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## Analysing the Dynamics of Decentralisation and the Creation of new District Assemblies in Ghana

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### Abstract

The creation of new district assemblies has become an overriding feature across African countries in recent years; yet, very few studies exist on this critical subject. This paper draws on the questionnaire to investigate the dynamics of decentralisation and the creation of district assemblies in Ghana. The paper submits that two principal factors are embedded in influencing the creation of new district assemblies in Ghana; the government's desire to gain political support during national elections and the fair redistribution of public resources, with the former, emerges as the stronger predictor. Following the conclusion, the paper recommends that the constitutional power entrusted to the president to create new administrative districts should be reviewed and ensure that this constitutional power is entrusted to an appointed independent body to conduct this exercise. Also, there should be strong engagements of the citizens and civil society organisations to deliberate on issues including, economic and financial viability, size of the population, the capacity of administrative staff, and infrastructural facilities before creating new districts in Ghana.

### Keywords:

Proliferation, District  
Creation, Decentralisation,  
Practitioners, Patronage,  
Democratic

### Introduction

Interest in decentralisation and the creation of district assemblies as a field of scholarly study and as a policy instrument has intensified in the last two decades (Pierskalla, 2016). This phenomenon is a recurrent practice on the African continent where almost half of the countries have enlarged their size of administrative districts (district assemblies) by over 20 percent since the early part of the 1990s (Green, 2010; Lewis, 2014; Pierskalla, 2016). For instance, case studies across Africa established that, as part of the decentralisation reforms, countries such as Uganda enlarged its number of administrative districts from 34 in 1990 to 117 in 2010, whilst Tanzania also increased its administrative districts from 119 in 1990 to 149 in 2010 (Grossman, Pierskalla, & Dean, 2017). Also, the Congo increased the number of her administrative districts from 79 in 1990 to 101 in 2010 (Grossman & Lewis, 2014). Besides, a recent scholarly report has revealed that between 2011 and 2016, the Patriotic Front government created almost 30 new districts in Zambia (Resnick, 2017). Historically, Ghana's decentralisation programme had its genesis in the colonial era. Since then, it has undergone a series of changes, especially after her national political independence from the British colonial masters (Republic of Ghana, 2003). The current decentralisation system

was launched by the Provisional National Defence Council (PNDC) Law 207 of 1988. However, the implementation of the current decentralisation programme commenced in 1993 after the country transitioned to a multi-party system in 1992 (Republic of Ghana, 2003). Typically, one of the underlying Acts of the Constitution of the Fourth Republic, the Local Government Act 462 officially empowered the government to devolve responsibilities and resources to the sub-national units (Republic of Ghana, 1993).

Technically, according to the Constitution and Local Government Act 462, district assemblies, which are the linchpin of the local government system, are mandated to coordinate the activities of sub-structures and help to create wealth for the benefit of local inhabitants and communities. It is expected that this will be achieved through transforming the local economy to achieve growth and accelerated poverty reduction, promoting participatory democracy at local units, and the protection of the vulnerable groups within their areas of jurisdiction. This is not only seemingly in consonance with the tenets of the Agenda 21 and development co-operation agreement, but also it falls in line with the development agenda of the Government of Ghana (Republic of Ghana, 2003). Subscribing to this constitutional requirement, successive governments since 1988 have created many new districts in Ghana (Ayee, 2012). For example, recent reports have shown that Ghana has increased its number of district assemblies from 110 in 1988 to 216 in 2012 (Ayee, 2012). In November 2017, Nana Addo Dankwa Akufo-Addo led government presented a Legislative Instrument (LI) to Parliament for passage towards the creation of 38 new districts and municipal assemblies, further increasing the total number of district assemblies to 254 (Ministry of Local Government and Rural Development, 2017). In 2018, the number of district assemblies stood at 260 (Ministry of Local Government and Rural Development, 2018). As echoed by Ayee (2012), this recurrent phenomenon suggests that the creation of new district assemblies has become an integral part of Ghana's decentralisation programme.

Importantly, while Article 241 (2) of the 1992 Constitution and Local Government Act (Act 462) empower the president to create new district assemblies, there have been series of grave concerns and insistent disagreements surrounding the creation of new districts assemblies in Ghana. For example, locating the district capital for a new district has often resulted in rivalries between towns in newly created districts. For instance, a report has shown that in 1989, there was a huge controversy on the location of the district capital of the newly created Tano District in the former Brong Ahafo Region. While the capital was finally sited at Bechem, it was agreed in principle that some of the district assembly offices should be located in Duayaw-Nkwanta (Ayee, 1994). In 2018, similar cases that occurred resulted in inexorable disagreements and social uprising in newly created districts in Ghana. Subsequently, the government had to ensure that other administrative offices were also located in some principal towns in newly created districts assemblies (Ministry of Local Government and Rural Development, 2018). To be sure, some politicians passionately support the creation of new district assemblies because they believe that this practice will help improve socio-economic growth and development in the rural communities, nonetheless, there has not been seeming evidence to show any improvement in the lives of the people. This situation is a source of caution to government and policymakers because, as a developing country striving to lessen quagmires of poverty, the focus of government policy interventions should rather create opportunities to improve the socio-economic lives of the people (Gyampo, 2018).

Although the creation of new district assemblies has been a key trend under various regimes in many developing countries and Ghana in particular since 1980, there are only a few studies that exist on this critical subject. In this study, the researcher seeks to unravel the dynamics of

decentralisation and the creation of new district assemblies in Ghana. The focus of this paper is to assess whether there are any significant relationships between decentralisation and the creation of new district assemblies, on the one hand, and relevant constructs such as patronage and electoral politics, accommodation of ethnic groups, and redistribution of national resources on the other. Consistent with the stated objective, the following research hypotheses are formulated to guide the study:

## Research Hypotheses

**H<sub>1</sub>:** The government is likely to get more electoral support from newly created administrative districts during national elections.

**H<sub>2</sub>:** Ethnic groups that are highly marginalised in political, economic, and social terms are more likely to access social services if they split from their original administrative districts and form new ones.

**H<sub>3</sub>:** The creation of new administrative districts is likely to lead to a fair redistribution of public resources.

Ghana is purposefully selected as a useful case for analysing the dynamics of decentralisation and the creation of new district assemblies for two reasons; first, Ghana has experienced several waves of redistribution of state authority to local government bodies since the inception of the current decentralisation programme. The process by which power has been deconcentrated and transferred to local level government institutions has been christened as one of the most far-reaching local government reform programmes in the developing countries (Ahwoi, 2010; Ayee, 2012). Second, across the African continent, Ghana's system of democracy shows some genuine features which are common to many advanced democracies in the world. For instance, Ghana established a precedent when she became the first country in Sub-Saharan Africa to elect a democratic government for the fourth time since its transition to a multi-party system in 1993. With the establishment of Ghana's Fourth Republic, the country has been hailed within local and international cycles as an oasis of peace and stability with a steady democratic culture in a continent besieged with conflicts (Bukari & Guuroh, 2013; African Union Commission, 2016).

This study makes a two-fold contribution to the literature. First, all the seminal scholarly studies on decentralisation and the creation of new district assemblies used data from national levels for their analysis (Ayee, 2012; Resnick, 2017). In terms of methodological contribution, this study combines data from national and district levels for analysis of the institutional forces which influence the creation of new district assemblies from their parent districts. Second, this study improves our practical knowledge of the creation of new district assemblies is a political agenda to keep the political regimes in power. Thus, states are expected to formulate realistic and far-reaching policies for restraining this emerging phenomenon and ensuring that the interest of local actors, and institutional aspects; particularly local people, electoral rules, and views of legislative members are considered when creating new district assemblies.

The rest of the paper is categorised to include the following: conceptual and theoretical considerations, methodological approach, results and discussion, conclusions, and policy implications.

## Conceptual and Theoretical Considerations

### *Perspectives on Decentralisation and Creation of New Administrative Districts*

The concept of administrative district creation is defined as a political process whereby existing sub-districts break off from their original districts and create their own (Green, 2010; Pierskalla, 2016). Emerging literature on decentralisation posits that the creation of new administrative districts (district assemblies) is commonly conflated with decentralisation; nonetheless, the two are different policies (Lewis, 2014). In his landmark study, Falleti (2005) documents that decentralisation is pursued in a state to achieve several goals such as improved democratic accountability and enhancing public goods and service delivery to the local people. While this description may work in theory, in reality, decentralisation is innately a political phenomenon that is pursued once it supports the interests of those in power (Wunsch, 2001; Smoke, 2015), whereas the creation of new administrative districts commonly occurs due to the initiation of decentralisation reforms (Green, 2010; Pierskalla, 2016).

Recently, there are new waves of research on the proliferation of new districts assemblies in developing countries (Ayee, 2012; Lewis, 2014; Pierskalla, 2016). These new research efforts brought to the fore an extensive scholarly debate on the benefits and paradoxes of creating new administrative districts (Ayee, 2012; Lewis, 2014; Pierskalla, 2016). While a broad array of scholars is in favour of the creation of new administrative districts, other groups vigorously protest this form of practice (Ayee, 2012; Lewis, 2014; Pierskalla, 2016).

The first line of thought in the literature argues that the creation of new administrative districts (district assemblies) by governments is crucial under the decentralisation system for myriad reasons. First, the creation of additional administrative districts is more likely to make each one, at best, smaller and more homogeneous, thereby, promoting closer relationships between communities and administrative districts. This helps to strengthen bonds among residents and facilitates collective action, which ultimately helps to enhance their attitude towards payment of taxes, leading to improvement in the provision of basic social goods and services (Hassan & Sheely, 2016). For example, an empirical study conducted by Hassan and Sheely (2016) in Uganda observes that newly administrative units created by the erstwhile Museveni government in response to western donors and international financial institutions call for decentralisation resulted in the provision of additional jobs for local inhabitants residing within new administrative units. This practice in larger part made it possible to resolve the unemployment situation in ethnic communities that were conceitedly opposed to his government. Also, it is argued that the creation of new administrative districts has heightened group control over their local affairs primarily because the residents in such districts are likely to get new leaders who are appointed from within the area. Accordingly, they are likely to share with the residents' familial and social networks, which will eventually help to reduce communal violence (Hassan & Sheely, 2016).

The second thread of thought in the growing literature which opposes the creation of new administrative districts hold that this practice is perpetrated by governments in developing countries to strengthen their political fortunes in future elections through the use of "divide-and-rule" tactics in places which are mostly dominated by elites who are not in favour of their rule. It also increases patronage opportunities for their members at the local levels to deliver votes for the



ruling government in competitive elections (Green, 2010). This view is illuminated in Kasara's (2006) study on *'Ethnic beachheads and vote-buying: The creation of new administrative districts in Kenya'* which observes that the political interest of governments is a key factor which influences the creation of new administrative districts in many developing countries. As echoed by Kasara (2006), the creation of new administrative districts by President Daniel Toroitich Arap Moi's government that ruled from 1978 to 2002 in Kenya served as a form of patronage support to influence voters from the newly created districts that were, hitherto, in opposition to his government.

Some scholars and local government practitioners have also observed that the inequality and irregularity accompanying the creation of new administrative districts has harmful effects on local governments' activities by impinging on their already unsatisfactory financial and human resources to the detriment of local communities (Green, 2010). For example, in an empirical study conducted in India on the creation of new administrative districts, Mawdsley (2002) documented that the trust of local people in the creation of new administrative districts is negative. According to the empirical findings, the small size of India's administrative districts makes it challenging to generate enough revenue from taxes from the inhabitants to deliver basic social services to improve their socio-economic welfare (Mawdsley, 2002).

### District Creation as Selective Patronage

The Theory of District Creation as Selective Patronage which is a key foundation on which this study is anchored was first developed by Shefter (1977) and Bayart (1989). The theory, which is generally used in political science discourse, highlights the importance of selective patronage and its outcomes in any meaningful competitive election. Central to this theory is the assumption that every government's goal is to **survive in a political office**. Thus, governments generally use state administrative resources coupled with institutional reforms as common tools to bolster their electoral prospects in the short-run even if such reforms can be detrimental to the state's long-run socio-economic growth and development (Kenny, 2013; Kimura, 2013). One of such institutional policies used in developing countries by political leaders has been the creation of new administrative districts. A new administrative district is formed when an existing sub-administrative unit breaks off from her original district and creates her own. After a split, the original administrative district is divided (at least) into two: The parent district holds the original capital of the pre-existing administrative district while the infant district is provided a new capital and a government apparatus (Kenny, 2013; Kent, Patricia, & Eade, 1987).

Akin to the earlier views, Bearfield (2009) argues that the creation of new administrative districts largely increases the level of government's financial spending because it is compelled to provide infrastructural facilities and also hire more bureaucrats to run such districts. In this way, the widespread creation of new administrative districts is a burden to the state. Thus, in determining the areas to site such new districts, the government is more selective in situating them in places occupied by ethnic groups whose votes can be won because they tend to be geographically concentrated and typically vote as a bloc (Stokes, Dunning, Nazareno, & Brusco, 2013; Hillman, 2014).

The use of district creation as patronage fits well into the political history of Ghana and explains why district assemblies began to increase since 1988. First, in Ghana, governments have been using this exercise as a political tool in a bid to win more electoral support from the swaying groups. Second, as a constitutional mandate, governments have also been creating new administrative districts as a

strategy to create a substantial number of more new jobs in the district levels to employ their party affiliates, thereby minimising political pressures facing their administration.

## Methodological Approach

The target population comprised all district assemblies in Ghana. Altogether, 50 district assemblies were randomly selected for the study. They consist of 25 newly created district assemblies and 25 existing administrative districts. The total number of participants selected stood at 404 comprising 250 staff, 50 assembly members, and 50 traditional chiefs from the selected district assemblies, as well as 50 members of parliament whose constituencies fall within the selected district assemblies for the study. Also selected were; 4 officials comprising the Minister, the Deputy Minister, and the Chief Director of the Ministry of Local Government and Rural Development, and the Head of the Local Government Service. Data were collected in a period of 6 months, from 10th June to 10th December 2018 from both primary and secondary sources. The research model developed for this study employed a three-phase methodological approach. In the first phase, a questionnaire was developed as a valid measuring tool based on relevant literature reviewed for this study. The questionnaire comprising 28 questions was developed to address the research objectives, and also form the basis for testing research hypotheses. The questionnaire focused on measurement scales such as patronage and electoral politics, accommodation of ethnic groups, and redistribution of public resources. Close-ended questions based on the Likert five-point scale ranging from 1=Strongly to Agree, 2=Agree, 3=Strongly Disagree, 4=Disagree, and 5=Not Sure was developed. The close-ended questions were used because they are easily coded and offer greater uniformity of responses. Before the actual data collection process, the questionnaire was pre-tested on 60 participants from two district assemblies; namely, Mfantseman Municipality and Gomoa East District in the Central Region.

The goal of this pre-test was to test the validity and reliability of the questionnaire for this study. In line with the results from the pre-test, survey items were revised to enhance the psychometric properties of the questionnaire. The analysis of the pre-test showed Cronbach's Alpha of 0.8, indicating high internal consistency and reliability of survey items.

The second phase focused on self-administration of questionnaires to gather empirical data from participants. These participants included members of parliaments, assembly members, chiefs, and staff, the Minister, the Deputy Minister, the Chief Director of the Ministry of Local Government and Rural Development, and the Head of Local Government Service. Out of the total of 404 participants who participated in this study, 350 questionnaires were retrieved from participants, representing a response rate of 87 percent, and 54 missing questionnaires, representing 13 percent of the participants. To a large extent, this figure did not pose problems to the analysis of results. Additionally, secondary data were generated from articles, and annual reports, both published and unpublished, from the Ministry of Local Government and Rural Development, and the secretariat of Local Government Service.

In the third phase, data generated from the field were edited, coded, and processed using Statistical Product and Service Solutions (SPSS) software version 21. Subsequently, data were summarised and further described using Descriptive Statistics as well as Structural Equation Model (SEM). Descriptive statistics were used to present the demographic data of the participants. Also, structural equation modeling was used to test the dynamics of decentralisation and the creation of new district assemblies in Ghana. These relevant constructs measured in this study were patronage

and electoral politics, accommodation of ethnic groups, and redistribution of national resources. The analysis of the three dependent variables proceeded consistently. The SEM is very useful for this study in that it offers a universal and appropriate context for statistical analysis that includes several traditional multivariate procedures such as the factor analysis, **multiple** regression analysis, discriminant analysis, and canonical correlation (Joereskog & Goldberger, 1975; Ringle, Silva, & Bido, 2014; Kim, 2016; Garson, 2016).

## Results and Discussion

This section is devoted to the presentation of results and discussion on the dynamics of decentralisation and the creation of new district assemblies in Ghana. This section was categorised into two-sub headings. The first part of the section focuses on the description of the socio-demographic data of participants. The second part addresses specific objectives and hypotheses guiding this paper.

### Socio-demographic Data of Participants

This part focuses on the description of the socio-demographic data of participants. These include sex, age, level of education, and marital status. A detailed summary of the results is indicated in Table 1.

**Table 1:** Socio-demographic Data of Participants

Profile of Respondents		Frequency (Valid Percentages)
		N =350
Sex	Male	220 (52.9)
	Female	130 (37.1)
Age	Below 20	12 (3.4)
	20-29	36 (10.3)
	30-39	51 (14.6)
	40-49	201 (57.4)
	50+	50 (14.3)
Marital status	Married	230 (65.7)
	Single	30 (8.6)
	Divorced	53 (15.1)
	Separated	37 (10.6)
Educational background	Junior High School	52 (14.9)
	Senior High School	85 (24.3)
	HND	56 (16.0)
	Bachelor	110 (31.4)
	Masters	45 (12.9)
	PhD	2 (0.6)

Results from the study presented in Table 1 showed that male and female participants represented 52.9%, and 37.1% respectively. Also, on the age of respondents, those who were below 20 represented 3.4%, whilst 50+ consisted of 14.3% of respondents. Besides, in terms of marital status, respondents who were married comprised 65.7%, whilst those respondents separated with their spouses consisted of 10.6%. Finally, the study found that 31.4% of respondents had a Bachelor's degree, whilst 0.6% and 14.9% had Ph.D. and Junior High School certificates respectively.

## Dynamics of Decentralisation and Creation of New District Assemblies in Ghana

This part focuses on the dynamics of decentralisation and the creation of new district assemblies in Ghana. The analysis was guided by the following constructs such as patronage and electoral politics, accommodation of ethnic groups, and redistribution of national resources. Structural equation modeling was used to do the analysis.

### Exploratory Factor Analysis

The 28 measurement scales in the initial questionnaire were factor analysed and subjected to principal components analysis (PCA) using SPSS version 21. Before performing the PCA, the suitability of data for factor analysis was assessed. The result from the initial EFA revealed a Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin (KMO) value of 0.844, exceeding the recommended value of 0.6 (Kaiser, 1970). Bartlett's Test of Sphericity (Bartlett, 1954) reached a statistical significance of Approx.: Chi-square= 3777.602, df. 132, sig. 0.000. This confirms that there was a significant correlation among the variables; thus, factor analysis was appropriate for the study. Table 2 displays the results of the KMO and Bartlett's Test which was run for the data obtained from the participants. The PCA also revealed the presence of 4 components with eigenvalues exceeding 1. The 4-component solution altogether explained 73.689 % of the variance.

**Table 2:** KMO and Bartlett's Test

Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin Measure of Sampling Adequacy.		.844
Bartlett's Test of Sphericity	Approx. Chi-Square	3777.602
	Df	132
	Sig.	.000

After the exploratory factor analysis, the surviving 17 items were designed into a new questionnaire to test the relationships among the constructs of the study. This procedure is consistent with recommendations given by scholars (Blunch, 2008; Byrne, 2010). A 17-item questionnaire was therefore re-designed to collect data from the 350 participants for the final confirmatory factor analysis. Results from the CFA analysis formed the underlying structure for the conceptual model of the study.

### Robustness Test of Final Measurement Model

The paper examined the validity and reliability of the study data. The reliability measures in this study are above the acceptable satisfactory levels (Cronbach's alphas > .70, Average Variance Extracted > .50, composite reliability > .70) as recommended by scholars (Fornell & Larcker, 1981;



Vandenbosch, 1996). The validity and reliability indicators of the final measurement model are presented in Table 3.

**Table 3:** Robustness Test Result for CFA

Construct	Factor Loading	CR	AVE	CA
<b>Patronage and Electoral Politics</b>		.907	.710	.878
PEP1	.851			
PEP2	.919			
PEP3	.879			
PEP4	.898			
<b>Accommodation of Ethnic Groups to access Social Services</b>		.787	.438	.769
AEG1	.787			
AEG2	.792			
AEG3	.853			
AEG4	.802			
<b>Redistribution of National Resources</b>		.887	.665	.853
RPR1	.771			
RPR2	.883			
RPR3	.905			
RPR4	.847			
<b>Creation of New District</b>		.889	.667	.913
CND1	.892			
CND2	.784			
CND3	.812			
CND4	.988			
CND5	.836			

As Table 3 indicates, data dimension or reduction was done in a rotated component matrix with a threshold set at 0.5. All the variables were used for the analysis. These were as follows: patronage of electoral politics (PEP), accommodation of ethnic groups (AEG), redistribution of public resources (RPR), and creation of new district (CND). The robustness test (AVE and CR) showed excellent reliability and validity of study measures. Cronbach's alpha (CA) also recorded values greater than 0.60; the Average Variance Extracted (AVE) measures were greater than 0.50 and the Composite Reliability measures, greater than 0.70. The CA, AVE, and CR were considered within the recommended threshold (Cronbach, 1951; Hu & Bentler, 1999). Furthermore, the factor loadings (ranging from .771 to .919) showed good convergent validity. Table 4 shows that the squares of the correlations of the individual constructs were less than the Average Variance Extracted (AVE), indicating its support for discriminatory validity (correlation matrix).

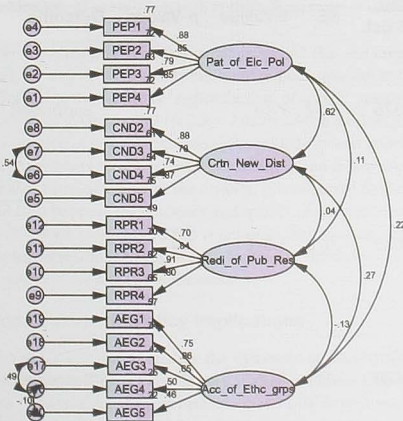
**Table 4:** Correlation Matrix after deletion

	PEP	CND	RPR	AEG
PEP	<b>0.803</b>			
CND	0.625	<b>0.817</b>		
RPR	0.039	0.221	<b>0.815</b>	
AEG	0.109	0.273	0.132	<b>0.662</b>

**Note:** The Average Variances extracted (AVE) are on the diagonal while squared correlations are off-diagonal. The AVEs for each construct is far greater than the corresponding inter-construct square correlations, thereby, supporting discriminant validity.

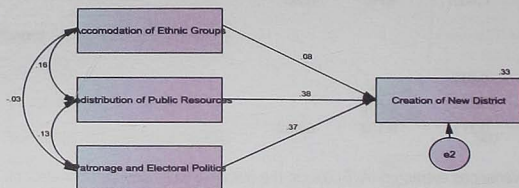
### Final CFA Measurement Model

The model fit measures are evaluated for appropriate measures of fitness in the context of suggested minimum threshold values (Arbuckle, 2010). The paper performed confirmatory factor analysis using SEM (AMOS) to test the three main hypotheses ( $H_1 - H_3$ ). The general model of the confirmed measurement scales is presented below in Figure 1



The general model showed strong "fit" indices: CMIN=441.640, DF=110, CMIN/DF=4.015<1>3 (acceptable), CFI=0.911>0.95 (acceptable), SRMR=0.094<0.08 (acceptable), RMSEA=0.071<0.06 (acceptable), GFI=.905, TLI=.915, IFI=.930, NFI=.909, RFI=.890. The general model was assessed for fitness and the indices for the eighteen (18) valid scales were excellent and fit based on the cut-off criteria by Hu & Bentler (1999). Figure 2 presents an assessment of the fitness of the general model.

## Structural Model for Creation of New District Assemblies in Ghana



The final model (Figure 2) represents the structural formation of the relationship between the three factors influencing the creation of new district assemblies in Ghana. Summary results from the structural model (See Figure 2) are presented in Table 5.

**Table 5:** Summary Result of Structural Equation Model

Relationship	Est.	Std. $\beta$ Est.	SE	t-Values	p-Values	Outcome
H1: Patronage and electoral politics influence the creation of new districts in Ghana	.368	.375	.052	7.14	***	Supported
H2: Accommodation of ethnic groups to access social services influences the creation of new district assemblies	.114	.085	.070	1.626	.14	Not-Supported
H3: Re-distribution of public resources influences the creation of new districts in Ghana	.291	.366	.041	7.057	***	Supported

Table 5 presents the structural equation model on the three determinants supporting the creation of new district assemblies in Ghana. First, it was found that the likelihood that the government will get more electoral supports from newly created administrative districts during national elections influences the creation of new district assemblies in Ghana ( $H_1$ ). Results from structural equation model ( $H_1$ ; t-value = 7.14 > 1.96;  $\beta$  = .375; p-value = \*\*\* < 0.05) confirm the first hypothesis ( $H_1$ ) of

this study. In effect, the study result shows that the opportunity to secure more electoral fortunes/ electoral support in national elections ( $\beta = .375$ ;  $p$ -value = \*\*\*) is the strongest feature that influences the creation of new district assemblies in Ghana. This finding confirms the theory of district creation as selective patronage conclusion that governments in developing countries create new administrative districts as an exchange between the centre and local areas. The centre bequeaths central resources in return for political support from the local areas during national elections (Shefter, 1977; Bayart, 1989). The second hypothesis of the investigation proposed that ethnic groups that are highly marginalised in terms of political, economic, and social considerations are more likely to access development if they split from their original administrative districts and form new ones. The study found that there is no statistically significant relationship that exists between political, economic, and social marginalisation of ethnic groups and creation of new districts in Ghana ( $H_2$ ,  $t$ -value = 1.626 > 1.96;  $\beta = 0.085$ ;  $p$ -value = .104 < 0.05). This means that factors such as promoting ethnic stability and creating opportunities for ethnic minority groups to access social services do not influence the creation of new district assemblies in Ghana. This result appears contrary to the evidence in the literature that creating new district assemblies is likely to help bring political, economic, and social development to mostly neglected and marginalised ethnic groups at the local level in the society (Hassan & Sheely, 2016). One reason for this contradiction is that although locating a new district in a remote area unvaryingly reduces the distance inhabitants cover to access basic social services, its impact on their quality of life could be poor if the size of the administrative district makes it problematic to generate enough revenue from taxes to deliver such services to the people.

The third hypothesis of this paper proposed that the creation of new administrative districts is likely to lead to a fair redistribution of public resources in Ghana. The result showed a significant relationship between the redistribution of public resources and the creation of new district assemblies in Ghana ( $H_3$ ,  $t$ -value = 7.057 > 1.96;  $\beta = 0.366$ ;  $p$ -value = \*\*\* < 0.05). This finding means the creation of new district assemblies is likely to help improve efficiency in resource allocations to the inhabitants and, thus, help in sustaining and improving territorial socio-economic equality in Ghana. Corresponding to the finding, it is observed that citizens' expectations that new districts will help improve the efficiency and quality of the allocation of social goods and services contrast starkly with Bearfield's (2009) conclusion that creating new administrative districts increases the government's financial spending, leading to difficulties in providing equitable social goods and services for the citizens in the country.

## Conclusion and Policy Implications

The paper sets out to analyse the dynamics of decentralisation and the creation of new district assemblies in Ghana. The empirical analysis shows that new district assemblies are created for two reasons. First, the government creates new district assemblies to gain political support during national elections. Second, new district assemblies are created to help ensure a fair redistribution of public resources to the citizens. The former emerges as the stronger predictor of the creation of new assemblies in Ghana. Following the above, the paper recommends the following steps to resolve this recurrent practice. First, it is recommended that this constitutional power entrusted in the president to create new administrative districts should be reviewed and ensure that it is entrusted into an appointed independent body to conduct this exercise. Also, there should be strong engagements of citizens and civil society organisations to deliberate on issues such as economic and financial viability, size of the population, the capacity of administrative staff, and infrastructural facilities before creating new districts in Ghana.



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