Urbanisation and Urban Governance in Ghana: Identifying Key Actors and their Roles

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Abstract

The rapid increase in the urban population in Africa has created many urban challenges, including informalities, waste management problems, increased health risks, and growing urban poverty. With the unplanned spatial patterns and informalities that exist with the current urban population, this raises the question of whether African cities are ready to host more than 1.3 billion people by 2050 and still achieve urban sustainability. Using Ghana as a case study, this research undertook a critical review of urban population trends and their relation with economic growth. It identified the actors of urban governance in Ghana, as well as their roles, contributions and level of participation in urban governance processes. Findings indicate that most urban management decisions in Ghana are made by the government and exclude the non-governmental actors and citizens who bear the outcome of such decisions. This has resulted in deficiencies in actualising local needs, thus hindering the provision of urban services. The study proposes an inclusive and participatory form of urban governance with active participation of non-governmental actors and a paradigm shift from the existing urban management approaches to a more sustainable one that delivers socioeconomic benefits for more inclusive and sustainable cities in Africa in the future.

Keywords: Urbanisation; urban governance; inclusive; participation; Ghana

Introduction

In recent decades, Africa has been urbanising rapidly. According to the UN-Habitat (2016), the continent is urbanising at an average rate of 3.44% per year. This has put the continent on the trajectory of becoming the fastest urbanising region in the world (United Nations 2012). Of the 2 billion people expected to be added to the world population between 2019 and 2050, 52% (1.05 billion) could come from Sub-Saharan African countries alone (United Nations 2019). It is therefore projected that Africa's population will reach 2.44 billion by 2050 (United Nations 2012). Although the continent is predominantly rural, the population in urban areas is expected to surpass 50% by 2035 (UN-Habitat 2016). At the time of writing this paper, three African cities (Cairo, Lagos and Kinshasa) have already surpassed a population of 10 million and will be joined by Luanda, Johannesburg and Dar es Salaam in the next few years.

From a theoretical perspective, an urbanising area should result in socioeconomic growth and innovations that transform and improve the general wellbeing of urban dwellers (Cobbinah and Erdiaw-Kwasie 2016). On the global scale, cities are major drivers of economic growth; however, in Sub-Saharan Africa, urbanisation is not accompanied by the level of per capita income (World Bank 2015). Urban population growth in Africa is outpacing urban economic growth since there is no equivalent increase in formal employment, leading to growing urban

poverty and increased urban vulnerability (Bryceson and Potts 2006). For example, Sub-Saharan Africa became 40% urban in 2013 with gross domestic product (GDP) per capita of $1,018, whereas East Asia reached the same level of urbanisation in 1994 with GDP per capita of $3,617, and Latin America and the Caribbean reached this level in 1950 with per capita GDP of $1,860 (World Bank 2015). The consequences of the rapid urbanisation and inadequate capacity for planning and managing cities in Africa are leading to informalities, inequalities, and increasing health risks (Smit 2018). Proper city planning is always hindered since in Africa, development is always ahead of planning. As a result of this and its associated urban governance challenges, many scholars including Cohen (2006), Cobbinah, Erdiaw-Kwasie and Amoateng (2015) and Smit (2018) express some concerns about the level at which the urban population of the continent is increasing. According to the International Monetary Fund (IMF) (2019), however, some of the fastest-growing economies in the world are from Sub-Saharan Africa, for example, Ethiopia, Rwanda, Ghana, Côte d'Ivoire, and Uganda.

Although Africa has the potential and opportunities for urban development and innovations as noted by Smit (2018), it has been dominated by huge urban challenges, such as growing slums and increasing poverty and inequality coupled with weak government capacity (Myers 2011, cited in UN-Habitat 2014). These challenges call for improved urban planning and urban governance, improved infrastructure, increased productivity and employment opportunities while bridging inequalities to achieve more inclusive and sustainable cities in Africa in the future. Recent studies have shown that Ghana is using the potential of urbanisation to foster urban development and providing social and economic services to urban residents (Amoateng, Cobbinah and Ofori-Kumah 2014; Cobbinah and Erdiaw-Kwasie 2016; Cities Alliance 2017). The World Bank (2015) reports that Accra's poverty incidence was reduced by 20% between 1991 and 2012 mainly because of the increasing urbanisation in the country. Moreover, there has been an increase in educational and healthcare services (Cities Alliance 2017). These affirmative descriptions of the Ghanaian cities have been acknowledged and echoed by many researchers (Cobbinah and Erdiaw-Kwasie 2016; Cities Alliance 2017).

Notwithstanding the various achievements highlighted above, the planning authorities in Ghana are still battling with limited skilled manpower, weak capacity, inadequate logistical support and funding, bureaucratic fragmentations, and ways of ensuring a reasonable equilibrium between population growth and infrastructure provision (Cobbinah and Erdiaw-Kwasie 2016). Urban governance and decisions influence urban development, and whether the influence will be positive or negative depends on the urban policy, capacity and coordination among policymakers, urban planners, local governments, actors, and all other stakeholders of urbanism. According to Smit (2018), the roles in key urban governance issues in many African countries, including Ghana, are mostly fragmented among a large number of government institutions with different interests and there is usually a lack of participation of citizens.

Recently, urban governance researchers including Cobbinah (2017), Amoah, Owusu-Sekyere and Angmor (2019) and Asante (2020) affirm that there is low participation of citizens in contemporary urban governance in Ghana. However, globally, participation is a key operational issue in the process of actualising the ideals of urban governance (Cobbinah and Erdiaw-Kwasie 2016). Participation in this context should therefore focus on consensus and civic engagement where governance transcends government and authorised agencies to include urban residents (Cobbinah and Erdiaw-Kwasie 2016). This research was conducted to review the urbanisation trends and their relation with economic growth in Ghana. Furthermore, taking into account the rapid urban population growth in Ghana and its implication for urban governance, the study identified the actors of urban governance in Ghana, as well as their roles, contributions and level of participation in the urban governance system.

Methodology

This study was based on desktop research and a literature review of available secondary data on urbanisation and urban governance in Ghana. The materials for this study were retrieved from scientific databases that included academic and grey literature from African Journals Online, Taylor & Francis, Routledge, Springer, ResearchGate, Google Scholar, Sage, Elsevier, and websites of prominent organisations such as the World Bank and UN-Habitat. Keywords and phrases such as 'urbanisation', 'urban governance', 'inclusive and participatory urban governance', 'urbanisation in Africa', 'urbanisation in Ghana', 'urban governance in Ghana' and 'economic growth in Ghana' were included in the web search. More than 300 publications were retrieved from the web search. Although many of the articles were considered potentially significant, 59 were selected for the study. Factors considered for the inclusion were the relevance of the article to the study, articles within the African and the Ghanaian context, and peer-reviewed journal articles and edited books on urbanisation and urban governance.

Urbanisation Trends in Ghana

In the last decade, Ghana's urban population has witnessed progressive growth (Cobbinah and Erdiaw-Kwasie 2016). With the current average urban population growth rate of 4.5% per annum (Cities Alliance 2017), Ghana's urban population is projected to reach 72% by 2035 (Government of Ghana 2015). The 2010 Population and Housing Census in Ghana indicated that the country's urban population (50.9%) had exceeded the rural population (49.1%) (Ghana Statistical Service 2012). The census also revealed that two regions in Ghana, Greater Accra and Ashanti, were urbanising rapidly with an urban population of 90.5% and 60.6% respectively (Ghana Statistical Service 2014). Moreover, previous censuses indicated that the urban population recorded more rapid growth than the rural population (Ghana Statistical Service 2012). For instance, during the period 1960–1970, the urban population grew by 4.7% per annum, declined to 3.3% during the period 1970–1984, and increased again to 4.6% during the period 1984–2000 while the rural population recorded growth rates of 1.6%, 2.3% and 1.5% per annum during the periods 1960–1970, 1970–1984 and 1984–2000 respectively (Ghana Statistical Service 2014).

Furthermore, the total population that lived in urban settlements in Ghana in 1931 was 9.4%, which increased to 13.9% in 1948, 23.1% in 1960, 28.9% in 1970, 32.1% in 1984, and 43.8% in 2000 (Songsore 2009). The urban population growth was largely influenced by the country's development strategy, which was based on industrialisation, modernisation, economic diversification, and indigenisation of the economy after Ghana's independence (Ghana Statistical Service 2014). During the post-independence era, Ghana saw the emergence of an industrial core region made up of Kumasi, Accra and Sekondi-Takoradi, which together accounted for 86% of all registered industrial enterprises in the country (Songsore 1979). Owusu (2005) notes that the introduction of cocoa centres and decentralisation also contributed to the growth and proliferation of urban centres across the country. In addition, government projects such as the building of hospitals, schools and railways increased the population in the urban centres (Ghana Statistical Service 2014).

Table 1: Percentage of the urban population in Ghana from 1960 to 2010

Year	1960	1970	1984	2000	2010
Percentage of urban population	23.1	28.9	32.1	43.8	50.9

Source: Population and Housing Census 1960, 1970, 1984, 2000, 2010 (Ghana Statistical Service 2012)

More recently, urbanisation in Ghana has been influenced by three main factors, namely the natural increase, rural–urban migration, and reclassification as villages are classified as towns once they attain the threshold population of 5,000 or more, which is the census definition of an urban centre in Ghana (Songsore 2009). The natural increase is defined as the excess births over deaths at a given time. In Ghana, the mortality rate is declining faster than the fertility rate, thereby increasing the total population each year and subsequently increasing the urban population (Ghana Statistical Service 2014). For instance, Ghana's fertility rate increased from 4.0 children per woman in 2008 to 4.4 children per woman in 2010, with projections indicating a further increase in the foreseeable future (Ghana Statistical Service 2013). Conversely, infant mortality rates declined from 77 deaths per 1,000 live births in 1988 to 66 in 1993, 57 in 1998 and 50 in 2010 (Ghana Statistical Service 2012). The urban population growth due to the natural increase accounted for 59.3% of the total urban population increase between 2000 and 2010 (Ghana Statistical Service 2014). Rural–urban migration is another influential factor in Ghana's urbanisation.

In Ghana, the level of development and availability of services differ when comparing living conditions in rural and urban areas, with the rural population being disadvantaged (Songsore 2009). Consequently, many people relocate to the cities to search for economic opportunities, higher education and better services, including healthcare, quality water, and the internet (Cobbinah and Erdiaw-Kwasie 2016). For example, a report on the distribution of inflows indicated that 78.9% of all projects registered in the first quarter of 2011 were located in Accra (Ghana Statistical Service 2014). This shows that the majority of business establishments in the country are located in the cities, which encourages many people to relocate to the urban centres. Although the major driving factors of urbanisation in Ghana are rural–urban migration and the natural increase, reclassification of villages as towns led to an increase in the number of urban areas (towns, cities, municipalities and metropolises) from 364 in 2000 to 636 in 2010 (Naab, Dinye and Kasanga 2013), thus influencing the number of the urban population.

Urbanisation and Economic Growth in Ghana

According to the IMF (2019), Ghana is one of the fastest-growing economies in the African continent. The country's economy is expanding and its GDP grew by 6.3% in 2018 (World Bank 2019), placing it in the sixth position of the fastest-growing economies in the world (IMF 2019). Although the economic growth can be attributed to the booming oil sector, non-oil sectors also witnessed progressive growth from 4.6% in 2017 to 6.5% in 2018 (Government of Ghana 2020). For example, the introduction of the agricultural initiative Planting for Food has boosted the agricultural productivity, leading to a food boom in the country (Government of Ghana 2020).

Furthermore, Ghana is second in the world in terms of cocoa exportation (Food and Agriculture Organization 2018), which contributes significantly to its GDP (Government of Ghana 2020). Since the Bank of Ghana's banking sector clean-up, 23 Universal banks, 144 Rural and Community banks and non-banking financial institutions, and 25 savings and loans companies remain (Bank of Ghana 2020). This repositioned the economy of the country, leading to single-digit inflation (9.8) in 2018 (Centre for Affordable Housing Finance [CAHF] 2019). The country has also started implementing a digitisation system in some sectors of the economy, for example, the digital addressing system, paperless port clearing system, and mobile and electronic payment systems such as 'mobile money' (Government of Ghana 2019). The paperless port clearing system has helped in the prevention of corruption within the Ghana Port and Harbour Authority (Government of Ghana 2020).

Despite the economic growth, a significant number of people (48.4% of the population) still live below the poverty line, leading to inequalities (CAHF 2019). This is due to the fact that in

many African countries, an increase in the per capita income does not necessarily mean an increase in the standard of living (Songsore 2009). As noted by Bryceson and Potts (2006), there is a mismatch between urban population growth and urban economic growth in many African countries since there is no equivalent increase in formal employment, leading to growing urban poverty and increased urban vulnerability. Currently, over one third of urban dwellers in Ghana still live in slum conditions (Cobbinah and Erdiaw-Kwasie 2016) because of low incomes coupled with a housing backlog of more than 1.7 million units (CAHF 2019). Moreover, there is increasing unemployment and underemployment, which, according to Cobbinah and Erdiaw-Kwasie (2016), has led to social disquiet, crimes, an unstable socioeconomic structure, and perennial youth unrest in various cities in Ghana.

The rapidly urbanising nature of Ghanaian cities presents daily urban governance challenges (Cobbinah and Erdiaw-Kwasie 2016). Various challenges such as informal settlements, air and water pollution, poor sanitation, increased urban poverty and several other demeaning conditions have become commonplace in Ghanaian cities (Amoako and Cobbinah 2011). Land use patterns in cities such as Accra, Kumasi, Sekondi-Takoradi and Tamale have altered considerably as a result of the increased urban population and physical expansion (Naab, Dinye and Kasanga 2013). Urban planning efforts to provide adequate infrastructure and ensure the best use of land resources become futile as institutional collaboration is weak, private sector participation is underdeveloped, and urban residents' role in urban planning remains largely unknown (Naab, Dinye and Kasanga 2013), which requires an extensive review of the roles of actors and their contributions and level of participation in the urban governance system in Ghana.

Urban Governance: Principles and Concepts

In describing urban governance, first, it is important to understand the meaning of governance. Governance, as defined by the World Bank in one of its earliest publications, is 'the manner in which power is exercised in the management of a country's economic and social resources for development' (World Bank 1992: 1). This definition of governance placed more emphasis on how a central government can use the available resources to develop the country by focusing on efficiency and accountability. This was mostly linked to the concept of 'good governance'. However, this definition was criticised by UN-Habitat (2016: 10) as 'a mainly administrative and managerialist interpretation of good governance'. It was further criticised as there was no distinction between the definition of 'governance' and 'government'.

Rhodes (1997: 652) highlights that 'governance should be seen as a change in the meaning and description of government because it is a new process and new method of governing a society'. Many scholars have made the distinction by incorporating civil society into the definition of governance, making it different from the definition of government. This is consistent with McCarney, Halfani and Rodríguez's (1995) definition, describing governance as a relationship between civil society and the state, between rulers and the ruled, the government and the governed. The United Nations (1997: 2) defines governance as 'the mechanisms, processes and institutions through which citizens and groups articulate their interests, exercise their legal rights, meet their obligations and mediate their differences'. Here, governance is perceived as consultation, coordination and cooperation among all stakeholders to reach a consensus on how a problem is defined and solved.

Recently, the term 'good governance' has gained popularity and its dimensions have been applied in many fields of study. The application of good governance dimensions in the urban economy has been championed and promoted by UN-Habitat, which considers it as a method for reducing urban poverty, improving social inclusion and providing an equal share of economic resources. UN-Habitat has therefore promoted the principles of 'good' urban governance, namely, subsidiarity, civic engagement and citizenship, sustainability, efficiency, transparency and accountability, equity, and security. These principles are interdependent and

mutually reinforcing (UN-Habitat 2016). With the recent introduction of the Sustainable Development Goals, the approaches to sustainability have been introduced in every aspect of human life, not excluding the urban environment. Many terms relating to sustainability, such as sustainable cities, smart cities, future cities, and creative cities, have been introduced. Sustainability is one of the recent indicators of good urban governance introduced by UN-Habitat. According to Badach and Dymnicka (2017), the concept of good urban governance requires continuous updating since a single new model of urban governance that takes into account the rapid contemporary economic, cultural and social transformations does not exist.

Urban Governance Actors in Ghana

The increasing global population has created large and dense cities around the world, especially in Africa. According to Harrison and Donnelly (2011), large and dense cities can be highly innovative, productive and have 'very green' per capita income, and therefore they are desirable for the future. However, the rapid influx of the urban population presents overwhelming challenges, such as informal development, waste management, traffic congestion, crime, and inadequate infrastructure (Harrison and Donnelly 2011). According to Cobbinah, Erdiaw-Kwasie and Amoateng (2015), the process of urbanisation in Africa, including Ghana, is mostly associated with socioeconomic stagnation, unplanned spatial patterns, and unsustainable environmental management. These challenges therefore require effective urban governance and better-informed choices among the various stakeholders and actors of urban governance. The responsibility for resolving these contemporary urban issues in Ghana rests on the following actors: the government, private sector, civil societies, traditional leaders, and international agencies.

Figure 1: Urban governance actors in Ghana
Source: Author's construct

Table 2: Actors of urban governance in Ghana and their constituent/components

Actors of urban governance in Ghana	Constituent/components/examples
Government	Ministries Local government (Metropolitan, Municipality and District Assemblies [MMDAs]), Sub-metropolitan, district, urban, zonal and area councils, Assemblymen/women and Unit committee Town and Country Planning Department Regional Coordinating Councils (RCCs) Environmental Protection Agency The Lands Commission
Private sector	Association of Ghana Industries Ghana Private Road Transport Union (GPRTU) Private Road Transport Owners Association (PROTOA) Ghana Employers Association National Entrepreneurship and Innovative Plan Microcredit Association of Ghana Ghana Real Estate Developers Association (GREDA) Individuals, etc.
Civil societies	Centre for Development Partnerships and Innovations Rocha Ghana ABANTU for Development Ghana AMURT Ghana African Institute for Development Policy Youth Empowerment Synergy (YES Ghana) Rural–Urban Partnership for Africa, etc.
Traditional leaders	National and Regional House of Chiefs Paramount chiefs Divisional chiefs Sub-divisional chiefs Caretaker chiefs Family heads Customary landowners, etc.
International agencies	World Bank United Nations agencies (e.g. UN-Habitat) IMF German Development Cooperation (GIZ) African Development Bank (AFDB) Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA), etc.

Source: Author's construct 2020

The Government

Globally, urban governance mainly involves the consensus of all stakeholders; however, in Ghana, the government plays a significant role in the decision-making and implementation stages (Obeng-Odoom 2013). There is a decentralised system of government in Ghana where power and functions are transferred from the central government to the local level. The central government performs a supervisory role mainly through an appointed minister over the local government, which is classified as MMDAs. Ghana's local government system has an element of a mixed system combining the 'prefectoral style' of the rule of a traditional district assembly that is responsible to the central government and democratic authority over local service delivery (Crook and Manor 1998). Decentralisation in Ghana can be traced back to the colonial period following its usefulness as a developmental tool and a method of de-concentration (Kyei 2008). Although there is a multiparty democratic system in Ghana, most of the appointments in the various levels of government are from and within the ruling political party (Smit 2018).

The political landscape is dominated by clientelist political parties that only provide to their constituents, with most research suggesting that they are less likely to improve the quality of public services than parties with coherent and consistent positions on policy issues (Smit 2018).

Mayors are appointed by the President to oversee the administration of the metropolitan areas in Ghana together with the elected assembly members. Recent studies, including Obeng-Odoom (2011), Adaawen and Jørgensen (2012), and Asante (2020) show that mayors are often autocratic in their decision-making and accountable to only the appointing authority and not to the local people. Many scholars have therefore proposed that Mayors, Municipal Chief Executives (MCEs) and District Chief Executives (DCEs) should be elected. However, Resnick (2010) suggests that the election of Mayors, MCEs and DCEs is not necessarily the best option since the central government may be reluctant to fund urban developmental projects in areas occupied by an opposition party. Ghana's urban governance and development has therefore been influenced by political affiliations and unhealthy competition between political parties, which has led to poor urban service delivery. Poor urban service delivery in Ghana has also been linked to a lack of adequate funds within the MMDAs. According to Cities Alliance (2017), local governments in Ghana are financially anaemic and functionally subdued as there is political determination of fund flows, poor internal revenue generation, and a lack of predictability of intergovernmental transfers.
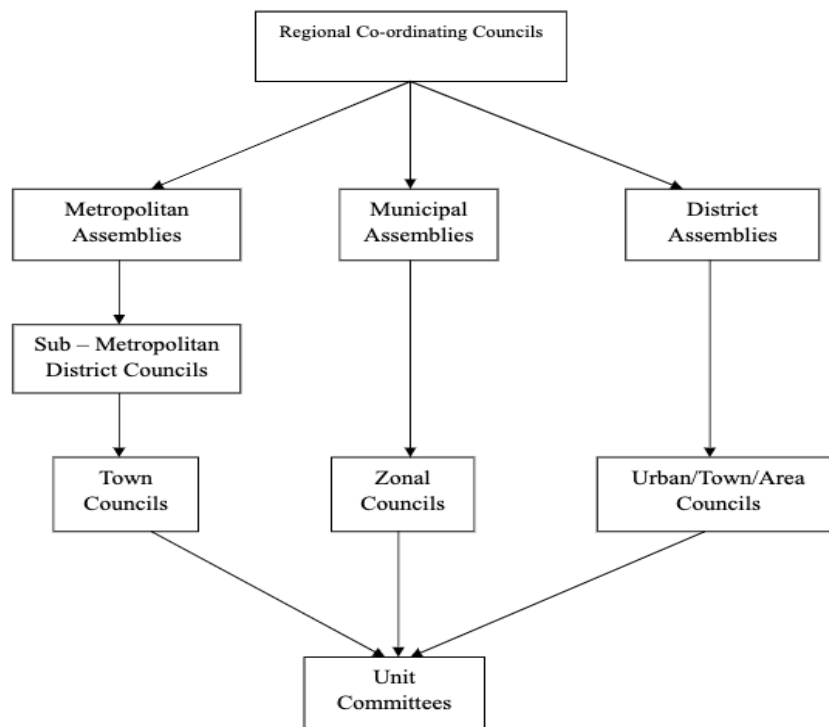

Figure 2: Local government structure in Ghana
Source: Forkuor and Adjei (2016)

Although an RCC has been established in each region in Ghana to promote coordination and provide institutional and human capacity among the various MMDAs within a particular region, there is still an overlap in functions and weak coordination among the various government institutions and the MMDAs (Obeng-Odoom 2017). Policies and directives are always from the top government bodies to the local level with little or no participation of local communities (Asante 2020). The roles of each of the government institutions are not specifically determined and participation of the people in urban development is limited, which means that the country

is not likely to benefit from a comprehensive urban intervention if there is no active participation of the people (Asante 2020).

The Private Sector

The private sector has a major influence and plays a significant role in the socioeconomic development of any city (Devas 2001). In Ghana, the private sector employs the majority of the people, thereby reducing the unemployment rate in the country (Ghana Statistical Service 2015). For example, an integrated business establishment survey conducted by the Ghana Statistical Service (2015) shows that privately owned establishments accounted for 85.6% while state-owned establishments constituted 14.4%. Furthermore, the private sector contributes to the delivery of public infrastructure (Inkoom 2014). In addition, most of the failed government initiatives in Ghana have been revitalised by the private sector. For example, taking into account the failed affordable housing initiatives in recent years, the government's agenda on housing was not fruitful (CAHF 2019).

Although the country is struggling with an overwhelming housing deficit of more than 1.7 million units (CAHF 2019), the contribution of GREDA in housing provision cannot be underestimated. Moreover, with the absence of an adequate public transport in Ghana, urban transport services are largely provided by private transport unions (Cities Alliance 2017). The major private urban transport unions in Ghana are the GPRTU and the PROTOA. An uncountable number of individuals also have commercial vehicles that operate daily in the cities. In addition, the private sector supports the government in the provision of educational and health services to urban residents (Cities Alliance 2017). Nevertheless, recent studies have shown that there is low participation of the private sector in urban decision-making. For example, the studies conducted by Inkoom (2014) and Asante (2020) show that in the development of market spaces in the cities in Ghana, traders are not usually invited to participate in the decision-making process. This reveals and supports the argument that there is low participation of citizens in contemporary urban governance in the country (Cobbinah 2017; Asante 2020). Even when there is participation of citizens, it is usually those in high-class neighbourhoods (Cobbinah 2017). Local government authorities justify the exclusion based on the limited time for implementation, the technical nature of the projects, and the fear of objections by the citizens (Asante 2020).

Civil Societies

Civil societies play an important role in the urban governance process by ensuring that the government focuses its attention on social, economic and environmental matters, which usually affect the vulnerable or the minority in society. Civil societies comprise people with a common interest in adhering to values such as inclusion, tolerance, equality, and cooperation (Ghaus-Pasha 2005). In Ghana, civil societies play a significant role in achieving socioeconomic development in societies (Frimpong 2017). According to Court, Mendizabal, Osborne and Young (2006), civil societies in countries such as Zimbabwe, Kenya and Ghana provide about 40% of all educational and healthcare services. Efforts of civil societies in Ghana date back to the pre-independence era, where the main objective of the societies was to protect indigenous resources and attain political independence (Frimpong 2017). Most of these civil societies were led by African elites and traditional leaders. In the post-independence era, efforts of civil societies were mainly related to media freedom, individual rights and freedom of speech, which were restricted under the military regime (Frimpong 2017).

More recently, civil societies' efforts have been mainly related to the vulnerable in society, such as the urban poor, women, and children. This makes them important organisations that should not be excluded from the urban governance system. In addition to being the mouthpiece for the vulnerable in society, they support many communities with the provision of potable water, toilet facilities, schools and hospitals and make donations to charity homes.

They also act as watchdogs, holding governments accountable for the use of the country's resources, thereby preventing corruption and embezzlement of public funds. However, civil societies still have a limited impact on public policy processes and practices in developing countries (Court et al. 2006). Furthermore, many civil societies are financially handicapped, which affects their activities and restrains the smooth operation of their objectives (Ghaus-Pasha 2005). In Ghana, the link between civil societies and the government is not clearly defined (Frimpong 2017), and they do not actively participate in urban governance.

Traditional Leaders

In Ghana, traditional leaders are considered as key figures in society and they are actively involved in most socioeconomic development initiatives in the country. They usually act as advisory bodies to developmental projects in many communities in Ghana. They also represent their community and put forward their interests and needs to the government. There is an established National House of Chiefs in Ghana that comprises members appointed from the Regional House of Chiefs. The National and Regional House of Chiefs unite all the traditional leaders within a particular jurisdiction to ensure peace and unity among their people and promote social, economic, cultural and political advancement in the country. In Ghana, 80% of the entire lands are under the customary tenure regime while the remaining 20% are managed by the state or under the statutory tenure regime (Bugri 2012). Since there are limited state lands that are not sufficient for most developmental initiatives, the government always has to consult traditional leaders for the release of community lands for developmental projects.

The 1992 Constitution of Ghana and the local government laws shows the intention to include traditional leaders in the local government system; however, their role is not clearly defined (Mahama 2009). Although the functions of traditional leaders and the MMDAs constitute different components of the same agenda, neither the Constitution nor the Local Government Act has made a provision for the representation of chiefs in the District Assembly or sub-district structures (Mahama 2009). One of the reasons for the non-participation of chiefs in the District Assembly system is the provisions prescribed in Article 276(1) of the Constitution, which prevents chiefs from playing an active role in politics. However, Ayee (2006) argues that in Ghana, projects are not successfully implemented without the involvement of chiefs within the project areas. Therefore, there should be involvement and active participation of traditional leaders in the planning and implementation of development projects in their communities (Seini 2006).

International Agencies

International agencies have played an instrumental role in urban development projects and public infrastructure provision in Ghana. Most of the urban infrastructure and regional projects in Ghana are mainly financed by international agencies (Cities Alliance 2017). Active international agencies in Ghana include the World Bank, United Nations agencies (e.g. UN-Habitat), the IMF, GIZ, AFDB and CIDA. Each of these agencies has its strategies and area of interest, and they sometimes form a partnership to execute their programmes. Their contributions to the development agenda in the country have improved many sectors of the urban framework, including health services, education, sanitation, housing, and jobs (Cities Alliance 2017). Ghana has not only benefited from the international agencies on a monetary basis, but also in policy formulation and implementation, urban and regional development initiatives, and protection of the rights of the minority, vulnerable and marginalised groups in the society. International agencies in Ghana have recently focused their attention on the Sustainable Development Goals, which address urban-related problems through policies, instruments and strategies that are pro-poor, gender-equitable and sustainable.

Towards Inclusive and Participatory Urban Governance

Many studies assert that urban management decisions in developing countries, including Ghana, are usually made by the government (Cobbinah 2017; Asante and Helbrecht 2019; Asante 2020) and exclude non-governmental actors who bear the outcomes of urban management decisions (Obeng-Odoom 2013, 2017). Although the actors of urban governance in Ghana are identified as directly or indirectly involved in urban governance processes, this research argues that all the actors should have active participation. The democratic feature of urban governance demonstrates that decision-making processes and responsibilities of urban redevelopment initiatives should be shared among all the actors of urbanism (Yeboah and Obeng-Odoom 2010; Asante 2020). Moreover, taking into account the rapid increase in the urban population, there should be a paradigm shift from the existing urban management approaches to a more sustainable one that delivers socioeconomic benefits, promotes equity, involves participation, and ensures accountability (Cobbinah and Erdiaw-Kwasie 2016).

Furthermore, regarding decentralisation, the central government's functions should be clearly distinguished and should target area-wide matters such as regional public transport planning and water and electricity provision (UN-Habitat 2010). Local governments should be autonomous, only accountable to the local people and actively involve them in the decision-making process. In addition, multi-level decentralised urban management should be based on democracy, participation and community self-help initiatives that will respond to local needs (UN-Habitat 2010). With much political influence on urban management in Ghana, active participation of all the actors of urban governance will limit the political control and promote inclusive and participatory urban governance. In addition, taking into account the contributions of the private sector, international agencies, civil societies and traditional leaders in urban infrastructure provision, active participation of these groups in urban governance will help significantly in meeting urban infrastructural needs considering the rapid growth of the urban population in Ghana.

Conclusion

Ghana's urban population has witnessed progressive growth in recent decades and is projected to increase in the coming years. This has exerted much pressure on the limited urban infrastructure in the country and created many urban challenges, including informalities as a result of unplanned spatial patterns and waste management challenges leading to increased health risks and growing urban poverty, which has led to inequalities. These challenges have implications for urban governance and therefore require improved urban infrastructure, increased productivity and employment opportunities while bridging inequalities to achieve more inclusive and sustainable cities in the future. This study identified five key urban governance actors, namely the government, private sector, international agencies, civil societies, and traditional leaders.

Findings indicate that urban management decisions in Ghana are mostly made by the government and exclude the non-governmental actors. However, the contributions of the non-governmental actors in terms of infrastructure provision and urban development cannot be underestimated. Findings also show that there is low participation of citizens in urban governance processes, which has resulted in deficiencies in actualising local needs, thus hindering urban service provision. Consequently, the study suggests the implementation of inclusive and participatory urban governance where the non-governmental actors can actively participate in urban governance. Furthermore, taking into account the rapid expansion of the urban population, the study proposes that there should be a paradigm shift from the existing urban management approaches in Ghana to a more sustainable one that delivers socioeconomic benefits.

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