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STALLED AT THE STARTING LINE:

Partisan Politics and Projects Discontinuity in
Decentralized Ghana – A Case Study Of Asante
Akim South Municipality

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Abstract

Decentralization, while promising empowerment for local communities and increased government responsiveness, can be undermined by practices like the partisan appointment of local leaders. This approach can introduce a significant challenge: project discontinuity. The literature has identified corruption, clientelism, and limited resources as the drivers of project discontinuity. However, a crucial gap remains: understanding how partisan appointments within decentralized systems contribute to project discontinuity. This study addresses this gap by leveraging a theoretical framework that integrates Principal-Agent theory, Rational Choice theory, and Public Choice theory. This framework helps identify the factors through which partisan appointments within decentralized systems lead to project discontinuity. The study focuses on Ghana because decentralization has been a core aspect of its public sector reforms. However, a significant challenge is the discontinuity of projects due to the country's highly partisan political system which translate to partisan appointment of local municipal chiefs. Consequently, projects initiated by one administration are often discontinued by the succeeding one. The study employed qualitative research design using both structured and semi-structured interviews with three key stakeholder groups considered knowledgeable on decentralization and local governance with a sample size of 30. The results show that, The MCE wields both formal and informal powers alongside his co-partisan assembly to make political decisions subject to his preferences and satisfying the material motives of his party which ultimately leads to projects discontinuity. The study calls for non-partisan elections of MCEs, to foster greater local ownership and responsiveness in governance particularly in the context of project discontinuity.

Key Words: Decentralization, Project discontinuity, Partisan appointment, Local Municipal Chiefs, Elections

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List Of Abbreviations

MMDCEs: Metropolitan, Municipal, and District Chief Executives

MCE: Municipal Chief Executive

MMDAs: Metropolitan, Municipal and District Assemblies

RCC: Regional Coordinating Council

NPP: New Patriotic Party

NDC: National Democratic Congress

CHAPTER ONE

1 Introduction

This section presents the background of the study, the problem statement, the research objectives and questions, the significance and scope of the study.

1.1 Background of the Study

Over the last three decades, decentralization has been a prominent policy approach in many developed and developing countries, aimed at promoting local governance, enhancing community participation, and fostering sustainable and inclusive development (Agomor & Adams 2019; Agomor et al.2018; Oates, 2005). This prominent trend as argued by Oates (2005) is driven by the failure of centralized government to bring sustainable growth, which is one of its major objectives of decentralization. The devolution of government functions and roles to sub-governmental units stems from the immense adversities of the government's inability to provide good quality services to the populace (Adams, 2016). Therefore, the implementation of decentralized systems is often envisioned as a means to empower local authorities, improve service delivery, and ensure that development projects are better aligned with the needs of the communities they serve (Ahoi, 2010; Adams, 2016; Rondinelli et al., 1983; Ducan, 2007). A 2007 European Commission report highlights the rising popularity of decentralization since the 1990s, with many developing nations at various stages of implementation. This trend underscores the growing importance of decentralization in modern public policymaking and implementation (Ayee, 1994; Nyendu, 2015).

In response to calls for political reform, developing nations like Brazil, Bosnia and Herzegovina, and the Philippines (among others) embraced decentralization to strengthen local autonomy and promote participatory democracy (Debrah, 2014; Crawford, 2004). Although Robinson (2003), opines that decentralization in developing countries has been a complex and challenging process with mixed results, it is worth noting that decentralization became the standard form of government and policy framework for the majority of developing nations (Crawford, 2004; Ayee, 1994; Nyendu, 2015).

The remarkable transitions from authoritarian rule to democratic governance in Nigeria, Senegal, and South Africa in sub-Saharan Africa were partly facilitated by decentralization (Dickovick, 2005; Heller, 2001). Decentralization as a tool of governance has become an

important policy framework across the continent (Dickovick, 2005; Agomor et al., 2018). Consequently, many African countries have undergone significant governance reforms, establishing subnational entities, devolving powers, and creating frameworks to support local decision-making (Chigwata, & De Visser, 2022).

Decentralization has been faced with a lot challenges which include but not limited to accountability issues (World Bank, 2004; Sambasivan & Soon, 2007; Clausen & Attaran, 2011), limited resources, (i.e. local government lack financial resources to effectively fulfil responsibilities transferred to them) (Ruuska & Teigland, 2009; World Bank, 2004; Teigland & Lindqvist, 2007), capture by elite interests (Appiah, 2016; Devas & Grant, 2003; Daddieh & Bob-Milliar, 2012) and project discontinuity (Wunsch, 1998). Among these challenges, the nexus between partisan appointments in decentralized systems and project discontinuity remains understudied. While decentralization holds great promise, concerns have emerged, particularly when local leadership is subject to partisan appointments. These appointments can lead to interruptions or premature cessation of development initiatives initiated at the local level (Wunsch, 1998). The large body of scholarly literature has attributed the prevalence of project discontinuity across Africa to corruption (Banerjee et al., 2013; Samuels, 2002; Rasul & Rogger, 2017) or inadequate funding and under bidding of projects (Hanacher, 2010; Ugwu, 2015) or clientelism among political actors (Kumah-Abiwu, 2017; Devas & Grant, 2003; Daddieh & Bob-Milliar, 2012).

This paper contributes to this discourse by investigating how partisan appointments of local leaders within a decentralized system lead to project discontinuity, with a specific focus on Ghana and the appointment of Municipal Chiefs. Ghana has been recognized as a beacon of democracy in Africa with decentralization being a core aspect of its public sector reforms (Amakye-Boateng et al., 2021; Ahwoi, 2010). The 1992 constitution established the legal framework for this process (Gyimah-Boadi, 2006), leading to the creation of Metropolitan, Municipal, and District Assemblies (MMDAs) (Local Government Act, 1993). This was a pivotal step in transferring decision-making powers and responsibilities to the local level. Ayee (2008) argues that since independence, succeeding governments in Ghana have preoccupied themselves with decentralization, because it is deemed as a necessary condition

for not only the socio-economic development of the country but also as a way of achieving their political objectives such as the recentralization of power and legitimacy (Ayee, 2008).

Decentralization holds the promise of deepening good governance, fostering social and economic development, and addressing regional disparities. However, this potential can be undermined by the practice of partisan appointments of local leaders. These appointments can lead to a critical challenge: frequent interruption or abandonment of local projects. This phenomenon hinders Ghana's ability to achieve sustainable development and necessitates a closer examination of the factors influencing project discontinuity within the decentralized framework, particularly how partisan appointments might be influencing these disruptions

1.2 Problem Statement

Ghana's decentralization policy aims to empower local communities, address regional disparities, enhance local participation, and improve development outcomes. However, a significant challenge is the disruption or abandonment of projects due to the country's highly partisan political system (Amakye-Boateng et. al., 2021). The winner-take-all approach between the National Democratic Congress (NDC) and the New Patriotic Party (NPP) translates to political appointments for Metropolitan, Municipal, and District Chief Executives (MMDCEs) by the President (Bob-Milliar, 2012). This system, as argued by (Daddieh & Bob-Milliar, 2012; Bob-Milliar, 2012; Gyimah-Boadi, 2006; Agomor et al., 2018; Ayee, 2008;) weakens the autonomy of local governments and prioritizes partisan interests over the needs of communities. Consequently, development projects initiated by one administration are often abandoned or significantly altered by the succeeding one, hindering progress and sustainable development. The gains made in the area of decentralization seem to be eroding as partisan politics take precedence over democratic principles and local interests (Bob-Milliar, 2012).

This research investigates how the appointment of partisan MMDCEs within Ghana's decentralization framework contributes to project discontinuity. By understanding the factors and mechanisms by which political affiliations influence project selection and implementation. The research aims to inform policy interventions that strengthen local government autonomy and promote continuity in development efforts. This will contribute to

a more effective decentralization process that delivers on its promise of improved service delivery and community-driven development in Ghana.

1.3 Research Objectives

The objective of the study is to examine the relationship between decentralization and project (dis)continuity at the local level. These specific objectives will guide the study;

- I. Examine the role of Partisan appointment of MMDCEs on project (dis)continuity
- II. Investigate the best alternative institutional arrangement for the selection of MMDCEs

1.4 Research Questions

The study proposes these research questions based on the objectives;

- I. What is the role of Partisan appointment of MMDCEs on project (dis)continuity
- II. What alternative institutional arrangements for the selection of MMDCEs could promote greater continuity in development initiatives?

To answer my research questions, I used qualitative research design using both structured and semi-structured interviews question type with three key stakeholder groups considered knowledgeable on decentralization and local governance.

1.5 Significance of the Study

This research makes a significant contribution to the field of decentralization studies by addressing a critical gap: the impact of partisan appointments of local leaders on project discontinuity. While existing literature has attributed the prevalence of project discontinuity across Africa to corruption (Banerjee et.al., 2013; Samuels, 2002; Rasul & Rogger, 2017) or inadequate Funding and Under bidding of projects (Hanacher,2010; Ugwu, 2015) or clientelism among political actors (Kumah-Abiwu, 2017; Devas & Grant, 2003; Daddieh & Bob-Milliar, 2012), the understudied phenomenon of partisan appointments within a decentralized system and its effect on project continuity remains a crucial area for further investigation.

This study directly addresses this gap by examining the mechanisms through which partisan appointments of local leaders, specifically Municipal Chief Executives in Ghana, contribute to project discontinuity. By employing a novel framework that integrates existing theories, the research sheds light on how these appointments undermine the potential benefits of decentralization. The findings hold significant value for various stakeholders. Policymakers can leverage the insights to design reforms that enhance local government autonomy and promote non-partisan approaches to project selection and implementation. Academics will gain a deeper understanding of the challenges associated with partisan appointments within a decentralized framework. Finally, local government practitioners can benefit from the study's findings by advocating for more effective collaboration between central and local authorities to achieve project continuity and ultimately, sustainable development.

1.6 Scope of the Study

This study focuses on the impact of partisan appointments of (MMDCEs) on project discontinuity in Ghana's decentralized system. Data will be collected from three key stakeholder groups: *Public servants in the local government service* who will provide insights on pragmatic challenges of project implementation under various MMDCEs regimes, *assembly members* who are considered knowledgeable on key issues of governance at the local level and will provide insights of the multifaceted challenges associated with project discontinuity at the local level and *local municipality constituents* who have spent more than ten (10years) in the municipality will help provide insights associated with the variation in projects completion or discontinuity under various MMDCEs regimes within the Municipality.

1.7 Organization of the Study

This study is organized into seven (7) chapters. Chapter One covers the Introduction and background, objectives of the study, research questions, and significance of the study. Chapter two (2) focuses on literature reviews on the impact of decentralization and project discontinuity. In chapter three (3), I present the theoretical framework. Chapter Four (4) presents the methodology and methods used in the study. Research findings are presented in chapter five (5) while chapter six (6) presents the discussion. Finally, in Chapter Seven (7) the conclusion, limitations of the study, and suggestions for future research are made.

CHAPTER TWO

This section presents a conceptual understanding of decentralization, project discontinuity, and partisanship. It further presents an overview of decentralization and local government in the Ghanaian context and the Challenges with the implementation of decentralization in Ghana. Lastly, the section also provides an overview of previous research relevant to the study.

2.1 Conceptualizing Decentralization

Decentralization encompasses various institutional reforms, including "reversing the concentration of administration at a single center and conferring powers on local government" (Smith 1985:1). While definitions vary, the World Bank (1999) emphasizes the delegation of political, fiscal, and administrative powers to subnational levels. However, despite its centrality to good governance and accountability in democracies (Fritzen & Lim 2006), the precise meaning of decentralization remains elusive due to scholars' focus on different aspects of the concept.

Friday and Myers (2019) argue that decentralization is a process through which power is delegated to local authorities with the expectation that local authorities and governments would properly represent local conditions. This definition fails to account for the extent of power or authority given to the local authorities to meet the needs and demands of the grassroots. According to Arthur decentralization connotes "an action that involves the creation of a realm of decision-making in which a variety of lower-level actors can exercise the same level of autonomy" (Arthur, 2012:13). This definition does not consider the extent of autonomy required for lower-level actors to perform their roles efficiently and effectively. Empirical evidence abounds in this scholarship that recentralization, where the central authority exerts unrestrained power under the guise of decentralization at the local level (Wunsch, 2001; Weiler, 1990), is a growing concern for researchers. The burgeoning literature on decentralization in Africa has drawn attention to local autonomy as a critical factor that influences the success of such efforts in emerging democracies (Debrah, 2016; Debrah, 2009; Ayee & Dickovick 2014; Olowu & Wunsch, 2004). This begs the question of whether local governments can truly be autonomous if the central government dictates who leads them?

Regarding the need for local governments to be responsive to the needs and requests of their constituents, Amegor et.al. (2018) conclude that decentralization involves delegating power and functions to lower levels of government to improve public service delivery without any exogenous constraints. Likewise, Ahwoi (2010) also adds that decentralization entails improving local government institutions to meet the needs of local communities and also improve the quality of the governance process at the local level. Local or sub-national governments' proximity to the grassroots is said to serve as a mechanism for rapid and better response to local needs and to match public spending to private needs efficiently (Smoke, 2003; Alam & Koranteng 2011; Ayee, 2013). The striking element identified here leads to increased trust among participants, as decision-making processes become more transparent and accountable at the local level.

Previous scholars like Rondinelli (1981) and Mawhood (1993) suggest that decentralization is a fundamental element in building an effective governance system. With this theoretical foundation, I provide a working definition of the concept as a governance process that involves the establishment of local authorities vested with the responsibility of providing and meeting the demands of the public interest at the local level with minimal or no exogenous constraints from the central government. The premise that decentralization brings governance closer to the people at the local level and thus offers better opportunities for residents to participate in the decision-making process enhances transparency and government responsiveness as a result of increased accountability (Awortwi, 2010; Ayee 2013; Rodden, 2006). Therefore, development at the local level is built on the foundation of strong functional local government institutions.

Earlier proponents of decentralization (Cohen & Peterson 1994 and Fritzen & Lim 2006) group the concept into four broad categories based on the various functions and/or resources that are decentralized: administrative, fiscal, political, and market decentralization.

Administrative Decentralization: is the functional and hierarchical division of executive authority or powers among the several governmental levels. Administrative decentralization seeks to decongest the central government and distribute workload evenly across subnational entities. This is usually done through the establishment of government Ministries,

Departments, and Agencies at the local level to provide the services of government to the grassroots.

Political Decentralization: This refers to individuals or elected representatives having more influence in local political decision-making. Arthur (2012) explains that political decentralization involves the transfer of decision-making to the people aimed at increasing the efficiency of local political units, hence making local authorities accountable to citizens. The ability of constituents to hold local leaders accountable emanates from the bosom of an effective politically decentralized system. Nonetheless, this is the missing key element within Ghana's decentralization program that requires stakeholder and researcher's attention.

Market Decentralization: denotes the transfer of certain functions from the public to the private sector. The overarching goal is to reduce centralization and promote diversity, resilience, and local autonomy within economic systems.

Fiscal Decentralization: entails transferring the authority to generate local revenues to local government authorities. Ahwoi (2010) concludes that fiscal decentralization involves finances and for that matter, the financial autonomy of local government is a pre-requisite of a successful decentralization.

The underlying principle of local governance and decentralization is to mobilize and inspire grassroots participation in the development of their localities through the mechanism of transferring power to lower or subnational units. However, because of the substantial degree to which it varies in scale and scope, Rondinelli (1981) concludes that such power transfer is done through delegation, de-concentration, devolution, and privatization. These forms, as explained by Rondinelli distinguish the various levels of functions performed by local governments in the decentralization agenda. *Delegation* denotes the transfer of power for the provision of public goods and services to semi-autonomous institutions, which act on behalf of and are directly accountable to the central government. *Deconcentration* refers to the outsourcing of central government functions to local or regional offices of the same. Sub-national officials are appointed by the center and are subject to directives from above. *Devolution* denotes a two-way process of having powers transferred from the central government and building capacities from below to effectively use these powers. *Privatization*

refers to giving private organizations and businesses the authority to carry out formerly governmental responsibilities, or at least the right to do so.

The process of decentralization is not complete without the necessary institutional arrangements to see to its implementation. This brings in the concept of *local government*. Afegbua et al. (2018) define local government as the “grassroots level of government” which is focused on addressing the pertinent needs and demands of citizens. This is a crucial element of good governance and democracy because it promises to foster bottom-up accountability, empowerment, and citizen participation in local politics and decision-making. Kpentey (2019) argues that local government is generally seen as one of the surest ways to bring administration very close to the populace and a conduit through which central government channels development to the local level. Local government, therefore, has a central role in the lives of citizens.

2.2 Partisanship

The introduction of multiparty democracy alongside the implementation of local government decentralization has introduced a complex challenge known as partisanship. Muirhead (2006) defines partisanship as the political allegiance of citizens to a particular political party. This allegiance, according to Muirhead, encompasses both psychological identification—where individuals align themselves with a party—and behavioral aspects—where they consistently vote for that party (Muirhead, 2006). Similarly, Efthymiou (2006) defines partisanship as the psychological attachment or inclination towards a political party, which is evident in individuals' voting patterns, policy preferences, and political involvement. Moreover, Mair (2003) defines partisanship as the prioritization of allegiance to a political party, placing it at the core of one's commitment, thus emphasizing party loyalty.

With this foundation, I define partisan in this study as the placing of commitment to a political party at its core, thus prioritizing party loyalty. Partisanship has become a key element in developed and developing democracies (Amakye-Boateng et. al., 2021). This affects bureaucratic accountability and local development (Bellodi, 2021). Therefore, there is an accountability deficit in governance at the local level when development policies are based on partisan lines (Schillemans & Busuioc, 2015).

2.3 A conceptual understanding of Project discontinuity

According to Akhanolu et., al. (2016), project abandonment occurs when construction work on a development project, which had commenced earlier, stops for various reasons. Similarly, Abdul-Rahman et al. (2015) described abandoned projects as a construction project which is uncompleted and not available for occupation on schedule. A striking element identified in these definitions is stopping or discontinuing a project. Hanachor (2012), also adds that when actions and activities on development projects are suspended without any stated time of resumption, the projects are said to be abandoned. The empirical literature shows that the causes of abandonment of projects don't seem to be limited to at least one particular reason but several reasons (Ayodele & Alabi, 2011). Project abandonment in the empirical literature has been attributed to inconsistencies in government, inadequate planning, inadequate funding, and poor risk management (Makalah, 2008; Ayodele & Alabi, 2011; Oyelola 2010; World Bank 2004)) or corruption and lack of skilled personnel (Perkins, 2006; Sambasivan & Soon, 2007; Banerjee et.al., 2013; Samuels, 2002; Rasul & Rogger, 2017).

Building on this foundation, I define project discontinuity as the premature cessation or abandonment of development initiatives due to various challenges. Consequently, these projects fail to achieve their intended goals.

2.4 Overview of Decentralization and Local Government in Ghana.

Following three unsuccessful republics after independence, Ghana adopted multi-party democracy in 1992, ushering in the Fourth Republic (Ayee, 1994). This shift is argued to have resulted in the development of two distinct administrative typologies for governing the country, reflecting a move towards decentralization and local government (Debrah, 2009; Ayee, 1996). This evolved from the Municipal Ordinance of 1859 and the Local Government Act 1961 (Act 1961), enacted soon after independence in 1957 (Agomor et al., 2018, Ayee, 1996).

The post-independence optimism in Ghana was short-lived as the country was confronted with the immediate task of meeting its citizens' needs and development goals (Agomor & Obayashi, 2008). In explaining the transition of Ghana from military dictatorship towards democracy, Daddieh and Bob-Milliar (2012) and Amakye-Boateng et al. (2021), opine that Ghana underwent a democratic upsurge in the 1990s following the lifting of the ban on

political party activities. Since then, Ghana has made significant progress, especially in terms of successfully holding seven parliamentary and presidential elections with four major turnovers. Ghana's institutionalization level has been counted as a highly instrumental mechanism that has propelled the country to its current state (Debrah, 2009; Agomor et al., 2018).

The inception and the major attempt at real decentralization began with the promulgation of the Provisional National Defence Council (PNDC) Law 207 in 1988 (Agomor et al., 2018). Currently, the 1992 constitution as enshrined in Chapter 20 and Article 240 lays out the legal framework and general foundation for Ghana's decentralization. Coupled with this is the Local Government Act (Act 462) of 1993 which established the Metropolitan, Municipal, and District Assemblies (MMDAs) system with legislating, budgeting, planning, and executing authority (Agomor et al., 2018; Ayee, 1996). Ghana's decentralization agenda seeks to enhance and promote broader participation in the decision-making process and promote responsive governance at the local level (Agomor & Obayashi, 2008). The policy also aims at devolving central administrative authority and divesting implementation responsibility to the district level (Adaapiim, 2012). The MMDAs have thus become the focal points for all development activities at the local level. At the heart of Ghana's current decentralization are the Metropolitan, Municipal, and District Chief Executives (MMDCEs) who serve as the principal representatives of the President at the local level.¹

The practice of the President appointing both MMDCEs and 30% of district assembly members undermines the decentralization process, as it concentrates power and weakens the autonomy of local governments (Gyimah-Boadi, 2009; Adamtey, 2014). A closer look at political decentralization in Ghana reveals a significant limitation: the 261 MMDCEs hold office at the President's discretion, who has the authority to appoint and dismiss them. According to Awotwi and Amakye (2020), this is demonstrated by the winner-take-all system, which necessitates that a political party form the full government structure upon winning an election. In such a case, opposition parties are "locked" up in their universe and

Depending on the size of the population, Ghana's local government units are classified as Metropolitan, Municipal and district Assemblies. These administrative distinctions are not relevant for this study. Hence this study generically refers to Municipal Assembly and Municipal chief Executive (MCE).

try to thwart the ruling political party's attempts to gain political points. Kumah-Abiwu (2017) adds that partisan cleavages in Ghana seem to affect local political issues making non-partisan local politics of Municipal and district assemblies incapable of surviving in highly partisan national politics. Consequently, this partisan nature of political decentralization in Ghana affects bureaucratic accountability and affects local development as well (Bellodi, 2021). Below is the organizational structure of the local government system in Ghana

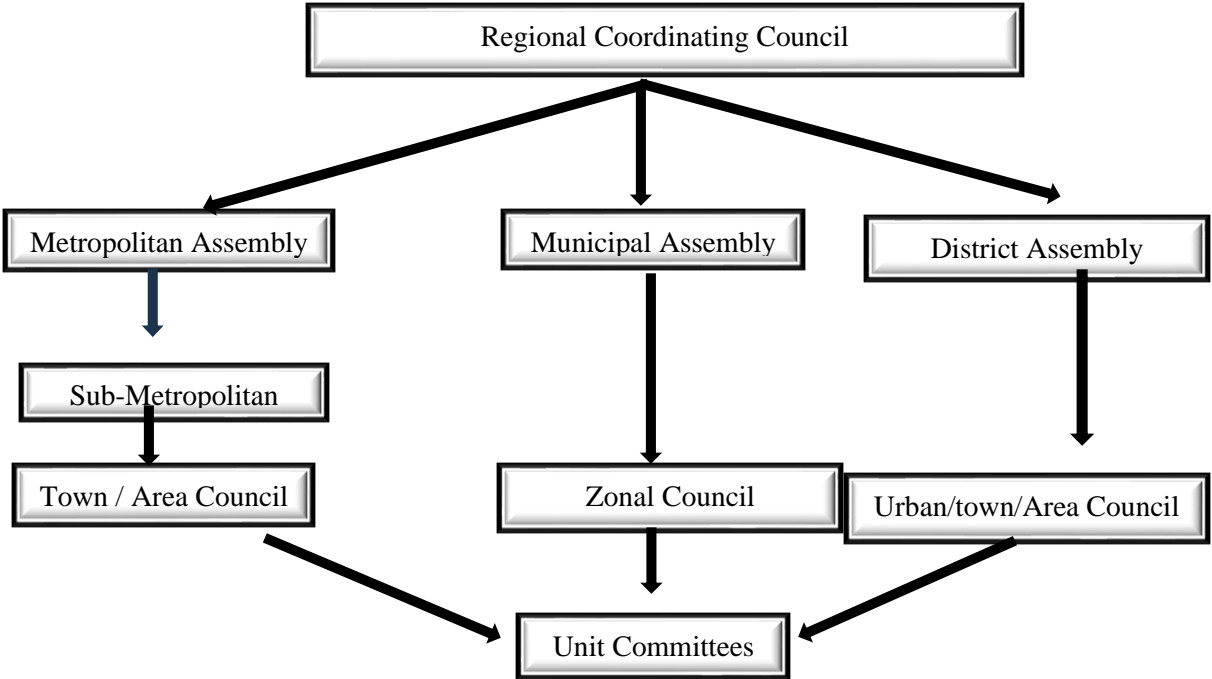


Figure 1: Structure of the Local Government in Ghana

The Regional Co-ordinating Council (RCC) is headed by a Regional Minister, appointed by the President and vetted by the Parliamentary Committee on Appointments, and approved by the National Parliament. The RCC oversees the local government system in the Republic of Ghana, including the Metropolitan, Municipal, and District Assemblies (MMDAs). Despite these powers, local governments often appear to be controlled and utilized for various political strategies by the central government (Antwi-Boasiako, 2010). Critics argue that the RCCs endowed with delegated authority to coordinate and harmonies Municipal and district-level development programs exercise unrestricted control over MMDCEs (Gyimah-Boadi, 2009). Hence this promotes presidential appointees' loyalty to the central government and their political parties since the executive head (Regional Minister) is also appointed by the president rather than the local populace.

2.5 Challenges with Ghana's Decentralization Policy

Despite the claims made about decentralization as a desirable policy, both the theoretical and empirical literature point to real problems inherent in its practice (Debrah, 2016). After three decades of decentralization implementation in Ghana characterized by several political turnovers in the 4th Republic, there has been a minimal impact, particularly in the context of sustainability and continuity of development projects, limited popular participation at the grassroots, lack of accountability, and a gap between power and capacity (Be-ere, 2022; Fridy & Myers, 2019; Ayee, 2012; Ahwoi, 2017). There remains a persistent direct central government influence on the composition of Ghana's local government authorities. According to Ayee (2012), this stems from the framework created by Ghana's 1992 Constitution which gives rise to a "principal-agent typology" for the interaction between the national and local government entities, wherein the local government authorities are considered to be fulfilling the needs of the national government rather than guaranteeing the effective delivery of services to the local population.

Another major challenge to Ghana's decentralization efforts is the limited financial autonomy of local governments. This results in an insufficient resource base, hindering local development projects and ultimately undermining decentralization's impact (Hoffman & Metzroth, 2010). Amanor (1999) conclude that approximately 85% of the funds allocated to MMDAs come from the central government, through the District Assemblies Common Fund (DACF) which is the primary source of funding. Development projects in the various MMDAs are largely financed from the DACF or donor support from international organizations or the Various Assemblies own internally generated funds (IGF) (Amanor,1999; Ayee, 2008; Ayee 2012). Ayee (2008) concludes that the DACF which is the primary source of funds faces a lot of challenges such as a lack of accountability, inconsistencies in disbursement, a lack of transparency, and a lack of discretionary powers for the MMDAs in its allocation. This has led to a decline in the performance of the various MMDAs in the 4th Republic as noted by (Ayee 2012; Ayee, 2008).

Moreover, equity and inclusivity have also been identified as a challenge in Ghana's decentralization effort to promote effective local development (Kpentey, 2019; Debrah, 2016). Kpentey (2019) concludes that Promoting equity, inclusivity, and social cohesion

through targeted interventions and affirmative action measures is vital for reducing inequalities and promoting sustainable development at the local level. Therefore, policy makers must address disparities in local development and ensure that decentralization benefits all citizens, including marginalized communities and vulnerable groups (Kpentey, 2019; Debrah, 2016; Antwi–Boasiako, 2010). Another challenge presented by Bob-Milliar (2012) is the adoption of the "winner takes all" strategy in partisan politics which undermines the efforts of decentralization.

Gyimah–Boadi, (2009) and Ahwoi, (2010) argue that decentralization is less effective when the central government continues to determine what is allocated to the MMDAs in terms of resources and development projects. This stems from the fact that the central government has absolute sovereignty over the MMDAs which hinders the autonomy and decision-making power of local governments. While decentralization aims to promote participation and inclusivity in development planning at the local level, Ghana's decentralization policy framework is marred by limited participation, projects discontinuity, and lacks inclusivity at the local level (Ayee, 2012; Ahwoi, 2017; Kpentey, 2019). By addressing these challenges and building on its democratic strengths, Ghana can continue to advance its democratic aspirations and promote inclusive, equitable, and sustainable development for all its citizens.

2.6 Previous Research

Extensive research in both developed and developing countries have explored the reasons behind project abandonment, particularly why many development projects fail to reach completion (Ayodele & Alabi, 2011; Sambasivan & Soon, 2007; Banerjee et.al., 2013; Samuels, 2002; Makalah, 2008; Perkins, 2006). For instance, Chima and Iko (2022) examined the causes of government project failure in developing nations. Their research focused on the central government and how regime change affects project continuity. They conclude and add that project development and continuity are significantly impacted by government changes, and they suggest that maintaining project continuity is one of the most reliable strategies to prevent financial resources from being wasted. Likewise, in South Africa, John (2012) conducted a study on why most government construction projects in some cities are never completed. He finds that poor budgetary allocation, corruption, and poor planning on the part of the central government are the causes of project abandonment.

Moreover, Olusegun & Michael (2011) carried out a study that determined the causes and effects of abandonment of development projects in Nigeria. They find that the causes of project abandonment are inadequate project planning, inadequate funds, variation of project scope, and delayed payment on the part of the central government. Similarly, Rasul and Rogger, (2017), conducted a quantitative study in exploring the influence of corruption on development projects completion in Nigeria. They find that twenty-five (25%) of government development projects in Nigeria that start are never completed attributing this to corruption among political elites.

According to Williams (2017), a significant portion of development initiatives in Ghana fall short of completion. His analysis of 14,000 development projects undertaken between 2011 and 2013 reveals that one-third are never finished, consuming nearly one-fifth of local government investment. Williams attributes this to commitment problems faced by political actors in contexts of limited resources.

Moreover, Ackah (2020), finds that the majority of the abandoned projects in Ghana date back to 1957. His Study identified several factors, including a deficient planning and budgeting system, insufficient money, a lack of continuity in government initiatives, and subpar service delivery. According to Ackah's study, projects have been abandoned since the 2000s whenever there is a change in government. The study reveals that successive auditor reports have shown that the state lost over \$30 million in 2017 as a result of projects being abandoned, and assemblies awarding new contracts when previous ones remain unfinished. Ackah thus calls for the government to make project abandonment a punishable offence. This has been a hindrance to Ghana's decentralization program of bringing development to the grassroots.

In addition, Evidence of a strong connection between partisanship and public sector management is presented by Akwei et al. (2020). Their investigation into the political influence on project execution reveals a high rate of failure or abandonment for government initiatives, leading to significant financial losses for the state. Therefore, the political climate fosters the failure of government initiatives and programs. Examples from their study include the Community Day School Building Projects, Senior High School Education Reform, and Affordable Housing Projects. Congruent with this, Daddieh and Bob-Milliar (2012) also

investigate the influence of partisanship and project discontinuity. Their study finds that the discontinuity of projects in Ghana has largely been influenced by partisan politics. They argue that project management and administrative leadership appointments coupled with the award of project contracts are made on partisanship and patronage. This has been a major hindrance to the development of the Country since the 4th republic.

Damoah et al. (2022) also add that in the road infrastructure sector, partisanship has taken a huge toll on the award and implementation of projects. Therefore, most projects are discontinued anytime there is a change in government. The study recommends a bi-partisan approach in addressing such excesses. Also, Nsiah, (2015) argues that this level of partisanship in the politics of Ghana has proven to have enormous ramifications including project implementation and discontinuity.

Furthermore, Akwei et al. (2022) identify several key challenges hindering community engagement in development programs: limited resources, conflicting interests, information gaps, public resistance to change, and interventions by political actors and central government.

In addition, Damoah et al. (2021), also investigate the influences of the central government on development projects in Ghana. Their study concludes that the majority of projects are abandoned due to a variety of factors, including culture, external pressures, resource limits, administrative bottlenecks, and inadequate political leadership. This further suggests that policies and initiatives are centered on politics and permeate the atmosphere of a weak local public sector, which typically manages these initiatives and their execution. closely examining these factors reveals a concerning bias toward research focused on the central government. This emphasis is perhaps untenable in the modern era, where effective governance necessitates empowering local government entities to manage grassroots affairs.

While previous studies have greatly focused on the nexus between corruption and project discontinuity (John, 2012; Perkins, 2006; Sambasivan & Soon, 2007; Banerjee et.al., 2013; Samuels, 2002; Rasul & Rogger, 2017) or the influence of partisanship on project discontinuity (Daddieh & Bob-Milliar, 2012; Akwei et al., 2020; Ackah, 2020; Akorful et al. 2022; Damoah et al., 2022) or limited resources faced by the central government and how that

influence projects discontinuity (Williams (2017; Damoah et al. 2021; Olusegun & Michael, 2011; Chima and Iko, 2022).

Despite these factors been studied extensively, the impact of partisan appointments within decentralized system and project discontinuity has been understudied in emerging democracies.

Therefore, building upon the existing literatures, this paper fills this gap and contributes to the discussion by investigating the understudied phenomenon of how *partisan appointments of local leaders* within a *decentralized system* lead to *project discontinuity*, with a specific focus on Ghana and the appointment of Local Municipal Chiefs.

Chapter Three: Theoretical Review

This section discusses the related theories that contribute to the understanding of decentralization and project discontinuity.

3.1 Principal Agent Theory

Principal-agent theory is a conceptual framework used in political science, economics, and organizational theory to analyze the relationship between two parties: the principal and the agent. The theory provides valuable insight for understanding the relationship between a principal and an agent, and the incentives that drive the agent's decisions making (Gailmard, 2014).

The theory examines situations where one party (the principal) delegates authority or tasks to another party (the agent) to act on their behalf. The principal-agent relationship typically involves a misalignment of interests between the principal and the agent, leading to potential conflicts hence agency dilemma. The theory posits that to ensure they share common interests, incentives are created such as performance-based compensation, contracts, and performance evaluations aimed to motivate agents to act in the best interests of the principal. This process of structuring incentives for the agent is the central focus of principal-agent theory (Gailmard, 2014).

In the context of decentralization and local government where power and authority are delegated among various levels of an organization or government, The Theory offers valuable insights into the dynamics of delegation, accountability, and incentive alignment within decentralized structures (Groot, 1988). Effective governance requires mechanisms to hold agents accountable for their actions and ensure they represent the interests of principals dependably. Elections, oversight institutions, and transparency measures serve as accountability mechanisms in democratic systems.

When examining project discontinuity, particularly in the context of decentralization and local government, the theory highlights how elected representatives may prioritize reelection or party interests over the preferences of their constituents. Bureaucrats may pursue departmental goals or personal agendas that diverge from broader policy objectives.

Therefore, considering the implications of principal-agent theory on local government operations, policymakers can make informed decisions to improve governance effectiveness.

3.2 Public Choice Theory

The Public choice theory provides valuable insights into governance inefficiencies by emphasizing how self-interested behavior and decision-making processes within the public sector can lead to suboptimal outcomes. The theory posits that individuals, including elected officials and public administrators, often act in their self-interest rather than the public interest (Schneider & Damanpour, 2002). This perspective is crucial when examining governance challenges, as it underscores the importance of understanding how incentives and motivations influence decision-making.

When exploring the relationship between public choice theory and governance inefficiencies, it is essential to consider the impact of factors such as fiscal transparency, and corruption. Chen and Neshkova (2020) discuss how public choice theory can be used to analyze the significance of government disclosure of fiscal information, shedding light on the role of transparency in mitigating corrupt practices. By understanding the incentives at play, policymakers can design mechanisms that promote accountability and reduce governance inefficiencies.

In the context of local government, public choice theory has been instrumental in analyzing service contracting and organizational performance. Boyne (1998) suggests that larger public organizations may perform poorly due to the effects of scale offsetting competitive benefit, illustrating how organizational size can impact service delivery. By considering the implications of public choice theory on local government operations, policymakers can make informed decisions to improve governance effectiveness.

When examining project discontinuity, particularly in the context of transportation megaprojects, the integration of public choice theory reveals factors such as changes in project scope, government bureaucracies, and conflicts between agencies as contributors to delays (Plotch, 2015). This highlights how the decision-making process influenced by self-interest and bureaucratic complexities can lead to project disruptions.

3.3 Rational Choice Theory

The rational choice theory posits that individuals make decisions by weighing the costs and benefits of different options and choosing the one that maximizes their self-interest or utility. The theory emphasizes the importance of cost-benefit analysis in decision-making. Individuals assess the costs and benefits of each option and choose the one that offers the greatest net benefit or utility (Fiorina, 2001).

In the context of political science, the theory is used to analyze voting behavior, political participation, and decision-making by politicians and policymakers. It provides insights into how individuals and groups make political choices based on their preferences, incentives, and constraints (Fiorina, 2001).

In the context of local government and decentralization, the theory provides a framework for understanding how elected officials, bureaucrats, and other stakeholders make decisions based on their perceived costs, benefits, and constraints. The theory posits that elected officials and bureaucrats in local government consider various policy options based on their potential to address community needs, fulfill campaign promises, or advance political agendas (Fiorina, 2001). The theory emphasizes that bureaucratic decision-making may be influenced by factors such as agency goals, institutional norms, performance incentives, and political pressures from elected officials or interest groups. By understanding the rational calculations underlying local government decision-making, policymakers can better anticipate, analyze, and influence the outcomes of public policy processes at the local level.

When examining decentralization and project discontinuity, the theory recognizes that decision-making in project selection, implementation, continuity and discontinuity is influenced by various factors, including organizational culture, limited resources, policymakers' preferences, and contextual dynamics, which may complement or diverge from purely rational calculations. This helps us understand how self-preferences, advancement of political agendas, limited resources and bureaucratic complexities can influence project discontinuity.

3.4 Application of Theories to the Study

The study applies and contributes to a new theoretical view by finding an intersection between the Principal Agent theory, Rational choice theory, and Public Choice theory. This provides valuable insights to understand how individuals, including elected officials, appointed bureaucrats, and public administrators often act in their self-interest and prioritize reelection or party interests over the preferences of their constituents. This intersection helps us to understand and examine governance challenges at the local level, as it underscores the importance of understanding how self-interest preferences, incentives, and motivations influence decision-making at the local level. Consequently, affecting project discontinuity at the local level within the decentralized framework.

CHAPTER FOUR

This chapter describes how the qualitative research design was employed in the study. It also presents the profile of the study area, information about the participants (population), how they were selected, and the process the study employed to collect data. The chapter also discusses the analysis plan and ethical issues used in the study.

4.1 Profile of the Study Area

Asante Akim South Municipal Assembly is one of the Forty-Three (43) Administrative Municipals in the Ashanti Region. The Asante Akim South Municipal was created in furtherance of the Government's decentralization policy which established the Assembly with its headquarters situated at Juaso via Legislative Instrument, L.I. 1409 of 1988. The Asante Akim South was elevated to Municipal Status in 2017 via Legislative Instrument (L.I) 2263 of 2017. The Asante Akim South Municipal is in the Eastern part of the Ashanti region. The municipality is bordered by seven (7) other districts. Four (4) of the districts are in the Eastern Region and the remaining three (3) in the Ashanti Region. Its eastern border forms part of the regional boundary dividing the Ashanti and the Eastern regions. According to the 2021 population and housing census, the provisional population of the municipality stood at 123,633 with a growth rate of 2.3%. The Municipal covers a total surface area of about 1217.7 square kilometers (472.4sq miles) which forms about five percent (5%) of the total area of the Ashanti Region, and 0.5 percent of the total area of the country. The Municipal has a location advantage as the "Gateway to the Ashanti Region". It offers much marketing potential to foster its development from the national capital, Accra. Its location on the Accra - Kumasi highway exposes it to the potential investors, travelers and tourists entering the region.

The Municipality for this study was selected because, since 1996, the New Patriotic Party (NPP) has won both presidential and parliamentary elections in the Asante Akim South Municipal. Thus, it is expected that local-level development projects inherited from the National Democratic Congress (NDC) by the Current NPP regime from 2016 will be continued since it's regarded as their stronghold. This helps to address potential bias that may arise out of the study.

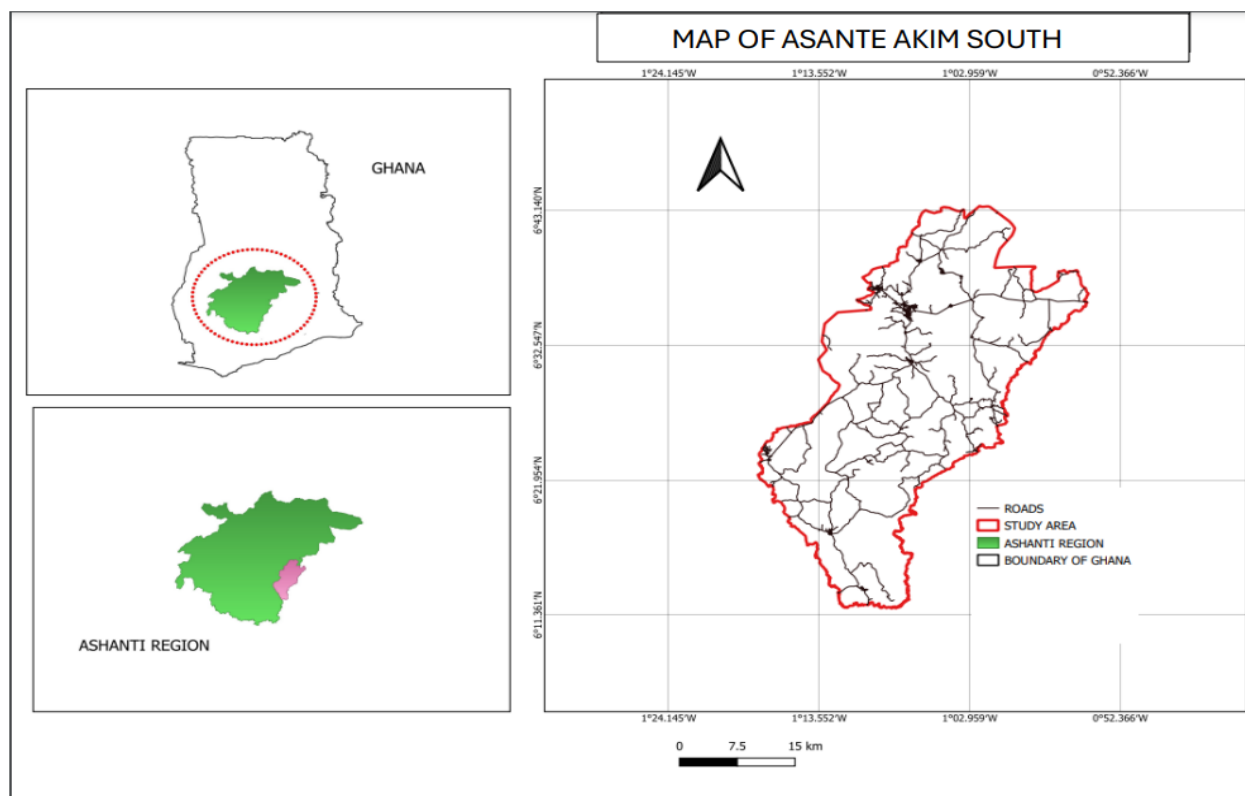


Figure 1: Map of Ghana and the Ashanti region showing the location of Asante Akim South. Source: Designed by the author using shape files

4.2 Research Design

This study will employ a qualitative research design. A qualitative research design aims at achieving a comprehensive understanding of a social phenomenon within the natural setting relying on the lived experiences of people. Qualitative research aims not to verify a predetermined idea but to a discovery that leads to new insights focusing on natural settings (Sherman & Webb, 1988). According to McCusker and Gunaydin (2015), qualitative research helps to assist in providing answers to what, why, or how inquiries about phenomena and helps to identify pertinent findings of the study. This design also helps to address a research issue and comprehend competing theories about a phenomenon, (Roulston & Shelton, 2015).

The study employed qualitative research to provide detailed arguments and narratives, in contrast to quantitative studies, which are mostly limited to questionnaires that yield confirmative and restricted responses (Tharenou et al., 2007). It helps obtain a varied source of data to critically explore the views and perceptions of the various actors (Public servants,

Assembly members, and Local constituents) who are directly and indirectly involved in the governance at the local level within the decentralization policy framework to enrich the study's findings. This will aid in doing an in-depth and comprehensive analysis as well as understanding the factors and mechanisms by which political affiliations influence project discontinuity at the local level within the decentralization framework.

4.3 Population

Agyedu et al. (2007) define a population as the entire group of people (subjects), things, or events that the researcher is interested in observing and that share a common set of observable characteristics. This research focuses on three key groups i.e., public servants, Assembly members, and local Municipal constituents who have spent more than ten (years) in the municipality. This is along with the view of Marshall (1996), who opines that qualitative researchers recognize that some informants or participants are ‘richer’ than others and that these people are more likely to provide insight and understanding for the researcher. These three target groups interact and play key roles in the local level of governance within Ghana’s decentralized framework.

4.4 Sampling Technique and Sample Size

The study used a purposive simple technique to select 30 participants for the study. The purposive sampling strategy enables the researcher to select participants who could provide the required information for the research (Farrugia, 2019). According to Bricki and Green (2018), purposive sampling ensures that the sample is credible, and covers the main groups in which the researcher is interested. In this study, I focused on three key groups i.e., public servants, Assembly members, and local municipal constituents within the Municipality. I employed a purposive sampling technique to choose participants for the interviews because they are considered key grassroots actors and knowledgeable on local governance administration within Ghana’s decentralized policy framework in the Asante Akim South Municipality and are likely to generate useful data and contribute significantly to the study.

Table 4.1: Sampling method and sample size

Category	Purposive Sampling
-----------------	---------------------------

Public Servants	10
Assembly Members	10
Local Constituents	10
Total	30

4.5 Data Source

In this particular research, I used primary data (interviews) to gain insights into mechanisms by which political affiliations influence project discontinuity at the local level. Primary data were collected using both structured and semi-structured interviews to collect data from the participants. Interviews allow for the collection of a holistic and integrated view of the research issue from the perspective of the research participants and provide more in-depth information than other methods (Mason, 2002). According to Gillham (2004), conducting interviews enables the interviewer to elicit responses from the interviewee for a specific objective.

4.6 Data Collection Instrument (Interview)

Data collection involves a series of interrelated activities aimed at gathering good information to answer emerging research questions (Creswell & Poth, 2018). The data collection instrument used in this research was an interview, using structured and semi-structured questions based on the nature of the topic and the kind of data the researcher seeks to collect. Structured interview questions are composed of completely pre-set standardized questions, usually closed-ended (Seidman, 2006). According to Gillham (2004), structured interview questions are straightforward, focused, and closed-ended. Ensuring that the interviewee understands the questions and provides accurate responses is crucial for the interviewer. On the other hand, Semi-structured interviews are characterized by their guided, concentrated, and open-ended nature. Stephens (2010), opines that semi-structured interviews provide the opportunity to gain an account of the values and experiences of the respondent in terms meaningful to them. They are co-created by the interviewer and interviewee and occur outside the regular course of life (Miller & Crabtree, 1992). This allowed the researcher greater scope

for in-depth probing of the respondents' experiences, thus enabling exploration of the complex feelings and attitudes about the research topic.

Primary data for the study was collected using pre-planned structured and semi-structured questions. Respondents were contacted via phone, email, WhatsApp, and Zoom, with their permission, to gather data. Visual observations were made, and an audio recording device was used to record the interviewees' responses. Additionally, keynotes were taken during the interviews (Creswell & Creswell, 2018). The majority of the respondents agreed to a meeting time and venue, and the research discouraged disruptions and interruptions by discussing appropriate ways to handle them and their implications for respondents' privacy, time, and communication flow. While the data collection process was expected to be completed within two months i.e. February and March 2024, there were some processes that I adhered to.

The researcher sent a consent form to the Municipal Assembly to gain access to the public servants, and local constituents as well as the contact information of the Assembly members in the Municipality. Although the initial plan was to interview all the thirty (30) assembly members of the Municipality, however, due to time differences, the busy schedule of some participants and some being anxious and skeptical about the out of the study decided to opt-out. This did not have a significant impact on the study and the data collection since less than five (5) people among the target group opted out.

4.7 Pilot Study

Before conducting my study, I began with two pilot interviews for two reasons. First, to identify challenges that participants could have regarding the interpretation of the interview questions and adjust the phrasing to suit the context. Secondly, I wanted to identify certain barriers to the study which could be ethical, time-related, and grammatical errors before administration. After piloting the study, some questions were eliminated while others were added. I adjusted the technical terms and used context examples when asking questions.

4.8 Data Analysis Plan

The data collected by interviews were analyzed using thematic analysis. Thematic analysis is a method for identifying, coding, analyzing, and reporting patterns (themes) within data (Braun & Clarke, 2006). A theme captures something important about the data, about the

research question and represents some level of patterned response or meaning within the data set (Ibid). Cypress (2018) also advises that the transcripts are read in their entirety several times to understand them better and make the interviews come alive before breaking them into parts; in her view, this allows the researcher to approach the data in a new light. Braun and Clarke (2006) outlined a 5-point with 15 criteria process that a good thematic analysis must adhere to which include, transcription, coding, analysis, overall, and written report.

This Study adopted the (Braun & Clarke, 2006) thematic analysis method because the process is an easy and quick method to learn, flexible, can usefully summarize key features of a large body of data, and can highlight similarities and differences across the data set. Results are generally accessible to educate the general public which informs policy development (Ibid). After obtaining the data, the researcher initially examines the data to ensure that all variables are represented. Each question item will be given a numerical value by the researcher, who will then code the replies and follow the qualitative process below;

Table 4.2 Thematic Analysis Process

Process	Criteria
Transcription	Voice and keynotes taken from the interview have been transcribed to an appropriate level of detail and checked with the tape for accuracy.
Coding	Each data set has been assigned to identification items (themes) through a thorough and Inclusive process to reflect the objectives of the study. Themes are coherent, consistent, and distinctive.
Analysis	The data or themes have been interpreted, linked to the research questions, and objectives, juxtaposed to the literature, and practical implications. Also, the narrative is well illustrated, consistent, and convincing.
Overall	All themes within the data set have been adequately covered. There is no inclusion and exclusion to distort the data.
Written Report	The overall analysis is good, result achieved ethical and confidential issues adhered to.

Source: Adapted from Braun & Clarke, 2006.

4.9 Reliability and Validity

In this study, several measures were employed to ensure the reliability and validity of the data collection and analysis. The research first maintained detailed records of the research process, including data collection procedures, coding schemes, and analytical decisions, allowing for transparency and replicability to ensure reliability. This also conforms with the recommendations made by Saunders, Lewis, and Thornhill (2012) on the three common approaches to ensuring the reliability of questions: tests and re-test, internal consistency, and alternative form. Also, a triangulation process was employed to corroborate findings (interview data), to the literature, and the data analysis process, enhancing the credibility of the research. The validity of the results was established by sharing preliminary findings with participants to verify accuracy and ensure that their perspectives were accurately represented ensuring consistency and coherence of the results with the research design, research questions, underlying theories, and data analysis.

4.10 Ethical Consideration

To perform the study ethically, equitably, and responsibly towards all persons involved, I considered ethical issues a crucial component of my research. Firstly, I obtained permission from the Asante Akim South Municipal Assembly to gain access to the public servants, Assembly members, and the local constituents. Informed consent was sought by first informing the participants about the objectives of the study, and guaranteeing them the right to decide not to take part in the process (Sanchini et al. 2014) in a manner free from any form of coercion. The participants were also informed about their rights to withdraw from the interview if they felt uncomfortable at any point. Moreover, they were also informed about the right to decline to answer any question they felt uncomfortable with.

In addition, the researcher assured the participants of the confidentiality of the study and informed them that their names would not appear in the final report (Israel, 2015). The paper used pseudonyms to ensure the anonymity of the participants to protect their identity (Birt et al., 2016). Also, the data collected was stored in a password-protected computer of the researcher and a backup on a secure online data storage.

CHAPTER FIVE: PRESENTATION OF RESULTS

This chapter presents the empirical results of the data collected. The data were collated, and key themes were identified. The purpose of the study was to examine the role of Partisan appointment of MMDCEs on project (dis)continuity and also investigate the best alternative institutional arrangements for the selection of MMDCEs that could promote greater continuity in development initiatives in the Asante Akim South Municipality. First, the background information or characteristics of the participants are examined, and then the thematic analysis is followed (Braun and Clark, 2006). The chapter is organized under the main themes (i.e. Partisan politics, political clientelism and corruption, limited resources/ finance, and Election of MMDCEs) that emerged from the coding process. The themes were analyzed in order of how often they were mentioned and the number of respondents who mentioned them.

5.1 Characteristics of the Participant

The study focused on three key groups of participants in the municipality, thus public servants, Assembly members, and local municipal constituents. Observing confidentiality, research ethics, and encouraging candid responses each key group was given a unique ID hence this study refers to public servants as (PS1-PS10), assembly members as (AS1-AS10), and local constituents as (LC1-LC10).

The interview inquired about the interviewees' gender, age, educational level, profession, and how long they have lived or worked in the Municipality. The data shows that 16 of the participants were male whereas 9 were females. This study did not take into consideration the gender difference hence it does not influence the data. The data showed that the majority of the participants (i.e. Assembly members and local constituents) have lived for more than years in the municipality.

Table 5.1: Background information of Participants

SN	Gender	Age	Years lived/worked	Educational level
PS1	M	43	8	Tertiary
PS1	M	36	6	Tertiary
PS3	F	50	9	Tertiary

PS4	M	29	4	Tertiary
PS4	F	38	7	Tertiary
PS6	M	49	8	Tertiary
PS7	F	27	4	Tertiary
PS8	F	33	6	Tertiary
PS9	M	28	3	Tertiary
PS10	M	56	10	Tertiary
AS1	M	43	36	Secondary
AS2	M	47	37	Tertiary
AS3	M	39	20	Tertiary
AS4	M	40	19	Secondary
AS5	M	45	25	Tertiary
AS6	F	37	23	Tertiary
AS7	M	47	38	Tertiary
AS8	M	51	40	Secondary
AS9	M	39	30	Secondary
AS10	F	43	43	Tertiary
LC1	M	38	25	Primary
LC2	M	29	20	Secondary
LC3	F	44	44	Secondary
LC4	F	48	29	Tertiary
LC5	M	37	30	Secondary
LC6	F	27	27	Secondary

5.2 Partisan politics

Partisan politics was one of the key themes that emerged from the study. Partisan politics, characterized by strong allegiance to political parties and ideological divisions, has had a

significant impact on the decision-making processes within Ghana's decentralization framework and ultimately led to project abandonment. The majority of the participants agreed that partisan politics has been one of the obstacles to local development in the Municipality. This manifests when there is a change in the regime, thus government programs and projects initiated in the municipality are discontinued due to the policies of the new government to meet their campaign promises. Therefore, continuing the previous government's projects will mean the incumbent government (MCE) has not done anything or is not doing anything. Respondents perceived this happens because such development programs and projects in the Municipality will not be credited to the new party that assumes power². When asked whether there is a relationship between the appointment of MMDCEs and project discontinuity, one participant indicated that;

“Yes, because the MCE represents the president in this Municipality. He places commitment to the government's development programs in the municipality at its core, thus prioritizing party loyalty over community needs. He can't just do anything. He has to follow party lines to implement projects”. (LC3)

One Assembly member strongly offered this observation that indeed there is a relationship between the MCE and project discontinuity in the Municipality. He also said that;

“The MCE decides which project to continue and to start in this Municipality. Let me tell you that most of the Assembly members are NPP members so there is no way we will sabotage the government. Anything the MCE brings for consideration at the General Assembly we support it because we know it's good for our party” (AS7).

This was corroborated by one public servant who indicated that;

“When they start a project, a lot of commitment is shown to complete it but they don't feel obligated to continue projects of predecessors, especially from a different political party. They only show concern when their party initiated the said project and they are still in power” (PS8)

² LC2, LC3, LC4, PS3, PS6, PS7, PS9, PS10, AS1, AS2, AS3, AS4, AS5, AS9, AS10

The data shows that the MCE actively seeks to maintain his popularity in the municipality as persistent protests from the grassroots party members can lead to his removal by the President. Therefore, to satisfy the material motives of his party members in the municipality, he follows party lines in project continuity, selection, and expenditure decisions³. One participant said that;

“We judge the government performance based on the Physical projects we see in the municipality. So, if the MCE doesn’t follow the party to implement projects, we the party members will call for his sack”. (LC1)

Another participant also opined that;

“They usually abandoned projects due to politics because these projects are sometimes used by party members as a campaign tool for the government of the day” (PS6)

A further question of *why* revealed that, politicians are interested in winning the next elections so development programs and initiatives are tailored on a partisan basis to what will make them popular in the next elections in the Municipality. Also, the majority of respondents agreed that a lot of ‘sod cutting’ is done in an election year, so when there is a regime turnover those projects are discontinued as a result of the new government's programs. A further question revealed that physical project plays a major role in winning elections in Ghana. Therefore, these many ‘sod cutting’ are done just to show that the MCE (government) is working⁴.

One respondent said that;

“This year is an election year and already some projects have been commissioned by the MCE while a lot of projects which began under the NDC regime remained uncompleted. They do this to get more votes” (AS7)

A Local government staff also said that,

³ PS6, PS7, PS9, PS10, AS2, AS3, AS6, AS8, LC1, LC3

⁴ LC2, LC4, LC3, PS9, PS3, PS5, PS1, AS7, AS2, AS9, AS5, AS10.

“The MCE has shown no interest in projects that were started by the previous administration. This new Municipal assembly office was completed because he started it in 2017 and made sure he completed it in 2023. I can take you around the Municipality and you will see projects that have been left in the bush that were started by the NDC government. They only care about the next elections and what will make them popular” (LC4)

The data further shows that even though the municipal Assembly usually has consultations with the Chiefs and community leaders in the municipality on what kind of projects they need. However, the MCE uses his formal and informal powers in project continuity, selection, and implementation with his co-partisan Assembly members which often leads to project discontinuity when there is political turnover.⁵ One Assembly member opined that;

“We all know the MCE is a government appointee and I am also from the same party as him. He listens to the NPP assembly members more than the opposition NDC assembly members when it comes to project continuity, selection, and implementation” (AS9).

A local constituent also indicated that;

“They usually meet us to discuss what the government is doing in the Municipality. Sometimes they ask what we need and our concerns but the ultimate decision lies with the MCE and the municipal Assembly” (LC3)

The findings of this study show that the political appointments of MCEs which translate to partisan allocation of development projects have been a major challenge leading to the frequent interruption or abandonment of local projects in the Asante Akim South Municipality. The mechanism at play involves the MCE wielding both formal and informal powers to control all aspects of project lifecycles within the Municipality, including continuity, selection, implementation, and management.

5.3 Limited Resources/ Finance

Limited resources or finance at the Municipal Assembly was also one of the key themes that emerged. The data show that there are two main sources of funds in the Municipal Assembly

⁵ LC4, LC1, AS7, AS1, AS9, AS5, PS7, PS1, PS8, PS5, PS4

for development projects i.e. the District Assembly Common Fund (DACF) which is funded by the central government and the internally generated fund (IGF) which is the Assembly's own generated funds. Project discontinuity manifests when politicians make unrealistic campaign promises. The majority of the Respondents agreed that the demand for development projects is great but resources are scarce or limited. Therefore, to win more votes politicians make unrealistic campaign promises without knowing how they are going to fund such projects. Consequently, if the allocated budget for the project is depleted due to economic downturns or changes in priorities, the Municipal Assembly may have no choice but to discontinue the project.⁶ One respondent opined that;

“They ‘cut sod’ for more development projects when they know they don’t have the funds available. The funds that come from the central government (DACF) are used on projects that will benefit the government but such funds are not enough” (PS8).

Another local government worker also said that;

“The DACF is just 5% of Ghana’s total budgeted revenue which is paid to the 275 MMDAs. So, what goes to each district or municipality is very small for development projects. The money is put into projects which began under the current regime so if they go out of power such project is abandoned because the new regime also has its new projects” (PS4)

One Assembly member also Opined that;

“The government even knows the funds for the various Municipalities are insufficient. If the MCE tries to reallocate a project from one community to another there will be protests. To satisfy everybody they start many small projects without having adequate funds to complete them” (AS7).

A further question of what kind of projects are more likely or susceptible to be abandoned in the municipality revealed that educational infrastructure and roads are more likely to be abandoned since such projects are largely financed from the DACF which is funded by the

⁶ PS4, PS5, PS7, PS8, PS9, PS10, AS3, AS4, AS5, AS6, AS8, AS9

central government compared to health facilities and others which are largely funded through donor support from governmental and non-governmental organizations in the Asante Akim South Municipality. The data further shows that the IGF of the Municipal Assembly is also very low and also contributes to project abandonment in the Municipality⁷. One participant indicated that;

“The Assembly's own generated revenue for a year is very low and cannot even complete all small development projects within the same year in the Municipality” (PS10)

One Assembly member also offered this observation;

“We the Assembly members can also blame ourselves for the Assembly’s limited financial resources because we are not able to properly educate the people in our various electoral areas on the need to pay their property rate and the others which generate revenue for the assembly” (AS6).

The data further shows that there is no proper planning from the MCE and the Municipal Assembly on how to use these limited funds, particularly in the continuity of development projects. The majority of the respondents noted that this has also led to most projects being abandoned in the Asante Akim South Municipality⁸. One Public servant offered this observation;

“Let me tell you, there is no proper planning! There is no proper planning! As an assembly, the MCE chairs the Municipal planning committee and anything that comes for consideration at the General Assembly is what benefits his party. If you try to raise any suggestions or objections you will be tagged as an NDC member. You can even be transferred from the Municipality. We are where we are as a result of politics” (PS8)

Another respondent also indicated that;

⁷ AS3, AS5, AS6, AS8, AS10, PS1, PS3, PS5, PS7, PS8, PS10, LC2, LC3

⁸ PS1, PS2, PS4, PS6, PS8, PS9, A2, AS4, AS5, AS7, AS8, AS9, LC1, LC4

“Planning is important in everything. off course our resources are limited as an Assembly but this problem is not peculiar to this Assembly alone. This is a national issue with successive governments. Who are you to challenge the MCE when he says something” (PS10)

The data shows that even though limited financial revenue has also contributed greatly to project discontinuity in the Asante Akim South municipality, The MCE using his formal and informal powers together with partisan Assembly members determines how these limited funds are used concerning project continuity or otherwise.

5.4 Political Clientelism and Corruption

Political clientelism and corruption were also some of the key themes that emerged from the study. The analysis of the data shows that political clientelism and corruption have also been one of the main challenges of project discontinuity in the Asante Akim South municipality. The majority of respondents agree that this manifests when there is regime turnover, most contracts of development projects in the Municipality are terminated by the MCE, and the same is been re-awarded to the party faithful. Contractors then discontinue such programs and projects without fear of arrest or prosecution. This happens because the MCE chairs the most powerful committees in the Municipal Assembly (i.e. the Executive Committee and the Municipal Planning Committee). Hence, he uses his formal and informal powers to influence partisan committee members on expenditure and budget allocation. The respondents agree that this has been a major challenge for successive governments over the years and has contributed enormously to project discontinuity in the Asante Akim South Municipality⁹. One Public servant observed that;

“I have been in this Municipal Assembly for over nine years I can tell you that anytime a new MCE assumes office even from the same party, most small development projects are reviewed and most of them are either terminated or re-awarded to new a contractor. I can tell you it doesn't help the Assembly and the municipality at all” (PS10).

This was corroborated by one local constituent who opined that;

⁹ PS4, PS9, PS1, PS3, PS8, AS7, AS1, AS6, AS9, LC4, LC2

“I can tell you that there is a 3-unit class block in ‘Atta ni Atta community’ which started in 2013 and has been abandoned. Anytime there is a new MCE you see that new a contractor is working on it but they stop later and when you ask you don’t get any positive feedback from the assembly” (LC3).

Another assembly member also observed that;

“Contracts being re-awarded is normal in politics in Ghana. we have worked for the party to come to power and that’s the only way they also show appreciation to us. Anything the MCE brings for consideration at the general assembly level we the party members always support it. I can tell you that every assembly member's wife or sister has been awarded the school feeding contract. Let me tell you that, if NDC comes to power they will do the same”. (AS7).

The data further shows that, even those that the contracts are being re-awarded to have little knowledge or expertise when it comes to project management. The majority of respondents suggested that this happens because most party members set up companies including the MCE himself so such contracts are awarded to them rather than to qualified people who execute the projects as contractors. Therefore, it has contributed to most projects been discontinued anytime there is a change in government. A further question of why someone with little knowledge or expertise could win a contract over a qualified contractor revealed these observations from some respondents;

“This is not new in Ghana politics. laughs (...), Everybody works hard for his party to come to power to enjoy. The MCE knows that everybody can’t be MCE and he is only there to represent our party and the people. Even the constituency Chairman in this Municipality has been awarded some small development contracts. That’s the only way for the party to appreciate him” (AS7).

“We suffered in the opposition between 2008 and 2016. So, what is wrong if the MCE awards party members contracts? These are even small development contracts. At times big contracts that come to the Municipality are awarded to the contractor by the central government before they even get to the municipal Assembly. It is a norm in Ghana politics and you can even ask some of the NDC members” (AS4)

The observation further shows that even those with expertise in project management and implementation pay bribes and ‘kickbacks’ before the contract is awarded to them. The analysis reveal that they pay between 10% to 20% of the contract sum to the politicians (not the MCE alone but the big boys in the party) especially when it comes to road construction and large development projects before it is awarded to them. These payments are seen as a necessary step in the contract award process. While not officially sanctioned, refusing to participate will disadvantage a contractor from being awarded a contract. Therefore, contractors have no option but to pay the ‘kickback’ to get the contract.¹⁰ This has contributed greatly to project disruptions in the Asante Akim South municipality.

Moreover, the analysis also shows that most small development project contract sums are inflated by the Assembly to reward new contractors (those faithful to the party) for their loyalty to the party in government and to use profits made from such programs and projects to fund the party in an election year. Even though the expectation is that once a project sum has been inflated it will see to its completion. However, the data revealed that these funds are shared among party members, and therefore only a small amount of money goes into the actual project. Therefore, because of insufficient funds the project is ultimately discontinued.

5.6 Election of the MMDCEs

The election of the MCE was one of the key themes that emerged from the study. The majority of respondents agreed that elected officials play critical roles in shaping public policy, ensuring government accountability, and representing the interests of their constituents. Therefore, the election of MMDCEs at the local level will allow those elected to seek the welfare of their electorates and represent the interests and concerns of their constituents in government. Thus, the advancement of the common good of the local people and their development will stand paramount. Respondents believe this will encourage greater participation in the policy process at the local level. This they believe will help reduce

¹⁰ PS8, PS4, PS7, PS9, LC1, LC3, LC5, LC4, AS3, AS5, AS1, AS9, AS10, AS2

These small development projects are markets, toilet facilities, chip compounds hospitals, and footbridges in the municipality.

governance inefficiencies, particularly in the context of project discontinuity at the local level¹¹. One respondent stated that;

“They should be elected. That is the only way we can hold them accountable and if you don’t perform, we vote you out. I think this will help bring development to the local level across the Various MMDAs” (PS6)

Another respondent also indicated that;

“The best way we can bring sustainable development at the local level is when we elect the various MMDCEs. This is something that the government and we the people have to take seriously. We cannot continue like this as a nation.” (PS3)

One Assembly member also said that;

“The same way we face election every four years, I think it will be good if the MMDCEs also face election. This will be good because they will be accountable. Laughs (...), but I doubt if this can materialize in Ghana” (AS7).

Further the data indicates that the election of the MMDCEs should occur through a non-partisan electoral process. The majority of the respondents believe that this will provide an opportunity for candidates to run for the office of MMDCE based on their individual merits and qualifications, rather than their alignment with a particular political party. This can attract a diverse pool of candidates with a range of perspectives and expertise, fostering independent leadership and innovation in governance at the local level. Respondents believe this will make elected officials seek the welfare of the electorates with less influence of partisan interest from the central government. Also, the elected MMDCEs will be more accountable to their constituents, rather than party leaders or political factions, fostering greater transparency, responsiveness, and trust in government institutions at the local level. Respondents are of the opinion that this measure will aid in reducing project interruptions within the Municipal Assembly.¹² one respondent offered this observation;

¹¹ PS2, PS4, PS9, PS1, PS3, PS8, AS7, AS3, AS5, AS1, AS6, AS9, LC4, LC2.

¹² AS2, AS4, AS6, AS7, AS9, PS2, PS5, PS8, PS9, PS10

“I think that MMDCEs should be elected. Simply because when one is apolitical in performing duties development is not skewed. Thus, an MMDCE administration won’t be biased. This will bring development at the local level” (LC2).

Another respondent also observed that;

“MMDCEs should be elected in a non-partisan way to prevent partisan influences or conflicts and also to promote transparency and accountability. This will make the MMDCEs directly accountable to the people they serve” (LC1)

Congruent with this, one public servant also opined that

“MMDCEs should be elected, but on a non-partisan basis. This is because most of the MMDCE are not performing their duties. After all, they know they are being backed by the current party in power, which isn’t right. the right person must be elected not on a partisan basis” (PS10).

Some Assembly members doubted if a non-partisan election of the MMDCEs would be possible in Ghana and offered this explanation;

“Let me tell you this, even the election of the Assembly members is supposed to be held in a non-partisan way but that is not the reality on the grounds. Everything is politics and I also have the party I belong to. The people in my electoral areas know I am an NPP supporter which is why they voted for me” (AS7).

“If MMDCEs can be elected in a non-partisan way in Ghana then is going to be good for our democracy. I am not saying this is not going to be possible but I tell you it will be difficult since everything in this country is politicized” (AS4).

The analysis further shows that the MMDCEs are sometimes not liked by the people in the municipality because they are not from the Municipality in some instances. Hence, there is no cordial relationship between the local constituents and the MMDCE resulting in him doing things without the general public's knowledge. The Majority of the respondents agreed that the MMDCEs should come from the municipality before they can be elected on a non-partisan basis. This is because elected MMDCEs will be familiar with the cultural nuances and context of their local area and are better equipped to address community needs and

preferences sensitively and effectively in municipal decision-making. This they believe will reduce project discontinuity in the Municipality.¹³

¹³ PS8, PS4, PS7, PS9, LC1, LC3, LC5, LC4, AS3, AS5, AS1, AS9, AS10, AS2

CHAPTER SIX: DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

This section of the study discusses the main findings of the study. The study explored research questions (1) What is the role of Partisan appointment of MMDCEs on project discontinuity? (2) What alternative institutional arrangements for the selection of MMDCEs could promote greater continuity in development initiatives? To answer question one the results from the study were categorized into several major themes including (partisan politics, limited resources/ finance, and clientelism and corruption) and to answer question two the study considered the following theme (election of MMDCEs).

6.1 The Role of Partisan Appointment of MMDCEs on Project Discontinuity

Understanding the mechanisms and factors that influence premature cessation of development projects particularly in the context of decentralization is important for decision makers. This is because policymakers can make informed decisions to improve governance effectiveness at the local level. It is theoretically argued that decentralization brings governance closer to the people at the local level and thus offers better opportunities for residents to participate in the decision-making process, enhancing transparency and government responsiveness (Awortwi, 2010; Ayee 2012; Rodden, 2006).

On the contrary, the findings from the study underscore the significant impact of partisan politics on the decision-making process within the decentralization framework. Therefore, affecting transparency and government responsiveness to the people's actual needs, particularly regarding project discontinuity at the municipal level. This study finds that the MCE in the municipality discontinued previous regimes' development projects due to the policies of the new government to meet their campaign promises. The continuation of prior administrations' projects by the incumbent MCE could be interpreted as a lack of novel initiatives or ongoing efforts to address the municipality's needs. Thus, Participants noted that physical projects play a significant role in winning elections in Ghana, leading to a surge in project commissioning and "sod-cutting" activities during election years.

These findings are congruent with the previous research of (Briggs, 2012; Weghorst & Lindberg 2013; Harding 2015) which finds that delivering infrastructure projects has been shown as a major contributing factor to winning votes for the incumbent in the Ghanaian

election. Also, Williams (2017) from his study finds that the completion rate of central government projects is higher in an election year because the incumbent views completing projects as more electorally beneficial than leaving them unfinished. This supports the findings of this study and helps us to understand why politicians commission a lot of projects in an election year and also 'cut sod' for more projects at the local level.

The findings highlight that to satisfy the material motives of his party members in the municipality, the MCE follows party lines in project continuity and discontinuity decisions. Bob-Milliar (2012) supports this notion, arguing that partisan politics in Ghana has fostered a national and political culture where political party membership functions as a form of "family," providing individuals with both social support and a sense of identity. This begs the question as to why a public official being paid with the taxpayers' money is interested in satisfying the material motives of his party. While this may be the reality on the grounds at the local level, the theories applied (Principal agent theory, Rational choice, and public choice theories) to the study help us understand this as it underscores how self-interest preferences, advancement of political agendas, incentives, and motivations influence decision-making at the local level. Could it be that the MCE is satisfying the interest of the President? or these elected officials are acting in their self-interest rather than the public interest? Nonetheless, this is consistent with the empirical studies by (Bob-Milliar, 2012; Asunka, 2016; Luna, 2015) which find that politicians and citizens in Ghana have a strong attachment to their political parties, their government, and their representatives.

Further, this study finds that resources are limited at the municipal Assembly and the mechanism through which this leads to project discontinuity is that the MCE uses his formal and informal powers alongside his co-partisan assembly members to make political decisions subject to his preferences and agendas on how these limited funds are used. This finding is supported by an earlier study conducted by Tennant and Clayton (2010) on infrastructural project implementation in Jamaica, which concluded that development projects in Jamaica faced serious and long-term challenges due to the political decisions of the central government. This study confirms the findings of my study of how political decisions affect project discontinuity. Moreover, poor planning on the part of the MCE has also contributed greatly to project discontinuity in the Municipality as pointed out by the respondents.

Previous studies (e.g. Pinto, 2013; Pourrostan & Ismail, 2011; Odeh & Battaineh 2002) find poor planning as the reason for most development project failures. However, they analyzed and discussed why projects get discontinued or fail in connection with the practitioners (technocrats). Although this study concentrates on the impact of partisan appointment of local chiefs and project discontinuity within the decentralized framework, it nevertheless contributes to and emphasizes the significant role of inadequate planning by political figures in project discontinuity at the local level.

Additionally, this study finds a strong link between political clientelism and corruption on the part of the MCE and how that contributes to project discontinuity. Respondents attributed the frequent project discontinuations within the municipality to the incoming MCE's practice of reviewing and terminating existing contracts upon assuming office. This is because the MCE chairs the most powerful committees (i.e. Municipal planning committee and the Executive committee) in the Municipality. These terminated contracts were then allegedly re-awarded to individuals affiliated with the governing party, regardless of their qualifications or project management competence. This they noted has contributed significantly to project discontinuity in the Municipality. This finding confirms the study by Yildirim and Kitschelt (2020) who conclude that development projects are often halted due to political clientelism among political actors. This is consistent with the findings of (Hwang & Ng, 2013; Gomes et al., 2012) who conclude that a competent and a skilled project manager has a significant influence on the success of the implementation of a project.

Moreover, the study reveals that even contractors awarded contracts are expected to pay bribes beforehand. This finding reinforces the perception of endemic corruption that has long plagued the country's public administration. This finding is supported by a study conducted by Luna (2015) which finds that party members conspire with contractors and government to embezzle government funds through projects contracts and then, pay back in the form of kickbacks. This is also congruent with Afrobarometer (2019) which find that the fight against corruption in the country is on a decline and that more than (53%) of Ghanaians believed corruption is on the high.

6.2 Alternative Institutional Arrangement for the Selection of MMDCEs

The selection of Metropolitan, Municipal, and District Chief Executives (MMDCEs) is a crucial aspect of local governance in many countries. In Ghana, there is growing interest in exploring alternative institutional arrangements for the selection of MMDCEs that could enhance greater continuity in development project, transparency, and local participation in the decision-making process at the local level. Previous studies (Asiamah et.al, 2005, Akorli, 2013, Agomor et.al, 2018) find that elections are a means of ensuring downward accountability as it affords electorates the real opportunity to make public officials accountable. Thus, calls for the election of MMDCEs in Ghana. Similarly, a study conducted in Senegal by Nanja (2019) also find that the elections of Local Municipal chiefs could potentially increase accountability to local constituents and empower communities to choose leaders who best represent their interests.

In contrast, Awotwi and Amakye (2020) present a pessimistic view regarding the viability of electing MMDCEs on a non-partisan basis in Ghana. Their findings suggest that such non-partisan elections would struggle to endure within a national government dominated by partisan politics.

However, this study finds that election of MMDCEs at the local level will allow those elected to seek the welfare of their electorates and represent the interests and concerns of their constituents in government. Respondents believe that this will help reduce governance inefficiencies, particularly in the context of project discontinuity at the local level. The finding is congruent with (Asiamah et.al, 2005, Akorli, 2013, Agomor et.al, 2018; Nanja, 2019).

The study further finds that the election of the MMDCEs should be based on non-partisan election. The majority of the respondents believe that this will provide an opportunity for candidates to run for the office of MMDCE based on their individual merits and qualifications, rather than their alignment with a particular political party. Again, this study adds that the MMDCEs should come from the municipality before they can be elected on a non-partisan basis. This is because by giving local communities more control over the

selection process, it helps to foster greater local ownership and responsiveness in governance particularly in the context of project discontinuity

CHAPTER SEVEN

In this section I present the conclusion of the study as well as the suggestion for future research and the limitation of the study.

7.1 Conclusion

The large body of scholarly literature has attributed the prevalence of project discontinuity across Africa to corruption (Banerjee et.al., 2013; Samuels, 2002; Rasul & Rogger, 2017) or inadequate Funding and Under bidding of projects (Hanacher,2010; Ugwu, 2015) or clientelism among political actors (Kumah-Abiwu, 2017; Devas & Grant, 2003; Daddieh & Bob-Milliar, 2012). However, the relationship between partisan appointments in a decentralized system and project discontinuity has received little attention. This paper fills this gap by investigating how *partisan appointments of local leaders* within a *decentralized system* lead to *project discontinuity*, with a specific focus on Ghana and the appointment of Municipal Chiefs. Thus, the objective of the study was to investigate this with a specific focus the role of partisan appointment of local municipal chiefs on project discontinuity and also to investigate the best alternative institutional arrangement for the selection of MMDCEs that could promote continuity in development projects at the local level in the Ghanaian context.

The study established that decentralization, while promising empowerment for local communities and increased government responsiveness, can be undermined by practices like the partisan appointment of local leaders. The study argued that partisan appointment of local municipal chiefs can significantly impact project discontinuity and effectiveness at the local level. When appointments are made based on political affiliations rather than merit or qualifications, it often leads to a project discontinuity when there is regime change. The study pinpointed three primary factors driving project discontinuity in the Municipality: partisan politics, political clientelism, corruption, and resource constraints. The interviewees provided a prevailing perspective that continuing previous government programs and projects could negatively impact the incumbent's chances during a general election, as voters might perceive a lack of tangible achievements. Consequently, politicians feel compelled to initiate new projects to bolster their electoral prospects. This dynamic contributes to project discontinuity in the Municipality. The mechanism at play is that the Municipal Chief Executive (MCE) wields both formal and informal powers alongside his co-partisan assembly members to make

political decisions regarding which projects from previous administrations should be continued or terminated within the Municipality, the limited financial resources available are often subject to the preferences and agendas of the MCE and assembly members, leading to inadequate planning, development project contracts may be re-awarded to party members, irrespective of their competency as project managers in the municipality and the MCE may prioritize satisfying the material desires of party members to enhance his popularity within the Municipality.

The study highlights the potential benefits of electing local Municipal Chiefs (MMDCEs). This approach could enhance accountability to local constituents and empower communities to choose leaders aligned with their interests. Consequently, it could contribute to a more effective decentralization process, ultimately leading to improved service delivery and community-driven development in Ghana. Building on prior calls for electing MMDCEs, this study emphasizes the importance of non-partisan elections. This ensures candidates focus on their individual merits and qualifications, rather than relying solely on political party affiliation.

7.2 Limitations of the Study

A key limitation of the study was the sample size of 30 participants. This number is relatively small compared to the total number of MMDAs (Municipal, Metropolitan, and District Assemblies) in Ghana (261). Furthermore, the purposive sampling technique used in participant selection may limit the generalizability of the findings to the broader population of MMDAs.

Furthermore, the data analysis relied solely on a one-way reliability approach, potentially introducing interpretative bias. This approach limits the ability to explore alternative perspectives within the data.

Additionally, the study faced challenges in participant recruitment due to time constraints, resource limitations, and busy schedules of potential participants. This resulted in some individuals opting out of the interview process, potentially affecting the representativeness of the final sample.

7.3 Suggestions for Future Research

Future research should do Comparative study to explore how context influences phenomena and how findings may vary across different Municipalities. An open area still remains to investigate the appointment of regional ministers who exercise unrestricted control over MMDCEs in the decentralization framework in Ghana. Also, future researcher should expand the sample size to make the results more generalizable. Further, future researchers should employ a third-party to conduct a thematic code of the interview responses to provide greater reliability and consistency.

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Appendix 1

Letter Of Consent

The Municipal coordinating Director
Asante Akim South Municipal Assembly
Dear Sir/Madam

My name is Emmanuel Kwabena Asare and I am a Master's student in Political Science at University of Gothenburg, Sweden. I am currently writing my Master's Thesis, which is a qualitative study that focuses on the impact of Partisan appointment of local Municipal chiefs within decentralization framework and project discontinuity in the Asante Akim south Municipality in Ghana. I would like to conduct a series of interviews with some local constituents, Assembly members and some staff at the municipal Assembly that aim at getting detailed understanding of the factors by which partisan appointments influence project discontinuity in the municipality. I would like to interview you through phone call, WhatsApp or zoom call or meeting you in-person via my research assistant for my research.

Participation in this research is entirely voluntarily and participant have the right to opt out or decided to decline any question they don't understand or feel uncomfortable about. The research is guided by ethical and confidentiality process while it also guarantees the anonymity of participants.

If there are any questions, please feel free to contact me or my Supervisor Dr. Michael Chanda Chiseni and we are happy to answer any question you might have. Your contribution is truly appreciated should you wish to participate. I look very much forward to hearing from you.

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Governance and local Dev. Institute
Department of Political Science
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Appendix 2

Informed Consent form

Thesis' Title: Partisan politics and Project discontinuity in decentralized Ghana. The case of Asante Akim South Municipality in Ghana

Researcher: Emmanuel Kwabena Asare

Tel:

Email:

Supervisor: Michael Chanda Chiseni

Tel:

Email:

- I voluntarily agree to participate in this research project.
- I understand that I have the right to withdraw from the research at any point and can decline to answer individual questions without giving reasons.
- I understand that I can withdraw permission to use data from my interviews within two weeks from the data collection and ask for the data to be deleted.
- I understand the purpose and nature of the study and I have the right to ask for clarification if I don't understand anything from the researcher.
- I agree with the interviews being recorded.
- I understand that I will receive a copy of the interview transcripts and have the right to ask for those transcripts to be adjusted when needed.
- I understand that all person identifying data will be removed from the report.
- I understand that I have the right to get access to the final report.

Participant's name:

Participant's contact information:

Signature:

Date:

Appendix 3

INTERVIEW GUIDE

A) Demographic background of respondents

Gender

Male Female

Age Group

Less than 18 years 18-35 36-59 60 and above

Educational Level

No formal education Secondary Tertiary Professional training

Profession

Civil Servant Assembly Member Other

How Long have you lived in the Municipality or worked at the Assembly?

B) Examine the role of decentralization on project (dis)continuity

1. Are you aware of any abandoned projects in your Municipality?
 Yes No
2. what kind of projects are more likely or susceptible to discontinuity?
 Educational infrastructure Healthcare Roads Other
3. Is there a relationship between the appointment of Metropolitan, Municipal, and District Chief Executives (MMDCEs) and project discontinuity?
 Yes No
4. If yes why
5. In your Opinion what other reasons do you think contribute to project discontinuity?
6. what is the source of funds for development project?
7. How would you describe the role of the MMDCE in your District toward project continuity?
8. In your experience how often do development project get discontinued before completion?
9. What are the main challenges faced in ensuring project continuity under different MMDCE administrations?
10. How does the involvement of the local community impact the sustainability of projects initiated by MMDCE
11. how would you rate the performance of your Municipal Assembly concerning project continuity and discontinuity?
12. How often do project initiated by one administration get continued or discontinued under different administration.
13. Which of the following is/are true?
 Consultations are made by MMDCEs through engagements before projects are undertaken
 MMDCEs implement government businesses without the needed public participation
 Projects in the District Assemblies emanate from public participation fora
 Projects in the District are tailored by the Government and implemented by MMDCEs

C) To investigate the best institutional arrangement for the selection of MMDCEs

1. Does the current state of appointment of MMDCEs good for our democracy?
2. Should MMDCEs be elected?
3. Kindly explain why to your answer above?
4. Does the current appointment process affect the sustainability of development projects in the municipality.
5. How does regime change affect development projects in this municipality.

Appendix 4

Gallery of some Abandoned Projects in the Municipality



