

2013

Towards Aid Effectiveness : Contested Theories and Concepts : A Case Study of Ghana's Community-Based Rural Development Project

Kwadwo Adusei-Asante
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**Towards Aid Effectiveness: Contested Theories and Concepts:
A Case Study of Ghana's
Community-Based Rural Development Project**

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MA (Theology)
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A Dissertation Submitted in Fulfilment of the Requirements for the Award of
Doctor of Philosophy (Social Science)

School of Psychology and Social Science
Faculty of Computing Health and Science
Edith Cowan University

Principal Supervisor: Dr Peter Hancock

January 2013
Perth, Western Australia

USE OF THESIS

The Use of Thesis statement is not included in this version of the thesis.

ABSTRACT

The discussion of aid effectiveness continues to gain prominence in international development policy discourse and analysis. However, the question of why aid seems to be ineffective is far more complicated and remains largely unanswered. While the notions that aid drives donors' interests and creates dependency are still relevant, this thesis confronts the problem, by examining the issues that influenced the operationalisation and effectiveness of aid programs in the context of Ghana's Community-Based Rural Development Project (CBRDP) (2005-2011). By arguing that aid dependency and "aid as a concept" are different, the thesis makes the most basic assumption that 'aid' is not negative; albeit, in the knowledge that its focus on aid in Ghana will also bring to the fore the major issues that frame debate on international aid.

Two theoretical themes emerged from the thesis. First, the thesis argues that the effectiveness of an aid program should be measured from the recipients' point of view. This is crucial, as donors tend to use their aid to successfully achieve their strategic advantages, while not necessarily benefitting the recipient country, or those groups for whom the aid was designed to help. Second, in lieu of the instrumentality of international aid, the thesis found that aid effectiveness also depends upon the 'externalities' (programs, degree of dependency, motives, theories, concepts; social and politico-cultural factors) that drive it. This notwithstanding, most of the current mechanisms for achieving aid effectiveness, such as Results-Based Financing, Aid-Agenda Conferences and Program-Based Approaches, appear to pay negligible attention to these 'externalities'. The researcher contends that these mechanisms are not enough for improving aid effectiveness *per se*.

The thesis employed ethnographic research to investigate the outcomes of the CBRDP implemented in nine districts of Ghana. The findings suggest that, alongside the mechanisms mentioned above, prior attention must be paid to the political and cultural realities of the recipient country as well as the theories and complex concepts that drive aid programs (by staff at donor agencies). Such attention, the thesis shows, should focus on a clear and contextual conceptualisation of key terms such as 'community' and 'empowerment', while at the same time embedding strategies to manage unintended outcomes. Efforts at making 'aid work' would also require further critical discussion of the decentralisation theories that underpin aid programs, particularly, Community-Driven Development (CDD); in this regard the thesis found that the indicators that the

World Bank uses in relation to CDD (referred to as high and low functioning intergovernmental systems), were far removed from the grounded realities of Ghana's decentralised system of local and regional politics.

The concept of 'community' is appealing, yet deceptive. Although a complex term, 'community' is often misused, and conceptualised only in the spatial sense, while it transcends the notion of territoriality to include an entity that has a: 1) Function that drives the group; 2) Opportunity for interaction; 3) Membership who identifies with and contributes to it; and 4) Culture that makes it distinct from others. Analysis of the empirical data presented in the thesis shows that the politico-cultural dynamics and population settlement and mobility patterns of the CBRDP beneficiary localities did not support interaction to the levels required for a coherent 'community' to exist. Put simply 'community' in the functional and geographic sense had to exist in the CBRDP beneficiary localities for the project to succeed. While the sense of 'community' can be developed, the World Bank and Ghana's Ministry of Local Government and Rural Development, who designed the CBRDP, ignored the need to nurture it in the recipient localities. As a result of this top down approach there existed no cohesive 'communities' to maintain the projects, and most of the CBRDPs were found to be in a state of complete disarray at the time of fieldwork.

The term 'empowerment' is another complex concept the thesis examines to show how its many theoretical complexities can, if ignored, have dire outcomes for aid programs. Scholars disagree on whether empowerment is a process or an outcome or both, a dilemma which presents many challenges for measuring it. The fact that 'empowerment' is predicated on the concept of 'power' makes it even more complicated. The reason being that 'power' is not a neutral concept and cannot be shared in the simple terms portrayed in donor discourse; also ignored is the fact that 'empowering' one group may mean disempowering others, a situation that could lead to conflicts. These conflicts were self evident in the fieldwork and are present in the thesis. Despite these theoretical realities, empowerment appears to have been vaguely applied in the CBRDP as the project: 1) Had no working definition of 'empowerment'; 2) Targeted women and vulnerable groups, although it was meant to empower the general population; 3) Measured 'empowerment' only in term of participation, ignoring the conditions that perpetuated 'powerlessness'; and 4) Had no strategy in place to monitor unintended outcomes. Therefore, in their bid at 'empowering' Ghana's local government officials (Assembly and Unit Committee Members in the quest for further

decentralisation), the designers of the project were unaware that they were actually disempowering Traditional Chiefs, many of whom felt ostracised. Moreover, project designers were also oblivious of the fact that the local government officials did not function in isolation, but are part of a very complex socio-cultural system. These shortcomings led to clashes between Traditional Chiefs and the newly 'empowered' local government officials. As the designers and managers of the CBRDPs did not anticipate these eventualities, they had no plan in place to manage resulting conflicts, which have ended up in protracted legal battles, leaving the CBRDPs in a state of dereliction, some completely abandoned.

The thesis brings to the fore the need for more concerted efforts at making aid effective, but at the same time arguing that all stakeholders need to pay closer attention to the use of nebulous theories and normative, yet complex concepts in aid-program designs. It underscores the essentiality for programs attempting to apply concepts such as 'community' and 'empowerment' to clearly define and conceptualise these terms within the confines of the political, social and cultural forces and social dynamics of beneficiary localities. If this were to happen development projects are more likely to receive community support and be more likely to be effectively maintained. The thesis below provides empirical insights into what becomes of aid programs that apply concepts and terms that are promoted by 'development pundits', but are at variance with the realities of the recipient country's pervasive traditions, culture and indeed its success or otherwise in adopting Western notions of decentralisation (as was the case outlined in this thesis).

DECLARATION

I certify that this dissertation does not, to the best of my knowledge and belief:

- (i) Incorporate, without acknowledgement, any material previously submitted for a degree or diploma in any institution of higher education;
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DEDICATION

To my daughters Obaapa and Ohemaa

Girls, a trail has been blazed...

You *can* also!

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I acknowledge God Almighty for His grace and the strength to go through the stressful and sometimes lonely years of carrying out this research.

Edith Cowan University, thanks for giving me a PhD position and granting me an International Postgraduate Research Scholarship (IPRS) to undertake the study, and an ECU International Stipend (ECUIS) to cater for my living expenses throughout the period. I wish to thank Prof Joe Luca, the ECU Graduate Research School and Miss Clare Ashby of the ECU Scholarship for their respective support.

I wish to thank my Principal Supervisor, Peter Hancock (PhD) for his commitment to my thesis. I feel indebted to Peter for his insights and suggestions that guided me through the research process.

My special appreciation goes to the research subjects in Ghana, who provided me with the ideas that have informed this thesis. My sincere thanks go the CBRDP secretariat for the permission to study the project, particularly, Misters K. Oppong, Adu Koranteng and Charles Nayram. Many thanks also go to the Ministry of Finance and Economic Planning and Ghana's Electoral Commission for providing me with statistical data, many of which were useful. To my Research Assistants Joshua Opoku, Linda Arhin and Joshua Owu, I say good job done and thanks again.

The following people also played significant roles in my journey to producing this thesis. These include: Apostle Stephen Waye-Onyina, Apostle and Mrs Steve Davies, Mrs Mpare, Dr Greg Maguire, Dr Agnes Apusigah, Dr Peter Quartey, Dr Ike Annan, Mr Nardo Drouven, Miss Nouschka Bergsma and Miss Judith Crabbe. Dr Colin Moyle thanks for painstaking proofing the entire thesis. To my Mum and Dad, thanks.

When I started this PhD research, Elizabeth, my wife, realised that her husband has changed, as I spent less time with her and our two girls. Elizabeth endured the loneliness, while urging me on. She managed our home and took good care of our girls, while I was buried in books and papers. Love, thanks! And to the girls, daddy is free now...so more time for see-saw and fun together.

TABLE OF CONTENT

COPYRIGHT.....	ii	
ABSTRACT.....	iii	
DECLARATION.....	vi	
DEDICATION.....	vii	
ACKNOWLEDGEMENT.....	viii	
TABLE OF CONTENT.....	ix	
LIST OF FIGURES.....	xiii	
LIST OF TABLES.....	xiv	
LIST OF PHOTOS.....	xiv	
LIST OF ABBREVIATION.....	xiv	
CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION		
1.0 Overview.....	1	
1.1 Primary Research Questions.....	3	
1.2 Significance of the Research.....	3	
1.3 Thesis Outline.....	5	
1.4 What is International Development Aid?.....	7	
1.5 Aid Effectiveness: Why Do Concepts Matter?	8	
1.6 Why Research on Community–Driven Development in Ghana?.....	11	
1.6.1. Social Characteristics	11	
1.6.2. Political Setting.....	14	
1.6.3 Ghana’s Economy and Aid	19	
1.7 The Case Study: The Community–Based Rural Development Project (CBRDP).....	23	
1.7.1 The CBRDP Implementation Strategy.....	24	
1.7.2 State of the CBRDPs as of Fieldwork.....	28	
CHAPTER 2: GLOBAL AID TRENDS AND RAMIFICATIONS FOR GHANA.....		30
2.1 A Brief Overview of Aid in the Pre–World War II Period.....	30	
2.2 The Post–World War II Period: The Birth of the Bretton Wood Institutions, the Marshall Plan and the Cold War.....	31	

2.3 The 1970s: Poverty Reduction Focus, the Herald of Structural Adjustments.....	34
2.4 Precursors to the World Bank’s Structural Adjustment in Ghana.....	35
2.5 1980/1990: Structural Adjustment Programs in Ghana	38
2.6. 2000–2010s: The Decade of Global ‘Aid Boom’	41
2.6.1 The Publication of Influential Scholarly Works.....	42
2.6.2 International Aid Campaigns.....	43
2.6.3 September 11, 2001 Terrorist Attack on the USA.....	44
2.7 Ghana in the Decade of Aid Boom: 2000–2010.....	47
2.7.1 Ghana and the Highly Indebted Poor Country Initiative.....	48
2.7.2 Multi–Donor Budgetary Support.....	50
2.7.3 The Millennium Development Goals.....	52
2.8 Conclusion.....	57
 CHAPTER 3: MAKING AID EFFECTIVE: EFFORTS, ISSUES AND GAPS.....	 58
3.1 Why Has Aid Been Ineffective?.....	59
3.1.1. Aid and Donors’ Strategic Interests.....	59
3.1.2 Aid and the Dependency Theory.....	63
3.2 Efforts at Making Aid Effective.....	67
3.2.1 Results–Based Financing (Tied–Aid Repackaged).....	67
3.2.2 Aid–Agenda Conferences.....	70
3.2.3 Program–Based Approaches (CDD).....	73
3.3 The World Bank’s Commitment to Community–Driven Development.....	75
3.4 The World Bank’s Framework for Engaging Local Govt Structures.....	80
3.5 Conclusion.....	83
 CHAPTER 4: METHODOLOGY.....	 85
4.1 Why Ethno–Methodology?.....	85
4.2 Case Study Boundaries.....	87
4.3 The Fieldwork Experience.....	88
4.4 Limitations.....	90
4.5 Ethical Considerations.....	91
4.6 Data Collection.....	92

4.6.1 Review of Literature/Documents.....	92
4.6.2 Participant–Observation.....	93
4.6.3 Interviews/ Focus Group Discussions.....	96
4.6.4 Open–Ended Questionnaires.....	99
4.7 Data Analysis.....	100
4.8 Conclusion.....	102
CHAPTER 5: GHANA’S LOCAL GOVERNMENT: A DECEPTIVE ‘HIGH FUNCTIONING’ SYSTEM?.....	104
5.1 Ghana’s Local Government System: A Brief Overview.....	105
5.2 Is Ghana’s Local Government System ‘High–Functioning’?.....	108
5.2.1 Decentralisation laws [that] create Autonomous Local Government Structures.....	108
5.2.2 Fiscal Decentralisation.....	110
5.2.3 Local Government Elections.....	112
5.2.4 Devolution of Service Delivery.....	115
5.3 Summary.....	116
5.4 The Plight of Assembly Members in Ghana.....	117
5.4.1 Managing Personal Life and People’s Expectations in an Unpaid Job.....	118
5.4.2 Relating to ‘Partisan’ District Chief Executives.....	121
5.4.3 Working with weak Unit Committees.....	124
5.4.4 Relating to Traditional Chiefs.....	127
5.5 Conclusion.....	127
CHAPTER 6: COMMUNITY: CONTESTED CONCEPTS AND MISINTERPRETATIONS.....	128
6.1 Community: Conceptual Controversies.....	130
6.2 Community Conceptualised.....	134
6.3 Research Findings.....	136
6.3.1 Case Study I: Tease, Kwawu North District.....	136
6.3.2 Case Study II: Tashie, Tema Municipality.....	143
6.3.3 Case Study III: Agbetor, Ketu Northwest District.....	150
6.4 Conclusion.....	155

CHAPTER 7: WHEN EMPOWERMENT DISEMPOWERS: THE CASE OF GHANAIAN TRADITIONAL CHIEFS AND LOCAL GOVERNMENT OFFICIALS.....	157
7.1 Empowerment: Background and Conceptual Issues.....	158
7.2 The CBRDP and the Concept of Empowerment.....	163
7.3 Traditional Chiefs versus Local Government Officials.....	165
7.3.1 Aboloo, Greater Accra Region.....	166
7.3.2 Ntoaso, Eastern Region.....	172
7.4 Conclusion.....	177
 CHAPTER 8: CONCLUSION.....	 180
Finding I: The World Bank’s mistaken categorisation of Ghana’s decentralisation system as highly functional negatively impacted on the design, implementation and outcomes of the CBRDP.....	180
Finding II: The lack of ‘community’ in the CBRDP beneficiary localities affected the implementation and maintenance of the CBRDP projects.....	183
Finding III: The CBRDP’s inappropriate application of the concept of ‘empowerment’ led to tensions between Traditional Chiefs and Local Government Official.....	185
Implication for Development Theory and Practise.....	186
 REFERENCES.....	 191
 LIST OF APPENDICES	
Appendix A: CBRDP components.....	216
Appendix B: Questionnaire.....	219
Appendix C: Permission to study the CBRDP.....	221
Appendix D: Letter of introduction from the CBRDP.....	222
Appendix E: Letter of introduction from the Edith Cowan University.....	223
Appendix F: Permission to obtain secondary data from Ghana’s Ministry of Finance and Economic Planning.....	224

LIST OF FIGURES

Figure 1.1: Locating Map of Ghana on the African continent.....	13
Figure 1.2: Emblems of the two Dominant Political Parties in Ghana.....	14
Figure 1.3: Structure of Ghana’s Local Government System.....	16
Figure 1.4: GDP– Real Growth Rate (%) in Ghana in a Decade Compared.....	20
Figure 1.5: Net ODA as Percentage of Central Government Expense.....	21
Figure 1.6: CBRDP Zonal Demarcations.....	27
Figure 2.1: DAC Members net ODA 1990–2008 and DAC Secretariat Simulation of Net ODA to 2009 and 2010.....	41
Figure 2.2: Net ODA received (% of GNI) of Afghanistan, Iraq and Pakistan Compared.....	46
Figure 2.3: Net ODA to Ghana 1970–2010 Compared in USD Millions.....	47
Figure 2.4: Ghana’s Public Debt as Percentage of GDP.....	49
Figure 2.5: ODA Forms Ghana Received in a Decade compared in Millions USD.....	51
Figure 2.6: Current Global Distance to the MDGs.....	55
Figure 2.7: Countries on Target to Achieve the MDGs, by Region.....	55
Figure 3.1: Aid as Percentage of Ghana and Botswana GNI 1980–2008.....	66
Figure 3.2: Characteristics of CDD Projects.....	76
Figure 3.3 World Bank Lending in Support of CDD Programs in USD (Billions).....	77
Figure 3.4: CDD as Percentage of IDA Lending.....	77
Figure 3.5: Number of Active IDA–Funded CDD Operations by Fiscal Year from 2000.....	78
Figure 3.6: CDD Institutional Alternatives.....	80
Figure 4.1: Data Collection Tools.....	92
Figure 4.2: Conceptual/Analytical Frameworks.....	101
Figure 5.1: Structure of Ghana’s Local Government System in the Fourth Republic.....	106
Figure 5.2: Percentage of National Average of Voter Turnouts in District Assembly Elections 1978–2010.....	113
Figure 5.3: Percentages of Voter Turnouts to Presidential Elections 1992– 2008.....	113
Figure 5.4: Number of Unit Committees with Zero Nominations per Region in 2010.....	114
Figure 6.1: Conceptual Framework of a ‘Community’.....	135
Figure 6.1: Eastern Region: Locating Afram Plains and Kwawu South.....	137
Figure 6.2: Afram Plains: Locating Tease Township.....	137
Figure 6.3: Greater Accra Region: Locating Tema Municipal Assembly/Tashie.....	144
Figure 6.4: Tashie Presby Basic School Population by Class 2010.....	146
Figure 6.6: Ketu Northwest District Locating Agbetor.....	151

LIST OF TABLES

Table 1.1: Aid–Dependency in Ghana and Sub–Saharan Compared.....	20
Table 1.2: Implementation Processes of the CBRDP in the Area Councils.....	24
Table 1.3: Profiles of the CBRDP Beneficiary Localities in Zone IV.....	28
Table 2.2: MDBS Disbursements for the Period 2003 – 2010 (in millions).....	52
Table 2.3: Ghana’s Progress Towards the Millennium Development Goals.....	56
Table 3.1: Classification of African Countries Context.....	81
Table 4.1: Focus Groups’ Sampling Structure per Project Type and Beneficiary Group.....	98
Table 6.1: Characteristics of a ‘Community’	133

LIST OF PHOTOS

Photo 4.1: The researcher on a familiarisation tour in Pakro, the Eastern Region.....	89
Photo 4.2: The researcher interacting with pupils from the Agbetor Primary School.....	94
Photo 4.3: The researcher on a farm in the Afram Plains.....	95
Photo 4.4: The researcher in a focus group discussion with parents in Agoe...	98
Photo 6.1: The deteriorating Tease CBRDP Market.....	140
Photo 6.2: Tease traders selling the wares in the sun, while the Market Project is empty.....	140
Photo 6.3: The renovated Tashie Presby School.....	144
Photo 6.4: The deteriorating state of the Tashie Presby School.....	145
Photo 6.5: The state of textbooks at the Tashie Presby School.....	146
Photo 6.6: The Agbetor CBRDP Three-Unit Classroom Block.....	151
Photo 7.1: Exterior of the Aboloo CBRDP library.....	168
Photo 7.2: Interior of the Aboloo CBRDP library.....	168
Photo 7.3 Male entrance of the Ntoaso CBRDP.....	175
Photo 7.4: Female entrance of the Ntoaso CBRDP.....	175

LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

- BARD: Bangladesh Academy for Rural Development
CAP: Community Action Plans
CBRDP: Community-Based Rural Development Program
CDD: Community Driven Development
DAC: Development Assistance Committee
DACF: District Assembly Common Funds
GDP: Gross Domestic Product
GHC: Ghana cedis
GPRS: Ghana Poverty Reduction Strategy
GSS: Ghana Statistical Services
ILGS: Institute of Local Government Studies
IMF: International Monetary Fund
ISSER: Institute of Social, Statistical and Economic and Research
LGO: Local Government Officials
MDA: Municipal/District Assembly
MDG: Millennium Development Goals
MLGRDE: Ministry of Local Government, Rural Development & Environment
MOFEP: Ministry of Finance and Economic Planning
MTDP: Medium Term Development Plan
ODA: Official Development Aid
OECD: Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development
PBA: Programme-Based Approaches
PNDC: Provisional National Defence Council
P-O: Participant-Observation
RICUs: Regional Coordinating Units

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND

“Donors tend to know relatively little about the communities in which they are trying to bring about change”

Lancaster (1999, p. 493)

1.0 Overview

This thesis critically examines International Development Aid (aid), and shows why an understanding of the local context of aid recipients is crucial for achieving aid effectiveness. The thesis argues that aid programs that are fashioned on contested decentralisation theories and complex concepts (such as ‘community’ and ‘empowerment’), have a lesser chance of achieving positive outcomes, particularly if such terms are at variance with the contextual realities of the beneficiary country and local communities. The data was generated using qualitative and ethnographic research tools over seven months in nine districts and localities of the Eastern, Greater Accra and Volta Regions of Ghana, West Africa.

A joint World Bank and Government of Ghana pilot program, the Community-Based Rural Development Project (CBRDP) was used as the case study. The overall objective of the CBRDP was to empower rural populations to participate actively in issues affecting their lives, while supporting Ghana’s decentralisation process. Beneficiary localities received fixed seed money to implement and maintain projects selected from predetermined categories (CBRDP Implementation Manual 2006; Yaron 2008).

Designed as a community-driven development program, the local people were expected to contribute labour to complete and own the projects. Considering that only nine of the projects (out of over two hundred) were studied, the thesis does not evaluate or audit the CBRDP as a whole or draw generalised conclusions on its performance nationally.

Rather, it seeks to provide insights into how key concepts and decentralisation theories, that underpin community-based programs, impacted on the CBRDPs. At the same time the thesis found these concepts were at variance with the demographic realities of Ghana and the selected localities.

This research developed out of my curiosity to understand why aid, altruistic as it appears, sometimes fails to improve lives in Ghana and other aid-dependent countries. After reviewing the aid literature, I found that although there is a great deal of published work on aid in Ghana, it seemed to be predominantly ‘economicentric’, failing to

explain how it works practically on the ground. Although these econometric analyses were sometimes hard to understand, they urged me to read further on global efforts at making aid effective. Of importance was the inadequate focus on the theories and concepts on which aid programs are based.

The popularity of Community–Driven Development (CDD) programs, as an effective aid delivery mechanism at the World Bank, attracted me to review its concepts and operations. Although CDD promised many prospects for achieving aid effectiveness, it was found that, like other development programs, the approach is underpinned by contested decentralisation theories and inherently complex concepts such as ‘participation’, ‘community’ and ‘empowerment’. Additionally, the readings revealed that because these terms appear to be idealised, the World Bank in particular, and other international development agencies seem to use them in program designs without considering their appropriateness and the demographical realities of the relevant contexts (see Botchway 2001; Mosse & Lewis 2005; Riddell 2007, Binswanger et al. 2010; Mavrotas 2010, World Bank 2006a, 2010a). Furthermore, little is known empirically on how these complex concepts influence CDD programs in culturally–complex contexts like Ghana.

As will be discussed in 1.5, three indisputable facts about Ghana make the country an interesting context for studying CDD programs. First, Ghana’s local government system is inherently partisan with weak sub–structures (Ahwoi 2010; Antwi–Boasiako 2010). As argued in Chapter Five, this fact questions the World Bank’s categorisation of the country’s local government system as highly functional, and better placed to implement a CDD program (Binswanger et al. 2010). Second, while no part of the country is ethnically homogeneous, Ghana is a multi–ethnic and religious country. Given that ‘community’ is complex and deceptive construct (Delanty 2003; Tesoriero 2010), Ghana’s ethnic diversity presents an interesting case for understanding the term in practice.

Designed as a type of CDD, Ghana’s Community-Based Rural Development Projects (CBRDP) aimed to strengthen and empower the hitherto weak local government sub–structures (Area Councils, Assembly Members and Unit Committees). A review of the ‘empowerment’ literature suggests that the concept is complex and could be inappropriately applied (Clifford 2001; Mosse 2001; Cornish 2006; Tesoriero 2010; Hancock et al. 2011). Additionally, empowerment is not a neutral term, as an attempt to

empower one group may lead to the disempowerment of others (Mansuri & Rao 2004; Hancock et al. 2011). Regarded as development brokers at the local level, Traditional Chiefs are very influential in Ghana (Arhin 2002; Knierzinger 2011). Therefore I was curious to understand how the Chiefs would react to the CBRDP's quest to 'empower' the country's local government officials. These three intriguing observations influenced the motivations and the framing of the research questions.

1.1 Primary Research Question

How were the outcomes of the Community–Based Rural Development Projects in selected Districts of Ghana influenced by contested decentralisation theories and complex concepts such as 'community' and 'empowerment'?

Secondary Research Questions

- 1) How did the World Bank's categorisation of Ghana's decentralisation system as highly functional impact on the design of the CBRDPs?
- 2) In what ways did the lack of 'Community' in the CBRDP beneficiary localities impact on the project's outcomes?
- 3) In what way(s) did the CBRDP's inappropriate application of 'Empowerment' impact on the relationship between Traditional Chiefs and Local Government Officials?

1.2 Significance of the Thesis

In the overarching sense, the thesis is a contribution to theory and practice of international development studies, from an anthropological and community development perspective. It also adds to the literature, theory and practise of the aid effectiveness agenda, specifically the need to understanding aid recipients' local contexts. While the research is certainly not the first to examine Project Aid and the policies that drive it (see Botchway 2001; Mosse & Lewis 2005; Pomerantz 2004; Easterly 2006; Riddell 2007), the thesis seeks to make three specific contributions. The first relates to the setting of the research, Ghana. Over the past fifty years in excess of USD 5 billion worth of aid has been invested in the country¹. While 60% of ODA to Ghana came in the form of Project Aid, very little research has been carried out on how the local context and its dynamics impact on such programs. The aid literature on Ghana seems 'economicentric' and tends to focus on tied-aid (Baffour 1999; Osei 2004; Clay

¹ Including the 2012 Chinese US\$ 3 billion loan (Quartey et al. n.d; GoG Budget Statement 2012).

et al. 2009), lack of coordination among donors (Aryeetey et al. 2003; Whitfield 2005; 2008; Woll 2008), and aid politics (Whitfield 2008). Using Ghana's CBRDP as a case study, this thesis provides insights into how contested decentralisation theories and complex concepts impact on Project Aid outcomes in the country, a subject which is barely researched.

This is timely because, while 'experts' often cite the country as an example where Project Aid really works, there have been concerns that this aid lacks sustainability. For example, the Operation Evaluation Department of the World Bank found in 2004 that projects completed in Ghana over a five-year period had been unsustainable and having less impact on the rural sector (World Bank 2004a, p. 29). Other recent studies have also arrived at similar conclusions on the National Health Insurance Scheme (Adusei-Asante 2009); the Capitation Grant in public primary schools (Ampratwum & Armah-Attoh 2010); and on Social Investment Funds (Anyidoho forthcoming). In 2012, the World Bank also warned the country against white elephant programs². Thus, this research provides insights into the issues that impact on development and aid-funded programs in the country.

The second contribution of the thesis relates to the methodology. This thesis is an example of the usefulness of employing ethno-methodology for researching the issues that impact on aid programs. Termed 'aidnography' [qualitative study of aid], the approach has been confirmed by others as an effective way of understanding how local contexts affect aid outcomes (Botchway 2001; Gould 2004; Mosse 2005). This thesis confirms the potency of the 'aidnography' research methodology and why the 'development fraternity' needs to start considering it in their quest to understand how their aid works practically on the ground.

Finally, the thesis also contributes to a better understanding of issues affecting Ghana's local government and decentralisation systems, which many local scholars and the country's Constitutional Review Commission (CRC)³ have observed has stagnated (Kyei-Baffour 2009; Owusu 2009; Ahwoi 2010; Gyimah-Boadi 2010; Antwi-Boasiako 2010; Constitutional Review Commission 2011). The thesis is therefore timely as it unearths the problems and challenges confronting the local government sub-structures;

² <http://ghanaian-chronicle.com/?p=36829>, retrieved June 15, 2012.

³ They were tasked with developing recommendations for amending the current constitution. Chapter Seven of the final report indicates that the country's local government laws needs to be amended so that more power and resources are moved from the centre to the units.

and may be useful to the CRC in drafting legislative instruments to improve and strengthen the country's decentralisation process.

1.3 Thesis Outline

This Chapter presents an introduction and background to the thesis. It informs readers about the research by outlining its scope and focus. The chapter discusses the issues that informed the research, the research questions, and the contribution of the research and the thesis outline. The chapter also defines International Development Aid as used in the thesis; discusses the relevance of focusing on complex concepts and how they influence aid effectiveness. An overview of Ghana's social, political and economic settings is also presented to contextualise the country's dynamics, which forms the basis of the thesis. Additionally, the chapter discusses the CBRDP, the case study project on which the thesis is based. Specifically, its design and implementation strategies are examined to outline some of the loopholes that have bedevilled the project.

The history and trends of International Development Aid and how they have impacted on various development programs in Ghana are discussed in Chapter Two. The chapter seeks to justify the choice of Ghana as the setting for this research by establishing the extent to which the country has increasingly depended on aid and experimented various development assistance programs since the mid-1960s. As of 2012, the country is believed to have consumed aid in excess of USD 5 billion (Government of Ghana Budget Statement 2012; Quartey et al. n.d.).

Chapter Three reviews relevant aid literature so as to establish gaps the thesis attempts to fill. The chapter discusses the factors believed to have contributed to aid ineffectiveness as well as efforts at making it work, particularly, Program-Based Approaches such as Community-Driven Development (CDD). It argues that while CDD is celebrated at the World Bank, its pivotal theories and concepts are contested, and as this thesis argues, can potentially impact negatively on the project's outcomes.

Chapter Four explains the methodology: the research tools and techniques employed to explore how complex concepts and contested decentralisation theories influenced the outcomes of Ghana's CBRDP. The chapter discusses the fieldwork experiences, the positionality of the researcher and ethical considerations. Additionally, the chapter presents the theoretical importance of the research approach, ethno-methodology; and

thoroughly describes how the data were collected and analysed, as well as the limitations of the research.

One of the pivotal theories of Community-Driven Development (CDD) program is that countries (including Ghana) with ‘high-functioning’ local institutions are better placed to implement CDD programs. Chapter Five challenges this claim. Within the framework of the World Bank’s four indicators, the chapter uses secondary data to argue that Ghana’s local government institutions do not appear to be highly functional as the World Bank claims. Drawing on the empirical data, the chapter reveals some of the issues that are impacting on the functions of Assembly Members, who are key facilitators of local development in Ghana. The findings and the discussion that ensues show that the country’s local government sub-structures are weak because of seeming partisan political machinations and the centralising tendencies of the constitutional provisions, which established the system.

The Sixth Chapter focuses on the term ‘community’ and how its ambiguity makes it a complex concept. The chapter begins by briefly exploring the literature to establish an analytical framework for securitising the ‘communitiness’ or otherwise of the localities researched. Drawing on evidence from three localities as case studies, the chapter concludes that, while the projects were supposedly ‘community-based’, ‘communities’ hardly existed in many of the beneficiary localities. Also, while the CBRDP was supposed to be implemented in rural localities, some were implemented in urban areas, a mistake that bedevilled the otherwise laudable CBRDP.

The Seventh Chapter examines another CDD pivotal concept, ‘empowerment’. Through a brief discursive overview of the concept, the chapter draws readers’ attention to the conceptual difficulties the term generates. It argues that because the concept carries a broad meaning, it allows for many blind spots and pitfalls. Drawing on two case studies from the empirical data, the chapter discusses conflicts that ensued between Traditional Chiefs and local government officials during the implementation of the CBRDP. These conflicts primarily stemmed from the fact that, while the project’s designers sought to empower local government officials, they seem to have: 1) Taken the influence of Traditional Chiefs for granted; and 2) Failed to appreciate the complexity of the concept of ‘empowerment’ and the ‘non-neutrality’ of power: empowering one group means disempowering others.

The eighth and concluding chapter binds all the chapters into one integrative format. It directly answers the research questions and presents the major findings of the thesis, as well as their implication for development theory and practice.

1.4 International Development Aid Defined?

Various scholars have defined aid differently (see Lancaster 1999; Kanbur 2003; Moyo 2009). However, according to Riddell (2007), the Development Assistance Committee (DAC) of the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD)⁴ has led the most substantial work undertaken to develop an operational definition of aid as:

Flows to countries and territories on the DAC list of ODA recipients and to multilateral development institutions which are (i) provided by official agencies, including state and local governments, or by their executive agencies; and (ii) each transaction of which (a) is administered with the promotion of the economic development and welfare of developing countries as its main objective; and (b) is concessional in character and conveys a grant element of at least 25 percent

(OECD 2008, p. 1).

Some commentators have criticised the above definition. For example, Riddell (2007, p. 1) argues that the definition fails to mention what the Official Development Assistance (ODA) impact is, or the extent to which giving and receiving are voluntary acts based on some degree of conditionality or coercion. Other scholars seem to interpret the definition's reference to 'development' as its main objective to mean promoting 'westernization'. Such scholars argue that the concept carries with it a notion of 'labelling' and Western imperialism to imply 'superiority' and 'differentiation', where some countries are labelled as 'Third World', ['Developing'] or 'Less Developed' and others as 'First World' and 'Developed' (Brown 1974; Fergusson 1990; Mehmet 1999; Eyben 2007). The notion that aid promotes 'development', therefore, tends to generate perceptions that the concept (aid) is 'always' used as a tool for the perpetration of cultural imperialism; although aid may be given genuinely for humanitarian reasons (Crush 1995; Escobar 1997; Li 2007).

There are three forms of aid: Humanitarian or Emergency Aid, Project Aid and Systematic Aid (Easterly 2006; Collier 2007; Moyo 2009). Humanitarian aid is mobilised in response to disasters, for example, to help flood victims (Moyo 2009). Project Aid, according to Riddell (2007), refers to specific projects dominated by

⁴ Formed in 1960 by leading donor governments to coordinate and promote aid from donor governments (see <http://www.oecd.org/document>, retrieved March 20, 2010).

interventions in health, education and community development. Project Aid has remained the dominant form of development assistance provided in Africa since 2000, and accounts for over 50% of the net ODA Ghana currently receives (Amoako–Tuffour 2005; Riddell 2007; Quartey et al. n.d.). Systematic Aid refers to payments made to governments either through government–to–government transfer (bilateral) or transferred through institutions such as the World Bank Group (Moyo 2009).

The definition of aid is further complicated by the recent differentiation between ODA and Official Aid, although both are provided under similar terms and conditions. The World Bank and the OECD/DAC regard ODA as the assistance given to poorer or developing countries outside of Europe, while the countries of Central and Eastern Europe and the former Soviet Union, and certain ‘advanced’ countries and territories [such as Greece, Spain and Italy who may be temporarily experiencing economic hardships] are the targets of Official Aid⁵. Owing to the controversies surrounding the definition above, aid is used in this thesis to simply refer to ODA for Project and Systematic purposes; while ‘aid effectiveness’ refers to delivering aid in a way that achieves value for money and maximizes impact on the relevant beneficiaries within the framework of donors specific program objectives (Riddell 2007; Killen 2011).

1.5 Aid Effectiveness: Why Do Theories and Concepts ‘Matter’?

After more than seven decades of its introduction, donors and their agencies, development organisations and academics are still searching for ways to make aid effective. The search is indicative of the dissatisfaction with the performance of aid, and the desperate pursuit of ideas to make it effectual (Easterly 2006; Riddell 2007). Consequently, since 2000, three different, but concurrently running mechanisms for delivering and achieving aid effectiveness can be identified. These include: Results–Based Financing, Aid–Agenda Conferences and Program–Based Approaches (Riddell 2007; Binswanger et al. 2010; World Bank 2000, 2006b, 2010b, 2011; Yogita et al. 2010; Savedoff & Martel 2011; OECD 2011). Notably, the World Bank has been a key player in these efforts, which have partly contributed to the doubling of the aid quantum from US\$ 60 billion in 2002 to almost US\$ 129 billion in 2010⁶.

⁵ See www.oecd.org/dac/stats/daclist; <http://www.tradingeconomics.com/ghana/net-official-development-assistance-and-official-aid-received-us-dollar-wb-data.html>, all retrieved November 11, 2011.

⁶http://www.oecd.org/document/35/0,3746,en_2649_37413_47515235_1_1_1_37413,00.html, retrieved March 15 2012.

Results-Based Financing (RBF), an aid delivery mechanism, was introduced in the World Bank in 2002. RBF ties the disbursement of aid funds to the attainment of specific results that directly improve access to specific sectors of the recipient country, such as healthcare, education communication, energy, and transportation (Yogita, Johannes & Kumar 2010; Birdsall, Mahgoud & Savedoff 2010). Proponents of RBF claim that it increases transparency, accountability and the engagement of private sector capital and expertise. They also maintain that RBF encourages innovation of public funding and enables monitoring of results (Birdsall et al. 2010; Savedoff 2011⁷).

However, the model's focus on results rather than processes has been criticised. First, it seems to contradict concerns that development is not just about results and money, but trust (Pomerantz 2004; Eyben 2006; Kaberuka 2011); and as the thesis argues, about beneficiaries' contests *vis-a-vis* concepts, theories and discourses that shape development programs. Second, the focus on results seems to reinforce 'conditionalities' and aid-tying, clauses known to have bedeviled aid effectiveness in the past (Kanbur 2003; Easterly 2006; Moyo 2009). Lastly, the efficiency of RBF mechanisms varies by sectors and countries, a limitation that weakens its potential of being accepted as a standard model for achieving aid effectiveness globally (Yogita et al. 2010; Savedoff & Martel 2011).

The second mechanism, Aid-Agenda Conferences (AAC), provides donors, aid consumers and other relevant stakeholders with the platform to share ideas on aid financing, effectiveness and policy formulation. Examples of AAC include the G8 and G20 Summits; the Monterrey 2002 and Doha 2008 Conferences to review Financing for Development; and the UK Commission for Africa. In recent times, the so-called High Level Forum on Aid Effectiveness (HLFA) has become very popular with four successfully held conferences in Rome (2003), Paris (2005), Accra (2008), and Busan (2011). While some of the above AAC have achieved some results, the latter are minimal. As argued in Chapter Three, despite its popularity, the HLFA appears to have become a bureaucratic formality, as most donors ignore the agreements they pledged to uphold (Mavrotas 2010). For example, the OECD (2011) painted a damning picture of the achievement of the 2005 Paris Declaration, as members of the OECD/DAC are not adhering to the benchmarks they set for themselves.

⁷ <http://www.gpoba.org/gpoba/what-is-oba>, retrieved March 16, 2012.

The third mechanism for achieving aid effectiveness, which is the focus of this thesis, is termed Program-Based Approaches (PBA). PBA is a strong move away from project-based approaches to delivering aid. PBA appear more promising as they seem to promote programs that espouse local ownership and participatory development; and normative, but inherently complex concepts such as ‘community’, and ‘empowerment’ (World Bank 1996; 2000a). Since 2000, Community-Driven Development (CDD) programs have become a popular PBA celebrated particularly at the World Bank, receiving funding worth over \$1.3 billion (Mansuri & Rao 2003; Binswanger et al. 2010). While its proponents appear to deify it as the panacea to aid effectiveness puzzles (Mansuri & Rao 2004; Binswanger et al. 2010; World Bank 2010b), this thesis presents an opposite picture of how CDD programs work in complex societies. Underlying the findings is the argument that the program is underpinned by complex concepts and contested theories that have little relevance for complex societies like Ghana.

Incidentally, as some commentators have observed, these concepts and theories are constantly being used by ‘development experts’ because: 1) Many of them have never set foot in the countries in which they are applied and as a result do not understand the local dynamics (Lancaster 1999; Easterly 2008); 2) It offers the convenience of homogenisation (Cohen & Uphoff 1980; Scrimgeour 1997; Guilt & Shah 1998); and 3) They are terms one can hardly be against, because they seem good by definition and on normative grounds, even if the empirical basis is not clear (Botchway 2001; Hancock et al. 2011). This thesis therefore asserts that it is too early to deify CDD programs as the answer to aid effectiveness enigmas, given that the pivotal theories and concepts are questionable and at variance with the realities of the beneficiary country.

The aid literature, as Chapter Three of the thesis will show, appears to blame aid ineffectiveness constantly on 1) The politics that influence the giving of aid (Cassen 1994; Riddell 2007); 2) Aid itself, in that it creates dependency (Easterly 2006; Moyo 2009); 3) The implementing country’s conditions (Burnside & Dollar 2000; Collier 2007); and 4) The lack of aid coordination among donors (Knack & Rahman 2007; Woll 2008). While these factors are relevant and have led some to argue that aid must stop (Easterly 2006; Moyo 2009), this thesis shows they are not the only reasons why aid has been ineffective. Theories and concepts on which aid programs are based really ‘matter’. Concepts such as community, empowerment, participatory development and sustainability seem to have been incorporated in the diction of the development industry

and used in aid policy documents (see Mansuri & Rao 2004; Easterly 2006; Riddell 2007; Binswanger et al. 2010, World Bank 1998, 2000, 2004b, 2005, 2006b, 2010b). Beyond their normative values however, ‘what they mean’ theoretically, sometimes seems irrelevant to the contexts in which they are practically applied. Even so, few academic studies have scrutinised how they influence aid effectiveness in politically-factionalised and ethnically-diverse settings like Ghana.

1.6 Why Research on Community–Driven Development in Ghana?

As Figure 1.1 shows below, Ghana is located on the Gulf of Guinea along the West Coast of Africa, a few degrees north of the Equator. The country had a population of 24,658,823 (Ghana Statistical Services 2012). A former colony of Great Britain until March 6, 1957, Ghana is not just an aid–recipient country, but also a major player in the aid effectiveness agenda, having hosted the Third High Level Forum on Aid Effectiveness in 2008. Many donors are convinced that the country is the proof that development works and an example that the sub–regional neighbours must emulate⁸. Ghana’s social demographics, economy and political characteristics, similar to its sub–regional neighbours, present interesting insights for aid policy discussions, particularly those that espouse the ideals of Community-Driven Development (CDD). It is important to explore briefly these characteristics and their relevance to the research.

1.6.1. Social Characteristics

Ghana is a multi–ethnic country defined by linguistic and cultural characteristics⁹. There are over two hundred and fifty languages and dialects, but English is the country’s official language, although most Ghanaians also speak at least one local language. The 2010 Government Census broke down religious divisions in the country as follows: Christian 71.2%, Muslim 17.6%, and African Traditional Religion 5.2%; some 5.3% Ghanaians are not affiliated to any religion (Ghana Statistical Service 2012). These diversities notwithstanding, no part of Ghana is ethnically, linguistically and religiously homogeneous, although a certain group may dominate. All the three regions researched (Greater Accra, Eastern and Volta Regions) share these characteristics, as described below.

⁸ See <http://www.dfid.gov.uk/ghana>, <http://www.usaid.gov/gh/welcome/>, retrieved March 24, 2011.

⁹ Although the Akan make up 50% of the population.

While the GA¹⁰ people dominate the Greater Accra Region, almost all ethnic groups in the country are represented there. The nation's capital city (Accra) is also situated there, and although it is the smallest region in terms of geographical size, it is the second most populated region¹¹ (4, 010, 054), representing 16.3% of the country's population (Ghana Statistical Service 2012). Over two million people reside in Accra (GSS 2012). Being multi-ethnic and busy, the city presents interesting demographical facts for studying how CDD programs work on the ground. The Eastern Region is the third most populated area in Ghana (2, 633, 154, representing 10.7% of the country's population) (Ghana Statistical Service 2012). The region is also one of the most ethnically diverse in the country, comprising four major ethnic groupings, namely Akan (52.1%), the GA-Dangme (18.9%), the Ewes (15.9%) and the Guans (7.2%)¹². It is important to note that within each of the major ethnic groups, there are differences. For example, the Akan people in the region consist of the Akwapim in the south, the Akyem in the west and the Kwawu in the north. All the three religious groups are also present in the region. According to the 2010 census, 2, 118, 252 people, representing 8.6% of the national population reside in the Volta Region (Ghana Statistical Service 2012). While the Ewe are in the majority (68.5%), seven other major ethnic groups can be found there¹³. Like the two regions mentioned above, all the three religions are present in the Volta Region¹⁴ (Ghana Statistical Service 2012).

The multi-religious, cultural and dialectal characteristics of the three regions presented many challenges for the implementation of the CBRDP. These stemmed from the design of the project as a 'community-based' initiative. While on face value, 'community' is appealing and connotes collegiality and local collective ideals; it is a contested and deceptive term (Amin 2005; Kelly 2008; Defillippis, Fisher & Shragge 2010). As Chapter Six will show, the designers of Ghana's CBRDP seem to have taken the characteristics of the regions in question for granted, oblivious to the fact that the more ethnically diverse a locality is, the higher the risk of a community-based project failing there (Labonne & Chase 2007). The term 'community' appears to have been erroneously 'spatialised', homogenised, labelled and forced on many of the beneficiary

¹⁰ Name of an ethnic group.

¹¹ The Asante Region has the highest population of 4,725, 046 representing 19.5% of the population.

¹² <http://www.modernghana.com>, retrieved December 13, 2011.

¹³ They include the Guan (9.2%), the Akan (8.5%) and the Gurma (6.5%). The region also houses other minority ethnic groups constituting less than 2% of the population: The Ga-Adangbe, Mole-Dagbani, Grusi and the Mande-Busanga.

¹⁴ <http://ghanadistricts.com/region>, retrieved December 15, 2011.

localities, even though their grounded realities and mobility patterns showed that ‘communities’ on which the projects were ‘based’ seemed not to exist practically.

Figure 1.1 Locating Map of Ghana on the African continent



Source: <http://thebrightestman.wikispaces.com/Sergio+Ghana+Safari>, retrieved March 20, 2012.

1.6.2. Political Setting

Ghana has a dual system of political governance: the Western-styled democratic system and the traditional system or Chieftaincy. The country's democratic system was necessitated by British colonialism, which began in the early Nineteenth Century (Buah 1998; Donkor 2005). Ghana became the first Sub-Saharan African country to gain independence from the British on March 6, 1957, led by its first President, Dr. Kwame Nkrumah of the Convention People's Party (CPP). Right from independence, Ghana has adopted a presidential democratic system of government with an elected parliament and independent judiciary. Since 1957, six military and civilian governments have led the country, although the Fourth Republic (1992) has witnessed uninterrupted regimes of J.J. Rawlings (1992–2000), J.A. Kufour (2000–2008), J.E.A. Mills¹⁵ (2009– July 24, 2012), and now, J. Mahama (July 25, 2012 to date).

Figure 1.2 Emblems of the two Dominant Political Parties in Ghana



Left: National Democratic Congress (Social Democrats), Right: New Patriotic Party (Liberals Democrats). Source: www.ghanaweb.com.

¹⁵ President Mills died and did not finish his first term. J. Mahama, who was the Vice President, has been sworn in as the President.

Ghana is a politically-sensitive country; virtually every national event or program is politicised. As Chapter Five will show, the CBRDP was politicised. Two political parties are dominant in Ghana (see emblems above): the ruling National Democratic Congress (NDC) and the New Patriotic Party (NPP). Both political parties have activist groups they call 'foot-soldiers'; these are supposedly the men and women who work hard for their respective political parties at the grassroots level to win elections. 'Foot-soldiers' have become so influential that they are able to boycott and sabotage national programs, seize state properties or even demand the dismissal of Ministers of state and government officials¹⁶. As the findings will show in the fifth chapter, the 'foot-soldiers' of the NPP, under whose regime the CBRDP was implemented, tended to capture some of the projects, a situation which discouraged 'non-party members' to contribute to the implementation and sustainability of the projects.

Ghana's democratic setting allows for the operation of a local government system that consists of Regional Coordinating Councils and a four-tier and three-tier Municipal/District (Figure 1.3). Within the local government system, District Assemblies (DAs)¹⁷ are the most influential (Tettey 2006; Antwi-Boasiako 2010). While constitutionally mandated to be the hub of development at the local level, the operations of the DAs offer many loopholes for political machinations. This is because, although Article 248 (2) of the Constitution requires that DAs be non-partisan, the opposite is the reality. Ahwoi (2010), Antwi-Boasiako (2010) and other local scholars have blamed this circumstance on the constitutional provision that allows the President to elect the District Chief Executive (DCE) and 30% of the DA membership. Thus, local government authorities in Ghana seem to be constitutionally subjected to the control of the central government. The situation, Crawford (2004) and Antwi-Boasiako (2010) have observed, has weakened the country's local government structures and the realisation of true fiscal and administrative decentralisation.

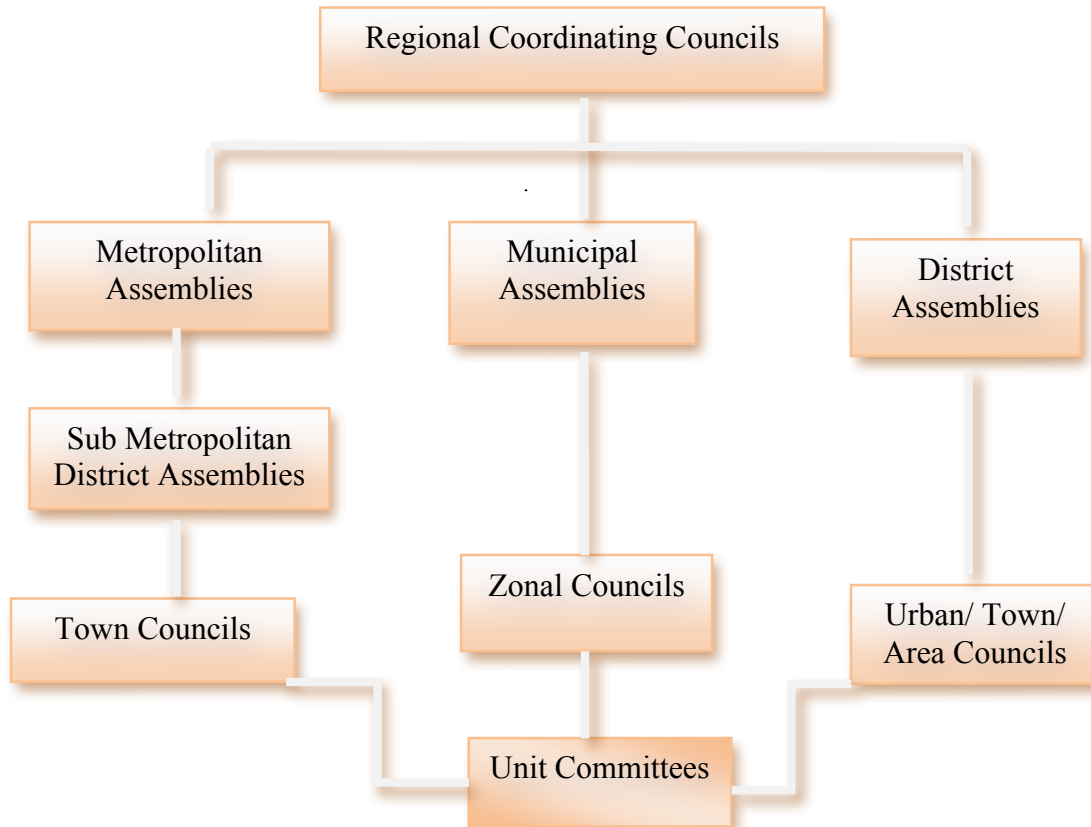
Despite these obvious flaws, the World Bank classifies Ghana's local governance as highly functional (Binswanger et al. 2010). As a result, the CBRDP was designed and implemented based on an approach called the 'Matching Strategy' (see Chapter Three). This meant that the country's established decentralisation system was not adjusted to accommodate the project. However, as argued in Chapter Five, the approach was a

¹⁶ <http://elections.peacefionline.com/politics/201108/64201.php>; <http://www.modernghana.com/news>, all retrieved November 25, 2011.

¹⁷ Could be Municipal Assemblies, depending on the population. But District Assemblies will be used throughout the thesis.

policy error, and led to the implementation of the project on an effectively weak and politicised local government system.

Figure 1.3 Structure of Ghana's Local Government System¹⁸



Source: Ahwoi (2010).

Chieftaincy is the other governance institution in Ghana. It is often referred to as the traditional institution because even before 1471, when Europeans first set foot in the country, the local people governed and administered their affairs through this institution. Chieftaincy was also the medium of British local governance during the early colonial days in the late nineteenth century through a system known as the Indirect Rule (Buah 1998; Arhin 2002). While the British colonial rule undermined the evolutionary processes of the traditional administrative structures, colonialism could not totally eradicate chieftaincy (Donkoh 2005; Knierzinger 2011). This is largely attributable to the fact that, while chieftaincy varies in form among different cultures nationwide, it is still very much respected. This is because chieftaincy provides people with a sense of belonging, aside from the fact that Traditional Chiefs are also regarded

¹⁸ Several Units form an Electoral Area headed by an Assembly Member. Several Electoral Areas form a Town /Area Council headed by an Area Council Chairman. Several Area Councils form a District Assembly headed by a District Chief Executive.

as the embodiment of the spirit of the ancestors and a link between the latter and the living (Arhin 2002; Donkoh 2005; Manboah–Rockson 2007; Knierzinger 2011). Scholars explain that after Ghana’s independence, the role that traditional rulers played under the British colonial rule was terminated in the interest of democracy. Through the enactment of the Chieftaincy Act of 1961 (Act 81), Traditional Chiefs became subject to central government control during the 1960 and 1966 periods. However, when Nkrumah’s regime that passed the Act was overthrown, the military government that took over adopted a more liberal approach to the institution. For example, they passed the Chieftaincy Act of 1971 (Act 370), which severed the central government control of the institution; and also established the Regional and National House of Chiefs (Buah 1998; Arhin 2002; Donkor 2005; Knierzinger 2011).

The current (1992) Constitution has further enhanced the recognition of the chieftaincy institution. For example, Article 270 (1) and (2) recognizes and protects the office of Chiefs and debars the Parliament from making laws that interfere with the institution. The Constitution in Article, 272, (a–d) also assigns the institution with the responsibilities of: 1) Advising the government on chieftaincy issues; 2) Collecting, refining, codifying customary laws; and 3) Performing other functions Parliament may refer. Aside from these statutory functions, Traditional Chiefs also settle disputes through arbitration and are able to mobilize people for development purposes (Arhin 2002; Donkor 2005).

Since 2000, while the legitimacy of the institution’s source of authority has been questioned in the wake of succession disputes, Chieftaincy continues to be popular in Ghana (Abotchie 2006; Manboah–Rockson 2007; Prah & Yeboah 2011). The institution has since 1980 realised some form of modernisation. Unlike the pre-1980 period, Ghanaian Traditional Chiefs are now acquiring formal education, with some setting up foundations for improving education, healthcare and environmental sensitization in their respective traditional areas (Knierzinger 2011). These initiatives and modernisation of the institution have in a sense augmented their influence as brokers of social capital and local development. However, the designers of Ghana’s CBRDP appeared to have sidelined Traditional Chiefs by not assigning them clear–cut roles. Because Traditional Chiefs are not just custodians of culture, but also of spaces with well–delineated boundaries, they tended to demand the right of control over the CBRDPs that were implemented within their localities. As the empirical data in Chapter Seven will show, this led to conflicts between the Chiefs and local government officials, which eroded

any existing social capital in the localities. Ultimately, the conflicts impacted negatively on the maintenance of the projects.

Social capital is noted as being indispensable attribute for developing communities (Putnam 2000, 2003; Bauman 2004; Tesoriero 2010). Described as the willingness of people to do things in concert and for one another, social capital is considered the glue that holds people together (Tesoriero 2010). Through social capital, networks and bonds can be created between people from different backgrounds or who have little in common (Putnam 2003, Woolcock 1998; Woolcock & Narayan 2000; Bauman 2004; Nyirenda et al. 2010). According to Kenny (2010), social capital is an observable and a measurable resource that should be nurtured through trust, reciprocity, norms and networks; but not necessarily for achieving positive outcomes. Therefore, as Yates and Jochum (2003) argued, social capital can be drawn on, increased or depleted.

Despite its importance for facilitating communal activities, recent research by Ling and Dale (2013) shows that social capital requires people and organisations to be nurtured and used effectively. They argue that social capital does not develop in a vacuum and that it requires the efforts of an influential individual or a group to cultivate it. Relative to Ghana, Arhin (2002), Donkor (2005), Ahwoi (2010) and Knierzinger (2011) have identified Traditional Chiefs as influential agents of social capital in the country. Respected as trustworthy individuals, Ghanaian Traditional Chiefs settle disputes, provide social welfare services and contribute to national debates on various topical issues. Aside from Ghana, Arcand and Bassole (2007) and Binswanger et al. (2010) outlined the roles Traditional Chiefs played in the implementation of various community-based programs in Senegal and Benin respectively. By implication, Traditional Chiefs in the West African subregion wield the influence to determine the fate of development projects. As the thesis shows in Chapter Seven however, Traditional Chiefs seemed to have been ignored in the implementation of Ghana's CBRDP, an oversight that came with dire consequences for the projects. Despite this positive literature and neat packaging of social capital, this concept proved elusive and complex in the field and like power and empowerment, was a concept not well implemented or understood, which in turn led to the negative impacts on the projects studied in this thesis (see Chapters Six and Seven).

1.6.3 Ghana's Economy and Aid

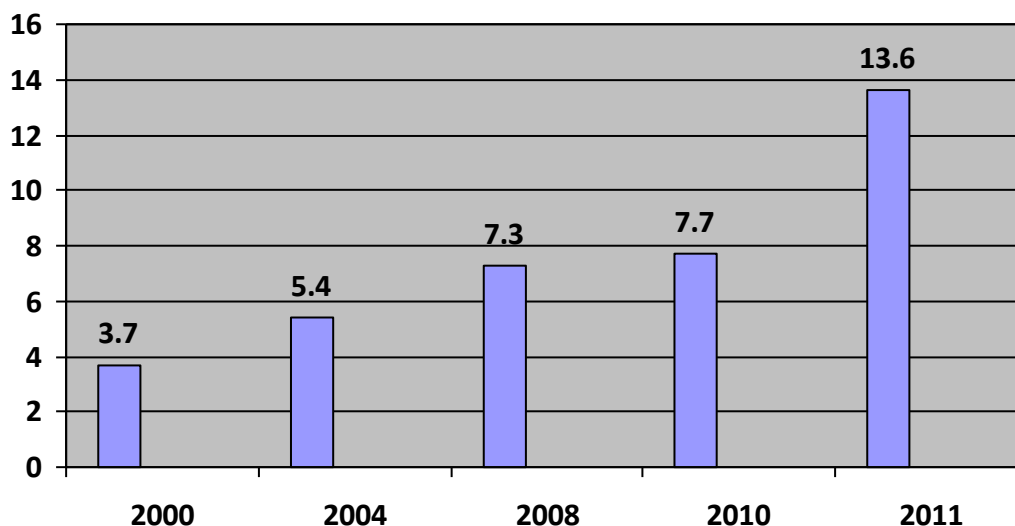
Ghana has an agro-based economy (35% of GDP), and the world's second largest producer of cocoa (Bawumia 2010). Ghana is also known for its large gold and other mineral export industry (Bawumia 2010). The country relies on its local taxes and remittances from Ghanaians abroad to support the fiscal budget (Aryeetey, Harrigan & Nissanke 2000; Amoako-Tuffour 2005; ISSER 2010). According to Amoako-Tuffour (2005) and Bawumia (2010), although significant, tax revenue has not been enough to meet the country's fiscal budgetary needs. In 2008, Ghana achieved Middle-Income Country status. The country's economy recorded the highest ever GDP growth of 13.6% in 2011 (see Figure 1.4; Government of Ghana 2012 Budget Statement, World Bank 2012). Poverty levels have also decreased significantly from nearly 40% in 2000 to 28.5% in 2009 (African Human Development Report 2012). Since 2010, Ghana has been producing oil from offshore reserves discovered in June 2007 and is raising hopes for an economic boost to further reduce poverty levels.

Despite the oil find and economic growth in the last decade, Ghana is aid-dependent (Harrigan and Younger 2000), and one of the top ten recipients of development assistance in Sub-Saharan Africa (see Table 1.1)¹⁹. As of 2010, the International Development Association of the World Bank Group, the US, the UK and the EU Institutions were the country's largest donors²⁰. According to Harrigan and Younger (2000), until the mid-1960s, aid was relatively insignificant in Ghana. This meant that very little donor assistance was needed. Two reasons accounted for this. First, Dr. Kwame Nkrumah, the first President of the country 1957-1996, was distrustful of Britain and the USA, major donors of the time. Aid in these times, as the next chapter discusses, was used to 'make friends' because of the Cold War (1947-1991). The Ghanaian President refused any aid advances to the country and adopted a non-aligned posture. Second, Ghana's economy had sizeable foreign exchange reserves, little debt, and a small public sector at the close of colonial rule (Harrigan & Younger 2000; Quartey 2005).

¹⁹ See also Development Aid at a Glance statistics by region, Africa 2012 edition, retrieved from <http://www.oecd.org/dataoecd/40/27/42139250.pdf>, retrieved on March 24, 2012.

²⁰ See <http://www.oecd.org/dataoecd/21/40/1881076.gif>, retrieved March 25, 2012.

Figure 1.4 GDP– Real Growth Rate (%) in Ghana in a Decade Compared



Source: World Bank 2008; Ghana Statistical Service 2010; Gov't of Ghana 2012 Budget Statement.

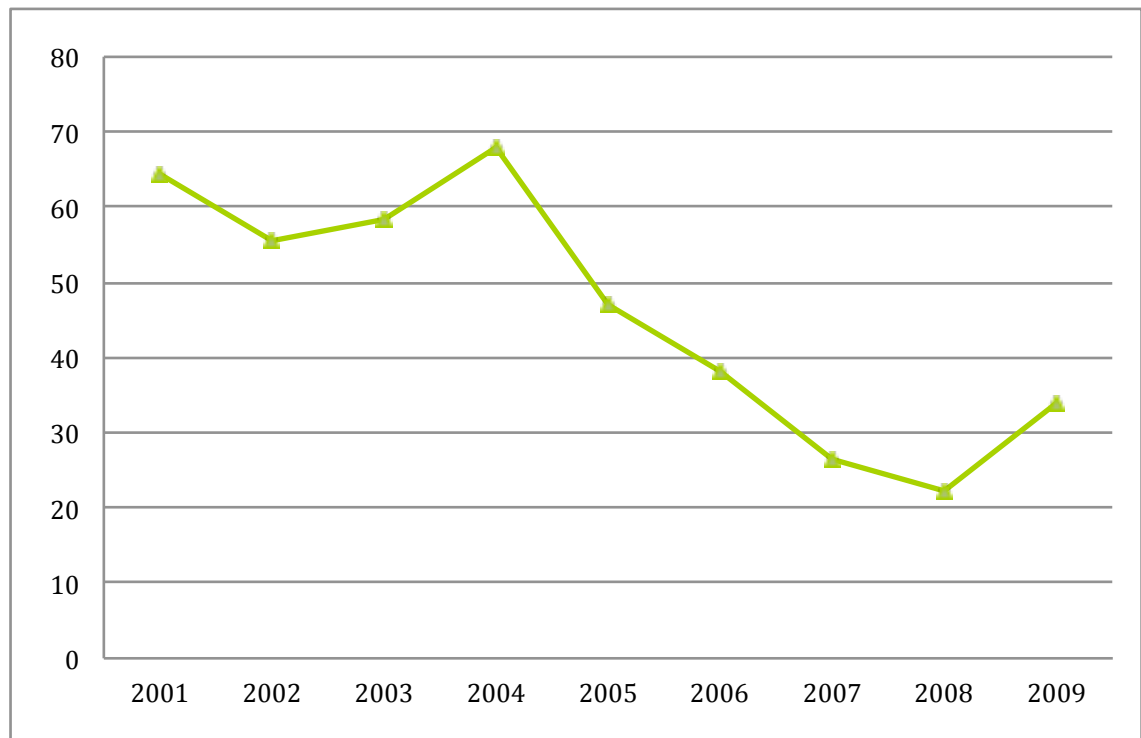
Table 1.1 Aid–Dependency in Ghana and Sub–Saharan Compared

Indicators	1968		2000		2009	
	Ghana	S–Sahara Africa	Ghana	S–Sahara Africa	Ghana	S–Sahara Africa
Net Aid as % of GNI	3.85	2.25	12.37	4.02	6.12	4.49
Net Aid as % of Gross Capital Formation	33.62	12.52	50.2	22.96	30.9	24.85
Net Aid as % of Imports of Good/Services	-	-	17.2	10.83	13.9	11.81
Net Aid per Capita (\$)	7.44	4.14	31.18	19.61	66.44	53.5

Source: <http://www.tradingeconomics.com/sub-saharan-africa/net-oda-received-per-capita-us-dollar-wb-data.html>; <http://www.tradingeconomics.com/ghana/net-oda-received-percent-of-gni-wb-data.html>, all retrieved under various indicators March 24, 2012. There are no data for 1968.

Nevertheless, since the mid-1960s, aid-dependency has become a common feature in Ghana. It commenced with the National Liberation Council (NLC), the military government, which ousted Nkrumah's regime²¹ (Harrigan & Younger 2000). The NLC government claimed that they needed fiscal support to balance the payments on large accumulated commercial debts incurred by the Nkrumah government. These developments laid the foundation for the phenomenon of aid-dependency in Ghana. As a share of Gross National Income (GNI) and other indicators (see Table 1.1), aid to Ghana, has for most periods, been higher than the Sub-Saharan African averages. As Figure 1.5 also shows, while aid ODA levels have been decreasing since 2005, aid as a percentage of Ghana's central government expenditure for the decade has averaged over 46%²².

Figure 1.5 Net ODA as Percentage of Central Government Expense



Source: <http://www.tradingeconomics.com/ghana/net-oda-received-percent-of-central-government-expense-wb-data.html>, retrieved March 25, 2012.

²¹ In a coup d'état in 1966.

²² <http://www.tradingeconomics.com/ghana/net-oda-received-percent-of-central-government-expense-wb-data.html>, retrieved March 25, 2012.

It is within this context that Ghana's 'friendship' with the IMF, World Bank (who funded the CBRDP) and the donor fraternity must be understood - a relationship that has been mutually beneficial. Ghana regards its donors and their agencies as 'development partners' (Government of Ghana 2012 Budget). On the other hand, the donors regard the country as a reference point for where 'development works' and aid policy succeeds (English 1999; Africa Development Outlook 2008²³). Significantly, although the implementation of the CBRDP meant that Ghana was still economically tied to donors (aid-dependency), there were a lot at stake for the World Bank who funded the project. Among other things, when successfully executed, the CBRDP would offer the World Bank and proponents of community-driven driven development programs the theoretical grounds to promote it in other developing countries.

For Ghana, it would also mean more aid and reinforce the notion that aid works better there (English 1999; Azeem et al. 2006). Consequently, in an obvious support of aid, former President J.A. Kufour (2001–2008), on a local media network [Joyfm], recounted the role aid has played in the country's development agenda, particularly during his tenure (July 1 2010, Joyfm midday news). In the face of recent flood and sanitation challenges facing the country, the former President urged the current government not to be ashamed to beg for aid²⁴. Interestingly, the immediate past President, H.E. Professor J.E.A. Mills, while addressing the African Diplomatic Corps in Ottawa, Canada in November 2011, urged his fellow African leaders to take bold steps to untie themselves from aid-dependency (Ghana News Agency, November 19, 2011).²⁵ Two days later, his government released the 2012 budget, of which a significant percentage was to be aid-funded, particularly with a USD 3 billion loan facility from China, the highest ever aid arrangement in the country's history (Government of Ghana Budget Statement 2012). While addressing the 2012 UN General Assembly in New York, H.E. John Mahama, the current President, also pleaded with the World Bank not to withdraw development assistance to Ghana, although the country has attained a middle-income status²⁶. Despite Ghana's obvious dependence on aid, academics do not agree on the direct relationship between aid flows and the

²³ See also <http://www.dfid.gov.uk/ghana>, retrieved March 24, 2011.

²⁴ <http://edition.myjoyonline.com/pages/news/201111/76753.php>, retrieved on January 10, 2012.

²⁵ See http://www.ghana.gov.gh/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=9163:president-mills-urges-african-nations-to-be-self-reliant&catid=28:general-news&Itemid=162, retrieved 20/01/12.

²⁶ Middle income countries are expected to go to the financial market to borrow at commercial rates instead of relying on the World Bank for concessionary loan facilities. (<http://www.modernghana.com/news/419992/1/mahama-pleads-with-world-bank-not-to-withdraw-fina.html>, retrieved September 30, 2012).

country's economic growth and poverty reduction (Aryeetey & Cox 1997; Osei, Morrissey & Lloyd 2005; Bawumia 2010; Clemens et al. 2011; Osei 2012).

1.7 The Case Study: The Community–Based Rural Development Project

The Community–Based Rural Development Project (CBRDP) (2004–2011) was a joint pilot initiative of the Government of Ghana and the World Bank. Theoretically, Ghana's CBRDP was designed as a type of the World Bank's Community–Driven Development program. However, Ghana's CBRDP was supply–driven, unlike conventional Community–Driven Development Programs which are demand–driven. This means that the beneficiary communities did not initiate the projects, but were selected, trained and funded to implement pre–categorised project types. Ghana's CBRDP was funded with loan facilities from the World Bank's International Development Association and the Agence' Francaise Development. The Government of Ghana implemented the project under the Ministry of Local Government and Rural Development (MLGRD) and the Regional Coordinating Units (RICUs) in conjunction with an independent CBRDP secretariat. The project was piloted in two phases, 2004–2008 and 2009–2011 in all ten regions, all hundred and thirty-eight Districts, and one hundred and forty five Area Councils (see Figure 1.3; CBRDP Implementation Manual 2006). The thesis is based on the Area Councils, which are found in Metropolitan and District Assembly areas. Area Councils consist of Government Appointees, ordinary residents, Assembly and Unit Committee Members (Ahwoi 2010).

The CBRDP served as one of the principal vehicles for the implementation of Ghana's Poverty Reduction Strategy (GPRS) to bridge the gap of uneven distribution across socio-economic groups and geographical locations (CBRDP Implementation Manual 2006). The CBRDP had two objectives. First, build and strengthen the capacities of National, Regional, District, Area Councils and rural communities to deliver services and manage resources. At the Area Council and local levels, the assumption was that, by empowering rural populations to participate actively in local development processes, they would improve their productive assets and their local infrastructure (CBRDP Implementation Manual 2006). As a result, the second objective was to introduce a new fiscal transfer mechanism for the development of infrastructure and income generating activities in rural areas (Yaron 2008; Binswanger et al. 2010).

As will be argued in Chapter Five, fiscal administration in Ghana is centralised and very bureaucratic (Inanga & Osei–Wusu 2004; Baffour–Kyei 2009). Thus, the CBRDP’s strategy was to pilot the transfer of funds directly to the hitherto weak Area Councils for local developments. Interestingly, while the CBRDP’s objective was to avoid the fiscal and administrative bottlenecks at the Regional and District levels, the designers of the project tied it to the existing bureaucratic government planning and procurement systems. Also, unlike conventional CDD projects, where various localities compete for funding (Dongier et al. 2003; Platteau 2004; Labonne & Chase 2007; Platteau & Gaspart 2009), the CBRDP was different; District Assemblies selected the recipient localities. Because Ghana’s District Assemblies are effectively controlled by the central government (see Chapter Five; Antwi–Boasiako 2010; Ahwoi 2010), the selection processes appears to have been politicised.

1.7.1 The CBRDP Implementation Strategy

To facilitate implementation, the country was divided into four Zones (see Figure 1.6): Upper East, Upper West and Northern Regions as Zone I; Asante and Brong Ahafo Regions as Zone II; Central and Western Regions Zone as III; and Eastern, Greater Accra and Volta Regions as Zone IV (the focus of this thesis). Each Zone had a Zonal Head and other staff to provide administrative and coordinating support to the project during the five stages of implementation; these are described briefly below.

Table 1.2 Implementation Processes of the CBRDP in the Area Councils

Stage	Activity
Stage I	Training in the rudiments of the CBRDP
Stage II	Preparation of Action Plans
Stage III	Examination and Approval of the Action Plans
Stage IV	Implementation
Stage V	Monitoring and Evaluation

Designed by author, based on CBRDP Implementation Manual (2006).

Stage I: Training of Area Councilors

All selected Area Councils²⁷ were taken through the rudiments of the project. In seminars run by consultants, Area Councillors were trained in financial, project tendering and procurement management processes. The Area Councillors were also trained in how to prepare project proposals (Action Plan). The Action Plans contained demographic information and the prioritised needs of the Area Council as well as a project implementation plan and a budget. While they were prepared as a requirement for receiving the CBRDP, the Action Plans were also meant to be the Area Council's development blueprint (CBRDP Implementation Manual 2006).

Stage II: Preparation of Community Action Plans

Once the training was over, Stage Two required that the Area Councillors return to their respective localities to prepare their Action Plans. The process was 'supposed' to be participatory and consultative between the local people [including women], the Assembly and Unit Committee Members, and local people. Once an Action Plan was finalised, it was forwarded to the Zonal Head of the CBRDP to be considered for funding.

Stage III: Examination/Approval of Action Plans

Stage Three rested with the CBRDP secretariat, which examined the Action Plans using four benchmarks. First, the Action Plan had to reflect the 'needs' captured in the respective district's development blueprints, referred to as the District Approved Development Plans. Second, it had to be explicit about the project's implementation and procurement plans. Third, the prioritised needs had to fall within the 'menu' of the CBRDP components, each consisting of different, but specific sub-projects (see Appendix A). These included: 1) Institutional Strengthening and Capacity Building (ISCB); 2) Infrastructure for Agricultural Development (IAD); 3) Rural Enterprise Development (RED); 4) Infrastructure for Social and Human Development (ISHD); and 5) Community-Based Natural Resource Management (CBNRM). Finally, the implementation budget had to match the CBRDP seed money of GHC15, 000²⁸. As will be discussed later, some 'good' projects were either rejected or downsized because they could not be funded by the project's inadequate seed money or that they were

²⁷ The selection of the Areas Council was based on two criteria: a functioning office with staff and a three-party-signatory bank account. But a number of the Area Councils researched did not have offices. Before the CBRDP, although the Area Councils existed, with no project to implement, they were virtually in a state of inertia, as the District Assemblies executed most local projects. The CBRDP was the seminal nationwide project that tested the facilitation and implementation capacities of the Area Councils

²⁸ Approximately US\$10, 274, based on exchange rate effective March 31, 2004, GH¢ 9050 = US\$1.

inconsistent with both the District Approved Development Plans and the project's sub-components.

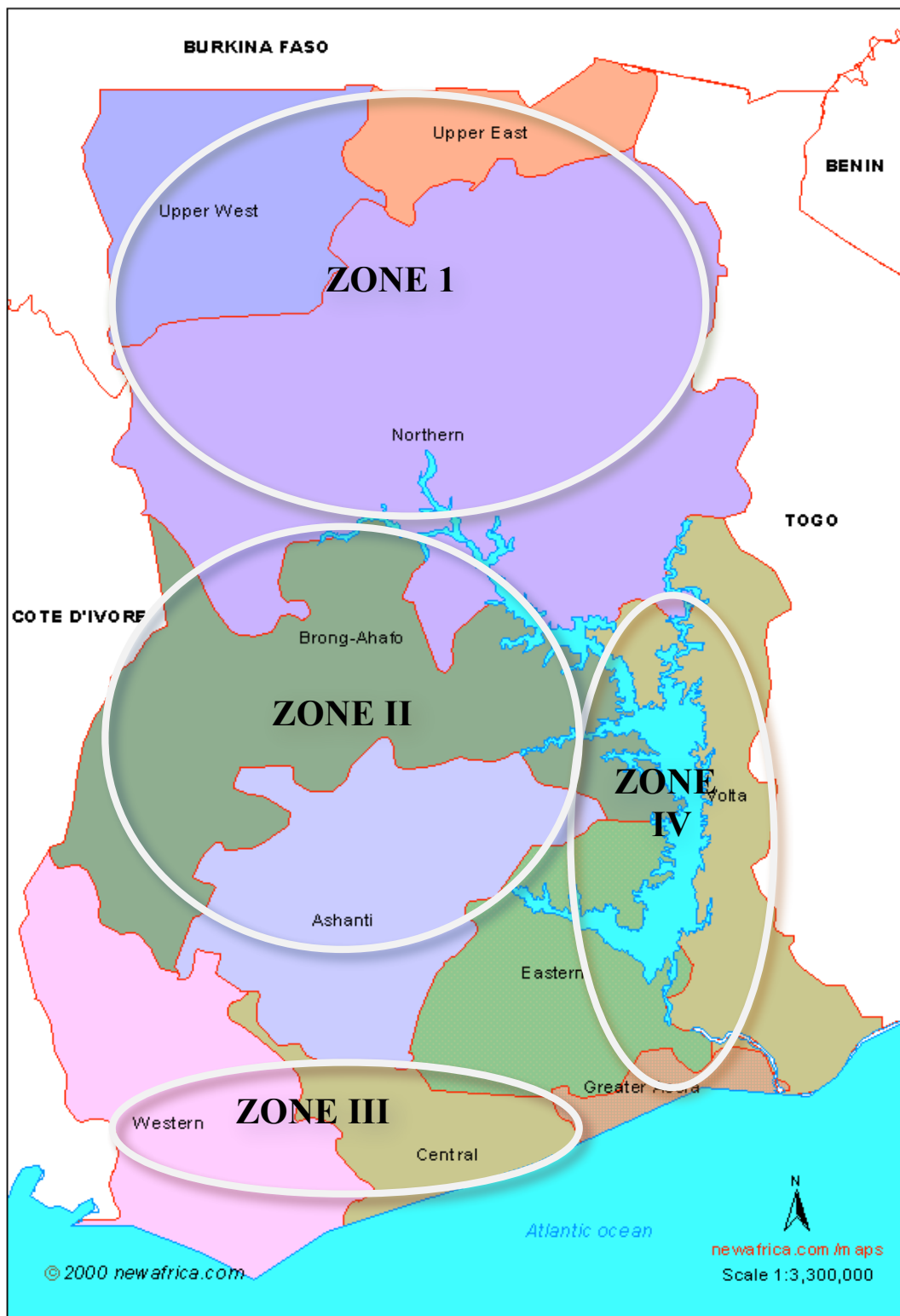
There were two types of the funding: the Normal and Rapid Response Initiative (RRI). Under the Normal funding arrangements, the Area Councils received the funding as they progressed and were not time bound. In the RRI category, Area Councils were required to complete their chosen project within a hundred-day limit, after which they received the funds (see Table 1.3). Yaron (2008), for example, observed that the RRI procedures had interesting empowerment impacts and proved to be very helpful in promoting greater accountability, transparency, ownership and effective management of associated sub-projects. However, in two of the nine localities where projects were implemented under the RRI were found the projects to be showing signs of structural deterioration, as they seemed to have been hastily constructed (see Table 1.3).

Once the CBRDP secretariat approved the Action Plan, the beneficiary locality received the seed money in three equal instalments into the Area Council's bank account. The expectations were that the District Assembly would contribute 10% of the project sum, while the beneficiary 'community' contribute labour or offer hired services at a reduced market rate. In some of the localities researched, the District Assembly funds never came, while others also suffered the 'usual' financial bureaucratic delays. In such circumstances, certain 'influential' local people pre-financed the projects, but were later reimbursed, when the seed money arrived (CBRDP Implementation Manual 2006; CBRDP Annual Reports 2006 – 2010; Field notes 2010).

Stage IV: Implementation

At the project implementation stage, the Area Councils had to collaborate with the District Assembly for technical assistance. This depended on the sub-project chosen. Commonly, the District Planning Officer, Accountant, and Engineers offered relevant technical assistance at various stages of project implementation. Most aspects of procurement and technical components were supposed to be achieved on a 'community contracting' basis. This meant that businesses in the beneficiary locality had priority over 'outsiders' in the supply of the project materials, albeit through a tendering process. However, as the sixth chapter of the thesis will show, in some localities, the Area Councillors awarded contracts to themselves or their 'cronies', an act that contravened the project's principles.

Figure 1.6 CBRDP Zonal Demarcations



Source: <http://www.ghanaweb.com/GhanaHomePage/geography/maps.php> retrieved under administrative maps on August 10 2010. Demarcated by author.

Stage V: Monitoring and Evaluation

As each of the CBRDP beneficiary localities was expected to implement, own and maintain their projects, monitoring teams were established to oversee the sustenance of the projects. The state of most of the projects studied, as highlighted below, suggested that the monitoring teams were not functioning. Some of the monitoring officials complained of being controlled at every turn by the District Assembly bureaucrats, who sometimes delayed the release of funds for the maintenance of the projects.

1.7.2 State of the Projects as of Fieldwork

As of March 2011 when the data collection was completed, all the projects studied were completed, some for more than two years. Apart from the eight-seater school toilet project at Ahugakorpe in the Volta Region, which was awaiting commissioning and the Tease market sheds, which appeared to be ‘boycotted’, the other seven projects studied were in use. During the fieldwork, it was observed that most of the nine projects studied had not been well maintained; these aberrations were confirmed in the interviews conducted. Some of the anecdotes have been reproduced with pictures on the projects in Chapters Five, Six and Seven of the thesis. Table 1.3 below depicts the state of each of the projects.

Table 1.3: Profiles of the CBRDPs in the sampled Localities in Zone IV

Region	Project	State of the projects	Funding Type
Eastern	Pakro Mechanised bore-hole	The project was in use, but had broken down several times. Some members of the committee taking care of it complained that the local people do not want to pay user fees, so they have to rely on the District Assembly for funds to maintain it.	Normal
	Ntoaso sixteen-seater Public toilet	A beautiful structure, but the surroundings were bushy and unmaintained. While the facility was being patronised, on all four visits to the village, the researcher found the inside of the facility not disinfected. The caretakers of the facility explained that it was in that state because of a seeming power struggle between the Assembly Member and the Traditional Chief over who should control the money meant to maintain the project.	Normal
	Tease Market sheds	The sheds looked abandoned and deteriorating. While empty, traders were seen selling in the sun outside. There were residues of human excreta in the sheds, which sheltered squatters in the nights.	Normal

Greater Accra	Agoo Culverts	The culverts looked well-maintained, but anytime it rained, they were flooded. The local people complained that they wanted them a bit wide, but the District Engineer, who they alleged paid no attention to them, indicated that there were no funds available to execute that.	Normal
	Renovation of Tashie Presby Primary School	The renovation and the government school-feeding program increased school enrolments to a rate that the facilities could not support. The school had no electricity and fans. Because the Tashie locality had no public toilet facilities, some of the local people were defecating in the classrooms and on the school's compound.	Normal
	Aboloo Community Library	The library was deteriorating. Most of the louver blades were broken; and there were numerous cracks on the building, which had no electricity and fans. Most of the bookshelves were empty, there not being enough books.	Rapid Respond Initiative
Volta	Agbetor	The structure lacked many basic educational amenities like textbooks and educational aids. Also because there was no toilet facility in the school, staff and students were using the bush as places of convenience. The school had outgrown the three-unit structure, so Classes Three & Four and Five & Six were merged in makeshift structures. The project looked to be resting on the shoulders of the local Chief who pre-financed it.	Rapid Respond Initiative
	Dedenu Mechanised Bore-hole	This was one of the well-maintained projects. People in the locality had no problems paying tokens. Even so, the pipe did not always flow and the people had to wait sometimes for a week. The maintenance committee was always active, but complained of District Assemblies bureaucratic processes of releasing funds to maintain the pipes. They were virtually frustrated by having to always go through the District Assembly to access funds to maintain the project.	Normal
	Lume Ahugakorpe eight-seater school toilets	The project has been completed but the school had been waiting for the District Chief Executive to commission it. In the mean time, the entire Lume locality and the school were sharing an overused 4-seater toilet facility built there by DANIDA.	

Source: Field notes (2011).

CHAPTER TWO

GLOBAL AID TRENDS AND RAMIFICATIONS FOR GHANA

“[Ghana has] been turned into a veritable laboratory for the investigation of different approaches to endemic African problems”
(Antwi–Boasiako 2010, p. 166).

This chapter provides an historical and global overview of International Development Aid (aid) and how the trends in this aid have impacted on Ghana. The researcher argues that Post–War II aid successfully met its aims of restoring the economies of Western Europe under the Marshall Plan. However, because it was originally designed for a specific context, aid has largely been unable to replicate the Marshall Plan’s results in other settings. Therefore, over the last two decades in particular, desperate for evidence that ‘aid works’, international development agencies have been experimenting with various programs, many of which have achieved mixed outcomes and also turned the recipients into ‘aid–addicts’ (Moyo 2009; Antwi–Boasiako 2010). Within the context of aid to Ghana, one of the top ten aid–dependent countries in Sub–Saharan Africa, the impacts and limitations are considered for major aid programs such as Structural Adjustment, the Highly Indebted Poor Countries Initiative, Multi–Donor Budgetary Support and the Millennium Development Goals. Based on the literature, this thesis argues that, when aid programs concentrate on economic theories and indicators (‘economicentric’), while ignoring the social, political and other relevant contexts within which they are implemented, mixed results or failure seem inevitable.

2.1 A Brief Overview of Aid in the Pre–World War II Period

Long before the institutionalisation of aid in the 1950/60s colonial governments and voluntary Christian missionaries provided and managed large–scale humanitarian aid (Hjertholm & Howard 1998). Thus, as early as 1811 and 1896, the US Government was providing relief aid to the citizens of Venezuela and food aid to other parts of the world. The US Department of Agriculture also funded agriculture research centres in parts of Latin America. Hjertholm and Howard (1998) argued further that, while the French funded universities in their colonies, Great Britain’s colonial administration provided non–administrative aid to their colonies through the 1929 Colonial Act and the Colonial Development and Welfare Act of 1940 and 1945 (see also Lumsdaine 1993; Riddell 2007). During much of the Pre–War II era, church–based organisations also provided key services to poor people. For example, in Eastern Africa, Riddell (2007) argues that

church-based organisations provided between 40% to 60% of health, education, water and food–security services. Relative to Ghana, Buah (1998) asserts that Christian missionaries championed formal education in the country during much of the Pre–World War II period.

Apart from the colonial governments and church-based organisations, Riddell (2007) explains that during the 1940s, there were discussions in the International Labour Organisation for the provision of funds to raise living standards in poor countries. Also, the United Nations Relief and Rehabilitation Administration (UNRRA), after its establishment in 1943, received funds from over forty countries to help provide food, medicine, and agricultural and industrial goods to recipients in more than fifty countries. These early international commitments for alleviating poverty in poor countries were not only championed by Western countries, as Asian and Latin American countries were among those who called for the establishment of substantial programmes of development assistance²⁹ (Lancaster 2007). Even so, the genesis of the current aid regime is traceable to the aftermath of World War II.

2.2 The Post–World War II Period: The Birth of the Bretton Wood Institutions, the Marshall Plan and the Cold War

The immediate Post World War II period (1945–1955) significantly influenced the institutionalisation of International Development Aid and several contemporary aid institutions developed from organisations originally created to cater for post–war needs (Riddell 2007). These include, but not are limited to, Oxfam (1942), which originally catered only for refugees from Greece; CARE (1945), which was originally the Centre for American Relief in Europe; the UN (1945) which began as the United Nations Relief and Rehabilitation Agency (UNRRA); and the so–called Bretton Wood Institutions³⁰ (Hjertholm & Howard 1998; Riddell 2007).

The birth of the Bretton Wood Institutions (International Bank for Reconstruction and Development [now the World Bank], the International Monetary Fund [IMF] and the International Trade Organisation [now the WTO]) to establish a framework for a global

²⁹ It was in the 1940s that the Indian Chair of the UN’s Sub–Commission on Economic Development formally called for the UN to provide concessional loans to poor countries to help them obtain loans from commercial sources.

³⁰ Named after the Bretton Woods suburb in New Hampshire USA, where over seven hundred delegates from some forty–four countries met in Mount Washington Hotel in 1944. The meeting was held against the backdrop of World War II and was meant to restructure international finance, establish a multilateral trading system and construct cooperation that would avoid a repetition of the Great Depression of the 1930s.

system of financial and monetary management, is considered by many scholars as the genesis of the dominant framework for aid-infused development (Crush 1995; Lancaster 2007). In broad terms, the World Bank was designed to facilitate capital investment for reconstruction, while the IMF was designed to manage the global financial system³¹ and stabilise the world economy. Subtly underlying the operations of the two institutions was the idea that if war-devastated Europe was to return to its previous level of development, massive capital [aid] injection was required. This principle, later referred to as the ‘Gap-Theory’, was based on the ideas of Britain’s J.M. Maynard Keynes (1883–1946) and America’s H.D. Dexter White (1892–1948) (Erixon 2005). At the end of the 1940s therefore, the notion of using aid to drive economies had been established, starting with the US Marshall Plan³² of 1948 for Western Europeans. Although an economic program, the Marshall Plan also propelled the US into leadership of foreign policy (Cassen 1994; Lancaster 2007).

Driven by the Keynesian³³ Economic Theory [given huge capital investments, weak economies would be revived], the Marshall Plan was tailored for the reconstruction of war-torn Western Europe in the face of the threats of communism in Eastern Europe (Mehmet 1999; Lancaster 2007; Riddell 2007). Under the program, the US through its Secretary of State, George C. Marshall (1947–1949), embarked on an aid program worth USD 13 billion³⁴ to fourteen Western European countries in a five-year development plan (1948–1952). The Marshall Plan was successful in bringing Western Europe back onto a strong economic footing, restoring infrastructure and reinstating political stability (Hjertholm & Howard 1998; Riddell 2007).

Although designed for Western Europe, the Marshall Plan significantly influenced the establishment and globalisation of aid in two ways. First, in the wake of its relative success, the Marshall Plan tended to lend credence to the Keynesian Economic Theory. As a result, some argued for its replication in developing countries, based on a simplistic assumption that if it worked for Western Europeans, why could it not produce the same results in other contexts (Mehmet 1999; Crush 2005; Erixon 2005; Reinert 2007)? However, as some scholars have observed (see Escobar 1995; Botchway 2001;

³¹ France (1946), Netherlands, Denmark and Luxembourg (1947) were the earliest beneficiaries of loans from the World Bank and these were for reconstruction.

³² Also known as the European Recovery Program (Riddell 2007).

³³ Referring to the ideas of Maynard Keynes.

³⁴ USD 86 billion in today’s terms and only surpassed in 2005. Great Britain had the largest share of 24% according to Riddell (2007).

Li 2007), and this thesis will argue, ‘development’ is not just about capital investment, as the contextual differences and concepts on which aid programs are based also matter.

Second, as the US provided large sums to Europe, monies that the Bretton Wood Institutions had earmarked for the reconstruction of Europe were freed up and were ready to be directed towards developing countries (Cassen 1994; Lancaster 2007). This coincided with: 1) Britain and France’s resolve to maintain their geopolitical hold on their former colonies in Africa and Asia; and the 2) US and Russia’s quest for allies in Africa during the Cold War. Despite this, by the end of the 1960s, over thirty-one African countries had become independent, beginning with Ghana in 1957. However, their independence seemed nominal; they remained financially dependent on their colonial masters (Mehmet 1971; Kanbur 2003). Thus, aid became the tool for countries, Britain and France in particular, to maintain their geopolitical influence, a situation some commentators argue laid the foundation for aid–dependency on the African continent (Ashimolowo 2009; Moyo 2009).

Aid was also the instrument of Cold War diplomacy (1945–1991), as the US and the Soviet Union used it to gain allies in African countries (Mehmet 1971; Riddell 2007). It is within this context that the famous inaugural speech of US President Harry Truman (1945–1953) must be understood³⁵. While the speech tended to portray the US commitment as being the altruistic use of aid, the reality was that the US employed it to gain more allies in its challenge to Soviet communism (Lancaster 2007). Thus, Zaire’s Mobutu Sese Seko (1965 – 1997), Liberia’s Samuel Doe (1986 – 1990) and Uganda’s Idi Amin (1971–1979) became beneficiaries of US aid at the time. The Soviet Union also funded the regimes of Patrice Lumumba (Congo: 24 June 1960 – 14 September 1960), Mengistu Mariam (Ethiopia: 1977 – 1987), Jean Bokassa (Central African Republic: 1966 –1979) and Muamar Gaddafi (Libya: 1977 – 2011) (Meredith 2005; Lancaster 2007). Interestingly, while most of these leaders were dictators with despicable human rights records, both the US and the Soviet Union overlooked their infamous records to further their respective strategic advantages. Ghana remained non-aligned during the Cold War, a position some aver accounted for the American CIA’s complicity in the overthrow of its first President, Dr. Kwame Nkrumah in 1966 (Shiyj 2003; Meredith 2005; Botwe–Asamoah 2005). During the Cold War period, aid also funded Poverty Reduction and Structural Adjustment Programs.

³⁵See <http://www.bartleby.com/124/pres53.html>, retrieved April 28, 2012.

2.3 The 1970s: Poverty Reduction Focus, the Herald of Structural Adjustments

This decade saw two major oil crises in 1973 /4³⁶ and 1979³⁷. According to Riddell (2007), for the most part of the decade, oil prices soared, sending most African economies into chaos. The greatest beneficiaries of the price hike were oil-exporting countries, which deposited their huge profits into international banks. Within Sub-Saharan Africa, incidences of food price hikes and economic recession occurred, situations that compelled many governments to borrow more from international banks. Owing to these crises, donors shifted their aid programs from the 1960s model of funding infrastructure to addressing poverty directly with projects in agriculture, rural development, social services, mass inoculation programs, adult literacy campaigns and the provision of food for the malnourished (Lancaster 2007).

Championed by the World Bank³⁸ and the UNDP³⁹, the ‘poverty focus’ was driven by the notion that economic growth was insufficient to reduce poverty, and that it was important for donors to tackle poverty directly (Ghai et al. 1980; Erixon 2005). The new approach compelled donors to abandon the Keynesian Economic Theory and also amend their international aid policies to focus on satisfying ‘basic human needs’. Accordingly, the US passed the International Development 1973 Act, which stipulated that 75% of its Food for Peace Program should go to countries whose per capita income was USD 300 per annum or less (Lancaster 2007). According to Riddell (2007), in 1975, the UK also released a paper titled *Changing Emphasis in British Aid Policies: More Aid for the Poor*, to reflect the ‘poverty focus’ paradigm. Riddell further asserts that the notion of addressing poverty directly laid the foundation for the professionalisation of the aid industry, more technocrats being needed to create, implement and monitor projects.⁴⁰ More importantly, the shift gave rise to poverty-oriented lending to Africa, rising sharply from 5% in the late 1970s to 50% in the early 1980s (Moyo 2009). By the end of the decade, the African continent had consumed USD 36 billion worth of aid, while many nations remained hugely indebted to international banks (Moyo 2009; Lancaster 2007). The situation led the World Bank Group to introduce and experiment with yet another aid program on the continent, Structural Adjustments.

³⁶ Arab States placed an embargo on oil in retaliation for US support for Israel in the Yom Kippur War.

³⁷ Precipitated by the Iran–Iraqi War.

³⁸ Redistribution-with-growth policy.

³⁹ Basic Needs policy—adopted from the ILO.

⁴⁰ Riddell (2007) estimates that over 40,000 people are employed in the aid industry.

2.4 Precursors to the World Bank's Structural Adjustment in Ghana

Aid was irrelevant in Ghana in the first decade of its independence (1957–1966). As Harrigan and Young (2000) observed, President Nkrumah's policy of non-alignment during the Cold War meant that he refused any aid advances to the country. At the time, Ghana also had a relatively good economy. According to Konadu-Agyemang (2000), although the British plundered the country, they left it in a better shape than any other country in Sub-Saharan Africa at the time, Ghana's primary material export-based economy being well established. At independence in 1957, the author insists that Ghana was the world's leading producer and exporter of cocoa, and exported 10% of the world's gold. The country also had foreign reserves of £200 million and an external debt of just £20 million (see also Buah 1998/09). Furthermore, Ghana had one of the best infrastructure systems in Africa, arguably with the most educated, skilled, and experienced workforce in Sub-Saharan Africa, and well-formulated development plans (Huq 1989; Roe & Schneider 1992; Werlin 1994). By all criteria, Ghana was probably much better endowed than most countries labelled 'Third World', and had better potential to develop its economy. At independence, Ghana was a middle-income country with a per capita income of £50, equivalent to that of South Korea. In 1960, Ghana's per capita income of £70 was still higher than that of Nigeria (£29), India (£25), and Egypt (£56), with a growth rate of 6% per annum (Huq 1989; Leite et al. 2000).

Under Nkrumah's Convention People's Party (CPP) government (1957–1966), manufacturing industries boomed in Ghana. The CPP government inherited a colonial economy that promoted only primary industries, mainly for the extraction of the country's natural resources, agricultural and forest products as raw material for metropolitan and Western industries (Buah 1998; Okyere 2000). However, Nkrumah took steps to reverse the trend to ensure that the raw materials were reserved for local production or that the government controlled their marketing locally and overseas. In pursuit of its policy of self-reliance and independence, Nkrumah's government set up the Capital Investment Board and the Industrial Development Bank to source funding for the country's industrialisation drive. Aside from entering into partnerships in some manufacturing sectors, the government itself established several enterprises that produced goods ranging from safety matches, canned foods, pharmaceutical products and fishing vessels to electronics. The Ghana Standards Board was also established to control the quality of production (Buah 1998; Okyere 2000).

Because industries thrive on a reliable power supply, the CPP government built the Akosombo Hydro–Electric Power Station, which still supplies much of the domestic and industrial needs of the country. The government also built rail lines, feeder roads and motorways to ease general transportation in the country and facilitate the haulage of export products and raw materials from the hinterlands (Buah 1998; Okyere 2000).

Under Nkrumah, Ghana experienced a golden decade of self–initiated development. As Apter noted:

Richer than most (African) countries, carefully groomed for independence, with trained cadres exceeding those of far larger countries ... having inherited a good and expanding educational system, Ghana [had] ... the resources, manpower ... moral and spiritual qualities to set the pace and tone of political development in all Africa

(Apter 1972, p. 337).

However, as Whitfield (2008, p. 185) observed, ‘Ghana became the epitome of Africa’s decline.’ By the middle of the 1960s, Ghana was bankrupt, the country having a huge debt burden of USD 1 billion. The country’s GDP growth rate in 1966 fell to –5.1%, while its foreign reserves became minimal. From this period onwards, aid dependency became a common feature in Ghana commencing with the National Liberation Council (NLC) government, which ousted Nkrumah’s CPP in a military coup d’état in 1966. The NLC government claimed it needed fiscal support to balance payments on the large accumulated commercial debts incurred by Nkrumah’s government (Harrigan & Young 2000). According to Bawumia (2010), in per capita terms, aid increased from USD 20.88 in 1966 to USD 24.28 in 1969.

Ghana returned to democratic rule in 1969, under K. A. Busia’s Progress Party, raising hopes that the economy will be restored. However, this did not happen as the economy was hit by the effects of the oil crises of the 1970s and decrease in aid levels from USD 24.28 in 1969 to USD 16.79 in 1972⁴¹ (Bawumia 2010). This led to harsh economic conditions and the overvaluing of the exchange rate to almost 1000% (Bawumia 2010). Citing the poor economic conditions of the time, Colonel I. K. Acheampong overthrew the K. A. Busia’s government in a coup d’état in 1972 and ruled the country until 1978. This government, the National Redemption Council (NRC) and later the Supreme Military Council I⁴²; decided to repudiate some of the country’s commercial debts for supposed irregularities. This led to a considerable decline in aid flows to Ghana in the

⁴¹ In per capita terms.

⁴² Acheampong changed the name of his government in 1978.

first half of the 1970s (Bawumia 2010).⁴³ Under the NRC, Ghana experienced import substitution, restrictions on foreign exchange imports and price controls (Okyere 2000; Bawumia 2010).

According to Bawumia (2010), from 1975 the NRC successfully approached multilateral lenders⁴⁴ leading to increases in aid levels, which reached USD 20.93 per capita by 1979. However, Ghana's inability to repay these loans on time increased the country's external debt stock. Thus by 1980, Ghana's total external debt had reached USD1407 billion, causing international financial institutions to refuse credit to the country. Meanwhile, cocoa production, the main source of foreign exchange at the time, dropped and industries stalled for lack of machine parts and intermediate inputs (Aryeetey, Harrigan & Nissanke 2000; Fosu n.d). The huge debt situation and the general harsh economic conditions that ensued were complicated by three years of political unrest (1978–1981), during which several governments, mainly the military, ruled the country.

In 1981, Flt Lt. JJ Rawlings (1981–2000) seized power in a coup d'état.⁴⁵ In his bid to restore the economy, Rawlings engaged in what Bawumia (2010, p. 43) calls "popular nonsense." The policy ensured that traders reported by the regime's vigilantes for hoarding and overpricing goods were arrested and their wares sold to the public at reduced prices. However, Rawlings abandoned that policy because it was an inadequate vehicle for growing and sustaining the economy. Compelled by an already bad economic situation including a severe drought and famine that hit the country in 1983, and the repatriation of many Ghanaians from Nigeria in the same year, Rawlings sought foreign assistance (Okyere 2000). After being disappointed by the Soviet Union, Rawlings approached the World Bank Group in 1983, which prescribed Structural Adjustment Programs (SAP), and a tight fiscal, neo-liberal and market-oriented program (World Bank 1984; Aryeetey et al. 2000; Bawumia 2010).

⁴³ For example, in per capita terms, aid decreased from USD 16.79 in 1972 to USD 7.43 in 1974.

⁴⁴ IMF, World Bank and the African Development Bank

⁴⁵ His first coup was in 1979, but handed over to Dr. Hilla Limann's People's National Party.

2.5 1980/1990: Structural Adjustment Programs in Ghana

Following the effects of the 1979 spike in oil prices, many African countries were hugely indebted, as they had borrowed and were servicing their debts at high cost. As Moyo (2009) argues, Africa's debt servicing had escalated to USD 8 billion by 1982 from USD 2 billion in 1975. As a result, the IMF formed the Structural Adjustment Facility, intended to lend monies to defaulting countries so helping them to repay their debts in a program referred to as Structural Adjustment. In simple terms, Structural Adjustment meant that beneficiary governments reduced the excessive involvement in economic activities by their countries, liberalised these activities, and then adopted privatisation, import substitution and export-oriented economic policies (World Bank 1984; 1991; 1995). The policy also postulated that African economies, in particular, carried 'excess baggage' that served as barriers to development. Examples of the barriers were, the World Bank indicated, unwarranted state interference in the workings of the price mechanism, a bloated public service, exchange control, state ownership of manufacturing enterprises, and investment in social welfare. Once removed, poverty reduction and strong economies were guaranteed (World Bank 1984; 1991; 1995).

Although Ghana adopted Structural Adjustment Programs (SAPs) from 1983–1995, by 1991, most of the structural reforms were concluded. Undoubtedly, the country experienced some positive improvements between 1984 and 1991. Interestingly, these transient improvements have earned the country the label as 'the most successful SAP case in Africa' (English 1999; Aryeetey et al. 2000; Aryeetey & Tarp 2000). Initially, SAPs helped to rehabilitate the country's physical infrastructure. According to Bawumia (2010), before Ghana adopted the program, its roads, highways and railways were in such an appalling state that important export products like cocoa and timber were locked up in the hinterland. The successful rehabilitation of roads linking export-producing regions opened up many rural areas and allowed export products to reach the ports. With increases in exports, Ghana's GDP, which was negative in 1981, rose to an annual average of 5% between 1984 and 1991. Micro-economic stability was also restored during this period, while poverty levels dropped from 51% in 1991/92 to 43% in 1998/99 (English 1999; Aryeetey & Tarp 2000; Aryeetey & Fosu 2003; Ghana Statistical Service 2000; Bawumia 2010).

However, these successes were momentary as the country began to experience the economic and social effects of SAPs. Thus, SAPs have been condemned generally as

laying the foundation for Ghana's current economic woes and continued aid-dependency (Osei & Quartey 2001; Tetteh 2003; Aryeetey & Fosu 2003). Three negative impacts are considered for discussion. First, under SAPs, many Ghanaians became unemployed. Nkrumah had made the state the driver of the Ghanaian economy meaning that the: 1) State completely dominated production; and 2) Government employed a large workforce, approximately 75% of formal employees. Thus, the SAPs stipulation that the Ghanaian government downsize its public service through retrenchment, while it divested its shares in many state-owned companies, should have been carried out cautiously. The directive, which led to the dismissal of over fifty thousand civil servants by 1990, brought much pain to families and the economy. The divestiture of several state-owned companies, some very strategic, also led to abrupt layoffs, and exacerbated the unemployment situation in the country. While it made some 'economic sense' to divest many of the state-owned companies at the time, as some were considered a drain on the economy, considering that a large percentage of the country's workforce would lose their jobs, the social context should have been considered to mediate the economic context.

Second, given that Ghanaians had been used to 'the government doing virtually for them', many were not used to paying realistic fees for public health and education. Although over 55% of the population was defined as poor in 1985 (Aryeetey n.d.; Sarris & Shams 1991) the Ghanaian government was compelled by the program to recover costs in critical sectors such as health and education in order to be eligible for loan facilities (Bawumia 2010). Thus, during much of the mid-1980s, fees for hospital beds and consultation were raised, a situation that led to what became known in Ghana as the 'Cash and Carry system', meaning that people could access the healthcare system only if they had the money to pay. The practice, Senah (1997) and Arhinful (2003) argued, led many people to resort to 'unorthodox' means of seeking health support, as they could not afford the cost of allopathic cure in health centres. Thus, while SAP is believed to have reduced poverty levels in the country, Aryeetey & Cox (1997) and Tetteh (2003) argue that it [poverty reduction] was confined to the capital city and the forest localities only, worsening the existing regional, spatial and the rural/urban disparities throughout the country.

Finally, SAPs made Ghana economically vulnerable to external shocks such as trade shocks and crude oil price hikes. Because SAPs promoted exports, Ghana relied heavily on cocoa and gold exports. However, when prices for these two commodities fell in

1992 and 1999/2000 due to the trade shocks that came with further rise in crude oil prices⁴⁶, Ghana's economy atrophied (Bawumia 2010). With a weak tax administration, the country experienced shortfalls in revenues, while the government continued to spend⁴⁷. This led to huge budget deficits of almost 9.4% and 9.5% in 1992 and 1996, respectively. Bawumia (2010) argues that, although the government embarked on concessional borrowing in response to these slippages and thus mitigating these external shocks, the economic situation remained essentially unaffected. By 2000, Ghana's currency, the Cedi had lost 50% of its value. As discussed below, the country's external debt also rose to unsustainable levels, so much so that by 2000 Ghana qualified as a Highly Indebted Poor Country.

The analysis of the factors that bedevilled the implementation of Structural Adjustment in Ghana points to the fact that aid programs have a less chance of being effective if they fail to address local circumstances. Clearly, the World Bank and the IMF seemed to have ignored Ghana's social context at the time, focusing on economic indicators as providing the framework for the implementation of the program. Specifically, they overlooked the facts that 1) Ghana's economy was state-driven, and approximately 75% of the work force were government employees; 2) Ghana's economy was not diversified, and was driven by cocoa and gold; and 3) Ghanaians in the period were not used to paying realistic fees for public health and education, over 55% being poor.

Although SAPs may have been good policy in principle as its relative achievements in other regions show (Glassman & Carmody 2001; McColls & Young 2005; Ostry et al. 2009), its implementation in Ghana offered a key theoretical and development policy lesson – giving consideration to aid beneficiaries' local contexts in development policy program designs. However, as the analysis of the progress towards achieving the Millennium Development Goals and the findings of this thesis will show (see Chapters Five, Six and Seven), international development agencies appear to have paid less attention to this lesson by continuing to promote and design aid programs that are at variance with the settings of development beneficiaries.

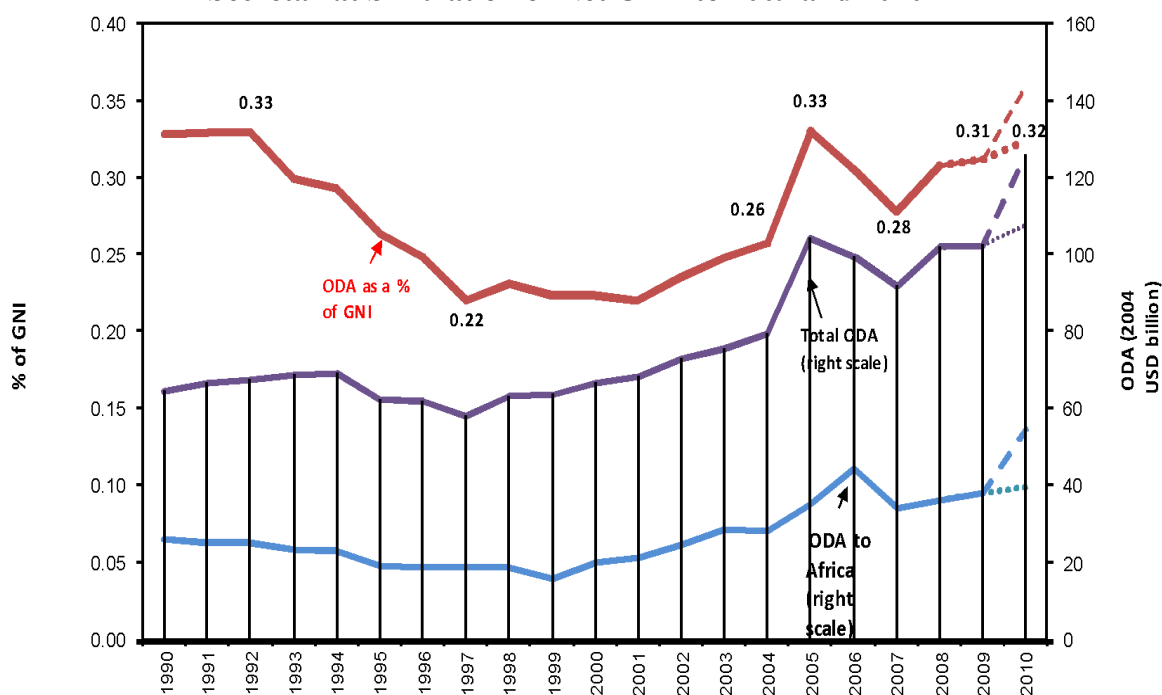
⁴⁶ In 1999/2000.

⁴⁷ Some of the expenditure was political as they financed election-motivated projects in 1992, 1996 & 2000.

2.6. 2000–2010s: The Decade of Global ‘Aid Boom’

Following the mixed results of Structural Adjustment Programs and the end of the Cold War, international aid flows in the 1990s were considerably reduced. Aid as percentage of donors’ Gross National Income (GNI) decreased consistently from 0.33% in 1992 to 0.22% in 1997 (see figure 2.1). Aid to Africa in the mid 1990s also remained below USD 20 billion. Hence, some anti-aid crusaders, who attributed the trend to aid ineffectiveness and ‘donor fatigue’, argued that aid was over (Collier 1999; Easterly 2006; Moyo 2009; Mavrotas 2010).

Figure 2.1: DAC⁴⁸ Members net ODA⁴⁹ 1990–2008 and DAC Secretariat Simulation of Net ODA to 2009 and 2010



Note: — dashed line indicates the growth-adjusted trajectory envisaged at Gleneagles.

.....dotted line indicates estimates based on reported intentions or current 2010 budget plans made by DAC members.

.....dotted line for Africa indicates a Secretariat estimate of likely actual spending.

Source: OECD Development Cooperation Report (2010).

⁴⁸ Development Assistance Committee.

⁴⁹ Official Development Assistance.

However, aid reinvented itself (Riddell 2007). As Figure 2.1 illustrates, and confirmed by the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD), the last decade has recorded an unprecedented increase in global aid levels ('aid boom'), so that by 2010, aid to Ghana had hit a record high of almost USD129 billion⁵⁰. Consequently, over the period in question, aid has promoted and financed several programs and initiatives. These include the Highly Indebted Poor Countries Initiative; Multi Donor Budgetary Support Programs; and the Millennium Development Goals, which are discussed below. The others, discussed in the next chapter include: Output-Based Aid; High Level Forum on Aid Effectiveness; and Community-Driven Development programs. While most of these initiatives were direct derivatives of and contributors to the 'aid boom', other factors have also influenced the trend, some of which predated the 2000s. These include: 1) The publication of influential scholarly works; 2) International aid campaigns; and 3) The September 11, 2001 terrorist attack on the US. It is important to analyse these factors briefly before discussing how some of them impacted on Ghana.

2.6.1 *The Publication of Influential Scholarly Works*

In a period when aid was condemned as being ineffective and a waste of tax payers' monies, Robert Cassen's seminal work, *Does Aid Work?* (1986, 1994) criticised the prejudices characterising the public perception of the concept of aid. Arguing that most aid did succeed in terms of its own objectives and obtained a reasonable rate of return, Cassen's work revived public hope in aid. In 1996, the OECD of the Development Assistance Committee (DAC) followed with the famous *Shaping the 21st Century: The Contribution of Development Cooperation*. Remembered for advocating the reduction of world poverty by 2015 which has been captured in the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), the report reiterated the 1970 UN General Assembly Resolution for economically advanced countries to set aside 0.7% of their GNI annually for international aid (UN General Assembly Resolution 2626, October 1970; CIDA 2010). Although most donors have not met this target, it still remains the benchmark for measuring aid levels (see OECD 2011).

The World Bank's 1998 study, *Assessing Aid* and Burnside and Dollar's (2000) *Aid, Policies and Growth* were other landmark publications during the period. They augmented Cassen (1994) and OECD publications by drawing together the relationship between aid, the recipient-country's environment and economic growth. Burnside and

⁵⁰ See http://www.oecd.org/document/35/0,3746,en_2649_37413_47515235_1_1_1_37413,00.html, retrieved March 15, 2012.

Dollar were particularly influential, theorising that aid worked in ‘good policy environments’ and among sound fiscal, economic and trade policies (see also Crook & Manor 1998). The theory emanated from the poor economic performance of most African economies in the 1990s⁵¹, which seemed to place blame on the continent’s weak political leadership and institutions. Burnside and Dollar’s report also influenced the establishment of the US Millennium Challenge Account to reward ‘well-governed’ African countries, including Ghana (Easterly 2006). British Prime Minister, Tony Blair’s Commission on Africa was also established, based upon the ideas presented by Burnside and Dollar (Easterly 2006).

Significantly, the report ushered in the era of aid conditionalities. Thus, unlike the Cold War era, when aid was a ‘gift’, it was now a ‘contract’ (Leon & Eyben 2005; Amoako–Tuffour 2005). Aid as a ‘contract’ seemed to have been given impetus by the terrorist attack on the US. As argued below, after the incident, the adoption of good governance, civil service reform and Western–styled democracy have become the ‘conditions’ for giving aid (Gastel & Nuijten 2005; Easterly 2006; Moyo 2009). Although the claims of the Burnside and Dollar (2000) report are now challenged together with the earlier publications, their work can be credited with stimulating academic interest in the subject of aid. These earlier works have led to further research and other publications, some very provocative. These include, but not limited to, the works of Hirvonen (2005), Mosse & Lewis (2005), Sachs (2005), Easterly (2006), Collier (2007), Lahiri (2007), Li (2007), Riddell (2007), Moyo (2009), Walz & Ramachandran (2010) and Mavrotas (2011).

2.6.2 International Aid Campaigns

The current ‘aid boom’ is also a result of two streams of international aid campaigns. The first was organised by NGOs within specific European Countries who decried the cuts in aid of the early 1990s. These NGOs called on their governments to stop further cuts in ODA, and instead to support increases in development support. These included, but were not limited to, the ‘Just 1%’ campaign in the US and the German ‘Pro 0.7%’ campaign (Lancaster 2007). Also, development oriented NGOs began to collaborate across borders in pursuance of aid. For example, in Japan, international NGOs launched the *Reality of Aid* publication to review and assess aid programs worldwide

⁵¹ This was a backlash of the SAP as high cost of their servicing debts which equalled the total amount of aid they received leading to a net reverse flow, from poor countries to rich countries, of USD 15 billion from 1987–1989 (Lancaster 2007; Moyo 2009).

independently⁵². The period also witnessed the restructuring of Japanese and French fragmented aid agencies to engage better the NGOs in advising and implementing their aid programs and aligning them to conform to the OECD/DAC (Lancaster 2007; Riddell 2007).

The other campaign stream was much more global, being manifested in the ‘Jubilee 2000’ and ‘Drop the Debt’ campaigns. According to Sachs (2005) and Moyo (2009), towards the end of the 1990s, there were concerns from some quarters that huge debts were holding Africa back, a situation largely the result of Western lending institutions’ operations. Consequently, in the early 2000, there arose an army of aid campaigners, pop and movie stars, philanthropists and the clergy, who not only fought for cancellation of African debts, but also pressed for a swathe of new aid. For example, in 2005 the Irish singer, Bono met the US President George W. Bush, while Bob Geldof was also a guest at the G8 meeting in Gleneagles, Scotland, all in the pursuit of debt forgiveness for poorer economies (Easterly 2006; Lancaster 2007; Moyo 2009). Both streams of campaigns were significant as they influenced the World Bank’s debt forgiveness initiative, the Heavily Indebted Poor Countries (HIPC), which led to the reduction of the debts of some African countries for the first time. For example, Lancaster (2007) notes that member states of the OECD/DAC forgave debts amounting to USD 3.7 billion in 2004, a substantial rise above the 1990 forgiveness figure of USD 650 million. Ghana benefited from the initiative, as later discussed.

2.6.3 September 11, 2001 Terrorist Attack on the USA

Global aid has not remained the same after the terrorist attack on the US on September 11, 2001. The incident, popularly referred to as 9/11, claimed thousands of lives, destroyed infrastructure and inclined American and European political elites to support higher levels of aid for the prevention of ‘failed states’, believed to be a derivative of poverty, conflicts and weak institutions and a haven for terrorists (Coll 2004; Collier 2007). As a security measure, rich countries around the world, led by the US and its allies, started employing aid as a tool to prevent state failures in the Arab world, particularly countries such as Afghanistan, Pakistan, Iraq and Somalia, each labelled as ‘havens for terrorists’ (see Figure 2.2 below; Jones, Riddell & Kotoglou 2005; Collier 2007). Legitimised by the unfortunate incident, ‘security aid’ regained currency in aid

⁵² (See <http://www.realityofaid.org/content/about-roa/parent/17/name/RoA-Profile/id/7>, retrieved March 25, 2012).

discourses, the philosophy having first influenced aid giving during the Cold War. As Brenda Killen of the OECD Development Co-operation Directorate submits in the OECD 2012 Yearbook⁵³, “in our highly interdependent world, what happens with the economy, security, climate and health of any country affects us all”.

Firmly underpinning the concept of ‘security aid’ was the notion that poverty and inequality around the world generate hostility and resentment towards the West (Lozada 2002; Hirvonen 2005; Woods 2005). As a result, most Western countries and their media argued for increasing aid to poor countries for poverty reduction and conflict prevention in ‘failed states’ (Hirvonen 2005; Collier 2007; Lancaster 2007). James D. Wolfensohn, the former World Bank President (1995–2005) supported the idea observing that:

Poverty in itself does not ... lead to conflict, let alone to terrorism ... and yet we know that exclusion can breed violent conflict. ... Civil wars have often resulted not so much from ethnic diversity... poverty is a central ingredient and conflict-ridden countries in turn become safe havens for terrorist ... Our common goal must be to eradicate poverty, to promote inclusion and social justice to bring the marginalised into the main stream of the global economy and society ... What should be our agenda? First scale up foreign aid.

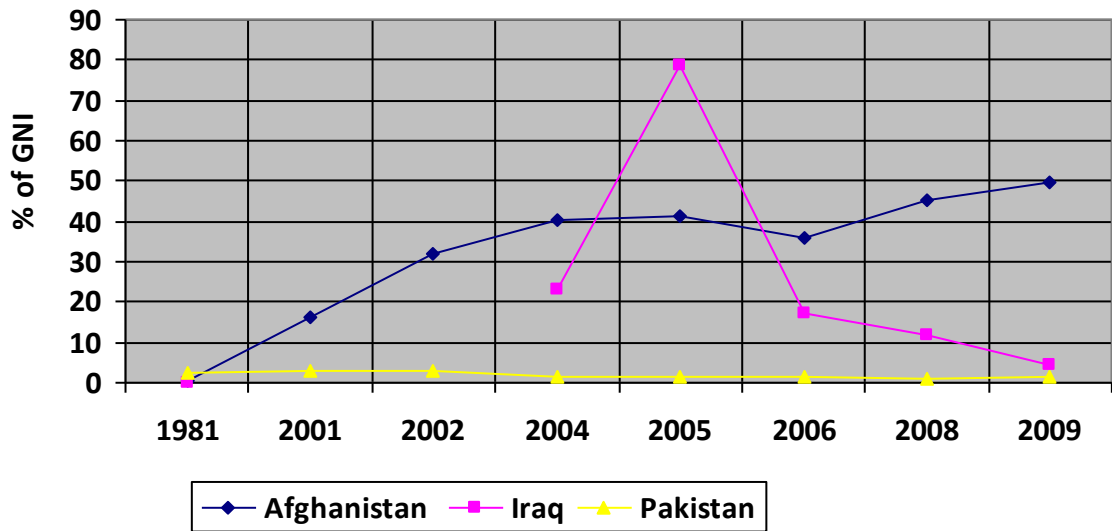
(cited in Lancaster 2007, p. 59).

The 9/11 incident has influenced the aid landscape significantly. Among other things, countries that had hitherto not been receiving aid have been included in the aid recipient list. For example, after the 9/11 incident, countries considered to be havens for terrorists – Iraq, Afghanistan, Pakistan – appeared on the UK’s top eleven aid beneficiary countries, although they had not been among the top fifteen in previous years (Jones et al. 2005). Meanwhile, these ‘terrorist-haven’ countries also appeared on the aid list of donor countries, sometimes as new aid providers, such as Sweden and Norway, whose ODA, until the 9/11 incident, was value-free. Figures from the OECD indicates that Afghanistan, Iraq and Pakistan, ‘supposed’ terrorist haven countries, have for the last decade remained in the top ten of aid beneficiary countries of the US and its wealthy allies in the fight against terrorism⁵⁴. Thus, as illustrated in Figure 2.2 below, aid to Afghanistan has since 2000 risen significantly, while at the peak of the US war on terrorism, aid to Iraq soared. Although aid to Pakistan is relatively smaller, the rise in US assistance to the country since the 9/11 incident is significant.

⁵³ <http://oecdinsights.org/2012/04/04/development-aid-drops-for-the-first-time-in-15-years/>. Retrieved August 22, 2012.

⁵⁴ <http://www.oecd.org/dac/stats>, retrieved May 04, 2012. For the 2009/2010 period see the top ten gross ODA recipients of the US, the UK, Australia, Sweden and Canada.

Figure 2.2 Net ODA received (% of GNI) of Afghanistan, Iraq and Pakistan Compared



Source: <http://www.tradingeconomics.com/afghanistan/net-oda-received-percent-of-gni-wb-data.html>, retrieved March 12, 2012. Figures from 1982–2000 are unavailable.
<http://www.tradingeconomics.com/iraq/net-oda-received-percent-of-gni-wb-data.html>, retrieved March 12, 2012. Figures from 1982–2000 on Afghanistan and Iraq 1991–2003 are unavailable;
<http://www.globalissues.org/article/35/foreign-aid-development-assistance>, retrieved January 2012.

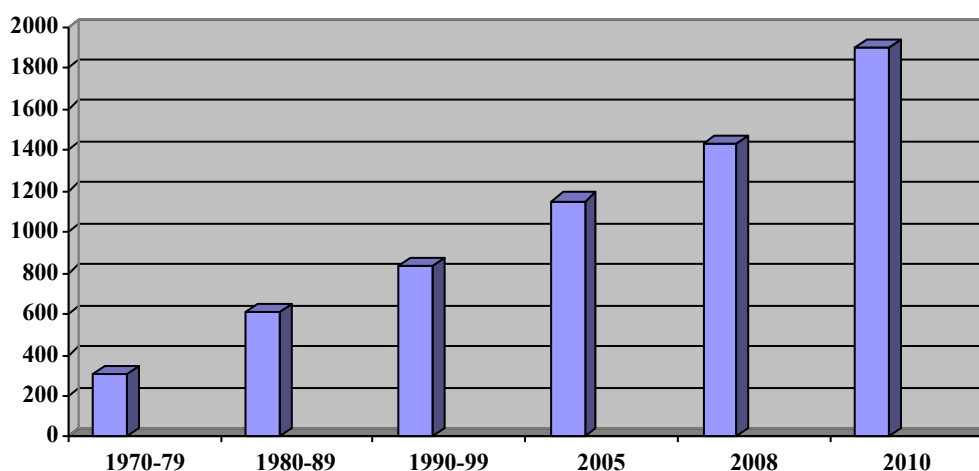
It is within this context that the 2002 UN Conference on Financing Development in Monterrey, Mexico; and the convening of the 2005 G–8 Summit in Gleneagles, Scotland must be understood. The Monterrey conference, which coincided with the international aid campaigns and the terrorist attack on the US, significantly impacted the first decade of 2000, as many donor countries promised to increase their aid to the developing world. For example, the US promised to increase its aid by USD 5 billion or by half by 2006, and to make that increase permanent (UN Monterrey Consensus 2003). According to Lancaster (2007), by 2003, worldwide aid rose by USD10 billion as governments began to implement their commitments. The G–8 Summit in Gleneagles in 2005 also renewed calls for donors to increase their aid to Africa in particular, where it was projected that a total aid volume of USD 25 billion was needed by 2010 to reduce poverty and conflicts⁵⁵.

⁵⁵ <http://www.unmillenniumproject.org/press/g8overview.htm>, retrieved January 18, 2012.

2.7 Ghana in the Decade of Aid Boom: 2000–2010

The discussion above addressed the factors that accounted for the ‘aid boom’ in the first decade of 2000. As earlier indicated, the trend has led to the promotion of many aid programs and initiatives in developing countries. Below, three such initiatives are discussed, within the context of Ghana to demonstrate the country’s continued aid dependence, and the challenges facing some of the programs. However, a brief overview of the country’s economic situation in the decade is crucial.

Figure 2.3: Net ODA to Ghana 1970–2010 Compared in USD Millions



Source: OECD (2011); World Bank Database; Quartey et al. (n.d.).

Ghana’s economy at the start of the millennium was poor. While the poverty level had been reduced from 51% in 1992, it was still high at approximately 40% in 2000, with almost 79% of the population living on less than USD 2 a day (Human Development Report 2002). The country also had huge debts burdens (see Figure 2.4). Thus, the newly elected New Patriotic Party (NPP) government was ‘desperate’ for programs that would improve the lives of the people and the country’s debt situation (NPP 2000 Campaign Manifesto). The NPP was fortunate as their regime coincided with the ‘aid boom’. As a preferred destination in Sub-Saharan Africa for the experimentation with aid programs, Ghana benefited significantly from the ‘aid boom’ with an unprecedented increase in ODA volumes, most of them as Project Aid (see Figures 2.3 & 2.5).

2.7.1. Ghana and the Highly Indebted Poor Country Initiative (HIPC)

The Highly Indebted Poor Country Initiative (HIPC) was a World Bank and IMF debt forgiveness program. Under the initiative, huge monies that poor countries were expected to use to service their debts to international creditors were channelled into poverty reduction programs, named HIPC Savings or HIPC Funds (IMF & IDA 2001). Apart from the worldwide campaigns for debt relief, the HIPC initiative was theoretically premised on several commentators' assertion that debt servicing was compromising the ability of developing economies to provide basic social amenities for their poor, and that the situation would hinder their achievement of the MDGs⁵⁶ (Osei & Quartey 2001; Eaton 2002; Tarp 2000; Birdsall et al. 2002; Easterly 2002; Kanbur 2003). With debt relief, the commentators were convinced that more resources would be freed and made available for investment in both human and physical capital, while achieving pro-poor growth targets and sustainable debt levels.

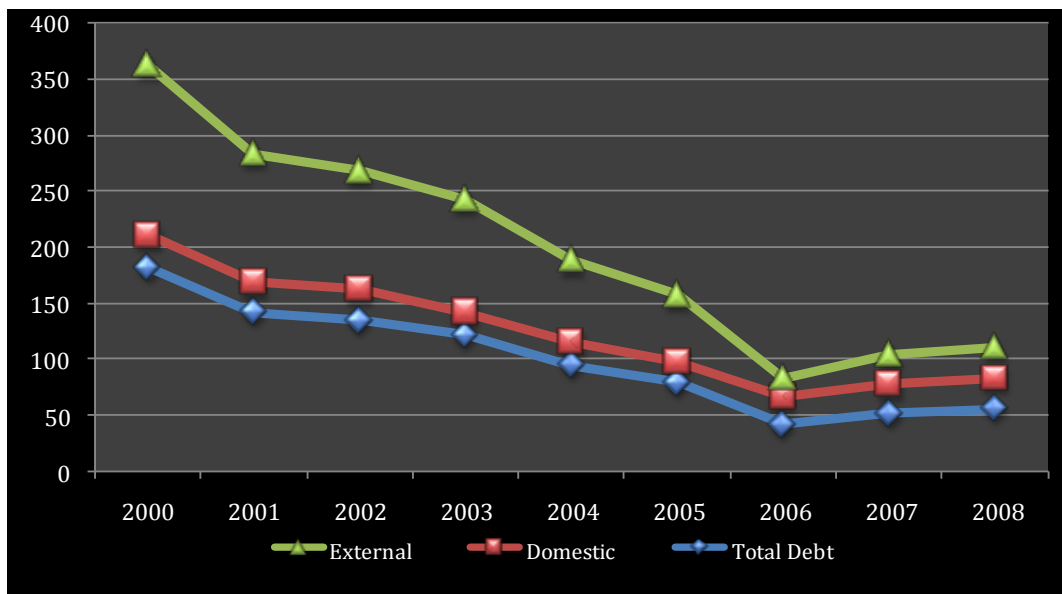
Beneficiary countries of HIPC had to go through three stages: a 1) Satisfactory three-year reputation, mainly the reduction of non-ODA debt by 65% in net present value terms; 2) Decision point; and 3) Completion point. The last two stages were tied to the HIPC country's ability to produce and implement its Poverty Reduction Strategy (Whitfield 2005; Woll 2008), after which donors would commit to the provision of 90% or more flow reduction in debt (Bawumia 2010). The Poverty Reduction Strategy Papers (PRSP) was a country-driven, results focused, long-term, comprehensive and partnership-oriented document that spelt out the economic priorities of countries that wished to access World Bank and IMF concessional lending and debt relief. The PRSP sought to introduce the principles of greater ownership of economic reforms by countries, and of wider participation by citizens in determining the content of their country's development strategy (IMF 2003; World Bank Country Assistance Strategy 2005; Killick 2001; Woll 2008).

Ghana commenced the year 2000 with huge debts (see Figure 2.4 below). The country's external debt as percentage of GDP was over 150%. According to the 2002 Africa Economic Outlook Report, Ghana's debt servicing in 2000 was over 20% of all exports in the country. The total external debt due for repayment in 2001 was USD 560 million (Bawumia 2010). Faced with such an huge debt-burden, the NPP government explained to donors that achieving the MDGs was a challenge, and upon the advice of the World

⁵⁶ In the case of Ghana an economic growth rate of 8% was projected as the condition for the country to attain the MDGs (Osei & Quartey 2001; Bawumia 2010).

Bank⁵⁷, declared the country HIPC in March 2001(GOG 2001; 2003a).⁵⁸ Apart from the usual harsh political criticisms of the opposition, Japan, Ghana’s leading bilateral donor at the time, also threatened not to extend new loans to Ghana if the country signed up for HIPC (Osei & Quartey 2001). However, the government remained resilient and braced itself to present its PRSP to be considered for debt relief.

Figure 2.4 Ghana’s Public Debt as Percentage of GDP



Source: MOFEP (2008), cited in: 2010 Ghana 2010 MDG Report.

According to Whitfield (2005), the National Development Planning Commission (NDPC) of the outgoing Rawlings’ government in 2000 formulated the first draft of Ghana’s PRSP. The New Patriotic Party under President J.A. Kufour (2001–2008) adjusted the draft and modified it to reflect the priorities of their election campaign promises while taking into account comments by the IMF and the World Bank. Named the Ghana Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper I (GPRP I) the paper defined the government’s medium–term development strategy. In 2003, the donors endorsed the document, although Whitfield (2005) argues that the formulation process was not consultative enough, Parliament being marginalised, and the paper lacking a ‘pro-poor’ face (see also IMF 2006).

⁵⁷ After the IMF conducted a Debt Sustainability Analysis

⁵⁸ Although the country had been technically HIPC since 1999.

The launch of the GPRS I coincided with several other development initiatives. Apart from the MDGs, the country had signed in 2002 the New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD) of the Organisation of African Union as well as the United Nation's Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD). Most of the medium-term development priorities of these commitments were similar to the GPRS I. Thus the NPP government reviewed and revised the GPRS I for the period 2006–2009, producing a single document, the Growth and Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper II (GPRS II), that combined all the government's development and policy commitments (Whitfield 2005; IMF 2006; Woll 2008).

Ghana reached the HIPC decision point in February 2002, after which an amount of USD 96 million of the total external repayable debts of USD 375 million was written off as debt relief (GoG Budget Statements 2002; 2003; 2004). In 2005, Ghana was also among eighteen African countries that benefited from another debt relief package totalling USD 40 billion under the Multi-Debt Relief Initiative (MDRI) of the world's richest countries (G-8). Under the MDRI, Ghana's debts of USD 4.2 billion were written off in January 2006⁵⁹. Thus, the country's external debt was dramatically reduced further from 156% of GDP in 2000 to 27% in 2008 (Bawumia 2010). Tellingly, owing to the problematic nature of aid-dependency, the country's debt stock seems to be rising again. Data from the World Bank indicate that in 2009, Ghana's external debt to GDP was 34.3%, 39.2% in 2010 and 41.2% in 2011⁶⁰.

2.7.2 Multi-Donor Budgetary Support

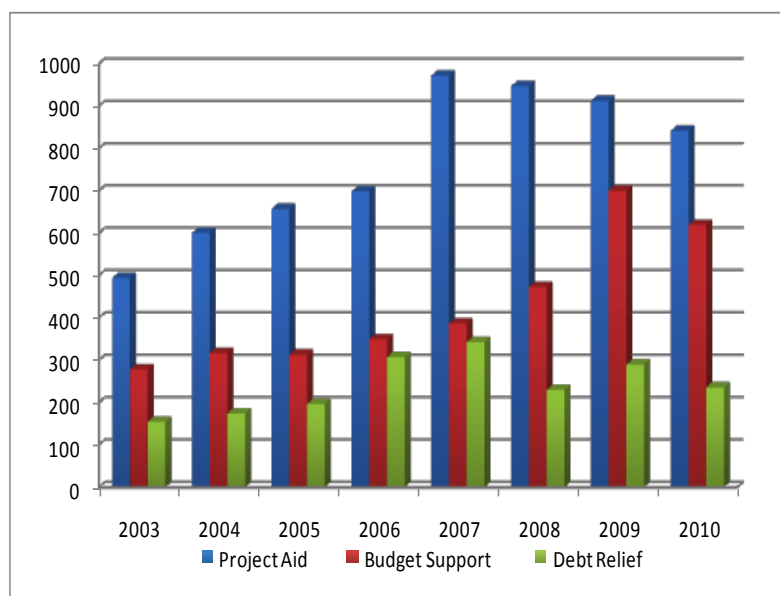
Another noteworthy milestone in Ghana's aid profile was the Multi Donor Budgetary Support Program (MDBS). Theoretically, the idea of the MDBS was borne out of the donors' strong commitment to making their aid effective. Because aid flows were unpredictable, governments of developing economies did not know how much to expect so enabling them to formulate their respective country budgets (Woll 2008; Amoako-Tuffour 2005). The idea of a multi-donor-funding mechanism was that all donors paid a fixed, so-called base tranche at the beginning of each year into a single fund so ensuring predictability of cash flow (World Bank 2006a; Amoako-Tuffour 2005; Woll 2008). The MDBS mechanism allowed a recipient government the freedom to determine which priority areas to which it wanted to allocate the funds, within the limits of its own budgetary processes (Walters 2005; World Bank 2006a). The initiative was

⁵⁹ IDA (USD 3,482.9 million), IMF (USD 274.6 million), AfDB (USD 445.5 million).

⁶⁰ See <http://www.tradingeconomics.com/ghana/government-debt-to-gdp>, retrieved April 13, 2012.

also a way of reducing aid transaction costs, while enhancing better coordination among donors and promoting recipient–government’s ownership of its development agenda (Amoako–Tuffour 2005; Walters 2005; World Bank 2000a; 2006a).

Figure 2.5: ODA Forms Ghana Received in a Decade compared in Millions USD



Source: Quartey et al. (n.d.).

Ghana’s MDBS was established in 2003 to support the implementation of the GPRS I, while harmonising development cooperation reporting mechanisms (Woll 2008). When Ghana’s GPRS I was replaced with GRPS II, donors signed a new Framework Memorandum with the government of Ghana in 2008 to finance fiscal actions broadly aimed at reducing poverty, reaching the MDGs and promoting growth. The MDBS has contributed a substantial amount of aid monies to Ghana (see Figure 2.5). Currently there are eleven donors⁶¹ participating in the MDBS. While the MDBS has led to aid predictability in Ghana, four challenges still remain. First, although there are many donor agencies in the country, not all of them have joined the MDGS. For example, while Australia has been providing aid to Ghana in recent times, the Australian aid agency (AusAid) prefers to implement projects in areas of its choice (Australian High Commission Accra 2010). Furthermore, none of the eleven donors, currently involved in the initiative, channel all their aid through the MDBS, the UK excepted (Geddes et al. 2009; Clay et al. 2009). Clearly, the situation has tended to fragment and lead to aid

⁶¹ The World Bank, European Commission, UK, Canada, Denmark, Germany, Switzerland, Netherlands, the Africa Development Bank and Japan.

duplication in the country, as well as allowing speculation into the motives of donors (Easterly & Pfutze 2008).

Additionally, Woll (2008) observes that the operational structure of the MDBS reflects continuing divergence in different donors' institutional structure, as well as in their priorities. Consequently, accounting structures have not been harmonised as donors continue to employ different accountability, planning and disbursement mechanisms, particularly whenever harmonisation requirements are at variance with their respective organisational requirements. Thus, while in principle the MDBS is supposed to make it easier for donor agencies to harmonise their aid policies with the Ghanaian government, the former continue to employ their respective reporting and monitoring mechanisms (CIDA 2010). Finally, donors usually fall short of the amounts they pledge (Table 2.2). Clearly these shortfalls have significant impact on the Ghanaian Government's fiscal budget and planning.

Table 2.2 MDBS Disbursements for the Period 2003 – 2010 (in millions)

	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010
Pledges in USD	281.40	302.16	285.33	372.43	319.57	347.90		
Actual (USD)	278	311	282	299	316.57	368.13	525.2	451.2
MDBS% of ODA	30.1	26.74	29.34	33.34	26.48	25.72		

Source: Ministry of Finance and Economic Planning (2010); Quartey et al. (n.d.). There are no figures for Pledges and MDBS % of ODA for 2009 and 2010.

2.7.3 The Millennium Development Goals

The launch of the Millennium Development Goals (MDG) in September 2000, added further momentum to the 'aid boom'. The MDGs were intended to be a vehicle for renewed global determination to achieve peace and decent standards of living for every man, woman and child⁶² (Sachs 2005). The eight goals that were to be reached by 2015 included:

- 1) Eradicating extreme poverty and hunger;
- 2) Achieve universal primary education;
- 3) Promote gender equality and empower women;

⁶² See also <http://www.un.org/millennium/declaration/ares552e.htm>, retrieved January 14, 2010.

- 4) Reduce child mortality;
- 5) Improve maternal health;
- 6) Combat HIV/AIDS, Malaria and other diseases;
- 7) Ensure environmental sustainability; and
- 8) Develop global partnership for development (MDG Reports 2006; 2008).

Three years to the target, developing countries are reported to be on track or close to achieving MDGs 1, 2, 3 and 7 (Figure 2.6). However, unless efforts are stepped up, MDGs 4 and 5 may not be achieved. Details of the distance to MDG 6 are lacking because the World Bank has conceded their hypothesis about HIV/AIDS must be re-evaluated as some impact evaluations have shown the original assumptions to be wrong⁶³. However, according to the MDG 2011 Report, while some efforts have been made, MDG 6 is unlikely to be achieved globally. ‘Develop Global Partnership for Development’, MDG 8, is also facing evaluation challenges. While ODA has increased, an OECD (2011) report indicates that donors are not adhering to the tenets of the 2005 Paris Declaration and the UN 0.7% of GNI aid target. Also, although there have been efforts to broker global development partnerships, the World Bank admits that poor economies have not been fully integrated into the global trading system and banking regulations, which impose excessive capital requirements on trade and finance transactions that still remain⁶⁴ (Global Monitoring Report [GMR] 2011). From this analysis, the Africa Human Development Report (2012) was right to project that globally, only four of the MDGs may be achieved by 2015.

In terms of regional analysis, Sub-Saharan Africa lags behind the other regions (see Figure 2.7). As a group, the region is unlikely to reach a single MDG target by 2015, a fact acknowledged by the African Region MDG Report (2011). Of the forty-seven countries engaged, the GMR (2011) indicates that only nine countries have shown progress on extreme poverty, eight on hunger, twenty seven on gender parity in primary education, and fifteen on access to safe drinking water. Goals related to child and maternal mortality, access to sanitation, and primary education completion require stepped-up efforts, as they seem to have lost their direction (Africa Human Development Report 2012).

⁶³ <http://www.worldbank.org/mdgs/diseases.html>, retrieved October 09, 2012.

⁶⁴ See also <http://go.worldbank.org/JGENXDULT0>, retrieved April 15, 2012.

Relative to Ghana, progress is mixed (see Table 2.3). According to the GMR (2011) and the MDG Report (2011), none of the MDGs has been fully achieved in Ghana. While the country is heading in the right direction to achieve MDGs 1, 2, and 3, the remaining MDGs will not be fulfilled. Incidentally, according to the Ghana MDG Report (2010), there is a dearth of data to track the progress of the under-performing MDGs. Thus, Baidoo (2011) asserts that Ghana would need nearly forty years to achieve the MDGs.

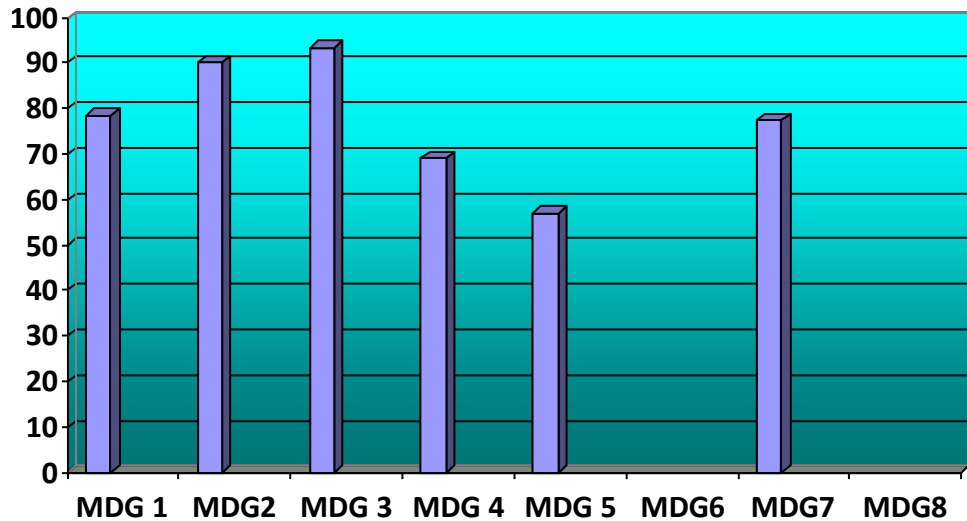
The reality that the MDGs will not be fully achieved globally by 2015 has led its realities to blame the situation on the: 1) Global financial, food and fuel crises; and 2) Notion that the Sub-Saharan Africa region is far behind (GMR Report 2011; MDG Report 2011; African Region MDG Report 2011). Consequently, the UN Secretary General, Mr Ban Ki Moon, the Special Advisor on the MDGs, Professor Jeffery Sachs, and Robert B. Zoellick, President of the World Bank Group have called for renewed international efforts and commitments for achieving the MDGs (see reports above).

Meanwhile, even before it became obvious that the MDGs would not be achieved, many scholars warned the UN and the World Bank to review the MDGs as they seemed arbitrary and had 'context problems'. For example, Easterly (2009) argued that the MDG are unfair to Sub-Saharan African countries as they do not take into account the historical and the contextual diversity of the region. In other words, because the indicators are universalised, relative successes of the Sub-Saharan African countries in some of the MDGs tend to be portrayed as worse or even failures. Therefore, as Clemens & Moss (2005) and Clemens et al. (2011) observed, in most discussions on the MDGs, the 'failure' of the region seems to be emphasised compared to other regions, although some progress has been made in specific countries.

Others have also argued that the MDGs would exacerbate aid dependency in many economically poor countries. Because the initiative emphasises foreign financing of domestic social and redistribution policies, recipient countries are being flooded with resource transfers, leaving them permanently aid-dependent or 'welfarised' (Reinert 2007; Easterly 2009; Haque 2011). Finally, Hancock et al. (2011) have criticised MDG 3, "Promote Gender Equality and Empower Women" on the ground that it isolates rather than mainstreams women. They argue that seeing women in isolation is not a sustainable way of empowering them as they do not live in isolation, but are a part of society. Thus, if 'uncontextualised', MDG 3 could lead to the inadvertent disempowering of men and result in conflicts. The phenomenon of the simultaneity of

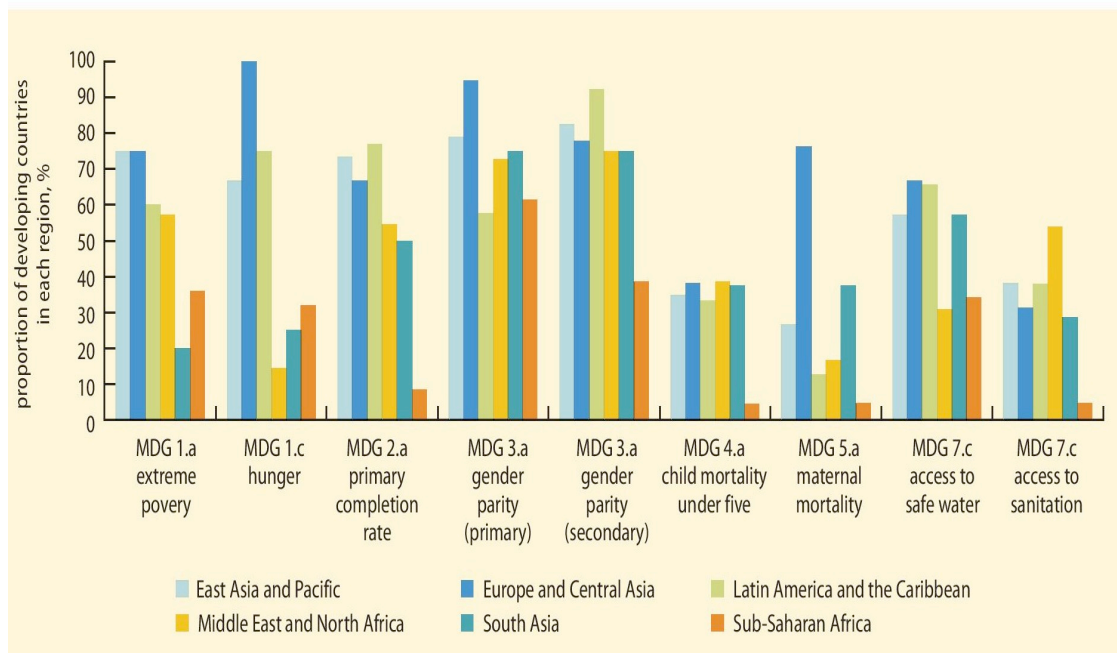
empowerment and disempowerment is empirically supported by the findings of this thesis (see Chapter Seven).

Figure 2.6 Current Global Distance to the MDGs



Source: GMR (2011).

Figure 2.7 Countries on Target to Achieve the MDGs, by Region



Source: Global Monitoring Report (2011).

Table 2.3 Ghana's Progress Towards the Millennium Development Goals

MDG TARGETS	ACHIEVEMENTS
MDG 1: Eradicate Extreme Poverty & Hunger	The percentage of those living below the national poverty line has fallen from 52% in 1992 to 29% in 2005–06. The 2010 report is confident that this target will be achieved by 2015.
MDG 2: Achieve Universal Primary Education	The percentage of children of official school age (net enrolment) who are enrolled in primary schools rose from 81% in 2006/07 to 89% in 2008/09. The total number of children enrolled at the primary level irrespective of age (gross enrolment) increased from 91% in 2006/07 to 95% in 2008/09.
MDG 3: Promote Gender Equality & Empower Women	Currently, for every 100 boys in primary education, there are 96 girls. It is likely that this target will be met.
MDG 4: Reduce Child Mortality	There has been significant progress on under-five mortality, although for every 13 children in Ghana, one child still dies before his/her fifth birthday. Previously 1 in 10 children died before his/her fifth birthday. This target can only be achieved if the country scales-up and sustains the recent child survival interventions.
MDG 5: Improve Maternal Health	Ghana is off-track in improving maternal health. Although Ghana's maternal mortality ratio has improved slightly in recent years, for every 100,000 women giving birth, 451 die (down from 560 deaths per 100,000 live births, WHO, 2005).
MDG 6: Combat HIV/AIDS, Malaria & Other Diseases	HIV/AIDS prevalence rate was 2.2% in 2008 but increased to 2.9% in 2009. With this trend, it is unlikely that the country will achieve the 2015 target of halting and reversing the spread of the epidemic. The incidence of malaria still remains the leading cause of mortality and morbidity, particularly among pregnant women and children under-five years.
MDG 7: Ensure Environmental Sustainability	Ghana is not on course to achieve this goal in full. Only 12% of households have access to improved sanitation. While the nation is on track in reducing by half the proportion of people without access to improved water, critical challenges exist in the area of proportion of land area covered by forest, and reducing the proportion of urban population living in slum areas.
MDG 8: Develop Global Partnership for Development	Donors are partnering for development, most significantly through the Ghana Joint Assistance Strategy (GJAS). While ODA inflows to Ghana appear to have increased in nominal terms between 2001 and 2010; the challenge has been quality of the aid the country receives. This target remains a challenge as global issues continue to negatively impact on the economy and debt situation.

Source: Ghana Ministry of Education 2008/2009 Annual Report; Ghana Health Service Annual Report (2009); African Development Outlook (2008); Ghana MDG Report (2010); MDG Report (2011); GMR (2011); African Human Development Report 2012.

2.8 Conclusion

This chapter traced global aid trends and explained how they have impacted on the Ghanaian aid landscape. Three conclusions were apparent. First, Post–War II aid did not start as a package for poorer economies nor was it geared to ethnically diverse contexts, as it was designed to save *only* the West. Second, Ghana is aid–dependent, being best described as both a beneficiary and victim of an experimental global aid system as the country has experienced most forms of aid introduced on the continent: SAPs, HIPC, MDDBS, and the MDGs– a matter which justifies the choice of the country for this research. Lastly, the chapter showed that a country’s political and social context play crucial roles in the fate of aid programs implemented there. Accordingly, a well–intended program could fail or achieve mixed results, if the beneficiaries’ grounded realities are taken for granted or judged within the framework of demographically different settings. The next chapter discusses the factors believed to have contributed to aid ineffectiveness as well as efforts to making them ‘work’.

CHAPTER THREE

MAKING AID EFFECTIVE: EFFORTS, ISSUES AND GAPS

“Effective aid matters to developing countries, as it can enable them to move beyond aid dependence and reach development effectiveness”

Dr. Kwabena Duffuor (2010)⁶⁵.

Over the last two decades discussions on the effectiveness of international development aid (aid) have gained prominence in international development discourse and policy analysis. The interests in the subject stem from the argument that, although Sub-Saharan Africa, for example, has received much aid in the past fifty years, lives have not improved, as 70% of the one billion poorest people on earth live in the region (Collier 2007; Moyo 2009). The prevalence of poverty in the region is considered so serious that not a single Millennium Development Goal (MDG) will be achieved by the target date of 2015, although some progress has been made (MDG Report 2011; Global Monitoring Report 2011; Africa Human Development Report 2012). While the incidence of poverty in Sub-Saharan Africa is caused by the interplay between so many factors including: leadership crises, ethnic hatred, corruption, politics, social structures and aid-dependency, the last factor is most often cited (Mehmet 1971; Cassen 1994; Meredith 2005; Calderisi 2006; Ashimolowo 2007). This has led some to argue that aid must stop entirely, as it does more harm than good (Easterly 2006; Moyo 2009). Others disagree and argue that aid can work, but only under very specific conditions (Cassen 1994; Sachs 2005; Collier 2007).

This chapter argues that global efforts for achieving aid effectiveness appear to focus on condition-driven and bureaucratic mechanisms, while the need to understanding local contexts of aid recipients is ignored. To put this argument in perspective, the first part of the chapter discusses two prevalent arguments believed to account for aid ineffectiveness that: 1) Aid drives donors' motives and; 2) Aid creates dependency in the recipient-country. While relevant, the section argues that the problem of aid ineffectiveness goes beyond these two widespread arguments; understanding aid recipients' contexts *vis-à-vis* the theories and concepts on which aid programs are based, is crucial.

⁶⁵ Ghana's Minister of Finance and Economic Planning (2009–2012) shared his perspective on how the DAC can help in providing aid more effectively to ensure that the country reaches its development goals (<http://www.oecd.org/dataoecd/4/22/45298985.htm>, retrieved April 27, 2012).

The second section of the chapter examines Results–Based Financing, Aid–Agenda Conferences and Program–Based Approaches, three currently popular mechanisms for addressing aid ineffectiveness globally. As will become obvious, while these approaches are celebrated, none seems to address the ‘context argument’, a gap this thesis seeks to fill.

3.1 Why Has Aid Been Ineffective?⁶⁶

Although there are several arguments for why aid is considered by many to be ineffective, the two most prevalent in the literature are explicated below. These are the notions that: 1) Donors use aid to achieve their strategic interests; and 2) Aid creates a culture of dependency in the recipient–country (Mehmet 1999; Riddell 2007; Moyo 2009; Mavrotas 2010).

3.1.1. Aid and Donors’ Strategic Interests

Although inherently altruistic, aid is believed never to have been ‘an honest gift’ (Mehmet 1971; Amoako–Tuffour 2005). In their *Who Gives Aid to Whom and Why?* Alesina and Dollar (1998), exposed non–developmental motives that inform aid allocation. They found that the direction of aid is dictated by political and strategic considerations much more so than the economic needs and policy performance of the recipient country. Jones et al. (2005, p. 26) also observed that:

Aid from the largest bilateral donors ... [is] provided for motives that are not purely based on poverty reduction objectives, although the latter have been made more explicit in recent years and are formally the sole or major justification for development assistance for some donors. Security and regional relations are the most significant drivers of aid allocations for donors.

As previously discussed, the phenomenon of using aid to achieve donors’ strategic interests dates back to the Marshall Plan, which was meant not just to revive Western European economies, but also to challenge the spread of Soviet communism in Europe (Lancaster 2007; Mavrotas 2010). The same principle also underlined British and French colonial aid after World War II as well as the US and Soviet aid during the Cold War (Riddell 2007).

Contemporary bilateral donors continue to use aid to advance their respective national interests. For example, a Japanese Minister of Foreign Affairs remarked, “it must not be forgotten that in the end Official Development Assistance is implemented for Japan’s

⁶⁶ This review does not take Emergency Aid into account.

own sake” (Riddell 2007, p. 97). Australia is also forthright, “the objective of the Australian aid program is to assist developing countries reduce poverty and achieve sustainable development in line with Australia's national interest”⁶⁷. Canada is also no exception (Pomerantz 2004). It is within this context that Riddell condemns the MDGs as being deceptive and tending to portray ‘development’ and the welfare of the poor as the only reasons why aid is given; however without doubt, security and commercial interests are influential (Jones et al. 2005; Riddell 2007).

The use of aid to advance donors’ commercial interests dates back to 1896 when the US used food aid as a ploy to find markets for their food surpluses (Hjertholm & Howard 1998). The British Colonial 1929 Act, which allowed for loans and grants to their colonies for infrastructure, was also meant to absorb the outputs of British manufacturers (Riddell 2007). As a result, during the 1940s the British viewed their colonies as the producers of materials for their industries (Hjertholm & Howard 1998). The British Minister of Food in the World–War II Labor government is quoted, saying that, “by one means or another, by hook or by crook, the development of primary production of all sorts in the colonial area ... is ... a life and death matter for [Britain’s] economy” (Gupta 1975, p. 320).

Modern bilateral donors have maintained the commercial–interest philosophy through strategies such as tied–aid. Tied–aid is defined as Project Aid determined and contracted by the source country to private firms in the donor country (Mehmet 1971; Svensson 2000). In simpler terms, if Australia gave aid to Sri Lanka to build schools, for example, Australian firms would be awarded the contracts. In the mid 1980’s, Jempa (1991) found that 52% of donors tied their aid. In 2006, the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development of the Development Assistance Committee (OECD/DAC) also revealed that more than 50% of total Official Development Assistance (ODA) remained tied⁶⁸.

Some have argued that in principle, tied–aid is common sense, and that it could strategically promote the recipient country’s business or exports (Aryeetey 1995; Sowa & White 1997). However, others disagree and argue that tied–aid promotes corruption and does not promote local ownership of aid programs (Bhagwati et al. 1983; Jempa

⁶⁷ <http://ausaid.gov.au/about/default.cfm>, retrieved May10, 2011.

⁶⁸ http://www.oecd.org/document/50/0,3746,en_2649_33721_46345330_1_1_1_1,00.html, retrieved April 26, 2012.

1991; Baffour 1999; Osei 2004; Quartey 2005). Riddell (2007) estimates that tied-aid costs recipient-countries about USD 7.3 billion extra; for example, Osei (2004) found that between 1990 and 1997, tied-aid raised the price of imported goods in Ghana from USD 40 million to USD 80 million a year (see also Mehmet 1971; Cassen 1994).

As a result of the negative impact of tied-aid on recipient-countries, the OECD/DAC has intensified its efforts since 2000 to get its member states to “untie” their aid (Clay, Geddes & Natali 2009). The efforts stem from empirical studies which suggest that untied aid promotes the development of the recipient country’s local businesses and employment, while aligning projects to local priorities (Jempa 1991; Lahiri & Raimondos 1997; OECD 2009). These efforts culminated in a *Recommendation to Untie Official Development Assistance to the Least Developed Countries*, which came into force in January 2002 (DAC High Level Meeting, April 2001; Riddell 2007). The recommendations aimed to: 1) Untie ODA to the least developed countries to the greatest extent possible; 2) Promote and ensure adequate ODA flows, in particular to the least developed countries; and 3) Achieve balanced efforts among DAC Members in untying aid. This effort was augmented by the 2005 Paris Declaration, which as discussed below, emphasised local ownership, aid coordination and donor/ recipient partnership as a means to achieving greater aid effectiveness⁶⁹. The recommendations were amended in 2006 and 2008 to expand the coverage to heavily indebted poor countries⁷⁰.

A recent report of Clay et al. (2009), *Untying Aid, Is It Working?* based on case studies from Burkina Faso, Ghana, Laos, South Africa, Vietnam and Zambia, indicates that the proportion of untied bilateral aid has risen progressively from 46% in the period 1999 – 2001 to 82% in 2008. The report also claims that since January 2002, ODA to the least developed countries has been untied in the following areas: balance of payments and structural adjustment support, debt forgiveness, sector and multi-sector programmes assistance, investment project aid, import and commodity support, commercial services contracts and ODA to NGOs for procurement related activities.

Despite OECD’s efforts, tied-aid still exists. In Ghana, with the exception of the UK, most bilateral donors do not channel all their aid to the country’s budgetary support

⁶⁹ See http://www.oecd.org/document/18/0,3343,en_2649_3236398_35401554_1_1_1_1,00.html, retrieved April 2005, 2012.

⁷⁰ http://www.oecd.org/document/50/0,3746,en_2649_33721_46345330_1_1_1_1,00.html, retrieved April 20, 2012.

mechanism that uses untied aid modalities (Woll 2008; Clay et al. 2009; Geddes et al. 2009). Technical assistance to most developing countries remains tied under the de facto tying principles which are applied in contexts where the aid recipient's local or regional contractors 'supposedly': 1) Are unable to compete internationally; 2) Have unequal access to information; and/or 3) Lack the capacity to implement the projects that may require speedy execution. Some donors also apply the principle because they want to avert potential risks or follow their ODA regulations (Clay et al. 2009; OECD 2011). While de facto tying may be a consequence and not necessarily intended, the practice offers loopholes for donors to manipulate their aid. As most donors are thought to focus their technical assistance in areas of their comparative advantage (Amoako–Tuffour 2005), the principle seems to provide donors with the convenience of promoting their country's businesses, while local capacities, which may need such opportunities to grow, are bypassed (Geddes et al. 2009).

While tied-aid does have some impact on the quality of aid; it does not offer enough grounds to argue in general that donors' interests contribute to aid ineffectiveness. The reason is that the commercialisation aspect of tied-aid is just one ruse of donors' strategic agendas. Interestingly, some donors have "successfully" employed the instrumentality of aid to accomplish security, climate, and immigration policy agendas. An example is the US Marshall Plan for Western Europe, which was an overt economic program, but in reality was 'security-driven'⁷¹ (Lancaster 2007). Others include the 2009 UN Conference on Climate convened in Copenhagen, Denmark, where aid was used as a "bait" to gain support for the deal⁷²; and the use of aid to curb illegal migration to many developed countries (AIDWATCH 2011; Arthur & Quartey 2008; DFID 2012).

The fact that some donors have been able to use aid to accomplish their national agendas presents two points for discussion. First, it gives rise to problems as to what defines "aid effectiveness". If defined and assessed as *just* "outcomes", aid programs that accomplish donors' objectives, but lead to increased local corruption and keep despots in power may also be considered as "effective" or "successful" (Alesina & Weder 1999; Annist 2005; Eyben & Leon 2005; Labonne & Chase 2007). The question then becomes: from whose perspective should "aid effectiveness" be measured: donors or recipients? Relative to this thesis, "aid effectiveness" is measured through the lenses

⁷¹ To challenge the spread of Soviet communism in Europe.

⁷² (see <http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/8422133.stm>, retrieved April 25, 2012).

of donors' specific program objectives and how these impact on beneficiaries at the local level. However, understanding the impact of aid on recipients, this thesis shows, requires a considerable appreciation of their local dynamics.

Second, it suggests that untying aid would not necessarily lead to “aid effectiveness”, as it is a broad concept (Li 2007; Mavrotas 2010). For example, although the UK has, as of 2008, untied all its ODA to Ghana (Geddes et al. 2009), this laudable action has not necessarily improved the successes of its programs in the country. This is because other problems with aid, such as lack of coordination among donors, still exist there, a challenge that has no correlation to tied or untied aid (DFID 2012; see also Woll 2008). Further, although multilateral aid programs are untied, appear to be less politically-driven, and are more likely to be channelled to recipients' needs, some of them fail or do not meet all goals for other reasons, including the notion that aid creates dependency (Riddell 2007).

3.1.2 Aid and the Dependency Theory

Dependency Theory has its roots in the Leninist theories of imperialism (Chase-Dunn 1975; Kaufman et al. 1975; Bornschier et al. 1978; Barrett & White 1982). It refers to “a situation in which the economy of a certain group of [developing] countries is conditioned by ... another [mostly rich] country or external forces [multilateral corporations, international commodity market, aid]” (Santos 1971, p. 321). Aid became the medium for dependency after World War II (Hjertholm & Howard 1998). Hitherto, minerals (gold or silver), agricultural products and raw materials were the instruments (Santos 1971; Bauer 1982; Mehmet 1999).

Arguing within the framework of Dependency Theory, most anti-aid authors contend that aid is a disincentive for development, as it leaves the recipient country dependent on donors and lenders (Pankaj 2005; Easterly 2006; Moyo 2009). Because of its “addictive” nature, they argue further that if a country relies on aid as a channel for mobilising fiscal resources, it would be difficult to “wean” them off it. Other grounds for criticisms against the concept include the notions that aid: is unpredictable and cannot be relied upon as a permanent source of income; is used to drive donors' agenda(s); reduces the incentive to adopt good policies; creates ‘welfarism’; stifles economic growth; and leads to consumption rather than investment (Barrett & White 1982; Bauer 1982; Collier 1999).

However, aid proponents would disagree with the above claims. For example, Barrett and White (1982) argued that the proposition of aid dependence leading to slower economic growth should not be considered as a generality. Drawing on evidence from Taiwan, they claimed that the country received massive foreign aid and investment, but also had one of the highest sustained rates of economic growth in the 1980s. Cassen (1994) also averred that aid has specifically contributed to raising food production in the South Asian sub-continent and to experimental rural education programs in Africa. Maintaining that majority of aid is successful in terms of its objectives, Cassen condemns “public demonisation” of aid, which, he argues; tends to be swayed by only one or two horrible stories of failed projects. Collier (1999 & 2007) and Sachs (2005) also argue that, subject to a satisfactory policy environment, aid improves economic growth, and that aid welfare and disincentive effects are negligible.

Despite these disagreements, there is no doubt that most Sub-Saharan African countries, including Ghana, are aid-dependent. As the consumer of two-thirds of global aid and often cited as the target of aid, the region is also showing little signs of “weaning” itself off donor largesse (Easterly 2006; Reinert 2007; Riddell 2007; Mavrotas 2010). For example, at the 2005 G-8 Summit in Gleneagles, Scotland, it was projected that the African continent would need a total aid volume of USD 25 billion by 2010⁷³. Figures from the OECD indicate that in 2010, bilateral aid to the continent rose to USD 29.3 billion. Of this, 90% (US\$ 26.5 billion) went to Sub-Saharan region alone⁷⁴. Despite this, the region has little to show for these huge aid investments, as poverty is still widespread (African Region MDG Report 2011). In fact numerous reports have stated that the region stands in the way of the achievement of the MDGs globally (Collier 2007; MDG Report 2011; GMR 2011).

The culture of aid dependency in Sub-Saharan Africa has spurred some Africans to join the campaign against aid even though Ghana’s former President J.A. Kufour [2001–2008] argued that the African continent cannot do without it for now⁷⁵. Among the campaigners are Africa’s richest man, Dangote Aliko⁷⁶; Nigerian Pastor Mathew

⁷³ <http://www.unmillenniumproject.org/press/g8overview.htm>, retrieved January 18, 2012.

⁷⁴ http://www.oecd.org/document/35/0,3746,en_2649_34447_47515235_1_1_1_1,00.html, retrieved January 14, 2012.

⁷⁵ <http://www.modernghana.com/news/241587/1/africa-cant-do-without-aid-for-now-kufuor.html>, retrieved October 10, 2009.

⁷⁶ <http://africanbrains.net/2011/02/04/dangote-africa-needs-investment-not-aid/>, retrieved October 10, 2011.

Ashimolowo (2009); Ghana's Archbishop Palmer Buckle⁷⁷; and Paul Kigame, the Rwandan president, who said that "the only type of aid that is worth[while] to Africans is the type of aid that will ... not exist in future"⁷⁸. The most assertive of the African anti-aid crusaders is a former World Bank employee, Dambisa Moyo. In her provocative book, *DEAD AID: Why Aid is Not Working and How There Is another Way for Africa?*, Moyo (2009) argues strongly that African governments must "wean" themselves off aid as it is ruining their economies. Aid, she argues, makes African leaders underperform and too comfortable, while avoiding innovative ways of improving their economies.

Moyo's (2009) arguments and those of many anti-aid authors seem to suggest a subtle demonisation of 'aid as a concept'. However, 'aid as a concept' and 'aid dependency' are not the same. Amidst the controversies it tends to generate, scholars, including critics like Moyo and Easterly, concede that aid is a way of mobilising investment and capital resources, and that when employed within in a short, finite and time-bound period, aid can produce positive results (Cassen 1994; Reinert 2007; Collier 2007). For example, the US Marshall Plan, which succeeded in reviving Western European Economies after World War II, lasted for a short time (1948–1952). Also, many countries, referred to as the International Development Association [IDA] Graduates, have lowered poverty, increased income levels and achieved, relative economic successes because of their short-term reliance on aid (Reed 2005; Collier 2007; Riddell 2009). These include: Chile, Columbia, China, South Korea, Taiwan, Thailand, and Turkey. Within sub-Saharan Africa, Botswana, Equatorial Guinea, and Swaziland are examples of the transformative power of aid (Cassen 1994; Collier 2007).

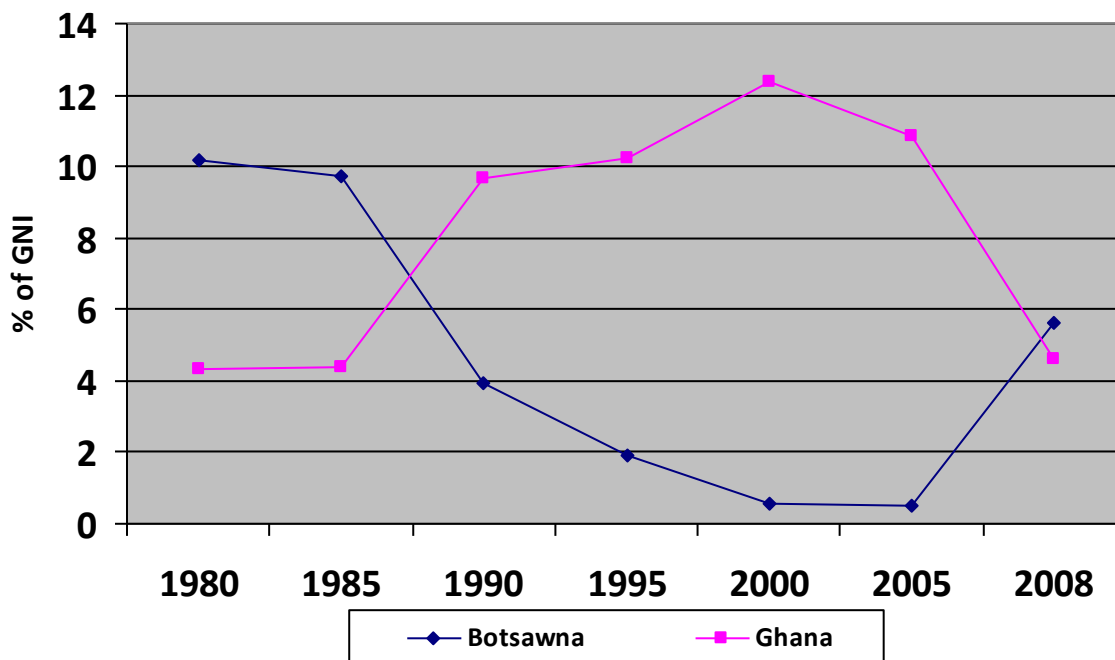
Although the figure below provides evidence to the contrary, Moyo (2009) contends that Botswana did not succeed economically because of aid. She argues that Botswana has been pursuing numerous market options; and that by 2000, aid as percentage of the country's Gross National Income (GNI) was less than 2%. However, as illustrated in Figure 3.3, Botswana relied significantly on aid in the decade of 1980, when it accounted for nearly 7.7% of its GNI, while aid to Ghana stood at 6%. Although factual that Botswana reduced its reliance on aid in the 1990s, aid as percentage of the country's GNI in 2008 rose to 5.6%, clearly higher than that of Ghana. Even though the

⁷⁷ <http://news.peacefmonline.com/social/201111/77515.php>, retrieved November 4, 2011.

⁷⁸ See <http://youtu.be/n4a-FZjPreg>, accessed June 27, 2011.

correlation between aid and Botswana’s growth lies beyond the scope of this thesis, it is clear that the country has not entirely been “aid-free” as Moyo (2009) and others claim.

3.1 Aid as Percentage of Ghana and Botswana GNI 1980–2008



Source: <http://www.tradingeconomics.com/ghana/net-oda-received-percent-of-gni-wb-data.html>, <http://www.tradingeconomics.com/botswana/net-oda-received-percent-of-gni-wb-data.html>, retrieved may 13, 2012, all retrieved May 12, 2012.

The above analysis has revealed that the question of why aid seems to be ineffective is far more complicated. While the notions that aid drives donors interests and creates dependency are still relevant, the discussion has 1) Problematised what is defined as ‘aid effectiveness’; and 2) Shown that aid dependency and ‘aid as a concept’ are not the same. The effectiveness of an aid program, it was argued, should be measured through the perspectives of donors’ specific program objectives and how they impact on beneficiaries at the local level. Furthermore, while aid-dependency may have long-term negative effects for recipients, it does not justify any attempt to demonise ‘aid as a concept’. What has emerged from the discussion so far is the fact that “aid” is not a negative concept and that it produces results, or otherwise, depending on the ‘externalities’ (programs, motives, theories and concepts) that drive it. However, as the next section will show, most of the current mechanisms for achieving aid effectiveness seem to ignore these ‘externalities’; particularly contested theories and complex concepts (such as ‘community’ and ‘empowerment’), which are the focus of this thesis.

3.2 Efforts at Making Aid Effective

Owing to the recent global financial crises, global aid levels dropped in 2011 by 3% to USD 133.5 billion compared to 2010⁷⁹. Coupled with the perception that aid does not work, the debate on aid effectiveness has been very active in the last decade. Among other issues, including the idea that donors must use their aid monies to solve domestic problems, or achieve tangible outcomes for beneficiaries, the aid effectiveness debate has led to the launch of many initiatives in pursuit of making aid ‘really work’ (Cassen 1994; Riddell 2007). Accordingly, the World Bank listed seven key principles for achieving aid effectiveness. These include the need to: 1) Improve [recipient] country ownership; 2) Build capacity and use country systems; 3) Increase the use of Program–Based Approaches; 4) Engage with fragile/post–conflict country situations; 5) Promote the use of non–DAC donors and funds and South–South cooperation; 6) Refine management for development results; and 7) Bolster transparency, governance and accountability (World Bank 2010a). Many of these principles are part of three broad categories of global efforts towards achieving aid effectiveness: 1) Results–Based Financing (Birdsall et al. 2010; Yogita et al. 2010; World Bank 2011); 2) Aid–Agenda Conferences (Walz & Ramachandran 2010; OECD 2011; Zimmermann & Kimberly 2011); and 3) Program–Based Approaches (World Bank 2010a; Binswanger et al. 2010).

3.2.1 Results–Based Financing (*Tied–Aid Repackaged*)

Introduced by the World Bank in 2002, Results–Based Financing (RBF), is considered a modernised approach to delivering aid. Results–Based Financing links disbursements to outputs, after the achievement of agreed measurable outcomes (Yogita et al. 2010; Birdsall 2010; Birdsall & Savedoff 2010). Advocates of the mechanism argue that RBF increases recipient–country ownership, transparency, accountability, the quality of governance and the engagement of private sector capital and expertise (Yogita et al. 2010; Birdsall et al. 2010). RBF is also believed to encourage innovation of public funding and enables monitoring of results, while reducing corruption (Birdsall et al. 2010; World Bank 2011; Bollyky & Glassman 2012).

Presently, two models of RBF exist: 1) Output–Based Aid; and 2) Cash on Delivery Aid. According to Yogita et al. (2010) Output–Based Aid (OBA), unlike traditional aid

⁷⁹ The first drop since 1997, disregarding years of debt relief (see http://www.oecd.org/document/49/0,3746,en_2649_34447_46582641_1_1_1_1,00.html, retrieved April 27, 2012).

delivery approaches, fund projects in specific sectors of the recipient country, including: Information Communication Technology (ICT), Roads, Energy, Water and Sanitation, Health, and Education. Under OBA, service delivery is contracted to a third party, which receives a subsidy to complement or replace user fees, and is paid after the work is done (Yogita et al. 2010). As of 2010, OBA projects totalling USD 3.5 billion⁸⁰, which had supposedly benefitted 17.4 million people worldwide, were identified at the World Bank (GPOBA 2011). The Global Partnership for Output Based–Aid (GPOBA) created by the UK Department for International Development (DFID) and the World Bank has, since 2003, provided technical assistance to donors wishing to use the mechanism (OBA Fact Sheet 2011). While currently being piloted in some developing countries, Australia, the UK, the Netherlands, Sweden, the International Finance Corporation (IFC), and the World Bank have adopted RBF⁸¹.

The Centre for Global Development (CGD) is piloting another RBF model, ‘Cash on Delivery Aid (COD)’. COD builds on the OBA approach, but links payments more directly to a single specific outcome. Unlike the OBA, which hires the service to a third party, COD allows the recipient–government the leverage to achieve progress (Yogita et al. 2010; Savedoff & Martel 2011). However, the donor pays for an outcome, not an input, agreed to by both the recipient and funder (Birdsall et al. 2010). The outcome must be measurable and should be continuous, such as number of children enrolled in school or surviving to age five, making it possible to pay in proportion to progress (Birdsall et al. 2010; Eyben 2010; Savedoff & Martel 2011).

In January 2012, the World Bank’s Board of Executive Directors approved the latest COD model, Program–for–Results (PforR). The mechanism is an innovative financing instrument for the World Bank’s client countries that links the disbursement of funds directly to the delivery of defined results⁸². According to Birdsall (2011)⁸³, when fully operational, PforR will be the third lending mechanism⁸⁴ at the World Bank, and the first to be added to the investment and adjustment instruments since 1980. PforR is expected to enable the World Bank’s partner countries to improve the design and

⁸⁰ Excluding USD 2.8 billion subsidy funded by the recipient government.

⁸¹ See <http://www.gpoba.org/gpoba/donors>, retrieved January 26, 2012.

⁸² <http://web.worldbank.org/WBSITE/EXTERNAL/PROJECTS/EXTRESLENDING/0,,menuPK:7321732~pagePK:7321723~piPK:7321730~theSitePK:7514726,00.html>, retrieved 15/05/12.

⁸³ <http://blogs.cgdev.org/globaldevelopment/2011/11/world-bank-results-initiative-the-u-s-should-support-it-%E2%80%93-but-with-independent-verification-please.php>, Retrieved April 28, 2012.

⁸⁴ The two that exist now are investment loans under which inputs, not results, are financed; and policy based loans, under which policy changes are financed.

implementation of their development programs thereby providing lasting results by strengthening institutions and building capacity (World Bank 2011). The mechanism will also enhance partnerships with government, development partners and other stakeholders by providing a platform for collaboration in larger country programs (World Bank 2011)⁸⁵. PforR is currently in the pipeline to fund projects worth almost USD 1.3 billion in Ethiopia, Mozambique Tanzania, Uganda, Morocco, Nepal, Uruguay, Vietnam, and Indonesia.⁸⁶

While RBF seems to provide evidence of achieved results to donors, the mechanism has been criticised on many grounds. First, the literature on RBF is dominated by its ardent supporters: World Bank, GPOBA and the CGD, for example. As RBF does not specify the use of, and there seems to be no independent, third-party performance audit of its programs, the claims about its effectiveness remain subjective (Birdsall et al. 2010). Second, there are concerns that donors who use RBF tend to be interested in results and, for example, ignore social and environmental safeguards. This criticism has been raised by the US, which has withheld its support for the RBF, despite being incessantly lobbied (Birdsall 2011). Third, Savedoff and Martel (2011) argue that outcomes of RBF vary by contexts, sectors and countries. For example, while RBF has been achieving successes in the ICT in Latin America, the mechanism has not produced equivalent results in Sub-Saharan Africa, for example (Yogita et al. 2010).

Finally, RBF seems to reinforce conditions and ‘neo tied-aid’, an approach identified as hampering aid effectiveness (Kanbur 2003; Easterly 2006; Moyo 2009). The seeming repackaging of tied-aid to results also appears to contradict the claims of RBF proponents that the mechanism enhances country ownership as most RBF projects are executed by a third party. The operational strategies of RBF also seem to suggest that donors: adopt ‘a hands-off attitude’ to aid program processes, mistrust recipient governments, and ignore the principle that development is more than increased funding and results (Pomerantz 2004; Eyben 2006; 2010; Kaberuka 2011).

⁸⁵ See also <http://web.worldbank.org/ProgramforResults>, retrieved April 27, 2012.

⁸⁶ http://siteresources.worldbank.org/PROJECTS/Resources/40940-1244163232994/6180403-1340125811295/PforR_Pipeline_6.20.2012.pdf, retrieved July 15, 2012.

3.2.2 Aid–Agenda Conferences

In their efforts to ensure that aid is effective, many donors have also resorted to using international conferences as platforms for the discussion of issues on global aid financing and effectiveness. Examples include: those held in Monterrey (Mexico) 2002 and Doha (Qatar) 2008 to review Financing for Development; the UK Commission for Africa; the G8 and G20 Summits; and the now popular High–Level Forum on Aid Effectiveness (HLFA). The HLFA is specifically organised for discussing issues on aid effectiveness with four being already held in Rome (2003); Paris (2005); Accra, Ghana (2008) and Busan, South Korea (2011). In Rome, representatives of donor and developing countries committed themselves to work with developing countries to coordinate and streamline aid activities better at the country level (HLFA Rome 2003).

The Paris Declaration on Aid Effectiveness (PD 2005) has enhanced the importance of HLFA as an Aid–Agenda Conference (AAC)⁸⁷. The document committed participants of the HLFA–2 (Paris) to fostering partnerships to ensure that developing countries were in–charge of their own development processes. Furthermore, the Paris Declaration stipulated that donors and aid recipients hold each other accountable for attaining development results through a set of indicators having thirteen targets to be achieved by 2010 (OECD 2011). The targets, which have become the only international framework on the quality of aid with overarching influence on the MDGs and the UN/G8–led commitments on development finance, cover five broad themes: 1) Ownership: developing countries set their own priorities for development, strengthen their institutions and lead in coordinating aid; 2) Alignment: donors arrange aid through developing countries’ priorities and make better use of each country’s plans, policies and systems; 3) Harmonisation: donors coordinate to avoid duplication, simplify procedures and agree to a better division of labour with partner countries; 4) Managing for results: developing countries and donors focus on effecting and measuring results; and 5) Mutual accountability: donors and developing countries become accountable to their parliaments and citizens for the results they achieve (OECD 2011; Killen 2011).

In September 2008, development partners met in Accra (Ghana) to accelerate the achievement of the Paris Declaration. Named the Accra Agenda for Action (AAA), the forum promoted the idea that donors and partner country governments recognise the necessity for national ownership of programs and for a wider dialogue on development

⁸⁷ See http://www.oecd.org/document/18/0,3746,en_2649_3236398_35401554_1_1_1_1,00.html#Paris, retrieved March 28, 2011.

processes. At the AAA, participants also assessed the progress of the PD 2005 and concluded that, while some progress had been made, it was minimal and very slow. Three major challenges identified were: country–ownership; building more effective and inclusive partnerships; and achieving development results, and openly accounting for them. Agreement therefore was reached on: 1) Aid predictability; 2) Use of recipient–country systems; 3) Avoidance of conditionalities; and 4) Untying aid⁸⁸.

Before discussing the HLFA-4 at Busan, it is important to show the extent to which the commitments to the PD 2005 have been realised. A report released by the OECD in 2011 reveals sobering outcomes. While some progress has been made, only one out of the thirteen targets established for 2010 (coordinated technical cooperation)⁸⁹ has been met, albeit by a narrow margin. The report also portrays stark variations in the direction and pace of progress across donors and partner countries since 2005 (OECD 2011). Other studies have made similar conclusions. For example, a study released in 2011 by a campaign group, “Publish What You Fund” indicates that aid harmonisation still remains wishful thinking because some donors continue to conceal a large proportion of their ODA (AIDWATCH 2011; Faust 2011; www.aidtransparency.net).

Following the report, aid proponents blamed aid ineffectiveness on a lack of coordination between traditional and new donors such as Brazil, China, India, Kuwait, Turkey, Russia, Saudi Arabia, Venezuela, the United Arabs Emirates, and recently, South Africa. Walz and Ramachandran (2010) estimated the aid flows of these donors in the last decade to be between USD 11 billion and 41.7 billion representing 8% and 31% of the global gross ODA respectively. Interestingly, while many of them have high rates of poverty, their ODA reach the UN aid target of 0.7% of GNI, a benchmark, which only 10% of the traditional donors attain (Walz & Ramachandran 2010; Zimmermann & Kimberly 2011).

The OECD/DAC argues that the new donors have no standard system for reporting their ODA nor follow the ‘official’ OECD/DAC definition of aid (Zimmermann & Kimberly 2011). Further, the OECD/DAC notes that this practice is impacting on global aid coordination and transparency, and has given rise to three distinct models of aid giving:

⁸⁸<http://siteresources.worldbank.org/ACCRAEXT/Resources/4700790-1217425866038/AAA-4-SEPTEMBER-FINAL-16h00.pdf>, retrieved April 28, 2012.

⁸⁹ The extent to which donors co-ordinate their efforts to support countries’ capacity development objectives.

the OECD/DAC; Arab; and Southern models⁹⁰. These models are distinguished by the level of transparency and accountability to areas such as military aid, peacekeeping contributions, debt relief and direct foreign investment (Walz & Ramachandran 2010).

Although collaboration with the new donors started in 2003⁹¹, it has intensified in recent years through the OECD/DAC Working Party on Aid Effectiveness (WP-EFF). Its main task is to get the new donors to adopt OECD/DAC guidelines for giving aid while working towards recommendations on ways by which the ‘traditional donors’ can engage the former by achieving the MDGs. This was discussed at the HLFA-4 held in Busan, and attended by many traditional and new donors (Walz & Ramachandran 2010; Zimmermann & Kimberly 2011⁹²).

The Busan discussion did not focus on coercing the new donors to adopt the OECD/DAC model, but on fostering partnerships between the traditional and new donors to increase and reinforce development results. Within the framework of diversity, that will underpin this partnership, the OECD/DAC urged the new donors to commit to the PD 2005 to pursue the achievement of the MDGs. A significant development at the Busan Forum was the commitment to scrap the role of the OECD/DAC’s WP-EFF as the convener of all development cooperation meetings. The WP-EFF will be replaced by a new, inclusive and representative Global Partnership for Effective Development Co-operation to support and ensure accountability for the implementation of commitments at the political level (Busan Partnership for Effective Development Co-operation 2011). This development was crucial because, as Walz and Ramachandran (2010) argued, the WP-EFF is an arm of the OECD/DAC and is not an independent body for facilitating discussion of international aid cooperation and understanding. In their view, the Southern and Arab donors were unlikely to subscribe fully to a donor dialogue led by the OECD/DAC; the international aid fraternity needed a more independent body to lead such discussions.

⁹⁰ http://www.oecd.org/document/35/0,3746,en_2649_3236398_43382307_1_1_1_1,00.html, retrieved May 14, 2012.

⁹¹ The China-DAC Study Group and the Task Team on South-South Co-operation were examples of such initiatives aimed at fostering dialogue on development assistance cooperation.

⁹² See also <http://www.aideffectiveness.org/busanhl4/en/about/aid-effectiveness.html>, retrieved April 28, 2012.

Some have argued that because many of the new donors are trying to break down the traditional Western hegemonies,⁹³ and build their profile and influence in the international arena, it is highly unlikely they will cooperate with the traditional donors (Zimmermann & Kimberly 2011; Walz & Ramachandran 2010). Tellingly, some of the new donors have formed an alliance organisation called the BRICS (Brazil, Russia, India, China and South Africa), where economic and other strategic areas of cooperation are discussed⁹⁴. Whether the new donors will adhere to the Busan principles and the traditional donors will take the HLFA agreements seriously cannot be predicted.

3.2.3 Program-Based Approaches (Community-Driven Development)

The Program-Based Approach (PBA) is premised on the notion that donors contribute to a coherent set of development activities at the national sectoral, sub-sectoral or thematic level⁹⁵. Within the World Bank, PBA is considered one of the seven guiding principles for achieving aid effectiveness (World Bank 2010a). The OECD defines it as sharing the following features:

Leadership by the host country or organisation; (ii) a single comprehensive programme and budget framework; (iii) a formalised process for donor co-ordination and harmonisation of donor procedures for reporting, budgeting, financial management and procurement; (iv) efforts to increase the use of local systems for programme design and implementation, financial management, monitoring and evaluation⁹⁶.

The Paris Declaration (2005) enjoined donors to commit 66% of their aid in the form of PBAs. Listed as a way of achieving both harmonisation of aid and the MDGs, donors support and implement PBAs in different ways and across a range of aid modalities including: budget support, sector budget support, project support, pooled arrangements and trust funds³¹. Although most donors have not achieved the 66% benchmark, there is evidence that many are investing in the approach (See CIDA 2010).

The World Bank's Community-Driven Development (CDD) has, since 2000, become a popular PBA and aid delivery mechanism. CDD is noted for espousing local community involvement, participation and empowerment (World Bank 2000b; Dongier

⁹³ Many of the new donors have not had fair representation in the Bretton Woods and other global institutions. For example, while Belgium has 103 votes per billion dollars of GDP at the IMF, China has about 25. The BRICs also feel sidelined in the multilateral institutions (Zimmermann & Kimberly 2011).

⁹⁴ See http://www.millasa.co.za/BRICS_2012, retrieved April 28, 2012.

⁹⁵ <http://www.aideffectiveness.org/Themes-Programme-based-Approaches.html>, retrieved May 18, 2012.

⁹⁶ http://www.oecd.org/document/19/0,3343,en_21571361_39494699_39503763_1_1_1_1_00.html. Retrieved May 18, 2012.

et al. 2003; Binswanger et al. 2010). Before discussing the World Bank's commitment to CDD, it is important to point out that the concept is not new. Historically, CDD or community-based development approaches date back to the days of Mahatma Gandhi and Paul Freire, and the activities of S.K. Dev and Akhter Hameed Khan of the Bangladesh Academy for Rural Development (BARD) in the 1960s (White 1999; Mansuri & Rao 2004).⁹⁷ Similarly, the World Bank in the 1970s used the approach in their Integrated Rural Development Programs which implemented many combined projects including: irrigation, agricultural credit, rural infrastructure, education, health, water supply, and small-scale industries (Binswanger et al. 2010)⁹⁸.

However, the CDD approach became unpopular, many commentators of the period criticising it as a Marxist paradigm and lacking external stimuli (Hardin 1968; Olson 1973; Mansuri & Rao 2004). These criticisms reinforced existing beliefs in the top-down, centralised and state-led machinery for the provision of public goods, state regulation of common-pool resources, and an emphasis on the development of private property rights (Mansuri & Rao 2004). In relation to developing countries, Binswanger et al. (2010) argues that the criticisms offered their leaders grounds for building strong centralised governments to allow them to stay in power under the guise of avoiding neo-colonialism.

Community-Driven Development approaches regained popularity from the mid-1980s (Binswanger et al. 2010), four factors accounting for this. First, allegations of corruption against leaders of centralised regimes, particularly in developing countries, led many to lose confidence in top-down paradigms (Collier 1999; Binswanger et al. 2010). Second, during the period in question, CDD approaches achieved better development results than government-initiated or 'top-down' projects in many developing countries such as: the self-employed women's association in India; the Orangi slum improvement project in Pakistan; the Iringa Nutrition project in Tanzania; and the Mexican Zacatecas projects⁹⁹ (Krishna et al. 1997; Mansuri & Rao 2004; Binswanger et al. 2010). These successes were in contrast to the failure of large-scale

⁹⁷ S.K. Dev was a former Indian Community Development Minister who piloted community development projects in 1948. He used community participation approaches that were scaled up to a nationwide community development program. The BARD designed a community-based rural project (the Comilla Model) to encourage farmers to generate capital through thrift deposits, access to credits and technological innovations.

⁹⁸ During the same period, UN agencies also used the community-based approaches (Mansuri & Rao 2004).

⁹⁹ The Mexican project employed Rapid Rural Appraisals, what is now referred to as Participatory Rural Appraisal.

‘macro-initiated’ projects in many sectors around the world (Scott 1998; World Bank 2000a; Mansuri & Rao 2004; Binswanger et al. 2010).

The popularity of CDD approaches is also attributable to its promotion by Western governments during the period in question. Rooted in the so-called ‘neo-liberal’ philosophy, community-based approaches became a strategy of most governments in the West for encouraging their citizens to do things for themselves and not rely on public funding. As discussed below, this has led some to mistrust community-based development paradigms (Pandey 2010; Tesoriero 2010; Kenny 2010).

Finally, academics played a vital role in promoting CDD approaches as opposed to top-down paradigms. Chambers’ *Rural Development: Putting the Last First* was an example of such influential scholarly works. Rooted in Foucaudian and Marxist ideologies, Chambers (1983) contended that wastage of billions of dollars occurred due to centralisation of power at the top. Many scholars have followed suit, arguing that local voices are crucial in determining the fate of project outcomes as they can enhance or dampen participation and sustainability tendencies (Cernea 1985; Ostrom 1990; Escobar 1995; Fergusson 1997; Scott 1998; White 1999; Narayan 2002; Cleaver 2001; Mosse 2001). According to Mansuri and Rao (2004), these writings have been instrumental in the World Bank’s renewed interest in CDD programs.

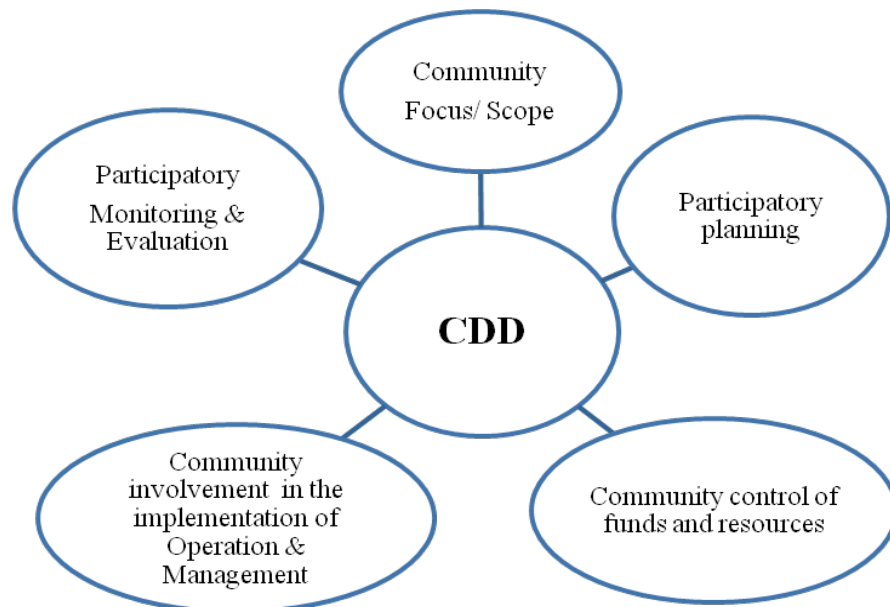
3.3 The World Bank’s Commitment to Community-Driven Development

Community-Driven Development (CDD) programs have been embraced as an effective Program-Based Approach (PBA) to delivering aid. The World Bank defines CDD as ‘a development approach that gives control over planning decisions and investment resources to community groups and local governments’¹⁰⁰. CDD is not considered a project, but rather the strengthening of political and administrative structures to empower communities and local governments with the resources and authority to control fully all project stages as shown in Figure 3.2 below (Chase & Woolcock 2005; Labonne & Chase 2007; 2008; Binswanger et al. 2010). While their operations vary by [country] context and objective, CDD is largely a joint-venture between ‘communities’, local governments and the central government, with support from the private sector and civil society (Mansuri & Rao 2004; Binswanger et al. 2010). However, in some contexts, different localities or “communities” wishing to use CDD approaches write project proposals to compete for funds (Annist 2005; Conning & Kevane 2005).

¹⁰⁰ <http://go.worldbank.org/24K8IHVVS0>, accessed August 04, 2011.

Because CDD provides ‘communities’ with a voice and control over all project stages, it is believed to; 1) Enhance sustainability; 2) Improve [aid] efficiency and effectiveness; 3) Allow poverty reduction efforts to be taken to scale; 4) Make development more inclusive; 5) Empower poor people, build social capital, and strengthen governance; and 6) Complement market and public sector activities (Dongier et al. 2003; Baird et al. 2009; van Domelen 2007; 2008; Binswanger et al. 2010; World Bank 2010b). Thus, the World Bank Group claims that CDD programs have empowered ‘communities’, delivered cost-effective infrastructure, enhanced livelihoods, and improved ‘community’ dynamics in Sub-Saharan Africa and Asia regions, while solving critical problems in Haiti and Somalia (World Bank 2010b)¹⁰¹.

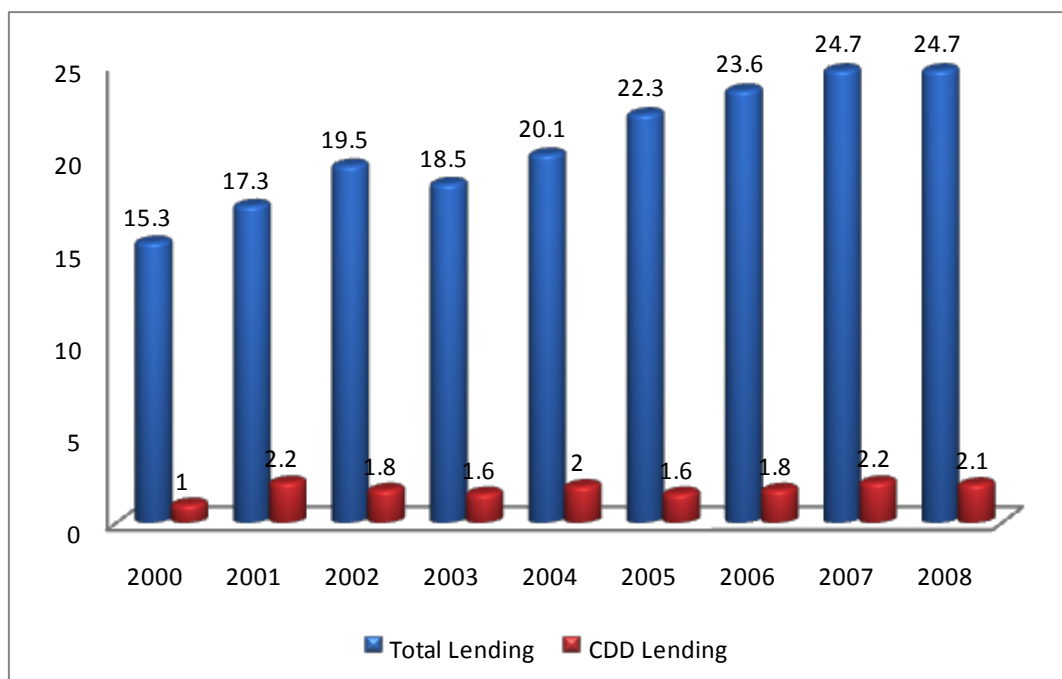
Figure 3.2 Characteristics of CDD Projects



Source: Asian Development Bank (2006)

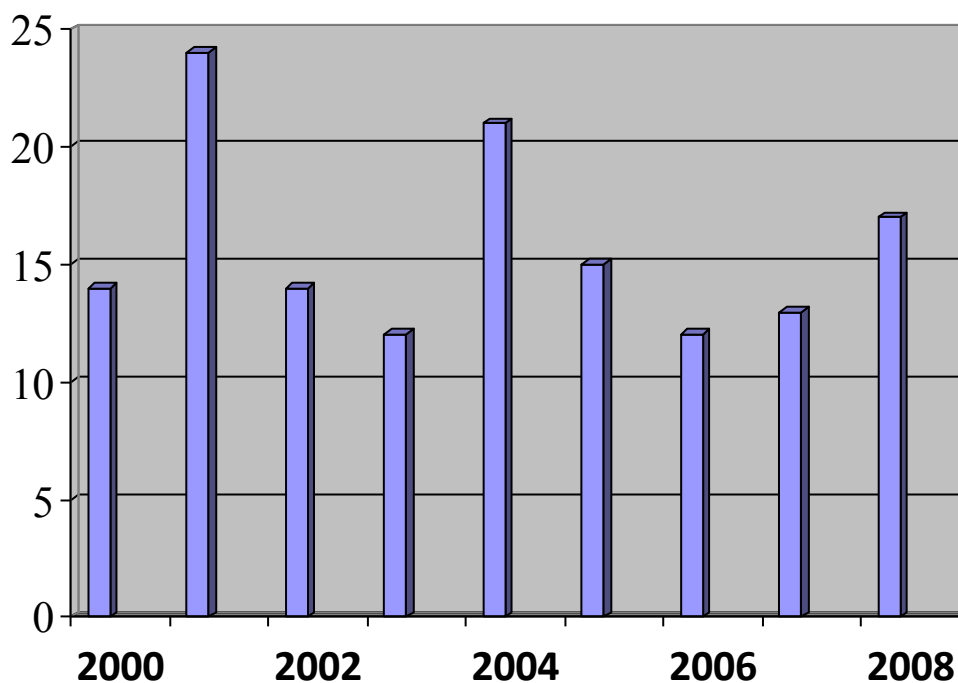
¹⁰¹ <http://www.worldbank.org/ida>, retrieved in January 2012; see also Van Domelen (2008).

Figure 3.3 World Bank Lending in Support of CDD Programs in USD (Billions)



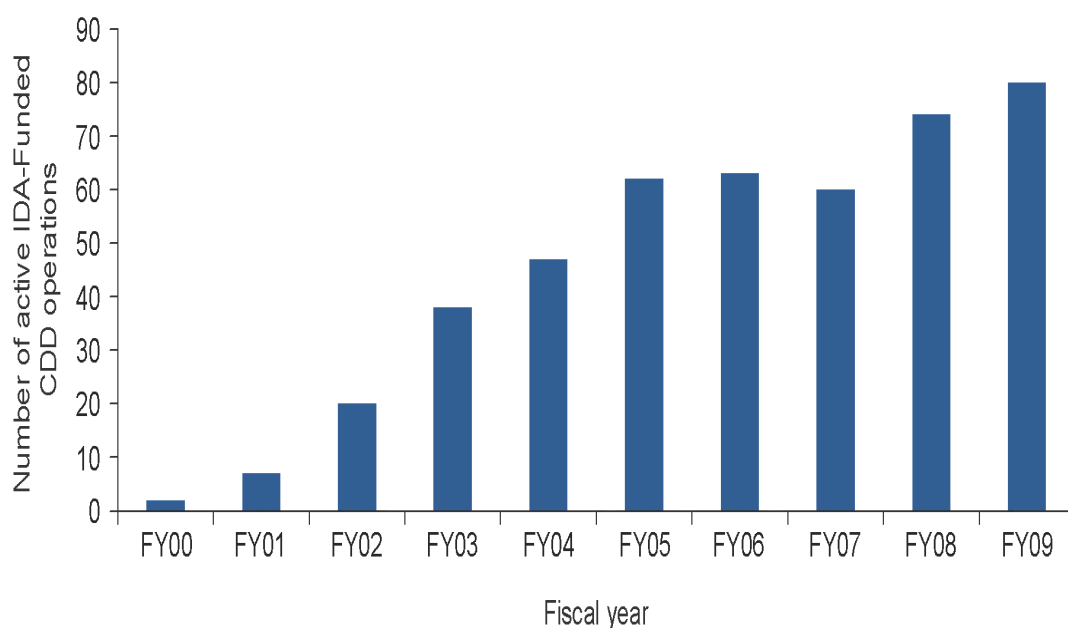
Sources: Wong & Guggenheim (2005); Binswanger et al. (2010).

Figure 3.4 CDD as Percentage of IDA Lending



Source: Binswanger et al. (2010).

Figure 3.5 Number of Active IDA-Funded CDD Operations by Fiscal Year from 2000



Source: World Bank (2010b).

The World Bank's investment in CDD programs since 2000 has averaged almost USD 2 billion a year (see Figure 3.3). A recent Independent Evaluation Group review of sixty-two country assistance strategies found that CDD operations are an important part of the World Bank's strategy in more than 74% of relevant countries (Binswanger et al. 2010). In 2008, the International Development Association's (IDA) lending for CDD-related programs averaged 17% of its total lending (World Bank 2010b; see also Figure 3.4) while the number of CDD programs active at the IDA for the 2007 – 2009 period averaged over seventy-two (see Figure 3.5). Although there are no recent published data on the regional distribution of the World Bank's CDD lending, there is evidence that between 2000 and 2003, a greater proportion went to Sub-Saharan Africa (Asian Development Bank 2006). The focus on the region reflects the World Bank's vision in 2000 to reducing poverty on the continent through program and community-based approaches (Narayan 2002; World Bank 2000a; 2004b; 2010b).

The above notwithstanding, some scholars have criticised CDD programs. First, Tesoriero (2010) and Warwick and Overton (2011) argue that the World Bank's promotion of the concept cannot be trusted, as they have a hidden agenda. In their view, like Structural Adjustments of the 1990s, the World Bank is now using CDD to promote neo-liberal and neo-structural ideals, which shielded governments'

commitment to welfarism, while encouraging privatisation and reliance on families and women (see also Amin 2005; Defillippis et al. 2010; Pandey 2010).

Second, some scholars contend that because, in some contexts, different localities have to compete for funding, CDD inadvertently promotes ‘survival of the fittest’, the rich, the educated and the politically–connected (Platteau 2004; 2009; Labonne & Chase 2007). Because the approach usually funds those with the *best* project proposal, it has been argued that the approach posits ‘style’ over ‘real needs’, and that the ‘genuinely needy’ (the poor, illiterate or marginalised), may not always be those who obtain ‘the help’, due to the possibilities of corruption and conflict of interests (Annist 2005; Conning & Kevane 2005; Araujo et al. 2008; Baird et al. 2009).

Furthermore, there are concerns that CDD programs lack generalisable and uniform indicators for assessing aid effectiveness, as its successes are context–specific (Mansuri & Rao 2004; Chase & Woolcock 2005; Labonne & Chase 2008). Finally, some argue that CDD programs tend to create new allocation rules, while altering existing structures of engagement and neglecting traditional institutions (Mansuri & Rao 2004; Miguel & Gugert 2005; Habyarimana et al. 2007). In other words, while CDD attempts to empower marginalised people, it is criticised for failing to appease the ‘traditionally powerful’. Because ‘power’ is not neutral, and ‘empowering’ one group may mean ‘disempowering’ the other; CDD programs can potentially threaten ‘community’ cohesion (see Chapter Seven; Chase & Woolcock 2005; Mansuri & Rao 2004; Vail 2004; Hancock et al. 2011).

As pointed out in Chapter One, ‘community’ and ‘empowerment’ are pivotal concepts in its operations. Without a certain entity called ‘community’, CDD programs cannot function. Further, although its operations may vary, CDD has one agenda: ‘empowering’ people. While appealing, both concepts are complex (Guijt & Shah 1998; Cleaver 2001; Amin 2005; Tesoriero 2010; Hancock et al. 2011). Interestingly, there seems to be no empirical study on how these concepts impact on CDD program outcomes in multi–cultural and ethnic settings. This will be the focus of Chapters Six and Seven of this thesis. Apart from these complex concepts, the World Bank also avers that countries with ‘high functioning’ inter-government systems are better placed to implement CDD programs (Dongier et al 2003; Binswanger et al. 2010; World Bank 2010b). While Chapter Five challenges this theory within the framework of Ghana’s

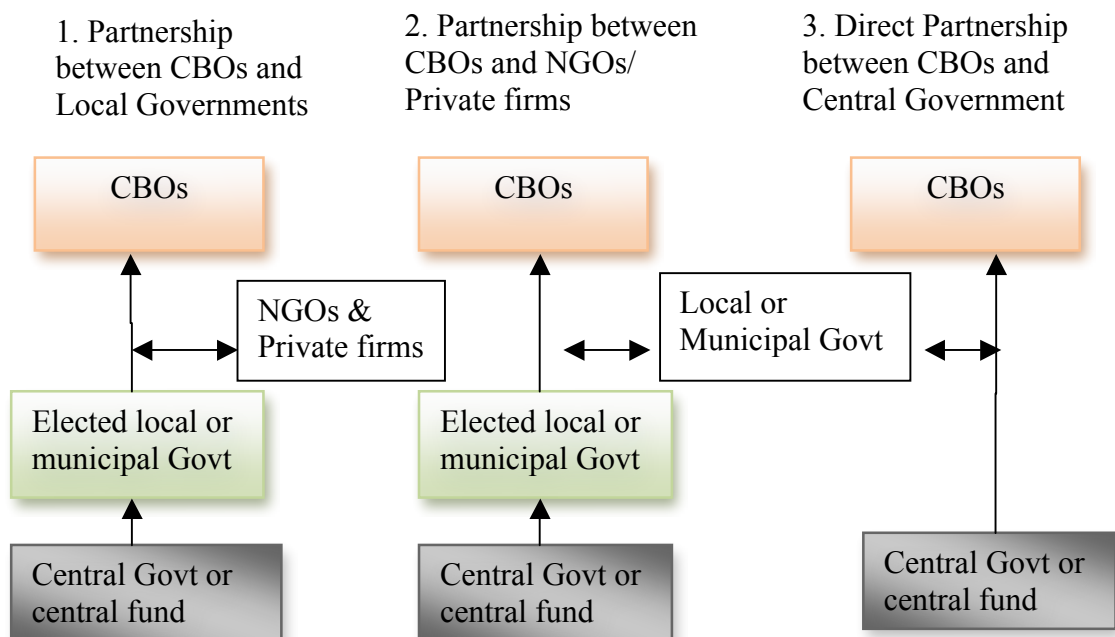
decentralisation system, it is important to first examine the theory to contextualise the arguments advanced against it.

3.4 The World Bank's Framework for Engaging Local Government Structures

The World Bank and other proponents of CDD programs opine that better outcomes are guaranteed if the implementing country's existing inter-government institutions are effective, or have genuine commitment to decentralisation (Crook & Manor 1998; World Bank 2002; 2004b; 2006b; Whitford & Kavita 2006; Binswanger et al. 2010). In the words of Dongier et al. (2003, p. 23):

Local governments can be critical to the success and sustainability of [CDD]. When local government interacts with communities and informal groups in a participatory way, it is possible to achieve economies of scale in producing and providing goods and services ... Furthermore ... local governments are needed to support operation and maintenance of services, and for continuing funding of community groups.

Figure 3.6 CDD Institutional Alternatives



Source: Adopted from Dongier et al. (2003).

As Figure 3.6 illustrates, Dongier et al. (2003) identified three institutional alternatives for CDD programs. While each varies operationally, their contextual appropriateness depends on the state of the country's decentralisation. While the World Bank's scholars provide guidelines for each option, they favour the first: partnership between Community-Based Organisations (CBOs) and local governments. They argue that because it engages existing elected and functioning local government structures, it has better prospects for galvanising local support for CDD programs. By so doing, the argument continues, it strengthens the national system of inter-governmental transfer of resources and allows resource allocation decisions to be accountable to local priorities (Dongier et al. 2003; World Bank 2006b; Binswanger et al. 2010). Ghana's CBRDP was fashioned on this format, but with some variations

Table 3.1 Classification of African Countries Context

	Low-functioning Inter-governmental System		High-functioning Inter-governmental System	
Description	Dysfunctional Government	De-concentrated System	Incipient Decentralisation	Consolidating Decentralisation
Characteristics	CPIA cluster D is less than 2.5	Local state bodies are upwardly accountable, but not elected	Decentralisation law creates local governments with some autonomy in resource management & local elections are held	Conditions for incipient decentralisation are met, combined with fiscal decentralisation & devolution of service delivery
Countries	Angola, Chad, Dem. Rep. of Congo, Rep. of Congo, Liberia, Sudan	Mauritania, Mozambique, Niger, São Tomé and Príncipe	Benin, Burkina Faso, Cameroon, Gambia, Guinea, Kenya, Madagascar, Malawi, Mali, Nigeria, Rwanda, Senegal, Sierra Leone, Zambia	Ethiopia, Ghana, Tanzania, Uganda

Source: Binswanger et al. (2010).

The World Bank distinguishes between low and high-functioning inter-government systems (decentralization) and categorises some African countries by the approach. The World Bank's indicators of a high-functioning inter-government systems include contexts where there exist: 1) Decentralisation laws create local government structures with autonomy in resource management; 2) Local elections; 3) Fiscal decentralisation and; 4) Devolution of service delivery (see Table 3.1 above). Accordingly, the World Bank has put forward operational strategies appropriate for both the low and high-functioning contexts: the Leading, the Conservative or Lagging and the Matching strategies (Dongier et al. 2003; Binswanger et al. 2010).

The 'Leading strategy' is used in low-functioning inter-governmental system countries that have dysfunctional government structures. Under this strategy, a community-based or driven project becomes an initiative that pushes the boundaries of the institutional environment and accelerates change in the political, fiscal, administrative or social aspects of local governance (Binswanger et al. 2010). The 'Conservative or Lagging strategy' is largely employed in a low-functioning inter-governmental system with a de-concentrated system or a high-functioning inter-governmental system and incipient decentralised system. The strategy is cautious in allowing the country's local government institutions the full power to set priorities, manage resources and implement subprojects. It does not take full advantage of the opportunities to promote the role local of government in program implementation (Binswanger et al. 2010).

The 'Matching strategy' is employed in a country such as Ghana, categorised as having high-functioning inter-governmental system, with a consolidating decentralised system. The World Bank considers such countries as being better placed to execute CDD programs successfully, a notion which influenced the design and implementation of Ghana's Community-Based Rural Development Project (CBRDP) (Serrano-Berthet et al. 2010; Binswanger et al. 2010). However, as argued in Chapter Five, Ghana's inter-government system does not appear to be highly functioning as claimed by the World Bank, a finding that questions the validity of some of the pivotal concepts and theories of CDD programs. Given this revelation, this thesis also cautions the use of CDD programs as PBAs to achieve aid effectiveness.

3.5 Conclusion

Based on the discussion so far, it can be argued that ‘aid as a concept’ should not be blamed for its ineffectiveness, but the motives, concepts and programs that drive it, and the tendency to depend on it perpetually. Two prevalent reasons for the relative failure of aid have been explored: 1) Donors use aid to advance their respective strategic interests; and 2) Aid is ‘addictive’ and creates dependency. Given the evidence that donors’ interests go beyond aid commercialisation (tied-aid); and that aid has ‘successfully’ facilitated the achievements of security, climate and immigration agendas, it remains debatable whether a causal link between donors’ strategic interests and aid ineffectiveness can be found. The chapter also revealed that ‘aid-dependency’, which obviously has adverse effects on recipients, is different from ‘aid as a concept’. Evidence was given to show that aid has promoted growth and has had positive impacts in many countries, including Botswana, whose reliance on aid is denied by some anti-aid crusaders. Therefore, it emerged that aid effectiveness must be measured from the perspectives of recipients and not as just ‘outcomes’ or within the framework of donors’ objectives. In this way, it becomes easier to identify such ‘externalities’ as motives, recipient structures and dependency level, and how they impact on aid program outcomes.

The second part of this chapter examined three existing mechanisms for achieving aid effectiveness, including: 1) Result-Based Financing; 2) Aid-Agenda Conferences; and 3) Program-Based Approaches. The purpose was to establish the extent to which these mechanisms pay attention to the impact of theories and complex concepts on which aid programs are based (‘the concepts factor’). It became clear that none of them pays significant attention to the ‘concepts factor’. Result-Based Financing mechanisms were found to be essentially ‘results-oriented’, and in the process, concentrate on conditionalities. The chapter also showed that, while Aid-Agenda Conferences provide donors, aid consumers and other relevant stakeholders, and the platform to share ideas on aid financing and effectiveness, these donors do not adhere to the principles established at those conferences. Thus, although some of the conferences have achieved very good results, it seems evident that the High Level Forum on Aid Effectiveness (HLFA) appears to have become a mere ‘bureaucratic formality’ as donors have reneged on their commitments to, for example, the 2005 Paris Declaration. As Mavrotas (2010, p. 3) observed “... it is apparent that some donors intend to slack off, and do not

take the [HLFA] process seriously enough”. Incidentally, the agreements of all four HLFA do not, at least explicitly, address the ‘concepts factor’

The last section of the chapter focused on Community–Driven Development programs, one of the celebrated Program–Based Approaches at the World Bank. Despite its many advantages, highly contested theories such as, “CDD programs succeed in high–functioning local and inter–government contexts”; and complex concepts like ‘community’ and ‘empowerment’, were identified as pivotal in CDD programs. Even so, little appears to be known as to how these ‘externalities’ influence CDD programs. The remainder of the thesis examines how these contested theories and concepts impacted on Ghana’s Community–Based Rural Development Program (CBRDP). In particular, the next chapter will explore in detail the methodology used to examine the CBRDP programs in Ghana.

CHAPTER FOUR

METHODOLOGY

It remains an open empirical question, however, whether and how such [positive] outcomes are achieved by a given Community–Driven Development [Program]; if they are, then it is likely that only a more diverse package of methodological tools than is typically deployed in (‘rigorous’) program evaluation is likely to detect them

(Chase & Woolcock 2005, p. 6).

This chapter discusses the methods and tools that were employed to explore how contested theories and complex concepts influenced the outcomes of Ghana’s Community–Based Rural Development Programs (CBRDP). The chapter discusses the methodological basis of the study, the fieldwork experiences, the limitation of the research, ethical considerations as well as the data collection and analysis processes.

4.1 Why Ethno–Methodology?

The option of using quantitative data collection techniques was discarded in favour of an ethno–methodology research practice being identified as the most appropriate technique for data collection (Patton 2002; Darkwa & Tsikata 2009; Liamputtong 2009; Travers 2010; Willis 2010). Using this approach, qualitative research tools such as participant–observation, interviews, focus group discussions, review of literature/documents and open–ended questionnaires were deployed. Because the research questions draw on people’s understanding of how CDD programs work on the ground, it was crucial to employ qualitative techniques in order to view the world through the eyes of the participants (Padgett 2008; Liamputtong 2009; Travers 2010; Willis 2010) as quantitative methods use structured (survey) instruments designed on pre–conceived biases (de Vaus 1995; Patton 2002; Walter 2010). Other factors as follows influenced the decision.

First, ethno–methodology is directly human–related and facilitates the collection of data in natural settings (Patton 2002; Liamputtong 2009). As this research sought to investigate the impact of intangible, but human–related concepts (such as ‘community’ and ‘empowerment’) on Ghana’s CBRDP, an ethno–methodological approach was more suitable (Mansuri & Rao 2004; Chase & Woolcock 2005; Darkwa & Tsikata 2009; Liamputtong 2009). Since humans are generally complex and their “actions are significantly influenced by the setting in which they occur” (Marshall and Rossman

2006, p.53) ethno–methodological techniques such as participant–observation, interviews and focus group discussions offered the possibilities of interacting and empathising with the beneficiaries of the project. These techniques enabled the researcher to gain insight into how the attitudes, behaviours, value systems, concerns, motivations, aspirations and culture or lifestyles of the beneficiaries impacted on the CBRDP processes¹⁰² (Patton 2002; Padgett 2008; Liamputtong 2009; Walter 2010).

Second, the choice of ethno–methodology was also necessitated by the dearth of qualitatively–generated research of aid programs (aidnography) in Ghana; although several independent scholars have effectively used it in other contexts to research and produce influential works on aid (Escobar 1995; Fergusson 1995; Grillo & Stirrat 1997; Gould 2004; Mosse 2004, 2005; Li 2007; Eyben 2007, 2010). While Ghana is one of the top ten aid–dependent countries in Sub–Saharan Africa¹⁰³, there are not many published independent, academic and ethnographic studies concerning aid to the country. As earlier indicated, the related aid literature appears to be dominated by the writing of economists, who ignore ‘human–centred’ and conceptual issues, and reports of aid agencies. Whilst some of the publications of the latter are scientific, many of them tend to be less critical and as Riddell (2007, p. 193) observed, “present a [more] flattering picture than it probably deserves”. Furthermore, owing to the concern that internally–initiated research and evaluations of donors and their agencies tend to suffer conflict of interests, their publications do not provide scientific and objective grounds for understanding the issues affecting aid programs at the grassroots level in Ghana (Azeem et al. 2006; Riddell 2007; Easterly 2008; Cullen 2009). Thus, although the ethno–methodological approach to this research may not be a theoretical novelty, it fills a significant gap of ‘aidnographies’ on Ghana.

One advantage of ethno–methodology is its compatibility with case studies (Patton 2002; David 2006; Willis 2010). The fundamental principle underlying case study is the purposive focus on [one, specific] individualised outcomes within a larger social group, or what Gerring (2007, p. 1) calls the “micro–macro link ... and cross level inference” (Gillharm 2000). By focussing on a key element [called a case], Gerring argues further that researchers gain insight into the whole, and that an in–depth knowledge of a case is more helpful than fleeting knowledge about a larger number of examples. Riddle (2007, p. 169) argues that “an effective way of addressing the methodological problems in

¹⁰² Project identification, implementation and maintenance.

¹⁰³ <http://www.oecd.org/dataoecd/40/27/42139250.pdf> , retrieved March 24, 2012.

understanding how aid works on the ground is to undertake sampling studies of where projects have been implemented”. Additionally, both Patton (2002) and Liamputtong (2009) aver that through case studies, researchers are able to compare, draw generalised inferences and stimulate further research (David 2006; Yin 2008; Padgett 2008).

Relative to this research, as indicated in Chapter One, Ghana’s CBRDP was implemented in one hundred and thirty eight districts. However, as it was not possible to study all, the research focuses on nine districts [cases] to gain insights into the CBRBPs nationally. Even so, experts in research methodologies insists that researchers clearly define the boundaries of their ‘cases’ and justify what/who is included and why (David 2006; Luck, Jackson & Usher 2006; Liamputtong 2009; Willis 2010).

4.2 Case Study Boundaries

This research focused on Ghana’s CBRDP Zone IV: Eastern, Greater Accra and Volta Regions¹⁰⁴. Several reasons influenced the choice of this zone. First, it was a practical impossibility to research the entire country; second, the zone is arguably the most developed and populated area of the country; third, it has better communication infrastructure, road networks, and was more stable, in terms of ethnic conflicts, compared to Zone 1 (the northern parts of the country), for example. Furthermore, the convenience that both the National and Zonal Headquarters of the project were situated there made the zone the best location for the fieldwork, as the researcher had to be in constant communication with both offices for documents and informal interviews on the project. Finally, although Zone IV differs topographically from the other zones, as pointed out in Chapter One, they share relatively analogous social characteristics, such as ethnic and dialectical diversities, Traditional Chieftaincies, political sensitivity, rural/urban dichotomy, relatively high levels of poverty and so on. The similarities of the zones legitimised the case study approach as well as the confident generalisation of the findings (Patton 2002; Padgett 2008).

Within Zone IV, nine municipalities/districts, three from each region, were selected. In each district, one Area Council (locality) was selected. While the districts were selected randomly, the localities were sampled purposively (Willis 2010, Travers 2010).

Although all the districts in the country benefitted from the CBRDP, not all Area Councils or localities did; some could not meet the criteria of having offices and a

¹⁰⁴ See Figure 1.6 in Chapter One.

three-person signatory bank account. Thus, the localities that received and completed their projects, and where relevant contacts had been established were selected.

4.3 The Fieldwork Experience

The fieldwork was carried out over a period of seven months (2010/2011) in three phases: familiarisation, data collection and follow-ups. The familiarisation phase involved collecting the project's documents and securing contact of all relevant persons in all nine Districts researched. The second phase involved visiting or living in the CBRDP beneficiary localities while collecting data. The final phase included the follow-up of some unresolved issues arising from the second phase, these ranging from obtaining relevant documents and information to ascertaining the results of the 2010 local government elections, which coincided with the fieldwork. As Chapters Five and Seven will show, the election outcomes were crucial for this research.

Although Ghanaian, the researcher had to adjust to the insider and outsider realities of fieldwork (Altorki 1994; Boudewijnse 1994; Chiseri-Strater & Sustain 2007; Al-Makhamreh & Lewando-Hundt 2008). Researching in Ghana allowed the researcher much flexibility and independence, as no permit was required. Although I am dark-skinned, and possess some intimate knowledge of the Ghanaian culture, for strategic reasons however, introductory letters from the CBRDP National and Zonal Headquarters were secured for identification purposes (see Appendix D & E). Being a Ghanaian also facilitated the identification of key informants and settling into the host localities. Further, except in some parts of the Volta Region, the use of interpreters in the data collection process was not necessary as many of the respondents could either communicate in Akan or English. Aware that being Ghanaian could breed familiarity, the researcher had to be reflexive and observe familiar socio-cultural patterns carefully (Altorki 1994; Boudewijnse 1994; Al-Makhamreh & Lewando-Hundt 2008).

Throughout the fieldwork however, the researcher was an 'outsider' in many respects. Three reasons explain this. First, most of the localities researched were relatively less populated, and meant that the residents easily identified 'strangers' in their midst, even if they spoke the local dialect or 'looked like them'. Second, except for Tease in the Afram Plains District¹⁰⁵, the researcher had no consanguineous ties with the other eight localities researched. Third, because 'community' and 'empowerment' research tends to

¹⁰⁵The researcher had conducted a research there in 2009.

relate to females (Tesoriero 2010, pp.12 & 13; see also Hancock et al. 2011), the data tended to be drawn more from females than males¹⁰⁶. In most Ghanaian rural localities, there seems to be a social distance between women and men (Apusigah 2004a; 2004b). Thus, my frequent interaction with women as a stranger, particularly in smaller localities, exposed my ‘outsiderness’, as both men and women found it strange.



Photo 4.1: The researcher on a familiarisation tour in Pakro, the Eastern Region

As an outsider, some of the research subjects tended to have doubts about the researcher’s status. Thus, letters of introduction obtained from the Edith Cowan University and the CBRDP Headquarters were always carried to all formal interview sessions as proof of identity (see Appendices D & E).

Also, the researcher consciously tried to reduce all asymmetrical variables between myself and the research subjects (Boudewinjsse 1994). This meant, for example, downplaying the social status of coming from abroad, wearing casual clothes most of the time, speaking the local dialects, and briefing the respondents and interviewees thoroughly before the sessions started. These proved very effective, as it enhanced the

¹⁰⁶Women form 55% of Ghana’s population (Ghana Statistical Service 2012)

trust of the respondents in me and allowed them to relate to me “as one of their own”, thereby facilitating the data collection procedures and the tenets of ethnographic research (aidnography).

During the fieldwork, the local customs of the host localities were observed. Indeed, some were so crucial that by defying them, the fieldwork or relationship with the research subjects would have been jeopardised. Examples included going through a Linguist during interview session with Traditional Chiefs. In Ghana, Traditional Chiefs are not addressed directly but through Linguists; culturally inappropriate language or expressions to Traditional Chiefs could lead to punishment for the offender. Linguists are the mouthpiece of Traditional Chiefs as well as the communication link (not interpreters or translators *per se*), between the former and visitors to the palace. Their main job is to edit information in a culturally appropriate way before they are spoken to Traditional Chiefs. Working with Linguists in some of the research localities proved very frustrating and time consuming, particularly during transcription. In most instances, as local traditions demanded, I had to pay money ‘to open the door’ into the palaces. In one village, the Traditional Chief was unwilling to welcome me, until the ‘palace knocking fees’ was paid.

4.4 Limitations

Like many social research activities, this research also had some limitations. Being Ghanaian came with some drawbacks. I concede that many aspects of the ‘Ghanaian culture’, which were familiar to me, must have been taken for granted, irrespective of my conscious reflexiveness (Boudewijnse 1994; Chiseri–Strater & Sustain 2007). During the fieldwork, the researcher also experienced what Altorki (1994, p. 60) referred to as ‘threat of exposure and judgement’. As most of the interviews and focus group discussions were recorded, the participants must have been cautious of their responses and withheld some vital information. However, because multiple data collection tools were employed for triangulation, the empirical rigorousness of the data is still credible (Liamputtong 2009; Travers 2010). Relative to the questionnaires, some of the respondents who could either not express themselves on paper or in the English language were assisted by the research assistants. While the respondents were debriefed about their answers, some of them may have been misquoted.

The final limitation relates to the transcription. Most of the interviews were conducted in Akan and transcribed into English. Owing to the variation in translations, despite

earnest endeavour, some interviews were difficult to transcribe verbatim with all its heuristic effects; thus some nuances that may have been better expressed in the original languages may have been lost (Patton 2002; Liamputtong 2009).

4.5 Ethical Considerations

All aspects of this research required adherence to many ethical considerations. These were important so that the confidentiality of the respondents' identity would not be jeopardised, while enhancing the credibility of the process. Several ethics formalities were completed and approved before and after the data collection process by the Ethics Committee of Edith Cowan University. Accordingly, all respondents were briefed about the research purposes and gave their consent before the implementation procedures with the protocols of the interviews and questionnaires. Respondents were also assured of confidentiality and informed about their rights to withdraw, if they felt uncomfortable. The data were protected in lockable filing cabinets or protected with passwords on hard disks. At the end of the research, much of the confidential data were shredded and deleted from the hard drives.

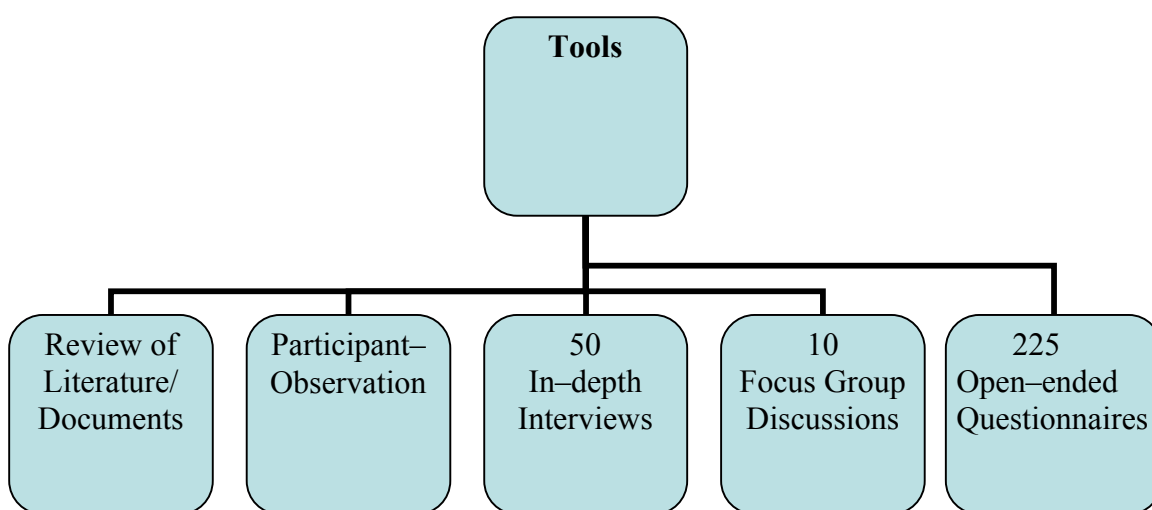
During the fieldwork, the magnitude of the work necessitated the use of research assistants. Thus, one permanent and two casual research assistants were employed. They were all trained in the rubrics of data collection and transcription and the ethical considerations of fieldwork. They signed contracts in which they assured me of confidentiality and to respect the social structures and cultures of the research subjects. Although permission of the CBRDP offices in Ghana to carry out the fieldwork was not necessary, letters of introduction were obtained from them for proof of identity and mission purposes whenever questioned. Substantial volumes of documents were obtained from them with the assurance in writing of their sole use for the purposes of this research (Appendices C & D).

For ethical reasons the names of the respondents and some of the towns and districts, where the fieldwork was carried out have been deidentified with pseudonyms.

4.6 Data Collection

In tandem with the Chase and Woolcock (2005) assertion that only a more diverse package of methodological tools were likely to detect how CDD programs work on the ground, five key research tools were employed in this research (see Figure 4.1). This was crucial to obtaining data for triangulation purposes, while enhancing the credibility of the findings (Patton 2002; Liamputtong 2009). Each of the instruments employed and the type of data they generated is described next.

Figure 4.1 Data Collection Tools



4.6.1. Review of Literature/Documents

Because the research focused on theories and concepts, a review of literature and policy documents was crucial. The purpose of the review was to: 1) Establish the absence of empirical studies on how contested theories and concepts influence aid outcomes, a gap this research seeks to fill; and 2) To understand aid policy discourses and analysis to establish the conceptual and an analytical frameworks for scrutinising the themes emerging from the data (see Figure 4.2). Four categories of literature were reviewed. The first category was academic literature which included the works of both local and ‘foreign’ scholars in scholarly peer-reviewed journal articles, books, conference papers and policy briefs that related to aid, CDD, community, empowerment, Ghana and decentralisation or local government.

CBDRP documents constituted the second category of literature consulted. Some aspects of the project that were directly unobservable were captured in the CBDRP documents. For example, the National Reports, which spanned the years 2005–2010,

established the trends and aims of the project. The Zone IV CBRDP Reports also provided some demographic information on the research localities and many aspects of the project that preceded the fieldwork. Both reports, most of which were obtained before entering the field, facilitated the framing of the interview questions, assembling the focus group discussions, sharpening the questionnaires and clarifying the nature of field observations. Copies of the CBRDP Action Plans, which described the planning and implementation processes of the projects in the respective beneficiary localities, were also obtained.¹⁰⁷

Official documents from the Government of Ghana were also reviewed. While some were directly downloadable online, others were obtained through formal applications to the Ministry of Finance and Economic Planning (MOFEP) (see Appendix F) and the Electoral Commission, for example. The documents from MOFEP, which ranged from annual budget statements to policy briefs, provided insights into various aid initiatives in the country since the implementation of Structural Adjustment Programs. The ‘ghanadistricts.com’ website also provided useful information on the social–cultural and demographical characteristics of the districts and localities researched.

The last category of documents consulted were literature from the World Bank, the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) and the United Nations Development Program (UNDP). The databases of these institutions provided statistical information on global and Ghana–specific trends regarding aid. They also provided useful insights into the Millennium Development Goals as well as global efforts at making aid effective. The recently launched UNDP African Human Development Report (2012) provided statistical information and indicators for understanding poverty levels and general development trends in Ghana.

4.6.2. Participant–Observation

Often seen as the main pillar of ethnography (see Senah 1997), participant–observation (P–O) allowed time for observing and interacting with the CBRDP beneficiary localities, as the pictures below show (Herbert 2000). This technique was used within the spirit of what Bryman (2008, p. 376) outlined as ‘prolonged participation in the social life of a [community] over a period of time allows the researcher to ensure a high level of congruence between concepts and observation’. Meyer and Singh (1997) have also endorsed P–O as an effective way of researching development program outcomes.

¹⁰⁷ See 1.4.1, Stages I & II.

Drawing on an observation by Tesoriero (2010) that any community-based development processes [or research] must begin with a long-term membership of the ‘community’; the researcher became immersed in the field for several months. While general trends were observed, particular attention was paid to the social systems, routines, spaces, events and cultural-norms and practices that underpinned the behavioural pattern and perceptions of research subjects (Boudewijnse 1994; Patton 2002). The CBRDP stipulated that beneficiary localities consultatively choose and implement projects that addressed their *most* important needs (CBRDP Implementation Manual 2006). Accordingly, in all localities researched, such infrastructure elements as the state of roads, school buildings; and basic necessities such as water, electricity, public toilet facilities and so on were observed. The aim was to gain first-hand and experiential knowledge of the ‘potential needs’ of the localities and to what degree they matched the projects implemented.



Photo 4.2: The researcher interacting with pupils from the Agbetor Primary School (Volta Region).

Community-based programs, Tesoriero (2010) and Kenny (2010) argue, thrive on social capital, an observable attribute of ‘communities’, and the glue that holds people together (Woolcock 1998; Woolcock & Narayan 2000). As a result, during the fieldwork, the observation of and participation in several social-cultural activities in the research localities took place thereby gaining insight into the strength of their respective

social capital or what Bhattacharyya (2004, p. 5, cited in Tesoriero 2010), referred to as ‘... [their] pursuit of solidarity and urgency’. Thus, religious services in both the church and mosque were attended and observed, and local and Parents/Teachers Association (PTA) meetings monitored, or some of the key informants accompanied to their farms. In the meetings, who spoke, who did not and the general atmosphere were observed. Apart from facilitating a better understanding of the localities and the projects, these interactions also assisted in establishing further contacts with prospective interviewees and key informants (Scheyvens & Storey 2003; Stone & Bonnie 2007).



Photo 4.3: The researcher on a farm in the Afram Plains, Eastern Region.

The entire P–O process enhanced the researcher’s understanding of the grounded meanings and realities of the theories and concepts such as ‘community’ and ‘empowerment’, which were pivotal in the implementation of the CBRDP. It also offered first–hand information, other than any prior conceptualisation of the projects and the localities gathered through reading (Patton 2002). The technique also allowed an appreciation of the forms of local knowledge and repetitive routines in the localities that must have escaped the project implementers or been taken for granted (Mosse 2001; Tesoriero 2010). Through the P–O process, issues such as people’s political affiliations, which many respondents were unwilling to reveal in formal interviews, were discovered. To keep track of everything observed in the localities researched, field

notes were written for review and analysis. Some of the insights gained through the P–O technique influenced the framing of the questions for the formal interviews and focus group discussions.

4.6.3. Interviews/ Focus Group Discussions

People’s thoughts, feelings, perceptions and intentions are not directly observable (Patton 1992). It is only when they open up to talk that their worldview, experiences and thoughts can be appreciated (Patton 1992; Liamputtong 2009). This explains why interviews and focus group discussions formed a substantial part of the methodology. As Tesoriero (2010, p. 129) points out, the “community worker [researcher] has to learn to step back, watch, listen and ask questions rather than provide answers.”

In order to obtain comparative data and address a range of experiences (Travers 2010), a total of fifty formal and in–depth individual interviews were conducted. Those included in the individual interviews were key informants, local government officials (Assembly Members, Area Council Executive or Unit Committee Members), Traditional Chiefs and CBRDPs’ maintenance committee members. The questions, many of which were based on what was observed in the localities or taken from the project documents, were semi–structured and open–ended to allow the respondents the flexibility of expressing themselves (Liamputtong 2009; Travers 2010). The interviews elicited information on the processes leading to the selection and implementation and the state of the CBRDPs. Key Informants were asked to identify issues that affect local organising tendencies in their respective localities as well as the sustainability of the projects, most of them being observed to lack maintenance.

Local government officials were asked to explain the motivation for doing the unpaid job and issues affecting their work. Three sets of questions were posed to Traditional Chiefs; the first sought information on the histories of the localities, while the second touched on their roles in the selection and implementation of the CBRDPs. The final set of questions related to their relationship with local government officials. Some of them were aggrieved that by virtue of its design, the CBRDP sidelined them, and they bore grudges with their local government representatives (see Chapter Seven).

All the interviews were held in venues that were convenient for the respondents. Although, the questions tended to probe, the sessions were patterned on what Liamputtong (2009, p. 44) described as the ‘Parisan Cafe Model’: [a relaxed

atmosphere] that encourages shared experiences between the researcher and respondents. Most of the interviews lasted approximately forty minutes and were recorded with the consent of the interviewees.

To obtain a larger sample of respondents without having to interview them individually (Liamputtong 2009; Tranter 2010), ten focus group discussions were held, one in each locality, except Aboloo in the Greater Accra Region, whose circumstances warranted two (see Table 4.1). As a research technique, many scholars have theoretically endorsed focus group discussion (Krueger 1994; Punch 1998; Frith 2000; Sarantakos 2008; Liamputtong 2009; Travers 2010). While the dynamics of each focus group differed, they were all sampled purposively, participants having to be residents of the relevant localities and to possess some knowledge of the projects. Depending on the project type, each focus group was based on a core characteristic, such as profession, parenthood or ethnicity. Other attributes such as gender, age, religion, and educational levels were used to stratify focus group members (see Table 4.1) so as to establish variations and representation of the relevant people in the localities (Liamputtong 2009; Travers 2010). For example, as photo 4.4 below shows, the focus group in Agoe (Greater Accra Region) centred on parents, the participants having been stratified by gender, religion and profession. Key informants in conjunction with research assistants facilitated the selection process, sometimes using both opportunistic and snowball¹⁰⁸ sampling techniques (Patton 2002; Liamputtong 2009).

All the focus group sessions commenced with an introduction of the research team, participants¹⁰⁹, the purpose of the research and what they had to expect. The discussions were designed from an interpretive perspective to obtain a wide range of opinions and detailed insights from the sampled groups on the CBRDPs (Liamputtong 2009; Travers 2010). Thus, the questions, which were mainly open-ended to stimulate discussions, related to the functions of the local government sub-structures and the commitment of the participants to the development of the locality. Others questions probed the participants' understanding of 'community', and their sense of belonging and obligations to their respective localities; and what they considered as the most important needs of their respective localities vis-a-vis the projects implemented. The researcher

¹⁰⁸ Participants were asked to suggest others they knew who met the research criteria and might be willing to participate.

¹⁰⁹ First time some were interacting with each other.

moderated all the focus group sessions, which were also recorded with the consent of the participants.

Table 4.1 Focus Groups’ Sampling Structure per Project Type and Beneficiary Group

Town/ Village	Project Type	Focus Group
Agbetor	Three–unit classroom block	Fulani People
Agoe	Culverts	Parents
Dedenu	Mechanised bore whole	Women
Lume	Eight–seater toilet facility for the local primary school	Farmers
Tashie	Renovation of Tashie primary School	Parents
Ntoaso	Sixteen–seater toilet facility	Traders
Pakro	Mechanised bore whole	Dagomba People
Tease	Market sheds	Traders
Aboloo	Community library block	Students/ Parents

Source: CBRDP Implementation Manual (2006); Field notes (2011).



Photo 4.4: The researcher in a focus group discussion with parents in Agoe, Greater Accra Region.

4.6.4. *Open-Ended Questionnaires*

Conventionally, questionnaires are considered as a quantitative or survey technique (Patton 1992; Robson 2002). In recent times however, that narrow stance is giving way to a contextualised usage of the technique, which allows for qualitative analysis. Responses to open-ended questions, some methodologists aver, can provide details about perceptions, opinions, personal experiences, and deeply held beliefs (Carpenter & Suto 2008; Padgett 2008). As Liamputtong (2009, p.282) puts it, “qualitative researchers need to know that we sometimes count too”. This implies that questionnaires could be used quantitatively or qualitatively, depending on their design. In this research questionnaires were used qualitatively for two reasons: 1) To reach out to the residents of the CBRDP beneficiary localities who were not included in the individual interviews and focus group discussions; and 2) To obtain some sense of quantity of the emergent themes for contextualisation and triangulation (Carpenter & Suto 2008; Padgett 2008; Liamputtong 2009).

Accordingly, twenty-five questionnaires were distributed in each of the nine CBRDP beneficiary localities researched¹¹⁰. They were administered randomly to residents who had intimate knowledge of the CBRDP implementation in the locality, but were not included in the individual interviews and focus group discussions and willing to participate in the research. All the questions were open-ended and required respondents to explain their: 1) Commitments to the locality; 2) Participation in the identification and implementation processes of the CBRDPs; and 3) Opinions on the functions of their local government officials (see Appendix B). While some responded to the questionnaires instantly, others retained them for up to seven days¹¹¹. Some of the respondents who were literate completed the questionnaires unassisted, while the research assistants helped those who could either not express themselves on paper or in the English language. In such instances, the respondents were debriefed about their answers, after which they could deny the claims written on their behalf or accept them.

¹¹⁰ 225 in total.

¹¹¹ Almost 95% of them were retrieved.

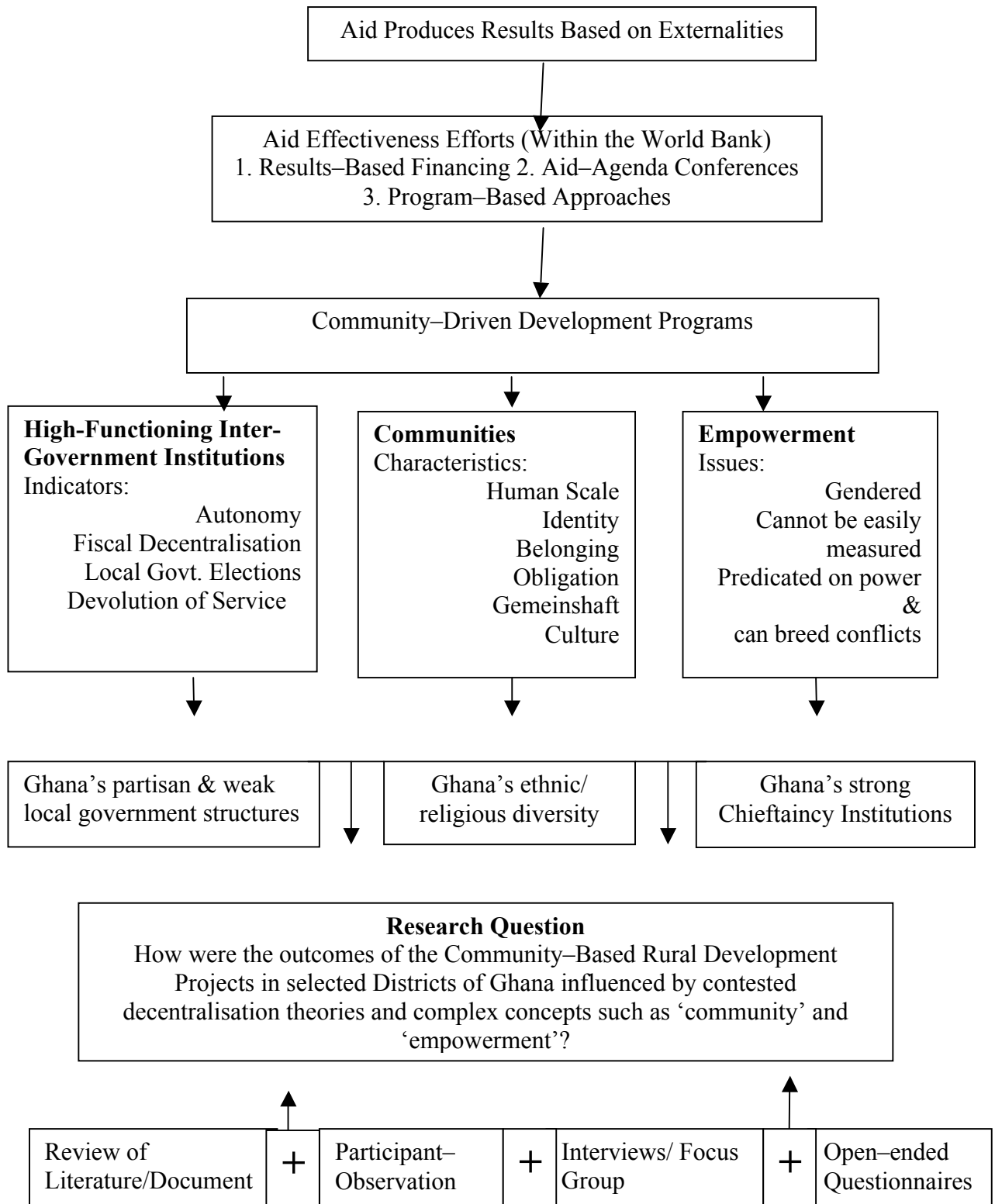
4.7 Data Analysis

Different analytical procedures were applied to make sense of and identify patterns and emerging themes from the huge volumes of the secondary and primary data collected. The secondary data, which were drawn mainly from academic literature, CBRDP documents and reports from the Government of Ghana, World Bank, OECD, and UNDP, were examined for their arguments, how they have evolved overtime and the contexts within which made them relevant to the research topic. In some cases, the literature was cited contrarily to identify gaps on the research topic (Liamputtong 2009; Walter 2010). The literature also provided the tool for both data analysis and the theoretical basis of the arguments advanced in the thesis (see Figure 4.2).

The analysis of the primary data – field notes, interviews, focus group and open-ended questionnaires – commenced with immersing in and organisation of the data (Willis 2010). This involved manually reviewing the field notes, verbatim transcriptions of all audio interviews and the interpretation of the questionnaires on a district basis. Another round of organisational procedure involved coding the data. In order to simplify the process, the data were broadly coded in accordance with the three Secondary Research Questions drawn from the Primary Research Question as SRQ1, SRQ2 & SRQ3. The third round involved organising for critical analysis each of the three categories to identify recurring responses both thematically and inductively (Walter 2010; Willis 2010). For example, in the SRQ2 category, themes recurring most included: 1) Residents' dissociation with the Tease locality; 2) Allegations of corruption against local government officials; 3) Lack of interest in local meetings; 4) The failure of previous locally-initiated projects; and 5) Partisan politics.

When several themes had been identified for each category, their convergence (how they hold together) and divergence (how they differ) was established (Patton 2002, Willis 2010). This involved interpretation of the themes through writing them up into complete stories guided by the conceptual and analytical framework (see Figure 4.2 below). Specifically, the emergent themes in SRQ1, SRQ2 and SRQ3 are discussed in Chapters Five, Six, and Seven respectively.

Figure 4.2 Conceptual/Analytical Frameworks



Source: Ahwoi 2010; Arhin 2002; Binswanger et al. 2010; Birdsall et al. 2010; Hancock et al. 2011; Tesoriero 2010; Travers 2010.

The concluding chapter of the thesis binds the findings into one integrative format and answers the Primary Research Question. However, because qualitative research techniques are often vilified as lacking validity and reliability, as the interpretation of the data tends to be biased by the researcher's personal worldview (Angen 2000; Patton 2002; Padgett 2008); the drafts were subjected to several test mechanisms. Apart from being reviewed by senior academics in the subject area ('expert-checking'), the drafts were also exposed to 'member-checking' for accuracy¹¹² (Lincoln & Guba 1989; Carpenter & Suto 2008), and an audit trail¹¹³ (Creswell 2007; Padgett 2008). These processes elicited feedback and comments, some of which have been incorporated into this thesis.

4.8 Conclusion

This chapter described the methods and tools employed in this study. It outlined the research design and the questions the thesis sought to answer. The three reasons that informed the use of ethno-methodology as the overarching design were also presented. These included the: 1) Fact that the research is directly human-related; 2) Dearth of ethnographic studies concerning aid in Ghana; and 3) Compatibility of case studies with ethno-methodology. The chapter also outlined the fieldwork experiences, explaining the negotiation of the researcher as an 'outsider'. The limitations of the research and ethical considerations were also outlined.

The genre of documents and literature reviewed to understand the CBRDP; the theories of aid and CDD approaches were also discussed. The literature provided background information that framed the theoretical and analytical frameworks of the research. Explanation was given of how the Participant-Observation technique facilitated the process of gaining useful insights into the real world experiences of the research subjects. The interview and focus group discussion processes and the kind of information elicited from them have also been outlined. The questionnaire protocols sought information by reaching out to residents of the CBRDP beneficiary localities who had not been included in the interviews and focus group discussions, and to obtain some sense of quantities for data triangulation purposes.

¹¹² For example, a draft of the section of Chapter One which described the research case study project was sent to the CBRDP Headquarters in Accra (Ghana) for comments.

¹¹³ Some of the drafts were reviewed by my network of academics internationally.

Finally, the chapter explained the data analysis processes and mechanisms engaged to mitigate against the biases and inaccuracies of qualitative research methods. All the data were manually organised on a district basis and coded to the Secondary Research Questions, which were drawn from the Primary Research Question. Subsequently, each category was analysed for recurring responses and themes. When several themes had been identified for each category, guided by the conceptual framework, drafts were written of the findings that answered the respective secondary questions. ‘Member-checking’ and audit trail mechanisms were employed to review and enhance the credibility of the findings.

The next chapter examines, within the framework of Ghana’s CBRDP, one of the pivotal decentralisation theories in Community-Driven Development operations. While the theory appears to suggest that CDD programs do well in ‘highly’ decentralised countries such as Ghana, the findings point to the contrary.

CHAPTER FIVE

GHANA'S LOCAL GOVERNMENT: A DECEPTIVE 'HIGH-FUNCTIONING' SYSTEM?

“Ghana’s decentralisation process could be best described as stagnated. Several countries who understudied Ghana’s system have made significant strides”
(Kyei–Baffour 2009, p. 32).

Chapter Three established that the Community–Driven Development (CDD) program is a popular aid delivery mechanism at the World Bank. Among other things, the popularity of CDD stems from the assertion that the implementing country or locality has control over the program, an essential recipe for achieving aid effectiveness (Mansuri & Rao 2004; World Bank 2010). The chapter also showed that CDD programs do not work in a vacuum, as their operations invariably depend on the level of the implementing country’s inter–government, or decentralisation systems (Dongier et al. 2003; Binswanger et al. 2010). Accordingly, the World Bank distinguishes between African countries with low and high–functioning decentralisation systems relative to the existence of four indicators: 1) Decentralisation laws [that] create autonomous local government structures in resource management; 2) Fiscal decentralisation; 3) Local [government] elections¹¹⁴; and 4) Devolution of service delivery. Therefore, a CDD operationalisation strategy (Leading, Conservative and Matching) is determined by the implementing country’s relative attainment of the four indicators. The Matching Strategy applies to countries with high–functioning decentralisation systems (Dongier et al. 2003; Binswanger et al. 2010).

Interestingly, in lieu of Kyei–Baffour’s (2009) assertion, and others (Asante 2009; Ahwoi 2010; Antwi–Boasiako 2010; Ghana Constitutional Review Commission Report 2011), that Ghana’s decentralisation process has stagnated and needs an overhaul; the World Bank considers it as high–functioning and better placed to implement CDD programs successfully (Binswanger et al. 2010). This projection, which has given Ghana ‘an aid celebrity status’ as one of the preferred destinations for donor support in Sub–Saharan Africa, does not paint the true picture or reflect the grounded realities, in this case, the country’s inter–government systems (decentralisation). This chapter challenges the World Bank’s classification of Ghana’s decentralisation system as being highly functional. Three sections are presented to contextualise the arguments

¹¹⁴ Although the World Bank does not state explicitly about the type of election it refers to, from the context it points to local government election (Binswanger et al. 2010 p. 123).

advanced in the text: the first section provides a brief overview of Ghana's local government and decentralisation system. Drawing on secondary sources and within the framework of the four indicators above, the second section examines and points out many weaknesses in Ghana's local government system, proving why it does not appear to merit the label 'high-functioning'. The final section of the chapter draws on empirical data collected from the Eastern, Greater Accra and Volta Regions of Ghana in 2010/2011. The section discusses some of the weaknesses inherent in Ghana's local government system by unravelling the issues affecting the operations of Assembly Members, who are key facilitators of developments at the local level. Among the issues contributing to their dysfunction are partisan politics, the fact that the officials are not paid any salaries, working with weak Unit Committees, and conflicts with Traditional Chiefs. Through an analysis of how these challenges influenced the outcomes of Ghana's Community-Based Rural Development Projects (CBRDP), the section provides empirical basis for appreciating the impact of contested theories on development program outcomes.

5.1 Ghana's Local Government System: A Brief Overview

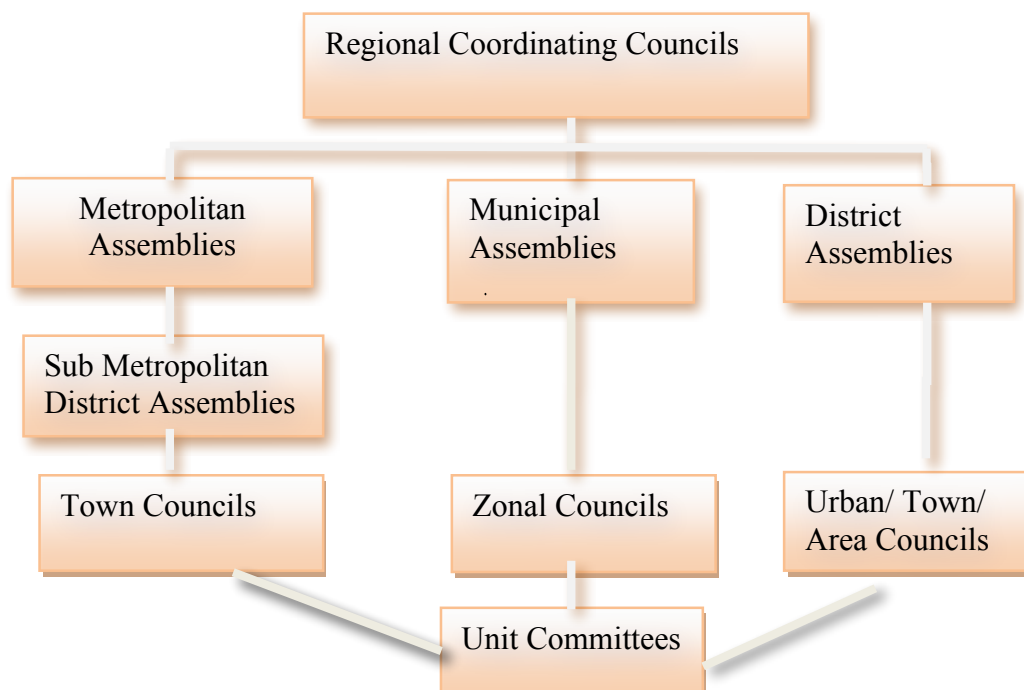
Local government in Ghana dates as far back to the pre-independence era through what was known as Indirect Rule, which centred on native authorities made up of Traditional Chiefs or local royalty (Ayee 1999; Institute of Local Government Studies & Ministry of Local Government & Rural Development and Environment 2006). Although both the pre and post-independence (1957) periods have witnessed several local government legal and constitutional amendments, the most significant was the 1988 Provisional National Defence Council (PNDC) Local Government Law 207, Legislative Instrument 1589¹¹⁵. This was the landmark legislation that provided the legal framework for the beginning of Ghana's decentralised local government system of today. In the current Constitution (1992), the PNDC Law 207 has been strengthened as an entrenched provision in Chapter Twenty, while Article 240 specifically provides the broad framework for the Ghana's decentralisation. In the last decade, the passages of other relevant laws have also augmented Article 240¹¹⁶.

¹¹⁵ The law was a reflection of the wind of public sector reforms that was blowing in the late 1980s and early 1990s for public accountability, transparency, efficiency, responsiveness to citizens' input and reducing state apparatus (Tettey 2006).

¹¹⁶ These include but are not limited to: the Local Government Act, 1993 (Act 462); the Local Government Service Act 2003 (Act 656); the District Assemblies Common Fund Act 455, the National Development Planning Systems Act 480 and the Metropolitan, Municipal and District Assemblies Standing Orders (Constitution of the Republic of Ghana 1992; Kyei-Baffour 2009; Antwi-Boasiako 2010; Ahwoi 2010).

Ghana’s local government structure consists of Regional Coordinating Councils and a four-tier and three-tier Municipal/ District Assembly system (see Figure 5.1). Within the structure, District/Municipal Assemblies (DAs) appear to be the most ‘influential’ as they are entrusted with wide political and administrative authority at the local level (Gyimah–Boadi 2009). For example, Section 10 (5) of the Local Government Act 462 stipulates that all programs and projects, including those approved under the District Development Plan and other development programs by Government Ministries and Departments and non–governmental organisations, are supposed to be coordinated and executed by/or under the supervision of the DAs. They also have responsibility for eighty-six functions, sole control over certain public services and the prerogative to make decisions regarding some executive and policy issues (Tettey 2006; Gyimah–Boadi 2009; Ofei–Aboagye 2009; Ahwoi 2010). Despite having these powers, in reality, as argued below, DAs seem to be controlled and used for various political manoeuvrings by the central government (Crawford 2004; Sumberg & Okali 2006).

Figure 5.1 Structure of Ghana’s Local Government System in the Fourth Republic



Source: Adapted from Ahwoi (2010).

While constitutionally mandated to be the hub of development at the local level, the operations of Ghana's DAs appear to offer many loopholes for political machinations. Although Article 248 (2) of the Constitution requires that DAs be non-partisan, the system seems to be highly politicised (Tettey 2006; Gyimah-Boadi 2009). Ahwoi (2010, p. 62) argues that the politicisation of the system stems from the modelling of Ghana's local government structure on that of Canada: 'partisan central government superimposed on a non-partisan local government system'. Others blame the politicisation of the DAs on the constitutional provision in Article 243 (2) that allows the President to appoint District Chief Executives (DCEs) rather than being elected (Tettey 2006; Antwi-Boasiako 2010). DCEs are responsible for the day-to-day performance of the executive and administrative functions of the DAs. They are also the chief representatives and the principal executors of the central government's programs in the district. Appointed for two terms of four years only, DCEs are nominated by the President, but require approval of two-thirds of the Assembly Members present and voting (Constitution of the Republic of Ghana 1992; ILGS & MLGDE 2006; Tettey 2006; Ahwoi 2010; Antwi-Boasiako 2010).

It has been suggested that the constitutional provision, which allows for the appointment of DCEs, be amended so that they get into office through popular votes. In the view of the pro-amendment scholars (see Tettey 2006; Gyimah-Boadi 2009; Antwi-Boasiako 2010¹¹⁷), revising that constitutional provision will make DCEs accountable to the local people. They argue further that the status quo allows DCEs to be loyal only to the President rather than the local people they serve. However, Ahwoi (2010) disagrees and argues that if DCEs were elected, the entire local government structure would be politicised, as political party cronies with little or no administrative experience would be voted to manage the system. While successive governments and politicians have promised to amend the particular constitutional provision, they appear to lack the political will to carry it out (New Patriotic Party Manifesto 2008; National Democratic Congress Manifesto 2008; Ex-President J.E.A. Mills First Sectional Address, cited in Asante 2009). The main reason, some scholars have observed, is that the status quo offers politicians the convenience of political manoeuvrings at the local

¹¹⁷ The current Deputy Minister of Local Government and Rural Development and Environment also supports the idea (<http://www.ghanaweb.com/GhanaHomePage/NewsArchive/artikel.php?ID=244165>, retrieved 10 July 2009).

level (Crawford 2004; Sumberg & Okali 2006; Tettey 2006; Gyimah–Boadi 2009; Kyei–Baffour 2009; Antwi–Boasiako 2010).

5.2 Is Ghana’s Local Government System ‘High–Functioning’?

The discussions so far show that while there are constitutional provisions for a decentralised local government in Ghana, the system appears to offer loopholes for political machinations. Within this context, this section analyses the state of Ghana’s local government system guided by the World Bank’s four indicators of a high–functioning decentralised system: 1) Decentralisation laws [that] create local government autonomous structures; 2) Fiscal decentralisation; 3) Local [government] elections; and 4) Devolution of service delivery.

5.2.1 Decentralisation laws [that] create Autonomous Local Government Structures

According to Crawford (2004, p. 32), autonomy of local governments refers to their ability to ‘initiate and coordinate local development [programs]’. Although Ghana’s 1992 Constitution (Article 240, 2b) and the Local Government Act, 1993 (Act 462) provide for the autonomy of Metropolitan, Municipal and District Assemblies (local authorities), the statutes appear to be inherently contradictory. Several examples will illustrate this. First, whereas the Local Government Act 462 stipulates that the District Assemblies (DAs) are responsible for the development at the local level, Article 10 (3) requires that their Medium Term Development Plans and budgets be approved by the central government (Tettey 2006; Ahwoi 2010). Section 88 of Act 462 also limits the amount of loans DAs can contract to only GHC 2000¹¹⁸; any amount above that requires the approval of the central government in accordance with the Financial Administration Act 2003 (Act 654). Given these ‘barrier statutes’, the ability [and autonomy] of DAs to undertake independent and creative programs is apparently restricted (Ahwoi 2005; Tettey 2006).

As earlier indicated, the autonomy of local authorities is further atrophied by the Local Government Act 462¹¹⁹, which gives the President the authority to appoint 30% of its membership. Gyimah–Boadi (2009) argues that the law invariably advances strong partisan politics within the local authorities, as the appointments tend to be characterised by political scheming and ethnocentrism, while little premium is placed on technical competence and integrity of the officers (see also Democracy Watch 2005,

¹¹⁸ Approximately USD 1100.

¹¹⁹ Reflects the dictates of Article 296 of the 1992 Constitution.

cited in Gyimah–Boadi 2009). Others argue that Act 462 encourages allegiance of Presidential appointees to the central government and their political parties, rather than to the local people (Tettey 2006; Ahwoi 2005, 2010; Antwi–Boasiako 2010). Interestingly, DAs also do not have the power to recruit and retain their own employees, relying on the Head of the Civil Service and the Ministry of Local Government and Rural Development and Environment (MLGRDE) to provide staff (Tettey 2006). While the Local Government Service Act 2003 (Act 656) sought to address this by vesting control of employees of DAs in the local authorities, the process, as Ofei–Aboagye (2009) notes, has been hampered by various factors, including resistance to change.

Furthermore, whereas Act 462 stipulates that 70% of the DA membership be elected by popular votes, the President [under the same Act] has the Power of Revocation to dissolve those s/he deems ‘non–performing’, without consulting the electorates. In fact, Gyimah–Boadi (2009) observed in 2005 that President Kufour (2001–2008) used the Power of Revocation to summarily dismiss some DA officials across the country. Therefore, a President could abuse the Power of Revocation to sack local government officials who may be at loggerheads with him (Tettey 2006; Ahwoi 2010). Considered critically, Ghana’s local government sub–structures seem to be constitutionally subjected to the whims and mercies of the President and the central government.

The central government’s manipulation of DAs is further complicated by the fact that all bye–laws enacted by local authorities are subject to the approval of the Ministry of Local Government and Rural Development (Ahwoi 2010). This provision, Tettey (2006) argues, weakens the autonomy of local authorities, while allowing politicians to interfere in local governance. There have been many instances in which certain decongestion and demolition exercises of local authorities [in the interest of the country] have been halted by the central government because of their political incorrectness or implications for the outcomes parliamentary elections¹²⁰ (Tettey 2006; Antwi Boasiako 2010).

The ensuing discussions show that the existence of decentralisation laws does not offer enough ground to categorise a country’s inter–government as high–functioning. In the

¹²⁰http://audio.peacefmonline.com/newsaudio/201201/444.php?pageNum_rsComments=1&totalRows_rsComments=17, retrieved February 9, 2012 (The audio attachment is the voice of Mr Yaw Boateng–Gyan, who works at the Presidency. On Peacefm, a local radio station, he warned Dr Vandepuye the Mayor of Accra, to stop the demolitions of illegal structures (See also Tettey 2006, p. 16; http://www.atokd.com/blog_Content.aspx?blogID=275, <http://www.wakeupghana.com/2009/12/22/president-orders-suspension-of-ama-decongestion.html> retrieved February 10, 2012.

case of Ghana, while the country's Constitution and the Local Government 462 Act provide for the autonomy of local authorities, the same statutes advance certain centralising and contradictory tendencies as well as politically exploitable loopholes, which compromise the independence of the local government sub-structures. This is consistent with Ahwoi's (2005) description of Ghana's local government system as 'recentralisation within decentralisation' (see also Sumberg & Okali 2006; Antwi-Boasiako 2010).

5.2.2 Fiscal Decentralisation

Fiscal decentralisation deals with how public expenditure is organised and financed between different levels of government (Owusu 2009). According to Ahwoi (2010), the indicators of a strong local government financial framework include: 1) Clear assignment of responsibilities; 2) Authority to adjust revenues to needed expenditures; 3) Authority to generate sufficient local government's own revenue sources and to develop strong positive incentives to strengthen this; 4) Developing an appropriate mix in expenditures and in revenues; 5) Efficient democratic and accountable budget procedures; 6) Appropriate financial relationship between central and local government; 7) Appropriate level of redistribution; 8) Efficient and timely transfers from central to local governments; and 9) Effective revenue collections. The underlying principle of these indicators is the ability of local governments to generate and control its revenues (Tettey 2006; Owusu 2009).

Ghana's 1992 Constitution makes provision for financial directions for local governments in Articles 245 and 252¹²¹. Despite these legislative provisions, in lieu of the nine indicators above, fiscal decentralisation appears not to have been achieved in Ghana, a fact widely acknowledged. For example, the Ghana Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper, which was drawn up to free the country from its indebtedness, identified the lack of progress with fiscal decentralisation as a barrier to local development (Government of Ghana 2004). Owusu (2009) also argues that fiscal decentralisation lags far behind administrative and political decentralisations in Ghana, and that there is a 'vertical imbalance' between the functions of local authorities and the financial resources available to them. Ghana's Minister of Finance and Economic Planning also acknowledged this in his 2012 budget statement to the Parliament of the Republic (Government of Ghana Budget Statement 2012, p. 6). The literature identifies three

¹²¹ The same are also catered for in Sections 43, Parts VII, VIII, IX and X of Local Government Act 462.

factors as being responsible for the lack of fiscal decentralisation in Ghana: 1) Weak revenue base of DAs; 2) Laws, which limit the financial independence of the local government structures; and 3) Seeming unwillingness of the central government to undertake true fiscal decentralisation (Tettey 2006; Gyimah–Boadi 2009; Owusu 2009; Ahwoi 2010).

District Assemblies in Ghana seem to have a weak financial base. Available figures indicate that 81% of their revenues come from the central government funding through the District Assembly Common Funds (DACF)¹²². According to Ahwoi (2010), although the law¹²³, which established the DACF requires that the central government transfers a minimum 5% of the total national revenue to the DACF; successive governments base this percentage on the total national tax revenue instead. Commenting on the DACF, a DCE is quoted by Owusu (2009, p. 36) as saying: “what comes is so small that the Assembly can’t carry out any meaningful activity or undertake a physical project ... for the whole year you just have only one or two projects”.

Ghanaian local government authorities appear not to determine how and where to utilise their DACF. For example, Ahwoi (2010) reveals that in 2007, 41% of the DACF was pre-determined by the central government, and that while local authorities had the flexibility of determining the proportions of the use of the remaining 59%, they were limited to specific sectors. Research by Inanga and Osei–Wusu (2004) also showed that not all the ceded sums to local authorities get paid. These challenges have raised concerns among some local scholars who argue that the dependence of local authorities on central government funding limits them from taking independent, timely and responsive initiatives that address on-the-ground needs of the localities, apart from allowing for political machinations (Tettey 2006; Asante 2009; Ofei–Aboagye 2009; Kyei–Baffour 2009; Ahwoi 2010; Antwi–Boasiako 2010). While local authorities are legally allowed to levy and collect taxes, the reality is that they lack the capacity to do so effectively (Gyimah–Boadi 2009; Ahwoi 2010). Owusu (2009) and Mahama and Otten (2008) attribute the weak tax collection tendency at the local level to the inadequate services in local government areas of jurisdiction, poverty and the reluctance of local people to pay taxes because of a perception that local authorities do very little to address their needs.

¹²² In the three Northern Regions it is 95% (Gyimah–Boadi 2009).

¹²³ District Assembly Common Fund Act 1993 (Act 455).

Furthermore, fiscal decentralisation in Ghana seems to be hampered by the existence of certain laws, which subject the financial transactions of local authorities to the approval of the central government. The 2003 Financial Administration Act 654 is an example. The law, which regulates the financial management of the public sector, makes the Ministry of Finance the primary authority for the preparation, publication and control of the national budget. Other controlling interests include the Financial Administration Regulation, 2004; the Internal Audit Agency Act, 2003, Act, (Act 655); the Public Procurement Act, 2003 (Act 663); and Section 88 of the Local Government Act 462, which caps the amount of loan a DA can contract to only GHC 2000. These statutes appear to centralise financial administration, while denying local governments the needed fiscal autonomy to operate effectively (Kyei–Baffour 2006; Gyimah–Boadi 2009; Ahwoi 2010). This is further confirmed by the unwillingness of the Ministry of Finance and Economic Planning to implement composite budgeting to allow the separation of DAs from central government budgets, although Section 10 (3) of the Local Government Act 462 enjoins them to do so. The attitude seems to indicate a clear reluctance on the part of Ghana’s central government to undertake true fiscal decentralisation (Owusu 2009).

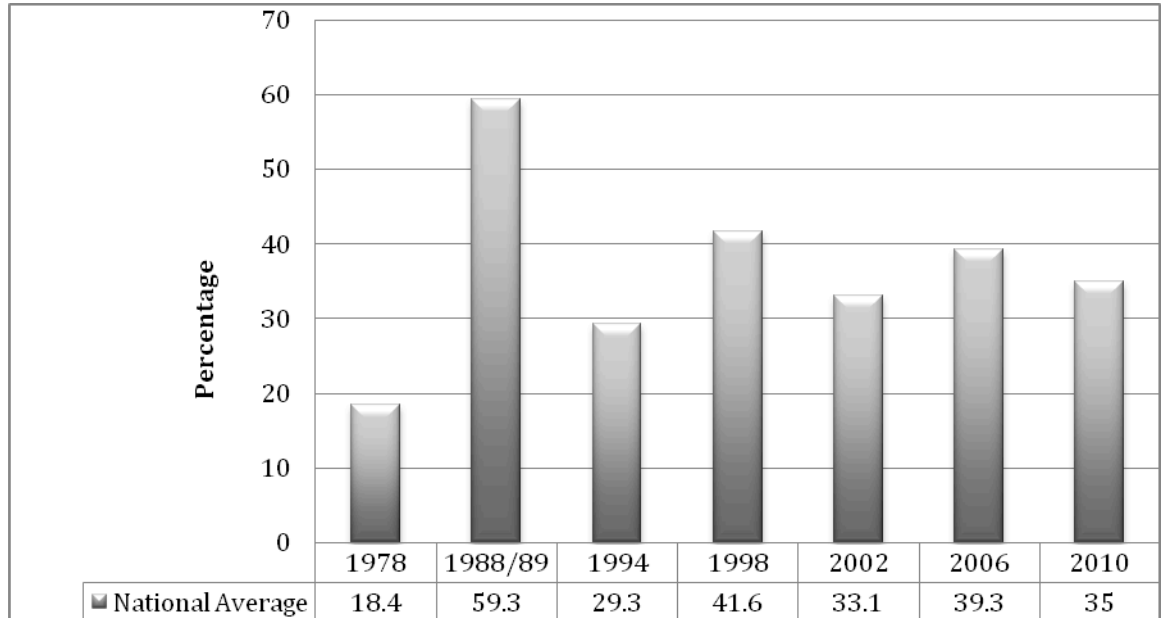
It is important to acknowledge though that Ghana has seen some progress in fiscal decentralisation, including: 1) The merger of central and local government treasuries at the District level into one District Finance Office; 2) Decentralisation of awarding and payment for contracts up to limits set by the Minister of Finance; and 3) Establishment of District Tender Boards (Ahwoi 2010). Even so, fiscal decentralisation is yet to be achieved in Ghana as local authorities rely heavily on central government funding, while ‘tied’ by several constitutional barriers and weak revenue mobilisation abilities. Based on these revelations, it appears that Ghana does not measure–up to the second indicator of a high–functioning decentralised system either.

5.2.3 Local Government Elections

The World Bank’s third indicator of a high–functioning local government system relates to local elections. It is argued here that local government election is not a robust indicator for measuring the level of decentralisation. The reason is that while local government elections have been held in Ghana since 1978, the process appears not to be taken seriously at the central government and local levels. As illustrated in Figure 5.2 below, Voter turnout to local government elections from 1994–2010 has averaged

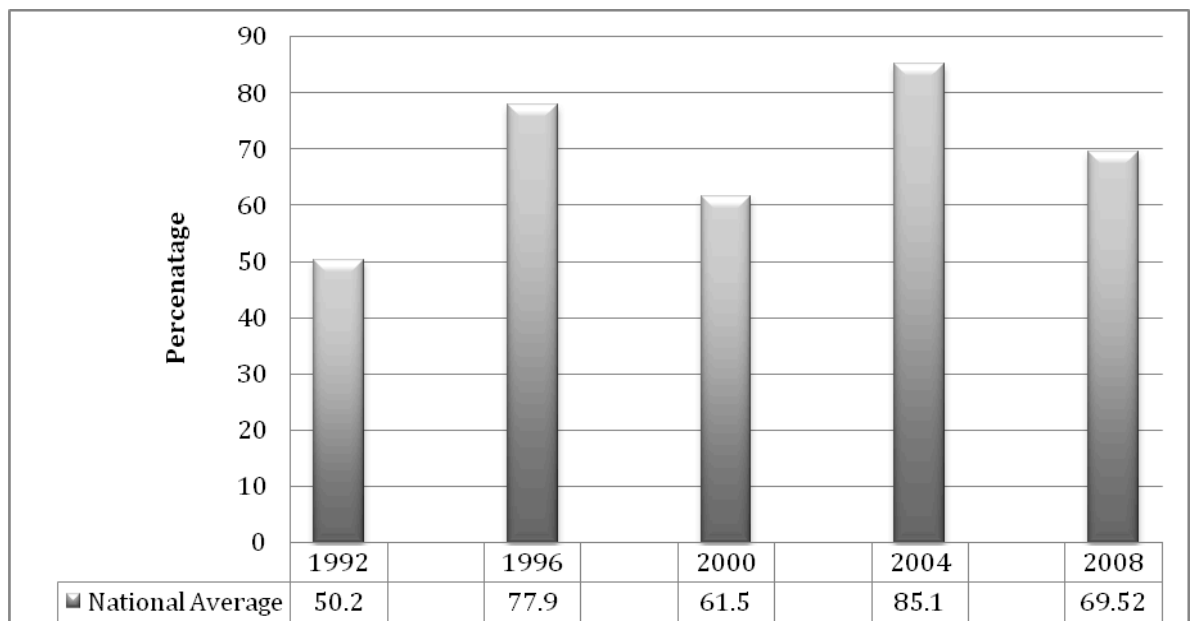
nearly 36%; significantly lower than the almost 70% patronage of presidential elections for the 1992–2008 periods (see Figure 5.3).

Figure 5.2 Percentage of National Average of Voter Turnouts in District Assembly Elections 1978–2010



Source: Electoral Commission of Ghana (2010).

Figure 5.3 Percentages of Voter Turnouts to Presidential Elections 1992–2008

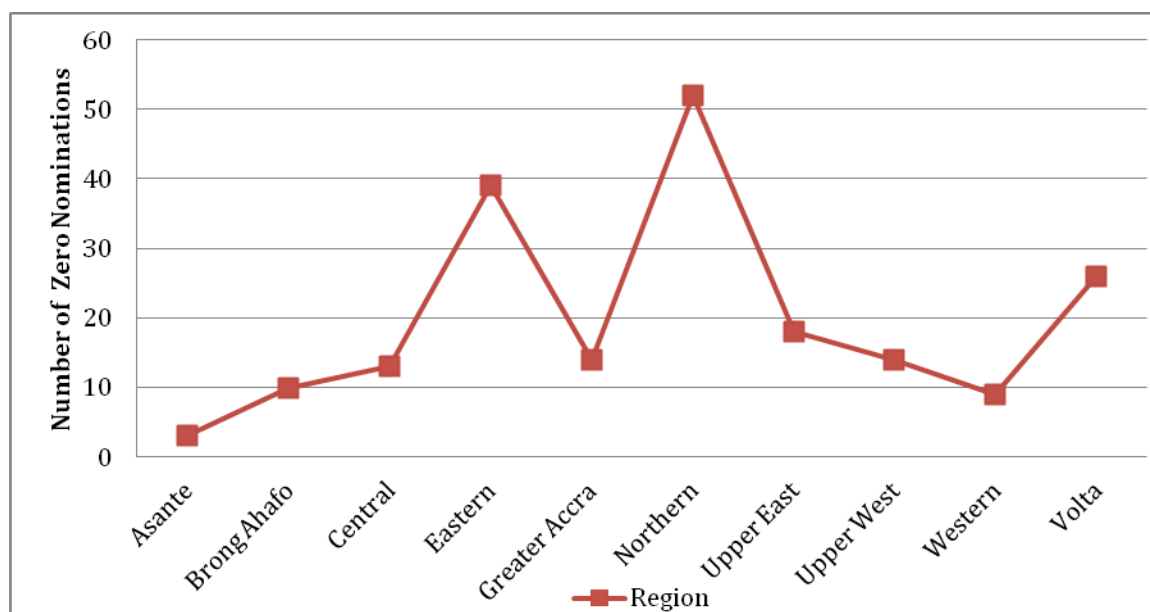


Source: Electoral Commission of Ghana (2010). 2000 & 2008 are averages of the first and second round voting.

Before the 2010 DA elections, which coincided with the fieldwork, there were concerns about the level of preparation and readiness of the electoral commission for the polls; some even called for its postponement. For instance, Aborampah–Mensah (2010, p. 1) of the Ghana Centre for Democratic Development (CDD–Ghana) argued:

We appreciate the chain of avoidable and unavoidable circumstances leading to the unfortunate delays in getting the nation adequately prepared for the 2010 edition of the District level elections. We do recognize the harm being done to decentralised local government in Ghana with the District... [CDD–Ghana] is also deeply disturbed by the implications of going into an election with so little visible preparation...The entire local government election process appears to have received very little attention from key election stakeholders such as the media and the public at large....We recommend that the electoral commission and stakeholders consider the possibility of postponing the polls.

Figure 5.4 Number of Unit Committees with Zero Nominations per Region in 2010



Source: Ghana Electoral Commission (2010).

The elections were not postponed and were so poorly organised that they were ridiculed locally as being held in ‘tots’¹²⁴ (batches). The report of a Special Parliamentary Select Committee to investigate the poor organisation and the low turnout of the 2010 DA polls indicated that public trust and respect for local government institutions, as a source of information and service is low, while central government’s commitment to the entire

¹²⁴ Local expression of ridicule.

process is also weak (Parliament of the Republic of Ghana 2011). Many of the issues raised by the report were not new, as others had expressed similar concerns (see CDD–Ghana 2003; Crawford 2004; Commonwealth Local Government Forum cited in Tettey 2006, Asante 2009).

Ghana's local government elections are also characterised by low involvement of women, although they constitute 51.2% percent of the population (Ghana Statistical Service 2012). Although women's participation in parliamentary elections as candidates is also significantly lower, it is better than their involvement in District Assembly and Unit Committee elections. For example, in the 2010 DA elections, only 7.3 % and 6.8% of women were elected as Assembly and Unit Committee Members respectively; nearly two hundred Unit Committee positions were uncontested nationally (see Figure 5.4; Electoral Commission 2010). While these figures show an improvement on the representation of women in previous DA elections, together with the voter turns as illustrated in Figure 5.2, it is evident that Ghanaians seem not to take the process seriously. People's indifference to the political exercise, some have argued, stems from the lack of confidence in local governments to fulfil their needs (Tettey 2006; Asante 2009; Gyimah–Boadi 2009; Ahwoi 2010; Government of Ghana 2011).

5.2.4 Devolution of Service Delivery

Devolution is the third form of administrative decentralisation¹²⁵. The notion of devolution stems from the principle of subsidiarity, and aims at shortening the distance between citizens and policymakers, while ensuring that critical services are available at the local level (Tettey 2006; Ahwoi 2010). Accordingly, the Local Government Act 462 and others¹²⁶ provide for the establishment of several Government Departments in Metropolitan (sixteen), Municipal (thirteen) and District (eleven) Assemblies. Despite these provisions, which make administrative decentralisation obligatory for key social sector ministries, Gyimah–Boadi (2009) argues that many of them are reluctant to decentralise and devolve authority. Consequently, Ahwoi (2010) notes that five critical services and departments (Health, Fire, Forestry and Game and Wildlife, and Education) are not decentralised in Ghana. Two factors explain this.

¹²⁵ The other two include: Deconcentration and Delegation.

¹²⁶ The Civil Service Law, 1993, PNDCL 327; Local Government Service Act, 2003, Act 656; and National Development Planning Act, 1994, Act 480.

First, as discussed above, the Local Government Acts 462 and 656, appear to promote centralisation. As a result, most Government Departments in the local authorities tend to operate as de-concentrated offices of their parent Ministries in Accra, the capital (Sumberg & Okali 2006; Ahwoi 2010). Crawford (2004, p. 33) puts it succinctly: “there is little to suggest that District Assemblies have [any] authority ... [as they] merely act as agencies for the central government with little or no discretionary powers”.

Administrative decentralisation in Ghana is also challenged by the lack of infrastructure and human resources. Owing to the paucity of infrastructure in some parts of the country, many public servants and national service personnel¹²⁷ continue to refuse postings to the northern and other ‘infrastructurally-deprived’ regions of the country, as they consider it as a punishment (Gyimah-Boadi 2009). As the Ghana Medical Association revealed, for three years running [2007-2009] no medical doctor accepted posting to the Upper East Region¹²⁸ (Ghana Medical Association 2009¹²⁹).

The stalled nature of administrative decentralisation in Ghana has been described by Asante (2009) and Gyimah-Boadi (2009) as contributing to the stagnation in rural development, continued rural-urban drift, the worsening of the north-south divide, and congestion in Accra. As of March 2011, when the researcher departed from Ghana, having collected the data, people were still queuing at the offices of the former Ministry of Foreign Affairs in Accra to have their passports issued; the regional passport offices were not functioning. As Ahwoi (2010, p. 145), Ghana’s longest-serving Minister of Local Government since 1951, observed: “there has been no administrative decentralisation [devolution] in the real sense of the term”.

5.3 Summary

Based on the facts presented above, one wonders if Ghana’s local government system is highly functional as claimed by the World Bank. While the country’s constitution and various Local Government Acts make provision for a decentralised local government system, the same statutes appear to promote centralisation, which hinders the autonomy of the local authorities, and effective fiscal and administrative decentralisation. As the figures from the electoral commission also suggested, Ghanaians appear not to take

¹²⁷ Ghanaian students who graduate from accredited tertiary institutions are required under law to do a one year national service to the country.

¹²⁸ The doctor-patient ratio in the three Northern Regions in 2009 was 1:57, 333. The national average in 2009 was 1: 13,000.

¹²⁹ See also <http://www.modernghana.com/news/223247/1/doctors-refuse-posting-to-upper-east-region.html> retrieved June 15, 2012.

local government elections as an important political exercise compared with their patronage of presidential elections. Despite the facts presented above, the World Bank and many development agencies have long presented Ghana's inter-government system as high functioning, a projection that has influenced the choice of the country as one of the preferred destinations for donor support and foreign aid in Sub-Saharan Africa. However, the grounded-realities of Ghana, as the above discussion revealed, appear to contradict the picture 'development experts' tend to paint of the country.

It is also important to point out that some of the World Bank's indicators for measuring developing countries' inter-government systems seems imprecise. Considered carefully, they appear to concentrate on the mere existence of the benchmarks rather than the ground realities. For example, it is not enough to cite local government elections as a yardstick for measuring the level of a country's decentralisation system without stating the percentage of patronage indicative of its success or otherwise. Additionally, as Ghana's example has shown, the fact that a country's constitution and legal framework makes provision for decentralised local governance does not make it high functioning. The indicators should move beyond constitutional provisions, be precise and include a specific focus on issues affecting the functioning of local government institutions. The next section, which draws on the empirical data, provides a more realistic analysis of some of the issues impacting on the operations of Ghana's local government substructures, specifically, the functions of Assembly Members.

5.4 The Plight of Assembly Members in Ghana

Assembly Members are key facilitators of developments at the local level in Ghana. They are elected for four-year re-electable twice terms (twelve years in all), and are not to be identified with any political party. They do not receive salaries, but receive transport allowances when they attend the Municipal/District Assembly (MDA) meetings (ILGS & MLGDE 2006). While the current government has promised to pay all Assembly Members, this payment has not yet materialised (NDC 2008 Manifesto, p. 86). Because of the dearth of empirical research on the functions of Assembly Members in Ghana, many challenges and issues they face appear to be unknown. As this research reveals, the challenges include, but are not limited to: 1) Managing their personal lives and people's expectations in an unpaid job; 2) Relating to their DCE; 3) Working with weak Unit Committees; and 4) Relating to Traditional Chiefs. These challenges, which

corroborate the lapses inherent in Ghana's local government system, are discussed in turn.

5.4.1 Managing Personal Life and People's Expectations in an Unpaid Job

The personal lifestyles of Assembly Members as well as their electorates' expectations are a source of interesting insights for discussions. A total of nine male Assembly Members were interviewed for this research; the oldest was over sixty and the youngest was in his 'mid-thirties'. They all listed their main occupation as either civil servant or self-employed being a part-time Assembly Member. Eight of the Assembly Members had at least completed basic education and could read, write and speak English with varied fluency¹³⁰. Almost all the Assembly Members interviewed were married with children; some with two or more wives. While most of them lived in the localities they served, two lived and worked elsewhere and visited their Electoral Areas occasionally. Asked how they combined their city jobs with their roles as Assembly Members, the general response was that, while it was difficult, they could not step down because their families would be disappointed; being in the position was considered prestigious and an honour for the family. Two of the Assembly Members had served only once and were seeking re-election, while the others were stepping down voluntarily – for reasons discussed subsequently.

Various reasons, which are categorised into political ambitions, volunteerism and family/friends' pressures, influenced many Assembly Members to take up the role. Those with political ambitions explained that the role was a first step into public service. Although the underlying principle was to serve the people, they considered it a foundation upon which they would build their political careers. The analysis revealed that sixty percent of the Assembly Members interviewed considered the position as a stepping-stone into a political career. As Kofi Dogbe, a 35-year-old Assembly Member from the Volta Region put it, "It's hard to rise into the political limelight overnight. You need a reference and starting point." Interestingly, while some of these prospective politicians claimed to have no political affiliations, others indicated their leanings.

Nearly twenty percent of the Assembly Members had also taken up the role voluntarily as an act of service to the local people. Such Assembly Members claimed having no political affiliations or ambitions, and that they were in the role to serve their people.

¹³⁰ Others could only manage 'broken' English or could not express themselves in English at all.

The final category of Assembly Members interviewed consisted of those whose friends or family members asked or influenced them to take up the job. One of them stated that:

When your people recognise that you can represent them in the District Assembly, it's an honour. If you say no, it will create displeasure and disappointment and may even be interpreted to mean disrespecting them. You need to honour the recognition given to you ... after all, some of them contributed to your education.

The Assembly Members interviewed were averagely in charge of twenty or more localities, some several kilometres away and accessible only by footpaths and bicycles. Interestingly, Section 16 of the Local Government Act, 1993, Act 462 (see ILGS & MLGRD 2006) expects an Assembly Member to:

- a) Maintain close contact with his Electoral Area, consult his/her people on issues to be discussed in the District Assembly and collate their views, opinions and proposals;
- b) Present the views, opinions and proposals to the District Assembly;
- c) Attend meetings of the District Assembly and meetings of the sub-committees of which he is a member;
- d) Meet his/her electorates before each meeting of the Assembly;
- e) Report to his electorate the general decisions of the Assembly and its Executive Committee and the actions s/he has taken to solve the problems raised by residents in his Electoral Area;
- f) Draw attention in general debate to national policies which are relevant to the subject under discussion;
- g) Actively participate in the work of the sub-committees of the Executive Committee [of the District Assembly];
- h) Bring to bear on any discussion in the Assembly the benefit of his skill, profession, experience or specialised knowledge;
- i) Maintain frequent liaison with productive economic groupings and other persons in the District; and
- j) Take part in communal and development activities in the district.

Confronted with such a realistically impossible task in an unpaid job, most of the Assembly Members seemed frustrated. Asked how they managed the situation, five explained that they visited each of the localities under their jurisdiction once in a month, while four did so only when an emergency ensued. Assembly Members who lived outside their localities explained that their Unit Committee Members visited in their stead and attended to urgent issues in their absence. Almost all the Assembly Members interviewed were not just worried about being unpaid, but the fact that their electorates expected so much from them.

The expectation of many local people from their Assembly Members seemed utopian. Some expected them to pay school fees, provide business capital, and initiate income-generating or employment-oriented projects. Thus, while almost 80% percentage of

questionnaire respondents admitted knowing their Assembly Members, they always remarked, “I know him ... but he does nothing for me”. The high expectations from Assembly Members may be attributable to the general high poverty levels across the country; the lack of public education on local government functions; and particularly, the many election campaign promises of the Assembly Members.

Because the position of an Assembly Member is electable, candidates are expected to visit their Electoral Areas individually to canvass for votes. During these campaigning times, many of them tend to raise the hopes of the people by promising things they cannot deliver. During the fieldwork, which coincided with the Ghana’s 2010 local government elections, the researcher encountered many potential Assembly Members who were promising to construct bridges, roads and schools. Tellingly, many Assembly Members disposed redeemable tokens, and doing favours or handing out gifts in electorates to win the constituents’ votes. Some revealed that they spent almost 5000 GHC¹³¹ on their campaigns. One was asked why such a huge amount of money was spent to get into an unpaid job. He replied:

This is Ghana. Money is powerful. You can have a great vision or a manifesto; if it is not backed with ‘action’ [cash, gifts] people will not have confidence in you. For me it’s not a big deal because I’m preparing myself for a bigger political future and there I will recoup all my investment.

Another explained:

It is very difficult to win elections in this place empty-handed. It is a survival of the rich or the one who can pay more. Here, votes are for sale ... even if you don’t want to do it, you will be compelled to do the same, as your opponents will be doing it.

The fact that Assembly Members are not paid, but expected to do so much, tend to lead to their misappropriation of funds earmarked for local development, one instance being the Community-Based Rural Development Projects (CBRDP). Because of the ‘investment’ some Assembly Members made to their work, they appeared to see the CBRDP as an opportunity to recoup dividends. As a result, in some localities, the Area Council Chairmen and project officials disclosed that some Assembly Members awarded the procurement of the project’s materials to themselves and/or inflated the prices.

¹³¹ Almost USD 4000.

5.4.2 *Relating to 'Partisan' Municipal/District Chief Executives*

As explained in Chapter One, the Community-Based Rural Development Project (CBRDP) was designed to strengthen the country's local government sub-structures ultimately, the Area Councils¹³². Although the Area Councils were expected to be the implementers of CBRDP, they relied heavily on the MDAs, because they lacked the technical capacities required. As DCEs are the most powerful figures at the MDA level, they supervised the selection of the beneficiary Area Councils. DCEs also oversaw the MDAs facilitation of the projects, particularly the technical aspects: planning, engineering, and accounting, among others. It is therefore important to explain briefly how the politicisation of the operations of MDAs in Ghana impacted on the CBRDPs; this will clarify the context for understanding how the 'power' of DCEs impact on Assembly Members.

As DCEs determined which Area Council would benefit from the CBRDP, the researcher found that some of the projects were politicised and given to unqualified localities¹³³. In Ghana, DCEs are eligible to contest parliamentary elections. As a result, some of them used the CBRDPs as the political machines to launch their campaigns or win favours for votes. Whitfield (2008) attests to this practice, observing that some Ghanaian politicians streamline aid-funded projects so as to get themselves elected or for fulfilling their election promises in locations where there is no need. Therefore, while the CBRDP required that the projects be implemented in Area Councils having functioning offices, the researcher found that some had no offices, although they had been given projects. Many sources reported that, whereas the projects were supposed to be managed by the Area Councils under the facilitation of professionals at the respective Municipal/District Assemblies' engineers, planning officers and accountants, DCEs who were aspiring to be elected as parliamentarians, aberrantly became the managers of the projects as a ploy to win political favour from the electorates. An Assembly Member whose locality benefitted from the project observed:

Although I was the Presiding Member and was supposed to be in charge of the project, the DCE sidelined me and took charge, working with his party cronies. He did this because he labelled me as a member of the opposition party and was also contesting one of the parliamentary seats in the district ... I'm happy he lost.

¹³² This consists of Assembly Members, Unit Committee Member and Government Appointees.

¹³³ The CBRDP secretariat relied on the DAs to choose deserving Area Councils to pilot the projects.

An Area Council Chairman from the Eastern Region also related:

The only project our Area Council got under my chairmanship was the public toilet facility the CBRDP brought. But the DCE had a political agenda ... but I was powerless and could not challenge him. According to the CBRDP officials, we were supposed to build a sixteen-seater toilet facility, but the DCE divided the project sum of GHC15, 000 and took part to another locality without consulting us.

Because DCEs wield so much power in determining which locality does or does not get projects, Assembly Members are forced to be obsequious at all cost, including lobbying them. According to the Collins Concise Dictionary (2001), lobbying is defined as “an attempt to influence [mainly politicians] on behalf of a particular interest”. Therefore lobbying involves putting forward arguments in support of a notion; however, ‘lobbying’ DCEs as used by Assembly Members presents interesting points for discussion. While each Assembly Member admitted that lobbying was a necessary skill required for success, they all had different ways of getting into the hearts of their respective DCEs or other influential officials at the DAs. This ranged from using gifts to providing party political contacts. In a discussion with the researcher, an Assembly Member revealed his manner of lobbying:

Assembly Member: Lobbying depends on so many factors. For example if I need something like a local school ... I will contact the one in-charge of education at the District Assembly. Sometimes, I will bring them here to see things for themselves ... But you don't bring down 'big men' just like that. You need to give them something or foodstuff ... so that s/he can push your agenda.

Researcher: Why do you have to do this? The person is doing his job. Is this not bribery?

Assembly Member: My brother, this is Ghana...wheels must always be put under files so they move faster.

An Assembly Member from the Eastern Region presented another angle to the lobbying discourse. He pontificated:

Assembly Member: When I was at ... Electoral Area I was able to lobby for the District Assembly to build a public toilet at the Zongo community. Also the road between ... was a big problem for the people so I was able to lobby to get the road constructed before my term of office ended. Through my lobbying abilities, I was able to provide streetlight for the people of ... and also extend electricity to...

After commending him for his achievements, the researcher enquired of his lobbying skills that enabled him to attain all these projects for his Electoral Area. He said:

As an Assembly Member you need to play your cards well to win projects to meet the needs of your community. Although the [District] Assemblies are supposed to be non-partisan, they are in disguise.... In the last eight years my government has been in office and that has helped me because the DCE knows

that we belong to ‘one family’ [political party]. Because the DCE is my man he helps me to win projects for my communities as I have listed. Although some Assembly Members would claim that they do not belong to any political party, we know each other’s political leanings. Political climates change so I try to convince the DCE to help some of my opposition Assembly Members friends with projects also so that when their government comes into office they can also help me if I’m still in office.

The researcher asked him how he manages to convince the DCE, as there are obviously other Assembly Members who may belong to the same political party. He answered with an Akan proverb interpreted as: “if you don’t help others to achieve their dreams you cannot see your dream come true”. The DCE in question was in a contest to be a parliamentarian in a constituency that included the Electoral Area of the Assembly Member. Thus there was a certain understanding of reciprocity between the two men. This implied that the DCE sent projects (including the CBRDP) to that Electoral Area so that the Assembly Member could cite them as evidence of the DCEs generosity and therefore competence as a prospective parliamentarian.

However, not all Assembly Members had good relations with the DCEs. This meant such Assembly Members were denied such development projects as CBRDP. The causes of the strained relations ranged from political rivalry to personality clashes. The situation could be so bad that DCEs curse Assembly Members, evidenced in the November 13, 2011 headline of the Ghanaian Chronicle newspaper: “Antoa Nyamaa¹³⁴ Will Kill You ... District Chief Executive Invokes Local Deity on Assembly Members”. The researcher also encountered some Assembly Members whose perceived affinity with the opposition party meant that their Electoral Areas received no projects during the eight years rule of the opposition New Patriotic Party. One of them shared his experiences in the Volta Region:

I have really suffered under the New Patriotic Party. The DCE perceived me to be a member of the opposition [National Democratic Congress]. For eight years I only had one project for my Electoral Area. We got that project because it was so crucial that he could not overlook it. During the implementation of the project he relied on his party faithful and neglected me. Because of this hurdle I have lost favour with my electorate and doubt if they would vote for me again if I contested.

¹³⁴ A dreaded local deity

5.4.3 Working with weak Unit Committees

Unit Committees form the base of Ghana's local government structure. A Unit consists of settlements with a population of between five hundred and one thousand of ten elected persons in the Unit and not more than five other persons resident in the Unit to be nominated by the District Chief Executive. Following criticisms of there being too many Unit Committees in the country¹³⁵, the membership of fifteen (15) considered too large, and the general disinterest in them, the membership has been reduced to five (5) elected persons who hold office for four years (L.I. 1967, section 24(1) 2010; Ahwoi, 2010).

Unit Committees represent their respective Electoral Areas in the Town/Area Council (see Figure 1). They are also expected to work closely with the Assembly Members so as to be in touch with the people; play important roles in public education; organising communal labour; raising revenue; ensuring environmental cleanliness; registering births and deaths; enforcing settlement planning; laying out and supervising District Assembly bye-laws; implementing taxation; and monitoring of self-help or community-based projects (Local Government Act, 1993, Act 462, Section 24 (1). Consequently, if the Unit Committee of an Electoral Area is weak, the work of the respective Assembly Member would be very daunting.

Nationally, there seems to be a strong case in favour of the abolition of Unit Committees, as they appear to be dysfunctional, in spite of their election processes being expensive (Ahwoi 2010). In all nine localities researched, almost 85% of respondents to the questionnaires indicated they did not know who their Unit Committee Members were and their functions. Explaining why the Unit Committees are weak, Ahwoi (2010) argues there being a perception among Ghanaians that, considering the numbers involved, the cost of Unit Committee elections are not worth the doubtful benefits derived from them. He argues further in favour of the suggestion that the country should save on costs by revisiting the original plan of holding Unit Committee elections by show of hands, as established under the Electoral Commission's Public Elections Regulations, 1995 Constitutional Instrument 10, paragraph 6 (1)¹³⁶. Another explanation for their ineffectiveness is that Unit Committees are not allowed to perform their decentralised functions. For instance, while there have been five Unit Committee

¹³⁵ 16,000

¹³⁶ Ahwoi (2010) explains that because the Constitutional Instrument 10 contradicted Article 49 (1) of the 1992 Constitution, which requires all public elections to be by secret ballot, it was never implemented.

elections have been conducted so far during the era of the Fourth Republic (1992, 1996, 2000, 2004 and 2008). Kyei–Baffour (2009) and Ahwoi (2010) argue these Committees have never performed any visible functions. While legitimate, the weaknesses of the Unit Committees go beyond the explanations already given. As the data below will show, they are weak because: 1) Partisan politics interfere with their roles; 2) Their members are not paid a salary; and 3) Some members do not understand their role.

Ten Unit Committee Members were interviewed, consisting of seven males and three females. Interestingly, nine of them expressed frustration about the interference of party politics in their work. Unit Committees, form an integral part of Area Councils, which also consists of Assembly Members, ordinary residents appointed by the District Assemblies and the Government Appointees. Interestingly, in some of the CBRDP beneficiary localities researched, Government Appointees were found to be either constituency members or local executives of the then ruling political party, the New Political Party (NPP). Referred to as ‘foot–soldiers’¹³⁷ in the media, the Government Appointees and other political party faithful tended to hijack the CBRDP: literally demanding the sole right to supply project materials, thus compromising the tendering process and in some cases inflating the prices of the project materials. As one Unit Committee Member from the Eastern Region put it:

We were elected for nothing. Government Appointees, many of who are staunch members of the NPP government, control virtually everything in the Area Council. It looks like we are only ceremonial officials. It is very frustrating when the Constitution, which spells out our roles, is set aside for partisan politics machinations.

Additionally, the analysis indicated that the frustrated Unit Committee Members seemed disappointed with the fact that they received no salary, although the role was very demanding. The general mood of these Unit Committee Members was that because they were in public life, people perceived making a lot of money from implementing projects. This perception, they contended, brought pressure on them as people flooded them with requests for financial assistance. These requests were complicated by the condition that if they did not meet these needs they would not receive constituents’ votes at the next elections. These Unit Committee Members, who were either petty

¹³⁷All political parties in Ghana have ‘foot soldiers’. ‘Foot–soldiers’ supposedly are the men and women who work hard for their political party at the grassroots level to win elections. There are always stories in the local media on the threats disgruntled ‘foot–soldiers’ issue to their National Party Executive if their demands are met. They are able to seize government properties or even demand the dismissal of Ministers of State and Members of Parliament (see <http://elections.peacefmonline.com/politics>; <http://www.modernghana.com/news> retrieved November 25, 2011.

traders or unemployed, had hoped that the role would come with respect and some financial benefits. When they realised that the role did not meet their expectations and would even be a drain their limited resources, they became disillusioned and retreated from the position.

The data revealed that the frustrated Unit Committee Members did not know what the role entailed, although they had received the constituents' votes. They had contested the position because their friends and families had asked them to do so or that there was not much competition. When asked what their roles entailed, some of these Unit Committee Members managed to state that their essential responsibility was to assist the Assembly Member. Apparently, ignorant of their roles when elected, and realising how demanding were the tasks, many would not resign, but give excuses for non-performance. Almost 90% of Assembly Members interviewed explained that their Unit Committee Members were inactive, thus giving no support in organising local initiatives. Interestingly, because Local Government Act 462 does not bind Unit Committee Members with any oath to remain active, it is easy for them to relinquish their roles without fear of any consequence.

The only Unit Committee Members who appeared to be enjoying the role was a 40-year old lady from the Volta Region. "Action Woman", as popular called in the locality, the lady considered herself as the future Assembly Member of her Electoral Area. Thus, while supporting her Assembly Member who did not reside in the locality, the lady regarded the role as a marketing strategy for her political ambition. Asked if she was not bothered about the sacrificial nature of the job, "Action Woman" remarked that "no sweat no gain... those who take up this role must be aware of the consequences."

During the fieldwork, I observed that because "Action Woman" and her colleague Unit Committees Members were comparatively active, efforts were being made to maintain the Community-Based Rural Development Projects (CBRDP); however, not without challenges. The Assembly Member of the Electoral Area remarked: "Because I'm do not reside here ... most of the time my Unit Committee Members do the job in my absence and send me verbal reports and feedback." Apart from this Assembly Member, the others described their Unit Committees Members variously being as being 'dormant, useless, lazy, unhelpful and betrayers'.

5.4.4 Relating to Traditional Chiefs

Ghana's local government system is such that Assembly Members would not succeed if they are not in league with the Traditional Chiefs of the Electoral Areas they serve. The influence of Ghanaian Traditional Chiefs and how it impacted on the outcomes of the CBRDP are extensively discussed in Chapter Seven. Analysis of the two case studies presented in the chapter shows that, because Ghanaian Traditional Chiefs are constitutionally recognised as the custodians of all lands in the country, they tend to demand right of control over development projects that fall within their traditional areas. Many of the Traditional Chiefs interviewed asserted, "The Assembly Member does not own the gong-gong of this village ... I do!" This meant that so long as the Assembly Member did not submit to the Chiefs' whims, they could not organise anything successfully in the locality.

Relative to the CBRDP, some Traditional Chiefs in the localities researched felt sidelined and clashed with Assembly Members, resulting in protracted legal battles and abandonment of the projects. This happened because those who designed the CBRDP failed to inform the chiefs clearly about the project's intention to strengthen the local government structures - Assembly Members and Area Councils. Frustrated by having to act in accordance with the bidding of Traditional Chiefs, some Assembly Members indicated that they were voluntarily stepping down and would not encourage others to take challenge for the position.

5.5 Conclusion

This chapter set out to refute the World Bank's classification of Ghana's local government system as being highly functional. Ghana's local government system was examined within the framework of the World Bank's four indicators of a high-functioning decentralised system. Based on the evidence provided it appears that Ghana's inter-governmental system does not seem to qualify for the 'highly functional' label. Although the Constitution and other local government statutes provide for a decentralised system, the principle of subsidiarity appears to be compromised by the existence of centralising tendencies in the same statutes. These constitutional contradictions weaken the autonomy of local authorities, while posing challenges to the realisation of true fiscal and administrative decentralisation in the country. The chapter also criticised some of the World Bank's indicators for measuring the inter-government systems of developing countries as being imprecise and lacking robustness. It emerged that the indicators appear to focus on mere existence of the benchmarks and not the

ground realities of the respective countries. In the case of Ghana, as the last section of the chapter showed, such ground realities would, for example, relate to issues that are impacting on the functions of Assembly Members: the non-payment of salaries, the politicisation of the system, conflicts with Traditional Chiefs and dysfunctional Unit Committees.

Because the World Bank considered Ghana's local government system as being high-functioning, during the implementation of the CBRDP, the Matching Strategy seem to have been applied, meaning that no adjustment was necessary to the country's established decentralisation setup. However, as the above discussions have shown, the country's local government system does not reflect the 'high-functioning' label and should have been modified to accommodate the CBRDP. This seemed to have been ignored, leading to the implementation of a 'community-driven' program in localities where 'communities' technically did not exist, a finding the next chapter discusses. This chapter has shown that while Ghana may be benefitting from massive aid money due to its 'misrepresentation' as a 'development celebrity' and having a highly functional decentralisation system, the long-term sustainability of development programs are at risk of failing, as the country's grounded realities do not always reflect the 'experts' views.

CHAPTER SIX

COMMUNITY: CONTESTED CONCEPTS AND MISINTERPRETATIONS

Community is more than simply a group established for administrative convenience (for example an electorate, a school class or a work place group), but [an entity] to which people belong as members and where this sense of belonging is significant and positively regarded.

Tesoriero (2010, p. 96)

The preceding chapter challenged a view held by the World Bank that Community–Driven Development programs have a greater chance of succeeding if the implementing country’s inter–governmental (or decentralisation) system is ‘highly functional’.

Despite the stagnated picture painted of Ghana’s decentralisation system in the last chapter, because the World Bank classified it as ‘high–functioning’, the designers of the Community–Based Rural Development (CBRDP) fashioned and implemented the projects on the country’s local government structures. Thus, although labelled ‘community–based’, the implementers did not build or consider the ‘communities’ within which to base the projects, expecting these projects to be endorsed, implemented and maintained by the said ‘communities’. The poor state of most of the projects studied (see Chapter One) and as argued below, suggests that ‘communities’ barely existed in many of the CBRDP beneficiary localities.

‘Community’ is a contested concept and often misused; this chapter portrays what becomes of programs that apply it inappropriately. The first part of the chapter will briefly explore the literature to show the conceptual controversies around the term. An analytical framework for examining what ‘community’ is and what it is not will be established in the second part of the chapter. The last section of the chapter discusses three empirical case studies from the CBRDP beneficiary localities. An analysis of the dynamics of each of the localities in relation to the CBRDP will indicate that ‘community’ is such a complex term requiring all its key features to be fully operational (see Table 6.1). The case studies also show that ‘community’ must be contextually conceptualised as its inappropriate application can lead to dire project outcomes.

6.1 Community: Conceptual Controversies

Community tends to generate a great deal of discussion and debate. As discussed in Chapter Three, some scholars argue that it is a political term, and that its recent romanticisation is a return to ‘local organising’ after it was jettisoned for Neoliberalism in the 1980s. In the wake of the obvious failures of the neoliberal market economy to deliver what it promised (trickle down growth), community organising (‘Communitisation’), they argue further, has been revived and repackaged as the ‘Third Way’ to reduce public spending by complementing government efforts in meeting citizens’ needs (Amin 2005; Marion 2007; Defillippis & Saegert 2008; Defillippis et al. 2010; Pandey 2010). The other issue that makes community a complex term relates to its definition (what it is and what it is not).

Etymologically, ‘community’ comes from the Latin ‘cum’, which means ‘together or among each other’ and ‘munus’, which means ‘the gift’¹³⁸. From its roots therefore, the term connotes the sharing of ‘something’ usually among small [human] groups, what Ferdinand Tönnies referred to as ‘gemeinschaft’ (Tesoriero 2010). Even so, the Internet, new technologies and urbanisation have given the term a ‘new seductive appeal’ (Delanty 2003, p. 2) by stretching its connotation beyond group sizes, territoriality and even as a form of manageable human organisation. Consequently, many people now live in small localities they do not consider as their ‘community’, but claim ‘communitiship’ with such larger entities encompassed as a university or country or their workplace, some of which have no geographical boundaries. It is also not uncommon to read about a ‘community’ of animals or even plant species (Hall & Cooper 1970; Gotelli 1996). Thus, the concerns of scholars such as Marx, Weber, Spencer and Comte that modernity has eroded the importance of ‘community’ (Piot 1999) must be seen in the spatial sense, as new forms of ‘communities’ have emerged recently, many of which transcend space, time and geography (Appadurai 1995; Bartle 2007; Tesoriero 2010, Kenny 2010).

Owing to the complexity of the concept of ‘community’, some scholars argue that the term can be inappropriately applied, giving rise to three situations (see Appadurai 1995; Guilt & Shah 1998; Botchway 2001; Cleaver 2001; Moncrieff & Eyben 2007; Tesoriero 2010). The first is the labelling of localities and groups as ‘communities’, where in reality ‘community’ does not exist, or exists but not in the traditional and romantic

¹³⁸ See <http://www.seek2know.net/word.html>, retrieved 23 March, 2012.

sense. In most cases, the ground settlement and mobility patterns of people in localities labelled as ‘communities’ may not support interaction to the levels required for a coherent ‘community’ to exist. Because interaction and membership is a choice, ‘community’ cannot be forced on people, even if they share spaces or interests (Khwaja 2001; Platteau 2004; Alesina & Ferrara 2005; Cornish 2006). Tellingly, some scholars have observed that the labelling of ‘community’ is sometimes a deliberate policy action to direct attention away from the internal politics and from questions of the nature of actual social relations in a locality (Fergusson 1995; Scrimgeour 1997; Botchway 2001; Cleaver 2001; Moncrieff & Eyben 2007; Tesoriero 2010).

Second, there is also the tendency, as Mansuri and Rao (2004, p. 11) observed, to conceptualise the term to denote “a culturally and politically homogeneous social system, or one which is, at least implicitly, an internally cohesive and more or less harmonious entity”. Referred to as ‘spatialisation’ by Amin (2005), the homogenisation inclination presents two challenges. On the one hand, it assumes that everyone within a geographic entity (village, town) shares similar values and interests with those therein, thereby burying internal differences (Scrimgeour 1997; Shah 1998; Botchway 2001; Platteau 2004). On the other, it fails to acknowledge the reality that ‘communities’ can and do exist within a ‘community’ (Etzioni 1996; Bartle 2007; Minar & Greer 2007). Thus, Mosimane & Aribeb (2005) caution community ideologues and practitioners to be aware of the difference between community of ‘place’, which denotes people living together in a spatially bounded locality; and community of ‘use’, which refers to a scenario where people share a certain resource or identity. As this chapter argues, the ‘technocrats’ who designed and implemented Ghana’s CBRDP tended to rely on the homogenisation and spatialisation of the localities in which they worked, failing to acknowledge their complexities (see Table 6.1).

Third, it is possible for identifiable groups or ‘communities’ to be misrepresented on matters that may concern them. The literature enumerates a number of instances where a few influential people, due to their wealth, political contacts or educational backgrounds [termed the elite], have dominated and ‘forcefully’ represented the rest. The opposite is also possible, where the voice or representation of a minority group can be relegated (Mehmet 1978; Scrimgeour 1997; Zakus & Lysack 1998; Cleaver 2001; Cornish 2006; Labonne & Chase 2007; Platteau 2004; 2009).

In lieu of the complexity of the term, some scholars concede that an attempt to universalise a particular definition of community is impossible. For example, Bell and Newby (1971) found ninety-eight different definitions that hardly shared any commonalities. Drawing on Plant's (1974) ideas therefore, Tesoriero (2010) argues that community should not be considered a description of something that exists, as it is almost impossible arriving at one definition (see Table 6.1). This argument resonates with Bartle's (2007¹³⁹) assertion that community is a

Sociological construct and model...we cannot see a whole community, we cannot touch it, and we cannot directly experience it. It is a set of interactions, human behaviours that have meaning and expectations between its members. Not just action, but actions based on shared expectations, values, beliefs and meanings between individuals...it may not even have physical location, but be demarcated by being a group of people with a common interest.

Community is also regarded as both evaluative and normative. By evaluative, it is considered as value-driven and its meaning is contested and open to diverse meanings, depending on the ideological leanings of the person using it (Amin 2005; Defillippis et al. 2010; Tesoriero 2010). Normative community implies that there exist norms and rules, which could be developed and used positively to organise people to achieve a 'good cause' or negatively to persecute and exclude 'the outsider' (Mosimane & Aribeb 2005). This assertion is supported by Fisher and Shragge (2007, p. 193), who argues that "community has become the dominant form of resistance and social change ... around the world."

Notwithstanding the difficulty of defining what community is and what it is not, theoreticians seem to agree on three issues. First, that the term should be appreciated for its complexity and that it may be futile attempting to find a universal definition (Tesoriero 2010; Kenny 2010). As a result many scholars circumvent defining the concept by describing its core features instead. For example, as Table 6.1 shows below, Goode (1957) outlined eight characteristics; McMillan and Chavis (1986) also presented four elements; Bartle (2007) discusses four features; while Tesoriero (2010) outlines five. Second, that the meaning of 'community' should go beyond 'spatialisation' to include 'functionalisation'. Community as a function relates to people having a sense of belonging, solidarity and identity (McMillan & Chavis 1986; Appadurai 1995; Delanty 2003; Tesoriero 2010). It is also about common interest or understanding between people; a form of social organisation where members share

¹³⁹ Retrieved from <http://cec.vcn.bc.ca/cmp/modules/com-wha.htm>, March 26, 2012.

spaces, including the virtual, interactions and a resource (Puddifot 1996; Mosimane & Aribeb 2005; Tesoriero 2010). Third, that whoever (scholars and policymakers) applies the term must clarify the meaning they ascribe to it (Botchway 2001; Bartle 2007; Tesoriero 2010; Kenny 2010).

Table 6.1 Characteristics of a ‘Community’

Goode’s 8 characteristics of a community	McMillan and Chavis’ 4 characteristics of a community
<p>A social organisation:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Whose members are bound by a sense of identity 2. Where few leave, so that it is a terminal or continuing status for the most part 3. Whose members share values in common 4. Whose role definitions vis-a-vis both members and non-members are agreed upon and are the same for all members 5. Who have a common language, which is understood only partially by outsiders 6. That has power over its members 7. Whose limits are reasonably clear, though they are not physical and geo-graphical, but social 8. Whose members encourage others to join them (social reproduction) for generational continuity. 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. Membership (the feeling of belonging) b. Influence (a sense of mattering) c. Integration and fulfilment of needs members d. Shared emotional connections
	<p>Bartle’s 4 characteristics of a community</p>
	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> i. Boundaries of communities are fuzzy ii. Communities can be within communities iii. Communities may move (not static) iv. Urban communities are special
	<p>Tesoriero’s 5 characteristics of a community</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> I. Human Scale II. Identity and Belonging III. Obligation IV. Gemeinschaft V. Culture

Sources: Goode (1957); McMillan & Chavis (1986); Bartle (2007); Tesoriero (2010).

As community was a key component of Ghana’s CBRDP, many of the project’s documents were systematically reviewed to establish how the term was conceptualised. When no official definition was found, the researcher informally interviewed one of the Senior Managers for clarification as follows:

Researcher: It’s been difficult to pin point how the project defines community. Could you please provide me with any relevant documentation that defines the concept as used in the project?

Manager: CBRDP has no special definition for a community. Our use of the word ‘community’ agrees with any dictionary definitions. A working definition of a community could refer to a group of people living in the same vicinity and bound by same culture, beliefs and practices. You may adopt any of the known definitions as offered by dictionaries or development practitioners

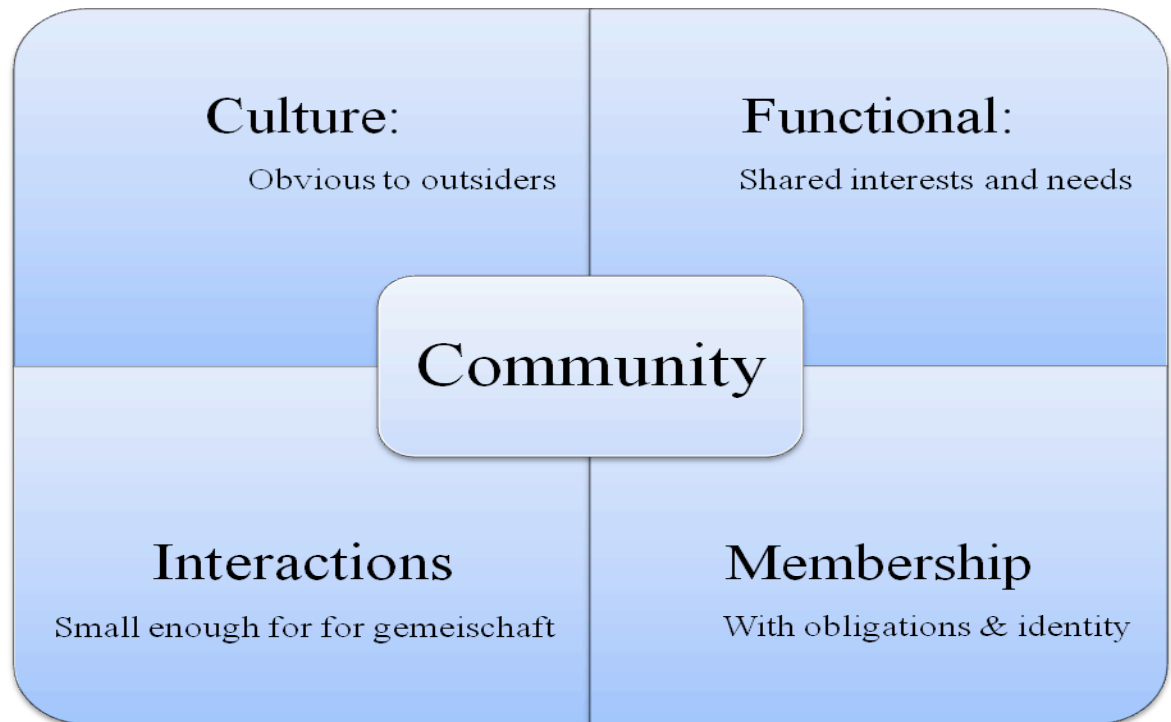
(Field notes 2011).

The fact that the CBRDP did not have a definition for community illustrates the disregard that some development pundits and technocrats tend to have for concepts and their contextual relevance in project designs (see also Chapter Seven, 7.2). While this tendency has been noted by many scholars as causing project failures, many development ‘experts’ appear not to be learning (Mehmet 1978; Botchway 2001; Mosse 2005; Easterly 2007; Collier 2007; Riddell 2007; Mavrotas 2010; Hancock et al. 2011). As the Manager’s response did not provide meaningful clarification of the concept as used in the project, it is crucial to establish an analytical framework for what community is and what it is not. Meaningful clarification is necessary for the purposes of use in this thesis so as to capture, to a greater extent, the complexities of the localities researched and the relevant groups therein.

6.2 Community Conceptualised

A critical review of the characteristics of ‘community’ in Table 6.1 above reveals that while the concept is contextually variable, that is, every community is different, it seems to relate primarily to relationships (sharing, belonging, solidarity, and collective identities) which transcend territoriality, as conceptualised as follows. First, while it could be organised around spaces and territories, as used in the thesis, community is conceptualised mainly in functional terms. Thus, residents of a given locality are not regarded as a community for the mere reason that they share that space, considering that not all of them may identify with it. However, as Lavarack and Wallenstein argued (2001, p. 180), “heterogeneous groups and individual [who share a given space] can actually become a community ... [if] programs reflect their shared interests and needs.” Consequently, members of a given locality may be referred to as a community if there is a function they are committed to or identify with. By implication, communities can be developed, if built around functions that relevant people are committed to either temporarily or permanently (Tesoriero 2010; Kenny 2010).

Figure 6.1 Conceptual Framework of a ‘Community’



Sources: Goode (1957); McMillan & Chavis (1986); Bartle (2007); Tesoriero (2010).

Second, because ‘community’ as a function relates to an idea of belonging, solidarity, and shared identities (Appadurai 1995; Delanty 2003), membership is crucial. A community may require a leader(s) who perform the rites of initiation and define the roles of members and their ethical boundaries (Amin 2005; Bartle 2007; Tesoriero 2010). While members could belong to other groups (Lavarack and Wallerstein 2001; Minar and Greer 2007), they are expected to be conscious of and have a sense of belonging to each of the communities they are a part of. Members are also expected to be loyal and committed to the community through their willing to contribute time, talents and abilities as well as material objects to maintaining the group (McMillan & Chavis 1986; Bartle 2007; Tesoriero 2010).

Third, a community should offer members structures and avenues for interaction and contact, as a ‘people’ and where ‘non–members’ come in as visitors or invited guests. Whether formal or informal, the interaction may have to be small enough for most members to know each other, what Ferdinand Tonnies calls ‘gemeinshaft’, which is interaction in a small group, as opposed to ‘gessellschaft’, or relationship of mass society (Bartle 2007; Tesoriero 2010). Finally, a ‘community’ may have to produce a

culture, which differentiates it from others. The culture may be a language or a jargon; or the group's philosophy and ideological leanings. In addition, it is expected that the culture is known, accepted, and practised by all members; non-members may have to identify it as a unique trait of the community (Tesoriero2010; Kenny 2010). As members of a family or a church identify with each other, so should members of a community be willing to claim, "This is my community".

6.3 Research Findings

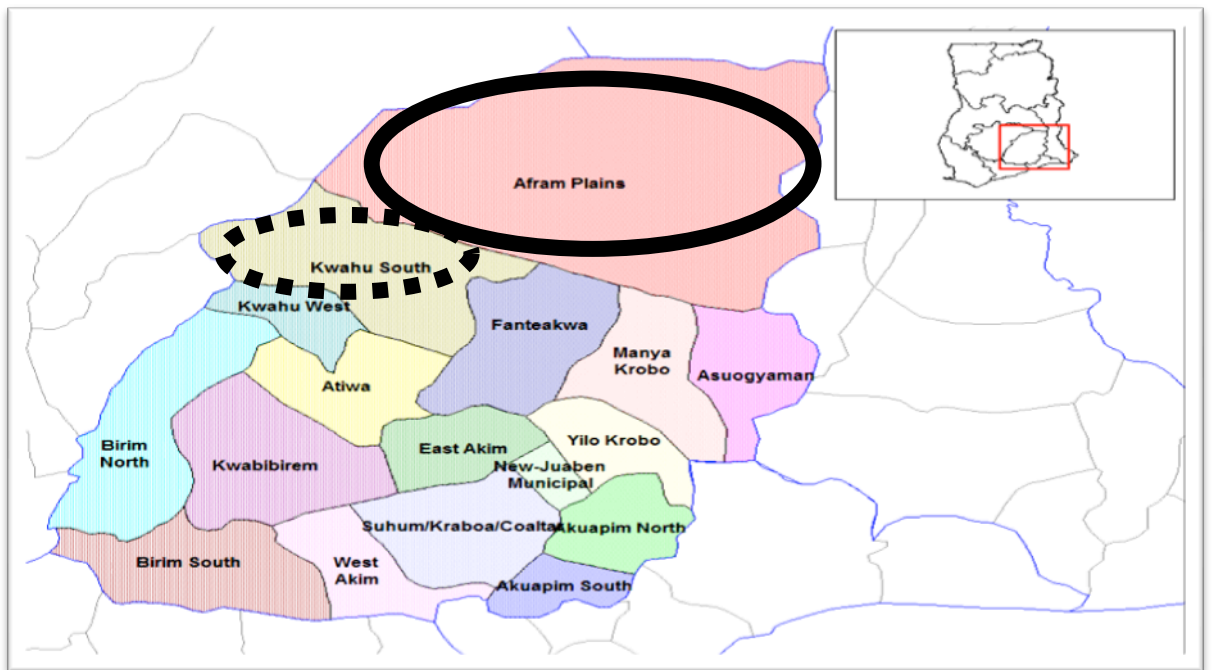
Thus far, an attempt has been made to conceptualise community as a functional entity, small enough for interaction, where members submit to the group's tenets voluntarily and having a distinct culture, which is obvious to 'outsiders'. Within this framework, this section of the thesis draws on the empirical data to examine the extent to which three CBRDP beneficiary towns, which shared overarching characteristics with the other localities¹⁴⁰, qualified as communities.

6.3.1 Case Study I: Tease, Kwawu North District

Tease benefitted from a forty-shed market structure under the CBRDP, which was completed in 2009. During the fieldwork, the market was not in use and traders were seen selling in the sun or under trees (see Photos 6.1 & 6.2 below). Due to the lack of maintenance, the aid-funded sheds were deteriorating. This shed had become a home for squatters who also used it as a toilet facility. While the failed state of the Tease project, in some respects, is attributable to partisan politics as discussed in the preceding chapter, it is also because many residents of the locality tended to treat it with 'a sense of temporality'. This attitude, as the paragraphs below highlight, raises doubts about why a community-based project was implemented in Tease.

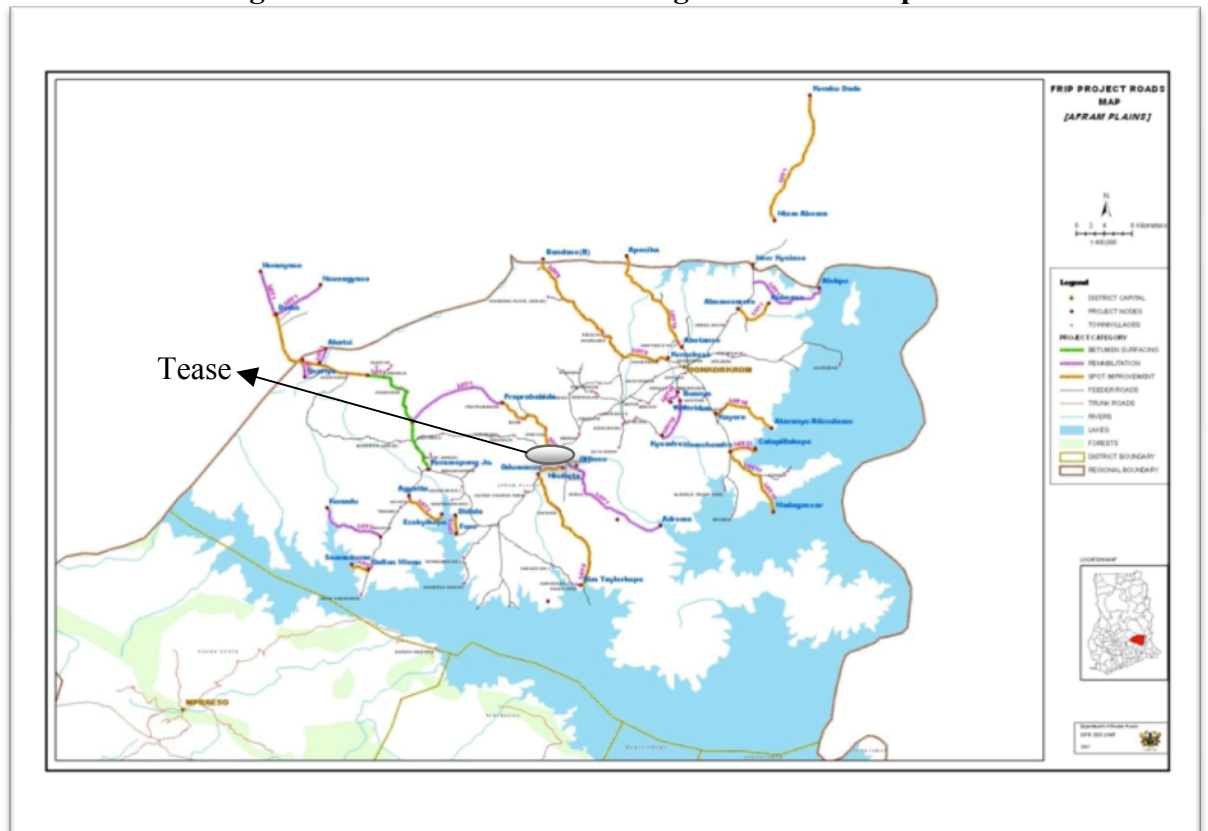
¹⁴⁰ In terms of ethnic heterogeneity, traditional governance et cetera.

Figure 6.1 Eastern Region: Locating Afram Plains and Kwahu South



Source: Kwahu North Medium Term Development Plan

Figure 6.2 Afram Plains: Locating Tease Township



Source: Kwahu North Medium Term Development Plan. Location of Tease by author.

Located in the Kwawu North District of the Eastern Region, Tease is a part of a 5,040 sq. km vast island, called the Afram Plains, one of the most remote, deprived and poverty-stricken parts of Ghana (Ghana Living Standards Survey 2008; Kwawu North MTDP 2010). According to the District's Medium Term Development Plan, the population of Tease was estimated to be 4,865. Residents of Tease are predominantly farmers and petty traders. In terms of religion, Christians are in the majority, but some 20% of the residents are Muslims (Kwawu North MTDP 2010). Although the ruling National Democratic Congress (NDC) occupies all two electoral constituency seats of the district, many Tease residents claimed that the New Patriotic Party, in whose term of office the project was implemented, have always won in their electorate.

Three ethnic groups dominate Tease. The Kwawus traditionally own most of the Afram Plains. They are an Akan ethnic group from the Kwawu South District (see Figure 6.1). Many of them are traders and farmers, some of whom commute to and from Tease at least three times in a week, while others have settled, but still maintain ties with their extended families in Kwawu South, where they also invest most of their capital.

Depending on the direction one uses, the distance between the Kwawu South towns and the Afram Plains is less than four hours, including the time spent on the ferry. Apart from the Kwawus, significant numbers of Ewes and ethnic groups from the northern part of Ghana have a presence in Tease and most parts of the Afram plains.¹⁴¹ The Ewes are largely from the Volta Region, and enter the Afram Plains through the eastern corridor by crossing the largest and longest river in the country, the Volta. A sizable number of people from different ethnic groups in the northern parts of the country, many of who are Muslims also live in Tease. Like the Kwawu and the Ewe, most are petty traders and animal farmers.

Because of its rural isolation, residents of Tease (and the Afram Plains) I interviewed, appeared not to associate with the locality as their hometown or a place worthy of any meaningful investments. Interestingly, such residents were either born or had lived there for over thirty years. The common maxim in the locality is that "Obiaa enfi Tease", translated "no one hails from Tease". The Director of the oldest and most influential NGO in the District, the Afram Plains Development Organisation (APDO), explained that, "Afram Plains will never develop until the residents change their attitude towards

¹⁴¹No statistical data exist on the ethnic distribution of Tease.

the place and treat it with some sense of permanence”. Because of this attitude of temporality, Anyidoho (forthcoming, pp.1 & 2) describes the Afram Plains as:

A fascinating reference point for thinking about development in Ghana. They are a recurrent site of experimentation in development programming, and yet remain persistently ‘undeveloped’ by all accounts ... The paradox of the Afram Plains is that while the district, with its agricultural and marine potential, has been targeted for development by various governments, it has not met its own potential or the expectation of policymakers. The Afram Plains District has a dual identity: it attracts migrants from the north and south with its promise of abundant yield from land and sea, but it also has an unwelcoming reputation as a remote and inaccessible region.

The perception of temporality is further corroborated by the fact that the Assembly Member of the town, at the time of implementing the project, is currently not serving in Tease. When asked why, he said, “Im not a native of Tease. Nkwatia is my traditional home and I would rather serve the people in that traditional area...”

The Area Council Chairman at that time also alluded to that assertion when he said:

My family lives in Accra and I work here. I visit them often. Afram Plains is more of a resettlement area, people move in and out. ... It is therefore difficult to build a school [for a locality] as it can be a white elephant in the future. I can even cite three places where schools were built: Eduanum, Asikam and Nkubeta, but are now of no use”.

The seeming disassociation with the town tends to impact negatively on local organising initiatives. While the size of Tease is small enough to allow for face-to-face interaction on local development issues, the residents tend to place more emphasis on religious and political meetings. When asked by questionnaire if they attended local meetings, over 85% answered, “No!” Three reasons emerged. The first related to the usual ‘no one hails from Tease’ mantra, while the second was associated with a concern that if people expressed dissent with local leaders at meetings, they were persecuted afterwards. In a mixed-gender focus group discussion with some Tease traders, many of whom were disappointed with the state of the market project, a youngman explained that:

The chief and his elders chair the meetings so you must be careful the way you talk ... during meetings you might offend someone and this would bring problems. I would rather stay at home and work instead of going for meetings.



Photo 6.1: The deteriorating Tease CBRDP Market



Photo 6.2: Tease traders selling the wares in the sun, while the Market Project is empty.

A 53-year-old woman also remarked,

The town is small ... so we are careful of what to say ... if not you are targeted ... I remember sometime ago, a senior medical doctor held a meeting with us and asked us to tell him about the problems we face at the clinic; one man told him that the medical staff did not respect the sick people ... because they always shouted on them. One evening this man fell sick and went to the clinic but he was sacked because of the point he raised during the meeting. He is now on pension and has left Tease for his hometown.

The lack of interest in local meetings also stemmed from failure of previous projects that involved the collection of residents' monies. Residents I interviewed made references to a failed water project in 2002. One of the Members of Parliament of the area initiated a local self-help project to raise money to construct a borehole for the town. It was alleged that the Member of Parliament provided the seed money and the local leaders also levied residents to raise the remaining sum. While most residents I interacted with claimed to have paid, the project did not eventuate; the residents' monies were also not refunded. A male farmer who had lived in Tease for ten years remarked:

When you ask question about the water project in meetings ... you will see that the faces of the leaders have changed ... why worry about projects again? I'm a native of Tease?

A female trader confirmed that:

We paid the money because we wanted access to good drinking water. They made it serious to the extent that you would be arrested if you did not pay. Some people were arrested for refusing to pay. Most of us paid, but we have not seen any good use of the money ... Since then, I decided not to go for local meetings any more.

These precedents, many of which tended to be allegations, did impact significantly on the implementation and the maintenance of the Tease CBRDP. While the local CBRDP officials claimed that they met and discussed the project with the local people, the residents maintained they were not consulted about it; all they saw was that a market was being built. While the local people, particularly women, admitted taking part in the communal labour later on, because the chief called for it, the local officials explained that it was initially difficult because of mistrust, the fact that many people tend not regard Tease as their hometown, and a mentality of the people that government should solve all local problems. Consequently, although the market project was meant for the entire community, they had to raise the project's additional money from among the traders who, against the policy of the CBRDP, were each promised a space.

Incidentally, while this promise led to the eventual completion of the project, the same appears to have bedevilled it.

Before Tease received the market sheds, traders sold their wares or produce under trees or straw structures. These trees and structures were broken down to make way for the CBRDP market sheds project. The officials assured the traders of spaces in the new sheds only if they contributed monies, which the latter did. However, the officials realised that they could not allocate the shed as promised because the forty sheds were not enough to accommodate the almost two hundred traders who had paid money in advance. The situation was further complicated by a directive from the Zone IV CBRDP manager who stated that the sheds belonged to the entire Area Council, made up of twenty localities, and that they could not be allocated to only the Tease traders who had contributed labour and money¹⁴². One aggrieved trader said:

Before they started the project, we were asked to pay some money if you wanted a space in the new market. We paid but when the market was completed and we asked for our space, they told us to wait ... we have been waiting for three years ... so we sell outside the market in the sun, while the sheds are empty.

During fieldwork, the project's officials were embarrassed by the situation and admitted that they had made a mistake by over collecting the monies. Even so, they argued that because of the attitudes of most of the residents towards the locality, and the mistrust that the failed water project had generated in the local leaders, there was no other way they could have raised the project's additional monies. The local officials blamed the state of the market on the CBRDP manager's insistence that the sheds could not be allocated to only the Tease traders. The puzzle now was who gets the shed and who gets the refund after their traditional structures has been broken down? As of March 2012, twelve months after the fieldwork, key informants in Tease confirmed that the market was still not being used and the monies of the traders had also not been refunded.

The Tease CBRDP market may best be described as a white elephant. The problem was that, like many towns in the Afram Plains, residents of Tease do not associate with the town. Analysed within the framework of what is a 'community', Tease barely qualified as one, as its residents do not regard themselves as members of the town, so do not interact, have no obligation to it, or show any culture worthy of commonality. The sense of having temporary tendencies, coupled with mistrust of local leaders seemed to have made it difficult for the local project's leaders to organise support for the project. In

¹⁴² By implication the monetary contribution should have included all the twenty localities.

their bid to raise additional monies to complete the project, the local officials over-collected monetary contributions from traders, who apparently outnumbered the sheds available. Tease's example epitomises the nature of many aid-funded projects in developing countries where, in the words of Easterly (2002a), 'a cartel of good intentions' result in failures'. The Tashie locality of the Greater Accra Region is another case in point.

6.3.2 Case Study II: Tashie, Tema Municipality¹⁴³

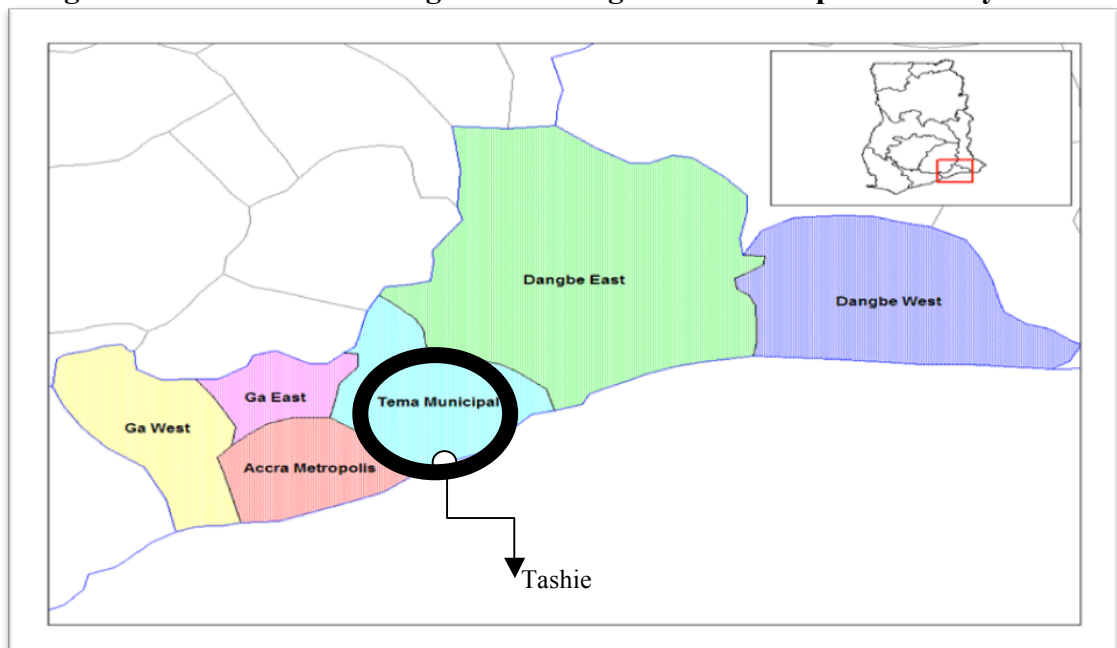
Tashie, a semi-urban locality in the Tema Municipality of the Greater Accra Region, benefitted from the CBRDP. Their project was the renovation of the Tashie Presby Basic School, whose roof was ripped off by a storm. According to the Head Teacher of the school, while the renovation was in the offing, it was not planned to happen under the CBRDP. However, the CBRDP coincided with the disaster, which disrupted their activities for several weeks and compelled the relocation to church buildings. Although important, the renovation of the school was not the topmost priority of the residents and the Area Council (Tashie Action Plan 2010). Many residents explained in interviews that their topmost priority was and still is a public toilet facility. Owing to the urgency of the school's renovation however, the Municipal Assembly impressed upon the Area Council to use the CBRDP funds to renovate the school. As explained below, while the project solved a major problem, the residents did not support it during and after the renovation. As of June 2012, fifteen months after the fieldwork, the school was still in crises, which in principle, the CBRDP intended that an entity called 'community' would maintain.

Before examining the reasons for the residents' neglect of the school, the circumstances leading to the renovation of the school require more explanation. The Tashie Presby Basic School, the only school in the town, houses the Pre-primary, Primary and Junior High Schools (JHS) pupils. The school children were largely from the surrounding villages. The introduction of the government School Feeding Program in the school led to increased enrolments and exacerbated the already overcrowded classrooms (see Figure 6.4). This was against the country's Ministry of Education stipulation that each class should be not more than forty pupils (Ministry of Education 2008/2009). The Head Teacher recounted that his teachers were always stressed, as they could not keep up with the influx. Thus, after consulting with the Parents and Teachers' Association of

¹⁴³ The names of the town and respondents have been deidentified.

the school, he decided to divide the Upper Primary (Classes Four, Five & Six) and JHS (One, Two & Three) to be run on a shift basis, 7:30–12:30 and 12:30–5:00pm respectively. The shift system, teachers explained, helped to some extent. Yet, because of the ever-growing population of Tashie, it did not solve the overcrowding problem and also exerted pressure on the limited resources of the school.

Figure 6.3 Greater Accra Region: Locating Tema Municipal Assembly/Tashie



Source: http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/File:Greater_Accra_districts.png. Tashie location: by author



Photo 6.3: The renovated Tashie Presby School



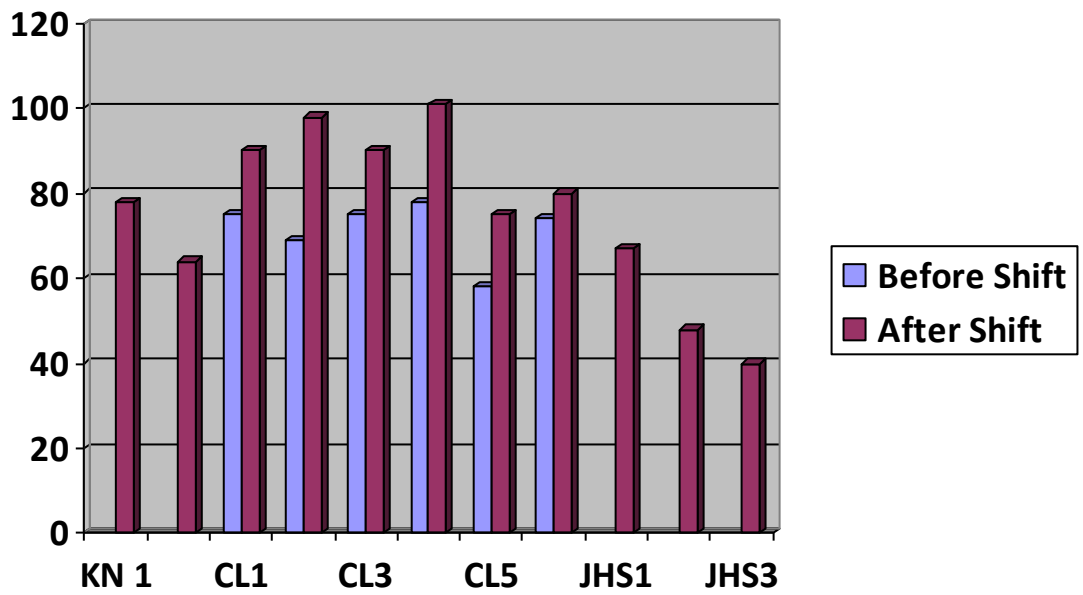
Photo 6.4: The deteriorating state of the Tashie Presby School.

Importantly, the shift system resulted in the loss of two hours of the teaching contact time. Moreover, the integrity of the school's examinations was also compromised as pupils sat close to each other. This was the state of the school until the storm blew the school's roof off. While the government has currently abolished the shift system in all schools in the country, the Tashie Presby Basic School still operates the scheme for their Upper Primary. Only the JHS has been moved to an uncomplicated structure, where pupils had to buy their own furniture. Asked why he continued to admit more pupils, the Head Teacher said:

We cannot deny the kids their right to education. But we have had to repeat some of the class six pupils who were due to go to JHS one, not because they are not brilliant but because the numbers are just too much and there are not spaces for them.

As of the fieldwork, none of the overcrowded classrooms had electricity or fans, and as there were not enough textbooks, three or four pupils in some classes shared one. Because of the high temperatures, many of the students used the textbooks to fan themselves, resulting in many tattered books (see Photos 6.5). There were also visible cracks on the floor and on some parts of the structure.

Figure 6.4 Tashie Presby Basic School Population by Class 2010



Source: Tashie Basic Presby School records.
KN: Kindergarten CL: Class, JHS: Junior High School



Photo 6.5: The state of textbooks at the Tashie Presby School.

The Area Council Chairman and the Assembly Member were concerned about the indifferent attitudes of the residents to the school and the general welfare of the locality. They expected the residents to rally behind the CBRDP and even initiate others to build more classrooms for the school. However, as it turned out, the residents appeared not to care much about the school. The local leaders had hoped that the successful implementation and maintenance of the CBRDP would attract more community-based initiatives from the Municipal Assembly. Of great significance to this thesis was the fact that the residents who contributed neither labour nor monies greeted the project with apathy. Tellingly, some Tashie residents used the school's toilet facility and/or defecated on the compound. The challenged state of the Tashie CBRDP was attributable to the fact that the dynamics of the town hardly qualified it as a 'community'.

The implementers of the Tashie CBRDP seemed to have underestimated the demographic complexities of the town. A community, as established above, goes beyond people sharing geographical spaces. With a population of almost 6,000, the Tashie Township is one of the fastest growing localities in the region because of its proximity to the nation's capital, approximately twenty minute's drive away. Thus while the GA, who are the traditional owners of the land, have some presence in the town, the majority of the residents are from other regions of the country, who either work in the capital or in local factories. Not only are many of these residents busy, they hardly have time for local meetings and activities. The Area Council Chairman explained the difficulty they had in organising the residents to provide labour during the implementation of the project. He said:

Participation in the communal was very poor. So we had to use the project funds to hire masons and other building professionals to finish the work. The project was supposed to be for the 'community' but they did not come. People gave excuses that they were going to find work and money.

Because the residents would not lend a hand to the project, the Head Teacher said:

During the renovation, sometimes the pupils had to spend time of school time to fetch water for the project. Although the 'community' was supposed to contribute labour, they did not. Thus a large percentage of the project sum went into hiring labour.

The Assembly Member condemned the apathetic attitude of the town residents when he said: "The disease in this town is that when you call for meeting they don't come ... so I have formed an elders' council who help me to plan for the community with."

Asked why they do not participate in local development activities, the residents raised many issues, which may be classified into: 1) Perception of corruption of local leaders; 2) Political factionalism; and 3) A concern that the project did not solve the major problem of the town, a public toilet facility.

Many Tashie residents interviewed perceived the local leaders (Assembly and Area Council officials) as corrupt. Apart from alleging that the leaders had failed to render proper accounts for monies collected for previous projects, the residents tended to label them as agents of the ruling New Patriotic Party (NPP) government of the time. Relative to the CBRDP, the Head Teacher corroborated the perception of corruption when he explained that the local officials awarded the purchasing contracts of the project to ‘themselves’ and inflated the figures for some of the project materials. Thus, the project suffered not only from labour cost but also over invoicing. These perceptions seemed to have affected local collective tendencies, as they generated mistrust in the local leaders and broke down the town’s social capital, an important ingredient for community-based initiative (Woolcock 1998; Woolcock & Narayan 2000; Labonne & Chase 2008; Tesoriero 2010; Kenny 2010).

There was strong sense of political factionalism in Tashie. The town seemed to have been divided along the lines of the two major political parties, the National Democratic Congress (NDC) and the New Patriotic Party (NPP). The division was so intense that certain areas of the town were noted as the strongholds of both parties. As a result, the Assembly Member, who was perceived to belong to the NPP, did not control the entire town. While he denied affinity with the NPP, he confirmed the factionalism in the town and indicated how the situation was frustrating his ‘unpaid’ work (see Chapter Five, 5.4.1). Speaking in the English language, he said:

Those boys have threatened me several times ... they are hooligans and are being incited by my political opponents. To counter their mischief, I also formed a youth group that I use to champion local developments and spread the good news about my achievements.

Members of the ‘opposition youth group’ interviewed alleged that the Assembly Member was only in power to execute the agenda of the NPP, and not the interests of the local people. They added that he did not consult with anyone in the town except his youth group and some elderly people, whom they also tagged as members of the NPP. The ‘opposition youth’ vowed to unseat the Assembly in the 2010 local government elections. However, they did not succeed, as the Assembly Member retained his job.

Despite his victory, he will still be representing a politically factionalised town in the Municipal Assembly. Tashie's factionalism is complicated by the fact that the town had no Traditional Chief who could have been a neutral force to organise the local people for development activities.

Finally, there was a strong concern by Tashie residents that the CBRDP did not solve the topmost problem in the town, which is the lack of public toilet facilities. While contemporary houses in Tashie had toilet facilities, many of the old houses (which are in the majority) did not. Residents explained that although some old houses did have toilet facilities, because the house owners have many rigid rules regarding their use, they preferred paying to use the only and poorly maintained public toilet facility in the town. Tashie had only one public toilet facility, and apparently could not support the growing population. A new one was being built, but since the NDC government took over in 2009, the project has been stalled for almost two years. When asked in the questionnaire to state the needs of the locality, 80% of the respondents mentioned a public toilet facility as the topmost need followed by others needs such as poor drainage system and the lack of pipe-borne water. These needs were also captured in the Area Council's list of social services needs in Tashie (Tashie Action Plan 2010). The respondents also indicated that a willingness to support wholly any project that would meet their needs.

Owing to the absence of adequate public toilets facilities in Tashie, some residents used the Tashie Presby Basic School's toilet facility. One of the teachers of the school complained that on most mornings when they reported to school, the students had to use some of the class hours to clean up the toilets. Frustrated by the incidents, the Head Teacher started locking the toilet after school and reopened it when reporting each morning. This did not help that much, as the perpetrators resorted to defecating on the school's compound and under verandas. During the fieldwork the researcher sighted some of the toilet residues on the school's compound. While many residents would not openly admit using the schools' toilet, they were aware of it and condemned it. However, they gave responses alluding to the fact that the perpetrators had no alternative. Many of these residents explained that, while they did not disregard the importance of education, the project officials should have implemented what the residents wanted: a public toilet, if they wanted their full cooperation.

The Tashie CBRDP has shown the importance of tailoring community-based projects to meet the local people's needs if their participation is to be guaranteed. Tashie lacked most of the characteristics of a community, although the local people shared the same space: 1) Tashie is a town and not a rural locality; 2) Most of its residents were busy city or local factory workers and hardly interacted on local development issues; 3) The existence of political factionalism in the town, complicated by the absence of a Traditional Chief, meant that organising would always be difficult; and 4) Because many of the local people wanted a public toilet facility, the renovation of Tashie Presby Basic School was not a 'function' strong enough to rally them. If the implementers of the project had studied Tashie's demographics carefully, they might not have implemented it as a community-based initiative. While the renovation of the school was important, the discussions above have shown that the 'community', which was needed to maintain and improve the school, did not exist. Agbetor presents other fascinating insights into the concept of 'community'.

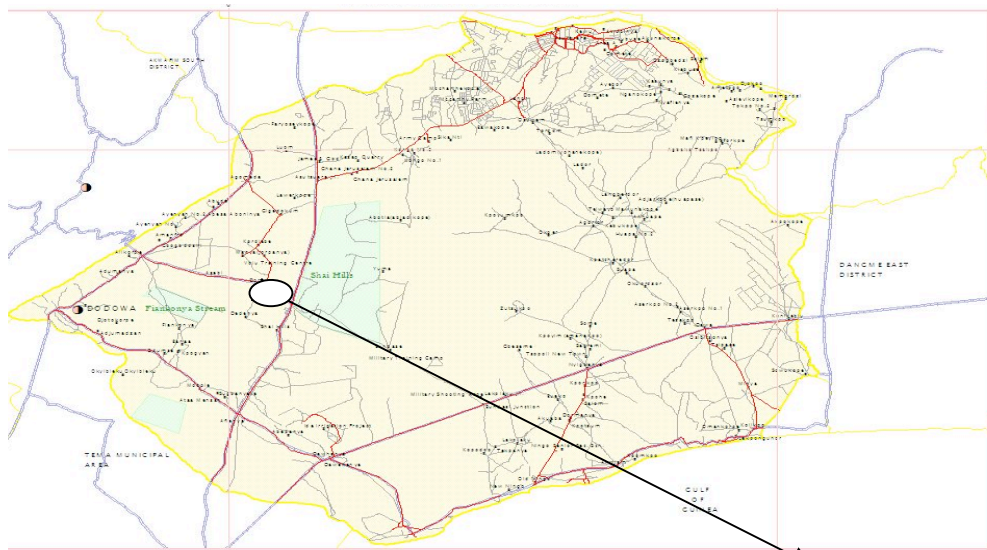
6.3.3 Case Study III: Agbetor, Ketu Northwest District, Volta Region¹⁴⁴

Agbetor is an old, but a small town in Volta Region of Ghana. Agbetor is inhabited by the Ewes ethnic group, many of whom are farmers, and a small herdsmen population, who hail from the northern parts of the country. Together, the population is almost one thousand. As of the time of fieldwork, the inhabitants of Agbetor had neither a pharmaceutical shop nor a health facility. Until recently, the entire population relied on surface water and hand-dug wells for their water needs (Agbetor Area Council Action Plan 2006).

Agbetor received a three-classroom school block under the CBRDP. Before this time, pupils in the town had to walk four kilometres to school at Gorbah, which is about four kilometres away. Attempts had been made by the leaders of the town to establish a school in tents and under trees, but parents would usually avoid the school and still send their children to Gorbah, as the local school lacked teachers and could not function anytime it rained. According to the Assembly Member of Agbetor, the fact that the children travelled long distances to school became a disincentive for school attendance. It was under these circumstances that the Traditional Chief of the town lobbied the District Assembly for a primary school.

¹⁴⁴ For ethical reasons the names of the town and the Traditional Chief have been deidentified with pseudonyms.

Figure 6.6 Ketu Northwest District Locating Agbetor



Source: Ketu Northwest Medium Term Development Plan (2010).

Agbetor



Photo 6.6: The Agbetor CBRDP Three-Unit Classroom Block.

If there was anything special about Agbetor's CBRDP, it was the role that their Chief, Nana Tagboto played in the entire project. While the efforts of Nana Tagboto were laudable, the researcher found that community-based projects are likely to have sustainability challenges, if Traditional Chiefs remain centre stage in the implementation process. Because of the influence they wield constitutionally and the fact that they oversee the finances of their respective traditional areas, culturally, it is the norm that they initiate and sometimes fund development projects. Having been a Chief for over fifteen years, Nana Tagboto typifies the influence of many contemporary educated Traditional Chiefs in Ghana¹⁴⁵. Officials in the CBRDP National Headquarters office would often refer to him as one of the project's success stories. For example, when Agbetor was selected as a beneficiary of the CBRDP, Nana Tagboto requested that the project be implemented under the Rapid Response Initiative¹⁴⁶. The project's seed money, which was expected in over three months, could only fund a three-classroom block and one veranda. Nana Tagboto single-handedly pre-financed the entire project and also offered to sponsor the construction of an additional veranda, which the school critically needed.

When the project was completed, Nana Tagboto bought books, furniture and other educational materials for the school and paid the salaries of the teachers for over two years until the Ghana Education Service adopted the school. Moreover, because the three classrooms were limited, Nana Tagboto went ahead to construct two more pavilion structures to cater for the Upper Primary classes. When asked why he invested in the school so much, he would always say: "I believe in education". The Assembly Member of the town confirmed the influence of the Nana Tagboto, when he admitted that: "I have not done much Agbetor because Nana Tagboto is influential and is able to lobby the powerful people in government to solve the problems in the locality."

Despite the influence of Nana Tagboto at the time of fieldwork, the school had many problems, which were beyond the resources of Nana Tagboto and pointed to the inadequacy of one influential person in the sustenance of a community-based project. A normal primary school structure in Ghana has ten classrooms¹⁴⁷; however, the Agbetor School had only five classrooms: Three constructed under the CBRDP and the two

¹⁴⁵ Nana Tagboto initiated and facilitated the construction of public toilet facilities, pipe-borne water; and the presence electricity in Agbetor.

¹⁴⁶ This meant that the project was completed in less than hundred days before the seed money of GHC15, 000 would be disbursed.

¹⁴⁷ From Kindergarten to Primary Six

pavilion structures constructed under the auspices of Nana Tagboto. Under the circumstances, the teachers merged some of the classes as follows: 1) Kindergarten & KG One; 2) KG Two & Nursery; 3) Class One; 4) Classes Two & Three; and 5) Classes Four & Five. The situation meant that the pupils follow syllabi not appropriate to their levels of education. Additionally, the furniture available to the pupils was so limited that some of the pupils were literally sitting on the floor during class sessions. While Nana Tagboto was doing his best to get the school running, it lacked many crucial resources a mainstream school should have: textbooks, toys, writing materials and other educational aids.

There seemed to be a sense of frustration among the teachers. Their concern was that the paucity of facilities was retarding the progress of the children. A female teacher said:

The children in Primary Four should be writing their names by now, but they can't. Even the Primary Five pupils have problems with reading and solving simple arithmetic problems ... it is so sad. The children come to school virtually empty-handed, without even a pencil. There have been instances that we have tried to help with our own monies, but we can't do that always. I have only one textbook for the Classes Three and Four and had to photocopy the text for the entire class out of my own pocket.

Another female teacher explained that:

When I want to teach them about computers, I have to walk all the pupils to Nana Tagboto's office because he is the only one who has the machine in this locality. It's hard to explain to these children the difference between a computer mouse and the animal mouse. We lack so many basic learning materials. For instance, if I want to teach them about geography, I use an orange because we don't have a globe. We love our jobs as teachers, but working in these conditions is too frustrating.

Also, owing to the limited number of classrooms, pupils who completed Primary Five at Agbetor Primary School must still travel on foot to Gorbeh to continue their Primary Six and Junior High School (JHS) education respectively. Aside from the paucity of educational resources, the school had no urinal and toilet facilities. The teachers had the option of either using the public facility in the town, Nana Tagboto's house or the bush – to which most of the pupils resorted. The females found the situation very inconvenient. While the teachers commended Nana Tagboto for his efforts, they were not enough to sustain a community-based project.

The data pointed to a two-fold problem with the Agbetor CBRDP. First, the project appears to have been implemented around Nana Tagboto, instead of the entire residential population. As pointed out earlier, Agbetor seemed to have received the project because of the influence of Nana Tagboto. As a result, the CBRDP secretariat appears to have relied on the Chief during the implementation, rather than developing and working in collaboration with the Agbetor ‘community’. Because Traditional Chiefs are culturally expected to initiate and provide leadership for the maintenance of local development projects, Agbetor residents interviewed appeared not to care about the school’s welfare. Although, they indicated that they took part in the communal labour during the building of the school, they considered it as a normal routine in the locality and tended to regard Nana Tagboto as the one who has the responsibility of maintaining the school. Interestingly, the residents thought that the project was Nana Tagboto’s own initiative, as they claimed that the CBRDP officials never came to the town to explain the process to them. Others claimed that Nana Tagboto was not categorical about the project being externally funded.

As a result of the erroneous impression created of the project as being one of the ‘usual’ initiatives of Nana Tagboto, the residents saw nothing wrong with not contributing any money to buy books or educational materials for the school. The general impression gathered through the interviews and questionnaires was that Nana Tagboto kept all the funds of the town¹⁴⁸, which they expected him to use to develop the school. While they would concede that it was the duty of the entire locality to seek welfare for the school, the residents’ perceived the maintenance of the school as the duty of the Chief. Thus, respondents argued that Nana Tagboto had no right to request funds from the residents to run the school. A woman, who had lived in the locality for over twenty years, remarked: “the school is for all of us. But as a traditional town, we also have proceeds from the sale of stool lands and the... stone quarry ... Nana Tagboto cannot levy anyone to pay anything towards the school”.

Asked why the local people have left the entire school’s burden on him, Nana Tagboto said out of frustration:

[Some] of my people don’t have foresight nor appreciate the value of education ...they feel it’s my responsibility to meet every need of the school. Although I’m culturally expected to be responsible for the school, I cannot do it all alone.

¹⁴⁸ From the sale of traditional lands.

The default 'elite capture' scenario discussed above happened also because the local people were poor and therefore lacked the financial resources to support the project. Agbetor does not offer any jobs to its citizens. Many of them are not engaged in profitable economic activities, aside from subsistence farming. Thus, in reality, such residents appeared to lack the means to contribute any meaningful sums of money towards the project's upkeep. For example, 70% of the respondents of the questionnaires in Agbetor indicated having no jobs. Being poor, they relinquished the maintenance of the school on the shoulders of Nana Tagboto, although they claimed to be a part of the Agbetor 'community' and attended local meetings. This finding is consistent with Botchway's (2001) observation during the implementation of a Canadian water project in the northern parts of Ghana, where the locality but lacked the resources to maintain it.

The case study of Agbetor's CBRDP and the role of Nana Tagboto have demonstrated what becomes of community-based projects that are driven by a Traditional Chief and not the larger community. Irrespective of the influence of a person or Traditional Chief, it is unsound to implement community-based projects around one person. Broader support from the beneficiary 'community' must be established, if development projects are to be sustainable. If this is ignored, 'elite capture' could happen by default, through cultural institutions.

6.4 Conclusion

This chapter had one focus: were the so-called 'communities', which benefited from the CBRDP worthy of the label? In answering this question, a conceptual framework for 'community', which drew on the works of several theoreticians, was outlined. The framework, which showed the complexity of community, established its key attributes and characteristics. These included the idea that: 1) Community is understood in the functional sense; 2) Community must have a membership which is conscious of and willing to contribute to it; 3) The group provides opportunity and structures for interaction; and 4) The group has a unique culture, which non-members can identify. Underlying these features was the notion that communities can be developed, if built around functions to which a group is committed.

Drawing on the data from three localities, two conclusions emerged. The first was that 'communities' appeared not to exist in the selected CBRDP beneficiary localities. Consequently, not only did the projects lack local support during their implementation,

but also that they have been left unmaintained. As argued, the residents of Tease tended not to associate with the town as ‘members’ and therefore had an attitude of ‘temporarility’ towards the locality because of its remoteness. The data on Tashie showed that the residents were politically factionalised, apart from the common feeling that the CBRDP did not meet their most crucial need, a public toilet facility. Agbetor pointed to two basic issues that it is risky to build a community–based project around one influential Traditional Chief, and the economic conditions of beneficiary localities must be considered, and at best improved before the implementation of community–based projects to forestall the possibility of an ‘elite capture’.

The second conclusion drawn was that the CBRDP designers and implementers appeared not to have made any effort to build the ‘communities’ upon which to base the projects. While many functions around which the CBRDP could have been built abounded, they were ignored. Thus, the projects appeared to have been implemented in ‘spaces’ rather than ‘communities’. As they turned out, because there were no ‘communities’ to maintain the CBRDPs, they appeared to be in a state of complete disarray at the time of the fieldwork.

This chapter has shown that it is not enough to base development projects on idealised, yet complex and contested terms such as community. As the conceptual framework indicated, community is a multi–faceted concept, and each of its features must be in place or developed before its benefits can be realised. However, the analysis of the empirical case studies showed that the four key attributes of the concept of community were lacking in the selected CBRDP beneficiary localities. The discussions so far have emphasised the importance of conceptualising key terms in development programs to serve as road maps during implementation; while at the same time investing in social research to understand local contexts before the designing projects meant to ‘improve’ the lives of people. The following chapter provides further insights into the reasons for such an exercise being crucial to CDD programs by examining another ubiquitous, yet complex and often misused term, ‘empowerment’.

CHAPTER SEVEN

WHEN EMPOWERMENT DISEMPOWERS: THE CASE OF GHANAIA N TRADITIONAL CHIEFS AND LOCAL GOVERNMENT OFFICIALS

Of all the buzzwords that have entered the development lexicon in the past thirty years, 'empowerment' is probably the most widely used and abused (Batliwala 2007)¹⁴⁹

The concept of 'empowerment' plays a pivotal role in Community-Driven Development (CDD). This stems from the supposition that CDD programs are able to transform community social capital through the 'empowerment' of groups traditionally disempowered or excluded from decision-making (Mansuri & Rao 2004). This chapter argues that, like 'community', the concept of 'empowerment', as applied in Ghana's Community-Based Rural Development Project (CBRDP), appears to have been conceptualised vaguely, overlooking the need to have considered the country's Chieftaincy institution, while monitoring the project for unintended outcomes. As examined below, the CBRDP's misguided application of the term 'empowerment' is partly attributable to romanticising of the term in the literature.

Argued from the normative theoretical perspective (Nozick 1974; Scheffler 1982; Dreier 1993) 'empowerment' seems to be 'marketed' as being inherently 'good' and a value that the powerless should pursue, or that they should be aided in their obvious quest to become empowered (World Bank 2000a; 2002; Binswanger et al. 2010; Anyidoho & Manuh 2010). However, this chapter sees the concept of 'empowerment' as problematic, providing theoretical and empirical arguments for the need to go beyond conceptualising the term normatively to appreciating its complexity and contextualised application. Three sections are presented to support this assertion.

The first section briefly explores the concept of 'empowerment' to show its complexity. The theoretical section begins by defining the term and discussing its supposed advantages. A critical analysis of the term that follows depicts 'empowerment' as a term that is: 1) Gendered; 2) Not easily measurable; and 3) Predicated on the notion of 'power'. Drawing on the last point, the section argues that because 'empowerment' pivots on the notion of 'power', it is a value-laden term. In other words, because

¹⁴⁹ http://www.opendemocracy.net/article/putting_power_back_into_empowerment_0, retrieved July 20, 2012.

‘power’ is non–neutral and has to be reclaimed from the ‘powerful’ and given to the ‘less powerful’, ‘empowering’ one group actually ‘disempowers’ others; and that ‘empowerment’ and related programs can potentially lead to conflicts. This is especially so in terms of this thesis as it found that if a program’s concepts, implementation and outcomes are not carefully monitored and managed with tact, problems ensue.

The second section examines the CBRDP documents to unravel the seemingly vague conceptualisation of ‘empowerment’ in the project’s design and implementation. The final section, which consists predominantly of empirical data collected by the researcher during fieldwork in Ghana, discusses certain unintended outcomes of the CBRDP. It presents the cases of Aboloo (Greater Accra Region) and Ntoaso (Eastern Region) to demonstrate the incidence of power struggles and conflicts between Traditional Chiefs, who felt sidelined, and local government officials (Assembly Members and Unit Committee Members). The conflicts are related to the question of who manages the project. The analysis suggests that in their pursuit to strengthen Ghana’s decentralisation process through the CBRDP, the designers of the project¹⁵⁰ appear to have focused only on the local government sub–structures, overlooking the country’s influential politico–cultural heritage. The oversight, which has led to intense feuds, also impacted negatively on the maintenance and outcomes of the CBRDP at the time of the fieldwork.

7.1 Empowerment: Background and Conceptual Issues

‘Empowerment’ discourse has its roots in Frierean philosophy (Cleaver 2001). The concept has, since 2000, become increasingly popular in development studies with a significant body of literature, typically divided into distinct schools of thought, discussing it in various ways (World Bank 2000a; 2002; Clifford 2001; Mosse 2001; Narayan 2002; Parpart 2002; Stern et al. 2005; Cornish 2006; Binswanger et al. 2010; Hancock et al. 2011; Maseno & Kilonzo 2011). The World Bank defines ‘empowerment’ as, “the expansion of freedom of choice and action. It means increasing one’s authority and control over the resources and decisions that affect one’s life” (World Bank 2002, p. 11). The World Bank argues that there is no single model of ‘empowerment’, and has put forward four elements which characterise the concept: 1) Access to information; 2) Inclusion and participation; 3) Accountability; and 4) Local organisational capacity. It argues further that regardless of the context within which it is

¹⁵⁰ Ghana’s Ministry of Local Government and World Bank Advisors.

applied, ‘empowerment’ outcomes are determined by: 1) The nature of public action; 2) Patterns of exclusion and conflict; 3) The extent of decentralisation; 4) The strength of local–level institutions and civil society; and 5) The extent of political freedom (World Bank 2002; Binswanger et al. 2010).

In tandem with the World Bank’s definition and drawing on Giddens’s (1984) sociological theory of structure and agency, Apusigah (2004a), Binswanger et al. (2010) and Tesoriero (2010) are of the opinion that in order to empower the powerless, their ‘assets’ must be developed, for assets determine a person or a group’s ability [agency] to deal with structure [institutions and systems]. The World Bank has since 2000 been arguing that attempts to empower the weak and poor should aim at promoting their right of inclusion and participation, and capacity to make choices, while demanding accountability from their leaders (World Bank 2000a; 2002; 2003b).

When targeted populations are ‘empowered’, the proponents of the concept argue, powerless and vulnerable people may be able to participate in their ‘communities’, reduce their poverty levels, and have a sense of confidence and independence. Central to their argument is the notion that the common elements underlying poverty is the exclusion, voicelessness and powerlessness of the poor; and that, faced with unequal power relations, the poor lack the influence to negotiate better terms for themselves. Thus, unequal power relations have to be addressed in order to expand the opportunities and choices of the poor (Botchway 2001; World Bank 2000a; 2002; 2003b; Mosse 2001; Narayan 1995; 2002; Stern et al. 2005; Cornish 2006; Anyidoho & Manuh 2010; Binswanger et al. 2010).

Consequently, ‘empowerment’ has become the objective of many development initiatives of the UNDP, the World Bank and most aid agencies. For example, UN MDG 3 aims to “promote gender equality and empower women” (Sachs 2005; MDG Report 2011). Currently, operating through its ‘Empowerment’ Team, the World Bank is one of the chief campaigners of the concept and employs it in a range of sectors, including the provision of basic services; improving local and national governance, pro-poor market development; and the enhancement of access to justice and legal aid¹⁵¹. On the face of it, these arguments seem logical, and a solution simple. However, based on

¹⁵¹ <http://go.worldbank.org/EEU9PYCWU0>; retrieved February 25, 2012. According to Alsop et al. (2006) in 2005, over 1,800 projects in the World Bank’s lending portfolio related to ‘empowerment’.

the data collected in this thesis, ‘empowerment’ is too complex a concept and should be employed with trepidation.

The term ‘empowerment’ is criticised for various reasons. Three arguments are considered in turn. First, although the term is inherently generic, its contemporary use and application appears to have been made ‘gender-specific’ in many contexts. Since 2001, there seems to have been a consistent effort by the World Bank to ‘engender empowerment’. A World Bank policy document, *Engendering Development Through Gender Equality in Rights, Resources, and Voice* (World Bank 2001), provides insights into tools for integrating gender into development work. Furthermore, between 2006 and 2010, more than \$65 billion, representing 37% of all the World Bank’s lending and grants, were allocated to gender-informed operations.¹⁵² The notion of engendering ‘empowerment’ also seems to underlie MDG 3, the 2012 World Development Report and the ideals of organisations such as United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women¹⁵³.

While ‘empowerment’ is applicable to either gender, due to gender inequality and the prevalence of patriarchy globally, a focus on women is justified and should continue until equality is achieved (Apuigah 2004a; 2004b; Anyidoho & Manuh 2010; Cornwall & Edwards 2010; Hancock et al. 2011). However, negative outcomes result when the term is used vaguely and is not theoretically explicit vis-a-vis gender specific outcomes, and ‘forced’ into or applied to romanticise development projects, as Ghana’s CBRDP seem to have done (see Section 7.2).

Scholars also disagree on whether ‘empowerment’ refers to a process or an outcome or both. According to Mosedale (2003) ‘empowerment’ is an ongoing process rather than a product, and that there is no final goal. Put in absolute terms, Mosedale argues that one does not arrive at a stage of being empowered. Others argue that ‘empowerment’ is both a process and an outcome. As a process, it involves building the capacities, skills and competencies of either an individual or a group of people over a period of time, from a lower to a higher state of ‘empowerment’. As an outcome, ‘empowerment’ becomes an end in itself, where an individual or group enjoys a state of ‘empowerment’ (Arnstein

¹⁵²In 2011, nearly 50% of the World Bank’s lending related to gender issues.
<http://go.worldbank.org/YHU5EJL110>, retrieved May 15, 2012.

¹⁵³<http://www.unwomen.org/> retrieved May 15, 2012.

1971; Lavarack & Wallenstein 2001; Cornish 2006; Binswanger et al. 2010; Tesoriero 2010¹⁵⁴).

The lack of consensus on whether ‘empowerment’ is a process or an outcome or both has critical implications for its measurement. Measuring ‘empowerment’ according to Yaron (2008) is an important indicator of a country’s performance and opportunities available to an individual. At the country level, they argued that, ‘empowerment’ indicators contribute to the process of strengthening governance and reducing corruption. They further argue that empowerment aims at developing the capabilities of the individual not just as beneficiaries, but also as agents capable of effecting institutional change. What then are the indicators for measuring empowerment outcomes?

Many independent scholars have suggested various indicators for measuring ‘empowerment’. These include, but are not limited to Mosedale’s (2003) ‘constraints to action’, Alsop et al.’s (2006) ‘availability and use of choices’ and Yaron’s (2008) ‘mixed method diagnostic tools’. As individuals and groups may seek different forms of ‘empowerment’, the models above appear to be contextualised and cannot be generalised (Zimmermann 1995; Lavarack & Wallenstein 2001; Cornish 2006). The United Nations Gender Empowerment Measure, the Global Gender Inequality Index and Global Gender Gap Index¹⁵⁵ have also been criticised as being irrelevant to many contexts (Beteta 2006; Klasen & Schelen 2007; Hancock et al. 2011). In lieu of the impossibility of measuring empowerment, Yaron (2008, p. 8) observed that:

We cannot measure empowerment in a way that does justice to its inherent complexity and ... satisfactorily ... What we can do, however, is to identify measurements that capture, albeit imperfectly, important dimensions of changes in power, and that can be complemented by more interpretive and explanatory forms of qualitative research.

The last and the most critical theoretical problem with ‘empowerment’ relates to the concept on which it is pivoted, ‘power’ (Nelson & Wright 1995; Batliwala 2007). A great deal of literature has tended to conceptualise ‘empowerment’ as a tool for correcting unequal power relations or a way of increasing the power of the disadvantaged (World Bank 2000a; Mosse 2001; Narayan 2002; Parpart 2002; Cornish 2006; Tesoriero 2010). Reference to ‘unequal power’ assumes that someone is

¹⁵⁴ See also <http://go.worldbank.org/V45HD4P100>, retrieved February 26, 2012.

¹⁵⁵ These are three gendered indicators for measuring women’s empowerment (see UNDP 2007; World Economic Forum 2008; 2010).

disempowered or disadvantaged in relation to another (Mosse 2001; Mosedale 2003). While scholars generally agree that power is a complex and multi-layered concept, they disagree on its form, definition and dimensions.

Attempts to define the concept of power since the late 1980s include the works of Clegg (1989), who categorises the different interactions of power relations; and Rowlands (1997), who examines the four main forms of power as: 1) Power over; 2) Power to; 3) Power with; and 4) Power from within. Others have also examined the concept of power, including Klasen and Miller (2002), who explored different aspects of political power; Csaszar's (2004) conflictual or consensual approaches to power; and Vails' discussion of 'A Theory of Power'. Even so, Tesoriero's (2010) discussion of power is more appropriate for the purpose of this chapter because of its currency, conciseness, and the fact that he draws on earlier theorists, such as Wright Mills, Robert Dahl, Talcott Parsons and Michel Foucault.

According to Tesoriero (2010) the nature of power in modern societies is categorised into Pluralistic, Elite, Structural and Post-structural perspectives. The Pluralistic Perspective considers power as a type of game which the individuals and groups in a given locality or society play competitively. It glosses over the disadvantages an individual or group may have by virtue of their class, gender, race, ethnicity, age, disability, sexuality and geographical location, postulating that all people have equal opportunity to participate, as there is none all-powerful. To win or gain power, one must be equipped or empowered with the capacity or assertiveness to compete effectively, apart from understanding the rules of the game. The Elitist Perspective Tesoriero argues, does not regard power as a game where all the players have equal opportunities to win. Rather, it views society as hierarchical with a certain few groups having more power than they should. Termed 'elites', they wield the influence to control key institutions and decide on issues that affect the majority. To gain power in an elitist domain, one has to become an elite.

The Structural Perspective of power, Tesoriero (2010) argues, relates to structural or systemic inequality or even oppression as a form of power. By emphasising the importance of class, race and gender, structural power holders, mainly the elites, reinforce inequalities by putting barriers in place that will keep the disadvantaged perpetually disempowered. Finally, the Post-structural Perspective of power relates to the way language and discourse is used as mechanisms of control (Rabinow 1984).

Drawing on the works of Michel Foucault, Tesoriero argues that power is not just about action, as the earlier perspectives seem to portray; but rather other forms of power which may relate to the way certain discourses are used by the ‘powerful’ as the norm that should guide and shape communication, for example.

The fact that ‘empowerment’ is predicated on power gives the term a competitive slant. According to Michel Foucault (1980; 1982) power is not neutral or a ‘zero sum’ concept and that it is required to overcome other forms of power, be they negative or positive (Csaszar 2004; Cornish 2006). In lieu of its competitive tendencies, it can be argued therefore that power cannot be ‘shared’ between the ‘powerful’ and the ‘powerless’. By implication, ‘empowerment’ actually means disempowering the one wielding power. Depending on the context, ‘empowerment’ may dis–empower others by breaking cultural norms, practices and /or certain monopolies and exclusivities enjoyed by a few, usually the elite.

Owing to the simultaneity of ‘empowerment’ and ‘disempowerment’, it is crucial development projects that seek to ‘empower’ people, facilitate, monitor outcomes, and have project staff made aware of the adverse impact of power rather than just using it normatively. Failure to address these concerns could lead to conflicts between those supposedly being ‘empowered’ and the ‘traditionally powerful’, and from whom ‘power’ is being reclaimed. As the research findings show below however, although the ‘concept of empowerment’ was central in the design and implementation of Ghana’s CBRDP, less attention appeared to have been paid to the complexity of the term as well as the monitoring and managing of unintended outcomes. Owing to the conflicts that the notion of power tends to generate, the project could have been more effective if Traditional Chiefs were briefed to appreciate its theoretical intent as strengthening the country’s local government sub–structures, and not as a challenge to their authority (see section 7.3).

7.2 The CBRDP and the Concept of Empowerment

As described in Chapter One, Ghana’s CBRDP was designed to contribute to the overall ‘empowerment’ of the rural population, while simultaneously strengthening the country’s decentralisation system. Despite being pivotal in the design and implementation of the CBRDP, the project’s application of ‘empowerment’ had four major flaws.

First, a review of most of the CBRDP documents revealed that ‘empowerment’ was not theoretically conceptualised, the researcher not being able to find a working definition of the term (CBRDP Implementation Manual 2005; CBRDP Annual Reports 2005–2010; Zone IV Annual Reports 2005–2010). Consequently, the project’s managers and local government officials interviewed conceded that they did not receive any background briefing on the theoretical intricacies of the term. As the empirical data will show in the next section, local government officials seemed to understand ‘empowerment’ more in terms of having an oversight responsibility to manage the project as well as rendering proper fiscal accounts to the CBRDP Headquarters in Accra, the nation’s capital.

Second, the CBRDP officials on the ground targeted women and vulnerable groups, while the project sought to ‘empower’ the general rural population (CBRDP Implementation Manual 2006). During the interviews, most of the officials stated that they involved women in local meetings during the implementation of the project. For these officials, having women sit in meetings, meant ‘empowering’ them, while as argued below, most of them were ‘coerced by culture’ to participate. Women’s ‘empowerment’ is a major topic for discussion in Ghana (Apusigah 2004a; 2004b; Anyidoho & Manuh 2010) and was therefore not out of place in the CBRDP. However, because the project was not explicit about having a gender–focus, it seemed to have contradicted its aim of empowering the general population as stated in the CBRDP Implementation Manual (2006, p. 1). Because of the lack of clarity on its gender–focus, the project also failed to provide the necessary resources required for the implementation of an effective gender–based ‘empowerment’ program (Mosedale 2003; Apusigah 2004a; Anyidoho & Manuh 2010; Hancock et al. 2011).

Owing to the apparent disjunction between what the CBRDP sought to achieve relative to ‘empowerment’, and its focus on the ground, the project appeared to have measured ‘empowerment’ more in terms of ‘participation’ by women and vulnerable peoples. For example, each of the CBRDP Annual Reports (2005–2010) tended to measure women’s ‘empowerment’ in the project’s beneficiary localities by the numbers of women present in local meetings. Interestingly, most women interviewed or who responded to the questionnaires explained that they attended community meetings as a marital or cultural obligation. For example, many Fulani women in one of the towns in the Volta Region disclosed that they attended the local meetings as a gesture of respect for the Traditional Chiefs and their husbands. Like these respondents, others from the Eastern Region

made similar assertions; 80% of the women respondents from the Volta and Eastern Regions conceded as having never contributed to discussions in local meetings. In the Greater Accra Region 70% of women attending local meetings were non-contributors. Furthermore, some of the married women, who admitted speaking in community meetings, indicated that their husbands were unhappy, if their contribution sounded dissenting.

Many scholars criticise participation as a yardstick for measuring ‘empowerment’ because of its coercive tendencies (Cooke & Kothari 2001; Cleaver 2001; Mosse 2001; Cornish 2006). Moreover, because ‘empowerment’ is a broad concept and may not always relate to participation of marginalised groups, many theorists argue that attention should rather be paid to addressing the conditions that perpetuate any form of disempowerment (Chambers 1983; Nelson & Wright 1995; Cleaver 2001; Mosse 2001; Cornwall & Edwards 2010; Tesoriero 2010).

The discussions so far point to a rather nebulous conceptualisation and application of the term ‘empowerment’ in the CBRDP. When development projects are unclear about what they seek to achieve and how these ill-defined achievements are measured, as the above typifies, unintended outcomes are inevitable. The section also implied that the project’s designers overlooked the country’s traditional institutions, while no strategy was put in place to monitor unplanned outcomes. The next section draws on two case studies from the empirical data to support this assertion. It discusses the manner in which tensions between Traditional Chiefs and local government officials, which were unplanned consequences of the apparent misguided application of ‘empowerment’, negatively impacted on the CBRDPs.

7.3 Traditional Chiefs versus Local Government Officials

As discussed in Chapter One, Traditional Chiefs are much respected in Ghana and in the West African subregion¹⁵⁶. Regarded as the custodians of the lands in the country, the chieftaincy institution is recognised and enshrined in Article 246 of Ghana’s Constitution, which restricts the state from interfering in its affairs. Aside from being constitutionally recognised, 30% of the seats of District Assemblies are also reserved for Traditional Chiefs, while the Assembly also pays them 22.5% of the revenue from

¹⁵⁶ However, not all parts of the country have strong Traditional Chieftaincy institutions.

Stool Lands (Donkor 2005; Ahwoi 2010; Knierzinger 2011).¹⁵⁷ Obviously, development projects (such as the CBRDP) that sideline them will have dire consequences, as the two case studies below illustrate.

7.3.1 Aboloo, Greater Accra Region¹⁵⁸

Aboloo is a semi-urban town in the Greater Accra Region. The locality is less than an hour's drive from the nation's capital. The population of Aboloo was estimated in 2010 to be two thousand five hundred (District Medium Term Development Plan 2010). The town is inhabited by a variety of ethnic groups: GAs form 55%, Ewes 25% and other groups, including the Akan and people from the northern part of the country, account for the remaining 20% (DMTDP 2010). The main occupation of the residents is agriculture, specifically peasant crop and animal farming, while others are engaged in petty trading. Aboloo had no health centre or clinic; thus, residents relied on health facilities in nearby towns such as Yamfo and Twibloh. While Aboloo had electricity, significant sections of the town used kerosene for lighting. The town also had four standpipes and three bore holes (DMTDP 2010; Aboloo Area Council Action Plan 2006; Fieldnotes 2011).

The fieldwork revealed Aboloo to have four basic schools: three privately-owned and one government-owned, the Awoyo Basic School. This was the basis for constructing a Community Library under the CBRDP to lift the low academic performance of the locality. This problem, the Area Council Action Plan (2006) stated, was due to the absence of a library facility in the locality and the generally poor state of the educational infrastructure at the government-owned school, which was a disincentive to teachers posted to the town. The absence of a library facility in Aboloo, the Action Plan explained further, led to high rate of school dropouts, as parents could not cope with spending lots of money on extra tuition. The construction of a Community Library was therefore regarded as a measure intended to motivate local school children to study, while attracting teachers to the town (Area Council Action Plan 2006). In the words of the Team Leader of the project:

We were worried that many pupils could not read in the town. In fact in the lower primary of the Awoyo Basic School only thirty-four [out of 130] could read. So we made it our target to raise that number to eighty-four by September 2007 [through the library project].

¹⁵⁷ In a survey conducted in Greater Accra in 2005, over 50% of the 1005 respondents stated that Traditional Chiefs were more powerful than Members of Parliament (Knierzinger 2011).

¹⁵⁸ The original names of the locality and towns have been concealed for ethical reasons.

The Senior Linguist¹⁵⁹ of Aboloo also explained that the library was built to “help the school children with their reading and writing ... [and] also prevent the pupils from going to video game centres at the nights and involving themselves in vices.” Because of the urgency to improve the academic performance in the locality, the Assembly Member of Aboloo explained that the project was implemented as a Rapid Response Initiative¹⁶⁰ and strategically situated on the compound of the Awoyo Basic School.¹⁶¹

Despite the good intentions that informed the construction of the library, the researcher found it in a state of dereliction. As argued below, the state of the project was largely attributable to a power contest between Aboloo’s Traditional Chiefs and local government officials resulting in a legal tussle. The problem, which was not envisaged by the CBRDP Headquarters or the World Bank, has left the facility unmaintained since its construction.

Aboloo has ‘powerful’ Traditional Chiefs who constantly make news for various advocacy issues in the interest of the locality¹⁶². Because of their influence, they tended to regard themselves as those to control all development projects in the town, including the CBRDP Library Project. For example, the Senior Linguist of Aboloo when interviewed kept emphasising his assertion that, “Aboloo is a GA traditional town, so we [Traditional Chiefs and Elders] wield the power to control and manage all development projects in the locality.”¹⁶³ He went further in arguing that Aboloo benefitted from the CBRDP because of the influence of the Traditional Chiefs in the Municipal Assembly, a claim the local government officials refuted.

¹⁵⁹ The spokesman of the Aboloo Traditional Chief.

¹⁶⁰ Constructed in a hundred days.

¹⁶¹ Private schools and individuals could access the library.

¹⁶² See for example, <http://sethbnews09.blogspot.com.au/2010/02/arrest-this-man-page-3.html>, retrieved June 28, 2012.

¹⁶³ Traditional Chiefs in other parts of the country tend to make similar assertions, and have been condemned in the media as insinuating ethnocentric tendencies are practiced in the country under the guise of culture and tradition (*Daily Graphic of October 16, 2011*).



Photo 7.1: Exterior of the Aboloo CBRDP library.



Photo 7.2: Interior of the Aboloo CBRDP library.

As indicated above, the fundamental aim of the CBRDP was to empower the rural population and the weak local government sub-structures¹⁶⁴ to make the Area Councils, Assembly Members and Unit Committees highly functional. Before the implementation of the CBRDP, Area Councils and Unit Committees, for example, were virtually in a state of inertia, some scholars contending they be dissolved (Gyimah-Boadi 2009; Ahwoi 2010). The CBRDP was therefore a seminal initiative that tested the implementation capabilities of the local government sub-structure to make them effective (CBRDP Implementation Manual 2006). Thus, by its design, the CBRDP was supposed to be managed by the local government officials, albeit in an ‘undefined’ consultation arrangement with Traditional Chiefs (CBRDP Implementation Manual 2006).

Mandated to manage the CBRDPs, the local government officials of Aboloo were not prepared to be dictated to by the Traditional Chiefs. These officials, some of who did not hail from the town, argued that the CBRDP was explicit about empowering local government officials to manage the project. While admitting that Traditional Chiefs were important stakeholders in the CBRDP implementation processes, the local government officials indicated that their role was only ceremonial. A 48-year-old man, who was a Unit Committee Member of Aboloo, captured this attitude succinctly when he argued that:

At the training session, the CBRDP officials from Accra told us that we must manage the project and render all accounts. So, we have a duty to the CBRDP Headquarters and the people who elected us and not to Traditional Chiefs ... the [CBRDP] officials explained that if anything went wrong with the project, they would hold us responsible and Aboloo may not get such a project again.

After the project was completed and commissioned on November 08, 2007¹⁶⁵, the Senior Linguist explained that the Traditional Chiefs and Elders of Aboloo demanded the local government officials to hand over all documents and render accounts on the project to them. Led by the Project’s Team Leader, who was also a Unit Committee Member, the local government officials refused to heed the Chiefs’ requests on the grounds that the CBRDP officials in Accra had not authorised the directive. Apparently annoyed by the actions of the local government officials, the Traditional Chiefs of Aboloo announced, in a dawn broadcast, that the Unit Committees Members had been suspended indefinitely from operating in the locality. The announcement went further to

¹⁶⁴See Chapter Five.

¹⁶⁵ See *The Ghanaian Times* of November 08, 2007.

indicate, “The Unit Committees Members would have themselves to blame if they flouted the order”. Confirming the suspension, the Senior Linguist of Aboloo explained that they took the action because, as he put it, “the local government officials were challenging our authority”.

Threatened by the broadcast, a Unit Committee Member indicated that they had to “wash their hands of” the library for fear of their lives. The project’s Team Leader criticised the Chiefs’ action as unconstitutional and, in consultation with the Municipal Assembly, filed a lawsuit against the Traditional Chief and Elders of Aboloo at the Accra High Court. Although the Assembly Member would not comment on the issue, he hinted that the attitudes of the Elders were impacting on his work and the organising of assets in the locality. Indicating his resolve not to contest the 2010 local government elections because of the conflict, the Assembly Member explained that the state of the library was an embarrassment to the locality. Asked how best the situation could be resolved, he indicated that, “Aboloo Traditional Chiefs need to come out of their power stupor and imperialist mentality.”

Many local people, from whom the data was drawn, in apparent ignorance of the lawsuit and the local power struggles, appeared to be disappointed with the performance of their Assembly Member. In fact, 55% of the respondents to the questionnaire indicated that they did not know the Assembly Member, while almost 90% had no knowledge of their Unit Committee Members. As explained in Chapter Five (see 5.5), Unit Committees are the bridge between the local people and the Area Councils. Working with the Assembly Member, they relate to people at the grassroots level; they listen to their concerns for onward discussions during the Area Council meetings. Unit Committees are very instrumental in local mobilisation and project maintenance (Article 240 [4–8], Constitution of the Republic of Ghana 1992). Owing to their suspension, between November 2007 and March 2011, when the fieldwork was completed, Aboloo did not have a functioning Unit Committee that would have otherwise mobilised the local people to maintain the library. While the Senior Linguist indicated that the Traditional Chiefs were sourcing resources for maintaining the library the researcher did not witness the project improve in any way throughout the seven months fieldwork.

Of all the projects studied in Zone IV, the researcher found the Aboloo Library to be the most neglected. Several cracks were visible in the structure and staircase (see photo

7.1). Many of the windows either had no louvers or were broken. The library had no electricity connected and there were no fans. In the afternoons the place could be so hot that one female JHS 1 pupil remarked, “It’s difficult to concentrate in the heat. It is terrible to study without fans. Some of my friends even use the books to fan themselves”. A majority of pupils in the JHS 2 and above also explained that most of the books in the library were irrelevant to their studies or were outdated. Furthermore, there were not enough books for some sections and subjects, while others had none. For example, the French, Information and Communication Technology and Ghanaian languages sections had no books, while the mathematics section had only five; the library also had no computer. The Librarian explained:

We haven’t got any books since the library was commissioned. Those here were made possible by the out-gone District Education Director. Sometimes, good people also walk in and give us books ... because of the book deficits [when they are torn] I mend the pieces and put them back on the shelves, even if some pages are missing.

Because of the conflict, many crucial administrative and resource challenges impacted on the efficiency of the library. The first related to the library’s operating hours. The library opened and closed during the Awoyo Basic School’s operating hours (8:00 am–3:30pm). It was not opened at nights, during weekends or on holidays. Pupils in the private schools also found the opening and closing times of the library discriminatory. A male JHS 2 student of one of the private schools said, “we are not experiencing the benefits of the library because they close at the government school times, whilst we finish later. They don’t also open it on Saturdays and Sundays.” When asked why the library closes early, does not open in the nights, on weekend and holidays, the Head Teacher of the Awoyo Basic School explained:

Hmm [deep sigh] I have discussed it with the librarian. But I have discovered that he needs an incentive to do those extra hours. But the motivation is not forthcoming because of the problem between the local government officials and the Traditional Chiefs. Another issue is that unlike librarians employed by the Ghana Library Board who work on weekends, in the evenings and on holidays, our librarian is a teacher employed by the Ghana Education Service and expected to work within our 8:00am –3:30pm opening and closing times.

She suggested that:

The community support has to support and pay him some extra money, if they want the library opened outside the school hours. We hope the court matter is resolved quickly so that the local opinion leaders can organise community volunteers to man the library after school. Otherwise it will not be serving the purpose for which it was built.

Although the library was meant for all pupils in the locality, it could not accommodate a standard class of forty pupils, as the quantity of furniture was inadequate. Whenever the library was full, the other pupils had the options of either sitting on the floor or standing to read. If the class was large, those who could not access the library had to sit in the classroom, having missed the allocated “library hour” on the timetable. A teacher from one of the private schools explained that they scarcely visited the library as it was always full and there were not enough relevant textbooks. He was also of the opinion that each school in the locality should be allocated days and times to use the facility. In separate interviews, the Librarian, Head Teacher and the Senior Linguist appealed for support for the library. The Project’s Team Leader expressed similar concerns when he said:

I visited the library last week and I saw how the project has been left unmaintained. The staircase has cracks all over and some of the louvers are off. On top, there are not enough books ... this is becoming disgraceful. But what can we do when ‘the powers that be’ would not allow us the freedom to operate?

The above analysis points to what could become of ‘good’ project such as Aboloo’s Library Project, that are based on complex concepts, but whose outcomes are not monitored and managed. While the CBRDP aimed to ‘empower’ Aboloo’s local government officials, it seemed not to have envisaged the consequences of sidelining the locality’s influential Traditional Chiefs; in fact the final outcome was disempowering for many. Aboloo is just one of the many localities in Ghana where fracas between Traditional Chiefs and local government officials negatively impact on development projects (see Abotchie 2006; Ahwoi 2010). Ntoaso, a town in the Eastern Region, is another case in point.

7.3.2 Ntoaso, Eastern Region¹⁶⁶

Ntoaso received a sixteen-seater public toilet facility from the CBRDP. Located almost seventy-five kilometres from Accra, Ghana’s capital city, Ntoaso falls under the Asempa Municipality of the Eastern Region of Ghana. The town is inhabited by Akyems, the traditional land owners, Ewes, Akwapims and people from the northern parts of the country. Many of the residents engage in palm oil business, farming and petty trading. Because the locality is not far from major trading spots such as Kwabre, Winneba and Accra, many of the traders and farmers commute to these centres to sell

¹⁶⁶ The original name of the town and others mentioned have been deidentified for ethical reasons.

their wares and return the same day. Ntoaso has electricity, pipe born water and one government–owned basic school (Asempa Municipal MTDP 2010¹⁶⁷).

Before the implementation of the CBRDP’s sixteen-seater facility in 2008, Ntoaso had only one public toilet facility, which was donated by the European Union. As of 2009, this facility located north of the town was insufficient to serve the town’s population of almost nearly four thousand, (Ntoaso Area Council Action Plan 2006). Those on the south opined it was too far from them, apart from the fact that they had to sometime join long queues to use it. In fact, up to the period of the fieldwork, the EU toilet facility was not in use as it had cracks and posed dangers for users. The lack of public toilet in the town, the Ntoaso Area Council Action Plan (2006) stated, had led to indiscriminate defecation in the town, a situation that led to the outbreak of cholera in the town. Thus, when the town was chosen as a beneficiary of the CBRDP, it was greeted with joy as many deemed it timely. The project was completed and in use as the fieldwork finished.

However, during most visits to the facility, the researcher observed that it was not being well–maintained. For example, although tokens were being charged for using it, the facility appeared to be untidy. This annoyed many of the users, some of who refused to pay the token on the grounds that the monies were not being used for its maintenance. Frustrated by the situation, the caretaker explained that she could not enforce the payment of the user fees as the facility looked unkempt. As this case study will show, the project was in this state because the Traditional Chief of the Town was quarrelling with the Area Council Chairman and Assembly Member of the town over who had the ‘power’ to manage the facility.

An indigene of Yakoko, the Traditional Chief had ruled Ntoaso for twenty-one years. As most Traditional Chiefs in Ghana would claim, the Ntoaso Chief indicated that his ancestors owned the land of Ntoaso and therefore had a default right to oversee all development projects in the locality, including the CBRDP public toilet facility. Since October 2008, when it was completed, the Chief had complained about what he termed as the “arrogance of the Assembly Member” of the locality. He argued that:

The Assembly Member and his so–called [Unit] Committee Members, who manage the project, are over stepping their borders. Before he became the Assembly Member I was the Chief. Yet, he is still holding unto the keys of the toilet and has refused to hand them over to me and my Elders.

¹⁶⁷ See also <http://westakim.ghanadistricts.gov.gh/>, retrieved July 15, 2012.

The Chief considered the Assembly Member's refusal to hand over the keys as a challenge to his traditional authority and indicated that he was in a process of auditing the facility's user fee proceeds. Further probes during the interviews with him revealed his poor understanding of the fact that the CBRDP was designed to be managed by local government officials. For example, when the researcher asked him what he knew about the project, he claimed that the CBRDP was sponsored from the coffers of the Municipal Assembly; and that it was a way of thanking the residents for being stalwart followers of the New Patriotic Party, under whose government (2001–2008) the project was implemented. Apparently ignorant about the terms of the CBRDP, the Chief was drawing on his traditional 'powers' to demand the right to control the project.

The Assembly Member in question had been in office for eight years (2003–2010) and also served as the Area Council Chairman for four years (2006–2010). He recounted the frustrations he encountered in getting the Municipal authorities to approve Ntoaso as a beneficiary of CBRDP funds. Interestingly, the Chief also claimed that it was his goodwill with the Municipal Chief Executive (MCE) that led to the choice of Ntoaso as the location of the new toilet facility. The Assembly Member denied this, explaining that the CBRDP was not for Traditional Chiefs, but about the strengthening of local government institutions. As a result, he and the Unit Committees owed a duty to the Government of Ghana to manage the project and not to the Traditional Chief, although he was ready to render accounts to the latter, if asked.

During one of my visits to the town, the Traditional Chief and Elders had summoned the Assembly Member to render accounts on the project. The Chief reported:

Last week the Assembly Member came and rendered the accounts on the project. But we [the Chief and his Elders] were dissatisfied and doubted the figures ... We feel there is something fishy somewhere because although the Assembly Member claimed that he sponsored part of the project with his personal money and that the community owes him a total sum of about GHC 5000¹⁶⁸, we are aware that that the District Assembly fully funded it, while the community contributed labour.

According to the Assembly Member, as briefly explained in Chapter Five, when the project was approved by the CBRDP secretariat, it was supposed to be a sixteen-seat facility. When the work started, it was not known that the MCE had ordered the project sum be equally divided between Ntoaso and Adoagyiri, a town in the Municipality also

¹⁶⁸ At the time GHC 1 = USD 0.5.

in need of a toilet facility. This brought the Ntoaso project to a standstill for a while as the local government officials were finding it difficult to change the project to an eight-seater facility. However, the Assembly Member decided to go ahead with the original sixteen-seater plan and hoped that the local people would help with tokens. Unfortunately, while some residents contributed, many did not. Under the circumstances, he had to use his own monies to complete the project, hoping that he would be reimbursed later from the facility's user fee proceeds.



Photo 7.3: Male entrance of the Ntoaso CBRDP.



Photo 7.4: Female entrance of the Ntoaso CBRDP.

The Assembly Member explained further that the Unit Committee Members and the Zone IV Headquarters of the CBRDP were aware of the monies owed him. Further, he explained that although he had produced receipts to support his claims, the Traditional Chief and his Elders suspected that he had concocted the figures. He asserted that until he recouped all the debt owed him, he was not ready to hand over the project to the Chief.

Concerning the maintenance of the toilet facility, the Assembly Member indicated this to be the responsibility of all the residents, the user fees not being enough for the upkeep of the facility. In addition, because the facility was constructed as a community-based project, he expected that the Chiefs would support him to organise communal labour for its maintenance. However, owing to the lack of cooperation from the Traditional Chief and his Elders, he explained that he was reluctant to call for communal labour to clean the toilets or clear the bushes around it (see photos above). Such an initiative could be interpreted to mean he was undermining the authority of the Traditional Chief¹⁶⁹. Some women the researcher interviewed indicated that as the facility was surrounded by bushes they were concerned about being bitten by snakes if they made use of it in the early morning or at night times.

The questionnaires and other informal interviews indicated that the Assembly Member had the support of most residents in the locality, but he admitted to fearing for his life. Consequently, although he was eligible to contest the 2010 local government elections, he voluntarily stepped down, blaming the decision on his dispute with the Traditional Chief and his Elders. He said:

I have had enough of the nonsense of these Chiefs, who know nothing about local governance. I'm out and out for good. I'm only biding the time to recoup my money and then hand over the keys to the CBRDP officials, who put me in charge of the project. If they give the project to the Traditional Chiefs to manage it, I care less.

Meanwhile, as of July 2012, key informants from Ntoaso contacted by the researcher indicated the toilet facility to be in no better state than it was in March 2011 when the fieldwork was concluded. Furthermore, while the former Assembly Member had handed over the keys, the CBRDP authorised the new local government officials to manage it. Consequently, as of July 2012 the Traditional Chief and his Elders have not

¹⁶⁹ In many traditional areas in Ghana, Traditional Chiefs call for communal labour.

been cooperating with the new officers to organise communal labour to maintain the toilet facility.

Notwithstanding the above case studies, the researcher found one example of positive power relations between the Chief and the Assembly Member of Pakro in the Eastern Region, one of the CBRDP beneficiary localities. During the fieldwork, the researcher witnessed several instances where the two were conferring on local issues. In separate interview sessions, both spoke kindly of each other and related several instances where they had collaborated to solve problems in the locality. In the latter stages of collecting data in Pakro, the researcher learned that the mutual respect between the Chief and the Assembly Member was partly due to their familial ties. Nevertheless, the Pakro mechanised borehole project was faced with challenges that were unrelated to power relations, but involved technical issues and community resistance to paying user fees. On a positive note, the Chief and Assembly Member were working hard to resolve these problems.

7.4 Conclusion

This chapter set out to show how the vague application of the term ‘empowerment’ in the design and implementation of Ghana’s CBRDP impacted on the project’s outcomes. The first section of the chapter explained why ‘empowerment’ is too complex a concept to be ‘cut and pasted’ into development aid project designs. It was argued that while ‘empowerment’ offers many advantages if used appropriately, the concept presents many theoretical challenges. Aside from the tendency to be gender-specific, despite being a generic term, measuring ‘empowerment’ can be challenging, as scholars disagree on whether the term is a process or an outcome or both. The fact that ‘empowerment’ is pivotal to the concept of ‘power’ makes it even more problematic. Because ‘power’ is not a neutral concept and cannot be shared, empowering one group may mean disempowering others by breaking certain traditional norms or monopolies. This may lead to conflicts if outcomes are not properly monitored.

The second section examined the CBRDP documents to reveal the manner in which ‘empowerment’ was applied in the project’s design and implementation. The section showed that ‘empowerment’ was loosely applied by the CBRDP as the project: 1) Had no working definition of ‘empowerment’; 2) Targeted women and vulnerable groups, although it was meant to empower the general population; and 3) Measured

‘empowerment’ only in terms of participation, ignoring the conditions that perpetuated the ‘powerlessness’. As a result of the imprecise application of ‘empowerment’ in the CBRDP, Ghana’s Ministry of Local Government, Rural Development and Environment and the World Bank’s Advisory Team, who designed the project, appeared to have overlooked the country’s institution of Traditional Chiefs and had no strategy in place to monitor unintended outcomes.

To support this assertion, the last section of the chapter drew on the empirical data to illustrate the manner in which power struggles and conflicts between Traditional Chief and local government officials negatively impacted on the CBRDPs. The analysis suggest that in their pursuit of strengthening Ghana’s decentralisation process through the CBRDPs, the designers of the project appeared to have focused only on the local government sub–structures, overlooking the country’s influential traditional establishment. While the intent to empower Assembly and Unit Committee Members was important, the project’s designers should have realised that the local government officials did not function in isolation, but were a part of a very complex socio–cultural system. It was therefore essential to have considered the whole context within which the project was implemented, while having a strategy to monitor unintended outcomes.

As the case studies showed, the Traditional Chiefs of Aboloo and Ntoaso seemed to have been uninformed about the CBRDP’s inherent intent of empowering the country’s local government sub–structures, contradicting the World Bank’s claim that Ghana’s decentralisation system is highly functional (see Chapter Five). Acting within their usual traditional ‘powers’, the Traditional Chiefs clashed with the newly empowered local government officials, who refused to pander to their whims. These conflicts have left the projects poorly maintained and in a state of dereliction. The Aboloo Library Project was faced with many crucial administrative and resource challenges that impacted on its efficiency, while the Ntoaso public toilet facility was left almost always in an untidy state, as the Traditional Chief of the locality refused to collaborate with the Assembly Member to organise the residents to clean it periodically. Hence the two CBRDP outcomes were not being fully utilised by the people for whom they were designed, becoming the centre of a protracted legal battle.

The CBRDP Headquarters was aware of the state of the projects, expressing their disappointment at the outcomes. Some of the Managers argued that, as the projects were only pilots; their states were of no concern, as one of them asserted, “To be pedantic

about terms and concepts”. The Managers appeared to be more concerned about the sanctity of the financial accounts on the project that had to be rendered to the government and the World Bank. The findings presented in the chapter reflect the observation of many scholars that international development discourse is full of normative and idealised terms that are not matched by clear conceptualisations. Moreover the data and case studies presented in this chapter clearly show a ‘breakdown of development’ as a result of power struggles and problems around ‘empowerment’. As a result the project led to a poorly functioning local government system, the exact opposite of what it was supposed to achieve.

CHAPTER EIGHT

CONCLUSION

Bad policies can easily destroy development and defy common sense.... This has been one of our weaknesses in Africa over the last 50 years. Our policies have been very much externally-driven, shaped and financed rather than endogenous. Worse, they were often based on frequently shifting trends in development thinking and practice, rather than our own internally generated consensuses.

Donald Kaberuka¹⁷⁰ (2011, p. 3)

This thesis has taken its researcher and now its reader from the macro-perspectives of International Development Aid (aid) to the nuanced meanings derived from doctoral fieldwork in three regions of Ghana. In between, the thesis has focused on the manner in which the inappropriate application decentralisation theories and normative concepts, such as community and empowerment, influenced the outcomes of the World Bank-funded Community-Based Rural Development Project (CBRDP) in Ghana. To remind the reader the Primary Research Question was:

How were the outcomes of the Community-Based Rural Development Projects in selected Districts of Ghana influenced by contested decentralisation theories and complex concepts such as ‘community’ and ‘empowerment’?

Three key findings stood out in the thesis: 1) The World Bank’s mistaken categorisation of Ghana’s decentralisation system as highly functional negatively impacted on the design and outcomes of the CBRDP; 2) The lack of ‘community’ in the CBRDP beneficiary localities affected the implementation and the maintenance of the projects; and 3) The CBRDP’s inappropriate application of the concept of ‘empowerment’ led to tensions between Traditional Chiefs and Local Government Officials. Below the findings are discussed in turn, followed with a discussion of their implication for development theory and practice.

Finding I: The World Bank’s Mistaken Categorisation of Ghana’s Decentralisation System as Highly Functional Negatively Impacted on the Design of the CBRDP

The thesis found that Ghana’s inter-governmental system is not highly functional, as the World Bank claims. Although Traditional Chiefs play key roles in Ghana’s local government system, it is inherently partisan and effectively controlled by central government. Given this limitation, the CBRDP documents indicated that: “the CBRDP

¹⁷⁰ President of the African Development Bank.

was designed to strengthen the country's weak local government sub-structures" (CBRDP Implementation Manual 2006, CBRDP Annual Reports 2005–2010, CBRDP Zone IV Annual Reports 2005–2010). While this clearly contradicts the categorisation of Ghana's inter-government system as being highly functional, an analysis of the country's decentralisation set up within the framework of the World Bank's four indicators is even more revealing. The World Bank's indicators of a highly functional inter-government system include settings where there are: 1) Decentralisation laws that create local government structures with autonomy in resource management; 2) Local elections; 3) Fiscal decentralisation and; 4) Devolution of service delivery. Examined within these indicators, Ghana falls short of the high-functioning labelling, and casts serious doubts on the robustness of the World Bank's indicators.

While the Ghana's constitution and various Local Government Acts make provision for a decentralised local government system, the same statutes appear to promote centralisation, which hinders the autonomy of local authorities, and the realisation of an effective fiscal and administrative decentralisation. Examples of such statutes include Act 462, which allows the President to both appoint 30% of the DA membership and sack those who constitute the other 70% elected by popular votes; Article 10 (3) of Act 462 that subjects the Medium Term Development Plans and budgets of DAs to central government's approval; and Act 462 (Section 88) and Financial Administration Act 2003 (Act 654), which limit the amount of loans DAs can contract. This finding shows that the fact that a country's constitution and legal framework makes provision for decentralised local governance does not necessarily make it high functioning.

Fiscal decentralisation has not been achieved in Ghana. This is attributable to the weak revenue base of DAs, existence of laws that limit the financial independence of local government structures; and the unwillingness of the central government to undertake true fiscal decentralisation. 81% of the revenues of DAs come from the central government funding, specifically, the District Assembly Common Fund (DACF). Even so, while the law that established the DACF enjoins the central government to transfer a minimum of 5% of the total national revenue to the DACF, successive governments base this percentage on the total national tax revenue instead. Additionally, DAs appear not to determine how and where to utilise their DACF, as nearly 60% are limited to specific sectors. While the realisation of true fiscal decentralisation has many benefits, the central government seem unwilling to implement the composite budget, although Section 10 (3) of the Local Government Act 462 directs them to do same.

Securitized within the framework of local elections, the third indicator of a high-functioning inter-governmental system, Ghana's decentralisation set up still falls short. Statistics from the country's electoral commission shows that Ghanaians seem not to take local government elections as a serious political exercise, when compared with their patronage at presidential elections. For example, Voter turnout at local government elections held between 1994–2010 averaged nearly 36%, considerably lower than the approximately 70% patronage of presidential elections held for the 1992–2008 periods.

Administrative decentralisation (Devolution of Service) in Ghana is challenged by the centralising tendencies of the Local Government Act 462 and the lack of infrastructure. Therefore, government departments in the districts appear to function only as de-concentrated offices of their parent Ministries in the capital, Accra. Owing to the paucity of infrastructure in most regional areas, public servants tend to refuse posting to such places; they consider it as punishment. The situation is impacting on the availability of human resources needed to achieve true administrative decentralisation in the country.

Aside from the evidence discussed above, analysis of the empirical data presented in Chapter Five on issues affecting local government officials in Ghana, further confirms the stalled nature of the country's decentralisation system. The last section of Chapter Five discussed the plights of Assembly Members, key facilitators of development at the local. It was found that Assembly Members are challenged by the non-payment of salary, working with partisan DCEs, weak Unit Committees and power-seeking Traditional Chiefs. These challenges, the chapter revealed, do impact significant on their overall role in the local government machinery.

The World Bank's endorsement of Ghana's decentralisation system as highly functional meant that the CBRDP was designed under the so-called Matching Strategy. By this, the project was designed and implemented on the country's existing political systems without adjustments. The design of the CBRDP on Ghana's highly politicised local government structures led to three problems. First, by its design, the CBRDP was subjected to political machinations. District Chief Executives, who are appointees of the central government and the most influential government representatives at the local areas, had the freedom to choose which locality benefitted from the project and who did not. As indicated above, some localities that did not qualify for the project benefitted. In

other instances, some DCEs used the projects as political campaign tool for their political party and to seek election into parliament.

Second, the fact that the CBRDP was implemented on a system, which did not pay salaries to Assembly Members, meant that the project could be bedevilled by corrupt practises. Assembly Members work so hard, but earn virtually nothing. This explains why, as Chapter Six showed, some Assembly Members awarded the CBRDP purchasing contracts to themselves and cronies. Such corrupt practices, the thesis argued, impacted on the overall quality of the projects.

Finally, the World Bank's categorisation of Ghana's decentralisation as highly functional made them lose sight of the fact that the CBRDP was theoretically fashioned on concepts, such as 'community' and 'empowerment', which were at variance with the demographical realities of the country and the beneficiary localities. As it turned out 'communities' did not practically exist in the beneficiary localities, leading to the poor maintenance of the projects. Furthermore, the inappropriate application of 'empowerment' in the CBRDP led to tensions between local government officials and Traditional Chiefs. The impact of the inappropriate application of the concepts of 'community' and 'empowerment' on the outcomes of the CBRDP are discussed in Findings II and III respectively.

Finding II: The lack of 'community' in the CBRDP beneficiary localities affected the implementation and maintenance of the projects

The concept of 'community' is appealing, yet deceptive. Although a complex term, community is often misused in development program designs, Ghana's CBRDP being no exception. As argued in Chapter Six, the designers of the CBRDP appeared not to have appreciated the complexity of the term, conceptualising it in the spatial sense, although the concept transcends the notion of territoriality. A community, it was argued, must have: 1) Function that drives the group; 2) Opportunity for interaction; 3) Membership who identifies with and contributes to it; and 4) Culture that makes it distinct from others.

Analysis of the empirical data in the sixth chapter of the thesis showed that the dynamics, ground settlement and mobility patterns of the CBRDP beneficiary localities did not support interaction to the levels required for a coherent 'community' to exist, or simply put, 'communities' did not seem to exist there. For example, the residents of

Tease in the Afram Plains tended not to associate with the town as ‘members’ and therefore had an attitude of the members being transient towards the locality because of its remoteness. In the case of Tashie in the Tema Municipality, the data showed that the residents were politically factionalised, apart from feeling in common that the CBRDP did not meet their most crucial need, a public toilet facility. Furthermore, most inhabitants of Tashie, some of whom had moved from other parts of the country to live there or work in the capital¹⁷¹, tended not to regard themselves as members of the locality who must, according to CBRDP official documents, contribute to its development. The data from Agbetor in the Volta Region showed it to be risky to build a community-based project around one influential Traditional Chief. Furthermore, it revealed the importance of improving the economic conditions of development beneficiaries, so that they can maintain and ‘own’ the said projects responsibly.

Despite these challenges, the designers of the CBRDP, it was found, did not developed the communities within which to base the project in the beneficiary localities. Although a complex term, the theoretical discussions revealed that communities could be nurtured around a function. For example, the CBRDP officials could have developed a strong Traders Community in Tease before implementing the market sheds project. This way, the traders would have taken ownership of and maintained the shed better than was apparent during the fieldwork. However, those who designed the project clearly ignored the need to develop a community in Tease before constructing the now abandoned market sheds. This explains why most of the CBRDP studied were in a state of complete disarray at the time of the fieldwork as there were no ‘communities’, such as those described above, in the localities to maintain them. Therefore the conclusion is that projects such as CPRDP cannot be sufficiently based on idealised, yet complex and contested terms such as community. It is important that programs attempting to apply the concepts clearly define and conceptualise it within the confines of the grounded realities and social dynamics of beneficiary localities. In this way development projects may receive maximum local support and be more likely to be effectively maintained.

¹⁷¹ Tashie is less than an hour drive to the nation’s capital, Accra.

Finding III: The CBRDP's inappropriate application of the Concept of 'Empowerment' led to tensions between Traditional Chiefs and Local Government Officials

The term 'empowerment' was inappropriately applied in the implementation of the CBRDP as it led to tension between local government officials and Traditional Chiefs. Like 'community', 'empowerment' is a complex term concept that presents many theoretical difficulties when attempts to define it are made. Aside from the tendency to be gender-specific and despite being a generic term, measuring empowerment presents many challenges, scholars disagreeing on whether the term is a process or an outcome or both. The fact that 'empowerment' is predicated on the concept of 'power' makes it even more complicated. The reason for this dilemma is that 'power' is not a neutral concept and cannot be shared; empowering one group may mean disempowering others by breaking certain traditional norms or monopolies. This may lead to conflicts, if outcomes are not properly monitored as shown in this thesis.

Despite these theoretical challenges 'empowerment' was loosely applied in the CBRDP as the project: 1) Had no working definition of 'empowerment'; 2) Targeted women and vulnerable groups, although it was meant to empower the general population; and 3) Measured 'empowerment' only in term of participation, ignoring the conditions that perpetuated the 'powerlessness'. As a result of the inappropriate application of 'empowerment' in the CBRDP, Ghana's Ministry of Local Government and Rural Development and the World Bank's Advisory Team, designers of the project, appeared to have overlooked the country's Traditional Chiefs and had no strategy in place to monitor unintended outcomes.

Analysis of the data drawn from Ntoaso in the Eastern Region and Aboloo in the Greater Accra Region points to a policy error. In their pursuit to strengthen Ghana's decentralisation process through the CBRDP, the designers of the project appeared to have focused only on the local government sub-structures, and overlooked the country's influential traditional establishment. While the intent to empower Assembly and Unit Committee Members was important, the project's designers ignored the reality that the local government officials do not function in isolation, but are part of a very complex socio-cultural system; a system that draws heavily on the influence of Traditional Chiefs to provide social capital.

As the two case studies showed, the Traditional Chiefs of Aboloo and Ntoaso appeared to have been uninformed about the CBRDP's objective of empowering the country's local government sub-structures. Acting within their usual traditional 'powers', the Traditional Chiefs clashed with the 'newly empowered' local government officials. These conflicts have left the projects poorly maintained and in a state of dereliction, as the Chiefs who wield the social capital to organise such maintenance activities felt sidelined. The Aboloo Library Project was faced with many crucial administrative and resource challenges that impacted on its efficiency, while the Ntoaso Public Toilet Facility was almost always left in an untidy state. In the latter case, the Traditional Chief of the locality refused to collaborate with the Assembly Member to organise the residents to clean the toilet facility periodically. Hence the researcher found that the CBRDP's two major assets were not being fully utilised by the people for whom they were designed; instead they had become the centre of a protracted legal battle.

Implication for Development Theory and Practice

The most important implications from this thesis is that international development agencies and donors need to understand the contextual realities of countries and localities in which they wish to bring about improvements. In the case of Ghana, those who designed the CBRDP failed to appreciate the dynamics of the country and the beneficiary 'communities', leading to the poor maintenance of the aid-funded project. The lack of appreciation for the CBRDP beneficiary localities was evident in the designers' failure to adjust the project and its pivotal concepts to suit the country's highly politicised, weak local government and influential chieftaincy systems. Four themes that emerged strongly in the thesis may be considered for their implications for aid effectiveness discussion, development theory and practice.

First, the findings have brought to the fore the need for international development agencies to move beyond conferences and mechanisms that are results-based in their quest for ways of making their aid effective. It is crucial that stakeholders in aid effectiveness discussions carefully consider aid recipients' social, political, economic and cultural settings in the design of program-based aid initiatives. For example, while Community-Driven Development Program is hailed as a 'messianic' aid delivery mechanism at the World Bank, the thesis has shown that CDD, in itself, is not the panacea to aid ineffectiveness. While it offers some advantages for delivering aid effectively, the thesis has exposed its operations as systematically underpinned by

theories and concepts that may have little relevance to the social and politico-cultural realities of beneficiaries.

The findings of the thesis resonate with the ‘Principle of Alignment’, captured in the 2005 Paris Declaration on Aid Effectiveness. The principle enjoins donors to arrange their aid through the recipient countries’ priorities and make better use of their policies and systems (OECD 2011). The thesis has provided the empirical basis for extending the principle to include “the need for donors to align and design their aid programs to suit the social and politico-cultural realities of aid beneficiaries”. This is important because although the Paris Declaration (2005) instructs donors to commit and implement 66% of their aid as programs, the findings of the thesis show that aid programs cannot produce any positive outcomes, if they are based on theories and concepts that are contextually flawed.

Second, the thesis has underscored the importance of investing in social research before, during and after the design and implementation of aid programs. Researching aid beneficiary settings is crucial, as it provides empirical grounds for designing and implementing programs in a contextually appropriate manner. Such an exercise may be cost effective, compared to the consequences of ignoring it. The thesis has established the usefulness of ethno-methodology as a credible technique for understanding how aid works on the ground. Termed ‘aidnography’, the qualitative study of aid, the data and insights produced herewith confirm the potency of the research methodology. Beyond the ‘politicised’ depiction of Ghana as an ‘evidence that developments works’¹⁷² and the country’s economic-centric aid literature, aidnography enabled the researcher to experience the convoluted nature of the contexts in which aid programs are implemented. The technique also allowed the researcher to examine the CBRDP through the eyes and the lived-experiences of the beneficiaries.

Development pundits and donor agencies tend always to cite Ghana as the ‘Star of Africa’. This labelling appears to mask the realities of the country’s political and cultural systems, while discouraging investment in social research before development programs are designed and implemented there. This projection, which has made Ghana one of the preferred destinations for donor support in Sub-Saharan Africa, the thesis has shown, has not necessarily guaranteed the success of aid programs implemented in the country; Structural Adjustments, Millennium Development Goals and the Community-

¹⁷² See DFID Ghana webpage: <http://www.dfid.gov.uk/ghana>, retrieved August 10, 2012.

Based Rural Development Projects (CBRDP) being cases in point. While Ghana may be benefitting from the ‘misrepresentation’ in the short term, the researcher argues that the distortion of the country’s grounded realities is detrimental to the country’s overall growth in the long term. To obtain first hand information on aid beneficiary grounded realities, it is important that international development organisations move beyond ‘celebrity labels’, and meticulously study the country or locality’s relevant demographical dynamics.

The thesis has also underscored the need for international development organisations to expose local project officials to the theoretical intricacies of key terms and concepts that underpin their development projects. Such terms as community, community engagement, empowerment, participation, sustainability, gender–equality, social capital and power are discussed at length in the thesis. Relative to the Ghana’s CBRDP, the research findings showed that the CBRDP Managers and Officials involved with the project did not have a clear theoretical or even practical understanding of the key concepts on which the project was based. As a result, they appeared to be ignorant about the fact that they were: 1) Implementing a community–based project in a location where a coherent ‘community’ did not seem to exist; and 2) Creating tensions by focusing only on ‘empowering’ local government officials, while sidelining local Traditional Chiefs, forgetting that the former were a part of a very complex socio–cultural system. In lieu of their apparent misapprehension of the complexity of the key concepts on which the CBRDP was predicated, there were no contingency plans and strategies in place for monitoring and managing the project’s unintended outcomes. This oversight, the thesis has shown, had a debilitating impact on the maintenance of the CBRDP projects, some of which were completely abandoned.

Finally, the thesis has highlighted the importance of channelling aid funds into improving the political institutions of developing countries, as the latter invariably impact on how development programs work on the ground. The thesis revealed the fate of the CBRDP, when it interacted directly with Ghana’s political institutions and culture. It showed that it is not enough to blame the failure of aid programs on international development agencies alone, as the outcomes of the CBRDP may have been different, if Ghana had an efficient decentralisation system. While it is essential for donors to invest directly in health, education and transportation programs, the thesis has revealed that the poor functioning of these interventions is directly linked to the state of the beneficiaries’ political systems. Interestingly, on December 12, 2012, Janmejaya

Singh, a World Bank CDD expert, posted an article on the institution's website calling on practitioners to put institutions at the centre of CDD programs¹⁷³.

While seeking to wean itself off aid in the long term, the Ghanaian Government may have to seek development assistance to address the following. First, the country's Constitutional Review Commission may need to consider drafting legislative instruments to strengthen the country's local government institutions. Specifically, such legislation should consider reducing the powers of District/ Municipal Chief Executives or make [DCE/MCEs] electable by popular vote rather than continuing to employ the existing practice of appointment by the President. It may also be worthwhile to make DCE/MCEs ineligible to contest for parliamentary elections; this way, the politicisation of the system may be reduced considerably.

Second, the government may also have to consider enacting laws that support policies for engendering effective fiscal decentralisation. As the thesis showed, local government authorities in the country seem to be constitutionally subjected to the whims of the central government; the situation breeds corruption and political machinations. It may be crucial for the state to amend laws which subject the financial transactions of local authorities to the approval of the central government and caps the amount of loan a District Assemblies can contract to only GHC 2000. Such statutes include the 2003 Financial Administration Act 654, the Financial Administration Regulation, 2004; the Internal Audit Agency Act, 2003, Act, (Act 655); the Public Procurement Act, 2003 (Act 663); and Section 88 of the Local Government Act 462 (Kyei–Baffour 2006; Gyimah–Boadi 2009; Ahwoi 2010). As argued in the thesis, these statutes appear to centralise financial administration and deny local authorities the needed fiscal autonomy to operate effectively. It is therefore important that the Ministry of Finance and Economic Planning heed Section 10 (3) of the Local Government Act 462, which enjoins them to implement a composite budget. When implemented, these structures would strengthen the country's fiscal decentralisation agenda, as local government authorities would have the authority to control their revenues, budgets and expenditure.

¹⁷³<http://web.worldbank.org/WBSITE/EXTERNAL/TOPICS/EXTSOCIALDEVELOPMENT/0,,contentMDK:23327793~menuPK:199462~pagePK:64020865~piPK:149114~theSitePK:244363,00.html>. Retrieved January 05, 2013.

Finally, it would be useful if Ghana's Ministry of Local Government and Rural Development put in place structures that screen and orientate prospective Assembly and Unit Committee Members. This is important because some of these aspirants, as this thesis showed, take up the role and later become disillusioned when faced with the sacrificial realities of the job. At the same time, the state should consider paying these officials salaries if the expectation is that they work with dedication. It is also equally important that Traditional Chiefs be educated on the country's local government system so as to avoid their tendency to feel sidelined, and therefore compelled to draw on traditional powers to control, or as the case may be, frustrate development projects in their localities. Being agents of social capital at the local level, Traditional Chiefs wield the power to influence the outcomes of development programs in their traditional areas.

In sum, global efforts at making aid effective should pay closer attention to the use of contested theories and normative, yet complex concepts in aid-program designs. Such attention should begin with investing in social research activities that employ credible methodologies for understanding the grounded realities of development beneficiaries. This is crucial if projects meant to improve the lives of people in developing countries are to be sustainable. As the thesis has shown, understanding the grounded realities of 'development' beneficiaries is more important than heeding the politicised and contested theories espoused by leading international aid agencies and institutions, who seem to be constantly moving, shifting and changing the aid discourse 'landscape' at times without empirical justification. These changes appear to be at variance with the contextual realities of 'development' recipients.

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APPENDIX A: CBRDP Components

Like most CDD programs, Ghana's CBRDP strategy was aimed at investing in community capacity building and empowerment. The project had six components namely: (I) Institutional Strengthening and Capacity Building (ISCB); (II) Infrastructure for Agricultural Development (IAD); (III) Rural Enterprise and Learning Centres (RELC); (IV) Infrastructure for Social and Human Development (ISHD); (V) Community Based Natural Resources Management (CBNRM); and (VI) Project Management (PM). The first and last components were predominantly administrative and had no subprojects. The other four components included subprojects which ranged from: rehabilitation of feeder roads; building of schools; health facilities; providing potable water; skills training to the unemployed; and dams for agricultural purposes; to protecting the environment and natural resources (CBRDP Imple. Manual 2005).

I. Institutional Strengthening and Capacity Building

The ISCB component had three main objectives. (i) Strengthen the capacity and skills of Ministry of Local Government and Rural Development (MLGRD), Regional Coordinating Councils (RCCs), District Assemblies (DAs), Area Councils (ACs), Community-Based Organizations, (CBOs), Not-For-Profit and Non –Governmental Organizations (FNGOs), private and public service providers, and rural communities to deliver cost-effective services to rural communities, manage, monitor, evaluate and maintain public and private goods and strengthen functional and governance capacities. (ii) Strengthen the financial and procurement management capacities of MLGRD and regional and district tender boards, committees, councils, ACs and other procurement entities. (iii) Strengthen the decentralization secretariat to pursue the decentralization agenda pursuant to the Local Government Service Act.

This category was largely borne by the CBRDP secretariat in conjunction with the RICUs. Primarily, it involved a training process, which was delivered by the project's consultants. The above listed organizations and institutions were taken through two or three weeks workshops on the CBRDP (the other four components), Ghana's decentralization concept, participatory planning, monitoring and evaluation, resource mobilization, leadership, communication, community decision- making processes, how to prepare community action plans, records keeping, procurement and contract management, and financial management. All who attended were given handouts

(CBRDP Trainers Manual for Area Councils Members and Opinion Leaders, 2005; Annual Reports 2006-2010).

II. Infrastructure for agricultural development

Under this component, beneficiaries ACs were given grants for four purposes: (i) Water for agriculture, including small-scale irrigation from stream flow diversions, pumping and run-off management, ponds, dugouts and tube wells; earthen banks, bunds and other flow control structures. (ii) Improving skills for management of facilities, including development of basic skills of beneficiaries for the appropriate application of recommended best catchment management practices and operation and maintenance of investments in water. (iii) Rehabilitation of priority feeder roads, provision of culverts and appropriate drainage; and upgrading of farm-to-village tracks and trails to facilitate use of bicycle trailers, donkey carts and other light vehicles. (iv) Post-harvest infrastructure, including provision of storage facilities, drying floors, cribs, crop processing and smoking units, and other processing equipment and facilities (CBRDP Implementation Manual 2006; CBRDP Annual Reports 2006-2010).

III. Rural Enterprise Development

This component advanced grants to beneficiaries for training in technical and business management for (i) the acquisition of employable skills in rural areas, establishment of agro-based micro enterprises, and upgrading and rehabilitation of equipment; (ii) establishment of learning centers to serve as focal points for processing units, marketing outlets, and empowering the poor through the acquisition of knowledge and skills; (iii) and the establishment of rural enterprises, including co-operative business activities, market research, business linkages and joint ventures (CBRDP Implementation Manual 2006; CBRDP Annual Reports 2006-2010).

IV. Infrastructure for social and human development

Many of the projects studied fell in this category. It provided sums for rehabilitating and improving existing rural community educational structures and constructing new community health compounds and nutrition centres. It aimed at constructing health compounds for the community health planning services, rehabilitating nutrition centres in association with the World Food Program; and also potable water and sanitation facilities for rural communities (CBRDP Implementation Manual 2006; CBRDP Annual Reports 2006-2010).

V. Community- based natural resource management

The last component prepared natural resources management plans in DAs, ACs and local communities' in collaboration with relevant public agencies including the Environmental Protection Agency, Savannah Resources Management Centre, Ministries of Food and Agriculture, Lands and Forestry and the Wildlife Division. It also targeted establishing tree and tree-crop nurseries for the production of seedlings, adoption of soil and water conservation measures, control of bush fires, and establishment of wood lots, rehabilitation of critically degraded watershed areas to ensure regular flow of water and effective management and use of water resources. Finally, the component sought to provide incentive schemes to natural resource collectors, processors and traders, wood carvers, traditional medical practitioners, wildlife traders and breeders and rural eco-tourism operators, excluding loggers, to increase income earning capacities of beneficiaries and provide skills to the rural unemployed (CBRDP Implementation Manual 2006; Annual Reports 2006-2010).

VI. Project Management

This component was more administrative. It financially supported the management and implementation of the five components above in areas such as technical assistance and services to communities to prepare development and investment plans, feasibility studies, detailed engineering designs, procurement, supervision contracts and monitoring (CBRDP Implementation Manual 2006; Annual Reports 2006-2010).

APPENDIX B: Questionnaire

EDITH COWAN UNIVERSITY
SCHOOL OF PSYCHOLOGY & SOCIAL SCIENCE
JOONDALUP CAMPUS, WESTERN AUSTRALIA

QUESTIONNAIRE FOR CBRDP BENEFICIARY LOCALITIES

This study, funded by the above University, aims at understanding how theories and concepts impact on aid funded development projects. The questionnaire is meant to elicit information on what you know about the CBRDP, your involvement in local initiatives as well as the functions of the Assembly and Unit Committee Members. There are seven questions in all and will take fifteen to twenty minutes to complete. It is meant for purely academic purposes. You are assured of confidentiality; however you may withdraw from answering any question that makes you feel insecure.

Locality.....Project Type.....
Age.....Gender.....
Religion.....Marital status.....
No of Children.....Profession.....

1. How long have you lived in this locality?.....

2. What are the five most important needs in this locality?

.....
.....
.....

3. What do you know about the CBRD Project?.....

.....
.....
.....

4. What did you contribute towards the implementation of the CBRDP?

.....
.....
.....
.....

5. Do you take attend local meetings? If yes what issues are discussed often?

If No why?

.....
.....
.....
.....
.....

6. How do you rate the function of your Assembly and Unit Committee Members?

.....
.....
.....
.....
.....

7. Could you identify some causes of developmental problems in this locality?

.....
.....
.....
.....
.....

APPENDIX C: Permission to Study the CBRDP



Joondalup Campus
270 Joondalup Drive, Joondalup
Western Australia 6127
Telephone 134328
Facsimile (08) 93001257

August 03, 2010

To:
The Country Director
CBRDP-Ghana
Accra, Ghana

Dear Sir/Madam,

PERMISSION TO USE YOUR COMMUNITY-BASED RURAL DEVELOPMENT PROJECT

I am a Ghanaian and a PhD student in the above named university. As part of my research on 'Communities and International Development Aid', I am expected to carry out fieldwork to collect data on an Aid funded development project. I am greatly interested in your Community-based Rural Development Project funded by the World Bank that I would use as a case study to inform theory and practice in International Development Studies. I am by this letter asking for permission to use the project for the study and also obtain relevant documents. These will be used to produce an academic thesis, which will incorporate your organization's views on some of the issues that may emerge out of the communities who are involved in the above-mentioned project.

I am due to arrive in Ghana in 26 August, 2010 and collect the data until March 31st 2011. I would be grateful if this is granted.

I count on your cooperation.

Please contact me with any further questions.

Sincerely Yours,
Kwadwo Adusei-Asante
PhD Candidate
School of Psychology and Social Science
Edith Cowan University
Joondalup Campus
Ph 61 0404509736
Kaduseia@our.ecu.edu.au

APPENDIX D: Letter of Introduction from the CBRDP



COMMUNITY-BASED RURAL DEVELOPMENT PROJECT

RURAL INFRASTRUCTURE CO-ORDINATING UNIT

MINISTRY OF LOCAL GOVERNMENT & RURAL DEVELOPMENT

Your Ref:

Our Ref:

Tel: 233 21 770246

Fax: 233 21 770247

P. O. Box CT 3742

Cantonments

Accra

3rd September, 2010

The Zonal Co-ordinator

Zone 4

Accra.

Dear Sir,

INTRODUCTORY LETTER MR. KWADWO ADUSEI-ASANTE

Bearer, Mr. Kwadwo Adusei-Asante is a PhD candidate of the School of Psychology and Social Sciences in the Faculty of Computing Health and Science of the Edith Cowan University in Australia. He is carrying out a Research Study in Rural Development and has chosen to use the CBRDP as a case study.

He is therefore being referred to you for your assistance in carrying out the studies in the three regions of your Zone.

Yours faithfully,

(B.M. OPPONG)

NATIONAL CO-ORDINATOR

**APPENDIX E: Letter of Introduction from the Edith Cowan
University**



Joondalup Campus
270 Joondalup Drive, Joondalup
Western Australia 6127
Telephone 134328
Facsimile (08) 93001257

August 15, 2010

TO WHOM IT MAY CONCERN

LETTER OF INTRODUCTION: KWADWO ADUSEI-ASANTE (10136963)

The above named person is a PhD student at our university. I am his Principal Supervisor. He is on an Australian Doctoral Scholarship and as part of his proposed research on how theories and complex concepts influence foreign aid outcomes. He will be carrying out fieldwork to collect data in Ghana (September 2010-March 2011) using the Community-Based Rural Development Projects (CBRDP) as a case study. The data collected will be used to produce an academic thesis. I would be grateful if you could offer him the assistance he needs.

We count on your cooperation. Please contact me with any further questions.

Sincerely Yours,

Dr Peter Hancock
Senior Lecturer
School of Psychology and Social Science
Edith Cowan University
Joondalup Campus
Ph 61 8 6304 5804
Fax 61 8 6304 5957
p.hancock@ecu.edu.au

**APPENDIX F: Permission to Obtain Secondary Data from Ghana's
Ministry of Finance and Economic Planning**



Joondalup Campus
270 Joondalup Drive, Joondalup
Western Australia 6127
Telephone 134328
Facsimile (08) 93001257

January 27, 2010

The Hon Minister of Finance
Ministry of Finance and Economic Planning
Accra

ATTN:
The Chief Director
Ministry of Finance and Economic Planning
Accra

Dear Sir/Madam,

REQUEST FOR SECONDARY DATA ON AID TRENDS IN GHANA

I am a Ghanaian postgraduate student at the Edith Cowan University, Perth in Western Australia. My research focus is on International Development, particularly how theories and concepts impact on aid funded projects.

Currently, I am collecting data on a World Bank funded project in Ghana for my thesis. To produce a good one, I would need to provide some background information on aid trends in the country. I am therefore by this letter kindly requesting your good offices to provide me with some secondary data on:

- 1) The history of Ghana-World Bank Relations
- 2) The trend and quantum of ODA/Foreign Aid in Ghana from 1980-2010 by:
 - Net ODA or official aid
 - Aid per capita
 - Aid as a % of GNI
 - Net ODA as a % of government expenditure

I am counting on your cooperation.

Regards.

Sincerely Yours
Kwadwo Adusei-Asante
(ECU DETAILS)