

Land governance and  
decentralised physical  
planning in mid-sized cities in  
Ghana: A case study of the  
Nkoranza South Municipality

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# Presentation Outline

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# Introduction

- The world is experiencing an increase in the number of people living in cities and towns
- The magnitude and intensity of human activities in the urban space has also increased
- But land, the basis for food, shelter and livelihood is scarce and fragile
- Resulting in human accelerated changes (changes in land use, toxification of the biosphere, invasion of exotic species and loss of biotic diversity)
- Requiring action in the form of Spatial Planning and efficient urban management

# Methods and Key Questions

- Reconnaissance
- Desk Studies
- Interviews/Focus Group Discussions
- How is physical planning in Ghana conceived and actually executed?
- What are the characteristics of the reformed land governance system of Ghana and how have these affected decentralised physical planning and spatial governance?

# The Research Site

- Mid-sized city (urban growth occurring in small and medium sized settlements)
- Located in the transitional belt
- Benefitted from land administration reforms under the LAP
- Created in 1998 and as such has an established history of physical planning
- Composed of 126 settlements, only 4 are urban



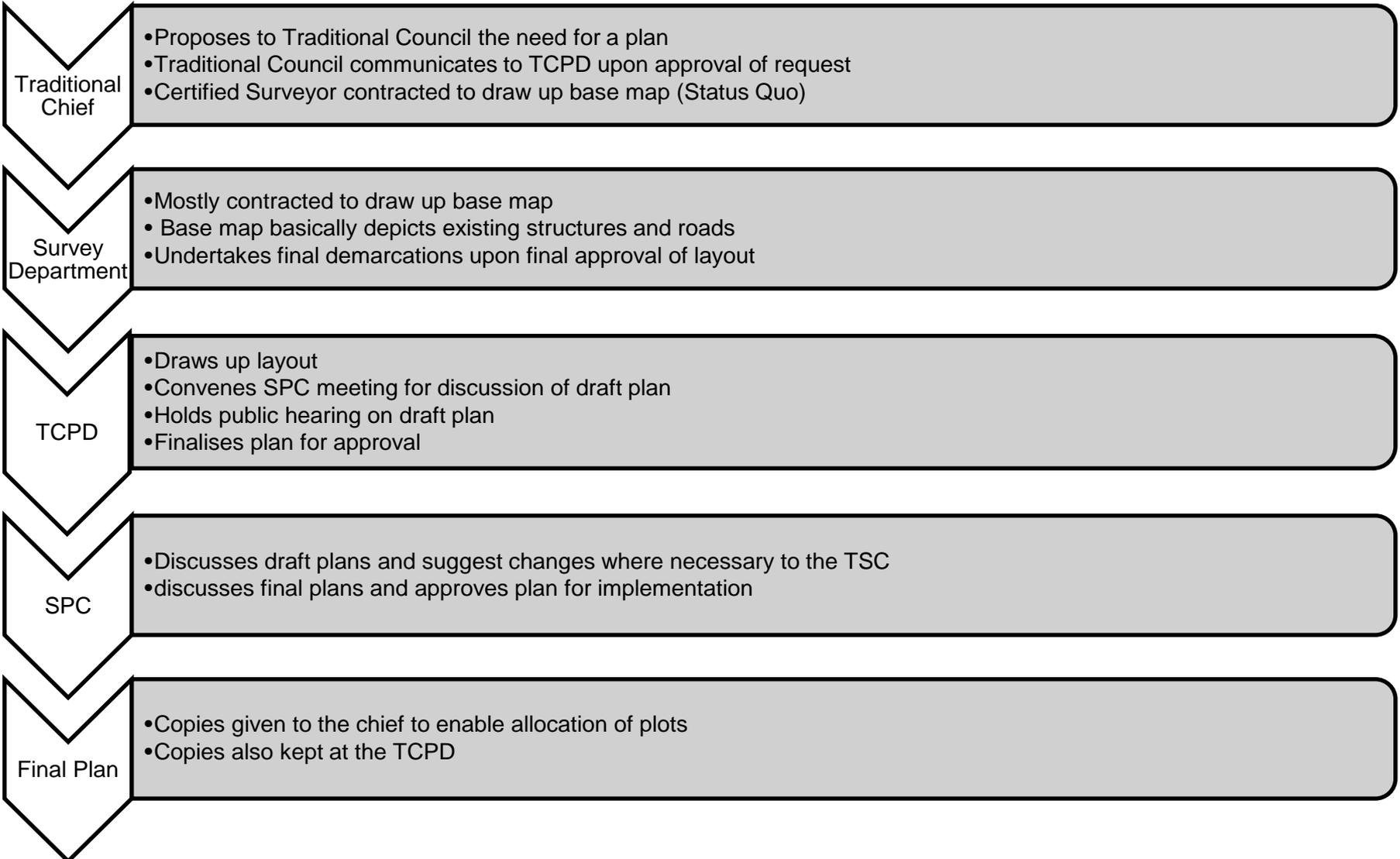
# Planning in Ghana and its Theoretical Underpinnings

- Dates back to 1945 (Town and Country Planning Ordinance, Cap 84)
- Planning was centralised
- Rendered outmoded with the enactment of the Local Government Act, 1993 (Act 462) resulting in the creation of MMDAs. Planning now hierarchically organised into a three-tier system
  - National (NDPC and TCPD)
  - Regional (RCC/RPCU and Regional TCPD)
  - Metropolitan, Municipal and District Assembly (MMDAs) (MMDAs/DPCUs and District TCPD)
- Mixed Scanning of Amitai Etzioni (1967)
- Communicative/Participative Planning of John Forester (1989)
- Attachment to traditional/modernists form of physical planning

# Land Governance in Ghana

- Traditional land governance (customary)
- Allodial title vested in the Nkoranza paramountcy
- Sub-divided among divisional chiefs, sub-divisional chiefs, and clan heads
- Ghana Began implementing LAP in 2003
- Created Customary Land Secretariats
  - Chiefs are pseudo land owners
- Agency method of land governance

# Physical Planning under the Reformed Land Governance System



# Findings/Challenges to Physical Planning

- Lack of long term sustainable urban development visions
- Weak planning concepts, principles and norms (function and fit, complementary mixed uses, character and meaning, order and flexibility and continuity and change)
- A seeming absence of a land use regulator
- Lack of a spatial development framework for the municipality (hierarchical networks or horizontal networks)
- Plans are not updated once drawn up
- Weak composition of Statutory Planning Committee
- Inadequate capacities (technical and logistical) of land use planning departments (Survey Department and TCPD)
- Weak participation and low levels of dissemination of spatial plans

# Recommendations/Policy Implications

- Chiefs could own their lands but NSMA must offer a sustainable long term vision for urban planning in the Municipality
- NSMA to develop spatial planning concepts, principles and norms in line with vision
- Technical people (sociologists, soil scientists, agronomists, range and livestock specialists, civil engineers, foresters, economists, lawyers etc) should be co-opted onto the SPC
- Build the capacities (technical and logistical) of the land use departments to help enhance the quality of spatial plans
- Conduct spatial planning within the framework of the National Development Planning Systems Act, 1994 ( Act 480) and disseminate plans widely

# Conclusions

- Strategic Spatial planning is required (how humans and non-humans might live)
- There is the need for a paradigm shift from “zoning” to “land use” planning
- ‘the question is whether we can begin to think of cities (NKORANZA) not in terms of needs we already know, but in terms of diversities whose connections we do not yet know’ (May, 2005: 166)