

DEVELOPMENT OF THE PLANNING PROCESS AT THE  
LOCAL COUNCIL LEVEL IN GHANA

by

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To the millions of Ghanaian people living in the rural areas, and farming under the severest of condition in order to keep the urban population fed.

### ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

I will like to thank my dear wife Okailey for the support she has given me since I decided to go back to school. Without her support I would not have gone this far. Also, my sincere thanks are due to my mother, Madam Caroline Amma Frempomaah Akuffo, my brother Seth Atiemo Akuffo, and all my sisters for holding the fort, while I was gone for several years.

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# CHAPTER 1

## INTRODUCTION

One of the major objectives of the present government (Supreme Provisional National Defence Council) of Ghana and that of previous governments is to raise the standard of living of the Ghanaian people, especially the rural people. This objective is to be achieved in part through rural development. The success of a rural development program will require extensive and long-term cooperation between the government and the people of Ghana, particularly the rural people. It will require the participation of the rural people in the planning process, beginning with formulation and implementation of policies at the local level, which are consistent and commensurate with the availability of indigenous physical resources and with the skills and education of the rural people.

The new governments of developing nations have opted for the welfare state; they have promised the people a higher standard of living. To get them, modern practices of administration are required; to get them, the national governments must share their responsibilities with their leadership and citizenry of localities ( 1 ).\*

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( 1 ) \* Numbers refer to references at the end of the report.

In a traditional society like Ghana in which decisions are made collectively at the village level in particular and in the rural areas in general, the government cannot overlook such a traditional process in making decision without involving the people. The exclusion by the Ghana government of citizen participation in the planning process is continuation of centralized planning inherited from the British colonial government without modifying it to suit local conditions. The lack of citizen participation in the planning process has resulted in the failure of several projects in rural Ghana. An example is the Volta River Dam resettlement project in which houses were built to resettle the people who were displaced by the creation of the Volta lake. The people were not involved in the planning of the resettlement villages. The outcome was the abandonment of most of the villages within a year of settlement. The reasons for abandonment, among others being unfavorable land conditions for farming, cultural differences between the newcomers and the traditional settlers of the area and building types which did not meet the settlers' needs.

Public participation is another issue to be tackled. The very people for whom the houses are being built are those who are least consulted. We hope that in future the public will take a great part in decisions regarding the types of dwellings they are going to have to live in. We also hope that the public will be able to play a role in the implementation of human settlement planning ( 2 ).

If countries where most of the people depend on and are confident with doing things as tradition and custom dictates, would begin at least to incorporate or modify gradually some of beliefs and customs in their planning process for rural development, it would enhance at least economic, political and social cooperation and understanding between the rural people and the objective of the government.

Due to the centralization of government functions all planning-economic, physical and social is done by the central government. Therefore, planning is virtually non-existent at the local council level in Ghana. Traditional chiefs and the citizens are not involved in the planning process, and because of the lack of planning at the local level, there are no physical planners at the local level to help the rural people plan their towns and villages. As a result, town growth, if any, is not directed because physical growth and development do not follow any laid out plan.

Communication between the rural people and the local council is poor, and there is no interest on the part of the people to identify with most government programs. Programs such as those to slow rural to urban migration, family planning to slow population growth and agricultural programs to encourage rural youth to take up farming have all not been successful.

#### PURPOSE OF THE REPORT

The purpose of this report is to examine the structure

and functions of the local government system in Ghana, particularly the local council system. Suggestions will then be made as to how the local council system can be more effective in serving the local people. In addition to the above, suggestions will be made as to how the local people can be brought into the planning process.

## A BRIEF PROFILE OF GHANA

### Geography

The Republic of Ghana formerly known as the Gold Coast is situated on the West Africa' Gulf of Guinea only a few degrees north of the equator. See figure 1. It covers an area of 92,100 square miles. It is bounded by Upper Volta, Ivory Coast and Togoland. Half of the country lies less than 500 ft. above sea level, and the highest point is 2,900 ft. The 334 miles coastline is mostly a low sandy shore backed by plains and scrub and intersected by several rivers and streams most of which are navigable only by canoe. A tropical rain forest belt, broken by heavily forested hills and many streams and rivers, extend northwards from the shore, near the Ivory Coast frontier. The climate is tropical, like that of other equatorial countries. The capital city is Accra and has a population of about one million people. See figure 2.

### Economy

By West African standards, Ghana has a diverse and valuable resource base. The country remains basically agricultural, however, with most of its workers engaged in farming. Cash crops consist mainly cocoa and cocoa products, which provide about two-thirds of export revenues.

Mineral, principally gold, diamonds, manganese ore and bauxite are produced and exported. Ghana's industrial base is relatively advanced compared with many other African countries.

MAP OF WEST AFRICA  
SHOWING POSITION OF GHANA

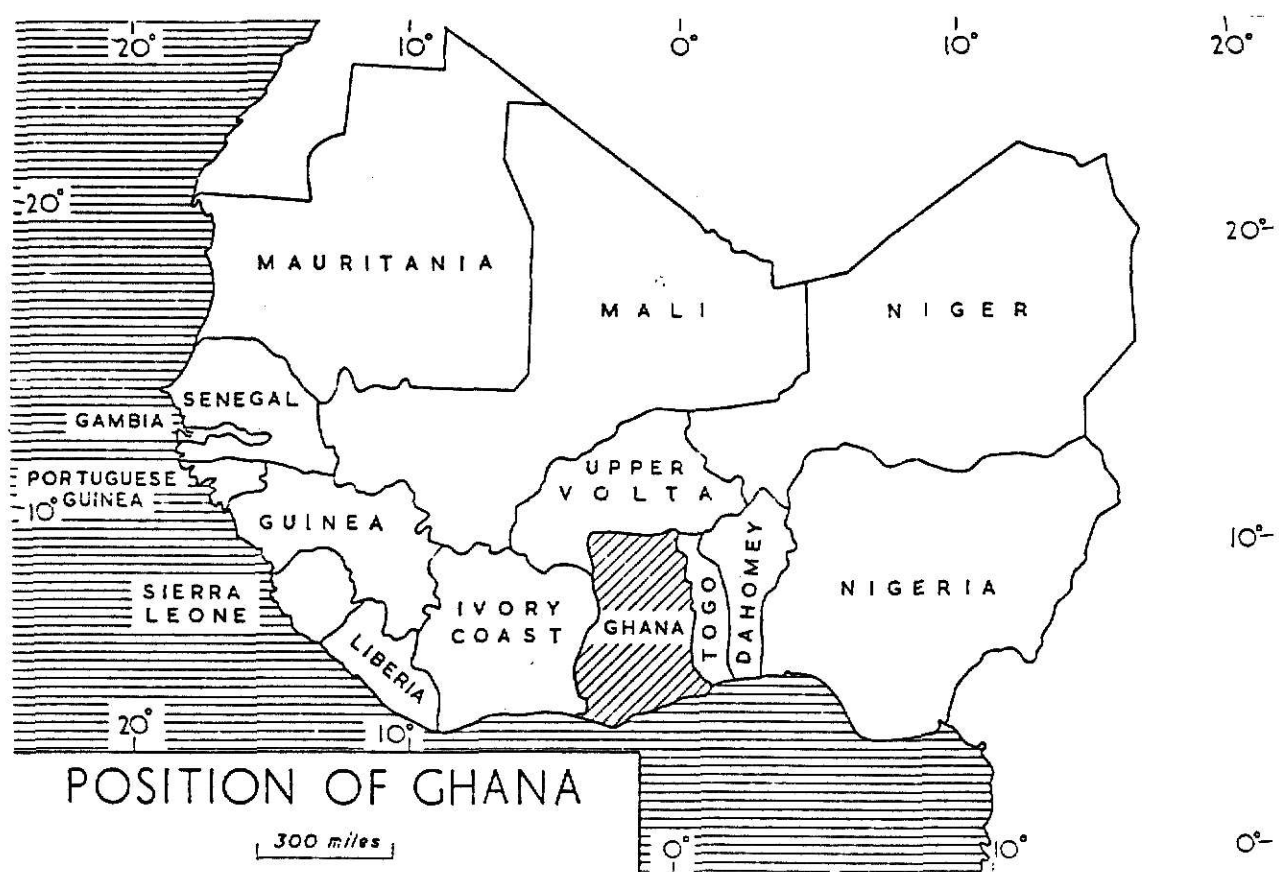


Figure 1

Source: Reference 5 is the source for figure 1 through 3.



# MAP OF GHANA SHOWING ADMINISTRATIVE DIVISIONS



Figure 2

The Volta River Project. A major development project undertaken in Ghana's history is the Volta River Dam. It is to be a major base for Ghana's economic development. The 370 ft. high dam, begun in 1961 at Akosombo, in the Volta gorge of Akuapem-Togo mountains, seventy miles from the sea, was completed in 1965. It has created a two hundred mile long lake, flooding over 3.5 per cent (3,250 square miles) of the country. It has also created one of the largest man made lakes in the world. The generating capacity will ultimately be 768,000 kilowatts. By far the greater part will be used to make up to 210,000 tons of aluminium annually, and Ghana will then become the third or fourth world producer. Power is also available for the existing gold and other mines, and for coastal, mining and other towns. Irrigation water might be made available to the lower Volta Plains.

### Government

Ghana became an independent state on March 6th. 1957, when the United Kingdom relinquished its control over the colony of the Gold Coast and Ashanti, the Northern Territories Protectorate and British Togoland. In subsequent re-organizations, the country was divided into nine regions which are now further divided into sixty six districts ( 3 ).

Since Ghana's independence in 1957, there have been eight governments ruling the country, and five of these governments were overthrown in a military coup. The present government of Ghana is called the Provisional National Defence Council, (PNDC). It is comprised of members of the Ghana

armed forces ( Army, Airforce, and Navy ) and appointed civilian authorities for administration.

### Education

The Ministry of Education is responsible for the organization of the public education system of Ghana as well as for relationship between the government and a large number of bodies performing work of educational nature. A six year primary course is followed by a four-year middle course during which selection is made for secondary school. The main secondary school course lasts for five years, and at the end of this time students are prepared for the School Certificate examination of the West African Examination Council. From the secondary school a student may proceed to one of the three Universities in the country. Admission to university is based on entrance examination. University education lasts from three to five years depending on field of study ( 4 ).

### HISTORY OF ETHNIC SETTLEMENT IN GHANA

Almost all the inhabitants of Ghana belong to that stock of the human race known as Sudanese Negroes. These people are found throughout West Africa and form one of the five main racial groups of the African continent.

It is not known exactly how long the present inhabitants have been settled in Ghana, but from the scanty records avai-

lable and the oral traditions of the various peoples it appears that most of them, whatever their origin may be, have moved into the country within the last 700-1000 years. The majority of them came from the north, but a few, such as Gas, Adangbes and Ewes believed to have come from the east. It is thought that these movements took place as a result of pressure from other groups, and some people believe that those who came from the north once formed part of the ancient empire of Ghana.

Either before or soon after their arrival here. our ancestors seem to have crystallized into a number of distinct groups usually described as "tribes", but perhaps more comparable to "nations". The largest tribe of all are the Akans, who embrace practically all the people of Ashanti, Western and Eastern Regions, apart from the Ewes, the Gas and Adangbes in the extreme south-east corner. Closely associated with the Akans and forming a broad crescent on their eastern and northern flanks are the Guans. It is thought that the Guans, who arrived before the Akans, moved in along the Volta river, in whose basin they are mostly found to-day, entered the Accra plains through the Volta gorge at Senchi and spread along the coast between Winneba and Cape Coast in the central region of Ghana.

Next came the Fantis, the vanguard of the Akans. The Twis followed. They moved southward between the Fantis and the Guans, following various river valleys and other convi-

nient lines of movements. They occupied almost the whole of Ashanti and spread over the forest country further south between the Tano river and the Volta.

Although the Ewes and Ga-Adangbes both came from the east, they arrived by slightly different routes and at different times. The Ga-Adangbes who arrived first, are said to have come from Nigeria by a coastal route. The Ewes claim to have migrated from a place somewhere east of the Niger to the town of Notsie or Nuatja in French Togoland, and those who eventually settled along the sea around Keta seem to have reached it from a northerly direction ( 5 ). See figure 3.

MAP OF GHANA SHOWING  
ETHNIC MIGRATION ROUTES

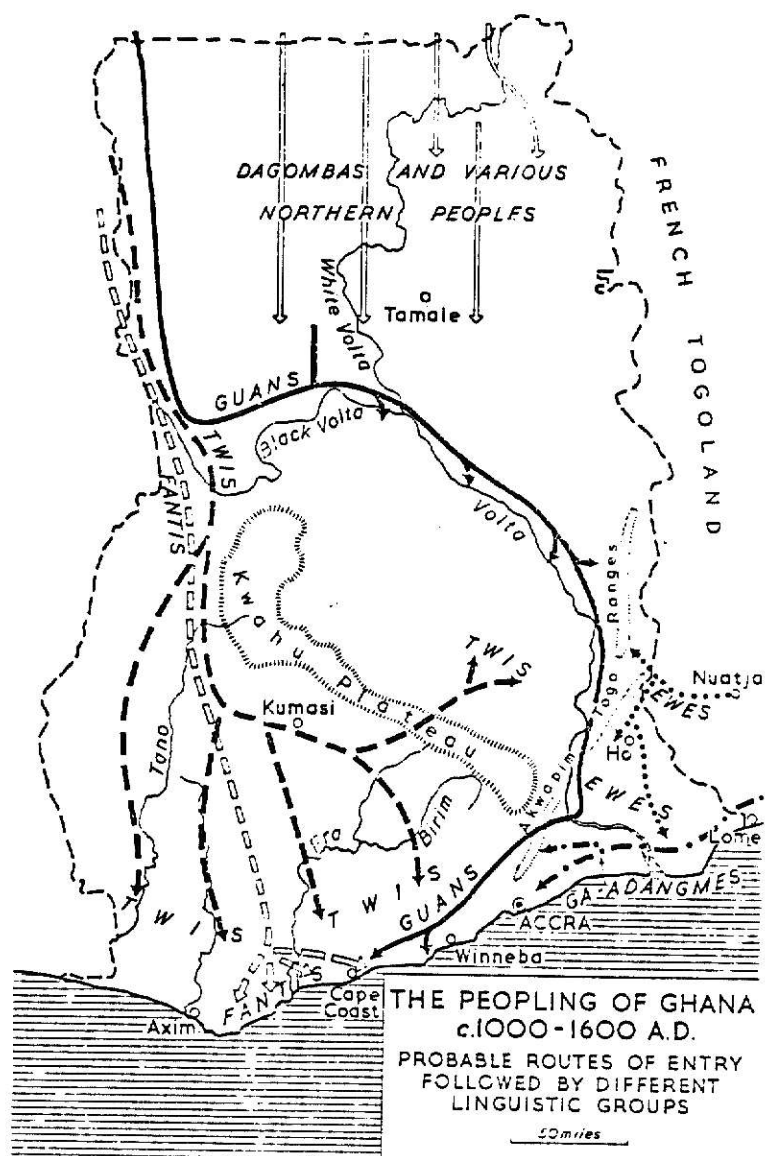


Figure 3

Dagombas &amp; Various

## Northern People

## ← Guans

←==Fantis

~~SECRET~~ Twis

← ~~1000~~ Ga-Adangbes

## SCOPE AND METHOD

This report will discuss all aspects of the local council system in Ghana, but it will be focused on citizen participation in the physical planning process at the local council level.

Major data sources will be government publications, publications by the United Nations and other international organizations. Books and articles on the subject written by individuals will also be used. The personal experience of the author as a Ghanaian and knowledge of the local council system, will be useful in writing this report.

Research and secondary analysis of publication, books and articles presents a historical and existing configuration of the planning process and its organization in Ghana.

The descriptive summary, derived from this research, includes:

1. The local council system and planning process under the British government;
2. The local council system and the planning process under the various governments of Ghana since 1951 to present;
3. Recommendation for a new planning process with emphasis on citizen participation at the local council level will be made. In addition the report will recommend changes in some aspects of the local council system with an emphasis on the physical planning process. It will recommend among other things: (a) The placement of a physical planner at the local council level; (b) Involvement of citizens and traditional

chiefs in the sharing of responsibility in decision-making, communication, coordination, administration, implementation and budget activities in the planning process.



## CHAPTER 2

### LOCAL GOVERNMENT SYSTEM UNDER BRITISH RULE TO PRESENT

#### The Local Council System and Planning Process under The British Government.

In 1925 a town planning ordinance was enacted, giving powers to statutory commissions to develop towns. The provisions of the ordinance were uncoordinated and spasmodic and hence were not applied. In 1945 a new town and country planning which blindly followed the principles of the English Town and Country Act of 1932 was enacted. It embodied the principle provisions for the preparation of statutory planning methods; control of interim development; power to enforce planning schemes; acquisition of land; exclusion or limitations of compensation in respect of certain restrictions based on the principle of "good neighborliness and betterment". However, the rigidity and regimentation which depressed the lives of the people and disfigured so many acres of their land were found too complex for satisfactory administration by local authorities to meet the need for changes. The task of drawing-up town and country plans coupled with lack of research, and availability of basic data and shortage of technical staff made it impossible for the indigenous tribal people to understand the nature of those innovations. Therefore, only those plans which were made to conform to the interest of the imperial British government came to be prepared and adopted while the rest of the country remained

unplanned ( 6 ).

Before 1925 and up till 1951, the system of local government was a traditional local government. Paramount chiefs and their subchiefs managed traditional affairs in the towns and villages under their jurisdiction. They levied taxes and had their own native courts to settle traditional disputes among their people. The chiefs organized the people for communal work on community facilities such as streets, markets etc.

Traditional local government, in most places, may be described in terms of a chief, a village head, or some kind of local leader, either acting as sole authority or more often assisted by a council of elders. The power structure is in terms of an extended family, clan, tribe, religious elite, or economic class. The functions of government are consonant with the cultural stage of the people, and jurisdiction is limited to a village or a group of villages in a contiguous geographic area ( 7 ).

Native administration throughout British West Africa first began to be modernized as a result of a directive from the Secretary of State for the Colonies in the post War Labor Government, to the Governors of African colonies, that they should work towards the establishment of efficient and representative local government. In the Gold Coast (Ghana) the trend was quickened by the after effects of the riots of 1948, and notably by the proposals of the all African Committee on Constitutional Reform. The committee's ideas were to

be embodied in the first Local Government Ordinance of 1951 which adopted the three - tier English system, including the device of precepting, and reduced the chiefs and their followers to a minority among an elected majority. It was, however, a largely political exercise, for although the new councils were more "representative" they were certainly no more "efficient", since their resources were no greater than those of the native authorities they succeeded ( 8 ).

#### Local Government Structure of 1951

After the traditional local government system was abolished by the British Administration, the Gold Coast (Ghana) adopted a local government system similar to that of the United Kingdom. In the Gold Coast's (Ghana) local government system of 1951, the Minister of local government was the official ultimately responsible for local government affairs. Assisting him in the Ministry were a Ministerial Secretary ( a legislative colleague ) and a permanent secretary ( a civil servant ). There were five regions with every senior administrative officers heading the regional organizations. The duty of these officers was to provide the Minister of local government with information and reports on local problems and to ensure that the government's policies were being effectively carried out. The regions were subdivided into local authority areas which could be run by

either local councils ( in rural areas ) or urban councils ( in fairly large towns ). The local councils was basically expected to perform the functions of the former native authorities. The responsibilities of urban councils were expected to be a bit more complex because of their more varied populations. Municipal councils were to run the cities. Outside the cities local and urban councils elected members to a higher local authority known as the District Council. The district councils were to provide major and sometimes over-arching services in the areas under their authority (9). See figure 4.

The local government system of 1951 did not function well for long and by 1956 signs of failure of the system have started to emerge. The failure of the system was due in part to the misunderstanding of the British local government system which was imposed on the people without any modifications to suite local conditions.

Secondly, some local councils did not have a good revenue base from which they could carry on developments in their areas. The above problems among others led the government to appoint a commission of enquiry to look into the local government system and to make recommendations for its improvement. But what worried the government most was inability of the councils to meet their developmental obligations to their areas because of their poverty. Many were so small that they could not generate enough revenue to sustain any worthwhile

**THIS BOOK  
CONTAINS  
NUMEROUS PAGES  
WITH DIAGRAMS  
THAT ARE CROOKED  
COMPARED TO THE  
REST OF THE  
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RECEIVED FROM  
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# STRUCTURE OF LOCAL GOVERNMENT (1951)

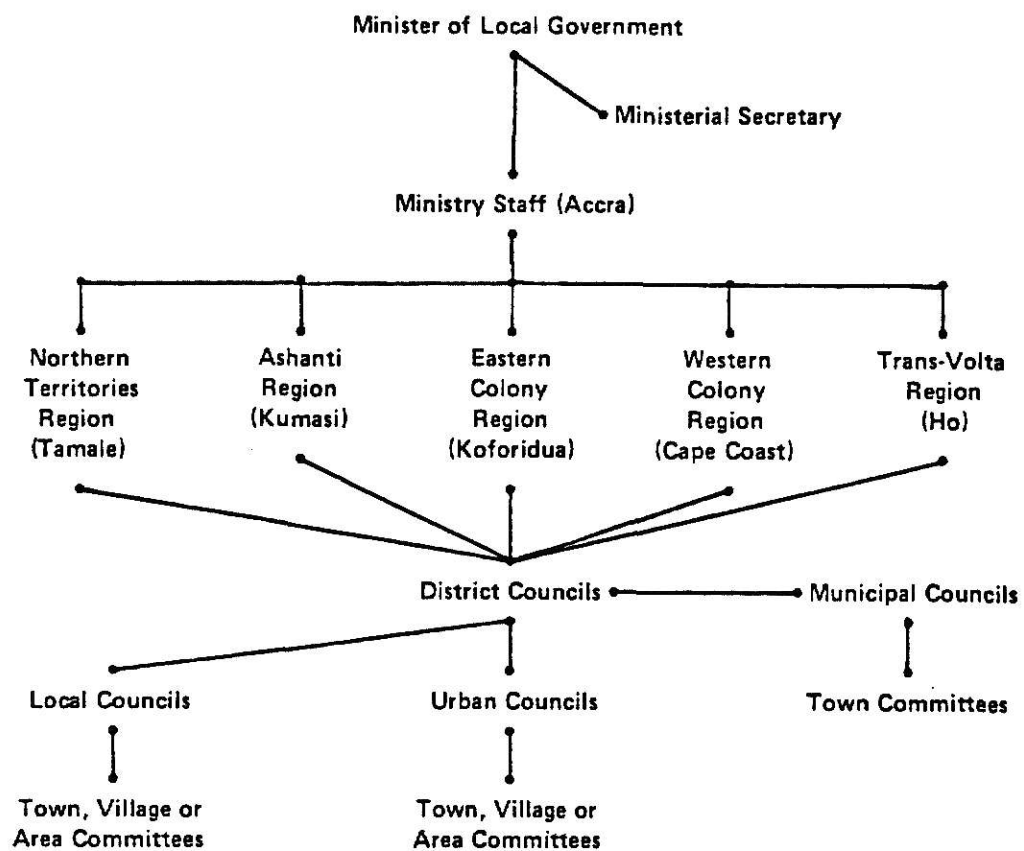


Figure 4

Source: Reference 9.

projects. In order to alleviate all or some of these problems a commission under Mr. A.F. Greenwood was set up on November 19th. 1956 to enquire into and report on the following:

1. The structure of local government in the Gold Coast with a view to a reduction in the number of local authorities.
2. Local authorities' methods of revenue collection.
3. Local authorities' methods of control of expenditure.
4. The methods of financing local authorities with particular reference to government grants - in - aid and loans.
5. The prospects of raising the level of rates and imposing other forms of taxation and to make recommendations ( 10 ).

## THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT SYSTEM - IN INDEPENDENT GHANA

### Local Government Structure of 1961

By 1961 the Greenwood commission of enquiry had recommended two alternative plans to restructure the local government system. In addition to the two plans, the commission recommended the reduction in the number of local authorities from 282 to 70 by merging some smaller ones. This, the commission hoped will make the system more efficient.

Plan "A" of the Greenwood report was to produce large units based on District council areas where they existed, and on similar groupings of local authorities where they did not exist.....; Local and Urban Councils as they existed then were to be abolished and in their place was to be put Town, Village or Area committees, corresponding to existing Local or Urban councils. See figure 5.

Plan "B" of the report recommended the retention of Local and Urban Councils, but District Councils were to be abolished ( 11 ). The government adopted Plan "A" of the Greenwood report and subsequently abolished local and urban councils and replaced them with Town, Village or Area Committees. By 1962 Ghana had become a one-party state, therefore, the adoption of Plan "A" helped the ruling party ( Convention People Party ) to get the town and village people of the rural areas to directly participate in the learning of



society in the country by then.

The structure of the 1961 local government remained functional until 1966 when the government was overthrown by the Ghana armed forces. Before then, the government had used the local government system to spread socialism. The local council offices had been turned into local party "offices" and the staff had been replaced with party loyalists who helped to spread the socialist ideology of the ruling party. The military government on taking power in 1966, disbanded all local councils in the local government system, and until a new system was established, local government affairs were in the hands of the most senior government officials in all localities.

#### Local Government Structure from 1974 to Present.

In 1974 the local government structure was changed again. Emphasis was laid on administrative efficiency more than participation by the people. It was felt that administrative efficiency would be effective in the implementation of government policies at the local level. The government adopted a four-tier structure consisting of :

1. Regional Councils
2. District Councils
3. Municipal, Urban, Local and Area Councils
4. Town and Village development committees.  
See figure 6.

Each of these tiers had its own administrative function.

# STRUCTURE OF LOCAL GOVERNMENT (1961)

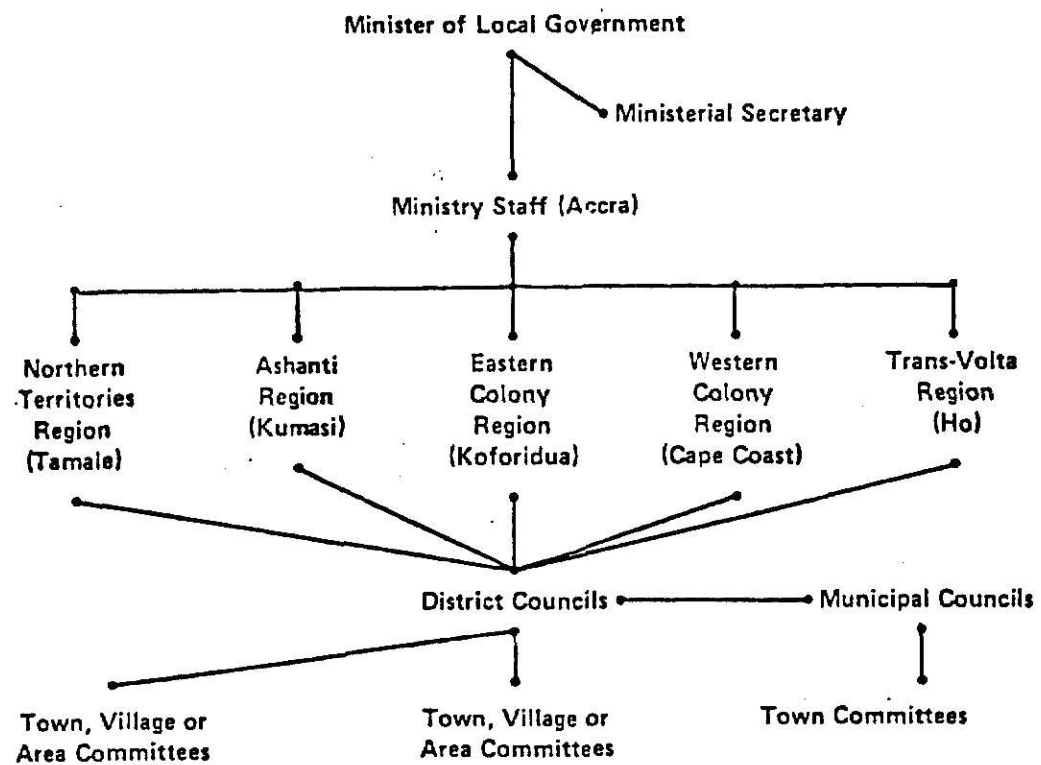


Figure 5

Source: Reference 9.

STRUCTURE OF LOCAL GOVERNMENT  
(1974)

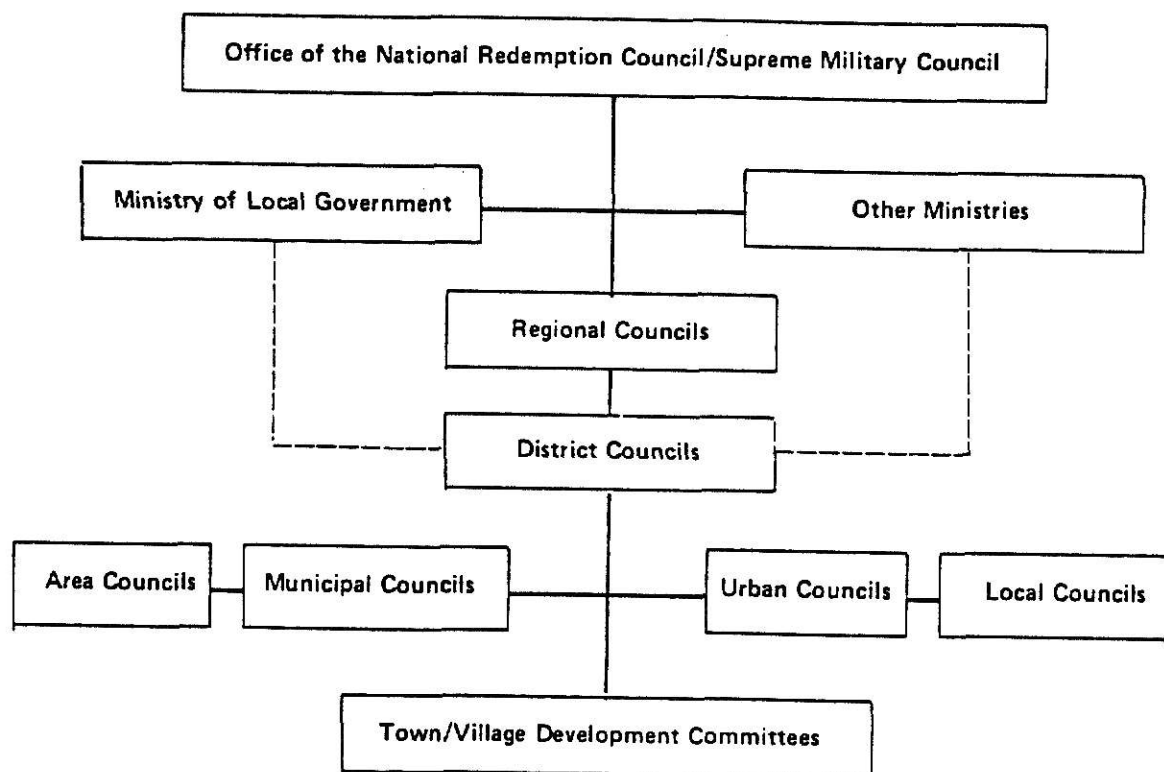


Figure 6

Source: Reference 9.

# CHAPTER 3

## ADMINISTRATION AND IMPLEMENTATION OF PLANNING

### AND

### PLANNING NEEDS AT THE LOCAL LEVEL

#### The Policy Making Body

The national policy making body of Ghana is the Supreme Provisional National Defense Council. It is a seven-man council of military and appointed civilians. The council is supreme over all bodies in Ghana. It rules by decree and the decree becomes the law of the land when passed by the council, and it may not be challenged. The council is headed by a chairman who is chosen from among the members.

Under the Provisional National defense council are the various secretarial positions and the regional councils. The council formulates the defense, economic and social policies for the country. Implementation of such policies is left to the various ministries of the government. See figure 7.

#### Functions of Each Level of Local Government.

At the top of the hierarchy of the local government system is the Ministry of local Government. The ministry is headed by a secretary who is appointed by the Supreme Provisional National Defense Council. He is responsible for the

PRESENT STRUCTURE OF LOCAL GOVERNMENT  
(Started December 31st, 1981)

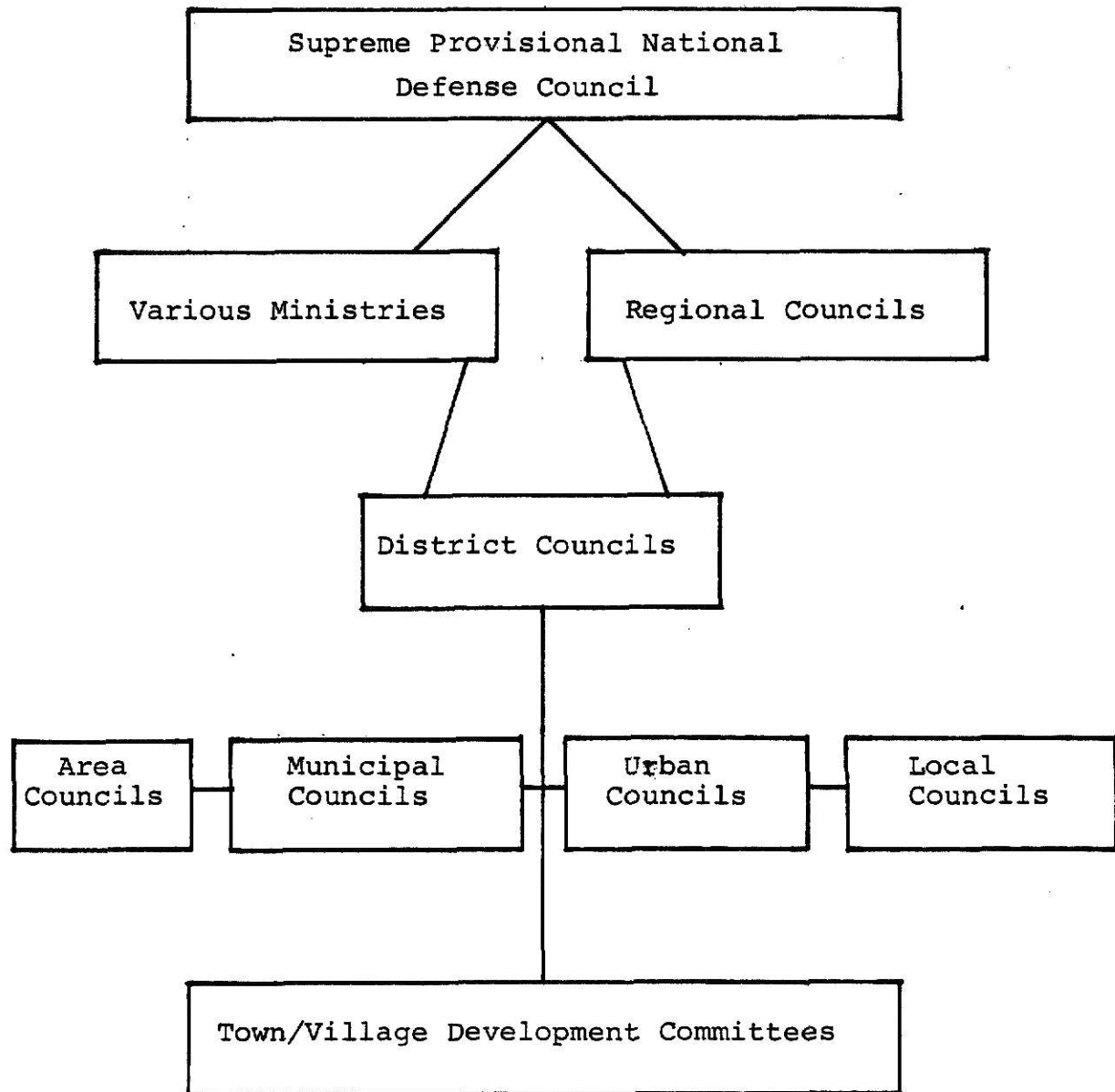


Figure 7

overall administration of the Ministry including all branches under it. He is assisted by a deputy secretary and a permanent secretary.

The functions are the formulation and implementation of policies for the local government system of Ghana as prescribed within the economic and social policies of the Supreme Provisional National Defense Council. In consultation with the regional councils, it draws up planning programs to be carried out at the local level by the various branches of the ministry.

#### Regional Councils

The nine regional councils in the country are each composed of two representatives from each of the District councils in the region and Regional Heads of government departments. The regional councils are responsible for the identification of the planning needs of all the regional branches under them. In consultation with the Ministry of Local Government, they develop plans and programs for their regions as specified in the national development plan. See figure 8.

They examine and approve estimates and allocate funds to the District councils which are under their jurisdiction. They act as representatives of the Central Government in respect of national programs and development projects which fall outside the jurisdiction of the District councils.

## REGIONAL COUNCILS

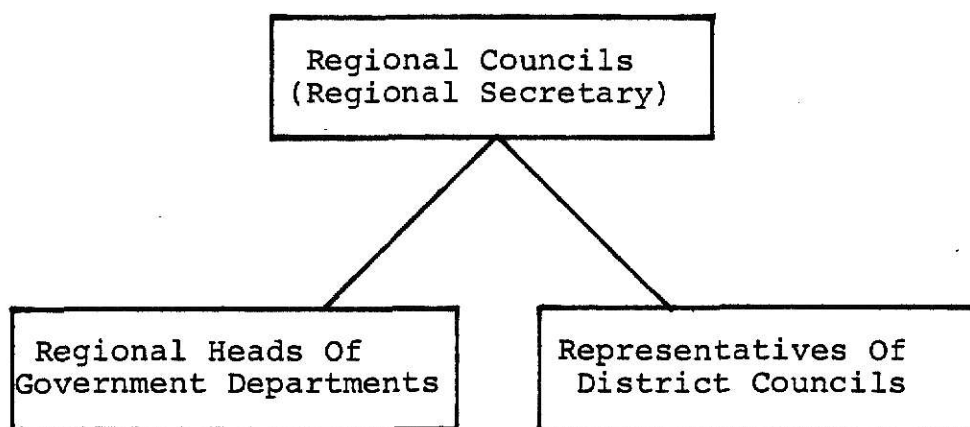


Figure 8

### District Councils

The District councils serve as the basic unit of administration at the local level. The councils are responsible for the provision, maintenance and management of public services such as provision of district markets, lorry parks, facilities for conservancy and refuse collection, control and education of the public to ensure public hygiene and public health, and also to implement any government policy at the district level as instructed by the ministry of local government. See figure 9.

### Municipal, Urban, Area, and Local Councils

The Municipal, Urban, Area, and Local councils are the subordinates to the District councils and performed such specific functions as are delegated by the District Councils. In addition to assigned functions, they are responsible for the maintenance of local public facilities such as incineration of local garbage, cleaning of public latrines, conservancy collection, public baths, local markets, etc. See figure 10.

### Town and Village Committees

The committees form the base of the structure of the local government system in Ghana. Members of the committees are appointed from the residents of the various towns and



## DISTRICT COUNCILS

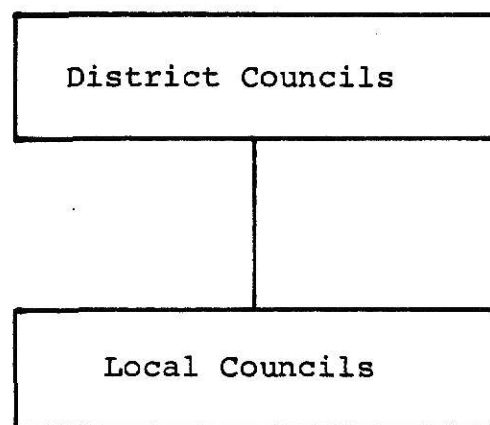


Figure 9

AREA, MUNICIPAL, URBAN, & LOCAL  
COUNCILS

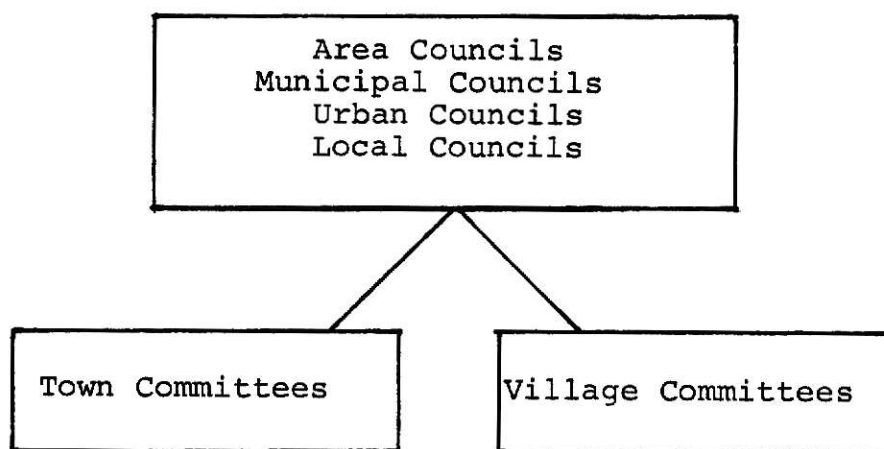


Figure 10

villages. They act as agents of development in the towns and villages, they cooperate and collaborate with the local councils in the performance of their functions which include education of citizens of towns and villages in matters of sanitation, environmental hygiene and government policies, among other things. See figure 11.

## TOWN/VILLAGE COMMITTEES

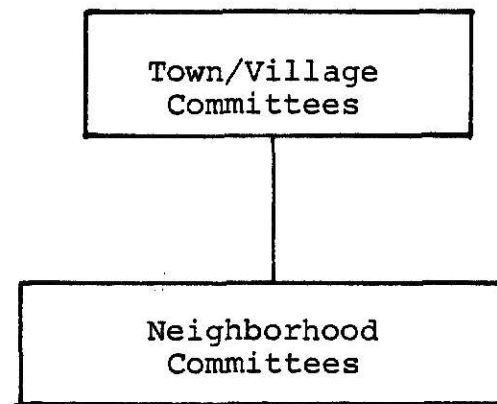


Figure 11

## IMPLEMENTATION OF GOVERNMENT POLICY

AT

### THE LOCAL COUNCIL LEVEL

"To implement means 'to carry into effect' and this in the short term at least, is what planning should be about. For a plan, be it approved by all authorities in the realm, is nothing but a series of paper documents. Implementation, moreover, is the only essential part of the planning process, the point where theories and policies become realities. It occurs regardless of the existence or absence of a 'plan'; and the plan can only be as good as its implemented realisation. A prospective excellent plan can fail miserably because of bad management during its implementation" ( 12 ).

The centralization of government functions in Ghana requires all decisions to be made by the various ministries within the framework of national policies. These decisions are made by the cabinet ministers on the advise of the various committees within their respective ministries. When a decision is approved by the cabinet, directives pertaining to the implementation of such policy are sent to the various line agencies within that particular ministry. Those agencies inturn transmit their directives to the sub-agencies in the various regions of the country. The regional agencies then transmit the directives to the district agencies who in turn pass it on to the local level.

Whereas such filtering down of information from higher to lower level of government is an aspect of centralization of government, there is always a disadvantage that, by the time

information reaches the local level, the directive may be:

(1) no more effective due to elapsed time from bureaucratic delays, (2) distorted due to the various commands it has to pass through.

Some policies are hard to implement at the local level due to the misunderstanding of the policies by the local people, and the lack of staff at the local level to interpretate such policies. Where a policy may be implemented, bad roads and the lack of other forms of communication - radio, telephones, transportation, etc., make it impossible for the local administrator or his field technicians to get to some villages or towns to implement such policy. Although government policies may be enacted for rural areas of the country, its implementation may be difficult if not impossible due, in part, to the above mentioned problems.

Another aspect of the present institutional inadequacy in planning is the separation of the plan formulation function from the plan implementation and control function. In the cities of Ghana, the town planning department is responsible for plan formulation, while the officials of the city council are responsible for plan implementation and control. This arbitrary division of functions leads to a failure to perceive planning as an aspect of local government, and so the planning function is not integrated into the other functions of government. A continuous process of interaction between planning officers and other officials of the city government would lead to more realistic planning and improve considerably the process

of plan implementation and control ( 13 ).

"At the local level, planning must be integrated with local government if there is to be a better climate for plan implementation. To ensure the successful implementation of plans and policies, and to ensure that all the suggested institutions are manned by people who can actually 'deliver the goods', we need an adequate supply of trained manpower at both professional and sub-professional levels" ( 14 ).

### THE PLANNING NEEDS AT THE LOCAL LEVEL

While planning offers great prospects for aiding the development effort, at the same time it faces serious problems. Planning itself is a complex and demanding organizational task requiring coordinated effort not only of the professional planning staff, but of political leaders and the general public as well ( 15 ).

Ghana, like most West African countries has been concentrating on urban development more than rural development, despite the repeated promises to the citizens to raise the standard-of-living of the rural population. This has resulted in the decline of some major rural towns which has inturn, intensified the rural to urban migration.

The lack of rural development has resulted in the lack of some basic amenities such as clean water supply, 'good' housing, medical facilities (health posts and health centers), roads, schools, electricity, good sanitations, etc. The lack of these amenities has resulted in the shortage of planning and other personnel in the rural areas of Ghana. Most personnel are reluctant to be transferred from the urban areas to the

rural areas, because of the lack of basic amenities which are available in the cities.

In nations bent upon improving standards of living through government effort, the problem of getting competent personnel to assist local government is one of major importance. There is always a critical shortage of qualified administrators and technicians available for work in the field. One of the reasons is that the capital city and urban areas offer more attractions; better living conditions, more prestige, higher salaries, and greater chance for individual preferment and promotion ( 16 ).

The lack of personnel at the local level has made planning non-existent, and where other government agencies exist at the local level, their functions are ineffective due to the lack of personnel. An efficient and effective personnel officers and technicians are needed to run all agencies of the central government at the local level. They are needed among other things to coordinate activities among the various government agencies to avoid duplication and to interpretate and implement government policies at the local level.

At present there are no physical planners and planning technicians attached to the local councils. In order to make the government's rural development program effective, each town should have a prepared physical plan. The physical plan is needed to direct town growth and efficient location of activities such as outdoor markets, schools, houses, streets,



lorry parks and garbage dumps. In addition to the above activities, the following activities will need to be properly located, public cemeteries, industries which are too large or too dangerous to be a home industry, communal open spaces, wells, public stand pipes (water pipes), agricultural land and mixed land uses which the towns will deem useful for their proper growth and development and which will contribute to the well-being of the town people.

The physical planners and the planning technicians will be needed at the local council level to approve building plans for house construction and other development projects. At present all building plans from rural towns have to be sent to the regional offices of the town and country planning department for approval before construction can start. Also, building inspectors will have to travel from regional offices of the town and country planning department to the rural towns to inspect buildings under construction. This inspection is necessary to verify that construction of a building is in conformity with the approved plan. A delay in the arrival of a building inspector to a construction site means a work stoppage, because a permit has to be issued in order for construction to continue. A times delay takes weeks. A building inspector operating from a local council closer to the people can curtail such delays.

Rural towns which are fortunate to have land use plans drawn for them, had them drawn by the Town and Country planning

department located in the capital city of Accra. A few of such towns are Obuasi and Tarkwa -gold mining towns and Akwatia, a diamond mining town. The town's people are not consulted and the technician drawing the plan may not even visit the town. Information for drawing the plan may be obtained from a survey map, and the technician may not even understand the culture of that particular ethnic group of the town. All these have resulted in the mistrust of government officials by the rural people and have made planning a non-human function. The basis of this planning deficiency is the Town and Country Ordinance of 1945.

In the thirty six years of operation of the Town and Country Act of 1945, certain shortcomings have become apparent in some of the concepts and institutional arrangements created to implement the act. There is a failure to integrate planning activity into local government processes. Planning has been viewed, in practice though not in theory, as a static act - the preparation of a plan - instead of as a continuous process of cyclical decision-making. It is, or should be a dynamic activity relying on feedback processes from all parts of the real world. The apparent failure to understand the cyclical nature of planning, as an activity subject to continuous review and feedback processes, has led to a situation whereby plans are prepared by the professional officer of the Town Planning Department, sent to the appropriate local planning committee for endorsement, and then sent back for final

approval by the appropriate minister. The result is that local plans are prepared by professional planners who are not members of nor in anyway connected with the local government. These plans are then sent to the planning committees, whose members are all laymen and who have not been given the opportunity even to understand some of the issues involved in these plans.

Moreover, little opportunity has been given to the people affected by the plans to express their views on proposals. Where the plan is exhibited for public comment, it is difficult for the ordinary man to understand all those nice maps with their little colored areas of all shapes and sizes. The social and economic implications of the major provisions are not clearly brought out, and the people are not presented with various alternatives so that they may register their preferences. Thus the cyclical nature of planning, as a process of action and reaction between planners, the public, and real world conditions, becomes frustrated and the plan is turned into a static fossilized document.

The exclusion in practical terms, of public involvement in the planning process is one of the basic weaknesses of the present administration of planning in most parts of the developing world ( 17 ).

## CHAPTER 4

### FINDINGS, RECOMMENDATIONS AND CONCLUSION

#### FINDINGS

Since Ghana's colonization by the British till the present time, its local government structure has gone through several changes with the intention of making it more efficient. However, the local councils have not been efficiently staffed and operated. The result of this has been the deprivation of the rural people of several projects which would have improved their standard of living. Local decisions are made by the central government for the people.

The local government system is influenced by the British local government system without much modification to suit local conditions. Decisions that are made at the local level by the administrator or the clerk of council have to be approved by one of the hierarchies above the local council.

"In most of the newer emerging nations, it is the educated elite who have taken control after the withdrawal of colonial administrations. These are comparatively few in numbers, and have been educated and trained for the most part in Western ways of government and Western ways of life. Coming into control, they institute practices and procedures that they learned from their teachers or predecessors, and come out with a system of government very close to the dominant Western type, which in colonial areas tended to be highly centralized. In fact, there appears to be almost as much of chasm of misunderstanding between this elite and the uneducated masses as there was between the Western administrators and the people as a whole"(18 ).

The centralization of the local government system in Ghana has made the system ineffective, thus, contributing to the underdevelopment of the rural areas, which in turn has contributed to the rural to urban migration. The migration to the urban areas has created problems for both rural and the urban areas. In the rural areas it has caused reduction in agricultural production because the youths who could have taken over family farms, have moved to the cities for employment. In the urban areas, it has caused squatter settlements at the fringes of the cities, and has also put heavy demand on urban facilities such as water, electricity, sewer, schools, medical facilities and law enforcement among other things.

A major function which is missing from the structure of the local council system is that of a physical planner. Also, the representation of traditional chiefs on the local council is non-existent. In addition to the above deficiencies, the local people are not given the opportunity to participate in the planning process.

Citizen participation in the modern planning process has much to learn from the traditional planning process. Land use decisions were not made by the traditional rulers alone and later confirmed, modified or rejected by the people at a meeting. Decisions were made by communities comprising the chiefs, elders and the people. Today's development planners must find ways and means of planning with the people, especially the community leaders (19).

One or more of the deficiencies previously discussed have contributed to the ineffectiveness of the local council planning in Ghana. These deficiencies need to be corrected to make the local councils more effective.

#### RECOMMENDATIONS

Rural development in which the local council will play a major role will need strong support from and participation by the rural people. Mobilization of the people will be effective through the chiefs with whom the people have strong traditional ties.

The traditional chiefs of Ghana are not incorporated in the hierarchy of the government structure, therefore, they are not directly involved in national decision making process. However, they command enough influence in their districts, towns and villages to affect local decisions. This is so because of the pyramidal structure of the chieftaincy system in Ghana. See figure 12.

A great deal of local autonomy is built into the pyramidal system because legitimacy obtains at each level. A sub-chief at a subordinate level even though he might consider the chief at the level above superior to him, nevertheless, has a legitimate independent power base ( 20 ).

Therefore, the paramount chief of a district or his representative should be a member of the local council. A traditional chief on the council will not only establish the people's interest in the local council affairs, but it

## THE STRUCTURE OF CHIEFTAINCY SYSTEM IN GHANA

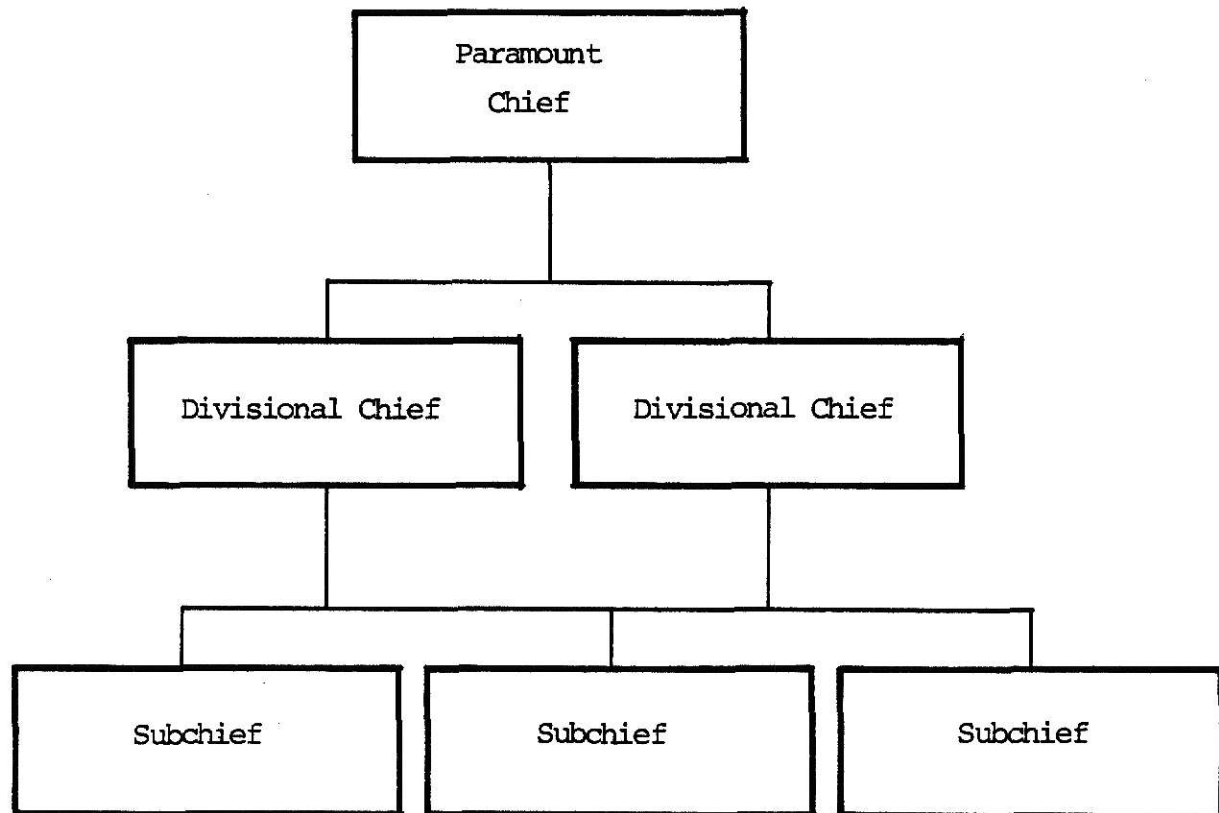


Figure 12

A Paramount chief is the head of all chiefs in a district (a district may comprise of about 20 towns).

A Divisional chief is the head of chiefs in a division of a district ( a division of a district may comprise of about 7 towns).

A Subchief is the chief of a town within a district.

will also encourage the people to contribute to the success of any development undertaken by the local council. It will improve communication between the local council and the people.

The chiefs themselves are naturally disturbed at the consistent attempts to cut them out of local council activities. They rightfully believe that the support, loyalty and enthusiasm of the people can only be properly harnessed for the welfare of the community through the institution of chiefship ( 21 ).

Some central government functions should be decentralized so that some decisions can be made at the local level without the approval of the minister or his representative in the ministry. The councils should be well staffed and funded to enable them under-take local developments.

Local government is one of the keys to sound administration. Local units must be strong enough to carry a substantial part of the total national load. The central government must organize them, grant them adequate financial resources, service them with administrative and technical assistance, stimulate and guide their activities in the direction of national goals. While it must exercise control to keep them within legal bounds, it should allow them as much freedom as possible so as to utilize the potentials of local leadership and democratic participation ( 22 ).



The local councils should take active role in physical planning of towns under their jurisdiction. At present the responsibility of physical planning of towns is that of the Town and Country planning department of the Ministry of Works and Housing. However, their operations have been confined to the urban areas of Ghana. Thus, physical planning of rural towns does not exist.

As previously mentioned in this paper, rural towns need to prepare physical plans in order to facilitate orderly growth and proper allocation of activities. The plans will have to be locally prepared instead of it being prepared from the Town and Country planning department in the city.

The necessity for and acceptance of local plans stem from a combination of practical and ideological considerations. It is part of the current socio-political trends of western societies to aim at some degree of devolution from the center to local communities. Whether this accepted as genuine desire to encourage increased civic involvement, or is considered a gimmick on the part of the establishment, a number of countries have started to implement policies which allow a certain amount of local decision making, and accept the fact that planning has to be done with local people and not for them by remote bureaucrats ( 23 ).

To do this, a planning section should be established at the local councils. See figure 13. It should be headed by a planner from the Town and Country department, so that activities of the planning section of the local council can be coordinated with that of the Town and Country department of the Ministry of Works and Housing. The planning section of

the local council will have responsibility for:

- (1) Consulting with community leaders and the town's people to identify their needs.
- (2) Preparing existing land use maps.
- (3) Preparing town plans.
- (4) Determining land use and zoning.
- (5) Advising the local council on all aspects of land use and town planning.
- (6) Approving building plans for houses and small scale industries and other land use activities.
- (7) Educating the people in the planning process.
- (8) Incorporating traditional town planning methods into the modern town planning system.

A physical planner assigned to a local council will have to respect and acquaint himself or herself with the traditional authority of the area under the jurisdiction of the council. Therefore, the planner upon arriving at the district will have to introduce himself or herself to the paramount chief of the district, and explain the functions of the physical planning section of the local council to the paramount chief and his elders. The same process will have to be followed in every town in the district which the planner visits for the first time. Once the chiefs and their elders have acquainted themselves with the planner and the functions of his or her office, they may cooperate with him or her in the performance of his or her duties as a planner.

Implementation of local plans will have to be done by all those involved in the plans preparation. There should be continuity between the preparation and the implementation stages. Unfortunately, too often planning departments are divided into a 'planning section' (under such names as 'research and intelligence' or 'development unit') and a 'control section'. One deals with preparing the plan up to its approval; the second takes over from there, having had no say in the plan's conception and, therefore, having little feeling of involvement with it. Similarly, it is rarely the planning department alone which will be affected and involved in the implementation of a plan. Other departments concerned should also take part in the preparation stages if they are going to have to implement it. Therefore, instead of the ridiculous situation of one group preparing the plan and handing it down to another group to put it into practice, the team responsible for the plan all the way should include members of all departments involved and, ideally, be located in the area being dealt with. It should have wide powers to deal with all aspects of the plan's implementation, and be directly responsible to an area committee - which might include the local ward's councillors ( 24 ).

The planner will play the roles of technician and that of facilitator. As a facilitator, he will bridge the

## STRUCTURE OF PROPOSED LOCAL COUNCILS

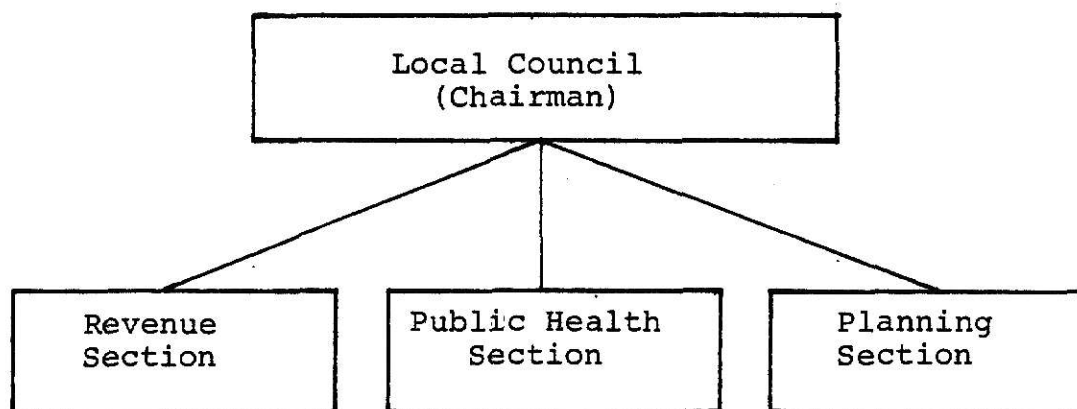


Figure 13

( A traditional chief will be a member of the local council).

gap between the local people and the Town and Country planning department. He will build coalition for local planning issues. As a technician, he will be concerned with the technical advice to the local council to facilitate decision making. He will be concerned with the means and ends of the planning process.

### Citizen Participation

Citizen participation in community development should be a continuous process of citizen interaction with government officials to help develop, execute and evaluate plans and programs for local community development. While ultimate authority and responsibility for decision making rests with public officials, there are substantial benefits to be derived from effective citizen participation including the assurances that community development programs will be responsive to local needs and will have more broadly based community support (25). The planner and his staff, through local chiefs and community leaders will organize the people to bring them into the planning process. The planner and his staff among other things will:

1. facilitate continuous communication between citizens, local council officials and the Town and Country planning department,
2. explain program technicalities, governmental processes, etc. to the citizens
3. keep citizens up to date on the status of community development activities ( 26 ).

### Town Development Committee

Town development committee will be formed in each town. It will be composed of the chief of the town or his representative and elected or appointed members of neighborhood residents. The committee will be the agent for local development. It will be the local body with whom the planner will directly work. It will channel all local development needs to the local council through the planner.

### Neighborhood Committees

Neighborhood associations will be formed in each town. These associations will be responsible for organizing neighborhood residents for participation in the planning process. They will coordinate their activities with those of the town development committee. Each neighborhood will be represented on the town development committee.

### Village Committees

Village development committees will be responsible for coordinating their activities with those of the planning section of the local council. Members will either be appointed or elected by the village residents.

The village committee is presently under the district council. This has not made their work effective. Therefore,

it will be placed under the authority of the local council so it will have the services of the planner.

### Revenue and Public Health

The two existing functions of the local councils are local revenue collection and implementation of public health policies of the Ministry of Health. However, these two sections of the local councils have not been effective in the discharge of their duties because of lack of coordination of their activities. To make revenue collection effective, the revenue section of the local council shall:

- (i) coordinate its activities with those of the planning section in the identification of houses whose plans have been approved for construction,
- (ii) identify with the help of the planning section those rental units in the town,
- (iii) identify with the help of the public health section, those houses with conservancy service,
- (iv) identify with the help of the public health section, the births and deaths in the various towns by proper recording of such events,
- (v) institute proper control of lorry parks and outdoor markets to make revenue collection effective.

The public health section will have to coordinate its activities with those of the planning and the revenue sections. The section will have the responsibility for:

- (i) approving the location and proper construction of sewer systems,
- (ii) determining with the planner the proper location

- and construction of public toilets and baths and the daily upkeep of those places,
- (iii) determining the location of garbage dumps and proper construction of incinerators,
- (iv) the daily upkeep of the outdoor markets and lorry parks,
- (v) general implementation of the public health policies of the Ministry of Health, and
- (vi) keeping record of housing conditions in the local council planning area.

### Rural Development

In order to staff the physical planning section of the local councils and other government agencies operating in the rural areas, the government through its rural development program, will have to make the rural areas of Ghana attractive to the urban dweller. Roads will have to be constructed to facilitate easy and fast transportation of people and goods. Good drinking water and sanitary facilities will have to be provided for all towns. Electricity should be provided for homes and streets. Health centers, district and regional hospitals will have to be provided. New Schools will have to be built and existing ones upgraded. Agricultural related schools will have to be located in the rural areas instead of urban areas. This will make it easier for the students, researchers and agricultural scientists understand the problems of the farmers and help solve them.

The government will have to make it easier for the rural people to obtain loans to upgrade their homes. Incentives will have to be given to the private sector to make rural location more attractive. (For example, tax incentives



should be given to businesses locating in the rural areas. People living and working in the rural areas may pay lesser taxes than those in the urban areas).

Some national cultural events or sporting events should be directed to the rural areas. The influx of the urban population to the rural areas to attend national events from time to time will not only help the rural economy, but will also expose the urban people to the rural areas.

In addition to the government's annual budget allocation for rural development, funding of rural programs and development will have to be made at the expense of urban development. The government of Ghana for several years has concentrated on urban development without paying much attention to rural development and the rural people. Therefore, the government of Ghana should reduce its fiscal and human resources for the urban areas, and redirect those resources towards the development of the rural areas. However, reduction in such urban resources should not reduce the quality of life already achieved. In other words, new developments planned for the urban areas should either be scrapped, suspended or reduced in size, but the provision of services and maintenance of infrastructure should continue at its present level. Thus, the money saved from reduction in urban development can be used for rural development.

The country's natural resources should be developed by the government, the private sector and foreign participa-

tion. Development of the country's natural resources will help the rural economy because most of the natural resources (Gold, Diamond, Bauxite, Manganese, Timber, Cocoa, etc), are located in the rural areas.

In order to fund rural development, the government may require all corporations or companies engaged in the business of extraction or processing of natural resources and also those in manufacturing, operating in the rural areas to set up a trust fund for rural development. The trust fund should be set up after a company or corporation has operated in the rural area for a period of time. The period of time after which a trust fund should be set up, will be determined by the government.

To supplement rural staff of government agencies and the staff of the private sector operating in the rural areas, the government should institute a two year mandatory national service for graduates. One year of which should be attained by working in the rural areas. Thus, a graduate in planning may choose to work in the planning section of a local council located in the rural area or choose to work for a private firm operating in the rural area, or work in the planning section of a mining company. A doctor may choose to work for a government clinic or a private clinic both of which may be located in the rural area. Students who are required to do internship before they graduate, should be encouraged to intern in the rural area if possible.

The preceeding suggestions among other things, will make the local council system more effective interns of their responsibilities to the people of the rural areas of Ghana.

### CONCLUSION

The ineffectiveness of the local council system in Ghana is the result of various factors amongst which are- the centralization of government functions which allows all decisions to be made by the central government, the local government system being based on the British system without any adjustments to suit local conditions, the disregard for traditional decision making ways by the western educated elite of Ghana, the unattractiveness of the rural towns to the urban workers, thus, creating a shortage of staff to man government agencies in the rural areas and the lack of planning by the local councils.

For the government to remedy this situation and make the local councils more effective, some government activities will have to be decentralized, thus giving some decision making responsibilities to the local agencies. In addition, the people will have to be part of the decision making and the planning process.

The government will have to give rural development as much attention as urban development to make rural towns

more attractive to urban workers and also to raise the standard of living of the rural people.

The central government should train and staff rural agencies of the government and also to fund them well in order that the local councils can carry out local developments in their areas. It will be the responsibility of the central government to monitor the activities of the local councils to see that they operate within the frame-work of the government's national development policies.

If the government and its rural agencies, for example, the local councils, involve the people in the planning process of their towns, there will always be a trust established between the government and the people. This kind of trust will hopefully foster national unity in a country of several tribes.

## SUMMARY

A major effort is being made by the Ghana government to raise the standard of living of the Ghanaian people. This effort is being directed particularly at the rural development.

Any program or policy that is used to achieve this objective, should have a well organized body to implement it. In addition to successful implementation, the local people should be involved in the planning process. One of the government agencies at the local level which may be used successfully to implement any government program is the local council. Presently, the local council lacks a physical planning aspect of the government's rural program.

Therefore, it is recommended that a physical planner from the Town and Country Planning department be placed at the local council. The planning section's duties will be to develop the planning process at the local level by bringing the traditional chiefs and local people into the planning process. Also, it will be responsible for all physical planning for towns under the jurisdiction of the local council.

Involving the local people in the planning and implementation of local programs will establish a trust by the people in the government.

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DEVELOPMENT OF THE PLANNING PROCESS AT THE  
LOCAL COUNCIL LEVEL IN GHANA

by

YAW BOADU AKUFFO

B. ARCH., Kansas State University, 1980

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AN ABSTRACT OF A MASTER'S REPORT

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## ABSTRACT

A major effort is being made by the Ghana government to raise the standard of living of the Ghanaian people. This effort is being directed particularly at rural development.

Any program or policy that is used to achieve this objective, should have a well organized body to implement it. In addition to successful implementation, the local people should be involved in the planning process. One of the government agencies at the local level which may be used successfully to implement any government program is the local council. Presently, the local council lacks a physical planning aspect of the government's rural program.

Therefore, it is recommended that a physical planner from the Town and Country Planning department be placed at the local council. The planning section's duties will be to develop the planning process at the local level by bringing the traditional chiefs and the local people into the planning process. Also, it will be responsible for all physical planning for towns under the jurisdiction of the council.

Involving the local people in the planning and implementation of local programs will establish a trust by the people in the government.