

Between Politics and Governance: The Dual Mechanism Shaping Metropolitan, Municipal and District Chief Executives (MMDCEs) Appointments in Ghana

Acheampong Charles Agyebeng

Ph.D. Candidate, Graduate School of International Cooperation Studies, Kobe University, Japan

Abstract:

Ghana's 1992 decentralization policy includes appointing Metropolitan, Municipal, and District Chief Executives (MMDCEs) who represent the central government in the districts and oversee the District Assembly's day-to-day operations. Scholars often view this appointment as presidential rewards for party loyalists suggesting MMDCE should be elected instead. However, the mechanisms governing the appointment remain unexplored. This study examines MMDCE appointment mechanisms in Ghana using a qualitative case study approach. The findings reveal a dual mechanism combining partisan interests with government objectives. It was found that the partisan nature was reflected in the appointment process, where the party exerts significant influence over candidate selection, emphasizing loyalty and long-standing contributions to the party. Despite this partisan procedure, the second mechanism was observed in the motivations and selection criteria of the direct actors involved in the appointment. The president aims to appoint trusted individuals through the party machinery to facilitate the implementation of his policies, as revealed by the study. These findings imply that in the analysis of the factors that influence public appointments, considerations of both procedural and substantive aspects of appointment provide useful insights and illuminations. The study suggests that enhancing transparency in appointments is a better remedy for patronage concerns than switching to elections, which would require restructuring DCE functions.

Keywords:

local governance, public appointments, decentralization, patronage.