Political dynamics and service delivery in urban Ghana: The case of Tema Metropolitan Assembly

PATRICK YIN MAHAMA
University of Professional Studies,Ghana
patrick.mahama@upsamail.edu.gh
& THERESA DOWETIN
Ghana Business School.

Abstract

This paper makes a case study of Tema Metropolitan Assembly (TMA) and how it is shaped by the dynamics of politics and the implications of such dynamics for service delivery. The paper contends that local politics engaged in by local politicians, including the Metropolitan Chief Executive, Assembly members, chiefs, religious leaders, powerful individuals and the community (described generally as stakeholders) as well as central government and supra-national bodies, shape urban governance in Ghana, including TMA in terms of structure, operational priorities, policy choices and implementation, and ultimately service delivery. Using a qualitative approach to data collection, specifically, purposive sampling, a number of key officers of TMA and a sample of residents were interviewed to ascertain how political dynamics define the activities and structures of TMA and its implications for service delivery. While it is acknowledged that the political dynamics have enormous implications for service delivery in that it has to strike a balance between delivering efficient service to the community while at the same time serving as the implementation arm of the government, it is also the case that this balance is not always carried through to perfection, since most often than not, service delivery is said to be mere propaganda and rhetoric rather than reality. Using the Institutional Collective Action (Leroy, *et al*) framework, the areas of service delivery, including sanitation, waste management, safety and security, infrastructural development,, have been discussed from the perspectives of TMA and the stakeholders, on the one hand, and the residents on the other. While the governance model adopts a bottom-up approach where programmes and projects are said to be proposed by assembly members after gathering inputs from the grassroots, and eventually validated through town hall meetings, need assessments and community engagements, service delivery is said to be less than expected, as revealed by residents through interviews. How come some members of the community don't seem to know or appreciate that the services delivered by the TMA is a matter of serious reflection on the political dynamics that underpin the activities of urban government largely and TMA specifically?
Key words: politics, service delivery, Tema Metropolitan Assembly, urban areas, Ghana

Introduction

Political dynamics shape every sphere of governance in any polity. In democratic settings, decisions on policy, projects, programmes and service delivery generally are reached through a web of ideas from a multi-stakeholder consultation and influence of local, national and supra-national politics and political entities and the influence of these on urban governance in Ghana is no exception. In such democratic polities, decision outcomes are the product of contested opinions, which are influenced by the structures of power within the organisation, but with an external political streak thats external from the national spheres of power. Public policies are arrived at in the context of political interplays and puzzles, which are discernible in decisions for development and service delivery at every level of governance, including the governance of Metropolitan, Municipal and District Assemblies (MMDAs) under Ghana's decentralisation programme. The structures and agencies for decision-making, as far as the governance of MMDAs in Ghana are concerned, are politically charged, resulting in many intricacies and trajectories for governance and service delivery at the MMDAs with its accompanying implications. In this study, an attempt is made to focus on the case of Tema Metropolitan Assembly (TMA) to examine how politics and political economy dynamics, including collective action, shape decision-making in the area of service delivery but a case is also made of how these dynamics shape urban governance generally in Ghana.

Geography of the Tema Metropolis

Devolution of authority and resources to decentralised units is significant as it allows for the adaptation of local needs for possible tailored policies in service delivery (Nørgaard and Pallesen, 2003, Ahwoi, 2010). Tema is one of the famous cities in Ghana. It is located at the coast in the Greater Accra Region of Ghana. The Tema Metropolis is a coastal district situated about 30 kilometres east of Accra, the Capital City of Ghana. It is well recognised as an industrial hub in the Ghanaian economy. The Greenwich Meridian (i.e. longitude 0º) passes through the Metropolis, which meets the equator or latitude 0° in the Ghanaian waters off the Gulf of Guinea.

The Metropolis' proximity to the sea, with its low-lying terrain that projects into the sea, makes it a natural endowment for a harbour. This, evidently, informed the decision of the construction of the Tema Harbour in 1957, making the Metropolis 'the Eastern Gateway of Ghana'.

According to the 2010 Population and Housing Census, the total population of the Tema Metropolitan area is 292 773. This consists of 139 958 males representing 47.8% and 152 815 females representing 52.2%. The Metropolis has no rural settlements. The 2014

projected population of the Metropolis is pegged at 324 429 persons. The distribution of the population of Tema Metropolitan area shows that the age group 25-29 recorded the highest population with 11.4 percent while 90-94 and 95-99 age groups had the least population, which represents 0.1 percent respectively. On average, there are more females than males in the metropolis, with a male-female ratio of 92:100. This means that for every 100 females in the Metropolitan area, there are approximately 92 males.

The built up area of the Metropolis is made up of well-planned communities, beachfronts and the industrial area. The residential areas (both well planned and squatter settlements) form about 60% of the total land area, with industrial and commercial areas making up the remaining 40% of land cover. With rapid population increase, the built up areas continue to increase and this has compounded the environmental and sanitation problems and challenges that face the Metropolis in terms of service needs and delivery. Some houses have been constructed in waterways, and this, together with the proliferation of other unauthorised structures, contributes to congestion and flooding, among other scurges.

Purpose of the study

The purpose of this study is to understand some of the peculiar challenges that undermine the effective performance of the MMDAs in service delivery at the local level, especially the urban metropolis. Particularly, the study discusses how political dynamics shape the structure and governance of TMA and the implications of that on service delivery. In the main, it examines (Constitution) why it is difficult or otherwise for TMA to make certain decisions as they pertain to service delivery (Constitution), community members' participation and expectations and how TMA goes about service delivery (3). It examines the political undertones and influences on decision-making and how this shapes TMA and its service delivery, (4) the role of local politicians and collective action and how they influence service delivery and (5) how national politics and supra-national funding agencies define certain actions of TMA and how they drive a wedge between policy and practice.

The problem

According to Slack (2009), "the challenge for local governments is to keep cities economically viable by delivering a high level of services and, at the same time, keeping taxes sufficiently low so as not to discourage individuals and businesses from locating in their jurisdiction. Over the past two decades, local governments have faced a number of issues and challenges that have put stress on their ability to meet this objective"(p10). The growth of the urban population has created and will continue to create serious challenges for municipal and metropolitan governments in both developed and less developed countries in terms of air and water pollution, transportation gridlock, shortage of

affordable housing, inadequate waste collection, deteriorating infrastructure, mounting violence and crime, and income polarisation. Local governments are required to provide transportation and communications networks, water and sewers, fire and police protection, parks, recreational facilities, cultural institutions, social services, social housing and public health. These services and infrastructure are, in many cases, already overstretched and rapid population growth, combined with limited funding for infrastructure, has put further strain on local governments to maintain existing services and meet future demands. The result is an infrastructure deficit that is large and growing (Slack, 2009). Dirie (2005) points out that in order to deliver its services effectively, local governments need adequate resources, local autonomy and increased capacity.

Research questions
Main question
Why are urban areas in the developing countries unable to meet the service needs of the urban communities?

Sub-questions
1. Why is TMA unable to provide satisfactory services to the Tema Metropolitan Area in spite of its relative effectiveness in revenue mobilisation in Ghana?
2. How is the co-existence between TMA and TDC affecting service delivery at the Tema area?
3. What are the politics and political dynamics that influence service delivery in the urban communities generally, and TMA specifically?

Theory/literature review
Politics has played important and strategic roles in decision-making in many facets of any nation's life. Political economy, which looks at various aspects of decision-making, including the structures and actors, has not spared the dynamics of governance as far as decentralisation in Ghana is concerned, and more so, how political economy dynamics affects performance and service delivery at the MMDAs in Ghana. Resnick (2014), explains that urbanisation represents one of the main demographic transformations confronting sub-Saharan Africa today, with its attendant implications for the region's long-term development trajectory. Focusing on key governance challenges related to addressing gaps in urban service delivery in sub-Saharan Africa, she asserts that vertically-divided authority can augment the trade-offs between autonomy and accountability that are inherent in the decentralisation process, leading to possible 'strategies of subversion' by national

governments that are loathe to see political opponents win credit for good performance but eager to assign blame when services are poorly delivered. Haus, *et al*. (2004) assert that complementarity between leadership and community involvement is key for good urban governance. Leadership in urban governance has many visible and invisible dimensions or local and national dimensions, each of which plays critical roles in decisions that affect governance at the level of MMDAs. It is established in the literature that political economy and governance factors affect the provision and delivery of services (Jones*, et al*, 2014). The governance context within which service delivery takes place is important for analysing the performance of MMDAs and for understanding how policies and decisions are reached and implemented.

Bertone & Witter (2015) argue that it is essential to look beyond policy-making to reflect on actual practices, and on how, by whom, and why policies are potentially reshaped in the translation process. They examined evidence-based practice to improve health outcomes but the political economy dynamics played a significant role in their analysis of the translation process. Various theories, including the rational choice model and the institutional collective action framework, have been used to discuss urban governance. A rational choice explanation for regional governance focuses attention not only on service costs and the benefits of interlocal cooperation, but also on transaction costs of cooperation. Transaction costs are reduced by formal and informal institutional arrangements that increase the availability of information, reduce obstacles to bargaining, and reinforce social capital. Advocates of both decentralised governance and of progressive consolidation each promote a particular governance mechanism generally. Rather than this unitary approach, a second-generation rational choice explanation posits that the potential for voluntary governance is contingent on contextual factors that reduce the transaction costs of negotiating, monitoring, and enforcing an agreement (Feiock, 2008). As in many other situations, we believe governance structures depend on contextual factors. For example, Oliver Williamson (1985) argued that the benefits and costs of external production versus vertical integration in firms depended on the transaction cost properties of goods and the frequency of transactions. Better understanding of the context of metropolitan governance not only advances our theoretical understanding of institutional collective action, but it also has practical policy implications. Systematic evaluation of the contextual factors that shape governance and transaction costs may allow policy makers and advocates of progressive consolidation to identify situations in which the costs of voluntary regional governance arrangements are high, and governmental approaches to regionalism may be more viable. Scholz, Berardo, & Kile (2008), discuss the institutional collective action (Leroy *et al*) framework, which focuses on the dynamics of decentralised systems of governance. The framework argues that as cooperation continues to provide benefits to participants, the parties to these

exchanges build reputations for being trustworthy, providing in the process a feedback mechanism that enhances future cooperation and collective action. Thus, service cooperation provides mechanisms for exchange of resources, commitments and trust that can reinforce cooperative norms. This approach was further explained by Feiock (2013). He argues that the ICA framework provides a conceptual system to understand and investigate the variety of ICA dilemmas ubiquitous in contemporary societies and governance arrangements. As a research approach, it integrates multiple research traditions and theoretical approaches under the same research programme umbrella to better understand how ICA dilemmas are resolved. He argues that this framework can be applied to a wide range of policy dilemmas in which local governing units can potentially achieve better outcomes collectively rather than acting individually by reducing barriers to mutually advantageous collaborative action, as represented by the transaction costs required for achieving joint projects. The ICA framework integrates elements of collective action theories, transaction cost theories of organisations, the public economy framework, network theories of social embeddedness, and theories of policy design in political markets.

The study of how these mechanisms operate in the face of multiple stakeholders and outsourced services and the political dynamics that shape governance at TMA can fully be discussed by drawing from the theoretical underpinnings of the ICA.

National level political dynamics

The shape and form of Ghana's public institutions have been modelled according to the tenets of patrimonialism bequeathed to the country by the colonialists. This patrimonial mindset and attitude has made it difficult for Ghanaian public institutions to be left alone by the political elite, or function without recourse to the same for many underpinning reasons, including receiving directives, influence of all kinds, and budget support, among others. Public institutions are largely funded by the government of the day and their activities are directed and influenced by the political elite, either overtly or covertly. Even bureaucrats who are expected to be neutral and anonymous cannot be said to be entirely free of these national political economy dynamics as they make policies and implement them for the benefit of the larger public. As a result, these public institutions, especially the bureaucracy, which are largely undemocratic and unaccountable to the people, make rules and policies that affect the economy and individual lives (Cooper, 2015). So the colonial heritage and governance mentality still largely undergird the practices and structure of most public institutions in Ghana and this has implications for governance and for service delivery in all sectors of the public sphere, including decentralisation and the MMDAs.

After independence, Ghana's political trajectories have played an immense role in shaping the identity of public institutions. To maintain the patrimonial and political identity of some of these institutions, the heads are government appointees who are expected to sing the praise and dance to the tune of the government of the day. Major decisions are made, not just on the basis of prudence and efficiency, but largely due to political influences for whatever the gains may be. Major decisions in these institutions are not devoid of political twists and turns, and this affects governance, policy and decision outcomes and service delivery in the public institutions.

Methodology

The study adopted a qualitative approach through purposive sampling to enable a focus on key informants/data collection units at TMA for relevant information. Data was obtained through unstructured interviews with the Public Relations Officer, the Deputy Public Relations Officer, the Planning Officer, the Deputy Budget Officer, the Finance Director, the CEO of the Tema Development Corporation and 50 community members, including document analysis to ascertain their collective views on the nature and effectiveness of services provided by the TMA.

Discussion

Local politics and TMA

The Tema Metropolitan Assembly (TMA), as with many public institutions, is shaped by internal, national and even supra-national politics through foreign funding agencies. Hence, the institutional set-up and political environment is key to the understanding (Ayee *et al*, 2011) and analysis of the operations of the MMDAs in Ghana. Internally, local politicians, including the Assembly Members, chiefs, and some powerful groups within the community, are seen as stakeholders whose inputs are taken into consideration during the planning processes. Through community engagements, needs assessment, and town hall meetings, views of the community are sorted, which feed into the overall plans of TMA, and later sent to the community through the same channels for validation. Local politicians, traditional leaders, ethnic and religious groups are considered key stakeholders whose ideas shape the policies and programmes of the TMA. The politics of who gets what, when and how (Lasswell Harold, 1936) plays out here where the Assembly Members, the MCE, the chiefs and some powerful groups in the community politically manoeuver to have their interests advanced through service delivery at TMA. For example, interviews with some community members revealed that some squatters at TMA have serious political backing from some local politicians, which make it difficult for them to be evicted by the

rightful property owners. The influence of politics on service delivery seems to permeate every facet of service delivery, including the key areas of latrine promotion, sanitation, waste management, street lighting, safety and security, and infrastructural development. From the time of community engagement through to the final planning and implementation of projects and programmes is the interplay of various and competing interests, which eventually shapes decision outcomes. Through its activities in service delivery, the TMA has to plan in line with the thematic areas of the government strategic focus, in this case, the Ghana Shared Growth and Development Agenda (GSWDA). The politics that undergird the development of these strategic programmes of government also flow through to these public institutions and shape their internal dynamics. According to the Public Relations Officer, "We implement central government policies to a large extent. We are the implementation arm of the central government. We do that alongside our own policy implementation. We also receive some funding from central government to undertake specific projects. We have no much say in decisions regarding those funds" (in-depth interview, TMA). The influence of central government through the intergovernmental transfer of funds is another aspect where central government exerts political influence on TMA. The District Assemblies Common Fund (DACF), which was established under the DACF Act 1993 (Act 455) and came to power in 1994, has as its main objective "…annually make provision for the allocation of not less than five percent of the total revenues of Ghana to the District Assemblies for development" (the 1992 Constitution). The MCE, which ensures that the fund is applied effectively for development locally, is a political appointee. This makes it difficult to divorce national political influences from decisions on funds provided by the central government for service delivery at the local level. Also, intergovernmental transfers come with projects attached and very little is usually achieved through negotiations for application of part of those funds to other local priority areas. This is one place where there are clear manifestations of local political engagement with national political institutions, thus, it is the ministry of local government and rural development to apply funds for local development. With the head of TMA being a political appointee working to advance the development agenda of the government of the day, there is usually a thin line between local development priorities and national development priorities and these dynamics underpin the functioning, service delivery and development of MMDAs in Ghana. The politics that shape the MMDAs in Ghana transcend the limits of internal organisational as well as national politics. Urban grants, which are usually given by the World Bank to develop some specific projects, are funds that attract serious competition from the more capable MMDAs. The World Bank itself, being a political institution, ties these grants to projects that have some significance, not only to the development of the urban areas that qualify for it, but beyond, where there are other political undertones.

Collective action/multi-stakeholder governance

We now turn to the interests that motivate outsourcing and local collaboration and argue that voluntary agreements emerge from a dynamic political contracting process. Outsourcing and local bilateral contracting and multilateral collective action are mechanisms by which two or more governments act collectively to capture the gains from providing or producing services across a larger area. Creation of these institutional mechanisms presents a problem of 'institutional collective action' (Leroy *et al*) for local units (Carr and Feiock, 2004, Feiock, 2007). The ICA focuses on how local government officials perceive and weigh the various costs and benefits of joint action as they contemplate inter-local service agreements and other forms of intergovernmental collaborations (Feiock, 2008). Although service collaborations can produce substantial benefits, local officials often perceive the costs of attaining those benefits as exceeding potential gains. How officials understand these costs will depend on the context of the decision setting, including the characteristics of the goods or services being considered, the configurations of political institutions under which they operate, and the networks of existing relationships among local government officials. This is reflected in service delivery in the area of waste management and sanitation services provided at TMA. J. Stanley, Amaia, and Zoomlion are some of the institutions that have been contracted to deliver these services. Collective action in the area of inter-local service agreements between TMA and outsourced bodies as well as community participation during clean-up campaigns, have been major ways of achieving the objectives of TMA in the areas of waste management and sanitation. However, interviews revealed that waste management, sanitation, the menace of squatters and security are still problematic in the Tema area. Accordingly, contract killings have increased in recent times, drains are left unattended and residents are made to pay extra fees for drainage services that should be provided on a regular basis without extra charges. According to one respondent, "sewage is left unattended, zebra crossing unmarked, and the menace of squatters highly political" (indepth interview, TMA).

According to Feiock (2008), collaborative agreements generate collective benefit by producing efficiencies and economies of scale in the provision and production of services and in internalising spillover problems. They also generate selective benefits if they advance the individual interests of local government officials. Collaboration or outsourcing of some services of TMA such as waste management and sanitation have yielded some benefits but at the same time, the level of efficiency resulting from the economies of scale that underpin such collaborations, leaves much to be desired. It is important to point out,

however, that a decentralised system of government like TMA enhances allocative efficiency if it produces a match between community preferences for quantity and quality of services and actual service choices and resource allocations, but it can also result in diseconomies of scale in service production and inter-jurisdictional externalities (Feiock, 2008, Bish, 2000, Post, 2002). Economies of scale result when average costs decline as output increases. TMA generates revenue through various sources, including tolls, fees, fines, and rates, which are collected directly from the people besides the DACF and urban grants, which are generated from the government through intergovernmental transfers and World Bank respectively. However, service delivery from the perspective of the consumer is below expectation. The general view is that TMA is very effective in revenue mobilisation but highly ineffective in service provision. One interviewee had this to say: "all TMA knows how to do is revenue collection, beyond that, I don't know what they are doing" (indepth interview, TMA).

It is not an exaggeration to say that any casual observer around the Tema Metropolitan area is likely to see all kinds of plastic and sachet rubbers and drainage congestion. The competing interests and self-interests of the local stakeholders also help shape the dynamics as far as service delivery at TMA is concerned. The politics of siting projects for political gains may result in the MCE, the Assembly Member, and the Member of Parliament from the area becoming embroiled in a political turf war. The result is not necessarily the best possible outcome, but likely the most politically powerful outcome that can advance the interest of one political figure or the other. As the Planning Officer noted: "We cannot underestimate the competing interests and political forces in the determination of project implementation, but we try to get the best possible outcome" (indepth interview, TMA).

Collective action and a multi-stakeholder approach to governance characterises practice at the TMA with multi-dimensional political underpinnings. The local politicians, chiefs, religious groups, assembly members, the parliamentarian from the area and the community at large, through town hall meetings on the one hand, and the place of national and supra-national political influences on the other, play significant roles in shaping the governance of TMA.

Automation and revenue mobilisation

Revenue mobilisation is one of the most important aspects of the decentralisation programme. The use of an industry-standard application can help promote the efficiency of government and management operations. The efficiency gain may come in the form of work hours or money saved in carrying out the same transactions through the Point of

Service Device compared to the manual practice (Chen and Gant, 2002).

Ghana's MMDAs development conundrum is underpinned by a woeful lack of sufficient funds even in the face of a constitutional provision guaranteeing the provision of such funds (Article 240(c) of the 1992 Constitution). The same Constitution mandates the MMDAs to raise funds for local development. What it means, therefore, is that apart from government funding through the District Assembles Common Fund (DACF), MMDAs are supposed to raise enough funds through their local sources, usually referred to as the internally generated funds, and through collaborations and other means through, for example, the urban grants, which come from the World Bank, to support local development. MMDAs in Ghana have uneven opportunities for revenue mobilisation due to the fact that while some are more privileged to have well functioning markets, road networks, well settled population with decent property, companies, and a wide range of businesses with innovative revenue collection strategies, others are left without the same facilities and mainly depend on the DACF for the day-to-day running of their set-ups and for development. These less endowed MMDAs are not also competitive enough to be able to outcompete the more endowed ones for funds such as the urban grants. The issue of revenue collection over the years has also been worrisome due to the fact that no adequate data exists in most of the MMDAs on property identification and efficient revenue mobilisation. In the case of TMA, the loss of significant revenue due to the manual revenue collection methods compelled management to look for innovative ways of revenue mobilisation as a key strategy to increase their revenue base for efficient service delivery. The sources of revenue available to TMA include property rates, fees, fines, tolls, own investments, licenses and urban grants and the DACF, which are run through donor support and intergovernmental transfers respectively. Maximising the methods of revenue collection has repositioned TMA to be able to collect more revenue from existing revenue sources to boost their revenue basket. This has enhanced their chances of effectively delivering services in the areas of safety and security, infrastructural development, as well as keeping the city clean. The automation began in 2014 with data collection through the introduction of the 3D system. This system allowed TMA to capture the whole of the housing property around the Tema area and to locate properties and identify those that were not included for property rates and other forms of charges up until that point. The Point of Service Device (POSD), which now makes for electronic receipting, replaces the manual receipting and this makes for efficiency in revenue collection. An interviewee had this to say: "Before the automation, revenue mobilisation was not good at all. Previously, it was manual receipting, but now the receipt is electronically generated and that ensures efficiency. This is done for all the revenue collection units. All revenue collection points are automated" (indepth interview, TMA).

The table below shows the trajectory of revenue mobilisation before and after automation.

Before Automation	Actuals (GHC)
2012	8 295 482.92
2013	11 556 365.65
2014	13 748 336.80
After Automation	
2015	19 090 766.88

Source: TMA Budget Office. Figures were provided by the Deputy Budget Officer.

The table above is a clear depiction of the revenue collection situation. Even though the table shows a progressive increase in revenue collection year after year from 2012-2014, the biggest difference (Ghc 2 191 971.1) between 2013 and 2014 under the same regime (non-automated) is far less compared to the difference (Ghc 5 342 430.1) between 2014 and 2015 after automation. While this is attributable to underpayment of rates by some organisations because of the hitherto manual system and non-payment due to the fact of their non-inclusion in the revenue basket, lack of proper accountability by some revenue collecting officers also explains the difference in revenue before and after automation. An effective receipt collection system, nevertheless, allows funds to flow as quickly as possible to the TMA bank accounts. It may also provide ways to enhance revenues by increasing collections, lowering processing costs, and increasing interest earnings. As a local government institution, an evaluation of the costs and benefits of various revenue collection alternatives, using measures such as the amount of time it takes to process a tax or fee payment, number of collections processed, cost per transaction, errors per 1 000 transactions, customer satisfaction and convenience is instructive. This will ensure more efficiency and effectiveness. Public-Private Partnerships have also helped revenue mobilisation at TMA. The services of private organisations, also referred to as 'Revenue Contractors' have been utilised on a commission basis, to help in the revenue mobilisation effort. However, while the automation has enhanced revenue mobilisation at TMA, it is not without its inherent deficiencies. Device malfunctioning due to system failures and manipulation by point of service personnel, are some of the challenges that have the potential to derail the effectiveness of the automated system at TMA.

Tema Development Corporation and Tema Metropolitan Assembly

One phenomenon that is of central significance as far as the governance of TMA is concerned is the presence of Tema Development Corporation (TDC). The presence of TDC in Tema introduces some peculiarity into urban governance in Ghana apart from Akosombo with some interesting political dynamics. The TDC was established in 1952 by an Act of Parliament with the sole responsibility to plan and develop about 63 square miles of public land and also to manage the township that had been created to provide accommodation to those who would be engaged in various kinds of economic activities. TDC was given a 125-year lease term to manage this land area known as the Tema Acquisition Area. Currently, the Corporation functions under LI 1468 of 1989 with the core functions being to plan, lay out and develop the Tema Acquisition Area, and also construct roads and public buildings, prepare and execute housing schemes, develop industrial and commercial sites, provide public utilities such as sewage and street lights, and carry out such activities as are incidental or conducive to the attainment of their objectives, but with the prior approval of TMA. Historically, TDC's existence far outdates TMA and its core functions (regarded as the 'landowners').

The political intricacies that play out between TDC and TMA are seen in various aspects of their working relationship. Unlike other MMDAs, in Tema, prospective land buyers would have to acquire their land from TDC and obtain the building permit from TMA. Again, TDC ensures that the structural design is appropriate before TMA grants the building permit. TDC has a taskforce to ensure that buildings are properly sited, which operates parallel with the taskforce of TMA. The politics that surround these dynamics can be high, which actually permeates many spheres of the governance of TMA. Interviews revealed that some of the difficult areas of their relationship include the enforcement of the by-laws in the areas of property siting, especially containers and unauthorised structures, which are usually demolished by TDC when thought to be wrongfully sited. The two public and legally established institutions have obligations and functions, which are outlined in the acts that established them, that are not radically different in terms of service delivery. Even though those services that were originally provided by TDC such as the provision of sewage disposal and street lights are said to have been taken over by TMA, TDC still has some of these services as their core mandate to the people of Tema in the current LI 1468 Act 1989, thus, blurring the lines between service and responsibility as far as the Tema area is concerned.

Conclusion

It is clear from the foregoing discussion that political dynamics fundamentally underpin governance at TMA, and by extension, all MMDAs in Ghana and other developing countries in the quest for service delivery in their respective jurisdictions. It has also been pointed out that the political dynamics, which shape governance at TMA, are peculiar because of the aspect of TDC, which is not a common feature of the rest of the MMDAs in Ghana, apart from Akosombo. The politics involving TMA, TDC, collective action, national and supra-national political institutions, including the World Bank, have variously influenced TMA through its structures, policy making and implementation, to service delivery. The political dynamics make TMA largely political, warranting a compelling understanding of what constitutes rhetoric and what is the reality. The contending opposing views of residents who claim ignorance of what TMA is actually doing by way of service delivery begs the question of its effectiveness for service delivery, and this has been underscored in the discussion above. Needless to say, the politics of service provision between TDC and TMA, the management of waste, sanitation, drainage, safety and security, infrastructural development, cleanliness and urban planning, are still areas of concern to residents and objective observers. The effort towards effective revenue collection is said to be the strongest point for TMA, as pointed out by residents even before the introduction of the automated system. It is established that TMA is very effective in that regard but that revenue collection does not match service delivery. It is contended that while strenuous efforts are usually made for revenue collection, little is done by way of service delivery, since the drains, refuse, litter, squatters, land litigation, poor planning and laxity in response to service provision still characterise the operations of TMA. The political dynamics are so interlocked that it is sometimes difficult to know who is telling the truth – TMA or the residents. Be it as it may, the discussion above points to some implications of the political dynamics and how they affect governance in urban areas of Ghana through service delivery as those dynamics define the institution, and their operational dynamics and implications for service delivery.

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