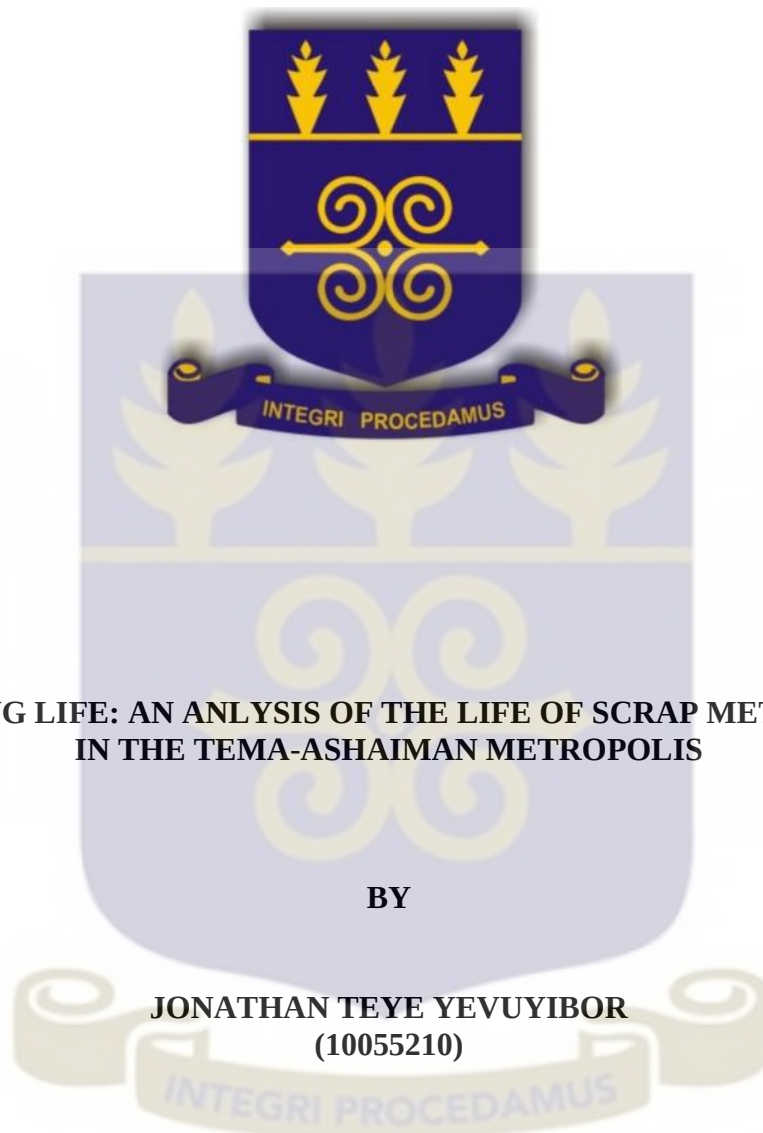


UNIVERSITY OF GHANA



**NEGOTIATING LIFE: AN ANALYSIS OF THE LIFE OF SCRAP METAL DEALERS
IN THE TEMA-ASHAIMAN METROPOLIS**

BY

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**THIS THESIS IS SUBMITTED TO THE UNIVERSITY OF GHANA, LEGON IN
PARTIAL FULFILMENT OF THE REQUIREMENT FOR THE AWARD OF A
MPhil SOCIOLOGY DEGREE**

JULY, 2015

DECLARATION

I hereby declare that, except for references to other people's work, which have been acknowledged, this thesis is the result of my own research work carried out in the department of Sociology under the supervision of Dr. Dan-Bright S. Dzorgbo and Emeritus Prof. G.K Nukunya.

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ABSTRACT

The study deals with the scrap dealers in the Tema-Ashaiman Metropolis (TAM). The purpose is to provide an analyses of the everyday life of scrap metal dealers in the metropolis. This was done by establishing the socio-demographic background of the scrap dealers and identifying the driving factors that lead them into this occupation. It traced the activities and the stages involved - from collection up to the delivery points. It also established the gains and risks involved in this trade. Further, it explored the future aspirations of the scrap dealers as well as their interaction with the general public and law enforcement agencies. The study was carried out using mainly qualitative research design and employing semi-structured interview guides, in-depth interviews, focus group discussions, participant and direct observations. A total of 34 respondents from the TAM took part in the study.

The study revealed that scrap dealing has become a major job outlet for some unskilled young men in the TAM, mostly migrants from the Northern Region of Ghana who engage in it for livelihood. Additionally, the activities of scrap dealers have proven to be economically viable. Their work, they assert, provide raw materials for the steel manufacturing industries thus playing an important role in the nation's development. They argued that the lack of organization, regulations, coupled with the porous nature and easy entry points into scrap dealing make it easy for some persons to infiltrate their ranks and caused a disaffection from the general public and the law enforcement agencies. Further, scrap dealers bemoan government's lack of recognition of their role. They also demand the swift and immediate review of the ban on exportation of ferrous metals if their industry is to survive.

It recommends that first, scrap dealers come together to pursue their common interest. Second, that government begin to recognize the efforts made by many in the informal sector especially scrap dealers and design policies that will enable them gain trust and credibility.

Keywords: Scarp Dealers, Survival, Informal Sector, Livelihood.

DEDICATION

To all the genuine scrap dealers who work tirelessly to survive.

“The profession is founded on an inviolable truth: almost all the metal that has ever existed in the world still exists, and always will exist. Iron may rust, but the rust is still metal” The New Yorker (January 14, 2008).



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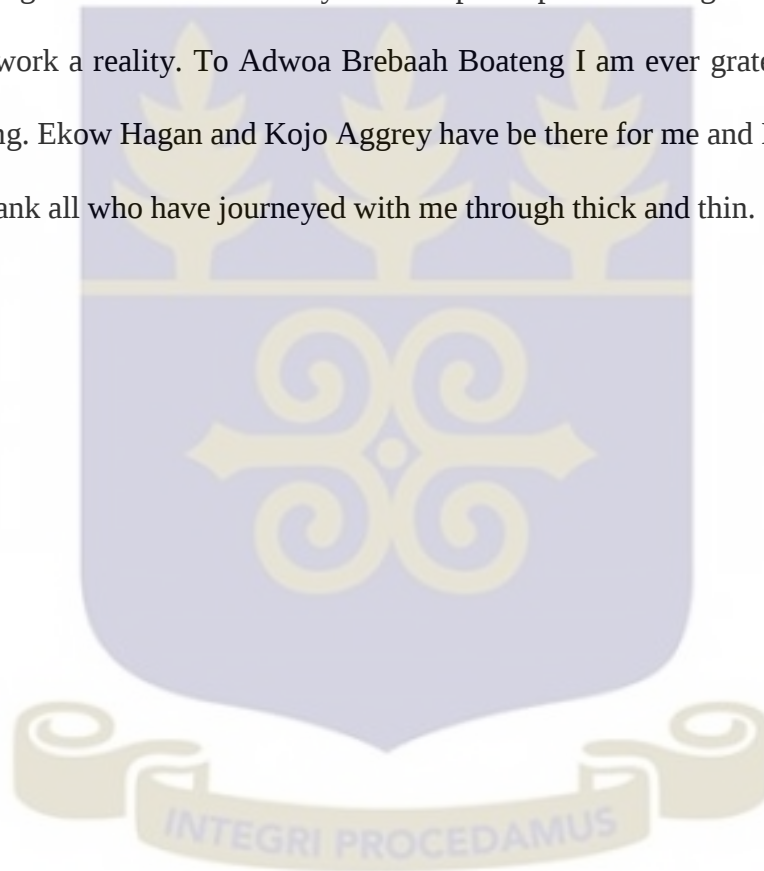


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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

AshMA	Ashaiman Municipal Assembly
DO	Direct Observation
DWDA	Dangme West District Assembly
FGD	Focus Group Discussion
GEMA	Ga East Municipal Assembly
GSS	Ghana Statistical Services
IDI	In-depth Interview
IMF	International Monetary Fund
SAP	Structural Adjustment Programme
SL	Sustainable Livelihood
TAM	Tema-Ashaiman Metropolis
TDC	Tema Development Corporation
TMA	Tema Metropolitan Assembly
UNMDG	United Nations Millennium Development Goals
WB	World Bank
WTO	World Trade Organization



CHAPTER ONE

GENERAL INTRODUCTION

1.0 Introduction

One of the many challenges of Africa is the twofold problem of rapid population growth and rising youth unemployment. According to The Guardian¹, Africa has the highest concentration of young people anywhere on the planet. Nearly 300 million people in sub-Saharan Africa are aged between 10 and 24, and most of whom are looking for nonexistent jobs. In the poorest regions, many of those who are employed work in low paid, insecure jobs with little hope of advancement. In a similar vein, the United Nations Millennium Development Goals (UNMDG) report² contends that Sub-Saharan Africa ranks high among the world's poorest regions. It further reveals that as at the year 2001, nearly 50% of Africa's population survived on less than \$1 (US Dollar) a day. Faced by economic uncertainty and lack of opportunity; cast as possible agents of social unrest and seen as a potentially lost generation (O'Brien, 1996); *"if young people are gifts, many must feel like unwanted ones"* (Maathai, 2004)³.

The effects of this twofold trend are especially visible in Ghana. Like many other African countries, Ghana suffered major economic decline from the 1970s and has been subjected to a series of economic reform programmes since the 1980s, aimed, among other things, at restoring the balance of payments, liberalizing businesses and attracting foreign investments. While Ghana was acclaimed as a star pupil of the Structural Adjustment Programme (SAP) (Dzorgbo, 2001) and government is still commended for its ability to stabilize the economy, the social and economic effects of neo-liberal reform is visible. In

¹ The Guardian. www.theguardian.com/guardian-professional-networks/all - accessed on: 14 July 2013

² UN (2005) The millennium development goals report 2005. United Nations Publications

³ Wangari Maathai – Nobel Lecture. Nobelprize.org. Nobel Media AB 2013.

http://www.nobelprize.org/nobel_prizes/peace/laureates/2004/maathai-lecture-txt.html Accessed on 14 July, 2013.

Accra as well as other major cities in Ghana, there is a sharp contrast between the new business districts and middle-class housing developments on the one hand and the lower income residential areas on another - where the majority of the nation's residents live without basic amenities, and work from home, the street or market. With economic reform has come retrenchment of the public-sector, which has negatively affected formal employment and meant increases in the prices of all necessities from food to housing, transport, education and health care. An economic expert Dr. Kwakye, in assessing Ghana's current economic situation underscores the fact that it is probably an understatement to say that Ghana is facing one of the most serious economic crises in its history⁴. He noted that economic growth has been slowing; coupled with double digit budget deficits; stockpile of payment arrears; rapid rising of public debts; free falling of the Cedi⁵; inflation; and weaken economic structure (low export commodity prices, slow agricultural growth, erratic power supply, and low public investment), which in part is due to revenue shortfalls and low donor disbursements. These assessments of the state of the Ghanaian economy paints a picture of limited opportunities and bleak future for most of the country's unemployed youth, most of whom possess little or no academic qualification.

To make the best of their situation and negotiate the grounds of their everyday lives and future, a large number of Ghanaians are engaged in informal income generating activities. They establish their own businesses in order to survive. "[We] are '*managing*', as [it is said] in Ghana!" (Langevang, 2008:2039). Nonetheless, the jobless situation has barely changed in recent times as there are serious concerns about unavailability of jobs. Largely, much emphasis has been placed on the unemployed educated youth, leaving the

⁴ Dr. J. K. Kwakye is a Senior Economist at the Institute of Economic Affairs (IEA), Ghana, where he is actively involved in the Institute's research and advocacy work.

<http://graphic.com.gh/news/politics/22817-genesis-and-solutions-to-ghana-s-current-economic-crisis.html#sthash> Access on 30th Sept. 2014.

⁵ The Cedi is the name of the currency or legal tender accepted for payment, procurement and sale of goods and services

uneducated ones without any clear-cut attention and direction. However, there is a ray of hope among some segment of this youthful population. There are a growing number of mostly uneducated unemployed youth who through their own innovation and ingenuity have resorted to picking scrap metal for livelihood.

1.1 Problem Statement

Ghana has recently been touted a lower-middle income country by the World Bank and arguably regarded as a model for political and economic development on the African continent. However, like most developing countries, it faces the challenges of uplifting the welfare of its population. According to the report of the 2000 Survey conducted by the Ghana Statistical Services, unemployment among the economically active population is above 11 percent and over 28.5 percent of the population lives below the poverty line⁶. This could probably be the lingering-on of the trickledown effect of the hash neo-liberal policies inflicted on the nation during the days of the SAP. Governments over the years have been unsuccessful in solving these problems through formal employment creation. The agricultural sector which often absorbed the excess unemployed labour in the system was neglected partly due to the fact that it was not rewarding. Mention could also be made here of the many chieftaincy conflicts that have plagued mostly the northern part of the country which have worsen the rural-urban drift in search of better life (Oteng-Ababio, 2012)⁷. Thus several socio-economic interventions such as the National Youth Employment Programme; promotion of informal trade where women are empowered financially to engage in petty trading, etc., in order to generate and support self-employment have been adopted by successive governments. But most of these have woefully failed. While others took to street hawking, hair dressing and dressmaking

⁶ www.statsghana.gov.gh

⁷ Oteng-Ababio (2012) conceptualized the problem of unemployment among the young people engaged in e-waste scavenging as one that could be traced from the early days of the SAP in the 1980, the unrewarding farming activities at the time, the many protracted chieftaincy disputes and the bad climatic conditions.

apprenticeship, shoe shining, *trotro*⁸ mate, etc. which according to scholars (Brigden, 2008; Oteng-Ababio, 2010) have become saturated. However, the inadequacy of these commendable efforts and the quest to survive have led some individuals to venture into novel occupations such as scrap-metal dealing. These people mostly young men pick scrap metals from the nooks and corners of communities, however, their activities have not been widely documented in this country, apart from the sensational and generalized publications in the media and some sections of civil society. Some members of the general public even perceive them as thieves and accuse them of engaging in criminal activities such as stealing and spying for arm robbers⁹. This study intends to fill the gap in our understanding of the features and dynamics of the everyday life of the scrap metal picker in the Tema-Ashaiman Metropolis, the largest industrial hub and the harbour city of Ghana.

1.2 General Objective

The main objective of this study is to explore the everyday life of young people within the Tema-Ashaiman Metropolis who engage in scrap dealing for livelihood.

1.2.1 Specific Objective

- To establish the socio-demographic background of the scrap dealers and identify the driving factors that lead them into this occupation.
- To trace their activities and the stages involve: from collection up to the delivery points.
- To establish the gains and risk involve in the scrap dealing.
- To explore the interaction between scrap dealers, the general public and law enforcement agencies.
- To find out their future aspirations.

⁸ *Trotro* is the local name for a public commercial bus run by a private owner.

⁹ <http://www.thechronicle.com.gh/scrap-dealer-in-police-custody-for-theft/>

1.3 Definition: Scrap Dealers

Scrap metals refers to discarded metal or iron materials that albeit could be valuable for reuse, resale, recycling, or disposal. Largely, huge industrial waste discarded consist of scrap metal. Scarp metals could also be retrieved form the streets, dump sites, community storage sites, etc. In Ghana, those who go about the business of buying, collecting and sale of scraps are referred to as scrap dealers (Oteng-Ababio, 2012). They search for scraps (from industries, street spaces, etc.), recover them, bargain and buy them and sell them for the financial value. Scrap dealers seek financial benefits from the sale of recyclable metals. For the purposes of this study, the term scrap dealer refers to persons such as referred to in the above.

1.4 Motivation for the Study

Insider research, according to Dwyer & Buckle (2009), is one in which the researcher shares a common identity, language and empirical base with respondents. Outsider research on the other hand is one in which the research does not necessarily share common characteristics with the informants. The position of the researcher as an insider or outsider is not one-sided. Being an insider or outsider is a fluid position. Initially, a social researcher may be an outsider to a specific group, but as more time is spent with the group, the researcher starts becoming more of an insider. A researcher could also be an outsider when it comes to some aspects of a person's life but not others (Rabe, 2003).

Based on the definition and attributes of the insider and outsider positions in research, the researcher considered himself more of an insider, given that the study explored the life of scrap metal dealers in the Tema-Ashaiman metropolis. This was a research carried out in a community where the researcher lived for most of his life and he was very conversant with issues of their everyday life. He therefore share many characteristics with the research group and identify with their needs and concerns. According to Dwyer &

Buckle (2009), this qualifies the researcher as an insider since he shared the same language, gender and interest among other things with the informants.

1.5 Significance of the study

The study is significant for a number of reasons. It has enormous significance to research because the issue of youth unemployment is explored from another dimension which paves way for other studies in this area. It also provides valuable policy formulation and implementation implications about unemployed uneducated youth in the country.

Furthermore, this study seeks to provide a platform for scrap dealers to narrate their story from their own perspectives. Media reports have often been laden with generalized stories about scrap dealers and therefore by conducting a systematic study, our new understanding of their daily activities will help clear any misconception hitherto held about them. This will also inform policy makers to enact policies needed to regulate these nascent developments.

1.6 Structure of the thesis

This thesis is organized in six chapters, each of which tackles a specific issue relevant to the topic. Chapter One provides an introduction, which covers the background issues. It particularly highlights the problem statement, objectives, research questions and significance of the study. Chapter Two presents the theoretical framework and literature review. Chapter Three focuses on Methodology. It outlines the study area, data collection method and techniques. Chapters Four and Five offer a detail analysis and discusses the data collected based on the themes generated. Chapter Six provides a summary of research findings and makes recommendations.

CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Introduction

This chapter is devoted to the review of relevant literature underpinning the study. The informal sector and the sustainable livelihoods approaches literature, coupled with an overview of the scrap metal industry will be reviewed. The life of the scrap metal dealers in the Tema-Ashaiman metropolis will be analysed via the lenses of the above mentioned, with detailed discussions on the key concepts.

2.2 The Informal Economy

According to Robinson (1988:3), what today is variously called the informal, irregular, black, hidden, shadow, parallel, subterranean, nonmonetary, second, unofficial, invisible, traditional, household, sub- or off-the-books economy (Mattera, 1985: 1; McCrohan and Smith, 1986: 49; Capecchi and Pesce, 1984: 20), has been with us since the Middle Ages. It is what Chen (2012) perceived to be the activities of the street vendors in Mexico City; the push-cart vendors in New York city; the rickshaw pullers in Calcutta; jitney drivers in Manila; garbage collectors in Bogotá; and roadside barbers in Durban. Also included in the list are bicycles and motorcycles repairers; recycle scrap metal dealers; garment workers in Toronto; embroiderers on the island of Madeira; shoemakers in Madrid; and assemblers of electronic parts in Leeds.

The term “informal sector” gained currency and significance in the 1970s. It was coined by a British anthropologist, Keith Hart, in 1971 when he studied the low-income activities among unskilled migrants who migrated from Northern Ghana to the capital city of Accra (Hart 1973). The term ‘informal sector’ came to denote all economic activities which are unregistered and not regulated by the state. The informal sector has often been characterized by the following criteria: less workforce often less than 10 people, operating

in open spaces, use of local materials, labour-intensive technology and minimum capital investment. Additionally, operators of the informal sector have little or no access to institutional credit, public services, and an organized market place. The result is lack of capital and skills that will improve their activity and economic income (OSCALDC 1996). Medina (1997) believes that though there exist a clear difference between the formal and informal sectors, the reality in most situations is that, the boundaries between the two are weak. Many individuals and enterprises operate in a grey zone between these two sectors, which exhibits both formal and informal characteristics. Added to that, fairly strong trade connections play out between the different actors in the systems.

The concept developed in the 1970s has given rise to different theoretical considerations. This include the Dualists, Structuralists, Legalists and Voluntarists perspectives. Common to the various attempts is the definition of the term in economic activities perspective. Proponents of this thought (called The Dualist) distinguished the informal sector from the formal using economic activities as the unit of analysis (Hart 1973; ILO 1972; Sethuraman 1976; Tokman 1978). The mode of production distinguishes the formal from the informal economy. The formal sector employ modern production systems while in the informal economy, traditional production practices characterised by intensive labour mark their line of operations. The informal sector is described as ‘... small-scale units engaged in the production and distribution of goods and services with the primary objective of generating employment and incomes to their participants notwithstanding the constraints on capital, both physical and human and know how’ (Sethuraman, 1981: 17). The Dualists argue that persons who operate in the informal economy lack modern economic opportunities. This, according to Chen (2012), is as a result of the imbalances between the growth rates of the population and of modern

industrial employment, and a mismatch between people's skills and the structure of modern economic opportunities.

The Structuralists, again according to Chen (2012) (citing Moser 1978; Castells and Portes 1989), hold the view that the informal economy are subordinated economic units (micro-enterprises). That the existence of the informal economy has provided cheap labour and thus increased the competitiveness of large capitalist firms in the formal sector. Structuralists argue that fallouts of capitalist operations such as retrenchment of labour, deregulation, etc., further generates and ensures the existence and growth of the informal sector. Specifically, capitalists attempt to 'reduce labour costs and increase competitiveness and the reaction of formal firms to the power of organized labour, state regulation of the economy (notably, taxes and social legislation); to global competition; and to the process of industrialization (notably, off-shore industries, subcontracting chains, and flexible specialization) (Chen 2012:5) provide the platform for the growth of the informal sector. The Structuralists see the informal and formal economies as intrinsically linked.

The Legalists also perceive the informal economy as micro-entrepreneurs whose activities are largely unregulated by the state. They argue that the informal economy is made of business owners who for the purposes of avoiding the cost, time and effort in formal business registrations and who need property rights to convert their assets into legally recognized assets choose to operate informal sector (de Soto 1989, 2000). It is this legal requirements, the Legalists argue, that leads most persons to operate informally. To curb this, governments are encouraged to simplify the bureaucracies associated with formal registration processes so as to get others to formalize the operations in the informal sector (Chen 2012).

The Voluntarist school of thought focus on the players in the informal economy who for the purposes of avoiding taxation and other statutory cost deliberately avoid formal regulations.

2.2.1 The Informal Economy: Ghana

According to the Ghana Statistical Service's estimate, 86.1% of all employment is located in the informal sector with the following gender permutations: 90.9% women and 81% men. The activities of this subsector are mostly uncontrolled, and not regulated by the state apparatus (GSS, 2012). Haug (2014:2) perceiving that only 14% of employment lied in the domain of the formal economic sector argued, "it is obvious that most of the jobs that will be needed to satisfy the labour market in the future have to be created inside the informal economy due to internal migration processes, most of them in urban areas". In his bid to provide a better understanding of the informal economy of Ghana, Adu-Amankwah (1999) groups the informal economy under two main sectors, the rural informal and the urban informal sectors.

The Rural Informal Economy

The rural informal economy of Ghana is mostly subsistent in character and largely dependent on the family unit. It includes primary production activities like farming, fishing, fish processing activities like fish smoking and marketing, basketry, weaving, etc. Others are agro based processing activities like processing cassava for gari, palm kernel and groundnut oils, tapping palm wine, processing traditional soap, etc. Persons who engage in such activities in this sector mostly have little or no formal education. Often, they have no formal training and acquire their skills and knowledge about the work through apprenticeship, on job training and or from traditional upbringing. It must be noted that the kinds of economic activities engaged in by the rural folks are predominantly dependent on the prevailing environmental factors in their area. It can also be based on what a community

has traditionally been associated with over the years, for example, as Bonwire is noted for the weaving of Kente. Women and children constitute a large portion of the workforce. They dominate such activities as fish smoking and selling, farming, processing of cassava for gari, cassava dough, palm kernel oil, etc., which are socially constructed as feminine jobs. On the other hand, strenuous jobs such as fishing, hunting, craftsmanship, kente weaving, etc., are associated with men.

The type of labour that features in the informal economy are mostly family, casual, apprentice, permanent and communal. Family labour is very key to especially agricultural activities in the rural informal economy. The family unit provides the workforce for farming, fishing, etc. it also serves as the medium through which knowledge is impacted from one generation to another. Casual labour commonly called “by-day” is when a person is contracted to work for another, mostly contracted to clear a land to prepare for planting, weeding or harvesting. Apprentice labour is the labour generated when young men and women enrol to acquire a skill that is primarily used in the informal sector. Communal labour is generated when a group of farmers come together and agree to help each other to work on their farms in turns.

Urban Informal Economy

The urban informal economy is cosmopolitan and diverse in nature. Studies conducted in Ghana on this sector reveal three broad groups operating in the urban informal economy. This is made up of services, construction, and manufacturing (Hart 1973; ILO, 1997; Adu-Amankwa, 1999; Osei-Boateng & Ampratwum, 2011).

There are a range of services that pertains in the urban informal sector. It includes food vending, domestic workers, street hawking, seamstresses, hairdressers and barbers. Others are repairers of watches, television and radio sets, fridges, auto mechanics, graphic designers, - photographers, cinema or video operators, private security, etc. While jobs

such as food vending, domestic works, hairdressing are predominantly engaged in by women, others such as auto mechanics, refrigerator and watches, auto-electronic repairers, etc. are manned by men. Such persons are mostly illiterates, semi illiterates or school dropouts. Another category of persons in the urban informal economy are those engaged in constructional works. This comprise of masons, carpenters, steel benders, small-scale plumbers, house-wiring electricians, etc. These are mostly young men, illiterates and semi-illiterates. Some of these workers carpenters, masons, electricians have acquired their skills through years of apprenticeship. The third broad category is the activities of the small scale manufacturing sector operated by private persons. It includes food processing, distilling of alcoholic and non-alcoholic beverages, wood processing, metal works, textile and garments, etc.

Basic characteristic features of this sector include low income and wages structure, little or no job security, no social security, no official protection, no unions, etc. Ownership is vested in an individual or a family, and decisions are mostly taken based on owners views. The informal sector is easily accessible and easy to operate; and the entrepreneurs rely on locally available resources. It is labour intensive and they employ adopted or appropriate technology in their operations.

2.3 The Livelihood Framework

Sustainable livelihood (SL) approach prioritizes the poor in the society. Its main concern is to seek to understand the very things the poor people really engage in as they strive daily to make a living. It sights the resources that are in their disposal and the difficulties that they go through in their bid to make ends meet (Farrington et al, 2002). SL as defined by Chambers & Conway (1992) has been understood as a livelihood framework that is rooted in an individual's or a group's capabilities, assets and activities which are prerequisites for survival. Thus SL is attained in a situation where an individual, a family

unit or by extension a recognized group of persons can withstand shocks and stressful situations, adapt to poverty stricken deprive conditions and improve upon their capacities and assets without depleting the natural resources. The framers of the SL approach conceptualized the framework in order to offer a deeper insight into the plight of the poor and subsequently promote a sustainable means of livelihood. In order words, the deprived person is the fulcrum around which the framework revolves. It centres on ways of understanding the practical realities and priorities of poor men and women (Farrington et al, 2002). However, this is not intended to suggest that livelihood analysis be viewed from the perspective of the vulnerability context. Rather, livelihoods are shaped by a multitude of different forces and factors that are in themselves constantly shifting. Thus integral in the concept definition of SL is the link drawn between assets and the possibilities (resources) that can ensure income generation and subsequently survival (Ellis, 2000). Assets namely human, natural, financial, social and physical capitals are the means through which the poor generate their means of survival. The resources on the other hand consist of everything they possess: their time, ideas, knowledge, strengths and weaknesses, skills, friends and family, etc. (Carney, 1998).

2.3.1 Livelihood in the Urban Context

Sustainable livelihood approaches, it is proposed, should meet the diverse and complex demands of the different contexts: rural, peri-urban or urban communities. In other words, proposed solutions must be context specific. This is because the context defines the constraints and opportunities that militate against or lure in the favour of the deprived respectively. It also determines the abilities of the individuals to manipulate these resources to earn a living (Rakodi, 2002). The SL framework though a tool developed to improve upon the understanding of livelihoods of the poor from a rural perspective, it gives

room to be operational in the urban areas¹⁰. For, according to Adugna (2006), the rural and urban areas share similar features economically, socially, culturally, etc. The difference, he admitted, exist in the personal attributes of the individuals occupying the different contexts. However, Farrington et al (2002) observed that the lack of a common definition as to the constitution of an urban area, *“the blurred distinction and pervasive linkages between urban and rural areas and the diversity of conditions found within urban areas means that attempts to use ‘urban sustainable livelihoods’ as a distinctive category should only be undertaken with great caution” (p.13).*

2.3.2 Vulnerability Context

According to Moser (1996), vulnerability is ‘the insecurity or wellbeing of individuals or communities in the face of changing environments (ecological/social/economic/political) in the form of sudden shocks, long term trends or seasonal cycles’. The UNDP’s 1997 Human Development report explains that the intensity of an individual, a household’s or a community’s vulnerability is dependent on their level of resilience resistance and recovery. It depicts the world in which the poor exist and it has been regarded as the starting point for the analysis. It must be noted, however, that the framework reckons that livelihoods are shaped by a multitude of different forces and factors that are themselves constantly shifting. The framework underscores the fact that livelihood trajectories and available assets are fundamentally affected by the trends, shocks and seasonality - core elements within the vulnerability context which the deprived have no control over but their results could be negative and far reaching (DFID, April 1999).

The vulnerability context consist of trends classified as population, resource (including conflict), national or international economic, governance (including politics),

¹⁰ DFID’s Guidance Sheets aim to stimulate reflection and learning on Sustainable Livelihood Approaches. April 1999.

and technology. These elements are constantly in a flux and their change impact all spheres of human life – economic, social, cultural, and political.

Shocks refer to the unforeseen occurrences that afflict humanity. This could be human health shocks like epidemics, diseases, etc.; natural shocks like floods, fire, famine, earthquakes, etc.; and economic shocks like the austerity policies of SAP, the credit crunch, etc. Others are conflicts, and crop or livestock health shocks like bird flu, etc.

Seasonality explains the times and seasons of the year when economic activities viable or impossible. Seasonality can be an occasion or a festive or a tragic time, of price change of commodities, of production, of health, of employment opportunities, etc. and this could have serious repercussions on the assets and resources of deprive people.

2.3.3 Livelihood Assets

Livelihood assets as framed in the SL approach provides a true and realistic insight into what people have as in terms of resources and capital; and how to effectively turn these into providing solutions for their needs. It presupposes that in order to achieve positive livelihood outcomes, one will need to require a range of assets. Thus the livelihood assets provides an extensive range of resources namely human, social, financial, physical, natural and political capital which can be drawn on. These resources may not be sufficient on their own but need to be combined in order to achieve the desired result. Though they may not always be owned by the people who make use of them, they may be said to possess a considerable and varying control over these assets. (DFID, 1999; Farrington et al., 2002).

2.3.4 Livelihood Strategies

These are the range of planned activities people involve in to achieve their livelihood outcomes. It includes the combination of choices, opportunities, advantages, etc. that accrue to people in their quest to attain their livelihood goals. Largely, the kind of livelihood strategy employed is dependent on the assets and possibilities that one has or

that one can annex. This is also informed by one's choices and favourites (DFID, 1999; Farrington et al., 2002).

2.3.5 Livelihood framework's relevance to scrap dealers

This segment seeks to discuss the relevance of the livelihood framework to the scrap dealers who are the primary subject of the study. Very remarkable insights of the livelihood framework discussed explored the livelihood activities engaged in by the poor. As Ashley & Carney (1999) explained, the SL approach was conceptualized to aid in the understanding of how the poor strive to earn enough to cater for their social and economic needs, both current and future and reduce their level of vulnerability. The elements of the vulnerability context, assets and strategies are framed to provide a better understanding of the constraints and the opportunities at the disposal of the poor. But according to Toner & Franks (2006), most of the numerous interventions proposed failed to yield the desired goal and therefore any effective intervention embarked on to alleviate the plight of the poor must evolve from the beneficiaries' interests and the choice of resources that are available to them.

The SL approach is employed here to provide a broader platform to better understand the life of the scrap dealers who go round the metropolis in search of scrap metals. The activities of the scrap dealers are contextualized on the basis of the framework. As noted in the problem statement, scrap dealers are persons who due to unemployment reasons have resorted to picking of scraps for livelihood. That which led to the search for livelihood are accounted for by the trends, shocks and seasonality. The scrap dealers mostly migrated to the urban centres due to famine, conflicts, unemployment, poverty, etc. However, they make use of what they have in order to meet their basic survival needs both in the present and the future. They employ their (assets and resources) physical strength, social connections, their knowledge, financial resources, etc. to enable them survive. These

young men engage in scrap dealing in order to achieve their livelihood goals for now and beyond. They come to this conclusion after assessing their vulnerability, their assets and resources, as well as their interests.

2.4 A Brief Overview of Scrap Metal Industry

It is a common fact that scrap recycling has been practiced from of old (Figueiredo et al, 2006; MacGaffey, 2009). It, however, took prominence during the smokestack era of the industrial revolution when industries emerged and invention of machines and development of industrial plants were the order of the day (Emery et al., 2000; Javaid and Essadiqi, 2003). According to Medina (2007), the 1970s witnessed a growing attention paid to waste pickers (of which scrap dealers forms a subset) around the globe within the academic circles. In contemporary times, scrap dealing has become more prominent both on the global and domestic scene due to a number of reasons ranging from scientific, power conservation, economic, industrial, livelihood, etc. Studies have revealed that in manufacturing a steel, raw materials can be derived from two sources: virgin and recycled steel. A virgin steel could be derived from iron ore or coke; while a meltdown steel is obtained from scrap metals. Recycled steel as the name suggests, is derived from scrap metals. This is the case because recycled steel is as strong as virgin steel. Besides, the recycled steel requires less energy in melting in an electric-arc furnaces (E.A.F.) than is required in producing a virgin steel (Emery et al., 2000; Javaid and Essadiqi, 2003; The New Yorker, 2008; Muchová and Eder 2010; Ritzer 2011). The scrap metal industry has become a multibillion dollars business in the advanced world for example in the United States (US) and China (Ritzer, 2001;The New Yorker, 2008); and a means of survival for many of the world's poor living in mostly the developing world (Tevera, 1994; Rankokwane and Gwebu, 2006; Medina 2010). Thus through the high and low points of civilization, scrap trade have always played a role.

In recent times, the scrap metal industry in the developed world has become a growing one. According to the OECD (2012) China and European Union each generated approximately 93mmt of ferrous scrap, the largest in 2010. China again increased its scrap generation to 115.8 mmt in 2011. Then came the United States, Japan, Korea and Russia in 2010 and 2011. The major players in the world of scrap metal recycling are SIMS Metal Management, EMR (United Kingdom), TSR (Germany), Scholz (Germany), Derichebourg (France), Stena (Sweden), Schnitzer (United States), Kuusakoski (Finland), Interseroh (Germany), and the David J. Joseph Company (United States). The large companies process more than 10 million tonnes of scrap per year, and the small process millions of tonnes of scrap per year. The industry supports, for instance, over 450,000 American jobs and generates over \$10.3 billion in revenue for federal, state, and local governments (Pleven, 2010).

The operations of the industry are well structured with clearly defined roles. According to The New Yorker (2008), some scrapyards are situated on over twenty-seven acre industrial land where large piles of scrap metals are gathered and processed. There are two kinds of scrap metals: industrial and obsolete scraps. Industrial scrap are left over metal scraps from industrial manufacturing operations. Obsolete ferrous scraps on the other hand are collected from automobiles, junk yards, steel structures, household appliances, railroad tracks, ships, farm equipment and other sources. It must be noted that used vehicles in the US remain the single largest source of obsolete scraps. The workflow in the in the product line of scrap metal recycling industries consist of collecting, processing and reselling of metals. Demand for the scrap metal is also driven by the large quantities iron material required by the steel, automobile, and construction industries.

The economic value of scrap cannot be undervalued. It has assumed a pride of place on the global market and the demand and supply needs have attracted higher prices on the

world market. It is estimated that in the US, scrap metal is the second largest commodity exported to China. A case in point was the 2008 recession in which the world market price on scrap metal dropped from \$700 to \$200 per metric tonne and as result supply also decreased. But as emerging markets in Asia namely China, South Korea, India and Japan increased their demand, pricing on the world market went up to \$400 per metric tonne (Pleven 2010). Still in the advance world, scrap dealers have invested in different locations in the world where scraps could be bought and shipped to meet their demands. The New Yorker (2008) reports of Sim, a company which operates in more than a hundred locations on four different continents and acquires about 9 million tons of metals annually. Similarly, Ritzer (2011), also reveals the situation on the global scene where some of the scraps exported from the US to China is made into products that are shipped back to the US. But interestingly, he suggests a situation where China might use the scraps to build its developing infrastructure.

“Most of the scrap metal that goes to China is turned into materials for the Chinese construction industry – rebar, beams and floor decking. That steel flows into the skyscrapers sprouting all around Chinese cities and into new factory towns, the copper is used to wire the millions of houses being built for China’s new middle class.” The great irony of this is that “China’s industrial might is being constructed out of the ruins of [the US]” (Seabrook 2008: 55, as cited in Ritzer, 2011:85).

Apart from its economic benefit, scrap metal recycling in the developed world impinges positively on the environment. Obsolete scraps that would have polluted the environment are recovered through scrap collection. It also provides the basis to limit the mining of new ore for the production of metal, thus reducing toxic chemicals used for mining (Wernick & Themelis 1998).

There is a sharp contrast when scrap dealing is perceived via the lenses of the developing world. Unlike their counterparts in the advance world, scrap dealing in the global south is one of a means of survival and mostly operated in the informal sector. Scrap dealers are mostly poor people who survive from proceeds from sale of scraps. Very

characteristic of them, their businesses are mostly small scale and run by the sole individual, - what is commonly called in the Ghanaian parlance as “One Man Business”. Thus they lack the required capital for investment to ensure expansion (Medina 2010; Ohimain 2013). Generally their activities are physical and energy demanding and pose a lot of health threats to the scrap dealers. Their operations are unstructured and not regulated by the state. They have little or no power to negotiate for the best prices and limited outlets to sell their scraps. Though they live and work under poor conditions, their main aim is to work to guarantee a means of survival. There are also some section of persons within the scrap dealing fraternity who operate with relatively large sum of capital (Fofana, 2009; Sebastian, 2010; Broni-Sefah 2012, Oteng-Ababio 2012).

Waste management in the developing world general is a major challenge. Solid waste are often disposed in drains, waterways, abandoned and uncompleted buildings, gutters, etc. In areas where waste collection are regulated, the waste disposed are not segregated (Ohimain 2013). According to Medina (2010), most municipalities and their contracted firms often fail to collect the waste generated. This results in the creation job avenues for many unskilled individuals, migrants who become waste collector and scavengers. Scavengers recover plastic materials, wood, bottle and scrap metals etc. Among the many items recovered, scrap metal is one of the most expensive. Thus most of these urban poor sell the scraps to earn a living. (Medina, 2010; Umaru, 2010; Manhart et al., 2011; Scheinberg, 2012). In addition, there are also a large group of persons whose main occupations is to collect scrap metals for a living. They go round the cities, auto-mechanic yards, households, streets, waste dumps, landfill sites, etc. in search of scrap metals. They then sell their scraps to scrap metal merchants who in turn sell to the steel industries for recycling (Tevera 1994; Rankokwane and Gwebu 2006; Medina 2010).

The scrap metal industry in the developing world which essentially is scrap collection could be said to have made modest gains based on the individual's quest for survival. That notwithstanding, the economic value generated in terms of providing for the survival of most of the scrap dealers cannot be underestimated. But importantly the scrap dealers contribute to the provision raw materials for the steel industries in the production of iron and steel which are very important for the industrialization and development of any country. The activities of scrap dealers in most developing countries overall has environmental implications for life and property. Recycling prevents pollution of water, air, etc. It also helps save energy.(Tevera 1994; Rankokwane and Gwebu 2006; Medina 2010; Umaru 2010; Manhart et al. 2011; Scheinberg 2012; Ohimain 2013). Thus Ohimain (2013) argues that the export of scrap from Nigeria has contributed to the collapse of steel factories in that country.

2.5 Contextualizing the Problem

Unemployment have been a major issue in most developing countries. It is often associated with urban economic life. As Owusu (2005) would have us believe, with an increased in urbanization, comes an increase in poverty since there are limited job opportunities for the masses. The rural-urban drift in Ghana has heightened the struggle for survival as there are limited job openings for most urban dwellers especially the unskilled persons (Anarfi, et al., 2003). Baah-Ennumh & Adom-Asamoah (2012) argue that the plight of the urban poor finds solace in the informal sector's attribute of ease of entry and exit which provides employment opportunities to many in the urban centres. Thus the quest for survival among many in Ghana, has led many to engage in all sought of jobs in the informal sector namely shoe shining, street hawking, food vending, etc. Most of the urban poor engage in works based on their resources and the opportunities that avail to them. Scrap dealers are a subset of these group of persons in the informal economy.

They are mostly migrants who due to limited job opportunities have resorted to picking of scrap metal for survival (Oteng-Ababio, 2012).



CHAPTER THREE

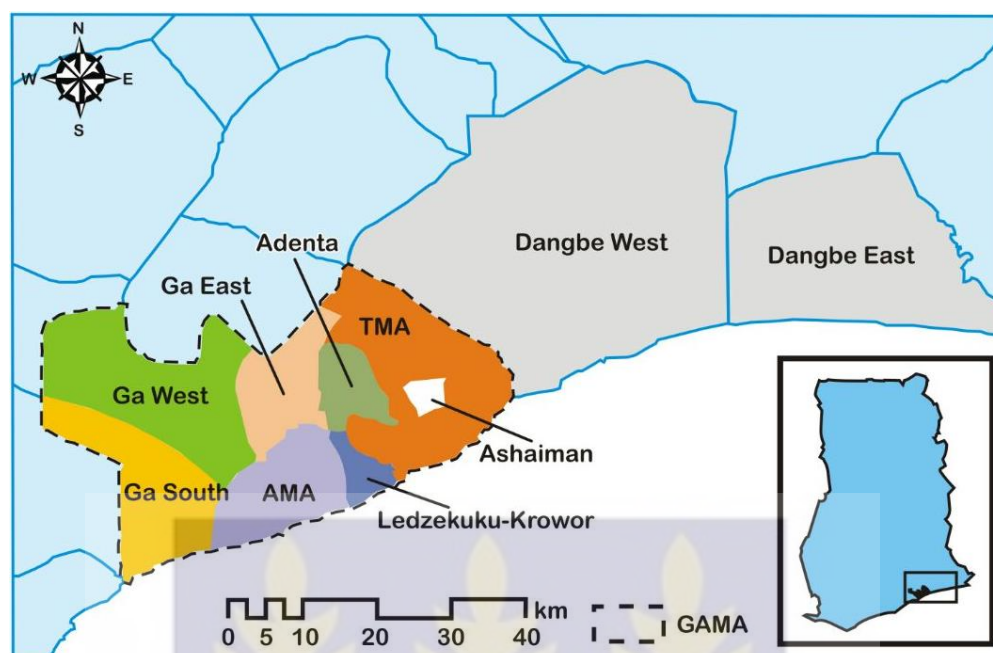
RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.1 Introduction

This chapter discusses methodological issues. It is divided into two parts. The first part gives a profile of the study area. The second part focuses on the choice of research methodology; informant selection and size; data collection techniques and justifications for the utilization of the specific techniques. It further highlights on my fieldwork experiences which are likely to have influenced the field decisions and the overall research outcome.

3.2. Study Area

The study was conducted in the TAM, arguably the largest industrial hub of Ghana. It focused primarily on the everyday life activities of scrap metal pickers in the residential communities of Tema, Ashaiman and the environs; the scrap yards within the light industrial areas of Tema-Ashaiman, and the scrap sales points at the Tema Heavy Industrial Area. The researcher chose to situate his study in these areas primarily because Tema is the largest industrial hub and harbour city of Ghana; and home to the five (5) steel companies in the country. It is also the destination where the many scrap agents who buy scraps for export ply their middlemen trade. Further, Ashaiman was included in the study because the Ashaiman Municipal Assembly (AshMA) is an in-lock municipality within the Tema Metropolitan Assembly (TMA) and strategically provides affordable accommodation for most of the lower income earners who are the target of this study.



Source: *Districts of the Greater Accra Region* (Adank, et al., 2011, p.4)

3.2.1 Profile of Tema

Tema¹¹ was established in 1957 when a Port was constructed at the Metropolis' natural harbour to serve as the main imports entries into the country. Tema Metropolitan Assembly (TMA) is a coastal district situated about 30 kilometers east of Accra, the capital city of Ghana. It shares boundaries on the North East with the Dangme West District Assembly (DWDA), Southwest by Ledzekuku Krowor Municipal Assembly, on the North West by Adentan Municipal Assembly and the Ga East Municipal Assembly (GEMA), North by the Akuapim South District Assembly and the South by the Gulf of Guinea. The Greenwich meridian passes through the Metropolis. Tema is the industrial hub of Ghana.

Traditionally, the Tema Metropolitan Area is made up of three major traditional areas namely, Kpone, Tema and Nungua (customary owners of Klagon, Lashibi, Katamansu, and Baatsonaa land). These areas install their separate Traditional Chiefs and

¹¹ The profile of Tema was accessed from the offices of the Tema Development Corporation (TDC). All information on the profile of Tema within this work is credited the TDC.

Chief Fishermen who oversee the Ga land and the activities of those engaged in fishing respectively. The people celebrate Kpledzoo and Homowo festivals.

The Tema Metropolis though a traditional home of the Ga-Dangme, it is also home to people of all walks of life because it is a popular destination for migrants. However, Akan, Ga-Dangme and Ewe are the three dominant groups. Other fairly well represented groups are the Mole-Dagbani and the Guans. Tema is also home to a number of foreigners which has resulted in inter-marriages.

The Metropolis is divided into communities with the central community (Tema Community 1) subdivided into sites. Housing type within the Metropolis can be broadly classified into the following groups: Flat or bungalow type housing units built by Tema Development Corporation (TDC) for rental as well as ownership purposes. Such units are usually well serviced with essential utilities such as water, electricity, sanitation, well-constructed road networks, physical access and other social amenities. Another category of houses are those built by the private or informal sector. These units can be subdivided into two broad categories namely; permanent urban type and low cost rural or slum type. The latter subgroup is more common in low income communities such as Manhean a suburb in Tema Newtown. These residential units are characterized by a marked pressure and lack of essential amenities.

Human and industrial activities have destroyed the general environment in the Metropolis. The indiscriminate construction and putting up of unauthorised structures such as extension of buildings, siting of shops and containers around street corners and road shoulders, sale of lands hitherto demarcated and reserved as greenbelts zones to business men and women, massive street hawking, commercial and private vehicles jamming the roads for lack of parking space, poor waste management etc., have marred the beauty of

the Metropolis. Other activities, such as sand winning, defecating, dumping of refuse along the coast makes the beaches unattractive.

Tema's population is about 402,637 with woman forming about 52% and men about 48% and a sizeable number of them are youthful (GSS 2010). This is largely due to the fact that the metropolis is a recipient of large influx of migrants from almost every part of Ghana who come there to seek for non-existent jobs in the Tema Harbour and Industries (many of which are defunct and turned into warehouses). Thus many of them settle for menial jobs for survival. The youth especially engage in shoeshine, truck pushing, scrap picking, *trotro drivers mate* (bus conductor), etc.

According to the TMA, population distribution within the Metropolis follows the nature of settlement. High density areas usually the slum type residential enclaves of Tema Manhean and to some extent Tema Community 1, usually contain a large number of socially misfit. Communities 2, 4, 7, 8, 9, Sakumono and Lashibi are classified moderately populated communities and they are dominated by the flats or bungalow housing type units built by the Tema Development Corporation for rental as well as ownership purposes. The Communities of 5, 6, 10, 11 and 12 are classified low density areas as these communities are dominated by high income earners with high class residential units.

Tema in the early days used to be the only industrial hub of Ghana offering jobs to the many Ghanaians who flocked to the Tema township in search of greener pastures. However, with the collapse of many of the major factories, the major occupation in the metropolis is sales work, followed by production, transport operators, estate agencies, freight forwarding, clearing agents and related workers. This pattern is largely due to the geographical location and the administrative nature of the district as it serves as the main gateway to the country for most goods and services particularly due to the presence of the main harbour.

Sanitation and waste collection in the metropolis are organized in the medium and low density areas. There exist adequate domestic toilet facilities which runs into the central sewage system. They have an organized system of refused collection with private sector participation operated in communities 1 to 25. However, the same cannot be said in places such as Manhean, Kpone, Adjei Kojo, Zeenu, Oyibi, etc. There are no domestic toilet facilities in most homes and well organized waste collection system in place.

3.2.2 Profile of Ashaiman

Ashaiman like Tema is the land of the Ga-Dangme's. Legends holds that the town was founded by Nii Ashai who migrated from Tema in the 17th century, hence the name "Ashaiman" literally meaning "*Ashai's Town*". It later became a one stop location for settlement for migrants from Ada and Volta Region as well as other parts of the country. However, it shot into prominence in the 1950's when the Tema Harbour and the Tema railway lines were under construction and migrants from across the country in search of jobs found residence in the cheap accommodation that Ashaiman offered. With the increased in the number of migrant workers, temporary settlement came to assume permanent state¹². The officials of Tema, Kirchherr (1968) contends, were forced to relax housing regulations and to allow the situation of unapproved settlements in Ashaiman when many factory hands constructed makeshift dwellings.

The Ashaiman Municipality constitutes an "island" within the TMA. It is bounded on the north and east with the Katamanso Zonal Council, on the south with the Tema Township, and on the west with Adjei Kojo. The western part of Ashaiman consisting of *New Quarters, Roman Down, Asikafo Amba Ntem, Night Market, Zongo Laka, Asensu Bar*, etc. are properly demarcated and the plots well laid out with roads, electricity, water and toilets, schools, recreational grounds and health post. The settlements on the eastern part

¹² Profile of Ashaiman from the Ashaiman Municipal Assembly (AshMA).

commonly known and called among the inhabitants of the town are *Ntaaboline*, *Tulakuline*, *Tutuline*, *Kaketoe*, etc. forms part of the early settlements that did not follow well laid pattern of development. In the light of this, Owusu (1999) reveals that the western part which is well designed in the 1960's was included in the TDC's plan, thus the two different patterns of development. He contends that settlements in the eastern part did not follow city planning and building regulations because that part of the town was under the control of settled farmers and traditional authorities. The controllers of the land also rented their lands to migrant workers who constructed makeshift wooden and aluminum structures resulting in the creation of urban slum that lacked the provision of basic facilities such as water, toilets, electricity, roads, market, etc.

Although the Ashaiman township having been raised to a Municipality status in 2008, the city is slowly experiencing some tremendous developments where basic facilities are being expanded and improved. In spite of that, there exist a large part of the city that developments do not follow laid out regulations. Housing types range from wooden shacks, aluminum housing, and ghettos to single family villas (locally referred to 'as self-contained') and 'compound houses' which provides housing facilities for the many labourers and factory hands that work in the industries in Tema.

It is a heterogeneous area that is home to migrants from many different parts of Ghana and other African countries with different ethnic and religious affiliations. Currently, Ashaiman is home to people from many ethnic groups from the country and West Africa. It is estimated that there are over 50 ethnic groups resident in the town. There are multitude of churches, mosques and shrines. Despite the negative reportage about inhabitants of the city, the town is whitewashed with numerous churches and mosques and in some cases traditional shrines, thus they can be said to be very religious people. There also exist the presence of many social groupings namely social clubs, sporting clubs, keep

fit clubs, ethnic associations, community watch dog associations, etc. from which members, mostly youthful people, derive their social capital.

With the raise to a municipal status has come improved development. Much attention is also being paid to their peculiar problems. As a result the issues of road construction, safety and security have taken the center stage. There have been upsurge of private school, clinics, banks and financial institutions, shopping malls, fuel filling stations, large market places, public toilets, Police Stations.

Like any densely populated area, Ashaiman is faced with serious sanitation and health problems. There is generally blatant disrespect for law and order. There are heaps of rubbish hills dotted around the city; waste are still thrown out in the open and in the uncovered drains; while waste collection is often not properly coordinated. The issue of open defecation is still a problem as most homes including some of the newly constructed Compound Houses¹³ have no toilets. In addition, most of the public toilets do not function properly.

3.3 Research Design

A research design is a systematic plan prepared for directing a research study (Kumekpor, 2002). The qualitative research design was mainly employed in this study. According to Limb and Dwyer (2001:1,3), methodologies applied in qualitative research “explore feelings, understandings and knowledge of others through various means.” They also explore some of the complexities of everyday life in order to gain a deeper understanding into the processes that shape the social worlds. This study seeks to provide an analyses of the daily life of scrap dealers. In view of this, and for the reasons outlined, the researcher believes that mainly qualitative approach suited the study. Qualitative

¹³ Compound House – It is usually a large gated house containing many rooms. It houses many families. These share common facilities such as toilet, bathrooms, common compound, etc. they also share common electricity, water, etc. it is predominant in densely populated neighbourhoods.

approach provides a handy tool that offers the researcher an in-depth, intensive and inter-subjective approach rather than an extensive and a numerical one (ibid.).

The qualitative research process has variously been described as iterative, emergent, simultaneous and flexible (Crotty, 1998). An important feature that characterizes much of qualitative research is the flexibility of its methods (Holliday, 2004, p. 723). Whereas it is not an easy act for the quantitative researcher to change his/her questionnaire, unless it has been completely challenged, a qualitative researcher in their interviews on the other hand can easily make changes due to its flexible nature. In the course of the research, this flexibility did not only guide the choice of respondents, but also helped in identifying the appropriate methods to use. In the process, the researcher reformulated his research problem and readjusted his objectives to reflect the realities on the field. He employed interviewing as the main method of enquiry. This was also supplemented with focused group discussions, participant and mostly direct observations. The secondary data was sought from the existing literature on sustainable livelihood approaches.

Overall, it guided the researcher in the process of collecting, analyzing, and interpreting his findings. Thus qualitative design helped the researcher to describe the socio-demographic profile of the scrap metal dealers, assessed their future aspirations and the strategies they employed in their bid to negotiate their way out of poverty.

3.4 Population Universe

A careful mapping of the population universe under study consisted of seven (7) groups of persons. They were mainly persons from the Tema and Ashaiman catchment areas. It also included those who live outside these areas but work within the area under study. This include the itinerant scrap dealers, scrapyard owners, scrap export agents and key officials of scrap buying companies. Others include residents of Tema and Ashaiman

where respondents live and work, key officials of City Council Guards and the Ghana Police in Tema and Ashaiman

3.5 Sample Technique

Owing to the exploratory nature of the study, non-probabilistic sampling techniques were used. This is where selection of the sample unit is based on assumptions, and some members of the population have no chance of being selected (Saumure & Given, 2008). Purposive sampling and Snowballing method were the two main methods employed in the selection of respondents for the study.

Prior to setting out to the field to collect data, the researcher had an idea as where to locate his respondents for the interview, and upon offering to be interviewed, respondents led him to engage other willing participants who contributed appropriate data, both in terms of relevance and depth to the study. Thus the fall outs of the sampling technique employed complied with the definitions of purposive and snowball sampling methods respectively. A purposive sample also commonly called a judgmental sample, is one that is selected based on the knowledge of a population and the purpose of the study. The subjects are selected based upon specialist knowledge of the research issue, or capacity and willingness to participate in the research (Kumekpor, 2002). The snowballing technique served as a basis for selecting informants. A snowball sample on the other hand is a technique that is appropriate to use in research when the members of a population are difficult to locate. Its main value as a method lies in dealing with the difficult problem of obtaining respondents where they are few in number or where higher levels of trust are required to initiate contact (Goodman, 2011). Noy (2008, p. 330) notes that, this sampling technique involves the researcher accessing informants through other informants. Thus, the snowballing technique was appropriate as it helped identified other informants based on the information and help from the researcher's initial field acquaintances.

Gaining Access

In conducting a field research, an unexpected difficulty which may arise is the researcher's ability to obtain access to the field. Finding the right individuals to interview can be challenging especially in the case where participants perceive that the society have preconceived thoughts about them. This task can be even more difficult if it involves entering the private lives of people (Johl & Renganathan, 2010, p. 42). In this study where the focus was on ascertaining how scrap dealing offers the unemployed youth alternative means of livelihood, the issues discussed to a large extent boarded on personal matters. It was more about how these young people, as individuals, are negotiating their paths to survival. In assessing such information, Wasserman & Clair (2007) opine that, it is important for the researcher to gain the trust and acceptance of informants. This facilitates informants openness, which improve the depth and quality of the data collected. As Feldman, et al (2004) note, in such situations, it is beneficial for researchers to use gatekeepers whether as individual or organizations who can help recruit informants. Approaching the study area with this in mind, the researcher first went to the Zongo Community of Ashaiman where he spent most of his youthful years. He connected with some former neighbours who also introduced him to some scrap dealers for the initial interactions and thus it aided in creating a rapport with the initial contact. He then proceeded further to identify others in the field as the work of scrap dealing easily connects the players in the profession.

At the initial meeting at the said scrapyards, the researcher shared his study intentions with the scrap dealers who offered to grant him an interview. Further, they introduced him to other scrap dealers both in Ashaiman and Tema. But prior to that introduction, they offered the researcher a 7-day scrap dealing experience since in their estimation that would provide him a first-hand information into the world of scrap dealing.

He was made to join a scrap gang who did not know about his mission and thus treated him as a novice scrapyard dealer. Later the researcher called the other scrap dealers whose contacts he had received from the initial interaction and disclosed to them how he got their cell phone numbers and asked if they could avail themselves for the study. He scheduled to meet each of them at their own convenience.

It could be deduced that the introduction by the gatekeepers which in this case were the researcher's former neighbours, might have influenced the initial informants into accepting to participate in the study. By coming from a higher institution of learning, and especially holding the interview in the wake of the continuous agitation for the lifting of the ban on scrap export by scrap dealers, the respondents might have misconceived the researcher for an official who could directly channel their views to the government. In clarifying this perceived misconception, the researcher honestly identified himself as an MPhil Sociology student from the University of Ghana who was only there to learn about and from them. However, he made it clear that he was in no way linked to officialdom, and their participation in the study was not going to earn them any material benefits. The only benefit he could provide was at least to contribute to the understanding of their everyday life and the struggles they go through intellectually, and at best, to contribute to policy formulation. Assuring them about the importance of their "knowledge" was very important. In the subsequent sessions with the other scrap dealers, he also took them through similar briefs about what his study and what their participation entailed. This proved useful as it reflected in their desire to share their views.

Feldman et. al. (2004) note that, researchers often make use of their acquaintances in the field to identify and gain access to informants. During his interactions with the initial set of scrap dealers, the researcher created a very good rapport as he could relate with them on numerous grounds. Thus they took keen interest in the study. Through them others

informants were identified and recruited for the study. Taking into consideration that the issues were about the private lives of the informants, and that it had the potential of causing informants uneasiness during the discussions, the researcher thus established good rapport with participants as this helped in gaining their trust. It also encouraged them to be forthcoming with their views.

As observed by Miles & Crush (1993, p. 85), “the interpersonal context of the interview, which includes power dimensions of age, sex, and class can also significantly affect the content and nature of the information from research subjects. It is thus illusive for researchers to claim that they are objective and neutral collectors of facts”. With this ‘familiar’ person taking on the mantle of introducing the researcher to the informants, it is believed, that the introduction helped reduce the power asymmetry that came with his status. The impression gathered was that, most of the participants were comfortable and open in sharing their views about their survival ‘techniques’.

However, identifying research participants was not overly a smooth process. Indeed, in many instances, the people the researcher approached were not interested and declined to participate. In trying to convince such people to reconsider their decision, it came out that for most of them, their decision not to participate was borne out of the reason that, participating in similar ventures which were aired on radio had not benefitted them in the past. The generalised reportage only increased the disaffection created by the public. This could also be true on the part of those who agreed to participate. However, for such people, the researcher believe, their decisions to partake in the study might have been influenced by their friendship with the gatekeepers or out of the desire to be heard. In airing their views, they hoped that it may help bring a change or improvement in their efforts to tell their own story.

3.6 Sample Size

In all, a total of about 32 informants partook in the interview for the study. This consisted of the following: 18 scrap dealers (out of which 4 were itinerant scrap dealers, 8 scrapyards boys, and 6 scrapyard owners); 2 key officials from two different steel companies in Tema; and 2 scrap export agents. The rest were 6 residents (4 males and 2 females) from the two communities where scrap dealers live and work; 2 key officials from City Council Guards; and 2 from the Ghana Police Service (1 each from Tema and Ashaiman respectively). All the informants who had direct contact with the scrap metals were males. This is because scrap dealership is often perceived to be very strenuous and energy demanding in nature and socially constructed to be a masculine job.

3.7 Data Sources

The researcher employed both the primary and secondary sources of data collection. The primary sources included In-Depth Interviews (IDI), Focus Group Discussions (FGD), Participant Observations (PO) and Direct Observations (DO). The secondary sources included books, journals, articles, research reports and relevant internet publications.

3.7.1 Data Collection Instruments

The main instrument used in the data collection was the semi-structured interview guide which was crafted on the basis of the study objectives. Specific questionnaires were developed for scrap dealers, scrap export agents, steel companies, law enforcement agents (which was made up of the Police and City Guards), and residents of the communities understudy. Other instruments include a digital voice recorder and a camera.

3.7.2 In-depth Interview

Field interview, according to Neumann (2011), is a joint production of a researcher and the respondents. A face to face interview has the highest response and permits the

longest and most complex questions. The flexible nature of interviews according to Bryman (2012) even makes it more attractive. This flexibility helped in probing into emerging issues and gave the researcher ideas of questions that he had not even thought of, and the ability to pose questions as and when they cropped up. There was also the ability to take notice of non-verbal communication in interviews which helped in understanding the phenomenon being studied (Neuman, 2011).

The semi-structured interview guide used also offered the researcher an opportunity to gain further valuable information by asking interlinked questions that are relevant to the theme of the research. It allowed the researcher to list fairly specific questions that ought to be covered, but the interviewee nevertheless had a great deal of leeway on how to reply (Bryman, 2012). Chilisa (2012:205) argues that “this type of interview allows for flexibility and makes it possible for the researcher to follow interests and thoughts of informants”.

The interview was conducted with scrap dealers in Tema-Ashaiman area, the Steel Companies, the scrap agents, the Police, City Guards and residents in Tema and Ashaiman. Except the residents, all interviews were conducted at their workplaces. Most of the scrap dealers after their initial resistance were very elated to be recorded. Some even asked for a play back to hear what they had contributed to the discussion and were happy to hear their voices played back to them. Other informants could, however, only make time for the researcher during their scrap sorting activities. This prolonged such interviews as they took time to answer questions citing concrete and practical examples. It was pretty much the same when the researcher interviewed the Crime Officers at the two different Police Stations. It, however, turned out to be an opportunity for the researcher to derive a deeper insight into the phenomenon under study. To capture as much detail as possible, field notes and tape recordings were also taken with the permission of all informants.

According to Rubin & Rubin (2005), in conducting interviews one should interview as many informants as possible until the two tests of completeness and saturation are passed. Completeness is when an interviewer can conclude that what he continues to hear gives a total sense of meaning of a concept being investigated. Saturation is the point in data collection when no new or relevant information emerges (Given, 2008). Thus one can then stop interviewing new informants at the point he can clearly see that he has achieved these two tests. This is because qualitative research is concerned with meaning and not making generalized hypothesis statements. Further, qualitative research can be labour intensive and analyzing a large sample can be time consuming and simply impractical. This concept became relevant to this study since an analysis of the life of scrap metal dealers could present common characteristics and thus may require few respondents to reach saturation limits. Armed with this understanding, the researcher identified the variables within the purview of the study objectives and tailored the questionnaire to reflect the set objectives. After the initial interviews were conducted, further interviews were conducted based on the themes that arose from the preliminary study. Thus through the use of theoretical sampling (Strauss & Corbin, 1998; Lawrence & Tar, 2013), completeness and saturation was attained.

3.7.3 Focused Group Discussion

The FGD allowed the researcher to develop an understanding of the scrap dealers' modus operandi. It was very helpful in the elicitation of a wide variety of views in relation to the issue. As cited by Marvasti (2004), the goal in focused groups is to let people spark off one another, suggest dimensions and nuances of the original problem that one individual might not have thought of.

Two FDG's were organized by the researcher, one in Ashaiman and another in Tema. In Ashaiman, the FDG was conducted among mainly itinerant scrap dealers who

work within scrap yards of their master. The one held in Tema was among scrap yard owners. This may be referred to as homogeneous sampling as explained by Patton (2001). Homogeneous sampling can be of particular use for conducting FGD because individuals are generally more comfortable sharing their thoughts and ideas with other individuals who they perceive to be similar to them (ibid). It was, however, preferred by the researcher because mixing scrap yard owners and itinerant scrap dealers groups may have inhibited some people, especially the itinerant scrap dealers from expressing their views. The interviews and discussions were mostly held in Twi and Pidgin English also known as “*Habour English*¹⁴”. This is adulterated English language. It is street language generally spoken by most Ghanaians and most Anglophone West African countries. The researcher transcribed them into English daily in order to enable him capture every detail and also to develop new themes that the respondents offered.

3.7.4 Direct Observation

The researcher carried out this function by observing the daily activities of the scrap dealers which involve the process of collecting, crushing of fridges, old television sets, etc., sorting out metals, aluminium and copper wires, loading scraps into trucks, and sale of scraps. This is in tandem with Thagaard’s (2002) understanding of observation which for him meant the researcher’s presence in the situation under study and observes participants and activities that takes place. This observation can be active or passive. It is considered active in a situation where the researcher participates fully in the activities and he or she is known to be studying the phenomenon under study; and passive observation when the researcher conceals his identity yet focusing on the activities taking place. The researcher, in his bid to get the best information applied both types of observations in

¹⁴ ‘Habour’ English is an adulterated English language commonly spoken by most people in Ghana. It is commonly referred to as Harbour English among residents of Tema-Ashaiman and the environs because it is the predominant language spoken by the working masses around the ports of Tema.

the data collection process. Further, he partook in some scrap sale at the steel factories and at other times in negotiations with scrap export agents; beyond that he also observed places where they lived and spend most of their time. There were no major problems encountered by the researcher as he wisely identified with the main respondents in many ways in terms of their social demographics; and respondents also accepted the theme of the research. The field observations, photographs and reflections were recorded in the field dairy. Thus the researcher experienced the work and life conditions of the scrap dealers: their behaviour, verbal and non-verbal reactions, physical surroundings, and these equipped him with a first-hand knowledge of the main informants for the study.

3.7.5 Participant Observation:

The use of PO in this study was to provide the researcher a first-hand information into the world of scrap dealing as it pertains in the TAM. Indeed the proposal to engage in PO was initiated by the researcher's initial contacts who were of the view that, that would afford the researcher a general idea about their industry. Viewing this as feasible, the researcher agreed to be recommended to join a scrap gang to go round the city in search of scraps for 7 days. According to the scrap dealers, 7 days was enough to acquire a general knowledge about their activities. Though a distinctive feature of PO was its longitudinal nature, that which was experienced in this study was of a short duration but the routine nature of the job was enough to provide the researcher the relevant information required for the study. It provides the means to capturing the natural processes involve in the scrap dealing as what actors say and do, given an interview situation, may not always be accurate. "Participant observation is in some ways both the most natural and the most challenging of qualitative data collection methods. It connects the researcher to the most basic of human experiences, discovering through immersion and participation the hows and whys of human behaviour in a particular context" (Guest et al. 2013:75). As arranged

during the initial meeting with the scrap dealers, the researcher arrived the next day at the scrapyard as early as 6:00hrs GMT. He was appropriately dressed in his working gear that made him appeared as a novice scrap dealer. After the preliminary introductions, the researcher join one of the gangs to go in search of scraps. He gained control of the modus operandi on the third day onwards as it was simple and repetitive. The researcher took field notes at the close of each working day so as to properly document the work processes involved.

3.7.6 Secondary Data

To supplement the primary data, information was gathered from various secondary sources. During his fieldwork, the researcher attained official documents about the profiles of the Municipalities of Tema and Ashaiman from the offices of the Assemblies. In addition, information from documents from the municipalities' websites, books and materials from internet sources have all been used to supplement the primary data. Taken together, information from these sources have yielded a pool of background information and the contextual understanding, needed to support the narratives of individuals.

3.8 Field Reflections and Challenges

In this section the researcher reflects upon his experiences and decisions, as well as, his role as a researcher and how these influenced his field entry, interactions with informants' and his interpretation of field materials. Thus this section focuses on issues ranging from scrap dealers' past experiences with researchers, and ensuring objectivity.

3.8.1 Scrap Dealers' Past Experience with Researchers

A challenge the researcher faced while in the field emanated from his status as a student researcher and how people related to this status. Scarp dealers are accustomed to being the subjects of various interviews by journalists in the metropolis. There have even been situations where journalists pose as researchers to extract information from them

which are later aired on radio. Thus many scrap dealers are weary of such endeavors and were constantly suspicious of persons who come to solicit information from them as researchers. This situation also affected the researcher's fieldwork as he sought to recruit respondents for the study.

For many of the scrap dealers who refused to participate in the study, researchers only come to the place with promises that their studies would bring positive effects on the lifting of the ban on scrap export. However, this had not been the case after these works were completed, there had not been signs of any 'improvements' as promised. As a result, they had lost interest in participating in these 'so called' studies. Others, who were bent on gaining something from their participation, demanded outright payment in exchange for their information since they were going to spend their working hours with the researcher. However, the researcher could also not oblige to such demands, as it is unethical as a researcher to pay for information.¹⁵ Even those that accepted to participate in the study demanded to see the researcher's student identity card before granting the interviews. It must be noted here that in selecting participants for the study, all potential participants were told about the exact nature of the research and the way in which their information was going to be used. They were clearly made aware of the objectives of the study and that their participation was voluntary. In addition, participants were made to understand that they could withdraw from interviews at any point and what they had said would not be used for the study.

Despite explaining to all potential participants the study objectives and the way the researcher wanted to go about it, he believes the refusal of some refugee scrap dealers in participating due to their past experiences, affected the number of informants and the social demographics of the study. He acknowledges that their participation could have further

¹⁵ http://www.uk.sagepub.com/upm-data/27011_4.pdf

enriched the study given the uniqueness of every scrap dealer's experience. Nevertheless, he considers the information attained rich enough to capture the views of the scrap dealers in the TAM about their survival strategies.

3.8.2 Same Gender Interviewing

During the interviews with the scrap dealers, the researcher found himself as an insider who shared certain characteristics with the interviewees. These offered him the opportunity to easily establish rapport with the respondents. The scrap dealers warmed up to him easily and were able to share their experiences freely. Most of them used the phrase "my brother" in referring to him anytime they answered questions during interview sections. This gave the researcher opportunity to hear their real motivations for engaging in scrap dealing.

Furthermore, the researcher could identify with their concerns and why they were engaged in that trade. In a more pronounced sense, the issue of unemployment especially for uneducated was often cited. This fact was very vivid in the participant's minds as well as the researcher's. This overly justified the whole idea that they engage in scrap dealing in order to survive.

3.8.3 Ensuring Objectivity

In social research, objectivity is a rule drawn from positivism that states that to an extent that is conceivable, researchers ought to keep a distance away from what they study so that their findings depend on the nature of what was studied as opposed to the researchers own personality, convictions and estimations. In carrying out the research, the researcher tried not to let his own characteristics influence his findings. He ensured that the informants were in control of the conversations. He avoided ending their sentences and asking leading questions. This in Payne & Payne's (2004) view was to ensure that the findings presented a true picture of the phenomenon being studied.

Despite the willingness of the informants to participate in the study, there was also a challenge in assessing the ‘truth’ about the information they gave. While conducting the interviews, the researcher realized in some cases that, the information respondents provided contradicted themselves and were not always accurate. For instance, various accounts conflicted especially in the issue of how much money was earned from scrap proceeds. While most of them quoted lower amounts, their accounts on their periodic expenditures were worth more than how much earning they disclosed. However, as Holliday (2007:10) puts it, researchers cannot put their thoughts above that of the people they study. That ambiguity in the statements of participants of a study might merely reflect the existing contradictions in their world. Yet, this must not be a sign of a person's insignificance (Kvale, 1996:31). As a researcher, having a critical perspective does not imply evaluating or judging the stories of one's study subjects. Indeed, good qualitative research becomes impossible if the researcher cannot respect the stories of informants. The researcher acknowledges the fact that he is not in the position to ascertain the veracity of the information provided by the respondents. While contradictions may render it incomplete, a researcher's task is to reflect upon and present the views of the interviewees as it is.

3.9 Summary

This chapter has focused on methodological issues of the study. Data was sought from respondents living in Tema and Ashaiman. In seeking to provide an analyses of the life of scrap metal dealers from their own perspectives, the qualitative approach was adopted by which interviews served as the primary data collection instrument. Non-probabilistic sample techniques of purposive and snowballing techniques were employed to identify respondents for the study. Altogether, 32 interviews were conducted using the semi-structure interview guides. This was made up of 18 scrap dealers, 2 scrap export

agents, 6 residents, and 2 key officials each from the steel companies in Tema, City Council Guards and the Ghana Police Service. Municipal Profiles, books, relevant internet sources, served as the source of secondary data for the study. Interviews were conducted and analyzed personally by the researcher in order to ensure the quality of data collected. While recruiting informants for the study, potential informants past experiences with researchers may have influenced the number of informants and richness of the study. Accessing informants through the information and help of other informants proved beneficial as it facilitated good rapport and trust with informants.



CHAPTER FOUR

THE QUEST FOR LIVELIHOOD IN AN URBAN SPACE

4.0 Introduction

Human's desire for economic sustenance impel them to reinvent the wheel for survival on many occasions depending on their understanding of what life has to offer at one point or the other. Many have devised divers and multiple means for earning a living. This phenomenon finds expression in the age old Ghanaian adage which states, "*ɛmerɛ dane a, wo nso dane wo ho*", meaning "*an individual must adapt to changes when the situation calls for it*". Such can be said to be the case of the scrap dealers in the Tema-Ashaiman metropolis (TAM) who are the primary subject of this study. In sync with the study objectives, this chapter is tailored to present an analysis and discussion of the field data collected. Particularly, it presents the socio-demographic characteristics of the respondents, explores the factors that lead people in to scrap dealing, and establishes the gains and risks in scrap metal industry.

4.1 Socio-demographic features of respondents

All respondents who took part in this study, with exception of one scrap dealer who lives in Accra but plies his trade in the metropolis, live and work in the TAM. Altogether, 32 persons took part in the study. This included 18 scrap dealers; 2 scrap agents; and 2 steel company officials, (one each from two different steel companies). The others are 6 residents (three each from Tema and Ashaiman); 2 officials from the City Councils of TMA and AshMA; and 2 Officers from the Ghana Police Service including 2 Crime Officers, (two each from Tema and Ashaiman). Apart from the scrap dealers (aged between 17 and 39 years) who were all males, some other respondents were females. The ages of the residents interviewed ranged between 30 and 60years. The reasons were that, persons within this age group forms the active population living in the study area and most of them

stayed at home at the times when scrap dealers operated; in addition, they were also persons who willingly availed themselves for the study. Coupled with the above, seasoned law enforcement officers also offered to contribute to the study when the researcher approached them.

Table 1 **Socio-demographic characteristics of the scrap dealers**

	Details	Frequency	Percentage
Sex	Male	18	100%
	Female	0	0
	Total	18	100%
Religion	Christianity	5	28%
	Islam	13	72%
	ATR ¹⁶	0	0
	Total	18	100%
Education	Basic/Islamic School	16	89%
	Secondary (SHS)	2	11%
	Tertiary	0	0%
	Total	18	100%
Marital Status	Married	6	33%
	Single ¹⁷	12	67%
	Divorce	0	0%
	Widower	0	0%
	Total	18	100%
Ethnicity	Akan	2	11%
	Ewe	2	11%
	Dagomba	12	67%
	Dangme	1	5.5%
	Others	1	5.5%
	Total	18	100%
Age	15-20yrs	2	11.1%
	21-25yrs	6	33.3%
	26-30yrs	4	22.2%
	31-35yrs	2	11.1%
	36-40yrs	4	22.2%
	41yrs+	0	0%
	Total	18	100%

Source: Field Data, February 2015.

¹⁶ ATR means African Traditional Religion. This column stands for adherents of African traditional beliefs.

¹⁷ It must be noted, however, that the field interactions revealed that 8 persons out of the 12 who said they were single have children even though unmarried.

4.1.1 Gender

All scrap dealers that availed themselves for the study were male. In the event, the research may not rule out the case of female scrap dealers but as far as this study is concerned, it can be assumed that males dominate this trade. The only female interviewees were a Police Officer, an Accounts Officer at the Pay Office at the sales point, and two residents.

4.1.2 Age

Most of the scrap dealers interviewed were aged between 17 and 39 years old. During the fieldwork, it was observed that some children aged between 8 and 15 years also dealt in the scraps trade. A further investigation revealed that these are children from the neighbourhoods where scrap dealers operate. They mostly gather the scrap of the scraps and go to weigh for a little amount of money. They are called *Dadeɛ Police* (Iron Police).

4.1.3 Dominant Ethnic Group

The table exhibiting the socio-demographic characteristics indicates that out of the number of scrap dealers interviewed, 67% of them were Dagombas; while Ewes and Akans were 11% each; and Dangmes and Others were 5.5% each. Some unscientific accessions by some scrap dealers purport that most of the scrap dealers were Dagombas. The researcher's observations during the study indicates that the predominant language spoken among the scrap dealers both during work and at home was Dagbani, the language spoken by Dagombas. Thus it can be assumed based on these findings and coupled with the findings concluded by Oteng-Ababio (2012), Amfo-Otu et al. (2013), and MacGaffey (2009), that most of the scrap dealers are Dagombas.

One such remark which suggests this assumption was made by a 39year old scrap dealer Tanko Osman¹⁸. He first arrived in Tema at the age of 21 years and initially worked as head porter at the Tema Community One Market for 2 year before saving his initial capital to begin scrap dealing. He has been engaged in the business of scrap dealing for the past 16years and have trained many young people mostly migrants from Tamale who come to the urban centres to seek greener pastures.

“It is because we the Dagombas started the scrap work in Ghana. In our part of the country, we have high rate of unemployment and we are vulnerable. We don’t have work. Most of us couldn’t continue with our education after JHS or SHS because of financial problems. We have to hustle in places like this. Besides, it is difficult to get employment in Accra but easy to be a scrap dealer if you have some small money. That is why you see most of the Dagombas dealing in scraps”.

4.1.4 Education

The majority of scrap dealers are said to receive one form of education or the other. The survey conducted showed that out of the 18 scrap dealers interviewed, 89% attained basic education which ended at the JHS level or Makaranta (Islamic School); and 11% persons attained SHS education. It can be deduced thus from the findings presented that most scrap dealers though may not have received formal education or continued their studies beyond the basic and secondary levels, may have received some form of education. Those who attended the Arabic School argued that one need to be very intelligent to be able to complete the study of the Al’Quran, the Holy Book of Islam.

Abu Immorrow is a 25year old scrap dealer. He arrived in Ashaiman at the age of 21year. He been dealing in scrap metals for the past 4year and he is a scrapyard master.

“Though I didn’t attend government school (formal education), I am very intelligent. I have read the entire Quran and like most of us, I have completed the various stages in Arabic education. The Arabs don’t learn English yet they do great things”. (25 year old, scrap dealer)

¹⁸ Tankos Osman as well as all the names in the narrations of this study are Pseudo Names created to hide the real identity of the respondents.

4.1.5 Religious Affiliation

Out of the number of scrap dealers that took part in the study, 72% of them were Moslems and 28% professed the Christian faith. There were no adherents of African Tradition Religion. It is a socially constructed perception among most Ghanaian that most of the inhabitants from the regions of the north of Ghana predominantly profess the Islamic faith. Thus the expected percentage of persons who practiced Islam from the table as far as ethnicity was concerned was 67%. However, with 72% of the scrap dealers being Moslems indicates that 5% of scrap dealers were of other ethnic origin but also profess the Islamic faith.

Osei Yakubu is a scrap dealer, an Akan and he collaborated this account. He is a Moslem convert.

“Some of us are Moslems even though we are not from the North. We grew up in predominantly Moslem communities and have become one of them. I am married to a Moslem and I love my faith”.

Thus the above data and analyses it can safely lead to the conclusion that the scrap dealing business is mostly engaged in by persons who professed the Islamic faith.

4.1.6 Marital Status

As illustrated on the table, the 33% of scrap dealers studied were married with families. They either live with their families or live separately, that is, the husband lives and work in Tema and the wife and the children live in the Northern Region of Ghana. 67% of the scrap dealers are single but a further probe revealed that more than half of the percentage of single scrap dealers are ‘born-ones¹⁹’. There were no widowers or divorcees among them.

¹⁹ Born-one is a term used to describe persons who have children (often one child) but are not married. They may not be cohabiting but mostly take responsibility for the upkeep of the child

4.2 Driving Factors that lead young people into scrap dealing

Livelihood trajectories for the urban poor may vary from one place to the other, but the essence which is survival has often been the same. For young people in the TAM, the opportunity to survive lies in the dirt of scrap metals. Most of these young men walk through the nooks and corners of the industrial areas, mechanic workshops, residential areas, etc., in search of scrap metals – a very scarce commodity in the metropolis. From a distance, the scrap dealers look dirty and sweaty and one may wonder the push factors that might have led these people to go into scrap dealing. The field data collected revealed two groups of persons who decides to embark on scrap dealing for livelihood. They are what the researcher labelled as persons-who-lived-most-of-their-lives-in-the-TAM and migrants-in-search-of-better-livelihood.

The former group of persons, it is revealed, were mostly Junior High School (JHS) graduates who were unable to pursue their education and at the same time were unable to enrol in any vocational training due to financial constraints. This group of persons find it difficult to acquire any gainful employment except to work as factory hands in the already competitive labour front which is saturated with unemployed highly educated persons who are better qualified persons than they are. Thus for some of these people, the way out for their survival is to go in search of menial jobs such as scrap dealing for livelihood. Some accounts of some scrap dealers who lived most of their lives in the TAM collaborates and confirms this analysis.

23year old, Kofi Nsuo had lived most of his life in TAM. He hails from Koforidua-Effiduase in the Eastern Region. He has been dealing in scraps for the past 6years.

“After my JHS education, I desired to enrol as a mechanic apprentice but I didn’t have money to pay for my apprenticeship so I joined this work”.

Suku Tanko is 30year old and a scrapyard master. He has been dealing in scraps for the past 11year and has more than 10 scrap boys who work for him. His parents brought him to Ashaiman to live with the paternal Uncle at the age of 10years.

“When I completed JHS, my parents couldn’t afford to help me continue my education. I was jobless for over 4 years. I got introduced to scraps by my ‘area’ (neighbourhood) boys and I became interested in it because I got money”.

For the migrant scrap dealers, their decision to enter into scrap dealing was borne out of the quest for survival. Most of them are Dagomba’s²⁰ who migrated from Tamale and its surrounding towns in the Northern Region of Ghana. They narrated the ordeal of joblessness within their villages and towns, and how it became increasingly difficult for most young people to get jobs. Their various accounts revealed how in the urban space, most of the migrants-in-search-of-better-livelihood had limited job opportunities in the formal arena. This, they ascribed to the limited qualification they possessed. The only opportunities open for them were to find the easiest job openings that required little or no formal qualifications or hindrance, but could afford them with earnings enough to cater for their livelihood. What readily presents one of such opportunities was scrap dealing. This is because the new migrants, in tune with the explanation offered by the social network theory as espoused by Massey and Espinosa (1997), were already connected to their families and friends who are scrap dealers and as such very easy to get on board the trade.

“I relocated from Tamale to Tema because of poverty matters and financial difficulties. I only want to hustle because there are no jobs in Tamale and living there was a waste of time. I never attended school. I only attended Makranta (Islamic School). I realized here (Tema) too, there are no jobs for me. In the case where I got a job, it was to carry ‘Banga’ (Cocoa) at the port. But I don’t have the strength to carry ‘Banga’. If I carry it, I will die. That is why my brothers advised me to do scrap business”. (25year old, Osumanu Laka)

²⁰ That most of the scrap dealers in general are Dagombas was an accession made by a 39 year old scrap dealer during an interview section. He has been in the scrap dealing business for the past 16years and according to him, he brought more than 30 young person from Tamale and have trained over 50 scrap dealers, 99% of whom he claimed are Dagombas.

“I decided to follow my brother to Tema because at that time, my ‘Foss’ (Used Clothes) business has been slow and staying idle was dangerous since I might end up becoming a criminal. So I accepted the invitation to come along with him to Tema so I can also earn a living. I have since been working as a scrap dealer for the past 16year”. (34 year old, Azizu)

4.2.1 Ease Entry

Most of the respondents consented that scrap dealing was one of the easiest jobs they could find. They opined that there were virtually little or no hindrances to becoming a scrap dealer. The researcher identified two entry points: those who became scrap dealers through referrals and others who had their own initial capital and started dealing in scraps on their own.

Those whose entry points were through referral first had to develop interest in the job and either seek the consent of the scrapyard owner (also called the Master) to come to work at the said scrapyard or ask someone to introduce them to the Master. With the approval of the Master, the prospective job seekers thus become scrap dealers. They then have to undergo some short form of on-the-job training and within a short time they perfect the rudiments of the trade. This training involve pushing a 4 wheel push truck in search of scrap metals, bargaining for scraps and weighing techniques, etc. A characteristic feature of these persons is that they do not commit any personal money to the buying of scraps. Their masters provides the money for the purchase of the scraps and thus they are commonly referred to as scrap boys. It must be noted, however, that like the second group it holds for a fact that all one needs to enter into the scrap business is an initial capital which in their case is provided for by their Masters.

“It started when I met some scrap dealers who needed help in pushing their truck because of the heavy load they were carrying. I offered to help them voluntarily but I was paid some money at close of the day, and so I became interested in the job. Even though I didn’t know them, they agreed to let me work with them when I expressed interest in the job. I am now a Master myself”. (23year old, Kofi Nsuo)

The second group are those who hold that all one need to become a scrap dealer is to possess a start-up capital. Some raise their start-up capital through proceeds from the sale of their farm produce, others raise loans from family and friends, and while others especially those migrants with higher degree of social networking and social capital receive money from those who invited to the urban centres to work. These group of entrants particularly the migrants start to deal in scraps in the early days of their arrival to the urban centres. The initial or start-up capital must be enough to buy scrap metals; acquire or rent a 4 wheel push truck; and a scale for weighing the scraps when they are bought. Further, he must acquire a good location to site one's scrapyards where he can easily get a lot of scraps to buy. After acquiring all or some of these requirements, the real scrap buying involves going round the possible locations which include mechanic workshops, industrial and constructional sites, homes, etc., where one can get scraps to buy, to inform the prospective clients that your job as a prospective scrap dealer who is interested in buying scraps. The scrap dealer then leaves his contact with the prospective clients and when they have scraps, they may call him. However, almost all the scrap dealers interviewed were quick to add that persons who enter into the business through this entry point must endeavour to solicit some form of training from existing scrap dealers with years of experience in order to learn the secrets of the trade else they may run the risk of running losses. Ali Moro age 36 years is a scrap dealer for the past 12 years. He had this to say in relation to this group of entrants:

"...When I quit my job as a gardener, I had a savings of Gh¢150.00 which I started to do the scrap business with. I hired a 4 wheel push truck and one scrap boy who knew how to buy scraps and push the truck because I am not used to pushing or bargaining for the scraps. But after the first few rounds, I learnt to buy scraps. You can also do scrap business but I will advise that you have to know someone who's already in the business and attach yourself to him so you can learn from that person".

4.3 Tracing the Activities and Stages involve in Scrap Dealing

The scrap dealing business as most of the respondents assert is a strenuous work that requires hardworking and energetic people to get on board the trade. A scrap dealer, the study revealed, must be a smart and an intelligent person who must know how to calculate off head and strike the best deals when bargaining for scraps. Further, he is required to be very observant and tactful if he must become a successful scrap dealer. One scrap dealer in a FGD exclaimed, *“if your head die, you can’t do scraps”* meaning *“if you are not an intelligent person you cannot engage in the scrap trade”*. The scrap dealers’ modus operandi entails knowing where to get scraps from at what time; how much to pay for a particular scrap item in the case where scraps cannot be weighed, for example, different car engines, engine blocks, the varieties of fridge motors, etc.; how to do proper separation of the various scrap metals such as zinc, copper wire, brass, aluminium, iron, and on some rare occasions gold²¹. Their work also involve the fundamentals of business transactions that take place at the scrapyards.

4.3.1 Acquiring Scraps

The real work of scrap dealing either by an itinerant scrap dealer, a scrap yard boy or the Master is grounded in the scrap dealers’ ability to acquire or gather scraps. The search for scraps for the different scrap dealers takes different forms and timelines for the different actors. However, it can be established that most scrap dealers begin their day literally when they rise from bed and work till sunset. They are ready to respond to calls from their clients at any time of the day to buy scraps. In spite of their preparedness to buy scraps at any time, most of them are wary of *‘connection goods’*²² and they avoid the occasion to purchase them.

²¹ Some scrap dealers claimed that on rare occasions they find gold when they dismantle some car engines.

²² Connection Goods are stolen items.

For an itinerant scrap dealer who could be referred to as the freelancer, his day begins from his house because he is not controlled by anyone. He is normally seen pushing his wheelbarrow through the city and along the streets in search of scraps. They rarely buy scraps but are mostly seen searching to launch on some discarded scraps in obscure or deserted places. At the close of a business day, they have the option to sell their scraps to a scrapyards owners immediately or keep them till when they have enough scraps.

Unlike itinerant scrap dealers, scrapyards boys mostly begins their day from the scrapyards. They report between the hours of 5:00am and 6:00am in order to select the best push truck. It must be noted that not all the push trucks are in perfect conditions. Again, in some scrapyards, the scrap boys outnumber the push trucks so in order to get a truck, one needed to get to the shop early since trucks are selected on first come first serve basis. A push truck is manned by mostly two persons who, in their work parlance, form a gang. The Master arrives after 6:00am and shares money for the various gangs. Depending on the experience of the gang, they are given monies ranging from Gh¢50.00 to Gh¢150.00. Those who could not get trucks for the day may choose to go home or stay at the yard; or be given money just like the gangs with the push trucks, they set out to search for scraps. They walk to all places where they can get scraps. They walk as long as their strength can permit them. Sometimes when fortune smile at them and they chance on scraps very early in the day, they can come back to the scrapyards early. In the course of looking for the scraps, they shout “*scrap, scrap, scrap*” to draw attention to their presence. They also knock on gates and doors of people’s homes to ask if they have scrap for sale. When they are privileged to get some scraps, they bargain for the best deal. If a deal is struck, payments are made and scraps collected. Should a situation arise where scrap boys on errands do not have enough money to pay for the scraps, they call their Masters who will bring them money enough to make payment. Depending on the volumes of scraps, they

can be carried on the head, on a push truck, motorbike, by a taxi or KIA truck. A good day for a scrapyard boy ends when he or the gang gathers enough scraps. Most of them return to the scrapyard between the hours of 3:00pm and 5:00pm to render account as to the volumes of scraps bought and the amount of money spent.

The task of the scrapyard owner or master takes place at any time of the day. They assert that scrap dealers could be called upon to buy scraps at any time of the day therefore the assertion that their work begins from their homes. In the early hours of the day (around 5:00am), the Master moves around the communities to ask for scraps by knocking on people's gates because they believe they can meet the landlords at home before they leave for work. The Master later gets to the yard early in the morning mostly after his initial rounds to give monies to the different gangs and dispatches them. He then goes round to his clients to announce his presence for the day and to inquire if they have some scraps for him. He returns to the scrapyard and wait for walk-in²³ clients who come to sell their scraps or he waits upon calls from his numerous clients. Some Masters use motorbikes for their rounds while others walk or hire a taxi in the case they are called to far distance places or for an urgent deal.

“I wake up by 5:00am and patrols the area to ask if the residents have scraps. I go there early because they might leave home for work. Some of us carry sacs, wheelbarrow, motorbikes, etc. Later, I ride my motorbike to other places where I often get my scraps before going to my scrapyard to meet my boys”. (24year old, Zorzor)

4.3.2 Scrapyrd Transactions

Activities at the scrapyard among other things involve dispatching scrap boys in the morning, weighing, buying and dismantling of scraps. In doing these works, the Master is sometimes assisted by one or more scrapyard boy(s) who most often are the senior most and trusted ‘*apprentice(s)*’. The Master having executed his morning duties, will sit to wait

²³ These are persons who by themselves bring their scraps to the scrapyard to sell.

for walk-in customers and his clients who bring scraps to sell at the scrapyard. This the transactions mainly involve weighing, or bargaining and finally payment. Scraps that are weighed attract fixed price per kilo or pond depending on the metric system being operated by the scrap dealer. It must be noted that at the time of the research, a kilo is priced 40Ghp and a pound 20Ghp²⁴ or more depending on its quality and the prevailing tonnage price at the time. There are two types of scraps: light weight scraps (*fala fala* as it is commonly called within their circles) and heavy weight scraps. Some scraps that could not be easily weighed include car engines, fridge motors, condemn vehicles, gathered scraps²⁵, industrial scraps, etc. it is during such times that scrap dealers exhibit their intelligence and calculus mind. They tactfully bargain in a way that would accrue to their interest. Emphasizing the scarp dealers' intelligence 34year old Azizur bursts out:

“That is why I told you earlier on that if your ‘head die’ you can’t ‘do scraps’. Not all scraps can be weighed. Just by mere mental calculations, one can say with certainty how much a quantity of scrap is valued, or how many tons can be acquired from a particular load. If I see 1000kilos or 1 tone scraps, I will know. You must be able to predict rightly”

Later in the day when the scrapyard boys return from their errands, their scraps are sorted out and weighed differently since different metals attracted different prices. At this stage, some Masters (often few of them) who do not deal in other metals apart from iron scraps ask their boys to sell the aluminium, copper, brace, batteries, stainless steel, zinc, etc., to those in that trade. But most of the scrap dealers the researcher encountered also bought other metals mentioned above. The scraps (ferrous metals) are weighed and the quantity multiplied by the prevailing price per kilo or pound. The master then deducts the initial amount given to purchase the scraps from the proceeds and the balance is given to them. They often make profit but sometimes too they run at a loss. The boys are paid their

²⁴ The Ghana Cedi and Pesewas is the Legal Tender accepted for transacting business in the Republic of Ghana. 100 Ghana Pesewas makes 1 Ghana Cedi. The current US Dollar to Cedi rate is 1:4.

²⁵ Gathered scraps: sometimes some scrap dealers offer to sell their collected scraps to other scrap dealers. This situations happens when a scrap dealer runs out of money.

balance when they make profit. In cases where losses are registered a 17year old Amuda Pele has this to say:

“Sometime when wonna scraps no catch the money wey we collect, wonna Master go comot wonna shirt plus wonna kick. So say if we bring the balance scraps, we go collect wonna dress den kick. That be how we dey job for here oo. But me too I know say some masters no dey like that”.

Translated it means:

“On occasions where the amount of money earned after weighing the scrap we brought from our errands cannot break even with the money we were given in the morning, our Master will seize our shirts and shoes until we pay back with scraps. That is the nature of the work. But I know not all Mater act in the manner my Master acts”.

4.3.3 Toward Sales

Developing the skill to ascertain when sales time is due a scrap dealer is an art which, the study revealed, must be acquire. While some scrap dealers are compelled to load their scraps for sale due to the proximity of the citing of the scrapyard to the residential areas, others base on the intuitive intelligence guess with some amount of certainty the tonnage of scrap gathered to load their scraps for sale. Still, others can also be more scientific in approach. One of such persons is 30year old Suku Tanko.

“We usually record the quantity of scraps we buy daily. We document the volumes of scraps in the notebook and how much money has been spent to acquire it. So depending on our records, we can easily find out how many tones we have at a time. As we sit here now, I can tell you the tonnage of scraps I have when I refer to my books”

However, all scrap dealers interviewed drew the researcher’s to the fact though many factors may determine why sales takes place but the supreme reason is when the money they spend in buying the scraps gets finish. They have no choice than to go for sales and replenish their account.

When it is certain that the scrapyard owner has accumulated enough scraps to be sold to the steel companies, the next line of action is to run a check on the current market price per tonne. To do this, the scrap dealer (who in this case is the owner of the scraps)

contacts a scrap agent who will provide the list of steel companies and export agencies that have the best prevailing competitive prices. The scrap agent, it must be noted, do own the scraps. Their role in the transaction is one of a negotiator. Scrap agents negotiate for the best price deals for their client – the scrap dealers and are paid an agency fee after close of a transaction. Based on the information gathered the scrap dealer can decide to load for sale or hold on to the sales for a while. When he decides to hold on for a while probably due to congestions at the various sales points or unfavourable prevailing market prices which might make him loose his capital in the process, the next action is to fall on his savings or get a loan from his colleagues so as to continue buying. As they chorused in a FGD, *“scrap dealers cannot stay idle”*. On the other hand, when the signals are positive, they take action to step up preparation for sales. One scrap dealer said this when the question, *who do you sell your scraps to*, was asked?

“I sell my scraps to the best bidder on the market. It can be the exporters or the steel companies. I simply follow prices. That said, I most a time sell to the exporters because they have the best prices”.

After the preliminary sales enquiries, the real preparations at the scrapyards begin when the scraps are properly sorted out. It must be noted that the initial sorting of the scraps are done on the daily basis when scraps are brought in. This final sorting is to ensure that scraps are properly handled so as to avoid delay during loading and harassment at the sales point. It is also to afford the scrap dealer an opportunity to arrange the quality scraps visibly for the inspectors to see during inspection, grading and weighing at the sales points. Meanwhile other metals such as zinc, aluminium, brass, copper wire, etc., will be selected and sold separately at different price.

After the sorting is done, the scrap dealer certain of the load makes a decision as to which capacity of truck to rent to convey the scraps to the designated sales point. This is a crucial point of the work since the conveying the scraps to the sales point is key to the

success of the work. Besides selecting an appropriate truck would forestall the common phenomenon of broken overloaded scrap trucks in the middle of the roads. Though scrap dealers are aware of this, they still go ahead to select with low capacity and rickety trucks which results in the constant breakdown of trucks. They explained that these truck drivers charge low and are willing to overload they are willing to overload their trucks. After an agreement on the cost of transportation is struck between the two parties, most drivers request for *fuel fee*²⁶, that is part payment of the total cost. It is a convention that truck drivers receive their full payment after the transactions have been closed and scrap dealers have been fully paid.

Loading follows once all the above deals have been sealed. It is one event that require massive labour and often at these times, all scrapyard boys partake in the process. When the situation demands, other persons are invited to augment the labour. Scrap dealers engage in loading skilfully so as to conceal *falafala* (light weight) scraps from the inspection officials at the sales point. Loading though can be done at any time of the day, most of them preferred either loading early morning so it can be transported immediately loading is completed. Some others also prefer loading at any time but transport the scraps at night when the roads are cleared of traffic and congestions. It also to avoid Police *wahala!* (problems) and consequent delays, one scrap dealer exclaimed.

These processes of knowing when sales is due, checking on the best market price, sorting scraps, selecting the right truck and loading of scraps, it must be noted, are worked out simultaneously since the activities run into each other. The scrap dealers having engaged in this processes on several occasions display greater dexterity and efficiency in their operations.

²⁶ Fuel fee is money the truck drivers will need to pay for fuelling the truck. It also includes what they call *Road Expenses*. This is the money they use in paying the Police along the way as they transport the scraps to the sales point. All these costs are factored into the final cost of transport.

4.3.4 The Sales Point

“It is a big relief for us when our load gets to the sales point safely. Sometimes we are faced with the problems of broken truck, accidents, Police arrest, and what have you. So once we get here, Insah Allah, we are happy”.

(Echoes of relief from 30year old Suku Tanko when he, together with the researcher arrived at the Tema Steel Works weighing toll)

The safe arrival of a truck fully loaded with scrap metals at the sales point gladdens the heart of every scrap dealer. In terms of proximity, the journey may be shorter for scrap dealers within the TAM. The reason being that all the scrap buying outlets nationwide are situated in the heart of the heavy industrial area of Tema. These outlets consists of five (5) steel companies namely Tema Steel Works Company Ltd., Ferro Fabrics Ltd., Western Caste Steel Ltd, Wahome Ltd., and Special Steel Ltd.; and three (3) export companies.

At the sales point, the truck load of scraps are handed over to the agent who leads in the sales process. This is not to only fulfil the requirement of the scrap buying companies or agencies, but it is also to ensure that agents negotiate the best price deals for scrap dealers. It is noteworthy, that scrap buying companies buy scraps from accredited agents in order to follow due procedure and ensure consistency in their work. In cases where there are queues at the said sales point, each truck wait for its turn. At the turn of a truck, the fully loaded truck is called to mount the weighing bridge. Weighing takes place at the modern computerized scales installed at almost all the sales outlets. The weight of the truck load of scraps is measured and recorded. This is followed by the inspection team who grade the scraps. Grading is rated A, B, C, and D based on the quality of scraps. The truck then proceeds to the offloading point where a mechanised system is employed to discharge the scraps from the truck after which the empty truck is weighed to ascertain its true weight. The value of the weight of the empty truck is lessen from that of the fully loaded truck. The difference then becomes the actual weight of the scraps which is always measured in

tones. The agent and a detailed official from the weighing department now presents the results of the weighed and graded scraps to the accounts office where payments are processed. Payments are made in cheques or cash. In the case where cheques are issue for payment, the agent goes to cash it from the bank and presents the amount to the scrap dealer. When post-dated are issued, the agent collects the cheque and withdraws the money on the said date and presents it to the scrap dealer. The process at the sales point ends when the agent receives his commission on the transaction.

After sales payments for scrap differs from one company to the other. In recent past, most steel companies delay payment to scrap dealers after scarps have been sold to them. This delays created a situation where scrap dealers sold their scraps to export companies who paid good rates and promptly. According to the scrap dealers, most scrap dealers thus sold their scraps to the export agents which led to the starving of steel companies of raw materials and the subsequent ban on scrap export.

4.3.5 After Sales

Rendering account follows after payment for the scraps have been received. Scrap dealers theorised as entrepreneurs (Sabastian, 2010), take steps to render accounts for every round of scrap deal embarked upon. They evaluate the entire process, access the quality of scraps bought and the amount of money committed during the season under review. Deductions are made, profit and loss margins are ascertained, and new strategies designed. This analysis is collaborated by 24year old Zorzor.

“After receiving the money from the agent, I deduct all expenses – agent’s fees, transport, loading boys and cost of scrap – from the amount received. The remaining is my profit. Sometimes I loose. When I loose, it changes my mind about how I must go to the field the next time. I now buy with strategy and quote lower prices when I bargain. But the business must begin again”.

4.4 Establishing Gains and Risks in Scrap Dealing

4.4.1 Income Generated

Income generation among the different groups of scrap dealers in TAM varies sharply at the different the levels. Scrapyard boys especially sell at subsistent level to their Masters. This is normally the case because their activities are hugely financed by their Masters. Besides, a scrapyard boy is destined to sell his scraps to his Master and no other person. They earn a daily income between Gh¢15.00 to Gh¢20.00 and more depending how good a day has been.

The *Zamrama* and the *Gaogao* boys (itinerant scrap dealers) who are their own bosses have stronger bargaining powers than the colleague scrapyard boys. They bargain for the best deal when it comes to determining the rate per kilo or pound especially when they have quality goods. They earn between Gh¢20.00 to Gh¢40.00 and more when they are fortunate.

The scrapyard owners, the study uncovers, or the Masters as they are called, earn higher margins in the trade since they invest a lot of money. However, there are degrees of earnings among them. This is based on the amount of capital invested at a particular time. At the close of a round of scrap deal when payments have been made by the agent and all expenses deducted, most Master assert they realise Gh¢1,000.00 and more depending on the capital invested and the quality of scrap sold.

Scraps dealers, as a statement of truth do not receive fixed monthly income or wages but receive remuneration based on the scraps collected. Therefore the motivation to earn more money empowers them in their daily search for scrap metals.

4.4.2 Health and Safety

The health and safety concerns of scrap dealers with the TAM is not a priority within their circles. Most of them believe they do not fall sick and as a result most of them

are not enrolled on the National Health Insurance Scheme (NHIS). The only disease commonly among them is the occasional feeling of nausea and headaches. They admitted that injury was not classified as sickness since getting injured was part of their daily routine. They only attend the hospital when one is severely injured. When they were asked if they wore protective clothing during work, some of them had these to say:

“No! I can’t wear hand gloves while walking in people’s homes”.

“The gases that emit from the TV sets and cylinders doesn’t affect us in anyway. Not at all. Those of us who buy and sell scraps are not directly into dismantling and so we are not affected. The dismantlers are the ones affected because they inhale different gases and fumes every day. So why do we need gloves, noise mask and helmet?”

4.4.3 Risk

Scrap dealers within the TAM perceive their job to be very risky. They listed injury, Road Commission Police arrest for overload, misrepresentations (as thieves), purchases of connection goods and copper wire, etc., as events that account for the risky nature of their job. The greatest fear for most of them is to be arrested for purchasing *connection goods* and copper wire. The risk factor in a transaction relating to *connection goods* is borne out of the scrap dealers’ passion to buy huge quantities of scrap. Second, the appeal of the connection goods as well as the connection men. And third, the fact that there is a ready market for the *goods*: that is, if one scrap dealer refuse to buy, another could buy them. In spite of such factors, some of them go ahead to buy *connection goods* and copper wire while others resist the attempt. Those who purchase *connection goods* insist they only buy what people sell to them. They claim it is not good business practice to ask a client about the origin of their scraps. On the other hand, the ones who avoid the purchase of such goods take such stands in order to avoid Police arrest. 30year old Suku Tanko is one of such persons who avoid shady deals.

“No I don’t buy connection goods or copper wire. Copper wire belong to the government and you can be arrested at any time if you have certain amount of it in your possession. As for connection goods, I identify it easily when I see it. Those who sell connection goods are always in a hurry and prepared to take any amount offered them. You can also observe that the supposed discarded metal may not be considered as scraps at all. When I find these traits, I simply tell them I don’t have money to buy. I do that to avoid troubles”.



Fig. 2: Gathered Scrap at a scrapyard

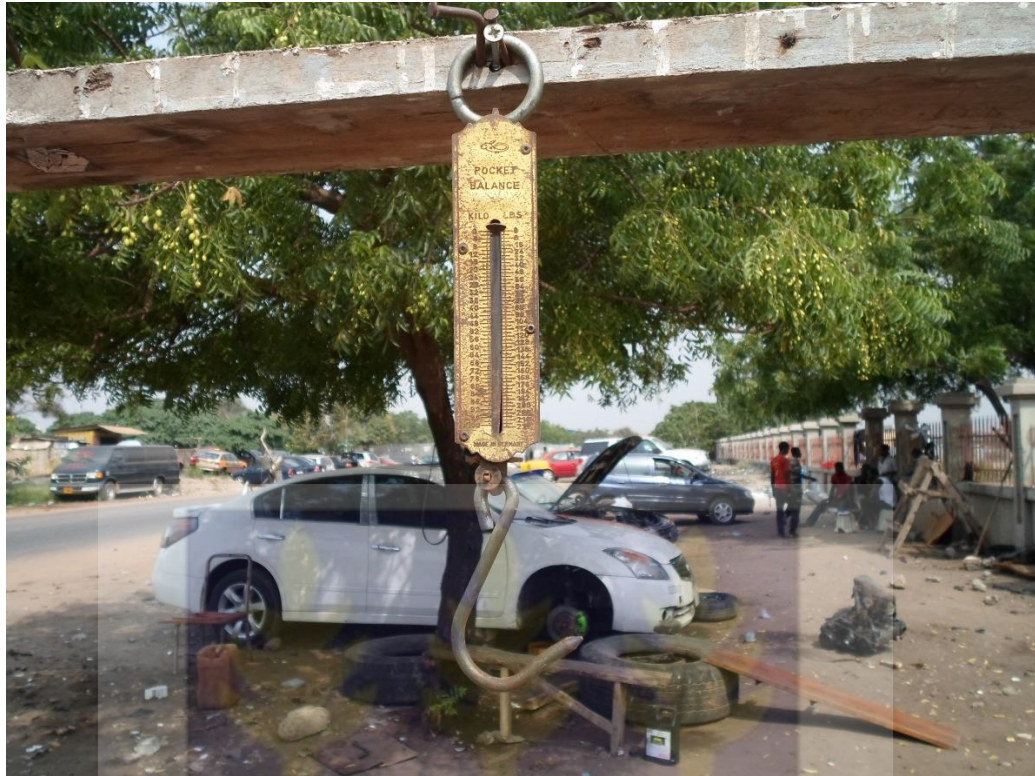


Fig. 3: Weighing Scale hanging on an erected stand at s scrapyard



Fig. 4: A scrapyard boy weighing scraps



Fig. 5: Push Truck



Fig. 6: A locally fabricated Wheelbarrow

CHAPTER FIVE

SURVIVING ON SCRAP PROCEEDS, SOCIAL RELATIONS AND FUTURE ASPIRATIONS

5.0 Introduction

This chapter provides further analysis and discussion of the data collected. Particularly, discussions are centred on how proceeds from scrap dealing have impacted the lives of scrap dealers. It assessed the public's perceptions of scrap dealers and also the relationship that exist between scrap dealers and the Police and City Council Guards from the different social contexts of Tema and Ashaiman respectively. The chapter furthermore explored the aspirations of scrap dealers and other emerging issues from the field study.

5.1 Scrap Proceeds

Considering the extent to which proceeds from scrap dealing have impacted the lives of scrap dealers depends on the category of scrap dealing and the extent to which the individual scrap dealer has been involved in the trade. This is the case because it determines one's level of earning as a scrap dealer. However, in spite of these factors, the scrap dealers within the TAM subscribed to the fact that ever since they embarked on this business, life has improved and that they earn enough money to take care of their daily needs and beyond.

The general notion gathered from the fieldwork has been one of the feeling of relief and assurance that at any time they have a job. Some in reminiscence, lamented their long ordeal of joblessness and how they lived in the past without the opportunities that scrap dealing avails them today. Besides they would not need to "*write long applications*"²⁷ in search of non-existent jobs, neither would they need to join long queues in front of companies to work as factory hands for a meagre wage. No matter the category they fell

²⁷ "*Write long applications*" means to write many application letters.

into, they possess control over their job as scrap dealers and that brought them a great sense of relief.

In addition, the scrap dealers opined that proceeds from their business has been the main source of funds for their livelihood. Basic needs such as food, water, clothes, shelter, health, bath, toilet, education of their children, etc.; others are mobile phones, transport, social and religious obligations, etc., are all provided for from the earning derived from scrap dealings. Out of their earnings, again some married scrap dealers provides start-up capitals for their wives to start petty trading.

Furthermore, most migrant scrap dealers and sometimes those who have lived their entire lives in the TAM send remittances to their families and friends. According to most of the migrants scrap dealers who hailed from Tamale and its neighbouring villages, it is imperative to send money back home to their families at regular intervals to help take care of their parents, siblings and most often for their wives and children. It is a common phenomenon among most migrant scrap dealers to travel to places such as the TAM without their wives and children. While some send money back home on fortnight basis, others send money on monthly basis. Such remittances some explained, are to help provide for and alleviate the plight of their families left behind. They are also meant to take care of their siblings who are still in school so that they do not end up being school dropouts. The above analyses is confirmed by a submission made by a 24 year old scrap dealer during the fieldwork experience:

“Oh yes, I earn enough to cater for our feeding, rent, bathing, toilet, health, clothes, etc. It is out of the scraps proceeds that I got married and take care of my wife and daughter, pay my rent and everything. I also send money back home to Tamale to my mother and siblings. I take care of their schooling too. I send Gh¢400.00 every month to Tamale through MTN Mobile Money²⁸”.

²⁸ MTN Mobile Money is a locally run money transfer system in Ghana operated by MTN a mobile telecommunications networks operator.

Another unique feather the study revealed is the saving culture cultivated by most scrap dealers. Most of them engage in some form of savings, either personal savings in their rooms, with the informal micro savings schemes or with the banks. While the well-established ones (the Masters) may operate bank accounts for various reasons, often most scrapyards boys operate *Susu*²⁹ with the locally operated saving scheme. Most of them explained that they save in order to plough back the savings into their business even as they sought to augment their capital investment. Still others have invested their proceeds into property investments mostly in their places of origin. Some have built schools (Islamic Schools), built Mosques, houses and shops for rent. Others are into *Trotro*³⁰ and *Okada*³¹ business, etc. For most of these scrap dealers, scrap dealing has transform their status from an impoverished to an affluent one.

“This business is a very good one. I don’t regret being a scrap dealer at all. Even though I wear dirty clothes and carry scraps, it is worth the kind of money I receive from the scraps. We scrap dealers may not be respected here but we are also “somebody” (respected) in Tamale. I know of some of my friends here who have built houses, and provision and hardware stores. Some of them have Trotro buses that work for them. All these properties some of the people who don’t respect us in this town, don’t have. It is a good job and it pays”. (25year old scrap dealer)

5.2 Public Perceptions

The current situation of large scale scrap dealing (in terms of number of persons engaged in this occupation) as it pertains in the TAM is said to be a recent phenomenon. For some resident who took part in the study, the brand “Scrap dealers” is generally a distorted image. They held that what come to mind whenever scrap dealers are mentioned is an idea of negativity - crime, petty stealing and robbery, and in some cases public

²⁹ *Susu* in the local parlance means daily savings. It is a locally operated micro saving schemes operated by individuals within the informal sector. The *Susu* collector goes round to his or her clients to collect their daily savings. Each client saves according to their ability. Savings are closed at the end of a specified period, mostly by the close of the month.

³⁰ *Trotro* is a locally run public commercial transport business operated by individuals within the private sector.

³¹ *Okada* is a motorbike transport system operated by persons within the informal sector.

nuisance. Given the generalized media reportage on a number of occasions, such prejudices have to a large extent affected the relationship that exist between the public and the scrap dealers.

Asafo Kumah, is a 43year old fridge repairer who has lived in Tema all his life. He works from home and have encountered scrap dealers on many occasions. He collaborated the above account when he was asked to say what he knew about scrap dealers.

“I see a lot of scrap dealers in recent times. It didn’t use to be like this some time ago. In the past, no one even came to ask of discarded refrigerators let alone buy them. But the case is different now. They want to buy anything metal and when you don’t sell to them, they sneak in when you are not around to steal the items. So now we are careful about how we leave our items outside. Now scrap dealers are not scrap dealers anymore. Some of them are thieves”.

Akwesi Maame is a petty trader in Ashaiman who also works from home, and she said this about scrap dealers.

“Hmm, the boys who buy condemn items have become something else. Because of them, some of us don’t use items made of metals like plates, bowls or buckets anymore. We have resorted to using items made from plastic so they cannot be stolen. So though they can be our children, I don’t really like the way they carry themselves about”.

Information gathered indicate that almost every non-scrap dealer respondent an idea of who scrap dealers are, the work they do, and have encountered them in divers’ ways. Again, some respondents perceive that scrap dealers are mostly jobless young men - often persons from the Northern Region - who parade the city in search of scrap metal, car batteries, aluminium, condemn fridges, discarded TV sets and other electronics, etc., to buy or pick. Some perceive them as smokers and drug abusers, criminals, etc. Some section of the public especially mechanics and metal fabricators are also aware of the lucrative nature of the business. A 45 year old metal fabricator had this to say about scrap dealers:

“Most of them are smokers and junkies and they don’t use their money well. But a few of them really mean business. Those people are good. They do scraps to take care of their

families in the North. They buy cars, put up buildings, develop properties, establish video centres³², etc. at the North”.

Further, some the resident respondents are of the view that scrap dealers could not be insulated when pollution of the environment is mentioned. Even though on the surface, they may appear to be picking scrap metals from the streets, or carry the discarded refrigerators, TV set and other discarded electronic gadgets away from people’s homes, much of their activities leads to environmental pollution and degradation. They litter the surroundings where they dismantle their stuff with non-metal wastes from refrigerators, TV sets, computers and the other electronics. They also pollute the environment with the constant burning of car tyres and other cables which emit smoke and dangerous toxic waste into the air which poses threat to human life. For most of the residents, scrap dealers’ sole interest is to acquire scraps metals. All efforts are geared toward getting scraps, thus anything non-metal is not of importance to them. This is how a resident reacted to the question on the scrap dealers and the environment.

“Ah no! These boys don’t clean anywhere. Their only interest is to carry scraps and that’s all. It is not true that they clean the environment, if anything at all, they destroy it. The metal content is all they need. They dismantle, pick the metals and leave all others to litter the surroundings. They also burn all kinds of stuff to emit thick black smoke into the air. It is really dangerous”.

Again, the presence of scrap dealers within the communities have been described by most informants as a nuisance. To begin with, they constantly shout “scraps” “scraps” “scraps” and knock on doors and gates of people’s homes at odd times in search of scraps. Some lamented that scrap dealer’s incessant quest for scraps make it difficult for them to accept “No” for answer anytime they ask for scraps. In cases where residents offer to sell their scraps to scrap dealers, the former are cheated as the latter often temper with their

³² Video Centre also called “DSTV” is a locally erected cinema centre often a makeshift structure constructed with wood and mostly situated in a densely populated community. It is a place where movies and European football matches are shown.

scales or offer ridiculously lower prices. Some scrap dealers, residents cried, steal from their homes when they find out the homes are empty. They steal from car spare parts, constructional materials, shoes, remove clothes from drying lines, sewage covers, fabricated culvert metal covers on the roads and to anything metal they lay hands on. In some rare cases where residents confronts them about their missing items, they threaten or even attempt to fight them. A non-scrap dealer collaborated this account:

“Yes some of them are terrible. They can break into our container where we keep our tools to steal our welding machine, hammer, chisels, unweils, etc. and sell them for some little amount. The issue is that some of them are real thieves and so we are very wary of them. These people can steal from cooking utensils to metal cups, plates, coal pots, metal buckets, etc. Just try them with anything metal and you will see for yourself. When they walk, their eyes are wide open”. (45year old metal fabricator)

Thus for most residents, especially residents of Tema, scrap dealers’ continues stay in the communities is a threat to their peace and security. While others, mostly residents of Ashaiman, though are in agreement with the other respondents about the unruly behaviour of some scrap dealers believe such bad nuts are in the minority and as such those good ones who are in the majority be given the opportunity to earn a living. Still others cannot decide whether scrap dealer should have a guaranteed stay within the communities. A 27 year old resident of Tema contemplates on the decision about their continuous stay:

“I don’t know what to say again whether they must be allowed to look for scraps around or not. Or whether they are good or bad people. Because in one breath, you may perceive them as good people because they pick up unused refrigerators, scrapped car spare parts, etc. from our garages so they can make ends meet. Beside, these scraps feed the steel companies but most of them are thieves and considering the evils some of them inflict upon us, I think I don’t know what to say about them”.

The data gathered and the researcher’s field experience revealed that the nuance of opinions and perceptions that residents formed about scrap dealers could be informed by the environment in which residents lived and work. Most of the residents who lived in the well planned communities especially, were of the view that scrap dealers are criminals and

must be flushed out of the community. On the contrary, most residents of Ashaiman and some communities of Tema namely Manheam, Community One Site Two, Industrial Area, etc., which share similar characteristics like Ashaiman, even though acknowledge that some scrap dealers engage in criminal activities, were also of the view that scrap dealers are merely persons who for lack of “proper” jobs participate in scrap dealing for survival. It must be noted, however, that Tema unlike most part of Ashaiman is a well planned community with most of the houses walled and furnished with metal gates. Ashaiman on the other hand is more of a slam community than Tema and most of the people live in crowded compound houses with lots of families occupying small portions of land. Even though recent developments seem to give the township a phase lift, most parts of the community have an alarming growing slam rate. Each household in Tema do not share utilities like water, toilets, and electricity, while most residents of Ashaiman fetch water from a common standing pipes, patronise community toilets, most households’ shares common electricity metres and most persons spend the night in the open. Thus in Ashaiman, the poverty rate is high and to an extent very endemic; and most of the scrap dealers live in these communities. As a result, the residents of slum origin easily identify with the scrap dealers and as such very difficult to perceive them as criminals. Below are excerpts of some contrary opinions expressed by residents.

“These guys are criminals. They steal or spy on us for arm robbery gangs who operate within this vicinity. They pretend to be poor and hide under that covering to perpetuate evil. They steal spare parts, batteries, household items, etc.” (A resident of Tema).

“There was a time my car radiator got spoilt. I removed it and was waiting for a taxi to pick it to the mechanic workshop for repairs. Before I could realise, a scrap dealer had picked the broken radiator into his wheelbarrow. Why must we continue to stay with such guys?” (A resident of Tema).

“Scrap dealers are not criminals at all. They are just like us. We know most of them. Not all of them engage in stealing and criminal activities. The junkies among them are the thieves. But there are some good ones. The hammer, jerks and pinch bars that are found in their sacs may not be meant for stealing. Sometimes they buy or find the scraps and put them in their sacs. Once they are arrested, a suspect may be charged for any crime”. (A resident of Ashaiman).

5.3 Law enforcement agencies and scrap dealers

The Police and City Guards are essentially law enforcers who ensure the peaceful co-existence between persons within their jurisdiction. They serve as the custodians and enforcers of the law and ensure that community bye-laws are adhered to by the citizenry. For these agencies to be up to speed with happenings, they must be abreast with most of the stakeholders, prominent and identifiable groups and persons within their jurisdiction. As such, the presence and the activities of scrap dealers are easily recognizable by the authorities. Both the Police and the City Guards, the study revealed, are well aware of the operations of the scrap dealers in the metropolis. While the City Guards appear to have little or no issues with the scrap dealers, the Police on the other hand, claim to have difficulties in curbing the alleged criminal charges level against some of them on daily basis.

(An Assistant Superintendent who happens a District Crime Officer, a position he has occupied for 4years, offers the following insights.)

“On daily basis, countless suspected criminal cases involving scrap dealers are brought before me. Shops are broken into; stolen items are found in their scrapyards; items not discarded are carried away as scraps; car spare parts and engines are stolen from mechanic workshops; items are picked up from residential communities without asking for them, etc.”

Again, the responses from the City Guards and the observations by the researcher suggest that the City Guards were more interested in issues regarding income generation

for the Municipal Assemblies than monitoring the activities of scrap dealers. Most scrap dealers in Tema recounts that it is only the TMA Task Force that though rare, pay periodic visit their scrapyards.

“We know about the activities of the scrap dealers. However, our men do not have problems with them. As you can see, we ensure that vehicular traffic is well controlled, that cars pay their levies to the Assembly and that market women pay the tolls to ensure effective running of the Assembly.” (An Officer from the City Guards).

The Police, according to the study, claimed they are aware of the activities of scrap dealer as well as the reasons for which these young men meander their way through the streets in search of scrap metals. The researcher observed that, the nature of scrap dealing in the metropolis is such that scrap dealers and the Police encounter each other almost on daily basis. The Police, according to the Crime Officers of two Police Stations in the study area, are aware scrap dealers collect scrap metals to sell to the steel factories. They are also in the known that not all scrap dealers are criminals. Again, they recognise that the genuine scrap dealers hesitate in buying or do not buy “*connection goods*”. These understandings notwithstanding, the Police largely hold that most scrap dealers are intruders, criminals, arm robbers, petty thieves and have gross disregard for the law. These negative conclusions, the researcher reckons, could be drawn as a result of the numerous daily criminal suspected cases involving scrap dealers that are brought before them.

Further, the Police alleges that sometimes the hour of the day in which scrap dealers operate and the kind of items found on them when arrested as suspects make a strong case for the initial suspicions.

The account of 49year old DSP supports this analysis. She has been serving in the Ghana Police for the past 23years. She was the Crime Officer in one of the Police Stations in Tema when the study was conducted - a position she’s held for 6years. And she shares on the her encounters with scrap dealers.

“Scrap dealers are seen early morning or hot afternoon in the residential areas when the whole place is quiet and there is no one at home. They are spotted carrying sacs with screwdrivers inside. They invade people’s homes under the pretence of looking for scraps.

When they find the house vacant, they tend to use the screwdrivers to unlock the doors to enable them enter to steal. Upon their arrest, they always say they are not there to steal but upon a Police search, you find the screwdrivers they use to unlock the doors on them. Others also use multiple keys, hammer or jerks to expand the burglar-proof on the windows or front doors so that the smallest person in the gang can enter into the house. They steal laptops, TV sets, radios, etc. Those who claim to knock on doors do so to first ascertain if someone is present in the house. It is when they get a response that they ask if those in the house have scraps for sale. Granted there was no response, they will operate as usual. There are more than 10 cases here at the moment involving scrap dealers, out of which we have 2 pending trials. 1 person has since been jailed and sent to Nsawam Prisons.

It could be deduced from the field data that the Police believe that as far as the activities of some scrap dealers are concerned, they could be considered to be a threat to the peace and security enjoyed in the metropolis even though they may not be the harden criminals. They maintain that this could hold if scrap dealers continue to disregard community bye-laws and road traffic regulations – for instance pushing trucks in the middle of the road; invading people’s homes and steal valuable items. The researcher, however, observed that even though the Police (both in Tema and Ashaiman) agree that some scrap dealers partake in criminal acts the tone of punishment and the posture taken by the Police in Ashaiman in prosecuting scrap dealers suspected to be criminals is more lenient than the one adopted by the Police officers Tema.

The District Crime Officer from one of the Police Stations in Ashaiman. He holds the rank of Assistant Superintendent. He’s served 23years in the Ghana Police and 3years at his current post, and he comments as follows:

“I acknowledge they are also a threat to the community but if you look at the number of persons plying this trade, you will realise that only a few of them are involved in such criminal activities. Even in the case of those arrested, you can see from their family background when you look at the poor relatives who come to bail them that, these boys are only trying to be smart. They are not real criminals but only trying to survive. In spite of this, we still apply the law in a way if their conducts is considered criminal. But we rarely process them to the courts since most of the people here consider the court process as a waste of time.”



Fig. 7: Some items found on some suspected scrap dealers during an arrested.

5.4 Scrap dealers and future aspirations

In planning for ones future, decisions taken are carefully thought through and possible risk factors aligned in order to ensure a successful career or future. Scrap dealers in taking decisions about their future could be said to be motivated by such innate qualities in their bid to become successful. There were varied views as to what the future held for most of the scrap dealers the researcher engaged during the field study. 11% of scrap dealers interviewed for reasons of perceived difficulties in searching for a new satisfying job would continue to engage in scrap dealing for the rest of their lives. Another 11% would want to stop the job at any time because their expectations have not been met. The remaining 78%, the majority of scrap dealers the researcher interacted with, have projected a number of years they want to engage in scrap dealing in order to raise capital for other future businesses.

The category of scrap dealers who would want to remain in their job for the rest of their lives hold that scrap dealing is a lucrative business but most importantly it offers them

the flexibility to live their lives couple the needed job satisfaction. Some of them also anticipate the cumbersome process to search for a new job, new clients and new work environment, work culture and challenges. Thus such persons make every effort to maximise profit, expand and establish themselves in the trade. These persons tend to have more than one scrapyards.

“I will continue to do scraps as long as it is lucrative. I will be in this business forever and ever because it is difficult to find a new job that gives maximum satisfaction”.
(24 year old scrap dealer)

The second group of scrap dealers are those who claimed expectations have not been met and may quit the job at any time. These were mostly scrapyards boys who had to roam the city in search for scraps. They claimed the business in recent times is not yielding the expected gains as hitherto enjoyed by their masters. That cost of discarded items quoted by owners are very high and as a result they make little gains when they get back to the scrapyard to weigh their goods at the close of business.

“The business is ‘spoilt’. It is not like it used to be. I don’t get enough money like I used to. So I can quit any moment from now. These days residents price their condemn items too high. For instance, a discarded coal pot may be priced Gh¢5.00 instead of Gh¢1.00. Times have changed. We are still here because we don’t have anywhere to go to at least in the interim”. (23 year old scrap dealer)

The third category which represented the majority view of scrap dealers may want to save money and start a new business. Most of such persons projected to engage in scrap dealing for the next 6 to 10 years. It is anticipated that much savings would have been accrued during this projected period.

“At least I have given myself 10 years in this business. I have spent the past 8 years working as a scrap dealer and have graduated through the ranks to be where I am today. Insha Allah in the next coming 2 years, I will quit and start a new business”. (39 year old scrap dealer)

For persons within this set, saving their money with reputable financial institutions and investing in properties like stores, etc. that could possibly set the tone for future business

often become their priority. Depending on the number of years a scrap dealer had worked, the opportunities that had come their way, the money accrued and the person's interest, most of them would want to operate transportation business, provision or hardware stores, etc. on a rare occasion, some of them would want to pursue their education.

“Depending on my finances, I would want to engage in another business in the future but not scraps. Possibly, I may operate a transport business, a provision or hardware store at the North”. (25year old scrap dealer)

“I have built stores in Tamale. I built 2 stores. I want to fill them with provisions and let my wife go back to manage it. I have built a fully furnished 3 bedroom self-contain house where we will move in, in the next 2 years. I will write private exams and go back to school since I left school for the past 10years. My aim is to become an Agriculture Engineer, Insha Allah”. (39year old scrap dealer)

When asked if scrap dealers had any succession plan for their children, siblings or close relations to succeed them in their work in the future, all scrap dealer respondents except one person responded in the negative. Many of them recounted the difficult and energy demanding nature of the job. For some others, the dangers involve and the health hazards, the public ridicule and the constant Police harassment demotivate make scrap dealing unattractive. Alternatively, most of them propose to offer their children and siblings the needed support in acquiring the best form of education.

“No please. I would not allow them to go through the financial difficulties I have been through. I will put pressure on them to pursue their education. I will provide them with all the necessary support they would need. It is over than 10 years since I completed secondary school and granted I had support, I would have been somewhere by now”. (39years old scrap dealer)

“No. I won't allow them. As I do this work, my siblings are in school. We have attended school to a level our parents cannot take care of us again. I now do this work in order to take care of my siblings. Before I stop, they would have attained tertiary education. Actually, we suffer a lot in this job. I know if I struggle, I can put a stop to the poverty in my family. I can't stop it completely, I can minimize it”. (25year old scrap dealer)

“No I would not allow any of my children to engage in scrap dealing. Because this work strips you of your dignity. No one respects you if you are a scrap dealer. We are doing it because the times calls for it. When time changes, one must change”. (23year old scrap dealer)

Even in the case of those who would want their children and close relations to succeed them as scrap dealers in the future, they vow to first offer them the best education while at the same time encourage them to go into scrap dealing since it is a well-paying business.

“Yes I will let my children become scrap dealers. First, I will make my male children attend school but I will encourage them to go into scrap business because it really pays. You see, when you are educated, you do things differently. So their scrap dealing will be different and they will be their own bosses”. (24year old scrap dealer)

5.5 Scrap dealers speak

An African proverb states *“until the lion tells his side of the story, the tale of hunt will always glorify the hunter”*. Such could be the underpinning motivation that made scrap dealers tell their stories passionately from personal viewpoints. The study revealed that for most scrap dealers, the decision to go into scrap dealing goes back to the times when they struggled to earn a living with no ray of hope. They recounted the initial rough stages of their career when they underwent apprenticeship by pushing trucks on the hot scourging sun through the city. It was a totally new life experience as most of them were new to the hash, complex, expensive and stressful urban life. They narrated stories of how on different occasions they experienced loss of capital, Police arrests, public ridicule, etc. But in the midst of these, as most of them reminiscent, they have endured the difficulties and are successfully negotiating their lives out of poverty.

“I remember I did not just come to the urban centre by default. My brother worked at Max Mart at 37. I was in Tamale in my final year in SHS in 2002. I took the private exam in 2003 and after my brother called to inform me he had a job for me in Accra. I came to Accra because I had no job back in Tamale after school. I was employed by a woman as a gardener in her house at East Legon. I worked for 6 months and later decided to quit and join the scrap dealers. I quit the job because the pay was ridiculously low. Besides when I informed my madam I wanted to go back to school, she did not agree to my request. She wanted me to stay in her house. So I quit because my aim was to save and go back to

school. I encountered a lot of difficulties when I started this job. All my savings was Gh¢150.00. I rented a push truck and employed the services of one scrap dealer who knew the terrain and how to purchase scraps. Later, I lost my capital when the tonnage price was reduced. At that time, I really suffered. I lost respect as I had to resort to all sorts of menial scrap jobs in order to gain a working capital all over again. In the process, I lost respect from my classmates who saw me as a dropout and a criminal. But most of us scrap dealers are genuine people who have done a lot of good things for ourselves and our communities. Some of us are in transport business, others have built Islamic schools, while others have built houses for rent, etc. I know of some doctors, Police Officers and managers who have invested their money into scrap business. They share the profit with the scrap dealers after every load. But my hard work has paid. I have two scrapyards, one in Accra and the main one in Tema". (37year old scrap dealer)

Others also recounted their positive and negative experiences as scrap dealers. The experiences differed for the different scrap dealers.

"Sometimes I chanced on a good person who offered his scrapped engine and lots of scraps for free. I made a lot of money that day. But there are times I roam the whole city without having a piece of scrap. Other times, I buy scraps and run a loss after weighing". (Scrapyard boy)

"I was once arrested over the purchase of copper wire. I had to pay over Gh¢2,100.00 before my release from the Police Cells. I also recount how once I bought some goods worth Gh¢5,000.00 and made a profit of Gh¢3,700.00 after sales". (Scrapyard Master)

On all the various platforms that researcher interacted with the scrap dealers, one major theme that became more pronounced was their reaction to the perceptions by some sections of the public, the media - both print and electronic, and the Police held about them. Scrap dealers believe they have been misrepresented, branded as criminals and perpetrators of most wrong doings in the neighbourhoods, and in some cases, they are considered a public nuisance. However, they want the entire world to know they are not criminal.

"In fact some people like us but most people don't like us. For those who don't like us, I don't really know their reasons. But I don't also know them. Granted I can see what in their minds on their faces, I will ask them why they don't like us. But for some other persons too, they say we are thieves and are involved in criminal activities. But I tell you the truth, we are have genuine scrap dealers and we have some criminal ones among us. The criminals are the junkies. They only look for the easy way out to get money to buy 'snuff"

(cocaine). They don't carry money on them when they go in search of scraps. They only pick the ones in the open or steal metals and other things they find. For us the real scrap dealer, we buy the scraps when we go out. We bargain and when you agree to our price, we will buy". (26year old scrap dealer)

"The public must know that we only buy discarded metal in order to recycle them. The scraps we buy are melted and used by the steel factories for the manufacture of iron rods. We the same Ghanaians use them to build our houses. So why should you harass or insult me when I come to ask to buy your scraps? Meanwhile, those 'old old metals' would not be of any use again" (25year old scrap dealer)

"The people must know we are not 'yawa' (useless) persons. That being a scrap dealer doesn't make me a bad person. I am a human being like all other persons and that working as a scrap dealer has made me a successful person". (24year old scrap dealer)

"Some of them relate well with us but because of the allegations of stealing and criminal charges against us, they do not want to relate with us again. But not all scrap dealers are thieves. As our elders say, 'you can tell a ripe corn by its look' so if you see my personality, you can tell the kind of scrap dealer I am. There are some criminals who pretend to engage in scrap dealing. The Police must look for such persons and not us". (27year old scrap dealer)

"Hmmm (a deep sigh), sometimes when the residents especially see you coming towards their direction, they get inside their houses and close their gates. Others will not even respond to you when you greet them. Their behaviour strangely anytime they see us" (25year old scrap dealer)

5.6 Expectations from Government

The Ghanaian economy even though plagued by many difficulties and citizens complain of hash economic effects has experienced tremendous growth and expansion in the informal sector as most persons have become innovative in their quest to survive the hardships. The informal sector has been touted the engine of growth by succeeding government officials. Successive governments in their bid to develop and expand the economy have designed policies, offered incentives, etc. Further, programmes such as youth in agriculture, youth in ICT, SADA, etc. were rolled out to curb youth unemployment. Governments have invested massive resources into these programmes in order to ensure their successfully implementation. However, scrap dealers are of the view that successive governments have failed to recognize the important role they play in the

informal sector. They hold the view that they are not mentioned anytime issues concerning funding and policy interventions on the informal sector and the macro economy as a whole are being considered.

“We receive no support from the state. Most people with private businesses have benefited from the government. We hear from the radio stations that government have reduced their taxes, given them free land at the Free Zone Area at the industrial area. Even foreigners enjoy these opportunities but not us even though our work is important. We provide raw materials for the steel companies to produce iron rods so government must help us so we can supply them with more scraps. If we are to stop working today, the steel companies will fold up” (30year old scrap dealer).

Some are of the view that government has not really assessed the role of scrap dealing as a medium of curbing the unemployment menace that has plagued the nation as a whole; that many young unemployed men have resorted to scrap dealing for livelihood.

“I think if the government and the ministers know how many young people engage in scrap dealing and how much money is involved in scrap picking, they will know that the scrap industry is also solving job problems in the country” (25year old scrap dealer).

Scrap dealers hold the view that despite the non-recognition for the great work of saving the nation of importing raw materials to feed steel factories, they are not given any tax rebate, exemptions or incentives to motivate them in their work. Instead, they assert, that government represented by the minister, the Police and the general public tag them as criminals and implicate them in any criminal act that takes place in the neighbourhoods where they operate. But worst of all government’s single action of declaring a ban on scrap export has been the most unfavourable decision against the scrap dealers ever³³. They explained that the export companies bought scraps at good rates and paid promptly. Again, exporters bought heavy metals such as caste iron, engine blocks, etc. which gave their goods enough weight that subsequently guaranteed good tonnage weight and thus good money at the end of every transaction. They recount how local steel companies have been

³³ It must be noted that the rationale for the Government of Ghana’s ban on the export of scrap metal was to preserve scrap metal for local industries.

overwhelmed in recent times by flight of overloaded trucks of scrap parked at the various weighing booths waiting for their turn. This phenomenon, they held, when continued for a long time would collapse the scrap dealing industry and government must take immediate steps to save the situation.

In that regard, they recommend that government recognize scrap dealing as a major outlet in curbing the problem of unemployment in the country. As a result, concerns of scrap dealers must also be prioritized anytime legislations and policies concerning the informal sector, etc. are being enacted. Government must exercise control over the sector by implementing policies that seek to regulate the tonnage rate. They expect the state to offer them incentives such as loans to beef up their capital and tax rebate anytime they sell their scraps. Further, they must be offered tools such as wheelbarrows, push trucks, etc. However, their most important and urgent need is for government to lift the ban on sale of scraps to export agents. They believe that this appears to be the only solution to the dwindling fortunes of the once very lucrative business. It will also provide renewed confidence to those scrap dealers who no longer practice the trade to come back.

“We don’t receive any help from the government. The government says scrap dealers are violent people. But that might not be entirely true for all of us. When the government doesn’t do the right thing, we will let them know. They say we talk too much violence and that is why they band export”. (24year old scrap dealer)

“Please all we just want from the government is to allow the foreigners, the exporters to start buying the scraps again. Let me tell you, scrap dealers, we have the money in Ghana. When we have good money, the economy will be good”. (25year old scrap dealer)

“Government does not help us in any way. If anything at all, it is only killing the business. But we want government to support the scrap dealers financially. Also, the government must regulate the pricing of scraps. The government stopped exporters in order to allow Ghanaian companies to get raw materials for the manufacture of iron rods. But they don’t pay well and they don’t have the money to pay. What we want government to do is to let the Ghanaian steel companies pay the same amount and timely as the exporters do. Exporters don’t reject caste and engine blocks but the Ghanaian companies do. Why should I sell to exporters if Ghanaian companies accept all scraps?” (39year old scrap dealer)

“I want you to interview the Minister, Honourable Haruna³⁴ and find out why he banned the export of scraps. He is one of us but I don’t understand why he want to destroy our business. More than 80 to 90% of scrap dealers are from the Northern part of Ghana. Southerners don’t do scraps. Ask him for us”. (24year old scrap dealer)

5.7 Overview of the scrap dealing system in the TAM

To grasp a deeper understanding of the activities of the scrap dealers in the TAM, the following provide an overview of the actors and scrap dealing as a whole.

The field work³⁵ revealed two major groups of scrap dealers who bare the same name but with different orientations. The first group of scrap dealers are those who often own large scrapyards and buy discarded metal equipment from industries. They are also sometimes invited to bid for discarded metal equipment when factories are being auctioned, closed down or when industries replace their old machinery. This group of scrap dealers sell their scraps as spare parts to small scale industries; and the metal plates to small scale metal workers engaged in locally fabricated metal works like blacksmiths, door locks and hinges, etc. As explained, this category of scrap dealing require huge financial capital and sometimes support from financial institutions.

The second group of scrap dealers are the subject of this study. They often own small scrapyards and buy the last resort of discarded scrap metal that hardly have any reuse value except to be sold to the steel factories. They roam the industrial areas, city centres, residential areas, workshops, etc. in search of discarded metal. Though could be capital intensive, it does not require that huge capital as in the case of the former group. It has easy entry point with virtually little or no training to deal in scraps in this latter group. Within this category there exist different players. It comprise the Scrap Agents, Scrapyard Owners and Itinerant Scrap dealers and Scrapyard boys.

³⁴ Honourable Haruna Idrissu was then the Minster of State in charge the Ministry of Trade and Industry.

³⁵ The source of this information is the data collected for study in February 2015 within the Tema-Ashaiman metropolis, the study area for this project.

Scrap Agent also known as the export agents are the middlemen who front for the steel companies or the export companies that buy scraps for export to China and India. Their duty is to bargain for a good price for their “employers” and they are paid a commission after a deal is struck. Scrap agents are mostly persons who have graduated from scrapyards boy to owning a scrapyard, often well-known within their circles.

Scrapyard Owner is also called in their circles *Master*. He owns the scrapyard which is often situated on a street corner, and unused land, lands around the refuse dump or containers, abandoned uncompleted buildings, etc. Most scrapyards contain a scale for weighing, push trucks and a makeshift shed. The Master provides the scrapyard boys money and push trucks and they go out in search for scraps to buy. At the close of day, the scrapyard boys sell their wares to the Master who then pay the difference of the money to the boys.

Scrapyard boys often work with their *masters* who pay them daily based on scraps weighed in a day. They are not bonded to a particular scrapyard. They can work with any Master at any time and they can decide to work or not to. However, the convention has been that most scrapyard boys regularly attach themselves to a particular scrapyard.

The Itinerant scrap dealers are those who could be described as freelance scrap dealers. They push a locally fabricated trolley (also commonly called within their circles *wheelbarrow*) specially made from the gas pipe tubes found on the back of refrigerators. It is welded in a square-shape with two long handles and rolls on two motorbike tires, one on each side of the square-shaped box and supported on two long handles. As the name suggests, they move freely across all parts of the city in search of discarded scraps. Some of them gather their scraps until they have the tonnage they require; others also sell to scrapyard owners at the close of each day. A unique feature of this group of scrap dealers, the study revealed, is that they are mostly migrant nationals of Niger (commonly called

Zammrama) and Mali (also commonly referred to as *Gaogao*) and or their descents who migrated to Ghana for generations. Their predominant occupation has been the buying of discarded bottles. They were known in the communities as *Koleba*. Some of these migrants also operate mechanised fuel stations mostly in the villages or deprived suburbs.

Thus for the purposes of this study, the term scrap dealers will apply to the second group of scrap dealers described above who go about the nooks and corners of the city in search of scraps for livelihood.

5.7.1 Citing a Scrapyard

Scrapyards are where scrap dealers gather their scraps when they acquire them. It is one of the basic requirement when a scrap boy graduates into a Master; or when a prospective scrap dealer who has his start-up capital decides to become a scrap dealer. The ground used for a scrapyard could be rented or taken with or without permission. It is rented when a verified owner shows up at the site or when scrap dealers make explicit request. But mostly they situate the scrapyard on an unused land or abandoned buildings without permission. All that is required is to keep the surroundings tidy at all times. Citing a scrapyard is based on the closeness to possible scrap sources. For those whose scrapyards are located outside the action area, they move to the city centres where they meet to dismantle scraps. Such places are not scrapyards.

“This is the city centre and we don’t keep our scraps here. This is where people can see us. We dismantle our scraps here but carry them away to our scrapyards situated outside the city centre in the evening when we close. We didn’t rent this place neither did we ask anyone before occupying the area. But we pay Lanpo (market toll³⁶) to TMA just like the market women do. However, we have been to the TMA and the Assemblyman’s offices just last month to inform them that we occupy this place temporarily”. (34year old scrap dealer)

³⁶ Market Tolls are paid by all persons who sell at the market to the Assemblies. It is one of the sources of Internally Generated Funds (IGF) used by the Assembly for development purposes.

5.7.2 Labour Force

The labour force of scrap dealers involve itinerant scrap dealers, scrapyards, boys, Masters and scrap agents. The activities of these group of people can be classified as informal. They do not follow any regulation and are not registered with any statutory government agency thus they do not directly pay taxes.

5.7.3 Working Hours

The working hours of scrap dealers differs from person to person, however, most of them work between 8 to 12 hours daily. Some scrap dealers the nature of their work demands that one works from sunrise to sunset as long as his strength can permit. While most of them work from Monday to Saturday because most outlets where scraps are sourced are closed on Sundays, some few work on Sundays. In addition, some scrap dealers who are Muslims break from their usual schedule and go for Friday prayers at the Mosque, while others dedicate the whole Friday to Allah.

“I can work the whole 24hours a day. But I don’t buy scraps in the night because the night be risky. You don’t know the kind of goods people bring to you at night. One other thing is that I don’t miss my Friday Mosque” (25year old scrap dealer).

5.7.4 Amount of scraps collected

There was a common agreement between informants concerning the average scrap metals collected in a week. Most of them collected between 1 to 2 tons per week depending on the availability or luck³⁷ as they put it. Those who buy from industries collect between 5 to 6 tons weekly also depending on their ability to buy. They reckon that measuring the amount of daily scraps collected since one cannot tell when the day really ends for a scrap dealer. However, by the close of Saturdays, one can be almost certain of gathered scraps. The researcher’s participation in scrap dealing also confirms this assertion.

³⁷ When

5.7.5 Seasonal Variations

Even though scraps metal, generally have become a scarce item in recent times, scrap dealers who go out in search of it often collected substantial amount of scraps at the close of a day. This, however, could not be said about all seasons. Scrap dealers lament that the raining season normally between the months of June and July, they register low output. They assert that the nature of their work demands a good weather condition since it will be difficult pushing a truck in the rains.

(23year old itinerant scrap dealer's account confirms the above assertion)

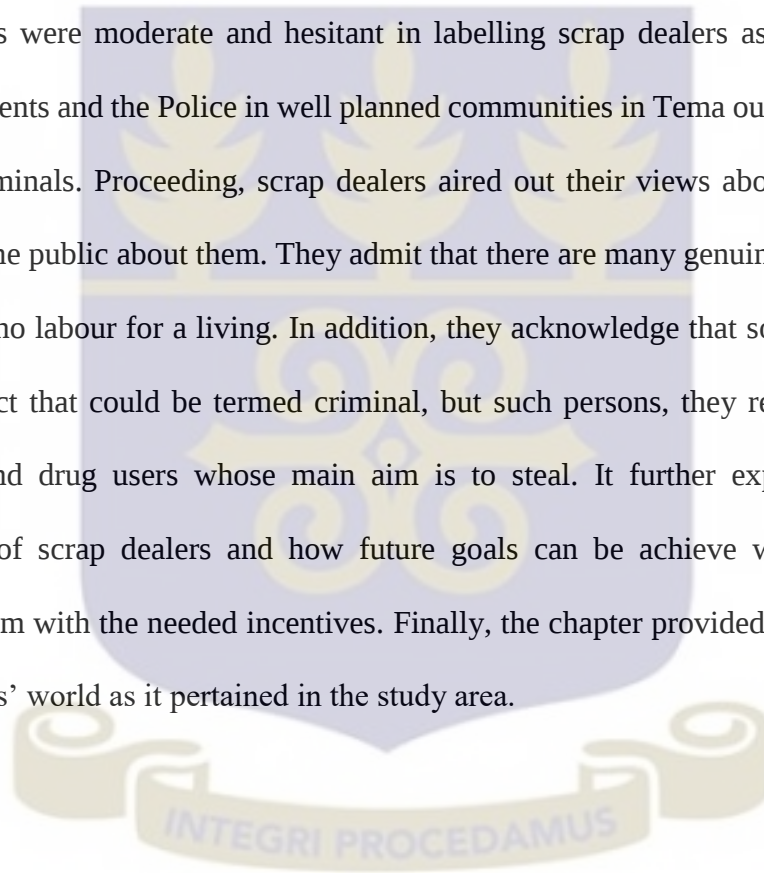
“The scrap dealing work is such that one had to push a truck the whole day searching for scraps, so we need a good weather to work. We get a lot of scraps when the weather is dried because you can go round to a lot of places. But when it rains, it is difficult to push the truck on the muddy road. Even the scrap owners won't come out to sell their scraps to you”.

5.8 Summary

This chapter ends the presentation and discussion of field data collected on scrap dealing as it takes place within the TAM. The results indicate that scrap dealers are knowledgeable individual actors, who freely and fully consented to the picking of scrap metal for livelihood. The decision to go into scrap dealing was based on the individual's quest for survival vis-à-vis an evaluation of his resources and the opportunities that accrued to him at a particular time. It revealed that there is easy entry into and exit from scrap dealing. Persons who decide to become scrap dealers may either join scrap gangs (often through recommendation); or be 'employed' to work at a scrapyards; or start scrap dealing by himself using his own start-up capital. The actual work of scrap collection, sorting, loading and sales were dully presented. The data also established the risks and the gains involved in the industry.

Further, it featured how scrap dealers use the proceeds that have been realised from the sale of scraps. It delved into how various scrap dealers use their gains. While some of

them plough back their profits, others invest in property acquisition, and still others save for a new job in the future. The chapter also explored the different public perceptions held by members of the general public. It was revealed that for the most part, the public perceive scrap dealers as criminals. In a similar vein, the Police also concluded that some scrap dealers are criminals but emphasized that comparing their number, a large number of them are genuine. There was, however, a tweak to the whole notion of scrap dealers being tagged as criminals. It is observed that both residence and law enforcement agents from the slum communities were moderate and hesitant in labelling scrap dealers as criminals, while mostly residents and the Police in well planned communities in Tema out rightly condemn them as criminals. Proceeding, scrap dealers aired out their views about the perception formed by the public about them. They admit that there are many genuine scrap dealers in the TAM who labour for a living. In addition, they acknowledge that some scrap dealers engage in act that could be termed criminal, but such persons, they reveal, are already criminals and drug users whose main aim is to steal. It further explored the future aspirations of scrap dealers and how future goals can be achieve when government provides them with the needed incentives. Finally, the chapter provided an overview of a scrap dealers' world as it pertained in the study area.



CHAPTER SIX

SUMMARY, CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

6.0 Introduction

The study thus examined the everyday life of scrap dealers in the Tema-Ashaiman metropolis (TAM), arguably the country's largest industrial hub and harbour city. Further, it explored how scrap dealers put the proceeds from scraps sales to use, both in the present and in the future. It also studied their relationship with the general public and the law enforcement agencies. The study was carried out within the purview of the following specific objectives:

- To establish the socio-demographic background of the scrap dealers and identify the driving factors that lead them into this occupation.
- To trace the activities of scrap dealing and the stages involve up to the delivery points.
- To establish the gains and risk involve in scrap dealing.
- To find out their future aspirations.
- To explore the interaction between scrap dealers, the general public and law enforcement agencies.

The study was carried out in the communities of Tema and Ashaiman. Tema is a well planned community built in the early 1950s when the Tema Harbour being was constructed. Ashaiman on the other hand is an island within the Tema Municipal Assembly. For the most part, Ashaiman could be considered a slam and a densely populated area. Generally, the inhabitants provide manual and unskilled labour for the industries in Tema. While Tema can boast of clearly laid out roads networks, water and electricity supply coupled with telephone network, etc., Ashaiman lacked proper roads, electricity and water supply to homes, proper infrastructure and housing development, etc.

The poor state of affairs make housing inexpensive compared to cost of housing in Tema. Thus Ashaiman provides a safe haven for most of the lower income earners as well as first time hustlers who throng the urban centres of Tema in search of greener pastures. Among the many migrants are also a large number of scrap dealers within the metropolis.

For the purposes of the study, mainly qualitative research design was employed. Further, non-probability sampling techniques namely purposive sampling, snowballing and saturation principle were adopted. Semi-structured interview guides, in-depth interviews, participant and direct observations aided in the data collection. Data gathered were transcribed, analysed and discussed based on the themes generated. In all, 32 respondents availed themselves for the study. This comprised scrap dealers, scrap agents, representatives from steel factories, members of the general public which included residents, mechanics, metal fabricators, etc. Others include the City Guards and the Police. This final chapter will seek to draw the curtains to a close on the entire work, by providing a summary of the key findings, draw conclusion and further outline recommendations drawn from the fallout of the study.

6.1 Summary of key findings

6.1.1 Socio-demographic Features

The quest for survival among most of the country's unemployed young persons due to the lack of employment opportunities nationwide, have been identified as the major driving factor that has led most young men especially migrants from the Northern Region to engage in scrap dealing in the TAM. The study revealed that even though some persons across the different ethnic divide in Ghana partake in scrap dealing, most scrap dealers within the study area are Dagombas who hail from Tamale and its environs. They are aged between 15years and 40years; and a few have attained formal education, that is, to the JHS and SHS levels. But large number of them have attained basic education be it formal or

Islamic (commonly called *Makaranta*). A few of the scrap dealers were identified as persons-who-lived-most-of-their-lives-in-the-TAM. 28% of them are Christians and 75% practice the Islamic faith. While 67% of them are married with families, most of them live separately from their wives. But some of the 33% who are unmarried have begotten one or more children.

6.1.2 Tracing Activities of Scrap Dealers

The study traced the activities of scrap dealers from scrap collection to sale points and when payments are made. It identified mostly migrants from Tamale and its environs as persons who engage in scrap dealing in the metropolis. The entry point into scrap dealing has been ascertained as porous and non-regulatory by default, for that matter it is easy for anyone to operate as a scrap dealer. That notwithstanding, person who engage into scrap dealing need to be very strong and must develop passion for the work. This is because of the strenuous and energy demanding nature of the work. Scrap dealers work from sunrise to sunset. They roam the nooks and corners of the city, workshops, industrial areas, etc. in search of scraps.

The quantity of scrap metals bought or collected at a time, the study revealed, is dependent a number of factors but primarily on the scrap dealer's ability to find the scraps. Other factors include the scrap dealer's ability to purchase scraps (which is largely determined by his category of scrap dealing); the seasonal variations, etc. Also depending on the category or quantity of scraps, a scrap dealer conveys scraps to the scrapyards with wheelbarrows, push trucks, motorbikes, taxis or KIA trucks. At the scrapyards, scrapyard boys weigh their scraps and render accounts at the end of each business day to their masters. There are also itinerant or freelance scrap dealers who unlike their scrapyard boys counterparts are not restricted from selling their scraps at any particular scrapyard; and walk-in customers who on their own bring their scraps to sell at the scrapyard.

A scrapyard owner or Master take steps to begin preparations for sales at the scrap factories when he ascertains that he has gathered enough scraps; or when he has no available space for scraps in his scrapyard; or when he has exhausted his capital. These steps involve the search for the steel company with best tonnage price on the market; the scrap agent with a strong bargaining power; the truck with the right capacity to transport the gathered scraps; etc. Upon arriving at the sales point, the truck load of scraps is handed over to the scrap agent who ensures it is weighed, offloaded and paid for.

6.1.3 Risks and Gains

Scrap dealing have proven to be a lucrative venture. However, income margins vary sharply with the different categories of scrap dealers. Scrapyard boys and itinerant scrap dealers earn income base on the quantity of scraps gathered daily while the Master who invests huge capital earns more than other scrap dealers. Whatever category one belonged to, it is established that scrap dealing provides essentially, a means for survival and beyond. While some scrap dealers have invested into procuring different properties, others are saving up capital to be invested in new businesses in the future. Like any other venture, scrap dealing has its fair share of risks. It ranges from daily injuries, health related problems, loss of capital, accidents, Police arrests, criminal tags by the general public, etc.

6.1.4 Future Aspirations

Almost all the scrap dealers shared the ambition to invest in some new and less stressful business in the future. Though they admitted the profitable nature of the scrap industry, they bemoaned the strenuous and energy demanding nature of the job, coupled with the discomfort of numerous Police arrests, public ridicule and disrespect. They also reckoned that over a long period, one may not be able to live up to the physical demands of the job. A few, however, reaffirmed their decision to continue to work as scrap dealers as long as their strength would permit.

6.1.5 Public Perception

The study revealed that the brand “scrap dealers” have been bruised. This according to the scrap dealers is due to the alleged criminal activities of some persons who parade themselves as scrap dealers. The researcher reckons that even though the media published generalized statements about scrap dealers, a section of the public interviewed confirmed the many alleged criminal acts some of them engage in. Their crimes ranged from petty stealing, purchase of *connection goods*, environmental pollution, gross disregard for road traffic regulations, public nuisance, to mention but a few. This is given credence by the Police who decried the crimes committed daily by some scrap dealers. For some members of the public as well as the Police, the movement of scrap dealers in the communities must be closely monitored so that those found engaging in criminal activities be severely made to face the full recourse of the law. In spite of the perceived summary agreement that some scrap dealers are criminals, a phenomenon that emerged during the analysis seek to portray that the residents and the Police in Tema describe scrap dealers as criminals. On the other hand those from Ashaiman and Maheam believe scrap dealers are persons who are struggling to survive on scrap proceeds and thus be treated leniently anytime issues concerning them arise.

6.2 Conclusion

The English adage “*necessity is the mother of all invention*” finds expression in the life of the young unemployed persons within the TAM who earn a living by picking scrap metals. Even though scrap dealing is not entirely a new phenomenon in the world (Emery *et al.*, 2000; Javaid and Essadiqi, 2003), reinventing the wheel in the face of the harsh economic conditions, unemployment, and limited opportunities, severed as an opium to solving the problem of poverty among some section of the unemployed within the metropolis. Scrap metals which hitherto has little or no value, have become the main source

of livelihood for the scrap dealers and a chain of persons. Scrap dealing has provided jobs for the many unemployed and unskilled migrants who have travelled to the metropolis in search of greener pastures. The informal economy literature provided a good basis for the understanding of the phenomenon. As characteristic of the informal economy, scrap dealing is easily entered into, mostly unregulated and unstructured; it requires little or no initial capital. It requires no elaborate training or apprenticeship. It is mostly subsistent, labour intensive and adopts appropriate technology in its operations. The SL framework's analysis offered a good grounding for the interpretation of how the scrap dealers survive in the difficult socioeconomic situations with the concentration on what they have (their physical strength, social networks, opportunities), vulnerabilities, assets, capabilities and strategies as well as everyday activities.

Their activities provide raw materials for the steel industry for the manufacture of iron rods which are used for building and developing the country's infrastructure and thus ensure the steel workers maintained their jobs³⁸. In addition, their activities also sought to revamp and improve on the operations of truck transport operators who due to the rickety nature of their trucks have almost been rendered non-operational. Other beneficiaries include the families of migrant scrap dealers who receive regular remittances through MTN mobile money transfer. Thus, it can be concluded from the above that scrap dealing have been very beneficial to the scrap dealers especially, and positively impacted the political, social and economic lives of the people.

The major actors within the industry include scrap dealers, scrap agents, exporters of ferrous metals, and steel companies. They are the immediate beneficiaries of proceeds

³⁸ The Chronicle Newspaper edition of reports are that, according to the minister Hon. Haruna Iddrisu, at least, 2,000 more workers are going to be employed in the industry. The nation, we gathered, is also going to save foreign exchange on the importation of billets from outside. <http://thechronicle.com.gh/gov-wont-lift-scrap-metal-exports-ban-iddrisu/> Accessed on 29/05/2015

from scrap dealing activities. The act of scrap dealing though a nuisance to the populace, serves as the lifeline to the various actors within the industry. The remote set of beneficiaries are the families of scrap dealers who receive regular remittances and as a result experience improved living status. Others include civil society who are the consumers of iron rods manufactured from scraps; and the government that is save from spending foreign exchange on the importation of billets for the manufacture of iron rods.

The researcher can establish from his interactions with the scrap dealers that scrap dealing is a tedious, difficult and energy demanding job. It comprises carrying heavy metals, pushing wheelbarrow or push truck loaded with scraps, etc. The work generally poses a lot health threats to the lives of players within the industry. Such threats include injuries, inhaling dangerous fumes, tetanus infections, as well as other related diseases. In addition, the scrap dealers, the major players within the industry face a lot of risk in their line of duty. This include frequent Police arrests, public ridicule and disrespect for their job, etc.

In spite of the rigorous and risky nature of the job, it also offers satisfactory rewards to the scrap dealers. First and foremost, it provides them with a job which enable them satisfy their basic needs and beyond. Some have extended financial support to their families in their bid to win them out of poverty, while others have acquired properties. All of these were made possible courtesy proceeds from the sale of scraps. It has also provided some scrap dealers enough savings for investing into different ventures in the future.

In conclusion, scrap dealing as it pertains in the TAM is a recent phenomenon that has proven to provide an alternative means of livelihood for most of the unskilled and unemployed persons, mostly migrants from the Northern Region of Ghana who have sojourned to the metropolis in search of a better life. In addition, it is perceived that scrap dealing industry has absorbed some of the country's unemployed youth. It also serves as a

source of supply for the raw materials for the steel factories. Overall, it stands to reason that genuine scrap dealing has many positives than negatives and thus must be encouraged.

6.3 Recommendations

The following recommendations are proposed for consideration:

- Scrap dealers must initiate the move for the formation of an association that can assist them pursue issues of their common interest. It will offer them a platform and a mouthpiece through which they can channel their grievances and vice versa. Among other things, they can liaise with the Police and sections of the general public to flush out the criminal from their midst.
- Government must recognize the activities of scrap dealing as an outlet in the reduction of unemployment among the youthful population. It must seek to enact and pursue policies that will see to the development of the sector. In addition, government can lead through any of its machinery, in organizing the scrap dealers on a common platform. This will provide the basis for government to recognize their need so as to supply them, monitor and regulate their activities, set up monitoring teams to ensure improved working conditions, and offer incentives when possible. Further, government can offer the organized scrap dealers some skill training that can afford them alternative means of livelihood in the future or in a situation when scraps run out.
- It is hereby proposed that based on participatory development³⁹ the informal sector concentrate on collecting, dismantling and segregating the scraps, while the formal sector processes the scraps generated. In doing this, the researcher proposes that

³⁹ Participatory development concept is proposed by Oteng-Ababioa and Forkuo Amankwaab (2014) in the case of the e-waste disposal model where the informal sector concentrates on the collection, disassembly and segregation, while the formal sector manages the upstream state-of-the-art processing requiring more capital and technology investment, and expertise.

the government can consider partnering the private sector to establish a “Scrap Bank”, a one stop centre for scraps metals in the country where local steel industries can purchase and sell scrap metal. That said, government can review the LI2201⁴⁰ partially to allow unused excess scrap metals be exported. This would aid grow the perceived ailing industry by absorbing all scraps at one point, regulating the pricing and ensuring proper code of conduct among stakeholders.

6.4 Proposed future study

Iron is very critical to many manufacturing industries, used vehicles, local metal fabricators, iron and steel industries. It is an important material required for the industrialization and development of a country. In the process of the production of steel and iron, scrap metals play a key role. It is the activities of the scrap dealers that provides raw materials for the iron and steel industries. Again, the recycle of scrap metals saves the environment from the indiscriminate disposal of iron waste. According to Emery *et al.* (2000), recycling scrap metal can be energy efficient. They held that approximately 1,000,000 kg of iron ore, 600 kg of coal and 54 kg of limestone are saved whenever a tonne of scrap metal is recycled. Thus recycling of scrap metals which has direct bearing with scrap dealing plays an important role in the process. As scrap dealing is gradually assuming a serious trend and an outlet for a sizeable number of young persons, especially within the urban centres across the country to earn a living, the researcher proposes a further study to

⁴⁰ According to the Daily Graphic online, the sale of scrap metals attracted soaring prices on the international market and thus resulted in the denial of scraps to local steel industries despite the ban on steel scrap from Ghana by the Ministry of Trade and Industry in November 2002. Parliament, on March 25, 2013 passed the LI2201 into law to make it an offence to export ferrous scrap metals. By this act, Ghana has joined Nigeria, Ivory Coast, Kenya, Cameroun and Zimbabwe to ban scrape metals. <http://www.modernghana.com/news/121962/1/ban-steel-scrap-exports.html>
<http://thechronicle.com.gh/gov-wont-lift-scrap-metal-exports-ban-iddrisu/> Accessed on 29/05/2015

cover many more areas so as to provide a better appreciation of the phenomenon. He believes it would arm policy makers with the needed resources.

The following study themes are hereby proposed for future studies:

- The field experience revealed that Agbogloshie,⁴¹ arguably the largest scrapyard and dismantling centre in Ghana is where ferrous and non-ferrous metals are gathered. It is proposed that an in-depth study conducted in the area would provide further resources into understanding this phenomenon.
- A study could be conducted to ascertain how a Public Private Partnership (PPP) in scrap dealing could change the face of the industry.



⁴¹ Agbogloshie is suburb of Accra the capital city of Ghana. It is a former wetland now turned into a dumping ground for e-waste and metal scraps. According to The Guardian, it is home to the largest e-waste dumping site. <http://www.theguardian.com/environment/gallery/2014/feb/27/agbogloshie-worlds-largest-e-waste-dump-in-pictures> Accessed on May 24, 2015

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APPENDIX – A

SCARP DEALING AND PARTS OF STUDY AREA IN PICTURES



Loading time



Scrap dealers rallying point in some part of the City Centre



Collecting scraps from the rallying point at the City Centre after business



A view of Tema central where scrap dealers operate



A scrap dealing with a Push Truck



An Itinerant scrap dealer



Scrap dealers burning cables



Truck load of scraps in traffic



Tema Steel one of the steel factories



A computerized weighing bridge

APPENDIX – B
SEMI STRUCTURED INTERVIEW GUIDE
A. IN-DEPTH INTERVIEW WITH SCRAP METAL DEALERS

Socio-Demographic Data:

1. Sex
2. Age
3. Nationality
4. If a Ghanaian, what Region do you come from?
5. What is Ethnic group?
6. Where do you live currently?
 - How long have you been staying in this town and place?
 - Why did you come to this town?
7. What is your Educational Qualification?
8. What is your Religious Affiliation?
9. Are you married?
 - How many children do you have?
 - What work does your wife do?
 - Do you have any dependents here?
 - Do you have other dependents?
 - Are they aware of the work you do?
 - How do you remit them?
10. How much do you earn per week?
11. What languages do you speak?

Factors Driving Them

12. Have you lived in other places before moving to Tema/Ashaiman?
13. Why did you decide to settle here?
14. How did you come here?
(Interrogate the places passed through, means of transport, and networks or assistance used).
15. Did you come here alone, or with family, relatives, friends?
16. Did you know anyone before coming here?

If yes, what is the relationship? (cousins/aunt/uncle etc)?
(Probe into ways in which the network has enhanced initial experiences or settling down)

Can you tell me the reason for leaving your home town and for relocating to this place? Reasons for leaving town of origin and the towns on the way to this place.
(Opportunity for probing person).

17. Do you do any additional job?
18. If yes, which job?
19. What was your first job in this town?
20. How long did it take you to find this job?
21. How did you find this job?
22. How did you become a Scrap Dealer?
23. Why a Scrap Dealer?

Trace the Activities or Stages Involve in Scrap Picking to Delivery Points

24. How does one become a scrap dealer?

25. Describe a typical day of a scrap dealer.

(Probe to ascertain the stages involve from inception to the final delivery point. Listen attentively and ask follow-up questions)

- What time does a typical day of a scrap dealer begins?
- Where do you start from? Do you have a central starting point?
- What do you need to start this work?
- How do you convey your scraps? Do you use Push Trucks, Trolleys or carry the scraps on your head?
- How do you acquire the site that use as scrap yards?
- How do you get the scraps?
- Where do you look for the scraps from? (*streets, homes, workshops, industrial areas, etc*).
- What do you do when you find the scraps?
- Do you buy the scraps?
- Do you seek the concerns from the owners before picking them or pick the scraps without asking the owners?
- If you seek the owners concern, what are their reactions?
- If no concern is sought, why?
- How do you raise the money to buy the scraps?
- If you pick without asking, does it amounts to stealing?
- What happens next when you get the scraps or when the day ends?
(Probe to find out if they have a gathering point or a scrap yard; how safe are their scraps and trucks, etc?)
- At what level would you say it is enough and ready for sale?
- Do you sell your scraps immediately to scrap yard owners or agents?
- Do you gather them yourself for future sale?
- If you do, do you process it before selling and how?
- Who do you sell your scraps to?
- How do you transport the scraps to the smelting factories or export companies?
- How do sell the scraps?
- How much do you sell your collection per kg?
- Do you receive prompt payment?
- Is the payment made in Cash or Cheque?
- What happens after the scrap is sold and your money is paid or not paid?

Establishing the Gains Involve in Scrap Metal Picking.

26. How many hours do you work daily?

27. How many days do you work in a week?

28. What are the volumes of scraps that could be gathered daily or weekly?

29. How much is a Kilo?

30. What is your daily earning?

31. How much money can you earn at the close of a week through scrap picking alone?

32. Are your earnings enough to cater for all your needs? *(Probe further to find out how much they earn and what they use their monies for).*

33. How do you save the money you earn and why?

34. Are you engaged in some other income generation activity?
35. If yes, what extra work do you do and why? If no, why?
36. Overall, what do you stand to gain by picking scraps? (*Probe for detail information*)

Assessing the Risks Involve

37. What risk are you exposed to in the collection and sale of scraps?
Find out about Risk in the following areas of their lives:
Personal Health Hazards: chemicals inhaled; injuries; accidents; health services.
38. Do you wear protective clothing, boots and nose masks?
39. How often do you get injured?
40. How do the chemicals and fumes inhaled from crushed electronic gadgets affect your health?
41. Do you have NHIS?
42. Where do you receive medical attention when ill? *Theft: Stealing of Scraps gathered; buying of stolen goods (copper wire, aluminium or scraps); Personal effect, money, etc.*
43. Do some other persons steal your gathered scraps?
44. Do you have a safe accommodation?
45. Do you buy “Connection” goods?
46. What happens when you buy “connection” goods?
Interaction or Confrontation with the Police or City Guards.
47. How do you experience the institutions of state [police, city guards, etc]?
48. Have you had any interactions with the police?
49. Under what circumstances did you encounter them?
50. Do the Police process your cases to the Court?
51. Tell me about your experiences if possible.
52. Do you get any support from the government?
53. If yes, are there any challenges with this? Can more be done to improve your experiences?
54. Do you experience any challenges when dealing with non-state private sector institutions, like banks?

Interaction or Confrontation with residents within communities where they live and work.

55. How do the people within the communities relate with you?
56. What do they say about you and your work?
To find out their Future Aspirations
57. How long do you want to be in this business?
58. Do you save at the Bank?
59. Why do you save or not save?
60. What do you want to do in the next 5 to 10 years?
61. Would you allow your children or any close family member inherit your job?

62. Why?

Tell me about yourself

63. Can you tell me about your negative and positive experiences since you started this work?

64. Tell me about yourself and what you will want people to know about you?

65. How do people relate to you?

66. Why?

67. Do you have any question for me?

68. Do you know of any governmental policy for or against you? (probe answers)

Thank you very much.

B. INTERVIEWS WITH THE LAW ENFORCEMENT AGENCIES (POLICE AND CITY GUARDS)

1. Age:

2. Rank:

3. How long have you been in the Service?

4. How long have you been working in your current position?

5. How often do interact with the scrap metal dealers?

6. What do you know about scrap metal dealers? (Probe answers)

7. Are they law abiding? *(Probe answers: congestions created on the roads with motorists; road signs preventing the use of Push Trucks on the roads; etc.)*

8. From a Security perspective, do you perceive them a threat to the peace and safety of the community?

9. If yes/no, why?

10. What has members of the communities been saying about them?

11. Have your officers ever arrested any of them? If yes, what were their offences? *(Probe answers further. Find out if the Officers cease alleged stolen goods; and how the officers dispose the alleged stolen goods).*

12. How would you describe the views of some section of the general public that some of the Scrap Dealers are criminals or that they are informants to arm robbery gangs?

13. Generally, how would you characterize interaction between the Police/City Guards and the Scrap Metal Dealers?

14. From the view point of your office, what should the general public about the scrap metal dealers?

15. Do you have any question for me?

Thank you very much.

C. IN-DEPTH INTERVIEW WITH MEMBERS OF THE COMMUNITY WHERE SCRAP PICKERS LIVE AND WORK.

1. Age:

2. Sex:

3. How long have you been living in this community?

4. What do you know about the Scrap Dealers? (Probe answers)

5. Have you ever encountered them?

6. How did you encounter them?

7. Can you describe an encounter with them?

8. What are your views about their work?

9. What are your general perceptions about the Scrap Metal Dealers?

10. Is their presence in the community a threat to peace and serenity you enjoy?
11. Why?
12. In your opinion, what are some of the effects of their work on the environment?
13. From the view point of a resident of this community, what would you want general public to know about the scrap metal dealers?
14. Would you recommend that they continue to live and work within your community?
15. If yes or no, why?
16. Do you have any question for me?

Thank you very much.

D. QUESTIONNAIRE FOR AGENTS / ENTREPRENEURS

1. Sex
2. Age
3. Nationality
4. Ethnicity
5. Marital Status
6. Household number of people/Dependants?
7. What is your Educational Qualification?
8. Why are you involved in scrap metal trade?
9. What is the name of your company/firm?
10. How much do you buy scrap metal?
11. Who sets the price of scrap metal?
12. Where are your collection shipped to?
13. How long have you been into this business?
14. Please explain how you conduct your transaction
15. What are the risks associated with the business of scrap metal?
16. What are the obstacles/constraints in scrap metal business?
17. Is your agency a registered business entity?
18. If yes or no, why?
19. Are you affiliated to an organization or union? (probe answers)
20. Are you being regulated by the central authority?
21. What future prospects do you envisage in the scrap metal industry?
22. How many tons of scrap do you export monthly?
23. How would you characterize your interaction with the scrap metal dealers?
24. Has the Government and NGOs expressed any concerns in your activity?

Thank you very much.