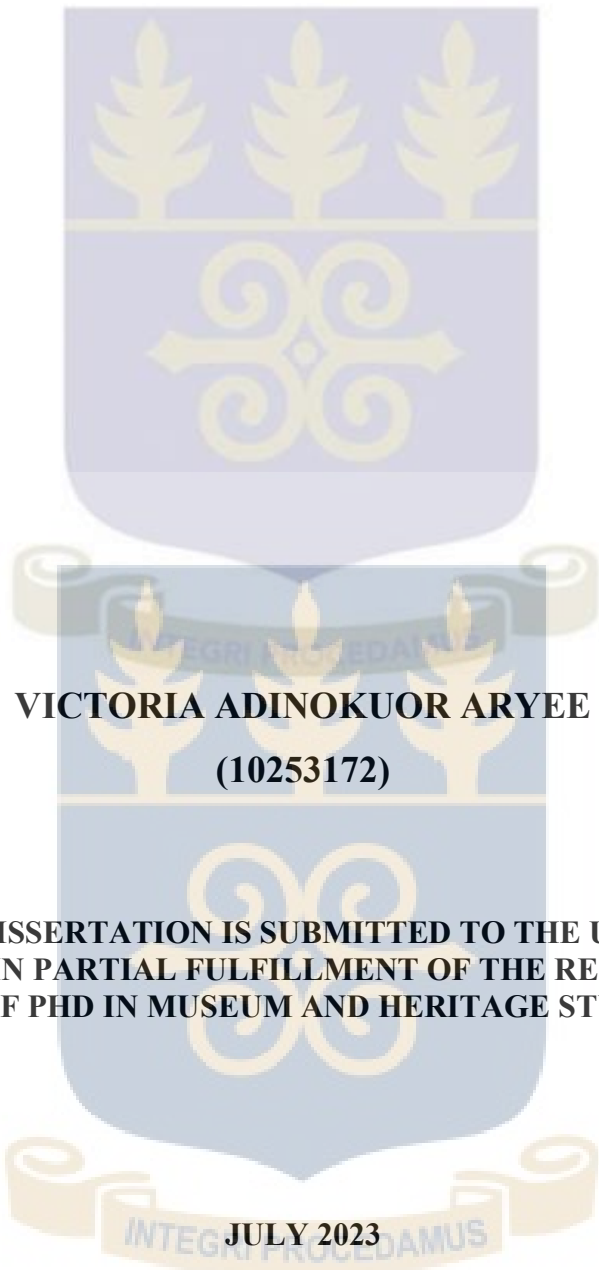


DEPARTMENT OF ARCHAEOLOGY AND HERITAGE STUDIES

SCHOOL OF ARTS

COLLEGE OF HUMANITIES

HERITAGISATION OF FISHING IN GA MASHIE ACCRA-GHANA



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**THIS THESIS/DISSERTATION IS SUBMITTED TO THE UNIVERSITY OF
GHANA, LEGON IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF THE REQUIREMENT FOR
THE AWARD OF PHD IN MUSEUM AND HERITAGE STUDIES DEGREE**

JULY 2023

DECLARATION

I, Victoria Twum-Gyamrah (née Adinokuor Aryee) hereby declare that except where I make references to other works which I have duly acknowledged, this thesis is the result of an independent research conducted by me at the Department of Archaeology and Heritage Studies of the University of Ghana under the supervision of the members of my PhD committee. To the best of my knowledge, this thesis has not been published or presented for another degree in any other academic institution.

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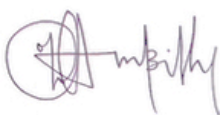
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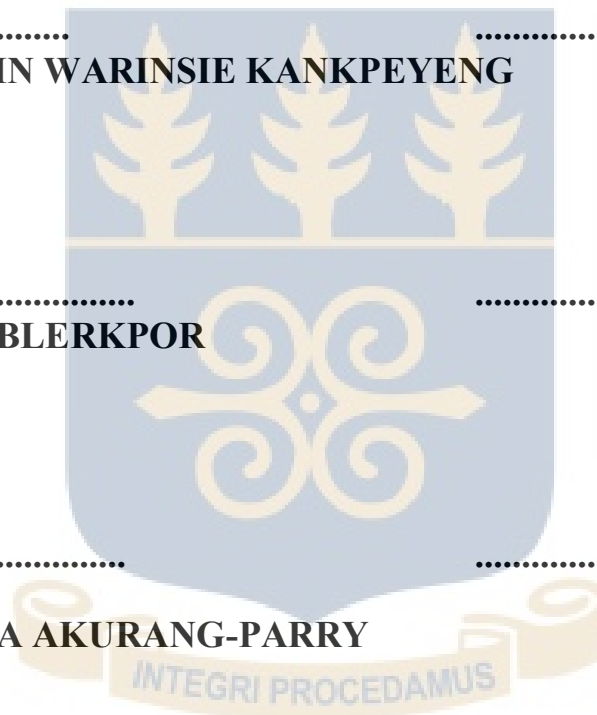
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Abstract

This doctoral study contributes to the understanding of artisanal marine fishing as a heritage in Ga Mashie. It explores the tangible and intangible resources that constitute the fishing heritage, with regard to the traditional practices and cultural dynamics of fishing within the community. This research builds on the historical documents by Odotei (1991,1992,2002), which highlights the historical perspective of fishing in Ga Mashie and the influence of the introduction of outboard motors on the activities of fisherfolks.

A community-based participatory research was undertaken, using qualitative methods of inquiry. The research employed ethnographic methods in the community by involving community members in focus group discussions, and formal and informal interviews. Additionally, the fishing practices and daily activities related to fishing within the community were observed. Whenever possible, participation in these activities was undertaken to gain a better understanding of the community's way of life. Archival research was conducted at the Public Records and Archives Administration Department (PRAAD), Balme Library, Google Scholar online repositories, NTNU Oria and the NTNU African Library. The research's theoretical framework was based on heritagisation, which is the process of recognizing objects, places, and practices as cultural heritage (Harrison, 2013).

The study identified the fishing heritage of Ga Mashie to include both tangible and intangible assets, represented by traditional institutions, ideology, and cultural expressions. The study uncovered that the heritage of fishing hasn't remained static and has constantly evolved to accommodate the cultural dynamics ensuing in its environs. The heritage has been influenced by the increase in population, modernity, illegal fishing practices, closed season regulations ongoing waterfront redevelopment projects and urbanisation and consequently evolved new practices. In conclusion, the study discusses cultural changes and dynamics related to fishing heritage in Ga Mashie. In reflecting on the future of Ga Mashie's fishing heritage, the study recommends both academic and pragmatic community engineered methods for its management.

DEDICATION

This research is dedicated to my parents, the late Christian Buete Aryee (Esq); Catherine Asorbo Coleman; James Ebo Whyte; and Sandra Whyte. I am because you obeyed.



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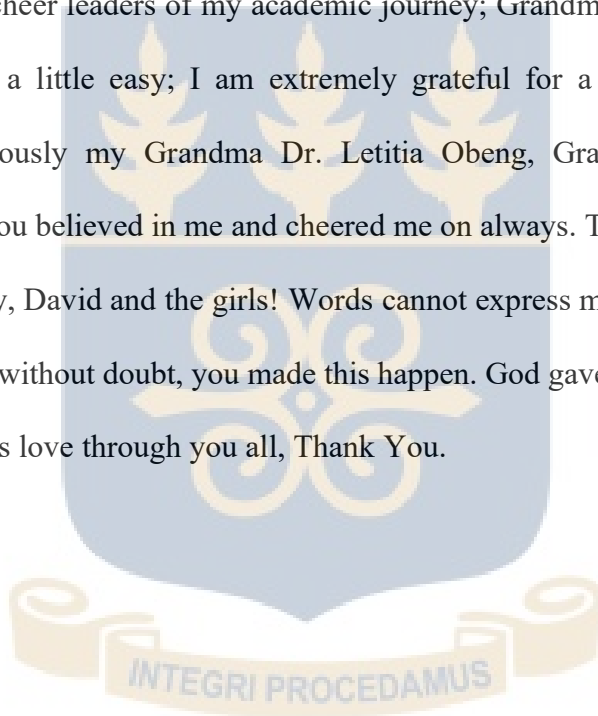


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LISTS OF ABBREVIATIONS

Abbreviation	Meaning
AMF	Artisanal Marine Fishing
GFH	Ghana's Fishing Heritage
FH	Fishing Heritage
GMFH	Ga Mashie Fishing Heritage
ICH	Intangible Cultural Heritage
UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization
AHD	Authorised Heritage Discourse
GTA	Ghana Tourism Agency
NTNU	Norwegian University of Science and Technology
PRAAD	Public Records and Archives Administration Department
CHIO	Community Heritage Intelligence Officers
CBPR	Community Based Participatory Research
CBPRA	Community Based Participatory Research Approaches



A Guide To Ga Pronunciation

Ga is a phonetic and tonal language. the same combination of letters could mean a different word depending on the rise and fall of tones. Example: ‘la’ may mean *sing, blood, fire, or dream*. This table is adapted after Kropp-Dakubu (1999).

<i>ga</i>	<i>as in</i>	<i>ga examples</i>
<i>a</i>	<i>a in ‘far’</i>	<i>abalai- sail ; Abola</i>
<i>B</i>	<i>b in ‘ball’</i>	<i>boda- squeeze</i>
<i>D</i>	<i>d in ‘do’</i>	<i>duku- scarf</i>
<i>e</i>	<i>a in ‘late’ but shorter with no glide</i>	<i>ee- a call to action</i>
<i>ε</i>	<i>e in ‘get’</i>	<i>ehεε – in the affirmative, yes</i>
<i>f</i>	<i>f in ‘fill’</i>	<i>faa- river</i>
<i>g</i>	<i>g in ‘go’</i>	<i>ga – the Ga people</i>
<i>gb</i>	<i>gb in the middle of ‘tugboat’ but with no pause between g and b</i>	<i>gba- width</i>
<i>gw</i>	<i>gu in ‘iguana’</i>	<i>gwa- meeting</i>
<i>h</i>	<i>heritagisation in ‘help’</i>	<i>hamahama – wavy, rough seas</i>
<i>hw</i>	<i>wh in ‘where’</i>	<i>hwa – hit hard</i>
<i>i</i>	<i>ee in ‘seek’</i>	<i>intsi - inch</i>
<i>j</i>	<i>j in ‘jump’</i>	<i>ja- divide</i>
<i>jw</i>	<i>dgew in ‘edgeware’ said quickly</i>	<i>jwettri- treasure, wealth, silver, capital</i>
<i>k</i>	<i>k in ‘keep’</i>	<i>ka - dry</i>
<i>kp</i>	<i>ckp in the middle of ‘stock pot’ with no pause between k and p</i>	<i>kpanaku- notorious</i>
<i>kw</i>	<i>qu in ‘aquarium’</i>	<i>kpokpoi- a ceremonial food eaten during Homowo</i>
<i>l</i>	<i>l in ‘lip’</i>	<i>l ε l ε – boat</i>
<i>m</i>	<i>m in ‘mean’, before an ‘f’ it is usually pronounced with the teeth against the lower lip</i>	<i>ma η- herring</i>
<i>n</i>	<i>n in ‘neat’</i>	<i>naanyo- friend</i>
<i>ny</i>	<i>ny in ‘own yoke’, with no gap between n and heritagisation</i>	<i>nya- rejoice</i>
<i>η</i>	<i>ng in ‘long’</i>	<i>ηshɔ- ocean, sea</i>

<i>ɲm</i>	<i>ngm in 'wrong mop', with no gap between ng and m</i>	<i>ɲmetso- oil palm tree</i>
<i>ɲw</i>	<i>ngw in 'wrong way', with no gap between ng and heritagisation</i>	<i>ɲwei- heavens</i>
<i>o</i>	<i>o in 'note', but shorter with no rising glide</i>	<i>oblayoo-young man</i>
<i>ɔ</i>	<i>o in 'lot'</i>	<i>ɔsrɛ- guitar fish</i>
<i>p</i>	<i>p in 'pit'</i>	<i>patapu- taod fish</i>
<i>r</i>	<i>r in 'around'</i>	<i>rula- ruler</i>
<i>s</i>	<i>s in 'seat'</i>	<i>saatso - bed</i>
<i>sh</i>	<i>sh in 'she'</i>	<i>sha- to burn,or smoke</i>
<i>shw</i>	<i>schw in 'schweppes'</i>	<i>shaabii- a kind of fish</i>
<i>t</i>	<i>t in 'tea'</i>	<i>ta - chew</i>
<i>ts</i>	<i>ch in 'chip'</i>	<i>tsaani-river fish trap , a seine</i>
<i>tsw</i>	<i>chw in the middle of 'each way' -with no gap between ch and heritagisation</i>	<i>tswei- moustache and whiskers</i>
<i>u</i>	<i>oo in 'too',but short</i>	<i>-as used in words-</i>
<i>v</i>	<i>v in 'veal'</i>	<i>vrao - suddenly</i>
<i>w</i>	<i>heritagisation in 'well'</i>	<i>wa- halt</i>
<i>y</i>	<i>heritagisation in 'yes'</i>	<i>yei- women</i>
<i>z</i>	<i>z in 'zero'</i>	<i>zim-describing a sound of hitting a pestle against the mortar</i>

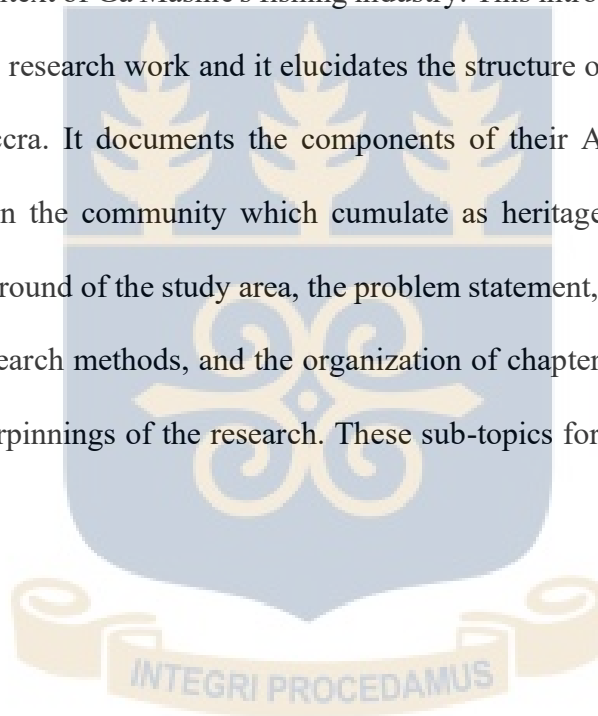


CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

1.0 Overview

This thesis provides a comprehensive account of the heritagisation process of fishing in Ga Mashie, a historic coastal town located in Accra the capital city of Ghana. The study explores the various cultural and social factors that have contributed to the preservation of the town's fishing heritage, including its traditional fishing practices, unique fishing equipment, and the role of fishing in the local economy. The thesis also analyzes the challenges faced in the process of preserving the town's fishing heritage, such as environmental degradation, waterfront redevelopments and the impact of modernization on traditional fishing practices. Through a combination of qualitative research methods, including interviews, observations, and archival research, this thesis presents a detailed and nuanced account of the complex process of heritagisation in the context of Ga Mashie's fishing industry. This introductory chapter provides a general outline of the research work and it elucidates the structure of the research conducted within Ga Mashie, Accra. It documents the components of their Artisanal Marine Fishing (AMF) practices within the community which cumulate as heritage. Within this chapter, I introduce a brief background of the study area, the problem statement, the aims and objectives, research questions, research methods, and the organization of chapters, and a brief exposition of the theoretical underpinnings of the research. These sub-topics form the foundation of this research.



1.1 Brief Background

The study is situated within Ga Mashie a town situated along the eastern coastline of Ghana (Figure 1.1). In ‘heritage focus’, it is noted primarily for its proximity to the ocean, and the James and Ussher Forts located on its shore, of which are both UNESCO world heritage sites. The dominant reference to world heritage sites (The James Fort and Ussher Fort) within the community has been the focus of a heritage identity for the community. This has resulted in the community being a well-plied tourist destination, in addition to the iconic lighthouse, the central Accra busy markets which make it easily accessible and the community’s littoral location. However, the heritage framework of Ga Mashie extends beyond the World Heritage Sites located within it.



Figure 1.1 Map showing the two location of Ga Mashie, and the main sub-divisions of Ga Mashie, i.e., Jamestown and Ussher town. Source: Author/CersGis.

The community also has a historical foundation of being the first settlement area of the Ga people, who have a thriving sustainable practice of artisanal marine fishing. It is also known as the hub for the sport and recreational activity of boxing (Akyeampong, 2002). These are community-engaged practices that have historical and cultural significance to the people. However, tourists to Ga Mashie popularly known as ‘Jamestown’ heavily engage with the colonial and post-colonial sites, consequently resulting in a cultural identity heavily influenced by Authorised Heritage Discourse (AHD) (Smith, 2006). This AHD identity is promoted by the ‘legitimate spokespersons of the past’ found in local institutions such as the Ghana Museums and Monuments Board (GMMB), which oversimplifies the heritage of the people of Ga Mashie. It monopolizes the community, contributing to a single narrative of the heritage of the community and the country, which begins from the arrival of the Europeans on the coast of the Gold Coast (Adichie, 2009; Aryee, 2015).

1.2 Problem statement

Transporting Adu-Ampong’s (2022) absence of the past conceptualisation, the problem of this research is premised on the question: ‘What are the absent yet present heritage of the people of Ga Mashie?’ This is aside from what the consequences of dominant heritage discourse make readily known. On this premise, Artisanal Marine Fishing (AMF), which is a traditional and culturally entrenched practice, stands out as a relegated practice of value to the community. This leads to the question- how do we study this absent- yet present heritage within Ga Mashie? Hence the conceptual framework and methodological approach of ‘heritagisation’ was employed. Despite the long years of engagement with artisanal fishing in the Ga Mashie community, the practice has received very little scholarly attention. Whereas there is a growing body of literature on Ga Mashie, the thematic interests are primarily focused on urbanism and its developmental concerns. Heritagisation of fishing is an approach to bring to recognition the practice of artisanal marine fishing in Ga Mashie as a heritage. This research seeks to highlight

a less dominant heritage discourse of fishing as heritage in Ga Mashie. Identifying, documenting, and unpacking the peculiarities identified by the local stakeholders as the components /fabric of the heritage; an attempt at resistance of the AHD identity carved for the community, and recognition of the public history of Ga Mashie. Eventually, this may rectify the political inequalities and subordination of the AMF heritage, resulting from years of neglect of the public history.

1.2.1 Aim and Objectives

This research sought to investigate, interrogate, and document the living practices of AMF, considered a heritage in the Ga Mashie community.

To achieve the above aim the following objectives were set:

- To identify and document the elements that constitute fishing as a living heritage in Ga Mashie, and document the heritagization process of Artisanal marine fishing at Ga Mashie.
- To identify the immediate and possible threats to the community's fishing heritage
- To critically interrogate continuity, change, and truncation concerning their living fishing heritage practices.

1.2.2 Research questions

To achieve the objectives the following questions were posed:

1. 'What constitutes the living fishing heritage of Ga Mashie?'. This question enabled the identification and cataloguing of the tangible and intangible cultural resources that accumulate as fishing heritage from the multivocal perspective of members of the fishing community.

2. 'Which tangible and intangible cultural resources of the community's fishing heritage are threatened? This question was posed to document the internal (Ga Mashie community) and external (actors from without the community) factors that affect the sustainability of fishing as a heritage in the Ga Mashie community.
3. 'What collaborative mitigative initiatives may be utilized to prevent and/or curb threats against the sustainability of Fishing as heritage?' This question interrogates, firstly, the awareness of the community of the threats to their community and secondly enabled the documentation of their adaptive and mitigative responses. Answers to it will serve as a blueprint for determining the best practices for the preservation of indigenous fishing technologies from the emic point of view

1.4 Conceptual Framework: A succinct introduction to Heritagisation

One of the academic underpinnings of this research is the concept of Heritagisation. This concept has been defined as both a 'theoretical' and practice-based conscious approach to 'confer' the status of Heritage unto a tangible or intangible cultural component (Fontal, & Gómez-Redondo, 2015; Doyon & Carbonell, 2019; Guan et al, 2019). Undeniably the tag or label of 'heritage' on either tangible or intangible cultural representations accords its acknowledgement in local, political, and economic spheres. 'Heritage' as a title serves as a commodification applique to render cultural representation more economically viable, for tourism, and funding applications amongst others. It also accords political attention and if well-presented qualifies an object, monument, or intangible cultural representation for the much sought-after UNESCO recognition.

In recent years the process of heritagisation has been researched and discussed- not only the "yet-to-be-heritage" in focus but, what the process means for the community connected to the heritage and the possibilities of legacy creation. The focus is not just on heritage as a status

but on the issues of preservation, self-sustainability i.e., without local government or international funding support, and the possibilities of tourism and community collaboration to support the yet-to-be heritage (Harrison, 2013; Herwitz, 2015). Furthermore, there's a shift in the conversation of heritagisation in three ways. Firstly, from just objectification and the preservation of heritage as 'time in glass cases,' to the functionalist appreciation and approach hence a shift from monuments to people and community. Secondly, from simply observing objects to their continuous function and/or functions; and thus thirdly from abstract preservation per se to purposeful preservation, self-sustainable use, and development (Rivero et al, 2018).

The process has been noted to infuse in communities the opportunity to make their heritage more meaningful to them primarily and then to the public who may consume it later, as Carbonell (2014) details in the case of the Catalonia ports where the new port structure that replaced the storm-destroyed port was developed to become heritage and embedded with traits to appeal to the community and the tourist. Avni (2017) asserts the reverse occurred in the case of the Jaffa port. With the Jaffa port, Heritagisation may have brought the community to the point of connecting with the high culture waterfront development constructed. How this process of heritagisation is achieved may largely be recognized as a process peculiar to the context being worked with. Heritagisation of food, monuments, dance, music, and communities, amongst others, vary. However, the underlying tenets of community value and historical and /or present significance that underpin the definition of heritage are a great starting point towards structuring a process of heritagisation.

Moving from authorized and popular heritage narratives to public and community-developed heritage may be the best practice that the fishing community of Ga Mashie needs for heritage preservation. Heritagisation as a process and conceptual approach afford this research the possibility to manoeuvre and develop methods for community-led innovative and sustainable approaches to heritage preservation.

1.5 Research Methods

The research was conducted within Ga Mashie, in Accra, the capital of Ghana. The research was conducted with a qualitative research approach of community-based participatory research methods. The primary data was gathered with methods such as informal, formal, unstructured, and semi-structured interviews, focus group discussions and observation of daily activities of the community members. These methods were employed using tools such as the field notebook, videography, and photography. Observations of cultural practices were also undertaken to complement the primary data. Secondary data gathered also included archival data recovered from the perusal of data within the Public Records and Archival Department in Accra Ghana, and the Norwegian University of Science and Technology African Library.

1.6 Towards a Definition of Fishing Heritage

A singular definition of heritage is often contested and viewed as subjective rather than objective. As a concept, heritage has been defined as an object (Aplin, 2002), an abstract (Gonçalves et al 2020), an event, an identity (Howard, 2003), a present occurrence (Kirshenblatt-Gimblett, 2014), a valorized past, a happening (UNESCO, 1972; 2003), and a process (Howard, 2003). For some, it has recourse to the past; for others, it is presently constructed. Within each definition, the underlying pillars are the intentional acknowledgement to confer 'heritage', the frameworks, whether intentional or inadvertently for its preservation, and the possibility of inheritance.

UNESCO (1972; 2003) has succeeded in providing a foundational definition of Heritage. A working definition that enables the commission to deconstruct and manage the affairs of Heritage. This definition compartmentalizes heritage into two broad categories: intangible and tangible. Embedded in these categories are more specific attributes that

distinguish heritages; these are natural and cultural. Further, there is a subject of ownership in the definition of heritage at the local, national, and international levels. Each with its peculiar attributes and contestations.

Notably, fishing has both tangible and intangible attributes, thus it is better defined as a mixed heritage. Arguably there exists a thin permeable line between tangible and intangible; possibly an integration that cannot be physically separated. Herein, identifying the intangible and tangible as separate is to provide a framework for analyses of the peculiar facts and materials that make the whole; it is not intended to break apart the two attributes as polar opposites. In light of this, the most suitable UNESCO definition category for fishing is as a ‘living heritage, this is defined as:

“Living heritage – performing arts, oral expressions, social practices, rituals, festive events, and traditional knowledge – is an integral part of human life. Handed down from parents to children, from masters to apprentices, from teachers to pupils, it is safeguarded through transmission”.(UNESCO, 2019)

The above definition is a sub-theme of the UNESCO definition of intangible cultural heritage; defined as:

“... the practices, representations, expressions, knowledge, skills – as well as the instruments, objects, artifacts, and cultural spaces associated therewith – that communities, groups, and, in some cases, individuals recognize as part of their cultural heritage. This intangible cultural heritage, transmitted from generation to generation, is constantly recreated by communities and groups in response to their environment, their interaction with nature, and their history, and provides them with a sense of identity and continuity, thus promoting respect for cultural diversity and human creativity... is manifested inter alia in the following domains:

(a) oral traditions and expressions, including language as a vehicle of the intangible cultural heritage;

- (b) performing arts;*
 - (c) social practices, rituals, and festive events;*
 - (d) knowledge and practices concerning nature and the universe;*
 - (e) traditional craftsmanship.*
- (UNESCO 2003)*

Whereas the UNESCO definition of heritage affords a broad foundational understanding of heritage, it seemingly constricts heritage to the past. Kirshenblatt-Gimblett (1995. p 369) asserts that heritage is a cultural production in the present that has recourse to the past, a value-added industry. Within this context, heritage takes on a living active attribute, much like the practices associated with the everyday activities of fishing in the Ga Mashie community. The definition of cultural heritage by UNESCO engages the word ‘living’ in classifying the expressions and traditions that are transmitted from generation to generation. Within that definition ‘living’ and ‘generational’ may appear contradictory, however, it is worth noting that heritage is in a viable position to achieve this; for it is not only for history but for the present and current construct of culture.

According to the Ghana Fisheries Act 625 of 2002, Fishing is defined as;

- (a) searching for, catching, taking, or harvesting fish,*
- (b) the attempted searching for, catching, taking, or harvesting of fish,*
- (c) engaging in any other activity which can reasonably be expected to result in the*
- (d) locating, catching, taking or harvesting of fish, placing, searching for, or recovering a fish aggregating device or associated equipment including radio beacons,*
- (e) an operation at sea in support of or in preparation for an activity within the meaning of this heading,*
- (j) or the use of an aircraft in relation to an activity described in this definition;*

The definition covers all forms of fishing including sea, ocean, lagoon, lake, or aquaculture rearing and harvesting of fish. Within these parameters, ‘fishing’ is categorized as a provision of subsistence, a business, and possibly a sport or leisure activity. However, it fails to capture the essential components of fishing as a traditional practice. A practice that is enhanced with performances, rituals, and events that give identity and meaning to the practice for its practising community. Artisanal fishing is categorized as a ‘traditional’ fishing practice that uses a relatively low level of technology and operates on a small scale. It utilizes small canoes or boats with simple low-power outboard motors instead of large, powerful vessels with high-power engines (Akyeampong, 2007; Odotei, 2002; Mensah & Antwi, 2002). These tools form part of the tangible components of the practice. Other notable tangible manifestations are the paddles, net-fixing equipment, fishing nets, slogans on the paddles and fishing boats, ovens, and other preservatory equipment among others.

In addition to being a subsistence, business, sport, and leisure activity, fishing as a practice is a presently occurring activity and tradition within coastal communities. Its traditions and accompanying arts are not static or a once-occurring historical event. Intangible cultural adaptations of small-scale artisanal marine fishing communities to their environment are evident in components of their cultures. These components may directly relate to fishing or are more distant from fisheries technologies and fisheries activities; they are often in their day-to-day existence. These adaptations are reflected in their kinship, gendered roles, and social structures, as reflected in the role of women in the Ga Mashie fishing community as fishmongers. This results from the practice of fishing being a strictly male affair. Furthermore, religious beliefs, values, symbols, and community rituals, songs, and folktales may also reflect the community's reliance on marine ecosystems; this is practically seen in the Homowo festival celebration and the use of the *TSIL3* fish as the staple during the festivities (Irvine & Brown, 1947; Henderson-Quartey, 2002; Wellington, 2017).

The religious beliefs and practices of the Ga Mashie artisanal fishing community are likely influenced by the larger Ga culture, but it is also possible that they have developed distinct customs and beliefs due to their close relationship with the sea and their strong connection to nature. The community's reliance on fishing as a way of life may have given rise to unique traditions and rituals that are not found in other parts of the region. Additionally, their daily interactions with the ocean and the creatures that inhabit it have led to a deeply spiritual understanding of the natural world that is reflected in their religious practices.

Contextualized within the above I attempt to define 'Fishing Heritage'. This study defines Ghana's Fishing Heritage (GFH) as the objects, practices, performances, rituals, traditions, use of space, and objects associated with small-scale artisanal marine fishing that has been packaged and presented as a collective identity of Artisanal Marine fishing communities in Ghana, and sustained in the present through continuous engagement and preserved for future generations through practice.

Divergent from maritime heritage, Fishing heritage is representative of the practices and objects solely associated with artisanal fishing. Maritime heritage has become synonymous with underwater cultural heritage, underwater cultural and paleontological resources, and deep-sea endeavours (Brebbia & Gambin, 2003). Although the coast of Ghana has recorded cases of ships which were involved in the slave trade being sunk, during the epoch of the slave trade, (Cook et al, 2016), the main interaction that coastal dwellers have with the ocean is not through these relics, but through artisanal marine fishing; which is the predominant way of life across Ghana's eastern and western coastlines. The argument for deep-sea marine fishing as an indigenous practice has been raised by archaeologists (see Biveridge 2014 PhD dissertation). Unfortunately, the archaeological evidence is limited to the Dixcove coastal community in western Ghana. The overwhelming focus of maritime heritage on underwater resources has rendered the general contribution of artisanal fishing and its additions to the totality of maritime

heritage almost insignificant. Pertinent to Ghana where the search for underwater resources is at the barest minimum, with no local engagement from universities nor nautical engineers; maritime heritage becomes nonspecific to our needs. Arguably a more suited heritage focus will be ‘Fishing Heritage’ as defined by this study.

Artisanal Fishing is an invaluable intangible heritage asset that holds significant cultural and historical significance. It is a practice that has been passed down from generation to generation and plays a crucial role in preserving cultural objects and practices. One of the unique qualities of fishing is its indigenous nature, which has given rise to distinctive cultural traditions. These traditions encompass a wide variety of elements such as folktales, music, dance, poetry, and language, all of which contribute to the rich intangible heritage assets of fishing. The practice of artisanal fishing also provides a valuable opportunity for cultural exchange and transmission. Indigenous and migrant fisherfolks often share knowledge and techniques that have been passed down through generations, which helps to preserve and promote cultural practices. Besides the heritage value, fishing is an important means of subsistence for many communities, providing food and livelihoods for millions of people locally and globally.

Artisanal Marine fishery resources, as with many other renewable natural resources, support the economy of many coastal communities in Ghana (Odotei 2002). An innovative management approach of the industry will be a formal acceptance of ‘Fishing heritage’, which will, in turn, be reflected in the political response and management of its resources. Recently, the artisanal marine fishing industry has been burdened with problems of climate change and sea erosion, overexploitation of fish, leading to declining fish stock, and activities of illegal fishing vessels (Nunoo, 2018). The political response to the industry’s challenges was the formulation and implementation of ‘the fisheries management plan of Ghana for 2015-2019’. Amongst other key objectives, the document primarily focuses on reducing fishing effort and

capacity (Fisheries Management Plan of Ghana 2015-2019; Tsamanyi, 2013). Although this is a good initiative, the strategies stipulated by the document do not favour the sustainability of indigenous knowledge and heritage nature of artisanal fishing.

The implementation plan rolled out to regulate the overexploitation of fish stock was to introduce artisanal fisherfolk to alternative employment options and livelihoods, as well as the periodic closed season of fishing activities to allow the fish to restock, ergo, reducing the participation in artisanal fishing leading to a gradual decline in the practice altogether. This is both a local and global concern because of the biological and ecological effect it has on the marine resources, and also because of the social, economic, and threat of cultural annihilation it has on the people whose livelihood in one way or the other depends on the artisanal fishing industry. Arguably a better management approach would have been an integrated management approach; one that employs a traditional management plan to complement the state management plan for preserving both the heritage/indigenous knowledge system associated with the industry and the marine ecosystem (Ameyaw et al, 2021), as practised in the fishing villages of the Shenge peninsula in Sierra Leone; where they have adopted community-generated traditional management plans to manage the overexploitation of fish stock (Khan & Sheku-Sei, 2015).

Fishing as heritage has the potential to attract tourists from different parts of the world, turning those coastal communities' sites into major tourist sites. With the growing popularity of waterfront developments, coastal communities' risk being alienated by introducing high culture into their landscapes. Combining the authentic fishing experience offered by the observation and participation of tourists in the everyday life of fishing communities, plus the high culture of resorts may prove to be a well-curated tourism plan. The process of creating the heritage of buildings and monuments and assigning authorized heritage is straightforward and has to do with governmental bodies and negotiations within universal guidelines from people outside the walls of a community (Smith, 2006). However, it has been argued that authentic

heritage bonds are intangible and transcendent, evoking a sense of sentimentality and nostalgia that resonates with a wider community. These bonds transcend time and space, connecting individuals to their collective history and cultural identity. They are not just physical artifacts or tangible objects, but rather a shared experience that touches the hearts of all those involved. Such bonds serve as a reminder of our past, and inspire us to preserve our cultural heritage for future generations. These are more difficult to forge and when forged are resilient against wear and damage. Packaging such experiences with community engagement should be a more sustainable tourism approach.

1.7 Structure of Thesis

This research work is organized into seven (7) chapters. The first chapter presents a general overview of the study. It provides a background to the study and details the problem and the aim for the undertaking of this research. It further details the achievable objectives and questions followed to make the research realistic. It further attempts a definition of Fishing Heritage stemming out of the research undertaken.

The second chapter reviews literature relevant to the study. It introduces Ga Mashie community history and polity. It further reviews the literature on the key concepts of heritage and the processes of heritagisation, that underpin this research. Chapter two also interrogates the dynamics of heritage and its subthemes of intangible heritage and community heritage. The concept of heritagisation which facilitates the methods used in this research is interrogated, and the criticisms and justification for its use in this study are elaborated.

Chapter three is a description of the methods used in this study. It describes the approaches used on the field and the methods used to gather relevant data for the research output. Chapter three further expands on how the data-gathering approaches used were chosen,

the challenges faced during the research , the mitigative approaches employed and the influence of the conceptual framework of heritagisation on the research methodology .

Chapter four details the data gathered that address objective one of this research. The research findings on the various elements of the Ga Mashie fishing heritage are detailed in this chapter.

Chapter five details the contemporary dynamics of the Ga Mashie fishing heritage. it presents data that address objectives two and three of this research. It addresses the challenges of the heritage, the best practices towards the challenges and the dynamics currently underway in the practice of fishing as an economic activity and as a heritage.

Chapter six presents a discussion on emerging issues of continuity and change of the heritage. It discusses the changing phases of the heritage, and it further briefly interrogates the contribution of the heritage to the blue economy.

Chapter seven details an overall view of the research in summary. It presents a succinct summary of the research findings, recommendations, significance of the research and the concluding final remarks.



CHAPTER TWO

GA MASHIE HISTORY, HERITAGE AND ITS COMMUNITY SIGNIFICANCE, HERITAGISATION AS A CONCEPT AND PRACTISE.

2.0 Introduction

This chapter expands on the conceptual underpinnings of this research. It begins with a review of Ga Mashie, its history and socio-cultural structure and its relationship with other Ga states. It provides a framework and definition of heritage that bolsters the research. Furthermore, it explores the concept of heritagisation as pertains to the research. The overarching aim of the chapter is to define heritage within its context as a present construction with recourse to the past. Furthermore, it explores the dovetailing of the concepts of intangible heritage and community heritage as they pertain to the research. Heritagisation is reviewed as both a concept and a data-gathering tool. Its processes as deciphered from previous research, provide a rudimentary structure for data gathering; in identifying stakeholders, interrogating stakeholders, and managing its politics.

2.1 Ga-Mashie community, People, and polity in brief.

Ga Mashie-Old Accra is an urban coastal community in Ghana that stretches across approximately 98 hectares (Dickson, 1969; Appeaning Addo, 2008). It is bounded to the west by the Korle Lagoon and the north and east by the industrial and business districts of Accra respectively. Traditionally the Ga community covers the territory from the foothills of the Akwapim range to the North, and from Lanma in the West to Tema in the East and the Atlantic Ocean to the South. Ga Mashie is recognized as one of the six sub-states that make up the Ga state, the other five are Osu, La, Teshie, Nungua and Tema (See Figure 2.0, and 2.3). Ga Mashie is regarded as the first settlement area of the Ga and has consequently emerged as a powerful sub-state amongst the Ga (Odotei, 1991, 1992; Reindorf C, 1895) (See Figure 2.1). It is

politically and culturally made up of seven clans, these are Asere, Gbese, Abola, Ngleshie Alata, Sempe, Akumadje, and Otublohum (See Figure 2.0, and 2.4). Presently Ga Mashie is subdivided into two geographical sub-states Jamestown and Ussher Town (See figure 2.2), this is a result of the presence of the European forts along the coast, the James Fort (British 1673) and Ussher Fort constructed (Dutch 1605). To make up Jamestown and Ussher town, the seven clans are geographically divided into four and three clans. Four clans, Asere, Abola, Gbese and Otublohum, form Ussher Town; while three clans, Sempe, Ngleshie and Akumadje constitute Jamestown (Agyei-Mensah & Wrigley-Asante, 2014; Wrigley-Asante & Mensah, 2017) (See Figure 2.4). these sub-states and clans are collectively referred to as the ‘Ga Mashie community’ and/or Ga Mashie in this research.

The lingering effect of the European contact period is seen in the renaming of the Ga Mashie community, it is also evident in how the community is casually referred to as Jamestown, this colloquial name is occasionally used interchangeably with Ga Mashie in this research. The participants of the research were purposely selected from the seven clans to give the researcher responses that will give a fair representation of views on the topic under study.

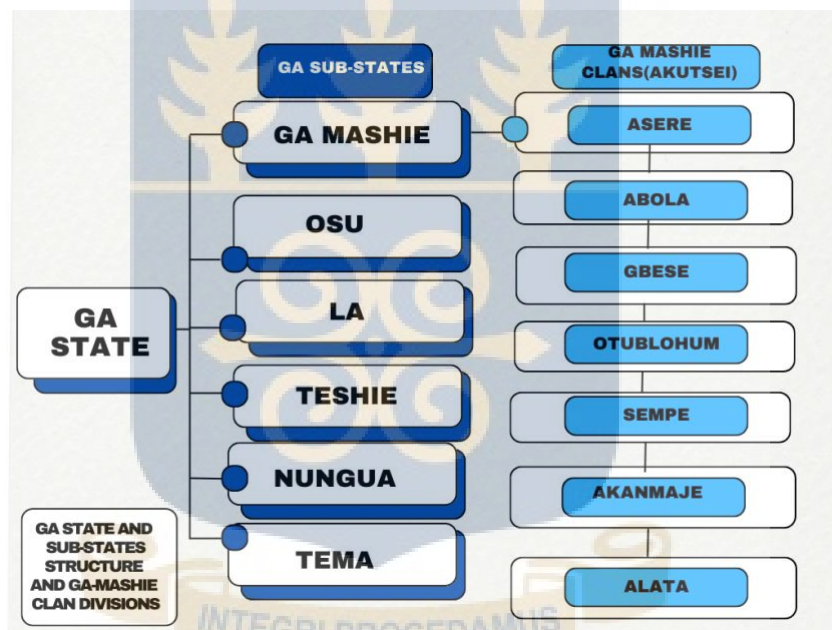


Figure 2.0 Ga state and sub-state structure, and Ga Mashie clan divisions,designed by researcher.

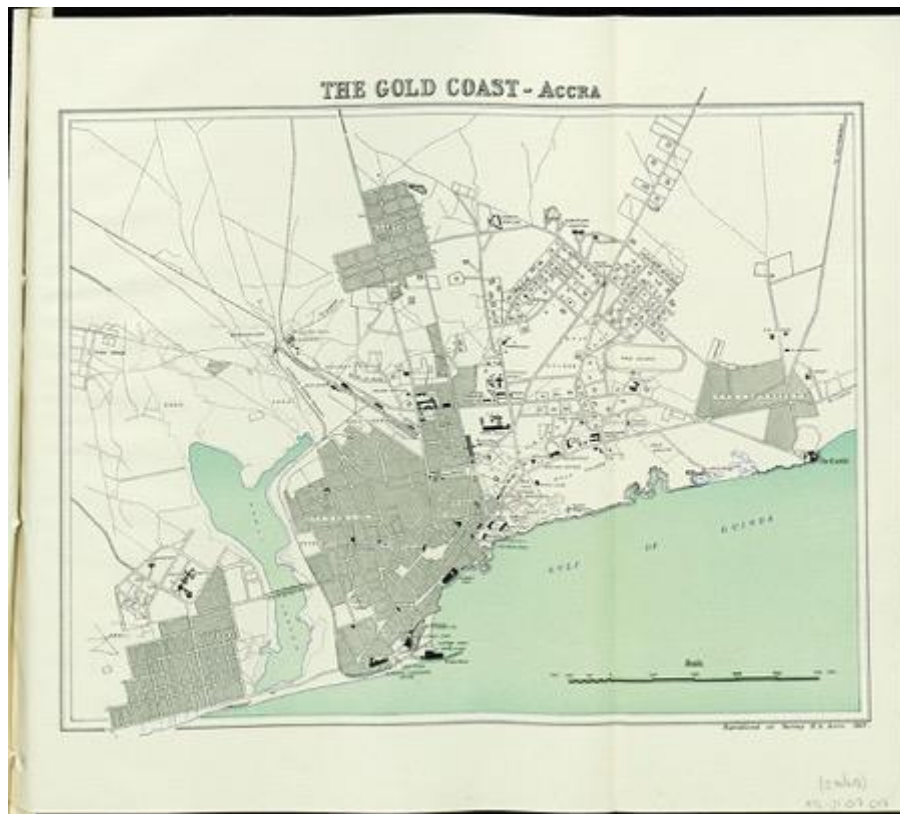


Figure 2.1 "The Gold Coast - Accra" ATL-31.017.017 Basel Mission Archives Proper date: [Johne Angabe], 1927
[Geography]: Africa {continent}[Geography]: Goldküste[Archives catalogue]: Maps and plans: ATL - Atlas collection:
ATL-31: ATL-31.017 - Atlas of the Gold Coast. Contains 24 maps and graphs, Gold Coast Survey Department, Accra, 1927.



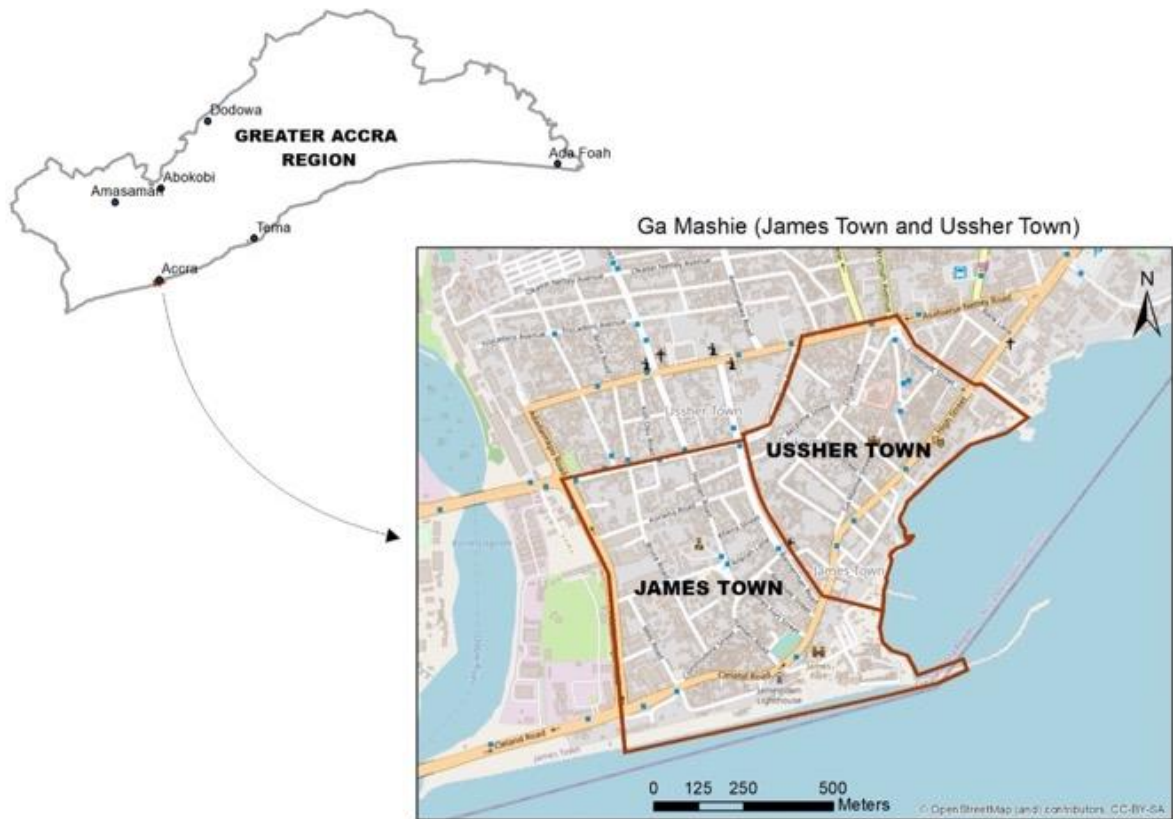


Figure 2.2 Map showing the two main sub-divisions of Ga Mashie, i.e., Jamestown and Ussher town. Source: Researcher/CersGis.

Ga Mashie earned the name Old Accra because it was the first settlement area of the Ga people; As a result, it is indigenously a Ga settlement. Ga Mashie has significantly expanded from a little trading post in the early 19th century to an urban space made up of indigenous Ga and migrants (Grant and Yankson, 2003). This may be connected to the shift of the colonial administration from Cape Coast to Accra in 1877. Although presently it remains one of the least developed and poorly planned communities in Accra it comprises a cultural mosaic representative of migrants; immigrants, and returnees including persons from neighbouring coastal communities, returned Brazilian slaves (Tabon), and the Nigerian ‘Allada’ community-hired workers who helped in the construction of the colonial trading outposts on the Ga Mashie coast-Ussher Fort (Dutch 1605) and James Fort (British 1673) (Alcione & Ayesu, 2002; Parker, 2000; Quayson, 2014; Wellington, 2017).

Within this mosaic of cultures are traditions and practices rooted in the political and social framework of the Ga people, their clan systems (Henderson-Quartey, 2002; Parker, 2002) the celebration of the annual festival of Homowo, Wulomei (Traditional Priesthood), and artisanal fishing.

As earlier indicated, the end of the seventeenth century, there were two major European trading outposts on the Ga Mashie coast: Ussher Fort (Dutch 1605) and James Fort (British 1673). The presence of these forts in Ga Mashie resulted in the change in names of the original town names of ‘*Soko*’ and ‘*Aprang*’ to Jamestown and Ussher Town respectively (Nunoo-Amarteifio, 2015).

Jamestown was historically recognised as a trading centre and port due to the presence of the lighthouse built in 1871 and rebuilt in 1892, and the breakwater constructed in the early 20th century (Brand, 1972; Hesse, 2000; Nunoo-Amarteifio, 2015). These monuments formed the first man-made harbour in Accra and established Jamestown as an important export centre; by 1899 Jamestown had become the busiest port on the Gold Coast coupled with warehouses lining the town streets (Dickson, 1969)

The presence of the harbour led to the growth of a community associated with trade and export. What started out as a temporary shelter for indigenous and migrant traders and fisher folks grew to become a permanent residence of a community made up of artisans, crewmen, fishmongers, and traders, to mention but a few. The decline of Jamestown as a trade centre and port gradually began within the 1920s with the construction of a new port at Takoradi in the western region of Ghana. With the commissioning of the Tema harbour in 1962, the Jamestown harbour became redundant (Jopp, 1961). The loss of business had a huge impact on the Jamestown harbour as well as the community which had sprung up as a result. The fishing community consequently declined and became a slum. However, in the 1950s a proposal was tendered for the construction of permanent residences for the growing community, an attempt

at slum clearance. The proposal, by Helga Richards and Alfred Alcock, was to construct accommodation with traditional influence, a space for drying fish and cooking overlooking a play area (See Bodleian Library, Alfred Alcock Archive, and Mss.Afr.5.6660). These planned housing projects did not materialise. The community continued to grow in a haphazard manner.

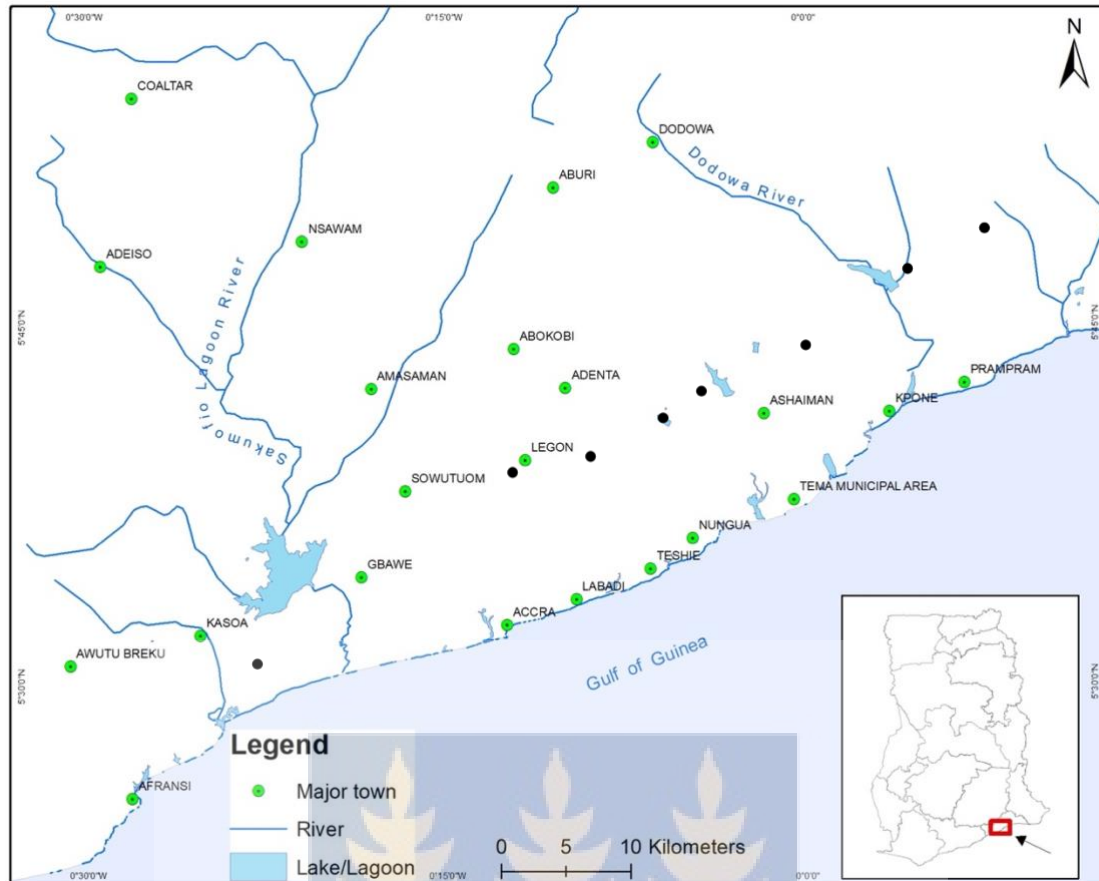
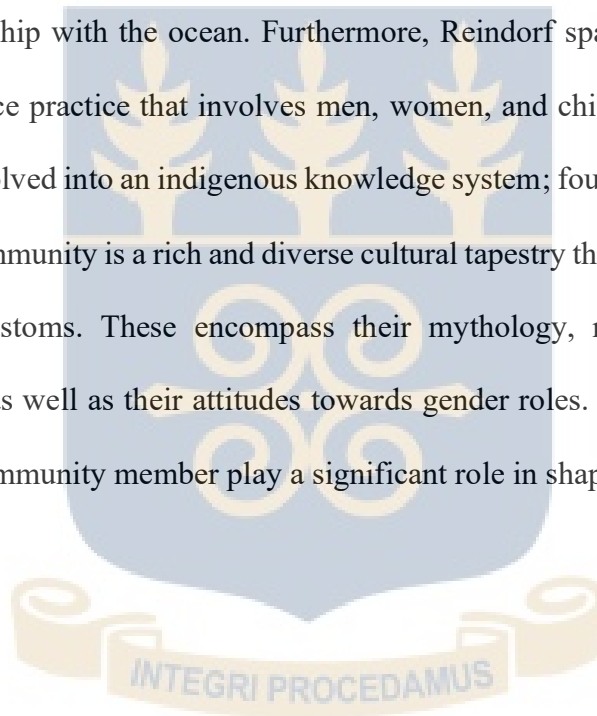


Figure 2.3 The communities of the Ga State on the eastern coastline of Ghana Source-Researcher/CersGIS

Presently, the geopolitical demarcation of Ga Mashie places it within the Ashiedu Keteke Sub Metro. This sub-metro houses the central business district of Accra, encompassing key heritage sites such as the old parliament house, Kwame Nkrumah Mausoleum, as well as key markets such as Makola, Agbogbloshie, Kinbu Dawn Market, amongst others. According to the 2021 Population Housing Census of Ghana, the population of the Sub-Metro area is estimated to be 88,633, with a density of 23,166 persons per square meter and 33,572

households. The non-household population is 3265, while the household population is 85,366. The female population is estimated to be 48,210, while the male population is 40,423. The primary source of livelihood for the Sub-Metro residents is fishing and trading. Due to its unique nature, the Sub-Metro attracts a significant influx of people from various walks of life, estimated to be about 2 million people daily. These individuals come into the city for administrative, educational, industrial, and commercial purposes. This constant traffic and in some instances settlements contribute to the diversity and vibrancy of the Sub-Metro area and it is reflected in the mosaic historical fabric documented by Odotei (1992; 1999; 2002) , Parker (2000), Osei-Tutu (2000).

Ga Mashie is recognized as a unity of clans that historically and presently maintains the economic practice of artisanal marine fishing (AMF), which is the dominant fishery sector in Ghana in terms of landings and fleet capacity along its approximately 550 km coastline (Mensah & Antwi, 2002). Reindorf (1895) asserts that these clans emerged from the ocean, possibly indicating the travel means that led them to their settlement. More pertinently, it signifies a long-standing relationship with the ocean. Furthermore, Reindorf sparsely mentions AMF as the means of sustenance practice that involves men, women, and children within Ga Mashie. Presently AMF has evolved into an indigenous knowledge system; founded on their continuous practice. The AMF community is a rich and diverse cultural tapestry that treasures its traditions, beliefs, and social customs. These encompass their mythology, religion, household and settlement structures, as well as their attitudes towards gender roles. The personal values and preferences of each community member play a significant role in shaping their unique cultural identity.



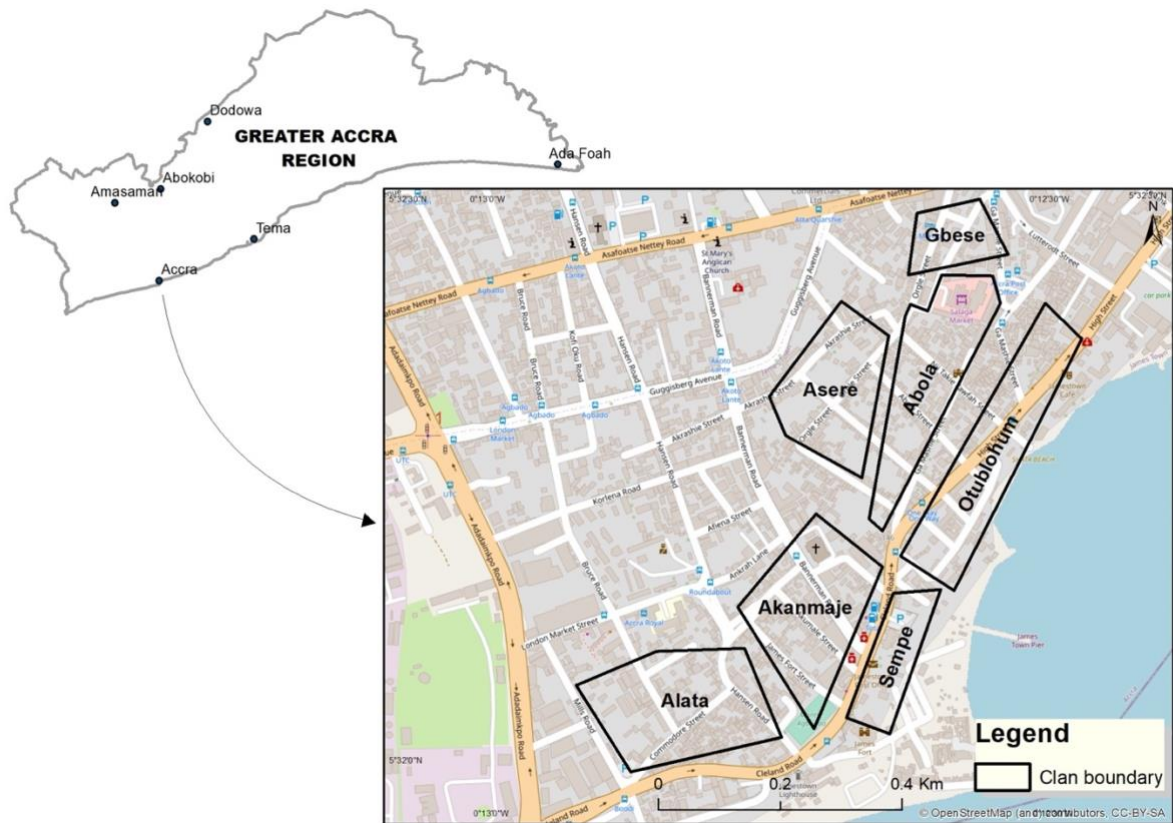


Figure 2.4 Map of Akutso/clan divisions in Ga Mashie. Source-Researcher/CersGis

The Ga cosmological framework and its relationship with the environment recognizes the supremacy of the ocean as a Spirit known as *Nai*. *Nai*, the spirit of the ocean has immense value to the Ga, every product of *Nai*, and the practices related to *Nai* are considered valuable and revered. Thus, by association with *Nai*, artisanal marine fishing has gained roots in Ga Mashie as a valued practice. There is a projection of the value of *Nai* as a feared God unto the act of fishing. Historically, the reverence for *Nai* can be inferred from the works of Reindorf (1895). *Nai* is one of the three principal deities of the Ga, alongside Sakumo and Kole, reputed to have won wars for the Ga people, with spinous, cartilaginous, testaceous creatures as warriors that arise to fight for them wounding their enemies. The priest of *Nai* is recorded as receiving a duty of 16 pounds and rum from groups of people that engaged with the coast. The priest was also entitled to two porgies (a blue-spotted silvery-red food fish) from every canoe, in August and September. It is evident that the act of fishing and receiving a catch from *Nai* is valued due

to the cultural reverence for *Nai* (ibid pp.29;108; 111-116;182;217) Presently the rites performed and prayers offered through libation to *Nai* during fishing rites indicated the continuity in reverence of the Spirit.

2.1.0 A Brief Look at Artisanal Marine Fishing in Ga Mashie

There are four main types of marine fisheries. These include nearshore and inshore vessels, offshore distant water vessels, tuna fleets, and artisanal fishing fleets. AMF can be considered the most significant among these, as it plays a crucial role in the livelihoods of coastal communities (Nunoo et al, 2014, p. 274-276; Garcia-Florez et al, 2014, p. 152-159). AMF is a small-scale and low-technology practice that requires minimal capital investment. It involves using traditional methods such as beach seines, hooks and lines, cast nets, and canoes fitted with sales and or outboard motors to catch specific species of fish. The artisanal fishers typically undertake short trips to the sea to catch specific types of fish. The canoes or pirogues used for artisanal fishing are small (being almost always hewn out of one tree) and lack the sophisticated equipment and technology of larger fishing vessels. Artisanal fishers, unlike commercial fishing operations, have a deep-rooted connection to the ocean and its resources. They have an intimate knowledge of the local marine ecosystem, which they have learned through generations of experience. They often have a deep respect for the ocean and its creatures, and they recognize the importance of sustainable fishing practices to ensure the longevity of their livelihoods.

The practice of AMF in Ghana has been thematically studied. There have been studies that have explored the practice as an economic resource and gendered entrepreneurship, its adaptation to modernisation and westernisation (Ovëra, 1998), modification with outboard motors (Odotei, 1991 & 2002), and the sustainability of the industry (Nunoo et al ,2018). Within these studies, Ga Mashie features as a major economic contributor to the industry in Ghana. However, beyond the economic, Ga Mashie is noted to identify with AMF as an intrinsic part

of their traditional framework. It's socially grafted into their art, religion, and the celebration of their annual festival *Homowo*.

Historically, the most detailed account of the Ga community is the often-referenced document by Carl Reindorf (1895). The few instances that fishing is recorded in the document points to a period of occupation that precedes encounters with Europeans. Reindorf documents the role of the Spirit of the sea *Nai* as an integral part of the Ga religion (ibid: p. 111,115), affirming the reverence of the products received from *Nai*, and the occupations associated with *Nai* are socially and spiritually recognized.

A neglected area in the studies of AMF amongst the Ga is the contribution of the practice to Heritage discourse and the recognition of the practice as a heritage. The existing hinterland research bias may be the cause for the possible dismissal of issues concerning the coast. Topics of heritage research along the coast are thematically heavy on issues of colonialism and enslavement (Parker, 2000, p. xxiv). Reflected in coastal studies, the Akan-hinterland bias has defined the course of study of the coastal areas with a focus given to the Fante fishing communities (Okusu, 2020). Identifying and documenting AMF as a heritage of a community is not a novel concept. Although not widespread, it has been successfully attained in Isla Cristina in Spain, where the fishing heritage is defined to include the common identity markers in all fishing villages across the island (Madariaga & Garcia del Hoya, 2018, p.1).

In some communities, specific tangible or intangible acts concerning fishing, have been identified, documented and /or listed as heritage as seen in Jaffa Port, Tel Aviv, Israel. (Avni, 2017), and the Catalonia port, Barcelona (Carbonell, 2014). Recent events at the Ga-Mashie King Nshornaa (popularly referred to as Jamestown) concerning the construction of the fishing harbour have brought to light the precarious situation that AMF in Ga Mashie may encounter. The ongoing construction has resulted in the demolition of the Jamestown fishing community, and its relocation to the much smaller ill-fitted Dogo (See Appendix 6a/b) and Shatta beach

sites. These events ensued without due documentary and management processes towards the community's existing indigenous systems concerning their fishing practices. Artisanal fishing is an essential contributor to the economy of many coastal communities. However, it is also an industry that faces many challenges, including overfishing, pollution, and climate change. As such, it is crucial to ensure that artisanal fishing practices are sustainable and that they take into account the long-term health of the marine ecosystem. This necessitates investigating what other internal or externally influenced threats to AMF in Ga Mashie exist, and initiating mitigative and adaptive strategies for the industry's sustainability. Sustainability of the industry can be found in a collective community agreement on what cultural elements of AMF they identify with as heritage, and are committed to preserving.

2.2 Defining Heritage

Within heritage studies, 'heritage' is often conceptualized as a process; heritage is made, not something that is waiting to be discovered (Ashworth, 1996; Harvey, 2001; Smith, 2006). Although, heritage has a long history in itself (Harvey, 2001) and by definition somehow reflects the past, heritage is always contemporary. It is not ambiguous that there lacks a general agreed upon definition for heritage. It appears that, as many as there are studies on heritage, there are definitions to contextualize heritage. This may largely be connected to the individualistic, seemingly fluid nature of heritage as a concept (Smith, 2006, p. 2). Thus, attempting a definition that may fully encompass what heritage is may be futile. However, there exist broad definitions of which the concept of heritage is approached and managed.

The UNESCO 1972 and 2003 conventions afford a widely accepted yet contested conceptualization of heritage. In summary, they deconstruct heritage into two broad categories tangible and intangible. Furthermore, within the broad categories, they deconstruct heritage into four main components these are natural, cultural, living (ICH), and underwater natural and

cultural heritage. (UNESCO, 2014, p. 134-135; Bajec, 2020, p. 9). These different kinds of heritage help give a basic understanding of heritage, a good attempt at a definition for a timeless fluid complex concept. In addition to this ostensibly universal definition of Heritage built on from the 1970s by UNESCO, the definition of heritage is locally defined by heritage governing bodies within countries, institutions, and communities.

In Ghana, the Museums and Monuments Board (GMMB) uses the National Museums Act of 1969 (NLCD 387) definition of archaeological heritage to identify and manage heritage sites within communities. The NLCD definition gives a general outline of items and monuments that can be identified as heritage, it states:

(a) an object of archaeological interest or land in which any such object is believed to exist or was discovered, including any land adjacent to such object or land which in the opinion of the Board is reasonably required to maintain the object or land or its amenities or to provide access thereto, or for the exercise of proper control or management over such object or land; or

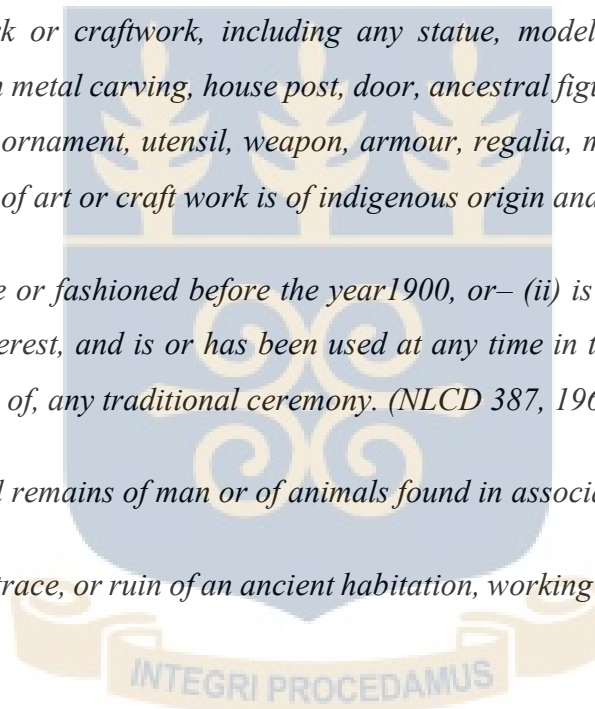
(b) any work or craftwork, including any statue, modelled clay figure, cast or wrought iron metal carving, house post, door, ancestral figure, religious mask, staff, drum, bowl, ornament, utensil, weapon, armour, regalia, manuscript, or document, if such work of art or craft work is of indigenous origin and

(i) was made or fashioned before the year 1900, or– (ii) is of historical, artistic, or scientific interest, and is or has been used at any time in the performance, and for the purposes of, any traditional ceremony. (NLCD 387, 1969, p. 11)

(a) any fossil remains of man or of animals found in association with man; or

(b) any site, trace, or ruin of an ancient habitation, working place, midden, or sacred place;

or



(c) any cave or other natural shelter, or engraving, drawing, inscription, painting, or inscription on rock or elsewhere; or

(d) any stone object or implement believed to have been used or produced by early man; or

(e) any ancient structure, erection, memorial, causeway, bridge, cairn, tumulus, grave, shrine, excavation, well, water tank, artificial pool, monolith, group of stones, earthwork, wall gateway, or fortification; or

(f) any antique tool or object of metal, wood, stone, clay, leather, textile, basket ware, or other material, which is of archaeological interest. (NLCD 387, 1969, p. 12)

Archaeological Heritage in Ghana is more than as defined by the NLCD. It has evolved and expanded to include all forms of cultural heritage and intangible heritage practices. This merger and extension in thought and process are buttressed by the Department of Archaeology in the University of Ghana, changing its name in 2008 to the ‘Department of Archaeology and Heritage Studies’. A strategic approach to create and promote heritage education creating a ‘student-friendly’ curriculum, which includes courses such as visual and economic anthropology, forensic anthropology and popular culture (Anquandah et al, 2014, p. 8-11). This has resulted in an exponential increase in student registration and retention. The Department of Archaeology and Heritage Studies maintains the position as the only academic institution presently in Ghana that teaches archaeology at undergraduate, graduate, and certificate programs for heritage practitioners. It is pleasing to witness that the thin, permeable line between material and intangible cultures has gradually created a co-existence between both disciplines' practice and theoretical approaches.

2.2.1 Intangible cultural heritage and Living heritage; similar yet different.

Intangible cultural heritage (ICH) has been identified as those practices, representations, expressions, knowledge, and skills that communities, groups, and, in some cases, individuals recognize as part of their cultural heritage (UNESCO, 2003: Article 2.1) After defining ICH in

the 2003 convention, UNESCO has further incorporated the International Centre for the Study of the Preservation and restoration of Cultural Property (ICCROM's) concept of Living Heritage into ICH emphasizing the continuity and the ability of the heritage to perform itself (Wijesuriya, 2010; ICCROM p. 3). The term living heritage, has become synonymous with intangible cultural heritage and is widely used interchangeably to refer to the same cultural resources. ICH is classified into five domains, these are traditional craftsmanship, oral traditions and expressions, social practices and rituals and festive events, performing arts, and knowledge and practices of nature and the universe. Although presented separately these domains and components are interwoven in practice.

On the UNESCO ICH list, there are currently 577 sites and practices listed, with many more being evaluated. Two of such listed ICH are the Sanke Mon fishing rite of the Sanke in Mali and the Argungu fishing and cultural festival in Northwest Nigeria. The Sanké mon collective fishing rite takes place in San in the Ségou region of Mali to commemorate the founding of the town. Traditionally, the Sanké Mon rite marks the beginning of the rainy season and it is held every second Thursday of the seventh lunar month. It is presented as an expression of local culture through arts and crafts, and knowledge in the fields of fisheries and water resources to reinforce collective values of social cohesion, solidarity, and peace between local communities (Arnoldi, 2014).

The Argungu International fishing festival is held every year between late February and March in the northwest of Nigeria. A recent festival that dates to before the independence of Nigeria. It is a four-day festival presented as a shared culture between the Argungu and the neighbouring Sokoto community. Like the Sanke Mon, it is perceived to maintain peace and solidarity as well as highlight the traditional fishing practices of the communities. However, in recent years, the Sanke Mon has seen a decrease in popularity that threatens to endanger its

existence. Contributory factors include ignorance of the event's history and importance, a gradual decrease in attendance, occasional accidents during the event itself, and the degradation of the Sanké Lake due to poor rainfall and the effects of urban development. (Hutchison, 1975; Asogwa et al, 2012; Bello & Rasheed, 2018; Asogwa et al , 2012; Shyllon, 2007).

Arguably, the process and act of listing heritage may imply exclusion and inclusion. Inclusion on ICH is based on the criteria of outstanding universal value, a dicey criterion that may not be locally measured in the same vein. Such criteria may well lead to the exclusion of other not- too-visible or prominent local heritage which may be of greater value than those that appeal to the public, and international crowds. The ICH criteria can also be problematic in the sense that it is designed for a global audience. It may not accurately reflect the local values and meanings that are associated with different types of heritage. Therefore, it is important to recognize that the ICH criteria should be viewed as one way of assessing heritage, rather than the only way.

Laurajane Smith (2006, p. 54; 2012, p. 2) considers heritage as intangible expressions, ways “of knowing and seeing” that inform and give meaning to the material world. The Kwahu caves and the Tongo hills in the east and north of Ghana respectively, held historical and archaeological significance and value for example, but this became apparent as heritage only after the local community contributed their ideas and narratives about the caves and the hills. (Insoll, Kankpeyeng & MacLean, 2005; Insoll, MacLean & Kankpeyeng, 2008; Insoll, 2009a; Insoll, 2009b). Similarly, Kirshenblatt Gimblett (2004; 2015, p.169-172) strongly posits on heritage not being an end-product, but a continuous construction. Gimblett's observation highlights how intangible heritage is constantly evolving through its interaction and interdependence with tangible and natural heritage, making ICH fluid and not limited to any specific time. A good quality that I perceive enhances intergenerational transmission of

knowledge associated with the ICH. and making provision for intergenerational knowledge contribution to the ICH. It is worth noting that the Ga Mashie fishing practice has components that may fit into all the ICH-defined domains. These are the traditional practices and their connection to the annual Ga Mashie *Homowo* festival, their use of traditional cosmology in navigating the ocean and predicting the catch, the performances associated with handling the catch, and rituals that are enacted before the ushering in of the traditional new year - *Nshɔbulemɔ-Lookomɔ*, the traditional craftsmanship in making canoes and paddles for their local industry. Although the listing is not the main purpose of documenting the Ga Mashie fishing practices as heritage, it may not be conceivable to think in that direction anyway considering all the issues that belie heritage as a discipline and an industry in Ghana.

Kankpeyeng and Decorse (2004) discuss the many issues concerning the NLCD 387 and its definition of heritage, the provisions made towards heritage management, its subsequent amendments and supporting legislations, and the overall governing body of the GMMB. The issues raised in their 2004 paper unfortunately remain the same; Lack of funding; internal conflicts between management staff and board directors; more pertinently a lack of concise direction towards heritage management in Ghana. These are the challenges that burden the politics of heritage management in Ghana.

Heritage studies in Ghana and to a larger extent Africa is relatively newer when compared to Europe and the Americas. However, Africans have continued to cherish their heritage in traditional ways peculiar to them. The recent adoption of the academic discipline of heritage studies has resulted in the bulk of pragmatic and theoretical knowledge of heritage (be it tangible or intangible). It is largely based on the definitions and experiences gathered from the West, and these, form the framework for the identification, classification, and management of heritage in Africa (Smith, 2006, p. 1; Schmidt & Pikirayi eds 2016, p. 3; Arazi, 2021;

Chirikure, 2022). Migrating such ideologies have contributed to the stagnation and slow-moving efforts toward heritage in Africa and Ghana. Ideally, we need to restructure heritage management toward a post-colonial approach in definitions and management practices. Possibly this may be realized through a shift from authorized heritage discourse labels of heritage to a community-engaged process of heritage, a public heritage and history.

From observation, there is an evident shift toward public heritage practices in Ghana, also occurring is a growing focus on public archaeology. The observations and recommendations raised by Gavua and Nutor (2014) on public engagement in research on community heritage are gradually being realized. Researchers are taking thoughtful approaches to involving and including the public in preserving cultural heritage. Heritage practitioners presently are rethinking heritage. Communities' experiences with heritage are being highlighted, this was often overshadowed by a focus on monumental heritage (Sinamai, 2020; Gavua, 2006; RSRP Project). UNESCO's unparalleled recognition of culture in its international agenda may have a role in the releasing of funds for community-centred heritage research.

In recent news in Ghana, the adaptive reuse of heritage structures seen in the Keta Fort site, and the Ussher Fort as an enslavement museum and a venue for the 'Chalewote' street festival, may be viewed as attempts at engaging the public into 'authorized' heritage monuments. Additionally, community-centred exhibitions such as the Jamestown Boxing Heritage Exhibition, mounted within the Ga Mashie community, publicly recognized the sport of boxing as the heritage of the community. There is a gap that exists between heritage, heritage management institutions, and government on one side and communities on the other. As indicated earlier, notable efforts have been made to bridge this gap which has negative repercussions on community heritage recognition and development.

2.2.2 Community Heritage

Community heritage is a term widely used to refer to significant cultural and historical tangible or intangible resources that may be viewed as an integral part of the life of a group of people. These resources are collectively owned and maintained by a community with the aim of safeguarding them for the present and future generations. These resources are an essential component of the community identity (Crooke, 2010). This heritage may be interwoven into their daily life practices or may stand alone as a monument relevant to them as a community. According to Nwankwo (2018), these resources are the instruments that bind the community together, whilst according to them a unique identity. Examples of such resources in Ghana may include the Bamaya dance of the Dagomba in the North, the Odwira festival of the Akuapem people in the eastern region, the Homowo festival of the Ga people in the south, the Dodowa forest in the greater Accra region of Ghana, and the Kloe hills of the Krobo in the East.

Defined as a geographical point of reference or a concept of unity the word community is a favourable way of classifying a shared heritage. It is however not as straightforward as it appears. The word 'community' has evolved over time from the simplistic meaning of a rural contextual, traditional collection of people within a geographic space that allows face-to-face contact to reflect complex social creations and experiences that are continuously in motion (Howarth, 2001; Waterton and Smith, 2010, p. 9). A space and /or group of people not fixed and limited to geographical locations and descriptions alone, but in constant motion, unstable, uncertain, and active; it is a transformative process similar to the human interactions which form and reform (Burket, 2001). Furthermore, communities are complex, diverse, often at odds, and can be made up of smaller groupings within a larger setting (Waterton, 2015) I perceive that it's through this attribute of being transformative that community heritage may also be interpreted as a process, a conscious attempt of involving communities in the management and preservation of heritage. As asserted by Schmidt and Pikirayi (2016) 'community heritage'

reflects a determined effort to change how heritage is viewed and accepted. Their edited compilation sums up how community-based participatory approaches in heritage management enhance research and the way of life of communities.

As a ‘process’ community heritage creates the opportunity for heritage professionals to benefit from shared resources and local knowledge. In the same vein creating locally inspired sustainable management practices by engaging local communities in research inquiry, inspiring jointly run projects that should tend to reflect things that are done *with* communities, rather than *for* them (Schmidt, 2014, p.134). In contemplation, the use of community heritage as a method or process may be reflected upon as the unpacking of the processes embedded within archaeological and ethnographic inquiry toward the attainment of creating a process that will achieve community engagement. As observed in the works of Stahl (1999;2001;2004;2014) in Banda , and Gavua and Apoh (2016) in Bui, the researchers used a combination of archaeological excavations, artifacts analysis, and ethnographic methods of interviews, video, and photo documentary amongst others to foster community engagement in preserving heritage.

With the use of archaeological excavations (Stahl, 2014; Apoh & Gavua, 2016), photos, images, videos (Plante, 2016; Wilmsen & Adjartey, 2020; Apoh, Gavua & Adjartey, 2012), and negotiation between communities and state organizations (Abrampah, 2017) the researchers by design, involved the communities in their processes to recognize and preserve their heritage which all can appreciate. This buttresses Schmidt and Pikirayi’s (2016, p. 2) opinion that there is no one way in performing community-centred heritage research, it is inspired by diverse perspectives arising out of different disciplines and approaches which comprises of filmmaking, psychology, geography amongst others . The intention behind these approaches is to facilitate engagement with heritage among all stakeholders, irrespective of their background or interests. The focus is on inclusivity, and the goal is to enable people to connect with their cultural

heritage in meaningful ways. The approaches aim to make heritage more approachable and less intimidating. While the ultimate aim is not to create a widespread appeal for heritage, the hope is to make it possible for everyone to appreciate and value their cultural heritage.

There appears to be a growing notion that heritage is largely communally and nationally reflective thus it is the responsibility of local and national policies to preserve and manage (Waterton & Smith 2010). Nevertheless, this perspective is rather idealistic. It fails to recognize the practical challenges, complex nature of heritage sites, the human resource-intensive management approaches, the human factors that pose a risk to the sites amongst others. In many cases, heritage practitioners can identify sites, materials, and practices considered significant heritage value within a community. These may align with the community's own perception of what constitutes heritage, with little to no disagreement among community members. A prime example of this can be observed in research on the initial settlement sites of Ghana's rural and urban communities, where historical and oral accounts have buttressed the location of certain sites, materials and practices identified and preserved as important cultural heritage assets.

In other cases however, this heritage may be contested due to conflicting interpretations or be a subject of dispute within the community. In other cases, the only relation the community may have with the heritage is proximity, as seen in the case of the Koma figurines in Yikpabongo in Northern Ghana. The community members do not identify with the makers of the terracotta figurines. Before a proper excavation, the settlers encountered these when digging for clay, and had no idea who made them and what they were used for. (Anquandah, 1987; Kankpeyeng et al, 2011). Another example can be observed in the forts and castles littered along the coast of Ghana, where local communities have often been excluded in the interpretation, access, and management of the sites (for a historical perspective see Osei-Tutu

& Smith, 2018). In other cases, over time, the communities' connection to the heritage may weaken, causing them to gradually drift away from the traditional practice or the identity of the heritage. This may be seen in the case of the Asante traditional buildings, which no longer hold the same value to the community as it did in the past leading to its deterioration and mismanagement (Wetcher, 2023).

Pertinent to Ghana there are national efforts to sustain heritage as seen in the recent enactment of a heritage board, the existence of a ministry concerned with heritage, and institutions such as the GMMB, and Ghana Tourism Agency (GTA) amongst others. However, the current approaches to heritage management appear inadequate and are constantly under scrutiny by the heritage academic community. This is reflected in the lack of initiatives to amend existing heritage protective laws which are outdated. Consequently, most heritage sites and practices risk being unrecognized, mismanaged or entirely lost. Additionally, the lax approach toward including heritage impact assessment protocols in development projects. Consequently, leading development initiatives such as the marine drive projects along the Eastern coastline, stretching from the Christiansburg Castle to the Ga Mashie-Jamestown landing bay, are underway without recourse to heritage. Archaeologists from the Department of Archaeology had to self-fund rescue archaeological projects (Apo, 2022) due to endangered heritage. This is often the case; rescue archaeological projects are either self-funded or funded through vigorous advocacy to draw the attention of international project funders to insist on Heritage Impact assessments, as seen in the Bui Hydroelectric dam project case (Apo & Gavua, 2016; Abrampah, 2017). Heritage, in this case, the practice of fishing, is threatened by policy and governmental interventions without influential community stakeholders being engaged. The government of Ghana, as a stakeholder in heritage matters hasn't been the most significant asset.

Engaging in Community heritage necessitates the question of ‘whose heritage is it’? a valid question when thinking of the future of community heritage. Pyburn (2011) draws our attention from the singular community ownership of heritage. His observation of a multi-grouping requires that we unpack the several stakeholders that have an ‘interest’ in the heritage; these may include government departments responsible for preserving it, schools responsible for educating the youth, the military responsible for safeguarding, collectors responsible for scouting materials of value and interest, tourism bodies responsible for promotion, descendent communities responsible for ensuring local continuity, religious groups, academic interests responsible for research and enquiry, and so forth. All of them approach the heritage with varying perspectives, inter-layered with their power relations to the heritage. Amongst all these stakeholders, the researcher and heritage practitioner can be valued as a vital agent to the sustainability of heritage in Ghana. Thus, the consciousness of the heritage practitioner as more than a researcher but an advocate with an advantage and access is imperative to successful community heritage.

Historically, heritage management in colonial Africa was at the preserves of the colonial masters, a system excluding the communities whose heritage was at stake. This management approach continued into post-colonial and independent Africa (Chirikure & Taruvinga, 2016), not only in management but also in the definitions and research practices underpinning the disciplines of heritage, archaeology, and museums. Presently, the historical bias trend has given way to accommodate the essential role of the local researcher. The local researcher wields influence, and the categories of stakeholders have expanded to include communities and other agents within the community.

Although the notion of community heritage is positive, it may, however, have negative implications if misinterpreted and misapplied. Waterton and Smith (2010) draw attention to the

misrepresentations and the misrecognition of the identity of people due to the misunderstanding of the word ‘community’ in the heritage process. They highlight the role of ‘Authorised Heritage Discourse (AHD)’ (Smith and Waterton, 2009a; 2009b) in maintaining the traditional definitions of communities, widening the gap between the public and the chosen glorified heritage. They assert that groups affixed with the term ‘community’ are often defined against standards set by the heritage that has been preserved ‘for them’ by heritage agencies and experts (Waterton and Smith, 2010, p.10; Deacon and Smeets, 2013, p.131- 133) where possibly a further interrogation of such groups may reveal an entirely different identity of what should be recognized as heritage.

Against this backdrop, I propose a definition of community heritage, as an ongoing process, in which identity is explored, created, and recreated, recognizing all ‘actors’ that contribute to the heritage creation and its continuous transformation. Acknowledging the conflicts and politics that may underline this group's relationships. Conflicts that may stem from a basal disagreement between stakeholders regarding identifying with the heritage and disagreements on management, preservation, and authenticity.

Furthermore, bearing on the above, I attempt to define the term ‘community heritage site’ as pertains to this research as a traditional neighbourhood, community, or specific district in the context of the historic settlement, where the Outstanding values may not necessarily be universal but more importantly ‘local’ and ‘community’ appreciated. These are values exhibited as the physical characteristics, and upheld by indigenous inhabitants, who carry on the living traditions, skills, and other cultural practices (Carmen, 2019; Schmidt, 2014; Waterton, 2015). Community heritage sites differ from single monuments, ensembles of historic buildings, or pure natural heritage sites, where fewer social activities are involved. This research considers community heritage sites to be dynamic and historical places that contain a wealth of intangible

‘values’ and cultural heritage. These sites could include historical towns, preserved districts and communities that have sustained various modes of social interaction and traditional ways of life, offering an avenue for people to connect with their past, present, and future while sustaining various social interaction and traditional life, such as historical towns or areas like Ga Mashie, preserved districts or communities, and the like.

2.3 Defining heritagisation as a research concept and method

In his 1992 book on museums and heritage in the post-modern world, Kevin Walsh introduces the word Heritagisation to describe the processes that lead to the transformation of things and places into objects and spaces of heritage value for display and exhibition. He positioned this process within the post-modernist museum practice. Harrison (2013) further expands on heritagisation and its post-modern motivations, asserting that heritagisation is both a social response as well as a ‘physical response to the problem of the material excess of ruin’(Harrison,2013, p. 80). He suggests that monuments and defunct remnants of the industrial period were given a new life through the application of the process of heritagisation. With this backdrop, he regards the concept of heritagisation as an extension of museological practice, which factors in notions such as collection, documentation, conservation, and exhibition beyond the walls of the museum to places and monuments in communities (Harrison, 2013, p. 81; Kirshenblatt-Gimblett, 2006).

Continuous interaction with the concept of heritagisation by scholars has expanded the understanding of the concept. Heritagisation has shifted in appreciation and has consequently evolved from a seemingly World Heritage listing-focused concept to a more national and communal process. Arguably, the quality of the concept to give the old a new function, of making sense of the past in the present, is as equally beneficial to indigenous communities and the nation as it is to the UNESCO heritage lists. Harrison (2013) notes that a global shift is

taking place, with increased attention on intangible heritage (Moisala, 2019) and community heritage; before this, heritagisation had been focused on landscapes and monuments. The aim is to identify outstanding community value, not a universal value. The trending focus is not necessarily attaining a goal of becoming a World Heritage but by creating a heritage that will be nationally and communally accepted and valued.

The heritagisation of the Hue complex of monuments in Vietnam is a crucial example of how a world heritage status can alienate the community from its heritage. Mai Le and Kelboro (2019) observe that although the Hue complex presently attracts an average of 11000 international tourists daily, the local people feel excluded and alienated from their heritage. The Nguyen descendants within the complex claim loss of control over their ancestral inheritance, and the Hue people, in general show limited knowledge and interest in the designated values ascribed to the heritage. In summary, those who live under the shadows of the heritage do not earn direct benefits from the world heritage (Ndoro 2021, p. 108-109; Ndoro 2015; Hampton 2005). Through heritagisation, the Hue complex may have attained an outstanding universal value. Despite being recognised and listed by UNESCO, their identity is not solely defined by this status. Other cultural, local, and community-valued aspects are of more import to the inhabitants that are not being projected (Le, Q. M., & Kelboro, G. 2019).

This brings to the fore how Heritagisation is seemingly interwoven with authorised heritage discourse. Authorised heritage discourse (AHD) is a concept relevant to heritage studies introduced by Laurajane Smith (2006, 2009). It refers to the political Eurocentric definition of heritage that underwrote the World Heritage Convention, placing the knowledge of heritage into the bosoms of a select few, made up of experts in heritage and archaeology (Smith, 2006, p. 4; Smith & Waterton, 2012). Within AHD, heritage is biased to aesthetically pleasing material objects, sites, places, and landscapes; heritage is found by experts and

identified as possessing an innate, authentic value. The AHD framework has been criticised by scholars, indigenous communities, and countries whose understanding of heritage must be captured by the AHD.

Smith (2015) expands on the hope that introducing the *Convention for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage*, 2003 (ICH) would unsettle AHD and challenge the framework. Commendably, the introduction of the 2003 convention has expanded the definition of heritage and included the perception of the subaltern- items or locations that were perceived to be of lower value in heritage discourse. In attempt to ground my literature review I must note that the just discussed are issues that were also identified within Ga Mashie. Even more pertinent in my attempt at defining heritage, I was conscious not to dismiss the less appreciated fraction, and all stakeholder groups within the community. Acknowledging that a collective ‘sense of pride’ is the most powerful driving force in fostering self-motivation for safeguarding intangible cultural heritage, I had to consider the existing strife between the youth and the elderly generation stemming from the politics of management and leadership concerning fishing. This tension among stakeholders may not alter the core of the heritage, but it threatens continuity in practice as it is gradually reducing the zeal for fishing within the younger generation. This continuity is already threatened by the generational gap that stems from the education of fisherfolk children. This is not to suggest that educating fisherfolk children is without merit. Nevertheless, it has contributed to a subtle disregard for fishing as ‘A poor, uneducated man’s occupation’ (Wemprakwa S33kwelɔ personal communication, 3rd August 2022).

Like AHD, Heritagisation has been criticised as a political tool to instate some monuments and practices of national interest for political and economic gain. Gavua (2015, p.110) observes that governments and communities in Ghana with varying political interests,

aspirations, and motivations have deliberately heritagized personalities, ideals, events, and actions to memorialise and advance their political agenda. Sarkozi (2021) notes how the process of heritagisation of the tradition of the Sibe people is used by the communist Chinese government as a meaning-making process to interpret, manipulate and invent the past for its present and future interests. Nilsson (2018), in scrutiny of the politics within the tourist sector regarding heritagisation, further observes the deliberate focus within the concept of heritagisation in which authorities and the tourist industry decide how cultural heritage should be exposed and interpreted to underpin a particular political order. Heritagisation, in these cases, was the tool used to isolate essential heritage components to cultivate public support to attain or maintain political power and supremacy.

These obvious political manipulations may be toned down should a bottom-up approach of heritagisation be employed. Studies of the heritagisation of cultural heritage have focused on the top-down process (Bajec, 2020, p.17; Sau-Wa Mak, 2021). A bottom-up approach against the top-bottom already existing will discernibly shift the position of the Ga Mashie community from expecting the government to ostensibly 'know' what they value as heritage. This is erroneous and detrimental to the progress and sustainability of community heritage. Glaringly, the lack of legislation that protects heritage in Ghana is enough to showcase the government's position on heritage. Specifically, concerning artisanal fishing, the continuous enactment of laws from the regulatory ministry that have dire effects on the traditional calendar and fishing practices are indicators of the government's detached position. However, this can be contested should the community curate, package, and present what and how they identify with the practice of fishing as heritage, as seen in the events leading to the Heritagisation of the Catalonia Port (Carbonell, 2014; 2019) which serves as a reminder of the importance of community-driven efforts, rather than relying on the government to acknowledge their heritage. As opposed to assuming that the government will acknowledge and recognise their heritage.

2.3.1 Heritagisation as a method

Although associated with preserving the past, heritage is believed to shape present and future ideas and practices; I concur with the position of Le & Kelboro (2019) that heritagisation needs to be studied as an integral part of politics, cultural, social, and economic processes that are transformed under the effect of globalization. To serve this function, heritage is actively made, and with purpose. This section aims to elaborate on the conceptualisation and processes of heritagisation.

Heritagisation is a vigorously selective, dynamic, and political method (Mentec & Zhang, 2017; Fontal & Gomez-Redondo, 2015). It is not about the past but the contemporary time. It is a valuable tool that selectively shapes the ideal and values of nations, communities, and individuals; as a process, it refers to actors, agency, power, and discourse within specific settings of society. To achieve a decolonized, post-world heritagisation method, I attempt to answer the following guiding questions: Firstly, as a method, how will community uniqueness be made to embrace community value and then if required, universal value? Secondly, as it is a selective method, which actors and stakeholders can be involved in conducting such a method?

Intending to answer, I identify that, recognising the “outstanding universal value of heritage” requires a process of identification, valuation, categorisation, and then listing for conservation and development (Kirshenblatt-Gimblett, 2015, p.166). To recognise a site, precise criteria and conditions for inscription have been developed to evaluate the ‘outstanding universal value’ by different experts such as UNESCO ICOMOS (Ndoro 2016, p.111).

The aim of achieving this criterion has cumulated in the drafting of covenants and conventions, that formulate guidelines and propose standardising and multidimensional instruments, requiring the establishment of committees and boards of governance mandated to

protect sites and monuments (Deacon 2014, p. 4-15). They are also intended to guide, make recommendations, and be the legal advocacy resource for potential heritage. When a listing is foreseeable, these conventions are the metric to examine inscription requests and proposals.

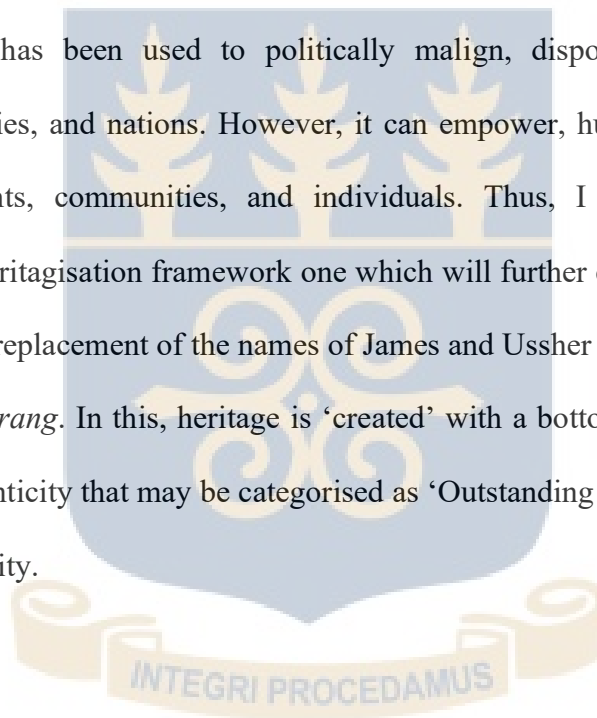
Local instruments, agencies and boards responsible for the national-level heritage management support the international instruments and committees. Like the international, state-formulated boards, committees, and organisations are to draft regulating documents guided by international documents to manage their heritage contextually. They are to define and identify the cultural assets in their environment, create inventories, and formulate heritage policy and committees to implement that policy (UNESCO 2005, p. 6). Additionally, they are expected to establish institutions to support the documentation of cultural assets and research into how best to safeguard them, as well as to train professionals to manage heritage. They should promote awareness, dialogue, and respect through valorising devices like the list.

International conventions and state regulations towards heritage require state recognition and referrals to committees set up by states for guiding and possibly inventorying heritage. However, while waiting on state recognition, cultural changes continue at the community level. As seen in how the state continues implementing policy without cultural recourse, evident in Ga Mashie regarding traditional fishing practices and the entanglements with the fishery ministry and marine science. The fishery ministry, relying on marine fishery science data, set laws regulating fishing seasons that clash with the traditional calendar of the Ga Mashie community. The community is essential to heritage valorisation and sustainability. The fragility of heritage laws presently in Ghana requires that current generations apply self-initiated plans to protect and revere these things so that future generations may inherit them.

The need to decolonise the method and shift the focus of heritagisation from World heritage listing-centred into a local community-centred process is to achieve the aim of making

local people the owners of the heritage. As espoused by Schmidt (2014, p.135), a colonial setting is any in which the interests of the people are made subordinate, where local decision-making is repealed, and where the economic welfare of the local community is appropriated on behalf of outside entities. As previously established, heritagisation as a method usually begins by identifying the role of a place or thing, developed by indigenous actors, religious or social conditions, and valorised by a community. In the absence of local actors and ownership, heritagisation often leads to a political situation burdened by political stakeholders and expert actors to promote certain, often nationalistic, ideas. The aim of decolonising heritagisation methods is to achieve community and national sustainability of the heritage. This process does not reduce or replace the scientific merit of the research. However, as Rizvi (2008, p.109) asserts, incorporating a post-colonial critique within the framework of any research project suggests a rigorous methodology that is socially and politically engaged—applying the postcolonial critique results in the emergence of new strategies, including collaborative community-based research.

Heritagisation has been used to politically malign, dispossess and misrepresent individuals, communities, and nations. However, it can empower, humanise, and restore the dignity of governments, communities, and individuals. Thus, I propose a decolonised community-focused heritagisation framework one which will further consider in line with this community-focus the replacement of the names of James and Ussher towns with their original names of *Soko* and *Aprang*. In this, heritage is ‘created’ with a bottom-up approach, with an innate value and authenticity that may be categorised as ‘Outstanding local community Value’ for heritage sustainability.



CHAPTER THREE

RESEARCH FRAMEWORK AND METHODOLOGY

3.0 Introduction

In this chapter, I present the research framework and methodology implemented. The qualitative approaches, data collecting tools, and community-based participatory research (CBPR) methodology employed in this study are described, and how these methods complement each other in mitigating any shortcomings. Furthermore, I delve into the influence of the concept of Heritagisation on the choice of community-based participatory research (CBPR) methods for data gathering and fieldwork. Finally, the bearing of my positionality in this research is discussed.

3.1 Research Methods

Ethnographic methods constitute the approaches I adopted for this research. These techniques are crucial in the heritagisation process, especially in the CBPR strategy (Kothari, 2004). The individual research methods employed in this research were influenced and informed by the research approach and conceptual underpinning adopted. The methods include field data recording processes, sampling, interviews, and observation. These methods were identified as the methods, tools, and approaches to collect relevant data to best answer the research questions, establish research roots for future work and sustain the heritage future.

3.1.0 Recording

Throughout the research, I used various types of recording equipment to ensure accurate and comprehensive documentation of data for later analysis and interpretation. These include my field journal, audio recorder, video recorder, still photo camera and drones. The field notebook was the first point of documentation.

Before seeking consent from respondents to use the recorder or video camera, the notebook was used to carefully document the data provided. After permission was given for audio and video recording, the notebook served as a supplement to document data I perceived was needed in the short term, data that couldn't wait until audio and video recording were later transcribed. The field journal was the primary tool throughout the research, it contains mnemonics, reminders, snatches of verbatim quotes bits and pieces of important information, short descriptions, impressions and feelings that I used later to revivify the moment and fully describe the events at the time of the observation (Madden 2019). All observations made during field visits were written down in the field journal. This journal was the handiest recording device during reconnaissance surveys in the Ga-Mashie community, and in brainstorming sessions with research assistants and community members.

The primary video recorder is a professional videographer colleague from the National Film and Television Institute (NAFTI), he was assisted by a colleague graduate student specialising in digital heritage at the University of Winneba Ghana (UEW). Both assisting colleagues are familiar with the community and the local language and have previously done research work in the community. Their familiarity with the inhabitants was a plus factor because they had a relaxed demeanour in the community, and they operated with an awareness of the community, which helped us to navigate the community with ease. It was also noted how their fluency in the Ga language (the community's local language) put the respondents at ease to participate in the discussions and interviews. Their primary responsibilities in the research were to ensure the proper functioning of the audio and video recording equipment, record the focus group discussions and one-on-one interviews, and take still photos during interviews (See Figure 3.2). The drone was used periodically for taking aerial videos and shots of the research site and the activities that happened on the ocean (See Figure 3.1).



Figure 3.1: Aerial shot of canoes from Ga-Mashie during end-of-year festivities. (Source:Project images,2023)





Figure 3.2 Researcher in In-Depth Interview with Fish smoker Uncle Nii. (Source: Project images,2022)



Figure3.3: Researcher interviewing Nii Abeo Kyerequanda IV, the Head Fisherman of Ga Mashie, in his home. (Source: Project images, 2022).

3.1.1 Sampling, Stakeholder Identification-Partners, participants, or passive recipients

The techniques used to select participants can be characterised as purposive, with some instances of reliance on snowballing. Sampling is a crucial act of research; it allowed me to break down my respondents into categories that best fit the research questions. Selecting the individuals that represent the larger population, ensures that the research will be representative, and the findings will be relevant to the parameters set by the research objectives and aims (Sharma, G. 2017, p. 749-752).

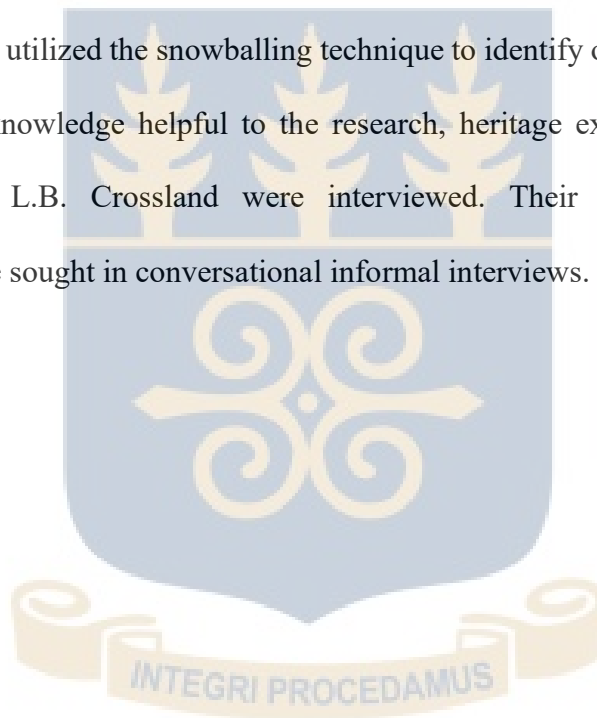
As will be elaborated further in this chapter, the respondents in this research are classified as research ‘partners’ and not just informants or respondents. This distinction was made to emphasize the active role that these individuals played in the research process and to curb respondent fatigue by including them in the process. Respondent fatigue could stem from the fact that Ga Mashie has been a hub for several research projects across different disciplines. Respondents were not simply passive providers of data, but rather active participants who contributed their knowledge and expertise to the research project, resulting in a more comprehensive and nuanced understanding of the topic under investigation.

Their individual/community members’ role as custodians and practitioners of the tradition of artisanal fishing was the main marker used to classify them. The first meeting, with the acting head fisherman and his linguist, who are both former fishermen, was purposively driven. It allowed the selection of key leaders of fishing within the community. This was helpful in gaining access. Sampling working fishermen was both random and purposive. Some fishermen were approached randomly, and others were selected due to their clan affiliation.

Following this, I worked on identifying the groups of persons or stakeholders critical to the heritage. The participants were grouped into two main groups, group one being the traditional custodians, which include the Head fisherman for Ga Mashie, the sub-head

fishermen of the seven clans within Ga Mashie and the head of the female working group at the beach. Group two is the practising group which comprises local fisherfolk, fish smokers and the women fishmongers at the beach (See Figure 3.4). Purposive sampling was used to identify and categorize these groupings and identify the participants within these groups for interviews. A total of 64 participants were interviewed from the community over the course of two phases of fieldwork. With fishing being a male-dominated occupation the ratio of men to women participants was unequal (see Figure 3.6).

The participants from the community were selected based on the length of time they had spent working and residing in the Ga Mashie community. All participants were expected to have at least ten years of working experience in fishing and should have resided in the community for more than twenty years (See Table 3.2). The present research is focused on mainly Ga Mashie in terms of its geographical boundaries, although the fishing community of Ga Mashie has traditional ties with other coastal communities in the Greater Accra region such as Prampram, Osu and Nungua to mention a few, these other communities were excluded from the study. The research utilized the snowballing technique to identify other participants outside the community with knowledge helpful to the research, heritage experts such as Professor Wellington and Mr. L.B. Crossland were interviewed. Their valuable opinions and recommendations were sought in conversational informal interviews.



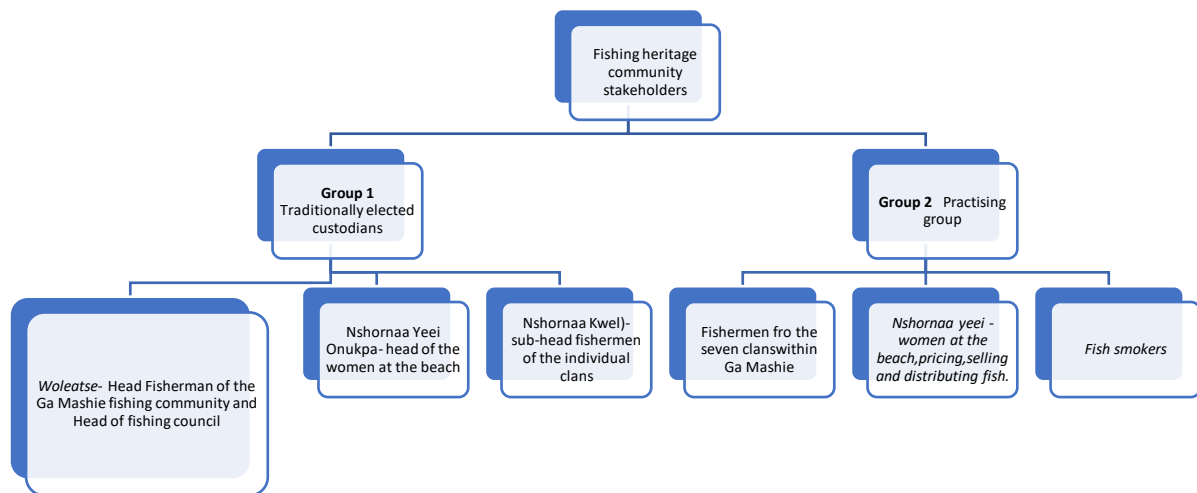


Figure 3.4: Groups of Identified stakeholders for in-depth interviews and Focus group discussions.



Figure 3.5: Map of Ga Mashie showing the location of the fishing community. Map designed by CERSGIS University of Ghana

3.1.2 Instruments

The data collection instrument used in this research was interviews. Two interview guides were prepared to cater for the two main groups of participants recognised for data collection. Each guide contained a series of questions that were tailored to elicit the needed data.

The interviews were either conducted in an in-depth manner with individuals or in focus group discussions. The module developed for the focus group discussions served as an overarching guide to prompt and guide the discussions that ensued during these sessions. The individual interviews utilised a guide with more specific questions to elicit more specific responses from the respondents.

The ethical consent form and a discussion on heritage and heritagisation preceded each in-depth and focus group interview. On this premise, the participants were made aware of their role in this knowledge creation and the preservation of the heritage. After each interview, participants were tagged with specific identifiers to aid in the transcription and analysis of data. In most in-depth interviews, the identifiers were affixed to the title of the respondents. However, with focus group discussions, the identifiers were affixed to the first name of the respondents. The table (Table 3.1) below gives a list of the specific identifiers.

An important instrument used in this research was observation. This was employed to facilitate a full in-depth understanding of the day-to-day lives of the members of the fishing community in Ga Mashie. Activities at the landing beach and the various ways fish as a commodity is used within the community were observed. Traditional events concerning fishing were also observed and where possible I participated to immerse myself in the process. These observations went on over a period of 6 months.

s/n	IDENTIFIER	INTERPRETATION
1	IDI-NW	In Depth Interview-Nii Wemprakwa
2	IDI-SK	In Depth Interview-Seekwel)
3	IDI-NN	In Depth Interview-Nii Ngleshie
4	IDI-NS	In Depth Interview-Nii Asere
5	IDI-NBM-LBFQ	In Depth Interview-Naa Bessa Mami, Landing Beach Fisherwomen, Queen
6	IDI-ND	In Depth Interview-Nii Dzase
7	IDI-ASFM	In Depth Interview-Asere Fisherman
8	IDI-M-FS	In Depth Interview-Male-Fish Smoker
9	FGD-CS-FM	Focus Group Discussion-Cross Section of Fishermen
10	FGD-NFM	Focus Group Discussion-Ngleshie Fishermen
11	FGD-LB-FW	Focus Group Discussion-Landing Beach, Fisherwomen
12	FGD-F-FS	Focus Group Discussion-Female-Fish Smokers
13	FGD-ASFM	Focus Group Discussion-Asere Fishermen
14	FGD-ABFM	Focus Group Discussion-Abola Fishermen
	FGD-LB-FW-SR	Focus Group Discussion-Landing Beach, Fisherwomen, Songs Recording

Table 3. 1 Interview Identifiers and Interpretation Source: Author 2023

3.1.3 Interviews

This research mainly deployed unstructured and semi-structured interviewing skills in collecting data. I opted for these because I noted how the participants would withdraw at the request of a formal interview and interaction; in many instances, they would become distant and make excuses of not being fluent in ‘English’ -although this wasn’t the language of communication-, just to get out of being interviewed. Thus I settled on unstructured interviews which require no predetermined plan but usually entail the formulation of a clear objective of topics to be discussed (Chauhan, 2022, p. 475-476; Blackman, 2002, p. 242). This form of

interviewing was used in collecting data from participants who could not be engaged in formal interviews. It must be noted that although these were not formal, the interviews were in-depth in context.

Unstructured interviews were also used in collecting data from participants who could not join focus group discussions. Its flexibility provided the convenience of undertaking interviews in places more convenient for participants. The strategy also allowed me to engage in broader conversations beyond the scope of the research, which yielded valuable data on the topic under study. Semi-structured interviews on the other hand were used for focus group discussions and with some one-on-one interviews. I relied on the semi-structured approach to allow room for flexibility and improvisation during the focus-group discussions and allowing room for reciprocity (Galletta, 2013; Wishkoski, R., 2020, p.94), and for participants to fully express themselves during interview sessions (Kallio et al, 2016, p. 2955).

The questions for these interviews as mentioned earlier were developed premised on the objectives of the research. With the objectives of the research as the overarching guide, I was able to set a series of questions that addressed each objective. This served as a guide for the interviews, and in where the interviewee lumped answers without addressing key components, the guide enabled a redirection to keep the interviewee on track to answer all pertinent questions.

The study also adopted the use of focus group discussions (See Figure 3.6) as an interview method in collecting data. The knowledge generated through participation in focus group discussions and traditional activities can unearth a range of perspectives that may exist within groups and subgroups of a community (Mack et al., 2005).

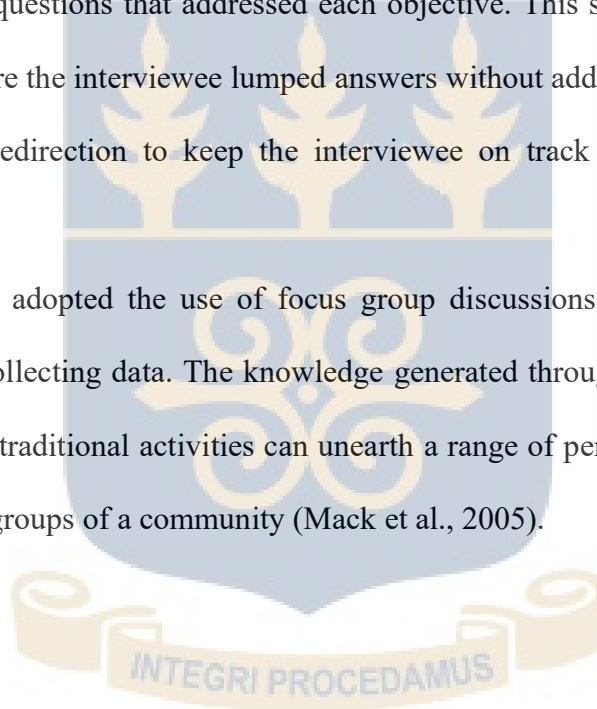




Figure 3.6: Focus group discussion with fishermen from Abola. Source: Project images

Focus group discussions were intended for fisherfolks from all seven clans of Ga Mashie. However, only three groups were represented in the focus group discussion. This was because I observed that the clan affiliation was not stringently enforced by the fishermen. Additionally, the fisherfolks consented that these three groups were key community fishing representatives (See Figure 3.17). They are the Asere clan which carries the authority as the lead Ga Mashie clan and the head/leader of the local council of ‘head fishermen’ in Ga Mashie. The second group was the Abola family, which is historically considered the family through which artisanal marine fishing methods were introduced into Ga Mashie, and out of which Nii Wemprakwa the traditional leader of Fishermen is selected. The third is the Ngleshie clan, they are considered the most prominent group of fishermen as they are located closest to the beachfront with an added advantage to land access and settlement. In addition to these three clan groups, a random cross-section of fishermen was interviewed. Other participants were purposively selected as they were identified as primary post-harvest groups, and key contributors to the management and preservation of fishing within the community. They include

the landing beach women, who oversee the fish the fishermen bring in, and the fish smokers who work on preservation (See figure 3.19).

Due to the existing calcified gender roles in fishing within the community, focus groups were made up of individuals of the same sex with shared gender roles. Except for a sole male fish smoker who featured among the women fish smokers. The number of participants in each group was restricted to a minimum of five and a maximum of ten, I had an average of 8. This was to aid in good moderation of the discussions and to ensure that all participants actually participated in the discussions.

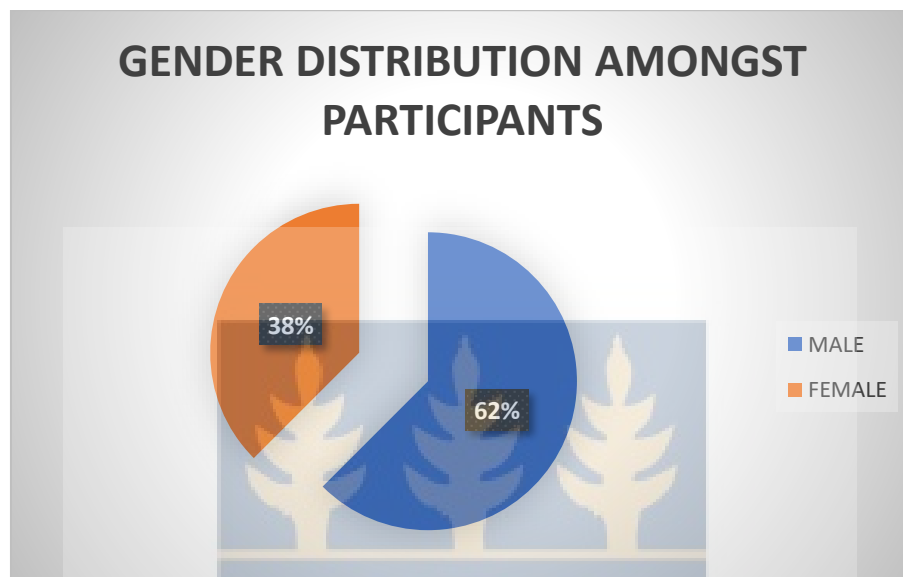


Figure 3.7: Graph 2 shows gender distribution amongst participants, indicative of male dominance of the study topic.

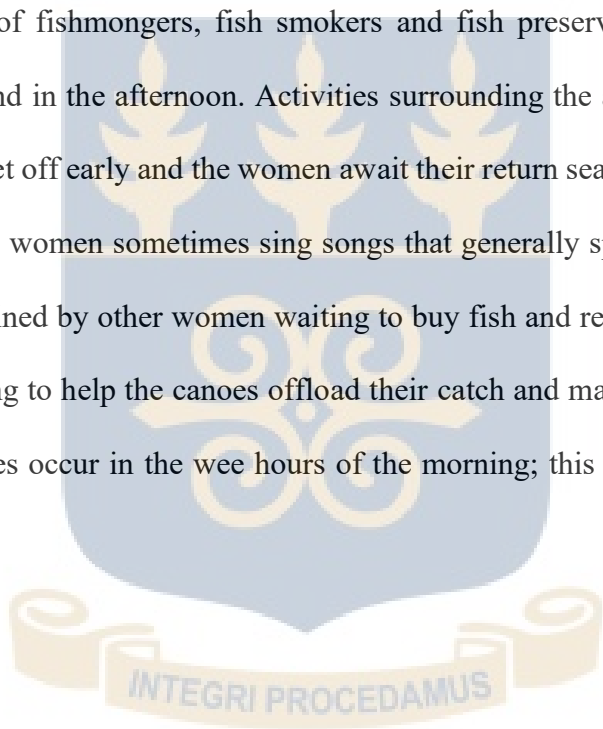
3.1.4 Observation

A vital tenet of the qualitative approach employed for this study was the observation method. This study employed participant and non-participant observation methods. These were conducted in three main locations, these are: the Ga Mashie township, the fishing community

located behind the Ussher Fort, and the relocated fishing settlement at Dogo Beach (See figure 3.5). These methods offered close interaction with the fisherfolks and the community and an appreciation of their daily living.

This less formal approach promoted rapport and trust-building between myself and the participants. A level of trust was established with the participants through spending considerable time taking casual walks within the community to observe the processing of fish and the interactions of the community members with each other. Whereas this process was slow to pick up, as people would generally feel odd being watched it provided access to fishermen and the community members. I used the local community language of Ga to break barriers; this mode of speech relaxed moods and made the participants welcome me into their space. The use of audio-visual tools was employed during the observation sessions. This was mainly used during functions and events that were connected to the subject of study, such as the Lookomo rites and the Homowo festival.

Participant observations without using the camera were also employed to engage and observe the activities of fishmongers, fish smokers and fish preservers at work within the community, at dawn and in the afternoon. Activities surrounding the act of fishing start early in the day; fishermen set off early and the women await their return seated at the beach. During this waiting period, the women sometimes sing songs that generally speak of life and fishing. They are sometimes joined by other women waiting to buy fish and resell and a host of young men and women waiting to help the canoes offload their catch and make away with some fish for free. These activities occur in the wee hours of the morning; this accounted for the dawn observations.



Identifiers	IdentifiersExpanded	Number of Participants	Gender	Age bracket
IDI-NW	In Depth Interview-Nii Wemprakwa	1	Male	Above 70 years
IDI-SK	In Depth Interview-Seekwel)	1	Male	50-59 years
IDI-NDZ	In Depth Interview – Nii Dzase Blɛtsɛ, Nii Kwadee	1	Male	50-59 years
IDI-NN	In Depth Interview-Nii Ngleshie	1	Male	50-59 years
IDI-NAS	In Depth Interview-Nii Asere	1	Male	50-59 years
IDI-NBM-LBFQ	In Depth Interview-Naa Bessa Mami, Landing Beach Fisherwomen's Queen	1	Male	50-59years
IDI-ND	In Depth Interview-Nii Dzase	1	Male	50-59years
IDI-ASFM	In Depth Interview-Asere Fisherman	1	Male	50-59years
IDI-M-FS	In Depth Interview-Male-Fish Smoker	1	Male	50-59 years
FGD-CS-FM	Focus Group Discussion-Cross Section of Fishermen	10	All Male	35-60 years
FGD-NFM	Focus Group Discussion-Ngleshie Fishermen	10	All Male	35-50years
FGD-LB-FW	Focus Group Discussion-Landing Beach, Fisherwomen	11	All Female	40-60 years
FGD-F-FS	Focus Group Discussion-Female-Fish Smokers	8	All Female	40-60 years
FGD-ASFM	Focus Group Discussion-Asere Fishermen	5	All Male	35-50years
FGD-ABFM	Focus Group Discussion-Abola Fishermen	7	All Male	35-50 years
FGD-LB-FW-SR	Focus Group Discussion-Landing Beach, Fisherwomen, Songs Recording	5	All Female	40-60years
LKR-OBSV-REC	Lookɔmɔ rites observation and recording.	All-Fishermen and leaders	All Male	N/A

Table 3. 2 Informants' indicators and Data distribution





Figure 3.8 : Researcher documenting songs sung by the fisherwomen. Source: Project images

3.2 Field Research Strategy and Data Collection.

3.2.0 Research Phases and Data Collection

The field research was structured in four phases. These are the familiarization stage, the second was archival data perusal, the third was interviews and focus group discussions and the fourth was the observation stage.

The conception of the research began in October 2019. The existing gap in knowledge became apparent when I was working on the ‘liberating stories of women’ (see www.benpaali.org/ <https://youtu.be/Ogg3KqTholU> ‘Liberating Stories of Women’ - American Spaces Virtual Program) project within Ga Mashie. This was a community-project in partnership with Ga Mashie based NGOs. The aim was to utilize smartphone filmmaking methodology to interrogate how young women within the community define heritage. Thus, by the time of the commencement of my PhD research I had already established a rapport with key officials and NGOs within the community.

This prior engagement and familiarity were beneficial to the research with regards to community entry and familiarization, as some community members were already familiar with me, and my research integrity had already been established with the members and family members of participants of the previous research. More pertinently it made it easier to identify research assistants with the right skills and knowledge background to aid the research process.

The familiarization and reconnaissance began in October 2019. Unfortunately, this familiarization period was challenged and halted due to the onset of COVID-19 in Ghana in March 2020. My interactions with the community became limited and I had to adhere to the travel restrictions and periodic lock-down restraints. In the unpredictable and emotionally straining year, the research progress slowed, and the community responses dwindled. As was globally and locally experienced, members of the community were dealing with health, economic and emotional traumas due to the dire effects of Covid-19 (Kenu et al, 2020; Afriyie et al 2020).

Before the onset of COVID-19, some archival data which is the secondary data for the research were collected simultaneously alongside the familiarization phase. Amidst all the uncertainties of that year, I had to regroup and focus on what was attainable, which was archival data searches and literature review. This was mostly done online with Google Scholar. Data was collected from the Public Records and Archives Administration (PRAAD), Balme Library and the African Studies Library on the University of Ghana Accra Campus, Ghana. Primary data was also sourced from the NTNU ORIA and the African library during a five-month exchange at the Norwegian University of Science and Technology. Overarchingly, the history of the Ga Mashie area and its political, economic, and social interactions with fishing were gathered from these archives. The research pace gradually picked up in September 2020. I consulted Mr L.B. Crossland a retired heritage expert who is an indigen from the Ga Mashie

community and Prof. Nii Adziri Wellington who has written and researched extensively on Ga traditions; both experts are octogenarians.

Consultation with these veterans was necessary for me to map out the academic output regarding research from the community. These octogenarian experts also gave me insight into how to navigate the traditional protocol expectations in Ga Mashie without offence to the elderly. During my familiarisation stage, I observed the patriarchal nature of the community and the male-dominated nature of the culture under investigation. I envisioned how these patriarchal cultural attributes could challenge my research thus I sought the guidance of these consultants to aid in conducting myself and my research in a ‘traditionally’ accepted manner.

A gender-balanced research assistant team was purposely chosen based on their knowledge and connection with the community. This gender-balanced team gave me access to households that necessitated that men be in leadership due to the culturally gendered ideology of fishing. I had previously built a rapport with members of the community in previous projects; however, I had to embark on a specified rapport-building to undertake this research.

My primary research assistant was selected based on three main reasons, firstly, both of her parents are associated with fishing. Her deceased father was a fisherman, and her mother is a veteran fish smoker who has successfully trained her daughters in the practice. Secondly, she is an indigen of the community and works with a community NGO (Acts for Change) that is targeted at empowering the youth, she had effectively facilitated the previous research I had worked on in the community. She was assisted by the video recorders as field assistants and together we were a team of two females and two males.

The third and fourth research phases, interviews, and observation, were scheduled from July 2022 to January 2023 and occurred concurrently. This time of year, was ideal for field

work for three reasons, firstly, July is the officially closed season for Artisanal Marine Fishermen, thus fishermen were available to engage in the interviews scheduled on any day of the week. Before the closed season, the fishermen were only available on Tuesdays, the traditionally accepted rest day for fishermen in Ga Mashie. Secondly, August is the beginning of the traditional calendar for the Ga community. It is ushered in with the celebration of the Homowo festival, which is preceded by activities led by the artisanal fishing community heads. Thirdly, the fishermen engage in games on the ocean in December and January, an activity that draws a diverse crowd of fisherfolks and spectators.

Initial interviews were immersive in nature, my team and I were required to wear a traditional costume and accept prayers offered up for us. The traditional outfits were a white head wrap, matching cloth to wrap around the chest and white wrist and neck beads made from seeds locally known as *afili* (See Figure 3.9). This protocol was performed by the acting Head fisherman to welcome us into the close-knit yet accessible fishing community of Ga Mashie and give us access to the knowledge of fishing. This immersive act symbolically gave us access to data that would otherwise not be made public and it confirmed to the traditional leaders that we had good intentions. Although I had been working within and was familiar with the community and the language this immersive act served as a spiritual community entry of sorts.

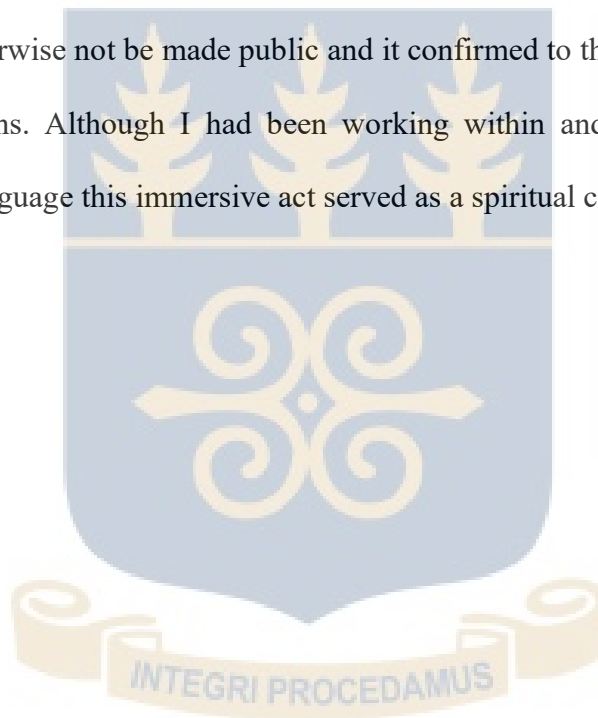




Figure 3.9 Researcher (far left) styled traditionally (in headgear, white cloth and wrist and neck beads) by the interviewees.
Source: Project images

The subsequent interviews and focus group discussions were without this initiating act (See figures 3.13 and 3.15). Unfortunately, the Head fisherman, whose authority is over the individual family head fishermen and all local and foreign fisherfolks, is presently indisposed due to his age and health challenges, thus, I had to be assisted in the field by his next in command. He and his linguist permitted us to observe traditional activities and rites of fishing.

The observation process was undertaken in two ways. Ad hoc observations were made during interviews and focus group discussions, and periodic walks through the fishing community and the Ga Mashie community at large during the day and at dawn. The second mode was done by purposely scheduling to observe the everyday life of the fishermen in their environment and how they engage with their tools, especially the canoe which they had continually identified as part of their heritage. I was also permitted to observe traditional rites performed by the fishermen, and where necessary I participated in the processes.



Figure 3.10 Researcher during at landing beach site, observing and documenting lookomo rites. . Source: Project images



Figure 3.11: Researcher engaged in participant observation, engaged in sharing libation drink . Source: Project images

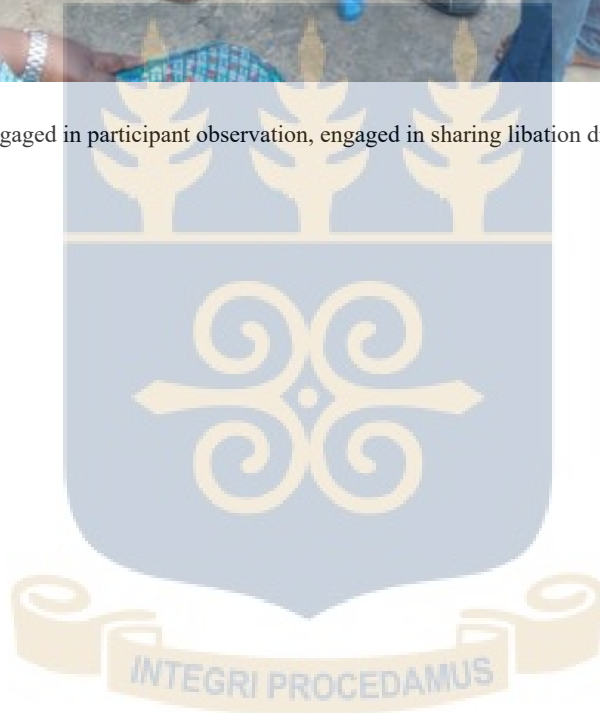




Figure 3.12: Researcher with research assistant, presenting items required for the traditional protocol to the Asere Head fisherman. Source: Project images

3.3 Ethical Considerations

At its core, the processes involved in CBPR are humanitarian in principle and practice (Israel et al,1988; Coughlin, Smith and Fernandez, 2017). The culturally accepted behaviour in Ga Mashie and the core values of any CBPR process share similarities as they can both be defined as interlaced with respect for people and for the knowledge and experience they bring to the research process (Brydon-Miller &Wood, 2022, p.33; Wellington, 2017).

Building trusting relationships guides the process of all community-focused research, knowledge creation, and community development. Wood & Zuber-Skerrit (2020), discuss how

research participants and researchers achieve these relationship outcomes through unbiasedly working with others, learning new technical skills and obtaining first-hand experience through knowledge creation in their contribution to collaborative research. Ergo, considering the long-term intention of research within the community I had to consider three ethical dynamics.

The first consideration of ethics was deontological, or duty ethics (Davis, 1993; Ebels-Duggan, 2011). This focused primarily on carrying out the research in a prescribed manner that falls within academic and institutional guidelines for field research such as following explicitly laid out subject recruitment procedures, gaining informed consent from participants, considering authorized documents and managing data in an institutionally approved manner. Community members were duly informed of their role in the research and gave their consent verbally and where possible in writing to indicate their willingness to participate in the research.

The second ethical consideration, defined as covenantal ethics. Being, “The unconditional responsibility and the ethical demand,” to act in the best interest of fellow human beings (Hilsen, 2006, p. 27). Thus, no children were exploited during this research; by extension, neither were any animals harmed. All fish that were documented were in the context of the research, and during observations of the community's daily activities, nothing was staged for recording. Children were excluded because in recent times they have been deliberately removed from fishing activities to encourage consistency in school attendance. Moreover, persons in their teens did not form a part of the research demographics. Presently, laws on child labour are being enforced in coastal communities and parents and guardians are encouraged to keep their wards in school and desist from economic exploitation.

The third ethical consideration practice is what I consider as everyday ethics, or culturally accepted behaviours which are embedded in the moment-to-moment decisions we make about how we choose to relate to one another and to the communities in which we work

(Banks, 2016). Culturally rich communities place value on both verbal and non-verbal communication in posture, speech, and dressing. These were considered in the interviews and observation sessions. Per the cultural framework of Ga Mashie, an elder or person in authority must always be approached with a gift of alcoholic drinks. These drinks are used for libation prayers before a conversation concerning delicate and sacred information is divulged. This is a culturally mandated act that was adhered to at the first meeting with an elder or person in authority(See Figure 3.12). These gift items are not expected at subsequent meetings. As per the cultural stipulations within the community, some data was considered unfit for public consumption unless the consumers had gone through the acts of specific rites and prayers. In such situations, limited access to recording and filming was adhered to, and data considered unsuitable for public knowledge was duly taken out and not included in the thesis write-up. Obtaining an institutional ethical clearance does not suffice in CBPR; this research was no exception. I noted that the knowledge sought after was given due to my prior engagement with the community and familial roots with the community.

3.4 Heritagisation leading to CBPR approaches as a methodological approach

The research methods employed were influenced and informed by the conceptual approach of heritagisation adopted to collect relevant data best to answer the established research questions. The success of heritagisation is greatly dependent on the societal perspective attached to it (Olwig et al., 2016). It is not a community-secluded enterprise but a collective process that engages expert and community stakeholders. This may be attributed to the identity creation tenet that heritagisation affords a community. Pragmatically the creation of a community's identity in heritage must not be left solely in the hands of 'external' influencers who have no traditional appreciation of the identity they seek to create (Le Mentec & Zhang, 2017, p.351-352). Thus, as observed by Altaba Tena and Garcia-Esparaza (2018, p. 194) current heritagisation processes that aim to lead to an understanding of heritage layers needs to be

participatory and inclusive ,as their integrity and sustainability depend on this. After considering the aim of collectively documenting the heritage of fishing in Ga Mashie, I carefully selected the most effective research method to elicit data and provide a foundation for a sustainable heritage future. This resulted in choosing a methodology that heavily involves community participation; Community Based Participatory Research (CBPR).

This is a research methodology that mobilises the local and indigenous knowledge of people based in communities of place, identity and interest; its participatory nature contributes to enhancing the impact of research, as it promotes knowledge exchange within and between ‘communities’ and researchers(Banks et al,2013). Coughlin, Smith, & Fernandez (2017, pp. 2-3) define CBPR as a method that actively involves community members, organisational representatives, and researchers in all aspects of the research process, focusing on social, structural, and physical environmental inequities. Although it has its foundational roots in public health and the sciences, CBPR has been effectually adopted into the humanities research methods as an action research approach in communities (Israel, B. A. 1998; Brush et al, 2020; Leavey P. 2017, p. 10, 224-254)

Characteristics of CBPR approaches may be classified as active and reactive. The active is the core characteristic that should drive any and every CBPR research. The reactive may be characterised as the consequent outcome of a well-run CBPR research. The active characteristics include firstly the process of positioning the community as a unit with a unique identity and secondly emphasising the relevance of community-defined problems (Huffman, T., 2017). CBPR is a collaborative research approach that seeks to involve community stakeholders in the research process, an attempt to include the voices of individuals and groups that are often excluded from decision-making processes. Enabling them to identify critical issues within their environment and to communicate their shared and individual experiences in an environment of mutual respect and trust. Consequently, developing innovative and reflexive

adaptation responses based on existing resources, local knowledge and perceptions (Israel et al, 1998, p. 178). Thirdly, employing an accountable tested process to develop and maintain community/ research partnerships, building on the strengths and resources of the community. This empowers people by considering them agents who can investigate their own situations and develop results, additionally, the community input makes the project credible (ibid: p. 179-180; Amauchi et al, 2022, p. 5), consequently achieving a balance between research and result implementation that benefits both academia and the community.

The reactive characteristics identified are firstly, promoting long-term co-learning and commitment among research partners, i.e., academia and community. And helping to dismantle the lack of trust communities may exhibit towards research and researchers (Coughlin, Smith, & Fernandez, 2017). Secondly, sharing knowledge acquired from the CBPR project with all partners is a valuable resource for the community. The collaborative approaches employed create a channel for bridging cultural differences among participants.

On this premise and considering the heritagisation of fishing in Ga Mashie the following were taken into consideration in settling on CBPRA as the best method towards the heritagisation of fishing in Ga Mashie:

1. Analysis of the community.

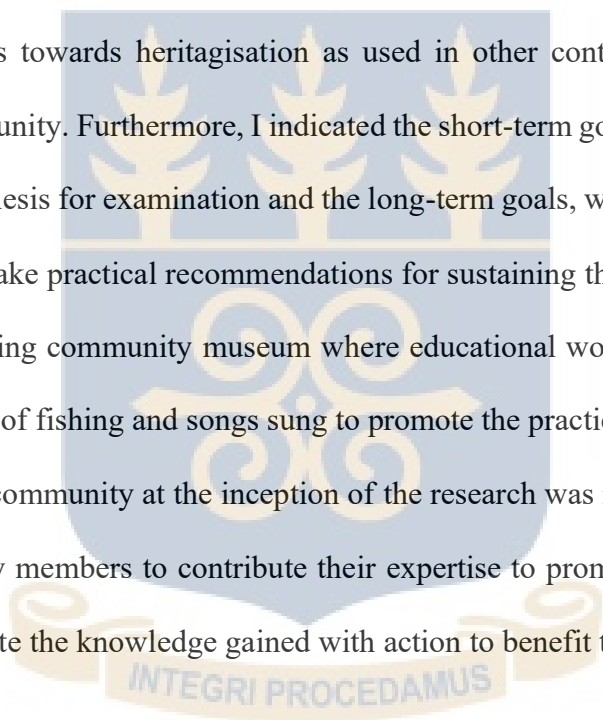
This research was designed to form partnerships with the community, focused on the practical ways to work with the community participants to help them identify the components of fishing they regard as heritage, whilst creating knowledge to foster social cohesion. The Ga Mashie community is presently classified as a low-income generating community with a high heritage tourism potential (Owusu, G., & Afutu-Kotey, R. L. 2010; Wrigley-Asante, C., & Mensah, P. 2017). Prior to the onset of the PhD program, I had been engaged in a long-term project which

started in 2019. A project focused on equipping the female youth in the Ga Mashie community with skills in smartphone filmmaking to empower them to create sustainable livelihoods and achieve positive change. The youth between the ages of 15-25 in general were identified as vulnerable in the community due to the growing disconnect, they have with fishing, the dominant sustenance practice in the Ga Mashie enclave. Thus, I identified that the methods of CBPR will enable me to create a relevant and useful scholarship in attempt to reconnect the youth to their heritage.

2. Promotion and participation in the research

The primary aim of this research was to document the fishing heritage of the community. To do this I had to bring together traditional experts' and practitioners' views of the fishing practice. The topic of fishing as a Heritage was examined collaboratively to establish a joint focal point regarding basic heritage concepts and the heritagisation of Fishing.

This resulted in developing an understanding and commitment of all parties about the topic of the research. At this stage, I offered my knowledge as a heritage practitioner, educating on the best approaches towards heritagisation as used in other contexts to inform the best approach for the community. Furthermore, I indicated the short-term goal of the research which is the production of a thesis for examination and the long-term goals, which is continuous work in the community to make practical recommendations for sustaining their heritage, such as the establishment of a fishing community museum where educational workshops can be held for the public, with stories of fishing and songs sung to promote the practice as heritage. Fostering a partnership with the community at the inception of the research was mutually beneficial as it enabled the community members to contribute their expertise to promote their understanding of heritage, and integrate the knowledge gained with action to benefit the study of heritage.



3. *Empowerment of the local population to determine the heritage and the heritage's future*

This was essential because the practices which are now being heritagized have been cared for and shaped by community members over a long period of time. Thus, rather than viewing the local population as participants of the research, they were considered as partners and a valuable source of knowledge of the community and practice (Mydland & Grahn, 2012). In agreement with Bergen & Labonte (2020), the position of a 'researcher' can limit the engagement with the community and data. However, positioned as a 'research- partner' with the community members, the empowering advantages of CBPR are experienced. This positioned the community members as agents who can identify their own situations and share ideas on how to promote their cultural identity in fishing. It also helped deter some community members from the lack of trust they previously had in academic research, where they were just considered as sources of data and nothing else; considerably relieving respondent fatigue. In addition to discussing the topic and working with traditional and community leaders at the beginning and during the research, this partnership was enforced in three other ways. First, a deliberate change of pronouns from 'I' to 'We' when addressing focus group discussions; secondly, asserting myself as a member of the community and giving roots to my interest in the community; and third, holding post-focus group discussions to update interested persons and groups on the progress of the research. Although classified as partners and not the researched, the terms participants, partners and respondents are used interchangeably in this write-up.

3.5 Data Processing and Analysis

Qualitative data gathered mostly comprised of transcripts of video and audio interview recordings, photographs, and observational data in the form of field notes. Data gathering and analysis occurred simultaneously during the field research; at this stage, I took notes, recorded

reflections, watched videos of interviews, listened to audio recordings, and ordered and labelled data during and immediately after a day's field work was completed.

The process of data analysis was guided by Braun and Clarke (2006, 2012, 2014, 2020) process of qualitative data analysis, in which they comprehensively teach the basic tenets of data analysis based on their proposed six-step approach. This approach was best suited for this research based on the conceptual underpinnings of heritagisation and the content that the thesis seeks to produce, which is a comprehensive documentation and interrogation of the heritage of fishing in Ga Mashie. Braun and Clarke (2021) discuss how their approach has been misinterpreted as a simple descriptive process. However, in their defence -which resonates with this research-, thematic analysis has an interpretative quality *which* hinges on the researchers' positionality. The researcher reads data through the lenses of their particular social, cultural, historical, disciplinary, political, and ideological positionings. These bear on the interpretation of the data, evidently there is no neutral descriptive approach to data analysis, rather it is based on the skill of the analyst (ibid, p. 339-340).

In summary, my data processing and analysis stage went through the familiarization stage, familiarizing myself with my data, generating initial codes, creatively generating themes, reviewing themes, defining, and naming themes, and producing the report. While this organized phase of analysis is logical and sequential, I observed that the process of applying it to my work was not in like manner. Data processing and analysis was not a linear process, but rather a recursive and iterative process, which required that I move back and forth through the phases as necessary (Braun & Clarke, 2020).

I was concerned with addressing specific research questions guided by the concept of heritagisation and analysed the data with this in mind. This process was addressed during the transcription of the interviews; as I self-transcribed the video and audio files I simultaneously

identified and assigned the codes; a process I deemed laborious, became an advantage to my research. Thus, I coded each section of data that was relevant to the research questions and conceptual framework of Heritagisation. Both semantic and latent coding were utilised, I did not prioritise semantic coding over latent coding or vice-versa. Rather, semantic codes were produced when meaningful semantic information was construed, and latent codes were produced when meaningful latent information was construed (Bryne,2022).

After the data was organised and coded, themes were generated, using words, phrases, tags or labels that gave comprehensive meaning to portions of the data set. This process of thematic analysis refers to the method of identifying, analysing, and reporting patterns (or themes) within data (Braun & Clarke, 2006). The themes were predominately descriptive, as they described patterns in the data relevant to the research question bearing on the conceptual framework.

Qualitative data processing and analysis are very iterative processes. A process which is fluid and hardly has defined start and stop indicators. Field notes, maps, photographs, and archival and contemporary videos were constantly referred to comparatively and iteratively with the deductions and inferences stemming from the interview, focus group discussion and personal conversations data analysis.

3.6 Positionality in the research

Ethnographers, just like the groups they study come with histories and socialisation, and the influence of these elements in ethnographic research needs to be considered (Madden, 2022). A researcher being aware of their history, background, socialisation, and the influence these elements may have on the ethnographic approach and interpretation of data are reflected in defining my positionality in the research.

Positionality in ethnographic research refers to the researcher's social, cultural, and political position in the research, the research participants and the research context. It is important to consider positionality because it can influence how the researcher collects and interprets data. One way to define positionality in ethnographic research is to honestly identify the researcher's social, cultural, and political identities and influences, which includes factors such as ethnicity, gender, class, academic background and religion (Jacobs-Huey, 2002; Huisman, 2008; Abu-Lughod, 1990). These factors are influenced by the researcher's personal experiences and relationships that hinge on factors such as their upbringing, socialization, education, and work experience. For example, a researcher who socially and/or culturally identifies with the research participants may be more likely to be accepted by them and gain access to their experiences, as was my experience in Ga Mashie. Madden (2022) asserts that for many researchers who work at 'home' their personal experiences preceding fieldwork can be expected to inform their fieldwork and writing. On the other hand, the researcher in a possible position of overfamiliarity, may also be more likely to take their own experiences for granted and to overlook, and dismiss the experiences of others.

Researchers at 'home' may decide on a particular research interest centred on prior personal and social experiences. Involuntarily, my youthful experience with the ocean and the fond memories of preparing, sharing, and eating Kpokpoi, palm nut soup and *Tsile*-(the *traditional festival meal of Ga's*) (Odotei, 2002), may have piqued my interest to enquire further and interrogate the significant role of fish and fishing in Ga Mashie, this is a subject area that was never taught to me in primary school.

Indigenous researchers, working within their home communities may take particular interest in aspects of their research. They may echo their own experiences and use this to inform their work. They may also search for information, evaluate data, and determine what is

important for their research; choosing to pursue certain leads and not others, and ultimately devise their approach to writing up their research findings (Bilgen, Nasir & Schöneberg, 2021, pp. 526-528). When perusing works that contain descriptions of events and cultural practices, the researcher may compare these depictions of culture with their own lived or shared experiences. This may allow for a more comprehensive understanding of the analysis presented and provide an opportunity to interrogate any assumptions or biases. Furthermore, it could highlight any gaps in one's knowledge of a particular culture or tradition, leading to a far more distinct appreciation of the subject matter. By considering positionality, researchers can improve the quality of their ethnographic research, can ensure that their research is more inclusive and that their findings are relatively more accurate (Holmes, 2020, pp. 2-3; Reyes, V., 2020)

Interrogating my positionality in this research required that I unpack the label “researcher” into the different sub-labels that I identify that come together to represent me as a researcher. These are an academic, PhD candidate, Assistant lecturer, and Ga indigene.

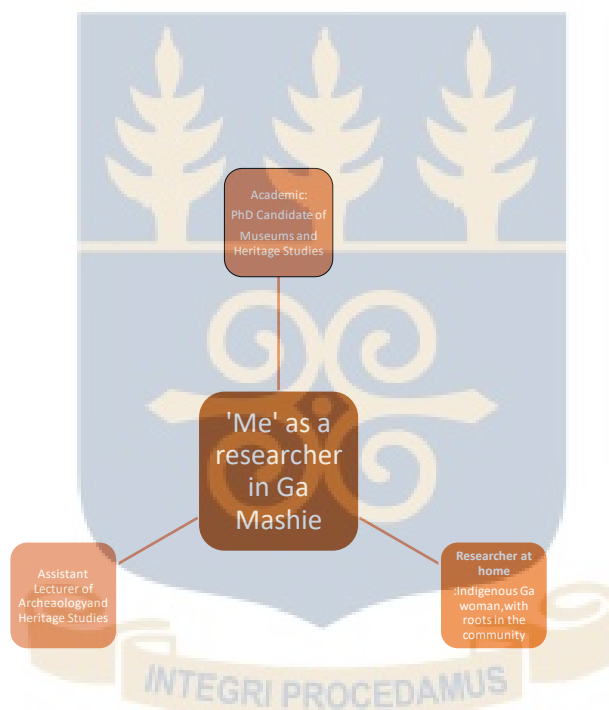


Figure 3.14: Graph showing the unpacking of the positionality of the researcher

As a student and assistant lecturer, I represent a background that seeks to address the scientific approaches ethnography is based on, ethically identifying stakeholders, addressing the research methods used in data collection and analysis, which systematic sampling techniques were used and what methods were used to gather data. Ethnography which is not founded on scientific principles such as sampling, systematic data collection, analysis, interpretation, and presentation, cannot be qualified as ethnography, it's more like fiction (Reeves et al, 2013, p.1367). Ergo, a systematic and disciplined approach is required when conducting good ethnography. However, it is equally crucial to bear in mind that ethnography that lacks the skill of prose writing, lacks a clear argument development, doesn't engage with its audience, is undescriptive and lacks detail, without rhetoric, and persuasion, is merely a collection of data and not proper ethnography. Therefore, striking a balance between scientific principles and the art of writing is crucial for the creation of successful ethnography.

As an indigen, although by extended relations, I am mindful of the role that my social and historical identity play in shaping my perspective; on the ways in which my personal experiences and background influence the information that I gather and the way that I present it. Further I recognise the tendency to be biased in my text analysis and data interpretation, and the possibility to overlook data under the assumption that it may be common knowledge to all. Kürti (2000, p. 283), a Hungarian anthropologist who researches primarily in Hungary, indicates that one of the underlying questions anthropologists should ask themselves is "Can they be their own informant?" the answer to this question must be a predictable resounding yes. The attempt at reflexivity and consideration of my positionality is simply an essential part of managing the influence of 'me' on the research and depictions of 'them-participants' in the data collected.

Positionality and reflexivity are not the same things, but the nature of my engagement with the community led me to reflect a lot on my role and gave rise to a strong reflexive element

in my research. However, these elements were not a problem to overcome; I learnt to embrace them as a necessary component of my research. It is important to note that positionality is not fixed; it can change over time as a close and deep experience with people, regardless of their relative strangeness or familiarity, can be a continuous transforming experience (Liong, 2015; Lønsmann, 2016).



CHAPTER FOUR

FISHING AS HERITAGE: EXPLORING THE VALUE OF TRADITIONAL PRACTICES AND LOCAL ACTORS

4.1 Introduction

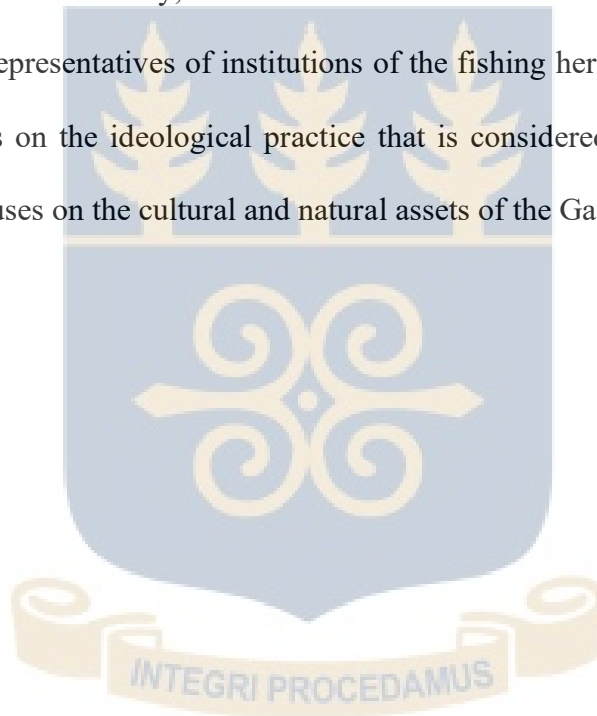
The underlying research question that produced this chapter is “What cultural elements do the Ga Mashie people identify as the heritage of fishing?” To answer the question the following scenarios were designed to create a visual representation of what heritage is and to enable the participants to identify both the tangible and intangible elements in their community which they identify as heritage and deem valuable for preservation and transmission.

In the scenario the participants were asked to imagine there existed a centre (a school, or an institution of sorts) where people from outside their community could visit to learn about the peculiarities of the Ga Mashie fishing practices, they were asked to then identify the key things about the fishing practice and the people involved in it which they would want to be taught about within this imaginary centre. This centre was described as a place that would preserve and protect the value of culture and tradition for years. To elaborate on the first scenario, the participants were encouraged to think about the possibility that such an institution was meant to teach foreigners from outside the country of Ghana about their fishing practice, reflecting on how they would want their lifeways concerning fishing to be represented. Thirdly they were to reflect on such a centre as built exclusively for their community; with that in mind they were encouraged to come out with views on how they represent themselves and fishing, and what elements of the fishing practices will they choose to identify with and safeguard for posterity. The answers to these questions provided a list of intangible values and narratives, and tangible materials that are described and explained in the text below.

An analysis of the data received enabled the mapping out of the structure of the fishing heritage in Ga Mashie. The core of the heritage is represented by three key components, which

are listed in no particular order but in synchrony: firstly, the actors of the heritage; which are also representatives of institutions; secondly, the rites performed; and thirdly, the fundamental material representatives of the heritage. These three core structures are further unpacked, and they involve different groups of people and individuals. The actors of the heritage, who are representatives of varied institutions and groups of people in the community break down to include the following: the title of ‘Nii Abeo Kyerekuandah’ conferred on the *Wolɛiatse* (Head fisherman) in Ga Mashie; the family home of Abola Wemprakwa; *Nɛshonaa Kwɛlɔ* ; *Wolɛimɛi*(Fishermen); *Nɛshonaa yei*(Women situated at the beach), and *Loishaalɔ* (fish smokers). The materials unpack into cultural and natural assets, the cultural assets are the canoes and the natural is the *Tsile* fish . The ideological component is the performance of the *Lookɔmɔ* rites performed by the fishermen and, this then leads to the performance of the Homowo traditional festival (see figure 4.1).

This following write up is structured into three sections, it is highly descriptive, and it is complemented with archival study, observation and oral narrations. The first section focuses on the actors and the representatives of institutions of the fishing heritage of Ga Mashie. The second section focuses on the ideological practice that is considered an integral part of the heritage. The third focuses on the cultural and natural assets of the Ga Mashie fishing heritage.



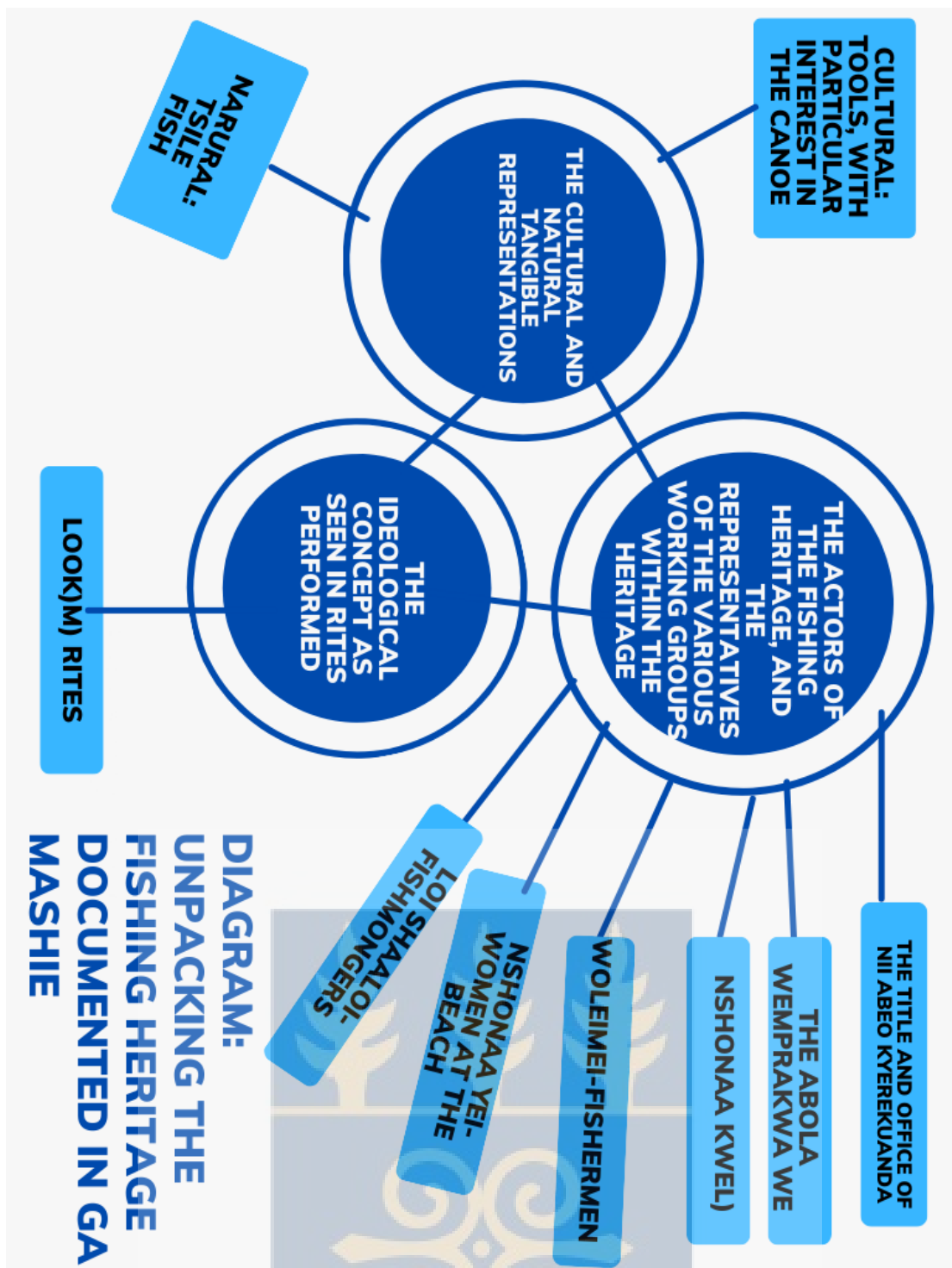


Figure 4.1 Structure of Ga Mashie fishing heritage. Source: Author

4.1 Abola Wemprakwa family home, and heraldic crest

According to the historical narratives gathered from the community, the act of fishing with a canoe was introduced to the Ga Mashie people by an ancestor known as Nii Abeo Kyerekuanda. Oral tradition holds that he migrated from *Ekwan/Ekɔn* then to *Moree* both in the central region of Ghana, to then have settled in Ga Mashie with the Abola- (Abora) *Akutso*- Community. He is purported to have settled amicably amongst the Abola community and later led to the establishment of the *Abola-Wemprakwa* family home; which is the family that handles all fishing affairs in the Ga Mashie community. Abola being the community he settled in and Wemprakwa was the famed name accorded to this ancestor of marine fishing. *Wemprakwa* is a Fante word that translates to mean ‘*He never gets hurt; Resilient fellow with immense strength*’. The name of this ancestor has been adopted as the title given to every *Wolɛiatse* elected in Ga Mashie. Oral narration indicates that Nii Abeo arrived on the shore of Ga Mashie in a single-occupant canoe, solely paddled from the Fante coast to the eastern coastline of Ga Mashie. He was well fortified with charms and gods that protected him from all possible attacks even that of a bullet could not harm him. Sɛɛkwɛlɔ in narrating the history of Nii Abeo intimated that:

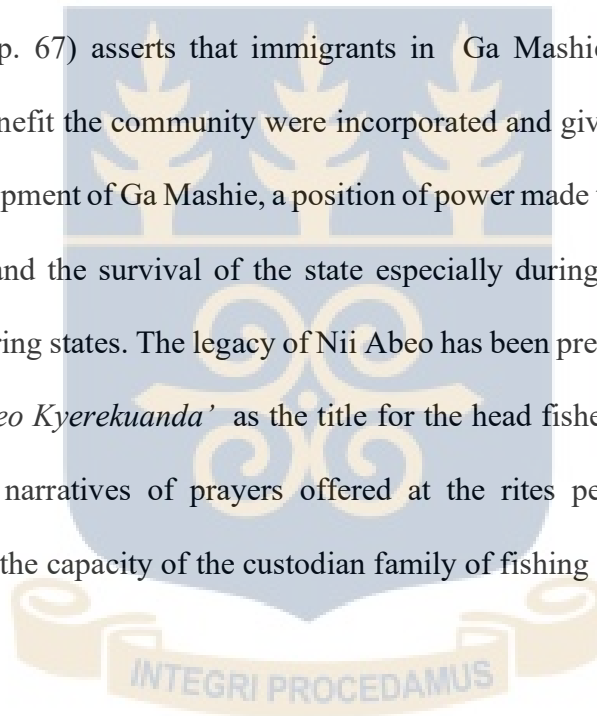
“He [referring to Nii Abeo Kyerekuandah] further led the people of Asere to war, he led them to the Anlo war, Katamanso... due to his many charms and gods he could never be wounded by a bullet of a gun during warfare, this is because we have a god of war in this family (IDI-SK)

This correlates with the historical narrative as given by C. C. Reindorf (1895, p.102), where he refers to a headman of the Abora quarter Abeo-Twerekoanna (an anglicized distortion of the name Kyerekuanda) of Ga Mashie who led the Asere to battle in the 1777 *Kotoku and Twerebo* civil war in Ga:

*“...They were met by a party of Labades there, were fired at, and a captain commanding the Aseres' force fell. This captain is supposed to have been the headman of Abora quarter with the name **Abeo-Twerekoanna**, of whom it had been foretold by Saku-mo, that his fall would insure success to Akra. His body was conveyed to the town and put down as a bait on the road to Akra, to allure them to come out for it. The cannon in the fort were posted in its defence. They attempted thrice to capture the body, but were repulsed with loss; fortunately, they finally succeeded and got possession of it (CC Reindorf p.102)”*

The historical narratives does not indicate a timeline for when Nii Abeo settled in the Ga Land. However, oral narration indicates that he introduced himself to Nii Lakote Aduawushie, whom Reindorf (1895,p.10) reports to have been on the coast before Gas relocated from Ayawaso to the coast. Thus, it is unclear if the reference made by Reindorf was to the very same individual or to the title as it is used today to refer to the head fisherman selected from the family home. Following the establishment of a strong relationship with the Abola people, Nii Abeo is said to have married a woman from the Asere group. His association with them is seen as the reason why the Asere clan is noted as the head of the *Nɛshɛnaa Kwɛlɛi*.

Odotei (1991, p. 67) asserts that immigrants in Ga Mashie who displayed certain qualities that would benefit the community were incorporated and given positions of power to contribute to the development of Ga Mashie, a position of power made them identify themselves with the government and the survival of the state especially during the period of incessant warfare with neighbouring states. The legacy of Nii Abeo has been preserved by the continuous use of the title ‘*Nii Abeo Kyerekuanda*’ as the title for the head fisherman. Additionally, it is preserved in the oral narratives of prayers offered at the rites performed by the Abola-Wemprakwa family in the capacity of the custodian family of fishing in Ga Mashie.



4.1.0 Heraldic Crest of Abola Wemprakwa

Heraldry is synonymous with the values, authority, and identity of an institution, family or nation. It may be defined as the complex artistic arrangements of symbols and depictions that characterise and define the identity of a group of people (Donkor et al, 2020, p. 72). The heraldic crests of Abola Wemprakwa are a hallmark of the family's history and exclusive role as leaders in the artisanal marine fishing industry in Ga Mashie.

The heraldic crests of the Abola Wemprakwa family are depicted in two illustrations. The first one, symbolically is illustrated and situated as a backdrop to the sitting area of the *Wolæiatse* in the family home. This is a significant positioning of the crest as it is inscribed in the area where court is held in the Wemprakwa home. The heraldic crest is made up of three material expressions and three inscriptions. The materials are a traditional carved royal stool, a canoe paddle placed vertically to the right of the stool, and to the left of the stool is a musket. Above these material illustrations is the inscription '*Kyerekuanda*'. This is inscribed immediately above the stool, giving the impression that the name is enstooled. Inscribed across the top of this image is the clan name *Abola Wemprakwa- We*.

Below the illustration is an inscription which reads '*Dza Nyumo*' which translates as "Only God," a statement that indicates their dependence on God alone (See figure 4.2). The heraldic crest encapsulates the two key attributes of the famed Nii Abeo Kyerekuanda, his adept fishing skills are represented by the paddle, and his warfare skills are represented by the musket. The stool symbolises that the clan is the seat of the family Kyerekuanda, furthermore, it symbolizes that they are the sole custodians, and family responsible for the knowledge, skill, and practice of artisanal fishing in Ga Mashie. The symbolic colours of the heraldic crest are blue and red. The blue is explained to represent their relationship with the ocean and the red signifies the bravery and battle expertise of their famed ancestor Nii Abeo Kyerekuanda.



Figure 4.2 The family crest located within the home, as a backdrop to the sitting area of the family head. Source: Project images.

The family has a second heraldic crest (see figures 4.3 and 4.4), which is a representation of the linguist staff of the family. This crest is on the wall of the central family home and it is illustrated on the right hand of the gate to the Wemprakwa family home. The linguist staff is represented as a staff with a canoe balanced on it, on the canoe is a traditional royal stool, on the royal stool is a fist with the index finger pointing up. In the fist is a paddle, and around the wrist of the fist are the traditional natural seed beads known as *Afili*. Above the wrist, the name

Kyerekuanda is inscribed. Flanked on the right of the staff are a bell and a ram's horn to the left. Like the crest within the home, Abola Wemprakwa-we and *Dza Nyumo* are inscribed above and below the crest, respectively.

These heraldic crest elements signify that the home is a *Wɔn shia* – a home that houses ancestral gods -*Dzeman Wɔn* . In this illustration there is the bell, the ram's horn and the *afli* around the wrist of the fist. The canoe speaks to the act of fishing within the home; its significance is enforced by the stool placed on the canoe, showing the role of the family as the custodians of the fishing practice. The depiction of the fist enclosed with a paddle, with the pointed-out index finger, signifies the mastery of fishing. It emphasises with the index finger that they remain the only family that is mandated to perform rites concerning fishing within Ga Mashie. Adjacent to the crest on the wall is a caution to all entering the compound that they are not to wear sandals or a hat and shouldn't carry an umbrella. This is common practice among the Ga; shrine homes are considered sacred, elements with European influence or those concealing identity are viewed as desecration and disturbance to the peace of the gods (Henderson-Quartey, 2002, p. 57-60).





Figure 4.3 Family crest located outside the family home at the main entrance to the home.. Source: Project images



Figure 4.4 Shrine home regulations depicted on the wall by the main entrance of the home. Source: Project images

4.1.1 Nii Abeo Kyerekuanda - The Ga Mashie Wolɛiatɛ (Chief Fisherman)

This position is an inherited position accorded to upright male occupants in good standing, from the Abola Wemprakwa family. It is a position held in succession, either through the patrilineal line or in the case where no sons are born to the *Wolɛiatɛ* his patrilineal nephews would be considered. The ideal candidate for this position should have a background in fishing or have previously worked as a fisherman. This criterion is to ensure that the candidate has a deep understanding of the practical qualities of the fishing industry and can best represent the interests and affairs of the fishermen.

In recent times, the criteria for selecting a chief fisherman have evolved to include a preference for individuals with formal education. This is because the role of chief fisherman demands a level of administrative expertise, knowledge of industry regulations, and skill of political engagement and negotiations that may not be present in individuals with only a practical fishing background. The research revealed that there is a recent aspiration to appoint a man who can effectively balance both practical knowledge of fishing, and administrative skills to represent the fishermen.

According to Nii Kwadee Beɛntɛ- the horn blower for the Ga Mantse - the process of enstooling a chief fisherman is akin to that of chieftaincy enstoolment in Ga Mashie. He further elaborates that, after the process of the election, there is an announcement to the stakeholder groups, these include the Ga Mantɛ, all chiefs of the Ga Mashie Akutseii, Nai Wulomɔ, the women at the beach, fishermen, and the *ɲshɔnaa onukpai*. The initiate is then kept in a sacred room for a week to train and perform the needed rites to usher him fully into the role; The Ga Mantɛ sends a delegation to confirm the processes occurring in the enstoolment process. Within this period of confinement in the sacred room, the candidate is tutored by the head priest of the Ga Mashie state Nai Wulomɔ Nii Lakote Aduawushie at dawn. He is tutored on the ‘mysteries’ and sacred knowledge of fishing and its history.

Naa Bessa Mami, the leader of the *ηshɔnaa yei* recollects the events as she has witnessed:

...he is kept in a room for a week and then brought out to be shown off to the public after the one week. It will be announced everywhere, and everybody will come out to witness the grand occasion...we go with items that will be used to enstool him. (IDI-NBM-LBFQ)

In the outdoorizing process the women at the beach are tasked with the honour of ‘opening the door’ for the ushering of the *Woleiatse* into the Ga Mashie community. Their role on this significant day reflects the value placed on them as women and stakeholders of fishing. Naa Bessa Mami fondly recollects how they would proceed from the Jamestown lighthouse led by their linguist holding the ‘fisherwomen’ linguist staff, all dressed uniformly in the same cloth. They carry along gift items for the newly elected *Woleiatse* such as fabric, beads(afili) for his wrists, and sewn clothes. This procession is accompanied by drumming and dancing. The same grand performance is done for the *Woleiatse* when he ‘joins the ancestors’. In the event of death, the materials are different, they include bathing sponges, soap, towels, and jumpers -a two-piece oversized shirt and loose pants outfit worn by men. The most recent event of enstoolment occurred approximately twenty years ago. Naa Bessa Mami fondly recollects this procession as she led the *ηshɔnaa yei*, she intimates:

...But my dear, enstoolment is a beautiful sight to behold and you will love every detail. We queue all the way from the lighthouse by the shore just to go open the door for him to come out for the whole community to see him... Every Ga community with leaders from other fishing fraternities will also come and witness the enstoolment rituals. Everybody from Ga to Ada to Fante. There is drumming, dancing, singing and merry making then he is brought out and enstooled in front of everybody (IDI-NBM-LBFQ)

INTEGRI PROCEDAMUS

The *Woleiatse* is adorned with ‘*Nyanyra*’ (*Momordica Charantia*) during his initiation. *M. Charantia* is a climbing herb with tendrils spirally twisted at nodes (WAHO, 2013,p. 112). It is a medicinal plant widely used in traditional medicine in most humid and sub-humid tropical countries, where it grows spontaneously. In Ghana, it is also considered a mystic plant for the Ga-Adangme people. It is used in ceremonial activities of all ranks and amongst persons. It is also used in homes and by individuals as a protective wreath hung either in homes or around the neck. *Nyanyra* is believed to possess qualities to ward off evil spirits and bring good favour. Its leaves and fruits have ethnomedical properties and is used in treating malaria, skin diseases, convulsions, stomach aches, snake bites, and ulcers, to mention a few (Agyare et al 2009; WAHO 2013, p. 112-113).



Figure 4.5 Nii Tackie Teiko Tsuru, the current Ga Mantse in seating, adorned with *M. Charantia*, *Nyanyra* around his neck.
Source: Graphic Online

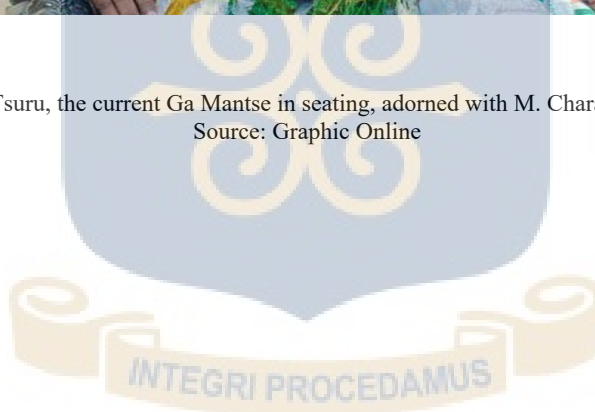




Figure 4.6 Asafoatsɛ adorned with M. Charantia Nyanyra during the funeral of the late Ga Mantse Boni Nii Amugi II 2007 (Source: www.GhanaWeb.com).

The title *Nii Abeo Kyerekuanda* is conferred on the individual, he serves in this role until he joins the ancestors in death. Presently the Ga Mashie *Woleiatsɛ* is an octogenarian with limited movement. As a customary administrative mandate, he has elected an assistant or deputy who sits to hold council and represent him at customary meetings. This person is equally a senior member of the family and plays the role of the head of the family; he carries the title of *Seekwelo* which translates to mean assistant, second in command, or deputy.

The *Woleiatsɛ* works with the *ɲshɔnaa onukpai* from the various Ga coastal communities to manage the affairs of fishing. He oversees the affairs of fishermen in Chorkor, Dansoman, Bortianor, Tema, Osu, La, Teshie and Nungua, all Ga coastal communities and recognised as the head fisherman in all these communities. His position as leader mandates him to perform all the rites needed for the fisherfolks, rites performed before the fishermen embark on the *Lookomɔ* expedition to bring in the famed *Tsile* for the preparation towards the Homowo festival. He performs the rites offered with the innards of the *Tsile* fish when they return from the expedition. These rites are performed in the clan home of Abola Wemprakwa. *Seekwelo* indicates that:

[referring to the *ηshōnaa onukpai*] *Yes, they are only there to take care of the shore and report back to the main Wolɛiatse. So, the Oldman is the only Wolɛiatse all the way from Ada to the Fante land. So, all the way from Ada to here, anyone to be crowned is brought here for acceptance and rituals and this is the only place for this ritual. The task given us to take care of the sea and the shore by Nii Aduawushie and the Abola leader whiles Nii Aduawushie takes care of the mountains and that is exactly what we are doing. If we do not perform the rites and select people to go bring the fish, there will be no food and the Homowo festival cannot take place. There is a need for extensive study into our practice for people to fully understand our role. (IDI-SK)*

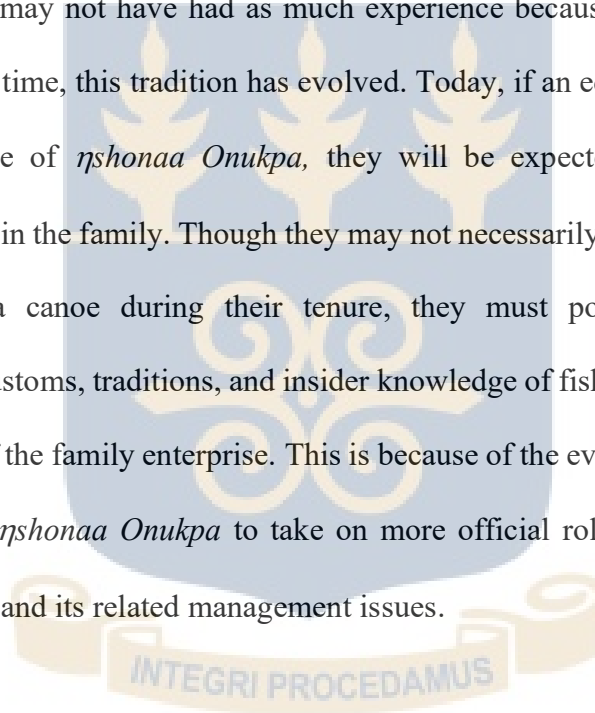
Presently, in addition to the religious responsibilities during rites, the position of *Wolɛiatse* comes with administrative responsibilities. As the representative of artisanal fisherfolks, he plays a crucial role in advocating for their interests and concerns in all state-related fishing issues. He is also the Executive Secretary of the Ghana National Canoe Fishermen Council (GNCFC), where he spearheads negotiations with government officials on matters that impact artisanal fishing. One of his primary responsibilities is negotiating pre-mix fuel prices and subsidies, which are essential to the livelihoods of artisanal fishers. Additionally, he advocates for the importation of standard fishing nets, which are crucial for sustainable fishing practices. Furthermore, he addresses the challenges faced by artisanal fishers, such as curbing light fishing and monitoring fish trawlers involved in Saiko fishing- illegal trans-shipment of catch. His efforts are instrumental in promoting sustainable fishing practices and protecting the interests of artisanal fishers in Ghana.

4.1.2 The *ηshōnaa kwelɔ*/Onukpa (literal translation: ‘Beach leader’ Beachfront Overseer’)

ηshōnaa kwelɔ or *ηshornaa onukpa* is the title given to a representative of each of the seven sub-communities in Ga Mashie- Asere, Sempe, Akumadje, Otublohum, Ngleshie, Abola, and

Gbese- mandated to manage the affairs that directly concern the members of their clan/community at the beach. As managers of the affairs of fishermen at the beach, they report back to the *Woleiatse*. Each community, based on succession, selects the best-fitted candidate to lead its members at the beach. This position is exclusive to males who have proven themselves to be the best-fitted candidates based on their experience, knowledge, and expertise in fishing in their family. The ideal leader should be a seasoned fisherman who has extensive knowledge of fishing techniques, traditions, and the management of fish at the beach. There are no training processes for the leader when he is in the role, he must solely rely on the knowledge gathered whilst practising fishing and learning from the elders in the family. The position may not be delegated or skipped over, the candidate is mandated to take the position or if not desired, relegate it to the next in succession. Unlike the Fante coastal towns where such roles are given to the person who is recognised as skilled and in upright standing in the fishing community, the Ga Mashie position is by family succession and blood lines (Overa, 2005, p.112).

Previously, formally educated persons were exempted in the successive line due to the obvious fact that they may not have had as much experience because of time spent away in school. However, over time, this tradition has evolved. Today, if an educated person is next in line to inherit the role of *ηshonaa Onukpa*, they will be expected to learn from older, experienced fishermen in the family. Though they may not necessarily be required to engage in physical fishing on a canoe during their tenure, they must possess a comprehensive understanding of the customs, traditions, and insider knowledge of fishing in Ga Mashie before assuming leadership of the family enterprise. This is because of the evolving responsibilities of the *ηshonaa kwelɔ* or *ηshonaa Onukpa* to take on more official roles and representation in official fora on fishing and its related management issues.



In an in-depth interview, Clement Adjei, a seasoned fisherman from the Asere clan espoused the various traditional know-how a fisherman must possess to be an effective leader, he explained:

There is no written document that is used to train you to become a good leader rather it is your experience as a fisherman that will help you to excel as a leader. Previously educated people were not crowned woleiatse but now things are different so we prefer that even though you are from the Ayikwe clan and have fishing experience, you are educated too. Even the educated without fishing experience must have a father or grandfather who has been fishing so that you learn from them before you are crowned. You need to learn some basics of fishing like drowning at sea, you must know that the sea doesn't stay the same way like lay people think; the sea actually moves and walks. It can move from east to west and vice versa which we call afutu and aduwu respectively. The sea can also descend so it moves down and it moves all the way back too. The sea also has timing so that it has a window of an hour or one hour and thirty minutes it gets so full or goes down, fishermen use this timing to go fishing. There are so many calculations that help us to fish so as our leader you need to know these things which come with experience and learning. (IDI-ASFM)

Previously the role of the *nshonaa onukpa* was highly fishing-focused, he was required to lead as well as offer insight into fishing. Gaining expertise in seasons and fish used to be a skill that required extensive apprenticeship and hands-on experience. However, as formal education becomes more prevalent, this requirement of extensive fishing knowledge is becoming less necessary. Similar to the role of *woleiatse*, there are administrative duties and political engagements required of the role as a leader in the fishing community. In the light of these evolving roles there is a shift to engage persons who are educationally fitted to represent the interests of the fisherfolks, who are able to make informed decisions on par with politicians concerning fishing practices. Additionally, the human rights issues regarding child labour and

child trafficking may have an impact on the decision to engage persons with formal education (Adeborna & Johnson, 2015, p. 5-6).

Children in coastal communities and Ghana in general are being required to spend more time in school, their participation in fishing is decreasing. Furthermore, section 2(2) of the Human Trafficking Act of Ghana, 2005 (Act 694) indicates that a person who engages in the offense of trafficking, in this case, fishermen found to be working with children under the age of 18 are liable on summary conviction for a term not less than five years. Under the Children's Act 1998, Section 87 mandates that any form of exploitative labour or work that adversely affects the health, education, or overall development of a child is prohibited. Additionally, Section 88 of the Act stipulates that no child should be employed between 8 PM and 6 AM. Nevertheless, Sections 89 to 90 of the Act provide for light work for children aged 13 and above and non-hazardous work for those above 15. (ibid, p.10-13). Thus, fewer children are being engaged in full-time fishing to learn from the elderly and it was noted that most fishermen insisted on educating their children as a sign of prestige, a gradual truncation of heritage may be progressively occurring in Ga Mashie.

Sɛɛkwɛlɔ opined that the *ɲshɔnaa onukpa* must be:

Someone always on the sea, someone who can swim, someone who knows fishes and their season, who can sew and mend a fishing net is the person who must be crowned ɲshɔnaa onukpa". Now without recourse to these traditions people are presented to us, people who have no knowledge about fishing or the sea. This has been very disturbing to us, we are trying our best to fix it because we have to go back to how our forefathers were doing things the right way. Even if an uneducated but experienced fisherman is selected as - ɲshɔnaa onukpa , an educated secretary (wolonkwɔtsɔ) can be assigned to him for assistance. (IDI-SK).

The role of the leader is multifaceted and can be divided into two crucial factions - administrative and traditional. Their administrative duties include distributing and managing

pre-mix fuel for fisherfolks, representing the interest of their members at meetings with the *Wolɛiatɛ* and the canoe fishermen association. Additionally, they serve to resolve local disputes such as petty theft, minor fights amongst others that occur at the beach; they refer weightier matters such as illegal fishing practices to the *Wolɛiatɛ*. Their traditional duties include representing their groups at traditional gatherings concerning fishing and performing the needed rites on their behalf. *ɲshɔnaa onukpa* to be referred to as *Wolɛiatɛ* is a misnomer, since the title *Wolɛiatɛ* refers to the overall head fisherman who manages all matters of artisanal marine fishing, which includes the *ɲshɔnaa onukpa* and fishermen.

4.2 Lookɔmɔ / *ɲshɔnaa* Kusun – Fishing Rites

The Abola Wemprakwa family performs the sacred rite known as the *lookɔmɔ* rite before the celebration of Homowo. This is a traditional rite performed to usher in the new traditional year. It is only after this rite is performed that the rites leading to Homowo may take place among all the Ga communities.

The *Lookɔmɔ* rites are also commonly referred to as *ɲshɔbulɛmɔ*, however, the stakeholders of fishing want to address the contradiction. With reference to Kropp-Dakubu (1999) in the Ga-English dictionary, *bulɛmɔ* translates to contaminate, offend, commit an offence against custom, or fail to perform a ritual or defy a taboo; this negative term casts an aspersion on the rites performed. The purpose of these rituals is to bring joy and peace to all those who take part in them, ushering in the Homowo festival. They serve as a reminder of the importance of tradition and the connection that fisherfolk have with the sea and the natural world.

The occurrence of the rites to usher in the celebration of Homowo is an indication of its value. The stakeholders of the tradition insist that the contradiction in the name of the rite be addressed. Addressing the *ɲshɔnaa onukpa* gathered for the rites, the *Sɛɛkwɛlɔ* reiterated:

Tomorrow is the day that we will undertake the tradition of going for the fish from the sea ṛshəbulemɔ. We say that but that is not what it should be, it should be said that we are going to take fish from the sea. When we say “bulemɔ” it’s a violent act which means we are spoiling something. That is not what we do during this tradition. When the fish is taken from the sea it is given to the people that it must be given to.

Over the years we have distorted this phrase. Bulemɔ means something destructive and violent. We cannot do such an act to the ocean/sea. The ocean is large and looming, we are not capable of doing anything of such manner to the ocean/sea. Thus bulemɔ is not the right phrase. We want to make this known to all coastal people. What you have to say is ‘ṛshənaa kusun’ which translates to sea ritual or Lookomɔ rites. (IDI-SK)

Naming a practice is equally as important as the processes it entails. This is because the name is a crucial aspect of its overall value. After the planting of corn and the ban on noisemaking is lifted, the rites of *Lookomɔ* take place. This is an annual traditional rite performed to send out selected fisherfolks from the seven sub-communities in Ga Mashie to catch *Tsile* the ritual fish used for the celebration of *Homowo*. The rite is centred on the bounty catch of *Tsile* for the festival; it is linked to the reverence of the sea, the *Nai* deity and all the deities of fishing that *Nii Abeo Kyerekuanda* migrated to *Akra-Accra* with from *Moree*. The bounty catch ceremony is a way for the community to express gratitude to the deities for their blessings and to seek their continued favour for a bountiful harvest in the future. This event is an important part of the community's culture and history, and it serves as a reminder of their connection to the sea and their dependence on it.

The rites take place over three days from Monday to Wednesday. The events of the first-day take place at dawn on a Monday and a select group of elders from the *Abola Wemprakwa* clan perform it. This is not open to the public and the specificities are not divulged in this writeup.

The next day, a Tuesday, the sacred day of rest for fishermen in Ga Mashie is a day of prayers and the provision of supplies for the fishermen selected to embark on the *lookɔmɔ* expedition. The Wolɛiatse meets with all the *ɲshɔnaa onukpai* from the Ga coastal communities in the Abola Wemprakwa family home; the seven sub-communities of Ga Mashie are represented at this gathering. At this gathering, prayers are offered up by the Wolɛiatse for a safe expedition and a bountiful catch of Tsile. He then proceeds to call out the sub-communities of Ga Mashie to identify their representatives to receive bottles of local gin to refresh them on their expedition. In total eight representatives are selected to embark on this expedition; eight made up of the seven Ga Mashie Akutseii of Abola, Sempe, Asere, Otublohum, Akumadje, Ngleshie, Gbese and an additional canoe referred to as the ‘Ambulance’ which acts as the backup storage canoe should there be an overflow of catch, or in the case of an emergency at sea, they are to assist the affected canoes or return to shore to render assistance.

Prior to the introduction of outboard motors the fishermen received bottles of gin as a send-off package to motivate and encourage them, presently they are given premix fuel for their motors in addition to the gin. Each canoe is provided with at least six gallons (25 litres) of premix fuel.





Figure 4.7 Sɛɛkwɛlɔ holding court and praying through libation for a successful expedition. Source: Project image





Figure 4.8 Ongoing distribution of drinks to the fishermen about to embark on the expedition.. Source: Researcher field image

At the break of dawn on Wednesday the fishermen set out to fish to receive the fish that they believe the rites performed has assured. A gathering of the elders from Abola Wemprakwa, *ηshɔnaa onukpai* from neighbouring Ga coastal communities, the fisherwomen and elders of Ga clans gather at the King *ηshɔnaa landing beach* (Jamestown harbour site) to witness the return of the fishermen with the ceremonial *Tsile* fish (See figure 4.7&4.). The duration of the wait period can provide valuable information about the fishermen's expectations and the success of the expedition. The longer the wait presupposes that the fishermen, may not received a plentiful yield. This could be due to various factors, such as poor weather conditions, overfishing, or the fish simply not being in the area. On the other hand, a shorter wait time could indicate a very successful catch. In 2022, the earliest canoe to return with *Tsile* arrived after spending approximately six hours at sea, while the last canoe arrived after approximately

thirteen hours. These were an Asere and Ngleshie Alata canoe respectively, and were the only canoes which returned with Tsile fish, all the others brought crates of smaller fish such as *amoni* and *antelɛ* (See Figure 4.11& 4.12).



Figure 4.9 Nɔ̃shɔnaa Onukpai waiting for the return of the fishermen sent on the Tsile expedition. Source: Researcher field image





Figure 4.10 Nqshonaa yei waiting for the return of the fishermen sent on the Tsile expedition. Source: Researcher field image





Figure 4.11 Antele fish, some of the catch the fishermen returned with instead of the Tsile. Source: Project images



Figure 4.12 Fishermen jokingly discussing the dire issues of overfishing and lack of Tsile. Source: Project images.



Figure 4.13 Tsile. The first catch of Tsile being inspected before a selection is given to the Abola Wemprakwa family head for the ritual . Source: Project images.

As part of the ritual, any canoe that arrives with a catch of Tsile is to throw one piece out to a group of young men waiting with large sticks to beat up the fish (see figure 4.14 & 4.15). The canoe signals by yelling out that they have caught Tsile as they approach the shore. The youth then run and grab large batons and sticks to beat the fish, as the canoe approaches the shore, a fisherman will throw out one Tsile fish onto the sand, the young men proceed to smack the fish repeatedly. Whilst smacking the fish they try to ward off the others to make way to grab the fish from the beach and run off with it. This is an all-male practise. The one who finally makes away with the fish must sprint off to a hideaway, as he is chased down by the other men who were smacking the fish with him. This aspect of the ritual is both a cleansing

and fun experience. It is noted to cleanse the shore and make way for a bountiful season. Further, the young men participating indicate that it is a practice they engage in as both a sport and a fun experience; whoever makes away with the fish is regarded as quick on their feet and a smart acquaintance for fishing.



Figure 4.14 Circled in blue, the Tsile beaten almost to pulp. Source: Project images.

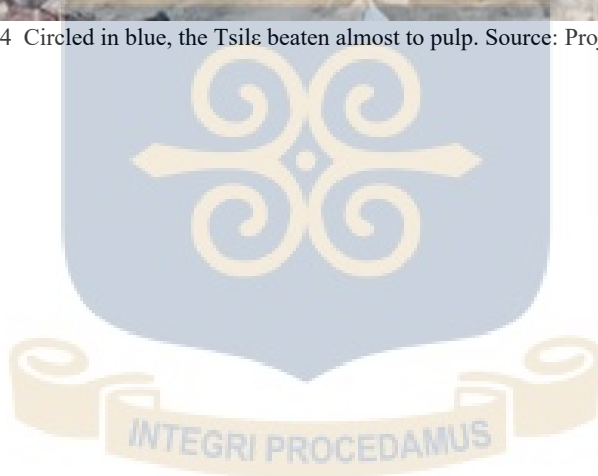




Figure 4.15 The young men at the beach beating the Tsile fish (circled in blue). Source: Source: Project images

The completing part of the ritual occurs after the catch of Tsile is brought in and presented to the *ηshɔnaa onukpai* gathered at the beach. Present at the beach is a representative from the Wemprakwa family, his duty is to deliver one of the Tsile fish back to the family home of Abola Wemprakwa. At the home the *Woleiatse* performs a specific prayer and offering with the guts of the fish at a family shrine. This completes the ritual.

Previously, the *ηshɔnaa onukpai* would all gather with the *Woleiatse* at the Wemprakwa home and share the catch amongst all the seven sub-communities of Ga Mashie. Fish was shared to the priests and leaders of the Ga state. However, over the years, the practice of sharing the fish catch among seven sub-communities and the leaders and traditional priests has been challenged by the effects of dwindling fish stock due to varied environmental and anthropogenic factors. Presently, the fish isn't shared amongst the sub-communities because there isn't enough to sufficiently go around, rather one fish is taken back to the Abola Wemprakwa family home where the rites are performed .

Blɛtsɛ *Beɛletsɛ* and the *Sɛɛkwɛlɔ* intimate that:

In the past, every Tsile catch by the Nisha fishermen was brought here to this home, with the elders of the seven communities present. They would share the fish amongst the fishermen and the seven communities, this was then smoked and used for the palm nut soup eaten with Kpokpoi for the Homowo festival. But with time, things are changing... How do you share a small Tsile among 7 communities to prepare food with? You cannot cut the tail of a small Tsile to Ga Mashie chief palace; you cannot cut the head of a small Tsile and send it to Nnae We and the same goes to the other communities we are to distribute to, so because of this we cannot distribute the Tsile for the festival like we ought to. So instead of sharing for the 7 communities to perform their own rituals, we remove the needed part of the Tsile and perform the rituals on their behalf so that everyone is covered. (IDI-ND Nii Kwadey & IDI-SK).

During the three days of the rites, it is forbidden for fish vendors and smokers to sell or smoke fresh fish. After the rites are completed all vendors and fish smokers are allowed to smoke and sell fresh fish. All residents in Ga Mashie must respect the rites, which signify the ushering in of the new traditional calendar. A male fish smoker divulged that

we help with some of their (fishermen) rituals; we pause our work when it is time to perform some of their annual rites, ritual or festival and continue when it is over. Their ritual starts from Tuesday, so it is not right to see fresh fish in town on Tuesday until the ritual is over. (IDI-M-FS- Unco Tei)

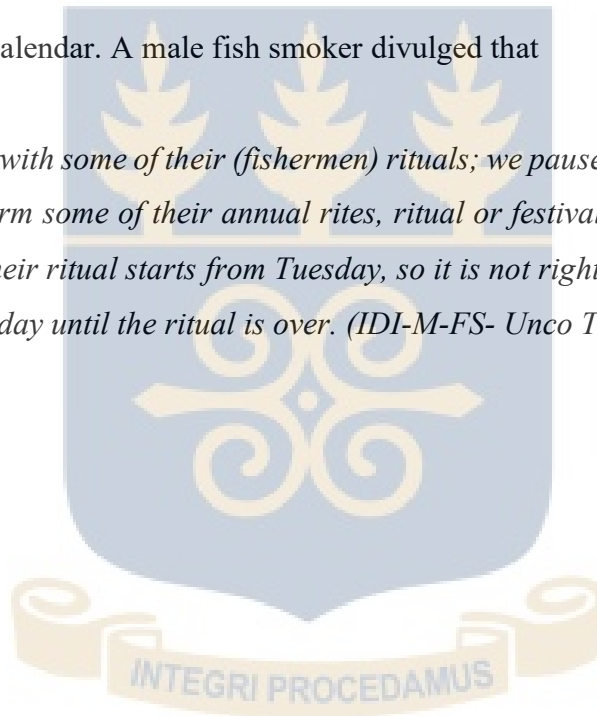




Figure 4.16 Evening approaches, the Nshonaa Onukpai await the return of the fishermen. Source: Researcher Field Image

4.3 Tsile

The ceremonial fish used to celebrate the annual festival is called Tsile. The ceremonial meal eaten during the annual festival of the Ga Homowo is Kpokpoi and Palmnut soup. This is a valuable fish that complements the food cooked. It is forbidden for ceremonial food to be cooked with meat or any other protein aside from fresh fish or smoked fish, because the Ga state has spiritual ties with the ocean and the Spirit of the ocean *Nai*. Although Tsile may be caught all year round and preserved by cold stores, it is reportedly caught in larger quantities during the season of July to September. This seasonal bounty has however changed in the past few years.

The spiritual valorisation of fish classified as Tsile has increased the value of it as a commodity on the market. It has an all-year-round value, and it hikes up during the homowo

season in August. Coupled with the gradual decline of the fish catch, its value has skyrocketed. Presently a smoked piece of Tsile on the general market is priced between Gh¢ 80-120. When sold whole it ranges between Gh¢ 900-1500 (personal communication with market women and their customers 23rd September 2022). During the festival season, most fresh fish sellers and cold store operators tend to hoard and sell the fish due to its high value. This is done to complement the dwindling catch since the fresh fish isn't enough to cater for all celebrants of Homowo. The hoarding process is widely accepted as a norm in Ga Mashie as it is prohibited for Tsile to be seen on the market between May and July of every year. During these months, the ban on noisemaking prior to the celebration of the Homowo festival is enforced. After it is lifted, the rites for the fishermen are performed in July. In addition to its tastiness and firm qualities, the increasing scarcity of *Tsile* continues to increase its value in Ga Mashie.

Sɛɛkwɛlɔ disclosed:

Tsile is a fish with great glory, a fish that doesn't disintegrate when you use it for cooking, it is very tasty, and it's a sign of abundance. When someone gives you Tsile as a gift, it's a sign of great value, it means the person values you. (IDI-SK).

Nii Asere, *ɲshɔnaa* onukpa for Asere also revealed:

In our culture, Tsile should not be seen in May unless it is around July ending You can be caught and punished. It is a ritual fish so strict rules go with it which must be obeyed...all we want is just one to celebrate our festival...we were praying to God to give us just one so when it came we were extremely happy. Because there is something in the Tsile that we remove and use for the festival ritual so when we get the Tsile, we are at peace and we celebrate because we know our festival is whole. (IDI-NAS).

To balance out this shortage of Tsile to celebrate the Homowo, fish smokers make other fish available to cook palm nut soup. Unco a male fish smoker speaks to this:

...presently it is not only Tsile we use for the festival, we use doctor fish, odaa, saflo, manɲ among others so that everyone can get some (IDI-M-FS- Unco Tei).

After careful observation and discussion with Dr. Winnie Sowah of the Department of Marine and Fisheries Science at the University of Ghana, I conclude that the Tsile fish isn't of a particular variety but representative of a group of fish with shared characteristics. These characteristics are common to the *Southern Common Sea Bream*, *Large Eye-Dentex*, *Dentex Gibbosus*, and the *African Red Snapper*. The size of these fish is similar to each other, and their meat is tough enough to endure the smoking process without disintegrating easily. This means that they are ideally suited for use in a range of smoked fish dishes, as their flesh retains its texture and flavor even after smoking.

This is an essential for the preparation quality of palm nut soup preparation takes approximately two hours. It is continually reheated after preparation; the firmness of the fish is imperative so it doesn't disintegrate during cooking and reheating. Its value is continually reiterated in the prayers offered during the lookomɔ festival;

*'...Please grant us peace of mind in all we do today
We are here to send off the fishermen to bring the fish prepared for us
To bring in the Tsile
For we cannot cook our sacred meal without Tsile
Without Tsile our meal is incomplete and tasteless
With it in the soup we have indeed cooked a sumptuous meal
Please provide Tsile for every fisherman who will set out today! (LKR-OBSV-REC-
libation prayers said by Sɛɛkwɛlɔ)*

In Irvine's (1947) records, two distinct species are noted as Tsile: the common sea bream and the large-eyed dentex. Similarly, Kwei and Ofori-Adu (2005) classify the *dentex gibossus* as Tsile, all of which fall under the Sparidae family. While the Southern Common Bream (SCB)

and dentex varieties share certain characteristics, there are noticeable variations in their physical attributes and flavour.

Despite their differences, all of these fish are excellent firm options for cooking and provide numerous nutritional benefits. They are rich in protein, omega-3 fatty acids making them a healthy addition to any diet.

Irvine documents SCB to grow to a length ranging between 35cm -75cm, with a deep pinkish-red colour, a forked yellowish tail, and large silvery scales. Large-eye dentex, *Dentex macrophthalmus* grows to a length of 90 cm. It is reddish, with traces of paler yellowish lines running along the body, its fins are all red and it bears large and protruding canine teeth at the front of both jaws (Edwards,Anthony, & Abohweyere, 2001)

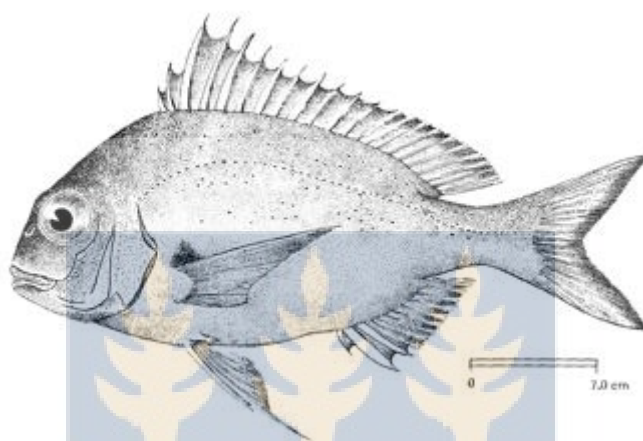
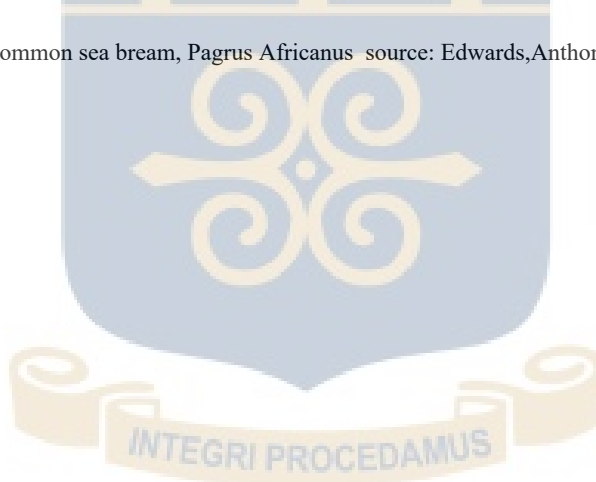


Figure 4.17 Southern common sea bream, *Pagrus Africanus* source: Edwards,Anthony, & Abohweyere 2001.



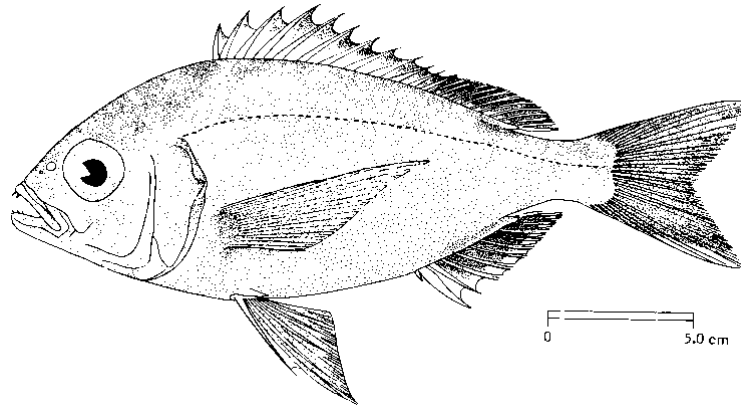


Figure 4.18 Large eyed-dentex source: Edwards, Anthony, & Abohweyere 2001



Figure 4.19 Tsile catch during the Lookomo rites, source: Source: Project images.

The fishermen complain of the dwindling catch of Tsile. This has both economic and ideological implications for the community. Tsile is recognized as the heralding fish that ushers in the traditional year and ideologically represents a bounty catch. Thus, when it is not bountifully caught it casts a foreboding of the expectations of fish harvests in the new year.

This dwindling in catch has been attributed to the consequences of illegal fishing and overfishing done by trawlers along the coast. During focus group discussions the fishermen spoke to this issue:

...as I stated everything has changed now, getting Tsile today is not an easy task. It will be a miracle to get one when we are celebrating Homowo. At first they go to sea and just in hours they are back with many Tsile but today we spend 3 to 4 days before getting one tiny Tsile to be used for rituals (FGD-NFM-Nii.3).

I will add a little to what my brother said because all he said is the truth. Previously as soon as Tsile comes kankaama follows then several other fishes follow. Now getting these fishes is hard, even getting amone is a huge problem now (FGD-NFM - Nuumo).

4.4 *ηshɔnaa* Yei

In Ga Mashie, the women play a vital role in the harvest and post-harvest processes of artisanal marine fishing. The women who are actively engaged in the affairs of fishing are called *ηshɔnaa yei*. They are an organized group of women led by an *ηshɔnaa yei onukpa* who manages the women who trade in fish by the shore. The women are primarily responsible for the distribution of a catch, processing, and trade of fish. Different from the Local variations of the female traditional authority of Woleianye *Woleianye (mother of fishermen)* in Tema recorded by Odotei (2003), their role is not equivalent to the *wolɛiatsɛ*, their authority does not extend to the management of the affairs of fishermen.

Like the position of *wolɛiatsɛ*, the *ηshɔnaa yei onukpa* position is inherited through the Ator family line connected to the Abola Wemprakwa family. Naa Bessa Mami the current *ηshɔnaa yei onukpa* intimates;

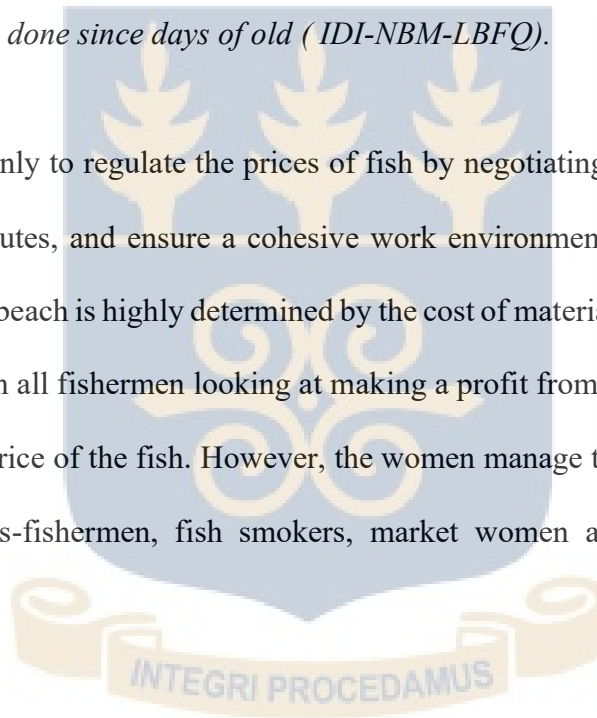
Yes, leadership was handed over to me because of the house and lineage I belong to. My elder sisters were the first females to settle around here so they were the leaders

who handed over to each other as they grew old till it was handed over to me... Should any dispute occur we are to settle it amicably. If people get into a fight, we call them together and we settle the dispute. We don't fight and don't curse each other. Here in Jamestown, because we settled here earlier, my elder sisters played that role till handed it over to me. This and more are the roles I play till now (IDI-NBM-LBFQ-Naa Bessa Mami).

The women are highly regarded as partners in the fishing tradition and industry, they wield the noble honour of outdoorizing a newly elected Wolɛiatɛ, and they are required to perform rites when he passes on. They are considered as matrons in the fishing community as they oversee and manage the various aspects of the industry who employ and sustain large numbers of women, men and children and have important role in the small-scale processing and distribution of fish. They play a crucial role in the small-scale processing and distribution of fish, contributing significantly to the local economy. Naa Bessa Mami continues to disclose

On the day of the lookomɔ rites the fishermen are provided with petrol to go and fish, when they return they give a share to the head fishermen as a token because they provided the fuel, afterwards the fishermen give us the women remaining catch. That's how it has been done since days of old (IDI-NBM-LBFQ).

The leaders role is mainly to regulate the prices of fish by negotiating with the fishermen and their wives, settle disputes, and ensure a cohesive work environment(see Figure 4.20). The price of fish sold at the beach is highly determined by the cost of materials used by the fishermen and the fish catch. With all fishermen looking at making a profit from their catch, they may be mandated to hike the price of the fish. However, the women manage to negotiate fair prices to ensure all stakeholders-fishermen, fish smokers, market women and consumers are duly satisfied.



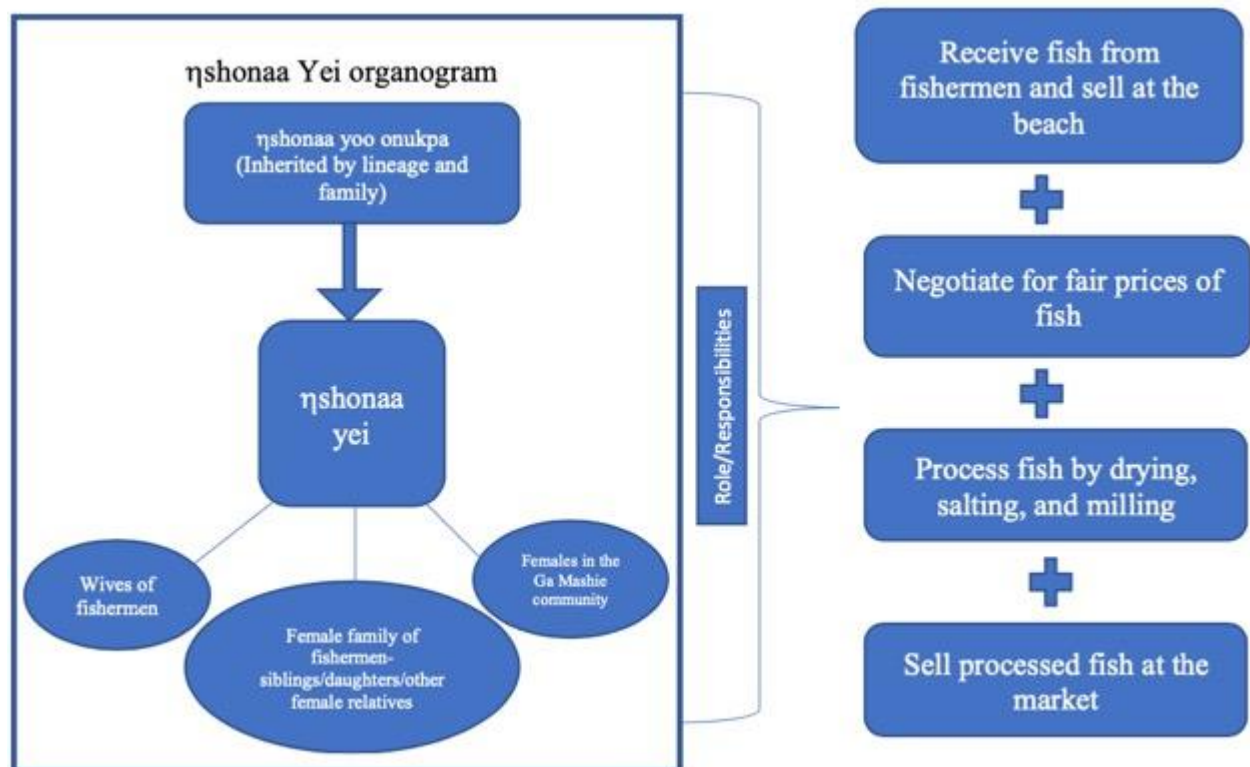


Figure 4.20 Women at the beach- nshonaa yei Organogram, roles and responsibilities.

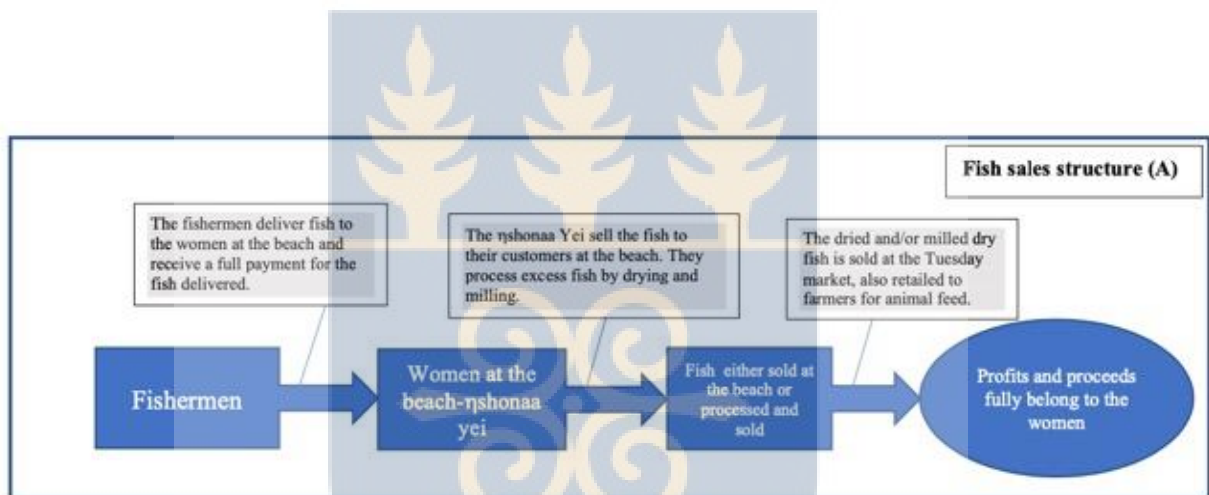


Figure 4.21 Fish Sales Structure A

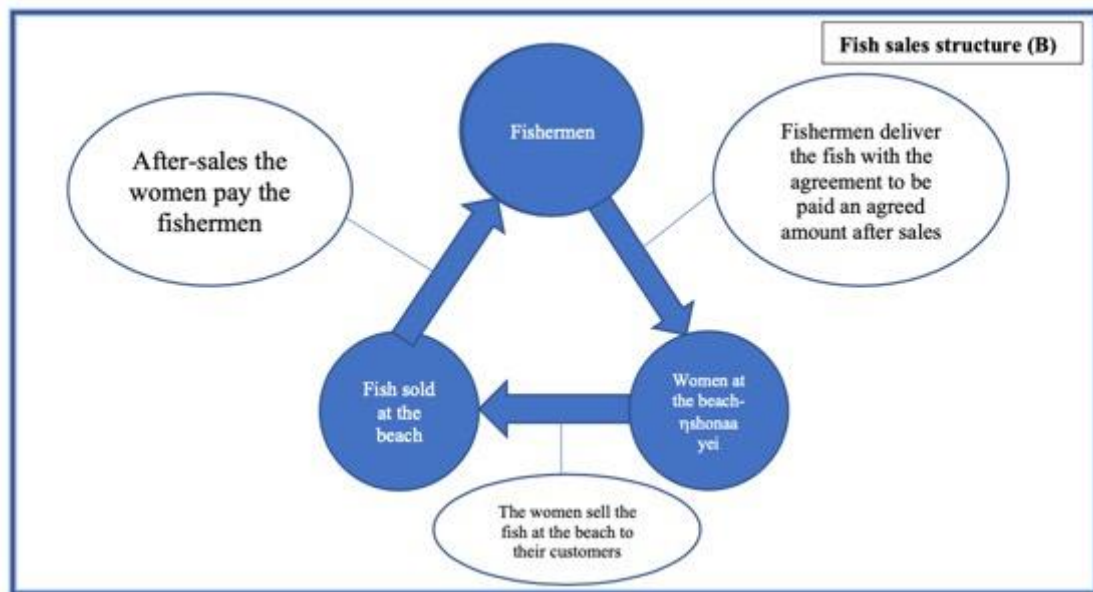


Figure 4.22 Fish sales structure B.

Fish sales are managed in a systematic manner based on two identified structures; either on credit or paid upfront (See Figures 4.20, 4.21, 4.22). The women receive the fish from the fishermen, they either pay for it wholly or agree to pay after selling to their customers. Should they pay after selling to their customers they agree on a price and after sales they share the profit with the fishermen. Prices are negotiated based on the expenses already incurred by the fishermen to go out fishing. This makes prices unstable, and the same kind of fish may be sold at different prices during the day depending on the bountiful nature or otherwise of the fisherman's catch upon return to shore. In the cases where the women pay the money upfront for the fish, they operate with flexibility in sales and apply diversity in managing the catch as they are not pressured to pay the fisherman immediately. Naa Bessa Mami and Maggie at different interview sessions explains,

this is how it works, so if my husband goes to sea and brings fish then I will take it and sell. Same as my sister here if her husband brings fish, she will take and go sell to her

customers. If my bother or brother or in-law brings fish to shore, I can buy some to sell and if my sister is interested she can also come and buy some to sell. We either sell at the shore or if we have customers, we go and supply to them. (FGD-LB-FW-Maggie).

Our sales, it is like a chain system where my husband, brother or father who is a fisherman goes to sea and brings me fish, I sell and make some money then I give him his part. The one I sell to also sells to others who also sell or consume. (IDI-NBM-LBFQ -Naa Bessa Mami).

They apply diverse processes such as drying of fish and milling of some dried fish varieties. The fish drying is done along the streets of Ga Mashie, fish is layered along the pavements of the intersection drive into Ga Mashie, engulfing human and vehicular traffic with a pleasing consuming aroma of fresh fish (see Table 4.1). The dried and milled dry fish are then sold at the Tuesday market. The Tuesday market is the largest processed fish market in Accra, it is located at Mamprobi approximately 3.4 km away from Ga Mashie. Naa Bessa Mami explained,

We get all kinds of fish like boe-boe, antele, amoni, manɲ and many more. We dry the amoni and antele. If the boe-boe is in season then we dry it...we sell some and dry the rest to preserve them. When they are well dried, we take them to Tuesday market and sell. We sell them ourselves.

When the fish is plenty, we sell and dry the rest like I was doing before I was called to come see you now. So, we dry the fish in the open to dry then we collect them, and then we separate to sell to customers. We sell some to chicken farmers, and to those who rear pigs. Previously the fish called amoni wasn't consumed, but now we eat it so we sell it to people from the Volta region, they buy and send it off to far-off places. (IDI-NBM-LBFQ).

Collectively the women operate a beachside enterprise, utilizing makeshift structures comprising umbrellas and either stools or plastic chairs. They procure freshly caught fish directly from local fishermen and store their wares in a variety of vessels including large silver basins, pans, and a white plastic container commonly referred to as the 'wachapo' (a derivation

from 'White Chapel'). They also offer to clean and fillet the fish for their customers, providing a valuable service to the community. The enterprise has become a popular spot for both locals and tourists who appreciate the freshness and quality of the seafood and the friendly service provided by the women. Their containers were previously wooden crates and baskets, which were affordable to purchase. They truncated use of these tools for two main reasons, firstly, their frequent contact with water resulted in their early deterioration and secondly the fishermen complained that the containers were large and affected the pricing of fish, as the fish were priced per container. The 'wachapo' plastic containers currently in use are smaller in size and more sustainable, a respondent discloses:

in the olden days we used woven basket to sell the fish, we used wooden box to collect the fish by removing our slippers and entering the water then we drop the box into the canoe after stretching our hands to give the money to the fisherman. Then some of the boys called hustlers on the ship will carry the box full of fish to the shore then they pour it into the wooden basket for us to sell. This is how we used to do it in the past. For now, we do not use the wooden box anymore because the fishermen complain that the box is a cheat which makes them run at a loss so we stopped using it and rather we use wachapo. So, if you want to represent us at the museum, please make sure this wooden box is represented because that was the beginning of how fisherwomen moved their fish from the canoe to the basket to sell. There have been changes over the years, the first change is that at first, they poured the fish on the ground when they get to shore, so you carry your basin and join the crowd so that when your husband's name who is also a fisherman is mentioned, you quickly collect the portion assigned you. From the basin we moved to basket so please make sure the basin, wooden basket and box is represented before these wachapo we use now. (FGD-LB-FW-Ellen Botchway).

They remain at the beach until the last group of canoes return with fish. Whilst they wait for the canoes, they entertain themselves with songs. These songs are considered as an intricate part of their work routine. During the research, a group of seven women sang a collection of

their most sung tunes that keep them entertained whilst they wait for the return of the canoes. According to them, the majority of their songs or ditties are vulgar and obscene. This is typical of fishing communities in Ghana, where obscene language is casually used in conversations. These folk songs they make reference to were 'passed' on from their 'mothers' whom they apprenticed with. These songs serve as a jukebox that memorializes the events of the past. The folk songs have their roots in the beach's social community and the workers' lives, with simple, repetitive verses. The songs originate from the workers' everyday lives and social interactions at the beach, with simple and repetitive stanzas that are easy to memorize. They explore themes of fishing, gender equality, sex, wealth, and long-distance trade.

The following three songs were selected for interrogation in the thesis, they were selected because they represent the values of hard work and embody an identity carved around fishing.

1. Ga

Awo mei ηsho λεεω

Ataa mei ηsho λεεω

ελεεω eee fεε keje owula yi no ee!

ηsho ni λεεω

English Translation

our dear mothers it is the sea that feeds us

our dear fathers it is the sea that feeds us

it feeds us all, it feeds the learned and us all!

the sea feeds us

The lyrics of this repetitive song, describe a deep regard for the sea and its produce. The song indicates that the sea serves all humankind in a generous way. The text briefly touches upon the theme of class and its relation to fishing as a profession. The line "it feeds us all, it feeds the learned and us all" suggests that fishing is often viewed as a profession of the uneducated, and that it serves as a means of sustenance for individuals from all social classes. The portrayal of fishing in this manner highlights the complex issues of class and socioeconomic status that exist within society. The economic and dietary value of the ocean is another theme of this short song. In stating the obvious value of the ocean, the song carries an undertone of a warning and a caution to the way the ocean has been treated over the years regarding issues of plastic pollution

and toxic waste. In reminding all classes of society that the ocean is a major source of food and economic value the song carries subtle notes of warning of issues that can disrupt this value of the ocean.

2. Ga
wɔjɛ Akosombo wɔ ba

beni wɔ shɛ Avaana

akɛ poli ɛgbe loo

English translation
we were returning from Akosombo

when we reached Avaana

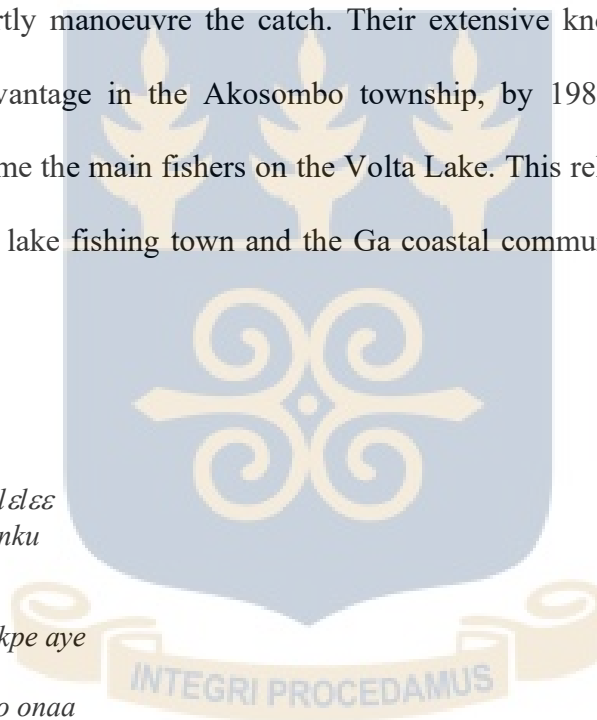
we received news saying “poli has brought in fish”

The lyrics of this repetitive verse narrates the journey and the connections of trade they have with several fishing communities. They mention Akosombo and Avaana (Havannah), the former is a fishing community along the Volta lake, and the latter is a bus stop on the route to and from Accra to Akosombo. Akosombo welcomed groups of migrants from Ga and Fanti coastlands who settled permanently and seasonally in the villages. These coastal fishers were more experienced on the open lake, using outboard motors and monofilament nets which enabled them to expertly manoeuvre the catch. Their extensive knowledge with the ocean allowed them due advantage in the Akosombo township, by 1980 these migrant coastal communities had become the main fishers on the Volta Lake. This relationship of contact and migration between the lake fishing town and the Ga coastal community is alluded to in this song.

3. Call: *Jiji Kplɛɛɛ*
Response: *Gbemi yɛɛ banku*

Call : *Ahunta ahu*
Response: *Adomashi aakpe aye*

Call : *kɛ ɛsheko onaa*
Response: *tɛɛ shi*



This recital is an appellation that precedes every song sung and also said in unison by the women. It is a motivational verse spoken with vigour in a call-and-response fashion, and sometimes recited in unison. The first call “Jiji Kplele” speaks about the large size of a pap made from dehydrated cassava commonly referred to by Ga communities as *Jiji*. It is commonly eaten with soup or pepper sauce with fish. The first response ‘*Gbemi yee banku*’ literally means the ‘vagina doesn’t eat banku’ banku is a pap made from fermented corn dough. The next call ‘*Ahunta ahu*’ means we are in a battle, it is responded to with ‘*Adomashi aakpe aye*’, which means people(witches) envy what we do and our success. The final call and response, ‘*ke esheko onaa.tee shi*’ is translated to mean ‘if you are not satisfied with what you have, then get up, move on and get doing!’

This recitation is known as ‘*Sabla*’ in the Ga language- explained to mean ‘an appellation’ in English. It’s a motivational saying by the women to discourage laziness and envy. The first two lines of the *sabla*, are interpreted as there is a need to work hard for the ‘vagina’, which here represents a woman must survive and thrive. Expressing the thought that you cannot survive on whoring, or that a female’s worth is more than her sexuality, thus females cannot depend on a man to survive. It is followed by a call to arise and press on, which is responded to with a statement meaning the envy of people does not perturb us. It ends with a statement to these people of envy that if they are not satisfied with their current lifeways they should equally arise and work.

4.5 Fish Smoking and Preservation/Drying

Fish smoking and drying processes

Smoking fish is one of the key processes of the preservation of fish within the Ga Mashie community. The process of smoking fish has been an intricate part of fishing within the community. Practically all species of fish available in the country can be smoked, and it has

been estimated that 70–80% of the domestic marine catch is consumed in smoked form. In Ghana, the smoked fishery sector plays a major role in terms of employment creation, income generation and food security. In Ga Mashie the marine fish species commonly processed by smoking include *Opoku*, *Onyankle*, *Kpanla*, *Tsile*, *Odoe*, *Saman*, *Saflo* (see table 1)

Fish smoking is an occupation practised by both males and females within the community, although the male population is quite scanty. I located only one male who identifies as a fish smoker within the community during the research, the others apparently are viewed as assistants to their wives or mothers who smoke fish, but do not categorically identify as fish smokers.

Smoking fish is a post-harvest activity which is as equally as important as the harvest process of fishing. The women that participate in smoking fish are relevant to the economic growth of the community and the country because they double up as market women selling the smoked fish at the market, specifically the Tuesday market in Mamprobi a suburb of Accra.

In Ga Mashie, the fish-smoking community is recognised as a part of the fishing network in Ga Mashie. Although they don't take part in any traditional rites and rituals concerning fishing they contribute to the sustainability of the heritage of fishing. In most cases, they don't deal directly with the fishermen, however, they deal directly with the revered and preferred fish *Tsile*. They assist in making sure that the regulations concerning the traditional rites performed before the traditional festival are adhered to. To do this, they halt their work during the period of the ban of noise-making, and the season of preparation towards the annual festival of Homowo. At these times of the year the sale of fresh fish within the community is prohibited.

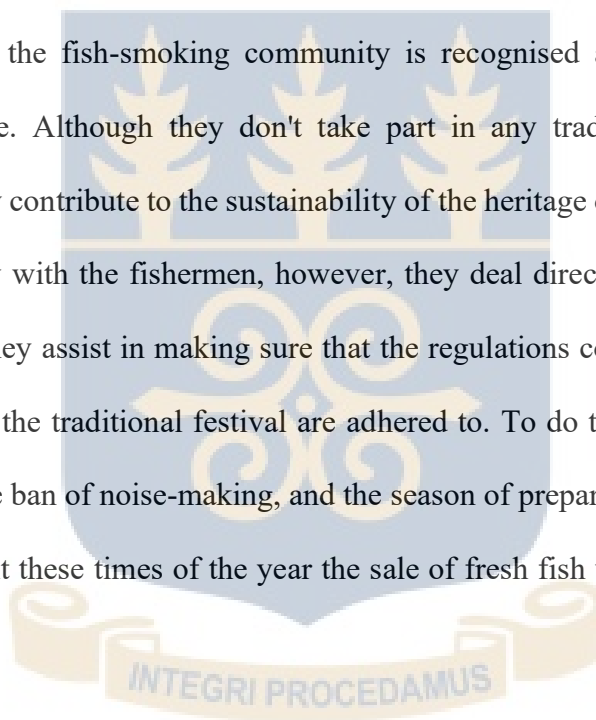
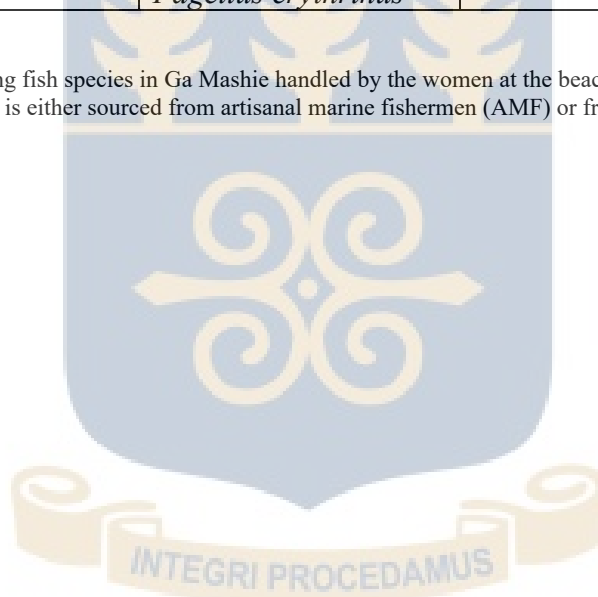


Table 1: Commonly occurring fish species in Ga Mashie, handled by the Women at the beach (WAB) and the Fish Smokers (FS). Sourced from either the Artisanal Marine Fishermen (AMF) or from Cold Stores.

Ga name	English name	Fish species	Process & processor	Sources
<i>Amoni- “Keta school-boys”</i>	Anchovy	<i>Engraulis encrasicolus</i>	Drying, Milling /WAB	AMF
<i>Kaŋkama, maŋ</i>	Round sardinella	<i>Sardinella aurita</i>	Drying, Milling /WAB	AMF
<i>Antele</i>	Atlantic bumper	<i>Chloroscombrus chrysurus</i>	Drying /WAB	AMF
<i>Opoku(1)</i>	Atlantic little tuna	<i>Euthynnus alletteratus</i>	Smoking/ FS	AMF/Cold store
<i>Onyankle</i>	Marlin	<i>Istiophorus</i> sp	Smoking/FS	AMF/Cold store
<i>Kpanla</i>	Atlantic horse mackerel	<i>Trachurus trachurus</i>	Smoking/FS	AMF/Cold store
<i>Tsile</i>	Pink dentex, Southern common sea bream, African red snapper.	<i>Dentex gibbosus</i> , <i>Pagrus Africanus</i> , <i>Pagrus Pagrus</i> , <i>Lutjanus agennes</i>	Smoking/FS	AMF/Cold store
<i>Odoe</i>	European barracuda	<i>Sphyraena sphyraena</i>	Smoking /FS	AMF/Cold store
<i>Pamplobaa</i>	Scad	<i>Decapterus</i> sp	Drying/WAB	AMF
<i>Opoku (2)</i>	Frigate tuna	<i>Auxis thazard</i>	Smoking/FS	AMF/Cold store
<i>Saman</i>	Chub mackerel	<i>Scomber japonicus</i>	Smoking/FS	AMF/Cold store
<i>Boe-boe</i>	Bigeye grunt	<i>Brachydeuterus auritus</i>	Drying/WAB	AMF
<i>Saflo</i>	Spanish mackerel	<i>Scomberomorus tritor</i>	Smoking	AMF
<i>Kanfla</i>	Long-finned herring	<i>Ilisha melanota</i>	Drying	AMF
<i>Yiwa</i>	Red fish	<i>Pagellus erythrinus</i>	-	AMF

Table 4. 1 Commonly occurring fish species in Ga Mashie handled by the women at the beach (WAB) and the fish smokers (FS). The fish is either sourced from artisanal marine fishermen (AMF) or from cold stores.



4.5.1 The smoking process

The fish smokers' community in Ga Mashie smoke only marine species, because they identify as the key preservers of fish within the community. They don't smoke river species nor fresh water species because their training does not extend to that, and for years they have been complementing the fishing industry within Ga Mashie by smoking only marine species.



Figure 4.23 Salmon on the grill in Ga Mashie fish smokers. Source: Project images



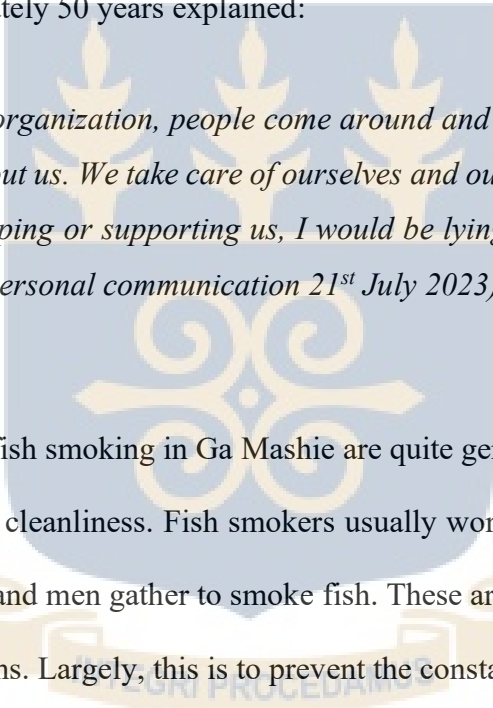


Figure 4.24 Uncle Tei, fish smoker, cutting 'Sawara' tuna fish for smoking. Source: Project images

Fish smoking in Jamestown takes two main forms. In the first form, the fish is smoked fully without it being cut up into manageable sizes. This pertains to species such as *saman* and the smaller version of *Odoe*. In the second form, the fish is chopped into smaller pieces. This is done for large fish such as Tsile, Odaa and other large varieties of fish. The male fish smoker I spoke to indicated that he's presently a leader in the profession, specialising in fish cutting within the community. He has been practising this for close to 60 years, and he was introduced to it as a child.

4.5.2 Rules and regulations

The fish smokers within the community do not belong to an organised group, which can be identify as an authority over them and their practice. However, each of the sub-communities within Ga Mashie have groups of people that smoke fish. Although there is a state-run organisation for fish preservers, the National Fish Preservers and Traders association (NAFPTA) established in March 2015. This is a membership organization of fish processors and traders operating small and medium scale fisheries businesses in Ghana with a present membership of approximately 15000 persons. NAFPTA is also a member of African Women Fish Processors and Traders Network. (AWFishNet), a network of women fish processors and traders from the African Union member states. It appears the women have been approached on several occasions to become members of NAFPTA, however, they have not committed to the organization. From my observation I gather, there is an anticipation that the NAFPTA organization and all others that come around must demonstrate monetary commitment to support their fish smoking trade and profession. Rebecca Annang a fish smoker who has been smoking fish for approximately 50 years explained:



We don't have any organization, people come around and ask us many questions, they leave and forget about us. We take care of ourselves and our business... if I tell you that there is a group helping or supporting us, I would be lying, we take care of ourselves (Rebecca Annang, personal communication 21st July 2023).

The management rules for fish smoking in Ga Mashie are quite general and related to issues of hygiene and environmental cleanliness. Fish smokers usually work in groups, in a designated location where the women and men gather to smoke fish. These areas should be void of things like lavatories and bathrooms. Largely, this is to prevent the constant running of unclean water

through the area, mixing up with the water used for cleaning and washing fish. This is a key regulation due to the lack of well-laid drainage systems in Ga Mashie.

Fish smoking is a beneficial preservative approach to fish management. In addition to providing an enhanced tasty flavour and variety of fish, it prolongs shelf life, offers more storage options making fish easier to pack, transport, and market; it reduces waste. Fish smoking increases versatility in cooking soups and sauces and leads to the availability of affordable protein all year round. However, there are several health implications for the smokers from the constant exposure to the smoke produced during the process. Although the process is done in an open area to create as much room for the smoke to be blown away, the women do not work with face coverings nor protective clothing.



Figure 4.25 Cold store fish ready for smoking in Ga Mashie. Source: Project images





Figure 4.26 Fish smoking community in Ga Mashie. Source: Project images



4.5.3 The tools/equipment

Three main tools used for fish smoking in the Ga Mashie community. These are the ovens made from repurposed metal oil barrels and sheets; firewood; wide wooden board, mesh, aluminium deep bowl/pans, and kerosene. The materials for the equipment's are locally sourced and often recycled materials from within the local community.



Figure 4.27 Smoked chopped Tsile fish. Source: Project images

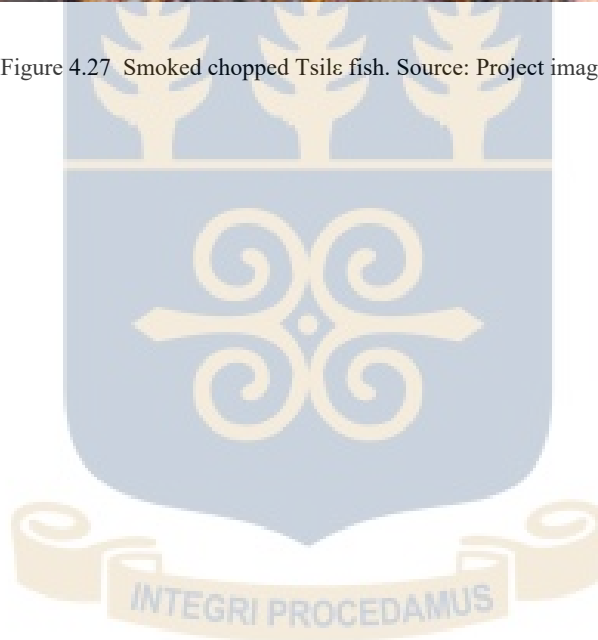




Figure 4.28 Firewood in the oven, in preparation for fish smoking. Source: Project images



Figure 4.29 Firewood packed at the fish smoking site, covered with plastic to prevent it from getting wet when it rains. Source: Project images



Figure 4.30 Salmon being arranged for smoking on the oven. Source: Project images





Figure 4.31 Flat boards used for covering the fish in the smoking process. Source: Project images

4.6 Canoes of Ga Mashie

Substantial work and research have been done on the materials used by fisher folks along the coast of Ghana (Lawson, 1968; Oneil, 1991; Acheampong, 2007). Artisanal fishery is mainly operated from beaches by means of wooden canoes and fishing nets. There are three types of canoe in Ghana ranging from 3 to 5 m small dugout canoes mainly propelled by paddle, through medium 6 to 11 m wooden canoes propelled by paddle, sail and outboard engine, to large 12 to 18 m wooden canoes mainly motorized by outboard engines. The most commonly used nets in artisanal fishing are the purse and beach seines locally known as the poli and watsa and the driftnets locally known as Ali, Man ali and Obue Ali.

The study revealed that the community identify with the canoe as part of the materiality of their heritage. Reflectively, these materials are the core instruments of their practice. There are other materials used by fishermen, the outboard motors, the paddles for those who still maintain the non-mechanised act of artisanal fishing, cooking equipment and legal light

fixtures, used by those who engage in long-distance expeditions. Thus, it was not surprising they repeatedly refer to these two materials as material expressions of their heritage. As intimated earlier, the topic of artisanal marine fishing tools has been extensively documented, by Odotei (1993) and Overå (1988). There are various nets, and each of these nets play a specific role or serves a particular purpose. The data indicates that they do not identify with a singular particular fishnet or canoe as material heritage, but, all in totality. The care and maintenance of canoes are a requisite skill to be valued as a fisherman. The knowledge is passed on through observation and practise.

Ga Mashie is noted for two main types of canoes, the poli/ ali/ watsa canoes and the lagas (line fishing). The canoes using poli (pursing nets) are the largest, approximately 12–18 m long and 1.30–1.80m wide, they are the crew responsible for the Tsile catch. These canoes are solely propelled by outboard engines, and can also be used in operating Ali and watsa nets. The Ali canoes are 6–11 m long and 70–100 cm wide, they are used in operating bottom set and floating gillnets, they are propelled by either paddles, sail and outboard engines.

The “Lagas” canoes specialize in hook and line fishing. The fishermen stay out at sea for a maximum of a week targeting large groundfish (demersal fish species) such as snappers, breams and groupers within rocky bottoms and crevices which they preserve in insulated coolers and containers. The canoe size is approximately 12.0 – 18.5m long. The canoes are carved and manufactured from Wawa (*Triplochiton scleroxylon*) and Onyina (*Ceiba petandra*).

The motorization of canoes started in 1959. Odotei (2002) extensively documents the pros and cons of the introduction of the outboard motors unto the Ga coast, issues that are still prevalent in the community. The cost of motors is increasingly high and loan schemes to acquire them are a burden on fishermen, while the issues of pre-mix fuel continue to burden the fishermen. Unfortunately, other issues such as climate change and illegal fishing activities have

reduced fish stock, thus fishermen struggle with increasing their wealth. The most common outboard engines currently used by the Ghanaian fishermen are Chrysler, Yamaha and Johnson in the 25–30 hp range.

4.6.1 The artistic and stylistic expressions of Ga Mashie canoes



Figure 4.32 Canoe inscribed with ‘‘Thank You God’’ and a club (stylised clover) pictogram. Source: Researcher field images

Canoes are more than mere vessels for navigating waterways; they hold a special significance in fishing communities with rich historical and cultural roots or associations. Each detail of a canoe, including the symbols and engravings adorning its surface as well as its role in economic, religious, and political spheres, contributes to a larger narrative.

Similar to public transport vehicles in Ghana (Quayson, 2014), canoes in Ga Mashie are not only a means of transportation but also an expression of creativity and cultural identity. The canoes are adorned with colourful patterns and designs, and inscribed with catchy slogans that

touch on diverse themes, ranging from politics and social issues to religion and entertainment; slogans are associated with designs of motivational messages, insults and insinuations, bible verses, and warnings. As Quayson (2014, p. 129-158; 2022, p. 965-984) observes, these slogans convey the hopes, convictions, and principles of individuals and communities, serving as a means of communication that fosters connection. While these statements may appear straightforward, their true meanings are often complex and nuanced, due to the intricate polysemous and multilingual nature of the texts which require careful interpretation.

Agbenu (2011) extensively addresses the processes of canoe carving, sales and maintenance in his Ph.D. Dissertation on Ga and Adangbe canoe culture: a composite art form for studio practice exploration at the Department of Painting and Sculpture Kumasi: Kwame Nkrumah University of Science and Technology. In this comprehensive work, he highlights the journey of a piece of wood from log to canoe and the various changes the raw material experiences to be a functional tool. Furthermore, being eager to call attention to the achievement of the Ghanaian canoe carvers and canoe painters, these few art educationist and artist researchers have often referred to canoe art (thus canoe carving and painting) rather as canoe decoration (that is embellishment of canoe) with canoe as a monumental sculpture. This is a superficial level of understanding canoe art and has led many such as Verrips (2002) to extend their investigations into its sociological dimensions

The study of canoes is a fascinating field beyond examining their physical attributes. It delves into the intricate cultural and social significance they hold. By exploring the diverse aspects of canoes, we can gain a deeper insight into fishing communities' rich heritage and traditions. A closer examination of these fascinating vessels can help us understand the profound connections between canoes and the lives of those who rely on them for their livelihoods and cultural identity.

Taluah and Musah (2015) looked at the linguistic features of vehicle inscriptions and found that they can be analysed as a form of moving poetics. They can be manifest in three ways. The Ministry of Fisheries has implemented a system to regulate the affairs of Artisanal fishermen. As part of this system, each canoe is inscribed with a unique licensing number. The licensing plates seen on the canoes, painted on by the Ministry of Food and Agriculture (MoFAD) serve as identity markers of the canoes. This number serves as an identification tool, allowing officials to keep track of each canoe's activities and ensure that they comply with regulations. By enforcing these regulations, the Ministry of Fisheries helps to protect the environment and maintain the sustainability of the fishing industry.



Figure 4.33 Canoe inscribed with pictograms and inscriptions. Source: Project images

Inscriptions on the canoes have several and varied themes. They also include pictograms which are mostly in the shape of clubs. Using slogans and motivational statements that personify canoes suggests that these vessels are not just seen as economic instruments but as objects that hold deeper meaning and significance to the community, these messages have varied implications and interpretations. Some are for inspiration and motivation the fishermen and their team. Others are family inscriptions that enables people to identify the family you belong to, reminding them of the importance of their journey and the beauty of nature that surrounds them. This use of language highlights the emotional and spiritual connection that individuals have with their canoes and the natural world, elevating them beyond their practical purpose. Some of the inscription on the boats in Ga Mashie are:

God win Yo Wa Kwε- God wins, we live to see

Anukwale Malεε- The truth doesn't lie

Thank you, God,

Dza Nyumε- God over everything

Wolεε akε yaa woo- Fishermen are the ones who fish

The themes of the boat inscriptions include, motivational biblical texts, family names, messages of encouragement, in Ga, and the recurrent 'club' symbol which they interpreted to mean a symbol of hard work, good luck, and good fortune (The club symbol is a stylised clover leaf, which leaf, is a symbol of good luck) . These names and slogans are peculiar to each canoe, none is allowed to be replicated by another family or individual, as it forms a unique identity.

In addition to the licensing numbers, most canoes are marked with numbers to indicate their generational position, with the first generation of that canoe being marked with number one and the family slogan or name, the next generation boat either succeeded by the son or nephew of the first-generation owner will indicate their canoe with the family slogan and the

number two. This follows suit for every generation of canoe holders within the family line of the family head or individual who owned the first canoe.



Figure 4.31 Fisheries ministry licensing number displayed. Source: Project images





Figure 4.32 Canoe with pictogram of Ga Samai? Number 3 is indicative of the number of the boat in the owner's fleet.
Source Project Images





Figure 4.34 Canoes inscribed with club symbols and text. Source: Project Images



CHAPTER FIVE

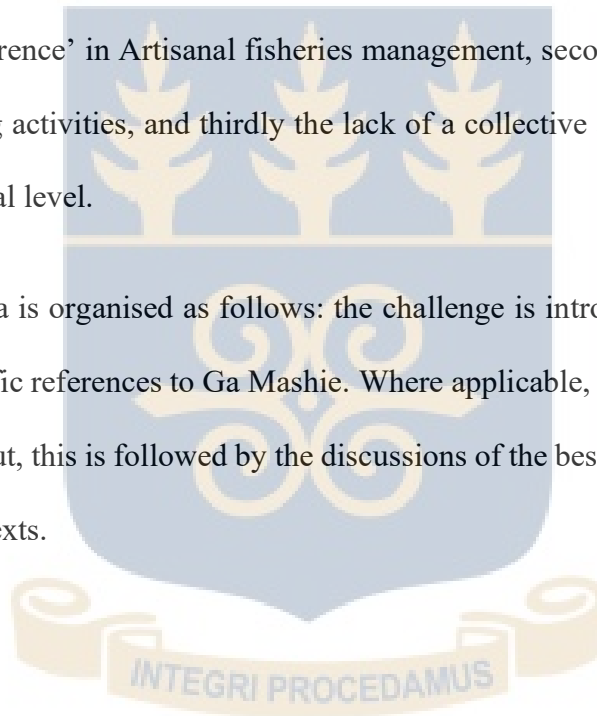
FISHING HERITAGE DYNAMICS

5.0 Introduction

This chapter combines data collected from the field and archival studies, to address objectives two and three of this research. These objectives seek to identify what challenges the community members indicate that may inhibit the progression of fishing as their heritage presently and possibly truncate it. Secondly it addresses what traditional mitigative methods the community members have identified as measures to curb the challenges identified.

Contrary to common assumptions in conservation science literature, small-scale fishing livelihoods are affected by intricate social, political, and material processes. As will be further pointed out, their challenges are not just centred on declining fish stocks, and the technology needed to secure a good catch (Kadfak & Oskarsson 2020, p.237-245). The respondents identified a host of challenges which have been sub-grouped into three main themes, these are firstly political ‘interference’ in Artisanal fisheries management, secondly Illegal Unregulated and Unreported fishing activities, and thirdly the lack of a collective approach to the fisheries management at the local level.

In this chapter, data is organised as follows: the challenge is introduced, and discussed in general and with specific references to Ga Mashie. Where applicable, the traditional mitigative methods are detailed out, this is followed by the discussions of the best practices or approaches as seen in similar contexts.



5.0 Political Negotiations, Interference, and Fishing Polity

5.1 Overview

The sub-themes within political interference border on bridging the gap between community and government concerning closed fishing seasons, this is a nagging complaint from the community members. Community members consistently lament how the implementation of the closed season impedes their work and economically hampers them. Furthermore, issues of political interference are seen in the issues surrounding the construction of the Jamestown harbour. Although there is a general appreciation for the construction of the harbour, there also exists the tensions and uncertainties concerning the future of artisanal marine fisherfolks in the community. There also exists physical constraints on their work and living spaces due to the loss of the old fishing community. I identified a threefold loss regarding the construction of the harbour. Firstly, the loss of the site that has historically played a role in fishing rites in Ga Mashie, secondly, the relocation to an unfavourable limiting workspace that results in canoes being destroyed during strong windy weather conditions, adversely affecting their work output and profit margins. Thirdly, the physical stress to manoeuvre the site to which they have been allocated and the displacement of the community members have scattered some members of the demolished fishing community.

5.1.0 Contested issues of waterfront re-developments, port re-developments and expansions

Waterfront redevelopment projects are fast becoming a global phenomenon along coastlines (Avni, 2017; Avni & Teschner, 2019). In addition to their aesthetic appeal, they are recommended as a sure tourism strategy. Recent port developments and expansions in Ghana aim to modernise and unlock the country's economic growth opportunities through maritime trade Ghana Ports and Harbours Authority (GPHA ,2022). In line with these visions, the

government has adopted neoliberal port strategies to achieve this ambitious economic development plan, including increased private sector participation and adopting international regulations and standards to improve port operational efficiency and increase trade competitiveness (GPHA, 2022). For instance, private sector investments are spearheading a USD 1.5 billion expansion of the Port of Tema and a USD 475 million expansion of the Port of Takoradi (GPHA, 2022). Ghana joined this global wave by initiating three key coastal projects, these are the Marine drive project (2017), the Elmina Heritage Bay project (2018), and the Jamestown harbour project (2020). However, in the wake of waterfront redevelopment and port expansion craze, local coastal communities are in a state of precarity and uncertainty. Local coastal communities have been either displaced or removed from within the port areas, some for the short term during the construction period, whilst others are completely displaced, others remain in a state of precarity, unsure what their fate will be after the introduction of 'high cultural' tastes into their familiar landscape. Whichever the time frame or period, these small-scale fishing communities are substantially affected and economically deprived as a result of these projects.

The 'Jamestown Harbour' project was commissioned in December 2018 by the president of Ghana. It is estimated to be a \$60 million project funded by the Chinese government ("Citi News; AMA demolishes structures at Jamestown to pave way for Fishing Harbour project", 2021). The president of Ghana, standing at *King Nshona* the project site, stated that the project had been on the drawing board since 1965-alluding to the Marine drive development project planned by the Nkrumah-led government. He further elaborated that after five failed attempts at initiation, this would be the one that will see fruition due to the funding secured from the Chinese government. The sod cutting was followed by the demolition of the Jamestown fishing community in May 2020; with over 400 structures, including homes, work sheds, orthodox and traditional religious spaces, and schools destroyed (Malkoc 2020, p.4-15).

Consequently, members of the community were moved to *Dogo* beach on the outskirts of Jamestown, close to the Korle lagoon. The government authorities after demolition split the community into two groups, the working and the residency. The working crew was relocated to the Ussher landing beach and the residency moved to Dogo beach (on the outskirts of the Ga Mashie community). This was not the initial plan. Per the initial plan the entire community was relocated to the Dogo beach area, however, the tide within this area is tumultuous and caused several canoes to be washed away. The authorities therefore rescinded their decision and consequently split the community.



Figure 5.1 Jamestown harbour construction site entry. Source: Project images

Construction has since commenced and is steadily progressing. However, this waterfront redevelopment was a reoccurring issue for the stakeholders, and they intimated that it is a major concern hindering their traditional and work practices. The problem is not necessarily associated with a dislike for the construction, the themes of their complaints are centred on issues of space at the relocated Ussher landing beach site as an unfavourable workspace, access to the site for traditional rites, and the uncertainties of the future of artisanal canoe fishing. With regards to the relocated work space the women at the beach (WAB) express the burden of

transporting their chairs and umbrellas down a steep flight of stairs that leads to the Ussher landing beach site. Naa Bessa Mami expressed her concerns:

*“Where to sit is a problem at the beach now, but when we complain the reply is that the building of the harbour will be completed soon so we must manage. The truth is we do not really have a good place to sit so we have all bought umbrellas to help reduce the impact of the sun once we get a small place to perch. This space we have been relocated to came along with several issues bothering us. when the sea is full, the water comes very close and very harmful to us. In that state the sea breaks concrete steps, how much more we humans, we humans have no way to escape. We have many problems
..... So, the major one is a sitting place because amongst the things we carry to the shore, we must add a seat too which is heavy. I live at palladium timber market, I have to bring along a plastic chair, umbrella plus my basins. When we close, I have to ask someone to carry these items back for me. The problems are many.” (IDI-NBM-LBFQ – Naa Bessa Mami).*

Ellen Botchway an Nshonaa yo woefully laments-

“...these ones are our pressing needs... We have no good and comfortable place to sit when we go to the shore. Our sitting place is where the harbour is being constructed so we were all sacked to this new place meanwhile the place is extremely small for us with so many challenges. Many people are sitting at home and not working due to this issue because they will not get a place to sit and trade, and those who have leg issues (arthritis or general knee pain) have no option but to stay back home because they will have to climb a ladder of 72 steps to access this new place and their legs cannot carry them. Even some of us struggle climbing but we have to do it because we cannot afford to be home, so we endure and climb the 72 steps then when we finish we descend 72 steps again. At our ages, for how long can we be doing this? If you count those of us at this new place, we will be less than 60 meanwhile we were so many at the old place... Cars could go to the old place but in this place; cars cannot go there unless you climb the ladder which is even not strong enough to hold most of us. There are some short corners we can pass but we have been prohibited from using those places, there is a gate too that has been locked so we have no option but to climb this ladder and when they see you carrying fish too, they will take money from you so it is double trouble for us. So,

we have no good place to sit and the daily struggle constantly gives us pain, sickness and suffering”. (FGD-LB-FW).

The fishermen are equally under constraints with space, coupled with the destruction of their canoes with the rising tides and wind. Comparatively, the old site was low-lying, bare and with enough space to move and work. The fisherman from different focus groups shared their sentiments on these issues recounting-

“Please I humbly say that when we were at the other side (King Nshornaa) the work went on well. What I mean to say Is the landscape was bare and open for us to work. It is not like the Shatta (Ussher) beach which is small. Also, others have taken up the space we have, and we don’t even have space to pull in our canoes...or not done, but some of us are pleased with the construction of the harbour. When the harbour was not there whenever the tide rises it destroys are properties and we have been told the harbour will help. That made a lot of people lose their business. Where we are now is not pleasing at all. If they want us to remain there there will be the need to clear up the place and make room for us.

The conditions are not favourable. We must swim to get to our boats every day and deal with water that has seeped into our boats overnight.

We the fishermen are confused; we need to talk and be heard about this issue”. (FGD-NFM – Robert Ashong)

“...the new place at the Korle is bad for us, people have been injured, died and most of our fishing equipment has been destroyed. Everyone here will bear me witness that it is the truth I speak. I have been to other places like Takoradi, there is no time the fishermen are relocated for the harbour to be built nor beaten when the try to accessing the place, it is only here we get to witness this...” (FGD-NFM – Robert Ashong)

“...when the wind starts now you will see how it will spoil them in line, so when the wind starts you have to quickly get to the shore to go check on your boat or canoe either to find a better parking space based on the direction of the wind and to make sure your equipment are safe. The wind that blows from the east is no joke so it destroys people’s canoes all the time”. (FGD-ASFM -Mensah Bill)

Demolitions of informal settlements are commonly occurring in urban settings around the world, possibly as a response to the growing pressure on cities to join in the global ideals of city images, and to project a ‘world-class image’ characterized by high-rise buildings, luxury resorts, recreational spaces, waterfront developments and tourist destinations (Amin, 2013; Pieterse, 2011). In the bid to become an advanced city, waterfront redevelopments will be considered. With this comes relocation, displacement, gentrification, clearance of street vendors and in some extremes the loss of monumental heritage (Pieterse, 2011, p. 7-10).

The issues of heritage loss need to be factored into the planning, pre-construction, construction, and post-construction stages. Considering the rich heritage of the coast in Ghana, as a space for significant contact and migration, there is a need to factor the heritage, in both monumental and intangible ways. In Ga Mashie, the proximity of the construction site to a world heritage site. The James Fort is also significant, the material heritage of that precolonial and colonial period is yet to be archaeologically investigated. Additionally, the historical significance of the area as a port in the early 19th century is yet to be fully documented. The archaeological perspective of the community has not been fully unearthed. These are all red flags which should have been addressed from both an international and local authority level prior to the project being initiated. Furthermore, the relocation of the fishing community was undertaken without recourse to their landscape and space, and their years of engagement on the site

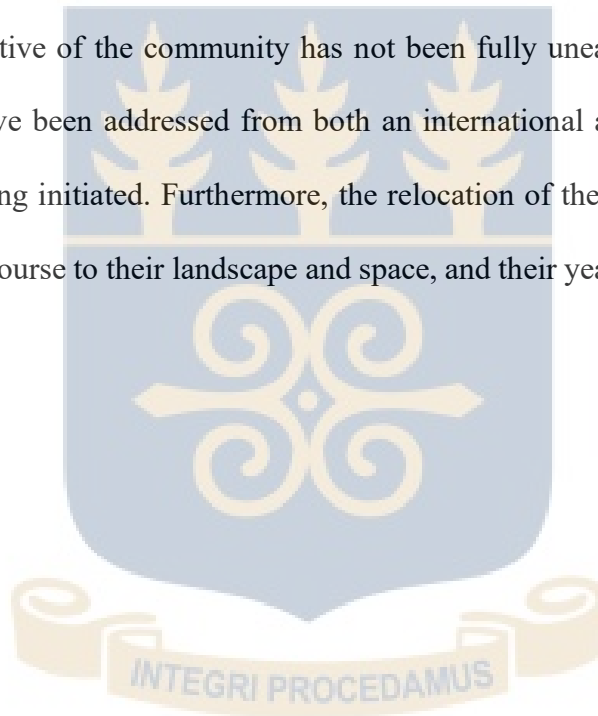




Figure 5.2 Accra Harbour, 1900, courtesy of the Library & Archives, London School of Hygiene & Tropical Medicine.
Source: 50, GB 0809 Macfie/03/04/03 Copied from : Iaian Jackson 2020

Evidently, effective stakeholder engagements are a necessary part of integrating and keeping the community involved in the processes of the construction in my perspective, in order to keep the community members informed about the project, the project team could have utilized mobile broadcast vans, since it already is the most widely used means of mass communication in the Ga Mashie area. These vans are equipped to disseminate project information in a variety of languages spoken in the area, including Ga and Twi. When in use they are thoughtfully positioned at key locations throughout the community, such as churches, school parks, and mosques, where they either drive through or remain stationary. This approach guarantees that community members are kept up-to-date on the project's progress.

The responses from the community members shed light on the efforts or the lack thereof to engage all stakeholders of fishing, which implies a top-bottom managerial approach. An approach noted to hold with a subtle disregard for stakeholder contribution and traditional

management approaches (Mda, 1993). Naa Bessa Mami the *ɲsh)naa yei onukpa* expressed her disappointment of not being included in the deliberations leading to the construction. She asserts that the views of the women at the beach were not involved although they are a primary stakeholder of fishing and the space to be utilized, she laments,-

This harbour, the wolɛiatse went for the meetings without us, they went alone! So we have never been included in any meetings so our views have not been heard. We have not been told anything except that it will be completed within four and a half years which will be up soon yet we are seeing no progress or signs of completion at all. You all came around during the sea ritual, did you see any sign of the harbor being completed soon? (IDI-NBM-LBFQ Naa Bessa Mami)

Before the project was started they called the wol3i ats3i and some of the elders and they had a meeting with them concerning the harbor renovation. A lot came up but due to some self-interest of some of these people they did not talk about the very things that will and is bothering us. Just because of the little that will be given to them at the end of the day, they keep mute while we all suffer. You might be getting something right now but how long will it last so at the end of the day I am suffering but you will also be affected as much. So with that aspect I think the government tried but the elders in the fraternity that were appointed to go represent us did not do well for us at all. (IDI-NAS -Nii Aryi Edin II).

By observation, I noted that the women are the main group of people who sit at the beach and wait for the canoes to arrive. Their location is close to the shore and the erection of a shed is not a viable prospect. They are positioned strategically at the beach to sell fish. Alternative sitting areas may not be an option at this new site, as the entire space is cramped (see Figures 5.2 and 5.3).

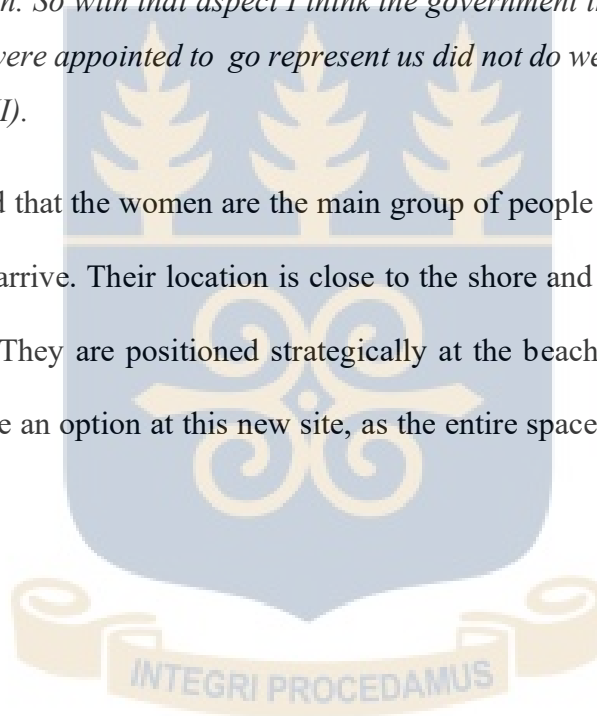




Figure 5.3 Aerial view of the relocated new site, Ussher beach.

Recommended practices of assessing the impacts a project will have on heritage stipulate that there should be a systematic process to identify cultural heritage and the possible potential for cultural heritage to be found at the planning stage of a major construction project. These processes take place over three main phases, the pre-construction and planning stage, the construction stage, and the post-construction stage (Ndlovu, 2014, p. 208-214).

At the pre-construction and planning stage it is required that the contractors and the government agencies must engage with the relevant stakeholders to identify cultural heritage and its uses, including shrines, graves, homes of community leaders, and sites for worship or sacrifice. If the proposed project area contains important cultural heritage, alternative locations for the project should be considered wherever possible. When it is not possible to preserve a heritage site, such as Jamestown (Ga Mashie), contractors should make an effort to comprehend and record multiple perspectives on the heritage and its value to the community. Ethically the approach towards heritage indicates that the project includes implementing measures for the

preservation and protection of cultural heritage sites and the materials used by the community within the project area (Garrow, 1993) .

These measures aim to ensure the sustainability of these sites and materials for future generations by preventing any damage, degradation, or loss caused by natural or human-induced factors; engaging with the local community to design the best management and protection measures for cultural heritage sites and materials used by the community within the project area. In circumstances where impact is unavoidable, removal and preservation should be considered. To enable this, project stakeholders must work together to identify partners associated with nearby heritage sites that may assist in protecting the cultural value of a site (World Bank). Exploring other avenues for preservation aside the state institutions such as the GMMB may be the approach best suited. Recommendably, for Ga Mashie the *Accra[dot]alt group* organizers of the Chalewote arts festival have been focused on projecting the Ga cultural ways through arts (see <https://accradotaltradio.com/chale-wote/>). Local organizations such as the Acts for Change group are viable to approach for partnership to assist in protecting nearby heritage.





Figure 5.4 Nshonaa yei stationed at the beach under their umbrellas. Source: Project images

At the pre-construction stage, if future co-management is envisioned then local communities must be engaged to negotiate approaches to management. Engaging locals in managerial positions, or sourcing locals with engineering qualities to partner with the project. The closed-off nature of the construction site makes it hard to determine if any locals are in management roles. However, it is clearly known that community members hold labourer positions. Idealistically, working on heritage sites, it is crucial to establish protection and management procedures that prioritize the preservation of historical artifacts. Workers should receive adequate training in defining procedures for chance finds and be equipped with the knowledge on how to consult a qualified archaeologist or specialist before continuing work in the event of a chance discovery. Additionally, training should be provided on how to carefully handle and manage any finds discovered on-site to ensure their proper preservation e.g.,

archaeological remains) during construction (chance-find procedure), and training workers on the chance-find procedure.

There is no clear channel for grievance with regards to this construction, the local crew at the site do not have positions that accord them any control, the Chinese crew and managers are deficient in the local language and access to the site is highly restricted. Advisedly, safe, alternative access to the site should have been provided, more pertinently to the cultural heritage sites or resources if construction will restrict access to the entire area.

The local authorities have not made available a plan for the stakeholders affected to address their grievances. However, addressing these grievances can benefit everyone involved, including the project crew, stakeholders, and those who have been aggrieved.

Nevertheless, taking steps to address these grievances can be advantageous for all parties involved, such as the project team, stakeholders, and those who have been affected. Introducing a grievance process enables the community to establish a constructive rapport with the team, fostering a sense of partnership rather than intrusion. Furthermore, feedback from those who have been affected provides the team with an opportunity to assess their working relationships and enhance their processes for future endeavors. Latent animosity may brew because of unaddressed grievances during a focus group discussion, a respondent indicated-

what my brother says is accurate. Previously before the traditional year begins we will converge at the King Nshornaa and perform rites there. Within the James fort there is a won(shrine) that such rites were performed. Now we don't have access to these places because we are even afraid of going to those places. There are some things we do that give us strength as a country. They want to curtail all these. They need to allow us the freedom to worship, others cannot impose their religious practices on us. If they don't allow us this freedom the wars that we know of will happen in Ghana. (FGD-CS-FM – Robert Ashong)

Other members of focus group discussions indicated a refusal to vote in the upcoming elections if their grievances were not addressed promptly. Whilst others pleaded desperately with myself

and the research team to make their pleas known to the government and the president. Although I had explained this was an academic exercise they believed I may have access to the president and his cabinet of ministers, a reflection of how neglected grievances heighten desperation. The fishermen and women recognize the importance of addressing their concerns in an effective manner. They propose alternative management approaches for the construction process that would allow their voices to be heard and their challenges to be considered. They point to the Tema harbor construction as an example of adequate management, where they were not fully relocated to alternative landing sites, resulting in positive impacts on their livelihoods.

You see, the people who won this contract do not care about all these issues, their priority and primary objective is to build the harbor and get it up and running. It is we the fishermen and the leaders of the fishing fraternizes that are affected and concerned about these issues therefore the duty rest upon us to form teams to go the authorities in charge of the harbor to make them hear us. (FGD-ASFM -Isaac Quashie).

In situations where individuals have been displaced from their homes and income as a result of a project, it is crucial to establish appropriate avenues for addressing grievances. When a complaint is made, evaluating the grievances can be a helpful process. It allows for a better understanding of the issues and concerns that have been raised, as well as gathering valuable information about how others perceive the situation. Furthermore, it can identify potential solutions to resolve the issues at hand.

There are various options available to solve problems, whether or not with the assistance of third parties. Traditional and cultural protocols within local communities can be effectively utilized to address conflicts related to the project at a community level. Such protocols may involve participation from community leaders, contractors, and project representatives as necessary. Indigenous methods offer suitable platforms for community members to address their concerns.

Internal decision-making processes, whereby issues are handled by designated project officials and local leaders, using documented standards and criteria to develop and propose a response to the grievance.

Alternatively, joint problem-solving involves the project and the complainant engage in direct dialogue, engaging third-party decision-making to offer a solution when a voluntary agreement is not possible policies and procedures to prevent recurrent future disputes. In Ghana, the native conflict resolution process relies on the invaluable contributions of chiefs, queen mothers, and their councils of elders. Ghana's 1992 Constitution acknowledges and supports the institution of chieftaincy and its customary councils as established by law and tradition, under Article 270. Additionally, the Chieftaincy Act of 2008 (Act 759) confers the power to settle disputes on chiefs, queen mothers, and their esteemed elders under Section 30.





Figure 5.5 Nshonaa yei ascending the stair that leads in and out of their work area. Note a woman resting with her pans.
Source: Project images

The loss of space is a phenomenon that can be understood in into three main ways . The first one is familiar space loss, which refers to the emotional impact of losing a space that has been consistently present in an individual's life. The second category is present space constraints,

which are the limitations that prevent the efficient use of available space. The final category is the unfavorable layout, inaccessibility, and terrain layout of the current work area, which refers to the physical challenges that impede the optimal use of space. Each of these categories plays a vital role in understanding the various aspects of space loss and finding effective solutions to mitigate its impact.



Figure 5.6 aerial view of the Jamestown harbour, former Jamestown fishing community. Source: Project images





Figure 5.7 Usher fort beach ,new working site for fishing community. in the image is a restaurant and pub sharing the space with the fisherfolks. Source: Project images

Ghana's coastal communities are currently experiencing significant transformations that prioritize growth over traditional Indigenous coastal fishers' livelihoods. However, there are concerns that changes often prioritize economic development over the well-being and sustainability of coastal populations. Additionally, social and political conflicts arise over land use, coastline privatization and redevelopment, and the exclusion of poor coastal communities (Fabinyi et al., 2022; Kadfak & Oskarsson, 2020; Kalina et al., 2019).

The positive of the construction affording labour jobs for the youth and young adults in the community is a commendable position of the project on community engagement. However, this is a short-lived joy in the face of precarity and uncertainty. Emmanuel Anam a fisherman from Ngleshie, who has worked on the site for eight months discussed how pleased he is with the project, however, he shared the concerns of his fellow fishermen in the Focus group

discussion. The exclusion of their canoes, the core equipment and heritage from the completed project site is a looming fear for the fisherfolks, by their observations of present occurrences they conclude that there is a possibility they will be neglected after the project is completed. They anticipate that the trawlers and industrial fleet will damage their canoes should they be located in the same dock area, Emmanuel Anam revealed:

I am pleased with the harbor being constructed; however I doubt our wooden carved canoes will be allowed to use that place when it is completed. I worked shortly with the crew at the site and after careful study of the process, I realized that the wooden carved canoes will not be allowed onto the premise after completion. I say this because I know the wooden carved canoes are not taxed, there are some payments that we as canoe users are exempted from. In addition, they are paying us to work and have invested in this project, how much can they recoup from allowing canoes to dock and work there when they complete the project. What I think may happen is possible, access to sell a big catch. I know the wooden canoes will not be allowed there, they will use metal ships, and these can ruin the canoe when they knock against it. We will not be permitted...In my opinion, this construction is nice but that is all there is to it. According to the plans, there will be a school, a church and a lot of other buildings. This will improve the community look, although, in my opinion, I doubt there be access for wooden carved boats-canoes to use the site. When complete and we have access I will be glad however if that doesn't happen, I won't be surprised. (FGD-CS-FM -Emmanuel Anam).

In Africa, a similar situation is observed by Benjaminsen and Bryceson (2012), where wildlife and marine conservation benefits rent-seeking state officials, transnational conservation organizations, and tourism companies while excluding local people. In the case of projects like the Jamestown Fishing Harbour Complex, Chinese and Ghanaian elites engaged in large industrial fishing may potentially accumulate more profits, displacing the local fishers from their assets and livelihoods (Malkoc, 2020). The introduction of high culture into their landscape may result in a lack of a sustained environment leading to either abandonment or a poor maintenance culture as seen in the Jaffa port documented by Avni (2017). In conclusion,

ports are vital for economic growth, yet their development, expansion, and operations can negatively affect access to crucial fishing resources and livelihoods, as demonstrated in this study of coastal fishing in Ghana.

5.1.2 Closed Season

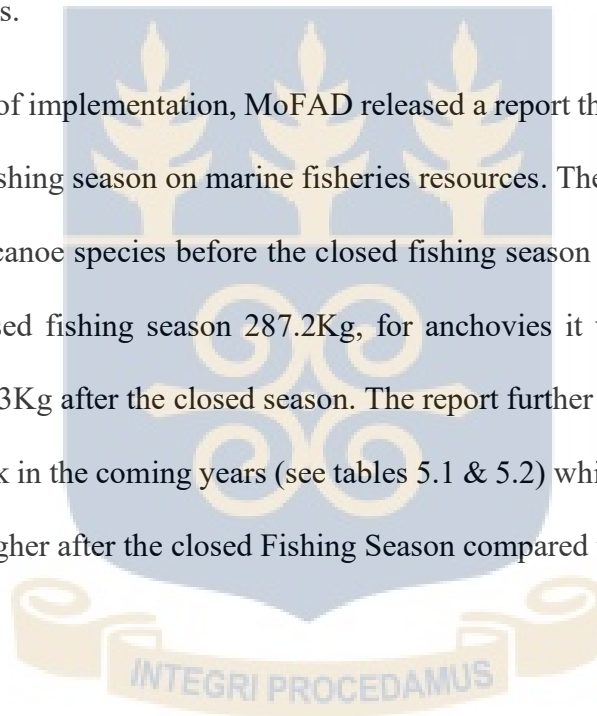
The Ministry of Fisheries and Aquaculture Development (MoFAD) and the Fisheries Commission in Ghana implemented a Closed Fishing season for marine fishers in 2016. This was done as a fish stock recovery strategy, guided by section 84 of the Fisheries Act 2002 (Act 625), and in line with Ghana's fisheries management plan. The government of Ghana through the Ministry of Fisheries and Aquaculture (MOFAD), enforced by the Fisheries Commission implemented the fishery closed season in its Exclusive Economic Zone (EEZ) approximately 200 nautical miles (Asiedu & Nunoo, 2013, p. 22-28).

According to the minister for Fisheries, Madame Hawa Koomson (2016) the closed season is expected to reduce overfishing and the pressure on fish stocks, recover overexploited fish stocks and rebuild depleted fish species, to replenish dwindling fish stocks. The scheduled dates started out between February and March in 2016 and 2017 but have subsequently been revised to July and August of each year. During this period, Artisanal canoes and Semi-Industrial (inshore) fleets stay away from all active fishing work for the period 1st – 31st July (one month) and industrial trawl fleet for the period from 1st July – 31st August (two months). In line with the Fisheries Act, violating this directive attracts fines ranging from US\$ 500,000 to US\$ 2 million as well as the forfeiture of the catch, fishing gear or vessel to the state if caught (MoFAD.org).

The ministry explains that the closed fishing season is a period where fishing activities cease. This decision of a closed season is based on research, scientific data, and information on the status of Ghana's marine fisheries resources. Most marine species reproduce in the open ocean, and their offspring drift into coastal zones and estuaries. After maturing, they return to the open

ocean to spawn in the fishing grounds. Fishing pressure can become so intense that it hinders the ability of fish to mature and reproduce, leading to a depletion of the stock. With the use of research vessels, an extensive and continuous monitoring process is conducted to keep track of the population of plankton in the ocean. This ensures that the status of the plankton is always under scrutiny and evaluation for any changes or fluctuations, which helps maintain the ecological balance of the ocean and ensures the sustainability of the marine ecosystem. Additionally, fish stocks of both pelagic and demersal fish species are subsequently evaluated and provided to both the Commission and the Ministry to inform policy and decision-making. The biological research reports indicate that fish stock is depleting rapidly and recommend the implementation of immediate measures to ensure the recovery and rebuilding of depleted fish stocks to avoid the collapse of the marine fisheries and consequently fishing industry (Apertorgbor, 2018). When followed diligently the closed season is expected to reduce the pressure on stocks when the fishes are reproducing or laying eggs, and help to protect the spawning by allowing the fish to lay their eggs to replace the lost ones due to fishing efforts and other natural causes.

After six years of implementation, MoFAD released a report that assesses the impact of the 2022 year closed fishing season on marine fisheries resources. The report indicates that the Mean Catch (Kg) per canoe species before the closed fishing season for round sardinella was 223.9Kg and post-closed fishing season 287.2Kg, for anchovies it was 269.3Kg before the closed season and 400.3Kg after the closed season. The report further project that there will be an increase in fish stock in the coming years (see tables 5.1 & 5.2) which implies that the mean catch per canoe was higher after the closed Fishing Season compared to the pre-closed Fishing Season.



However, community members in Ga Mashie do not attest to these figures and projections of an increase in fish stocks but remain hopeful. Nicholas Ayithey, an Abola Wemprakwa Fishermen indicated-

...we noticed improvement because kankaama has really been harvested this year in other countries or places but we in Ga Mashie haven't seen some yet. We are also hoping to see the changes here too... (FGD-ABFM -Nii Ayithey).

Presently there is a clash between traditional knowledge systems and scientific research. The underlying tension leads to a grudging compliance of the close season. The fisherfolks are disgruntled concerning the dates of the closed season, which stems from the certainty the fisherfolks have that the months of February, March and/or May are best suited for a closed season. This recommendation is based on the traditional knowledge systems, and fishing experience gained over the years.

The closed season disrupts the observance of the *lookɔmɔ* rituals which interferes with the traditional Ga calendar and the rites performed before the Festival Homowo. These events take place at the end of July, during which the closed season is still in force. Despite regularly performing the rituals at the end of the month, they express dissatisfaction with the timing, as the closed season dampens the spirits and motivation of fishermen. An Asere fisherman, Isaac Quashie reveals –

we have been fishing harmoniously for a very long time like we were taught by our fathers until recently we have noticed a few discrepancies. One is the closing of the sea which is disturbing our fish season and the performance of our sea ritual. As we mentioned earlier about our forefathers, there were rituals they performed that helped them with the sea a great deal , one is what we call nsh)bulem) or aak) loo. The time of the year we perform this ritual for the sea is when the government decided to close the sea and this is really worrying. We are pleading that they look at the timing for us so

we can observe the closing of the sea as well as enjoy our fish season and perform our sea rituals too, this way we get enough fish to celebrate our Homowo festival.(FGD-ASFMM – Isaac Quashie).

Additionally, according to the fisherfolks, the months of February and March do not produce enough fish. This happens to be the dry season for Fisher folks thus a Closed season will be appropriate within those months. The month of May is the rainy season in Ghana, with the high tides due to the rain the fisherfolks don't venture out as much, therefore they suggest that this could also be an alternative to the July and August closed season period. The dry season for fishing is seen as a natural way of replenishing stock and it spans two months. They point out how the bounty harvest of fish within the months of June to September coincides with the vegetable and other foods harvest. A sign from nature that all foods must be bountifully harvested within these months. Clement Adjei a seasoned fisherman recommended that

At least they can bring it to May, because it is usually a rainy season and fishermen use this time to sew and mend their nets as well as maintain their boats and canoes for July, so it will be good for us, so we must also work it to our favour, if you have watched closely you would have realized that the season for fish coincides with the bumper harvest of food stuffs like cassava, vegetables, fruits and others. Nature has made it in that way so you do not close the sea when nature will have it otherwise. (IDI-ASFMM – Clement Adjei).

There is currently a great deal of debate surrounding the ban on fishing, with many expressing concerns about its potential ecological impact, as well as the challenges associated with enforcing such a ban. Additionally, there are questions about how those affected by the ban will be compensated for any economic losses they may incur as a result. These issues must be carefully considered and addressed before any final decisions are made regarding the implementation of this ban. The problems with the closed season may be due to miscommunication and lack of follow-up on the directive. This can be curbed with structured

processes to communicate scientific data to the fishermen and educating them on how to manage the closed season. When these approaches are not taken, it can make the community feel excluded and disregarded in terms of their opinions on how to manage fish stock depletion.

Secondly, a lack of evidence that fish stock quantities improving, a situation they attribute to the lack of control and sanctioning of the illegal, unregulated, and unregistered(IUU) fishermen who do not adhere to the closed season directive. They argue that should the fish be replenished, the IUU fishermen who never cease fishing will catch the fry and fingerlings before they mature using light fishing. Accordingly, they request more stringent patrol of the ocean during the closed season, with heavy sanctions to deter other offenders. This corroborates with Macusi, Morales, Pancho & Digal (2022), who found that bans on fishing may not yield positive ecological outcomes without the enforcement of the laws on illegal fishing activities Nicholas Ayithey indicated-

“...The only problem is that after the research, they have not been able to communicate to us exactly reason why the fishes are reducing in the sea yet they are using the closing of the sea as solution. Because when they came down to the various coastal lines to talk to us and they got to know some of the problems like the light fishing, the trollies fishing at the wrong places, filament nets and other wrong practices but they are doing about those ones. Who is making sure these wrong practices are being stopped, there is no arrest, there is no punishment whatsoever and no media house is educating any one on these malpractices because I believe when they start monitoring, making arrest, fining and imprisoning culprits then these practices will die down and allow the sea to also breathe. We heard of marine police but where are they, we cannot see or feel them work, where are the equipment and tools they need to work effectively because IUU is still going on.” (FGD-ABFM – Nicholas Ayithey).

Clotia Clotthey another fisherman from the Abola Wemprakwa family intimates:

“Lighting fishing is a problem, fishing trollies are part and they made mention of IUU which stands for Illegal, unregulated and unreported activities. So what are some of the ways to stop these IUU activities? That was when the ministry and some other bodies

started interviewing fishermen as scientist also went down into the sea to find answers and they finally arrived at a couple, they realised that the fishing trawlers have broken most of the big rocks under the sea which serve as a hiding and breeding places for fishes”.(FGD-ABFM -Clotia Clotey).

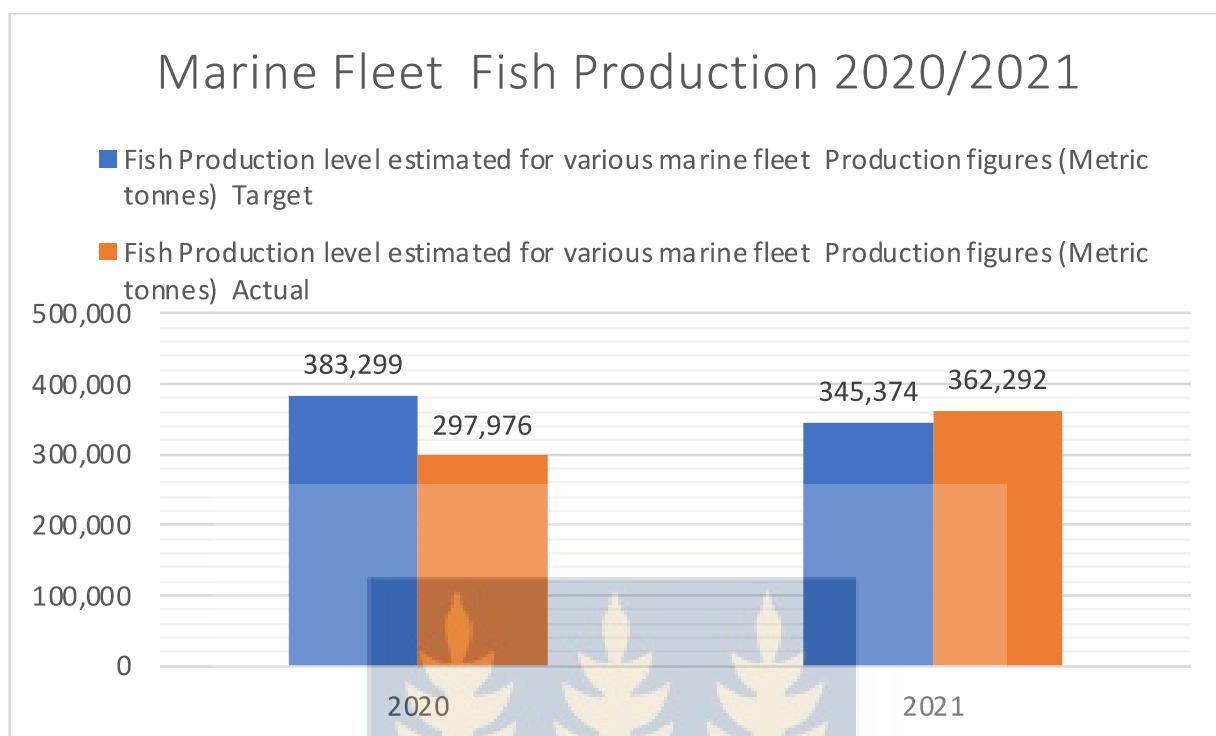


Table 5. 1 Marine fleet fish production for 2020 and 2021- Data source: MoFad report



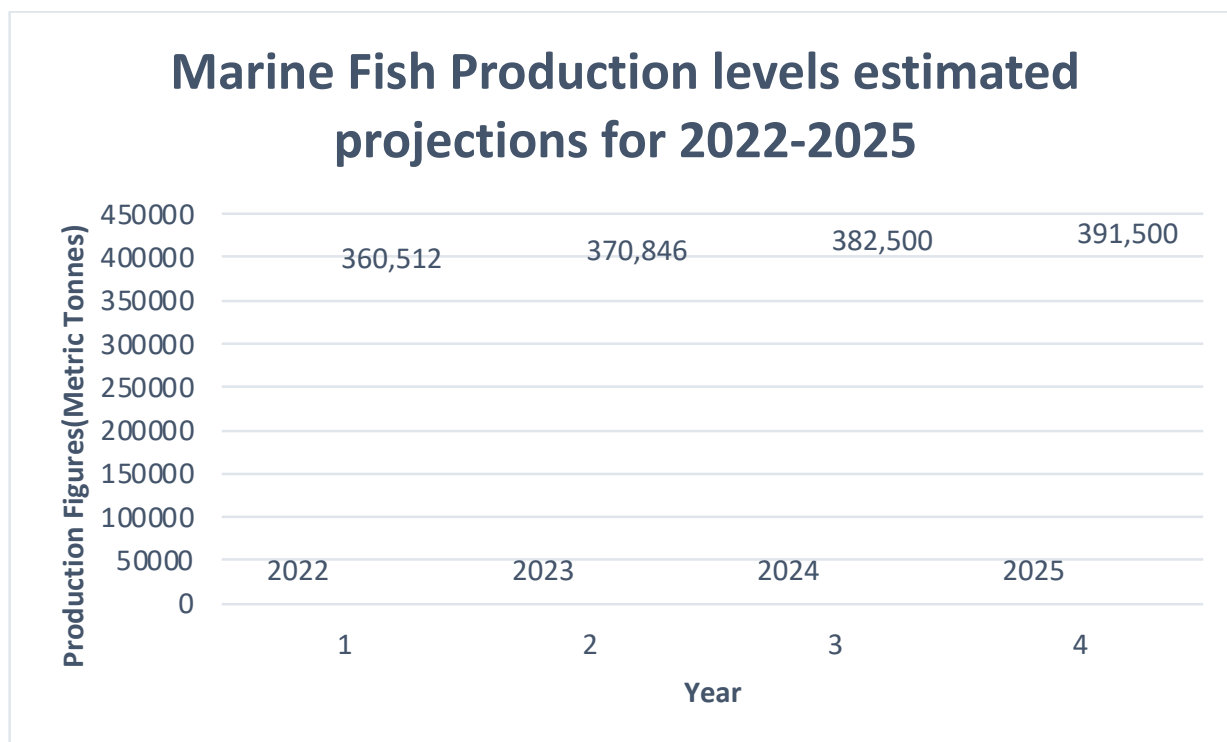


Table 5. 2 Estimated marine fleet fish production levels for 2022-2025- Data source: Mofad report

5.1.2.0 Grudging Compliance-Exploring alternative traditional methods of mitigation.

With a staff strength for fisheries and aquaculture research and development at a total of 27 (MoFAD.org), community engagement is likely to be relegated to the background, or entirely non-existent when research is underway. Stakeholder engagements did not fully engage the working groups of the fisherfolks in Ga Mashie. The stakeholders who indicate involvement in decision-making are the family heads of the Wemprakwa family home and the *nshɔnaa* onukpai who were to communicate these changes to the fishermen. The chain of information dissemination has been largely unsuccessful, due to a multitude of factors that have impeded its progress. One of the most significant obstacles has been a prevailing mood of grudging compliance among those involved in the dissemination process, and the hostile reception of fishermen and other stakeholders. This lack of enthusiasm has resulted in a lack of engagement with the information being disseminated, which has in turn hindered the overall dissemination

process. The chain of information dissemination was not successful, and this is because there is a grudging compliance and a preference for alternative dates which fall in line with the initial dates of February and March as used in 2016 and 2017. This preference reflects a lack of flexibility and an unwillingness to consider alternative options, which has made it difficult to successfully communicate information that may be of great importance. As a result of these challenges, the dissemination of information has been significantly hindered, and the stakeholders have not been able to fully comprehend the significance of the information being communicated. There is a clear need for a more effective communication strategy that can overcome these obstacles and ensure that the stakeholders are fully engaged with the information being disseminated.

Fisherfolks have had to adjust their lifeways to accommodate the closed season, many fishermen are forced to migrate to other neighbouring coastal countries such as Cote d'Ivoire, that engage in fishing for the one-month season, and some end up staying beyond a month should they find conditions there favourable. However, this may be short-lived as the Fisheries Committee for the West Central Gulf of Guinea (FCWC) has rolled out its first-ever joint fisheries closed season in July of 2023. This year both nations -Ghana and Cote d'Ivoire -closed their artisanal sectors from 1– 31 July 2023, and their semi-industrial and industrial sectors from 1 July – 31 August 2023 (MoFAD.org, Owusu, Adu-Boahen & Kyeremeh, 2023, p. 1-3).

The fishermen are not the only ones expressing discontent with the closed season; the *nshɔnaa* yei have also voiced their concern. Their livelihoods are intricately linked to fishing, and they claim that there has been no noticeable increase in fish numbers since the closed season. The government has recently released a statement outlining its plans to provide additional assistance to *nshɔnaa* yei and fishermen during the closed season. Hawa Koomson, the Minister for Fisheries and Aquaculture, has taken the initiative to launch a comprehensive training program for approximately 8,000 individuals from these communities. Currently, 550

fishermen are undergoing training in various trades, such as masonry, carpentry, dressmaking, hairdressing, electronics, and auto engineering. The training is being conducted at specific locations situated along the coastline. The program is aimed at equipping these individuals with alternative support strategies to help them sustain their livelihoods during the closed season. After the training, trainees would be supported to set up to ensure that they can earn income from their trade.” The *ηshɔnaa* yei expressed their concerns during a focus group discussion, Mary Larbi lamented that-

...another problem that is really challenging is closing the sea. It is also really affecting us and we are suffering there too. The truth is it doesn't help us in any way because from all the generations I came to meet and what we have even heard before them, there has been nothing like closing the sea. Homowo is our main and annual festival as they mentioned earlier which happens around August and before that they lock the sea so none of us the locals are supposed to go fishing. They tell us it was to allow the sea rest and fish to multiply and grow big. Meanwhile, you see big ships far on the sea collecting the fishes so by the time our festival is here and they open the sea for us to go there is nothing to catch. Today when you go to Tema, you will see the major fishes that used to be common within our fishing fraternity all boxed with ice for sale while we suffer here because our fishermen do not get some for us to eat not to talk of selling. Fishes like many3 ofl3, buebue, gyaase, pamplo tso, sweet mother, antebo, kankaama, yoomoshi, shilemann, amone and even shrimps have been swept from the sea by the big ships and put into cartons with ice and sold there. (FGD-LB-FW – Mary Larbi).

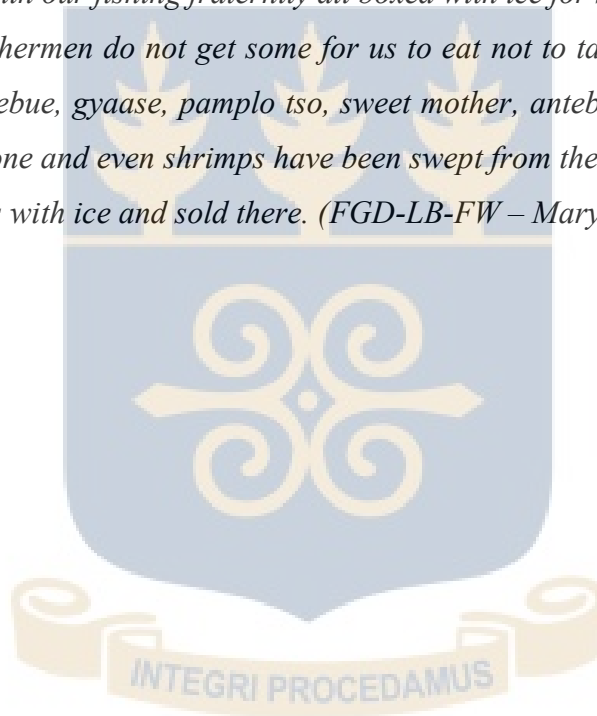




Figure 5.8 Mad. Hawa Koomson symbolically 'locking' the ocean, announcing the beginning of the closed season(Source Graphic online).

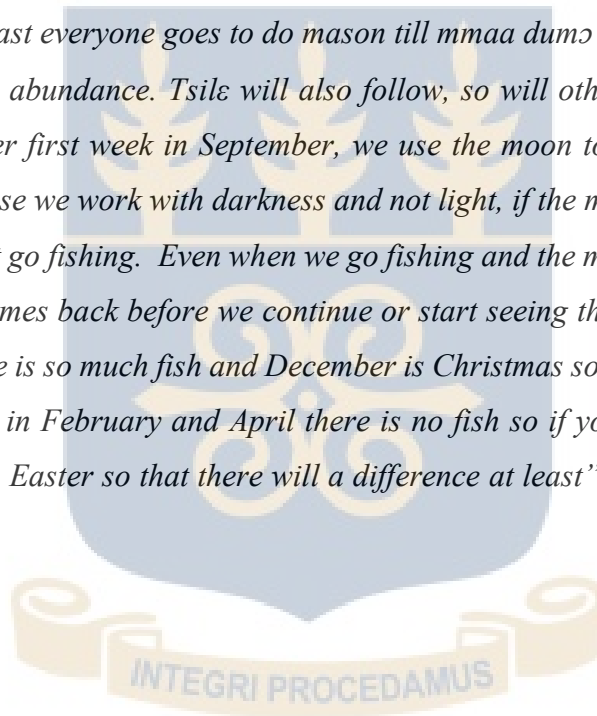
Results from the biological research team with the ministries of fisheries indicate that the catches of the canoes were higher after the Closed Fishing Season than the Pre-Closed Season. Sampling was conducted on five fish species: Round sardinella, Anchovy, Red Pandora, Angola Dentex, and Red Mullet. The data was collected from four sampling sites located along the coastline: Keta (Volta Region), Tema (Greater Accra Region), Elmina (Central Region), and Sekondi (Western Region). The two small pelagic species were found to be the most abundant, while the three demersal species were deemed the most important commercially (See MoFAD.org). It is important to note that Ga Mashie was not included in the sampling, and, therefore, its fish population cannot be accurately assessed. The pelagic species were commonly abundant in the Ga Mashie area recently but not as usual. Targeted research on the taking of the *Tsile* species, which is their preferred sacred fish for the homowo, may be helpful to ascertain the effects of the closed season on the traditions of Ga Mashie. It appears a top-bottom

management approach has been rolled out. The fishermen have proposed several dates for the management of the community's fishing resources, however, their suggestions may have not been accepted due to the lack of scientific evidence to support them. Thus, the community continues to search for a feasible solution to ensure the sustainable use of their valuable natural resources. Nii Aryi Adin II the Asere Nshonaa Onukpa indicates-

“Please nature is nature! If you want to do something like that then do it in May because naturally fish is scarce in May. So that if you open in June then the fish will start coming or you can close in February when we are celebrating Easter because there is no fish. So from June to September, by nature there is abundance of fish which is how God himself created so closing the sea has not made any difference or improvement in our lives when it comes to fishing...The closing of the sea is really worrying us...The sea is not a river where a fishpond can be created within to rear fish and monitor them to grow”. (IDI-NAS Nii Aryi Adin II).

Other Fishermen also share similar views-

Clement Adjei – “Yes so in February and March nobody goes fishing, we are all encouraged to mend our fishing tools and rest because it gets very windy around that time so in the past everyone goes to do mason till mmaa dumɔ start then maŋŋ fish will start coming in abundance. Tsile will also follow, so will other fishes all the way till September. After first week in September, we use the moon to calculate and time our activities because we work with darkness and not light, if the moon makes way for light then we will not go fishing. Even when we go fishing and the moon goes away, we have to wait till it comes back before we continue or start seeing the fishes. So from July to September there is so much fish and December is Christmas so there is fish but once we cross to Easter in February and April there is no fish so if you want to close the sea, you can do it in Easter so that there will a difference at least”. (IDI-ASFM – Clement Adjei).



5.2 Illegal Unregulated and Unreported - light fishing and trawlers and the consequent depletion in fish stock

5.2.0 Overview

The illegal, unregulated, and unreported (IUU) issues concerning artisanal marine fishing have been widely documented in Ghana, and commendably the Fisheries ministry has done extensive work to try and curb the occurrence of IUU. However, some community members still feel short-changed, thus they indicate this as one of the key issues confronting them. Largely because they consistently experience a constant depletion of fish stocks which is the leading consequence of IUU activities. There also exists a dissatisfaction with the leniency of the punishment meted out to violators of the fishery regulations. These matters have resulted in a loss of faith in the government as a governing body for such occurrences. In some cases, fisherfolks take matters into their own hands and deliver punishments on people found engaging in such IUU fishery practices.

Illegal, unregulated, and unreported (IUU) fishing occurs when fishery management regulations are violated. Ghana is among the countries failing to address illegal fishing by their fleets. Especially in artisanal fishing zones, overfishing depletes fish stocks, leading to low profitability and food insecurity for fishing communities (Afoakwah, Osei, & Effah, 2018 p. 7-11). In Ga Mashie, there are two main issues of concern regarding IUU. They are highly concerned about the light fishing practises and migrants come into their territories to practise such illegal fishing; such miscreants are dealt with locally. Unregulated and unreported Chinese-funded or manned trawlers engaging in *Saiko* are another nagging thorn for the fishers. In their perspective, these trawlers are given undue fishing advantage over them as Artisanal Marine Fishermen which hampers their yield, and they see the evidence of that in the decline in fish stock over the past few years. Unreported fishing occurs when licensed vessels do not report their catch to national or regional authorities. It could either be a case of non-reporting

where catches are not reported at all or under-reporting where full catches are not declared. Unregulated fishing occurs when unregistered/unlicensed vessels fish in national/regional fisheries waters. Illegal fishing methods among others have contributed to the depletion of fish stocks in Ghana. Some fishermen use harmful fishing methods like light fishing, carbide fishing, dynamite fishing, and the use of insecticides. These practices contribute to the decline in fish populations. Unfortunately, illegal fishing is very pervasive among artisanal fishers as well. The use of nets of the wrong mesh sizes, dynamite, poisons and light for fishing have been the bane of artisanal fisheries in Ghana.

5.2.1 Light Fishing

As documented by Afoakwah et al (2018), light fishing is an illegal mode of fishing which uses light attached to a structure above water or suspended underwater to attract both fish and members of the food chain to specific areas to harvest them.

In Ghana, fishermen in the coastal regions have adopted light fishing as a quick method of catching fish by using generators and 1,000-watt bulbs which are often laid into the sea, and the light and heat produced by the bulb attract the fishes. The fishermen then cast their nets to catch the fish drawn by the light and heat. They therefore catch the fish as well as the fingerlings in large quantities. In Ghana's coastal regions, fishermen also resort to using chemicals and dynamite to bolster their catch and bottom line. They employ these dangerous techniques to stun and immobilize and kill the fish, resulting in a greater haul. When it comes to light fishing, fishermen typically employ a small canoe, which they outfit with generators, lights, and other necessary equipment. Two crew members operate these accessories.

The practice, however, threatens the sustainability of the fish stocks and the fishing occupation. Fishermen in Ga Mashie intimate that they keenly observe their shores, policing

for such small boats which are indicative of light fishing. Nii Ayi Tagoe a seasoned fisherman indicated the vigilance of the fishermen in Ga Mashie-

Usually, light fishers go with small boats at night with a generator so we do not care about seeing you in the act but once we see you in a small boat with a generator, you are a lighting fisherman and we will stop you (FGD-ABFM -Nii Ayi Tagoe).

5.2.2 Saiko

This is the local name for illegal fish trans-shipments in Ghana. This occurs when industrial trawlers transfer frozen fish to specially adapted canoes out at sea. This was initially a way for industrial trawlers to offload their excess catch to canoes. However, this has now become a lucrative, unregulated practice. The industrial trawlers do not just target the demersal species for which they are licensed but also target the same species as the artisanal fishing community, including the severely depleted small pelagic species such as sardinella (Afoakwah, Osei , & Effah 2018).The fishermen's failure to adhere to the appropriate categorization of commercial fishing boats has resulted in the disruption of sustainable fishing practices in Ghana's Exclusive Economic Zone (EEZ) (Fisheries Act 2002, Act 625(Ghana), Sub- Part VI, Section 81,p.31-32)

This violation has created an unfavourable environment for the conservation of marine resources and has adversely affected the livelihoods of coastal communities that depend on fishing activities (Thomas et al., 2020).

These pelagic species are then offloaded to saiko canoes who then sell them off to the local market. This act has severe implications for the artisanal fisheries sector, the trawlers with the advantages of larger boats and machinery monopolize the fish and further deplete the stock available to the artisanal fishers.

Fishers who are involved in light fishing and Saiko use less resources and effort to gather more fish. The harm caused to the ocean and the fish stock is evident. Amongst other

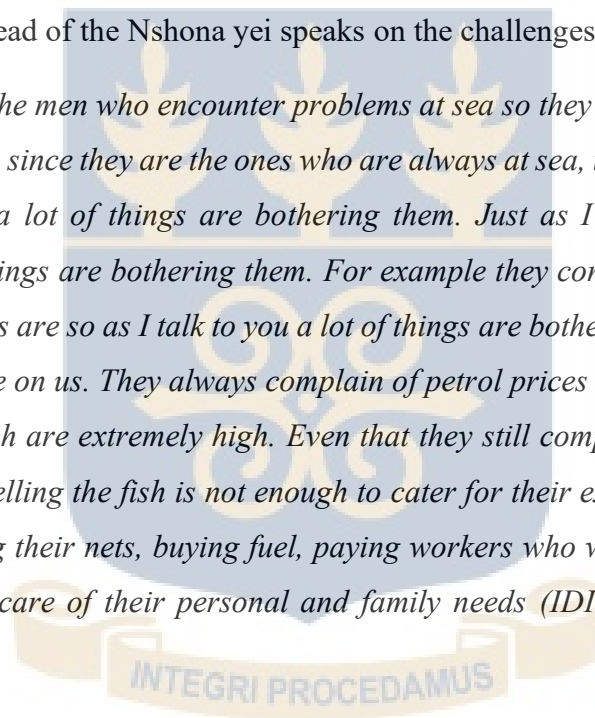
factors they are a major contributor to the fish stock depletion in Ghana's coastal waters (Hen Mpoano, 2017).

This results in more work and increased income for the fishers involved in such illegal trends, and their fish is less expensive compared to their counterparts who are not engaged in such activities. This could have severe implications for the food and job security of artisanal fishers. The low-effort gains may lead other fishermen who previously used legal methods to resort to illegal fishing activities to keep up with the competition. The economic livelihoods of fishers in Ga Mashie have been destabilized by global price hikes and the after-effects of COVID-19, exacerbating existing monetary constraints many participants expressed their concerns:

“One problem worrying us in this our job is the light and type of nets some people use to catch fish. These things are destroying our work because the fishes will not descend for us to get some to catch so we are not getting the money we are supposed to get. When our working tools get spoilt, we cannot fix them because we do not have money hence, we take loans which doesn't make sense”. (FGD-ASFM-Daniel Quaye).

Naa Bessa Mami the head of the Nshona yei speaks on the challenges of her male colleagues-

“Usually, it is the men who encounter problems at sea so they usually come with issues bothering them. since they are the ones who are always at sea, they encounter problems. but right now a lot of things are bothering them. Just as I said earlier, things are expensive so things are bothering them. For example they constantly complain of how expensive things are so as I talk to you a lot of things are bothering them, then they also put the pressure on us. They always complain of petrol prices so when they come back, the prices of fish are extremely high. Even that they still complain because the money they get from selling the fish is not enough to cater for their expenses from fixing their boats, changing their nets, buying fuel, paying workers who went fishing with them as well as taking care of their personal and family needs (IDI-NBM-LBFQ-Naa Bessa Mami).



5.2.3 The reason behind the deep-rooted presence of IUU

Many stakeholders who analyse the fisheries sector in Ghana tend to ignore the amount of investment put into illegal, unreported, and unregulated (IUU) operations. As a result, it becomes challenging to stop such practices. IUU operators, being unlicensed, often cannot obtain financial assistance from banks and micro-credit institutions. They must secure funds through informal channels that sponsor activities in exchange for fish. Several other supplies had also been purchased: The probability of AMF being abandoned in communities with high levels of investment is low (Banchirigah, 2007).

Moreover, even though it is not officially recognized, illegal, unreported, and unregulated (IUU) fishing can provide individuals with a consistent source of income. It offers employment opportunities to young people, including low-skilled jobs, and supports the livelihoods of the *nshonaa yei* and the market women who sell the fish.

One of the lesser-known aspects of IUU fishing is that it can provide a means of livelihood for individuals. Although not formally acknowledged, many people engage in illegal fishing activities to secure a steady income for themselves and their families. This is especially true in the case of artisanal fishing, where it creates employment prospects for young individuals, encompassing even menial jobs. In addition, it sustains the livelihoods of the *nshonaa yei*, who are responsible for the management and distribution of fish within communities, and the market women who sell the fish. Additionally, artisanal fishing is often deeply ingrained in its connection to influential traditional leaders and political figures. These individuals often have a stake in the fishing industry and use their power to protect and promote illegal fishing activities, making it difficult to control and regulate the practice. Thus, in areas that are relatively 'un-policed', some chief fishermen or influential persons stand to benefit financially from IUU fisherfolks by 'endorsing' their activities: in exchange for a fee, artisanal fishermen are granted 'permission' to operate. The involvement of leaders and political

influences in artisanal fishing has implications for which alternative income ventures are likely to succeed; in a larger context, their 'participation' in illegal fishing makes it 'acceptable' in the communities. And reduces policing structures. Benjamin Botchway laments-

The light they use to catch fish is not good but because it helps them catch a lot of fish, they still use it but it is not healthy because the fishes change colour and go bad easily compared to fish caught with only nets. Most of these leaders in government too own some of these fishing trawlers that are being used to work for them on the sea so they cannot help bring a stop to some of these malpractices because of their interest. (FGD-NFM -Benjie Botchway).

The Ghanaian government is actively combating illegal fishing practices through a range of effective methods. The Minister of Fisheries, Hawa Koomson has emphasized the need for a comprehensive approach, including equipping the Fisheries Enforcement Unit with the latest tools and technologies to deal with illicit activities at sea (<https://heritagisation.graphic.com.gh/news/general-news/lets-fight-illegal-fishing-activities-fisheries> June - 22 - 2023). These measures involve the initial deployment of Electronic Monitoring Systems on trawl vessels. The government has started installing Electronic Monitoring Systems on trawl vessels to keep a close watch on their activities and ensure they comply with regulations. These proactive measures demonstrate the government's commitment to protecting Ghana's fisheries and safeguarding the livelihoods of those who depend on them.

The Monitoring, Control and Surveillance (MCS) Division of the Ministry of Fisheries and Aquaculture Development implemented the vessel monitoring systems (VMS) to provide information on the actual position of fishing vessels on the sea.

In recent news, it is reported the Ghana Navy has partnered with the Ministry of Fisheries and Aquaculture Development to combat illegal activities at sea to ensure the protection of Ghana's territorial waters. To aid in the enforcement of fisheries regulations, the

Ghana Police Service has established a Marine Police Division. Regrettably, limited resources have impeded the effectiveness of these organizations in implementing the laws which could potentially lead to negative consequences on the sustainability of fish populations and the overall health of marine ecosystems (<https://henmpoano.org>). To tackle the issue of illegal fishing, a comprehensive strategy is required that involves not only strengthening existing fisheries legislation but also introducing new regulations and legislative reforms. It is important to impose strict penalties on those who violate the law and ensure that they are punished accordingly. In addition, it would be beneficial to enlist local enforcers from within the community, as they have a vested interest in protecting their livelihoods from the negative impact of overfishing and depletion of fish stocks. They can also provide alternative sources of income during periods of closed fishing restrictions. By taking a multifaceted approach, we can work towards promoting sustainable fishing practices and preserving our marine ecosystems for future generations. In this way the community members are included in the management of their affairs.

In 2019, the landing Beach Enforcement Committee (LaBEC), project was initiated and underwent a fruitful trial in Elmina, Mumford, and Nyanyaano, in the central and western regions of Ghana. LaBEC is a crucial entity in the fight against illegal fishing practices in the area targeting canoe artisanal fishermen. The LaBEC will play an important role in protecting the environment and ensuring fair and sustainable fishing practices among artisanal fishers, controlling illegal fishing practices in the area. Its main objective is to protect the environment and uphold fair and sustainable fishing practices among artisanal fishers. [https://heritagisation.ghanaweb.com/regional news](https://heritagisation.ghanaweb.com/regional%20news) 27th December 2020)

In the final quarter of that same year, the Fisheries Commission received assistance from the '*Far Dwuma Nkodo*' project, which was executed by the Environmental Justice Foundation and 'Hen Mpoano,heritagisation and financed by the European Union. As a result of this

support, each of the 48 coastal communities in the Central Region was able to train a 15-member Landing Beach Enforcement Committee. It is pertinent to mention that the Ga Mashie community has yet to receive such aid, possibly for the reason of their discontent with government and non-governmental organizations.

The committee is made up of volunteers, although in Elmina, fishers have decided to allocate a small portion of their catch to support the ten-member committee for sustainability purposes. The arbitration committee comprises five members - an officer of the FC, the Ghana Police Service, the Chief fisherman, and a representative of fish processors and traditional leaders.

5.3 Disunified front for reforms and the emergence of parallel fisher groups leadership

5.3.0 Overview

The fishing community members also indicate how there seems to be a lack of a collective approach to the management of their affairs on the local level. Fisherfolks indicate a gradual loss of faith they have in traditional leadership, whereas, traditional leadership also indicates a lack of faith they have in the competence and traditional know-how of the fishermen who currently work along the Ga Mashie coast. The post-harvest groups correspondingly indicate, a lack of faith they have in fishermen and the traditional authorities. They base their complaints on the continued increase in price hikes, which they attribute to traditional authorities becoming politically affiliated. Hence, their judgement and decisions are selfish, and politically biased, negatively affecting the people they are to govern locally.

The homogeneity within AMF stakeholders, is a crucial factor. Without it their ability to collectively work and sustain fisheries is impeded, thus they cannot establish their rights in fishery management locally and within political spheres. According to recent research (Okyere, Chuku, Dzantor, Ahenkorah & Adade, 2023), the leadership of artisanal fishers has not

effectively engaged in relevant governance matters due to a capacity deficit. Presently their heterogeneity poses a significant challenge to their ability to act collectively and establish their rights. The lack of a cohesive front has made it challenging to present their concerns and interests effectively, leading to further marginalization and loss of rights. This situation presents a significant challenge to the sustainable management of the fishery, as it hampers efforts to establish a common understanding of the issues and work towards a solution that benefits all stakeholders.

The announcement of the first-ever closed fishing season for artisanal fishers to rebuild small pelagic stocks revealed a deep fragmentation within the community. The move was met with mixed reactions, with some sections of the fisherfolk holding press conferences to protest the closure while others expressed support for the initiative. The differing opinions within the community highlighted the complexities of managing a natural resource like fisheries, where there are often competing interests and perspectives. While some fishers saw the closed season as a threat to their livelihoods, others recognized the importance of allowing fish stocks to recover

The artisanal fishery industry is currently facing severe capacity challenges that have resulted in the marginalisation of fishers both politically and economically. They are not adequately involved in decision-making processes, policies, and laws that affect their livelihoods. Furthermore, government-subsidised fishing inputs, such as premix fuel, fishing nets, and outboard engines for motorized canoes, which were previously administered by the GNCFC and Chief fishermen, are now controlled by committees established by the ministry. This has led to a significant power shift in the industry, leaving the fishers with limited control over their own affairs. The impact of these changes has been far-reaching, affecting the lives of many individuals and families who rely on fishing as their primary source of income. The

fishermen continually see their marginalization as the result of their lack of formal education.

This notion was continually indicated by the leaders, Nii Aryi the Asere leader intimated-

“Unfortunately, most of us fishermen are not educated so others are beating us to our own game because they are educated and can manufacture all sorts of gadgets to harvest more fish leaving us with nothing. When we complain we get no audience nor help because we do not have the voice. If our forefathers were documented while fishing like the presidency of Kwame Nkrumah, JJ Rawlings, Acheampong, Akuffo, and the others, it will be known to all that fishing is a vital part of us and our heritage. The only part of our tradition that has been well captured and documented is our Homowo festival”. (IDI-ASFM – Nii Aryi Adin II).

The Wemprakwa family heads indicate a different reason for the lack of homogeneity and thus marginalization has been the result of the lack of continuity in knowledge amongst the younger fisherfolks. They intend to hold meetings with these groups of people to teach them the knowledge of the past to sustain fishing and uphold its value. In different interviews with the Abola Wemprakwa home they intimated that they are increasingly concerned about the lack of continuity and the lackadaisical approach to fishing know-how amongst the youth. This truncation in continuity may be attributed to the reduced amount of time spent at the beach by the young people due to the time spent in school. The leaders intimated the following:

“It is exactly how my brother is saying, there are a lot of fishermen today who do not even know how to tie what we call abalai (a sail) kpaa (cord/rope) they do not even know how to lift and place shimaatso and meetso” (Sεεkwεlɔ of Abola Wemprakwa).

“That is why we say that come and learn how to fish here and all other thing associated with it but they will not listen. As we speak there are leaders who are appointed to take care of the shore who call themselves wolεiatε yet they do not know most of these things therefore they also cannot teach these young fishermen”. (IDI-NW -Nii Abeo Kyerekuandah)

“I am glad you asked this question. What I will say is that even if God blesses you with so much and do not practice and learn more about it then it will not profit you or society. God has blessed us with everything especially brains to think with but when it comes to fishing it is very important to learn. Learning is vital and that is what gives you the knowledge you need to be good at it then with time you get the experience, all this will be possible with humility. If you are not humble you cannot learn and this is what this generation lack, humility! These new fishermen are not humble and willing to learn at all. Fishing is a good thing, when you learn it well you will be glad you did”. (IDI-NDZ - Nii Dzase Blatsɛ)

They pointed to issues of misappropriation and misuse of titles as evidence of insufficient fishing education. Cultural changes and the dynamics of culture have resulted in the blurring of the distinct role of leaders in the fishing community. According to the fishermen the roles of the Woleiatse is being usurped by the *ηshɔnaa onukpai*. In subtle ways expressed in their costume, they assert their influence.

During several interviews conducted with leaders, it was gathered that the misuse of *Afili* (seed beads) is a clear distortion of traditional customs and practices. It is important to understand that *Afili* beads were not originally intended to be worn by the *ηshɔnaa onukpa* community. This group had a specific role in the society which was focused on fishing and overseeing fishing activities. As per the traditional customs, it was not permissible for them to wear beads as adornment while carrying out their duties. Hence, they were not entitled to receive a set of beads upon receiving their title. On the other hand, *Afili* beads hold great significance in the cultures of the Woleiatse and Ga Mashie priest. In their respective traditions, *Afili* beads are considered sacred and are reserved only for certain individuals. The Woleiatse community members wear one set of *Afili* beads, while the Ga Mashie priest wears two sets.

This distinction highlights the importance of Afili beads in the communities' traditional customs and their significance. They assert-

“We are disturbed by the many distortions within our practice. As an example...

Nuumo Aduawushie wears two afili (seed beads), Nii Abeo wears one because he considers Nuumo as a father and cannot wear the same number of afili (beads) with him but today the afili the ηshɔnaa onukpai are wearing are bigger afili than what their elders wear.

In days past, when the leader is selected at the shore, he is adorned with white beads with a touch of blue given to you to put on your wrist to depict that you are under someone's authority. Only wolɛiatɛ are to wear the afili, but today they are all wearing afili meanwhile fishermen do not wear afili”. (IDI-SK - Sɛɛkwɛɔ

“These things are troubling. When you go to the beach the ηshɔnaa onukpa must clearly state this and not allow all to casually refer to them as Wolɛiatɛ and Nii.

We want to make time and meet with Abola over this issue so we sort these things out so that these fishermen will know their rights, and responsibilities and accord respect to the elders appropriately. All those who call themselves wolɛiatɛ will not call themselves wolɛiatɛ when they get here because they are before the main wolɛiatɛ”.

(IDI-NDZ - Nii Dzase Blɛtsɛ)

The fishermen are equally disgruntled with the existing ηshɔnaa onukpai onukpa, their immediate leaders. They indicated that some of them do not have the development of fishing at heart. They express dissatisfaction towards the current state of the ηshɔnaa onukpai This system, which regulates fishing, seems to be failing in its objective of promoting the sustainable development of the fishing industry. According to the fishermen, some of their immediate leaders are not actively contributing towards improving the state of affairs. This could potentially be because they lack the necessary skills or resources, or they are simply not interested in the progress of the industry. The fishermen are now calling for urgent reforms to revitalize the ηshɔnaa onukpa system and ensure that it benefits all stakeholders. During the

focus group discussions with the fishermen affiliated to the Asere, Nii Kwardey with the resounding support from his colleagues asserted-

“They only think of their stomachs and pockets instead of the collective wellbeing of the people. When there is a new development, they call the fishermen for meetings to discuss but only a few elders get to go leaving us behind and it is worrying us. We know we have elders but it will be fair if we get the opportunity to go sit behind the elders as support systems while we learn from them as they represent us and advocate for us”.(FGD-ASFM – Nii Kwardey)

-our leaders in the fishing fraternity are also part of our problems, when they announced the harbour construction, authorities met with our leaders and we heard some of our leaders got as much as 10,000ghs so they did not relay our displeasure of moving. Even the places we ‘park’ our canoes have been converted into a bar and if you are not careful, they will pull a gun and cutlass on you for trying to find a place to park your canoe. They even sell wee, cocaine and others terrible things there which we are not happy with. The last time, we came back from fishing very tired and some people came unto us with machetes when we tried to park our canoe at the shore, frightened we pulled back into the sea with the fish we had caught, is this fair? For how long would we live like this? (FGD-ASFM)

In conclusion, some negative implications are evident due to the decline of traditional fishing practices among the younger generation. The knowledge and heritage of fishing are losing value amongst the youth, while the older generation is trying to educate their children about the importance of this profession. However, without proper training and education, the younger generation is growing up without sufficient knowledge of local traditional fishing practices. This lack of knowledge could lead to non-compliance with legal and regulatory frameworks, resulting in severe consequences for the sustainability of fisheries resources and the livelihoods of artisanal fishers.

One of the main reasons why artisanal fishers are unable to effectively participate in fisheries governance is their low level of formal education. This lack of education not only affects their ability to engage in decision-making processes but also hinders their ability to implement policies and regulations effectively. The head of the families indicates that many of the fisheries are untrained, which makes it difficult for them to carry on the fishing heritage properly. Thus, they have reached out to the fisherfolk to engage them in training to appreciate indigenous knowledge systems and practices associated with fishing.



CHAPTER SIX

DISCUSSIONS

6.0 Introduction

This chapter discusses some key revelations emerging from the research. It attempts to map out the interactions between the human and non-human actors of the Ga Mashie fishing heritage (GMFH) and interrogate their agency. It highlights some key cultural dynamics and changes to the heritage, that have ensued due to the interactions of these agents. To illustrate the changes pertaining to the concept of heritagisation, the chapter discusses these dynamics under the sub-themes of re- heritagisation and de- heritagisation . These dynamics are all aspects of heritage conservation, which manifests in events of adaptation, rehabilitation, and reuse (Silverman 2015). This chapter also touches on the local conceptualization of fishing heritage of the community. It also discusses how the fishing heritage in Ghana highlights the state of cultural resource management.

6.1 Agents and Actors of the Ga Mashie Fishing Heritage

As heritage is a social and cultural process involving various agents, heritagisation involves multiple agents. Agency is the active element of culture (Ratner, 2000); three key agencies were identified within the GMFH as heritage stakeholders. These are the community, institutions, and individual agency. The community agency is seen in the individuals within the community, that is, the clans and the various sub-communities or Akutseii within Ga Mashie. Within the institutional agency is a further breakdown, which is the traditional institutional agency. These are the stakeholder groups with deliberate traditionally institutionalized succession plans identified as custodians of fishing as a heritage, they are: the Wemprakwa family head-Ga Mashie Wolɛiatɛ, Akutseii Nshornaa Kwɛlɔi, Nshornaa yei, Fishermen, and Fish smokers. Identifying with Fontal and Redondo (2016), the institutional agency recognized the researcher

and her 'theoretical' knowledge as instruments for change and continuity of the heritage. Furthermore, under institutional agencies, the Ghana Museums and Monuments Board, and the Department of Archaeology and Heritage Studies were identified as agents for the preservation of the GMFH.

These agents collectively represent different dynamics of the GMFH fishing heritage within Ga Mashie, working together in a systematic order to the success of the heritage and its sustainability. There is a co-dependence on each agent in sustaining the heritage, a constant rethinking and redefinition of cultural values by various agents, including social groups, and institutions, which are themselves constantly evolving.

It is worth noting that within the agents are specific actors. To understand the behaviour and actions of the actors within the GMFH, it was crucial to take into account their agency, and their ability to make choices and take actions based on their own unique roles, and interests. The concept of agency is central to the study of social roles, as it helps us recognize that actors are not just passive recipients of social expectations, but rather active contributors, who shape and negotiate the meaning and significance of their roles (Van der Duim, Ren & Johanneson, 2013. pp.4-10).

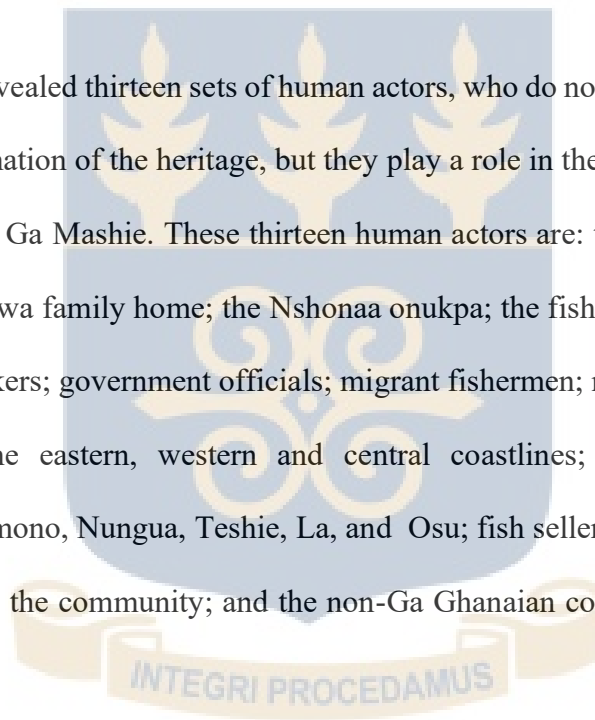
This is in line with the actor-network theory (ANT), an approach developed by Michel Callon (1986,1999), Bruno Latour (1996,1997,2011), and John Law (1999,2008) within social science studies . Considering the agency of actors, we can gain a deeper understanding of how they navigate their roles, exercise their power or resist constraints, and ultimately impact the social structures and norms that shape their lives. Thus, interrogating how the making of society demands the association of diverse elements that never existed as pure categories cut off from the wider fabric of relations (Johannesson & Bærenholdt, 2009).

6.1.0 Identifying change actors in the Ga Mashie fishing heritage

Actors are assembled and structures are arranged in a recursive process of networking or translation, such that we cannot take anything as given. Everything is an effect of relational practices (Jóhannesson, G. T., 2005). Relating this to GMFH it is essential to understand that nothing can be taken for granted. Every aspect and element of its system is a result of relational practices. In which actors and structures are not independent but rather interconnected through a looping reoccurring process of networking (See figure 6.1). This process involves the continuous exchange of ideas, information, and resources, leading to the formation of complex structures that are constantly evolving and adapting to changing circumstances.

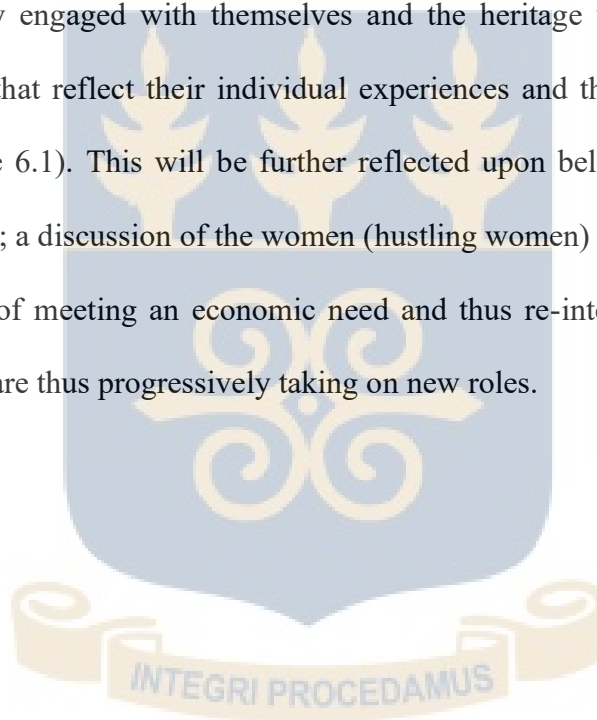
In GA Mashie, the actors of the fishing heritage engage in three core interactive and intersecting areas of: pre-harvest, harvest, and post-harvest processes. The pre-harvest reserve involves traditional rites and practices that are adhered to, whereas the harvest process involves the actual act of fishing. The post-harvest phase includes activities such as processing, management, and sales of fish. All these activities revolve around the central non-human actor, which is the fish.

The research revealed thirteen sets of human actors, who do not all have a direct bearing on the history and formation of the heritage, but they play a role in the present sustainability of fishing as a heritage in Ga Mashie. These thirteen human actors are: the Chief Fisherman; the elders of the Wemprakwa family home; the Nshonaa onukpa; the fishermen in Ga Mashie; the Nshonaa yei; fish smokers; government officials; migrant fishermen; members of other fishing communities along the eastern, western and central coastlines; members of other Ga communities i.e. Sakumono, Nungua, Teshie, La, and Osu; fish sellers within the community, and fish sellers outside the community; and the non-Ga Ghanaian communities in Ghana and the diaspora.



Evidently, as materials come together, they create actors (human) through a process of relational ordering. This means that the eventual solid individual actor doesn't exist until it has been created and stabilized through various processes. In other words, it is the relationships between the materials that create the actor, rather than the materials themselves (Sayes 2014). As a result of continuous relational interactions, these materials assume the role of non-human actors. The non-human actors of the Ga Mashie fishing heritage identified are the King Nshonaa space/landscape and the Tsile fish. It is important to note that while non-human entities possess agency and may be considered as actors, the intensity and type of agency varies among them, and may differ from that of humans (Callon and Latour, 1992, p. 356, 360–361). In Ga Mashie this nonhuman agency is represented in the role of Tsile amongst other fish species as a preferred specie and ‘ritual’ fish, and its consequent feature role of import in the Homowo festival.

The point is that, evidently, the fishing heritage is in continuous interaction with diverse people, who make and remake its structure and processes. These actors are equally non-passive recipients, but actively engaged with themselves and the heritage under study, through the creation of meanings that reflect their individual experiences and their significance to their livelihoods (See figure 6.1). This will be further reflected upon below in the discussion on changes and continuity; a discussion of the women (hustling women) who engage with fishing from a point of view of meeting an economic need and thus re-interpret the restrictions of women in fishing and are thus progressively taking on new roles.



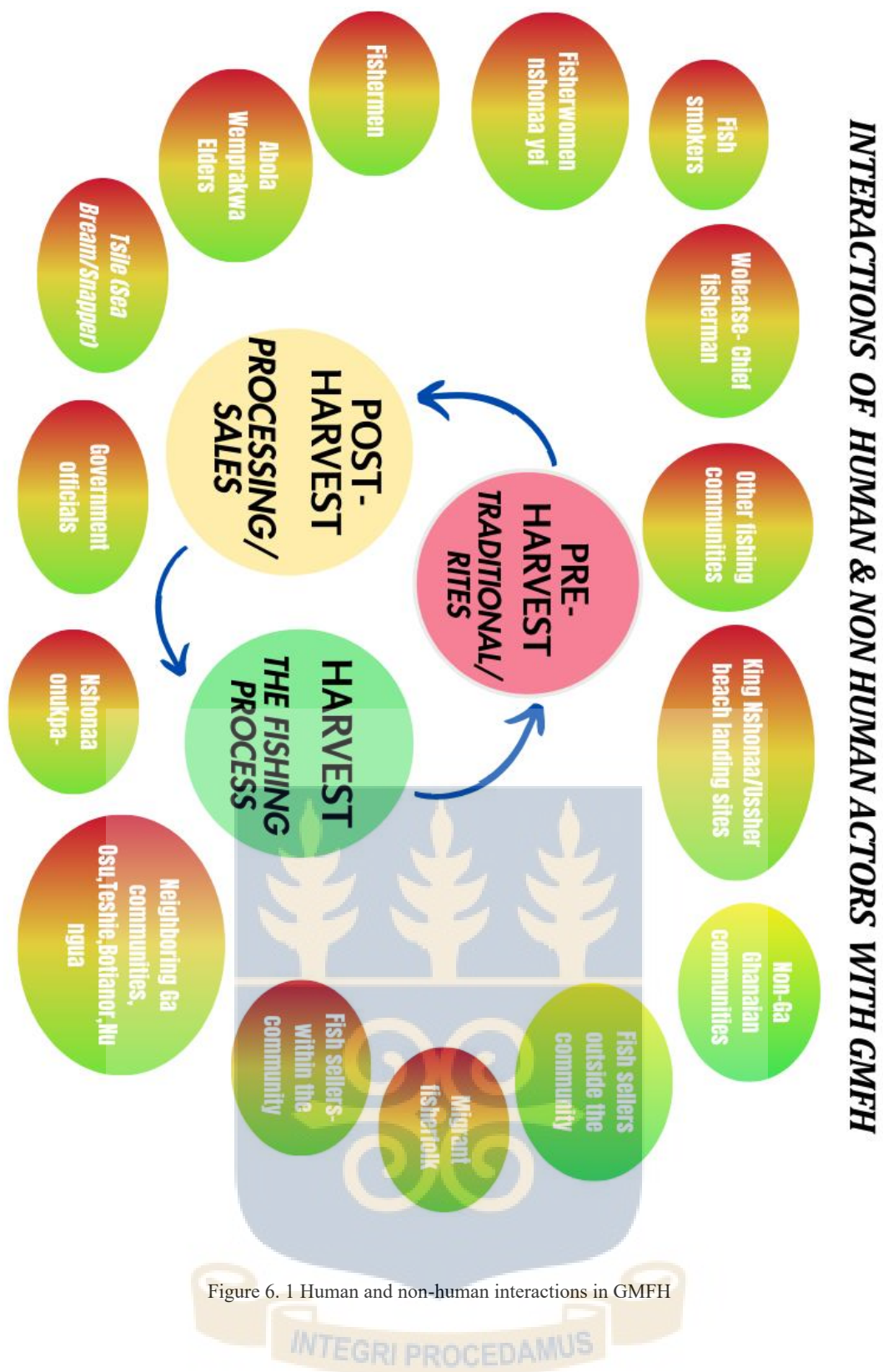


Figure 6. 1 Human and non-human interactions in GMFH

The process of interaction between actors, and between actors and agents produces a recursive nature indicating that the entities and relationships are not static but are in a constant state of flux. This indicates that each new interaction creates novel entities, and new relationships emerge.

The process is self-referential and repetitive. The recursive nature of the process implies that the heritage dynamics and the relationships formed are continually being modified, and changing and thus the heritage is never static (Sayes, 2014, p. 142).

6.2 Fishing Heritage Culture dynamics, change and continuity

The fishing heritage of Ga Mashie is experiencing some profound changes, which may be a result of the interaction between agents and actors and the communities' response to global encounters, policy, global blue economic expectations, and diverse cultural dynamics.

The following discussed instruments of change albeit negative were noted during the research period. It raised the question of the sustainability of the heritage. These occurring changes with the GMFH are categorized into themes of re-heritagisation and de-heritagisation (Sjöholm, 2016).

With focus on the non-human agent of fish species, two major instruments of change have been: the issues of climate change and its varied effects on fish stock, coupled with the adverse effects of IUU practices. The direct effect of these acts is seen in the continuous dwindling yield of Tsile fish, bordering on a possible impending case of de-heritagisation. De-heritagisation refers to a possible elimination or desisting from a practice designated as heritage or the substitution of an already designated heritage with an alternative (Sjöholm, 2016). The last decade has seen a continuous decline in catch which has resulted in the establishment of closed season periods, which was started in 2017. There is a record of small pelagic fish stocks

increasing after the closed season enforcement, but there hasn't been a study that documents demersal stock increase, and neither do the fishermen testify to an increase. This is not exclusive to Ghana, there are global conversations on the possibilities of diversifying fishing communities away from marine fishing in the light of declining global fish stocks (Owusu et al., 2023). Some global recommendations indicate that Fish farming may be a solution for coastal communities that depend on fishing as a livelihood (Bavinck et al., 2005). However, such options may not be viable for coastal communities in Ghana where fishing is more than sustenance but an intricate cultural identity. Thus, the local response to alternative livelihoods implemented by the Ministry of Fisheries hasn't been well received.

The results of this research and Akyeampong's (2001) study on the Anlo-Ewe fishing community buttresses the Ghanaian coastal communities' cultural identity, and traditional ties to artisanal fishing and the coast. Pertaining to the GMFH the decline in the catch of 'Tsile' adversely affects their Lookɔmɔ rites which is directly linked to the ushering of the new traditional year, and the celebration of the Homowo festival.

The effects of the decline have resulted in alternative protein sources being utilized during the preparation of the Homowo meal of Kpokpoi. In conversation with the fish smokers, they indicated the alternatives of *Odaa* and *Saflo* fish being used in place of the Tsile fish for the preparation of the festival meal. These are tasty alternatives which are more readily available than 'Tsile'. As discussed in chapter four of this thesis, this research revealed that 'Tsile' is not a particular fish but a collection of fish with similar characteristics. In light of the changes directly affecting fish stock, the GMFH may be forced to adopt and include these current alternatives of *Odaa* and *Saflo* into the 'Tsile' family. The only perceived challenge is the issue of the non-exclusive, non-seasonal nature of these fish alternatives which in a way reduces their value. Deducing from the research results, I hypothesize that in addition to its

exclusive nature, taste and firmness, the current collection of fish species known as Tsile, may have been collated as a result of changes and adaptation to new species of fish in the absence of a preferred species.

A possible necessary approach to combat the continuous changes and contemporary dynamics of the heritage is also noted in situations of re-heritagisation. Re-heritagisation refers to the reaffirmation or re-interpretations of already specified heritage components. Notably, the Ga Mashie community is evidently a mosaic yet cohesive community, with long-standing historical connections with colonial rule, migrant settlers from West African nations, and contemporary migrants from other coastal communities. This cohesive existence and constant interaction are resulting in changes within the GMFH. The heritage is presently engaged by agents and actors that may not necessarily belong to the identified stakeholders documented by this research, and their interaction has an impact on forming new methods and interpretations of aspects of the heritage.

A clear example is the re-interpretation of gender roles and restrictions. The women as stakeholders and agents of the GMFH have not received extensive study as their colleagues in the central and the western communities. Their role in fishing hasn't been fully examined nor explored; they have been documented as post-harvest managers, who are not engaged directly with fishing or its activities. However, this research discloses that unlike the communities in Tema, Central and the Western parts of Ghana the women in Ga Mashie play an exclusive historical role as those in charge of fish sales at the beach, with a recognised family line connected to the Wemprakwa family (Adjei, 2023. p. 3-7).

This role is evolving to include more organisational roles as most women are gaining economic power. The women play a de facto leadership role as sponsors for the fishing expedition of the fishermen. These negotiations of de facto leadership are not readily disclosed

within Ga Mashie, this is evidence of it not being widely accepted. It normally occurs within family confines, where a woman may sponsor her husband or fisherman relative with funds for pre-mix fuel and his crew to embark on a fishing expedition.

Moreover, the role of the women at the beach is gradually evolving and women are increasingly becoming more involved in the practice of fishing itself. This was noted among the female migrants who moved to Ga Mashie and settled in the now-demolished Jamestown fishing community. This community had a group of women who eagerly assisted with working on the canoe when it docked and bringing in the catch, carrying fish from the boats and bringing them to the shore. Although they don't participate directly in fishing, it is worth noting how the post-harvest roles of women are evolving.

The progressive evolution in roles and responsibilities in comparison with other coastal communities doesn't indicate that the power dynamics of the women in Ga Mashie are less than those of the women in the other coastal communities. However, it does express the limitations that the women within these communities may face in asserting their power and control. (Adjei 2023; Walker & Robinson, 2019, p. 471-474).

Although the management of the canoes by individual fishing heads identified with families reduces the possibility of women owning a fishing canoe in Ga Mashie, their options for generating wealth from fishing far exceed the fishermen. They transform the commodity of fish in three main ways. They either sell the fresh fish, process by drying and milling, and/or smoke or fry the fish. They have a broader range of customers with more diversity to manage the harvest. Whereas, the men just offload and receive cash for their efforts. Through observations, I identified that some women engage with cold stores in a partnership or by a simple agreement to store fish and sell during periods when the fish is out of season. These cold stores are located just outside the Ga Mashie township entrance.

Changes are continually seen in the core operations of the GMFH, as heritage is dynamic and consequently has been transformed in several ways. The equipment has evolved with the addition of outboard motors and the use of pre-mix fuels. The rituals are consequently undergoing change with the loss and transformation of the landscape. Furthermore, the local fishing governance reflects the present preference for engaging educated individuals in leadership, who may not necessarily have extensive fishing knowledge (Dovlo, Amador & Nkrumah 2016; Lawson, 1968). Questions that arise out of such governance issues touch on the transmission of knowledge of fishing to the younger generation. Adaptation of new methods will need to be considered when considering the effectiveness of new practices that have evolved to be relevant to the heritage. The present leadership are not actively involved in fishing; this suggests a possible near-future truncation of the traditions, myths, and narratives. Fishing practices may be slow to change, resulting in a continued reliance on traditional methods rather than adopting new, potentially more collaborative techniques. Incorporating new knowledge, such as climate data, is crucial for the livelihoods of fisherfolk who face increasing uncertainties in their work.

There is also concern about the availability and practicality of alternative livelihoods which fisherfolks and other stakeholders can work on during the closed seasons and the periods of the ban. I suggest the fisheries commission collaborate with fishermen on co-management projects. Namely, projects that will enhance the capacity of artisanal fishing as a practice and consequently the heritage. These may include projects where the community members may be engaged as security forces during the ban season; and periodic training sessions engaging them in life-saving workshops on Cardiopulmonary Resuscitation (CPR). Or more pertinently adult education classes on thematic topics of financial literacy, climate science, and heritage management amongst others.

6.2.0 The heritagisation process of fishing in Ga Mashie highlights the problem of cultural resource management in Ghana.

The case for cultural resource management, which extends to heritage management in Ghana, is still being made and debated. The valuable cultural legacy of Ghana is threatened by earth-moving initiatives that are executed without proper impact assessments, highlighting the need for a focus on heritage engagement from a political and legal perspective. Despite the mandate of academic and state bodies, such as the Department of Archaeology and Heritage Studies (DAHS) and the Ghana Museums and Monuments Board (GMMB) respectively, to safeguard heritage sites, the current state of 'lawlessness' leading to the absence of impact assessments before earth-moving projects have resulted in the loss of numerous significant historical and cultural sites.

The destruction of these sites is not just a tragedy for Ghana's heritage but also the world's cultural heritage. It is without doubt that the Department of Archaeology and the GMMB must urgently intervene to prevent any further damage to these sites by ensuring that impact assessment projects are initiated before any earth-moving projects. This way, they can guarantee that these heritage sites are protected, and their cultural significance is preserved for future generations. After the Volta Basin research project and the Bui dam projects (Davies 1971; Apoh & Gavua 2016) other large-scale state-implemented projects have proceeded without the necessary cultural impact assessment. The focus is on the environmental research aspects and not on the loss of cultural components, be they tangibles or intangible. However, when cultural components are laced into a landscape or environment as in the case of Ga Mashie, a pause and reflection before action must be taken into consideration.

6.2.1 The case of Ga Mashie Beach-

The beach stretching from behind the Ussher Fort to the James Fort is indicated as an area that constitutes the heritage of fishing in Ga Mashie. The community identify with the land as their property which has served them as landing sites for their canoes since the introduction of fishing

into Ga Mashie. These landscapes were a temporary port the colonial government acquired from the coastal traditional landowners in the late 1900s, however, it became redundant after the construction of the Tema port in 1962 (Jackson 2022, p.295-307). In Accra, most lands are either stool-owned or family/individually owned thus, the community reclaimed use of the coastal land for artisanal fishing purposes. It soon evolved into a living and working community for fishermen and migrants. Although described as a beach, the King Nshonaa, was a working harbour rather than a place for leisure. Businesses, residences, schools, places of worship and bars were established on the beach and a large population considered it their home and community. Land tenure and user rights claims have emerged as critical concerns for urbanising fishing communities as urban economic development projects attempt to claim regions historically reserved for traditional fishing (Fabinyi, 2020; Fabinyi et al., 2022; Kadfak & Oskarsson, 2020). The community, proclaim their ancestral rights to the land. However, the government, through the local authorities, declared the fishers in the Jamestown harbour to be squatters who lack economic and political rights to the coastal land. The community's mosaic quality, a common trait of coastal communities resulting from migration, was the basis for labelling them as squatters.

The beach area has gone through various changes and modifications, with the most recent being the demolition of the fishing community situated in the Jamestown section of the landscape. This was done to pave the way for the construction of Jamestown Harbour, which began in 2019 (Citi News, 12/11/2019). The Harbour is being constructed with an 80-million-dollar fund from China, and the project is currently underway. The fisherfolks identify this as one of their main grievances. Presently the fishing community that resided at the beach has been displaced to the Ussher beach and shares their work space with a recreational restaurant and pub.

Over the years, the beach space has been used for traditional rites to usher in the new year in Ga Mashie and for protective rites for fisherfolks during expeditions. Due to the construction of the Jamestown Harbour, the fishing community has lost full access to the Jamestown beach, locally referred to as the King Nshonaa for their traditional rites and rituals. During the Lookɔmɔ rites in 2022, access was granted by the construction team to the community members to perform the rites, however, this was quite limited as it was crowded with construction materials. As discussed in Chapter 4, Ussher Beach is unsuitable due to overcrowding and lack of spiritual significance compared to King Nshonaa. The site, the beach area, is used for the preparation of the food eaten by the priestess. This meal is known as Fotoli. It is prepared at the beach. Afterwards, children are invited to come and participate in the meal. This meal is a shrine meal and very little information is given about it to the public.

According to the United Nations, more than three billion people depend on marine and coastal biodiversity for their survival (Nthia 2021; Tettey 2019). On a typical day without any ceremonial or ritual activities, the Ga Mashie beach is a lively environment with numerous layers of value- economic, social, recreational, and entrepreneurial- for various individuals, which I further unpack in the following. Within the months where I observed activities at the Ga Mashie beach, I noted vendors were seen carrying food items such as breakfast foods in the form of porridges such as rice-water (a rice porridge eaten with sugar and milk), oats and other beverages and sliced bread with options of margarine or coleslaw. At noon foods such as rice, sauces, and plantains with beans stew are carried around and sold to the fishermen and women gathered at the beach. On the sand, children play and seek to be of help to the fishermen, with school children engaging in the same after school, seeking distinct shells and sea urchins to sell within the community. In the little makeshift sheds built along the shoreline, people are seen mending their nets and canoes, and nestled under their umbrellas are the women waiting for the return of the fishermen, standing close by to them huddled in groups are their customers eagerly

waiting to purchase fish. However, during the closed season, the beach looks bare with very little activity happening along the coast. It is obvious that the vibrant nature of the coast is directly connected to fishing activities. Within that month the shore is scantily littered with a few fishermen mending their nets and children running around and playing soccer, and a few children and adults are observed idling about. These diverse uses of the space shed light on the culturally interwoven appreciation of the landscape and the continuous adaptation to the new working space. It further highlights the continuity in actions and value being transferred to the new space, an ongoing re-heritagisation.

In Ghana, waterfront developments are becoming increasingly popular due to their contribution to the global Blue Economy (BE) (World Bank 2013; Zhao, Guan, and Sun 2019; Li et al. 2021; Kedong et al. 2022). Blue Economy (BE) which is the collective sustainable use and management of marine resources for comprehensive economic growth is considered a multi-faceted and interdisciplinary approach to the management of marine affairs, and it includes investment in marine energy, tourism, health, transportation, real estate, recreational activities, and fisheries, amongst others. The agenda aims to convert coastal regions into recreational zones, thereby promoting economic growth and boosting tourism. The redevelopment sites include Elmina Beach in Cape Coast, the Takoradi Harbour, the Osu coastal area's Marine Drive project, and the Ga Mashie coastal area.

In recent years the conversation about the Blue Economy has taken over and has been accepted as a viable reason to explore waterfront redevelopments and port restructuring. More pertinently it is concerned with the sustainability of the marine ecosystem whilst benefitting from its economic value. (Ayilu 2022; Li et al. 2021; World Bank 2013). Globally, studies have shown that the blue economic developments, such as ports, maritime zones, aquaculture, industrial parks, and eco-tourism, could potentially displace traditional fishing livelihoods and

small-scale local operators (Ayilu et al., 2022; Cohen et al., 2019; Fabinyi et al., 2022; Okafor-Yarwood et al., 2020).

There is no doubt that the fishing practices in Ga Mashie contribute to the local and international blue economy. Artisanal Marine fishery resources, as with many other renewable natural resources, support the economy of many coastal communities in Ghana (Odotei, 2002). In recent times the artisanal marine fishing industry has been burdened with problems of increasing filth and the declining fish stock and activities of illegal fishing vessels (Nunoo, 2018). The beach and seawater in Ga Mashie are plagued by plastic bags, food wrappers, and beer bottles that create sanitation challenges. To improve community health, the Waste Management Department must conduct monthly evaluations and monitoring. Immediate measures need to be taken to limit pollution in urban beach areas.

The increasing filth of the ocean affects the habitat of fish. Amidst the complaints of fish stock depletion, the fisherfolks indicate the continuous interference of their catch when all they receive is *Yoomoshi* and plastic trash. This is both a local and global concern not only because of the biological and ecological effect it has on the marine resources, but also because of the social, economic, and threat of cultural annihilation it has on the people whose livelihood in one way or the other depends on the industry. Their occupations have become part and parcel of their lives; Sometimes, the financial aspects become less important or even irrelevant. One must remember that many of those who become fishermen along the coast virtually grew up with the sea (Nukunya, 1989, p. 158-9).

To manage the biological and ecological impacts of pollution, IUU related issues and climate change, Ghana implemented the "Fisheries Management Plan of Ghana 2015-2019". Amongst other key objectives, the document primarily focuses on reducing fishing effort and capacity (Fisheries Management Plan of Ghana 2015-2019) which is a good initiative, however,

the strategies stipulated by the document do not favour the sustainability of the indigenous knowledge and heritage of artisanal fishing. To regulate the overexploitation of fish stock, an implementation plan has been rolled out. It involves introducing artisanal fisherfolk to alternative employment options and livelihoods. Furthermore, periodic closed seasons will be implemented to allow the fish stock to restock. This will reduce their participation in artisanal fishing and lead to a gradual decline in the practice altogether. These strategies are a direct threat to the artisanal fishing industry across Ghana; the historic Ga Mashie-Jamestown fishing community is not exempted.

Arguably a better management approach would have been an integrated management approach, one that employs a traditional management plan to complement the state management plan for the preservation of both the heritage/indigenous knowledge system associated with the industry as well as the marine ecosystem (Ameyaw et al., 2021). As practised in the fishing villages of the Shenge peninsula in Sierra Leone; where they have adopted community-generated traditional management plans in managing the overexploitation of fish stock (Sheku-Sei, 2011). Reflectively, an integrated management approach would have worked better due to the community's traditional sense of fishing and the beach as their heritage.

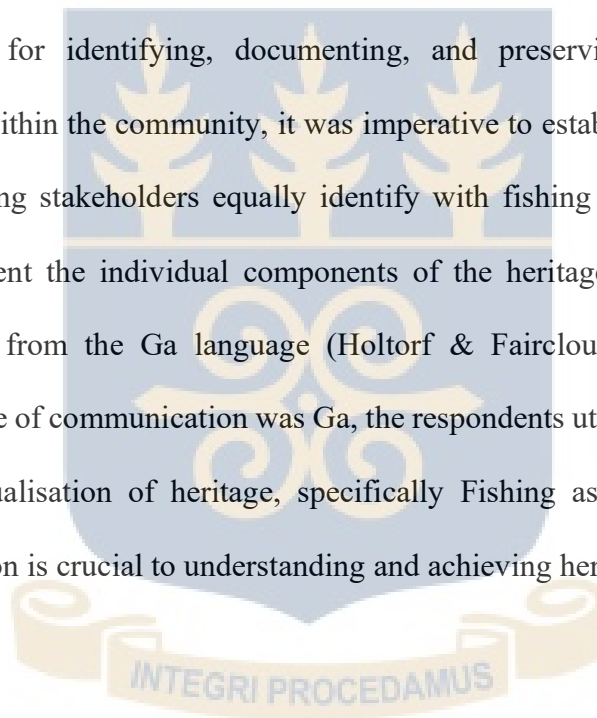
6.3 Fishing is our Heritage-Defining Heritage: the Gboshi+Jwetri Ni hybridity

The concept of heritage is heavily influenced by the theoretical frameworks put forth by scholars who have studied it. The definitions of heritage are largely shaped by the research, analysis, and conclusions drawn by these scholars, and their work continues to shape our understanding and appreciation of heritage today.

In her critique of authorised heritage discourse, Laurajane Smith highlights the significance of how heritage issues are written, talked about, and conceptualized. Smith argues that heritage discourse privileges some social actors while disengaging others from active

heritage use and sheds light on the complex power dynamics at play in heritage discourse, and the need for a more inclusive and equitable approach to heritage management and preservation (Smith 2006). In this context, I am exploring the dynamics of the power that language asserts, As observed by Silverman (2015, p.21-219) the Bono in Ghana had no direct equivalent for the definition of Culture as understood by academics. He notes how several words were used in explaining culture, likewise in Ga Mashie. This highlights the local appreciation of culture and heritage, additionally, it points to the constant need to include the community in heritage discourse creation for curriculum development.

This research was premised on the foundational and historical appreciation of fishing as a practice that is valued within Ga Mashie. Coupled with the many years of practice of fishing in Ga Mashie, this research revealed that the community identifies with fishing as a heritage. Due to their long-standing practice and sustainable methods, they have established their customs and passed them down through the generations. Participants were introduced to heritage concepts and global conversations before in-depth interviews and focus group discussions. Reasons for identifying, documenting, and preserving heritage were also discussed. However, within the community, it was imperative to establish that the community members and all fishing stakeholders equally identify with fishing as their heritage before progressing to document the individual components of the heritage, this understanding of heritage was gleaned from the Ga language (Holtorf & Fairclough, 2013). During data collection, the language of communication was Ga, the respondents utilised the Ga language to explain their conceptualisation of heritage, specifically Fishing as heritage because local community participation is crucial to understanding and achieving heritage objectives (Ripp & Rodwell 2016).

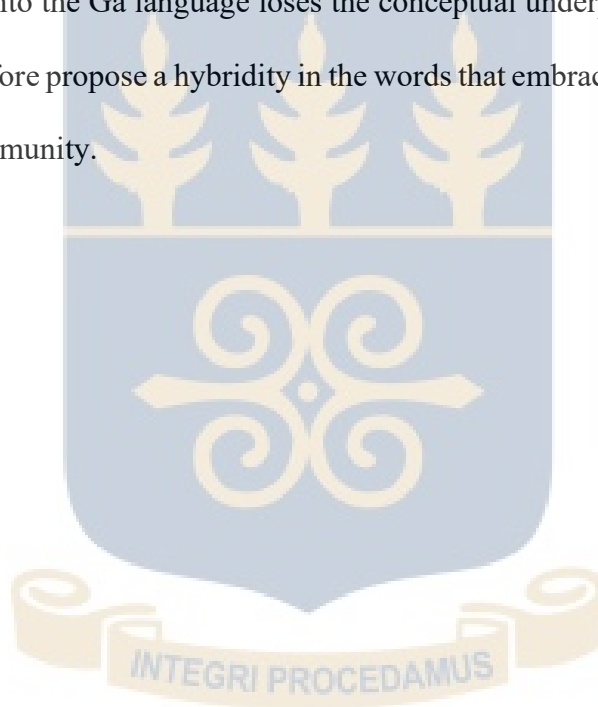


In the Ga language the closest word that can be used to describe and understand heritage, is the word *Gboshinii* which translates to mean *legacy, inheritance or property that has been passed on from generations*. However, this word doesn't fully embrace what heritage means to the community. This word is largely significant of things that are valued in the past and passed on from generation to generation it doesn't embrace the understanding of heritage as a present construction. This limited how much of 'heritage' could be explained using the Ga language.

Today, cultural heritage is seen as more than just preservation for future generations (Ripp, 2018). It maintains a present value, it's a value-added industry (Kirshenblatt Gimblett 1995 p. 370). Responses from Ga Mashie indicated that the fishing industry is considered a valuable and sustainable economic livelihood, with significant value as a legacy. Additionally, respondents mentioned how their current involvement with the practice contributes to the preservation of fishing heritage and its construction and its economic value is highly regarded. Although, the better-fitted word the community used in addition to *gboshinii* to communicate this economic value and viability of fishing as heritage is *Jwetri*, which means *treasure, heirloom, money, wealth, silver, or capital*. The fishing heritage holds a dual value in this way. *Jwetri* is a term the community uses to describe the economic significance and sustainability of their heritage. a way to articulate how preserving and promoting their cultural identity can contribute to the local economy. Firstly, the value that they place in the practice, preserving it in their family systems, and traditions such as homowo. Secondly, the experiential ways of fishing have imbued in them an additional value of the practice, where they have derived economic value from the practice.

In this way, the present construction and living heritage quality of fishing is captured and appreciated. Fishing as heritage has a compound meaning, *gboshi+Jwetri ni*. As *gboshinii* it is valued as a heritage that is necessary to be passed on from generation to generation. For

generations, the leadership roles in fishing have been intricately woven into the fabric of family succession among the seven sub-communities of Ga Mashie. The knowledge and skills required to lead successful fishing expeditions have been passed down from one generation to the next, ensuring that each leader possesses a deep understanding of the sea and its inhabitants. Through this system of family succession, the people of Ga Mashie have been able to maintain their fishing traditions and way of life for centuries. these are the defining principles of the word *gboshinii*- succession, legacy continuity and heritage. Beyond the values that *gboshinii* asserts, they value fishing as their *Jwetiri*. In this sense, its value is doubled to include the economic viability and sustainability of their livelihood. and to unpack the word *Jwetiri* to them is both a heritage, both a valorised product and also an economically sustainable way, and then also the very foundation of the Ga State. Although there is a scholarly notion that asserts that the Ga people were farmers and have consequently settled into the pattern of fishing, the community have built a strong identity around fishing, farming as it is may be a forgotten past. They have asserted a new identity to not lose the true definition of fishing heritage. Translating the definition of heritage into the Ga language loses the conceptual underpinning of what heritage is to the people, I therefore propose a hybridity in the words that embrace the concept of heritage for the Ga Mashie community.



CHAPTER SEVEN

FUTURE RESEARCH: SUMMARY OF FINDINGS, THE SIGNIFICANCE OF RESEARCH, RECOMMENDATIONS

7.0 Introduction

This research sought to investigate, interrogate, and document the living practices of AMF in the Ga Mashie community, considered a heritage. The key argument is that artisanal marine fishing in Ga Mashie has an immense historical and economic value which hasn't been interrogated, recognized or documented comprehensively as a heritage. As such it was important to employ the concept of heritagisation to interrogate the various components of the practice that are valued as heritage within the community. There exists a dominant representation of the heritage of Ga Mashie heavily focused on the presence of the forts and castles located in the community and its obvious connection to enslavement and its related diasporic connections which has come to represent their popular history. Hence, the research sought to highlight one of the public historical attributes of Ga Mashie which is artisanal marine fishing. In pursuit of its objectives, the project outlined three key goals. The first goal was to:

1. Thoroughly document the various components that constitute fishing as a vital cultural heritage in Ga Mashie, and to document the heritagisation process in Ga Mashie.
2. The second goal was to identify any present or future challenges that could potentially jeopardize the community's fishing heritage.
3. Lastly, the project aimed to conduct a critical analysis of the evolution, transformation, and potential disruption of their fishing heritage practices.

Three research questions guided the data collection process. They are: first, what constitutes the living fishing heritage of Ga Mashie? This question enabled the identification and cataloguing of the tangible and intangible cultural resources that accumulate as fishing heritage from the dissenting perspective of members of the fishing community. Secondly, which tangible

and intangible cultural resources of the community's fishing heritage are threatened, this question was posed to document the internal (Ga Mashie community) and external (actors from without the community) factors that affect the sustainability of fishing as heritage in the Ga Mashie community. Finally, what collaborative mitigative initiatives may be utilized to prevent and/or curb threats against the sustainability of Fishing as a heritage? This question interrogates, firstly, the awareness of the community of the threats to their community and secondly enables the documentation of their adaptive and mitigative responses. These guided the data collection process, and its documentation has resulted in the compilation of this research thesis.

This chapter discusses and presents the conclusions of the research. It is sectioned into four main parts, first a discussion on some insightful findings and leadings of the research. The second part presents a summary of the key findings of the research. The third section presents the academic and general recommendations based on the findings and the fourth section presents the limitations of the study.

In this concluding chapter, I summarise the findings from the research and follow up with recommendations from the research, that when implemented should help to pragmatically conserve and preserve the heritage of fishing in Ga Mashie. Four of these recommendations are pragmatic and industry-related, and the remaining are academic and theoretically focused.

7.1 Summary of findings

The research has presents a detailed analysis of the tangible and intangible resources that collectively represent the heritage of fishing in Ga Mashie. The study has delved into the various aspects of the fishing industry and community, social, and historical traditions associated with fishing which reveal insights into the history and evolution of fishing in Ga mashie. Further highlighting the significance of this industry to the local community and the national economy.

It provides a deep understanding of fishing as a crucial cultural activity in Ga Mashie, rather than just a profession. Previous studies on fishing along the Ga Mashie coast by Odotei (1992; 1999; 2002) did not consider the practice as a heritage, nor did they delve into the cultural dynamics that led to the evolution of this heritage. Consequently, there was a gap in knowledge in this area. The research now fills the gap in fishing heritage studies using heritagisation as a conceptual approach, as proposed by Harrison (2013) and Sjöholm (2016), to examine both tangible and intangible resources.

7.1.0 The Fishing Heritage of Ga Mashie

The study revealed that the fishing heritage of Ga Mashie may be appreciated in three main parts, firstly the agents or traditional institutions, secondly the ideological, and thirdly the material expression of culture. The traditional institutions are primarily led by the Wemprakwa family home and elders who have the mandate to oversee the affairs of fishermen in Ga Mashie. They are responsible for installing a Chief Fisherman, and they perform all the rites that concern fishing. They are supported by other institutions such as the *Nshonaa Kwelɔ*, *Wolɛimeɪ*, the *Nshonaa yei*, and the *Loi Shaalɔ*. Among these supporting institutions the chief fisherman oversees the affairs of the *Nshonaa Kwelɔ* and the *Wolɛimeɪ*.

The ideological component of the heritage is represented in the *Lookomɔ* rites performed by the Wemprakwa family for the fishermen before the beginning of the Homowo festival in Ga Mashie. The material expressions of the heritage are seen in the canoes; the Tsile fish, the space used for the rituals of beating the fish, the space lost to the waterfront re-development, and the relocated working space of Ussher fort.

The canoes are an important tool for fishing and as such it carries symbolic inscriptions and meaning for the fishermen and their families. These three main parts all work together cohesively to support the practice of fishing in Ga Mashie. In documenting them the research

further revealed some dynamics that exclusively pertain to the heritage of fishing in the community.

The study revealed the changes occurring concerning titles accorded to stakeholders of fishing and the rites of fishing. It highlighted the exclusivity of the title *Wolɛiatse* as the title given to the individual installed from the Wemprakwa family to oversee the affairs of fishing in Ga Mashie. It further clarified that the *Nshonaa Onukpa* are often incorrectly referred to as *Wolɛiatse* by the general public. These evolving practices concerning the heritage has reflected in the costume and broadening of the roles taken up by the *Nshonaa Onukpai*; seen in the adorning of beads which are solely to be worn by the *Woleeatse* and the seeming overlap induties performed at the beach with regards to sanction and disciplining fisherfolks, and the distribution of pre-mix fuel.

The study further revealed the changes and controversies concerning the name of the *Lookɔmɔ* rites. This rite is commonly referred to as *Nshobulemɔ* rites. However, *Nshobulemɔ* translates as a negative practice of “fighting” with the ocean, which incorrectly mars the sacred nature of the rites they perform. Thus, the stakeholders prefer the rites to be referred to as *Lookɔmɔ*- ‘going for fish’ which reflects the act of going for fish from the ocean.

The research shed light on areas of interest that give the concept of heritage a foundation and appreciation in the community. It revealed a deeper appreciation of heritage as a present construction within the community. This was seen in the reference to fishing as not just a heritage without present value but a continuous resource. This was seen in the use of the word *Jwetri*[*dzétri*] *treasure, money, and capital* to qualify the value of fishing.

Furthermore, the study revealed the vital role of the fishermen in Ga Mashie to the entire Ga State. This is seen in their key role of initiating the celebration of the Homowo Festival. It was noted that without the successful completion of the *Lookɔmɔ* rites with the *Tsilɛ* fish, the Homowo festival isn’t scheduled to begin, this is because the specific fish of *Tsilɛ* is revered in

the community. Parts of the Tsile fish are used for the *lookɔmɔ* rites within the Wemprakwa family home, and it is the preferred fish for the cooking of the Homowo meal which must be prepared with only fish and not meat.

Additionally, the study revealed that the *Tsile* fish is not a particular fish species as documented earlier by Irvine (1947). However, it is representative of fish species with share characteristics in size and toughness of flesh. These characteristics are seen in species such as the common sea bream, large eye-dentex, dentex gibbosus and the African red snapper.

Concerning the dynamics and continuity of the heritage today, the study revealed that the fishing heritage is challenged by three key dynamics. These are:

1. Poor political facilitation of Artisanal fisheries affairs and management,
2. Illegal unregulated and unreported fishing activities, and the
3. Lack of a collective approach to fisheries management on the local level.

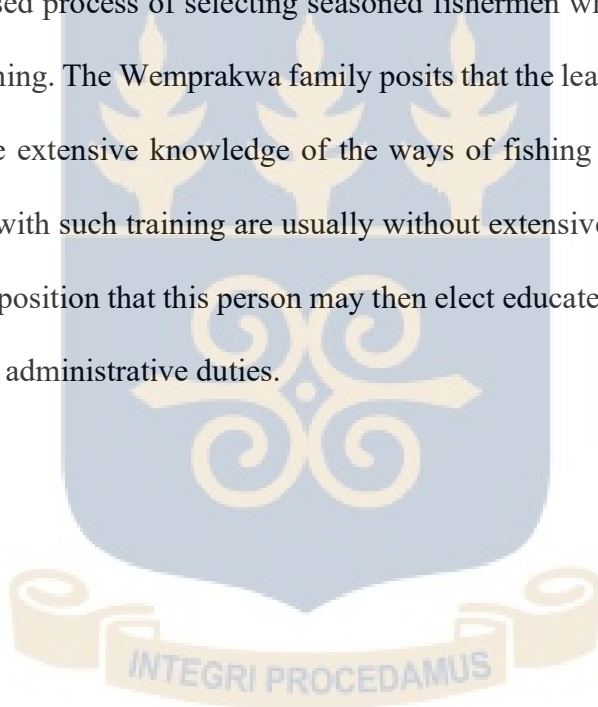
The sub-themes within political facilitation are represented in concerns bridging the understanding gap between community and government concerning closed fishing seasons. Furthermore, issues of political interference are seen in the issues surrounding the construction of the Jamestown harbour. The research identified a threefold loss regarding the construction of the harbour. Firstly, the loss of the site that has historically played a role in fishing rites in Ga Mashie, secondly, the relocation to an unfavourable limiting workspace that results in canoe clashes during strong windy weather conditions destroying their canoes, adversely affecting their work output and profit margins. Thirdly, the physical stress to manoeuvre the site to which they have been allocated, and the displacement of some community members due to the demolition of the old fishing community.

Furthermore, the issues of illegal, unregulated, and unreported (IUU) activities have resulted in the depletion of fish stock. Although there is a national response to these activities, spearheaded by the fisheries ministry, community members still feel short-changed thus they

indicate this as one of the key issues confronting them. There also exists a dissatisfaction with the lenient, slap on the wrist punishment meted out to violators of the fishery regulations.

The research revealed that the fisherfolks are progressively losing faith in traditional leadership, whereas, traditional leadership also indicates a lack of faith they have in the competence and traditional know-how of the fishermen who currently work along the Ga Mashie coast. The post-harvest groups correspondingly indicate, a lack of faith they have in fishermen and the traditional authorities.

The study revealed the different agents of the heritage of fishing and how they interact with each other. Concerning change and continuity, the study revealed that the community's fishing heritage is continually transforming to reflect the contemporary position and policies of the government of Ghana. Additionally, stakeholders of the heritage are keen on being led by individuals with more than basic formal education because they want to be represented adequately during political gatherings and meetings that directly affect them. This conflicts with the usually practised process of selecting seasoned fishermen who are without extensive formal educational training. The Wemprakwa family posits that the leaders of fishermen should first and foremost have extensive knowledge of the ways of fishing and the management of fishing affairs; People with such training are usually without extensive formal education, their resolve is based on the position that this person may then elect educated assistants who will aid in their managerial and administrative duties.



7.2 Future Research

“That the practices of heritage inevitably intersect with social and political debate about the meaning of the past in the present...sites of heritage making can be understood as one of the many arenas of either justification for political conservatism or arenas of resistance and affirmation of progressive politics” (Laura Jane Smith)

As a result of this research, I make four key recommendations for future research. These are identified as pragmatic approaches to the management and sustainability of the heritage of fishing in Ga Mashie. These recommendations were curated as a result of the considerations of the limitations of the study and the interrogation of the data retrieved from the research. Considering the evolution of the heritage in the face of modernity, political issues, globalization, climate change amongst others as The first three recommendations offered here are highly facilitated by the community members with limited dependence on external facilitation from government officials and heritage-governing institutions. The final one is academic and elaborates on the continuous role of academia within heritage affairs.

7.2.0 Identifying Community Heritage Intelligence Officers To Highlight The History And Heritage Of Fishing.

Future research will seek to continuously identify, and document the evolving phases of the heritage with aim of preserving and conserving the heritage of fishing in Ga Mashie. In the light of this I recommend the identification of individuals within the community who will be tasked to work with government and heritage agencies to foster and protect the community heritage. these individuals will act in the capacity of what I term Community Heritage Intelligence Officers (CHIO). I recommend that these individuals should have an affiliation to the seven sub-communities in Ga Mashie and have a connection with fishing, either be a retired fisherman or a member of any of the post-harvest groups such as the women and the fish smokers, and/or either a beneficiary of a parent who was a fisherfolk or has proven to have the heritage within the community at heart. The CHIO could also be selected from trusted community-based

organizations—such as churches, schools, and community social- service agencies can be key to the advancement and preservation of culture and heritage.

Periodic training for these individuals can be given by the key agents of the heritage to ensure cohesive knowledge. These individuals with historical knowledge, being deeply rooted, and with passion-fuelled nonprofit intentions, can play important roles in fostering appreciation for culture and fishing heritage. These Community Heritage Intelligence Officers (CHIO) will be tasked to speak at community schools periodically about their heritage, their nonprofit position affords them neutrality and authenticity which isn't economically driven. Thus, they will be instrumental in working with agencies that seek to promote the image of the fishing heritage.

7.2.0.1 Increasing Visibility And Impact: Celebrating Ga Mashie Fishing History

The fishing community is an important, and central, element of life in Ga Mashie, fishing has contributed to the local landscape and economy. I recommend an intentionally structured approach to utilize these CHIO volunteers in the development of a curriculum for schools to teach the Ga Mashie fishing heritage. This I believe will give fishing an academic patina which may curb the ongoing disdain for fishing as being a profession for the uneducated. With fishing being a viable economic venture, the practice, history, and relevance to the Ga state must be preserved. This ensures the continuity of the fishing heritage and the practice of fishing. Herein, both the industry and the theory of heritage will be engaged in the community with the inclusion of local heritage and community involvement in heritage topics and the teaching of heritage. Presently agricultural studies in schools do not integrate the practical skills of artisanal marine fishing.

Further, I recommend the development of an innovative document that integrates the overarching theme of sustainability by addressing the preservation of fishing and its resources,

agricultural viability, sustainable artisanal fishing practices, and communities' food and job security. This could be an interactive culinary /recipe book.

7.2.1 Enhancing The Heritage As A Business

The research further recommends that the fishing heritage of Ga Mashie should be purposefully revamped as a business without forfeiture of its heritage and cultural tenets. Combining tourism, marketing heritage, and self-economic sustenance to address arising issues of post-tourism interactions and the concerns of inadequate governmental sponsorship.

Fishing Heritage and its practice are the same, their intricate nature may be seen as its sustainable attribute. With the recent conversations on the blue economy, I recommend the local community highlight their heritage as a business to highlight the contribution of the fishing heritage to the local and global blue economy. In practice, the community should engage in deliberate attempts to highlight artisanal fishing and its related heritage in Neighbourhood farmers' markets or open-air markets located in the heart of a community that offers much more than fresh, locally produced food. These farmer's markets will provide a recurrent community gathering space and the opportunity for residents of all ages and cultures to participate in communal activities such as cooking and heritage workshops, live music, and special cultural events. The success of the Chalewote Street Festival has given Ga Mashie a visibility leverage which can be harnessed in these other forms of business models.

7.2.3 Open Space Cultural Expression

Following recommendation three I recommend the use of venues such as parks, open spaces, and public streets as places for arts and cultural expressions of fishing heritage as recommendation four. I perceive that this can be an effective way to integrate history and heritage into the everyday lived experience.

This is already in action in the community, but it lacks a focus on fishing heritage. I recommend the use of the yet-to-be-completed fishing harbour as a space for cultural expression through artworks with fishing heritage themes. Through permanent and temporary public art installations and sculptures, this space may be multiply engaged to commemorate the heritage of fishing and create a bond and recognition of the culture. This reduces the possible exclusion the community members may experience due to the introduction of such high culture. The already practiced annual fishing games held at the end of every year are a good avenue to engage the wider Ga and Ghanaian community. Murals incorporating Storytelling methods is an empowering tool that planners can use to develop an understanding of a community's history, values, and needs. Various storytelling methods have been documented amply and are worth incorporating into a planner's toolbox.

The research unearthed data that may be continually engaged with to ensure the continuity of the heritage. I recommend further studies on the possible re-heritagisation and reinterpretation of aspects of the heritage of fishing in Ga Mashie because of the ongoing dynamics of the heritage. The eventual commissioning of the harbour will play a significant role in the dynamics of the heritage about the ideological components and the practice. Reflecting on de-heritagisation factors concerning the heritage of fishing and the current alternatives of fish in the preparation of the Homowo meal. This dovetails into repurposing heritage, and issues of adaptive reuse of the fishing heritage

I recommend further studies into the materiality of the fishing heritage, interrogating the material culture manifestation of fishing heritage. Reflecting on the cultural dynamics there are of course other questions that might be asked. Further, it is important to examine the Ga Mashie dynamic fishing heritage in relation to other coastal communities to interrogate the influence migration and contact has on the continuity of the heritage. We observe how modernity and contact have influenced the formation, maintenance, sustainability and

transformation of the fishing practice and heritage over time. The very act of fishing may be argued as an invented tradition and that's evidence of the influence of contact.

7.3 Strength and Significance of Research

The research methods employed in this research were diverse and representational of all stakeholders of the GMFH. Furthermore the primary data sources were indigenous persons who live and work in Ga Mashie.

This research sheds new light on the development and policy issues of AMF as a practice and heritage. Furthermore, it broadens our understanding of sustainable conservation issues and heritage preservation, leading to a wholistic appreciation of the Ga Mashie community.

This study's findings redound to society's benefit in five keyways:

1. It contributes to the Ghanaian and more specifically the Ga Mashie fishing community;
2. Contributes to the understanding of intangible heritage resources in Ga Mashie;
3. It contributes to discourse on governmental developmental procedures and practices regarding heritage;
4. it contributes to the understanding of artisanal marine fishing practices as a coastal communities' heritage, filling the existing lacuna in academia.
5. It affords a definition of Ghana's Fishing Heritage.

As earlier stated, the existing knowledge of Ga Mashie heritage may largely be considered authorized heritage. The monotonous reference to monuments such as the lighthouse, James and Ussher forts, Brazil house, etc have consequently relegated the community's living heritage to the backseat. Documenting and presenting artisanal fishing as a heritage will increase the viability of Ga Mashie to tourism as it will instigate conversation on preservation and sustainability.

The rate at which urban developmental projects are skyrocketing within Ghana and the high disregard for the ensuing impacts on culture and heritage justifies the need for more effective and community-focused heritage impact assessment strategies. Thus, governmental, and individual-run firms that consider these research findings will achieve better results and protect tangible and intangible heritage whilst achieving their developmental goals.

Additionally, the fishing community members will be guided on the best practices towards self-preservation of their indigenous knowledge systems, their consideration of the results derived from this research should guide them on the development of traditional management systems that can be harnessed for the preservation of Artisanal Marine Fishing. As this research involves a living community and other stakeholders of fishing within Ga Mashie, it has uncovered critical areas in the discipline of heritage and the study area that many researchers did not fully explore, which should lead to future studies better to understand the dynamics of the Ga cultural system.



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Act 560

[https://lawsghana.com/post-1992-legislation/table-of-content/Acts%20of%20Parliament/THE%20CHILDREN%27S%20ACT,%201998%20\(ACT%20560\)/171](https://lawsghana.com/post-1992-legislation/table-of-content/Acts%20of%20Parliament/THE%20CHILDREN%27S%20ACT,%201998%20(ACT%20560)/171)

Reports:

Fisheries Management Plan

<https://mofad.gov.gh/wp-content/uploads/2016/07/FISHERIES-MANAGEMENT-PLAN-OF-GHANA.pdf>

National Plan of Action to Prevent, Deter, and Eliminate Illegal, Unregulated, and Unreported Fishing

https://www.mofad.gov.gh/wp-content/uploads/2022/05/GHANA-NPOA-IUU_FINAL_04.05.21.pdf

https://www.mofad.gov.gh/wp-content/uploads/2022/05/GHANA-NPOA-IUU_FINAL_04.05.21.pdf

News:

<https://www.ghanaweb.com/GhanaHomePage/business/Fight-against-IUU-fishing-requires-US-2-5-million-Fisheries-Ministry-1728236>



APPENDIX

APPENDIX 1:LIST OF GA WORDS USED IN THE THESIS

Ga word	English meaning
<i>Amoni- “Keta school-boys”</i>	<i>Anchovy</i>
<i>Kaŋkama, maŋ</i>	<i>Round sardinella</i>
<i>Antele</i>	<i>Atlantic bumper</i>
<i>Opoku (1)</i>	<i>Atlantic little tuna</i>
<i>Onyankle</i>	<i>Marlin</i>
<i>Kpanla</i>	<i>Atlantic horse mackerel</i>
<i>Tsile</i>	<i>Pink dentex, Southern common sea bream, African red snapper</i>
<i>Odoe</i>	<i>European barracuda</i>
<i>Pamplobaa</i>	<i>Scad</i>
<i>Opoku (2)</i>	<i>Frigate tuna</i>
<i>Saman</i>	<i>Chub mackerel</i>
<i>Boe-boe</i>	<i>Bigeye grunt</i>
<i>Kanfla</i>	<i>Long-finned herring</i>
<i>Yiwa</i>	<i>Red fish</i>
<i>Saflo</i>	<i>Spanish mackerel</i>
<i>Ga Mashie</i>	<i>One of the Ga states, ancestral home of the Ga people</i>
<i>Woleiatse</i>	<i>Chief fishermen</i>
<i>Wolemei</i>	<i>Fishermen</i>
<i>Loo shaloi</i>	<i>Fish smokers</i>
<i>seekwelo</i>	<i>Associate, or second in command</i>
<i>ŋshɔnaa kwelo/ Onukpa</i>	<i>A fishermen clan leader</i>
<i>ŋshɔnaa yei</i>	<i>Women at the beach</i>
<i>Jwetri</i>	<i>Wealth, capital, treasure</i>
<i>Gboshinii</i>	<i>Legacy, inheritance, property</i>
<i>Lookɔmɔ</i>	<i>Rites performed to usher in the Homowo festival.</i>
<i>ŋshɔnaa yei onukpa</i>	<i>Leader of the women at the beach</i>
<i>ŋshɔbulemɔ</i>	<i>Act of wrestling with the ocean</i>
<i>Homowo</i>	<i>Ga traditional festival ,literal meaning is ‘to hoot at hunger’</i>
<i>Nai</i>	<i>The Spirit of the ocean</i>
<i>Dzeman Wɔn</i>	<i>Ancestral/Foundational gods of the Ga</i>

APPENDIX 2: LETTER FROM GNCFC COUNCIL SIGNED BY NII ABEO KYEREKUANDA IV, ADDRESSED TO THE FISHERIES COMMISSION, EXPRESSING CONCERNS OF FISH STOCK DEPLETION AND THE ACTIVITIES OF CHINESE OWNED FISH TRAWLERS.

GHANA NATIONAL

Banker: Standard Chartered Bank
(High Street, Accra)
Social Security Bank
(Kokomlemle Branch Accra)
Agricultural Development Bank
(Cedi House, Accra)

Our Ref: □ □ □ □ □ □ □ □ □ □
Your Ref: □ □ □ □ □ □ □ □ □ □



CANOE

FISHERMEN COUNCIL

P. O. Box 14867
Accra
Tel: 662873 / 670418
Fax: 21670418

May 22, 2020

The Executive Director,
Fisheries Commission,
Accra.

Dear Executive Director,

We are writing to express our concern regarding reports we have received from our fellow fishers that, new fishing trawlers from China are currently at Tema port awaiting licensing. We have been informed that three of the trawlers were registered to fly the Ghanaian flag last October.

We are deeply concerned by this development. Our fish stocks in Ghana are in crisis and the small pelagic fishery –the lifeline of our artisanal fishing communities– is on the verge of collapse. A recent study found significant numbers of small pelagic – and particularly the severely depleted sardinella – in blocks of saiko fish and by-catch landed by the industrial trawl fleet. Nearly all were juveniles which are vital for the recovery of fish populations.

As identified in the 2015-2019 Fisheries Management Plan, there are already too many trawlers fishing in Ghana's waters. The Management Plan sets a target of reducing the number of trawlers by 50%, with a maximum sustainable limit of 47 vessels. Yet 76 vessels were licensed to fish at the end of 2019.

The licensing of new vessels would not only contravene the laudable targets in the Management Plan, but also a government moratorium dating from 2012 on the issue of fishing licenses for new trawlers and the replacement of old vessels in the industrial trawl sector.

In the light of these commitments and the deplorable state of Ghana's marine resources, we are of the firm view that new trawlers should not be arriving in Ghana and being issued with licenses to fish. **We are firmly opposed to any decision to issue these newly arrived vessels with licenses to fish in Ghana's waters.**

Indeed, the country is already confronted with major challenges in controlling the vessels that have existing licenses in Ghana. We continue to see large quantities of fish landed by saiko canoes at Elmina fishing harbor, even after government and industry committed to end the practice last November. Trawlers are illegally harvesting the fish that would normally be caught by our artisanal fishers and selling this back to fishing communities in the saiko trade. This is having a devastating impact on the livelihoods of fishing communities.

It is also worth mentioning that, according to the 2002 Fisheries Act, Act 625, industrial trawlers in Ghana should be owned and controlled by Ghanaian nationals. However, it is an open secret in the industry that the vast majority of vessels are operated by Chinese.

These new trawlers arriving in Ghana are registered to local companies established in 2019 and with only a PO Box as their address. Respectfully, we ask how it is possible that a newly established fishing company in Ghana can suddenly acquire one or two trawlers of this size with the costs involved? Is the Fisheries Commission able to confirm that it has investigated the beneficial ownership of these companies to ensure that only Ghanaian citizens will be controlling and profiting from the operations? Do these operations comply with Ghana's revenue and foreign investment laws and the newly adopted 2019 Companies Act, Act 992?



We request your urgent response on these issues and reiterate our strong opposition to the licensing of these new vessels to fish in Ghana's waters.

We want to emphasize, that as the umbrella body of the fishers, our sole aim is to collaborate with the regulator to ensure that the livelihood of our fishers is well managed. It is in this view that we share this letter with you.

Thank you in advance for your consideration.

Nii Abeo Kyerekuanda.

Nii Abeo Kyerekuanda, IV,
Executive Secretary, GNCFC.



APPENDIX 3: INTERVIEW GUIDE FOR FOCUS GROUP DISCUSSIONS

Interview Guide for Focus Group discussions-Used for Groups one and two.

(Translated into Ga)

Name :

Age:

Role:

Years of Practice:

Number of years resident in Ga Mashie:

Primary Question: What cultural elements do you identify as the heritage of fishing?

☐ Descriptive scenario 1:

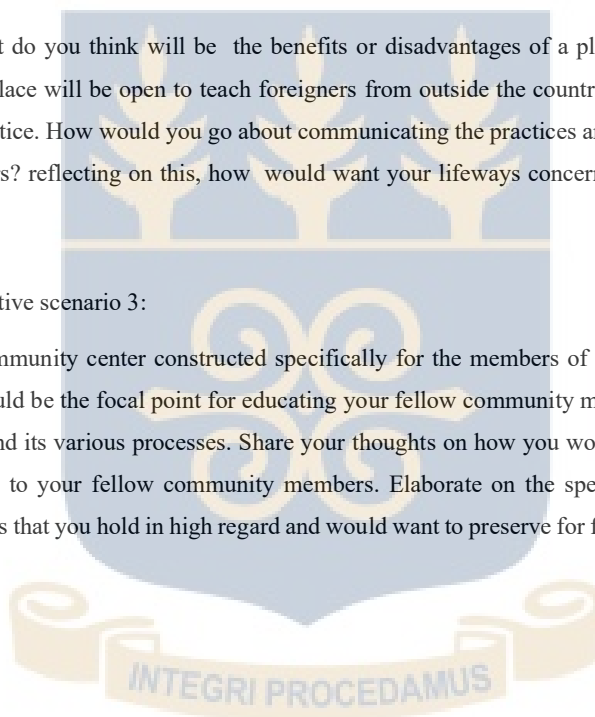
Imagine there existed a centre (a school, or an institution of sorts) beautifully structured center, nestled in the heart of Ga Mashie, that welcomes visitors from far and wide to learn about the rich and unique fishing practices of the community. This center is designed to provide an immersive experience for visitors, allowing them to learn about the people involved, the cultural beliefs that underpin the practices, and the methods that have been passed down through generations. By the time you leave this center, you will have gained a deep understanding of the community's fishing practices and the people who rely on them. Can you identify the key aspects of the fishing practice and the people involved that you would like to be taught about in this center?

☐ Descriptive scenario 2:

Question: What do you think will be the benefits or disadvantages of a place such as this . Consider this place will be open to teach foreigners from outside the country of Ghana about the fishing practice. How would you go about communicating the practices and your processes to the foreigners? reflecting on this, how would want your lifeways concerning fishing to be represented?

☐ Descriptive scenario 3:

Visualize a community center constructed specifically for the members of your community. This center would be the focal point for educating your fellow community members about the art of fishing and its various processes. Share your thoughts on how you would like to impart this knowledge to your fellow community members. Elaborate on the specific elements of fishing practices that you hold in high regard and would want to preserve for future generations to come.



APPENDIX 4: INTERVIEW GUIDE FOR IN DEPTH INTERVIEWS

Interview Guide-Used for In Depth interviews for Groups one and two.

(Translated into Ga)

Bio Data

Name :

Age:

Role:

Years of Practice:

Number of years resident in Ga Mashie:

Fishing /processing experiences

What materials do you use for your work?

Please describe the processes you engage with whilst working?

What challenges do you presently engage within your line of work?

What challenges have you previously face in your line of work?

Are you affiliated to governmental organisations?

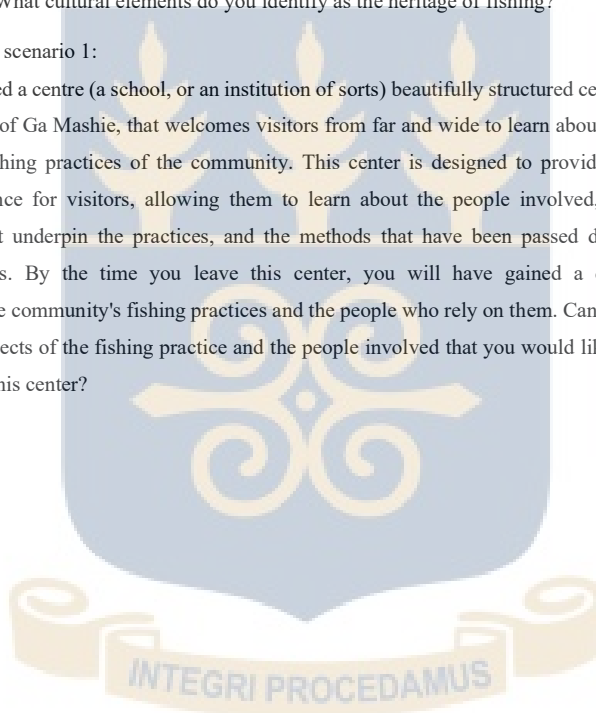
How have you resolved these challenges?

Do you recognize fishing as a heritage?(USE SCENARIOS PROVIDED TO EXPANTIATE QUESTION)

Primary Question: What cultural elements do you identify as the heritage of fishing?

☐ Descriptive scenario 1:

Imagine there existed a centre (a school, or an institution of sorts) beautifully structured center, nestled in the heart of Ga Mashie, that welcomes visitors from far and wide to learn about the rich and unique fishing practices of the community. This center is designed to provide an immersive experience for visitors, allowing them to learn about the people involved, the cultural beliefs that underpin the practices, and the methods that have been passed down through generations. By the time you leave this center, you will have gained a deep understanding of the community's fishing practices and the people who rely on them. Can you identify the key aspects of the fishing practice and the people involved that you would like to be taught about in this center?



☐ Descriptive scenario 2:

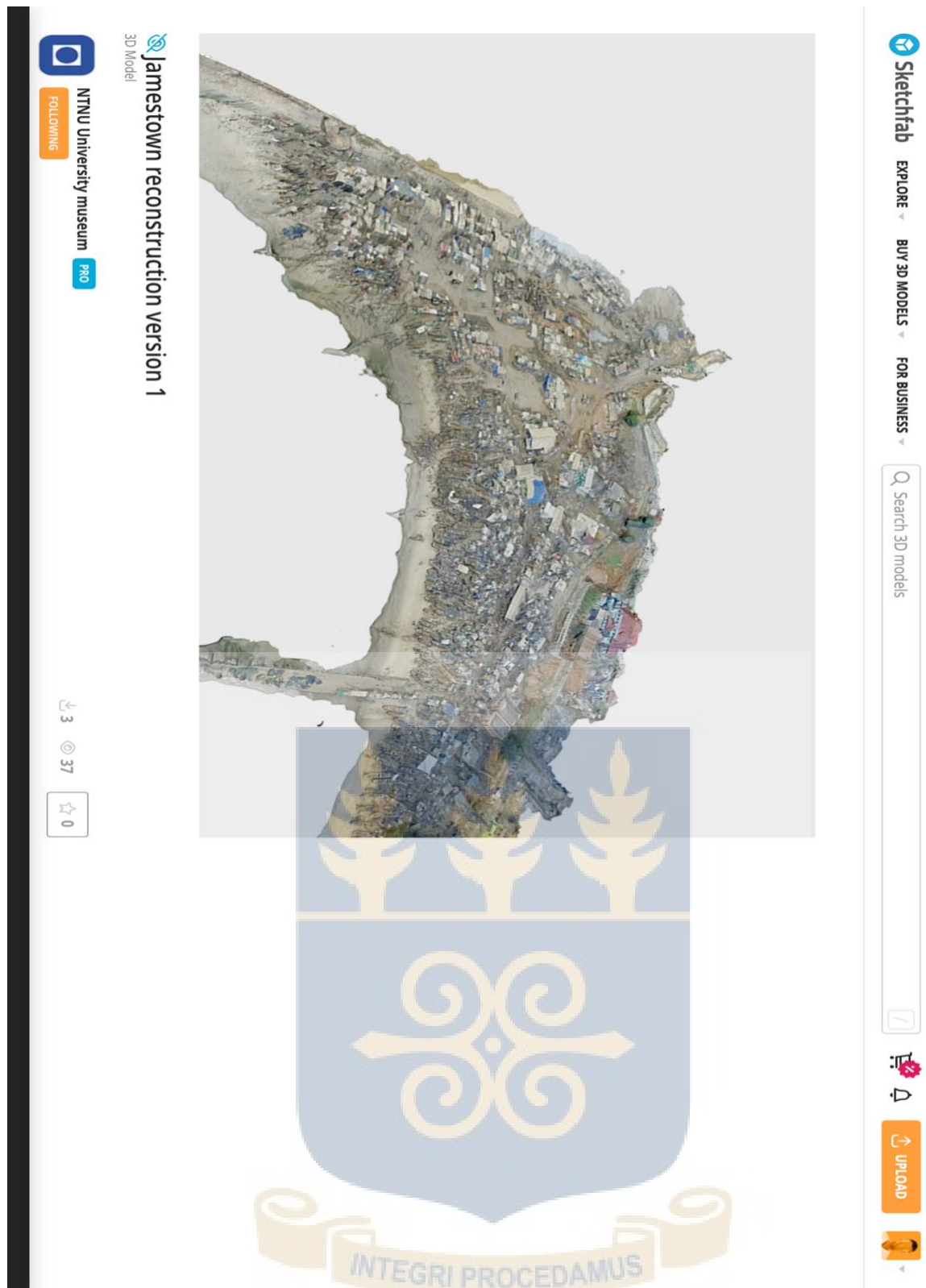
Question: What do you think will be the benefits or disadvantages of a place such as this . Consider this place will be open to teach foreigners from outside the country of Ghana about the fishing practice. How would you go about communicating the practices and your processes to the foreigners? reflecting on this, how would want your lifeways concerning fishing to be represented?

☐ Descriptive scenario 3:

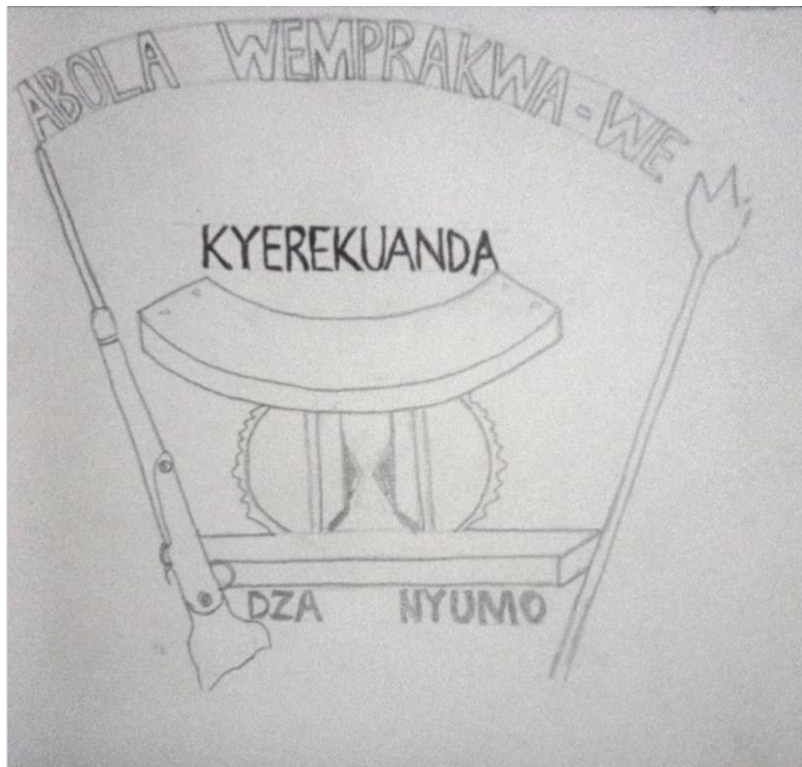
Visualize a community center constructed specifically for the members of your community. This center would be the focal point for educating your fellow community members about the art of fishing and its various processes. Share your thoughts on how you would like to impart this knowledge to your fellow community members. Elaborate on the specific elements of fishing practices that you hold in high regard and would want to preserve for future generations to come.



**APPENDIX 5: 3D RECONSTRUCTION OF DEMOLISHED JAMESTOWN FISHING
COMMUNITY- SOURCE: RESEARCHER & MAGNAR MOJAREN(NTNU)**
[3D RECONSTRUCTION LINK](#)



APPENDIX 6: ARTISTIC SKETCH OF HERALDIC CRESTS OF WEMPRAKWA FAMILY.



**APPENDIX 7: ARTISTIC SKETCHES OF COMPONENTS FORM THE HERALDIC
CRESTS OF WEMPRAKWA FAMILY**



APPENDIX 8a/b: DOGO BEACH FLOOD AFTER RAINFALL. DOGO BEACH IS THE RELOCATED LIVING OF THE DISPLACED FISHING COMMUNITY



APPENDIX 8B



APPENDIX 9: FISHERMEN MENDING CANOES WITH TAR AND MELTED RUBBER.



**APPENDIX 10: LIBERATING STORIES OF WOMEN PROJECT IN GA MASHIE
DETAILS, PLEASE SEE [HTTPS://WWW.BENPAALI.ORG/AKUTSO-SANE](https://www.benpaali.org/akutso-sane)**

