

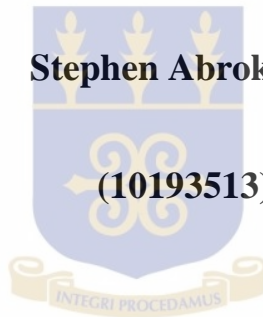


# **Decongesting the Streets of Accra: The Problems and Prospects**

**By**

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**This thesis is submitted to the Department of Geography and  
Resource Development, University of Ghana, Legon in partial  
fulfillment of the requirement for the award of a Master of  
Philosophy degree.**

**June, 2013**

## DECLARATION

I, Stephen Abrokwah, certify that except the literature cited which is duly acknowledged, this thesis is the result of research undertaken by me towards the award of Master of Philosophy degree in Geography in the Department of Geography and Resource Development, University of Ghana.

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## DEDICATION

This work is dedicated to the almighty God and every individual who by their effort made it possible for me to recognize my potential and pursue it.



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## **LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS**

- ILO: International Labour Organization
- SAP: Structural Adjustment Programme
- AMA: Accra Metropolitan Assembly
- GAMA: Greater Accra Metropolitan Area
- GWC: Globalization and World Cities
- GaWC: Ghana Water Company
- AIDC: American International Development Corporation
- CBD: Central Business District
- SADAOC: Sustainable Food Security in Central West Africa
- NCBDA: Nairobi Central Business District Association
- USAID: United States Agency for International Development
- UN: United Nations
- GTUC: Ghana Trade Union Congress
- DHPT: Department of Hawking and Petty Trade
- NEA: National Environment Agency
- HDB: Housing and Development Board
- JTC: Jurong Town Corporation

## ABSTRACT

The tension in the city of Accra concerning the desired modernization of the city space and the existence of the perceived outmoded activity of street hawking is replicated in many cities in developing countries. By encroaching public spaces not authorized for trading, street hawkers offer various products for sale in order to eke out a living. By this act, the activity of street hawking finds itself at the wrong side of the laws governing city-space. In response, several attempts have been made by city authorities in an apparent need to uphold the laws by evicting hawkers operating at unauthorized locations, at times with the use of force. Yet street hawkers, as numerous studies have revealed, defy all oppositions and return to the streets to hawk.

This study hence set out to understand the motivation for the return of street hawkers in the Metropolitan Area of Accra amidst the bans and subsequent forceful eviction by city taskforce personnel. To achieve this, 180 street hawkers, a representative of the Accra Metropolitan Assembly (AMA), formal store owners and members of the general public were interviewed.

Findings of the study established that majority of the hawkers hailed from the southern regions of Ghana and resided in low income neighborhoods. It turned out that the main factors pushing people into the activity of street hawking included: the lack of jobs vacancies in the formal sector and low levels of training/educational attainments of hawkers. The analysis ultimately showed that the resistance of hawkers to eviction is motivated by the need to survive. Findings also showed that other factors fuelling the proliferation of hawkers despite the challenges surrounding the enterprise are: persistent traffic jams, the lack of effective policing of hawking spots,

the minimal entry capital required to start hawking and the potential of obtaining substantial turnover.

The study recommends the reassessment and enforcement of the land use regulations as well as the efficient management of traffic flows in the city as part of the antidote to the hawking phenomenon. Suggestions are also made as regard the reconciliation of data on street hawkers and their contributions to the national economy, in order to appreciate the demographic characteristics of city dwellers as well as their need to survive even as we strive to maintain modern cities and towns.

## **CHAPTER ONE: STREET HAWKING AND THE CONTESTATION FOR PUBLIC SPACE**

### **1.1: Introduction**

Hawking could be defined as including trading in various types of goods and services, which may consist of fruits and vegetables, newspapers, cosmetics, jewelry, watches, ladies' bags, wallets, second-hand clothes to shining of shoes on the streets, highways, sidewalks, avenues etc. The Encarta 2009 edition defines a street hawker as “a person who engages in the selling of merchandise on the street or from door to door”. This definition includes even those hawkers who are commissioned by formal retail outlets, and by no means informal traders in their own right, rather, appendages of the formal retail outlets in every sense, as a mechanism to expand the formal retail market outreach within their space of operation (Rudman, 1988). Street hawkers essentially transform streets into arenas of economic activities in a bid to earn a living (Wang, 1998).

Street hawkers are found virtually in all major cities of the developing world; they are present in Cartagena in Colombia, Quito in Ecuador (Bromley, 1998 cited in, Jimu, 2003), Dhaka the capital of Bangladesh, Bangkok in Thailand (Bhowmik, 2005), Lagos in Nigeria (Oyefara, 2005), Nairobi (Kamunyori, 1999), Zomba in Malawi (Kayuni and Tambulasi, 2009) among others. The congestion as a result of hawker's presence in public places is a global phenomenon affecting both big and small cities (Kamunyori, 1999; Mitullah, 2003 and Asiedu and Agyei - Mensah 2008). The swelling numbers of street hawkers is however attributed to the massive rural - urban migration, generally low levels of education of the populace and the shrinking vacancies in the formal sector of employment (Dickson and Benneh, 1988).

The Ghanaian experience, which is not different from most countries in the developing world, show rates of urban growth overwhelming the rate of industrial expansion (ILO, 1992 and Cross, 2000), which leaves the country with employment deficit. This situation becomes a disappointment to the dreams and aspirations of the work oriented migrants as well as the local populace, who hitherto had the notion that urban centers have the ‘magic wand’ of liberating people from poverty through urban wage – employment. Realizing the non-existence of formal job opportunities, people turn to other alternatives, such as selling on the street and walk-ways as a necessary means of earning a living (Friedmann, 1992 and Mitullah, 2003).

The issue of street hawking has however enjoyed immense attention both within the media and in academia. This is due to the ever increasing numbers of people selling on the streets, the street congestion they contribute to, the negotiation for power and the resultant friction that ensues between these street hawkers and city authorities (Nduma, 1990 and Jimu, 2005). Street hawking in the major cities of Ghana and particularly Accra is not a recent phenomenon (Overa 2007 cited in Asiedu and Agyei - Mensah 2008). However, the spatial manifestation and impact of street hawking was intensified by the dislocations in the Ghanaian economy in the 1960s and further entrenched by the forces of globalization in the 1990s.

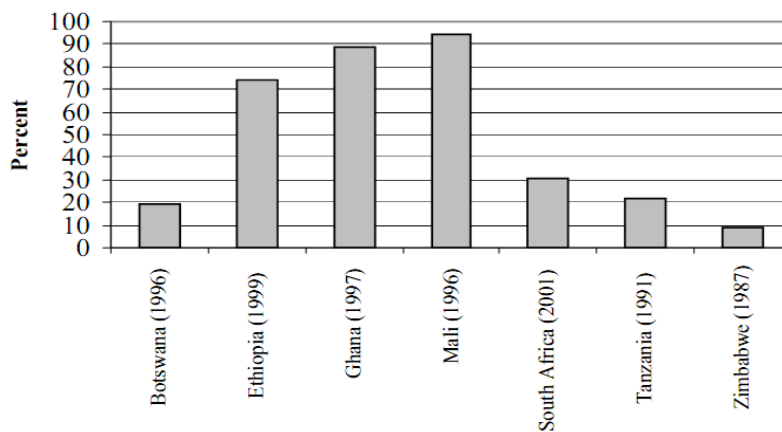
This major economic downturn that hit the Ghanaian economy led to the implementation of the Economic Recovery and Structural Adjustment Programme in the 1980s, resulting in massive layoffs of formal sector workers (Asiedu and Agyei - Mensah, 2000) which saw poverty levels in the Greater Accra region rise from 5.2% in 1998/1999 to 11.8% in 2006 (GSS, 2007). Left with no government to turn to for assistance, people took their destinies in their hands, bracing all odds and challenges in their struggle for survival. For the thousands who were either retrenched, or whose

income could no longer support the basic necessities of life, the informal sector, particularly street hawking provided hope and relief, owing to its low financial entry requirement (Meagher and Yunusa, 1996; Meagher, 1996).

The propensity to engage in street hawking was however further augmented with the inception of trade liberalization, which led to the influx of imported goods, providing a supply avenue for street hawkers. These imported goods make up the majority of the products the street hawkers sell, and with the continuous increase in the street hawker population all of whom sell some substantial amount of imported goods, the country was invariably turned into a market for foreign products (Overa, 2007).

Considering the negative impact of these global initiatives and policies on the local economy of Ghana, street hawking immediately became an avenue for making ones ends draw near if meeting was impossible. A circumstantial evidence suggests that Accra's daytime population exceeds 3 million and most of the inflows originate from the city's outlying towns and villages, who converge at the city centers to engage in commercial activities including hawking (Asiedu and Agyei - Mensah, 2008).

Discussion of street hawking cannot be exhaustive without reference to the informal sector, since many scholars regard street hawking as a manifestation, offshoot, spillover and often, a prodigal subset of the urban informal sector. The term informal sector itself is elusive, a genre that evades explicit characterization. Despite decades of scholarly research, knowledge of the informal sector is still insubstantial (United Nations, 1996; Post, 1996; Niger-Thomas, 2000). However an effort was made by ILO in their 2002 report to shed some light on employment generated by the informal sector for a number of African countries.



**Figure 1: Share of total employment in the informal sector (ILO 2002)**

Though the figures are for different years, it is clear that the share of informal employment varies considerably within Africa, ranging from 8.8 % in Zimbabwe to 94.1 % in Mali. The informal sector in Africa is dominated by trade-related activities, with services and manufacturing accounting for only a small percentage of this sector (UN 1996). For example, in Angola, Nigeria, South Africa, Uganda and Ghana, a majority of informal sector workers are active in retail trade (ILO 2002a). Most of these workers are self-employed, which accounts for 70% of workers in this sector in Sub Saharan Africa, with the remainder in wage employment (ILO 2002c). Street hawking is one particular informal activity that is prevalent on the continent. According to 1992 figures quoted in Charmes (1998a), street hawkers represented 80.7% of all economic units surveyed in urban areas in Benin, with women making up over 75% of vendors.

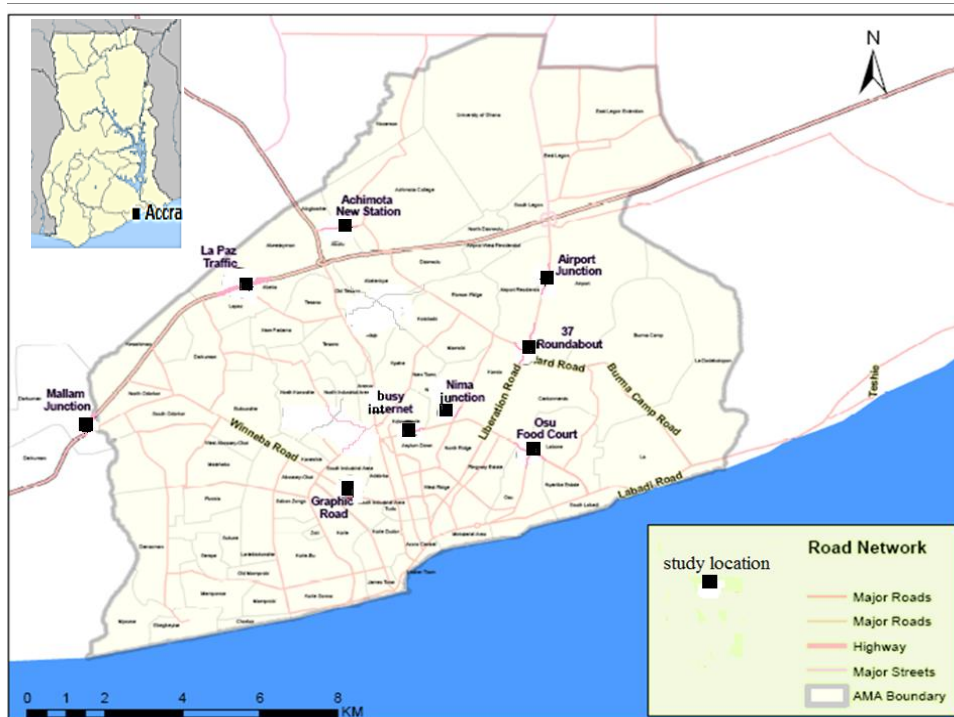
These afore mentioned statistics paint a problematic picture for urban-space management. Hays-Mitchell (1994) and Bromley (1998) observed that, as characterized by activities and services in the broad array of urban informal enterprise, street hawking, which is linked to the central part of the city (i.e. Central Business District), over time, has become the most visible and statistically an important component of the informal sector. It is generally observed that operators

within the frame of street hawking work outside the laid down legal regime, characterized by tax liabilities, non-adherence to labour codes, violation of zoning codes (Hays-Mitchell, 1994).

In most countries urban planning consists of an overall framework, usually a master plan, zoning regulations, planning and building standards, and a development control system (Njoh, 2003). Healey (1997) highlights that land-use zoning and urban planning was introduced for the reorganization of the urban fabric and thus became part of the management of all physical development processes. It is however noted that one recurring theme throughout the literature on urban planning is the underlying assumption that planning is uncontroversial in the interests of all (Evans 1995). The rationale for urban planning has been the improvement in the use and development of land for sanctioned public interest. In this light, street hawkers are regarded as persons contravening this rationale by illegally occupying public space. The use of public space by street hawkers has hence become the subject of intense contestation (Yiftachel et al 2002).

Notwithstanding, many authors yet identify access to public space as a key physical asset in the strategies of the urban poor. Hawkers use public spaces as primary factor and bases for their activities (Cross, 2000). It is at these public spaces like streets, pavements, hospitals environs and lorry stations that they obtain the critical mass of people needed for a viable trading to earn a living (Rakodi, 2002:3). It is however the appropriateness and authorization of these assets (public space) that one chooses which is in contention. As Anajaria (2006) indicated this contention leads to the conflicts between city managers and hawkers at these hawking locations, a dissension which numerous spots in the city of Accra epitomizes.

The Busy Internet environs, Nima Junction, Lapaz Traffic Light, Mallam Junction, the Accra Airport Junction, the Accra Graphic Road, 37 Military Hospital Circle, the New Achimota Station and the Osu Food Court are all places of high retail and business activities, including street and pavement hawking. These places (fig.2 below) are considered sufficiently as Business Areas, located along principal thoroughfares within the Accra Metropolitan Area of the Greater Accra Region of Ghana.



**Figure 2: Study locations within the AMA (source: field work 2012)**

According to the postulates by Harris and Ullman (1945) in their multi-nuclei model of the urban spatial structure, the business district with its associated intensity in commercial activities have the highest pedestrian and vehicular traffic in the city during its peak hours, an element which is key to lucrative hawking. By reason of the high vehicular and population numbers, the business district naturally becomes a place for congestion, and the activities of street and pavement hawking only make the congestion worse if not well regulated.

The non – regulation of street hawking, in the instance of the city of Accra leads to tax liabilities, non-adherence to labour codes, the generation of excessive amount of garbage and noise, and most especially violation of zoning codes (Gyamfi, 2000). This tag of general flouting has caught the attention of city managers and given rise to the desire to control the phenomenon.

In a bid to correct these anomalies in the urban commercial areas, and restore the respect for rule of law, the Accra Metropolitan Assembly on April 21, 2011 embarked on the exercise of decongesting the city of Accra, effectively evicting hawkers, and also removing structures located at wrong places. It was hoped such an exercise will bring sanity to the capital, show adherence to the laws governing the allocation of space in the city and in effect make Accra the true Millennium City that the Mayor promised to bring about during the July, 23<sup>rd</sup>, 2010 edition of the Accra Partners Conference.

The exercise of decongesting the city's streets and pavements has however been carried out at locations like the Kwame Nkrumah Circle, some sections of the Independence Avenue (close to the Novotel Hotel) among other locations. But under less than a day the hawkers were back on the streets doing business as reported in the April 21, 2011 edition of Joy FM 6pm news. It is however worth noting that hawker's resistance and return after a decongestion/eviction exercise is however not new (Bhowmik 2010; Mitullah 2003). Such resilience and resistance in every dimension of it leaves one to wonder what at all could be that powerful driving force which keeps motivating traders to return to the streets (Jimu 2003; Cross 2000; Kayuni and Tambulasi 2009).

From that backdrop and with reference to this study, the focus of the work would predominantly be on the street hawkers with the aim of unraveling the reasons

underlying the street hawker's continual resistance to leave the streets amidst the brutalities visited on them and their merchandise by city task forces.

### **1.2: The Dilemma of Dealing with Street hawking**

Hawkers' eviction exercises have been carried out in several cities, but it is observed that for some reasons the hawkers in most cases return to the street to sell despite the hostility meted out to them by city task force. Bhowmik (1995) reports of the resistance and subsequent return of hawkers in Calcutta (India), the Klongtoey and Dindaeng districts in Bangkok (Thailand) after brutal raids. Mititullah (2003) also made observations in Nairobi (Kenya), concerning the return of hawkers after city taskforce had raided hawking areas; that it took only some few hours for the hawkers to return (though hiding). Observations are also made of the streets of Zomba, Blantyre, and Lilongwe in Malawi, in which hawkers always made it a point to return after successive eviction attempts by different governments (Tambulasi and Kamunyori, 2009). Same is said of the hawking situation in Gaborone city in Botswana (Jimu, 2005), the streets of Enugu, Kaduna and Ibadan in Nigeria (Ebibgo, 2003) among others. Consistent among the reasons cited by hawkers in the studies mentioned above are that city authorities do not discuss with them issues affecting their work and the fact that the alternative locations that they provided in some cases are most often deemed un lucrative and the environs unhygienic.

In the case of Ghana, past eviction plans and attempts could not yield the desired results. The recent attempt which was carried out in April 2011, which saw most of the hawkers evicted from the streets and their subsequent return, has brought to mind the resilience and resistance of the hawkers spoken about by Cross (2000) and Jimu (2005). A survey through the city revealed that, hawkers had re-appeared (though in

smaller numbers) doing brisk business as reported in the Joy FM 6pm news item on the very evening of April 21, 2011, the day of the eviction exercise.

Such hard-to-the-core resilience and resistance therefore leaves one to wonder what could be that driving force which keeps motivating hawkers to return to the streets. This question, city managers are faced with in their strive to ensure that people's attempt at meeting their socio economic aspirations does not conflict with laws and regulations governing city space allocation. Jimu (2005), after a review of articles on 'street hawker evictions and subsequent returns' remarked that 'the reasons underlying street hawkers' resistances to relocation or evictions are neither well understood nor appreciated by authorities'. Asiedu and Mensah (2008), in their submission proposed that "the key to understanding and controlling the hawking phenomenon is one of consultation not confrontation". All these issues make imperative the need to seek from the hawkers some understanding of the underlying reasons motivating their unfailing return to the streets.

Even though research has been conducted within the broad array of street hawking in Ghana (Hart, 1973; Clark, 1994; Yankson, 2007), not enough space have been given to the reasons underlying hawker's persistent return and resultant conflict with metropolitan authorities which necessitates a detailed study to unravel the underlying issues therein. It is therefore with the objective of bringing to the fore the reasons underlying hawkers' resistance to evictions and relocation, and consequent return to the streets that this study is being carried out.

### **1.3: Research Questions**

1. Why do hawkers return to the streets shortly after eviction?
2. What are the coping mechanisms adopted by hawkers in the face of the active task force presence on the street?
3. What must be wrong with the approaches adopted by city authorities?

4. Is there an alternative approach that would solve the street hawking menace permanently?

#### **1.4: Objectives**

The main objective is to understand why numerous attempts at removing street hawkers from the streets of Accra have not yielded the desired results. The specific objectives of the study are:-

- i. to examine hawking as a means to eke out a living;
- ii. to evaluate the coping mechanisms adopted by street hawkers;
- iii. to assess the sustainability of the approach adopted by city authorities; and
- iv. to explore other means of dealing with the phenomenon of street hawking.

#### **1.5: Proposition**

Literature on hawkers is replete with the revelation that hawkers normally have low educational attainments (majority being middle and secondary school leavers), this occurrence is believed to constitute a major factor inhibiting people's ability to find employment in the formal sector (Barimah et al 2012). It is further argued that this low level of education rather makes people legible and readily absorbable into the informal sector of the economy where educational qualifications are not critical for participation. In light of these foregoing allusions the following is suggested as a plausible guide for the study:

‘One’s level of formal education has no influence on his/her predisposition to hawk’

#### **1.6: Theoretical Considerations**

Given the nature of this study, the political economy approach as an analytical framework that recognizes “the intermeshing of political, economic and social factors of change as one on-going historical process” recommends itself (Gutkind, and Wallesteing 1976:7), recognizing the fact that local economic forces interact with the

global economy to shape the form of the local space-economy (Stewart 1999). The theory holds that global economic policies and initiatives impacts local forces in shaping the welfare of people. As the economic history of Ghana shows, hawking as a phenomenon has been highly influenced by the impact of international economic policies on the local economy.

The political economy approach developed in relation to the need to integrate both political and social factors as explanatory elements in economic analysis (Aina, 1986:10). Ake (1997:17) states that political economy treats social life and material existence in their relatedness. According to Samon (1982:8) it is a framework that focuses on conflicts based on the assumption that there are systematic connections among productions, power stratifications and ideas. Samon (1982) further asserts that economic outcomes are neither largely structurally determined nor largely the result of individual behaviour, but a complex combination of both.

From these theoretical perspectives, political economy underscores the central importance of the mode of production and the relationship between institutions in an economic space as a major causal factor in the emergence of socio-economic characteristics of a region (Unicode, 1985:7). Thus an examination of the socio-economic and political development process in the international system provides a useful background for the analysis of street hawking and harassment by city taskforce.

The role of politics in resource allocation and the place of material wellbeing for a people are all realities that play out in space to create a socio-economic phenomenon which forms part of the country's development process. Political economy is therefore, the science of economic relations between people and institutions. It clarifies the effect of both international and local policies on production, distribution,

exchange and consumption of material wealth of a region at various stages of its development (Nikitin, 1983:24).

In the case of Ghana, consequent upon the eventual integration of the country into the global capitalist framework in a compradorial and dependent form, consolidating the inherited colonial structure, the post-colonial state broadened the basis of capitalist accumulation to include the political class (Fosu, 2004; Nnoli, 1981; Bangura, 1991). This class, in their quest for power and wealth accumulation plunged the country into a national economic crisis. The manifestation of the economic crisis in the forms of poverty and increased unemployment, creating an aura of apathy, cynicism and disillusionment on the part of the masses against the political class owing to the increased vulnerability, marginalization and abandonment. Efforts at tackling the crisis through policies such as the Stabilization Act and the Structural Adjustment Programme (SAP), deepened, rather than resolved the economic crisis (Overa, 2007).

The outcome of these policies (especially SAP), engendered an environment of declining industrial capacity utilization, deteriorating external lending conditions, increased interest rates and scarcity of loans and investible funds (Momoh and Adejumobi, 1995). Similarly, all forms of government subsidies and social welfare benefits were withdrawn, and many public sector workers retrenched in the name of 'downsizing'. The palpable consequences that the citizens had to grapple with were the decline and irregular nature of social infrastructure, low quality education, job loss and factory closure, internal and external financial imbalances, depreciating value of the cedi, mounting local and external debt, growing poverty, increased unemployment and underemployment, vulnerability to communicable diseases, political instability and rapid rural-urban migration (Jega, 2003, Babalola, 1996; Adejumobi, 2000).

Left with no economic assistance, people took their destinies in their hands, bracing all odds in their struggle for survival. For the many who had either migrated from rural areas into urban centers in search of jobs or who were laid off, or those whose income could no longer afford their needs, the informal sector, particularly street hawking provided the means to making ends meet (Meagher and Yunusa, 1996; Meagher, 1996). Globalization and trade liberalization as mentioned earlier also made available variety of imported goods which people retailed to ensure their economic sustenance (Fosu, 2002).

Street hawking is an old phenomenon in the major cities of Ghana (Overa, 2007) cited in Asiedu and Agyei - Mensah (2008), but the rate of its growth has been intensified by impacts of economic policies and globalization leading to the transferring of rural poverty into the urban centers where poverty levels are already intolerable (Agyei – Mensah, 2008). Hawkers employ spaces like streets, pavements, hospital environs and lorry stations where they take advantage of the agglomeration of pedestrians and passersby offering goods and service for sale with the purposes of earning a living (Rakodi, 2002:3). Merchandise on offer from hawkers in these public spaces ranges from edibles, mobile phone recharge cards, electrical appliances, apparel, office stationeries to school supplies. It is however the authorization of these public spaces for the activity of trading that leads to the confrontations that ensue between hawkers and law enforcers (Agbo 2010; Nesvag 2000). The statutes of the city of Accra do not make room for hawking at unauthorized spaces, and indeed, it is a crime per the AMA bye-laws to use unpermitted spots in the Accra Metropolis for activities such as hawking. Hence hawkers are left at the mercy of law enforcement agencies who in fulfillment of their task conduct inspections which at times degenerate into raids and harassments.

Yet as a result of the inherent socio-economic benefits of the activity of hawking, we find hawkers “re colonizing” the streets, pavements, footbridges among others even after brutalities have been meted out to them and their merchandise. My contention therefore, is that most of the people engaged in street hawking do so out of the need to survive rather than a matter of choice.

### **1.7: Research Methodology**

In this section the data expected, research instrument to be used in the data collection is discussed, the analyses conducted with the solicited data are also elaborated upon. The research design adopted for the study is described with particular reference to its strengths and weaknesses. The sampling technique used, as well as the data collection instruments are discussed. This chapter concludes with the sampling frame and a table of the study objectives and the target group that responses were collected from.

The case study approach was employed in this circumstance, the essence of the case study design as a technique aided the collection of detailed information about the socio-demographic characteristics of hawkers, examined hawking as a means to eke out a living, evaluated the suitability of hawkers for alternative jobs. And also assessed the sustainability of the approach adopted by city authorities and explored other means of dealing with the phenomenon of street hawking if the current approach is found to be problematic.

With special regard to this work, the state and complexities of the phenomenon of street hawking was looked at in an attempt to bring to the fore the reasons underlying hawkers resistance to evictions, as well as professing a possible way forward.

### **1.7.1: Data Collection and Sources**

The data collected are put under the broad headings of primary and secondary data. The primary data was gathered from the reconnaissance survey which preceded the interviews that were conducted in the field. With the aid of a structured interview guide containing the core set of questions constituting the main research focus, respondents were engaged in interviews at the study locations. There were note-taking along side tape recordings that captured salient comments that respondents made.

On the secondary data, the research relied on the vast documentary sources which included research papers, articles, news media as well as relevant information on the internet. Publications were consulted to familiarize myself with what generally had been done in the subject area. Writings on both the subject area and related issues were very beneficial in understanding and consequently in the gathering of information on the topic.

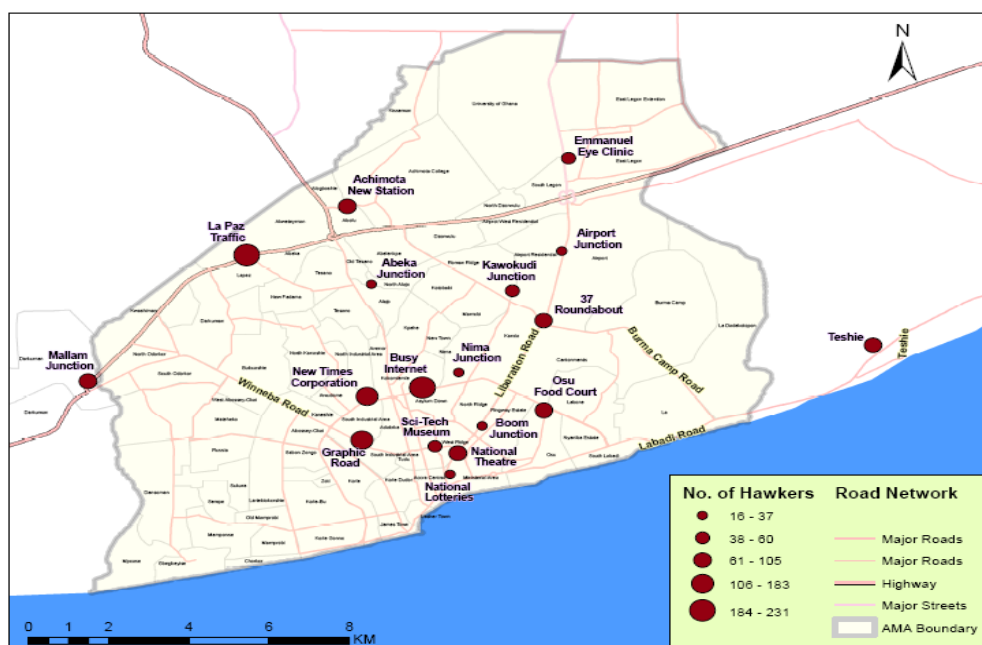
### **1.7.2: Study Locations and Population Sampling**

Street hawking in the Metropolitan City of Accra occur in different parts of the urban landscape. Hawkers employ various media to display their goods which may include: wheel burrows, handcarts and bicycle seats. Others display their goods on the ground, over a mat or gummy bag, whilst others carry their commodities on their heads, hands and shoulders. There are also others who hang their goods on walls, trees and fences.

The business of street hawking however exhibits some temporal dynamics. Street hawking generally has its peak periods which is synonymous with that of vehicular and human traffic peak periods. The morning peak period (rush hour) is usually between 7am and 10am whereas the afternoon experience is between 1pm and 3pm. The evening rush hour is between 5pm - 8pm. The population of hawkers edges up in response to this human / vehicular traffic peak / rush hour periods, locating at

strategic points especially routes where pedestrians come by, while others walk from one place to the other frantically on the lookout for buyers. Other hawkers also alternate with the signal of the traffic light. When the red light switches on for the vehicles to stop, hawkers then take their turn to move onto the streets, meandering between the vehicles advertising their products and selling as quickly as possible. Their busyness, as well as their non-stationary character affords hawkers little or no time for discussions.

Within the Accra Metropolis, hawkers are literally found on all major roads and commercial areas. However, a thorough observation of the various hawking locations dotted across the metropolis revealed 18 major hawking points, although there are several minor spots. Figure 3, shows the major hawking locations within the AMA.



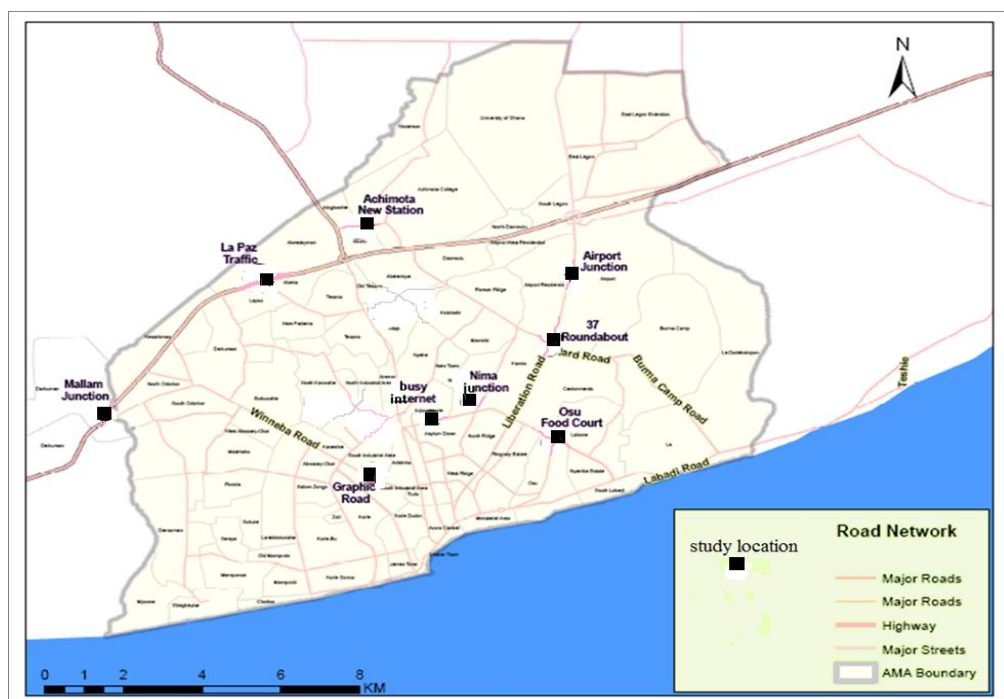
**Figure 3: Major Hawking locations and the estimated number of Hawkers as of March 31st 2011 (Barimah, 2012)**

These locations are places within the Accra metropolis with vibrant hawking activity as a direct result of the concentrations of brisk daily markets, shops, banks, public offices, public institutions and their location along principal thoroughfares and attendant traffic jams. By the sheer presence of these activities, institutions and

infrastructure, these locations experience high human as well as vehicular traffic which serve as the major ingredient for hawking.

Using the simple random sampling technique, 9 locations were selected out of the 18 major hawking locations in the AMA. These are the Graphic Road, the New Achimota Station Traffic Light, 37 Roundabout Traffic Light, Mallam Junction, Airport Junction Traffic Light, Osu Food Court, Busy Internet of the Nkrumah Circle, Nima Junction and Lapaz Traffic Light. The Graphic Road, the New Achimota Station Traffic Light, 37 Roundabout Traffic Light, Mallam Junction and Airport Junction Traffic Light lie on principal thoroughfares which characteristically experience high vehicular densities.

The Osu Food Court, Nima Junction and Busy Internet of the Nkrumah Circle aside the fact that they lie on important roads have commercial and business characteristics which by reason of their centrality, attract heavy human traffic which is a basic factor for profitable hawking. Fig. 4 shows the sample locations used for this study.



**Figure 4: Map of the Accra metropolis and study locations**  
(Source: fieldwork 2012)

The target population among other key informants comprised of street hawkers who were sampled at the selected locations. In all, 180 hawkers were sampled from the 9 locations mentioned above. In view of the number of the study sites, the stratified sampling technique was used to obtain representative number of respondents for each location. Spreading the total number of sample (180) for the 9 study locations, 20 respondents were selected for each hawking location ( $180 / 9 = 20$ ). The 20 respondents from whom data was solicited were accidentally sampled for interview.

Hawkers were so sampled given their mobile nature which allowed them little or no space for non-trade related activities such as interrogations. The technique was hence to collect information from hawkers whom one chances upon and offered the space for interaction. Care was however taken to avoid the undesirable case of double interview. Interviews were held on the streets whilst hawkers were doing their trade. The interview site, though not free from distractions and noise presented me the opportunity of participant observation, offering firsthand experience of the activity under study (Elwood and Martin 2000).

The thoughts of the City Managers (AMA) were sort in order to gain insight into their approach to managing hawking in the city of Accra, the results the approach yielded and the way forward. Shop Owners as well as members of the general public around the study areas were randomly selected to inquire of their perception of the street hawking phenomenon, their assessments of the City Authorities approach to managing the phenomenon and suggestions made as to how to control the phenomenon. References were also made to the success story of hawker management in some countries where hitherto hawking was a challenge.

### **1.7.3: Data Analysis**

The data from the study were processed to derive statistics which were used to provide understanding and relationships with regard to the socio-economic issues affecting the proportion of the city's population doing street trade. The demographic aspect gave information as to which region of the country hawkers hailed from, their educational background as well as their age profile. This aided analysis on the trends in the age distribution, regions of origin among the hawkers as well as assertions made regarding the educational background in an attempt at verifying studies by earlier researchers.

Employing the levels of education and the corresponding frequencies, the Spearman Rank Correlation Co efficient was calculated for. This variable was so selected due to its recurrence in literature to the effect that generally hawkers have low levels of education which makes them more attracted to hawking and other informal economic activities. One therefore sought to ascertain the direction and magnitude of the relationship between level of education and the propensity to hawk.

Based on the data collected, the claim that hawking is a major means to a living was also interrogated and its linkage to hawker resistances established. Profit margins of the individuals at various locations were computed and used to draw inferences as to the ease to wean hawkers off the activity of hawking. This ultimately provides a guide as to what needs to be taken into consideration in the attempt to manage the activity.

The effectiveness of the hawkers coping mechanisms were assessed, coupled with that, was the frequency and effectiveness of the taskforce at ensuring that hawking is brought under control. Also the phenomenon of unionizing was examined among the sampled with special consideration to membership and the union's efforts regarding

the ongoing eviction exercises, as a bases for assessing their level of participation in decision making regarding the future of hawking.

The data provided understanding into the sustainability of the approach currently used by the city authorities and how they intend to improve upon it. Thoughts were also expressed by hawkers, suggesting ways of handling the phenomenon. Finally the measures taken by Singapore which has to a large extent helped in their quest to managing hawkers were delved into.

**Table 1: Sampling Frame**

<b>Sampled locations</b>	<b>Objectives of the study</b>	<b>Method of data collection</b>	<b>Technique for sampling location</b>	<b>Technique for sampling general public and store owners</b>	<b>Technique for sample hawkers</b>	<b>Sampled number of hawkers per location</b>
<b>1.</b> Graphic Road <b>2.</b> Achimota New Station <b>3.</b> 37 Round about <b>4.</b> Mallam Junction <b>5.</b> Airport Junction <b>6.</b> Osu Food Court <b>7.</b> Busy Internet <b>8.</b> Nima Junction <b>9.</b> Lapaz Traffic Light	Hawking as a means to a living  Coping strategies of street hawkers  Sustainability of the current approach by city authorities.  Explore other ways of dealing with the phenomenon.	In-depth interview	Simple Random	Simple Random	Accidental	20
						<b>180</b>

**Table 2: Objectives and Respective Target Population**

Objectives	Target Group	
	Hawkers	City Authorities
1.To examine hawking as a means to eke out a living	<p>Level of education.</p> <p>Are you the bread winner of your family?</p> <p>How long have you been selling on the street?</p> <p>What is your average daily profit?</p> <p>Why the particular spot.</p>	<p>What is the Metropolitan Assembly's perception on street hawking?</p>
2. To evaluate the coping mechanisms adopted by street hawkers.	<p>Why the particular spot.</p> <p>How many places do hawkers sell?</p> <p>Are there traders association or unions.</p>	
3. To assess the sustainability of the approach adopted by city authorities.	<p>Was the decongestion exercise necessary / good or unnecessary / bad?</p> <p>Do the city authorities seek your thoughts on activities they carry out concerning the trade?</p> <p>How often do task force personnel come around?</p> <p>Have your ware ever been confiscated by the taskforce?</p> <p>Are you aware of the risks associated with trade?</p> <p>Are you aware of the laws and regulation governing the allocation of space?</p>	<p>What is the strategy to deal with it?</p> <p>Has the decongestion exercise been successful?</p> <p>What has been the contribution of stakeholders in the formulation of a sustainable policy at controlling hawking?</p> <p>What is the extent of involvement of the hawkers in the formulation of a sustainable policy concerning their activity?</p>
4. Exploring other means of dealing with the phenomenon.	<p>Suggestion on dealing with the phenomenon</p> <p>Suggestion on alternative vocation</p>	<p>Suggestion on dealing with the phenomenon</p>

### **1.8: Significance of the Research**

Despite the various attempts by city authorities in Africa at halting the proliferation of street hawking, it is interesting to see how thriving it has rather become. In the midst of all the threats and intimidations, street hawking has proven to be the most visible spatial manifestation of the urban informal sector of developing countries (Bromley 1998; Hays-Mitchell 1994).

This study therefore is of relevance in the sense that it comprehensively studies the phenomenon of hawking, and provides information on the nitty-gritty of hawkers' contestation and resistance to evictions and relocations. This can inform policy makers as to the consideration they ought to make in the drive to curb or reduce hawkers' resistance and agitations.

The outcomes of this research would also provide thoughts on how the phenomenon could be dealt with, which when considered should lead to a more acceptable approach at solving the problem of hawking. And ultimately, this work if published, would also add to the body of knowledge already available on the topic.

### **1.9: Challenges Encountered in the Field**

This section provides highlights of some of the challenges encountered during the course of the fieldwork. Basically, there were two main challenges.

The first and foremost challenge had to do with hawker's mode of operation. Hawkers normally move to and fro the streets scanning through vehicles and pedestrians for prospective buyers. This affords the hawker little or no time for discussions which invariably made data gathering difficult. To overcome this, the accidental sampling technique was adopted to obtain the needed sample for the investigation.

The second challenge encountered was that hawkers thought I was a representative of the AMA or a media house sent to spy and inform the institution as to where hawking is still persisting for raids to be carried out at such locations. As a result, respondents felt reluctant to be spoken to. At some locations hawkers threatened to seize my research logistics. Still bent on achieving the stated objectives, I carefully convinced hawkers that the study was purely for academic purposes before some offered to cooperate with the study.

### **1.10: Structure of the Thesis**

The thesis is composed of six chapters. Chapter one (1) sets off with the introduction, highlighting the background to the study. This is followed by: the problem statement; research questions and objectives; the proposition of the study; theoretical considerations; research methods; significance of the study; challenges encountered during the study; and an outline of the chapters of the thesis. Chapter two (2) is the literature review, and it discusses street hawking as a major concern for developing countries. The chapter covered thematic areas including: the nature of street hawking; global economic trends and street hawking; street hawking as a means to a living; and managing street hawking in Africa. The chapter ends with a summary and some concluding comments. Chapter three (3) gives an overview of the AMA and the study locations. Chapter four (4) analyzes the street hawker and their need to survive in the city of Accra. Discussions in this chapter covered the general characteristics of hawkers and hawking as a means to a living. Chapter Five (5) provides an interrogation of the efforts at managing street hawking in the Accra metropolis. Specially dealing with the decongestion of the streets of Accra; hawkers resistance to eviction and the future of hawking in the city of Accra. Finally, Chapter six (6)

contains the Summary, Conclusion and Recommendations. The References and Appendixes constitute the end of the thesis.

The next chapter is the chapter two; and it discusses literature bordering on: street hawking, as a major concern for developing countries. It covers the nature of street hawking; global economic trends and street hawking; street hawking as a means to a living; managing street hawking in Africa; and ending with a summary and some concluding comments.

## CHAPTER TWO: STREET HAWKING, A MAJOR CONCERN FOR DEVELOPING COUNTRIES

### 2.1: The Nature of Street Hawking

In its simplest terms, street hawking falls within the category of economic activities generally referred to as the informal sector (Jimu, 2003). Despite the existence of substantial literature about the informal sector, there is still no concise and universally agreed definition of this sector. Studies by Tinker (1997) and Cross (1998) indicated that there are at least as many ways of defining the informal sector as there are countries where it has been studied. The boundaries of the informal sector vary greatly depending on the geographical and historical context within which it is being discussed and according to theoretical and methodological approaches adopted in a particular study (Pick *et al.* 2002).

Notwithstanding this diversity, Cross's (1998) definition of the inform sector (that encompasses street hawking) is well articulated and encompassing hence adopted by this work. Cross (1998) describes the informal sector as "the production and exchange of legal goods and services that involves the lack of appropriate business permits, violation of zoning codes, failure to report tax liability, non-compliance with labour regulations governing contracts and work conditions, and/or the lack of legal guarantees in relations with suppliers and clients." Being one of the highly visible informal sector activities, street hawking is basically unregulated trading that takes place in public spaces such as streets, sidewalks, bridges, pavements etc (Jimu, 2005).

In a study by Bhowmik (2000), he described a hawker to be a person who in the name of commerce occupies space on the street, pavements or other public/private spaces or, they may be mobile in the sense that they move from place to place by carrying their wares on push carts or in baskets on their heads. In his essay, Bhowmik (2000)

however stretched the term street hawker to include stationary as well as mobile vendors and it incorporates all other local/region specific terms used to describe them. McGee and Yeung (1977) clarified the case with their study which sort to give typology regarding the types of street hawkers that there are. McGee and Yeung (1977) were of the view that there exist two major types of vending units: the mobile vending unit and the fix or static vending unit. In the mobile vending unit, they explained that the hawker in this case do not have a fixed premises but moves from one location to another. And that this category incorporates also the semi-static vending unit in which the selling unit is removed after a relatively long period of selling. The static or fix vending unit is permanently located, they opined.

Mitullah (2003) in agreement with Bhowmik (1995) noted that hawkers use different structures, including tables, racks, wheel burrows, handcarts, and bicycle carriers to display their goods. Others display their goods on the ground over a mat or gummy bag, while others simply carry their commodities on their hands, heads and shoulders. There are also those who hang their goods on walls, trees, fences and an advanced group that construct temporary shades with stands for displaying their goods.

Kayuni and Tambulasi (1995) also studied that street hawkers trade in a variety of commodities ranging from food stuff, both fresh and processed to fabrics/clothes, shoes, cosmetics, flowers, traditional herbs, craft/artwork/pottery, kitchen ware, plastic products, hardware, electrical appliances and general merchandise such as office stationery, school supplies, books, sweets, brooms, tobacco and newspapers among others.

Mitullah, (2003) in her studies bordering on the activity of street hawking in countries like Kenya, Cote D'ivoire, Ghana, Zimbabwe, Uganda And South Africa realized that most traders locate themselves at strategic points with heavy human traffic, while

others walk from one place to the other. Hawkers, she held locate themselves along main roads and streets, near shopping centers or at corners where they can be seen by pedestrians and motorists. These traders, she remarked, settle in streets spontaneously without any official allocation. However, her case study from Kenya shows that there are informal methods used in locating and operating within a particular site. Some hawkers according to Mitullah (2003) consult the owners of neighboring yard, others negotiate with acquaintances, and others are allocated spaces by the Local Authorities, while some share with friends and colleagues.

In all cities covered by Mitullah (2003), it was discovered that the availability of an acceptable site of operation is a pre-condition for compliance with various statues relating to business operation. Most street hawkers in Africa have no authorized sites of operation, which results in incidences of confrontation and brutality between street hawkers and urban authorities. The authorities, she observed, are reluctant to allocate hawking sites, especially within the Central Business District (CBD). With cases of Nairobi and Kampala, Kayuni and Tambulasi (2009) observed that hawkers have severally been allocated hawking sites outside the CBD which they have rejected, arguing that they are not accessible to customers.

Most street hawkers, Mitullah (2003) discovered, have no tenure for the sites they use, and hence the temporary nature of the structures and display tools they use. The numbers that have tenure are negligible as compared to the total numbers who have no tenure agreements. This gap, Mitullah (2003) believes can be captured by looking at the numbers of street hawkers licensed to hawk, compared to the numbers that hawk. All of these gaps exist as a result of the sketchy nature of demographic data collected on hawkers.

As the International Labor Organizations (2002:51) compilation of informal economy statistics revealed, that despite the numbers and visibility of street traders there are few good estimates of the number of traders. A number of reasons are cited in the ILO (2002) report: first, many population censuses and labor force surveys do not contain a question on 'place of work' with relevant alternative responses. However street trade is inherently difficult to measure. As the report notes there is a great variance in the number of street hawkers counted depending on the time of day, day of the week, time of month or the season of the year. The number of hawkers can fluctuate from one season to the next, one day to the next, and even during a single day. This scenario, King (2006) found out to be because some street hawkers only sell in the morning, afternoon or evening; and others sell only during certain seasons. Some may move from one location to another during the day, appearing to settle at each; while others may change what they sell from one season, month or day to another. From the brisk and very dynamic nature of the activity, it is not surprising that the youth constitute a great chunk of the hawker's population in lieu of the fact that they have the energy required for such vibrant and dynamic occupation (Mitullah, 2003).

Revisions by United Nations (2003) and Palmer (2007) delved deeper into the observation revealing that the youth in sub-Saharan Africa are increasingly engaging in the informal sector to enhance their livelihoods. Palmer (2007) contends that informal sector activities are becoming the primary destination of most middle school leavers in Ghana. A comprehensive situation analysis on the youth in Botswana reveals that 41% of youth in the country were involved in informal sector activities, the majority (68%) of them being young women (GoB and UNDP 2000: 22).

A roundtable conference organized on the subject of Street Food in Ghana held on September 6, 2001 further gives some exposé on the demographics of street hawkers

in Ghana. Captured in the minutes of the meeting, Dr. P.N.T Johnson of the Food Research Institute, Accra, revealed that Accra had over 60,000 street hawkers who make about 100 million United State dollars as turnover. A. Ntiforo in addition stated that from a 1995 – 1996 survey, the street hawkers sampled were between the age brackets of between 16 – 80 years, with 89% between 20 – 49 years. The study also demonstrated that the majority of street hawkers in Accra are females with a diminutive 6% of the sampled respondents being males.

According to Bhowmik, Dhaka City, the capital of Bangladesh has around 90,000 street hawkers operating mainly in Motijheel, Baitul Mukarram, Gulistan, Shahbagh and the New Market Areas. Observations he made indicate that there are a substantive number of food hawkers in the urban areas. Their ages range between 25 and 60 years with a majority being in the age group of 30-40 years. The contribution of women to this trade is significant. It was however observed that women do not constitute a major section of food hawkers in Dhaka.

In a related study conducted by Kamunyori (1999), it was revealed that over 6,000 street hawkers with a daily capital stock worth \$1 million line the streets and alleyways selling their wares in the Central Business District of Nairobi. Kamunyori (1999) further mentioned that the Socio-Economic Survey on Street hawkers in Nairobi's Central Business District carried out by USAID and NCBDA determined that 55% of the respondents were between 25 - 34 years. The mean age for informal traders was 31.7 years. Most of the informal traders are therefore young adults in the most productive periods of their lives. Of this number, 69.5% were males as compared to 28.5% who were females, 98.2% of the hawkers had some level of formal education. More than half (51.7%) of the hawkers had secondary (equivalent

to Grades 8-12) level education, whereas 5.6% had obtained post-secondary education.

Adiko and Anoh Kouassi (ibid) in their survey of over 1700 markets and street hawkers in Ivory Coast for example, found that over 70 % of hawkers were women. Although there are regional differences, there appears to be a tendency for women to sell food products and men to sell non-food products, which is often more lucrative. The evidence suggests that there are large numbers of street hawkers and, in many contexts, a disproportionate number being women. Although there is no time series data, urbanization and economic development studies, researchers believe that these trends suggest that the numbers of female hawkers have increased over time.

The afore mentioned studies depicts a case where majority of the population of street hawkers are young people engaged in retailing service with little or no value addition to the products they offer for sale. The issue of sex dominance still remained inconclusive in view of the fact that some studies had males dominating whereas other studies also had females dominating. It is however generally observed that a substantial number of street hawkers studied have received at most basic education.

## **2.2: Global Economic trends and Street Hawking**

Another argument which is of relevance to the study of the informal sector is that of trade reforms. Goldberg and Pavcnik (2003) explain the informal sector to be a consequence of global forces. Goldberg and Pavcnik (2003), intimate that as a result of harsh economic conditions, formal businesses/companies are forced to reduce labour costs to remain competitive. To achieve this, employers cut workers' benefits such as leaves, overtime payments, social security contributions and employment protection (severance payments). Alternatively, the enterprise can lay-off these more

expensive employees and temporary staff who are as it were, not afforded the protection of labour laws and union coverage. The submission of Goldberg and Pavcnik (2003) implies that informal sector workers would invariably increase their representation in the economy, since most of the abled-persons would devise some livelihood strategy of which street selling is prominent due to the low initial capital required.

Mupedziswa and Gumbo (2001) provide an illustration of the impact of structural adjustment policies in Zimbabwe on informal traders in Harare. They studied that prior to the economic reforms and crisis in the early 1990s, many women in the country were however already employed in the informal sector. In 1984, for example, Mupedziswa and Gumbo (2001) stated that women accounted for 64% of employment in the informal sector compared with only 25% in the formal sector.

The first phase of economic reforms in Zimbabwe occurred from 1990 to 1996, which included reducing the fiscal deficit, tightening monetary policies, domestic deregulation, and trade and exchange rate liberalization. One particular outcome of the policies, they conclude, was an increase in the competition amongst informal traders, which resulted from the influx of retrenched workers and those who had to acquire a second job to offset declining real wages. By 1996, Mupedziswa and Gumbo (2001) reports that there were 1.56 million workers in the informal sector compared with only 1.26 million in the formal sector. Cross-border trading with other Southern African countries they assert, witnessed the strongest growth, increasing from 5.4% of all informal trading activities in 1992/1993 to 19.5% in 1998 (Mupedziswa and Gumbo 2010).

A study by Boateng (1998) also provides an insight into the development of the labour market in Ghana after the implementation of structural adjustment policies

during the early 1990s. He reckons that prior to the SAPs, formal sector employment in Ghana grew from 337,000 in 1980 to 464,000 workers in 1985, an average annual growth rate of 7.5%. After the implementation of economic reforms and SAPs, employment levels in the formal sector dropped from 414,000 in 1991 to 186,000 in 1996. Nonetheless, the average real formal wage increased by 27% per annum. Boateng (1998) argues that this reflects the shift from mass employment to quality jobs, which suggests a potential positive outcome resulting from structural adjustment in Ghana on that score. But this left massive number of people rendered jobless. The need to survive drives such persons to the streets to sell, more so when trade liberalizations had made available a host of imported products, he added.

Marjit and Maiti (2005) in their write-up, maintained that the ongoing trade liberalization efforts on the continent continue to impact on the size, nature and dynamics within the informal economy in general, and street hawking in particular. Consider, for example, as Hansen (2004) warns of the implications of the increasing numbers of those working informally, on gender dynamics. Although often more dominant in terms of numbers, in many countries, women tend to predominate in areas of trade which are less lucrative. With greater competition, as many goods were made available for more people to retail, Obiri (1996) agrees with Hansen (2004) that women get displaced or are forced into even more marginal areas of trade.

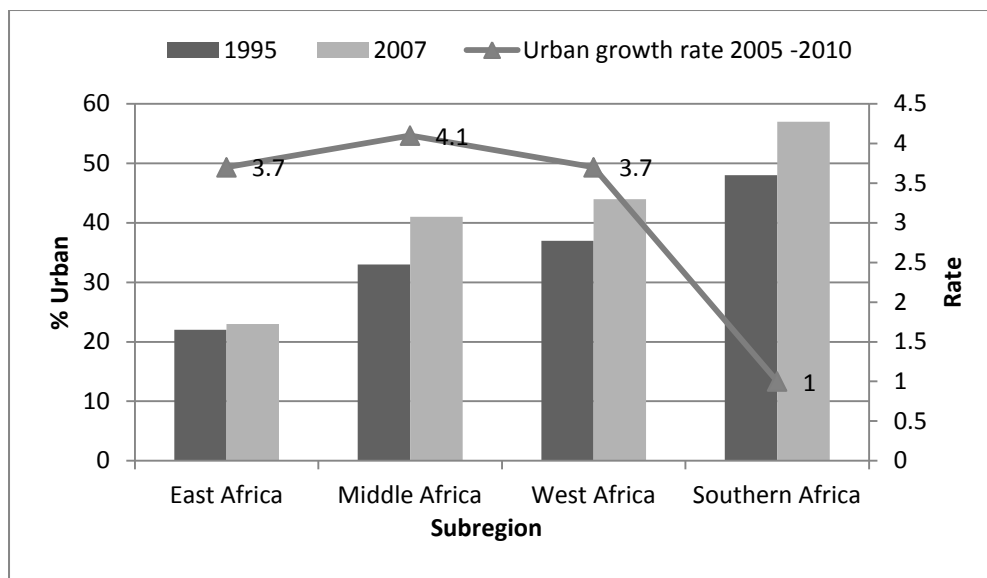
The combination of greater competition among informal traders and a shrinking demand for goods due to shrinking economies as supply increase, Rigg (2002) strongly argues, has led to individual incomes decreasing. Marfleet (1998) is of the view that this has become particularly pronounced with the dramatic increase in imports from China to Africa over the last 10 years. The greater availability of a diverse range of goods can be positive for consumers, but has often had devastating

impacts on local industry. Baden and Barber (2000), for example, reflect on the impact of second hand clothes trade on local clothing manufacturing in West Africa. This they observed has however led to job losses, especially for women and also a shrinking customer base for local enterprises.

An interesting finding in Boateng (1998) is that the decline in employment was larger in firms that had collective bargaining agreements, which illustrates how labour market institutions can constrain labour mobility during periods of adjustment. Overall, there was a shift in demand from low-skill to high-skill labour, reflecting the need for one to attain very high level of education before one could match the type of skills required in the new economy, pushing the section without the requisite skill and training into unemployment or at best the informal sector.

In Africa the informal sector as a whole by the estimation of the International Labor Organization (2002) accounted for 60% of all urban jobs and over 90% of all new urban jobs. After home-working, street hawking is estimated to account for the largest share of these jobs. Trends in street hawking over time are integrally linked to urbanization, migration and economic development processes. Therefore before reflecting on what data there is, each of these will be considered in turn.

Mitullah (2003) noted that urbanization in African is a relatively recent phenomenon except for West Africa and some coastal East African towns. Figure 5 below presents urbanization figures in 1995 and 2007, as well as projected urban growth rates for 2005-2010.



**Figure 5: Percentage of total population in urban centers and projected urbanization rates for four sub regions of Africa (ILO, 2002)**

Mitullah (2003) continues that despite the fact that, for the first time in history, in 2008 one in every two people were living in urban areas, overall urbanization in Africa is lower than in Asia and in Latin America and the Caribbean. It is clear from the figure, however that there are significant regional differences within Africa. North and Southern Africa are highly urbanized in contrast to, for example, East Africa. Further, there are increases over time. In the space of 12 years, a relatively short period in demographic terms, the percentage of the total population that is urban has increased by 5%.

Again there are regional differences, with increases in urbanization figures being particularly pronounced in Middle, East and West Africa. The figure also shows projections of the urban growth rate. These predictions suggest that urbanization processes in Africa will proceed faster than in other continents. With lack of formal job vacancies, the danger will be that newcomers to the city will as a matter of urgency opt for some informal activity in order to survive. Mitullah (2003) professed finally that these figures suggest that the current congestion on the streets is likely to intensify.

A further dimension of urbanization processes that swells the number of street hawkers is international migration. As Landau (2007:61) points out 'international migration is an inexorable response to regional economic inequalities'. Not only are there significant inequality between African countries, but Africa has long been the site of a number of political crises and civil wars. Somalia, Liberia, Sierra Leone, the Democratic Republic of Congo, Rwanda, Burundi, Ethiopia and Eritrea have generated high levels of forced migration. More recently the crises in the Darfur region as well as in Zimbabwe have generated flows of migration both within Africa and elsewhere. Foreign migrants, like their rural counterparts, often have no choice but to work in segments of the economy where barriers to entry and set up costs are low. Street trading according to Landau (2007) is thus what many foreign migrants opt to do.

The combination of urbanization, migration and economic development trends suggests that there has been and still will be a rapid increase in the number of street traders operating on the streets of African cities.

The informal sector in developing countries as a whole is thus seen to have been greatly impacted by international politico-economic policy, resulting in retrenchments and the availability of foreign products creating the grounds for the offshoot of informal activities.

### 2.3: Street Hawking as a Means to a Living

It is generally agreed that the informal sector in developing countries is rapidly growing (De Soto, 1989). There exists however no doubt in Madziakapita's (2003) mind that the informal sector plays a critical role in the developing and underdeveloped nations. Madziakapita (2003) argues, "there is clear evidence that the benefits of the informal sector in many countries can no longer be ignored".

The ILO (2002) compilation estimates for selected countries reports that informal traders in the African countries contribute between 85% and 99% of total employment in trade and between 46% and 70% of total value added in trade. Kenya and Tunisia for instance as seen in the table below presents a situation where street trade provided work for over 500,000 people in total. In most African countries, other than North African Muslim countries, women represent at least 50%, if not more, of the total number of traders. In matrilineal societies of West Africa, there is a long standing tradition of informal markets largely controlled by women.

**Table 3: Street Vendors in Selected African Countries**

	Number of street vendors	Percentage of the non agricultural labour force	Percentage of women
Tunisia (1997)	125 619	6	2
Benin (1992)	45 591	5	81
Kenya ( 1999)	416 294	8	33

Source: ILO, 2002:52

Concerning the informal sector in Africa, UN (1996) reported as been dominated by trade-related activities, with services and manufacturing accounting for only a small percentage of this sector. For example, in Angola, Nigeria, South Africa and Uganda,

a majority of informal sector workers are active in retail trade (ILO 2002). Most of these workers are self-employed, which accounts for 70% of workers in this sector in Sub Saharan Africa, with the remainder in wage-employment (ILO 2002c). Street hawking is one particular informal sector activity that is prevalent on the continent. According to 1992 figures quoted in Charmes (1998a), street hawkers represented 80.7% of all economic units surveyed in urban areas in Benin, with women making up over 75% of vendors. In view of these benefits (both at individual and national level) and the many other problematic issues (zoning and urban land management) that surround this sector, lots of care and consultation needs to be employed when confronting the challenges of the informal sector.

One of the challenges is the notion that the formal and informal sector are in competition. Contrary to this view, both sectors benefit from each other in a number of ways since the informal sector at times become the outlet for their finished products. Cross (2000) clarifies this argument when he stated that “many formal products are available in poorer areas, but only because they are provided by informal stores and stalls which in exchange leads to an upgraded standard of living”.

Arguably, Cross (2000) adds that: the popularity of Coca Cola, Pepsi and innumerable other snacks and consumer products are made possible in third world countries by the small-scale distribution channels of these products that makes ample use of informal and semi-formal distributors and retails outlets that reduce the final cost to the consumer in poor areas. Madziakapita (2003) further argues that the informal sector helps to absorb labor of the new arrivals in the urban areas. Without the existence of the informal sector it is likely that a ‘social-economic crisis’ can be highly exacerbated and cause a destabilization of the whole society in general, he (2003) concludes.

According to the study by Kusakabe (2010), women hawkers in the city of Phnom Penh in Cambodia are from poor backgrounds and have low levels of education. Street hawking hence became the only way they could earn a living with dignity. Kusakabe (2010) found that these women are less dependent on their husbands as they are the main bread winners in the family. In most cases, their husbands did not have regular jobs and because of 'male superiority' they do no house chore either. He (1999) found that street vendors who are widowed or divorced are not interested in finding husbands because they feel that they are independent and do not need the support of males.

Bhowmik (1995) also argues that street hawking is an important source of employment for the urban poor. Bhowmik (1995) visited some slums in Bangkok in May 2003 and found that most of the slum dwellers were engaged in street food hawking. The number of street hawkers in the city, he (1995) reported, increased rapidly after the monetary crisis of 1998 that affected the group of countries known as the Asian tigers. Many of the workers who lost their jobs as a result of the crisis and others who could not find formal jobs took to street vending as a source of living, and indeed it served as a safety-net for lots of the indigenes.

Anarfi (1997) found that more than a third (36%) of children on the streets were involved in street hawking in Ghana for a living. He identifies poverty as the main factor pushing Ghanaian children onto city streets. Obiri (1996) had already observed that these children mainly hawk on the streets to supplement the income of their parents (especially those in the lower socio-economic stratum). Anarfi (1997) discovered that some street children hawk for their relations and other people on commission bases, and thereafter decided to breakaway and hawk for themselves when they can no longer live on the commissions paid to them by those they worked

for. Information however on adult hawkers is scanty. Nevertheless, one can conjecture that, like the children, poverty may be the main driving force in the case of adults.

Cross (2000) argues, “the paradox is that, despite its characteristic challenges, the informal sector is now often called upon by today’s development experts to take over where the formal sector has failed”. Cross (2000) states that the formal sector has in many ways failed to eradicate unemployment hence the government and Non-Governmental Organizations are currently providing loans and support to these informal setups so that they develop. According to Cross, this is a clear indication that the informal sector is recognized as critical for national development. Cross (2000) further argues that writers tend to focus mainly on what the informal sector lacks as compared to the formal sector but what is “overlooked are the features that actually make the informal sector successful—the spirit of survival and flexibility”. Apart from the availability of funds and relaxation of regulations, the growth of street hawking and the informal sector in general is attributed to several other factors such as unemployment due to privatization, retrenchment in the public sector among others.

Hawking as an economic strategy can thus be seen as offering people a path to obtaining a living in the seemingly harsh socio-economic circumstance. However hawkers are often spotted employing unauthorized places which brews the conflicts that ensue between them and managers of the urban space in their attempt at restoring respect for regulation.

## **2.4: Managing Street Hawking in Africa**

In the period immediately after the Second World War, cities in less developed countries were seen as the main agents of development and they were regarded as the spatial oases from which progress would eventually be spread (Potter and Salau 1990). This role of cities was considered to be crucial for modernity. Post (1996) notes that the thoughts of many urban planners and decision makers in most of the developing countries were, and still are dominated by the pursuit of modernity through city beautification and orderly layouts. Modernist planning became central in the designing and shaping of towns and cities in most of these countries. In most countries urban planning consists of a general framework, usually a master plan, zoning regulations, and a development control system. Post (1996) was convinced that perhaps no function is more central to what planners do than land use zoning.

Zoning divides the city into distinct areas each of which has its own set of authorized uses. Njoh (1999) explains that this instrument is used, for instance, to ensure that housing and housing-related activities are restricted to residential areas while commercial activities are confined to business districts and industrial activities housed within industrial and manufacturing parks. Healey (1997) highlights that land-use zoning, layout plans for subdivisions and projects were introduced for the reorganization of the urban fabric and thus became part of the management of all the physical development process. Evans (1995) observes that one recurring view throughout literature on urban planning is the core assumption that planning is undebatable in the interests of all. The rationale for urban planning has been the improvement in the use and development of land for authorized uses. Hence, street hawkers are still regarded as contravening with this rationale by illegally occupying public space.

Yiftachel *et al* (2002) singing from the same hymn sheet as Post (1996) stated that urban planners and managers maintain that modernity is inconsistent with the continued presence of large numbers of street hawkers and assert in no uncertain terms that zoning is also used as a planning tool to control and exclude economic strategies developed by the poor in society under the guise that they don't fit the permitted uses of the urban-space. Hence, apart from simply compartmentalizing land use activities, zoning is used as an instrument for keeping undesirable activities out of the urban landscape (Njoh 1999).

The use of public space by street hawkers became the subject of intense contestation and as a result street hawkers became victims of urban planning machination for the achievement of a healthy urban environment. All sorts of labels indicating the undesirability of street hawking were put forth to emphasize the perceived dangers these activities pose.

Nesvag (2000) states that in the post-apartheid South Africa and other post-independence African countries, street hawking is perceived as a major problem and an "eye-sore" in the urban landscape, which city authorities wish to present to their booming tourism industry. In a related work by Post (1996: 5), he found that street hawkers' activities in Sudan were seen as the "reminiscent of the dark past and are swept into a pile which they labeled chaotic, untidy, unhealthy and illegal bundle which distorts the image of their towns". Urban planners and managers in Mexico City criticize street vendors for causing or contributing to a number of social ills that afflict the city, and as such, have labeled them as "mafia" (Cross 1998). According to Bayat (1997: 144), the official discourse in Tehran City of Iran perceives street hawking as a social disease, afflicting malaise, parasitic and fake and pseudo-occupation which causes nuisance in public sites and hence would use laws and

regulations to restore order in the city.

In a case study by Mitullah (2003), she revealed that most Local Authorities operated dated bye-laws that require review. Most cities, she observed, have placed the responsibility for street trade in wrong departments, with most of them managing street traders through the Traffic and Enforcement Departments. In this respect, hawkers are viewed as a problem that has to be controlled rather than as an employment production unit that contributes to the urban economy. Further asserting that most of city managers use outdated restrictive policies, by-laws and regulations drafted by colonial governments originally intended to control and regulate the growth of indigenous enterprises. These restrictions make hawking principally illegal, and view vendors as responsible for making cities dirty, obstructing traffic and therefore a public nuisance to be dealt with.

These policies, Mitullah (2003) continues, did not provide for any trade within the Central Business District (CBD), and most street hawking activities that take place within the CBD had no legal provisions. The policies did not appreciate the role of street hawking in an urban economy. South Africa, Asafo-Agyei (2004) studied, had initiated processes through its Constitution, that have potential for improving the business environment for Medium and Small Enterprise, providing services to communities and promoting social and economic development.

However, while some shopkeepers appreciate and actively encourage the presence of hawkers near their businesses, others have actively encouraged hawker evictions. With ever greater frequency, Boadi (2000) observed that business owners have pressured the police to permanently remove hawkers from the spaces around their business. Clamoring calls put the phenomenon of street hawking in vulnerable state. Moser (1978:1055) in her analysis came to one realization that 'hawking or street

vending in its proper place of informal sector by all intents and purposes is a grey area'. This is due to the fact that whereas some countries frown upon it, other countries have also made provisions for it.

However, Kamunyori's (1999) study in Kenya also revealed that the street hawking, despite the problems that is associated with it has gained some legal backing. His (1999) studies revealed that hawking is legal according to the bye-laws that govern Nairobi City as long as the hawker has paid a licensing fee (either a daily fee of \$0.75 or an annual fee of between (\$45-75). However, while there is provision for street hawking, he noted another bye-law, the General Nuisance By-Law, which is often used to override this provision. Created during the colonial administration, the General Nuisance Bye-Law allows city inspectors to arrest any individual that they deem to be creating 'general nuisance' in public spaces.

Bhowmik (2010) reports that street hawkers in Sri Lanka appear to be in a slightly better position than their counterparts elsewhere. Street hawking in most urban areas in Sri Lanka, he observed, is not totally illegal and vendors can ply their trade on the pavements by paying a daily tax to the municipal council.

Morales (2000) disclosed that even at times when hawkers have gone through the process of acquiring an annual license, there is no guarantee that the license will protect them. Kamunyori (2003) agrees with Morales' (2000), stating that in the Kenyan circumstance every time there is a change of the chief executive of the City Council, the chief executive would want to make an impression for all and sundry to know that he is in charge; so he voids all licenses though the expiry date might not yet be up. In such a situation street hawkers are given no legal recourse nor refund which culminates in the conflicts and raids observed by Vishwanath (2001). Hansen (2004:68) in a similar investigation identifies a leadership change in the local

authority as a key reason for evictions of traders in Lusaka. In Ghana, King (2006:17) also observed a similar situation. King (2006) noted that the new system of decentralization where there are more frequent changes in the local authorities leads to eviction of street hawkers which is seen as a common way to display power.

Agbo (2010) observed that in Abuja, Nigeria, street hawkers have always been victims of persistent raid carried out by city taskforce. The reason has always been the desire to make Abuja an exceptionally neat capital city compared to any modern city anywhere in the world. In South Africa Nesvag (2000), notes that street hawkers were particularly harassed by the apartheid regime as part of the strategy of preventing Africans from taking control of public space. Similarly, Rogerson and Hart (1989:32) argued that South African urban authorities fashioned and refined some set of anti-street trader measures that allows for the continued repression, persecution and prosecution of street hawkers up till the early 1980s.

In Tanzania, Nnkya (2006) documents the harassments of street hawkers by the government in the mid-1970s. She noted that hawkers operating in the capital city were forcibly evicted to villages on the coast; under the facade that street hawkers encroach on public spaces not permitted for trading and undermines socialist principles. Mitullah (2006) spoke of the fact that the lack of the right to trading space and operation sites of street hawkers has also been the basis for evictions. As she noted, because most spaces hawkers occupy are considered illegal, it usually leads to evictions and in most cases charging of daily fee without providing any legal protection. Ever conscious of the erratic nature of their occupation it is almost imperative for hawkers to device tactics at outsmarting city taskforce personnel if they are to persist on the street (Boadi 2000).

In almost all hawker-eviction attempts and raids, street hawkers have tried to resist by adopting strategies that enable them maneuver the taskforce personnel and effectively persist at unauthorized spots selling. Nnkya (2006:84) points out that by 1997, about 240 self-help groups constituting of almost 16,000 members had been formed in Dar es Salaam, enabling traders to collectively access services and oppose undesirable policy that adversely affects their work. Nnkya (2006) discovered an umbrella organization – the Association of Small Scale Businesses – which acts as a lobbyist and pressure group and is involved in these selection of space for business activities as well as strategizing on the steps at moving hawkers so as to ensure that all parties make inputs in the strategy designed so as to obtain a sustainable solution.

In Durban as well, street hawkers were observed by Mitullah (2003) to be well organized during the redevelopment of the Warwick Junction area. Traders were organized into product groups and block committees. The Self Employed Women's Union, was also very active in the area. In both cases this meant that they were the negotiating partners when dialoguing with local authorities for their concerns to be heard. Bhowmik (1995) was however staggered to learn of the fact that street hawkers in Bangkok were not unionized; given the fact that it is one sure way to make ones voice and concerns taken seriously.

Despite the above surveyed trader organizations, there is however evidence that hawkers' organizations among street traders are still low. Lund's re-analysis of data in South Africa, for example, found that in the two large surveys of street hawkers that had been conducted, 15% belonged to an association in Johannesburg, while in Durban only 12% of the men and 16% of the women traders were members of associations. Alila and Mitullah's (2000:18) interview with over 300 street hawkers operating in four different Kenyan cities found that 67% had no knowledge of any

association that addressed street vending issues. More recently in Nairobi, Kamunyori (2007) reports of an encouraging development, that there has been the formation of the Nairobi Informal Sector. This suggests that traders are gradually been conscientized into forming unions to fight their course.

Other unorthodox coping strategy revealed in the works of Ishengoma and Kappel (2006) and corroborated by reviews on the activities of the informal sector in Africa by Lund et al (2000) include sexual favours and hide and seeks (Boadi, 2000). Boadi (2000) again mentioned that hawkers at times pay bribes to taskforce personnel after which they are then permitted to sell at unauthorized spots. Similar accounts are rendered by Mitullah and Alila (2000), Kamunyori (2007), Bhowmik (1995) amongst others. Using such social links one secures a spot at least to ply the trade to ensure a living.

In the midst of the back-and-forth, some city managers have adopted some strategies with the hope of controlling the phenomenon. Bhowmik (2000) learnt of the fact that municipal authorities in Bangkok have demarcated sites where street hawkers are legitimized to operate. They provided 287 of such sites on government lands and additional 14 sites on private lands. The sites officially allotted for street vending, as commentaries have it, are not sufficient for accommodating all street hawkers. Moreover, these areas as Bhowmik (2000) observed do not cover all sections of the city, and hence the customers are not well reached. This has led to street hawkers going back to operate in unauthorized areas to cater for the unserved consumers. As a result, there sprung up 407 unauthorized hawking sites to serve the uncovered population. This means that the majority of street vendors in the city still operated at unauthorized locations.

Kayuni and Tambulasi (2009) expressed much hope in the South African National Government, lauding the government for her commitment to creating an enabling environment for informal economic activities, including street trading. In order to realize this, at National, Provincial, and Local Levels, new laws were enacted to change the legal approach to informal trading. The Business Act of 1991 acknowledged street hawkers as business people who contribute to the economy. The Act provided the hawkers with the right to trade, whereby the Local Authorities merely regulate but could not prevent hawkers from trading.

Malaysia is also another success story of street hawker regulation. The significant feature about Malaysia is that it has given some form of recognition to street hawkers. Sankaran et al (2007) studied that the whole programme started with the regulation and control of street hawkers, which was placed under the Department of Hawkers and Petty Traders (DHPT) established in 1986. The objectives of the department included: the development, modernization and management of the street hawkers in line with the objective of making Kuala Lumpur a clean, healthy and beautiful city for the local people and tourists. In the 1990s, Sankaran et al (2007) adds, the state formulated the National Policy on Hawkers, which had a comprehensive plan to tackle the social and economic problems associated with street hawking. Its implementation included the provision of funds and training programmes for street hawkers to improve their facilities and better themselves. This move saw almost all hawkers vacating the streets of Malaysia which was the prerequisite to access the provisions.

Kayuni and Tambulasi (2009) report of another successful eviction in Malawi, but was not without the application of force. They (2009) satirically pointed out that even with the apparent demise of hawking in public places; people could not fully accept

that it had indeed happened. The forced relocation of street hawkers in Malawi, though not entirely unique in contemporary Africa, has nonetheless had a significant impact on the informal sector activities as well as means of living for many other Malawians who depended on street hawking for their everyday survival.

According to the Flea Market overseer, another problem that has emerged is that some of the hawkers refuse to pay a daily fee because they argue “*we were forced to come here with guns on our heads. We did not want this place in the first place, why should I pay? You only pay for something that you are interested in, not a forced service*”, (Kayuni and Tambulasi, 2009).

All the hawkers interviewed by Kayuni and Tambulasi (2009) mentioned that they have noticed a major reduction in the profits generated in their businesses. They maintained that “the success of their business was highly dependent on the unplanned decision-making of their customers. Customers decide to buy their items not because they had initially planned to do so, but by impulse. Their location, away from the general public, entails that their prospective customers are neither able to see nor get enticed to buy their items. People who actually plan beforehand to buy items are few and worse of all end up doing so in shops around the CBD rather than trek all the way to the flea market.

Bhowmik (2005) hence concludes that though each city has its own development plan which may or may not be implemented, it is quite evident from the review that the term ‘public space’ has a very restrictive meaning. Hawkers or markets that can take care of hawking are not considered in the discussions on public space. He (2005) argues that when urban planners allot space for hospitals, parks, markets, bus and rail terminuses etc. they should take into account that these places usually develop as natural markets for hawkers. Hence urban development plans should capture these

possibilities and make provisions for the growth of such natural markets. As cited in Kayuni and Tambulasi (2009), Mitullah also argues that: although it is believed that vending attracts those who have limited opportunities, street hawking is increasingly becoming an option for many citizens. It is no longer limited to the lower social groups. A number of entrepreneurs have entered the trade as an option. Morales (2000) further raises some thought provoking arguments related to the issue of treating street hawking as a lifestyle. He argues: “hawkers are individuals, but hawking is an outcome of socio-economic complexities, hawking hence is an activity whose benefits and costs cannot be reduced to a single metric and emphasizing that the phenomenon should be understood over time and, analytically speaking, from the perspective of the studied not of the analyst”.

## **2.5: Summary and Concluding Comments**

After a long journey through the various works of researchers, with respect to the topic at hand, one cannot but realize the myriad of issues that exist regarding the informal sector and street hawking to be specific.

At one breath the informal sector seems like a good avenue providing people with means of making ends meet, and contributing to the nation’s economic basket. But on the other side, due to the non-adherence to regulations and bye – laws in the face of the current era of rule of law and city beautification, it becomes a challenge reconciling both positions. The reviews point to the need for a much more holistic approach to the phenomenon to better understand why people would risk their lives on streets as against the national drive at maintaining beauty in the city. It is however understood that with the cuts in employment at the public sector and trade reforms, selling has emerged as an avenue where increasingly people have sought economic refuge.

Dwelling on the objective of this research paper, a functional definition of who a street hawker is was given and some details on their demographic characteristics were provided which depicts that street hawking is carried out by people in their arguably economically productive ages. It was also realized that generally street hawkers have had some basic education, but still remained low. Regarding sex dominance, the data on street hawker population is yet not conclusive.

As mentioned above the activity of street hawking, aside the risk associated with it, the mode of operation violates fundamental laws and hence various attempts have been made worldwide to either control or curb the phenomenon. But most often than not, we find street hawkers coming back to the very spots from where they were evicted. Reasons for this act, researchers point out city authorities are deficient of and as result their seeming inability to take control of the phenomenon. Related to this, the coping mechanisms which street hawkers adopt in order to enable them stay on the street to sell were also looked at.

Interest group formation among the hawkers which could be a way of making their voices heard was discovered not to be very common among hawkers. Palpably missing in the literature so far surveyed was the existence of an effective urban management policy in most African countries. This gap in policy requires urgent attention from policy makers so as to prevent undesirable phenomenon from sprouting in the cities of developing countries.

In the midst of these challenges however, some governments were found to have put in place various curative strategies in an attempt at controlling the phenomenon. Some authorities adopted evictions while others used re location as part of a comprehensive approach, whereas other governments have given some vocational as well as technical training to hawkers as a strategy of opening new career doors for the street hawkers.

Issues regarding the perceptions people have concerning the usefulness or otherwise of the informal sector, and more specifically street hawking were addressed. As was touched on, views expressed showed that one section supported the eviction of hawkers on the basis of city beautification and the adherence to regulations. Others, recounting the very benefits that are derived from the sector, showed solidarity to street hawkers.

## **CHAPTER THREE: THE ACCRA METROPOLITAN AREA AND STUDY LOCATIONS**

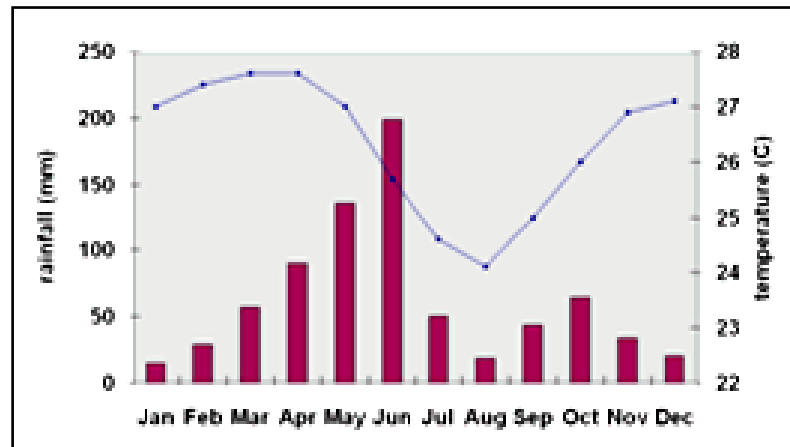
### **3.1: The Geography and Historical Overview of Accra**

Accra is the capital and largest city of Ghana, with an estimated urban population of 2.269 million as of 2012. Accra is also the capital of the Greater Accra Region and of the Accra Metropolitan District, with which it is coterminous. Accra, during and after the colonial periods has been a very important administrative and socio - economic center of the country (Smit and Doortmont, 2007). Due to its early founding around the British, Danish, and Dutch forts, central Accra was and still is a hub with vigorous business activities giving Accra a compact spatial view (Dickson, 1965).

Accra is furthermore the anchor of a larger metropolitan area, the Greater Accra Metropolitan Area (GAMA), this area served as the capital of the British-ruled Gold Coast between 1877 and 1957. Once merely a 19th-century suburb of Victoriaborg, Accra has since transitioned into a modern metropolis; the city's architecture reflects this history, ranging from 19th-century British colonial buildings to skyscrapers and apartment blocks. Over the years, however, with in-migration from rural areas, the city has expanded with no regard to zoning, giving it a sprawled attribute (Dickson and Benneh, 1988).

Owing to Accra's location in the Dahomey Gap, where the coast runs parallel to the prevailing moist monsoonal winds, Accra features a tropical savanna climate with an average annual rainfall of about 730 mm, which falls primarily during Ghana's two rainy seasons. The chief rainy season begins in April and ends in mid-July, whilst a weaker second rainy season occurs in October. Rains usually fall in short intensive storms and give rise to local flooding where drainage channels are obstructed.

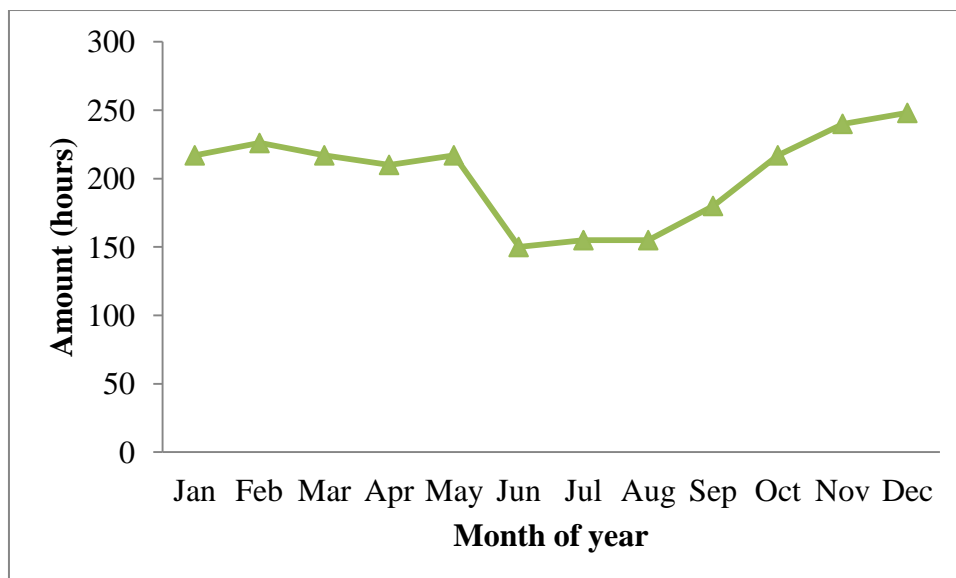
There is very little variation in temperature throughout the year. The mean monthly temperature ranges from 24.7 °C (76.5 °F) in August (the coolest) to 28 °C (82.4 °F) in March (the hottest), with an annual average of 26.8 °C (80.2 °F).



**Figure 6: Rainfall and temperature data for Accra (UK Weather. May 2011)**

It should be noted, however, that the "cooler" months tend to be more humid than the warmer months. As a result, during the warmer months and particularly during the windy harmattan season, the city experiences a breezy "dry heat" that feels less warm than the "cooler".

Air is often trapped in pockets over the city which creates an insulation effect which gives rise to local increase in air temperature, occurring most notably in the Accra Newtown sports complex areas. As Accra is close to the equator, the daylight/sunshine hours are practically uniform during the year with a bit of a drop mid-year resulting in her generally high humidity, varying from 65% in the mid-afternoon to 95% at night. The predominant wind direction in Accra is from the WSW to NNE sectors. Wind speeds normally range between 8 to 16 km/h. High wind gusts occur with thunderstorms, which generally pass in squall along the coast.



**Figure 7: Sunshine data for Accra (BBC Weather. May 2011)**

The maximum wind speed record in Accra is 107.4 km/h (58 knots). Strong winds associated with thunderstorm activity often cause damage to property by removing roofing material. Several areas of Accra experience micro-climatic effects. Low-profile drainage basins with a north-south orientation are not as well ventilated as those orientated east-west.

The city of Accra has a total area of 200 square kilometers, and is the anchor city of the Greater Accra Metropolitan Area (GAMA), made up of the Accra Metropolitan District, Tema Metropolitan District, Ga South Municipal District, Ga East Municipal District, Ga West Municipal District, Adenta Municipal District, Ashaiman Municipal District, Ledzokuku-Krowor Municipal District, and the town of Kasoa in the Awutu Senya District of the Central Region.

The intersection of the Lafa stream and Mallam junction serves as the western border of the city. The Great Hall of the University of Ghana, legon forms Accra's northern border, while the Nautical College forms the eastern border. The Gulf of Guinea forms the southern border. These borders notwithstanding, conflict where adjoining districts exist, resulting in a de facto shrinking of the city limits in recent years.

Nonetheless Accra still remains the most populous city of the country with an estimated population of about 3.9 million, making her one of the most populated and fastest-growing cities in Africa, with an annual growth rate of 3.36% (UN 1998).

Accra is Ghana's primate city, serving as the nation's economic and administrative hub. It is furthermore a center of culture and tourism, spotting a wide range of nightclubs, restaurants and hotels. Since the early 1990s, a number of new buildings have been built, including the multi-storey French-owned Novotel hotel and the well celebrated National Theatre which was built with Chinese assistance. In 2010, the GaWC designated Accra a Gamma-minus-level world city, indicating a growing level of international influence and connectedness.

The Central Business District of Accra contains the city's main banks and department stores, the Cocoa Marketing Board headquarters (dealing with cocoa, Ghana's chief export) and an area known as the Ministries, where Ghana's government administration is concentrated. Economic activities in Accra include the financial and agricultural activities, Atlantic fishing, and the manufacture of processed food, lumber, plywood, textiles, clothing and chemicals.

The period between 1960 and 1970 saw rapid industrialization and expansion in the manufacturing and commercial sectors of Accra. This factor contributed to high rural-urban migration to the city, and consequently a high population growth rate (Dickson and Benneh, 1988). The stagnation of the Ghanaian economy during the 1970s slowed the growth of Accra's population, as shown by the falling growth rate of the 1970-1984 inter-censal years.

The primacy of the Accra Metropolitan Area as Ghana's administrative, educational, industrial and commercial center continues to be the major force for rapid population growth, wherein migrants contribute over 35% of the city's population growth. The

gross density of population for Accra Metropolitan Area in 2000 was 10.03 persons per hectare, compared to 6.23 per ha. in 1970. The highest densities were recorded in the Accra Metropolitan Assembly, with an overall average of 69.3-persons per ha.

At the community level, densities exceed 250 persons/ha, occurring mostly in the immigrant and depressed areas in the oldest parts of Accra such as Accra New Town, Nima, James Town and Ussher Town, while densities range between 17.5 - 40 persons/ha in the high-income areas such as Ridge, Cantonment, Labone among others (Songsore and McGranahan, 1993).

### **3.2: Overview of the Economy and Transport in Accra**

In 2008, the World Bank estimated that Accra's economy constituted around 10% of Ghana's total gross domestic product (GDP), or around US\$3 billion. The economically active population of Accra is estimated to be 823,327, but the daily influx of commuters from dormitory towns outside the city inflates this figure almost on daily bases (GSS 2000).



**Figure 8: Banks along Accra's High Street (Source: fieldwork 2011)**

Accra is a major center for manufacturing, marketing, finance, insurance, transportation and tourism. It has about 350 major industrial establishments, and its financial sector incorporates a central bank, commercial banks, development banks,

merchant banks, discount houses, home finance mortgage Banks, multiple building societies, a stock exchange, over 218 foreign exchange bureaux, finance houses, insurance companies, insurance brokerage firms, savings and loans companies, and a host of real estate developers.

The sectors of Accra's economy consist of the primary (farming, fishing, mining and quarrying), secondary (manufacturing, electricity, gas, water, construction) and the tertiary sectors (wholesale trade, retail trade, hotel, restaurant, transportation, storage, communication, financial intermediation, real estate service, public administration, education, health and other social services). The tertiary service sector is the city's largest employment avenue, employing about 531,670 people. The second largest sector, is the secondary sector, employs 22.34% of the labor force. Accra has 114,198 of its workforce unemployed, bringing the unemployment rate to about 12.2% (GSS 2000).

Tourism is also an avenue via which Accra contributes to Ghana's development, spotting a wide variety of hotels, monuments, museums and nightclubs. The city has two five-star hotels: the Labadi Beach Hotel and the La Palm Royal Beach Hotel. The Golden Tulip Hotel and Novotel Accra, located in Accra's central business district, are both ranked four-star. There are numerous three-star hotels, including the Hotel Wangara, Hotel Shangri-La and Erata Hotel, along with numerous budget hotels.

The Accra International Conference Centre and other meeting facilities provide venues for conference tourism, an area in which Ghana leads the rest of the West African sub-region. Accra furthermore hosts the National Museum, which houses a large collection of Ghanaian historical treasures; the National Theatre, with its distinctive modern Chinese architecture; and the National Cultural Centre, whose arts

and crafts bazaar and traditional textile market host traditional handicrafts from all over Ghana.

The Du Bois Centre houses a research library and gallery of manuscripts, as well as the graves of its namesake, the African-American scholar W.E.B. Du Bois, and his wife Shirley Graham Du Bois. The Kwame Nkrumah Mausoleum is the resting place of Ghana's first President, Kwame Nkrumah, who oversaw the country's independence from British rule and was a leading exponent of Pan-Africanism.



**Figure 9: Accra's Independence Arch** (Source: fieldwork 2011)

The city's foremost historical site is the James Town area, which contains the national monuments including: Ussher Fort, James Fort and Osu Castle (also known as Christiansborg), built by Danish settlers in the 17th century.

The road network in the Accra Metropolitan Area totals about 1117.89 km, made up of 918.10 km paved and 199.8 km of unpaved roads. Accra is served by Accra International Airport, which has both civil and military uses. Located 6 miles (10 km) from downtown Accra, the airport handles all of the city's scheduled international air passenger services. Accra is furthermore the hub of two of Ghana's three main railway

lines: those to Kumasi and Takoradi. Downtown Accra's streets were not organized in a grid plan, but rather created as needed. By contrast, the streets of planned housing estates, such as Dansoman Estates, Ringway Estates and Kanda Estates, do follow a grid system.

With Ghana having only 21 passenger automobiles per 1,000 citizens as of 2009, public transportation is the most popular means of getting around in Accra. Rail services to Tema, Takoradi and Kumasi are unreliable and unpopular owing to their limited reach.

Feasibility studies for a \$1.5 billion monorail project were completed in 2011, to be followed by the construction of rail tracks within the following five years. The privately-funded project is to be undertaken by the American Intercontinental Development Corporation (AIDC). Accra has an extensive taxi network and numerous taxi ranks, but most lack a meter system, so price negotiation is required between the passenger and driver when one gets on. Metered taxis do operate in the city, but tend to be slightly more expensive. Taxis in Ghana are painted in two colours: the four bumpers fenders are yellow/orange, and the rest of the car is in a colour of the operator's choice.

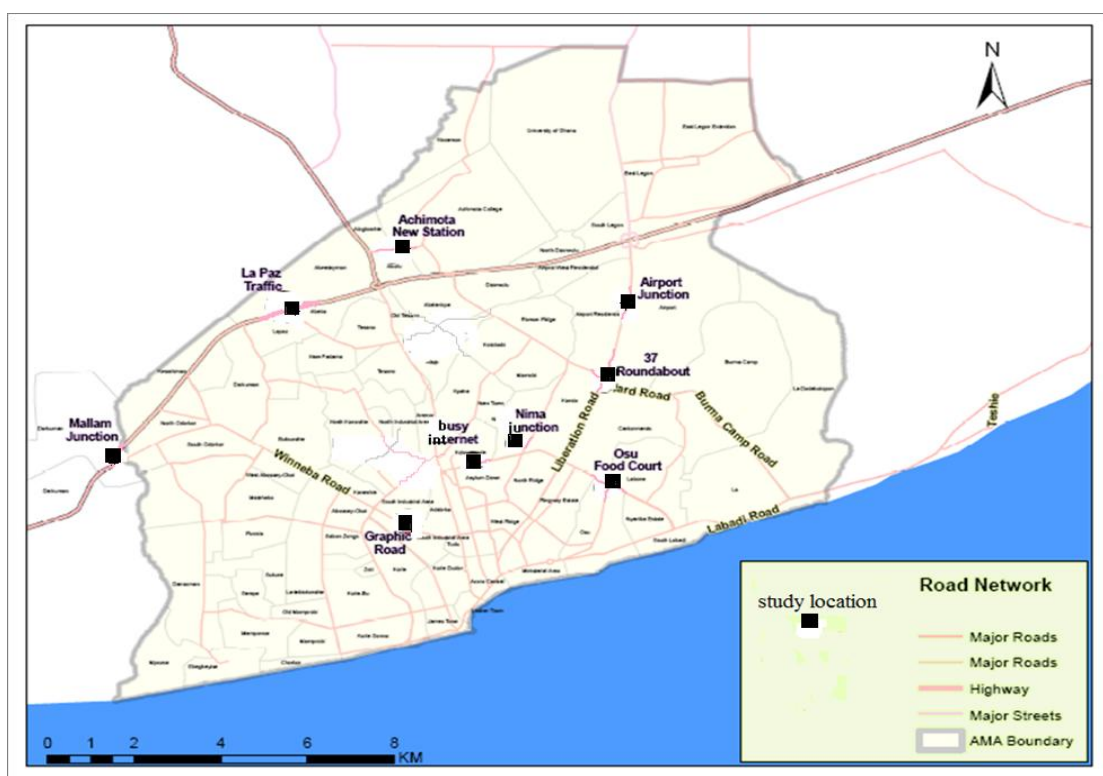
By far the most common form of transport in Accra, *trotros* (motor vehicles repurposed for passenger transport) are the most efficient and cost-effective way of getting around in the city. *Trotros* stop at bus stops or places with a gathering of people, and can also be found at truck stations or designated station as such.

In 2003, the Metro Mass Transit Service was inaugurated in Accra as a more comfortable and cheaper alternative to the *trotro*. However, the services of these buses have not been highly used. Recently, plans have been afoot to develop a more advanced rapid transit bus system for the city and its metropolitan area. This project is

aimed at creating an "integrated, efficient, cost-effective and sustainable transportation system responsive to the needs of society, supporting growth and poverty reduction"

### 3.3: The Study Locations

The locations sampled for the study included: The Busy Internet environs, Nima Junction, Lapaz Traffic Light, Mallam Junction, the Accra International Airport Junction, the Accra Graphic Road, 37 Military Hospital Circle, the New Achimota Station and the Osu Food Court, all of whom are situated in the Accra Metropolis.



**Figure 10: Map of the Accra Metropolitan Area and Study Locations**

(Source: Authors construct 2011)

Generally all the locations experience either heavy vehicular and/or human traffic which in both ways present an opportunity for very vibrant hawking activity. Aside the general attributes that the locations share, there exist some peculiarities that further augment the vibrancy of the hawking activity seen at the locations.

The Busy internet is located in the commercial area of the Kwame Nkrumah Circle, its lorry park accommodates vehicles bound for almost all the regions of Ghana, and boasts of one of the largest fleet of intra – city vehicles. The area also houses various offices, banks and other business places. In view of the consequent passenger densities, the location provides an attractive space for hawking both within the car parks as well the adjoining streets and bus stops.

Osu is located about 3 kilometers (1.9 mi) east of the central business district. Osu is a district in central Accra, Osu and is locally known as the "West End" of Accra. Bounded to the south by the Gulf of Guinea, Osu's western boundary is the Independence Avenue. The Ring Road separates Osu from the northern district of Labone. At its southern end is the site of the 17th-century Fort Christiansborg, a former Danish colonial fort, which used to serve as Ghana's seat of government.

The main thoroughfare, Cantonments Road (colloquially known as Oxford Street) features large supermarkets, offices, banks and private shops, and is also renowned for its food court which has a chain of restaurants, fast food joints, rest houses, entertainments centers and lively nightlife. All of these establishments attracts people to the place and hence provide good grounds for hawking.

As a suburb of Accra, Nima lies to the east of the ring road. It is one of the densely populated areas of Accra, well known for her high concentration of migrants from the northern regions of Ghana. The Nima junction is thus located on a principal thoroughfare whose environs also house various banks, telecommunication offices, apartment stores as well as offices of air transport companies. The Nima junction, just as most of the locations, experiences traffic jams during its peak hours and hence provides the market for hawkers to ply their trade.

The Achimota New Station is located in the residential area of Achimota. It has a lorry station with vehicles that do both intra-city as well as inter-regional travels. Its creation was as a result of pressure that the Nkrumah Circle lorry station received, where people came from distant places within the metropolis in order to obtain vehicles that do long distance travels. As a direct result of the daily passengers that come to the station to board or alight from vehicles hawking has evolved to take advantage of the agglomeration.

The Mallam Junction forms an intersection on the main George Walker Bush Highway and the Kaneshie – Winneba road. Before the construction of the George Walker Bush Highway, this intersection served as terminals for *trotro* (local buses) and taxis. The area also experiences heavy vehicular traffic during its morning and evening peak hours, and has consolidated the space into an attractive space for retail trade and hawking.

The Airport Junction has also emerged as a major hawking area as a result of the weight of vehicles that ply the road. The Airport Junction is located on the main Accra – Madina road just outside the Accra International Airport. Its environs accommodate offices for ambassadors, hotels, banks as well as offices for investment companies. Aside the fact that it lies on a principal linking road, the ‘go – slow’ vehicular traffics that occur during its rush hours coupled with its bus stop for travelers, provide a fertile ground for street hawking.

The Lapaz Traffic Light is also located on the George Walker Bush Highway on a cross road boarded by Akweteyman to its north, Abeka to its east, North Tesano to its south and Achimota Village to its west. The Lapaz environs have a very large and vibrant daily market which caters for its surrounding settlements. The area is also served with numerous shops, retail structures, banks and offices. By virtue of the large

population accessing the market and the shops on a daily basis as well as the heavy traffic jams that occur on the high way, street hawkers have found the place profitable.

The 37 Military Hospital Circle is located on the section of the main Accra - Madina road (Liberation road) that joins the Obansajor way to the Burma Camp road. The hospital in this case serves as a major land mark and a feature which see a lot of people trooping in and out the health center. The location also has a functioning market, eat-outs, apartment stores as well as one of Ghana's renowned hotels - The Golden Tulip Hotel. As a characteristic feature of most roads in Ghana, this segment of the liberation road also experiences some amount of human and vehicular traffic snarls which make for a viable hawking activity.

## **CHAPTER FOUR: THE STREET HAWKER AND THE NEED TO SURVIVE IN THE CITY OF ACCRA**

### **4.1: Introduction**

This chapter commences discussions of the findings, which for easier comprehension are categorized under specific headings beginning with the General Characteristics of the sampled hawkers, and then proceeding to one of the four study objectives which is: Examining hawking as a means to eke out a living.

### **4.2: General Characteristics of Hawkers in Accra**

#### **4.2.1: Sex and Age distribution**

Studies have shown that men engage in street hawking at younger ages but later leave for other higher paid formal jobs while women join the street trade and stay till old age as it offers them the flexibility of combining this activity with household chores (Mitullah 2003). It is also widely held that females normally dominate in the hawking business (Agyeman 1993). This however is not exactly the case in Ghana. It was observed by Asiedu and Agyei-Mensah (2008) in some four locations within the Accra Metropolis that the number of males in the hawking business is now slightly edging above that of their female counterparts. In furtherance to this recent observation, and with increased study locations, table 4 touches on this issue with the rationale of bringing to bare the depth of this changing characteristic among hawkers in the Accra Metropolis.

It was observed that males dominate the hawking activities in the Accra Metropolis, constituting approximately 52% whereas the female respondents made up 48% of the sample. This shows that males, with respect to this sample form the dominant portion (though slightly) of the street hawking population in the Accra Metropolis.

**Table 4: Sex and Age distribution**

	<b>Age</b>	<b>Male</b>	<b>Female</b>	<b>Total</b>
<b>Youth</b>	<b>&lt;18</b>	3	6	<b>9 (5%)</b>
	<b>18-28</b>	22	27	<b>49 (27.2%)</b>
	<b>29-39</b>	<b>54</b>	<b>26</b>	<b>80 (44.4%)</b>
<b>Early old age</b>	<b>40 -50</b>	14	23	<b>37 (20.6%)</b>
<b>Late old age</b>	<b>50&lt;</b>	1	4	<b>5 (2.8%)</b>
	<b>Total</b>	<b>94 (52.2%)</b>	<b>86 (47.77%)</b>	<b>180 (100%)</b>

**Source: fieldwork 2011**

The analysis of their ages revealed that the dominant age group was that between the age brackets of 29 - 39 years, who made up 44.44% of the sample. The majority of the respondents in this age category were however in locations as the Osu Food Court, the Nima junction and Lapaz traffic light. The second dominant age group was between 18 - 28 years followed by those between 40 - 50 years, recording 27.22% and 20.6% respectively.

Looking at the age categories, one observes that females dominate in all the age groups under consideration except for that between 29 - 39 years. Corroborative of literature, females who are generally observed to join the trade at tender ages and stay till old age are again observed to maintain a dominative representation almost across all the age categories. One quickly observes also, that in all the age categories under consideration, there is a chunk of the youth and largely males in the age category of 29 - 39 years. This revelation lends credence to the observation that predominantly, persons in their most active economic ages due to the non existence of job vacancies enter the informal sector for jobs. Where they may employ the informal sector as a step, such that as and when a hawker finds more desirable occupations he/she may decide to quit hawking. Another point worthy of note is that this group of persons

would have energy which is a key element in hawking (Iyenda, 2005). Aside the resilience and toughness that hawkers require in order to persist in the raids and conflict ridden activity of hawking (Jimu 2003; Cross 2000), hawkers walk to and fro the streets, thoroughfares and at times through vicinities in a bid to attract as many buyers as possible in order to obtain the much needed profits (Ntiforo 2000). Such mode of operation calls for an energy requirement, which all other things being equal, is available in this age category.

It is therefore seen that contrary to the norm that females dominate the activity of street hawking, it is now being observed that the number of males is gradually growing above that of the female. This slight growth in the number of male regarding the phenomenon can however be seen as the ramifications of the raids and conflicts that have characterized the trade lately, such that the more resilient males are now dominating in the trade.

#### **4.2.2: Region of origin, Place of residence and length of stay in Accra**

It has also been the common argument that people from the northern regions of Ghana dominate the migration drift to Accra in the attempt to seek economic refuge. It therefore became imperative to look into the wave of migration with regard to hawkers, the various places hawkers settle and how long people have stayed in Accra engaging in hawking.

Looking at figures 11 and 12, it is realized that the majority of the respondents hail from Ashanti, Central and Eastern regions of Ghana, with the other regions recording marginal frequencies which is however consistent with the findings of Asiedu and Agyei-Mensah (2008).

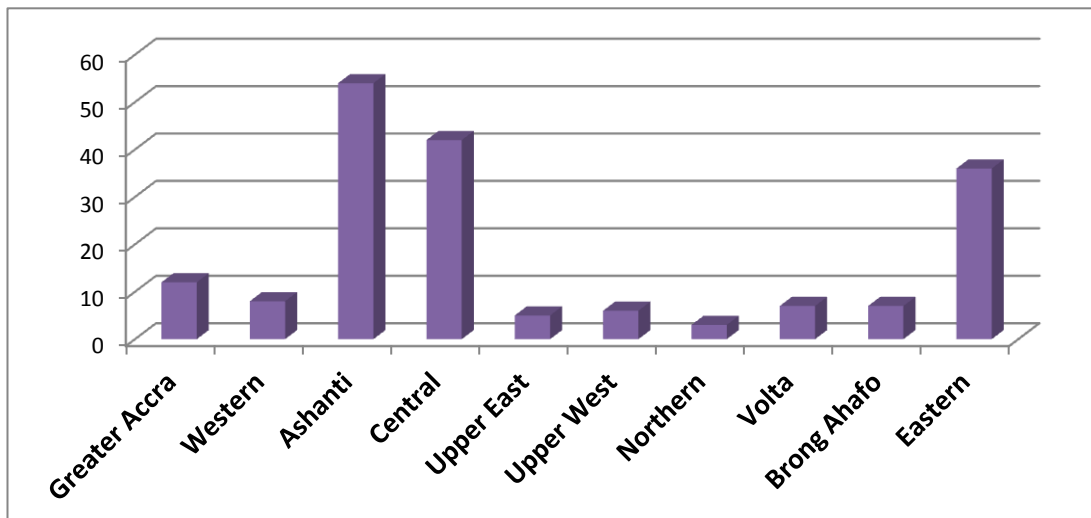


Figure 11: Region of origin

(Source: fieldwork 2011)

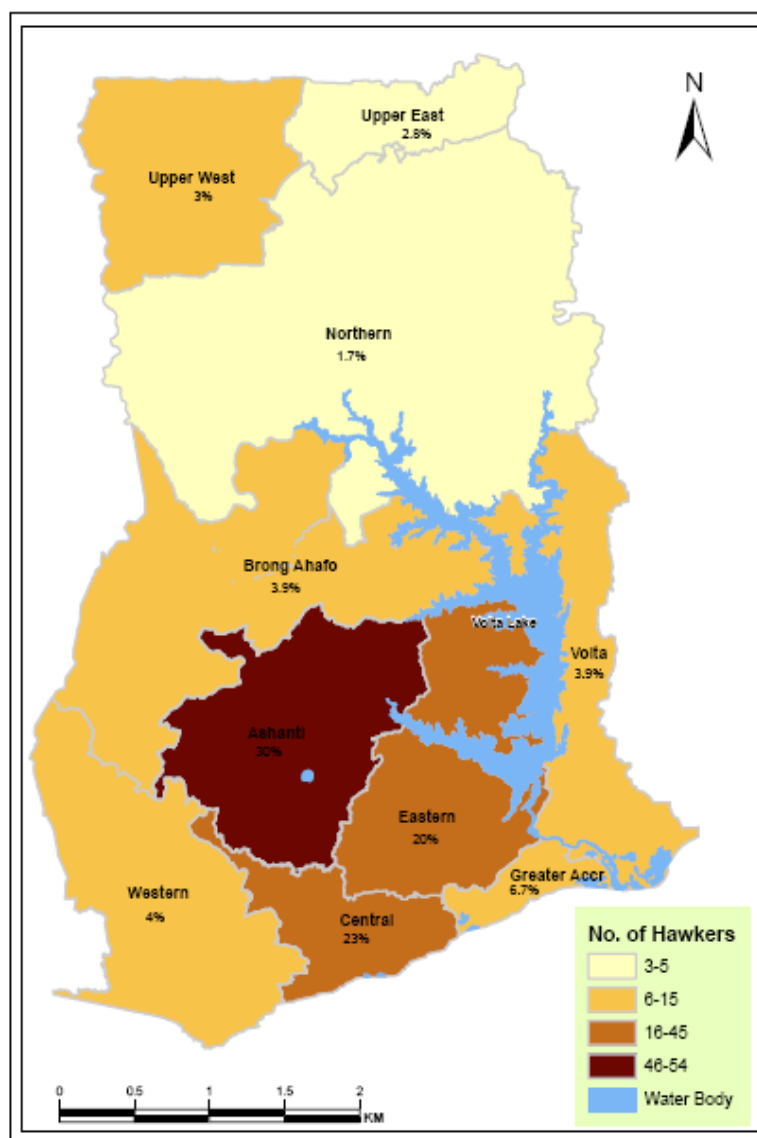


Figure 12: A map of Ghana showing Number and percentage of Hawkers and their region of origin.

(Source: Fieldwork, 2012)

The Ashanti region dominated with 30% of the sample, partly explained by their arguably enterprising nature which is believed to drive them especially in their quest to always seek for self - employment rather than work for others.

The Central region is understood to be one of the underdeveloped regions in Ghana followed with 23.33%. This makes reasonable to posit that people migrate to Accra as a means to escaping poverty (Asiedu and Agyei-Mensah 2008). The Eastern region with the third highest frequency, recording 20% of the sample can be understood as people seeking to migrate to urban center to prospect for jobs and enjoy better social amenities.

The Greater Accra, Western, Volta and the Brong Ahafo regions recorded 6.67%, 4.44%, 3.89%, and 3.89% respectively. Whereas the Upper West, Upper East and Northern regions recorded 3.33%, 2.78% and 1.67% correspondingly. Studies have shown that these under represented section of the sample are more interested in other occupations including head porting, carpentry, masonry among others rather than hawking.

The next area of enquiry was to identify the specific locations these migrants reside as they move to Accra. It is generally realized in Table 5 below that a significant portion of the sampled hawkers resided not far from the places they hawk. With the exception of Weija and Dodowa the remaining places of residence are located either in or close to Business Districts. These findings find expression in the assertion made by Harris and Ullman (1945) that generally low income residences normally sprout out near Business Districts. These locations usually house the economic group who risk bearing high transport fares when taken farther away their business areas (Alonso 1966; Wingo 1965 cited in Vermont, 1997).

**Table 5: Place of residence and Hawking locations**

Place of Residence	Place of Hawking									Total
	Osu FC	Busy Internet	Nima Junction	Lapaz TL	Mallam Junction	Airport Junction	Graphic Road	Achimota New St	37 MH	
Dodowa	-	-	-	1	1	4	-	-	3	9 (5%)
Kasoa	-	4	-	4	4	-	2	-	-	16 (8.8%)
Weija	1	2	-	4	2	-	3	-	-	12 (6.6%)
Independence Avenue	1	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	2 (1.1%)
Fadama	-	-	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	1 (0.5%)
Madina	2	1	2	3	-	7	-	-	1	16 (8.8%)
Avenor	3	8	6	-	-	-	2	-	-	19 (10.6%)
Achimota	-	-	1	-	-	2	-	5	7	15 (8.3%)
Mallam	-	-	-	3	6	3	-	7	2	21 (11.7%)
Lapaz	-	-	-	5	7	4	-	8	3	27 (15%)
Nkrumah circle	2	4	-	-	-	-	6	-	-	12 (6.6%)
Osu	6	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	6 (3.3%)
Adabraka	3	-	8	-	-	-	6	-	-	17 (9.4%)
Nima	2	-	2	-	-	-	-	-	-	4 (2.2%)
Kaneshie	-	-	-	-	-	-	3	-	-	3 (1.6%)
Total	20	20	20	20	20	20	20	20	20	180 (100%)

**Source: fieldwork 2012**

It was also realized that some hawkers resided outside the Accra Metropolis but commute to sell there. Of the sampled hawkers, 5% resided at Dodowa and hawked at Abeka Lapaz, Mallam and the 37 military hospital circle. Other hawkers came from as far as Kasoa and Weija to hawk at the Busy Internet environs and the Graphic road. Others also lived as close as Avenor and hawked at the Busy Internet environs, Nima

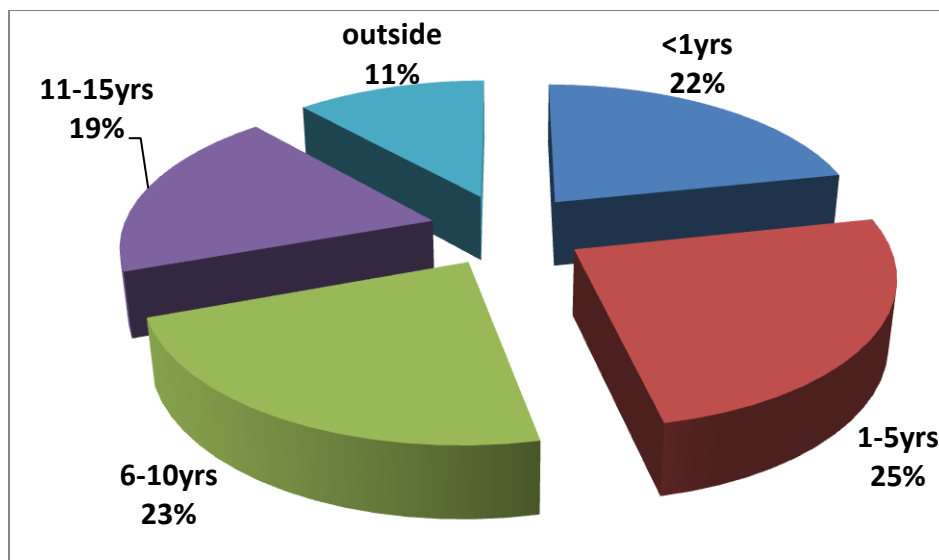
Junction and Graphic Road. This observation shows that distance does not inhibit people in their drive to obtaining substance for a living.

It was also generally observed that the dominant section of respondent resided at Lapaz followed by Mallam, Adabraka, Madina, Avenor, Kasoa, Weija and Nkrumah Circles with other locations as Nima, Kaneshie, Independence Avenue, and Fadama posting marginal frequencies. Mallam, Lapaz and Madina serve as major Commercial District on the entry point from the Central region and Eastern region respectively to the Greater Accra region. Hence these locations could be reckoned as points through which almost all the other regions connect to the Greater Accra region. This has configured these locations as point for settling and consequent integration into the new economic region of Accra for new entrants.

Adabraka, Avenor, Nkrumah Circle, Nima, Kaneshie, Independence Avenue and Fadama are examples of areas with settled squatters hence persons of such ilk go to these locations for onward integration into the larger urban economy.

Having explored the various places of residence that hawkers stay, the next question is how long they have stayed in these places? This enquiry was with the rationale of providing some hints into some aspects of the occupancy characteristics of hawkers in the Accra Metropolis.

Figure 13 below shows the percentages of hawkers and corresponding periods that they have resided in Accra or otherwise. It was noticed that for almost all the periods under consideration, there are quite a sizable number of hawkers who have been staying in the Accra metropolis. This shows that migration to Accra has indeed been a continuous phenomenon (GSS 2000).



**Figure13: Length of stay in Accra** (Source: fieldwork 2012)

The survey recorded that 11% of the respondents reside outside Accra but commute to Accra on regular bases to take advantage of economic opportunities. This observation supports that which was made by Asiedu and Agyei - Mensah (2008) that Accra's daytime population exceeds 3 million and most of the inflows originate from outlying towns and villages, converging at the city centers for commerce as a means to a living. This scenario brings to discussion the primate nature of the city of Accra. With Accra's relatively higher concentration of facilities and amenities, the city was and still is the one place people in the rural areas and small towns seeking economic prospects and better life would look to.

The ILO (2008) however reports that economic opportunity in the area of job vacancies for the ever increasing population still remains in a deficit. This situation necessitates the emergence of various kinds of businesses in an attempt at mitigating the economic challenge of joblessness. People who are unable to obtain work within the formal sector, among others, engage in some informal economic activity including hawking (Cross 2000).

### 4.2.3 Hawking locations and reasons for their selection

With knowledge of the regions of origin of hawkers, length of stay in Accra and place of residence of hawkers in the AMA, this section as an add-on introduces us to the preferred locations for hawking, and the reasons informing those choices of hawking locations. Being an organism of intellect, one can hypothesize that hawkers do not locate haphazardly at their areas of operation, but does so based on some observations, information or experiences at the various locations.

Table 6 reveals that hawking locations such as the Busy Internet environs and the Lapaz traffic light had more people from the Ashanti region. Respondents hailing from the Central Region of Ghana were observed to have preference for Lapaz and Mallam junction for the probable reason of proximity to their home region.

**Table 6: Region of origin and preference of hawking location**

Hawking locations	Ashanti	Brong Ahafo	Upper East	Upper West	Northern	Central	Eastern	Gt Accra	Western	Volta
Osu food court	6	0	0	1	0	2	2	4	1	1
Busy Internet	10	1	0	0	0	1	5	0	0	0
Graphic Road	6	1	1	2	1	6	1	0	2	0
Achimota New Station	5	0	0	1	0	0	1	0	0	1
37 MH Roundabout	3	2	0	0	0	0	0	2	2	0
Nima Junc.	4	0	1	2	1	6	1	0	2	0
Mallam junction	6	1	1	0	0	12	8	0	0	0
Airport junction	6	0	2	1	0	0	10	0	2	1
Lapaz TL	8	2	0	0	0	11	8	0	1	1
	54 (30%)	7 (3.9%)	5 (2.8%)	6 (3.3%)	3 (1.7%)	42 (23.3%)	36 (20%)	12 (6.7%)	8 (4.4%)	7 (3.9%)

Source: fieldwork 2012

Again, Mallam junction, Airport junction, Lapaz and the Busy Internet environs received a significant number of folks from the Eastern Region. The remaining regions notwithstanding, posted marginal frequencies between 0-2, stemming from their low contribution to the general hawking population.

Table 7 presents the various factors considered by hawkers in the selection of hawking spots. It was observed that profitability came up tops attracting 59.4% of the sample. These respondents came mainly from all the locations except in Achimota New Station and the 37 military hospital circle. Among the various reasons cited, 5% of the respondents stated they chose their places of hawking by reason of the fact that those locations affords them the opportunity to see relatives on buses heading to their villages. The hawkers disclosed that these passengers serve as conduits through whom they send remittances and provisions back to their relatives in the villages.

**Table 7: Criteria for selecting hawking locations**

Reasons	Hawking Locations									Total
	Osu FC	Busy internet	Nima Junction	Lapaz TL	Mallam Junction	Airport Junction	Graphic Road	Achimota New St	37 MH	
Profitable	18	14	17	11	16	12	8	5	6	107(59.4%)
To see relatives	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	6	3	9(5%)
To be with friends	-	6	3	4	4	2	9	5	4	37 (20.6%)
Less harassment	2	-	-	-	-	2	3	-	-	7 (3.9%)
No alternative	-	-	-	5	-	4	-	4	7	20 (11.1%)
Total	20	20	20	20	20	20	20	20	20	180 (100%)

**Source: fieldwork 201**

Of the total sample, 20.6% disclosed that the activity affords them a moment to trade alongside friends. This bit about social-capital underscores some conceptualization of livelihood, where social capital is identified as a key resource to ensuring sustainable livelihood (Skinner, 2008; Rakodi 2002:3). This is by virtue of the fact that in times of crises friends become the source of information and aid to help one survive turbulent times in order to get back on track (socially and economic wise).

Another section of the respondents in location as the Osu Food Court, Airport Junction, and Graphic road making up approximately 3.9% of the sample disclosed that they selected the various locations based on the factor of peace / less harassments in those areas. They opined that since they receive no harassments they thought that the place naturally became the safest location to hawk even though the returns are moderate. Respondents at Lapaz traffic light, Airport junction, New Achimota Station and the 37 military hospital circle representing 11% thought that there were no better alternative locations hence their keeping up with their current locations.



**Figure 14: Hawkers at Lapaz**

**(Source: fieldwork 2012)**

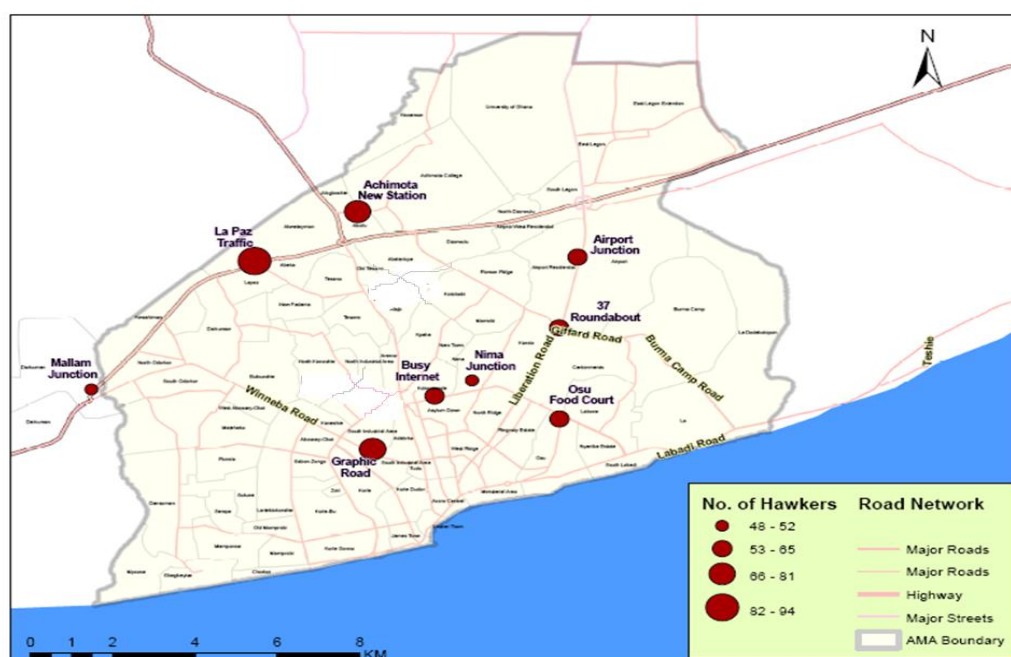
As a result of these variations in the reasons underlying a hawker's choice of location which influences the location preferences observed in Table 7, there stand the possibility of hawker population variation between locations. Table 8 below presents the concentration patterns across the study locations.

**Table 8: Population of hawkers**

Hawking locations								
Osu food court	Busy Internet	Nima junction	Lapaz TL	Mallam Junction	Airport Junction	Graphic road	Achimota New station	37 Military Hospital circle
57	53	36	94	34	65	70	78	62

**Source: fieldwork 2012**

As the table depicts, the highest concentration of hawkers occur at the Lapaz traffic light, Achimota new station and Graphic road environs in that order. Aside the fact that the Lapaz, the Achimota New Station and Graphic road both lie on very important thoroughfares, they are also located in business districts which immediately suggests the agglomeration of people. Such large pool of demand or potential buyers will automatically attract a commensurate large number of hawkers.



**Figure 15: Hawker concentrations**

**(Source: fieldwork 2012)**

The second level of concentration happens around the Airport junction surroundings, Busy Internet area, the Osu food court as well as 37 Military Hospital Circle environs which are all effectively commercial districts and experience heavy traffic during their respective peak hours. As a result, these areas attract a substantial amount of hawkers.



**Figure 16: Hawkers at the 37 round about (Source: fieldwork 2012)**

The Mallam junction and Nima junction environs however present a different case. These locations experience speedy moving vehicles, hence we find the concentration of hawkers being comparatively low.

#### **4.2.4: Level of Education, Length of Hawking and Items Sold**

It is argued that, due to the challenges of accessibility and inappropriate curricular in the educational system in Africa, young people as well as persons without higher education dominate in informal economic activities. The low level of education / training consequently becomes a barrier to enabling an individual acquire employment in the formal sector of the economy. It is contended that in cases where people are fortunate to obtain employment in the formal sector, the wages paid are not

competitive enough as compared to what pertains in hawking. This section presents analysis on the level of education of hawkers, period for which respondents have been hawking as well as the items they sell.

**Table 9: Level of Education and Length of Hawking**

Length of Hawking	Level of Education						Total
	None	Primary	Middle/JHS	Secondary	6 <sup>th</sup> -form	Tertiary	
<1	0	2	18	4	5	0	29(16%)
1-5	2	8	4	26 (14%)	2	1	43(24%)
6 -10	4	8	56(31.1%)	10	6	1	85(47%)
10 <	6	4	5	0	8	0	23(13%)
<b>Total</b>	<b>12(6.7%)</b>	<b>22(12.2%)</b>	<b>83(46.1%)</b>	<b>40(22.2%)</b>	<b>21(11.7%)</b>	<b>2(1.11%)</b>	<b>180(100%)</b>

Source: fieldwork 2011

It is observed in the table above, that cumulatively 58.33% of the sample had obtained only basic formal education. Approximately 12% of respondents had received primary education, while 46% of respondents disclosed receiving formal education commensurate to the Junior High School level. On the other hand, 22.2% of respondents revealed they had obtained Senior High School education, whereas 11.7% of the respondents divulged they had gone through the 6<sup>th</sup>-form educational module. A diminutive 1% of the respondents stated they have received tertiary education. Nonetheless, about 7% of the respondents exposed they had not obtained any form of formal education.

Supportive of literature, it is studied that a majority of informal sector employees normally possess not more than Junior High School (JHS) / Middle school education (Kamunyor 1999). It is primarily so, because the JHS level of education does not equip its leavers with the rigorous skills necessary for either self-employment or hiring. In such an undesirable situation, we find people turning to various avenues for employment including the streets to hawk for a living (Hart1973). In situations where they obtain employment, the contention has also been that the JHS/SHS qualification

attracts a lower remuneration in the formal sector of employment as compared to what one can earn while hawking.

Jones (1997) studied that the low-skilled as well as the less educated workers tend to earn less than the minimum wage even within the formal sector of employment. Ghana however has her current minimum wage around GH¢3.73, as compared to the revelations by Asiedu and Mensah (2008) that majority of hawkers earn between GH¢ 5 - 10 as daily incomes. With this income differentials, which favors hawking, coupled with the already- non-availability of jobs vacancy in the formal sector, street hawking and other informal sector economic activities tend to be an economically attractive venture to indulge in.

Another emerging trend is that, hitherto, the share of Senior High School and Post - Senior High School leavers who were into hawking was usually insignificant (Bhowmik 2005). Increasingly studies have shown that their share of the hawking population is on the ascendancy, climbing above 20% of sample sizes in most cases (Affortey 2002; Asafo-Agyei 2004; Bhowmik 2005; Asiedu and Agyei-Mensah 2008). This somewhat gives a hint of the expanding role that the informal sector is playing regarding employment. Another revelation that surfaced was that some hawkers were employing hawking as a means to accumulating funds for further investment in other fields of endeavour. Below is an excerpt from an interview with a hawker within the age brackets of 18 - 28 years to buttress this observation:

*“When I completed JHS my father said he could not fund my SHS education so my senior brother who sells here (Abeka traffic light ) asked me to come and sell so as to accumulate enough money to enable me continue my education” (field work, 2012).*

Having recognized that hawkers generally have low skill-sets and hence are more attracted to informal economic activities, it became prudent to interrogate how long respondents have been hawking. It was observed that 16% of the respondents have been hawking for periods not more than a year. Approximately, 24% of the sample revealed that they have been selling on the street for periods between 1 and 5 years. About 47% of the sample disclosed that hawking has been their main employer for the past 6 to 10 years, while 13% of the sample also report they have been hawking for more than 10 years. We find that a majority of the sample have been depending on hawking as an income earner. This tells of the importance of the activity of hawking to a significant section of the urban population of the developing and under developed countries (ILO 2002).

Juxtaposing Level of Education and Length of Hawking, it is realized that 31.1% of hawkers forming the dominant category had obtained education up to the JHS and correspondingly hawked between 6 – 10 years. The next dominant group making up 14% of the sample had hawked between 1 – 5 years and received secondary school education. This revelation is indicative of the fact that those persons who had hawked for substantial periods have also received some education but not enough to aid them secure formal employment.

Persons with no formal education as well as those with only primary education had little representation. This is due to the fact that this crop of persons realizing their educational handicap opts for training in diverse vocations and apprenticeship to gain either technical or vocational knowledge for self employment. The 6<sup>th</sup> formers and tertiary institution graduates as a result of their higher education are easily absorbed into other areas of employment hence their low representation among the hawking populace.

A correlative analysis also showed  $r_s = - 0.257$ , indicating that there is a weak negative rank relationship between level of education and the disposition to hawk. This index means there is no consistent relationship between level of education and the disposition to hawk. Such is the observation that as level of education rises with the number of hawkers at the basic level, peaks around the JHS then reduces with heavy margins all the way to the tertiary level thereby offsetting the initial rising frequencies and resulting in the negative index.

Addressing the proposition put forth, it is realized that ones' level of education influences his / her disposition to hawk. As was observed, frequencies kept rising till the JHS level, but as ones' level of education rises, that is, SHS onwards the pull towards hawking dwindles. It is hence clear that education could be used to drastically reduce the number of persons engaged in hawking.

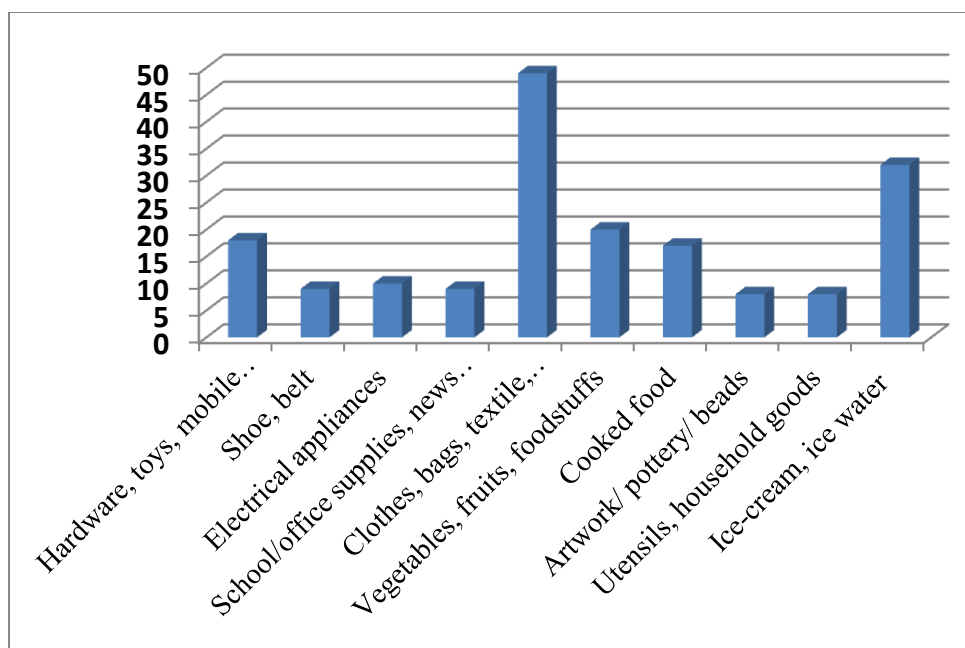
Comparing table 9 to figure 13 (length of stay in Accra) also, one notices a striking phenomenon as a characteristic of hawking. In figure 13 it is observed that respondents who had lived in Accra between the periods 6 -10 years are lesser than the group who had been hawking in Accra for the same period. This reinforces the argument that some hawkers who were hitherto not residing in Accra were indeed commuting from far and wide to the city to trade (hawk) long before they to relocated to the city to stay and continue their economic activities. A move some of the respondents said they adopted just so they could keep body and soul together. An interview with a hawker further clarified this assertion:

*"I come here (Busy Internet) every morning from Kasoa to sell and leave in the evening when the traffic has reduced and cars are easy to catch. At times we sleep here when the next day is a market day and have to get to Accra (Kantamanto) early to obtain fresh goods to sell" (field work, 2012).*

#### 4.2.4.1: Items Sold

Two major kinds of hawkers are however identified in the Accra metropolis, the itinerant and the fixed (Asiedu and Agyei-Mensah 2008). It is reported that the itinerants were the majority, offering various kinds of products for sale. Observing Figure 17 below it is found that the dominant section of the respondents representing almost 23% of the sample are into the retail of used clothes, bags, textile and cosmetics. This group was followed by those selling ice-water and ice-cream, and constituted 17.8% of the sample. Farm-produce hawkers (Vegetables, fruits and foodstuffs), hard ware hawkers (including VCD and DVD) as well as Cooked food hawkers followed in that order, recording 11.11%, 10% and 9.4% respectively.

Other products, such as shoe, belts, electrical appliances, school and office supplies, artwork/ pottery and utensils/ household equipment were not absent, but with relatively smaller frequencies.



**Figure 8: Items sold by hawkers**

**(Source: fieldwork 2012)**

Some hawkers however revealed that they obtain their supplies from nearby store which they either sell on credit or on commission basis. As recognized in the

frequencies and noted by Asiedu and Agyei - Mensah (2008), increasingly hawkers are gradually moving to the sale of more sophisticated products such as: mobile phone, VCD and DVD players, water heaters, shaving machines, massaging machines, and the likes, which represents a shift from the hitherto rudimentary goods.

In summary, it can be said that the sample were predominantly males, the majority of which were between ages considered as the economically active age. With a good chunk of the sampled hawkers hailing from the southern part of Ghana, and generally residing in low income areas with generally low levels of education and retailing various forms of products ranging from edibles to electrical appliances.

#### **4.3: Examining Hawking as a means to a Living**

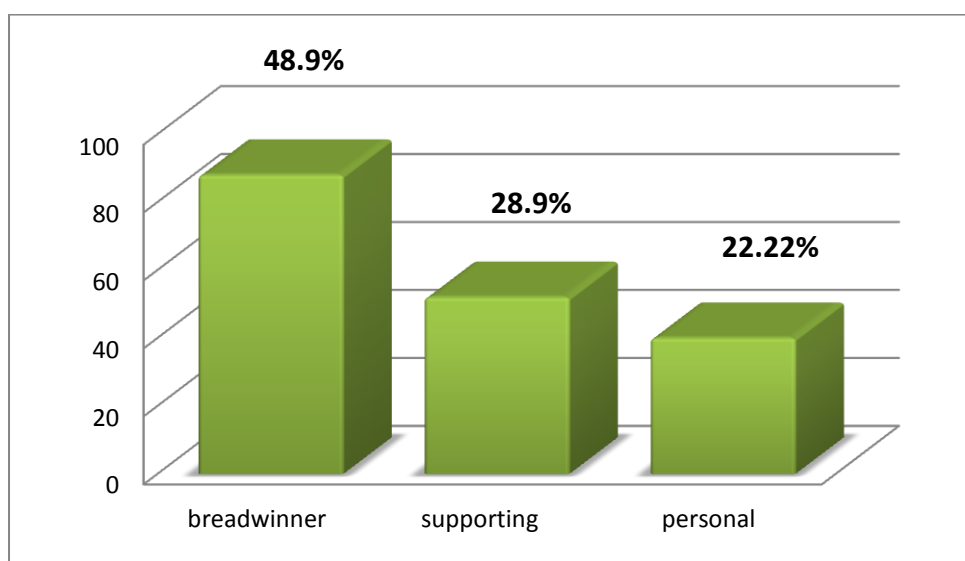
It is maintained that street hawking and the informal sector as a whole has evolved into an important sector with vast vitality for providing employment, entrepreneurial skills development and ultimately promoting economic growth (Fapohunda, 1985 and United Nations, 1996). This view has been echoed in a great body of literature with special emphasis on the developing and less developed countries where unemployment and poverty are rife. In the midst of the undesirable economic circumstances, street hawking among many other informal activities have emerged and enable its participants obtain the means to make ends meet (Rogerson and Hart, 1989; Hope, 1997, 2001). With this back drop, this section delves into the analysis on various indicators in an attempt at giving some insight into the importance of hawking as far as the economic wellbeing of the hawker is concern.

##### **4.3.1: Role played by hawker in their families**

The rationale to examine the roles that respondents play in their families is to provide a peep into what the incomes obtained by hawkers could probably be channeled into as far as the upkeep of their families is concerned. Figure 18 below reveals that 48.9%

of the respondents are the sole bread winners of their families and by virtue of that, the very survival of their families solely depends on what they are able to make on the street. This disclosure partly explains why hawkers would brace all odds and return to the street (Mitullah, 2003). Below is an extract from an interview with a 52 year old hawker to further drive home the point.

*“My son see, this is all what I do before I am able to pay for my rent, light bill, buy water, pay school fees for my three kids, provide food for my family and remit to my parents at Akyem Oda. When I don’t come here for more than two days there is trouble in the house” (field wok, 2012)*



**Figure 18: Role in family**

**(Source: fieldwork 2012)**

About 29% of the sample also revealed that they hawk in order to support their partners. In such a circumstance, as Ebibgo (2003) analyzed, hawking is being employed as a supplementary avenue for raking in money for the general upkeep of the household. This extra money is critical most especially in the African circumstance where daily wages are relatively low and cost of living is high (Bhowmik 1995). Hence for a family to stay afloat, there is the need to adopt various

means of earning additional income to increase the family's resource base and make for better standards of living (Middleton 2003).

Further on, 22.2% of the respondents stated that they engage in hawking for their personal upkeep. To this group, hawking provides them a means to securing their portion of the national cake. A necessity they ensure via offering products for sale on the streets and hence their resistance at any attempt at depriving them this opportunity.

#### 4.3.2: Dependants of street hawkers

An issue affecting a person's ability to give up an economic activity includes the amount of dependants the participants in question has (Rogerson and Hart 1989). The number of people who depend on a hawker for survival is key to understanding hawkers' inability to desist from moving back to the streets. Table 10 below displays the analysis on whether street hawkers sampled had dependants whom they cater for.

**Table 5: Does street vendor have dependents**

	Hawking Location									Total
	Osu FC	Busy Internet	Nima Junction	Lapaz TL	Mallam Junction	Airport Junction	Graphic Road	Achimota New St	37 MH	
<b>Yes</b>	16	14	7	16	14	20	20	16	17	140 (77.8%)
<b>No</b>	4	6	13	4	6	0	0	4	3	40 (22.2%)

**Source: fieldwork 2011**

A colossal 77.8% of the respondents with significant representation in all the study locations except the Nima Junction disclosed that they are sole bread winners of their families and have dependants ranging between 2 - 5 people whose survival depends on what they are able to make on the street. From this exposé, one can appreciate the reasons based on which hawkers return to places they are cautioned not to trade at

(Mitullah 2003). A portion of this dominant group (77.8%) however in discussion revealed that they hawk in order to support their partners whom they disclosed were hawking elsewhere. A revelation which brings up once more the objective of families to widen their resource base to meet their various needs (Middleton 2003).

Further on, 40% of the respondents stated that they had no dependants. Noticeable with all the groups is the fact that the size of turnover one makes is critical whether one has dependants or not since that keeps the business running.

#### 4.3.3: Profit margins made by hawkers and the Availability of Alternative sources of Income

It was observed in table 7 that profit making is a major variable considered in selecting a hawking spot. Table 11 presents the spatial variations regarding the turnover made by hawkers in the Accra Metropolis.

**Table 6: Profit margins realized by hawkers**

Profit percentage	Hawking Locations									Total
	Osu FC	Busy Internet	Nima Junction	Lapaz TL	Mallam junction	Airport junction	Graphic Road	Achimota New St	37M.H circle	
10 – 30	0 (0%)	3 (7.7%)	6 (15.4%)	7 (18%)	5 (12.8%)	4 (10.3%)	5 (12.8%)	5 (12.8%)	4 (10.3%)	39 (21.7%)
40 – 60	4 (4.8%)	12 (14.5%)	12 (14.5%)	9 (10.8%)	10 (12%)	7 (8.4%)	10 (12%)	9 (10.8%)	10 (12%)	83 (46.1%)
70 – 90	6 (15.8%)	2 (5.3%)	0 (0%)	3 (8%)	5 (13.2%)	7 (18.4%)	3 (8%)	6 (15.8%)	6 (15.8%)	38 (21.1%)
100 +	10 (50%)	3 (15%)	2 (10%)	1 (5%)	0 (0%)	2 (10%)	2 (10%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	20 (11.1%)
Total	20	20	20	20	20	20	20	20	20	180 (100%)

**Source: fieldwork 2012**

The table shows that respondents make substantial profits which could serve as an incentive for hawkers to hold tight to the hawking business. Approximately 22% of the sample made profit between 10 - 30%. The dominant group constituting 46% of the sample however make between 40 - 60% profits, whereas 21% of the respondents

make between 70 - 90% profits. The smallest group constituting approximately 11% makes the highest profit margin of 100% and over.

According to table 11, the Osu food court appears to be the most lucrative spot for selling evident in the fact that a substantial amount of hawkers are able to obtain profit of 100% and over. Generally almost all the locations ensure a good amount of return on seed money which is vital if a business is to survive. In view of this life-line offered by hawking, one can understand the difficulty the hawkers face when being asked to halt the activity. It is however noteworthy that the profits made by a street hawker is directly tied to the time of the day and the volume of traffic at the respective location. Hawkers hence move from one location to the other taking advantage of the traffic situations at those specific locations.

The respondents indicated that they hawk in multiple locations in response to the morning, afternoon and evening traffic congestion regimes. For instance hawkers at the Airport junction disclosed that before the completion of the George Walker Bush High Way, they used to move to the Lapaz Traffic Light in the afternoon. But after the completion of the road construction the Lapaz Traffic Light does not fetch as much profits as it used to hence they have selected other spots. Other respondents who sell at the Airport environs disclosed that usually after the mornings trade, they move to the Golden Tulip as well as Flagstaff house environs in the afternoon when the traffic becomes very heavy over there.

However, other hawkers around the 37 Military Hospital Circle also mentioned that they hawk at the 37 Roundabout in the morning through to the afternoon then relocate in the evening to the Ghana Water Company Limited to the Flagstaff House stretch of the same road (about 1 km down the road) to take advantage of the traffic that builds up at this stretch of the road. This move, the hawkers opined enabled them meet

buyers early enough before any other hawkker does, such that before they get to the License Office area for instance, where there are other hawkkers, the hawkkers at the flagstaff house would have already sold stuff to the passengers already.

Other hawkkers also disclosed that their movement from their original place of hawking to other areas is in direct response to the influx of hawkkers from other locations to their zone which leads to a reduction of market share hence their decision to relocate and hopefully increase their market share which has a direct correlation with levels of profit.

Away from the norm, some hawkkers at Mallam Junction revealed that they normally hawk on the street in the morning, then move to the neighboring residential areas when the traffic on the road dies down in the afternoon and then return to the street in the evening when the traffic peaks again. In the Osu Food Court area the story was again different, a good number of hawkkers registered that they end the days trade and go home to take care of their families when the traffic goes down usually in the late afternoon. This unusual behaviour of hawkkers at Osu Food Court area may partly be explained by the fact that hawkkers in this location make comparatively higher turnovers hence their ability to call it a day when the heavy traffic period is over.

The forgoing discussions touch heavily on the rationality of the hawkker evident in decisions they make regarding when and where to hawk in response to prevailing circumstances. Hawking, to a large extent becomes a make-shift activity which varies with prevailing traffic congestion periods.

Still dwelling on the reasons for hawkkers' persistence on the streets amidst the numerous warnings and raids, it is instructive to enquire about whether the street hawkkers aside the street trade had any other avenue of earning a living? The analysis of this is presented in Table 12.

**Table 7: Alternative sources of income**

Response	Street Hawking location									Total
	Osu FC	Busy Internet	Nima Junction	Lapaz TL	Mallam junction	Airport junction	Graphic Road	Achimota New St	37 MH	
Yes	5	3	1	11	8	2	0	0	1	31 (17.2%)
No	15	17	19	9	12	18	20	20	19	149 (82.8%)

**Source: fieldwork 2011**

A colossal 82.8% of the sample with majority from locations as: Graphic road, Achimota New Station Nima and Airport Junction revealed that hawking is their only means of making ends meet. This partly explains the apparent difficulty in keeping them off the street in view of the fact that hawking has now assumed the function of ensuring the economic survival of a significant proportion of the urban population of Accra.

On the other hand, 17.2% of the sampled hawkers in locations as Lapaz Traffic Light and Mallam divulged that they had alternative sources of income. For such persons leaving the activity of hawking would probably not be as difficult as people who solely depended on hawking for survival.



**Figure 19: Street hawking on the Graphic Road (Source: fieldwork 2011)**

In summary one observes that a significant proportion of hawkers are either sole bread winners of their families or playing supportive roles. It was also made known that hawkers had between 2 to 5 dependents whom they take care of with the income they make on the street. Most of the hawkers with no other source of income employ hawking as a full time occupation making substantial profits for both business and family up keep. In view of these opportunities and benefits that hawking provides for the hawkers and their families, it becomes a struggle to give up the activity.

## **CHAPTER FIVE: EFFORTS AT MANAGING STREET HAWKING IN THE ACCRA METROPOLIS**

### **5.1: Introduction**

This chapter presents discussions on the approach(es) adopted by the AMA who are the managers of urban space of Accra, the coping mechanisms adopted by hawkers in response to the AMA confrontations, and suggestions of other means of dealing with the phenomenon of street hawking in the Accra Metropolis. This chapter ends with a look at some successful strategies adopted by Singapore with which the phenomenon of hawking was brought under control.

### **5.2: Decongesting the Streets of Accra**

Efficient and comprehensive institutional and legal frameworks are key to ensuring the smooth operations of business in any space (Samon 1982). Bye-laws set controls that ensure that urban areas are safe, clean and livable (Mitullah 2003). With reference to the activity of retail trade, bye-laws set standards in the provision of public goods and services provided by the retailers and the expected manner of operations. When anomalies emerge in the mode of business operation, it becomes imperative to fall on the governing laws for antidotes in order to restore orderliness in the space economy.

Street hawkers locate at strategic and easy to see spots where they can have access to vehicles and human traffic. Hawkers, as surveys show are usually found along sidewalks, streets, foot bridges, lorry stations etc. This gradual encroachment by hawkers, results in their invasion of public spaces and impeding the smooth flow of traffic, be it human or vehicular traffic. Hawkers operation in spaces not designated for hawking is seen as an anomaly which according to the AMA, needs to be cured.

The approach adopted by the AMA in dealing with the phenomenon of street hawking and some concerns raised by shop owners as well as members of the general public are discussed in the subsequent subsections.

### **5.2.1: Major Concerns: - City Authorities, Street hawkers, Shop Owners and Members of the General Public**

#### **5.2.1.1: City Authorities' Perspective**

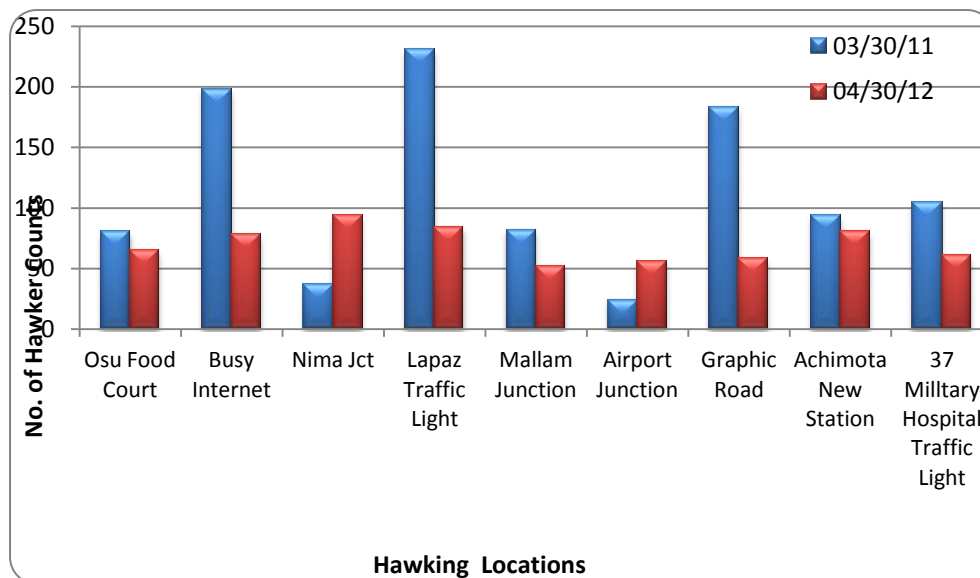
Views of the AMA were sought concerning the institution's perception of hawking, the institutional approach to dealing with the phenomenon and the results of the approaches so far.

Speaking to the Assembly's Public Affairs Officer, he stated that according to the bye-laws governing the jurisdiction of the Accra Metropolitan Area, street hawking is unacceptable, unlawful, illegal, criminal and has to be halted by all legal means. He stated that the AMA's initial approach in dealing with this unacceptable act was dialoguing and cautioning. However, these approaches did not yield the desired results and in the words of the Public Affairs official he stated that, "*since they failed to heed to the caution, force was applied*".

The institution believes that years of dialogue and caution have not stopped street hawking and in fact it is on the ascendency, where hawkers are now visible in every nook and cranny of the city. In the assessment of the AMA, the approach of *cautioning and eviction* chopped some success, although not across board. The public affairs officer was however of the conviction that the policy is gradually gaining grounds, and upon stepping up the policy by prosecuting offenders, hawkers would be deterred and hopefully put a stop to their activity or carries it out at least at the designated places which the Assembly has provided.

The study sought to know from the AMA what they consider as the challenges hindering the progress at ending the hawking phenomenon. In responding to this question, the AMA official attributed the continual existence of hawkers to the lack of law enforcement. He opined that the lack of implementation of the law to the letter has contributed to the almost acceptance of the phenomenon. Most hawkers and the general public see hawking as a normal activity by people seeking a means to a living. In line with this thinking, any effort at evicting hawkers are seen as inhuman and invariably an attempt to deprive hawkers and their dependants their sources of livelihood. This kind of perception, the officer intimated, adversely affects the AMA's ability to go all out to enforce the law.

From the above mentioned views, it is studied that the AMA does not accept the presence of hawkers on the streets of Accra and based on the authority vested in them by the constitution and district assembly's bye-laws, the Assembly is willing to do everything possible to ensure that street hawking does not flourish in the city. Yet in spite of the efforts made by the AMA in controlling the phenomenon of hawking, one still observes the presence of hawkers on the streets of Accra. In assessment, the AMA official described the result of their effort as mixed. Data on head counts at the various study locations also suggest that some gains have been made. Absolute numbers have indeed decreased for all study locations except for the Nima junction and Airport junction. The point however needs to be made that a comparison of data before and after the AMA's ban of hawking presented in figure 20 below shows that hawkers are still on the streets of Accra.

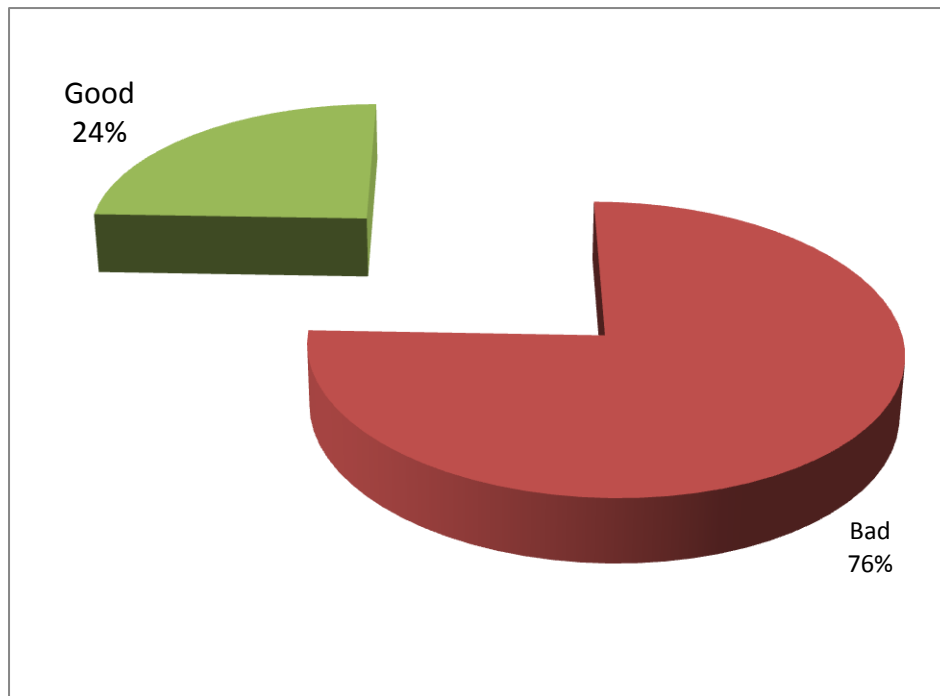


**Figure 9: The dynamics of hawker concentration in response to ban on street hawking on 1st April 2011 (Source: Field work 2012)**

To cure this hide-and-seek and ensure across board success of street hawker eviction from the streets of Accra, the AMA official proffered that arrests and increased law enforcement personnel on the streets would be the antidote.

#### **5.2.1.2: Street hawkers perspective on the eviction exercise and reasons for resistance**

Views of hawkers concerning the decongestion exercise were also captured to bring to the fore their general impression regarding the eviction/decongestion exercise. These sentiments expressed, to a large extent underlie their resistance to the decongestion exercise. Figure 21 below portrays the views held by hawkers. The majority of the sample, constituting 76% described the exercise as a bad one, whereas 24% of the respondents though had some reservations, generally felt that the exercise was in the best interest of the larger city and hence described the exercise as good.



**Figure 10: Perceptions on the decongestion exercise (Source: fieldwork 2012)**

As was expected of any policy that seeks to halt an activity upon which people depend almost entirely for their sustenance, there were bound to be negative votes especially from the adversely affected party. Below is an extract of an interview with a disgruntled hawker on his perception of the decongestion exercise:

*“I know it is not right for me to be selling here that is why the taskforce personnel are sacking us. But they should have some mercy. This is all we do to ensure our families and ourselves can have something to eat, pay bills as well as school fees.” (Field Interview, 2012)*

As cited in Kayuni and Tambulasi (2009), Mitullah (2003) argues that: although it is believed that street hawking attracts those who have limited opportunities, street hawking is increasingly becoming the only option for many citizens. Morales (2000) spoke to the fact that street hawking is a lifestyle. Morales (2000) argues “hawkers are individuals, but hawking is an outcome of socio-economic interplays”. From this backdrop, one can analyze the decongestion exercise in the context that it did not only

mean a termination of an economic activity but rather a termination of a product of a complex socioeconomic and historical process. The negative responses the exercise attracted from the majority of hawkers can be understood in this perspective. The negative stance is born out of the assessment of the repercussion they are bound to suffer if the exercise is to succeed. Further interrogations revealed that the 26% of the sample who supported the decongestion exercise are as Bhowmik and Nitin (2001) observed, that section of hawkers who understand they are flouting the city rules and regulation and hence their support for the decongestion exercise even though it adversely affects them.

### **5.2.1.3: Shop Owners' Perspective**

Speaking to some shop owners who are members of the Central Shop Owners Association in Accra, divergent views were expressed. In general the majority made negative remarks concerning the phenomenon of hawking and commended the city authorities in their attempt at halting it. On the other hand, a minority of store owners sampled recounted the benefits the activity brings to the hawkers and called for a more subtle approach to dealing with the activity. These quotations below indicate some of the thoughts expressed by shop owners in answering the question 'What is your view on street hawking and the approach adopted by the AMA at dealing with it?'

*These scalawags are a big problem to our business in this commercial area, we pay VAT, huge rents in order to operate rightfully and these young boys and girls will not let us have our peace, selling inferior goods, causing congestion and creating filth in the end. The AMA is trying but it's obviously not the best because as you can see behind you they are still all over. They should be serious with enforcing the laws,*

*effect arrests and stop accepting the small bribes that hawkers give to them to obtain their goods. (Shop owner I)*

*Well for me I think it's rather a much wider problem than just sacking them off the street. It would be like putting a big beautiful plaster on an untreated wound, it would rather degenerate. The AMA is doing their best but that is not all, there are no jobs for these young men and women to do. Until a better location or jobs are provided am sorry the harder the city authorities try to remove them, the more skilful the hawkers would become to outsmart and persist because this is the means by which they obtain food to eat.(Shop owner II)*

#### **5.2.1.4. Perspective of the General Public**

Some members of the general public randomly spoken to also shared their thoughts on the question 'What is your view on street hawking and the approach adopted by the AMA at dealing with it?' Below are extracts of the reactions they put across.

*Hawkers help in providing some items which would have been difficult to come by, and they offer these at relatively cheaper prices. By doing so, they also obtain their daily bread Yes, they make the place look disordered and they can be knocked down by moving vehicles but the AMA should be a little soft and obey the laws first. They are beating and burning things which I am not sure that is what the bylaws they are operating with state as the remedy, without proper trial? Better location or some job training should be offered them instead, and I belief most of them would not come back to the street. (General Public I).*

*Personally I think it is not the best showing for Ghana as we pride ourselves as the gate way to Africa. The streets should be free for movement for pedestrians. At times you might even be having nothing in your pocket and yet these street hawkers would*

*be pulling you to buy their stuff, its irritating to say the least. I commend the AMA; Africans obey force than quiet-talk. But they have to extend the work to other streets across the metropolis and as the other city and town managers see the positive impact they would emulate and Ghana would be a beautiful place. (General Public II)*

### 5.2.2: Taskforce Inspections and their Relationship with Hawkers

With the forgoing argument on the call for the efficient policing of hawking locations, this subsection assesses the regularity of taskforce personnel inspections on the street as a way of preventing the use of public spaces for unpermitted activities. This would be followed by a disclosure of the nature of relationship between hawkers and taskforce personnel, which is also key to understanding how effectively the laws could be applied without favour.

Table 13 below provides the distribution regarding the rating of taskforce inspections at the study locations as a means of picking up some impression of the level of effort being put into the fight to control the hawking phenomenon in the Accra Metropolis.

**Table 8: How often taskforce inspect**

Rating	Osu F.C	Busy Internet	Nima Junction	Lapaz TL	Mallam Junction	Airport Junction	Graphic Road	Achimota New St.	37 Military Hospital	Total
Often	-	20	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	20 (11.1%)
Rarely	12	-	13	2	3	16	17	14	-	77 (42.8%)
Not at all	8	-	7	18	17	4	3	6	20	83 (46.1%)
Total	20	20	20	20	20	20	20	20	20	180 (100%)

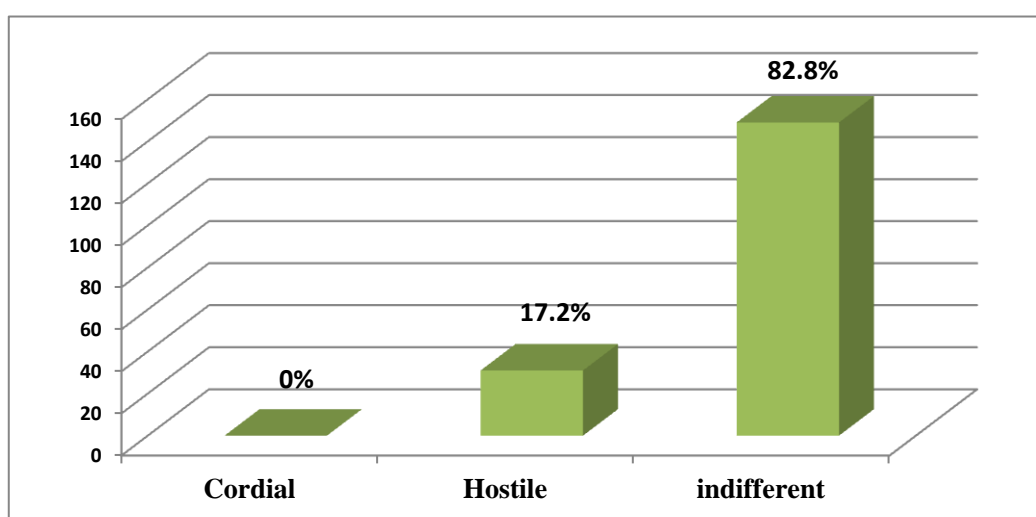
**Source: fieldwork 2012**

The Busy Internet environs according to respondents happen to be a hawking location with very visible presence of the taskforce personnel. Aside Busy Internet,

respondents in locations as the Osu food court, Nima junction, Airport junction, Graphic road and Achimota New Station accounting for 42.8% reported that they rarely see taskforce personnel around. About 46% of respondents from the same locations also disclosed that they are yet to see any taskforce personnel around.

As already disclosed by the AMA's representative and argued by Asiedu and Agyei - Mensah (2008) as well as Nunoo (2005) that the checkered approach adopted by city authorities explains their inability to fight the phenomenon. In reaction to the checkered approach, street hawkers have adopted a spatial strategy of relocating to other streets or public places where there are no taskforce agents policing the space.

It was observed that in locations where taskforce personnel are present, the kind of relationship that ensues between themselves and the hawkers can also indicate how successful laws are carried through. A more friendly approach is bound to bring little achievement whereas an approach which shows no favouritism would achieve more. Figure 22 below presents an enquiry to the above deductions and seeks to bring to the fore the nature of this relationship.



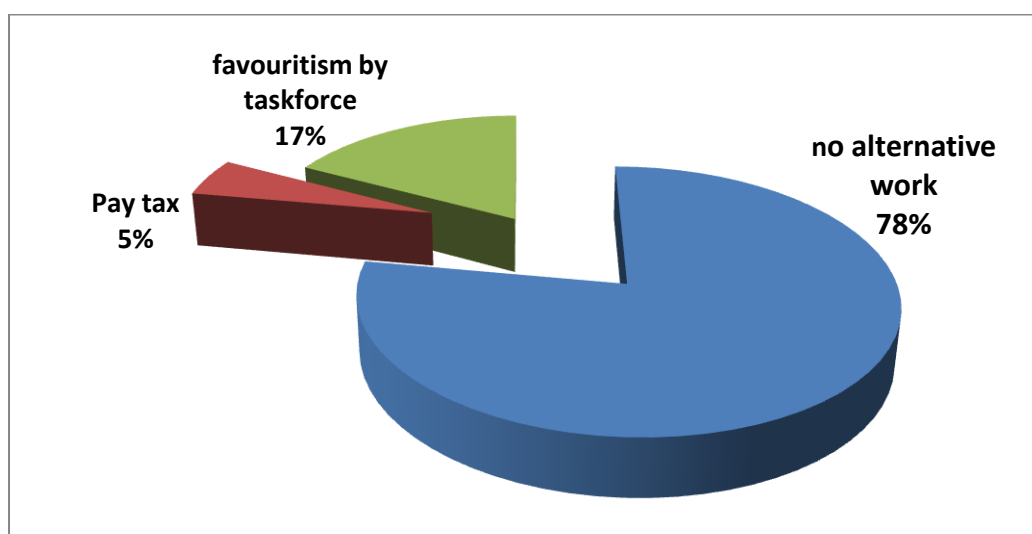
**Figure 11: Relationship between Hawkers and Taskforce personnel**

(Source: fieldwork 2012)

Respondents at the Busy Internet environs defined their relationship with taskforce personnel as hostile, the remaining locations labeled their relationship as indifferent. As a result of the absence of the taskforce personnel at the bulk of the hawking locations marked for this study, majority of the respondents making up 82.8% of the sample described the relationship between themselves and the taskforce personnel as indifferent. The conducive atmosphere enjoyed by hawkers in most of the hawking locations, has partly contributed to their proliferation and intransigence to move from the unauthorized locations.

### 5.3: Hawkers Resistance to Eviction

Figure 23 below presents the reasons put across by hawkers in explanation of their resistance to eviction. It emerged that 78% of the respondents relied on hawking as their only source of income. To this group hawkers' eviction means a seizure of their means to live, hence their relentless fight to hold on to these locations and more importantly the activity.



**Figure 12: Reasons for resistance**

(Source: fieldwork 2012)

Hawkers also disclosed that these locations ensure decent profits, substantial enough to sustain their families and their businesses. This response is further supported by

tables 11 and 7 where profitability was rated highest in the selection criteria of a location for hawking with a majority engaged in hawking as their only source of income. In an interview with a 53 year old hawker, he had this to say;

*“This is all I do my son. I sell, pay my suppliers and care for my wife and three children. And now they say we should leave. They say they have provided new places, the problem is that those new places have lesser people passing and that means fewer sales which is not good for our business and family upkeep. If I had a better job or location to do you think I would stay here to be beaten like a goat?”(Field interview 2012).*

To add to this, 5% of the respondents in locations as the Busy Internet area and the 37 military hospital circle disclosed that they had to pay monies to taskforce personnel with the assurance that their places of operation have been legitimized, and documentations were issued to that effect. Hence with a feeling of betrayal, lost capital (money paid to taskforce personnel) and the perceived favoritism which the remaining 17% of the respondents alluded to as their reason for resistance, hawkers are bent on resisting the AMA efforts. And when it became obvious that they could not oppose directly, street hawkers have adopted some strategies in order to persist on the street and ensure a living.

With the foregoing efforts and posturing, one recognizes that the AMA’s wish to see one thing - the disappearance of street hawking from the urban landscape of Accra. And to ensure this, hawkers were cautioned, after which force was applied to remove recalcitrant hawkers. This approach however has not achieved success generally as seen in figure 20 and to which, the Assembly proffered increased policing and prosecution as the solution. On the other hand there existed mixed perception among store owners and the general public regarding the activity of hawking and how the

AMA is handling it. While some commended the Assembly, others called for sober heads in the approach to the phenomenon.

The validity in the claim of weak taskforce inspections was affirmed with their near absence that was recorded in the study locations except for the Busy Internet environs. Regarding the exercise of decongesting the street of hawkers, a majority of the hawkers voted against it citing reasons as the lack of job opportunities, monies paid and favoritism among others.

### **5.3.2: Hawkers coping strategy against eviction**

In all hawker-eviction attempts, some street hawkers have tried to resist eviction by adopting strategies that enable them outsmart the taskforce personnel and effectively persist on the street (Cross 2000; Jimu 2005). In bringing to bare the nitty-gritty of this observation, this subsection presents some analysis on the situation on confiscation of merchandise and the coping mechanisms adopted by hawkers in the Accra Metropolitan Area.

#### **5.3.2.1: Confiscation of merchandise and ways of escaping**

Table 14 below shows the analysis regarding the seizure of merchandise of hawkers by city taskforce and some strategies adopted by hawkers in outsmarting city authorities. It came out that about 46.7% of the respondents emanating from locations including; the Busy Internet, Nima Junction, the Airport junction and Achimota New Station responded in the affirmative that their merchandise have been confiscated before.

It is realized from table 13, that some of these locations happen to experience some taskforce patrols which usually leads to the confiscations and the sour relationships that hawkers expressed to be existing between themselves and the taskforce

personnel. This unpleasant working circumstance under normal circumstance, Jimu (2005) agrees with Cross (2000) should serve as a disincentive for hawkers, but by the fact that hawking is a major employer and has become a sole income avenue, people overlook these challenges and return to the streets to hawk for a living.

**Table 9: Confiscation of merchandise and ways of escaping**

	Hawking Locations									
	Osu FC	Busy Internet	Nima Junction	Lapaz TL	Mallam Junction	Airport Junction	Graphic Road	Achimota New St.	37 MH	Total
<b>1. Have your merchandise been seized before</b>										
Yes	4	17	12	3	3	13	10	14	8	84(46.7%)
No	16	3	8	17	17	7	10	6	12	96 (53.3%)
Total	20	20	20	20	20	20	20	20	20	180 (100%)
<b>2. Ways of outwitting</b>										
Run away	1	3	3	-	-	7	4	3	9	30 (31.25%)
Have formed acquaintance	4	-	5	2	3	-	1	3	-	18 (18.75%)
Not seen raids before	11	-	-	15	14	-	5	-	3	48(50%)
Total	16	3	8	17	17	7	10	6	12	96 (100%)

**Source: fieldwork 2012**

The majority of the respondents, constituting 53.3% of the sample, however disclosed they have never experienced seizure of goods which again feeds into the observation of the absence of taskforce inspections recorded for some of the study locations. The sample belonging to the group who had never experienced confiscations before were further interrogated to seek the reasons behind that observation. It came out that a little over 31% of this sub group, among others, adopted the spatial strategy of running away to other locations with their merchandise to continue the trade. Also, 18.75% of this sub-group, with scattered representation across the study locations divulged that they had forged acquaintances with members of the taskforce. As a

result of these social links, hawkers are exempted from raids or at worst their goods are easily retrieved after confiscation. This offer hawkers the courage to go through each hawking day with assurance of safety for their goods.

The remaining 50% of this sub-group, mostly in locations as the Osu food court, Mallam junction, Lapaz traffic light and the 37 military hospital circle, however stated that they have just not experienced raids before. This revelation somewhat points to the very basic question of law enforcements on the streets of Accra. Even though hawking at unauthorized places is prohibited, people hawk on the streets in violation of the law without any cautioning or apprehension. This disregard for the law by hawkers goes on till a time that people almost feel they have the right to do what they desire on the streets before reactionary steps are taken to get them out leading to the shocks and vulnerabilities in the livelihood of the affected hawker.

To the 84 people of the total sample, who responded in the affirmative to the 1<sup>st</sup> question in table 14 regarding whether hawkers merchandise have ever been seized before, a follow up was necessary to ascertain whether one was able to obtain his or her goods and how they obtained them. The responses to this enquiry are presented in table 15.

Referring to the table, 26.2% of the 84 people with representation across the study locations stated that in almost all cases of confiscation, hawkers have been able to obtain their seized merchandise. Whereas 73.81% of this category mainly in locations as the Busy Internet environs, Nima Junction, Airport Junction and Achimota New Station disclosed their merchandise have been seized before, and that they could not obtain the seized goods.

**Table 10: Obtaining seized goods and other coping strategies**

	Hawking Locations									Total
	Osu FC	Busy Internet	Nima Junction	Lapaz TL	Mallam junction	Airport junction	Graphic Road	Achimota New St	37 MH	
<b>1. Did u obtain goods</b>										
<b>Yes</b>	-	5	4	3	1	-	4	3	2	22 (26.2%)
<b>No</b>	4	12	8	-	2	13	6	11	6	62 (73.8%)
<b>Total</b>	4	17	12	3	3	13	10	14	8	84 (100%)
<b>2. Ways of obtaining goods</b>										
<b>Paid money</b>	-	4	3	3	1	-	2	3	2	18 (81.8%)
<b>Sex offer</b>	-	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1 (4.6%)
<b>Via relations within taskforce</b>	-	-	1	-	-	-	2	-	-	3 (13.6%)
<b>Total</b>	0	5	4	3	1	0	4	3	2	22 (100%)

**Source: fieldwork 2012**

Of the 26.2% who revealed that they were able to obtain seized goods, 81.8% of them disclosed that they paid money to retrieve their confiscated goods, whereas 4.6% of this group stated that they offered sexual favours in order to retrieve their goods. In support of an earlier observation, 13.6% of this group disclosed that they received their wares via their relations within the taskforce without cost.

Even though the group who were able to receive their goods are relatively small, it still proves that there exists a means via which hawkers are able to retrieve their confiscated goods. In South Africa, Nesvag (2000) noted that the availability of the means to obtaining seized goods serve as an incentive for people to persist on the street with the mindset that even if goods are confiscated there are ways one can

retrieve merchandise. In Nesvag's (2000) interview it was revealed that usually those hawkers with no means of retrieving seized goods would call on fortunate hawkers with acquaintance within the taskforce for the return of goods to affected hawkers which at the long run builds their attitude to persist and resist all attempts at halting the activity of hawking.

In addition to the various schemes that hawkers adopt to outsmart and obtain confiscated goods, other hawkers make use of spatial strategy which has to do with the number of places one hawks at, with the logic being that, as taskforce personnel clamp down on one of the locations, hawkers then relocate to other locations to continue the trade.

**Table 11: Number of hawking places**

	Hawking Locations									Total
	Osu	Busy Int.	Nima Junction	Lapaz TL	Mallam Junction	Airport junction	Graphic Rd	Achimota	37	
<b>1</b>	17	7	8	15	14	4	8	14	6	93 (51.7%)
<b>1&lt;</b>	3	13	12	5	6	16	12	6	14	87(48.3%)
<b>Total</b>	20	20	20	20	20	20	20	20	20	180(100%)

**Source: fieldwork 2012**

As indicated in Table 16 above, 51.7% of the respondents disclosed that they trade at only one location citing the relative calm in doing business at those locations as the reason. Dominant in this group are respondents from the Osu food court, Lapaz traffic light, Mallam junction and the Achimota New Station. Explaining that due to the absence of taskforce personnel to disrupt the trade coupled with the realization of substantial amount of profit between 40 - 60% (seen Table 11), there was no propensity to seek other hawking locations.

On the other hand, 48.3% of the respondents revealed that they hawk at more than one location. While some respondents cited differences in market days as their reason for the adoption of multiple locations, other hawkers in locations as the Busy Internet, Nima Junction and the 37 Military hospital circle indicated that their adoption of many hawking locations was their way of escaping taskforce personnel patrols and raids (Boadi, 2000).

Another strategy adopted by hawkers is the formation of interest groups. Street hawkers form interest group in the hope to advance their course and aspiration in a more unified fashion (Jimu, 2005). By virtue of their sheer numbers, it is anticipated that city authorities would offer a listening ear to their grievances and respond favorably bearing in mind the electoral prospects that lie therein for the sitting government.

Table 17 reveals that interest group formation has still not gained much expression among hawkers within the AMA. From the table, 18.3% of the sample mostly in locations as the Osu food court, Busy Internet environs and Achimota responded YES to the question of whether they had knowledge of hawkers' union. Respondents from the remaining locations making up 81.7% of the respondent answered NO to the same question. An observation Bhowmik (1995) expressed amazement about when he learnt of the fact that street hawkers in Bangkok were not unionized given their sheer numbers. Jimu (2005), speaking to this issue commented that he thought hawkers would use their sheer numbers as a political leverage to receive better treatment from city authorities and the government.

**Table 17: Union and membership**

	Street hawking Locations									Total
	Osu FC	Busy Internet	Nima Junction	Lapaz TL	Mallam junction	Airport junction	Graphic Road	Achimota New St	37 MH	
<b>1. Knowledge of unions</b>										
<b>Yes</b>	8	16	-	-	-	-	-	9	-	33 (18.3%)
<b>No</b>	12	4	20	20	20	20	20	11	20	147 (81.7%)
<b>Total</b>	20	20	20	20	20	20	20	20	20	180 (100%)
<b>2. Membership of unions (ref to yes above)</b>										
	Osu	Busy Internet						Achimota N S	Total	
<b>Yes</b>	1	3						-	4 (12.1%)	
<b>No</b>	7	13						9	29 (87.9)	
<b>Total</b>	8	16						9	33 (100%)	
<b>3. Have unions contributed in the struggle</b>										
	Osu	Busy Internet								
<b>Yes</b>	1	-								
<b>No</b>	-	3								
<b>Total</b>	1	3								

**Source: fieldwork 2012**

Of the 18.3% of the sample who responded to have knowledge of the existence of hawkers Interest Group, actual members of such unions were less than half of the respondents. The Ghana Trade Union Congress (GTUC) in 2003 initiated a national alliance for market and street traders – the Street Net Ghana Alliance. The GTUC gave market and street traders a representation on the informal sector desk for many

years, but the lack of unity ensured that the alliance made little strides in the struggle to securing a better deal for traders (War on Want, 2006:36). The lack of unity in the front of the hawkers culminates in the less effectiveness of the existing interest groups, because as the old adage goes “strength resides in unity”.

As a summary to this subsection, one noticed that in the midst of the conflicts and resultant seizures, hawkers have devised some means of escaping the seizures which includes running away to other locations of relative calm. In the unfortunate incidence of confiscation, hawkers have yet devised some strategies for retrieving seized goods which vary from paying money to offering sexual favours. Some hawkers as was noted have chosen to hawk at one particular place whilst others ply their trade at more than one location as a coping strategy. However there still exists apathy towards unionization among hawkers to champion their course or interest.

#### **5.4: The Future of Hawking in the City of Accra**

As it stands hawking is regarded as a challenge to the overall development of the cities of developing countries (Bayat 1997: 144); it therefore becomes necessary to generate ideas about the control of the phenomenon which includes reviewing successful decongestion exercises carried out in other cities. This subsection among other concerns, addresses these issues.

##### **5.4.1: City Managers’ Perspective**

The representative of the Public Affairs unit of the AMA in speaking to the issue of “the way forward regarding dealing with street hawking”, stated that hawkers as well as buyers found selling or buying on the street would now face the full rigors of the law. This he said would range from fines to imprisonment or both. He further indicated that there was going to be a 24 - hour patrol team who will randomly inspect

places to curb night hawking. He also entreated the public to desist from patronizing these hawkers as a move to discourage the activity. He again encouraged the hawkers to make use of the hawkers market provided to ensure peaceful co-existence and the overall development and beautification of the city. He was however hopeful that with the continuous application of city bye-laws, the city will soon be free of street hawkers.



**Figure 13: Orgle Road, Accra**

**(Source: fieldwork 2011)**

According to the above narration, the AMA will apply the power provided by the law as well as increase law enforcement personnel going forward, to halt the phenomenon of hawking. The desire of completely eradicating street hawking however has roots in euro-centric ideals and does not take into consideration the socio-economic circumstances of less developed and developing countries where population increases correspond with lower rates of industrial expansion which results in high urban unemployment (GSS 2007; Cross 2000; Mitullah 2003; ILO 1992). This incidence of joblessness in the less developed and developing countries makes indispensable the need to encourage in a regulatory manner other forms of economic activities which provides jobs for the population who are unable to break into the formal sector.

#### 5.4.2: Suggestions by hawkers on how to control hawking

It became important especially in this era of participatory development to seek from the hawkers suggestions they believed can help develop a sustainable solution to hawking in the city of Accra. Table 18 shows that a majority of the respondents with significant representations at Airport junction, 37 circle, Busy Internet area, Graphic road and Achimota opted for the creations of formal jobs as a means of curbing the proliferation of hawkers on the street.

**Table 18: Suggestions on ways of controlling street hawking**

Suggestions	Hawking Locations									Total
	Osu FC	Busy Internet	Nima Junction	Lapaz TL	Mallam Junction	Airport Junction	Graphic Road	Achimota New St.	37 MH	
Creation of jobs	6	12	9	9	7	16	11	11	13	94 (52.2%)
Dialoguing	7	3	-	-	3	-	8	1	-	22 (12.2%)
Better location of new markets	4	5	8	7	6	-	-	6	7	43 (23.9%)
Stop selling market areas	-	-	-	4	4	-	-	2	-	10 (5.6%)
Implement by-laws	3	-	3	-	-	4	1	-	-	11 (6.1%)
Total	20	20	20	20	20	20	20	20	20	180 (100%)

**Source: fieldwork 2012**

Approximately 24% of the respondents were of the view that the procurement of a better location would see hawkers vacate the streets and other unauthorized places. Also 12% of the respondents mentioned that dialoguing was the way to ensuring that hawkers conduct themselves according to the agreed terms which will lead to the birth of a more sustainable solution. A category of the respondents constituting about 6.1% however divulged that an increase in law enforcement was the way to go whereas

5.6% were clear in their minds that halting the sales of profitable market areas to private investors and big multi-national companies was a sure antidote. Hawkers held that city authorities frequently sold out profitable locations where traders had their stalls to investors with no move at re-settling or compensating them, consequent to which they are forced to get on the streets and pavements and sell for a living. This revelation brings to the fore the phenomenon of gentrification which is fast transforming the high value urban space currently being used for low income activities to one that will yield higher returns.

#### **5.4.3: Suggestions of alternative vocations for street hawkers**

As it has been established in earlier discussions, economic opportunity has always been the main driving factor for which both migrants and indigenes move to the cities (Friedmann, 1992). One can therefore assume that migrants have some job preferences for which they will give up hawking if any materializes; these various economic activities that hawkers would like to engage in are presented in this section.

It is observed in Table 19 that a dominant section of the sample (25.6%) preferred to be engaged as factory hands, a fact Dickson and Benneh (1988) studied as the number one dream of most migrants when relocating to the big cities. The next significant category constituting approximately 21% of the sample surprisingly hinted that they would rather remain in the petty trade business, but called for institutional recognition and regularization to legitimize the activity. This view is rooted in the obvious desire for continuous self-employment and control of profits that accrues to one's effort. Notwithstanding 19% of the sample relished an opportunity to gain formal education, whilst others expressed interest in vocations such as catering, plumbing, teaching, soap making as well as engaging in the batik tie and die business.

**Table 19: Suggestions of alternative vocation for street hawkers**

	Street Hawking location									Total
	Osu FC	Busy Internet	Nima Junction	Lapaz TL	Mallam Junction	Airport Junction	Graphic Road	Achimota New St	37 MH	
Catering	-	-	4	-	3	6	-	-	-	13(7.2%)
Back school	-	-	5	-	3	-	8	3	-	19(10.6%)
Driving	2	4	-	5	-	-	-	-	2	13(7.2%)
Plumbing	-	-	-	-	4	-	-	6	-	10(5.6%)
Teaching	-	2	-	2	2	-	-	-	-	6(3.3%)
Soap making	-	-	3	3	5	-	-	-	-	11(6.1%)
Batik tie and dye	-	-	6	3	-	5	10	-	-	24(13.3%)
Regularize petty trade	12	4	2	-	3	2	-	5	10	38(21.1%)
Factory hand	6	10	-	7	-	7	2	6	8	46(25.6%)
Total	20	20	20	20	20	20	20	20	20	180(100%)

**Source: fieldwork 2012**

These job options and vocations, with the help of policy makers and Non-Governmental Organizations can equip people with acceptable occupations and hopefully wean people off the street and transform them from being mere retailers to actual producers to the greater benefit of the community and the country.

#### **5.4.4: Success story on street hawker evictions and relocation: The case of Singapore.**

A familiar sight in the 1950s and 1960s were the myriad of hawkers and wrongly placed stalls that filled Singapore's streets and alleys. While there's little argument that these street hawkers brought a certain charm to the social and cultural landscape, many stallholders plied their trade under less than desirable conditions. More often than not, hawkers operated under unhygienic conditions, contending with a lack of

portable water supply and inadequate facilities to prepare their products. To compound matters, the authorities and wider population had to deal with the street congestion that they brought about coupled with indiscriminate disposal of wastes into drains. In time this caused difficulty in human traffic movement as well as considerable pollution in the island's drains and watercourses, endangering both public health and the environment.

This prompted the government to develop the plan to build designated areas for hawkers. These areas, which we now know as hawker centers have a complete infrastructure to support hawkers' day to day operations. An island-wide census in 1968/69 was the first step in systematic phasing out of hawkers. The census registered a total of 18,000 street hawkers who were then issued with temporary hawking licenses. The exercise effectively set in motion a systematic approach to curbing illegal hawking in Singapore.

In 1970, the government began to re-site street hawkers. These hawker centers were designed and specially sited along busy routes with alternative pedestrian walks one through the hawker centers and another outside it for those who abhor the hassle and bustle of hawkers. These hawker centers were also equipped with proper facilities for food preparation, cooking, advertising products, and supported by clean and efficient drainage systems as well as proper sanitation facilities.

By February 1986, all street hawkers were completely re-sited in hawker centers. Fifteen years on, there are now 139 hawker centers owned by the Housing & Development Board (HDB) and the Jurong Town Corporation (JTC). Collectively, these hawker centers hold a total of 17,331 occupied stalls; 10,333 being market stalls and 6,998 being cooked food stalls.

Stalls were located based on item sold and occupied for a fee. Following the relocation of hawkers to hawker centers, a number of vacant stalls were allocated to hardship cases (i.e. hawkers who were unemployed and/or experiencing financial difficulty). The hardship scheme was discontinued in April 1998. Vacant stalls are now periodically tendered out for purchase, leasing or rental to the public.

Launched by the NEA in April 1994, the Stall Ownership Scheme enabled stallholders to own their stalls. Under the scheme, stalls in NEA and HDB hawker centers were sold to incumbent stallholders on a 20-year lease at a discount. Those who declined to buy their stalls could surrender them and opt for cash grants or continue to rent their stalls at a revised rate instead.

Till date, 4 batches of stalls in 15 hawker centers had been sold, with 1,871 stallholders or 90.2% opting to buy their stalls. However, 9.2% of the stallholders accepted cash grants. These stallholders who opted for cash grants were mostly elderly hawkers who had planned to retire. Stallholders who bought their stalls were given permission to sublet them.

As a result, many of these stalls were opened for longer operation hours. These stallholders were also allowed to sell their stalls. Some did and, consequently, more innovative and enterprising players joined the trade making it a very fruitful and attractive enterprise.

All stallholders in hawker centers were licensed by the Ministry for Environment. Stallholders who deal in edibles are required by law to ensure that food prepared in their stalls is safe for public consumption. Stallholders were expected to be vigilant in adhering to proper food and personal hygiene practices and to ensure that their stalls were free from pest and vector infestation. As a further precaution, all licensees and their assistants are vaccinated against typhoid and those above 45 years are screened

for tuberculosis. The food handlers also attended and passed a food hygiene course. With a view to obtain exemplary hygiene standards in hawker centers, there was the introduction of a point demerit system. In 1997, 231 hawkers were given demerit points for flouting hygiene standards. From this, 16 had their licenses suspended for two weeks.

In 2000, the Ministry in charge held 489 dialogue sessions with hawkers' organization representatives to discuss and resolve problems pertaining to their centers. A special aids and loans center was put in place to be accessed by licensed hawkers only for the expansion of their businesses. As a prerequisite, a hawker was to get licensed and stay off the streets before he/she becomes eligible to acquire funds from the aids and loans center. This move, among others, was to encourage hawkers to desist from returning to the street. Also in collaboration with the trades and industry ministry vocational training was given to hawkers to enable them acquire skills for self-improvement. Between 1990 and 1996 the department and ministry had trained more than 10,000 hawkers in other vocations aside retailing and subsequently started their own businesses.

All market centers periodically undergo cyclical repairs and redecoration works. The Ministry and Department in charge undertake upgrade works. Every 5 years, technical experts go around to ensure that stalls are equipped with proper facilities that are operational and efficient. In the year 2000, upgrading works were carried out at Holland Road Market and Market Street Food Centre. In 1998, a programme to refurbish the toilets in all markets and food centers was embarked upon. Under this programme, quality toilets were constructed, modern accessories, and automatic sensor flush valves in public toilets were fixed. Along with re-tiling of walls and floors, the entrances to the toilets were installed with coin-operated turnstiles.

Mechanical ventilations were provided for the toilet cubicles. The year 1999 saw the first three refurbished toilets in hawker centers like North Bridge Road Market, Market Street Food Centre, Sembawang Hill Food Centre and Newton Food Center.



**Figure 14: Newly repaired and refurbished toilet at Newton Food Centre (Source: Annual Report, Ministry of Environment, Singapore 2000)**

As of March, 15, 2000, the Ministry of Environment started the 24-hour operation service to attend to complaints from the members of the public. Under the present configuration, there are 12 enforcement officers on duty in the morning and afternoon shifts, until 10pm daily. Another four officers take over their duties in the midnight shift until 7am the next morning. Enforcement officers attend to illegal hawking complaints as well as environmental health complaints such as noise pollution, illegal dumping, smoking in prohibited areas etc. that are received through the Ministry of Environment Hotline, after office hours. These law enforcement officers ensured that no hawker traded at an unauthorized place, culprits are arrested and handed over to the police who in a fast track manner process culprits for prosecution in the law courts.

These steps in the long run have kept people from selling on the streets, so much so that prospective hawkers go to the appropriate stall allocation body and request for a

stall. When all necessary requirements are met, stalls are allocated to the trader. Such is the case that as at the end of the year 2000 Singapore had less than 500 hawkers on her streets to the admiration of all.

To conclude this section, it can be said that the AMA does not accept the presence of hawker on the streets of Accra and based on the authority vested in them by the constitution and district assembly's bye-laws, the Assembly is willing to do everything possible to ensure that the activity of hawking is halted in the city. Hawkers however proposed among others, the creation of jobs, regulations on petty trade, activation of the bye-laws and the discontinuation of gentrification processes that adversely affect their activities as some ways of controlling the proliferation of hawkers.

Suggestions were also made with regard to alternative vocations and this included catering, teaching, going back to school, batik tie and dye, factory hand, plumbing among others for which hawkers disclosed they would gladly give up hawking if they were to be aided to obtain training in these indentified activities.

Finally, some strategies adopted by state institutions in Singapore at handling the issue of hawking were also presented. Significant among the approach is the fact that as part of the use of law, there was first and foremost a head count of all hawkers as the basis for any other strategy that was to be rolled out. As part of the strategy, well-sited and designed hawker markets as well as funds for the improvement of the lot of the hawker were provided. This served as a motivation for hawkers to accept and work within regulation, whereas the law was also used to check the stubborn few.

## **CHAPTER SIX: SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS, RECOMMENDATIONS AND AREAS FOR FURTHER RESEARCH**

### **6.1: Summary**

The study explored the reasons underlying hawkers' resistance to evictions and relocation, and consequent return to the streets. The study used the Accra Metropolitan Area (AMA) as the study area due to the vibrancy of the hawking business witnessed on the urban landscape. To find answers to this problem, some objectives and research questions were posed and answered through empirical investigations. Specifically, these objectives included: examining hawking as a means to eke out a living; evaluating the coping mechanisms adopted by street hawkers; assessing the sustainability of the approach adopted by city authorities; and exploring other means of dealing with the phenomenon of street hawking.

Data from both primary and secondary sources were used. Data from primary sources were collected through in-depth interviews, during which hawkers, city managers, store owners as well as members of the general public were sampled for interview. Also relevant literature was consulted as a means of gaining a thorough appreciation of the informal sector as a whole and hawking to be specific.

Descriptive statistics including frequencies, percentages, tables, graphs, charts, relational analysis as well as the Spearman's rank correlation were used in analyzing the data collected from the field. In spite of the evident challenges such as time and resource constraints, and most especially during the collection of data, the researcher has attempted an analytical study, upon which further research could be conducted.

A majority of the respondents sampled for the study were males and constituted 52.22% of the target population. A bulk of the sample was within the age category

considered as the economically active age brackets (18- 28 years (27.22%) and 29- 39 years (44.44%)). A majority of the sampled hawkers hailed from the southern part of Ghana mainly from the Ashanti, Central and Eastern regions, with the other regions recording marginal frequencies. Generally, hawkers were found to be residing in low income areas and had received low levels of formal education which makes them more attracted to the informal sectors of the economy. Hawkers within the Accra Metropolis were observed to be retailing various products ranging from edibles to electrical appliances. This observation represented a gradual shift from the sale of rudimentary commodities to more sophisticated products.

The study revealed that hawkers had between 2 to 5 dependents whom they took care-of with the proceeds from hawking. A significant portion of the hawkers were either sole bread winners of their families or supporting their spouses with the income they obtain from hawking. It was learnt that most of the hawkers had no alternative sources of income and as a result had employed hawking as a full time occupation and are indeed making substantial returns for both business and family upkeep. One could then appreciate the struggle of the hawker to persist on the streets amidst the brutalities in this context.

On the side of the city managers, it was made known that it is the AMA's aim to see to the disappearance of street hawking from the urban landscape of Accra. In order to ensure this, hawkers were cautioned by the AMA to keep off all unauthorized spaces. The disobedience to this caution led to the application of force to evict hawkers at unauthorised areas. This approach, as the Public Affairs Officer of the AMA conceded, has not achieved much. The AMA's reaction is increased policing and prosecution. The strategy of the AMA is therefore understood not to be one of

accommodating and regulating the phenomenon but rather an outright termination of it.

There however exist mixed perceptions among store owners and the general public regarding the activities of hawking and how the AMA is handling it. Whiles some commended the Assembly in their strive for orderliness in the city, others called for sober heads in the approach to the phenomenon, obviously recognizing the benefits therein. Regarding the perceptions held by hawkers concerning the exercise of decongesting the street of hawkers, a majority of the hawkers constituting 78% of respondents voted against the exercise citing the lack of job opportunities among others as their reason.

The claim of patchy taskforce inspection was confirmed by their presence in some hawking locations especially those within the neighbourhood of the central business districts and absent at locations which are far off business districts. Locations which experience taskforce inspections normally became the areas with reported cases of taskforce – street hawker confrontations. In the midst of the conflicts and resultant confiscations of merchandise, hawkers were observed to have devised means of escaping this ordeal. This included: running away to other locations of relative calm as well as forming social ties within the force to attract favour. In the unfortunate incidence of confiscation, hawkers yet adopted some strategies for retrieving seized goods which varied from paying money, contacting friends with social links within the force to offering sexual favours. Some hawkers also hinted that they ply their trade at more than one location as a strategy for coping with the unreceptive business environment. There was yet overwhelming apathy towards unionization of hawkers to champion their course of interest.

Hawkers proposed among others the creation of jobs, the recognition and regulation of petty trade and the control of the gentrification processes as some ways of controlling the proliferation of hawkers. Suggestions were also made with regard to alternative vocations and training that hawkers desire to enroll in and these included: catering, teaching, going back to school, batik tie and dye, factory hand, soap making, plumbing among others.

Finally, some strategies adopted by state institutions in Singapore aimed at controlling the phenomenon of hawking were also presented. Significant among the approach is the fact that as part of the use of law, there was the provision of facilities in the form of well-sited and designed hawkers market. There was the provision of funds for the improvement of the lot of the hawker on condition that they operate within the set code of conduct. This served as a motivation for hawkers to accept and work within the set regulations which included staying off the street. Nonetheless the law was still used to check the adamant few.

## **6.2: Conclusion**

The resistance of hawkers to eviction is motivated by the need to ensure a living for themselves and their families. Their relentless hold to the hawking business emanates from a combination of factors including: their generally low level of academic qualification, their lack of employable skills, the lack of alternative employment avenues, ineffective policing of the streets, the minimal entry capital requirement, the consistent traffic congestions and the potential to realize substantial profit. All of these factors and more have led to the emergence of hawking as the main avenue for income earning for its participants and by extension their dependants and hence their unwillingness to give it up. To counter this phenomenon, there is the need for enforcing the land use codes and application of technologies and measure to see to the

reduction of traffic jams on the streets. Also there is the need to formulate strategies that will fight the socio-economic challenges that the hawker is grappling with which may include: taking steps to offer them education / training in diverse vocational occupations as well as putting up measures to fine-tune and regularize the operations of hawkers, as it serves as a possible avenue of employment.

### **6.3: Recommendations**

The informal economy largely emerges from the fight from poverty. However, it is far from clear whether the informal economy with all its attributes is a problem or the solution to the overall development of a nation. Informal sector as some writers hold undermines government revenue and thereby its ability to provide social services amongst other things. They also undermine government authority and the respect for the rule of law. On the other hand, others are also of the opinion that the informal sector provides a very important avenue to earn income and social security in the absence of formal social protection, and that this sector could be an alternative source of economic growth. In the midst of these socio-economic puzzles some recommendations are made for consideration:

First and foremost, there is the need to comprehensively reconcile data on street hawkers and their contribution to the economy both at the local and national level. In most regions where developments have been realized, statistics have often played an important role. Kamunyori (2007) for example partly attributes the success story of Kenya's hawkers control to the multiple local surveys and the 2005 National Economic survey done on the informal sector. The latter survey found that for every one job created in the formal sector, 1000 jobs were created in the informal sector and calculated that the informal sector contributed 18.4 percent of GDP. These kinds of

statistics are important not only for adjusting perceptions but also for informing the planning processes.

Furthermore, there is the need to look at the possible adoption of the system of weekly markets during which, for a selected day or two of the week, a market is set up at designated venues. Hawking could then be done legally only at these centers on the designated days. These venues in all cases shall be cordoned off by the Authority for this specific purpose. This approach would as a matter of national economic growth extend the avenue of employment and livelihood.

Again, hawkers should be provided with avenue to improve themselves with regards to training and retraining in diverse vocations. This step would equip people with the requisite skill for self-employment, take them off the street and at the long run would increase the nation's lot. Moreover, there should be practical steps at decongesting the city center, which would invariably reduce the extent of congestion on the streets of Accra; hawking is mostly driven by traffic congestion, hence any action that would free the flow of traffic in the city would make hawking unattractive and less profitable due to the likely reduction in sales.

Another deficiency that has sustained the street hawking phenomenon has to do with the appropriate dispensation of the political-will needed to implement policies and regulations in the constitution to the letter. This makes imperative the need for a reassessment and enforcement of the land use regulations to prevent hawkers from getting access to some areas of the street where hawking is unauthorized

#### **6.4: Areas for further research**

Further research is required to assess the implications of the increased penetration of the formal shop owners into the informal sector activities for livelihoods of the urban

poor. Information on the spread or backwash effects of formal shopping center developments on informal retail in the surrounding areas is scanty.

A further inquiry is however needed to assess the welfare and livelihood potential of the household, informal and underground activities. This will help shape the nature of policy they require to increase production, increase revenue and possibly formalize their activity. There is also the need to know what and how social structures have emerged to sustain the informal economy.

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## APPENDICES

### Appendix A:

#### Interview Guide for Street Vendors

This piece is part of the study being conducted by an MPhil student of the Department of Geography and Resource Management of the University of Ghana. Your candid opinions and views are therefore welcome as it will provide an invaluable feedback on how to tackle socio – economic issues affecting national development. The confidentiality of your response is assured.

1. Age
2. Sex
3. Region of origin
4. Current place of residence of street vendor.
5. What do you sell?
6. Level of education
7. Are you the bread winner of your family?
8. How many people do you cater for?
9. How long have you been selling on the street?
10. What is your average daily profit?
11. Why the particular spot?
12. How many places do hawkers sell?
13. Was the decongestion exercise necessary / good or unnecessary / bad?
14. How best do you think the phenomenon could have been dealt with?
15. Do the city authorities seek your thoughts on activities they carry out concerning the trade?
16. Why don't you want to move to designated market area?

17. How often do task force personnel come around?
18. What is the relationship between hawkers and task force personnel?
19. Have your ware ever been confiscated by the taskforce?
20. If no to Q 17, how do you escape the task force personnel checks?
21. If yes to Q 17, did you get your goods back?
22. If yes to Q 19, how did you get the confiscated goods back?
23. Are you aware of the risks associated with trade?
24. Are you aware of the laws and regulation governing the allocation of space?
25. Are there traders association or unions.
26. If yes to Q 23, are they members?
27. If yes Q 23, what has been their contribution in securing them the best place to sell?
28. If no to Q 23, have they thought of the benefits of joining or forming one?
29. Aside the hawking is there any job or vocation one would want to engage in as a livelihood means?

**Appendix B:****Rank Correlation**

<b>Level of education</b>	<b>x (ranks of level of education)</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>y (ranks of frequency)</b>	<b>d (x - y)</b>	<b>d<sup>2</sup></b>
<b>None</b>	6	12	5	1	1
<b>Primary</b>	5	22	3	2	4
<b>JHS/Middle school</b>	4	83	1	3	9
<b>SHS/Secondary School</b>	3	40	2	1	1
<b>6<sup>th</sup> Form</b>	2	21	4	-2	4
<b>Tertiary</b>	1	2	6	-5	25
					<b>∑44</b>

$$r_s = 1 - \left\{ \frac{(6 \times 44)}{6(6^2 - 1)} \right\}$$

$$r_s = -0.257$$

## **Appendix C:**

### **Interview guide for AMA official**

This piece is part of the study being conducted by an Mphil student of the Department of Geography and Resource Management of the University of Ghana. Your candid opinions and views are therefore welcome as it will provide an invaluable feedback on how to tackle socio – economic issues affecting our national development. The success of this exercise depends on your personal and honest response to the questions. The confidentiality of your response is assured.

1. What is the Metropolitan Assembly's perception on street hawking?
2. Did the urban managers ever envisage the emergence of the phenomenon of street hawking?
3. Was there a policy to deal with the phenomenon?
4. Were they implemented and what were the results?
5. What is the law's position currently regarding street hawking?
6. What is the strategy to deal with it?
7. Has the decongestion exercise been successful?
8. What has been the contribution of stakeholders in the formulation of a sustainable policy at controlling hawking?
9. What is the extent of involvement of the hawkers in the formulation of a sustainable policy concerning their activity?
10. What is the way forward?