentralization, and finally, it makes a case for electing district and regional leaders by the various electoral constituencies: Districts and Regions. The paper concludes with recommendations for constitutional amendments to allow locals to elect leaders of their choice.

Theoretical Considerations

As a panacea to ease regional conflicts (Laksono & Topatimasang, 2003; Permana, 2002), "decentralization is a process where central government transfers political, fiscal, and administrative powers to lower levels in an administrative and territorial hierarchy" (Duncan, 2007, 713). In theory, it holds regional leaders accountable to their constituents instead of the central government. Decentralization is defined in a variety of ways by the degree of delegation and autonomy of local actors (Assibey-Mensah, 2000; Fesler, 1965; Werlin, 2003),

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which presents conflicts and dilemmas in the concept and its impact (Faguet, 1997; Hommes, 1995). Empirical literature does not agree on the benefits of decentralization as different studies are poles apart in their conclusions. For example, while Olowu and Wunsch (1990), Putnam (1993), and World Bank (1994) argue that decentralization makes governments more responsive, Faguet (2008), Tanzi (1995), Prud'homme (1995), and Samoff (1990) think otherwise. However, the 1992 constitutional recognition for decentralization has renewed interest in political decentralization in Ghana, as locals often reject leaders appointed by the central government (Ayisi, 2008).

While economists focus on efficiency and equity, public administration scholars are also interested in the distribution of power, responsiveness, transparency, and accountability (Klingner & Nalbandian, 1998). The literature affirms that macroeconomic function must remain with the central government, suggesting that local governments must deal with program specificities for local demand. Oates (1993) analysis of over 50 countries confirmed a positive relationship between decentralization and economic growth.

The theoretical argument for fiscal decentralization dates back to Madison, and Rousseau, in the 17th and 18th centuries (Wolman, 1990), though they had different reasons for supporting decentralization. For example, in the *Federalist Papers No. 39* (FP39), Madison argues that leaders must derived their powers "directly… from the great body of the people," which means that powerful locals and "not inconsiderable…handful of …nobles exercising their oppression by a delegation of their powers" (Rossiter, 1961; 241). Though decentralization is not specifically mentioned in FP39, Madison believes that the people must be given the mandate to elect their leaders as a way of "composing the distinct and independent" regions, to "which they respectively belong" (Rossiter, 1961, 243).

Rousseau (1762) also favored small government. To him, "rulers over burdened with business, see nothing for themselves: clerks govern" (1762, 59-50). Using the Poland political system, Rousseau, who advocated for a political reformation, instructed the Poles to perfect and extend the authority of their provincial parliaments to avoid the dangers of larger state bureaucracies (Rousseau, 1772, 183-184). By this assertion, Rousseau was insisting on the essentials of local representation: decentralization. According to Wolman (1990), small democratic (local) governments were the fundamental hopes of the people, as most of them distrusted the activities of the central government. The debate for political decentralization is inconclusive in the literature as both proponents and opponents provide different findings in their studies (see for example, Putnam, 1993; Prud'homme, 1995).

In discussing the politics of decentralization, therefore, it should be noted that the concept goes together with centralized government -power. Though decentralization is primarily a strategy for transferring authority and responsibility from the central government to sub-national (regional and district) levels of government (Ostrom, 1989 and Stone, 1997), many

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African leaders only adopt the concept in theory but fail to delegate powers to the districts and regions. Some studies maintain that the concept is not easily defined; therefore, it has several dimensions and a wide variety of types of institutional restructuring, which encompasses the term *decentralization*. Though some scholars see it as a simple term, they argue that its simplistic generalization is sometimes too broad. According to Fesler (1965) decentralization is a term of rich conceptual and empirical meaning "which can designate static fact and dynamic process and it can refer to pure ideal-type and to moderate incremental change" (536) when the rational theory of decentralization is understood in all compartments.

Types of Decentralization

For the purpose of this paper, a four-stage (*political decentralization, deconcentration, devolution, and delegation*) definition is provided based on the degree of discretion and responsibility delegated by the central executive. The literature shows that developing countries have addressed decentralization in different ways, often reflecting the national history, politics, and culture for administrative and economic efficiency; but more important is the role of district and regional leaders in focusing on the needs of their constituencies. However, the concept of the decentralization/development dichotomy has not yielded the desired results in other parts of the world (Kettl, 2000), including Ghana. This analysis defines decentralization as an electoral devolution to enable citizens at the grassroots (i.e., locals) to elect their own leaders void of any direct input from the central government.

Political Decentralization
Political decentralization, which is manifested in the degree and types of political autonomy and accountability, is of greater importance to this study. A fully developed system of political decentralization in Ghana is a situation where local people in the districts and regions elect their own legislative and executive personnel so that those units will be able to hire, pay, and dismiss administrative personnel without reference to central authority.

Political decentralization gives citizens and their elected representatives the political power in the public policy process. This form of decentralization is associated with pluralistic politics and representative government, but it can also support democratization by giving citizens, or their representatives, more influence in the formulation and implementation of policies (Furniss, 1974; Harrigan, 1994) in their areas. Political decentralization often requires constitutional or statutory reforms. Such a reform may force elected officials in the constituencies to be more accountable to the electorates instead of satisfying the wishes of a distant executive. Administratively, political decentralization empowers citizens to "play a

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larger role in regional governance… [including] conflict resolution" (Duncan, 2007, 727). This empowerment, unfortunately, is lacking in the current political process where the executive has the exclusive power to appoint district and regional leaders. The literature affirms that "political appointees are subject to the whims" (Klingner and Nalbandian, 1998, 43) of the central government.

Generally empirical studies tend to favor political decentralization over centralization in terms of innovation, leadership accountability, and responsiveness (Taylor, 2003). This assertion, according to Taylor, has "become a sort of accepted wisdom among social scientists" (231). Nevertheless, given the theoretical support by social scientists, a general correlation between political decentralization and innovation is yet to be firmly established. Treisman (2007) argues that self-governing is the core aspect of modern democratic nations where the people must elect their own leaders. To Treisman, political decentralization is good for its facilitating features. These features include but are not limited to administrative efficiency, checks on central government abuses, and policy experimentation. While decentralization satisfies geographically concentrated ethnic groups, it could also prompt locally elected officials to be unsupportive to central government by "play[ing] the ethnic card" (15) to distort fiscal distribution. Political decentralization oftentimes leads to deconcentration.

Deconcentration

Deconcentration is a form of network of central power and sub-state institutions comprising the elites of those constituencies. As Assibey Mensah (2000) puts it, deconcentration is a power sharing strategy where power is transferred from central operating agencies to regional ones. The central government under such a concept uses the local governments to improve efficiency and effectiveness of delivering services (Cheema & Rondinelli, 1983, 79-81).   Rondinelli (1981) argue that deconcentration takes place as long as central government disperses certain responsibilities of services to regional and local governments.

Devolution

Another division of decentralization is *devolution.* The theory behind this stipulates that constituencies must operate independent of the central government. The central authority does not exercise any authority, and the regions are left alone in their operations. It is the transfer of service responsibility from central government to autonomous units of local government with some corporate status. Devolution is a radical political concept, which involves the creation of independent units at the sub-national level. These autonomous entities function on their own accord to signify separation from the central authority.

For example, Conyers (1984) argues that *devolution* is the legal establishment of locally democratically elected political authorities, but other scholars (Prud'homme, 1995 and

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Samoff, 1990) do question the viable policy process for development. Conyers is more likely to argue that poor districts and regions in Ghana, for example, may not benefit from the central government assistance if decentralization is adopted, making these areas less likely to develop. According to Cohen and Peterson (1991), the concept represents separateness of structure within a political system. But Esman and Uphoff (1984) argue that devolution and decentralization are two different issues, which should not be discussed together for any comparison. They argued that decentralization has relations to a central authority but devolution is a unit of its own and not accountable to any authority.

This concept of decentralization describes an intra-organizational pattern of power relationships and should be seen as such. Esman and Uphoff (1984) contend that the institutional separation from other levels of the government only succeeds in rendering the local levels impotent. For example, the poor districts in the northern part of Ghana cannot raise enough revenue for development since there are neither significant industries nor businesses to provide employment in these districts. There are various interpretations of devolution in relation to development in the literature; Uwadibie (2000, 58), for example, maintains that local autonomy "does not create incentives for development [but] only creates a network of organizations to promote development...by the central authority."

Kincaid (1998) describes devolution as a revolution, which must make state and local governments more efficient and effective in service delivery. He identifies the objectives of devolution to include 1) More efficient provision and production of public services; 2) better alignment of the cost and benefits of government for a diverse citizenry; 3) better fits between public goods and their spatial characteristics; 4) increased competition, experimentation, and innovation in the public sector; 5) greater responsiveness to citizen preferences; and 6) more transparent accountability in policymaking. Kincaid argues that these are ambitious objectives with no apparent direction but they occur in the context of vertical intergovernmental relations with some constitutional changes. In countries where devolution has been used, the central government still retains some authority. In Ghana, regardless of which type of decentralization the central government adopts, the executive will still maintain control over the districts and regions because of the dire financial conditions of some of the districts.

Delegation
The final form of decentralization discussed in this paper is *delegation*, which seeks to transfer service responsibility from central government agencies to specialized organizations with some degree of operating autonomy (Ayee, 2000). Apart from devolution, which is expected to stand on its own, the other forms of decentralization discussed above tend to overlap in the execution of responsibilities between the centralized authority and district or regional representatives. The

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theory of decentralization obviously presents a problem for a country with a unitary political system like Ghana because of the system's political and legal structures.

The NPP under John Agyekum Kufuor's presidency, like its predecessor, Jerry J. Rawlings, promoted the decentralization concept as one of its administrative goals, but how an administration would choose one strategy over another remains a matter of preference and interest of that administration. Though the Ghana Constitution provides the structure of decentralization in Ghana (see Ghana Constitution: Chapter 20: Article 240, A-E), it does not allow citizens at the grassroots to elect their political leaders. For example, Article 243 (1) states that regional and district political leaders "shall be appointed by the President." Undeniably, democratic deficits are associated with the ongoing decentralization reforms in Ghana. One could argue that decentralization has not succeeded since it does not appear to adopt the characteristics discussed in the literature. The concept of political decentralization in Ghana has negative implications to the executive since some districts have over the years resisted the appointments and nominations of their leaders by the central authority (Ayisi, 2008).

Brief Background of Decentralization in Ghana

A discussion of the complexities facing Ghanaian political leadership including the Kufuor administration regarding decentralization is beyond the scope of this analysis. However, some understanding of the concept from a historical background may help to explain the quandary of the executive. The literature on this topic considers the colonial British indirect rule through the local chiefs as the genesis of decentralization in the then Gold Coast (now Ghana). Decentralization thus became a political tool for the British through the chiefs and their elders to reinforce the wishes of the British government. As Bamfo (2000) noted those chiefs who cooperated with the British were rewarded and the uncooperative ones were punished. Such an authoritative implementation of the concept created fear among the chiefs and their subjects (i.e., the locals).

Ghana's political independence in March of 1957 did little to change the political structures established by the colonizers. As a result, many studies have described post-colonial decentralization as ineffective, as regime change through military coups became the order of the day after Kwame Nkrumah was ousted in 1966. It was during the mid-1970s under Lt. Col. Ignatius Kutu Acheampong's military regime when the government tried to empower the locals (Nkrumah, 2000). The history of contemporary decentralization in spite of Acheampong's attempt is credited to the Provisional National Defense Council (PNDC) regime under Jerry John Rawlings' administration (Assibey-Mensah, 2000). Assibey-Mensah argues that after the

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passage of the 1987 Local Government Law (PNDC Law 207), "110 District Councils and their respective District Assemblies (DAs) were set up" (2000, 17) to ensure local participation in the decision making process. This led to the formation of the defunct People's Defense Committees (PDCs) in communities to identify each area's needs instead of relying on the central government to make every decision and try to solve local problems from the Castle (Office of the National Government). Research shows that the PDC concept created grassroots interest in local administration as district elections during the PNDC regime were the highest ever recorded for the decades in the late 1980s. Assibey-Mensah also noted that "official reports indicated that 58.9 percent of registered Ghanaian voters cast their ballots in the local elections, and the turnout was the highest of any district-level election over the past 30 years" (2000, 17).

The PDCs, made up of local self-identified defenders of the PNDC revolution, effectively took over local government responsibilities, though they were often limited to mobilizing the implementation of local self-help projects, while the deconcentrated ministries played a more significant role. Ayee (1994) notes that despite the PNDC's rhetoric, its interest in decentralization reflected that of previous regimes, thus, a curiosity in the administrative decentralization of central government and not the devolution of political authority to the local level. Additionally, Ayee (2000) perceives a key feature of local governance, through the PDCs for example, in the pre-1988 period as a dual hierarchical structure in which central and local government institutions operated in parallel, but with encroachment at times by better-resourced central government on the roles and responsibilities of under-resourced local revolutionary activists (Ayee, 2000, 49-50). The PDC concept of decentralization became a legitimate revolutionary political institution under the PNDC military administration. Was there any legal or constitutional backing to decentralization in Ghana?

The Politics of Decentralization in Ghana since the 1990s

The military administration of Rawlings planned to transfer both fiscal and some political responsibilities from Accra (National Capital) to all the districts and municipalities in the country. This move centered on local government law decreed under the PNDC administration. It was to introduce fiscal balance between the central government and the districts. By transferring power to the districts, the PNDC administration was making government more responsive to local communities to placate critics of the centralized military rule. For example, according to Adedeji (2001) Ghanaians were not happy with Rawlings' PNDC administration during the late 1980s. He states that "objections to the authoritarianism of Rawlings

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government, which lacked structure for grassroots participation, were widespread despite rhetoric to the contrary by the PNDC" (1).

The PNDC government introduced a legislative reform, the *Local Government Law (LGL)* (PNDC Law 207) in 1988, which led to the creation of 110 designated districts within Ghana's ten regions, with non-partisan District Assembly (DA) elections held for the first time in 1988/89 under the PNDC and subsequently every four years (1994, 1998, 2002 and 2006). The law provides in part that two-thirds of DA members are elected on an individual non-partisan basis and one-third is appointed by the central government including a District Chief Executive (DCE) for each of the 110 districts.

The 1988 *LGL* was to promote grassroots, citizen participation, and ownership of the machinery of government by devolving power, competence and means power at the district level. The PNDC decentralization exercise, through the PDCs, was to satisfy the demands of the revolution and was not in the interest of democratic principles. Ayee (2000) argues that the decentralization policy under the second Rawlings regime had self-serving motives. The PNDC's decentralization policy was, therefore, seen by critics as an effort to increase the legitimacy of Rawlings' second revolution, which ruled Ghana from 1982 through 1992.

The Constitution and Decentralization

After eleven years of dictatorship under Rawlings (1981-1991), the 1992 Ghana Constitution provided a transition from a military rule to multi-party democracy at the national level, which also authorized the 1988 LGL reforms. It consolidated the aim of decentralization within the overall context of a liberal democratic constitution, yet essential democratic elements remained compromised, especially through the retention of presidential appointments instead of local elections in the districts. The objective of decentralization was laid out specifically in the 1992 Ghana Constitution (see chapter 20) under *Decentralization and Local Government*. Here the Constitution states categorically in Article 240[1] that "Local government and administration [are to] be decentralized," and that the "functions, powers, responsibilities and resources should be transferred from the Central Government [*Castle*] to local government" constituencies (Article 240[2]).

The independent role of local government, with discretionary powers at the grassroots, was subjected to a provision in Article 240[2][b], which states that "measures should be taken to enhance the capacity of local government authorities to plan, initiate, co-ordinate, manage and execute policies in respect of matters affecting local people."

The principles of participation in local government and accountability to the

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locals were also emphasized in Article 240[2][e], which 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." There is a contradiction here. For example, during the eras of the Rawlings and Kufour's administrations the locals rejected their leaders, but the executive rejected the cry of citizens at the grassroots (locals) (Ghana News Agency, 2005).

It is not uncommon for the central government to appoint someone the people have rejected in parliamentary elections to become the senior administrator in the same constituency. In 2005, several of such appointments were made and the trend did not change. Critics argue that "in the first place, [*such practice*] amounts to undermining democracy, because these were people who were rejected by their own constituents at an election and the government is recycling them by using the 'back door' to now impose them on the people as their political heads" (Ghana News Agency, 2005b). Without a doubt, the democratic intent in the decentralization requirements are provided in Article 35[6][d]: The "state shall take appropriate measures by decentralizing 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 of national life and in government."

The 1992 Ghana Constitution preserved some of the PNDC 1988 reforms of non-partisan local level elections and presidential powers of appointment. A District Assembly shall comprised 70 percent elected members and 30 percent of the members appointed by the President "in consultation with traditional authorities and other interest groups in the district" (Article 242[d]). For example, the appointment of a district chief executive (DCE) by the President is retained with at least the approval of 66 percent of the DA members (Article 243[1]). The DCE is the political head of the local executive, centrally involved in decision-making, with a District Coordinating Director (DCD) as the highest ranking civil servant.

The Ghana Constitution also provides guidelines for the local government on finances and clearly states that the DAs "should have sound financial bases with adequate and reliable sources of revenue" [Article 240(2)], with an attempt to secure this position through the establishment of the District Assembly Common Fund (DACF). This is determined annually by the legislature but with appropriation "not less than five percent of the total revenues of Ghana" [Article 252(2)]. The proceeds of the DACF are divided between DAs on the basis of a revenue sharing formula approved by the legislative. Article 240 provides reforms of the civil service with local government authority, which states "as far as practicable, the persons in the service of the local government shall be subject to effective control of local authorities" [2][d]). The irony of Article 240 is that it is focused extensively on the districts with no mention of the responsibilities of regional leaders. For Ghana to benefit from the decentralization concept, it

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would largely depend on the vision of the leadership and a constitutional amendment to empower the electorates.

Decentralization: Two Faces, One Coin

Ghana's political history lacks continuity. The road to Ghana's independence was brutal and nasty as the British did not want to relinquish its power over the occupied colonies. The military and democratic mix of Ghana's political system since independence has given leaders cause to be cautious of how they share power at the regional and district levels. Since the military ousted the Convention People's Party (CPP) under Kwame Nkrumah's regime in 1966, democratically elected leaders like Dr. K. A. Busia (1969-1972), Dr. Hilla Liman (1979-1981), Jerry J. Rawlings (1992-2000), and John A. Kufour (2001-2008) have always been suspicious of individuals who could influence the military in coup plots. Busia and Liman became victims of military coups while the Kufour administration accused some individuals of plotting to overthrow his administration. For example, several media reports quoted President Kufour as saying "that ex-President Rawlings *was* planning a coup to topple his government." (Enquirer, 2006) How does this play into decentralization? Given the above discussion, leaders tend to delegate responsibilities and government duties to individuals who are loyal to a ruling party instead of allowing the grassroots to elect their own leaders to ensure security. It could be argued that such appointments do not consider the interest of the citizens, who oftentimes reject the presidential appointees.

On four different occasions (1966, 1972, 1979, and 1981), the Ghana Constitution was suspended as a result of military coups. Such political instability has forced democratic leaders, it can be argued, to act like military leaders where the executive tends to hold on to power while the regional leaders become extensions of the executive branch without any significant power. Democratic and undemocratic changes of government in Ghana affect local political structures. For example, the fall of the Nkrumah's CPP saw the collapse of the Young Pioneers (Youth Wings of the CPP), while the PDCs vanished with the defunct PNDC as a grassroot political structure. Ghana's political history shows that decentralization is a concept used by governments to reflect the leaders' political ideologies as seen under the Nkrumah, Rawlings, and Kufuor administrations, but the actual implementation of the concept under any of these leaders is far from how the literature defines it. Politically, whether civilian or military, the executive has always appointed favorites as political leaders in the regions and districts with little input from the local electorates.

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Elections: Making a case for DCE and Regional Ministers (RM).

Bobo and Gilliam (1990) argue that local involvement in the political process through elections ensures self-empowerment as locals gain more political power. Such empowerment translates to locals not only trusting their elected officials but also have a higher sense of political efficacy about local citizens' issues (1990, 382-384). Despite the mixed conclusions of the impact of decentralization, allowing districts and regions to elect their own public officials "makes government more accountable to the local populations" (Duncan, 2007, 711) and more responsive to local concerns. It is against this background in the literature; the reason why this paper calls for districts and regional elections in Ghana.

In any matured democracy, the people govern themselves or play a significant role in the governing process through elections. The theory of modern representative democratic systems provides that the core of popular participation is voting, therefore, an elected candidate will represent the voice of the governed. The gap created through legal and constitutional backing for not electing DCEs and RMs in Ghana has been highlighted in this paper. The actual challenge is on government (Parliament) to realize this loophole in the Ghanaian Constitution by legally and procedurally amending it for voters in the districts to elect individuals of their choice. A weak democratic constitution, one could argue, is better than the strongest authoritative decree since the former avails itself for amendments and not the latter.

The 1992 Ghana Constitution came into being after over a decade of military rule. It could, therefore, be argued that the absence of honest and prolonged discussion in the writing of this Constitution before its adoption may have represented the views of a few who belong to the military class with their authoritative ideology despite several years of constitutional assemble meetings. Sixteen years into the Fourth Republic is considered young in the political literature. However, it seems to be the ripe time for any amendments if the Constitution would be able to stand the test of the years ahead as Ghana snails into a well established democracy.

The government must devise new strategies for managing public programs as it critically evaluates policies regarding issues like health, education, the national economy, elections, and transportation. With anticipated growth in the economy and other sectors, it is obvious that the central government may not be able to police every sector of the economy at large, especially in the regions; hence the importance of decentralization as discussed earlier in this paper. Most government bureaucracies in Ghana remain structured and staffed to manage the traditional pre-independence political programs with the central government in control of every activity.

As the country has undeniably accepted democracy as the way toward viable political and economic development, government strategies and tactics must also change, especially in its structures and processes in the area of human resource management. Regrettably, such a

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centralized bureaucratic structure as the executive appointment of leaders in the regions and districts has not changed significantly in line with democratic principles. Although the district and regional leaders' appointments by a president have constitutional backing, this paper advocates for a constitutional amendment to allow locals to elect their leaders instead of the central government. Admittedly, since the 1990s Ghana has undergone a steady, but often unnoticed transformation in terms of its policies toward improved health care, education, transportation, and economic growth. However, in all these sectors, a decentralized management system could have provided a better sense of local ownership, which would have led to an improved maintenance of facilities and government assets as long as transparency and accountability on the part of the elected existed.

Local citizens' direct involvement in electing their leaders is more likely to improve government efficiency and responsiveness, which are likely to ensure regional accountability where the citizens will have the mandate to replace or retain their leaders through elections based on the leaders' performance during their tenure. The election of DA members and RMs could be scheduled the same date that the presidential and parliamentary election is held. Such a constitutional amendment is more likely to diminish the notion of the indirect one party system where the president appoints DCEs and RMs throughout the country and those appointees are replaced as soon as the party in power falls during an election.

Conclusion

The paper discussed four types of decentralization: *political decentralization*, *deconcentration*, *devolution*, and *delegation*. It noted that the theory of decentralization seems appealing, but one cannot conclude which one Ghana utilizes as described in the Constitution. In Ghana's Fourth Republic, as in other African countries, most people, including the politicians, are in favor of decentralization as a positive method of citizen empowerment and local economic development. Decentralization enjoys both legal and constitutional guarantees with strong multi-partisan support. However, though some scholars argue that decentralization ensures responsibility, efficiency, and accountability through participatory democracy, Ghanaians at the regional and district levels are not involved in electing their own political leaders. Therefore the paper advocates for a constitutional amendment to allow locals to select their leaders.

The post-independence history of decentralization in Ghana has come with criticisms as the executive tends to appoint only party loyalists: the spoils system concept. Such executive power, as enshrined in the Constitution, does not ensure participatory democracy "unless the right, interest and involvement… [of]…society at large are taken into consideration [through] elections (Loh, 2008, 128). Allowing locals to elect their own political leaders is more likely to

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force local public officials to perform since failing to do so, may result in the electorates rejecting them in future elections.

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