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Doctoral Dissertation

A study on socio-spatial structure and community management system in Abese indigenous quarter, La, Accra, Ghana – Rethinking urban informality and informal settlement improvement.

ガーナ・アクラ・ラ市域のアベセ土着的形成地区における社会・空間構造とコミュニティの運営システムに関する研究 - 都市の非正規性と非正規市街地改善に関する再考察 -

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December 2017

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ABSTRACT

If sustainable and inclusive urban development in the developing world demands a rethinking on urban informal settlements (with embedded social practices and spatial dynamics), then how do we appropriately capture inherent practices and devise new paradigms that accept the activities of the urban poor to improve their settlements? As urban informal settlements continue to host majority of the urban population in Ghana and Africa generally, coupled with a global human settlements agenda (SDG 11) for sustainable, inclusive, safe and resilient cities, these questions become critical to the development of the often-neglected informal areas of contemporary developing cities such as Accra, Ghana. To appropriately respond to these questions there is the need to move beyond the negative narratives and exclusionary policies that fail to provide sustainable and effective development alternatives for urban informal settlements in Ghana. Rather than focusing on conditions and characteristics, the active role of residents, self-organization, collective activities, experiences and spatial behavioral patterns can provide urban development experts a balanced perspective and contextual understanding for a collaborative and community-led planning and design improvement in urban informal communities.

This dissertation attempts to respond to these questions and contribute to the future development of urban informal settlements by investigating the social and spatial intersections of residents' indigenous management practices and human behavior in the indigenous informal quarter of Abese in La Dadekotopon, Accra, Ghana. An indigenous community with pre-colonial roots, the settlement is characterized by a distinct social system and spatial structure but have yet to receive significant attention—compared with other areas—from urban researchers and professionals in the Greater Accra Metropolitan Area (GAMA) of Ghana.

Based on two sets of field surveys in 2015 and 2016, this study revealed a strong system of self-organization among residents manifested in social collaboration, housing improvement, communal maintenance of community facilities and services, and positive living experiences for residents in the quarter. Culture, tradition and the social hierarchical structures have created a discursive community for incremental improvement in housing and physical conditions in the quarter. Moreover, human behavioral patterns indicate what we term 'urban mixity' to denote the indigenous use of informal open spaces to fulfill social, economic and leisure needs by different

category of users in the quarter. The intertwined socio-spatial patterns reveal that informal spaces, courtyard based clan houses and narrow alleys are not simply physical configurations in space, rather they serve as social spaces and exert economic value for residents' everyday life. Even though residents recognize existing problematic physical and infrastructure conditions, they generally perceive their quarter to be in a process of change. That is a situation where an understanding of the physical environment and residents' collaboration and mobilization possess the capacity to provide pathways to the gradual development of the quarter.

The study argues that these socio-spatial patterns and dynamics in indigenous urban informal settlements provide an alternative to understanding the uniqueness of informal areas in GAMA and the need for building on existing indigenous practices for community-based development. Specifically, preserving the existing social structure and drawing on effective partnerships with local government, NGOs and community traditional structures for collaborative interventions. Additionally, current spatial configuration calls for land adjustment to improve the functionality of space and enhance its relevance to 'mixity' patterns of residents' everyday activities.

This study contributes to informal settlement research by challenging traditional perspectives about informal areas and reinforcing the need to integrate, not supplant indigenous knowledge and practices into urban planning, design, and policy. This, of course, can potentially lead to new paradigms for sustainable and inclusive local community-led development planning in Accra and Ghana as a whole.

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LIST OF ACRONYMS AND ABBREVIATIONS

AMA	ACCRA METROPOLITAN ASSEMBLY
CBD	CENTRAL BUSINESS DISTRICT
GAMA	GREATER ACCRA METROPOLITAN AREA
GHS	GHANA NEW CEDI (CURRENCY)
GLSS	GHANA LIVING STANDARDS SURVEY
GSS	GHANA STATISTICAL SERVICE
ILO	INTERNATIONAL LABOUR ORGANISATION
KMMF	KONOSUKE MATSUSHITA MEMORIAL FOUNDATION
LADMA	LA DADEKOTOPON MUNICIPAL ASSEMBLY
MEXT	MINISTRY OF EDUCATION, CULTURE AND SPORTS
NBSSI	NATIONAL BOARD FOR SMALL SCALE INDUSTRIES
NCCE	NATIONAL COMMISSION FOR CIVIC EDUCATION
NGO	NON-GOVERNMENTAL ORGANISATION
NPO	NON-PROFIT ORGANISATION
PHC	POPULATION AND HOUSING CENSUS
PSUP	PARTICIPATORY SLUM UPGRADING AND PREVENTION
SAP	STRUCTURAL ADJUSTMENT PROGRAM
SDGs	SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS
SPSS	STATISTICAL PACKAGE FOR SOCIAL SCIENCES
SSA	SUB SAHARAN AFRICA
SWOT	STRENGTH WEAKNESS OPPORTUNITY THREAT
UN	UNITED NATIONS
UN HABITAT	UNITED NATIONS COMMISSION FOR HUMAN SETTLEMENTS
UNDP	UNITED NATIONS DEVELOPMENT PROGRAM

CHAPTER ONE

THE CASE FOR URBAN INFORMAL SETTLEMENTS

1.1 Background

Urban informal settlements continue to remain an important agenda in international development and urban planning circles (Varley 2013; p.4; Roy 2005, p.148). This is partly due to unprecedented urbanization and (often unplanned) urban growth in Africa and other developing countries (Okyere and Kita, 2015; UN Habitat, 2009). The UNDP (2008) indicate that the cities in Africa and Asia are showing average levels of urbanization similar to what industrialized countries experienced in the first quarter of the 20th century. The social, economic, political and cultural factors driving current urbanization patterns have led to structural and fundamental changes in the socio-spatial morphology of cities. These changes, in the context of developing countries, have been applied to urban informal settlements (UNDP, 2008). Consequently, the UN Habitat (2008, p.90) estimates that about one billion people or almost one-third of the worlds urban population reside in informal settlements. Observers have accordingly termed this 'a billion squatters' population (Neuwirth 2005, p.9) or dystopia of 'a planet of slums' (Davis, 2006).

Thus, through decades of theoretical and empirical research on urban informal settlements (see Gilbert, 2009; AlSayyad, 2004), the dominant narrative of urban informal settlements has been negative (UN Habitat, 2003; Okyere and Kita, 2015). These narratives are often based on over emphasis on physical conditions, underpinned by concepts and theories that perceive informality as the opposite of formality (Revell, 2010). A sort of binary compositions (Valey, 2013, AlSayyad, 2004) that disregard their intricate interdependencies (Caldeira, 1996), including the socio-cultural, political and historical factors that influence their formation and consolidation. Urban informal settlements are therefore caught in a theoretical marginalization—in terms of words, images and stories producing powerful meanings—that highlight them as a 'problem' to be addressed than a phenomenon to be understood and engaged (Lombard, 2014 p. 5).

Moreover, data on Africa is even more striking. An estimated 55.9 percent of urban residents live in informal settlements (UN Habitat, 2016) and 75 percent of basic needs are met informally through residents' activities and interventions. Thus,

not only is urban informality the driving force of urbanization (Roy, 2005) but also its residents the main actors shaping the nature and character of urban spaces (Simone, 2004). Strangely, informal settlements (as a socio-spatial organization) and resident informal activities (as a practice) have been viewed with resentment and analyzed negatively (Lombard, 2014; Revell, 2010).

In the Greater Accra Metropolitan Area (GAMA) of Ghana, it is estimated that about 60 percent of the population reside in informal settlements (Pellow, 2002, Grant and Yankson, 2003), which is higher than the national average of 38 percent (UN Habitat, 2016). Even the terminology of informal settlements here is encapsulated within a negative lexicon among local politicians and the media—to the extent that it evokes resentment and socio-spatial marginalization (Afenah, 2009). In spite of the limitations imposed by an outdated planning system and lagging technical response from local planning authorities (Yeboah and Obeng-Odoom, 2010), informal settlements carry the blame for every blamable ill in the city. The principal tools of exclusion, rejection, and destruction of the bleakest parts (informal areas) of the cities demonstrate the marginal status to which urban informal settlements are assigned. The popular lens, therefore, fails to see urban informal settlements as adapting, changing and coping places where residents organize their physical space, shape their social organization and frame their existence within a system of innumerable limitations.

Subsequently, this marginalization has become suspect in postcolonial urban studies (Robinson, 2006; Roy, 2011; Watson, 2009; Obeng-Odoom, 2013a, 2015, Nuthall and Mbembe, 2008). Scholars have therefore criticized such treatment as a generally worrying emphasis on poor conditions and over-simplified universal image of urban informal settlements (Gilbert, 2007. p. 698, Huchzermeyer, 2007, Myers, 2009). What ought to be done, postcolonial urban scholars argue, is a 'working together' to engage urban informal settlements (Nuthall and Mbembe, 2008, p.8) by recognizing that they are complex systems with social practices that outplay in spatial arrangements (Huchzermeyer, 2007). In this way, as implied, urban informal settlements can provide a rich source of documentation—of residents' socio-physical activities and human experiences—that offer a better understanding for improving conditions (Gouveneur, 2015).

Within the purview of this emerging paradigm in postcolonial urban studies, this study is premised on rethinking urban informal settlements, especially in the context of residents' socio-spatial collective: informal activities and human behaviors that can serve as an input into future planning and development. Specifically, using the case of the indigenous quarter of Abese (Ladadekotopon district of GAMA), this research posits that obtaining a balanced view of informal settlements is critical to advancing efforts in improving conditions. In other words, it draws on Hardoy and Satterwaite's (1989) view that informal communities provide a rich source of activities from which we can learn many things often hidden from plain view. That is, observations and documentation of resident practices and spatial dynamics may provide context-specific framing of such places for documentation, policy and development planning interventions.

1.2 Problem Statement

Ghana's recent Population and Housing Census (PHC), conducted in 2010, indicates that 51 percent of the population resides in urban areas, an increase from 43.8 percent in the year 2000 (GSS, 2013). The World Bank (2015, p.1) recent estimate indicates an annual urban population growth rate of 4.4 percent. Informal settlements are directly embedded in the process of urbanization and urban growth. Actually, Ghana has a dominant informal settlement presence, as the capital area, referred to as the Greater Accra Metropolitan Area (GAMA), has about 60 percent of the population residing in urban informal settlements (UN Habitat, 2016), occupying 15.7 percent of the land area (UN Habitat/AMA, 2011, p.2). For local authorities, informal settlements constitute a lack of land tenure, poor housing conditions and inadequate access to basic housing, infrastructure facilities, and services (UN Habitat/AMA, 2011; Okyere and Kita, 2015). From these defining characteristics, about 78 settlements in the GAMA have recently been identified as informal settlements that require necessary improvement in physical, social, environmental and economic conditions (UN Habitat/AMA, 2011).

These so-called informal enclaves are diverse and occur in different parts of the GAMA area. The disheartening trend of urban informal settlements in Ghana has been mainly attributed to the high incidence of rural-urban migration in major cities such as Accra and displacement or eviction from other informal areas (Owusu, 2012;

UN Habitat, 2009a). Others include restrictions on building materials and unrealistic planning standards that work against low-income dwellers (Amoako, 2016; Korah, 2015). In addition, weak statutory land use planning and creation of alternative land use processes by landowners have perpetuated informal settlements creation (UN Habitat, 2009b). Economically, consequences of Structural Adjustment Programs (SAPs) and economic restructuring in the 1980s by the World Bank (Okyere et al., 2012; Grant, 2009), through deregulation and privatization reduced affordable housing options for low-income earners. Historically, colonial planning paid little attention to the development of indigenous communities through spatial segregation and exclusionary zoning (Grant and Yankson, 2003). Either way, informal settlements continue to be traditionally viewed as the worse part of the city, frequently subjected to mass evictions and threats of removal from local authorities (Obeng-Odoom, 2015; Amoako, 2017).

Thus, local government treatment of so-called informal areas has been in terms forced evictions, demolition or neglect (Amoako, 2016). Informal settlements are therefore subjected to poverty conditions and socio-spatial marginalization, manifested in unequal access to basic facilities and services. More so, local policies of repression support views of informal settlements as illegality, symptoms of poor safety and disregard for planning regulations (UN Habitat 2010; Werner et al, 2011). Nonetheless, there is still little or no evidence of such strategies addressing the challenge of urban informal settlements (Obeng-Odoom 2013, 2015). Recently, a seeming inclusive response has been introduced in the participatory upgrading and prevention program (PSUP), though it is still in its preliminary phases (UN Habitat/AMA, 2011) to assess its effectiveness.

So, amidst the seeming failures of local government planning and policy to address the challenge of informal settlements, there appears a growing scholarly consensus to obtain a balanced view of informal settlements, including residents' activities, experiences and spatial patterns of behaviors (Myers, 2010). This is crucial, as recent evidence suggests that the resolution of the urban crises will come from the urban poor's actions in their own living environments (Pieterse, 2008). Yet, local government and the planning apparatus pays little or no attention to the practices of the urban poor residing in informal settlements (Myers, 2010). To wit, context-specific analyses that appropriately capture activities and spatial dynamics are

relevant to how such places can be engaged and collaborated with, for future improvement and development. Hence, there is the need, in the words of Demissie (2007), to study the 'ingenuity with which African urban residents have developed novel strategies' for confronting the 'structural and social crises confronting them' (Myers, 2012:58). This, of course, also implies the need for a careful observation and analyses to understand the social context, spatial structure, human behavior and spatial dynamics. This, it goes without saying, helps to understand physical needs and also promote locally sensitive planning and design response.

The central argument in this study, therefore, is that radical progress in improving existing conditions will come from a deep understanding and recognition of the social and spatial dynamics of residents in urban informal settlements. To this end, the following research questions guided the study

- What are the residents socially based informal collective activities and management system that support everyday life in Abese quarter of La Dadekotopon?
- What are the spatial dynamics of human behavior in informal open spaces and
- What are the implications of these socio-spatial patterns for planning and design improvement of indigenous settlements in Accra?

1.3 Objectives of the Study

The underlying principle of this study is that analyzing the residents' socio-spatial intersections in urban informal settlements, recognizing and embracing them is the needed starting point for inclusive urban development planning in Ghanaian cities. Specifically, the objectives of the study include the following

- To analyze the social system, residents' social collaboration and management system for communal facilities in indigenous informal settlements
- To examine the spatial structure and spatial dynamics of human behavior in informal open spaces
- To identify the planning and policy implications for rethinking and planning for inclusive, sustainable community development of informal settlements.

1.4 Scope

The case study area, the Abese quarter, is one of the eight quarters that constitute the historical core (La Mami) of La Dadekotopon district of Accra. Broadly, the district is located within the Greater Accra Metropolitan Area (GAMA)—the capital area of Ghana. The District is noted as one of most identifiable informal districts in the GAMA. Again, the La township, within which Abese informal settlement is located, is considered a matured informal settlement characterized by inadequate infrastructure facilities and services, lack of durable housing and low economic profiles.

1.5 Significance of the Study

Revell (2010) argues that urban informality in planning research has not been widely understood and largely neglected. In an effort to define the place of informality in planning research, Yiftachel (2009) did a content analysis of six leading international planning journals (2005-2008) and discovered that only three out of 327 journals were devoted to the issue of informality. In fact, in situations where discussions on it appeared, local authorities and professionals are unequivocal about the approach to remove than integrate, discard than embrace; rather than utilize it as a starting point for understanding socio-spatial organization of the city and shaping urban planning strategies in developing world, especially Africa. Thus, in a more critical position, the study of informal settlements in Ghana may help support the current base of research of urban informal settlements and contribute to its theoretical and empirical paradigms.

At the policy level, this study provides inputs and directions into the debate on 'what to do' with urban informal settlements. For example, the newly formulated Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) stipulate in goal 11 to make 'cities and human settlements inclusive, resilient, safe and sustainable', including the over 800 million inhabitants in informal settlements globally. In Ghana, the new government has for the first time instituted the Ministry for Inner City and Zongo Development, suggesting a commitment to address the informal settlement crises. This study, with its findings, therefore contribute to such global and national agenda by emphasizing alternative strategies that are relevant to the indigenous character of urban areas in Ghana— focusing on residents' social and spatial dynamics.

Empirically, as Roy (2005) argues, there is a lot to learn from what appears to be going wrong in urban areas. Urban informal settlements prove to us that planning still has a way to go in dealing with the urban challenges in Ghana and utilizing it as an opportunity in shaping the quality of urban life. Hence, this study on urban informal settlements helps to advance current literature in (postcolonial) urban studies on rethinking informal settlements and its usefulness. The study also to brings to fore positive practices in informal settlements to affirm the need and significance of reimagining these spaces with potentials for sustainable and inclusive development.

Lastly, this study provides an understanding of urban residents' collective activities and also human behaviors within open spaces. Thus, the study emphasizes peculiar, often undocumented activities that contribute to their improvement. This is to serve as the background for the development of an urban development framework where informality is not rejected but recognized to offer hints for new planning tools and strategies beneficial to the socio-cultural peculiarities of urban areas in developing countries such as Ghana.

1.6 Previous Studies

Beginning from the early 2000s, there have been some studies on the socio-spatial conditions (Pellow, 2002a, b; Owusu, 2010; Silver, 2014; Nunbogu and Korah, 2016), housing (Konadu-Agyeman, 2001), political economy, and globalization (Grant, 2009a, b; Obeng-Odoom, 2011; Amoako, 2016) processes at play in urban informal settlements in the Greater Accra Metropolitan Area (GAMA). Specifically, some studies have focused on the physical conditions and characteristics of houses in Accra relating to poor housing conditions, compound type family houses and the trend towards single detached housing (Konadu-Agyeman, 2001). One study draws on anthropological perspectives to examine the history and spatial formation in low-income migrant settlements within GAMA with emphasis on historical processes, leadership and community development (Pellow 2002a). Another touched on the poor health and environmental conditions in informal settlements (Owusu, 2010), while others examined the effect of globalization and neoliberal processes on the perpetuation of urban informal settlements in GAMA (Afenah, 2009; Obeng-Odoom, 2011, Guilespie, 2016). Residents' improvisations in obtaining access to basic infrastructure such as electricity have also been studied (Silver, 2014) while recent

research by Nunbogu and Korah (2016) has revealed a self-organization trait among informal settlement dwellers in the provision of basic amenities. This diversity of empirical studies provides an enriching understanding of characteristics, conditions, and practices in informal settlements. This demonstrates a set of diverse and intricate political, spatial, physical, social and economic processes that underpin the consolidation of urban informal settlements in GAMA.

Nonetheless, little empirical work has focused on residents' social collaboration, collective practices and the spatial dynamics of human behavior in indigenous informal settlements in GAMA. Also, there is, surprisingly, a limited use of spatial organization analysis in understanding indigenous urban informal settlements (Pellow, 2001; Coquery-Vidrovitch, 1991). Such an approach focuses on the spatial dynamics of places by examining relationships between human behavior and their physical environment (Metha, 2013; Lang, 1987) the physical characteristics of a place that facilitate specific uses (Gibson, 1975); and the 'mixture of processes that create our experience of our socio-physical surroundings' (Canter, 1991). Through spatial organization analysis, it is possible to understand the intersections between social and physical factors as well as how informal settlers insert activities and practices into space to deal with their daily urban challenges. For instance, spatial organization analysis has been used to identify the distribution, structure and residents' use of streets to evaluate spatial patterns in old quarters (Oktay, 1998). It has also been used to physically demarcate street space and compound houses to examine the relationship between people and urban space in migrant communities (Pellow, 2001). More recently, scholars have used it to map the physical layout and characteristics of houses to understand living environments in traditional urban districts (Okazaki and Miyake, 2012).

This study, therefore, contributes to existing research on urban informal settlements by focusing on residents' social collaboration and collective practices, social interactions, human behavior and their spatial aspects in the indigenous informal quarter of Abese, in La Dadekotopon Municipality of GAMA. This native quarter, with a distinct spatial organization and social structure, has not received much scholarly research attention compared to other informal areas in GAMA. This research is guided by the observation that cities in Africa are both spatially delineated and culturally differentiated quarters. This implies that the different informal quarters of the city with similar features cannot be subsumed into a single universal

terminology of informal settlements. Thus, through an analysis of social structure, residents' collaborative management system, and human behavior, it is possible to identify the distinctiveness of urban informal quarters, their ordering in space, and practices to understand the urban milieu. It also offers the opportunity to gain insights into practical ways of contextualized community-led planning and design improvement in existing conditions.

1.7 Limitations of the Study

While this study produced a number of interesting results in terms social, behavioral and spatial aspects of informal settlements, there are three key issues that have to be highlighted to properly contextualize the significance of this research. Firstly, the issue of adequate, reliable and verifiable data on urban informal settlements is scanty in Ghana and GAMA specifically. For example, accessible and reliable data on geographical, spatial, economic aspects of indigenous informal areas such as Abese quarter are virtually non-existent. Thus, for the purposes of this study, a Google-generated map was used provide a preliminary understanding of spatial configuration. However, without detailed geographical data over a specific timeline, it was difficult to conceptualize the evolution of the site.

Secondly, some of the residents were unwilling to provide detail information on key aspects such as income for privacy concerns. The study therefore resorted to income ranges instead of absolute income earned. Others also vehemently opposed the physical measurement of their houses even though community leaders had agreed with residents for this purpose. Thus, courtyard and informal open spaces were rather measured and considered for analyses. Again, photography was limited to clan houses and communal areas. Even though pictures are necessary to provide visual tools for understanding people and space, not all areas could be photographed for cultural reasons. In spite of this, the fieldwork was able to capture certain areas to aid visual comprehension in the analyses.

Lastly, this study focuses on the indigenous quarter of Abese in Ladekotopon municipality of GAMA. It however does not comparatively consider the case of other native quarters in municipality. Thus, the results of this study cannot offer generalizations for the municipality or GAMA. In spite of this, the site-specific focus of this study emphasizes the need to understand the peculiarities of individual

informal areas and the relevance of planning interventions that do not generalize but provide context specific interventions for community development and sustainability.

1.8 Structure of the Dissertation

This dissertation emphasizes the paradox of informal settlements as housing significant proportion of the urban population in African cities and yet, its relevance continues to be disregarded and marginalized. It underscores the social vitality, usefulness in the practices and activities of residents in indigenous informal settlements that are essential for enacting inclusive policies and knowledge production. Each of the chapters of this report explores important aspects of this research endeavor.

Chapter 1 provides a general background to the study by placing this research within the current situation of urban informal settlements from the world to the Ghanaian situation. In chapter 2, a critical theoretical and conceptual review of urban informality, informal settlements and self-organization is undertaken. This is to provide the concepts and theories that support this study and helps in understanding its theoretical dimensions. In chapter 3, the methodological approach adopted for the study is narrated. It includes the case study design and the process of data collection and analysis. Chapter 4 explores the urban development process in Ghana, within a historical framework of the colonial and post-colonial era. This enables a comprehension of the historical and structural processes that have contributed to the current state of urban informal settlements in major Ghanaian cities and towns.

In chapters 5 and 6, the study engages the analyses of empirical data from fieldwork. Chapter 5 analyses the residents' social collaboration and collective activities that support their daily urban experiences in the Abese quarter. Chapter 6, however, moves into the spatial dynamics, which emphasizes human behavior in informal open spaces to reveal the interrelations between residents and their physical space. Finally, Chapter 7, the concluding chapter, summarizes the findings from the study and identifies implications and suggestions for promoting community-based, inclusive and locally sensitive planning in the study area and informal settlements in Ghana. The detailed content of each of these chapters is entailed in the subsequent sections that follow this chapter.

CHAPTER TWO

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK: INFORMALITY, INFORMAL SETTLEMENTS AND SELF-ORGANISATION NEXUS

2.1 Introduction

Following the background to this study in the previous chapter, this section of the study relates to a literature discussion of the main theories, concepts, and practices that underpin this research. Specifically, the concept of urban informality and the phenomenon of urban informal settlements are reviewed in its historical and theoretical dimension. More so, the concept of self-organization, which has been recently used in urban studies to analyze civic initiatives and residents' activities, is also reviewed. It is therefore anticipated that this theories and literature review will ground the study and support the discussion of findings in later chapters.

2.2 Conceptualizing Urban Informality

2.2.1 Economic Origins of Urban Informality

The practice of informality is not new, so does studies about it (Roy and AlSayyad, 2004). However, the conception of informality and its underlying assumptions have seen several shifts across the spheres of planning, human geography, and development studies. Hence, a conscious attempt to construct a logical understanding of informality warrants the need to look at its origins. AlSayyad (2004, pp. 10) asserts that any 'discussion of informality must begin with the emergence of the informal sector as a concept in the 1970s'. He further notes that concept of informality is rooted in the descriptions of the movement of labor to cities in the 1950s and 1960s.

The roots of the concept can, therefore, be traced in the work of Arthur Lewis (1954), who proposed a two-sector model for comprehending the association between the movement of people and their employment. Reynolds (1969 in AlSayyad, 2004) further developed this model to mean the 'state sector' and the 'trade-service sector'. Reynolds defines this 'trade-service sector' as the multitude of people seen in the visible parts of the city (such as streets, sidewalks, and back alleys) including petty

traders, street vendors, porters, and artisans among others. This, he also geographically positioned as being in developing countries. However, the empirical origins of informality and application within the urban context emerged through the work of economic anthropologist Keith Hart. Hart (1973) in his study on urban employment in Accra-Ghana argued the case of the 'informal economy', where city dwellers are not necessarily unemployed but involved in activities of low and erratic income. His analysis, primarily from an economic anthropology perspective, is a categorization of activities based on wage earning or self-employment (Okyere and Kita, 2015). In similar conception as that of Reynolds, it suggests a dualistic categorization of activities based on formal (state-controlled) and informal (outside the control of the state). Similarly, Portes (1987) referred to the informal in the terminology of the 'black market': where work contracts, insurances and recorded payments among others do not practically exist. Fundamentally, the central idea is a differentiation of activities in urban areas into a dualistic framework of formal and formal.

The application of this model has been more evident in developing countries through international agencies such as the International Labor Organization (ILO). In their mission report on Kenya, the ILO (1972) used the term 'informal sector' as a terminology, for classifying activities and designing intervention programs in towns and cities in developing countries. Informality, therefore, becomes a 'double provenance', in the words of Hart (2010 in Ojong 2011), reflecting two sides: bureaucracy (development administration) and the people (ethnography). For the ILO (1972 in Ojong, 2011 p.10) informality is characterized by '(a) ease of entry; (b) dependence on indigenous resources; (c) family ownership; (d) small-scale operations; (e) labor-intensive and adaptive technology; (f) skills acquired outside of the formal sector; and (g) unregulated and competitive markets'. Inherently, informality becomes a state of exception (Roy, 2009), in terms of practices and activities that lie outside the norm of what ought to be.

Nonetheless, this understanding of urban informality has come under criticisms over the years. Several scholars (Porters, Castells and Brenton, 1989; Gilbert, 2007, Meagher, 2007, Varley, 2013) have criticized economic dualism as an oversimplified categorization of urban activities. Hence, they claim the need to extend discussions to encompass social, cultural and behavioral matters (Aramburu Guevara, 2014). Others

have also argued against the association of formal/informal with terminologies such as First/Third world, poverty/richness, developed/developing and traditional/modern (Roy, 2007, Aramburu Guevara, 2014). This is because such categorization poses a risk of inflexibility and a limit to transversal analysis. It is, therefore, necessary, scholars argue, to move beyond these dichotomies of First world solutions and Third World problems to adequately conceptualize urban practices and activities (Roy, 2007). Consequently, such criticisms have led to different perspectives on urban informality. The next section briefly underlines some of these perspectives.

2.2.2 Perspectives on Urban Informality

It is commonly agreed that there is still no concerted definition of what urban informality is. As has been evident in academic literature, the conception of informality is largely framed by ideology, discipline and other localizing (e.g. local laws and codes) factors. Thus, even though urban informality has attracted a lot of attention from several disciplines and also within urban literature (Moroni and Chiodelli, 2013), it is this multi-disciplinary interest that makes an applicable definition much difficult.

a). Economic Perspectives

The economic perspective is rooted in the very origins of urban informality, with very little variations, if there is. The term informality is therefore defined as 'a range of behaviors and practices unfolding within cities: the underground economy' (Aramburu Guevara, 2014). It generally concerns income-generating forms of production, worker technology, services or settlement practices that are relatively unregulated by the state or formal institutions. Therefore, the informal city as perceived, is a constitution of 'unregistered economic activities (Tranberg Hansen and Vaa (2004). The previous criticisms still apply here since urban areas are narrowly and simplistically viewed on a set of regulations, that which makes little room for the 'other', that is the non-economic factors evidently at play in urban areas.

b). Legalistic Perspectives

This perspective is principally an extension of the dualism concept to represent illegal and legal dichotomies. From the legal point of view, it 'denotes unofficial modes and strategies, a collection of processes that are not formally sanctioned or

regulated as part of a predefined rule-based procedure' (Roy and AlSayyad, 2004). These may include illegal land transfers, casual or spontaneous interactions, informal occupation, or informal 'behind the scenes' negotiations between developmental actors, etc. (Roy and AlSayyad, 2004). The prominent figure within this perspective is the Peruvian economist Hernando De Soto. In his view, urban informality is a manifestation of a 'survival strategy', an overt response to the excessive state regulations. Indeed, as he asserts, it is a natural response to legal barriers, bureaucratic procedures and also to real market forces (De Soto 2000). What is striking here is a sort of association of urban informality into the realm of the illegal. An association that still emphasizes the anti-regulation conception of urban informality in several African cities. Such legal conceptions continue to be used by politicians and local authorities to justify redevelopment and eviction of informal settlement residents (See Afenah, 2009, Ojong, 2011).

c). Social Forces Perspective

It has become obvious that urban informality is equally, if not more, as social as an economic matter. Several authors (Perlman, 1976, Castells, 1983, AlSayyad, 2004 and Huchzermeyer, 2008) have provided an empirical understanding of sociality and social processes in urban informal activities. For instance, Perlman (1976) in her epic work 'the myth of marginality' reveals the blurred boundaries in the social, cultural and economic systems at play in urban informal settlements. Famous urban scholar John Friedman (1996) extends this, claiming that the social force of informality is a notion of empowerment manifested in self-organization for collective survival of the poor—a sort of opportunity-creating tendency. He also observes an actualization of the principles of the 'moral economy' (reciprocity, voluntarism, etc.) and social power (associations, events, social networks, tolls of production) as a means by which actors organize and improve their living conditions. This observation is of much relevance to this study as it brings to fore the self-organization (social collaboration and activities) element of informal settlement populations; an element this research uses to justify positive practices in informal settlements.

d). Behavioral Perspective

This perspective is the most distinctive and better reflects contemporary patterns of urban informality (See Caldeira, 1996, Roy, 2005, Gelder, 2013). It primarily

concerns individual behavioral patterns that seem oscillatory and non-static. Within this perspective, urban informality is expressed as 'a mode that results from the interweaving of the formal and informal, a sort of mobile and elastic way between legal and illegal' (Roy, 2005). In other words, the 'new' patterns cannot be conceived as confined to a specific group or area, but that which involves a higher degree of mobility where people switch between formal and informal or are interwoven at different situational moments. In addition, Gilbert (2002) writes that the new pattern of urban informality is 'ephemeral' (temporal) and that its contemporary manifestation is shown in the situation where individuals or groups switch between the formal and informal and have both dynamics at the same time. Roy and AlSayyad (2004) expound this by stating that there are several situations where individuals may belong to the formal and informal, at the same time. This phenomenon is not within the so-called marginal but also those in the preferential social status of the population. Thus, both the formal and informal are in a sort of 'entanglement', a dynamic relationship where the formal/informal behaviors change with time through individual or collective behavioral patterns.

This perspective also draws urban informality close to the realms and disciplines such as Environment Behavior Studies (Rapoport, 1990). Though not considered within the subject of urban informal settlements, urban scholar Metha (2007, 2013) has shown in his numerous studies how human behavior observations are also useful to understand the relationship between urban users and the physical setting. This perspective is relevant to this study and has been employed in the analysis to understand how informal residents utilized open spaces and the hints it offers for the physical design and improvement of indigenous informal quarters.

2.3 Urban Informal Settlements

The application of urban informality to human settlements is traced to the Chicago school's description of urbanization in Third World (AlSayyad, 2004). Since then, the socio-spatial conception of urban informal settlements has largely remained marginal. Right from the beginning, it has occupied a 'marginal status' (Abrams, 1964) and painted with a color of poverty (Lewis, 1967). It is geographically positioned in poorer continents and socially associated with 'delinquency, breakdown

and general social malaise' (Hall, 2002 in Lombard, 2014 p. 7-8). In spite of its decades-long persistence, it is widely acknowledged that informal settlements and the process of their formation and perpetuation are not well understood (Roy 2005, Smit, 2006 and Misselhom, 2008 cited in Huchzermeyer, 2008).

Thus, informal settlements, squatter settlements, slums and unplanned towns are some of the popular terminologies adopted in literature (Nguluma, 2003) to describe those parts of a city or urban space thought to be outside the scope of state planning regulation and laws. Gilbert (2007) also asserts the noun 'slum' (used to include informal settlements) has increasingly been considered as 'bad shelter'; used at varying scales: to refer to anything from a house to a large settlement considered to be substandard and inhabited by the poor. Informal settlements are therefore identified with characteristics such as 'irregular land tenure, self-build housing, low level of infrastructure and residents with low incomes' (Lombard, 2014, p. 3). The UN Habitat (2003) identifies it with the following: inadequate access to safe water, inadequate access to sanitation and other infrastructure, poor structural quality of housing, overcrowding, and insecure residential status. Such a definition as Gilbert (2007) argues, ignores the complex social dimensions and over-relies on physical and legalistic categorizations. The UN Habitat (2003a) seemingly acknowledges this weakness, indicating best indicators associated with their work are terms that do not have universally agreed on definitions.

Contrariwise, Hague (1982) has contended that the notion of informal settlements and their association with slums is debatable. Dovey and King (2011) agree, revealing that informal settlements are urban neighborhoods or districts that develop and operate without the formal control of the state, co-existing but are not the same as 'squatter' settlements and 'slums'. In a similar pattern, Myers (2010) assert that not all informal settlements are necessarily slums and not all slums are informal settlements, and not all aspects of the informal economy are confined to informal settlements. Pointedly, the confusion surrounding urban informal settlements demonstrates the marginalization and negative discourses it has received over the years. It is however within this confusion that Huchzemeyer's (2007) contribution becomes important.

Huchzermeyer (2007) insists that informal settlements should be understood as an adverb or verb, not an adjective or noun as these settlements are in a process of constant change. Thus, informality responds to changing structures and pressures and hence, best described as a relative than an absolute concept. The negative connotation of the terminology of slums to informal settlements, as perpetuated by media and international organizations, evokes an urgent response or action, but strangely makes it more 'political than science' (Yelling, 1986 in Gilbert, 2007). It, therefore, stands to reason, that a proper conception of urban informal settlements is critical to formulating appropriate strategies for its development. This proper conception, this study argues, may be achieved by open engagement by researchers to residents' collective activities and human behavior and how it affects experiences, identity, and local sustainability. Either way, the strategies adopted for addressing urban informal settlements, explicitly and implicitly, reflects some of these perspectives.

2.4 Approaches to Urban Informal Settlements Improvement: A Planning Dilemma?

In the course of the last decades, there have been several approaches and interventions aimed at confronting the challenge of urban informal settlements. Spanning across geographies and states, these interventions provide an understanding of the inherent assumptions about urban informal settlements and how institutions have sought to tackle them. The essence of a discussion of past and present approaches in this section of literature, is necessitated on two pillars: (i) to understand the tools and mechanisms that have been adopted (including their weaknesses) and to offer an understanding on how various formulations have changed (if any) over time with respect to policy and strategy. As the UN Habitat (2003) reports, policies have ranged from indirectly ignoring people living in informal settlements to protecting their rights and helping them to improve their income and living environments. They further reveal that, based on comparative policy analysis, past policies are still and currently being used in several cities today. The objective here is not to explore the vast array of approaches (and hence not exhaustive) but to elucidate some of the dominant approaches in literature.

2.4.1 Negligence

The UN Habitat (2003) identifies 'Negligence' as a particular policy approach to informal settlements in developing countries until the 1970s. Documented in the global report 'Challenge of Slums' by the United Nations Commission for Human Settlements, also known as UN Habitat, this approach is premised on the assumptions that informal settlements are illegal and unavoidable temporary phenomenon that will disappear through economic development. This was based on the conception of informal settlements as a negative phenomenon and in effect its non-existence in planning documents of both local and national agencies (UN Habitat, 2003).

The report further argues that the attitude of Negligence was a Post-World War II strategy on subsidized housing in industrialized countries, particularly Europe. The thought was that heavily subsidized low-cost housing supported by economic growth would eventually cause informal settlements to disappear. The main challenge, however, was how developing countries imitated these programs to develop mass public housing aimed at low and middle-income earners. Though in the end, the beneficiaries were middle class, politicians, and government employees. Due to its high cost of delivery and the economic constraints in the post-independence era, this strategy rather created social inequalities and spatial segregation (UN Habitat, 2003) that fostered the informal settlement 'problem' in the developing world.

2.4.2 Eviction

Eviction or selective mass eviction was and continues to be one of the brutal acts against urban informal settlements (Obeng-Odoom, 2013, 2015). Based on the recognition that economic growth will not necessarily drive away the emergence of informal settlements, certain regimes, (e.g. Zimbabwe), resorted to repressive alternatives (Potts, 2007, Rakodi, 2008), through harassment or pressure on informal settlement dwellers. This approach was common in political environments of centralized decision-making, weak local governance and administration, non-democratic urban management, non-recognition of civil society movements and lack of legal protection against forced evictions (Azizi, 1995 cited in UN Habitat, 2003).

With regards to this approach, there are no negotiations offered to informal settlement dwellers, no alternative solutions and actions are justified on grounds of urban renewal projects or provision of basic infrastructure services and facilities in

the city (See Okyere, et al., 2016). Apparently, the effect of this approach, in spite of the threat of removal, rather moved informal settlements to urban fringes and the periphery of the city due to cheap access to land and lack of planning control (Watson, 2009). The remarkable effect of this domain has been the vicious cycle of informal settlements in the periphery of developing cities (or the overcrowding in dilapidated houses in the inner city) and the 'commodification' of informal housing delivery systems (Harvey, 2012).

2.4.3 Sites and Services

Also, emerging in the 1970s and 1980s, this scheme was aimed at mitigating some of the housing problems of the urban poor (Werna & Keivani, 2001 cited in Wekesa, Steyn and Otieno, 2011). Site and service programs comprise the subdivision of 'greenfields' including security of tenure and basic infrastructure to households. Beneficiary households are mandated to construct their own housing units in a manner that their own resources and abilities may afford (CSIR, 2000 cited in Wekesa, Steyn and Otieno, 2011). This scheme emerged due to the inability of national governments to meet housing needs through direct public housing provision as discussed earlier. The popularity of this scheme can be attributed to the influences of the World Bank in a bid to replicate the success of similar approach witnessed by Harvard housing researcher and advocate, John Turner, in the 'barriadas' of Lima, Peru (Balbo, 2001; Wekesa, Steyn and Otieno, 2011, Lombard, 2014).

This approach, albeit appearing pro-poor also failed to a large extent. Some of the reasons attributed to this failure include the low output compared to the high demand Werna & Keivani, 2001). In addition to this, the high project cost led to several target groups unable to meet financial eligibility for selection, and thus, eventually benefitting financially eligible middle-income groups. The location also played a role as some of the sites were on the periphery (due to cheap land), leading to extensive transport costs. Again, there were inadequate technical and financial support, land price increases as a result of speculation and, adoption of locally unsuitable development models (Werna & Keivani, 2001 cited in Wekesa, Steyn and Otieno, 2011). Wekesa et al (2011) note that the major failure of indirect housing programs was that, even though it incorporated self-determination, it did not integrate the socio-economic and political factors for empowering a community.

2.4.4 Settlement Upgrading

Informal settlement upgrading applies to any sector-based intervention in a settlement that results in a quantifiable improvement in the quality of life of target residents (Abbot, 2002). Informal settlements upgrading appears to be one of the most extensively discussed approaches in planning and urban literature. Numerous studies have discussed its origins, mechanisms, successes, and failures over the years (See Baken and van der Linden, 1993, Huchzermeyer, 1999, Balbo, 2001, Abbot, 2002, UN Habitat, 2003, Wekesa et al, 2011). Abbot (2002) traces its origins to work of John Turner (and others) through their focus on incremental housing and the involvement of settlers in housing production. Its popularity, however, was fostered by the World Bank in the 1970s and 1980s as 'the trendsetter in development thinking at that time' and its relation to international communities such as the EU, US and the UN Development organizations (See Baken and van der Linden, 1993, Huchzermeyer, 1999, Abbot, 2002).

It was initially seen as a low-cost alternative and comparatively cheaper to other approaches (UN Habitat, 2003, Wegelin 2004 in Wekesa et al, 2011). It basically involves improvement of the physical environment of a locality. It encompasses the provision or improvement of basic infrastructures such as water and sanitation, solid waste, access roads and footpaths and electricity. It also includes regularizing security of tenure, mostly for private household's home improvement (Wekesa et al, 2015).

The World Bank (1994a, 1994b, and 1995) supported upgrading projects in Indonesia (Kampung), India (Calcutta) and the Philippines (Manila). As it notes, quantitatively, these projects seemed to have been successful by reducing the number of deaths by water-borne diseases, remarkable improvements in households, better livelihoods, and access to recreational and health facilities. But it also acknowledges that 'cheap solutions can have poor outcomes' (UN Habitat, 2003). Bedeviled with government inability to provide services, poor governance and maintenance issues, the impact was no more successful than site and services.

In Africa, settlement upgrading has been impeded by the security of tenure, resource constraints, central planning weakness and capacity issues. Again, early approaches of upgrading were conceptualized on disconnected projects at the neighborhood level rather than a 'policy or programmatic approach' (Wegelin, 2004

in Wekesa et al, 2011). Abbot (2002) mentions that in spite of several approaches within informal upgrading approach, none has been able to deal with informal settlements in totality.

2.4.5 Housing Delivery and mode of Production

Different modes of delivery and production have aimed at supporting the urban poor in informal settlements with adequate, meaningful and affordable housing that fosters the social and economic well-being. Wekesa et al (2011) in their literature review on approaches to informal settlements identify these schemes to include self-help housing, cooperative housing, and social housing. In the model of self-help housing, the authors mention that the future occupants provide the time, labor and materials employed in conventional housing. United Nations New Millennium Task Force supports this model as the most appropriate and inexpensive alternative in developing countries (UN Habitat, 2005 in Wekesa et al, 2011).

Cooperative housing has been much explored and implemented in Europe. In Africa (where it has been rarely employed) it does not usually extend to the poor, even though it produces affordable housing because of government subsidies and the removal of profit goals (Wekesa et al, 2011).

Social housing, on the other hand, is conceptualized on the notion that government should provide housing to those in need of subsidized rent. It is also non-profit and also allows private sector participation. Vitally, it offers tenure security to the poor and ensures the participation in administration and management. The weakness, however, is the inherent assumption that the poor have extra money to spend on housing; which is normally not the case. In reality, the poor have irregular incomes and mostly unemployed (Wekesa et al, 2011).

As the foregoing discussions have shown, there have and indeed continues to be several approaches to informal settlements. It is also noticeable that there is an urgent need to develop the most appropriate strategy for urban informal settlements. However, the caution of Jones and Ward, quoted below, is noteworthy:

> *'...that the main advantages of informal housing processes derive precisely from their informal nature of being able to evade much of the costs (building permits,*

adherence to regulations, taxes) inherent in the formal process. Therefore, any attempts to gain benefits of informality ***through imitating the processes in a formal setting*** *will inherently lead to failure' (Jones and Ward, 1994 in Wekesa et al, 2011, emphasis added).*

This research follows this caution that a better approach will emerge from residents' informal activities and practices or informal processes. Perhaps, this is the fundamental flaw in most approaches and necessitates a rethinking, in the least terms.

2.5 Emerging Paradigms on Urban Informal Settlements

Globally, there is an urbanization transition in place, creating significant patterns and processes of change across social, political, economic, spatial, and even environmental spheres. These exert important implications for the conception of informal settlements, at least in the developing world where most of these transitions are taking place. Accordingly, growing literature within planning and urban studies are directing towards a new paradigm. That is contemporary urban processes in developing countries that reinforce the need for rethinking the conventional understanding of urban informal settlements. This section emphasizes three important themes eliciting an emerging paradigm on urban informal settlements. These include urban informal settlements driving urban expansion, informal provision of basic services and socio-spatial qualities.

2.5.1 Urban Informality as a 'Mode of Urbanization'[1]

Urban informality is no longer considered a 'residual or transitory category' but an integral element of the dynamics of most cities in the global South (Kriebich, 2012). Roy (2005) posits a paradigm shift from the earlier conventional notion of informality as a sector to a 'mode'. She argues 'informality, once associated with the poor squatter settlements is now a generalized 'mode' of metropolitan urbanization'. Thus, informal housing and land markets are not necessarily the preserve of the poor but very important for the middle class and even the elite of the Second World and Third World cities (Roy and AlSayyad, 2004).

[1] This terminology is adopted from Roy (2005) as an expression of the *means* of urban growth in several cities in the Global South. By mode, she refers the means or the process itself through which urbanization occurs much of the developing world.

Moreover, Ahmed Soliman (2004)[2] states that informality is no longer the domain of the poor but has also become a primary avenue of the lower middle and middle class. The representation of informality as a mode, according to Roy is visible in many parts of the World. She further argues that metropolitan expansion is 'being driven by informal urbanization' (Roy, 2005). According to Aguilar and Ward (2003 cited in Roy, 2005), there is a polycentric expansion (which is the incorporation of small towns and rural peripheries) in the dispersed Metropolitan region in Mexico. In the context of Southeast Asia, Roy (2005) citing McGee (1991) labels similar expansion of Metropolitan area that signals a complex hybridity of rural and urban functions and forms. Roy (2005) therefore posits that these dynamic rural/urban interfaces, occurring in many parts of the world are constructed through forms of informality that include labor flows and housing types that constitute life 'at the bottom of the urban economy' (Breman, 2003 cited in Roy, 2005).

Furthermore, in Africa, informality has become pervasive and permeating, occurring even in formal settlements—a situation better expressed 'formal informalities' (Meagher, 2005; Brown, 2006, Rakodi, 2008). Metropolitan regions, therefore, have become a key location of informal practices of both rich and poor.

2.5.2 Informal Provision of basic facilities and services (Improvisations)

One significant element that demands the need to rethink earlier conceptions of urban informal settlements, noted in planning literature, is improvisations in the provision of basic facilities and services and resident aspirations and actions toward material changes (See Lombard, 2014; Simone, 2004; Lanzani, 2003; Soliman, 2004; Curci, 2012). However, for the purposes of this research, the informal provision of basic (and common) services is considered.

One basic feature of informal settlements is the lack or poor state of basic services and facilities. Sanitation, water, electricity, and transport are pictured in their most awful terms. However, one of the ways the process of urban informality has changed in recent times is a paradoxical situation where there is an informal self-organization for the provision of basic (public) facilities and services required for

[2] Ahmed Soliman contributed a paper titled Titling at Spines of Greater Cairo and Alexandria in which he examines the diversity and complexity of informal housing types. He indicates new forms of informal development that supports Roy's representation of informality as a mode than sector due to its complex and bizarre intersections.

improving living conditions. These services are however provided in market oriented, flexible and efficient way. The situation is expressed as:

> *"More flexible than the concessionaires, independent informal operators can respond more easily to rapid changes in demand linked to the growth of unplanned urban areas. They offer a wide variety of services close to where people live, allowing them to select the most convenient. They adapt to the limitations of their clients 'needs and income, and communicate face-to-face with their clients rather than at a distance and through the time-consuming bureaucratic procedures of the concessionaires."* (Collignon and Vezina, 2000:59-60 cited in Aramburu Guevara, 2014).

Hence, even though traditionally certain basic services would not have existed, emerging trends suggest these services are appearing in informal settlements. In furtherance of this, there are indications that these services also provide livelihood opportunities for informal settlement dwellers as well as its effectiveness and efficiency in delivery (Gilbert, 2002; Biesinger and Richter, 2007 in Aramburu Guevara, 2014).

2.5.3 Socio-Spatial Qualities in Urban Informal Settlements

Contrary to conventional views, emerging literature is pointing to qualities within the socio-spatial aspects of urban informal settlements. Beton (2010) and Ejigu (2011) reveal that even though there are many problems that threaten its dwellers, informal settlements have shown to favor the poor and contribute to their livelihoods than the 'formal' city does. Both agree that many of the qualities that are absent in formally planned housing areas are found in informal settlements. What real qualities do they possess? Several Studies (Gouverneur, 2015; Lombard, 2014; Correa 1989; Holston 1989; Caves 2005) have highlighted the socio-spatial qualities of informal settlements. In particular reference to the African context, Ejigu (2011) asserts informal settlement could contain qualities such as:

- Qualities in the process of formation which involves successful layers of negotiation, appropriation and efficient utilization of spaces, innovative approaches inherent in the designing of smaller detail
- Compactness, environmental qualities, flexibility of design and use of spaces, hierarchy and flow of spaces,

- Diversity of spaces for specialized and temporal uses,
- They are built by dwellers and hence responds accurately to their needs
- Continuous process of transformation (and flexibility) makes them adaptable to changing life and economic situations.
- They are integrative as they accommodate social and economic mix of residents
- They include rich network of social interaction among residents and hence a high social capital

These qualities are, though at a theoretical level, important to this research as it analyses residents' collective activities and behaviors that may empirically prove some of these qualities. If rightly so, then Mills (2014) argument that there is the need to identify and build on these qualities is noteworthy. However, to be able to capture the rationale and support for resident activities and behaviors, a brief review of the notion of informal human behavior and 'mixity' patterns within the context of informal settlements is prudent. Following this, we will look at how this is manifested through residents' activities by engaging the concept of 'self-organization'.

2.6 Informal Human Behaviors and Urban 'Mixity'

Informal human behaviors constitute a set of individual and collective activities and practices, both within and outside state norms or regulation (Roy, 2005; Gilbert, 2002). In the context informal settlement research, informal behaviors are conceived as the 'human agency' of places that operate outside the scope of planning norms and regulations, although it sometimes operates within a set of formal manipulations and limitations (Roy, 2011). As Huchzemeyer (2008) argues, when informal housing, as produced through informal behavior, is a considered as a verb, that is a system of changing human/behavioral practices, it helps to comprehend the spatial dynamics and local needs rather than mere conditions and negative narratives.

However, informal behavior and its spatial component can be properly captured when placed within Environmental Behavior Studies (EBS). Within EBS, human behavior entails a set of individual and collective activities that occur due to interactions between people and their setting [Rapoport, 1990; Metha, 2013]. While the social

component of this interaction relates to meetings and conversations between residents or neighbors (Metha, 2013), the setting, or behavior setting (Baker, 1968), refers to the physical layout, the human pattern and the relationship between them (Baker, 1968). It is through this setting that human behavior and need is "afforded"—that is the physical characteristics that allow for specific activities or uses to occur at specific places (Gibson, 1979). The idea also includes patterns of human behavior to fulfill everyday purposes and the resources needed to support them (Perin, 1970). But this process of fulfillment may also include 'personalization': where a group of individuals personalize aspects of space and condition it for social interaction (Metha, 2013). However, it is the territorial flexibility and adaptability to different behaviors and needs that make this personalization of urban spaces possible (Metha, 2013). Thus, in as much as physical layout and characteristics of space may simplify or complicate the setting, it is through territorial gestures, social interactions, the sale of goods and services and leisure that the relationship with the physical context is clearly understood (Metha and Bosson, 2010; Rapoport, 1990). Either way, it is generally agreed that tracking human behavior provides one of the possibilities for understanding the physical environment; for example, streets and public spaces and the comfort or anxiety that they afford. Thus, using direct observation (faculty of sight) and descriptive analysis, one can evaluate neighborhoods and their qualities to improve urban experiences by altering the design and physical aspects of settlements (Cullen, 1961).

It is thus within this conceptualizing of human behavior and their spatial settings that the concept of 'mixity' emerges. The term relates to indigenous urban tissue and the patterns of human behavior in urban space (Baumeister and Knebel, 2009). It also refers to a combination of social strata, functions (or activities) and economies. It denotes the observation of mixed activities that include different groups (or users), the social and economic activities that occur within the indigenous (yet unplanned) or historical enclaves of an old city (Baumeister and Knebel, 2009). Mixity is functional and includes uses and activities within urban space that foster integration of uses and users rather than separation (Clérc, 2011). This is a quality that can promote the renewal of urban informal settlements; useful for understanding the social and economic 'fate' that surround daily practices in informal settlements (Clérc, 2011). According to Wankiewicz (2012) mixity also includes the young and the old, their

human behavior patterns in space, and their expression of everyday needs. For the most part, scholars argue that mixity is not only a trend or phenomenon but also a planning and policy goal, which reflects the integration and functionality of urban places and spaces.

For the purposes of this research, informal human behavior entails individual or group activity observed as residents' interaction with the physical configuration of space (spatial setting). Social interaction refers activities or interactions between residents' as part of observed human behavior. Urban mixity, therefore, represents different patterns of human behavior within a defined space— an integration of spaces, uses, and users. It is also a mechanism through which we can understand the relationships between social interactions and human behaviors, as well as human needs within a local spatial context.

2.7 The Concept of Self-Organization

Self-organization is related to 'complex adaptive theories', which states that society is made of up large components and interactions which are difficult to manage (Boonstra and Boelens, 2011; Klijn and Snellen 2009). Self-organization points to the complexity that characterizes contemporary human society and the need for adaptive systems through interactions. In line with this, Nunbogu and Korah (2016) intimate that human behavior is sometimes self-organized by the way human beings work with local information through direct and indirect interactions with the environment.

Even though the concept of self-organization is observable in chemistry, natural environment and philosophy, there are three main areas in which self-organization is interpreted in the urban setting. According to Boonstra and Boelens (2011), these include economic, spatial and socio-political perspectives. Noble Prize economist, Paul Krugman emphasizes the economic aspect, referring to self-organization as the systems that spontaneously form alternative large-scale patterns. He uses self-organization to explain how economies organize themselves in time and over space, especially in terms of the way cities differentiate themselves in specialized districts. He further states the self-organization appears in cities where no planning or zoning predefines the layout of the city (Krugman, 1996 in Boonstra and Boelens, 2011). This indirectly points to the state of informality in cities in developing world, where

residents have self-organized to adapt to the complexity of city life amidst the failure of planning apparatus to deal with such complexities (See Silver, 2014, Roy, 2011; Simone, 2004).

In terms of spatial interpretation, Portugali (2000) refers to the city as a self-organization system. The city is therefore composed of infrastructural layers—spaces of houses, parcels of land, a network of streets, among others—and on top of that a superstructure layer of free agents. In this sense, he maintains that the city is a reciprocal initiative of actors, interacting with the spatial developments that are in turn a product of collective actions (Portugali, 2000 in Boonstra and Boelens, 2011). By extension, such interactions are observed in the socio-spatial groups that are formed within the city (e.g. NGOs, neighborhood/community associations), often defined by certain geographic, social and cultural characteristics, seen in the many different quarters of African cities.

The concept of self-organization is given a socio-political definition in the work of Christian Fuchs (2006) on social movements. In this context, social movements are seen as self-organizing systems because they have an internal logic that arises from spontaneity. Thus, different entities become networked, cooperative and synergetic to produce novelty (Fuchs, 2006 in Boonstra and Boelens, 2011). This proposition by Fuchs emphasizes the mechanisms through which different actors in the city build on networks and relationships to develop the necessary capital (be it social or economic) to oppose unfavorable political and social policies. This also points to civil society organizations, associations, and federations, which network to collectively support their communities and thereby produce qualities through collective action (See Grant, 2009).

2.7.1 Self-Organization and Planning

Based on the above, the concept of self-organization is, therefore, necessary for urban planning to move away from the traditional perspective of the city as operating under the planning machine of guidance and control. Rather, it aids in comprehending the city as a composition of multiple processes of citizen initiatives (in addition to government interventions) with the capacity to introduce unique qualities in urban settings. In support of this, Portugali (2006) considers the city as an open, complex, self-organizing system. Such a consideration, he continues, would make local plans

effective in shaping the city. But how can this be done? Boonstra and Boelens, (2011) propose that planners adopt an 'outside-in' instead of the current 'inside-out' approach where planning actions are influenced by government and institutions. This suggests acknowledgement of the collective actions and interventions of residents and citizens, civil society and non-governmental actors in the shaping of the city.

Furthermore, it implies that planners adopt an open and unbiased view, to deal with the socio-spatial initiatives of those outside the technical planning process (Nunbogu and Korah, 2016). This statement is of particular significance to this research. This is because it has become all too common for governments in the developing world to disregard collective initiatives and resident practices in low-income communities as informal, un-modernized and threatening capitalist urban development of the city (Harvey, 2012; Obeng-Odoom, 2011). As will be shown in the analysis of the study, residents' collective activities and behaviors, on the contrary, can provide alternative mechanisms for improving conditions in impoverished settlements.

2.7.2 Self-Organization and cities in Sub-Saharan Africa (SSA)

The importance of the concept of self-organization is perceived in the developing world, especially Sub-Saharan Africa (SSA). The recent State of the World cities report indicate much of the transformations in the 21st century is occurring in the developing world, and cities in SSA are growing fastest in the world (UN Habitat, 2016). Urbanization is SSA is much different from the developed world in terms of rate, and socio-economic factors, which are occurring within a system of weak planning capacity. Self-organization, therefore, dominates the urban process and practices. Self-organization here includes, but not limited to, individual and collective practices of urban residents for survival, expressed in informal and indigenous practices to attain an appreciable level of urban comfort. Consequently, informal settlements—which are typically underpinned by self-organized activities—represent about 55.9 percent of the urban population in Africa (UN Habitat, 2016).

In Ghana, for example, Yeboah and Shaw (2013) reveal that local conditions and discretions dictate the pace and the overall configuration of physical development. Thus, the transformation of towns and cities is hardly influenced by statutory or planning policy but rather at the mercy of private landholders, capitalist investors and

residents. Others have also noted that residents have been pushed into self-organized practices due to restrictions on building materials and unrealistic planning standards (Korah, 2015). Unsurprisingly, the trajectory of everyday activity in urban Africa is informality and informal settlements (Myers, 2009).

Therefore, the lack of attention to self-organization explains why the poor cities of Africa are overlooked in terms of spatial planning and land use rights (Parnell and Pieterse, 2010). Resident initiatives, civic activities, and self-organization that could offer an opportunity for planning in Africa to embrace the positive aspects of informal settlements are rarely part of mainstream planning. Based on the foregoing, this study argues that paying attention residents activities and behavior in socio-spatial settings may be one of the ways of undoing what Njoh (2013) calls 'the supplanting of indigenous African practices in the built environment'. Therefore, the analysis in this study emphasizes some of these activities and observed behaviors in informal open spaces.

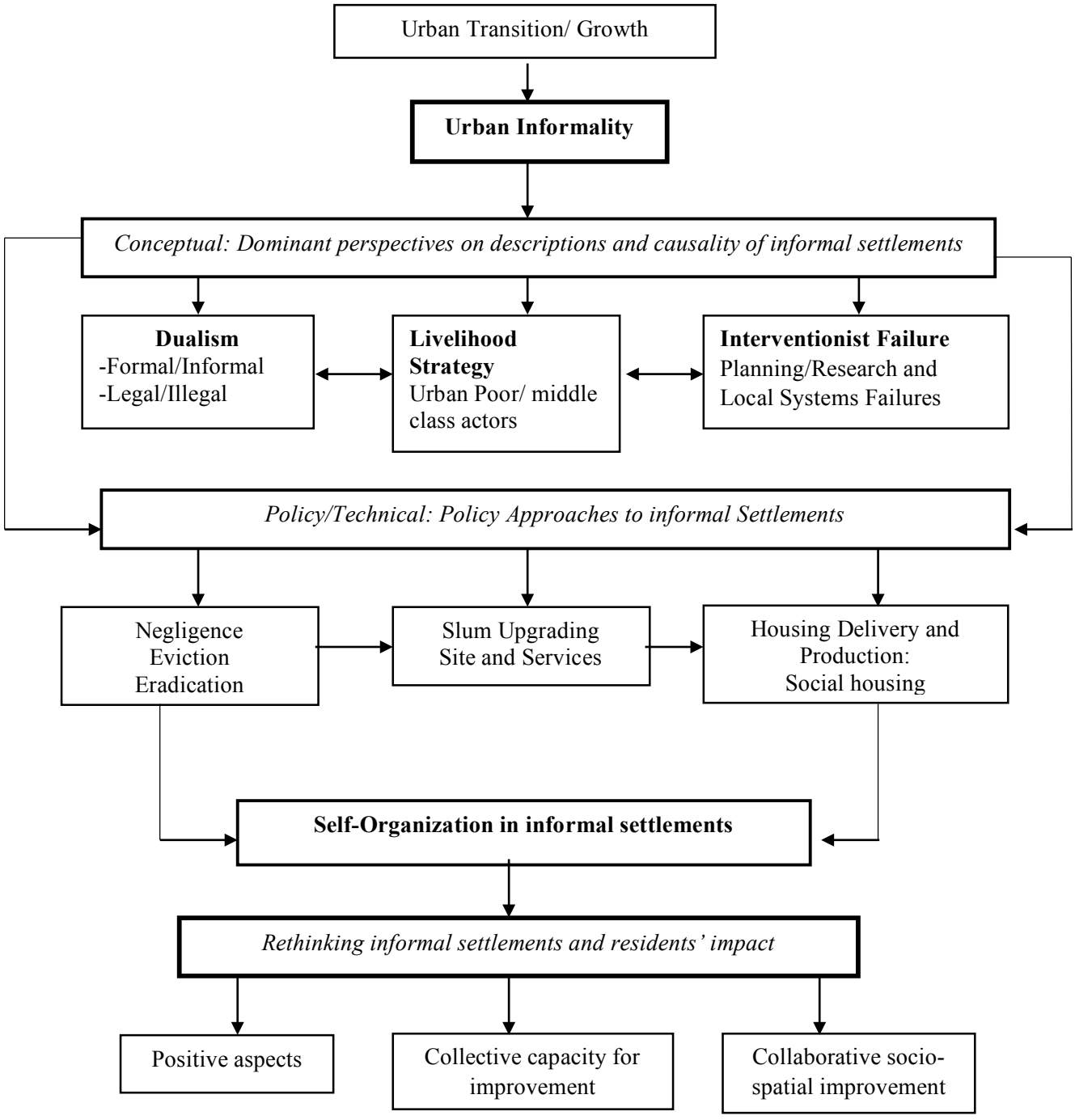
2.8 Conclusion

The chapter aimed at presenting a theoretical construction on the concepts of urban informality, 'mixity', self-organization, and the terminology of urban informal settlements. This review indicated the different perspectives on urban informality and its application to human settlements. It has been shown that there are socio-spatial qualities evident in the so-called unplanned settlements. Self-organization as a concept appears to provide a theoretical frame to explain residents' activities and behaviors and how they manifest in the social, economic and economic dimensions of informal settlements. These different patterns of human behaviors denote the notion of 'mixity' as presented in this chapter.

Figure 2.1 is a representation of the conceptual framework for this study. This has been thematically categorized into three main levels. Level one as described before, is concerned with earlier descriptions on the phenomenon of informality, mainly in the form of dualistic perspectives that sought to differentiate between the formal and informal as distinct patterns. Again, the narrative on the causality for informal settlements was basically expressed in terms of the failure of the state apparatus and the survivalist strategies of the urban poor. The second level presents

the policy and or technical approaches formulated to deal with urban informality. Apparently emanating from the perspectives on causality, they included policies of negligence that later led to upgrading and mass housing initiatives. The legacy of these approaches can be seen, however, in the perpetuity of informal settlements and the visible failure of planning interventions. What is emerging, as presented in the last level of Figure 2.1, is the need to rethink urban informality and informal settlements in a context-specific and locally relevant manner. Maybe, this will emerge from paying a little more attention to the locally based self-organized informal activities and practices of informal residents. This, of course, is the underlying aim of this research.

It the next chapter, the methodology for the study in terms of the steps and processes undertaken for the collection, analysis and interpretation of secondary and primary data are discussed.



Source: Author's elaboration, 2017

Figure 2.1: Conceptual Framework

CHAPTER THREE

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.1 Introduction

The previous chapter explored the conceptual and theoretical framework, which underpins this research through literature reviews. The case for this chapter is to define the procedures, methods, and instruments employed to address research questions. Issues of research design, data collection, techniques for data collection and analysis as well as the rationale for the selection of the specific case study are considered.

3.2 Research Design

The research design is a critical element in empirical studies as it sets itself as the means to connecting questions to empirical situations. Yin (2009) reveals that every research has an implicit or explicit research design. The research design refers to the logical sequence of logical activities that connect the study's research questions to its conclusions. It comprises the outline of various stages involved in the exercise and serves as a plan that guides in the process of collecting, analyzing and interpreting observations (Agbesinyale, 2003 cited in Baah-Ennumh, 2012). It thus commences with a set of questions at the beginning and ends with conclusions or answers to the questions. This is similar to a work plan, but more than that, since one aims to avoid the situation where evidence does not address questions (Yin, 2009). In effect, the research design is a logical problem than a logistic problem (Baah-Ennumh, 2012).

The research design can, therefore, be conceived as providing the overarching framework for undertaking the field research. It sets the methodological boundary within which strategies and techniques are explored and utilized for the successful undertaking of a research. It includes the problem statement, the emerging questions from the problem description, the objectives and the underpinning hypothesis, the process of obtaining field data as well as the techniques for analyzing and interpreting such data.

3.2.1 Case Study Research Strategy

The case study strategy was adopted as the main research method for this study. Yin (1994) posits that it is an 'an empirical inquiry that seeks to understand a contemporary phenomenon in its real-life context, especially when the boundaries between phenomenon and context are not evidently clear and in which multiple sources of evidence are used'. Bell (2004) indicates that the case study approach or strategy is useful for an in-depth study about a phenomenon in a limited time where large-scale results may not be appropriate. Case study design thus allows for an intense study of any analysis that are often overlooked. It is very useful for studying several units of social life including an individual, group and community among others (Theordorson and Theordorson, 1969 cited in Yeboah, 2008).

The selection of the case study approach is conditioned and justified on the very nature of this research. As Yin (2009) indicates, case study is to understand a phenomenon in real life context, and so did this study. The study also used descriptive case study method. This was due to the aim of this study: to analyze social collaboration and resident's activities and human behaviors in urban formal settlements. Moreover, to identify how such activities can provide support future planning and development of informal settlements. Thus, the purpose and aim of this study mandated, with its empirical nature, the selection of the case study to assure relevance of the findings.

The main weakness of this approach is that it offers little in generalizations or application to other areas (Yin, 1994 cited in Nguluma, 2003). With respect to this research study, the aim is not to make generalizations but to reinforce the need for context-specific understanding and future improvement of urban informal settlements by recognizing unique attributes and support indigenous activities and dynamics.

3.2.2 Justification for the selection of the study area

The Abese informal quarter of La Dadekotopon district was selected for two main reasons. First, it is one of the most important municipal assemblies in Ghana; in terms of the high-class residential, commercial and cultural facilities it hosts. For example, the only International Airport in Ghana, the Accra Mall (one of the biggest in Ghana) and Cantonments area (embassies and diplomatic residences). Yet, it has one of the most indigenous informal settlements, with a long pre-colonial history, but

has seen no significant improvement from local authorities. The co-existence of a so-called highly formalized area and an indigenous informal settlement was an interesting case from the researcher's perspective. Thus, the study area shows how the formal and informal can coexist, with no particular attention to the informal area.

Additionally, the specific selection of Abese settlement within the La Township was due to the aims of this research. Abese quarter, one of the seven divisions of La Township, is considered a matured legal informal settlement (AMA/UN Habitat, 2011, LaDMA, 2013) with indigenous socio, physical and cultural patterns distinct from other settlements in the district. The residents' continuous exercise of local identity and sustainability of local life was appealing in a research perspective.

Furthermore, in comparison with other informal settlements in GAMA, Abese quarter have not been widely engaged, in both research and policy strategies. As other areas have been researched on economic and spatial themes (e.g. Ga Mashie, Agbobloshie, Nima, etc.), little consideration has been given to resident actions in this historical area. Hence, the site offered a very good case for a case study research to provide critical inputs into urban literature and implications to planning practice.

This procedure follows Simon's suggestion that selecting a case, especially one of geographical significance, implies the need to consider geographical location, the willingness of institutions and people to be studied and opportunity where the researcher lives. Again, Patton (1987 cited in Nguluma, 2003) writes that cases are relevant where one can identify rich information— that a great deal can be learned from few examples of a phenomenon.

3.2.3 Methods of Data Collection and Analysis

The study made extensive use of qualitative techniques: physical observation and non-participant observation, interviews and focus group discussions. The details of the various qualitative instruments are described below.

a). Interviews

There were two field visits that were organized in the process of data collection for this study. In both field visits, interviews were used as a technique in obtaining vital information about resident collective activities, use of space and human behaviors. The first fieldwork was undertaken from November to December 2015.

During this fieldwork, 120 semi-structured interviews (including the head of clan, residents, and community representatives) were conducted in the study area. The interviews included all clan houses in the study area. Heads of the clan houses (18), residents (96) and women's group representative (2) and members of community council (4) were interviewed. Specifically, two household respondents were selected from each clan based on two criteria: position as head of household and local knowledge (well-informed about house and settlement activities). Since there were multiple households in each house, this criterion was used to select respondents for the interview.

Interestingly, in all house residents easily identified and selected such persons. Then, such persons were contacted and a convenient time sought for the interview to be conducted. On three occasions, selected persons were not available and hence house occupants had to be contacted again to suggest another person. Most of these interviews were recorded, transcribed verbatim and in some cases translated from native Ga Language to the English (Ghana's official language).

During the second fieldwork (November 2016), 10 semi-structured interviews were organized in the study area. Respondents were community facility managers (8) and members of the community council (2). This is because the focus of the second fieldwork was to understand the spatial dynamics of human behavior and system for managing communal facilities in the study area.

b). Measurements

Physical measurements were organized during the study. Basically**,** this included measurement of open spaces, roads and alleys. The physical dimension of courtyard spaces was also measured. These measurements were to help in understanding the spatial patterns and distribution of spaces in the study area. It is, however, worthy to note that individual houses and plots were not measured because local residents were anxious about such exercise.

c). Focused Group Discussion

Focused group discussions were organized during both field works in the study area. Within this context, the multiple household members inside the clan houses were organized for informal discussions. An interview guide was prepared to

aid group discussions. Residents were free to express their opinion on questions on their participation in community meetings, events and activities, their satisfaction and living experiences, social support and welfare, housing transformation and among others. The gender and age mix in these group discussions provided useful information on collective activities and social collaboration in the study area. In all, about six (6) focused group discussions with an average membership of six (6) were organized.

Furthermore, the researcher also participated in eight (8) community meetings in the study area. These community meetings are organized on Sundays in each clan house for residents to deliberate on community issues and offer ideas for improvement. Participation in these meetings was useful to comprehend the social and cultural dynamics that support residents' collective activities and experiences in the study area.

c). Direct Observation

Observation was significantly used during this research. Using the 'faculty of sight' (Cullen, 1961), daily activities were observed in terms of the use of spaces and resident activities. This included observation of communal spaces like streets, alleys, courtyards, etc., and the social significance of these areas. Unstructured observation was conducted in open spaces to support observation and map human behavior (Morning, Afternoon and Evening). Again, the study observed housing transformation practices, ongoing modifications and use of space. Non-participant observation was adopted for family and community meetings. In this case, the researcher participated in the meetings, noted key points and recorded interactions but did not contribute to matters being discussed.

d). Photography

As it is popularly asserted, a 'picture says a thousand words'. Photographic images are important sources of evidence for fieldwork. They do not only support the analysis of field observation but also help in the interpretation and reporting of field data. Self-taken images were taken to support interviews during the research. Pictures covered different elements of housing, use of space and social deliberation among others. Table 3.1 illustrates the research variables and the associated data collection methods.

Table 3.1: Research Variables and Data Collection Framework

Aspect	Analysis of Variables	Objective	Methods of Data Collection
Social collaboration and residents' activities	Forms of deliberation, social support, communal activities in housing, collaborative house transformation. Use of common spaces, building materials, etc.	To analyze social collaboration and residents' collective activities in informal settlements	Interview with key informants and household heads, focused group discussions, social observations.
Management of communal facilities	Types of communal facilities, system for maintenance and management	To analyze social collaboration and residents' collective activities in informal settlements	Interview with key facility managers, field observation, mapping
Human Behavior in informal open spaces	Hierarchy and distribution of spaces, time-based observation of human behavior in open spaces	To examine the spatial dynamics of interaction and human behavior in informal open spaces	Behavior mapping, photography and unstructured observation

Source: Author's Elaboration, 2017.

3.3 Data Analysis

Data from the field was analyzed mainly qualitatively. Thus, through content analysis, direct quotes and thematic organization of responses. Responses were analyzed using notes, audio recordings, and sketches. SPSS and MS Excel were basically used to organize data on the characteristics of respondents and resident's satisfaction and living experiences. Mapping, using google maps were used to understand spatial organization of the quarter. Without any existing and updated map of the quarter, the google map was useful to help preliminary data collection and mapping of spatial patterns.

3.4 Conclusion

This chapter has elaborated the generally methodological framework for undertaking this research study. It has also stressed adoption qualitative methodologies based on descriptive nature of this research. The main methodology was based semi-structured interviews in addition to photography, group discussions and, observations. In essence, this dedicated chapter on methodology is intended to readers in Ghana an explanation of the procedures and tools used for this study.

CHAPTER FOUR

HISTORICAL OVERVIEW OF URBAN DEVELOPMENT IN GHANA

4.1 Introduction

In order to be able to appreciate the current urban situation in the study area, a historical review of urban development in Ghana is necessary. Specifically, this is considered in lieu of the colonial and postcolonial dynamics that has fostered the unequal attention to varying settlements, disregard for indigenous (and informal) areas and eventual generation of informal communities. In view of this, this section of the report provides a narrative on the development and formation of urban settlements in Ghana (including Accra) within the periods of pre-colonial, colonial and independence era and the corresponding impact on the development of urban informal settlements. Different periods and their associated policies have had an influential effect on the formation, role and position of urban settlements in the country.

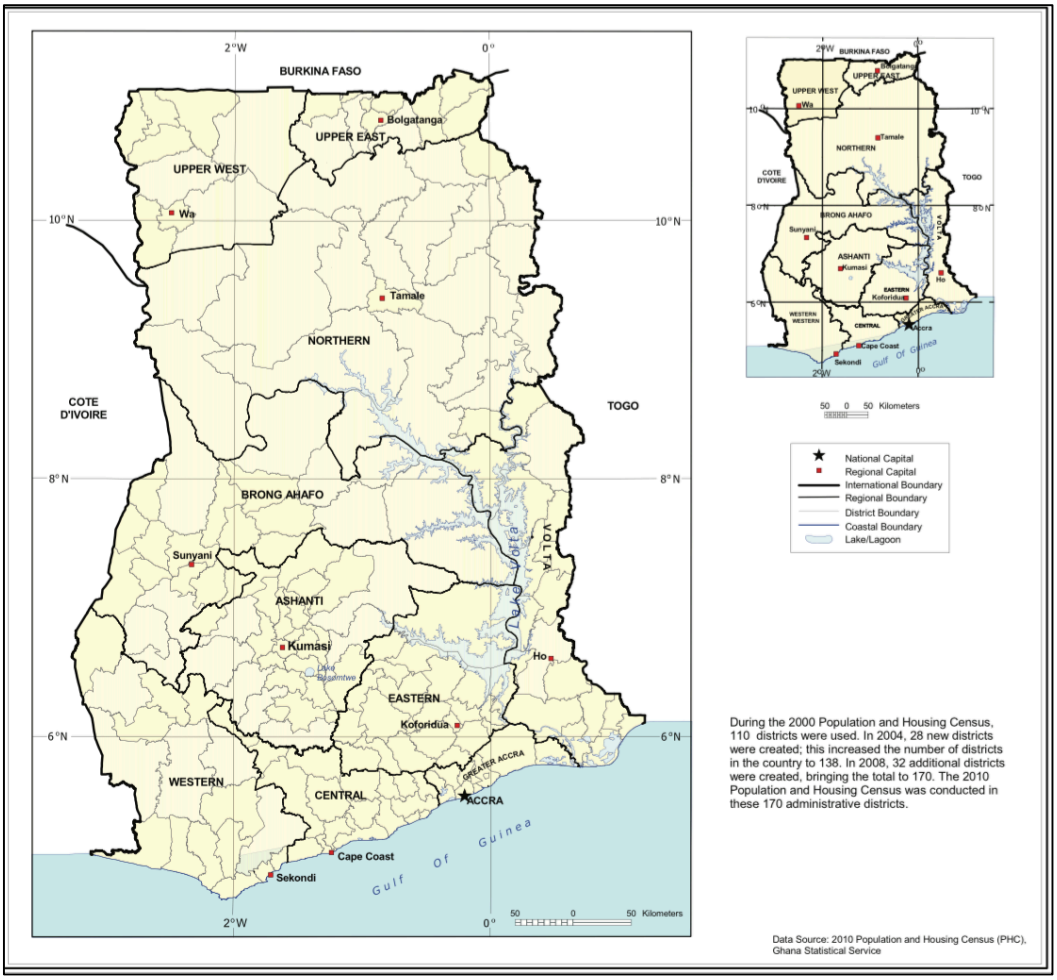
4.2 Brief Introduction on Ghana

Ghana is a country situated in the western part of Africa. Geographically, it is located on Latitudes 4^o and 12^o N and longitude 4^o W and 2^o E. It shares national boundaries with Ivory Coast to the West, Togo to the East, Burkina Faso to the North and the Gulf of Guinea (Sea) to the south. It has a total surface area of 239, 460km^2. Formerly known as the Gold Coast, Ghana was the first sub-Saharan African country to gain full independence from British colonial rule in 1957. In spite of intermittent episodes of military rule, the country has since remained one of the 'more prosperous and stable democracies' in Africa (Weeks, et al, 2013).

Administratively, Ghana is divided into ten regions (Figure 4.1) with further sub-divisions into generic districts (Metropolitan, Municipal and districts in a decentralized system). The 2010 population and housing census recorded the total population as 24,658,823 (GSS, 2012). Like many other African countries, Ghana is experiencing rapid urban population growth of 4.4 percent (World Bank, 2015) with diverse spatial, economic and social patterns across the country. Accra is the capital city and seat of government. Even though Accra's urban primacy (in terms of share of total population) has reduced from 24 to 16 percent between 1984 and 2010, it still

functions as the most urbanized with the high concentration of economic functions and the destination of internal migration (World Bank, 2015).

As a country, Ghana has evolved through different political, social, spatial and economic processes that have both affected and influenced current dynamics of urban development. The following section emphasizes the urban development aspects from a historical perspective.



Source: Ghana Statistical Service Atlas, 2013.

Figure 4.1: Map of Ghana showing administrative regions

4.3 Evolution of Towns and the Urban Development Process

4.3.1 Pre-colonial Era

Before the onset of direct colonization by Europeans, commerce and trade were the bedrock of state formation (Songsore 2010) in Gold Coast and the significance of towns was seen in their role as centers in the commercial system. In other words, the functionality of these spatial entities was defined in their role in supporting commerce and trade, particularly in the Western African region (Gugler and Flanagan, 1978, Grant, 2009). In effect, centers that were located among major trading routes became important urban settlements in the pre-colonial spatial system.

This was especially the case in northeastern and northwestern parts of Northern Ghana. The significance of the commercial centers and towns was due to their strategic location along the western Sudan trade routes but also the presence of commodities such as gold, kola nut, ivory—which were important commodities between 11th and 16th century AD (Dickson, 1970 in Songsore, 2010). Towns in the northern part of Ghana such as Salaga, Walewale, Savelugu and Kumasi among others became important town/commercial centers due to their functionality in the trading system.

However, this era also saw the first appearance of Europeans along the coast. The appearance of Europeans along the coast set the tone for a shift in the entire urban system, radically different from the pre-colonial era (Mabogunje, 1968, 1990; McNulty, 1969). As Songsore (1979, 2010) asserts, the arrival of the Europeans contributed to the disintegration of the old Western Sudan trade, which previously made towns in northern Ghana very important in an urban system of trade and commerce. The focus shifted to a new urban system in the southern part of the Gold Coast[3] (now Ghana). Particularly, the Atlantic Ocean, located in the southern border, which was hitherto a barrier, became the starting point and the catalyst for a new urban system that is centered on the coast and forest regions of Ghana (Garret, 1976 in Songsore, 2010; Mabogunje, 1990).

[3] Gold Coast was the name of the territory of present day Ghana. The first President adopted Ghana as a county name on the day of independence in 1957. Before then, the Europeans referred to the territory as the Gold Coast. Legend has it that this name was coined due to the vast expanse of gold discovered by the Europeans during the period of commercial trade.

The coast and forest regions, therefore, became the most important elements of the urban system within the new spatial system. Coastal towns such as Elmina, Cape Coast, and Accra became important urban centers in the new European trade. In addition, the gold and ivory trade was converted into slave trade (as cheap labor) to support agricultural activities in the West Indies (Caribbean). By the end of the 17th century, the Dutch and English had respectively exported between 5000 and 6000 African slaves annually (Songsore 2003, 2010). Ghana and largely Africa, as Amin (1972 quoted in Songsore, 2010) states, 'had been reduced to a supplier of slave labor for the plantations of America and eventually lost its autonomy'. Thus, the significance of coastal towns was not due to their role in supporting the internal system of growth and development, rather its connection within the international capitalist trade and commercial system of European states (Songsore, 2010). The value of a 'town', in this period, can, therefore, be perceived as its ability to meet the conditions of European merchants and trading and its connection to product demands of an externally defined urban system. This was the beginning of the prominence of the coastal towns and forest regions in southern Ghana. It also contributed to the decline in importance of northern towns.

4.3.2 Colonial Era

Pre-colonial era trade with Europeans can be said to have conditioned coastal towns for urban development. It has already been mentioned that in the history of settlements and urban development in Ghana, towns have basically emerged as centers of trade, consumption, and administration (Songsore, 2003, 2010). Before the direct colonization by the British, it can be argued that towns were simply centers of trade and consumption and less of administration. However, the administrative element of towns became much visible after political control was taken over the European Colonizers, particularly Britain. For instance, the rise of Accra, as an important urban center, is attributed to the relocation of the colonial headquarters from Cape Coast to Accra in 1877 (Acquah, 1957).

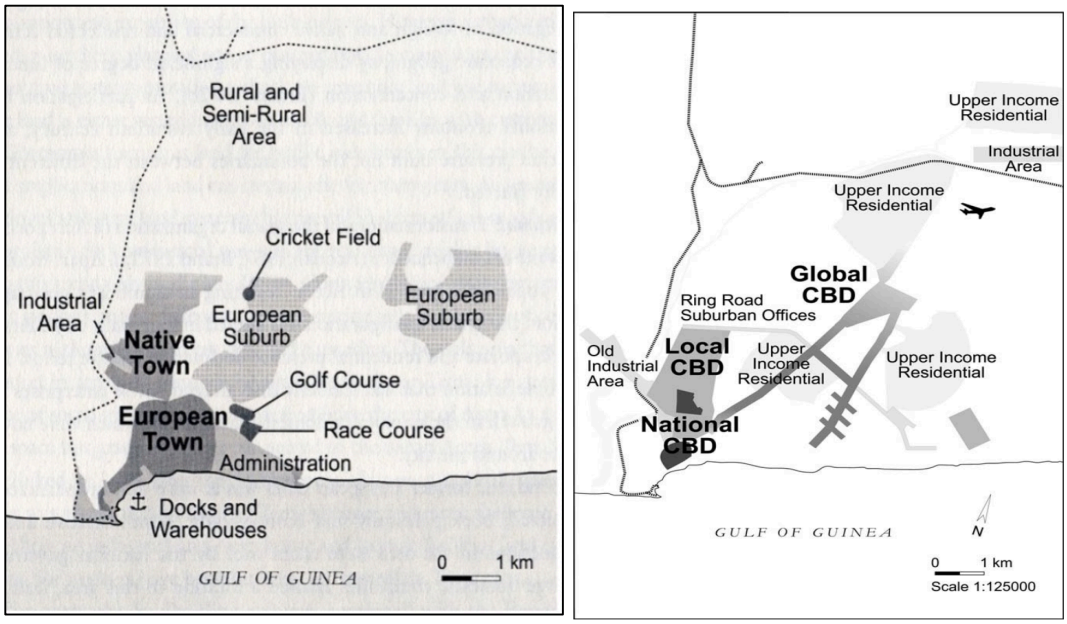
The colonial era saw both the growth and decline of towns in the course of urban development. The investment strategies gave much attention to regions with exploitable and exportable resources (e.g. gold, cocoa), and therefore, provision of basic infrastructure concentrated in such areas (Owusu, 2005). Towns became

important because they had resources for exploitation or export to Europe and therefore will merit certain basic facilities and services. In effect, these 'colonial cities' became warehouse (or commercial) cities instead of a factory (or industrial cities) (Grant, 2009, Songsore, 2010). A new spatial structure of 'center-periphery' (Songsore, 1983) therefore emerged. The center consisted of the forest where cocoa, timber, gold, diamond, manganese, and bauxite production were concentrated. Kumasi was an important town in this structure of the 'center' or 'growth region'. Another growth region, which could also be loosely categorized into the center, is the coastal area. The coastal towns were important for their role in the import-export activity of colonial administrators. In view of this, the towns of Kumasi, Accra, and Secondi-Takoradi became the most important towns in the colonial period and monopolized much of the social infrastructure (Songsore, 1979a, 1989, 2010).

The periphery, on the other hand, referred to towns that were not very important as perceived by the colonial administration because they did not have resource potentials (specifically mineral and agricultural cash crops) or the ability to function as centers for external trade—that is, port towns (Songsore, 2010). This situation resulted in an uneven development across the country. The colonial towns or cities, therefore, grew in importance as growth poles or centers, received much of the infrastructure facilities and services while the peripheral areas—mostly in northern Ghana— declined, creating marked differences in development between the northern and the southern parts of the country. This developmental gap still exists and evidence by the significant level of underdevelopment in northern Ghana.

So, how did the colonial cities look like? The colonial development policies largely influenced the spatial character of the cities. For instance, in Accra, Grant and Yankson (2002) report that zoning codes were severely enforced to ensure an orderly European character in the city. There was a deliberate spatial segregation policy, which sought to separate European residential areas from native settlements in the Accra (Figure 4.2; Grant, 2009). This separation was because British colonial authorities considered the native areas of Accra as unsanitary and mosquito infested (Grant and Yankson, 2002). Colonial Accra had a skyline line of not more than three stories and landscaping was good with environmental sanitation. Housing conditions were also good with motorable access roads (Adarkwa, 2012).

It is important to underline that this was not the same situation for native areas of the city, which was settled by the local population. Local populations settled in the less desirable locations that were poorly served with facilities and vulnerable to flooding (Adarkwa, 2012). Three populations could be identified within the city that resided in distinct locations: the foreign or European population, local business people or merchants, and the local/native population. This was the onset of residential segregation that was also seen in other towns in the country including Kumasi, Cape Coast, and Secondi-Takoradi. The uneven development and the neglect of the 'peripheral' towns and their subsequent decline also led to a new settlement formation in cities such as Kumasi, Secondi-Takoradi and Accra. For instance, many people migrated from Northern Ghana to cities as Accra, settling in migrant areas and forming new settlements referred to as 'Zongo'[4].



a. Colonial Accra b. Post-Colonial Accra

(Source: After Grant, 2009)

Figure 4.2: Spatial Organization of Colonial and postcolonial era

[4] Zongo is a socio-spatial termed used to refer to migrant communities in towns and cities in Ghana. Historically, they are communities socially defined by Muslim migrants from northern Ghana living in southern towns in search of opportunities and improved living standards. They are spatially defined in specific parts of the southern cities and towns with distinct religious and cultural characteristics under usually poor housing and living conditions.

4.3.3 Post-colonial Era

The postcolonial era led to the transfer of political and administrative power to Ghanaians through the first elected President—Dr. Kwame Nkrumah. The British colonial administration had been fairly successful in their trade and commerce but none of the towns emerged as a key industrial or manufacturing enclave (Rodney, 1972) for the resources that were exploited. The post-independence administration, therefore, set on a massive industrialization effort (Mabogunje, 1990), aimed at creating 'import-substitution industries' (Songsore, 2003) that will make towns and cities as centers of industrial production. This was possible because the basic infrastructure had already been laid by the colonial administration before independence.

However, these colonial infrastructure facilities were located in the three main colonial cities of Kumasi, Secondi-Takoradi and Accra, also known as the 'big three' (Figure 4.3). As observed by Songsore (2010), the strategy of industrial development was spatially concentrated within the 'big three'. This created an industrial cluster, making these cities to grow and acquire metropolitan status (Songsore, 1989, 2010). The spatial structure remained unchanged, as post-colonial infrastructural improvement efforts complemented the spatial segregation of the city in the colonial period (Grant, 2009). Hence, driving more people into these 'favored' zones and creating a new form of urbanization and growth of towns within the golden triangle[5]. As recorded by Owusu (2005), between 1921 and 1960, urban population increased from 7.8 percent 1921 to 23.1, with Accra and Kumasi constituting 5.5 and 3.1 respectively (Table 4.1).

Again, the development of transport infrastructure including trunk roads and railways led to the formation and growth of several towns within the golden triangle. This was intended to support growth and distribution in terms of local industrial production. Already existing colonial roads were also improved, such as Accra-Takoradi and Kumasi-Accra trunk roads (Government of Ghana, 1964 in Adarkwa, 2012). Railway lines were also constructed to connect major mineral-rich towns to

[5] The golden triangle refers to the three dominant cities of Accra (the capital), Secondi-Takoradi and Kumasi. Also, known as the 'big three', they represent the spatial concentration of development activities in the country since the colonial era. Literally, their locations in graphical and geometrical sense compose a triangle. They represent the highest spatial order in the country and are the main hosts of migrations from other underdeveloped and deprived parts of the country.

seaports. These transport systems contributed in no small way to the development of towns in the country. Owusu (2005) reinforces the locational factors in urban development in the country. Small settlements, as a result being located along major transport routes and mining centers, grew into major or large towns.

A total of about 52 new townships were planned and constructed (Adarkwa, 2012) during the first decade of independence along the Volta Lake alone. The Akosombo and Tema townships were developed as industrial and Port cities respectively. Several mass housing units were constructed especially for industrial workers in Accra-Tema. All these actions set the pace for an urbanization process in Ghana. This was due to the spatial concentration of industries, other physical developments, and centralization of administration and associated services in the cities and major urban centers (Buah, 1998 in Adarkwa, 2012).

There were two main distinct characters in the spatial structure of the towns and cities during this period. Firstly, was the well-planned area of cities and towns. For the first time, several multi-story commercial structures appeared in the central areas of Accra and Kumasi. The public transport system was functional with little private means of transport (Olu-Davies, 1981 in Adarkwa, 2012). Towns were 'greener' and active open spaces were well zoned in the cities. Kumasi, for example, was referred to as the 'Garden city of West Africa' (Adarkwa, 2012). Planning was fairly effective and development control was well exercised with compact cities and less sprawl. Secondly, and on the other hand, was the gradual emergence of informal settlement development. Planning seemed to have been effective in the planned areas of the city (former colonial cities) and little attention drawn to other areas that were increasing in population—mostly people who were coming from other parts of the country to seek opportunities. Consequently, 'make-shift' (temporary) structures appeared around residential buildings, along street verges and reservations among others (Arku, 2006). Environmental quality began decreasing and sprawling activities started taking place.

It is worthy to note that overcrowding and unplanned areas that were appearing in the cities was a consequence of the overconcentration of development activities in the 'golden triangle' or the big three cities. The uneven development drew people from the underdeveloped towns into the cities for an improved urban experience.

Urbanization in this sense was a sort of labor out-migration from deprived regions to more favored regions (Songsore, 2003).

4.3.4 Post-Independence Era

Since the first republic, several factors have affected the urban development process in Ghana. Equally, other extenuating factors have contributed to the urban growth patterns of towns and cities (see Obeng-Odoom, 2012, Adarkwa, 2012, Owusu, 2005). After the US-backed military coup d'état that overthrew the first President in 1966 (Biney, 2011), several national policies have been enacted with varied implications on urban development. Notable among them is the Structural Adjustment Program (SAP) by the World Bank, the decentralization program and mass-housing program among others. For instance, with respect to the SAP, aimed at fixing the economic instability in the country, brought significant urban development projects (roads, electricity) (Owusu, 2005) in small towns and rural areas. On the contrary, more intensely, SAP negatively affected the general wellbeing of residents through privatization, deregulation, and removal of support for the agricultural sector. This affected agricultural production and created mass unemployment, pushing many into informal practices (Grant, 2009; Okyere, et al., 2012; Owusu, 2015). Most researchers have noted that SAP represents the negative effect of a program by an international agency (e.g. the World Bank) that 'depressed' African cities and created a lot of urban problems (Riddel, 1997 in Larbi, 1999).

The Decentralization program also sought to transfer decision-making power and administrative authority from the central level to the local level. Consequently, the PNDC Law 207 introduced in 1988 and ratified by the constitution (1992) and the local government Act of 1994, created District Assemblies as administrative and political authorities that were responsible for overall development of human settlements and environment. Owusu (2005) reveals this led to investment in the districts and hence transforming many rural areas into urban centers. Many places attracted public infrastructure and population leading to gradual urbanization of the country. Urbanization rate, thus, increased from 32 to 44 percent between 1984 and 2000. However, most investments were still concentrated in the golden triangle reinforcing the uneven level of developing across the urban areas.

Currently, Housing remains a critical challenge and as 2000, the housing deficit stood at 1,526,275 units (UN Habitat, 2011). Urban sprawl is the evidence of urban expansion and most cities have seen tremendous physical expansion over the years (Owusu, 2013). For instance, Accra was approximately 10 square kilometers during the colonial period (Rain et al, 2011), but it has increased from 133.35 to 344.26 square km between 1985 and 2000 respectively (Angel et al., 2005; Larbi, 1999). This has been due to the extensive sprawl and uncontrolled spatial expansion (Figure 4.4) due in part, to the trade liberalization of the structural adjustment program. Again, urban expansion is occurring in the fringe areas in an unplanned and unregulated manner, leading to sprawling low-density development which is uneconomic in terms of land use and service delivery (Owusu, 2013). As high income and middle-income housing are occurring in peripheral areas, the old historical cores of cities are deteriorating into slum conditions. There is an extensive congestion in the inner cities, increased length in journey-to-work, unusual peri-urbanization, and poor environmental sanitation among others. At the same, skyline of commercial districts in cities, (in Accra for example), is changing with new vertical development for office and residential buildings due to limited space (Adarkwa, 2012).

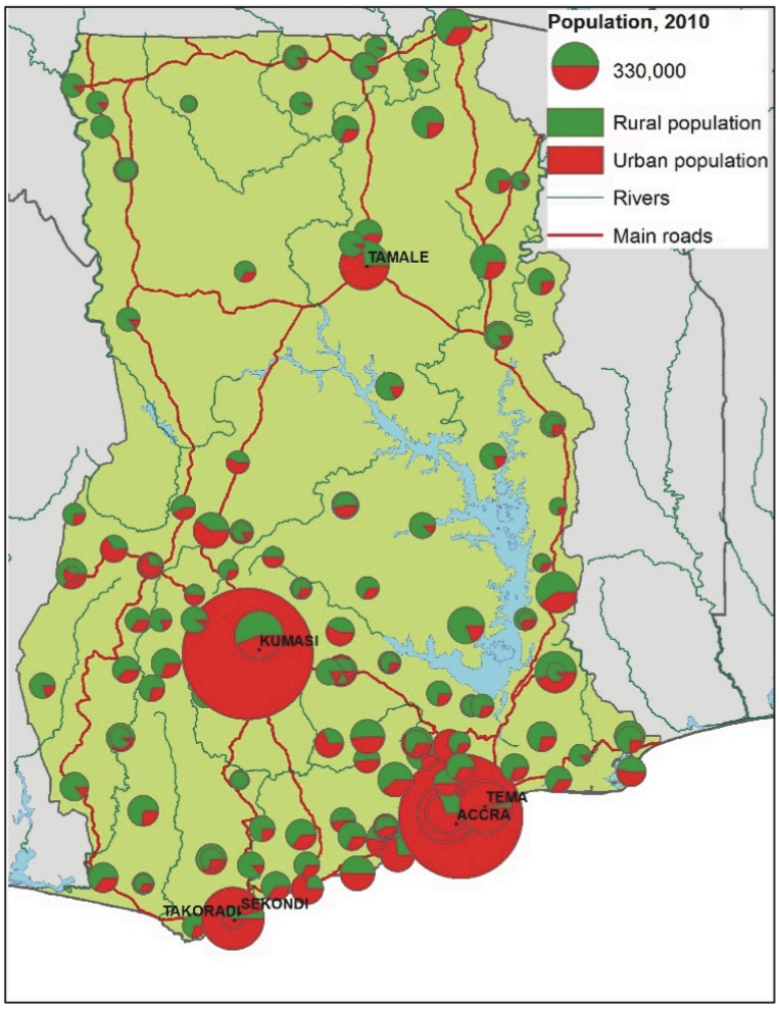
However, the planning system is short-sighted (Rain et al, 2011), weak with obvious financial and human resource limitations, outmoded master plans and even lack of plans to guide development of towns and cities. The entire planning system seems to be behind development and there is little capacity to deal with the existing growth in the cities (Yeboah and Obeng-Odoom, 2010).

The spatial structure of cities has not changed significantly. There is still a central business district (CBD) where commercial, administrative and political activities are concentrated. The spatial ordering, separation, and segregation is much visible. Local populations and migrants are still found in deprived parts of the city (informal areas) and former European and merchant sections remain the most planned areas inhabited by foreigners, expatriates and local bureaucrats (upper class residential estates).

Table 4.1: Urban Population Growth trend in Ghana (1921-2010)

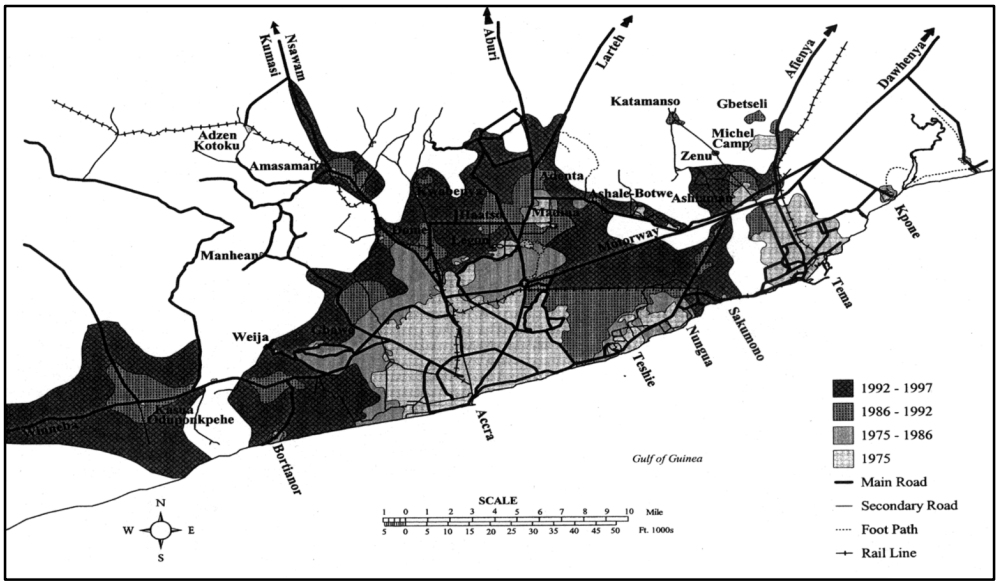
Census Year	Total Population	Urban Population (%)
1921	2,298,000	7.8
1931	3,163,000	9.4
1948	4,118,000	12.9
1960	6,726,815	23.1
1970	8,559,313	28.9
1984	12,296,081	32.0
2000	18,912,079	43.8
2010	24,658,823	50.9

Source: Ghana Statistics Service (2013); UNFPA (2009).



Source: 2010 Population and Housing Census (GSS, 2012)

Figure 4.3: Distribution of Ghana's major cities concentrated in southern Ghana



Source: Larbi (1999)

Figure 4. 4: Urban Expansion in Accra city region

To conclude this section, it can be fairly argued from a historical perspective that this kind of urban development has not been driven by the economic functionality of cities but rather the disproportionality, unevenness and social and economic dis-functionality of the entire urban system and the accompanying planning framework.

4.4 Urban Development process and the growth of informal settlements

The historical overview of urban development in Ghana exerts important ramifications in the nature and growth of informal settlements across the major cities in Ghana. In other words, policies and practices since the colonial era, have in part contributed to the situation of informal settlements in Ghana especially in the GAMA (see figure 4.5), which includes the study area. Hence, we attempt to identify certain specific elements in the historical overview and its relation to informal settlements in the country. For analytical purposes and ease of understanding, the main element in the historical overview is divided into three broad issues: (i.) spatial bias or concentration, (ii.) planning weakness and ineffectiveness, (iii.) housing shortages, and (iv.) commercialization of towns. Each of these elements, as we argue, has generated causality in the enforcement and perpetuation or even the formation of informal settlements in Ghanaian cities, particularly Accra metropolis.

4.4.1 Spatial Concentration and Bias

As already mentioned, the colonial administration emphasis on resource frontier regions and the golden triangle—Accra, Secondi-Takoradi and Kumasi—created a sort of spatial bias that left several other urban areas impoverished. The other towns in the 'periphery' received little investment in infrastructure, basic facilities, and services. Hence, a developmental gap emerged that made such towns deprived, underdeveloped and characterized by a decline in fortunes. This also generated a spatial rendering of poverty where such towns, especially in northern Ghana became relatively poorer than the other southern cities. Migration to the south, therefore, became a strategy for survival. These migrants, normally often serving as 'cheap labor' in southern towns, settled in ethnic areas in the city, poorly planned and without access to basic urban services and facilities. Yet, these areas offered a cheap way to obtain a 'right to the city' (Harvey, 2012) and a meaningful urban experience.

4.4.2 Planning Weakness and Ineffectiveness

Planning since the colonial era has been limited in its role in the urban development. Colonial era planning was highly effective but only in the European part of the city. Post-colonial planning largely continued the colonial planning policy by focusing on the well-planned areas of the city. However, since the decentralization policy in the late 1980s, planning in towns and cities have been largely weak. Again, the lack of updated master plans and local plans for the cities has meant that the planning apparatus does not have the capacity to control the rapid growth in both physical and demographic terms occurring in the cities. Planning is still based on British colonial legacy, yet to be remodeled to the local conditions and practices (Watson, 2009). In effect, planning is far behind physical development as urbanization and urban growth occurs. Fringe areas and peri-urban settlements are appearing, mostly without development and planning control. The weakness of the planning system and its inability to remodel itself after current development trends means that urbanization and urban growth is occurring without a long-term vision for settlements. Informal settlements both old and new have become a common reality.

4.4.3 Housing Challenges

One of the problematic areas in the history of urban development in Ghana has been 'the housing question'. There has been a housing bias against the low income and poor areas of the cities that needed it most. Mass housing notably reached the middle class instead of the lower-class residents. Consequently, housing has been in the hands of the real estate companies and private groups whose interest is towards the rich or upper middle class (See figure 4.2 above) (Branwen, 2001, Grant, 2009). This has led to the construction of substandard, poorly serviced, unregulated housing in vulnerable and less habitable parts of the large towns and cities by individuals— a logical response to meet shelter needs.

4.4.4 Commercialization (Lack of rural industrialization) of towns

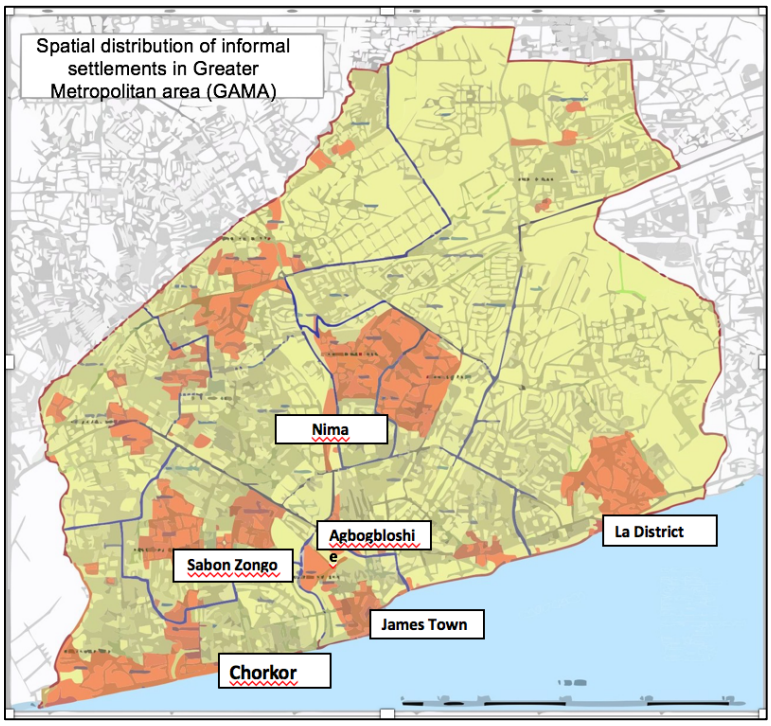
Even though several cities across the world have developed based on their strategic locations to support a system of productive services (industry and commerce), Ghana remains an exception, if considered historically. Since the colonial era, towns have become commercial nodes not catalysts for urban development. Moreover, in spite of all the resources being exploited from the towns, industrialization of the small towns and rural economies to support production is far from realized. Hence, what has emerged is that small towns and rural areas become dependent on large towns and cities. Without growth in the agricultural and industrial sector, rural-urban migration became a demographic trend. This has been one of the causes of urbanization. However, without the skills and means to survive in the city, many depend on informal mechanisms including spatial informality as a means of survival in the dream of securing a foothold in the large towns and cities. Hence, informal settlements have significantly grown as a result of rural population movements into the cities.

4.5 Conclusion

The above criticalities generate two important issues, what is usually termed 'push' and 'pull' factors. The deprivation and decline of several rural and urban areas serve as push factors forcing people to move out of these areas into the main cities. In the former colonial cities, the continuous inattention to native and migrant areas

continue to undermine effective urban development and impoverish native communities. Thus, the issues of housing challenges and planning weaknesses affect improvement in urban informal settlements. What then is the most appropriate path to take in fostering an inclusive, balanced and holistic urban development in Ghana?

The next chapter, through an empirical survey, attempts to provide the basis for reversing the historical trends and fostering an inclusive urban development that integrates the forgotten informal settlement residents. This is based on the premise that the places to look for such ideas might be found in the positive practices enacted by the urban poor in confronting the physical and social crises they face and the need to acknowledge—and even accept—such practices of the urban poor. To this end, the two chapters on analysis explore residents' social system, collaborative activities and the spatial dynamics of human behavior. Perhaps, such analyses offer a new way of understanding informal settlements, social and physical needs and hints for locally sensitive planning strategies for the future.



Source: Author's elaboration (2017) after UN Habitat/AMA (2011)

Figure 4. 5: Spatial distribution of informal settlements in Accra city

CHAPTER FIVE

RESIDENTS' SOCIAL COLLABORATION, COMMUNAL MANAGEMENT AND HOUSING IMPROVISATIONS

5.1 Introduction

This chapter of the study reports empirical analyses of resident's activities and practices in Abese informal settlement. Essentially, the focus of the chapter is to descriptively analyze and provide field evidence that supports the presence of often-undocumented positive resident non-formal activities that enrich their living environments. The discussion centers on social deliberative activities to collectively think and enact actions for improving settlement conditions. It also highlights social support platforms that are embedded in a network of relations and ties. In a unique sense, the study discloses shared adaptations in the use of space and improvisations in accessing basic facilities. In other words, the chapter simply brings to fore the flexibility, collaboration, improvisation and adaptable nature of urban informal settlements and how these features shape residents daily living experiences.

5.2 Abese quarter: Local history and Overview

The Abese quarter is part of seven quarters (*Abese, Kowe, Dzrase, Leshi, Kannada, Abafum and Nmati*) that forms the indigenous area of *La Mami* (also known as La Township). The people of Abese belong to the La tribe, hence the history of the settlement is embedded in the origin of the La Township. In terms of ethnicity, La is one of the several states of the Ga-Adamgbe[6] ethnic group in the Greater Accra Metropolitan Area (GAMA) of Ghana.

The La Township traditionally constitutes the original settlements of the La people during the early years of migration into the present area in the 17th century. According to a historical narrative by one local leader[7] during the field survey, the La people trace their origins to the time of Pharaoh Amenhotep II (15th century BC) in Egypt, during which several nations had migrated to Egypt in search of food as a

[6] Ga is an ethnic group in Ghana, usually referred in official population records as the Ga-Dangme. According to the Ghana Statistical Service 2010 Population and Housing Census, they represent 7.4 percent of Ghana's total population.
[7] Interview with the 'Dzaase-tse', the stool 'father' of the Abese quarter of the La traditional council (4.11.2015).

result of a great world famine. According to local leaders, Pharaoh Amenhotep II[8] poor treatment of most of these foreign nations (including the ancestors of the La peoples) led to mass emigration from Egypt (In similar pattern as the Jews, who in the Hebrew Bible left Egypt, recorded as the great Exodus to the Land of Canaan; present-day Palestine). The 'Le' tribe (also known as 'La') also emigrated towards the south through Ethiopia and later settled on the island of Bone in Nigeria. Local history recounts that they further moved through neighboring countries Benin and Togo before establishing settlements in their present location, close to the coastal part of Ghana. These migratory patterns from Bone (Nigeria), as literature confirms, included the crossing of the Volta River with other Ga-Adamgbe tribes in this order: Krobo, Ada, Ga-Mashie, Osudoku, Shai and La peoples (See Mensah, 2013). As the last in the order of westward migration, the La people's present territory—between Osu and Nungua—was secured through inter/intra ethnic wars and alliances. The site of Abese was established around the 17th century through an agreement between La and Osu traditional leadership.

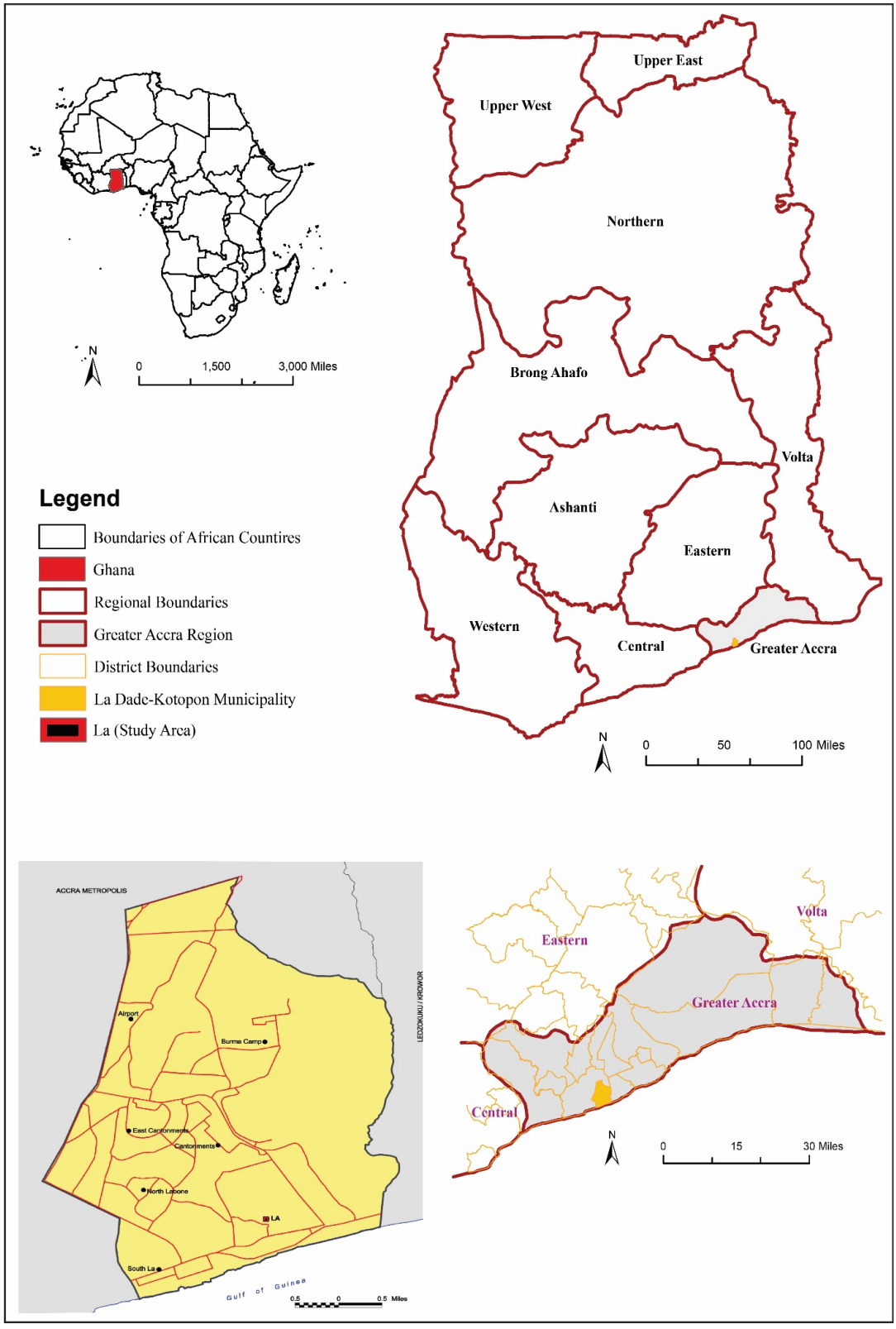
It is important to note that this migration did not occur as a movement of the whole tribe, but different clans within the tribe moved at different historical periods. Each clan established its own settlement and became a distinct community or quarter over time. Abese, together Kowe, is reported as the first La clan to have settled in their present environment. These two settlements, therefore, claim royalty and are accorded as such, in addition to land ownership and control. Each clan occupied a different part of the land, developing it through time to meet their social and physical needs.

This historical narrative of La is significant as it enables a better comprehension of the social and physical organization of the various quarters or divisions and an appreciation of their continuous adjustments in terms of their physical and social practices. It also denotes deep social and spatial intersections in the settlement. In the sense that, ethnically, the people belong to the same clan and are defined by distinct cultural and traditional practices, while at the same time, showing marked physical features in the organization of houses, spaces, and uses.

[8] Local leader support their historical narrative with 'The book of Exodus' in the Old Testament of the Christian Bible, which provides a biblical account of this story with regards to the Jews. See Genesis 41:55-57 and Exodus 2:23-25.

Previously, as elsewhere in Greater Accra Metropolitan Area, the settlement was predominantly fishing and farming village in the pre-colonial era. Broadly, the development of the quarter is embedded in changes within La Dadekotopon district and the city of Accra generally. For instance, the relocation of the capital of the then Gold Coast (now Ghana) to Accra in 1877 and its function as a central business district pulled some of the inhabitants formerly involved in agriculture to work at the port and central market.

Administratively, Abese quarter was part of the La sub-metropolitan council of the Accra Metropolitan Assembly (AMA) until 2012. However, in 2012, the La sub-metropolitan council was carved out of the AMA to establish the La Dadekotopon Municipal Assembly (Figure 5.1). The Abese quarter, in addition to Kowe, subsequently became an electoral area with an elected assembly member to represent the two communities in the municipal assembly.



Source: Author's elaboration, 2016

Figure 5.1: Map of the Study area in National, Regional and Municipal Context



Source: Author's Field Survey, 2016 (based on google earth)

Figure 5.2: Map of the Study Area (Abese quarter)

5.3. Characteristics of Respondents (Household Heads)

The households directly interviewed from all the 18 family/clan houses had an average household size of 5.7. This is higher than the regional and national average of 3.9 and 3.6 respectively. The comparatively higher average size in the settlement is attributed to the situation the concentration of two or more generations living in the same house. However, this higher household size is consistent with earlier observations in indigenous informal settlements in the Greater Accra area (Ardayfio-Schandorf 2012, Appeaning Addo 2013).

The survey revealed that 80 percent of interviewed household heads were above 40 years old. Half of surveyed residents (50 percent) were married and living with their partners. Again, 85 percent of surveyed residents were born in the community, while the rest had moved into the community as a result of marriage. This explains why 95 percent of interviewees indicated they have been living in the settlement for more than 15 years. This is quite common for indigenous communities in Ghana especially Accra where residents are likely to stay in their place of birth and usually with family relatives.

With respect to the educational attainment, 85 percent of the respondents had attained basic education, which constitutes up to Junior High School level (JHS) in Ghana (Table 1). None of the respondents had a tertiary level education, while 15 percent had no formal education at all. This suggests that surveyed residents did not have enough qualification for formal sector jobs. Apparently, this explains why 55 percent of household heads have undertaken apprenticeship or training programs to acquire skills in hair dressing, plumbing, carpentry and painting to be able to obtain livelihood that can support their households. Thus, a majority of the households were self-employed (85 percent) mainly involved in informal activities such as food selling, tabletop grocery stores, electronic repairing, hairdressing and construction. Women, especially, capitalized on spaces (within or outside the house) for small-scale activities such as hair dressing, drinking bars, and cooked food 'joints'.

Surveyed household's mean monthly income was 75 Ghana Cedis (GH¢ equivalent 19 US$, at the time of the survey). The benchmark for the income poverty in Ghana, according to the Ghana Living Standards Survey (GLSS 2013) is GH¢1, 314 (US$ 345) or less. Considering this, it can be asserted that the mean annual income of GHS900 (US$236) puts surveyed households in the low-income category. The same result is obtained if the global poverty line of US$1.90 a day benchmark is used. This finding confirms Oduro's (2008) observation of the correlation between educational attainment and wealth status of a household. That *ceteris paribus*, higher educational attainment assures a household of a meaning income for wealth creation.

Again, this also recalls Hart's (1973) notion of self-employment and erratic low income in the informal sector in Ghana, with similar trends identified in other African cities (Ojong, 2011). Such informal small-scale economic activities are often prone to uncertainties in sales and market, symbolized by inconsistencies in daily or monthly incomes. It is within such economic limitations that enable the appreciation of resident's individual and collective activities and practices that assure a reasonable urban life and experience in Abese informal settlement. Such activities in terms deliberation, support, housing transformation, space adaptation and service improvisation are subsequently discussed.

Table 5.1: Characteristics of Household Respondents

Characteristics	Frequency	Percentage
Age		
25-40	22	20
41-60	46	40
60+	46	40
Place of birth		
Within community	97	85
Outside community	17	15
Duration of residency		
Less than 15 years	6	5
Above 15years	108	95
Marital Status		
Single	17	15
Married	57	50
Divorced	17	15
Widowed	23	20
Educational Attainment		
Primary/JHS	92	80
Vocation/technical/secondary	6	5
No formal education	16	15
Employment status		
Self employed	97	85
Unemployed	11	10
Students	6	5
Total	**114**	**100**

Source: Author's Field Survey, 2015

5.4 Social Activities

Out of the 77 clan houses in the La Township, 18 of them are in Abese quarter. Each house represents a particular family, with the family name labeled at the entrance of the house. The multiple households within these clan houses are usually related and belong to the Ga-Adangme ethnic group. Indeed, 95 percent of interviewed households indicated that they have at least one relative living in the settlement. This result affirms the existence of 'ethnic homogeneity' (Appeaning Addo, 2013): which suggests that households in indigenous informal settlements such as Abese usually belong to the same ethnic group.

In terms of social activities, local leaders have organized all the 18 clan houses as community discussion points where residents meet every Sunday for discussions concerning current socio-physical conditions and actions for improvement (Table 5.2).

5.4.1 Clan house-based deliberations

Clan meetings are organized and led by appointed leaders: clan head, chairman, secretary, and treasurer. Residents are required to attend such meetings in one of the clan houses based on the specific family to which they belong. Observations revealed that apart from participation from residents living in the community, other relatives who originate from the community but live in other neighborhoods or districts also attended the meetings (Figure 5.3)

Table 5.2: Common issues in clan house-based discussions

Meetings	Issues Discussed	Themes
Meeting 1	Library construction	-Community/house improvement -Social support -Attitudinal and behavioral change
	Funeral contribution, Wedding/Engagement	
	House reconstruction and improvement	
	Maintenance of community cemetery	
	Individual behavior and discipline	
Meeting 2	Provision of housing facilities such as toilet, bathroom, etc.	-Community/House improvement -Attitudinal and behavioral change
	Sewage construction in the community	
	Maintaining peace and harmony	
Meeting 3	Maintaining peaceful co-habitation in the community	-Attitudinal and behavioral change
	Community norms and values	
	Actions against attitude of dependency and laziness	
Meeting 4	Funeral contribution	-Social support -Community/House improvement
	House reconstruction and improvement of house conditions	
	Financing house improvement through relatives living abroad	
	Seeking permission and inviting technical experts to guide reconstruction	

Source: Authors' elaboration, Field Survey, 2015.

The observed discussions during the field survey (Table 5.2) were categorized into three main themes: community/house improvement, social support, and attitudinal or behavioral control.

Community/House improvement: Here, residents main concern includes the provision of house facilities such as toilet, which was not available in several of the houses (elaborated later). In addition to this, improving housing conditions, including the use of suitable building materials such as cement blocks instead current mud walls were pertinent issues during residents' meetings. In meeting 2, one resident participant noted:

'There is no toilet in this house. We cannot rely on the public toilet; it is so uncomfortable, especially at night. It is time to build our own toilet here and connect to the main sewer. I think if we all think of about it, we can plan how to go about things in our meeting next week and invite artisans to check it. Anyway, we need a toilet in this house'— (Mike Sowah, 04.11.2015)[9]

This discussion demonstrates consciousness on the condition of their houses and their keen interest not in only in terms of future visions but undertaking self-initiatives to improve current conditions.

Social support: Here, residents are required to make contributions to support members' house improvement or social events such as funeral or wedding ceremonies. During a discussion in meeting 1, one family elder announced:

'We have been notified that the father of our brother Kwei, is deceased. As we all know, when a member is bereaved, contributions are made to support funeral arrangements. Those who have not paid their monthly contributions to the treasury are reminded to do so. It is time to show our love and support to our beloved brother'— (Amarteyfio, 15.11.2015)

The chairman of meeting 4, during a discussion on mobilizing funds to support reconstruction of a house in deplorable state, hinted:

'*Some of our brothers, relatives and friends are living abroad in Europe or America. All of us are aware of this. I think they may be willing to contribute to improve the condition of our house and settlement. Some of them have supported us before, especially in times of need. It is time to contact them to provide us funds, to add to what we can generate here to improve the physical conditions of our houses'— (Odoi Lamptey, 20.11.2015)*

It is noteworthy to observe the communal pooling of economic resources to support house reconstruction and improvement. Residents utilize several mechanisms, including soliciting support from relatives leaving overseas, usually in developed countries, to provide remittances that can support house improvement. As explained in the section on housing transformation, 64 percent of housing improvements were financed by shared contributions from friends or relatives. This brings to fore what

[9] These accounts are based on semi-structured interviews and discussions with respondents. They are direct translations from the field survey. All names of respondents are pseudonyms.

Ejigu (2011) refers to as social collaborative support in informal settlements. It denotes residents' ability to collaborate through social ties and bonds to improve conditions under limited economic circumstances. It implies the value of relational bonding, not necessarily as an end, rather a means to achieve common goals.

Attitudinal and Behavioral control: maintaining peaceful co-habitation, adherence to common norms and values through discipline was an important theme of discussion. Regulating individual behavior for the common good of the community is seen as highly important. An observably concerned resident opined in meeting 3:

> *'Our house and community have common rules. We know that unnecessary noise and loud music is not allowed here, especially at night. Yet, some of the youth act against this common rule. I suggest necessary disciplinary measures are meted out. They cannot do whatever they like here... The attitude of laziness among some of our members is shameful. We know our ancestors were hardworking and brave. If not, we would not be here. We must not sit and chat here doing nothing; everyone must work including coming to meetings early'*— (Tettey, 22.11.2015)

The 'call to order' as one resident participant joked at, expresses how members uphold unwritten but spoken community values to main serenity. This corresponds to Myers (2009) claim that informal settlements, though often perceived with contempt and viewed as dysfunctional, can prove to be 'normal' places where residents know how to act and guide individual behaviors for community peace and harmony. Thus, 'social disorder' as an extension of physical disorder (Davis, 2006) may find exceptions in places such as Abese quarter, where deliberations also aim at enriching the settlement in a peaceful, harmonious and controlled manner.



a) Meeting in Clan House 4 b) Meeting in Clan House 1

Source: Authors' picture, Field Survey, 2015

Figure 5. 3: Residents' clan house-based deliberations/discussions

5.4.2 Rules of Engagement in House based deliberations

Each family member was supposed to pay at least GHS2 per month (US$0.5) as a contribution to a welfare fund for mutual support and benefit of clan house members. One of the clan meetings revealed that a person could be fined as much as GHS4000 (US$1,033) for failure to contribute, especially when such a person may also need help. One's ability to access the social support systems depended on their regular contribution. However, households also indicated the possibility of obtaining help from friends in times of need, which is based on mutual trust and friendship. Moreover, members were required to regularly attend meetings, unless under unforeseen circumstances. In such cases, they were to inform the leadership of their inability to attend through other members or in direct communication with leadership. Financial contributions are not accepted from those who are able but unwilling to attend meetings.

Following the house-based discussions, representatives from every clan house (head and assistant) participate in a special community meeting (Figure 5.4), usually on Thursdays (Figure 2) to harmonize all the house-based deliberations into a common agenda for decision making and planning.

5.4.3 Special Community Representative Meeting (SCRM)

The SCRM is organized on Thursdays to discuss emerging or related issues following the house-based deliberations. In addition to the representatives from the 18 family houses, there are participants who represent different groups such as youth, women and the traditional authority. During this session, clan house-based discussions are harmonized into a common agenda for decision-making and planning purposes. The general community meetings are also used as a mechanism for information dissemination to the clan houses and residents in general. This may have contributed to residents' deep awareness of issues in the community and their involvement in community improvement activities. The survey revealed that 83 percent of households indicated that they have participated in communal activities such as community sanitation exercises, providing labor for community projects, cleaning and maintaining community facilities. On the significance of these meetings, one local leader mentioned:

> *'Our community meeting is the avenue for us to show our love and interest in our community, to improve it, to develop it and to change things. We discuss, we argue, sometimes we fight, but we do all this to get a common view about the future of our settlement. They call us slum community, but we are organized and we want to improve things in own our way'— (Nii Kwore, 04.11.2015)*

This reveals how residents contrast the popular perception of disorganization and 'slum-ness' with their view of communal discussion as an organized activity. In furtherance of this, the meetings exemplify a deliberative process, of arguments and counter-arguments that together represent residents' decisions, actions, and aspirations: to 'improve things' and 'change things'. In addition, it also demonstrates how emotional elements such as 'love' are used to show their attachment to their settlement. That is, participation in discussions about community issues is an evidence of their sense of belonging and desire to foster changes. This support what Simone (2004) notes on practices in urban poor communities in African cities, that residents' interaction with others and their improvisation, drives aspirations and new possibilities towards material changes.



a) Representatives in session b) local elders at a sitting

Source: Author's own picture, Field Survey, 2015.

Figure 5.4: Special Community Representatives Meeting

The social deliberation process is organized within a hierarchical mechanism based on the different levels of decision making in the study area (Figure 5.5a, b). As already mentioned, discussions begin at the clan house level and culminate in a broader representative centered deliberation at the traditional council. The traditional council includes the paramount chief of La, the divisional chiefs of the seven indigenous quarters of La and associates, and other appointed representatives (e.g. women, youth, elderly). The process can be conceived as cyclical, through a feedback and information transfer process that start and end at the clan house level (Fig, 5.5b)

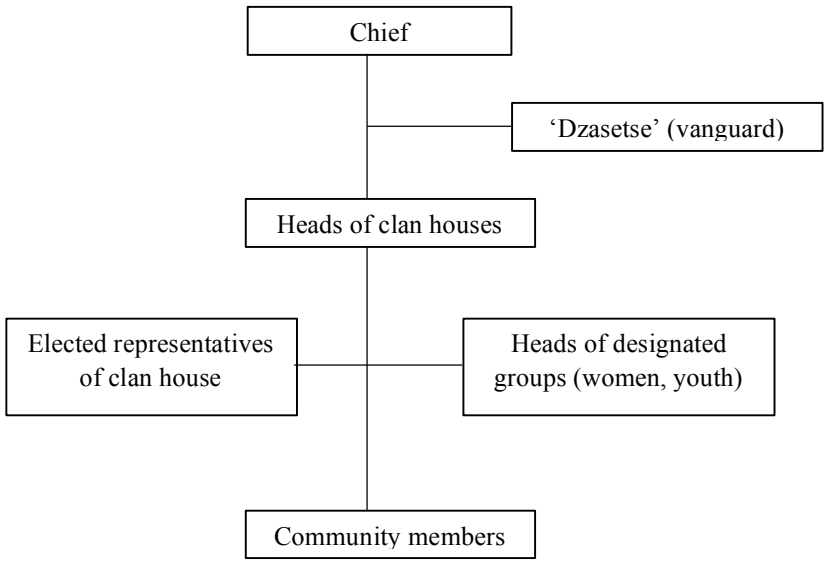
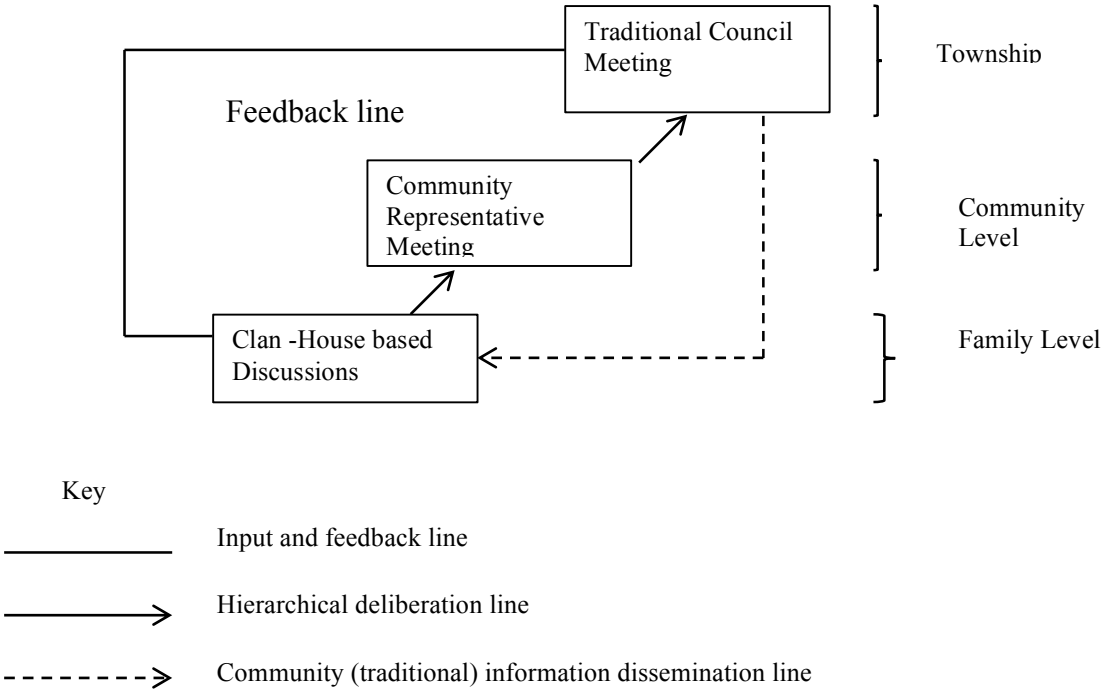


Figure 5.5a: **Indigenous (organogram) community social structure**



Source: Author's Elaboration, 2015.

Figure 5.5b: Hierarchical Informal Social Deliberation Process

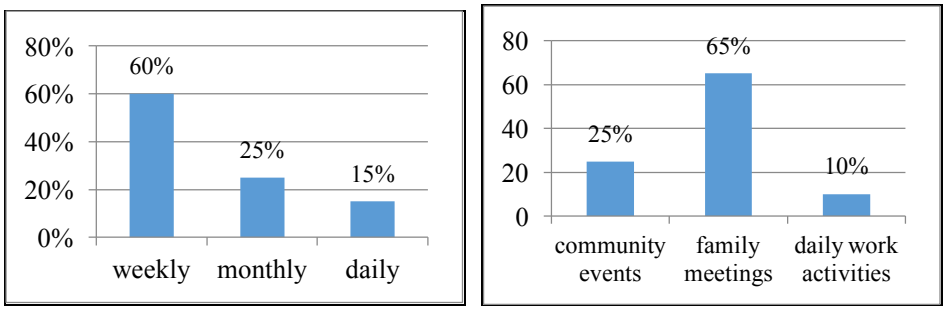
5.4.4 Social Events and Bonding

Community social events provided avenues for residents to deepen social bonds and ties. The study revealed that 65 percent of households (Figure 5.6a) indicated they participated in clan house meetings. Others mentioned community events (25 percent) (e.g. festivals, etc.) and daily work activities (10 percent) as events that strengthen bonds. These events provided members the opportunity to interact with others, strengthen relationships and demonstrate their mutual support. One household respondent remarked:

> *'We participate in social events to meet other people, get acquainted and more importantly support each other. We are brothers and sisters, whether by blood or friendship. If we do not help each other, no one will help us'— (Amartey Linda, 8.11.2015)*

The above points to motivation to participate in social events and how this is connected to the idea of 'brotherhood' and support in the settlement. This finding is

consistent with Granovetter's (1973) claim that strong ties usually exist within relational settings among residents with common lineage. Family ties also result in informal support networks with enabling residents to achieved through mutual support, understanding and shared values. Furthermore, 90 percent of households described the relationship with other residents as cordial. By cordial, residents suggest the lack of personal conflicts, their interests in others resident's welfare and the shared perspectives on issues in the community. Households supported this claim with their frequency of joining other members in the settlement for social events, mainly weekly or monthly (figure 5.6b), such as family or community meetings and events (funerals, wedding and communal projects etc.).



a. Occasions for bonding b: Frequency of meeting other residents

n=114 (Source: Author's Field Survey, 2015)

Figure 5.6: Avenues for Social Bonding in Abese quarter

The discussion above reveals some of the social activities in the Abese informal settlement, basically, in terms of regular clan and community based discussions, relational ties and social bonds enabled through events. It recalls what Gouverneur (2015) refers to as social 'vitality' in informal settlements. Again, it provides evidence of residents' aspirations and attempts to improve conditions. This, however, contrasts conventional view of informal residents and their activities as 'marginal' (Lombard, 2014, Abrams, 1964) to show the extent of social vitality, even in informal areas such as the study area. It also reveals resident's view of conditions as not static but a process, through which their own discussions and actions can contribute to a better experience in their settlement. It brings to mind urbanist Huchzermeyer's (2004) thought on viewing informal areas as a 'verb': that is, fluid, constantly changing places through resident behaviors and social activities.

5.5 Residents' housing and space adaptations

5.5.1 House acquisition and ownership

All household respondents interviewed indicated that family members or close relatives built the house they reside in. Except for two households who indicated their houses were built in 1737 and 1800, all others could not provide the specific dates for house construction. Rather, households resorted to comments such as 'over hundred years', '1700s' or relate to notable periods such as political events (e.g. colonial period) or reign of key personalities (e.g. chiefs) to indicate the age of their houses. In addition, only 10 percent of surveyed houses had land title/registration, which further signifies the inadequate documentation about houses in the settlement. Houses have been acquired through inheritance passed on from one generation to another. The response from one resident is notable:

> *'We obtained this house from my grandfather. I do not know when it was built. Around the 1800s, am told. But I know it is very old. You cannot see from the building because we have modified many times. I think it was built around the time the British colonial authority moved the capital to Accra. That is what I know'— (Naa Shormeh, 18.11.2015)*

In another interview, one family head stated:

> *'We do not have title deed but I know this is our land and house. Everyone knows this. Even the airport area and Cantonments belong to our clan. Our forefathers came here first and fought with other tribes to gain this land. I can show you books about the history of our people and other tribes like Ashanti's which verify this'— (Nii Clottey Sackeyfio, 11.11.2015)*

Residents claim to ownership through historical records and ancestral lineage is hereby observed. Time, history and local knowledge play an important role in household's personal construction of house ownership and displays an awareness of settlement origins. In the absence of necessary documentation, it reveals Margolis (2014) argument that listening to stories (local knowledge) is a key to understanding people and their communities. In this context, respondents do not only rely on anecdotes, but also draw written records to affirm their views. This does not, however, remove the element of subjectivity when conflicting stories are told. Yet, it

posits that embracing local knowledge through stories and histories is significant in understanding places like Abese quarter. It helps not only to understand the people but the historic-cultural reasons that undergird resident interest and commitment to distinct activities and practices in their settlement.

5.5.2 Structure and social functionality of Clan House

The clan houses within the Abese quarter are courtyard-based with entrances directed toward the streets and alleys (Figure 5.7). Physically, the clan houses are separated by alleys which generally intersperse the quarter. There are also passageways within the courtyard that allow residents to directly connect other houses or open spaces. In times past, each of the clan houses had separate compounds for males and females (Figure 5.7). This is in line with 'duo-local' Ga culture that separates male ('*hiiamli'*) and female compounds ('*yeiamli'*). Females lived with children in their compound and visited husbands in the male compound. Currently, evidence from the fieldwork indicated that only four clan houses still maintain this male-female separation. The survey revealed that this 'duo-locality' is changing, becoming 'blurred', due to intermarriage with other cultures, increase in family size and the general trend of western and globalized lifestyles in the district and GAMA generally. This is consistent with recent research observations in other parts of GAMA, which indicate changing residential practices in indigenous informal residential neighborhoods (Appeaning Addo, 2013) as a result of westernization of family systems.

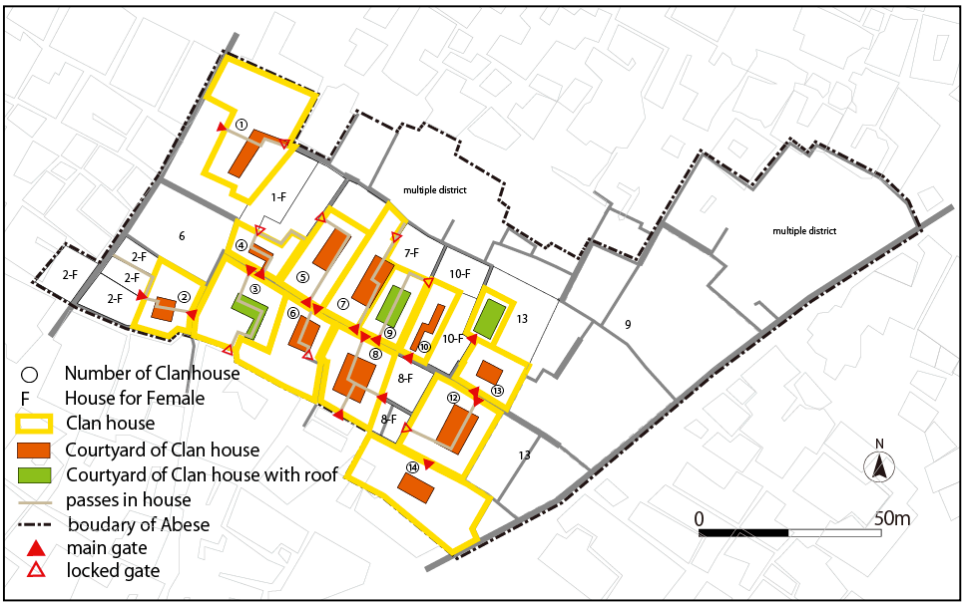
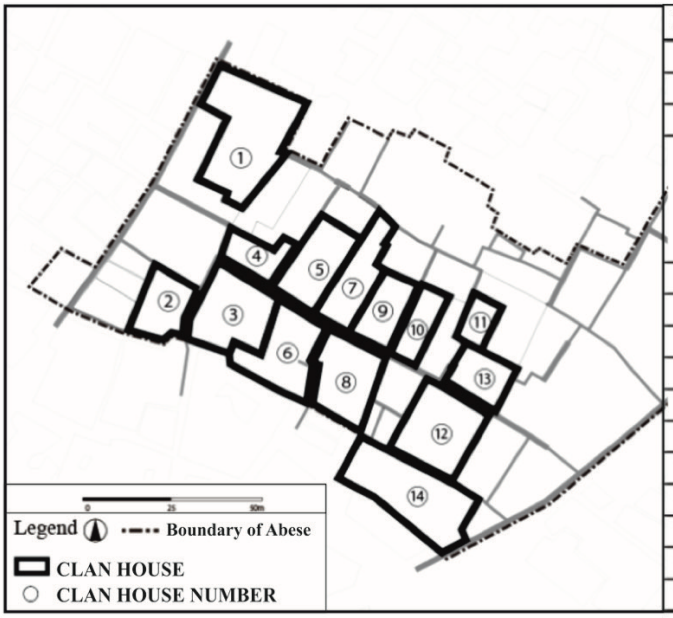


Figure 5.7a: Clan houses in relation to courtyard and network of alleys (Source: Author's field survey, 2016)

Table 5.3: Names of Clan Houses



No	Clan Name
1	Nii Kwakwranya We
2	Nii Sowah Animle We
3	Nii Okanfra We
4	Nii Lante Okunka We
	a. Lante Djan We
	b. Lante George We
	c. Ati Donkor We
5	Nii Odoi Atsem We
6	Nii Animle We
7	Nii Afrimi We
8	Nii Sowah Kwade We
9	Nii Nai Kwami Otun We
10	Nii Ashirifi We
11	Nii Nai Afum We
12	Nii Amoah We
13	Nii Badu Ansah
14	Nii Tunma We
15	Klan We

Source: Author's field survey, 2016

Figure 5.7b: Distribution of clan houses and their names



Figure 5.8: Open and Roofed Courtyard based clan house (Source: Author's field survey, 2015)



Figure 5.9: Entrance of clan house (with clan names posted at entrance (Source: Author's field survey, 2016)



Figure 5.10: On-going material transformation of clan houses (Source: Author's field survey, 2016)

5.5.3 Use of Space

***Courtyard*:** the courtyard is the most important space in all the houses surveyed. Since courtyard-based houses (i.e. multiple occupation single rooms, Figure 5.8) without kitchen or storerooms, households adapted the courtyard as shared multi-purpose space. For example, households cook, eat, rest or receive visitors in the courtyard. Moreover, all households claimed that the courtyard within the family house was the main space for family, community meetings or other socio-cultural events (e.g. traditional marriage). Given this situation, the courtyard can be said to be a communal space, which performs a collective function with social significance.

Furthermore, the survey indicated that courtyard spaces provided physical opportunities for residents to converge inside the house to interact with others, socialize, and deepen existing bodies. Inside the clan houses, the elderly—who are typically family heads and in charge of the house—take seats with neighbors and residents on plastic chairs in a circular form, and interact in a socially active atmosphere on matters of family, community welfare and dispute resolution and house improvement. This kind of social gatherings and interactions in the courtyard of the clan houses emphasize that the various clan houses are not only physical layouts in the spatial organization of the quarter. Rather, with the family members and other residents within the house, they form a socio-spatial structure that underlines the everyday life in Abese quarter.

It can, therefore, be argued that the courtyard within the clan houses served as an important 'social space'—fostering discursive interactions among residents in the quarter. As mentioned earlier, the courtyard provides the physical space to organize social activities. Hence, the courtyard as a physical space contributes and sustains socio-cultural practices in the quarter. This observation highlights what Hiller and Vaughan (2007) term the 'social logic of space'. In this case, through the courtyard, it is possible to notice how both social and cultural patterns are imprinted and function in spatial layouts.

The courtyard also had an economic significance. Some residents were observed using the courtyard as local fast food joints, tabletop grocery stores or drinking bars. As reiterated earlier, without adequate skills to enter the job market, residents, mostly

women, used the courtyard for small-scale income generation activities as livelihood support

***Alley*:** an extensive network of alleys that connect the different parts of community characterizes the entire settlement. These alleys, observably, provides connectivity and promote permeability. Observations revealed residents used it for multiple purposes. The use of alleys for playing games like draft was observed (Figure 5.12). They were common spaces for gathering, where locals relaxed or discussed sports, politics or petty gossip. In the absence of recreational facilities, the alley served as a recreational space where people relaxed or rested. In addition, and similar to the courtyards, the alleys were also used for small-scale informal economic activities such as food vending. Consequently, it could be inferred that the alley was both recreational and economic space, which reinforces resident's daily adaptations to meet basic local needs.

The use of the courtyards and alleys for income earning activities is consistent with Oosterbaan et al's (2012) observation of home-based business in low-income settlements to support their livelihood needs.

Sleeping rooms: All the surveyed houses comprised of single rooms. These single rooms were used as 'bedrooms' for house occupants. It was the main private space in the settlement. In addition, households mentioned that they were also used to receive visitors or holding small meetings if discussions were about private matters.



a. Roofed courtyard b. open courtyard

Source: Authors' picture, Field Survey, 2015

Figure 5.11: Courtyards in the case study area



Left: card plays and Right: washing in the alley (Source: Authors' picture, field survey, 2015)

Figure 5.12: Use of Alleys in the Settlement

Table 5.4: Activities and space utilization in the study area

Activities	Spaces Used		
	Courtyard	Alley	Sleeping Room
Cooking	X		
Eating	X	X	
Gathering/reception	X	X	X
Sleeping			X
Resting/games	X	X	X
Washing	X		
Income generating activities	X	X	

Source: Author's elaboration, Field survey, 2015.

The use of spaces (table 5.4) illustrates resident's space adaptations to suit varying functions. It shows that residents though living under extreme space limitations have been able to creatively adapt available space to fit local needs—creating multipurpose spaces that serve both individual and collective good. Emelia Laryea, a mother, in one of the interviews summarized this. She claimed:

> *'We have no kitchen, so we use the courtyard for cooking. We also sit here and eat, after that we clean up. I receive visitors here as well. As you can see, I have my small drinking bar and grocery store also here. Everyone in this house can use this courtyard. We share the space and everything. We can chat here or sit at the alley. Sometimes we gather at the alley to chat or kids play there. Even my sister sells around there too. We use the space for different things. I only sleep or watch TV in my room [sleeping room]'— (23.11.2015)*

This reiterates the practice of space limitations and resident's ingenuity in confronting daily challenges as important activities that merit attention (Gouvenuer, 2015,

Nguluma, 2003). It also affirms the view that complex intersections of people, space, and activities 'provide for and reproduce life' for urban informal residents (Simone, 2004, p. 407) under constrained physical conditions. The human behavioral component in outdoor spaces is further elaborated in the next chapter.

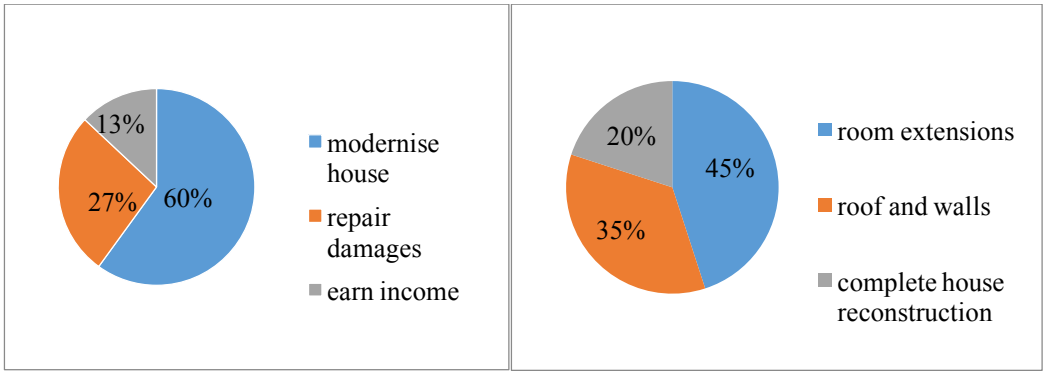
5.5.4 Housing Transformation (or modification)

Houses in the Abese quarter were originally built with mud (walls) and asbestos or zinc (roofing) (Table 5.5). Over the years, however, there have been material changes to some of the eighteen (18) clan houses. Household's transformation activities included room extensions (due to the increasing household size), wall or roof material improvements. Complete reconstruction of houses comprises both physical extensions and house repairs. The main reasons for transformation were to modernize (or improve), repair damages (cracks in walls or ripped roof) and to earn income through rent (Figures 5.13a). These on-going modifications emphasize a 'process of change' (Huchzermeyer, 2004), at least in the physical sense, in Abese quarter. This continuous 'process of change' is revealed in the way houses are transformed to fulfill social, physical and economic needs.

Table 5.5: Building Materials of Surveyed Clan Houses

House Number	House Type	Building Material (structure)		
		Wall	Window	Roof
HA1	Courtyard	Mud	Wood + Metal	AS
HA2	Courtyard	Stone	Wood + Metal	AS+AL+Z
HA3	Courtyard	Mud	Wood + Metal	AS+AL
HA4	Courtyard	Mud	Wood + Metal	AS+AL+Z
HA5 (MD)	Courtyard	Mud+SC	Wood + Metal +GL	AS+AL+Z
HA6	Courtyard	Mud	Wood + Metal	AS+AL+Z
HA7 (MD)	Courtyard	Mud+SC	W+ME+GL	AS+AL
HA8 (MD)	Courtyard	Mud+SC	W+ME+GL	AS+AL
HA9 (MD)	Courtyard	Mud+SC	W+ME+GL	AS+AL+Z
HA10	Courtyard	Mud	Wood + Metal	AS+AL
HA11 (MD)	Courtyard	Mud+SC	Wood + Metal +GL	AS
HA12	Courtyard	Mud	Wood + Metal	AS
HA13	Courtyard	Mud	Wood + Metal	AS+AL
HA14 (MD)	Courtyard	Mud+SC	Wood + Metal +GL	AS+AL
HA15 (MD)	Courtyard	Mud+SC	Wood + Metal +GL	AS+AL
HA16 (MD)	Courtyard	Mud+SC	Wood + Metal +GL	AS+AL+Z
HA17	Courtyard	Mud	Wood + Metal	
HA18 (MD)	Courtyard	Mud+SC	Wood+Metal+GL	AL

Key: AS: Asbestos; AL: Aluminium sheet; SC: Sandcrete; GL: Glass; ME: Metal; MD: Modified House; Z: Zinc. (Source: Authors' field survey, 2015)



a: Reasons for changes b: Part of house modified (n=114)

Source: Author's Field survey, 2015

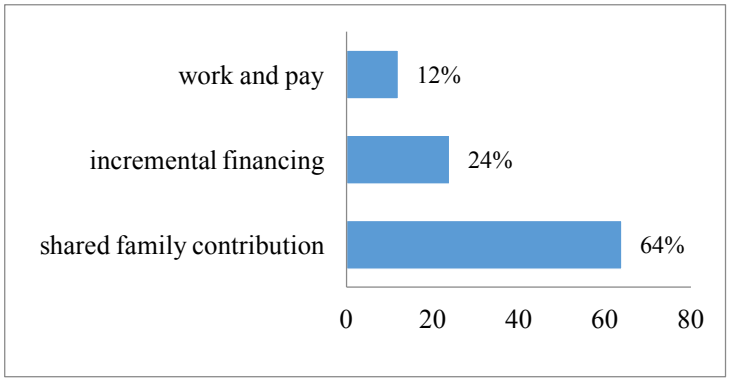
Figure 5.13: Residents' House modifications

One significant finding from the study was the mechanism through which financial resources are mobilized for house modifications outlined above. That is to say, housing transformation in Abese is not simply a matter of shifting house material conditions and space extensions. It is also about social collaboration and mutual support. For instance, 64 percent of finance for house transformation was through shared contributions from family members or support networks (Figure 5.14). The remaining 36 percent was through individual funds, in the form of incremental financing (24 percent) or work and pay (12 percent). Though interviewed households were generally low-income earners, the ability to tap into social support systems provided possibilities for generating some form of funding for house improvement or transformation. This finding is affirmed in earlier research, which asserts that mutual financial support ranks among the top in informal support networks (Appeaning Addo, 2013). They provide a strong pillar of aid in addressing pertinent issues including housing improvement.

The willingness of relatives or friends to contribute towards the house improvement is connected to the social significance (social value) of clan houses in the settlement. This is due to the fact that most local socio-cultural events are organized in the courtyards within the various houses—where occupants are usually related. Thus, improvement is seen as a shared responsibility of all. One household head declared in the interview:

'We cannot watch our house deteriorate. Our name is respected in this community and to see the poor state of our house is a shame. How can we bring visitors here and have meetings in this condition? We must reconstruct the entire house into a multistory to fit the respect we have in this community. We must do our best and also contact our brothers living overseas to support this renovation'— (Kofi Ashong, 30.11.2015)

The above statement points to informal social support networks, which backs what African urbanists have noted as 'reciprocity' and 'transnational' (Pellow, 2003) networks in the housing sector. Transnational support networks, in this case, occurs in a context where social or family ties with apparently higher income earning relatives usually in Europe or North America, become means, an opportunity, or even a strategy, for pooling economic resources for housing transformation. This also explains why the majority of funds for housing came from shared contributions (Figure 5.14).



(n= 114) Source: Authors' field survey, 2015

Figure 5.14: Means of financing housing modifications

5.5.5 Access to community facilities and residents' service improvisations

Access to public and basic infrastructure facilities and services is an important aspect of residents' urban life and necessary for better urban experience. The survey revealed that facilities such as clinics and schools were outside the settlement, accessible by an average distance of between 15 to 20 minutes by foot respectively (Table 5.6). Notably, 85 percent of houses surveyed had no toilet facility and therefore had to resort to the public toilet within the community. Similarly, none of the households had water supply inside the house. This confirms earlier observations

by Arku et al. (2011) on the lack of necessary housing facilities such as water supply and toilet in native households in the Greater Accra Metropolitan Area.

However, resident's improvisation in terms of water supply is noteworthy. For example, some private individuals and clan houses had established water distribution points[10] (figure 5.15), where households could obtain potable water at a cost per bucket. There were several of these distribution points, which simultaneously provided income to the providers and ensured residents access to potable water. In addition, most households organized to used rainwater harvesting (Figure 5.15) during the rainy season.

Table 5.6: Residents' average walking distance to access basic facilities and services

Facility	Average Distance (in minutes)	Provider	Location (within or outside study area)
Clinic/Hospital	19	Government	Outside
School	20	Government and Private	Outside
Market	8	Government	Outside
Public Toilet	10	Government and Private	Within
Water	5	Private (individual/group)	Within
Waste disposal	***	Private (Company)	Within

***Waste collection was done on house-to-house basis through a private waste management company.

Walking speed 12min/km (source: Author's field survey, 2015)



a) Tank used for water distribution b) household rainwater harvesting

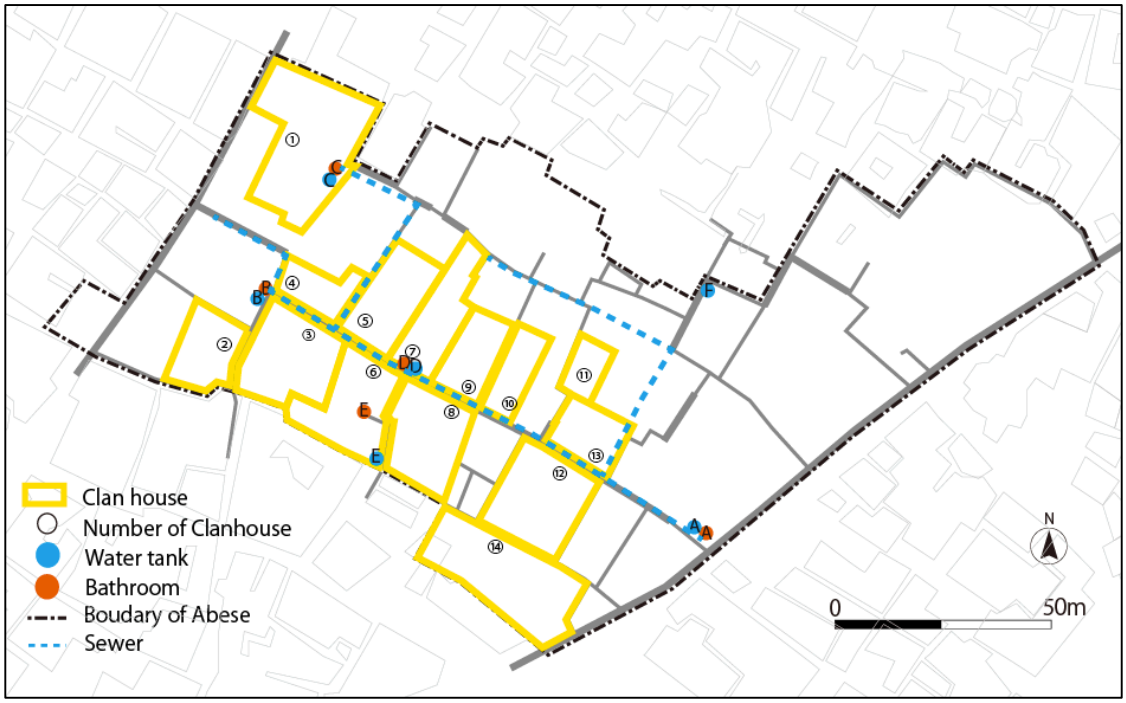
(Source: Authors' own picture, field survey, 2015)

Figure 5.15: Water supply and distribution in the settlement

[10] Local water providers (usually clan house) source water from private water companies, stored them in tanks and sold them to local residents. The tanks were strategically located at different places in the settlement, which enabled easy access.

5.6 Clan based management of common facilities

In the absence of basic housing facilities such discussed in the previous section (e.g. water supply, bathroom and toilet), local leaders, clan houses, and residents have organized to provide some of these basic facilities. Consequently, interviews and observation during the survey revealed the presence of self-organized provision and management of communal facilities such as water tanks, bathroom, and sewer lines (Figure 5.16). In this part, the focus is to present the system for managing and maintaining these common facilities (Figure 5.20). Generally, this system is supported by the existing socio-physical structure, organized around the social system in the various clan houses.



Source: Author's field survey, 2016

Figure 5.16: Map showing common facilities in Abese quarter

a). Water Tank

There are six water tanks within Abese quarter (Figure 5.16), five of which were provided by clan houses. This is based collective effort and contributions by residents within the clan houses to meet the water supply needs of both the clan and residents in the quarter. Residents use the water for domestic purposes such as

washing, bathing, and cooking. Use of water is open to everyone within the quarter. However, those who do not belong to the clan house that provided the specific water tank must pay a fee 0.50 GHS (0.12 US$)[11] per gallon of water[12].

In terms of management, members of each clan house appoint a 'caretaker'— usually from the clan house— responsible for collecting user fees and maintaining the facility. Interview with caretakers indicated that they cleaned the tanks when it became empty. The surroundings of the tanks, however, were cleaned every day. The user fees are used for both caretakers' monthly wages and purchasing materials for cleaning and other maintenance works. The caretakers are required to report to the head of the family in each clan house every week, mostly during clan house meetings on Sundays.

b). Bathroom

The management system for common bathrooms follows similar patterns to water tanks. There are five (5) common bathrooms in the quarter (Figure 5.17). The clan houses provided the bathroom to be used by all residents within the quarter. The financing of the construction of the bathrooms was obtained from the monthly contributions (2 GHS or 0.48 US$) members within each clan house pay to the head of clan to provide welfare and undertake minor improvements. Thus, access to bathroom was free for clan members but other residents in the quarter must pay a fee of 0.50 GHS (0.12 US$). In a similar manner as the water tanks, members of the clan house appoint a caretaker to manage the bathroom. According to field interviews, caretakers cleaned these bathrooms three times a day. User fees are used for both paying the caretaker and buying cleaning materials. The caretaker reports to the head of clan house during weekly clan house meetings.

[11] 1 Ghana cedi (GHS) was equal to 0.25 US dollars at the time of the field survey.
[12] A gallon of water equals 20 liters of water in study area



Source: Author's field survey, 2016

Figure 5.17: Common bathroom for residents in Abese

c. Sewer

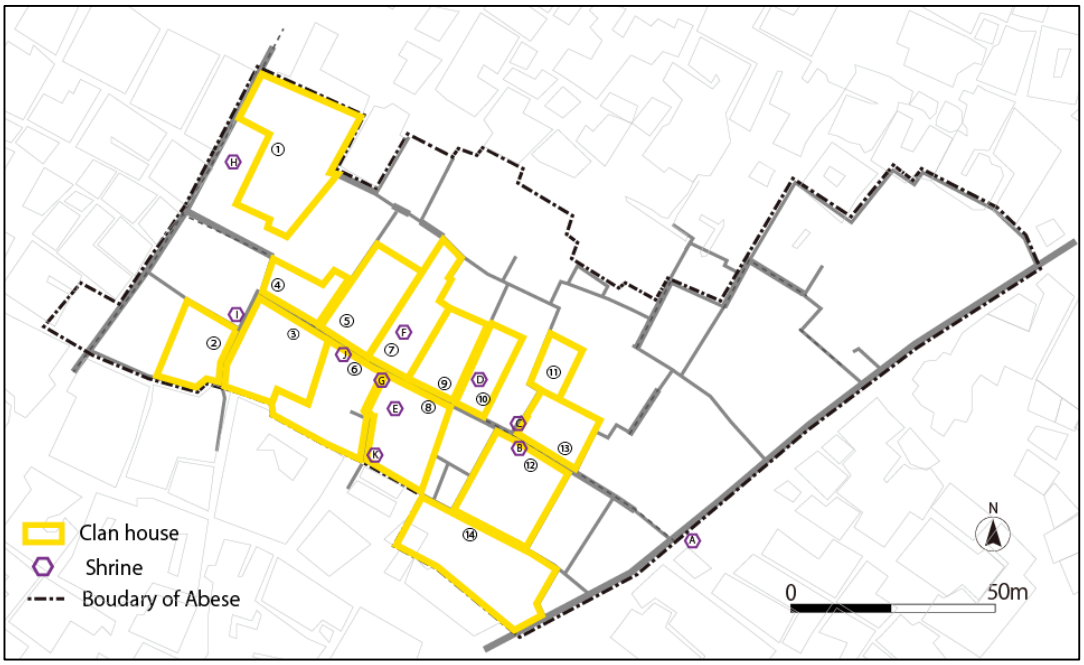
As part of community efforts to improve sanitation in the quarter, residents have constructed a sewer. The survey indicated that the main purpose of this sewer is to improve sanitation in the quarter. The process of connecting all clan houses to the main sewer line is still in progress. In contrast to the communal facilities mentioned above, a private sanitation company is responsible for managing the sewer and septic tank. According to local leaders, the management of the sewer and community septic tank requires technical expertise that is not available in the quarter. The finance of this private management is from the community fund—which is a monthly contribution made by leaders of the clan houses in the Abese quarter.

d. Shrine

Stone-made shrines are important cultural and religious symbols for residents in Abese quarter. Although shrines vary in size and shape, they are identifiable by their white color painting and stone materials. Shrines are the main physical elements through which local people establish a spiritual connection with their gods and local deity 'La Kpa'. In other words, shrines possess spiritual, religious, and cultural relevance to the daily life of the people in Abese and form a core part of their local

identity. The survey identified eleven (11) main shrines in the study area (Figure 5.18, 5.19). Generally, a local priest performs rituals and lead spiritual prayers at the shrines during festivals, ceremonies and other cultural events.

As shown in figure 5.18, the maintenance of individual shrines is based on the clan house system. Thus, members of each clan house are responsible for maintaining the shrines that are within the boundary of their clan house. For instance, shrine *F* and *D* is managed by clan house *7* and *10* respectively because the shrine is located within their clan house. This means that a particular clan house can be responsible for managing two shrines, as in the case of clan house 8. Shrines that are outside the boundary of the clan houses are managed by the youth (e.g. shrine A). In such situations, the community selects a day where all young people gather together to clean and paint all shrines. Furthermore, before major festivals or cultural events, all the residents organize community clean-up activities to clean, paint and repair all broken shrines in the quarter.



Source: Author's field Survey, 2016

Figure 5. 18: Map of shrines in relation to the clan houses in the quarter

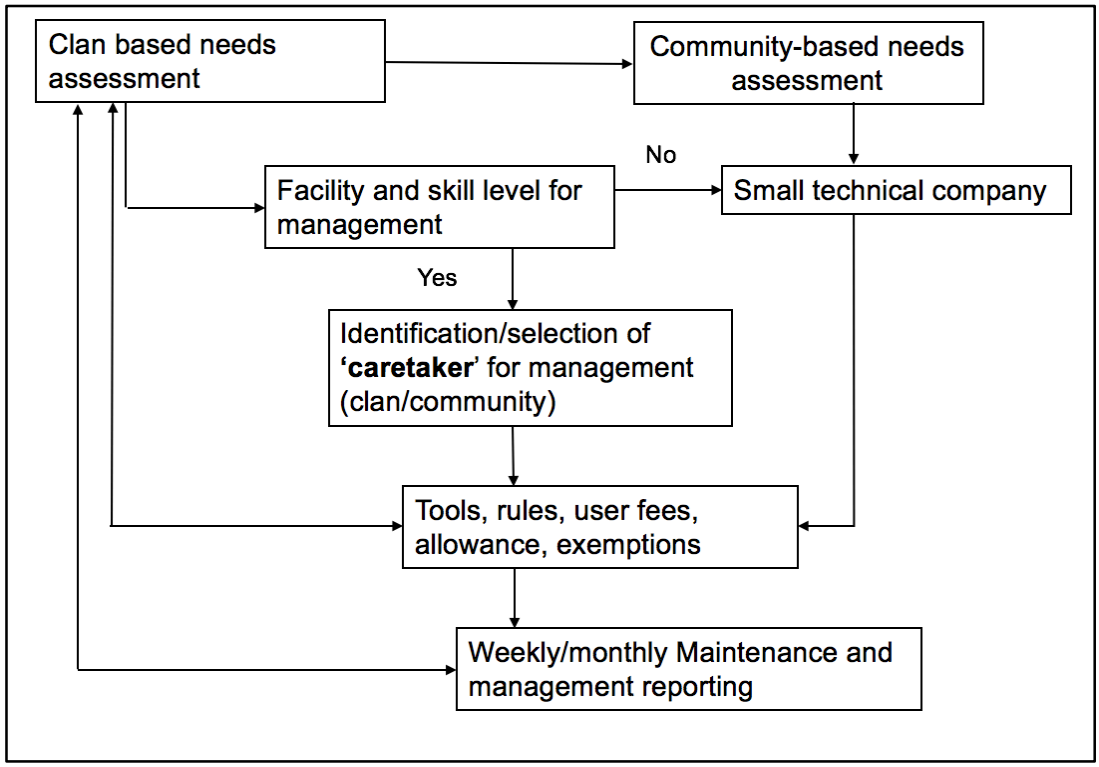


(a) courtyard (b) along an alley

(Source: Author's field Survey, 2016)

Figure 5.19: Shrines dedicated to local gods

Based on the above discussion, it may be claimed residents in the quarter have utilized the physical and social intersections, negotiated around the clan houses, to achieve minimal improvements in existing housing conditions. This system of self-organization, cooperation, and communal understanding builds collective capacity to sustainably manage facilities in the quarter. It, therefore, relates to what planning scholar John Turner's (1972) idea of 'self-help' or in a loose sense, what De Soto' (2000) call urban 'entrepreneurialism' in informal settlements. Possibly, this form of residents' self-organization suggests that Boonstra and Boelens' (2011) view that self-organization and civic initiatives are a formidable alternative to improving conditions in informal settlements may merit some attention among planning professionals and researchers in Ghana.



Source: Author's elaboration, Field survey, 2016

Figure 5. 20: Community mechanism for maintaining common facilities

5.7 Residents' Experiences and Satisfaction in Abese Quarter

Another important aspect of informal settlements is everyday urban life experiences and satisfaction on current conditions and practices. This is important to understand what informal residents value in their settlements and the perceptions they have about their own habitation. In most cases, professionals and researchers define their own perspectives of informal places without a critical construction of what such places mean for the very people who live there. But understanding this is important to identify local values and inputs into future planning and design interventions. In line with this, the study also sought to analyze resident experiences and satisfaction in the Abese quarter.

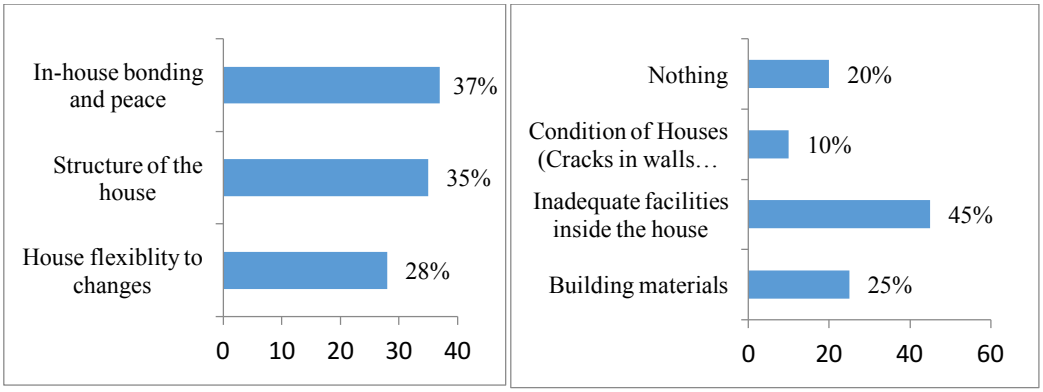
Interviews on residents' level of satisfaction, elicited important considerations on how social aspects, physical conditions, and collective activities affect daily experiences in informal settlements. Generally, this was narrated in terms of the clan house and the settlement as a whole.

In terms of clan houses in the settlement, satisfaction was based on in-house social bonding, structure of the house and its flexibility to incremental modifications (Figure 5.21a). The dominance of the courtyard-based houses with multiple occupants who had strong bonds and ties; common understanding (in deliberations) and absence of personal conflicts (in the use of shared spaces) gave residents a sense of community and belonging. This finding supports what Appeaning Addo (2013) identified in Greater Accra that clan (or family) based houses foster unity, neighborliness and mutual support which is very beneficial in informal settlements—especially in coping with daily socio-economic challenges to achieve better livelihood.

On the other hand, physical factors such as the condition of houses (old building materials) and inadequate facilities (e.g. toilet, kitchen, etc.) were the main elements of respondents' dissatisfaction (Figure 5.21b). Contradictory remarks by two respondents, during a group discussion, are notable:

> '*I like this house very much. Even though we are about four different households in this house, we behave like brothers and support each other. No one causes trouble or confusion. Oh yes! The courtyard is also good for gathering and connecting with others. We use the courtyard as shared space in a way that benefits everyone. Sometimes, we sit there and talk about football or politics.'—(Yaw Anang—01.12.2015)*

> *'But our house is too old. See, the roof is a mixture of old asbestos and zinc. There are so many cracks in the walls. It is just mud, and cracks are appearing everywhere. I like the house but the physical condition is not good. I think you can see it yourself. We don't even have toilet here'—(Acquaye Mark—01.12.2015)*



a: Satisfied conditions b: Dissatisfied house conditions (n=114)

Source: Authors' field survey, 2015

Figure 5.21: Satisfaction with housing conditions

With the respect to the settlement, respondents indicated that relative peace and the freedom to discuss and think collectively, social collaboration, sense of community and rich cultural tradition were the major reasons they liked to live in Abese quarter (Figure 5.22a). Mr. Nortey, a local elder in the settlement, hinted:

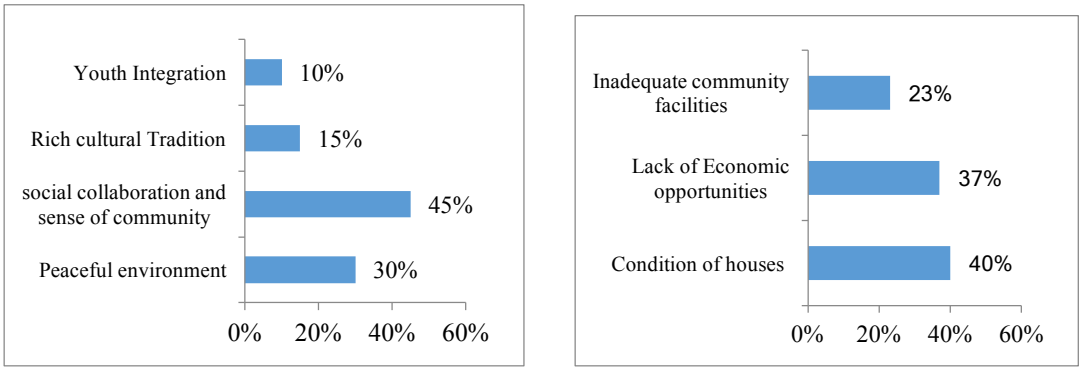
> *'This is a peaceful settlement with a rich cultural tradition. The Homowo festival provides one of the best moments to bond. Everyone is free to act responsibly here. In difficult times, you can always count on another person for support. We build on our cordial relationships to address our challenges together. By working together, we have constructed a community library and a sewer. We can get water from the tanks. We are still planning many things. Also, the youth occasionally lead out in community clean-up to improve this area. I have been living here since I was born and I like it very much.'—(Nii Nortey, 01.12.2015)*

On the contrary, others suggested inadequate economic opportunities and community facilities as among the reasons they were less satisfied in the settlement (Figure 5.22b). Naa Adoley, a mother and local trader, lamented in a group discussion:

> *'We all love this place, except for some negative conditions. There are no secured jobs and sometimes you see young people just hanging around. It is quite worrying. We do not get enough from local government and the*

politicians. We do not have adequate community facilities like public spaces and others'— (01.12.2015)

These remarks during focus group discussions provide an understanding of the contextual issues that influence living experiences in Abese quarter. These are suggestive of the fact that the high value of their collective character is predicated on a set of residents' activities and practices that include social deliberation, support, and space adaptation and service improvisation. However, these experiences also imply the need to look at informal settlements holistically and integrated: social, physical, economic, cultural and environmental. As the responses show, the collective and social capital is appreciable, but there is also the need to connect this with economic and physical aspects, which may contribute to better living experiences and higher levels of satisfied urban experience. By extension, residents' comments inherently postulate that the improvement of and better living experience in Abese quarter emerge from an interweaving of social, physical, economic and cultural concerns.



a: Satisfied conditions in the settlement b: Dissatisfied conditions in the settlement

n=114 (Source: Authors' field survey, 2015)

Figure 5.22: Satisfaction with existing settlement conditions

Based on this discussion of positive and negative attributes, residents rated the Abese quarter as poor (10 percent), moderate (30 percent) or good (60 percent). Generally, the residents' rating of their settlement leaned toward a positive than negative outlook. An opinion leader succinctly remarked:

'People who do not live here, have very negative views about conditions here. They say so many things. See, this a very good place. We relate to each other,

support each other and think together. We are happy. I enjoy good air and I can even sleep outside freely without fear. Every Sunday we all meet in our various family houses to discuss and think about our community. Ah, of course we have many problems. Mud houses, poor house conditions, unemployment...But we are working together. We are doing many things; we are changing things. With little support, things will improve. Why should I go and live in places like Cantonments? They look good but they have tall walls and big gates. They talk to no one. It is like prison.'— (Anyetey, 01.12.2015)

In this striking statement, the respondent affirms an overall positive living experience with a deep awareness of the challenges they face. Social collaboration and residents' collective improvement actions are viewed at an appreciable level to cope with obvious physical problems. Most of the respondents during group discussions expressed no interest to move out of the communities for the reported reasons for dissatisfaction. Those who wanted to would rather move due to overcrowding or secure additional rooms for their children. Rather, they preferred an on-site improvement in the current conditions.

Furthermore, the emphasis on the collective activities and socio-physical aspects does not suggest that other issues such as income and employment are less significant for residents of the Abese quarter. On the other hand, collective efforts to improve current conditions is here cited to indicate a progressive community—one that emphasizes action, change and progress in a positive direction. This, consequently, reinforces the growing scholarly reasoning among urbanists—what contributes to happier, positive and better living experience in a place may not always be quantifiable economic indicators such as income (Obeng-Odoom, 2014). Rather, as Abese quarter reveals, non-income reasons such as social support, solidarity, freedom to act and think collectively, flexibility to adapt and change the physical environment are more important for resident's satisfaction and living experiences.

5.8 Conclusion

This chapter has reiterated the presence of social collaboration, collective activities, physical adaptations and living experiences. It shows that residents in Abese quarter are indeed low-income, but not in 'lower level of social energy' in

participation and contributing to minor changes in their settlement. Succinctly, it has been observed that residents are not oblivious to deplorable conditions (in terms of basic housing facilities) existing in their settlement. Yet, through self-organized initiatives and socially embedded practices, residents' have been able to introduce basic housing facilities such as water supply and bathrooms and a system for their management. Contrary to most analyses that overemphasize the problematic conditions in informal settlements, residents in Abese quarter refer to practices such as regular deliberations, incremental house improvements, social bonds, and relationships among others; which together contribute to a satisfying living experience. Positive living experiences, however, does not suggest resident expectations have been achieved, rather, their settlement is a 'verb': constantly evolving through their own initiatives and activities, towards a better future condition.

In the next chapter, the study focuses on the spatial dynamics of human behavior in open spaces in Abese quarter. Since the social dynamics and mechanisms have been presented in this chapter, it is also necessary to understand the spatial dynamics and human behavior to obtain a better view of the physical environment in the study area. This also enables the comprehension of the physical and spatial needs of residents and offers hints for spatial ordering, planning and design improvement.

CHAPTER SIX

SPATIAL DYNAMICS OF HUMAN BEHAVIOUR IN INFORMAL OPEN SPACES

6.1 Introduction

Informal settlements, as a socio-spatial phenomenon, suggest that residents' needs, aspirations, and identity are seen through the interaction between behavior and space. In this chapter of the study, the purpose is to analyze the interactions between human behavior and the spatial settings of Abese quarter. It is anticipated that through this sort of analyses, the physical pattern of the study area and its significance to residents' everyday life will be appreciated. Thus, the spatial pattern of roads and alleys, distribution of open spaces and human behavior in such spaces are analyzed and discussed.

6.2 Distribution and Hierarchy of Roads

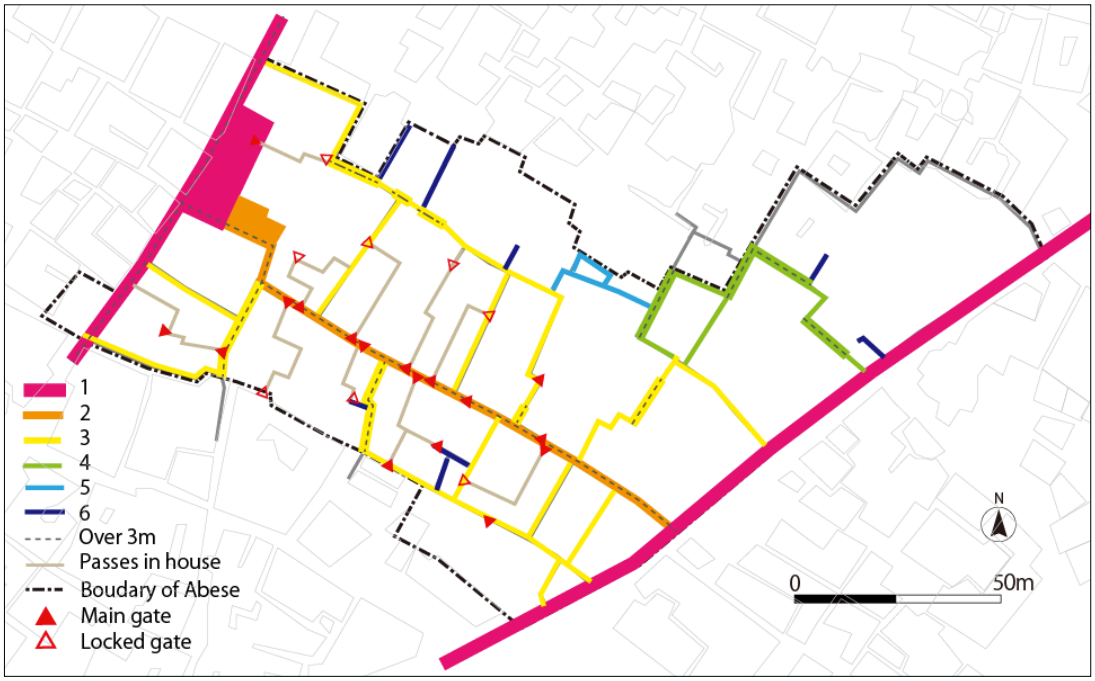
It is generally agreed that the life of urban communities is in its roads (streets or alleys) and they contribute significantly to the public realm and lively community life (Thomas, 1991; Jacobs, 1961). As part of our study in Abese quarter, we sought to understand the distribution and hierarchy of roads as important elements in understanding how physical aspects shape social interactions and human behavior in the quarter.

Based on observation and physical analysis, we identified a 6-level hierarchy of roads (Figure 6.1, Table 6.1) in Abese quarter. The definition of this hierarchy is based on relative functionality and openness. The quarter is enclosed within two arterial roads (Road 1), both of which link Abese with other quarters. Abese road (Road 2) divides the quarter and the traditional clan houses cluster around it (Figure 6.3). This area forms part of the original nucleus from which the settlement has naturally expanded. The Abese Road also links the two arterial roads (Road 1) to the north and south and serves as an important connector for the people of Abese to other quarters.

Generally, networks of roads or alleys are mostly less than three meters wide (roads 4, 5 and 6). They disperse from the main road (Road 2) and connect to different parts of the quarter. There are also eleven passageways within each clan house that makes it possible for residents to connect between different houses through the courtyard. Residents use these passageways to move freely between clan houses and connect with other residents. The survey revealed how these enabled residents to freely move between houses to interact, seek assistance or check on their neighbors' welfare frequently. One elderly woman reported: '*because our houses are connected by passageways, it is very easy for me to move from here to the next house and ask for assistance if needed or check on my neighbor every day. Just a shout and am there in a minute to check what's happening. It makes us feel as if we live together in one big house' (Naa Aforley,17/11/2016*)

Additionally, before major local events such as the 'Homowo' festival or community cleaning exercises, local announcers use these passageways to easily access the clan houses and inform residents about upcoming program schedules and residents' roles. However, there are gates that lock eight of the eleven passageways. Here, the elderly in the clan house controls access. The locked gates are to prevent uncontrolled access by those who do not reside in the Abese quarter. However, all gates are opened during major community events like the '*homowo*' festival, traditional weddings, funerals or community clean-up exercises.

The spatial distribution of the road and alleys has formed a 'tributary system' or 'network' where narrow alleys (under 3 meters wide) connect wider roads (over 3 meters wide). This network has created a 'permeable' and 'open spatial pattern', in this dense Abese quarter. The relevance of the network of roads and alleys are beyond movement or passage, as they also serve as important open spaces for sustaining daily urban life. To appreciate this, the following section analyses observed human behavior in these open spaces.



Source: Author's field survey, 2016

Figure 6.1: Distribution and Hierarchy of Roads in Abese quarter

Table 6.1: Definition of Road layers

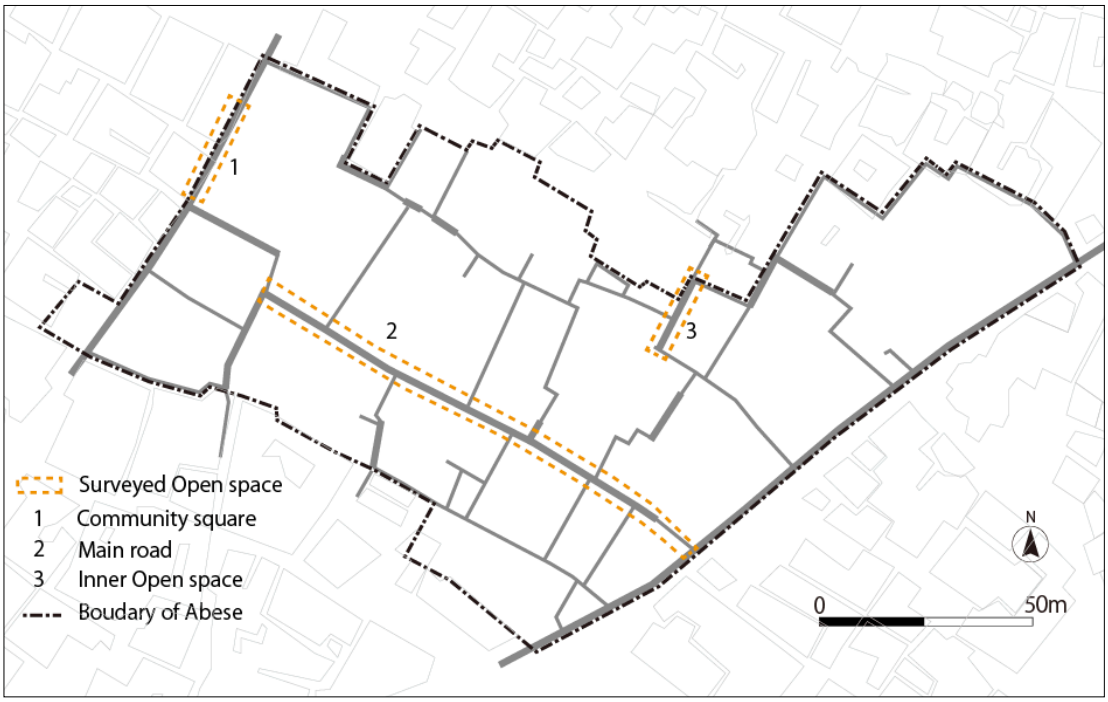
Layer	Definition
1	Arterial roads which surround Abese and link with other districts
2	Internal roads passes through the Abese and connected to layer (1)
3	Internal road which is connected to Layer 1 and 2, with an *L* shape
4	Internal bending road which returns to the point of departure on one side, but also connected to another road on the other side
5	Internal *U* shape road with two connecting points which are enclosed.
6	Cul de sac

Source: Author's field Survey, 2016.

6.3 Human Behavior in Informal Open Spaces in Abese Quarter

Human behaviors in open space are necessary to understand human needs, activities and their interactions with the physical environment around them. Here, using what Cullen (1961) calls the 'faculty of sight' (cited in Metha, 2013: p. 58), an unstructured direct observation was used to understand how residents' relate to

physical space in Abese quarter. Three open spaces were selected for this exercise. The reason is that relevant open spaces are those open to public use and generate active or passive social, functional behavior, and interactions. In line with this, the three main open spaces selected in the quarter include Abese road (main road), main public square and inner open space (Figure 6.2). This study does not, however, claim that these are the only open spaces in the settlement. For the purpose of this study, human behavior and interactions are categorized into social, economic and stationary activities[13].



Source: Author's Field Survey, 2016

Figure 6.2: Selected Open Spaces for studying human behavior

6.3.1 Abese Road (Main Road)

This road is an important open space within the quarter because the entrance of ten of the fifteen clan houses open directly towards it. Also, the clan houses are concentrated along it. In the mornings, the main activities observed were economic oriented. These were home-based informal economic activities such as selling of

[13] We build on the categorization offered by Metha (2013). Thus, social refers to observed interactions among two or more people. Economic refers to income-generating activities within open spaces while stationery activities connected individual activities such as sleeping/napping or non-interactive and non-economic based activities. We are however aware of the overlaps and the simplification within such categorization.

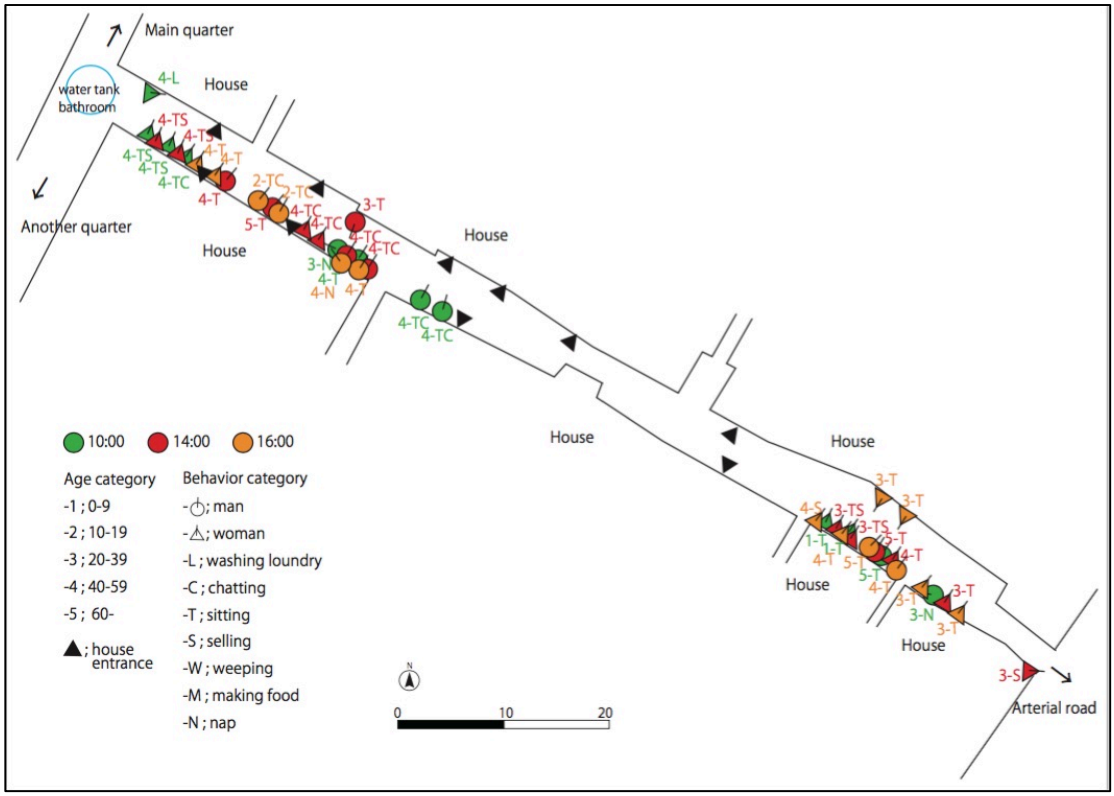
home-cooked food or grocery by women. Such economic activities are concentrated at the extreme ends of the road (Figure 6.3). The road network influences this concentration of activities. This is because the entry/exit points of the main road connecting to two main arterial roads that directly link the local bus station, and thus aggregates relatively high movement of people. Residents in the quarter, with knowledge of this spatial configuration, strategically locate informal economic activities at such locations to be able to access potential consumers. As these economic activities take place, an 'economic node' and a 'social node' are created: where other female residents join the women vendors at their selling location, not necessarily to purchase food but to chatter.

More so, the dominance of women in such economic activities points to cultural norms, where such informal activities as food vending and grocery stores, are considered 'women occupation'. This finding confirms earlier observations that home-based economic activities are common in low-income settlements in Accra and other African cities, adopted as an income-earning strategy to address poverty and unemployment (Gough, Tipple and Nappier, 2003).

In the afternoon, apart from women engaging in economic activities such as food vending and grocery stores, men—within the working age cohort (20-59 years)—were observed sitting and chatting in the area. As a matter of inference, the concentration of men within the working-age (20 to 59 years) sitting and chatting during the active part of the day is indicative of the high unemployment rate (10 percent) or unstable informal job (85 percent) among residents in the quarter [LaDMA, 2014, GSS, 2014].

Conversely, in the evening, we observe a shift in human behavior from economic to mostly social. Male and female residents of varying age cohorts sit, chat and interact with one another in the quarter. This perhaps points to the sociable and lively nature of this open space at night—made possible by the lighting of the street (though minimal) and adequate space to for seating. It also supports the observation of strong social bonding in the previous chapter. It is noteworthy, however, that social activities are also located at the entry/exit points of the road. This is because, unfortunately, the middle area of this space is narrow (2.9 meters, Figure 6.3) and does not afford enough space for residents to sit on long benches to chatter, and simultaneously allow

passage for others who access the road at night. The limitation on social behavior offered by the physical layout of this section of the road space suggests that what other researchers have noted that 'behavior settings' (Metha, 2013; Zacharias, 2001), such as physical convenience for sitting and gathering may affect human use and activities in open spaces.



Source: Author's Field Survey, 2016

Figure 6.3: Human Behavior on main road within the quarter

6.3.2 Community Square

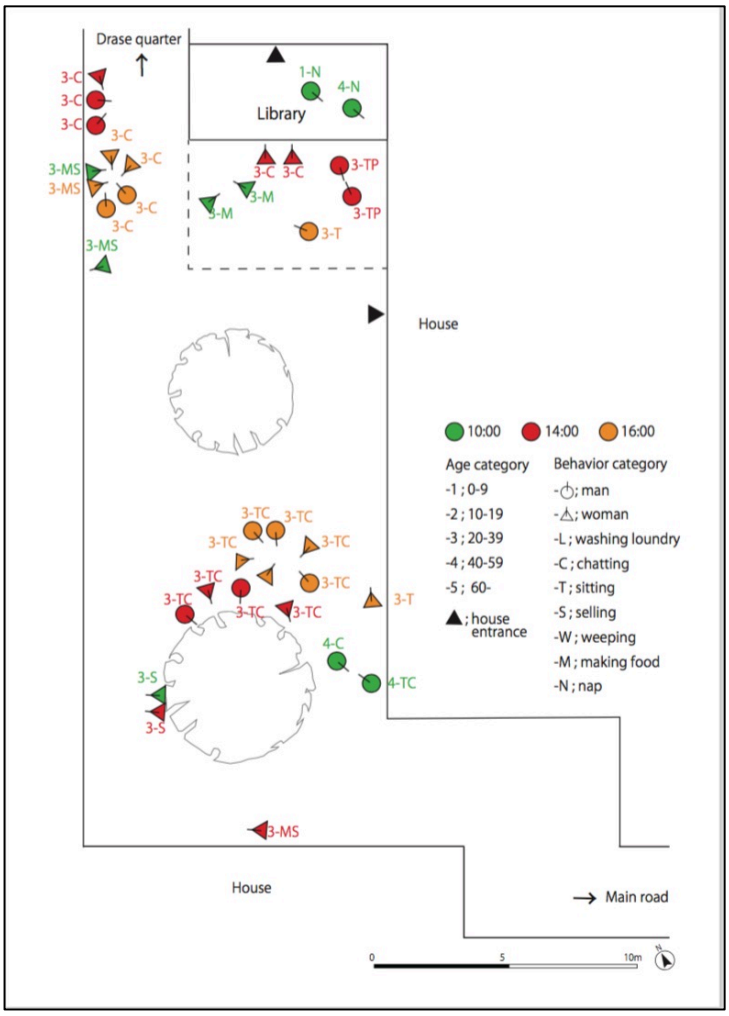
In addition to the main road, the community square (Figure 6.4) located in the northwestern part of the quarter was studied. It directly links the arterial road that connects the quarter to the local station (a station for boarding private commercial vehicular transport) at the southwest section of the area) and one of the commercial areas in the district. It also serves as a passage to neighboring quarters situated in the north of the study area. In the eastern part, it connects the main road that divides the Abese quarter. A recently constructed community library adjoins this square, with a

tent erected in front of the library for outdoor educational activities for school children (Figure 6.6). There are also two big trees centrally located in this square.

In this open space, the main activities in the morning included preparing and selling of food or grocery (economic) (Figure 6.5), napping (stationary) or chatting (social). As compared to other open spaces within the quarter, the square was wide enough (an area of about 249.6 square meters) to provide women space to prepare and sell their food on site. This location is also suitable for economic activities because it directly links the arterial road that connects the area with a local station and other districts. The economic use of this space directly corresponds to an earlier study (Yankson, 2000) that shows how residents in low-income communities use open spaces, which are usually rent free, for informal economic activities to be able to generate income and address socio-physical problems.

In the afternoon, stationary activities such as sleeping or napping were apparent. Typically, women selling here put their babies or young children to take a nap in the shaded area (tent area) in front of the library (Figure 6.6). What is noticeable in this open space is the cluster of activities around the big tree or in front of the library. This is because it provides shading and cover from the hot weather (32^{o} C on average during the survey) during the late morning and afternoon hours. At this location, we observe how climate affects human behavior in open space, and that people usually congregate around areas where shading exist to seek protection from harsh natural elements. This is consistent with other research findings which show that microclimate has significant impact of human behavior in physical space (Rapoport, 1990; Zacharias et. al, 2001; Sullivan, et. al, 2004). It also indirectly hints at the need for urban greening and shading elements to improve the physiological suitability of open spaces in hot weather communities such as the Abese quarter.

Evening activities were predominantly social in nature. Sitting, chatting among men and women of different age categories were observed in this open space. People usually gather in groups. Gathering in the open space is a very important part of life and a routine activity among residents in the quarter for strengthening social bonds.



Source: Author's Field Survey, 2016

Figure 6.4:Human Behavior in community square



(a) Small shop selling both home-cooked food and grocery, (b) medium sized grocery store in open space (Source: Author's field survey, 2016)

Figure 6.5: Economic activities in community square



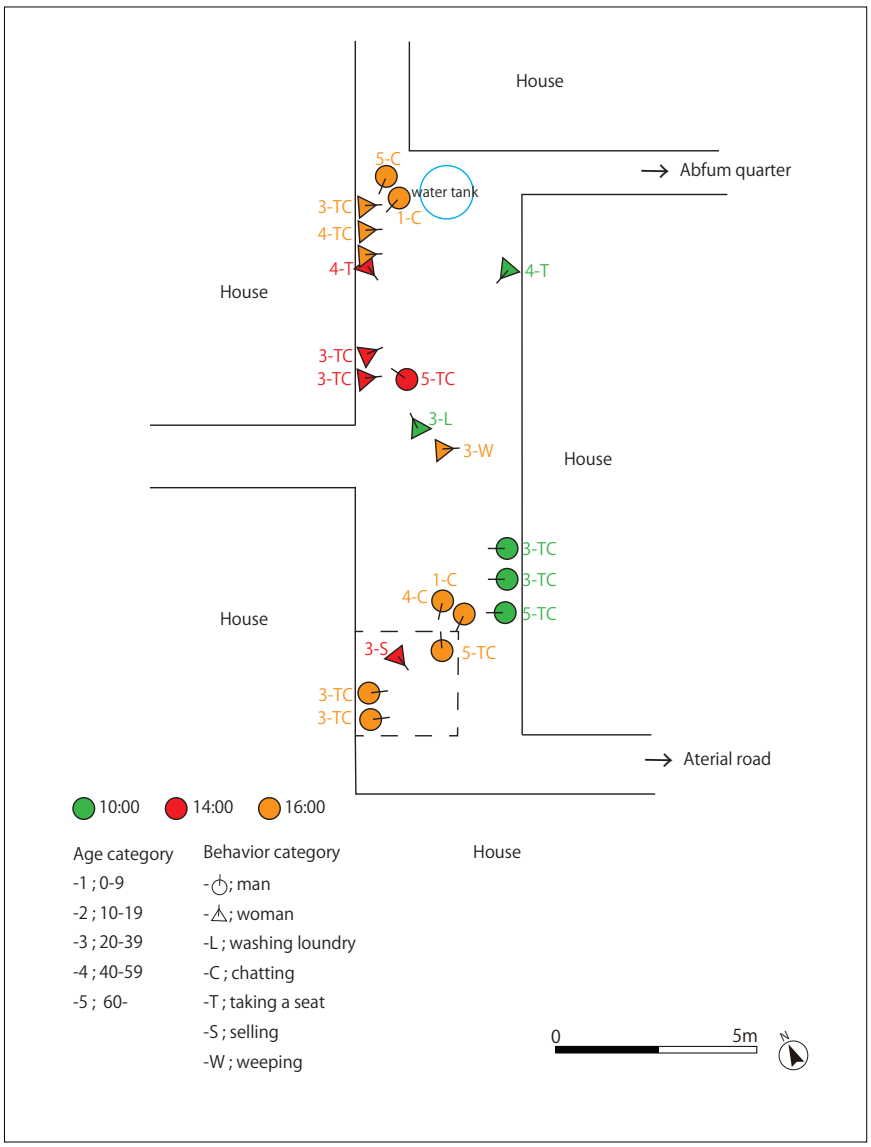
(a) North Side (b) South Side

Figure 6.6: View of the community square

6.3.3 Inner Open Space

This open space (Figure 6.7) is physically enclosed between three houses near the eastern boundary of Abese quarter (Figure 6.8). The spaces between these three houses are also connected by three narrow alleys, which allow residents within surrounding houses to move freely between the houses and the open space. The peculiar location and physical enclosure of this space meant that its use was different from the other open spaces mentioned above. In the morning, young men (20-39 years) were observed sitting and chatting while women washed laundry with their hands. Similar activities were recorded in the afternoon, even though the sitting positions shifted to the edge of the houses, under the extended roofs. This was also to gain shading and protection from the sunny weather.

Comparably, evening activities were typically sitting and chatting. This inner space was therefore mainly for social use as residents from the three houses around the space usually gathered to socialize or relax.



Source: Author's field survey, 2016

Figure 6.7: Human behavior in inner open space

However, the comparatively limited economic use of this space is due to the enclosed nature in-between houses, which has been appropriated by inhabitants for domestic use such as washing or simply socializing with friends and neighbors. Furthermore, without a direct link to the street or high passage of people, this space does not provide a good location for informal economic activities as compared to other open spaces discussed above.

Generally, the human behaviors observed in the three informal open spaces discussed above imply an element of 'mixity': that is a mixed category of human

behaviors and users of varying age cohorts (different generations). It also demonstrates what urban researchers have noted as flexibility (Loukaitou-Sideris and Ehrenfeucth, 2009) and adaptability of space (Frank and Stevens, 2007, Gourveneur, 2015). This specifically reflects how spaces can accommodate different activities and also offer different cohorts of residents (by gender and age categories) the possibility to invent behaviors and activities that meet their needs. Again, the social and economic use of open spaces in Abese quarter reinforces the thinking that open spaces must be associated with social and economic functionality rather than just a channel for movement (Gehl, 1987, Jacobs, 1961, Metha, 2007).



Source: Author's field survey, 2016

Figure 6.8: Inner open space appropriated for domestic use

6.4 Conclusion

This chapter has presented spatially embedded behavioral patterns in the indigenous informal quarter of Abese. The analyses in this chapter identified an organic network and hierarchy of roads and alleys has contributed to an open and 'permeable' spatial pattern. Human behavior in open spaces also intimates the multi-

functionality of physical space and how it is important to meeting the social and economic needs of residents in Abese quarter. Importantly, an informal 'mixity' pattern is identified: different kinds of human behaviors along various users (gender, age and time). Human behavior patterns are observed in social, economic and stationery activities activated on physical open spaces. These findings and observations provide an understanding of the spatial and behavioral intersections in indigenous informal settlements and also provides hints for planning and design improvements. In the next chapter, the summary of findings and implications of this study for community based planning and future research are presented.

CHAPTER SEVEN

CONCLUSION: SUMMARY OF FINDINGS AND POLICY IMPLICATIONS

7.1 Introduction

This chapter entails the conclusion to this dissertation. Following the previous chapters on analyses, it contains the summary of major findings, policy implications and the direction for future research. It also presents a framework for rethinking the significance of informal settlements research and design improvement in Ghana.

7.2 Summary of Findings

The major findings have been group thematically based on the analyses in the previous chapters. They are organized around social collaboration or collective activities, housing transformation and adaptions, and management of common facilities. It also includes spatial aspects of human behavior. The following are therefore the major findings:

Residents' social collaboration and collective activities

- The study revealed that the social structure of Abese quarter is organized around the clan houses, where most residents have family ties and common ancestral lineage. Family members in each of these clan houses had a head, responsible for all affairs within the house.
- The community holds weekly family meetings where residents meet to discuss social, physical and economic issues. Representatives from each clan house with their assistants also meet weekly to deliberate and discuss on issues toward the development of the quarter.
- The quarter has a strong social support system, where residents see each other as part of a big family. Social bonding is evident in participation in community clean-up exercises and other social events such as weekly family meetings, festivals, and funerals.

Housing Transformation and space adaptations

- The main housing typology is courtyard based single story houses with gendered male-female separation. However, there are signs that this is changing as new transformations are occurring in multiple story houses due to westernization and/or globalization.
- The houses surveyed did not have basic housing facilities such as bathroom, water and toilet inside the house.
- Residents do not have adequate documentation about the clan houses such as when the house was built or land title registration. Proof of ownership was based on stories and inheritance.
- Originally, clan houses were built with mud walls, wooden windows, and zinc roofs. However, half of the clan houses have been modified with new building materials such as cement (walls), aluminum (roof), and glass (windows). The main reason for this modification was to modernize the house, repair damages in buildings and extensions to accommodate an increase in family size.
- The major source of funding for housing modifications is from residents' shared contributions (64 percent). In this case, local and overseas members contribute money to improve condition of houses or introduce minor adjustments. The study also showed that the willingness of clan members to support housing improvement is because of the 'social value' and identity attached to clan houses.
- There are three main spaces that define the settlement: courtyard, alleys (roads) or sleeping rooms. Out of this, the courtyard is the most important space for residents as it supports domestic activities such as cooking, washing or social activities such as gathering, relaxing and cultural events.
- All spaces had multiples uses as evidence showed residents appropriation of space to fulfill economic and social needs.

Provision and Management of Common Facilities

- The study showed that due to the absence of basic facilities, the community leaders and some of the clan houses have provided facilities such as water tanks, bathrooms, and toilets for residents. A minimal user fee was charged for

the use of these facilities even though access is free for those who belong to the clan that provided the facilities.

- Members of each clan house define the management of these communal facilities. Typically, residents in each clan house deliberate to appoint one person to collect fees, maintain and clean the facility daily. The user fees are used to pay the 'caretaker' or facility manager and at the same time buy materials for maintenance.

Residents' satisfaction and living experiences

- This research indicated that even though the quarter has notable physical problems (facilities and housing conditions), social bonding and collective activities contributed to residents reporting satisfied living experiences.
- Again, about 60 percent of residents rated the Abese informal quarter as good as compared to poor (10 percent) and moderate (30 percent).
- Residents' recognized problems such as bad condition of houses, inadequate economic opportunities and lack of housing facilities. However, their opinion of their settlement is progressive and evolving. That is, the case where they assert that through collective activities and deliberations, they are changing current conditions.

Spatial Dynamics of Human behavior in Open spaces

- The study revealed an irregular (unplanned) spatial pattern characterized by alleys and road networks that intersperse the quarter.
- A six-level hierarchy of road and alley network was identified. This formed an 'open and tributary' system where narrow alleys (under 3 meters) join roads or open spaces in the quarter.
- In terms open spaces, the study introduced an 'urban mixity' pattern: social, economic and stationary. This refers to multiple behaviors in open spaces by different generations of users (age, gender, time).
- Informal rent-free open spaces provide opportunities for residents to undertake economic activities such as food vending or small grocery shops. This provides a source of income for addressing unemployment and other socio-economic problems. More so, access to cheap food for informal residents.

- Location, local knowledge and physical characteristics of informal open spaces also influenced human behavior. Open spaces with direct links to the main road and arterials roads were used for informal economic activities while inner spaces served domestic and social purposes. However, all spaces had social significance at night, including gathering, chatting and relaxation.
- The hot microclimate (weather) within open spaces affected residents positioning and location of activities. Mostly, human behavior was concentrated around trees, under extended roofs or tents, where protection and shading from the hot temperature (32^{o} C) were afforded.

In view of the summary of major findings above, a SWOT analysis framework is developed (Table 7.1) to conceptualize potentials and limitations in the study area. This SWOT framework is then used to guide the policy implications and recommendations from the research. The benefit of the SWOT framework is that it helps in identifying strategies to maximize the positive aspects (strengths and opportunities) and minimize challenges (weaknesses and threats).

Table 7.1: SWOT analysis of the research study

Strength	**Weakness**
Strong social capital and support system	Narrow width of alleys poses risk of accessibility in case of major disaster such as fire or flooding
Residents' deep interest, consciousness and collective effort to improve condition	Lack of effective collaboration between community and local government
Socially organized system for providing and managing communal facilities	Limited use of spaces/limited economic opportunities in quarter
Adaptable and flexible open spaces that support residents' needs and transformation	Lack of greening infrastructure to provide maximum comfort in open spaces
Opportunities	**Threat**
Existence of NGOs and civil society groups absent in the community but present in the district e.g. Global communities/ People's Dialogue	Negative narratives and perceptions against informal settlements and indigenous activities (social stigma)
The introduction of the pilot PSUP (upgrading program by UN Habitat) in other informal communities	Westernization of lifestyles and family systems or globalization
The New Urban agenda on sustainable cities and communities pays attention to informal settlements	Planning laws and policy against informal housing and settlements

strength (internal)/opportunity (external) enabling factors; weakness(internal)/threat (external) debilitating factors (Source: Author's elaboration, 2016)

7.3 Policy Implications and Recommendations

Urban informal settlements constitute a significant feature in the socio-spatial organization of major towns and cities in Ghana. They may appear to be unplanned or disorganized, but an empirical engagement with residents and their physical environment suggest other important aspects. The future of the rapidly growing urban areas, where urban informality is the norm, is not in ignoring, rejecting or even the common practice of mass evictions. Negative perceptions will not provide an effective response to this pattern of human settlements. As this research has shown, there are a lot of things happening and it is, therefore, necessary not to merely focus on characteristics but to engage informal areas socially and spatially. Based on the findings from this study, policy implications and recommendations are outlined below.

Promote and preserve the existing social system. The study revealed a very organized social system that supports resident initiatives, collaboration and support, and advances cultural practices in the quarter. It has also been useful in discussions to initiate strategies for community development and positive living experiences. This is significant for urban planning and policy. The new government of Ghana, in 2017, introduced a new ministry for 'inner city and zongo development'. In as much as this is a noble policy idea, the results of this study show the need to promote and deepen existing social practices in both formal and informal settlements is vital for improving conditions in low-income settlements. This is because this social pattern has the potential to promote community-based development strategies and enhance community-led planning in Ghana. It is therefore recommended that the existing social system should be maintained and promoted by integrating into Ghana's urban policy framework.

Ensure the continuity of courtyard-based housing style. It has been documented in this research that courtyard based housing is not only physical imprints in the current urban structure of Abese quarter but they also possess social and cultural functionality among local residents. Thus, the courtyard based housing style in important to sustaining socio-spatial identity in the study area. It contributes to the architectural heritage and residents' attachment to the neighborhood. However, the study also revealed that these styles are changing as a result of westernization of

urban lifestyles in the Greater Accra Area. There is, therefore, the need for urban policy to recognize the social, cultural and physical heritage of indigenous communities in Ghana and to provide incentives to maintain existing housing and spatial patterns. Planning standards, building regulations and housing requirements in the country must support continuity in historical formation and identify. As scholarly evidence shows, residents show commitment and involvement in their neighborhood when attachment and identity are strong.

Introduce housing and land title registration. There is inadequate documentation about houses in the study area. The study showed that most of the residents' do not have land titles, information on year of construction and house modification. Even though customary ownership is recognized, there is the need for introducing documentation of all houses in the study area and other places with such conditions. This is important to create a database of houses; uses and other residents' data to support evidence-based planning, design, and research in the quarter.

Introduce and Promote Urban Tourism. Findings from this study indicated the presence of cultural and social practices in the study area such as festivals, traditional naming and wedding ceremonies, transnational history and support mechanisms. This is a potential for urban tourism. Urban tourism has the potential to support two critical aspects of the study area: (i) maintain and sustain the historical, cultural, spatial and social aspect of the quarter and; (ii) support the local economy by providing economic opportunities for young people, revenue for the community through tourists and new funding for improving existing conditions. In terms of policy, it suggests the need to shift attention from natural tourism (tourism based on nature) to emphasize material and cultural tourism in terms of culture (art, history, food, music) and housing (heritage). It is therefore recommended that young people with artisan skills (e.g. painting, sculpting, design), and older residents with historical knowledge about the settlements can collaborate to introduce galleries and art centers. This can also be integrated into the annual '*Homomo'* festival to boost local tourism, continuity in existing patterns and eventually the local economy.

Developing traditional markets to build Local Economy. Evidence from this study demonstrates the intense manner residents use rent-free open spaces to undertake informal economic activities as source of income to support their

households. This points to the need to support market development in informal quarters and urban spaces. Recent government policy has supported neo-liberal urban policies with the introduction of big shopping malls and commercial centers whose rent is high and also beyond the reach of low-income residents in most informal quarters. This implies that traditional market development is needed to provide a cheaper alternative for residents to engage in informal market and also support the local economy. Through adequate and locally sensitive regulation of traditional markets and support for food safety, traditional markets can become attractive spaces for shops and productive areas for residents involved in informal economic activities.

Land adjustment/Design Improvement of Spaces. Observations from the study showed that informal open spaces represent an important aspect of the spatial dynamics of human behavior in the study area. Thus, the 'urban mixity' pattern of social, economic and leisure use of space among different age groups point to the multi-use of spaces. On the other hand, even though sustainable urban development is mentioned in district development plans and government urban policy, not a lot of attention has been paid to urban greening or green infrastructure (especially in informal areas). However, a large body of evidence (for example Matthews and Byrne, 2016) proves that greening improves residents' outdoor physical and social activities within neighborhoods. This can also advance the new global urban development agenda on sustainable, inclusive and resilient cities.

More so, refocusing urban policy towards place-making and locally sensitive sustainable design of open spaces is an imperative for urban development. This implies an urgent need for Land adjustment programs. The potential of land adjustment and development is scarcely considered in urban planning practice in Ghana. Yet, the success of land readjustment strategies in Asian countries (e.g. Japan, Thailand) suggests it has prospects for generating hybrid and innovative mechanisms for urban development from the community to the city level. For example, creating and redesigning open spaces to support multi-use and sustain residents' attachment to these places as social, economic and cultural spaces. In addition, mixed-used developments that support the diversity of informal living. This also requires microclimate supportive strategies such as greening (e.g. trees and shading) to reduce physical discomfort within the hot and humid microclimate. However, considering the

customary ownership of land in Ghana, it means active participation of traditional leaders, family heads and citizens will be crucial to policy success.

Reinvent Community Planning. The case of Abese informal quarter shows that residents do not only know what they want, but they also have historical knowledge, social and cultural capital in the places they reside. Through this cultural capital, residents can provide important historical perspectives, hints, and information on what is meaningful for local people. This can be a good starting point for effective community planning. However, this approach does not refer to the current idea of participatory planning in Ghana where residents become passively involved in the planning of their communities. Rather, it refers to recognizing the unique skills and attributes of informal residents and their communities and giving them the technical support to lead the planning and development of other own settlements. Stated differently, this is a form of community-led planning in practice. Thus, NGOs, community based organizations, local associations collaborate with local residents with support from local government to support civic initiatives and innovate the community planning process.

Rethinking urban informal settlements. This study has reinforced the need to rethink urban informal settlements and recognize their positive aspects, uniqueness and associated residents' activities that support meaningful urban life. It means the local government and media organizations biased representation of poor conditions and negative narratives without an empirical engagement of communities is not a sustainable and inclusive option for improving existing conditions. Government urban planning and policy focus should recognize informal settlements as places where citizens are not merely illegal but victims of the unequal opportunities and years of neglect in the urban development process. Positive social and spatial practices must be recognized and utilized as a potential in developing informal areas. This would also imply engaging locally with residents. In light of this, it suggested that planning institutions and government agencies must plan for informal settlements and provide frameworks that support than destroy. It implies universities and research centers proving a balanced empirical evidence for planning and design improvements. Again, support for local associations and professional organizations experimenting and testing innovative ideas while the government provides policy and technical support.

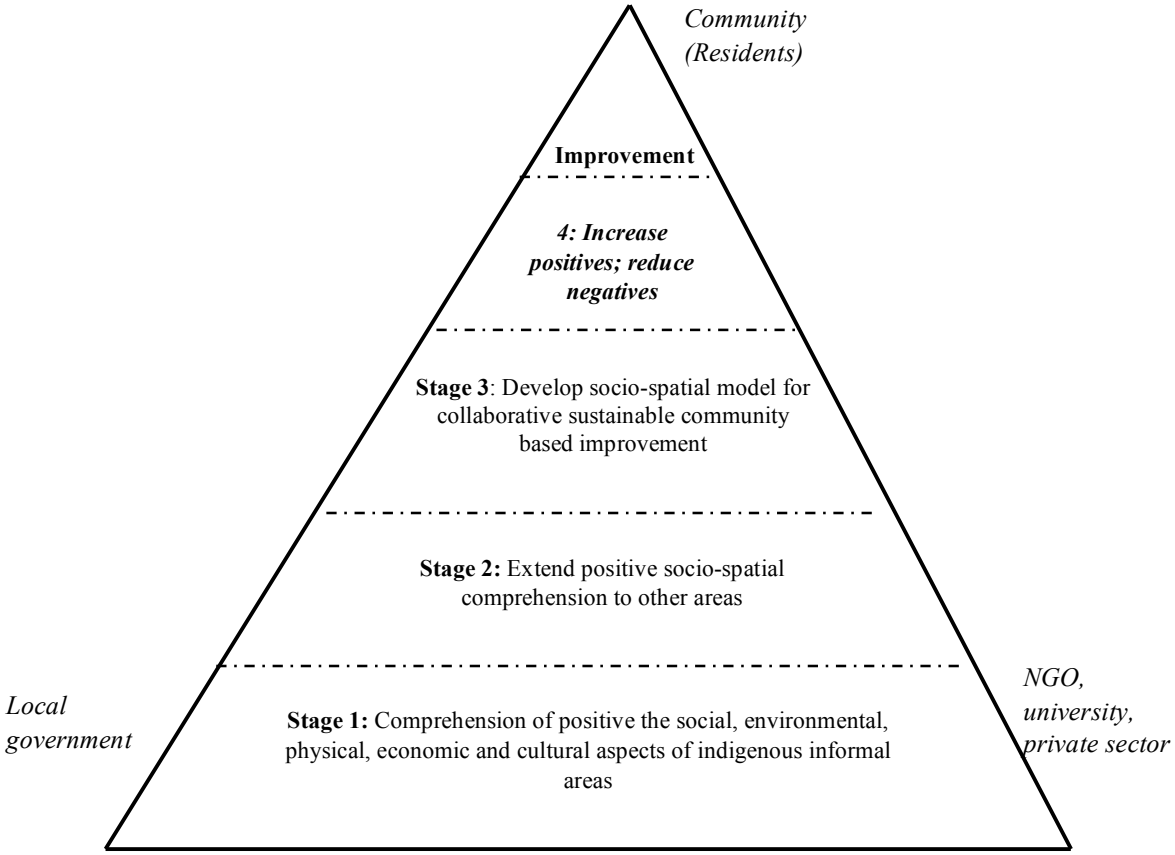
Table 7.2: Summary of Issues and Policy Implications

Issue	Action	Institution
Preserve Social system	Support for activities that preserve existing social patterns. (e.g. festivals, cultural activities, clan meetings)	Local Government, Traditional Council, NGOs, Ministry for Inner City Development
Housing and Architectural identity and continuity	Establish local laws that require new housing designs to maintain courtyard style or traditional housing style	Local Government, Department of Housing, Community Council, NGOs, Sector Ministries
Physical Condition of houses	Promote the use of indigenous building materials	Local government, Habitat for Humanity, Sector Ministries, NGOs, community council, traditional authority
	Building material subsidy for low income communities	
Secured Tenure	Encourage land and house registration in indigenous communities	Land Administration Authority, Local Government, Traditional Authority, Community councils, Sector ministries, NCCE.
	Educate residents on registration process and reduce bureaucracies	
Improve Informal Economy	Redevelop traditional markets into safe, healthy and secured low rent market stalls	Local Government, NBSSI, Traditional Authority, Sector ministry, NGOs, Commercial Banks
	Microfinance access to informal residents for small business start ups	
Value of Open Spaces	Greening of informal open spaces to provide physical comfort	Town and Country Planning Department, Local Government, Sector Ministries, NGOs, community council
	Effective lighting of informal open spaces at night	
	Redesign of alleys to support pedestrianisation	
Reinvent Community Planning	Integrate social and cultural capital and historical perspectives in informal settlement planning and development	Local Government, Ministry for Inner City Development, NGOs, Community Council, Universities, Professional Organizations
	Recognize and encourage civic initiatives in community planning	
	Support and cooperation with NGOs and community federations in urban place making	
Introduce Urban Tourism	Train and encourage young artists to develop artistic representations of their communities (e.g., music, food, art)	Ministry of Tourism, Center for National Culture, Traditional Authority, Local Government, Community Council, Technical Schools and Universities
	Organize elderly and the well-informed to narrate and document distinct socio-cultural and settlement features during festivals and community meetings	
	Establish art galleries as centers to promote cultural urban tourism	
Rethink informal settlements	Recognize and plan for urban informal settlements	Local government, Ministry for Inner City development, Traditional Authority, NGOs, Universities, Research Centers and Policy Units
	Engage informal residents and integrate their perspectives and initiatives in planning, design and social development	

Source: Author's elaboration, 2017

In view of the issues and policy actions identified in Table 7.2, a framework is proposed to provide a systemic research and policy process for the future planning and development of informal settlements in Accra, Ghana (Figure 7.1). The framework proposes 4-stage process for improving conditions towards sustainable and inclusive urban development that pays attention to the needs of the urban poor in Ghana. The first two stages emphasize the research-based comprehensive analyses of informal settlements that integrate positive socio-spatial aspects into the current understanding of informal areas. It implies an interdisciplinary and collaborative engagement of all dimensions of informal settlement living and practices (social, spatial, cultural, economic, environmental). Stage 3 suggests the need to develop a community-based socio-spatial model (based on the analysis in Stage 1 and 2), for improving existing conditions.

This model can be extended beyond the study district to other migrant and squatter informal settlements in Accra. At this stage, action research and greater collaboration with local residents, community associations and local government will be very important. The model will also require a greater role for civil society (NGOs/NPOs), the private sector, and universities in this regard. Invariably, there is the need for embracing indigenous practices instead of supplanting them through modernist planning. Stage four, the final stage represents the impact of stages one, two and three. Here, it is anticipated that the positive aspects of informal areas will be increased and the negative aspects reduced to a minimum. Through a gradual, incremental and collaborative process, sustainable improvements can be achieved for the majority of urban residents who live in informal areas of Accra. It is anticipated that through future research and policy development, this 'research-action-policy' framework can guide efforts towards sustainable and inclusive urban development in predominantly informal Ghanaian cities.



Source: Author's elaboration, 2017

Figure 7. 1: Proposed framework for informal settlement development in Ghana

7.4 Future Research

The study has sought to contribute to postcolonial urban scholarship by emphasizing the residents' collective informal activities and behaviors in an indigenous informal settlement in Ghana. The study has established that informal settlements are not simply disorganized and dysfunctional places as conventional literature suggests. On the other hand, the Abese case shows the presence of organized social systems and unique spatial aspects that provide meaningful living experiences to residents' everyday life. For urban professionals, researchers and policymakers, this study has established that even in the current universal terminology of informal settlements, micro-level differentiations exist at the local level socio-spatially. Therefore, recognizing positive aspects and engaging these local differences will go a long way to promote tailor-made planning and design interventions sensitive to existing spatial, social, cultural and economic character and conditions. In this case,

These findings also present important debates and future research directions. Looking forward, much more research needs to be done. We still do not know much about how civic informal practices provide alternatives to the current planning regime in Accra? What are the institutional barriers to this? What are the prospects and challenges of introducing community associations (or federations) in community-planning systems as an alternative for developing informal settlements? Would the Japanese 'Machizukuri' practices (NPOs, Neighborhood Associations) be a feasible experimentation in this regard? Moreover, how can Land adjustment be experimented as possible solutions to improving informal areas? Therefore, future planning and research will have to debate and research this urban development trajectory.

7.5 Conclusion

Indigenous settlements (or native settlements) in addition to several other low-income communities constitute the expansive presence of informal areas within the urban landscape of Greater Accra Metropolitan Area and Ghana generally. The segregationist and exclusionary colonial planning that paid little attention to native communities have been fashionably reinstated in postcolonial governments evictions and negative view of informal areas. Yet, the phenomenon of informal settlements continues and currently, about 60 percent of urban residents reside in such areas in GAMA. This dissertation has to set to argue that plans, policies and programs are important, but sustainable improvements will emerge from careful and critical attention to the self-organizing activities of residents, their indigenous environment and associated behaviors. It asserts that Ghanaian cities are socially, culturally and physically differentiated and that it is through a neighborhood by neighbored, quarter-by-quarter attention that to civic initiatives that potentials can be developed.

By investigating the indigenous community management system, it has been obvious there are important potentials in informal settlements that can be built- on to improve conditions. It has also shown important cultural, social and human aspects that are critical to the development of informal areas. Additionally, human behavior has pointed out how the intersections between space and residents play out in informal open spaces. Thus, indicating important economic, social and physical needs in what we term 'urban mixity'. Hence, residents' direct speech, human behavior

observation, and understanding of the resident collaborative environment are perhaps more important than top-down policies and programs. This dissertation, therefore, gives additional voice to the need for organized civil society and community based organizations in native and low-income communities in Ghana and elsewhere. Sustainable redevelopment of informal settlements is possible. However, it means institutions (public and private) should recognize the informal practices, structure, and rules that shape the lives of informal settlements residents and their environment. It is only through this kind of endogenous locally based redevelopment that the dream of a sustainable inclusive city can be achieved.

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APPENDIX: QUESTIONNAIRES AND RESEARCH INSTRUMENTS

HOUSEHOLD QUESTIONNAIRE

The purpose of this research is to collect field data and generate information on the topic *'Self-Organized Innovations or urban nightmares? Study on socio-spatial practices in informal settlements and the implications for urban development planning in Accra, Ghana'*, toward the fulfillment of the requirements for PhD (Urban Planning). Please, be assured of the confidentiality of your response and all information provided are for **academic purposes only.**

Name of interviewer:

Date of Interview:

Time of Interview:

Place of interview:

I. Socio-Economic Background of Household Head

Q1. Name of Respondent

Q2. Sex of respondent a) Male b) Female

Q3. Age of Respondent

Q4. Highest level of educational attainment

a) No Formal Education b) Primary/JHS c) Secondary/SHS/ Vocational) d) Tertiary

Q5. Marital status a) Single b) Married C) Divorced

Q6. What is the size of this household?

Q7. What is the number of dependents in this household?

Q8. What is your place of birth? a) Within Community b) Within the city c) Within the region d) outside the region e) outside of the country

Q9. If you do not come from the city, where do you come from?

Q10. Why did you move into this community?

Q10. How long have you lived in this community? a) 1-5years b) 6-10years c) 11-15years d) above 15years

Q11. Do you plan to move out of this community in the future? a) Yes b) No

Q12. Can you give reasons for your answer in q.11?

Q13. What is the religion of the head of this household?

a) Christianity b) Islam d) Traditional e) others please specify…….

Q14. What ethnic group do you belong to? A) Akan b) Ga-Adangbe c) Ga d) Ewe d) Guan e) Mole g) Others, please specify……

Q15. Which is your occupational status? A) Self-employed b) Housewife c) Student d) Retired e) Public/Civil Servant f) Private employee

g) Others, please specify……

Q16. What is your income per month a) below 500GHS B) 501-1000GHS c) 1001-1500GHS d) 1501-2000GHS e) above 2001GHS

Q17. What percentage of your income do you spend on housing every month?

II. Informal Growth factors

Q18. Why did you decide to live in this settlement and not any other part of the city?

Q19. What are the things in this community that attracted you?

Q20. Have you ever changed houses in this community? A) Yes b) No

Q.20.1 If yes, how many times? A) Once b) Twice c) More than twice

Q.20.2Why did you change houses?.....

Q.20.3 If yes, what problems did you face in your old house or community

III. Housing Characteristics

Ownership

Q21. What is your occupancy status? a) Owner b) renter c) caretaker ***If tenant, please skip to Q21.3.***

Q21.1 If owner, how did you acquire the house?

Q21.2 If owner, do you have a land title deed or registration of ownership?

Q21.3 If tenant, what is the relationship between you and the landlord? Please explain……
……

Q.21.4 Are there any rules regarding your relationship with the landlord?

Q22. Who built this house you are living in?

Q22.1 If you built the house yourself or were part of it, why did you use the specific building materials you used?……

Q22.2Why did you adopt this particular typology of housing

Q23. When was this house built?

Housing transformations

Q24. How long have you been living in this house? a. 0-4years b. 5-9years c. above 10years

Q25. Have you made changes to any part of the house? (e.g. walls, windows, doors, ceilings, roofing or number of rooms) A) Yes b) No

If not, skip to Q29. Housing Vulnerability and Household Actions

Q25.1 If yes, which parts of the housing did you change?

Q25.2What prompted you to make these changes?

Q25.3 Did you modify the use of space for kitchen or sleeping rooms?

NB for analysis: If modifications were done by additions or subtracting existing spaces to make room for others.

Q25.4 How was the transformation done?

a) Local artisans b) professional (architects, engineers) c) self

Q26 How did you finance the transformation? a) Personal savings b) loansc) family support d) NGOs or external support d) government

Q26.1. What was the payment arrangements for the transformation?

Q27. Are you aware of building regulations and rules guiding housing transformation? a) Yes b) No

Q27.1 Do you think they are necessary, especially in your community?

Q28. Do you know of any local community rules (aside public regulations) to guide development in this settlement? A) Yes b) No

Q28.1 If yes, please specify

Housing vulnerability and Household actions

Q29. Has your house ever been affected by fire or flooding before?

a) Yes b) No

Q29.1.If yes, what caused it?

Q29.2 If yes, how did you respond?

Q29.3 If no, what actions have you made to prevent or reduce the damage in case of flooding or fire outbreak?.....

(NB: take pictures of some of these preventive actions or cases of flooding if any)

Q30. Have you made any changes to your house or surroundings to prevent flooding or fire? A) Yes b) No

Q30.1 If yes, what are the specific changes you have made?

IV. Social practices

Social ties and relationships

Q31. Do you have other members of your family/relatives in this community? A) Yes b) No

Q31.1 If yes, what is your relationship with them and how often do you meet? A) Daily b) multiple times in a week c) weekly d) monthly

Q31.2 Is there any specific part of the community where you normally meet? A) Yes b) No

Q31.3 If yes, can you please specify such places?

Q32. What is your relationship with other members of this community?

a) Cordial b) Hostile c) others, please specify

Q32.1. At what occasions/events do you normally meet other members of the community? (e.g. church or religious meetings, community meetings, sports, etc)

Q32.2Which places in the community are these events normally organized

Q33. Do you have communal activities in this community (e.g. communal labor, cleaning exercise, etc.)? a) Yes b) No

Q33.1 If yes, how often are these communal activities held?

a) Weekly b) monthly c) quarterly d) yearly

Q33.2 If yes, do you participate in such activities? a) Yes b) No

Q33.3 If yes, why do you participate in such activities?

Q33.4 If no, why?

Q34. Are there existing support systems to help community members who need help (e.g. funerals donations, education support, e.g.)? A) Yes b) No

If yes, what are the procedures to follow to access these support (please specify)?

Access to basic communal facilities and services

Q.35 what are some of the facilities and services in this community?

Facilities	Distance	Current Condition	Provided by
Water			
Toilet facilities			
Waste disposal			
Hospital/health center			
Basic schools			
Local Market			
Church			
Mosque			

Q35.1 How are these facilities maintained or managed?

Q35.2 What are the 'rules of use' of these facilities, if any?

Q35.3 What are the challenges you face in accessing these facilities? If any

Livelihood Strategies

Q36. Do you have any small business or income generating activities in your home? A) Yes b) No

Q36.1 If yes what kind of business?

Q36.2 Do you have any small business or income generating activity in the community?

a) Yes b) No

Q36.3 Do you have any difficulties in operating this business at home?

Q37.Do you have a relative in other parts of the city? A) Yes b) No

Q38. Do you have a house in other parts of the city? A) Yes b) No

Q39. Are you part of any local association or group in the settlement (could be at work, church, neighborhood, market, etc.) a) Yes b) No

Q39.1 If yes, can you mention and give the objective of this group? .....
.....

Q39.2. Do you join any microfinance or savings group? a) Yes b) No

If no, why?

Q39.3 If yes, what was your reason for joining?

Q39.4 If yes, what benefit have you received from joining the savings or microfinance group?

Q40. Do you have any vocational/training skills a) Yes b) No

If yes, please specify

Urban Governance/The 'Presence' of City government in the community

Q41. Has the LDKMA undertaken any development activity in this community over the past five years? A) Yes b) No

Q41.1 If yes, can you please mention these interventions?

Q41.2. How has your household benefited from this intervention by the city government?

Q41.3 Did you participate in the decision-making process for this city intervention? A) Yes b) No

If yes how?

If no, why

Q42. Have you received any threat from city government (in terms of permits, evictions, relocations, etc? a) Yes b) No

Q42.1 If yes, what was the reason for this threat?

Q42.2What was your response to the threat?

Q43. Do you know of any current city government plan to improve your settlements and livelihood? A) Yes b) No

Q44. If yes, can you please specify

V. Evaluation

Q.45. What do you like most in your house?.....

Please explain why

Q45.1 What do you consider as bad in your house?.....

Please explain

Q46. What do you like most in this settlement?.....

Please explain

Q46.1 which part(s) of this community do you visit very often?

Q46.2 Please explain why

Q47. What do you consider bad in this settlement?

Please explain

On a scale of 0-4, Can you please provide level of satisfaction with this settlement?

Scale	Settlement	Reason
0 (very Poor)		
1 (poor)		
2(fair-not good or bad)		
3 Good		
4 Very good		

QUESTIONNAIRE FOR COMMUNITY LEADER/ASSEMBLY MEMBER

Overview of settlement

Q1. Can you provide a brief history of this settlement?

Q3. What is the general perception about the settlement?

People

Conditions

Activities

Q3. Do you have common norms and values in this settlement for residents? A) Yes b) No

If yes, please specify

Informal Growth factors

Q4. What are the reasons why people decide to live in this settlement?

Q5. What do you think are the most attractive elements in this settlement?

……

Urban Governance

Q6. Has the city government been undertaking activities to improve conditions in this settlement? A) Yes b) No

If yes, can you explain this?

Q7. What are some of the facilities (Infrastructure) in this community that has been provided by the city government?

Q8. Do you know of a city development plan for this settlement? A) Yes b) No

If yes, please specify…….

If yes, is the community involved in this plan? A) Yes b) No

If yes, how was participation achieved?

Q9. What is the perception of city government towards your community or settlement?

Community Provision of facilities and services

Q10. What are some of the community facilities and services that have been self-provided……

Q11.What was the process of the planning and provision of these facilities?.....

Q12. How did you involve community members in the process?

Q13. How did you finance the community projects?

Q13. How is the project being managed?

Informal Provision of basic services

Are there individual or quasi-private agencies providing basic services such as water, public sanitation to community members? If yes, please provide details

Informal institutions	Type of service

Service e.g. water supply, public toilet (managed by private individuals), labor-paid gardening and sanitation services, etc.

What is the means of payment? ……

How do you evaluate their role?

NGOs, Civil Society groups and associations

Q14. Are there NGOs and other local agencies and associations operating in your community (e.g. cooperatives, CBOs, etc.? A) Yes b) No

If yes, can you please name them?

NGO	Support/Role in the settlement

Social assistance and support mechanisms

Q15. Do you organize occasional community activities to improve conditions in this settlement (e.g. cleaning, road or street improvement, buildings, etc.)? A) Yes b) No

If yes, can you please specify?

……
……

How often do you organize such activities?

.....

What is the level of participation from community members?

Q16. Do you undertake activities to reduce vulnerability to disasters (such as fire, flooding, etc.)? a) Yes b) No

If no, why?

If yes, can you please specify such activities?

……
……

Q17. Are there support mechanisms for people who may be in need (e.g. financial support for the needy, funeral support for bereaved families, etc.) a) Yes b) No

If yes, can you please specify?

Evaluation

Q18. Which aspect of this community requires improvement?

Q19. How do you think this can be done?

Q20. Do you think informal communities can provide lessons for city government in building a good city?

If yes, can you please explain?

……
……

QUESTIONNAIRE FOR MUNICIPAL/METROPOLITAN ASSEMBLY

Name of interviewer:

Date of Interview:

Time of Interview:

Place of interview:

Growth of informal Settlements

Q1. What are the factors driving the growth of informal settlements in metropolis or municipality?

.....
.....

Q2. What criteria does the city use to identify informal settlement in metropolis or municipality?

.....
.....

City Approach and strategy

Q3. What efforts has the city made to understand the growth and practices in informal settlements in recent years?

.....
.....

Q4. Is there an existing plan or strategic framework to address the challenge of urban informal settlements? If yes, can you please provide details or necessary document?

.....
.....

Q5. Have city authorities undertaken projects in informal settlements? If yes, can you please complete the table?

Project	Informal community	Reason for the facility/project

Q6. What challenges do you face in providing basic services in informal communities?

Collaboration and partnerships

Q8. Does the AMA collaborate with other institutions (NGOs, donor agencies, international organizations, universities, etc.) in understanding and addressing the challenge on informal cities in the city? If yes, please explain

Institution	Type of Collaboration

Note: type of collaboration could be funding, technical support, policy support, etc.

Q9. Are there any challenges in such collaborations? If yes, please explain

.....
.....

Practices in informal settlements

Q11. What would you summarize as the conditions in informal settlements?

.....
.....

Q10. How does the presence and growth of informal settlements affect the city of Accra?

.....
.....

Q13. Do you think informal settlements provide any lessons for the planning and development of Accra? If yes, please explain?

.....
.....

OBSERVATION, MAPPING AND UNSTRUCTURED INTERVIEWS

OPEN SPACE

1. Alley/Street [Locate on the map]

1(i.) Width

a. 0 – 3m

b. 3 – 10m

c. above 10m

2. What is the function or use?

a. Passage

b. Vehicular Access

c. Activity

d. Both Activity and passage

e. Other, please specify

……
……

3. Who uses this Alley or street?

a. Local Residents

b. Both local residents and outsiders

c. Others, please specify

4. What is the function of the Alley/street/square?

5. Condition of open space [Observe]

a. Clean (repaired)

b. Clean (not repaired)

c. Not clean (not repaired, maintained)

d. Very dirty (not repaired, not maintained)

GREEN SPACES AND ELEMENTS

1. Classification [Observe and Locate on the map]

a. Pavement

b. Cluster of Trees

2. How is this managed?

……..……

3. Who manages it?

HOUSING

1. Locate Clan house on the map with an appropriate number on the list

2. Identify courtyard and the entrance to each courtyard on the map [observe]

3. Condition of clan houses [observation]

a. Very Good (no cracks, plastered and painted wall, foundation not exposed)

b. Good (little cracks, plastered and painted, foundation not exposed)

c. Bad (cracks, not plastered or painted, exposed foundation)

d. Poor (partly damaged wall, not plastered or painted, exposed foundation)

3. Ordinary House

(i) Which clan does the owner/occupier belong to? Choose number

If multiple clans please specify

……..……
……

(ii) Condition of Ordinary House [observation]

a. Very Good (no cracks, plastered and painted wall, foundation not exposed)

b. Good (little cracks, plastered and painted, foundation not exposed)

c. Bad (cracks, not plastered or painted, exposed foundation)

d. Poor (partly damaged wall, not plastered or painted, exposed foundation)

COMMON/SHARED FACILITIES

Bathroom

1. Locate on the map [observe}

2. Who can use of this bathroom?

3. How do you manage/maintain this bathroom?

4. Are there any rules of usage? If yes, please specify

Water Tanks

1. Locate on the map [observe]

2. Who can use of this water tank?

a.

3. How do you manage/maintain this water tank?

4. Are there any rules of usage? If yes, please specify

5. How many people use this facility in a day?

Library

1. Locate on the map [observe]

2. Who can use of this library?

3. How do you manage/maintain this library?

4. Are there any rules of usage? If yes, please specify

5. How many people use this facility in a day

Sewer

1. Locate sewer line on the map

2. How did you mobilize funds for the sewer?

……

3. How did you decide the line for the sewer?

……

4. How do you manage or maintain the sewer?

……

Religious Facilities

Shrine

1. Locate on Map

2. Who manages or maintains this shrine?

a. Local Priest

b. Residents

c. Surrounding house occupants

d. Others, please specify

Church

1. Locate on map

2. Type of Church

a. Catholic

b. Orthodox Protestant (Presby, Methodist, Anglican)

c. Other Protestant (Charismatic, Pentecostal, etc.)

LOCAL ECONOMY

1. Locate different small-scale shops in the community on the map

2. Kind of shop

a. Food or eatery shop

c. Small-scale grocery shop

d. Other (please specify)

……

3. Location of shop

a. Street/Alley

b. Courtyard

c. Public space/square

LOCAL EVENTS

1.Where are the main public spaces where the following events are organized?

a. Funeral

b. Traditional wedding

c. Naming ceremony

d. Homowo festival

2. Who can participate in these events?

3. Who organizes and manages such events

HUMAN BEHAVIOUR IN INFORMAL OPEN SPACE

Time Range	**Category of Users***	**Activities**	**Remarks/ observations**
Morning			
Afternoon			
Evening			

*Category of users refers to sex and age cohorts (children, teenager, young adult, middle age, elderly) of people utilizing the specific public space at different time frames.