

# GOVERNANCE

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## DEALING WITH THE WINNER-TAKES-ALL POLITICS IN GHANA: THE CASE FOR EFFECTIVE DECENTRALIZATION

*The Winner – Takes- All (WTA) Politics project is an initiative of the Institute of Economic Affairs (IEA). The WTA project forms part of a larger governance research project which dates back to 2014. The aim of this project is to promote a “More inclusive and accountable system of Governance in Ghana”. At the end of an almost two year consultation and research process a report was produced by*

*the IEA WTA Advisory Committee and the Board.*

*A copy of the Winner -Takes -All Politics report was submitted to The President of Ghana and disseminated to key stakeholders. All subsequent papers on the subject including this paper have been developed based on themes/issues identified in the final report.*

***Presented by Dr. Ransford Gyampo<sup>1</sup>***

### Summary

*This paper is the second in a series of publications aimed at contributing to the discourse on issues relating to the “Winner-Takes-All” politics in Ghana. The paper briefly discusses the Winner-Takes-All politics, highlighting its polarizing nature and dangers to Ghana's drive towards democratic maturity and development. It critically examines decentralization in Ghana as a power distribution mechanism and identifies some of the inherent challenges that undermine the very essence of “giving power to the people”. The paper proposes practical suggestions that could ensure inclusive local governance and deals with some of the challenges associated with the Winner-Takes-All politics in Ghana.*

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## Introduction

As was indicated in the previous publication (Series One), the Winner-Takes All (WTA) in Ghana is not merely an electoral formula for determining winners in elections but also an extremely partisan practice of governance that allows the winners to monopolize state resources, facilities and opportunities. In this regard, the WTA politics excludes real or perceived political opponents and other experienced and competent citizens, who are not necessarily members of the ruling party. One omnibus feature and result of the WTA politics is the feeling of marginalization and exclusion from the governance process by those who are not part of the ruling party/government (Dennis, 2007; Abotsi, 2013). The feeling of marginalization and exclusion from the governance process by those who are not members of the party in power poses a danger to Ghana's developing democracy. It breeds apathy, creates a divisive “we and they” attitude as well as ill-feeling against the state. In addition, the unbridled practice of the WTA politics makes people ever ready to undermine the national interest and sabotage the national agenda in order to render the ruling government unpopular and be voted out in the next election (Gyampo, 2010). In order to deal with the practice of the WTA politics, it has been suggested that Ghana's current practice of decentralization should be improved upon to ensure that it is purged of presidential control in a manner which ensures that the people at the grassroots, particularly those who lost elections at the national level are “compensated” by being given a say in determining their local leaders as well as planning and implementing their own developmental agenda. An effective decentralized system of governance in Ghana could also be a way to check the practice of using the appointing powers of the president in favor of only one party's supporters – a practice typical of the WTA politics.

Against this backdrop, this paper discusses the broad concept of decentralization, noting how it could act as a check on the WTA politics. The paper also examines the features of Ghana's decentralized governance system and highlights its various challenges that accentuate the practice of the WTA politics, deepen the feeling of marginalization and promote “re-centralization” within the context of decentralization. Finally, the study summarizes and highlights key proposals for effective decentralization as a solution to the WTA politics, participation and rural development.

## 1. THE CONCEPT OF DECENTRALIZATION AND WINNER-TAKES-ALL POLITICS

Decentralization may be defined as the transfer of authority and responsibility for public functions from the central government to intermediate and local governments or quasi-independent government organizations (Rondinelli, 1989; Crawford, 2004). In modern democratic dispensations, it is generally accepted that the concentration of all powers and functions in the hands of the central government is not conducive for good governance as it perpetuates the feeling of marginalization associated with the WTA politics. Transferring powers and resources of the state to local semi-autonomous units, particularly areas where the ruling party is not popular, is therefore seen as a necessary aspect of democratic governance that promotes inclusivity and douses the flames of the WTA politics (da Rocha, 2002).

Four main types of decentralization are commonly identified. These are administrative (deconcentration and delegation), economic, fiscal and political decentralization) (devolution) (Cheema and Rondinelli, 2007; Ayee, 2013; Ayee, 1999; Ostrom et al., 1993).<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>2</sup> Administrative Decentralization includes Deconcentration and Delegation. Deconcentration is the relocation of branches of the central state to local areas, entailing transfer of powers to locally based officials who remain upwardly accountable to the central government, ministries and departments. When only responsibility or authority is transferred but not resources, there is deconcentration. According to the World Bank's 2007 Decentralization Briefing Notes, this type is often considered the weakest form of decentralization. This is used most frequently in unitary states when decision-making authority and financial management responsibilities are assigned to different levels of the central government. Delegation refers to the transfer of responsibilities from the central government to local units. It is a more extensive form of decentralization through which central governments transfer responsibility for decision-making and administration of public functions to semi-autonomous organizations not wholly controlled by the central government, but ultimately accountable to it. Unlike deconcentration, delegation involves the transfer of both responsibility and resources. Economic decentralization can be achieved through privatization of public-owned functions and businesses. It can also be done through deregulation and the abolition of restrictions on businesses competing with government services. Fiscal decentralization is the transfer of power and authority to raise revenues and spend same from government to sub-national units. Finally, political decentralization or devolution is the transfer of responsibilities, resources and accountability from the central government to sub-governmental units. Devolution entails the transfer authority for decision-making, finance, and management, to quasi-autonomous units of local government with corporate status. More importantly, devolution also implies the transfer of responsibilities to districts to elect their own mayors and councils, raise their own revenues and have independent authority to make investment decisions.

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The potential contribution of decentralization to ensuring inclusive politics and democratic local governance cannot be overemphasized. Indeed, decentralization ensures the attainment of several democratic principles, two of which are core. These are popular control over collective decision-making and political equality in the exercise of that control (Crawford, 2004). Clearly, these two principles which are critical to dealing with the WTA politics are realized most effectively in small groups or associations, that is, where direct popular control enables each person to speak and vote. In this respect, decentralization has the potential to enhance the realization of democratic principles, given that the selection of representatives and decision-making structures are on a smaller scale, and more open to influence by local people (*ibid*). Other benefits of decentralization include reduction in bureaucracy associated with planning and co-coordinating at central levels; improved responsiveness to local demands for effectiveness and efficiency and public service delivery; a greater ability for officials familiar with local-level problems to tailor development plans to particular needs; the greater representation of political, religious, ethnic and tribal groups in the process of formulating local development plans; and enhanced system of accountability (Hyden, 1983; Rondinelli, 1989, pp. 57-87).

According to Ayee (2003), decentralization is a political process whose objectives cannot be achieved overnight. It involves major political and technical risks and trade-offs. Consequently, it cannot be regarded as a panacea or quick fix for problems of underdevelopment (*ibid*). Other weaknesses of decentralization include the capture of power by local elites; the promotion of fissiparous tendencies and the creation of inequality among districts and regions in countries where natural resources are not evenly distributed (*ibid*).

For decentralization to be effective, the grassroots must be given the opportunity to decide how they

want to govern themselves. There should be more local voice in decision-making, particularly on matters that directly affect the grassroots (Botchie, 2000; Crawford, 2004). In addition, there should be competent human resources at the grassroots to man local affairs. Also, the decentralized units should be able to generate funds from both internal and external sources to run their activities and to be successful in this regard, the Metropolitan, Municipal and District Assemblies (MMDAs) will have to forge links with their publics, including the private sector and civil society.<sup>3</sup>

If the basic tenets of decentralization are strictly adhered to, the concept would be effective in serving as a viable strategy for the promotion of grassroots participation in decision-making and dealing with the WTA politics. Indeed, the WTA politics is perpetuated if upon winning national or presidential elections, the ruling party goes on to control local affairs and decision-making, especially areas that completely voted against the ruling party in the general election. Winning the presidency confers many resources, largesse, power of patronage and other important advantages on the ruling party. The central government controls state resources and runs the affairs of the state at the national level and under the practice of the WTA politics, the opposition is sidelined. What worsens the situation is that the ruling government does not only regulate affairs and control decision-making at the national level, but also controls decision-making at the local level across the country in a manner that further pushes the opposition into oblivion in the decision-making scheme of the country. The argument being made to deal with the WTA politics in this paper is that after winning national elections, the practice of decentralization should be strengthened such that it can grant some degree of autonomy to the local people to run their affairs. In this regard, it would be helpful for a government of the National Democratic Congress (NDC) to allow the grassroots in the Ashanti Region where the NDC is not too popular, to elect

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<sup>3</sup> I am grateful to Prof. Atsu Ayee, Adjunct Senior Fellow of the Institute of Economic Affairs for this insightful view on effective decentralization.

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their own local leaders to control local affairs without undermining the powers and authority of the central government, as practiced in other advanced democracies. This in a way reduces the feeling of “the winner takes it all”. It could also reduce the feeling of marginalization of the opposition and tension that characterizes elections on grounds that even if one loses the opportunity to get his preferred candidate elected at the national level, he still retains the opportunity to decide on who must rule over him at the local level. Indeed, if governments decide to give power to the local people through decentralization, it can help reduce the negative practice of sabotaging the national agenda imposed by the ruling party on the local people who do not belong to the ruling party. It will also lead to local participation and development.

## **2. GHANA'S DECENTRALIZED SYSTEM OF GOVERNANCE**

For the purpose of this study, three main features of Ghana's current decentralized system of governance are worth discussing. These are the:

- Appointment and election of Metropolitan, Municipal and District Chief Executives (MMDCEs) – which may be viewed as components of political and administrative decentralization;
- Election and selection of District Assembly Members – which is also political and administrative decentralization; and
- Allocation of Funds to the Metropolitan, Municipal and District Assemblies (MMDAs) through the District Assemblies Common Fund (DACF) – a component of fiscal decentralization.

### **2.1 Appointment and Election of MMDCEs**

The 1992 Constitution empowers the President of the Republic of Ghana to directly appoint MMDCEs in Ghana with the “prior approval of not less than two-thirds majority of the MMDAs present and voting at the meeting.” These appointees are often members of only the ruling party and the government of the day. There cannot be any meaningful discussion of reducing the WTA politics and deepening democracy in Ghana if the grassroots do not fully participate in the

democratization process through direct election of MMDCEs. By allowing local people to decide the mode of governing their own district and thereby broadening their scope in the decision-making process, the feeling of inclusivity and the acceptance of the benefits and responsibilities of democratic governance across a broad spectrum is enhanced (Ayee, 2003; Boafo-Arthur, 2003). Currently in Ghana, one main concern which has been raised about the mode of recruiting and appointing MMDCEs is that their appointment by the president is done in a way that does not seem to allocate greater role and power to the people at the grassroots (Government of Ghana, 2007).

In the modern democratic processes of government where the people's will is the dominant political factor, elections occupy a position of special importance because it is primarily through them that their “will” is able to achieve its most potent expression (De Tocqueville, 1988). It is the result of elections that determine who shall represent the people in parliament and other important decision-making bodies at the national, regional, district and local levels. Through elections, key officials of state and public servants like the President, Vice President and Parliamentarians, Speakers of Parliament and their Deputies, etc are selected by the people be it directly or indirectly (ibid). It is therefore not surprising that during the nationwide public consultations of the Constitution Review Commission in 2011, several well-meaning Ghanaians called for the direct election of MMDCEs.

The original theoretical assumption of the procedure for appointing MMDCEs, as indicated above, was to inject some checks and balances into Ghana's decentralized system of government. In practice however, this procedure has not been always effective as an instrument for ensuring checks and balances. On the contrary, it has fueled the practice of using state power to appoint only party cronies as MMDCEs not necessarily with recourse to meritocracy and to the neglect of the will of the people at the grassroots. Sometimes, nominations regarding who must be appointed by the president are informally sought from the ruling party and sometimes other interest groups such as



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traditional authorities. Nevertheless, it is the one in whom the president is well pleased who gets appointed. Consequently, immediately after their appointment, MMDCs become totally loyal and dedicated to the president, sometimes even subservient to him while relegating the needs and aspirations of the local people to the background (Ghana Decentralization Policy Review, 2014; Ghana Decentralization Policy Framework, 2015). Indeed, the central government's appointment of the MMDCs who effectively guide the district assemblies – not as civil servants, but as political appointees – ultimately establishes the Metropolitan, Municipal and District Assemblies (MMDAs) as arms of the central government rather than semi-autonomous bodies.

WTA politics is perpetuated if upon winning national or presidential elections, the ruling party goes on to control local affairs and decision-making, especially in areas that completely voted against the ruling party in the election. Winning the presidency confers many resources, largesse, power of patronage and other important advantages on the ruling party. The central government controls state resources and runs the affairs of the state at the national level and under the practice of the WTA politics, the opposition is sidelined. What worsens the situation is that the ruling government does not only regulate affairs and control decision-making at the national level, but also controls decision-making at the local level across the country in a manner that further pushes the opposition into oblivion in the decision making scheme of the country. The winner of a presidential election therefore takes it all both at the national and grass roots levels in a manner that typically infuriates people in local areas where the president is unpopular and creates a feeling of marginalization in the minds of people. Indeed, there have been instances where presidential nominees for the positions of MMDCs have been rejected by the MMDAs in areas where the ruling party is not popular. For instance, Afriffa Yamoah Ponko, the president's nominee for the position of Municipal Chief Executive of Ejisu-Juabeng was rejected by the municipal assembly

on 14th December 2015 even though he was the immediate past MCE for the same area. Again, Eric Osei, the presidential nominee for the position of DCE for Atebubu-Amantin district, was on 3rd June 2016 rejected by DA members.<sup>4</sup>

Having lost the main elections, an opportunity to select their MMDCs at the local level would have served as a consolation prize and doused the feeling of marginalization. However, the current mode of appointing MMDCs creates a double jeopardy for the people in the strongholds of the opposition as power is lost both at the national and local levels. This situation breeds conflict as the MMDCs ignore the concerns of the local people while the local people always try to undermine and sabotage the agenda of the MMDCs in their areas (Ayee, 2003). Even though the assembly members have the power to reject the appointee of the president, they are generally whipped and enticed with monetary rewards to push through the appointee of the president (ibid).

The more recent wave of democratization in Sub-Saharan Africa has ushered in a new interest in elected local councilors (Hartmann, 2004). Several countries in Africa including South Africa, Botswana, Malawi, Tanzania, and Zambia all favor the direct election of local mayors and in these countries, the feeling of marginalization associated with the WTA politics, particularly at the grassroots is minimal as the population living in the rural areas elect their own leaders (ibid). Ghana, which is touted as one of Africa's best success stories in terms of democratic practice, should move towards electing all MMDCs. The Constitution Review Commission (CRC) recommended the direct election of MMDCs as one possible solution to WTA politics that also ensures grassroots participation in the governance process irrespective of which side of the political divide they belong and whichever party that wins the national election (Constitution Review Commission Report, 2011). Unfortunately, the government rejected the view that MMDCs should be directly and popularly elected on grounds that it ought to strike a delicate balance between central government control and local

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<sup>4</sup>See more details at [www.pulse.com.gh](http://www.pulse.com.gh) and the Wednesday 8<sup>th</sup> June 2016 Edition of Daily Guide, page 10.

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autonomy. In this regard, it rather proposed an arrangement to alter Article 243 (1) of the 1992 Constitution for the president to nominate a minimum of five (5) persons who would be vetted by the Public Services Commission (PSC) for competence after which three (3) nominees would contest in a public election (Government White Paper, 2012:34). Even though this response sought to please those who are calling for direct election of MMDCEs and those who want the status quo to remain, it still gives the president the power to indirectly appoint his favorites as MMDCEs because whoever may emerge victorious after the direct local election would be an appointee of the president. This would certainly perpetuate the very problem being solved. Besides, the PSC is just a nine-member Commission<sup>5</sup> that would crumble and be inefficient under the burden of vetting the numerous aspirants for the position of chief executive of the 216 Metropolitan, Municipal and District Assemblies (MMDAs) in Ghana even if the president decides to stick to the nomination of a minimum of 5 people for every MMDA. In the discharge of this heavy workload, the PSC itself may easily become susceptible to manipulations in a manner that may undermine the quest for the selection of the most competent nominee, particularly when aspirants desire to be selected “at all cost.” Therefore, the government's counter-proposal cannot fully promote effective decentralization and check WTA politics as it places whoever emerges victorious in the local elections under the control of the president.

## **2.2 Election and Selection of District Assembly Members**

District level elections for the selection of MMDA members are expected to be non-partisan. However, in Ghana, one can say without equivocation that virtually all the DA elections that have been held since 1994 have witnessed furtive display of partisan politics. The major political parties, in an attempt to ensure that they maintain their support at the grassroots level, are found covertly supporting candidates to get them elected into the DA. Some of the aspirants

campaign in the name of their political parties and use their symbols to win votes (Ayee, 2003).

As a way of checking the practice of the Winner-Takes-All politics at the grassroots, elections to the District Assemblies (DAs) should also be contested on partisan basis to ensure a full and active electioneering campaign by the political parties to get their own people elected to represent them at the MMDAs as happens in other advanced jurisdictions (Magre and Bertrana, 2007). The clandestine campaigns by political parties to get their preferred candidates elected to the MMDAs are not effective because it is an illegality. The direct election of DA members by the grassroots on partisan lines fulfills the tenets of democratic decentralization as it entrusts the people with the power to select their own representatives. This creates accountability and responsibility on the part of the assembly members to the local people who elected them. More importantly, it ensures that the parties elect their true representatives to serve on the DAs and for the opposition who may be in the minority in the national parliament, an opportunity is given them to have majority seats in the MMDAs, particularly in their strongholds. It is to be conceded that about 70% of MMDA members are elected. However, in spite of the surreptitious attempts on the part of political parties to play a key role in DA elections, such elections are by law not expected to be on partisan lines. Making DA elections officially and legally partisan could arguably serve to reduce the feeling of marginalization on the part of political parties typically associated with WTA politics. This is because it would allow the parties to fully and openly campaign to get their preferred candidates elected to the various DAs.

Government also appoints 30 percent of DA members in consultation with traditional authorities and other interest groups to, inter alia, infuse persons with expertise and experience into the DA system and make room for the marginalized (Ahwoi, 2010). However, it is widely believed that the president does not consult the traditional authorities and other interest

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<sup>5</sup>The Public Services Commission consists of a Chairman, Vice-Chairman, three full time commissioners, chairman of the National Council on Tertiary Education and three persons with extensive experience on the operations of the public services.

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groups within the district, as stipulated in the Constitution. Instead, the political party in power selects the government appointees from a party list drawn by the MMDCE and the regional minister who are themselves political appointees. Such appointees are answerable to the president and not to the local people in a manner that excludes the opposition and other people who are a-political but have adequate experience to play a role in the local governance process (Crawford, 2004; De Grazia, 1962). By implication, the appointment of the 30 per cent members of the MMDA by the president without proper consultations with the appropriate bodies also violates the tenets of democratic decentralization and deepens the practice of WTA politics.

The appointment of some members of the MMDAs will not make the assemblies overly partisan and it is expected to improve the capacities of the assemblies and for providing representation to traditional authorities and underrepresented groups such as women, the youth, persons with disability and the economically disadvantaged (Constitution Review Commission Report, 2011; Ahwoi, 2010). However given the challenges associated with the process, government appointments to the MMDAs should also be abolished and all members of the MMDAs including the MMDCEs should be elected, in order to reduce the polarizing effects of WTA politics at the grassroots; attain the principle of democratic decentralization as well as effective grassroots representation of the political parties, particularly those who may have lost the main elections. This would reduce conflict and also ensure total support of the people for the policies of the MMDCEs (Ayee, 2013; Ayee, 1999; Jonah, 2005).<sup>6</sup>

### **2.3 The District Assemblies Common Fund**

The 1992 Constitution requires the establishment of a “District Assemblies Common Fund”<sup>7</sup> The current total allocation of the fund is 7.5 percent of

total revenues of Ghana<sup>8</sup> even though there are agitations for increase to 10 percent. Total revenues of Ghana is defined as “all revenues collected by or accruing to the central government other than foreign loans, grants, non-tax revenue and revenues already collected by or for DAs under any enactment in force”<sup>9</sup> The DACF Act, was promulgated on 6th July 1993 and a Fund Administrator was appointed immediately afterwards. The Constitution states that the District Assemblies Common Fund (DACF) is to be distributed among MMDAs according to a formula approved by Parliament. The recommendation of the formula and the administration of the fund are the responsibilities of a District Assemblies Common Fund Administrator, who is appointed by the president for a renewable term of four years.

Since the inception of the DACF, four factors have largely been considered in the calculation. These are the “Equality”, “Needs”, “Responsiveness” and “Service Pressure” factors (DACF, 2015). The “Equality” factor simply stipulates which percentage of the DACF allocation is to be distributed evenly between all the districts. This ensures that each district is assured a certain amount of DACF grant. The “Needs” factor is meant to measure a district's need for development compared to other districts in the country; the “Responsiveness” factor is incorporated to motivate districts to generate their own local revenue and the “Service Pressure” is a measure of how much use the facilities in a district received (DACF, 2015; Banful, 2006). Before the formula is applied, an amount called the “Reserve Fund” is taken from the total DACF allocation. The “Reserve Fund” is used for bulk purchases for the District Assemblies and to support the Regional Coordinating Councils and the office of the DACF Administrator in their monitoring roles (DACF, 2015). A proportion of the “Reserve Fund” is distributed evenly between all the Members of Parliament (MPs) for development

<sup>6</sup> Joy FM News on Thursday 26<sup>th</sup> of July 2007 in Accra reported hostilities between the Municipal Chief Executive of Ho in the Volta Region of Ghana and the people in the municipality. The Municipal Chief Executive faced stiff opposition and total lack of support from his own people when he was appointed by the president to administer an area, considered to be the stronghold of the opposition National Democratic Congress (NDC). His own people demonstrated and petitioned the president against a decision to elevate him to the position of a deputy minister.

<sup>7</sup> The Constitution of the Republic of Ghana, Article 252

<sup>8</sup> See [www.commonfund.gov.gh](http://www.commonfund.gov.gh)

<sup>9</sup> The District Assemblies Common Fund Act 1993 (act 455)

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projects of their choice in their constituencies (ibid). It must, however, be noted that government accepted the CRC recommendation to abolish the MPs' share of the DACF and replace it with a Constituency Development Fund (Republic of Ghana, 2012).

While there are broad guidelines for the use of the common fund, MMDAs are free to use the funds as they wish as long as the intended use is in the budgets to be sent to the Administrator of the DACF before allocations are disbursed (Banful, 2006). Unfortunately, many MMDAs have hidden behind the flexible rules about the use of DACF to misappropriate and misapply the funds. Several reports of the Auditor-General reveal these malpractices. For instance, the 2014 Auditor-General's report on the management and utilization of DACF for the year 2012 revealed that MMDAs across the country misappropriated a total of GH¢43,975,431 (GH¢44 million) of the DACF (Auditor General, 2014).

Apart from misappropriation and misapplication of the funds, there are other challenges that confront the DACF. For instance, there are serious delays in the release of funds to the districts.<sup>10</sup> Delays in the disbursement of funds as a result of cash flow challenges of the government may be tolerably understood. However, deliberate delays for disbursement of funds make MMDAs politically dependent on the central government. In order to check this dependence and give true meaning to the practice of decentralization, Parliament should ensure that funds are released to MMDAs on time and that no MMDA is given preferential treatment whatsoever in the release of funds as may have happened in some time past (Banful, 2006). Furthermore, as recommended by the Constitution Review Commission (2011), the share of the DACF allocated to MPs should be abolished to ensure that adequate funds are directly disbursed to the MMDAs. Even though most MPs are not happy with the proposal to

abolish their share of the common fund<sup>11</sup>, it must be noted that they are not direct agents of development and it is technically illegal for them to have a share of the DACF which many of them invariably use more for the benefit of their supporters in a manner that facilitates WTA politics.

Moreover, proper fiscal decentralization through internally generated funds (IGFs) has the potential to address WTA politics and its attendant feeling of marginalization and belief that all powers belong to the president.<sup>12</sup> Apart from the MMDAs that are not viable and cannot generate meaningful IGFs, all MMDAs should generally take IGFs more seriously and institute robust internal audit mechanisms that will plug leakages of funds generated. Even though IGFs currently form about 20%<sup>13</sup> of total revenues of MMDAs, there is evidence to show that they could account for more when fully and effectively tapped (NDPC, 2010). For instance, in 1993 and 1994, IGFs formed only 8.3% and 11.1% of MMDA revenues respectively (Botchie, 2000). Again, in 2006, IGFs increased to 14% of funds accrued to the MMDAs (NDPC, 2010). The steady increases in IGFs over the years show that when properly explored, it could increase beyond the current 20%. The creation of the Fiscal Decentralization Unit at the Ministry of Finance shows the importance being placed on IGFs to augment government's financial commitment to decentralized units and to make them quite independent of the central government.<sup>14</sup> In this regard, the collection of property rates, market levies, and other tolls must be drastically improved and measures must be put in place to ensure that IGFs are not embezzled or misapplied. The generation and use of internal funds by MMDAs would reduce the feeling of marginalization and victimization associated with WTA politics as well as ensure that local communities that did not vote for the government of the day still have some financial autonomy to exist without kowtowing to the whims and

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In an interview with the Minister of Finance, Seth Terkper in Accra on Tuesday, July 22, 2014 on Peace FM, an Accra-based radio station, he noted that the delays are to allow central government to channel the statutory payments into other social interventions in the areas of health, education, poverty reduction and meeting campaign promises. Even though this explanation may sound reasonable, a fine balance between these imperatives and the need to satisfy a statutory obligation to the district must be found.

Interview with Alban Bagbin, Majority Leader of Parliament on 20<sup>th</sup> May 2016 in Accra  
I am grateful to Prof Atsu Ayee, Adjunct Senior Fellow of the Institute of Economic Affairs for this view.

Ibid  
Ibid



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caprices of the government.

### 3. Summary/Conclusion

From the foregone discussion, it can be noted that the three main features of Ghana's decentralized system of governance, namely, the mode of appointment of MMDCs, the mode of selecting assembly members and the allocation of funds to MMDAs, are all saddled with challenges that promote WTA politics. After winning national elections, the president appoints virtually all officials of the country including ministers, ambassadors, board members, etc. The president also appoints all chief executives for all the MMDAs including areas that clearly voted against the candidature of the president during elections. In addition, the fact that MMDA elections are not legally partisan, to some extent, hinder party activism on the part of political parties, particularly those that lost the national elections, to get their preferred candidates elected to the MMDAs as a consolation. In addition, in the selection of the 30 percent members of the MMDAs, the president "takes-it-all" by not consulting those he is legally bound to consult. Finally, the idea of allocating the DACF to the various MMDAs also promotes WTA politics because it creates an all-powerful central government that must be looked up to for help at all times.

In recommending effective decentralization as one possible solution to WTA politics, Ghana must inter alia, establish independent MMDAs whose heads and members would be directly elected by the people on partisan basis. There should be proper fiscal decentralization to enable the local units that can generate their own resources to do so to meet their needs and reduce their over-reliance on the central government. In this regard, internal generation of funds must be taken more seriously by decentralized units. Furthermore, the allocation of the DACF must be timeous and practical measures must be implemented to reduce undue delays. These would lead to effective decentralization and local development. The implementation of these measures would also promote inclusivity and douse the flames of WTA politics.

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