TOWARDS EFFECTIVE PARTICIPATION OF CHIEFS IN GHANA'S DECENTRALIZATION PROCESS: THE CASE OF WENCHI DISTRICT

by

JOSEPH TAABAZUING

Submitted in accordance with the requirements for the
degree of

DOCTOR OF LITERATURE AND PHILOSOPHY

in the subject of

DEVELOPMENT STUDIES

at the

UNIVERSITY OF SOUTH AFRICA

PROMOTER: DR. STEPHAN P. TREURNICHT

APRIL, 2010

DECLARATION

I, Joseph Taabazuing, author of this thesis, do hereby declare that the work presented in this document entitled: "TOWARDS EFFECTIVE PARTICIPATION OF CHIEFS IN GHANA'S DECENTRALIZATION PROCESS: THE CASE OF WENCHI DISTRICT", is a result of my own research and independent work except where reference is made to published literature. I also hereby certify that the work embodied in this thesis has not already been submitted, either in whole or in part, for any other degree in this University or other institute of higher learning.

.... ……………………………..
JOSEPH TAABAZUING **DATE**

PROMOTER:

………………………………..
DR. STEPHAN TREURNICHT

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

ABSTRACT

This study explores the interactive process between decentralized structures and traditional authorities in Wenchi district, with a view to generating lessons and insights that can guide the recommendation of a more appropriate decentralization framework to tap the strengths of traditional authorities towards accelerated rural development. Within the framework of action research methodology, mixed-methods were used to triangulate findings and enhance research rigour. Specific methods employed were focus group discussions (FGDs), in-depth interviews (IDIs), and observation, complemented by context analyses of relevant documents. It was found that the interactive processes between traditional authorities and decentralized structures are characterized mainly by competition for power and legitimacy, leading to mistrust and an inability to take advantage of the synergy effect between the two systems of local governance in accomplishing accelerated rural development. Key recommendations are that traditional authorities should not be fused with the decentralized structures, but should remain as countervailing institutions to check the misuse of power by the decentralized structures. However, traditional authorities should be given the ceremonial role of the right to address meetings of the District Assembly and the Area Councils. Additionally, chiefs should be given the chance to nominate at least two people onto the Unit Committees.

KEY WORDS: decentralization, development, devolution, development culture, field administration, traditional authorities, culture, institutions, action research, participation.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

LIST OF TABLES

LIST OF FIGURES

LIST OF ACRONYMS

FGD   Focus Group Discussion

DA   District Assembly
DACF   District Assembly Common Fund
DADU   District Agricultural Development Unit
DCD   District Coordinating Director
DCE   District Chief Executive
DFR   Department of Feeder Roads
DMTDP   District Medium Term Development Plan
DPCU   District Planning Coordinating Unit
PPO   District Planning Officer
GLSS   Ghana Living Standards Survey
GTZ   German Technical Cooperation
IFAD   International Fund for Agricultural Development
IFPRI   International Food policy Research Institute
IIED   International Institute for Environment and Development
ILO   International Labour Organization
ISGP   Institute for Studies in Global Prosperity
MLGRDE   Ministry of Local Government, Rural Development and Environment
MOFA   Ministry of Food and Agriculture
MoH   Ministry of Health
NDPC   National Development Planning Commission
NGO   Non- Governmental Organisation
NIEO   New International Economic Order
PM   Presiding Member
PNDC   Provisional National Defense Council
TA   Traditional Authority
UC   Unit Committee
WDA   Wenchi District Assembly

CHAPTER ONE

1.0   RESEARCH OUTLINE

1.1   Introduction

This chapter outlines the research design for this thesis. It provides some background information on Ghana's efforts in relation to decentralization, and highlights the weak interface with the system of traditional governance. This has had a negative effect on the decentralization process. The chapter also outlines my motivation for the study, the research problem and the key research objectives. There is also a brief delineation of the research methodology and a chapter outline.

There is growing global interest in decentralization 'because of its identification with such benefits like development, popular participation, accountability, responsiveness, effectiveness, equity and stability' (Ayee 1994: 11). Even though Ghana's attempt at local self-government or decentralization has a long history, evolving from 'indigenous rule' (Rattray 1929: 62-70) to 'territorial and local councils' (Zanu 1996: 1), the major attempt at real decentralization started in 1988 with the promulgation of Provisional National Defense Council (PNDC) Law 207, which is now superseded by the Local Government Act (Act 462) of 1993.

 Ghana's attempts at decentralization since independence have not generated the desired benefits. This is due to various reasons such as inadequate competent personnel, negative attitudes, poor co-ordination, reluctance of central government to devolve power to the districts, as well as the inability of local government law to define the roles and functions of the various actors, resulting in conflicts in the decentralization implementation process (Zanu 1996; Ayee 2000; USAID 2003; Crawford 2004; IFPRI, 2009). The discourse on the poor functioning of the district assemblies in Ghana often overlooks the possible clash of different world views and power dynamics between traditional authorities and decentralized structures. Decentralized administration in Ghana, as is the case with many other bureaucracies in Africa, is to a large extent influenced by Western ideas and values

like rationalism, individualism, positivism, and a technocratic approach to development (Ogwo and Andranovich 2005: 134). Such values may be inconsistent with the traditional value system and world view. Consequently, the interaction between the decentralized structures and traditional authorities is likely to generate conflict and a clash of world views, something which obviously has implications for local development. This situation has not engaged sufficient research attention in the past. Even though Ayee (1994) reported conflicts among traditional authorities and decentralized structures, his study did not examine the wider interactive processes among these two systems of local governance, highlighting the underlying factors that strengthen or weaken their relationships.

Furthermore, decentralization, especially devolution, is co-extensive with shifts in power relations among the various actors which might influence the type and quality of decentralization. For example, central government may be reluctant to opt for devolution for fear of losing power or control. Similarly, the decentralized units at higher levels will also be reluctant to transfer resources and power to lower-level structures. Additionally, elected assembly members may like to exert their power and authority in the locality, which may be challenged by the traditional authorities in their desire to have more power over their subjects. Such conflicts reflect the diverse interests of groups competing for power and scarce resources, and this can be detrimental to local area development efforts. Various authors have commented on this trend (Crook 2003; Berry 2004; Falleti 2005). Such power dynamics are part and parcel of the local development culture, but their implications for decentralization and development are poorly understood.

There is general consensus among many writers that, as the main custodians of culture and because they wield so much influence at the local level, traditional authorities in Africa should be brought in to play a greater role in local development (Ray 2003; Sharma 2003; Kendie and Guri 2004; Alhassan 2006; Abotchie 2006). The literature, however, is silent as to the appropriate institutional framework or conditions to effectively tap the potential of traditional authorities in the development process, especially within the context of decentralization, where the decentralized structures are

expected to be agents of local development. It is this knowledge gap that this study seeks to redress by exploring the development implications of an interactive process between traditional authorities and local government structures. Based on this process, an appropriate institutional framework could be recommended to utilize the development potential and strengths of traditional authorities in Ghana's decentralization process. The relevance of this kind of study, which seeks to improve functional collaboration between decentralized structures and indigenous social structures like traditional authorities, is reflected by Jutting (2003: 7) as follows:

> "Research that finds solutions to improve the links between existing indigenous social structures and formal institutional set-ups such as governance structures would not only address a currently under researched area, but also promise to yield highly relevant policy results."

In Ghana, traditional rule finds expression in religious leaders, lineage headship and chieftaincy. Chieftaincy is, however, the fullest expression of traditional rule (Assimeng 1996; Ray 2003). Traditional authorities in this study are referred to by the generic name of "chiefs" (Ray 2003: 2).

1.2 Motivation for the study

Two main reasons motivated me to undertake this study. My first motivation stems from my rural background, having been born and bred in a rural area and witnessed the situation of many rural people deteriorate over the years, despite the promise of decentralization to improve their lot. I have witnessed misunderstanding and difficult relationships between district assembly structures and traditional authorities, apparently due to their different world views and power dynamics which are poorly understood. In my view, such a dysfunctional relationship between traditional authorities and decentralized structures could be one of the major factors militating against the ability of decentralization to deliver the promise of improved living conditions for the rural poor. This experience gives me a strong desire to contribute to the search for more effective mechanisms of addressing rural poverty. As a point of entry, I have chosen to investigate the institutional structures and processes that govern the lives of the rural poor, since the quality and performance of institutions have a positive correlation with development outcomes (Jutting 2003; Jain 2007: 21). I am of the view that rural development and

poverty reduction take place in a political and institutional context which might not always be favourable, and changing or transforming such structures could accelerate rural development (Pearse and Stiefel 1979; Hettne 1982). This dimension of development has not been conspicuous in past efforts, as the emphasis tends to be on technical issues to the detriment of organizational and social processes. It is therefore a grey area which merits research attention.

My second motivation is rooted in my previous professional practice as a development worker. During my fifteen years working with the development wing of the Catholic Church of Ghana, I have come across many failed development projects initiated by various district assemblies or government agencies, partly due to inadequate involvement of the traditional authority of the area. A classic example was a building project in a village to process cassava into '*gari*' that was stopped by the village chief because he controlled the land and had not been consulted before the project was started by the district assembly. Since then, I have not been in any doubt that traditional authorities have tremendous influence and potential in promoting rural development if properly engaged. This thinking is shared by Kendie and Guri (2004) and Abotchie (2006). The inability of Ghana's decentralization efforts to recognize and tap into this development potential of the traditional authorities may be due to inadequate knowledge of the workings and capacities of these traditional authorities, as well as of their proper role in the decentralization process. This study seeks to fill this gap.

Focusing my research on rural development and poverty reduction may be justified by the fact that the majority of Ghanaians (57.8%) still live in rural areas (Ghana Census report, 2000). The incidence of poverty is also higher in rural areas than in urban areas. The Ghana Living Standards Survey (GLSS) of 2000 reported that the incidence of poverty in rural areas is 49.5 % as compared to 19.4 % in urban areas. The district assemblies directly reach and serve the rural people better than central government. This implies that if the district assemblies are working well they will better serve a large portion of the population and address poverty more effectively than central government.

Furthermore, the significance of this study lies in the fact that harmonizing various social forces in society is shown to be crucial. Certain sustainable development efforts have downplayed this social dimension in favour of strong technological approaches**.** This study, which seeks to generate a better understanding of the interactions and relationships between Wenchi district assembly structures and traditional authorities, has merit in the sense that it will provide the basis for building healthier social relations at local level, something which is critical for accelerated and sustainable rural development.

1.3   Problem Statement

In Ghana, there are two parallel local governance systems at district level, namely:

- The district assembly structures, designed along the lines of the British functional model of field administration, with its attendant bureaucracy and poor co-ordination in the field, and deriving legitimacy from democracy and constitutional legality.
- Traditional authorities, modeled on tradition, and deriving their legitimacy from custom and sacredness which predate the conventional system of governance.

The decentralized system is largely influenced by Western values like rationalism, technocratic approach to development and individualism, which may be at variance with traditional values like consensus building, communalism and peaceful co-existence even at the expense of economic gain. Consequently, the two systems of local governance, with different worldviews and power bases, interact with each other and with the community in various ways which have implications for local development but which are poorly understood. As a result, Ghana's decentralization process could not effectively tap into the traditional governance system, leading to frequent conflicts and lack of synergy between the district assembly structures and traditional authorities, thereby stifling local development. Even though there is growing recognition in Ghana of the need to tap the development potential of chiefs by involving them in the decentralization process, there is no clarity as to how far they should be involved and under what conditions this could be done to optimize the benefits.

The search for an appropriate institutional framework for Ghana's decentralization process to effectively tap the potential of traditional authorities is reflected in a speech by the Minister of Local Government, Rural Development and Environment, Hon. Asamoah Boateng, during a consultative workshop on 'the interface of the traditional political system and decentralized local government structures', held in Kumasi, Ghana, on 12th December 2006. The Minister summed up the problem as follows:

> "The local government sector had long realized the importance of the chieftaincy institution for achieving effective local governance, but has been pondering over how to achieve a systematic and sustainable way of harmonizing the two systems".

The search for such an institutional framework for Ghana's decentralization process to tap into the potential of the traditional authority system requires systematic and scholarly studies, which have not attracted the necessary research attention in the past. The focus of this study is to fill this knowledge gap. The work of Magomero (2004) further illustrates the need for a study of this nature where he assesses the rural development role of traditional authorities within the decentralization process in Malawi.

The main problem of this research is to assess the development implications of the interactive processes between the Wenchi district assembly structures and traditional authorities, as a basis for suggesting how to effectively involve traditional authorities in Ghana's decentralization process.

1.4   Objectives of the Study

In relation to the research problem, the main objective of this study is to generate better understanding of the interactive processes between traditional authorities and decentralized structures in Wenchi district, as a basis for suggesting how to effectively involve traditional authorities in the decentralization process to accomplish accelerated rural development.

The specific objectives of this study are:

i. To analyse and document the functioning of the Wenchi district assembly, as well as the traditional authority systems, highlighting their development strengths, potentials and weaknesses;

ii. To assess the development implications of the interactive processes between Wenchi district assembly structures (assembly members, area council members and unit committee members) and traditional authorities (paramount chiefs, divisional chiefs and village chiefs);

iii. To identify and study specific cases in Wenchi district where there are either conflicts or harmonious features in the relationship between traditional authorities and district assembly structures so as to generate lessons to guide efforts seeking to promote collaboration between decentralized structures and traditional authorities in the decentralization process;

iv. To recommend a more appropriate institutional framework for the effective participation of chiefs in the decentralization process towards accelerated local area development.

1.5   Key research questions

A further elaboration of the objectives is captured in the following key research questions that guided this study:

i. How do the district assembly structures and traditional authorities interact within the current decentralization process, and why do they interact the way they do?

ii. How do the various interactive processes or lack of interaction, between the district assembly structures and traditional authorities affect development issues at the local level?

iii. What kind of institutional framework will promote functional collaboration and synergy between traditional authorities and district assembly structures?

1.6   Delimitation of the Study

The study is limited to Wenchi district for two reasons:

- It is one of the oldest local government units in Ghana and therefore has well established district structures and traditional authority systems that can be studied.

- The researcher is very familiar with this district as he has stayed there before and speaks the local language. Knowledge of the district and my ability to speak the inhabitants' local dialect facilitated the research process.

Villages visited in order to conduct the study were Awisa, Nchira, Agubie, Ayigbe, Wurumpo, Tainso, Adamu, Buoko, Nkonsia, Branam, Konoware and Koase.   These villages were randomly selected from the list of villages with unit committees as explained in page 141, under sampling. A map of the area is provided in chapter 4.

In terms of content, and to keep the specific focus, the study does not extend to other forms of traditional authority such as religious leaders and lineage headship. This is because chieftaincy is the dominant form of traditional authority in Ghana (Assimeng 1996).

This study limits the assessment of the functioning of decentralized structures and traditional authority systems in terms of three criteria that are universally acknowledged as staples of good governance and rural development. These criteria are:

- **Participation:** Evidenced by the existence of mechanisms to capture different shades of opinions and views in the decision-making process (OECD 2004; Smith 2007).
- **Fairness:** By examining if there are any discriminatory tendencies against women and minority groups; transparency of rules and by-laws; evidence of impartial and effective enforcement of by-laws or rules established by a District Assembly or chieftaincy institution (Rao 2000; Bergeron 2006: 60; Todaro and Smith 2006: 16).
- **Accountability:** Existence of checks and balances to prevent abuse of power, as well as the ability of citizens to access information that concerns them (Merat 2004: 250;

Chanie 2007: 356; Stokes 2007: 1). The focus here is to examine "who is accountable to whom, for what, and how effective is such an accountability system?"

Furthermore, the focus of analysis related to decentralization in this study is limited to the period of Ghana's Fourth Republic, that is, from 1993 to 2009. This choice is based on the fact that the Fourth Republic is characterized by a more systematic and rigorous attempt at decentralization, backed with an elaborate legal framework as reflected in the 1992 Constitution, the Local Government Act of 1993 (Act 462) and the Local Government Establishment Instrument of 1994 (L.I 1589). Even though the Fourth Republic witnessed change of government from the National Democratic Congress (NDC) government to the New Patriotic Party (NPP) government, they both sustained the efforts to deepen Ghana's decentralization process, in line with the legal framework. Consequently, the Fourth Republic has the more elaborate decentralized structures that can easily be studied. Empirical data on this study is limited to the period of 2006 to 2009.

The other key thrust of this research project is to assess the development implications of the interactive processes between the traditional authorities and District Assembly systems. This study understands interactive processes to mean the way the traditional authorities and district assembly structures relate and how they perceive one another. The study takes the position that the quality of interactive processes is influenced by the different world views that people hold, as well as the perceptions they have of each other. Consequently, assessment of interactive processes will be limited to three issues:

- Assessment of how and why the diverse worldviews of traditional authorities and Wenchi district assembly operatives in relation to development and local governance are mediated to promote co-operation, or ignored to generate conflict;

- Assessment of the linkages between, and influence of, key actors within the decentralized structures and traditional authority systems in Wenchi district;

- Assessment of the perceptions the various actors have about each other.

The focus on analyzing the interactive processes of the two systems of local governance finds justification in the fact that relational and group-based processes shape and influence individual aspirations and capabilities, as well as the distribution of power (Rao and Walton 2004: 359).

1.7   Research methodology

In my search for an appropriate methodology to effectively address the research objectives, I have taken note of the extensive debates on the various research paradigms, so that the methodology could be informed by a specific research philosophy. Details of these philosophical reflections are explored in chapter four and, on the basis of this investigation, the study opted for the constructivist paradigm (Cohen and Crabtree 2006; Burgoyne 2009). This research methodology therefore underpins the choice of action research (Scoones and Thompson 1994; Reason and Marshall 1994; Reason and Bradbury 2001; Denzin and Lincoln 2005; Craig 2009; Burgoyne 2009) as the overall methodological approach for the study. Action research seeks to actively involve research participants in the research process, such that their consciousness is raised and there is a commitment to use the research results in an immediate practical manner to improve their situation or bring about desirable social change (Scoones and Thompson 1993; Chambers 1994; Reason and Bradbury 2001; Stringer and Genat 2004; Denzin and Lincoln 2005; Craig 2009). Consequently, the study employed more qualitative methods to generate deeper insights about the complex socio-cultural context (Holland and Campbell 2006: 3) that underpins the interactive processes of decentralized structures and traditional authorities.

 Two main reasons informed my choice of action research as the overall methodology. In the first place, the complexities of socio-cultural issues that this study seeks to investigate cannot be adequately addressed using the dominant quantitative research methodology through questionnaire surveys. In this regard, the study recognizes the complexities of multiple realities and the need for negotiated knowledge production and contextualization of such knowledge (Pottier 2003; Briggs 2005: 103). Secondly, my key interest in this

study is to combine research with development action by actively involving the research participants in such a way that the knowledge jointly generated could extend their understanding of issues and stimulate some desired follow-up actions to improve their situation.

I am aware that action research is a relatively new approach in social research with great value and potential to move forward development research, yet it has its critics who find it limiting in scientific rigour (Scheurich 1992; Pretty 1994). To address some of the concerns relating to action research and to improve the validity of the findings, these were triangulated (Stake 2006: 33) and regular feedback was provided to participants for their validation and the filling of any gaps. Action research was therefore employed in this study in an innovative manner with the introduction of some visual tools to facilitate joint analysis and better understanding of issues, as well as drawing on some quantitative methods where appropriate. Convergence of the two methods was thereby sought in such a way that quantitative data was backed by a qualitative understanding of what the data meant (Beazley and Ennew 2006; Holland and Campbell 2006). By doing so, the study seeks to contribute to advancing the frontiers of action research.

Within the framework of action research methodology, specific methods that were used in a complementary manner were focus group discussions (FGDs), in-depth interviews (IDIs), and observation, complemented by context analyses of relevant documents. Details of the research methodology and the philosophical perspectives that informed the choice of research methods are discussed in chapter four.

1.8   Organization of the Study

The study is organized into eight chapters as outlined below.

Chapter One: Research Outline

Chapter 1 introduces the study and outlines the research design. It captures background information, motivation for the study, problem statement, objectives, delimitation of the study and research methodology.

Chapter Two: Decentralization and its promises: myth or reality.

This chapter discusses theories, debates and dilemmas related to decentralization, with a view of providing deeper insight into the concept of decentralization and its implications for development. The chapter starts with an elaboration of the conceptual understanding of decentralization.   The objectives, potentials and challenges of decentralization are then examined. The chapter also examines decentralization and field administration, highlighting the different forms of field administration and their implications for co-ordination and development. The evolving role of traditional authorities in decentralized administration in Ghana from the pre-colonial era to present times is also traced. Such a literature review will not only provide a theoretical basis for the study, but also enable me to identify gaps in the literature that this study could contribute to filling.

Chapter Three: Development, Culture and Governance in Africa: The Challenges, Prospects and Emerging Trends

This chapter examines the concept 'development' in all its ramifications, both as a goal, which countries or communities strive to attain, and also in terms of a process which involves causal links. This provides the theoretical foundation to examine how the decentralized structures and traditional authorities in Ghana promote or inhibit development. The rationale is that if Ghana's decentralization policy has to be influenced and shaped to deliver the desired results of 'development', then the concept of development has to be thoroughly understood. A significant portion of the chapter is also devoted to a critical review of relevant literature on culture and its place within the theory of development and social action. The chapter highlights the diverse cultural perspectives between Africans and Europeans, who colonized many African countries and tried to inculcate western culture, leading to a clash of world views which still linger today.

Chapter Four: Research Methodology

This chapter provides background information relating to the research area so as to offer contextual appreciation of the findings. It also details the methodology employed in the study, as well as the philosophical perspectives that informed the choice of research methodology. The research process and some of the techniques employed during the study are elaborated.

Chapter Five: Functioning of Wenchi district assembly and traditional authorities

This chapter documents findings related to the functioning of the Wenchi district assembly and traditional authority system. This assessment highlights the strengths and weaknesses of these systems in terms of promoting rural development, so informing any policy review aimed at tapping into the strengths of the traditional authority in Ghana's decentralization process.

Chapter Six: Interactive processes between traditional authorities and district assembly structures and their development implications

This chapter presents the nature and quality of interactions between traditional authorities and district assembly structures. The actor-oriented approach is used here to explore how the different worldviews, values and beliefs of actors within the traditional authority system and decentralized structures interact and are mediated, highlighting possible development implications. The actor linkage diagram (Biggs and Matsaert 2004) was used during the field work to visualize the interactive processes between the traditional governance system and the District Assembly structures. Such visualization facilitated the ability of the study to capture the realities as constructed in the minds of the various actors. This was achieved through relaxed and frank discussions, thereby enhancing the validity of the findings.

The chapter also examined the philosophical understanding of the term "development" from the perspectives of actors from the decentralized structures as well as those within the traditional authority system. The rationale was to discover whether or not there was a shared understanding of this term among the various actors which could provide a basis for collaboration and synergy in the promotion of local area development.

Chapter Seven: Recommendations Towards a More Effective Participation of Chiefs in the Decentralization Process

Based on the findings, this chapter puts forward some recommendations as to how to strengthen the decentralized structures, as well as delineating the appropriate involvement of chiefs in the decentralization process.

Chapter Eight: Summary and Conclusions

This chapter provides a summary of the study and highlights the key conclusions. It recaps the problems and objectives of the thesis and briefly indicates how those objectives are addressed in the study.

1.9   Conclusion

This chapter provided an overview of the study. It outlined the problem driving the study and the objectives. To effectively address the research objectives, the study opted for qualitative research methods so as to generate deeper insights on the interactive processes between traditional authorities and decentralized structures in Wenchi district. The chapter laid the foundation for the study by pulling together pieces of relevant information to provide readers a good overview of the study. The chapter articulated the problem driving the study as the search for better understanding and ways of improving decentralization process in Ghana. The next chapter therefore builds on this foundation by discussing relevant literature on decentralization so as to provide the necessary theoretical foundation.

CHAPTER TWO

2.0 DECENTRALIZATION AND ITS PROMISES OF DEVELOPMENT: MYTH OR REALITY?

Decentralization is recognized as a complex, multi-dimensional process and demands that local government institutions should provide an innovative, transparent and accountable administration along with a participatory political process for alleviating marginalization and poverty (Dauda 2006: 292).

2.1 Introduction

This thesis is informed by the complementary theories of decentralization and development. Relevant literature on these two theoretical constructs is therefore drawn together in this chapter and the next, so as to provide a theoretical foundation for the study, as well as identifying existing gaps in the literature that the study could hope to fill. This chapter discusses some theories, debates and dilemmas related to decentralization, with a view to providing deeper insight into the concept of decentralization and its promise of development. The discussion is supported by some relevant case studies.

The main thrust of this chapter is to:
- Deepen a conceptual understanding of decentralization and contemporary development efforts;
- Review some debates and dilemmas related to decentralization;
- Appraise the contextual issues related to decentralization;
- Trace the historical evolution of decentralization in Ghana, highlighting the changing roles of traditional authorities.

The chapter begins with an elaboration of the conceptual understanding of decentralization in its various forms. The objectives, potential and challenges of decentralization are then examined. The ways in which decentralization is influenced by contextual issues like the prevailing political environment, values and administrative culture are examined, with case studies to buttress the arguments.

Since decentralization, particularly deconcentration and devolution, is rendered operational through field administration, the various types of field administration are examined, with an emphasis on their implications for co-ordination and development. The interplay between field administration and the prevailing political system is then brought to the fore. The chapter also traces the evolving role of traditional authorities in decentralized administration in Ghana from the pre-colonial era to present times.

2.2   The concept and forms of decentralization

Decentralization remains a complex concept and different authors, writing from different angles and disciplines, have attributed different meanings to the term (Visser 2005: 1; Saltman et al, 2007: 1). This divergence is compounded by using broad and narrow definitions of decentralization interchangeably. However, decentralization is generally understood as the transfer of authority and power for public planning, management and administration from central government to lower levels of government, or from national to sub-national levels (Ribot 2001: 5; Crawford 2004: 4; Saltman et al 2007: 10).

Decentralization also involves the delegation of authority and responsibilities for public functions from central government to subordinate or quasi-independent government organizations or the private sector (Rondinelli 1981: 138; Smith 2001:10; Rondinelli 2006:392). The lower- level units to which authority and power are transferred may be one of the following:

    i.   field units of central government ministries or agencies,

    ii.   local government units,

    iii. semi-autonomous public authorities or corporations,

    iv. area-wide regional or functional authorities, or

    v.   organizations of the private and voluntary sector.

Depending on the nature of power transferred from central government to lower levels, various forms of decentralization may be identified. However, there is little agreement in the literature as to the different characteristics and forms of decentralization.

Nevertheless, Rondinelli's model whereby decentralization is separated into four types, namely; deconcentration, devolution, delegation and privatization (Rondinelli 1981: 138; Buthelezi 2007: 51) remains the most frequently cited conceptual framework in the field (Kaufman 1997: 172; UNDP 1997: 16; Bankauskaite and Saltman 2007: 2). According to Rondinelli (1981:139), the forms of decentralization are like a continuum, depending on the level of power transferred, as well as the nature of the institutional arrangement. This is depicted in Figure 2.1.

Figure 2.1: Forms of decentralization as a continuum

Minimum Power Delegation
(Centralization)

Maximum Power Delegation
(Decentralization)

Deconcentration   Delegation   Privatization   Devolution
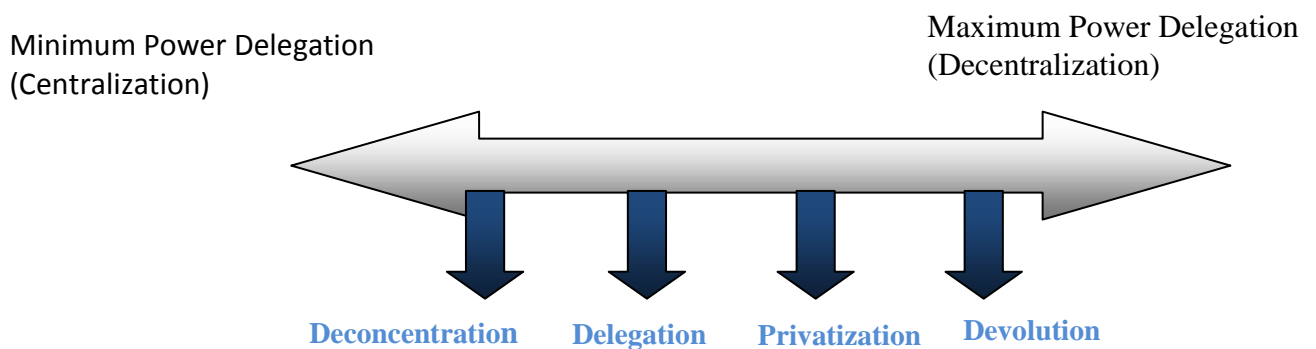
Adapted from Rondinelli 1981.

Figure 2.1 captures Rondinelli's conceptualization of decentralization in a continuum of 'centralization-decentralization', or minimum and maximum power delegation from the centre to the periphery. The left- and right-hand sides of the continuum are polar ends that do not exist in the real world, since extreme devolution would wither away the state, whereas total centralization would make it impossible for the state to function (Fesler 1968: 371, and Hutchcroft 2001: 31). Towards the centralized end of the continuum one finds deconcentration, with devolution at the decentralized end. In the middle are privatization and delegation. The utility of the continuum lies in its ability to capture variations in the forms of decentralization. A critical question which arises is: what is the appropriate level of control that should be exercised by central government on the decentralized units? The answer may be context specific.

Building on Rondinelli's conceptualization of decentralization, Smith (2001) added a fifth theoretical construct called partnership. However, he visualized the five forms of decentralization not as a continuum, but based on the nature of the relationship between the central administration and the organization or unit to which the responsibilities and resources had been transferred, as well as on the objectives of the transfer (Figure 2.2).

Figure 2.2: Forms of decentralization based on nature of the relationship
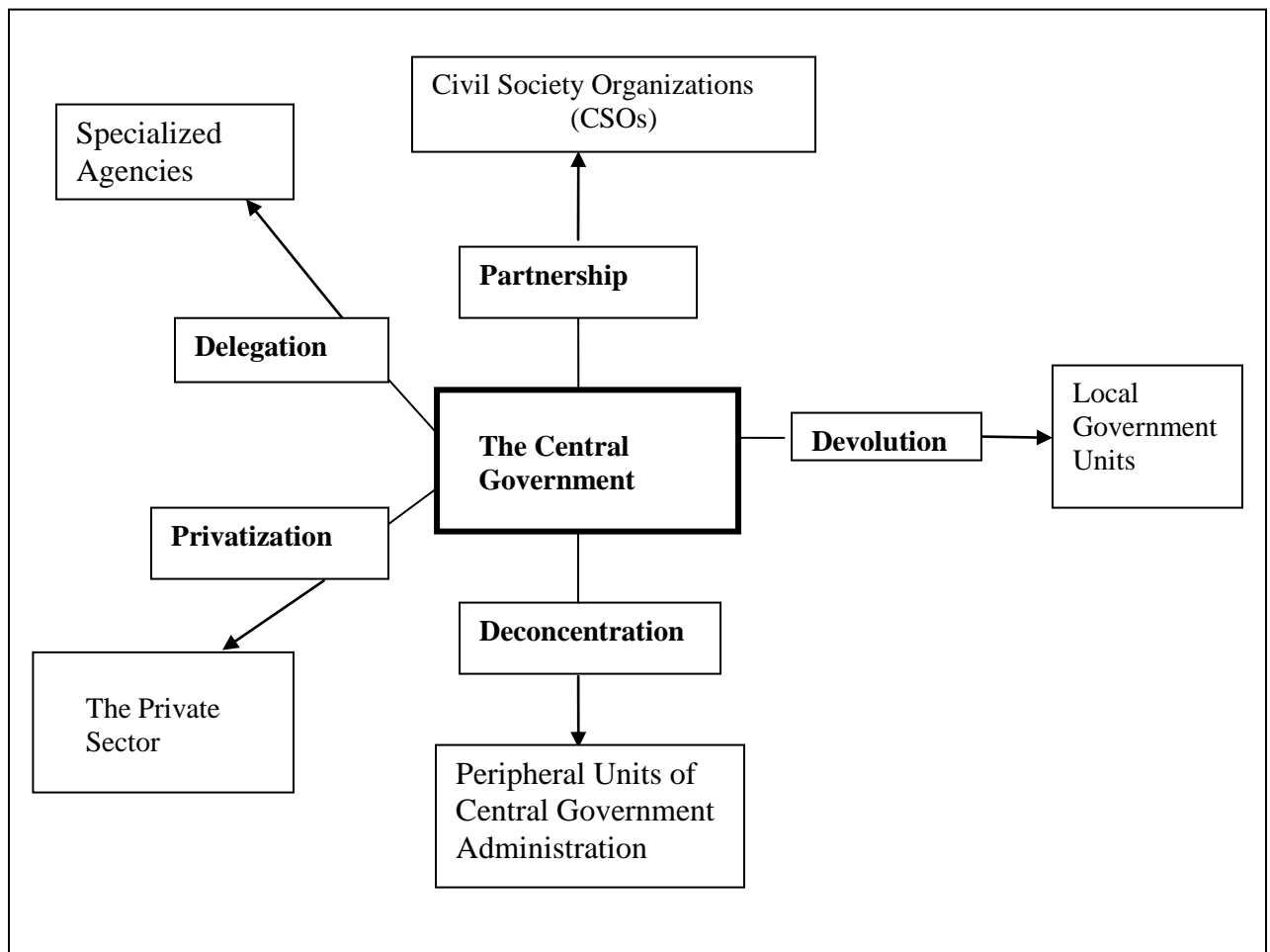
Source: Smith 2001

As illustrated in Figure 2.2, Smith (2001) identifies five forms of decentralization as:

- **Devolution**, where power and responsibilities are shifted from central government to local government units;

- **Deconcentration**, where the work load is shifted from central government Ministries, Departments and Agencies to staff in peripheral units without sufficient authority for autonomous action;
- **Privatization,** whereby central government transfers responsibilities for the performance of certain tasks to the private sector;
- **Delegation**, where central government transfers some functions to specialized semi-autonomous agencies;
- **Partnership,** where there is collaboration between central government and some civil society organizations in the execution of certain functions.

The major difference between the typology of decentralization as advanced by Smith and Rondinelli is that the latter visualizes the various types of decentralization to be a continuum, whilst the former visualizes them as existing in their own right without any order of strength. Smith's arguments make sense, in that it is difficult to arrange some forms of decentralization like privatization and delegation based on their level of power. It is rather context-specific, as government could, in some situations, offer more power and autonomy to a delegated entity than a private entity or vice versa, depending on the particular situation. It is therefore problematic to arrange such forms of decentralization on a continuum based on the level of power transfer as proposed by Rondinelli. Rondinelli's typology of decentralization is therefore based on value-laden assumptions, like the perception of a kind of progression when the process shifts from one category to the next, with devolution being the preferred outcome. His typology, however, has value in terms of being systematic and well structured.

The various forms of decentralization are examined below, highlighting their development potential and challenges.

2.2.1 Devolution as the ultimate criterion for decentralization

Devolution implies the creation of autonomous government entities or units, like the District Assemblies, with sufficient decision-making powers to operate in specific geographical areas without much reference to, or interference from, central government,

which only offers indirect supervisory control (Habibi et al. 2003: 75; Olowu and Wunsch 2004). Consequently, devolution is also referred to as political decentralization as it involves substantial political and constitutional reforms that strengthen the political autonomy of sub-national governments (Falleti 2005: 329).

The results of devolution are mixed. Those who favour devolution argue that it empowers citizens to participate effectively in decisions that affect them, thereby ensuring that decisions and resource allocations are responsive both to their needs and to changing realities (OECD 2004; Smith 2007). Besides, devolution brings public service closer to the local people, thereby increasing transparency, accountability and the response capacity of government institutions, as well as making service delivery quicker than would have been the case from central government (Crook and Sverrisson 2001; Saito 2001; Wunsch 2001; Ribbot 2002; Jain 2007). For example, studies on devolution of power for natural resource management in India and Asia by Osmani (2001) and Suzuki (2005) respectively led to the establishment of empowered local resource user-groups who effectively managed these natural resources. By improving the natural resource base in this way, rural livelihoods may be enhanced, since poor people depend on natural resources for their livelihoods. Furthermore, after evaluating the impact of political devolution of health services in the United Kingdom from 1999 to 2002, Jervis and Plowden (2003) reported improved efficiency and better implementation of health care strategies based on need. Other writers have reported positive development outcomes in Uganda as a result of devolution of power to the local level (Crook 2003; Mitchinson 2003; Olowu 2003; Wunch and Ottemoeller 2004)

On the other hand, there are risks associated with devolution such as distributional conflicts (Treisman 1999), sub-national authoritarianism (Cornelius et al 1999) and exacerbation of patronage (Samuels 2003), as well as an elitist monopoly of the political system and resources (Chinsinger 2007; Stokes 2007), especially in countries where monitoring processes are poorly developed. Devolution may jeopardize equity in national resource distribution, since a more well-endowed area may keep all its resources from less endowed communities. Hence redistribution aimed at regional equity is best achieved

through national intervention rather than through devolution (Visser 2006: 35). Devolution may also promote more loyalty to local government or province than to the state, thereby jeopardizing national unity (Juting and Kauffmann 2004; Visser 2006). In multi-ethnic societies which proliferate in many African countries, secession cannot be ruled out. Also, the danger of devolution leading to elite monopolies, corruption and patronage is real, since monitoring and supervision from the national level, which often acts as a check, will be minimized. For example, in Bangladesh, the introduction of elected local councils resulted in a monopoly of power on the part of local elites who did little to address the concerns of the poor (Hulms and Siddiquee 1999; Wood 2000; Curtis 2002). Indeed, Juting and Kauffmann (2004) argue that some level of central government support is necessary in order for devolution to be effective.

The various debates on devolution suggest that its outcomes, in terms of good governance and effective rural development, greatly depend on the context and how the devolved power is used at the decentralized level. If such power is used in a flexible and participatory manner, then rural development will be enhanced (Smith 2007). Furthermore, the assumption that devolution will necessarily lead to citizen participation in decisions that affect them and promote accountability may not be true, unless the people are willing and have the capacity to participate (Devas and Grant 2003; USAID 2003). Indeed, studies by Devas and Grant (2003: 315) in Kenya and Uganda indicate that before participation and accountability can function effectively, the capacity of both local government and civil society organizations needs to be strengthened. Consequently, in a situation of limited administrative and civil society capacities at the local level, which is a common feature in many African countries, extreme devolution may not be suitable. Nevertheless, devolution has an inherent potential for good governance and rural development and it is incumbent on us continually to search for ways to tap into this potential in a balanced manner, without compromising the need for national unity, equity and accountability.

2.2.2 Deconcentration and the challenges of having responsibilities without sufficient authority

Deconcentration or administrative decentralization involves a shifting of the workload from central Government Ministries, Departments and Agencies to staff at the level of sub-national units, without providing sufficient authority or power for autonomous action (Rondinelli et al 1984; Haroldo 1997: 172; Hutchroft 2001: 30; Ahwoi 2006: 11). In some cases, a limited amount of decision-making power is given to field staff, but the central government or line ministries usually retain the authority for policies, resource allocation and supervision of field staff. Deconcentration has been described as the weakest form of decentralization (Rondinelli 1981; Cloete 1988; Hutchroft 2001). Nevertheless, this form of decentralization is popular in Africa, possibly due to the political culture of elitism and bureaucratic control that many African countries inherited from their colonial history (Lauer 2007). The fear of dispersal of political power makes many African governments reluctant to devolve power to the local level, and this has negative implications for local development.

At the extreme end of deconcentration, where there is very little power transfer to the local level, rural development is planned from the centre and given to the decentralized staff to implement. They are also required to submit regular reports. Problems arising from implementation of the project have to be dealt with at head office. This approach not only causes delays in project implementation, but also prevents the project from adjusting to local realities that can generate better results. Besides, deconcentration results in a weakening of accountability in the lower echelons due to an over-concentration of power at the top, with inadequate mechanisms available to those in lower positions for demanding accountability from the top (Crawford 2004). Using the case of Ghana, Crawford (2004) reported that the appointment of key decision makers in Ghana's decentralization process, like the District Chief Executive and some Assembly Members, resulted in the tendency of these appointees to be accountable to the appointing authority, the President, but not to the local people they were serving. The desire of these appointees to retain their positions tends to make them take decisions by which they

demonstrate obeisance to the President and the ruling political party, even if this is not in the interest of the local people.

As argued by Turner (2002: 354), deconcentration does not provide the full range of benefits theoretically attached to devolution but, in practical terms, a well planned and properly implemented deconcentration process could bring worthwhile development returns. For example, if deconcentration is implemented by giving a higher degree of authority to field staff, with the centre still exercising a supervisory and monitoring role, the outcomes could be good. Besides, no matter what the level of power transfer in deconcentration might be, there is always some level of flexibility for field action. Much depends on the attitude of the field staff and their willingness to work for the common good rather than out of self-interest. Consequently, the potential benefits of deconcentration are largely managerial. Indeed, Turner (2002: 353) reported greater development gains from deconcentration than devolution in Columbia (where the government experimented with the two forms of decentralization) due to varying contextual issues like attitudes of field staff and institutional arrangements.

2.2.3   Delegation as a means of circumventing government bureaucracy

Delegation involves the transfer of responsibilities for specifically defined functions to some parastatal agencies that are technically and administratively capable of performing them (Rondinelli 1981: 138; Visser 2005: 6). These may include autonomous project implementation units, regional development corporation, and parastatals or public corporations. Such organizations are semi-autonomous and do not fall under the regular bureaucratic structures of government. However, government usually oversees the operations of these organizations. Delegation is sometimes described as 'Pseudo-decentralization' because it is often motivated by administrative convenience aimed at reducing the work load at the capital. As shown in figure 2.2 above, delegation represents a greater means of decentralization than deconcentration, but still falls short of devolution.

23

Manor (1995: 81) and Visser (2005: 6) contend that delegation is a variation of deconcentration, since both involve the transfer of responsibilities to parastatal units. This view cannot be sustained because in the case of deconcentration the transfer of responsibilities is within the hierarchy of national government, whilst in the case of delegation the transfer of responsibility lies outside the hierarchy of national government.

Delegation may minimize the bureaucracy typical of government agencies, and thus facilitate faster service delivery in a flexible manner. However, in the absence of effective controls and monitoring in countries like Ghana, delegation may reinforce corruption and worsen service delivery (Smith 2007).

2.2.4   Privatization and the surrounding controversies

In privatization, central government transfers responsibility for the performance of certain tasks to organizations in the private sector. This may be in the form of allowing private enterprises to produce specific goods or services instead of the parastatals or public corporations which were originally in charge of providing them (Rondinelli et al 1984: 23; Savas, 2000). The most common form of privatization is the divestment of state-owned enterprises to private business concerns.

For example, in Ghana, the marketing of grain was previously done by the state through the Food Marketing Board. However, this function has, since the 1990s, been relinquished by government and outsourced to private business concerns. Warehouses and other properties belonging to this state company and located in various parts of the country were divested through competitive bidding. Privatization may also take the form of allowing professional bodies to handle issues related to admission into a particular profession, as well as regulating the conduct of its members (Rondinelli et al 1984; Kotze 1997; Rondinelli 1999). An example is the Ghana Medical Association which regulates the professional conduct of medical doctors.

The inclusion of privatization as a type of decentralization has generated debate. Collins and Green (1994) contend that privatization cannot be considered as a form of decentralization. They argue that, as a concept, decentralization connotes the transfer of some functions and authority from central government entities to sub-government units, which implies a partnership between public entities (intergovernmental). Under privatization, on the other hand, the state completely relinquishes the particular functions to the private sector under the influence of market forces which Bennett (1994: 11) calls market decentralization. However, Smith (2001) and Agrippinah (2006) maintain that privatization is a form of decentralization except that there is a difference in the nature of the power transfer from central government. They distinguish partnership from privatization by arguing that partnership involves collaboration between central government and Civil Society Organizations (CSOs) to perform a particular function, whilst in privatization, central government completely relinquishes the provision of the particular goods or services to private business concerns under the control of market forces. In other words, whilst under partnership there is joint action or co-operation between government and the private sector in the form of Civil Society Organizations, under privatization there is no joint action in the production of the particular goods or services. Such production is left solely in the control of a private business entity. Agrippinah (2006) cites the collaboration between the central government of Uganda and Civil Society Organizations, including community members, to sustainably manage some wildlife and protected areas, as an example of partnership between public-private stakeholders for their mutual benefit. Such an arrangement is different from divesting government interest in the management of the wildlife and protected area to a private entrepreneur to manage it as a tourist business, which is what the concept of privatization reflects. However, in both partnership and privatization, there is a transfer of functions and authority from central government to some sub-national entities, which is what decentralization connotes.

Despite these various forms of decentralization, this study focuses more on devolution and deconcentration, because Ghana's decentralization efforts over the years have centred upon deconcentration, even though official pronouncements sometimes indicated

that devolution would be pursued (Ayee 1994: 5). A cursory observation confirms this assertion by Ayee, since the decentralized structures in Ghana act as mere agents of central government, and tend to be accountable to central government from which they derive their power and legitimacy, rather than being accountable to the local people they serve. For example, the District Chief Executives are appointed by the President of Ghana and there is therefore the tendency for them to work towards pleasing the President and the ruling political party, rather than being accountable to the people.

This study also takes the position that devolution and deconcentration are not mutually exclusive, with each having advantages and disadvantages depending on the development context. The critical challenge is to blend the advantages of the two forms of decentralization to optimize the outcomes of decentralization in an appropriate way. Striking such a balance in a particular area is worthy of research. Such a balanced blend of devolution and deconcentration may not currently have a specific name in the literature, but it does exist as an empirical reality which should be discovered.

2.3   Decentralization and its promise of good governance and development: the perceptions and the evidence

Democratic decentralization is often associated with governance virtues like political participation, responsiveness and accountability (Blair 2000; OECD 2004; Smith 2007). The presumption is that decentralization will bring governance closer to the people at the local level and thus provide better opportunities for local residents to participate in decision-making. Furthermore, local citizens will be able to hold their elected representatives accountable through the power of their collective authority, and local public servants will also be accountable to the elected representatives (Smith 2007: 105). The reality, however, is that the varying and sometimes conflicting interests among the various actors in the decentralization process, as well as their power differentials, often generate results that are not consistent with principles of good governance. For example, Smith (2007: 105) reported a tendency among civil servants at local government level, who, because of career aspirations, lifestyles and professionalism wished to retain their

links with the central government, preferring to account to national rather than local government. Smith provides an example of teachers in Pakistan who successfully opposed a reorganization of education that would place them under the control of local authorities, motivated by their fear of reduced career opportunities in other local government areas, as well as by a suspicion that the prestige of their profession would be reduced. Such interests, hostile to devolution, may also be exhibited at national level, as politicians and bureaucrats at the centre are reluctant to relinquish their power and control of resources to the periphery in the name of decentralization.

Tam (2005) adds another dimension to this debate when he argues that political cronyism based on the offering of material goods may sometimes take the form of threats rather than inducements. He cited the example of the government of Singapore threatening to withhold housing improvements in districts that elected opposition legislators. My view is that in many parts Sub-Saharan Africa, where there is widespread poverty and relatively weak state institutions, a form of patronage is expected to be prevalent, as the poor depend on such relationships for survival, thus bringing into question the suitability of liberal democracy for Africa. This may also relate to government structures at local level, designed along the conventional system of liberal democracy, which could be open to abuse and poor functioning depending on the context.

In Africa and other developing countries it is perceived that devolution of power to the local level can promote rural development and poverty reduction, since it allows the state apparatus to be more exposed to the local context and therefore more responsive to local needs, thereby improving efficiency of resource allocation (Crook and Sverrisson 2001; Ribot 2002, Robinson 2007: 1; Smith 2007: 102). Although there seems to be an ambiguous link between decentralization and development, it is commonly agreed that decentralized local governance contributes to development in terms of promoting local participation in the development process and the design of policies that are adapted to local needs (Crook 1994: 340; Sharma 2000: 177; Azfar et al 2004: 21-24; Mehrotra 2006: 269). Besides, local resources for social and economic development can be more

easily mobilized and efficiently applied in the development process, as well as tailoring the activities to the specific needs of the local population (Rondinelli 1981; Ayee 1994; OECD 2004; Smith 2007). The rationale is that decisions about public expenditure that are taken by a government closer to poor communities are likely to be more responsive to local situations than a remote central government. Indeed, Mehrotra (2006) reports that democratic devolution of the primary health care service to locally elected health committees in Guinea, Mali and Benin has expanded access to affordable health services. This, in turn, has increased immunization rates and reduced infant mortality.

Whilst I agree in principle with the potential benefits of democratic decentralization, much will depend on political will and how the institutional framework for decentralization is fashioned. For example, if there is not sufficient countervailing influence to check the possible abuse of political power by local elites, then the benefits of such a democratic decentralization may only be enjoyed by a powerful few (USAID 2003; Smith 2007). Another concern is the capacity of citizens in a specific locality effectively to participate in decisions and hold local politicians and public servants accountable (Cloete 2002: 282; Grawford 2004: 20). For example, Cloete reports of poor local development in situations where there is 'half-baked' decentralization with little power or authority devolved to lower levels, and where there are inferior administrative systems and an etiolated civil society to hold local authorities accountable.

Crook (2003) contends that in Africa and other developing countries, the achievement of authentic participation of rural people in development depends on the devolution of power to local government structures. However, Smith (2007: 113) cautions that locally elected government, as envisaged in devolution, does not guarantee people's participation. He argues that in many Third World countries, democratic elections are easily swayed by local elites such as businessmen, public servants and wealth farmers, whose interests are not to empower the poor, but to maintain their privileged positions. For example, a USAID study on Ghana's decentralization found that participation in the district assemblies is dominated by elite groups like nurses, teachers and businessmen USAID (2003: 9). These elites also tend to monopolize resources for development and to

allocate such resources in ways that will maintain existing patterns of power and wealth (Blair 2000; Smith 2007: 115). This may take the form of deflecting expenditure towards local elites under the influence of patronage, corruption, electoral manipulation, fraud and misappropriation (Helmsing 2003: 75; Smith 2007: 115).

A number of writers point to a weak correlation between democratic decentralization and poverty reduction (Blair 2000; Crook and Sverrisson 2001; Rasman 2001; Olowu and Wunsch 2004; Blunt and Turner 2005; Robinson 2007). For example, despite great strides in decentralization in Columbia and Brazil in terms of devolving power to local democratically elected bodies, these countries have achieved relatively little in the way of poverty reduction or in terms of reducing or improving regional disparities (Crook and Sverrisson, 2001: 37-9). Manor's (1999: 106-8) conclusions about experiences in Bolivia, India and Bangladesh are equally pessimistic. Similar negative conclusions on decentralization in Uganda are drawn by Francis and James (2003). Adamolekun (1999: 58), who did extensive work on public administration in Africa, reported that despite several years of implementing decentralization by some African Countries like Uganda, Kenya, Côte d'Ivoire, Nigeria, and Ghana, "there are no real success stories as far as improved development performance at the local level is concerned".

Various explanations have been provided to explain the poor performance of decentralization in Sub-Saharan Africa. Wunsch (2001) attributes these failures to the over centralization of resources, limited transfers to sub-national governance, a weak local revenue base, lack of local planning capacity, limited changes in legislation and regulations, as well as the absence of a meaningful political process. Oyugi (2000: 20, cited in Jain, 2007: 60) explains the poor performance of decentralization in Sub-Saharan Africa to the poor design of decentralization programmes, the imitative nature of decentralization initiatives which fail to take into serious consideration their feasibility within the prevailing political environment, and the lingering culture of central hegemony over the localities, both politically and administratively.

A further administrative constraint as argued by Kotze (1997: 72) is that some operatives within the decentralized administration are political appointees who may have little administrative acumen. Such appointees are more inclined to tow the party line at the expense of community interest, thereby compromising development efficiency and effectiveness for political expediency. This situation is exemplified in Ghana where reports indicate that the ruling party executives in some districts usually put undue pressure on the politically appointed district chief executive (DCE) to release some district resources to support local political activities. In cases where the DCE is reluctant to do this, he/she is often branded as recalcitrant and the local party executives may make recommendations to the President for the removal of such a DCE. This view is corroborated by Grawford (2004: 20) who reports that the lack of a fully elected District Assembly, including the District Chief Executive, in Ghana's decentralization process, entails a significant deficit in the system of democratic representation and in the accountability of local representatives to the electorate. In other words, the democratic principle of popular control is severely compromised.

Theoretically, the policy of devolution has potential for the rapid development of sub-Saharan African countries. However, implementation failures have accounted for the poor performance of decentralization efforts in some African countries. In my opinion, such implementation failures are mainly caused by the weak institutional framework within which decentralization is undertaken. In this regard, what is particularly noteworthy is the tendency for African countries to borrow Western models of decentralization without adequately adapting them to suit the local context with its inherent traditional attributes (Jain 2007). Unfortunately, the fact that such institutional bottlenecks militate against effective decentralization has not attracted sufficient attention in scholarly studies. This study seeks to redress this.

2.4 Decentralization and the promise of participation in local governance and development

As stated earlier, democratic decentralization is often associated with virtues like participation in governance and development that can improve the well-being of citizens (Blair 2000, OECD 2004; Smith 2007). The assumption is that devolution will empower people to participate in decisions that affect them, thus enhancing accountability and improving service delivery (Golooba-Mutebi 2005). This section explores the concept of "participation" and how it relates to local governance and development.

The concept of participation defies definition: however, three main interpretations of participation can be identified (Biekart 2005; Cornwall and Gaventa 2006):

- **Participation as merely involving people in project implementation:** Here decisions about a project are taken by the development agent and the beneficiaries are asked to participate in the implementation such as by providing cheap labour.
- **Participation as mere involvement or co-optation:** Here people are merely consulted in the decision-making process, but do not influence the outcomes of such decisions.
- **Participation as a means of empowering people:** Here people are actively involved in decision-making and have the power to influence the outcomes of such decisions, as well as taking part in their implementation. In this regard, people are empowered to take control of their destiny.

The first two interpretations of participation are considered a form of tokenism rather than furthering real participation, since people are merely involved but cannot influence decisions (Cornwall and Gaventa 2006). Consequently, such tokenism has little benefit in local governance and development, since people cannot influence decisions that reflect their priorities and neither can they demand accountability from various service providers (Golooba-Mutebi 2004). Real participation in governance or development means going

beyond tokenism to empower people to influence decisions and to take control of their destiny. In this way, everyone is given a stake, a voice and a choice (Cornwall 2003).

Arnstein (1969), cited by Khisty (2006: 14) defines citizens' participation in terms of the degree of actual control they have over policy decisions. She depicts citizens' participation as a ladder ranging from no control to complete control, as illustrated in Figure 2.3.

Figure 2.3: The ladder of citizen participation

The figure shows a ladder with eight rungs labelled from bottom to top:

1. Manipulation
2. Therapy
3. Informing
4. Consultation
5. Placation
6. Partnership
7. Delegated
8. Citizen Control

The rungs are grouped as follows:

- Rungs 7–8: Degrees of Citizen Power — **Teleogenic System**
- Rungs 3–6: Degrees of Tokenism — **Teleozotic System**
- Rungs 1–2: Non participation — **Teleonomic System**
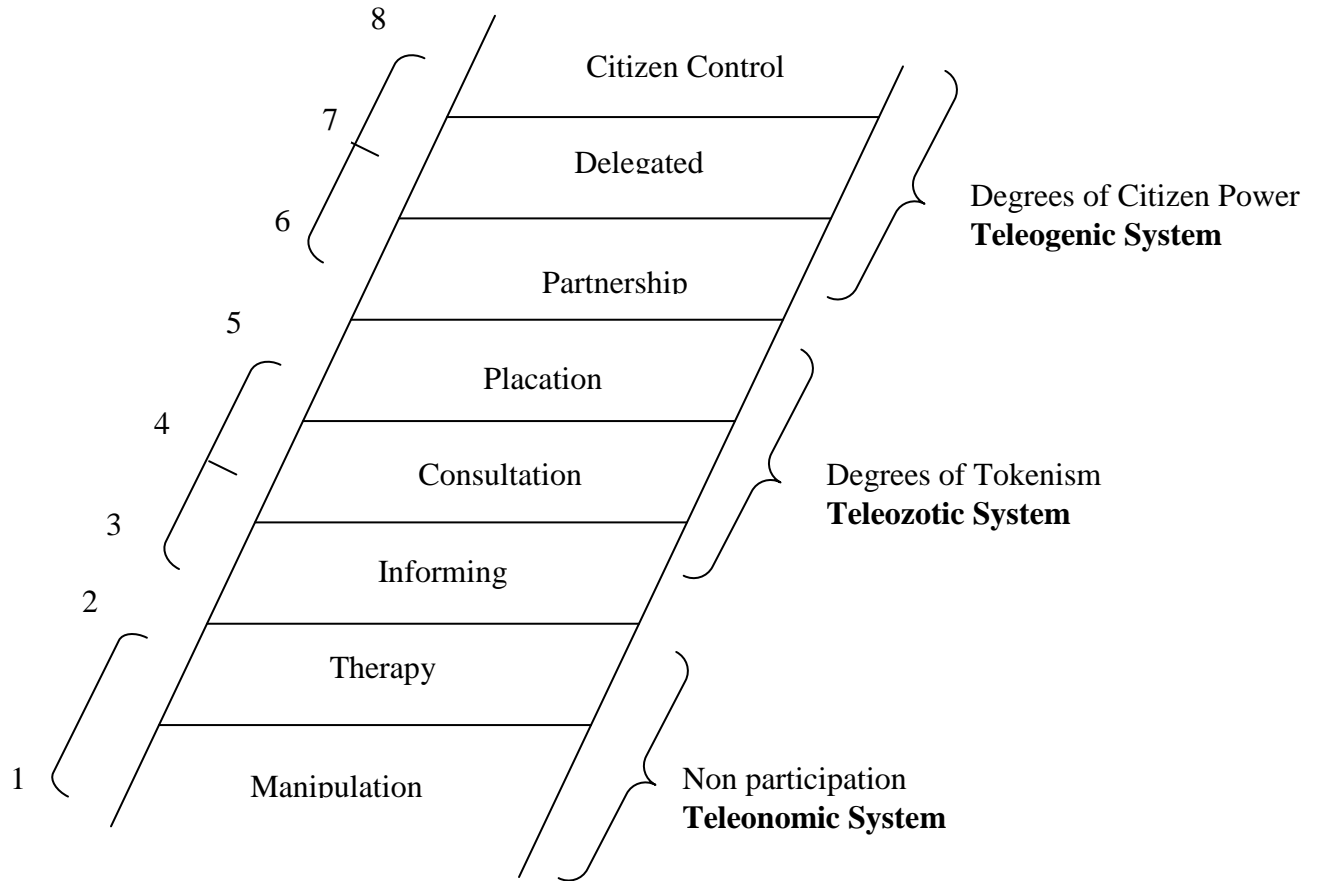
Source: Khisty (2006: 15)

The ladder in Figure 2.3 depicts a progressively enhanced application of teleogenic methods or the source of goals to be pursued. From the point of view of goals and their relationship to participation, Khisty (2006) distinguishes three types:

- **Teleonomic** (or goal determined), whereby the goals to be pursued by the citizens are externally determined.

- **Teleozetic** (or goal selecting), whereby the goals to be pursued by the citizens are selected from a repertoire of goals provided by an external agent.
- **Teleozotic** (or goal generating), whereby citizens are in control of generating their own goals to be pursued. These goals could previously have been non-existent, thus implying the generation of innovative ideas.

Based on the ladder of participation depicted in Figure 2.3, Arnstein (1969) and Khisty (2006) argue that without actual redistribution of power, citizen participation is an empty ritual, and that the only way of achieving any significant social reform is to encourage citizens to operate as high up the ladder as possible. It is clear, therefore, that participation connotes power sharing, making its realization complex. Those with institutional or structural power, like decentralized structures may be reluctant to devolve their decision-making powers to those they serve. As pointed out by Cooke and Kotari (2001: 14), proponents of participatory development have generally been naïve about the complexities of power and power relations which underpin much of participatory discourse. Participation that fails to address such a power imbalance by allowing for greater involvement of community members to influence decisions that affect them is not likely to offer much in terms of furthering the community development process (Hildyard et al. 2001; Bierkart 2005).

In recent times, "participation" has become a fashionable word that many development agencies and local government units profess to use, even though each uses the word "participation" on their own terms, with a different understanding and application (Biekart 2005). For some people, the word "participation" is used merely as rhetoric to reflect political correctness, or to satisfy some donor conditionality, but without really applying participatory practices whereby citizens can exercise real control in the decision-making process.

Whilst participation may sound attractive at a theoretical level, some writers question its utility and feasibility on various grounds. In the first place, participation may require that people sacrifice their time at the expense of investing their energies in other beneficial

livelihoods (Cooke and Kotahari 2001; Kapoor 2002; Golooba-Mutebi 2004). Additionally, Cooke and Kotahari (2001) argue that the use of terms such as "community participation" tend to mask power relations within the community, as well as biases in interests and needs, based on factors like ethnicity, sex and age. For example, in some communities, tradition does not permit women to talk publicly in the presence of men, as the women are expected to listen and the men to decide on their behalf. Such a power imbalance is not readily visible during community meetings, and what could pass as a participatory community decision, is likely to be the decision of a few dominant people.

Furthermore, Golooba-Mutebi (2004) questions the assumption that people are willing and have the capacity to participate in public affairs and that the only requirement is that there are opportunities for their participation. His study of local councils in Uganda showed that the initial enthusiasm for people to participate in local council meetings faded over time due to participation fatigue and doubts about the utility of such participation. Pryor (2002) observed similar apathy on the part of parents to participate in their village school management at Akurase, a village in Ghana, due to doubts about the relevance of the school to their welfare. Cooke and Kothari (2001) contend that the motivation for people to participate in public decisions or not is poorly understood. For example, participation in some communities may be alien to the prevailing development culture, and people may fear to speak publicly in the presence of their leaders.

The other critique of participation is the likelihood of raising unrealistic expectations among community members (Guijt 2003). Such members often have high expectations when participating in development related discussions, which may not be realistic. If this situation is not well managed it could easily lead to disillusionment when, after a process of participation, these expectations are not met. This concern is valid, since I encountered such high expectations from some community members during this research. They wanted to see immediate tangible benefits from their participation in the research.

Given the complexity of decentralization and its links with participation and development, as discussed above, it is recognized that decentralization is a multi-

dimensional process which takes place within a particular political context and therefore evolves differently in different countries depending on the context (Smoke 2003; Oxhorn 2004; Dauda 2006). Understanding the local context and taking this into consideration in the decentralization policy therefore holds the key to its success in terms of rural development and poverty reduction. These contextual issues of decentralization will be explored further in the section below.

2.5   Contextual issues impacting on decentralization outcomes

The outcomes of decentralization are greatly influenced by the political, social, economic and cultural context which varies from place to place (Smoke 2003; Bankauakaite and Saltman 2006; Dauda 2006; Lauer 2007). This echoes the commonly used phrase that "context matters". There is a growing recognition that decentralization takes place within a particular political context, and therefore evolves differently in each country (Crook 2003; Dauda 2006: 292). Consequently, the prevailing political culture in a country has great influence on the functioning of public institutions, including the decentralization process (Bankauakaite and Saltman 2006), which needs to be carefully studied and analyzed. This view is alluded to by Lijphart (1999) who utilized empirical evidence on 36 countries from 1945–1996, and found that the existing political context influenced institutional configuration, which in turn affected the performance of various policies.

African political culture has been greatly influenced by Western constructions in terms of both the vocabulary and the practice of the political system, with some aspects like the concepts of justice, democratic consensus, community responsibility and patriotism being inconsistent or alien to traditional African worldviews, thereby making the practice of these concepts problematic within the African context (Bankauakaite and Saltman 2006: 12; Lauer 2007: 3). This is particularly true of most African elites and bureaucrats who, through formal education, have been indoctrinated in their former colonizers' language (English, French, German, Spanish) and at the same time had their initial socialization, as they were growing up, rooted in traditional African values, thus making them both modern and traditional in their outlook. The histories and nature of both the indigenous

36

African societies and the intensity of the colonial experience of each country have led to the emergence of various forms of political cultures which shape the general governance system and institutional framework of these African countries. For example, Lauer (2007) reports that in East Africa, the political cultures of Kenya, Tanzania and Uganda vary considerably, despite having been ruled by the same colonial power, the British, and despite adopting a liberal democracy. The differences can be related to the different history and the indigenous social system and values of each country.

Many Third World countries inherited a largely centralized political (Falleti 2005: 327) and bureaucratic culture (Leftwich 2000: 88; Jain 2007) from their colonial masters and some of these post-colonial governments still hold on to this central control with little power or authority devolved to the lower levels (Cloete 2002: 282), thereby making decentralization ineffective. In this regard, the political willingness of central governments to transfer more power to decentralized units will positively influence decentralization outcomes (Crook 2003; Mitchinson 2003). Indeed, Crook (2003) reports of positive decentralization outcomes in Uganda as a result of political willingness to transfer more power to the local level.

The other contextual issues point to the fact that the economic and cultural realties in Western nations compared to African countries are different (Jain 2007: 37; Lauer 2007: 3). Consequently, the borrowed Western political systems which informed the decentralization process in many African countries may be incompatible and ineffective unless adapted to reflect the unique cultural and economic realities of these African nations (Leftwich 1993: 431; Rao and Walton 2004: 360; Jain 2007: 37). There is merit in this line of thinking which should be explored further. Whilst western democracy might be a fine idea for developed countries where there is a high literacy rate and better understanding of democracy, with more developed democratic institutions and higher income levels, developing countries like Africa may find democracy unsuitable for various reasons. In the first place, the high poverty levels and illiteracy in many African countries tend to eliminate many people from effectively engaging in formal political processes, which are then hijacked by a few elites motivated purely by self-interest.

These elite politicians at national and local levels often use their money, power and party platform to capture the votes of rural people so as to represent them in democratic institutions like the District Assembly or Parliament. Consequently, there is the tendency for these rural people to vote en masse for reasons which may not be related to their long-term development and well being. In this regard, democratic elections may become a blunt instrument for ensuring political accountability in many African countries, with implications for decentralization outcomes. In other words, if the citizens are incapable of holding their elected representatives to local government accountable, then decisions and development administration will not be responsive to the people, particularly the poor. Besides, the political institutions in many African countries are not well developed which means that they are vulnerable to being abused by self seeking-politicians. No wonder many democratic elections in Africa are prone to disagreements and conflicts.

Furthermore, decentralization is a multidimensional process that entails political bargaining over the content and implementation of different types of policies (Montero and Samuels (2004: 8; Falleti 2005: 328). Clegg (1990), as well as Blunt and Turner (2005), have also emphasized how decentralization can be shaped, positively or negatively, by existing institutions, social and cultural traditions. For example, the struggle for power and resources between decentralized institutions and traditional authorities could negatively affect decentralization if not well managed. Again the differences in perceptions and worldviews as to how local governance and development should be conducted can negatively affect the outcomes of decentralization. Such interactive processes between the traditional authorities and the implications of such processes for local governance and development have been given little scholarly attention.

From the above analysis, it sounds reasonable to search for ways that can ensure that the decentralization process going on in many African countries is grounded in the culture and in African realities. Political inclusiveness and diversity may provide the key to generating more innovative and effective decentralization that is responsive to the local context (Blunt and Turner 2005; Jain 2007). How this can be done given the entrenched

Western pressure for liberal democracy in African countries needs serious reflection by researchers.

2.6 Decentralization and field administration: some implications for co-ordination and development

The contextual issues discussed in the previous section flow into the nature and type of field administration being practiced. This has implications for field co-ordination and decentralization outcomes. Unfortunately, my search of the literature revealed that very little scholarly attention has been given to this important area, as the existing literature is not only scanty, but also very old. Consequently, field administration is still a grey area which this study will attempt to ameliorate. The various models of field administration and their implications for development are examined in this section.

2.6.1 Meaning of field administration

Field administration implies the delegation of administrative and policy implementation functions from central government or ministries to their representatives in the field, known as field officers or field agents (Bennett 1990; Olowu 2001; Schmid 2003). Field administration therefore comprises the bureaucracy of decentralization, as it is the mechanism through which the decentralized units are administered and central government policies are implemented. Development at local level is managed through field administration. Consequently, the nature and quality of development outcomes at local level are linked to the type of field administration. Despite its importance, field administration is often a neglected aspect of decentralization (Smith 1967; Hutchroft 2001). This may explain why literature on the topic is so scanty.

The nature of field administration is intertwined with the political and administrative culture of the country (Hutchroft 2001; Schmid 2003). Consequently, in analyzing field administration, account must be taken of the political environment within which the field agent works and the political role he/she plays, as well as the culture that defines

administrative practice. For example, some writers have lamented the fact that despite various attempts at institutional reforms in some African countries, such nations still hold on to the Western model of public administration which is centralized, elitist and technocratic (Kotze et al 1997: 17; Jain 2007: 38). It is within such an administrative culture that field officers in many African countries handle development administration, with disappointing results. For these African bureaucrats to transform into effective development administrators which is the major challenge of our times they need to become less powerful but more functional, showing flexibility in administrative procedure in response to the changing local context. The attitude of superior knowledge should also be replaced by respect for indigenous knowledge and practices (Kotze et al, 1997: 19).

2.6.2 Forms of field administration and their implications for co-ordination and development

Two main forms of field administration structures can be distinguished: functional field administration and prefectoral field administration (Kotze et al 1987; Bennett 1990; Hutchchoft 2001: 30). Some writers distinguish two forms of the prefectoral model, namely; the integrated and un-integrated prefectoral systems (Smith 1985, Adamolekun 1999; Olowu 2001; Prum 2005). These various models of field administration are discussed below, and their implications for co-ordination and development are highlighted.

2.6.2.1 Functional field administration model: serving the centre at the expense of the local

Under the functional field administration model, central ministries and departments at national level have their agents in the field who are directly supervised from the centre. In other words, the field agents under this model belong to different functional hierarchies responsible for distinct aspects of government policy, such as health, education and agriculture (Smith 1985: 152; Hutchroft 2001: 30; Ahwoi 2006: 11). This implies that

there is functional independence in the field as there is no general representative of government in the region or district exercising overall responsibility for all governmental functions in the area or field of jurisdiction. Lines of command and channels of communication run directly between departmental headquarters and their agents in the field. The functional model of deconcentration tends to serve the purpose of greater operational and managerial efficiency in individual ministries and departments at the expense of local level co-ordination (Smith 1985). Co-ordination is undertaken at the highest ministerial or departmental level or the centre, thus making co-ordination more political than administrative (Hutchcroft 2001). This system of field administration is best exemplified by Britain and most of its colonies, like Ghana and Uganda, where line ministries have their agents in the field to provide specific services under the supervision and control of the centre (Smith 1985 Hutchroft 2001: 30; Ahwoi 2006: 11). For example, in Ghana, field administration is done by various field staff at the district level, who represent their line Ministries or Departments in the centre, Accra. These field officers are supervised by the various line Ministries or Departments, without any central authority at the district level to co-ordinate their activities. Besides, the field officers have little authority to take decisions without reference to the centre. This often leads to slow responsiveness of field operations to changing realities at local level, as well as duplication of efforts and an inability to take advantage of the synergy effect among the various field officers. A case in point is when I visited a community in Ghana (Bongo) and farmers there complained of receiving conflicting messages from the agricultural extension officer in charge of crops and the other one in charge of animal production. The former told the farmers to plough the groundnut vines back into the field after harvesting the groundnuts, so as to enhance soil fertility, whilst the officer in charge of animals visited the same community on a different day and rather advised them to gather all the groundnut vines from the field and store them at home for feeding to their sheep and goats during the dry season. These farmers were confused as to which advice to take and therefore right ignored both.

The problems associated with the functional field administration model as espoused by Smith (1967) and Kotze et al (1987) include the following:

- **Lack of uniformity in geographical territories for field services**: Each government agency under the functional model arranges its own deconcentrated organization to suit its particular needs and problems. For example, geographical areas meeting the requirements of agricultural administration may not be suitable for another department like health. This leads to deviations in administrative areas among departments at sub-national level, thus making co-ordination at local level difficult.

- **Weak inter-departmental co-ordination in the field**: The most common method of co-ordination under the functional model is through inter-departmental committees at the regional or district level. This form of co-ordination tends to be in the interest of communication between departments rather than to increase delegation or collective executive action in the field. It also tends to be functionally specific in its intention since such committees are usually established for a special purpose rather than for general co-ordination.

- **Problems of intra-departmental co-ordination:** Where a government department runs a number of specialized services, like the ministry of agriculture having specialized units of fisheries, veterinary services and agronomy under one umbrella, there could be internal difficulties between the general administrator and the specialist, as well as among the various specialists working within the same territory as they compete for more resources and power. In such situations, the role of the general administrator is reduced to that of a mediator between competing factions within the department which results in a precarious balance of power in the field. Besides, these field officers are supervised and accountable to their line Ministries, but not to the political head in the district (Prum 2005: 2).

It is clear from the above review of the literature that with the functional model there is weak co-ordination of field activities. Besides, there is not much flexibility for field staff

42

to swiftly adjust their operations to suit local conditions, as they may have to seek clearance from the centre first. Furthermore, in my view, the functional system of field administration does not provide motivation for popular participation in decision-making and implementation, since local people will not have a strong motivation to participate in decision-making with people who do not have the power to implement these decisions without clearance from central authorities who are remote and may not know the peculiar local situations. These shortcomings of the functional field administration tend to hamper local development.

2.6.2.2   *Integrated prefectoral model of field administration*

In its 'pure' or ideal form, the prefectoral system of field administration has a prefect in the province or district who is the central government official and superior to all other state officials in the province. The prefect is responsible for implementing all national policies in his/her sub-national unit. The prefect is part of the national bureaucracy or the chain of command between headquarters and the field for all government services, both administrative and technical (Fried 1963; Ridley 1973; Bjorna and Synnove 2006). Indeed, the prefect is the main channel of communication between technical field officials and the capital. The term 'integrated' refers to the dual relationship between the prefect and all field officers of the central government, as well as between the prefect and local government (Smith 1967: 45; Bjorna and Synnove 2006: 309). In other words, the prefect is both chief government field agent and chief executive of the territorial assembly.

In the prefectoral system, the prefect tends to be a central point of co-ordination for all field activities, including development administration. Consequently, field coordination is better and various field staff can complement each other's efforts, thereby enhancing development. For example, community outreach by various departments could be done jointly, instead of each department going to the same community on different occasions with varying messages of development, as is likely to happen in the functional model.

The French system is a classical example of the integrated prefectoral model (Lacome 1977: 755; Wouters 2006). Here, the *departement* has an elected assembly which appoints a president. However, the chief executive officer of the local administration, the prefect, is appointed by the central government and is thus the head of both local and central administration in the province. As delegate of the state, the prefect also exercises supervision over lower-tier authorities, namely the communes. The prefect is thus the representative of the state in the department, the delegate of the government, the agent of all the ministries, the *tuteur* of the communes and the executive head of the *departement* (Ridley 1974: 50; Bjorna and Synnove 2006: 310). France passed on their model of field administration to their colonies, and many Francophone countries like Burkina Faso, Mali and Mauritania practise this model of field administration.

The political context within which Francophone countries in Africa adopted the prefectoral model may be traced to the fact that France opted to administer its colonies through direct rule and the doctrine of assimilation (Betts 2005) as opposed to the indirect rule adopted by the English. Consequently, France did not rely so much on traditional authorities like chiefs to administer its African colonies, but only used chiefs as auxiliaries of the administration, carrying out the administrative instructions of the prefects or commandants. Few powers were entrusted to native courts, and administrative authority was firmly in the hands of the colonial officers or prefects appointed by France (Elias 1961; Smith 1967; Betts 2005). France used the prefectoral system as a mechanism for inculcating political control and the stability of its colonies, as well as for ensuring that local communities or sectional interests were closely linked to the administration.
.
Most scholars view the integrated prefectoral system of field administration to be more effective, especially with regard to co-ordination at the local level, since it entails devolution of power and operations can easily be adapted to prevailing local conditions (Chikulo 1992: 17-18, Olowu 2001). It is also held to be more amenable to popular participation in both decision-making and the implementation of decisions, since the system provides for easy involvement of representative bodies at the regional or district administrative units (Lee 1970: 60). However, Smith (1967: 62) cautions that there is a

limitation in using prefects as instruments for centralized political control, since there is the possibility that the prefect could develop loyalties to the communities and may begin to assess central government measures from the point of view of local rather than national priorities. Hence, to prevent subversion of the prefectoral system of field administration, loyalty and responsiveness of the prefect to central government is critical.

2.6.2.3 *Un-integrated prefectoral model: a bridge between the functional and prefectoral models.*

The distinction between the integrated and unintegrated prefectoral systems of field administration is purely artificial, since both systems share common characteristics. The unintegrated system departs in two fundamental ways from the integrated prefectoral system (Smith 1967: 79; Ridley 1973; Prum, 2005). Firstly, the prefect in the unintegrated prefectoral system has no overriding authority over the field staff, as they report directly to their line ministries at the centre and may only inform the prefect. Secondly, the prefect in the unintegrated prefectoral system does not occupy the position of chief executive in the local government system as is the case with the integrated prefectoral system. Instead, local authorities appoint or elect their own chief executives or political head. The implication here is that the power of the prefect to co-ordinate and supervise field activities is diluted in the unintegrated prefectoral system, which can minimize development outcomes. Besides, in the event that the ideas of the political head of the area do not coincide with those of the prefect, there could be political interference and conflicts in field administration, with negative implications for development and co-ordination. Indeed, Chikulo (1992) argues that the unintegrated prefectoral system of field administration, like the functional model, entails weak co-ordination of field activities, with associated difficulties relating to the promotion of genuine participation in the development process.

Italy is a good example where the unintegrated prefectoral system is practised. Here, the prefect is both the representative of the central executive and of the Ministry of the Interior. However, the functional autonomy of individual ministries in Rome has minimized the formal powers of the prefects to coordinate field activities. The prefects

are responsible for coordinating the services of the Ministry of the Interior, such as the police and provincial fire brigade. However, the operations and supervision of other field staff are done by the various central ministries, even though the field staff are subject to instructions from the prefect. This implies that the role of the prefect is more focused on maintaining peace, order and stability in the province rather than acting as a general director of all field activities. Cogent arguments about the prefect's lack of technical expertise in a number of issues are often used to justify keeping the prefect from supervising field activities which are usually more technically oriented. Such arguments are not persuasive since the prefect, as a leader, does not need to be a technical expect in all issues in order to be able to supervise or coordinate the work of technical field staff. The prefect's major task should be getting the best out of the field staff through his/her skills in people management. For example, a Minister of Health does not need to be medically trained to co-ordinate and get the best out of the medical personnel who fall under his or her Ministry. What such a Minister rather needs is to know who has what skills and how to motivate them to deploy those skills towards the accomplishment of particular objectives set by the Minister.

In my view, the unintegrated prefectoral model has the advantage of combining local flexibility with strong links to the centre. Since field staff are supervised from the centre and at the same time take instructions from the prefect, there is room for the prefect to provide good leadership that can harmonize the various levels of expertise, thus ensuring development that is responsive to local needs. Much will depend on the type of prefect and the leadership style.

The above analysis clearly shows that the system of field administration adopted will greatly determine decentralization outcomes. Since there are pros and cons associated with the three models of field administration discussed above, the search for an appropriate model should seek to tap the strengths in each of the three in a balanced manner that can enhance decentralization. This, however, requires research attention.

2.7 Colonial and post-independence field administration in Africa: the varying roles of traditional authorities and emerging trends

2.7.1 Involvement of chiefs during the colonial era

Field administration under indirect rule of the British colonies differed from French direct rule using the prefectoral system (Hutchroft 2001; Lange 2004). Under British indirect rule of her colonies, responsibility for running local affairs fell to traditional political institutions or native authorities. The traditional authorities, mainly chiefs, were responsible for maintaining law and order in their localities, as well as for collecting taxes and undertaking minor public works like the establishment of village markets and construction of feeder roads. To enforce law and order, the chiefs had native courts and police. Colonial government agents in the field were the governors, who had executive authority to manage their provinces (Lange 2004). These governors were assisted by inspectors who were assigned to take charge of the various districts into which the provinces were divided. The colonial administrative officers (governors and inspectors) were responsible for carrying out the policies of the central government in Britain and guiding the development of native institutions according to local law and custom, while at the same time guiding against the abuse of traditional powers. The administrative officers were expected to advise and supervise native authorities, but never to interfere directly. The strategy was to establish local self-rule built on traditional political institutions and custom (Nkrumah 2000; Hutchroft 2001). In effect, field administration in the Anglophone African countries was undertaken by the appointed administrative officers of the colonial authority, in close collaboration with traditional authorities. In my view, such an arrangement had the advantage of making field administration benefit from traditional culture and values. The negative side of this arrangement is that it led to an upward accountability of chiefs to the colonial authority rather than to their subjects (Nkrumah 2000: 55). This undermined the ability of chiefs to mobilize their people for development, as they were seen as part of the colonial system which was considered autocratic and alien to the traditional leadership system.

On the other hand, the French opted for direct rule of their colonies and therefore did not rely so much on traditional authorities like chiefs to administer their African colonies. Chiefs were mainly used as auxiliaries of the administration, carrying out the administrative instructions of the prefects or commandants appointed by the French government. Here administrative authority was firmly in the hands of the prefects (Hutchroft 2001), with little involvement of traditional leaders. The influence of the French government on the historical evolution of the chieftaincy institution in Francophone African countries has therefore been minimal.

The exposure of the traditional African authority system to colonial influence, particularly in the Anglophone countries, has historically diluted African traditional political values of common good, solidarity and consensus-building by subjecting them to Western values of rationalism, efficiency and individualism (Lauer 2007). The jury is still out as to whether such Western influence has negatively affected the image of African traditional authorities and their ability to provide development-oriented leadership to their people in contemporary society.

2.7.2 Post-independence field administration and emerging trends

Field administration in many post-independence African countries tends to adopt and modify the field administration model of their colonial masters (Hutchcroft 2001). Consequently, Anglophone countries usually take on the functional model, whilst the Francophone countries use the prefectoral model. The implication is that field coordination tends to be better in Francophone countries rather than Anglophone ones. Another common trend in many African countries at independence was to inherit the centralized administrative system from their colonial masters (Smith 2007: 108). This was found justified at the time, based on the belief that central policy planning by technocrats was necessary for the rapid economic and social transformation required. After a few years, however, many governments in Sub-Saharan Africa began to adopt some level of decentralization as a means of improving local service delivery (Conyers 2007: 19). The form of decentralization at that time was more one of deconcentration

rather than devolution. This was to ensure that the central government could still have control. However, over the last two decades, some African countries like Uganda are devolving power to local government units or sectoral areas like health (Mehrotra 2006; Conyers 2007).

Conyers (2007) observes that many independent African countries are moving towards the establishment of democratic local self-government, on the grounds that local democracy is an essential part of a democratic state and that election and representation are the only legitimate source of political authority. As more African countries adopt democratic decentralization, the role and legitimacy of traditional authority in local governance will be called into question, as traditional authorities are generally considered not to be democratic institutions and therefore have no political legitimacy in a democratic era. Such a trend of democratic local governance in many African countries implies that local governance and field administration will be more in the hands of elected representatives of the people, with chiefs playing only a minor role. For the Anglophone African countries, where chiefs were actively in local governance through the policy of indirect rule during the colonial era, such a power shift from traditional authorities to elected local representatives responsible for the administration and development of their local areas has the potential to generate conflict between the two institutions. Indeed, Ayee (1994) reported on such conflicts between chiefs and elected Assembly Members in some communities in Ghana. This aspect of the power dynamics and conflict between traditional authorities and district assemblies has not been given sufficient attention in the literature, and this study will hope to address this.

2.8   Decentralization in Ghana: the historical context and emerging trends

This section traces the evolution of decentralization in Ghana from the pre-colonial era to present times. It attempts to highlight the interplay of forces, both indigenous and foreign (colonial) that helped shape decentralization policies during the independence era. This, it is hoped, will inform this study as to the context and nature of decentralization in Ghana and provide a basis for a more insightful analysis of my field findings.

49

2.8.1   Traditional rule and decentralization during the pre-colonial period

A semblance of decentralization has long existed in Ghana in the form of local authorities who ensured law and order in their localities without much external control or influence. In Ghana, traditional rule or governance finds expression in forms such as religious leadership, lineage headship, leadership in extended families and chieftaincy (Assimeng 1996; Ray 2003; Bekoe 2007). The chieftaincy institution is, however, the dominant form of traditional rule in Ghana (Assimeng 1996; Nabila 2006), and thus will be the main focus of this study. Indeed, traditional authorities in Ghana are referred to by the generic name of "chiefs" (Boaten 1994; Ray 2003). Scholars who have enriched our knowledge about traditional rule in Ghana include (Bentsi-Enchil 1971; Fynn 1974 Ollennu, 1977; Arhin 1985; Gyekye 1996; Kendie and Guri 2004; Abotchie, 2006). The literature shows that there are two major forms of traditional rule in Ghana. These are the centralized political system (cephalous societies) and acephalous societies.

The cephalous societies have centralized authority, administrative machinery and judicial institutions, where pockets of wealth, privilege and status correspond to the distribution of power and authority (Fortes and Evans-Pritchard 1970: 5; Tutu II 2004). The Ashantis and Dagombas are examples of cephalous societies in Ghana. On the other hand, the acephalous societies, in their pure form, lack centralized authority, administrative machinery and constituted judicial institutions, and there are no sharp divisions of rank, status or wealth. The lineage system is predominantly used to regulate and govern such societies. Despite this simple political system, there is usually a central figure like the *tindana* whom the people respect and look up to for spiritual support (Boaten 1994; Tutu II 2004). The Tallensi and Dagaabas are examples of acephalous societies in Ghana.

Anthropological and historical sources (Rattray 1929: 62-70; Busia 1968: 15-6; Wilks 1975: 465; Abochie 2006: 171) suggest that the pre-colonial indigenous administration in cephalous societies in Ghana was bureaucratic, in that there were highly formalized systems or procedures within the hierarchy of chiefs. However, the traditional bureaucracy had some elements which distinguished it from industrial or modern

bureaucracy. The traditional bureaucracy had elements of decentralization and participation of citizens. For example, in the Ashanti kingdom, traditional administration was highly decentralized and participatory. There was a hierarchy of positions from the Asantehene, being the overall head, to the village chief who enjoyed considerable autonomy within the hierarchy of chiefs. Furthermore, there was wide scope for adult participation in decision-making in the traditional bureaucracy, as issues like village projects and settlement of cases were often decided through open forum, debates and consensus building.

The African political culture values consensus-building and social solidarity (Gyeke 1997: 131; Kendie and Guri 2004). During pre-colonial times, the chieftaincy institution was the mechanism for maintaining social order and stability. Consequently, the functions of the chief have been an amalgamation of different roles such as those of a military, religious, administrative, legislative, economic and cultural custodian (Ray 2003; Abotchie 2006)

Among the *Akan* speaking people of Ghana, one institution which acted as a check on the power of the chief and his elders was the *asafo*, the traditional warrior organization (Ayee 1994: 11; Owusu 1989: 381; Kendie and Guri 2004). Traditionally, the *asafo* served as an independent outlet for popular dissatisfaction and protests. Members of the *asafo* had a sacred duty to safeguard the interests of the wider local community against rulers or leaders who misused or abused their power. They also had a strong voice in the enstoolment and destoolment of chiefs, and participated in political decisions relating to the proper course of state action. Consequently, the *asafo* has therefore always formed an essential part of the traditional system of checks and balances upon the authority of the chief (Owusu 1989: 383; Kendie and Guri 2004).

These checks and balances have not only helped to preserve the chieftaincy institution up to this date, but have also cast serious doubts upon the claim by some scholars that the authoritarian tendencies exhibited by post-colonial Ghanaian leaders was a legacy of the traditional political system (Ayee 1994).

2.8.2 Traditional rule and decentralization during the colonial period

After their colonization of Ghana (then called the Gold Coast), the British introduced the policy of indirect rule in 1878 when the first Native Jurisdiction Ordinance was passed, lasting until 1944 (Ayee 2000: 48). Indirect rule holds that local administration should be entrusted to local institutions, rooted in custom, and subject to the supervision and authority of the central British government. The British found that the institution of chieftaincy was well organized to carry out the task of indirect rule, and therefore sought to buttress the influence and power of chiefs, using them to maintain law and order in their locality on behalf of the colonial government (Ayee 1994: 14). Chiefs were even appointed by the colonial government in areas where chiefs did not exist. Under various ordinances, the governor had considerable powers of suspending, destooling or enstooling a chief, thereby making the chief's position less dependent on the will of the people, as they gradually lost control over their chiefs (Ninsin and Drah 1987: 44-5).

Through this system of indirect rule, the chieftaincy institution was enhanced during the colonial era. However, the appropriation of chiefs as agents of colonial rule undermined their ability to mobilize their people for socio-political change, due to the fact that the chiefs derived their power from the colonial masters and were seen as a colonial creation (Tutu II 2004). In other words, the position of the chief was considerably undermined, as he was seen as part of the colonial system of rule which was autocratic (Ninsin and Drah 1987: 44). The authoritarian leadership style of the colonial authority gradually crept into the chieftaincy institution. There are oral reports on how chiefs in Ghana used to give orders to the citizens for communal labour accompanied with intimidations from the native police. Such an approach is in sharp contrast with the traditional practice of negotiation and consensus-building for communal work or actions for the common good. Some citizens saw their chiefs as agents of the colonial authority and as adopting unfamiliar practices in the service of this colonial authority. This led to the gradual erosion of respect and confidence among some of the citizens for their chiefs, thereby diluting their influence in contemporary society.

Decentralized structure under indirect rule has been well documented by Ayee (1994: 14-20). The colony was divided into provinces, which were further subdivided into districts. In each district the "native authority" was established, made up of the chief and elders. They had powers to establish treasuries through taxes, appoint staff and perform local government functions like passing by-laws relating to local matters (Nkrumah 2000: 55). The native authorities were allowed to establish tribunals to try certain cases like matrimonial disputes, as well as those relating to issues such as land ownership. They also used part of the taxes to undertake some local development projects like schools and health centres (Ayee 1994; Nkrumah 2000). In terms of this arrangement, chiefs were directly involved in local governance and rural development. Since chiefs lived and interacted with the local inhabitants, they knew the development priorities of their people, thereby making development more relevant to them. Besides, the chiefs were able to mobilize the locals to undertake communal labour on some of these development projects like school buildings, thereby enhancing the utility of the limited financial resources at their disposal.

The Native Authority Ordinance of 1944 heralded the beginning of the erosion of the power of chiefs in local administration and a continuation of the process of change from chieftaincy-based local government towards democratically elected government (Ray 2003: 87). Following the recommendation of the Coussey Constitutional Reform Committee appointed in 1948, the colonial government passed the Local Government Ordinance in 1951 (Cap 64). This Ordinance provided for a single comprehensive framework for local government in the country through the establishment of a two-tier local government structure at local and district levels. Governance at local level was vested in local councils in rural areas, urban councils in urban areas, and municipal councils in municipalities. Governance at district level was embodied in district councils. Two-thirds of the council members were democratically elected and one-third represented the traditional authorities (Nsarkoh 1974; Ayee 1994). The introduction of democratic elections implied that chiefs who used to have greater authority under the native authority system now had to share power with democratically elected

representatives. Such power sharing, if not managed well, could lead to conflicts between the chiefs and the elected representatives, thereby stalling development.

2.8.3 Decentralization in Ghana after independence

After independence in 1957, the Nkrumah regime adopted the single tier structure of local government, based on the recommendations of the Greenwood Commission that large and fewer councils would be administratively cheaper to run and would mean that development services could be planned much more efficiently and economically. The one-tier structure took the form of city, municipal, urban or local councils. In the short term, President Nkrumah maintained the composition of the local councils as two-thirds elected and one-third nominated to represent the chiefs (Ayee 1994: 54-55). However, under the Local Government Act of 1961, he changed the one-tier local government structure to a four-tier one, comprising regional councils, district councils, municipal/urban or local councils, as well as town/village development committees. Furthermore, chiefs were banned from participating in local government (Apter 1970; Ayee 1994).

The participation of chiefs in local governance was, however, restored after the overthrow of Nkrumah in 1966, with one-third of local government units being nominated to represent the chief and two-thirds being made up of elected members. This composition of local government was maintained by subsequent governments until the Rawlings coup d'etat of December 1981 and his government of the Provisional National Defence Council (PNDC) stopped formal representation of chiefs in the District Councils/Assemblies. This situation has prevailed until now (Ayee 1994; Nkrumah 2000; Crawford 2004). According to Boafo-Arthur (2006: 145), while Nkrumah sought to suppress the political power of chiefs and subjugate them to the state, the Rawlings regime felt that chiefs were elitist and that they should not be allowed to play any significant role in the December 1981 revolution. The revolution was seen as a type of class struggle between the 'haves and have-nots', the elite and ordinary people. The revolutionaries, particularly those at grassroots level called the Committees for the Defence of the Revolution (CDRs), perceived chiefs as an embodiment of traditional

power and arrogance which should be confronted, whilst the chiefs in turn saw these revolutionaries as upstarts or opportunists who should be stopped. This led to various conflicts between chiefs and Committees for the Defence of the Revolution (CDRs) who were then in charge of local government.

Despite various attempts by past governments, particularly the Nkrumah and Rawlings' PNDC regimes, to weaken the chieftaincy institution, its ability to survive these political pressures is a reflection of the resilience of this institution which cannot be dismissed as a force in contemporary local governance (Ray 2003: 99; Boafo-Arthur 2006: 145).

2.8.4   Current Local Government structure in Ghana

The current decentralization in Ghana has been well documented by Ghana (1988), Ayee (1994) and Crawford (2004), as collated in this section. The legal framework that guides Ghana's decentralization process is rooted in the 1992 Constitution of Ghana. Chapter 20 of the Constitution entitled "Decentralization and Local Government" states that:

> Local government and administration shall be decentralized and the functions, powers and responsibilities and resources shall be transferred from central government to local government units (Article 240 (1) and (2) of 1992 Constitution of Ghana)

The 1992 Constitution of Ghana further envisaged grassroots participation in governance and accountability right the way down the power hierarchy. Article 240 (2) (e) of the Constitution has the following objective:

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

The critical question, searching for empirical answers, is whether these virtues of participation and downward accountability, as envisaged by Ghana's Constitution, are being fulfilled?

Other legal provisions that guide Ghana's decentralization process include the Local Government Act of 1993 (Act 462) and the subsequent Local Government Establishment Instrument of 1994 (L.I 1589). These legal provisions sought to promote popular participation in the decision-making process, good governance at local level, as well as the enhancement of efficiency and effectiveness of the entire government machinery. Consequently, a four-tier structure of decentralization was adopted, consisting of Regional Co-ordinating Councils (RCCs), District Assemblies (DAs), Town/Area Councils and Unit Committees, as captured in Figure 2.4.

Figure 2.4: Local Government Structure
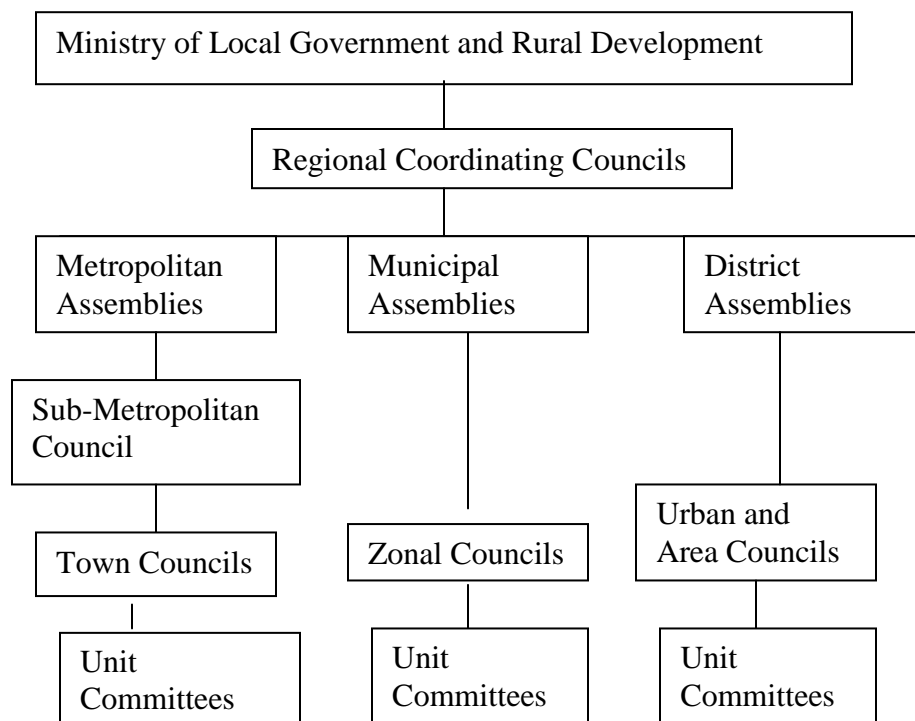
Source: Ministry of Local Government and Rural Development (MLGRD, 2005)

The four-tier structure of Ghana's decentralization starts at the grassroots with a Unit Committee for every community or settlement with a population of about 500 to 1000 in rural areas, and of 1,500 people for urban areas. There are currently about 16,000 Unit Committees in the country. Each Unit Committee is supposed to have ten elected members and five members appointed by government. The role of the Unit Committees includes the mobilization of people for development projects, the facilitation and

implementation of development planning in their localities, as well as undertaking certain functions on behalf of the District Assemblies, such as the registration of births and deaths, public education campaigns and revenue collection (Ayee 2000: 18). The advantage of the Unit Committees is their knowledge of the communities in which they live which means that they are able to articulate their felt needs to the District Assemblies for attention. The problem with the Unit Committees as observed by a USAID study of Ghana's decentralization process in 2003 is the growing apathy amongst people who are reluctant to offer themselves for selection as Unit committee members, since members receive no remuneration or recognition for their efforts (USAID 2003: 8).

The other sub-district structure, depending on the population size, is the Urban Council, where the population is over 15,000 people or the Zonal/Town/Area Council where the population is between 5,000 and 15,000. There are about 1,300 Urban, Zonal and Area Councils in Ghana. These Councils are composed of representatives from the Unit Committees within the catchment area, as well as the Assembly Members of the area and government appointees. The role of the Urban or Area Council is to act as a link between the District Assembly and the Unit Committees.

Central to Ghana's decentralization programme is the Metropolitan/Municipal/District Assembly as depicted in Figure 2.2. The Metropolitan Assembly is found mainly in major cities where the population is over 250,000. The Municipal Assembly is designed to serve an area with a population of over 95,000 people, whilst the District Assembly is for an area with a population between 75,000 and 95,000. The 2008 annual report of the Ministry of Local Government and Rural Development (MLGRD) indicated that there are currently six (6) Metropolitan Assemblies, forty (40) Municipal Assemblies and one hundred and twenty-four (124) District Assemblies. Due to their disproportionate sizes, the Metropolitan Assemblies are sub-divided into sub-metropolitan district councils. The Metropolitan/Municipal/District Assembly (which will be referred to hereafter as the District Assembly) is comprised of the District Chief Executive (political appointment), two-thirds of members elected by universal adult suffrage and the remaining one-third nominated by the president in consultation with chiefs and identifiable groups in the

district. Members of Parliament from the district are also members of the assembly, but do not have voting rights.

Among the functions of the DAs are the following (Ghana 1988: 8):

- The formulation of programmes and strategies for the effective mobilization and utilization of human, physical, financial and other resources;
- Maintenance of security and public safety in the district in cooperation with the appropriate national and local security agencies;
- Initiation of programmes for development of basic infrastructure;
- Ensuring ready access to the courts and public tribunals in the district for the promotion of justice.

Above the District Assemblies in the hierarchy is the Regional Coordinating Council (RCC) which is made up of the Regional Minister, Deputy Regional Minister, the Regional Administrative Officer, the District Chief Executives, two representatives elected from the Regional House of Chiefs, and the Regional Heads of the Decentralized Department as ex-officio non-voting members. There are currently ten Regional Co-ordinating Councils (RCCs) in Ghana and their functions, among other things, are to co-ordinate and harmonize the programmes of the District Assemblies within their jurisdiction, as well as to review and coordinate public services in the region.

The current district assembly structure in Ghana has no link with traditional authorities like chiefs, despite the influential position of chiefs, particularly in rural areas. The closest chiefs come to being included is through the nomination of one-third of assembly members by the President in consultation with chiefs. Where the quality of consultation is poor, then traditional authorities are effectively eliminated from the decentralization process. This situation often creates difficult relations between the district assembly structures and traditional authorities, thereby negatively affecting development. This is particularly so because article 270 of the 1992 Constitution of Ghana recognizes the position of the chieftaincy institution and guarantees the existence of traditional councils according to customary law. This has created a kind of parallel governance system at the

district level; namely, the District Assemblies and the traditional authorities both vying for power, resource control and recognition. In the process, the loyalties of community members are torn between the District Assembly and the traditional authorities. Indeed, Ray (2003) reports of the divided sovereignty of many Ghanaians as they are both citizens of the state and subjects of their chiefs. The interactive processes between the traditional authorities and district assembly structures, as well as the community members in Ghana will therefore have implications for local government and development, which are poorly understood. Besides, the significance and effectiveness of the District Assemblies in Ghana and their sub-structures are open to questions requiring empirical studies.

2.9   Conclusion

This chapter examined various theories on decentralization in order to provide a theoretical basis by which to anchor this study. The complex nature of the concept of 'decentralization' was noted in the diverse opinions and debates concerning the nature and forms of decentralization. This study, however, opted for the typology of decentralization by Rondinelli (1981, 1983), and concluded that devolution is the advanced form of decentralization that could promote popular participation and local development. The superimposition of a modern political system on a traditional system of local governance provided the political context of Ghana's decentralization process. The literature review highlighted the fact that contextual issues which greatly influence decentralization outcomes are not value-free. Different people with different values, interests and world views try to influence the content and practices associated with decentralization so as to reflect their own interests. In so doing, a power imbalance and power struggles may emerge which have to be managed if decentralization is to deliver on its promises. However, what was found to be missing in the literature reviewed was an analysis of the development implications of this superimposition of a modern political system on a traditional system of local governance, in view of the associated contestation of power and clash of world views between modernity and tradition.

CHAPTER THREE

3.0 DEVELOPMENT, CULTURE AND GOVERNANCE IN AFRICA: SOME CHALLENGES, PROSPECTS AND EMERGING TRENDS

*"Development is about **being** more rather than **having** more" (Encyclical letter of Pope John Paul II, 1987:21 on Social Concerns).*

3.1 Introduction

This chapter seeks to accomplish the following objectives:

- To discuss the concept of development from various perspectives that will provide some understanding of the type of development that Ghana's decentralization process should be promoting;
- To examine the meaning of culture and its links with development;
- To draw attention to the threat of erosion of traditional African culture by Western cultural values and the need for an African cultural renaissance;
- To generate a deeper understanding of the dialectical tension between modernity and tradition, with particular reference to the functioning of public institutions in Sub-Saharan Africa.

Having examined decentralization and its promises of good governance and development, this chapter seeks to deepen the understanding of development from various perspectives. This will provide the theoretical foundation for an examination of how the decentralized structures and traditional authorities in Ghana promote or inhibit development. The chapter examines the concept of 'development' in all its ramifications, both as a goal, which countries or communities strive to attain, and also in terms of a process which involves causal links. The rationale is that if Ghana's decentralization policy has to be influenced and shaped to deliver the desired results of 'development', then the concept of development has to be understood thoroughly, otherwise the direction of development policies and practice and how their results are judged will be blurred.

Since the research focus is on the participation of traditional authorities in Ghana's decentralization process, there is a cultural dimension, particularly in relation to the place of culture in development and local governance. A significant portion of this chapter is therefore devoted to a critical review of relevant literature on culture and its place within the theory of development and social action.

In this chapter, attention is drawn to the threat of dominant Western cultural values and their capacity to erode the traditional values of Sub-Saharan African countries. This obviously has implications for the functioning of public institutions in African countries.

3.2   Historical context of development

Current development thinking and practice has evolved over the years with some of the old ideas still lingering on and influencing the way some people in contemporary times perceive and explain development. To appreciate the various debates on development, it would be appropriate to situate them within the historical context that triggered such debates.

Economic historians generally agree that the industrial revolution in Europe and North America in the eighteenth century greatly influenced development thinking over the years (Ha-Joon Chang 2003). However, the concept of "development" became popularized following the inaugural speech to Congress by US President Harry Truman on 20 January 1949. In this speech, Truman described the largest part of the world as consisting of 'underdeveloped areas', with particular reference to the Southern parts of the world which were expected to move along the same track of the industrial nations to attain development (Sachs 1992; Crafts 2003). This implied that societies of the underdeveloped areas called Third World countries were no longer seen as diverse, with different possibilities for conducting their social and economic life, but were rather placed on a single path of progress and judged as doing well or not based on the criteria of Western industrial nations. After this speech, the race began for the South to catch up with the North in the "good life" called development. In the course of this race, some

people begin to question whether they were running in the right direction, as the goal of 'development' became elusive. Consequently, various theories and debates have emerged and continue to emerge in the search for development, as elaborated in subsequent sections.

3.3   The theories, debates and delusions of development

The concept of development is elusive and difficult to define, since it is associated with a wide range of definitions and interpretations (Oyugi 2000: 4; Todaro and Smith 2006: 15). The various conceptualizations and debates on development over the years are discussed below so as to provide a deeper insight into the term "development", to which this study seeks to make a contribution. It is worth noting, however, that various conceptualizations of development are reflections of different worldviews which are not value-free.

3.3.1   Development as modernization and economic growth

Modernization theory refers to a group of theories which emerged after 1945 following the industrial revolution in Europe and North America which pointed to the success of Western science and political organization (Norgaard, 1994; Crafts 2003). Consequently, development in Third World countries was expected to be an imitative process of modernizing traditional values and production systems based on Western economic experience and values such as capitalist industrialization, social differentiation, individualism and liberal democracy (Okolie 2003: 236-7; Kambhampati 2004: 70; Stewart 2005: 38). Modernization theorists were inspired by classical theorists like Weber who saw the transformation of Western Europe and the emergence of the modern capitalist system to be the result of rationalization of various aspects of life and the replacement of traditional custom by rational principle (Weber 1973; Crafts 2003).

According to Chilcote (1981), the various modernization theories may be classified under three themes:

- **Political development**: These theorists held that democracy was the path to development, even though some saw democracy as the product of a society which had developed stable institutions (O'Brain 1972).

- **Development and nationalism**: Theorists grouped under this heading emphasized that developing a sense of nationalism through the socialization process provides the ideological impetus for development across the entire social spectrum.

- **Modernization:** This is the broadest and most dominant of the three general themes identified by Chilcote and will therefore be discussed in more detail than the other two themes. Theorists who espoused this theory assumed that all states were capable of attaining modernity if they followed in the footsteps of the industrial states. They conceptualized development as involving a dichotomy between the traditional and underdeveloped sector on one hand, and the modern industrial sector on the other, and argued that for development to occur there was a need for all societies to move from the traditional to the modern (Leftwich 2000).

A prominent advocate of the modernization theory, Rostow (1960) argues that all societies must pass through a single logical and well defined sequence of five stages of economic development. The first stage is that of a traditional society with a low level of technological knowledge and low per capita production. The second stage is the achievement of the pre-conditions for "take-off" and the removal of many of the growth-inhibiting features of traditional society. At this stage, the society receives the scientific insights necessary for agricultural expansion and the manufacturing of various goods. The third stage is the "take-off" to self-sustained growth. At this point, net investment and savings rise sharply, thereby resulting in industrialization, and the political and social framework is modified to reflect rationalism (Harrison 1998). The fourth stage embodies the drive to maturity, where modern technology is adopted and the economic structure shows continuous changes as older industries stagnate and make way for new ventures.

The fifth and final stage of Rostow's evolutionary scheme is the stage of high mass consumption, where consumption patterns shift towards services and durable consumer goods (Etzioni-Halevy 1981; Bloomstrom and Hettne 1984).

The assumption by Rostow that all societies need to pass through a linear path towards development implies a prescriptive standard model of development for all societies without taking into account contextual differences like the different values of various societies and the diverse development cultures. Besides, the inability of Rostow to explain in detail the transition from one stage to the next makes the practical application of his theory problematic (Smith 1973; Todaro and Smith 2006).

At the heart of the modernization idea is the presumption that "the structures and processes of all human societies usually develop from simple forms of traditionalism to complex expression of modernity' (Rostow 1960; Leftwich 2000: 33). Tradition and culture are therefore seen as stumbling blocks to development. This may explain why the development efforts in many African countries, including Ghana, have sought to replace traditional values like communalism and harmonious living with values of modernization such as rationality, industrialization, competition, maximization of production, as well as a secular outlook on life and the world. This, however, gives the impression that development is equated with westernization (Okolie 2003; Szirmai 2005). The implicit notion associated with modernization theory that one form of life, based on Western values, is superior to other forms of life based on traditional historical values is not convincing, since there are some positive aspects to the way in which any society organizes its life.

The modernization theory was informed by the industrial success of Britain's laissez-faire policy of the eighteenth century which hinged upon a free-market system and economic growth (Leftwich 2000: 27; Bergeron 2006: 60). Consequently, laissez-faire economists see development as embodied in economic growth in the form of an increased Gross National Product which will automatically translate into prosperity for all. The assumption that increased economic growth alone can lead to human fulfillment is not supported by empirical evidence. For example, global economic growth during the past twenty years

has not been able to address the problem of hunger and abject poverty (Todaro and Smith 2006: 193). This is emphasized by Leftwich (2000: 28-29) who demonstrates that the so-called economic miracle of Brazil from 1969 to 1974, when the economy grew by an average of 10% GNP annually, did not benefit all people equally. In 1972, the poorest 20 per cent of households in Brazil accounted for only 20 per cent of household income, while the highest 10 per cent accounted for 50.6 per cent (World Bank 1984; Leftwich 2000). It may be deduced, therefore, that economic growth is often pursued within a system of selfish competiveness, or rational self-maximizing behaviour, at the expense of the common good. This unbridled desire to accumulate material possessions at the expense of others may be explained by Brekke and Howarth (2002: 262) who argue that economic growth creates a new lack through processes of social signaling and identity formation, thereby leading to endless consumption by the rich without considering the welfare of society as a whole. In other words, equating the concept of development to economic growth only leads to the production of desires which it cannot fulfill.

The danger with this kind of development paradigm is that the pursuit of individual interest based purely on rational thinking and individualism could lead to a situation where capital is concentrated in the hands of a few, thereby generating social upheaval. Besides, the environmental damage associated with this type of development cannot be ignored, especially in the Newly Industrialized Countries like South Korea, where the environment is over-exploited in the pursuit of industrialization. It is becoming clear that the development model of the North is not only historically obsolete, but that "many of its glorious achievements are actually optical illusions in disguise" (Sachs 2002: 18). There is, therefore, a strong case for Africa and other developing countries to search for their own development models rather than to seek to imitate the West.

Another limitation with the modernization theory is that it does not take into account the differences in cultures, as well as the quality and quantity of resources in various countries which can influence development in different ways. The underlying universalism associated with modernization theory is inappropriate for the complexity of issues involved in development. It is no wonder that, with time, the optimism associated

with modernization theory could not be sustained, by virtue of growing poverty, marginalization and unemployment.

Whilst I agree that economic growth is a vital ingredient for development, there is a need to ask: who is driving this growth? Is it the few rich people or the majority of the population? If economic growth is driven by the majority, then the fruits of that growth will be shared more evenly, leading to a more stable and happier society, which is the essence of development. I therefore share in the thinking of Kambhampati (2004: 66) and Todaro and Smith (2006: 27) that even though economic growth has the potential to contribute to human welfare, it does not address other important factors affecting development such as poverty, unemployment, human rights and social stability.

A major criticism of modernization theory is its inability to take into full account the global situation and external influences that could limit the ability of a particular society to develop (Haines 2000: 38). For example, the more developed and powerful countries could place structural impediments in the development path of weaker nations. This line of thinking has led to the emergence of dependency theory.

3.3.2   Dependency theory of underdevelopment

In reaction to the shortcomings of modernization theory, the dependency theory of underdevelopment was formulated by a number of Latin-American economists and social scientists in the 1960s. This theory was informed by marxist social thought on capitalism and its exploitative tendencies. Proponents of the dependency theory argue that the underlying causes of Third World underdevelopment can be traced to the exploitation of Third World resources for the development of the industrial western world (Burkey 1993; 28; Hettne 1996: 89-93; Stewart 1997:59; Madziakapita 2003: 88). The theory also questions the assumed mutual benefits of international trade and development asserted by modernization and growth theories, and argues that unfair international trade agreements and an imbalance in economic and political power have led to neo-colonialism and underdevelopment of the Third World (Burkey 1993: 28; Madziakapita 2003: 90; Leys 2006: 113). In other words, the unequal relationship between the dominant Western

countries and weaker Third World or peripheral countries led to the underdevelopment of the latter, thus highlighting the interplay of political and economic factors in development (Fair 1982; Leys 2006).

Dependency theorists suggest development strategies of self-reliance, minimizing links between Third World countries and the world economy through by means of import substitution, state intervention and sub-regional integration. This thinking influenced many governments in Third World countries such as Allende's in Chile, Manley's in Jamaica, and Nyerere's in Tanzania, but they were unsuccessful. Industrialization through import substitution was difficult because of the small size of internal markets and the need to import technology and other factors of production, especially petroleum products, which required large amounts of foreign exchange. In addition to these problems were the inefficiencies associated with state intervention which, in many cases, led to paralysing bottlenecks (Burkey 1993: 29; Madziakapita 2003: 90).

Critics of the dependency theory argue that it has failed to construct its own theory of development, instead putting too much emphasis on external forces as the cause of underdevelopment in Third World countries (Hettne 1996; Leys 2006). This critique is valid, as some Third World Nations ignore their inherent potential to use their indigenous knowledge and resources to construct their own development path. What is required is visionary and dedicated leadership. For example, Malaysia was also an underdeveloped country that was colonized by Britain, just like Ghana, and won independence in the same year as Ghana did. Yet today the economy of Malaysia is much stronger than Ghana's and the former is classified as a middle-income earning country as a result of good political leadership.

Despite its failure, the dependency theory led to a critical examination of the modernization theory and undermined the idea of progress as a more or less automatic and linear process. It stimulated dependency analysis in other areas of the Third World as well as the debate on the New International Economic Order (NIEO).

3.3.3   The Reformist Approach

The reformist development approach which emerged in the early 1970s sought to mitigate the harmful effects of modernization theory by seeking economic growth together with social equity (Fair 1982; Haines 2000). Consequently, greater attention was given to income distribution, especially to the poor segments of the society, such that everyone could meet their basic needs, thus eradicating poverty. Some people call this the basic needs development approach (Haines 2000) which seeks to remove mass deprivation by improving the income earning opportunities for the poor and their access to basic goods and services, as well as promoting non-material needs like participation, cultural identity and a sense of purpose in life and work (Streeten 1981; Gary 2002).

The other strand of the reformist development approach is to promote export-oriented industrial goods in developing countries, using labour-intensive methods, with such goods being exported to developed countries (Fair 1982; Haines 2000). Taiwan, Singapore and South Korea are usually cited as examples of the successful implementation of this strategy (Fair 1982). The third approach employed by the reformists was to seek improvement in the international environment that could provide better opportunities to developing countries. This triggered the ongoing debate for a New International economic Order (NIEO). Some of the recommendations being pushed by Third World countries for the NIEO include giving Third World countries as much control over the pricing of their primary commodities and freer access to the markets in the developed world. Additionally, developed countries should continue to give financial aid to poorer countries and a target of 7% of the gross national product of developed countries was to be provided as aid to developing countries (Fair 1982; Haines 2000).

Even though the reformists' agenda of equitable growth is an improvement on classical growth-led development, it does not go far enough to explain how to mobilize the goodwill of those driving economic growth so that they will be willing to share the benefits of such growth with the poor. If this power imbalance is not addressed, the rich will continue to use various strategies to frustrate the self-help efforts of the poor.

3.3.4 Alternative Development

The theoretical debates on development during the early 1970s led to an increasing concern with the question of how development *should* take place rather than limiting the discussions to how development *actually* takes place. This is termed a normative approach, in contrast to the positivist approaches reflected in modernization and dependency theories (Burkey 1993: 30; Andreasson 2005). The utility of the normative approach to development lies in its focus on the content of development rather than on the form. The alternative development paradigm has been concerned with alternative practices of development and with redefining the goals of development (Korten 1990: 4; Pieterse 1998: 343; Latouche 2004; Andreasson 2005).

Burkey (1993: 31) and Madziakapita (2003: 97) summarise the ingredients of alternative development as:

- **Need-oriented**: Development should be geared towards meeting both material and non-material human needs.
- **Endogenous:** Development should stem from the hearts of each society and be built on local knowledge and practices.
- **Self reliant:** This implies that development should be built on internal strengths, potential and resources.
- **Ecologically sound:** Development should rationally utilize the resources of the biosphere.
- **Based on structural transformation:** As an integral whole, development should promote the establishment of a social order where there is equity and opportunities for people to participate in issues that affect them.

Alternative development theorists seek to build a way of life which is materially more modest and also culturally diverse, in which all people can participate and find fulfillment (Madziakapita 2003: 98). In other words, there is a need to change the notion that we must have more in order to be better off, rather than managing with less in a sustainable manner. A transformation of institutions and values to reflect social justice, inclusiveness

and environmental integrity is therefore involved (Korten 1990 cited by Madziakapita 2003: 98; Pieterse 2000). The attractiveness of the alternative development approach is the attention paid to re-engineering the value system of society to reflect more solidarity and equity. This has a spiritual dimension which can renew the heart of mankind towards the common good. The other positive characteristic of alternative development theory is its view of the world as organic, holistic and ecological. The universe is no longer considered as a machine, made up of multiple separate parts, but as an indivisible, dynamic whole whose parts are interrelated (Haverkort 2002). This highlights the need to regard development within the systems theory perspective, which is often overlooked in conventional development thinking and practice.

Implicit in the alternative development perspective is a call for developing countries like those in Sub-Saharan Africa to take their peculiar context into account and to chart their own development path, instead of adopting a 'universal' development paradigm in the construction of which they have little input. Such a contextual understanding of development has attracted little scholarly attention, as evidenced by the scanty literature in this area. This study hopes to make a contribution to the field where development is linked to its local context. Paying attention to such a contextual understanding is justified, since my observation is that the erosion of natural and biological resources goes hand in hand with diminishing cultural diversity as a result of globalization and the modernist hegemony. Many traditional values and customs are vanishing, leading to lost identity and increasing frustration as people are caught between lost traditions and unaffordable modernity.

The alternative development theory and debates generated different strands of development approaches, as discussed below.

3.3.4.1   People-centred development

The search for other effective ways of combining growth with equity led to the concept of people-centred development, with an emphasis on economic justice, poverty reduction

and social transformation (Korten 1990; Bergeron 2006: 60; Todaro and Smith 2006: 16). Implicit in people-centred development thinking is the recognition that there are certain structural issues like unequal access to natural resources or unfair distribution of these resources which keep some people trapped in poverty. There is a need, therefore, to remove such structural impediments through social transformation in order for development to take place. This approach seeks to build the capacity of people. Korten (1990: 67) defines people-centred development as follows:

> Development is a process by which the members of a society increase their personal and institutional capacities to mobilize and manage resources to produce sustainable and justly distributed improvements in their quality of life consistent with their own aspirations.

Critical issues that Korten (1990: 4) seeks to address in people-centred development are:

- Justice among the world's citizens in their access to a decent livelihood;
- Sustainability of our environment for future generations;
- Inclusiveness, which allows everybody to contribute to the well being of society.

The attractiveness of a people-centred approach is that it goes beyond micro-level issues to macro and global issues such as the need to reform the General Agreements on Trade and Tariffs (GATT), as well as examining the way in which the United Nations is functioning. Its emphasis on the development of poverty reduction, equity and employment is an improvement on the narrow concept of economic growth, but the picture is still not complete. The notion that development is only about human beings is myopic, since human beings are an integral part of other creatures in the universe which have to co-exist in harmony. There is therefore a need to shift from people-centeredness to viewing the world or all life as a complex, integrated "living whole", of which man is part (Norgard 1994; Reason 1998; Breu and Peppard 2001). A thorough understanding of this complex inter-relationship between different human beings, as well as between human beings and other creatures, should be the challenge of development planning and action, with a view to striking a sustainable balance. Losing such a balance in pursuit of human greed will

71

eventually undermine the conditions of life itself, through over-exploitation of the environment, conflicts and other human catastrophes.

3.3.4.2   Development as Freedom

A new dimension to development thinking is to view development as "freedom" or what a person is capable of doing (Sen 1999; Alkire 2002; Nafziger 2005: 9; UNDP 2006). Here Sen argues that human well-being is not just about the availability of income or commodities, but how such commodities are used, which he calls "functionings" or what a person does or can do with the commodities at his or her disposal (Sen 2002: 83; Nussbaum 2003: 49; Todaro and Smith 2006: 18). In this regard, the focus is on a number of basic human functions such as being adequately nourished, avoiding premature mortality, appearing in public without shame, and being free to move around and associate. Expanding this thinking, Sen (2002) views development as being about what a person is capable of doing, implying the expansion of freedom or enlarging people's choices. Freedom as development is about having the opportunity to choose tangible outcomes that one prefers, as well as being about the degree to which individuals participate in social decisions (Sen 1999: 291: Sen 2002: 84). This view of development requires the removal of sources of "unfreedom" such as socio-economic deprivation, neglect of public facilities and services, as well as the tyranny which prevents people from participation in decisions and choosing what is preferred. For example, economic poverty can rob some people of their freedom to satisfy hunger or to be adequately sheltered. In such circumstances, development should seek to improve the economic conditions of people so that their freedom will be expanded. Similarly, there may be a need in some circumstances to change institutional or social arrangements that prevent people from exercising their rights such as having the freedom to participate in the social, political and economic life of the community.

Looking at development as "freedom" is not only incisive, but also provides a means of interrogating the adequacy of debates on development in addressing wider issues like economic and social responsibilities, as well as political rights and responsibilities (Bergeron 2006; Todaro and Smith 2006). What people can achieve in their development

or well-being is influenced by economic opportunities, political liberties, social powers and the enabling conditions for good health and education. In my opinion, such a view of development embraces the plurality of institutions, including the markets and governance which facilitate it. Development should therefore seek to transform such institutions so as to remove any structural impediments that may unfairly restrict the expansion of these freedoms by certain segments of society. Such institutions will also have to reinforce each other in a balanced manner if such freedoms are to be sustainable, since these freedoms are interconnected. For example, economic "unfreedom" can lead to social "unfreedom", just as social or political "unfreedom" can also breed economic "unfreedom" (Sen 2002).

Approaching development as freedom also allows one to examine how the exercise of freedom is mediated by prevailing social values and norms, as well as the nature of social interactions among various actors. This dimension of freedom has not attracted scholarly studies, as my literature search revealed.

The challenge implicit in Sen's concept of development as freedom is whether everything is acceptable so long as one is able to exert the "right to choose"? For example, some people may define their "freedom to choose" in ways which effectively exclude others from exercising this freedom themselves. Consequently, there is a need for defined boundaries within which these choices are made so as to safeguard the collective good and the long-term survival of humanity. Defining such boundaries is value-laden and influenced by differential power relations which are hardly taken into account in the analysis of development as freedom (Evans 2002). In defining boundaries within which people can exercise their freedom, there is the possibility that those with more power can expand their choices, whilst restricting the choices of the less powerful in society. For example, in Ghana, owners of commercial fishing trawlers are able to influence the Ministry of Fisheries to allow pair-trawling, through which they virtually sweep the sea bed of fish stock and, using canons, deprive small-scale fishermen from making a catch, thus depriving them of their livelihood. In this case, the boundaries or the laws were designed in such a way as to favour the rich owners of commercial fishing trawlers who maximize their profits at the expense of

the survival of small-scale fishermen and their families, not to mention the environmental damage being caused. It is therefore reasonable to argue that the processes through which people exercise their freedom to choose may be invisible in our daily lives, although understanding this process is central to our ability to enhance people's livelihoods in a sustainable manner, thereby promoting the outcomes of development as freedom.

3.3.5   Sustainable development and associated debates

The continuous increasing poverty in the South, coupled with environmental degradation despite several years of development efforts, triggered concern in the 1980s for a connection to be made between the environment and development, with a focus on environmental integrity and intergenerational equity (Atifield et al. 2004; Todaro and Smith 2006).   The concept of sustainable development was popularized after the publication in 1987 of the Brundtland Commission's report on the global environment and development (Redclift 2003; Sneddon, Howarth and Norgaard 2006).

Various writers have different conceptualizations of sustainable development. Bartelmus (1987: 12) defines it as "development that maintains a particular level of income by conserving the sources of that income". His emphasis is on conserving stocks of natural capital, which is a departure from the traditional economic view of development which seeks to exploit natural resources for increased income levels. The inability of Bartelmus's definition to establish the required level of income appropriate for every society, and beyond which natural capital should be preserved, makes the definition unattractive.

On the other hand, Barbier (1989: 185) defines sustainable development as embodying an optimal level of interaction between three systems – the biological, the economic and the social, a process which is balanced through trade-offs. For Pearce (1986), sustainable development is a development path that does not make people better off today at the expense of future generations. This implies a non-declining human welfare. The World Commission on Environment and Development, known as the Brundland Commission

(WCED 1987:43) cited in Ntsime (2002: 37) and Sneddon et al (2006: 256) defined sustainable development as: "development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs".

The conceptualization of sustainable development by Brundland and Pearce is similar in that they both have an element of intergenerational thinking. However, Brundland's definition emphasizes "human needs", whilst Pearce stresses "trade-offs" in environmental and economic assets between present and future generations. A common thread in all these definitions is the need for "trade-offs", except that the emphasis on such trade-offs differs. For Barbier, trade-offs exist in respect to three systems (social, economic and environmental), whilst in the case of Pearce they were related to present and future generations and involved economic and environmental assets. Barbier's definition is therefore more comprehensive, as it includes the social dimension.

The problem with Brundland's conceptualization of sustainable development lies in its over emphasis on the needs of human beings at the expense of other living things (Redclift 2006). Sustainable development should rather strive for harmony between human beings and other living creatures. Besides, as Redclift (2006) persuasively argues, Brundland's conceptualization of sustainable development looks simplistic and obscures underlying complexities and contradictions. For example, the needs of any society keep changing with time, and it is therefore unlikely that the needs of future generations will be similar to those of the current generation. Consequently, it is difficult to predict the needs of future generations so that the current generation will be informed about how to protect such future needs. Again, needs are defined differently in different cultures, and the ingredients for sustainable development are perceived differently in different cultures (Redclift 2006). For example, one society may take the view that maintaining social relations is necessary before development can be sustainable, whilst another society may seek more material wealth even at the cost of social relations. Consequently, it is difficult to have universal and predictable "needs" that must be addressed for future generations, as implied in Brundland's definition of sustainable development. Much of the mainstream debate about sustainable development has ignored culturally specific definitions of what

is sustainable in favour of the rather exclusive system of knowledge favoured by the dominant science paradigm (Norgaard 1988; Redclift 2006).

Various strands of sustainable development have emerged over the years. Prominent among these, as classified by Carley and Christie (1992), are the technocratic management view, the populist view, political ecology, deep ecology and ecofeminism. These strands of sustainable development are discussed in the subsequent sections.

3.3.5.1 Technocratic management view of sustainable development

This view is closely related to the classic modernization perspective where the human being is separated from the environment in a typically reductionist fashion (Treurnicht 2000). This approach emphasizes the optimal use of environmental resources for economic growth, without due regard to the long- or short-term effects. Its proponents view the environment as a resource that should be well managed and preserved by means of technological advances, but at the same time exploited to the maximum to meet growing human needs (Carley and Christie 1992; Treurnicht 2000).

The employment of efficiency-based approaches and technologies to address the growing environmental crises has not only proved futile, but also highlights the persistence of the conventional modernization paradigm as a solution to all problems confronting humanity, including the environment. Haines and Robino (2006: 13) describe such a technological approach to environmental problems as "ecological modernization", as reflected in the Kyoto Protocol's Clean Environment Mechanism which seeks to invest in projects in developing countries so as to generate credits for reducing emissions. The thinking that environmental crises can be addressed by technological means and market forces is unrealistic, given the self-centred orientation of human beings to rather use technology to over-exploit the environment so as to satisfy human greed. To effectively address environmental crises, there is a need to transform the moral and spiritual conscience of humanity, guiding people towards fulfilling a role of stewardship in relation to the environment.

3.3.5.2 Populist approach to sustainable development

Those who profess this approach to sustainable development argue that grassroots mobilization, rather than technological and efficiency-based management, is the key to sustainable development. They oppose the growth-centred model of development, instead proposing a low-growth economy where Third World countries need to abandon the Western criterion of affluence and attend more closely to social, political, environmental and cultural development (Trainer1989: 200). Supporters of this view feel that local knowledge systems should be mobilized for development, highlighting the need for grass roots participation in the search for sustainable development (Sneddon et al. 2006).

Trainer (1990: 199-201) describes some of the key features of the populist view as involving a:

- Focus on the concept of appropriateness, with reference to global resources and justice considerations;
- Rejection of northern affluence as a goal for development;
- Paying more attention to social, environmental and cultural development problems;
- Starting at grassroots level and ensuring the availability of resources so that people can determine their own priorities;
- Promoting maximum economic self-sufficiency and minimum dependence on external inputs.

The attractiveness of the populist view is its recognition of indigenous knowledge in the search for sustainable development. However, it is too simplistic since it does not indicate how to overcome the dominant pressures of modernization values in the wake of globalization. Besides, proponents of the populist view have not elaborated on how to mobilize the global political will to ensure that the natural resources are used justly and in a sustainable manner.

3.3.5.3 Political ecology

Proponents of political ecology view the environmental crises to be the result of global political economic forces, with losers and winners based on unequal power relations among various actors (Robins 2004). Consequently, political ecologists seek to influence national politics in such a way that greater political attention is paid to environmental issues (Byrne and Glover 2002). This has led to the emergence of green parties in Europe who seek to galvanize political will and public support for environmental protection. Political ecologists are engaged in global struggles to expose the flaws of dominant approaches to environmental management which are rooted mainly in neoliberal capitalism and eco-modernization (Robbins 2004). Some current issues that political ecologists are campaigning against include the release of genetically modified organisms into the environment, the domination of food production by transnational agribusiness and the failure of the United States of America to sign the Kyoto Protocol despite the continued rise of global warming gases (Byrne and Glover 2002).

The attractiveness of political ecology is its recognition of how political, economic and social factors affect environmental issues, thereby offering a more comprehensive understanding of environmental crises (Byrne and Glover 2002; Robbins 2004). However, it is doubtful if the activist approach adopted by the political ecologists will be effective on its own in transforming the attitudes of people, particularly those in powerful positions, so that they relinquish their positions of dominance and adopt alternative values which reflect environmental justice. There may be a need to back the activist approach with strategies that appeal to the moral and spiritual conscience of people so that they re-order their value system and recognize the need for such environmental justice.

3.3.5.4 Deep ecological view.

Deep ecologists draw attention to the inter-relatedness of all systems of life on earth and reject the human-centredness approach, whereby human beings tend to dominate the

earth rather than seeing themselves as an integral part of other creatures (Zimmerman 2000). The deep ecological view questions western reductionist perspectives on the environment and tries to promote a new ethic, where existing values are replaced with new ones, leading to desired changes in behaviour (Treurnicht 2000: 66). Deep ecology is a kind of social movement comprising activist groups like Earth First, Wild Earth and The Sea Shepherds, which attempt to protect an individual species or ecosystem, as well as to resist environmentally destructive industrial projects (Chatterjee and Finger 1994).

The underlying principles of deep ecology, according to Knill (1992), include the following:

- All life, human and non-human, has value in itself, and it is wrong for human beings to reduce that diversity except to satisfy basic needs.
- Human beings are too numerous and too intrusive towards other forms of life, and a substantial reduction in human population is necessary to permit the earth to flourish as a whole.
- Radical changes have to take place in human cultures, with the emphasis on sustainability rather than on consumption.

Whilst I share the call by deep ecologists that human beings should see themselves as being an integral part of the earth rather than separate from it, they have a simplistic view about the environmental crisis and how this is linked to the functioning of society (Chatterjee and Finger 1994: 72). For example, the differential power relations among various people and how these affect environmental problems have not been given due attention by deep ecologists.

3.3.5.5 Ecofeminism

Ecological feminism or 'ecofeminism' takes the concerns of deep ecology further by drawing attention to the connection between the unjustified domination of women and other underclass people on one hand, and the unjust domination of nature on the other (Cuomo 1998; Warren 2000). Adherents of this strand of sustainable development argue

that there can be no liberation for women or solutions to the ecological crisis in a society where basic socio-economic relationships are shaped by values of domination rather than those of equity and justice (Warren 2000). In this regard, the demand for women's liberation and ecological integrity are seen to be one and the same, based upon the transformation of the worldview which underlies domination by replacing it with an alternative value system (Cuomo 1998; Warren 2000).

According to ecofeminists, nature is a feminist issue, as the understanding of the domination of women helps one to understand the domination of the environment which underlies the environmental crisis (Warren 2000). Ecofeminists argue that women, as home makers, are closer to nature than men, and are also disproportionately affected by the degradation of the environment. Consequently, women can provide alternative sets of values that are environmentally friendly (Dankelman and Davidson 1988; Warren 2000). This view finds merit in the fact that, in many developing countries, women are more dependent on tree and forest products than men, since it is women who mostly look for firewood and other forest products for the household.

My discomfort with the philosophy of ecofeminists lies in its incoherence, as many ideas such as gender justice and global sustainability are bandied about, without any clarity as to how to accomplish these ideals (Carlassare 2000). Even though ecofeminists advocate social transformation, they are not able to clearly articulate the alternative value system that is required to ensure environmental integrity. Besides, there are no clear proposals as to how to accomplish such societal transformation, given the tendency of those in power to try to maintain their hegemonic grip.

3.3.5.6   Synthesis of the various debates on sustainable development

After a critical analysis of the various debates on sustainable development, I am persuaded by the thinking of (Korten 1996; Okolie 2003; McAlpine and Birnie 2006) that sustainable development is about creating sustainable economies that meet human needs equitably, without extracting resource inputs or expelling waste in excess of the

environment's regenerative capacity, as well as establishing sustainable human institutions that assure both security and opportunity for social, intellectual and spiritual growth. Such a conceptualization allows for a more structured discussion on, and analysis of, how to balance environmental concerns with economic and social processes, including the spiritual dimension of promoting harmonious living among human beings and other creatures. Such a concept of development may be depicted as in Figure 3.1

Figure 3.1: Sustainable development model
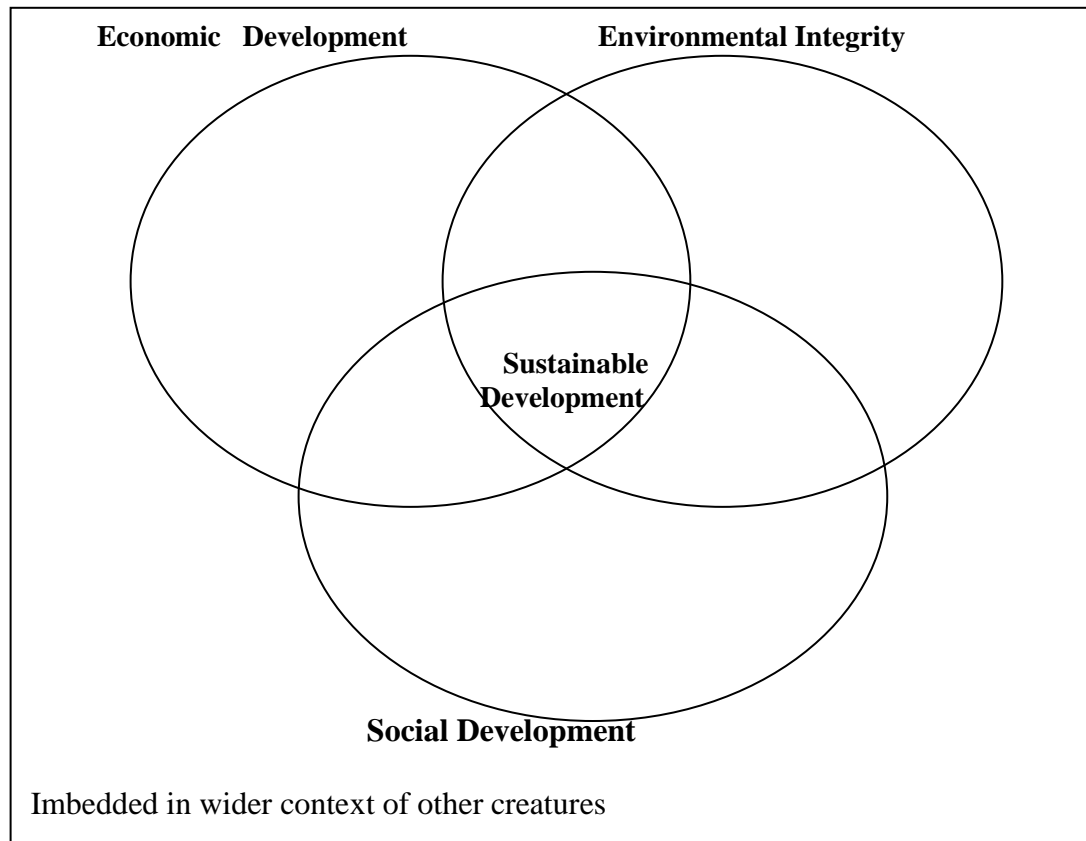
Source: Adapted from WCED, 1987

Figure 3.1 shows that sustainable development is a balancing act between economic growth, social equity and environmental integrity, involving the intersection of these three dimensions, with the whole system embedded in a wider context of co-existence with other creatures. Implicit in this conceptualization of sustainable development is the desire for development to meet the essential needs of all people, especially the poor, as

81

well as drawing attention to the need for limitations to be placed upon exploiting natural resources if the survival of future generations is to be guaranteed. In practice, however, the emphasis is more on economic growth at the expense of environmental concerns, thereby distorting the balance required for sustainable development. This has resulted in the threat to the ecosystem by the human practice of over-exploitation of natural resources, as well as pollution through industrial activities, as evidenced by biodiversity loss, climate change, as well as air and water pollution.

I am of the view that the environmental crisis may also be a moral and spiritual one which cannot be addressed solely through a technological breakthrough. The loss of a moral and spiritual conscience provides the basis for the over-exploitation of the environment, without any consideration for other living creatures or for the ability of future generations to make a living. The root cause of this crisis is the inability to link an environmental consciousness with a moral and spiritual outlook. By this I mean a philosophy of life or worldview informed by the ultimate source of power or energy that created the universe, a being which many people call God. It is my opinion that the waste and destruction of creation, as well as the social crisis of our times, may be traced to our inability to recognize any power or need superior to our own, instead seeing only ourselves. An environmental and social crisis begins when there is no concept of life beyond death, along with a concomitant desire to amass as many material possessions as possible, indulging in rampant consumerism without making sacrifices for the benefit of others to whom creation belongs as much as it does to us. Humanity will have to find a new way of living, a discipline which involves making sacrifices and recognizing the fellow inhabitants of creation (Korten 1996; Redclift 2006). This may be called "**Harmonious Development**", a term which highlights the need for development to emphasize living harmoniously with other creatures (Redclift 2006), even if this requires moderation in terms of material accumulation and consumption. In this regard, I agree with Pope John Paul II (1987) that development is about "being more", rather than "having more". In other words, development is not simply about the blind pursuit of material possessions, often at the expense of other creatures, but about becoming more of a human being. "Having" only helps us when it contributes to a more complete "being", as reflected in relationships of love, solidarity, justice and peace with other persons, as well as

being a good steward of creation. To promote such harmonious development requires the transformation of the human heart, a process which is both material and spiritual (Institute for Studies in Global Prosperity, 2000). The emphasis of development on secular or material issues, to the detriment of a spiritual dimension, has resulted in "development" limping on one leg instead of walking on two, as evidenced by the growing environmental crisis, global poverty, unsustainable lifestyles, as well as the loss of identity and purpose in life and a corresponding unhappiness.

I share in the thinking of McKibben (2007) who argues that the ultimate goal for development is human happiness, which is predicated on an overall appreciation of one's life as a whole, something which cannot be obtained solely by material wealth. The evidence in support of this argument is reflected in the fact that developed nations blessed with material wealth are still not satisfied with their lives, having higher suicide rates than poorer countries (Layard 2005; Nettle 2005). This suggests that there is still a vacuum that man is yearning to fill, which, in my opinion, involves the spiritual dimension of life that will provide meaning and purpose for our existence, as well as the motivation to adopt more sustainable lifestyles.

Happiness can be bolstered by friendship, human community and wider social factors like freedom, democracy and rule of law. The search for happiness therefore points towards the African traditions of communalism and maintaining harmonious relationships. There is a need, therefore, to further nurture these values, rather than destroying them in the name of modernity. What makes us happy is a question that has received relatively little scholarly attention, and my contribution to this issue is to draw attention to spirituality and traditional African roots. Indeed, I am of the view that central to the global economic and political crisis is a spiritual crisis that goes to the heart of who we are and what we value.

As lamented by Esteva (1992, cited in Madziakapita 2003: 74) God, who used to be linked to development thinking and practice, started disappearing over the years, leading to unsustainable lifestyles. There is a clear need for further work to expand our understanding

on the role of the spiritual dimension in development, especially at the local level. This thesis hopes to make a contribution in this area.

The literature review on the concept of development points to a proliferation of interpretations, theories and models; at the same time, there is a growing dissatisfaction with the ability of these theories effectively to address the development challenges of our times, as reflected in the world's increasing economic, political, cultural and environmental crisis. A strong case therefore exists to rethink "development" and to search for more effective and innovative paradigms of development which emphasize diversity and contextual issues. I take the view that this search should go beyond a Eurocentric approach to development by exploring opportunities presented by African indigenous knowledge and practices. This will ensure that Africa is able to develop in a different way from Europe, based on the contextual realities of Africa. Many writers have recognized such a contextual relevance to development (Haverkort 2002; Morgan 2002; Andreasson 2005; Easterly 2006). However, these writers emphasize contextual issues that are related to tangibles issues like farming practices and the use of traditional herbs to treat various diseases in Africa. Intangible contextual issues like the thinking processes of the people and how these stifle or promote development have not attracted research attention. It is to this grey area in the literature that this study will make a contribution by examining how the different world views of various actors within the Wenchi District Assembly and traditional authority systems interact, along with the development implications of such interactions.

3.3.6   Contemporary development issues

Some issues that characterize contemporary development debates include globalization and post-development, which other people call anti-development. These two issues are discussed in subsequent sections of this thesis.

3.3.6.1 Globalization

Globalization is both a concept and a process, with a variety of meanings and ideological interpretations attached to it (Haines 2000: 54). As a concept, it is used to describe new features of the international economy such as global production systems, free trade and movement of financial capital across borders. As a process, globalization is used to refer to transformation in social relations and transactions, as well as in politics and culture. This transformation reflects a growing international influence upon standardization or sameness, grounded in Western values (Castells 1996; Held, McGrew, Goldblatt and Perraton 1999; Haines 2000). Globalization therefore goes beyond economic issues to signify the deepening interconnection of societies, with a free flow of capital, labour, ideas, images, weapons, criminal activities and pollution (Kambhampati 2004). Generally, globalization is often referred to as raising the levels of interdependence among nations and the involvement of such nations in the world economy, as well as the diffusion of technology and culture (Laison and Skidmore 1997; Haines 2000). As a social theory, globalization assumes the emergence of a global culture, rooted in a Western lifestyle, which is spreading rapidly through the application of information communication technology, thus making the world like a "global village" (Held et al 1999; Haines 2000).

Supporters of globalization, like the World Bank and WTO, see it as a positive force which provides new technologies, new investment opportunities, larger markets and prosperity for all (Mickelthwait and Wooldridge 2000; Kambhampati 2004: 104). These proponents of globalization rely on neoclassical arguments relating to comparative advantage and the free flow of investment capital and technology, where advantage is taken of various forms of economic potential, in the process creating jobs and income for diverse people, thus increasing prosperity. However, the promise of globalization to deliver prosperity to all becomes hollow when confronted with the evidence of growing poverty and the widening gap between rich and poor, despite the global economic growth of the last three decades (Leftwich 2000; Todaro and Smith 2006).

The other criticism of globalization is its drive for standardization and sameness in regard to how societies should organize themselves, thus blocking out new ways of thinking and doing things that may be more appropriate in a given context. Besides, such a drive for sameness tends to undermine traditional values and cultural identity which can eventually lead to social disintegration (Haines 2000; Stiglitz 2002; Kambhampati 2004). For instance, many traditional African values like solidarity and communalism are being replaced with western values of modernization such as individualism and materialism, thus leading to relations of injustice, mistrust and conflicts which can threaten the very survival of the human race.

3.3.6.2 Post-development

Frustrated with the inability of the various development paradigms and interventions to address global poverty, inequality and oppression, some writers (Rahnema and Escobar 1994; Morgan 2002; Easterly 2006) question the relevance of the whole development enterprise and argue that "development" is a tool used to entrench a Western hegemony at the expense of the rest of the world. They see development theory as being socially constructed, with Western interests guiding how knowledge is generated. They therefore propose a "post-development" (also called "anti-development") theory which rejects any development intervention from outsiders, thereby allowing indigenous people to determine their own future free from Western expectations and judgments.

Whilst I sympathize with the post-development theorists' concern with the appalling and often disastrous effects of many development interventions, rejecting the whole notion of development is not the best solution. For post-development implicitly to advocate indifference and inaction in the face of the misery that many people in the world experience daily is unacceptable. There are some wealthy people with a strong moral commitment to helping the poor realize their dreams. To reject such help in the belief that it often does more harm than good is not only frustrating, but unfair to the willing donor and recipient. In my view, external aid should not be rejected wholesale, but should

rather be analyzed in terms of the interests which it serves and its implications for wider development processes, before such aid is either accepted or rejected.

Many people in the Third World still dream of and desire material and economic progress which often require external intervention in the form of technology or financial support. In my practice as a development worker, I often ask people in rural areas what they would consider as progress or development in their villages. The response is mostly the same: electricity in the village, tarred roads, school buildings, a clinic, fertilizer to increase crop yield and so on. To discard these ideas as naïve thoughts of villagers unaware of the risks of development interventions, as implied in post development, is to betray their dreams and desires. The solution is not to withdraw from the whole development industry, but to search continuously for more effective ways of fulfilling these dreams within the local realities and in a more sustainable manner (Leftwich 2000). This reinforces my earlier argument that this search should explore the cultural and spiritual dimensions of development which will motivate people to adopt more sustainable lifestyles, as well as developing the mental orientation to reject the fantasies continuously being created by the notion of development, opting instead for a more harmonious lifestyle. Leftwich (2000: 68) and de Vries (2007: 27) corroborate my thinking when they call for new conceptions and practices of development, encouraging mankind's desire for a different kind of society with new ways of using, producing and distributing resources. Such a new society, with a different economic, social and political order is not yet clearly defined. This study hopes to contribute to the debate and search for this new type of society.

The other concern I have with post-development is that it rejects the entire development enterprise yet fails to provide an adequate alternative. In my view, to undermine a system that is considered ineffective without offering an alternative amounts to a form of anarchy. I share the criticisms of (Blaikie 2000; Ziai 2004; de Vries 2007) that if post-development theorists would like to reject contemporary development initiatives completely, they ought to present a more detailed description of how to address the problems of poverty, inequality and the environmental crisis. In my view, the issue is not

simply to reject the development enterprise as proposed by the post-developmentalists, but to work towards a change in development thinking and practice that would reflect justice, solidarity and moderation in our lifestyles. This calls for changes in our way of life, in models of production, distribution and consumption, as well as in the established structures of power governing the world. This is a call to conversion of the human heart from excessive greed and selfishness, as well as insensitivity to the plight of the poor. Indeed, the current global financial crisis, particularly in the United States of America, may be traced to excessive greed, selfishness and misuse of power and trust, thereby reinforcing this call for a change of heart. Such a change cannot be accomplished without drawing on the spirituality of human existence.

Despite my criticism of post-development thinking, it provides food for thought with its implicit call for development "experts" to rid themselves of preconceived notions of what development should involve, as well as recognizing and acknowledging indigenous efforts to improve well-being, no matter how unconventional and unofficial such indigenous practices might be.

3.3.7   Towards an Operational view of development

Having reviewed the various development thoughts and debates, one has to make a choice in this study as to an operational definition of development which will serve as a reference point in subsequent analysis.   This thesis adopts a broad and holistic view of development that transcends economic growth and material progress. I see development as involving an increase in the capacity of people in a community to interact with their social, spiritual and physical environments in an effective and sustainable manner, with the view of achieving the goals they set for themselves. In other words, as far as my study is concerned, development is about the expansion of choices and opportunities for human well-being, including the opportunity for people to participate effectively in the social, economic and political affairs of their societies. I share in the thinking that human fulfillment does not just depend on material progress, but includes other dimensions like human dignity, spirituality, civil liberties, and cultural concerns. In this regard, it makes sense for

development to attempt to optimize the various sources of human well-being, rather than to maximize any one individual at the expense of others.

Inherent in my view of development is the need to tailor development efforts to reflect the culture, aspirations and potential of people in a particular locality. Development should seek to facilitate processes that can enable people to accomplish what they consider as well-being. This is important because the conceptualization of the "ends" of development and the "means" of accomplishing these ends varies from one society to the other in a dynamic manner. The whole concept of development is value-laden, and these values differ from one society to the next (Njoh 2006). Besides, the challenges confronting a particular society some years ago may not be the same in recent times: there is a need for creativity and a constant search for innovative and effective strategies to address the contemporary development challenges facing any society (Redclift 2006). Development should therefore be seen as an open ended, flexible and reciprocal learning process. Groups and individuals need to learn from one another in their search for innovative and sustainable development strategies that can meet the needs of current generations, without degrading the environment and jeopardizing the ability of future generations also to meet their needs. This thinking is reflected by Norgaard (1994: 166) in his concept of co-evolving discursive communities, as captured in Figure 3.2.

Figure 3.2: Co-evolving and overlapping discursive communities
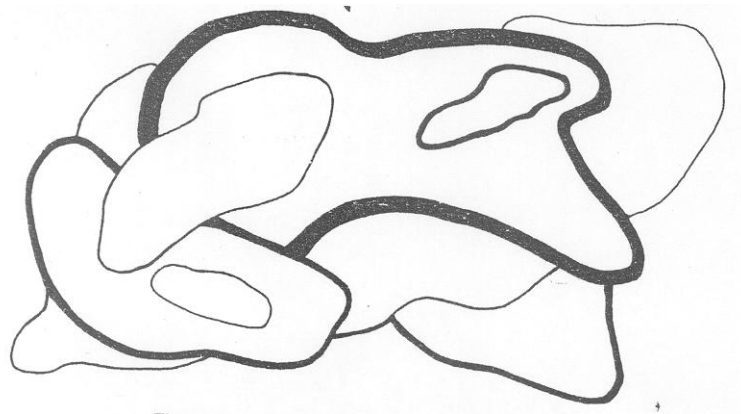
Source: Norgaard 1994: 166

Figure 3.2 shows different societies overlapping one another in a flexible, open-ended interaction with each other and the environment, such that feedback from the ecosystem and other challenges of human existence can easily be identified and interpreted. The appropriate response can then be provided to suit the prevailing local context, but with an appropriate sensitivity to global concerns. This open learning approach within the context of diversity and uncertainty will ensure the emergence of innovative but more sustainable models of organizing societies and managing the environment (Kambhampati 2004).

Many people equate development with change (Leftwich 2000; Szirmai 2005). However, I see development not necessarily as change, but as part and parcel of dynamic stability, where self-sustaining communities open up and adjust to new ideas and novelty from time to time within the context of co-evolution (Norgaard 1994; Rassafi, Poorzahedy and Vaviri 2006). Consequently, it is important for local communities to have greater control in decisions as to what should remain the same and what should change, depending on the local context and their own values. However, the realization of this in practice is often difficult, given the dominant pressures of modernization and globalization (Schech and Haggis 2004; Njoh 2006).

3.4 The concept of culture and its links with development

The preceding section which offered a literature review on development provided hints that the different meanings attached to the term "development" as well as how it can be achieved are culturally specific. In other words, depending on the particular cultural lens through which one is looking, the understanding of development as "end" and "means" may vary. It is appropriate, therefore, to further explore the links between culture and development, which this section seeks to do.

The term "culture" has different meanings and connotations depending on the context in which it is being used (Schech and Haggis 2004: 2). I do not intend to go into the various meanings associated with culture, since the focus of this study is not on culture per se. My interest is to have an operational understanding of the term "culture" and how it is

linked to development and local governance, as well as exploring the relevant institutions for accelerating rural development in the African context.

This study takes a broader view of culture so as to incorporate all socially transmitted behaviour patterns, knowledge, arts, beliefs, traditions, institutions and other products of human work and thought that characterize a society or social group (Leininger 2001; Punnett 2006; Njoh 2006). Culture involves the way of life of a people which includes the material, spiritual and non-material aspects of life such as the values, beliefs and unconscious processes that create the social reality of "being" (Gabriel and Sims 2000; Geissler 2004).

Bartle (2007) elaborates on this definition by identifying six dimensions of culture as indicated below:

- **Technological dimension**: Represented by the tools, skills and ways of dealing with the physical environment. Here the term "tools" does not refer to the physical tools themselves, but to the inventing, using and teaching of others to invent and use such tools.
- **Economic dimension of culture**: The focus here is on values, institutions and practices associated with the production and distribution of goods and services.
- **Political dimension of culture**: Relates to power and influence and how it is acquired and exercised. It includes authority with its various types (traditional, bureaucratic and charismatic).
- **Institutional dimension of culture**: The ways people act and interact and the expectations they have of others, including the meanings we attach to each other, our self-presentation and our roles.
- **Values**: Structure of ideas that people have about good and bad, beautiful and ugly, as well as right or wrong. Values guide people's actions.
- **Belief-Conceptual**: The structured ideas or worldview that people have about nature, the universe, the world around them and their role in it; the forces of cause and effect, as well as the nature of time. This dimension is sometimes thought to

encompass people's religion as it includes shared beliefs relating to how the universe came to be, how it operates and what constitutes reality.

The above definition of culture highlights the fact that divergent societies or groups have different cultures which provide identity and meaning for their existence, and which can strike deep emotional responses within people (Alkire 2004; Bartle 2007). Culture therefore involves arbitrarily assigned meanings to symbols such as words, language or objects, and such assigned meanings which are shared by the cultural group are passed on from one generation to the other. Consequently, culture provides a framework for everyday decisions, as well as for relationships and interactions with others. In the process of intercultural contacts, a power imbalance among various cultural groups can lead to weaker groups subordinating the meaning which they themselves attach to particular symbols or phenomena and adopting the meaning prescribed by the more powerful group (Njoh 2006). For example, there is a tendency for the African traditional concept of development to be subordinated to the dominant modernist one. If, however, these cultural contacts are managed properly, they could lead to productive and mutually enabling learning between different cultural groups. I take the position that a particular culture is relative to its prevailing context and that no culture can be considered inferior to another since the contexts are not the same. Therefore, rather than describe a community as backward and underdeveloped, someone with a critical cultural mind will describe the same community as offering an alternative development to what pertains elsewhere, and will therefore try to see the value in this alternative development being offered by the community (Norgaard 1994; Njoh 2006).

Development and culture are widely acknowledged to be linked in a number of different ways, in terms of both the "ends" and the "means" of development, yet efforts to offer a systematic study of such links remain woefully inadequate (Njoh 2006: 7). There are two schools of thought in this regard: one sees culture as an important factor in enhancing development outcomes (Sen 2000; Odhiambo 2002; Alkire 2004; Kuran 2004; Schech and Haggis 2004; Cassar and Bezzina 2005; Punnett 2006). The other views culture as being antithetical to development, since societies attached to traditional cultures are

unsuited to market-oriented development (Rostow 1960, cited in Njoh 2006: 6; Landers 2000; Harrison and Huntington 2000; Sorenson 2003: 79). These two perspectives will be explored further in subsequent sections.

3.4.1   The perspective of culture as valuable to development

Those who recognize the important role of culture in development outcomes, particularly in Africa (Serageldin and Tabaroff 1994; Sen 2000; Odhiambo 2002; Alkire 2004; Kuran 2004, Umeh and Andranovich 2005) advance various arguments to support this view. A major thrust of their argument is that the values, beliefs and perceptions people hold, all of which are aspects of culture, tend to greatly influence their way of thinking, motivation and behaviour (Punnett 2006: 106; Oniango 2007: 3). In other words, culture is a major force that shapes behaviour and social structures, with important implications for development. Indeed, culture is the basis of all social action, including economic and political life. For example, some traditional African societies perceive their economies not in terms of the Western concept of capitalism and market-orientation, but as being based on such values as solidarity, social stability and care for the environment (Verhelst 1987; Okolie 2003).

Other writers (Alhassan 2006: 530; Njoh 2006: 13) report on the effectiveness of some African indigenous knowledge and practices for natural resource management, as well as for healing, since they are adapted to, and defined by, their culture and natural environment. For example, Asabere-Ameyaw and Anamuah-Mensah (2006) report the effective management of the fragile ecosystem in the Dagaaba and Mamprusie communities of Ghana through the application of indigenous knowledge systems. Indeed, it is widely acknowledged that building on indigenous knowledge and practices is a necessary condition for self-reliant development. This may be accomplished by ensuring that development intervention is informed by indigenous knowledge and practices, be they values, aspirations or social institutions which are important to the people (Okolie 2003: 249).

Other writers who see value in culture (Singer 2000; Odhiambo 2002; Rao and Walton 2004a; Abotchie 2006) argue that it is through culture that people make sense of the world and of their lives. Culture is the part of human existence which keeps adapting to suit changing historical events so as to ensure the proper functioning and survival of the people. There is therefore usually a strong attachment of people to their culture, as it evokes a sense of identity and pride. This attachment is, in a way, a fundamental human need (Kleymeyer 1994), since people require sustenance from their cultures just as they do from food. Sen (2000) adds another perspective when he argues that if development can be seen as enhancing freedom in a broad sense, then cultural freedoms are among those by which development should be assessed.

3.4.2   Interventionists' view on culture

Critics of culture argue that the notion of development implies a change from old ways of doing things. People should therefore be released from the bonds of traditional cultures and lifestyles which are considered not only to be signs of underdevelopment, but to provide actual obstacles to development (Landers 2000, Harrison and Huntington 2000; Schech and Haggis 2004: 4; Rostow, cited in Andreasson 2005: 977). These critics of culture take the interventionist approach to development and argue that traditional culture inhibits people from functioning in the modern world and should therefore be replaced with modern values and development strategies through well-planned external intervention (Harrison and Huntington 2000; Rao and Walton 2004a). The challenge for development in this case is to reform traditional culture by means of the spirit of capitalism, infusing more growth and mobility-oriented perspectives through education and acculturation. Opponents of culture often cite the protestant ethic and the associated spirit of capitalism to support their arguments that infusing more Calvinist values into traditional societies would improve their ability to grow and escape from poverty (Rao and Walton 2004a). Such thinking is, however, out of tune with the growing recognition of diversity as a condition for innovative models of development that are more sustainable. I am therefore of the view that tradition and modernity should not be regarded as being incompatible, but should rather complement one another to accelerate

development in a sustainable manner. The evidence provided by the economic progress of Japan, despite its strong hold on traditional values like group responsibility and interpersonal trust, clearly shows that tradition and modernity can effectively complement each other in order to achieve greater results.

A further critique about traditional culture is that it could be misused in pursuit of social control, exploitation and political or religious gain (Landers 2000). For example, Golooba-Mutebi (2005) reports the use of accusations of witchcraft in some villages in South Africa to subordinate certain people and to destroy social relations which tend to retard development. I have also come across pastors in Ghana who use religion to exploit people by convincing them that the more they give to God, the more blessings they will receive. The other concern about traditional culture is that there can be differences of priorities within the field of culture itself, leading to those with more power in the community having their way at the expense of the weak (Landes 2000). For instance, there is the issue of "winners" and "losers" when it comes to which aspect of traditional culture will be considered valuable enough to be subsumed within the development process. What appears to be a valuable traditional practice by some may be viewed by others as an outgrowth of oppression and inequity. Whilst one cannot completely dismiss the possible negative sides of culture, the advantages of incorporating it in development practices tend to outweigh the possible dangers. There is a need to discard or modify some inimical cultural practices like female genital mutilation and also widowhood rites performed in some African countries, where a widow is subjected to various punishments as a way of cleansing her from the spirit of the dead husband. To use a handful of negative cultural practices as an excuse to condemn or discard the role of culture completely in the development process is completely counter-productive.

After following the debates on the two schools of thought on traditional culture and development, I am of the view that there are advantages and disadvantages associated with each. I therefore opt for a middle ground and advocate a blend between mainstream economic and modern perspectives on the one hand, and positive traditional values and

practices on the other. I see the two perspectives as lying at the extreme ends of a continuum, as depicted in Figure 3.3 below.

Figure 3.3: Culture and development as a continuum

Development as
intervention
(culture ignored)

Development as
Conservation of culture

Extreme   High   Balanced   High   Extreme
Intervention   Intervention   Development   Conservation   Conservation
                               (*Montrad* dev't.)
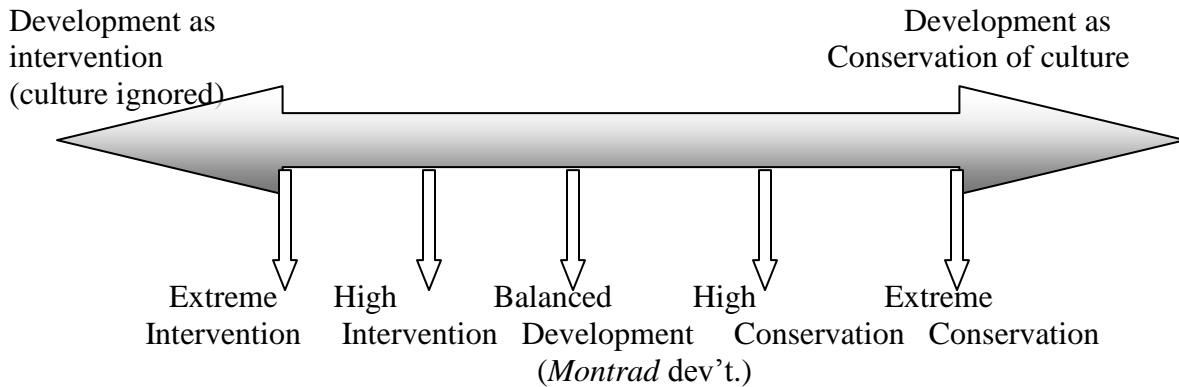
Figure 3.3 depicts culture and development as a continuum, with the end on the extreme left indicating development as a form of extreme intervention, where traditional culture is ignored and regarded as an impediment to development. In this case, the development strategy is to replace traditional culture with modern and market-oriented values which will make traditional societies adopt capitalist and rational perspectives to stimulate growth and prosperity. This approach, however, has a tendency to dislocate these traditional societies due to the loss of cultural identity (Verhelst 1987, Oniango 2007).

The next level from the left is what I choose to call high intervention to signify the tendency of development to employ high doses of interventionist strategies in the development process. In this case, there is not a total rejection of traditional culture, but no effort is made to appreciate any positive elements that can be tapped in the development process. Such an approach tends to block other knowledge systems that could provide clues for innovative and more sustainable development strategies.

The middle level is what I have chosen to call '*montrad*' development, signifying the balance between modernity (represented by "*mon*") and tradition (represented by "*trad*"). Here, there is a careful balance between modern values and practices, appropriate to the

local context at the time, and positive traditional values and practices in the development process. This allows development to take place as an open-ended learning process, allowing traditional culture to select some ideas from the modern market-oriented world and adapt itself to these ideas, and vice versa, within the context of co-evolution and dynamic stability (Norgaard 1994; Rao and Walton 2004a). Such a balanced development holds the key to our search for more innovative and sustainable development strategies.

As one moves along the diagram to the right, after the point of balanced development, one finds the high conservation of culture in the development process. Here there is a marked tendency on the part of traditional societies to hold onto their culture and not to be open to opportunities presented by the modern world. Such an approach denies the positive changes that could accrue to these traditional societies. At the extreme right end of the diagram, one finds the most extreme form of conserving traditional culture in the development process. Here there is a likelihood of traditional culture degenerating to become totally anachronistic, with possible negative implications for development. Culture should be dynamic and open to new ideas as it evolves to meet the challenges of the changing times.

There are positive and negative aspects of any culture with the potential to promote or hinder development. The important thing is to identify the positive aspects of culture and use them in ways that will enhance development. For example, Landes (1998: 291) and Njoh (2006: 48) maintain that the economic strides in Japan and other Asian countries are the result of these countries remaining true to their culture and traditions. These nations have not simply imitated the West blindly, but have chosen only those aspects of Western culture that can complement their own indigenous values such as group responsibility, company loyalty, interpersonal trust and implicit contracts that bind individual conduct. There may be merit, therefore, in arguing that the underdevelopment of Africa may be traced to the inability of many African countries to incorporate their culture with various development efforts. At the heart of this dilemma is what may be called "cultural globalization", whereby the dominant Western culture is being imposed upon the world in the guise of modernization or development (Njoh 2006). This is reinforced by the

pressures of globalization with its attendant free flow of goods and services, including culture. Western countries, with their economic and political power, are able to create and sustain a reality that reflects their world view or culture. This point is alluded to by Escobar (1995), cited by Schech and Haggis (2004), who argues that development is not only an amalgam of processes of change, but also a system of knowledge and power which produces and justifies these processes (see also Leftwich 2000: 64). This trend is reinforced by the fact that African scholars, who wield influence in their societies, have been trained within a Western educational system and, by extension, tend to be influenced by Western ways of thinking and reality construction.   To be considered an expert in a field like development, one has to be evaluated using standards developed within the Western frame of mind. The tendency, therefore, is 'to join them, if you can't beat them.' In this way, the development industry perpetuates practices and world views which are not in the long-term interest of humanity. There is thus a need for development experts to be more critical in their thinking, exploring ways of ensuring that development efforts in Africa are grounded in the tradition and culture of the people. Empirical evidence shows very positive results when this is done.

Many people who look through a Western cultural lens may find aspects of African tradition to be weird and counter-productive to development. However, it is my contention that African traditional beliefs and worldviews provide another body of knowledge about reality, or another science that has to be recognized and assimilated in our search for more authentic and sustainable development (Briggs 2005). Maintaining cultural diversity by protecting and promoting one's own culture, while recognizing and valuing the existence of others, is the key to generating innovative models of development (Kambhampati 2004). It is unfortunate, therefore, as observed by Kambhampati (2004: 71) that, through ethnocentrism and the dominance of the Western worldview, people tend to look down on other cultures or worldviews as being unscientific or superstitious.

Indeed, some aspects of Western culture and beliefs may also look weird to some Africans, but these are hardly ever questioned due to the uneven power relations that

underlie knowledge production in a particular way. Western culture has been documented and projected as the only truth, thereby subordinating other truth claims like the African world view. This point is supported by Njoh (2006: 10) when he recounts a story of how a hunter in an African village shot and killed a fellow hunter during the hunting expedition, yet was released by the traditional courts on grounds that he shot at a tiger and went to pick it up, only to realize that it was a human being. To bolster his claim, the hunter enlisted the testimonies of African traditional healers/priests, who testified to the fact that the victim was endowed with powers to transform himself into animals. People with a Western mindset could not imagine how any sane jury or judge could be persuaded by such a baseless defense. This story is then compared to a similar one in which an American shot and killed his wife, yet was set free on the defense that he had carried out the shooting whilst in his sleep. This was supported by medical experts that the man suffered from a sleeping disorder known as somnambulism. Yet, the same people who found the African hunter's story absurd did not find anything wrong with the American somnambulist, apparently due to ethnocentrism or the cultural lenses they were wearing. In my view, the difference between the African hunter and the American somnambulist is that the latter has been documented in such a way as to create a certain desired reality, whilst the former has not been documented, and is instead shrouded in secrecy and prone to being condemned as superstition (Briggs 2005: 102) rather than being considered as another possible reality. Thus, the challenge is for African writers to document and explain some of the African phenomena and project them as another form of science which differs from the Western model (Kaniki and Mphahlele 2002). This will ensure that the rich African culture and values are not eroded in the name of modernity.

The discourse on culture and development often brings out conflicting considerations. For example, there is often the dilemma and conflictual relationship between modernity and cultural traditionalism. Should rational scientific methods be used to explain the world, or should we adopt the traditional African "irrationalism" that has the tendency to explain some of the problems of the world based on witchcraft? Should we develop social institutions founded on rational reasoning and the changing dynamics of society, or rely on traditional systems of social control which might not be appropriate for the evolving

complexities of our societies? Should the individual be subordinated to the community in the name of African culture of collectivism, or is there value in the individual focusing on individual needs and interests? Should we adopt technologies generated from the West or hold on to indigenous African technologies that might be ineffective? (Briggs 2005; Njoh 2006). In the face of these conflicting views on modernity and African tradition, I have argued that there is value in both worldviews, which have to be evaluated on their own merit and context, with a view to tapping into the strengths of each in a complementary manner. The desire to integrate traditional culture with development should therefore be undertaken with a critical mind, seeking consensus as to how this can be implemented most effectively. That we should take culture into account when designing or putting development policies into practice has been known for a long time and documented by various writers (Alkire 2004; Kuran 2004; Schech and Haggis 2004; Cassar and Bezzina 2005; Punnett 2006; Gay 2007). What is not yet known is "how" to take culture into account. This study hopes to make a contribution in searching for the "how" in relation to the involvement of traditional authorities in Wenchi district in local governance and rural development.

3.5 Development culture: The clash of worldviews between tradition and modernity

The concept of culture may be extended to cover the term "development culture", which means the predominant values, beliefs and actions associated with development theory and practice (Rao and Walton 2004b). In this regard, the development culture in many African countries is based on a Western worldview of individualism, rationalism, competiveness, profit maximization, positivism and technology transfer (Norgaard 1994; Rao and Walton, 2004b; Szirmai 2005). The rationale behind this thinking is that if developing countries, like Africa, want to increase their standard of living, they will have to abandon their indigenous cultures, considered as being inimical to development, and rather adopt more of the Western lifestyle such as individualism, secularisation and the weakening of ties that bind people together in communities. A critical questions related to this line of thinking is whether a particular life-style or culture can be superior to, or more

satisfying than, another? Although well-intentioned, the modernization paradigm has, over the years, proved to be disastrous to human existence in many respects.

According to Norgaard, the Western philosophy of people and social relations is based on the fact that people exist as individuals with preferences, and hold assets like material resources, talents and votes that they can trade with each other based on the utility that the individual will derive. In other words, social relations are reduced to mere mechanisms of exchange between individuals, founded on rational thinking. This is in sharp contrast with typical African traditional values which emphasize collectivism, as well as peaceful and harmonious co-existence (Oniango 2007). This implies that in the African cultural context, the individual is not expected to act in a manner based purely on rational decisions like maximizing profits or material possessions at the expense of the environment and other human beings. Rather, the individual's actions should be grounded more in moderation and compromises that can foster both individual and collective well-being, leading to peaceful and harmonious living with one's fellow man and other creatures in the world. This is certainly the crux of sustainable development, which we must seek to understand and promote. The relentless pursuit of wealth in an impersonal marketplace and an uncontrolled self-indulgence could eventually lead to humanity's self-destruction.

I strongly believe that a sustainable future is substantially linked to the world's ability to maintain long-term ecological and cultural integrity, and should therefore take precedence over the short-term growth of physical and financial capital. The key to such a sustainable future may be found in African traditional philosophy which emphasizes that human well-being is best attained through harmonious living with the universe rather than through uncontrolled accumulation of wealth at the expense of the common good. It is also instructive to note that if Japan has succeeded economically by holding onto its ethic of what benefits the common good, then the communal spirit of African tradition should not be destroyed in the name of modernization, since it is possible to manage such a communal spirit effectively towards the accomplishment of a win-win development agenda.

Unfortunately, this African tradition is under threat from dominant Western values which emphasize individualism, self centeredness and a maximization of material resources. An added concern is the growing tendency for breaking up of traditional community units such as villages and extended family systems, all in the name of modernization. Furthermore, the younger generations in Africa are attracted to the glamorous living in the North and are therefore abandoning their traditional culture which they consider to be backward and anti-modern. This is creating a loss of identity among many African youth, as they are caught between a Western lifestyle which they cannot afford and a traditional culture that they dislike. This study seeks to contribute towards the revival of these traditional African values and to generate better understanding of the traditional governance system in Wenchi, along with its role in local governance and development.

Another dimension of development culture as observed by Baidyanath (1993) and (Norgaard 1994: 7) is a technocratic approach to development planning and management in many African countries whereby "experts", mostly wearing Western cultural lenses, define development problems and design blueprint solutions to address these problems, with little attention being paid to indigenous knowledge and practices. The persistent development challenges of the world, despite several decades of experts leading development processes, calls into question this technocratic approach to development. Although well-intentioned, this system has, over the years, proved to be disastrous to human existence in many respects. Jain (2007: 17) adds another dimension when he reports of a bureaucratic development culture in many Third World countries, whereby the formulation, implementation and evaluation of development policies are undertaken by government bureaucracies. Such an approach tends to generate poor outcomes, since the interests and concerns of the bureaucrats do not necessarily coincide with the primary beneficiaries that such development may be targeting.

The literature on development culture points to development thinking and practice that have been shaped by modern epistemology, with a tendency to exclude most traditional systems of knowledge, thereby making holistic thinking of development highly problematic (Kambhampati 2004). Whilst I concede that the modernist world-view and

industrial revolution made enormous contributions to our material welfare and control of our lives, we can at the same time see the cost of this progress in the form of ecological devastation, human and social fragmentation and spiritual impoverishment. There is a need for a fundamental shift in our understanding of the world so that we can embrace new patterns of thinking and action to generate sustainable human development. We need to think in new, innovative ways rather than holding on to the epistemological errors that have shaped our current way of thinking, errors which have had unfortunate consequences for justice, peace, development and ecological integrity. One way in which we could do this is to go back to traditional cultural values which have evolved over several years of trying to live in harmony with the world. The challenge of changing our world-view is central to our times.

3.6 Culture and the functioning of public institutions in Africa: The missing links and implications for development

An important dimension of culture is its links with the operations of public institutions, particularly in Africa. This is so because culture conditions a society's expectations among and between various actors in the society. This section deepens the discussions on culture in this direction, with the hope of generating a better understanding of how the performance of such public institutions could be enhanced by blending modernity with tradition.

Institutions, as referred to in this study, imply the rules, processes, traditions, structures and organizational entities that humans impose on their interaction and which therefore define the incentives that determine the choices individuals make. Such choices go a long way to shaping the performance of societies and economies (North 1990: 2-3, cited by Orrnert 2006; Haines and Robino 2006: 8). In other words, institutions are the framework within which human interactions take place and can have a direct effect on economic growth and poverty reduction, depending on the institutional framework and context. For example, if institutions are shaped by the values of solidarity and common good, then a development outcome which favours the poor may be realized. If, on the

other hand, the institutions are created by rich and powerful people to protect their privileged positions, then the poor could well be discriminated against and eliminated from the benefits of economic and social development.

There is an overall acknowledgement of a positive correlation between the quality and performance of institutions on one hand, and development outcomes on the other (Jutting 2003; Wilson and Gill 2003; Orrnert 2006; Jain 2007: 21). Yet, Evans (2004) reports that many institutional reforms in Third World countries have not been successful in alleviating poverty. This may be attributed to inappropriate institutional reforms that do not take into account the complex realities in developing countries. Indeed, Jutting (2003) and Srivastava (2004) argue that there is a poor understanding of the causal links between institutional environment and development outcomes. Jutting (2003) suggests that studies analyzing the impact of institutions on development outcomes need to take into account the local setting and the influences of other existing social structures and institutions, as well as the perspectives of the various development actors. Such an understanding can provide the basis for any institutional reform in order to make it more responsive to the development needs of various categories of people, particularly the poor. There is therefore a strong justification for this study to explore the perspectives and relationships between two key development actors at the local level (district assembly structures and traditional authorities) as a basis for recommending institutional reform of the decentralization process so as to bring about accelerated local development.

Since post-colonial rule, many African countries have been battling with the proper functioning of their public institutions. McCurdy (1977: 298-299), Umeh and Andanovich (2005: 107) and Njoh (2006: 122) have documented some of the administrative challenges endemic to Third World countries:

- Poor delegation, as executives want to control everything;
- Inability of officials in developing countries to operationalize development plans, which are mostly left to gather dust;
- High corruption;

- Waste of time on management of paperwork, meetings, field trips, rather than concentrating on the actual management tasks of communicating objectives and defining responsibilities;
- Too much secrecy in relation to management information. One may even need special permission to get copies of public documents.

Kotze, et al (1997: 19) explains that corruption and poor performance of public servants in many African countries may be traced to the concentration of power at higher levels, with weak mechanisms for downward accountability. Whilst there may be merit in this argument, it follows the modernization paradigm with the presumption that there are objective and universal management models that can be introduced to automatically guarantee efficient performance of public servants in Africa. The problem with this approach is that even if the management model is efficient and the people who have to implement it have a negative mindset and values focused on the pursuit of personal interests instead of the common good, the results will still be dismal. African bureaucrats need to be guided by African traditional values and beliefs such as the fear of a superior Being to whom all persons will have to account one day, and the mantra that the good of all equals the good of the individual. If this was the case, then these bureaucrats would always take decisions and act appropriately in the interest of all, even if there were no management models to check corruption. This highlights the critical role of reviving some valuable African traditional values and blending these with modern administrative systems.

One explanation for the poor functioning of public institutions in Africa as provided by Haque (1996: 316), Gyekye (1997: 115) and Orrnert (2006: 451) is that these institutions reflect exogenous origins, as they were shaped largely by their colonial rulers and not rooted in the culture of the people. Consequently, these government systems failed to illicit cultural understanding, legitimacy and emotional attachment among African people. Haque (1996: 316, cited in Umeh and Andranovich 2005: 109) notes that these government institutions are "contextless", thus making their functioning problematic. In other words, the nature of the relationship between the administrative system on one

hand, and the economic, political and social context on the other, differs in Western nations as compared with African countries. Consequently, borrowed Western administrative models have been incompatible and ineffective in non-Western societies holding different and unique sets of values. This thinking highlights the need to fashion administrative systems grounded in the cultural realities of the people. For example, whilst the Western administrative model may emphasize rational thinking and utility calculation as a source of motivation for a certain desired behaviour, it could be different in the African context, where people's attitudes may be driven by other factors like a desire to maintain good interpersonal relationships, even at the expense of economic gains. In other words, in some African contexts, social considerations might be a stronger motivating factor than economic gains. Such social factors must be understood and addressed in any institutional policy reform. As argued by Orrnert (2006: 451), formal organizations are embedded in, and influenced by, a larger social structure and power relations such as the norms and values of the people, as well as informal networks of power. Hence the broader institutional context influences procedural and policy outcomes. Indeed, cultural factors lie at the heart of the functioning of formal and informal institutions (Rao and Walton 2004: 360). This line of thinking is corroborated by Blunt and Turner (2005) who found that decentralization in Cambodia was limited by cultural constraints.

In the midst of these challenges, confronting the functioning of African public institutions, I am persuaded by the arguments of Njoh (2006: 122) and Gay (2007: 21) that if contemporary governance and development administration in Africa are to be successful, then they have to be grounded in the culture of the people. For instance, contemporary governance institutions in Africa could benefit from traditional political values like consensus building, co-operation and the fear of God in relation to decisions or the exercising of executive powers. This should, however, be founded on a critical evaluation of their merits. Unfortunately, international and national development authorities seeking to address this challenge have historically ignored the need to evaluate African traditional models of governance, with a view to identifying elements that may

improve the capacity of contemporary systems of administration on the continent, particularly development administration, which is the critical challenge of our times.

In my opinion, the above administrative challenges in Africa may be traced to the erosion of some positive African traditional values, like integrity and communalism, through the importation of Western administrative models crafted within modernization values of rationalism, maximization of material wealth and individualism. In many traditional African communities, there is a popular proverb which literally translates as "your good name is better than wealth", reflecting the values of honesty, hard work and social solidarity, which are ingredients for preserving the integrity and respect of a person and the family name. Unfortunately, these values are being replaced with principles of modernization which tend to promote the notion: "seek wealth first and all other assets like your good name and respect will be added unto you". As many Africans become enticed by the promises of modernization, in terms of good living and the respect from society accorded to the wealthy, they are at the same time confronted with the reality that they cannot afford such wealth and good living. Consequently, there is the temptation to employ all means, including corrupt practices, to acquire riches and live lavishly, thus commanding the respect of society. This is reinforced by unrealistic expectations from many African societies that leaders or people who occupy a certain social status, like a Minister of State, should necessarily live the modern lifestyle of opulence. All these pressures push senior public servants and politicians in Africa to indulge in corrupt practices to satisfy their egos or the expectations of society. Such unlawful practices are further encouraged by a concentration of power with people of higher social status and weak mechanisms for downward accountability. To facilitate such corruption, some public servants will be lured to employ secrecy with regard to public information, trying to do everything by themselves, thereby making it impossible for those below them to demand accountability. If this tendency of African leaders to blindly pursue individual materialism is not addressed, then it will inevitably lead to severe mistrust.

So far, public institutions have been discussed in relation to the state. However, Lund (2006: 686) adds a new dimension with his argument that public authority does not

always fall within the exclusive realm of state institutions, but that traditional authorities in Africa also exercise public authority alongside the state. This argument is persuasive, since traditional authorities in many rural areas I visited in Ghana are able to enact and enforce traditional by-laws, as well as taking decisions which are binding to their subjects. Similarly, state institutions like the district assemblies have similar powers. People are often torn between the two authorities, especially where there is divergence in policy directives between traditional authorities and state agencies. This duality of public authority may lead to intense competition between the two institutions which could affect the proper functioning of both.

Whatever the explanation for the poor functioning of public institutions in Africa might be, questions are being asked as to why viable public and political institutions cannot be designed to reflect the African context and reality. This study aims to contribute to this search by exploring the nature and workings of traditional and modern governance systems in Wenchi district and how these two systems can effectively complement each other.

3.7 Traditional institutions in Africa: The development potentials and weaknesses of chiefs

The previous section highlighted the need for public and political institutions in Africa to incorporate relevant aspects of traditional institutions or governance models for greater effectiveness, especially in delivering the much needed good governance and development for which Africa is yearning. Traditional institutions are defined for the purposes of this study as all those forms of social and political authority which have their historical origin in pre-colonial states and societies. A key traditional institution in Africa, which is of interest to this study, is that of chieftaincy, which may also be called a traditional governance system. I share in the thinking of Owusu-Sarpong (2003), as well as Umeh and Andranovich (2005: 140) that these African traditional governance systems display some indigenous political values such as truth and honesty, as well as love and respect for one's fellow man, that need to be understood and incorporated into contemporary political and public institutions. If policy makers are to make informed

decisions about traditional governance systems, they need first to know how they function and who uses them. This section consolidates the relevant literature on traditional governance in Africa, highlighting the development potential and weaknesses of these traditional institutions.

3.7.1 Types of traditional governance systems in Africa

Most observers of traditional African political systems recognize two main forms, namely the non-centralized or fragmented traditional state, and the centralized state (Ray 2003; Tutu II 2004: 2; Nabilla 2006: 2). The centralized states or cephalous societies have centralized authority, administrative machinery and judicial institutions, with the power and authority permeating from the top to the local level in a hierarchical manner. The king or paramount chief is the administrative and judicial head, vested mostly with final economic and legal control over all the land within his boundaries, and the people living within these boundaries are the subjects of the chief (Fortes and Evans-Pritchard 1970: 5; Ray 2003). The king or chief rules with his council of elders and advisors in accordance with the law. The chief is accountable and liable to deposition upon violation of norms considered subversive of the entire political system. Examples of centralized states include the Asante of Ghana, Barotse of Zambia, Baganda of Uganda, Yorubaland of Nigeria and Zulus of South Africa.

The non-centralized states or acephalous societies on the other hand, lack centralized authority and administrative machinery. The lineage system is predominantly used to regulate and govern such societies. This usually consists of well-established rules of conduct, usually enforced by heads of families or clans, and in more serious or subversive cases, by spontaneous community action. Despite this simple political system, there is usually a central figure like the *tindana* or spiritual head, whom the people respect and look up to for spiritual support (Boaten 1994; Nabilla 2006). Examples are the "Tallensi" of Northern Ghana, the Sukuma of Tanzania, the Nuer of Southern Sudan, the Ibos of Nigeria and the Kikuyu of Kenya. However, the policy of indirect rule adopted by the colonial masters led to the installation of chiefs in societies where there were no chiefs.

This led to many acephalous societies adopting the traditional political systems that pertain in centralized societies.

3.7.2 Key features of traditional governance systems: Any lessons for modernity?

In spite of the variations in the different forms of African traditional governance, there are a number of important common elements and features. In the first place, a traditional African governance system exhibits features of decentralization, as power and authority are decentralized from the paramount chief to sub chiefs and village chiefs (Ray 2003; Tutu II 2004: 2; Njoh 2006: 125). This can provide clues to the search for a more effective decentralization process on the continent. However, before policy-makers can tap into the potential of a traditional decentralization system, there is a need first to understand how it works, as well as its strengths and weaknesses, so that its strengths can be tapped and maximized.

The second key feature of a traditional African governance system is that the leaders rule or govern their societies with the direct participation of elders (representing various clans or families) in the decision-making process. Although the king or chief has the final word, he is bound to consult very regularly, and decisions are reached by consensus without formal votes (Tutu II 2004: 2). This consensus-building approach in decision making promotes team work and minimizes conflicts. If contemporary public institutions in Africa are not functioning well, one of the reasons could be traced to the culture of top-down decision-making processes, as well as a "winner takes all" attitude which tends to create rifts and rivalry between various groups.

Another interesting feature of African traditional governance, as explained by Tutu II (2004), as well as Ray (2003), is that even though the choice of a chief or leader is often based on membership of a particular family or clan, other criteria like character and personal qualities are also given important consideration. The critical question to ask is whether the same diligence of character is considered in the choice of leaders of

110

contemporary public institutions. My experience seems to suggest that the emphasis in choosing leaders for political and public institutions in Ghana is based more on academic qualifications and people with connections to appointing authorities, rather than on character. If we can draw lessons from the traditional system and ensure that leaders within public institutions are honest and interested in the common good, then the frequently reported cases of corruption and misappropriation of funds in political public institutions in Africa will minimize, thereby making more resources available to invest in development activities.

Messer (1998) argues that traditional institutions are based on interpersonal, mostly face-to-face, relationships among social (rather than administrative) units that are conceptually distinct from the modern construct of state institutions, thereby making such local institutions more effective rallying points for social mobilization towards development. The institution of chieftaincy is an important traditional administrative mechanism in many African countries (Vehnamaki 1999), but is poorly understood by policy makers, particularly in relation to decentralization.

It is worth noting, however, that these virtues of traditional African institutions relate to their pristine purity before the colonial era. However, with the impact of colonization and modernization, these traditional governance systems may be corrupted by the values of modernization. Thus there is a need to evaluate them in order to ascertain which aspects are still relevant in contemporary public institutions. This study seeks to make a contribution in this direction.

3.7.3   Chiefs and local development: Some pros and cons

There is an increasing recognition that traditional authorities in Africa have tremendous potential that could be tapped to enhance rural development. Ray (2003), Kendie and Guri (2004), Magomero (2004), Abotchie (2006), and Leonardi (2007) argue that the vast majority of rural people in Africa encounter traditional authorities as they grow up and are therefore socialized to imbibe some of these traditional political values that cannot

easily be shaken off. In many rural areas, chiefs are still held in high esteem as the legitimate moral and social leaders. The respect and influence of traditional authorities is reinforced by their links to the divine or sacred, which incite tremendous passion among the subjects. In this regard, chiefs can be a powerful source of mobilizing local people for development. Customary values could also be mobilized by chiefs in support of development interventions such as Zimbabwean reforestation (Daneel 1996, cited by Ray 2003: 115). In this regard, chiefs could be instrumental in promoting balanced and sustainable development models that blend tradition with modernity. The significance of chiefs in imparting justice also cannot be overlooked, since customary courts are easily accessible, cheap, fast and comprehensible to many rural people (Sharma 2003: 261).

Furthermore, as custodians of lands in many African communities, chiefs have a critical role to play in terms of land use management, including natural resources like forests and water systems. Indeed, Alhassan (2006: 530) argues that traditional authorities in Africa have been very good stewards of nature, apparently due to the traditional philosophy that land and natural resources belong to a triple heritage, namely, *the dead, the living* and *future generations*. A prominent chief in Ghana, the late Nana Sir Ofori Atta I, Omanhene of Akim Abuakwa, expressed this philosophy as follows: "I conceive that land belongs to a vast family of which many are dead, few are living and countless numbers are unborn" (Alhassan 2006: 530). This thinking enjoins the living to manage and conserve the environment for future generations, while at the same time accounting for their stewardship to the ancestors.

On the other hand, there are some commentators who strongly believe that traditional authorities have no place in modern Africa because they retard, rather than encourage, development (Van de Waal 1994: 434, cited in Magomero 2004: 2; Abotchie 2006: 173). They argue that the ascribed and non-democratic nature of the chieftaincy institution is inconsistent with modern political institutions that are democratic. Besides, the appropriation of chiefs as agents of rule by colonial and post-colonial states undermined their ability to mobilize for socio-political change, and these chiefs are therefore irrelevant in modern times. Furthermore, the commentators cited above are of the opinion

that traditional authorities are installed without mechanisms of accountability and good performance, and can therefore not be trusted with development management. The other accusation is that chiefs are not supervised by any other authority and are therefore not able to be held accountable for their decisions. This could lead to chiefs becoming susceptible to exploiting those under their control, such as charging unreasonable fees.

The argument against traditional authority as being undemocratic may be contested by the fact that even though the choice of a chief or leader is often based on membership of a particular family, there is usually some form of selection process from a pool of qualified candidates. Any democratic system has eligibility criteria, and the requirement that a chief has to come from a particular clan may be considered as fulfilling at least one criterion for eligibility. Besides, the disadvantages associated with appointing traditional leaders can be offset by greater benefits like saving the costs of elections, as well as minimizing the antagonism usually associated with democratic elections. Furthermore, a key ingredient in democracy is participation in the political process. However, given the fact that the majority of the population in Africa is poor and excluded from elite politics, any system that offers greater political participation to ordinary citizens satisfies a major requirement for democracy. My interaction with ordinary people in rural areas of Ghana suggests that they are closer to their chiefs than to their elected representatives in parliament and the district assembly, and that they have various mechanisms by which they can actively participate in the traditional political system. The chieftaincy institution in Africa can therefore not be regarded as being undemocratic.

Those who see the chiefs as unaccountable are probably not aware of the various traditional mechanisms that are used to ensure accountability from the chiefs. There is usually a social contract between the chief and his subjects based on certain rules and expectations, violations of which usually attract various sanctions including the possible loss of his position. I must admit, however, that the pressures of modernization might have eroded some of these mechanisms of accountability in certain traditional areas, although one cannot generalize and maintain that all chiefs are not accountable. The knowledge that a chief serves as a link between the living and their ancestors tends to act

as a check on chiefs' behaviour. This is due to the fact that chiefs have an inherent fear that if they do not live upright lives, they will attract appropriate retribution from the ancestors.

Goncalves (2005: 64) finds a middle ground in the debate on the relevance of traditional authorities in Africa, in that his study of traditional authorities in the Mocumbi tribe in Mozambique reveals that both critics and supporters of traditional authority have exaggerated the relevance of the institution for local governance and rural development. He advocates instead the use of alternative forms of local authority like the influential family elders in local governance and rural development. As these debates go on, more empirical data is required across the continent as to how people perceive traditional authority in Ghana and its relevance in contemporary local governance and rural development. It is evident from the above discussions that the political and developmental role of the chief in contemporary societies usually elicits varying opinions. I, however, share in the thinking of Crothers (2004: 71) that "the proper role of any social position cannot be determined by theoretical reflections alone, but deserves careful empirical study".

3.8 Conclusion

The discourse on development shows how Western world-views have shaped the understanding and practice of development. The effectiveness of these development paradigms is being called into question due to their inability to address contemporary problems of poverty, social unrest and environmental crises. The search for alternative development models points to cultural diversity and its role in generating innovative and more sustainable models of development. The chapter explored the links between culture and development, as well as the functioning of institutions in Africa, which highlighted the dialectical tension between tradition and modernity, universalism and peculiarity, Western science and indigenous knowledge. Within this tension, the threat of an erosion of traditional African culture by Western cultural values was brought to the fore. The position taken in this study is that there should be recognition of the value and

114

opportunities offered by cultural diversity in our search for innovative and more effective systems of governance and development. Consequently, African indigenous knowledge and world-views should be respected as another science and reality capable of complementing Western science in generating innovative outcomes in terms of addressing present-day problems. However, respect for cultural diversity does not mean an unconditional acceptance of all differences in cultural values, but rather the willingness to listen and be open to learning possibilities as well as offering criticism when necessary. This lays the foundation of, and provides further justification for, my research, which seeks to generate a deeper understanding of the workings of traditional authorities in Wenchi district and their role in Ghana's decentralization process.

CHAPTER FOUR

4.0 RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

4.1 Introduction

This chapter starts with background information relating to the research area so as to offer a contextual appreciation of the methodology and findings. It details the methodology employed in the study, as well as the philosophical perspectives that informed the choice of research methods. The chapter therefore focuses on the following issues:

- Study context;
- Philosophical perspectives and selection of research paradigm and methodology;
- The research methods employed;
- Data analysis.

4.2 Research area

4.2.1   Choice of Wenchi district and justification

Wenchi district was chosen for this research for three reasons. In the first place, Wenchi district is one of the oldest local government units in Ghana and therefore has well established district structures and traditional authority systems that can be studied. The second reason for choosing Wenchi district for the study is that the researcher is very familiar with the area, as he has stayed there before and speaks the local language. Knowledge of the district and my ability to speak the inhabitants' local dialect were considered critical in facilitating the study. Finally, the choice of Wenchi district was based on the fact that it has both urban and rural characteristics, as Wenchi township and Nchiraa have some urban characteristics and these towns are surrounded by many villages.   The choice of Wenchi district therefore allowed the study to benefit from both rural and urban phenomena, which enriched the understanding of the interactive

processes between decentralized structures and traditional authorities in both urban and rural settings.

4.2.2 Location

The study area, Wenchi district, is located in the Western part of the Brong Ahafo region of Ghana. It lies within latitudes 7 30' and 8° 05' North and longitudes 2° 15' West and 1° 55' East. Wenchi district shares boundaries with Techiman district to the West, Kintampo district on the Northwest, Tain district to the East and Sunyani municipal to the South. Wenchi covers a land area of 3,494 sq kilometres. Figure 4.1 is a map of the study area. The villages covered by the study are: Awisa, Nchira, Agubie, Ayigbe, Wurumpo, Tainso, Adamu, Buoko, Nkonsia, Branam, Konoware and Koase.

Wenchi district is unique, as it occupies a central location in Ghana, lying in-between the forest and savanna ecological zones of the country (see map of study area in Figure 4.1 on the next page). Located in the transitional zone, Wenchi district has suitable climatic conditions for agricultural production, thus attracting migrant farmers from the less endowed northern savanna. Other people migrate from the coastal areas of Ghana to undertake fishing along some of the rivers in Wenchi. The district is therefore inhabited by different ethnic groups with diverse socio-cultural backgrounds interacting with the district assembly structures and traditional authorities in various ways. The implications of this for local area development are not well understood. A contextual understanding, as elaborated in subsequent sections of this chapter, is therefore critical for informing the methodology of the study.

Figure 4.1: Map of Ghana, showing Wenchi District
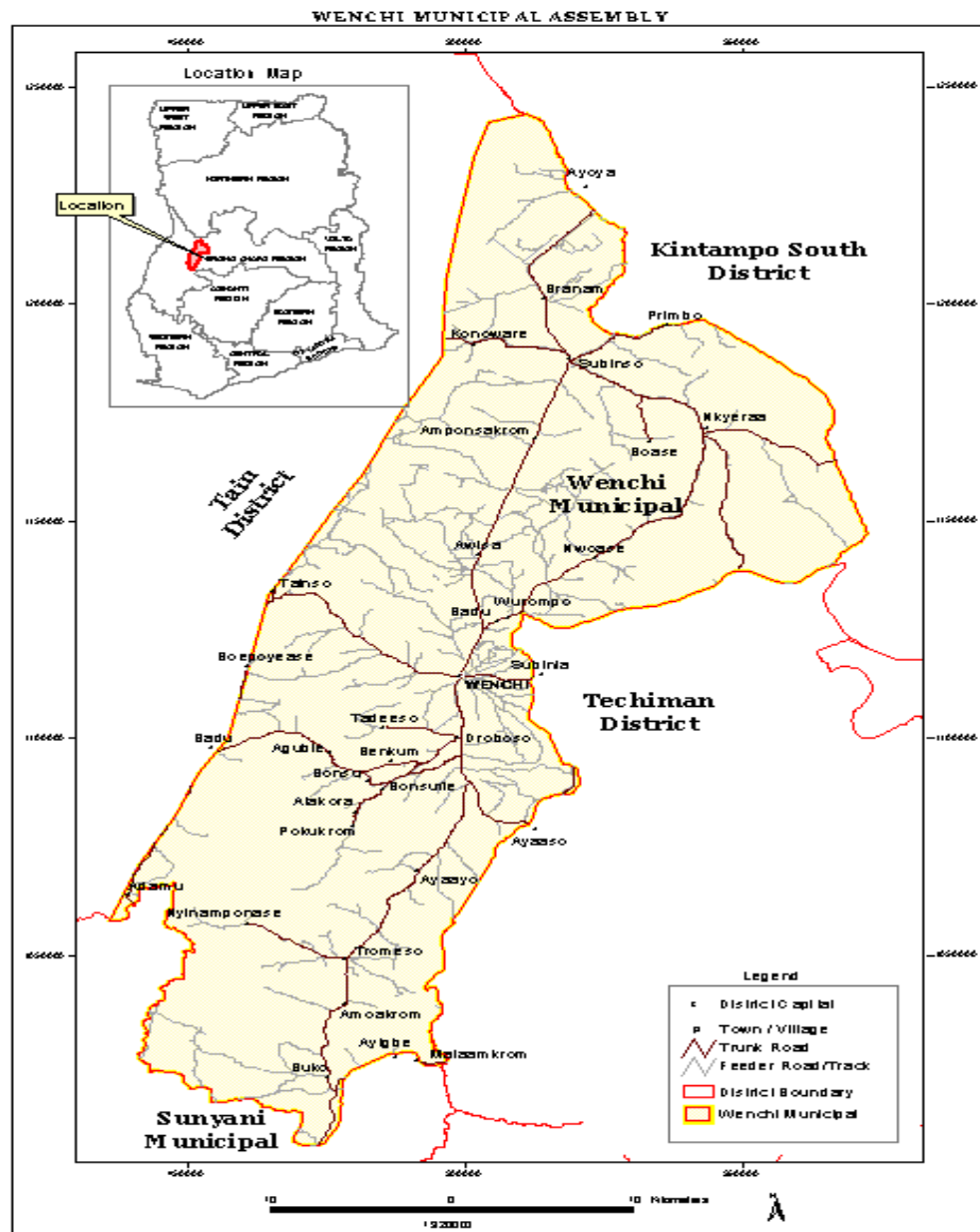
4.2.3   Origin of the District and Demographic Characteristics

Wenchi district is one of the oldest local government units in Ghana, as it was established in the 1920s by the colonial authority as the capital of North Ashanti, overseeing major towns such as Nkoranza, Atebubu, Berekum, Techiman and Kintampo. However, Wenchi Local Government was reclassified as Wenchi District Assembly in 1988 as a result of the decentralization policy of Ghana. In 2004, the district was divided and a portion ceded to Tain District.

Wenchi District is predominantly rural, with about 70% of the population living in settlements with fewer than 5,000 people. There are seventy four (74) settlements or communities in the district. By population criteria alone, only Wenchi settlement would be classified as urban. Nchiraa, the next largest community, has a population of 3,658 (Wenchi District Development Plan, 2006).

The district data base estimates the population of Wenchi to be about 68,417. The population is youthful, in that 7.24% are under 5 years of age, while 35.45% are between the ages of 5 and18 years and 50.12% between 18 and 59 years of age. Only 6.69% of the population is above 60 years old (Table 4.1).

Table 4.1:   Age Structure of Wenchi District

Age	Percentage (%)
0 – 4	7.24
5 – 18	35.45
19– 59	50.12
60 +	6.69

Source: District Data Base 2005

The economically active group of 50.12% is higher than the national level of 24.4. This implies huge potential in terms of the availability of a labour force to propel the development process of the district, if well harnessed. The high percentage of economically active inhabitants of the district may be traced to people migrating from other parts of the country to settle there, taking advantage of the huge agricultural potential in the district. In terms of gender distribution, 49.36% are males and 50.64% are females.

119

4.2.4   Ethnicity

About eight major ethnic groups are found in Wenchi District (see Table 4.2). However, 50% of them are Bono, the dominant indigenous group. This is followed by the Banda (15%). Other tribes such as the Fantes and Ewes are mainly fishermen and carpenters. In spite of the multiplicity of tribes, there is relative peace and harmony among the various ethnic groups. This obviously has positive implications for development.

Table 4.2:   Major Ethnic Groups in the Wenchi District

Ethnicity	Settlement	Percentage
1. Bono	Wenchi, Nchiraa, Asuogya, Nwoase, Tromeso	50%
2. Banda	Wenchi	15%
3. Mo	Subinso I & II, Branam , Ayoya	4%
4. Badu	Akete, Wurompo, Nkonsia,	8%
5. Ashantis	Mixed	5%
6. Fantes	Along rivers e.g. Yoyo Stream	2%
7. Ewes	Akrobi town and along Yoyo Steam	1%
8. Dagarbas & other Northern tribes	Mixed	11%
9. Others (Sisalas)	Asuogya and Subinso areas	4%

Source: Department of Social Welfare, Wenchi District Assembly, 2006

4.2.5   Economic Activities

About 75% of the people in Wenchi earn their livelihood through farming. Major crops cultivated are yam, cassava, maize groundnuts and cowpea. The soil and weather conditions are suitable for agriculture, since the district lies between the transitional forest and savanna zones. Consequently, people migrate from the Northern parts of the country to Wenchi area to engage in farming, resulting in increasing demand for, and pressure upon, farmland in the area. About 3% of the population, mainly Fantis and Ewes, are engaged in fishing along the various river sources in the district (Wenchi District Development Plan, 2006). These settler farmers depend on the traditional authorities for farmland and to facilitate a peaceful co-existence with the other tribes.

Even though many farmers keep animals as well as cultivating crops, they usually consider such animal farming as a secondary occupation, with little attention paid to the animals which are mostly reared under a free range system. Many women in the district are engaged in processing cassava into gari.

The community members generally demand various services like agricultural extension and market access for their produce, as well as potable water and health services from the decentralized department of the district assembly. The satisfactory delivery of these services requires effective and well coordinated field administration at district level.

4.2.6   The nature of local governance in Wenchi district

Local governance in Wenchi district, like other districts in Ghana, reflects the provisions in the Local Government Act of 1993 (Act 462). The District Assembly is the highest political, administrative and planning authority in the district and has deliberative, legislative and executive functions. The District Assembly is made up of 30 assembly persons, one-third of whom are appointed by the ruling government. The Member of Parliament of the area is an ex-officio member. This body is empowered to make and enforce by-laws. It exercises deliberative, legislative and executive functions in the District. The Assembly is chaired by a Presiding Member elected from amongst all the members.

The Executive Committee of the Assembly is chaired by the District Chief Executive and discharges the Assembly Executive powers. The Central Administration, which is headed by the District Coordinating Director, also exists to assist in the general administration of the district.

A number of sub-committees are established to function as the operating arms of the Executive Committee and to assist in the implementation of specific activities of the Assembly. The sub-committees which currently exist in the District Assembly are:
- Development Planning
- Social Services

- Works
- Justice and Security
- Finance and Administration
- Environmental Protection
- Agricultural

In terms of the decentralized sub-structures, Wenchi district has one Urban Council, four Area Councils, and seventy four (74) Unit Committees. The main functions of these sub-structures (Unit Committees and Area Councils) include revenue mobilization, implementation of policies at local level and community mobilization for popular participation in decision-making and organizing community labour. In performing these functions, they act as the extended arm of the central administration of the Assembly. The Unit Committees and the Area Councils serve as a link between the Assembly and the Communities. Decisions of the Unit Committees reach the Assembly through the Assembly members in their respective areas (Wenchi District Development Plan, 2006).

The administrative issues of the district are handled by the Central Administration which is made up of three departments (General Administration, Finance, as well as a Planning and Budgeting Unit). Wenchi district has all eleven decentralized departments, as provided for under the local government Act 462. These decentralized departments render various specialized services to the people and serve to offer technical advice to the district sub-committees.

The following Departments and Agencies are currently represented in the district:
- Directorate of Agriculture
- Ghana Health Services
- Ghana Education Services
- Social Welfare & Employment
- Community Development
- Town and Country Planning
- Finance

- National Board for Small Scale Industries (NBSSI)
- National Council for Civic Education (NCCE)
- National Disaster Management Organization (NADMO)
- Electoral Commission
- Specialized Units of the Central Government
  a. Births and Deaths Registry
  b. Information Services
  c. Statistical Service

These Departments and Agencies are supervised by their line Ministries in Accra, who also provide funding for field activities. Consequently, control and allegiance of these decentralized departments is vested more with their mother organizations rather than with the district. These decentralized departments therefore exhibit what Hutchroft (2001) describes as the functional model of field administration, as illustrated further in Chapter five (5.2.2.3).

4.2.7 The nature of Traditional Authorities in Wenchi

Traditional authorities provide a parallel local governance system to the decentralized one. They also exercise political influence on their subjects and seek to promote local area development. These two systems of local governance interact in ways that are not well understood. Through their policy of indirect rule, the colonial authorities used traditional authorities to govern the people. Chiefs had the power to institute and enforce by-laws. They were also allowed to levy their subjects for development. The chiefs used the police to enforce law and order, with prisons to incarcerate recalcitrant subjects (Ray 2003: 102). Indeed, the vestiges of these colonial prisons are still visible in Wenchi district. For these chiefs who used to wield so much power in local governance now to be relegated to the background in the decentralization process definitely carries implications for good governance and local area development.

Given such a complex socio-cultural, economic and political context, as elaborated above, the study has to be creative with the research methodology in order to generate a deeper understanding of the interplay of the various forces characterizing the interactive process between various people in the district.

4.3 Selection of research paradigm and methodology

Having outlined the research problem and obtained a contextual understanding of the research area, the next challenge of the study was to design a research methodology capable of accomplishing the objectives of the research.

4.3.1   The research paradigm debate

In my search for a general approach to guide this study, I have taken note of the extensive debate on the various research paradigms. Research is basically about generating knowledge, which involves one's understanding of "why and how things work or should work" (Kaniki and Mphahlele 2002: 3). The generation of such knowledge usually takes place within some framework of thinking or philosophy called a research paradigm (Kuhn 1962; Coetzee and Graaff 1996). The philosophical underpinnings that inform the various research paradigms are grounded in three issues:

- **Ontology**: The nature of reality, or how things *really* are and how things *really* work;
- **Epistemology**: How the reality is known or knowledge claimed. In other words, the relationship between the inquirer, the inquired, and the known (reality);
- **Methodology**: How should the inquirer go about finding out knowledge?

In my search for an appropriate research paradigm, the above three criteria were used to examine four paradigms before opting for the one that resonates most with my research interests and personal belief system.

4.3.1.1   The positivist paradigm

The positivist paradigm is considered to be the conventional approach, as it has been the dominant driving principle behind research since the time of Descartes (Stringer and Genat 2004). The basic belief system of positivism is rooted in a *realist* ontology, which posits that there is a *reality* out there, driven by immutable natural laws, which can be discovered free of bias by applying a strict methodological protocol. The assumption is that there is a fixed universe that operates according to a stable set of laws which can be described accurately by identifying cause-effect relationships, and that the goal of research is to discover these patterns so that they can be used as a basis for predicting and controlling natural phenomena (Guba and Lincoln 1994; Stringer and Genat 2004; Cohen and Crabtree 2006).

Once committed to *realist* ontology, the positivist is constrained to practise an *objectivi*st epistemology. In other words, if there is a *real* reality operating according to natural laws, and nature can be seen as it "really is" or "really works" (Guba 1989: 19) then the inquirer can interrogate nature directly without bias and gain answers that could reveal the reality objectively. Methodologically, the positivist relies mainly on experimental and manipulative methods, the generation and testing of hypotheses, as well as employing more quantitative methods (Guba and Lincoln 1994; Creswell 1998; Angen 2000; Cohen and Crabtree 2006).

The positivist paradigm, which had been the foundation of Western science, governed development thinking worldwide up to the mid-1980s (Kotze et al 1997: 11). However, this approach has been subjected to various criticisms, giving rise to a new science or way of generating knowledge about the world. Critics of the positivist paradigm (Guba 1989; Angen 2000; Cohen and Crabtree 2006) argue that the process of scientific inquiry can never be devoid of subjectivity and that we cannot, as the positivist would maintain, separate ourselves from what we know. Therefore, the tendency of the positivist to predict and generalize findings is inconsistent with the fact that knowledge is a human construction which varies depending on the context. Indeed, empirical evidence shows

that some of the predictions using the positivist approach do not come true in real life. For example, the positivists' faith in markets and technology to solve social and environmental problems has proved to be incorrect, as evidenced by the increasing social and environmental crises which cannot be solved by technology and market forces.

My discomfort with the positivist paradigm is that it tends to close out other ways of thinking and alternative world-views to a large extent, thereby limiting innovative ways of dealing with the numerous and complex problems confronting the world. There are other ways of knowledge construction apart from the positivist paradigm which have been suppressed by the hegemony of Western epistemology. There is thus a need to develop alternative ways of knowing as they may provide the clues to address the social, economic and environmental crises of our times. Besides, it is simplistic for positivists to assume that the social and physical worlds are similar so that one is able to investigate phenomena in these worlds using the same methodology (Mouton 1996). In my view, the positivist paradigm may be more applicable in the physical world, where scientists can explore molecules and atoms objectively. However, in the social environment, reality is socially constructed, based on one's experiences in life and one's world views, which vary in time and space, thus making prediction of human behaviour problematic (Briggs 2006).

The shortcomings of the positivist paradigm gave rise to other ways of generating knowledge about the world, generally called new science. New science views the earth as a complex "living whole", of which humans make up a part (Norgaard 1994; Reason 1998; Breu and Peppard 2001). A thorough understanding of this complex inter-relationship between different human beings and between human beings and other creatures should be the challenge of research so as to generate relevant information to guide sustainable development planning and action. Hence, new science upholds holistic thinking of the world, as opposed to the reductionist view of systems which is the foundation of Western epistemology. The reductionists are guided by atomism and mechanism principles (Kotze 1997: 11) which view a system as comprising unchanging parts with fixed relationships which can be discovered by breaking down the various

components. The implication here is that the reductionists see the "whole" to be equal to the sum of the various minute components of the "whole". However, this is not true in real life. For example, one cannot divide an animal into its smallest parts and re-assemble them to get the same animal. Indeed, the social, economic and political crises we face in recent times may be traced to the consequences of a science driven by positivism, which emphasizes scientific progress that is not grounded in a thorough understanding of the complex system of interrelated entities of nature of which we are part (Reason 1998; Breu and Peppard 2001).

4.3.1.2 Post-positivist paradigm

Post-positivism or critical realism is a modified version of positivism, one which minimizes its weaknesses and makes it more acceptable, although control and prediction continue to be the aims. Ontologically, post-positivism moves from the strict realist posture to what is often termed critical realism, with the argument that although a real world exists driven by natural causes, it is impossible for humans, with their imperfect sensory and intellectual mechanisms to accurately perceive it (Cook and Campbell 1979: 29; Guba 1989: 20). Proponents of this paradigm argue that reality is constructed subjectively through the meanings and understandings developed socially and experientially (Angen 2000).

Epistemologically, post-positivism recognizes that we cannot separate ourselves from what we know, since our worldview is linked to our understanding of reality. It takes the position that *'objectivity'* remains as an ideal that researchers attempt to attain through careful sampling and specific research techniques. The extent to which objectivity is attained during the inquiry can be evaluated by the community of scholars, as well as by the community of people who are studied (Guba 1989; Cohen and Crabtree 2006). In other words, the post-positivist assumes that even though there is a reality out there, our ability to know this reality is imperfect, and claims about reality must be subject to wide critical examination in order to achieve the best understanding of that reality. However, this requirement opens the gate for power brokers in the research community to protect

and defend the hegemony of post-positivism which may make it difficult for new paradigms to assert themselves.

Methodologically, post-positivism seeks to improve the weaknesses of the positivist paradigm by employing a combination of qualitative and quantitative methods and conducting research in more natural settings, as well as collecting more situational or contextual data (Cohen and Crabtree 2006). Emphasis is placed on critical multiplism (Cook 1985) which is a form of elaborated triangulation (Dezin 1978, Stake 2006). The research designs also provide opportunities for discovery or emergent knowledge, as opposed to operating by testing an *a priori* hypothesis.

Whilst it is recognized that post-positivism is an improvement on the positivist paradigm, it is still not able fully to address some imbalances associated with its zeal to achieve a realistic and objective inquiry. According to Guba (1989), these imbalances include the following:

- The imbalance between rigour and relevance;
- That between precision and richness;
- Between elegance and applicability (establishing grant theories which may not apply in local contexts);
- The imbalance between discovery and verification.

Criticisms of the positivist and post-positivist paradigms are well documented by Guba and Lincoln (1989). In the first place, they argue that since propositions (hypotheses and questions) put to nature are grounded in theoretical foundations which are mental constructs of certain people, the knowledge generated from such inquiry cannot be devoid of bias. Therefore, reality can only be seen through a window of theory, whether implicit or explicit.

Secondly, Guba and Lincoln contend that reality can only be seen through a value window and thus many constructions are possible. Besides, the results of an inquiry are

always shaped by the interaction of the inquirer and the inquired into, thereby stripping objectivity from any inquiry. Consequently, the findings do not reflect what is really out there, but the residue of the process that creates them. Furthermore, the tendency of positivist and post-positivist paradigms to predict and generalize findings is inconsistent with the fact that knowledge is a human construction which can never be certified as ultimately true, but which is problematic and ever-changing (Briggs 2005).

Reflecting on the above analysis and my personal experience with the real world, I take the view that even though post-positivism is an improvement on positivism, the fact that it clings to "objectivity" in research, and leaves the determination of such objectivity to the research community, opens the door for positivist standards to be used in judging the quality of research, especially since many powerful researchers still hold on to positivist ideals. This might therefore limit creativity in research that could trigger the emergence of the unexpected.

4.3.1.3 Critical Theory

Proponents of critical theory believe that nature cannot be seen as it "really is" or "really works", except through a value window (Guba 1989: 24). In other words, the social constructions of people are shaped by their environment and values. Consequently, the findings of a study can vary depending on the values chosen, thereby making inquiry a political act in the service of particular purposes (Hall et al 1982; Cohen and Crabtree 2006). People with power are therefore able to create and transmit "false consciousness" so as to maintain their hegemony. Critical researchers assume that social reality is historically constructed, produced and reproduced by people with power so as to maintain their hegemony. Critical researchers recognize that the ability of people, particularly the oppressed, to change their social or economic conditions is constrained by various forms of dominant forces. These forces must be exposed through critical research in such a manner that the consciousness of the participants is raised to act in ways that can transform or change the social order so as to reflect equity and justice. Consequently, the main task of critical research is seen as being one of social critique, such that causes of alienation and domination are eliminated.

129

The argument of the critical theorist that the values of an inquirer could influence the outcome of knowledge generated implies the ontology of critical realist and subjectivist epistemology. The aim of inquiry is to transform the world by raising the consciousness of participants so that they understand that social action is needed to change the social order. A dialogic approach is therefore adopted, one that seeks to eliminate the false consciousness of participants by rallying them around a common point of view. In this process, features of the (real) world are examined and judgments made about which of these features can be altered.

The value of critical theory is its promise to eliminate false consciousness so as to result in a more just society. I share in the sentiments of Selener (1997: 26) that one of the greatest obstacles to creating a just world is the power of the dominant hegemony through which those with power create and transmit the dominant ideology which shapes the way people think. However, critical theory is silent on which standard to use to determine which structures are oppressive and must be transformed. Besides, critical theory has failed to propose an effective way by which the power brokers realize that it is in their interest to change their thinking and behaviour for the collective good. The militant approach, as implied in this paradigm, may not always work in changing the position of the dominant group.

4.3.1.4 Constructivist paradigm

The constructivist believes that realities exist in the form of multiple mental constructions which are socially and experientially determined and location specific. Consequently, there are always many interpretations that can be made in any inquiry, depending on the context. Ontologically, the constructivist adopts a position of relativism.

Epistemologically, on the other hand, the constructivist adopts a subjectivist position and argues that subjectivity is part of our human nature. Besides, if realities exist only in the respondents' minds, subjective interaction seems to be the only way to access them (Guba 1989: 26).

Methodologically, the constructivist proceeds in ways that will identify the different constructions and bring them to as much consensus as possible. This process, according to Guba (1989: 26), has two aspects: hermeneutics and dialectics. The hermeneutic aspect focuses on depicting the individual constructions as accurately as possible, while the dialectic aspect consists of comparing and contrasting these constructions such that each respondent is confronted with the constructions of others and comes to terms with them. Consequently, the hermeneutic/dialectic methodology seeks to produce as informed and sophisticated a construction or constructions as possible. Alongside this, the methodology aims to keep channels of communication open so that that there can be continuous building on the knowledge attained.

The distinguishing characteristics of the major research paradigms are summarized in Table 4.3 below.

Table 4.3: Distinguishing characteristics of various research paradigms

CHARACTERISTIC	RESEARCH PARADIGMS AND ASSUMPTIONS			
	Positivist	**Post-positivist**	**Critical Theory**	**Constructivism**
Ontology (nature of reality)	There is *real* reality	Critical reality	critical reality	Relative realities in the form of multiple mental constructions. (Multiple realities)
Epistemology (nature of knowing or knowledge claim)	Knowledge can be obtained by objective methods	Modified objectivity	Subjectivity	Subjectivity
Methodology (How to construct knowledge)	-Surveys - Experiments - Quantitative approach	Modified experimental, with emphasis on: -carrying out inquiry in more natural setting. -qualitative methods - use of grounded theory	**Dialogic, transformative** (Eliminate false consciousness & facilitate transformation	**Hermeneutic, dialectic** (varied constructions or realities are elicited and refined hermeneutically, compared and contrasted dialectically, with the aim of generating one or few consensus construction)
Criteria for evaluation	- Validity - Reliability Generalizability	-Critical analysis - Triangulation	- depth of critical analysis	- Depicting various perspectives as accurately as possible. -Triangulation

Source: Adapted from work of Cohen and Crabtree (2006) and Guba (1989)

In order to make an informed choice among the various research paradigms discussed above, there was a need to compare the philosophy and practice of each of the paradigms against my own personal values in relation to this study. In the first place, my research interest is to generate knowledge that is useful to the people; hence the desire to combine research with development action that can lead to improved living conditions of the people. The entry point is to contribute towards evolving a more effective district assembly system that can improve the lives of the people. I take the ontological position of the outer world being objectively given, but subjectively represented in the human mind. Consequently, I recognize that there are various constructions as to how the Wenchi district assembly system currently works and how it ought to work. The research

challenge is to illicit all these diverse perceptions and negotiate the multiple perspectives with various stakeholders so that some consensus can be reached and the desired follow-up actions can be stimulated.

Secondly, I share the thinking that the earth is a complex "living whole" of which man is part (Reason 1998; Breu and Peppard 2001), and my interest is to contribute towards a thorough understanding of this complex inter-relationship between different human beings and between human beings and other creatures. This should be the challenge of research if we are to generate relevant information to guide sustainable development planning and action.

Furthermore, I believe that reality can be socially constructed, thereby highlighting the connection between knowledge/reality-making and power. However, the positivist paradigm, in seeking objective truth, tends to neglect the power dynamics that shape reality. The Western conception of knowledge, called scientific knowledge, is based on the principles of objectivity, measurability, the ability to analyze components of a phenomena and inductive reasoning (Kotze 1997: 11). However, I believe there are other sciences or other ways of knowledge construction which have not been developed due to the hegemony of Western epistemology. I am motivated to contribute towards further developing these alternative ways of knowledge construction.

Based on this self-introspection and analysis, I realized that the constructivist paradigm resonates very much with my research agenda. This has therefore been adopted to guide the research, even though I am open to tapping into the other paradigms in a complementary manner where appropriate.

4.4 Research Methods

The next challenge of this study was to select the appropriate research methods. Given my choice of the constructivist research paradigm, coupled with my desire to ensure that the practical and theoretical outcomes of the study are grounded in the perspectives, world-views and interests of the research participants, I realized that participatory

research methods would best suit this study. This led me to adopt Action Research (Scoones and Thompson 1994; Reason and Marshall 1994; Reason and Goodwin 1999 Reason and Bradbury 2001; Denzin and Lincoln 2005; Craig 2009; Burgoyne 2009) as the overall methodological approach for the study.

Action research seeks actively to involve research subjects in the research process such that their consciousness is raised, and there is a commitment to use the research results in a practical manner so as to improve their situation or bring about desirable social change (Reason 1988; Reason and Marshall 1994; Chambers 1994; Chambers, et al 1989; Scoones and Thompson 1993; Stringer and Genat 2004; Denzin and Lincoln 2005). This is accomplished by bringing people together in a dialogic and productive relationship to share perspectives and negotiate the meaning of multiple realities so as to generate practical initiatives (Stringer and Genat 2004). Thus, there is a dual commitment in action research to study a system and concurrently to collaborate with members of the system. This is so as to change it in what is communally regarded as a desirable direction (Reason 1988). Here, a co-operative relationship between researcher and subjects is emphasized, such that all those involved work together as co-researchers and as co-subjects in a spirit of joint learning and action.

Some attributes which separate action research from other types of research, according to Reason (1988) include the following:
- Primarily, action research is focused on turning research subjects into co-researchers in view of the fact that people learn best and are more willing to apply what they have learned when they do it themselves.
- The research takes place in a real-world situation, and aims to solve real problems.
- It allows research subjects to participate in analyses of their own reality that can lead to appropriate action in order to improve their situation.

Philosophically, action research offers a participatory world-view and takes the ontological position of the outer world being objectively given, but subjectively

represented in the human mind. In other words, social reality is viewed and interpreted by the individual based on the individual's understanding of the world or the particular ideological position of the individual. Therefore, findings or knowledge claims emerge through dialogue, in which conflicting interpretations are negotiated among members of a community (Reason and Branbury 2001; Angen 2000; Dash 2005; Cohen and Crabtree 2006). To facilitate communication for illiterates and for people who are becoming less and less articulate, visual tools and techniques are employed (Beazley and Ennew 2006: 193).

This is not to suggest that action research is a flawless methodology. I am aware of the various criticisms leveled against it, such as that it is too subjective, unreliable and insufficiently generalizeable (Guba and Lincoln 1989). However, I disagree with this because the criteria used in assessing the validity of action research methods are different from those used in assessing experimental or survey research (Stringer and Genat 2004: 49). Experimental and survey research tend to follow the positivist paradigm and therefore require that such research should predict and generalize, using statistical methods. Action research, on the other hand, draws from the constructivist paradigm, with a focus on generating deeper insights into complex issues at local level, rather than on generalizing the results. Consequently, applying the same criteria to judge these two different types of research, as critics of action research seem to do, is unfair and inappropriate.

Lincoln and Guba (1985), as well as Stringer and Genat (2004), provide a set of criteria for establishing the validity of qualitative or action research, as summarized below:

- Creditability or integrity of study: this may be accomplished by triangulation using different sources, methods and perspectives to corroborate findings. Participant debriefing or feedback may also enhance credibility as any wrong interpretations could be corrected.

- Transferability: unlike quantitative research that assumes the need to generalize the results of the study, qualitative research by its nature seeks to apply the results directly to the local context.

- Participant validity: the credibility of action research may also be enhanced by the active participation of stakeholders in the research process. This overcomes, to some extent, the propensity of some researchers to observe and interpret events through the lens of their own interpretive framework.

In the light of the ongoing debate on the various research methods, it is my contention that there is value in both the quantitative and qualitative research methods in our search for knowledge and better understanding of the world. Consequently, even though this study is generally guided by action research methodology, the study is open to tap into some quantitative methods, where appropriate, with a view to seeking some convergence of the two methods in such a way that quantitative data is backed by qualitative understanding of what the data mean (Beazley and Ennew 2006; Holland and Cambell 2006). By so doing, the study aims to contribute towards advancing the frontiers of action research.

By adopting the Action Research approach, a critical requirement was to get the research participants actively involved in the entire research process (Gaventa 1993: 25; Cornwall and Jewkes 1995: 1670). This was accomplished by adopting the strategies outlined below:

i. **Planning phase:** As part of planning the research, I undertook a reconnaissance visit to Wenchi district to consult with the stakeholders, including community members, district assembly members, chiefs, district assembly staff and some local NGOs, so as to solicit their input in generating research questions and designing data-gathering instruments that would reflect their interests and concerns. This was to ensure that the research results would be of practical value to them and also to increase their sense of ownership and commitment to the implementation of the results. The reconnaissance visits also helped me to

establish a rapport with some social and research networks that were later used during the in-depth field study.

ii.   **Field study phase:** Whilst conducting the field study, I identified and trained two (2) local research assistants (one male and one female) from the district, in techniques of data-gathering and analysis, using participatory approaches. These research assistants were then actively involved in the whole process.

As the research progressed, I periodically checked back with the stakeholders who were consulted during the planning phase to ensure that they were kept updated and to build consensus if there was a need to change some aspects of the research. It was during one of these cross-checking meetings that the Minister of Local Government wanted me to include a section reflecting community members' perceptions of chiefs in terms of their accountability and the extent to which chiefs could be trusted to champion community development. The reason for such a request from the Minister was to ascertain if community members were satisfied with the ways in which chiefs used community resources such as those relating to the sale of land and the royalties paid to communities through the chiefs. This he explained would provide some insight as to whether government should accede to the demand by some chiefs to channel part of the government's common fund through the chiefs to District Assemblies for development. The question the Minister wanted answered was: "can chiefs be trusted to manage government resources on behalf of the citizens?" The Minister reasoned that if there was evidence that chiefs could manage the few resources at their disposal in a transparent manner, then it would be most likely that they could be entrusted with more substantial resources. My initial thinking was to limit the study to the examination of the interactive processes between traditional authorities and Wenchi district assembly, not expanding the research to include community members. However, this request from the Minister made me review the scope of the study to include an examination of the perceptions of accountability held by community members and their chiefs.

iii. **Dissemination of results phase:** feedback sessions were conducted in the sample communities, where the preliminary findings of the study were discussed with community members and other stakeholders for them to validate the findings and possibly fill in any gaps, as well as noting any follow-up actions that might be required of the community members. At district level, a stakeholders' workshop was held on 18th November 2008 to discuss the findings and follow-up actions. This involved the various stakeholders like the District Chief Executive, assembly members, chiefs and NGOs.

4.5 Data collection methods

The study relied on both secondary and primary data sources. Secondary data was obtained by reviewing various relevant documents including the following laws and policies on decentralization:

- The National Decentralization Action Plan prepared by the Ministry of Local Government and Rural Development in 2003.
- The 1992 Fourth Republican Constitution
- The Local Government Act of 1993 (Act 462)
- The Local Government Service Act of 2003
- The National Development Planning Commission Act, 1994 (Act 479)
- The local Government Establishment Instrument, 1994 (L.I. 1589)
- The District Assemblies' Common Fund Act, 1993 (Act 455)
- Report of the Presidential Advisory Committee on Decentralization (2004).

The following libraries were visited to obtain and review relevant journals and books:

- University of Ghana Library
- GIMPA Library
- UNISA Library
- University of Pretoria Library

- British Council Library in Ghana
- Google Scholar

The content analysis of these documents not only provided me with a solid background and context for the research, but also enabled me to identify gaps in the literature to which my research could make a contribution.

Primary data was obtained by three main methods, as explained below:

i. **In-depth Interviews:** One-on-one in-depth interviewing (Dunn 2005) was conducted with twenty eight (28) key informants from Wenchi district and other parts of the country. These included selected chiefs, the Minister of Local Government and Rural Development, some parliamentarians, the Wenchi district Chief Executive, District Co-ordinating Director, Planning Officer, Environmental Health officers and Electoral Commissioner. In this exercise, an interview guide was developed, structured around various themes of mutual interest and allowing for new and related lines of questioning and discussions as the interviews progressed. The semi-structured questionnaire probed various issues like the functioning of the institution of chieftaincy and district assembly structures, the perceived role of chiefs, the accountability of chiefs and district assembly structures, as well as recommendations to improve functioning of the traditional authorities and district assembly structures. A sample of the interview guide used is provided in Appendix 1.

ii. **Focus group discussions:** A total of forty-eight (48) focus group discussions (Krueger 1988) were conducted with representatives of Unit Committee members in each of the sampled villages, as well as with community members of each village (divided into men, women and the youth). Each focus group was made up of an average of seven people. To achieve maximum variation in participants' diverse opinions, conscious efforts were made to ensure that various categories of community members, including minority groups like

139

settler farmers, were represented on the groups. The participants for the focus groups were recruited through a snowball sampling strategy, with initial contacts being established through the village chiefs and community opinion leaders. A checklist of topics was developed to guide the focus group discussions, allowing for new questions to be added during the data collection process. Some tools of Participatory Rural Appraisal (PRA) like mapping, matrix scoring and ranking, and flow diagrams (Chambers 1995; Selener et al 1999; IIED 2007) were used, where appropriate, to facilitate reflection and to make respondents more analytical in their responses, as well as increasing participation in the discussions. The joint meetings through the focus groups promoted cross fertilization of ideas and allowed issues to be debated or viewed from different perspectives by the group members, thereby encouraging participation and generating more insightful information.

All focus group discussions were conducted outdoors under shady trees so as to provide a relaxed atmosphere, as well as facilitating the mapping and use of other visual aids during the discussions. The discussions and interviews were recorded using audio tape, with respondents' permission. These recordings were transcribed verbatim in the local language and then translated into English. Each focus group discussion included a short feedback session to ensure that we captured people's ideas accurately. There were, in fact, some occasions when respondents corrected our inaccurate interpretations of their comments. In some of the study villages, the study team stayed for two to three nights, which provided opportunities for social interactions and informal discussions on local affairs. This proved particularly valuable in generating a deeper understanding of various issues. .

iii.   **Observation:** The study employed both direct and participant observation techniques (Strauss and Corbin 1990; Kannae 2004; Leedy and Ormrod 2005), so as to deepen my understanding of issues and also observe the interaction of people in their natural setting. I stayed in Wenchi district for

three months, during which time I participated in the everyday life of the people whilst making critical observations. Such prolonged engagement in the field allowed me to establish a relationship of trust with research participants which facilitated greater access to "inside" knowledge, thereby enhancing the credibility of the findings (Stringer and Genat 2004). The research team was also privileged to participate in meetings held between chiefs and community members, as well as between chiefs and unit committee members. This provided the team with the opportunity to observe the interactions between the various participants. The field observation was guided by an observation matrix as shown in Table 4.4.

Table 4.4: Observation matrix used

What to observe	Where	Method of observation
How agents of the decentralized structure talk to, and behave in front of traditional authorities	Anywhere there is a meeting involving chiefs and agents of the decentralized structures like members of Unit Committee, Area Council or Assembly Member	Direct observation
How community members relate with Unit Committee members and Assembly members	12 sampled communities	Participant observation
How community members relate with their chiefs	12 sampled communities	Participant observation
Level of participation of different categories of people in community meetings and outcomes of such meetings	Any community in the district where community meetings are held under the auspices of the chief or Unit Committee or assembly member	Participant observation

It is worth noting that although the actual doctoral research period extends from 2006 to 2009, the observations and findings analyzed in this study cannot be restricted to this period alone. I drew upon my experiences during over eighteen years of work in rural development interventions, during which period I visited and stayed in the research area on various occasions.

4.6 Sampling and the challenges of new paradigm research

Despite the appeal of action research, with its emphasis on active participation of the research subjects, it was not possible to reach out to all the communities in Wenchi district and involve all the people. Due to constraints of time and resources, it was only possible to involve a cross-section of the inhabitants in the study. In order to capture the perspectives of a balanced cross-section of views, I used a combination of purposive and random sampling techniques. Purposive sampling (Leedy 1993: 89; Du Plooy 2001: 59; Creswell 2002; Lynn 2004: 431) was used to identify and interview people with knowledge of the issues under investigation. This method also allowed diverse stakeholders to be identified and interviewed, thereby enriching the study with multiple perspectives. These included key personnel of the Wenchi district assembly like the District Chief Executive (DCE), the District Co-ordinating Director (DCD), the Presiding Member (PM) and the district planning officer (DPO) who contributed their immense knowledge of the dynamics in the entire district. Other people who were purposely selected included the paramount chief of the district, as well as key informants like development NGOs operating in the district, and staff of relevant government agencies, as well as some policy-makers like the Minister of Local Government and Rural Development and certain members of Parliament.

Furthermore, purposive sampling was used to select two villages as sub-cases – Agubie and Ayigbe – where both a cordial relationship and conflict between the district assembly structures and traditional authorities were reported. This provided me with the opportunity to explore factors which could promote positive relationships between these two groups. The resulting theoretical insights helped to establish the appropriate institutional framework for the two institutions to work in harmony.

The purposive sampling was supplemented with random sampling techniques (Creswell 1994; Kannae 2004; Leedy and Ormrod 2005) so as to minimize bias in the data-gathering process. Two (2) Area Councils were randomly selected out of five (5), and 12 units or villages were randomly selected out of seventy-four (74) villages or units. The

selection was made using the lottery method, whereby the name of each Area Council or Unit was written on a piece of paper and thoroughly mixed in a box before selecting the required sample size. The sampling framework for the study is captured in Table 4.5.

Table 4.5: Sampling framework

	CATEGORY OF RESPONDENTS	Total No. in Wenchi District	Number Interviewed	Sampling method
1.	**District Assembly Structures**			
	Town/Area Councils	5	2	Random
	District Assembly Members	30	8	Random
	Unit Committees (Villages)	74	12 Units (villages)	Random
	District Chief Executive, Presiding Member, Co-ordinating Director, Planning Officer	4	4	Purposive
2	**Traditional Authorities**			
	Paramount chiefs and elders	1	1	Purposive
	Village chiefs	74	12	Random
3	Community Members (focus group discussions)	Not applicable	36 focused group discussions	Purposive
4	Key Informants	Not applicable	28	Purposive

To compensate for the inability to involve as many people as possible in the study, the findings were presented at a stakeholders' workshop which involved a larger cross-section of people, including those who were not directly involved in the study. This provided an opportunity for those who did not participate to validate the findings and fill in any gaps where necessary.

To enhance the validity of the information gathered, a triangulation process occurred whereby different research methods were combined simultaneously to collect and analyze data. Triangulation was also done by cross-checking the information with different people.

4.7 Data Analysis

Data analysis relies mainly on qualitative methods (Straus and Corbin 1990; Leedy and Ormrod, 2005), with a view to exploring the connections between various issues, as well as consolidating lessons that could guide the development of an alternative framework for decentralization. Thematic coding techniques were used to summarize and analyze themes and constructs related to the study (Cooper, et al. 1988; Lang, et al. 1999; Houghston & Roche 2001; Holahan, et al. 2001).

In most cases, initial analyses of the data were made jointly with the respondents in the field, so as to eliminate personal biases in interpretation. In addition, a detailed periodic analysis was carried out in tandem with the trained local research assistants. Where there were doubts, follow-up visits were made to the source of the information for clarification. The data analysis was supported by field notes which were taken throughout the data collection period. By combining field notes, observations and secondary data, the data analysis was able to establish connections and consistencies that provided greater understanding of issues.

Based on an analysis continuum (Krueger 1988), the following types of analyses were carried out:

- **Raw data: e**xact statements, facts and figures, ordered, categorized or classified;
- **Descriptive statement: s**ummaries and brief descriptions, illustrations, the provision of typical or illuminating quotes, especially showing diversity;
- **Synthesis:** filtration of preconceptions, expectations, personal opinions and separating biases and stereotypes. Cross-checking and validating.
- **Interpretations:** combining statements, field notes and observations with secondary data. Analyzing consistencies and inconsistencies with a view to providing understanding.

In analyzing the data, attention was paid to two issues: first, establishing broad areas of consensus and differences among focus group respondents on various topics; and second, drawing attention to areas of difference between men and women.

I wish to state that the methodology as discussed here provides the general outline of how data was collected and analyzed. However, some of the data-gathering techniques, which are rather specific in their generation of information, are discussed under the appropriate chapters that deal with the research results. I have chosen to decentralize the methodology, because some of the methods may also be part of the results or flow directly into my observations and conclusions.

4.8 Limitations and challenges of the study

In the first place, my personal values could not be completely eliminated in the interpretation of the results. This was, however, minimized by frequent feedback of findings to respondents for validation. Furthermore, the other two members of the research team provided an alternative source of interpreting the data collected, thereby minimizing any possible bias or misinterpretation by me.

The other methodological challenge with the data collection was the hesitation of some respondents freely to express their views, apparently due to the fear that any critical opinions might come to the notice of their chiefs or superiors at the district assembly and attract their anger and possible hostility. However, the assurance of confidentiality and the use of some participatory techniques like mapping made them open up. Additionally, the initial difficulty of getting some members of the focus groups actively involved in the discussions was overcame by employing some PRA techniques such as asking them to reflect their perceptions of relative importance on some issues being discussed with a group score of between 1 to 5. The excitement of debating with one another as to what score to give on a particular issue was not only insightful, but broke down any defensive barriers between group members. Consequently, everyone became involved in the discussions.

The study also encountered the challenge of getting some people to participate in the focus group discussions. Some people were too busy with other work activities which prevented them from attending focus group discussions. Others simply could not appreciate the relevance or utility of their participation.

Furthermore, it was difficult managing the expectations of some community members. Some people had the initial impression that the research would bring them immediate tangible benefits. However, after the study team explained the purpose of the research and how it could go a long way to benefit them, they co-operated. Even then, though, some community members still demanded money or refreshments from the research team.

Due to constraints of time and logistics, this study could not cover all the communities in Wenchi district. However, since these communities are quite homogeneous, the random sampling employed to select communities should adequately reflect the general picture in the district. Furthermore, since the study was limited to only one district out of the current 170 districts in Ghana, generalization of the research findings can only be made in districts with similar contextual and compositional characteristics. A broad generalization across all 170 districts might therefore be inappropriate.

4.9 Conclusion

The chapter provided contextual understanding of Wenchi district as the research area. Based on an analysis of the various research paradigms, the study opted for the constructivist research paradigm as the overall methodological approach to guide the study. Within this framework of constructivist paradigm, the study adopted a qualitative action-research approach and demonstrated its suitability for such a development-oriented research. The chapter also elaborated on the methods of data collection and analysis, highlighting the need for triangulation of methods and tapping into quantitative methods where appropriate, in such a way that quantitative data could be backed with qualitative understanding of issues. The chapter proposed to employ action research in an innovative manner, thus contributing to methodological knowledge.

With such an elaborate framework to guide the data collection and analysis, the next chapter presents the findings of the study.

CHAPTER FIVE

5.0 FUNCTIONING OF WENCHI DISTRICT ASSEMBLY STRUCTURES AND TRADITIONAL AUTHORITY SYSTEMS

5.1 Introduction

This chapter and Chapter Six present the results of the study, as well as the discussions surrounding them. The main thrust of this chapter is to:

- assess the way in which the Wenchi District Assembly system works in relation to three governance and development criteria as outlined in section 1.6 of this study, namely: participation, accountability and fairness;
- consider how the traditional governance system in Wenchi functions in relation to the same three governance and development criteria;
- identify the overall impact, including the strengths and weaknesses, of the two systems of local governance in relation to rural development.

This chapter presents empirical data and analysis of the functioning of the Wenchi District Assembly and traditional governance systems as these operate on the ground vis-à-vis what can best be described as rhetorical presentations. Through such an assessment, the strengths and weaknesses of the District Assembly and traditional authority systems in terms of promoting rural development are highlighted in order to inform any policy review aimed at tapping into the strengths of the traditional authority in Ghana's decentralization process.

The criteria used to assess these two institutions are:
- The avenues and quality of participation in decision-making, including the issue of representation (OECD 2004; Smith 2007);

- Accountability system, as reflected by the checks and balances to prevent abuse of power, such as the level of transparency and the ability of citizens to access information that concerns them (Merat 2004: 250; Chanie 2007: 356; Stokes 2007: 1);
- The standard of fairness in the workings of these institutions as reflected in any discriminatory tendencies against weaker segments of the society, as well as the level of transparency of rules and by-laws (Rao 2000; Bergeron, 2006: 60; Todaro and Smith 2006: 16).

5.2 Functioning of Wenchi District Assembly system

The decentralized structure in Wenchi district, like other districts in Ghana, reflects the provisions in the local government Act of 1993 (Act 462) and the subsequent Local Government Establishment Instrument of 1994, as already explained in section 2.7.4 of this study. Wenchi District Assembly (WDA) was, in fact, upgraded to a Municipal Assembly in November, 2007. However, since this study was started at a period during which Wenchi was a District and not a Municipality, the rest of the discussions will still refer to it as a district. The functioning of the WDA is then examined below with reference to the three main criteria for good governance and development (participation, accountability and fairness).

5.2.1 Participation in Wenchi District Assembly: The opportunities and the realities

Participation in this study is understood as a process of active involvement of the people in decision-making and their ability to influence the outcomes of those decisions which obviously affect their well-being. Participation also encompasses their involvement in the implementation and monitoring of collective decisions (Burkey 1993: 59; Graham, et al. 2003: 3; Prokopy 2005: 1802). This implies that people are able to exercise control over the institutions and resources available to them. In this regard, the three-tier structure of the Wenchi District Assembly (as shown in Figure 5.1) is theoretically intended to provide a mechanism for broad-base participation in decisions related to both local

governance and development. This three-tier structure comprises the Unit Committees at the lowest level, the Area/Town Councils at the intermediate level, and the District Assembly at the top, as shown in Figure 5.1 below

Figure 5.1: Decentralized structure of Wenchi district

```
        ┌──────────────────────────────────┐
        │     Wenchi District Assembly      │
        └──────────────────────────────────┘
           │                          │
    ┌──────────────┐          ┌──────────────┐
    │ Town Council │          │ Area Council │
    │     (1)      │          │     (4)      │
    └──────────────┘          └──────────────┘
      │        │                │        │
    ┌──────────────────────────────────────┐
    │        Unit Committees (74)           │
    └──────────────────────────────────────┘
```
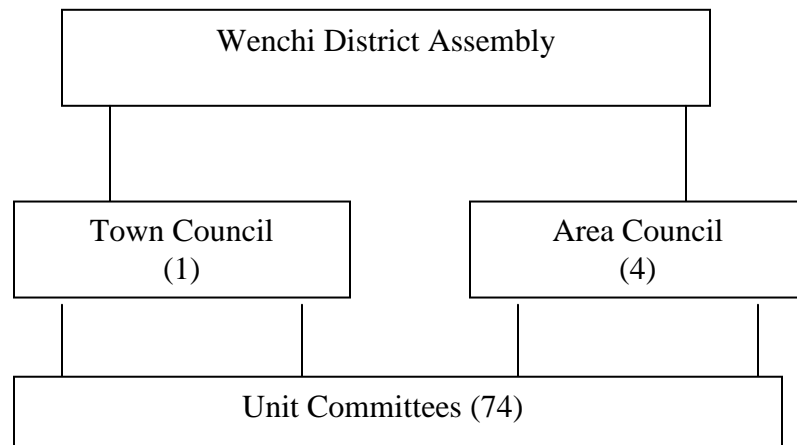
Source: Wenchi District Medium Term Development Plan (2006-2009)

The seventy four (74) Unit Committees located in various parts of the district are expected to provide a channel for community members to influence decisions pertaining to local governance and development. The views and concerns of local community members are expected to be captured by the Unit Committees and channeled through the Town or Area Council to the District Assembly where final decisions are taken. Furthermore, the Unit Committees are expected to mobilize their respective community members for self-help development initiatives. With such an elaborate decentralized structure, one could argue that there are adequate mechanisms in place for people to participate in decisions that affect them. However, a closer examination of how these decentralized structures are formed and operate reveals a poor level of participation, as elaborated below under each of the decentralized structures.

5.2.1.1 Unit Committees and grassroots mobilization

The Local Government Establishment Instrument (LI 1589) of 1994 provides, under part IV section 24 (1), that a Unit Committee shall consist of not more than fifteen persons, of

149

whom ten should be democratically elected and five appointed by the District Chief Executive on behalf of the President, and in consultation with traditional authorities and identifiable groups. The Unit Committees are expected to organize community meetings and provide a focal point for discussions of local problems, identify community development needs to be channeled to the District Assembly through the Area Council and mobilize community members for the implementation of development and self-help projects (LI 1589 of 1994). However, this study found that 9 out of the 12 unit committees interviewed were not able to organize one successful community meeting during the entire year, and neither were they able to mobilize the people to undertake any self-help projects. The Unit Committees (UCs) interviewed explained that their interest in the job was waning, since they were not motivated in terms of financial reward or recognition from community members. Besides, they maintained that "community members are always reluctant to attend meetings called by the UC". This apathy on the part of community members is implicit in the following quotations gleaned from them during the interviews:

- "Nothing substantive usually comes out of such meetings, and it is a waste of our time" (58 year-old male from Nchira community).

- "Two years ago, women regularly attended these meetings called by the UC, with the hope that our request for a borehole would be granted to solve our water problems…. If, after two years, we still have the same water problems, then what is the use of these meetings?" (42 year-old female from Branam community).

- "The last time I attended a meeting called by the UC, some people used the platform to campaign for a political party, which did not go down well with some of us" (23 year-old male from Ayigbe community)

From the above sentiments expressed by community members one can deduce that their reluctance to attend meetings called by the Unit Committees is based on their historical experience that these meetings are not able to accomplish the expectations of community members, thus leading to a disinclination to attend such meetings. Asante and Ayee (2008) reported a similar decline in people's interest in the decentralization process in Ghana when the people realized that their expectations could not be fulfilled because of

the incapacity of the decentralized structures. The implication here is that the desire of using the UCs to promote grassroots participation in the governance process becomes mere empty rhetoric, as these UCs exist only on paper. A critical concern is that whilst the Unit Committees have been given functions to perform at the local level, they are not provided with the necessary financial support or power to carry out these functions. Neither are they able to influence decisions effectively at the higher assembly level by ensuring that local concerns are reflected in the District Assembly policies and decisions. These findings point to the limited devolution of power to grassroots structures. The apathy observed amongst communities and their Unit Committee members is similar to what Ayee (2000: 7) describes as "the inability of the decentralization process in Ghana to wholly whip up enthusiasm". Golooba-Mutebi (2004) reported a similar decline in interest on the part of community members when it came to participating in local council meetings in Uganda due to participation fatigue and doubts about the utility of such participation.

To triangulate this initial finding of decreasing interest amongst Unit Committee (UC) members in their jobs, forty-eight (48) of them were asked individually if they were willing to offer themselves for re-election as UC members. Eighty-one per cent (81%) (39 out of the 48) replied with an emphatic "no" to this question. Their main concern was that the role of UCs involves many sacrifices, and yet there was neither recognition nor reward for the job. Instead, they often received insults from certain community members. The lamentation of a UC member at Ayigbe below captures the general frustrations of his colleagues:

> "Since there are no police stations in the villages, any criminal case is referred to the Unit Committee Members, who are expected to take some action with their own resources, and if this is not done to the satisfaction of all parties, then the insults follow. I remember an incident where there was a hit and run accident case in my village and I was immediately contacted to send the victim to hospital and report the matter to the police. I genuinely had no lorry fare that day to undertake the assignment. As I was busy soliciting funds from some community members, the victim died and I was accused of delayed action resulting in the death of the victim. As for the insults I received on that occasion, I had better not recount them. Since then I lost interest in the job and I will definitely not present myself for the next election. It is simply not worth it".

The above lamentation of the UC member in Ayigbe highlights a fundamental systemic issue within the Ghanaian political system in relation to the expectations citizens have of their democratically elected representatives. Discussions with various democratically elected representatives like parliamentarians and assembly members revealed that voters viewed the election of these representatives to various offices as doing them a favour, for which the representatives were expected to recompense the electorate in the form of various services and financial rewards. The following quotations from a Member of Parliament (MP) buttress this view of unrealistic expectations from the electorate.

> "Almost every day I receive visitors from my constituency demanding school fees and payment of medical bills without questioning the source of the money. Inability to satisfy such demands often results in insults and insinuations".

Such unreasonable societal pressure on elected representatives is a great temptation for them to indulge in corrupt practices just to satisfy the public and continue to be elected. This is similar to the patron-client ties as reported by Tam (2005), thereby undermining the ability of democratic elections to deliver accountable governance and development.

To cross-validate the notion that there is growing apathy within the Unit Committee system, I collected and analyzed the records from the Wenchi District Electoral Commission. The results, as captured in Table 5.1 below, confirm this trend.

Table 5.1: Trend of Unit Committee Elections in Wenchi District

Parameter	YEAR		
	1998	**2002**	**2006***
Number of Unit Committees	**172**	**194**	**74***
Unit Committees with 10 or fewer contestants (unopposed)	18	84	47
Unit Committees with more than 10 contestants (elections)	154	99	20
Unit Committees with no Candidate	2	11	7
% of Unit Committees where there was an election	89.5%	51%	27%
Total Registered voters	74,083	77,586	44,068*
Voter turnout for District Assembly elections	53,592	47,904	21,507
% Turnout of Voters for Unit Committee elections	72.3%	61.7%	48.8%

Source: Wenchi District Electoral Commission

* In 2006 Wenchi District was divided into two, thus explaining the lower number of Unit Committees in that year.

The Local Government Establishment Instrument of 1994 (L.I 1589) provides that each unit or village should have a Unit Committee comprising ten democratically elected persons living in the unit and five persons appointed by the District Chief Executive, in consultation with traditional authorities and organized groups. In the event that not more than ten people present themselves for consideration as Unit Committee members, then the candidates are appointed automatically without any elections. Table 5.1 shows the declining interest and willingness of people to present themselves for election as Unit Committee Members. This is evidenced by the fact that, in 1998, there more than 10 candidates presented themselves for consideration as Unit Committee members in the majority of units, thereby necessitating elections in as many as 89.5 % of the Units. This declined to 51% in 2002 and 27% in 2006, indicating that over the years fewer people presented themselves for Unit Committee elections, resulting in people being declared unopposed in many villages (units) since there were fewer candidates than the required minimum of ten people to constitute the Unit Committee. For example, in the 2006

elections, 47 out of the 74 Units in Wenchi district had fewer than ten candidates presenting themselves for elections as Unit Committee members, thereby resulting in those candidates being unopposed. A similar finding with the Unit Committee elections in Ghana's decentralization process was reported by a USAID study of 2003. The implication of this is that unless some incentive system, like a salary, is instituted to make Unit Committees attractive, there may come a time when no one will offer himself or herself for election as a UC member, thereby limiting the avenues for grassroots participation in local government.

The lack of interest in contesting for positions on the Unit Committee goes alongside a steady decline in voter turnout, as revealed in Table 4.1. There was great enthusiasm during the initial stages of the decentralization process in Wenchi, as reflected in the high voter turnout of 72.3% during the 1998 District Assembly elections. This declined to 61.7% in 2002 and further reduced to 48.8 % in 2006. A key explanation for this trend, as it emerged during the interviews, is that community members had high expectations during the initial stages of Ghana's decentralization process that the District Assembly elections could be an effective vehicle to fulfill the development needs and aspirations of the local communities. However, their elected representatives to the Unit Committees and District Assembly could not provide the desired leadership to galvanize the people towards self-help; neither did they see in their elected representatives the necessary authority and influence necessary to attract various development projects to the community. The perception, therefore, is that these District Assembly elections are a waste of time, as no tangible benefits can be linked to them. When such perceptions are coupled with the observed community projects from the District Assembly, like school buildings and boreholes, one gains the impression that the community members view these projects as a favour from the District Chief Executive or the Member of Parliament in recompense for the community's political support. Community members do not see these District Assembly projects as being impelled through the initiatives of their elected representatives in the Unit Committee or Assembly.

The decentralization process in Ghana assumed that people were willing to participate in public affairs and had the capacity to do so, and that all that was needed were the right opportunities (Goloaba-Mutebi 2005: 165). Consequently, this process was based on the assumption that once the opportunities for participation in local governance had been created, through the establishment of decentralized structures like the Unit Committees, people would be willing to take advantage of these structures and participate in them. However, the evidence in Wenchi points to the fact that people will only be willing to participate in these local government structures if they find them relevant to their well-being and if they can generate certain desired benefits. Pryor (2002) observed a similar lack of interest amongst parents for participating in their village school management at Akurase, a village in Ghana, due to the parents' doubts about the relevance of the school to their welfare.

The other factor which tends to limit participation in the decentralization process, as observed in Wenchi district, is the growing politicization of the election of Assembly Members and Unit Committee Members. Whilst these elections were expected to be non-partisan, the various political parties realized that the best strategy to win national political power was to take control of the political structures at grassroots level. Consequently, the major political parties openly sponsor candidates to become assembly members or Unit Committee Members. This has polarized some communities along party lines, thereby defeating the development objective of the decentralized structures. For example, a focus group discussion in Wurumpo community revealed that because the National Democratic Congress (NDC) Party had more sympathizers elected as Unit Committee Members of the village, every time communal labour was required, the sympathizers of the ruling political party, the New Patriotic Party (NPP) usually refused to undertake such work as a means of making the Unit Committee unpopular. Indeed, after several failed attempts to organize any successful communal work, the Unit Committee there disintegrated out of sheer frustration. The partisan and political rivalry that characterizes the election of representatives to various levels of the decentralized structures definitely has a negative effect on local area development.

When various key informants, including Unit Committee members, were asked what could be done to make the Unit Committees more functional, various suggestions emerged. These are captured in Table 5.2.

Table 5.2: Suggestions to make Unit Committees attractive and more functional

Responses	Frequency	%
Reduce size of Unit Committees and offer a salary to members	26	54.2
Let communities select their own development committee members, and work out a way of motivating them to work.	17	35.4
Scrap the Unit Committees system and strengthen the Area Councils, with full-time employees who will be capable of handling all the development needs of communities under their purview.	5	10.4
Total Number of Valid Respondents	48	100.0

Source field data, 2007

A critical analysis of the Unit Committee system as selected from the interviews points to the need to introduce some incentives to make the system more attractive. Such motivational factors might be in the form of decentralizing more power to the Unit Committees to drive their local area development processes, as well as providing them with some financial incentives. For this to be effective, the number of Unit Committee members might be reduced from the current 15 people to about seven. Another source of motivation for Unit Committees would be to give them a sense of recognition from the community when they are selected, through consensus rather than competitive election, as those selected will strive not to betray the confidence reposed in them by the community. Besides, the rivalry and vilification that often characterize democratic elections in many African countries make some truly competent people shy away from presenting themselves for elections, thereby depriving the community of the services of potentially capable candidates.

However, this study came across an active Unit Committee (UC) at Agubie that had mobilized its community members to undertake various self-help projects like

constructing a place of convenience and embarking on an effective anti-bushfire campaign. An examination of the factors that made the UC members in Agubie community more functional than they were in other places revealed that the Agubie UC members were selected by the chief and other community members through consensus and not through democratic elections. By means of this approach, the Unit Committee members explained that they were motivated by the recognition given them by the chief and people as worthy sons and daughters of the community capable of championing the community development process. They could therefore not afford to betray the trust reposed in them. The respect and solidarity from the entire community for their efforts reinforced their determination. One of the Unit Committee members in Agubie added a spiritual dimension to all the sacrifices he was making in serving the community when he said: "I see my role as a Unit Committee member to be a divine responsibility for which the ancestors would punish or reward me depending on how I conduct myself." There is a need to invoke such intrinsic sources of motivation for the Unit Committees in order to make them more functional. This position is supported by Crook and Addo-Fening (2005: 12) when they report that the Village and Town Development Committees formed in Ghana in the 1970s and early 1980s by various communities to champion the community development process performed noticeably better than the Unit Committees because they were appointed by consensus, as opposed to the democratic elections of Unit Committees.

5.2.1.2The Area Councils: Link between the District Assembly and Unit Committees

The second tier of the Wenchi District Assembly system is that of Area/Town Councils, with each council comprising a number of Unit Committees within the area, as illustrated in Figure 4.1 above. The Area or Town Council is made up of ten representatives of the Unit Committees within the area, not more than five Assembly Members and five members appointed by the government (LI 1589, part II section 10 (1)). Wenchi District has four (4) Area Councils and one (1) Town Council. The main functions of these include revenue mobilization, community education and mobilization for self-help, as well as collating the needs of the various Unit Committees and preparing an Area

Development Plan for consideration by the District Assembly. Area Council members who were interviewed were emphatic that they had very little influence in setting the development priorities of the district. One of the Area Council members at Awisa remarked that:

> "Our participation in the Medium Term Development Plan of the District was to answer a questionnaire designed by development experts from the district. In answering the questionnaire, we articulated our development priorities, but we have waited for more than one year without seeing any signs that our development needs are being addressed by the Assembly. Neither have they given us any feedback as to why our development priorities were not fulfilled by the Assembly."

Such disillusionment from an Area Council member raises some fundamental concerns related to participation. In the first place, it points to the fact that decision-making powers reside within the District Assembly, contrary to the rhetoric which maintained that decentralization would empower local communities to influence decisions that affect them. The second problem lies with the quality of participation, which is more consultative rather than empowering. For the district development planning process to use an extractive questionnaire to elicit responses from Area Council members, and for such information to be analyzed somewhere, without giving feedback to the community members from whom the information was extracted, points to the lingering top-down or technocratic approach to development planning in the district. This is in spite of the fact that such an approach has been discredited as not being capable of generating sustainable and self-reliant development outcomes.

The other concern is with the capacity and willingness of Area Council members to participate in the decision-making process of the district. In my view, if the Awisa Area Council had adequate capacity and interest, they would have followed up with the District Assembly to find out which of their development priorities were being considered for support, rather than waiting helplessly for over one year without any feedback from the Assembly. Golooba-Mutebi (2004) expresses similar doubts about the commitment and willingness of people to participate in local council activities in Uganda.

Furthermore, the Awisa Area Council cited the poor performance of the Water Board in their area, yet any time the Area Council wanted accountability from the Board, they were told that the Water Board was accountable to the District Central Administration and not to the Area Council. "This is not a decentralization, but a re-centralization of power at district level", one of the members indicated.

A visit to two of the Area Councils in Wenchi revealed that they hardly ever meet as a body to deliberate on issues and take decisions. Even though some Area Council members reported that they met twice in 2007, some of the members were not aware of such meetings and neither did they have records or minutes to indicate what was discussed and what decisions were taken.

When community members were asked about their perceptions of the Area Councils, the response was unanimous: "We do not feel their relevance in our lives and we hardly interact with them". Similarly, Unit Committee members interviewed were of the opinion that most Area Councils were not functional and wondered why they could not deal directly with the District Assembly through their respective Assembly Members rather than having to pass through the Area Councils first. The discussions point to the perception that the Area Councils are not functional, thereby limiting participation, since these councils are the link between the UCs and the district assembly.

Furthermore, Part II, section 10 (1) of the Local Government Establishment Instrument (LI 1589) of 1994 provides for the fact that not more than 10 representatives of the Unit Committees should be elected annually on a rotational basis to serve on the Area Council. About this provision, a Unit Committee member had this to say: "this process of annual election of representatives is not only complicated but involves too short a duration of tenure, since by the time the Unit Committee representatives become used to the functioning of the Area Council and settle down to work, it is time for them to be replaced, and then the whole cycle continues as before". Additionally, even though the Area Council is the link between Unit Committees and the District Assembly, only ten members out of the about 50 to 100 members of the Unit Committees under each Area

Council are actually elected to the Area Council. The result is that the majority of Unit Committee members, who are not elected to the Area Council, are cut off from the flow of information between themselves and the District Assembly. The significance of this concern is reflected in the fact that the Area Council is the main official platform for interactions between Unit Committee and assembly members. Consequently, the majority of Unit Committee members who are not elected to the Area Council have no official platform to engage with their respective assembly members, thereby limiting the space for participation in the decentralization process.

5.2.1.3 The District Assembly as the highest political and administrative authority in the district.

The other avenue for local people to participate in political and development-related decisions in the area is through their elected representatives to the District Assembly, which is the highest political and administrative authority of the district. It has deliberative, legislative and executive functions under the Local Government Act of 1993. Wenchi District Assembly is composed of thirty (30) Assembly Members, two thirds of whom are elected to represent their electoral areas and the other one third appointed by the President, in consultation with local interest groups. When Assembly Members (AMs) were asked about their views on the appointment of one third of members by government, sixty-two percent (62%) of the respondents found the idea of 30% government appointees to the Assembly as being beneficial for the following reasons:

- "The appointed members bring technical expertise that is not usually available among elected members".

- "It is a mechanism to bring on board some good people who otherwise would not offer themselves for election due to the partisan nature of the process".

- "The appointed members have a wider social network which they can use to attract additional resources to the district".

The other thirty-eight (38%) of assembly members interviewed who did not find it necessary for government to appoint people to the Assembly offered the following reasons:

- "The appointed members take advantage of their relatively higher education and better connections to dominate assembly meetings and discussions, thus suppressing the views of many elected assembly members".

- "Most of the appointees are political sympathizers of the ruling government, thereby publicizing the assembly system".

A background check on the government appointees to Wenchi district assembly reveals that even though they come with some technical skills, they also have leanings towards the ruling political party, giving the impression that these appointments were made based more on political affiliation than technical expertise. Consequently, the possibility of assembly decisions being influenced by political considerations and the interests of local bureaucrats, rather than the interests of the local people cannot be ruled out. The reported dominance of assembly proceedings by government appointees implies the stripping of any substantive authority in relation to major Assembly decisions from those members who represent the local communities, thereby weakening the voice of local people.

Section I (16) of the Local Government Act, 1993 provides that an Assembly Member should maintain close contact with his/her electoral area and elicit the views of his/her constituents before any assembly meeting, such that their opinions will be presented. The Assembly Member is also expected to inform his/her electorate of the general decisions taken by the Assembly and the actions he/she has initiated in order to solve problems raised by his/her constituents. All 8 of the Assembly Members interviewed admitted that they were not able to consult their various communities due to logistical constraints, as no provision had been made to pay for transportation to the various villages. Besides, it is time-consuming to undertake such consultation effectively, even though the job of the Assembly Member is voluntary. An assembly man asked: "How can we spend so much time interacting with constituents at the expense of our livelihoods?" It was therefore not

surprising to hear that some Assembly Members suggested projects for their communities during assembly meetings without prior consultation with these communities.

To further promote wider participation in decision-making, the local government Act of 1993 decrees that the executive functions of the Assembly be performed by an Executive Committee, with various sub-committees as its operating arms. There are six sub-committees in Wenchi, with the various Assembly members serving on at least one of the sub-committees. The heads of decentralized departments are ex-officio members of the relevant sub-committees providing technical insight to guide the decisions of these sub-committees. The sub-committees in Wenchi district are:

- **Development planning sub-committee:** Responsible for the overall development planning of the district based on the potential and constraints of the district and harmonization of the plans from other sub-committees;

- **Social services sub-committee**: Responsible for social development planning in the district, especially education, health, social welfare, sports and culture;

- **Works sub-committee:** Responsible for the infrastructure needs of the district, especially roads, electricity, sanitation and water supply;

- **Justice and security sub-committee:** To monitor and maintain peace within the district, as well as promoting the enforcement of the by-laws of the Assembly;

- **Environmental protection sub-committee:** Handles environmental-related issues in the district **t**o promote environmental awareness;

- **Finance and Administration sub-committee:** Examines the general financial position of the Assembly, identifies ways to ensure judicious use of available resources and submits financial plans to the Executive Committee for harmonization with other sub-committee plans.

The chairpersons of the various sub-committees are members of the Executive Committee, which is chaired by the District Chief Executive (DCE), with the District Co-ordinating Director (DCD) acting as Secretary.

The Local Government Act of 1993 provides that various issues of interest to the Assembly, like development priorities from communities, should first be referred to the appropriate sub-committee for deliberations, and their findings or recommendations passed on to the Executive Committee who will in turn present these issues at the Assembly for further discussions and subsequent approval or otherwise. It is therefore expected that the recommendations of the sub-committees would greatly shape the decisions of the Assembly. However, the reality as discovered in Wenchi district shows that the sub-committees are powerless and inactive. Indeed, some of them, like the one dealing with justice and security, as well as public works, met only once during the whole of 2007.

The inability of sub-committees of the Wenchi District Assembly to influence decisions of the Assembly implies that Assembly members will not be able to respond to local development needs, a situation which is gradually leading to what Crawford (2004: 28) describes as the disillusionment of community members in the decentralization process. Related to this is the apparently weak capacity of Assembly Members to assert their rights by demanding that relevant issues of the Assembly be referred to them first for their deliberation and recommendations, as provided for in Act 462 section 25 (1 and 2). If this provision was respected, then the subcommittees would be forced to meet regularly to deliberate on matters referred to them by the Assembly and by implication be able to influence some of the decisions of the Assembly so as to reflect the concerns of their constituents. The inability of some of the sub-committees to meet more than once during the whole of 2007 points to decisions being taken by the Executive Committee of the Assembly without first referring such matters to the appropriate sub-committees. Indeed, some of the sub-committee members interviewed were unanimous that major decisions like the siting of various projects and awarding of contracts are usually taken by the District Chief Executive (DCE), the District Co-ordinating Director (DCD) and the Presiding Member. Some respondents referred to them as the "trinity" of the Assembly.

The comments below made by a member of the Wenchi district sub-committee on Works sum up the whole situation:

> "There are a number of school building projects and boreholes financed by the Wenchi District Assembly without the knowledge of the Works Committee, which is responsible for recommending and overseeing the various projects in the district. The district administration has highjacked the role of the sub-committees, thereby making them dysfunctional"

However, the District Co-ordinating Director discounted the above claim, using the argument that it "is the social services sub-committee that is responsible for school projects and not the Works sub-Committee". This clearly points to a lack of clarity as to the exact role and responsibilities of the various sub-committees. In fact, no orientation course was organized for the elected assembly members in Wenchi District to enable them to acquaint themselves with their roles, responsibilities and rights in relation to the decentralization process.

This problem of dysfunctional sub-committees is similar to what was observed by Crook and Manor (1998: 193) in their study of Decentralization in the East Mamprusi District Assembly of Ghana, where they observed that the sub-committees were almost totally moribund. On the other hand, N'yel (2003: 59) found the sub-committees in Ga District Assembly to be functioning satisfactorily. The difference may be attributed to urban influence, since Ga District Assembly is very close to Accra, the capital of Ghana, whilst Wenchi and East Mamprusi are considered rural districts, very far away from the capital city of Ghana. By virtue of their close proximity to the capital city, the sub-committee members of the Ga District Assembly have more access to information regarding their roles and responsibilities, as well as having more resources to work with, since its nearness to the capital of Ghana implies the ability of the Assembly to collect higher property tax, some of which is used to support the work of Assembly members.

5.2.2 Accountability in the operations of Wenchi decentralized structures

How the various decentralized structures of the Wenchi District are held accountable for their decisions and actions is one of the key dimensions of this study, since, as argued by

Oyono (2004: 15), "democratic decentralization is founded on a locally accountable representative authority'. My study therefore seeks to provide empirical evidence as to the effectiveness of the accountability system in relation to the decentralization process in Wenchi. The field analysis was guided by the theoretical insights of Brinkerhoff (2001: 2-4) who distinguishes three types of accountability: "democratic or political accountability", "financial accountability" and "accountability for the performance of services."

5.2.2.1 Democratic accountability

As argued by Keohane and Duke (2002: 2-3) and Smith (2007: 21), democratic accountability envisages an effective mechanism by which electorates can assess the performance of their representatives elected to the various levels of the decentralized structure (Unit Committees and Assembly Members) Based on these findings, the constituents can either reward or sanction these representatives through the ballot box. When community members were asked how they are able to hold their elected representatives accountable, the responses were similar to the one below:

> "We are not satisfied with the performance of our Unit Committee and Assembly Members, but we have no way of ensuring that they work better since they are doing a voluntary job and do not care whether we vote for them next time or not"

The interviews with a cross section of people in Wenchi district revealed that the citizens have only very weak mechanisms for imposing sanctions on the non-performing DA or UC members since they are not paid, and therefore feel that they are under no obligation to perform well. The presumption that the people could use their votes to demand accountability from their representatives is ineffective, since competition for these elections is not very keen due to the voluntary nature of the job.

5.2.2.2 Financial accountability

The key player in the financial management of the district is the District Chief Executive, yet here again the controls by which people can hold their District Chief Executive

accountable are largely of a token nature. In the first place, the District Chief Executive is not elected but appointed by the President. There is therefore a tendency on the part of the appointed District Chief Executive to steer the affairs of the Assembly towards pleasing the appointing authority rather than the local people, thereby compromising downward accountability. For example, an Assembly Member reported that:

> "The District Chief Executive sometimes takes resources from the District Assembly to support the local political structures of the ruling government, so as to demonstrate political loyalty that would guarantee a continuous stay in office. Despite such misapplication of district assembly funds, nobody in the district has the courage to call the Chief Executive to order as, with her political connections, she is considered too powerful".

The other issue which makes accountability difficult is the secrecy surrounding information. A focus group discussion with some Assembly Members of Wenchi revealed that apart from those on the Finance and Administration sub-committee, most other Assembly Members did not know how much money came into the district in 2007 and how the money was disbursed. Particular reference was made to financial inflows from other development partners like the German Development Agency (GTZ) and from royalties. Without information on the total picture of income and expenditure, demanding accountability becomes futile. The situation is aggravated due to the inability on the part of Assembly Members to put pressure on the District Chief Executive to be more open with information and more accountable. This is indicative either of their unwillingness, or of their lack of proper awareness of their right to demand accountability as a countervailing mechanism to prevent abuse of power from the District Chief Executive and other key decision-makers in the district.

Furthermore, it was noted that the Ministry of Local Government and Rural Development deducted amounts from Wenchi district's share of the District Assemblies' Common Fund, usually transferred to the district annually to spend on their local priorities. For example, out of about GH¢820,000 that was to be transferred from the central Common Fund to Wenchi District Assembly in 2007, the following deductions were made by the Ministry of Local Government and spent on behalf of the District Assembly:

- National Youth Employment Programme: 20%

- Training of Assembly Members: 2%

- National NALAG dues: 0.5 %

- NALAG Building: 0.1 %

With such deductions made at the national level, the District Assembly was pre-empted from having full control of their share of the Common Fund that could then be applied in response to their local needs. Indeed, some Assembly Members in Wenchi observed that "left on our own we would not have applied so much of our Common Fund to the national youth employment programme". Another concern relates to the difficulty experienced by a lower authority like the District Assembly to demand accountability from the Ministry, a higher authority, as to how such deductions were spent.

Apart from the mandatory deductions at national level, central government also earmarked monies from the Common Fund that were transferred to the District for certain specific activities, as indicated in Table 5.3 below.

Table 5.3 District Assembly Common Fund (DACF) Utilization Guidelines 2007 and 2008

No.	Item	Proportion of DACF	
		2007	2008
1	Human capacity-building	2%	1%
2	National youth employment programme	20%	30%
3	Self-help project	5	2
4	District education fund	2	2
5	Establishment and strengthening of sub-district structures	5	2
6	District response initiatives on HIV/AIDs	1	0.5
7	Malaria Prevention	1	0.5
8	Support to the physically challenged	2	2
9	Sports and culture	3	1
10	Other development projects and administration	59	59

Source: District Assembly Common Fund Secretariat, 2008

Even though the guidelines for the utilization of the District Assembly Common Fund may appear useful in promoting accountability by minimizing misuse of the fund on frivolous activities, the question arises as to whose priorities count – the local people's or the central government's? Table 5.3 indicates that Assembly Members were disempowered when it came to utilizing their share of the Common Fund, as priorities for disbursement were determined at central, rather than local, level. Such conditional grants therefore limit the ability of the District Assembly to utilize its share of resources according to local needs, for which the district authorities could be held accountable.

The study also noted concerns raised by some key informants that, in guidelines for the allocation of resources, expenditure on development projects was lumped together with administrative expenditure. The fact that 59% of the Common Fund was accounted for in this way often led to a tendency on the part of District Administrators to subjugate development projects in favour of administrative expenditure. They cited examples of unnecessary travel by the District Chief Executive and other District Officers, for which they claimed huge allowances, thereby leaving little of the 59% from the Common Fund for actual development projects. The key informants therefore advocated a ceiling of, say, 10% to 25% of the Common Fund to be used for administrative expenditure such that more resources would be available for investment in community development projects like schools, boreholes and clinics. These informants also expressed concern that "public spending is insufficiently linked to specific outcomes for which spending officers could be held accountable, thus resulting in wasteful spending, as long as receipts could be obtained to account for the expenditure".

5.2.2.3 Accountability for the performance of services: Challenges with field administration

Most services in the district are provided by decentralized departments like agriculture, health and education. There are eleven such departments in Wenchi district providing various services to the people. Consequently, accountability for performance of services resides more with the decentralized departments. However, these departments are not

well integrated into the District Assembly system as was originally envisaged, making their accountability problematic. This is because central government has not yet implemented the Local Government Service Act of 2003 (Ghana, Act 656, 2003) that will make these decentralized departments come under the supervision and control of the District Assembly. Instead, they fall under the direct supervision of their line Ministries and Agencies at headquarters, who also provide funding for their field officers in the district. Consequently, control and allegiance of these decentralized departments lie more with their mother organizations and not with the district. These decentralized departments therefore follow what Smith (1984: 152) and Hutchroft (2001: 30) describe as the functional model of field administration, since the field agents belong to different functional hierarchies responsible for distinct aspects of government policy such as health, education and agriculture, as illustrated in Figure 5.2.

Figure 5.2: Illustration of functional model of field administration

Line Ministry 1 (e.g Ministry of Health)	Ministry of Local Government and rural Development	Line Ministry 2 (e.g Ministry of Agriculture)
Regional Directorate of Health	Regional Co-ordinating Council	Regional Directorate of Agriculture
District Health Directorate	District Assembly	District directorate of Agriculture
	Unit Committees	
Community Members	Community Members	Community Members

KEY:

⟶ Flow of Authority

⸺ Service Delivery

·········· Information Sharing

Source: Field data 2007

As illustrated in Figure 5.2, various functional units like health and agriculture are independent of each other and only work according to instructions from their respective line ministries in Accra, through the Regional Directorates. At best, the field officers may share information with the District Assembly, but the Assembly does not supervise or co-ordinate the activities of these officers. This has resulted not only in a situation of poor co-ordination in the district, but also makes it difficult for the District Assembly to hold these field officers accountable for their actions (or lack of action), as well as ensuring

the judicious use of the resources at their disposal. Consequently, horizontal accountability, as espoused by Francis and James (2003: 325-336), whereby democratically elected local politicians interact with local administrators and field officers who will make them more responsive to the concerns of their constituents, is very weak in Wenchi district.

The functional model of field administration that Ghana inherited from the colonial authority, coupled with the bureaucratic culture of the civil service, tends to reinforce departmental boundaries, with strong internal loyalty and power maintenance strategies. For example, a key informant recounted that in 2006, the District Assembly supported certain groups who aimed to undertake grass-cutter rearing under the District Poverty Alleviation Fund. At the same time, the Department of Agriculture had a similar parallel project, where farmer groups were also mandated to undertake grass-cutter rearing under the Alternative Livelihoods Project. Due to a lack of co-ordination, one farmer group was able to obtain grass-cutters from both the District Assembly and the Department of Agriculture, whilst many other farmer groups in the district were interested but could not avail themselves of the services of the grass-cutters due to limited numbers of these workers. The closest attempt at horizontal co-ordination among these decentralized departments has been through inter-departmental committees such as the committee on environmental protection, where the Departments of Forestry, Lands and Agriculture hold joint planning meetings. However, implementation of these plans is carried out separately by the various departments, without any centralized co-ordination to ensure that there is a cross-fertilization of ideas and that people are able to take full advantage of the synergy effect.

Another dimension of accountability concerns the responsiveness of field services to local situations. In this regard, the study noted that the management and administration of the district is based on a bureaucratic culture led by the District Co-ordinating Director and other civil servants like the District Budget and Planning Officers. Here there is a strong adherence to procedures, thereby limiting flexibility and making it difficult for the district to respond quickly to changing local needs and priorities. For example, the head

of an NGO in the district recounted that, in 2006, the district had planned to provide a borehole for a particular community to solve their water problems. His NGO also noted the water problem in this community and took the lead ahead of the Assembly to provide the inhabitants with a borehole. This NGO expected that the priorities of the community would change now that they already had a source of potable water, and that the District Assembly would adjust their plans accordingly by providing the intended borehole to another community which needed it most, or converting the cost of the borehole into financing other priority areas of the community. This, however, was not done, and the Assembly went ahead to provide the second borehole to this community "just because it has been planned for, and the plan had to be followed".

The strength of the decentralized structures lies in the availability of diverse technical expertise within the various decentralized departments. Such expertise, when well coordinated and blended with traditional knowledge, could generate innovative and sustainable development models. Unfortunately, however, field administration in Wenchi district is professionally based and departmentalized, rather than multidisciplinary and multi-service-based. This often results in poor coordination and weak performance accountability in terms of responsiveness to local needs and efficient utilization of available resources. The search for a more flexible, responsive and accountable field administration points to multi-disciplinary district managers with many delegated powers to supervise all field activities and ensure links with local development representatives. For example, the District Chief Executive should be more of a manager, given sufficient powers to supervise and co-ordinate all field activities in the district, with line Ministries only providing technical back-up to their various field officers.

5.2.3   Fairness in the operations of the decentralization process in Wenchi

Another key dimension of this study was to examine the perceived fairness of the decentralization process within Wenchi district. This was done by examining if there were any discriminatory tendencies against weaker segments of the society like women and minority groups, as well as investigating the transparency of rules and by-laws and

the impartial enforcement of these laws. Such an investigation was important in view of the fact that any development philosophy and practices that are not grounded in justice and protection of the rights of the weak cannot be sustainable (Ntsime 2002: 42). Since women are considered to be more disadvantaged or vulnerable than men, the study investigated the percentage of women in the District Assembly as a test of inclusivity and fairness in the operations of the District Assembly system. It was found that out of the thirty members of the District Assembly, only four were women, representing 13% of the total number of representatives. The reasons provided for this included the fact that many women in the District were not capable of presenting themselves for Assembly elections because of the relatively limited resources at their disposal for pursuing an effective election campaign. Besides this, women were often preoccupied with domestic chores so that they had little time to engage in election campaigns. It also emerged that gender stereotypes, such as the notion that democratic elections are the preserve of men, tend to discourage some women from presenting themselves for possible election. For example, a woman in the Ayigbe community recounted her story of how she attempted to stand for district assembly elections, but had to give up because she was branded a witch for venturing into a territory that was supposed to be exclusively for men. USAID (2003: 10) cited a similar story of an assembly woman in Ghana lamenting the intimidation of women by husbands and society in general which discouraged them from participating in the District Assemblies. Offei- Aboagye (2000: 4) also alludes to this when she reports that many husbands are reluctant to have their wives in the public eye in the name of democratic participation. It is clear, therefore, that whilst there are no legal or political barriers to participation of women in democratic elections in Wenchi district, there are economic and socio-cultural barriers limiting women's participation. This tends to undermine political equality, a key principle of good governance.

Despite this limitation, women exert great influence in the operations of Wenchi District Assembly since the District Chief Executive, in the person of Honorable Binto Farizana Ibrahim, is a woman. As the District Chief Executive and Chairperson of the Executive Committee of the Assembly, she is able to influence the disbursement of the District

Poverty Alleviation Fund to more women's groups. Of the nine groups that benefited from the fund in 2007, seven were women's groups.

As to the transparency of rules and by-laws of the Assembly and their impartial enforcement, this study noted that enforcement of the law through the law courts is too complicated and expensive for most rural people. The chorus from focus group discussions with community members was that these courts are not only far away, but one also has to visit the court several times before a case is eventually settled. Furthermore, focus group discussions on law enforcement revealed a perception that the conventional law courts are corrupt and unjust, with most decisions usually favouring the rich. A group cited the example of a community member whose land was encroached upon by a wealthy man and when the case went to court, the man used various fictitious documents to justify ownership and obtained a ruling in his favour.

5.3 The functioning of the traditional governance system in Wenchi

To contextualize the interactive process between the decentralized structures and the traditional authority system in Wenchi, which is one of the key dimensions of this study, one needs to understand the functioning of the two systems of local governance. The previous section analyzed the functioning of the Wenchi District Assembly system based on the three theoretical constructs of participation, accountability and fairness. Similar theoretical constructs were used to examine the functioning of the traditional governance system in Wenchi so as to allow for an effective comparative analysis of the two systems of local government. The analysis here also seeks to generate a better understanding of the complex sets of norms, rules, philosophical underpinnings and roles of the various players within the traditional authority system. Such an understanding will facilitate more effective engagement with the traditional authority system in the decentralization process.

5.3.1   The structure of the traditional governance system in Wenchi

The traditional political system in Wenchi district, like other *Akan* societies in Ghana, is hierarchical in structure, yet also exhibits outstanding features of decentralization which

allow for broad participation in decision-making. The head of the traditional area or *Oman* is the *Omanhene* or Paramount Chief, who is the supreme overlord. Next in importance after the *Omanhene* are the Divisional Chiefs, who take responsibility for the divisional areas. Each divisional area comprises a number of villages (*nkura*), each having a village chief called an *odikro*. This traditional political structure is presented in Figure 5.3.

Figure 5.3 Traditional authority structure in Wenchi

```
                    ┌──────────────────────┐
                    │   Paramount Chief    │
                    └──────────────────────┘
              ┌────────────────┴────────────────┐
        ┌──────────────┐                 ┌──────────────┐
        │ Divisional   │                 │ Divisional   │
        │ chiefs       │                 │ chiefs       │
        └──────────────┘                 └──────────────┘
        ┌──────┴──────┐                 ┌──────┴──────┐
   ┌─────────┐  ┌─────────┐       ┌─────────┐  ┌─────────┐
   │ Village │  │ Village │       │ Village │  │ Village │
   │ chief   │  │ chief   │       │ chief   │  │ chief   │
   │(odikro) │  │(odikro) │       │(odikro) │  │(odikro) │
   └─────────┘  └─────────┘       └─────────┘  └─────────┘
```
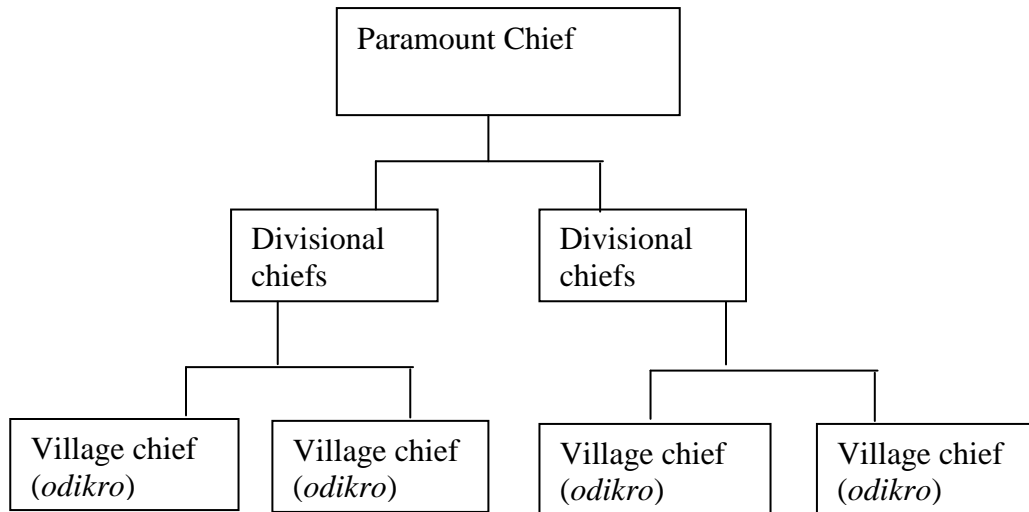
Source: Field data, 2007

Each village constitutes a political unit, with a village chief and council of elders who are the heads of the various clans or *abusua*. A group of villages form the division of the state (*oman*), with a capital town headed by a divisional chief who supervises the villages under him. The divisional chiefs in turn are under the authority of the paramount chief. Even though ultimate power resides with the paramount chief, such power is well distributed among various segments of the community. For example, there is devolution of authority from the paramount chief to divisional chiefs and village chiefs, with lower chiefs allowed to carry out certain functions in the areas of culture, land administration and arbitration without undue interference from a higher-level authority. The traditional political structure in Wenchi therefore exhibits features of decentralization similar to those to which Nabila (2006) alludes. By means of such clearly defined decentralized

roles, the paramount chief is able to exert influence on the people in his traditional area, particularly in terms of social mobilization for some activity or in enforcing certain by-laws (Ray 2004; Abotchie 2006). Such a decentralized traditional political structure has the potential of promoting broader participation and development, as power within the traditional area is well distributed and owned by all segments of the community. The people therefore have more confidence in their traditional authority system. In fact, Bratton, et al. (2001: 243) reported that a public opinion survey in Ghana showed that citizens were more likely to consult traditional chiefs than local government representatives or public officials.

Another interesting feature of the traditional governance system in Wenchi is the non-confrontational and non-competitive philosophy that underpins the selection or appointment of traditional leaders based on set traditional procedures. As explained by Tutu II (2004), as well as Ray (2004), even though the choice of a chief is based on membership of a particular family or clan, other criteria like character and personal qualities are also given important consideration. The queen mother of Wenchi traditional area and other key informants interviewed explained that whenever there is a vacancy, it is usually the queen mother who nominates a candidate from the royal family for approval by the kingmakers. If the nominated candidate is rejected by the kingmakers, the queen mother is allowed to make a maximum of three more nominations. In the event of a nominee being rejected for the third time, the kingmakers (*Krontihene* and the other sub-chiefs) will pick a candidate of their choice from the potential heirs for installation. It is necessary that the person chosen be acceptable, not only to the councilors who represent their clans, but also to the *Asafo Companies* of young men or "commoners" who are, in effect, the body of citizens.

This selection process of a chief highlights traces of "democratic values", contrary to popular opinion that the chieftaincy institution is non-democratic. A major requirement of democracy is that the citizens must have a say as to who their leader or representative should be. This democratic requirement is met during the selection of a chief by virtue of the fact that there are various avenues through which citizens can express their views as to who their chief should be. The first line of vetting and approval of the candidate

nominated by the queen mother is undertaken through the representatives of the royal family called the *Gyase Ahenfo*. The second line of vetting is done by the representatives of the ordinary people called the *Amanfo* or *Asafo Companies.*

The other argument people usually put forward to show the undemocratic nature of the chieftaincy institution is the exclusive nature of candidates eligible to become chiefs, as this is limited to the royal family. This may be countered with the argument that any democratic process has its own election criteria, and the criterion of belonging to the royal family can be compared to the criterion that to be nominated as presidential candidate of a political party you must be a registered member of that political party.

A major weakness of the chieftaincy institution as highlighted during this study is the inability to document the succession plan whereby future potential chiefs can be determined in advance so as to limit litigation. In the current state where the selection of a chief is left to oral history and the good judgment of the queen mother, the process could be abused, as non-royals or people not qualified by tradition to be selected as chiefs use money and connections to influence the selection process, thus causing disputes. No wonder there are a number of chieftaincy disputes in Wenchi district as a result of disagreement on the eligibility of the proposed candidate for consideration as chief in some communities.

5.3.2   Participation in the traditional authority system

In-depth discussions with the paramount chief of Wenchi and his elders revealed that chiefs at various levels rule or govern their societies with the direct participation of elders representing various clans or families. In other words, the chief at all levels (*Oman*, divisional, sub-divisional, village) has a council of elders, including the *Ohemaa* or queen mother, who advises the chief on various issues, and decisions are jointly taken with these elders, thereby enhancing participation of the citizens. The philosophical underpinning is that since the clan heads interact frequently with their respective clan members, they are able to bring the perspectives of their clan members into the decision-

making process, thereby broadening participation. There are seven clans in the Wenchi traditional area, with each clan headed by an *abusuapanin*, the elder of the family group, who then represents the family as an elder in the chief's palace. The chief and his elders reaffirmed the position of Tutu II (2004: 2) as well as Ray (2004) that, although the chief has the final word, he is bound to consult very regularly and decisions are reached by consensus without formal votes. Such consensual decision-making is fuelled by the desire to accommodate every viewpoint via compromise rather than by the will to dominate through the tyranny of majority opinion (Wiredu 1988, cited in Lauer 2007). Consequently, conflicts are minimal and greater cooperation is experienced in the traditional governance system.

Unlike the situation with the decentralized structures where community members are reluctant to attend meetings called by the Unit Committees, the response of community members for meetings called by the chief or his elders is usually massive, thereby enhancing participation. This may be attributed to the respect the people have for their traditional authority, as well as to the fact that such traditional meetings are usually practically oriented and focused on improving their living conditions. The implication here is that the traditional authority system is better positioned to stimulate community mobilization for self-help than the district assembly structures.

The other mechanism in the traditional governance system of Wenchi that promotes broad participation is the existence of functional sub-chiefs who act as leaders of various groups and who are actively involved in the decision-making process. Prominent among these functional sub-chiefs are:

- *Asafo Companies*: All young men and some women in the village who are non-office-holding members or commoners are organized into *asafo companies* which are responsible for defending the community from foreign invasion. However, in peacetime, the *asafo companies* are preoccupied with communal labour in respect of sanitation and other self-help projects, as well as with providing entrainment to the community through music and dance. The *asafo companies* also serve as a

medium of information dissemination and action during times of emergency. Each *asafo company* has a leader called *mmrantehene* or *asafohene.* All the *asafo companies* in Wenchi traditional area have, in consultation with the paramount chief, appointed their overall head called the *Tufuhene.*

- *Nkosuohene:* A development chief, whose election is based on the person's development orientation and abilities. This position is not hereditary.

- *Settlers' Chief:* The paramount chief, in consultation with various prominent settler groups, usually install sub-chiefs for such settlers, who then act as a link between the settler community and the chief.

5.3.3 Accountability within the Wenchi traditional governance system

To better appreciate the accountability of chiefs in discharging their duties, it is appropriate to outline the various roles expected of chiefs in Wenchi traditional area, as gleaned from the interviews. These roles are specific forms of contractual relationship between chiefs and their subjects which one could call social contracts.

5.3.3.1 Roles of traditional authority

Once a chief has been selected and enstooled, he takes on multiple roles as a spiritual and secular leader. As a spiritual leader, he is seen as the living representative of the ancestors and a link between the living and the dead (Gyekye 1996). The chief is therefore expected to perform various rituals on behalf of the subjects so as to appease the ancestors and attract their blessings. It is this sacred role of the chief that attracts reverence from the community. Indeed, some of the community members interviewed believed that the chief is appointed by the ancestors to become a vessel of service for his people, which requires upholding the dignity and security of the chieftaincy institution.

As a secular leader, the chief is an administrator, a law-maker, a judge, a development agent and a soldier. As an administrator, he is expected to direct all the affairs within his area for the common good. He sees to the general development of the area and needs to be ready to fight to protect his subjects and territory. The chief performs these functions

with support from his sub-chiefs and counselors who are mostly heads of the various clans in the area. As a judge, he presides over his court to hear cases of conflict or violation of traditional laws. The Chief and his elders occasionally sit in state to deliberate on issues concerning the welfare of the town or village, passing appropriate by-laws to ensure peace, harmony and development. Issues are usually debated openly and freely until all opposing views are reconciled and consensus reached. Unlike the modern democratic system where decisions are based on the majority view, the traditional decision-making process has room for minority views, as these are negotiated until consensus is reached, thereby promoting harmony and a sense of unity. This reflects the communal ethos of African culture which places great value on solidarity and consensus-building.

To gain an insight into the perceptions of community members of the role of traditional authorities, focus group discussions were held in selected communities where the various roles of the chief were listed and symbols used to represent these roles were drawn on the ground. Each person was then given five pebbles to distribute among the various functions listed in order of priority. A total of fifty-seven individuals took part in the exercise, involving thirty-six males and twenty-one females. The aggregation of the results is summarized in Table 5.4 and graphically depicted in Figure 5.4 below.

Table 5.4: Community members' ranking of the roles of chiefs.

Role	Score by Community Members (Total number of pebbles)		% Score among men and women	
	Men	Women	Men	Women
Initiate projects & promote development	32	17	17.8	16.4
Manage community natural resources and be a custodian of community land	39	20	21.6	19.5
Enact and enforce by-laws	33	23	18.5	22.8
Settle disputes and conflicts	41	27	22.8	26.3
Sustain traditional values	23	10	12.7	9.2
Receive visitors	2	1	1.1	0.6
Mobilize subjects towards self-help	8	6	4.2	5.7
Protect community against enemies	2	1	1.3	0.6
Total	**180**	**105**	**100%**	**100%**

Source: Thesis field data, 2007

Table 5.4 reveals that community members greatly value the role traditional authorities play in keeping law and order through the enactment of by-laws and settling disputes. They argue that without social order and peaceful co-existence with each other, the survival of humanity will be jeopardized. In this regard, community members expressed more confidence in traditional authorities than in state agencies in maintaining law and order. They explained that the traditional system of doing this is more transparent and just than the conventional one. Consequently, the majority of community members prefer to seek settlement of disputes at the chief's court rather than in the law court. As indicated earlier, they perceive conventional law courts to be corrupt and unjust, where decisions usually favour the wealthy and the elite who might use legal technicalities to secure a judgment against poor community members who are not familiar with the procedures of the formal law courts. Traditional courts are not only close to community members, but also use the local language in a transparent manner such that judgment is based on truth and justice rather than on technicalities.

To facilitate a better appreciation of Table 5.4 by community members when the findings were presented for their validation, the table was converted into a bar chart as indicated in Figure 5.4. Such a visualization of the findings promoted better engagement with community members as they could easily follow the interpretations of their views on the role of traditional authorities and make any necessary corrections.

Fig. 5.4 Community members' perceptions of the relative importance of the roles of Traditional Authorities

	Promote development	Manage natural resources	Enact bye-laws	Settle disputes	Sustain traditional values	Receive visitors	Mobilize for self-help	Protect community
Men	17.8	21.6	18.5	22.8	12.7	1.1	4.2	1.3
Women	16.4	19.5	22.8	26.3	9.2	0.6	5.7	0.6

Roles of chiefs
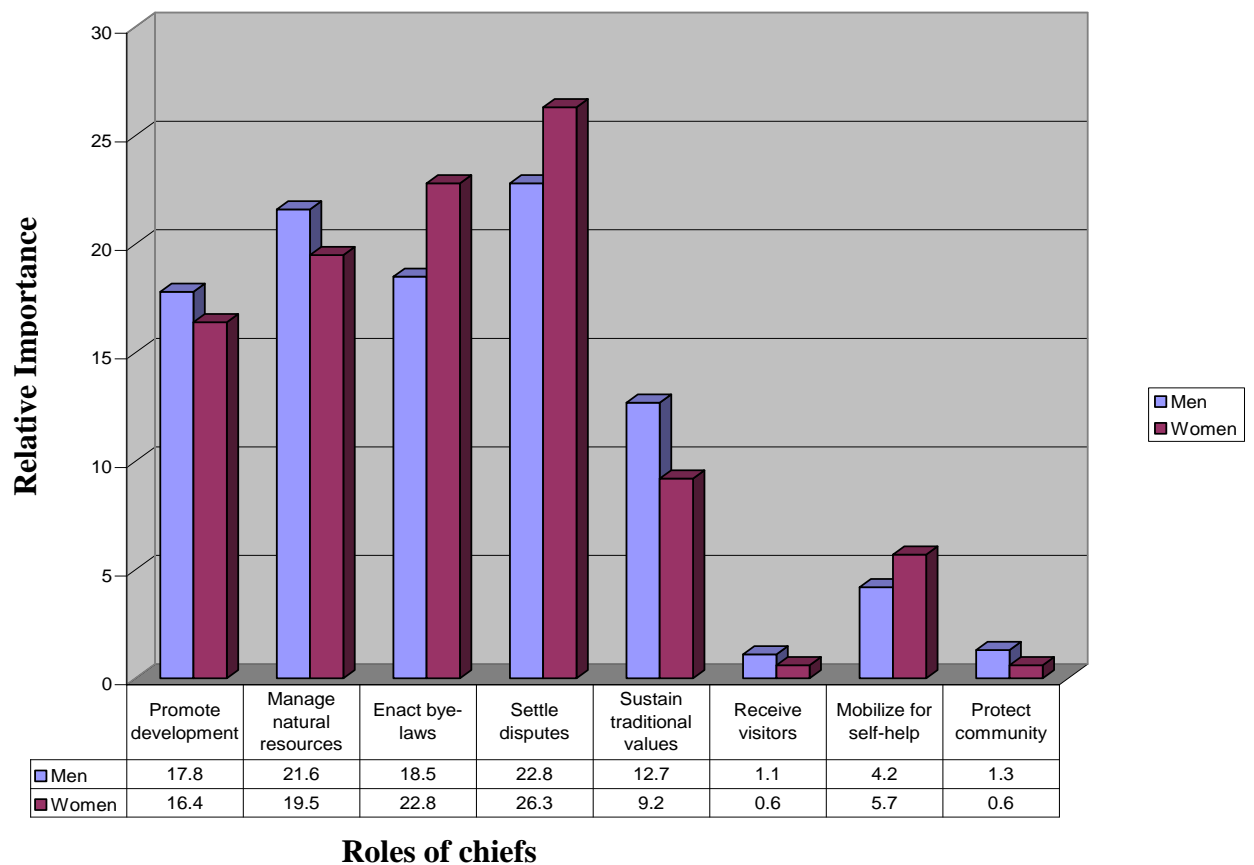
Source: Field data, 2007

It is significant to note that in Figure 5.4, more women than men (26.3% as against 22.8% respectively) put a premium on dispute settlement by the chiefs. When probed for reasons for such a score, the women explained that they were often victims of household disputes, either with their husbands or with rivals, and there was need to have a reliable avenue for

settlement of such disputes. Those women who were involved in disagreements in the past and who had resorted to the chief for settlement indicated that they were very satisfied with the outcome.

If chiefs are so recognized for their role in dispute resolution, particularly in the villages, there is a need for the decentralization process to tap into this potential in the pursuit of law and order which is a vital ingredient for good local governance.

The other important role of chiefs as captured in Figure 5.4 is the management of communal natural resources such as land, rivers and forests. Community members explained that many of them depended on natural resources such as these for their livelihood and, since chiefs were the custodians of the land it needed to be managed in a sustainable and equitable manner for the benefit of all community members and for future generations. They expressed anxiety about the growing deforestation in the area and the drying up of some water sources which they attributed to the erosion of traditional values by modernization, calling for the revival of the traditional natural resource management systems, which are underpinned by the philosophy that land, as a medium that connects the living with their ancestors and those yet unborn, is sacred. Focused group discussions with some elders revealed that this traditional philosophy which guided the sustainable use of natural resources in the olden days was being eroded by modernization. There was a growing tendency among the younger generation to treat land simply as a commodity to be exploited in order to maximize profits, without considering the needs of future generations. The ensuing discussions around this theme involving both the elders and the youth, and using historical trend analysis on the environment, was found to be a very useful tool that allowed the elders to conscientize the youth and reorient their thinking towards issues of sustainable natural resource management.

The focus group discussions highlighted the desire of community members to see a greater involvement of traditional authorities in the management of natural resources. They expressed greater confidence in their traditional authorities managing natural

resources than government officials who were perceived as corrupt and as frequently not respecting the traditional norms and values guiding natural resource management. This highlights the need for collaborative natural resource management involving government technocrats, chiefs and community members if the rapid environmental degradation going on in many communities is to be stemmed. Officers from the Forestry and Lands Department could blend their technical expertise with the social controlling potential of traditional authorities towards sustainable natural resource management.

5.3.3.2 Accountability for the performance of roles

The study found that in discharging these roles, the chiefs are held accountable in various ways. In the first place, the *asafo companies* act as a check on the chief and elders so that they respect the social contract in discharging their duties lest they attract the opprobrium of the *asafo companies*, with possible distoolment of the chief if the misconduct is considered grievous. The second source of motivation for social accountability from the chiefs is the fear of sanctions from the ancestral spirits if found to be betraying the social contract with the people. The sacredness of the office of chief presupposes that he sees his role as being divinely sanctioned, thus attracting reward or sanction from the ancestors depending on how he conducts himself.

The study noted, however, that, for various reasons, these traditional mechanisms of accountability by chiefs are becoming ineffective in modern times. Firstly, the *asafo companies* in olden days used to be actively involved in tribal wars to protect or expand their territory: this militant posture was sufficient as a countervailing mechanism in those days to hold their poorly performing chiefs accountable. However, with civilization and the end of such territorial wars, the relevance and power base of the *asafo companies* are being eroded, thereby diluting their militant hold on their chiefs. In fact, discussions with a cross-section of elders revealed that in the past three decades, there has never been a distoolment of a chief in the Wenchi area by the *asafo* company based on poor performance of duties, even though people complain of some chiefs not living up to expectations in terms of promoting community development and being accountable for

communal land held in trust. Secondly, Christianity and modernization have demystified the powers of the ancestors to punish erring chiefs or elders. For example, an elder in Nkonsia village of Wenchi commented that: "these days, a chief or elder of a family will sell community or family land and spend the money for his personal benefit without fear of the ancestors, who expect such communal property to be preserved and used only in the interest of the whole community".

Consequently, the study found varying degrees of good conduct and accountability amongst the different chiefs in Wenchi, depending on the level of attachment that these chiefs had to traditional political values. This was clearly demonstrated in Figure 5.4 when community members were asked, during focus group discussions, to diagrammatically depict their perceptions of how well the various chiefs were able to maintain social accountability with their subjects, using circles of various sizes to show the various levels of chiefs and drawing lines of varying sizes to indicate the level of accountability. The bigger circle represented the paramount chief, followed by the sub-chiefs, with the smaller circles representing the village chief. The thicker lines represented a higher level of social accountability. The diagrammatic representation of consensus is captured in Figure 5.4 below

Figure 5.5 Community members' perception of social accountability from various chiefs in Wenchi traditional area
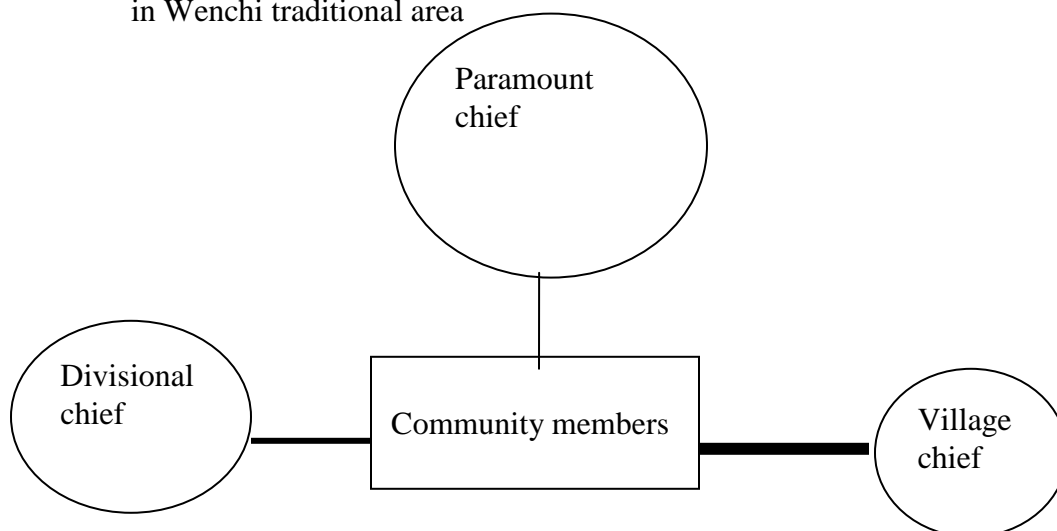
Source: Field analysis, 2007

Figure 5.5 shows that the village chiefs are perceived as being more accountable to community members, possibly due to their strong adherence to traditional values associated with the common good, relationship-building, as well as the fear of retribution from the ancestors for bad conduct.

Drawing this diagram on the ground, with the focus group members standing around it for discussions, was found to be a useful method of breaking down any barriers and enhancing open and frank discussions. The conversations around the diagram revealed that the wind of modernization and the desire to accumulate property have led to a strong tendency amongst some chiefs, particularly those in urban areas and those more exposed to modern education, to attempt to re-interpret certain customary laws and practices to serve their own personal interests. The words of an elderly man, captured below, adequately reflect this line of thinking:

> "the traditional philosophy of a chief being housed in a communally built palace with all his needs taken care of by the community was to ensure that chiefs did not clamour for personal property so that he could have a focused mind in order to act in the best interests of the community. Based on such a philosophy, the subjects gave their land to be held in trust by the chief who then administered such lands to best serve the community. Unfortunately, the winds of modernization have made some present-day chiefs eager to accumulate personal property that can be passed on to their immediate nuclear families. Consequently, community land that is entrusted into their care is sold by such chiefs for their own personal benefit rather than for the benefit of the community. Similarly, land royalties paid to such chiefs by government or commercial entities are often used in a similar manner".

The traditional checks and balances which ensured accountability of chiefs in the past are being eroded by modernization, bringing into question the adequacy of certain traditional laws and practices to address the concerns of contemporary societies. In my view, contemporary society cannot continue to rely on informal mechanisms like trust and the willingness of the chief to be held accountable for resources at his disposal. This is because some traditional values like communalism are being eroded by modern principles of individualism and wealth accumulation. It is therefore desirable for

traditional authorities in contemporary times to introduce more formal resource accountability systems like employing qualified people to manage traditional resources, with proper books of accounts that can be audited, with feedback given to the public.

5.3.3.3 Fairness in the operations of the traditional governance system

The traditional governance system in Wenchi district has in-built mechanisms to ensure equity and protection of the rights of the weak in society. For example, settler farmers in Wenchi, who are considered vulnerable, have been recognized and given a voice in the traditional political system by allowing these settler farmers to choose their own leader who then acts as a link between them and the traditional authorities. The study did not find any evidence of discriminatory tendencies towards these settler farmers, or any minority group, except that they are not qualified to become chiefs in the area. Even though women are not eligible to become substantive chiefs in the area, they have a strong voice in determining who does so. As already explained, it is the queen mother who usually nominates the chief whenever there is a vacancy. As the person who represents women's interests, she usually sits in council with the chief and elders to deliberate on major issues. Those involved with the traditional decision-making process often seek the counsel of women, as they are considered to have an intuitive wisdom. It is common to hear traditional authorities and elders faced with a difficult decision about which they are not certain, saying: "let us defer this case and consult the old lady first", implying the need to seek counsel from the queen mother or some elderly woman. Through this arrangement and the philosophical underpinning guiding the decision-making process, the interests and concerns of women are usually catered for fairly in the traditional governance system.

5.4 Conclusion

The analysis in this chapter points to the poor functioning of the decentralized structures in Wenchi, apparently due to limited devolution of power and low motivation, as well as a weak capacity on the part of operatives within the decentralized structures to deliver on their mandate. There is minimal participation of the citizens in the decision-making

process, and accountability on the part of elected representatives and public servants to the citizens is negligible. Factors contributing to this situation include the growing apathy in the Unit Committee system, as well as a tendency for the District Chief Executive to be accountable to the appointing authority, the President, rather than to the people. The local population or their representatives have little information on funds coming into the district and virtually no control over how such funds are utilized.

The strength of the decentralized structures lies in the availability of diverse technical expertise within the various decentralized departments. Such expertise, when blended with traditional knowledge, could generate innovative and sustainable development. However, the tendency of these decentralized departments to account to their line agencies at headquarters rather than to the local people has resulted in poor coordination and an inability to take advantage of any possible synergy effect.

The traditional authority system in Wenchi was found to offer a more effective platform for citizen participation in governance and development, since most citizens have an emotional attachment to the traditional authority system as they have been socialized into this system from childhood. A fundamental weakness of the chieftaincy institution was the lack of financial accountability, especially the use of land royalties and income from land sale by chiefs. The traditional checks and balances which ensured accountability of chiefs in the past are being eroded by the pressures of modernity and individualism, highlighting the need for traditional authorities in contemporary times to introduce more formal resource accountability systems.

CHAPTER SIX

6.0 INTERACTIVE PROCESSES BETWEEN TRADITIONAL AUTHORITIES AND DISTRICT ASSEMBLY STRUCTURES AND THEIR DEVELOPMENT IMPLICATIONS.

6.1 Introduction

The ability of the decentralization process to tap into the traditional governance system requires a sound understanding of how the two systems of local governance function and interact. The previous chapter examined the workings of the decentralized structures and traditional authority system in Wenchi district. This chapter builds on the previous one by examining the interactive process between the two systems of local governance. The focus of this chapter is to:

- assess the patterns of interactions and linkages between the district assembly structures and traditional authority system in Wenchi district and their implications for local area development;

- identify the factors that strengthen or weaken the relationship between the traditional authorities and decentralized structures in Wenchi district;

- explore the meanings ascribed to the concepts of "local governance" and "development" by the various operatives of decentralized structures and traditional governance system, as well as how these different perceptions shape the outcome of local governance and development;

- examine the power relations between TA and DA structures and the processes that create, sustain and transform these power relations over time.

A key dimension of this study is to examine the development implications of the interactive processes between traditional authorities and district assembly structures in Wenchi district. The study takes a broader view of interactive processes to include both the explicit and implicit interactions between traditional authorities and District Assembly structures. The explicit interactions involve physical aspects like joint

meetings and people's behaviour towards each other, which can be observed and categorized. The implicit interactions involve the perceptions people have of one other, as well as the values and thinking processes of the various actors and how all these influence their behaviour. In this regard, the study takes into account what Long (1984: 3) describes as "the full human agency" , which means recognizing how the different role-players interpret the world around them, as well as their interactions with each other based on their diverse values, beliefs, worldviews and expectations.

It is expected that the interface or working relationship between the decentralized structures and the traditional authority system will influence the outcome of local area development. Consequently, the actor-oriented approach is used in this chapter to explore how the different worldviews, values and beliefs of actors within the traditional authority system and decentralized structures interact and are mediated, highlighting possible development implications. The actor linkage matrix and linkage diagram (Biggs and Matsaert 2004) were used during the field work to visualize the interactive processes between the traditional governance system and District Assembly structures. Such visualization facilitated the capacity of the study to capture the realities constructed in the minds of the various actors in the form of relaxed and frank discussions, thereby enhancing the validity of the findings.

The chapter also examines the conceptualization of the term, "development", from the perspectives of actors within the decentralized structures, as well as the traditional authority system. The rationale is to assess whether there is a shared understanding of the concept of development among the various actors which could provide the basis for collaboration and a synergy effect in the promotion of local development.

6.2 Linkages and interactions between traditional authorities and district assembly structures

To facilitate frank discussions towards a deeper understanding of the interactive processes among the various actors, focus group discussions were held with the various

groups of role-players in the decentralized structure, as well as in the traditional authority system using the actor linkage matrix and actor linkage map to visualize the discussions and ensure more active participation. During these discussions, each group was asked to indicate the nature of the links and interaction between them and the other actors in the local governance system. The various actors were listed vertically and horizontally in a matrix, with each cell representing some form of linkage or interaction (See Table 6.1). To gauge the quality of interaction, each group was asked to score each linkage cell from 1 to 5, with 1 indicating very weak linkage and poor quality of interaction and 5 indicating very strong linkage and a high quality of interaction. In order not to bias their thinking, each group was asked to discuss and agree on the criteria they would use to score the quality of interaction. This brought to the fore issues of importance to each group with regard to what their expectations were in relation to a good quality of interaction. Interestingly, all of the eight groups raised some common indicators expected of good interaction among actors. These included the following:

- Frequency of meetings or interactions;
- Frankness and openness of discussions;
- Level of trust;
- Mutual benefits emanating from interactions;
- Level of convergence of ideas and world views.

The ensuing discussions among group members as to what score to give to each linkage cell, based on the criteria established, was quite revealing, as they debated with each other with examples as to why a certain score should be given. This tool was therefore found to be very effective in generating deeper insights on the various interactive processes with the different actors.

The results of the various focus group discussions are summarized in Table 6.1 below

Table 6.1: Actor Linkage Matrix showing nature and quality of interaction among various local governance actors in Wenchi district

ACTORS	District Assembly	Assembly Members	Area Council	Unit Committee	Community Members	Paramount Chief & Elders	Divisional Chief & Elders	Village Chief & Elders
District Assembly	X	Meetings for joint planning and decision-making (rank = 4)	Area Development Plans submitted for consideration (rank = 2)	Public Fora to discuss approved projects for the district (rank =1)	Public Fora to discuss approved projects for the district (rank =1)	Public functions and consultation of chief for land (rank =2)	Public functions and consultation of chief for land (rank =2)	Public functions and consultation of chief for land (rank =2)
Assembly Members	Meetings for joint planning and decision making (rank = 4)	X	Attend Area Council meetings, though not frequent (rank = 3)	Hardly meet officially to deliberate on area development (rank= 2)	Electioneering campaign and rare visits to community (rank =2)	Informal interactions (rank = 2)	Informal interactions (rank = 2)	Electioneering campaign and Informal interactions (rank = 3)
Area Council	Area Development Plans submitted for consideration (rank = 2)	Information sharing (rank = 3)	X	Unit development priorities sent to Area Council (rank = 3)	Collection of local taxes and informal interactions (rank= 2)	Informal interactions (rank = 2)	Informal interactions (rank = 2)	Local tax collection and various informal interactions (rank =3)
Unit Committee	Public Fora to discuss approved projects for the district (rank =1)	Occasional informal interaction (rank= 2)	Unit development priorities sent to Area Council (rank = 3)	X	Occasional community meetings and organization of self-help projects (Rank = 3)	Indirect communication through village chief (Rank = 2)	Indirect communication through village chief (Rank = 2)	Occasional community meetings and organization of self-help projects (Rank = 3)
Community Members	Public Fora to discuss approved	Electioneering campaign and rare visits to	Collection of local taxes and	Occasional community meetings and	X	Indirect communication through village	Indirect communication through village	Occasional community meetings and

	projects for the district (rank =1)	community (rank =2)	informal interactions (rank= 2)	organization of self-help projects (Rank = 3)		chief (Rank = 2)	chief (Rank = 2)	organization of self-help projects (Rank = 4)
Paramount Chief & Elders	Public functions and consultation of chief for land (rank =2)	Informal interactions (rank = 2)	Informal interactions (rank = 2)	Indirect communication through village chief (Rank = 2)	Indirect communication through village chief (Rank = 2)	X	Traditional council meetings and informal consultations (rank = 4)	Occasional meetings with chief and elders as well as paying annual homage to chief (rank = 4)
Divisional Chief & Elders	Public functions & consultation of chief for land (rank =2)	Informal interactions (rank = 2)	Informal interactions (rank = 2)	Indirect communication through village chief (Rank = 2)	Indirect communication through village chief (Rank = 2)	Traditional council meetings and informal consultations (rank = 4)	X	Divisional Council meetings (rank =4)
Village Chief & Elders	Public functions & consultation of chief for land (rank =2)	Electioneering campaign and Informal interactions (rank = 3)	Local tax collection and various informal interactions (rank =3)	Occasional community meetings and organization of self-help projects (Rank = 3	Occasional community meetings and organization of self-help projects (Rank = 4	Occasional meetings with chief and paying annual homage to paramount chief (rank = 4)	Divisional Council meetings (rank = 4	X

Source: Field data, 2007

After calculating the average score of the quality of interaction among the various actors as indicated by the various focus groups, a linkage matrix map was constructed to visually present their perceptions of the quality of interaction among the various actors. This linkage map was presented to the groups for further discussions and validation. The quality of interaction or strength of linkage between two actors was depicted by means of lines of different thicknesses, with a thicker line depicting a stronger linkage or higher quality of interaction (Figure 6.1).

Figure 6.1: Linkage map of various operatives of the decentralized structure and traditional governance system
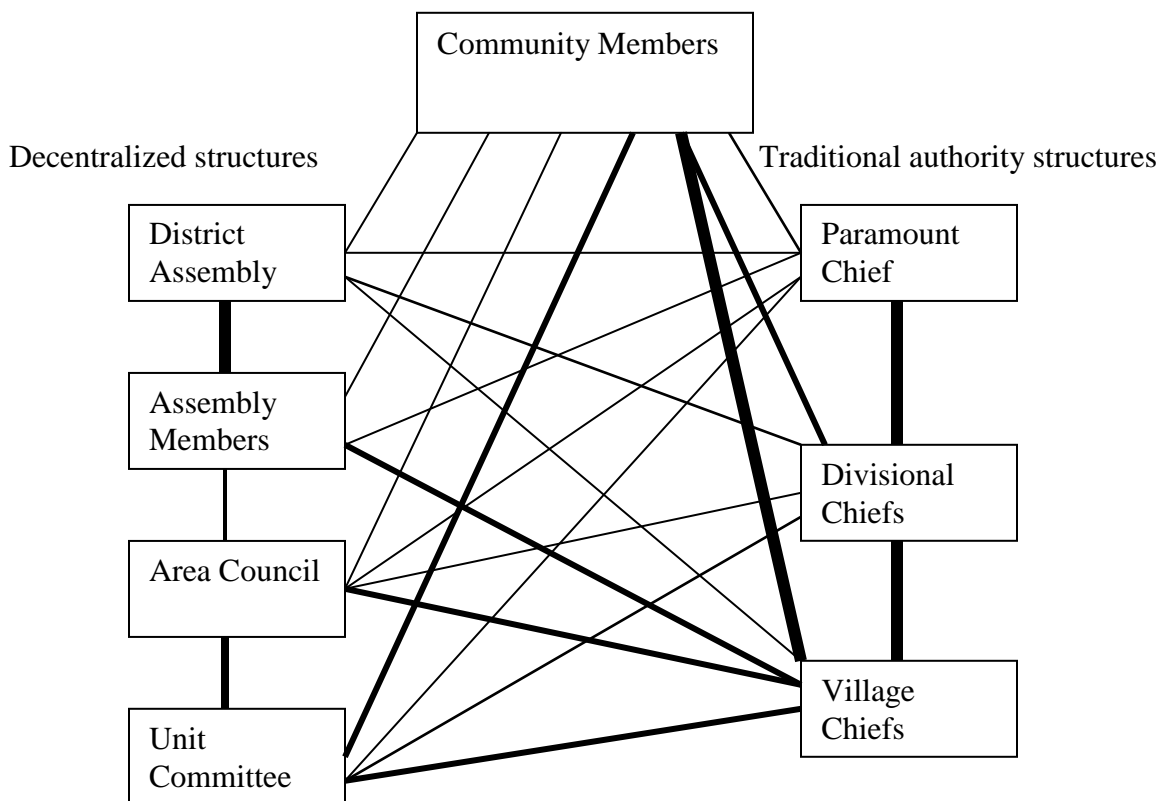
Source: Field analysis, 2007

The linkage map above indicates that the interaction between the various operatives of the District Assembly and the traditional authority system is generally weak, except in a few situations where there is good interaction and strong linkage between the unit

committees and their village chiefs. To generate a better understanding of what accounts for either strong or poor interaction among the actors within the decentralized structures and those of the traditional authority system, the relevant linkage lines as depicted in Figure 6.2 were taken one after the other, and discussions centered on what accounted for the strengths and weaknesses of the link. This generated very insightful discussions among the various focus groups as to what accounted for the perceived strong or weak linkage among the various actors. Table 6.2 captures the views of the various groups as to what accounts for the strengths and weaknesses with respect to their relationship with other actors.

Table 6.2 Views from focus groups on the strengths and weaknesses that underpin the relationships between the traditional authority system and decentralized structures

Actors of Decentralized System	Relationship with Traditional Authority System		Actors of Traditional Authority System	Relationship with Decentralized Structures	
	Strengths	Weaknesses		Strengths	Weaknesses
Assembly Members	- Occasional consultations with chiefs on development issues	- Fear of being overshadowed by chiefs - Competition for power and resources -Perception that some chiefs are not accountable	**Paramount Chief & Elders**	- Occasional involvement in ceremonies organized by district assembly	- Disrespect from some assembly members even though we were there before them - Our authority and legitimacy being encroached upon by the district assembly system
Area Council Members	- Some Area Councils work closely with their chiefs in the collection of local taxes	- Fear that chiefs would like to control the local taxes collected - In areas of chieftaincy disputes, it is better to avoid them	**Divisional Chiefs & Elders**	- The District Assembly usually consults chiefs for land to undertake various projects	- No regular feedback to chiefs on activities of the assembly structures - Chiefs not consulted or involved in the planning and execution of development projects in their localities
Unit Committee Members	- Some unit committee members have strong relations with village chiefs	- Some unit committee members competing with their village chiefs for legitimacy and power	**Village Chief & Elders**	- Some village chiefs work closely with their unit committee members - In some areas there is mutual respect between village chiefs and assembly members	- In areas where the village chief is perceived to be sympathetic to a political party different from the majority of Unit Committee members, there is often tension in the relationship.

Source: Field data, 2007

As revealed in Table 6.2, it came to light that, in many communities, operatives of the district assembly structures were in competition with traditional authorities for legitimacy and power. The traditional authorities felt they were not given the respect due to them from the District Assembly operatives, as the latter took certain major decisions without consulting them. Traditional authorities were particularly concerned that, even though the decentralization law (Act 462) expects the District Chief Executive to consult chiefs in

the appointment of government nominees to the Assembly structures, this is hardly ever done, which smacks of disrespect to the traditional authorities. Some chiefs and elders also cited instances when the Assembly or Unit Committee Members would call for a community meeting or communal work without prior consultation with the local chief. This the chiefs found to be a threat to their power, as it has long been the preserve of chiefs to assembly their subjects for a meeting or any communal action by beating the *gongong,* a traditional instrument. On the other hand, focus group discussions with the Assembly and Unit Committee Members revealed that some of them conceived themselves to be legitimate representatives of the people since they were elected to their positions and the state authority, which they represented, was sovereign, superseding the traditional authority. Consequently, they felt that there was no need for them to consult the traditional authorities before taking certain decisions or actions. This thinking, however, negates the fundamental principles of decentralization which hinges on broad-based participation in public decision-making and on facilitating local people so that they can attend to their own needs. Furthermore, the assumption that the elected representatives to the district assembly structures are superior to the traditional authorities is misconceived, since the two sets of actors derive their authority and legitimacy from different sources. Traditional authorities derive theirs from the sacred and political order that existed before the imposition of the colonial state, whilst the post-colonial state, Ghana, derives its legitimacy from democracy and constitutional legality. These are mainly secular, as opposed to the sacred legitimacy of traditional authority (Ray 1996: 184). Since chiefs and state agencies like the district assembly operatives draw upon mutually exclusive bases of legitimacy, the question should not be who is superior, but rather how the two sets of actors (state agents and traditional authorities) use their various sources of legitimacy in a complementary manner to enhance rural local governance and development.

The other reason given by some of the district assembly operatives for keeping a distance from traditional authorities is the fear of losing their independent thought and actions, which they summed up as being "swallowed up by the chiefs". These assembly and unit committee members were persuasive in their explanation that the local culture does not

permit people to argue with the chief in public. There is therefore the danger that chiefs could impose their ideas on the decentralization process, even if such ideas were not in the public interest, since people will not have the courage to put forward counter arguments to the chief. The assembly and unit committee members argued that, in such a cultural context, it was better to keep the chief out of those public decisions where there was a need to debate diverse perspectives. To cross-validate this argument, the study sought opportunities to observe community meetings where the chiefs were present. Three of these community meetings were observed and it was noted that, in all cases, community members were first given a chance to have their say concerning the issues on the table and then the chief took the final decision which was not subject to further challenge or argument. After the community meetings, the study randomly interviewed some of the participants to ascertain whether they were satisfied with the final decisions by the chiefs and whether such decisions reflected consensus. The results of these interviews are summarized in Table 6.3 below.

Table 6.3: Community members' satisfaction level with outcome of their community meeting

Are you satisfied with the final decisions of the meeting as reflecting the will of the people?		
	Frequency	Percentage
YES	37	63%
NO	21	37%
Valid Responses	58	100%

Source: Field data, 2007

Table 6.3 reveals that even though majority of the community members were satisfied with the outcome of their meeting, quite a sizeable number (37%) expressed dissatisfaction. The reasons they gave included the following:

- Some of us were afraid to voice our opinions in the presence of the chief and therefore our views were not captured.

- The meeting was dominated by a few people and therefore ended up reflecting the views of the few vocal ones.
- The personal biases of the chief influenced the final decision.

The fact that some community members did not have the courage to voice their opinions in the presence of the chief and elders points to a culture of fear of authority. This is a new dimension, since most writers on decentralization as reviewed in the literature did not touch on this issue which could hinder the genuine participation envisaged by decentralization. The matter was further investigated by asking key informants, including the staff of some government agencies and NGOs, if fear of authority as a hindrance for effective participation of people within different hierarchical levels was a valid factor. Interestingly, all the respondents agreed that there was a predominant culture of fear of authority. They cited examples of how most assembly members were not able publicly to debate with the District Chief Executive or demand accountability from her as a result of this fear: "Similarly, community members might grumble about certain poor decisions by the chief, but cannot confront him publicly, since such a move would be considered as being uncultured". Through probing, it came to light that this culture of fear may be traced to the fact that many traditional African societies use fear as a means of social control. For example, "people are told not to enter a sacred grove because of possible attack from the spirits rather than for environmental reasons". Further evidence was provided by the respondents when one of them said: "it is open knowledge that many traditional Ghanaian parents use intimidation to control their children, who then grow up with a subconscious fear of people in authority".

The implication of this culture of fear is that participation of people from different hierarchical levels may be more symbolic than real. It is reasonable, therefore, to assume that in a society where there is a predominant culture of fear of authority, the development or progress of the people largely depends on the benevolence of the leader or authority they look up to, in terms of being selfless and sensitive to the collective good in all his/her decisions and actions. A benevolent dictatorship is not necessarily negative. Evidence from Singapore, Malaysia and China shows that a continuous stay in office by

particular Presidents who ruled firmly but with benevolence, led to significant progress in their countries.

The findings highlight the fact that the inherent selfishness and greed in man, which is the root of all the problems in the world, be they economic, social, political or environmental can only be tamed by two forces – strong institutions and spirituality. Strong institutions are widely understood and accepted by particular societies as providing the rules of the game by which they must all abide without fearing that whoever violates the rules will be sanctioned. Such institutions are a powerful force for controlling people in authority or in advantageous positions from abusing the public trust for selfish ends. Similarly, the fear that there is somebody superior (Superior Being or God) capable of evaluating your thinking and actions, based on which you are either rewarded or punished, provides a check on people in power so that they do not abuse their authority for selfish reasons. In societies where there are no strong institutions to guide the conduct of people in various spheres of human existence, it is desirable to invoke the spiritual dimension to instill purposeful discipline and sacrifice for the common good.

Many African societies seem not to have strong democratic institutions, as these are still evolving, yet the spiritual dimension is also being eroded by the forces of modernization, leading to the emergence of leaders at all levels who tend to take advantage of their power to exploit the weak. Historically, traditional African society used the spiritual or sacred dimension to illicit such selflessness in their leaders by invoking the fear of punishment or reward from the ancestors, depending on how well they were able to rule. However, the superimposition of modern institutions like democratic governance on the traditional African governance system has led to a weakening of the traditional governance system, whilst the modern system is also not well understood and still evolving. Without strong democratic government institutions in these African societies, the only other force that could curb the selfishness and misconduct of their leaders is spirituality or fear of a Supreme Being that will hold people responsible for their actions and inaction. The tendency of some African leaders to abuse their power is reinforced by the persistent culture of fear of authority in some African societies, as was found in

Wenchi district. Such situations not only hinder development, but also breed mistrust and strained relations which limit constructive participation. Indeed, democracy and development can only flourish when decisions made by our leaders are guided by truth and love of the common good. This highlights the importance of leadership, since the quality of collective life depends on the type and quality of leadership.

Furthermore, the analysis of the actor-linkage map above revealed a rather weak linkage between community members and their paramount chief. When probed for reasons, it came to light that the paramount chief was considered distant from the everyday struggles of community members and did not show sufficient interest in their welfare. Besides, most community members perceived the paramount chief as not adequately accounting for income from land sales and royalties received. This reinforces the idea of a culture of fear, since these community members only grumble privately, but have no courage to confront the paramount chief to demand greater accountability.

Sentiments of dissent regarding the legitimacy of the current paramount chief also surfaced in some of the focus group discussions with community members. It was noted that the tendency for chieftaincy disputes in the area was more pronounced with the higher chiefs (paramount and divisional chiefs) than the village chief. This may be due to the seemingly low profile and non-lucrative nature of the village chief's position. In areas where chieftaincy disputes exist, the sovereignty of the chief is undermined and his influence in development is weak. Indeed, some district assembly and unit committee members in areas where there was conflict relating to chieftaincy explained that one of the reasons for their inability to interact effectively with their traditional authority, derived from a fear of being misunderstood as taking sides, if found interacting with any of the contending parties. In such circumstances, the best strategy would be for them to have as little contact with any of the contending parties as possible.

Despite the rather weak linkage between community members and their paramount chief, the study noted that the paramount chief still has indirect influence on the community members through the various village chiefs who have strong links with both the

paramount chief and their respective community members. Since village chiefs live with their community members and identify with their everyday struggles, they enjoy stronger trust and loyalty from these members. Besides, the village chiefs are not prone to the sale of communal land, since they cannot sell land on their own without the prior approval of their superior chief. In any case, the land market in the village is poor due to low demand for such land. Thus, the perception of accountability is higher in relation to village chiefs than the paramount chief. Consequently, the village chief enjoys relatively stronger links with, and trust from, most actors in the decentralized structures, as well as in the traditional authority system, as captured in the linkage map above (Figure 6.2). The implication here is that these village chiefs have great potential to be used as rallying points or platforms to mobilize community members and other actors towards more effective participation in local governance and self-help projects.

6.3 Cases of difficult and positive features in the relationships between the District Assembly structures and traditional authorities

To generate a deeper understanding of the factors that strengthen or weaken the relationship between the traditional authorities and district assembly operatives, the study undertook a detailed analysis of two communities, one exhibiting positive relationships (*Agubie*) and the other negative relationships (*Ayigbe*) between the two systems of local governance. Two focus group discussions (one for men and one for women) were held in each of these communities and the main theme around which discussions centered concerned the factors that strengthen or weaken the relationship between the traditional authorities and decentralized structures. Similarly, twelve key informants with specific knowledge about the two communities in relation to the theme of interest were identified and interviewed. The findings of these discussions are captured in Table 6.4.

Table 6.4: Positive and negative factors in relations between traditional authorities and decentralized structures in Agubie and Ayigbe

Community (Respondents)	Positive Factors of Relationship	Negative Factors of Relationship
1) Agubie (Men)	- Unit Committee members were selected by consensus during a community meeting presided over by the chief. This has made them work closely with the chief. - There are regular meetings between unit committees and the chief. - Chief and community members see relevance of unit committees as they are leading the community to undertake various self-help projects. - There is mutual understanding and respect for the unique value and roles of chief and unit committee members.	- Poor understanding of chief and community members as to how the decentralization process functions, since there is hardly any feedback on outcomes of Assembly meetings. - Lack of clarity on the role of chiefs in decentralization process. - The chief and elders think they are not actively involved in the management of forest trees on their land, as these are controlled by the Forestry Department in a non-transparent manner, creating the impression that government agencies are corrupt.
Agubie (Women)	- Chief and unit committee members share similar goals for improving the well-being of community members. - Unit committee members focus more on development of the community rather than on politics.	- The Assembly member of the area only came here during elections, but we have not seen him since then. - Fear that the decentralization process will encroach on the powers of the traditional authority. - Weakening spirituality and traditional values.
Agubie (Key Informants)	- Respect of unit committee for the chief. - Unit committee members are dedicated to their work of developing the community. - There is common understanding among the unit committee members and the traditional authority on what kind of development is appropriate for the community.	- Even though the village chief and his unit committee members are working well together, he has negative perceptions of the whole decentralization process, seeing it as an attempt to usurp the powers of traditional authorities and therefore as something that must be resisted. - Disagreements between traditional authorities and decentralized structures on some issues like land and forest administration, as well as development.

2) **Ayigbe** **(Men)**	- An assembly member of the area visits the chief once in a while.	- Unit Committee members sometimes call for communal work without informing the chief who sees this as a mark of disrespect and as encroaching on his powers. - Lack of clear roles and powers of chiefs in local governance. - The chief is perceived to be sympathetic to a political party which is different from the party to which the majority of unit committee members belong.
Ayigbe **(Women)**	- The queen mother is a unifying force, always advising the various conflicting parties to live in harmony.	- There is a rival faction challenging the legitimacy of the chief, thereby undermining his authority. - Chief feels marginalized in local area development issues. - Relevance of Unit Committees is not apparent.
Ayigbe **(Key Informants)**	- There are a few people in the Unit Committee who relate well with the chief.	- Mutual distrust among the traditional authority and operatives of decentralized structures, resulting in a kind of 'cat and mouse game' in their relationship. - The Unit Committee is viewed by chief and elders as a useless enterprise, as they are not able to influence decisions at the Assembly level and attract necessary assistance for community development efforts. - Partisan nature of electing local governance representatives, since people view their political opponents as enemies. - Divergent views on development and local governance between traditional authorities and decentralized structures.

Source: Field data, 2007

The above ideas raised during the various focus group discussions were analyzed and similar issues grouped under key strengthening and weakening factors which were then visualized in a flow chart as shown in Figure 6.2

Figure 6.2: Flow diagram on factors that strengthen or weaken relationship between traditional authority and Wenchi district assembly operatives
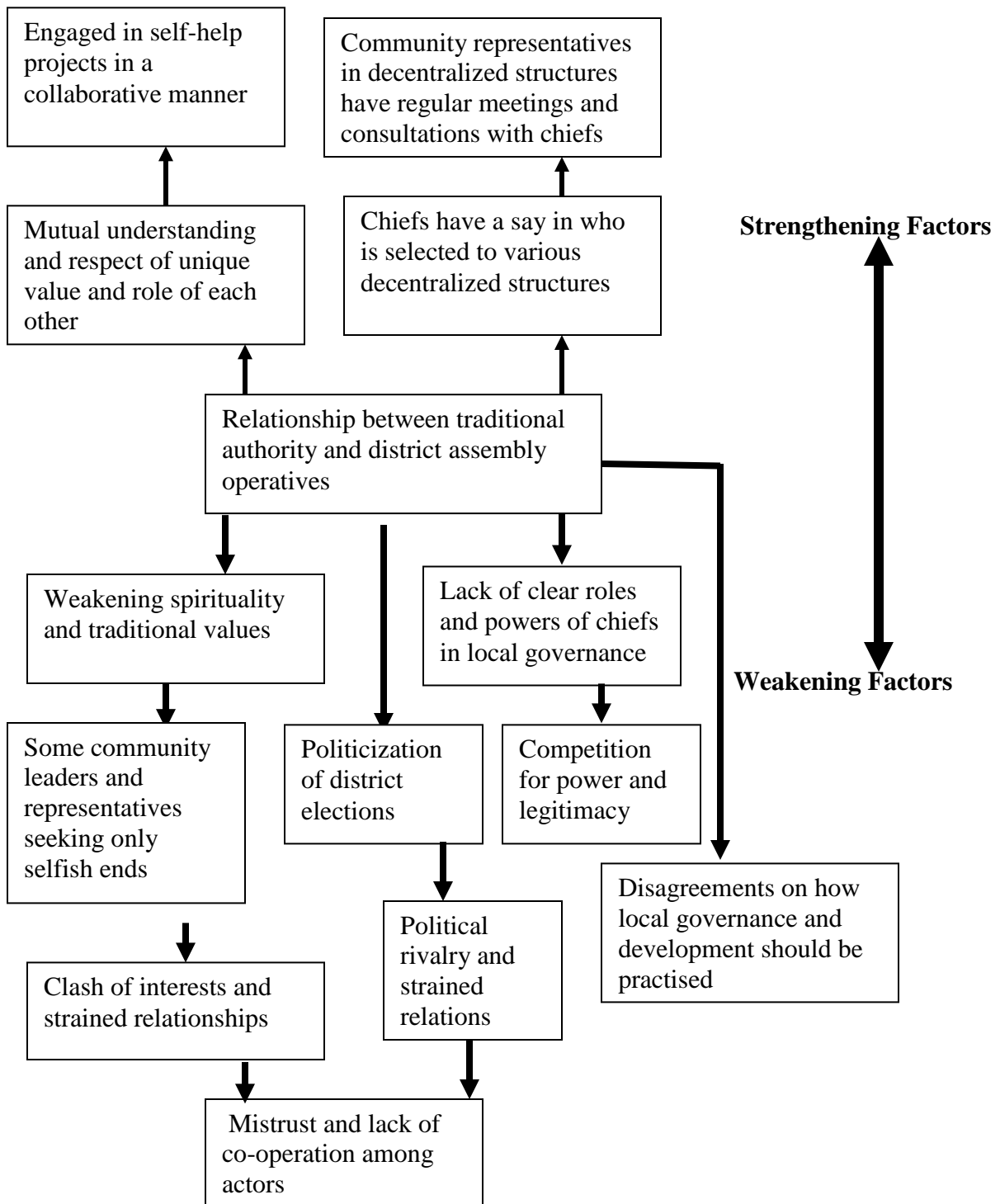
This flow diagram was presented to each of the communities for validation and further analysis. During these community meetings, each line of the flow chart provided the focus for further discussions and joint analyses as to the factors underlying the relationship between the traditional authority and decentralized system, as well as the development implications of such a relationship. These discussions revealed that the synergy between traditional authority and district assembly operatives could be strengthened if opportunities were created for the chiefs to have a greater say as to who was selected to represent their communities within the decentralized structures. This would promote mutual allegiance and cordiality between the chief and selected representatives, as the selected representative would feel honoured by the recognition, and the chief would want to support those he had an influence in choosing. Such an arrangement would also ensure that some of the traditional values that underpin the selection of traditional political leaders were brought to bear in the selection of community representatives. For example, the consensus approach of selecting chiefs, yet still allowing room for various community members to have a say in the choice, might be more appropriate than the current system of competitively oriented democratic election of community representatives to the various structures of the district assembly. The current democratic political culture of Ghana is often characterized by indecent competition and conflicts, pointing to an inadequate understanding of the nature and working of this democratic process imported from the West. For example, the focus group discussions and key informants' interviews highlighted the concern that many Ghanaians see their political opponents as enemies who must be destroyed, rather than seeing them as people with different views on addressing the socio-economic issues of our times.

The other key factor that could strengthen the relationship between traditional authority and decentralized structures as identified from the interviews and discussions is the need for more regular meetings between these two entities, conducted in a spirit of partnership. Such a partnership would be further strengthened if there was a joint project for the various participants. For example, the joint project of an anti-bush fire campaign, as well as the establishment of a community woodlot at Agubie where both the chief and unit committee members are actively involved, provided a platform and motivation for

decentralized structures and traditional authorities to interact frequently and to develop interpersonal relationships. Such collaborative ventures between the two groups means that they are able to avail themselves of the synergy between the two systems, based on their unique strengths, thus accelerating local area development. It is through such social processes of regular interaction among the various participants that the requisite innovations for development can be initiated. Such development-oriented innovations could be institutional or socio-economic, such as evolving new ways of gaining access to resources or ensuring accountability.

As to the factors that weaken the relationship between the traditional authorities and decentralized structures, the discussions point to four key issues: competition for legitimacy and power, politicization of district elections, as well as a lack of clear roles for the traditional authority in the decentralization process and the weakening spirituality in society. In Ayigbe, it was reported that the Unit Committee members sometimes call community meetings without consulting the chief and, when queried by the chief, they become defiant and argue that they are elected representative of the people and therefore have more legitimacy and power than the chief who was not democratically elected. Challenging the power and legitimacy of the chief in this manner is definitely a recipe for conflict and strained relationships. The tendency of traditional authorities to view decentralized structures as mechanisms designed to erode their power base may be appreciated more fully when viewed within a certain historical context. Under the colonial states, chiefs were actively involved in local governance, through various colonial laws like the 1883 Native Jurisdiction Ordinance and the 1927 Native Administration Ordinance for the Gold Coast Colony. For instance, chiefs and their councils were allowed to make by-laws dealing with local government functions like the building and maintenance of roads, forest conservation and regulation of burials. Traditional leaders were given the right to fine or imprison those subjects who broke the by-laws (Ray 2003). Furthermore, both the 1957 and 1969 Constitutions of Ghana reserved one-third membership of local government units for chiefs. However, this was lost under the 1988 decentralization reform in Ghana. These chiefs, who once wielded power and had a lot of say in local governance, were now sidelined in favour of

decentralized structures which now fulfilled some of the roles which had previously been the preserve of the chiefs. This definitely has the capacity to trigger strained relations between the two systems of local governance.

Furthermore, the inability of the decentralization process to define a clear role for traditional authorities makes them feel alienated, leading to a tendency of non-co-operation. An elder of the Ayigbe chief alluded to this when he said: "decentralization came up against traditional authorities actively involved in local governance, yet no role was given to traditional authorities in the current decentralization process. That is why it faces many challenges".

The politicization of the district assembly elections was also cited as a major cause of tense relations. Some community members explained that the village chief and most of the unit committee members belonged to different political parties and viewed each other as political rivals and enemies, thus leading to friction. For political rivals to regard each other as enemies points to a paucity of understanding when it comes to democratic elections. Rivalry should rather focus on the competing ideas to solve the same problem, rather than targeting specific personalities. The challenge posed by the predominance of party politics in the decentralization process in Ghana has been reported by IFPRI (2009: 42).

Community members also expressed concern about the growing erosion of spirituality in the lives of many Ghanaians, leading to some operatives within the decentralized structures, as well as some traditional authorities, indulging in various forms of self-seeking behaviour such as misappropriation of public resources. Indeed, some community members in Ayigbe cited the example of the misappropriation of community contributions for a community project by some Unit Committee members, thereby breeding mistrust and strained relations. They attributed this to growing modernization and secularization and argued that: "in the past, when the fear of God was intense, cases of misappropriations of public funds were rare, due to the fear of retribution from the ancestors for such behaviour".

Such growing secularization of Ghanaian society has negative implications for development. In the first place, it leads to a tendency for community leaders or public office holders to misapply development resources for selfish ends, rather than for the common good, since there is no fear of a Supreme Being who could check their conduct. This is of particular concern in many African countries where there are an inadequate number of institutions to provide the necessary checks and balances. Secondly, the emphasis on the secular at the expense of the spiritual makes the practice of development skewed towards material accumulation and over exploitation of the environment due to a weakening appreciation of the sacredness of the earth and the stewardship required by humanity in order to preserve the environment for future generations.

6.4 Interface perspectives on development and clash of world views between operatives of the Wenchi District Assembly structures and traditional authorities

The previous section hinted at the clash of world views and interests among the various operatives of local governance, which is a contributing factor to the generation of difficult relations between the various actors. This section deepens this analysis by exploring the meanings ascribed to the concept of "development" by the various operatives of decentralized structures and traditional governance systems, as well as the implications of these diverse perceptions. Such an analysis is considered appropriate in view of the fact that both the district assembly system and the traditional authorities seek to promote local development. The meanings ascribed to the concept of development by the various actors will shape their interactive processes and practices in relation to this concept, with obvious implications as to the outcomes. For example, if there is a shared understanding and belief in the concept of development between the two political structures, this will facilitate collaboration and an ability to take advantage of the potential synergy between them in the promotion of local area development. Where there is no shared understanding in the meaning and practice of development among the various actors, the development process will not be able to involve everyone in a committed manner, thereby stalling the development process.

To explore perspectives on the concept of development, the different focus groups were asked to list the elements which characterize development in its perfect state, and provide different weightings to each element by assigning a rank of 1 to 5, with one signifying very low importance, and 5 signifying very high importance. Figure 6.4 captures the various perspectives on development.

FIGURE 6. 3: WORLD VIEWS ON DEVELOPMENT BETWEEN WENCHI DISTRICT ASSEMBLY AND WENCHI TRADITIONAL AUTHORITY SYSTEM

WENCHI DISTRICT ASSEMBLY STRUCTURE   **WENCHI TRADITIONAL AUTHORITY SYSTEM**

Clash of World Views on Development

District Assembly Members
- Physical infrastructure like schools, hospitals & water (4)
- Employment and high income (4)

Paramount chief
- Good roads, hospitals, schools and water (4)
- Employment for people (3)
- Ability to house and feed oneself (3)

Area Council Members
- Modernization of agriculture (4)
- Electricity, good health service and water (4)

Divisional Chiefs
- Peaceful coexistence (4)
- Contentment with what you have (3)
- Thinking of next generation (3)

Unit Committee Members
- Mechanization of agriculture (4)
- Electricity, good roads, hospital and water (4)
- More money in pocket (3)

Village chiefs
- Social harmony (4)
- Better control over property (4)
- Less misery (3)
- Stewardship of environment (3)

District Planning & Coordinating Unit
- Industrialization (4)
- Economic growth (4)
- Efficiency & productivity (3)
- Modern infrastructure (3)

Community Members

Youth
- Modern infrastructure
- Jobs and high income

Elders
- Social harmony & reciprocity
- Less misery & more happiness

Source: Field data, 200

211

Figure 6.3 shows that the concept of development varies among the various participants, highlighting the clash between tradition and modernity. It brings to fore the confusion created in the minds of traditional authorities and their subjects, as well as the district assembly operatives, as to what the "good life" called development is all about. Staff of the district assembly structures, who are mostly influenced by Western formal education and are therefore biased by Western orientation, see development as "having more" in terms of resources and physical infrastructure. The youth in the communities also appear to be influenced by the Western orientation regarding development, as their concept of this process is similar to that of the district assembly operatives. On the other hand, the village chiefs and their elders see development as involving the building of harmonious societies where there is reciprocity among community members, ensuring that all people meet their basic needs. In their view, development should make the individual become more of a human being, with fellow feeling, compassion and seeking the common good. The perceptions on development as expressed by all eight village chiefs and elders interviewed are ably captured by the sentiments of Opanin Kwaku Duah of Awisa village, as indicated in box 6.1 below.

Box 6.1: Sentiments of Kwaku Duah of Awisa village

We the older generation believe that the ultimate purpose of development is happiness, and that this is not attained by merely accumulating more money or other resources, but by living in harmony with the community and with nature. This implies seeking the common good, rather than pursuing individual self-interest. Consequently, as we were growing up in our day, we observed that the strong pulled the weak along in life, thereby creating mutual interdependence and harmony. During the good old days, we did not have much money, yet we were more content and happier because we were each others' keeper. We did not have multi-storey buildings in those times, yet there was shelter for everyone. We did not have tractors and sophisticated technology to produce more food, yet no one went hungry, as farmers willingly gave part of their farm produce to those who could not establish a farm. But what do we see today? In the name of development we have multi-storey buildings, yet there are a growing number of children sleeping on the street. Through technology we produce more food, yet many are going hungry. How can one be happy in the midst of such contradiction?"

The above views on development as expressed by the village chiefs and elders are consistent with what Layard (2005) puts forward when he argues that economic growth

and property accumulation is not a goal for which we should make large sacrifices at the expense of the most important source of happiness, which is the quality of human relationships. Promoting such relationships is implicit in traditional African values as reflected in the thinking of the village chiefs and elders in Wenchi. Unfortunately, no one seems to be listening to the dying voice of tradition as we continue to push for the ideals of modernization such as competitiveness, individualism and efficiency. Such thinking is reflected in the Wenchi District Assembly operatives. Indeed, when the village chiefs and their elders were asked why they did not publicly push for their ideas to be incorporated in the development efforts of the district, the common chorus was: "who will listen to our views?" The elders indicated that they are often forced to suppress their opinions on development due to the dominant ideas coming from the district assembly and the youth. The elders therefore tend to move along with the crowd in promoting development ideas they do not actually share. The implication is that the inability to carry everyone along in the development process could affect its sustainability. Furthermore, if these traditional perspectives on development, as expressed by the elders, are not captured and preserved, they are likely to die with them, thereby depriving future generations of their value.

Increasingly, development is equated with the material and financial possessions of an individual or society, leading to competition among individuals or groups which often results in conflict, injustice and the erosion of relations of trust and caring. Such a Western market-oriented worldview of development is often counterproductive and does not generally produce a happy society. In this regard, Lecours, (2005: 10) cautions that human behaviour should not be driven by utility calculations alone, but by other factors such as the desire for harmonious living, internalized principles and values, as well as spirituality and a search for meaning within human existence. Whist I agree that people should have the freedom to acquire property and choose how to develop such property; I am of the view that freedom is not only a human right, but also a call or summons to personal responsibility towards others and towards nature as a whole. The preservation of freedom calls for the cultivation of virtue, self discipline and sacrifice for the common good, as well as a sense of responsibility towards the less fortunate.

6.5 Role of traditional authorities in local governance

In the light of the various discussions on the functioning of traditional authorities and decentralized structures, as well as the interactive processes between the two systems of local governance, the study sought to illicit from respondents their views on the role of traditional authorities in Ghana's decentralization process so as to enhance local area development. Views in this direction were captured from focus group discussions with community members, as well as from interviews with key informants. Respondents were asked if chiefs should be actively involved in Ghana's decentralization process and to give reasons for their response. For the focus group discussions, each group was asked to debate the issues and finally come to a group consensus of "yes" or "no". This approach forced the groups to reflect critically on the issue and to advance various arguments for or against the participation of chiefs in the decentralization process. Of the thirty-six (36) focus group discussions with various categories of community members, 27 of them, representing 75% of the groups, found it appropriate for chiefs to be more involved in the decentralization process. A summary of the responses from the various focus groups and reasons for their views are captured in Table 6.5 below.

Table 6.5: Role of chiefs in decentralization process

	Should chiefs be actively involved in the decentralization process?				TOTAL
Type of Focus group	YES	Percentage	NO	Percentage	
Men (12 groups)	9	75%	3	25%	100%
Women (12 groups)	11	92%	1	8%	100%
Youth (12 groups)	7	58%	5	42%	100%
Total No. of groups interviewed = 36	Total number of groups saying YES = 27	75%	Total number of groups saying NO = 9	25%	100%

Source: Field data, 2007

Table 6.5 reveals that women's groups demonstrated overwhelming support for chiefs to be involved in the decentralization process, whilst the youth were more sceptical. The reasons advanced by the various groups are captured in Table 6.6 below

214

Table 6.6 Reasons advanced by the various focus groups for saying "yes" or "no" to the involvement of chiefs in decentralization, as well as what the specific role of chiefs should be.

Type of Focus group	Reasons for saying 'YES"	Reasons for saying "NO"	Specific role to be played by chiefs
Men's groups	- We understand traditional governance better than modern governance. - Chiefs are closer to us than decentralized structures. - As custodians of custom, chiefs cannot be ignored.	- Where there are chieftaincy conflicts, their involvement will polarise the system.	- Chiefs to nominate representatives to unit committees. - Paramount chief to chair District Assembly meetings. - Chiefs to manage land and forests.
Women's groups	- Chiefs command respect and can easily mobilize community members for development. - Chiefs solve our disputes better than law courts.	- Decentralization is politicized and politics in Ghana is dirty. Some of this dirt will stain the chiefs' reputation if involved.	- Chiefs to be used in community education and mobilization. - Chiefs should be involved in dispute resolution.
Youth groups	- Some chiefs are better positioned to lead the development process of their areas than decentralized structures. - As custodians of land, the involvement of chiefs will facilitate easy land acquisition for development.	- Some of the chiefs are not accountable. - People fear to speak their minds in the presence of the chief. -The chieftaincy institution is not democratic.	- Chiefs should play an advisory role to the various decentralized structures.

Apart from the focus groups, a total of thirty eight (38) key informants were also asked if chiefs should be involved in Ghana's decentralization process or not and to provide reasons for their position. Table 6.7 below captures the various perspectives of these key informants

Table 6.7: Key informants' views on involvement of chiefs in Ghana's decentralization process

	Should chiefs be actively involved in the decentralization process?				TOTAL
Gender of Key informants	**YES**	**Percentage**	**NO**	**Percentage**	
Male (N= 22)	16	73%	6	27%	100%
Female (N= 16)	13	81%	3	19%	100%
TOTAL (Respondents =38	Total No. saying "YES" =29	76%	Total No. saying "NO" = 9	24%	100%

Source: Field data, 2007

The reasons advanced by the key informants for saying "yes" or "no" to the involvement of chiefs in Ghana's decentralization process are captured in Table 6.9 below

Table 6.9 Reasons advanced by the key informants for saying yes or no to the involvement of chiefs in decentralization, as well as the specific role which they should play.

Gender of Key informants	Reasons for saying "YES"	Reasons for saying "NO"	Specific role to be played by chiefs
Males	- Chiefs command great influence in their communities. - Involving chiefs will ensure that the decentralization process benefits from some valuable traditional values.	- The politics associated with decentralization is dirty and chiefs need to avoid it. - Some chiefs misappropriate community resources and cannot be trusted with Assembly resources.	- The paramount chief should be the ceremonial head of the District Assembly. - Chiefs should be actively involved in the management of natural resources.
Females	- Chiefs and decentralized structures are all interested in local development and should therefore work closely together. - Involvement of	- Involving chiefs will compromise the dignity and respect associated with the chieftaincy institutions. - Chiefs should remain neutral and	- Chiefs should offer counselling to the decentralized structures. - Chiefs should be involved in dispute resolution in their localities.

	chiefs will minimize the mistrust and conflicts between some chiefs and the decentralized structures. - As custodians of custom, the involvement of chiefs will make the decentralization process benefit from rich cultural values	act as a check on the District Assembly and sub-structures	

Source: Field data, 2007

Tables 6.6 to 6.9 show that the majority of respondents see the need to involve chiefs in the decentralization process. This would not only improve the relationship between traditional authorities and decentralized structures, but also ensure that some traditional political values like consensus-building and communalism are brought to bear in our decentralization and development efforts. Blending traditional and conventional governance systems will allow our governance and development efforts to reflect contextual peculiarities. Some writers have recognised the importance of such contextual issues in shaping the outcomes of decentralization (Phoebe Griffith 2003; Smoke 2003; Bankauakaite and Saltman 2006; Dauda 2006; Lauer 2007).

Three key roles for chiefs in the decentralization process were suggested by the respondents. The first suggestion was for chiefs to play an advisory and ceremonial role within the District Assembly and its sub-structures. In fact, some respondents wanted the paramount chief to be the ceremonial head of the District Assembly, similar to the Queen of England being the ceremonial head of the government, with the right to offer ceremonial speeches and counsel. Through such an arrangement, the chiefs would see themselves as being part of the decentralization process and thus be more collaborative. The second suggestion was to actively involve chiefs in the management of natural resources such as forests and river bodies. It was hoped that this would enhance the sustainable management of these resources. The third suggestion by respondents,

particularly from women, was for the decentralization process to use chiefs as recognised channels for settling various disputes at the local level, instead of resorting to the law courts.

Despite the call for more involvement of chiefs in the decentralization process, some respondents felt strongly that it would be better for chiefs to stay out of the decentralization process so as to maintain their neutrality and dignity. This view was informed by the dirty politics usually associated with the decentralization process. Such a neutral position would also allow the chiefs to be a countervailing force with the capacity to check excesses on the part of the District Assembly and its sub-structures.

6.6 Conclusion

The findings and analysis in this chapter point to the fact that the chieftaincy institution is deep rooted within the socio-cultural realities of the people in Wenchi district. The village chief in particular exerts a strong influence on his subjects. Consequently, chiefs are important partners in development at the local level. The majority of respondents therefore found it appropriate to involve chiefs more actively in the decentralization process.

The interactive processes between traditional authorities and decentralized structures are characterized mostly by competition for power and legitimacy which often leads to mistrust and an inability to take advantage of the synergy effect between the two systems of local governance which would help to accelerate rural development. The mistrust and suspicion between the two systems is reinforced by the lack of opportunities or an official platform for face -to-face interaction between chiefs and decentralized structures, such that first-hand information might be obtained, and different perspectives mediated among these key players in the decentralization process. The growing mistrust among the various actors of local governance inhibits constructive participation which is central to good governance and local area development.

The findings in this chapter also show that Wenchi district, like many other African societies, is a melting pot of conflict between tradition and modernity. Globalization and westernization are eroding traditional values and social mechanisms for harmonious living, resulting in a state of ambivalence, as people are torn between western ideas and tradition. On the one hand it is acknowledged that traditional institutions cannot be preserved in their pristine state in contemporary society; on the other hand, complete westernization of our political, economic and social institutions is inappropriate. A carefully balanced synthesis between democratic local and traditional governance systems may therefore be appropriate. For example, in the United Kingdom, the Queen is a traditional authority, yet is also part of modern democratic governance and development. The Netherlands has a similar arrangement.

CHAPTER SEVEN

7.0 RECOMMENDATIONS TOWARDS A MORE EFFECTIVE DECENTRALIZATION PROCESS IN GHANA

7.1 Introduction

Drawing from the findings, this chapter seeks to provide some recommendations towards a more effective decentralization process capable of tapping into the potential of traditional authorities so as to accelerate rural development. The various aspects that the recommendations addressed are:

- Moving towards more functional decentralized structures;
- Trying to achieve a more effective traditional authority system;
- Delineating the role of chiefs in the decentralization process;
- Offering recommendations for further research.

7.2 Making the Decentralized structures more functional

The findings revealed that one of the major reasons for the reluctance of some chiefs and community members to participate in activities organized by the decentralized structures is their perception that such participation is a waste of time, as nothing concrete usually emerges from such engagement. This highlights the need to make the decentralized structures more functional if the participation of chiefs in the decentralization process is to be sustained. To address this concern, the following proposals were put forward to help make the decentralized structures more effective.

7.2.1 Towards more functional Unit Committees.

To make the Unit Committee attractive it might be necessary to reduce the size of the membership from the current 15 to 7, with a token salary given to members as an

incentive. Five (5) of the members should be elected democratically and two appointed by the village chief and his elders. This would make the traditional authorities feel part of the decentralization process and therefore help them to forge a better relationship with the decentralized structures. Chiefs and elders are more justified in nominating representatives onto the Unit Committee than the government is through the District Chief Executive, since the chiefs live in the communities and know better than the government which community members are most suitable to become Unit Committee representatives. Consequently, the current policy of government appointing one third of the Unit Committee members on the grounds that they will bring in people with the best expertise is untenable at the village level, since the chiefs know better than the government.

Furthermore, there is a need to devolve sufficient authority to the Unit Committees to be able to influence the direction of village development based on local priorities. To this end, about 10% of the Assembly's Common Fund should be shared among the Unit Committees in the district to enable each Unit Committee to operate a local development fund from which they can draw to finance their priority self-help projects. This local development fund could be augmented from donations or other fund-raising initiatives by the Unit Committee. Again, it would be desirable for the Unit Committee to be charged with the responsibility of collecting the local taxes within their purview, with a certain proportion being retained at the village level to support development projects. The rest of the monies could be sent to the district.

7.2.2 Towards more functional Area Councils

To make the Area Councils more functional and improve grassroots participation in local governance the following recommendations are made:

- Every Unit Committee should be represented on their respective Area Council by the Chairperson and Secretary of the Unit Committee, and their tenure should be for four years, as is the case with District Assembly elections. This will allow for a constant flow of information from the Area Council to the Unit Committees.

- Each Area Council should engage a full-time Secretary to manage the office and handle the day-to-day activities of the council.
- There should be mandatory meetings of the Area Council, at least four times a year, scheduled in advance in order to enhance attendance.

7.2.3 Towards more effective Assembly Members

Given that the job of an Assembly Member is so onerous, it is unrealistic to continue demanding that people deliver such services on a voluntary basis. It is therefore proposed that a salary be paid to Assembly Members as a motivation to deliver on their mandate, and also as a justification for constituents to demand accountability from Assembly Members. Currently, because the job is voluntary, there is no dedication on the part of members, and constituents also do not feel that it is fair to insist that members deliver services to them without a salary to compensate for their time and effort. In the long run, the objective should be to employ Assembly Members on a full-time basis, as is the case with Parliamentarians. However, due to the current economic challenges faced by the country, this may be done on a gradual basis, starting with a part-time engagement paying for 25% of their time, for instance, which could be increased to 50% and then to 100% as the economy of Ghana improves and democracy deepens.

To enhance grassroots participation in local governance, it is desirable for each electoral area to designate a meeting centre as an official rallying point where Unit Committees and community members could officially meet and interact with their respective Assembly Members. Through such regular interaction, Assembly Members would be familiar with the development priorities of their constituents and their concerns regarding local governance in general which could then be carried further to Assembly level. Similarly, feedback on decisions by the District Assembly and actions taken by the Assembly Member to address the concerns of the constituents could readily be provided to the constituents using the same platform. The co-ordination of the activities of the various Unit Committees in each electoral area could then easily be carried out by the Assembly Member by means of this official platform.

7.3 Towards a more effective traditional authority system

To promote effective engagement between traditional authorities and decentralized structures, both systems must be seen to be working well and addressing some of the concerns likely to inhibit joint activities or participation. In this regard, there is a need for traditional authorities to address some of the concerns that tend to make the decentralized structures shy away from them, as captured in the points below:

i. To minimize the growing chieftaincy disputes that tend to make the decentralized structures wary of engaging with chiefs for fear of being caught up in litigation, it is recommended that traditional authorities should document the succession path, outlining who is to be chief in future, similar to what pertains in Britain, so as to eliminate any doubts as to who becomes chief.

ii. In view of the growing discontent of community members about the weak accountability of some of their chiefs in relation to communal land and financial management, there is a need to find ways of addressing this concern, such as engaging professionals to manage traditional resources and account to the people.

7.4 Role of chiefs in the decentralization process

i. Given the strong influence of chiefs on their community members, the chieftaincy institution is an effective mechanism for rallying community members to actively participate in the decentralization process and to promote democratic accountability. The study found that Assembly Members or Unit Committee members on their own do not command sufficient influence to successfully call community meetings and discuss issues without the involvement of the chief.

ii. To ensure strong links between decentralized structures and traditional authorities, it is recommended that, at the village or unit level, the village chief is represented by two persons appointed by him onto the Unit

Committee. At Area Council level, traditional authorities should be given a ceremonial role by allowing the most senior divisional chief in the area to address the Council at any time when they are meeting. Similarly, traditional authorities should be given a ceremonial role at District Assembly level, by allowing the paramount chief of the area to address the Assembly whenever they meet.

iii.   To ensure better accountability from the decentralized structures, chiefs should not be directly absorbed into the assembly structures but should rather remain as a countervailing body to check abuse of power by operatives within the district assembly system. In this regard, the Traditional Council, which is a forum for all chiefs in the district, should be strengthened and encouraged to occasionally invite key actors from the District Assembly to provide information on relevant issues of public interest. Similarly, chiefs within a particular Area Council should be encouraged to come together and create a forum through which they can officially invite key members of the Area Council also to provide relevant information of public interest.

iv.   Given the level of satisfaction among community members on the various disputes settled by chiefs in Wenchi district, it might be desirable formally to recognize the role of chiefs in alternative dispute resolution.

v.   To promote greater co-ordination and efficiency in land administration, there is a need for traditional authorities to work with district assemblies in land use planning and transfer of land use rights. Similarly, the active involvement of traditional authorities in the management of forests will ensure greater efficiency, as chiefs are more capable of achieving compliance from community members to adopt practices that will not destroy such forests.

7.5 General recommendations

i.   The findings suggest that if decentralization is to be effective, it should
      operate as an open system and be sensitive to the prevailing socio-cultural
      context, including the local people's values, beliefs and institutions. Of critical
      importance is the need for a feedback mechanism that allows for regular
      interaction among the various actors within the decentralization process. This
      will not only promote accountability, but also ensure that the system is able to
      be self-correcting in order to reflect changing conditions.

ii.   Given the fact that public institutions like the decentralized structures in
      Wenchi are weak, there is a need to promote the spiritual and other positive
      traditional values that can restrain the greed of leaders in such public
      institutions, thereby ensuring that the available resources will be used more
      effectively for accelerated development. This is important, because democracy
      and development can only flourish when decisions made by our leaders are
      guided by truth and love for the common good.

7.6 Recommendations for further Research

For a deeper understanding of the interactive processes between decentralized structures
and traditional authorities and how effectively to involve chiefs in Ghana's
decentralization process, the following themes need further research:

i.   How decentralized structures like Area Councils and Unit Committees can
      be empowered and motivated to deliver on their mandate.
ii.   There may be a need to replicate the study in other districts to allow for
      generalization of findings for Ghana.
iii. Generating deeper understanding on the value of indigenous knowledge and
      its place in the development process.
iv.   Impact of globalization on traditional structures and values.

7.7 Conclusion

This chapter built on the findings of the study to make various recommendations aimed at improving decentralized governance in Ghana. Key among these recommendations is that traditional authorities should not be fused with the decentralized structures, but should remain as countervailing institutions to check the misuse of power by the decentralized structures. However, traditional authorities should be given the ceremonial role of the right to address meetings of the District Assembly and the Area Councils as giving chiefs the chance to nominate at least two people onto the Unit Committees. The chapter also provided suggestions to strengthen the decentralized structures as well as the traditional authority system and make them more responsive and accountable to the citizens. It is expected that these recommendations will promote more effective collaboration between decentralized structures and traditional authorities as well as the citizens, thus leading to accelerated rural development.

The chapter however recognizes the limitations of this study and made recommendations for further research that can enrich the knowledge and allow for some generalizations covering the whole country.

CHAPTER EIGHT

8.0 SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

8.1 Introduction

This chapter summarizes the thesis by offering a recapitulation of the problem driving the study and the key objectives. A brief overview of each chapter is provided before articulating the central conclusions on each objective. The thesis is then brought to finalization by means of a general conclusion.

8.2 Summary

In Ghana, the traditional authorities and decentralized structures operate as two parallel local governance systems with a different world view and power base, interacting with each other and with the community in various ways, with implications for local development which are poorly understood as no scholarly studies have been done in this direction. Consequently, the main problem of this research lies with the sketchy knowledge of the interactive processes between Wenchi district assembly structures and traditional authorities. This limits the ability of the decentralization process to tap into the strengths of traditional authorities and, in so doing, accelerate rural development. In the light of this problem, the following objectives were formulated for the study:

i.   To analyse and document the functioning of the Wenchi district assembly system, as well as the traditional authority system, highlighting their development strengths, potentials and weaknesses.

ii.   To assess the development implications of the interactive processes between Wenchi district assembly structures (assembly members, area council members and unit committee members) and traditional authorities (paramount chiefs, divisional chiefs and village chiefs).

iii. To identify and study specific cases in Wenchi district where there are either conflicts or harmonious features in the relationship between traditional authorities and district assembly structures. This is so as to guide efforts

227

seeking to promote collaboration between the decentralized structures and traditional authorities in the decentralization process.

iv. To recommend a more appropriate institutional framework for the effective participation of chiefs in the decentralization process designed for accelerated local area development.

The thesis was informed by two complementary theories; namely, "decentralization" and "development". Relevant literature on these two theoretical constructs is therefore consolidated in chapters two and three respectively, so as to provide a theoretical foundation for the study, as well as identifying existing gaps in the literature which the study could seek to fill.

Chapter four provides background information relating to the research area so as to offer a contextual appreciation of the findings. It also details the methodology employed in the study, as well as the philosophical perspectives that informed the choice of research methods. Within the framework of action research methodology, mixed-methods were used to triangulate findings and enhance research rigour. Specific methods employed were focus group discussions (FGDs), in-depth interviews (IDIs) and observation, complemented by context analyses of relevant documents.

Chapter five documents findings on how the Wenchi district assembly and traditional authority system work. By virtue of such an assessment, the strengths and weaknesses of the two systems in terms of promoting rural development are highlighted. This helps to inform any policy review aimed at tapping into the strengths of the traditional authority in Ghana's decentralization process. It was found that decentralization in Wenchi District is constrained by various factors such as inadequate devolution of power to the decentralized structures, poor participation and apathy, as well as unwillingness on the part of operatives within the decentralized structures to deliver on their mandate.

A fundamental weakness of the chieftaincy institution is the lack of financial accountability, especially in terms of the unauthorized use of land royalties and income

from the sale of land by chiefs. The traditional checks and balances which ensured the accountability of chiefs in the past are being eroded by the pressures of modernity and individualism, highlighting the need for traditional authorities in contemporary times to introduce more formal resource accountability systems.

The traditional authority system in Wenchi was found to offer a more effective platform for citizen participation in governance and development, since most citizens have an emotional attachment to the traditional authority system, as they have been socialized into this system from childhood. The strength of the decentralized structures lies in the availability of diverse technical expertise within the various decentralized departments. Such expertise, when blended with traditional knowledge, could generate innovative and sustainable development. However, the tendency of these decentralized departments to account to their line agencies at headquarters rather than to the local people has resulted in poor co-ordination and an inability to take advantage of the potential for synergy.

Chapter six presents findings on the interactive processes between traditional authorities and district assembly structures and the development implications of such interactions. It was found that dealings between traditional authorities and decentralized structures are characterized mostly by competition for power and legitimacy, leading to mistrust and an inability to take advantage of possibilities for creative interaction between the two systems of local governance. The suspicion between the two entities is reinforced by the lack of opportunities or an official platform for face-to-face interaction between chiefs and decentralized structures such that first-hand information may be obtained, and different perspectives mediated among these key players within the decentralization process. The growing mistrust among the various participants in local governance inhibits constructive engagement which is central to good governance and local area development. Furthermore, it came to light that one of the major reasons for some chiefs and community members showing reluctance to participate in activities organized by the decentralized structures is their perception that such participation is a waste of time, as nothing concrete usually comes from such engagement.

The findings in this chapter point to diverse conceptualizations of development among the various actors, highlighting the clash between tradition and modernity. They bring to the fore the confusion created in the minds of traditional authorities and their subjects, as well as the district assembly operatives, as to what the "good life" known as development is all about. Staff within the district assembly structures, who are mostly influenced by Western formal education and are therefore biased by a Western orientation, see development as offering more in terms of resources and physical infrastructure. The youth in the communities also appear to be influenced by the Western orientation of development, as their concept of this process is similar to that of the district assembly operatives. On the other hand, the village chiefs and their elders see development as building harmonious societies where there is reciprocity among community members that ensures that all people meet their basic needs. In their view, development should make the individual become more of a human being, with fellow feeling, compassion and a desire to seek the common good. The implication of a lack of shared understanding in the meaning and practice of development among the various actors is that the development process will not be able to involve everyone in a committed manner, thereby dragging out the development process. As indicated earlier, the search for innovative and more sustainable development strategies may be successful if there can be a blend between tradition and modernity. However, the pressures of the dominant forces of modernization make the realization of this synergy problematic (Landes 1998; Njoh 2006).

Based on these findings, chapter seven provides recommendations towards the achievement of more effective decentralized structures, as well as delineating the potential role of chiefs in the decentralization process. The chapter recommends the downsizing of the Unit Committee membership from the current 15 to 7, and the motivating factor of a token salary. Similarly, a salary is recommended for Assembly Members in a gradual manner that will eventually lead to their being engaged on a full-time basis.

To create a platform for greater interaction among the various actors, it is recommended that mandatory meetings take place at least three times a year, scheduled by Unit Committees and Area Councils.

To promote better accountability from the decentralized structures, the incorporation of traditional authorities within such structures was found to be inappropriate. Rather, the traditional authority system should be strengthened at various levels as a means of monitoring the abuse of power by operatives within the district assembly system. In order to promote a sense of involvement in the decentralization process, traditional authorities should be given a ceremonial role by allowing the paramount chief to address the District Assembly every time they meet and the most senior divisional chief within an Area Council should also have the right to address the Council.

Other roles recommended for chiefs in the decentralization process are the use of chiefs in dispute resolution, as well as their active involvement in land and forest management.

To minimize the chieftaincy disputes that tend to stifle local development, the chapter recommends that traditional authorities should document the succession path, outlining who is to be chief in future, as is the case in Britain, so as to eliminate any doubts as to who becomes chief in the various areas.

Given the fact that public institutions like the decentralized structures in Wenchi are weak, there is a need to promote spirituality and other positive traditional values that can restrain the greed of leaders in such public institutions, thereby ensuring that the available resources can be used more effectively towards accelerated development.

8.3 Key findings

This section highlights the key findings of each of the objectives.

8.3.1 Key findings of first objective

The first objective of this study sought to analyze and document the functioning of the Wenchi district assembly, as well as the traditional authority systems, highlighting their development strengths, potentials and weaknesses. The study found there to be ineffective participation on the part of citizens at various levels within the decentralized structures, thereby weakening the ability of the decentralization process to be responsive to the development priorities of the various communities. By extension, this ineffective participation has led to a weak system of accountability.

In terms of the fairness of the decentralization process, it was established that even though there were no legal barriers preventing the participation of weaker segments of the society in democratic elections for the decentralized structures, economic and cultural obstacles limited the ability of disadvantaged members of society like women from effective participation in such democratic elections.

The strengths of the decentralized structures are reflected in the availability of diverse technical expertise within the various decentralized departments. Such expertise, when blended with traditional knowledge, could generate innovative and sustainable development. However, the tendency of these decentralized departments to account to their line managers at headquarters rather than to the local people has resulted in poor co-ordination and an inability to take advantage of a potential synergy effect.

From the evidence, it can be concluded that the decentralization process in Wenchi is more one involving a deconcentration of power, even though public pronouncements imply that there is devolution of authority.

The traditional authority system in Wenchi was found to offer a more effective platform for citizen participation in governance and development, since most citizens have an emotional attachment to the traditional authority system as they have been socialized into this system from childhood. Such goodwill from the subjects presents tremendous potential for the chiefs to use in social mobilization for development. A fundamental weakness of the chieftaincy institution is the lack of financial accountability, especially the use of land royalties and income from the sale of land by chiefs. The traditional checks and balances which ensured the accountability of chiefs in the past are being eroded by the pressures of modernity and individualism.
.

8.3.2 Key findings on second objective

The second objective of this study sought to assess the interactive processes between Wenchi district assembly structures and traditional authorities and the implications of such interactions. It was established that the relationship between traditional authorities and the decentralized structures are characterized mainly by competition for power and legitimacy, leading to an inability to take advantage of the synergy effect between the two systems of local governance so as to achieve optimum rural development. The mistrust and suspicion between the two systems of local governance inhibits constructive participation which is central to good governance and local area development.

A prevailing fear of authority inhibits genuine participation of people from different hierarchical levels, thereby reinforcing the lack of accountability from leaders. In such a culture of fear, there may well be a need to promote spirituality and other positive traditional values that can restrain the greed of leaders in such public institutions, thereby ensuring that the available resources can be used more effectively for the accomplishment of development goals.

There is diversity in the conceptualization of development among the various actors, highlighting the clash between tradition and modernity. This impedes the development process from involving everyone in a committed manner, thereby retarding progress.

8.3.3 Key findings on third objective

The third objective of the study sought to identify and study specific cases in Wenchi district where there is either conflict or harmony in the relationship between traditional authorities and district assembly structures so as to generate lessons to guide efforts for promoting collaboration between the decentralized structures and traditional authorities in the decentralization process. The sub-cases studied were the Agubie and Ayigbe communities which exhibited features of both collaboration and conflict between the decentralized entities and traditional structures.

From the analyses in these two communities it was concluded that the relationship between traditional authorities and district assembly operatives could be strengthened if opportunities were created for the chiefs to have a greater say as to who was selected to represent their communities within the decentralized structures. Another bolstering mechanism could take the form of more regular meetings between the traditional authority and operatives of the decentralized structures in a spirit of partnership.

As to the factors that weaken the relationship between traditional authorities and decentralized structures, the discussions point to four key issues: competition for legitimacy and power, politicization of district elections, as well as a lack of clear roles for the traditional authority in the decentralization process and the weakening spirituality in society.

8.4 Initial practical outcomes of the research

Even though this study seeks to contribute towards influencing policy change on Ghana's decentralization in the long-run, there were initial spin-offs of practical relevance to the research participants. These included the following:

- Through a process of consciousness-raising in relation to accountability and its links to development, a commitment was obtained from some assembly members

234

to insist on a more open and transparent accounting system at the district assembly. They also pledged to hold more regular meetings with their communities in an effort to facilitate local area development.

- The study exposed the challenges of field administration in the district which generated a renewed desire among some field officers in the district to search for mechanisms to foster better co-ordination of field activities.

- The study has triggered ongoing debates in the district and at national level as to the appropriate role of chiefs in Ghana's decentralization process. It is hoped that such debates will eventually lead to the desired policy changes.

- Given the enthusiasm of some research participants in the research process and their subsequent comments like "the study has opened our eyes and minds", one can deduce that the study had some effect in shaping the attitudes and thinking of some of the research participants.

8.5   General conclusion

This thesis brings to the fore the dialectical tension between modernity and tradition, universalism and peculiarity. The study established that the outcomes of decentralization and development in Wenchi district are shaped by the local context such as the values, perceptions, institutions and relationships among the various actors. Consequently, the search for a more effective decentralization process and sustainable development points to inclusiveness and diversity rather than to universal blueprints. An administration that allows for interaction between different value-systems in the form of an open-minded learning process is the way forward.

REFERENCES

Abotchie, C. 2006. Has the position of the chief become anachronistic in the
        contemporary Ghanaian politics? in *Chieftaincy in Ghana: Culture, Governance*
        and Development, edited by IK Odotei and AK Awedoba. Accra: Sub-Saharan
        Publishers: 169-182

Abotchie C, Awedoba, A. K and Oddotei I. K. 2006. Perceptions on chieftaincy, in
        Chieftaincy in Ghana: Culture Governance and Development, edited by IK
        Odotei and AK Awedoba. Accra: Sub-Saharan Publishers: 103-116

Adamolekun, L. 1999. *Public Administration in Africa.* Boulder: Westview Press.

Adam-Szirmai. 2005. *The Dynamics of Socio-Economic Development: An*
        Introduction. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press

Adelman, I and Morris, C.T. 1967. *Society, Politics and Economic Development.*
        Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press

Ahwoi, K. 2006. Ghana's public administration reform: devolution, deconcentration,
        delegation or decentralization? *GIMPA Journal of Leadership, Management and*
        *Administratio*n 4(2): 8-44.

Akin, A T. 1989. Culture in the development process: The Nigerian experience.
        Scandinavian Journal of Development Alternatives VIII (4): 123-137.

Alhassan, O. 2006. Traditional authorities and sustainable development: Chiefs and
        resource management in Ghana, in *Chieftaincy in Ghana: Culture Governance*
        and Development, edited by IK Odotei and AK Awedoba. Accra: Sub-Saharan
        Publishers: 527-546.

Alkire, S. 2002. *The Capability Approach as a Development Paradigm.* Stanford:
Stanford University Press

Alkire, S. 2004. Culture, poverty and external intervention, in *Culture and Public
Action: a Cross-disciplinary Dialogue on Development Policy*, edited by V Rao
and M Walton. Stanford: Stanford University Press: 359-372

Andreasson, S. 2005. Orientalism and African development studies: The reductive
repetition motif in theories of African under-development. *Third World Quarterly*
26(6): 971-986.

Angen, M.J. 2000. Evaluating interpretive inquiry: Reviewing the validity debate and
opening dialogue. *Qualitative Health Research* 10(3): 378-395.

Agrippinah, N. 2006. From paternalism to real partnership with local Communities?
Experiences from Bwindi impenetrable national park, Uganda. *Africa
Development* XXXI (2): 39–68.

Apter, D.E. 1965. *The politics of modernization.* Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

Apter, D. E. 1970. *Ghana in transition*. Princeton: Princeton University Press.

Arhin, K. 1985. *Traditional rule in Ghana, past and present*. Accra: Sedco Publishing.

Arnstein, S. 1969. A ladder of citizen participation. *Journal of American Institute of
Planners* 35: 216-244.

Asabere-Ameyaw, A and Anamuah-Mensah, J. 2006. Taboo system and rituals - a simple technology for environmental resource management: the case of Dagaaba and Mamprusis of Ghana. *Journal of Alternatives and Area Studies* 25(2): 104-115.

Asante, F.A and J.R.A. Ayee. 2008. Decentralization and poverty reduction, in *The Economy of Ghana: Analytical Perspectives on Stability, Growth and Poverty Reduction,* edited by E. Aryeetey and R. Kanbur. London: James Currey and Woeli Publishing Service: 57-83

Assimeng, M. 1996. Traditional Leaders' Capability and Disposition for Democracy: The Example of Ghana. A Paper Presented during an International Conference on Traditional and Contemporary Forms of Local Participation and Self-Government in Africa, Organized by Konrad Adenauer Foundation in Nairobi, Kenya, 9-12 October, 1996.

Atifield, R., Hattingh, J and Matshabaphala, M. 2004. Sustainable development, sustainable livelihoods and land reform in South Africa: a conceptual and ethical inquiry. *Third World Quarterly* 25(2): 405–42.

Ayee, J.R.A. 1994. *An Anatomy of Public Policy Implementation: The case of Decentralization Policies in Ghana.* Aldershot: Avebury.

Ayee, J.R.A. 1996. The measurement of decentralization: The Ghanaian experience. *African Affairs* 95 (78): 31-50.

Ayee, J.R.A. 2000. Sub-district structures and popular participation: A preliminary Assessment, in *A Decade of Decentralization and Local Government Reform in Ghana: Retrospect and Prospects*, edited by W Thomi, PWK Yankson, and SYM Zanu. Accra: Ministry of Local Government and Rural Development: 42-56.

Ayee, J.R.A. 2003. Towards effective and accountable local government in Ghana. *Critical Perspectives* 13: 1-27.

Ayee, J.R.A. 2004. Ghana: a top-down initiative, in *Local Governance in Africa: The Challenges of Democratic Decentralization, Local Governance in Africa: The Challenges of Democratic Decentralization,* edited by D. Olowu and J. Wunsch. London: Lynne Rienner

Azafar, O; Kahkonen, S; Meagher, L.P and Ruthford D. 2004. Decentralization, governance and public service: the impact of institutional arrangements, in *Devolution and Development: Governance Prospects in Decentralizing States*, edited by M S Kimenyi and P Meagher. Aldershot: Ashgate: 23-52.

Baidyanath, S. 1993. Interface of cultural identity and development. Proceedings from UNESCO sponsored meeting of experts on 'Interface of Cultural Identity and Development' held at the Indira Gandhi National Centre for the Arts, New Delhi, on 19-23 April 1993. Available at: http://ignca.nic.in/ls_03003.htm. Accessed: 5th June 2008.

Bankauskaite, V and Saltman, R.B. 2007. Central issues in the decentralization debate. In Saltman, Bankauskaite and Vrangbaek:

Barbier, E. 1989. *Economics, natural resource scarcity and development*. London: Earth Scan.

Bartelmus, P. 1987. *Environment and development*. London: Allen and Unwin

Bartle, P. 2007. Lecture notes on 'The Meaning of Culture." Available online at (http://www.scn.org/cmp/modules/dim-dim.htm). Accessed: 20th February 2008.

Beazley, H. and Ennew, J. 2006. Participatory methods and approaches: tackling the two tyrannies, in *Doing Development Research*, edited by V. Desai and R.B Potter. Thousand Oaks: SAGE Publications: 17-35

Bekoe, A. 2007. A keynote address as Chairman of the Council of State at a workshop on "Fifty years of traditional authority in the socio-political development of Ghana" held in Accra from 27th-28th February 2007.

Bennett, R.J. 1990. *Decentralization, local governments and markets: towards a post welfare agenda*. Oxford: Clarendon Press.

Bennett, R.J .1994. *Local Government and market decentralisation: experiences in industrialised, developing, and former eastern bloc countries.* Tokyo: United Nations University Press.

Bentsi-Enchil, K. 1971. *Institutional challenges of our time*. Accra: Ghana Publishing Corporation.

Berg, C. 2003. Alternative Development as an important strategy within development oriented drug control. A paper presented at the Vienna Civic Centre in parallel with the Ministerial session of the Commission on Narcotic Drugs at Vienna Civic Centre, 15th April, 2003.

Bergeron, S. 2006. *Fragments of development: nation, gender and the space of modernity*. Michigan: University of Michigan Press.

Berry, S. 2004. Reinventing the local? Privatization, decentralization and the politics of resource management: examples from Africa. *African Study Monographs* 25(2): 79-101.

Betts, RF. 2005. *Assimilation and association in French colonial theory*, *1890-1914* London: University of Nebraska Press.

Biekart, K. 2005. Participation in development studies: towards mainstreaming. *Development Issues* 7 (2): 16-34

Biggs, S. and Matsaert, H. 2004. Strengthening poverty reduction programmes using an actor oriented approach: examples from natural resources innovations systems. *Agren Network Paper* 134. London: Overseas Development Institute.

Bjorna, H. and Synnove, J. 2006. Prefectoral systems and central-local government relations in Scadinavia. *Scandinavian Polical Studies* 29 (4): 308- 332.

Blaikie, P. 2000. Development, post-, anti-, and populist: a critical review, *Environment and Planning* 32: 1033-1050.

Blair, H. 2000. Participation and accountability at the periphery: democratic local governance in six countries. *World Development* 28 (1): 21-39.

Blau, J.R. (ed.). 2001. *The Blackwell companion to international markets*. New York: Plenum Press.

Bloomstrom, M. and Hettne, B. 1984. *Development theory in transition: the dependency debate and beyond: Third World responses*. London: Zed Books.

Blunt, P. and Turner, M. 2005a. Decentralization, democracy and development in post-conflict society: Commune councils in Cambodia. *Public Administration and Development* 25 (1):

Blunt, P. and Turner, M. 2005b. Decentralization, democracy and development in post-conflict society: commune councils in Cambodia. *Public Administration and Development* 25 (1): 16-25

Boafo-Arthur, K. 2006. Chieftaincy in Ghana: challenges and prospects in the 21st century, in *Chieftaincy in Ghana: Culture, Governance and Development*, edited by I K Odotei and A K Awedoba, Accra: Sub-Saharan Publishers: 145-168.

Boaten, A.1993. *Bantama stool history*. Legon: Institute of African Studies.

Boaten, A. 1994. The changing role of the Queen mother in the Akan polity. *Research Review* 9 (1): 1-13.

Bratton, M., Lewis, P. and Gyimah-Boadi, E. 2001. Constituencies for reform in Ghana. *Journal of Modern African Studies* 39 (2): 231-59.

Brekke, K.A. and Howarth, R.B. 2002. *Status, growth and the environment: goods as symbols in applied welfare economics.* Cheltenham: Edward Elgar.

Breu, K. and Peppard, J. 2001. The Participatory paradigm for applied information systems research. A paper presented at the 9th European Conference on Information Systems, held at Bred, Slovakia, June 27-29, 2001.

Briggs, J. 2005. The use of indigenous knowledge in development: problems and challenges, in *Progress in Development Studies,* 5 (2): 99-114.

Brinkerhoff, D.W. 2001. *Taking account of accountability: a conceptual overview and Strategic options.* Washington: U.S. Agency for International Development, Miméo.

Burgoyne, J. 2009. Issues in action learning: a critical realist interpretation. *Action Learning: Research and Practice* 6 (2): 149-161.

Burkey, S. 1993. *People first: a guide to self-reliant participatory rural development.* London: ZED Books.

Buthelezi, S. 2007. Decentralization and democratization in Africa: the political economy of local government in Africa. *African Journal of Development Studies* 1 (12): 32-76.

Busia, K.A. 1968. *Africa in search of democracy*. London: Routledge and Kegan Paul

Byrne, J. and Glover, L. 2002. A common future or towards a future commons: globalization and sustainable development since UNCED. *International Review for Environmental Sciences* 3 (1): 1-12

Carley, M. and Christie, I. 1992. *Managing sustainable development*. London: Earthscan.

Carlassare, E. 2000. Socialist and cultural ecofeminism: allies in resistance. *Ethics and the Environment* 5: 89-99.

Casser, V. and Bezzina, C. 2005. People must change before institutions can: a model addressing the challenge from administering to managing the Maltese public service. *Public Administration and Development* 25: 205-215.

Castells, M. 1996. *The information age: economy, society and culture, Vol. 1: The rise of the network society*. Malden, Mass: Blackwell.

Chambers, R., Pacey, A. and Thrupp, L.A. 1989. *Farmer first: farmer innovation and agricultural research.* London: Intermediate Technology Publications.

Chambers, R. 1990. Rapid rural appraisal: rationale and repertoire, *IDS Discussion Paper no.155*. Brighton: Institute of Development Studies, University of Sussex.

Chambers, R. 1994. The origins and practice of participatory rural appraisal, *World Development Report*, 22 (7): 953-969.

Chambers, R. 1995. Paradigm shifts and practice of participatory research and development, in *Power and Participatory Development,* edited by N. Nelson and S Wright. London: Immediate Technology Publications: 12-26

Chambers, R. 1997. *Whose reality counts? Putting the first last*. London: Intermediate Technology Publications.

Chanie, P. 2007. Clientelism and Ethiopia's post-1991 decentralization. *Journal of Modern African Studies* 45 (3): 355-384.

Chatterjee, P. and Finger, M. 1994. The *earth brokers: power, politics and world development*. London: Routledge.

Chikulo, B.C. 1992. *The role and functions of the office of the governor in the development process at the district level in Bophuthatswana*. Mwabatho: University of the North West Press.

Chilcote, R.H. 1981. *Theories of comparative politics: the search for a paradigm.* Boulder: Westview.

Chinsinger, B. 2007. District Assemblies in a fix: The perils of self-seeking tendencies in decentralization policy reforms in Malawi. *African Development* 32 (1): 89-111.

Clarke, CJS. 1996. *Reality through the looking glass: science and awareness in the postmodern world*. Edinburgh: Floris Books.

Cleaver, F. 2001. Institutions, agency and the limitations of participatory approaches to development, in *Participation, the new Tyranny*? edited by B Cooke and U Kothari. London: Zed Books: 36-56.

Clegg, S.R. 1990. *Modern organizations: organization studies in the post-modern world*. London: Sage.

Cloete, F. 1988. Decentralization: instrument for constitutional development in South Africa. South African Journal of Political Science (*Politikon)* 15 (1):1-9

Cloete, F. 2002. Capacity-building for sustainable local governance in South Africa, in *Democratizing Local Government: the South African Experiment*, edited by S Parnell, E Pieterse, M Swilling and D Wooldridge. Cape Town: UCT Press.

Coetzee, J.K. and Graaf, J. 1996. *Reconstruction, development and people*. Johannesburg: Thomson.

Cohen, D. and Crabtree, B. 2006. Qualitative Research Guidelines Project. http://www.qualres.org/HomePhil-3514.html. Downloaded: 27th June 2008

Collins, C. and Green, A. 1994. Decentralization and primary health care: some negative implications in developing countries. *International Journal of Health Services* 24: 459–75.

Commonwealth Foundation. 2008. Research report into culture, cultural policy and development, called "*Putting Culture First*." Available online at (http://www.commonwealthfoundation.com/culturediversity/Research/). Downloaded: 20th July 2008.

Conyers, D. 2007. Decentralization and service delivery: lessons from sub-Saharan Africa. *IDS Bulletin* 38: 18-29.

Cook, T. and Campbell, D. 1979. *Quasi–experimentation: Design and analysis issues for field settings.* Chicago: Rand McNally.

Cooke, B. and Kothari, U. 2001. The case for participation as tyranny, in *Participation: the new Tyranny?*. London: Zed Books: 1-16.

Cooper, M.L., Russell, M., and George, H.W. 1988. Coping, expectations and alcohol abuse: a test of social learning formulations. *Journal of Abnormal Psychology*, 97(2): 218-230

Cornwall, A. and Jewkes, R. 1995. What is Participatory Research? *Social Science and Medicine* 41(12): 1-17

Cornwall, A. 2003. Whose voices, whose choices? Reflections on gender and participatory development. *World Development* 31 (8): 1325-1342.

Cornwall A, and Gaventa, J. 2006. Participation in governance, in *International Development Governance*, edited by AS Huque and H Zafarullah. New York: Tailor and Francis.

Cornwall, A. and Pratt, G. 2003. *Pathways to participation: reflections on PRA*. London: ITG Publishing.

Cornelius, W. A., Todd A., Eisenstadt, and Hindley, J. 1999. *Sub-national politics and decmocratization in Mexico*. La Jolla, CA: Centre for US-Mexico Studies, UCSD.

Craig, D.V. 2009. *Action research essentials*. New Jersey: John Wiley and Sons.

Craft, N. 2003. Historical perspective on development, in *Frontiers of Development Economics: The Future in Perspective*, edited by G.M Meier and J. E Stiglitz. New York: Oxford University Press: 53-97

Crawford, G. 2004. Democratic decentralization in Ghana: issues and prospects. *School of Politics and International Studies Working Paper 9*. University of Leeds: 1-35

Creswell, J.W. 1998. *Qualitative inquiry and research design: Choosing among five traditions*. Thousand Oaks: Sage.

Creswell, J.W. 2002. *Educational research: planning, conducting and evaluating quantitative and qualitative research*. Upper Saddle River, NJ: Pearson.

Crook, R.C. 1994. Four years of Ghana district assemblies in operation: decentralization, democratization, and administrative performance'. *Public Administration and Development* 14: 339-64.

Crook, R.C. 2003. Decentralization and poverty reduction in Africa: the politics in local-central relations. *Public Administration and Development* 23 (1): 77-88.

Crook, R.C. and Addo-Fening, R. 2005. Drivers of change in Ghana: traditional and religious institutions and their role in politics and development. Report of a case study commissioned by DfID.

Crook R. C. and Sverrisson, A. 2001. Decentralization and poverty alleviation in developing countries: a comparative analysis. IDS Working Paper N0. 130. Brighton: IDS.

Crook, R. C and A. Sverrisson. Does decentralization contribute to poverty reduction? In *Changing Paths: Institutional Development and New Politics of Inclusion,* edited by P. Houtzager and M Moore. Michigan: University of Michigan Press: 1-14.

Crothers, C. 2003. Social characteristics of traditional leaders and public views on their political role, in *Grassroots Governance? Chiefs in Africa and the Afro-Caribbean,* edited by DI Ray and PS Reddy. Calgary: University of Calgary Press: 69-82.

Cuomo, C.J. 1998. *Feminism and ecological communities: an ethic of flourishing* London: Routledge.

Cuyvers, L. and Elgar, E. 2001. *Globalization and social development: European and Southeast Asian evidence*. Massachusetts: Edward Elgar.

Curtis, D. 2002. Cutting the bars: thoughts on prisoners and escapees in Bangladesh. *Public Administration and Development 22(2): 149-157.*

Daneel, ML. 1996. Environmental reform: a new venture of Zimbabwe's traditional custodians of the land. *Journal of Legal Pluralism* 38: 347-76.

Dankelman, I and Davidson, J. 1988. Women and environment in the Third World: alliance for the future. London: Earthscan.

Dash, NK. 2005. Selection of the research paradigm and methodology. http://www.celt.mmu.ac.uk/researchmethods/Modules/Selection_of_methodology/index. php. Downloaded: 5th April 2008

Dauda, C.L. 2006. Democracy and decentralization: local politics, marginalization and political accountability in Uganda and South Africa. *Public administration and Development* 26 (4): 291-302.

de Beer, F. and Swanepoel, H. 2000. *Introduction to development studies*. Cape Town: Oxford University Press.

Denzin, N. K. 1978. *The research act: an introduction to sociological methods.* New York: McGraw-Hill.

Denzin, N. K. 1997. *Interpretive ethnography: ethnographic practices for the 21st Century*. Thousand Oaks: Sage

Denzin, N.K. and Lincoln, Y.S. 2005. *The Sage handbook of qualitative research*, 3rd Edition. Thousand Oaks: Sage

Desai, V. and Potter, R.B. (eds). 2006. *Doing development research*. Thousand Oaks: Sage.

Deval, B. and Sessions, G. 1885. *Deep ecology*: *living as if nature mattered*. Layton, Utah: Peregrine Smith.

Devas, N. and Grant, U. 2003. Local government decision-making, citizen participation and local accountability: some evidence from Kenya and Uganda. *Public Administration and Development* 23(4): 307-316.

de Vries, P. 2007. Don't compromise your desire for development: a Lacanian/Deleuzian rethinking of the anti-politics machine. *Third World Quarterly* 28 (1): 25-43.

Dove, M.R. 1988. *The real and imagined role of culture in development: case studies from Indonesia*. Hawaii: University of Hawaii Press.

Du Plooy, G.M. 2001. *Communication research: techniques, methods and applications*. Landsdowne: Juta.

Dwivedi, O. P. and Henderson, K M. 1990. State of the art: Comparative public administration, in world perspective and development administration, in *Public Administration in World Perspective* edited by O.P Dwivedi and K.M Henderson. Ames: Iowa State University: 9-20.

Easterly, W. 2006. *The white man's burden*: w*hy the West's efforts to aid the rest have done so much ill and so little good*. London: Oxford University Press.

Edelam, M. and Haugerud, A. 2006. *The anthropology of development and globalization: from classical political economy to contemporary neoliberalism*. New York: Blackwell.

Elias, T.O. 1961. *Government and politics in Africa*. New Delhi: Asia Publishing House.

Escobar, A. 1995. *Encountering development*. Princeton: Princeton University Press.

Estiva, G. 1992. From global to local thinking. *The Ecologist* 25(5): 12-28

Etzioni-Halevy, E. 1981. Social change: the advent and maturation of modern society. London: Routledge and Kegan Paul.

Etounga-Manguelle, D. 2000. Does Africa need a culture adjustment programme? In *Culture Matters: How Values Shape Human Progress*, edited by L. E Harrison and S. T Huntington. New York: Basic Books: 65-77.

Escobar, A. 1994. *Encountering development*. Princeton: Princeton University Press.

Etzioni-Halevy, E. 1981. Social change: the advent and maturation of modern society. London: Routledge and Kegan Paul.

Evans, P. 2002. Collective capabilities, culture and Amartya Sen's development as Freedom. *Studies in Comparative International Development* 37 (2): 54-60.

Evans, P . 2004. Development as institutional change: The pitfalls of monocropping and the potentials of deliberation. *Studies in Comparative International Development* 38(4): 30-52.

Fair, T.J.D. 1982. *South Africa: spatial frameworks for development*. Cape Town: Juta.

Falleti, T.G. 2005. A sequential theory of decentralization: Latin American cases in comparative perspective. *American Political Science Review* 3 (99): 327-346.

Fesler, J. W. 1962. The political role of field administration, in *Papers in Comparative Public Administration,* edited by F Heady and S.L Stokes. Ann Arbor, MI: Institute of Public Administration: 11-23.

Fesler, J. W. 1968. Centralization and decentralization, in *The International Encyclopedia of the Social Sciences No.1*, edited by D.L Sills. New York: Macmillan: 370-379.

Fortes, M. and Evans-Pritchard, E. 1970. *African political systems.* London: Oxford University Press.

Francis, P. and James, R. 2003. Balancing rural poverty reduction and citizen participation: the contradictions of Uganda's decentralization programme. *World Development* 25 (7): 1029-43.

Fried, R.C. 1963. *The Italian prefects.* Yale: Yale University Press.

Fynn, J.K. 1974. The structure of Greater Asante: another view. *Transaction of the Historical Society of Ghana* 15(1): 1-9.

Gabriel, Y, Fineman S, and Sims, D. 2000. *Organizing and organizations*. London: Sage.

Gary, S. F. 2002. *Distribution and development: a new look at the developing world*. New York: Oxford University Press.

Gaventa, J. 1993. The scaling up and institutionalization of PRA: lessons and challenges. Who Changes? Institutionalizing participation in Development. London: IT Publishers.

Gay, R. D. 2007. Beyond modernization and postmodernism: reflexivity and development economics. A Thesis submitted to the University of Stirling, for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy in Development Economics.

Geissler, E.M. 2004. *Cultural Assessment.* 2nd edition. St. Louise: Mosby.

Ghana Government. 1993. *Local Government Act (Act 462).* Tema: Ghana Publishing
     Corporation.

Ghana Government. 1992. *The Constitution of Ghana*. Tema: Ghana Publishing
     Corporation.

Ghana Population Census. 2000. Accra: Ghana Statistical Service.

Ghana Living Standards Survey Report of the Fourth Round (GLSS 4). 2000.
     Accra: Ghana Statistical Service.

Golooba-Mutebi, F. 2004. Reassessing popular participation in Uganda. *Public
     Administration and Development* 24: 289-304.

Golooba-Mutebi, F. 2005. When popular participation won't improve service provision:
     primary health care in Uganda. *Development Policy Review* 23 (2): 165-182.

Goncalves, E. 2005. Finding the chief: political decentralization and traditional authority
     in Mocumbi, South Mozambique. *African Insight* 35 (3): 64-70.

Govina, F. N. 2006. The significance of religion in development: a case study of
     Damongo Catholic Diocese. A research project submitted to the Ghana Institute
     of Management and Public Administration (GIMPA) in partial fulfilment of the
     requirement for the Post-graduate Diploma in Public Administration.

Guba, EG. 1989. The alternative paradigm dialogue, in *The Paradigm Dialogue*, edited
     by EG Guba. London: Sage Publications:17-45.

Guba, E.G., and Lincoln, Y.S. 1994. Competing paradigms in qualitative research. In *Handbook of Qualitative Research*, edited by NK Denzin and YS Lincoln. London: Sage Publications: 89-115.

Guijt, I. 2003. Intrigued and frustrated, enthusiastic and critical: reflections on PRA, in *Pathways to Participation: Reflections on PRA*, edited by A. Cornwall and G. Pratt. London: ITG Publishing: 14-26

Graham, J., Amos, B., and Plumptre, T. 2003. Principles for good governance in the 21st Century. Institute on Governance Policy brief No. 15. August 2003. Also available at www.iog.ca/publications/policybriefs, downloaded: 02 June, 2008.

Gyekye, K. 1996. *African cultural values*. Accra: Sankofa Publishing.

Gyekye, K. 1997. *Tradition and modernity: philosophical reflections on the African experience*. New York: Oxford University Press.

Habibi, N., Huang, C., Diego, M., Murillo, V., Ranis, G., Sarkar, M. and Stewart,F. 2003. Decentralization and Human Development in Argentina. *Journal of Human Development* 4 (1): 73-101.

Haines, R. 2000. Development theory, in *Introduction to Development Studies*, edited by F. De Beer and H Swanepoel. Cape Town: Oxford University Press: 52-60.

Haines, R. and Robino, C. 2006. A critical review of selected topics in development theory and policy in Eastern Cape, South Africa. *Africanus*: *Journal of Development Studies* 36 (1): 4-21.

Ha-Joon, C. 2003. *Kicking away the ladder: development strategy in historical perspective*. London: Athens Press.

Hall, B., Gillette, A., & Tandon, R. 1982. *Creating knowledge: A monopoly? Participatory research in development*. New Delhi: Society for Participatory Research in Asia.

Haque, S.M. 1996. The contextless nature of public administration in Third World countries. *International Review of Administrative sciences* 62: 315-329

Harrison, D. 1998. *The sociology of modernization and development*. London: Unwin Hyman.

Harrison , LE and Huntington, SP. 2000. Why culture matters, in *Culture Matters: How Values Shape Human Progress,* edited by LE Harrison and SP Huntington. New York: Basic Books: 1-18

Haug, M.R. 1967. Social and cultural pluralism a concept in social system analysis. *American Journal of Sociology* 73(4): 294-304.

Haverkort, B. 2002. Integrating Western and indigenous institutions for sustainable development. A paper presented during a workshop on indigenous knowledge and organizational development, organized in Cape Coast from 18th to 21st October, 2002.

Heady, F. and Stokes, S.L. (eds). 1962. *Papers in comparative public administration*. Ann Arbor: Institute of Public Administration.

Helmsing, A.H. 2003. Local economic development: new generations of actors, policies and instruments for Africa. *Public Administration and Development* 23 (1): 67-76.

Held, D., McGrew, A., Goldblatt, D. and Perraton, J. 1999. Global transformations: politics, economics and culture. *ReVision* 22 (2): 7-17.

Hettne, B. 1982. *Development theory and the Third World*. Stockholm: SAREC.

Hettne, B . 1996. *Development theory and the three worlds: towards an international political economy of development*. Essex: Longman.

Hofstede, G. 1980. Motivation, leadership, and organization: Do American theories apply abroad? *Organization Dynamics* 9: 42-63.

Holland, J. and Campbell, J. 2006. *Methods in development research: combining qualitative and quantitative approaches*. Wales: Intermediate Technology Publications.

Holahan, J. C., Moos, H. R., Holahan, K.C., Cronkite, C.R. and Randall, P. K. 2001. Drinking to cope, emotional distress and alcohol use and abuse: a ten year model. *Journal on Studies on Alchohol* 9(1): 1-12

Houghton, E., and Roche, M. A. 2001. Learning about drinking. Philadelphia: Brunner-Routledge.

Houtzager, P. and Moore, M. 2004. *Changing paths: institutional development and new politics of inclusion*. Michigan: University of Michigan Press.

Hulme, D. and Siddiquee, N.A. 1999. Decentralization in Bangladesh: Promises, performance and politics. In Turner:

Huque, A.S. and Zafarullah, H. (eds). 2006. *International development governance*. New York: Taylor and Francis.

Hutchcroft, P. D. 2001. Centralization and decentralization in administration and. politics: assessing the territorial dimensions of authority and power. *Governance: An International Journal of Policy and Administration* 14 (1): 23-53.

IFAD. 2001. Rural poverty report 2001: the challenge of ending rural poverty. London: Oxford University Press.

IFPRI . 2009. Gender and governance in rural services: Insights from India, Ghana and Ethiopia. Washington D.C: International Food Policy Research Institute

IIED (International Institute for Environment and Development). 2007. *Participatory Learning and Action (PLA)*, issue no. 56.

ILO. 1976. *Employment, Growth and Basic Needs: A One-World Problem* New York: Oxford University Press

Institute on Governance. 2003. Principles of good governance in the 21st century. *Policy Brief No. 15, August 2003*.

ISGP (Institute for Studies in Global Prosperity). 2000. *Science, religion and development: some initial considerations*. A paper presented by ISGS at the Colloquium on Science, Religion and Development, held 21-24 November 2000, in New Delhi, India. Available at: http://www.bcca.org/ief/isgpsrd.htm. Accessed: 15th October, 2008.

Jain, R. B. 2007. Public administration, bureaucracy and development in the Third world: emerging paradigm of good governance at the threshold of the 21st century, in *Governing Development Across Cultures: Challenges and Dilemmas of an Emerging Sub-discipline in Political Science*, edited by R. B Jain. Opladen: Barbara Budrich Publishers: 17-65.

Jervis, P. and Plowden, W. 2003. The impact of political devolution on UK's health services: final report of a project to monitor the impact of devolution on the United Kingdom's health services 1999-2002. London: The Nuffield Trust.

Jutting, J. 2003. Institutions and development: a critical review. *OECD Development Centre, Technical Paper* No. 210. Paris: OECD Publications.

Jutting, J. and Kauffmann, C. 2004. Decentralization and poverty in developing countries: exploring the impact. OECD Development Centre Working Paper No. 236, Paris: OECD Publications.

Kambhampati, U. S. 2004. *Development and the developing world*. Oxford: Blackwell.

Kannae, L. 2004. *Research skills capacity building for national teachers' organization: Training Manual*. Lome: Pan African Teachers Centre.

Kaniki, A.M and Mphahlele, M.E. 2002. Indigeneous knowledge for the benefit of all: can knowledge management principles be used effectively? *South African Journal Libraries and Information Science* 68 (1): 1-15.

Kapoor, I. 2002. The devil's in the theory: a critical assessment of Robert Chambers' work on participatory development. *Third World Quarterly* 23(1): 101-117.

Kapoor, I. 2004. Hyper-self reflexive development? Spivak on representing the Third World 'other'. *Third World Quarterly* 25(4): 627-647.

Kaufman, D. 1997. Revisiting anti-corruption strategies: tilt towards incentive driven approaches? In *Corruption and Integrity Improvement initiatives in Developing Countries,* compiled by OECD Development Centre. New York: United Nations Development Programme; 1-9.

Kendi, S. B. and Guri, B.Y. 2004. *Traditional institutions, culture and development: the Asafo group in the Mankessim-Nkwanta traditional area*. Cape Coast: Centre for Development Studies, University of Cape Coast.

Keohane, R.O. and Duke, J.B. 2002. Political accountability. Paper presented at the Conference on "Delegation to International Organizations." Park City, Utah, May 3-4.

Khisty, C. J. 2006. A fresh look at the systems approach and an agenda for action: peeking through the lens of Churchman's aphorisms. *Systemic Practice and Action Research* 19(1): 3-25.

Kiggundu, M.N. 2000. Decentralization, in *African Public Administration*, edited by R. Mukandla. Harare: African Association of Political Science: 13-19.

Kilick.T. 2001. Globalization and the rural poor*: Development Policy Review* 19 (2): 155-180.

Kimenyi, M.S. and Meagher, P. 2004. *Devolution and development: governance prospects in decentralizing states*. Aldershot: Ashgate.

Kleymeyer, C.D. 1994. *Cultural expression and grassroots development: cases from Latin America and the Caribbean*. Boulder, Colorado: Lynne Rienner Publishers.

Korten, D. C.1980. Community organization and rural development: a learning process approach. *Public Administration Review* 40: 480-510.

Korten, D. C 1990. *Getting to the 21st century: voluntary action and global agenda*. West Hartford: Kumarian.

Korten, D. C.1992. A not so radical agenda for a sustainable global future. *Development* 4*:* 1-17

Kotze, D. A. 1987. Contradictions and assumptions in community development. *Community Development Journal* 22(1): 1-12.

Kotze, D. A. 1997. Successive approaches to development administration and management, in *Development Administration and Management*: *A Holistic Approach*. edited by DA. Kotze. Pretoria: J.L van Schaik Publishers: 7-16.

Kotze D.A., Kellerman G.E.J and Mentz J.C.N. 1997. The bureaucracy, in *Development Administration and Management: a Holistic Approach,* edited by D.A Kotze. Pretoria: J.L van Schaik Publishers: 17-34.

Kuhn, T. 1962. *The structure of scientific revolutions.* Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

Kuran, T. 2004. Cultural obstacles to economic development: Often overstated, usually transitory, in *Culture and Public Action: A Cross-disciplinary Dialogue on Development Policy*, edited by V Rao and M. Walton. Stanford: Stanfort University Press: 286-304.

Lacome, D. 1977. The prefect in French public administration. *Political Science Quarterly* 92 (4): 955-756.

Laison, T. and Skidmore, D. 1997. *International political economy: the struggle for power and wealth.* Fort Worth: Harcourt Brace.

Landers, D.S. 1998. *The wealth and poverty of nations: Why some are so rich and some are so poor.* New York: Norton.

Landers, DS. 2000. Culture makes almost all the difference, in *Culture Matters: How Values Shape Human Progress,* edited by LE Harrison and SP Huntington. New York: Basic Books: 25-38.

Lang, R.A., Patrick, J. C., and Stritzke, G. K. W. 1999. Alcohol and emotional response: a multidimensional multilevel analysis, in *Psychological theories of Drinking and Alcoholism,* edited by E. K. Leonard, and H. T Balne. NewYork: Guilford *:*57-73.

Lange, M.K. 2004. British colonial legacies and political development. *World Development* 32 (6): 905-922.

Lanzona, L. A. *2001*. Social development and globalization: the Philippine case, in *Globalization and Social Development: European and Southeast Asian Evidence, edited by L Cuyvers and E Elgar. Massachusetts: Edward Elgar Publications* :14-27.

Latouche, S. 2004. Why less should be so much more. *Le Monde Diplomatique*, November 2004, at http://mondediplo.com/2004/11/14latouche.

Lauer, H. 2007. Depreciating African political culture. *Journal of Black Studies* 38 (2): 288-307.

Layard, R. 2005**.** *Happiness - lessons from a new science*. London: Penguin.

Lecours, A. 2005. New institutionalism: issues and questions, in *New Institutionalism: Theory and Analysis,* edited by, A. Lecours. Toronto: University of Tronoto Press: 1-13.

Lee, A. F.1970. *Changing patterns of local government*. The Hague: IULA.

Leedy, P.D. 1993. *Practical research.* 5th edition. New York: Macmillan.

Leedy, P.D. and Omrod J. E. 2005. *Practical research planning and design.* 8th edition. New Jersey: Pearson.

Leftwich, A.1993.Governance, democracy and development in the Third World. *Third World Quarterly* 14 (3): 605-623.

Leftwich, A. 2000. *States of development: on the primacy of politics in development*. Cambridge: Polity Press

Leininger, M. 2001. *Culture care diversity and universality: a theory of nursing.* New York: Jones & Bartlett.

Leonard, E.K. and Balne, H.T. (eds). 1999. *Psychological theories of drinking and alcoholism*. New York: Guilford.

Leonardi, C. 2007. Violence, sacrifice and chiefship in Central Equatori, Southern Sudan. *Africa* 77(4): 535-557.

Leys ,C. 2006. Rise and fall of development theory, in *The Anthropology of Development and Globalization: From Classical Political Economy to Contemporary Neoliberalism,* edited by M Edelma and A Haugerud. New York: Blackwell: 37-52.

Lijphart, A. 1999. *Patterns of democracy in thirty-six countries*. New Haven, CT: Yale University Press.

Lincoln, Y. S., & Guba, E. G. 1985. *Naturalistic inquiry*. Beverly Hills: Sage.

Lincoln, Y. S., & Denzin, N. K. 1994. The fifth moment, in *Handbook of Qualitative Rersearch*, edited by Y. S. Lincoln & N. K. Denzin. Thousand Oaks: Sage: 1-17.

Lund, C. 2006. Twilight institutions: public authority and local politics. *Development and Change* 37(4): 685-705.

Lynn, P. 2004. Measuring and communicating survey quality. *Journal of the Royal Statistical Society Series* A 167(4): 51-74.

Madziakapita, S. V. P. 2003. A situational analysis of the informal sector in the three major cities of Malawi. A Doctoral Thesis submitted to UNISA, Pretoria.

Magomero, C. 2004. The rural development role of traditional authorities within the decentralization process in Malawi. Master of Philosophy Dissertation submitted to UNISA, Pretoria.

Manor, J. 1995. Democratic decentralization in Africa and Asia. *IDS Bulletin* 26(2): 81-88.

Manor, J. 1999. *The political economy of democratic decentralization.*Washington: World Bank.

Marshall, J. 1994. *A solitary pillar: Montreal's Anglican Church and the quiet revolution*. McGill: McGill-Queen's University Press.

Marshall, P. 1997. *Research methods*. Plymouth: How to Books Ltd.

McAlpine, P. and Birnie, A. 2006. *Establishing sustainable indicators as an evolving process: Experience from the Island of Guernsey*. London: Routledge.

McCurdy, H.E. 1997. *Public administration: A synthesis*. Menlo Park, CA: Cumming Publishing Company.

McKibben, B. 2007. *Deep Economy: the wealth of communities and durable future*. London: Routledge .

Mehrotra, S. 2006. Governance and basic social services: ensuring accountability in service delivery through deep democratic decentralization. *Journal of International Development* 18: 263-83.

Meier, G.M. 1964. *Leading issues in development economics.* New York: Oxford University Press.

Meier, G.M. and Stiglitz, J.E. (eds). 2003. *Frontiers of development economics: the future in perspective*. New York: Oxford University Press.

Merat, J. 2004. Taxation and local government accountability in a clientellist context: the case of Columbia. *Public Administration and Development* 24 (3): 247-254.

Merchant, C. 1980. *The death of nature: women, ecology and scientific revolution*. New York: Harper and Row.

Messer, E. 1998. Pluralist approaches to human rights. *Journal of Anthropological Research* 53 (1):1-13.

Mickelthwait, J. and Wooldridge, A. 2000. *A future perfect*. London: Routledge.

Mitchinson, R. 2003 Devolution in Uganda: an experiment in local service delivery. *Public Administration and Development* 23 (1): 41-52.

MLGRD. 2005. *Operational manual for the implementation and administration of the District Development Fund*. Accra: Ministry of Local Government and Rural Development.

Montero, AP. and Samuels D.J. 2004. After decentralization: patterns of
intergovernmental conflict in Argentina, Brazil, Spain and Mexico, in
Decentralization and Democracy in Latin America, edited by A.P Montero and D.
Samuels. Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press: 1-17.

Morgan, B. 2002. Post-development, Foucault, and the colonization metaphor. *Third
World Quarterly* 23 (3): 421-436.

Morgan, D.L. 2007. Paradigms lost and paradigms regained. *Journal of Mixed Methods
Research* 1(1): 48-76.

Moss, T J. 2007. *African development: making sense of the issues and actors*. Boulder:
Lynne Rienner Press.

Mouton J. 1996. Theory, metatheory and methodology in development studies: a
heuristic framework, in *Reconstruction, Development and People,* edited by J.K Coetzee
and J. Graaff. Johannesburg: International Thomson Publishing: 42-56.

Nabila, J. S. 2006. Decentralization within the traditional system of authority in Ghana.
Paper presented at a seminar organized by the National House of Chiefs in
collaboration with the Ministry of chieftaincy Affair and Konrad Adenauer
Foundation from 16th to 18th August 2006 at Akosombo, Ghana, on the theme:
"The role of chiefs in Ghana's decentralization and development Process".

Nafziger, E. W. 2005. From seers to Sen: the meaning of economic development. A
paper presented at the UN University/World Institute for Development
Economics Research (WIDER) Jubilee Conference, 17 – 18 June 2005.

Nelson, N. and Wright, S. 1995. *Power and participatory development*. London:
Immediate Technology Publications.

Nettle, D. 2005. *Happiness - the science behind your smile*. New York: Oxford University Press.

Ninsin, K. A and Drah, F. F. 1987. *The search for democracy in Ghana: a case study of political instability in Africa*. Accra: Asempa Publishers.

Njoh, A. J. 2006. *Tradition, culture and development in Africa: historical lessons for modern development planning.* Hampshire: Ashgate.

Nkrumah, S.A. 2000. Decentralization for good governance and development: the Ghanaian experience. *Regional Development Dialogue* 21(1):53-57.

Norgaard, R. B. 1988. Sustainable development: a co-evolutionary view. *Futures* 20 (6): 606-620.

Norgaard, R. B. 1994. *Development betrayed: the end of progress and co-evolutionary revisioning of the future.* London: Routledge.

North, D.C. 1990. *Institutions, institutional change, economic performance*. Cambridge: University Press.

North, D.C. 1993. *The new institutional economics and third world development*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press

Ntsime, P. T. 2002. Towards sustainable development: a participatory model for the water services sector in South Africa. A PhD thesis in development administration, submitted to the University of South Africa, Pretoria.

N'yel, T S. P. 2003. Assessing the effectiveness of the committee system of the district assembly: the case of Ga district assembly. A Master's thesis submitted to the Ghana Institute of management and public Administration.

Nussbaum, M. C. 2003. Capabilities as fundamental entitlements: Sen and social
    Justice. *Feminist Economics* 9(2): 33-59.

O'Brain D.C. 1972. Modernization, order and the erosion of a democratic ideal. *Journal
    of Development Studies* 8 (2): 15-32.

Odhiambo, A. E. S. 2002. The cultural dimension of development in Africa. *African
    Studies Review* 45(3): 1-16.

Odotei, I.K. and Awedoba, A.K. (eds). 2006. *Chieftaincy in Ghana: culture, governance
    and development*. Accra: Sub-Saharan Publishers.

OECD Development Centre. 1997. *Corruption and integrity improvement initiatives in
    developing countries*. New York: United Nations Development Programme.

Offei-Aboagye, E. 2000. Promoting the participation of women in local governance and
    development: the case of Ghana. ECDPM discussion Paper 18, (ECDPM,
    Maastricht).

Ogwo, J.U. and Andranovich, G. 2005. *Culture, development and public administration
    in Africa*. Bloomfield: Kumarian Press.

Okolie, A.C. 2003. Producing knowledge for sustainable development in Africa:
    implications for higher education. *Higher Education* 46 (3): 235-260.

Ollennu, J.N. 1977. Chieftaincy in Ghana. *Sankofa* 1 (II): 35-48

Olowu, D. 2001. Decentralization policies and practices under structural adjustment and
    democratization in Africa. *Democracy, Governance and Human Rights Paper* No.
    4. Geneva: United Nations Research Institute for Social Development.

266

Olowu, D. 2003 Local institutional and political structures and processes: recent experiences in Africa. *Public Administration and Development* 23 (1): 41-52.

Oluwu, O. and Wunsch, J.S. 2004. *Local governance in Africa: the challenges of democratic decentralization.* Bouder, CO: Lynne Rienner.

Oniango, C.M. P. 2007. The foundation of African philosophy. A paper presented at the African Science Conference held in Bolgatanga, Ghana in March, 2007.

Orrnert, A. 2006. Missing pieces: an overview of the institutional puzzle. *Public Administration and Development* 26: 449-455.

Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD). 2004. *Lessons learned on donor support to decentralization and local governance. DAC Evaluation Series 7.*

Osmani R.S. 2001. On inequality, in *The Blackwell Companion to Economic Markets*, edited by J. R Blau. New York: Plenum Press:18-32.

Oxhorn, P. 2004. Unraveling the potential of decentralization, in *Decentralization, Democracy, Governance and Civil Society in Comparative Perspectiv*e, edited by P Oxhorn; JS Tulchin and AD Selee.   Washington: Wooddrow Wilson Centre Press: 1-14.

Owusu, M. 1989. Rebellion, revolution and tradition: reinterpreting coups in Ghana. *Comparative Studies in Society and History* 31(2): 380-392.

Owusu-Sarpong, C. 2003. Setting the Ghanaian context of rural local government: traditional authority values, in *Grassroots Governance?: Chiefs in Africa and the Afro-Caribbean* edited by DI Ray and PS Reddy. Calgary: University of Calgary Press: 31-67.

Oyono, P.R. 2004. Institutional deficit, representation and decentralized forest management in Cameroon: elements of natural resource sociology for social theory and public policy. *Environmental Governance in Africa*. *Working Paper Series No. 15.* Washington: World Resources Institute.

Oyugi, W.O. 2000. Decentralization for good governance and development: concept and issues. *Regional Development Dialogue* 21 (1): 15-27.

Parnell, S., Pieterse, E., Swilling, M. and Wooldridge, D. 2002. *Democratizing local government: the South African experiment*. Cape Town: University of Cape Town Press.

Pearce, D. 1986. *Sustainable development*. Aldeshort: Edward Elgar.

Pearce, D . 1991. *Blueprint 2*: *greening the world economy*. London: Earthscan.

Pearse, A. and Stiefel, M. 1979. *Inquiry into participation: a research approach.* United Nations Research Institute for Social Development (UNRISD) Publication No. 79 (4): 1-25.

Pick, D. and Dayaram, K. 2006. Globalization, reflexive modernization, and development: the case of India. *Society and Business Review* 1 (2): 171-183.

Pieterse, J. N. 1998. My Paradigm or Yours? Alternative development, post-development, reflexive development. *Development and Change* 29 (2): 343-373.

Pope John Paul II. 1987. Encyclical letter on social concerns. Rome: Vatican Press.

Pottier, J. 2003. Negotiated local knowledge: an introduction, in *Negotiating Local Knowledge: Power and Identity in Development,* edited by J. Pottier; A, Bicker and P. Sellitoe. London: Plutto Press: 1-18.

Pretty, J. N. 1994. Alternative systems of inquiry for a sustainable agriculture. *IDS Bulletin* 25: 37-48.

Prokopy, L.S. 2005. The relationship between participation and project outcomes: evidence from rural water supply projects in India. *World Development* 33 (11): 1801-1819.

Prum, V. 2005. Reforming Cambodian local administration: is institutional history unreceptive for decentralization? *Forum of International Development Studies* 30 (9): 97-121.

Pryor, J. 2005. Can community participation mobilize social capital for improvement of rural schooling? A case study from Ghana. *Compare: A Journal of Comparative Education* 35 (2): 193-203.

Punnett, B. J. 2006. *International perspectives on organizational behaviour and human. resource management*. New York: Sharpe.

Rao, G.B. 2000. Strengthening of Panchayats: beyond contractor's role. Paper presented at a workshop on the Role of Panchayati Raj Institutions in Natural Resources Management, New Delhi, 2nd and 3rd February, 2000.

Rao, V and Walton, M. 2004a. Culture and public action: relationality, equality of agency and development, in *Culture and Public Action: A Cross-disciplinary Dialogue on Development Policy*, edited by V. Rao and M. Walton. Stanford: Stanfort University Press: 1-36.

Rao, V and M. Walton. 2004b. Implications of a cultural lens for public policy and development thought, in *Culture and Public Action: A Cross-disciplinary Dialogue on Development Policy*, edited by V. Rao and M. Walton. Stanford: Stanfort University Press: 359-372.

Rassafi, A.A., Poorzahedy, H. and Vaziri, M. 2006. An alternative definition of sustainable development using stability and chaos theories. *Sustainable Development* 14 (1): 62-71.

Rahnema, M. and Bawtree, V. 1997. The post-development reader. London: Zed Books.

Rattray, R.S. 1929. *Ashanti law and constitution*. London: Oxford University Press.

Ray, D.I. 1996. Divided sovereignty: traditional authority and the state in Ghana. *Journal of Legal Pluralism* 37 (38): 181-202.

Ray, D.I. 2003. Rural Local Governance and traditional leadership in Africa and the Afro-Caribbean: Policy and research implications from Africa to the Americas and Australia, in *Grassroots Governance?: Chiefs in Africa and the Afro-Caribbean*, edited by DI Ray and PS Reddy. Calgary: University of Calgary Press: 1-30

Reason, P. 1988. *Human inquiry in action*. London: Sage Publications.

Reason, P. and Marshall, J. 1994. *Participation in human inquiry*. London: Sage.

Reason, P. and Goodwin, B. 1999. Toward a science of qualities in organizations: lessons from complexity theory and postmodern biology. *Concepts and Transformations* 4(3): 281-317.

Reason, P. and Bradbury, H. 2001. *Handbook of action research*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

Redclift, M.R. 1987. *Sustainable development*: *exploring the contradictions*. London: Routledge.

Redclift M.R. 2003. The multiple dimensions of sustainable development, in Perspectives in Resource Management in Developing Countries: Resource Management Theories and Techniques. New York: Amazon Ltd: 1-24.

Redclift, MR. 2006. Sustainable development (1987-2005) - an oxymoron comes of age, *Horizontes Antropológicos*. Vol. 12 (25): 65-84.

Reynolds, L.G.1985. *Economics in the Third World, 1850-1980*. New Haven: Yale University Press.

Ribot, J.C. 2001. *Local actors, powers and accountability in African decentralizations*: *a review of issues*. A Paper Prepared for the International Development Research Centre, Canada.

Ribot, J.C . 2002. African decentralization: local actors, powers and accountability. Paper Number 8. United Nations Research Institute for Social Development Program on Democracy, Governance and Human Rights, Washington, DC.

Ridley, F.F. 1973. Intergrated decentralization: models of the prefectoral system. *Political Studies* 21 (1): 13-25.

Ridley, F.F. 1974. The French Prefectoral System Revived. *Administration and Society.* 1: 48-72.

Robbins, P. 2004. *Political ecology: a critical introduction.* Oxford: Blackwell.

Robinson, M. 2007. Decentralizing service delivery? Evidence and policy implications. *Institute of Development Studies (IDS) Bulletin* 38 (1): 1-6.

Rondinelli, D. A. 1981. Government decentralization in comparative perspective: theory and practice in developing countries. *International Review of Administrative Sciences* 47 (2): 133-145.

Rondinelli, D. A . 1991. Asian urban development policies in the 1990s: from growth
        control to urban diffusion. *World Development* 19 (7): 135-148.

Rondinelli, D. A. 2006. Decentralization and development, in *International Development*
        Governance, edited by AS Huque and H Zafarullah. New York: Tailor and
        Francis: 390-399.

Rondinelli, D. A., Nellis, J. R and Cheema, G. S. 1984. *Decentralization in developing*
        countries: a review of recent experience. Staff working papers No. 581
        Washington DC: World Bank.

Rostow, W.W. 1960. *The stages of economic growth*. Cambridge: Cambridge University
        Press.

Rousseau D. M. 1990. Assessing organizational culture: the case for multiple methods.
        In Organizational Climate and Culture, edited by B.Schneider . Jossey- Bass: San
        Francisco: 153-192.

Ryle, M. 1988. *Ecology and socialism*. London: Century Hutchinson.

Sachs, I. 1974. Eco-development, in *Ceres*, Nov-Dec. 1974, Rome: FAO: 11-26.

Sachs ,W. 1992. Development: a guide to the ruins. *New Internationalist* 32 (6): 19-32.

Sachs ,W. 2002. The Jo'burg memo: fairness in a fragile world. Memorandum for
        the World Summit on Sustainable Development. Berlin: Heinrich Boll
        Foundation.

Saito, F. 2001. Decentralization theories revisited: lessons from Uganda. *Ryukoku RISS*
        Bulletin, 31 (3): 1-17.

Saltman, R. B., Bankauskaite, V. & Vrangbæk, K. 2007. *Decentralization in health care: strategies and outcomes*. European Observatory on Health Systems and Policies series. Berkshire: McGraw Hill.

Samuels, D. 2003. *Ambition, federalism and legislative politics in Brazil*, New York: Cambridge University Press.

Samuels, D. 2004. The political logic of decentralization in Brazil, in *Decentralization and Democracy in Latin America*, edited by A.P Montero and D. Samuels. Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press: 13-24.

Savas, E.S. 2000. *Privatization and public-private partnerships*. New York: CQ Press.

Scheurich, J. 1992. The paradigmatic transgressions of validity. Unpublished manuscript, quoted in *Handbook of Qualitative Research,* edited by N Denzin and Y. Lincoln. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

Schech, S. and Haggis, J. 2004. *Culture and development: a critical reflection*. London: Blackwell.

Schmid, D.E. 2003. Political influence and policy variation: understanding the politics of field administration. *Administration & Society* 35 (3): 279-314.

Schneider, B. 1990. *Organizational climate and culture*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.

Schraeder, P.J. 2004. *African politics and society: a mosaic in transformation.* Second Edition. Belmont, CA: Thomson-Wadsworth.

Scoones, I., and Thompson, J. 1993. *Beyond farmer first*. London: Intermediate Technology Publications.

Scott, G. and Garrison, M.S. 2006. *The political science student writer's manual.* Upper Saddle River: Pearson.

Selener, D. 1997. *Participatory action research and social change.* Cornell Participatory Action Research Network, Cornell University.

Sen, A.K. 1999. *Development as freedom.* New York: Knopf.

Sen, A.K . 2000. Ethics and economic success. Essay presented at the Ambrosetti
.   Forum on "Business Ethics in the New Millennium" in collaboration with Young Entrepreneurs of Prato, on 27 September 2000.

Sen, A.K. 2002. *Rationality and freedom.* Cambridge, Mass: Harvard University Press.

Selener D., Endara, N. and Carvajal, J. 1999. *Participatory rural appraisal and planning workbook.* Equador: IIRR.

Serageldin, I. and Tabaroff. 1994. Culture and development in Africa. *ESD Proceedings. Series No.1.* Washington, DC: World Bank.

Sharma, K.C. 2000. Popular participation in Botswana. *Decentralization and citizen participation in Africa, regional development dialogue.* 21 (1): 177-191.

Sharma, K.C. 2003. Traditional leadership and rural local government in Botswana, in *Grassroots Governance? Chiefs in Africa and the Afro-Caribbean,* edited by D.I Ray and P.S Reddy. Calgary: University of Calgary Press: 249-262.

Sills, D.L. (ed.). 1968. *The international encyclopedia of the social sciences.* New York: Macmillan.

Singer, M. 2000. Culture works: cultural resources as economic development tools. *Public Management*, August: 11-16.

Smith, A.D. 1973. *Concept of social change: a critique of the functionalist theory of. social change.* London: Routledge & Kegan Paul.

Smith, B. C. 1967. *Field administration: an aspect of decentralization.* London: Routledge and Kegan Paul.

Smith, B. C. 1985. *Decentralization: the territorial dimension of the state*. London: Allan and Unwin.

Smith, B.C. 2007. *Good governance and development*. New York: Palgrave Macmillan

Smith, D. L. 2001. Reform and decentralization of agricultural services: a policy framework. *FAO Agricultural Policy and Economic Development Series No.7.*

Smoke, P. 2003. Decentralization in Africa: goals, dimensions, myths and challenges. *Public Administration and Development* 23 (1): 7-16.

Sneddon, C., Howarth, R.B. and Norgaard, R.B. 2006. Sustainable development in a post- Brundland world. *Ecological Economics* 57: 253-268.

Soni, V. 2006. Public administration to good governance in developing countries: the evolution of sub-field in political science. In Jain:

Sorenson, J. 2003. Disaster and development on the horn of Africa. London: Macmillan.

Srageldin, I. and Tabaroff, E. 1994. Culture and development in Africa. ESD Proceedings Series No.1. Washington, DC: World Bank.

Srivastava, M. 2004. Moving beyond institutions matters: some reflections on how the rules of the game evolve and change. *Crisis States Discussion Paper Series No. 4*, Development Research Centre, London School of Economics.

Stake, R. E. 2006. *Multiple case study analysis*. New York: Guildford Press.

Stewart, F. 1997. *Planning to meet basic needs.* London: Macmillan.

Stiglitz, J.E. 2002. *Globalization and its discontents*. New York: Norton.

Stokes, C. S. 2007. *Political clientelism: handbook of comparative politics.* Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Strauss, A. and Corbin, J. 1990. *Basics of qualitative research: grounded theory procedures and techniques.* Thousand Oaks: Sage.

Streeten, P. 1981. First things first: meeting basic human needs in the developing countries. New York: Oxford University Press.

Stringer, E. T and Genat, W.J. 2004. *Action research in health*. New Jersey: Donnelley and Sons.

Suzuki, R. 2005. The intersection of decentralization and conflict in natural resource management: cases from Southeast Asia. *Rural Poverty and Environment Working Paper Series No.17*. Ottawa: International Development Research Centre (IDRC).

Srivastava, M. 2004. Moving beyond "institutions matter": Some reflections on how the rules of the game evolve and change. Crisis States Discussion Paper Series No. 4. London School of Economics.

Szirmai, A. 2005. The dynamics of socio-economic development: an introduction. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Tam, W. 2005. *Political insecurity and clientelist politics: the case of Singapore*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

Thomi, W., Yankson, P.W.K. and Zanu, S.Y.M. (eds). 2000. *A decade of decentralization and local government reform in Ghana: retrospect and prospects*. Accra: Ministry of Local Government and Rural Development.

Thomson, A. 2004. *An introduction to African politics*. Second Edition. London: Routledge.

Todaro, M. P and Smith, S.C. 2006. *Economic development*. Edinburgh Gate: Pearson Education Limited.

Tordoff, W. 2002. *Government and politics in Africa*. Fourth edition. Basingstoke: Macmillan.

Trainer, T. 1989. *Development to death: rethinking Third World development*. London: Merlin.

Trainer, T. 1990. A rejection of the Brundland report. *Ifda Dossier* 77:1-23.

Treurnicht, S. 2000. Sustainable development, in *Introduction to Development Studies*, edited by F. De Beer and H Swanepoel, Cape Town: Oxford University Press: 61-72

Turner, M. 1999. *Central-local relations in Asia-Pacific: convergence or divergence?* London: Macmillan.

Tuner, M. 2002. What happened to deconcentration? Recent initiatives in Cambodia. *Public Administration and Development* 22(4): 350-368.

Tutu II, O. 2004. Traditional systems of governance and the modern state. Keynote address presented at the fourth African Development Forum in Addis Ababa on October 12, 2004.

Umeh, O. J and Andranovich G. 2005. *Culture, development and public administration in Africa*. Bloomfield: Kumarian Press.

United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), 1997. Governance and sustainable human development: A Policy Paper. New York: UNDP Publications.

United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), 2006. *Human Development Report 2006.* New York: Oxford University Press.

United States Agency for International Development (USAID) (2003). Decentralization in Ghana: an assessment (mimeo).

Van der Waal, C.S. 1994. Development and the mystification of cultural factors: review Article. *Development Southern Africa* 11(3):

Vehnamaki, M. 1999. Culture and economic development in Ghana: the conventional wisdom revisited. *Nordic Journal of African Studies* 8(1): 57-79.

Verhelst,T.G. 1987. *No life without roots: culture and development*. London: Zed Books.

Visser, J. W. 2005. Developmental local government: a case study of South Africa. Belgium: Intersentia Publishers.

Voss, J. P., Bauknecht, D and Kemp, R. 2006. *Reflexive governance for sustainable development.* London: Edward Elgar Publishing.

Wadel, D. A and Lund, C. 2006. Governing access to forests in Northern Ghana: Micro-politics and the rents on non-enforcement. *World Development* 34 (11) 1887-1906.

Weber, M.1973. The role of ideas in history. In Etzioni-Halevy and Etzioni:

Wenchi District Assembly, 2006. District medium term development plan and budget 2006-2009. Wenchi District Assembly.

Wilks, I. 1975. *Asante in the nineteenth century: the structure and evolution of political order.* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Wilson, D. and Gill, S. 2003. *Promoting institutional and organizational development: a source book of tools and techniques*. London: UK Department for International Development.

Woods, N. 2000. The challenge of good governance for the IMF and the World Bank themselves. *World Development* 28(5): 823-841.

World Bank. 1984. *World Development Report* 1984. New York: Oxford University Press.

World Bank. 1992. Governance and development. Washington, DC: World Bank.

World Commission on Environment and Development (WCED). 1987. *Our Common Future.* Oxford: Oxford University Press.

World Health Organization (WHO). 2002. WHO traditional medicine strategy 2002-
2005. Geneva: WHO. (Document Reference No.: WHO/EDM/TRM/2002.1).
Also available at:
http://whqlibdoc.who.int/hq/2002/WHO_EDM_TRM_2002.1.pdf
Downloaded: 18th June 2008.

Wouters, N. 2006. Municipal government during the occupation (1940-5): A
comparative model of Belgium, the Netherlands and France. *European History
Quarterly* 36 (2): 221-264.

Wunch, J.S 2001. Decentralization, local government and re-centralization in Africa.
Public Administration and Development 21(4): 277-88.

Wunsch, J.S. and Ottemoeller, D. 2004. Uganda: multiple levels of local governance. In
Olowu and Wunsch:

Zanu, S.Y.M. 1996. The institutionalization of local self-government in
Ghana's present-day constitutional process. A paper presented at an
international conference on traditional and contemporary forms of
governance in Africa, held in Nairobi, Kenya from 9th to 12th October,
1996, under the auspices of the Konrad-Adenauer-Stiftung.

Ziai, A. 2004. The ambivalance of post-development: between reactionary
populism and radical democracy. *Third World Quarterly* 25(6): 1045-
1060.

Zimmerman, M.E. 2000. *Introduction to deep ecology*. Langley: Context Institute Press.

APPENDIX 1: INTERVIEW GUIDE

SEMI-STRUCTURED QUESTIONAIRE TO GUIDE FIELD INTERVIEWS

A)   BIODATA

1. Name…………………………………………………………………(optional)

2. Location (Village)………………………………………………………

3. Sex ……………………….(M or F)   4. Age……………………….

5. Status …………………………………………………….

B)   QUESTIONS FOR POLICY-MAKERS (Minister for Local Government, Members of Parliament, Regional Minister)

6.   What has been your experience with the implementation of the decentralization process so far?

7.   What is your assessment of the general relationship between traditional authorities (chiefs) and the district assembly structures?

8.   Give some examples of positive or difficult relationships between the two institutions that you know about.

9.   What could be the root causes of such a relation?

10. What do you think are the development implications of the various types of interaction and relation between traditional authorities and district assembly structures that you talked about?

11. What do you think should be the role of traditional authorities (chiefs) in the decentralization process

12. Probe for reasons behind your answer to question (7).

13. Given an opportunity to amend Ghana's decentralization law, what areas would you amend and why?

C)   QUESTIONS FOR WENCHI DISTICT ASSEMBLY OPERATIVES
(District Chief Executive (DCE), Presiding Member (PM), Assembly Members (AM), District Co-ordinating Director (DCD), Unit Committee Members UCM), Staff at district office)

14. What is your role in the decentralization process?

15. In performing these roles, what interactions do you have with traditional authorities?

16. What is your assessment of the quality of these interactions with traditional authorities?

17. Using a ranking of 1 to 5 (1 being very poor quality of interaction and 5 being very good) rank the quality of the various interactions with traditional authorities and give reasons, by filling in the Table below

Type of interaction	Quality Ranking					Reasons
	1	2	3	4	5	

18. With the help of a flow diagram, explain your understanding of development, particularly the following dimensions: economic development, social, environmental and technological.

19. How is development planning done in your district?

20. What specific roles have been played by traditional authorities in the decentralization process of your district?

21. What is your assessment of their ability to perform these roles effectively? (Use a ranking of 1 to 5 to indicate your level of satisfaction with their performance, 1 being very poor and 5 being very good).

22. Using the same ranking of 1 to 5, indicate the level of trust you have in traditional authorities if, given a chance, they are capable of promoting accountable and sustainable development in their localities.

23. What is your assessment of the power base of traditional authorities in terms of their ability to influence their communities along some thinking or line of action? (Use a ranking of 1 to 5 to express your assessment, with 1 being very weak and 5 being very strong).

24. With a ranking of 1 to 5 (1 being very poor and 5 being very good), rank the quality of the relationship between traditional authorities and the various decentralized structures (Unit Committees, Area Committees, Assembly Members, DCE) by filling in the Table below.

Decentralized Structures	Ranking of Relationship					Reasons
DCE	1	2	3	4	5	
Assembly Members						
Area Committee Members						
Unit Committee Members						

25. Please give any specific examples of difficult or positive relationships between traditional authorities and decentralized structures that you know about and provide the underlying causes for such a relationship.

26. What, in your assessment are the development implications of these relationships between traditional authorities and decentralized structures?

27. What should be the role of chiefs in the decentralization process so as to enhance development in the area?

28. What amendments would you recommend in Ghana's decentralization law and policies so as to make them more effective?

D) QUESTIONS FOR TRADITIONAL AUTHORITIES

29. What role do you play in the decentralization process in your district?

30. What kind of interactions or relationship exists between you and the various decentralized structures (DCE, Assembly Member, area Committee Members, and Unit Committee Members)?

31. Using a ranking of 1 to 5, with 1 being very poor and 5 being very good, assess the quality of these interactions by completing the table below.

Type of Decentralized Structure	Ranking of Quality of Interactions / Relationship					Reasons or underlying causes for the relationship
	1	2	3	4	5	
DCE						
Assembly Member						
Area Committee Members						
Unit Committee Members						

32. What are the development implications of these types of interactions or relationships with the various decentralized structures?

33. Using the same ranking of 1 to 5, indicate which of the decentralized structures have helped you and your people in your development efforts most effectively.

Type of Decentralized Structure	Ranking of level of Dev't. Assistance Offered					Any Specific Examples of Dev't. Assistance
	1	2	3	4	5	
DCE						
Assembly Member						
Area Committee Members						
Unit Committee Members						

34. With the help of a flow diagram, explain your understanding of development, particularly the following dimensions: economic, social, environmental and technological development.

35. What role do you think chiefs should play in Ghana's decentralization process and why?

36. What are some of your concerns about the decentralization process in Ghana?

37. What suggested amendments would you propose in relation to Ghana's decentralization process in order to make it more effective, particularly in terms of development, accountability, good governance and operational efficiency?

E)   QUESTIONS FOR COMMUNITY MEMBERS

38. What role do the various decentralized structures or offices DCE, Assemblyman, Area Committee and Unit Committee) DCE, Assemblyman, Area Committee and Unit Committee) play in your community?

39. What is your level of participation and influence in the decentralized planning process? Rank this between 1 to 5, with 1 reflecting very low participation and 5 indicating very high participation.

40. Among the various decentralized structures (DCE, Assemblyman, Area Committee and Unit Committee) which of them have accompanied you in your development efforts? Demonstrate this by during circles, the bigger the circle the more important the office or body, the further away the circle form your village (which is the central circle), the more remote the person or body is to you in your development pursuits.

41. Using lines connecting the various circles, indicate your level of trust in each of these decentralized structures (offices) to promote your development interest. The thicker the line, the higher your trust.

42. What development role do chiefs (Paramount chief, divisional chiefs, and village chief) play in your community?

43. Between traditional authorities and the district assembly structures, which of them do you trust the most to best promote your development interest and why?

44. What is the level of power, in terms of their ability to influence your thinking or actions that traditional authorities exert in your community? Rank your assessment between 1 to 5, with 1 being very low and 5 being very high. Display this by filling in the Table below:

Type of Traditional Authority	Power Ranking					
	1	2	3	4	5	
Paramount Chief						
Divisional Chief						
Village Chief						

45. What is the level of power, in terms of ability to influence your thinking or actions, that the various decentralized structures exert in your community? Rank your assessment between 1 to 5, with 1 being very low and 5 being very high.

46. What role do you think traditional authorities should play in Ghana's decentralization process?

47. With the help of a flow diagram, explain your understanding of development, particularly the following dimensions: economic, social, environmental and technological development.

48. How satisfied are you with the services provided by the decentralized department?

49. What concerns do you have about the way in which decentralization is being implemented in the country?

50. What suggested amendments would you propose to make Ghana's decentralization process more effective?

APPENDIX 2: List of Key Informants Interviewed

Mr. Nyankamawuh	Chief Director, Ministry of Local Government and Rural Development (MLGRD)
Mr. Josua Magnus Nicol	Administrator, District Assembly Common Fund
Mr. Okyere-Darko Ababio	Director, Ministry of Local Government and Rural Development
Ms Esther Ofei-Aboagye	Director Institute of Local Government
Mr. Kwamena Ahwoi:	Former Minister, MLGRD
Mr. Ben C. Eghan	Director Civil Service School, GIMPA
Mr. Bruno Dery	Director, National Development Planning Commission
Mr. Nuamah Twum	Director, FASCU, Wenchi
Mr. J. Y Aberefa	Secretary to Wenchi Traditional Council
Mr. Ben Guri	Executive Director, Centre for Indigenous Knowledge and Organizational Development
Dr. Lawrence Kannae	Deputy Rector of GIMPA
Prof. Gyang Baffour	Member of Parliament for Wenchi
Hon. Alban Bagbin:	Majority Leader in Parliament
Mr. Stephen Asamoa Boateng:	Former Minister of Local Government & Rural Development (LGRD)
Hon Joseph Yelleh Chireh:	Minister of LGRD
Mr. Geaorge Owusu	Wenchi District Planning Officer
Hon. Binto Farizana Ibrahim	Wenchi District Chief Executive
Mr. Osman Kennth	Wenchi District Co-ordinating Director
Mr. Kwame Pensang	Opinion Leader of Agubie
Nana Abrefa Kojo Nketiah VIII	Paramount Chief of Wenchi Traditional Area
Nana (Prof.) E.O Asante	Chief of Swedru
Nana (Dr.) D.K Berko	Paramount chief of Konongo
Mr. John Anokye	town and Country planning Officer, Wenchi
Mr. Osei-Addai	Wenchi District Director of Agriculture

Mr. E. K Effah   Wenchi District Environmental Health Officer

Mr. Jones- Owusu   Wenchi District Engineer

Rev. Fr. Augustine Ansu-Damoah   Catholic Priest of Wenchi

Mr. Owusu Boateng   Deputy Co-ordinating Director, Wenchi

Mr. Joe Mensah   Head teacher of Wenchi Primary & J.S.S

Mr. Peter Nanfuri   Former Inspector General of Ghana Police