

2021

Understanding District Assemblywomen Participation in District Assemblies Common Fund Decisions in Ghana

Ranney B. Jackson
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Walden University

College of Social and Behavioral Sciences

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Ranney B. Jackson

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Walden University
2021

Abstract

Understanding District Assemblywomen Participation in District Assemblies Common
Fund Decisions in Ghana

by

Ranney B. Jackson

MBA, Oklahoma City University, 1984

BA, University of Liberia, 1978

Proposal Submitted in Partial Fulfillment

of the Requirements for the Degree of

Doctor of Philosophy

Public Policy and Administration – Local Government Management and Sustainable
Communities

Walden University

November 2021

Abstract

The problem addressed in this study is that there is no deep understanding of the perspectives of the Assemblywomen of Ghana regarding their participation in the District Assemblies Common Fund (Common Fund) in Ghana. This qualitative case study aimed to explore and understand the perspectives of the assemblywomen's participation in decisions of the Common Fund regarding development initiatives in their districts. The study used two theoretical frameworks, citizen participation theory and a sequential theory of decentralization, to provide better insights into the existence of this gap. The critical finding derived from an analysis of interviewing 25 assembly members is that the assemblywomen play no role in the decision-making process of the Common Fund. This finding led to the recommendation that the government provides 30% seats for women in the Metropolitan, Municipal, and District Assemblies (MMDAs) to fill this participation gap. This analysis showed that the District assemblies are far from accomplishing President Rawlings' decentralization policy. Nevertheless, with the implementation of the recommendation to increase the number of assemblywomen in the assemblies, there is a good chance that such an increase will increase the number of assemblywomen and their participation, thus bringing about positive social change.

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Dedication

This research is dedicated to my wife, Alice Kebbeh Jackson. I like to also dedicate this research to my children and others who helped me through my long-life educational journey, my parents, Mr. & Mrs. Flomo and Korto Jackson, my uncle, Mr. Mulbah S. Jackson and my sponsor, Hon. Harry A. Greaves, Sr. All of you played significant roles in my life as a wife, parents, mentors, and supporters. While some of you are no longer with me, I continued to appreciate and remember you as I accomplished my educational goal.

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Throughout my academic journey, especially during the completion of this dissertation, the encouragement of my wife, Alice Kebbeh Jackson, helped make this day a reality. When challenges and barriers attempted to steal the dream of completion, she always offered an encouraging word or a needed hug. I dedicate this work to her, my wife, my life partner, Alice Kebbeh Jackson, who stood by me throughout this process and held me up when I needed it. She allowed me to pursue my dream with her serving as the breadwinner of the family. Without her trust in me to accomplish my goal, it would not have been fulfilled.

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Chapter 1: Introduction to the Study

Introduction

Ghana got its independence from Britain on March 6, 1957, following a long period of colonialism (Torrent, 2016) that began with the arrival of the Portuguese in 1470 (Boahene, 1975) to 1885 when the British took over Ghana at the Berlin Conference (Rosenberg, 2019). The president of the young independent nation, Kwame Nkrumah, took the stance of considering the women of Ghana marginalized for so long. The president instituted an affirmative action program that created ten seats in the first parliament for women (Manuh, 2011). Farrar (1997) stated that despite Nkrumah's effort, women's marginalization has not always existed. Before reorganizing the Akan society in the 1300s and 1400s, there existed women's institutions like the Queen Mother, a matrilineage system that gives women in Ghana inherited properties, political opportunities to state offices, and means to the spiritual world (DeCorse & Spiers, 2009). The spiritual world is a belief of Ghanaians that they are linked through spirits to the early years of human life, a life that ensures these women power (McCaskie, 1981).

The overthrow of Nkrumah in 1966 began a long period of uncertainty for women's involvement in the government. This period also brought about the need for good leadership in the country (Torrent, 2016). In 1981, when Flight Lieutenant Jerry John Rawlings became president, he followed Nkrumah's example of empowering the women of Ghana (Kasim & Agbola, 2017). Rawlings empowered the women through his decentralization program (Ayee, 2012; Smoke, 2003; Turner & Hulme, 1997).

The decentralization program was to provide local citizens with the ability to participate in the decision-making process of their District Assemblies (Acheampong & Dinye, 2015). Such participation was also to enable the assemblywomen to play a meaningful role in decisions affecting their District Assemblies Common Fund (Common Fund), a fund comprising five percent of the national budget used for local government development activities. Rawlings concretized the need for citizen participation in the Constitution through Article 35 (6)(d):

The State shall take appropriate measures to make democracy a reality by decentralizing the administrative and financial machinery of government to the regions and districts and by affording all possible opportunities to the people to participate in decision-making at every level in national life and government (Ghana Const. Article 35 (6)(d)), 1992).

The literature that I reviewed for this study focused on the lack of government participation by the general population and District Assembly members of Ghana in general, but with no reference to assemblywomen's specific involvement or noninvolvement in Common Fund decision-making (Opare, 2015). This study was needed to understand the perspectives of these assemblywomen's participation in decisions regarding development initiatives in their districts (Debrah, 2014). This study was also necessary to fill this gap in which policymakers are provided with information from the District Assembly members to influence the formulation of policies to improve District Assemblywomen's participation in decisions of the Common Fund.

Background

The establishment of the Decentralization Policy of Ghana by Flight Lieutenant Jerry John Rawlings following British colonialism and the ouster of President Kwame Nkrumah brought renewed hopes for women's participation in the country's political system (Ayee, 2012; Smoke, 2003; Turner & Hulme, 1997). The return of democracy and the enactment of the decentralization policy into law through the Local Government Act 462 of 1993 strengthened women's hopes (Ayee, 2012; Smoke, 2003; Turner & Hulme, 1997).

The Local Government Act placed the District Assemblies as the highest political authority in the districts of Ghana (Ghana Const. Local Govt. Act 462, 1993). As the highest political authority of the districts, women elected to this body hoped they would enjoy all the privileges and benefits of their elected positions when it came to the decision-making process. This positive thinking was in line with their rise in population, which they believed would translate into power for women through the District Assemblies. In 2010, the Population and Housing Census of Ghana put the population of Ghana at 24,658,823 (12,024,845 males and 12,633,978 females). Despite a higher female population, the men continued to assert more power than the women. In an election held in Ghana in 2010, Boateng and Kosi (2015) and Yobo (2012a) stated that 412 women were elected out of 6,093 persons chosen. In another election in 2015, the organization, ABANTU for Development, a pan-African international nongovernmental organization that trains women for leadership in sustainable development, stated that 18,938 candidates contested District Assembly positions in Ghana; there were 17,756

men and 1,182 women (Boateng & Kosi, 2015). Such disparity gives the men more power over the women (Baah-Enumh et al., 2005; GSS, 2012; Trikala, 2009).

In another survey in which 53 women from the Abura-Asebu-Kwamankese District of Ghana were surveyed, results showed that women's participation in meetings was only about attendance instead of playing a meaningful role in making decisions compared to the men (Abakah, 2018). Tagoe and Abakah (2015) observed that while there is a disparity in the number of assemblymen to assemblywomen, participation in the District Assemblies Common Fund decisions is not proportional to their populations. Acheampong and Dinye (2015) stated that this is due to the absence of reforms for the participation of assemblywomen.

A study from Wenchi District confirmed that no functional plan of action had been established for citizen participation (Adams & Taabazuing, 2014). These are corroborated by a study conducted in Ejisu of 353 women that indicated that while women participate and play significant roles in the homes and national and international organizations outside of government, they play only minor roles in the assemblies of the government (Acheampong & Dinye, 2015).

Such statistics have prompted the women in Ghana to seek assistance from international organizations for their plight (Odame, 2010). One international organization that has assisted women the most is the United Nations (UN; Bawa, 2016). The UN has supported women through the passage of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs). These goals are intended to eliminate all forms of discrimination against women (Bawa, 2016). Contrary to these efforts, Ghana's traditions and cultures continue to hinder

women's empowerment (Cleveland, 2015). Within the various ethnic groups, the traditions and cultures are used by men to continue to undermine women's authority (Cleveland, 2015).

Cleveland (2015) stated that how men see their powers over women is not new, and this is not only due to traditions and cultures. It began in the early 1300s to the 1400s after the reorganization of the Akan society. Before the reorganization of the Akan society during the precolonial period, there existed influential women and women organizations like the institution of Queen Mother (Farrar, 1997). As explained in the introductory section, the Queen Mothers were a dominant part of the African political system. Farrar (1997) stated that the Ohemmaa, as they were known, got their titles as Queen Mothers after gaining seniority in the royal matrilineage. They were powerful and influential as a female institution and wielded what was called true political power. They could, under certain conditions, assume full control of governing authority and regard themselves as kings. One such queen mother that existed during 1840 – 1921 was Yaa Asantewaa, a queen mother of Ejisu in the Ashanti Empire that forms current Ghana. As Queen Mother, Yaa Asantewaa led the Asanti war against British colonialism in the 1900s (Brempong, 2000).

The matrilineage system gives the Queen Mothers of Ghana opportunities to political positions and means of passage to the spiritual world (DeCorse & Spiers, 2009). Stoeltie (2004) stated that Ghanaian ethnic groups believe a linkage between them and those who died before them and regard them as ancestors. Ghanaians believe that their ancestors are always near, observing every action they take.

However, Cohen (1977) argued that Queen Mothers during the Akan precolonial periods were merely ceremonial and not as powerful as the kings. Cohen's (1977) argument was that kings regarded Queen Mothers as opposition to the kings; therefore, they could not be more powerful than the kings who possessed real political power. Farrar (1997) maintained that Cohen's (1977) consideration of Queen Mothers as ceremonial is derived from the Queen Mothers in the Pabir Kingdom of Nigeria. However, the Queen Mothers that Farrar researched in the Brong Ahafo region of Ghana that falls within the Nkoransa Traditional area of Northern Akan or Bono kingdom of Nkoransa gives a different meaning to Queen Mother's power. The stools, which signify female power in the Akan designation, embodied real political power. Farrar (1997) stated that the debate should not be about whether Queen Mother had political power because they did, but the argument should be about whether Queen Mothers had more political power than the kings.

Due to the lack of opportunities for women's participation in the decision-making process, women have taken on the task of mobilizing their constituencies for recognition through women's movements and building coalitions such as the Women's Manifesto Coalition (Madsen, 2015). The purpose of these women's movements is to improve women's conditions (Prah, 1996). Prah (1996) names some of these women's movements as the 31st December Women's Movement, the International Association of Women Lawyers (FIDA), and its affiliate Women in Law and Development in Africa (WILDAF). The former First Lady of Ghana, Mrs. Agyeman-Rawlings, serves as the 31st December

Women's Movement (WMM) leader. The Christian Mothers' Union is another women's movement involved with issues that impact women in the church (Prah, 1996).

The Ghanaian women also pressured the government during 2001 to establish the Ministry of Gender, Children, and Social Protection to handle women and children's issues (Ghanaweb.com). The women's effort further strengthened the institution of Queen Mother and brought about the first female Speaker of Parliament, Mrs. Joyce Bamford (Drah, 2014).

Economically, the women of Ghana transformed themselves into what they call Nana Benz, a name given to these women because they owned and drove Mercedes Benz cars due to their success in doing business (Kothor, 2017). The Nana Benz were women of Togo and Ghana who became rich and powerful from trading wax printed cloth of Dutch Wax textile (Kothor, 2017). Kothor (2017) stated that the activities of the Nana Benz stem from the British Gold Coast in Ghana.

All these women's activities and provisions within the country's decentralization policy helped improve women's participation. They strengthened the governance system of inclusion (Kasim & Agbola, 2017), thereby providing an effective platform for active citizen participation at the local level (Adams & Taabazuing, 2015). Decentralization is about increasing the widespread popular participation of the citizens at the local level (Mohammed, 2016).

Debrah (2017) observed that while there should be inclusion, many studies show that those at the grassroots level are perceived to lack such inclusion. Debrah's (2017) observation supported a study done by the District Assemblies (ghanadistricts.com,

2017). The research indicates that women's participation and interest at the assembly level were low. Such an assessment by the District Assemblies themselves clearly shows that assemblywomen's involvement in the decision-making process of the Common Fund is much lower.

Problem Statement

The problem addressed by this study was that there was no deep understanding of the perspectives of the District Assembly members of Ghana concerning the participation of assemblywomen in the decision-making process of the Common Fund of Ghana. Despite various laws in the nation's constitution on citizen participation (Ghana Const. Amend. 12 Sec, II, 1992), researchers are not aware of the extent of assemblywomen's participation in Common Fund decisions (Acheamponp & Dinye, 2015). In this study, I sought to understand assemblywomen's involvement in Common Fund decisions because a lack of assemblywomen's involvement would undermine the government's democratic and decentralization policy of inclusion (Adam & Taabazuing, 2015).

The Constitution empowers every elected member of the Assembly to participate in decisions regarding the Common Fund (Ghana Const. Amend. 12 Sec, II, 1992). There was insufficient research and analysis regarding the assemblywomen's role in decisions affecting the Common Fund. This study adds to the body of knowledge by making an essential contribution to understanding the role of the assemblywomen in Common Fund decisions in the District Assemblies.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this qualitative case study was to explore and understand the perspectives of District Assembly members of Ghana concerning the participation of assemblywomen in the decision-making process of the District Assemblies Common Fund of Ghana. I intended to understand the Assembly members' perspectives through in-depth interviews of the extent and adequacy of the involvement of the assemblywomen in decisions affecting the Common Fund. Knowledge acquired from this study will give Ghanaian policymakers who value citizens' perspectives on participation an opportunity to write better policies on citizen participation.

Research Question

The research question for this qualitative case study was: What are the perspectives of District Assembly members of Ghana concerning the participation of assemblywomen in the decision-making process of the District Assemblies Common Fund (Common Fund) of Ghana?

Theoretical Foundation

Two theories served as the foundation for this research study. The theories are the citizen participation theory and a sequential theory of decentralization.

Citizen Participation Theory

The first theory, the citizen participation theory, was practiced by the Greeks (Cogan & Sharp, 1986). In Athens, Greece, citizen participation was enjoyed only by male citizens (Cartwright, 2018). Jean-Jacques Rousseau, a Genevan philosopher, developed his citizen participation theory during the development of his social contract

theory (Bertram, 2010). Rousseau discussed citizen participation theory under the caption universal participation. Rousseau felt that people will only feel bound by a law that they can support. Such citizens should be committed to the general good of all. The theory was used in the mid-1960s by President Lyndon B. Johnson to promote his Great Society Program (Cogan & Sharp, 1986).

The theory stated that citizen participation can make a planning process more useful in making decisions (Cogan & Sharp, 1986). Michels and de Graaf (2009) developed their citizen participation theory in the context of citizen participation in local government. Michels and de Graaf (2009) used the theory as a framework in advising local authorities about the involvement of their citizens in development initiatives. Michels and de Graaf (2009) felt that citizen participation is good at ensuring that local authorities interact with citizens and elected officials within democratic institutions. Michels and de Graaf (2009) stressed that such interaction helps bridge the gap between political powers and citizens. It is this citizen participation theory that I used as the framework for this study because it aligned with my research of inclusion of assemblywomen in the decision-making process of the Common Fund.

A Sequential Theory of Decentralization

The second theory that I chose for this qualitative research was the sequential theory of decentralization developed by Tulia G. Falleti (Dickovick, 2014). The theory states that decentralization is a process geared towards transferring responsibilities, resources, and authority from the central government to the local government (Falleti,

2005). Due to the emphasis of this study on local government, the sequential theory of decentralization was appropriate.

The theory has three main parts, decentralization as a process, considers preferences, and considers transformational timing (Falleti, 2004). Supporters of decentralization believe that it enhances political participation, accountability, and administrative and excellent fiscal system (IBD 1994, Oats, 1972, 1997; Shah 1994; Weingast 1995; Weinsner Duran 1992). I embraced this philosophical view of decentralization and used this as the framework for this study.

Nature of the Study

This study's methodology was qualitative with a case study approach to gather the study's data. I used interviews, which I conducted by telephone using the WhatsApp platform, handheld recorder, and pen and paper to collect descriptive information through open-ended semistructured interviews. According to Yin (2015), an essential element of a case study approach is to collect data from participants through in-depth interviews. In selecting the number of participants for a qualitative case study, Boddy (2016) recommended that the number of participants should range from 15 – 30. For this study, I selected 25 assembly members, five assembly members from each region, for the interviews. Some of the 25 assembly members came from the same District Assemblies, while others came from separate Assemblies. I did this to ensure that the information provided was accurate, as I was not present in Ghana for the interviews. While my emphasis was on getting the perspectives of the assemblywomen, it was appropriate also to get the perspectives of the assemblymen for a balanced understanding of the

participation of assemblywomen in an Assembly's decisions. I conducted the interviews with individual Assembly members by collecting the data at the lowest level unit of analysis as possible. According to Patton (2015), the researcher should collect the data at the lowest unit level as possible. Bernard (1994) stated that while there may exist more than one case or several cross-case comparisons, what is important is getting the views of each individual. This does not mean that the researcher is not interested in the general population but says that can be done later (Stake, 2000). Gathering the perspectives of these District Assembly members of Ghana captured "how they perceive it, describe it, feel about it, judge it, remember it, make sense of it, and talk about it with others" (Patton, 2015, p.115). I used these interviews to answer the research question by understanding seemingly the views and experiences concerning the participation of the assemblywomen in Common Fund decisions. I used NVivo 12 Pro Data Analysis Software to analyze the interview data.

Definitions

ABANTU for Development: A Pan-African international nongovernmental organization established in 1991 in London by African women. The purpose of the organization is to train women for leadership in sustainable development. The word ABANTU is not an acronym but a word that means people in several African languages. The founders of ABANTU capitalize letters in the word to signify its importance. The organization is concerned with gender discrimination issues which its founders see as an obstacle to sustainable development (Jaffer, 2014).

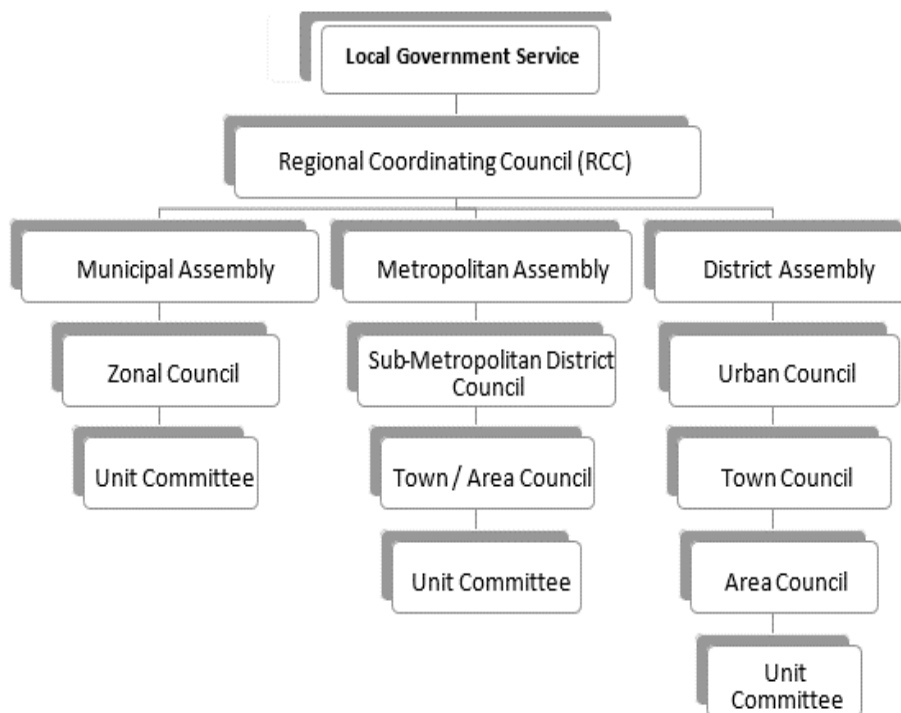
Assemblywomen: Women elected to MMDAs of Ghana.

Colonialism: Colonialism, based on the Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy, is a practice in which people take domination over other people. The trans-Atlantic slave trade was a form of colonialism that originated with the arrival of the Portuguese in 1470, followed by the French, the British, the Dutch, and the Danes (Boahene, 1975). The Portuguese first started with trading in gold and later in humans. The human trade, known as the trans-Atlantic Slave Trade, caused the displacement of Africans to the Americas and the Mediterranean (Bonsu, 2015). In 1884 – 1885 the Portuguese invited other countries involved in the slave trade to a conference in Berlin, which came to be called the Berlin Conference (Rosenberg, 2019). They carved Africa into 50 protected areas or colonies for several European powers (Rosenberg, 2019).

Decentralization Policy of Ghana: Decentralization in Ghana came about by creating a local government in Ghana. The decentralization policy of Ghana created the districts and their Assemblies. It transferred the political, administrative, and fiscal powers of decision-making, including raising funds through the collection of taxation and their allocation (Ghana Const. Amend. 12 Sec, II, 1992). The Local Government structure comprises Metropolitan, Municipal, and District Assemblies (MMDAs; Figure 1). The MMDAs are generally referred to as District Assemblies, even though they all have Assemblies. The leadership of the Assemblies includes the Chief Executives, Members of Parliament residing within the District, the Coordinating Directors, and the Presiding Members (Ghana Districts: A repository of all Local Assemblies in Ghana; Figure 1).

Figure 1

Local Government System in Ghana



Note:

<https://images.search.yahoo.com/search/images?p=local+government+structure+chart>

District Assemblies Common Fund (Common Fund): The creation of the 1992 constitution of Ghana was to promote democracy and decentralization. Chapter 20, Article 240-256, dealt explicitly with implementing the country’s decentralization policy and Local Government (Adu-Gyamfi, 2014). The Constitution transferred significant responsibilities to the districts through the Local Government Act. Because of the inadequacy of support provided to the districts to carry out their responsibilities, the Central Government created the Common Fund, which is five percent of the national

budget. The districts use the Common Fund in Ghana to undertake development initiatives in the districts.

Ensure Environmental sustainability: In 2010, the United Nations set up eight sustainable development goals known as the Millennium Development Goals. The seventh of those goals was to ensure environmental sustainability. Ensuring environmental sustainability meant reducing biodiversity loss, providing access to safe drinking water to the population and making significant improvements in the lives of at least 100 million slum dwellers (Bawa, 2016).

Institution of Queen Mother: The Queen Mothers in ancient Akan Ghana dominated the political systems (Farrar, 1997). While their powers have deteriorated over the years, they still participate in the political system of Ghana. The institution of queen mothers develops women leaders that support and fight for women's causes.

International Non-Governmental Organizations (INGOs): INGOs are nonprofit voluntary organizations operating globally whose members are countries. An example of INGOs is the United Nations (Baah-Ennumh et al., 2005; GSS, 2012; Trikala, 2009).

Matrilineage System: The matrilineage system is a system that gives the women of Ghana inherited properties, political opportunities to state offices, and means to the spiritual world (DeCorse & Spiers, 2009).

Patriarchal System: The reorganization of the Akan Society brought about the establishment of the patriarchy system, putting the men over the women, where the eldest male in the family is the head from whom the tracing of descendants takes place. The

patriarchal system similarly brought the institutions of chieftaincy and kingships with it, giving power to the men over the women (Cleveland, 2015).

Subdistrict Structures: Below the District Assemblies are submetropolitan District Councils, amounting to 58 Town Councils, 108 Zonal Councils, 626 Area Councils, and more than 16,000 Unit Committees.

Assumptions

Before the interviews, I explained to the participants that their responses will be confidential. I informed the participants upon completing my study, the interview recording and transcript will be kept by me for 5 years as required by Walden University and then disposed.

Voluntary nature of the study:

By providing this information, I assumed four things:

1. I assumed that the District Assembly members of Ghana will be forthright in their responses to the interview questions.
2. I assumed that the findings of the study will make the assemblymen allow the assemblywomen full participation in the decision-making process of the Common Fund.
3. I assumed that the District Assembly members of Ghana will be willing to transcend the norms of the culture or tradition of Ghana in their roles as District Assembly members of Ghana.
4. I assumed that the assemblywomen will be enthusiastic in sharing their perspectives and experiences with me.

Scope and Delimitations

There are 16 regions in Ghana, namely, Ahafo, Ashanti, Bono, Bono East, Central, Eastern, Greater Accra, Northern, Northern East, Savannah, Oti, Upper East, Upper West, Volta, Western, and Western North Region (Ghana Districts: A repository of all Local Assemblies in Ghana). Before these 16 regions, the 1957 constitution had five regions, Eastern, Western, Ashanti, Northern, and the Trans-Volta Togoland Regions. It was followed by the 1960 Republic Constitution, at the time when the country was divided into eight regions, namely Ashanti, Brong Ahafo, Central, Eastern, Northern, Upper Volta, and Western (A Guide to District Assemblies in Ghana, 2016).

There was again a division of the country into ten regions before another division into 16 regions. The three levels of the government are the Central Government, the Regional Administration, and the Local Governments (A Guide to District Assemblies in Ghana, 2016). The country consists of 260 Metropolitan, Municipal, and District Assemblies (MMDAs). There are six Metropolitan Assemblies, 109 Municipal Assemblies, and 145 District Assemblies. The hierarchy of the MMDAs is based on population. A Metropolis is the highest and has a minimum population of 250, 000 people, a Municipality the next highest with a minimum population of 95,000 people, and a District the lowest has a population of 75,000 people. Assemblies of the MMDAs are called District Assemblies and are created by the Minister of Local Government through a legislative instrument. The Regional Coordinating Councils (RCCs) serve as coordinating bodies of the MMDAs. A major responsibility of the Regional Coordinating Councils is to resolve conflicts between a District Assembly and an agency of the Central

Government, public corporation, statutory body, non-governmental organization, or an individual (936 Local Government ACT, 2016). Below the MMDAs are subdistrict structures. These subdistrict structures are composed of submetropolitan District Councils, amounting to 58 Town Councils, 108 Zonal Councils, and 626 Area Councils with more than 16,000 Unit Committees (Ghana Districts: A repository of all Local Assemblies in Ghana). Unfortunately, the citizens of these structures lack adequate information and knowledge regarding the functions and responsibilities of the MMDAs (A Guide to District Assemblies in Ghana, 2016). The structures below do not get sufficient information to understand how the District Assemblies work to enable them take part in the decision-making process (A Guide to District Assemblies in Ghana, 2016).

The regions that I selected to conduct my in-depth interviews are Ashanti, Central, Eastern, Greater Accra, and Western. The Ashanti, Central, and Eastern regions were selected because they have the highest numbers of districts. The Greater Accra and Western Regions were selected because they are among the regions with the lowest number of districts. (Tagoe & Abakah, 2015).

The inquiry was limited to soliciting the views and perspectives of the District Assembly members of Ghana because they are the participants in the study. I interviewed the assemblymen to compare their views and perspective with the assemblywomen.

Limitations

Limitations to case studies include the inability of the research to be duplicated (Mcleod, 2019). Mcleod stated that a case study may lack scientific rigor, become time-

consuming and expensive, and include researcher bias. After reading the pieces of literature, one limitation expected was difficulty in obtaining some of the needed in-depth interviews. Many of these districts are in the country's remote parts, and getting reception utilizing telephone would be difficult. Nevertheless, I got the number of participants needed for the data collection process. The other expected challenge was language barrier. Some Ghanaians speak only in their various languages. I felt those participants who fell in this category would be replaced or hire interpreters for them. However, I did not encounter language barrier.

Significance of the Study

This study was vital to fill the literature gap where policymakers are provided with information regarding the perspectives of the assemblywomen that explain their participation in the decision-making process of the Common Fund. Understanding the perspectives of the assemblywomen gave reasons to the Assemblies and the government to involve the assemblywomen in the decision-making process of the Common Fund.

Currently, the involvement of the assemblywomen in the decision-making process of the Common Fund seems minimal. Such action can undermine the core principles of decentralization, which calls for the widespread participation of citizens at the government's local level (Mohammed 2017). Getting the assemblywomen involved in the decision-making process enhances the democratic and decentralization process of the Assembly and opens room for social change.

Summary

The discussion in this chapter explained the citizens' perceived lack of participation in the decision-making process of Ghana's local government structure. The election of Kwame Nkrumah, as President of Ghana, gave opportunities to the youths and women to participate in the government. However, the overthrow of President Nkrumah in 1966 ended those opportunities. Opportunities for the women did not return until the presidency of President Rawlings. President Rawlings gave the women of Ghana renewed hopes of participating in the government again. This hope came through the enactment of the Local Government laws into the Constitution giving rise to the establishment of the decentralization policy of Flight Lieutenant Jerry John Rawlings, President of Ghana. When the local citizens, including youths and women, fought alongside the men for independence from colonial Britain, they expected that equality would exist in the government. However, that hope has not been fully realized. In a democratic nation with a decentralization program, public participation is critical. It seems that has not been materialized which contradicts such lack of participation. This study sought to understand the perspectives of the assemblywomen's participation in decisions of the District Assembly Common Fund.

To understand the participation of the assemblywomen in the Common Fund, in-depth interviews with the District Assembly members of Ghana was needed. Responses from the District Assembly members were also needed to answer the research question of the study. Two theories used for the study were the citizen participation theory and a

sequential theory. Chapter 2 includes the literature search strategy and the literature review.

Chapter 2: Literature Review

Introduction

The problem that I addressed in this study was to understand the perspectives of District Assembly members of Ghana concerning the participation of assemblywomen in the decision-making process of the Common Fund in Ghana. A lack of involvement in decisions affecting the Common Fund goes contrary to the goals and objectives of the country's decentralization policy (Adam & Taabazuing, 2015).

In 1988, Ghana's President, Flight Lieutenant Jerry John Rawlings, established the country's decentralization policy. The enactment of laws into the Constitution took place in 1993. The policy had four pillars: political, administration, decentralized planning, and fiscal decentralization (Government of Ghana Draft Decentralization Policy Framework, 2010). In the formulation process of the policy, the government says that there were tremendous time and effort put into formulating the policy. These efforts included ten regions level consultative meetings, written position papers, and a national stakeholder conference with input from nine policy action areas (Government of Ghana Draft Decentralization Policy Framework, 2010).

The government stated that for more than 25 years, it has not achieved its primary goal of getting popular participation of citizens on the local government level. The government says that the policy has been incoherent and contradictory when incorporating the regions, departments, and other parts of the government into the national governance structure (Government of Ghana Draft Decentralization Policy Framework, 2010).

The government further admits that policy results are mixed after 2 decades of implementation (Ghana's Draft Decentralization Policy Framework). One crucial factor of the plan that has not been incorporated is fiscal decentralization (Government of Ghana Draft Decentralization Policy Framework, 2010). While there has been some concrete development, the overall policy results have not been impressive (Government of Ghana Draft Decentralization Policy Framework, 2010).

Adam and Taabazuing (2015) stated that such admission by the government proves his point that the District Assemblies have not provided the proper platform for citizen participation. The information provided by the government's draft decentralization policy framework made this study even more relevant because it helps to address the research question of this study about the involvement of these assemblywomen in participating in the decision-making process of the Common Fund.

By addressing the research question, readers will grasp proposed strategies that uphold the constitutional rights of these assemblywomen (Kenton, 2019). A qualitative case study design is appropriate because it helped me understand the assemblywomen's perspectives that explained their participation in decisions affecting the Common Fund.

Literature Search Strategy

The literature search strategy that I used for the study was Google Scholar, online news magazines, relevant websites, and search engines of online databases of the Walden University Library. Search engines that I used were EBSCOhost, Sage premier, and ProQuest. Documents also used include Ghana government documents (Ghanaian Constitution, The Ghana National Decentralization Action Plans, 2010 – 2015 & 2015 –

2019, Ghana Statistical Services, Ghana Decentralization Policy, and District Assemblies' Common Fund Act, 1993, Act 455).

The key terms that I used include *ABANTU for Development, Assemblywomen, Colonialism, Decentralization, District Assemblies, District Assemblies Common Fund (Common Fund), environmental sustainability, Ghana's history, the institution of Queen Mother, international nongovernmental organization, matrilineage system, Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), patriarchal system, and sustainable development*. These key terms assisted me in identifying scholarly literature and peer-reviewed journals.

Theoretical Foundation

I chose two theories as the framework for this research study: The citizen participation theory and a sequential theory of decentralization. I will discuss both.

Citizen Participation Theory

The citizen participation theory dates back to Ancient Greece and Colonial New England was initiated as a component of Greece's democratic decision-making process (Cogan & Sharp, 1986). In the fifth and fourth century BCE, only male citizens of Athens, Greece, had equal political rights, freedom of speech, and the right to participate directly in the democratic process (Cartwright, 2018).

Later, Jean-Jacques Rousseau, a Genevan philosopher, developed his democracy and participation theory during the development of his social contract theory (Bertram, 2010). Rousseau said that when political authority is legitimate and its citizens agree to honor its jurisdiction, there is a social contract established between the citizen and the administration. It also means that the body has met the general will of the citizens.

Rousseau felt that citizen participation is rooted in democracy (Bertram, 2010). Rousseau thought it is crucial to establish engagement, drive trust, and remain connected to the citizens. Rousseau also felt that citizens will not have a general will in a government where inequality exists.

Since then, researchers have used the theory or developed some aspects of the theory as an integral part of the democratic decision-making process in various contexts, externally and locally (Cogan & Sharp, 1986). The theory became institutionalized in America in the mid-1960s during President Lyndon B. Johnson's Great Society Program (Cogan & Sharp, 1986). The program was a series of domestic programs that increased the participation of all Americans in the government's democratic process. It also enabled the citizens to receive the benefits to which they were entitled. Some of the President's programs were the Voting Rights Act, the Social Security Amendments Act, which created Medicare and Medicaid, among others (Longley, 2018).

According to the theory, citizen participation can make a planning process more effective in making decisions (Cogan & Sharp, 1986). Michels and de Graaf (2009) used citizen participation theory in the context of citizen participation in local government. Michels and de Graaf (2009) used citizen participation theory as a framework that advises public officials and local citizens on public participation initiatives in a democracy. Michels and de Graaf (2009) showed how citizen participation plays a vital role in advising local authorities about the involvement of their citizens in local initiatives. They argued that citizen participation should emphasize interactive policymaking with elected democratic institutions because it helps bridge the gap

between political authorities and their citizens. The framework of this citizen participation theory of the inclusion of local citizens in the decision-making process aligned with the integration of assemblywomen in the decision-making process of the Common Fund.

When Flight Lieutenant Jerry John Rawlings established the country's decentralization policy, it created districts and their elected and appointed District Assembly members, their functions and authorities, and the Common Fund. The fund supports the sustainability of the Assemblies (Ayee, 2012; Smoke, 2003; Turner & Hulme, 1997). Other aspects of the act included transferring power, authority, and responsibility from the central government to the local government, furthering accountability, responsible governance, and reducing poverty (Hidayat, 2017). For a decentralization policy to be successful, it needs active citizen participation (Bebelleh & Nobabumah, 2013). Bebelleh and Nobabumah (2013) supported the statement by Mohammed (2017), who says that the success of decentralization is about getting popular support from citizens at the local level. Mohamed and Agalega (2017) stress that the key factors for the longevity of Ghana's decentralization policy are the mobilization for participation, representation, and accountability of the central and local governments.

While there has not been participation granted to the local citizens equally, there has not been participation given to women specifically at the Assembly level regarding decisions affecting the Common Fund (Boateng & Kosi, 2015). For sustainable development to improve in Ghana, women should be allowed to participate in the

development process, especially when the women are in the majority in terms of population (Boateng & Kosi, 2015).

Michels and de Graaf' (2009) citizen participation theory addresses critical aspects of this study and discusses citizen participation as a contributor to democracy. Michels and de Graaf (2009) saw alignment between citizen participation and participatory democracy, deliberative democracy, and social capital. Michels and de Graaf stated that the involvement of citizens in policymaking and implementation enhanced positive results; that citizen involvement has created a more bottom-up approach to citizens' initiatives. Michels and de Graaf (2015) stated that participatory policymaking left vertical decision-making in its entirety while allowing the need to create more space for citizens to make suggestions and provide ideas. Michels and de Graaf further concluded that citizen participation can enhance the people's feeling of responsibility in dealing with public matters and helps to give the citizen a sense of responsibility. When the citizens are involved in the decision-making process, a greater legitimacy is derived from the decisions (de Graaf et al., 2015).

A Sequential Theory of Decentralization

The second theory that I chose for this research study is a sequential theory of decentralization. A sequential theory stated that decentralization is a process geared towards transferring responsibilities, resources, and authority from the central government to the local government (Falleti, 2005). The sequential theory of decentralization was developed by Tulia G. Falleti (Dickovick, 2014). Because the

emphasis of this study is on local government, I selected the sequential theory of decentralization.

There are three main parts to the theory (Falleti, 2004). First, decentralization as a process takes time and has different reform processes. Second, the theory is about the preferences of central and local governments. Thirdly, the timing of reforms between central and local governments is about priority (Falleti, 2004). Advocates of decentralization theory feel that decentralization brings about increased political participation, accountability, administrative, and fiscal resourcefulness (IBD, 1994, Oats, 1972, 1997; Shah 1994; Weingast 1995; Weinsner Duran, 1992). Opponents feel decentralization leads to budgetary constraints, instability, and enormous bureaucracy (Cornelius 1999, Fox & Aranda 1996; Rodden 2000; Rodden & Wibbels 2002; Stein 1998). I agreed with the advocates of decentralization that stated, decentralization brings about increased political participation, accountability, administrative, and fiscal resourcefulness.

Ghana's decentralization process has been slow though receiving various support from international organizations. It is indicated in the World Bank Appraisal Document that a proposed credit in the amount of SDR 71.1 million (US\$ 100 Million Equivalent) was given to the Republic of Ghana for a Ghana Secondary Cities Support Program on September 4, 2018 (Dept. of The World Bank Program Appraisal Document, September 4, 2018). The amount was divided among three areas of the government referred to as windows. The Local Government (Local window: U.S. \$90 million); the Regional level of the government (Regional window: U.S. \$3 million); and the National Government

(National window: U.S. \$7 million). Ghana received funding for its Support for Decentralization Reforms (SFDR) from the German Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development for 2007 to 2021 (German Cooperation, 2016). Amounts received by Ghana included EUR 5,800,000 (BMZ) covering April 2016 to March 2019; EUR 3,850,000 (BMZ) for September 2003 to March 2007; EUR 5,550,000 (BMZ) for April 2007 through June 2011; EUR 5,234,771 (BMZ) and EUR 576,500 (Cities Alliance) for July 2011 – March 2014; EUR 3,850,000 (BMZ) and EUR 336,000 (Cities Alliance) for April 2014 – March 2016 (German Cooperation, 2016).

In USAID/Ghana's 2015 Annual Report from October 2014 through September 2015, USAID gave Ghana for FY 2013 to 2017 amounts nearing one billion dollars in aids for economic Development. Most of the funding went to local government and decentralization programs for democracy and governance, health, education, and economic growth (USAID/Ghana's 2015 Annual Report, 2016). The United Nations, through the United Nations Development Program (UNDP), has provided millions of dollars to support Ghana's local government and its decentralization programs. It would seem that all of this support would move Ghana's decentralization program beyond criticisms, but that has not happened. The government, a democratic nation, has not empowered its citizens by getting them involved in the country's development activities.

In 2010, the European Development Fund gave EUR 45 million toward the country's decentralization program. The first phase was launched in 2011 in support of the Ghana Decentralization Support Program (GDSP; Ghana Decentralization Support Program, 2010). With all this assistance for Ghana in support of its decentralization

process, Ghana has not met the goals set by the Paris Declaration on what is termed as Aid Effectiveness (Brown, 2017). Brown (2017) stated that such ineffectiveness of the use of international aids for Ghana's decentralization program has made scholars and practitioners pessimistic about the changes that such grants have brought to the country.

Literature Review

In this section, I reviewed the literature concerning the establishment of Ghana's decentralization policy, its purpose, its impact on the citizens, and the country's form of government. I also discussed the participation of the local citizens, including the assemblywomen. Organizations like the United Nations have come to the aid of women and women organizations in Ghana. The UN's assistance is to increase the participation of women despite the country's tradition. Before Ghana gained independence from Britain in 1957, great sacrifices were made by the country's people, including youths and women (Torrent, 2016). The support from the women encouraged Nkrumah to involve them in his administration. This trend was followed by President Rawlings' vision to have women play some meaningful role in the government.

The Government of Ghana

As a democratic nation, Ghana is headed by a president and has a parliament and a judiciary independent of political interference by other government branches (Ghana Const. 1992-1996, Ch. 8-11). The country structured its system of government after the British system of government. The president serves as head of state and commander-in-chief of the armed forces of the country. In the country's constitution, the president takes precedence over the vice-president, the speaker of parliament, and the chief justice.

According to the constitution, the vice-president acts whenever the president is absent or is incapacitated. The speaker performs the duties of the president whenever the president and the vice-president are incapacitated. The president is elected for a four-year term and can serve only for a maximum of two terms (Ghana Const. 1992-1996, Ch. 8, Part 1, 57 - 92).

It was stated in the constitution, “There shall be a Parliament of Ghana which shall consist of not less than 140 elected members.” The Parliament (same as Congress of the United States) is vested with all legislative powers (Ghana Const. 1992-with amendments through 1996, Ch. 10, Part 1, 93 1 & 2). The country has a judiciary headed by a chief justice. According to the constitution, the supreme court is independent and subject only to the constitution. “The Judiciary shall consist of the Superior Courts of Judicature comprising the Supreme Court, the Court of Appeal, and the High Court and Regional Tribunals.” The supreme court consists of a chief justice and not less than nine other justices (Ghana Const. 1992-1996, Ch. 11, Part 1, 125 - 162). These provisions within the Constitution give ample reasons to the assemblywomen of Ghana to feel that Ghana, a democratic nation, cannot deprive them of participating in the decision-making process of the Common Fund. That doing this deprives them of their constitutional rights.

When President Rawlings initiated his decentralization policy in 1988, the strategy was to transfer power, authority, and responsibility from the central government to the local government to reduce poverty (Hidayat, 2017). The policy needed the participation and support of the local citizens to succeed. The involvement of the local citizens, including women, was to strengthen the governance of inclusion (Kasim &

Agbola, 2017). It would provide a successful medium for citizens to participate locally (Adams & Taabazuing, 2015). The policy was also to help create and regulate the local government system through the district assemblies (Debrah, 2016; Boamah, 2018). The enacted policy also called for establishing the district assemblies, their responsibilities, and a support fund known as the District Assemblies Common Fund to support district assemblies' development activities (Kasim & Agbola, 2017).

Provisions within the Act calling for the creation of districts in Ghana, functions of the district assemblies, and policies surrounding the District Assemblies Common Fund include the following: Chapter 20:

Section 241:

1. For the purposes of Local Government, Ghana shall be deemed to have been divided into the districts in existence immediately before the coming into force of this Constitution.
2. Parliament may, by law, make provision for the redrawing of the boundaries of districts or for reconstituting the districts.
3. Subject to this Constitution, a District Assembly shall be the highest Political authority in the district and shall have deliberative, legislative, and executive powers.

Section 251:

1. 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.

2. The composition of the Executive Committee and the procedure for its deliberations shall be as provided for by law.

Section 252:

1. There shall be a fund to be known as the District Assemblies Common Fund.
2. Subject to the provisions of this Constitution, Parliament shall annually make provision for the allocation of not less than five percent of the total revenues of Ghana to the District Assemblies for Development, and the amount shall be paid into the Common Fund in quarterly installments.

All these provisions were intended to bring about the participation of the local citizens. Nevertheless, these steps, since the independence of the nation, women have continued to struggle for equality and ways they can participate in the politics of the country (Torrent, 2016). The feeling of allowing women to participate in the country's governance dates back from President Kwame Nkrumah to the present leadership (Torrent, 2016). The constitution of the country gives every citizen the right to participate in the country's decision-making process. Ghana is a Unitary Democratic system of Government that should encourage citizen participation, including women. The government has not allowed women to fully participate in governing the country (Mohammed, 2016). When Nkrumah's first cabinet did not include a woman, it was further evidence of the lack of women's participation in the government (Donkor, 2019).

Role of A Pan-African International NGO in Ghana

ABANTU for Development is a Pan-African International Nongovernmental Organization that works with women in Ghana in their struggle for equality and

nondiscriminatory policies (Jaffer, 2014). The organization was formed by African women in London, the United Kingdom, in 1991, with the vision of dealing with gender discrimination, which the organization saw as a stumbling block for women in Ghana (Jaffer, 2014). ABANTU for Development focuses on empowering women's participation in the local, national, and international decision-making process. The four primary areas the organization focuses on are gender and poverty, gender and conflict, gender and governance, and gender and information and communication technologies. The organization seeks to advance women's interest in the lens of supporting policies that are in the interest of both men and women (Jaffer, 2014).

ABANTU for Development continues to realize its primary goal by equipping women organizations worldwide, including Ghana. The organization has provided more than 500 African women trainers that train women throughout the United Kingdom and Africa. These trainers teach women in workshops in their various countries for the advancement of positive social change. The organization also provides women organizations in their countries with multiple reports on activities from its research center. These pieces of information are published in the organization's quarterly newsletter, ABANTU News (Jaffer, 2014).

Women's Participation in Government

The country of Ghana has strived to promote the participation of women since its independence in 1957; however, the statistics show otherwise. Statistics in Ghana's 2010 Housing Census indicated women in Ghana were more than the men (Ghana Statistical Service, 2019), 51.2% of women and men 48.8%, but the men continue to hold more

positions disproportionately to the women. In a 2015 study, Boateng and Kosi (2015) stated that 412 women were elected out of 6,093 persons elected in Ghana (Yobo, 2012a). Another study of fifty-three women in the Abura-Asebu-Kwamankese District of Ghana found that there was not much women's participation in district meetings (Abakah, 2018).

The seeming lack of participation of women is not just within the districts; instead, it is also a national problem (Tagoe & Abakah, 2015). For instance, information from the Judicial Service stated that in March 2015, there were four women out of 12 members on the Supreme Court Bench, 27 women out of 98 judges on the High Court, 21 women out of 58 judges in the lower courts, and 16 women judges out of 50 in the District Court (Appiah, 2015). On the national level, because Ghana is a signatory to many international conventions to protect women against discrimination, one would feel that Ghana will champion women's cause. In 1979, Ghana adopted the Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination against Woman (CEDAW); the Country ratified the document in 1986 (Appiah, 2015). Additionally, Ghana is a signatory to the International Convention on Human Rights. The convention, known as the 1948 Universal Declaration of Human Rights, of which Ghana is a signatory and signed by the 192 members of the United Nations, calls for upholding the dignity and justice for all human beings (Appiah, 2015). Appiah (2015) further indicated that Article 21 of the convention grants every citizen the right to participate in the government. Such right Appiah says extends to electing representatives of their country. In Article 7 of the CEDAW, women have the same eligibility as men to participate at every level of their

governments (Appiah, 2015). Nevertheless, women in Ghana have continued to fight for equality and participation in the political arena.

Acheampong and Dinye (2015) stated that there is a lack of progress with changes carried out to improve the participation of women in the District Assemblies. For instance, in an interview of 353 women in Ejisu conducted by Acheampong and Dinye (2015), they discovered that while women participate and play significant roles in the homes and other areas of society, they play no significant roles in the government or the assemblies (Acheampong & Dinye, 2015). Acheampong and Dinye (2015) stated that worldwide, shutting women out of the decision-making process both on the local and the international levels is common. For example, women are 20% of the world's parliamentarians and 17% of the world's ministers and secretaries of the governments (United Nations, 2012).

Despite these statistics, Ghana has made some progress in the appointment of women in the government. In 1960, President Kwame Nkrumah created ten extra seats in the first Parliament of Ghana, bringing the number of women in Parliament to 18 (ghanaweb.com). In 2009, the country saw its first in history Speaker of Parliament, a retired Supreme Court Judge, Mrs. Joyce Bamford Addo. Also, in 2007, Mrs. Georgina Theodora Wood, first Chief Justice. In 2013, Mrs. Marietta Brew Appiah-Oppong became the second woman to serve as Attorney-General of the Country, following Mrs. Betty Mould-Iddrisu. The other women appointed into offices were Mrs. Elizabeth Mills-Robertson as the first female Director of Ghana Immigration Service in 2002, and Madam Hannah Tetteh, former Minister of Trade and Industry and the National

Democratic Congress Member of Parliament for Awutu-Senya West as the first female Minister of Foreign Affairs and Regional Integration.

Reforms in the Government

Since Ghana's independence in 1957, many governments following Nkrumah's administration have tried to bring about reforms that would have citizens participate in the nation's development. Those efforts have failed to bring about improvements that would bring about meaningful changes in women's participation (Ayee, 2013; Ohemeng & Ayee, 2012; Ohemeng & Anebo, 2012). Some of these transformations included Public Administration Restructuring and Decentralization, the Civil Service Reform (CSR), The National Institutional Renewal Program (NIRP), and the Civil Service Performance Improvement Programme (CSPIP) (Antwi & Agyekum, 2008); Ayee, 2001). Ohemeng and Ayee (2016) say these reforms have performed poorly. For change to be effective, it must use the bottom-up approach instead of the top-down approach (Ohemeng & Ayee, 2016).

Because these improvements have failed to fully involve women in the decision-making process, women continued to fight for equality and participation. The support for women's involvement extends to the 1995 Beijing Declaration and the United Nations' call for gender equality (Tagoe & Abakah, 2015). While some of these countries like Rwanda, Burundi, Angola, Tanzania, Uganda, and Mozambique have increased women's participation, women have continued to face roadblocks in their paths in Ghana (Tagoe & Abakah, 2015). Some international organizations have taken steps that would enable women to develop their political skills and encourage participation.

United Nations (UN) Role to Empower Women

The United Nations is an intergovernmental organization established on October 24, 1945, with the prime purpose of establishing and maintaining international peace and security among nations of the world (United Nations – Britannica Online Encyclopedia). Some of its specialized agencies include the International Labour Organization (ILO), World Health Organization (WHO), United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), the United Nations Security Council, the United Nations Children’s Fund (UNICEF), Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO), World Food Programme (WFP), the World Bank (WB), and the International Monetary Fund (IMF) (United Nations – Britannica Online Encyclopedia). Some founders of the United Nations include the United States, United Kingdom, Brazil, France, and the Soviet Union. Two African countries that were founders of the UN are Liberia and Ethiopia. In Ghana, the UN assists the women of Ghana in their fight for equality, non-violence against women, slavery, and discrimination (United Nations – Britannica Online Encyclopedia).

The UN is also fighting for women's education, ownership of property, the right to vote, and the right to have equal pay (Bawa, 2016). The UN's role of empowering women for justice and fairness spans over three decades (Bawa, 2016). Some of the policies which the UN has drafted on behalf of women include the United Nations Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) and the Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) (Bawa, 2016). In 1967, the United Nations General Assembly (UNGA) drafted the Maputo Protocol, adopted in 2003 to

protect the Rights of Women in Africa. These protocols and the MDGs were policies of the UN to empower women.

In 2016, the UN launched a new set of 17 bold and transformative development goals known as the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development (United Nations, 2015). The 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) are:

1. No poverty,
2. Zero hunger,
3. Good health and well-being,
4. Quality education,
5. Gender equality,
6. Clean water and sanitation,
7. Affordable and clean energy,
8. Decent work and economic growth,
9. Industry, innovation, and infrastructure,
10. Reduced inequality,
11. Sustainable cities and communities,
12. Responsible consumption and production,
13. Climate action,
14. Life below water (fish),
15. Life on land,
16. Peace, justice, and strong institutions, and
17. Partnership for the goals (United Nations, 2015).

Despite these efforts, the traditions and cultures of Ghana would seem to continue to hinder women's empowerment (Cleveland, 2015). Within the various ethnic groups, women's authority seems to be undermined by the powers of the men. Men hold advantages and are considered superior to women within these ethnic groups (Cleveland, 2015).

Ghana's Traditions and Cultures

Men are held in high esteem in the traditions and cultures within the various ethnic groups in Ghana (Cleveland, 2015). A study by Cleveland (2015) indicated that the undermining of women is due mainly to Ghana's traditions and cultures. These traditions and cultures include several languages amounting to more than sixty languages, with English being the official language. Ghana selected English due to the Country's colonial past with England that is an English-speaking country. Most Ghanaians speak other languages. The Country's Constitution, written in 1969, called for Parliament to speak, read, and understand English, whereas the 1992 Constitution did away with this provision of only speaking English in Parliament. Removal of this restriction within the Constitution was to avoid discrimination against those parliamentary members whose constituents could not understand English. Most Ghanaians speak up to three or more languages.

Most Ghanaian radio and television stations use English significantly but sometimes speak languages like Akan, Ewe, Ga Hausa, and Dagbani. In 1974, the Ghanaian Government approved a list of languages as mother-tongue languages (Owu-Ewie et al., 2006). Some of these languages are Akan, Nzema, Ga, Ga-Adangbe, Ewe,

Gonja, Kasem, Dagbani, and Dagaare (Owu-Ewie et al., 2006, p.77). Some of these languages represent ethnic groups. Some of those that represent ethnic groups are, Akan which represents the Fante and Twi ethnic groups, the Ewe represents the Ewe ethnic group, and the Ga-Adangbe represents the Ga-Adangbe ethnic group (Bawa, 2016).

These ethnic groups are some of the largest and most dominant ethnic groups in Ghana.

Akan (Fante and Twi)

Akan is the largest ethnic group of people in Ghana (Salm & Falola, 2002). They are composed of 48 percent of the population of Ghana (Salm & Falola, 2002). The two ethnic groups that make up the Akan are the Fante and the Twi. The Fante were the first ethnic group to settle in Ghana. They settled around the area called Cape Coast sometime around the thirteenth century. The Twi came later, settling within the central region between the Volta and Tano Rivers in the South. Some of these Akans moved to the east and established the Baule Community, now the nation of Cote d'Ivoire (Salm & Falola, 2002). The first group of Akan came around the late thirteenth century, long before the coming of the Portuguese, who arrived in 1470. The Fantes were the first ethnic group to form a relationship with the Europeans due to their location on the Sea Coast.

There was the development of several states as a result of the Akan. The growth of these states included the Akan state of Ashanti, Fante, Akwama, Akyem, Akuapem, Wassa, and Denkyira. The Ashante became the most powerful state among these states expanding from the eighteenth century to the nineteenth century. The British arrived just about the time that the power of the Asante Empire was getting powerless. As a result, the British defeated the Ashanti Empire and established a protectorate over them in 1906.

Once the British defeated the Asante Empire, the British began to create the Akan States into independent splinter states and provided them with resources that made them more independent.

The Ewe

The Ewe people migrated from Northern Togo (Salm & Falola, 2002). The Ewe may have also come from the Fon or Yoruba Tribe. The Volta Region is where they initially settled. In Ghana, you will find the Ewe around the Southeastern Part of Ghana, separated by the Volta from the Ga-Adangbe and Akan. They were found in German Togoland during the early colonial period. After the defeat of Germany in World War I, the League of Nations divided the Ewe between France and Britain. As part of Togo, the Ewe joined Ghana as the Volta Region of Ghana after Ghana got its independence from Britain. The British refusal to administrate British Togo separately from the Gold Coast made it easier to integrate British Togo into Ghana after independence (Rosenberg, 2019)

Ga-Adangbes

The Ga-Adangbes may have come from Nigeria (Salm & Falola, 2002). It is not certain whether they came from Yorubaland or Egypt. However, it is most likely that they came from the Yoruba because they have similarities in language, circumcision rites, the manner in naming their children, and the importance that they attach to the priesthood when it comes to state affairs. Ga is, fishermen, and farmers divided into seven towns James Town, Ussher Town, Osu, La, These, Numgua, and Tema. You will find most of the Ga People in the oldest part of Accra, the capital of Ghana. You will also find them in James Town and Ussher Town. They are found mostly in the coastal area.

The Impact of British Colonialism

Cleveland (2015) further stated that the Akan society reorganization and the coming of British Colonialism saw the power of women begin to deteriorate. The restructuring of the Akan Society brought about the establishment of the patriarchy system, putting the men over the women, where the eldest male in the family is the head from whom the tracing of descendants takes place. The patriarchy system similarly brought the institutions of chieftaincy and kingships with it, giving power to the men over the women (Cleveland, 2015).

Nwakeze and Schaffartzik (2014) agreed with this assertion and stated that the coming of British colonialism did not help improve women's development. Women could not own land or property under the institution of private property ownership established by colonial administrators (Nwakeze and Schaffartzik, 2014).

Positive Effects on Women

Unlike the views expressed by Nwakeze and Schaffartzik (2014), Ayesu et al. (2017) argue that British colonialism did have a positive impact on African women. Ayesu et al. say the first thing the British did was to free women from farm labor. Next, the British constructed clinics, health centers, and projects of interest to the women (Ayesu et al., 2017). Based on Ayesu et al.'s assertion about the supporting development activities of the British, it is easy to assume that British colonialism improved the lives of African women.

Contrary to Ayesu et al.'s (2017) declaration, Bonsu (2016) argued that British colonialism on the Gold Coast (Ghana) was not about empowering women. Bonsu (2015)

says that while colonialism may have improved women's lives somehow, the trans-Atlantic Slave Trade was an occurrence that had its positives and negatives on the people, including women. He names the positive impact of introducing new crops, European clothes, literacy, religion, and opportunities to work in an office environment.

Negative Impact

Bonsu (2015) stated that the adverse effects of British Colonialism outweighed the positives. Bonsu (2015) named the negative impacts of the displacement of Africans to the diaspora, causing a population reduction, and intensified inter-ethnic wars. In support of Bonsu, Ndlovu-Gatsheni (2015) quotes Ali Mazuri:

European colonial rule in Africa was more effective in destroying indigenous African structures than destroying African culture. The tension between new imported structures and old resilient cultures is part of the post-colonial war of civilizations on the African continent. The question has therefore arisen as to whether Africa is reclaiming its own.

Bonsu (2015) concluded by asking the question, who benefited from colonialism in Africa? Bonsu (2015) answered the question by saying that only the European slave merchants benefited because those enslaved from Africa were taken away to America and the Mediterranean, where they worked on sugarcane, cotton, and tobacco plantations; thus contributing to the growth of the economy of the two continents (Bonsu, 2016, p.374). In support of Bonsu's (2015) stance, Mensah (2016) says that colonialism on the Gold Coast should not emphasize one issue; rather, colonialism on the Gold Coast should

also highlight the struggle for the independence of people who continued to be enslaved by colonialism.

The Independence of Ghana

By 1956, Kwame Nkrumah and his people had begun seriously fighting the British for their freedom (Torrent, 2016). Boahene's 1975 article (as cited in Bonsu, 2016), the Trans-Atlantic slave trade started with the arrival of the Portuguese on the Gold Coast from 1470 onwards and later followed by the French, the Dutch, and the Danes. They were followed by the British in 1867 (Bonsu, 2016). When the Portuguese arrived around 1470, they traded gold but later changed the trade into buying slaves (Boddy-Evans, 2018). The Portuguese initially indulged in the trading of gold, guns, metal goods, and tobacco. (Boddy-Evans, 2018). They then used the guns to expand their empires in pursuit of the greater slave trade. The second stage of the slave trade started around 1650, involving the transportation of slaves to the Americas. By this time, the slave trade had reached West-Central Africa (Boddy-Evans, 2018). Boddy-Evans stated that by the 19th century, African kings and merchants had become involved in the slave trade.

Many countries trading more than 6 million Africans saw Britain as the worst transgressor, enslaving more than 2.5 million Africans. In 1884, the Portuguese called on Otto von Bismark, the German Chancellor, Britain, and 13 other countries (Austria-Hungary, Belgium, Denmark, France, Italy, the Netherlands, Portugal, Russia, Spain, Sweden-Norway, Turkey, and the United States of America) for a meeting in Berlin,

Germany (Rosenberg, 2019). The meeting, which came to be known as the Berlin Meeting, divided Africa into 50 countries or protected colonies.

The meeting ended in the colonization of countries mainly along the coastal areas. While countries selected other countries, Britain refused to take Togo without the inclusion of Ghana and Nigeria. The body granted Britain's request. Ghana's long struggle for independence did not materialize until March 6, 1957, when it finally got its independence (Torrent, 2016). Kwame Nkrumah became the Country's first President from 1960 – 1966. Ghana's independence made it the first African Country to gain independence from Britain (Torrent, 2016) making it second to Liberia that got its independence on July 26, 1847. Liberia was never colonized (Library of Congress).

The struggle for independence did not include men alone. Besides the youths, Nkrumah also gave credit to women for the success of independence (Mensah, 2016). Mensah (2016) says a woman created the hymn, Lead Kindly Light, sung at rallies of Nkrumah's Convention Peoples' Party.

While Nkrumah praised the women for their support, it is important to note that during the formation of the first government, the Convention People's Party (CPP) failed to appoint a female to a cabinet position (Donkor, 2019) of the Daily Graphic. Dr. Beatrix Allah-Mensah of the Political Science Department of the University of Ghana stated that women played an indispensable role in the independence of Ghana (Donkor, 2019). Information provided by Donkor of the Daily Graphic indicates that women made a tremendous contribution to the country's independence. In contrast, while women did not

get a seat in the cabinet, the CPP provided 10 uncontested seats to the women in parliament.

The bill to meet this criterion was known as the Representation of the People (Women Members) Bill in 1960 (Donkor, 2019). The 10 women seated in Parliament represented the following regions as follows: Susan Al- Hassan, Ayanori Bukari, and Victoria Nyarko representing the Northern Region; Sophia Doku and Mary Koranteng representing the Eastern Region; and Regina Asamany representing the Volta Region. Others were Grace Ayensu and Christina Wilmot from the Western Region and Comfort Asamoah from the Ashanti Region, while Lucy Anim came from the Brong Ahafo Region. Additionally, in 1965, Nkrumah appointed the first female cabinet member, Madam Susan Al-Hassan.

Nkrumah's overthrow in 1966 began the erosion of gains that women had made. Nkrumah lived in Sekou Touré's Guinea until his death on April 27, 1972, in a hospital in Bucharest, Romania (Torrent, 2016). Following Nkrumah's overthrow, there were successive government-overthrows and leadership changes until the time of Flight Lieutenant Jerry John Rawlings, who took over in a military coup (Plockey & Asuro, 2018). Rawlings overthrew the government in 1979 and turned the leadership over to Hilla Limann, a civilian (Williams, 2014). Rawlings again overthrew the government, this time the Hilla Limann's Government in 1981, and seized power leading the government until 2001 (Williams, 2014).

Summary

In chapter 2, I discussed the literature search strategy and the literature review. In discussing the literature review, I wrote about having the local citizens and assemblywomen participate in the District Assemblies Common Fund decision-making process. I discussed the literature on the decentralization policy and the role that assemblywomen are expected to play regarding their participation in Common Fund decisions. I concluded that citizen participation and Sequential theories are the proper theoretical frameworks to conduct this study. Ghana's inability to achieve its decentralization objectives despite financial contributions from international organizations was discussed. In discussing the participation of the assemblywomen in the decision-making process of the Common Fund, I indicated that studies showed that culture and tradition are some of the factors for men asserting power over women. In chapter 3, I discussed the research design and rationale, the role of the researcher, and the methodology. Other aspects of the study that are discussed in chapter 3 are the data collection and analysis and ethical procedures.

Chapter 3: Research Method

Introduction

This study's purpose was to explore and understand the perspectives of District Assembly members of Ghana that explain the participation of assemblywomen in the decision-making process of the District Assemblies Common Fund (Common Fund) of Ghana. The Common Fund is a fund established to spur development activities in the districts. I intended to understand the assemblywomen's perspectives through in-depth interviews of the extent of their involvement in decisions affecting the Common Fund. By overcoming what explains the participation and the burden of tradition and cultural norms, assemblywomen's participation could improve the decision-making process of the Common Fund in the assemblies.

The intent for establishing the decentralization policy in Ghana by President Rawlings was to transfer power, authority, and responsibility from the central government to the local government to reduce poverty (Hidayat, 2017). The policy was also meant to encourage the participation of the local citizens and gain their support. The involvement of the local citizens meant involving the women, including the District assemblywomen. (Kasim & Agbola, 2017). The women would assist in providing room for better decisions regarding the allocation of the Common Fund (Kasim & Agbola, 2017). With women having no support in participating in the decision-making process, women had to turn to international organizations for support (Jaffer, 2014).

International support came from international organizations like the UN and ABANTU for Development. The UN helped the women by empowering them through

justice reforms (Bawa, 2016). The UN formulated eight Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) and the Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) to help the women (Bawa, 2016). The MDGs, which ended in 2015, was to help improve the lives of poor people with women as a priority. The other international organization, ABANTU for Development, helped train the women to run for elected government positions (Baah-Ennumh et al., 2005; GSS, 2012; Trikala, 2009). Despite help from these international organizations; women continue to face what is explained as a lack of participation in holding elected positions in the government.

Cleveland (2015) stated that how men see their powers over women is not new. Cleveland said it goes beyond what many claim to be due to traditions and cultures within the various ethnic groups. Cleveland (2015) also stated that while women held power before the reorganization of the Akan society, colonialism helped reduce the power of women and women organizations (Farrar, 1997).

Research Design and Rationale

The research question for this study was: What are the perspectives of District Assembly members of Ghana concerning the participation of assemblywomen in the decision-making process of the District Assemblies Common Fund (Common Fund) of Ghana? Qualitative case study interview questions are open-ended and keep the interaction between the researcher and the participants. Such interaction is usually in a conversation where questions are injected during the interview (Yin, 2014).

I researched several methods for this study and chose the qualitative case study design as the most appropriate design. A qualitative case study was appropriate because it shared light on the perspectives of the assemblywomen of Ghana.

Patton (2015) stated that to gather data for such a phenomenon, the researcher will have to conduct in-depth interviews with participants with direct experience with the situation under study, talking to the participants and not with persons who only have second-hand experience. These District Assembly members should be members of the District Assemblies of Ghana. Yin (2014) agreed that a qualitative case study primarily collects data through in-depth individual interviews, focused groups, or questionnaires.

McCracken (1988) stated that an in-depth qualitative interview is sometimes long and could go on for two hours to a day or several days. In finalizing the appropriateness of such an in-depth interview, Blumer (1969) stated that the researcher should understand how people place meanings on their experience impacts how they carry out such an activity.

In arriving at the type of interview to implement, I sought to understand the various qualitative interviews, including structured, semistructured, and unstructured interviews. For this study, I selected a semistructured interview. Such an interview is more conversational, with predetermined open-ended questions with an interview guide (Yin, 2014). Yin stated that before the interview, participants should be given the option of whether they choose to go ahead with the interview. Interviewees should be asked questions to answer the research question (Yin, 2014; Moustakas, 1994; Patton, 2002). During the interviews for this study, I asked the participants several questions lasting for

30 to 90 minutes. In asking these questions, understanding the issues from the participants' perspective made it easy for me to analyze the participants' points of view.

Role of the Researcher

The researcher played a vital role in this qualitative case study by interpreting the findings of the study (Yin, 2014). The researcher's role extended to conducting the interview, observing the interviewee's behaviors virtually, collecting data, and examining the documents (Yin, 2014). Yin stated that the researcher's confidence in the study gave strength to the qualitative method of the research. A researcher who is well-trained, experienced, and observant adds to the credibility of the study. My experience as a former member of the Liberian legislature opened a better line of communication with the District Assembly members and gave credibility to the study.

A researcher should be able to identify any biases or conflicts of interest and explain such biases and conflicts of interest (Yin, 2014). During this study, I did not encounter any bias. If I had encountered any bias, I would have sought approval from the Institutional Review Board (IRB). Another means of dealing with bias is through bracketing (Yin, 2015). In this case, it would mean that as a former legislator, I would set aside bias of any personal experience encountered during my past service as a legislator.

As the researcher of this study, I conducted the study in a disciplined and systematic manner. Previous level of understanding of Ghana helped me with the process. My first contact with Ghana was in 1976 when I spent a month in Ghana for the First African University Games. In 2003, I spent 3 months in Ghana from May to

October for the Liberian Peace Conference, where we had gone to make peace among Liberia's four warring factions.

Additionally, Liberia, where I come from is in the same West African Region with Ghana; both countries are members of the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS). Both countries share similar climates, cultures, and traditions. For this study, I interviewed District Assembly members of Ghana in collecting the data for this study. These District Assembly members from five selected regions of Ghana were in Ghana while I interviewed them from the United States. I followed the IRB's criteria for guidance in the conduct of the interviews.

Opedenakker (2006) stated that taking advantage of the interviewee can disturb the interviewer's effect whereby the interviewer guides the interviewee to the interviewer's direction. As the interviewer, I was mindful of not taking advantage of the interviewees. Opedenakker (2006) also said that a researcher must consider interview fatigue and the risk of bias, which can happen due to time-consuming interviews. These interviews took place at venues that were conducive to the interviewees in a timely manner. This means that I was considerate of the physical setting and the time.

Methodology

Participant Selection Logic

The participants for this study were the District Assembly members of Ghana from the Districts of five regions in Ghana: The Ashanti, Central, Eastern, Greater Accra, and Western Regions. According to (Ghana Const. Local Govt. Act 462, 1993), the District Assembly members of Ghana are members of the Local Government branch regarded as

the highest political authority in the districts, a reason for which I selected them for this study. The District Assemblies are composed of the Metropolitan, Municipal, and District Assemblies. The District Assembly members' positions make them the most appropriate participants to answer the research question of this study. They are also the appropriate participants because they came from the same geographical area.

A purposive sampling strategy is selecting participants for a study with certain unique knowledge to answer the interview questions (Maxwell, 2013; Ravitch & Carl, 2016). I used this purposive sampling strategy to select District Assembly members who were knowledgeable about the Common Fund and had unique knowledge and perspective to contribute to my study.

The primary criteria that I used to select the participants for this qualitative case study was because the participants have similar experiences in dealing with the Common Fund in Ghana. According to Yin (2014), participants who have not experienced the same phenomenon should be avoided and only select those who have had experience with it. Selecting participants with a similar background, especially location, culture, and social-economic background, makes it easy for the researcher to find common themes.

In selecting a research site, it is essential that the researcher selects a location that is associated with the researcher's goal and can address the research question (Ravitch & Carl, 2016). For instance, if a researcher's study is about education, the research should match the study with an educational setting while business research will match with a business setting (Ravitch & Carl, 2016). The participants that I selected for the study share similar traditions and cultures.

A researcher should be knowledgeable in his area of research (Ishak et al., 2014). As a former legislator from Liberia, I have insight into the running of the legislative process in a democracy, whether in the United States or Ghana. This knowledge makes me capable of conducting this study.

In selecting the number of participants for a qualitative case study, Boddy (2016) recommends the number of participants to range from 15 – 30. I conducted the interviews with 25 Assembly members. The 25 Assembly members were selected from districts of the five regions. Even though the emphasis of this study is about getting the perspectives of the assemblywomen, however, getting a balanced understanding of the perspectives of the assemblywomen was better achieved by involving both assemblywomen and assemblymen.

Dibley (2011) stated that data should be thought of in terms of how rich and thick the data is instead of thinking about the size of the sample. Burneister and Aitken (2012) stated that the thickness of the data has to do with the quantity of the data, while the richness of the data has to do with the quality of the data. Thus the sample size of 15 assemblywomen and 10 assemblymen met the threshold for this study.

When selecting participants to interview for a study, the sample size should be large enough to answer the research question and achieve the research goal (statisticssolutions.com). The required number of participants should be based on the time that saturation is reached (statisticssolutions.com). Over the years, researchers have developed a common understanding that when researchers collect and analyze their data, there should be no need to collect additional data (Flush & Ness, 2015). Flush and Ness

(2015) stated further that there can be negative impacts on studies that do not reach a point of saturation. Morse (2015) stressed that saturation has become a point in a study where researchers feel that rigor has been utilized. Grady (1998) stated also that saturation is reached when the researcher begins to hear the same comments from the interviewee.

Instrumentation

Procedures for Recruitment, Participation, and Data Collection

A semistructured interview was used as the primary instrument for this study. I used a telephone, handheld tape recorder, and paper and pen to conduct my in-depth interviews from the United States. Considering the unavailability of strong internet reception, I did not use Skype or Zoom in gathering the data for this study. I asked the participants open-ended questions ranging from 30 to 90 minutes (see appendix A for interview questions). The questions primarily surrounded the participation of assemblywomen in matters concerning the Common Fund and the assemblies. The interview was in-depth, with probing follow-up questions for detailed answers. I established initial contact with the participants by telephone. These contacts were about getting to know whether they agreed to participate in the study.

In recruiting participants for a study, research shows that researchers have to apply special efforts and develop strategies to recruit and retain certain populations in research studies (Evelyn et al., 2001). While these techniques vary over time due to inadequate personnel, time, and the availability of funds to conduct the study, employing

the strategy of snowballing helped me in getting the number of Assembly members that I needed for this study.

Recruitment Procedures

I regarded myself as the primary data-collection instrument. In qualitative research design, the researcher should take their responsibility seriously to ensure that the data collected from the participant is accurate (Lincoln & Guba, 1981). This means that the researcher must capture and communicate whatever the interviewee says accurately (Yin, 2014; Moustakas, 1994; Patton, 2002). To accommodate the interviewees, I sent them the interview questions electronically or by mail. An important aspect of the interview process was to undertake proper planning to get all of the District Assembly members.

I used Microsoft Excel tool to list the District Assembly members by districts. The District Assembly members were then listed according to their regions. In conducting an interview, it is always good to begin the interview by introducing yourself to the participant (Kaiser, 2009). Ask permission to record the interview and do all you can to make the interviewee comfortable (Kaiser, 2009). In addition to introducing yourself, introduce the project, ensure confidentiality by showing how you will protect the participant's privacy. In protecting the privacy of the participants for this study, a final listing was done where I disguised the identify the participants by replacing their names with pseudo nomenclature from AM-1 to AM-25.

The design for this study was a qualitative case study. A qualitative case study approach offered a detailed understanding of the perspectives of the District

Assemblywomen of Ghana (Yin, 2014). I used this approach because it better collected the data provided through in-depth interviews. The District Assembly members were initially contacted by telephone. The participants that agree to the interview were sent a letter of invitation. An appointment indicating the date, time, and place was set up with the District Assembly members who agreed to the interviews.

Data Collection Procedures

A researcher should be aware as stated in the consent form about the confidentiality of their participants and risks involved in the research and that they are not forced to participate (Rubin & Rubin, 2012). I collected the data in compliance with IRB requirements by obtaining informed consent from the participants. The informed consent form indicated that the interviewees were aware of the purpose of the study. I understood that some participants would not consent to the interview because of concerns they may be linked to the information provided.

The interview guide included questions that were semistructured, in-depth, and open-ended. Open-ended questions enable participants to share their experiences and perspectives freely and successfully. Tharenou et al. (2007) stated that such interviews are more focused, flexible, and the interviewer is free to pursue questions, not on the list of questions.

The reason for limiting the interview questions is to give the participant sufficient time to answer the questions. Patton (2016) stated that the advantage of an interview guide is that it allows the interviewer to utilize the time allotted for the interview wisely.

Because of getting these assemblywomen to participate in their Common Fund decisions, it was vital to ask probing questions.

In research, recording in-depth interviews is best because it captures the interviewee's answers that may be spontaneous with no extended reflection (Opedenakker, 2006). A telephone, tape recorder, paper and pen were used in recording my in-depth interviews. While recording was done, I used a notebook and pen to take notes and guide the interview. Once the interview was over, I listened to the recording to draw better conclusions from the data collected. Then I transcribed the interview from the tape recorder to my notebook. This gave me assurance of not losing information gathered.

Data Analysis

In analyzing qualitative data, first describe the phenomenon under study (Yin, 2014). When the interview was completed, the data collected from the interviews were analyzed and compared with the notes taken from the interviews. The data included feedback that I received during the interview. During this process, I decided on what items went into a grouping, a category, a pattern, and a theme. Yin (2015) agreed that grouping such items into themes gives a textural description and structural description, which Yin stated enables the researcher to know what and how the participants experienced the phenomenon.

In my study, the data were analyzed based on the responses from the interviews that was in-depth and used to analyze the perspectives of the District Assembly members of Ghana. In analyzing data, a primary component is coding the data (Babbie, 2017).

Babbie (2017) stated that this process deals with retrieving, classifying, or categorizing the data. The interviews are transcribed and coded. As the researcher begins transcribing the interview, similar themes, concepts, patterns, and meanings begin to appear (Denzin & Lincoln, 2003). Coding the data helps the researcher observe the patterns among the various data (Babbie, 2017). Such patterns lead to a better theoretical understanding of the study's social implications (Babbie, 2017).

I used NVivo 12 Pro Data Analysis Software to analyze the interview data collected through audio. In using the NVivo 12, Pro I selected the nodes in the navigation view of the software then coded the data. Saldana (2016) said that codes are words or phrases that create a collective essence. I use the codes with common ideas and placed them in the same categories to assist me in identifying the interview recordings. The software helped me organize the data and coded it electronically. In this way, I created the themes, categories, and other important aspects of analyzing the data.

Issues of Trustworthiness

The question of trustworthiness is about the researcher's confidence in their study (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). For the research to be trustworthy, the data must meet specific criteria. Those criteria are credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability. To achieve these criteria, Lincoln and Guba (1985) said that the researcher must test for distortion due to misinformation and misrepresentation. The researcher must also be a keen observer during the time of the data collection process. The researcher must also be willing to engage their peers in discussing the research findings.

An audit trail should also be an option when collecting, recording, and analyzing the data. Anney (2014) stated that researchers have to be informed about the trustworthiness criteria to use.

Credibility

Guba (1981) stated that the credibility of a study is enhanced when the researcher can gather all the complexities and difficulties to present a useful finding. Credibility deals with the design of the research. To establish credibility for this study, I used strategies to develop an accurate report. To obtain validity and reliability for the research, Lincoln and Guba (2004) stated that to reach such a milestone, the report gathered must be accurately recorded, which threshold this study meets.

Transferability

Lincoln and Guba (1981) stated that transferability is how a qualitative study is applicable or transferred to other studies or contexts while maintaining all of its context-specific richness. The important thing is knowing that the transferability of qualitative research to another setting is possible. It is done by having detailed descriptions of the data and the context to make comparisons to other settings (Guba, 1981). It is not about replicating the study design or findings; instead, it is about transferring certain aspects of the study or decision to other contextually. Transferability means using evidence that applies to different times, situations, populations, and contexts. Merriam (1997) agreed and stated that in the positivistic view, the study's findings must apply to other situations or a broader population.

Dependability

Lincoln and Guba (1985) stated that dependability means that the data are stable. The data's stability occurs when the data is consistent and steady over time (Miles et al., 2014). It also means that because the data are answering the research question correctly, it is dependable. Dependability will exist when the data collected appropriately addresses the issues raised in the research with the appropriate research design.

Confirmability

Confirmability in qualitative research comes about when the data is confirmable and free of biases (Guba, 1981). As the researcher, my findings have the ability to be confirmed. Miles et al. (2014) stated that the research findings can be established in the best interest of the researcher. Such confirmation occurs when a researcher states the results without bias and prejudices, and the researcher can accept a challenge from outsiders to such findings (Lofland et al., 2006; Porter, 2010). It does not mean that a qualitative researcher should seek objectivity; instead, the researcher should find means to confirm the findings and be free of biases (Miles et al., 2014). The research is free from bias also means that the researcher has used several methods to collect the data on the same subject. The researcher is reflective and has sought external sources in writing a comprehensive report (Lofland et al., 2006; Porter, 2010).

Ethical Procedures

I foresaw some risks involved in interviewing the assemblywomen because of their minority nature in the assemblies. Because the assemblywomen are in the minority, they could face repercussions from their male counterparts or leaders of the Assembly for

divulging sensitive information affecting them. However, such risks did not occur during this study. Nevertheless, I ensured that the participants knew the risks and benefits of the study before consenting to participate. I also assured the District Assembly members of the confidentiality of the information shared to be considered personal and not be traced to them. I informed the Assembly members that they do not have to answer questions they feel uncomfortable answering.

The District Assembly members were reminded that the informed consent indicated that they can withdraw from the process at any time. Most importantly, I did all I could to avoid the appearance of ethical questions by using my good judgment to protect the study's integrity.

Summary

The discussion in chapter 3 covered the research design and rationale of the study. The chapter also included the researcher's role, methodology, instrumentation, and the data collection and analysis. I discussed the objective of my qualitative case study and how I used it to answer the research question. This was done by understanding the perspectives of the assemblywomen concerning their participation in the decision-making process of the Common Fund in Ghana. In chapter 4, results are detailed.

Chapter 4: Results

Introduction

The design of this study required interviewing a minimum of 15 Assembly members, including both assemblywomen and assemblymen; however, I interviewed 25. Boddy (2016) recommends that the number of participants for a qualitative study should range from 15 – 30, which threshold this study meets. I initially used purposive sampling which is to find participants that have unique knowledge on the topic being researched (Maxwell, 2013; Ravitch & Carl, 2016). After beginning the interviews, I also used snowball sampling which is for interviewees to refer the researcher to additional persons with unique knowledge on the topic (Ghaljaie et al., 2017). Using purposive sampling meant interviewing Assembly members based on their unique knowledge of the phenomenon, the Common Fund. Similarly, and using snowball sampling meant asking those Assembly members interviewed to put me in contact with other Assembly members who could speak knowledgeably about the Common Fund. The interview questions were semistructured.

This chapter includes information on recruiting and selecting study participants, my approach to the interview process, the methodology for coding and analyzing the data, the key findings, and the research summary.

The Setting

My use of purposive sampling followed by snowball sampling as a strategy to collect the data for this study, helped me meet this study's goal; however, there were some challenges in collecting the data. In some instances, I had to spend more than 3

hours over several days to get the full interview from some participants due to low telephone reception in some parts of Ghana. The Greater Accra Region, host of the capital of the country and the regions nearer it, the Central and Eastern Regions, had better telephone reception than the Ashanti and Western Regions. In the end, I successfully obtained the information and documented it. All of the interviews that I conducted were done on the free apps known as WhatsApp. Using a telephone and the WhatsApp platform, a handheld tape recorder, and paper and pen, enabled me to get all of the information that I needed for this study.

Because this was a telephone interview done virtually, there was no arrangement concerning a particular location to meet. I asked each participant to find a quiet area in their homes almost in all cases.

Demographics

I conducted the interviews with 25 Assembly members (15 assemblywomen and 10 assemblymen). I interviewed more assemblywomen because the study was mainly about getting their perspectives. Five participants each came from the five regions under study. I used vigor and commitment to ensure that I interviewed all Assembly members from their respective assemblies. I am a Christian by faith and have learned some belief systems of the Muslim faith.

When I interviewed Muslims for this study, I deliberately made myself conscious of being unbiased when asking interview questions relating to the culture of the Muslim faith. What helped me most is that I come from Liberia, where Christians and Muslims live together in the same communities. I was amazed at how intelligently the participants

elected in 2019 answered the interview questions. How they answered the questions indicated that they had learned a lot about the workings of the Assemblies. One of the participants I interviewed was a PhD student, while some had their first degrees.

Data Collection

After mailing the informed consent forms to 35 participants for the study, I received responses from nine invitees. Once I began interviewing the participants whose consent forms I received, I asked them to contact other Assembly members who had served longer in the Assemblies and had more knowledge about the Common Fund. In that case, I interviewed Assembly members, some of whom had served in their Assemblies for more than 12 years (4 years a term). This strategy worked very well for the study. Interviewing both assemblymen and assemblywomen gave me a sample size required for the study and a balanced view on the extent of how much involved the assemblywomen were in the Common Fund decisions. This balanced view also provided better information and data for the study. According to Dibley (2011), the richness of data has to do with the quality of the information.

I placed the prepared interview questions before me while asking the participants open-ended questions, followed by probing questions. The time that I used to interview the participants ranged from 30 minutes to 90 minutes. Afterward, I listened to the interviews on the recorded tapes and transcribed them verbatim in handwriting to paper. I later typed the handwritten transcribed document to the computer, indicating the researcher's questions in blue color and responses from the participants in black. A file

was created for each interview. AM-1 through AM-25 was put into a data source folder marked, the dissertation analysis folder.

Data Analysis

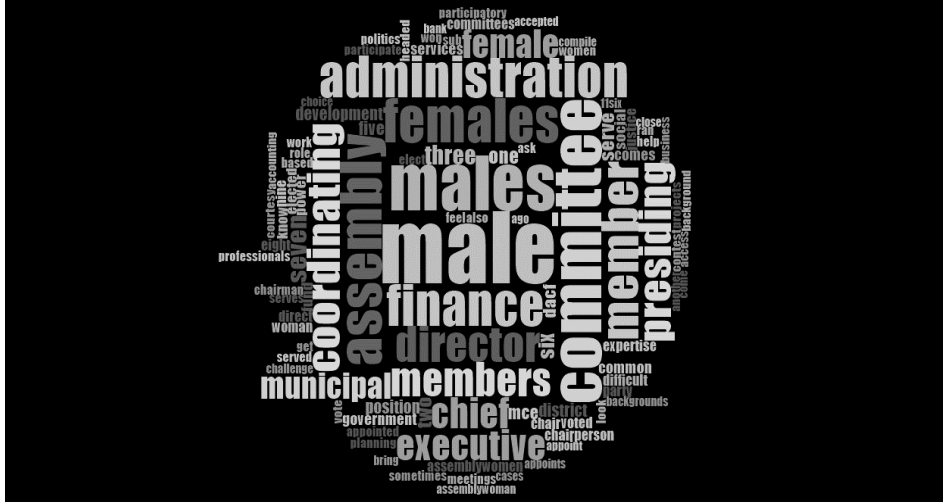
The data analysis process involved retrieving, classifying, and categorizing the data. According to Denzin and Lincoln (2003), when coding data, the development of similar themes, concepts, patterns, and meanings will begin to occur.

I used NVivo 12 Pro Data Analysis Software, a newer version of the NVivo 12 software I had initially planned to use to code the interview data collected. First, I clicked on the document button on the software and loaded the source folder containing the 25 files. I double-clicked each file and selected the relevant text or phrase for coding. Then I right-clicked and attached the chosen words and texts to the various nodes for coding.

In Figure 2, I clicked on the Word Frequency Query Results to create a word cloud where one sees how some words are more prominent than the others. The larger the size of the word in the word cloud provides, indication is that the word was more frequently used. For example, the word male in the diagram indicates that male was used more frequently than the other words. Male is used more often when discussing leadership positions in the Assembly. Male is also used more often when talking about the Common Fund, chief executives, presiding members, coordinating directors, and the Committee on Finance and Administration. If one clicks on the word male, you are taken to the sources of the word male.

Figure 2

Word Cloud Shows Frequency of Word Usage



From these processes, the information in Table 1 was derived. For example, for the node, Leadership Positions, I coded 24 data sources to derive 44 references. If I needed to see those 44 references, all I did was double click on the node. These processes helped me to develop the themes for the study.

Table 1 shows the coding leading to the six themes of this study.

Table 1

Theme Nodes

Nodes	Theme Notes Files	References
Challenges	19	29
Common Fund	21	28
Compensation	15	16
Decentralization	15	19
Leadership Positions	24	44
Participation	25	40
Turnover	22	23

The analysis of the data resulted in six themes. These themes that I came up with helped answer the research question leading to a better theoretical understanding of the study's social change implications. The themes are:

1. Challenges women face when running for the Assembly.
2. Lack of leadership positions for assemblywomen in the Assembly.
3. Assemblywomen's participation in Common Fund Decisions.
4. Compensation of Assembly members.
5. High turnover in the Assemblies.
6. Decentralization at the grassroots.

Evidence of Trustworthiness

Lincoln and Guba (1985) stated that the researchers should have confidence in their study to ensure trustworthiness. That means meeting specific criteria. Those criteria are credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability. To ensure that I met those criteria, I became most concerned with the quality of the information collected. When there was difficulty with reception, I postponed the interview until the reception was better, mainly during the evening hours. I kept in close contact with the participants and continued to do so through texts and telephone calls to ensure that the information I received and now put together was accurately recorded. I compared the notes that I took during the interviews with the recordings. I gathered sufficient information to correctly answer the research question and address the research issues. Because of all these measures that I took, I can confidently say that the study is free of biases and prejudices and that the findings are in the interest of the participants and the researcher.

Research Results

I collected and analyzed the data from the interviews conducted with 25 Assembly members from five regions of Ghana to answer the research question for this study. I used NVivo 12 Pro Data Analysis Software to generate the codes that were used to develop themes that helped me understand the participation of assemblywomen in the decision-making process of the Common Fund. These interviews enabled me to know that the assemblywomen did not participate in the decisions of the Common Fund. While the Assemblies voted on the projects to be implemented, it was at the end of the process. The offices of the District Chief Executives, who are the political and administrative heads of the Executive Committees of the District Assemblies appointed by the President of Ghana receive the Common Fund from the central government and control the process up to awarding of contracts (ACT 656, 2003). It is to the DCE that the various decision-making departments of the Assembly made their reports. I assured the participants of their rights to participate in the study only if they wanted to participate in the consent form. I also informed them that their names would not be mentioned in the report.

However, while their names are not being indicated, their sex is mentioned to distinguish the roles assemblywomen and assemblymen played by using the pronouns he and she. The following are the results of the study organized around the six themes that emerged.

Challenges Women Face when Running for the Assembly

The constitution of Ghana states:

The state shall take appropriate measures to make democracy a reality by

decentralizing the administrative and financial machinery of government to the regions and districts and by affording all possible opportunities to the people to participate in decision-making at every level in national life and government.

(Ghana Const. Article 35 (6)(d)), 1992)

By interpretation, it means the local citizens, including women, should be allowed to aspire for office and aspire for Assembly positions within their respective districts. Once in the Assemblies, these assemblywomen can seek positions within the Assemblies that enable them to participate in the Common Fund decisions directly (Acheampong & Dinye, 2015), a privilege given to some Assembly members. Many of the Assembly members interviewed confirmed that women getting elected to the Assembly is very difficult because it involves several complicated issues.

According to AM-1, women on the local level in Ghana do not get involved in politics for fear of being ridiculed. "I had to force myself to run," AM-1 told me. In response to the same question, AM-3 told me that it is difficult for the women to get elected to the Assembly because of lack of money. She said, the men do not give the women the opportunity to run, meaning the men use lots of money against the women who have little or no money for election campaign.

Asked about her hopes for the future, AM-3 said "what gives me hope for the future is the perception now developed by the voters that married women are more concerned about those they lead just as they are concerned about their children and family." Asked the same question, AM-2 said:

The incident encouraging women to run for the assembly is the 1995 Beijing

Declaration. The declaration calls for gender equality. It is the Beijing Declaration that has inspired many women to run for political offices. The women delegation to the Beijing Conference returned home and encouraged many of us to run for political offices. Many international organizations have also come into the country to help with organizing women groups for political offices. One organization helping to develop women organizations is the ABANTU for Development.

Another participant, AM-8, told me, “because my district is 54% Muslim, there are fewer women in my assembly, and those women come from Christian background. The Muslim culture does not allow women to rule over men” he concluded. However, when interviewing AM-22, she said that the notion is no longer valid in many areas because Muslims have passed that stage, which is why she was elected. Nevertheless, looking at her district, she was elected from a mixed Christian-Muslim district.

In another interview, AM -25 said that women have to build confidence in themselves and know that they can win if they run. Some women prefer to support men because they feel that the job of Assembly member is just for men.

Based on all that I heard, there is a strong need for more women's education and training in the political arena. Because women are in the majority in terms of population in Ghana, there is great hope and opportunity for women to succeed in politics.

Lack of Leadership Positions for Assemblywomen in the Assembly

The leadership positions of the MMDAs, according to the law, are the positions of District Chief Executive (DCE) if it is a District Assembly or Municipal Chief Executive

(MCE) if it is a Municipal Assembly, but both generally are called DCE. The other leaders of the Assemblies are the members of Parliament that reside within the MMDAs, the Presiding Member (PM), and the District Coordinating Director that is also an appointed position usually by the political party in office. The Assembly members elect the Presiding Member, head of the Assembly. Others elected are the chairpersons of the sub-committees. The presiding member is what is referred to in the United States Congress as the Speaker. They are elected by two-thirds of the majority of the Assembly for two years and are eligible for re-election. However, when the women, fortunately get elected to the Assemblies, they find it difficult to be elected to the Presiding Member position. The Assembly members of the five regions that I interviewed informed me that there is only one female Presiding Member in their Assemblies. She has served for six two-year terms (12 years) as Presiding Member, three four-year terms as an Assembly member. In her Assembly, there are 68 males and three females, including herself.

I asked her, what was the reason for her success? She informed me that she constantly reminds the men about the UN meeting in China that promotes women. While she credits her mentor, a man who taught her the scales of politics, her motivations came from the wife of the late President, Jerry Rawlings, who told them that what men can do, women can also do and even do it better.

A part of the constitution strictly adhered to in Ghana is the appointment of 30% of District Assembly members by the President. The researcher asked many participants if a similar law could be passed to empower the President to appoint 30% women to the Assemblies? Many felt that this would be a great idea.

Assemblywomen's participation in District Assemblies Common Fund Decisions

Based on the data collected for this study through interviews of assemblywomen and assemblymen, the assemblywomen of the MMDAs of Ghana do not participate in the decisions of the Common Fund of Ghana. To directly participate in the decisions of the Common Fund or serve on the powerful Executive Committee of the Assemblies, one has to be a Chief Executive, a Member of Parliament, a Presiding Member, a Coordinating Director or Chairman of one of the five sub-committees of the Assemblies (Finance and Administration, Development and Planning, Social Services, Works, and Justice and Security). The Executive Committees of the Assemblies are responsible for the executive and coordinating functions of the District Assemblies. Those functions include drawing up the comprehensive plans of the Assembly, implementing Assembly resolutions, and reporting Executive Committee's decisions to the Assemblies. The Executive Committees are empowered to carry out the functions of the Assemblies during the time that the Assemblies are not in session (Local Government Act 2016, Act 936, section 21)

Assemblywomen rarely have an opportunity to serve in any of the positions of the Executive Committee. The President appoints the Chief Executives who are almost always males. The Presiding members heading the assemblies of the 25 Assembly members I interviewed are all males except one female. The heads of the Sub-committees are also almost all males. One can see that there are not many females involved in the decision-making process of the Common Fund. The only time the assemblywomen have an opportunity to be part of the decision-making process for the Common Fund is when the General Assemblies meet to vote on the projects that have been earmarked by the

Executive Committees to be implemented. The chairpersons of these sub-committees are elected by their District Assemblies which come as a list compiled by the Executive Committees (Local Government Act 2016, Act 936, section 21). In most cases, the chairs of these sub-committees are men, especially the Finance and Administration Committees mainly involved with the Assemblies' financial matters.

A provision within the constitution calls for every member to serve on at least two committees. The process still does not benefit the assemblywomen. The process begins with all Assembly members sending in their resumes or curriculum vitae to the Coordinating Director. The Assembly members are placed on committees based on their areas of expertise. AM-8 told me, "Putting your name on a particular list is not guaranteed to remain on that list. In most cases, party politics may get you off a list."

The Assemblies meet and vote on the listings. The disadvantage to the assemblywomen is that most of them leave school without an accounting degree, enabling them to serve on the Finance and Administration Committees. While there may be one or two women serving on the Finance and Administration Committee and a small number heading one of the other committees, it does not solve the problem. Therefore, when the Executive Committees meet, the participation of women is low.

This process has perpetuated itself over time. The inability for assemblywomen to serve as chairs of the Finance and Administration committees further takes them away from getting involved in decisions affecting the Common Fund. Based on the interviews conducted, the Chief Executives appointed by the President of Ghana are more than 80%

males. Such statistics put the assemblywomen further away from participating in the decisions of the Common Fund.

Compensation of Assembly Members

During the interviews, one of the issues mentioned more frequently was the lack of salary payments to Assembly members. In Ghana, Assembly members attend three General Assembly meetings a year. Each General Assembly meeting may last for up to four hours. During those meetings, they are given a small fee called a sitting allowance, rather than salaries. The sitting allowance is to pay for transportation to and from a General Assembly meeting. They also give each Assembly member a motorbike for four years. Many interviewed told me that since they were elected in 2019, they have not gotten their motorbikes and are not sure of the time they will get their motorbikes. Older members told me that it comes, but sometimes at the end of your four-year term.

During the interviews, I asked many Assembly members about the salary issues they raised when speaking to me. The responses were mixed. AM-19 and AM-7 told me that they were not in favor of salary payments because their regular jobs are with the government and their salaries come from the Consolidated Fund. The Consolidated Fund represents government's total income whereas the Common Fund is a portion of the Consolidated Fund. If the local government's allowances are called salaries, it would mean that the government is paying them two salaries which is against the law. They suggested an increase in the allowances.

The majority of the Assembly members, some of whom work in the private sector, told me they favored being paid salaries because the work of the Assembly is

difficult and runs all year. They are responsible for solving the problems within the districts. When I asked AM - 11 about why she decided to become an Assembly member amidst all of the challenges, AM – 11 told me “The job is a sacrificial job, it is a calling,” meaning that God has called her to serve her people, but added that as a caterer, she has no time to do her catering job because the Assembly work takes up all of her time.

In an article published entitled: "Paying salaries to Assembly members will weaken local governance system – Presiding members," Ghanaweb (2020) stated that the Conference of Presiding members from the Eastern Region feel paying Assembly members' salaries will weaken the local governance system because doctors, lawyers, teachers, and other qualified citizens serving in the government will no longer want to serve as Assembly members. These Presiding members are against the terminology salary.

Most Assembly members work full-time for the government, and their salaries are charged to the Consolidated Fund. If they are paid a salary from the Common Fund for serving as Assembly members, they would receive double salary payment. To avoid receiving double salaries, they would prefer to only do their professional jobs as doctors, teachers, nurses rather than serving as Assembly members part-time for sitting allowances.

High Turnover at the Assemblies

Out of 25 Assembly members interviewed, twenty of them were new commons

being elected in December 2019. This could be due to a hidden phenomenon at the Assemblies that could cause the high turnover rate at the Assemblies. The Common Fund was earmarked in the 1992 Constitution, in Section 252 (1) & (2), it is stated:

There shall be a fund to be known as the District Assemblies Common Fund.

Subject to the provisions of this Constitution, Parliament shall annually make provision for the allocation of not less than five percent of the total revenues of Ghana to the District Assemblies for development, and the amount shall be paid into the Common Fund in quarterly installments.

However, the country has not been able to meet this development goal. Presently, 2% of the Common Fund goes to the vulnerable or those with disabilities to avoid them sitting at street corners and begging. The balance of 3% is shared between the Assemblies and their members of Parliament residing in their districts. It can easily be seen that this amount is not sufficient for every Assembly member to carry projects to their districts to meet their campaign promises. AM-1 told me, "During the last General Conference of the Assembly, I was told that the Common Fund for the previous quarter of last year and this year's first quarter has not come."

When I interviewed AM-7, he told me that he had three communities and got a project for only one of the three communities. So the other two communities told him because he did not get projects for their communities, they will not vote for him during the next election. With the districts' limited funds, one can see that every Assembly member cannot bring projects to their communities. But that is what each new candidate campaigned on; the incumbent was not doing enough to bring a project to their

communities. But once they get in the Assemblies, the reality is always the same. AM-1 concluded by telling me “I have been at the Assembly for two years and have no project to show. I will indeed be booted out of office during the next election.”

Decentralization at the grassroots

The strategy behind President Jerry Rawlings's decentralization policy initiated in 1988 was to transfer power, authority, and responsibility from the central government to the local government to reduce poverty (Hidayat, 2017). By creating the local government structure of Ghana, local citizens would have the ability to participate in the decision-making process of their District Assemblies, thus increasing widespread popular participation of the citizens at the local level (Acheampong & Dinye, 2015).

Is decentralization working in Ghana? AM-20 responded by saying:

Decentralization is working because there is power transferred from the central government to the local government. Initially, the central government was managing and taking everything. For example, I went to my municipality instead of the central government for my school project. Everybody like me would have been going to the central government. So the policy that Jerry Rawlings brought about was for the central government to wave some of that power to the local government, to give us autonomy in managing our affairs, including collecting taxes.

AM - 13: confirmed AM-20's assertion by saying “The central government gives us the power to collect local taxes and construct schools, hospitals, and host local elections with those taxes. All of this work is done through the lower level of the local

government structure” he said. The subdistrict structures are composed of sub-metropolitan District Councils, amounting to 58 Town Councils, 108 Zonal Councils, and 626 Area Councils with more than 16,000 Unit Committees. (Ghana Districts: A repository of all Local Assemblies in Ghana). These lower structures are making decentralization work effectively. Every Assembly member presides over a unit committee composed of five members. These five unit committee members meet and vote for a committee chairperson, and the member with the highest votes becomes the chairman. AM-10 told me, “policies from the President are channeled through the Minister of Local Government, then Parliament, the MCE, the Assembly members, the unit committees, chiefs, and the public.” AM-19 however stated:

One disappointment that needs the central government's attention is that Rawlings decentralization policy called for the President to appoint 30% of Assembly members with a technical background to help the Assemblies, but it has turned out to be politics. The 30% is now composed of partisans, some of whom cannot read and write, and most are males. People appointed are only there to vote how the political party in power wants.

Summary

In chapter 4, I presented information regarding the study's setting and demographics. Information involving the data collection process was also presented. The participants in the study were able to provide sufficient information to answer the research question. Those data enabled me to conduct a qualitative analysis that provided the research result and the six themes for the study. While reception when calling was a

challenge in collecting the data from some participants, the information obtained was satisfactory. In chapter 5 I examined conclusions and recommendations.

Chapter 5: Discussion, Conclusions, and Recommendations

Introduction

The purpose of this qualitative case study was to explore and understand the perspectives of District Assembly members of Ghana concerning the participation of assemblywomen in the decision-making process of the Common Fund. I used a qualitative methodology with a case study approach to answering the research question. I used telephone, handheld recorder, and WhatsApp to collect the data for the study. I also used in-depth, open-ended semistructured interviews to interview the District Assemblies members who are the participants of this study. The number of participants that I chose are 25, which met the threshold ranging from 15 – 30 participants. Boddy (2016) recommended that the number of participants should range from 15 – 30. The 25 participants came from MMDAs of five regions of Ghana.

Getting the opinions of the assemblymen helped to get a balanced view of the participation of assemblywomen in the Common Fund decisions. The data that I collected was analyzed through the NVivo 12 Pro Data Analysis Software. I collected the data in compliance with IRB regulations by obtaining signed informed consent forms from the participants. The informed consent forms indicated that I let the interviewees know the purpose and risks involved in the research and that they were not forced to participate.

The interview guide used included questions that enabled the participants to share their experiences and perspectives freely and successfully. The questions were focused, flexible, and free to pursue inquiries not on the list of questions. The participants were allowed sufficient time to answer the questions while allowing time for probing

questions. Once an interview was over, I listened to the recording to draw better conclusions from the data collected. Listening to the recorded interviews assured me of not losing information gathered.

Interpretation of the Findings

The study's findings involved getting to know whether the assemblywomen participated in the decisions of the Common Fund. To this question, I found no instance where the assemblywomen participated in decisions of the Common Fund outside of voting at the General Assembly with the general membership on the list of projects to be implemented. M-8 told me:

By the time the process reaches that stage, all significant decisions, such as selecting the types of projects and the districts to which the projects are going, have been made". All that the Assembly members are voting on are the projects on the list to be implemented. Even worse, an assemblywoman would not have the power to do anything contrary at that point because the government in power selected members of 30% would just shot the assemblywoman down if she wants to make a point contrary to their views.

AM-8 told me a similar process occurs with the passage of the budgets, where if an assemblywoman or member is not on the executive committee, that member is just powerless in the decision-making process. As stated earlier in study by Acheampong and Dinye (2015), the lack of assemblywomen participation in the Common Fund decisions is due to the absence of reforms for the participation of assemblywomen. Debrah (2017)

supports this assertion and observes that while there should be inclusion, many studies show that those at the grassroots level are perceived to lack such inclusion.

Some of this can be attributed to those who serve in the leadership of the District Assemblies and how they administer the assemblies. Ghana's Assemblies within the Metropolitans, Municipals, and Districts have similar internal political structures. The administrative political leader of each district is known as the District Chief Executive (DCE). The DCE is appointed by the president and represents the government as head of the executive committees. An executive committee comprises chairs of the five subcommittees, finance and administration subcommittee, development planning sub-committee, security and justice sub-committee, social services sub-committee, and works sub-committee. Members of the assemblies have the option of serving on at least two sub-committees. To serve on a sub-committee, you must have expertise in the work of the committee.

During the General Assembly, Assembly members vote on the lists compiled by the office of the coordinating director based on the expertise of the Assembly member. The finance and administration sub-committee is the committee mainly involved with the Common Fund and drafting the budget. Among the 25 participants interviewed, only one Assembly had an equal number of assemblywomen and assemblymen (nine women and nine men) on their finance committee. All of the other Assemblies had either no women or a maximum of three women. One Assembly had eight men and no women. This was another instance where the participation of assemblywomen is limited in the decision-making process of the Common Fund.

Theoretical Framework

Citizen Participation Theory

The structure of the local government of Ghana gives me hope that there is room for citizen participation. The subdistrict structures are composed of submetropolitan district councils, amounting to 58 Town Councils, 108 Zonal Councils, and 626 Area Councils with more than 16,000 Unit Committees (Ghana Districts: A repository of all Local Assemblies in Ghana). The subdistrict structures work with the Assemblies and participate in the work of the Assemblies. According to one of the participants, the only problem is that the Unit Committee that is the largest organ of the local structure, does not often cooperate because they are not paid salaries or allowances. "Sometimes I have to entice my Unit Committee members with my funds for their cooperation," according to AM - 22.

The citizen participation theory articulated by Michels and De Graaf (2009) is the framework that I used for this study. The theory advises public officials and local citizens on public participation initiatives in a democracy and shows how citizen participation plays a vital role when local authorities get their citizens involved in local initiatives.

While assemblywomen do not participate or play a role in decisions made on the Common Fund, the recommendation made for 30 percent seats on the assembly can be a good point of integration of assemblywomen in the decisions of the Common Fund.

A Sequential Theory of Decentralization

The sequential theory of decentralization is used in Ghana. The government has transferred responsibilities, resources, and authority from the central government to the

local government (Falleti, 2005). With the transfer of responsibilities, resources, and authority, local government has an opportunity to increase the political participation of the citizens (IBD, 1994, Oats, 1972, 1997; Shah, 1994; Weingast, 1995; Weinsner, 1992). The local governance structure of the country provides room for such participation to succeed because of the submetropolitan District Councils comprising of zonal, town, area councils, and unit committees. This structure enables Ghana's decentralization program to use both a bottom-up approach and a top-down approach. By the top-down approach, the President's policy is channeled through the Minister of Local Government, the parliament, the municipal chief executive, the presiding member, the Assemblies, and then to the Unit Committees. With the bottom-up approach, the initial formation of a policy starts from an assembly member who would discuss such policy formation with his Unit Committee members, then to the entire Assembly, to the district chief executive, to the parliament, and the president. These processes align with the theories of this study.

Limitations of the Study

In collecting the data for this study, I remained in the United States and interviewed the participants in Ghana. I did not encounter the limitations that I had foreseen earlier in the study. The two limitations encountered were poor telephone reception and hosting the interviews virtually. The poor reception occurred when calling three of the participants through WhatsApp. The call kept breaking up and I could not hear the participant clearly. Therefore, I had to postpone the interview until the evening hours when the reception was better. The second limitation resulted in hosting the interviews virtually. Due to the COVID 19 Pandemic, I had to host the interviews

virtually. The disadvantage of hosting the interviews virtually was that I could not see the participants to read their body language. Besides those two limitations, I did not encounter any other problem like a language barrier because all of the participants spoke English well. One of the participants was working on a PhD, while some have master's degrees and others are working on their master's degrees. All of the participants have attended school and spoke English well. Nevertheless, to ensure that the information provided was correct, I interviewed more than one person from each assembly. This was to give me accurate information. I collected the data from the intended participants, recorded, and transcribed the data, thus enabling me to have confidence in the study's findings. The study met the criteria of credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability, thus achieving the data collection goal.

Recommendations

Compensation to Assembly Members

The first recommendation of this study deals with the payment of salaries to Assembly members. In Ghana, the District Assemblies are the highest political authorities in their districts. Assembly members are tasked with exercising the Assemblies' deliberative, legislative, and executive functions (Local Government Act 936). Some of these responsibilities include but are not limited to being responsible for the overall development of the districts. Additionally, according to the Act, the Assembly shall:

1. Be responsible for the overall development of the district.

2. Formulate and execute plans, programs, and strategies for the effective mobilization of the resources necessary for the overall development of the district.
3. Promote and support productive activity and social development in the district and remove any obstacles to initiative and development.
4. Sponsor the education of students from the district to fill particular staffing needs of the district, especially in the social sectors of education and health, making sure that the sponsorship is pretty and equitably balanced between male and female students.
5. Initiate programs for the development of basic infrastructure and provide municipal works and services in the district.
6. Be responsible for the development, improvement, and management of human settlements and the environment in the district.
7. In co-operation with the appropriate national and local security agencies, be responsible for the maintenance of security and public safety in the district.
8. Ensure ready access to courts in the district for the promotion of justice.
9. Act to preserve and promote the cultural heritage within the district
10. Initiate, sponsor or carry out studies that may be necessary for the discharge of any of the duties conferred by this Act or any other enactment; and
11. Perform any other functions that may be provided

With such responsibilities, the Assembly members are paid allowances that amount to less than \$200.00 United States Dollars in some cases. With complaints from more than 80% of those interviewed that they would like to be paid salaries, I recommend that the government consider its policies on paying salaries to the Assembly members. If salaries cannot be paid, I would recommend that the allowances paid be equivalent to salaries in similar positions.

Provision of 30% Seats for Women in the Assembly

The second recommendation is giving women 30% seats in the Assemblies. When Ghana got its independence, President Kwame Nkrumah, gave the women 10 seats in Parliament through an affirmative action. Presently, the constitution gives the president the power to appoint 30% citizens while 70% contest for Assembly seats. I recommend that a similar enactment of 30% be made for women in the Assemblies. While this would not bring the women on par in numbers with the men, it would assure the women of some level of seats and increase their participation in the Assembly decisions.

Limitation on the Creation of MMDAs

The third recommendation that I propose is putting some limitations to creating MMDAs. In Ghana, MMDAs are created based on population. A population of 250,000 triggers creating a Metropolitan Assembly, 95,000 a Municipal Assembly, and 75,000 a District Assembly. It means that as the population grows, there will be the creation of more MMDAs. The creation of MMDAs come with additional Assemblies and Assembly members. Presently, the structure includes 260 Metropolitan, Municipal, and District Assemblies (MMDAs) (six Metropolitan Assemblies, 109 Municipal Assemblies, and

145 District Assemblies) plus 58 Town Councils 108 Zonal Councils, and 626 Area Councils with more than 16,000 Unit Committees. Out of this number, only the Assembly members get an allowance. There are complaints within the ranks of the Assembly members for lack of salary payments. Based on population growth in Ghana, it is almost impossible for government to continue to have all these people working without salaries. An increase in this number could breed disaster in the future for the government and make it unpopular. Moreover, all of these Assembly members feel it an obligation to carry projects to their various districts from the government. This brings me to the point to recommend that the government examines its local government policy when it comes to the creation of additional MMDAs.

Implications for Social Change

Currently, the involvement of the assemblywomen in the decision-making process of the Common Fund does not exist. With the granting of 30% of seats to women in the Assemblies, the government would meet its core principles for decentralization, which calls for the widespread participation of citizens at the local level of the government (Mohammed, 2017). Getting the assemblywomen involved in the decision-making process could enhance the democratic and decentralization process of the Assembly and open room for positive social change. The significance of such social change would give Ghanaian policymakers who value citizens' perspectives on participation an opportunity to write better policies on citizen participation.

Conclusion

The decentralization policy of President Jerry Rawlings to increase the participation of the citizens in the decision-making process of their District Assemblies is accepted by Ghanaians across the country (Acheampong & Dinye, 2015). To increase citizen participation, the President enacted laws that would transfer power, authority, and responsibility from the central government to the local government to reduce poverty (Hidayat, 2017). This would also enable women to contest elections and become Assembly members and play a meaningful role in decisions affecting the Common Fund of their Assemblies. With the women population exceeding the population of men, they continue to hope for participation commensurate to their increased population. But that is still to be seen.

Ghanaian women face the problem of getting elected to the Assembly. If elected to the Assemblies, they would have a shot at serving in leadership positions. Once in a leadership position, they would participate in the decision-making process of their Assemblies' Common Fund decisions. But that still needs to be seen because getting elected to Assemblies takes money and courage. Many assemblywomen interviewed want to change this trend by electing more women to the Assemblies and changing the mindset of other women on the notion that the job is only for men.

However, with help from international nongovernmental organizations like ABANTU for Development and the United Nations, there is a good chance that the women of Ghana will do well in the future. This study was necessary to understand the perspectives of not only the assemblywomen but also the assemblymen who all agree that the involvement of

the assemblywomen in the decision-making process of the Common Fund is good for the Assemblies and the country.

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Appendix A: Interview questions

I want to thank you for accepting my invitation to participate in this research, which is to assist me in completing my doctoral study at Walden University. As I stated in the consent form, your participation is strictly confidential. I only need to know if you are an Assemblyman or Assemblywoman. Your name will not appear in this report. I will record our conversation only for accuracy of information if I miss something that we discussed that I did not understand. Again, thank you as we begin this interview. Again, my name is Ranney Jackson from Walden University. I am a doctoral study conducting this study in the completing of my study at Walden. With this brief introduction:

1. Please tell me about yourself, your village, and your family?
2. When did you get elected to the Assembly?
3. What do you do besides working at the Assembly?
4. What were the challenges you faced running for the Assembly?
5. Did marriage or culture have any influence or play any role in your running for the Assembly?
6. What motivated you to run for this position?
7. There are the positions of Chief Executive, Presiding Member, and chairs of Sub-committees of the Executive Committee, which of these positions do you hold?
8. What are some of the challenges of being an Assembly Member?
9. What can you tell me about the District Assemblies Common Fund?
10. What specific role do you play do the Assemblywomen play in the District Assemblies Common Fund?

11. I hear you are paid allowance as an Assembly Member, why not salary?
12. How many times does the Assembly meet in the year?
13. What is your perspective on the decision-making process of the District Assemblies Common Fund?
14. Is there a particular committee that deals with the Common Fund?
15. Are you a member of that committee?
16. Do you know any female on that committee?
17. Do you think that the role of women in the Assembly is changing? If so, how?
18. What can you tell me about the Decentralization program in Ghana?
19. What are the various local government structures that participate in the Decentralization program?
20. What further thoughts would you like to share concerning the role of women in the Assembly, mainly related to decisions around the District Assemblies Common Fund?

Thank you for your participation