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Towards organising sustainable urbanism: The Accra City-Region (ACR) within Africa's West coast urban corridor

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A research report submitted to the Faculty of Engineering and the Built Environment, University of the Witwatersrand, in fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Urban Studies in Urban Management

Johannesburg **September 2022**

DECLARATION

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SENATE PLAGIARISM POLICY: APPENDIX ONE

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ABSTRACT

Over the past few decades, complex urban formations like city-regions/megaregions resulting from extended urbanisation have necessitated readjusting planning and governance. This study explores the nature and role of spatial planning and governance processes in organising development in the Accra city-region, situated within the transnational megaregion taking shape on the West African Coast. I use a qualitative research design, collecting data through document review and semi-structured interviews with some key actors in city-region governance in Accra.

I find that the planning response to the growing city-region has been reactionary rather than proactive over the past two decades. The national spatial development framework (2015-2035) has emerged as the foundation planning tool for city-region planning in Accra. I also find that governance arrangements are lagging the city-region's rapid evolution. Governance remains largely hierarchical with little evidence of concrete collaborative action among constituent municipalities. Transnational spatial planning efforts are underway within the framework of the West Coast urban corridor programme, but linking governance and policy coordination across the corridor remains weak due to institutional, technical and financial limitations.

DEDICATION

This piece of research is dedicated to my lovely mother, Hajia Katumi Ibrahim.

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LIST OF ACRONYMS

ACR	Accra City-Region
AMA	Accra Metropolitan Assembly
AfDB	African Development Bank
BRICS	Brazil-Russia-India-China-South Africa
CBD	Central Business District
ECOWAS	Economic Community of West African States
GAMA	Greater Accra Metropolitan Area
GAR-SDF	Greater Accra Region Spatial Development Framework
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
GIZ	German Agency for International Cooperation
GSS	Ghana Statistical Service
JICA	Japan International Cooperation Agency
LUSPA	Land Use and Spatial Planning Authority
MCRs	Mega City-Regions
MMDAs	Metropolitan, Municipal and District Assemblies
MTDPs	Medium Term Development Plans
NEPAD	New Partnership for Africa's Development
NSDF	National Spatial Development Framework
NUA	New Urban Agenda
OECD	Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development
RCCs	Regional Coordinating Councils
SDFs	Spatial Development Frameworks
TCPD	Town and Country Planning Department
TMA	Tema Metropolitan Assembly

UGB	Urban Growth Boundary
UN	United Nations
UNHSP	United Nations Human Settlements Programme

Chapter 1: Introduction

1.1 Background

According to projections, the world will reach another milestone of urbanisation by 2030 as urban centres will be home to 60% of the global population (United Nations [UN], 2018). While some parts of the world will experience a decrease in the population of cities, Africa and Asia are expected to host more megacities, city-regions, and large metropolitan areas due to fast urbanisation rates (some metropolises growing at above 2% per annum) (UN, 2018). In Ghana, the urbanisation level is projected to reach 63% by 2025, and large metropolitan cities like Accra are the major drivers (Ghana Statistical Service [GSS], 2005).

The emergence of large and complex networks of urbanisation ('extended urbanisation') (Brenner and Schmid, 2015; Keil, 2018), including what we refer to as 'city-regions,' is a standout spatial consequence of urbanisation processes. These complex spatial forms of organisation, relationships and flows often defy traditional administrative planning boundaries (Agyemang, Amedzro and Silva, 2017; Salder, 2020). The concept of city-regions is complex and at times vague both in academic and practical terms, but it is now intensely debated in urban and regional studies (Haekli, Kallio and Ruokolainen, 2020; Rodríguez-Pose, 2008). So, context-specific analysis is the better to explore the concept as it may be invoked differently in several contexts (Addie and Keil, 2015).

Beyond the use of this concept for this new 'extended urbanisation,' city-regions have gained traction among policymakers and researchers who consider it a vehicle for organising efficient and sustainable spatial development. As Healey (2009) points out, the invocation of city-regions in policy circles is seen as a tool for organising cities, a focus for governance, and a unit for planning interventions. In recent times, policies, concepts and frameworks for city-regions development are promoted under the banner of 'sustainable development' (Jonas and Wards, 2007) Therefore, this study explores the role of planning and governance processes in organising sustainable urban development in the emerging Accra City-Region(ACR), situated within an even wider urban agglomeration emerging on the West Coast of Africa.

1.2 Problem Statement and rationale

Over recent years, urbanisation processes have been profound in sub-Saharan Africa (UN, 2018). According to the Town and Country Planning Department [TCPD] (2015c), the urban population in Ghana is expected to hit 30 million by 2035. Agyemang et al. (2017) add that the rapid urban growth has effectively transformed Accra into a city-region, and that the city will become a Megacity by 2035. The emergence of the ACR raises planning and governance questions for authorities. As Healey (2009) notes, the emergence of city-regions poses some real policy dilemmas and the approach used to address the challenges determine outcomes for cities. City-regions usually act as economically networked systems, thus defying traditional administrative boundaries of individual municipalities (Salder, 2020). Due to this, city-regions are spatially complex with mega challenges (in transport, energy, environment, housing, etc.) and multiple governance (State and non-State) actors (Evers and de Vries, 2013).

Extended urbanisation processes occurring around the world are still inadequately examined (Murray, 2017). Some previous studies provide valuable insights into the emerging ACR (e.g., Agyeman et al. (2017) on the implications of city-region growth for governance, Gaisie, Kim and Han (2019) on devolution, spatial development and urban challenges and Agyeman and Silva (2019) on simulating city region growth in Accra). However, the city-region discourse remains a nascent one in Ghana therefore this research is a relevant contribution. Even so, city-region governance is insufficient to deal with the complexities of extended urbanisation (Keil, 2018) which could be transnational as the emerging pattern on the West African coast shows (Choplin and Hertzog, 2020). Therefore, city-region planning in Accra must be integrated into the development of integrated national planning (Acheampong and Ibrahim, 2015) and into transnational development corridors where appropriate.

1.3 Research aims and objectives

The study aims to explore the major planning concepts utilised in the quest to organise future developments in city-regions. The study also investigates the relations between municipalities within city-regions and identifies practical limits to city-region governance, relating the ACR to the West Coast urban corridor as a much wider form of extended urbanisation. This study seeks to demonstrate the role of planning and adaptive governance practices in promoting the ACR as a

sustainable and competitive city-region, but also indicates how transnational governance and planning processes are emerging in West Africa which include but extend beyond the city-region.

1.4 Research questions

This study looks to provide answers to the following questions.

1.4.1 Main research question

How is planning supporting the development of City-Region Governance in Greater Accra and of transnational urban governance in the West Africa Urban Corridor?

1.4.2 Sub questions

- How has Accra developed spatially as a city-region within the larger corridor of urban growth along the West African coast?
- What are the key planning processes, proposals and planning concepts for organising future development in the Accra city-region and within the broader transnational corridor?
- To what extent, and in what ways, has city-region governance emerged within Greater Accra (e.g., how do constituent municipalities of the Accra city-region relate with each other, and how do the municipalities relate to the other levels of governance?) and what governance instruments are emerging for managing the broader corridor?
- To what extent emergent city-region planning and corridor-wide governance processes respond to the complexities of integrating development across greater urban scales?

1.5 Expected findings

The study expects to find that Accra has evolved into a complex urban agglomeration defying traditional administrative boundaries, and this emerging city-region is located within an even wider more complex urban agglomeration on the West African coast. Governance arrangements are lagging these changes brought about by the evolving city-region, but there have been some attempts to improve coordination between municipalities and between municipalities and other levels of government (i.e., regional, national and even supranational). Planning processes are gradually taking on board concepts which relate to the city region as part of efforts to sustainably organise future development in the expanding ACR, but The Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) is leading an even more ambitious (transnational) governance and planning programme. How to link governance across these scales of 'extended urbanisation' is a new topic for urban scholars.

1.6 Methods

The study adopted a qualitative approach that allowed for a blend of theoretical and empirical data to achieve its aims. I used a qualitative approach because it presents me with a range of approaches that brings out less obvious factors (Mack at al., 2005). Creswell (2009) adds that, it allows for flexible data analysis because the researcher can draw on varying strategies of inquiry. A case study was the corresponding strategy used to get an in-depth understanding of the emerging city-region within a specific geographical and cultural context. The focus of a case study is to develop an in-depth understanding of different cases (Yin, 2014). Case studies are used in an explanatory manner and typical research questions are 'how' and 'why' (*ibid.*:10). A case study is also noted for allowing a flexible technique of data collection and analysis (Grinnell, 1997).

1.6.1 Selection of case study

I purposively selected the ACR as the case study for this research mainly because it is the most complex city-region urban system in Ghana (Agyeman et al., 2017). The ACR has expanded both in terms of population and urban footprint over the past 30 years. Its population was over 4.1 million per the 2010 national census (GSS, 2013). Between 1985 and 2000, the population soared 50% while the urban footprint grew by 160% (World Bank, 2015). The ACR contributes 25% of the national GDP (Cities Alliance, 2016). This makes the ACR the most complex urban area in Ghana, and the most appropriate case to explore planning and governance of city-regions in Ghana.

1.6.2 Data collection

The two main methods I used to collect data for this study are document review and interviews. I started off with reviewing more theory-based literature, including journal articles and books from other researchers on city-region governance. In order to build on my case study, I undertook a desktop study which involved a careful review of more empirical-based works related to city-region governance and planning within the Ghanaian context. This was mainly journal articles by other authors on the ACR and official government documents such as the National Spatial Development Framework (NSDF), the Greater Accra Region Spatial Development Framework (GAR-SDF) and development plans of ACR constituent municipalities. Also, I studied West Coast urban corridor related plans on transnational urban development published and/or promoted by ECOWAS. Additionally, I reviewed relevant documents from international agencies such as the UN-Habitat, Cities Alliance and the World Bank.

Building on this, I conducted four semi-structured interviews in total. Two of the interviews were conducted with the planning officials at the Accra Metropolitan Assembly (AMA) and the Tema Metropolitan Assembly (TMA) (constituent municipalities of the ACR). Also, these two municipalities were purposively selected out of a possible forty-two (42) because they have emerged as the economic anchors of the ACR and Ghana (Gaisie et al., 2019). Another interview was conducted with an urban expert (academic) in Ghana to enrich the perspectives from government structures. Here, I was unable to interview the expert I had prior correspondence with on this study though he had earlier accepted my interview invitation. Since he was unavailable, I recruited another expert who is also well versed in urban research in Ghana. Again, I aimed to interview an official from the ECOWAS Infrastructure Projects Preparation and Development Unit (PPDU), a unit in charge of regional infrastructure development and integration but I was unable to secure the interview after not getting a reply to several introductory emails sent to the official email address of the unit. My attempts to use unofficial contact channels did not also yield results. Therefore, I substituted this with an interview with an official at the Land Use and Spatial Planning Authority (LUSPA) in Ghana.

All four interviewees were selected using purposive sampling. The use of this technique not just in selecting the interviewees but the case study itself was justified because the selections are based on the study's purpose and the rich and unique insights participants bring to the study (Ilker, Sulaiman and Rukayya, 2016). The main criterion I used in selecting potential interview participants was the closeness of association between their job responsibilities or research area and the central theme of the study (i.e. city-region governance). This was to ensure that only knowledgeable participants were selected for the study. Further, an interview guide was developed for each of the four participants (see Appendix 3 and 4). The guides were used in a flexible manner to ensure that relevant angles that arose while engaging the interviewees were captured. During the interviews, I audio-recorded with the consent of the interviewees. All interview participant consented to the audio recording. l made notes in a field notebook to complement.

Throughout the data collection phase, I conducted observation through taking drives across the ACR area to observe spatial growth, patterns and major infrastructure projects that have become vital for the development of the city-region and its linkage to the West Coast urban corridor. I made some rough sketches in my field notebook and took photographs to document my

observations. This was especially helpful in answering the first sub research question stated in section 1.4.2.

1.6.3 Data analysis

After the data collection, I had 3 sets of data to analyse - from document review (secondary data), interviews (primary) and observation (primary). The secondary data I utilised were collected for purposes other than for this study so the information is already categorised and interpreted. I reorganised, reinterpreted, and integrated it with the primary data collected through the semi-structured interviews and observation to achieve the aims of the study. Interviews were transcribed, and themes identified to facilitate the interpretation, then the results were paraphrased and in some cases quoted verbatim and referenced in-text using pseudonyms. Relevant maps and diagrams from document review were adopted and in some instances adapted to provide visual illustrations of arguments made. Fieldwork photographs (including those downloaded from the internet) were also used to provide further visual illustrations of observed phenomena.

1.7 Ethical considerations

Ethics form an important component of research. It is defined as 'a legitimate and moral way of carrying out a research' (Neuman, 2000:16). Before conducting fieldwork, l applied and received ethics clearance from the University Human Research Ethics Committee (Non-Medical) (see Appendix 5). However, I note that the ethics clearance process took longer than expected largely due to the COVID-19 pandemic which affected some university administrative processes. Due to the delay, I conducted the interviews in late September 2021. I maintain that this delay, although unfortunate, did not affect my research plans significantly as the study was completed on schedule. All interview participants were briefed about the study, and I disclosed my identity as a student of Wits University via the participant information sheet (Appendix 1). Participants had the choice of giving or withholding their consent or withdrawing from participation at any time if they so wished. The study guaranteed anonymity because participant identities are not revealed in report. Confidentiality was also guaranteed because I did not share the information given by participant as part of their participation in this study with any other person. In interviewing the participants, sensitive and personal questions were avoided and participation was entirely voluntary with no financial incentives attached. The risk level of research was minimal and this helped the study as

all invited participants who acknowledged receipt of the participant information sheet accepted the invitation for interviews.

1.8 Scope and Limitation of the Research

Mindful of the limited timeframe to complete the research project, I limited the scope to conduct four interviews fairly distributed across some key actors in the city-region conversation in Accra. This was backed by document review and observation. Thus, although the scope was reasonable, some issues remain uncovered. This may raise questions about the validity and reliability of the study, but I emphasise that the study does not claim to cover all of the city-region planning and governance issues of the ACR and that the instruments used were sufficient in answering the research questions. Also, the ACR is just one case out of two city-regions in Ghana and several along the West Coast urban corridor, so it may be problematic to make generalisations from the findings of this study. Therefore, my conclusions are specific to the ACR case. But it is worth noting that some findings from this case study may be relevant to other city-regions elsewhere, especially in Ghana and West Africa.

During the data collection phase, the major challenge I faced was my inability to secure an interview with an official at ECOWAS which created an empirical data gap on the conduct of spatial planning in the West Coast urban corridor. I remedied this by conducting more a thorough review of corridor related documents, so this shortfall did not sacrifice the quality of the findings in this regard. More so, the corridor dimension was not the main focus of this research. I introduced it to help demonstrate the multi-scalar nature of extended urbanisation within the context of Ghana with the ACR as the case study. Additionally, the interviews with the LUSPA and the urban research expert were conducted virtually although I planned to conduct them in-person while observing COVID-19 safety protocols. These two interviews were also a bit shorter than originally planned. Here too, I maintain that this limitation did not affect the overall quality of the findings as the two interviews complemented those conducted with the constituent municipalities and the document review well. To reiterate, despite these limitations, the overall approach l followed has produced an empirically sound investigation that sufficiently answers the research questions.

1.9 Organisation of the research report

This research report has seven chapters. Following this introductory chapter, chapter two presents the literature review, which provides the theoretical and conceptual background for the study. It picks up on the debates around the definitions, characterisations and delineation of the city-region and other urban formations like the megaregion. It further discusses planning in city-region touching on related planning concepts, motives and need for city-region planning, and the challenges city-region growth present for spatial planning. This chapter also discusses governance arrangements in city-regions, the opportunity city-regions present for urban governance and the limits to city-region governance processes. It ends with an illustration of the study's conceptual framework based on the arguments from the literature. Chapter three gives a geographical and issue-based contextualisation of the study. It describes the case study by location, population and other vital metrics while also explaining the spatial planning context in Ghana and along the Abidjan-Lagos corridor. The fourth, fifth and sixth chapters constitute the empirical chapters, presenting a discussion and analysis of the research findings. The last chapter summarises the findings from the study, drawing some important conclusions and making recommendations for policy and future research.

Chapter 2: Theoretical and conceptual framework

2.1 Introduction

In this chapter, I review the works of other researchers and scholars around city-region development, planning and governance processes. The review establishes the theoretical foundation of the study and culminates in a conceptual framework that becomes the guide for subsequent empirical work. It explores the concept of the city-region from different theoretical lenses. The chapter also assesses the challenges and opportunities the emergence of city-regions present. I then look at how planning responds to this urban form and the complex process of governing them.

2.2 City-Regions as a form of 'extended urbanisation'

The idea of city-regions has emerged as a vital urban concept and gained traction among researchers and policymakers over the last few decades (Haekli et al., 2020). The idea traces back to Dickinson (1947), who is widely accepted to have coined the term, although other authors have used various related terminologies like 'conurbation' used by Patrick Geddes in 1915 (Davoudi, 2008). Scott (2019) identifies two major areas of focus of the literature on city-regions in the 21st century: One segment is focused on the economic processes that create functionally linked urban economic entities (e.g., Scott, 2001); the other segment takes a more political and social dimension and view city-regions in the perspective of the politics and governance challenges (e.g., Jonas and Ward, 2007). Harrison (2021) also contextualises sustainability concerns of city-region development using the BRICS countries and points to an emergent third strand of city-region literature that highlights sustainability concerns.

How the concept has been conceived and evoked over the years point to one important point that should be made from the outset: no single universally used definition for the term exists (Parr, 2005). But it is crucial also note that idea of city-regions and related terms that preceded it all attempt to explain an urbanisation phenomenon of varying scales that extends beyond what may be considered the 'normal city' to include surrounding hinterlands (Parr, 2005; Scott et al., 2001). This conceptual difficulty has led to the proliferation of definitions. There is also, invariably, overlap with ideas such as the 'metropolitan region', although the city-region *generally* refers to large, complex urban agglomerations incorporating multiple urban centres, while the metropolitan region traditionally is the territory dominated by a single core (Evers and de Vries, 2013).

2.2.1 Defining the city-region

As noted above, the concept has been used in varied ways. According to Parr (2005), the City-Region may be viewed as an urban-regional entity that integrates an established urban centre with its specialised functions and adjoining areas within its sphere of influence. The city and its adjoining territory are 'two distinct but interrelated elements' (*ibid.*:556). For Scott (2019), city-regions can be seen as cities just like other cities because they are generally shaped by the concentration of social and economic activities in geographic spaces and the resultant spatial arrangement of these activities within the agglomeration. Effectively, city-regions cannot be isolated from the current urban realities.

Taking a more policy-oriented tone, the UN-Habitat (2017: vii) says:

> The term city-region refers to the concept of an urban core or cores, linked to peri-urban and rural hinterlands by functional linkages. The city-region approach shifts away from administrative boundaries and sectorial development strategies towards territorial strategies, characterized by vertical and horizontal structures of governance and sectors and focuses on the interconnectivity of an urban agglomeration and its hinterland.

The United Nations Human Settlements Programme (UNHSP) (2018: iv) also define the city-region in terms of an extensive but geographically bounded entity as:

> The area within which the connections between one or more cities and the surrounding rural land are intense and functionally (economically, socially, politically and geographically) connected. These areas are typically 80–100 km across and occupy up to 10,000 km².

Nonetheless, city-regions are marked as unique urban phenomena because of 'their size, spatial extent, multipolarity, functional heterogeneity, political influence, innovative capacities, and global interconnectivity' (Scott, 2019:555). It is these characteristics that uniquely position city-regions as requiring scholarly inquiry (*ibid.*).

2.2.2 Delineating the city-region

Just like its definition, there is no single rule for delineating a city-region (Agyemang et al., 2017). Davoudi (2008) notes that two major approaches have been used to delineate city-regions. This first one utilises statistics on economic flows between areas. The other is based on estimates of commuting time into the core or between the core(s) and its region. Providing an empirical basis

for what constitutes a city-region (mainly from a UK perspective); Parr (2005) identifies four mutually reinforcing perceptions. One has to do with an officially designated administrative region acting as a city-region, so the main urban centre is the seat for specialised services for the hinterland. Here, the administrative model matches the functional structure. Another perception has to do with sub-regions within one administrative region acting as city-regions. The point is that some official regions may have larger spatial extents and populations, so sub-regions and their surrounding catchments are considered city-regions to ensure effective planning and policy implementation. City-regions may also be identified using the concept of Functional Urban Region (FUR) (Beery et al., 1968). Here, the criteria for inclusion into the city-region area is the extent of commuting flows into the 'core' (OECD – at least 15% going into the core). The core can be the built-up area or an administrative area. Extended metropolitan areas, which see the boundaries of metropolises extended beyond their built-up footprints, can also be considered a city-region.

Although these approaches to delineation are seemingly conceptually sound, they are critiqued. For instance, the focus on commuter flows has been tagged as extremely deterministic, while the one based on economic flow relation is seen as reductionist because it ignores other complex socio-cultural variables of city-regions (Agyeman et al., 2017). Parr (2005) also notes that official administrative regions may encounter challenges in infrastructure investments and other planning issues across different regional boundaries. He further notes that the extended metropolitan area approach tends to focus primarily on the metropolis and not the wider region. It emerges that it is difficult to determine a clear break for city-regions, so this introduces the element of context and subjectivity. It is important to stress that regardless of the approach to delineation, city-region growth is a manifestation of extended urbanisation processes in growing cities. Brenner and Schmid (2015:167) indicate that extended urbanisation as a concept is 'partially illuminated' by the traditional city-hinterland dichotomy in the city-region discussion. From this, we understand that city-region growth is a type of extended urbanisation process.

2.2.3 Spatial forms of city-regions

According to Scott (2019), city-region spatial patterns vary from one context to another. Spatial forms of city-regions dynamically evolve as a particular city-region grows into its surrounding hinterland. A common spatial form of city-regions identified globally are those with an overwhelmingly dominant core that provide specialised services and are vital transport nodes for

their surroundings (e.g., London, Paris) (Parr, 2005). Another form is typified by core cities with a network of satellite cities and linking corridors (e.g., Greater Delhi in India). City-regions can also take the form of two large cities serving as anchors of a vast area of urban growth (e.g., Beijing-Tianjin in China). Some city-regions are a complex cluster of cities of varying sizes, as observed in the Gauteng City-Region in South Africa (Harber and Joseph, 2018). Scott (2019) also talks about superclusters resulting from the coalescing of adjoining individual city-regions. These superclusters can take the form of linear corridors with nodes as typified by the East Coast of the US and the Abidjan-Lagos corridor on the West Coast of Africa. They may also be characterised as mega clusters as in the case of the Yangtze River Delta in Asia. These different forms are illustrated in figure 2.1 below.

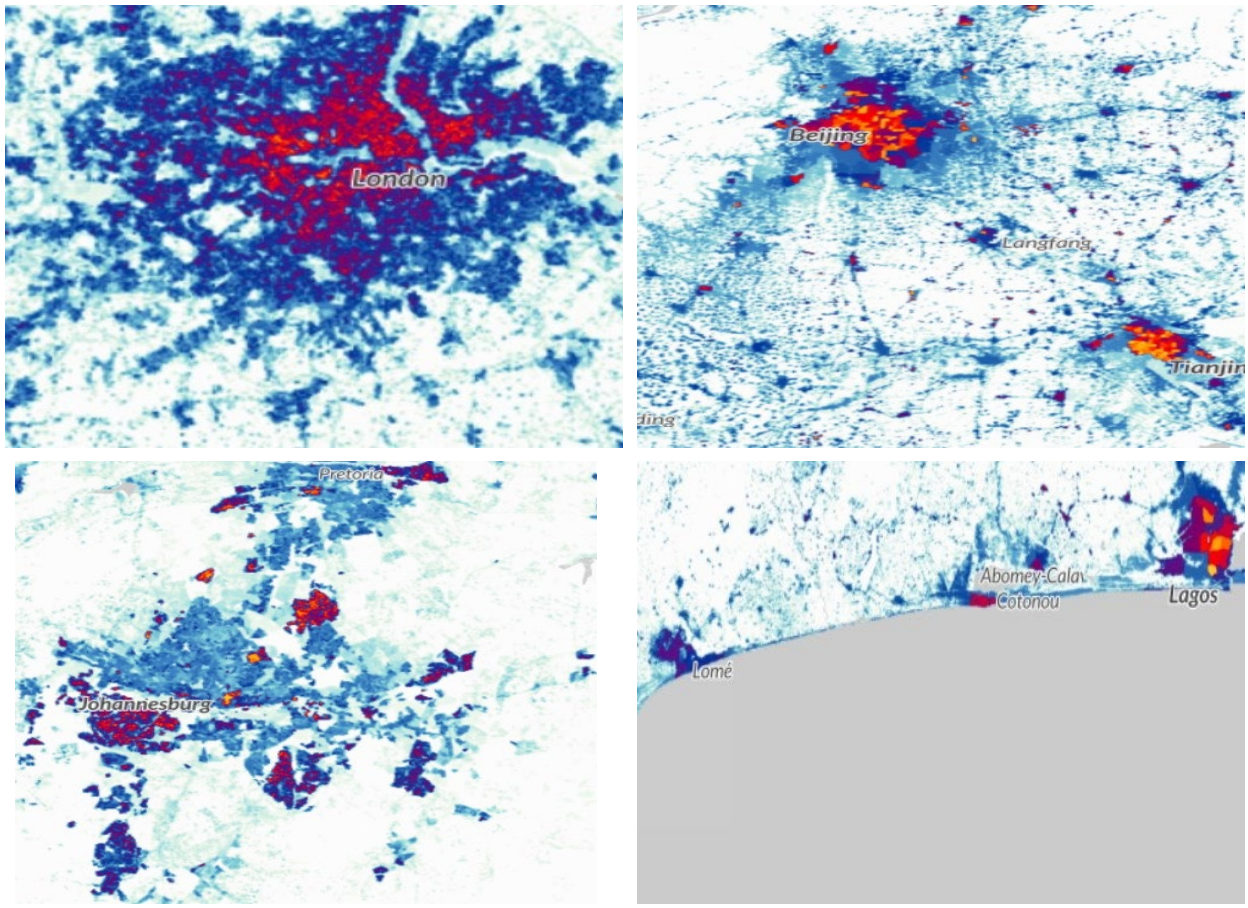


Figure 2.1: Spatial forms of city-regions-Dominant core (Top left), Dual core (Top right), Complex clusters (Bottom left); Linear mega corridor (Bottom right) (Extracted from http://www.luminocity3d.org/WorldPopDen)

Crucially, city-regions can be distinguished from other urban forms because they are areas of varied densities and clusters of development across large areas (Scott, 2019). Improved accessibility and transport linkages can be major enablers for city-region growth (*ibid.*). It is also

important to clarify that city-region networks are not necessarily contiguous built-up areas but exist as concepts that help explain different urban forms and dictate how development is structured.

2.3 Relationship patterns in city-regions

The relations between a city and its surrounding region and their mutual interdependence could be understood using different theories in urban studies as simplified in (table 2.1).

Table 2.1: City-Region relations derived from different theoretical perspectives

Theories	**Types of Relations between City and Region**	**The Role of Region in City Development**	**The Role of City in Regional Development**
Spatial Interaction Theories	Complementary, Intervening opportunities, Transferability	Provides resources and serves as market for goods and services	Provides resources and serves as a market for goods and services
Urbanization Theories	Evolution of regional settlement systems as a result of both agglomeration and decentralization processes	Area of origin or destination for migrations depending on current tendencies	Area of origin or destination for migrations depending on current tendencies
Economic Base Theory	Basic and non-basic local activities of city	There is no distinction between regional hinterland and other markets	Not applicable. Region is one of possible markets for goods and services
Central Place Theory	Goods and Services provided by City for the Region	The importance of the City depends not only on local but also on regional demand. The City is the central place for its Hinterland.	Region depends on City
Growth Pole Theories	Positive spread effects and negative backwashing effects	Region provides simple resources and labour	Capital investments, diffusion of innovations, but backwashing of human resources
Network Theories	Network Linkages are hierarchical and not depending on distance between nodes	Region plays a limited role in city development but is vital where nodes exist within the regional network	City is a core of nodal region

Source: (Author's elaboration, adapted from Smetkowski, 2014:4)

Although the city-region has moved beyond just one core city or metropolis to take more complex forms as discussed in section (2.2.3) above, the fundamental generalisation is that there is an interaction between the city and surrounding hinterlands (Rodríguez-Pose, 2008). The theories presented in table 2.1 point to the fact that the level of coordination between metropolis(city) and region depends on their economic linkages and structure, the degree of mutual attractiveness as well as the level of connectivity (Smetkowski, 2014). The relationship patterns of city-regions are influenced by spatial dynamics, the extent of specific relationships and the level of concentration/deconcentration of population and economic activities aided by 'spatial self-organisation process' (*ibid.*:4).

These theories (see table 2.1) provoke a discussion on the analysis of city-regions over the years. The theories are rooted in the idea that city-regions are spatially bounded and are bundles of mainly economic relations between the city and its hinterland. City-regions are also shaped by linkages and relationships with other urban centres within the country and around the world (New regionalism's globalization thesis) (Scott, 2001; Watson, 2021). However, new regionalism has been critiqued for being over reliant on economic linkages and appears to disproportionately portray the role of globalisation in the structuring of cities to the neglect of local or national levels processes (Watson, 2021). Harrison and Growe (2014) offer revealing interpretations of city-region in terms of their nature and relations: they recognise that they may be complementary, overlapping or competing, in different configurations of space. This is perhaps the fitting lens that accommodates the theories I have outlined in table 2.1 above. Addie and Keil (2015:409) also talk about the concept of 'real existing regionalism', which advances that regionalism is a discourse of contested outcome, relationships and technologies and not just mere normative abstractions nor a collection of predictable activities.

2.4 A transnational twist to city-region growth

At the global scale, countries face a two-dimensional dynamic: externally, they must confront global geostrategic realities while managing their relations with city-regions within their borders (Harrison, 2012). Globalisation coupled with continental and supranational integration efforts has promoted an era of looking beyond the nation-state (Keating, 2009). According to Calzada (2015), the shift towards post-nationalism is strengthening the position of city-regions. Morgan (2013) argues that the strategies for promotion vary across countries: some city-regions are promoted

through economic policy while others are driven by their historical and economic role within their countries. Consequently, city-regions are now promoted as scales for the adoption and implementation of regional policies and programmes beyond the borders of their nation-states (Calzada, 2015). City-regional promotion strategies rely on varied territorial approaches, including cross-national cooperation, economic development schemes and democratic consolidation (*ibid.*). As a result, clarifying these approaches using appropriate categorisations and case studies are crucial, especially, as Scott et al. (2001) have noted, 'city-region' as a term breeds confusion.

Although city-region as a concept and associated processes have become the subject of exploration and debates in urban studies (Rodríguez-Pose, 2008), few empirical works exist on transnational city regions and their political and economic relevance (Calzada, 2015). The piece of work by Calzada (2015) in this area is therefore significant. He tried not only to bridge a conceptual gap in the new regionalism paradigm which ignored transnational city-regions, but he also highlights the diversity that exist among these types of city-region configurations. He devised a methodological framework to benchmark eight selected city-regions with diverse profiles (using aspects of their social innovation processes) in Europe and the US. Cross-border city-regions can be seen as 'global flows of migration and commuters' and 'internal democratic regeneration' (Calzada, 2015:354). Further, he finds that such city-region growth produces 'tensions' that question the centrality of nations states themselves.

Transnational city-region growth brings up the issues of rescaling and governance and planning (Brenner, 2004; Evers and de Vries, 2013). Evers and de Vries (2013:537) argue that the effect of this rescaling has become even more pronounced in large urban areas and "mega-city regions" (MCRs). MCRs are unusually adjacent and overlapping functional urban regions (Hall and Pain, 2006). These MCRs can be multi-layered clusters of individual cities (metropolises) and their hinterlands (*ibid.*), and this can take a transnational dimension, thus increasing the level of complexity (Calzada, 2015; Choplin and Hertzog, 2020). In exploring the scale of city-region in a transnational sense, Watson (2021) draws from authors such as Zoomers and Van Westen (2011), who offer interesting insights though city-regions was not the central theme of their work. Zoomers and Van Westen (2011) write that globalisation has created development patterns that require linking intervention at the local scale in one country to the local scale in another rather than focusing on nation-to-nation scaler integration.

The past decade has witnessed a shift from traditional city-centric urbanisation towards regional urbanisation forms culminating in the emergence of complex urban formations such as megacities (UN-Habitat, 2008). Megaregions and urban corridors are significant urban formations that come with mega urban challenges but also opportunities and could transform urban living in the coming decades (*ibid.*). French geographer Jean Gottmann was the first to identify megaregions in his book Megalopolis in 1961. Gottmann (1961) used the concept to describe the North-east of the US stretching from New Hampshire to Virginia. He further described megaregions as representing a new height of our civilisation and predicted their emergence in other areas of the US at the turn of the 21st century. Since Gottmann's (1961) work, megaregions have been defined and described in different ways by several scholars (e.g., Hall and Pain, 2006), but many authors agree that these urban formations span over large territories and are a manifestation of a higher scale of city-region growth (TCPD, 2015b). The US is home to four megaregions, Europe has five, China is home to four, and Africa and India both have one megaregion (*ibid.*).

Notably, the emergence of transnational city-region and wider socio-territorial systems have been recognised in Europe, and the European Union has served as a platform to deepen and valorise these linkages (Calzada, 2015). However, in the global South, multi-scalar urban integration has not been as well embedded into governance and planning processes, but increasingly it is being recognised in regions like the West African Coast (Choplin and Hertzog, 2020). These transnational scale processes must be understood as politically constructed (Keating, 2009). In the next chapter of this study, I provide an overview of the West Coast urban corridor (also known as the Abidjan-Lagos Corridor), a typical MCR formation in Africa.

2.5 City-regions and the global South

It has been argued that the concept of city-region is essentially a European or Northern urban invention (Watson, 2021). However, according to Scott et al. (2001), the urban and regional development processes that city-regions represent should not be limited to geospatial categories such as the global North. The global South is home to some of the largest global city-regions, e.g. the agglomerations centred around cities like Lagos, Shanghai and Jakarta (Scott et al., 2001). Southern city-region growth is a cumulative effect of rapid population and spatial expansion along with the push for industrialisation at the national level (*ibid.*), with city-regions tending to be areas of concentration of advanced services in their countries (Scott, 2019; Scott et al., 2001). Scott

(2019:559) characterises the emergence of city-regions in the global South as part of the 'third wave' of urban development processes in a post-Fordist era. Countries in the global South have also moved into a period of accelerated growth built on 'export-oriented strategies, international subcontracting, and foreign direct investment' (*ibid.*:560). Along with this, large urban areas in the global South have also become actively involved in the new capitalist economy as they serve as trade and service hubs to serve domestic and international markets (Raiser and Volkmann, 2007). Growing city-regions in many Southern nations act as anchors for spreading development to other parts of their nations though they also suffer high poverty levels and informality (Smit et al., 2017).

In a recent work on the place of the global South in the city-region, Watson (2021) makes a strong case for the city-region discussion to recognise the variations between cities and regions in the global North and South. It is also worth pointing out that even the blanket categorisation of global North and global South city-region may be in itself problematic because urban realities vary even among cities within the same region. For instance, the impact of apartheid-era spatial planning is still very present in the spatial structure of Johannesburg (the hub of the Gauteng city-region) and in the spatial construction of Gauteng as a whole today (Watson, 2009), while Accra (the core of the ACR) has not experienced apartheid, but colonialism has impacted the spatial form of the city. However, it is the impact of rising global capitalism that is most noticeable in the spatial structure of Accra today (Grant, 2009). Global capitalism manifests differently across space, with Jessop, Brenner and Jones (2008) asserting, for example, that contextual and historical variations are key to understanding the complex socio-spatial realities of cities and regions.

2.6 Planning in/for city-regions: Organising sustainable urbanism

The various definitions of the concept of city-region give us an insight into the intrinsic linkage between this idea and planning (used more in the sense of statutory spatial planning). Healey (2009) identified that the city-region idea has become both a tool for organising development and a basis for interventions. These elements she talks about are essential to what planning sets out to do. From a planning and policy angle, the drawing up of city-regional plans by national governments in the UK, Europe and the United States influenced the emergence of regional planning in those geographic regions and sometimes beyond (Watson, 2021). City regions present planning challenges while also creating opportunities for tackling mega urban challenges using collective mechanisms (Evers and de Vries, 2013; Healey 2009). Healey (2009) suggests that in

Europe, the city-region idea was embedded in the planning systems, seen in the efforts to match functional linkages with administrative boundaries to create city-regions as planning areas.

2.6.1 The opportunity of city-regions

City-regions as a unit for policy and planning presents a significant opportunity for collective action in areas of social and economic life (Healey, 2009; Rodríguez-Pose, 2008). The city region is also a foundation for regionalisation (Parr, 2005). The rise of greater urban scales has impacted how plans and policies are prepared, marketed, and implemented (Rodríguez-Pose, 2008). According to Parr (2005), sectors like transport planning and policy, land use and waste management should be areas for concrete joint action for city-regions in future planning initiatives. Rodríguez-Pose (2008) identifies some advantages city-regions present for planning and policy.

This city-region approach provides a framework for addressing the peculiar needs, aspirations of different cities within a country. The emphasis on bottom-up process rather than top-down gives room for more targeted policy strategies. In some cases, the efficient allocation and service delivery is cited for promoting the city-regions idea (Rodríguez-Pose, 2008). Relatedly, city-regions have also been touted as avenues allowing for policy innovation (*ibid.*). Local-level planning is normally influenced by competing to create niches and 'selling points,' so there is an incentive to test ideas and initiatives to maintain national and global competiveness (Thießen, 2003). The city-region is seen as an ideal scale for innovative local-level processes because of the aggregation of the population's potential, creating an avenue for continuous innovation (Duranton and Puga, 2001). Local-level innovations can diffuse to deal with development issues more effectively than those emanating from the national level (Rodríguez-Pose, 2008). Innovative successes of some city-regions may be promoted as worthy examples and modified to suit other city-region contexts (Thießen, 2003). Also, city-region development strategies benefit local accountability and transparency because of the proximity of decision-makers to the citizens (Rodríguez-Pose, 2008). This proximity coupled with the transparency and accountability can also help create an empowered population (Wolfensohn, 2001) to take ownership of the planning and development process to build a future they envisage (Rodríguez-Pose, 2008).

2.6.2 Planning and policy challenges in city-regions

Rodríguez-Pose (2008) notes that there are downsides to development decision making processes that could derail the potential advantages of the city-region approach. Governance has been the major focus of the city-region approach, but a weak financial base is a challenge inhibiting the emergence of voluntary processes (Rodríguez-Pose, 2008). Therefore, planning and policymaking at this scale may be limited due to financial constraints (*ibid.*). In many countries, city-regions possess limited taxation powers and thus rely on central government statutory transfers or grants (*ibid.*). Rodríguez-Pose (2008) adds that a weak financial base could derail the effective implementation of development initiatives and that the lack of a specified government tier to cover the city-region area tends to complicate planning. Related to this is the issue of rising debt because of the tendency for city-regions to operate under the assumption of continuous central government support and bailouts when needed (Rodríguez-Pose, 2008). This phenomenon which is fuelled by excessive borrowing and over-spending not only constrain local development but also has implications for national economies (*ibid.*).

Further, the efficiency of policymaking at a city-region scale vis-à-vis centralised State policymaking has been questioned (*ibid.*). Drawing from the ideas of Prud'homme (1994), Rodríguez-Pose (2008) argues that while some city-region may have sufficient economic and demographic capacity to undertake public policy, some others do not fulfil minimum thresholds, so it may be more efficient to deliver development strategies at the national level than at the city-region scale. He further indicates that smaller city-regions are more constrained in terms of finances, human and logistical resources. Therefore, a reduced role of the State in policy puts them at a disadvantage as opposed to their counterparts. There is also the risk of the competition among city-regions becoming a zero-sum game instead of being growth-enabling (Brenner, 2004; Rodríguez-Pose, 2008). This is attributable to the uneven playing field as larger city-regions with strong economic and demographic indicators essentially outperform smaller ones (Rodríguez-Pose, 2008). Large city-regions are also more complex to govern given the multiplicity of actors *(ibid.*) These factors culminate in growing territorial imbalances as larger and richer city-regions out compete weaker and less endowed ones (*ibid.*). Parr (2005) reiterates that the application of planning concepts and effective implementation of public policy can also be successful if it comes along with supportive changes in administrative and governmental structures.

2.6.3 Concepts, frameworks, guidelines, to the rescue?

As an idea embedded in planning consciousness, especially in global North regions like Europe (Healey, 2009), the operationalisation of the city-region approach is associated with other planning concepts. In recent times the adoption of policies, concepts or frameworks in city-regions are promoted under the banner of 'sustainable development' (Jonas and Wards, 2007; Watson, 2021). It has emerged that growing city-regions have increasingly sought to apply city model principles that support the sustainability agenda (Waters, 2016; Westerink et al., 2013). In this section, I focus on three main contemporary urban development paradigms (mutually reinforcing) that have been associated with organising development in growing city-regions (i.e., compact city, polycentric city, and smart city) and build on urban density arguments (Waters, 2016). I also look at the New Urban Agenda (NUA) and associated UN documents which have emerged as crucial sources of planning guidelines for the city-region approach (Watson, 2021).

Compact city: sustainability or efficiency?

Like many other planning concepts, the compact city is advocated in city-regions for perceived sustainability benefits (Westerink et al., 2013). According to Williams (1999), the compact city concept revolves around the efficient use of land use and countering urban sprawl. The concept has several goals and parameters linked to what it sees as sustainability outcomes. The parameters of the compact city as identified by Williams (1999) include, containing sprawl, efficient land use and public transport (reduced car dependency, emissions and improved public health as a result), protection of rural and agricultural land and ecology, dense urban development (along with indirect effects including social mixing, economic diversity,).

Westerink et al. (2013) calls the compact city concept a paradigm because of its economic and social dimensions. Some other 'complementary' concepts can be drawn from the parameters/goals of the concept. For instance, the compact city is intrinsically linked to connectivity, mobility, accessibility and urban densities (*ibid.*). According to Waters (2016), the compact city with its focus on dense urban development also positively contributes to urban resource efficiency, ecological balance and lower service delivery cost. But drawbacks like inadequate affordable housing, congestion and pollution may also exist (UN-Habitat, 2012). Westerink et al. (2013) draw our attention to the fact that the compact city is not an 'implementable blueprint,' and its sustainability potentials are unclear because trade-offs exist. They also state that city-regions should adopt context-specific strategies that fit their peculiar urban realities. Most city-regions

(emphasis on Europe) seem to apply the polycentric city model interpretation of the compact city as opposed to the monocentrism (associated with the classic compact city) (*ibid.*).

Polycentric city: Benefiting from compactness and 'sprawl'

The polycentric city model is where the city is morphologically shaped into corridors or networks (opposite of monocentric model). The aim is to among others contain urban growth, make room for biodiversity, create vibrant and diverse human settlements and site developments along accessible corridors (Westerink et al., 2013). Polycentric cities aim to integrate the advantages of sprawling and compactness by creating multiple centres of social and commercial activity complemented by an efficient public transport system (Waters, 2016). Just like compact cities, there is a focus on creating a healthy mix of private activities and public services (*ibid.*).

According to Hoyler, Kloosterman and Sokol (2008), many planners seem to agree that city-regions and megaregions have become increasingly multinuclear or polycentric. Polycentric urban regions are said to have significant economic strength due to their polycentric structure as opposed to monocentric regions (Bailey and Turok, 2001). However, there is a risk of fragmentation and uneven development if sprawl is not managed well (Scott et al., 2001). This risk not only threatens sustainability but also social and spatial balance (Wheeler, 2009). Hoyler et al. (2008) argue that the concept of the polycentric city lacks conceptual clarity which makes empirical studies of polycentric city-region challenging. But the empirical work of Westerink et al. (2013) in some European city-regions reveal that various variants of the concept are at play in all of them.

Smart city: The new 'kid' on the block

This approach is built on promoting 'smart growth' allowing for greater urban efficiency by coordinating transportation, economy, land use and service delivery and environmental protection (Batty et al., 2012). Smart growth is projected as a vehicle for urban innovation and increased competitiveness because it helps integrate hard infrastructure (e.g., transport, health and education infrastructure) with the knowledge economy and human and social capitals (Caragliu, Bo, and Nijkamp, 2011). Crucially, smart city developments often contribute to sustainability by reducing CO2 emissions as they promote eco-friendly public transportation and cleaner sources of fuel (Waters, 2016). However, this model can be complex for city-regions to adopt especially, those in the global South, because of the sophisticated ICTs, human and technical resource base (and substantial financial investment) required (*ibid.*). What makes this model interesting for city-

regions is that the idea of 'smartness' cuts across sectors of economy, social activity and geography. In this way it integrates, coordinates and shapes the two important variables of sectorial and territoriality which represent the political and spatial aspects of the city-region respectively.

City-regions and the NUA

The NUA and related UN-Habitat guideline documents have emerged as important sources of planning guidelines for city-region growth (Watson, 2021). The UN-Habitat (2017) guideline document focuses on the importance of creating urban-rural linkages for balanced development. It promotes the city-region approach as a vehicle for ensuring better rural-urban linkages and ultimately helping cities achieve the goals under the NUA. The definition of city-regions in section 2.2.1 demonstrates the importance of city-regions in terms of policy and planning of growing cities. The UNHSP (2018), another NUA related guideline document, highlights the importance of linkages between cities and their hinterlands and identifies a range of 80-100km within which such linkages could be established.

Watson (2021) provides an assessment of the NUA and other closely related planning guideline documents in the context of the global South. She argues that most of the underlying assumptions of the guidelines are mainly global North driven and may be less applicable in the South. However, this does not suggest that the guidelines are entirely out of touch with the urban realities of the South. Beyond the argument that these planning guidelines seemingly ignore place and history, she further points out that the conceptualisation of city-regions in the documents focus on a local scale and largely neglects global level process that impact city-regions. What we see is that local and global economic and social changes widen inequalities in both core cities and their hinterlands, and planning and development interventions (such as investment in improved regional transport connection) benefit some segments of society and further marginalise others (*ibid.*).

Putting it all together

Planning concepts and guidelines that have emerged as vital for the city-region approach have been motivated by sustainability concerns, along with the quest for efficiency and competitiveness (Waters, 2016; Watson, 2021). Concepts such as compact city, polycentric city and smart city provide useful insights planning and policy can draw from in pursuing the city-region approach. But as Westerink et al. (2013) note, some of these concepts (e.g., classic compact city) are not implementable blueprints. Some others that may be 'implementable' (polycentric city and smart

city and their variants) require several economic and socio-technical underpinnings that may be non-existent in smaller and less economically advanced city-regions (Water, 2016). As Watson (2021) also argue, the NUA and related guideline documents may be problematic because of a 'one-size-fits-all' assumption that does not account for the differences between global North and South urban areas. She goes further to suggest that these planning documents only provide guidelines without concrete proposals. Scott (2019:573) disagrees with the assertion that theoretical positions ignore the needs of Southern cities and argues we must not conclude that 'empirical diversity is necessarily a sign of theoretical incommensurability.' Therefore, proper contextualisation concepts and planning guidelines become imperative for city-region planning authorities in the global South because as Westerink et al. (2013) advise, planners need to adapt concepts to fit the context in which they seek to apply them.

2.7 Governing growing city-regions

According to Rodríguez-Pose (2008), the city-region discussion has mainly focused on governance-related issues. A new regionalism emerged from the 1970s and superimposed itself on traditional devolution processes in countries (Scott et al., 2001). This development was a direct response to the emergence of the city-regions as important nodes in the global economy (*ibid.*). The term governance itself is used variedly to describe the coordination of different social and economic processes, and incorporates not just the public sector but also non-State actors like civil society organisations, public-private partnerships (*ibid.*).

Scott (2019) points out that a key theme in the literature on city-regions speak to their place in the broader geopolitical setup of the state. City-region governance is always complicated as it involves multiple actors with different agendas across a large territory (Evers and de Vries, 2013; Jonas and Ward, 2007). It is even more complicated where there are low levels of trust between actors (Feiock, 2009; Rodríguez-Pose, 2008). It takes many different forms, from highly formal, to informal relationships and associations (Evers and de Vries, 2013). Sometimes, it is imposed from above by a national or state/provincial/regional government, while in some instances, it emerges organically through voluntary collaborations of local actors (Evers and de Vries, 2013; Feiock, 2009). Here, I explore issues related to the need for city-region governance, governance arrangements and models and limits to governance arrangements.

2.7.1 Why is city-region governance necessary?

Scott (2019) makes the point that the relevance of governance in the urban setting is better appreciated when seen in terms of how it materially affects development on the ground. The rescaling processes around the world are making city-regions increasingly powerful and influential (Brenner, 2009). City-regions have also become sites of continuing experimentation on fashioning innovative governance frameworks to manage their internal dynamics and strengthen their influence as important actors in the national and global economy (Scott, 2019). The overarching rationale for city-region governance stems from the drive for improved policy and development coordination (Rodríguez-Pose, 2008). The reasons for a drive towards improved city-region governance processes are varied.

First, local development decision-making occurs at lower government levels, thus making vertical coordination of institutional structures and actors at that scale imperative (Va´zquez-Barquero, 2002). Rodríguez-Pose (2008) elaborates that vertical coordination involves harmonising the development efforts across all scales (local, regional, national, and supranational) because conflicts among policies at different scales could negatively impact development in city-regions. So, multi-level governance approaches have become characteristic of city-regions (Hooghe and Marks, 2001). It has also emerged that horizontal coordination between State and non-State actors has become necessary because most city-region development strategies require participatory and voluntary mechanisms (Va´zquez-Barquero, 2002). Such coordination fosters better interaction between the State and the private and civil society in decision-making (Hamilton, 2004). Constant interaction between the State and private sector actors creates an environment of 'good governance' and potentially empower citizens to have a greater say in city-region development processes (Rodríguez-Pose, 2008:1034). The functional structure of city-regions rarely coincides with administrative or political units, so horizontal coordination is imperative (Parr, 2005).

The nature and degree of coordination lead to the emergence of complex and innovative governance forms built on cooperation and better coordination (Brenner, 2003; Scott, 2001). These arrangements become important for service delivery, spatial planning and local stakeholder mechanisms in the city-region (Rodríguez-Pose, 2008). However, Rodríguez-Pose (2008) cautions that creating and maintaining these governance systems can be costly and risk breaking down if conflicts between constituent elements and sectors are not well managed.

2.7.2 City-region governance arrangements/models

It has been argued that the classic core-hinterland dichotomy of city-regions has become a more complex collection of sub-national, local and sub-local government structures with sometimes conflicting roles and interests (Evers and de Vries, 2013). Rescaling and governance arrangements vary across time and space because they are embedded in local government systems which take different forms in various countries (Scott, 2019). Scott (2019) identifies some global examples of city-region arrangements like the megacity of Toronto formed by consolidating seven adjacent municipalities in Ontario Province in 1998. In South Africa, the Gauteng City-Region, a complex but loose cluster of urban centres and hinterlands is moving toward building institutional processes to help consolidate its position as Africa's most sophisticated economic hub, although, to date, the idea of the city-region is still more evident in rhetoric than practice (Cheruiyot, 2018; Harber and Joseph, 2018).

Mega city-regions in China (e.g., Beijing) are moving towards formalisation of government structures (supported by the national government) mainly by coordinating key areas like infrastructure (Zhao, Derudder and Huang, 2017). Likewise, the UK government has tried to support the emergence of viable city-regions Northern England through policies to enhance agglomeration economies (Scott, 2019). UK government initiatives like the Northern Powerhouse Programme started in 2010 has focused on reinvigorating cities such as Manchester and Liverpool through devolution, science and technology promotion and transport infrastructure investments (Harrison, 2010). These examples of rescaling and arrangements identified above are just a fraction of the many governance processes happening in city-regions worldwide. For Scott (2019), the governance processes unfolding around the world represents the move towards creating appropriate governance mechanisms to tackle contemporary urban realities in city-regions.

Conceptually, all forms of governance arrangement fall under broad thematic groups based on their major characteristic and outcomes. It has been argued that city-region governance hinges on collective approaches, usually to address challenges (Evers and de Vries, 2013). Following the work of other scholars such as Feiock (2009), Evers and de Vries (2013) identify three broad categories of collective governance models (see Fig. 2.2). Hierarchical arrangements exist where a powerful formalised and centralised government body leads interventions. Competitive arrangements promote competition among constituent units and are market oriented. The category on Joint-decision making is one built on actor/stakeholder engagements to make collective

decisions. Evers and de Vries (2013) note that, in practice, collective-action arrangements in city-regions may be a mix of the three categories highlighted.

Approach	Typical solutions	Indicators
Hierarchy	Consolidation/regional authority; concentrating relevant powers in a single body	One dominant public actor (national, state, regional) overseeing the particular collective action problem National/state/regional government engages in strong substantive control through: - Regulation (e.g. zoning), - Directly managing public goods (e.g. national parks), - Providing subsidies for narrowly defined results.
Competition	Decentralization and privatization	Multiple and fairly autonomous public and/or private actors involved in the particular collective action problem National/state/regional government presence is absent or limited to: - Rewarding concessions (e.g. public transport) or - Establishing a rule to internalize external effects (e.g. tradable development rights).
Joint decision-making	Building networks of actors, collaborative governance	Multiple interdependent public and/or private actors involved in the particular collective action problem Existence of a (informal or formal) structure for joint decision-making (association, platforms, coalitions, etc.) National/state/regional government influence is primarily procedural, and aimed at facilitating cooperation between stakeholders by: - Issuing grants provided that stakeholders arrive at a joint agreement or - Acting as a mediator or process manager.

Figure 2.2: Classification of collective action arrangements (Source: Evers and de Vries, 2013:540)

2.7.3 Limits to city-region governance

As indicated earlier, the discussion on city-regions has focused on governance. Despite the benefits of governance arrangements in dealing with challenges of the city-region, limitations exist (Rodríguez-Pose, 2008). The limits to city-region governance can be identified from the challenges to policy and planning (discussed in section 2.6.2) because these challenges affect the emergence of collaborative processes that are key to city-region governance (*ibid.*). Notwithstanding, I highlight a few issues to avoid the risk of repeating points already elaborated above. According to

Rodríguez-Pose (2008), one challenge that could limit collaborative city-region governance mechanisms is that related to cost. He elaborates that it is harder to create and maintain governance structures in economically weaker city-regions because constituent municipalities suffer financial, human and logistical constraints. Further, he identifies the risk of conflicts (and lack of trust) between constituent municipalities, sectors and other levels of government as a drawback if there is little or no clarity on how to resolve conflicting interests. Scott (2019) also points out that the viability of the city-region is determined by whether basic administrative and political structures exist. McGuirk (2007) stresses that national governments are crucial to city-region development because, in many jurisdictions, they lay the groundwork for decentralised governance.

2.8 Research conceptual framework

Drawing on the literature reviewed in this chapter, I developed a conceptual framework (Figure 2.3) tying together the ideas explored. Henning (2004:26) defines a conceptual framework as 'an alignment of key concepts of a study which helps to position it in the bigger research enterprise.' The framework shows elements of planning and governing of complex urban formations resulting from extended urbanisation.

As noted earlier, city-regions and megaregions are spatial creations of extended urbanisation. As complex urban formations, city-regions take varied spatial forms depending on the scale and context (Scott, 2019). Some common spatial patterns of city-regions include those with a dominant core (e.g., London), complex clusters (e.g., Gauteng city-region) and superclusters (e.g., East Coast of the US). Planning, policies and governance processes are identified as the 'organising elements' of city-region development. Planning intervenes in varied forms within the city region. Key among these is the application of planning concepts, especially those on city forms (e.g. compact city), the adoption of frameworks (both local and international) to guide planning, and specially targeted interventions to address development issues. City-region governance may be structured by national or regional/provincial governments in a hierarchical central regionalisation approach (top-down approach) (Evers and de Vries, 2013). Also, they could emerge organically through internal structuring and voluntary collaboration among local actors (Evers and de Vries, 2013; Feiock, 2009). And as Westerink et al. (2013) point out, city-regions and associated planning and governance processes are motivated or promoted under the banner of sustainability.

However, it is usually the case that the need to ensure efficiency and competitiveness of the city-region to compete in the global economy are equally prime objectives of city-regions development (Scott, 2019; Westerink et al., 2013). These linkages are diagrammatically presented below.

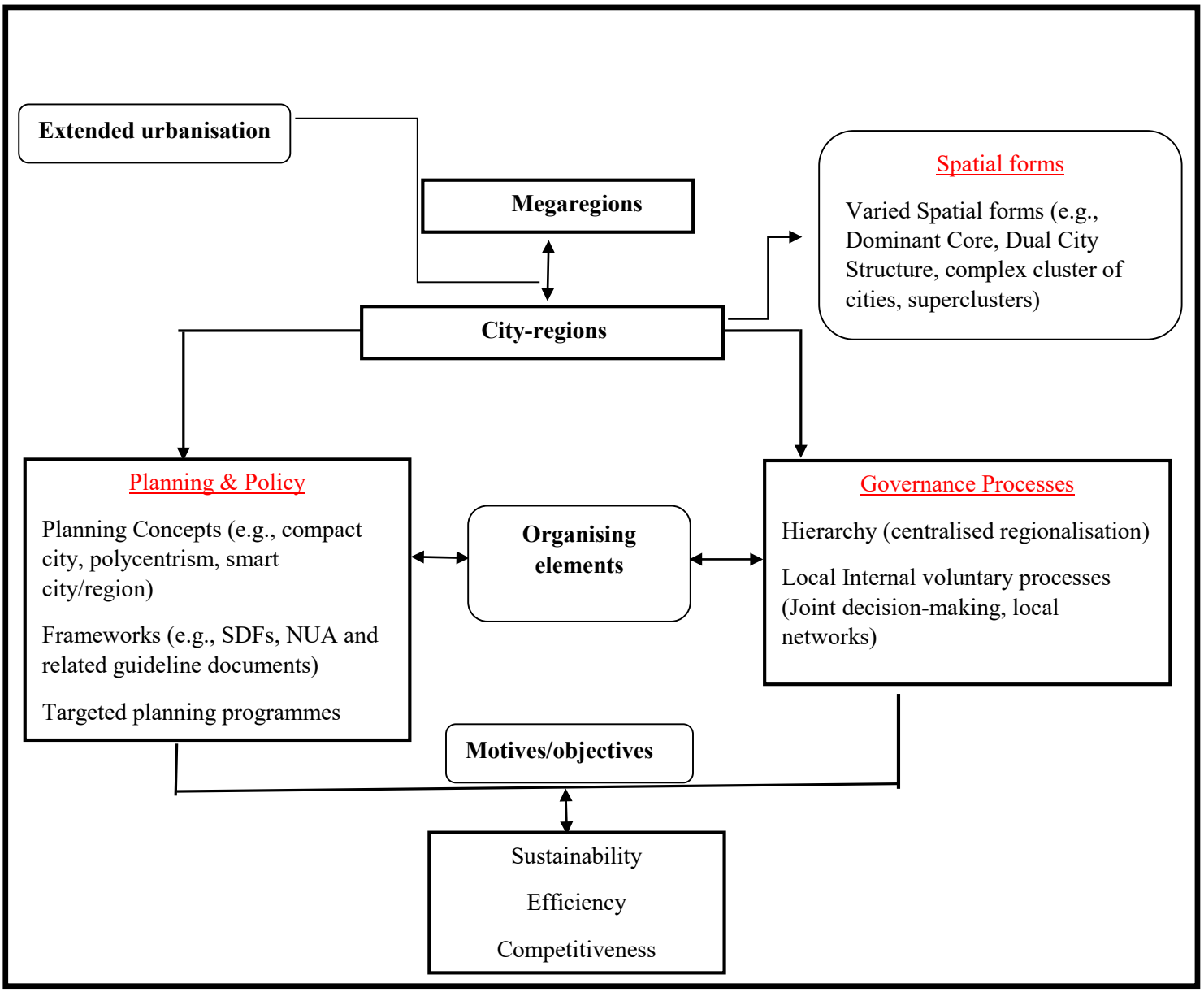


Figure 2.3: Conceptual framework of the study (Source: Author's own illustration, 2021)

2.9 Conclusion

In summary, it is clear from the literature that city-regions, megaregions and associated urban formations resulting from extended urbanisation are complex. Even the concept of city-region itself does not have a unified definition or conceptualisation. However, the common thread that stands out from the several conceptualisations in the literature is that city-regions bring together core areas and their surrounding hinterlands to create various patterns of urban configurations. Therefore, context is important when discussing the emergence of city-regions and their development issues (Healey, 2009; Parr, 2005). This study identifies with the conceptualisation of city-regions according to the UN-Habitat (2017) which is oriented towards understanding the functional linkages between cities and their surrounding peri-urban and rural areas as well as territorial and governance processes. Drawing from the literature, this study identifies planning, policies and governance processes as the 'organising elements' of city-region development. These organising elements come to life through the application of planning concepts (e.g., compact city, smart urban region) and the adoption of governance tools and processes with the view to respond to urban change in city regions. I explore how some aspects of these organising elements of city-region development play out in the case study in the empirical section of this research.

Chapter 3: The Accra City-Region and West Coast Urban corridor in context

3.1 Introduction

In this chapter, I contextualise the ACR within the national urban landscape of Ghana and the broader West Coast urban corridor (The Abidjan-Accra-Lagos corridor). This contextualisation entails an overview of urbanisation trends in Ghana which has fuelled the emergence of city-regions and other urban formations in the country. This section also delves into the existing spatial planning and governance architecture to establish the place of city-regions within this frame.

3.2 Urbanisation: the foundation of complex urban formations

Urbanisation is an established phenomenon that provide a foundation for urban research. Urbanisation is set in motion by complex socio-economic and spatial processes that alter the spatial configuration of human settlements in terms of their form, relationships and flows (Agyeman et al., 2017). In contrast with the expected stagnation or even decrease in the population of cities in some parts of the global North, Africa and Asia are expected to host more complex urban formations such as megacities and city-regions along with an increase in smaller urban centres/medium-size towns and cities (UN, 2018). Urbanisation is a double-edged sword because while it presents significant socio-economic development opportunities, it is also associated with challenges like environmental pollution, urban poverty, congestion, among others (Agyemang and Silva, 2019). Understanding the likely spatial consequences of increased urban growth is key to harnessing the opportunities it offers for sustainable development (*ibid.*).

3.2.1 Urbanisation trends and implications in Ghana

Ghana has experienced rapid urbanisation over the past few decades, and this is consistent with observed trends on the African continent (Ghana Urbanisation Think Tank, 2019). The urbanisation level increased from 31.3% to 43.9% between 1894 and 2000, and as of 2010, the urbanisation level climbed to 50.9% (GSS, 2014), and by 2025, 63% of the total population of Ghana will live in urban centres (TCPD, 2015a). Urbanisation is mainly driven by rural-urban migration, natural growth in urban areas and designation of previously rural areas as urban (GSS, 2014). Rapid urbanisation in Ghana over the last 30 years has created a mix of prosperity and rising urban poverty (World Bank, 2015). Rapid urbanisation has magnified urban challenges including, uncoordinated spatial expansion, infrastructure deficiency in some communities,

environmental pollution and unemployment (*ibid.*). These challenges tie into broader themes related to economic growth, inclusive urban growth, and urban institutional structures and sustainability (Government of Ghana, 2012). In framing their work on the implications of the ACR for spatial governance, Agyemang et al. (2017) note that one area neglected in urbanisation research in Ghana and Africa is examining the emergence of city-regions. Accordingly, this study is also framed around a move away from 'city-centrism.'

3.2.2 The emergence of city-regions in Ghana

As indicated in the previous section, the emergence of city-regions and other complex urban formations across the world are consequences of urbanisation. In Ghana, rapid urban growth and expansion have seen some cities grow into 'new' complex spatial formations (city-regions) that defy traditional planning and administrative boundaries (Agyemang et al., 2017). The growth of major cities beyond established administrative boundaries to create city-region formations is evident in the absorption of the surrounding peri-urban and rural hinterlands, and in some cases, the formation of clusters with other substantially large secondary cities (TCPD, 2015b).

In the last few decades, Ghana has initiated a series of urban policies aimed at making its cities competitive with Accra as the major focus (Gaisie, et al., 2019). These have contributed to making Accra the largest and preeminent city-region in the country (Agyemang et al., 2017). Interestingly, the ACR is found within an urban agglomeration corridor or megacity region taking shape along the West Coast of Africa, stretching from Cote d'Ivoire through Ghana to Nigeria (Choplin and Hertzog, 2020). Showing the place of the ACR within the Abidjan-Lagos corridor is crucial for this study as it reveals another layer of urban complexity and scaling up of the city-region. ECOWAS, the main transnational governance body within the corridor has recognised the importance of transnational planning through interventions such as the Abidjan-Lagos highway which forms part of a broader urban corridor programme (African Development Fund, 2016). According to Evers and de Vries (2013), Mega-City Regions (MCRs) present an opportunity for meaningful joint interventions to deal with problems that exist in less magnified forms in individual city-regions. It is to be noted that in many countries, even city-regions are still weakly institutionalised (Haekli et al., 2020).

The National Spatial Development Framework (NSDF) indicates that Ghana has two main city-regions anchored around Accra, the capital and Kumasi, the second-largest city. These two cities have grown beyond the official planning boundaries into adjacent administrative entities (i.e.,

municipalities and administrative regions for ACR) (TCPD, 2015b). The two city-regions are characterised by dense (and dominant) cores and other significant urban/peri urban settlements in the outer core and peripheries within reasonable commute distances (*ibid.*). However, the ACR occupies a unique position in national policy as it is Ghana's political and economic capital.

3.3 Spatial governance in Ghana: what is the place of city-regions?

The political-administrative structure of every country provides the basis for fashioning spatial governance. Ghana is divided into 16 administrative regions and runs a unitary constitutional democratic government structure. The regions are divided further into Metropolitan, Municipal and Districts Assemblies (MMDAs), and these are the most important local government units in the decentralisation model. As of 2019, there were 260 MMDAs, and the number of regions also increased from 10 to 16 (City Population, 2020). A key feature of Ghanaian decentralisation is the constant re-demarcation of areas, especially MMDAs and this significantly affects the urban landscape in the country (UN-Habitat, 2010). Demarcation of MMDAs is trigged by urban growth and expansion and authorities see it as a tool to enhance service delivery and local development (Agyemang et al., 2017).

Spatial planning and governance in Ghana are framed by various pieces of legislation passed after the coming into force of the 1992 Constitution which ushered in a new era of democracy and decentralisation in the country (Acheampong and Ibrahim, 2015). Spatial governance in this 'new' era has its foundation in the Local Governance Act, 1993 (Act 462), replaced by the Local Governance Act, 2016 (Act 936) (Agyemang et al., 2017). This legislation spells out the roles and competencies of sub-national government structures with the MMDAs forming the cornerstone of decentralised planning. In 1994, the National Development Planning Commission (NDPC) Act (Act 480) was passed to guide development planning at all levels of government. These different legislations provide a basis for spatial planning and governance structured in three tiers: national, regional and district (summarised in Fig. 3.1 below) (*ibid.*).

According to Acheampong and Ibrahim (2015), Ghana has an established history of 'development' (soft) planning which is traced back to the pre-independent era and the years following Independence, but 'spatial'(physical) planning has not received much attention though it has a long history too. This has effectively created two competing planning systems (Acheampong, 2019).

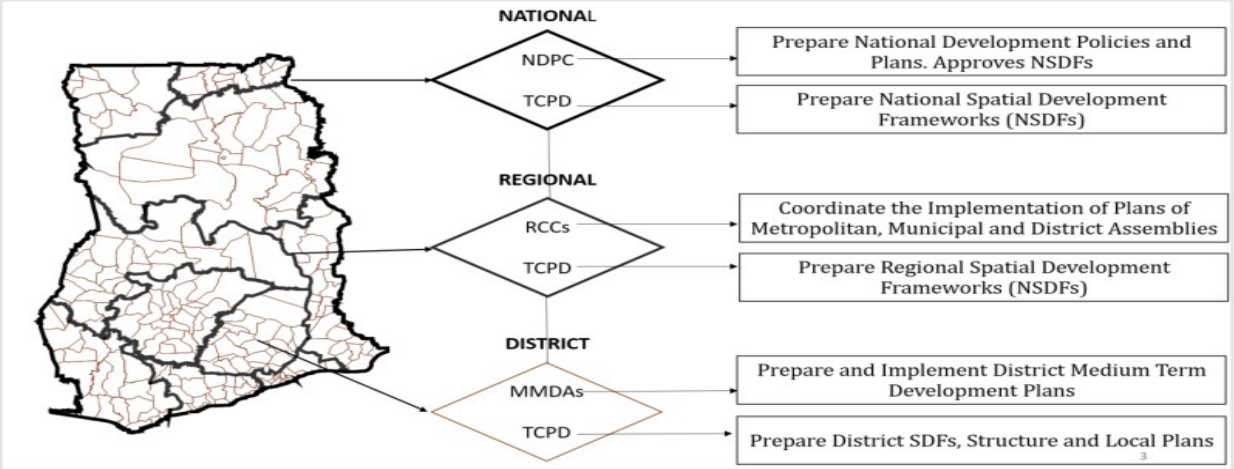


Figure 3.1: Summary of spatial governance structure in Ghana (Source: Agyemang et al., 2017)

From figure 3.1 above, we understand that city-regions do not necessarily coincide with any of the tiers within the current arrangement. City-regions may be situated between the district and regional levels, or above the regional level depending on their scale and functional reach. For instance, the ACR has functionally grown beyond its administrative region (Greater Accra) into surrounding regions and may thus operate as a 'super region' within the current structure. Conversely, the Greater Kumasi city-region is well within the administrative boundaries of the Ashanti Region and so would be considered a 'sub-region within the existing governance structure. This is in line with the assertion by Evers and de Vries (2013) that governance in city regions usually depend on collective approaches that mediate between various scales of government as they rarely coincided with traditional planning boundaries. In Ghana, the National Development Planning (System) Act (Act 480) provides for joint planning areas to encourage collective action among municipalities through territorial strategies. This provides the basis for different forms of inter-municipal coordination and collaboration among constituent municipalities in city-regions.

3.4 The Accra City-Region: the most complex city-region in Ghana

3.4.1 Definition, nomenclature, and delineation

Per the NSDF, the ACR may be defined based on geography and functionality. First, it may be defined in terms of the Greater Accra Metropolitan Area (GAMA), designated in 1991 for planning purposes in response to the expanding urban footprint of Accra. The original GAMA consists of the present day AMA, hosting the urban core of Accra, Tema, the industrial hub of the country (25km east of Accra) and the now subdivided Ga District, the outer core and peripheral Accra.

Second, the ACR may be defined as the contiguous built-up area of Accra as of 2010. Again, the ACR may be seen as the districts and municipalities within the built-up area. Finally, the ACR could be defined in terms of the existing and projected daily commuting area. These definitions of the ACR points to the fluid nature of contextualising this emerging city region.

The term GAMA is still invoked in national planning documents to refer to the three original Assemblies, but the recent usage of the term suggests it has become synonymous with the Greater Accra administrative region in the face of an ever-expanding urban footprint (Gaisie et al., 2019). In functional terms, the ACR extend beyond the Greater Accra Region to include some districts in the surrounding Eastern and Central Regions (Agyemang et al., 2017). Despite the difficulty in determining the exact extent of the ACR, this urban formation cuts across different municipalities and so calls for an analysis that moves beyond city-centrism. The NSDF also admits the difficulty in determining the extent of functional area of the ACR because the administrative nomenclatures of many areas do not correspond to their actual built-up or population on the ground. Moreover, data on commuting distances normally used to define functional areas is unavailable.

3.4.2 Understanding the geography and urban dynamics

The ACR is located in the Southern Ghana and covers a land area of about 15,000 km^2, covering the city of Accra and all other districts in the Greater Accra region and some districts in the neighbouring Central, Eastern and Volta regions (Agyemang et al., 2017). However, this study limits its geographical contextualisation of the ACR to an area covering about 8,133 km^2 that absorbs the Greater Accra region in full and other districts in the Eastern and Central regions that fall within the contagious built-up area of Accra as identified by Agyemang and Silva (2019). This 'scaled-down' ACR represents a more manageable scope for the computations of various parameters (*ibid.*) and given the current regional administrative structure of the country. Indeed, the NSDF does not offer unified geography for the ACR. It instead provides scenarios based on which planning programmes could be pursued.

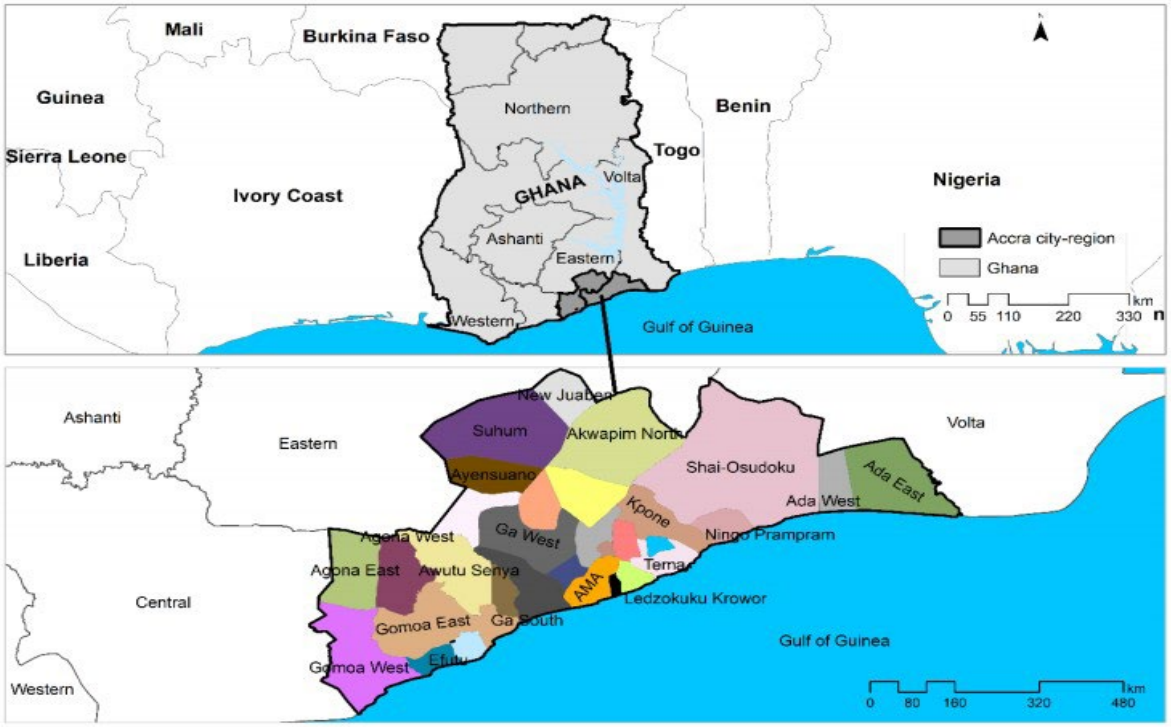


Figure 3.2: The ACR in the national and regional context (Source: Agyemang and Silva, 2019)

The delineated area shown in Figure 3.2 had a population of 5.5 million people per the 2010 population and housing census (Agyemang and Silva, 2019). The ACR area saw its population increase by about 1.3 million between 2000-2010 and is also the most urbanised region in Ghana (*ibid.*). The TCPD (2015b) projects that this could reach 10 million by 2035.

Constituent municipalities are the building blocks of any city-region. Currently, there are forty-two (42) MMDAs within the ACR. As indicated earlier, the boundaries of these municipalities keep changing due to the constant reclassification and demarcation of districts across the country. The Greater Accra has the highest number (29) ACR constituent MMDAs as in Table 3.1 below.

Table 3.1: ACR constituent districts as of 2020

Region	ACR constituent MMDAs
Greater Accra	Accra metro, Adentan, Ada East, Ada West, Ledzokuku, Krowor, La Dadekotopon, Okaikwei North, Ablekuma North, Ablekuma West, Ablekuma Central, Ayawaso East, Ayawaso West, Ayawaso North, Ayawaso Central, Tema metro, Tema West, Ashaiman, Kpone-Katamanso, Korle Klottey, Ga East, Ga West, Ga Central, Ga North, Ga South, Weija Gbawe, La Nkwantanang, Shai-Osoduku, Ningo-Prapram
Eastern	Akuapim North, Akuapim South, Nsawam Adoagyiri, Ayensuano, Suhum, New Juaben,
Central	Agona East, Agona West, Awutu Senya East, Awutu Senya West, Efutu, Gomoa East, Gomoa West

(Source: adapted from Agyemang and Silva, 2019)

Next, I give an overview of the Abidjan-Lagos corridor as an emerging mega urban growth within which we can establish the place of the ACR.

3.5 The Abidjan-Accra-Lagos urban corridor

The West Coast urban corridor (Fig. 3.3 below) is one of the world's fastest-growing megaregions (Hertzog, 2020). It is located on Africa's West coast and spans about 1000km from Abidjan through Accra to Lagos (Hertzog, 2020). The other major cities along the corridor are Porto Novo and Cotonou in Benin and the Togolese capital Lomé (*ibid.*) Hertzog (2020:8) describes the corridor as many urban areas growing together to create a 'remarkable polycentric' corridor consisting of large cities, medium-sized towns, ports and rural settlements strung together by a transnational coastal highway. The corridor is a manifestation of transnational extended urbanisation in West Africa (*ibid.*). The UN-Habitat (2008) also identified the Greater Ibadan-Lagos-Accra urban corridor as a megaregion that provides prospects for development in the four major West African countries. This megaregion stretches 600km, starting from Ibadan and Lagos in Nigeria through Cotonou in Benin, Lomé in Togo to Accra. This does not represent a separate megaregion from the Abidjan-Accra-Lagos corridor but may best be described as a 'scaled-down' version (excludes the about 500km stretch between Abidjan and Accra) of the corridor.

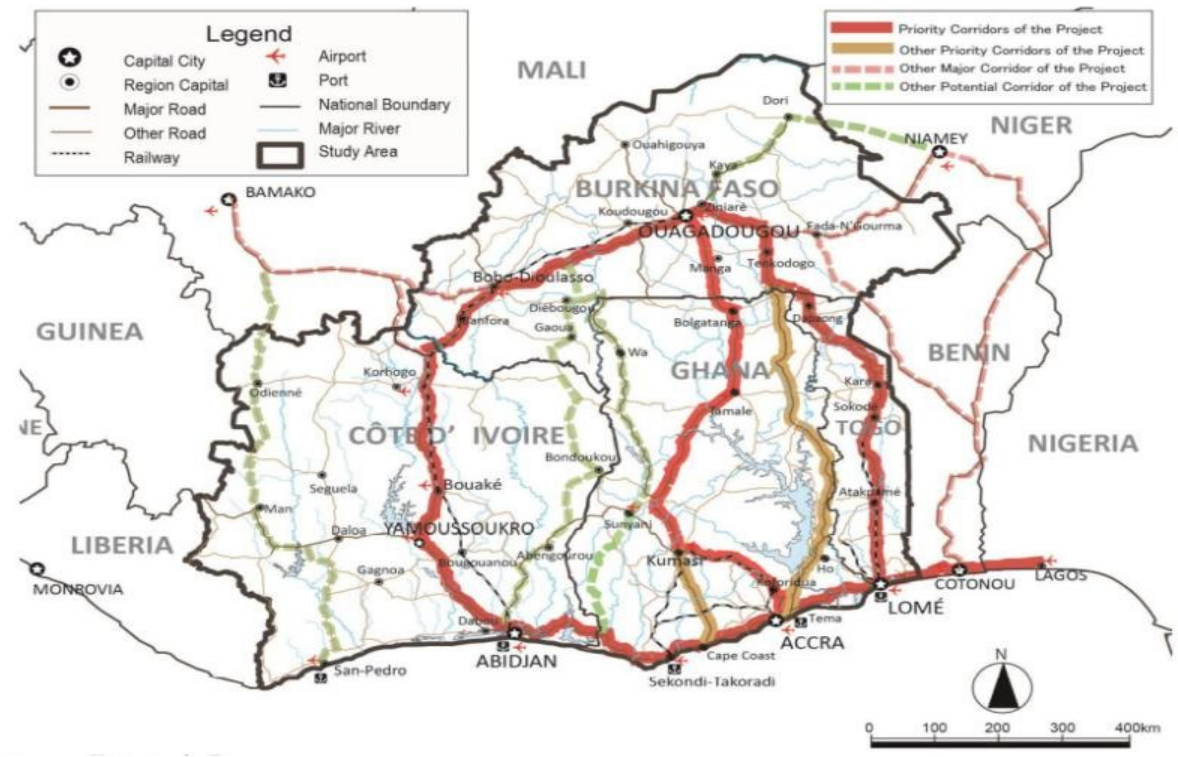


Figure 3.3: The West African Urban Corridor (Source: Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA), 2018)

As stated earlier, the defining characteristic of megaregions is that they are centres of population concentration and economic power. The West Coast urban corridor fits this characterisation. In terms of population, this corridor is one of the most populated in the world and growing rapidly. The region has an urban population of over 30 million people while the entire corridor population is about 50 million (Moriconi-Ebrard et al., 2016). The urban agglomerations of Abidjan and Accra each have a population of over 5 million and are among the large urban centres in Africa, while Lagos is home to over 10 million people and is one of few global megacities (Hertzog, 2020). The corridor is widely regarded as the economic engine of West Africa (TCPD, 2015b). This is so because the corridor is home to the three largest economies in West Africa (Nigeria, Ghana and Cote d'Ivoire), and these urban agglomerations are the economic hubs of their respective countries.

3.6 Transnational urban governance in West Africa

The rise of territorial forms like transnational megaregions brings some challenges concerning governance and sustainability, but this also provides an opportunity for undertaking urban development in a new refreshing light (Evers and de Vries, 2013; Hertzog, 2020). Transnational megaregions like the Abidjan-Lagos corridor are complex in the urban development landscape

because they are driven by an interplay of both incremental popular urbanism and the emergence of networked infrastructure connecting large urban areas and the peri-urban and rural interfaces in-between (Sorensen and Labbé, 2020). Along the West coast urban corridor, the Abidjan-Lagos highway as an infrastructure network has transformed the megaregion into a boundless collection of urban, peri-urban and rural areas. The resultant polycentricity has accelerated various scales of incremental urbanism, including at the building scale which could take the form of individuals adding new extensions to their properties, and neighbourhood scale which may see a gradual intensification of development (Choplin and Hertzog, 2020). As a response, institutions and structures (either existing or new) become key to driving the governance process.

The Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) is the main transnational governance body leading the planning project for the West Coast urban corridor. ECOWAS was founded in 1975 with a mandate to promote regional integration and cross-border trade in the West African sub-region (ECOWAS, 2012). Recognising the importance of transnational urban planning, the ECOWAS has led and facilitated the preparation of plans and development proposals for the Abidjan-Accra-Lagos corridor. A major aspect of the broader urban corridor programme is centred on improving transport connectivity along the corridor through the transnational Abidjan-Lagos highway and other transport initiatives (African Development Fund, 2016). National governments through related ministries, departments as well as international partners such as JICA and the UN are important role-players within the framework of the West Coast urban corridor programme. For instance, JICA (2018) undertook a corridor-wide study for the formulation of a master plan for some countries along the corridor.

3.7 Conclusion

It has been established that complex urban formations such as city-regions and megaregions are spatial manifestations of extended urbanisation processes. Therefore, the ACR emerged within a context of rapid population growth and urban expansion together with spatial governance and political processes. The constituent elements of the city region are mainly conceived as standalone administrative units at the lower tier of the spatial governance model in Ghana and do not coincide directly with any tier of governance. The ACR is located midway along the West Coast urban corridor, a more complex scale of urban growth as it spans several countries. This means developments in the ACR has implications for the megaregion and vice versa. The empirical chapters that follow try to demonstrate this.

Chapter 4: The evolution of Accra City-Region and the West Coast megaregion

4.1 Introduction

After the literature review and context, the next step is to present and analyse the empirical findings. The theoretical analysis demonstrated the complexity and contextuality of city-region formation and governance. Insights from the literature are invariably generic, but they provide a good starting point for empirical research. They do however need to be contextualised and tested through empirical work. The contextualisation shows the Accra City-Region (ACR) is a fast-evolving city-region located midpoint along the mega West Coast urban corridor. This chapter is the first of three empirical chapters of this study. The empirical chapters integrate data from document reviews and interviews to build a coherent story. Due to ethical considerations, I use pseudonyms to cite the various interviewees to protect their identity ('Official 1' for Accra Metropolitan Assembly (AMA), 'Official 2' for Tema Metropolitan Assembly (TMA), 'Official 3' Land Use and Spatial Planning Authority (LUSPA) and 'Expert 1' for the urban scholar). In this chapter, I show the evolution of the ACR and establish its place within the wider transnational urban corridor along the West African coast.

4.2 The emergence of a city-region in Greater Accra

The idea of the Accra city-region has evolved, starting from 1991 with the definition of The Greater Accra Metropolitan Area (GAMA) in response to Accra's expanding spatial structure (TCPD, 2015b). Since the designation of GAMA, the urban landscape of Accra has transformed more quickly in terms of population and space as Accra became the centre of Ghana's economic liberalisation, attracting both foreign and domestic investments and population (World Bank, 2017). The first usage of the term 'Accra city-region' in Ghanaian planning circles may be attributed to the National Spatial Development Framework (NSDF) (2015-2035) document. This document floats the idea of the ACR, providing scenarios of defining it along with the broad policy responses required (TCPD, 2015b). Official 2 (interview 22 September 2021) puts it this way: 'what we call the ACR today is effectively The GAMA but with a larger landmass and a better appreciation of its spatial linkages with the national and sub-regional (i.e. West Africa) processes.' The recognition of the potentials of the city-region approach in urban planning has sparked interest in research into aspects of city-region development in the emerging ACR. This also means that the

ACR has now become a unit of urban analysis and focus of policy discussions. It reflects the international literature where Healey (2009), for example, indicated that the renewed attention on city-regions has made them units of urban research and policy intervention and analysis.

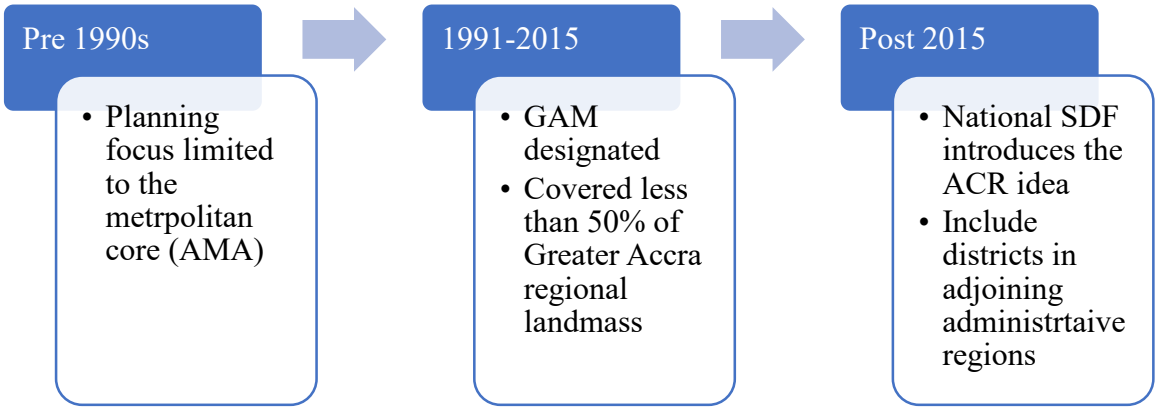


Figure 4.1: Timeline of the emergence of the ACR (Source: Author's construct, 2021)

4.3 An Expanding population versus falling urban density

As indicated earlier, one of the defining characteristics of the ACR is the rapid rate of urban growth and expansion. Table 4.1 below presents the population growth and density trajectory between 2000-2010. The population of constituent municipalities has expanded over the years with most of the growth concentrated in the Greater Accra region. Overall, the population density of the ACR dipped from 7384 people/km^2 to 4554 people/km^2 in the period 1990-2015 as the spatial expansion nearly doubled the population growth (Gaisie et al., 2019). The adjoining districts in the Central and Eastern regions that held part of the built-up area of Accra as of 2000 have also witnessed significant growth. Along with the population growth is an even faster rate of physical expansion. As Agyemang and Silva (2019) found, the contiguous built-up area of Accra expanded more than four times to about 920 km^2 between 1990-2015 at an urban expansion rate of 6 per cent per annum (see Fig. 4.2). This rapid physical expansion of the city-region vis-à-vis the population growth has resulted in falling population densities in the city-region area although the AMA which is home to the traditional core of Accra is highly densified (Official 3, interview 27 September 2021). The

AMA is also experiencing more upward densification and changes in land use driven by the changing urban dynamics on the ground (Official 1, interview 24 September 2021). The Tema Metropolitan Assembly (TMA) has also been witnessing increasing population density mainly due to the continuous carving of new districts from the Tema metropolis (Official 2, interview 22 September 2021). Consequently, there is limited opportunity for further horizontal densification in the TMA, so what is currently happening is in-filling between Accra and Tema but also vertical densification which takes the form of reconfiguration of existing buildings to accommodate more people and in some cases, changes to new land use (especially commercial) (*ibid.*).

Table 4.1: Urban growth in the ACR

Constituent District	**Total land area (km^2)**	**Built-up area (km^2)**		**Population**	**Population Density(2015)**
		1990	2015	2010	
Accra metro	237	130.08	205.15	2,076,546	10,122
Tema	600	67.22	226.94	671,824	2960
Ga	1181	48.28	363.81	1,038,053	2853
Dangme west	1594	-	62.55	122,836	1964
Total	3612	245.58	858.45	3,909,259	4554

**Based on the original GAMA districts in 1991+ Dangme West; ACR limited to Greater Accra region; 2010 is the latest available census* (*Source: Gaisie et al., 2019*)

The declining population densities overall, which imply higher land consumption per person, raises sustainability questions of protecting urban blue-green assets (e.g., water bodies, wetlands, Ramsey sites and urban forests) which are already under threat from the expanding physical developments (GIBB, 2017b). Figure 4.2 shows the trajectory of the ACR's built-up area between 1990-2015. It also raises the fundamental question of whether the anticipated population growth can be serviced adequately by urban infrastructure (Expert 1, interview 29 September 2021). According to Gaisie et al. (2019), infrastructure investments in the ACR are lagging the rapid pace of urban growth and expansion while urban services are over-stretched. Planning for high-density urban developments has been advocated to curb the declining population density in the ACR (TCPD, 2015b). However, it remains to be seen if the current low-density urban growth trajectory of the ACR can be reversed given the rapid expansion of the urban footprint and the historically poor application of growth management approaches. Currently, Accra has not formally delineated an Urban Growth Boundary (UGB) (GIBB, 2017b), a necessary urban growth management tool (with its variants) used by some of the world's major cities to counter sprawl (Official 3, interview 27 September 2021). In the next chapter, I attempt to contextualise some of the tools and planning concepts in the ACR.

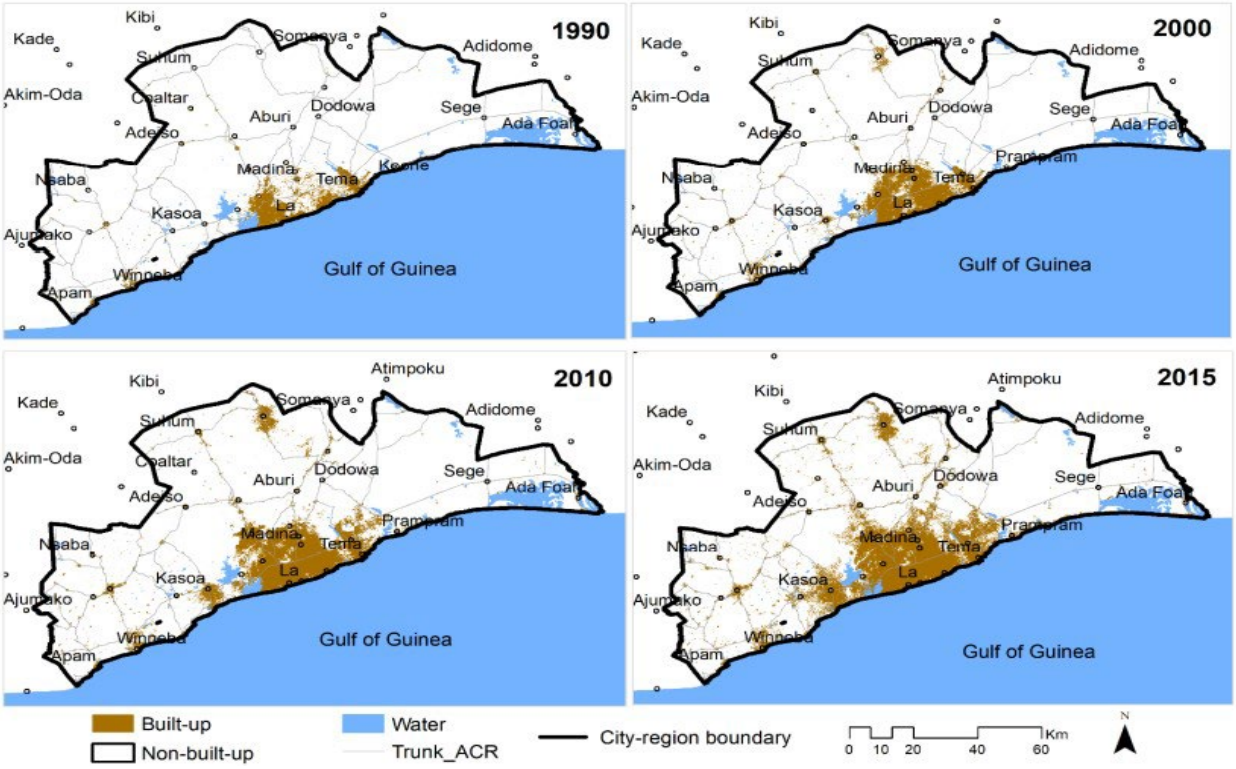


Figure 4.2: Urban expansion in the ACR between 1990-2015 (Source: Agyemang and Silva, 2019)

The built-up area of Accra has quadrupled in 25 years. Growth has been more significant in the western outskirts towards the Central region and to a lesser extent northward towards the Eastern region. However, growth has accelerated northwards into the Eastern region with arterial roads serving as a major growth catalyst (GIBB, 2017a). Also, growth has intensified in far-eastern areas towards the Volta region with improved transport linkage and the relative availability of land for new developments (Official 3, interview 27 September 2021) although this part has traditionally remained rural and associated with primary sector activities such as agriculture, quarrying, and environmental conservation areas with no major anchor towns to drive growth (GIBB, 2017a). Agyemang and Silva (2019) found that the pace of westerly growth driven by rapidly urbanising suburban areas just outside Accra (e.g. Waija in Greater Accra and Kasoa in the Central region) (see Fig. 4.3) came as a surprise to planning authorities because they anticipated easterly urban growth thus the Eastern end was a planning priority (during the 1990s).



Figure 4.3: Residential developments on the Western edges of Accra - the predominant horizontal densification in areas like this has fuelled the Westerly spatial expansion of the ACR (Source: Author's photograph, October, 2021).

The expectation that Tema would anchor the far-eastern areas and the opportunity presented by this area for further urban expansion of Greater Accra (westerly growth easily spills over into the Central region) may help explain why this area became a planning priority. (see Fig. 4.4 below). There has been little deliberate intervention to re-direct urban growth or create a more sustainable spatial development pattern (GIBB, 2017a). So, I argue that Accra's growth has happened rather 'organically' and 'spontaneously', and a case of development moving to areas depending on the intensity and or importance of their functional linkage with the Accra metropolis.

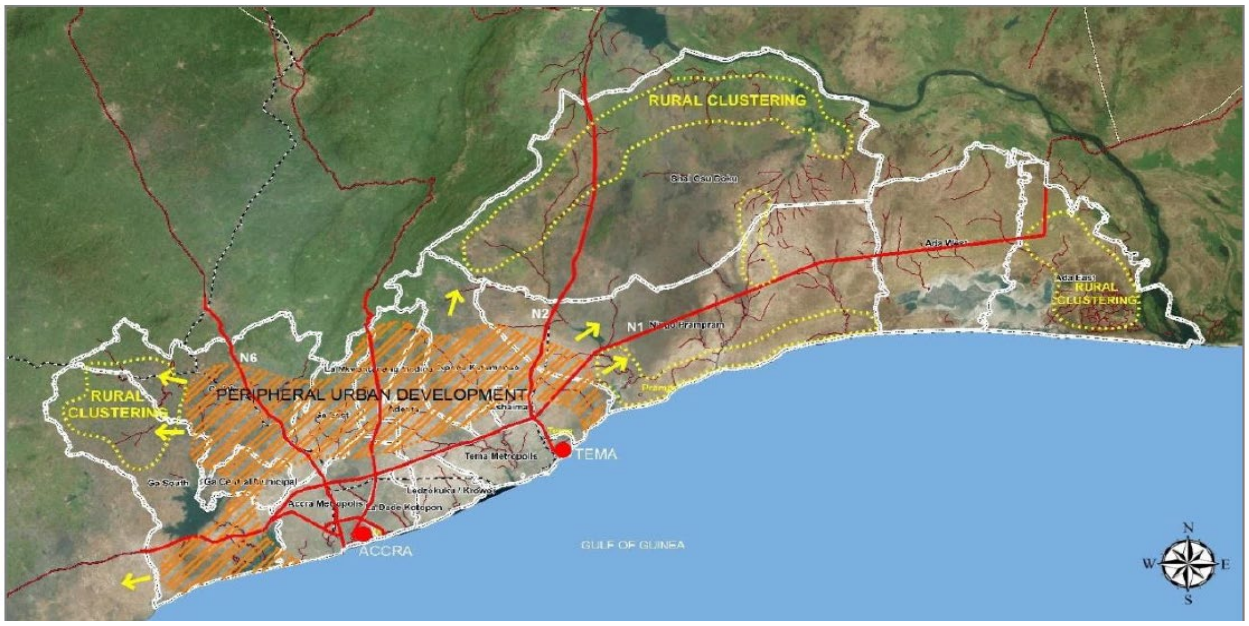


Figure 4.4: Spatial dynamics of peripheral Accra (Source: GIBB, 2017a)

The spill-over of growth from Accra into the surrounding peri-urban and rural interfaces is a defining characteristic of the relationship between Accra and its hinterland (*ibid.*). It is the various layers of outward urban growth that makes the ACR the most complex urban formation in Ghana. In effect, the Greater Accra region is becoming 'citified.' This is in line with what Cardoso (2016:97) observed regarding the relationship between the metropolis and its hinterland. For him, extended urban growth leads to a 'citification of the region' through aggregating functions, activities and people while ensuring connectivity by implementing integrated governance in the fragmented territorial arrangement. However, integrating governance across the citifying region remains elusive in the ACR (Agyemang et al., 2017).

4.4 The Accra City-Region and transnational urban growth processes

Geographically, the ACR is found roughly at the midpoint of the West Coast urban corridor. This strategic location together with good connection by air and the West African highway network has made the ACR one the most important city-regions along this mega urban corridor (TCPD, 2015b). With a population of about 5.5 million people, the city-region comes only behind Lagos and to a lesser extent Abidjan in terms of population. Moreover, it contributes more than 25% to the GDP of Ghana which is the second-largest economy in West African only behind Nigeria (World Bank, 2017). The layers of outward urban growth from the core of Accra seem to feed into the trans nationalisation of the West Coast urban corridor as development spreads along the coastal corridor

highway rather than further inland (Expert 1, interview 29 September 2021). It must be emphasised that the spatial proximity between the major cities along the corridor means their economies are closely knitted together and these cities grapple with similar development challenges (Hertzog, 2020). For instance, Accra is about 500km from Lagos and only about 190 km from Lomé. Hertzog (2020:10) further points out despite their similarities, the individual city-regions each possesses a unique 'trajectory and are highly differentiated' which is a major strength for the corridor. Further, the corridor is 'a vital key for regional integration in view of stimulating economic growth and eliminating poverty' (NEPAD, 2017:5 cited in Hertzog, 2020).

The close proximity of such diverse urban formations along the corridor has meant that migration, mobility and economic exchanges of its over 30 million people are main drivers of regional growth which defines the spatial and political character of city-regions such as the ACR (Hertzog, 2020; Official 1, interview 24 September 2021). Consequently, extended urbanisation processes along the corridor are blurring city-region boundaries across the vast area, just as city or municipal boundaries are being blurred within city-regions such as the ACR. It is also coalescing different ethnicities and linguistic zones (i.e. Anglophone and Francophone) and makes the associations between political jurisdiction and defined spatial areas less clear (*ibid.*). The extensive transnational nature of the corridor sets it apart from individual city-regions because transnational growth does not generally apply to city-region formations except for a few examples such as Kinshasa-Brazzaville in Central Africa.

4.5 Conclusion

The ACR has evolved both as an idea and a spatial entity. The designation of the GAMA in 1991 set the stage for bringing the regional level urban growth into national policy consciousness. Today the idea of the ACR has almost replaced the GAMA as the level of urban complexity in Accra continues to increase rapidly. Nonetheless, an appraisal of the GAMA strategic plans reveal implementation has generally failed (GIBB, 2017a). The spatial extent of the city-region has more than quadrupled in a period of 25 years which is faster than population growth. This 'mismatch' between spatial and population growth in the ACR has emerged as an important focus for planning in the growing city region. However, importantly, the ACR is itself part of a wider urban configuration – a vast transnational urban corridor, and so governance arrangements need to be layered. I explore the planning and governance response to the evolving ACR in the next chapter.

Chapter 5: Planning for a growing city-region and mega urban corridor

5.1 Introduction

This chapter explores how metropolitan, regional and national statutory planning is responding to the growing ACR as well as the West Coast urban corridor. Also, I contextualise some planning concepts and city models that have been advocated or are finding expression in the growing city-region, and in the wider urban configuration known as the West Coast urban corridor which cuts across multiple city-regions. I explore initiatives to achieve a level of integration/harmonisation between corridor-wide planning processes and those in the ACR.

5.2 Planning tools, processes and proposals

As stated in chapter 4 of this report, the National Spatial Development Framework (NSDF) (2015-2035) is perhaps the first national planning document to directly refer to the idea of a city-region in Greater Accra albeit that the concept may have been embedded in the rationale for designating the Greater Accra Metropolitan Area (GAMA) in 1991. Given this, the NSDF document has emerged as the major planning tool that provides a basis upon which regional and metropolitan planning authorities can pursue the city-region planning approach. Following this, a regional spatial development framework for the administrative Greater Accra region was prepared in 2017. The Greater Accra Regional SDF(GAR-SDF) gives more specific planning proposals for regional development and may be seen as the regional level planning response to the growing ACR because Official 1 and 2 (interviews 24, 22 September 2021) both indicate that there is currently no concrete planning proposal for city-region planning in Accra beyond the GAR-SDF. Also, municipalities within the ACR prepare 4-year Medium Term Development Plans (MTDPs), but these plans mainly give brief socio-economic profiles and programmes/projects implementation schedules. Although these plans present key development matrices of municipalities, they cannot be considered concrete spatial planning proposals (GIBB, 2017a).

In recent years, the implementation of targeted infrastructure projects has been the dominant strategy used by the government to intervene in the ACR. Recent notable developments include the establishment of the Accra Airport City, transport infrastructure including the Tema Motorway Interchange, Accra-Winneba Highway, Tema-Akosombo, and the Accra-Tema railway upgrade, all meant to improve connectivity between the core of Accra and the regional surroundings as well

as functionality (Official 2, interview 22 September 2021). Other planned initiatives for the city-region include a ring-road and integrated regional rail network (TCPD, 2015c). There is also public-led housing projects like the Accra Planned City Extension Project. This project is a collaboration between the private sector, the Government of Ghana, Ningo Prampram District Assembly (host municipality), and backed by the UN-Habitat. It is marketed as an innovative mixed-use development built around sustainable urbanisation principles, and looks to bridge Accra's housing deficit and become a new regional hub for the Abidjan-Accra-Lagos corridor (City and Habitats Ghana, n.d.) Next, I highlight how the ACR idea is approached in the NSDF and GAR-SDF documents.

5.2.1 The Accra City-Region and national spatial planning

Beyond introducing the idea of the ACR, the NSDF discusses critical issues emanating from Accra's transition from just a 'metropolis' to a city-region. As indicated earlier, the NSDF offers various scenarios to define the ACR. Significantly, the conception of the city-region favoured in the NSDF is that it defies the traditional administrative boundary of both the Accra metropolis and the Greater Accra Region. According to some city-region researchers (e.g., Salder, 2020 and Agyemang et al., 2017) that is a defining characteristic of city-regions. The ACR has Accra and Tema metropolises as its nuclei (Gaisie et al., 2019). (see Fig. 5.1). This definition is akin to two perspectives of delineating city-regions offered by Parr (2005). First, it may be loosely described as a Functional Urban Region (FUR) because of the functional linkages between Accra's core and commercial towns such as Kasoa in the Central region (Agyemang and Silva, 2019) although city-region inclusion criteria (e.g., the OECD's 'at least 15% going into the core benchmark') is non-existent in the case of Accra. Second, the ACR may also be considered as an extended metropolitan area if seen in the sense that Accra has gone beyond its official boundaries to include other areas within its built-up space. The designation of GAMA typifies this.

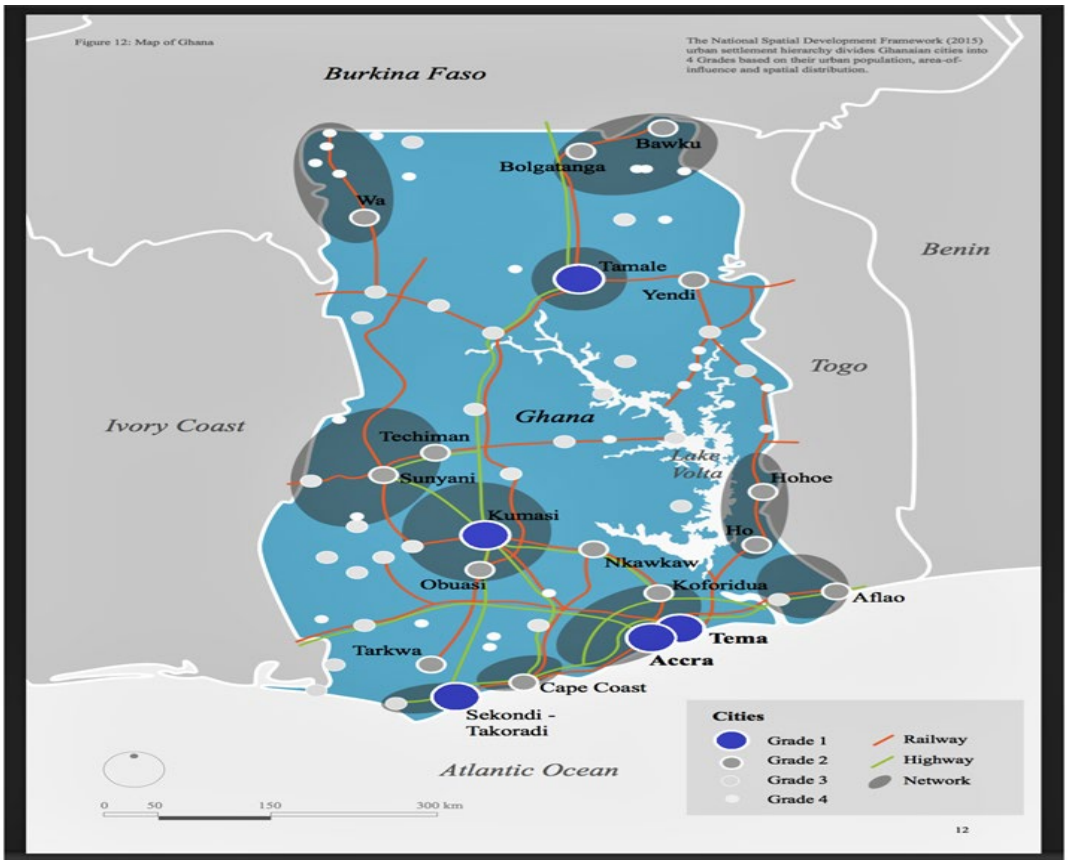


Figure 5.1: The NSDF [2015-2035] showing city-regions and urban networks (Source: Adapted from Cities Alliance, 2016)

5.2.2 The Accra City-Region and regional planning

The GAR-SDF is extracted from the NSDF per the hierarchy specified by the current planning regime. The GAR-SDF for its part presents more concrete planning proposals on key focus areas such as land use, environment, urban transportation, economic development and energy together with a detailed programme of action and investment. The GAR-SDF is the most detailed planning framework available as a reference point for some regional planning efforts beyond traditional municipal planning which has some basis under the current planning model in Ghana (Officials 1 and 2, interviews 24, 22 September 2021). One of the limitations of the GAR-SDF is its administratively bounded nature, as it does not cover areas beyond the Greater Accra region that have now become part of the ACR. However, this is in keeping with the current statutory requirement of preparing regional SDFs along political-administrative lines. But according to Officials 2 and 3 (interviews 22, 27 September 2021), the current three-tier hierarchical planning regime recognises this and makes provision for harmonisation across administrative and planning

areas. They add that in practice, this appears lacking due to several factors ranging from disparities in technical capacities to financial resources of the different municipalities and regions.

Crucially, both the NSDF and GAR-SDF promote the ACR as Ghana's 'Gateway,' pointing out its significance for commerce, advanced services (e.g., finance and ICT) and international commerce and investment. The economic superiority of the ACR gives it an advantage over the only other city-region in Ghana (The Kumasi city-region) and other metropolitan cities in terms of pursuing some viable regionalisation (Expert 1, interview 29 September 2021). The ACR is an economic powerhouse and one of the three most competitive city-region nodes of the West coast urban corridor (TCPD, 2015b). This characterisation of the ACR as a competitive space connected to the global economy is consistent with Scott's (2019) assertion that city-regions have also become sites of influence and significant actors in their national and global economies. But the emergence of city-regions also presents planning and policy challenges in areas such as transportation and environment (Evers and de Vries, 2013) that requires bold planning tools and proposals to mitigate. For the ACR, challenges such as declining urban densities, informal property development and a widening housing deficit, uncoordinated transport infrastructure, inequality, among others, are identified (TCPD, 2015b; Gaisie et al., 2019). In response, the NSDF and GAR-SDF both recognise the need to adopt a city-region planning and management approach which includes but is not limited to the preparation of an ACR spatial development framework.

5.3 Spatial planning models/concepts finding expression in Accra City-Region

The rapid pace of urban growth and expansion in the ACR makes the adoption of a city-region planning and management approach imperative. In any city-region planning and management approach, the preparation of a city-region spatial development framework for instance would normally be inspired by some important underlying city planning models or concepts. It is important to note that many planning concepts may apply in this instance. Even the reference to 'planning concepts' may be vague and too broad. In the context of this study, the concepts refer to three contemporary urban planning paradigms founded on urban density arguments: compact cities, polycentric cities, and smart cities (Waters, 2016). I have chosen to highlight these specific concepts because the NSDF identified declining urban densities (primarily population density) as a key concern for organising future development in the growing city region. I will now evaluate these concepts identified in the light of the expanding ACR.

5.3.1 A polycentric compact city-region or 'business as usual'?

The prevailing spatial structure of the ACR suggests that urban expansion has happened largely uncontrolled or unguided by some underlying planning principles for the most part (Officials 1 and 2, interviews 24, 22 September 2021). This means planning has historically made little impact in determining the pace and direction of urban growth, and this has almost become the norm or 'business as usual' (Owusu and Oteng-Ababio, 2015; Official 3, interview 27 September 2021). Consequently, Accra is characterised by urban sprawl, congested and largely non-functional (GIBB, 2017a). Therefore, the application of compact city model is driven by the need to attain a liveable urban system and by extension, the SDGs in Accra (*ibid.*). A polycentric compact structure is built on demarcating the urban region, transport network, protected ecological assets, a hierarchy of urban nodes and rural centres and improved connectivity and mobility (Fig. 5.2) (*ibid.*). My analysis of national and regional planning frameworks shows that the polycentric compact region is the preferred model for the development of the ACR but the practical limits to its application on the ground within the urban realities of Accra are not clearly articulated. This is important because authors like Watson (2021) have argued that concepts such as this with their origins in European planning traditions may not be applicable in most Southern contexts. However, it may be that the adoption of a polycentric approach reflects an evolving spatial reality in the ACR. It may be the most realistic approach in the circumstances as it acknowledges the decentralised nature of development but tries to define nodes better and strengthening linkages.

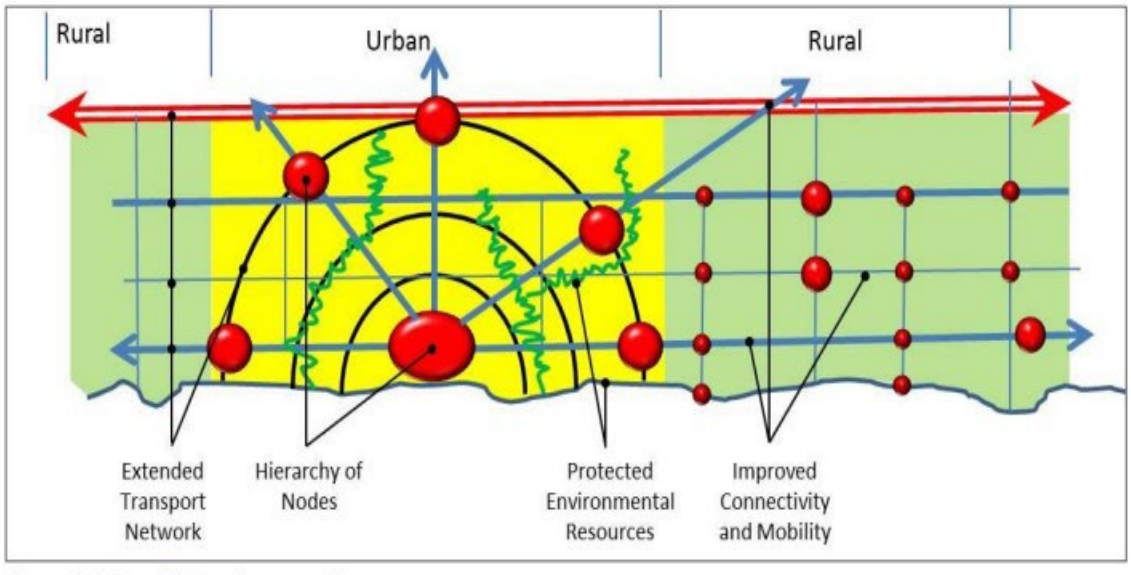


Figure 5.2: The polycentric compact region development concept for the ACR (Source: GIBB, 2017a)

The creation of the Accra Airport City (Fig. 5.3) is one of the explicit attempts by the government to promote compact developments in the ACR (Gaisie et al., 2019). The Accra Airport City, a high-density mixed-use development near the Kotoka International Airport, has become an important component of ACR's global CBD. It hosts finance HQs, hospitality establishments, airline offices, among others. The development of the Accra Airport City as part of a global CBD has helped decongest the city's traditional CBD and avoid the political difficulties associated with redevelopment schemes (Arthur, 2018).



Figure 5.3: A section of the Accra Airport City (Source: Author's photograph, September, 2021)

5.3.2 Smart sustainable city

The smart city concept just like many planning paradigms does not have a unanimous characterisation. However, the broad understanding that has emerged is that a smart city model is one built on the application of technology to ensure greater urban efficiency by coordinating major sectors of an urban area such as transportation, economy, land use and ecology (Batty et al., 2012). In the ACR, there has been mention of smart urban growth policies geared towards integrating transportation, communications and housing while achieving sustainability which is an explicit objective of 'smartness' (GIBB, 2017a). Indeed, the current and previous vision statements of the AMA in MTDPs revolve around smartness, sustainability and urban resilience (Official 1, interview 24 September 2021). In 2006, the Rockefeller Foundation helped establish a resilience

and sustainability office within the AMA as part of the 100 Resilient Cities initiatives (Gaisie et al., 2019). According to Official 1 (interview 24 September 2021), this office is now fully institutionalised in the AMA and responsible for offering technical advice on sustainable development issues but same cannot be said for adjoining municipalities. In terms of integrating smart and sustainability principles into actual policy implementation (e.g. infrastructure projects), my observation is that this is still very limited, although policy documents and frameworks provide sufficient guidelines. This may be explained by the absence of sophisticated ICT systems needed for the operationalisation of this model as indicated by Waters (2016). The socio-technical underpinnings required for a true smart city agenda is still not properly developed in Accra.

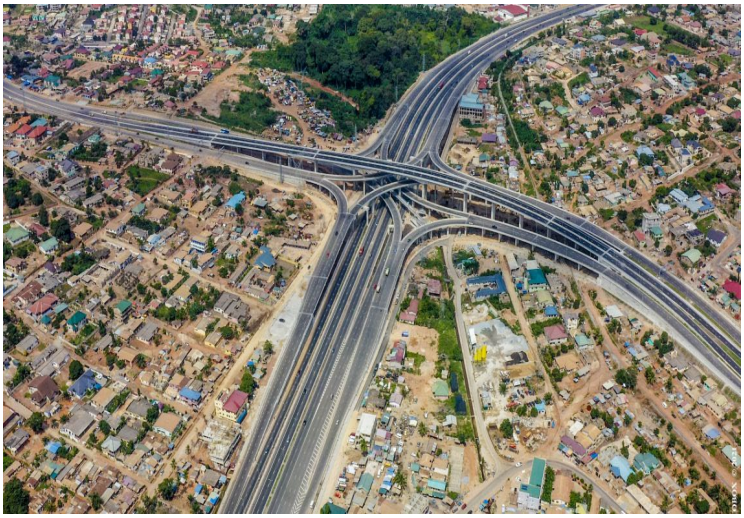
Putting it all together

Although these planning concepts have always been highlighted in national planning documents, little can be said about how they are applied on the ground because development has always preceded planning, especially from the 1990s when growth accelerated (Official 1, interview 24 September 2021). Colonial Accra was anchored on the concentric model where development radiates outwards from the CBD but today it is hard to identify the city's right characterisation (Official 2, interview 22 September 2021). Even Tema, a city planned and built in the 1960s (post-Independence), has lost its spatial identity because of variation between plans and what exists on the ground (*ibid.*). The degree to which these concepts assist the city-region in striking a balance between sustainability, efficiency, and global competitiveness continues to be crucial in their application. Even so, concepts like the polycentric compact city and smart sustainable city are not mutually exclusive because sustainable urbanisation is the underpinning object of their application. At best, these concepts may be said to be mutually reinforcing.

5.4 Key development issues: A driver of policy integration

The situation where planning continues to lag the fast pace of growth has resulted in the magnification of the urban development challenges (Agyemang and Silva, 2019). Gaisie et al. (2019) identified major urban development issues in the ACR in areas such as housing and informal settlements, transportation infrastructure, waste and disaster management. The built environment of the ACR is a mix of a State-planned urban core, private sector-led urban development projects and a peri-urban interface where most developments happen devoid of planning permission (Gaisie, et al., 2019). Even some planned areas are sandwiched by

(temporary) informal developments mostly catering for the needs of the urban poor and migrants from other parts of the country (Official 3, interview 27 September 2021). Accra's housing shortfall was about 400,000 units in 2010 (GSS, 2013). Also, investments in transport have largely focused on road construction projects (Fig. 5.4) with little success in creating a functional public transport system (Birago, Mensah and Sharma, 2017; Expert 1, interview 29 September 2021).



(Source: Frempong, 2021)



(Source: Frimpong, 2020)

Figure 5.4: Major road infrastructure developments in ACR - Four-tier Pokuase interchange on the northern edge (left); Tema Motorway interchange connecting Accra-Tema and far eastern areas, part of the Abidjan-Lagos Highway (Right)

These challenges point to the need for integration and harmonisation of planning across the different scales of planning both within the ACR and the national context as well as the broader transnational corridor. It is worth noting that determining an urban settlement hierarchy (Fig. 5.5) is crucial for the preparation of place-based planning programmes (TCPD, 2015b). The NSDF recognises the megaregion amalgamating along the Coast of the ECOWAS region as the pinnacle of the urban hierarchy in West Africa, so the overall spatial development concept for Ghana is based upon this proposition.

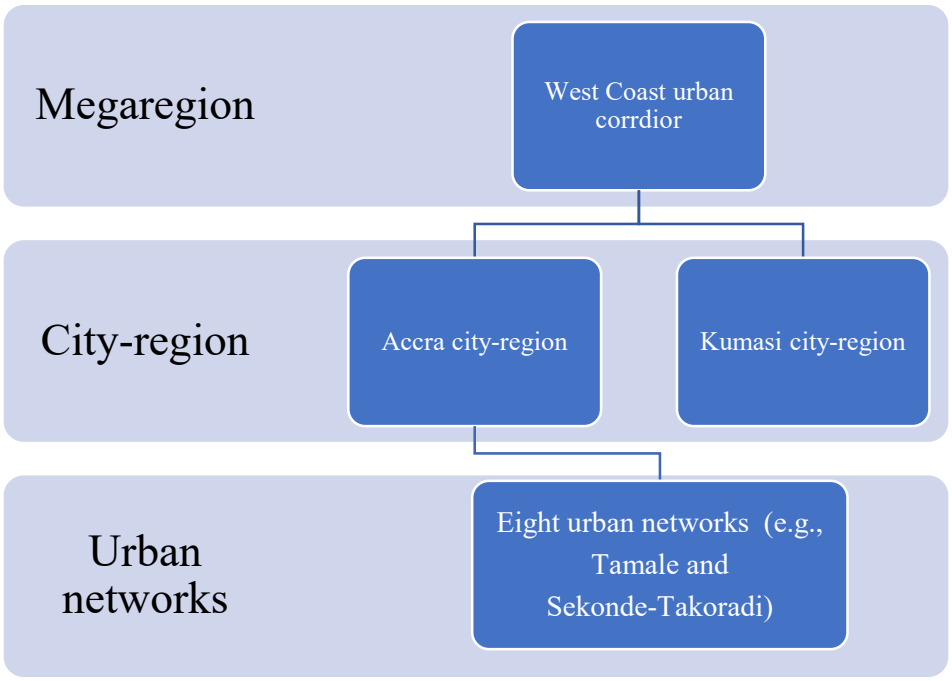


Figure 5.5: Urban settlement Hierarchy for spatial planning in Ghana (Source: Author's representation based on the NSDF (2015-2035)

Crucially, this urban settlement hierarchy above hinges on promoting regional, national and sub-continental connectivity as the various settlements are linked together by a network of road, railway and air transport infrastructure. Also, the city-regions emerge as important spatial planning units though they do not coincide with traditional administrative planning entities. The urban networks point to the relevance of secondary or second-tier cities because they complement city-regions and megaregions while providing critical services for areas within their spheres of influence. This multi-layered/scalar hierarchy of spatial planning seeks to promote balanced coverage of the functions of settlements (TCPD, 2015b). Greater urban scales like city-regions are beneficial for planning because key areas like environment, transport infrastructure and economic strategies are more efficiently coordinated at such scales than at the city level (Expert 1, interview 29 September 2021). The NSDF and the GAR-SDF advance arguments in support of pursuing planning at such greater scales due to the possibility of promoting more integrated development which remains a challenge for planning in Ghana. For instance, regional transport infrastructure yields better dividends for urban mobility and integrated economic development while piecemeal planning centred on constituent units of a city-region may create a disjointed urban form.

Indeed, as Acheampong and Ibrahim (2015) found, multi-level policy integration remains weak in Ghana because there are essentially two planning systems in a fragmented institutional space.

5.5 Conclusion

The ACR has seen an incremental reaction in terms of planning and policy as the level of urban complexity increases. It appears that the planning reaction to the trend of extended urbanisation in Accra has been reactive rather than proactive. Planning and policy have recognised the development potentials of the city-region for both Ghana and the West African sub-region. Because of this, national and regional planning processes are readjusting to harness the potentials this emerging urban formation brings while seeking ways to tackle the challenges that come with it as well. The NSDF and the GAR-SDF provide the foundation frameworks for pursuing a city-region or regional planning approach which is not yet properly realised.

Chapter 6: Governing the city-region and mega urban corridor

6.1 Introduction

Throughout this report, I have highlighted the role of governance as an organising element for city-region development. In this chapter, I elaborate on the nature and level of inter-municipal collaboration among ACR constituent municipalities. Also, I discuss areas of joint/collective governance action along with the limits to any such collective efforts. I then touch on the mechanisms for spatial governance along the West Coast urban corridor.

6.2 Inter-municipal cooperation/collaboration in the Accra City-Region

Because city-region growth defies traditional municipal boundaries, inter-municipal and inter-local collaborations are important features of city-region governance processes. The ACR as defined in this study is composed of about 42 Metropolitan, Municipal, District Assemblies (MMDAs) covering three administrative regions (Greater Accra, Eastern, and Central regions).

6.2.1 Motives for inter-municipal collaboration

It is widely agreed that city-region governance usually hinges on collective action to address common challenges (Evers and de Vries, 2013; Feiock, 2009) but the motivations for such types of governance varies from one jurisdiction to another as they are shaped by the legal and institutional environment. Inter-municipal collaboration has a 'loose' legal foundation in The Land Use and Spatial Planning Act 2016 (Act 925) which encourages and specifies the role of joint planning committees to deal with cross-district issues. However, collaborative approaches have been historically uncommon or mostly ineffective in Ghana (Owusu, 2013). This was confirmed by both Officials 1 and 2 (interviews 24, 22 September 2021) in my interviews with them. Official 1 (interview 24 September 2021) puts it this way:

> On paper, we are supposed to have joint planning boards but in reality, every MMDA within Greater Accra appear to be working in isolation in their little corner. We all submit our development plans to the RCC (and ultimately to the NDPC) which is by law required to coordinate and harmonise MMDA plans while our physical planning unit also remain mere advisory bodies. It is the Land Use and Spatial Planning Authority (LUSPA) created by Act 925 that has enforcement powers and coordinates national and regional SDFs.

This suggests that the effectiveness of inter-municipal and collective action is determined by the level of coordination at the regional level and ultimately at the national level. There is also the emergence of 'competition' among municipalities in areas such as sanitation and internal revenue generation as they try to position themselves as good investment destinations, even though by-laws are generally the same across the entire ACR (*ibid.*). The governance structure in the ACR is a complex mix of approaches, institutions and actors in constant interaction to shape the city-region. This is consistent with the assertion by Evers and de Vries (2013) that in practice, collective action arrangements in city-regions may be a mix of hierarchical, competitive and joint decision-making approaches to governance. So, although there is a concept of a city-region in planning, actual practice is still hierarchical and does not reflect the collaborative approaches to city-region governance and planning indicated in much of the literature.

6.2.2 Limits to inter-municipal cooperation/collaboration

The limits to collaboration and collective action among constituent municipalities of the ACR mirror the reasons for the failure of regional or larger metropolitan area plans. Overall, a tradition of strategic partnerships/collaboration among local government units is absent in Ghana (Acheampong and Ibrahim, 2015). According to Gaisie et al. (2019:10) the main challenge facing city-region governance and the achievement of its objectives in the ACR is 'inadequate institutional and financial capacity.' Although institutional and financial constraints to a large extent are true for all the constituent municipalities of the ACR, it is particularly seen in weaker MMDAs which makes taking collective action together with such MMDAs challenging (Officials 1, 2, and 3, interviews 24,22,27 September 2021). Additionally, the constant rescaling of governance by way of delimitating district boundaries has resulted in a situation where no agency deals with inter-municipal issues or, there are numerous bodies responsible for managing the ACR (Owusu and Oteng-Ababio, 2015). This makes collaboration and pursuing collective action difficult (Official 2, 2021). Interestingly, this challenge is acknowledged by the GAR-SDF which proposes setting up a unified 'metropolitan' body to deal with cross-district issues and collective action. However, the fragmentation of districts by the government has continued (Gaisie et al., 2019). These limitations mirror some of those identified by Rodríguez-Pose (2008) as issues that could limit collaborative city-region governance mechanisms.

6.3 Regional and national level city-region governance processes

Under the current spatial governance structure in Ghana (Fig. 3.1), planning at the municipal level should be in sync with regional and national level plans. In terms of development or policy planning, the districts within Accra prepare plans using the guidelines emanating from the NDPC while spatial plans are extracted from prepared regional SDFs which are also extracted from the NSDF (Officials 1 and 2, interviews 24,22 September 2021). In practice, development (soft) planning is more decentralised than physical planning because physical planning largely occurs in a top-bottom fashion, albeit spatial planning at the national level is required to utilise feedback from the regional and district levels (Official 1, interview 24 September 2021). Historically, the focus of decentralised planning has been on strengthening districts level governance while regional (spatial) planning has remained weak (Acheampong, 2019). Therefore, the main planning activity at the regional level is 'coordination' of district-level plans with no significant powers and capacity in terms of regional policy, decision-making and investment in areas such as urban infrastructure (Official 3, interview 27 September 2021). The Regional Coordinating Council (RCC) along with the regional offices of the TCPD and LUSPA are the main institutions tasked with overseeing regional coordination and enforcement of national standards. It is crucial to indicate that in Greater Accra, political initiatives introduced by regional political leaders like the Regional Minister have also been important governance instruments (mostly not backed by law) for development in the city-region Official 1 (interview 24 September 2021) elaborates:

> Although Regional Ministers in Greater Accra have no legislative powers per se, they have led initiatives with the sole aim of improving coordination of development efforts of individual MMDAs. A recent example is the 'Make Greater Accra Work' initiative by the current Minister.

However, the challenge with such initiatives is that they are normally ad hoc political sloganeering tied to the political survival of the Regional Minister (the President appoints Regional Ministers) with no concrete operational mechanisms (*ibid.*). Therefore, the success of initiatives like the 'Make Greater Accra Work' depends on the extent to which they instil a sense of collaboration and collective action which has traditionally been weak/non-existent among MMDAs despite being just a loose political alliance with no codified legal statute (*ibid*.).

Crucially, the role of the national government has been key to the structuring of the ACR. It is the central government that recognised its potential and through the NDPC, The TCPD and the LUSPA provide planning and policy direction for the development of this complex urban formation (Official 3, interview 27 September 2021). Effectively, the ACR has emerged as a strategic national priority because of its rapid growth, economic importance and political significance as Ghana's capital (TCPD, 2015c). Consequently, the city-region has become the focus of major capital and infrastructure investments such as those in urban transport (see Fig. 5.4) from the central government (Expert 1, interview 29 September 2021). Especially so, within a context where municipalities are still significantly constrained in terms of financial and technical capacity (Owusu and Oteng-Ababio, 2015) in their quest to drive major development interventions. This suggests that the State does not promote the ACR to rival the other city-region in the country (Kumasi city-region) but as a 'national benchmark' for city-regions. The ACR may be in a similar position as city-regions like Sydney, Australia which McGuirk (2007) cited in Watson (2021:22) shows 'was transformed to a "national champion" city-region through national strategic strategies of economic–territorial management.' Although national-level governance processes remain vital for city-region development, the process also requires 'discursive production, political mediation and institutional formation "from below"' (McGuirk, 2007:181). Although the ACR – effectively a 'national capital region' – will remain a focus of national governance concern, the question is whether top-down governmental action can be matched with greater collaboration and coordination among municipal and other local actors. Can a 'collaborative city-regionalism' develop within the ACR?

6.4 Spatial governance along the Abidjan-Accra-Lagos corridor

Spatial planning along the West Coast urban corridor is generally confined within the borders of individual countries and cities, with minimal attention paid to trans-border spatial issues (Choplin and Hertzog, 2020). National planning processes and proposals in the countries along the corridor often overlook corridor-wide urban growth, migration dynamics and trade exchanges (Hertzog, 2020). By limiting territorial strategies within cities and national boundaries rather than trans-national urban processes, professionals, investors, and planners along the corridor miss an opportunity to fully unleash the growth potentials the corridor presents (*ibid.*). Hertzog (2020:105) emphasises that 'such planning exercises are often trapped within the limits of methodological nationalism, failing to draw on regional and trans-national dynamics at play.'

6.4.1 National strategies and corridor-wide processes

In Ghana, spatial planning seems to have recognised the role of extended urbanisation (and the emerging West Coast megaregion) in structuring the ACR in terms of its spatial character, population growth and economic sectors. This is evident by the settlement hierarchy presented in the NSDF (see Fig. 5.5). Official 3 and Expert 1 (interviews 27,29 September 2021) argue that, Ghana has some of the most pragmatic spatial development frameworks that attempt to connect ACR territorial strategies to the broader trans-national urban corridor. Officials 1 (interview 24 September 2021) also had this to say:

> Ghana has one of the most developed planning systems in West Africa so our planning strategies take cross-border issues into consideration. Just take a look at the current NSDF you would see how cross-border issues are embedded within our national strategies.

In contrast, spatial planning in other countries along the corridor still do not account for transnational urbanisation. For instance, Benin's spatial plan which borrows the notion of the *pole* from French urban planning tradition divides the country's coastline into 3 poles with each anchored around a city, but the importance of urban continuity along the coast and its relevance for greater urban scales is overlooked (Hertzog, 2020). Further, Hertzog (2020) finds that the maps accompanying the spatial blueprint of Benin omits the territorial role of coastal urban areas in neighbouring countries like Togo and Nigeria despite the significance of cross-border interactions. This approach of essentially slicing the corridor into distinctive functional units connected only to their various national hinterlands prevents planning authorities from anticipating future growth of the corridor as well as developing strategies to form territorial synergies along the corridor (*ibid.*).

6.4.2 Institutional mechanisms for corridor-wide spatial governance

The main corridor-wide spatial governance instrument in West Africa is the West Coast urban corridor programme facilitated and coordinated by ECOWAS. The focus of the Abidjan-Lagos corridor programme has been on improving transport linkages which is a vital part of promoting regional trade and investments, a core objective of the ECOWAS protocol (JICA, 2018). This includes the Abidjan-Lagos highway which is part of a transcontinental highway epitomising the vision of integration in Independent Africa (Hertzog, 2020). Although the corridor-wide highway is in place, it may still be considered an ongoing project as it is yet to be fully aligned within some member counties (Hertzog, 2020; TCPD, 2015c). There are also planned investments in railway

lines linking major economic hubs along the coastal corridor and even landlocked countries such as Burkina-Faso and Niger (JICA, 2018).

Interestingly, apart from the emphasis on cooperation and collaboration among individual city-regions as part of the corridor programme, there is intense competition in attracting investments and boosting global competitiveness. This emerging competitive relationship is especially keen among the three largest city-regions in terms of population and economic significance in West Africa (i.e. Abidjan, Accra and Lagos). The strategic statement in the NSDF succinctly captures this as follow:

> …support Accra to compete globally, especially with regional centres such as Lagos and Abidjan, to attract investment in activities associated with the role of a regional business, trade and investment hub - a role that no other city can play (TCPD, 2015c:32).

These three city-regions have become the main drivers of economic growth for their countries and the corridor. And as Scott and Storper (2003:581) points out city-regions are the 'locomotives of the national economies within which they are situated.'

ECOWAS as the main transnational governance body plays the lead role of coordinating regional integration and development efforts through its various commissions and associated organisations. Governance bodies are mindful that about 75% of the economic activities in the region occurs along the corridor (African Development Bank, 2016). Major areas of intervention for corridor-wide development are transport, energy and ICT infrastructure, and regional projects are coordinated within broader Continental infrastructure agenda for Africa such as the Programme for Infrastructure Development in Africa (PIDA) (Kamara, 2013, JICA, 2018).

Apart from ECOWAS, the international development partners play vital roles in corridor development. The main partners are the World Bank, African Development Bank (AfDB), German Development Agency (GIZ) and Japanese Development Agency (JICA). Their role centres around funding and technical support in areas such as the preparation of corridor-wide spatial plans and policy integration efforts in the member countries (Hertzog, 2020). Such financial and technical support for corridor-wide projects is geared towards accelerating the integration and growth of trade exchanges, streamlining ports and borders, and lowering cost of doing business through improved transport linkages (*ibid.*). However, it is important to note that these development partners especially those from outside Africa may be furthering the long-term strategic goals of

their counties/organisations in the region and not necessarily those that fully align with the specific needs of urban dwellers along the corridor. But the inherent weaknesses of the ECOWAS and its commissions in coordinating governance processes along the corridor means the role of the international development partners is indispensable. According to Kamara (2013), ECOWAS's corridor-wide planning and governance efforts are affected by institutional capacity issues such as inadequate budgetary contribution from member States, poor policy frameworks and integration, low level of commitment to corridor-wide infrastructure projects, and deficiency of technical capacity for implementing regional infrastructure projects and development management.

6.5 Conclusion

I have established earlier from the literature that city-regions do not normally coincide with traditional administrative entities. This means spatial governance needs to adjust to the complexity of these areas. In the ACR, policy integration and coordination across municipal boundaries is still weak due to factors cutting across financial, technical and institutional spheres. Attempts to improve coordination between municipalities and between municipalities and other levels of government (i.e., regional, national and even supranational) are seen in planning processes gradually taking on-board territorial approaches that favour city-region development even if this remains only on paper. At the transnational level, ECOWAS leads an ambitious governance and planning programme focused on creating a functional transport axis. Therefore, some kind of planning-governance nexus is seen as vital to integrating spatial governance across scales along the West Coast of Africa. The development of a transnational perspective and practice on urban development is, however, likely to be an evolving process, and it may take time for real instruments of governance and planning to emerge which will connect across local, regional, and transnational corridors scales. However, there is promise as Ghana does recognise its position within the wider urban corridors, unlike other countries. An immediate advantage of the transnational perspective is the focus on large-scale connecting physical infrastructure but, over time, this should evolve into connected plans and strategies in areas including the natural environment and economy. It is also clear that intergovernmental cooperation, which entails active civil society participation in governance, has become a priority. However, this angle has not been adequately explored in this study.

Chapter 7: Conclusions and Recommendations

7.1 Introduction

This study has discussed the role of planning and governance as the organising elements of urban development in city-regions using the Accra City-Region (ACR) as the case study. The study examined the ACR within the context of the larger transnational megaregion taking shape along Africa's West Coast. This concluding chapter summarises and draws together the key findings to respond adequately to the research questions stated in chapter 1. Following this, I make policy recommendations. Although this study was not conceived as 'problem-solving' research, its findings have a bearing on planning and urban governance issues in the ACR. Finally, I offer critical reflections on the research process (methods) and suggest possible areas for future research.

7.2 Summary of key findings

This research report has advanced arguments in both the literature review and empirical chapters to answer the research questions. The major findings of this study built around the themes of the research questions stated in chapter one are highlighted below.

Evolution of the Accra City-Region

In this research, I found that the ACR is undoubtedly the most complex urban formation in a rapidly urbanising Ghana. From the literature, the city-region is understood as not just a spatial entity but as an 'idea,' because they are political constructs that may be difficult to define precisely. Rightly so, the ACR has evolved both as an idea and a spatial unit of urban analysis. As an idea, the ACR is better seen as a successor to the Greater Accra Metropolitan Area (GAMA) which has been used to describe the urban formation beyond the city of Accra since 1991. This idea of a city-region in Greater Accra is tied to space as it is a response to the spatial expansion and population growth witnessed in and around Accra. The ACR as a spatial entity has seen its built-up footprint more than quadruple within 25 years (1990-2015) while the population has soared to over 5.5 million as of 2010. Planning and policy response to the evolving ACR has been reactionary rather than proactive. Therefore, spatial planning has had little success in determining the spatial evolution of the city-region (in terms of regulating the pace and direction of growth). The ACR is characterised by a rapidly growing population but outstripped by the rate of spatial expansion, thus creating a sprawling spatial structure. This is contrary to the compact development favoured by most of the city-region literature. The evolution of the ACR has also been influenced by regional

growth processes along the West Coast urban corridor of which the city-region is located roughly at its midpoint. The main regional structuring elements for the ACR vis-à-vis the Abidjan-Lagos corridor are migration, mobility and economic exchanges along the corridor.

Planning processes and initiatives

During this study, I have discovered that the idea of the ACR itself is relatively new as it was introduced into the country's urban landscape by the National Spatial Development Framework (NSDF) (2015-2035). Given this, the NSDF has emerged as the foundation planning tool that defines the ACR and provides a basis for pursuing a city-region development approach in Greater Accra. This recognition in national policy is significant because it highlights the increasing importance of territorial or regional development strategies in Ghana's urban landscape which has been dominated by city-centrism and development (soft) planning. It also points towards the institutionalisation of the city-region idea in Ghana. Especially so, as the literature alludes to the fact that the city-region approach is still weakly institutionalised in most jurisdictions globally. Following from the NSDF, the Greater Accra Region Spatial Development Framework (GAR-SDF) published in 2017 is the most detailed available planning proposal for the ACR covering areas such as transport, environment, regional economic development and housing although this SDF is spatially bounded within the administrative Greater Accra region and technically does not account for the districts in the adjoining Central and Eastern regions that fall within the ACR area. In keeping with the 'spontaneous' nature of the spatial growth in the ACR, the approach to planning has been dominated by the implementation of targeted initiatives (as they become necessary) revolving around regional transport infrastructure and promoting high-density mixed use developments founded on the notion of compactness (e.g. Accra Airport City) by the national government. Planning processes are gradually taking on board concepts related to the city-regions like the polycentric compact region to promote compactness and sustainably organise future development. However, how the NSDF and GAR-SDF will shape the ACR as the first steps towards an integrated city-region planning and management approach remains unclear. Crucially, there is a realisation by planning authorities that the West Coast urban corridor is vital for the city-region approach in Accra. This is evident in the goal to promote a polycentric and balanced hierarchy of settlements with the Abidjan-Lagos corridor at the pinnacle of this urban hierarchy. Planning in Accra has now recognised the need to integrate planning across the city-region and mega corridor level because areas such as economic development, environmental planning and

infrastructure development are better addressed at greater urban (territorial) scales and have the advantage of promoting more balanced and integrated development across the city-region.

Governing the Accra city-region and Abidjan-Lagos corridor

From the planning response to the rapidly growing ACR, it has become clear that governance arrangements are lagging these changes, but there have been some attempts to improve coordination between municipalities and between municipalities and other levels of government (i.e., regional, national). However, governance in the ACR remains largely hierarchical with coordination efforts led by regional administrative structures and national level processes, and little evidence of concrete collaborative action among constituent municipalities. Interestingly, most city-region literature leans towards inter-municipal collaboration. This means the city-region governance approach in the ACR is hampered by the absence of or weak horizontal coordination among constituent municipalities. Limited inter-municipal collaboration in the ACR is attributed to practical factors around institutional deficiencies and resource (i.e. financial, human and logistical) constraints facing the constituent municipalities. So, national-level processes have been key to the governance approach in Accra. The national government has made the ACR a national urban policy priority due to its unrivalled status as the nation's economic nerve centre and its administrative importance as the national capital. The role of the national government in organising urbanism in the ACR also covers efforts at connecting it to the West Coast urban corridor. The national government promotes the ACR not just as a getaway to Ghana but also to the corridor, but it is in competition with Abidjan and Lagos for this 'title.' Collaboration at the corridor scale is also emphasised in the governance approach for the ACR.

As the principal transnational governance body, the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) plays the lead role of coordinating regional integration and spatial planning efforts along the corridor within the framework of the West Coast urban corridor programme. This rather ambitious (transnational) governance and planning programme is anchored on promoting transport linkages through the Abidjan-Lagos Highway and other transport infrastructure, seen as a catalyst for economic development along the corridor. It also stresses integrating and harmonising key areas such as energy, environmental issues and communications to build synergies. Along with the ECOWAS, non-State actors and development partners notably, the Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA) and the African Development Bank (AfDB) have emerged as key actors in the corridor-wide spatial governance and development through providing technical and

financial support for corridor-wide spatial planning and major infrastructure projects to achieve regional integration. The complementary role of these organisations is vital due to the institutional, technical and financial limitations of ECOWAS in its ability to lead and coordinate regional planning and governance initiatives. Spatial governance in member countries along the West Coast urban corridor is yet to pick up on linking the individual city-region governance to corridor-wide processes although Ghana has recognised the need to create such linkages (at least on paper).

7.3 Policy Recommendations

In this research, I found that the rate of spatial expansion in the ACR vis-à-vis the population growth may be unsustainable. This has led to the current mismatch between spatial and population growth which is typified by urban sprawl and its attendant infrastructural, economic and environmental issues. I recommend the implementation of an urban land management strategy that incentivizes high-density mixed-use developments in the city-region area and encouraging in-filling of vacant areas between anchor municipalities of the ACR especially Accra and Tema. This would cut the spatial expansion rate and help create a more sustainable and balanced urban form.

It will be impossible to achieve a balanced urban form for the ACR if planning remains reactionary as is the case now. Planning needs to be proactive, and planning processes must adjust to the urban reality on the ground more quickly. To this end, I recommend strengthening of spatial planning bodies such as the Land Use and Spatial Planning Authority (LUSPA) in terms of human, technical and financial capacities to better coordinate and enforce spatial plans which have remained the bane of Ghanaian spatial planning. On an intellectual level, I recommend setting up a policy research institute akin to the Gauteng City-Region Observatory (GCRO) in South Africa. This would provide a platform for the production and dissemination of research related to city-region planning and governance in the nascent ACR. It could serve as a vehicle for advocacy and influencing policy in the quest to organise future development in the ACR sustainably.

For functional city-region governance in the ACR, I further recommend improving horizontal coordination and collaboration among constituent municipalities. The findings of this study show a rather hierarchical (vertical) city-region governance structure with little emphasis on inter-municipal collaboration. Improved horizontal collaboration may be achieved by empowering individual constituent units of the city-region. There is also the need to avoid further fragmentation of municipalities into smaller units which may not be viable in terms of generating local resources

and planning competencies. Actualising the creating of a 'metropolitan or city-region agency' as suggested by the NSDF could provide specific focus for the ACR idea, and become an agency that leads the formation of territorial synergies among the administrative municipalities. Improved collaboration would enable the emergence of a 'collaborative city-region governance' model, allowing for bottom-up innovation processes and an engaged citizenry to drive development.

Similarly, it may be problematic to prescribe a particular model of city-region governance for the ACR. But in the current circumstances, I recommend the establishment of the 'ACR Governance Chamber' as a temporary body tasked within a period of a year to negotiate city-region governance arrangements. Options may range from consolidating municipalities into a single structure (like the proposed metropolitan agency in the NSDF) to a collaborative body for inter-municipal collaboration (such as the ABC Region in Brazil, and many others). The Chamber could have representation from the municipalities and district, central government, business, and civil society. A functional ACR could then directly participate in the ECOWAS urban corridor initiative as a complement to the existing central government participation. Linking the local (urban) scale with the local scale in corridor member States may be beneficial for the success of corridor initiatives. A deeper application of Ghana's decentralisation to municipal government is crucial in all this. More devolution to give sub-national units like municipalities more control over spatial planning, exploring innovative urban financing and undertaking regional-scale projects independently with little interference from the 'centre' would inject creativity and dynamism into local government.

For the West Coast urban corridor, I found that spatial planning and policy is poorly linked. This means urban centres along the corridor are 'isolated' spatial units bounded within national borders with little regard for the implication of adjoining city-region in neighbouring countries. Given this, I recommend that ECOWAS along with its partners within the framework of the West Coast urban corridor programme support the dissemination of corridor plans and their integration and harmonisation with the national plans of member States. Just as inter-municipal (horizontal) collaboration remain vital for governing individual city regions, there is also the need to support the creation of partnerships and synergies among the corridor's major cities. It would become a platform for the cities and city-regions to share knowledge and expertise, which ultimately benefits efforts at policy integration across this vast megaregion. With this, the Abidjan-Lagos corridor would reach its full potential as a functionally connected continuous urban agglomeration.

7.4 Concluding Remarks

Overall, this study explored some aspects of the planning and governance of the ACR, contextualised within the transnational megaregion taking shape on the West African Coast. I have used various illustrations and demonstrations throughout this research report to advance my arguments, but I recognise the limits of this research work and its use as a basis for making generalisations. Here are some of my critical reflections on the research methods.

First, I conducted four interviews in total. Two of those were conducted online over Zoom calls as a precaution in the COVID-19 context, so interview times were typically shorter than the face-to-face ones. Notwithstanding, I maintain that this did not sacrifice the overall quality of the findings. Further, I could not secure the interview with ECOWAS but this was controlled for by thorough review and analysis of corridor related documents published or promoted by the organisation, and systematically incorporating some of the questions into the other interviews. To add up, not much empirical research on the ACR exist as city-region research is a relatively new area in the geographical context. Due to this, it seems the study may have over-relied on fewer empirical documents to draw its findings. However, this is what was practicable under the circumstances. The interviews provided a healthy complement.

Continuing the research agenda

Within the practical limits like time and data shortfalls, I do not claim this research covers all of the planning and governance issues in the emerging ACR. However, it opens several areas of inquiry for future research and other authors. First of all, an in-depth study into the mechanisms for spatial planning and policy integration along the West Coast urban corridor is required to sufficiently understand the nature of the transnational dimension of extended urbanisation in West Africa. It appears that urban research in West Africa is still largely city-centric, and much larger scales of analysis would be a valuable addition to urban scholarship. Additionally, sustainability concerns as a driver towards the emerging city-regionalism in Accra is an interesting area for further research. This is particularly important because such a study will highlight how governance actors in the ACR can mobilise to deal with cross-cutting sustainability concerns. Even so, research on sustainability [environmental] as a motive for city-region governance processes is still in its nascent stages as the literature suggests.

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List of Interview participants

Official 1- Assistant Planning Officer, Accra Metropolitan Assembly, Accra

Official 2- Assistant Planning Officer, Physical Planning Unit- Tema Metropolitan Assembly, Tema

Official 3- Physical Planning Officer, Land Use and Spatial Planning Authority, Tema

Expert l - Urban Planning Researcher/Lecturer, University for Development Studies

Appendices

Appendix 1: Participant Information Sheet

Dear Sir/Madam,

My name is Mohammed Musah. I am a student in the Master of Urban Studies (Urban Management specialisation) in the School of Architecture and Planning (SOAP) at the University of Witwatersrand, South Africa. I am currently conducting research titled "Towards organising sustainable urbanism: The Accra City Region (ACR) within Africa's West Coast urban corridor" as part of the requirements for my degree. The study aims to explore aspects of the planning and governance of the emerging Accra City-Region. This research is envisaged to contribute to the discussion on the city-region idea for Accra.

I would like to invite you to participate in an interview as part of this research project. The interview will cover issues around the emergence of the city-region idea in Greater Accra and the planning and governance issues it has come with. The interview will take no longer than 30 minutes of your time. With your permission, I would like to make an audio recording of the interview with my mobile phone along with taking notes. This recording will be stored in a password encrypted file on my personal computer and no other person will have access to the recording.

You have been selected to participate in this study because of your insights on planning and development governance issues in Greater Accra. Participation in this study is voluntary, you may refuse to answer any questions you find uncomfortable, and you may withdraw at any time without penalty or loss. No payment or other incentives are attached to your participation. I guarantee that the interview will be completely confidential and anonymous in that your name and identity will be protected although your organisation may be identified and the information you give will not be disclosed to anyone else. I will be using codes (pseudonym) to represent your participation in the study when writing up my research report so that the information you provide cannot be linked to your identity.

There are no foreseeable risks associated with your participation. The final report of this study will be publicly accessible through the university's library website. The information you provide as part of your participation in this research will be stored in a password-protected computer. With your permission, the data collected from this research project may be used by other researchers in an anonymized format. If you have any concerns or complaints regarding the ethical procedures of this study, you are welcome to contact the University Human Research Ethics Committee (Non-Medical), telephone +27(0) 11 717 1408, email hrecnon-medical@wits.ac.za

If you have any questions, concerns and comments during or afterwards about this research, feel free to contact me on the details listed below.

Yours sincerely,

Mohammed Musah

Researcher: Mohammed Musah| Email: 2253311@students.wits.ac.za Supervisor: Prof. Philip Harrison| Email: Philip.Harrison@wits.ac.za | Tel: Ext. 7646

Appendix 2: Formal (Signed) Consent Form for interview participants

Title of project: Towards organising sustainable urbanism: The Accra City Region (ACR) within Africa's West Coast urban corridor

Name of researcher: Mohammed Musah

I, ……., agree to participate in this research project. The research has been explained to me and I understand what my participation will involve. I agree to the following:

(Please circle the relevant options below).

I agree that my participation will remain anonymous	YES	NO
I agree that the researcher may use anonymous quotes in his / her research report	YES	NO
I agree that the interview may be audio recorded	YES	NO
I agree that the information I provide may be used anonymously after this project has ended, for academic purposes by other researchers, subject to their own ethics clearance being obtained.	YES	NO
I agree to share relevant documents I deem appropriate	YES	NO

…… (signature)
…… (name of participant)
…… (date)

…… (signature)
…… (name of person seeking consent)
…… (date)

Appendix 3: Interview guide for Government planning officials, Accra and Tema Metropolitan Assemblies and Land Use and Spatial Planning Authorities

Interview type and mode: semi-structured, face-to-face and Videoconferencing

1. Explain the purpose, key concepts and logic of the study

2. Identify and communicate questions to be explored in the interviews as follows:

Part I: City-region idea, Spatial expansion and growth

1) Would you say the city-region idea has entered planning consciousness in Accra? If so when did that happen? The drivers and dynamics…

2) Could you comment on the metropolitan population growth over the last 2 decades? Major divers, unique patterns, relation to overall growth in Greater Accra…

3) How would you describe the rate of spatial expansion? What are the main drivers? To what extent is the expansion connected to regional processes?

3) How would you characterise the place of Accra among the major cities on the Abidjan-Lagos Corridor? How are sub-regional processes affecting growth?...

Part II: City-region and Planning

1) What planning processes have been initiated in response to Accra's changing status as a city-region? How is the implementation progressing?

2) Is there any concrete proposal on city-region wide planning for Greater Accra? If yes, please briefly comment on what it entails…

3) How would you assess the Greater Accra SDF as a city-region wide planning tool?

4) Could you identify key planning concepts embedded within planning in the metropolis and Greater Accra? (e.g., compact city, polycentric city, smart city) How are these concepts being operationalised?

Part III: City-region Governance

1) What areas of collective/joint action have emerged between your Metropolis and other municipalities in Greater Accra (e.g., sanitation, environmental governance etc.)?

2) What are the motivations for inter-municipal cooperation? Legislated, voluntary, or others.

3) What would you say are the practical limitation to collective action? Please elaborate…

4) To what extent does the Regional Coordinating Council (RCC) initiate or lead collective municipal action? Would you advocate a 'super-body' aside the RCC to oversee city-region decision making?

5) How do you see the role of the national government in promoting the ACR idea (e.g., national strategies and policies in this regard)?

6) what is your general assessment of the relationship between the national government and municipalities in Greater Accra?

7) How would you describe the role of non-State actors in the governance process?

8) In what ways does your metropolis cooperate with others along the West Coast urban corridor?

Closing. Summary of conversation, ask whether there are additional points and any available documents that could provide further details. END

Appendix 4: Interview guide for urban planning researcher/expert

Interview type and mode: semi-structured, videoconferencing

1. Explain the purpose of the study

2. Identify and communicate questions to be explored in the interviews as follows:

1) When and how did the city-region idea enter planning consciousness in Accra and Ghana?

2) How are population growth and urban expansion connected to city-region processes?

3) How would you characterise Accra among the major cities on the Abidjan-Lagos Corridor? How would you say sub-regional processes are affecting growth?...

4) What planning processes have been initiated in response to Accra's changing status as a city-region? How would you assess the implementation?

5) Are you aware of any concrete planning proposal on city-region wide planning for Greater Accra (perhaps aside the Greater Accra SDF)? If yes, please briefly comment on what it entails…

6) How would you assess the Greater Accra SDF as a city-region wide planning tool?

7) To what extent are sustainable urbanism concepts (such as compact city, polycentric city, smart city) applicable/implementable in the ACR?

8) What form of city-region governance would you say has emerged in the ACR?

9) What are the motivations for the inter-municipal cooperation and what is your assessment of the extent of cooperation/coordination in Greater Accra?

10) What role do you see the Regional Coordinating Council (RCC) play in initiating or lead collective action arrangements?

11) Would you advocate a 'super-body' aside the RCC to oversee city-region decision making? Please elaborate…

12) How do you see the role of the national government in promoting the ACR idea?

13) What is your general assessment of the relationship between the national government and municipalities in Greater Accra?

14) How would you describe the role of non-State actors in the governance process?

15) What governance ideas would you propose for managing the transnational West Coast urban corridor

Closing. Summary of conversation, ask whether there are additional points and any available documents that could provide further details. END

Appendix 5: Ethics Clearance Certificate

UNIVERSITY OF THE WITWATERSRAND, JOHANNESBURG | SCHOOL OF ARCHITECTURE PLANNING

03 February 2022

Faculty of Engineering and the Built Environment:

Ethics clearance letter:

Dear Mohammed Musah

Student number (2253311), this letter confirms that your ethics application has been cleared. Your clearance/protocol number SOAP133/06/2021

Yours sincerely

Lerato Nkosi

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