

Urbanisation of Hope or Despair? Urban Planning Dilemma in Ghana

Patrick Brandful Cobbinah^{1,2} ·
Michael Poku-Boansi³ ·
Raymond Asomani-Boateng⁴

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Abstract Our reflections on recent treatment of African urbanisation begins with the assertion that implicit recognition and acceptance of “rapid urbanisation” as a legitimate and primary cause of urban management challenges—e.g. poverty, slum development, haphazard development, etc.—has impoverished the appreciation of other fundamental causes of poor urban functionality in Ghanaian cities. This article argues that urban planning practice in Ghana has contributed to the many urbanisation challenges in Ghanaian cities, yet remains critical if rapid urbanisation is to be effectively managed. The article provides some useful policy directions to managing rapid urbanisation in Ghana.

Keywords Africa · Ghana · Urbanisation · Urban planning · Urban management

✉ Patrick Brandful Cobbinah
pcobbinah@csu.edu.au

Michael Poku-Boansi
pokuboansi@gmail.com

Raymond Asomani-Boateng
raymond.asomani-boateng@mnsu.edu

¹ Department of Environmental Management, Faculty of Environment Society and Design, Lincoln University, PO Box 85084, Lincoln 7647, Christchurch, New Zealand

² Institute for Land Water and Society, Charles Sturt University, PO Box 789, Albury 2640 NSW, Australia

³ Department of Planning, Faculty of Built Environment, Kwame Nkrumah University of Science and Technology, Kumasi, Ghana

⁴ Urban and Regional Studies Institute, Minnesota State University Mankato, 106B Morris Hall, Mankato 56001, USA

Introduction

It is often reported that rapid urbanisation—i.e. increasing concentration of population in urban areas—provides a conduit for augmenting and compounding urban development challenges in developing countries, particularly African countries (see Cobbinah and Darkwah 2016a; Misilu et al. 2010; World Bank 2015). Indeed, international organisations such as the United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs/Population Division (UNDESA/PD) often link rapid urbanisation to poor living conditions in developing countries of Asia and Africa (UNDESA/PD 2012). It is also not uncommon to find researchers relating urban management challenges—poverty, slums, congestion, haphazard development, urban sprawl, etc.—to rapid urbanisation in developing countries, with some (e.g. Ravallion et al. 2007) describing African urbanisation as “urbanisation of poverty”. Yet, apart from studies of specific projects that report on rising urban poverty in Africa (for example Mabogunje Akin 2005), there is little research evidence to quantify the interactions between urban management challenges and urbanisation. This, of course, is not to say that urbanisation cannot create urban management challenges. Urbanisation as a phenomenon and a process may generate negative outcomes, including poverty, if not properly managed. For example, urbanisation has variously been reported as compounding slum conditions and resulting in increased unemployment (see Cobbinah et al. 2015a, 2015b).

However, overconcentration on rapid urbanisation as a major cause of urban management challenges in Africa (see Boadi et al. 2005; Cobbinah et al. 2015b), often disregarding other underlying causes of these challenges may crowd effective intervention towards addressing them. Besides, the generally held belief that Africa is characterised by rapid urbanisation has recently been disputed (Obeng-Odoom 2010; Potts 2009, 2012). Potts (2009) strongly argues that the African rapid urbanisation mantra is based on unreliable population data and that urban growth rates in many African countries have actually slowed with most recent census data indicating that growth rates in most cities are no higher than or even below national rates. Despite the different experiences of individual countries, Potts (2009) maintains that demographic process of urbanisation and the relocation of population from rural to urban areas are gradually stagnating in most African countries. Indeed, there are cases of counter-urbanisation (e.g. Zambia, Côte d’Ivoire and Mali), and weak in-migration towards cities (e.g. Benin and Mozambique) although some (e.g., Tanzania, Kenya and Niger) continue to report high net in-migration rates (see Owusu and Oteng-Ababio 2015; Potts 2009). In this case, it may not be accurate to continue blaming rapid urbanisation as the primary cause of urban management challenges in Africa.

A recent study by Cobbinah and Darkwah (2016b) shows that, although urbanisation has contributed to current urban challenges across Africa, urban planning practice on the continent remains largely to be blamed. In variety of contexts, urban planning in Africa has been unimpressive both in approaches and instruments used (see Hamza and Zetter 2000). In their reflections, Cobbinah and Darkwah (2016b) argue that urban planning in Africa is not founded on the principle of sustainable development but remains largely a relic of colonisation. It is also in this direction that Watson (2009) contends that urban planning in Africa will not make any meaningful impact on urban functionality and management as long as it is based on Western prescriptions. Unless there is a recognition that the African landscape is unique in its own right, and

thus requires different approach to planning based on inclusiveness and spatial integration rather than the Western idealistic approach of orderliness and aesthetics, urbanisation may continue to be the culprit for the urban management challenges in Africa (Cobbinah and Darkwah 2016b; Watson 2009). In this case, it is unsurprising that most African countries are confronted with the challenge of planning and developing more functionally integrated, spatially coherent, economically competitive, environmentally sustainable, and socially inclusive urban environment (Cobbinah and Darkwah 2016b). Unfortunately, until recently, this issue of overconcentration on urbanisation opposed to the systems of urban planning in Africa has remained peripheral in urban discourse in Africa.

Using Ghana as a case study, this paper argues that urban management challenges may persist, with or without urbanisation and that urbanisation should not solely be blamed for the current urban challenges. Rather, attention should be given to other urban development variables, particularly urban planning. This paper has two objectives: (i) to understand the pattern and dynamics of Ghanaian urbanisation and urban planning; and (ii) to explore the reasons accounting for the poor functionality of Ghanaian cities despite the practice of urban planning. Answers to these questions will provide a context for balancing the discussion on urbanisation as a primary cause of recent urban development challenges in Ghanaian cities. The paper is organised as follows: Section 2 discusses the urbanisation and urban planning challenges in Africa. This provides a framework to situate Ghanaian urbanisation and understand the broader trajectories of urbanisation across the continent. Section 3 presents an analysis on Ghanaian urbanisation and urban planning and their limitations thereof. Section 4 presents efforts directed towards effective management of urbanisation in Ghana. Section 5 presents some concluding remarks for the study.

African Urbanisation and the Challenge of Urban Planning

Literature on African urbanisation abounds (e.g. Cobbinah et al. 2015b; Cohen 2006; UNDESA/PD 2012). The purpose of this section is neither to repeat the burgeoning literature reporting on rapid rate of African urbanisation (see Table 1) nor the effects of African urbanisation (see Cobbinah and Darkwah 2016a; Cobbinah et al. 2015b). Rather it critically reflects on why urbanisation is increasingly perceived as being synonymous with urban management challenges in African cities. Recent years have seen a considerable transformation in the African urbanisation discourse. The question being asked is no longer “Does urbanisation contribute to socio-economic development in terms of modernisation and industrialisation?” but “Why African urbanisation seems to be compounding urban management challenges and creating unsustainable urban environments and poor living conditions?” Phrases such as parasitic urbanisation, pre-mature urbanisation and urbanisation of poverty have remained the watchwords for describing African urbanisation by researchers and international organisations (Obeng-Odoom 2010; Ravallion et al. 2007). These phrases gained the broad-based support in the last few decades that earlier notions of urbanisation stimulating socio-economic development were unfathomable in Africa. Although recent studies suggest otherwise as Africa’s urbanisation is now perceived in positive terms (see Potts 2009, 2012), it is progressively becoming acceptable that all urban management challenges

Table 1 Urbanisation patterns in Africa and selected sub-Saharan African countries

Major area, region or country	Population ('000)					Urbanisation level (%)					Urbanisation rates (%)				
	1950	2000	2010	2050	1950	2000	2010	2050	1950–2000	2000–2010	2010–2050				
Africa	33,004	288,402	400,651	1,264,629	14.36	35.56	39.19	57.70	4.34	3.29	2.87				
Eastern Africa	3685	53,124	77,954	358,974	5.45	20.57	23.34	44.75	5.34	3.84	3.82				
Middle Africa	3657	34,775	51,861	171,082	14.00	36.15	40.94	61.46	4.51	4.00	2.98				
Northern Africa	12,935	82,079	102,249	195,877	25.80	48.41	51.25	65.32	3.70	2.20	1.63				
Southern Africa	5869	27,647	33,778	49,810	37.65	53.74	58.46	73.98	3.10	2.00	0.97				
Western Africa	6857	90,777	134,810	488,886	9.73	38.51	44.31	65.72	5.17	3.96	3.22				
Burundi	42	526	892	3829	1.73	8.25	10.64	27.94	5.03	5.29	3.64				
Kenya	340	6217	9549	44,302	5.59	19.89	23.57	45.73	5.81	4.29	3.84				
Zimbabwe	292	4223	4793	12,490	10.64	33.76	38.13	60.59	5.34	1.27	2.39				
Angola	314	6822	11,140	33,004	7.58	48.99	58.38	77.96	6.16	4.90	2.72				
Chad	109	1771	2441	10,295	4.50	21.53	21.74	37.78	5.57	3.21	3.60				
Gabon	53	990	1292	2582	11.40	80.11	85.84	92.74	5.84	2.67	1.73				
Sudan	432	8954	11,117	34,731	6.82	32.50	33.08	50.78	6.06	2.16	2.85				
Botswana	11	936	1224	1964	2.72	53.22	60.98	78.47	8.85	2.69	1.18				
South Africa	5778	25,464	30,855	43,616	42.23	56.89	61.55	76.85	2.97	1.92	0.87				
Burkina Faso	164	2194	4227	25,801	3.84	17.84	25.67	55.22	5.18	6.56	4.52				
Ghana	769	8424	12,492	35,520	15.44	43.95	51.22	72.33	4.79	3.94	2.61				
Nigeria	3867	52,383	77,629	277,916	10.21	42.35	49.00	71.33	5.21	3.93	3.19				

Source: Adapted from UNDESA/PD (2012)

and poor living conditions in urban Africa are outcomes of urbanisation (see Boadi et al. 2005; Cobbinah et al. 2015b). For example in Ghana, slum conditions (Amoako and Cobbinah 2011), urban sprawl (Cobbinah and Amoako 2012), unauthorised and unplanned physical development (Amoateng et al. 2013; Cobbinah et al. 2015c) are, to a large extent, linked to urbanisation.

Yet, skeptics of the African rapid urbanisation mantra have disputed the perceived rapid rate of urbanisation and drawn attention to the prevailing conditions of counter-urbanisation and the slow urbanisation rates compared to countries of other continents (Obeng-Odoom 2010; Potts 2009, 2012). As discussed earlier, countries such as Zambia, Côte d'Ivoire and Mali are experiencing counter-urbanisation while Benin and Mozambique are having weak in-migration into cities (Potts 2009). This view disputing rapid urbanisation in Africa, according to Owusu and Oteng-Ababio (2015), has far-reaching implications for the urbanisation agenda because African governments may be positioning themselves for rapid urbanisation. Murmurs of disappointment are also being heard. For example, "is African urbanisation a product of socio-economic development or an outcome of failed development?" is being asked increasingly often without, however, clear responses forthcoming (see Boadi et al. 2005; Cobbinah et al. 2015b). African urbanisation is at risk of becoming a truism—a trendy concept that all countries blame for their urban development syndrome but nobody cares about its positive implications. A decade ago, Mabogunje lamented that African urbanisation is a product of poor urban management with failed development and rural development policies resulting in the "peasantisation" of African cities (Mabogunje Akin 2005); the situation has not improved since.

There are those (e.g. Brockerhoff and Brennan 1998; Mabogunje Akin 2005) who claim that, since the 1980s, there has been a gradual change of research focus from the "demography of cities to the polity of cities", emphasising issues of urban management. This change is in recognition of the fact that both costs and benefits of cities are not simply a product of urbanisation, but rather, are mainly a corollary of urban management, manifested through the commitment and capabilities of city authorities to initiate, implement and sustain policies and projects—e.g. infrastructural provision and maintenance, innovation and poverty mitigation—that improve welfare of urbanites and urbanism (Brockerhoff and Brennan 1998). For example, Zimbabwe has embarked on legislative and institutional reforms to broaden and democratise the process of urban management by ensuring active community involvement (Okpala 2009). Also in Nigeria, although a fully participatory approach to urban management has not yet been achieved, Okpala (2009) observes some commitment towards local stakeholder consultations in urban management projects in the Anambra State.

Given that the change towards polity of cities was observed in the 1980s, and some indications in African countries (e.g. Nigeria and Zimbabwe), one would have expected some changes in terms of improvement in urban livelihoods across Africa. Instead, chaotic and indescribable urban planning and management scenes of poverty and blight have become the defining features of many African cities (see Boadi et al. 2005; Cobbinah et al. 2015b) despite the availability of some well-planned gated communities (see Grant 2009). For example, owing to ineffective urban management in Africa, Diaw et al. (2002) note that it is in very rare occasions that urban actors—e.g. non-governmental agencies and community-based organisations—are adequately involved in management decision-making, as participation is perceived as slowing down the

decision-making, administrative and delivery process. Such situations in African cities appear to accentuate and make increasingly tenable the postulation that effective management of cities defeats urbanisation challenges (Brockerhoff and Brennan 1998). Unfortunately, in most parts of Africa, cities, due to poor urban planning and management, seem too big relative to their managerial capacity, despite being smaller compared to those in developed countries.

In this case, the long standing belief in development studies that living conditions of residents in cities of developing countries are superior compared to those in rural areas (Brockerhoff and Brennan 1998) appears to be gradually eclipsing, as urban poverty dominates in cities of developing countries particularly African countries (Mabogunje Akin 2005). It is clear that sections of many African cities (e.g. Nairobi in Kenya, Accra in Ghana) today can only be described as “big slums” because they have become centres of poverty (Muluka 2002; Grant 2009).

While there is available literature reporting on African urbanisation as parasitic and poverty driven (e.g. Boadi et al. 2005; Ravallion et al. 2007), and to a large extent it is true that urbanisation has contributed to urban management challenges, it still remains to be demonstrated whether Africa’s development trajectories would have been any better without urbanisation. For instance, previous studies in the early 1990s, a time when many African countries were relatively less urbanised, reported of cities acting as centres of poverty and social collapse, due to degenerating or relatively unfavourable living conditions for city residents compared to rural residents as cities such as Cairo and Lagos had majority of their residents living in slums (Kennedy 1993; Oberai 1993). Others (e.g. Kaplan 1996) at the time described cities of developing countries, including those in Africa, using distressing catchphrases such as “cities of despair” to highlight the severe conditions - e.g. limited municipal services such as inadequate housing, and poor infrastructure (Brockerhoff and Brennan 1998)—faced by city residents. Nearly three decades on, the same problems exist in many African cities such as Accra and Kumasi in Ghana (Amoako and Cobbinah 2011; Obeng-Odoom and Amedzro 2011; Yankson et al. 2004), Abuja in Nigeria (Abubakar 2014) and Nairobi in Kenya (Muluka 2002) at a time that urbanisation is rife. It becomes increasingly certain that urbanisation may not be the fundamental cause of urban management challenges in African cities as many authors have suggested, rather other factors (e.g. poor urban planning). This paper uses Ghana as a case study to demonstrate the poor functionality of Ghanaian cities despite the practice of urban planning and to underscore how urban management challenges have been negatively twisted by poor urban planning and less of urbanisation.

Urbanisation and Urban Planning in Ghana

Urbanisation Patterns in Ghana

Although the rapidity of urbanisation in Africa remains a contested issue, urbanisation in Ghana is on the rise (Owusu and Oteng-Ababio 2015). Urbanisation in Ghana is caused by three factors: natural population growth, rural-urban migration and urban re-classification. In relation to natural population growth, official statistics indicate an increase in the fertility rate in Ghana from 4.0 children per woman in 2000 to 4.4

children per woman in 2010, with estimates suggesting a rise in the near future (GSS 2013). In the same way, infant and under-five mortality statistics have significantly declined in Ghana since the 1980s. For instance, infant mortality rates declined from 77 deaths per 1000 live births in 1988 to 66 in 1993, 57 in 1998 and 50 in 2010, whilst under-five mortality rates declined from 155 in 1988 to 108 in 1993 and 80 in 2010 (GSS 2012, 2013). There is also an observable fact of rural-urban differences; for example, in 2010, urban under-five mortality rate was 83 deaths per 1000 live births compared with 90 in rural areas (GSS 2012, 2013). Improved health delivery system such as vaccination against common diseases and nutritional education has contributed to the increase in natural population.

Recent studies (e.g. Awumbila et al. 2014; Cobbinah and Erdiaw-Kwasie 2016) have identified rural-urban migration to be the most predominant factor in Ghana's urbanisation process. Observed trend in recent times shows that migrants have generally moved from resource-poor to resource-rich areas in search of good living conditions, with increasing concentration and densities in the capital cities, particularly Accra and Kumasi (Songsore 2009). Urbanisation in Ghana is also caused by reclassification of rural areas as urban. In Ghana, urban areas are officially defined as settlements with population of 5000 or more (GSS 2012). As population of villages and small communities grows mostly through natural increase, their status change to urban as they reach the minimum population threshold, although their identities (e.g. economic structure, infrastructure) may not change. In some cases, reclassification of rural areas as urban occurs on the basis of re-demarcation of boundaries of metropolitan and municipal areas through the process of local government area fragmentation (Owusu 2015). With several rapidly urbanising rural communities, reclassification has become a vital cause of urbanisation in Ghana (Amoateng et al. 2013; Cobbinah et al. 2015c). For example, Cobbinah and Amoako (2012) observe that rural communities around Kumasi (Ghana) such as Ayeduasi, Pankrono and Breman are rapidly urbanising due to increased habitation of city dwellers in those communities and emerging development projects (e.g. housing development). Yet, reclassification resulting from local government area fragmentation is faced with growing developmental and planning needs, especially the need for basic infrastructure and services including, among others, roads, water supply, energy, communication, and transportation required for urban competitiveness in a globalising world (Owusu 2015).

Given the above causes of urbanisation, it is understandable that the proportion of the country's population living in urban areas increased from 9 % in 1931 to 31 % in 1984 and 44 % in 2000 (Yankson et al. 2004). By 2010, Ghana had moved from rural past to an urban future with an urban population of 50.9 % (GSS 2012). With many benefits associated with urbanisation in developed countries, one would hope that this rapid rate of urbanisation would provide opportunities for advancing the welfare of Ghanaian urbanites. Regrettably, the urbanisation phenomenon in Ghana differs in two aspects from that experienced by the developed countries. First, urbanisation in parts of Ghanaian cities particularly Accra and Kumasi is closely associated with modernisation with high rise buildings, well-planned gated communities and adequate municipal infrastructure and services. These neighbourhoods within the urban setting are frequently occupied by foreigners, first and middle class Ghanaians and Ghanaian Diaspora (Owusu and Oteng-Ababio 2015). Second, in contrast to the experience

above, most parts of Ghanaian cities experiencing rapid urbanisation are marked by the dominance of informal settlements (e.g. slums), inadequate basic services and increasing unregulated informal economic activities. These neighbourhoods are home to thousands of low income and poor people (Owusu and Oteng-Ababio 2015). Unfortunately, thousands of residents in Ghanaian cities of Accra and Kumasi live in rapidly growing unplanned neighbourhoods with limited infrastructure, poor basic services and inadequate housing and transport services (Obeng-Odoom and Amedzro 2011; Owusu and Oteng-Ababio 2015).

Within such a context, it may not be inaccurate to argue that rapid urbanisation has contributed to limited industrialisation and modernisation of urban Ghana. However, demographic and urbanisation analyses in Ghana suggest that urbanisation received little attention in urban planning and governance until recently, when its negative impacts became unbearable and widespread. Prior to the turn of the twenty-first century, urban growth was not considered as a major force in Ghana's national development, as rural development and agro-based strategies of production were implemented without attention to urbanisation. As a consequence, the urbanisation process has been characterised by rapid growth in the size of bigger cities than smaller towns with a resultant concentration of population in relatively fewer large cities, particularly Accra and Kumasi (Grant 2009).

Owing to, among others, poor urban planning, natural increase remains high and rural-urban migration is widespread and uncontrollable in Ghanaian cities (GSS 2005). For example, Songsore (2009) explains that rural-urban migration is the most significant factor in spatial population redistribution in Ghana, influencing and driving economic and income disparities across different geopolitical regions. As presented in Table 2, Ghana's urban growth remains increasingly high. Some researchers (e.g. Adarkwa 2012) have attributed the swelling concentration of Ghanaians in large cities to elements of colonisation, arguing that colonialist policies focused on developing cities in resource-rich southern Ghana which facilitated the exploitation and exportation of natural resources from Ghana to Europe. However, it is becoming increasingly clear that inadequate, if not, lack of commitment on the part of successive governments

Table 2 Rural-urban population distribution of Ghana

Year	Proportion urban	Proportion rural
1960	23.1	76.9
1970	28.9	71.1
1984	32.0	68.0
2000	43.8	56.2
2005	47.7	52.3
2010	50.9	49.1
2015	55.4	44.6
2020 ^a	59.2	40.8
2025 ^a	62.9	37.1

Source: (GSS 2005, 2012)

^a Projections

following independence in 1957 to ensure good governance and make urban planning a priority appears to be a major contributing factor to urban blight and increased poverty.

Yet, urbanisation in Ghanaian cities today is frequently blamed for increasing state of congestion, poor transport system, growing unplanned informal settlements and activities, urban sprawl, destruction of ecologically sensitive areas, indescribable state of filth, flooding and land use conflicts (see Adarkwa 2012; Amoako and Cobbinah 2011; Amoateng et al. 2013; Cobbinah and Amoako 2012; Cobbinah and Korah 2015; Fuseini and Kemp 2015). However, a closer analysis of these urbanisation-induced urban management challenges shows that they are both related to issues of urban planning and urbanisation. An analysis of urban planning trajectories in Ghana would provide a clearer picture of the role of urbanisation in the distressing state of Ghanaian cities. The next section examines Ghana's urban planning and management systems.

Urban Planning and Management in Ghana

The history of Ghana's planning system has variously been discussed (see Adarkwa 2012; Cobbinah and Korah 2015; Fuseini and Kemp 2015 for detailed historical analysis on planning system in Ghana). The purpose of this section is to provide an overview of urban planning in Ghana, and why urbanisation may not be a primary challenge in urban development and management in Ghana. In the late 1800s, urban planning was introduced in Ghana by the British as a strategy to improve sanitation and hygiene conditions in Ghana's national capital, Accra. Town councils were established as institutions of change in relation to improving sanitation and hygiene by decongesting congested neighbourhoods, removing unsafe and insanitary structures, providing telegraph and postal communications (Quarcoopome 1993). Other studies (e.g. Fuseini and Kemp 2015; Leith 1974) also traced the origin of urban planning in Ghana to the activities of the British Colonial Governor, Gordon Guggisberg, who launched a 10-year Development Plan for the development of the then Gold Coast (1920–1930). His plan, according to Fuseini and Kemp (2015), was directed towards infrastructural development such as roads, schools, hospitals, housing and institutional development. The development of railways, roads, educational institutions (e.g. Achimota School) and the country's premier teaching hospital (Korle-Bu), the Takoradi Harbour and the Cocoa Research Centre at Tafo in Kumasi were based on the Guggisberg's plan (Adarkwa 2012).

National urban planning attempts commenced with the passage of the Town and Country Planning Ordinance (Cap 84), and the establishment of the Town and Country Planning Department (TCPD) in 1945 (Cobbinah and Korah 2015). According to Fuseini and Kemp (2015), the Cap 84 surfaced due to the post-war restructuring planning efforts in metropolitan Britain that was transferred to the colonies to, among others, provide decent housing for the post World War II veterans, the local educated labour force and to respond to increasing population growth in urban Ghana. The Cap 84 mandated the TCPD with a responsibility of planning and managing the development of urban and rural communities in Ghana. The purpose for the enactment of the Cap 84 and the establishment of TCPD was to promote efficiency, orderliness, safety and health in human settlements in Ghana.

However, when it came to the role of the Cap 84 and TCPD in dealing with the challenges of urban planning between the 1950s and the 1980s, Fuseini and Kemp

(2015) argue that the actual implementation of the Cap 84 did not engender spatial equity in development. Many (e.g. Adarkwa 2012; Cobbinah and Korah 2015) argue that the failure of successive Ghanaian governments to make any appreciable efforts towards decentralising urban planning practices following independence in 1957 resulted in highly centralised, nationally oriented and sector-based urban planning effort, which was insensitive to community aspirations. Adarkwa (2012) notes that most colonial and post-colonial investments and planning were concentrated within the familiar “Golden Triangle” that had Accra, Kumasi and Takoradi as its pinnacles to serve colonial interest of exploitation and exportation of natural resources.

The post-colonial period (1950s–1960s) was marked by evidence of industrialisation, which made urban planning central in transforming and addressing the implications and consequences of such phenomenon. According to Fuseini and Kemp (2015), urban planning authorities were overwhelmed with the rapid growth in urban population and demand for basic services and infrastructure. For instance, Accra’s population increased by about 240 % between 1950 and 1960 (Wood 1970), with net-migration contributing over 97 % to the total urban growth between 1948 and 1960 (Songsore 2009). By the mid 1980s, urban areas including Accra, Kumasi and Takoradi were spilling over, in terms of spatial development and population, beyond their administrative boundaries into neighbouring districts (Songsore 2009). In this sense, it is reasonable to argue that urbanisation remained the cause of urban planning failure. However, rapid urbanisation during the period, for Laryea-Adjei (2000) and Wood (1970), was a result of low capacity of urban planning authorities to plan and implement policies with all necessary complementary services and infrastructure in response to emerging urban growth, as well as colonial planning efforts which developed the cities of the south—Accra, Kumasi and Sekondi-Takoradi—and neglected northern Ghana and the rural areas, thus attracting huge influx of people into the south.

It is true that a decentralised system of planning was introduced in 1988 to ensure a broad community-based approach to urban planning through the establishment of Metropolitan, Municipal and District Assemblies (MMDAs). It is also true that several planning legislations including Local Government Act of 1993 (Act 462), National Development Planning Systems Act of 1994 (Act 480) and National Building Regulation Act (LI 1630) were passed to support urban planning in Ghana, in addition to the recently passed Land Use and Spatial Planning Bill. Yet, present day urban challenges in Ghanaian cities—poor sanitation, destruction of urban greenery, inadequate housing, slum development, uncontrolled urban growth and inadequate municipal services such as water (e.g. Adarkwa 2012; Amoako and Cobbinah 2011; Cobbinah and Amoako 2012; Cobbinah and Korah 2015)—have their roots in the poor performance of the immediate post-independence planning efforts (Fuseini and Kemp 2015). For Wood (1970), the failure of planning to keep pace with rapid urban growth is caused by the interplay of factors including lack of foresight or capacity by urban planning authorities. Similarly, Yeboah and Obeng-Odoom (2010) maintain that the piecemeal and reactionary approach to urban planning in Ghana, rather than long-term proactive approach has contributed to current urban development predicament. This situation also reflects Watson (2009) and Cobbinah and Darkwah (2016b) claims that non-inclusivity of urban planning in Africa, coupled with inadequate spatial integration and the perpetuation of colonial planning ideologies, underlie the poor urban planning in Africa. In this case, it is seemingly interesting that many mega-cities of the world

such as London (UK), New York (USA) and Sydney (Australia) are frequently cited as being well managed and, therefore, not too large, while ironically smaller cities such as Accra and Kumasi have become too large in management terms due to poor urban planning.

Drawing from the above, it is difficult to isolate rapid urbanisation in Ghana as the fundamental cause of urban development and management challenges. It is true that urbanisation in Ghana, to a large extent, imposes urban development and management limitations by increasing pressures on planning authorities to respond to emerging urban development and management challenges. However, the problematic and interwoven socio-cultural, political, economic and institutional factors involved in Ghana's urban planning are generating urban vulnerabilities across Ghanaian cities, making effective urban development and management a myth. Despite the existence of legal and administrative setup for the practice of urban planning, the aforementioned urban management challenges seem to suggest an absence of urban planning in Ghana. For example, the "Strategic Plan for the Greater Accra Metropolitan Area Volumes 1, 2 & 3" which provided an accurate prediction of urban sprawl of the city and appropriate planning responses suffered implementation challenges due to political interference and domination as well as limited knowledge of these plans among, and involvement of, the urban residents (Accra Planning & Development Programme 1985, 1991, 1992). It is becoming increasingly clear that poor urban planning, in terms of enforcement of planning laws, plans and schemes, underlines the many urban management challenges in Ghana. This complex background, coupled with increasing urbanisation, provides a framework to explore a future of hope for Ghana's urban planning in the context of increasing urbanisation.

Towards an Urbanisation of Hope in Ghana's Urban Planning Context: Key Questions

Urbanisation represents one of the most promising opportunities for stimulating socio-economic development through industrialisation and modernisation worldwide. Certainly, the rate of urbanisation is likely to increase in Ghana as population growth pressure increases. One of the difficulties with urbanisation in Ghana is that there has been limited systematic analysis of the critical elements in the urbanisation process and management initiatives (see GSS 2012; Songsore 2009). Many of the research started as description of urbanisation, focusing on causes, patterns, effects and projections, as well as on the narrow definition of urbanisation as a demographic process, with only minimal local management input and with uncertain implementation funding sources. Urbanisation could benefit significantly by contextualising research and project interventions to reflect local conditions and aspirations, rather than generalising. The fundamental notion of urbanisation is to stimulate socio-economic growth through modernisation and industrialisation; however, the rate, patterns and characteristics differ from one urban geographical locale to another. While its ultimate objective is not to create urban development and management impediments, many of the research projects and processes on urbanisation in Ghana describe it as an urban development challenge (e.g. Owusu and Oteng-Ababio 2015; Songsore 2009). Thus, while the overall purpose of urbanisation in Ghana, in terms of industrialisation and

modernisation, could be substantially improved (see Obeng-Odoom 2010), research projects on this issue is nonetheless riddled with a number of conceptual dilemmas and contestations that can affect urbanisation management, and ultimately the sustainability of urban landscape.

Also, the above analysis has shown that the availability of urban planning legislations, plans and institutions does not automatically translate into effective urban planning. Although the practice of urban planning was introduced in Ghana during colonial times, the lack of commitment on successive Ghanaian governments towards supporting urban planning agencies—in terms of law enforcement, promoting inclusiveness, spatial integration, resources and implementation of plans—evidence of Ghanaian cities today suggests a complete absence of urban planning. Within this context, broader debate and discussion about ways of improving the positives of urbanisation within Ghanaian urban planning context is essential to improve the management of the urbanisation process.

Consideration of Urban Residents' Involvement in Planning Efforts

The first approach towards urbanisation of hope in Ghana relates to the incorporation of urban residents' participation into urbanisation management initiatives. As argued by Watson (2009) and Cobbinah and Darkwah (2016b), inclusiveness of urban residents in the process of urban planning is increasingly becoming a necessary condition for turning the tide on urban planning fortunes in Africa. Similarly, one common perspective among urban scholars in Ghana is that Ghanaian government lack the capacity to ensure long-term viability and functionality of the urban environment. This is evident in the lack of implementation of the Accra's strategic plans despite their usefulness in guiding the development of the city (Accra Planning & Development Programme 1985, 1991, 1992). Limited planning knowledge among urban residents was one of the reasons for the non-implementation of these plans. Perhaps, if the public was fully aware of these plans and their usefulness, it would have put pressure on governments to implement them. In order for the process of urbanisation to be managed adequately, urban residents must ultimately become the owners of their development. From the perspective of developed countries, there is ample evidence that urban residents' participation in the planning, design and implementation of urban development and management projects and research increases both the quality of designs and project effectiveness (Bloom et al. 2008; Bloom and Khanna 2007; Cohen 2006). In Ghana, the involvement of urban residents in the creation of geographical enclave for artisan workers in Kumasi ensured successful relocation of artisan workers from crowded and unsafe environment to a well-planned area (see Amoateng et al. 2014). These arguments make it clear that strong urban residents' participation is fundamental in all phases of urban planning and management, especially in this era of urbanisation.

Yet, there are some planning and management dilemmas when it comes to incorporating urban residents' participation into urban planning. First, should urban planning and local government authorities hide their true urban development agenda from urban residents? Some urban planning and local government authorities, particularly politicians feel that they need to uphold the importance of community aspirations, and that they should not influence the process by overriding community aspirations with what they perceive as important. A secondary and related issue is that what urban planning

and local government authorities define as an urbanisation problem (e.g. unregulated physical development) may not be a concern of urban residents, who are more likely to be concerned with day-to-day survival issues (e.g. job opportunities). Third, urban residents' participation may lead urban residents to define a set of needs which are not linked to addressing the challenges of urbanisation. This issue may underline the generally lack of involvement of urban resident in urban development and management across many African cities (see Okpala 2009).

Another theme across Ghanaian cities is that while urban planning and local government authorities often agree that the ultimate goal of participation is empowerment, they are unsure that urban residents will make decisions that would reflect urbanisation management agenda. How would urban planning and local government authorities know if decision making had been captured by neighbourhood elites? Or more dramatically, what would happen if urban residents decide through participatory mechanisms that they want to use the resources (e.g. land) in an unsustainable way (e.g. conversion of nature reserve for residential or commercial uses)? Or what if urban residents' priorities reflect the present, rather than the future?

The potential conflict between planning and participation has been cited in other development spheres, such as natural resource management. A conservation planning intervention may prefer to stress non-use of natural resources, but the community may prefer shared use (Cobbinah 2015). Yet, this analogy does not address the fact that the poor management of urbanisation may be irreversible (for instance, destruction of water resources), affecting not only present urban functionality, but may have a host of other consequences (e.g. flooding, destruction of ecologically sensitive areas, destruction of natural habitat for wildlife, climate change, etc.). The ideal of urban planning initiatives in Ghana might be to emphasise prevention in order to stop a situation from becoming acute and requiring dramatic action. Yet in the case of urbanisation, the situation is already acute in Ghana (GSS 2012; Songsore 2009), and preventive measures are not readily apparent (Cobbinah et al. 2015b; Cohen 2006). In Ghana where the threats of urbanisation result from multiple causes, it is often difficult to ensure the participation of all important stakeholders. In other cases, what benefits one group or section of urban Ghana (those living in gated and well-planned communities) and meets urbanisation management agenda may harm another group (e.g. those living in informal communities). These divisions, as earlier discussed, are based on class, income and spatial location within the urban setting, and can pose a challenge in involving urban residents.

Clearly, urban residents' participation is essential to urbanisation management. Yet in Ghana, participation of urban residents in urban planning and management is virtually non-existent. Urban planning has in fact done little to involve urban residents in urban management generally and urbanisation in particular. If anything, the caution displayed seems to result more from reluctance from urban planning and local government authorities on the extent to which urban residents should be involved, rather than as part of a conscious effort.

Defining Urbanisation Benefit Sharing

One of the most difficult aspects of Ghanaian urbanisation is defining benefit distribution. As earlier discussed, urbanisation as a process can generate modernisation and

industrialisation outcomes. However, in Ghana, the dual nature of urbanisation with concentration of high- and middle-income earners and foreigners in well-planned neighbourhoods and gated communities and low income groups in slum and poor neighbourhoods presents a challenge in realising the full potential of urbanisation. In this case, should distribution of urbanisation benefits be equitable? Should urbanisation benefits only be focused on those urban residents living in well-planned gated communities with adequate infrastructure services or those who are degrading or threatening the sustainability of the urban environments through their activities (e.g. slum communities, encroachment on nature reserves, etc.)?

In this situation, serious practical issues arise in urban planning in terms of determining who should benefit and the extent of benefits. Should those who currently degrade the urban environment through their activities (e.g. slums communities) be rewarded by receiving more urbanisation benefits through effective urban planning? Should benefits be distributed more broadly across the urban landscape, so that every urban resident, irrespective of one's socio-economic background and geographical location has a stake in reducing the threats of urbanisation through effective city-wide urban planning and management? It is worth mentioning that this latter strategy costs a great deal more. What if many of the urbanisation threats to urban functionality are caused by those urban residents living in poor neighbourhoods, which is often the case? In Accra, for example, neighbourhoods such as Nima, Old Fadama and Chorkor are generally poor in terms of urban planning, social services, transport infrastructure, housing and sanitation, and present many of the urbanisation challenges.

However, if these neighbourhoods acknowledge the need for effective urban planning in addressing many of their challenges, and are prepared to bear the costs associated with these challenges (e.g. relocating from marginal lands), while the "elite" neighbourhoods provide support in the form of financial rewards can contribute to augmenting the benefits of urbanisation. Underlying this strategy is the importance of public education by urban planning and local government authorities to conscientise the urban residents, particularly those living in poor neighbourhoods to realise the importance of, and their role in the urbanisation process within the broader context of urban development.

Creating Urbanisation Buffer Zones

Theoretically at least, the desire to offset the costs borne by urban residents by providing them with some benefits associated with urbanisation makes sense. But there is an inherent risk in providing urbanisation benefits or even promoting effective urban planning in fragile or poor areas. Infrastructure services in many of these areas are poor, and until recently, most of these areas have been among the most isolated neighbourhoods in terms of urban development. For example, slum communities in Kumasi such as Aboabo and Asawase are among the poorest in urban Ghana in terms of municipal services (e.g. waste management) and adequate housing (Amoako and Cobbinah 2011).

When well managed, urbanisation generates employment, provide infrastructure services, and contribute to growth of urban areas through industrialisation and modernisation (World Bank 2015). For instance, the World Bank (2015) reports that urbanisation contributed 5.7 % to annual GDP growth in Ghana between 1984 and

2013, while Accra recorded 20 % decrease in poverty incidence between 1991 and 2012. Experience has shown that infrastructure provided by local government authorities can often be a magnet, attracting more migrants. Many would agree that the justification exists for providing urban residents who have traditionally resided in poor neighbourhoods with urbanisation benefits (e.g. infrastructure, housing, services, jobs, etc.) to improve their living conditions. Should these benefits be provided to recent migrants? Clearly, if the objective of urbanisation management were simply development, the answer would be an unequivocal yes. However, the objective of urbanisation management has been tied to urban functionality and sustainable development, and budget for such projects in Ghana have always been limited.

One could argue that given the contribution of rural-urban migration to Ghana's urbanisation, rural intervention efforts such as improving agriculture as a viable livelihood option, and providing basic rural infrastructure services should be developed and may help reduce the influx of rural people into such poor urban neighbourhoods which has the tendency to deteriorate the existing conditions. However, an effective rural intervention programme should be developed in rural communities, particularly northern Ghana where there is increased rural-urban migration to cities in southern Ghana. Although urban development projects such as Savannah Accelerated Development Authority (SADA) have been introduced to improve livelihoods in northern Ghana and reduce the influx of migrants from the region to the southern part, poor planning, implementation and governance have rendered the project ineffective. Thus, rural intervention projects need to be effective in terms of planning, implementation and governance, and should reflect the aspirations of the local people.

Conclusion

The above analysis indicates that there is a long way from knowing how to effectively respond to, and implement an ideal urbanisation management strategy in Ghana. Much of the difficulty is derived from the overall debate over the scale of urbanisation in the functionality of Ghanaian cities as well as the usefulness or otherwise of urban planning. This analysis has shown that urbanisation is rapidly occurring in Ghana and generating negative urban management challenges. However, these urban management challenges are occurring not necessarily because of urbanisation but, to a large extent, poor urban planning which is non-inclusive. Despite the introduction of urban planning in Ghana during colonisation and the availability of institutional and legal setup, a picturesque description of urban Ghana today shows a complete absence of urban planning.

Linking urbanisation to development objectives in Ghana is in fact extremely difficult, even at a conceptual level. Many would agree that the management of urbanisation should be a worldwide priority given the unprecedented rates of demographic growth across developing countries. It can also be indicated that effective urban planning should be a goal across African countries, particularly Ghana. Can the two, however, be successfully linked at the city-wide level in urban Ghana? There is some evidence that such linkages are possible (see Cobbinah and Darkwah 2016b; Okpala 2009; Watson 2009). But conflicts between rapid urbanisation and poor urban planning will arise, and may generate more urban challenges. Within this context, urban planning

and local government authorities should have an agreed agenda and a clear definition of their priorities and roles in relation to managing urbanisation through effective urban planning. This would avoid non-implementation of plans.

Some factors will be essential to the success of managing urbanisation. Many of these factors are similar to the lessons evident from poor urban planning in Ghana: growing unregulated informal activities, haphazard development, urban sprawl, slum proliferation, inadequate service provision, etc. At a minimum, it is essential that urbanisation management be built on solid urban planning that has the capacity to address the above challenges, and has a good chance of success in terms of modernisation and industrialisation through inclusiveness and spatial equity. In most cases, enforcement will be needed to complement development interventions. Some of the critical factors which affect urbanisation management are as follows: (a) a good understanding of the concept and the local context in which it is occurring; (b) emphasis on urban residents' participation in the planning and management of urbanisation management interventions; and (c) long-term financial and political support and commitment towards the implementation and enforcement of planning regulations.

It can be expected that there will be a huge learning curve in developing and implementing urbanisation management interventions in Ghana. Enforcement will remain an important component of urbanisation management in Ghana. Enforcement alone, however, is insufficient to manage the rapidity of urbanisation. Until efforts are made to ensure inclusivity and equity in urbanisation benefits in urban Ghana, conflicts, distortion and variations are likely to remain between the "modernised" urban communities and the poor urban communities in Ghana.

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