University of Reading

Decentralised Planning and 'Scales' of Participation

An Analysis of Multi-Scale Bottom-up Planning in Ghana

Thesis submitted for the Degree of

Doctor of Philosophy

Department of Real Estate and Planning

University of Reading

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May 2018

Abstract

This thesis explores how participatory planning interacts with spatial scale processes to translate decisions at a lower scale into decisions at a higher scale in Ghana. Decentralised participatory planning and decision-making have become important way of creating space for inter-scalar decision-making practices across three spatial scales, namely the unit committee, area/zonal council and district assembly. This thesis seeks to understand *what* the mechanisms of participatory planning at the unit committee are, *how* participatory decisions at the unit committee are incorporated into district-wide decisions and the rationales for translating unit committee decisions into district decisions. For this purpose, I developed and use a Multi-Dynamic Socio-Spatial Connectivity (MDSSC) framework of analysis. Conceptually, this thesis is focused on participation and spatial scale and I conducted case studies of unit committees, area/zonal councils and district assemblies as scales of decentralised participatory planning in Ghana.

The unit committee scale of study involved three mechanisms of participatory planning namely stakeholder sensitisation workshops, community forums and public hearings at Amanchia, Pasoro, Esaase and Mmorontuo unit committees. Using primary sources of information such as interviews and focus group disccusions, I show that with the exception of community forums, none of the mechanisms of participatory planning had been implemented. I extend my analysis to also explore the reasons for inability to implement stakeholder sensitisation workshops and public hearings and the consequent impact on active participation in unit committee planning. The findings suggest that financial and time constraints, local political influence and delay in the issuance planning guidelines by the National Development Planning Commission (NDPC) are fundamental to non-sensitisation and lack of public hearings in this case.

In the area/zonal and district assembly studies, I investigated how plans of the unit committees were translated and harmonised at the area/zonal council and district assemblies. Using secondary sources of information, I tried to illustrate the procedures established to undertake harmonisation and prioritisation of development needs at the area/zonal council and district scales. I also used information from in depth interviews and focus group discussions to analyse the realities of harmonising and prioritising unit committee plans into district plans and how these were shaped by singular/plural senses

of scale in harmonisation, harmonisation with scale jumping, bringing power into harmonisation and harmonising of scaled networks of connection. The findings highlighted that there was district-focused harmonisation with limited opportunities for active engagement of sub-district scales' actors in the harmonisation process. The findings also bring into light the rationales for harmonising unit committee plans into district plans namely politically-induced lobbying, decision-making with experience, technical feasibility and decision choices and spatial implications. The district-focused harmonisation was found to be less sensitive to the scalar relations among the units, area/zonal and district scales, leading to the formulation of district medium term development plans (DMTDPs) with less attention to their scalar expressions.

In the light of these findings, I argued that there was loss of scalar consciousness, which was operational within a scaled decentralised context of planning. Going beyond revealing the evidence of the loss of scalar consciousness, the study also illustrated the factors that are instrumental in giving rise to loss of scalar consciousness. Key among them are scale jumping with limited interaction, relationally weak networks of flows, and a weak sense of scaled spaces with strong political interests operating in planning and decision-making.

Declaration

I confirm that this thesis is my own work and the use of all material from other sources has been dully and fully acknowledged.

Maxwell Okrah

Acknowledgement

Finally, many have contributed to my data collection effort in Ghana, by sparing their time and effort in this endeavour. Key among them was Mr. Francis Sarkodie. I acknowledge the great support he provided as an assistant in my field work, particularly in conducting focus group discussions at the unit committee and district scales. He also helped in making some of the maps I used in this thesis. I am really grateful for his tireless work in my field work.

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List of abbreviations

AAP	Annual Action Plan
ALPs	Area Level Plans
ANDA	Atwima Nwabiagya District Assembly
CAP	Community Action Plan
CBOs	Community-Based Organisations
CDD	Centre for Democratic Development
DAs	District Assemblies
DBO	District Budget Officer
DCD	District Coordinating Director
DMTDPs	District Medium Term Development Plans
DPCUs	District Planning Coordinating Units
DPO	District Planning Officer
EJMA	Ejisu-Juaben Municipal Assembly
EXECO	Executive Committee
FGI	Focus Group Interview
GSGDA	Ghana Shared Growth and Development Agenda
GSS	Ghana Statistical Service
IEA	Institute of Economic Affairs
KMA	Kumasi Metropolitan Assembly
LGS	Local Government Service
MCE	Municipal/Metropolitan Chief Executive
MDAs	Ministries, Department and Agencies
MDSSC	Multi-Dynamic Socio-Spatial Connectivity
MLGRD	Ministry of Local Government and Rural Development
MMDAs	Metropolitan, Municipal and District Assemblies
MMDCEs	Metropolitan, Municipal and District Chief Executives
MMTDPs	Municipal Medium Term Development Plans
MPCU	Municipal Planning Coordinating Unit
MPS	Modern Political Structure
NDPC	National Development Planning Commission
NGO	Non-Governmental Organisation
NMTDPF	National Medium Term Development Policy Framework
NRC	National Redemption Council
NRCD	National Redemption Council Decree
PM	Presiding Member
PNDC	Provisional National Defense Council
POCC	Potentials, Opportunities, Constraints and Challenges
RCC	Regional Coordinating Council
SMDC	Sub-Metropolitan District Council
SWOT	Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats
TPA	Traditional Political Authority
ULPs	Unit Level Plans

Chapter 01

General Introduction

1.1   Introduction

This thesis explores how participatory planning interacts with inter-scalar processes to translate decisions at a lower scale into decisions at a higher scale in Ghana. The case-study of Ghana is a suitable case study for examining issues of scale and decentralised participatory planning, which was initiated over two decades ago. The main motivation for this study emerges from my experiences of researching into decentralised local government planning for the past nine years; my undergraduate and post graduate level training in the field of development and policy planning as well as teaching in the field of development planning for the past six years. Both in my research and teaching, I witnessed a challenging situation with regard to how sub-district action plans flow into decentralised district planning work and information sharing relationship among sub-district and district[1] level institutions. This experience gave me a strong desire to contribute (through research) to the search for effective coordination of participatory planning decisions across the decentralised district structures. The main research question addressed is – 'how does participatory decisions taken at lower scales translate into decision at higher scales?

This introductory chapter is devoted to defining my research problem, conceptualisation of my research approach, the scope, the research questions, and an outline, introducing each chapter of the thesis. The section that follows provides an overview of the relevance of the above research question, emphasising the significance of the subject under investigation for the context. The next section focuses on key aspects of participation and spatial scale, and provides a conceptualisation of my research approach and focus. I also present my empirical research questions for further exploration and propose empirical context for the study in Ghana. The last section summarises all the chapters in this thesis and highlight the main points advanced in each chapter.

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[1] In this thesis when the word district is used alone, it refers to the three types of districts in Ghana namely, metropolitan assembly, municipal assembly and district assembly

1.2   Relevance of the Research Question

The short narrative presented below provides a description of the politics of participatory planning and decision-making at multiple spatial scales in terms of how participation and socio-spatial relations across scales have influenced planning. It serves to prepare the ground for defining my research problem and conceptualising my research approach. The relationship between participatory planning decisions and issues of spatial scale has been explored particularly by planning researchers, economic geographers, and political scientists for quite some time now. At the broadest level, most scholars agree that in nearly every facet of life, humans participate in the politics surrounding the mobilisation, articulation and construction of scales. There are real questions at stake regarding why the analysis of participation and spatial scale together matters in planning decision-making.

While on one hand, spatial scales produce a network of socio-spatial relations, on the other hand, networks of socio-spatial relations produce spatial scales (Brenner, 2001). We can also speak of a more dialectical relationship between spatial scale and socio-spatial interactions, in that, the two are constitutive of one another in complex mutual interactions. This is particularly so in governance structures where the multi-scalar nature of decision-making is increasingly being recognised instead of an exclusive focus on fixed territorial spaces (Rockloff and Moore, 2006; Bulkeley, 2005). In addition, Rockloff and Moore argue that in a multi-scaled decision-making context where management activities and associated planning filter through other scales, it is not only the active involvement of stakeholders that matters, but also how participation at different spatial scales can expose the potential influence of both participation and scale on decisions.

As will be explained further in chapter 2, insights from the participation literature has been drawn to operationally define participation as a process that organises opportunities for public consultation and dialogue with transformative potential influence on public decision-making. In this regard, participation sees people not only as beneficiaries of change in the participatory process, but more importantly as key agents of decision-making. The core of this definition centres around two main thematic

issues: (1) that participation involves the organisation of opportunities, and (2) that the opportunities should enable the public to influence public decisions. This emphasises how planning thought and practice has moved beyond a simplified view of participation – a form of community consultation – to one which placed attention on processes of interaction with the promise of more impact on public policy.

The anthropologist and geographer Neil Smith (1993) argued that scale is a social construct or social process (i.e. scale is produced in and through societal activity), and in turn, it produces and is being produced by social interactions in an ongoing political struggle. Smith observes that the way social interactions can unfold materially and discursively depends on the way scale is constructed. For example, by setting boundaries to socio-spatial processes, scale can become a means of constraint and exclusion, but a politics of scale can also become a means of expanding interaction[2] and enlarging actors' interests when scale is constructed as spatialised politics. A similar view from political science, regional planning and geography is that state-centred forms of policy-making is becoming unworkable because established institutional arrangements often lack the power, capacity and knowledge to deliver the required policy. It is argued that, solutions to most of our pressing problems go beyond the boundaries of a single polity (Hajer, 2003), hence the need for new forms of participation and articulation of state-civil society relationships (Swyngedouw, 2005).

According to Hajer (2003), in polycentric networks of governance, policy-making power is dispersed and its context is expansive, which means that the fundamental issues and themes that are now brought into policy-making spaces may also change. Hence, doing planning work in this context has become an arena of multi-scalar[3] interactions and struggles. Spatial scales of participatory decision-making are at the heart of understanding the manifold ways in which policy issues are constructed and contested. It also highlights the challenges confronting citizen participation in terms of governance and integration of multiple scalar issues in planning (Chapman, 2012).

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[2] Bunnel and Coe (2001). Interaction refers to the web of relational flows and linkages connecting actors and scalar processes within and across multiple spatial scales.
[3] Haughton et al (2010) multi-scalar mean that policy and plan making are made by different bodies at different spatial scales.

Next, I focus on defining my research problem, contextualising the research question stated above, conceptualising my research approach and setting its scope.

1.3   Definition of Research Problem

Within the literature on planning, interest in public participation in planning and decision-making is not new. This interest has gained growing popularity and has translated into the creation of participatory spaces across a spectrum of institutions and scales (Cornwall, 2008; Healey, 2003). Indeed, participation is recognised as a critical input for democratic decision-making and sound planning practice. In this context, participation as a model of input involves not only citizens, but also interest organisations, planners, public administrators and political office holders (Innes and Booher, 2004; Alexander, 2008). The increased awareness is related to the insight that improved governance and integrated solutions are required to deal with complex problems of society. The emphasis on the desirability of participation also seeks to open up planning processes to democratic scrutiny and to unfold the scope of public involvement. Increasingly, the demand for public participation not only requires that decisions should be made at the appropriate level (Fainstein, 1999), but also aims at improving collaboration between different actors and across scales of decision-making (Rydin and Pennington, 2000; Morinville and Harris, 2014). Typically, multi-scale institutional arrangements can be important for handling scale-dependent governance challenges with a tangle of interactions and capabilities within which decision-making power is negotiated and played out (Allen and Cochrane, 2007; Brenner, 2001).

Scale-relevance of participation and the consequential impact on decision-making are captured in a wide range of academic literature by scholars across different disciplines and in different contexts. For instance Newig and Fritsch (2009) Swyngedouw (1997), Brenner (1999, 2001), Fainstein (1999) and Marston (2000) have specifically talked about the causes of interaction between spatial scales, collective action and their implications on governance processes. These issues have been studied from different theoretical leanings and across different fields of study including – political science or political economy (for instance see Cox, 1998; Hajer, 2003), political geography (for instance see Howitt, 2003; Smith, 1993), social and environmental research (for

instance see Swyngedouw, 2010), urban theory (Brenner, 2001) and Planning (for instance see McCann, 2003; Healey, 2007). This suggests that the subject of spatial scale and participatory decision-making is multi-disciplinary and also underscores the fact that there are multifarious perspectives through which they may be explored and analysed. The analysis of the conceptual arguments that evolved from such a diverse literature is discussed in chapter 2.

A growing body of literature on scale-relevance of participation indicates varied reasons for its growth, such as its strategic value for actors (Healey, 2006; Lebel, 2004), a positive relationship between the appropriateness of spatial scale and the attainment of desire outcomes (Collinge, 1999), interest in how scale can help the field of participatory planning to see planning problems and possibilities in new ways (Lowe, 2011), interest in how interactions are entangled in multi-scalar configurations (Allen and Cochrane, 2007;), and how actors can use spatial scales to counter disempowerment by jumping scales to assert their specific concerns (Smith, 1993; Herod and Wright, 2002; Cox, 1998). However, what remains unanswered is how participatory decisions at lower scales translate into decisions at higher scales. This prompted my initial theoretical explorations concerning participation and spatial scale, socio-spatial interactions, and multi-scalar strategies.

My study is mainly centred on participatory planning and spatial scales, the concepts of which, as will be discussed in chapter 2, capture broad perspective on various participation related issues and scalar dynamics through which socio-spatial relations and political struggles are experienced. From the review of literature on these perspectives, four key participation related issues can be identified, namely; collaboration, places where planning occurs, power and spatiality[4]. Similarly, from the literature, four key dynamics of spatial scale can be identified, namely; singular/plural dimensions of scale, scale jumping, power relations and networks of connection. I argue in my literature review that these related issues of participation and dynamics of spatial

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[4] Healey (2007). Spatiality, understood as an inherent property of any social and natural relation; between place as an objectively discerned focus of activities and qualities

scale are at play at and across different spatial scales and influence each other in varied degrees to shape planning decisions.

There are limited studies regarding how participatory planning interacts with spatial scales and how decision-making ideas are brokered between different scales. Such studies that exist, mainly focus on how participatory decision-making is a vital strategy to influence multi-scalar relations (Swyngedouw, 2005), conceiving participation (i.e. socio-spatial interaction) and spatial scales as being dialectically constituted (Brenner, 2001), and how actors' ability to participate in decision-making is linked to the spatial scale at which planning takes place (Newig *et al.,* 2017; Rockloff and Moore, 2006), particularly in the European and/or global-capitalism contexts and in a spatially divided urban regional settings (Smith, 1993; Brenner, 2001; Amin, 2004; Swyngedouw, 2000, 2005). The participation-scale focus of such limited studies is mainly on the European context and the conceptual focus is usually placed on urban regions, limiting analyses to the social construction of spatial scales in urban regions. Different models of social construction of scale are proposed as a result. These include collaborative shaping of contested urban regional space through contested geographies of capitalism, spatial flows, equity, inclusivity, representation, democratic governance and spatial planning approaches.

In my study, I wanted to explore *how participatory planning and spatial scales may be responsible for participatory decision-making across scales.* In addition to the possibility of place-focused participatory decision-making, I suggest that it is equally important in participatory planning to understand how the nexus of participation-scale play a role in translating decisions across scales. There is currently a very limited understanding of how the rationales for decision transfer are conscious of scale. To accomplish this task, an informed understanding of how participatory planning interacts with spatial scales is essential, particularly the rationales for multi-scalar decision transfer. Failure to address the socio-spatial interactions and their constitutive effects on decision-making can lead to decisions at a particular scale that do not scale up or scale down, hence may not secure a buy-in from all relevant actors. However, as mentioned earlier, despite the availability of a wide range of conceptual and empirical literature around participation and spatial scale (as will be discussed in chapter 2), there

is limited research on spatial scales of participatory planning that interrogates the rationales for translating and/or re-composing lower scale decisions into higher scale decisions.

Healey's (2006) conceptual thinking on scalar consciousness is exceptional, which I draw on to expand my argument on 'loss of scalar consciousness in chapter 7. This notwithstanding, a detailed understanding of spatial scales of participatory planning processes and – how they affect the rationale for inter-scalar decision transfer in multi-scalar planning contexts need exploration. It is this lack of understanding of the rationales for inter-scalar decision transfer from a participatory planning perspective that has prompted me to explore spatial scales of participatory planning in my research. Hence, the investigation of the rationales for inter-scalar decision transfer through spatial scales of participatory planning is the central purpose of my research study.

Bringing participatory planning and spatial scale studies together to explore the details of how they shape planning decision-making and decision transfer in my study is challenging because it requires a multi-dynamic analytical framework, to be informed by both participation and spatial scale dimensions of inter-scalar relations regarding decision transfer. Hence, I undertake this task of developing a suitable analytical framework in the thesis through the review of literature on participation and spatial scale in chapter 2. The development of my analytical framework involved the following; as mentioned before, based on the review of literature on the concept of participation (in chapter 2), different dynamics issues of participation were identified. This forms one component of the framework. Also, in the review of literature on spatial scale in chapter 2, different socio-spatial dynamics of scale were identified. This forms another component of the framework. Bringing these together help me to finalise my framework of analysis to investigate the spatial scales of participatory planning and how they shape decision transfer across scales. I refer to this finalised framework as a *'Multi-Dynamic Socio-Spatial Connectivity'* (MDSSC) framework of analysis.

In order to explore the spatial scales of participatory planning and to understand the rationales for decision transfer across multiple scales, the development of the MDSSC framework of analysis was essential for it helps to systematically analyse how participatory planning interacts with spatial scales to shape inter-scalar decision transfer. In line with the above, I conceptualise my research approach as illustrated in Figure 1.1. There are three distinct ways in which I approach and explore this: (a) how participatory planning provides avenue for participatory decision-making (b) how participatory planning interact with spatial scales and (c) how spatial scales become a site for decision-making.
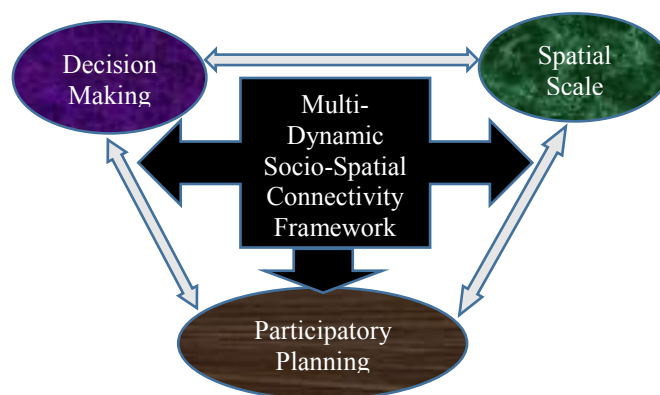
Figure 1.1: Conceptualising the research approach and its focus
(Source: Author, 2017)

Participation in planning implies that citizens should be involved in a plan-making process, that common problem solving takes place, and that the outcome are binding to some degree upon others (Woltjer, 2002: 438). Participatory planning in the context of inter-scalar relations is entrusted with the task of facilitation of peoples' spatial awareness and expands their spatial horizons of action through integration of participatory projects into wider political spheres (Kesby, 2007). This can create an environment conducive for articulation of differences and the search for common ground within planning and decision-making processes. Also, it recognises, among other things, 'the institutional context of the planning situation, the *scale* of planning that is being engaged with' (Brownill and Parker, 2010: 281). There is a great degree of scope on the material and discursive conditions concerning participatory planning in multi-scalar configurations. For example, as will be discussed further in chapter 2, it is argued that participation captures a wide-range of issues which add complex dynamics

to shaping the processes of participation in planning decision-making. This means that planning should not just address problems that are local in character, but also address problems that are wider in scale (focusing on wider indicators).

In multi-scalar contexts, the task of participatory planning may be understood as being concerned with shaping and relying on networks of decision-making relationships that link government and civil society across many scales. Hence, according to Cohen and Uphoff (1980), the role of participation is more of assembling and balancing between three principal dimensions: what kind of participation, who participates in them, and how participation is occurring, as illustrated in Figure 1.2. By analysing the 'what', 'who' and 'how' dimensions of participation, one can be alerted to the ways in which participation by certain groups (who) in particular activities (what) can differ. Briefly, the main kinds of participation talk about participation in decision-making, in implementation, in sharing the benefits and in evaluation Thus, the degree of influence of participatory planning in shaping these dimensions and the degree of interplay among them depend on how stakeholders understand and deploy them. The second dimension is concerned with the characteristics of the participants while the third deals with the way participation occurs (i.e. whether it is initiated from above or below, voluntary or coercive, etc.).

What?   Who?

Dimensions of participatio

How?

Who participates?
Local residents
Local leaders
Government personnel
Foreign personnel

What kind of participation?
Participation in decision making, benefits, implementation or evaluation

How participation occur?
Initiated from above/below
Voluntary or coercive
The structure
Channel, scope, empowerment
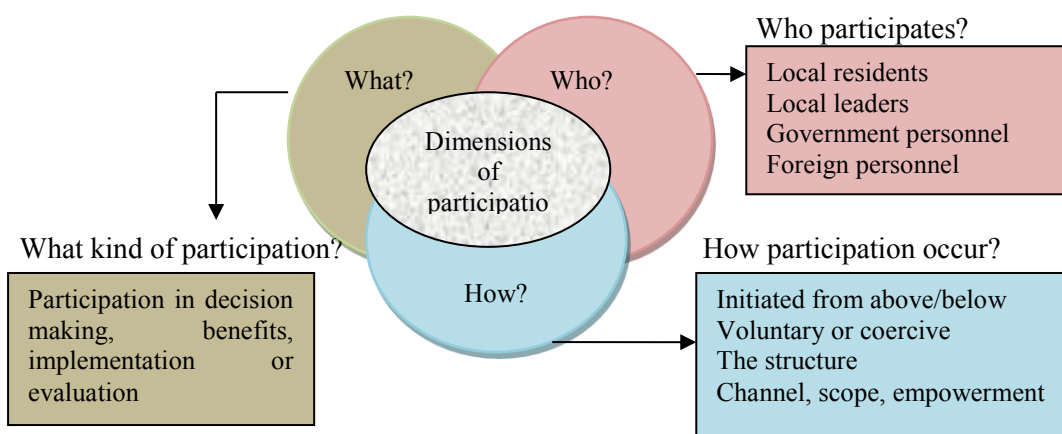
Figure 1.2: The three principal touchstones of action in participatory planning

Source: Derived from Cohen and Uphoff's (1980: 8-15) framework on participation

Although, the purpose of these authors was not directly linked to spatial scale considerations, the logic of these dimensions of participation could serve as justification to draw scale issues into the discussion. This is particularly true when planning is performed in a context where 'new' spaces of planning are created at the sub-national level. As shown by Allmendinger and Haughton (2010), devolution of power in planning is often accompanied by parallel processes of participatory planning at different scales which have been tasked with planning-related functions.

Further, in conceptualising the research approach, I also highlight the link between spatial scales and participatory planning (see Figure 1.1). In addition to an earlier view that solutions to most of our pressing problems go beyond the boundaries of a single polity, it is also important to stress that the spatial scales at which planning is performed and the changes to them (i.e. spatial scales) are part of a process driven by socio-political contestation (Haughton *et al.,* 2010). The degree of influence of participation in shaping planning decisions depends on how scale operates both as a site of policy regulation and arenas for socio-spatial and political contestation (Swyngedouw, 1996). As such, participatory planning fails (with regard to delivering effective decisions) when it ignores the fact that scales produce scalar effects and at the same time become the object of socio-spatial and political interaction (ibid). Therefore, in order for participatory planning to be responsive to solving social problems, it must seek to engage in planning decision-making that recognises and operates with spatial scale in mind. Next, I present my research questions and propose my empirical studies in Ghana.

1.4   Research Questions

Based on the foregoing discussion and the definition of my research problem, the following research questions are derived and answers to them are to be explored in this study;

How does participatory planning interact with spatial scale processes to translate decision at a lower scale into decision at a higher scale in Ghana in a decentralised district planning?

1. What are the mechanisms of participatory planning involved in unit committee level planning?
2. How do participatory decisions taken at the unit committee level connect with and become an integral part of district level decisions?
3. What are the rationales for translating the unit committee level decisions into district level decisions?

Participatory planning can cover a broad area of planning activities and has diverse facets of action as mentioned earlier. Hence, it is necessary to narrow down the scope of my empirical study within a particular action area of participatory planning. I focus on the decentralised district planning in Ghana in this study. I studied two districts and under each, two area/zonal councils and two unit committees (i.e. sub-district scales of planning in Ghana). The districts are Ejisu-Juaben municipal assembly (EJMA) and Atwima Nwabiagya district assembly (ANDA), all in the Ashanti region of Ghana. Under EJMA and ANDA, I choose to study Anum River and Juaben zonal councils and Nkawie/Toase and Akropong area councils respectively. Esaase and Mmorontuo unit committees of Anum River and Juaben zonal councils and Amanchia and Pasoro unit committees of Nkawie/Toase and Akropong area councils were chosen from the area/zonal councils for empirical study. The details of these choices in terms of background information and how there were chosen are discussed in chapter 3 and 4 respectively.

1.5   Chapter Outlines

The study is organised under seven main chapters. This first chapter described the overarching research problem, it theoretical positioning and the research questions. I also explained how I developed a suitable analytical framework to analyse and answer these questions.

The second chapter clarifies and discusses the concept of participation and then explains four related issues of participation, namely, collaboration, public sphere, power and spatiality. The chapter also provides conceptual clarification by reviewing the literature on spatial scale and four related issues – singular/plural meaning of scale, scale jumping, power relations and network of connection. The third chapter introduces Ghana, the

historical overview of decentralised planning, legal basis of participatory planning, structure of current decentralisation and the preparation of DMTDs. The fourth chapter explains my research strategy, research design, strategies for case selection, and data collection procedures. The chapter also discusses transcription and analysis of data and ethical considerations.

The fifth presents the first part of empirical evidences, analysis and findings of the mechanisms of participatory planning in Ghana and discusses stakeholder sensitisation, community forum and public hearings. The sixth chapter presents the second part of the empirical evidences, analysis and findings of planning decision-making across embedded spatial scales. It discusses the framework for harmonising plans, the realities of harmonisation and prioritisation, particularly around singular/plural sense of scale, scale jumping, power, network of connection and the basis for transferring decisions. Based on the findings, I argued that there is 'loss of scalar consciousness among the unit committees, area/zonal councils and district assemblies. The seventh chapter concludes this thesis by highlighting the main findings, research contributions and avenues for further research.

Chapter 02

Participation and Spatial Scales of Social Relations

2.1 Introduction

This chapter aims to explore participation in decision-making and the scalar dynamics of socio-spatial relations and interactions. It argues that, for participatory planning to respond effectively to decision-making in a multi-scalar context, the contested nature of spatial scale cannot be ignored. The chapter is organised under two broad parts. Part one begins with a review of various definitions of participation with the aim of establishing a working definition for this study. I then discuss the various forms that the public may be mobilised or engaged in participatory planning work. In the next section, I review and clarify different but interrelated conceptual issues of participation such as collaboration, public sphere/arena, power and spatiality of participation. Next, I discuss the promises of participation and the barriers that may impede the potential promise of public participation in decision-making. The last section of part one presents a framework of conceptual issues in participatory planning. Overall, part one attempts to explain key issues of participation and provide clarifications on how they shape and are being shaped by public participation in planning and decision-making.

Part two focuses on exploring the scalar dynamics of socio-spatial relations and interactions (i.e. socio-spatial interaction in policy processes) and propose an analytical framework of analysis to study and understand participation-scale relationship and the rationales for translating lower scale decisions into decision at a higher scale. This part begins with the concept of scale and move on to discuss the politics of scale – both from the singular and plural meaning of scale politics. As I will discuss later, an informed account of these two notions of politics of scale and their defining characteristics are important because they are central to understanding socio-spatial actions and interactions that take place at particular scales in association with/without other spatial units. Also, it has the potential to expose how decisions and policy processes may be open for participation at and across scales as well as the interfaces between different scales. I then examine the (multi-) scalar strategies that may be pursued to harness and/or maximise actor's influence on processes associated with scaled relations. Finally,

I explore the notion of relational connectivity and scalar consciousness at different spatial scales. Together, these help me to work toward and develop a Multi-Dynamic Socio-Spatial Connectivity framework of analysis for inter-scalar decision transfer in a multi-scalar context. I deploy this framework of analysis in my empirical study to examine how participatory planning may be used to address inter-scalar decision transfer in different scales – district and sub-district – in Ghana.

Part One
2.2   Definition and Forms of Participation

2.2.1   Definition of participation

Participation is a highly contested term that means different things to different people (Chilvers, 2009). This may be explained by the fact that participation is a broad concept with great appeal to different ideological positions (Nelson and Wright, 1995), and hence leaves room for varying interpretation (Rowe and Frewer, 2005). For instance, Kitchen and Whitney (2004) argue that both in government and planning literature, there is lack of clarity over what is meant by participation. That is, whether the extension of public participation with planning is about increasing the number of participants or it is about the level of public influence over decisions. In political science theories, similar arguments on the ambiguity of participation are articulated. According to Callahan (2007), while citizen-government interaction may take place both within representative and within participatory forms of democracy, divergent contexts of participation and differing ideological stances further complicate an understanding of the concept of participation. Hence, there is the need to clarify the meaning of the term 'participation' in my study, an issue taken up below.

In the late 1960s, a public policy analyst, Sherry Arnstein (2011) was emphatic that participation is a categorical term for citizen power. Accordingly, she defined participation as 'redistribution of power that enables the have-not citizens, presently excluded from the political and economic processes, to be deliberately included in the future' (p. 3). Thus, in this definition, participation tends to be both outcome-focused and a strategy by which the have-not group of people take part in determining how policy goals are set, politico-economic resources are allocated as well as benefits shared.

Nancy Roberts (2004), a professor of strategic management, acknowledges that while Arnstein's definition of participation illuminates how redistribution of power may result from participation, it should not be a constraining factor in its definition. For her, the most valid way we can differentiate participants is between those who hold elected and administrative positions and those who do not. In this sense, she defines participation as 'the process by which members of a society (those not holding offices or administrative positions in government) share power with public officials in making substantive decisions and in taking actions related to the community' (p. 320).

The concept of participation in this sense highlights three main thematic issues: that participation is a shared responsibility between office holders and lay citizens; that participation is about sharing of power; and in participation, citizen-government interaction moves beyond consultation to a more direct form of public influence over decisions. By specifying how participation is capable of opening up power relations, citizens are viewed as key actors in the governance process and their active involvement is considered essential to the critical decisions facing a polity. Carole Pateman (1970) who is an advocate of the educative function of participation provides another interpretation of participation from a political perspective, specifically in terms of the relationship between individuals and their political institutions. In her text, *participation and democratic theory* (1970), she states that in the participatory theory, 'participation refers to (equal) participation in the making of decisions' (p. 43). For Pateman, taking part in the decision-making process develops a sense of responsibility and gives educative experience to citizens. She emphasises that this model of participation can be characterised as one where maximum input (participation) is required and where output is not just a matter of policies (decisions) but also about how individuals are able to develop their socio-political capabilities and to provide a feedback as input to public policy.

The above definitions are explicit about the core issues of the concept of participation. The central issues of the above definitions are that participation is an expression of citizen power aim at mobilising and influencing public opinion and a crucial component in making public policy decisions. By combining insights from the above definitions, I

operationally define participation as a process that organises opportunities for public consultation and dialogue with transformative potential influence on public decision-making. In this regard, participation sees people not only as beneficiaries of change in the participatory process, but more importantly as key agents of decision-making.

It must be stressed that, the above operational definition differs from political participation, through which citizens engage in traditional forms of political involvement such as voting in elections/referendum, and campaigning. It also differs from the notion of civic involvement where individuals support particular course of action through civic activism and social movement (Gaventa and Valderrama, 1999; Giugni, 2006). All these forms of social action are legitimate and essential ways of having a say on issues of common affairs. Also, in political participation and civic activism, citizens may either not be directly involved in decision-making or participatory decision-making may not be the main agenda for governments, politicians or the activists. But for the purposes of this thesis, and as stated in the operational definition, the term participation is being used in the sense of public participation in which concerns, ideas and goals raised by participants are effectively translated into public decisions.

2.2.2 Forms of participation

The participation literature shows that involvement of citizens in any decision-making process can be realised in various ways and at various degrees of influence on outcomes (Goetz and Gaventa 2001; Aitken *et al.,* 2016). In other words, public participation in planning may not necessarily lead to public decision within all forms of participation. Essentially, the degree of public participation in planning is generally studied as a continuum, regarding the extent of citizens' involvement and how it affects the outcome of the process. For example, Goetz and Gaventa's (2001) investigation of citizen voice and state responsiveness shows that the level of citizen-government interaction is a continuum of the relationship between participation and decision-making. This continuum focuses on three broad steps – consultation, presence and influence – as being crucial for understanding the nexus of participation and decision-making. Central to their argument is that, differences in the depth of engagement distinguish between

initiatives that are aimed at public consultation from those that organise opportunities for more direct influence on public decisions. The first step, consultation, involves organising and opening opportunities for dialogue either as on-going or one-off exercise of participation. Presence (and representation), which is the second step involves granting access to social groups who were previously excluded to be included in planning decisions. The third step, influence, is where citizen consultation and presence can be translated into tangible impact on decision-making. Goetz and Gaventa's analysis show that, it is not every opportunity for participation that translates into public decisions, and that such decisions miss a key quality of democratic decision-making – popular control.

Analysing public participation in decision-making in social urban programmes in the United States of America from the point of view of redistribution of power, Arnstein (1969, 2011) presents her argument in eight stages, famously expressed in the 'ladder of participation'. Figure 2.1 illustrates this ladder. Her central argument is that "there is a critical difference between going through the empty rituals of participation and having the real power needed to affect the outcomes of the process" (Arnstein, 1969: 216). On this basis, public participation in which citizens do not have the opportunity to affect outcomes is characterised as non-participation. Non-participation, located at the bottom end of the ladder is primarily concerned with therapy and manipulation of citizen participants (see Figure 2.1). At best, non-participation may create the opportunity to 'educate' the public and/or solicit public support.
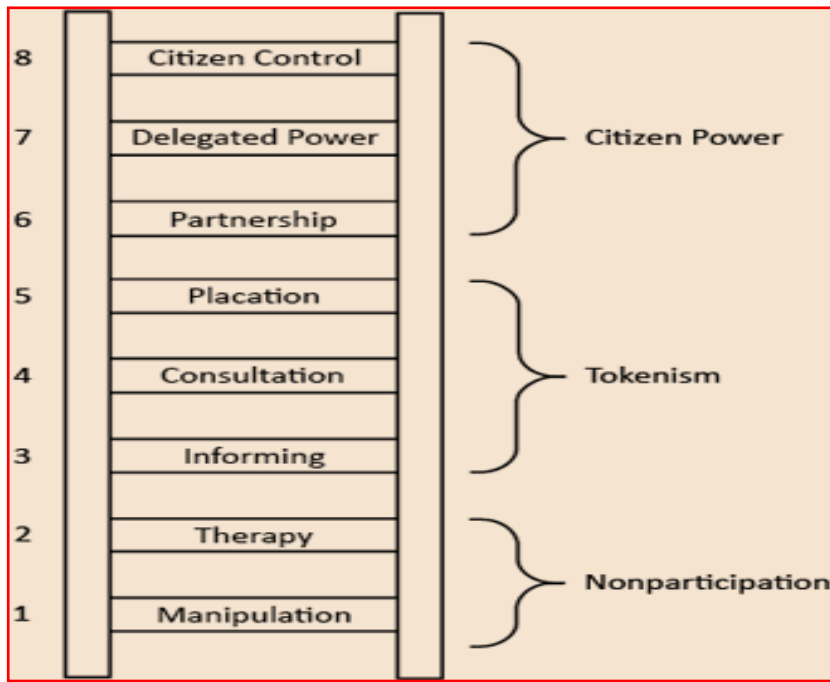
Figure 2.1: Arnstein's ladder of citizen participation
(Source: Adapted from Arnstein, 1969)

However, through mechanisms of information provision and consultation (inviting citizens' opinion) of citizens, the level of participation progresses to "tokenism", a stage which allows citizens to hear and to have a voice. Arnstein (2011) indicates that, though informing and consulting citizens' opinion are important first step towards genuine participation and full participation respectively, emphasis is placed on one-way flow of information and/or there is no guarantee that outcome of consultation will be taken into consideration. One of the most common mechanisms of consultation, Arnstein notes, is public hearing. Although, other scholars agreed with Arnstein assertion that public hearing is a common participatory mechanism, they raised questions about its effectiveness. As found by King et al. (1998) and Burby (2003), public hearing is both wasteful and ineffective because effort to involve the public is symbolic rather than substantive and tends to create controversy than build consensus.

In Arnstein's thinking, the top rung of the ladder – citizen power – requires that citizens have increasing degrees of decision-making power through partnerships, delegation of power from public officials to citizens and citizen control. By characterising along a ladder of citizen participation, Arnstein does not only show how citizens' participation is shaped through different technologies of participatory planning, but also highlight the relationship that citizens have with the decision-making process. At the same time, Arnstein's model of participation highlights a range of different participatory opportunities and their conceptualisation in regard to the different ways that participants can be empowered.

In a recent publication on public engagement relating to onshore wind farm in the United Kingdom, Aitken et al. (2016) indicate that Arnstein's thesis on forms of participation point towards a disconnected hierarchy of public engagement, wherein information provision is placed at the bottom while more substantive approaches to empowerment are positioned at the top. In their view, Arnstein's ladder of participation framework conceives different mechanisms to participation as alternatives to one another. An alternative interpretation Aitken and colleagues put forward is that thinking of the different mechanisms to participation as complementary to one another rather than alternatives is helpful in both participatory planning practice and the evaluation of public involvement in the process. Building on this, these authors summarise and (re)classify Arnstein's typology of participation under three headings – awareness raising, consultation and empowerment – as interlocking approaches/mechanisms. Thus, as complement, each of these mechanisms can add different value and play vital roles in public participation in an interconnected manner. To some analysts, the thinking that forms of participation should be engaged as complements admit the possibility of using more than one form of participation in a given episode of participatory planning practice (Rowe and Frewer, 2005; Dietz and Stern, 2008).

Though, acknowledged as being capable of increasing citizens' understanding around particular issues in planning practice, awareness creation is assumed to be a minimal form of participation, particularly when it is conducted on its own (Aitken *et al.,* 2016; Rowe and Frewer 2005). Scholars, including Forester (1982) therefore argue that if

indeed planners and planning practitioners want to respond in a meaningful way; to use planning to shape the needs of citizens, there is no way a single type of planning action or activity can be adequately deployed to address that. Similar to Aitken and colleagues view, Forester also points out that each type of planning activity is constitutive of the other if planning is to be responsive.

Dietz and Stern (2008) extend this discussion in their investigation into the role of public participation in environmental assessment and decision-making in the United States of America. These authors show that an analysis of how particular forms of participation influence decision-making cannot be isolated from the purposes for which public involvement are being sought. For Dietz and Stern, three main purposes for public input and in assessing the degree of influence in public decisions include, but not limited to, improving the quality of decisions, increasing legitimacy of decisions, and improving the decision-making capacity of actors, both state and non-state ones. The point Dietz and Stern then make regarding purpose-influence relationship of participation is that each of the above purposes creates its own participants, which differentially influence the extent to which citizens could substantially contribute to decision-making. Dietz and Stern's analysis also demonstrates that analysing a participatory process without reference to the purpose that the process is intended to serve may produce narrow and problematic outcomes.

Despite the above concerns, there are optimistic views across the participatory planning and political science literature on why the notion of participation as decision-making is fundamental to planning work. For example, using the inclusionary argumentation model, which emphasises collaborative consensus building underpinned by inclusionary intentions, Healey (1997) argues that participatory decision-making can be both inclusive and consequential. Moreover, this model proposes that claims for participation with decision-making influence are not necessarily assessed on the basis of opportunities created for citizens to be heard, but involve working out opportunities for citizens to play active roles in shaping discussion and public policy. She elaborates that:

"A key attribute of a good decision would be that it is taken in cognisance of the concerns of all members of a political community and that these members have the opportunity to express their views, and to challenge the decisions made on their behalf, not just in the ballot box, but through rights and opportunities to challenge policies as they are developed and as they become guides for subsequent action" (p. 237).

Healey's notion of "good decision" suggests strong recognition for citizens' involvement with substantive influence and a strong connection between "voice" and public decisions. This quote also illustrates that understanding what difference participation makes to planning decision-making occupies key position in the field of participatory planning. Thus, democratic decision-making resides in opportunities to participate in deliberations about the content of public decisions. This interpretation relates to Pateman's thinking, particularly her argument that, "for a democratic polity to exist it is necessary for a participatory society to exist [..] where the theory of participatory democracy is built around the central assertion that individuals and their institutions cannot be considered in isolation from one another" (1970: 42-43).

In the foregoing section, I reviewed the meaning of participation and based on the literature, I operationally defined the concept of participation. I also discussed forms of participation and how they may produce different effects on participatory decision-making outcomes. It is important to keep in mind that participation and decision-making relationships are contingent upon what form of participation is deployed to address which kind of planning problems. Next, I focus on four interrelated concepts that shape and are being shaped by the concept of participation.

2.3   Related Concepts and Issues of Participation

The participation literature captures a wide-range of related conceptual thoughts. In one way of the other, these related concepts shape the processes of participation in planning decision-making. The selected concepts (which to some extent overlap with one another and with participation) which are relevant for the purpose of this study are collaboration, public sphere, power and spatiality. This section provides a brief account of these concepts to understand how each of them shapes and/or is being shaped by participation.

I argue that consideration and incorporation of different spheres of participation (collaboration, public sphere, power and spatiality) is necessary to strengthen participatory approaches to planning. As I will explain in the following sections, the above-mentioned concepts are not only central categories of participation, but are also critical drivers of public decision-making that need to be leveraged into participatory planning outcomes.

2.3.1 Participation and collaboration

Collaboration, which Innes and Booher (2015: 198) refer to as "co-labour on a task" is fundamental to many participatory planning work. Although, participation and collaboration may be different conceptually, policy-making processes and government initiatives are undertaken continuously through collaborative networks of state and non-state actors (Huxham and Vangen, 2000). Indeed, in the contemporary context of growing complexity of changing social problems, citizens, interest groups and governments are creating and 'joining up' in new venues to address such problems (Innes and Booher, 2004; Healey, 1997). At the same time, in such contexts, participation becomes a practice of mediating between multiple interests and actors in an inclusionary and collaborative manner. This exemplifies what Innes and Booher (2004) refer to as collaborative participation, that effective participation is partly produced through collaborative dialoguing. In the above connection, a related question to address is what are the markers of collaborative public engagement in participatory planning?

In order to answer this question, it is important to look closely at Innes and Booher's (2003, 2004) idea on ways of conceptualising collaborative participation and engaging the public in planning work in the United States of America. According to these authors, there are three features of collaborative engagement of the public in participatory planning, namely, (a) coexistence of diversity and interdependence among stakeholders (b) shared understanding of problems and joint fact finding by citizens and (c) stakeholders and well-developed interactions among stakeholders both within and outside a given locality. Innes and Booher indicate that the above three aspects of collaborative participation engender collaborations with capacity, capacity that is built

at least among community leaders, and can in turn spread to other members of society. Hence, collaborative efforts that are driven by perceptions of interdependence around social problems within a robust interactive context can become integral to participation.

Furthermore, providing leadership to the collaborative process is at the heart of building effective relationships between participation and collaboration. As argued by Crosby and Bryson (2005), in a collaborative process, leadership is central to fostering dialogue, and encouraging stakeholders to participate as well as manage conflict. Similarly, in a recent publication on leadership and collaborative urban planning in Indonesia by Fahmi et al. (2015), it is pointed out that one of the key factors that facilitated communication and effected public involvement in relocating street vendors to a newly constructed market in Surakarta is leadership capacity to coordinate relationships. Innes and colleagues made a similar case when they report on a policy research seminar in California that in addition to institutional arrangement that may create arenas for collaboration, committed leadership provides stakeholders the incentive to cooperate and collaborate (2005).

However, it is evident from the collaboration literature that, though leaders' ability to share power is a crucial factor in building collaborative relationships among stakeholders, this may not necessarily translate into participatory decision-making processes, particularly if power sharing only takes place at the leadership level (Vangen and Huxham, 2003; Brand and Gaffikin, 2007; Bryson and Crosby, 1993). Also, in shared-power (understood as actors jointly exercising their capabilities related to the problem in order to further their separate and joint aims) arrangements such as collaborations (Crosby and Bryson, 2005: 18), the choice of "forums" is equally important in creating and distributing access to collaborative participation environments. Forum is interpreted to mean an interactive venue that links stakeholders through discussion, debate and deliberation in order to create and communicate meaning (Bryson and Crosby, 1993). It is identified that, rules governing access to particular forums and/or participation in forums are linked to social position, skills, precedent and resources, but the greatest of all is the one which keeps other actors from the discussion table (Bryson and Crosby, 1993; Crosby and Bryson, 2005). It is believed

that organisation of forums at times, places or at a cost that make it difficult for some actors to participate (Bryson and Crosby, 1993) or the organisation of unrealistic number of meetings may become potential barriers to active collaboration (Khamis, 2000). This then demands serious attention in relation to building effective roles of leadership in collaborative action and decision-making processes.

Huxham and Vangen (2000) and Huxham (2003) whose theoretical ideas contribute immensely to the theories of collaboration, use the leadership literature to draw our attention to the mediums through which collaborative processes are created and/or exercised. Huxham (2003) in particular argues that joining multiple organisations and interest groups together to address collaborative policy issues brings its own problems. For Huxham, the issue of leadership seems highly relevant in addressing the problems of collaboration and to understand "the mechanisms that make things happen in collaboration" (p. 415). The theory that Huxham develops to explain 'leadership-collaboration' relationship has two components. The first is about the mediums through which collaborative leadership processes are enacted and/or promoted, namely, structures, processes (e.g. major forms of communication) and participants. The second concerns the facilitative leadership activities that are carried out, in terms of mobilising and empowering members to interact.

2.3.2 Participation and the discourse on public sphere

Like 'collaboration', the 'public sphere' is another related concept of participation. The concept of public sphere emerged from the work of Jurgen Habermas (Huxley, 2000; Fraser, 1990). In presenting his view, Habermas (1991) identifies three conceptual categories of public sphere – the state, official-economy of paid employment and arenas of discursive relations. The state can be regarded as public sphere in that it represents a large-scale group of individuals who reside in particular geographical spaces over which the state enjoys political sovereignty (Susen, 2011). On the other hand, the transformation of the economic and the constitution of society in the sixteenth century had triggered the creation of public realm in the official-economy of paid employment (ibid). In Habermas' view, the latter – arenas of discursive relations – is considered as a primary category of theorising the concept of public sphere; a sphere between the state and civil society (Fraser, 1990).

According to Habermas (1981, cited in Fraser, 1990) public sphere denote 'a theatre in modern societies in which political participation is enacted through the medium of talk'. In short, 'it is the space in which citizens deliberate about their common affairs, hence, an institutionalised arena of discursive interaction' (p. 57). Conceptually, public sphere is distinct from the state; it is an arena for the production and circulation of discourses that can scrutinise actions of the state. At the same time, public sphere is conceptually different from official-economy, in that, it is not an arena of market relations (i.e. buying and selling) but rather one of discursive and deliberative relations (Fraser, 1990). Therefore, deliberation in the public sphere is not under the sponsorship of the state and not an arena for decision-making, but opinion-formation (Huxley, 2000).

Following Habermas, Nancy Fraser (1990: 74) develops two conceptual ideas – 'weak publics' and 'strong publics' – to interpret how the public sphere may be constituted and the differential transformative effects it has on participation and decision-making. Her argument is that the kind of 'the public' we constitute in discussing our common problems can provide a viable basis for public influence in decision-making. She defines weak publics as the public whose participatory practices exclusively focus on collective discussion of issues, but with little chance of influencing or incorporating decision-making. For this reason, though, weak publics are open to discursive activities, decision-making may not necessarily be dependent on public opinion formation, a view Fung (2003) strongly contest. For Fung, any discursive practice that does not allow participants to exercise voice in decision-making weighs against their empowerment. The moment transformative possibilities are relegated to the background in public deliberation, participation amounts to private capture and promotes the growth of weak publics. The second interpretation, 'strong publics', is defined by Fraser (1990) as public whose discursive practices encompass both opinion formation and decision-making. This emphasises, not only a democratic advancement in participatory decision-making, but also strengthens the development of social and political capabilities of participants; the ability to translate what Fraser calls 'force of public opinion' into 'authoritative decisions' (p. 75). Embedding decision-making in this way may help to explain the need to pay attention both to the constitution of public spheres and the transformative potential public participation may produce.

As argued in literature, careful consideration must be given to the institutional sites/arenas because the choice of arenas within which ideas are generated, framed and explored are fundamental to creative discovery of policy ideas (Healey, 2007; Beauregard, 2013). Where planning practice actually occurs (i.e. the arenas/sites) and the design of such arenas affects how planning decisions are made (Beauregard, 2013), which proposals are placed on the decision-making agenda and which are incorporated into development projects (Crosby and Bryson, 2005). According to Bryson and Crosby (1993), in social practices where decision-making is the focus, arenas help to distribute and redistribute access to participation in the decision-making process and the implementation practices. Based on the above understanding, institutional arenas become the conduit for maintaining and/or changing the socio-political relations that help make participatory decision-making necessary and possible.

2.3.3 Participation and power dynamics

This section highlights the concept of power and how power relations within participatory planning processes shape the content and process of participation. Foucault (1978) whose conceptualisation of power had great influence on planning theory and practice stated that 'power is not an institution or a structure; neither is it a certain strength individuals are endowed with; rather, it is the name that one attributes to a complex strategical situation in a particular society' (p. 93). He goes on to explain that power is not just a negative, coercive or repressive thing that forces others against their will, but that, it can also be an essential, productive and positive force (Sadan, 2004). Foucault (1978) proposes further that power cannot be appropriated as a commodity but rather is exercised as a relation through a net-like organisation in which there is no ordered and definite source: only an infinite sequence of social practices but without an individual author. And as a relation, power permeates dialogues, strategies and tactics of actors.

Furthermore, in a Foucauldian interpretation, power is inseparable from knowledge in the sense that "the exercise of power perpetually creates knowledge and, conversely, knowledge constantly induces effects of power [..] and accumulates new bodies of

information" (Foucault, 1980: 52). Moreover, because Foucault perceives knowledge and power to be integrated (power/knowledge), he advocate that:

> "[…] we should abandon a whole tradition that allows us to imagine that knowledge can exist only where the power relations are suspended and that knowledge can develop only outside its injunctions, its demands and its interests. […] we should abandon the belief that power makes mad and that, by the same token, the renunciation of power is one of the conditions for knowledge. We should admit rather that power produces knowledge […]; that power and knowledge directly imply one another; that there is no power relation without the correlative constitution of a field of knowledge, nor any knowledge that does not presuppose and constitute at the same time power relations" (Foucault, 1979: 27).

As noted earlier, a Foucualdian interpretation of power is central to participation, and planning theorists who recognise the usefulness of Foucault's conceptual work on the politics of power and how it affects planning have imported them into the study of planning and planning theory. For example, planning theorists like John Forester, John Friedmann and Bent Flyvbjerg draw inspirations from Foucault's interpretation of power. In his landmark case study of planning in Aalborg Denmark, Flyvbjerg (1998: 319) observes that 'power procures knowledge which supports it purposes, while it ignores or suppresses that knowledge which does not serve it', such that the powerful groups can exercise power over the planning process by adopting strategies that serve their interests to the detriment of others. Similarly, Friedmann (1998) reminds us that, in talking about power, effort should be made to distinguish between power that is used to constrain, coerce and control the actions of others and that which reflects an enabling view; enabling people to engage in social action with others.

Accordingly, participatory planning may occur in settings that are dominated by power relations, in which inequalities of power and knowledge co-exist; a shared power context (Crosby and Bryson, 2005). How does this context mediate between the participatory planning process and its outcome? Christiansen's (2015) analysis of planning processes and outcomes from a practitioners' perspective suggests that the

ability of planners to create space in planning deliberations hinges on various factors. Key among them are ability to direct attention to planning as a means to resist power, shedding light on the intricacies and essential issues of planning practice and using planning as a steering device to make a difference to power relation. In other words, reframing planning issues that incorporate and are sensitive to political realities are essential to addressing power in planning. She also states that, to understand, anticipate and respond effectively to the above, time is critical. Using the Brazilian experience of planning, Torres (2013) argues that planning as strategy of government deploys power in two distinctive ways. On one hand power can be deployed to control practices of planning in terms of how urban space and public policy are organised. Thus, though government may intervene to solve urban problems by means of plans, planning is analysed in terms of their political rationality. On the other hand, planning can be used as a steering device to resist the exclusion of certain views and/or stakeholders from the decision-making space. For Torres (2013), in order to understand how planning makes a difference to decision-making, planners should pay attention to how power is structured.

This should not be taken to mean that power relations are antithetical to citizen-government interaction in planning work; rather, it can promotes and (re)produces citizen-government interactions. As argued by Flyvbjerg (2004), there is no way we can gain adequate understanding of planning without placing the analysis of planning within the context of power. For this very reason, ignoring the role of power in participatory planning cannot be the solution to potential control of power. Rather it is by incorporating power relations into planning that democratic decision-making can be achieved (Gaventa, 2004; Friedmann, 1998). This means that bringing to centre stage the question of power and participation in the analysis of planning may help us to understand participation beyond the rhetoric of giving 'voice' (the ability to share knowledge relevant to particular decision - Muraleedharan, 2006) to the powerless, thus creating new possibilities with potential for citizens to have a share in decision-making.

2.3.4 Spatiality and participation

Spatiality, like power, is another important concept to the analysis of participation. Planning and geography theorists have explored the idea of spatiality in participation and seem to agree that the fundamental question is not about whether spatial issues should be analysed in participatory practices; but rather how might genuine involvement be achieved among multiple spatial scales, through which policy and decision-making processes are pursued (Chapman, 2012; Renedo and Marston, 2014). Since issues about scales of socio-spatial interactions are part of the main issues discussed in part two of this chapter, here, I limit the discussion to the fundamental reasons that guide the incorporation of spatial scale issues into the concept/practice of participation. According to Chapman, without a coherent spatial account of participation in a world with considerable disparities (in power, skills resources, etc) between places, the ability to shape and integrate critical debates between socio-economic sectors and geographic scales will be missed. In an ethnography study of how participatory spaces are co-constituted in participatory healthcare improvement efforts in the United Kingdom, Renedo and Marston (2014) argue that spatiality permeates and comprises of social relations.

Further, Kesby (2007) argues that spatiality is important to participation (or vice versa) because participatory discourse and practices with potential to empower participants must be seen as spatially embedded. In an earlier work presented at a conference in Manchester, Kesby (2003) also emphasises that spatiality and participation are interconnected, in that, agency and performance are not only relational socially, but also spatially. As a result, analysis of participation at the local scale alone without linking it to wider scale processes of governance and policy-making may not bring about significant change. Geographical comparison is a key way to how people engage in available practices of participation because interactive processes in particular places may be curtailed by relations that are constituted in other places (ibid). Also, Marcuse (2009) is of the view that, if solution to problems of a particular arena is the central concern, there is no reason why we should limit the interactive processes to such and arena. Because what happens in a given place is dependent on what happens in its region. Marcuse therefore notes that not only are solutions dependent on the support of other

spatial and institutional levels, but also the solutions to problems might exist at institutional levels.

Notwithstanding the optimistic views about the need to recognise spatial implications of participation, some scholars think the possibilities are more conceptual than practical. For example, Kesby (2007) who examines how participatory approaches are spatialised in participatory HIV/AIDS projects in Zimbabwe observes that, though efforts to deepen participation within the participatory forums may empower participants, this does not reflect on their decisions in the home space. This happened because people find it difficult to transfer lessons learned in the project space into taking life-saving decisions regarding the practice of safe sex, attributable to male-domineering or unequal power relations. It is therefore important in participatory planning to understand the social relations that seemingly fail to produce sustainable empowering effects and to ask how to mediate interaction within and across different places.

2.4 The Promises and Barriers to Participation

Many scholars, both in political theory and planning theory, have pointed out that there are critical gaps between the aspirations of participatory arrangements and the reality on the ground (Dietz and Stern, 2008). Accordingly, scholarly discussions on participation and its effects on public decision-making are divided between those who believe in the promises of participation and those who are sceptical about the ability of participation to deliver what its proponents promised. In this section, I focus on these two schools of thoughts in terms of the arguments for and against public participation.

2.4.1 The promises of participation

Although, there are important differences among scholars who hold optimistic views about participation, most of their arguments tend to converge on key perspectives, namely, political equality, popular sovereignty and human development (Dietz and Stern, 2008). The first perspective, political equality, sees participation as a basic right where every citizen participates on equal terms in the policy-making process, while the second emphasises self-government. For them, taking equal opportunity and the autonomy to participate together imply that participatory forms of governance is a

means to managing socio-political power relations. A similar view is expressed in the participatory planning literature. For example, Healey (1997) argues that because diversity of interest is recognised in participation, planning within such a context becomes a practice of mediating competing claims within which different forms of knowing, reasoning, and valuing are bargained and contested collaboratively.

The third perspective – human development – resonates with Pateman's (1970) conceptual definition of participation, stated at the beginning. The argument is that, participation in democratic governance is both an opportunity to articulate personal interest and a means through which individuals come to understand their own interests and how those interests relate and depend on those of other citizens (Dietz and Stern, 2008; Pateman, 1970). Through participation in public life and decision-making processes, a sense of connection with others is developed and the potential to empower citizens (Kesby, 2005). In addition to this emancipatory view, the opening up of planning and policy-making arenas to the public has the potential to recruit new actors, and provides the basis for successful policy implementation (Cornwall and Coelho, 2007; Irvin and Stansbury, 2004).

2.4.2 Barriers to participation

Participatory approaches to governance and planning is not without its difficulties. Those who share this view point to two broad barriers – resources constraints and misrepresentation of participation-related empowerment. On the question of resource constraints, planning scholar, Nicole Peterson (2012) notes that one of the greatest barriers to public participation in planning is funding, and time too. Time becomes an issue in participation either because there is not enough of it or the timing for a particular planning activity is not appropriate (Buchy and Hoverman, 2000). The discussions on participation also emphasise that lack of funding affects citizens and planners who may be seeking to mobilise citizens for participation, particularly when planners do not have control over the allocation of resources for public participation (Peterson, 2012). Beyond the constraints of time and money on participation, there is also the question of institutional capacity to think through, plan and collaborate with other stakeholders (Burby, 2003).

With regard to empowerment effects of participation, three main criticisms have been raised. The first critique is about the problematic nature of analysing empowerment. Cleaver (2001) argues that there is no clarity about *who* is to be empowered by the participatory process. That is, whether the focus of empowerment is the community or the individuals, or categories of people such as the poor or women. Again, the mechanisms by which empowerment can be determined are not clear. Even if some form of empowerment exists in participation, the question that still arises is for what reasons are people being empowered (Henkel and Stirrat, 2001). The second critique is largely against the claims for how empowerment can grow out of participation. According to Kothari (2001), making participatory practices more inclusive for the previously marginalised groups and individuals, while using the same structures of power which excluded them previously do not necessarily neutralise the power dynamics. Her argument here is that, simplifying the nature of power rather encourages the reassertion of structures of power and social control.

The different but interrelated concepts of participation that I explained in this section are shown in Figure 2.2. Although, I have treated the above concepts/issues separately, they do not function in isolation in a participatory planning context. It is evident in most episodes of participatory initiatives that several conceptual ideas together create the momentum to shape the relations and outcomes of collective action. Indeed, they are reinforcing concepts/issues; not only in the sense of shaping participation, but also in the sense of participation itself having transformative effects on them. For example, in mobilising stakeholders[5] in particular public spheres, greater focus is also needed on collaborative processes, power relations, and clear understanding of the spatiality of participation and the decisions thereof.

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[5] Crosby and Bryson (2005) any person, group, or organisation that is affected by a public problem, has partial responsibility to act on it, or has resources needed to resolve it
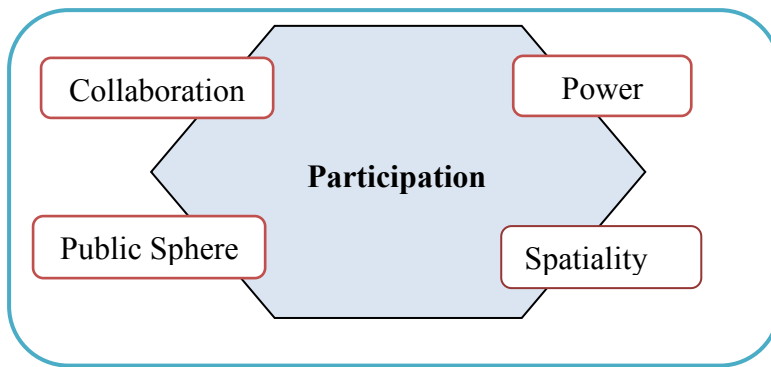
Figure 2.2: The multiple issues of participation: Towards building analytical framework of the study

(Source: Author, 2016)

I do not claim that the above related concepts/issues of participation are rigid or compartmentalised, or that they must all be operating on equal terms in all planning settings. However, addressing these issues together is helpful for a rich understanding of participation in planning decision-making and for analytical purposes. Also, the identification of these participation-related concepts is a first step in this study towards building a multi-dynamic analytical framework of multi-scalar decision transfer in the context of participatory planning to be applied in my empirical study in Ghana.

Thus far, I have discussed participation and clarified participation related concepts to understand how that shape and being shaped by public participation. But participation and its related concepts by themselves is not enough to confront socio-spatial power relations and interactions across scales, despite the potential to create the momentum for participatory decision-making. The politics of participation needs to be buttressed by the politics of spatial scale. To convey this understanding and to deal with how socio-spatial interactions across different places shape decision-making, part two focuses on spatial scale.

Part Two

2.5   Spatial Scale

Along with space, place and territory, scale is a foundational concept in geography (Born and Purcell, 2006) and social science (Howitt, 2003) since the early decades of the 20th century. Contested ideas about the need to incorporate scale into the analyses of social claims across geographical spaces and contemporary politics (Agnew, 1997) and the production of collective action (Auyero, 2006) in planning and policy decisions (Brownill and Parker, 2010) are continually being raised. Even though, Jessop et al. (2008) questioned the privileging of a single dimensions of socio-spatial relations (including scale), they also recognised that focusing more on the scalar form, or any other dimension of spatial relations (such as place, space, territory, etc.), is partly a question of research objectives and shifts in their relative importance in different research fields and contexts.

In this section, I discuss the meaning of scale and explore some of the underlying explanations that attempt to theorise and apply scale to socio-spatial, economic and political processes. The argument is structured in two main ways – scale as a geographical hierarchy and scale as a geographical relation. Overall, I seek to discuss and understand scale and its processes that are situated within active socio-spatial interactions through which socio-political struggles are experienced.

2.5.1   Scale as geographical hierarchy

Earlier notions of scale considered geographical scales as nested territorial containers within which socio-political life takes place. Taylor's (1999) attempt to understand the political geography of the world at a variety of different scales conceives scale as a fundamental concept in political geography. This argument is in line with the hierarchical notion of scale. He claims that the processes of world economy manifest as scalar levels of world-economy, nation-state and locality. Also, in her attempt to enquire into the supranational framework of migration control for the European Union, Helga Leitner argues that most geographers engaged with the term 'geographic scale' from the sense of bounded spaces of differing size such as the local, regional, national and global (1997). For her, the increasing trend in the flow of human population throws

a challenge to the way geographical scale is conceived mainly as a nested hierarchy of bounded spaces of differing size, such as the local, regional, national and global. Such conception is questionable because it tends to treat geographical scale as unproblematic and as simply spatial ordering of the world in which economic, social and political processes are fixed or given.

For Adger et al. (2003), engaging scale as a geographical given is to deny that different tiers of governance (whether, local, national or global) interact. This claim was made in their attempt to examine decisions concerning contested nature of conservation and multiple-use commons in the management of Hickling Board in Norfolk (in United Kingdom). They came to the realisation that treating scale as nested territorial container in environmental governance obscures how social (or environmental) problems can have different spatial and temporal scopes or how institutional response to such problems unfolds at different scales. According to these authors, this issue of scales as ontologically pre-given could stop social scientists and geographers alike from examining levels of decision-making as constitutions of socio-spatial contestations across geographical places.

Bearing in mind that the way in which scale is conceived and deployed can significantly affect its material practices, an introductory article in *Political Geography* (Delaney and Leitner, 1997) shows that conceptualising scale as a fixed hierarchy of bounded spaces is problematic. The key reason is that, socio-political activities and political authority are relationally constituted, and as well influence processes operating at different spatial scales. As a result, different spatial scales interact to produce incentives for socio-political actions. Therefore, one way we can de-emphasise the conception of scales as hierarchically fixed entities is to mobilise the political practices and policy processes that take place at and across different scales in terms of their multi-scalar relations (Sheppard, 2002). This perspective is discussed further in the following section.

2.5.2 Scale as geographical relation

In an attempt to present a steady conceptual meaning of scale, some political and economic geographers have been spawning an impressive body of literature (Moore, 2008). Increasingly, theoretical attention has focused on the relational, socially (re)constructed and discursive ideas of scales. Rather than conceiving scale as an ontologically given category, the relational concept of scale points to (a) a socially and politically constructed nature of socio-spatial territories, and (b) processes and events at particular scale shaped by a plurality of scales that are always involved in, affected by or mobilised in these processes (Howitt, 2003, Sheppard, 2002; Marston, 2000). Howitt (2003) considers the social and political construction of geographic scale as social action. In such social action, neither the material nor abstract construction of scales can be taken as geographic given. This points to the relational nature of the construction of scale. Agnew (1997), who explores how political parties in Italy organised and used space, pointed out that social construction of scale, means that a single geographical scale only makes sense in relation to others.

Smith (1993) who addresses the role of spatial scale in urban struggle, particularly in his attempt to analyse homelessness in New York City, emphasised that the relational notion of scale can better be understood as a dialectical relation, because:

> "In a literal as much as metaphorical way, scale both contains social activity and at the same time provides an already partitioned geography within which social activity takes place. Scale demarcates the sites of social contest, the object as well as the resolution of contest" (p. 101).

Using the Homeless Vehicle (a jarring intervention in the landscapes of the evicted) in the context of emerging struggles over homelessness, Smith goes on to explain that the spatiality of the politics of homelessness and the constitutive role of geographical scale in dealing with spatial difference is not necessarily about the production of space in the abstract, but also the 'concrete production and reproduction of geographical scale' (1992: 60). In short, Smith places emphasis on scale as a social process, wherein geographic scales are manifest as both a contingent and emergent property of socio-spatial and political struggles. Smith's contribution to the social construction

perspective on scale is that, social groups, such as evictees, can make and remake spaces through self-mobilisation to respond to urban policy-making.

Drawing inspiration from Smith's (1993, 2000) work on social production of scales, Swyngedouw (1997) argues that scale is not an independent definable geographical territory, but an arena and moment, both discursively and materially, where socio-spatial power relations are contested and compromises are negotiated and regulated. In this sense, theoretical and political priority should not focus on a particular scale, but rather on the discursive processes through which a particular scale may be (re)constituted (ibid). He later argues that geographical scale '[..] has always been the terrain of the political where socio-political tensions were fought over, mediated, and negotiated, resulting in ever-changing forms of territorial or geographical organisation and in territorially shifting forms of governance' (Swyngedouw, 2000: 68). Therefore, scale is not a neutral background; it embodies and expresses socio-political power relations. By analysing scale from the relational perspective, Swyngedouw has made two contributions to our understanding of scale: first that it is in the real-world of social struggle that the nature of scale of politics is established, and second, the scaled spaces are embodiments of social relations of empowerment and disempowerment or changing geographies of state power.

Based on the above discussion, it is believed that the geographic scale at which socio-spatial processes are located and/or exercised do not necessarily constitute a fixed geographical terrain, but rather are constructed socially and politically and are prone to change. In this context, it is important to explain the socio-spatial politics involved in social construction of scale. Based on the literature, there are four intimately connected concepts of scale that I pay attention to in order to understand the dynamics of socio-spatial relations in a participatory planning context. They are politics of scale in singular and plural senses, scale jumping, power relations in scale and networks of connections. Next, I focus on these interrelated concepts.

2.6   Politics of Scale

Political geographers and social science theorists in general who seek to investigate geographical scale from the relational perspective have also engaged in an ongoing attempt to theorise about the politics surrounding the construction of scale. Brenner (2002) who acknowledges that the concept of the politics of scale was introduced and developed by Smith (1992, 1993), thinks the concept has been used to summarise the proposition that scales are socially constructed and thus historically changeable through socio-political contestation. In short, in Brenner's (2001) view, the concept of a politics of scale connotes that "geographical scales and scalar configurations are socially produced and politically contested through human social struggle [..]" (p. 604). In a work entitled: *Political Construction of Scale*, Delaney and Leitner (1997) made an insightful contribution to the constructivist perspective of scale. They argued that, politics surrounding scale does not emerge from a neutral background; but rather, it is constituted by discursive practices that can be seen as practical efforts to persuade or convince; to create in the minds of others a kind of mental map or image (p. 94).

In advocating for constituted and discursive politics of scale, Delaney and Leitner's approach comes close to Marston's (2000) argument that, it is impossible to understand the ongoing restructuring of the relations of production, without analysing the corresponding changing relations of social reproduction and consumption, because each are inescapably bound up with the other. For Marston, a politics of scale as constituted and reconstituted relations of capitalist production, social production and consumption place emphasis on three sets of relations that are critical to understanding the social production of scale. Focusing on the scale of the household as empirical case of social relations that maintain capitalism and also provides the material bases for social life, Marston argues that, besides being a site for social reproduction, it is equally a scale where capitalist consumption practices occur. Brenner (2001) feels less convinced with the way Marston treats scale in her case study, because in his view, Marston had failed to analyse the relationships between the household and other scales. Brenner's alternative argument is that, one cannot understand a particular scale without analysing its relationships to other scales, since the meaning and significance of each

scale is inevitably embedded in its inter-scalar relationships. Further discussion on Brenner's alternative argument on politics of scale is the focus of the following section.

2.6.1 Politics of scale: singular or plural approach

In developing his argument, Brenner (2001) started with the view that there is an 'established truism' (p. 599) that scales are socially constructed and are subject to change through socio-spatial struggles; the fundamental source of the notion of politics of scale. He further argued that, the notion of a politics of scale have been expanded by geographers, including Marston, to examine different aspects of socio-spatial practices when they are actually analysing a place, a territory, or any other geographical entity. In Brenner's view, the tendency of over-extension of the scalar concepts can collapse the analytical power and the theoretical potentials of geographical scale. For this reason, he presents a distinctive explanation of the term 'politics of scale' in two common ways: the singular and plural meanings.

(a) The singular approach to politics of scale

The singular meaning of politics of scale refers to the production and contestation of some aspects of social and spatial organisation within a relatively differentiated and self-enclosed geographical arena. This arena is usually labelled as the local, the urban, the regional, the national and so forth (Brenner, 2001). For Brenner, the singular meaning of the politics of scale presents scale as a boundary whereby particular geographical units (such as a place, a locality or a territory) and its socio-spatial processes are separated from other geographical units. Brenner's fear, as noted earlier, is that this approach to analysing socio-spatial processes tends to neglect inter-scalar relationships between different scales. According to Brenner, the primary sense in which Marston (2000) analysed the politics of scale within households is linked to the singular approach and therefore does not illuminate the scalar nature of the household. Although, there is a possibility for scalar effects to emerge from a singular usage of politics of scale, it appears to Brenner that such effects are not only insignificant, but also more difficult to demonstrate.

(b) The plural approach to politics of scale

The plural approach, by contrast to the singular approach, examines many scales at once, and analyses the changing inter-scalar relationships among them. Brenner describes the plural notion of politics of scale as the production and contestation of particular differentiations, orderings and hierarchies among geographical scales. At the same time, the plural usage of a politics of scale is not limited to social production of different spatial units: it also involves the embeddedness of particular scales in relation to a variety of spatial units within multi-tiered geographical configurations. In support of this, Brenner further argues that for analysis to be particularly about scale, the inter-scalar relationships must be more than implicit; inter-scalar relationships must be the explicit purpose of investigation. Even though, relational accounts of geographical scale are a subject of later discussion, it need to be understood under the plural conception of politics of scale.

Particular relevance of the relational focus of theorising scale was made explicit in Brown and Purcell's (2005) study of the scalar politics of environmental changes in the Brazilian Amazon. Their argument, which draws inspiration from Brenner's piece on plural connotations of politics of scale point out that because (Brenner) analysis focuses on how the discursive and organisational relationships between scales shift, it is imperative both to pay attention to how each scale is socially produced and also examine how the relations among different scales are socially produced. In the above connection, Brown and Purcell further argued that, for us to understand the social production both of particular scales and of their relationships, we must also take seriously both 'scales' and 'scalar arrangements' (p. 610).

A central insight from Brenner's (2001) interpretation is that the effect of scale on social processes appears to be extensive when the plural and not the singular idea of a politics of scale are deployed to address such processes. In other words, the plural notion of a politics of scale effectively captures both the relational view of all scales and their determinate positions as different geographical units within multi-layered socio-spatial hierarchies (Howitt, 1998; Collinge, 1999). Also, in arguing that socio-spatial practices should be examined at multiple scales, Brenner is not only echoing an earlier call to

reject the notion of scale as a fixed geographical category, but also insisting that a politics of scale must be approached as a complex social process which is experienced in different ways by different actors. And this in turn allows a sense of scale which is conscious and interested in both internal and external realities of the politics of scale. Next, I focus on the (multi-) scalar strategies that may be pursued to achieve specific agendas across multiple scales.

2.7   (Multi-) Scalar Practices and Strategies

The primary purpose of this section is to explore multi-scalar action with particular interest in the scalar strategies that socio-political actors draw upon to engage with scale and/or politics of scale in a multiple scalar configuration. A scalar strategy can be regarded as a political strategy in which social realities are framed in terms of scale (McCann, 2003). Leitner and Miller (2007) who share this view stressed that in order to expand the geographical and political reach of multi-scalar strategies, politics of scale must operate simultaneously at multiple scales at multiple places. The scalar literature argues that scale and scalar configurations are not bounded geographical entities or independent variables that cause outcomes; rather, they are a strategy deployed by socio-political actors to pursue particular agendas at and across scales (Jones, 1998; Brown and Purcell, 2005). As noted by Swyngedouw (1997), 'the theoretical and political priority [..], never resides in a particular geographical scale, but rather in the process through which particular scales become (re)constituted' (p. 141).

At the same time, the human geography literature argues that the ability to act across multiple scales is an expression of power relations, an issue to be discussed later. However, this is not evenly distributed (Brenner, 2001; Uitermark, 2002). In support of this view, Huesker and Moss (2015) argue that in a context of uneven power distribution, two key strategies are open to actors. On one hand, those actors who are constrained only concentrate their effort on preserving or gaining influence on one particular scale. On the other hand, actors deploy multi-scalar strategies to act on several scales in order to maximise their influence on socio-spatial processes. According to (multi-) scalar strategy arguments, to remain active and influential on several scales is not a mere political strategy of actors, but deeply involves socio-spatial and political struggles to

dissolve spatial boundaries to politics of scale (Smith, 1992, 1993). For example, it is argued by Swyngedouw (1997) that, to understand socio-spatial relations is to understand "process", which focuses attention on transformation of scale through social struggle. This is because; the process-based approach to socio-spatial theory does not only take the focus of analysis away from both the 'global' and the 'local', but also insist that it is through the socio-spatial struggles and interactions between individuals and social groups that scales and their transformative outcomes become produced (p. 141).

In another piece, Swyngedouw (2000) shows that oftentimes, these struggles lead to changes in three ways (a) changing the importance and role of certain scales, (b) reasserting the importance of other scales, and (c) occasionally lead to the creation of entirely new scales. In the process, politics of scale is spatialised, in which social power and control of some actors and/or scales is strengthened while disempowering others. This process, which Smith (1992) refers to as 'scale jumping' is discussed further in the following section. I shall also extend the discussion to reflect how scalar political strategies are mobilised to (re)define socio-spatial power in section 2.8.

2.7.1 Scale jumping

Scale jumping as a scalar strategy emphasises how social groups (both elite and subordinate groups) mobilise their socio-spatial relations to make and remake the social, economic and political scales of organisation (Marston, 2000; Brenner, 2001; Swyngedouw, 2010). It was around this thinking that Smith (1992) introduced and developed the notion of scale jumping later deployed by other geographers to inquire into socio-spatial processes, political strategies and political possibilities of resistance across geographical scales. In general, scale jumping refers to cases in which some social actor (be it a group of people, a firm, or a government body) shifts the level at which some process occurs (be it decision-making, enforcement, or the production or distribution of some valued good) in order to secure a desired outcome (Sayre, 2005: 285). This also concerns the way socio-spatial relations are spatialised through the processes of stretching and contracting (Jonas, 1994; Swyngedouw, 1997) and through the mobilisation of more central branches of the state to construct more extensive

networks of association (Cox, 1998). Similarly, Smith (1996) notes that scale jumping, a fundamental scalar strategy, is a phenomenon whereby political power established at one geographical scale, is expanded to another scale to transform socio-spatial relations.

This is particularly highlighted in Smith's (1992, 1993) earlier work on how Homeless Vehicles enabled homeless people to jump scales with the hope of gaining the opportunity to expand their spatial mobility. In this context, the mobility provided by the Homeless Vehicles enabled the homeless people to construct scales of resistance and to jump 'contained' spaces imposed from above (or higher scale). Though, scale jumping can be deployed for varied reasons and by different groups, Smith suggests that it is marginalised groups who often use the scale jumping strategy to open up new spaces of interaction. In brief, Smith's argument on scale jumping highlights how access to higher scales enhances the social and political linkages of different scales as a result of abrogation of spatial boundaries. Similar views is shared by Marston (2014) when she argues that, though literature on politics of scale seems to afford limited agency to social groups who wish to transcend the local scale and influence politics at a higher scale, scale jumping offers a common strategy for such groups to deploy to bypass their immediate scale and form alliance with other groups at higher scales.

The above account seems to present scale jumping as unidirectional process, wherein lower scale actors shift and engage with higher scales in defence of their collective interest. In certain respect, this position has been taken by Swyngedouw (2010) when he argues that scale jumping occurs when social actors or socio-spatial processes move from one geographical scale to another. He goes on to say that the process of European integration whereby policy domain shifts from the national to the European scale is a clear example of stretching policy making relationships from lower to the higher scale. But in an earlier submission, Swyngedouw (2000) holds the view that scale jumping can move socio-spatial processes sideways as well as upward or downward. Likewise, while scale jumping implies a unidirectional process, scalar negotiation and manoeuvring basically also involves the combination and mobilisation of many lower scales (Cox, 1998; Marston, 2014).

Jonas (1994), in his classical work on the need to incorporate politics of spatiality in theorising scale notes that drawing on scale jumping in pursuit of politics of scale is more than a unidirectional process. Clarifying this, Jonas argues that the process of jumping between different scales is activated by the mechanisms of stretching and contracting. On one hand, scale jumping through contracting occurs when domineering scales attempt to control dominated scales by confining the latter and their socio-spatial and political processes to a manageable scale. On the other hand, scale jumping occurs when subordinated/dominated social groups attempt to mobilise and harness power to free themselves from scale constraints at a higher scale (p. 258). According to Jonas, such processes incorporate politics of spatiality into the discourse on scale theory with a promise of active construction of scale. In addition, distance becomes a useful factor in designing and jumping from lower to higher scales.

In a paper discussing *'Fractal spaces for planning and governance'*, Chettiparamb (2005) suggests that the interplay between the 'global' and the 'local' can be conceived as an 'emergent' phenomenon and operates in two ways. She argues that depending on the scale at which a given problem is manifested, different solutions can be given to the same problem, while at the same time each solution needs to be complemented at a higher or a lower time-space (coupling time and space) scale. She further points out that in relative space (the qualitative dimension of space) thinking; the flow of interactive relations between places is related materially to the distance separating such places. Though, scales in governance may be conceived and sometimes organised under the 'global' time-space scale of sectoral control which distances the 'local' and alienates the particular, solution may be sought either at the 'global' or the 'local' scale depending on which scale offer creative solution to a given problem. In this sense, the 'global' and the 'local' may interconnect and co-evolve with the potential to respond to emerging new problems.

Also, in addressing the question of scale, particularly with respect to local politics, Kevin Cox (1998) uses two distinctive conceptual ideas – spaces of dependence and spaces of engagement – to emphasise the capability of scale jumping as a political strategy. He defines spaces of dependence as place-specific conditions for our material

well-being and our sense of significance, and space of engagement as the space in which the politics of securing a space of dependence unfolds (p. 2). Cox treats spaces of engagement as networks of associations (a subject for discussion later) when he argues that the process of scale jumping is rooted in mobilising not local state agencies but more central branches of the state, by constructing spatially more extensive networks of association, and hence spaces of engagement. At the same time, he notes that scale jumping may not necessarily mean shifting the politics of scale or socio-spatial processes from the 'local' to the 'global'; rather it may be conceived as a strategy of shifting between spaces of engagement, which may either be broader or narrower than spaces of dependence in any particular moment. So, in the pursuit of politics of scale, scale jumping constitutes potentials for social groups to practice politics of scale by actively reshaping the socio-spatial discourses within which their political struggles are (re)constituted.

However, there are arguments that seem to question the possibility of using scale jumping to construct socio-spatial relations across scales. For instance, in arguing for the need to build international alliances that can match the international reach of global scalar forces, Sheppard (2002) claims that formation of effective alliances cannot simply rely just on scale jumping because it falls short of being able to identify specific social groups in particular places with whom common ground can easily be found. Similarly, in the introductory chapter of a book entitled '*Geographies of Power'*, Herod and Wright (2002) argued that to talk of jumping from one scale of socio-spatial organisation to another is to admit that scales as social products exist independently of the social practices through which they are continually reconfigured (p. 11). As such, not only do the notion of scale jumping and negotiation reify scales as objects, but also tends to overlook the very processes which constitute geographical scales. For Herod and Wright, the alternative way to articulate scale jumping is that social actors do not jump or relocate from one scale to the other, but rather constitute scale through their socio-spatial practices, and that this then represents instances of social actors producing scales of economic and political organisation and policies. This may also help to make more clear how scale enables relatively place-based groups to constitute their socio-spatial interests within a relatively local politics, and how such groups can interact and

counteract disempowerment by jumping scales to assert their specific concerns at a higher scale (Howitt, 2003). Next I focus on how scale embodies and expresses power relationships across multiple scales.

2.8   Power Relations in Scale

It is relevant to examine Leitner's (1997) idea on reconfiguring the spatiality of power and the political construction of scale. According to Leitner, a key aspect of the political construction of scale in space is the manoeuvring of relations of power between overlapping or mutually inclusive political territories by actors operating and situating themselves at varied scales (p. 125). She argues that the manoeuvring process is contested over three main issues, namely where power should be located and exercised, the geographic scope and territorial extent of power associated with particular scale and which political power should actually be exercised in and across spaces. Leitner goes to note that together, these issues are deemed quite effective in creating arenas of negotiation, conflict and uncertainty and also make the reconstruction of the spatiality of power relations contingent and unpredictable. In the meantime, understanding the diverse spatialities of power is very much related to understanding both the social construction of scale and the multi-scalar dynamics of socio-political contestation (Leitner and Miller, 2007).

Similarly, Delaney and Leitner's (1997) paper on political construction of scale show that if we embrace the thinking that political construction of scale is a serious theoretical project, then theorists must take seriously the relationships between space and power as well as the conceptions and meanings of space and power that are drawn upon by actors to shape socio-spatial and political practices and/or resist change. As pointed out earlier, socio-spatial power struggle redefines scale in terms of changing its importance and role, reasserting its importance or creating new scales, a struggle which give rise to changes in 'the geometry of power' – multiple web of relations of dominion/subordination, of solidarity/cooperation (Massey, 1992); because 'as scalar configurations change the modalities of organising and exercising social power change too' (Swyngedouw, 2000: 69). As such, though both the processes and effects of scale move from one scale to the other, it affects different people differently based on the

scale at which such processes operate or are organised. This may also happen because different groups pursue scale strategically to either maintain or alter existing socio-spatial power relations or geometries of power (Swyngedouw, 1997, 2000). All this suggests that the geometries of power fragment and differentiate and shape socio-spatial power relations in multiple ways as I demonstrate below.

2.8.1 Locating power in multi-scaled configuration

Beyond the shift in scales of socio-spatial interaction and its differential effects on different people, there are particular levers that shape the geography of scaled power. As such, the analysis and the need to understand shifting relations of power are of central concern, particularly in light of the link between control over and access to different decision-making spaces and building of territorial alliances of differential power relations. For McCann (2003), the politics of scale necessarily entail the disruption and re-composition of power relations that connect actors together within and across varied scales. He also argues that though, new opportunities for socio-political contestation may emerge from scalar configuration, it cannot be assumed that such opportunities wholly benefit a single social group because outcomes are contingent on strategies and/or whether the opportunities are really acted upon. Hence, the ability to deploy scaled power relations to influence multi-scalar policy process may not only be contingent on knowing and using new power geometry, but also knowing how the central driving forces can be expressed in different forms.

Such proposals start from understanding how material scales are constituted and represented. For example, Jonas (1994) argues that in thinking about changing power geometry of social relations, geographers need to pay attention to how social groups map out material scales to release them from existing scale constraints. Using a takeover bid of Worcester Company in Massachusetts by a British conglomerate and the politics of spatiality that ensued, Jonas argues that the bid was unsuccessful because the antitakeover politics of the state of Massachusetts (where Worcester Company was located) was stronger. His conclusion was that the state of Massachusetts did not constitute scale simply as a dimension of this particular struggle, but rather strategically constituted scale as integral to the presentation and material development of the struggle.

As such, the power being struggled over when geometries of power changes is the power to constitute scale as part and parcel of the material context of the struggle.

Another consideration in relation to how scaled power relations may be expressed is that besides being influential in thinking about scalar dynamics of power, scale jumping is also seen as a vehicle for expressing and reconfiguring power relations. Using the classic example of Homeless Vehicle, Smith (1992) argues that, though it was not a solution to homelessness in New York City, it provided potential means by which evictees were able to contest and in part overcome social dislocation/facilitating the seizing of urban space rather than containing them to prescribed geographical locations; open new spaces of interaction/enhance their spatial access; and help them to re-inscribe their political empowerment. Using the notion of positionality [6] Sheppard (2002) similarly stresses how power is relationally constructed, and how positionality is central to its construction (though with unequal positionality of actors).

Such a process is grounded in two positions of power relations: positions that tend to be more influential than others and those that simultaneously put others in a state of compliance or dependence. For Sheppard, while this thinking presupposes that the former exert control over the latter, 'disadvantaged positionality' is a primary condition for mobilisation, resistance and struggle (p. 321). Hence, the ability to deploy positionality (or disadvantaged positionality) to mobilise resistance across geographical scales may be used to give account of changing scalar positionalities (Brenner, 2001; Sheppard, 2002) and the production of new power relations (Leitner and Miller, 2007).

Margit Mayer (2007) in her work on "Contesting the Neoliberalisation of Urban Governance" took the analysis of scaled power relations further. She argues that even in the context of socio-spatial polarisation of power at particular places, explicit efforts can be made to frame such differences in ways that can build coalition to confront global power relations. She refers to this as building "fronts of resistance" (p. 108). Her

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[6] Sheppard (2002). 'the situated positions in space from which subjects com to know the world

argument is in relation to the neoliberal policies of privatising public space and urban infrastructure in Germany, where attac – anti-globalisation movement – mobilised new local actors to provide broad-based and concrete support to challenge neoliberal globalisation forces. The local broad-based support was built through the combination of factors; connecting the political agendas of local actors, focusing attention on the impact of globalisation politics on local life and framing their differences and presented their diversity as a positive value for collective action. Leitner and Miller (2007) found that the ability to recognise the existence of scalar orders and power asymmetries is a starting point for (re)working towards progressive scalar politics in terms of the development of alternative political spaces, and in terms of deploying effective socio-spatial strategies of resistance in and across scales. This means that power geometries may be expressed and also be realised in the process of coordinating the politics around local and extra-local places as mutually constituted geographic projects.

A similar sense of power relations as a locally and extra-locally constituted phenomenon is explicit in Doreen Massey's (2004) thesis. In her readings on 'Geographies of Responsibility', she presents a view that relational construction of space presupposes that particular local scales and its processes are criss-crossing in the wider power-geometries that constitute both local and extra-local places. Therefore, local scales are not necessarily victims of global policies in which the latter acts upon the former; but the former are key agents in wider socio-spatial processes. This then means that there is 'global' reach of 'local' politics of scale as there is 'local' reach of 'global' politics. Therefore, politics of scale and/or the production of geographical scale are an intra-scalar as well as an inter-scalar process (Marston, 2014). So, the question is, if indeed scales are products of overlapping socio-spatial power relations, how is this relationships conceived and communicated? I will focus next in addressing this question.

2.9   Networks of Connection

The debate about scale and power geometries of scaled places can be read in parallel to debates about 'networks of connection'. Here it is argued that scaled places and their socio-spatial processes are products of networks and relations. In this section, I focus more on the network aspect while the relational aspect is discussed in the subsequent section. Much of the conversation about network has been motivated by the desire to understand how vertically structured political formations of the geographies of the state and their scalar processes interconnect. Network is viewed in different ways by different scholars. For example, Held et al. (1999) show that network is generally treated as regularised or patterned interactions between independent agents, nodes of activity, or sites of power. For Dicken et al. (2001: 96), 'networks are both social structures and relational processes constituted by intentional actors, and are also causal mechanisms capable of effecting empirical changes [..]'. Leitner (2004), who draws a distinction between spatiality of politics of scale and networks states that whereas the spatiality of a politics of scales is associated with vertical relations among nested territorially defined entities, networks span space rather than covering it, transgressing the boundaries that separate and define these political entities. She however, acknowledges that spatiality and network politics are not necessarily disconnected; because networks, which represent new forms of coordination and new politics of horizontal relations also have a distinct spatiality.

A similar view was expressed by Harriet Bulkeley (2005) in her attempt to understand the spatial and scalar configurations of environmental governance. She argues that, though the potential for integrating scalar and networked accounts of spatiality depend on how the concept of network is conceived, the networked nature of socio-spatial relations does not necessarily rule out an analysis of scale. In terms of how networks are conceived and the possibility of using them to account for scalar and network processes, the work of Dicken et al (2001) provide classic interpretations. For example, in addition to showing the distinction between the use of network as an analytical tool and as a form of governance, Dicken and colleagues also put forward three mutually constituted interpretations of network to analyse the global economy. These include networks as relational processes, networks as multiple manifestations of social

processes at multiple geographical and organisational scales and networks as territorial embedded entities. The argument posed is that, a network link that crosses different scales is not just about bringing actors who are spatially distanced together to interact, but also that relational processes are constituted by territorially embedded scales. This implies that scale make sense in relation to others (Agnew, 1997), and thus, signifies a constituted process: 'while networks are embedded within territories, territories are, at the same time embedded in networks' (Dicken *et al.,* 2001: 97).

As a result, in conceptualising the politics of network, it should be recognised that, scales evolve relationally within tangled hierarchies and dispersed inter-scalar articulation of a social process and hinges crucially upon its embeddedness within dense webs of relations to other scales and spaces (Brenner, 2001). Yet moving away from the territoriality of networks runs the risk of losing sight of the profound geographical variations across localities and spatial units (Dicken *et al.,* 2001). It is in taking cognisance of this (i.e. relational but territorially embedded networks) that we can address both direct and indirect connectivities between social activities that stretch across different spatial scales but embed in particular places (ibid).

Furthermore, in examining the content and form of politics of space, Kevin Cox (1998) argues that even though, jurisdictions of states are mapped out with territorially defined power and responsibilities, their boundaries tend to be porous. For Cox, a more appropriate way we can understand how porous the spatiality of scale and its politics are, is that of the network. As argued earlier, beside spaces of dependence, Cox thinks that politics of scale operate within spaces of engagement. According to him, to construct a space of engagement, we need to address the question of network of associations because the latter constitutes the former. Moreover, just as scale is not a natural given, the form a space of engagement takes in practice is also contingent upon particular network of associations/interactions in any given instance (ibid). In other words, Cox is advocating for a shift away from an 'areal notion of scale' (understood as enclosed jurisdictional spaces) to that of scale as the spatial form of networks of association.

McGuirk (2000) argues that organisational forms through which power is produced in urban governance involve cooperation and mobilisation of networks of interaction. This means that power is enacted by networks of interaction. Her presentation of the network-power nexus points out that, if power is enacted by networks, then it follows that power and its outcomes are shaped by actors who are mobilised in exercising power through those networks; often organised at a range of spatial scales. She emphasises also the way in which collective interaction in turn transform and redefine policy network and its outcomes across scales. According to Herod and Wright (2002) such transformation go a long way to help articulate a different sense of scale and scaled relationships within which actors and places are bound, 'a sense in which specific places are seen as simultaneously global and local [..]' (p. 8). So, in scaled spaces of engagement, as highlighted by Cox earlier, politics of scale is thus made up of social actors engaged in relational networks within a variety of spatial scales.

In the foregoing section, I showed the different ways scholars have interpreted networks of connection in a multi-scalar context. In particular, the discussion centred on spatialising networks, networks as a constituted process within spaces of engagement and between relational and territorial entities and exercising power through network. Next, I discuss further the relational view of networks.

2.9.1 Relational connectivity

One important conclusion from the preceding discussion is that particular networks and processes of generating effective socio-spatial practices are a result of ongoing relational connectivity. This also operates as an enabling force for further connectivity between various actors and geographic scales. The narrative that I present in this section puts particular emphasis on the extent to which network formations in the politics of scale are connected with important consequences in policy formation at multiple scales. An enquiry into this is crucial because, as noted by Delaney and Leitner (1997) above, socio-political activities and political authority are relationally constituted, hence, processes that are constituted by them and through them can partly by addressed by examining their relational connectedness.

There are different perspectives of geography that are drawn upon by scholars seeking to analyse the representation of space and the possibilities of realising the relational dynamics of socio-spatial processes. For example, in her examination of relational planning in urban governance, Healey (2007) asserts that two main interpretations that come to the fore in probing links between spaces, are geographies of physical manifestation (or physical geography) and geographies of social relations (or relational geography). The former conceives 'space-as-a-surface', where places and people (at various scales) become objects located on a geographic plane, while the latter sees space as a relation; a momentary co-existence of trajectories of flows and connectivity. Healey's understanding leans broadly on Lefebrian theorisation of space as well as Massey's (2005) interpretation of space. What becomes important in the second meaning of geographic space is the flows of relationships and interactions through which socio-spatial phenomena are produced. Although, both geographies (i.e. physical and relational) may pay attention to the interplay between places and flows, the conceptions of how such interplay plays out differ (Healey, 2007). This notwithstanding, in relational geography,

> "[..] planning activity can be understood as part of an effort of collective imagination about place qualities, and as a set of relational webs which, intersecting with other relations, can produce substantial resources and constraints on other relational dynamics" (Healey, 2006: 526).

Moreover, in terms of policy implications, planning and geography literature show that from a physical geography perspective, policy ideas and policy-making are hierarchically organised, but relational geography tends to approach policy-making as a matter of mobilising and connecting the relational dynamics of socio-spatial processes at various spatial scales (Gualini, 2004; Healey, 2007). But as argued in planning and geography literature, there has existed for some time now, 'a relational reading'[7] of place understood in terms of flows, and connectivity as well as boundaries around particular set of policy issues (Amin *et al.,* 2003; Amin, 2004; Healey, 2007).

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[7] A relational reading is a conception of social organisation which emphasises that the tellers of stories and policy or decision makers are not outside the world they explore, but are part of the dynamic, unfolding realities to which their work, interactions and relations contribute (Healey, 2007).

Accordingly, connectivity (either at the local, regional, national or supranational scale) embodies a nexus of relations and connections around and through different scales. However, Healey (2007) reports that interpreting connectivity this way raises concern about the ability to analyse and fix the potential impact of particular policy intervention when all kinds of relations and connections (proximate or distant) are mobilised. Similar argument was made by Amin et al. (2003) that a relational reading of space and the construction of relational politics poses challenges both to the analysis of the causes of inequality and the measures to be put in place to tackle it.

It is argued from the planning literature that, the extent and strength of connectivity (construed as a directed form of relationality, which distinguishes planning as a purposeful, normative activity) between geographic scales is partly defined by the role and position assigned to planning in a given social space (Madanipour, 2010). For Madanipour, planning involves setting up a series of temporal spatial and institutional connections, and to make and analyse planning as a connective activity in such setting also involves giving an account of the process itself. He however, notes that connections that are constructed by the planning process are subject to rupture and shrinkage. As a result, connectivity in planning processes are contingent, and often limited to being symbolic rather than substantive connections of spatial scales. To make sure that socio-spatial and political connections are substantive, Madanipour advocates that the spatial connections that planning makes should not be fixed, but should continually respond to the political, economic and spatial concerns and to facilitate collective action.

In their investigation of how local government reforms had changed the geographies of inter-governmental arrangements and spatial consciousness in Denmark, Galland and Enemark (2013) identified some problems associated with relational connections between different tiers of governance. According to these authors, the Danish planning system which originally depicts institutional harmonisation and spatial coordination of policies and socio-spatial practices has been replaced with a pursuit of a-spatial agendas (especially at the regional and national levels) influenced by growth-oriented sectoral policy strategies and/or growing influence of neo-liberal economics in national politics and administration. As a result, functional relationships, interconnectedness or institutional relations across different jurisdictions and scales were overlooked. These,

among other implications, appear to have contributed to what Galland and Enemark refer to as 'loss of spatial consciousness', underpinned by planning and policy practices that are less inclined to strategic reasoning and geographical thinking in decision-making processes. More than two decades ago, the political geographer, Edward Soja (1989: 37, cited in Graham and Healey, 1999) expressed similar sentiments when he asserted that both in traditional geographical and planning theorisation, space is always treated as a domain of the dead, the immobile and a world of passivity rather that action and meaning. At the same time (as highlighted earlier), a growing body of research (Haughton *et al.,* 2010; Madanipour, 2010; Khan *et al.,* 2013) argued planning in different areas could best be undertaken not a specific scales but rather across scales. Hence, a relational approach is anchored on the idea that what count in relational thinking is connectivity (Thrift, 2004). Therefore, if scales are relationally constructed and are 'perpetually redefined, contested and restructured' (Swyngedouw, 1997), then how can planning that transcends rigid notion of scale be undertaken? The next section explains how some authors respond to and seek to take the relational perspective of scale forward.

2.9.2 Scalar consciousness in multi-scaled planning

Ways of thinking about scale as unbounded geographies of socio-spatial relations and the ways in which planning attempts to cope with complex scalar relations is the main concern of this section. An inquiry into this issue must be understood through a combined focus on relationality and scalar consciousness. A reflection on scalar consciousness sets the context for a more nuanced understanding of its features and the way it operates in terms of whether particular contexts of doing planning work engage with the notion or not. The argument is that since relational scales of planning are multiple and fragmented the need to act and think relationally is also a need to reflect the more complex scalar relationships that stretched across a range of spatial scales. In what follows, I introduce the notion of scalar consciousness and discuss its key defining features as found in the literature. This section also discusses briefly, the objectives, structure and application of scalar consciousness.

Scalar consciousness involves the strategies that develop the scale implications of the coexistence in places of multiple relations, each of which has different forms of networks that transect territory with different scalar reach. The concept of scalar consciousness was developed by Pasty Healey (2006) with an empirical focus within Western Europe. The concept focuses on the idea of geography of places with particular qualities, the notion of fluidity, openness, and multiple time-space relations. Likewise, the interconnectedness of socio-scalar relations and the potential to shape the spatiality of policy intervention and spatial organisation lies in the way scale and relational dynamics are conceptualised. Healey defines scalar consciousness as:

> "[..] the way in which an area or territory in imagined, both in relation to its external positioning and its internal differentiation, [..] the multiple spatial 'reach' of different networks transecting a territory", and also focus on "the spatial implications of the coexistence in places of multiple relations, each with their own network morphologies and scalar reach" (p. 534 and 535).

In other words, scalar consciousness is associated with and finds expression in the extent to which spatial organisation, trans-scalar and multi-scalar flow of ideas and information are embedded in public policy formulation (McCann, 2003; Salet and Thornley, 2007; Healey, 2006). Hence, scalar consciousness is functional if the processes of policy formulation have become increasingly trans-scalar in reach and cross-scalar in constitution with explicit consideration of the flow of webs of socio-spatial relations and multi-layered interactions

There are various forms of scalar consciousness. Some types of scalar consciousness involve functional interdependencies of ecological and resource-use systems, as in the case of Xingu Indigenous Park in Brazil (Brondizio *et al.,* 2009), while others involve the use of spatial technology such as geographic information systems (GIS) to explore interactive network formations at multiple scales as in Milwuakee, in the United States of America (Ghose, 2007). Healey's focus is on a different reading of scalar consciousness, namely, relationally imagined urban regions with multiple scales of socio-spatial interactions. She understands relationally imagined urban regions as that which;

"[..] capture the dynamic and tensions of relations with very different driving forces and scalar relations as these coexist in particular places and flow through shared channels, [..] and the extent to which concepts of place, spatial organisation and territorial identity are embedded in policy cultures and political assumptions" (p. 532 and 536).

In spite of its insistence that a relational reading of places comes with interconnected views of socio-spatial relations, scalar consciousness is not about the balance between near and far spatial units. Rather, it is about the ability of a spatial strategy to reflect on the relational understanding of socio-spatial dynamics of governance process and depends upon the creation and maintenance of a sense of scalar consciousness (or understanding of the ways multiple scales of social relations matter in planning and decision-making), though such a process may be taking place in a specific territory. It is argued that scalar consciousness introduces significant changes to the way politics of spatial scale is conducted. Unlike the treatment of territory as a 'container' or homogeneous spatial entity, the notion of scalar consciousness talks about spatial organisation of places as meeting points that gather flows and put together overlapping places with interdependent relationships. In this context, Healey argues that planning policy arenas informed by this perspective (scalar consciousness) recognises the many ways in which people experience complex relational dynamics which constitute and thrive on different scales and 'borders' in a complex multi-tiered web of relations. To be able to see an issue as an interrelation of activities in particular places means a break away from thinking that local happenings are unrelated to those at other spaces out there. Otherwise, analysis will remain focused narrowly on internal cohesions of territorial relations, leading to a 'thin' conception of scalar relations and a challenge to articulating multi-relational dynamics around which planning policy should focus.

The main objective of scalar consciousness is to establish and advocate for a multiplicity of relational spaces where the 'local' place is open to different scales of practice/action that lend themselves to public debate, spatial mobility and embeddedness of competing visions. As opposed to this objective, a politics of scale in terms of defined territorial boundaries puts emphasis on localised connections within a

given locality. This localised connection, according to Healey, tends to restrict relations, issues and distance connections that are external to a particular locale, leading to 'thin' conception of scalar relations. This means that though a focus on boundedness can build internal territorial relations, it is by invoking scalar consciousness of such relations that broad-based consultations and inclusive ambitions of relational spatial imagination can be achieved.

Healey (2004, 2006) proposes the following structure as constituting the formation of scalar consciousness and facilitating the emergence of planning policy arenas;

1. Treatment of scale – scale is understood in terms of the 'reach' of a relationship in space and time, which may connect many discontiguous sites

2. Treatment of position – position is not seen as geographical point but an institutional site in particular relational networks, and how near and far they are, in relational terms

3. Internal differentiation – the fragmentation and splintering of social relations, and of the coexistence of multiple relational layers, with which 'places' become infused

4. Social relation – as networks of different forms, connecting people, spatial scales and events that stretch in many directions and linked to different scales. As such, the relations may be driven by different driving forces in a fluid and open manner, and operate in multiple time-space contexts

5. Spatial effects of social relations – analysis cannot be done merely as changes in physical proximities but may take place 'at a distance' as well as nearby. It is possible for social relations to transect without intersecting or coexist in specific places without affecting the socio-spatial activities

6. Participation/action-oriented – each scale is connected to relations of other scales as part of efforts of collective imagination of social phenomenon which are diverse and contested

The above features are conceived as mobilisation forces of scalar consciousness and/or relational understanding of space that operate across different political realms. These features reflect and embody how interactive spatial relations can be mobilised and organised to actively construct planning policy activities through relationally

constituted spaces and/or communities. At the same time, in trying to make sense of scalar consciousness, the qualities of place and the social relations co-evolve. Consequently, (local) places are not simply inert locations but are actively embedded with other places and social relations at multiple scales of interaction. In what follows, I explain the conditions that give rise to loss of scalar consciousness and its dynamics.

An understanding of how scalar consciousness operates is imperative, particularly when dealing with relational spaces of planning that are multiple and fragmented. This equally raises for us the question of how planning practice is grappling with the concept. From Healey (2006) and Paasi (2013) lines of inquiry, scalar consciousness in planning and policy formulation may operate by: (a) concentrating attention on the inter-scalar/inter-territorial distribution of infrastructure and development intervention; (b) treating scales as heterogeneous entities with complex relationships in and across different spatial scales. It thus accepts diversity of scales in multi-layered webs of relations and a geography of flow of planning ideas in decision-making. Similarly, decision-making must focus both on an 'inward' orientation that aims to distinguish a given space (either designated as national, regional or local) as an entity apart from other spaces and relational 'outward' orientation that relies on social relations through which a given space is represented as part of wider relational space; and (c) at higher scales, scalar consciousness provides presumably an answer to the question 'where does each planning issue or development need belong? Yet, to gain importance, such issues must be coordinated spatially. Among the many implications of such coordination is the pursuit of planning that emphasises the importance of active public discussion, stretched and overlapping networks and influence by explicit (re)discovery and (re)articulation of 'mobile' planning ideas.

Foregoing discussion of the four main interrelated concepts of scale and/or politics of scale – singular and plural meaning of politics of scale, scale jumping, power relations in scale and networks of connection – reveal the dynamics of socio-spatial relations. Although, scale is conceived differently, its politics, networks of relations and connection around and through spatial scale, thus far, there are common threads of insights. First, scale is socially and politically produced with a scalar politics of scale

jumping. Second, scale is constitutive of social, spatial and political relations in which the construction and politics of scale incorporates and/or are affected by power and networks of connection. Such socio-spatial processes and politics in a (multi-) scalar context can explain how the dynamics of integrating policy decisions across different scales to induce decision transfer from lower to higher scales are shaped. Much of the debate surrounding the relational reading of scale in the literature has to do with social and political construction of scale and how scalar processes at particular scale shape and are shaped by multiple scales. However, the literature has so far paid little attention to the rationale for translating policy decisions in relational scale thinking to planning in multi-scalar context.

In the following section, I build what I call a Multi-Dynamic Socio-Spatial Connectivity framework of analysis to investigate how participatory planning interacts with spatial scale processes to translate decisions at a lower scale into decision at a higher scale. In doing this, I also incorporate the framework I proposed in part one – the multiple issues of participatory planning.

2.10 A Multi-Dynamic Socio-Spatial Connectivity framework of analysis

In the preceding part it has been found that forms of participation have differential effects on participation and decision-making relationships. I also showed in the same part that there are interconnected concepts of participation (collaboration, public sphere, power and spatiality) that shape and constitute participation in planning decision-making (see Figure 2.2). Thus, this constitutes the participatory framework through which multiple actors may be mobilised for participatory planning. The current part provides the theoretical basis to incorporate multiple scalar dynamics (singular/plural dimension, scale jumping, power relations and networks of connection) as mechanisms of embedding socio-spatial relations in decision-making. Based on these discussions, it can be argued that any study that seeks to explore participatory and spatial scale processes needs to be positioned within broader and multi-scalar dynamics. When studied within the context of embedded socio-spatial interaction, the relations and scalar strategies across spatial scales needs to be interrogated. This requires that we build a multi-dynamic socio-spatial connectivity (MDSSC) analytical framework that

can help in systematic investigation of socio-spatial relations within a participatory decision-making context. Therefore, based on the discussions hitherto, I propose this MDSSC framework in Figure 2.3 and intend to use it in my empirical study of participatory planning and its socio-spatial relations across spatial scales in Ghana.
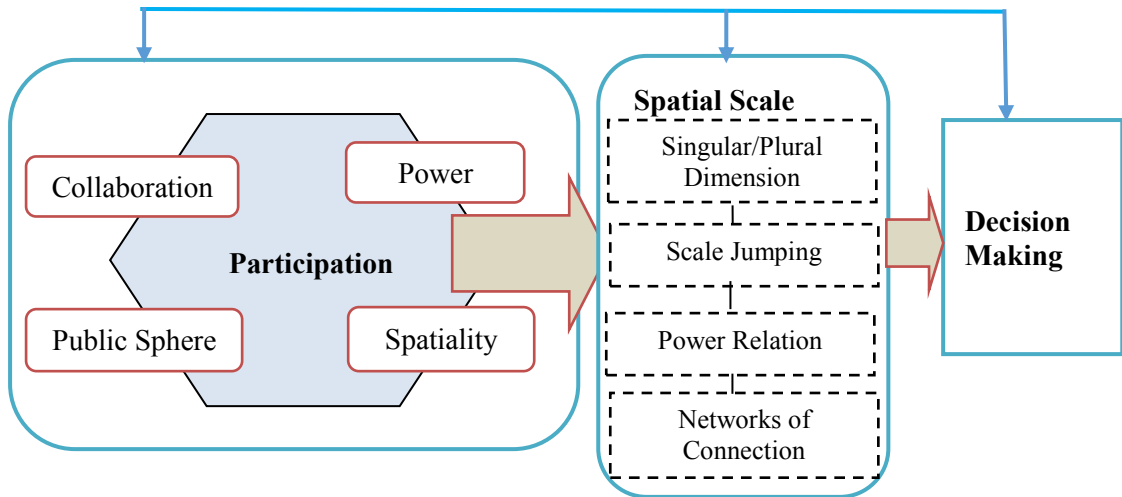
Figure 2.3: Multi-Dynamic Socio-Spatial Connectivity framework of analysis (Source: Author, 2016)

As shown in the framework (MDSSC), I attempt to incorporate social dynamics of participatory relation and the dynamics of spatial scale processes, and to interrogate them to identify the rationales for translating decisions across scales in a multi-scalar planning context. This framework is deployed in two ways; as guidance for empirical studies because it informs the various aspects that need to be covered in data gathering; and as guide to a systematic analysis of empirical evidences. It offers policy makers and planners a systematic way of looking at multi-scalar decision-making in participatory planning context. Each of the boxes under spatial scale in the framework specifies scaled interactive relations with reference to different dynamics of socio-spatial spatial scales of participatory planning. This dynamic of socio-spatial relations of spatial scales of participatory planning do not act in isolation and are often closely associated to each other, and become reinforcing factors. Therefore, the potential interactive relations and information in each box may not be mutually exclusive and they can be inevitably interconnected.

Further, I emphasise that, though the framework can be used to guide multi-scaled participatory planning studies, the results from the MDSSC framework may not be generalised to all situations of multi-scalar participatory planning because the contextual issues of multi-scaled planning in different context may differ. My empirical study in Ghana will attempt to capture as many socio-spatial issues of spatial scales and planning as possible that have influence on decentralised district planning, not all of them may be relevant or equally important in all situations. Therefore, the application of the MDSSC framework can be modified or extended to suit any contextual condition. The framework simply attempts to serve as a simplified; but at the same time broader guidance to systematically approach the complex nature of multi-scalar participatory planning studies. Particularly, to investigate the rationale for interconnection of the outcome of different spatial scales, something that has not received enough attention in the literature. I conceive that the MDSSC framework will be useful in analysing participatory decisions in the context of socio-spatial and scalar dynamics.

However, it must be noted that the MDSSC framework is being used as a 'heuristic device'[8]; not regarded as final and strict framework, but as provisional and plausible only, whose purpose is to inquire into how participatory planning and its socio-spatial relations in and across spatial scales in Ghana. As a result, this framework (MDSSC) could be refashioned or modified based on empirical findings of this study.

2.11 Conclusion

This chapter argues that for participatory planning to respond effectively to decision-making in a multi-scalar context, the contested nature of spatial scale cannot be ignored. It also argues that participation and spatial scale cum their related issues influence each other to define the rationale for multi-scalar decision transfer. This emphasised the need to investigate spatial scales of participatory planning alongside issues of scaled participation in order to uncover the socio-spatial relations at play. This is addressed in two parts.

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[8] Olga Kiss (2006). 'Heuristic device' is used when an entity X exists to enable understanding of, or knowledge concerning some other entity Y. It shows how things would have to be connected, and how one thing leads to another.

Part one focus on participation and participation related concepts. Following the discussion of the meaning of participation and based on different theoretical insights gained from review of the literature, I constructed a working definition of the concept of participation to guide my study. I have also showed that there are different forms of participation and that the mainstream views on participation characterise participation as a continuum of devolution of power between non-participation and citizen control and as differences in the depth of engagement between consultation and influence on public decision. Drawing on four interrelated concepts of participation, namely collaboration, public sphere, power and spatiality, I have shown how each of these interact and interconnect with participation with substantive effect on decision-making. I emphasised how analysing different spheres of participation create particular context for interaction and strengthen participatory approaches to planning. I then discussed the potential benefits, and the dissenting views of participation. Finally, I constructed a framework of the interrelated concepts of participation with the aim of refining and joining it with spatial scale issues to construct an analytical framework of my study.

Part two of this chapter started a discussion on the meaning of scale. I showed that the geographical scales at which socio-spatial process operate are not fixed but are socially and politically produced. Based on the literature on scale, four key concepts that shape the politics of scale construction were identified and discussed. I demonstrated that singular/plural meanings of politics of scale, the strategy of scale jumping, power and network of connection have the potential to expose how policy processes may be inclusive or exclusive.

This interactive and relational understanding of scale resonates strongly with the relational understanding of urban planning, presented by Pasty Healey in three urban regions (the Amsterdam area, the Milan area and the Cambridge sub-region) in Western Europe (2007). Healey seeks to present and develop insights into the nature of socio-spatial relations/interactions and the articulation of the planning project in relational and non-Euclidean [9] ways. Although, planning practice may be structured by

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[9] Non-Euclidean: according to Friedmann central to a non-Euclidean planning model are planners acting as responsible, thinking urban professionals rather than as faceless bureaucrats engaged in the production

specificities of each planning 'story' in the above cases, there are broader forces (recognising interdependencies among scales of planning, socially-focused development orientation, how relational networks to planning provide critical input to decision-making) that lead to some commonalities. As such in following relational perspective to 'telling stories of planning practice', particular emphasis is made by Healey on the multiplicity of socio-spatial relations that seek to engage with more open and relational spaces. It follows that, relational understanding of spatial scale as assemblages of webs of multi-scaled relations provide a useful starting point from which to engage with planning, especially when it operates at multiple spaces of governance and decision-making (Almendinger *et al.,* 2016).

Similarly, the work of Haughton et al. (2010) explains how some planning scholars respond to and seeks to take the 'relational thinking'[10] of planning forward. Drawing inspiration from the relational scale perspective, these authors undertook a comparative research into national and sub-national planning systems across the scales of planning, particularly in the United Kingdom, Ireland, Scotland, Northern Ireland and Wales. Their key interest was to address the extent to which planning involved working with a wider range of actors and spatial scales of multi-scalar governance contexts of planning. Their findings revealed that, while some amount of planning was undertaken with focus on specific scales, they also found evidence that planning is being (re)constituted to be more embedded in multiplicity of socio-spatial relations in which planning provides a forum for various kinds of interactions. Hence, the argument developed from the case accounts is that planning has changed from being largely 'scalar fix'[11] towards more networked and relational understanding of scale, one that is capable of forging a series of links and socio-spatial interactions between spatial scales of planning. This not only suggest a move towards a commitment to planning with relational networks, but also a

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of anonymous documents. Hence, face-to-face interaction in real time is the new model of planning (Friedmann, 1993).

[10] Relational thinking put emphasis on connectivity, spatiality of flow of social relations/spatially stretched relations, porosity and multiple geographies of affiliation where politics of place bring together different scales of practices/social actions (Haughton *et al.,* 2010; Amin, 2004).

[11] 'Scalar fix' is composed of relatively stabilised geographical hierarchies in which activities organised at some scales tend to predominate over others (Collinge, 1999). Such scalar hierarchies constitute relatively entrenched geographical structures bounding political, economic and cultural activities in specific ways (Brenner, 2001).

move from a fixed conception of spatial scales (as self-enclosed spaces) to a relational understanding – spatial scale as constituted by spatialised social relations stretched over space and manifest in material and discursive forms.

Guided by the literature and/or the insights on socio-spatial interactions and relational connection between spatial scales, I proposed a theoretically informed analytical framework to investigate how participatory planning interact with spatial scale in a multi-scalar context. I intend to use this framework – MDSSC – in my study of decentralised district planning projects in Ghana to empirically explore how participatory planning shapes and is shaped by spatial scale processes. In chapter 6 in particular, I deploy and elaborate (empirically) on the MDSSC framework of analysis in more detail. The chapter that follows mainly cover the decentralised district planning context in Ghana.

Chapter 03

Decentralised Participatory Planning in the Ghanaian Context

3.1   Introduction

This chapter explains the background characteristics of decentralised participatory planning of Ghana. I begin the discussion with brief background information on Ghana, study region and study districts. I then present an overview of decentralised local governance system in Ghana in relation to the power of traditional political authority before 1988. Following a description of the legal provisions of participatory planning after the 1990s, I shall discuss the structure of current decentralisation system. Although, planning takes place at the district, regional and national levels, for the purpose of this study, emphasis will be given the district level for three reasons. First, as my research explores the rationale for translating decisions at a lower scale into decisions at higher scale through the understanding of participatory planning, the local level, which is within the district, is the key site where public participation is mobilised and practiced. Second, mechanisms of participatory planning in Ghana are practised primarily at the district level (NCG and DEGE Consult, 2007), hence, understanding such mechanisms and how they shape planning decision-making can be addressed effectively at the district level. A third reason is that the constitution and other legal instruments give greater weight to public participation in planning and decision-making at the district level. I next discuss traditional authority-local government relations. The chapter concludes by looking at how participatory planning ideas are steered toward the preparation of the DMTDPs and the opportunity for citizen participation.

3.2   An Overview of Ghana, Study Region and Study Districts

This section presents an overview of the profiles of Ghana and Ashanti region in general and the Atwima Nwabiagya district assembly (ANDA) and Ejisu-Juaben municipal assembly (EJMA) in particular. With regard to ANDA and EJMA, I focus mainly on their location and size, the number of sub-district councils[12] and unit committees or

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[12] NDPC (2013a). Sub-district council refers to urban, zonal, town and area councils

electoral areas they cover. As for the criteria by which the region, the districts and their sub-district structures were selected, I discuss this in chapter 4.

3.2.1 Brief profile of Ghana

Ghana is a unitary republic in Sub-Saharan Africa, bounded on the west, north, east and south respectively by Cote d'Ivoire, Burkina Faso, Togo and the Gulf of Guinea (Ayee, 2008). The country covers a total land area of 238,537 square kilometres. The 2010 population census by Ghana Statistical Service estimated the population at 24.66 million (2010). Since independence in 1957 from the British government, Ghana has had significant experiences with democratic political life. However, between 1957 and 1992, Ghana was governed by a succession of civilian and military regimes, and within this context, four republics (or democratic regimes) were adopted. Ayee (2008) shows that since the return to multi-party rule in 1992 when the current (or fourth) constitutional republic was introduced to date, there has been relative political stability.

3.2.2 Brief profile of Ashanti region

The Ashanti region is one of the ten politico-administrative regions in Ghana. The region has a population of 4,780,380, representing 19.4% of the total population of Ghana (Ghana Statistical Service, 2010). Physically, the region lies in the southern half of the country and occupies 10.2% (24,389 square kilometres) of its total land area. It is the third largest region after the Northern and Brong Ahafo in relation to land size. It shares boundaries with the Western, Central, Eastern and Brong Ahafo regions. Although, many ethnic groups reside in the region, it is estimated that the 'Akan' speaking people are in the majority, representing 74.3% (Ghana Statistical Service, 2013). It can be observed that, the Ashanti region has a strategic link between the more developed coast and the rest of the country. For its central location, Ayee and Dickovick (2010), describe the Ashanti region as the 'heartland' of Ghana. The central location is also strategic for transportation and distribution networks of goods and services. As shown in Figure 3.1, the region is centrally located in the middle belt of Ghana. It lies between latitudes 5° 50′N and 7° 46′N and longitudes 0° 15′W and 2° 25′W (http:www.ghana.gov.gh/index.php).
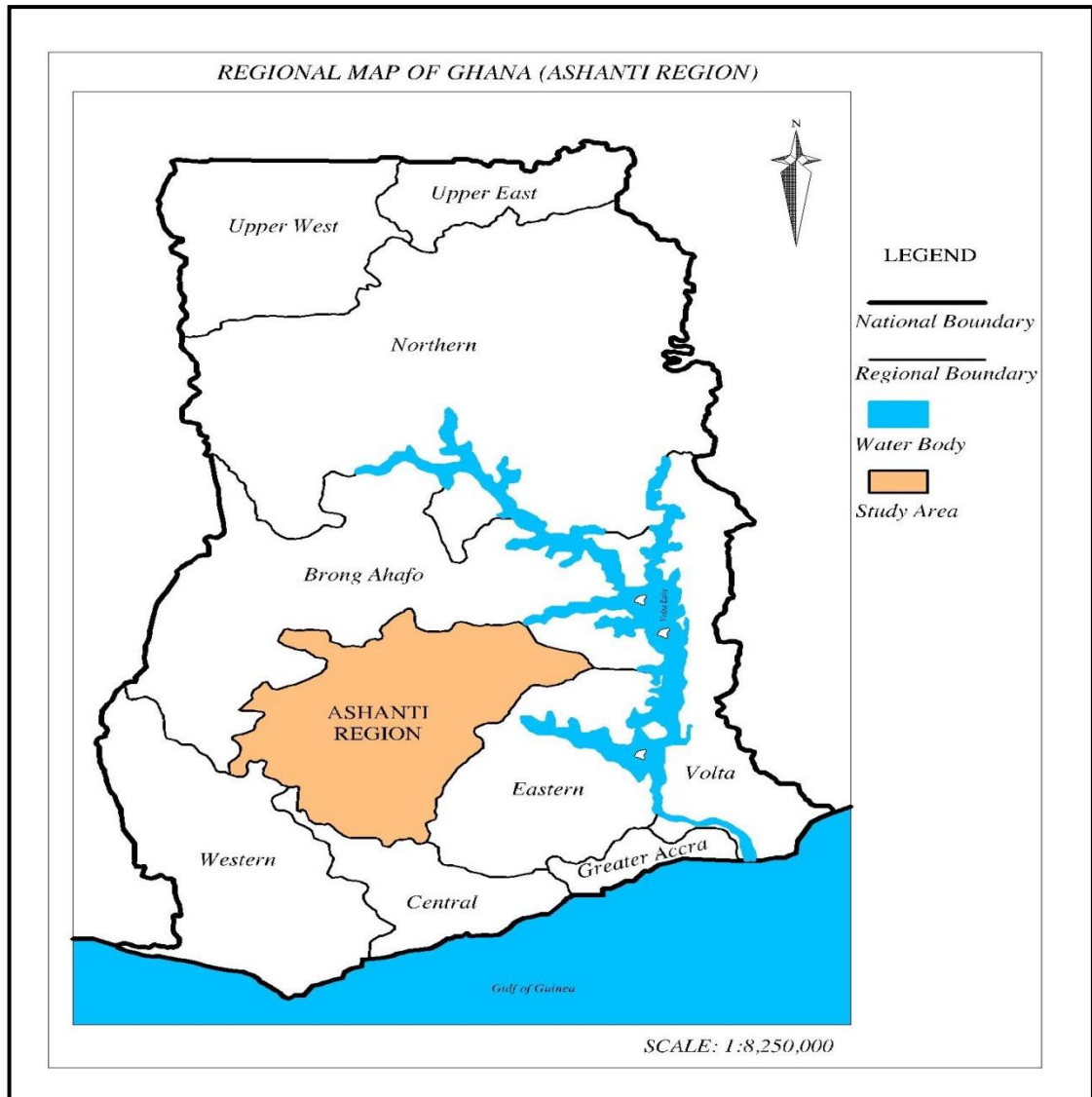
Figure 3.1: Map of Ashanti region in a national context
(Source: Town and Country Planning Department, KMA, 2013)

Following the recent creation of new districts in 2012, the region whose capital is Kumasi had 30 political and administrative districts. At the start of the local government reforms in 1988, 18 district were established and later increased to 27 in 2008 (Ayee and Dickovick, 2010). Out of the 30 districts, one is a metropolis, 7 are municipalities while twenty-two are districts (Ghana Statistical Service, 2013) (see section 3.5.1 for further explanation). It was from these 30 districts that I selected Ejisu-Juaben municipal assembly (EJMA) and Atwima Nwabiagya district assembly (ANDA) for the current study. The reason for selecting them is a subject of discussion in chapter 4. In Figure 3.2, I present a map of these two administrative areas in the regional context.

Like other regions in Ghana, the head of the political administration of Ashanti region is a regional minister whose appointment by the national President needs to be approved by the national parliament.
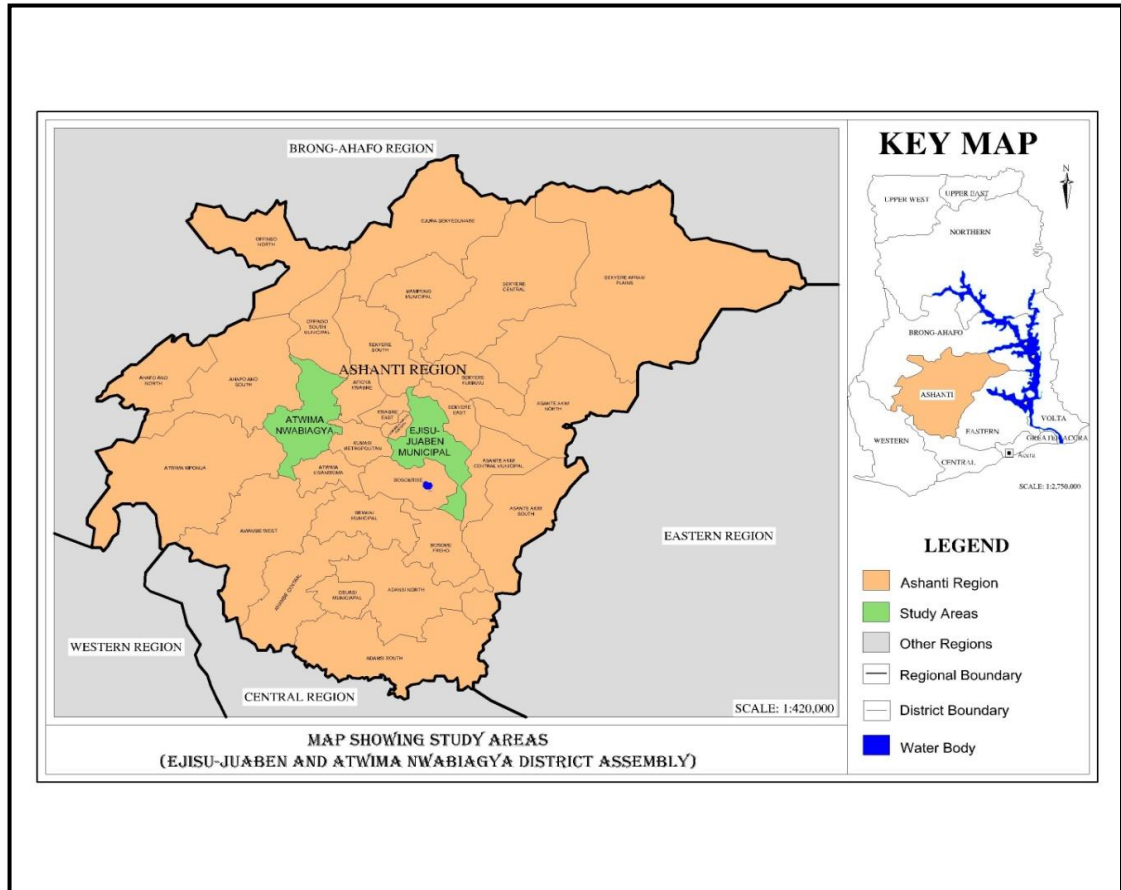
Figure 3.2: ANDA and EJMA in the regional context
(Source: Town and Country Planning Department, KMA, 2015)

3.2.3 Brief profile of Ejisu-Juaben municipal assembly

Ejisu-Juaben municipal assembly, which is one of the 30 districts in the Ashanti region stretches on a land area of 637.2 square kilometres, with Ejisu as its administrative capital. According to Ghana Statistical Service (2012), Ejisu-Juaben municipal area has an estimated population of 143,762 (representing 3% of regional population). The criterion for classifying Ejisu-Juaben as a municipality is explained later on. The municipality is located in the central part of the Ashanti region. It lies within latitude 1° 15′ N and 1° 45′N and longitude 6° 15′W and 7° 00′W. Ejisu-Juaben municipal is bounded on the north east and north west by Sekyere East and Afigya Kwabre districts

respectively, south by Bosomtwe-Atwima-Kwanwoma and Asante-Akim South districts, east by Asante-Akim North district and west by Kumasi metropolitan district (EJMA, 2015). Figure 4.3 shows a graphical representation of the Ejisu-Juaben municipal area and the case zonal councils.
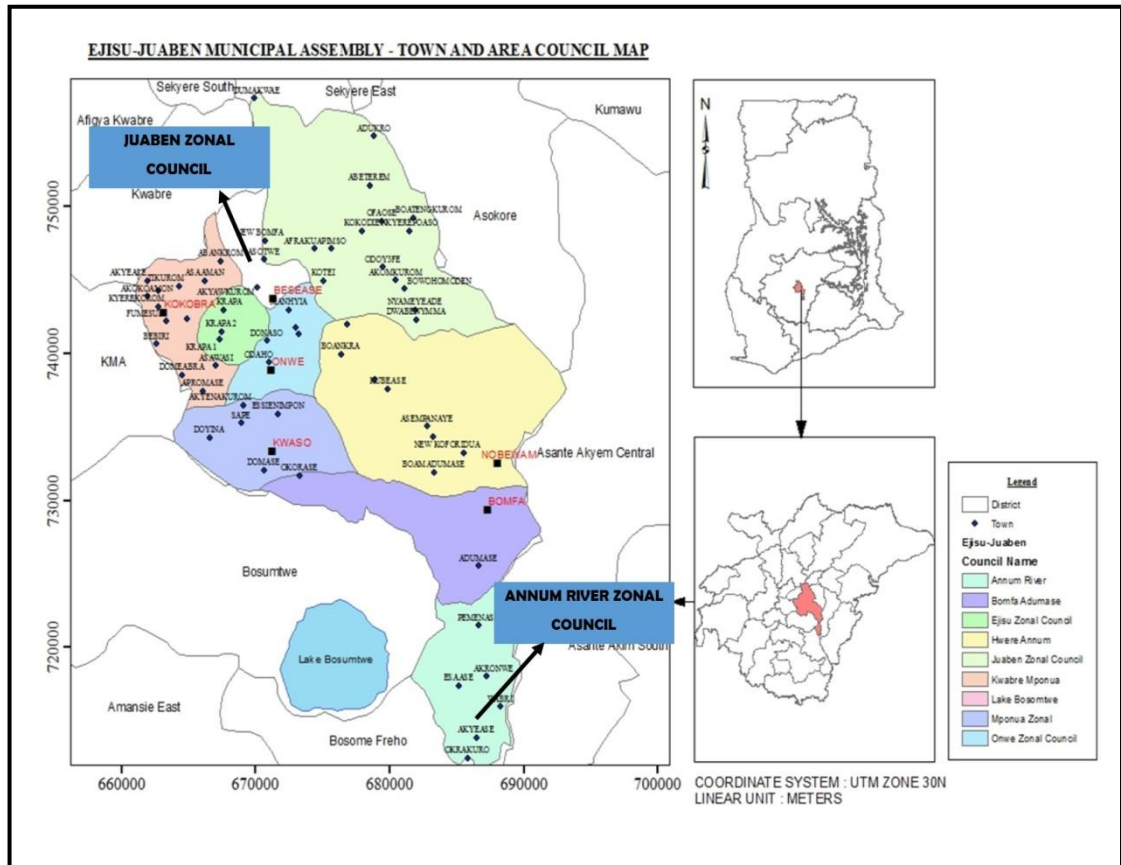
Figure 3.3: EJMA and the selected zonal councils
(Source: Town and Country Planning Department, EJMA, 2015)

Within the geopolitical landscape of Ejisu-Juaben municipal area, 9 zonal councils have been established to promote grass root participation in decision-making and socio-economic development of their constituents. The 9 zonal councils have a total membership of 135 (i.e. 15 members per zone). As shown in Figure 3.3, it is among these councils that the case zonal councils (shaded in blue) were selected for my study. Together, the 9 zonal councils are subdivided into 47 electoral areas, with each being represented by an elected assembly member through universal adult suffrage. This implies that the municipal area has 47 assembly members. However, there are other 21 appointed members, making 68 members for EJMA. Further, in every electoral area, a

unit committee is established to work in collaboration with the assembly member (EJMA 2015). Just as the elected assembly members, there are also 47 unit committees in the EJMA municipal area. It is through the unit committee structure that various communities and community members interact to prepare community/unit committee level plans. How the unit committees are distributed among the 9 zonal councils and/or within the municipal area is presented in Table 3.1.

Table 3.1: Zonal councils and electoral areas in the EJMA

Zonal Council	Number of Electoral Area	Percent
Ejisu	3	6.4
Juaben	5	10.6
Hwere Anum	6	12.8
Bomfa-Adumasa	5	10.6
Anum River	6	12.8
Besease-Bonwire	6	12.8
Kwabre Mponua	8	17.0
Onwe	3	6.4
Mponua	5	10.6
Total	**47**	**100**

(Source: Department of Planning, EJMA, 2015)

3.2.4   Brief profile of Atwima Nwabiagya district assembly

The Atwima Nwabiagya district assembly (ANDA), whose capital is Nkawie, is one of the 30 political and administrative districts in Ashanti region. It was first established in 1988 with a total land area of 2,411 square kilometres. However, in 2004, a new district – Atwima Mponua – was carved out of it. After the re-demarcation exercise, the district now covers a total land of about 294.84 square kilometres and lies approximately on latitude 6° 75′N and between longitude 1° 45′W and 2° 00′W (ANDA, 2015; Ghana Statistical Service, 2013). ANDA has an estimated population of 149,025, representing 3.1% of the regional population. The district is located in the western part of Ashanti region and bounded on the west by Ahafo Ano South and Atwima Mponua districts, on the north by Offinso municipal, on the south by Amansie-West and Bosomtwe-Atwima Kwanwoma districts and on the east by Kumasi metropolitan and Afigya Kwabre districts (ANDA, 2015). The ensuing figure shows the location of ANDA in national and regional contexts.
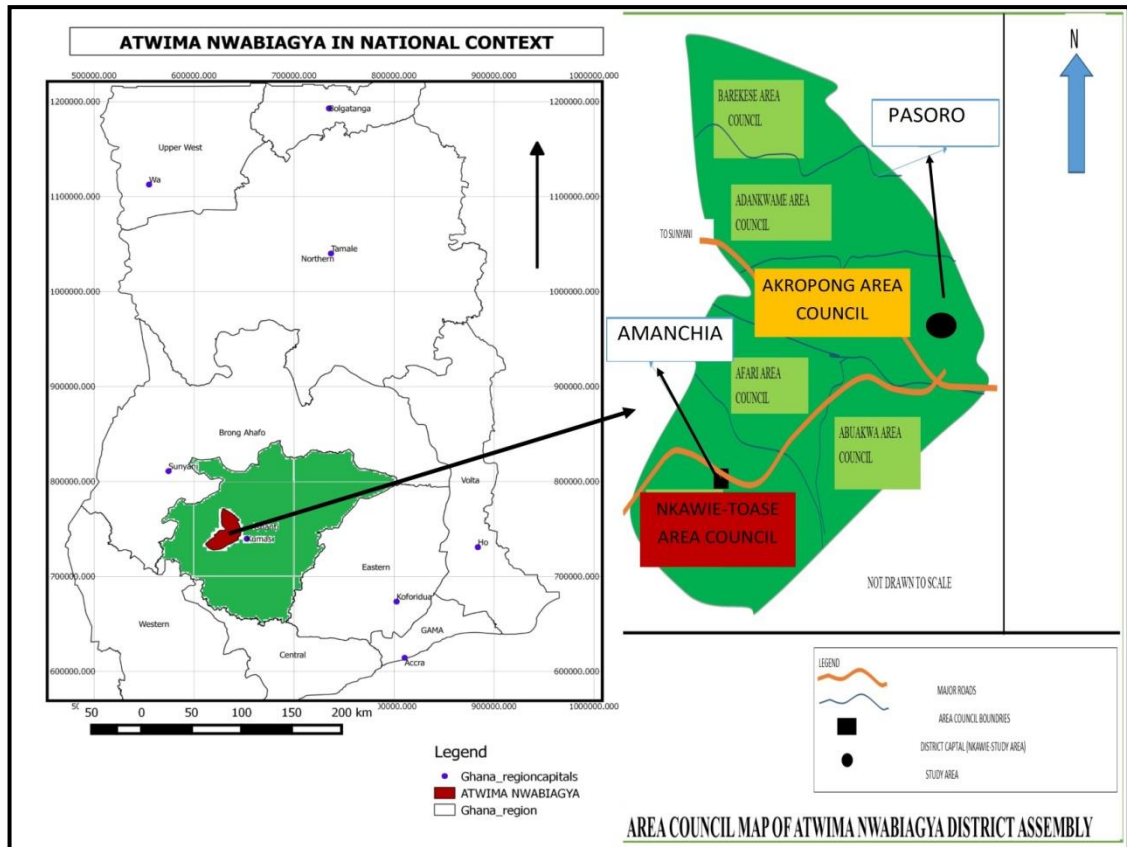
Figure 3.4: ANDA and its area councils in national and regional contexts
(Sources: Town and Country Planning Department, ANDA, 2015)

Beyond the district level, the next layers of institutions – for bottom-up planning – are the area councils and unit committees. With regard to decentralised district planning, the area councils and unit committees are supposed to collaborate with the ANDA to mobilise communities and local citizens to undertake planning work (Botchie, 2000). ANDA (2015) shows that there are 6 area councils under its jurisdiction. These councils are subdivided into 38 electoral areas (see Table 3.2), or unit committee (the starting point of the bottom-up planning process). Out of a total of 55 assembly members, 38 are elected while 17 are appointed. It can be noted that, the electoral areas and/or unit committees are not evenly distributed among the 6 area councils. As can be seen in Table 3.2, area council such as Abuakwa is constituted by about 29% of all electoral areas in the district while Afari area council has only 8%. Although, the number of electoral areas constituting an area council was not one of the criteria for selecting Nkawie/Toase and Akropong area councils (either than those established in chapter 4), they have equal proportion of electoral areas.

Table 3.2: Area councils and electoral areas in the ANDA

Area councils	Number of electoral areas	Percent
Nkawie/Toase	7	18.4
Afari	3	7.9
Abuakwa	11	28.9
Akropong	7	18.4
Adankwame	5	13.2
Barekese	5	13.2
Total	**38**	**100**

(Source: Department of Planning, ANDA, 2015)

The 6 area councils (or sub-district councils) and the unit committees structures provides the lowest possible arenas at which local citizen can play a part in plan formulation and decision-making on development (ANDA, 2015). In terms of local governance, ANDA focuses on strengthening the capacity of public institutions under its jurisdiction, especially area councils and unit committees to plan and manage development and promoting community participation in decision-making and development (especially the youth and women) (ANDA, 2006). The cases of area councils I selected for empirical study are those shaded in blue.

3.3   Decentralisation in Ghana: An Historical Overview

In the above section, I presented brief profiles of the country of study (Ghana), the region (Ashanti) and those of the case districts (EJMA and ANDA). In this section, I discuss the nature of decentralised local governance before and after colonial rule –a period preceding the launching of the current system of decentralisation in the late 1980s. Specifically, I focus on the trajectory of decentralisation in Ghana under two periods – pre-independent era and post-independent era. In both periods, there is an underlying concern to better understand how the traditional authorities were used to facilitate communication and local decision-making. This will set the context for further discussion about the interaction between traditional authorities and the current decentralised structures of local government, particularly in the area of participatory planning in section 3.5.2.

3.3.1 Decentralisation in pre-independence Ghana

Prior to independence, some form of decentralisation was introduced in Ghana by the British colonial authorities through the policy of 'indirect rule'. Indirect rule refers to a policy aimed at providing statutory basis for the exercise of local government functions by chiefs as well as effecting reform measures to modify the indigenous system to suit conditions of colonial administration (Appiah *et al.,* 2000). The governance landscape could probably be described as a duality: two forms of power under a single hegemonic authority (Mahmood, 1996). This system of local government – indirect rule – was categorised into two distinct parallel institutions. The first is municipal councils, which were constituted at the major municipalities and towns at the time, and the second is native authorities, representing the rest of the country (Ahwoi, 2010a). However, functionally, both the municipal councils and native authorities perform similar local government functions such as settle disputes over ownership, possess and occupy land, appoint staff and pass of bye-laws to raise fund for development. In a study conducted by Hoffman and Metzroth (2010) on the trajectory of Ghana's decentralisation, it was found that the mode of appointment or selection of representatives (chiefs, sub-chiefs and community elders) to the above institutions was not democratic as they were mostly hand-picked by the colonial authorities on the basis of loyalty. On the whole, colonial authorities through the policy of indirect rule had a final determining say in who becomes a chief and/or who became appointed to the native authorities.

Even though the implementation of indirect rule through the local chiefs may have sown the seed of decentralisation in Ghana (Antwi-Boasiako, 2010) and granted power to native authorities to raise local taxes to undertake public works (such as building of schools and health centres) (Ayee, 1994), it appears to have weakened the chieftaincy institution and the development of democratic values. This can be attributed to three main reasons. First, the respect, trust and confidence that were accorded to the chiefs and the chieftaincy institution gradually eroded. In fact, some citizens saw the chiefs as mere 'messengers' of the colonial authorities as they appeared not to exercise authority of their own but to take directive from the latter. Others saw the chiefs as agents of colonialism who have connived with and are working in the interest of the colonial authorities to impose leaders on them or tax them (Nkrumah, 2000; Mahama, 2009).

Second, local governance in this era did not offer opportunity to develop inclusive local government system. As argued by Ahwoi (2010a), indirect rule tends to have impeded popular participation in local decision- making.

Third, instead of the chiefs being accountable to both the local citizens and colonial authorities in the performance of their duties as community leaders, Nkrumah (2000) observes that they rather ignored or replaced downward accountability to the people with upward accountability to the colonial authorities. This suggests that loyal chiefs and appointed individual members of the native authorities were drawn closer to the colonial authorities, but became alienated and less answerable to their communities. Consequently, the power and authority of chiefs seem to have experienced ebbs and flows depending on the level of loyalty to the colonisers (Owusu, 2005). The net effect is that, the native authorities and chiefs could not be seen as advocates and true representatives of local citizens' interests.

3.3.2 Decentralisation in post-independence Ghana

Prior to independence in 1957, local demands were rife for citizens to have a say in the governance of their locales. This was manifested in 1948 when the Gold Coast (now Ghana) witnessed a nation-wide rioting against poor living conditions, and limited representation in governance. Based on recommendations of the Watson Commission (1948) and the Coussey Committee (1949) that were constituted to respond to the above concerns, a new form of decentralised authority was introduced in 1952. This reform changed the structure of local government councils where for the first time, two-thirds of their memberships were elected (through universal adult suffrage) and one-third made up of appointed chiefs (Appiah *et al.,* 2000). Thus, whereas membership of traditional authorities, which were replaced by local government councils were appointed exclusively by the British colonial authorities, the latter is made up of elected and appointed members. Boafo-Arthur (2001) argues that, this was the time local representation and greater participation in local government appeared to have been granted. However, the implementation of these reforms could best be described as interim measures because they were truncated in the heat of the pre-independent political struggle between 1952 and 1956.

In an attempt to launch a new approach to local governance and to institutionalise decentralisation, the Nkrumah led government (1957-1966) enacted a local government Act, Act 54 of 1961. However, instead of taking into consideration the pre-existing local institutions (particularly the chieftaincy institution) in this reform, the government rather perceived them as a threat (Hoffman and Metzroth, 2010). For example, the post-colonial government of Nkrumah succeeded in curtailing (or sidelining) the powers of some chiefs, particularly those who were seen to be loyal to the opposition and went ahead to ban chiefs from participating in local government. Furthermore, Nkrumah and his government resorted to re-demarcation and fragmentation of the local government units in order to appoint those chiefs who were considered loyal to head such units. This did not promote decentralisation, but rather encouraged centralisation of authority in the presidency (Hoffman and Metzroth, 2010; Appiah *et al.,* 2000; Ayee, 1994). Also, this climate of banning chiefs from participating in local politics seem to have relegated the role of chiefs and the chieftaincy institution to the background in matters of local governance and local development (Mahama, 2009).

From independence until the 1970s several attempts were made to reform local governance. In one of such reforms in 1974, an attempt was made to restore the participation of chiefs in local governance by the National Redemption Council (NRC – a military regime). In other words, chiefs and the chieftaincy institution were empowered to play a central role in local governance. This reform resulted in the establishment of sixty-five district councils through the Local Administration (Amendment) Decree 1974, NRCD 258. According to Hoffman and Metzroth (2010), this reform had introduced at least two changes. First, the reform could be accredited with the introduction of formal structures of local administration system. And as part of this formalisation, some sectoral agencies such as community development and town and country planning were transferred from national to the local level. Second, the office of a district chief executive (DCE), which still exists to date, was created as the political and administrative head of the local government unit.

Unfortunately, however, as claimed by Antwi-Boasiako (2010), this reform, which sought to transfer central government functions of administration to the district councils, also failed. This failure, which was linked to the internal power struggle within the NRC, had played a central role in strengthening central government control at the local level (Nkrumah, 2000; Hoffman and Metzroth, 2010). Furthermore, as regards the financing of local government, no measures were put in place to ensure inter-governmental fiscal transfer to finance the local government functions that were transferred to the local units (Awortwi, 2011). It can be argued that local government in post-independence Ghana was generally weak in transferring power to the people and changing the decentralised political structures established by the colonial authorities. This claim seems to have continued until another (or the current) local government reform programme was launched by the Provisional National Defense Council (PNDC) regime in 1981. However, government initiative to reform decentralisation actually started in 1988, when a new local government law (PNDC Law 207) was passed. To promote this reform, the PNDC government created forty-five new districts in addition to the existing sixty-five (65) local councils (making 110 districts). Before I show how the current structure of decentralisation is established to undertake decentralised district planning work, I first present the legal provisions that were enacted subsequently to strengthen decentralisation and participatory planning.

3.4   Legal and Legislative Basis of Participatory Planning

This section discusses the main legislative provisions that were enacted to support participatory planning and inclusive decision-making, particularly at the local government level. The discussion centred primarily on the 1992 constitution of Ghana, local government Act, 1993 (Act 462), the national development planning Act, 1994 (Act 479), the national development planning (system) Act, 1994 (Act 480) and the local government service Act, 2003 (Act 656). In the next sections, I present a discussion of these legal and legislative provisions. It must be stressed at the outset that while attempt is made to explain the above legislative provisions hereunder, more detail information is presented in appendix 3.1.

3.4.1 Participatory intents of the 1992 Constitution

The current programme of decentralisation (in 1988) was initiated, as noted above, by PNDC Law 207 prior to Ghana's transition from military rule to democratic governance in 1992. This law was however repealed by the local government Act, 1993, Act 462, which will be discussed next. Generally, the objectives of this reform are to promote power sharing, rational allocation of resources, install adequate capacity to effect efficient decision-making (Kokor, 2001) and to carry out governance through a participatory and consultative fashion (Inkoom, 2011). Subsequently, in 1992 the fourth republic constitution, which modifies PNDC Law 207 puts emphasis on three issues that are relevant and associated with participatory planning – democratic local government, promotion of decentralisation and establishment of local government system that thrives on public participation.

It is worthy of note that, while the above (Article 240 (2)*(e)*) and Article 270 (1) guarantee grass roots' participation, Article 270 (1) also permits the use of both national laws (statutory) and customary practices (traditional) in governing the country. However, the same constitution bans chiefs from partisan politics. For example, Article 276 (1) makes it clear that "a chief shall not take part in active party politics; and any chief wishing to do so and seeking election to parliament shall abdicate his stool[13] or skin[14]". In addition, PNDC Law 207, which was adapted by the 1992 constitution, also bans the institutional representation of chiefs in their capacity as traditional rulers in local governance. One school of thought argues that the above legislations will prevent conflict between traditional leaders and the local government system, wherein the sanctity of the chieftaincy can be preserved (Boafo-Arthur, 2001). However, Ayee (2006) holds an opposite view that, because of the tendency to fight for space between local government officials and chiefs, the absence of formal institutional representation of chiefs could become a recipe for non-cooperation. I leave this to a later discussion on how the current decentralised structure of governance grants interaction between local government and traditional authorities.

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[13] Dzivenu (2011). 'Stool' is a symbol of chiefly office and commonly used to refer both to a chief's office and to the land and people under his jurisdiction.

[14] Aikins (2011). In the northern part of Ghana, 'skins' are the equivalent of stools (thrones) in the southern part of Ghana to which the royal families select a successor to ascend to.

In addition to the 1992 fourth republican constitution, the local government Act (Act 462) was also enacted to deepen decentralisation as well as participatory planning (see appendix 3.1 for details).

3.4.2   Subsidiary legislations of planning (Acts 479 and Act 480)

In accordance with the constitution and with the aim of deepening decentralisation and decentralised planning, other subsidiary legislations were enacted. For example, while Article 86 of the constitution is devoted to the setting up of the NDPC, Article 87 (2)(*b*) enjoins the commission – NDPC – to make proposals for the development of a decentralised multi-year rolling plans, taking into consideration the resource potential and comparative advantage of the different districts of Ghana. In line with this, two Acts of parliament – the national development planning Act, 1994 (Act 479) and the national development planning (system) Act, 1994 (Act 480) were subsequently enacted. Act 479 of 1994, which establishes the NDPC also specifies, among other things, its functions to include the formulation of broad national development plans and strategies, making proposals to ensure even development of all local government units in Ghana and to coordinate, evaluate and monitor development policies and programmes. Act 480 also specifies the institutions and agencies with planning authorities at the ministries, sectors, regions and district levels (also see appendix 3.1 for details).

3.4.3   Establishment of departments of MMDAs through Act 656

The MMDAs, which will be elaborated further, refer to the metropolitan, municipal and district assemblies. In furtherance of Article 240 (2)*(d)* of the 1992 constitution and Section 38 (1) and 161 of Act 462 (see appendix 3.1), another law – local government service Act, 2003 (Act 656) – was passed to establish the local government service (into which all staff of decentralised departments become members). For example, while Section 38 (1) of Act 462 talks about the establishment of decentralised departments at the district level, Section 161 envisages that some of these departments ceased to exist when Act 656 is passed. Indeed, the passage of Act 656 marks the beginning of transferring governmental agencies and departments that were (previously) hierarchically organised national level departments into departments of the district

assembly. In addition, the government of Ghana passed the local government instrument, 2009 (LI 1961) to enhance administrative decentralisation. The legislation (LI 1961) provides for administrative decentralisation and begins the process of converting and/or allocating functions and human resources from central agencies (Civil Service at national level) to MMDAs (Local Government Service, 2016), including sub-metropolitan district councils and urban/zonal/town/area councils. Further discussion on the distribution of the MMDAs is presented in appendix 3.1.

However, in practice, there are problems with the planning functions of the decentralised departments for a number of reasons. First, most of the decentralised departments do not have designated planning officers, and those who happened to have recruited planning officers appears to lack the requisite knowledge on the preparation of the DMTDPs (Ayee, 2008). Second, Ayee's earlier work on decentralisation reports that the decentralised units and departments continue to retain their hierarchical relationship with national offices (2004). This has tended to reinforce a centralised top-down administrative and personnel relationship preceding the enactment of Act 656. Third, the implementation of the law is challenged by what appears to be a centralisation of recruitment, promotion and discipline of staff of the decentralised departments. In this regard, the ability of the staff of the decentralised departments to be accountable and committed to the MMDAs seems to be undermined (ibid).

Considering the above discussion on the legal provisions for participation and planning, we can see that there is extensive legal framework supporting decentralisation of planning and governance in Ghana. This ranges from decentralising the administrative powers of government, ensuring popular participation in a non-partisan bottom-up cum top-down manner, establishment of sub-district structures, the realignment of line departments into departments of the MMDAs and granting the MMDAs' the power to direct and coordinate planning within their jurisdictions. Apart from the above legislations, it must be noted that decentralised participatory planning across different decentralised structures of government need not be only grounded on legislative framework and requirements. As argued by Appiah et al. (2000), although legislative framework provides a useful benchmark against which to measure decentralised

planning, issues of institutional constraints influence the ability to implement decentralised decision-making and planning or limit active involvement of lay citizens in planning work. The legislative framework can be interpreted as a means to an end; a context for assessing local government planning (ibid). A crucial and intertwined factor to the foregoing point is the question of the institutional structure of the current decentralisation system. In other words, the structure of decentralisation and participatory decision-making that had been envisioned by the legal provisions. In the following section, I elaborate on the current structure of decentralised governance and other related concerns including the national planning context of Ghana.

3.5   Structure of Current Decentralisation System

In the above account, I have sketched the legislative provisions that promulgate and backed decentralised administrative and planning in Ghana. In this section, I describe the decentralised structures that are established, among other functions, to undertake participatory planning work. First, I present an overview of the national planning context and the structure of decentralisation from the regional to the unit committee levels. This is not intended to capture issues of regional planning in my analysis, but to clarify how plans from the district level may link the regional level. I also discuss the distribution of the MMDAs, their composition and functions as well as those of the sub-district structures. Second, I discuss traditional authority-local government relationship under the current decentralised system of planning in Ghana.

3.5.1   National context of development planning in Ghana

The current system of development planning in Ghana envisaged an institutional arrangement that reflects a fused[15] system of decentralised authority wherein 'national-local' institutions and actors form part of a single integrated hierarchy of governance and decision-making (Ayee, 2008). In this attempt, planning should be regarded as a process of preparing and implementing a set of decisions and actions at the local[16],

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[15] An institutional structure of participatory planning characterised by overlapping and interconnected channels of authority, stakeholders, institutions and ideas from the national through the regions to the district levels and vice versa.

[16] The term 'local' in this context refers to the politico-administrative bodies at the sub-district level; area/zonal councils and unit committees.

district, regional and national levels that can affect the living conditions of the people of an area and their environment in ways that improve their existing socio-economic conditions and institutions (Adams and Anum, 2005). At the national level, the process of preparing a development plan starts with the issuance of a policy statement and vision by central government. Based on government policy statement, the NDPC produces a draft policy document and constitutes a team of experts from MDAs and MMDAs to review the proposals and develop appropriate strategies. The strategies are subject to discussion and approval by cabinet and parliament subsequently (Dotse *et al.,* 2010; Ayee and Dickovick, 2010).

Besides its core responsibility of preparing and coordinating development plans, the NDPC also issues planning guidelines for the preparation of sector plans (and MMDAs too). In accordance with this guidelines, sector MDAs are required to prepare and submit sectors plans to the NDPC. The objective is to align sector goals, priorities and strategies with that of the national plans. In addition to the sector MDAs, there are functional relationships among the institutions of planning (see appendix 3.2). At the apex of appendix 3.2 is the office of the President. According to Botchie (2000), for the purposes of planning, there is an administrative link between the President and the NDPC, but relationships between all other institutions are functional and signify the operationalisation of the decentralised planning policy in which the power for decision-making is devolved and integrative. At the regional level, the RCC provides information and data from the NDPC and facilitate the harmonisation and monitoring of plans of MMDAs. The MMDAs have the role of overall management of participatory planning by ensuring active engagement of sub-district structures and providing citizens with information about planning process at the district level. The MMDAs' context of planning, which is the focus of empirical investigation in this thesis is given emphasis in the preceding sections.

3.5.2   The nature of decentralised structures and planning

The current system of decentralisation established multi-tiered structures of development planning. These structures operate at the regional, district, and sub-district levels. The regional level consists of regional coordinating councils (RCC), while the

district and sub-district levels comprise of metropolitan, municipal and district assemblies (MMDAs) and sub-metropolitan district councils, urban/zonal/town/area councils and unit committees respectively (Dotse *et al.,* 2010; Friedrich-Ebert-Stiftung, 2010). The decentralised structure of the multi-tiered planning system is illustrated in Figure 3.5.

Key:

→ Development Plans
- - - ► Coordination/Harmonisation
◄······► Data and Information Flow
◄——► Plan inputs (guidelines, projects, community action plans)
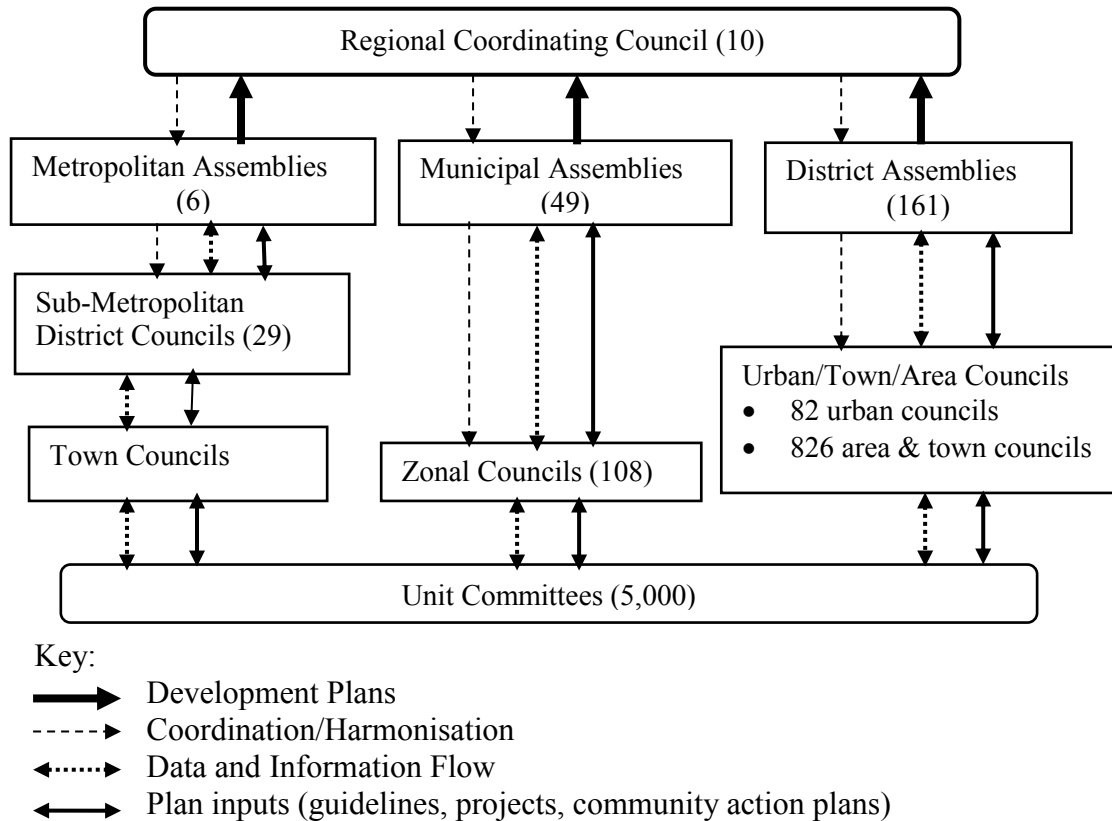
Figure 3.5: The structure and number of decentralised system of planning

(Source: MLGRD, 1996, 2010; Ayee, 2012)

As shown in the above figure, there are 10 politico-administrative regions in Ghana. A study by MLGRD (2010) finds that the local government units, which have been created across these regions, are constituted by sub-district political/administrative structures. The study also indicates that, there are 29 sub-metropolitan district councils, 82 urban councils, 108 zonal councils, 826 town and area councils and 5,000 unit committees (see Figure 3.5). I discussed the local government units and their sub-district structures later.

a) The regional coordinating council (RCC)

The structure of decentralisation in Figure 3.5 exhibits a hierarchical relationship between different levels of government. At the regional level, there are 10 regional coordinating councils (RCCs), which are established as part of the new arrangement for decentralised planning in Ghana (MLGRD, 1996). With the passage of the local government service Act of 2003 (Act 656), the regional level of governance is supposed to be constituted by the RCC and the regional level ministries, departments and agencies (MDAs) as the bureaucratic institutions. For the purposes of development planning, the RCCs are entities with delegated authority to monitor, coordinate, harmonise and evaluate the plans and programmes of the MMDAs within their administrative jurisdictions (MLGRD, 2010). Even though, the RCCs are among the essential institutions involve in decentralised planning and governance, they are not legislative, policy-making, or elected bodies. In fact, some researchers raised questions about whether the RCCs have the authority to modify the plans of MMDAs in performing their coordination and harmonisation functions (Kokor and Kroes, 2000).

b) The metropolitan/municipal/district assemblies (MMDAs)

The local government Act, 1993 (Act 462) established three categories of districts in Ghana – metropolis, municipalities and districts – for local governance and decentralised planning. Each of these has an assembly as the highest political, administrative and fiscal decision-making authority such as metropolitan assembly, municipal assembly and district assembly (hereafter refer to as MMDAs). The creation of the MMDAs is based on the local government Act (Act 462) of 1993 which used population as the foremost criterion: metropolitan (population over 250,000); municipal (one-town assembly with population over 95,000); and district (population over 75,000). The number of MMDAs at the start of the current local government reform, as indicated earlier, were about 110 in 1988 but had increased to 216 as of 2012 (LGS, 2012). Out of this number, 6 are metropolitan assemblies, 49 are municipal assemblies while 161 are district assemblies (Ayee and Dickovick, 2010; LGS, 2012) (also see Table 3.4 below).

Table 3.4: Regional breakdown of metropolitan, municipal and district assemblies

Region	Metropolitan Assembly	Municipal Assembly	District Assembly	Total	percent
Ashanti*	1	7	22	30	13.9
Brong Ahafo	—	8	19	27	12.5
Central	1	6	13	20	9.3
Eastern	—	8	18	26	12.0
Greater Accra	2	9	5	16	7.4
Northern	1	1	24	26	12.0
Upper East	—	2	11	13	6.0
Upper West	—	1	10	11	5.1
Volta	—	5	20	25	11.6
Western	1	2	19	22	10.2
Total	**6**	**49**	**161**	**216**	**100**

 (Source: LGS, 2012; Ayee and Dickovick, 2010)

*Note: the shaded row represents the study region

The MMDAs are not evenly distributed across the regions of Ghana as illustrated in Table 3.4. While the Ashanti region constitutes about 14% of all MMDAs in Ghana, the Upper West region's share is about 5%. Notwithstanding these differences in the distribution of the MMDAs, those regions with more or less MMDAs are considered equal in terms of power, functions and rights. As Friedrich-Ebert-Stiftung (2010) argues, the three types of districts are essentially equal in terms of power and are given equal attention in any discussion on decentralised planning. The districts that are of metropolitan status have a four-tier structure and those of a municipal/district status have a three-tier structure (see Figure 3.5). For instance, the four-tier structure is composed of metropolitan assemblies, sub-metropolitan district councils, town/area councils and unit committees while the three-tier structure is made up of municipal/district assemblies, zonal/urban/town/area councils and unit committees.

In terms of membership at the central administration, the MMDAs consist of three categories of members. First, a representative (with the title assembly member) from each electoral area of the district who is elected through the ballot box, devoid of partisan politics. By law (1992 constitution and Act 462), persons elected to the MMDAs through the ballot should not exceed 70% of all members. The national President, in consultation with traditional authorities (or chiefs) and other interest

groups in the district, appoints the remaining 30% of the members (Republic of Ghana, 1992; Ahwoi, 2010a). The primary aim of using the appointment mechanism is to infuse certain technical skills and experience (such as teachers, nurses, doctors extension workers and chiefs too) that might be lacking among the elected members. Ayee and Dickovick (2010) describe this as a hybrid form of representation at the MMDA level because both elected and appointed officials constitute the membership. In another study, Ayee (2003) reports that both the elected and appointed members put together, then elect from among themselves one member as the presiding member (PM). The appointment of the PM is subject to approval by two-thirds of all members (i.e. both elected and appointed) present. The PM, whose position is equivalent to the speaker of parliament, chairs general assembly meeting (the highest decision-making body) of the MMDAs.

Among other things, the assembly members are charged with joining and participating in the committee meetings of the MMDAs. Every assembly member is expected to serve on at least a committee of the MMDAs, which will be discussed later. It is also their responsibility to educate constituents on government policies and MMDAs' decisions, as well as consult with the constituents on regular basis, particularly before and after major decisions of the assembly are taken (Republic of Ghana, 1993).

The second category of members is the member(s) of parliament. Although, member(s) of parliament are entitled to participate in the deliberations of the MMDAs, they do so without a voting right. That is, in the course of deliberation if a decision needs to be reached by voting, member(s) of parliament have no right to vote. A third category is the metropolitan, municipal and district chief executives (MMDCEs). They are the political heads and ex-officio members of the MMDAs and are nominated by the national President. The MMDCEs are centrally involved in decision-making, including planning decisions. Similar to the PM, the appointment of the MMDCEs is subject to approval by at least two-thirds of the members of the MMDAs. The MMDCEs are representatives of the national President at the local government level (Crawford, 2009). Arguably, they are the most influential political players of the MMDAs, given their role

as heads of the MMDAs and as the general supervisor of the decentralised district departments (Ayee, 2008; Appiah *et al.,* 2000).

Apart from the MMDCEs, the local government authority is steered by district coordinating director (DCD) as the chief administrative officer and the most senior career civil servant of the MMDAs (Appiah *et al.,* 2000). It is important to emphasise that the DCD carries heavy responsibilities, given that as the head of the district coordinating directorate (or office of the district assembly), the DCD is required to coordinate the operations of decentralised district departments as well as performs secretarial duties, and implement development plans, policies and decisions of the district assembly (Dotse *et al.,* 2010). At the same time, the DCD performs planning functions. As recommended by the NDPC (2013a), the DCD is expected to lead the DPCU (as its chair) towards the preparation of the DMTDPs. An overview of Ghana's decentralisation by Ofei-Aboagye and Osei-Wusu (2001) revealed that the DCDs are not only kingpins in the attainment of participatory approaches to planning, but also that the responsibility placed on them to steer inter-department relations make them key players in enhancing the participation of social groups who have been hitherto marginalised in local decision-making. This suggests that the efficiency and effectiveness with which the DCD conducts the above functions have direct bearing on the business of the district assembly.

Notwithstanding the important role that the DCD plays, the MMDCEs, remain the most important and powerful figure in the administration of the MMDAs (Appiah *et al.,* 2000), because the heads of decentralised departments are not only answerable to the MMDCEs through the DCD, but also that the latter is equally answerable to the MMDCEs (Ofei-Aboagye and Osei-Wusu, 2001).

Two bodies/units that also play important roles, including decentralised district planning work, are the district planning coordinating unit (DPCU) and the executive committee (EXECO) of the MMDAs. Concerning the former, as mentioned earlier, the MMDAs are mandated by law for their establishment to assist in performing decentralised district planning functions. The DPCU, headed by the district planning

officer (DPO), can be divided into core and expanded components (NCG and DEGE, 2007; Botse *et al.,* 2010). The core DPCU is composed of skilled professional staff such as the district planning officer and district budget officer while the core members plus, the DCD, heads of decentralised district departments, as well as a nominee of the MMDAs constitute the expanded DPCU (see Appendix 3.3). Key planning functions that the DPCU performs include:

- Organise awareness creation workshops for the sub-district councils and the unit committees and supervise a participatory engagement of local citizens in planning;
- Compile and provide up-to-date information on the profile of the whole district covering all sectors;
- Prepare a detail work plan ahead of the actual planning work covering planning activities to be carried out, the actors (who should do what), the time frame and a budget relating to each activity and to be financed by the MMDAs; and
- The preparation of the DMTDPs in consultation with all relevant stakeholders such as private sector institutions, civil society organisations, traditional authorities, the academia, religious organisations, etc. (Republic of Ghana, 1994b; NDPC, 2013a, Crawford, 2005).

Lastly, the executive committee (EXECO) is another body through which the MMDAs perform their functions. As noted earlier, the EXECO is a statutory body, which is charged with the responsibility, among others, of coordinating, integrating, and harmonising development plans and policies, as well as overseeing the administration of the district (NCG and DEGE, 2007). It also reports to the general assembly (the highest decision-making body) for deliberation and approval of DMTDPs. The EXECO, which is chairs by the MMDCEs, has five mandatory sub-committees as its operating arms. It is composed of a third of the total number of the members of the MMDAs (Botchie, 2000). A study by Crawford (2010) on the intersection of decentralisation government in Ghana revealed that the EXECO has power to co-opt heads and directors of decentralised district departments as members of its sub-committees to provide technical insights to decision-making. However, such members have no voting rights. Table 3.5 illustrates the sub-committees of the executive committee and their core functions.

Table 3.5: Sub-committees of the MMDAs and their executive functions

No	Sub-Committee	Functions
1	Development planning sub-committee	— Supervise the identification of opportunities and constraints for exploitation of MMDA resources — Supervises the development of information base on MMDA resources — Submits plans received from other sub-committees to the executive committee for harmonisation
2	Social services sub-committee	— Responsible for social development planning in the district, especially, education, health, social welfare, sports and culture
3	Works sub-committee	— Responsible for the infrastructure needs of the district, especially roads, electricity, sanitation and water supply
4	Justice and security sub-committee	— To monitor and maintain peace within the district, as well as promoting the enforcement of bye-laws of the district
5	Finance and administration sub-committee	— Examines the general financial position of the district, — identifies ways to ensure judicious use of available resources — Helps in the generation of funds for development

(Source: MLGRD, 1996; Republic of Ghana, 1993)

In the foregoing discussions, I have explained the political and the administrative machinery for development planning and decision-making at the central administration of MMDAs, the composition and functions of key actors. I also discussed two major bodies/units that perform crucial roles in the operation of the MMDAs. In what follows, I focus on how the local organs (sub-district structures) of the MMDAs are constituted to complement or assist in the execution of decentralised district planning and decision-making.

c) The sub-district structures

Beneath the MMDAs are other decentralised structures – metropolitan district councils, urban/zonal/town/area councils and unit committees – whose designation mainly depends on the population size and nature of settlement. With the exception of the unit committees (whose members are partially elected), the remaining sub-district structures are not elective bodies. Rather, they are composed of representatives drawn from MMDAs (i.e. assembly members), unit committees as well as central government appointees selected by the metropolitan, municipal and district chief executives (MMCEs) (NCG and DEGE, 2007). The sub-district structures constitute the basic units of Ghana's decentralised planning, commissioned to perform community and local planning task at the base, though without a budget of their own (Datse, *et al.,* 2010; Inkoom, 2011). In addition, they constitute the structures through which political

representation and participation at the local level may be guaranteed. The establishment of these sub-district structures and the assignment of their respective functions are promulgated by the local government instrument, (LI 1589) of 1994 (Republic of Ghana, 1994c). In the following paragraphs, I present further discussion on each of these sub-district structures with respect to their composition and functions.

i.   Sub-metropolitan district councils

The sub-metropolitan district councils (SMDCs) exist only in metropolitan assembly areas and form the first level of local government authority below the metropolitan assembly. They were created to meet the complex and peculiar socio-economic, urbanisation and management problems that confront the few metropolitan assemblies in Ghana (see Figure 3.5). The SMDCs consist of not less than 25 and not more than 30 members. Similar to the MMDAs, the SMDCs comprise of both elected and appointed members. They comprise of all the elected members of the metropolitan assembly within the area of the SMDC; 10 unit committee members, elected bi-annually on rotational basis; and other persons (not exceeding 30% of the total members), appointed by the metropolitan chief executive (MCE) in consultation with traditional authorities and the presiding member (PM). As I will discuss later, the SMDCs perform delegated functions assigned to them by the metropolitan assembly except the powers to legislate or borrow money (Republic of Ghana, 1993; Ayee, 2003).

ii. Urban councils

The next sub-district structures under the metropolitan and district assemblies are the urban councils. They are created for settlements with population above 15,000, cosmopolitan in nature, and with urbanisation and management problems, though not of the magnitude of the problem confronting a metropolis. An urban council consists of not less than 25 and not more than 30 members. Out of this, about 8 of them are elected members of the district assembly, 12 are representatives from the unit committee and not more than 10 persons who are ordinary residents in the urban area. The urban councils are responsible for all functions delegated to them by the district assemblies except legislative power and power to levy or borrow money (Ayee and Dickovick, 2010).

iii. Zonal councils

The subsidiary legislation, notably local government establishment instrument of 1994 (LI 1589) established the zonal councils for 'one-town' municipal assemblies. The creation of the zonal councils is based on the following criteria: settlements with population of 3,000 and identifiable streets and other landmarks as boundaries (Friedrich-Ebert-Stiftung, 2010). The zonal councils and urban councils are similar in mandate but differ in population size and composition. For instance, whereas the latter is composed of between 25 and 30 members, the former is made up of not less than 15 and not more than 20 members. The membership is distributed as follows: not more than 5 persons elected from among the members of the municipal assembly, not more than 10 representatives from the unit committees and not more than 5 ordinary residents within the zonal council area (Republic of Ghana, 1994c; Bandie, 2007). Two of the cases (Anum River and Juaben zonal councils) I selected for empirical study in the EJMA are of zonal council status (see Table 3.1).

iv. Town/Area councils

Whereas the zonal councils are established under the municipal assemblies, the town/area councils are mostly established in metropolitan and district assemblies. In the district assemblies, town councils are established for areas with population between 5,000 and 15,000, while area councils exist for a number of settlements/villages which are grouped together but whose individual settlements have populations of less than 5,000. They cover areas with predominantly rural population and in some cases can be identified with spheres of influence of a particular traditional authority. However, town councils in the metropolitan assemblies are markedly different in size from those of municipal assemblies; sometimes their population exceed 50,000 (Republic of Ghana, 1994c; Botchie, 2000). In terms of membership, town/area councils are constituted in the same way as the zonal councils I discussed above. In the current study, Nkawie/Toase and Akropong area councils, I selected for empirical inquiry are of area council status.

d) Functions of sub-district Structures

The above sub-district political and administrative bodies perform functions assigned to them by law (e.g. Act 462 and LI 1589) or delegated to them by the MMDAs. Core among these functions include the following:

- To serve as administrative units of the unit committees under them and liaise between them and the MMDAs;
- To enumerate and keep records of all rateable persons and properties in the urban, zonal, town or area council;
- Assist any person authorised by the MMDAs to collect revenues due to the assembly;
- Prepare annual budgets of revenue and recurrent and development budget of the urban, zonal, town, or area council for approval by the MMDAs;
- Recommend to the MMDAs the naming of all streets in their area of authority and cause all building in the street to be numbered for improved revenue generation; and
- In collaboration with any other relevant organisation, organise annual congress of the people for the purposes of discussing the development of the urban, zone, town or area.

e) Unit committees

The unit committee forms the base structure of the current local government system at the community level. They are elective bodies through universal adult suffrage. A unit is normally a settlement or a group of settlements with a population of between 500-1,000 in the rural areas and approximately 1,500 in the urban areas (Republic of Ghana, 1994c; Ahwoi, 2010a). The unit committees whose designation is associated with demarcated electoral areas throughout Ghana were about 16,000 (NCG and DEGE 2007). Each unit was composed of 15 members (i.e. 10 elected members and 5 government appointees). Much like the sub-district councils, the 5 government appointees are selected by the MMCEs with consultation of traditional authorities, PM and other interest groups. However, with the passage of a new legislative instrument (LI 1967) in 2010, the number of the unit committees had been reduced from 16,000 to 5,000. At the same time, the membership of each unit committee had been scaled down from 15 to 5. The same LI abolished the appointment system at the unit committee level. The head of the unit committee is the chairperson, who is selected by members on consensus (Ayee, 2003; Botchie, 2000). In addition to mobilisation of communities for

planning work, the unit committees also perform key functions such as public education campaign, organisation of communal labour, registration of births and deaths, monitoring of local services or any other function delegated to them by the MMDAs (Ayee, 2012).

However, some studies have shown that, the ability of the unit committees to perform the above functions is being undermined by lack of financial resources and lack of capacity on the part of unit committee members (Asante and Ayee, 2008; Appiah *et al.,* 2000). It has also been found that the effectiveness of the unit committees is undermined by inability to implement participatory bottom-up planning (NCG and DEGE, 2007; Asante and Ayee, 2008), lack of capacity, in terms of qualified manpower and weak capacity to facilitate information flow between the different levels of local government (Appiah *et al.,* 2000). Ayee and Dickovick (2010) argue that the existence of the above factors can hamper the flow of community-based inputs or information to influence decisions at district level.

Considering the discussion of the composition of the MMDAs including their sub-structures, it can be observed that there is a hybrid source of representation: 70% of members are elected on the basis of universal adult suffrage and 30% appointed by the President. In reference to previous discussion on the trajectory of local government reforms, particularly, in the late 1940s and mid 1970s when two-thirds of the members of the local government council were elected while one-third were appointed chiefs, it can be argued that the split between two-thirds elected and one-third appointed MMDAs members is a historical legacy. However, Crawford (2004) argues that the system of 'elected-cum-appointed' membership structure may undermine local democratic practice because the appointees are likely to be loyal to the appointers than their constituents.

3.5.3 Traditional authority-local government relations

As can be seen from previous discussion, Article 35 (6)*(d)* and 240 (2)*(e)* of the 1992 constitution seek to make local governance and planning as participatory as practicable. In pursuance of this, the MMDCEs have been enjoined to consult traditional authorities,

among other things, in the appointment of persons as members of the sub-district structures. In some cases, chiefs are included in the local government system through the appointment mechanism of one-third of assembly members. The question is what role does consultation of traditional authorities play in fostering integration and interaction between traditional authorities (or chiefs) and mainstream local governance structures?

In a paper presented at the Institute of Economic Affairs (IEA), Ahwoi (2010b) points out how the appointment mechanism can allow chiefs to be consulted or appointed as members of the MMDAs on the following grounds. The first reason talks about the attempt to blend people's representation with technical capacity and experience. As mentioned earlier, one of the objectives of the appointment mechanism is to introduce skills and experiences (such as teachers, nurses, doctors, engineers, accountants, lawyers, extension workers and technicians as well as chiefs) that might be lacking among elected membership of the district and/or sub-district units. As noted before, besides consultation of chiefs in the appointment process, in some cases chiefs are appointed to constitute the 30% of the MMDAs' members. The second reason is the recognition that, irrespective of how decentralisation may be promoted to bring governance and decision-making closer to the people, it is difficult to guarantee the representation of disadvantaged and marginalised groups through the ballot box (ibid). Under both reasons, at least, in principle, chiefs have the opportunity of being consulted and/or appointed.

Lastly, in recognition of the important role chiefs play in matters of community mobilisation and local governance, and by virtue of the constitutional provision against their active involvement or representation in partisan politics (as noted before), it was necessary that their opinion should be sought and their informal representation secured through consultation and appointment into the local government system (Ahwoi, 2010b). Appiah et al. (2000) also argued that the consultative role assigned to traditional authorities is a clear indication that participation and collaboration between traditional authorities and local government is integral to decentralisation and local decision-making. This implies that, though, the two political institutions remain structurally

separate from each other, they relate and interact as they function alongside each other in local governance.

This, notwithstanding, research has shown that the aim of using consultation to bring key stakeholders into local decision-making arenas, including chiefs, is not yielding the desired results. According to Ayee (2007), the consultation process does not only lack clarity, but also that the mode of consultation has been left in the hands of partisan political actors (such as the MMCEs) who often end up making the appointments of the non-elective members of the district assemblies and their sub-district structures based on parochial political considerations. Consequently, the argument in favour of blending people's representation with technical capacity may be defeated. Similarly, NCG and DEGE (2007) raised concern that the consultation and the appointment mechanism may not provide automatic engagement of traditional authorities in the MMDAs and their sub-district structures. It is also instructive to note that, the abolition of the position of government appointee by LI 1967 at the unit committee level (as mentioned before), may deny traditional authorities the opportunity to play consultative role in the appointment of unit committee members.

Further, MLGRD (2003) reports that consultation as the basis of engaging with traditional authorities in the business of local government is mostly restricted to consultations on the release of land for community projects and/or the invitation of chiefs to participate in ceremonial functions. Similarly, NCG and DEGE, (2007) show that while the original intent of consulting with traditional authorities prior to the appointment of the non-elective members of the MMDAs and sub-district structures is laudable, the participation of chiefs is often perceived to be ineffective on the following grounds:

- chieftaincy-local government relation lacks consistent policy on representation of chiefs in local government units,
- poorly defined relationship between chiefs and local governments, as well as lack of specificity in the nature of consultation with chiefs, and
- non-existence of structured and formalised arrangements to foster collaboration between traditional, councils and the local governments (ibid).

In spite of the fact that traditional authorities lack formal spaces in mainstream local government structures, the truth remain that chiefs continue to wield power and significant influence so that they cannot easily be ignored in the governance and development of local communities in Ghana (Owusu, 2005). Besides, there was a time in Ghana's history, particularly under indirect rule system, when local governance typically revolved round chieftaincy institutions. Although, the dominant role of the chieftaincy institution has changed in the course of Ghana's local government reform, it is still a relevant partner to modern local governance. According to MLGRD (2010), traditional authorities continue to be relevant because in the face of several local government reforms, they continue to play important roles in their communities, in respect to infrastructure development, ensuring security, provision of land and revenue mobilisation.

For Ray (2003), local government system cannot, but embrace the reality of two different sets of political authorities (traditional and modern) within Ghana. Owusu-Sarpong (2003), in examining the context of local government in Ghana, also comments that it is not a question of whether traditional authorities or modern local government is more legitimate, but rather how the two can work together to increase cooperation and enthusiasm of stakeholders who are both citizens of the state and subjects of the traditional authorities.

3.6   Toward the preparation of DMTDPs

In this section, I focus on the key activities that are undertaken in the preparation of DMTDPs as a district-wide policy document. I attempt to analyse the participatory spaces and mechanisms that have been provided at the unit committee, area/zonal council and MMDAs scales to address local development needs and aspirations. Following a discussion on the roles and responsibilities of key institutions and actors in the preparation of the district medium term development plans, I focus on the processes and activities involved in formulating the DMTDPs. I then discuss the challenges to the formulation of the district medium term development plans.

3.6.1 Roles and responsibilities of key institutions and actors

As mentioned earlier, the NDPC issues guidelines for planning and policy formulation at the MMDAs. Although, the MMDAs make use of these guidelines in their planning process, they rely on data/information and plans from the sub-district structures and other decentralised district institutions to undertake their planning functions. Figure 3.6 presents key institutions that interact with stakeholders for the purposes of development planning and/or the preparation of DMTDPs.
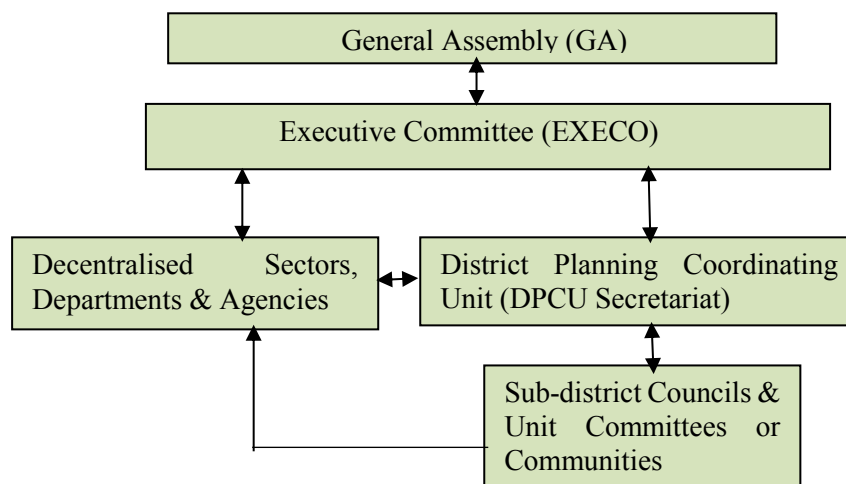
Key: ◄──────► reciprocal interactive relationship

Figure 3.6: Key institutions for district level planning

(Source: Derived from NCG and DEGE 2007)

The above figure defines and allocates responsibilities that promote and build effective institutional relationship for district-wide policy formulation – the DMTDP. Within this structure, the DPCU, which serves as the development planning secretariat is expected to coordinate the unit committees and sub-district councils planning. The NDPC (2013a) shows that, the DPCU also serves as a coordinating body for incorporating plans of decentralised departments into the policy document of the district. MLGRD (2010) asserts that in order to use planning to respond to the development needs of the MMDAs, policy formulation should be undertaken through collaboration between district level departments, public agencies and private sector agencies as well as sub-district level actors and traditional authorities.

As part of the process toward the preparation of DMTDPs, the policy document of the district is passed on to the executive committee and its mandatory sub-committees for deliberation and submission to the general assembly for approval. The general assembly, which is the highest decision-making body or final approval authority of the MMDAs, is expected to approve the DMTDPs before it becomes development blue print. Overall, the aim is that through the coordination and collaboration of the institutions, the MMDAs, through the DPCU and the EXECO should be able to prepare a medium term development plan for every four years. The way the district planning system plays out: the essential features and activities that need to be organised toward the preparation of district harmonised plans is illustrated in Table 3.6.

It can be noted in the table below that besides the formulation of planning guidelines to guide planning work at the MMDAs, the NDPC, in conjunction with the RCC needs to orientate members of the DPCU. Botse et al. (2010) show that such orientation is aimed at enhancing the capability of the DPCU to conduct and coordinate community and sector planning work in conformity with national policy agenda. The next activity, according to Table 3.6, is to constitute plan preparation team for the MMDAs. Meanwhile, the NDPC (2013a) points out that one activity that is required to be carried before the commencement of the actual planning work is the preparation of a work plan to guide the participatory planning process as well as a budget (to be financed by the MMDAs). It is also recommended that after the budget had been approved and funding secured, the DPCU should embark on awareness creation of stakeholders, both at the district and sub-district levels (ibid).

Table 3.6: The processes leading to the preparation of DMTDPs

Steps	Activities/Actors
1	Orientation workshops jointly organised by the NDPC and RCC on the planning guidelines for the DPCU secretariat.
2	The MMDAs constitute plan preparation team, comprising representative of decentralised departments, members of planning sub-committee and the DPCU
3	A 2-3 day situational analysis workshop drawing participation from assembly members, members of the sub-district structures, heads of decentralised departments, traditional authorities, professional associations, community-based organisations (CBOs) and opinion leaders. The workshop centres on: • Undertaking performance review of previous plan of the MMDAs • Embarking on a SWOT analysis of development goals and objectives • Undertaking small group work on different sectors such as education and health • Organising first public hearing to present the current situation and ascertain development priorities at the MMDAs' level
4	Each unit committee is sensitised and supported by the DPCU to identify community needs/problems and goals (through community forum and public hearings), prepares and submit local action plans to serve as input for the composite plan of the MMDAs through the urban/zonal/area councils.
5	Together with inputs/plans from decentralised departments, unit committee plans are then harmonised into a holistic unit as the first draft of the four year development plan (or DMTDP) and submitted to the EXECO.
6	The first draft of the DMTDP is then sent to urban/zonal/area councils for (the second) public hearing.
7	After the public hearing a second draft of the DMTDP, incorporating comments from the urban/zonal/area councils, is prepared
8	Following any amendments arising from the above consultation process, the final draft of the DMTDP is presented at a general assembly meeting of the MMDAs for approval. It is then forwarded to the RCC for harmonisation.

(Source: Derived from Awoosah *et al.,* 2004; Crawford, 2005; and NDPC, 2013a)

Another important step in the plan preparation process is situation analysis or assessment of current development situation of the whole district. This initiative aims at helping to understand the existing situation in terms of problems, development issues, opportunities, etc. of the MMDAs. Key among the activities in situational analysis is performance review of previous development plans. Performance review, which precedes the actual planning work, assesses the performance over the plan period. It has the potential to promote functional relationship among stakeholders in subsequent planning activities. As argued by Ofei-Aboagye (2011), the promotion of functional relationship has great potential to guide, encourage and support the sub-district structures, decentralised departments and local communities to perform their planning and other development related roles effectively.

Following performance review and after the situational analysis is subject to public scrutiny through public hearing, each unit committee is required to prepare its plan (ULPs). The ULPs are expected to feed through the sub-district councils' plans into DMTDPs through harmonisation. Much like performance review, sub-district council and unit committee plans must be subject to public hearing before adoption (Ayee and Dickovick, 2010). In addition, together with decentralised district departments plans, the ULPs/sub-district council plans are further harmonised and drafted into the DMTDPs. Another public hearing (as in step 6 of Table 3.6) is then conducted at the various sub-district councils. After comments from the sub-district councils have been incorporated and synthesised by the DPCU, the draft DMTDP is forwarded to the EXECO and then to the general assembly for debate, approval and adoption (Awoosah *et al.,* 2004).

3.6.2 Challenges to the preparation of DMTDPs

With regard to public hearing, a report on comparative assessment of decentralisation in Africa by Ayee and Dickovick (2010) identified that there are instances where district and sub-district plans were prepared without subjecting them to public hearing. According to these authors, this may occur for a number of reasons. First, there is apathy on the part of the local actors, couple with their unmet expectation by the MMDAs. Second, because the MMDAs are rushed (particularly by the RCC and NDPC) to submit plans, they have limited time to subject such plans to public hearing. Third, even in districts, which used to hold public hearings had started to relegate that to the background, mainly because of the realisation that participants do not make far-reaching contribution towards the discussion of the plans. Therefore, such MMDAs appeared to be discouraged to organise public hearings next time round. Under these circumstances, the preparation of the DMTDPs may take place without extensive consultation and/or participation.

A recent study by the Ghana Centre for Democratic Development (CDD-Ghana) (2014), aimed at addressing some of the bottlenecks to planning at the MMDAs, so as to promote participation in the preparation of the 2014-2017 DMTDPs revealed that the process had been undermined by a number of factors. The first factor relates to late

commencement of the planning process, due mainly to delay in the issuance of the planning guidelines by the NDPC. Meanwhile, it can be noted that this is not peculiar to the 2014-2017 planning period, as Dotse et al. (2010) also report that between 2003 and 2009, the issuance of the guidelines for the preparation of the DMTDPs were delayed. Second, it was revealed that the first and second public hearings (as shown in steps 3 & 6 of Table 3.6), supposed to have been organised through DPCU were not conducted in a significant number of MMDAs. It further claimed that, as many as 70% of the MMDAs in Ghana failed to hold the two mandatory public hearings in the 2014-2017 planning period. Third, both stakeholder sensitisation activities that is supposed to precede the actual planning process and facilitation by the DPCU to support the preparation of local action plans or sub-district plans were not given the needed attention. The CDD finds that as high as 80% of local residents who participated in the planning process were not sensitised on the NDPC planning guidelines (ibid).

Therefore, from the foregoing discussions of the processes leading to the preparation of DMTDPs, it can be argued that the inability to undertake such core activities can highly affect the ability to identify and respond appropriately to community problems. The point is that, the inability of the DPCU to supervise sub-district level planning undermined the effectiveness of the bottom-up planning and broader consultation in the planning process. In effect, planning at the MMDAs level could have been undertaken with little or without inputs from the sub-district level and/or that, local action plans were prepared with inadequate information in term of the current situation and development priorities as indicated in step 2 of Table 3.6. Consequently, information/data gap may be created between the MMDAs (what the guidelines of planning are) and the sub-district structures (the real needs and goals of communities) and therefore could constrain the effort at participatory decision-making.

3.7   Conclusion

In this chapter, I presented the analysis of the Ghanaian context of decentralised district planning and decision-making. The analysis was aimed at understanding the background characteristics of decentralised planning. To examine this, I first discussed the profiles of Ghana, the case study region (Ashanti) and the two selected local government units of ANDA and EJMA. With regard to ANDA and EJMA, particular focus was put on location, size and number of their sub-district structure. The chapter has also shown that decentralised local government and its trajectory of reforms came with changing role of actors, particularly, traditional authorities. Further, I discussed the legal and the legislative provisions that have been enacted to regulate and consolidate decentralised participatory planning. The main legal provisions, I relied on are those that put emphasises on participation and decentralised local democratic governance. Key among them are the 1992 fourth republic constitution, local government Act, 1993, Act 462, the National Development Planning Commission Act, 1994, Act 479, the National Development Planning (system) Act, 1994, Act 480 and Local Government Service Act, 2003, Act 656.

The next section then explains the structure of decentralised local governance that has been put in place to deepen public participation including the key actors. Three types of districts – metropolitan, municipal and district assemblies – including their sub-district bodies were discussed. I have also highlighted the relationship between traditional political authorities and the current local government. Finally, I looked at the processes and activities that are involved in the preparation of district medium term development plans (DMTDPs). The chapter showed that public participation in such processes is undermined by delay in the issuance of planning guidelines, lack of public hearings and non-sensitisation of stakeholders. This has implications for the current study, especially the first part of my research question – what are the mechanisms of participatory planning at the unit committee level? This then is the context within which decentralised district planning is practiced and from empirical evidences has been gathered. I discuss in the chapter that follows how I approached my empirical study in Ghana, including the research strategy, research design, methods of data collection and analysis.

Chapter 04

Research Methodology

4.1   Introduction

The aim of the thesis is to explore how participatory planning interacts with spatial scale processes to translate decisions at a lower scale into decisions at a higher scale in a context of embedded socio-spatial relations in Ghana. This chapter discusses my research approach, the research design, and the methods of data collection and analysis. I have proposed the MDSSC framework of analysis to empirically investigate the dynamics of socio-spatialities of participatory bottom-up planning at the unit committee, area/zonal council (or sub-district council) and district assembly scales in Ghana. The overall research strategy I followed is case study research. The study consisted of three scalar types of case studies of decentralised planning – the unit committee scale, sub-district/area/zonal council scale and district scale of planning – in Ghana. In the first and second types of case studies (unit committee scale and area/zonal council scale), I chose and studied four each and for the third type (district) I studied two cases.

The chapter is structured in two main sections. The first section focuses on my research strategy that discusses the justification of case study research, how it can be used to answer my research questions, the case study design and the selection strategies I adopted. The second section discusses data collection procedures and sources and methods of collecting data. The relevant methods for data collection mainly include documentary search, interviews and focus group discussions. In addition to a focus on methods of data analysis, the third section also discussed the ethical issues in my study – particularly in respect to getting the consent of the participants, how to ensure confidentiality of information they provide and consequences of the study.

4.2   Research Strategy

4.2.1   Case study approach and its justification

Case study is one of the several ways of doing social research including educational research, organisational studies, information systems research, sociological inquiry, industrial relations, political science and anthropology (Hartley, 2004; Creswell, 2012; Yin, 2003). In case study research, the researcher focuses on developing an in-depth understanding of a case, such as a program, event or activity (Creswell, 2012). In simple language, a case study is an empirical inquiry that investigates a contemporary phenomenon (the 'case') in depth and within its real-world context, especially when the boundaries between the phenomenon and its context may not be clearly evident (Yin, 2014: 16). For Meyer (2001: 329), case study consists of detailed investigations of one or more organisations, or groups within organisations, with a view to providing an analysis of the context and processes involved in the phenomenon under study. Creswell's (2007) understanding of case study captures the nature of the case, time, sources of empirical data and the themes generated thereof. From this foreground, he perceives case studies as qualitative research approaches in which the investigator explores a bounded system (a case) or multiple bounded systems (cases) over time, through detailed, in-depth data collection from multiple sources of evidence. What Creswell means by 'bounded' is that the researcher needs to make very clear statements in the research objectives about the focus and the scope of the research.

Based on the above definitions, case study research tends to highlight two important issues. One aspect focuses on how case studies can effectively be used to achieve the goal of uncovering patterns, determining meaning and constructing valid conclusions (Yin, 2003). A second aspect is that, the description, analysis and explanation of the selected case(s) could be a single unit or multiple units of the chosen phenomenon (see next section for more details on single and multiple case studies) in their natural settings (Yin, 2003; Flyvbjerg, 2011).

In case study research, the design decisions are flexible for the researcher, in that they are able to adapt to and probe areas of planned but also emergent conceptual ideas (Hartley, 2004) in the course of data collection. In spite of its flexibility, and the fact

that there are no prescribed rules in designing a case study research, the researcher is required to make various number of choices (ibid). Relatedly, Meyer (2001) shows that unlike other research strategies, case study does not require pre-determined guiding principles. Although, many researchers take advantage of the flexibility of case study strategy, it is required of the researcher to provide strong justifications in support of such decisions in his/her case study (Schell, 1992; Meyer, 2001). This is where case study becomes critical in an inquiry. For this reason, every decision regarding the methods of data collection, the number of cases investigated, and the data analysis strategies adopted in the case studies need to be explicitly justified.

Before I discuss my research design and its justification, it is important to give a brief account of the advantages and critiques of case study strategy in regard to my study. With regard to design and methods of data collection decisions, case studies are flexible and offer the researcher a number of options to choose from. Simons (2014) believes that the flexible nature of case studies is helpful in many circumstances, particularly when a change in unforeseen circumstances in the field entail modifying the research design. Flexibility also makes it possible to gather case study data from a variety of sources, a strategy which also improves data credibility. Using multiple methods of data collection help to improve the quality of the research as it allows data triangulation, reduces respondent bias and increases support for the researcher's conclusions (Eisenhardt and Graebner, 2007). Flexibility created allowed me to use alternative data source when I could not use methods proposed prior to data collection. For instance, before starting my field work, I planned to use Participant observation method of data collection, but it turned out that community forums and public hearings which would have created the context for me to observe how participants articulate their interest in the context of participatory planning had been completed before I started the field work. I was then able to use focus group discussions to probe the research questions.

A second way a case study approach is beneficial is the possibility to both describe empirical data in real-life context, and to explain complex real-life situations which may be ignored by other research approaches such as survey or experimental research (Zaidah, 2007). In real-life situations, people have unique ways of interacting and

making meaning out of such interactive processes. These processes may be hidden in large-scale surveys, although, they are crucial to understanding the functioning of a phenomenon (Bell, 2005). However, because case study data is often examined in the context of its use, the phenomenon studied is not only connected to its context, but also helps to understand how context may be shaping the complexities of the social processes of the phenomenon.

Further, as noted in Creswell's definition of a case study, case study approach pays attention to the generation of in-depth information about the phenomenon under discussion based on extensive data collection (2007). Providing in-depth information means that the researcher will be able to develop an in-depth understanding of the case(s) studied, particularly when data is collected from multiple sources. As such, a case study approach provides the researcher the opportunity for a holistic examination of the intricacies of the process or event, and to establish and analyse relationships between different aspects of the phenomenon under study (Denscombe, 2010). In contrast to ethnography or grounded theory, case study approach is significant for it allows the researcher to use conceptual framework and analytical categories derived from theories to provide a meaningful guidance for data analysis and interpretation in a research (Meyer, 2001; Hartley, 2004). These advantages make case study approach an effective and meaningful methodological strategy in doing social research.

However, although, case study research is a distinctive research strategy that presents many advantages while allowing in-depth analysis of the phenomenon under study, it is not without criticisms. There are problems associated with gathering data from multiple sources. Although, relevant in terms of data triangulation – understood as collecting and converging (or integrating) different kinds of data on the same phenomenon (Creswell, 2012) – and rich sources of information, the use of multiple data sources may pose a problem for the researcher due to the large amount of data that has to be managed and analysed (Baxter and Jack, 2008). Yin (2003) remarks that, in the midst of large amount of data, most researchers (especially novices) may become confused. In this situation, the researcher may find him/herself 'lost' in the data (Baxter and Jack, 2008).

Another point is that, the flexibility of case study research, as noted above as strength, also contains a weakness. The weakness emerge from the difficulty in being able to keep a balance between 'open and flexible' design (Lankshear and Leander, 2005) and addressing procedural uncertainty during the course of the study (Yin, 2009). Yin in particular shows that while unforeseen circumstances may call for the modification of a case study research design, this flexibility can lessen the rigor with which the methodological approach of case study is followed. He also argues that the greatest concern many critics have is about lack of rigor of case study approach, and to some extent, the inability of the case study researcher to follow systematic procedures or allows ambiguous evidence to influence the directions of the research findings and/or conclusions. This will affect the researcher's ability to have a firm grasp of the issues being studied and eventually may lead to poor case study research.

Following from the above, it is clear that case study research is associated with various strengths which a researcher can take advantage of. However, the choice of a particular methodology and methods also need to be informed by strategic reasons in a particular context. Here, Bryman (2012) and Flyvbjerg (2006) remind us that while unanticipated findings may emerge from empirical case data, a researcher's strategic decision about the choice of design, methods and execution of the case study should be made in advance and for good reasons. Yin (2009) argues that what count as good reasons for choosing a particular research approach must not run counter to the aim of the research. Depending on the research purpose/problem, other qualitative research approaches may be more appropriate to use than case study in a particular study. It is therefore important to demonstrate why I chose and adopted the case study approach as my main research design over other potential alternatives.

Many scholars that promote case study as a rigorous research strategy in doing social research suggest that a case study approach becomes the best option when the research problems/aims are situated within and/or defined by a theoretical framework and the analytical categories that are informed by theories, or when there is an established analytical framework to analyse empirical data collected from case studies (Hartley, 2004; Yin, 2009; Noor, 2008). In that respect, case studies are likely to contribute to

verification and modification of existing theories and even building of theory; because of the depth of data usually gathered in the research process. As noted above, there are opportunities for data triangulation in case study approach, which enhances the quality of the findings and enables the researcher to deal with both existing and emerging concepts with confidence. Yin (2009) in particular stresses that the use of theory in case study research helps in defining the appropriate research design as well as systematically guiding the collection of empirical data. Typically, other related qualitative research methods, such as ethnography and grounded theory deliberately avoid putting emphasis on theoretical statements at the beginning of a study.

Similarly, Hartley (2004) argues that without a theoretical framework in a case study, a researcher may produce captivating and detail descriptions without any wider significance to the phenomenon under consideration. Hartley further shows that the building of theory in case studies is generally, but not exclusively, influenced by inductive process (i.e. where research findings emerge from dominant or significant themes and concepts inherent in data). This does not only give the opportunity to explore issues in-depth, but also enhance the production of rich data in terms of quality and quantity which enables the researcher to develop, replicate or modify theories of broader interest through systematic piecing of detailed evidence generated in case studies. This is where my choice of the case study strategy stands strong as I placed my research within the conceptual framework of 'a politics of connectivity' and also developed an analytical framework (based on the concepts of participation and socio-spatial relations) to guide both data collection and data analysis.

According to Yin (2009), case study strategy is more appropriate to adopt for a research when the following criteria are met: the researcher poses 'how' and/or 'why' research questions; when the researcher has little control over the events/phenomena under investigation; and when the focus is on contemporary events. My choice of case study approach is based on firstly, the empirical focus of my research; to explore and understand how participatory planning interacts with socio-spatial processes to translate decisions at a lower scale into decision at a higher scale in Ghana. Here, the emphasis Yin puts on 'how' criterion for choosing case study research will be satisfied. Thus, an

attempt to unpack how decisions at one scale translate into decisions at another will end up answering the 'how' criterion. In my study, I did not have control over the events associated with participatory planning decision-making in Ghana or what influences the translation of decisions from one scale to the other. Rather, I attempt to understand the mechanisms of participation and the socio-spatial processes that influence decision-making across spatial scales by reviewing extant literature, and conducting documentary search and interviews with stakeholders involved in decentralised district planning across scales that need to be coordinated. This is the second criterion Yin puts forward. In the light of the third criterion, systematic study into the socio-spatial processes of translating decisions at one scale into decisions at another is a contemporary phenomenon.

Furthermore, the suitability of case study approach for investigating a given contemporary phenomenon, the question that needs to be answered is whether clear cut boundaries exist between such a phenomenon and its context or not. In a situation where the phenomenon and its context are not distinguishable in real-life settings, case study approach becomes the preferred choice to undertake the research (Rowley, 2002; Yin, 2009). In the present study, because I intended to investigate how participation interacts with socio-spatial processes to shape the translation of decisions across scales which are enmeshed in contextual conditions of planning practice, case study approach became suitable for me to adopt.

4.2.2   Selecting the case study design

I have so far discussed the case study strategy (understood as empirical inquiry into contemporary phenomenon in its real life context) and its suitability for my study. Having adopted the case study approach, I now discuss case study design and decide on the appropriate design I chose for my study. As indicated in the introductory section of this chapter, I intended to research into three types (multiple cases) of case studies – district scale (district assemblies), sub-district scale (area/zonal councils) and unit scale (unit committees) of bottom-up decentralised planning in Ghana. I studied two cases in respect to the district scale and four cases each for the sub-district and unit scales. The question of why multiple cases were selected with regard to these types, what specific

cases were selected from each type, how and with what justifications were based on the following factors: my theoretical understanding of case study research design; and the nature of my research questions, in terms of posing 'how' question. With this in mind, I set out to examine what cases will be selected, how they are selected, and why. Before I explore these issues in detail, I first discuss case study design in general and their application to my research.

According to Yin (1994), every empirical research has an implicit, if not explicit, research design (p. 19). He also states that, in the most basic sense, research design is the logical sequence that connects the empirical data to a study's initial research questions and, ultimately, to its conclusions (1994, 2009). Such a sequence cannot and should not be a 'once-and-for-all' blueprint for case studies (Mason, 2002), partly because in thinking through a research design process, the researcher needs to evoke rather than impose particular structure on the realities of participants' experiences (Barbour and Schostak, 2005).

However, Stake (1995) offers an important classification of case studies that helps the researcher to think logically on the basis of purpose of study. These include intrinsic case study, instrumental case study and collective case study. According to Stake, **intrinsic** case studies are undertaken when the purpose of the study is to examine the phenomenon of study for its own sake. As such, the case turns out to be the object of analysis and in order to provide an informed knowledge about the object of study, the research questions mainly focus on the case. Thus, the intent of the researcher is not primarily about creating general theories or generalising the case findings to broader populations. The second category of Stake's framework is **instrumental** case study design. The prime goal of instrumental case study is to examine a particular case to understand a theoretical question or improve a theory. This type of design framework is useful when enhanced understanding of the particular phenomenon being studied is of secondary importance to a greater insight of the theoretical explanation of the phenomenon (Hancock and Algozzine, 2006). Therefore, instrumental case is of secondary interest; it plays a supportive role in facilitating the researcher to explore the theoretical questions. The third category identified by Stake (1995) is **collective** case

design. Collective case design usually involves the study of a number of cases jointly in order to research into a phenomenon which can lead to better understanding and/or better theorising.

Considering the above three categories of case studies and the nature of my research aims, the main purpose of which is to explore the socio-spatial processes of translating decisions at a lower scale into decision at a higher scale (using the MDSSC framework) rather than the study of participatory bottom-up planning practices per se, it was clear to me that my research should follow an instrumental case study design. As such, I used the cases only as instrumental to understanding how lower scale decisions are translated into higher scale decisions in the context of bottom-up planning practice in Ghana. So, the main goal of my case study design was to explore the rationale for translating decisions at lower scale (i.e. the unit committee) into decisions at higher scale – the district.

In addition to categorising case study design on the basis of purpose of the research study is the need to take a decision on whether the research will be designed and conducted as a single case study or as multiple (two or more) cases (Hartley, 2004). On single case design, Yin (2014) argues that it is more useful if the case is critical, extreme/unique, representative/typical, revelatory or longitudinal. Similarly, Flyvbjerg (2011) also believes that single case study may be the preferred decisions for critical cases; cases considered to have strategic importance in respect to the general research problem. In the same vein, extreme/deviant cases may be studied through single case design because such cases reveal more information and help the researcher to understand the limits of extant theories so as to develop new conceptual ideas.

In spite of this strength, there are some genuine concerns raised against the use of the single case design. First, single case design can be faced with the problem of selection bias. According to Yin (2003), if particular care is not taken, a single case design may later turn out not to be the case it was thought to be at the beginning. This then represents a potential ground for biased findings. In effect, there is a high risk of misjudging and exaggerating from single case data. The second concern which relates back to the first

is the 'logic of inferences'. That is, while a single case design may be noted for its ability to give 'thick' descriptions about a phenomenon, it is also the case that it is more challenging to draw inferences from a single case (Simons, 2014). One useful way, as argued by some authors is that, even if the aim of a research is to explain and describe a single case, there might be some potential benefits when additional cases are added because multiple cases provide additional leverage for integrating different perspectives on the same issue and/or grounding the inquiry on varied empirical evidence (Creswell, 2007; Eisenhardt and Graebner, 2007). I take forward this discussion by looking at the arguments in favour of multiple case study design.

In some instances, it is possible to conduct a single research study in more than one single case, and if the same study contains more than a single case, it is a multiple case design (Yin, 2014). This variant of design – multiple-case design – typically provides stronger evidence from a number of cases and is capable of producing more convincing conclusions. Also, multiple cases may enable the researcher to clarify whether emergent findings are simply peculiar to a single case or consistently replicated in several cases (Eisenhart and Graebner, 2007). As Yin (2009) notes, in multiple case study design, it is advisable to consider the cases as one would do in multiple experiments; that is following a 'replication' logic, whereby the researcher repeats the procedure of inquiry for each case to confirm or disprove a pattern of behaviour on a given phenomenon (p. 54). Hence, the overall research may be considered as being more robust (Yin, 2003) because the more cases that can be marshaled to explore and to understand a phenomenon, the more convincing and reliable the research outcome becomes (Rowley, 2002). Similarly, such a context - multiple case studies – offers the opportunity to understand the underlying dynamics that are present within and across cases of a phenomenon (Eisenhardt, 1989). However, undertaking multiple case research demands extensive amount of resources and time. It is therefore imperative that the choice of a multiple case study design be made when the focus and problem to be investigated require its use.

Considering the above in connection to my research aim, it was clear to me that my research design should follow a multiple case study design – four cases each at unit committee and area/zonal council scales and two cases at district scale. I decided to follow multiple case study design mainly because I wanted to see if a phenomenon that I observed in one case is replicated elsewhere. For example, when I found out from the initial interviews that the reasons district level planners gave to justify the translation of unit committee decision into district-wide decisions did not necessarily follow the prescribed guidelines of the NDPC, I decided to add another district to enable me uncover new or divergent views. Further, I chose to follow multiple case study design because I wanted to get a broader understanding of my research question – how participatory planning interacts with the dynamics of socio-spatial relations to translate decisions at a lower scale into decision at a higher scale – from different instances. Thus, I believe multiple case study design helps me to bring together reasonable evidences that are greatly supported by multiple sources (see section 4.3 for details). Having argued for the relevance of an instrumental multiple case study design for my thesis, I proceed to explain the strategies that have guided me in selecting the cases in the next section.

4.3   Strategies for Case Selection

Having proposed to investigate multiple cases, the next major concern was on how to select cases that could provide the appropriate in-depth information. The challenge however, is that, sometimes there may be many qualified cases to select from (Yin, 2009). This is particularly the case in the present study as there are many unit committees (about 5,000), area/zonal councils (826/100) and districts (about 216) that could have been chosen to empirically research the rationale for translating participatory decisions at a lower scale into decisions at a higher scale through bottom-up decision-making in Ghana. In this section, I discuss the strategy used in selecting multiple cases for the study out of the potentially qualified cases. To address the issue of selecting the appropriate cases, I needed to establish a criteria that would help me select the most likely cases, identify and collect reliable data and answer my research question.

In case study research, cases or multiple cases are not particularly selected as sampling units and should not be chosen for the reason of statistical generalisation (Yin, 2014). In this sense, rather than random sampling, individual cases for multiple case studies are often selected on the logic of theoretical sampling (Charmaz, 2006; Yin, 2014). By theoretical sampling, the authors mean the logic of choosing cases and research participants that are likely to delve into more theoretical categories and cases which can illuminate and extend the relationships and the logic among constructs (Eisenhardt and Graebner, 2007; Yin, 2009). From a theoretical sampling perspective, cases of the phenomenon under investigation need to be purposefully or analytically selected (Miles and Huberman, 1994; Meyer, 2001; Johansson, 2003). One basic assumption is that cases selected purposefully should be capable of generating rich information about the phenomenon under investigation and should be selected in accordance with the purpose of the study than those that emphasise representativeness ((Flyvbjerg, 2006; Yin, 2003). Flyvbjerg (2006) reiterates that 'when the objective is to achieve the greatest possible amount of information on a given problem or phenomenon, a representative case or a random sample may not be the most appropriate strategy (p. 299). The most likely cases that are purposefully selected should be of the 'polar extreme types' (for instance cases of very high and very low records of performance) that can easily to be used to observe matching and/or contrasting patterns from the data (Eisenhardt and Graebner, 2007).

While not disputing the significance of representativeness of case(s) selected, Stake (1995) demonstrates that the overarching purpose of case study research is not to represent the world, but to represent the case. However, to understand the critical issues of a given phenomenon may require that some basic criteria for selecting the appropriate case(s) be established. Such criteria include, but are not limited to selecting cases that offer the greatest opportunity to maximise our learning (after considering ease of access to information, resources and other relevant characteristics). A general understanding is that, selection of cases on the basis of their potential to maximise learning among the cases is more significant than sampling their attributes and the representativeness of such attributes (Meyer, 2001; Eisenhardt, 1989).

With regard to the above, two tasks emerged here for me: first establish the criteria for selection of the empirical cases (unit committees, area/zonal councils and district assembly) and second, show how these criteria were applied in selecting suitable cases for data collection. I proceed to illustrate the criteria for selecting the cases in the following section.

4.3.1 Criteria for selecting empirical cases

The discussion in the preceding section showed how the selection of multiple cases in qualitative case studies must be approached from the perspective that the selected cases offer rich information so as to maximise learning. This section attempts to establish the criteria for the selection of the most appropriate cases of decentralised participatory planning at the unit committee, area/zonal council and district scales in Ghana. The choice of these criteria was greatly influenced by my research focus.

First, I give a brief account about what informed my choice of the Ashanti region from which the case districts were selected. Despite being the region with the highest number of districts (30 of them, see chapter 3), the Ashanti region was rated to be among the high performing regions in terms of preparation and submission of district medium term development plans (DMTDPs) to the National Development Planning Commission (NDPC). Besides plan preparation, the region is also noted for subjecting the DMTDPs to monitoring and evaluation exercises. For example, while only 58.8% of all districts in Ghana prepared and submitted their monitoring and evaluation plans to the NDPC in 2011, the Ashanti region's share was 81.5%. The following year, this performance increased to 100% (NDPC, 2012, 2013b). This case was thus selected purposively as an example of effort at decentralised planning in Ghana. Also, as mentioned earlier, I intended to choose cases that would help me achieve the greatest possible amount of information. The ability to communicate in the common language of the respondents is useful in the above regard. Hence, the common language of the case region – Akan – which I could share with the respondents guided my choice of the Ashanti region.

For the district, area/zonal council and unit committee cases, I established the following criteria to select the most likely cases that helped me to gather the relevant information to address my research questions.

a) Districts that were established before 2012

In 1999, after the implementation of the 1992 constitution of Ghana, the number of districts increased from 65 to 110. Also, in 2003 and 2007, additional districts were created, increasing the number to 170. The last time new districts were created was in 2012. I did not consider these newer districts because potentially they would have had little experience in preparing DMTDPs (the only occasion would have been 2014). Hence, only districts that were established before 2012 in Ashanti region became potential cases for this study.

b) Polar extreme type of cases

The intention was to select cases of anticipated level of performance (both high and low performance). Flyvbjerg (2006) refers to this as either the 'least likely' or the 'most likely' cases. With respect to my study, I defined polar extreme types of cases as the timely/untimely preparation of unit committee level plans (ULPs) and district medium term development plans that comply with the National Development Planning Commission's (NDPC) guidelines. This can be obtained from monitoring and evaluation report of the NDPC on district planning. In line with my research aim, I decided to select cases that represent low and high performing contexts of planning practice.

c) Plan preparation that involved the three scales

Decentralised district planning in Ghana is about the flow of interaction between the unit committees, area/zonal councils and district assemblies. Each spatial scale has a specific role to play in facilitation, preparation of plans, harmonisation of plans and the making of final decisions. Hence, it was important to select cases where these scales were actually engaged in preparing plans. I considered the involvement of each spatial scale in relation to whether the designated spatial scale for particular planning activity and/or the stakeholders charged with such activity were actually engaged. In some of the districts, consultants were engaged to prepare the DMTDPs or it was only the district planning coordinating units (DPCUs) that prepared it. In both cases, ULPs were not prepared before the preparation of the DMTDPs and unit committee area/zonal council scales did not actively participate. The information concerning the involvement

of all the three scales in planning was obtained from monitoring and evaluation report of the RCC. In line with my research focus and in order to select the most likely cases that are best to explain their scalar connectivity, I decided to select cases where the designated spatial scales for doing planning work were actually mobilised.

d) Logistical reasons

Logistical reasons include access to sites, resources and official documents. This also included the preparedness of the respondents whose cooperation was necessary in providing the information I needed. After my preliminary search for information and the list of all districts in the study region was obtained, I first contacted those districts that fall under criterion 'b' above. Those districts that had given the approval to cooperate in terms of giving information about their sub-district structures, copies of their DMTDPs and a list of assembly members were considered. Further, I consider the cost, in terms of time and money involved in travelling to such districts to collect data. Accordingly, I decided to choose districts that had shown the willingness to give official documents and are also relatively less expensive to access.

Considering the above criteria – districts that were established before 2012, polar extreme types of cases, plan preparation that involved the three scales and logistical reasons – I decided to choose cases from the top (the district level). Once the districts were chosen, I then use the same criteria (particularly 'a' and 'b') to choose the area/zonal councils within the district. Finally, the unit committees within the selected area/zonal councils were chosen. With regard to the above four criteria, the following district assemblies, area/zonal councils and unit committees were selected for empirical study respectively.

a) District Assemblies
   i.   Atwima Nwabiagya district assembly (ANDA)
   ii. Ejisu-Juaben municipal assembly (EJMA)
b) Area/zonal Councils
   i.   Nkawie/Toase area council (of ANDA)
   ii. Akropong area council (of ANDA)
   iii. Anum River zonal council (of EJMA)
   iv. Juaben zonal council (of EJMA)
c) Unit Committees
   i.   Amanchia unit committee (of ANDA)
   ii. Pasoro unit committee (of ANDA)
   iii. Esaase unit committee (of EJMA)
   iv. Mmorontuo unit committee (of EJMA)

In Table 4.1, I show how the three types of cases satisfy the criteria I established above for case selection. However, information about the profile or the description of the selected cases is provided in chapter 3 (the chapter on decentralised participatory planning in the Ghanaian context). Considering the above criteria, I decided to select two cases of district assemblies and four cases each for the area/zonal council and unit committees. Having established and/or selected these cases, the next section explains the data collection methods that I followed to gather empirical data from the field.

Table 4.1 Selection of cases based on set criteria

Scale	Selected Cases	Criteria			
		Time established	Polar extreme type	Planning with the three scales	Logistical reasons
District Assembly	ANDA	Established in 1999 but reconstituted in 2003	Polar extreme type (exhibit high performance) based on NDPC's report	Used to harmonise and translate ULPs into DMTDPs	Accessible in terms of cost, and readiness of the DPCU and participants to give information
	EJMA	Established in 1999 but upgraded to municipal in 2006	Polar extreme type (exhibit low performance) based on NDPC's report	Used to harmonise and translate ULPs into DMTDPs without units and zonal stakeholders	
Area/Zonal Council	Nkawie/Toase	Established in 2003		Not engaged in harmonising ULPs but stakeholders were mobilised at ANDA	Accessible in terms of cost, and readiness of participants to give information
	Akropong				
	Anum River	Established in 1999		Were neither engaged in harmonising ULPs or stakeholders mobilised at EJMA	Accessible in terms of cost, and readiness of participants to give information
	Juaben				
Unit Committee	Amanchia	Established in 1999		Was engaged in preparing the ULPs	Accessible in terms of cost, and readiness of participants to give information
	Pasoro				
	Esaase	Established in 1999		Was engaged in preparing the ULPs	
	Mmorontuo			Stakeholder were mobilised at Juaben for the preparation of ULP instead of harmonisation	

(Source: Author, 2016)

4.4 Data Collection Procedures

The data collection procedures and methods of collecting empirical data I chose were guided by my research questions and the case study type – multiple case study design. The choices that I made in designing the case study were also guided by the methodological considerations and data collection procedures. According to Yin (2003), evidence for case studies are usually gathered from multiple sources such as documents, archives and interviews. Meyer (2001) suggests that the benefit of using case study methodology is linked to the possibility of using multiple methods. For this reason, it enables triangulation. Other issues that case study researchers need to consider that also influenced my decision of data collection methods include the constraints of financial resources, time, and the willingness of respondents to participate and/or give relevant information. In the following sections, I explain these decisions in relation to data sources and data collection methods.

4.4.1 Data sources and data collection methods

In this section, I discuss the research methods that have been used to collect empirical data from the three types of (selected) cases – district assembly, area/zonal council and unit committee. The main methods I used in my data collection include documentary search, face-to-face interviews and focus group discussions. I next discuss the advantages and disadvantages related to each method of data collection and then move on to discuss the ethical issues and the approach I used to analyse field data.

a) Documentary search

Documents are one of the common sources of evidence in case study research (Yin, 2014). Flick (2009) shows that documents should not just be seen as representation of facts, but that they are also a means of communication between the author of the documents and the intended audiences. While in some studies documentary information can be used as the exclusive method of sourcing data, in others, it may be used in conjunction with other methods (Bell 2005). In my case, I combined documentary search with interviews and focus group discussions. The documents I used in the present study included district medium term development plans (DMTDPs), NDPC planning guidelines, monitoring and evaluation reports of the NDPC, district monitoring and

evaluation plans, work plans for community consultation meetings and public hearings reports on the preparation on ULPs and district development plans. Though very limited, internet information that related to decentralised planning in Ghana in general and the two case districts in particular were also useful documents. For example, I relied on the website of the NDPC for information on planning guidelines, the number of MMDAs, and the progress reports of each district. Also, I could find useful information from the websites for the two case districts with regard to their profile and land size. However, I had to determine the authenticity of the internet sources and the information I retrieved from the websites of the planning departments of the selected district assemblies.

In terms of the strengths of using documents in my study as a source of data collection, three issues are outstanding. First, I used documents to check spellings, names of people, places and organisations that the participants mentioned in the course of data collection. I diligently spent much of the first two weeks of field work in document search in files of the district assemblies, websites of NDPC and local libraries. This helped me to gain more insights about the planning system; the legal provisions rules and guidelines that guide local government plan making. Second, documentary sources provided specific details to validate some of the information I gathered through interviews. In fact, it is possible for different interviewees to interpret the same situation differently with regard to some of the things they claim to have done or experienced, I used documented evidences such as public hearing reports of MMDAs development plans and to corroborate some of such claims. Third, documents became useful source for me to discuss and present the prescribed framework within which local government planning is performed. For example, by perusing the NDPC planning guideline, I was able to understand the criteria established to harmonise ULPs into DMTDPs, which also guided me to interrogate participants, particularly members of the DPCU, in terms of which of the criteria were used/not used and why. Also, documents, including the NDPC guidelines and DMTDPs, were particularly useful to me in discussing the overview of harmonisation of ULP into DMTDPs (see chapter 6 for detail).

However, I was vigilant about over reliance on documents as I realised that they may mislead the focus of my research. Because there could be biased reports and manipulation of information in the reports for contextual reasons that I might not be aware of. This became an important concern for me because in the course of reading the NDPC and the EJMA monitoring and evaluation reports, I came across conflicting information on timely preparation of DMTDP in 2010. Whereas the NDPC reported that EJMA did not prepare and/or submit its DMTDP in time, the opposite was reported by the EJMA. Whenever, I came across such contrasting information or reporting, I investigated further for clarification in the interviews and focus group discussions, both of which are discussed further on. To discern the potential level of bias in using documents, I also paid careful attention to their original purpose, as well as the reliability of the sources of the data and information.

One of the main issues I faced with respect to documentary search was associated with 'corrupted' word files (soft copy) of the 2006 – 2009, 2010 – 2013 and 2014 – 2017 DMTDPs I collected from the planning department of ANDA. These files which were transferred onto my personal computer with a 'pen drive' ended up damaging the 'windows' of my computer. Hence, the MDTDPs (or the documents) I initially collected from ANDA became unusable. It was only later, after I printed out hard copies of the DMTDPs, that these documents became available to me.

b) Interviews

Interviews play a central role in data collection and are also one of the common sources of evidence in case study research. Unlike in survey methods where interviews are often used as structured queries, in a case study they are guided and fluid conversations with a purpose (Yin, 2014; Janesick, 2014). In other words, rather than following a rigid set of questions, the interviewer pays much attention to coherent but flexible line of inquiry (Rubin and Rubin, 1995; Brinkmann, 2013). Similarly, Kvale (2007) suggests that case study interviews should be generally guided by: imposing a low degree of structure by the interviewer, focusing on specific situations and action sequences in the world of the participant; and extensive use of open questions. Considering these factors, I used semi-structured interviews in my study as the main source of information and data. Kvale

and Brinkmann (2009) define semi-structured interview as 'an interview with the purpose of obtaining descriptions of the life world of the interviewees in order to interpret the meaning of the described phenomena' (P. 3).

I discuss below the process involved in my overall interview with regard to its theoretical relevance and my research focus. This includes discussions on planning the interviews, designing the interview process, selecting participants for the interviews, carrying out the interviews and analysing the research data.

i. Planning the interviews

Informed by my research question, the first thing I did when I decided to conduct interviews was to produce a list of information needed. This list was informed by the analytical categories (such as scale jumping, power relations, singular/plural sense of scale, etc.) I derived from the MDSSC framework; a framework of the dynamics of participatory planning across spatial scales and its link to socio-spatial dimensions of bottom-up decision transfer. This helped me, first, to clarify the initial themes the study was interested in investigating, and second, to translate these themes into interview questions (appendix 4.2 provides a list of information needed to be collected through interviews). While I started the interview process with a clear list of issues or questions to interrogate the participants, relevant information that emerged as the interview progressed were accommodated because of the semi-structured nature of the interviews. This gave me the flexibility to handle emerging information and concepts and to ask more questions that I may not have anticipated at first. My interview thus followed an open ended nature that allowed me to maintain focus on the semi-structured interview questions while simultaneously remaining flexible enough for participants to raise questions from their own perspectives in a friendly manner. In the following section, I discuss how I designed the interview process.

ii. Designing the interview process

There are several guidelines suggested for conducting successful case study interviews. Hancock and Algozzine (2006) provide an overview of the procedures to follow in designing case study interviews. These include identifying and gaining access to key informants or participants, considering the setting in which the interviews are conducted, developing a means of recording the interviews and adhering to ethical requirements. In designing my interview process I followed the above guidelines. Accordingly, I first identified the key informants whose responses would be invaluable to addressing my research questions. My initial documentary search was helpful in identifying some of the participants, particularly those who have been designated to play specific roles in decentralised district planning.

The next critical step in designing the interview process was about how to gain access to potential participants or what Meyer (2001) refers to as 'how to approach the interviewees' (p.336). When I decided the potential participants for the interview (as will be discussed later), I ensured that potential participants or key informants are willing to be interviewed in the study. To do this, I first visited the planning departments of the selected district assemblies to introduce myself and to obtain the contact numbers of the assembly members and unit committee chairpersons of the selected unit committees. Then I established contact with the participants, first on phone, and second, by travelling to their locations with an introductory letter from my department (Real Estate and Planning, University of Reading) and a list outlining the key thematic areas the interviews would focus on. In consultation with each participant, suitable locations were chosen to conduct the interviews.

The next phase of designing the interview process is how to record the interviews. In all cases, I used a digital voice recorder and/or note-taking during the interviews. Yin (2003) shows that although, audio-recording devices provide an accurate way of recording case study interviews, it should only be used when permission is granted by the interviewees. Therefore, when I approached the interviewees for data/information that needed to be recorded, I first sought their consents before recording. Ethical

considerations, which is discussed further on, is another critical issue I considered when designing the interview and conducting the interviews.

iii.   Selecting the participants

The number of participants I chose was a trade-off among the resources, including time required to have in-depth interviews, ensuring a fair representation of perspectives across the three types of cases and scales of planning (district, area/zonal council and unit committee) and obtaining a reasonable amount of rich information. On the one hand, while a case study approach tends to prefer small number of participants (Denscombe, 2010), if the number of participants is too small, it runs the risk of making false claims from the data. On the other hand, if the number is too big, it could pose another difficulty in carrying out deep and rich analysis of data. In searching for a way out of this dilemma, Patton (2002) advised that the researcher should be able to specify the minimum number of interviews, long before the study begins, by taking into consideration the question of 'reasonable coverage' of the phenomenon under investigation. With regard to what represents an adequate number of participants, Morse (1995) and Creswell (2007) noted that case study researchers should typically conduct between 20 and 30 interviews. This does not however, become the rule in all case study research as the number of interviews to be conducted could be more than 100, given the scope and purpose of the study and the research questions to be addressed. In this respect, the short answer to the question of 'how many' interviews are enough is: it depends. However, generally, the number of interviews to be conducted tends to be a combination of available resources, time and the 'law of diminishing returns' (Patton, 2002; Bowen, 2008). Bearing this in mind, I had to make a choice on the number of participants that would ensure a fair representation of perspectives across and within the three scales of planning I was investigating.

To gather data from the participants of the three scales, I employed three main sampling approaches – purposive (sometimes referred to as judgement sampling), snowball sampling and theoretical sampling. At the district and area/zonal scales, I selected the interviewees on the basis of judgement. In purposive sampling, the interviewer selects a participant because he/she is capable of providing the needed information with regard

to answering the research question(s) and objectives (Creswell, 2007; Saunders *et al.,* 2009). In my case, two factors influenced the choice of participants: (1) I used my judgement to select participants who had the knowledge and experience about public participation or the preparation of local level plans and (2) these participants had to be available and willing to talk or participate. A typical instance was that I selected the district planning officers, assembly members, area/zonal council chairpersons, unit committee chairpersons, and traditional rulers based on their different interests and knowledge, and their willingness to share their views.

However, in selecting participants among the community members, I decided to use snowball sampling. Snowball sampling is a strategy of selecting research participants, in which the interviewer uses an informant to identify and locate other participants who have useful information to a research being conducted (Fossey *et al.,* 2002). This strategy is commonly used when it is difficult for the interviewer on his/her own to identify the relevant people with the requisite information. In my case, because I was not present at the time of the preparation of community and district level plans, I had to use the snowballing approach after I managed to establish contact with one of the participants in the preparation of the 2014 – 2017 development plans. After I finished collecting relevant data from these informants, they then led me to other community members who could potentially provide relevant information for my study. The number of participants who were selected through snowball across the unit committee/community is 9. They are categorised as community/opinion leaders in Table 4.2.

In addition to the above methods, I also made use of theoretical sampling to obtain empirical data that could help me to explain the emerging conceptual ideas or categories. In more general form, theoretical sampling entails selecting groups, respondents and categories in a study on the basis of their relevance to the research question, analytical framework or an explanation a researcher is developing (Mason, 2002). Such categories guide the researcher on what further information needs to be collected and from who this can be obtained while data collection was in progress. In this regard, in some occasions, I had to recruit new participants, while in others, I simply returned to some

of the participants I already interviewed. For example, I had to return to the physical planning officer for ANDA when I needed further information on spatial implications of translating ULPs into DMTDPs. I did not have to finish using the purposive and the judgment methods of sampling before I resorted to sampling the participants theoretically: I kept on moving back and forth between theoretical sampling, purposive sampling and judgment sampling.

In Table 4.2, I present a summary of the number of participants I selected and collected empirical data from.

Table 4.2: Category and Number of Participants

Category of Respondent	District Assembly Scale		Total
	ANDA	EJMA	
Coordinating Directors	1	0	
Planning Officers	2	2	
Physical Planning Officers	1	0	
Budget Officers	1	1	
Education Directors	2	1	
Health Directors	0	1	
Agriculture Directors/Officers	1	0	
Presiding Members	1	0	
Planning sub-committee members	1	1	
Sub-total (A)	**10**	**6**	**16**
	Area/Zonal Council Scale				Total
	Nkawie/Toase	Akropong	Anum	Juaben	
Area/Zonal Council members	1	1	1	1	
Sub-total (B)	**1**	**1**	**1**	**1**	**4**
	Unit Committee Scale				Total
	Amanchia	Pasoro	Esaase	Mmorontuo	
Assembly Members	1	1	1	1	
Unit Committee Members	1	1	1	1	
Chief/Queen Mothers	1	1	2	1	
Community/Opinion Leaders	2	3	2	2	
Sub-total (C)	**5**	**6**	**6**	**5**	**22**
Grand-total (A + B + C)	**23**		**19**		**42**

(Source: Author, 2015)

iv.   Carrying out the interview

As indicated in the preceding section, the information I gathered through document analysis was subsequently used to design open ended questions in the form of interview guides (pre-set semi-structured questions) (see appendix 4.2). As the name suggests, the interview guides were used to provide a starting point, the topics to cover, keep the interviews on track and to help identify when to round off the interviews. Hence, the sequence and form of the questions were open to change in order to follow up on

contextual answers given by the interviewees. That is, the interview situation greatly influenced when and in which sequence the questions were asked. However, I was careful to maintain the focus on the research question and to avoid shifting from the main line of inquiry while conducting the interview. The flexible nature of the questions enabled me to collect data that I did not anticipate from the beginning.

Before each interview was conducted, I first, contacted the participant on phone to book an appointment. As mentioned earlier, the phone numbers were obtained from the planning departments of the selected district assemblies. Prior to booking an appointment with the participants, I had given them all needed information that included my details as a researcher, my research aims, its implications on bottom-up decision-making and the role I expected them to play. I also explained to them how the information would be recorded, the arrangement to ensure confidentiality of their information, the estimated time required to conduct the interviews. In many cases, as noted above, I communicated this information to the participants, particularly those at the community level by calling them on phone. At the institutional level (area/zonal council and district assembly), all relevant details about what I needed the participants to know before conducting the interviews was communicated to them through text messages. A consent sheet (see appendix 4.3) was also used to get the consents of the interviewees (at the community, area/zonal council and district levels) which was signed at the end of each interview. I was aware of the ethical implications of the above, and will discuss this further. It is important to stress that based on preference of a respondent, the face-to-face interviews were either conducted in the 'Akan' language (the dominant language in the study areas) or in the English language.

In most cases, the first few minutes of the interviews were used to restate briefly the information the participants need to know about the study and what role I expected the participants to play; what Kvale (2007) refers to as 'briefing', partly to create the atmosphere that would allow the participants to talk freely and to expose their experiences to me. I also gave them the opportunity to ask any questions or clarifications before I actually started the interviews. As mentioned earlier, even though, digital recording was used in recording most of the interviews, I also maintained a

separate field note book to write and to keep a note of significant issues during every interview. This helped me to trace what a participant said and to follow up for further questioning whenever the need arose. At the end of each interview, I asked the participants to comment further on the interview. I rounded off each interview by a debriefing. In the process, I mentioned some of the main viewpoints I learned from the interview which were not recorded.

However, there were two main issues I encountered with the interview method, partly linked with the semi-structured nature of the questions. I was initially confronted with the problem of finding a middle-range between 'talking too much' as against 'talking too little' in the interview process. At first, in an attempt to either further explain a question or probe for meanings of answers, I ended up doing all the talking. This came to light after I played back the recorded interviews and realised that some of the interviewees had remained passive which was probably because I was 'talking too much'. I then realised the need to create a balance between 'not talking too much' and 'not talking too little'. This is what Bryman (2012) refers to as 'balanced' in questioning and answering, at least, with the aim to prevent passive response from the interviewees. The second challenge I encountered was about 'laconic interviewee' (giving one word or shallow answers to questions) (King, 2004). Though, the participants gave their consents for me to conduct the interviews and were subsequently available to respond to the interview questions, some of them gave short responses to the questions when I was actually expecting them to give detailed explanations about their experiences. I confronted this in two ways. In the process of interviewing, whenever an interviewee gave a shallow answer, I either remained silent – implying that I would like to hear more or simply used a phrase like 'tell me more'. In most cases the respondents will begin to give detail explanation than before. The analysis of the information that is generated from the interviews is discussed in section 'e'.

c) Focus group discussions (FGDs)

In addition to documentary search and interviews, I also used focus group discussions as a source of information during the field work. Patton (2002) defines focus group discussions as an interview with a small group of people on a specific topic (p. 385).

He perceives FGDs to be efficient methods of data collection, which provide some quality control on data collection; because participants tend to restrain one another from making false or extreme statements on the phenomenon under discussion. Though, this can serve as a drawback as group members whose statements might reveal critical information may be inclined to keep quiet, the way a researcher will manage or respond to FGDs situations is fundamental. As shown by Bell (2005), one way a researcher can manage FGDs situations is to devise techniques that will keep strong personalities in line and at the same time draw less articulate members of the group into the discussion. For Bell, such techniques include using checklist of issues or interview guide, and the need for the researcher to become less of an interviewer and more of a facilitator. Similar to this study, I developed a list of topics (such as the relationship between the unit, area/zonal and district, how harmonisation of plans is done, etc.) beforehand. Also, while conducting the group discussion, I encouraged the participants to reveal things whereby even after a point had been made by a more articulate participant, I still invited comments from the less articulate member participants. In addition to encouraging participants to share their views, I also facilitated the interaction between group members and monitored those who tried to dominate the conversation by providing probing questions.

According to Flick (2009), FGDs can be used as a method of case study data collection in their own right or to complement other data collection methods. With this understanding, I used FGDs not as a stand-alone method for data collection, but alongside individual interviews. Even though I had earlier on planned to use FGDs in my data collection exercise, three events that unfolded during the individual interviewing process highlighted the need to carefully engage the participants through focus group discussion for new data and conceptual categories. First, I realised during the field work that the amount of data (the credible amount of data that speaks to my research purpose and questions) I expected to have gathered from the individual interviews had not been collected, not even after carrying out repeated interviews. One reason is that the participants are used to answering 'closed-ended' research questions (questions that are usually very specific and offer the interviewees a fixed range of answers – Bryman, 2012) than to give a narration on phenomenon. Second, I also

noticed that some of the participants, especially those at the community/unit committee level had lost memory of the key events and issues that were discussed during the participatory planning processes that took place in the first quarter of 2014. Third, probably due to the second factor, some of the answers or responses from the participants were inconsistent even across same thematic issues.

Becoming aware of this situation, I decided to use FGDs to stimulate the participants to recall and to elaborate their views and answers beyond what I could collect using document search and single participant interview. Also, using FGDs aided me to validate extreme statements and views through collective conversation so as to fill the information gaps about key issues in the study. Following Denscombe's (2010) thinking that, researchers who use FGIs are always confronted with the problem of recording the discussion, as the discussants interrupt one another and/or talk concurrently, I anticipated the need for a field assistant at this stage. It became necessary during the FGDs process to seek the services of a field assistant when I was faced with the challenges of managing the processes of writing down key points, observing the interactions, asking probing questions and audio recording, all at the same time. So the next task was the selection of a field assistant. I was aware of the fact that a field assistant needs to be selected with care. As Peters (2014) suggests, outsourcing part of data collection to a research assistant might distance the researcher from the data, which has potential implications for the research findings. Unlike one-on-one interviews where both English language and the 'Akan' were used, the latter was the main language used in conducting the group discussions.

Having considered all these factors, I identified Francis Sarkodie as my field assistant whose selection was based on education background (graduate planner), skills and professional commitment to the study. Also, the choice of Francis as my field assistant was a strategic one because he had been appointed in the planning department of Atwima Nwabiagya district assembly, where he had received trainings in data collection. Further, at the time of my field work, Francis was running an NGO (Deprived Children of Southern Ghana) and had been interacting with many communities in my study areas. Therefore, he was personally known and well

recognised by community members. Hence, conducting focus group discussions with Francis was a feasible option. As far as FGDs were concerned, Francis assisted me in writing down notes and recording while I was moderating the discussion.

Another task I needed to accomplish was the selection of participants and finding an appropriate site to organise interviews. The FGDs were undertaken at two scales or tiers; unit committee and district assembly scales. The area/zonal council scale were not included because I was unable to mobilise the potential participants. This was particularly due to the fact that the participants at the unit committee scale were the same people who were supposed to be organised for FGDs at the area/zonal scale were reluctant to participate. However, I ensured that key issues (such as who harmonise ULPs into ALPs, what role the area/zonal played in harmonisation) that I intended to discuss at the area/zonal council scales were dealt with at the unit committee scales. At the unit committee, I first contacted the participants on phone to seek their consent. Later I arranged to meet those who agreed to take part in the FGDs to agree on the date, time and venue of the meetings. This was repeated in all the unit committees/communities where I conducted FGDs. Before the FGDs commenced, I introduced myself, explained the purpose of the FGDs to the participants, and also asked participants to introduce themselves.

FGDs at the district scale were conducted in two phases. In the first phase, assembly members and unit committee chairpersons from each unit committee were purposively selected to join members of the district planning coordinating unit (DPCU) to conduct FGDs at the district scale. I purposively selected them because they are more likely to provide the needed information and more articulate at the district scale as the mouthpiece of their electoral areas. My aim was to understand participants' views on the harmonisation of ULPs into DMTDPs: how it was conducted and emerging issues or concerns that needed to be clarified. The second phase of FGDs at the district scale involved only few members of the DPCU of ANDA and EJMA. This was organised to collect information on why development issues in the ULPs may/may not be translated into the DMTDPs and the implications of their decisions on the socio-scalar relations among the three scales at hand. I contacted five members of the DPCUs on phone to

seek their consent and after they had agreed to participate, I then arranged to meet them. This meeting was used to take a decision on the appropriate venue, date and time.

Having decided on the number of participants, venue, date and time, the next step was to actually conduct the meetings. I initially designed some topics based on the information sheet (given in appendix 4.1). Also, before the meeting begun and during the meeting, I identified four important tasks for me as a researcher: (a) to introduce the focus group session (b) to take note of the degree of my involvement and asking of questions (c) recording the discussion and (d) closing the focus group session. Before the start of the meetings, I introduced myself and outlined the goal of the research as well as the goal of the group discussion, how the discussions will be recorded and asked each participant to introduce him/herself. As the interpretations of matters that are crucial to the reputation of individuals and organisations have ethical implications, I also encouraged participants to point such issues out. During the discussion, I was mindful not to interrupt free flow of the discussion. However, in order not to shift the discussion from the line of inquiry, I occasionally get involved by asking probing questions for clarification. As suggested by Bryman (2012), one way a researcher can get involved in a focus group session is to respond to specific points that are of potential interest to the research questions but that are not being responded to by the participants.

The next task involved recording and/or writing down notes during the discussion. While I was interested in knowing exactly what participants had said about topics being discussed, I was equally interested in knowing who said it. I needed to keep track on who said what because I wanted to avoid the difficulties involved in distinguishing participants voice during transcription of data. Also, as discussed later, because the one-on-one interviews and FGDs data were brought together in my analysis I needed to identify specific relevant statements in the focus group sessions with particular participants. As mentioned earlier, while conducting the focus group sessions, my field assistant (Francis Sarkodie) was recording and taking down notes. At the end, I gave a summary of what was discussed, and also expressed my appreciation to the participants for their participation. Next I focus on the transcription of data I collected from both in the one-on-one interviews and the FGDs.

d) Transcribing data

All the interviews (i.e. both one-on-one and focus group discussion) I conducted in my study were audio-recorded. I then transcribed or reproduced the interview recordings as a written account using actual words. Kvale (2007) remarks that rather than being a simple clerical work, transcription of interview data is an interpretive process in which the differences between oral conversation and written texts give rise to the generation of meanings from data. He also argues that it is through transcription that the direct face-to-face conversation becomes abstracted and transformed into a written form and by neglecting issues of transcription, the researcher risks becoming engulfed with unmanageable copies of transcripts. But when care is taken to prepare interview transcriptions, the written texts tend to be regarded as the solid rock-bottom empirical data in interview studies (p. 92-3).

From a socio-linguistic perspective, transcription is an act of translating from oral language to a written language (Kvale, 2007; Jaffe, 2007) which is also considered a representational process (Bucholtz, 2000). Meaning that, oral language and written texts do not only take different forms, but also that transcripts take sides, enable certain interpretations and favour particular interests. Hence, transcription appears to be a selective process where particular aspects of the conversation and interaction are sampled and transcribed. For instance, though about 40 minutes of audio-recorded interview data was recorded in my interview with the physical planning officer of ANDA, I only transcribed those portions of his speech that were relevant to addressing my research questions. According to Kvale (2007), transcription involves two levels of abstraction. The first occurs where the process of recording leads to loss of body language and gestures of the interviewee. In the second level, when the outcome of the first level is transcribed into written texts, the tone of the voice and the intonation are lost. Therefore, being mindful of the first and second level of abstraction is critical for the interviewer to understand the world of the interviewee and to make meanings of the empirical data.

Although, it cannot be denied that transcription of interview data is both difficult and time-consuming (Bryman, 2012), it is an important aspect of doing social research in general, and in case study research in particular. Bailey (2008) shows that transcription creates opportunity for the researcher to become familiar with data and to pay attention to what is actually existing about a given phenomenon rather than what the researcher expected. It has also been noted that a carefully transcribed interview data helps to; (a) correct the natural limitation of our memories of what respondents say in interviews, (b) permits repeated assessment of respondents' answers, and (c) allows data to be reused in other ways other than those intended by the original researcher (Heritage, 1984, cited in Bryman, 2012).

With the knowledge of how transcription is important as pointed out before, I undertook the transcription, which was conducted both in the 'Akan' language and the English language (as mentioned earlier) on my own. I have a good knowledge and understanding of the 'Akan' language and I did most of the recordings. Notwithstanding the time it takes to transcribe recorded interviews, I did not delegate this task to an 'outsider' because it would not allow me to secure the many details that are relevant for subsequent analysis. I also felt that tasking somebody who was not part of the interview process to do the transcription ran the risk of eliminating valuable points and I wanted to cross check the field notes (i.e. notes taken during the interview) alongside the process of transcribing. The data collection and the initial data coding were carried out concurrently. This meant that I did not have to wait till data collection was over to transcribe. In the next section, I turn my attention to the analysis of transcribed interviews.

e) Analysing data

In this section, I present the logic I used to analyse and make meaning out of the field data which was transcribed. The analysis included transcribed data from both one-on-one interviews and FGDs. As noted by Bryman (2012), the approach to analysing one-on-one interview data is similar to that of focus group discussion. Data analysis – systematic search for meaning (Hatch, 2002) – is one of the important steps in the research process. And in many instances, it is feasible to carry out the interview data

analysis process manually and/or with computer aided software (Yin, 2014). Kvale (2007) suggests that analysis of transcribed interview data can be broadly classified into four types. First, interview analyses focusing on meaning, which entails meaning coding (attaching keywords to a text), meaning condensation (putting meanings expressed by respondents into shorter formulations) and meaning interpretation (working out relations of meanings that is not obvious in a text). Second, interview analyses focusing on language, whose characteristics include linguistic analysis, narrative analysis, conversation analysis, discourse analysis and deconstruction. The third type is interview analyses as bricolage. This type of analysis involves ad hoc use of mixed tactics, which are not linked to any specific analytical techniques or methods. The researcher, who Kvale and Brinkmann (2009) refer to as a 'craftsman' may first of all go through the interview text to obtain the overall impression. Then s/he steps back to look at specific interesting portions of the interview data and try to visualise findings and write notes about what had been visualised. The fourth type is interview analysis as theoretical reading (theoretically informed reading of interviews). Here, the researcher needs to (a) read through the interview texts repeatedly, (b) reflect theoretically on specific themes related to his/her research purpose, and (c) write down the interpretations and findings even without following any systematic method.

Reflecting on the above types of analysis, I realised that interview analysis as bricolage and theoretical reading were more suitable for analysing the interview texts of my research. My purpose in selecting these types of analysis is that my research questions and the analytical framework (MDSSC) I had established were informed by formal theories. Kvale and Brinkmann's (2009) show that in several influential interview studies – based on extensive and theoretical understanding of the subject matter – researchers were able to develop rich interpretations and meanings, though they did not follow any systematic analytic techniques. This suggests that applying specific analytic tools may be less important in a context where interview questionings are theoretically informed. In spite of the fact that there are no specific requirements when applying the eclectic and theoretical analyses of interviews, the general requirements of providing rich descriptions and interpretations still pertains.

An essential task for me is to illustrate how I was guided by theoretical reading and bricolage analysis of my interview data. First, I read each of the transcribed interview text, wrote down a summary report (for all the 42 respondents – see Table 4.2) and classified relevant passages of each text in reference to the dynamics of participation across spatial scales and the spatial flow of bottom-up decision-making. This is also informed by the MDSSC framework of analysis. Second, the themes that were appearing in the transcribed interview texts were registered and classified and/or re-classified based on active search for confirming and disconfirming evidence in the interviews. Further, I had to classify the thematic ideas or concepts that emerged into two; those that were associated with dynamics of participation and those associated with inter-scalar relations and bottom-up decision transfer. The thematic ideas that emerged from my analysis prompted me to organise my analysis into two chapters (that is, chapter 5 and chapter 6), where, I had to classify and relate the emerging themes to their respective chapters. At the same time, I had to step back repeatedly, to listen to the recorded answers of participants and read the transcribed texts, partly to prevent misrepresentation of their (the participants') intended meanings.

During the analysis, I tried to keep a link between the interview data and the MDSSC analytical framework. This is because I simply wanted to analyse and understand the dynamics of participation across spatial scales and the spatial flow of bottom-up decision-making as they emerged in their socio-spatial contexts and were experienced and understood by the respondents. In most cases, claims from literature on participation and spatial scale were used to reflect more on readings and claims of the respondents. In doing this, I compared the new or different interpretations/insights that my analysis had yielded with what is stated in the literature. Nonetheless, this is not about making judgement on whether the previous findings (in literature) are wrong or right. Instead, to explore and understand how we can effectively transfer participatory decisions from the bottom to the top in a multi-layered bottom-up decision-making context.

f) Ethical considerations

In this section, I discuss some of the ethical issues that I was confronted with in my study, particularly, in the course of data collection. As the definition of case study in section 4.1.1 pointed out, data collection involved an intrusion into the real-world of the respondents. This required me to make reflected choices and analysis that were sensitive to the respondents' 'world-views' so that my research would not in any way undermine or harm their dignity, safety and respect as well as my own safety and the integrity of the research. I identify and discuss research ethics from three main perspectives; informed consent/'rolling informed consent, maintenance of confidentiality of information and anonymity of participants and consequences.

i. Informed consent

As mentioned earlier, one of the key issues in designing the interview process is to seek the consent of the interviewees. The permission to enter, interact and gather data was sought at two levels – from the relevant institutions and individual participants. At the institutional level, I obtained permission from the local government units after I submitted an introduction letter and explained to them the purpose and benefits of the study. While permission was given to conduct the study within the local government area, it also behoves on me to obtain informed consent from each participant – the second level. It was not straight forward for me to determine whose consent was needed in advance, particularly, those participants who were selected through snowball sampling methods (see section on selection of participants above). So I did not only select some of the participants when data collection was underway, but also sought their consents when data collection was going on. Seeking participants' consent while data collection is ongoing is what Piper and Simons (2009) refer to as 'rolling informed consent'. In my case, 'rolling informed consent' was mostly used whenever I had to get back to the same participants to further interrogate emerging issues that required more time.

ii.   Confidentiality

The second ethical issue I had to deal with is confidentiality. I addressed confidentiality in separate ways: allowing participants to talk in confidence; and protecting participants' privacy or not reporting the information in a way that might cause harm to the participants in any way. With regard to the first, the participants were promised at the beginning of the interviews that any private data/information about them would not be disclosed. As part of the measures to ensure confidentiality, I also gave them the opportunity to request me to switch off the recorder if they wanted some information to be off-record. In terms of confidentiality in record keeping and reporting, I assured participants that in my data analysis and presentation they would be kept anonymous (i.e. names, job, leader position, etc that can easily reveal the identity of participant were withheld). In situations where interviews passages that were interspersed with findings might reveal the participants' identity, I contacted them to obtain their consent. So those participants whose names and/or offices are mentioned in the report are those who have agreed for me to include them.

iii.   Consequences

I reflected on the consequences of my interviews with respect to both the potential risks and benefits on the participants and on the findings of the research. Thus, my decision to carry out the interviews was a compromise between the consequences on my research findings and the value of the knowledge gained by society at large. With respect to the consequences for the participants, I first discussed with each participant the possible risks and benefits their participation in the interview may cause. A general concern among the participants centred on confidentiality of the information they disclosed and how it may affect their dignity and relationship with others. I explained to them how my university's guidelines on research ethics enjoined me to be conscious of the participants' rights. I further explained to the participants how I intended to ensure the confidentiality of the information they would reveal with reference to what I discussed under confidentiality section above.

Again, I explained to them that the interviews were being conducted only for study purpose and that, though, the benefits and findings of the study may not be direct and immediate to the individuals taking part in the study, the potential benefits could be linked to augmenting our understanding about the rationale for translating participatory decisions at a lower scale into decisions at a higher scale in the context of embedded socio-spatial relations. Therefore, participants were not only enthused to take part in the interviews, but also perceived their participation as a positive contribution to society. However, in two occasions, particularly in ANDA, those who could not perceive the benefits of the findings beyond the micro (personal) level opted out of the interviewing process. Hence, I proceeded with the interviews with only those who were satisfied with my explanation and had given their consent. This often creates what Kvale (2007) refers to as tension of ethics between micro and macro perspectives. Micro ethics talks about possible consequences of interview situation for the participants involved while macro ethics highlights the potential consequences of the knowledge produced by interviews to the wider society.

With regard to potential ethical risks to the research findings, I did not experience such occasions in my study. As explained before, I took time to explain the purpose of the study and how its findings could contribute to effective bottom-up decision-making to the participants from the onset. Those who felt that taking part and/or revealing certain information may harm them in any way chose to excuse themselves from the interviews. In some cases, I was stopped by the participants from asking certain questions if they thought that answering such question would negatively affect their reputation or that of other persons. Also, because I could speak the local language and exhibit a fair understanding of the culture, I was generally accepted by the respondents.

Coupled with the above, I also paid attention to the consequences of conducting FGDs with participants at the unit committee and district assembly scale. For example, as mentioned in section 'c', as part of the introduction to the focus group meetings, I explained to the participants that participation was voluntary. As such any participant who felt that his/her participation had negative consequences on them or their employer could withdraw at any time. Also, at the end of each discussion session, I summarised

the salient points and asked participants to point out those statements they felt were of negative consequent on them.

4.5   Conclusion

Consistent with my research question – of how participatory decision making at lower scale translates into decisions at a higher scale – I proposed a case study design and analysis of the empirical data. I have defined a case study and why it is suitable to collect data to address my research questions and the MDSSC framework of analysis. In the context of choosing appropriate case study design, I proposed an instrumental design, intended to explore bottom-up decision-making through participatory planning practice in the context of multi-scale socio-scalar relations in Ghana. I also proposed a multiple case study design involving four cases each at the unit committee and area/zonal council scales and two cases at the district scale. I then establish criteria to select those cases which fall under the above scales. The respondents included members of the communities, elected local leaders, and staff of area/zonal councils and district assembly.

The methods I used to collect data were discussed next. These included document search, interviews and focus group discussions. The documents I collected were mainly from the planning offices of the two districts. The one-on-one interviews I conducted involved forty (42) participants across three types of cases (unit committee, area/zonal council and district assembly). One further method I employed to collect data was focus group discussion. I had to deal with this at two levels – unit committee and district assembly. The outcomes of all the interviews were then transcribed. Although, I carried out data analysis while data collection was ongoing, substantial amount of the analysis was undertaken after data transcription. I approached this by relying on two types of analysis – analysis as bricolage and theoretical reading. Using this approach meant that no elaborate and systematic analytic tools were applied to the interpretation of the empirical evidences or findings. Finally, I discussed the need to ensure that participants' consent needs to be informed before collecting data from them and to maintain confidentiality of their private information.

In the next two chapters, I present the analysis of the data collected based on the strategies and methods explained in the preceding discussion. The chapter that follows immediately is focused on the analysis of the mechanisms of participatory planning while the subsequent chapter (i.e. chapter 6) discusses planning decision-making across embedded spatial scales.

Chapter 05

Mechanisms of Participatory Planning and the Context of Participation

5.1 Introduction

This study enquires into how participatory decision at a lower scale translates into decision at a higher scale. In this chapter, I reflect primarily on the first empirical research question, namely; what are the mechanisms of participatory planning at the unit committee level? Using four unit committees (Amanchia, Pasoro, Esaase and Mmorontuo) as the empirical cases, I intend to show how the implementation of mechanisms of participatory planning affects the active engagement of local people in local decision-making. In this attempt, I present and discuss how the implementation of stakeholder sensitisation workshops, community forums and public hearings may provide an interactive space for the preparation of community/unit committee plans. I conceive that effective implementation of mechanisms of participation matters in strengthening participatory local decision-making. In doing this, I hope to tease out the extent to which the above mechanisms enabled lay public to share in planning decision-making and how unit committee context may/may not offer interactive opportunities for doing planning work.

I begin this chapter by presenting the institutional structure within which local decisions are made, and by extension, sensitisation workshops, community forums and public hearings are implemented. Following a brief explanation of each of the above three mechanisms of participation, I then focus the discussion on what reasons accounted for non-implementation of some of these mechanisms and how it might have affected active involvement of community actors in unit committee planning. Further, I analyse how those mechanisms of participation which were actually implemented shaped the participation of local people in doing planning work at the unit committee level.

5.2   Mechanisms of Participatory Planning

Participatory mechanisms by themselves do not produce participatory plans; rather, interactive engagement does. For this reason, this section focuses on how the implementation or otherwise of stakeholder sensitisation workshops, community forums and public hearings at the unit committee level of planning shapes community involvement in local decision-making at Amanchia, Pasoro, Esaase and Mmorontuo unit committees. As shown in chapter 3, unit committees in Ghana, including the above cases, are established as the lower tiers of administrative and political decision-making bodies below the districts where public involvement in planning work starts from. In the same chapter (chapter 3), I have spelt out factors that are considered in constituting the unit committees and how they co-exist and function alongside with the traditional political authority (TPA). Before I get into the discussion of how the implementation of stakeholder sensitisation workshops, community forums and public hearings in the unit committee context shaped local participation, I first present and describe the institutional structure or context within which planning and local decision-making are practiced.

5.2.1   Structure of local decision-making at the unit committee level

The unit committee shares the same political jurisdiction with the traditional political authorities. To perform its functions, particularly with regard to the preparation of unit committee level plans (ULPs), the unit committee is expected to consult and dialogue with the traditional authorities (otherwise called chiefs) and other local people with a stake in planning and decision-making. The structure of relationship between these actors is illustrated in Figure 5.1. The left half of Figure 5.1, which represents the traditional political authority, predates the unit committee or modern governance system. Irrespective of size, each community constitutes a separate political unit under the leadership of the chief and supported by his council of elders, clan and family heads and settler/zongo chief. What differentiate the chief from settler/zongo chief is that the former is usually a native who hails from the royal family and holds land in trust for the current and future generations, while the latter is not. Thus, the settler/zongo chiefs' access to land may be limited to land rental. Within the TPA, a settler/zongo chief serves as a link between the non-native residents and the chief or the rest of the

community. Though, it can be observed in Figure 5.1 that the word 'chief' is used for both the political head of the TPA and the leader of non-native residents, the status and power of the former is higher than the latter. In terms of community governance, people in the above positions constitute the core members of the traditional political authority (TPA).

Key:
⟺ District planning coordinating unit in supervisory position
⟷ Collaborative relationship between the traditional and modern political structures
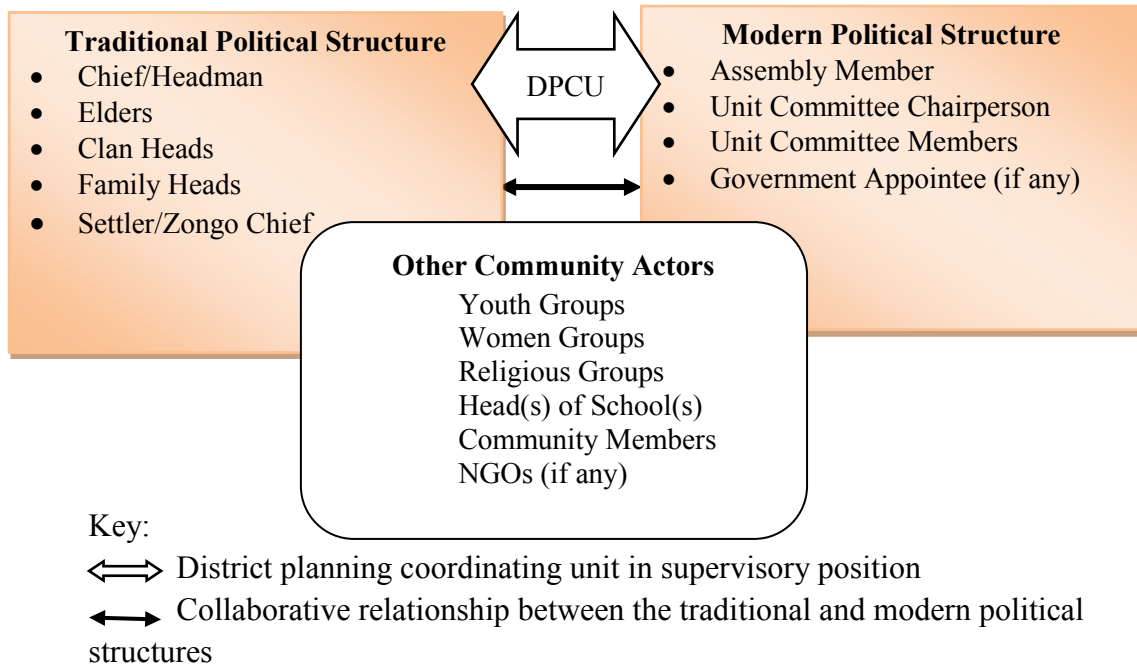
Figure 5.1: Local decision-making structure in the unit committee context

(Source: Author, 2016)

On the right half of Figure 5.1 is the modern political structure (MPS), a structure represented at the community level by the unit committee (hereafter used interchangeable with the MPS). As noted in chapter 3, the unit committee is an elected body and its leader, unit committee chairperson, is a convener when it comes to the preparation of unit committee level plans (ULPs). Another important member under the MPS, the assembly member, is elected to represent an electoral area (either constituted by one community or more – see chapter 3). They serve as the liaison between the district assembly (DA) and the community. That is, the assembly member does not only report to the electorates, decisions of the DA, but also in collaboration with unit committee members and the TPA, consult with the people and take decisions or formulate plans that feed into the DA level plans (e.g. district medium term development plans – DMTDPs).

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While the positions of the assembly member and unit committee members are elected, that of the government appointees is through appointment by the national President, in consultation with local stakeholders. They are individuals with specialised knowledge in areas such as law, engineering, medicine, and planning. Once appointed the appointees become members of the DA and perform the same functions as those who are elected. However, unlike elected assembly member, an appointee does not necessarily represent an electoral area, but can exercise voting right on important issues at the DA level. Whenever, community level planning is undertaken within an electoral area where the appointees cast their votes, they are supposed to collaborate with the TPA in conjunction with their elected counterparts. The lower part of Figure 5.1 represents other identifiable social groups within a community/unit committee who have a stake in community development and planning issues and whose participation need to be mobilised by the unit committee. The district planning coordinating unit (DPCU), a local government planning secretariat, is established to assist the DA to execute designated planning functions. Basically, there are two categories of DPCUs, distinguished mainly by the composition or size of membership. The first type is a DPCU constituted by core technical/professional staff, while the second type (also called expanded DPCU) is constituted by representatives of the various decentralised departments in the district (see chapter 3 and appendix 3.3). I selected respondents from both. Although, fundamentally the DPCU is not located within the socio-political structure of the unit committee/community, it is introduced here for the facilitation role it is expected to play in the preparation of ULPs.

Community level decision-making functions, particularly prior to the establishment of the unit committee was vested in the TPA. This was exercised mainly over land allocation, natural resource management, settlement of disputes, religious functions, as well as oversight responsibility for the mobilising of community members for 'self-help' development projects. However, as mentioned earlier, since the establishment of the unit committee, the jurisdiction of the TPA is expected to be shared with the unit committee. Besides public education, local revenue mobilisation, mobilisation of communities for communal labour and registration of births and death, the unit committee also mobilises communities for the preparation of plans (see chapter 3).

Though the local government act (Act 462) of 1993 mentioned that the unit committee may perform these functions in consultation with the chief and other identifiable groups, the nature of consultation, the division of power and the working relationships between them are not clearly delineated nor are there any formalised arrangement of collaboration. Thus, the role of the TPA towards the preparation of ULPs is ill-defined. It is under this ill-defined interactive relationship between the TPA and the unit committee that participatory planning work is performed.

This suggests that, though, to be able to provide the context for planning work requires collaboration between the TPA and the unit committee, this does not happen through formally established structures but informal collaboration. Here, I operationally define informal collaboration as interactive arrangement concerning local planning work, in which the participation of actors and their interactive relationships are not structured by rules. In the following section, I give a brief explanation of stakeholder sensitisation, community forum and public hearing and the level at which they are supposed to be practiced.

5.2.2 Brief of mechanisms of participation

Though there are several mechanisms of participatory planning (such as sensitisation workshops, public/community forum, public hearing, public surveys and citizen juries), my probe here is essentially narrowed down to three of them: Stakeholder sensitisation, community forum and public hearing. The main reason is that they are the dominant mechanisms commonly recommended and deployed in planning practice in Ghana. Also, they are core to undertaking bottom-up planning at the unit committee and area/zonal council levels than other mechanisms in terms of both enabling active involvement of non-state actors and deepening community participation in planning for their common needs.

Following Crosby and Bryson (2005), this study refers to a stakeholder as any person, group, or organisation that is affected by a public problem, has partial responsibility to act on it, or has resources needed to resolve it. Applying this notion of stakeholder to the current discussion means participants of participatory planning who generally share

interests and solutions to a problem. This includes assembly members, unit committee members and local communities (constituted by chiefs and their council of elders, community members, women group, and civil society organisations within a particular unit committee). However, given that the DPCU plays a role in doing planning work at the unit committee level and in sensitising stakeholders, the stakeholders transcend those above to include members of the DPCU. I must stress that there are two levels at which stakeholder sensitisation workshops are organised at the MMDAs' level. First, it is organised jointly by the NDPC and the regional coordinating council (RCC) for the MMDAs' staff namely; budget officers, coordinating directors, development planning officers, finance officers, physical planning officers and local government inspectors of the DAs. The second, which is the focus of discussion here, is organised for local communities, assembly members, unit committee members and identifiable groups within the jurisdiction of the unit. However, evidence from the field shows that stakeholder sensitisation workshops has not been organised before actual planning work started in 2014 (see Table 5.1).

Another participatory mechanism which is organised mainly at the community/unit committee level is community forum. Here, community forum could be described as a process of participatory planning where local stakeholders are provided and given the opportunity to identify, discuss and to plan for their common needs and aspirations. In the current context, the implementation of a community forum means allowing stakeholders of the unit committee to form and articulate their views around their shared problems in undertaking local planning work. As shown in Table 5.1, community forum has been implemented at all the case unit committees, except the Mmorontuo unit committee. The reason why it was not implemented at the unit committee level in Mmorontuo will be discussed further on.

The third mechanism is public hearing. There are about four public hearings, expected to be organised separately at the unit committee, area/zonal council and district levels of planning. Public hearing at the unit committee level is organised with the aim of giving opportunity to local stakeholders to verify the output of a community forum – ULP – and to address unresolved issues during the forum. This involves the presentation

of the results of the forum by the DPCU at a meeting after the plan – ULP – has been reviewed in relation to issues identified in a review of performance of previous district wide plan – DMTDP. The outcome of this meeting (a revised ULP) is expected to feed into area/zonal council level planning wherein priority issues in such plans are harmonised to prepare area/zonal wide plans. To accomplish the harmonisation exercise, a second public hearing is expected to be organised.

The level where this public hearing is organised is the area/zonal council. As mentioned before, here, public hearings are conducted in order to combine (or harmonise) all unit plans (ULPs) within their jurisdictions into area/zonal level plans (ALPs). This is open to the public. At the district level, two separate public hearings are expected to be conducted. The first public hearing is organised to present the current situation (or profile) of the district (e.g. concerning the trend and impact of previous interventions) while the second, also referred to as 'general assembly meeting' is organised to approve and adopt the DMTDP. With the exception of the second public hearing at the district level, which will be discussed further in chapter 6, there was no evidence that public hearings were conducted at the unit committee and area/zonal council levels. Next I provide a summary of reality of the above participatory mechanisms – stakeholder sensitisation workshops, community forums and public hearings – in the light of whether they have been implemented at the unit committee level or not.

Table 5.1 Summarised views on implementation of participatory mechanisms

Unit Committee	Participatory Mechanism	Application
Amanchia	Sensitisation	No
	Community Forum	Yes
	Public Hearing	No
Pasoro	Sensitisation	No
	Community Forum	Yes
	Public Hearing	No
Esaase	Sensitisation	No
	Community Forum	Yes
	Public Hearing	No
Mmorontuo	Sensitisation	No
	Community Forum	No
	Public Hearing	No

(Source: Author, 2017)

Having given a brief explanation about the three participatory mechanisms, where they are supposed to be applied in undertaking planning work and the realities in terms of whether they have been implemented or not, I further discuss each of the mechanisms in the following sections, starting with why non-sensitisation and how it shaped active involvement in subsequent planning activities of local residents of Amanchia, Pasoro, Esaase and Mmorontuo unit committees.

5.2.3. The reality of stakeholder sensitisation workshop

According to the NDPC (2013a), sensitisation workshops are intended to ensure informed planning practice and to elicit the cooperation of stakeholders during the actual planning process. Among other things, the DPCUs are charged with the organisation of stakeholder sensitisation for all unit committees under their area of operation. Sensitisation is intended to explain the status of implementation of previous plans after a performance review has been conducted to local stakeholders. It also involves explaining the NDPC planning guidelines, which are designed to provide focus and direction on national policy framework and priorities to local stakeholders. In part, this is intended to keep local stakeholders abreast with what is expected of them in the community forum and public hearing. This is important because national policies are not fixed but changes with political regimes. Besides being aligned with national policy, community/unit committee plans are expected to be compatible with national goals and objectives. So through stakeholder sensitisation, local actors are expected to be able to mobilise their strategic ideas for effective interaction and dialoguing. In other words, it helps non-state actors to internalise the 'rule of engagement' and create pathways for them to become 'active subjects'. Further, sensitisation may lay the ground to engender ownership of the plan (such as ULP or DMTDP) that will be produced subsequently.

Despite the significant role of sensitising stakeholders, evidence in Table 5.1 suggests that across all cases, local communities, unit committee members and assembly members were not sensitised by the DPCU before the preparation of the 2014 plans. In the above context of non-sensitisation, it is crucial to examine why sensitisation workshops were not implemented and to set the context for further analysis on how it

affected local participation in unit committee planning. Further, part of the solution to non-sensitisation comes from understanding the factors which are likely to cause it. Despite the recognition from previous studies that stakeholder sensitisation is an important first step toward active involvement of citizens in planning (Arnstein, 2011) which is capable of increasing actors' understanding around particular issues in planning practice (Aitken *et al.,* 2016; Rowe and Frewer, 2005), literature is not clear about why planners and/or planning authorities may fail to implement it (stakeholder sensitisation).

To what extent can empirical evidences from the present context expand our understanding on the 'why' of non-sensitisation? For this, I first wanted to analyse why sensitisation workshops were not organised from the views of local communities, unit committee and assembly members. However, it was revealed from my interview that stakeholders at the unit committee level have no clear idea (or not well informed) about why the DPCU failed to conduct sensitisation workshops. The following comments support the view that ordinary people and local elected representatives were not certain about the issues that prevented the DPCU from implementing stakeholder sensitisation:

> "I didn't find out from the district planning officer the reason why they failed to create our awareness [..]. As such, it will be unfair for me to try to conjecture any reason for the failure of the planners to organising awareness creation workshops. If the awareness raising workshop was organised and I didn't attend, then I will be in the position to tell you why I failed to attend" (Interview with a teacher from Pasoro on: 09/04/2015).

Similarly, a resident of Esaase electoral area, a basic school teacher claimed that:

> "As far as awareness creation is concerned, we are at the receiving end. I mean; what we can do is to hold ourselves ready to attend a sensitisation workshop if a word is sent by the DPCU through the assembly member. [..] everybody knows that awareness creation is the responsibility of the DPCU and if they failed to do that, you [referring to the interviewer] should seek answers from them; [..] I don't know the answers. [..] or maybe, the assembly member will be able to tell us why it [sensitisation] didn't come off" (Interview on: 01/06/2015).

In view of the above allegation from the last comment that the assembly member of Esaase might be in the position to answer why stakeholder sensitisation was not implemented, I went further to seek the assembly member's side of the story. And this was what he said in my interview with him:

> "[..] yes, it is a fact that the DPCU is supposed to organise sensitisation workshops on issues surrounding the NDPC guidelines and the performance review report of the previous plans. It is also true that before such workshops are organised, the DPCU is supposed to inform me about it. Previously, whenever the DPCU failed to create awareness, [..] I try to find out why it [awareness creation] was not organised. I always receive one constant answer; no money, and stuff like that. Honestly, I didn't seek answers to non-sensitisation in 2014, so right now the simple answer I can give to you [referring to the interviewer] is that, I don't know why" (Interview on: 28/04/2015).

In fact, none of the remaining assembly members and unit committee members I interviewed could explain why the local government planning secretariat – DPCU – failed to implement stakeholder sensitisation. However, in my interview with the district planning officers (DPOs) and district budget officers (DBOs) of the two case districts (Atwima Nwabiagya and Ejisu-Juaben), financial constraints and political influence in the allocation of financial resources were cited as some the reasons for non-sensitisation. With regard to financial constraint, the DPOs seem to share the same story that though the question of funding the cost of doing planning work is a district wide problem, the brunt of financial constraint largely falls on the sub-district level, including unit committees. For instance, a senior planning officer of Ejisu-Juaben municipal assembly (EJMA), a core member of the DPCU states that:

> "Throughout my practice as a planner, one of the biggest challenges I face is how to get money to execute the needed activities. The story is not different at Ejisu-Juaben municipal area. [..] people who don't understand the difficulties involved in getting money to implement what we [referring to the DPCU] have been tasked to do always think that we are not committed to our work. Do you see the amazing thing? [..] while we didn't have money to fuel a car to organise

sensitisation workshops, somehow, the DA manages to get money to conduct general assembly meetings at the municipal level. You know we are not in control when it comes to funding planning work" (Interviewed on 12/06/2015).

Similarly, a district budget officer (DBO) of Atwima Nwabiagya district who is a core member of the DPCU remarks that:

"Financing the cost of planning activities in this district is a thorny issue; the reason is that there is no money. [..] but it is tougher with unit level planning than the district level [..]. Look, somehow, somewhere, we [referring to the DA] always find money to organise general assembly meeting, a meeting, during which the DMTDPs are approved and adopted. I cannot remember the last time I prepared a budget for sensitisation workshops or public hearings at the community level. The reason is that there is no money" (Interviewed on: 23/04/2015).

Regarding the same issue of financial constraint as one of the key reasons for non-sensitisation, a senior DPO of ANDA states in my interview that

"As a planner, I would have wished that every activity that will be implemented to make our work effective is carried out. However, the fact is that we lack the funding that will enable us plan well. With all the levels [referring to units, area/zonal and districts] where we are supposed to facilitate planning activities, it is at the unit committee that the constraints of funding is more prevalent. Truly, we have a problem with committing the needed financial resources to doing sensitisation work. [..] we [referring to the DPCU] don't have much say in terms of allocating resources but the DA does" (Interviewed on: 21/05/2015).

From the above evidence, it may be argued that besides the problem of limited financial resources as a reason for non-sensitisation, the allocation of the limited amount of money seems to favour the district level over the unit committee level, where the 'on-the-ground' activities of participatory planning is supposed to be happening. Again, the DPOs who are core members of the DPCU have little influence in terms of the decision to allocate financial resources to implement planning activities, including stakeholder

sensitisation workshops. Previous studies (Peterson, 2012; Burby, 2003) have shown that providing the needed financial resources to raise grassroots awareness or for planning practice in general may not necessarily fall under the control of planning agencies. As mentioned above, it appears that non-sensitisation was not only attributable to financial constraints; but also a matter of how the DPCU has control over the allocation of even the limited resources. Taken together, these issues (skewed distribution of funds and financial constraint) can influence which particular episode and institutional level of planning is given more attention.

However, considering the fact that the DPCU has a responsibility to prepare work plan and budget for the activities of the work plan before it embarks on stakeholder sensitisation (see chapter 3), also means that it has a part to play in ensuring that funding is secured for the implementation of stakeholder sensitisation. Therefore, if lack of funding is alleged to have contributed to non-sensitisation, then we need to look into the effort the DPCU had made in this regard (or in responding to this task). With the exception of work plan, my search for further evidence from the DPCU yielded no results because budget for the work plan was not prepared or unavailable at the time of my field work. A senior planning officer of EJMA, who first acknowledge the importance of budgeting and securing funding ahead of awareness creation and yet maintains his earlier claim that the inability of the DPCU to implement stakeholder sensitisation is more a matter of inadequate and bias allocation of financial resources, has this to say:

> "There is no doubt that our [referring to the planning department] inability to prepare and to secure a budget to finance planning activities may play a role in non-sensitisation. But since I was transferred to EJMA, anytime I prepare a budget to cover the cost of activities of the work plan, it will either not be looked into or funds will not be released at all. [..] the reason is; no money. [..] how can I continue to prepare budgets that will end up being pushed under the desk? Well, we all know that funds are indeed limited. [..] amazingly, instead of using the little money to sensitise and to engage unit committees [the action level] in preparing plans, the big men rather proffer to use such money to engage the

media [..] and do publication about the general assembly meetings" (Interviewed on: 19/06/2015).

When I asked who he thinks are the 'big men' he was referring to in the above narrative and how they influence the approval of work plan and budget, the planning officer asserted that:

"Hmmm! you mean 'big men'; I am referring to the MCE [meaning the municipal chief executive] and the municipal coordinating director. [..] the MCE is a politician, a representative of the president [..] more interested in spending money on those things that will win votes for his party. Sometimes, with the support of the coordinating director, he [referring to the MCE] uses his political power to direct how money is released for planning. [..] even if a budget is approved, you cannot write a cheque or receive cash without his advice, approval and/or signature. When it comes to power to release fund for planning; it's the MCE that counts" (Interviewed on: 09/06/2015).

With regard to politicisation of budgetary allocation, my interview with the municipal budget officer of EJMA also revealed that:

"It is a usual practice in the municipal assembly that the politicians [referring to the MCE and members of parliament] push money into particular planning activities just to support their political ambitions. [..] look, at the request of my MCE, I was asked to prepare and pay per diem to all the assembly members who attended the general assembly meeting when we could not even raise money to organise forums at the unit committees. [..] if one is not careful, the politician will push you to do things that are unprofessional" (Interviewed on: 12/06/2015).

In the light of the foregoing narratives, it can be noted that besides financial constraints, political power may be employed by local politicians to block the flow of even the limited financial resources to the unit committee level, leading to non-sensitisation. Hence, non-sensitisation is not just a problem of funding, but also about local political control in terms of what planning activity is considered important or encouraged. This

draws our attention to Flyvbjerg's (1998) landmark research of power and planning in Aalborg which demonstrate that power is always exercised in the planning process to serve particular interests – the 'powerful' – over others. In addition, Torres (2013) and Christiansen (2015) remind us that some of the ways planners can respond to the power-infused nature of planning include directing attention to planning as a means to resisting power, shedding light on the intricacies and essential issues of planning practice and as a steering device to make a difference – reframe issues that incorporates and are sensitive to political realities. Christiansen notes that the success of the above tasks entails the ability of planners to deliver on time their own goals.

Similar to Christiansen's (2015) thinking, my interview with the DPOs and DBOs of the two case districts reveals that delay in the issuance of the NDPC planning guidelines to the Ejisu-Juaben municipal and Atwima Nwabiagya district assemblies was another major reason for non-sensitisation. In fact, previous studies (Asante and Ayee, 2008; Dotse et al., 2010; Centre for Democratic Development – CDD, 2014) in Ghana also produce similar findings. However, a focus group interview with members of the expanded DPCU – a DPCU that is composed of members of various decentralised departments – (also see chapter 3) at ANDA and EJMA revealed divided opinions about the link between non-sensitisation and the delay in releasing the planning guidelines. The disagreement is not so much about the realities of delay in issuing the guidelines, but whether it was feasible/not feasible for the DPCU to have organised sensitisation workshops even in the absence of the NDPC planning guidelines.

An assistant district planning officer (ADPO) of ANDA, who seems to support the idea that delay in releasing the planning guidelines caused non-sensitisation, claimed that:

> "It is by law [referring to national development planning (system) act, act 480 of 1994] that the NDPC should issue guidelines for district level planning, from time to time. [..] from the unit committee, through area council to the district, every step we take towards the preparation of any particular plan is supposed to follow the guidelines. The question is, by what authority will I [as a planner] be acting if I choose to conduct sensitisation workshops without the guidelines?

[..] no authority. This shows that if the guidelines are not released, we have no authority to plan [..] not even sensitisation" (Interviewed on: 10/08/2015).

At the same time, it has been noted by a senior planning officer of Ejisu-Juaben municipal assembly that though, the DPCU and the planning department have a discretion in undertaking planning work, it is not appropriate to initiate the planning process ahead of the NDPC guidelines which are designed to facilitate the preparation of plans at the district and sub-district levels. He further elaborates that:

"It is not our [referring to the DPCU] wish to mobilise and elicit the opinions of communities and community actors to plan when we have not pre-informed them on issues they should form their opinions around [..]. But what can we do if the NDPC does not give us the planning guidelines in time. One of the ground rules is that the assembly cannot engage in planning when the NDPC guidelines are not released [..] we were handicapped because whatever activity we undertake and whatever goal we pursue must be in harmony with national goals" (Interviewed with a senior DPO of EJMA on: 27/07/2015).

A contrasting view, however, is that, though, the delay in the issuance of the NDPC planning guidelines can affect planning practice at the sub-district level (as will be explored further on), non-sensitisation could have been averted if the DPCU was proactive. That is, if the DPCU would have taken the initiative by acting to respond appropriately to problems rather than reacting to them (Interview, physical planning officer of ANDA, on 10/08/2015). For example, a district director of education, and also a member of the expanded DPCU of ANDA explain in my interview that:

"I know, and I want to believe that the planners even know better that the planning guidelines don't change until we change government. As at the time [referring to 2014] the DPCU was expected to create people's awareness, there was no change of government. [..] since 2010, our plans are based on the same national policy goals and the same planning guidelines. So, I will not agree that it was because the guidelines were not issued in time that the DPCU failed to

organise awareness creation workshops. [..] whether NDPC delayed in releasing the guidelines or not, awareness creation could have been conducted if that was the priority of the DPCU" (Interviewed on: 10/08/2015).

In addition, a municipal director of health services of EJMA, who also believe that non-sensitisation, is seemingly caused by the failure of the DPCU to be proactive with the task of awareness creation and not necessarily as a result of delay in releasing the NDPC planning guidelines stated that:

"[..], the planners [referring to the planning department] knew very well that the 2014 national policy framework, which could have caused changes to the planning guidelines did not differ from that of 2010. What had changed was probably the report on performance review of previous plan. [..] this review was done by the DPCU at the district level, and reported earlier than the release of the guidelines. So, what prevented the DPCU from using the performance report and the 2010 framework to sensitise the people before the release of the NDPC guidelines? [..] we cannot put the whole blame on the NDPC" (Interviewed on: 27/07/2015).

Considering the above evidence and the foregoing analysis, there is no dispute about the reality of delay in releasing the NDPC planning guidelines. However, as argued above, opinions are divided regarding how the delay in releasing the guidelines could have led to non-sensitisation of stakeholders at the unit committee level. For this reason, I assessed two of the NDPC planning guidelines (for 2010 – 2013 and 2014 – 2017 planning periods) to ascertain whether significant changes were made to the 2014 – 2017 guidelines to the extent that, in its absence no meaningful sensitisation workshop could be organised. My assessment revealed that the content of the two planning guidelines did not differ. Hence, the claim of the two planning officers of the two case districts with regard to the delay in the issuance of the planning guidelines as a reason for non-sensitisation may be disputed. At this point, and also coupled with an earlier evidence that non-sensitisation can be explained by financial constraints and the use of political power to influence the allocation of resources away from the unit committee level, make a case for the need to analyse and understand how non-sensitisation or non-

implementation of stakeholder sensitisation might have affected the involvement of local citizens in subsequent episodes of planning – community forum.

Unlike some previous studies (Rowe and Frewer, 2005; Aitken et al 2016; Arnstein, 2011) which seem to argue that awareness creation represents a minimal form of engaging the public or one-sided flow of information in participatory planning work, my focus here is on the consequent impact of non-sensitisation on participation in actual planning work at the unit committee level. Both the unit committee level stakeholders and DPCU members who were involved in my study believed that there has been a great influence of non-sensitisation on actors' ability to participate, negotiate their needs and to make informed choices. However, none of the interviewees from Esaase unit committee could make a claim that there has indeed been any negative impact of non-sensitisation on participation. The reasons assigned for this will be discussed in the following section. As mentioned earlier, what is important here is to look at the views of those interviewees who have evidence to suggest that non-sensitisation was a 'blind spot' on participation in community forums. The quotes below provide more evidence in this regard.

> "You see [..] my concern is if awareness creation is intended to ensure that individuals and communities gain access to relevant information before actual planning takes off, what different way has this information been transmitted to serve the same purpose now that it has not been done? [..] first, the purpose for which it is instituted [referring to sensitisation] has been defeated [..] second, the opportunity that awareness creation would have offered; form [new] ideas, ask critical questions and new ways of looking at the same problem were missed [..] people decided to stay away from the unit committee meeting" (Interview with a community member from Mmorontuo on: 26/05/2015).

> "I see awareness creation as a feedback from our officers on what is happening outside this community before we can also tell our own stories [..] and the inability to perform this task really pulls the brakes on the whole unit committee planning process; difficulty in securing people's involvement [..] difficulty in ensuring that we become both speakers and listeners in doing planning work.

We may try hard to tell the story of our problems without awareness raising, [..] how well can we do that if it is not informed by other relevant stories that exist outside of this community? (Interview with the chief of Amanchia on: 01/06/2015).

"There is no doubt that awareness creation would have educated us about why certain issues; needs and interventions in our previous plans were not solved or implemented. [..] that is very important. [..] Being an assembly member does not mean that I know everything but my constituents expect me to provide answers to all their questions, most especially concerning planning. I was unable to answer some of the questions with accuracy [..] I don't also have all the information. I believe that at least, a day's workshop on awareness raising could have informed the people more [..]. I think, lack of awareness raising, might have made even the few participants to be passive" (Interview with assembly member of Amanchia on: 16/04/2015).

In addition, closely related to the consequent impact of non-sensitisation is the issue of the quality of interaction during the community forums. A senior municipal planning officer of EJMA states that one of the purposes of holding sensitisation workshops before actual planning work begins is to ensure that local participation and the planning process gather more than simply information; it also needed to be driven by people's understanding and interpretations based on knowledge that is both internal and external to them (Interview, DPO, EJMA, 28/05/2015). But, this seems not to be the case because "it could be noticed that majority of the local participants found it difficult to reflect on what others said, to learn from what others said, to dialogue and defend their own choices and assertions when such assertions conflict with others" (ibid). Likewise, non-sensitisation has the potential of decreasing the scope of information that the DPCU or planners could gather towards the formulation of ULPs. As the presiding member of the ANDA put it:

"You can list and plan for everything that everybody said at a forum to show to the whole world that you're up for a great process. [..] you can't fine-tune the analysis of planning issues and information at just one session [referring to a forum] and expect to promote a constructive interaction. Indeed, if you ignore certain activities [..] or reverse how people access information you might end up reversing the way socio-political actors interact and cooperate with one another" (Interviewed on: 30/06/2015).

Considering matters relating to public involvement in planning in the context of non-sensitisation in the preceding analysis, it can be argued that consequent effects of non-sensitisation are critical for understanding and shaping the participatory actions of actors in subsequent activities of planning. Even though, there are different ways the consequent effects may manifest in the cases under consideration, common effects appear to be evident; difficulty in asking critical questions and securing public involvement, the tendency to engage passively and/or giving rise to less discursive and constructive deliberation.

Given the evidences and the analysis in this section with regard to the reasons for non-sensitisation and the potential impacts it has created on public participation in subsequent activity of planning – community forum, it is clear that the inability of the DPCU to implement stakeholder sensitisation prior to the organisation of community forums is mainly defined by financial constraints, local political reality of allocating resources away from unit committee level activities and arguably, delay in releasing the NDPC planning guidelines to ANDA and EJMA. While the above evidences are important they may not be able to give adequate account of participatory planning at the unit committee level. As argued by other scholars, different mechanisms to participatory planning are not alternatives to one another (Aitken *et al.,* 2016; Rowe and Frewer, 2005), neither is any single type of planning action or activity considered sufficient on its own if planning practitioners are to be able to respond adequately to unheard voices and/or if 'citizen participants' are to be engaged in planning meaningfully (Forester, 1982). In the following section, I discuss community forum and analyse how its implementation shaped the participation of local residents in the preparation of ULPs.

5.2.4 Community forum

This section extends the discussion on participatory mechanisms of unit committee level planning from stakeholder sensitisation workshops to community forums. Unlike the former which could not be implemented for reasons and evidences shown above, there is evident that the latter have been conducted at the unit committee level in three out of the four cases of unit committees (see Table 5.1). Questions might be raised regarding citizen involvement in the implementation of the forums, i.e. how the implementation of community forums, preceded by non-sensitisation provides opportunity for local citizen to participate and to shape its outcome – preparation of ULPs. And how can the realities of socio-political context of the unit committees play a part in the implementation of the forums and shaped the involvement of local citizens? For this, I focus on the extent to which the implementation of the community forums represents an exercise in participation to incorporate citizen ideas in ULPs at Amanchia, Pasoro and Esaase unit committees. It should be noted that these cases fall under two separate local government jurisdictions – ANDA and EJMA – and are supposed to be supervised by their respective DPCUs.

At the outset, it should be noted that, members of the DPCU (both ANDA and EJMA) revealed in my interviews that they have not been able to supervise the implementation of the community forums. With the exception of those from ANDA, core members of the DPCU of EJMA that I interviewed did not give any other reason/s for their inability to supervise the implementation of the community forums besides those that have already been cited for non-sensitisation above (e.g. financial constraints, reality of local politics and untimely release of planning guidelines). While core members of the DPCU of EJMA hold the above views as the core reasons for non-implementation of community forums, it appears that their counterparts from ANDA hold another reason besides those noted above. According to an assistant district planning officer of ANDA, community forums could not be organised because there was no substantive DPO at the time that the forums were supposed to be conducted (Interviewed, on 10/08/2015). Although, the DPCU is a team of officials with different expertise in various fields, "there is no way a community forum, and the implementation of planning activities in general can effectively be undertaken in the absence of a professional planner" (ibid).

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Given this situation; the inability of the DPCUs of both the ANDA and EJMA to play their facilitation role, the discussion and analysis that follow regarding the implementation of community forums and its implication on public participation is focused primarily on the narratives of interviewees from the unit committee level. However, for the purposes of clarifying and/or explaining certain claims further, the viewpoints of other interviewees outside the unit committee have been sought.

5.2.4.1 Community forum at Amanchia unit committee

After information was received from the DPCU of ANDA that it would not be able to supervise the implementation of the community forums, the assembly member and the leadership of Amanchia unit committee took it upon themselves to mobilise other community stakeholders (as illustrated in Figure 5.1) to dialogue and to prepare ULP. Per this information, Amanchia unit committee had only four days to undertake and to submit its ULP to the district assembly. I focus on how constituents were mobilised, the context within which actors were mobilised and the implications for active public involvement in the preparation of ULP. At the outset, it has to be mentioned that my interviews reveal that the usual venues of community forum – chief palace – was moved to a school park. As I will explore further, the mobilisation of community members for community forum outside the palace of the chief of Amanchia (the first of its kind) appears to have significant influence on participation. The reasons cited for organising the forum outside the palace or changing the venue were that "the chief had travelled out of the community when the meeting was organised, and there is a long history that the community cannot be mobilised in the palace in the absence of the chief" (Interview, unit committee chairman, 09/04/2015). In addition, the assembly member of Amanchia, who played a key role in choosing a 'new' venue and organising the community forum in the absence of the chief, stated that:

> "[..] only few of the people participate in forums we organise in the palace [..].
> I found out that because people have to follow the traditions and customs
> pertaining to deliberation in the palace, people [particularly women] would
> either not attend or attend but decide not to contribute to the discussion. [..] we
> [referring to the assembly members and unit committee chairman] organised the

meeting without the chief because we needed to meet a deadline [of four days] given to us by the planning officer [..] the absence of the chief allowed us to organise the meeting at the primary school park, [..] compared to the previous meetings at the palace, the last one we held at the park was well attended" (Interviewed on: 27/07/2015).

However, the chief of Amanchia, whose absence seems to have created the space for the elected community leaders to organise the community forum outside the palace explained in my interview with him that:

"Traditionally, it is not acceptable for anybody to hold a meeting in the palace in my absence, without my knowledge or without my approval. [..] the action of the assembly member and unit chairman [i.e. organising a forum in the chief's absence] does not show respect to me and the 'stool' [a customary community]. [..] they're questioning my power. I believe, their action was influenced by the fact that I didn't support their candidature when they were vying to be elected in 2010, especially the assembly member. [..] yes this may have influence their action. [..] well, back then, I was only being critical about how they could partner with me to develop this community" (Interviewed on: 21/08/2015).

What is important to consider in this juncture is to understand how the foregoing accounts of the respondents in terms of organising the forum without the chief, and shifting its venue from the chief palace to the school park affected active involvement of local residents in the preparation of community action plan (CAP) or ULP. Next, I focus on this analysis.

It appears that the choice of venue and the organisation of the community forum in the absence of the chief seem to have produced one positive effect – enhanced public involvement in planning work. Even though, this contradicts earlier evidence that non-sensitisation may create difficulty in asking critical questions and securing public involvement, my interview with a 34-year-old woman reveals that the forum opened up the preparation of the ULP to wider participation and her decision to participate was

substantially influenced by the venue where the forum was organised. She went further to state that:

> "I don't know what happened for the unit committee and the assembly member to change the venue from the palace to the school park the last time a community forum was held. [..] that was a good decision because a lot of people, including women came for the meeting. [..] we were able to speak our mind [..].Unlike the palace where the views of the chief cannot be contested, at the school park, I was able to talk, seek clarification and even oppose certain views that I felt were not in my interest. [..] open local planning forum" (Interviewed on: 31/03/2015).

The above response does not in any way suggest that the chief or the traditional political authority (TPA) of Amanchia is irrelevant in mobilising the constituents of the unit committee. As mentioned earlier, though, the TPA or the chief has ambiguous roles as far as formal collaboration and mobilisation of communities for planning is concerned, the contribution and influence of chiefs in community governance and decision-making cannot be wished away from the business of the unit committee. For instance, it was disclosed in my interview with a primary school teacher that the chief of Amanchia has demonstrated that he has the welfare of the community at heart and his palace has been open to the discussion of varied community problems (Interview, a teacher on 09/04/2015). In his words, "we gather in the palace of the chief on countless occasions to deliberate on different topics, including land disputes, sexual abuse, sanitation, supply of portable water etc, [..], and the last time one of my colleague teachers was attacked by a group of young men, the case was settled amicably in the palace" (ibid).

Notwithstanding the above viewpoint, some interviewees, including the unit committee chairman claims that the 'new' venue – school park – seems to be more inclusive and open up the forum to public input than the palace. As a result, it has created an opportunity for improved participation. Elaborating further, the chairman stated that:

"I have no doubt in my mind that, we [referring the chairman and the assembly member] did what we did [organise the meeting at the park] because we wanted to challenge the authority of our chief. [..] the aim was to choose a place that welcomes all interest groups to share and solve our problems together. [..] this was addressed; we were able to engage with those who aren't usually involved in planning work [e.g. women], the meeting was interactive and the participants identified issues; key issues to our development. An example of such issues was the proposal for a market by one young lady; that was my first time of seeing her in our meetings" (Interviewed on: 09/04/2015).

Another point raised by the assembly member of Amanchia regarding how the organisation of the community forum at the park affected participation was that;

"Some lads [between the ages of 15 and 19] who were playing football on the same park where we were going to hold the meeting quickly stop their game and join the meeting. Under normal circumstances, such young men will not attend a community forum [..] I mean at the palace. [..] it is not easy for people within such age group to attend meetings at the place" (Interviewed on: 27/07/2015).

The above remarks which provide further evidence on the potential influence of venue (school park) in defining people's active role in the preparation of ULP, also brings into focus how participation in planning or community forum is sensitive to site. As argued by Healey (2007), there is a connection between the choice of a particular site for social activities and actors' ability to act in concert with others and to articulate their views effectively. However, in the present case, while adopting a 'site-conscious' approach to the implementation of community forum can form the basis of active involvement of community members, it can also lie at the root of tension, particularly at the leadership level. Thus, it appears that the organisation of the forum in the absence of the chief become a potential source of tension between the chief and his elected counterparts. Again, the extent to which the 'new' participatory site (the school park) will continue to be deployed for subsequent planning work remains uncertain. A 34-year-old woman, who supports the change in the community forum venue, also admits how the

organisation of the forum in the absence of the chief has the potential to create tension/conflict. She further claimed that:

"Though, organising the forum at a new place [in the absence of the chief] was well attended than before, [..] I think, it has created unhealthy relationship between the chief and the assembly member. [..] the chief registered his discontent [..], this thing has divided our leaders. Yes, the venue might have motivated people to get involved in the forum, [..] I don't think this can be sustained. Cordial relationship and harmony between our leaders are very important if we want to continue mobilising more people to participate. [..] if this does not stop, it will breed disunity even among we the ordinary people" (Interviewed on: 22/07/2015).

In addition to the above claims, the chief of Amanchia, who was initially reluctant to comment on whether the organisation of the forum in his absence has created sour relations between him and his elected counterparts or not, later (after I made several visits to his palace), acknowledged that:

"The assembly member and the unit committee chairman are only among some of the players [..] but they do not play central roles in the development of this community. I don't think so [..]. For me, I know that I need to partner with them [referring the unit committee chair and assembly member] to take decisions. So what inference can I make from this action [..]? Disrespect; laying claim to power they don't possess! [..] As long as I am in the driving seat of this community, excluding me from the forum and any other decision-making effort in this community will not go well with me. [..] I was not happy at all [..] I even complained to the presiding member about this" (Interviewed on: 20/08/2015).

In my interview with the above presiding member of ANDA, he confirms receiving a verbal complain from the chief and how he subsequently advised the unit committee chairman and the assembly member to render an apology to the chief, which they did. As can be noted in the following comment, until an office accommodation is provided for the unit committee, subsequent community forums cannot be organised

(with/without the chief) outside the palace. Considering how the evidence of attempt to do so generated tension/conflict, excluding the chief from community planning work pose a fundamental threat to cooperation (Interview, presiding member, 28/08/2015). He further stated that:

> "[..] I can tell you from my position as a presiding member of the assembly that if the assembly member and/or unit committee chair and the chief don't iron out their differences, [..] if they don't handle their disagreement well or see peaceful co-existence as a door to effective mobilisation [..] and participation. [..] holding grudges against one another has been taken too far, [..] it can affect a wide range of other actors or the way people will respond to future forums. [..] looking for a place where people can exercise voice without cordial relationship simply builds frustration; it can later translate into poor participation" (ibid).

In sum, for the evidences and analysis shown above, it may be argued that although, the mobilisation of the community forum at the school park have enhanced public involvement in planning, its persuasive power also lies in the ability to bring into focus elements of collaboration and harmonious co-existence, particularly of community leaders. Thus, enhanced participation may be short-lived if the tension and disagreement that emerged as aftermath of excluding the chief from the community forum are glossed over.

5.2.4.2   Community forum at Pasoro unit committee

Unlike Amanchia unit committee, which is constituted by a single community, three different communities, namely Pasoro, Akwaboa and Sokwei, constitute Pasoro unit committee (see chapter 3 for explanation or appendix 5.1). In this context, membership of the unit committee is drawn from these three communities. Similarly, though, the community forum was organised at Pasoro, the headquarters of the unit committee, respondents were selected from among the constituent communities of the unit committee. The emphasis here is to understand how actors were mobilised by community/unit committee leaders, and how the implementation of the community forum serves as a mechanism for active involvement of ordinary citizens in the preparation ULP. Active involvement of actors in planning cannot be taken as a given;

the way and/or the context within which the forum was organised and actors mobilised matter.

Unlike Amanchia unit committee, where the chief was not involved because he was not invited and/or travelled, in Pasoro unit committee, my interviews revealed that though the chiefs of its constituent communities were invited only the chief of Sokwei attended the forum. In the case of Pasoro community, the unit committee chairman mentioned to me that the position of a chief had been vacant following the death of the then chief, and subsequently the failure to find a successor (Interview, unit chairman, 13/05/2015). He further explains that it is a usual practice in Pasoro that any meeting which involves a chief cannot be organised outside the palace. But the fact that we did not have a chief to occupy the palace, most of the meetings I called, including the community forum are held in my house (ibid). How did people response to the call/mobilisation effort? And/or how did this allow local citizens to get involved actively in discussing and planning their common problems? My interviews with some of the people who took part in the forum show that, it (the forum) was poorly attended. A resident of Akwaboa community, who is a former member of Pasoro unit committee, stated that:

> "[..] first and foremost, I was disappointed in the choice of venue for the meeting; a small corner, closer to the unit committee chairman's drinking spot. [..] no venue is 100% perfect or conducive, but for me that place was not nice. [second], the attendance was low, [..] and the venue could be the cause. I could count those who attended the meeting; I met 5 people and some few minutes later, 9 people joined us. [..] the whole of Akwaboa community was represented by two people" (Interviewed on: 16/06/2015).

While the above comment regarding the suitability of the venue of the forum (and its consequent effect – low level of public involvement) corresponds with the argument of Beauregard (2013) that, where planning happens does not only affect how it happens, but also affect how stakeholders participate in doing planning work (also see Bryson and Crosby, 1993; Crosby and Bryson, 2005), the unit committee chairman holds contrary views. His views suggest that, though participation in the community forum

was low, the choice of venue is unlikely to be the primary reason partly because of previous (past) experience. He explained further that:

"[..] to say that low participation was mainly caused by the nature of the venue is unfair. [..], the drinking spot [i.e. the venue] is attached to my house, [..] I have called meetings, meetings that did not focus on plan preparation in this very place [near a drinking spot] and people attended well. [..] people simply don't want to get involved in planning work [..] even before I was appointed as a committee chairman [..]; the time we used to organised the planning forum in the chief's palace, people show little commitment to participate in planning work as compared to other community meetings" (Interviewed on: 15/05/2015).

When I asked the unit committee chairman to further elaborate on whether low participation is peculiar to unit community planning forums or predominant across all participatory activities or all form of mobilisation, he stated that:

"In general, the way people respond to community meetings is okay, [..], especially when the meetings dwell more on their livelihood activities. [..] but if it is about engaging them in the planning work, the story changes [..], only a handful of people get involved. It is not only the ordinary people who are not willing to attend; the chiefs are also guilty of this. [..] surprisingly, whenever I invite the chiefs and their communities to discuss how we could share subsidised fertilizer from central government, they [the chiefs and community members] don't fail to attend. [..] their participatory behaviour [or response] is biased [..]; very, very biased, it depends so much on the topic of discussion" (ibid).

Corroborating the above claim in terms of bias in participation behaviours or responses to the mobilisation efforts, an agriculture extension officer in charge of crops in the ANDA stated that:

"[..], I usually ask the assembly member to mobilise farmers for us to distribute fertilizer and other farm inputs to them [..]. one time my vehicle developed a fault [..] but the people waited patiently for me upon the fact that I was about 3 hours late. [..] after thanking them for coming, I also commended them for their patience and their spirit of participation, [..]. The assembly member quickly retorted that they don't show the same commitment [..], they don't willingly take [active] part when it comes to engaging them in community planning forums. [..] they select what to participate in; they participate more in what brings immediate and tangible benefits to them" (Interviewed on: 26/06/2015).

The above comment, which appears to provide further evidence that low participation is associated more with community planning forums than being a common feature of community engagement in Pasoro unit committee, prompts the question: why inclusive application of the forum could not be achieved, or why there is bias participatory behaviour towards community planning forums? In previous studies (Bryson and Crosby, 1993; Crosby and Bryson, 2005) it was acknowledged that participation in forums is linked to access rules (based on social position, precedent, skills and resources), and the greatest of these rules is the one which cause actors (or potential actors) to be absent from the discussion table. Issues of access and active involvement of actors can also be limited by unrealistic number of meetings and holding meetings at times that makes it difficult for interested parties to attend (Khamis, 2000; Bryson and Crosby, 1993). In the present study, it appears that participants did not see the number of times and the suitability of the time the forum was organised as the reasons why people stayed away. It was rather noted in a focus group interview at Pasoro, the headquarters of Pasoro unit committee, that the inability of planners to facilitate community forums is one of the reasons for staying away from the forum.

A primary school teacher of Akwaboa community, who claim to be a regular participant in planning community forums pointed out in my interview that while the district planning officer and/or the DPCU do well to inform the leadership of Pasoro unit committee to mobilise stakeholders for planning forums, they always fail to play their facilitation role; the actual application of the forum that would have transformed people's motivation to be engaged into active participation (Interview, a teacher on,

09/04/2015). He saw this as lack commitment (or facilitation deficit) on the part of the DPCU/planners. There are no other sources of tapping into information outside what the local resident already know. This is the reason why, according to the teacher, people did not want to be involved in the forum "because we know very well that it is the responsibility of the planners or DPCU to facilitate our conversation, moderate debates and arguments and to steer our understanding on issues which lies beyond our grasp" (ibid).

One of the other issues which is connected to the above view (facilitation deficit), and seems to have rendered the community forum less participatory is associated with planning without planners (or planners' input). According to the assembly member of Pasoro, this is not just about the failure of planners to facilitate the forum; it is also a matter of continuous neglect of some of their core tasks, including stakeholder sensitisation. He further explains that:

"There is some wisdom in the way some planning activities have been put in place to plan [..] and to share our ideas together. I mean, series of stakeholder engagements have been envisioned to engage with us. [..] but the officers who are supposed to administer the workshops and forums have left everything on us; and that aspect of technical information is always missing [..]; this has been happening over the years; it was not only in 2014. [..] the behaviour of our planning officers [towards to whole process] show that they are fed up with their duty [..]. I think this opens the door for people to stay away" (Interviewed on: 30/06/2015).

In addition to this, he continues:

"I am beginning to feel that our views [or plans] wasn't being incorporated into district plans [..], it is disheartening to prepare plans on our own [without supervision], send them to planning officers [..], but don't hear anything from them; no feedback. [..], do our actions [involvement] count [..], or make a difference to district plans at all, and if no, why should we be so committed to

engage in community planning forums? [..] we participate in order to achieve something; positive outcome, improve our lives, development projects " (ibid).

Another important cause of bias and/or non-inclusive implementation of the forum is the neglect of chiefs in community mobilisation efforts by the unit committee. As mentioned earlier, in conjunction with their elected counterparts, chiefs are major shaping forces in mobilising communities. However, it appears that the chiefs of the constituent communities of the Pasoro unit committee were less involved in the mobilisation of communities for the forum. And the low level of involvement of chiefs has been identified as a hindrance for broad participation of local citizens. It is conceived that as powerful local figures, chiefs influence participatory behaviour and facilitate people's entry into participatory arenas. The TPAs particularly believe that by not allowing chiefs to play responsible roles in the planning forum became an avenue for other community actors to be disengaged because as 'custodians' or 'owners' of the land they are a force to reckon with regarding community mobilisation. For example, the chief of Sokwei, one of the constituent communities of the Pasoro unit committee, stated that:

> "Though, the arrangement; using the unit committee to gather people and as an arena of participation is backed by law, [..] as far as this community [Sokwei] is concerned, I don't come under the unit committee. [..] I am not saying that I should be put on the driving seat. [..] if leaders [of the unit committee] keep me and my colleague chiefs involved [give us central role to play], people will participate [..]. In terms of organising, whether planning forums or any other meeting, [..] is a big part of my role. [..] lets face the fact; ignoring me may amount to turning individuals off participating" (Interviewed on: 10/06/2015).

Implicit in the chief's comment is the idea that if our concern is to bring all stakeholders into the arena of community planning forums, using only the elected leaders to mobilise their participation is misplaced unless supported and partnered by the chiefs. In other words, public participation may change according to the level of involvement of the chiefs in community planning mobilisation efforts.

Considering the perceptions respondents hold in the light of how unit committee level actors were mobilised and how community planning forums construct their participants as presented in the analysis thus far, it can be argued that low participation is not only a matter of inappropriate choice of venue; it is also one of participation bias, influenced by facilitation deficit, lack of planners and planning work prior to and during meetings, the feeling that participation does not make a difference and the neglect of chiefs in community mobilisation toward community planning forums. Next, I focus on how Esaase unit committee provides the setting for the implementation of the community forum and how the forum served as a mechanism for active involvement of local citizens in unit committee planning.

5.2.4.3   Community forum at Esaase unit committee

To what extent has the implementation of the community forum in Esaase unit committee provided critical moments for participatory engagement? It was noted in the implementation of the community forum in Amanchia that the mobilisation of stakeholders (in the absence of the chief) outside the chief's palace played a central part in motivating people to participate. In the case of Esaase, the leadership of the unit committee, the assembly member and the chief collaborated and organised the forum in the chief's palace. As I have mentioned elsewhere, there is no formally established structures of collaboration between the chiefs and their elected counterparts (including Esaase), and so collaboration at the leadership level is informal collaboration. It has been conceived by some respondents that informal collaboration exists at the leadership level in Esaase. It was also perceived that there is a blood relation between the chief and the assembly member, and that this has supported a cordial relationship between these two political executives of Esaase. Given these perceptions, it is important to be clear about how stakeholders were actually mobilised and to analyse if the community forum had fostered dialogue and encouraged mass participation in the preparation of the ULP.

Probing further on these matters (how actors were mobilised and how the forum served participatory engagement in planning), it was revealed that collaboration between the local political executives of Esaase appears to have created a good condition to mobilise

local citizens' participation. This condition, according to the unit committee chairman of Esaase, "has gone way beyond our ability to come together and to mobilise local people for planning meetings; in addition to his council of elders, the chief consults and shares with us [i.e. unit committee chair and assembly member] on every issue that matter to this community" (Interview, unit committee chair, on 16/06/2015).

The above comment alleges that the collaborative relationship between the leadership of Esaase community/unit committee was not ad hoc or limited to the implementation of the community forum. In my interview with a teacher in Esaase community, it was revealed that kinship relationship between the chief and the assembly member has aided informal collaboration at the leadership level. He explained that:

> "Because the chief and *honourable* [referring to the assembly member] hail from the same royal family, [..] bonding exists at the family level [..], and I suppose this bonding was what has been translated into partnering one another for planning work. [..] every meeting the assembly member organised is done jointly with the chief in the palace. [..] but we were all here; during the tenure of the former assembly member when venue for holding planning forums was a challenge" (Interview on: 02/07/2015).

However, the assembly member, who is also a secondary school teacher in Kumasi (the regional capital), claimed that a cordial working relationship cannot wholly be defined by blood relations and the opportunity to host meetings in the chief palace is not selective because the chairman of the unit committee who is not related by blood to the chief equally calls meetings in the palace. He further claims that:

> "[..] the chair of the unit committee and I were [before we were both elected], and are still members of a *watchdog committee* which was formed by the community to fight the pollution of our water bodies and deforestation. [..] we built this network [..] long, long ago [..]. This has helped to build shared leadership roles [..], such roles and relationships are bigger and far from being family ties" (Interviewed on: 09/06/2015).

Literature on collaboration emphasised that while the ability of leadership to share power offers incentives for stakeholders to come together (get people to interact), this is no guarantee that collaboration at the leadership level necessarily translates into active involvement of the public (Brand and Gaffikin, 2007; Vangen and Huxham, 2003; Crosby and Bryson, 2005). A lesson this present study can draw from the above is to address the question of how the leadership of Esaase community/unit committee collaborated and the extent to which their collaboration has shaped public participation in the community forum. One way to deal with this, as Huxham and Vangen (2000) and Huxham's (2003) work have shown is to pay attention to the mediums through which collaborative processes are created and/or promoted. Chris Huxham (2003) who attempted to theorise collaboration practice found out that there are three important mediums through which leaders can 'make things happen' in a collaboration, namely; structures, processes and participants. Unlike Huxham, however, I am not seeking to draw on the three mediums as the analytical lens of addressing leadership collaboration and public participation interface. Rather, in line with research question (of how participatory planning interacts with spatial scales with implications for decision trade-offs across scales) I am more interested in describing the events in the course of collaboration at the leadership level and how this promoted broad and active participation of participant.

With regard to how the leadership of Esaase community/unit committee ensured collaborative engagement with participants, a unique step the leadership took was to form a joint five-member committee, charged with community mobilisation. Although, this initiative was not taken exclusively for the preparation of ULPs, members of the Esaase community who were involved in my study believe that it enhanced participation in the community forum. A male community member whose house shares fence with the chief palace stated that:

> "[..] it got to a time in this community when people [women and the youth in particular] don't want to get involved in our meetings [..]. I mean every meeting; not only planning forums [..]. Back then, they saw [..], the meetings as window dressing [..]; leaders only pass information, no give and take or

meaningful exchange. [..] thankfully, now our leaders had put their heads together to form a joint five-member committee [members are drawn from TPA and the unit committee] to make sure that the views of women and the youth; I mean, everybody are sought [..]. It has been a catalyst [..]; it seems like it's maybe more worth getting involved now" (Interviewed on: 02/07/2015).

Further, the queen mother of Esaase told me in an interview that the formation of the joint five-member committee as mentioned above, has allowed her to work in partnership with other community leaders than before. She adds that this development "is helping me feel confident and informed [..] to go out to mobilise people's energies [particularly women] for the purpose of getting them involved in the community forum that took place in 2014" (Interview, queen mother on, 31/07/2015). She also believes that:

"The benefit that accrues is great [..], opportunity for people to participate was key [..], it encouraged people because they saw that they can actually make a difference after they got involved. [..] but, initially people did not just jump on board [..]. but as time goes on my women colleagues are getting involved, more highly involved in community planning [..]" (ibid).

In addition to providing a platform for collaborative engagement, it was also evident in my interview with the chief of Esaase community that the collaborative effort of the leaders did not only help to mobilise local residents, but also helped to mobilise financial resources for development. He supports this claim with the comment that:

"[..] I think that the committee [referring to the joint five-member committee] is good at persuading people to attend meetings. [..] this young men and women with their mobile phones invite one another for meetings without sounding the traditional 'gong gong' [..]. could you imagine that within 3 days, members of this committee teamed up with me to mobilise citizens of Esaase; both inside and outside the community to attend the last forum we organise. [..] it was an effort worth it; people came for the meeting [..], through teamwork, and we have

been able to mobilise money [both within and outside the community] to complete a clinic we started building 8 years ago" (Interviewed on: 31/07/2015).

Meanwhile, the elected political representatives of Esaase unit committee (the assembly member and the unit committee members) that I interviewed claim that although, the formation of the committee appears to have fostered a collaborative interaction in the community forum, mistrust/suspicion among the leaders became an obstacle to fight. Mistrust became an issue, according to the assembly member because;

"[..] 2 months into the formation of the joint five-member committee, cash was donated by one mining company to the watchdog committee for tree planting and campaign against water pollution. [..] some members of the joint five-member committee told me [..], heh, this is cash for the whole community [..] let us use part of it for our activities [the five-member committee]. [..] I said no to that [..]; some started to suspect me [see me to be corrupt]. [..]; during that time, if I call a meeting, they [committee members] won't attend [..]; if I send text message they won't reply" (Interviewed on: 09/06/2015).

When I asked about how the issue of mistrust, as the above comment suggests, was resolved to secure/build trust and collaborative engagement ahead of the community forum, the assembly member explained that:

"On my own, I tried to explain [..], it was misunderstanding which needs to be pushed behind. [..] later I invited the mining company which made the cash donation [..] it sent 2 of its staff to explain to us; they clear the air that the money was not donated for general development of the community; it was meant for a specific purpose, planting trees [..]. We understood, so, I moved on, or rather, we moved on; without trust the possibility of teamwork, fostering participation and dialogue cannot be achieved" (ibid).

Considering the hitherto evidences and the analysis put forward in this section relating to the implementation of the community forum and how this has created the opportunity for active involvement of the public, it is clear that, although, initially there are some elements of mistrust, the way leadership has made an effort to create and charge a committee to mobilise the participation of stakeholders provided opportunity for inclusive implementation of the community forum. This effort (collaborative mobilisation) appears to have produced beneficial impacts, such as enhanced participation.

5.2.4.4   Community forum at the zonal level: Mmorontuo unit committee

Similar to the structure of Pasoro unit committee, multiple communities, namely, Juaben Zongo, Mmorontuo, Asumagya and Dumakwai, constitute Mmorontuo unit committee (see appendix 5.2). As mentioned earlier in the case of Pasoro unit committee, the constituent communities of Mmorontuo unit committee are also supposed to be mobilised at Mmorontuo (the headquarters of the unit) to undertake planning work, including community forums. As can be seen from the above three cases, the community forums were actually organised at the unit committee level.

However, in the case of Mmorontuo unit committee, instead of organising the forum at Mmorontuo (the capital of Mmorontuo unit committee), it was organised in response to a request by the municipal planning coordinating unit at Juaben zonal council. Thus, instead of moving from one unit committee to the other to supervise the organisation of the community forums, the coordinating unit invited the unit committees for the same purpose at the zonal level. Despite the request to move the organisation of the community forum from the unit committee level to the zonal council level, Esaase unit committee which also received similar request as Mmorontuo unit committee went ahead to organise the forum at the unit level. At this juncture, critical questions arise; what necessitated the request to move the organisation of the forum from the unit to the zonal level? Why was Mmorontuo unit committee unable to organise the forum at the unit level before joining other constituent unit committees at Juaben? And what are the implications on local citizens' participation in the zonal council setting? Next, I focus

on how the Juaben zonal council created a participatory decision-making site for the implementation of the community forum.

With regard to the first question, the assembly member of Mmorontuo, who received the letter inviting him and his constituents to organise the forum at Juaben said that reasons for such decision were not stated in the letter, neither was he able to seek answers from the municipal coordinating unit. However, in my interview with the municipal planning officer, he cited the same constraining factors that led to non-sensitisation as discussed in section 5.2.3 above. For emphasis sake, they include financial constraints and delay in the issuance of the NDPC planning guidelines.

However, regarding the failure of the Mmorontuo unit committee to mobilise its constituent communities to organise the forum at the unit level, the assembly member stated in my interview with him that:

> "Time was against us [..]. First, we only got to know, I mean, we received the invitation letter just 5 days to the meeting [..]. [Second], I work as a court registrar in a different district; far, far from my electoral area. [..] that very week we were supposed to mobilise communities for the forum was a very busy week for me [..], work load in the office did not allow me" (Interviewed on: 02/06/2015).

Given that both Mmorontuo unit committee and Esaase unit committee fall under the jurisdiction of the same local government unit – EJMA, as mentioned earlier, and that the assembly member of the latter unit also works outside his electoral area, yet managed (through collaboration with other community leaders) to organise the forum, raise questions about why time could be a credible reason here.

Because I was not convinced regarding the reasons the assembly member assigned for the failure to organise the community forum at Mmorontuo unit committee, I sought further answers from the participants in a focus group discussion at Mmorontuo. The unit committee chairman who plays a key role in mobilising communities for planning work stated that:

"[..] we did not organise the forum because members of the unit committee didn't cooperate; failed to honour a meeting I called [..]. I had wanted us to see how we could work things out [..], truly, I invited the members for a meeting, [..]. [..] over the last few years it's become pretty obvious that some members of the unit aren't committed; am not trying to give excuses, [..] that is true. It is highly likely that, time constraint might not have been a problem if I was dealing with unit committee members from one community [..], here we're talking about 4 communities" (Interviewed on: 02/06/2015).

It is evident therefore that failure to organise the forum at the unit committee level is caused by the inability of members of Mmorontuo unit committee to mobilise/organise themselves. The fact that the unit committee chairman did not rule out limited time frame as a cause, appears to give some credibility to the assembly member's claim that lack of time was the reason for non-implementation of the forum. Therefore, it can be argued that the ability of local political representatives to act together and to mobilise communities to implement the forum can be defined both by limited time frame and the structure of the decision-making unit. Next, I focus on how Juaben zonal council provided the context to organise the forum and the implications for active involvement of constituents in planning decision-making.

As we shall see below, my interview with some of the participants who attended the community forum reveal that Juaben zonal council did not really constitute or provide participatory space for people to share ideas and/or act collectively as constituents of one unit committee – Mmorontuo. The assembly member who claimed to be the only participant from Mmorontuo to be given the opportunity to present their felt needs revealed further that "how can we think of achieving a participatory forum at Juaben [..], a forum which open up for face-to-face discussion of our problems when participants from all the five unit committees of Juaben council were put together in one meeting; no one from my unit committee spoke after my presentation [..], the rest became observing participants [..]. [..] who and how long one was allowed to speak

were controlled by the staff of the DPCU who coordinated the forum" (Interview, assembly member on, 02/06/2015). He further remarks that:

 "[..] the moment I was informed that the forum was going to be held at Juaben, I knew right away that active involvement of communities would be problem [Mmorontuo unit committee will not be able to be closely in touch with its constituents communities]. Even community forums organise at Mmorontuo are not well attended. So, I didn't expect more people to attend the meeting in their numbers when this same people are invited for a forum at Juaben zonal council" (ibid).

It is evident therefore that organising the forum at the zonal council instead of the unit committee did not only leads to low attendance, but also that participants were not actively engaged to share their concerns.

Further, the chief of Dumakwai clearly stated that the decision to shift the venue of the forum from Mmorontuo to Juaben was a bad one because "It was one meeting I attended and at the end of the day did not know what exactly I took part in [..], we didn't come out with any plan; be it for the unit committee or zonal council. We ended the meeting with a list of needs and not a plan" (Interview on, 12/06/2015). Rhetorically, he goes on to ask, "[..], how could we be talking about zonal council plans when we didn't even prepare a unit committee plan? Which one comes first? [..]. He also told me in my interview with him that:

"Whatever the reasons might be, [..] you don't expect us to come out in our numbers when the venue [Mmorontuo] we have been using all this while is changed suddenly. [..] you think because we're yearning for development we will hold ourselves ready to attend meetings everywhere, no! [..] no wonder people did not attend in their numbers; for the whole Dumakwai community, I was the only participant" (Interviewed on: 12/06/2015).

Similarly, regarding how the implementation of the community forum at Juaben zonal council provided opportunity for active involvement of local citizens, a former assembly member of Mmorontuo stated that:

> "In the wisdom of those who designed the way and where planning should be practiced, knew that [..] active involvement of the people is more likely to occur at Mmorontuo than in Juaben. [..] you can't achieve open dialogue by ignoring the context or the location of such dialogue. [..], for me it was [mobilisation] by convenience; just to satisfy a regulatory requirement than bring us together to plan" (Interviewed on: 02/06/2015).

Interestingly, officials from the DPCU who supervised the community forum at Juaben zonal council that I interviewed did not contradict the above acclaims. In fact, the assistant municipal planning officer of EJMA admitted that "the forum, and indeed; the whole processes leading to the preparation DMTPs in 2014, was conducted in a rush; thus after several phone calls had been received from the RCC to submit the plan" (Interviewed on: 24/07/2015).

Considering the reasons and evidences following from organising the community forum at Juaben zonal council instead of Mmorontuo unit committee and the extent to which it provided a participatory decision-making site as presented in the analysis thus far, it may be argued that although, Mmorontuo unit committee interconnects with Juaben zonal council, the latter is not a substitute for the former. Attempt to substitute has led to compromise 'participatory' implementation of the community forum. What strikes most is that if community forum had not been held prior the forum at Juaben, it is unlikely to have priority community needs. Therefore, the fact that it was only the assembly member who had the opportunity to speak during the forum at Juaben zonal council suggests that what he presented could not be representative of the felt needs of Mmorontuo unit committee. This lends credibility to the claims made by the last respondent that the mobilisation of Mmorontuo unit committee at Juaben zonal council is more of fulfilling a planning mandate.

Given the foregoing evidences and analysis in this section, it can be seen that the context within which community forums were organised differed from unit committee to the other. It also appears that active participation in the community forums is contingent on the contextual factors operating at each unit committee. It can be argued that putting more emphasis on contextual factors of unit committee may turn participatory planning into delivering place-based strategies at the expense of broader and integrated perspective of district planning or strategies that transcend spatial boundaries. Next, I focus on public hearing as one of the mechanisms of participatory planning practice in Ghana.

5.2.5 Public Hearing

Public hearing is one of the important mechanisms in decentralised district planning in Ghana. However, with the exception of the public hearings at the district level, there was no evidence that public hearings were conducted at the unit committee and area/zonal council levels. The first source for me to check whether public hearings were actually organised was the appendix of the DMTDPs or the annual action plans (AAPs). As part of the requirement from the NDPC, the DPCU is expected to write a report on public hearings and attach it to the DMTDPs as appendix. However, as mentioned above, there was no documentation to that effect except the one covering the 'general assembly meeting'. Attempt was then made to find out from the DPCU the possible reasons for non-implementation of the public hearings at the unit committee level. The reasons given by the planning officers for ANDA and EJMA are not necessarily different from those noted under non-sensitisation of stakeholders in the previous section. That is, financial constraints and delay in the issuance of the NDPC planning guidelines. With regard to financial constraints, the DBO of ANDA stated in my interview with him that:

> "I have said this before [..] financing planning work, including public hearings, is a thorny issue. Though, we [the budget unit] prepare budgets to cover planning activities I cannot remember the last time money was released to organise public hearings. [..] it is not what we budget for that matters but what the authorisation officer [i.e. district chief executive] and the spending officer

[i.e. district coordinating director] deem to be essential is what matters. [..] if money is not released then we cannot organise planning activities, including public hearings" (Interviewed on: 23/04/2015).

Based on the above claim, it is believed that the effective organisation of public hearing does not only depend on the availability of funding, but also the readiness of district spending officers to release funds. Hence, the preparation of unit committee plans without subjecting them to public hearing. It appears that financial constraints which affected the implementation of public hearing may not only work against effective engagement of community members, but also affect planners' ability collect relevant information to plan. This view is explicit in the senior municipal planning officer of EJMA statement that:

"Lack of money to organise public hearings and to do planning work in general has made the planning profession a challenging one for me. [..] I know the importance of public hearing but money needed for the DPCU members to carry it out was not released. What hurt me most is that when the assembly [referring to the EJMA] fail to prepare and submit its plan on time, the regional coordinating council don't write to the assembly but to the planning officer. [..] when we failed to organised the hearings, [..] some people felt that we are not up to the task" (Interviewed on: 31/08/2015).

The municipal planning officer goes on to explain that:

"Our [i.e. the DPCU] inability to conduct public hearings before preparing the municipal plan had affected our ability to collect the relevant information, [..]. we may end up defining community problems so narrowly that we rule out the options communities believe need to be addressed. This makes it difficult to conduct effective participatory planning work" (ibid).

Hence, information gap may be created as a result of non-implementation of public hearings at the unit committee level. Also, it is evident that financial constraints may also constrain the implementation of public hearings or make it difficult to undertake planning work that is more inclusive. Hence, as Peterson (2012) have observed, lack of

funding becomes a hindrance to public participation in planning and as well undermine the ability of planners to mobilise stakeholders for planning work.

In terms of time as a constraining factor to organising public hearings, the senior district planning officer of ANDA claimed that, "apart from the time we [both the DPCU and local citizens] needed to commit to organising and participating in public hearings, the NDPC planning guidelines needed to be released on time. Unfortunately, the NDPC delayed in releasing the guidelines on time as required. I feel that the delay was partly responsible for non-implementation of public hearings. [..] we were in a rush to prepare and submit our plans to the regional coordinating council" (Interview, DPO of ANDA on, 28/05/2015).

Despite the important role public hearing was envisioned to play, particularly in providing information for planning work, it was not conducted. Similar to reasons for non-sensitisation discussed earlier, the main reasons cited for non-implementation of public hearings are related to financial constraints and delay in releasing the NDPC planning guidelines. This evidences share with earlier studies (CDD, 2014; Dotse *et al.,* 2010) conducted in Ghana. It can be argued that, for effective implementation of public hearing, and as corollary to effective participation, careful consideration must be given to the availability of resources, especially those of money and time.

5.3   Conclusion

In this chapter, I presented the analysis of the four case studies – Amanchia, Pasoro, Esaase and Mmorontuo unit committees – wherein three participatory mechanisms of unit committee level planning in Ghana have been applied. The chapter argues that effective implementation of mechanisms of participation matters in strengthening participatory local decision-making. These three participatory mechanisms which are central to participatory planning practice in Ghana include stakeholder sensitisation workshops, community forums and public hearings. The implementation of these mechanisms aims towards the preparation of ULPs. It was found that with the exception of community forum, none of these mechanisms had been implemented. I have then provided an account of the reasons for inability to organise stakeholder sensitisation

and public hearings, emphasising financial and time constraints, local political influence and delay in the issuance of NDPC planning guidelines. I have also showed the consequent impact of non-sensitisation and non-implementation of public hearings on active participation in planning. One relevant point that emerged from the case study accounts is that, in the face of such apparent neglect of stakeholder sensitisations and public hearings, effective involvement of unit committee level actors and the flow of relevant planning ideas and information between sub-district and district scales were undermined.

Next, the chapter discusses how constituents were mobilised for community forums and how this had shaped public participation in the preparation of unit committee plans. The specific situation of each unit committee within which constituents were mobilised can either facilitate or impede public participation in the community forums. For instance, it was found that while shifting the venue of the forum from chief palace to school park in Amanchia enhanced participation (amidst power struggle), shifting the venue from Mmorontuo unit committee to Juaben zonal council had compromised public participation. What is evident here is that enhanced participation (as in Amanchia) and compromised participation (as in Mmorontuo) in doing planning work occurred with limited focus on the intra-unit committee power relations, collaborations and interactions. This can affect the ability to mobilise actors internally and to harness their power to influence decisions at the district level.

I also demonstrate that besides issue of venue as a cause of low participation, participation bias, lack of facilitation and the feeling that participation makes no difference are fundamental, especially in Pasoro unit committee. Further, I highlighted in the case of Esaase unit committee that, community forums can be participatory if it is collaboratively organised by community leaders using the chief palace as a venue.

In the chapter that follows, I present the discussion and analysis of how unit committee level planning and plans that are produced through the implementation of the participatory mechanisms become integral part of the area/zonal council and district level plans.

Chapter 06

Planning Decision-Making Across Embedded Spatial Scales

6.1   Introduction

In the previous chapter, I presented and discussed how the implementation of three participatory mechanisms – stakeholder sensitisation workshops, community forums and public hearings – at Amanchia, Pasoro, Esaase and Mmorontuo unit committees shaped active involvement of local people in the preparation of unit committee level plans (ULPs). In this chapter, I build on the previous chapter by analysing how the ULPs were harmonised and prioritised into DMTDPs of the ANDA and EJMA. Also, using the MDSSC framework of analysis, I attempt to discuss the underpinning reasons for translating lower scale (unit committee) decisions into higher scale (district) decisions. That is, the dynamics of socio-spatialities of inter-scale planning decision-making at the district scale. I argue that in the search for the underlying reasons why planning decisions may interconnect across scales; much more effort is needed toward understanding inter-scalar decision-making relations and the embeddedness of such (scaled) relations. In addressing this argument, I explain how singular/plural sense of scale, scale jumping, power and socio-spatial networks of connection interact with the practice of harmonising and prioritising unit committee development needs in the ULPs into DMTDs and the basis for transferring decisions of the unit committee into district-wide decisions.

I begin this chapter by introducing and explaining the existing framework for harmonising and prioritising priority community needs in the ULPs into area/zonal priority needs (ALPs) and district medium term development plans (DMTDPs). Then, I provide a detailed account of the realities of how interactions at the unit committee scale flow through the area/zonal councils to the district assembly and focus on the quality of interaction in creating multi-scalar decision-making relationship. Thus, the chapter discusses how the harmonisation of plans has promoted a more integrated ways of doing planning work and decision-making. I then discussed the basis for translating decisions that are made at the unit committee scale to form an integral part of district-wide decisions.

6.2   Framework for harmonising ULPs, ALPs and MDTDPs

Decentralised district planning and the harmonisation of local government level plans in Ghana is a multi-layered structure (a socio-political relationship in which unit committees and sub-district councils engage in direct exchange with district level planners – see Ayee and Dickovick, 2010 –); starting from the unit committee scale through the area/zonal council to the district scale. As a multi-layered structure, plans prepared at the unit committee scale are supposed to be harmonised into area/zonal council plans and finally into district plans. In this context, though the unit committee is part of the multi-layered structure, it is not a layer for harmonising plans, but the preparation of plans – ULPs. In this section, I discuss the procedures put in place to make sure that ULPs are combined into area/zonal council and district plans. This will set the context to understand how far planning across the three scales – unit committee, area/zonal council (generally referred to as sub-district councils) and district – represent a coordinated and integrated approach to MMDAs' decision-making. I extend the discussion to also explore the process of plan approval. I mainly used documentary sources of information. Figure 6.1 illustrates how decentralised district planning and decision-making is designed to promote the harmonisation of plans across different scales of local government.
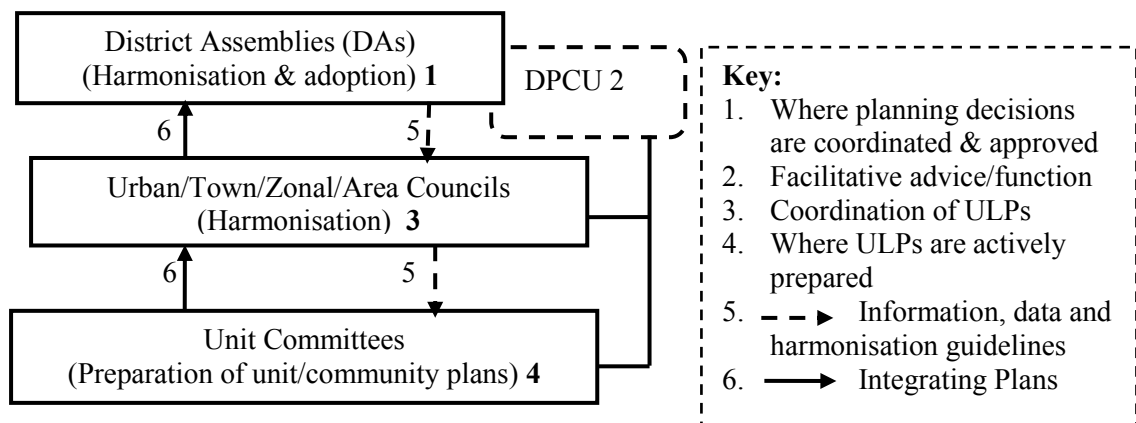
Figure 6.1: An overview of harmonisation of plans in decentralised district planning

(Source: Adjei-Fosu (2013), and data gathered from DPOs of ANDA and EJMA in the field)

The information presented in Figure 6.1 represents the way development needs and aspirations in ULPs, prepared at the unit committee (labelled as 4) can be harmonised into development needs of the sub-district (ALPS) and preferred development options in a district plan (DMTDP). The harmonisation and prioritisation of key development issues in the ULPs into those of the district (DMTDPs) starts from the area/zonal council to the district. At the area/zonal council, the DPCU, on behalf of the DAs collaborates and/or facilitates the harmonisation of key development needs in the ULPs into a set of prioritised area/zonal council needs. The priority needs are subsequently formulated into ALPs. A check list of information in the ALPs includes summary of all prioritised community needs submitted by the unit committees, parts of the area/zonal councils that are most deprived as well as their existing development potentials (NDPC 2013a). The aim of harmonising community needs and aspirations at the area/zonal council scale prior to harmonisation at the district scale is to ensure that development programmes of the districts reflect those of the area/zonal councils and their unit committees (ibid). Also, it aims at providing a uniform format for the harmonisation of ALPs at the district level into DMTDPs, and to ensure that the sphere of influence of a planned facility has adequate utilisation at the sub-district level (i.e. to avoid under-and-over utilisation) (NDPC, 2006).

6.2.1 Harmonisation and prioritisation at area/zonal scale

As mentioned earlier, local government planning in Ghana is multi-layered, wherein plans from the unit committee scale are combined and/or synthesised into ALPs and subsequently into DMTDPs. As noted before, the harmonisation exercise starts from the sub-district council scale and it aims at ensuring uniformity and adequate utilisation of development interventions. Secondly, harmonisation of ULPs at the sub-district council will help bring spatial thinking into the planning and distribution of development needs of all unit committees in a particular sub-district council area. In short, it helps to achieve equitable and balanced sub-district development. To guide the harmonisation and prioritisation exercise, the NDPC (2006, 2103a) had set out some procedures. The relevant sections of these procedures that need to be followed in harmonising and prioritising development needs of ULPs into prioritised area/zonal council needs include the following:

1. Prepare a list of the priority needs of all unit committees within the jurisdiction of the area/zonal council

2. As much as possible, the priority needs should be shortened by combining those that are the same or similar (and state them differently) into single statement.

3. Construction of a matrix showing the list of community needs in the first column, and the whole range of ranking of such needs in the first row. The NDPC recommends that priority needs per unit committee should not exceed six. As such, the ranking range from one (highly ranked) to six (lowly ranked).

4. The DPCU and area council assign weights to the ranked unit committee priority needs and indicate these weights under the corresponding ranks. Example, the DPCU and area council is expected to assign a weigh of six to highly ranked needs and one to lowly ranked needs.

5. For a given community/unit committee need, find the respective number of units committees that ranked such a need at each of the position. For example, in Nkawie/Toase area council, there are seven unit committees, and if we assume that provision of market is among their priority needs, we need to establish the number of units that have ranked it as 1st, 2nd, 3rd, 4th, etc.

6. The next activity is to calculate the weighted score of each need under each rank. This is done by multiplying the frequency for each rank by the weight assigned to that rank.

7. The total weight is then calculated for each need by summing up all the weighted scores calculated in step 6 under the heading 'total weighted score'.

8. Based on the results of step 7, all the needs under a given sub-district council are ranked in order of their total weighted scores to obtain prioritised needs of such a council and/or synthesised into a draft ALPs (or sub-district council plans).

The harmonisation and prioritisation exercise at the area/zonal council may be brought to a close by conducting public hearing to further discuss the results before a written submission is made to the DPCU in the form of a draft ALPs. As mentioned earlier in chapter 3 (also see appendix 3.1), by law (national development planning (system) Act, 1994, Act 480), plans prepared at the sub-district level are required to be subjected to

public hearing before such plans are adopted (see Local Government Service, 2016). Next, I will focus on harmonisation and prioritisation at the district scale.

6.2.2 Harmonisation and prioritisation at district scale

Following the harmonisation of development issues in the ULPs into prioritised needs in the ALPs, the DPCU then proceeds to harmonise and incorporate the latter (ALPs) into the DMTDPs at district scale. Similar to the area/zonal scale, harmonisation at the district scale aims to integrate and ensure that the development plans and projects of the district are compatible with each other and support national development objectives (NDPC, 2013a). This can be accomplished in two key ways – harmonisation and prioritisation. In this juncture a critical question is this: what is actually involved in harmonising and prioritising development needs of sub-district into preferred development options at the district?

a) Prescription for harmonisation

The harmonisation of priority needs in sub-district council plans into district-wide needs is also about the preparation of DMTDPs or district decision-making. According to Local Government Service (2016), the first activity of the decision-making process that the DPCU needs to embark on before community priority needs in the ALPs are harmonised into the DMTDPs is to establish the key development gaps/problems in the 'old' DMTDPs. This involves conducting a performance review meeting through the collaboration of DPCU (lead), decentralised departments, assembly members, councillors, parliamentarians, development partners, NGOs and beneficiary communities. Performance review seeks to solicit and provide stakeholders with information to make informed choice during the actual planning work (ibid).

Another reason is that, to ensure harmony in the plan preparation process and efficient resource allocation and utilisation, performance of previous DMTDP, based on thematic areas of national medium term development policy framework (NMTDPF) needs to be conducted and the outcome considered in current planning decisions (NDPC, 2013a). It is worthy to note that NMTDPF and it thematic focus is not developed by the NDPC, but rather national political leadership. As a result, it changes

with change in political leadership or regime. The existing NMTDPF, title: *Ghana shared growth and development agenda II* (GSGDA II) and its thematic areas informed the preparation of the 2014-2017 plans. Performance reviews by the DPCU in consultation with stakeholders, including sub-district councils and unit committees is conducted by focusing on the following (NDPC, 2006, 2013a):

- The extent of implementation of proposed programmes and projects with respect to whether they were (a) fully implemented, (b) partially implemented, (c) ongoing or (d) not implemented at all;
- The level of achievement of set goals, objectives and targets in relation to thematic areas of the NMTDPF;
- The reasons for any deviation that might be observed regarding implementation or set targets;
- Revenue and expenditure patterns of the district assembly; and
- Lessons learnt and their implications for current planning decisions.

The output of the above exercise includes performance status of the previous DMTDP, the application of funds to development programmes including the proportion of such funds allocated to sub-district programmes and projects and a list of identified key development gaps/problems. Further, the NDPC (2006, 2013a) recommends a set of activities or procedures that need to be undertaken after performance review. Key among them are the following:

1. Generate a list of identified key development gaps/problems derived from the review of performance of previous DMTDP and sub-district priority needs for each area/zonal council. In doing this, the geographical spread of the development issues should be taken into consideration (MLGRD 2010).
2. Establish criteria to score each of the sub-district need and identified key development gaps/issues in a scale of 0 – 2. The scoring should be done in relation to the following thematic areas of GSGDA II, namely (a) ensuring and sustaining macroeconomic stability (b) enhancing competitiveness of Ghana's private sector (c) accelerated agriculture modernisation and sustainable natural resources management (d) oil and gas development (e) infrastructure and human settlements (f) human development, productivity and employment (g) transparent and accountable governance (NDPC, 2013a).

3. Define the scale (i.e. 0 − 2) and explain how the scoring is done. As indicated in the NDPC (2013a) guidelines, the extent to which a given sub-district need or identified key development gap contributes towards the achievement (or otherwise) of the objectives of each thematic area of GSGDA II should be used to score and/or define their relationship. A score of 2 represents strong relationship, 1 represents weak relationship, while zero means no relationship.

4. Calculate the total scores by adding up the score of all sub-district needs and identified key development gaps under each thematic area and divide the answer by the total number of sub-district needs to obtain the average score.

5. Determine the harmony between sub-district needs and identified key development issues and the thematic areas using the criteria in step 3. A high average score means that there is a strong harmonious relationship between sub-district needs and identified key development gaps and the thematic areas while low score indicates weak relationship. An average score of zero means no relationship between the sub-district needs and identified key development gaps and the thematic areas. This calls for either a review of the sub-district needs and identified key development gaps (if possible), or taken out of the needs and development gaps or the district plan.

6. Generate a list of those needs and development gaps/issues that have strong or weak relationship with the thematic areas to arrive at adopted harmonised district needs/development issues for prioritisation.

Decentralised district departments are not only required to collaborate, among other stakeholder, with the DPCU in performance review of previous DMTDPs (as mentioned above), but also required to submit their plans to the DPCU to be incorporated into the district-wide plans (as noted in chapter 3). It is after step 6 is accomplished that the harmonisation exercise is conducted. Thus, before harmonised district development issues are prioritised, the DPCU, a coordinating unit of planning activities in the MMDAs, is charged by Act 480 of 1994 to coordinate plans of decentralised district departments so that the policies, strategies and programmes of such departments reflect the development focus of the MMDAs and/or the NMTDPF.

b) Prescription for prioritising harmonised adopted issues

The NDPC planning guidelines identified prioritisation of harmonised development issues as a critical planning activity. It focuses on ensuring fairness in the allocation and/or whether the allocation process strengthens the integration of the three spatial scales under consideration (Dotse *et al.,* 2010). Although, the NDPC shows that prioritisation of development issues and the final decision-making rest on the DPCU and the executive committee of the MMDAs (or involve a lot of 'desk work'), the outcome is open to stakeholder consultation for further discussion through public hearings at the sub-district level. For instance, the Local Government Service (2016) reports that the prioritisation exercise engages similar category of stakeholders in public consultation just as in performance review (as mentioned above).

Accordingly, the prioritisation of harmonised adopted issues should be conducted through consensus of all stakeholders under the following broad criteria, namely; prioritisation of adopted issues, prioritisation of issues in relation to spatial location and prioritisation of the opportunities for the promotion of cross-cutting issues (Local Government Service, 2016; NDPC 2013a).

The first – prioritisation of adopted issues – assesses and selects those most preferred harmonised development issues that should be given priority attention in the plans. This is guided by four main considerations; the extent to which particular harmonised identified issues may affect the life of large proportion of the citizens, its multiplier effect on the district economy, its linkage effect on meeting basic rights/needs and the extent to which it addresses inequality. The second criterion, prioritisation of spatial issues, involves paying careful attention to the spatial location of development interventions and investments partly to help bridge rural-urban disparities and to ensure equal access to public goods and services. That is to say, in prioritising the harmonised adopted issues, spatial implications must be brought to bear in selecting particular communities/unit committees as beneficiaries of planned interventions. The third criterion, prioritisation of the opportunities for the promotion of cross-cutting issues, brings to the attention the need to select harmonised development issues that touches on multiple sectors of society. For instance, prioritisation that is sensitive to population

issues, gender equality, environmental concerns, health issues, etc (NDPC, 2006, 2013a).

The outcome of these exercises is captured as a list of prioritised issues including cross-cutting issues and/or their spatial dimensions (NDPC, 2006). Again, the prioritised issues need to be further refined by subjecting them to further analysis by the DPCU. A major step that is taken to achieve this is through the analysis of the potentials and opportunities, constraints and challenges (POCC) or assessment of the strength, weaknesses, opportunities and threats (SWOT) of the prioritised issues with respect to the thematic areas of the GSGDA II (Local Government Service, 2016). Based on this a refined prioritised issues are compiled by the DPCU in collaboration with executive committee. In its recent guidelines on decentralised development planning, the NDPC (2013a) laid emphasis on spatial dimensions of DMTDPs and had accordingly charged the DPCU, led by district planning officer and physical planning officer to further analyse the spatial implications emanating from the refined prioritised development issues to arrive at preferred development options. As I shall discuss later, the DPCU is required to coordinate and formulate the preferred development options into the first draft plans (or DMTDPs) and forward it to the executive committee through the planning sub-committee for consideration. The MMDAs, through the DPCU is expected to conduct public hearings at the sub-district level and consider views expressed by the public before a general assembly meeting is organised for approval and adoption.

6.2.3   The approval of the draft plan

Another important exercise that needs to be undertaken before the MMDAs' plan can become a working document is to subject it to public approval. According to NCG and DEGE (2007), the final approval authority of the DMTDPs at the district level is the general assembly through a public hearing (see also Figure 6.2). While public hearings at the sub-district level are vital for promoting community participation in the planning process, using public hearings to approve DMTDPs at the MMDAs level represent the official climax of community participation in decision-making (NDPC, 2006). Potential participants of the latter public hearings and/or those involved in the approval of

DMTDPs include assembly members, traditional authorities, MMDCEs, opinion leaders (both men and women), decentralised district departments, member(s) of parliament, media, civil society, NGOs, etc (Local Government Service 2016). With regard to public hearings on the draft DMTDPs at the sub-district level, the aim is to give opportunity to local stakeholders to verify as well as be updated on their priority issues in the plan after further analysis had been done by the DPCU (ibid).

Following that (the public hearings) the DPCU incorporates public concerns, prepares a second draft of the plan and forwards it to the executive committee through the planning sub-committee (see chapter 3 for details on executive committee and planning sub-committee). As mentioned in chapter 3, because the planning sub-committee supervises the exploitation of MMDAs' resources, its core input into the plan before submitting it to the executive committee is to conduct an assessment of the plan based on the overall potentials and constraints of the MMDA in terms of the availability (or otherwise) of resources required to implement the plan. The resulting output after carrying out any amendments that may arise from this assessment is passed on to the executive committee for consideration (Botchie, 2000).

| Draft MMDA plan (DMTDP) submitted by DPCU | → | Planning sub-committee of the MMDA | → | Executive committee discuss & submit to general assembly | → | General assembly approves MMDA plan (DMTDP) |
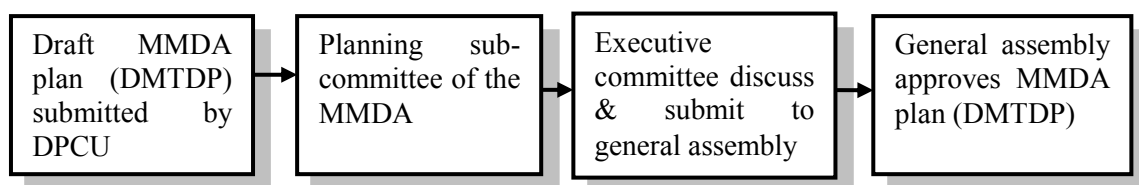
Figure 6.2: Approval process of MMDAs plan (DMTDP)

(Source: Developed by Author with data gathered from the DPOs of ANDA & EJMA)

Ideally, the executive committee, which constitute key political leadership of the MMDAs, give strategic and political direction to the draft plan (NCG and DEGE, 2007). Following any amendments that the executive committee may carry out, the draft plan is presented for further discussions at a general meeting of the MMDAs, known as general assembly (Crawford, 2010). Such meetings are convened and chaired by the presiding member of the MMDAs. Although in principle the general assembly is designated as the approval authority of the MMDAs' decision, it is argued that the final decisions (or executive decision-making) on proposals, initiatives and plans are made

by the executive committee, chaired by the MMDCEs (Banful, 2009; Appiah *et al.,* 2000). Although, several projects may be captured in the draft plans, the decision to approve such projects by the general assembly need to fall within the projected MMDAs' budgets (Botchie, 2000; Crawford, 2005). If approval is given, and/or if views expressed during public consultation are addressed, the plan becomes the development blue print of the MMDAs (NDPC, 2013a; Local Government Service, 2016). Through the unit committee and/or assembly member, information on the approved plan is communicated back to beneficiary communities.

However, there is evidence that, the executive committee which play an important role in the approval of draft DMTDPs seem to be less effective. As reported by NCG and DEGE (2007), the issue of lack of skills on the part of the executive committee and its various sub-committees (particularly those in less endowed districts) appears to undermine their ability to undertake thorough assessment of the draft plans prior to the general assembly meeting. In this context, it is only few influential members who assess the plans; pushing forward what is politically expedient rather than taking options that will maximise community interests (Botchie, 2000).

The foregoing discussion of the prescriptive framework of harmonising and prioritising development needs/issues from the bottom (unit committee) to the top (district) provides the context within which ULPs of Amanchia, Pasoro, Esaase and Mmorontuo unit committees are to combine with ULPs of other constituent unit committees of Nkawie/Toase area council, Akropong area council, Anum River zonal council and Juaben zonal council respectively to form ALPs and DMTDPs. It is also noted that the two scales where harmonisation and prioritisation are expected to be carried out are the area/zonal and district. Moreover, it is shown in the above that in addition to organising public hearings on the draft DMTDP, the area/zonal scale is a site for harmonising community development needs in the ULPs. The picture painted here is the existence of different spatial scales whose interactions are spatially distributed but with connected actors and social relations (at least for harmonising plans). This constitutes a coalition of 'unit-council-district' scalar relations of planning decision-making. Because of this overlap, harmonisation at one scale is influenced by action at other scales. Accordingly,

the effectiveness of planning decision-making at one scale depends on how it relates to action and interaction at other scales.

Given the above context, and using the Multi-Dynamic Socio-Spatial Connectivity (MDSSC) framework of analysis, in the sections that follow, I present and analyse in detail the socio-spatial and embedded social relations through which priority community needs and/or priority area/zonal council needs were harmonised and prioritised into district-wide plans at ANDA and EJMA. Before the above framework is applied, I first establish whether priority development needs/issues of the case unit committees (captured in the ULPs) were actually harmonised into sub-district priority needs and preferred development options at the sub-district and district scales respectively, and how it happened.

6.3   Realities of Harmonisation and Prioritisation

As mentioned earlier, the two key ways ULPs and ALPs and the priority development needs/issues can ladder onto DMTDPs are harmonisation and prioritisation. The NDPC, the coordinating body of decentralised development planning, provides elaborate processes for harmonisation and prioritisation as shown above. Although, it appears from the study that development needs and aspirations in the ULPs were incorporated into the DMTDPs, this mainly took place at the district scales of ANDA and EJMA. That is, in practice the sub-district scales and/or stakeholders of Nkawie/Toase, Akropong, Anum River and Juaben were not mobilised for the harmonisation and prioritisation exercise.

In an interview with the senior planning officer of EJMA, it was revealed that though community needs in the ULPs were not harmonised into zonal plans at the zonal level, public hearings were conducted on the draft DMTDP in five out of the nine zones (see chapter 3). He further acknowledged that Anum River and Juaben zonal councils were not part of the five. The main reason he cited was that because of time and financial constraints, the DPCU decided to organise public hearings for only zones in which majority of the ULPs seem to have serious discrepancies (in terms of deviating from the format of the NDPC guidelines) and had to be modified before incorporating them

into the DMTDP (Interviewed on, 27/07/2015). It therefore follows that those unit committees prepared their plans without the needed information or sensitisation. This gives credibility to an earlier claim in chapter 5 that non-sensitisation could affect the scope of information and the ability of actors to shape the actual planning process.

The following comments support the planning officer's view that development needs in ULPs of Esaase and Mmorontuo were not harmonised at the zonal council scales, neither were public hearings conducted on the draft DMTDPs at Anum River and Juaben councils after harmonised development issues were prioritised at EJMA.

> "[..] at the request of the planning officer, our plan was passed on to Ejisu [the municipal capital] straight. [..] no zonal-wide harmonisation was carried or neither were we [community stakeholder and councillors] invited anywhere for planning work, [..] I know public hearings had been conducted in some zones. I was thinking that the DPCU would invite all the unit committees in our zone [referring to Anum River] to join the people of Bomfa-Adumasa zonal council [a nearby zone where public hearing was conducted]" (Interviewed with assembly member of Esaase on: 09/06/2015).

It is clear from the above that, although priority development issues/needs of the case unit committees (captured in the ULPs) may have been harmonised and prioritised with those of other constituent units into zonal and/or municipal priority development needs of EJMA, attempts were not made to engage with the Anum River and Juaben zonal council spaces, or invite key actors at the district. This suggests that harmonisation was not only district-focused, but also that public consultations at the sub-district councils were not conducted.

In a similar sense, respondents from ANDA claimed that the harmonisation and prioritisation of community priority needs into area council priority needs as well as organising public consultation meeting on the draft DMTDP at the sub-district scale (Nkawie/Toase and Akropong area councils) were shifted to the district scale. An interview with the chairman of Nkawie/Toase area council revealed that, he could not

remember the last time unit committee priority needs in the ULPs were harmonised and prioritised into Nkawie/Toase area council priority needs or Amanchia unit committee was mobilised at Nkawie to discuss draft district plan (Interviewed on 31/08/2015). He further claimed that, "I cannot hide the information on harmonisation of our plan from you [referring to the interviewer], if indeed it has been conducted here [i.e. the council]. [..] what I can confirm is that we [referring to councillors] were mobilised alongside assembly and unit committee members at district capital to harmonise our plans" (ibid).

It is evident from the above statements that, although Nkawie/Toase and Akropong area councils were skipped in the harmonisation process, sub-district level stakeholders (primarily councillors and elected community leaders) were mobilised for the harmonisation exercise in Nkawie. Although, this attempt appears to have mobilised the interaction of some stakeholders from the sub-district structures, the fact still remain that the harmonisation process have ignored the sub-district council spaces and their scalar relations. Considering the procedures to be followed in accordance with relevant framework for harmonising unit and council level development needs, as noted above, district-focused harmonisation or substituting the district scales of ANDA and EJMA for the case sub-district council scales in the harmonisation process can be argued to have not adhered to the prescribed procedure in practice. As noted above, the sub-district councils have been skipped in both ANDA and EJMA, but the strategies deployed to implement district-focused harmonisation differ between the two. Next, I will focus on the strategies that were deployed to undertake district-focused harmonisation and how they affected scalar relations between the unit, council and the district.

6.3.1 Harmonisation as scalar strategy in EJMA

The strategy deployed to implement district-focused harmonisation is a critical dimension to be examined in order to unpack the dynamic of multi-scalar relationships between the three scales at hand. It is important, in the context of this analysis, to consider district-focused harmonisation effects – a change in the harmonisation process and change in the outcome brought about by shifting the focus of the process from the

sub-district council scale. In terms of the scalar strategies[17] that were used to harmonise community priority needs in the ULPs in EJMA, it was evident in a focus group discussion I organised at EJMA that participants from the sub-district structures had no clear idea as to what exactly took place. A former assembly member of Mmorontuo electoral area who is also an agriculture extension officer and a member of the DPCU claimed that:

> "In principle, I don't fault the *honourable* [referring to Esaase assembly member]; we [all members of the DPCU] are not only expected to know what steps were taken, but be involved in designing such steps. [..] as I speak, [..] at least, on behalf of my department [agriculture], we were not consulted, except that Mr. Ohene Gyan [the senior planning officer of EJMA] invited us to present our plans [department of agriculture]. [..] I can confidently say that we didn't know the content of community plans, [..] or the way they were inputted into district plans" (Interviewed on: 28/08/2015).

In response to the above claim of the former assembly member, an assistant municipal planning officer of EJMA who also took part in the focus group discussion stated that:

> "It is true; we [referring to the planning department] didn't involve all members of the DPCU [..]. It was not a deliberate attempt to exclude other members; if we didn't do that, we wouldn't have been able to put together all the community plans, [..] we were behind time. So, what we did was to call few people together; myself, one other assistant planner, my boss [referring to senior planner] and 3 members of the development planning sub-committee to translate community needs into DMTDP" (Interviewed on: 28/08/2015).

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[17] Scalar strategies entails multidimensional socio-spatial processes through which strategic cross-scale relations are built and articulated; a type of spatiality that can bring together networks of specific sites and spatially boundless multiple intersections (see Matusitz, 2010).

Further, with regard to how district-focused harmonisation operated at Ejisu (the headquarters of EJMA), a senior planning officer of EJMA remarked that, "though we did not engage with the councils in harmonising community plans into district plans, we ensured that all the unit committee plans were harmonised into zonal plans first, [..] and later into district-wide plans. [..] we did not necessarily change any development needs or projects in the community plans in the course of harmonising them. Nothing really changed. [..] I heard some of the participants at the group meeting saying that because we [the DPCU] have bypassed the councils or didn't organise public hearings [..] we are not giving the councils room to operate. It's not true. [..] we did not bypass the councils in an attempt to make them powerless or enhance their capability" (Interviewed on, 03/09/2015).

Considering the comment by the planning officer, it can be argued that district-focused harmonisation of community plans into DMTDP did not pay careful attention to the differential scalar positioning of social groups and actors. Given the above evidence, it can be seen that incorporating ULPs into DMTDP at the district without the knowledge and input of sub-district actors raise a note of scepticism with regard to connecting actors and their constituted decision-making spaces. This claim seems to be supported by earlier evidence that under district-focused harmonisation, local stakeholder did not know how it was carried out and that only a handful of DPCU members were actually mobilised. I want to explore this further by examining whether or not the district-focused harmonisation operated as planning within multi-tiered units of spatialised social interactions. Next, I focus on politics of scale in the singular and plural senses and analyse how it shaped the connectedness (or otherwise) of the unit, council and district.

a) Singular/plural senses of scale in harmonisation in EJMA

The central concern here is to account for how the internal and the constituted relations of Anum River and Juaben zonal councils and EJMA within district-focused harmonisation unfolded. As I mentioned earlier, harmonisation at the sub-district and district scales are informed by separate procedures. As far as the multi-layered structure of harmonisation is concerned, these two scales have their internal politics or relations

as well as constituted ones. Unlike Brenner (2001) who suggests that socio-spatial politics or social organisation within a relatively bounded spatial unit and those within orderings and hierarchies among geographical scales denote singular and plural dimensions of politics of scale respectively, evidence from EJMA shows that in the district-focused harmonisation these two approaches (singular and plural) operated simultaneously. It was pointed out that members of the planning sub-committee who took part in the harmonisation are also elected members of their respective electoral areas. Their involvement was interpreted to mean that the process could be laden with politics that are both internal to EJMA as well as constitutive of other lower scales represented by such members. For instance, the zonal council chairman of Juaben stated that:

> "Though, the unit and council scales were not engaged with harmonisation, [..] all the members of the planning sub-committee who were involved are elected members of their electoral areas. [..] they are not just members of the committee [..] they also represent their people at the assembly. There is no doubt that their actions would be driven by politics that is not specific or confined to the district only [..]; priority needs in their electoral area could be given special attention" (Interviewed on: 02/06/2015).

A similar narrative by the assembly member of Esaase appears to maintain the same claim that the planning sub-committee members who were part of the team that undertook the harmonisation demonstrate that particular zonal councils interconnect with EJMA than others. He stated that:

> "I know that harmonisation took place at Ejisu [the municipal capital], but within Ejisu town, we have [Ejisu] zonal council and three unit committees [..] so I am talking about three different scales here. [..] I will not say that no zonal council was involved in the harmonisation directly [..] look the chairman of the planning sub-committee who took part is also an assembly member in Ejisu. Yes the physical space of Ejisu zone may not be mobilised, but indirectly it was constitutively involved. [..] though place-based, yet connected to Ejisu zonal council or even the unit committee" (Interviewed on: 09/06/2015).

With regard to the involvement of planning sub-committee members, who are also assembly members and how this could bring together bounded and constituted socio-spatial relations in the district-focused harmonisation, the senior planning officer's views suggest that this did not take central command. He claimed that:

> "[..] the analysis [harmonisation and prioritisation] we conducted at Ejisu was more sensitive to the interrelationship among various communities and zones [..] the whole municipal area was our focus. I don't think there could be any exercise call harmonisation if communities did not prepare plans [..] and I don't also believe that the process was coloured by politics or directed by the desire to please certain political figures and their constituents. [..] some politicians would want to take advantage [..] that we can be certain of, particularly during the implementation of the district plans. Because we were unable to engage the Anum and Juaben zones doesn't mean that the analysis was insensitive or not open to lower tiers' issues" (Interviewed on: 31/08/2015).

Considering the first two comments, there is a mention of some participants (especially the planning sub-committee members) having more extensive inter-scalar relations because their interest or influence cut across the three scales – unit, council and district. As a result, the community needs of the particular unit committees they represent could flow to the district (or EJMA). In contrast, the third comment seems to suggest that district-focused harmonisation was approached as intertwined scaled process among the three scales. This seems to resonate with Brenner's (2001) plural notion of politics of scale noted earlier. In the light of the foregoing analysis, it can be argued that though there appears to be interplay of the singular and plural readings of politics of scale, effects of the latter on the harmonisation of ULPs into DMTDP may be difficult to discern, partly because multi-tiered scalar relations across the three scales are difficult to express under district-focused harmonisation in EJMA. Next, I focus on how bypassing the sub-district council scales of Anum River and Juaben zones to harmonise ULPs at EJMA constitute an action of scale jumping.

b) Harmonisation with scale jumping in EJMA

There is ambiguity as to whether the harmonisation exercise that completely avoided the Anum River and Juaben zones and local actors was exactly a moment of scale jumping, which Smith (1992) claim is a useful way to mobilising and addressing the interconnectedness of socio-political relations of different spatial scales. Following Swyngedouw's (2010) view that scale jumping occurs whenever social actors or social processes shift from one spatial scale to another, one may argue that shifting the harmonisation exercise from Anum River and Juaben zonal councils to EJMA could be described as scale jumping strategy. But Jonas (1994) also reminds us that, as a mechanism of stretching and contracting social processes and interactions across space, scale jumping strategy operates in two ways: on one hand, higher scale actors may use scale jumping to contract and confine social processes to a manageable scale, and on the other, it may be deployed by lower scale actors to mobilised themselves to resist oppression by harnessing their power at a higher scale. In Chettiparamb's (2005) view, distance between the lower and higher scales becomes important factor to consider in trying to find solution to 'local' problems at the 'global' scales.

While the first interpretation of Jonas is somewhat similar with jumping the Anum River and Juaben zonal councils to harmonise community needs in ULPs into DMTDP in the sense of contracting scalar relations, the second interpretation appears not to have a link with the district-focused harmonisation that took place at EJMA. Clearly, this cannot be read as pursuit of politic of scale that allows unit committees and zonal councils to stretch out their social and political spaces to influence the harmonisation process. As shown below, some respondents believe that there is no way local networks of place-based politics could be mobilised in the absence of sub-district scale actors, or when harmonisation did not operate through scalar relations of Anum River and Juaben zonal councils. For example, Juaben zonal council chairman stated that:

> "I don't think that bypassing Anum and Juaben zonal councils was a move to build coalition of network of relations; relation between the unit, council and the district. This may be true elsewhere but not in the case of Anum and Juaben zonal councils. [..] when it comes to planning work in general, we [councillors]

have limited options in terms of mobilising actors at the assembly level [i.e. EJMA]. [..] the issue is what and who were we supposed to mobilise at Ejisu, when we don't have access to unit committee plans in the first place" (Interviewed on: 03/09/2015).

Moreover, the unit committee chairman of Esaase stated in my interview with him that, "we [referring to unit committee stakeholders] were requested by the planning officer to submit our plan to the assembly [..] and we acted upon that. It was not something we decided to do on our own [..]. [..] the plan only represents our aspirations but could not be a substitute for our involvement in harmonisation. [..] I will not say that by simply responding to the official request we were engaged in organising ourselves across the boundaries of Anum River zonal council; not at all" (Interview, unit committee chair, Esaase, 02/07/2015).

One of the other reasons that appear to suggest that district-focused harmonisation in EJMA may not be much of a scalar strategy to jump the zonal council scale is the claim by a former assembly member of Mmorontuo that:

> "Although, there seems to be an institutionalised approach for persons or group of persons who might be affected in matters relating to planning to complain and/or mobilise support at the district, region etc.. to advance their interest [..], it is really cumbersome. [..] during my tenure as assembly member, I tried to mobilise support at Ejisu and Kumasi to stop one mining company from polluting our water bodies [..] I am yet to receive a response. It has never been easy on our part [i.e. lower scale actors] to link-up with, [..] to pursue or get our issues addressed at a more higher institutional levels" (Interviewed on; 02/06/2015).

Considering the above claims in relation to district-focused harmonisation as reminiscent of scale jumping between Anum River and Juaben zonal councils and EJMA, it can be argued that the process did not only fail to deal with harmonisation as scaled form of scalar relations; but also tended to assign privilege position to the district (EJMA) scale at the expense of the sub-district scales. This does not only illustrate

power differential between the district scale of EJMA and other lower scales, but also appears to suppress the mobilisation of socio-political resistance by the latter against the former. The scale jumping literature highlights that effort at creating scaled alliances to escape, resist or control domineering scalar relations has a decisive role to play in shaping the relative socio-spatial power positions of actors (Swyngedouw, 2000, 2010; Delaney, 1997). This brings us to one question which forms the crux of the following section: how did district-focused harmonisation context shape the socio-spatial power relations of district and sub-districts actors?

c) Bringing power into harmonisation of plans in EJMA

As mentioned before, in trying to harmonise unit committee/community level plans into DMTDPs, the district planning authority (through the DPCU) skipped the zonal council scales. Apart from the uneven effect of substituting EJMA for Anum River and Juaben zonal councils on actors, it also constituted a shift with varying power relations over people and places as well as differential access to district-focused harmonisation space – Ejisu. As argued by some theorists of scale (Swyngedouw, 1997, 2010; Smith, 1992; Leitner, 1997) one of the major consequences of shift in scales of socio-spatial interaction is a shift in power relations; a shift which tends to strengthen the power and control of some while others are disempowered. Leitner, in particular shows that in engaging with scales across mutually inclusive political territories, power operates in three key ways: the 'where' (where power is located and exercised), the 'scope' (the geographical scope of power) and the 'which' (which political power should be exercised in such geographical spaces).

In the case of EJMA, evidence from my interviews show that there are varying interpretations of the relationship between district-focused harmonisation and socio-spatial power relations (in terms of the locale and scope of power). While one view claims that even under district-focused harmonisation power still resides with the case zonal councils, another view emphasises that limiting the harmonisation exercise to Ejisu did not cede power to actors at the sub-district level. The municipal planning officer of EJMA told me in a face-to-face interview with him that, "no serious planner would deny that the zonal councils have power of their own. [..] the councils are

supposed to serve as a liaison between unit committees and the assembly [i.e. EJMA]. I am not sure that shifting the harmonisation venue to Ejisu was intended or is the same thing as shifting the councils' power; no, it is not. [..] it was not an agenda to take over the responsibilities of the councillors [..] we were just interested in getting the plans [i.e. ULPs] integrated." (Interview, planning officer – EJMA, 31/08/2015).

In addition, a planning sub-committee chairman of EJMA, who claim to have been involved in the harmonisation of community development needs in the ULPs into development focus in the DMTDP, claimed that:

> [..] all the zonal councils in EJMA provide focal setting for social action [..]; effective level for managing community-driven planning work. [..] though, the councils may differ in term of the capacity to perform planning functions, the system allows unit committees, zonal councils and districts to play specific roles in an inclusive manner [..]. To me, this is one route to distributing power [..] at least, this was the assumption. [..] if lack of time had made the DPCU to carry out harmonisation functions at Ejisu in 2014, it does not mean that the zonal councils power had been circumvented" (Interviewed on: 03/09/2015).

However, a contrasting view, which share conviction with Swyngedouw (2000) is that, the spatial scale over which the EJMA could exercise its plan harmonisation functions also signifies the scope of its capacity to control other lower scales (in this case Esaase and Mmorontuo unit committees and Anum River and Juaben zonal councils). The assembly member of Mmorontuo claimed that although, issues discussed at the district-based harmonisation may include felt needs of communities, questions about how community and zonal level actors shared in the intricate power relations and the expanse of this relations remained unanswered (Interviewed on, 02/06/2015). He further claims that, "the politics of harmonisation is a political project, [..] a project infused with all sort of power play. [..] to have one's voice heard, I mean, benefits come through interactive engagement and exchange of ideas both within and across all these places [referring to the three scales at hand]" (ibid).

It is evident from the above claim that though multiple arenas for plan harmonisation may be put in place, attempts to centralise harmonisation in Ejisu is simultaneously an arena in which particular power dominates. That is, district-focused harmonisation has the tendency to confine the socio-spatial power relations to the centre, in this case, EJMA. Meanwhile, a municipal director of health – EJMA – who is a member of the DPCU, a unit which performs planning functions of the EJMA, revealed that this issue of confining power relations to EJMA (or DPCU) may not apply to all members of the DPCU even at the district scale. His reason is that:

> "harmonisation was not something that was used to forge intra-scaled power relation in the DPCU [..] there are issues with the DPCU operating as a unified body. [..] I am a member of the DPCU, but I wasn't invited for harmonisation. [..] no representation from the municipal health directorate was involved. I was only given a copy of the draft plan after harmonisation. The DPCU is noted for keeping planning activities [including harmonisation] to the planning department of the assembly" (Interviewed on: 27/07/2015).

From the foregoing analysis, it appears that exclusive application of the harmonisation project at the district scale of EJMA had the tendency to exclude socio-spatial power relations that are both internal and external to EJMA and its sub-district councils of Anum River and Juaben as well as the case unit committees. This coupled with the claim that jumping the sub-district council scale assigns privileged position to the district (EJMA) scale at the expense of the sub-district scales, makes it imperative to analyse how the district scale had mobilised scalar networks of interactive relations across the scales at hand to harmonise ULPs into DMTDPs.

d) Harmonising of scalar networks of connection in EJMA

Why does it matter to understand whether EJMA and its sub-district structures are relationally connected or not? In fact, the argument is made from the politics of scale literature that one useful way we can inform our understanding of multi-scalar policy processes involves the ability to organise and balance actors' power relations which stretch beyond different tiers/scales (Bulkeley, 2005; Cox, 1998). Central to this view

is the point that scale only make sense in relation to other scales (Agnew, 1997) and to govern and realise the flow and achievement of place-specific interests, actors need to construct networks of socio-spatial and political relations with other places (Cox, 1998; Leitner, 2004).

However, in the cases under consideration here, it appears that similar argument on the need to approach politics of scale as 'networked of spaces' may not apply. Because evidence from my interview revealed that both district and sub-district level actors who were involved in my study believe that though, the inter-scalar relations between and among the unit committees, zonal and district scale can be conceived to embody relational networks that stretches across them, the extent to which this happened in practice is hard to fetch. For example, a former assembly member of Mmorontuo electoral area stated that:

> "[..] the description I would give to the way harmonisation was conducted without engaging with actors at Juaben zonal council as building network of seclusion [..]. I mean, the harmonisation was conducted in an exclusive venue [Ejisu]. [..] limiting the harmonisation task to Ejisu also impose a limit on how we could act as actors in multiple scaled networks. [..] network formation [from the unit committee to the district] depends on one's ability to navigate power structures, but actors need to be mobilised first. It is obvious that because we were not part of it [harmonisation] I cannot see how networks of relations could operate [..] or flow to and fro Ejisu" (Interviewed on: 02/06/2015).

In sum, in the above, I have shown how district-focused harmonisation of ULPs into DMTDPs shaped multi-scalar processes and relations between the unit, council and the district. It was found that the politics of district-focused harmonisation did not operate as planning within scaled and relational scales mainly because it (a) assigns privileged position to the district (EJMA) scale at the expense of the sub-district scales, (b) tends to pay less attention to how socio-spatial power relations (both internal and external to EJMA) could shape the harmonisation process, and (c) that actors and/or harmonisation

were not organised on the basis of their socio-spatial network of relationship, particularly between Ejisu and the zonal councils of Anum River and Juaben.

Having illustrated how district-focused harmonisation had attempted to shape and inform the mobilisation of scalar processes and actors' power and network relations in EJMA, the following section explores how the work of district-focused harmonisation was performed through the socio-spatial practices of scale jumping, socio-spatial power and networks of social relations in ANDA.

6.3.2 Harmonisation as scalar strategy in ANDA

As mentioned earlier, although, the sub-district council scale of Nkawie/Toase and Akropong in the ANDA were also skipped in the harmonisation and prioritisation process, the approach taken appears to be different. Thus, unlike EJMA where community inputs and/or inputs from the expanded DPCU was not sought, in the case of ANDA, at least representatives from Amanchia and Pasoro unit committees and some members of the Nkawie/Toase and Akropong area councils were invited to take part in harmonising the ULPs into ALPs, and into the DMTDP in 2014. This was decided under the directive of a new district planning officer, and it appears to be a new way of mobilising and engaging with sub-district councils at Nkawie (the capital of ANDA) to undertake harmonisation work. As stated by the assembly member of Amanchia, "we all know how the previous planning officer will come around with one or two other officers to explain to us [community stakeholders] [..] the defining features for harmonisation. [..] sometimes they will not involve us at all [..]; they don't used to invite us to the district assembly to discuss anything about our plan before general assembly meeting" (Interviewed on: 18/08/2015).

The planning sub-committee chairman of ANDA claimed that although the choice to mobilise community representatives at Nkawie was DPO's decision, the district planning team (or DPCU) had given its full support because; "there were no other options to engage with the people at their respective area councils within the time left for us to submit our DMTDP to RCC" (Interview on, 18/08/2015). Considering this view, I wanted to explore further, the strategies that were used in mobilising and

organising actors for the district-focused harmonisation. Both in a focus group discussion and during a face-to-face interview with the senior district planning officer (DPO) of ANDA, he explained that:

> "I consider the effectiveness of the task involved in planning across different tiers as a practical question; its realisation is based on how the [..] process and actors are constituted. [..] we needed to operate across the various communities and area councils [..] but I realised that we could not accomplish this within the time frame by dealing with each council separately. In this occasion, I grouped the six area councils into three [..] and quickly arranged for local political actors [key community leaders] to be invited to Nkawie to incorporate community plans into the DMTDP. [..] in all we used three days to do that; two councils per day" (Interviewed on: 11/08/2015).

When I asked the DPO to further explain the strategies that were deployed to undertake harmonisation after local stakeholders had been mobilised at Nkawie, he stated that:

> "[..] the first thing was to treat each area council as a separate political unit; we did the harmonisation area council by area council [..] that is very important. We were able to come out with area level plans for each council. [second] we attempted to incorporate these plans or the key development issues into the district policy framework. [..] here, it was more of illustration of what issues needed/not needed to be harmonised [..]. We dealt with the rest in the office. [..] but let me point out that, by organising the meeting in Nkawie does not mean that the area councils are not relevant" (ibid).

Considering the evidence presented above, particularly by the DPO, it appears that though, the area councils of Nkawie/Toase and Akropong were not engaged in the harmonisation process, they were not taken for granted. Next, I focus on how district-focused harmonisation operated and/or how the process was tied to the idea of singular or plural dimensions of politics of scale.

a) Singular/plural senses of scale in harmonisation in ANDA

District-focused harmonisation and the strategies adopted by the DPCU through which community needs in the ULPs are incorporated into DMTDP of ANDA affects how scale may be deployed as bounded or embedded multi-tiered spatial units. In this section, I focus on this aspect – whether the process of district-focused harmonisation was contained in ANDA (the district scale) or was sensitive to inter-scalar relations of the case unit committees, area councils and district. At the outset, it has to be noted that my interviews reveal that respondents, particularly those who took part in the harmonisation process, believe that the analysis focused more on the plural notion of scale. However, unlike Brenner (2001) who conceives socio-spatial contestation among multiple scales and their changing relations as plural dimensions of politics of scale, respondents assign meaning to it (plural scale) in different terms. Notable among them is the thinking that plural scales are defined by how they enable groups of people advance their claims. The unit committee chairman of Pasoro, in particular claimed that:

> "There is nothing wrong with the processes of harmonisation that are working at all centres [unit committee, area council and district], but I strongly believe that the appropriate unit for addressing issues of harmonisation is not fixed. It could be at Akropong or Nkawie. [..] the process matter [..], the way and manner harmonisation occurred at Nkawie yielded different results and this [results] spread across the communities. [..] what is important is the degree to which the processes are open to all the participants [..] or are relevant and connected to their demands" (Interview on: 19/08/2015).

Moreover, there is the view that the intention for shifting and mobilising actors at the district (or ANDA) could help define whether scale was deployed in the singular or plural sense. Seemingly influenced by this, the presiding member of ANDA stated that:

> "When it comes to planning and coordination of plans, the district and its sub-district institutions overlaps, but it is the state apparatuses [such as DPCU] that work to make this happen. [..] venue [Nkawie] should not just be considered as [..] a plane at which harmonisation processes operated. [..] yes, harmonisation

was organised exclusively in Nkawie, but the issue is; did we [referring to the DPCU] intend or had we acted in a way that the harmonisation process became rigid [..] that ideas and issues from unit committees could not criss-cross to the district. [..] intention for taking this move matter most [in terms of its causal impacts] on who were invited [..] who the actors were and how the process was open to development issues of communities" (Interviewed on: 30/06/2015).

Given the above discourses and claims in relation to how district-focused harmonisation engaged the district scale from the point of socio-spatial relations between Nkawie and the case sub-district structures were enmeshed, ambiguity may arise, particularly concerning the extent to which this had re-asserted the importance of Nkawie/Toase and Akropong area councils and their case unit committees in (plural) construction of such relationships. What is important here is to understand the ways in which these sub-district scales were skipped as processes of mobilising opposition at the district scale? In the section that follows, I focus the discussion on this.

b)   Harmonisation with scale jumping in ANDA

The process of moving key local actors and the harmonisation exercise from the sub-district councils of Nkawie/Toase and Akropong to ANDA have implications for (re)defining how the former take position in scale analysis in terms of the opportunities for local actors to harness their socio-spatial relations across the three scales under consideration. My interview revealed that the mobilisation of local representatives and councillors (area council members) at ANDA instead of Nkawie/Toase and Akropong seems to undermine the strengthening of the scaled relations expected to operate among the three spatial scales. For instance, an assistant director of education in charge of planning who took part in the harmonisation of Amanchia and Pasoro unit committee plans into ALPs at ANDA stated that:

> "[..] yes, we [referring to the participants] were able to prepare the ALPs, but I don't think that calling local representatives to Nkawie to do what they're supposed to do at Akropong and Nkawie was the right approach. We've taken away the power of the people and that of the area councils. [..] in this case where can we put Akropong and Nkawie area councils? [nowhere!] [..] there is

uncertainty about how we want to plan with the area councils" (Interviewed on: 31/08/2015).

Further, the presiding member revealed some other valuable information regarding the uncertainty around the failure to harmonise plans and to prioritise key development issues of unit committees at Nkawie/Toase and Akropong area councils and the challenges it posed to the search for effective harmonisation or decision-making at ANDA. The key issue he wants us to focus on is whether it is doable/possible or whether "we really bypass the area councils and still get communities' concerns across to the assembly [referring to ANDA]" (Interview on; 30/06/2015).

It was also evident in my interview with the (traditional) chief of Sokwei (one of the constituents communities of Pasoro unit committee) that failure to engage the Akropong area council to harmonise the ULP of Pasoro unit committee prior to the harmonisation at ANDA is a reflection of the ineffectiveness of Akropong area council to take charge of its own responsibilities and to liaise with the former to make [planning] decisions. He expressed surprise, though, why the Akropong area council which is composed mainly by unit committee and assembly members who are actually involved in planning work at the unit committee and at ANDA, are struggling to exploit their multiple relations to the benefit of local communities. He further revealed, "[..] they [the councillors] don't listen carefully to our complains [..], I expect them to be conversant and familiar with major information sources; what is needed to be done, who to contact and how to lobby their way through or use the decision-making channel to our benefit. They know all these, or I expect them to, but they wouldn't take the initiative" (Interviewed on: 10/06/2015).

Anything short of this, he continued:

> "[..] is a question of capacity on the part of the councillors. Sometimes we find that this office bearers [the councillors] who are supposed to be doing something or other, don't do it, not because they're bad guys; no, they're simply not capable of doing it or they don't know how to [..]. The truth is that the councillors are not proactive, [..] Akropong area council is not functioning [..] how can a council which is not functioning join forces with communities or the assemblies [..] or fight our cause for us? I am not so sure [..]" (ibid).

In spite of the above claims and counter-claims, one story that seems to stick is that the harmonisation process was confined to the district scale of ANDA. Thus, although, the sub-district (Nkawie/Toase and Akropong area councils) scale is very much part of the district (ANDA) scale, in terms of harmonising ULPs and ALPs into DMTDPs, the former scales were bypassed. This re-echoes the notion of 'jumping of scales' – how socio-spatial and political relations are spatialised through the processes of stretching and contracting across scales (Jonas, 1994; Cox, 1998; Swyngedouw, 1997). For Jonas (1994), one of the ways subordinated groups can resist any attempt by a domineering group to control and confine the actions/activities of the former to specific scales is to harness their socio-spatial power relations that stretches over and across other scales. However, unlike Jonas who claimed that the ability to stretch or contract socio-spatial relations is driven by the forces of class, ethnic, gender and cultural struggles, respondents in the present study, particularly those from ANDA are of the view that Akropong and Nkawie/Toase area councils were 'jumped' partly due to the perception of lack of capacity to shoulder and to mobilise (not in the sense of the forces identified by Jonas) their constituents for the harmonisation of ULPs. Similarly, lack of capacity as the reason for scale jumping differs from Marston's (2014) argument that (local) social groups often deploy scale jumping as a strategy for influencing politics at a higher scale.

This reminds us of the argument in the scale literature that while in overlapping multi-scale context, information flows may overlap with disempowering effects at other scales, social relation and its outcome are not necessarily defined by particular spatial scale (Swyngedouw, 1997, 2000; Jonas, 1994; Brenner, 2001). Swyngedouw (1997) in particular thinks that it is through active and ongoing struggle between individual and group actors for control over the socio-spatial processes that the importance and role of certain spatial scales may emerge/change. Following this argument, we could say that the effective interaction of actors (especially those mobilised from the unit committees and area councils) and the impact of their interaction on the preparation of the DMTDPs will therefore depend on their ability to harness power at ANDA. However, there is limited information from the scale literature on how the quality of interactions and decisions (or scaled processes) will be implicated in the event that actors of particular

[lower] scale fail or lack the capacity to stretch their socio-spatial and political relations when jumping of scale occurs.

At this juncture, we can see that it is not sufficient to acknowledge that active socio-spatial relations matter and that a 'jump' over the sub-district councils constitutes a significant change/jump with implications for them to (re)assert their power at ANDA spatial scale, but also requires us to develop more understanding by showing how the 'jumping' of the sub-district councils shaped and reorganised inter-scalar power relations across the case unit committees, area councils and district. Next, I focus on how the implementation of the district-focused harmonisation helped to unlock the socio-spatial power relations across the three scales at hand.

c) Bringing power into harmonisation of plans in ANDA

It has been common in the scale literature to argue that shifting the process and the politics involved in socio-spatial interaction across space (McCann, 2003; Swyngedouw, 1997) is not only central to the notion of scale jumping, but also an integral part of social strategies and struggles for control and empowerment (Jonas, 1994; Swyngedouw, 2000). Attention to scale jumping has become an influential theoretical construction for thinking about the scalar dynamics of social power (Sheppard, 2002), and as Jonas had stated earlier, it also presents the opportunity for subordinated groups to activate and harness such power to become actively involved in higher scale decision-making process.

In contrast to the above view but similar to the case of EJMA discussed earlier, the initiative to mobilise key actors in ANDA was not taken by the local actors. Also, instead of using district-focused harmonisation to empower local actors, evidence from my interview suggests that there is intra-scale/intra-unit committee power struggle between the traditional political leaders and the local elected leaders (i.e. the unit committee chairpersons and assembly members) of Amanchia and Pasoro electoral areas. That is, a struggle that is internally driven. This perception of power struggle, especially on the part of traditional political leaders, is linked to their exclusion from the district-focused harmonisation that took place at Nkawie. As stated earlier, instead

of mobilising local stakeholders to harmonise ULPs of Amanchia and Pasoro unit committees into ALPs at Nkawie/Toase and Akropong area councils respectively, it was rather shifted to ANDA. And, it appears that information sent by the DPO of ANDA through the local elected leaders to mobilise key stakeholders was not communicated to the traditional political leaders.

For example, the chief of Sokwei (one of the constituent communities of Pasoro unit committee) stated that the unit committee chairman who received the invitation to participate in the district-focused harmonisation did not announce this or ignored the traditional political leaders and attended the meeting alone. He also stated that the elected officials seem to think they are the major force to reckon with when it comes to unit committee planning, "but until we start treating the unit committee and the traditional authority as equal partners of two interdependent centres of power; centres that can be used to forge strong inter-personal relations and inter-institutional cooperation, there can be no way we can transform development in this community [Sokwei] in a meaningful way" (Interview, Sokwei chief, on: 06/08/2015).

Similarly, another traditional political leader and a chief of Amanchia community also believe that the assembly member for Amanchia who received the invitation in respect to participation in the district-focused harmonisation but failed to communicate to him was only trying to be responsive selectively. When I asked the chief to further explain what he actually meant by 'responsive selectively' mentioned above, he stated that, "I mean the assembly member is noted for making bias choices as to when and who to consult in playing his leadership role" (Interview, chief of Amanchia, on 06/08/2015).

When I asked the chief to further elaborate on how the attitude of the assembly member in terms of failure to involve him and his elders in the harmonisation process constitutes an attack on his power and authority, he explained that:

> "If we're to be active partners in the harmonisation process, we need to be interested in whatever is being harmonised. [..] to be interested, we need to be informed; I mean access to information by all those who matter should be of

paramount importance. He [referring to the assembly member] may not admit that he is challenging my authority as a chief, [..] but this is exactly what he had done. [..] this had shifted from the poles of power relations between us [..] my absence means that my sphere of power had also been excluded the decisions that were taken there" (ibid).

The above claim of the chief of Amanchia, which provides further evidence to how the exclusion of traditional leaders could lead to conflicting power relations, appears to have revealed that district-focused harmonisation also produce new socio-spatial power relations of particular communities with important consequences on who have access to the district scale of ANDA. This seems to re-affirm an earlier claim in chapter 5, particularly by the chief of Amanchia that the traditional political leaders were ignored in the mobilisation of community members for the community forum.

For further verification, in respect of lack of consultation with traditional leaders and the consequent impact on intra-scale power struggle, I seek explanation from the elected local leaders on their side of the above claims. Evidence from my interview with the assembly members of Amanchia and Pasoro electoral areas confirmed that they did not give prior information to the chiefs and their elders; hence, the inability of the latter to participate in the district-focused harmonisation that took place at Nkawie (the district headquarters). The assembly member of Amanchia in particular claimed that, "even though, other community leaders were supposed to be informed, at least, in the interest of peaceful co-existence between the two political institutions [unit committee and traditional authority], I acted contrary because I believed the invitation was extended to me and the unit committee" (Interview, assembly member of Amanchia, 07/08/2015).

However, the above claim that the invitation was meant for only the assembly members was refuted by the district planning officer (DPO) of ANDA on two grounds. First, he stated that the letter was only addressed to the assembly member in his capacity as a representative of the people of Amanchia electoral area and as such disclosing the content of the letter to other stakeholders was paramount. Second, the purpose of the invitation was to harmonise development issues, an aspect of a planning process that

was started with the whole community during the preparation of the ULPs. More to the point, he continued, "the plan [referring to the ULP] is not a personal document of the assembly member; it was prepared by the people, so the best thing for him to have done was to get at least the opinion leaders informed/involved" (Interview on: 11/08/2015). In the light of the above claims and counterclaims, it appears that there is no convincing reason to support the local elected officials of Amanchia and Pasoro unit committees' failure to involve their non-elected counterparts (traditional leaders) in the harmonisation process. Given the analysis on the mobilisation of sub-district and unit committee actors without traditional political leaders thus far, it can be assumed that in an attempt to 'jump' the sub-district scales to organise the harmonisation work at ANDA, intra-unit committee power relations may not only be competitive, but also that the process may not emanate from broader and constituted socio-spatial power relations between the traditional political leaders and local elected leaders. What is important here is to understand how mobilising only the local elected leaders at the district scale shaped the inter-scalar power relations in the district-focused harmonisation. In other words, in thinking about inter-scalar power, understanding the enabling factors through which socio-spatial power relations are constituted in an attempt to mobilise the ANDA space for the district-focused harmonisation is imperative.

Previous scholarly work had shown that, it is not sufficient to concentrate on expanding the geographical reach of multi-scalar politics to fight for a common agenda; it needs to stand on strong and broad local support because grasping the processes by socio-spatial power relations of actors embed themselves locally is as important as understanding how they extend such relations to other scales (Mayer, 2007; Leitner and Miller, 2007). Mayer in particular goes on to say that although, differences in power may exist among actors of particular places, it is possible to frame such differences in ways that can help build 'fronts of resistance' at other scales (p. 108). Mayer believes, among other things that, local broad-based support can be sparked through connecting the political agendas of local actors, focusing attention on the impact of higher scalar processes on local life and harnessing local diversity for collective action.

However, evidence from respondents who took part in the district-focused harmonisation seems to suggest that inter-scale interaction in ANDA is possible even without broad-based power support at the sub-district scales. Two views have been singled out as the potential triggers. The first is the 'politics of public discussion', that is, the perception that people were able to speak out and share ideas more openly with members of the DPCU in contrast to traditional authorities. For example, in my interview with the area council chairman of Nkawie/Toase, he stated that, "the local culture does not permit members of the community to argue with the chief in a public discussion. [..] what the chief says is final, whether one agrees to it or not. Although, the district capital [Nkawie] has its own politics [power dynamics] but not to the extent that whatever is said by a member of the DPCU at the meeting was final [..] not even the chairman [i.e. DCD]. I am sure a domineering attitude in the palace did not find its way into the harmonisation process at Nkawie" (Interviewed on: 12/08/2015).

The second reason why socio-spatial power relations of the local elected leaders appears connected with those at ANDA without traditional political leaders could be explained by the willingness of participants, particularly those from ANDA scale who did not take part in the preparation of the ULPs, to have a better insight and deeper understanding of the key development needs as captured in the ULPs. According, to the DPO of ANDA, because the DPCU was not directly involved in the preparation of the ULPs, it was necessary to give room to community representatives who were present at the meeting to clarify some choices they made in community plans. He also stated that, "of course, I am not in any way saying that the replacement of the area councils with the district assembly is a good planning practice, but it was a temporal measure to reorganise the spaces of harmonisation [..]; a process which helped us [the DPCU] to get around the constraints of time and money. I am sure that we did not waist the participants' time. They demonstrated [through their explanation] their understanding of their felt needs in the ULPs" (Interview, DPO ANDA on: 11/08/2015).

At the same time, an interview with a district coordinating director (DCD) of ANDA, who is also chairman of the DPCU, saw the harmonisation exercise as a means through which some local elected officials lobbied to influence subsequent decision-making. He stated that:

> "I'm not able to confirm that participants at the harmonisation meeting in Nkawie resorted to lobbying, but there is one thing I can confirm: [..] during breakfast and lunch time, one assemblyman [whose name I will not like to disclose] tried to persuade me to support the construction of market in his electoral area to fulfil his campaign promise and to enhance his chances of re-election in 2016. [..] he kept on calling me on phone on this same matter [..] putting pressure on me all the time after the meeting was over" (Interview, DCD ANDA on, 20/08/2015).

Considering the above reasons and claims, it can be argued that by shifting the process and the politics involved in harmonisation from the area council (sub-district) scales to ANDA, not only are socio-spatial power relations of the former subsumed as interior to the latter, but also that the internally embedded socio-spatial power relations of the traditional political and local elected leaders was overlooked. The traditional leadership, in particular may not be given level playing field in ANDA. Within this context, district-focused harmonisation is likely to construct a power relations that will operate from the sense of bounded (for traditional political leaders) and multi-layered (for local elected leaders) spatial units simultaneously. This does not mean that in all circumstances, traditional leaders are politically weak and territorially-bound actors in the political landscape of the unit committees. As noted in chapter 3, in the face of several local government reforms in Ghana, traditional authorities continue to play important roles, particularly in the areas of infrastructure development and the provision of land for community projects. What is important to consider in this juncture is how the district-focused harmonisation had been connected to the operation of spatialised networks of relations among the three scales under consideration. Next, I focus the analysis on this concern.

d) Harmonising of scalar networks of connection in ANDA

As mentioned earlier, a framework of the decentralised district planning had been established, that sought to define scalar relationships between the unit committees, sub-district and the district scales in terms of plan harmonisation. We saw from the above discussions that in attempts to implement this framework, the area councils of Nkawie/Toase and Akropong were skipped, though key actors from the unit committees and the area councils were mobilised at ANDA. We also saw how the mobilisation mutually excluded the traditional political leaders. A critical question arises in respect to whether, under the district-focused harmonisation, the case unit committees, area councils and district were constituted as multiple geographies of socio-spatial interaction.

Perceptions around matters of using a scaled division of politics of decentralised district planning and harmonisation as heterogeneous spatial arrangements with networks of relationships between scales appeared to catch the attention of stakeholders of local government in Ghana. Notable among them is the former minister of local government. Ghana News Agency reported that, in an inaugural speech at the inauguration of the Atwima Nwabiagya district, the minister (Alhaji Collins Dauda) advised that:

> "[..] the credibility of the assembly [ANDA] would be assured in respect of decision-making [..] if it is able to create a platform for [..] the principal actors, namely, the district chief executive, presiding member, [..] district coordinating directors assembly members, councillors, unit committee members, the traditional authorities [..] respect the prescribed boundaries of their responsibilities across spheres of government [..] and recognise that nobody is superior to the other" (www.ghananewsagency.org on: 08/10/2015).

Later, at a national launch of orientation of assembly members, the minister (Alhaji Collins Dauda) also called on assembly members to:

"use their unique role in local government to promote intensive and extensive networks of collaboration. He said, this could be done through maintaining close contacts with the people, traditional rulers, area council as well as civil society organisations and the private sector to attract the needed support and resources" (www.ghananewsagency.org on: 23/10/2015).

Similar to the above quotes, scholarly work on scale, including McGuirk (2000), Brenner (2001) and Howitt (2003) alluded to the importance of using scales as a structuring element in the operation and governance of the interdependence of networks of relationship. Howitt (2003), in particular acknowledges that for scale to structure social relations and construct the means for socio-political participation, the networks and relationships that mobilise actors must be enacted through interaction among geographical scales. From this point of view, Howitt argues, scale then becomes a vehicle not only for participation, but also becomes a means to recognise its constitutedness; a possibility to link social action within and across scales and to provide opportunity to transform existing socio-spatial power relations.

In the case of ANDA, although, majority of the respondents recognised the need to deploy scale relationally (by mobilising the socio-spatial actions of actors) across the three scales at hand, but seem not to be convinced that socio-spatial and political relations and networks of the sub-district structures were mobilised in the context of district-focused harmonisation. For example, the planning sub-committee chairman revealed in my interview with him that:

"[..] the way harmonisation is structured [..] or even the planning process in general is complicated with networks of relations. I can talk of political networks, cultural networks, economic networks, governance networks, and more. [..] all these [networks] overlap [..] but the people who took part in the harmonisation did not represent all that. I am not sure the organisers [DPCU] had this in mind [..] that they wanted to connect unit committees and area councils, or any other groups of people, using harmonisation. [..] I wonder how the involvement of the chief of Amanchia [..] any other chief could have built a formidable networks" (Interviewed on: 18/08/2015).

A similar view was expressed by the chairman of Nkawie/Toase area council that he is not certain how participants of the district-focused harmonisation could rely on their networks of interaction to influence the process (Interview, on 12/08/2015). The senior DPO of ANDA, although, admits that there were some political interests in Nkawie and its sub-district structures that affect the way planning is done, including harmonisation, but felt that the harmonisation of plans in 2014 did not create space for the participating actors to draw on their networks of association to influence the process. (Interview, DPO ANDA on, 11/08/2015). He further stated that:

> "[..] there are certainly, at least in principle, people in the communities [..] or chiefs who have wide range of relations. [..] they have connections which do not stop at the boundaries of their communities, but that does not mean that if they were involved in the harmonisation, they could have made a difference. [..] they couldn't have oriented the harmonisation towards their communities or network of influence" (ibid).

However, a contrasting view from the chairman of Pasoro unit committee is that, the fact that people have been mobilised from the three scales in question means that their spatial networks were forged. He also stated that:

> "I am a mouthpiece of the people [..] and anytime I take an action [..], or decide to do something on their behalf I do it for my people. [..] the plan [unit committee level plan] was prepared with the people and [..] harmonised at Nkawie by representatives of the people. My presence connects my electoral area to other electoral areas through their representatives too. [..] my area council [i.e. Nkawie/Toase] chairman was also with us. [..] however implicit it may look, my electoral networked" (Interviewed on: 31/08/2015).

Despite the above contrasting view that socio-spatial network of flows between the three scales could find their way into the district-focused harmonisation space in ANDA, it appears not to be a decisive phenomenon. There is also no credible evidence to show that the exclusion of traditional political leaders from the district-focused harmonisation

facilitated/impeded the flow of socio-spatial networks of relations across the unit committee, area council and district scales.

Considering the evidences and claims in this section regarding the interplay of scale jumping, socio-spatial power and network of relations were exercised in the district-focused harmonisation context, it is clear that besides the uncertainty rounding the role of Nkawie/Toase and Akropong area councils, and the perception that they lack capacity to perform harmonisation, the work (harmonisation) was not done through networks of social relations across the scales under consideration. In other words, the socio-spatial network of relations and connections across the case unit committees, area councils and district had less possibility of influencing the district-focused harmonisation exercise.

This sits uneasily with concepts such as spatial connectivity and the geographical dispersion of scalar relations, a prime concept associated with scale jumping ideas (Leitner, 2004; Jonas, 1994). This also suggests that, though key local actors were mobilised to perform the district-focused harmonisation work, it may not give adequate account of the three scales at hand and their constitutedness. As Brenner (2001) has made it clear in chapter 2, spatial scales shape and are shaped by networks of spatial connectivity. This also leads us to an important concern: how to grasp the underlying reasons that were actually applied in translating community/unit committees' development issues in ULPs into the DMTDPs both in ANDA and EJMA.

6.4   The Basis for Transferring ULPs into DMTDPs

In this section, I attempt to develop an explanation of the rationales for transferring decisions that have been taken at the unit committee scale in district-wide decision at ANDA and EJMA. At the beginning, I presented some of the main criteria that have been put forward by the NDPC to guide the harmonisation and prioritisation of unit committees' development needs in the ULPs, first into ALPs, and second into DMTDPs. In addition to the harmonisation and prioritisation criteria identified earlier in this chapter, this section explores the main reasons which guides and shapes the translation of key development issues in the ULPs into DMTDPs in ANDA and EJMA.

At the outset, it should be noted that, when I asked participants in focus group discussion, both at ANDA and EJMA to ascertain the reasons for decision transfer, they were reluctant to do so. Probably because, district planning decision-making authorities, particularly the executive committee, planning sub-committee and DPCU always want to prove to stakeholders that their decision-making choices are guided by the NDPC planning guidelines. Also, the decision-makers and people who are not involved in planning decision-making but have the opportunity and reasons (reasons that are outside the NDPC guidelines) to influence decisions were all present at the discussion. However, in face-to-face interviews, a number of reasons/factors for decision transfers were revealed.

6.4.1 Politically-induced lobbying

One of the notable factors actors deployed to get unit committees' decisions incorporated into ANDA and EJMA is lobbying. For example, in an interview with an assistant municipal planning officer of the EJMA, it was revealed that some people, particularly those in leadership positions had made effort to lobby him for a particular development projects or the other after the harmonisation exercise was completed (Interview, 24/08/2015). He was emphatic that, "the municipal chief executive and some assembly members used their leadership positions to lobby for particular development issues to be incorporated into the DMTDP. [..] and I am sure that it is a way of gaining political advantage". He further claimed that, "the chief of Juaben who has his own way of raising money to finance development in his traditional area persuaded the DPCU to give careful consideration to the construction and mechanisation of borehole water in the Mmorontuo electoral area because he [the chief] had been assured of funding by one international NGO" (ibid).

The above evidence of how the chief tried to use lobbying to influence planning decisions is not peculiar to EJMA. As mentioned before, the DCD of ANDA also gave evidence how an assembly member had attempted to lobby for market infrastructure to enable him retain his seat. While the above evidences illustrate how socio-political actors attempted to influence the decision-making process through lobbying, it appears that local political leaders in particular used it to advance their political interests. The

narrative below actually shows elements of making political capital out of lobbying, particularly in the EJMA.

The municipal director of education (MDE), who is also a member of the DPCU claimed that, "[..] classroom blocks in this year's plan [referring to the 2014 DMTDP] [..] more of them [i.e. classrooms] are allocated to Ejisu and Juaben townships than the hinterlands. The main argument is that these towns have large population [..] and also more children of school going age will benefit than when they are sited at the hinterlands. [..] definitely, there is an element of politics here: these towns are also big political constituencies with large electoral roll" (Interview MDE, EJMA, on 29/08/2015).

It is not always the case that lobbying or political interest is used to facilitate the transfer of unit committee decisions into district-wide decisions; the opposite also happened. A primary school teacher in Pasoro community claimed that because, his electoral area is a strong hold of then opposition party, then district chief executive of ANDA whose party was in power, used political power to convince the DCD and diverted roofing materials that were meant to roof a public latrine in Pasoro. His reason was that the project was started by then opposition candidate, so by sabotaging the project could mean taking away some of the opposition candidate's chances of winning (Interview on: 09/04/2015).

As mentioned earlier, the above remark give more support to how lobbying could underscore the role of politics and local politicians in planning decision-making. But the senior municipal planning officer of EJMA has a contrast view. For him, while politics and/or politician may have used lobbying to influence decisions, it is equally deployed by people who are not politician to influence decision transfer (interview on, 31/08/2015). He further elaborated that:

> "It is not only politicians who will like to press for development to be sent to their preferred communities: even some civil servants, opinion leaders, interest groups etc. [..]. [..] they always want to use their personal ties with me to get

priority attention. [..] yes things like this do happen, but I can tell you that the underlying reason for harnessing most of community decisions into the decision of the whole municipal area was their likelihood to affect the life of many people" (ibid).

Further, with regard to the role of (inter)personal relationships in decision transfer, the budget officer of the EJMA stated in my interview with him that:

"When we [referring to the DPCU] needed to take a decision on whether to supply electricity to Esaase community or the new residential areas of Ejisu town in 2015, Esaase was chosen. [..] I know Esaase was favoured because of the personal relationship between the member of parliament for Ejisu and the municipal planning officer. [..] the number of potential beneficiaries were expected to be high in Ejisu than Esaase yet the decision went in favour of Esaase. [..] we cannot take inter-personal politics away from this" (Interviewed with DPO of EJMA on 27/08/2015).

Therefore, it can be argued that the process of using lobbying-induced decision transfer to achieve political ambition may be taking place alongside the politics of inter-personal relationships people had built over the years. Next, I focus on the role experience plays on the question of rationales for decision transfer from the unit committees to ANDA and EJMA.

6.4.2 Making decision with experience

As mentioned in chapters 3 and also shown in this chapter earlier, the executive committee of the MMDAs is charged with executive and administrative functions, and expected to discuss the draft DMTDPs prior to general assembly meeting. My interviews revealed that most members of the executive committees of ANDA and EJMA lack experience in planning decision-making and/or have limited knowledge about the NDPC planning guidelines. However, the DPOs DBOs and DCDs of the case districts appear to have had experience in decision-making and had brought this to bear in the decision transfer process. According to the DPO of ANDA, his previous

experience in planning practice had led him to put a ceiling on the number of development needs that should be captured in the unit committee plan. He further stated that:

> "When decentralised planning started, I used to leave it open for unit committees to include as many issues as possible in their plans. [..] it became difficult to transfer all the issues into the DMTDP, [..] we [referring to the DPCU] are forced to drop some [..] but the people are unhappy about that. I have noticed a declining rate of public participation in planning, [..]. So what we could do so that some of the community needs will not be dropped is to ask them to plan for not more than five [..] needs [..] I made sure that all five were incorporated into the DMTDP in 2010. This was repeated in 2014" (Interviewed on: 11/08/2015).

But when I asked the DPO of ANDA how the question of putting a ceiling on the number of community priority needs could be used to influence decision transfer, when indeed, it forms part of the NDPC planning guidelines (as noted earlier), he explained that:

> "[..] my emphasis is not on the ceiling per se [..] because it had been violated over the years. [..] the emphasis is on the lessons I have learnt and how this had helped me in doing my professional work" (ibid).

There is also an element of the previous experience in transferring decisions of the unit committees into those of the district in EJMA. However, it is interesting to note that, whereas previous experience had made the DPO of ANDA to restrict the number of community priority needs to five, his counterpart in EJMA acted in the opposite. The DPO of EJMA told me in an interview that:

> "In addition to district assembly common fund [a statutory fund from central government to local government], we can tap other donor funding sources to implement our plans [i.e. DMTDPs]. But to qualify [..] projects must fall in line with the area of operation of the donor partners. [..] between 2010 and 2012, the

assembly [EJMA] could not access funding from some of the donors because of that. Since then, I don't limit communities to any specific number of issues they plan. Once the issues captured in the community plans conform to the NDPC format, I don't have problem [..] they were all transferred into the district plan" (Interview on: 03/09/2015).

From the above response, it can be seen that experience about how plan/planning can be used to attract funding influenced both the way community plans are open to more development issues and the possibility of transferring such issues into EJMA planning decisions. Thus, there appears to be a tendency of making 'unit committee-district' decision transfer choices partly on the basis of attracting donor funding. However, this tendency of planning to meet donor funding requirement may be critiqued for overstating the role of funding in planning decision-making to the detriment of weighing up the impact of such decisions on different unit committees. Of course, a secured source of funding (including donor funding) and effective planning decision-making are intimately linked, but when decision-making fail to capture local conditions and interests, it may inadvertently stifle the role of unit committees' participation in planning decision-making, a point made by Fung (2003) in chapter 2.

6.4.3 Technical feasibility of decision choices

There is also technical feasibility basis of decision transfer. Thus, in attempt to translate development issues of the ULPs into DMTDPs, contextual factors of the decision-making situation of ANDA and EJMA were taken into consideration. In my interview with members of the DPCU of ANDA, it was revealed that despite the need for stakeholder consultation in making participatory decisions, subjecting outcome of such participatory processes to technical feasibility analysis is of central importance to the decision-making process and the translation of ULPs into DMTDPs. This point was made clear by the district planning officer (DPO) of ANDA when he stated that:

"[..] while I recognise the value of eliciting and incorporating local priorities into the DMTDPs, the strength of this depends on our [referring to the DPCU] ability to assess how well our decision-making preferences are technically

possible to provide solution to the pressing problems. [..] we could not do this and leave financial possibilities out [..]. I mean, we needed to know how much it will cost to implement the plan [i.e. DMTDP] or the decision we were taking" (Interview with DPO on: 11/08/2015).

It is clear from the above statement that the decision to transfer unit committee needs and incorporate them into ANDA decisions was not only informed by technical possibilities, but also financial possibilities. When I asked the DPO how financial feasibility counts in making decision transfer choices or relates to technical feasibility, he stated that:

"In spite of the fact that we have put a ceiling on the number of development needs and aspirations each unit committees could raise, we asked further questions about the proposed community needs in the ULPs. [..] we have four years to execute this plan [DMTDP], so the critical questions we asked in assessing whether our choices are financially sound were: can we raise the required money to finance these projects? And can it be done within the next four years?" (ibid).

Though, the question of feasibility was central to making decision transfer choices in EJMA, the interpretation given seems to differ from that of ANDA. In EJMA, it appears that feasibility is partly a political strategy whereby technical possibility of transferring unit committee decisions into EJMA decisions is contingent upon how such decision is politically acceptable on the part of local politicians. This is exemplified in the following statement of the senior municipal planning officer of EJMA;

"the technical aspect of making decision is key [..] but I can assure you that, in this assembly [referring to EJMA] technicality will collapse when the location of project is not going to benefit the politicians. [..] I am just being frank [..] we should move away from telling people what they ought to hear [..]. Though I pondered on how the decisions were technically acceptable, I also pondered on whether the politician will release money to fund such decisions. Look, there is

a particular project in Juaben town, which was supposed to be implemented in 2011, [..] a crucial project [..] but as I speak nothing has been done about it. But similar projects in Ejisu, which are not even among the priority needs, are done" (Interviewed on: 03/09/2015).

It is shown from the above that the task about decision transfer has reflected the way inter-scalar decision-making pendulum swung between technical feasibility and how they are politically acceptable. However, it appears that the latter provides incentive to the former to act on decision transfer.

6.4.4 Spatial implications

In narrating how technical feasibility formed the basis for decision transfer in the above, the DPO of ANDA also mentioned that, although transferring unit committees' decisions into the DPTDP is about decision-making across different spatial scales, there was little attention given to the analysis of spatial extent of their decisions. I became more interested in knowing why they did not pay much attention to spatial implications of decision transfer choices when indeed, the NDPC had recommended the MMDAs to subject their planning decisions to spatial analysis. The DCD (of ANDA) and a chairman of the DPCU whose explanation seems to confirm the above perspective, is of the view that "even though the area councils do not have equal number of unit committees, I believe very well that because we had asked the unit committees to focus their planning on not more than five issues, we were already conveying a sense of giving equal attention to different unit committee within the district" (Interviewed on, 20/08/2015).

Meanwhile, an assistant director of education, in charge of planning was emphatic that, no particular effort was made to assess the spatial implications or spatial connections of the various development projects contained in the DMTDP. He further claimed that "this whole plan [i.e. the DMTDP] was prepared in a hurry, [..] I was invited by planning officer for a meeting with other members of the DPCU to examine the plan before general assembly meeting was held. This was after the RCC had requested the assembly to submit its plan. [..] so we did not have enough time to subject our decisions

to critical analysis in relation to how the projects were spatialised among the unit committees and the area councils" (Interviewed on, 31/08/2015).

Similarly, in the case of EJMA, it was also apparent from the municipal planning officer's narrative that though the consideration of spatial implications of decision-making across the unit committees and zonal councils are not trivial, the extent to which space was brought to bear on the decision transfer exercise was inconsequential. The reason he gave was that, "in 2010 we [referring to the DPCU] decided to pay heed to spatial distribution of primary school blocks across all zonal councils and unit committees to ensure that each council has a fair share, and also to ease overcrowding in urban areas like Juaben and Ejisu. Four years after taking this decision, some of the schools in rural parts of the municipal area are underutilised [..]. [..] so rather than concentrating on spatial effects of our decisions, we decided to focus more on the proportion of the people who stand the chance of benefitting in 2014" (Interviewed with DPO of EJMA on: 03/09/2015).

Therefore, the decision transfer choices through which ULPs were integrated into district decisions of ANDA and EJMA, may have taken place without any concerted effort to understand their spatial implications across the scales under consideration.

Considering the foregoing evidences and the analysis in this section, regarding the basis of decision transfer between the unit committee and the districts' scales, it is clear that different and complex factors informed the planning decision choices at ANDA and EJMA. Irrespective of this, a common decision transfers rationales appears to be evident; including politically-induced lobbying, previous experience in decision-making, technical feasibility and spatial implications. Following this assessment, it can be argued that, although the three scales under discussion are mutually inclusive spatial scales, using them to steer planning decisions presents a paradox: that is, while these spatial scales are seen as scales with inter-scalar relationships and politics, their connectivity is not a central issue to decision transfer choices.

As such, although, scale jumping (or district-focused harmonisation) here resonates with Jonas' (1994) description of how social relations are spatialised through mechanisms of 'contracting', it fails to actively engage the scaled and multi-layered relations of the three scales. In other words, the attempt to 'jump' the sub-district scales to harmonise plans at the district scales did not happen through active public discussion of actors across the scales. Hence, this is termed scale jumping with limited socio-spatial interaction. This was particularly so in EJMA, where neither the sub-district scales nor their actors were involved in the harmonisation of plans. As noted above, the underlying reasons for decision transfer from the sub-district to district scales is informed by previous experience of few members of the DPCU, forces of politically-induced lobbying and technical feasibility of planning decisions. To transfer sub-district decisions into district decisions without due concern for spatiality of socio-spatial power relations, as noted in chapter 2, is to admit that scales exist independently of their social practices. One criticism that can be made generally is that, excessive focus on these reasons directs attention away from approaching the decentralised district planning as an activity of socio-spatial interaction and contestation that need to capture experiences, interests, ideas and issues of both specific and multiple scales.

The focus of attention of inter-scalar decision transfer solely on the above reasons has significant implications for relational interaction and decentralised district planning and practice. The first implication is that district-focused harmonisation and planning efforts have to abandon the idea that there exist some pre-fixed technical policy strategies, experiences and politically acceptable decisions that can provide a legitimate basis for planning interventions in a multi-scalar context. It is the ongoing socio-spatial process of thinking and acting (which is not operating to a single template) that can better influence the processes of decision transfer. Second, the emphasis on the district scale through scale jumping in decentralised district planning and decision-making may frustrate power dynamics (both internal and external) which is expected to play out at multiple scales. Since any spatial scale mobilised in doing planning work carries power, or attempt to create opportunity to extend actors actions in space is a form of power, the way decision transfer was confined to the district scale showed little appreciation to how socio-spatial power struggle can change importance of particular scales. Thus, by

implication, there is more to 'scale jumping' in planning practice particularly when careful consideration is not given to the extent of power associated with particular scales as the evidence in the ANDA serves to highlight.

Also, considering the discussion in this chapter thus far, it can be found that district-focused harmonisation is a reminiscent of scale jumping but failed to provide the needed opportunity for sub-district level actors to harness their socio-spatial interaction to shape decision-making. As mentioned earlier, this appears to be caused mainly by privileging the district scale, lack of capacity on the part of sub-district actors and less attention to socio-spatial power relations across the three scales. In this context, participatory planning and the decisions thereof are likely not to respond substantially to the transformation of the spatial conditions of the unit committees, sub-district councils and district assemblies. This is likely to give rise to what I call 'loss of scalar consciousness'. The argument here is that, while scalar consciousness, with its emphasis on the way multiple scales of social relations of a place are envisaged and the extent to which relational dynamics is understood and reflected in policy-making endeavours (Salet and Thornley, 2007; Healey, 2006), the present study produced contrasting evidence. That is to say, while the unit committees and area/zonal councils are positioned as part of wider relational scale (in this case, the district scale), the practical work of harmonising inter-scalar decisions appears not to have given explicit consideration to their scalar relations. Decentralised district planning arrangement in Ghana recognises the need to perform planning work across three scales, a thinking which shares with Healey's conception of scalar consciousness (2004, 2006, 2007). This is particularly so in her treatment of scale, description of internal differentiation and spatial effects. However, planning practice (or harmonisation of plans) in the present study appears not to reflect and/or mobilise forces of scalar consciousness, as defined by Healey.

A similar view was expressed by Galland and Enemark (2013) in the context of Danish planning system. The difference here however, is that whereas in their case planning policies and practices (both at the national and regional realms) are seen to be less

inclined to spatial vision of the country, the current findings reflect spatial scales of participatory planning in a multi-scalar context that is less inclined to scalar relations.

6.5 Conclusion

In this chapter, I presented the analysis of the second phase of my case study of three spatial scales – unit committee, area/zonal council and district assembly – instituted for decentralised district plan harmonisation in Ghana. These three spatial scales are interconnected in terms of the flow of interactive social relations and ideas among them. I mainly relied on primary sources of data and information and used the MDSSC framework of analysis to explore inter-scale planning relations and the rationales for translating participatory planning decisions at the unit committee into decisions at the district assembly scale of ANDA and EJMA. Subsequent to the above, I have tried to illustrate the procedures that have been established to undertake harmonisation and prioritisation of development needs.

Evidences presented in this chapter related to the realities of harmonising and prioritising ULPs into the DMTDPs, harmonisation as a scalar strategy, singular/plural sense of scale in harmonisation, harmonisation with scale jumping, bringing power into harmonisation and harmonising scaled networks of connection in a district-focused harmonisation. I have demonstrated that this strategy – district-focused harmonisation – which was mobilised to jump and conduct harmonisation of plans mainly in ANDA and EJMA had limited opportunities for active engagement of sub-district scales' actors. I have also shown that implementation of the district-focused harmonisation was less sensitive to the scalar relations among the units, area/zonal and district scales, leading to the formulation of DMTDPs with less attention to their scalar expressions.

The EJMA case shows how district planning authority did not take into consideration the differential positioning of social groups at different scales. Even where there was the thinking that those members of the planning sub-committee who got involved in the harmonisation exercise have interest and influence across the different scales, it tends out that their scalar relations were difficult to discern. Substantially, scale jumping appears to suppress active mobilisation of scalar relations as well as excludes socio-

spatial power relations that are both internal and external to EJMA. It is further contested that harmonisation did not operate as planning practice within scaled and relational spatial scales. In contrast, although, the sub-district scales in ANDA were 'jumped' in the course of plan harmonisation, their social relations and actors were not taken for granted. For the evidence that decision transfer was relatively actively produced by both district and sub-district level actors. But a relatively active involvement of sub-district actors tends to overlook the internally embedded socio-spatial power relations of the traditional political and local elected leaders of the unit committees. The case is also that the mobilisation of sub-district actors at the district scale lacks the evident that decision transfer set the tone for multiple relational geographies of socio-spatial interaction.

In general, the central point is that, all cases illustrate that scale jumping occurred with limited inter-scalar relations and interactions. One way in which this was manifest was in reliance of the DPCU not on the mobilisation of socio-spatial relational networks working across the unit committee, area/zonal council and district assembly scales to perform decision transfer but relying on politically-induced lobbying, their previous experiences in doing planning work and technical feasibility of proposed policy decisions. In this sense, a focus on the district scale and over-reliance on the above factors as the basis for inter-scalar decision transfer makes the decentralised district planning less embedded and conscious about the relational connection of the scales.

With regard to the above findings, my argument is that there is loss of scalar consciousness, which is operational at the decentralised district context (unit committee, area/zonal council and district assembly) where inter-scale decision transfer process did not insert an understanding of how geographical scale may structure such relations. Part of the reason for this lies not only with scale jumping without active engagement of sub-district scales and actors, but also the fact that there was strong political interest and relationally weak networks of flows in doing decision transfer. Furthermore, the approach to decision transfer runs against the argument made in the planning literature that planning with and across multiple spatial scales must focus on treating scale as relational reach in different networks, reflect on spatial effects of social relations and

the internal differentiation of a place. In the following chapter, I present the conclusions of the thesis.

Chapter 07
Conclusions

7.1   Introduction

This thesis examined how participatory planning interacts with spatial scale processes to translate decisions at a lower scale into decisions at a higher scale in a context of embedded socio-spatial relations of decentralised planning. In this chapter, I recall and reflect on the overall nature of the thesis with respect to the main arguments and findings. The chapter is organised under three headings. The first section presents a summary of each chapter of the thesis, including the main findings and contribution. The second then reflects on the limitations of the research. The key research agendas that arise out of the thesis in terms of future research in the offing are discussed next.

7.2   Summary of Major Findings

This section summarises key findings made by the thesis in each chapter and emphasises therein the contribution made by this thesis to planning. In doing so, I also pay attention to my research question and the research problem that this thesis attempts to answer.

In chapter 1, I stated the main research question and recounted its relevance: the politics of participatory planning and decision-making at multiple spatial scales in terms of how participation and socio-spatial relations across scales mutually influence planning and decision-making. This takes off from the argument that spatial scales and networks of socio-spatial relations are mutually influenced (Brenner, 2001) and in a multi-scalar governance structure where planning filter through scales, both participation and spatial scales matter in decision-making (Rockloff and Moore, 2006). The key aspects in this recounting include the way scale is constructed – either as a boundary or conceived as a spatialised politics (Smith, 1993) and the reality that solutions to social problems stretch beyond the political and administrative boundaries of a single polity (Hajer, 2003). The need for participatory planning to pay attention to how policy making power is dispersed and the multi-scalar nature of socio-spatial interaction is also argued for.

In this chapter I also defined the research problem following a discussion of scale-relevance of participation, its consequential impact on decision-making and how various scholars in different contexts have captured it in their studies. The need for the current study, the conceptual approach to the research and empirical research questions are then presented. The research approach, which is presented in Figure 1.1 forms part of the substantive argument this thesis is making and is original in a sense.

In Chapter 2 I argued that for participatory planning to respond effectively to decision-making in a multi-scalar context, the contested nature of spatial scale cannot be ignored. I also argued that participation and spatial scale and their related issues influence each other to define the rationale for multi-scalar decision transfer. The chapter addressed this in two parts. The first part discussed the meaning of participation and based on insights gained from the review of the literature, I constructed a working definition of participation to guide my study. I also showed different forms of participation and the mainstream views on participation as a continuum of devolution of power between non-participation and citizen control and as differences in the depth of engagement between consultation and influence on public decision. Following this discussion, four interrelated concepts of participation (collaboration, public sphere, power and spatiality) were identified and discussed. In discussing each of these related concepts, I showed how they interact and interconnect with participation with substantive effects on decision-making. I then discussed the potential benefits, and the dissenting views of participation. Finally, I constructed a framework of the interrelated concepts of participation with the aim of refining and joining it with issues of spatial scale in part two of this chapter to construct an overall analytical framework for my study.

The second part of this chapter discussed the meaning of scale. I showed that the geographical scales at which socio-spatial processes operate are not fixed but are socially and politically produced. Based on the literature on scale, four key concepts that shape the politics of scale construction were identified and discussed. I demonstrated that singular/plural meanings of politics of scale, the strategy of scale jumping, power and network of connection have the potential to expose how policy processes may be inclusive or exclusive. I proposed a theoretically informed analytical

framework to investigate how participatory planning interacts with spatial scale in a multi-scalar context. This built upon the first framework in part one. I used this framework – MDSSC – in my study of decentralised district planning projects in Ghana and explored how participatory planning shapes and is being shaped by spatial scale processes of relational interaction. This chapter thus contributed towards understanding the need to investigate spatial scales of participatory planning alongside issues of scaled participation in order to uncover the socio-spatial relations at play. In doing so the chapter tries to bring the relational perspective into focus and to reflect arguments in planning theory and practice. From thereon, examples of relational understanding of scale from the planning literature were discussed. Healey (2007) and Haughton et al. (2010) are important advocates in arguing that planning can draw inspiration from relational understandings of scale. The need for planning to pay attention to and engage with more networked relations that are capable of forging series of links across different spatial scales are subsequently argued. Also, bringing together participation, spatial scale and key related concepts to construct a framework of analysis is an original contribution made by this thesis in this chapter.

Chapter 3 explained the background characteristics of decentralised participatory planning in Ghana. Thus in order to effectively recount how planning is experienced and practiced, the chapter set in some detail the context for doing planning work in Ghana. Following an introduction to the profiles of Ghana, the case study region (Ashanti) and the two selected local government units, a brief historical overview of decentralised local government and its trajectory of reforms were discussed. The chapter also discussed the legal and legislative provisions that have been enacted to regulate and consolidate decentralised participatory planning and decision-making. The legal basis for doing decentralised district planning work was then established particularly, regarding the institutions and agencies that have the authority to plan; the establishment of district planning secretariat; and the allocation of human resources from national to sub-national levels. Besides, the chapter explained the structure of decentralised local governance, functions of decentralised institutions as well as the functions of key actors. Three types of districts – metropolitan, municipal and district – including their sub-district structures were also discussed. Here I explored the districts

and their sub-structures (including their functions) for their significance to participatory planning and decision-making at the sub-national level.

The chapter also highlighted the processes and activities that the districts and their sub-district structures undertake towards the preparation of district medium term development plans. It showed that in part, delay in the issuance of NDPC planning guidelines lack of public hearings and non-sensitisation of stakeholders undermined effective public participation in planning. This had implications for the current study, particularly regarding my first research question (what are the mechanisms of participatory planning at the unit committee level?) which sought to understand the mechanisms of participation at the sub-district level. This chapter thus contributed towards understanding the contextual setting of planning and the way planning can shape and be shaped by the contextual setting of particular places.

Chapter 4 explained the research methodology used to explore the spatial scales of participatory planning and decision-making. Consistent with my research question – how participatory decision making at lower scale translates into decisions at a higher scale – I proposed a case study design. I argued for the suitability of a case study design to collect data to address my research questions and the use of the MDSSC framework of analysis highlighted in chapter 1 and chapter 2. I proposed an instrumental design, intended to explore bottom-up decision-making through participatory planning practice in the context of multi-scale socio-scalar relations in Ghana. I also proposed a multiple case study design involving four cases each at the unit committee and area/zonal council scales and two cases at the district scale. I then established criteria and used them to select suitable cases for my research. The respondents for one-on-one interviews and focus group discussions included members of the communities, elected local leaders, and staff of area/zonal councils and district assemblies.

The research methods used to collect data were discussed next. These included document search, interviews and focus group discussions. The documents I collected were mainly from the planning offices of the two districts. The one-on-one interviews I conducted involved forty-two (42) participants across three types of cases (unit

committee, area/zonal council and district assembly). One further method I employed to collect data was focus group discussions with selected community and DPCU members. I had to deal with this at two levels – unit committee and district assembly. The information gathered from all the interviews (i.e. both face-to-face and focus group interviews) were then transcribed. Although, I carried out data analysis while data collection was ongoing, substantial amount of the analysis was undertaken after data transcription. I approached this by relying on two types of analysis – analysis as bricolage and theoretical reading. Chapter 4 contributed to the ability to access insider information and views about the operation of decentralised district planning.

In chapter 5 and chapter 6, the empirical data collected through the research methods highlighted in chapter 4, were discussed and analysed. Chapter 5 dealt with participatory mechanisms, particularly at the unit committee level of planning. The chapter argued that effective implementation of mechanisms of participation matters in strengthening participatory local decision-making. The chapter first introduced three participatory mechanisms – stakeholder sensitisation workshops, community forums and public hearings – whose implementation aimed towards the preparation of unit level plans (ULPs). The chapter found that with the exception of community forums, stakeholder sensitisation workshops and public hearings had not been implemented. Reasons for inability to organise stakeholders sensitisation workshops and public hearings were then discussed, emphasising financial and time constraints, local political influence and delay in the issuance of NDPC planning guidelines. The consequent impact of non-sensitisation and non-implementation of public hearings on active participation in planning are also discussed.

Next, the chapter examined how unit committees were mobilised for community forums and how its implementation had shaped public participation in the preparation of unit committee plans of Amanchia, Pasoro, Esaase and Mmorontuo. Following the discussion on how each community forum was organised, the chapter established that the context in terms of venue and the role of community leaders in mobilising communities had different impacts on participation. It was found that while shifting the venue of the forum from the palace of the chief to a school park in Amanchia enhanced

participation, the opposite happened when the venue was shifted from Mmorontuo unit committee to Juaben zonal council. In addition, issues of participation bias, lack of facilitation, the feeling that public participation makes no difference and power struggles at the leadership level (particularly in Amanchia and Pasoro unit committees) were raised as causes of low participation. Finally, the ways in which collaboration among community leaders played a role in enhancing more active participation was illustrated. This was the case in particular in Esaase unit committee. This chapter contributed to understanding effective implementation of participatory planning mechanisms. The discussion of the implementation (or otherwise) of the mechanisms of participation and how active participation in planning differed across the unit committees is a contribution of this chapter.

Chapter 6 represents the second phase of data analysis and builds on chapter 5 by carrying forward issues raised through the examination of mechanisms of participation in unit committee planning. The analysis in this chapter give insights in two ways - first in terms of the interconnectedness of spatial scales of participatory planning, and second the rationales for translating inter-scalar planning decisions in a multi-scalar context. Using the MDSSC framework of analysis, the chapter discussed harmonisation of plans as scalar strategy, singular/plural senses of scale in harmonisation, harmonisation with scale jumping, the dynamics of power and harmonising of scaled networks of connection. The chapter also demonstrated that the attempt to focus the harmonisation of plans at the district scale (or district-focused harmonisation) had created limited opportunities for active engagement of sub-district scales and actors as in EJMA (see section 6.3.1). It found that district-focused harmonisation is reminiscent of scale jumping but failed to provide the opportunity for sub-district level actors to harness their socio-spatial interactions to shape decision-making. This point is not different from the claim made in chapter 2 that scale jumping may not necessarily afford all social groups the opportunity to interact because acting across multiple spatial scales is an expression of power. However, what the scale jumping literature did not emphasise, but is evident in this chapter is the potential causes of scale jumping without the active interaction of multi-scalar actors. Following this argument, the potential causes of limited interaction were brought out by discussing the empirical context for

planning across scales in the EJMA and ANDA. The key issues that the chapter raised point to; privileging the district scale, lack of capacity on the part of sub-district actors and less attention to socio-spatial power relations across three scales.

A second insight shown in this chapter is that rationales for inter-scalar decision transfer in the context of district-focused harmonisation was less sensitive to the scalar relations among the units, area/zonal and district scales, leading to the formulation of DMTDPs with less attention to their scalar expressions. Subsequent to this, the chapter discussed the key reasons that informed the transfer of decisions from the unit committee scale into planning decisions at the district scale. Key among them are politically-induced lobbying, focusing planning and decision-making previous experience of DPCU members and technical feasibility of proposed decisions. Following this discussion, a key finding of the study is that attempt to 'jump' the sub-district scales to harmonise plans at the district scale happened with limited socio-spatial interaction. The argument advanced in support of this finding is that a focus the district scale and over-reliance on the above factors as the reasons for decision transfer undermined the mobilisation of socio-spatial relational connection and interaction across the scales under consideration.

Finally, it argued the causal implications of this by pointing out that there was a loss of scalar consciousness (a notion which is explained further in Figure 7.1) in trying to plan across the spatial scales of planning. Next, the grounds for saying that decision transfer did not operate with explicit consideration of the flow of webs of socio-spatial relations at various scales of planning were argued with particular emphasis on strong political interest and relationally weak networks of connection. These two insights are interlinked and feed into each other forming the substance of the analysis in the chapter. Thus the approach to district-focused harmonisation, the reasons advanced for inter-scalar decision transfer, the evidence of scale jumping with limited relational interactions and the notion of loss of scalar consciousness are original contributions made in this chapter.

In the light of this, and with reference to the MDSSC framework of analysis which was conceived and deployed as a heuristic device to investigate participatory planning and its socio-spatial relations, the need arises to revisit this framework to reflect on the layer of findings that demonstrate how scalar consciousness is lost in the present study. The ensuing figure (i.e. Figure 7.1) provides an illustration of the amended MDSSC framework, and the conditions through which loss of scalar consciousness is expressed in the present cases. To be clear, Figure 7.1 is not only about modifying the MDSSC framework of analysis, but also to clarify how scalar consciousness was displaced in transferring decisions across the scales under discussion.
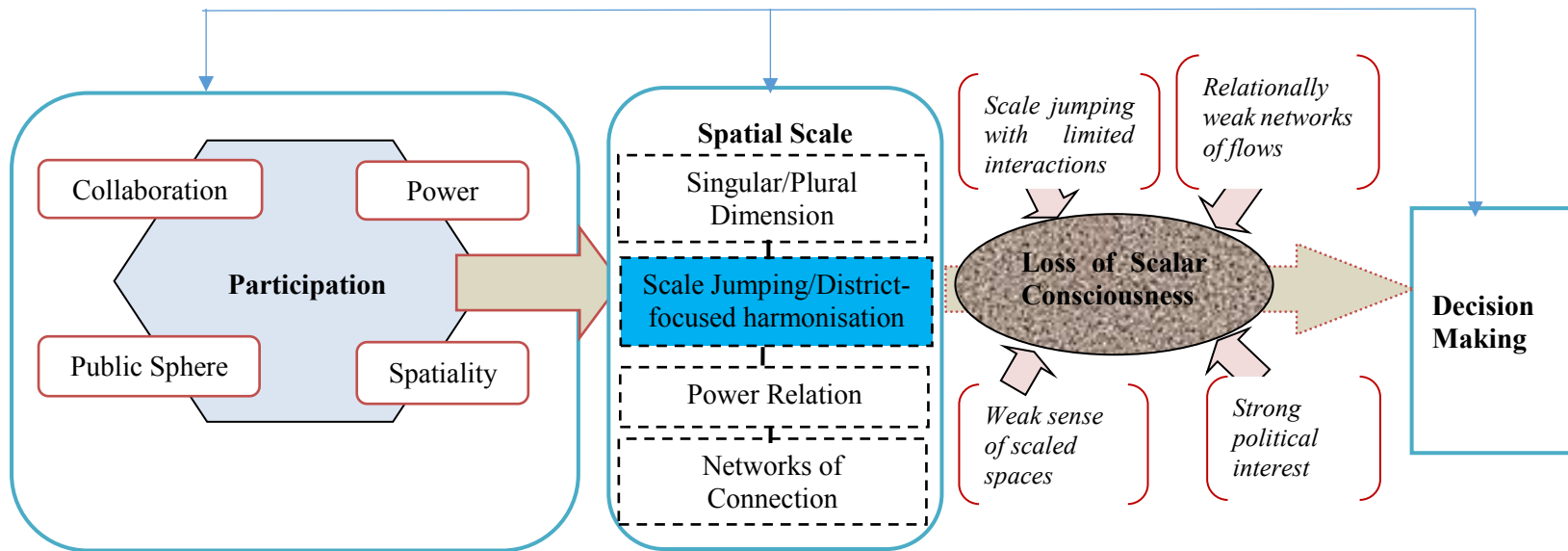
Figure 7.1: Mapping how scalar consciousness is lost within the MDSSC framework
(Source: Author, 2018)

7.3   Conditions for Loss of Scalar Consciousness

The suggestion that there was a loss of scalar consciousness is informed by the findings from the case study of the socio-spatiality of decision transfer in Ghana. As illustrated in Figure 7.1, loss of scalar consciousness is pitched between relational spatial scales and decision-making of the above figure. As seen in chapter 6, the decentralised district planning arrangement in Ghana recognises the need to perform planning work across three scales (unit committee, area/zonal council and district assembly). To a large extent, this arrangement shares with Healey's conception of scalar consciousness. For instance, Healey's treatment of scale, description of internal differential, social relation, spatial effects and her understanding that scalar consciousness involves public scrutiny of policy decisions resonate with the arrangements put in place to harmonise ULPs and ALPs into DMTDPs and the approval process of the DMTDPs. However, in my analysis of planning decision-making across the three scales I found that there is a shortfall of scalar consciousness in harmonising and translating ULPs into DMTDPS. There appears to be a combination of factors/conditions that give rise to loss of scalar consciousness. Key among them are; (i) scale jumping with limited interactions, (ii) relationally weak networks of flows, and (iii) a weak sense of scaled spaces with strong political interests. In the sections that follow, I explain these factors/conditions further.

7.3.1   Scale jumping with limited interactions

Decentralised district planning in Ghana under the local government Act, 1993 (Act 462) and local government establishment instrument (L. I. 1589) assigned to the sub-district councils the responsibility to liaise between the unit committees and the MMDAs (section 3.5.1 d). Also, in the area of harmonisation and prioritisation, the sub-district council scales in collaboration with the DPCU are charged with the responsibility of integrating ULPs into ALPs (see section 6.2.1). While the sub-district council scales were not engaged in harmonisation, the same process (the integration of ULPs into ALPs) was shifted to the district scales. In section 6.3, I discussed in detail the realities of harmonisation and/or scale jumping and found that it was approached differently between ANDA and EJMA; wherein EJMA district-focused harmonisation happened without sub-district actors and ANDA district-focused harmonisation

happened with selective mobilisation of local elected leaders. Notwithstanding the variation in the implementation of the district-focused harmonisation, both ANDA and EJMA did not engage with the sub-district scales. As such there was no active exchange of socio-spatial relations between the sub-district scales and the district scales (also see chapter 6), limiting the possibility of using them to plan and take decisions as truly constituted multiple spatial scales.

7.3.2   Relationally weak networks of flows

A related factor to the above is weak relational connections between the spatial scales of the unit committees, area/zonal councils and districts. Relationally weak networks is either defined by the complete avoidance of the zonal council scales in the harmonisation process in the case of EJMA or intra-scale/intra-unit committee power struggles between local elected political leaders and traditional political leaders, which led to the exclusion of the latter from the district-focused harmonisation in the case of ANDA (see sections 6.3.1 d and 6.3.2 d). In both cases (i.e. EJMA and ANDA), there were some forms of seclusion of (some) lower scale actors. Hence, although plans prepared at the lower scales may be integrated into the DMTDPs at the districts, this did not happened in close association with other lower scales, causing loss of scalar consciousness.

7.3.3   A weak sense of scaled spaces with strong political interest

The fundamental purpose for engaging unit committees to plan and to harmonise such plans is to facilitate the formulation of planning decisions for particular districts with a sense of interconnected spatial scale relations with multiple spatial reaches. It is evident that a number of factors/reasons were considered in dealing with the translation of development issues in the ULPs into district-wide decisions with limited consideration of their spatial implications at the sub-district scales (section 6.4.4). At the same time, though issues of lobbying and previous experiences in decision-making were considered in making decision transfer choices in ANDA and EJMA, such considerations appear to be dominated by political interests (see sections 6.4.1 and 6.4.3). Beyond this was the grounding of planning and inter-scalar decision transfer on

(inter)personal relationship. Hence, strong political interest may be argued to have central role to how planning decisions are transferred.

Given the above discussion thus far, it could be argued that, along with district-focused harmonisation in a multi-layered decentralised district planning context, scale jumping with limited interaction, the interplay of the above three factors/conditions together created loss of scalar consciousness among the unit committees, area/zonal councils and the districts. This discussion serves to explain how an envisioned relational understanding of decentralised district planning in Ghana has been largely 'captured' by political and technical considerations in practice. The evidences presented to highlight loss of scalar consciousness, informed by participatory planning and the way decision transfer was underpinned more by 'politico-technical' necessities than networked form of interaction are original contribution in this chapter.

7.4   Limitations of the Current Research

In this section, I reflected on the main limitations of this thesis, especially in respect to conducting it. It took some time before I could decide upon the research strategy and the nature of the thesis. So what was to be done was not clear to me from the start. The time this became fairly clear to me, was when I was getting ready to go to the field for data. The current research is limited by the need to answer the research questions within a limited timeframe, within which the theoretical development of the thesis as well as the field work were conducted. There were also other limitations the researcher faced in conducting the research.

First, the research was limited by response bias. Response bias at the unit committee scale was revealed in my data collection particularly with elected local leaders – assembly and unit committee members. Even though, the position of these leaders (as noted in chapter 3) is supposed to be non-partisan, doing one-on-one interviews with most of them and the responses they gave were biased towards one political party or the other. For example, when I tried to know why stakeholder sensitisation workshops and public hearings were not organised from some of the assembly members, (though they were unable to tell the reasons) they were rather criticising particular political

regimes and politicians at the district scale for not being serious with unit committee planning. Therefore, the information I gathered was biased depending on the political leaning of the respondents. First of all, I addressed this problem by changing the wording of the questions I asked. Also, interview data was triangulated with those of focus group discussion and documents and vice versa. Respondents' interpretations were also crosschecked against one another.

Another limitation this study faced was the unavailability of some information particularly on community forums: minutes of the meeting; copies of ULPs; list of participants; and prioritised community needs. Similar problem was encountered at the district level when I tried to find information on ULPs that were harmonised into DMTDPs, work plan that guided the planning process and budget covering the planning activities. This was partly due to poor data management. For example, an assistant district planning officer of ANDA indicated that the computer which had this information had 'crashed', and that this was not stored anywhere else. This had affected the ability to use documents to crosscheck certain information I obtained through interviews. While this was challenging in respect to information gap, it also presented an opportunity for me to go back to some of the respondents for repeated interviews (as can be seen in appendix 4.1) so as to collect more information to fill the information gap.

In addition, the inability to use participant observation[18] method of data collection had limited the current research. Prior to data collection, one of the methods of data collection I had decided to use as a source of data and information was participant observation. The purpose was to gather information on how unit committees engage to prepare ULPs and the processes through which such plans would be harmonised into ALPs at the area/zonal council and DMTDPs at the district assembly.

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[18] Waddington (2004) states that participant observation 'involves social interactions between the researcher and informants in the milieu of the latter', the idea being to allow the observer to study first-hand the day-to-day experience and behaviour of the subjects in particular situations, and, if necessary, to talk to them about their feelings and interpretations.

However, at the time of data collection, the planning activities for participant observation had been completed. Therefore, accessing first hand information through direct observation of the planning activities and the social settings within which people interact could not be achieved. The main problem I encountered, and believe participant observation method of data collection could have helped to reduce was the problem of deception by some respondents during one-on-one interviews. The anticipation is that initial observation of practical engagement of stakeholders on planning may serve as the starting point from which my research questions could be refined to address the emerging issue of deception. In addition, I also believe that opportunity to use participant observation would have made it possible for me to get deeply involved to appreciate people's interpretations of their situation/reality of their collective response to planning work. This in turn, would facilitate the generation of 'thick descriptions', particularly of social processes and interactions rather than relying memories of the people or the researcher's own inferences. But I also believe that, although, its potential is considerable, using participant observation to collect data could have been faced with the difficulty involve in maintaining a balance between 'insider' and 'outsider' status. Thus, the ability to identify myself with the people under study and get close to them, and at the same time, maintaining a distance which will permit adequate observation and data collection. For instance, although, I could speak the local language of the people, some of them still saw me as 'outsider'; government official who has an interest in understanding and solving their problems.

Also, it was methodologically challenging to collect credible amount of data that spoke to my research purpose and questions. As noted in the methodology chapter (i.e. chapter 4), after I finished conducting one-on-one interviews, I realised that the amount of data I expected to gather through interviews could not be realised. As mentioned above, conscious attempts were made in the field to carry out repeated interviews to cross-check responses of the respondents. In addition, I also used focus group discussions to collect more information and/or fill data gaps and to respond to the issue of collective response to planning work which could have been assessed through participant's observation method.

However, at the end, the whole experience of conducting this research was extremely enriching where the researcher was able to gather adequate data and information that speak to the research question. In part, this was achieved by carefully planning and conducting focus group discussions to collect the needed information from the cases. The whole experience has transformed and allowed the researcher to grow as a research scientist and to begin an intellectual journey in social research.

7.5   Research agendas that arise out of the thesis

This section focuses on the major findings that have emerged from this thesis and show instances of how these can lead to new agendas for research. A key research finding in this thesis is the loss of scalar consciousness. In my discussion of the concept, empirical evidences such as scale jumping with limited exchange relations, relationally weak network of relations and weak sense of scaled spaces with strong political interests were identified as causal factors. The first research agenda seeks a refinement of the concept of loss of scalar consciousness by conducting further exploration to clarify and expand it as well as understand how it plays out in different settings. To this end, detailed comparative studies need to be conducted to ascertain the possibilities of the operation of loss of scalar consciousness and possible causal factors in order to understand and improve planning practice in Ghana. For example, comparative studies can be done by choosing different unit committees, area/zonal councils and district assemblies to examine whether and how the inter-scalar relations in planning and decision-making are performed with loss of scalar consciousness.

In addition, further comparative studies of loss of scalar consciousness in inter-scalar decision-making remains to be explored beyond Ghana. The exploration should compare and contrast how different inter-scalar relations, their similarities and differences support or refute the operation of loss of scalar consciousness. In my study I showed key factors that give rise to loss of scalar consciousness; whether such factors can exclusively be used to explain loss of scalar consciousness remains to be seen and thus need further exploration. Future studies, if properly conceptualised, can lead to broader understanding of planning practice.

The second research agenda also relates to loss of scalar consciousness. The question I would like to take further concerns the implications of loss of scalar consciousness in participatory planning. This research essentially might try to examine the direct connections between loss of scalar consciousness and the institutionalised practices that are differentially scaled within decentralised district planning context. In other words, it will contribute to an understanding of how loss of scalar consciousness may restructure the scalar relations in a multi-layered context of planning and decision-making. Further, the possibilities and effects of loss of scalar consciousness at the regional scale could also be examined. That is in the context of the operations of loss of scalar consciousness and its effects on the harmonisation of district plans into regional plans. These studies would help clarifying and improving the concept of loss of scalar consciousness as well as exploring its dynamics further towards theorisation.

The third research agenda emphasises the need to put 'decentralised planning and scales of participation' in a broader, national context. This will probe into the link/s between the national, regional and district tiers of participatory planning in Ghana, using the concept of relational spatial scale. In other word, it will contribute to an understanding of the ways in which concepts from relational spatial scale theory can inform understanding of how policy aspirations set out in national documents on planning across multiple scales is discursively experienced. Practically, this can lead to assessment of how far or how tightly the relational spatial structure of planning is actually absorbing planning ideas and information or responding to felt needs across the national, regional and district scales. It would thus provide grounding for a broader way of organising the articulation and delivery of government policies as multi-scaled and networked activity.

Appendices

Appendix 3.1: Summary of key aspects of legal and legislative provisions of decentralised planning in Ghana

Year	Act/Legal Document	Specific Portions/Articles/Sections of Legal Provisions
1992	Fourth Republic Constitution	The democratic and decentralisation aims of the constitution were emphasised by the statement that the state shall take appropriate measures to: "make democracy a reality by decentralising the administrative and financial machinery of government to the regions and districts and by affording all possible opportunities to the people to participate in decision-making at every level of national life and in government" (Article 35 6*(d)*), where "Ghana shall have a system of local government and administration which shall, as far as practicable, be decentralised" (Article 240 (1)), and that, "[..] functions, powers, responsibilities and resources should be transferred from the central government to the local government units" (Article 240 (2)*(a)*) (Republic of Ghana, 1992). Coupled with the above, the constitution also recognises the district assembly as: "the highest political authority" (Article 241 (3)) at the district level, and that, "to ensure the accountability of local government authorities, people in particular local government areas shall, as far as practicable, be afforded the opportunity to participate effectively in their governance" (Article 240 (2)*(e)*).
1993	Local Government Act (Act 462)	Chapter twenty of the constitution which largely provides broad constitutional provisions on decentralisation was later operationalised by the passage of the local government Act, 1993 (Act 462). The promulgation of this Act gives meaning and form to decentralisation (Botchie, 2000) and provides core regulations for the administration of local government by making the district assembly a focal point of local planning and development (Bandie, 2007). In fact, Act 462 confers on the district assembly the authority to plan though, based on planning guidelines provided by the national development planning commission (NDPC). Notably, Section 46 (1) and Section 47 (1) of the local government Act, 1993 (Act 462) state that: "[..] a district assembly is [..] established as the planning authority for its area of authority", and that "the national development planning commission shall prescribe the format of district development plans".

		To fulfil its planning functions, district assemblies have also been mandated to create a secretariat/unit to coordinate planning. To this end, Section 46(3) of the local government Act, 1993, Act 462 stipulates the establishment of a district planning coordinating unit (DPCU) to assist the district assembly to execute designated planning functions. Additionally, Section 3 (3) of Act 462 enjoins the local government minister to establish sub-district structures – sub-metropolitan district councils, urban/zonal/town/area councils and unit committees to help district assemblies in executing, among other things, their planning functions. This requirement was fulfilled through the passage of local government establishment instrument, (L. I. 1589 of 1994). This L. I. established the urban/zonal/town/area councils and unit committees to replace town and village committees, which hitherto had the responsibility of community/village development.
		Under the local government Act, 1993, Act 462, the district assemblies are not only assigned planning functions, but are also given legislative, executive and deliberative powers for the overall development of the district. To perform these functions, district assemblies are empowered to formulate strategies for effective mobilisation of resources necessary for the attainment of their development objectives. One of such resources is personnel or human resources. As stated in Sections 37 (1) and 38 (1) of Act 462:
		"a local government service shall be established to form part of the public services at the district level", and "a district assembly shall in the performance of its functions establish the departments specified in the first schedule in relation to that assembly" respectively.
		Related to the above provision is the establishment of an executive wing of the district assemblies. Indeed, the establishment of the executive committee with executive responsibility is made explicit in Sections 19 (1) and 21 (2)*(a)* of Act 462. These Sections state that:
		"there shall be established an executive committee of a district assembly which shall be responsible for the performance of the executive and administrative functions of the district assembly", such as "coordinate plans and programmes of the sub-committees and submit these as comprehensive plans of action to the district assembly".
1994	National Development Planning (System) Act (Act 480)	With regard to development planning, Act 480 assigns to the NDPC the responsibility to:
		"prescribe the format and content of development plans for the districts, ministries and sector agencies", and to "coordinate district development plans and programmes submitted through the regional coordinating councils (RCC) and ensure that these plans and programmes are compatible with national development objectives" (Section 11 (a) and (b)) (Republic of Ghana, 1994b).

		What this law envisions is to put in place a planning system that is decentralised from the national level through to the district to the sub-district level, including unit committees/communities. As explained in the introductory section of this chapter, my focus here is on the district, sub-district or unit committee/community levels. Apart from ensuring the compatibility of district plans with national development objectives, the Act also requires district assemblies to direct local communities to prepare sub-district or local action plans. For instance, Section 5 (2)*(a)* and (2)*(b)* of Act 480 stipulate that:
		
		     "A community in a district authorised by the district planning authority may prepare a sub-district or local action plan
		         in accordance with: (a) [..] district development plan; (b) the development guidelines of the district planning authority".
		
		 As regard to the implementation of plans prepared by sub-district councils or unit committees, the national development planning (system) Act, 1994 Act 480 makes it clear that sub-district bodies cannot implement plans without the approval of the district assembly. Section 5 (3) and 3 (2) in particular state that:
		
		     "sub-district or local action plan [..] shall be subject to the approval of the district planning authority", and [..] 'shall
		         conduct public hearing before the adoption of the proposed sub-district or local action plan" respectively.
		
		 MLGRD (2010) reports that Act 480 of 1994 provides the context to adopt and combine top-down, bottom-up (where development planning is initiated from the community level based on the identified needs of local inhabitants) approach to decentralised planning process. The reason is that, though, participatory planning starts from the community/sub-district level through to the national level, the content, format and policy focus are based on guidelines provided by NDPC and informed by national development policy objectives. In order to respond effectively to local development needs, district assemblies must ensure active participation and collaboration of all stakeholders, departments and agencies, particularly at the district level (ibid).

2003	Local Government Act (Act 656)	Section 34 of Act 656 emphasises that:
		     "On the coming into force of this Act, the members of staff of the branches, divisions or units of the departments
		         specified in the schedule shall be deemed to have been transferred to a department of a district assembly as determined
		         by the minister and shall form part of the service from the date of transfer" (Republic of Ghana, 2003).
		 What this means is that, the decentralised units and departments' budgets, goods, works and services to be procured need to be consolidated into the development framework of the local government structure (or MMDAs). In aggregate, the Act is intended to provide the local branch departments at the district level with the right calibre of personnel to undertake development activities independent of central government intervention through the process of institutional integration and manpower absorption. Following this process, about twenty-two decentralised departments under Section 161 of the local government

Act, 1993 (Act 462) are merged and transferred to departments of the metropolitan, municipal and district assemblies (MMDAs). NCG and DEGE (2007) state that Act 656 has established an integrated district structure whereby all heads of decentralised district departments are supposed to be answerable to the metropolitan, municipal and district chief executives (MMDCEs) through the district coordinating director (DCD) (see also Section 23 (2) of Act 656). The ensuing table illustrates how the decentralised departments are assigned to the various MMDAs.

Table 3.3: Decentralised districts departments under the MMDAs

S/No	Department	Metropolitan Assembly	Municipal Assembly	District Assembly
1	Central administration	✓	✓	✓
2	Finance	✓	✓	✓
3	Education, youth & sport	✓	✓	✓
4	Department of health	✓	✓	✓
5	Agriculture	✓	✓	✓
6	Department of physical planning	✓	✓	✓
7	Social welfare & community development	✓	✓	✓
8	Natural resource, forestry game & wildlife	✓	✓	✓
9	Department of works	✓	✓	✓
10	Industry and trade	✓	✓	✓
11	Disaster prevention	✓	✓	✓
12	Transport	✓	✓	
13	Urban roads	✓	✓	
14	Waste management	✓		
15	Budget and rating	✓		
16	Legal department	✓		
	Total	16	13	11

Source: Republic of Ghana, 1993; NCG and DEGE, 2007

As shown in the above table, the twenty-two decentralised departments that are reconstituted are not equally distributed across the various MMDAs. For instance, the twenty-two departments are reorganised and reconstituted into sixteen departments, thirteen departments and eleven departments at the metropolitan, municipal and district levels respectively. However, the

		twenty-two departments, which have been merged and converted, do not mean that their previous functions are no longer performed. As argued by Local Government Service (LGS) (2012), the departments are merged with other departments and have taken new names and institutional structure, yet their previous functions have not been ignored completely. The LGS is convinced that the realignment of the decentralised departments may provide technical expertise for local development for the fact that they are often associated with the performance of technical functions. In terms of planning at the district level, development plans of decentralised departments are supposed to be channelled to the district planning coordinating unit (DPCU) and integrated into the district-wide plans (Republic of Ghana, 1994b; LGS, 2014).

Appendix 3.2: An illustration of national development planning system of Ghana
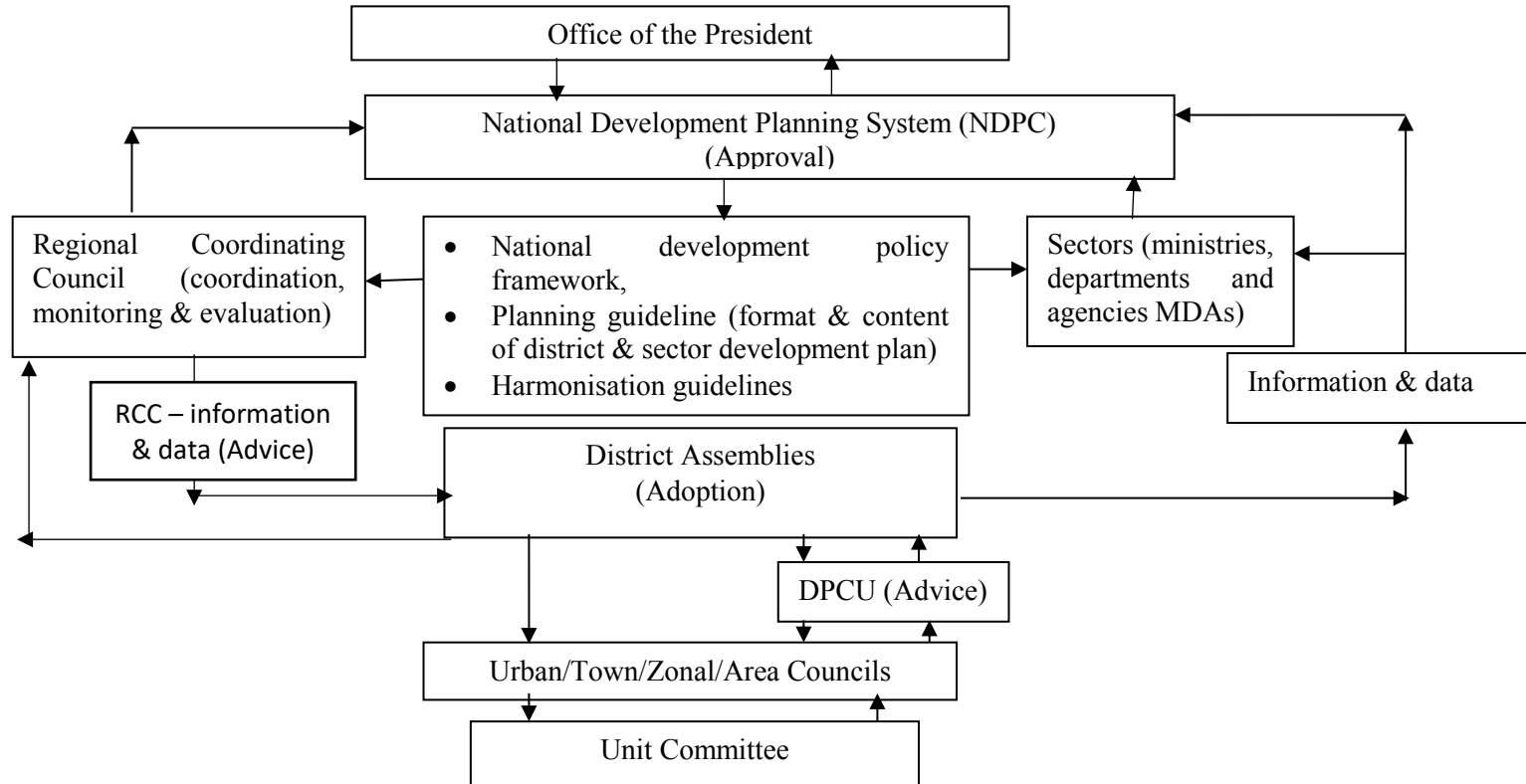
(Source: Adapted from Local Government Service, 2016)

Appendix 3.3: Membership of district planning coordinating unit (DPCU)

No	Core/Technical/Professional Staff		Co-opted/Expanded Members	
	Municipal Assembly	District Assembly	Municipal Assembly	District Assembly
01	Municipal coordinating director	District coordinating director	Municipal coordinating director	District coordinating director
02	Municipal planning officer	District planning officer	Municipal planning officer	District planning officer
03	Municipal budget officer	District budget officer	Municipal budget officer	District budget officer
04			Municipal physical planning officer	District physical planning officer
05			Municipal finance officer	District finance officer
06			Municipal director of education	District director of education
07			Municipal director of health services	District director of health services
08			Municipal director of agriculture	District director of agriculture
09			Municipal director of urban roads	District director of social welfare
10			Municipal director of social welfare	District director of works
11			Nominee of municipal assembly	Nominee of district assembly

Source: Derived from NDPC, 2013a

Appendix 4.1: Summary of the field interviews – ANDA and EJMA, Ghana

No	Date	Respondent/Description	Place	Institutional Level	Duration
		Face-to-face interview			
1	31/03/15	A young woman	Amanchia	Unit committee	18 mins
	22/07/15	A young woman	Amanchia	Unit committee	21 mins
2	09/04/15	Unit committee chairman	Amanchia	Unit committee	54 mins
3	09/04/15	A teacher	Pasoro	Unit committee	34 mins
4	09/04/15	A teacher	Amanchia	Unit committee	41 mins
5	09/04/15	A teacher	Akwaboa (Pasoro)	Unit committee	38 mins
6	16/04/15	Assembly member	Amanchia	Unit committee	56 mins
	27/7/15	Assembly member	Amanchia	Unit committee	23 mins
	07/08/15	Assembly member	Amanchia	Unit committee	14 mins
7	23/04/15	District budget officer	Nkawie	District assembly – ANDA	28 mins
8	28/04/15	Assembly member	Esaase	Unit committee	69 mins
	09/06/15	Assembly member	Esaase	Unit committee	21 mins
9	13/05/15	Unit committee chairman	Pasoro	Unit committee	55 mins
	15/05/15	Unit committee chairman	Pasoro	Unit committee	20 mins
	19/08/15	Unit committee chairman	Pasoro	Unit committee	17 mins
	31/08/15	Unit committee chairman	Pasoro	Unit committee	14 mins
10	21/05/15	Senior district planning officer	Nkawie	District assembly – ANDA	27 mins
	28/05/15	Senior district planning officer	Nkawie	District assembly – ANDA	46 mins
	11/08/15	Senior district planning officer	Nkawie	District assembly – ANDA	15 mins
11	26/05/15	A community member	Mmorontuo	Unit committee	31 mins
12	28/05/15	Senior district planning officer	Ejisu	District assembly – EJMA	33 mins
	12/06/15	Senior district planning officer	Ejisu	District assembly - EJMA	26 mins
	19/06/15	Senior district planning officer	Ejisu	District assembly – EJMA	14 mins
	27/07/15	Senior district planning officer	Ejisu	District assembly – EJMA	15 mins
	31/08/15	Senior district planning officer	Ejisu	District assembly – EJMA	17 mins
	03/09/15	Senior district planning officer	Ejisu	District assembly - EJMA	19 mins
13	01/06/15	A teacher	Esaase	Unit committee	40 mins

14	01/06/15	A community chief	Amanchia	Unit committee	36 mins
	06/08/15	A community chief	Amanchia	Unit committee	16 mins
	18/08/15	A community chief	Amanchia	Unit committee	14 mins
	20/08/15	A community chief	Amanchia	Unit committee	17 mins
	21/08/15	A community chief	Amanchia	Unit committee	23 minis
15	02/06/15	Assembly member	Mmorontuo	Unit committee	52 mins
16	02/06/15	Unit committee chairman	Mmorontuo	Unit committee	47 mins
17	02/06/15	Zonal council chairman	Juaben	Zonal council	25 mins
18	02/06/15	A community member (former assembly member)	Mmorontuo	Unit committee	34 mins
	28/08/15	A community member (former assembly member)	Mmorontuo	Unit committee	20 mins
19	10/06/15	A community chief	Sokwei (Pasoro)	Unit committee	25 mins
	06/08/15	A community chief	Sokwei (Pasoro)	Unit committee	16 mins
20	12/06/15	A community chief	Dumakwai (Mmorontuo)	Unit committee	19 mins
21	12/06/15	District budget officer	Ejisu	District assembly	38 mins
	27/08/15	District budget officer	Ejisu	District assembly	24 mins
22	16/06/15	A community member (former unit committee member)	Pasoro	Unit committee	23 mins
23	16/06/15	Unit committee chairman	Esaase	Unit committee	50 mins
24	26/06/15	Agriculture extension officer	Nkawie	District assembly - ANDA	27 mins
25	30/06/15	Assembly member	Pasoro	Unit committee	41 mins
26	30/06/15	Presiding member	Nkawie	District assembly – ANDA	39 mins
	28/08/15	Presiding member	Nkawie	District assembly - ANDA	17 mins
27	02/07/15	A community member	Esaase	Unit committee	44 mins
28	24/07/15	Assistant district planning officer	Ejisu	District assembly – EJMA	32 mins
	28/08/15	Assistant district planning officer	Ejisu	District assembly – EJMA	19 mins
29	27/07/15	Municipal director of health	Ejisu	District assembly – EJMA	49 mins
30	31/07/15	Queen mother	Esaase	Unit committee	43 mins
31	31/07/15	A community chief	Esaase	Unit committee	56 mins
32	10/08/15	Assistant district planning officer	Nkawie	District assembly – ANDA	42 mins
33	10/08/15	District director of education	Nkawie	District assembly – ANDA	29 mins
34	10/08/15	Physical planning officer	Nkawie	District assembly – ANDA	40 mins

35	12/08/15	Area council chairman	Nkawie/Toase	Area council	28 mins
	31/08/15	Area council chairman	Nkawie/Toase	Area council	36 mins
36	18/08/15	Planning sub-committee chairman	Nkawie	District assembly – ANDA	34 mins
37	18/08/15	Area council chairman	Akropong	Area council	19 mins
38	20/08/15	Zonal council chairman	Anum River	Zonal council	22 mins
39	20/08/15	District coordinating director	Nkawie	District assembly – ANDA	57 mins
40	29/08/15	Municipal director of education	Ejisu	District assembly – EJMA	33 mins
419	31/08/15	Assistant director of education (planning)	Nkawie	District assembly – ANDA	17 mins
42	03/09/15	Planning sub-committee chairman	Ejisu	District assembly – EJMA	26 mins
Focus Group Discussions – Unit committee					
1	24/08/15	The assembly member, a teacher, unit committee chairman, queen mother, the chief and one community member	Esaase community	Unit committee	108 mins
2	26/08/15	Two community members, including former assembly member, assembly member, unit committee chairman and the chief of Dumakwai	Mmorontuo community	Unit committee	97 mins
3	29/08/15	The chief, assembly member, a teacher, one young woman and unit committee chairman	Amanchia community	Unit committee	125 mins
4	31/08/15	Two teachers, one from Pasoro and the other from Akwaboa, unit committee chairman, a former unit committee chairman, the chief of Sokwei and the assembly member	Pasoro community	Unit committee	88 mins
Focus Group Discussions – District assembly					
1	01/09/15	The senior planning officer, presiding ember, two assistant planning officers, budget officer, a representative from district education planning unit, coordinating director as well as assembly members and unit committee chairpersons of Amanchia and Pasoro unit committees	Nkawie	District assembly	112 mins
2	02/09/15	The senior planning officer, budget officer, an assistant planning officer as well as assembly members and unit committee chairpersons of Esaase and Mmorontuo unit committees	Ejisu	District assembly	133 mins

(Source: Author, 2015)

Appendix 4.2: Information Sheet/Interview guide for interviews

For Unit Committee and Area/Zonal Council Level Respondents
- Who are the primary actors when it comes to unit committee planning?
- What planning activities are usually performed prior to the preparation of plans?
- Who is supposed to ensure that the participatory mechanisms are organised?
- Do you always prepare your plans under the supervision of planning officers?
- Is there anything you can do on your own to prepare your plans when such officers fail to supervise you?
- Which of these mechanisms were actually organised in the course of preparing the 2014 plans in your area?
- Which particular place in the community is used to organised yourselves to do planning work?
- Is the place different from venue for other community meeting?
- Are you a regular participant of unit community planning work?
- How will describe the place where you gather to plan for your community?
- What do you have to say about the involvement community members in planning?
- What could be reason why some people do not take part in planning work?
- What other planning activities are performed after you finished preparing community plans?
- What will you like change about the way planning is done in your community?

For District level Respondents
- Do you think that decentralised participatory planning process is being implemented in your district?
- Who initiate the participatory planning process at the community and district level?
- Is public participation in the preparation of plans a concern?
- What effort has made to make public participation integral part of planning decision-making?
- What is the history of public participation in planning in your district?
- What role does your department/unit play towards community and district level planning?
- Apart from the district level, which levels under the district are required to plan?
- What is the relationship between plans that are prepared at the unit committee levels and those of the district?
- What are the main problems associated with implementing participatory planning across the unit committees?

(Source: Author, 2015)

Appendix 4.3

Consent Form

University of Reading

1. I have read and had explained to me by MAXWELL OKRAH the accompanying Information Sheet relating to the project on DECENTRALISED PLANNING AND 'SCALES' OF PARTICIPATION: ANALYSIS OF MULTI-SCALE BOTTOM-UP PLANNING IN GHANA.

2. I have had explained to me the purposes of the project and what will be required of me, and any questions I had have been answered to my satisfaction. I agree to the arrangements described in the Information Sheet in so far as they relate to my participation.

3. I understand that participation is entirely voluntary and that I have the right to withdraw from the project at any time, and that this will be without detriment.

4. This project has been reviewed by the University Research Ethics Committee and has been given a favourable ethical opinion for conduct.

5. I have received a copy of this Consent Form and of the accompanying Information Sheet.

Version – September 2012

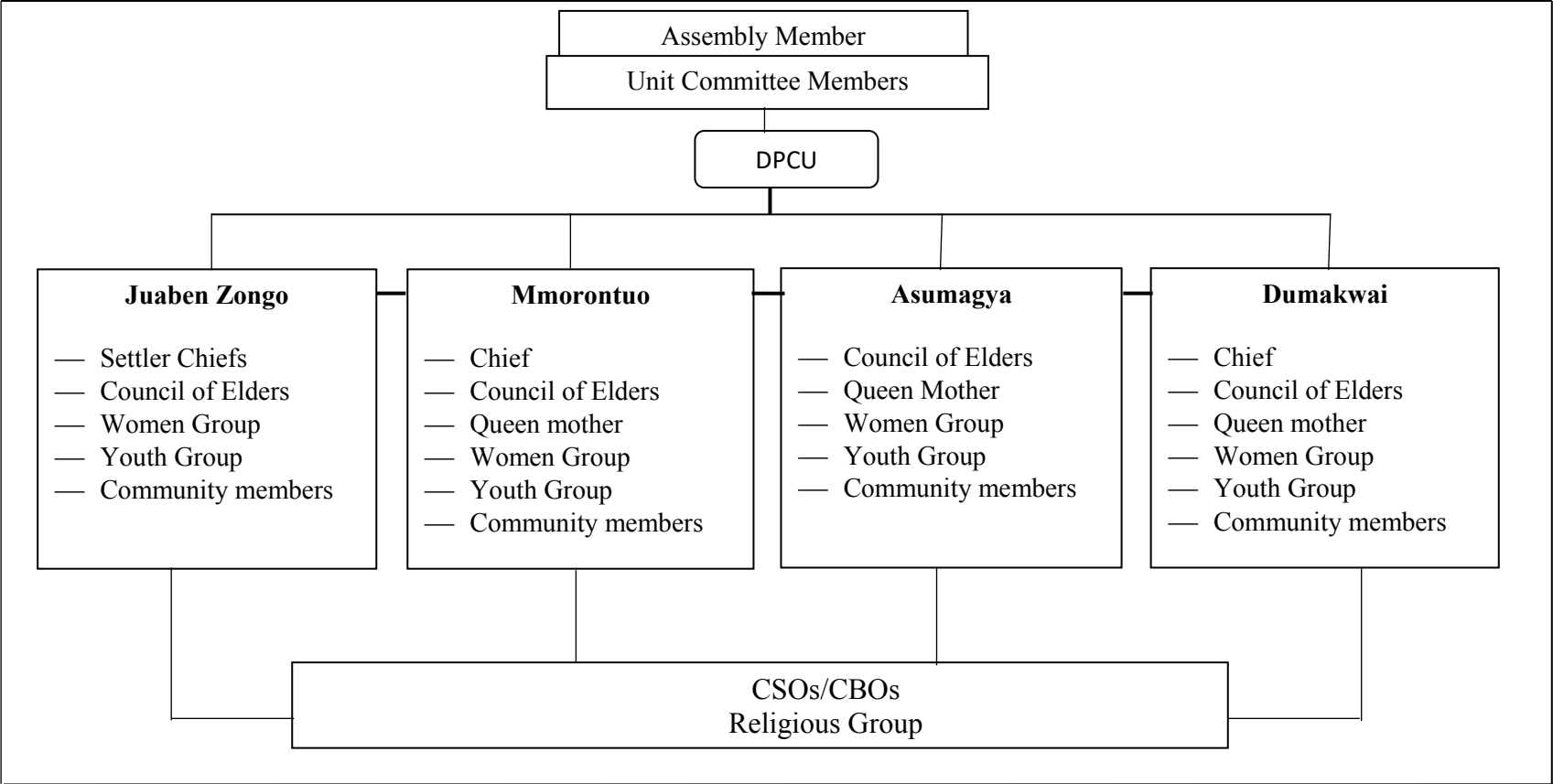**Appendix 5.1:** The structure of Pasoro unit committee for doing planning work
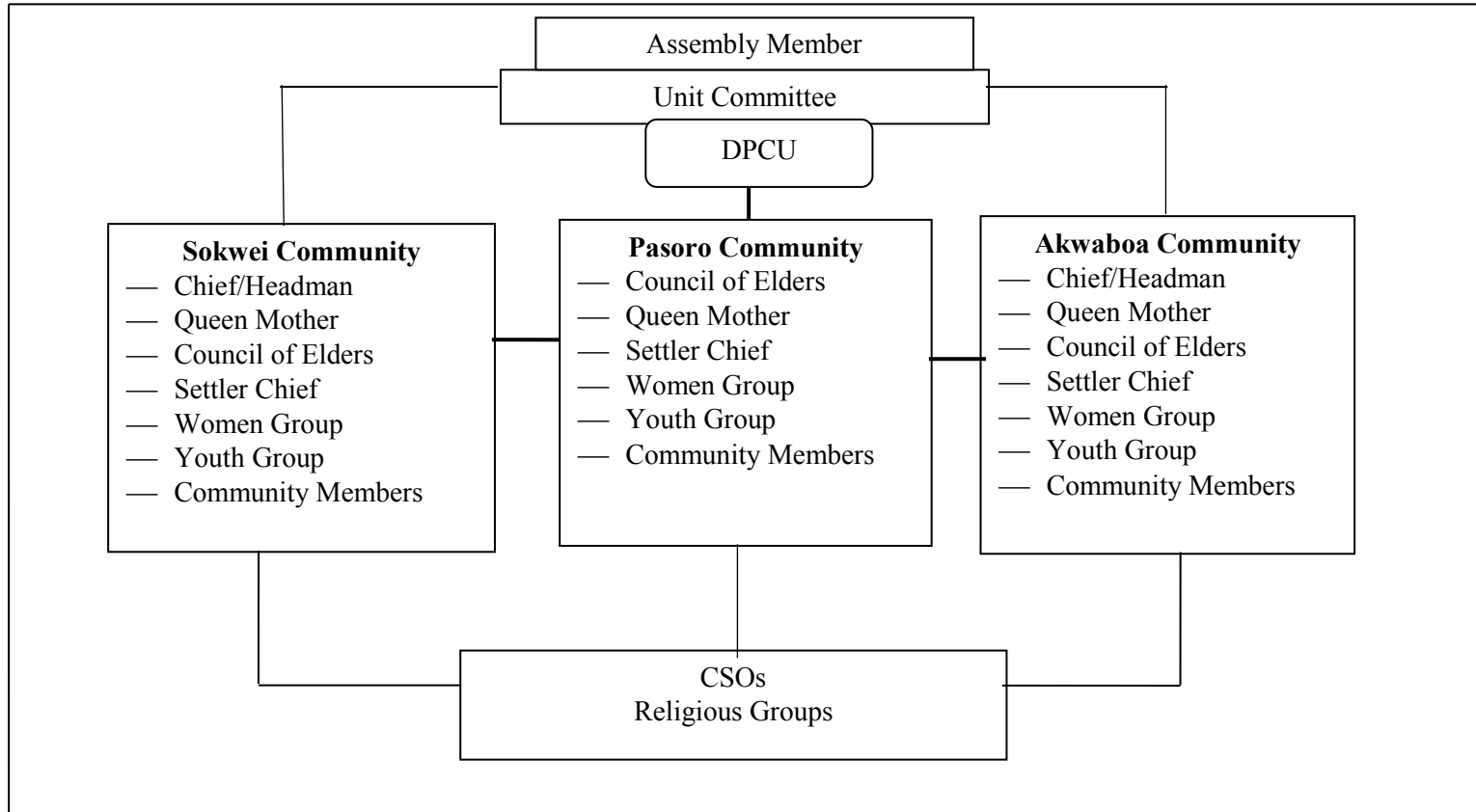
(Source: Author, 2015)

Appendix 5.2: The structure of Mmorontuo unit committee for planning work

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                    ┌─────────────────────────────┐
                    │      Assembly Member        │
                    ├─────────────────────────────┤
                    │   Unit Committee Members     │
                    └──────────────┬──────────────┘
                           ┌────────┴────────┐
                           │      DPCU       │
                           └────────┬────────┘
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Juaben Zongo	Mmorontuo	Asumagya	Dumakwai
— Settler Chiefs	— Chief	— Council of Elders	— Chief
— Council of Elders	— Council of Elders	— Queen Mother	— Council of Elders
— Women Group	— Queen mother	— Women Group	— Queen mother
— Youth Group	— Women Group	— Youth Group	— Women Group
— Community members	— Youth Group	— Community members	— Youth Group
	— Community members		— Community members

```
              ┌──────────────────────────────────┐
              │          CSOs/CBOs               │
              │        Religious Group           │
              └──────────────────────────────────┘
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(Source: Author, 2015)

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