

Inclusive Public Space

Young people's use and perception of the public realm in Accra, Ghana.

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Declaration

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Signed: Kristijn van Riel

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Abstract

The thesis examines power dynamics behind young people's perceptions and use of urban spaces in two neighbourhoods of Accra (Ghana), and proposes guidelines for spatial planning and urban design to remedy key spatial injustices. Like many African cities, Accra has a very young population and high rates of under-employment among young people, demographics often associated with societal instability and increased risk for civil conflict. Additionally, young people are persistently excluded from spaces of political, social and cultural decision making. Research into African youth and urbanism is scarce and involves several methodological and theoretical challenges, but it is urgently needed to improve the quality of urban life and the urban environment, and create more inclusive, spatially just cities engendering societal development through better policy-making and urban planning practices.

The thesis develops a spatial justice framework hinging on Lefebvrian spatial dialectics to investigate power relations between different spatial actors. It conducts a multi-level empirical investigation, integrating three lines of inquiry corresponding to Lefebvre's spatial triad: (1) on young people's use and perceptions of the public realm (lived space); (2) on collective activities and local power dynamics that produce and manage the public realm (perceived space); (3) on urban policies and planning that organise and structure the public realm (conceived space). This is achieved with a multi-method approach combining different qualitative methods and focusing their tools on these dialectical perspectives of the urban space.

The study finds important variations in lived realities and suggests that most youth experience a deep sense of belonging in place, but also that relations with the community and its leadership are complex and often problematic, leading to significant forms of marginalisation. Findings suggest that local power dynamics decisively affect young people's perceptions and use of spaces, and that their lack of voice in spatial planning processes directly influences the urban form and the suitability and availability of spaces to them. The thesis recommends further research into spatial justice issues and methodologies that allow investigating lived experiences of marginalised populations – particularly in Africa. It recommends advanced forms of participation in spatial planning and decision-making processes and firmly promotes a move towards democratisation of urban policy, planning and research to significantly reduce political, traditional or commercial pressures on marginalised populations and lead to more inclusive and sustainable urban development.

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List of acronyms

AMA	Accra Metropolitan Area
CBO	Community Based Organisations
GAMADA	Ga Mashie Development Agency
GAR	Greater Accra Region
GSGDA	Ghana Shared Growth and Development Agenda
GYEEDA	Ghana Youth Employment and Entrepreneurial Development Agency
IMF	International Monetary Fund
LP	Local Plan
LUSPA	Land Use and Spatial Planning Authority
MICZD	Ministry of Inner City and Zongo Development
MMDA	Metropolitan, Municipal, District Assemblies
MOYS	Ministry of Youth and Sports
MTDP	Medium-Term Development Plan
NDC	National Democratic Congress
NDP	National Development Plan
NDPC	National Development Planning Commission
NLC	National Liberation Council
NPP	New Patriotic Party
NSPM	New Spatial Planning Model
NYA	National Youth Authority
NYEP	National Youth Employment Programme
NYP	National Youth Policy
PD	People's Dialogue on Human Settlements
PNDC	Provisional National Defence Council
SAP	Structural Adjustment Programme
SDF	Strategic Development Framework
SDG	Sustainable Development Goal
SDI	Slum/Shack Dwellers International
SP	Structural Plan
SPO	Systematic Photographic Observation
TCPD	Town and Country Planning Department
UCLG	United Cities and Local Governments
UN	United Nations
UNECA	United Nations Economic Commission for Africa
WB	The World Bank
WPAY	World Programme of Action for Youth
WYR	World Youth Report

Chapter 1: Introduction

This introductory chapter presents the research, an empirical investigation into the power dynamics behind young people's use of public space through a spatial justice lens. Two diverse neighbourhoods – Ga Mashie and Sabon Zongo – of the city of Accra, Ghana serve as a case study. The first section, the *problem statement*, accentuates the societal relevance and urgency of the topic, by outlining in successive paragraphs the problematic aspects of the larger socio-economic context of youth and public space in urban Africa, and the current policy and urban planning conditions. This is accompanied by a brief overview of the spatial justice framework to demonstrate why it is important to examine this topic using the adopted conceptual lens. Subsequently, the *initial knowledge gap* is presented, showcasing the academic importance and necessity for this investigation. This highlights the issues and sets the stage for the *research questions* and the *research objectives* and *approach*. These introduce the adopted methodology, and highlight the projected scientific and societal *contributions*. Finally, the *structure of the thesis* provides a roadmap of the thesis.

1.1 Problem statement

1.1.1 Inequality in Africa

Several decades of global capitalism and neoliberal ideologies have demonstrated that one effect of globalisation has been a worldwide increase in inequality. Harvey (2003) contends that the social segmentation of cities we observe throughout the world can be largely blamed on widening class divisions supported by free market policies of global capitalism, the effect of which is particularly menacing when these divisions overlap with other dimensions of social difference such as age, gender, race, culture or religion. The marginalising effects of this social and economic polarisation are often most discernible in cities in the Global South, as contrasts are amplified when governments struggle to keep up with the excruciating pace of urbanisation and migration.

Cities everywhere have always been, and remain today, centres of wealth creation, but recently the relative share of the urban poor has been growing at a disturbing rate in many cities (Ravallion, 2002; UN-Habitat, 2003). Cohen (2006) observes that a main characteristic of the process of urban growth is an increase in diversity. All cities are therefore inevitably comprised of more and less affluent parts; however, in cities of the Global South this disparity tends to be exaggerated, and basic service provision and infrastructure in the less affluent parts are generally grossly

inadequate. Experts anticipate that the region of Sub Saharan Africa will face the most difficult developmental challenges in the foreseeable future, partly because, in contrast to other major regions in the Global South, the growth of its cities has become largely disconnected from its economic logic (Cohen, 2006). In 2003, UN-Habitat estimated the urban population in Africa living in poverty to be in excess of 70 per cent, and already in 1999 The World Bank warned that 'cities in Africa are not serving as engines of growth and structural transformation. Instead, they are part of the cause and a major symptom of the economic and social crisis that have enveloped the continent' (The World Bank, 1999, p. 130).

It should then hardly be a surprise that some of the highest levels of inequality can be found in cities on the African continent (UN-Habitat, 2010). Economic, social and spatial inequalities can be found at every scale and tend to be highest in cities that have been under long-term colonial influence. Decades of policies encouraging ethnic and social segregation have left the urban fabric of these cities particularly vulnerable to the effects of social exclusion and inequality, even long after independence. Accra, the capital of Ghana, is chosen as the case of this investigation because it is a classic example of a city whose social and spatial fabric has been fragmented under British colonial spatial planning, and which can be argued to generate social and spatial exclusion to this day (Pellow, 1991, 2001).

1.1.2 Youth bulge

The urban landscape of Accra, like most African cities, is characterised by a visible presence of young people, often sitting idle or just 'hanging about' (as observed by for instance Langevang, 2008a; van Riel, 2015). Many cities in the Global South currently experience an overrepresentation of young people in their demographic composition, popularly referred to as a 'youth bulge.' This specific demographic profile in countries is increasingly connected to societal instability and higher potential for civic unrest (Beehner, 2007). Particularly on the African continent, where this development is combined with very high rates of underemployment, especially among young men, this is increasingly a cause for concern. In Accra, approximately 56% of residents were under the age of 25 in the year 2000 (Accra Metropolitan Assembly, 2000), while, on a national level, 15.9% of the population between 15-24 were unemployed, more than twice the rate of the age group of 25-44 and in excess of three times that of the age group of 45-60 (Youth Employment Network, 2002).

It should be no surprise then that many young Africans currently experience a range of different

forms of marginalisation, as they are often excluded from spaces of power, labour, education and leisure (Diouf, 2003). Their marginalisation is closely linked to a larger and dramatic shift of the African identity over the past decades, following the intensification of the economic and financial crisis, the erratic trajectory of democratisation and political fissures that appeared at the end of the 1980s. The subsequent influx of young Africans on the public and domestic stage has caused distress at the core of African societies. As a response to their exclusion, young people often resort to the production of new forms of social space that explicitly demonstrate their difference (Diouf, 2003; De Boeck and Honwana, 2005; Langevang, 2008a).

The spaces claimed by youth are often situated in spaces abandoned by the establishment, on the margins of society and outside of dominant cultures. Additionally, parks, squares and similar 'dedicated' public spaces are rare in most parts of Accra, and are often designed and managed in an exclusionary way, defending them from 'unwanted' visitors such as street hawkers, homeless people or indeed, loitering youth. As a result they are often left underused and neglected (Ayitio and Sarfoh, 2014a, 2014b). The street, however, continues to be an important arena for many young people to affirm, negotiate and challenge their identities, both in the Global North (e.g. Matthews, Limb and Taylor, 2000) and the South (e.g. Gough and Franch, 2005; Winton, 2005). A 'base' is an informal meeting place produced by young men in public spaces of Accra. Langevang (2008a) presents these bases both as a symptom of the marginalisation of young people, but at the same time as meaningful places produced in their struggle for survival and respect.

In the light of heightened concerns and discourses on terrorism and globalisation (see for instance Coker, 2002), several studies have highlighted the dangers of social marginalisation of youth in relation to religious radicalisation, in a European (e.g. Spalek, 2007) but also in a West African (e.g. Aning and Abdallah, 2013; Hinds, 2013; Ismail, 2013) context. Furthermore, the increased migration of the last few years as a result of ongoing conflicts in the Middle East, but also central America, often referred to as a 'refugee crisis', many of the displaced were young arguably makes research on exclusion, mobility, place and identity as relevant as ever (Yazgan, Utku and Sirkeci, 2015). If we aspire to generating a more inclusive urban environment, the importance of embracing the perceptions, needs and desires of this group of people, on which the future of African societies so desperately depends, cannot be overstated. When referring to the marginalisation of youth, it is important to remember that this social group is extremely heterogeneous, and to reflect on differences and inequalities within the category, particularly gender imbalances.

1.1.3 Youth policies

Since the early 2000's, there has been a noticeable increase in international awareness and concern over youth issues, both in academic literature as in the policy community. The leading catalyst in this surge has been the United Nations and its various youth initiatives, including the World Programme of Action for Youth (WPAY) and the World Youth Report (WYR) (United Nations, 2010, 2018). It is ironic then, that the recent UN 2030 agenda and the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), put arguably too little emphasis on youth issues (Senanu, 2014; United Nations, 2016a, 2018). In Africa, youth challenges have also increasingly managed to attract public attention in the recent decades. Two landmark initiatives are: (1) the ratification of the African Youth Charter in 2006, which represents a regionalised policy framework that underlines the responsibilities of its member states in the development of youth (African Union Commission, 2006); and (2) the presentation of the African Youth Report in 2009 by the United Nations Economic Commission for Africa (UNECA), which offers an account on key economic and social development issues most relevant to young people, evaluates policies that affect these issues, and provides recommendations (United Nations Economic Commission for Africa, 2009). However, none of these documents contain any specific reference to young people's claim to, or use of public space, besides a peripheral mention concerning infrastructure for sports and leisure activities.

In Ghana, youth agendas have historically been fragmented and incorporated into larger, more prominent ministries such as education or sports. This way, youth development has been systematically subordinated to other political processes and agendas in the national development discourse, inspiring critical views that government efforts towards youth development are not sincere. This situation has rendered youth policies susceptible to political interference, and youth themselves vulnerable to manipulation or recruitment for political purposes (Korboe, 2014). Political interference and corruption in youth development are undeniably a persistent concern, both in the internal operation of governmental and non-governmental organisations, and in the allocation of contracts to service providers, which are often rewarded to companies with improper ties to the ruling political party (Applerh and Hoetu, 2012; Gyampo, 2012a; Korboe, 2014).

Nonetheless, a range of ministries, agencies and organisations strive to improve the situation for youth, but the approach has always been problematic. The National Youth Authority (NYA), the institution mandated to lead the coordination and organisation of the youth development process, is reputedly ill-equipped for this task, and its lack of effective leadership undermines

the coherence of policies, services and training provided (Hoetu, 2011; Korboe, 2014). Its most significant achievement is the implementation of the National Youth Policy (NYP) in 2010, which identifies the main structural drivers that perpetuate inequality, and outlines a national framework for the various youth development agendas (Ministry of Youth and Sports Ghana, 2010, p. 1; Hoetu, 2015a). However, little awareness of the policy among Ghanaian youth, and little evidence of its implementation or of any substantiable progress on the identified structural drivers are reported (Korboe, 2014). Youth development currently remains significantly underfunded, and this is not projected to improve in the near future (Korboe, 2014; Hoetu, 2015b). Furthermore, Gyampo (2012b, p. 13) describes that policies and development processes have largely been *'formulated and implemented with little or no participation of the youth'*.

1.1.4 Urban planning and public space in Africa

Further motivation for this research follows the observation that many of the current challenges facing the Sub-Saharan African region can be directly or indirectly related to the fast pace of urbanisation of its cities. The Sub-Saharan African urban population is expected to double over the next 15 years and it is commonly agreed that most African cities are very poorly equipped to provide even the basic services of housing, water and sanitation for the anticipated additional urbanites (UCLG, 2014). Urban planning is generally recognised as a government's most potent tool to manage rapid urban growth, but its success depends on the available resources, the amount of authority wielded by its institutions, and its relationship and engagement with the main stakeholders (Watson and Agbola, 2013; Fuseini and Kemp, 2015; Cobbinah and Darkwah, 2017). It involves the redistribution and repurposing of resources, often producing winners and losers, and its main stakeholders – residents, the state and the private sector – hold very different power-relations to one another, making it inherently a deeply political process (Adams, 1994; Watson and Agbola, 2013; Cobbinah and Darkwah, 2017).

Increasingly, the need to shift from Western philosophies of urban planning towards a focus on inclusivity, equity and pro-poor approaches in African cities is gaining traction in academic and planning circles. This should, however, not come at the expense of well-designed and attractive urban environments, considered fundamental components for achieving inclusivity, equity, and as argued in this thesis, spatial justice (Watson, 2009). Simultaneously, there is a growing awareness of the importance of urban planning in general, and public space provision in urban Africa. Mostly under impulse of the UN (UN-Habitat, 2015) a global movement has advocated for urban policies

to increase focus on public space. According to this movement, focusing urban policies on public space can be a viable approach to improve the general quality of life in cities, by making urban areas more attractive and comfortable, by creating opportunities for employment, and by making the city more inclusive and safe for everyone, especially for vulnerable or marginalised groups. The association of United Cities and Local Governments (UCLG, 2014, 2015), claims a focus of urban planning on public space is imperative, but will require new types of governance that rely on a participatory approach, where citizens are included in every phase of the development of public space, from the planning and design, to resourcing and maintenance, and to the enjoyment and use thereof.

During the colonial period, planning was used to dissect Accra along ethnic lines to segregate the Europeans from the indigenous and migrant populations; a practice that was entertained all over the African continent and seen in its severest form under the apartheid regime in South Africa (Mabogunje, 1990). The legacy of this divisive planning on the city is remarkably intact, visible in the vast inequality of amenities, services, greenery and open space between some of the inner-city neighbourhoods.

After independence, a new optimism about improved lifestyles, increased employment opportunities and the promise of freedom and autonomy attracted ever more Ghanaians to the cities. The post-colonial government failed to respond appropriately to the new wave of migration or to the many challenges and spatial imbalance generated by colonial planning (Acheampong, 2019). In fact, many of the current challenges facing Ghanaian urban areas, such as the unguided urban development, poor sanitation and deficits in housing and vital services, can be attributed to a combination of harmful planning by the colonial administration, but also of very poor planning performance in the early days after independence (Songsore, 2009; Owusu, 2010; Adarkwa, 2012). To make things worse, spatial planning efforts were abruptly suspended in 1966 after a military coup, which introduced a prolonged period of successive military regimes during which no substantial planning projects were attempted (Fuseini and Kemp, 2015). In the 1980s, largescale austerity measures, most notoriously the Structural Adjustment Programmes (SAPs), endorsed by large institutions and donor countries, forced administrations to drastically cut public spending, which further exacerbated the problem as it encouraged the development of high density settlements without any regard for the public realm (Yeboah, 2000; Konadu-Agyemang, 2001; UCLG, 2014).

Sadly, planning after the reinstitution of democracy in 1992 did not fare much better. A hard policy-shift towards decentralisation was introduced and planning was separated into 'development planning', which focused on socio-economic issues and poverty reduction, and 'land use planning', which fixated on spatial planning and development of urban areas. This dichotomy yielded a parallel structure with strict divisions between development and spatial planning activities at every level, with very little coordination or dialogue between the different agencies and departments (Acheampong, 2019). In reality, the emphasis shifted away from explicit spatial forms of planning, and planning documents were therefore generally not supported by a convincing spatial strategy to implement the predominantly socio-economic development agendas, leaving it open to different interpretations of the various local authorities charged with execution, and vulnerable to all types of interference (Acheampong, 2019).

Finally, in 2011 the New Spatial Planning Model (NSPM) was presented, further reinforced in 2016 by the Land Use and Spatial Planning Act, to address the neglect of spatial planning and the lack of a coherent planning system (Town and Country Planning Department, 2011). These policies aim to ensure a direct correlation between national development strategies and the local implementation of spatial planning activities and mandate the Land Use and Spatial Planning Authority (LUSPA) to take over spatial planning responsibilities and coordinate between, and synchronise development and spatial planning to achieve a more effective, integrated planning practice (Town and Country Planning Department, 2011; Government of Ghana, 2016). Together, both acts mark a substantial leap in the development of Ghana's spatial planning system, as they finally replace and update the legal planning framework, still in place since the colonial era (Acheampong, 2019).

It is commonly accepted that urban planning should be a collaborative endeavour that reflects the desires and needs of the constituents (Cobbinah and Darkwah, 2017). However, in Ghana, activities from political and traditional leadership have been deeply detrimental to the planning process and contributed to a situation in which residents' views are inconsequential, and urban planning institutions are incapable of effectively influencing urban processes, which has led to the poor urban planning situation in Ghana (Yeboah and Obeng-Odoom, 2010; Fuseini and Kemp, 2015; Cobbinah and Darkwah, 2017). Furthermore, despite Accra being the largest urban area and the main economic and administrative centre of Ghana, so far it has been the subject of very few specific spatial planning efforts. The available documents demonstrate no intent to increase inclusivity or equal access to urban services and spaces, or specific plans to implement

participatory decision-making processes moving forward. This means that with little formal guidelines or legislative imperative, the implementation of participation schemes and provision of inclusive and qualitative public spaces are left to the capacity and willingness of the local authorities, with all the apparent risk that it poses.

In summary, we can state that processes of globalisation have been central in the asymmetrical development and production of inequality around the world. Particularly in many countries of the Global South have disparities between affluent and deprived, and between powerful and powerless deepened. Many argue then that likely the greatest consequences for the foreseeable future will be felt in the region of Sub Saharan Africa. Meanwhile the locus of poverty is shifting from rural to urban areas, often resulting in vast urban sprawls of residential areas with very poor living conditions. In cities such as Accra, whose physical and social fabric is fragmented by prolonged and intensive colonial involvement, this has generated and reproduced particularly pervasive forms of inequality. Postcolonial governments and urban planning have so far been unsuccessful in significantly moving towards more inclusive urbanism or effectively tackling these inequalities. Currently, its physical infrastructures are deteriorating and many of its public spaces are either dysfunctional or highly congested. Finally, the city displays an overrepresentation of young people, coupled with high degrees of underemployment in the same category. When combined, these reasons contribute to a current problematic situation where many young people experience severe exclusion, and are marginalised from spaces of employment, education, politics, and leisure.

It is argued that, combined, these issues highlight the current societal relevance and urgency of the topic and the pressing need for research and interventions in this field. This investigation attempts to contribute by addressing these issues with a spatial justice lens, which is briefly introduced in the next section.

1.2 A Spatial Justice Lens

The present study involves the investigation of the power dynamics behind youth's use and perception of Accra's public realm, as seen through a spatial justice lens, an analytical perspective that focuses on the central role of space in the production of justice and injustice.

Issues of spatial justice concerning the production, appropriation and access to public space often implement urban theory based on '*the right to the city*' coined by Lefebvre. It is based on his interpretation of the city as a participatory endeavour, generated by the interactions and

exchanges of all citizens. Spatial justice can then be understood in terms of the right to inhabit the city by different groups, with widely different needs and desires, and different claims on its resources. In this sense it is the struggle over the shape of the city, and the way the power to shape the city is distributed among its citizens. In most African cities, however, the 'right to the city' is granted only to the wealthy and powerful, resulting in conflicts over land, employment and politics, often escalating existing ethnic, cultural and social tensions (Cartwright *et al.*, 2018). Inclusive urbanism rooted in spatial justice then advocates for approaches that engage all stakeholders in decision making processes and introduce improved participatory processes to urban planning, governance and design (Swilling, 2011; Belausteguigoitia, 2019).

A theoretical framework grounded in spatial justice is established built on Lefebvrian dialectics of space, with a focus on how notions of belonging and exclusion are reflected in the mode of '*lived space*'. At the core of Lefebvre's urban theory lies the concept of social space, and the '*three moments of social space*' which exist in dialectic, yet hierarchical, relation to one another, each contributing in important ways to shaping the landscape (Lefebvre, 1991). He calls these moments the conceived, the perceived, and the lived space.

The highest and most abstract level of space, 'conceived space', is a discursive and strategic space (Lefebvre, 1991; Zhang, 2006). It is in this ideological space that hegemonic power is situated, and where urban governance operates (Wiedmann, Salama and Mirincheva, 2014). The second level, 'perceived space', is an empirical, material space, made up of flows of capital, labour, and information. It is the space of collective agency, in which conceived and lived spaces are interpreted and reduced to images, depictions and plans by architects and planners, but also by corporations and industries. It is where forces of capitalism reign supreme and the main space of production (Harvey, 1990; Zhang, 2006). The third level of space, and the one that the present investigation is most concerned with, the 'lived space', is a deeply subjective, humanised and bodily space, and consists of the '*inner structure of space, as it appears concretely to man in his experience*' (Bollnow, 1961, p. 31). It is the space of users, meaning, affect, emotion, and imagination (Lefebvre, 1991; Elden, 2004; Zhang, 2006). The important concept of *place* is generally recognised as located and grounded in the lived mode of space. Following Wiedmann et al. (2014), it is argued that social justice and associated processes of inclusion/exclusion can best be understood in terms of processes of identification – or rather *belonging* – between individuals, collectives and places, by investigating closely the lived dimensions of space.

Based on Yuval-Davis (2006) and Fenster (2005), Antonsich (2010) identifies two interdependent dimensions of belonging. The first dimension treats belonging as a subjective, personal and intimate attachment to place. This dimension is firmly rooted in the everyday (Fenster, 2005) and can be interpreted as a central aspect of Lefebvre's lived mode of space. The second dimension deals with belonging as a discursive resource that '*constructs, claims, justifies and resists forms of socio-spatial inclusion/exclusion*' (Antonsich, 2010, p. 4). This is the *politics of belonging*, aptly described by Crowley (1999, p. 30) as '*the dirty work of boundary maintenance*,' boundaries that delineate a community of belonging, their maintenance encompasses defining what behaviour is, or which characteristics are appropriate for membership in this community and its associated territory (Trudeau, 2006). Claiming who is allowed to belong and who is excluded, in order to monopolise resources and retain power, this process of social closure, is a constituent part of the conceived mode of space (Soja, 1996). Antonsich (2010) emphasises that the sense of belonging can be embodied and affectively felt, but that it is always socially constructed and thus never isolated from power dynamics in place.

The study of the affective dimension of belonging, or the sensation of feeling at home in place, often poised as the counter-pole of exclusion (Trudeau, 2006), reaches back to the phenomenological tradition of humanistic geographers (see for instance Tuan, 1974; Relph, 1976). Home, in this sense, is not restricted to the physical domestic space, but rather refers to the symbolic idea of *Heimat*; a familiar space, a safe zone of emotional attachment and agreement, a place where one feels protected and at ease. Pfaff-Czarnecka (2011b) notes that the notion of belonging allows for the conceptualisation of more dynamic modes of collectivity that are based on shared experience, knowledge and meaning, thereby going beyond often dichotomous signifiers of identity. Belonging can therefore be characterised as a fluid, multi-faceted construct, a process subject to continuous social and spatial transformations, involving simultaneous attachments to different places and collectives, often evoking feelings of in-betweenness or hybridity (Pfaff-Czarnecka, 2011b; Lähdesmäki et al., 2016). Committing to exposing the multiple forms of belonging and exclusion as manifested in young people's lived, everyday experiences poses the challenge of finding analytical tools that befit the multidimensionality of the constructs.

1.3 Initial knowledge gap

The African continent has largely been overlooked in terms of literature on urbanism, including on the main topics of public space and youth. Urban studies that focus on cities in the Global South, have most often focused either on the Asian continent or on Latin America. Even so, the majority

of studies that have looked at African cities, have generally focused on the urban characteristics and phenomena in relation to, and mainly fixated on the period of colonialism, independence and subsequent transitional processes of nation building. Even though it is impossible to understand African cities independent from their colonial heritage (Kalua, 2009), the literature leaves a painful chronological and theoretical gap in the knowledge production on contemporary African urbanism. Furthermore, according to several notable urban scholars, the current African city, and its complexities and diversities, challenges rigorous theorisation (e.g., Simone, 2003; Robinson, 2006; Pieterse, 2010, 2011). Further investigation of contemporary African urban characteristics and phenomena is necessary.

Skelton and Gough (2013) additionally notice that, despite their often very visible presence in the urban landscape, youth has long been largely overlooked by urban research. This disregard in the literature arguably reproduces and reflects their spatial exclusion experienced in the public realm. Freeman and Tranter (2011) concur that in most cities young people are often unaccounted for in – if not deliberately omitted from – political decision making processes, despite that these processes affect their lives as much as any citizen. Many authors (e.g., Malone and Hasluck, 1998; Massey, 1998; Vanderbeck and Dunkley, 2004; Langevang, 2008b, 2008a; Langevang and Gough, 2009; Hopkins, 2010; Skelton and Gough, 2013) argue it is therefore necessary to recognise and enable the agency of young people in theory and practice, exactly because they behave differently in relation to the city, because they are an important part of cities' characteristic diversity and because they play a significant role in the production and consumption of urban culture and identity (Skelton and Gough, 2013). Langevang (2007) adds that research on African youth is still in its developmental stage and in dire need of more specific methodological discussions.

Despite optimistic language used in many reports and policies arranged by large institutions (United Nations, 2006, 2015, 2016b; UN-Habitat, 2010; UCLG, 2014, 2015) to promote a focus on public space, issues of youth, or participatory types of governance as a way forward to more inclusive cities, very rarely do they specifically address issues of spatial justice, or exclusion of young people in particular. Several compelling observations must be stressed: First, as before mentioned, public space in the African context is almost completely absent from the urban literature. Second, the study of young people in public space is also virtually unexplored territory in research and policy. This is at least remarkable given the evident current relevance, the demonstrable importance of public space for sustainable urbanism and the severity of many

young people's situations in African cities, as is argued here. In summary, an urgent need arises to address:

- A shortage of studies that focus on contemporary African urbanism, particularly on public space;
- A lack of studies that focus on the experiences of young people, especially concerning their experience of belonging;
- Few methodological discussions that seek to operationalise an empirical study of place and belonging.

1.4 Research questions & objectives

1.4.1 Research questions

This thesis studies the spatial marginalisation of young people in the urban realm of an African city by empirical enquiry. The multi-level investigation adopts a spatial justice lens and is structured according to Lefebvre's spatial triad. The empirical work focuses on the case of young people in the public spaces of two vastly dissimilar areas of the urban core of Accra: the migrant neighbourhood of Sabon Zongo, and the indigenous neighbourhood of Ga Mashie. The main research question is presented:

How can we understand the effects of spatial planning and youth policies (conceived space) on the one hand, and collective action and local power dynamics (perceived space) on the other, on young people's perception and use of the public realm (lived space), and what are the implications for urban policy, planning and design?

Applicable to the case of Accra, this question is further deconstructed into manageable parts, which are addressed separately in different chapters.

1. *How do young people use and perceive the public realm? How can we characterise their sense of belonging in place?*
2. *How do collective action and local power dynamics within communities contribute to the sense of belonging and exclusion of youth in the public realm?*
3. *How do spatial planning and youth policies affect the availability of, and youth's access to qualitative inclusive public spaces?*
4. *What are the implications for spatial planning and urban design in an African context?*

1.4.2 Research objectives

In order to answer the research questions presented, the thesis responds to the following objectives:

1. Identify the key issues and develop a conceptual framework for investigation based on spatial justice.

The developed framework forms the fundamental theoretical lens of the thesis, and closely guides the collection and analysis of data, the reporting and discussion on findings and conclusions;

2. *Investigate the power relations between the different spatial actors in the urban landscape.*

Conducting a multi-level empirical investigation which is captured through a methodology that operationalises the research questions and integrates three lines of inquiry: (1) on young people's use and perceptions of the public realm; (2) on collective activities and local power dynamics that produce and manage the public realm; (3) on urban policies and planning that organise and structure the public realm. This is achieved by connecting and aligning methods adapted from different disciplines in a mixed-method framework, combining qualitative and quantitative methods, and focusing their tools on different aspects, perspectives or experiences of the urban landscape;

3. *Develop guidelines for urban policy, planning and design that aim to increase the inclusivity and quality of public spaces in urban settlements, in a larger framework of sustainable urbanism and spatial justice.*

This is achieved by assessing current and past practices of urban governance and planning and evaluating their effects on young people and on the urban landscape, to propose strategies that generate and promote sustainable urbanism and more inclusive, equitable cities in general.

1.5 Contributions

Responding to the identified knowledge gap, by answering the developed research questions through actions elaborated in the research objectives, the thesis seeks to contribute on three

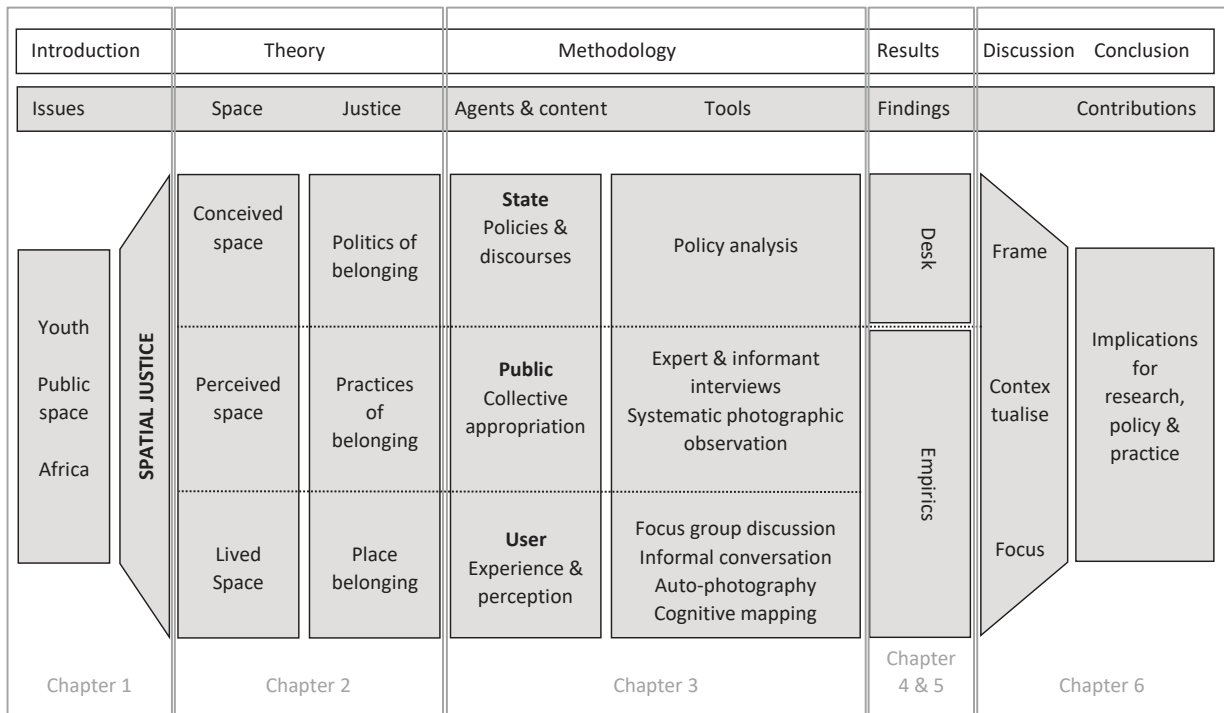


Figure 1: A diagrammatic representation of the thesis structure

distinct levels: (a) contributions to knowledge; (b) contributions to future investigations; and (c) contributions to society and practice.

- a) The thesis responds to the knowledge gap previously identified by focusing on under-researched issues such as African urbanism, youth and public space.

Hereby the thesis:

- makes an urgently needed contribution to the body of knowledge on African cities, and to bridging the yawning North-South knowledge-divide;
- make a contribution to the ongoing development and operationalisation of a theoretical framework based on *spatial justice*;

- b) The thesis contributes to future research and approaches to investigation, particularly those in similar urban contexts, disenfranchised populations or other spatial injustices:

- demonstrates that a focus on the everyday experiences of citizens allows a voice for a misrepresented or absent population to be considered in discussions and decision making in urban policy, planning, and design;
- makes a contribution to the operationalisation of participatory methodologies in urban sciences, with a particular focus on investigating marginalised voices in urban Africa;

- c) The thesis, contributing to society and practice:

- generates practical guidelines for urban policy, planning, and design professionals to support the development of inclusive urban environments in African cities;

1.6 Structure of the thesis

The thesis structure is visualised in Figure 1. In this introductory chapter the need and urgency of the research is demonstrated, the main issues that are addressed in the thesis are briefly contextualised and then summarised in the problem statement after which the knowledge gap is identified. Subsequently, research questions are presented alongside the objectives and expected

contributions of the research.

In Chapter 2 a conceptual framework is developed based on spatial justice adopting a selective literature review across different disciplines, mainly architecture, urban planning, geography, environmental psychology, anthropology and social studies. In separate sections, spatial justice is deconstructed into its constituting parts *space* and justice and reviewed separately. In a subsequent section they are brought together, and the connections between space and justice are made explicit. In a final section the chapter concludes with the conceptual framework.

Chapter 3 starts with a discussion of the research context. In a first section the case study areas are framed in successive steps from the macro-economic context of the African city, through a brief breakdown of Accra's political and planning history, and focus in a discussion of the two specific neighbourhoods and the research population of young people. In a subsequent section the adopted methodology and tools are described, and the encountered challenges and limitations of the research are examined.

In Chapter 4 and 5 the analysis of the results and findings are presented of the empirical study and the desk study respectively. This means that chapter 4 presents the results in separate sections from the *lived space* centred around the experience of young participants – which includes the *focus group discussions*, *cognitive mapping* and *auto-photography* exercises – and the *perceived space* which focuses on collective actions and perceptions on the community level – which comprises the *key informant interviews* and *systematic photographic observation* of key open spaces. Chapter 5 then, focusing on the political level of the *conceived space*, discusses more in depth the policies and legal frameworks that affect the research areas in terms of *youth policies* and *urban planning*.

In the final chapter 6, the discussion section contextualises the findings and frames them in the existing literature. The last section *conclusions* summarises the research, presents the main findings, and answers the research questions. It then concludes the thesis with recommendations for practice and future research.

Chapter 2: Deconstructing Spatial Justice

In this chapter a conceptual framework is developed for analysing issues of spatial marginalisation, exclusion and injustice that takes into account larger urban processes and practices, but has its main focus on the lived experiences of those affected. This framework provides the theoretical foundation to guide the empirics in the subsequent chapters, necessary to design a methodology appropriate to the particular context and research population, and that provides a lens for the analysis of the data collected.

The larger topic of contemporary African urbanism is extremely complex and multifaceted, and can only be adequately understood by using a multidisciplinary or inter-disciplinary approach that successfully marries social and spatial perspectives. The conceptual framework then, is built on a selective review of the main theoretical contributions in literature, drawn from various academic fields – most notably architecture, urbanism, human geography, sociology, philosophy, and political science. This interdisciplinary reading highlights the interconnection and interdependence of different fields of inquiry, and thus provides a foundation to facilitate collaboration across, and to extend a spatial understanding beyond, disciplinary boundaries.

The framework is based on spatial justice, an analytical perspective that focuses on the central role of space in the production of justice and injustice. Spatial disciplines such as geography and urban planning often take justice at face value, while social and political disciplines generally treat space as a static container, a backdrop for social processes. Theorisation and further operationalisation of spatial justice are therefore urgent and necessary, and attempts have been scarce, leaving its transformative potential rather unrealised (Williams, 2018). Its mechanics are generally left vague and unspecified, illustrated by the refusal of the most vocal advocate, Soja (2010a), to provide a comprehensive definition and leave its interpretation up to the reader.

In order to develop a conceptual framework built on spatial justice the chapter deconstructs the term into its constitutive elements 'space' and 'justice' and analytically discusses them separately (Williams, 2018). The chapter aims to interrogate concepts underlying spatial justice in four parts: in the first two sections, 'space' and 'justice' respectively, and their corresponding theoretical and philosophical traditions are reviewed and discussed. The third section, where the two elements are combined, presents a deliberation on how a radical spatial perspective affects the outlook of justice. A fourth and final part summarises the main theories, develops and operationalises a

solid spatial justice framework, and sets it up for the subsequent chapter on research design.

2.1 Introduction: Space and justice

According to Soja (2010a, p. 1), the central principle of spatial justice is that 'justice, however it might be defined, has a consequential geography, a spatial expression that is more than just a background reflection or set of physical attributes to be descriptively mapped'. A framework based on spatial justice must adopt as the main premise that understanding spatiality is crucial to understanding how people and their relationships are ordered, how justice and injustice are produced and reproduced in society. Soja (2010a) identifies geographic dispositions, spatial strategies of urban planning and governance, and the uneven residential patterns driven by market forces as representative forms of spatial injustice. He argues it is critical to explicitly focus on the spatiality of justice on different geographical scales, partly because it allows us to reveal and emphasise the spatial networks that 'local', place based issues and mobile actors are entangled in, a point that is elaborated on by Massey (Massey, 1991; Iveson, 2011).

Why is it important then to explicitly focus on the spatiality of justice? The spatiality of social processes did not remain unacknowledged through many theorisations of social justice. Furthermore, environmental justice has been coined in the 80s in urban planning to deal with spatial issues of justice, such as distribution of (natural) resources and services, but does so with a specific disposition towards ecology and the natural environment (Williams, 2013). What makes spatial justice then distinct from different approaches to justice, social and environmental justice, and why is there a need for it? A framework based on spatial justice overlaps in distinct ways with social and environmental justice, but has no intentions to replace, encapsulate, or relabel them, rather it aims to reframe issues of justice, formerly perceived and treated as fundamentally social in nature. By primarily focusing on the spatiality of justice relations, it is possible to reveal causal relations that remain hidden or implicit when the focus stays squarely on the social, and space is treated as context. Williams (2018) highlights that its utility over other theories of justice lies in its explicit emphasis on the spatial rather than its unique content. Soja perhaps expresses the need to recognise and investigate the spatiality of justice most eloquently:

'It is important to stress that seeking spatial justice is not meant to be a substitute for or alternative to the search for social, economic, or environmental justice. It is intended instead as a means of amplifying and extending these concepts into new areas of understanding and political practice. Calling it spatial justice is not meant to imply that justice is determined only by its

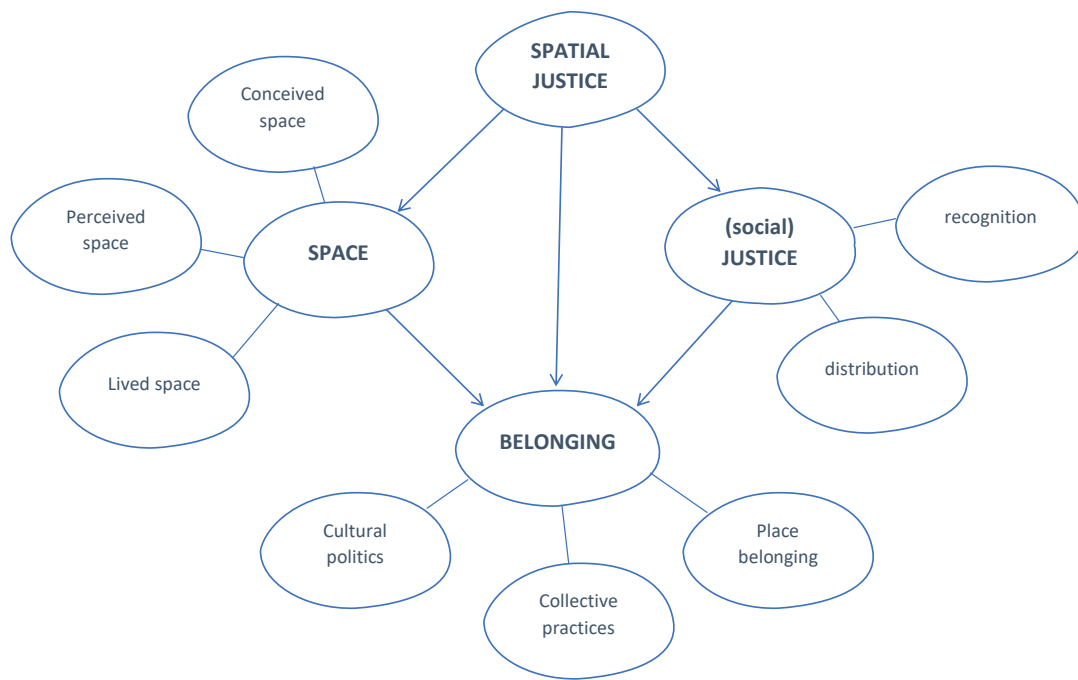


Figure 2: A diagrammatic representation of the conceptual framework

spatiality, but neither should spatial justice be seen as just one of many different components or aspects of social justice to be comparatively gauged for their relative strength...In the view taken here, everything that is social (justice included) is simultaneously and inherently spatial, just as everything spatial, at least with regard to the human world, is simultaneously and inherently socialized' (Soja, 2010a, pp. 5–6).

Space is often understood as a set of relations between things and/or people. This necessarily conceives space as a dynamic process, as its constituting elements are unstable relations in constant flux. As will be explained in more detail in the following section (see p. xxx), leading spatial scholars Lefebvre (1991) and Soja (1996, 2010a) contend that space and society are tied in a dialectic process of co-constitution and co-production: space simultaneously produces and is produced by social processes. Williams (2018), following Soja (2010a), ties this claim to justice, making explicit that relations of justice must also be produced by space. If space is an active agent in the production of justice and injustice, any approach to justice must account for its spatiality, a consideration that is seldomly implemented in social theory (Williams, 2013, 2018). As much as social and political sciences have tended to overlook importance of spatial production, spatial disciplines have equally taken social process for granted and tended to under-theorise societies' effects on space. Taking spatial justice seriously requires recognising the mutual interdependence and co-constitution of space and society. Figure 2 illustrates a diagrammatic representation of the conceptual framework as it is presented in this chapter.

2.2 Space

2.2.1 The social and the spatial

Bourdieu (1986) observed that social interactions between people or groups are always embedded in the places that host their activities. The spatial arrangement of people is tied to their social and political position, it is never socially neutral. This means that spatial configurations of people – residential densities, how space is used, divided and shared – are socially produced (Gabaccia, 1984). As will be briefly discussed in a subsequent section, social exclusion in media is often conflated with poverty or deprivation, and therefore popularly understood in predominantly economic terms. Notable financial institutions argue that macro-economic indicators have the strongest measurable correlation with social indicators of well-being. It can therefore (falsely) be reasoned that economic development should lie at the heart of any development effort. Analogous to this discursive hierarchy popularly adopted when dealing with economic and social

realms, there is a tendency to place social processes above spatial ones in causality. This in turn could lead critics of spatial causality (e.g. Langer, 2003; Marcuse, 2009) to argue that the spatial is derivative of larger social or economic processes.

In a Newtonian view, space is seen as absolute, a thing in itself, concrete and active because of the forces that act through it. In this interpretation space can be seen to be built up of places where things are located within a force field (Feingold, 2004). Leibniz, widely considered the first to support a modernist view of space as passive, argues rather that space is relational and only receives power from relations between objects, agents and events, and is thus fully dependent on them (Agnew, 2011). In this view, space only exists in, and because of, the relations between locations of objects and subjects, and has no autonomous causality outside of their structuring and organisation (Antognazza, 2008). This would seem to support a view of spatiality as secondary to more fundamental non-spatial processes, such as social, economic and political processes that produce spatiality.

Marcuse (2009) argues that further attention should be ascribed to driving processes behind issues of injustice, and that these processes are social in nature. He claims that 'social injustices always have a spatial aspect' and therefore spatial cures are necessary, but the spatial can only be partially causal to, or constitute an exacerbation of, fundamentally social and economic ills. Spatial cures are therefore needed but never sufficient to remedy even the spatial effects, never mind the larger processes of social injustice. By distinguishing between spatial patterns or aspects of injustice and broader processes of social injustice, he effectively renders '*spatial injustices [...] derivative of broader social injustice*' (Marcuse, 2009, p. 4).

Soja (2009), as one of the main protagonists of the spatial turn, makes a strong case for the causality and prominence of spatiality in the act of promoting spatial justice. He agrees that it is not only the outcomes of injustice that matter, and that also the wider processes involved require scrutiny, but, counter to Marcuse, he argues that some of these processes are fundamentally spatial in nature rather than social. He builds his argument by emphasising two principles of critical spatial thinking: firstly that our spatiality is a central part of our being in the world and our connection to it; and secondly, that the dialectical relationship of mutual dependence and construction between space and society, that the social produces, and is simultaneously produced by the spatial (Soja, 2010c). He asserts that 'space is neither derivative of the social, nor is spatial

justice 'a substitute or alternative to social, economic, or other forms of justice, but [...] a way of looking at justice from a critical spatial perspective' (Soja, 2010c, p. 60). Therefore he strives for the academic community to 'recognise more cogently the far-reaching causal and explanatory power of the human geographies we produce and within which we live' (Soja, 2010b, p. 629). At the same time, Soja (2010b) warns us that great care is required, not merely to substitute social for spatial determinist approaches, when adopting a strong spatial focus.

Firmly grounded in the spatial theorisations of Lefebvre, Soja (1996) argues that spatiality, together with historicity and sociality, form the fundamental pillars of being. There is a long tradition of spatial thinking, yet throughout most of the 19th and 20th century philosophical thought was preoccupied with the interaction between historicity and sociality, which led Lefebvre to criticise the subordinate role of the spatial in the discourse. Space was generally regarded as a passive backdrop or an envelope to the main processes of time and social interactions. Lefebvre made the following observation:

'There is one question which has remained open in the past because it has never been asked: what exactly is the mode of existence of social relationships? Are they substantial? natural? Or formally abstract? The study of space offers an answer according to which the social relations of production have a social existence to the extent that they have a spatial existence; they project themselves into space, becoming inscribed there, and in the process producing space itself' (Lefebvre, 1991, p. 129).

According to Lefebvre all things social and historical are spatial in their 'mode of existence.' It is this argument, first and most prominently pursued by Lefebvre in the 1970s, but only widely recognised in the 1990s when his work was translated into English, that would be the driver of the spatial turn in social sciences. It is this momentum that would bring spatiality into the focus of social sciences, but would simultaneously cause a shift in the traditional spatial sciences, such as geography, architecture, and urban planning, towards a more socially focused agenda. Soja, one of Lefebvre's most loyal and outspoken supporters, further developed this argument to distinguish between spatial justice and social justice.

Soja points to the important implications of this rhetoric, namely that it is only when social relations become inscribed in space that they become meaningful, that they become tangible, that they have consequences in the lived experience of people. This means that the social is not 'coincidentally [...] but ontologically spatial', asserting firmly that '[t]here is no unspatialized social reality' (Soja,

1996, p. 46). Shields (1991) affirms that conceptions of space play a fundamental role in any ontology, therefore the spatiality of individuals constitutes a central aspect of the connection to their environment, of their being in the world. Lefebvre (1991)(p.!) thus characterises space as 'social morphology: it is to lived experience what form itself is to the living organism, and just as intimately bound up with function and structure.' He sees space as a 'concrete abstraction', often related to Marx's understanding of the commodity, not substance nor reality, and yet at the same time, both: a transitory moment in the continuous process of labour. Similarly, place can be seen as a moment, a temporary phase in the existence of ongoing processes of spatial production.

Such a process of spatial production, according to Lefebvre (1991, p. 85), characterises space simultaneously as a product, and a means of production. It is the material grounding of labour, the tangible consequence of interventions and engravings of capital, and at the same time the crystallisation of the social interactions that led to its production. Thus: space is generated by, but also makes up the fabric of social processes, it is 'both object and subject in social processes' (Williams, 2013, p. 7). Spatiality is then simultaneously the divisions and arrangements produced by social relationships and the metaphysical medium that allows social relations to exist, that structures them and thus affords them agency (Shields, 1991).

2.2.2 Modes of causality

As previously established, Soja (1996), largely built on Lefebvre's ideas, claims that the relationship between spatial and the social should be seen as reciprocal, a dialectic relationship of mutual interdependence and co-production – space is simultaneously the outcome and medium through which social relations are constituted. Williams (2018), interpreting this dialectic relationship in terms of justice, assigns three levels of consequence to the intertwining of space and justice: Space can either indicate injustices, it can exacerbate them, or produce them. He asserts that only when a conceptualisation of spatial justice attributes an active role to space in the co-constitution or reconfiguration of social relations of justice, is it able to accomplish the radical transformative potential its proponents promote.

However, as Williams (2018) points out: much of social, political and – ironically – spatial literature, treats geography as merely indicative of distributive injustice. An unjust geography is then a particularly visible outcome of deeper social processes, an "external" marker that a principle of equity or distribution is violated. This is the case when claims are made against the unequal distribution of important services and infrastructure throughout a given territory. The

injustice originates in political or planning decision making, and is therefore social in nature preceding its emplacement. Space in this conceptualisation remains a passive background for more fundamental processes of production and reproduction of social injustice (Williams, 2018).

A second way space is seen as affecting justice, is when spatial relations exacerbate existing injustices. Injustice can be engrained into the built form of a city, the material permanence of the landscape reproduces and extends the relations of injustice, and makes them durable. This makes spatial injustice particularly persistent and difficult to counter or resolve, because 'once [...] inscribed into the built environment, it is difficult to erase' (Soja, 2010a, p. 41). The spatiality of a city – the organisation of the built environment in terms of residential patterns and forms of segregation – is here attributed important agency towards society, but only to the extent that it is able to intensify and solidify existing social injustice, without meaningfully altering its content. Injustice is still seen as social in nature prior to, and not significantly transformed by, its emplacement (Williams, 2018).

A third possible relationship between space and justice proposed by Williams, is when space is conceived as actively producing injustice. He highlights Soja's (2010a) prominent assessment of the differential access to public space and the literature on "right to the city" as a convincing case, to which this thesis takes particular interest for its thematic alignment around the importance of public space. Soja asserts that 'the essential starting point in the search for spatial justice is the vigilant defence of public space against the forces of commodification, privatization, and state interference' (2010a, p. 45). These types of claims of injustice in capitalist cities arise primarily as a result of the loss of public space to privatisation or to the expansion of road infrastructure. Nussbaum (1992, 2000) includes in her take on the capabilities approach to justice that access to particular spaces is an essential ingredient to guarantee the freedom of association, self-expression and voicing of political opinion, and to allow and develop capabilities of leisure and play. Access to certain spaces is therefore a central premise for a just society, because it allows individuals to lead a dignified, 'fully human life' (Nussbaum, 2000). Williams highlights how in this understanding the geography assumes an active role in the production of injustice. It goes beyond expressing or entrenching external injustice, but rather forms the content of the justice relations: access to public space is a prerequisite of a just configuration of relations between people and things, the lack thereof produces injustice. This convincingly conceptualises the spatial production of social processes and reveals the radical potential of spatial justice as envisioned by Soja (Williams, 2018).

2.2.3 Space and Place

In order to move beyond abstract theoretical thinking, and apply spatial concepts to concrete settings, it is necessary to introduce the concept of place and consider its relation to space. In his introduction to place research, Cresswell (2004) distils the discourse into his definition of place as essentially space that has been attributed with meaning in a broader context of power. Agnew (2011) observed that in abstract spatial studies, the concept of place denominates a geometric position, a node in the vast field of, and therefore part of, space. In concrete spatial analysis, place refers to a specific setting, that embodies a mediating or a driving force on processes of social, physical and economic production (Agnew, 2011). He further noticed that place research inherited from the modernist movement the tendency to label and classify with abstract concepts and terms, and to generalise about them across space and time, rather than to emphasise concrete realities in place. This has been coupled with a process Marx (1971) first referred to as 'the annihilation of space by time'. During the 19th century, tied to technological advancements of the Industrial Revolution, a narrative was established that traditional local communities –associated with place – were going to be conquered by a modern global society – often associated with space. This process, often now referred to as 'time-space compression' (Harvey, 1989), is generally argued to increase in momentum due to ongoing progress particularly in communication and information technology.

This linear narrative, which assumes some parallel between biological evolution and human history is prevalent in many of the social sciences, and requires that older social forms will be replaced by newer, better ones. It implies that society is morally superior to community and will inevitably replace it, likewise modernity will substitute tradition, and the global will conquer the local. It can then be argued that (generic) space is currently taking over (specific) place and that in the modern age of internet and air travel, place is increasingly becoming obsolete (Agnew, 2011). This aligns with Relph's (1976) observation that modernity is replacing distinctive place by placelessness and its increasing homogeneous uniformity. Place becomes connected to the past, it becomes reactionary, regressive and nostalgic, whereas space becomes connected to the present and the future, with connotations of being progressive and radical. This logic can be so employed that place still only contributes significantly to people's lives in non-Western, 'underdeveloped' parts of the world, and that likewise places will lose importance when development 'catches up' and modernity takes over from tradition (Agnew, 2003). This argument perpetuates a moral hierarchy where the 'developed' West reigns supreme over the 'underdeveloped' Global South,

and is shaky at face value, and deplorable when fully dissected. Clearly this long unchallenged relationship between on the one hand place, the local and the traditional, and on the other hand, space, the global and the modern, must be dismissed and requires alternative conceptualisation (Agnew, 2011).

Such attempts have been the subject of literature in a range of disciplines. Philosophers such as Kant, Heidegger and Foucault, and sociologists like Lefebvre and Bourdieu have contributed immensely to this project. Geography has invested in place as its core concept since the 1970s, and some of its most prominent scholars such as Tuan, Relph and Seamon have elaborated on its distinction from a generic space. In the 1970s this was largely a philosophical, phenomenological project, an inquiry into the pre-cognitive, most direct experience of place. From the 1980s onwards, environmental psychologists shifted the focus towards cognitive processes in the reciprocal relationship between human behaviour and environment. Authors such as Lynch, Rapoport, Low, Gifford and Gibson, sought to understand the complex relationships, interactions and transactions between people and their environments. Literature on the topic of place in architectural research has - under impetus from Hamdi - been preoccupied with the concept of place-making, the generation of qualitative environments typically through bottom-up, resident-led and participatory approaches.

Many attempts have been made to conceptually disentangle or reconcile space and place, to restore the historic division that tends to conform each to another extreme of a spectrum: a generic, abstract location on one side, a particularistic, concrete, charged place on the other. Following Agnew (2011), it is helpful to organise literature into three main theoretical approaches that define place in relation to space: the Marxist approach, the humanist approach, and the critical approach. All three perspectives dismiss polarising or dualist reasoning employed in the literature since the 17th century. Agnew (2011) warns, however, that all of these perspectives suffer issues regarding operationalisation and none are heavily supported by empirics. A brief overview follows of the defining characteristics, conceptual principles and most prominent scholars of each perspective.

The Marxist perspective

The Marxist perspective conceives space as produced by dominant economic processes that commodify and quantify it and determine who controls the activities and populations that are

allowed within its boundaries. These powerful forces have generated and exacerbated uneven development globally, and within countries and cities (Harvey, 1990). The main protagonist of this strain of thought is Henri Lefebvre, a French Marxist philosopher who focused on the social production of space. He theorised that space and place are involved in a dialectic relationship – a dynamic connection characterised by contradiction and tension – in which space is defined by the ‘rootless, fluid reality of material flows’ and place is seen as the ‘locus and stopping of these flows’ (Merrifield, 1993, pp. 521–525). Following Merrifield’s (1993) reading of Lefebvre, we can assume that place is where everyday life is situated, hence where the experience of lived space finds its grounding. Lefebvre never explicitly uses the word place, but his use of concrete space – contrasted with abstract space – should be understood as synonymous with place. He states that capitalist forces, operating in abstract space, encroach on, and dominate everyday life in concrete space. Place can only be reclaimed from the dominance of abstract space by people in the lived space (Soja, 1996). Critics might argue that the conceptualisation of space and place as dialectically opposed, rather than clarifying, obscures the precise relationship between them, which counteracts the operationalisation of any spatial framework rooted in this relation (Merrifield, 1999; Agnew, 2011). It can, however, provide a crucial insight into how under capitalism prevailing discourses and spatial practices produce unequal development (Harvey, 1973). Determined to understand young people’s spatial experiences of injustice in the urban landscape, this perspective is adopted as a foundation that structures further theorisation.

The humanistic perspective

During the 1970s and 1980s, research on space and place was dominated by a focus on individual behaviour, on perceptions and motivations¹. Place research underwent a revival during these years, largely under impetus of Tuan, Relph and Seamon. This perspective underscores the strong affective connection between individual and environment. Tuan (1974) argues human space is arranged into patterns of ideological meaning, which are embodied in places. This is best visible in grand monuments or around borderscapes, but perhaps less obvious - but no less significant - in what he terms fields of care; everyday geographies that individuals or groups identify with, that provide for their needs and in which they differentiate themselves from others. Tuan notices that place, besides signifying a location in space, can also indicate a social position and moral order – he even considers this likely to be the primary meaning of the word. This recognition highlights the social construction and relationality of place and thus has important

1 For a comprehensive discussion see Shields, 1991.

implications for its theorisation. The renewal of interest in place is therefore not because of a romantic or mystic idealisation of place, but rather because of the mediating character of place in social relations and on the purchase of meaning (Agnew, 2011).

The humanist tradition focuses on connecting space and place through the experience of human agents of their home and lifeworld. According to Sack (1997), from an experiential perspective, it is time and familiarity that distinguishes place from space through human agency. Place requires agency over time to familiarise the subject with the location, and through its interactions with its attributes acquire meaning and emotional ties. When people move around in space, they move from one place to the next place. When increasing the speed of movement, boundaries become obscured, places become indistinct, start to lose individual qualities and gradually appear to fuse into space (Sack, 1997). This leads Agnew to observe that places can be seen as 'woven together through space by movement and the network ties that produce places as changing constellations of human commitments, capacities, and strategies' (Agnew, 2011, p. 19). He notes, however, that in humanist conceptions it often remains unclear how free individuals are to create and benefit from opportunities in place making.

The humanist spatial project is closely connected to the spatial ontology of Heidegger (1978) and the phenomenological tradition, initiated by Husserl (1962) and most prominently advanced by Merleau-Ponty (2010), which takes as a premise that perception and experience is pre-cognitive and a bodily process that can be shared with others. Two important terms emphasise its spatiality: the body-subject, a term that implies the precognitive bodily awareness that guides us in our everyday, banal gestures and movements and situates our spatiality firmly at the centre of our being; and inter-subjectivity, a shared sub-conscious that connects people in their activities and can be measured by observing the everyday activities of people. This is interpreted by Seamon (1980, 1994), inspired by Jacobs (1961), as place-ballet: a collective movement of bodies in space, led by an underlying logic of the body in space. It is the humanist focus on the significance of home and the everyday, the ordinary and everyday practices, activities and meanings attributed to place in the lived realm that is of importance to this investigation, which will become clear as the chapter progresses.

The critical perspective

The critical perspective brings together views from feminist (most prominently Massey, 1991, 1998) and post-colonialist (see for example Amin and Graham, 1997; Robinson, 2006) spatial

scholars. The critical view on place is very sceptical of grand narratives that tend to monopolise a single perspective and that restrain or repress plurality, difference or alterity. It categorically rejects linear narratives and false analogies that reduce place to the local and traditional – strongly connected to the mundane and the banal, the everyday life of the voiceless and the vulnerable – and correspondingly privilege space as implicitly modern, global and the locus of power.

Scholars who subscribe to critical approaches to space call for a dynamic concept of place that is responsive to processes of increasing globalisation. The aim is to develop a progressive reconceptualisation of place that simultaneously harbours and embraces plurality, difference and contingency, that highlights interconnectivity and interdependence of places and spaces while preserving the uniqueness and rootedness of place (Massey, 1991; Agnew, 2011). Places in this perspective are conceptualised as nodes in a vast network of interconnected places, and are defined in terms of their relations to other places and the human agents that connect them. Rather than focusing on individual human agency in place, or on the distinction between representation and practice, respectively from the humanistic and Marxist perspectives, it emphasises places as nodes in the ‘flow of social relations’ (Agnew, 2011, p. 20). The identities of places and subjects are thus constructed through interconnections. The emphasis on the interconnectivity and fluidity of place in this perspective is crucial for a framework that aims to understand widely different perspectives and experiences of place between various social groups in a rapidly globalising city.

2.2.4 A progressive sense of place

Looking beyond the differences between these perspectives, it is apparent that they are compatible in important ways. However, before aligning their conceptual mechanisms in function of justice, the critical perspective urges us to look further into the contextual relation between place and difference in academia and popular discourse. Massey argues that place is often conceptualised as rooted in an idealised and temporal notion of place in a fictional period when it was populated by a ‘coherent and homogenous community’ and thus inherently reactionary (1991, p. 1). When this conception of place is set against the current dynamics of increased mobility and movement, but also of fragmentation and diversification, it is often met with defensive responses towards outsiders or ‘others’. The desire for such coherence is evidence of the uncertainty and the disturbing influence the process of globalisation can have on people. To many, a rootedness in place can provide the stability needed, an unproblematic identity based on authentic and historic ties to place and its community. However, as Massey (1991) argues, place

and community have very rarely been geographically or conceptually contiguous, and notions of a homogeneous community with a shared history rooted in place are often exaggerated, or the internal heterogeneity and diversity underplayed. Hence such reactionary conceptualisations can be seen as irrelevant and even counterproductive towards theorisation of place and ultimately the improvement of social cohesion in place against the current backdrop of increased globalisation and diversifications of communities.

Massey then contends that for places to be conceptualised as nodes in a vast network of interconnected places and are defined in terms of their relations to other places and the human agents that connect them. This conceptualisation is important because it reacts to several misconceptions associated with sense of place. The first is the assumption that place is a static node in the dynamic field of space. It must be recognised that place, along with the social relations that constitute it, is a dynamic process. Another popular misconception about place is the myth of a single coherent identity that is shared by everyone. The experience and sense of place is, because it is rooted in individual constellations of connections, very different for each group. Even inside a community or a social group, there are internal power structures that determine individuals' positions within, and therefore their relations to place. Every person identifies with different aspects of place and attributes different meanings to place dependent on their individual history, behaviour and power-relation to that place. Therefore, place has to have multiple simultaneous and coexisting identities which are by no means mutually exclusive. A progressive sense of place needs to embrace this multiplicity. Pellow (2001) notes that the delineations between different places and associations with place strongly differ between individuals, and essentially depend on what and who the individual considers belonging to. Different people will attribute different meanings to the same space, therefore place will never have one fixed identity but will simultaneously be a multiplicity of places with multiple identities.

A connected assumption is that sense of place is derived from, or develops only from an introspective, self-centred history in a location. This seems always to involve the drawing of exclusionary boundaries to decide what is, and what is not part of this place-history. However, it is impossible to conceive of most places without considering current and historical links to other places. Certainly, since the geography of social relations, and its inherent power geometries, is currently expanding ever further and wider over space, it can no longer be useful to conceive place only by defining its confining limits. Additionally, the practice of deciding between inside and outside risks becoming another means of constructing difference between the self and the

other. Instead of focusing on boundaries, Massey (1991) asserts that it is decidedly more helpful to focus on the links that connect locations and people as characteristic to place.

This highlights another important point in this perspective, that the process of time-space compression and its effects on people and their sense of place are highly differentiated and heterogeneous over space. People experience or benefit from this process very differently in various parts of the world, in terms of the degree and range of movement and communication, but also in terms of the control they exert over that movement, all of which have a determining influence on the sense of place (Massey, 1991). Massey proposes a progressive, what she terms 'global sense of place' as defined by its connections to other places instead of by its excluding boundaries, its specificity arising from its construction 'out of a particular constellation of social relations, meeting and weaving together at a particular locus' (Massey, 1991, p. 522). This assertion of place as a pluralistic, relational and dynamic bearer of meaning is complementary with theories of spatial production by Lefebvre and is therefore particularly well suited for the development of a framework of spatial justice proposed in this thesis.

2.2.5 Lefebvrian triad of social space

Drawing on the body of knowledge developed over the past decade or so with a focus on social space (e.g., Soja, 2010a; 2014; Wiedmann, Salama and Mirincheva, 2014; Williams, 2018), it is argued that spatial justice can best be approached by adopting Lefebvre's triad of social space. At the core of Lefebvre's thinking is the concept of social space, his conceptualisation of the relationship between the social and the spatial has been investigated in the first section of this chapter. However, in order to reveal the usefulness of his spatial thinking in further conceptualising spatial justice, some clarification is in order. He conceptualises three 'moments' of social space, or rather three perspectives of looking at space, which he calls lived space, perceived space, and conceived space. Most important to this investigation will be lived space, and of secondary importance will be conceived and perceived space.

Whereas often a positivist view on space is held, defining it in terms of distinct categories, the three elements of the triad should not be understood as the segmentation of space but rather as the observer's shifting perspectives (Zhang, 2006). The diversity of space does not come from changes in space itself but rather from changes in our perception of it. Each perspective therefore represents the totality of social space, but each produces a different recording of it, which overlaps and intersects with other perspectives rather than replacing or juxtaposing

it (Elden, 2004). According to Lefebvre (1991) these spatial modes relate to each other in a hierarchical structure, each contributing in important ways to shaping the landscape.

Conceived space

The most abstract level of space is 'conceived space,' often used interchangeably with 'representations of space.' It is a strategic space, purely ideological in nature, comprised of numerical data, instructions, signs and symbols (Lefebvre, 1991; Zhang, 2006). It is in this abstract space that the greatest power is situated and negotiated. According to Wiedmann, Salama and Mirincheva (2014) it is at this level that urban governance operates. They argue that its highest goal, when aspiring to sustainable development, is to provide the city with efficient urban structures.

Perceived space

The second level is 'perceived space,' otherwise known as 'spatial practices.' In this visual space, consisting of movements and interactions of money, labour, and information, space is reduced to images, depictions and plans (Harvey, 1990; Zhang, 2006). It is the space of capitalism; a space of pure materialism and the main space of production. It is therefore referred to as an 'indifferent' space, but therefore not an innocent one (Lefebvre, 1991). In reference to the level of perceived space, Wiedmann, Salama and Mirincheva (2014) identify the collective appropriation and adaptation of space to the needs and desires of its users as vital. It is at this level that variation and diversity is created in the urban fabric, which in turn generate growth and resilience in the economy, essential ingredients for sustainable urbanism.

Lived space

The first level of space is the 'lived space', sometimes referred to as 'representational space.' It is a bodily space, the space of dwellers and occupiers, the space of experience, meaning, affect, emotion, and imagination (Lefebvre, 1991; Elden, 2004; Zhang, 2006). Bollnow (1961, p. 31) argues that it consists of the 'inner structure of space, as it appears concretely to man in his experience.' It is in this dimension that the all-important contention between private and public spheres unravels (Lefebvre, 1991; Zhang, 2006). Lefebvre reportedly introduced lived space as a bridging concept to overcome the Cartesian dualism of the opposing concepts of perceived and conceived space. The lived space of absolute subjectivity is poised to create equilibrium between the opposing poles of respectively absolute materialism and absolute ideology (Elden

2004 in Zhang 2006). Wiedmann, Salama and Mirincheva (2014) argue that social justice, which is fundamental to targets of sustainable development, can to a large degree be attributed to processes of identification and association with place, processes which must be understood by closely investigating lived dimensions of space.

Regarding operationalisation, the key issue is, as argued by Casey (2001), that space is abstract to the extent that it discourages experiential explorations. He highlights the importance of place in reflecting on community and the public realm and suggests phenomenological inquiry provides a potential window into the relation between place and the self (Casey, 1997). This linking of place and identity, contained in the notion of belonging, is considered foundational of spatial justice in this framework, as demonstrated in the following sections. Casey's concerns about the abstraction of space merit further exploration of spatial justice within the lived space, using a phenomenological approach to the fieldwork in order to expose the everyday urban experience of youth in Accra.

2.3 Justice

2.3.1 Social justice, social exclusion, marginalisation?

The empirical case embarked on to investigate, the urban experiences of African youth is a complex one, comprised of multiple levels of social and spatial injustice that intersect and feed on each other. Several authors highlight the importance of looking at social categories as intersecting (Crenshaw, 1991; McCall, 2005). In popular media, but also in academic and political language, the terms of marginalisation, inequality, social exclusion and social justice are often confused or used interchangeably. If the terminology in a framework is conceptually unclear or ambiguous, the theories, implications and recommendations flowing out of these documents are likely to be operationally unsound. These concepts are clearly closely related, but we need to closely examine the specific context around their emergence in order to conceptually disentangle their meanings. Contributions to these fields have come from a variety of disciplines across social sciences and humanities. Additionally, literature offers many different theoretical frameworks, various methodological tools, and covers a variety of often overlapping dimensions of social differentiation (such as age, gender, social class, race).²

Each of the preceding terms have emerged as a way for the social sciences to criticise the

inadequacy or failure of predominantly economic conceptions to represent the complexity of realities of structural deprivation and to highlight inherent social and political dimensions and processes. But despite significant differences, they share more than a *raison d'être*. An important commonality to the argument of this thesis is that several concepts place a heavy emphasis on spatial components of structural social issues. Because the emergence of spatial justice is relatively recent, many important works that contribute to building the argument do not explicitly address the same issues, or they are worded or framed differently. It is exactly the purpose of this chapter to differentiate between, but also to bring together and make explicit the commonalities between these different concepts. The focus is on social justice, but social exclusion will also be briefly addressed; these have the most complete theoretical underpinnings and are currently the most frequently adopted perspectives in policy and academic work.

2.3.2 Unpacking Justice

In order to understand the journey that social and spatial justice have made in the decades since the 1970s, and towards the interpretations adopted in this thesis, it is necessary to reach a basic understanding of the concept of justice, separate from distinctive disciplinary perspectives. Rawls' (1999, 2001) influential interpretation of the philosophical underpinnings of justice will be used as a guideline, as it is the foundation upon which many prominent scholars have largely built their theoretical arguments (e.g. Harvey, 1973, 2003; Young, 1990; Fraser, 1997; Nussbaum, 2000; Fainstein, 2009).

Justice should not be confused with inclusivity or equality. Rawls argues that sometimes inequalities can be just, as long as they maximise the advantages for the most deprived. According to him justice therefore sometimes conflicts with other dimensions of morality. Perhaps his most innovative argument, and simultaneously the one that attracts the most criticism, is his assessment of whether a practice or process is just or not. He proposes a thought experiment in which he introduces the veil of ignorance, a hypothetical position in which one assumes to know nothing of their social location, abilities or other relevant social, economic or cultural differentiators. One should consider whether or not the participants of a practice would agree to it from behind the veil of ignorance and from a position of equal liberty.

Social justice is a social contract stating that those who engage in social collaboration or interaction determine together the principles that distribute basic rights, duties and social benefits. Rawls famously sees justice as fairness, it is then the social contract's goal to guarantee *'that the*

fundamental agreements reached in it are fair (p.657).

‘All social values – liberty and opportunity, income and wealth, and the bases of self-respect – are to be distributed equally unless an unequal distribution of any, or all, of these values is to everyone’s advantage’ (Rawls, 2001, p. 660).

Rawls argues thus that inequalities are unjust only when they do not improve everyone’s situation. He further breaks up this definition into two main principles to clarify his point. These principles are designed to guide the allocation of rights and duties, and the distribution of social and economic benefits in society (Rawls, 2001, p. 660):

1. Each person is to have an equal right to the most extensive basic liberty compatible with a similar liberty for others.
2. Social and economic inequalities are to be arranged so that they are both (a) reasonably expected to be to everyone’s advantage, and (b) attached to positions and offices open to all...

Rawls deliberately separates and structures these principles hierarchically, to rule out that trade-offs are made between basic liberties and social or economic benefits. This is to make sure that injustices following from deviations from the first principle could never ‘be justified by, or compensated for, by greater social and economic advantages’ (Rawls, 2001, p. 660). Critics could argue that it is not inconceivable that individuals behind a veil of ignorance might choose to take a risk. However, Rawls argues that reason dictates a careful and conservative attitude in this situation. Every individual has duties towards others in society, and he argues it is immoral to wager with others’ prospects (Haksar, 1972).

2.3.3 Social justice: paradigms of distribution and recognition

Despite this explicit determination not to conceive spatial justice as a more spatialised version of social justice, it is necessary to study closely theories of social justice, and the spatiality that is produced by them. Social justice has arguably the most extensive and exhaustive theoretical and philosophical tradition, with notable contributions by Honneth, Young, and Fraser and Nussbaum.

Young, for example, conceptualises social justice in general terms as the extent to which institutions provide the conditions that people require to pursue the ‘development and exercise of individual capacities and collective communication and cooperation’ in a given society (1990, p. 39). Social injustice then, refers to the degree to which barriers and restrictions erected by oppressive

institutions impede the realisation of these capacities (Nussbaum, 1992; Allison, 2000). Young proposes to think of injustice as a form of oppression, an important notion that encompasses distributive patterns of injustice, but recognises that certain issues cannot be explained by the logic of distribution alone (Young, 1990). Oppression has historically been used to describe tyrannical ruling of a powerful group, often with associations to violent invasion or colonial conquest. From the 1960s this meaning has gradually shifted to include injustices in benign liberal societies, forms of oppression that are produced and reproduced by institutional rules, market mechanisms, collective assumptions, ordinary interactions and everyday practices (Young, 1990, p. 43). These types of injustices are structural in nature, embedded in regular processes in society, rather than the result of malevolent intentions and actions of a powerful elite. According to Foucault (1980) power relations in contemporary liberal societies can no longer be understood in terms of explicit binary divisions of the sovereign ruler versus the subordinate subject. The workings of power should rather be sought in the systematic production and reproduction of difference and inequality in procedures of economic, political and cultural institutions of societies. A social group suffering from oppression then does not necessarily have an opposing party that oppresses them, deliberately or otherwise. Consequently, resolving issues of injustice involves rather more foundational and sustained measures than removing a group from power or adjusting a few rules (Young, 1990).

Reflecting social changes towards increasingly multicultural societies, and subsequent to a gradual move within the social sciences away from primarily economy-focused approaches towards more culture-oriented theory, often referred to as the “cultural turn”, the debate on social justice became largely divided into two strands of theory. The dominant economic paradigm since the mid-19th century puts claims for redistribution of resources, goods and services at the centre of justice. It conceives “the good life” primarily in terms of economic and material accumulation and consumption, and injustice concerned with unequal outcomes of societal processes. This perspective is generally referred to as the distribution paradigm. Since the 1990s a cultural paradigm has increasingly gained traction in political philosophy and social theory, which focuses on claims for the recognition of difference, and is therefore generally called the recognition paradigm (Young, 1990; Fraser, 1998; Nussbaum, 2000; Honneth, 2001).

These understandings and postmodern theorisations of justice look beyond explicit expressions of injustice and attempt to understand the structural conditions behind particular constellations and distributions that are often engrained in the everyday exchanges and interactions (Young, 1990).

The result has been an increasing gap between proponents of a 'social politics of equality' and a 'cultural politics of difference' (Fraser, 1998, p. 1). However, Fraser argues that this dichotomy is artificial and grounded in false antagonisms, and that the struggle for social justice very much requires both. A brief description of each paradigm and the main characteristics is in order.

The paradigm of distributive justice is largely based on Marx' social ontology and Rawls' philosophical underpinnings of justice (Fraser, 1997). It is the paradigm that is associated with the struggle for equality in modern society. Distributive injustices are seen as socio-economic inequality, and following Marx, are rooted in how political and economic dimensions are compounded in society's structure. These structural dimensions differentiate society into collectives based on social class, which are demarcated 'economically by a distinctive relation to the market or the means of production' (Fraser, 1999, p. 28). Difference then is seen in terms of distribution of goods, resources and services, and is often used synonymous with inequality. 'Exploitation, marginalisation and deprivation are the main forms of injury and can only be remedied by 'political-economic restructuring' (Fraser, 1999, p. 27) with the goal to produce equality, which therefore in most cases means to erase difference between social groups (Fraser, 1997).

The paradigm of recognition is broadly connected to the struggle for acknowledgement of diversity in a just society. Fraser in her conceptualisation of recognition leans heavily on Honneth's and Taylor's interpretations of Hegelian conceptions of morality. She defines recognitive injustice as harms of insult, which are cultural and symbolic in character (Fraser, 1997). Prominent cases of such injustice are cultural domination, non-recognition, and disrespect. According to Fraser these types of harms can only be alleviated by cultural or symbolic change through the positive valorisation of diversity through the 'transformation of societal patterns of representation, interpretation and communication' (Fraser, 1999, pp. 27–8). Recognitive justice views society as structured into collectives of Weber's status groups, contrasting with Marx's social class, related by Fraser to redistributive justice. A recognitive claim for justice therefore generally aims for group differentiation, involving the acknowledgement of group specificity and the affirmation of its values (Fraser, 1997; Yar, 2001). The project to reconcile these seemingly opposed discourses cuts across philosophical, theoretical and political dimensions and has been at the heart of much discussion on social justice among its most prominent advocates (e.g., Young, 1990; Honneth, 1992; Fraser, 1997; Nussbaum, 2000).

2.3.4 Reconciling distribution and recognition

Fraser attempts to demonstrate that issues of redistribution and recognition – despite being indisputably related and interlinked – can only convincingly be theorized as two separate causal paradigms, and that neither can be reduced to, or completely encompassed by the other. Fraser argues that empirically, in any realistic form of society – structured not by one simplistic or totalising ordering principle such as class or status, but rather characterised by complex, intertwined, plural structures and processes of organization – it is impossible to conceive of justice without considering both perspectives. Fraser highlights the multiple ways injustice affects and reproduces social categories in her attempt to integrate recognition and redistribution, and link these dimensions to participation in a comprehensive framework of social justice.

To reconcile the paradigms into one framework Fraser introduces the ‘parity of participation’ as a core concept to which the paradigms’ justice claims should be attuned and assessed (Fraser, 1998). The ‘parity of participation’ encompasses the moral obligation of society to grant the opportunity for everyone to participate on equal footing with others in any activity or interaction, but by no means imposes effective participation. Fraser asserts that the pursuit of justice involves the requirement for society to accommodate: (1) such a distribution of resources, goods and services that guarantees all citizens are independent, at liberty to participate and have equal opportunity to voice their grievances and opinions; and (2) the institutionalisation of ‘cultural patterns of interpretation and valuation’ that aim to generate respect, dignity and opportunity for realising social esteem equally for every citizen (Fraser, 1998, p. 4). She claims that the realisation of both conditions is required, and that alone neither condition will serve to generate just procedures and outcomes. The first condition emphasises distributive issues concerning class structures attributed to market forces and economic processes in society, while the second condition deals with issues of recognition, particularly relating cultural ordering of societies based on status.

Fraser suggests a theoretical linking of these conditions and these conceptions into a single comprehensive framework by implementing an approach she calls ‘perspectival dualism’. This approach entails that every social practice and process is understood as simultaneously economic and cultural in character which preserves the distinction between class and status, it does not subsume one within the other, but brings both together under the moral direction of participatory parity (Fraser, 1998). She recognises the possibility of analytical tension or conflict between the perspectives when simultaneously claims of redistribution and recognition are pursued, in which

case they generate what she calls 'mutual interferences' (1997, p. 34). The distributive paradigm sees group difference as differentials that skew the distribution of wealth and opportunity, and therefore as something to be struggled against. Redistributive injury, Fraser claims, is thus to be remedied by the struggle for sameness. In contrast, the recognition perspective requires group difference to be acknowledged and valorised if all individuals are to be given opportunity to participate in society as equals. The recognition paradigm thus wants group differentiation, while the distribution paradigm urges for the opposite de-differentiation.

2.3.5 Spatialising Recognition

Yar (2001, p. 291) criticises this approach as 'unable to resolve the problematic configurations of the 'political status of 'sameness' and 'difference'' within the perspectives. He argues that, despite its many merits, the fallacy of this strand of argument lies in its rough theoretical underpinnings to distinguish between recognition and distribution, which clings to the similarly problematic dualistic distinction between culture – represented by analytic notions of identity and status – and economy – that is connected to materiality and class. In other words, this conception of recognition is considered excessively fixated on cultural notions of status and identity, and defined rather narrowly and one-dimensionally to overcome the conflict in perspectives. Yar (2001), leaning heavily on Honneth, proposes a pluralistic theorization of recognition in which these mutual interferences are considered derivative of the ordering of three forms of recognitive claims, tied to different aspects of self-realization. Honneth (1992) claims that no struggle for social justice is unaffected by the logic of recognition because it is constitutive of fundamental processes of humans' development of the self and the social. What follows is that the struggle for justice can be seen as a manifestation of the struggle for people's self-realisation, not unlike Nussbaum's conceptualisation in her capabilities approach (Nussbaum, 1992, 2000, 2002).

Yar's (2001) re-conceptualisation of recognition attempts to accommodate the various ways struggles for recognition underpin economic distributive claims, an important analytical connection that remained unaccounted for in Honneth's theorisation. Yar (2001, p. 297) then defines social justice as 'the intersubjective satisfaction of moral expectations that arise as individuals attempt to establish positive self-relation via recognition from others.' Recognition is seen as mediated through the externalization of human values in the form of resources, goods and services. Socio-economic claims of distribution are central to justice, not because the project of self-realization requires some basic preconditions, as might be argued (Foster, 1999), but because 'the normative

interactions associated with the struggle for recognition are materially as well as linguistically and representationally mediated' (Yar, 2001, p. 298). Kojève (1969) builds on Marx and Hegel when he sees recognition as shared values and meanings externalised and embodied in artefacts, in material objects. The desire for an artefact, Kojève (1969) claims, is 'mediated' by the value attached to it by others, which reflects the longing for recognition and affirmation by others. This way 'social meanings and evaluations are concretized in objects, those objects can become the focus of [...] struggles for recognition, and likewise a shared estimation or evaluation of an object can become a mediation of mutual recognition' (Yar, 2001, p. 298).

The meaning of object in this conceptualisation could be extended to include place, as an explicitly spatialised artefact, it exemplifies the embodiment of social value, meaning and relations in concrete material form. The urban environment – most prominently, but not only, the public realm – as an important dimension of material production, can certainly be seen as the object of attachment, of shared values and experience, as embodied desire³. The importance of this claim will become abundantly clear later when we expand on belonging, because it allows us to understand communities of belonging as united around common values through shared attachments to spaces.

Honneth (1992, 2001) interprets recognition as constituted by a tripartite model of 'self-realization' along the axes of singularity, particularity and universality.⁴ He understands each of these moments as connected to a different dimension of subjectivity, responding to different desires and needs that must be gratified intersubjectively. The moment of singularity reflects the most intimate realm of recognition, where the individual experiences unity and 'emotional support' through primary relationships of love and friendship. It is a space in which the individual is able to establish basic autonomy and self-confidence derived from the trust that basic needs can be freely conveyed without the risk of being declined or excluded. This trust in the self is a prerequisite for all other forms of self-realisation. Injustices of physical violation and humiliation, such as torture or rape, have a 'profoundly destructive impact on an individual's practical relation

3 Further argumentation that place can be understood as a primary bearer of meaning and shared value can be found in literature of the phenomenological tradition, see for instance Tuan 1977, Relph 1976, Seamon 2000, Buttner & Seamon 2015.

4 The logic of self-realisation is here interpreted by the author partly separated from Hegel's classical structuring of the social world into the family, civil society and the state. The philosophical merit of his theorisation becomes disconnected from some problematic and outdated terminology and descriptions, particularly regarding the family as the root of singularity. This should be seen as reflecting the *zeitgeist* in which it was written, and is due a contemporary update.

to self' as they deny an individual this most fundamental dimension of self-respect and bodily autonomy (Honneth, 1992, p. 190).

The recognition of particularity is the sphere of social life in which self-esteem is generated, which constitutes an individual's sense of worth in wielding certain social and cultural features and histories and ascribing to certain practices. This worth is dialogically acknowledged in an exchange of mutual respect and solidarity with others. Injustice then is constituted by 'the denigration of individual or collective life-styles' (Honneth, 1992, p. 191) or 'the depreciation of the social value of forms of self-realization' (Honneth, 2001, p. 49). This form of recognition revolves around the evaluation of difference, the main focus of Fraser's theorisations of recognition.

The moment of universality constitutes the official, legal recognition by the state extended to individuals in the form of rights and duties. Rights in this sense legitimate individuals' expectations/claims to equal opportunity to participate in the production of institutional order (Honneth, 1992). Extending equal rights to every member of the polity possesses a distinctive universalising, de-differentiating dynamic. When individuals or groups are denied such right, they are 'not deemed to possess the same degree of moral accountability as other members of society' (Honneth, 1992, p. 191). They are harmed in their dignity, their cognitive self-respect as worthy of being a full partner for participation in society. The assertion that the state is required to provide its members of society with rights remains relatively vague and based on common sense in most theorisations of recognition. The issue is intertwined with complex notions of citizenship and requires further scrutiny as to what type of rights are required. This will be discussed in section on the right to the city (see pp.xxx).

2.3.6 Priority of injustice

Barnett (2018) highlights the tendency in spatial theory to frame social justice by prioritizing and distinguishing between different types of injustice, rather than by reference to an idealized construction of justice. This primacy of injustice over justice has several important implications. Drawing on Young's (1990) work, he argues that prioritizing injustice means giving prominence to claims-making, which Young demonstrates is crucial to how injustices emerge in politics. Taking claims to injustice seriously encompasses on the one hand, treating people as free and equal citizens, but on the other, also recognizing that the violations and wrongs that comprise injustice are individually experienced and felt but also socially expressed, evaluated and countered in processes of justification through intersubjective relations and interactions. Barnett (2018), warns

that the focus on claims of injustice in theory and practice risks neglecting the fundamental ways that certain processes and power relations weaken the capacity of affected groups to articulate their experiences, and thus risks responding only to those injustices that are expressed and heard, possibly disregarding the most marginalized voices. He argues therefore that engaging with injustice forces us to re-examine the spatial implications of politics and extend the meaning of claims as assertions or demands – practices of negotiation and contestation of wrongs – to also cover the processes by which claims of injustice are assessed, transformed, acknowledged and validated and acted on by society and its institutions.

2.3.7 Social exclusion as social injustice

The concept of social exclusion is technically separate from justice, but is often incorporated in some form into frameworks of justice or even used interchangeably with the term of injustice. It does, however have a distinctive theoretical and institutional background and history. Social exclusion seems to be more widely adopted among governmental institutions and international organisations, which in itself should warrant an investigation, but it also possesses explicit spatial connotations. It is therefore worth taking a brief look into some of the literature, as specific aspects prove helpful in the operationalisation of spatial justice. However, as with any socially produced concept, its use and meaning are contested and remain open to different interpretations. Without going into too much detail, some general conventions are outlined here.

The notion of social exclusion first emerged in France in the 1970s, but was popularised in research and development following the World Social Summit in Copenhagen in 1995, after which several multilateral institutions implemented frameworks based on social exclusion and inclusion, most notably the United Nations, the European Union, the World Bank, and the International Labour Organization (ILO). The definition of the ILO serves well to characterise social exclusion, as it includes all major characteristics; it is intersectional, it is process, it is relational, it is about power relations, and markedly; it is predominantly economic:

‘Social exclusion may therefore be understood as an accumulation of confluent processes with successive ruptures arising from the heart of the economy, politics and society, which gradually distances and places persons, groups, communities and territories in a position of inferiority in relation to centres of power, resources and prevailing values’ (Estivill, 2003, p. 19).

Social exclusion as a concept is necessarily connected to concepts of inequality, marginalisation

and poverty, but cannot be reduced to the meaning of either. What most scholars agree on is that social exclusion has simultaneously dynamic and static aspects, as it impacts different people and groups in different ways and varies over time, but its effects are also often profoundly demobilising and entrenching and can be very difficult to overcome. Khan, Combaz and McAslan Fraser (2015) highlight its close resemblance to the concept of inequality; however, where inequality frameworks focus on structural constraints and differences between social groups and categories, social exclusion is an actor-oriented framework that concentrates on how actors produce, challenge and alter the structures and processes. They argue that it helps to identify and explain issues of power, as it focuses on the relation between the excluded and the excluding party, and the relation between them; who is being excluded, who is excluding them and why are they being excluded.

Social exclusion is generally understood as multifaceted, as its scope covers political, cultural, economic dimensions. Economic exclusion implicates the lack of access to resources, which is typically expressed through marginalisation from the labour market, and limits practices of production and consumption. Political exclusion implies marginalisation from decision-making processes, and subsequent lack of official representation. Cultural exclusion refers to the exclusion from certain collectively held signs, values and discourses. The strongest cultural markers of identity and grounds for exclusion or inclusion have typically been nationality, religion and language. Most profound levels of exclusion are experienced when individuals or groups simultaneously experience exclusion on economic, political and cultural grounds (Madanipour, 1998).

Social exclusion is also relational, as it results from social interactions between people, society and its institutions and the unequal power geometries between them. Because it is constructed socially, its meaning is dependent on what is considered 'normal' and shifts with the perspective and ideology from which it is studied (Silver, 1994). Because social exclusion is so heavily associated with the specific historical (Western) context in which it was conceived, and its alleviation is generally understood in terms of intervention by some form of welfare-state, its relevance to very different contexts, not necessarily compatible with 'Western' models of governance and citizenship, might realistically be limited despite much prominent international interest. Different conceptual models cut across a range of types and dimensions of exclusion - political, cultural and economic - but are for a large part rooted and developed based on economic theories, precisely in response to the lack of explanatory power of existing theories on poverty.

Silver (1994) warns against conceiving exclusion in terms of its counterpart belonging. Every society and culture might define 'belonging' in another way, it would therefore suggest a national political consensus on the foundations and characteristics of crucial concepts of citizenship, integration and membership. However, the same can be concluded of social exclusion itself, as can be derived from her work. The challenge is to conceive a framework that is dynamic and sensitive to local contextual and cultural variations, yet able to explain larger processes and not succumb to the pitfalls of particularism. Silver's warning is valid to some extent, however, because the conceptual benefits it possesses, this thesis develops a framework focused precisely on belonging as a central aspect of spatial justice, because it embraces a strong spatial focus, and allows for more inclusive conceptualisations of commonality that promote recognition and positive valuations of difference.

2.4 Linking space and justice

2.4.1 Landscapes of injustice

Trudeau (2006) and Trudeau and McMorran (2011) highlight one way space is instrumental to understanding processes of exclusion and relations of injustice, through Mitchell's conception of landscape as:

... 'an uneasy truce between the needs and desires of people who live in it, and the desire of powerful social actors to represent the world as they assume it should be. Landscape is always both a material form that results from and structures social interaction, and an ideological representation dripping with power. In both ways landscapes are acts of contested discipline, channelling spatial practices into certain patterns and presenting to the world images of how the world (presumably) works and who it works for' (Mitchell, 1996, pp. 34–35).

Mitchell emphasises that power relations and inequalities are reproduced, but remain concealed, in and through the landscape. The inequalities remain hidden and cannot directly be read from the landscape because of challenging ideologies in place, the dominant rhetoric generally obscuring the ways in which the landscape is produced, and 'institutionalising' certain representations of the world (Mitchell, 1996; Trudeau, 2006). Trudeau (2006) explicitly links production of landscapes therefore with Lefebvre's conceived space. According to Sibley (1995) the landscape itself might assist or impede processes of exclusion. He argues that exclusionary processes of social control

are much easier to enact in an already structured, homogeneous and purified environment. By extension, it can be argued to be much more difficult to support practices of control in highly heterogeneous, diverse or disordered environments such as urban areas, particularly in the Global South. This is important to remember considering the high diversity and informal character of the neighbourhoods of Accra under scrutiny that might hinder more formal attempts at social control through the landscape.

2.4.2 Social closure and difference

Madanipour (1998) highlights that exclusionary processes are crucial to the functioning of any society, as they form the structure of all social relationships, and consequently order our social world. These processes are continuously reproduced in social and spatial practices, but also in legal, political and cultural bodies, where forms of exclusion become institutionalised instruments of access regulation. He further emphasises the spatiality of exclusion by pointing to the ways that mechanisms of exclusion often intersect and overlap with barriers that impede movement. By defining social exclusion as reduced access to what the city offers – generally in function of an individual's distinctive feature such as race, class, religion, income, gender, national origin, disability, or sexual orientation – he aligns exclusion with the main premise of 'The Right to the City' literature (see Lefebvre, 1996; Purcell, 2002; Harvey, 2003; Mitchell, 2003; Soja, 2010a) and with the spatial justice framework as envisioned in this thesis (Madanipour, 1998).

Sibley (1995) draws attention to how exclusionary processes of 'social closure' and the production of difference play a crucial part in everyday production of social identities. Social boundaries are drawn in order to produce a clear distinction between the self and the other, to be able to distance oneself from that Other that might represent adverse or unwanted qualities. This way discursive boundaries are created and reproduced around individuals and social groups informed by the 'generalised other'. This process 'through which a dominant group defines into existence a subordinate group', which is often referred to as 'othering', is a central concern of social justice (Khan, 2012, p. 12). Through the invention of categories and characteristics that define who belongs to these categories, certain people or groups are defined as fundamentally different, and thus outside of the social category from which it is defined. This is generally accompanied with the process of 'bordering' where the social category is associated with, and often confined to a spatial territory. It involves the production, reproduction and maintenance of symbolic and spatial boundaries that regulate people's access to public 'goods', such as certain spaces, services,

employment and politics (Khan, 2012). This way a dominant group often attempts to clear 'their' social space of other groups, by excluding them from mainstream society, and pushing them to its margins (Sibley, 1995).

Sibley (1995) argues that the notion of belonging, often conceived as the operational counterpart of exclusion, is correspondingly also central in the workings of social organisation and social control of space. 'To belong' encompasses the membership of an individual or a group to a polity, culture or society, and crucially, its associated territory (Crowley, 1999). This means the individual's or group's identity needs to share certain central features and elements with the identity of the polity in order to belong. Individuals or groups who do not represent the preferred characteristics or behaviours are only allowed to exist at the borders or margins of its territory, and are effectively excluded from participation. Creswell (1996) in his analysis of place, argues that when a phenomenon does not belong, or is out of place, there is a boundary, symbolic or material, implicit or not, being trespassed. Sometimes therefore a transgression must be experienced before the existence of a boundary is revealed. People then question certain social elements and identify some as transgression and the boundary becomes explicit. A transgression can then be defined as a form of cultural trespass, a violation of a polity's sense of place. Such a trespass causes the articulation of a set of previously implicit common sensical social rules, which over time become formalised or institutionalised as laws, as a way of preventing further transgressions in the future. These social rules and laws form a range of relations that prescribe how the polity and its associated territory can operate smoothly, and define which is the 'right' and accepted behaviour, and which is not (Creswell, 1992).

2.4.3 Crisis of identity

As we have seen in the previous section, the production of identity and belonging can be seen in function of difference, identification is then seen as a process of differentiation from the 'generalised Other' (Sibley, 1995). Identity is always a process, inextricably linked to the act of identification, as it always needs to be *established* in order to exist, both in self-identification and categorisation of others (Jenkins, 2014). It is a cognitive process that is central to the organisation of the world, both on a collective and individual level. As such, the usefulness of the concept extends beyond the division between public and private issues, manifesting its utility for the investigation of (power) relationships between the individual and the collective (Jenkins, 2014). Jenkins stresses that all human identities are intrinsically social, rooted in interactions

between people, but also argues that an analytic distinction between the social and the cultural does injustice to the 'observable realities of the human world' (Jenkins, 2014, p. 18) ⁵. The choice then not to dig into sub-categorisations, but to adopt the meta-concept of identity allows the investigation to avoid epistemological issues when manoeuvring between collective and individual levels of identity, and as further explained in the next sections, belonging. The notion of identity has, however, been subject to much contestation over the years, the most pervasive argument of which can be distilled to a sensed shift away from a historic situation where identities were considered relatively fixed, generated and rooted in tradition, community and place. In a rapidly changing world where the stability of these institutions is increasingly being eroded, the fragmentation and pluralisation of previously unified identities are giving rise to a supposed 'crisis of identity' on academic, political, and cultural scenes (Hall, 1996).

Hall describes the evolution of identity theorisation, based on different conceptions of subjectivity. The historic subject considered an individual's agency and subjectivity as flowing naturally from the capacity of reason and consciousness. The identity constituted the centre of the individual and enjoyed relative continuity throughout its development during the individual's lifespan. The conception of the 'sociological subject' during the turmoil of the late 19th century mirrored an increasingly complex world. It recognised that the identity as the centre of being was perhaps not as autonomous as previously considered, but rather 'formed in "interaction" between self and society' (Hall, 1996, p. 597). Identity was seen as the crucial connection between the private and the public sphere, between inside and outside, which stabilised both identity and society. It is this stable subject that has shifted and become 'fragmented; composed, not of a single, but of several, sometimes contradictory or unresolved, identities' following substantial societal changes, and has made way for the post-modern subject, characterised as 'having no, essential or permanent identity' (Hall, 1996, p. 598).

2.4.4 Identity and mobility

Following Madanipour (1998), Williams (2018) and advocates of 'the Right to the City', spatial injustice can be characterised in terms of restricted access to what the city has to offer based on their specific characteristics. This issue of reduced access links identity with spatial mobility. It is acknowledged that mobility is fundamental to understanding spatial practices and livelihood activities in urban Africa (De Bruijn, Van Dijk and Foeken, 2001). Many authors (Malone and Hasluck, 1998; Langevang and Gough, 2009a; Skelton and Gough, 2013) therefore concur that

5 His argument can be found in full in Jenkins 2002.

it is imperative to look at the mobility of young people when aspiring to understand their claims of injustice.

The 'mobility turn' in social sciences has driven an important shift in research to understand the world rather in terms of its movements or flows of people, matter, capital and information, instead of in strictly localised processes (e.g., Hannam, Sheller and Urry, 2006; Sheller and Urry, 2006; Skelton and Gough, 2013). Mobilities considered range from small movements on a local scale to much larger exchanges on a global scale. Reasons, motivations and aspirations behind movement critically differ between people. An increase in spatial mobility might signify emancipation or even prestige for one individual, as it might also signal a desperate measure and means to survive for another (Langevang and Gough, 2009a).

Drawing on Vigh (2006) and Langevang and Gough (2009a) we can explore the movements of youth conceptualising mobility as 'social navigation'. Social navigation as a concept builds on de Certeau's (1984) theorisation of 'tactics' and 'strategies'. He conceives strategies as the imposed economic, political or cultural values and significations of the powerful that form the pillars of society, and are designed to tolerate little flexibility to interpretation. This level of operation belongs to Lefebvre's (1991) mode of conceived space. Tactics, on the other hand, should be seen as the everyday practices accessible to ordinary citizens to challenge these representations and meanings (de Certeau, 1984), strongly related to the mode of perceived space (Lefebvre, 1991). Both can be seen to shape the lived space through their powerful impact on the identity, and I argue sense of belonging, of individuals or social groups (Lefebvre, 1991; Easthope, 2009; Wiedmann, Salama and Mirincheva, 2014). Mobility consequently can be seen as a tactical exercise concerning the capacity to adjust one's action to challenges and opportunities as they come but also to 'evaluat[e] the movement of the social environment, one's own possibilities for moving through it, and its effect on one's planned and actual movement' (Vigh, 2006, p. 11). Mobility as social navigation is a form of 'bounded agency'; instead of experiencing absolute freedom, youth constantly adapt their practice to changing circumstances (Langevang and Gough, 2009a, p. 752).

As argued earlier, in an increasingly dynamic and mobile world, the importance of mobility in the project of identity production might be increasing. Easthope asserts that identity is increasingly 'dynamic, positional, hybrid and constructed within relations of power' (2009, p. 67). Alsayyad (2014) acknowledges the effects of current processes of globalisation on tradition, identity and

place. He states that definitions of tradition as a 'place-based, temporally situated concept, as a static authoritative legacy of the past, and as a heritage owned by certain groups of people', are becoming increasingly problematic (AlSayyad, 2014, p. 13). For AlSayyad, tradition is rooted in the everyday and mundane practices of social groups, and should be seen as 'transient, fleeting, and contingent' which are important qualities for conceptualising place in a rapidly globalising context. He argues that globalisation is in the process of de-territorialising identity, place, and tradition, stating that 'culture has become increasingly placeless' (AlSayyad, 2014, p. 41).

Doreen Massey (1991) further argues that on-going processes of globalisation and the resultant time-space compression are eroding sense of place. She questions earlier conceptions of place, conventionally seen as rooted centres of meaning and identity, hostile to mobility. From here it is not hard to argue that place is losing its significance in the development of identity, and therefore as a central part of human existence (Massey, 1991). However, Easthope reminds us that attachment to place necessarily holds relevance as long as we are physical beings, as identity is produced when we interact with the physical environment, with and through our body. According to Heidegger, the body is the vehicle for being-in-the-world, or in place, and the connection made to place is awarded social significance through belonging (Casey, 2001; Easthope, 2009).

Easthope (2009, p. 78) concludes that it is crucial to equally take into account both notions of place and mobility in order to understand the production of identity, as they are both 'fundamental aspects of the human condition', an important position that I argue holds up equally for belonging. She relates the dialectic between place and mobility to the associated relationships between stability and change, rest and movement, centre and horizon which are acknowledged as essential to people's identity project (Tuan, 1974; Seamon, 1979; Casey, 2001). Easthope (2009) underlines that place and stability are seen as important to sustain consistent identities, and that mobility and change are vital to further develop identities. However, caution is required when drawing parallels between stability and place, or between change and mobility. As discussed previously, if place is conceptualised as a particular intersection in a system of relations and interactions (Massey, 1991), then different people, on different times interpret, represent and negotiate place in different ways, it can therefore not be understood as fixed. Furthermore, even when someone is spatially mobile, the imagination might be fixated on a single place. Similarly imaginations of mobility, of different and distant places, can inform lived space even when being in place (Easthope, 2009).

Young people's mobility is thus dependent on changing opportunities and restrictions dictated by the urban landscape but also on their social networks and status. Skelton and Gough (2013) affirm that a sensitivity to mobility may lead to an understanding of certain practices that contest existing distributions of power and hence pursue a more inclusive urban landscape. Mobility must then be seen as tactical practice, its motivations rooted in lived space, acted out in perceived space, and able to challenge, counter or sidestep the constraints of the landscape, envisioned in, and imposed by conceived space. It is then imperative to include the study of spatial practices and movements of young people in urban space; which spaces young people move through, in which places they decide to stay, which they avoid and where they desire to move to, but are refused from (Langevang and Gough, 2009a). This project may provide a unique look into urban places that young people occupy, the 'liminal' and 'interstitial' spaces which might otherwise remain hidden to us (Kalua, 2009; Skelton and Gough, 2013, p. 459) and can help us to develop an understanding of the inclusionary and exclusionary strategies and tactics that enable or hinder young people's spatial and social mobility; how youth attribute meanings to the urban landscape and the places they negotiate; how this influences young people's sense of belonging in place (Gough and Franch, 2005; Winton, 2005; Easthope, 2009; Langevang and Gough, 2009a). In this context it is argued crucial to pay attention to the role of mobility in notions of injustice and its relationship with place and belonging.

2.4.5 Introducing belonging

In this section it is finally argued, as has been indicated several times previously, that a focus on the concept of belonging could thrust the debate on spatial justice forward. This section will bring together aspects of different frameworks of space and place, of social and spatial justice, across a wide range of disciplinary fields, that have – consciously or not – contributed to a joint project towards spatial justice. It is argued that the multi-dimensional concept of belonging allows a conceptualisation, in which the social and the spatial are co-constitutive and co-producing, that considers how people in their everyday lives are attached to the material world through place, how difference is produced in discursive dimensions and reproduced through social and spatial practices to generate exclusion of individuals and social groups. This way it is possible to trace the development of relations of justice through the spatial and the social, and inversely propose spatial and social remedies.

To recapitulate, several authors (e.g., Silver, 1994; Sibley, 1995; Trudeau, 2006; Trudeau and

McMorran, 2011) argue that the notion of belonging can be understood as the analytical opposite of exclusion, and is central in the workings of social organisation and social control of space, as it constitutes the membership of an individual or a group to a polity, culture or society, and importantly, its associated territory (Crowley, 1999). Membership then means that the individual's or group's identity needs to share central features and elements with the identity of the polity in order to belong. Individuals or groups who do not represent those preferred characteristics or behaviours are only allowed to exist at the borders or margins of its territory, and are effectively excluded from participation. Many authors (e.g., Sibley, 1995; Trudeau, 2006; Yuval-Davis, 2006; Antonsich, 2010) agree that belonging is a profoundly political measure, but it is also intensely spatial, playing a significant role in the production of social space (Sibley, 1995; Trudeau, 2006), it generates boundaries, discursive and spatial, around certain identities, characteristics and behaviours, to distinguish between inside and outside, and to control the behaviour inside, and access to, associated bounded spaces.

Explicit theorisation of the intimate connection and intertwinement of social belonging to a collective, and territorial belonging to a place has led several authors (Lovell, 1998; Pollini, 2005; Antonsich, 2010) to dissolve the distinction between belonging to a place and to a group, in which case belonging becomes essentially interchangeable with identity. 'Politics of belonging' and 'politics of identity' are in fact often used interchangeably in public and academic discourse. Acknowledging the similarities and ties between the two concepts is necessary to understand why belonging is 'inserted' into the justice discourse, a discourse that has long been claimed as the territory of identity theorists. However, there are some fundamental differences that must be considered in order to appreciate the value of adopting belonging as more than a mere replacement for identity.

2.4.6 Dialectics of belonging and identity

Clearly the concepts of identity and belonging are closely related, stemming from similar theoretical traditions. Understanding and deconstructing the relationship between belonging, place and identity seems especially relevant in the contemporary period of increased migration and globalisation, in which local and particular interests increasingly collide with national or international political, economic or social goals (Lovell, 1998). Several attempts have been made to conceptually differentiate and disentangle identity and belonging, to review their respective usefulness in conceptual frameworks (Anthias, 2002, 2016; Yuval-Davis, 2006; Antonsich, 2010;

Pfaff-Czarnecka, 2011a). Many authors decide that identity has become problematic, citing that the concept has become ambiguous, is expected to deliver too much or is reliant on sharp delineations between categories or loaded with often essentialising associations, making it susceptible to appropriation in divisive rhetoric (Brubaker and Cooper, 2000; Anthias, 2002, 2016; Pfaff-Czarnecka, 2011a). Anthias (2002) argues that the application of identity, rather than produce substantial contributions to social or spatial discourse, tends to obscure and detract the focus from place, from specific context, meaning and practice. However, because it has become embedded in popular culture and has acquired importance in everyday conversations, identity remains a crucial instrument to wield in the struggle for social justice, implicated in political relations of 'power, recognition, representation and redistribution' (Anthias, 2016, p. 175).

Pfaff-Czarnecka (2011a) argues that belonging is a more suitable concept from which to theorise social processes in contemporary societies than the currently more prominent notion of identity, because it allows conceptualisations of commonality that go beyond the often homogenising or dichotomising signifiers of identity. Instead the notion of belonging allows for the conceptualisation of more dynamic modes of collectiveness that are based on shared experience, knowledge and meaning. Belonging can therefore be characterized as a fluid, multi-faceted construct, a process subject to continuous social and spatial reconfigurations, involving simultaneous attachments to different places and collectives, often evoking feelings of in-betweenness or hybridity (Pfaff-Czarnecka, 2011a; Lähdesmäki et al., 2016).

Nonetheless, the concept of belonging itself is certainly not uncontentious or entirely liberated of some of the accusations that surround the notion of identity. Belonging might share some important similarities with identity, however there are some crucial differences which might make it a more appropriate concept to deploy in the project of theorisation of spatial justice, one that could overcome some of the issues regarding causality and co-production and bind the social and spatial together in a comprehensive framework. Identity as a concept necessarily produces bounded categories that are frequently mutually exclusive and defined by impermeable (artificial) boundaries (Anthias, 2016). Postcolonial critics argue that identity should therefore be defined in terms of plurality, permeable boundaries and hybridity (e.g., Bhabha, 1994; Hall, 1996; Weedon, 2004). Belonging similarly produces categories, but combines this with less problematic forms of social relating (Pfaff-Czarnecka, 2011a). Anthias affirms that 'where identity necessarily leads focus to the self, belonging always happens in connection to an element external to the self, it happens in relation to 'place – in the social as well as geographical sense – and is therefore

always 'located' (2016, p. 177).

2.4.7 Defining belonging

Pfaff-Czarnecka asserts that although belonging constitutes a central and familiar aspect of our lived experience, it is all the more difficult to define in terms of analytical categories. She strikingly describes belonging as 'an emotionally-charged social location' (Pfaff-Czarnecka, 2011a, p. 2), which highlights again the close connection to the concept of place: I argue that 'an emotionally-charged geographic location' would come very close to how Tuan or Cresswell would define place. She goes on to distinguish three dimensions: perceptions and practices of commonality; a sense of mutuality or a reciprocal 'collective allegiance'; and tangible or intangible attachments (Pfaff-Czarnecka, 2011a, p. 2).

Commonality that generates belonging is multidimensional and encompasses much more than 'traditional' signifiers of identity, such as language, class, race, or religion. Commonality can be defined as the perceived sharing of certain things among a community of belonging, mainly experience, cultural practices, values, knowledge, meanings and memory (Pfaff-Czarnecka, 2011a, p. 3). She argues that a crucial aspect to have in common in order to belong, is a shared purpose, some collective investment in the future. This again highlights an important difference with identity, which is generally oriented towards a nostalgic common past, belonging then, as a process, is better equipped to accept change and dynamic aspects into its inner workings. Pfaff-Czarnecka highlights this when she argues that social meanings, values and knowledge constantly evolve as they are produced and reproduced in social practices of interaction, negotiation, reflection, conflict and compromise.

The dimension of mutuality can be interpreted as a system of norms, shared expectations and obligations, flowing out of performing or externalising of those commonalities. This way the commonalities are affirmed and stabilised through 'common horizons' into relationships of reciprocity, loyalty and commitment (Pfaff-Czarnecka, 2011a, p. 5). Acknowledging mutuality generally includes conforming individual behaviour to certain rules and standards that organise social relations in the collective, but also accepting the duties that come as a reciprocal price to enjoying the rights and liberties of membership. If any measure of the mutuality is violated, collectives can apply some form of negative sanction, generally the exclusion of the individual or group from the collective.

The third dimension of attachments incorporates the intimate connections between people and their material and immaterial 'lifeworld' in generating belonging (Buttimer, 1976; Seamon, 1979; Lovell, 1998; hooks, 2009). This process is heavily influenced by citizenship and property rights: the issue of ownership – collective, private and symbolic – can be seen as crucial in the forging of attachments, and therefore a central component in personal and political dimensions of belonging (Crowley, 1999; Manning, 2004; Pfaff-Czarnecka, 2011a).

Separately these three dimensions of commonality, mutuality or attachments are not sufficient to generate a robust sense of belonging, but through their combination the 'collective sociability' that generates belonging is stabilised and made durable (Pfaff-Czarnecka, 2011a, p. 7). The community of belonging produces certain practices, knowledge and norms, that are perceived and reproduced as common sense among its members, and which unite the collective while simultaneously differentiating between inside and outside. However, these shared values and norms can sometimes be produced within repressive communities or systems, and this particular arrangement is prone to consolidating the social order and power relations within and between collectives. Belonging then often involves the surrender of individual principles and norms to those that govern and protect the collective belonging (Pfaff-Czarnecka, 2011a).

2.4.8 Dimensions of belonging

Different authors identify at least two interdependent dimensions of belonging (Fenster, 2005; Yuval-Davis, 2006; Antonsich, 2010; Anthias, 2016). One dimension deals with belonging as a discursive resource that 'constructs, claims, justifies and resists forms of socio-spatial inclusion/exclusion' (Antonsich, 2010, p. 4). This is the politics of belonging, aptly described by Crowley (1999, p. 30) as 'the dirty work of boundary maintenance,' boundaries that delineate a community of belonging, their maintenance encompasses defining what behaviour or which characteristics are appropriate for membership in this community and its associated territory (Trudeau, 2006). This process of social closure, as discussed in section 2 of this chapter, claiming who is allowed to belong and who is excluded, in order to monopolise resources and retain power, is a constituent part of the conceived mode of space (Soja, 1996). Politics of belonging is wielded by the powerful to remove certain social groups from spaces that they control. It necessarily implies the carving up and classification of space into bounded categories, whether by imagined, metaphorical or material boundaries. It is important to note that the boundaries may be drawn around abstract categories, but the territories they circumscribe are expressed in the landscape, in the production

and assertion of space, and have very real social consequences (Sibley, 1995; Gallaher, 1997). States here are particularly powerful regulatory mechanisms that 'play a critical role in constructing social identities and differences. They help define, institutionalize, and order the categories and the relations that produce and maintain identity/difference' (Hayward, 2003, p. 501). Furthermore, the state apparatus controls physical boundaries, regulates access and defines entry criteria (Pfaff-Czarnecka, 2011a). Rather than reacting to difference in social process, states are active agents in the production of difference and belonging.

A second dimension treats belonging as a subjective, personal and intimate attachment to place, named place belongingness by Antonsich (2010). This dimension of belonging is firmly rooted in the everyday and the routine (Fenster, 2005) and can be interpreted as a central aspect of Lefebvre's lived mode of space. Antonsich (2010) emphasises that the sense of belonging can be embodied and affectively felt, but it is always socially constructed and thus never isolated from power dynamics in place. Dixon and Durrheim (2004, p. 459) observe that the affective, intimate feeling 'at home' in place, should at least to some degree be understood as flowing out of 'the comforting realization of others' absence'. The study of the affective dimension of belonging, or the sensation of feeling at home in place¹, often poised as the counter-pole of exclusion (Silver, 1994; Trudeau, 2006), reaches back to the phenomenological tradition of humanistic geographers (see for instance Tuan, 1974; Relph, 1976). Home, in this sense, is not restricted to the physical domestic space, but rather refers to the symbolic idea of *Heimat*; a familiar space, a safe zone of emotional attachment and agreement, a place where one feels protected and at ease. As previously discussed, this tradition recognises both notions of place and mobility as fundamental to the human project of identity formation (Easthope, 2009).

If the politics of belonging drives the discursive production of difference, it could then be further argued that between the discursive level of politics and the subjective level of emotional attachment, it is possible to distinguish a third dimension rooted in Lefebvre's perceived space. Antonsich (2010, p. 13) states that to every claim of belonging there is one party doing the claiming, and an opposing party 'which has the power of 'granting' belonging'. This leads me to argue that there is a third 'party' involved – not necessarily consciously or deliberately but actively nonetheless – and that is the 'public': the collective agency of citizens, communities, organisations, architects and companies and their spatial practices that contribute significantly to shaping the city. By interpreting, adopting, negotiating, rejecting or ignoring the political and ideological discourses of belonging, they produce a space in which exclusion and inclusion are acted out. I will call

this dimension the practices of exclusion and inclusion. This dimension is then where collective agency – and with it socio-economic forces such as capitalism – through socio-spatial practices in society become locally embedded in the landscape as built form – the material manifestations of flows of capital and social relations – as physical boundaries, as the implementation and enforcement of rules, forms of surveillance or other types of barriers or enablers of belonging. It is in this space that discourses of belonging are interpreted and difference is applied or enforced through the construction of boundaries, territory markers, divisions and connections, in the form of brick and barbed wire, but also as billboards, or as private guards or cameras.

A commitment to exposing the multiple forms of belonging and exclusion as manifested in young people's lived, everyday experiences poses the challenge of finding analytical tools that befit and do justice the complexity and multidimensionality of the concepts. The different analytical tools are introduced and ordered according to the different spatial perspectives in the final section of this chapter, a comprehensive discussion of the precise procedures used during fieldwork can be found in section 3.2 on page 98.

2.4.9 Everyday politics

As the conception of belonging ventures into the political realm, it is important to briefly look at different types of politics, particularly at the politics of the everyday. Politics are generally defined in terms of the control, distribution, production and use of resources, and the values and views that back those activities (Kerkvliet, 2009). The resources involved can include tangible materials, such as land, natural resources or money, but also intangible matters, such as space, power or education, to ephemerals such as information and truth. Broadly defined, politics can encompass almost any action, but political studies most often limit their inquiry to the political processes of large institutions such as governments and states, and to major organisations that try to influence the activities or configurations of these institutions (Kerkvliet, 2009). However, the management of important resources is hardly ever limited to government institutions and associated organisations. Kerkvliet (2009) notes that focusing mostly on official, formal politics, overlooks the vast majority of the population, and the political activities they willingly or unwillingly partake in. It generates a perceived and real distance between citizens and politics, ignores the intimate connection between people, place and power that is central in this investigation. It is argued that a focus on the mundane, on the everyday practices of 'ordinary' citizens is crucial to understand how spaces are managed, and who benefits from them and who does not in cities of

the Global South. Considering how customary and traditional rule in Ghana are entangled with official politics, but also how the informal and formal sectors are entirely intertwined in everyday practices, this paper centres its attention on everyday forms of politics and decision making, situated in the lived and perceived space, while the official politics of the conceived space are not disregarded, but rather frame the study and provide its context.

In order to understand everyday politics, it is appropriate to characterise what sets it apart from other main types of politics. Two types stand out for the benefit of this discussion: official politics and advocacy politics. What characterises official politics is that the people involved hold authoritative positions within the organisations concerned, they are sanctioned to make decisions within or on behalf of the organisation, or are involved in a significant way in their operations and decision-making process. Organisations dealing in official politics include most prominently (and most often studied) governments and states, but also different collectives such as religious organisations, educational institutions, and NGO's. Official politics should not be contrasted with informal political activity, as informal and even illegal activities can be subject to official politics (Kerkvliet, 2009).

Advocacy politics rather, encompasses 'the direct and concerted efforts to support, criticise and oppose authorities, their policies and programs, or the entire way resources are produced and distributed within an organization or system of organisations' (Kerkvliet, 2009, p. 232). Advocacy politics is always organized and coordinated, and the parties involved always openly and intentionally direct their activities and perspectives at the establishment or authoritative organisations. The distinction between official, advocacy and everyday politics is not always sharp, but everyday political actions are in general more routine, indirect activities with 'softer' consequences, involving little or no organisation. The people that participate in these activities would likely not define them as political. Kerkvliet (2009) makes a distinction between three different levels of everyday politics, based on intentionality and direction. He distinguishes between resistance, support and compliance, and modifications and evasions.

Resistance is possibly the most studied and most intensely theorised (see particularly de Certeau, 1984) of the three levels, because the power-relations are abundantly clear. As one of the everyday 'tactics' available to the powerless to counter the 'strategies' of the powerful, resistance is the most powerful, but also the most outspokenly political. Instead of settling for an existing situation which is unjust in their view, people often disagree and assert different

ideas of how resources could be better distributed or used. Resistance can vary from displays or expressions of aversion and rage, to physical manifestations of discontent but often induce more confrontational forms of politics. There is some disagreement on the definition of resistance, but there are two main characteristics that most scholars agree on that distinguishes resistance from the other types of everyday politics, namely intention and upward orientation. Resistance as such, is marked by a clear intention of opposition to what is regarded as unjust, and by an upward orientation, the opposition is always directed at a more powerful social group or institution. Kerkvliet (2009, p. 233) states that 'through resistance, subordinate people struggle to affirm their claims to what they believe they are entitled to, based on values and rights, recognised by a significant proportion of people similar to them.'

Hierarchies and uneven power relations can be found, not only between citizens and their governments, but in various degrees between people or organisations throughout society. As a second level, rather than openly resisting the activities and ideas of the establishment, a large part of the population generally lives and acts in some form of support for, or compliance with the existing power structures. According to Kerkvliet (2009), the main distinction between compliance and support is in the degree of intentionality: Support is characterised by the intentional, even passionate endorsement of the organisation, along with its actions and values. Compliance then involves less intentionality, the actions can be similar, but lack the conviction or intent of full support. Different from resistance, everyday practices of support and compliance can be directed towards people in similar, inferior and superior power positions.

A third level of everyday politics, that can be located somewhere halfway between resistance and compliance, is the modification and evasion of political structures. This form of everyday political activity involves no intentionality, no deliberate attempts at opposition. Generally, the consequence of attitudes of negligence or indifference rather than contempt towards regulations and political processes, modifications and evasions result from people looking for shortcuts or alternative paths to cope with daily challenges or trying to make work easier. Since these acts are not purposefully directed at anyone, it is possible that they negatively affect fellow community members, or people from similar social standing.

Michel de Certeau (1984), in his theorisation of everyday practices, adopts the concepts 'strategies' and 'tactics' to discuss 'political' activities of subaltern or marginalised individuals or communities. Strategies are the discourses and meanings imposed by the powerful, the decision makers, the

political, economic and cultural elite. These meanings are hegemonic, rigid structures, intended to leave little or no space for interpretation. They are regulations and delineations that divide and label the world, circumscribe places and define boundaries, in order to 'serve as a basis for generating relations with an exterior distinct from it' (de Certeau, 1984, p. 17) a process often referred to as social closure, or 'othering', but in this context closely connected to 'politics of belonging' and Lefebvre's 'conceived space'. Tactics, in contrast, are the processes adopted by the powerless and marginalised, to contest and challenge these meanings. With his focus on tactics, de Certeau emphasised the importance of the mundane and ordinary activities of individuals, and celebrated the numerous ways in which people in their everyday lives manipulate cultural meanings, or resources enforced on them by the powerful. To de Certeau, tactics represent 'the ingenious ways in which the weak make use of the strong' (de Certeau, 1984, p. xvii). We can see everyday politics as a form of tactics: practices adopted by ordinary or even marginalised people in day to day life to negotiate the limitations of their environment, by either resisting, escaping or conforming to the rules dictated by hegemonic forces. It is transgression, willingly or otherwise, of boundaries imposed on people and place (Cresswell, 1996).

2.4.10 The right to the City

Issues of exclusion and social justice in the city, especially in terms of access to public space, are often dealt with using the 'language of rights', more specifically a framework of 'the right to the city' based on a connected string of urban theory of Lefebvre. His conceptualisation of justice is best understood using his interpretation of the city as an oeuvre, a participatory endeavour, generated by the interactions and exchanges of all citizens. For Lefebvre therefore, citizens, as contributors to the oeuvre, are entitled to the entirety of the oeuvre. He claims that the city is a fundamentally public and heterogeneous place. It is the space where interactions and encounters occur with difference. Then the right to the city can be understood in terms of the right to inhabit the city by different groups, with widely different needs and desires, and different claims on its resources. It thus speaks of the ways in which a city can accommodate the diversity of projects of its citizens. In this sense it is the struggle over the shape of the city, and the way the power to shape the city is distributed among its citizens.

There are, however, a range of authors that have criticised frameworks based on rights in the progressive struggle for social justice, not the least of which, Marx (1976) himself was unconvinced that rights alone were useful in the progressive social struggle, because 'force decides' in the

inevitable case that claims to rights overlap. For this reason, Mitchel (2003) contends that a framework based on rights can only be effective when it is backed by force, imposed with the implicit threat of violence, generally authorised by the state, but in its absence, also extra-legal.

Attoh (2011) rightly wonders then what type of right is implied in the right to the city, criticizing literature's lack of handle on this distinction, and the fuzziness of the concept. By discussing three main approaches in political and legal philosophy, he attempts to demonstrate the real implications that different interpretations and implementations of rights would have on the form and management of the city. The first approach he discusses is the classical analysis of the internal structure of rights by Hohfeld (1919), who claims legal rights are one or a combination of four basic rights: Claim rights mark a type of duty owed to the bearer. Liberty rights, represent the opposite, a duty an individual or collective is protected from. Powers and immunities, for Hohfeld secondary rights, permit the bearer to modify, influence or abandon existing legal relationships.

A second approach discussed is Waldron's (1993) distinction between generational differences of rights. A first set of rights are the conventional rights and freedoms derived from citizenship, such as the freedom of expression, freedom of religion, the right to democratic participation and so on. A second generation of rights are socio-economic rights, accompanying the rise of the welfare state. These rights are meant to stimulate economic equality and social security, most prominent are the right to a fair income and the right to housing. Waldron's third generation of rights are collective rights that secure communal goods, connected to communities, ethnicities or other groups, for instance the protection of cultural, linguistic or natural heritage. Along with other proponents of second-generation rights, Waldron emphasizes that struggling for liberties alone is meaningless when so many are deprived of the means to fully enjoy these liberties. He therefore argues that first generation rights should be accompanied 'by a principle addressing the distribution of the means of material well-being' (Waldron, 1993, p. 29). How the interrelation between first, second and third generation rights is conceived, and how trade-offs are managed between them when applied to the right to the city, makes for tangible differences in the type of city that is created (Attoh, 2011).

A third perspective discussed is Dworkin's (1977) analysis of the intertwinement of moral and legal issues, and his conception of rights as a defence against the oppression of a democratic majority. In a democratic society, legal regulations represent and protect the average view of what is in society's interest. Dworkin sees rights as a mechanism that protects persons or minorities whose

behaviour is not approved by larger society. He argues that rights permit people to challenge and, crucially, break a law that they feel is morally unjust, and permits them to justify their actions in a fair trial. For Dworkin then, rights in a democratic society embody 'the majority's promise to minorities that their dignity and equality will be respected' (1977, p. 205).

Different scholars emphasise different aspects of the urban experience, different rights but also different agents, exemplified in different struggles around the world when they evoke the right to the city. To some authors the right to the city represents predominantly a right to a political space (e.g., Dikeç, 2005), to others it signifies the right to physical urban space (e.g., Mitchell, 2003; Gibson, 2005) or rather a defence against government domination or oppression (Mitchell and Heynen, 2009), or sometimes the emphasis is on the socio-economic right to different resources the city has to offer (Marcuse, 2008). Groups whose right to the city is disputed range from refugees and migrants (Dikeç, 2005), homeless (Mitchell, 2003), ethnic minorities, to women and sexual minorities, disabled and, as in the case of this work, youth. Illustrated by the multiplicity of struggles that are reframed by the language of the right to the city, it seems clear the right to the city does not exist as a singular right, but rather as a set of multiple rights defined by its specific situation and context. Attoh (2011) believes therefore it is crucial to recognise the diversity of rights, and to question the type of right intended in the right to the city, in order to move the progressive debate into a new direction. The openness of the concept is celebrated by several scholars exactly because it unites different groups and their struggles against diverse injustices under one theoretical umbrella. However, following Attoh (2011), we can state that it can simultaneously obscure important distinctions that make real differences in concrete cities. Wastl-Walter and Staeheli (2005) observe that most work on the right to the city can be read as criticism on urban policy, and on the injustices generated by current practices of urban design and policy that prioritise needs of influential industries and the affluent over those of the masses, the common citizens and the underprivileged. Recognising that different types of rights might not always be compatible, echoing Waldron (1993), Attoh (2011) asserts that to resolve a situation where claims to certain rights conflict, as they inevitable do, it might be necessary to expand or include the right to the city into a larger theory of social – and why not spatial – justice.

2.5 Conclusion: A Spatial justice framework

'It is widely admitted that while scientific discourse aims to understand, partisan discourse authorizes itself to judge. However, our way of looking

at human societies often carries an implicit assessment of the fairness or unfairness of the situations we describe' (js/sj, 2009).

This final part of the chapter follows a comprehensive review of the main theories in literature, spanning several academic disciplines, relevant to the development of a conceptual framework on spatial justice. Theories are organised in three parts, that set up a state of the art, the first two separately discuss theories of space (A) and justice (B), which are then combined and aligned in a third part on spatial justice (C). As a conclusion to the theoretical chapter, this fourth part (D) briefly summarises the main theoretical points, and develops a conceptual framework in the first section, a lens that is used to analyse the empirical reality. The second section then operationalises the concepts and briefly introduces the methodological tools, setting up for chapter 3 on research design.

2.5.1 Spatial justice

This chapter develops a framework focused on belonging as a central aspect of spatial justice, because it embraces a strong spatial focus, and allows for more inclusive conceptualisations of commonality that promote recognition and positive valuations of difference. Adopting the multi-dimensional concept of belonging has two main theoretical advantages that differentiate it from other models: on the one hand it allows a conceptualisation in which the social and the spatial are co-constitutive and co-producing; on the other, it takes into account how ordinary people in their everyday lives are attached to the material world through place, how difference is produced in discursive dimensions, and how it is reproduced through social and spatial practices to generate exclusion of individuals and social groups, respectively in the lived, conceived, and perceived space. As seen in the previous chapter, a framework built on spatial justice adopts the premise that in order to understand how people and their relationships are ordered, how justice and injustice are produced and reproduced in society, it is central to understand their spatiality (Soja, 2010a; Williams, 2018). The primary focus on the spatiality of justice relations allows the exposure of causal relations that might remain hidden or implicit when space is treated as context.

Space is conceived as a set of relations among things and/or people, a dynamic process because of the shifting and unstable nature of its constituting relations. In order to achieve the radical potential of spatial justice envisioned by its proponents, as discussed in the previous parts of this chapter, the framework must account for the process of mutual co-constitution and

co-production of the social and spatial, a conceptualisation that allows space to simultaneously produce and be produced by social processes, and vice versa. The agency of space in the production of justice relations must be explicitly recognised. Following Williams (2013, 2018), this means that the framework must recognise the possibility of space to indicate, exacerbate and – crucially – produce injustice. This, he argues, is only possible when both spatial and social relations are simultaneously understood as dynamic processes and fundamentally undetermined. This is in contrast to common practice of social sciences to study social processes against a static backdrop of space, or of spatial sciences to focus on spatial dynamics while holding social relations in an artificial state of inertia.

Following several substantial efforts over the last decade to investigate issues on the interface between the social and the spatial (e.g., Soja, 2010a; Thompson, Russell and Simmons, 2014; Wiedmann, Salama and Mirincheva, 2014; Williams, 2018), this thesis adopts Lefebvre's (1991) tripartite model of spatial dialectics as the main paradigm that guides the investigation into spatial justice, that organises the productive relations of spatial and social processes, and structures the relations between the theoretical concepts. The three modes of space, generally termed conceived, perceived and lived space, consequently form the backbone of the subsequent chapters, organising the empirical results, the discussion and conclusion chapters of this thesis.

Following Rawls (2001), justice can be seen as a social contract in which the parties involved in social collaboration or interaction strive for a fair agreement, by determining together the principles that distribute basic rights, duties and social benefits, and by extension spatial and material benefits. The principles by which these benefits are distributed must therefore be fair – not necessarily equal – the distribution itself must be to everyone's benefit. Young (1990, p. 39) building on Rawls' thesis, sees social justice as the extent to which institutions provide the conditions that people require to pursue the 'development and exercise of individual capacities and collective communication and cooperation' in a given society. Injustice then, refers to the degree to which barriers and restrictions erected by institutions impede the realisation of these capacities (Nussbaum, 1992; Allison, 2000). Power relations in contemporary liberal societies should no longer be understood in terms of binary divisions of a sovereign ruler versus a subordinate subject, but rather in terms of systematic production and reproduction of difference and inequality in processes of the economic, political and cultural institutions of societies (Foucault, 1980). Injustice under such circumstances should be seen as structural in nature, embedded in regular processes in society, rather than the result of necessarily malevolent intentions or actions of a

powerful elite (Young, 1990).

Distribution and recognition

Rather than venturing into the increasingly polarised distinction between the economic paradigm of distribution and the cultural paradigm of recognition, following Fraser (1998) and Yar (2001), this framework recognises this dichotomy is artificial and counterproductive, and that both are necessary elements of a progressive framework for spatial justice. In the distribution paradigm, group difference is seen as unwanted differentials that skew the distribution of wealth and opportunity, thus at the root of inequality. The remedy to distributive injustice is 'political-economic restructuring' (Fraser, 1999, p. 27) with the goal to produce equality, which therefore generally strives to erase difference between social groups (Fraser, 1997). The recognition paradigm rather requires group difference to be acknowledged and valorised if all individuals are to be given opportunity to participate in society as equals and thus aims for group differentiation. Recognitive injustice can only be remedied through the 'transformation of societal patterns of representation, interpretation and communication' (Fraser, 1999, pp. 27–8), by the acknowledgement of group specificity and the affirmation of its values (Fraser, 1997; Yar, 2001). Following Fraser (1998) the framework reconciles these paradigms by assessing justice claims to the 'parity of participation', which involves the requirement of society to accommodate: (1) such a distribution of resources, goods and services that guarantees all citizens are independent, at liberty to participate and have equal opportunity to voice their grievances and opinions; and (2) the institutionalisation of 'cultural patterns of interpretation and valuation' that aim to generate respect, dignity and opportunity for realising social esteem equally for every citizen (Fraser, 1998, p. 4).

Building mostly on Kojève (1969), Honneth (1992) and Yar (2001), the framework reconciles these paradigms by a more pluralistic theorisation of recognition that conceives the struggle for justice as a manifestation of the struggle for people's self-realisation. Honneth (1992) claims that processes of recognition are constitutive of fundamental processes of humans' development of the self and the social, and therefore central to any struggle for justice. Claims of distribution are central to justice because 'the normative interactions associated with the struggle for recognition are materially as well as linguistically and representationally mediated' (Yar, 2001, p. 298). Building further on Kojève (1969), shared values and meanings are seen as externalised and embodied in artefacts, in material objects, but also in place. Place, as an explicitly spatialised artefact and therefore central to this investigation, exemplifies the embodiment of social value, meaning and

relations in concrete material form. This way, 'social meanings and evaluations are concretized in objects, those objects can become the focus of [...] struggles for recognition, and likewise a shared estimation or evaluation of an object can become a mediation of mutual recognition' (Yar, 2001, p. 298). Conceptualising recognition as mediated through the externalisation of human values in the form of resources, goods and services, accommodates the various ways struggles for recognition underpin distributive claims. Yar (2001, p. 297) then redefines social justice as 'the intersubjective satisfaction of moral expectations that arise as individuals attempt to establish positive self-relation via recognition from others.'

The conflicting logic of differentiation and de-differentiation is resolved as derivative of the ordering of three forms of recognitive claims, that follow Honneth's (1992, 2001) model of self-realisation along the axes of singularity, particularity and universality. Each of these moments responds to different desires and needs that must be gratified intersubjectively, and corresponds to a different mode and scale of spatial production, presented and discussed in the final section.

Belonging

Sibley (1995) draws attention to how exclusionary processes of 'social closure' and the production of difference play a crucial part in everyday production of social identities. Social boundaries are drawn in order to produce a clear distinction between the self and the Other, to be able to distance oneself from that Other that might represent adverse or unwanted qualities. This way, discursive boundaries are created and reproduced around individuals and social groups informed by the 'generalised Other'. This process 'through which a dominant group defines into existence a subordinate group', which is often referred to as 'othering', is a central concern of social justice (Khan, 2012, p. 12). Through the invention of categories and characteristics that define who belongs to these categories, certain people or groups are defined as fundamentally different, and thus outside of the social category from which it is defined. This is generally accompanied with the process of 'bordering' where the social category is associated with, and often confined to a spatial territory. It involves the production, reproduction and maintenance of symbolic and spatial boundaries that regulate people's access to public 'goods', such as certain spaces, services, employment and politics (Khan, 2012). This way a dominant group often attempts to clear 'their' social space of other groups, by excluding them from mainstream society, and pushing them to its margins (Sibley, 1995).

Belonging is deployed as an analytical concept on the interface of recognitive and distributive claims

that binds together issues of justice under a strong spatial focus. The previous chapter introduced the notion of belonging as a profoundly political (see Sibley, 1995; Trudeau, 2006; Yuval-Davis, 2006; Antonsich, 2010), and intensely spatial (see Silver, 1994; Sibley, 1995; Trudeau, 2006; Trudeau and McMorran, 2011) measure, playing a significant role in the production, organisation and control of social space. This framework, following theorisation by several authors (Lovell, 1998; Pollini, 2005; Antonsich, 2010), dissolves the distinction between territorial belonging to a place and social belonging to a collective or social group.

Belonging here constitutes the membership of an individual or a group to a polity, culture or society, and crucially, its associated territory (Crowley, 1999). Membership means the individual's or group's identity needs to share central features and elements with the identity of the polity in order to belong. Individuals or groups who do not represent those preferred characteristics or behaviours are only allowed to exist at the borders or margins of its territory, and are effectively excluded from participation. Belonging thus, in a process of social closure, generates boundaries – both symbolic and spatial – around certain identities, characteristics and behaviours, to distinguish between inside and outside, and to control the behaviour inside, and access to associated bounded spaces. Belonging, when compared to the notion of identity, allows for the conceptualisation of dynamic modes of collectiveness that are based on shared experience, knowledge and meaning. Belonging can therefore be characterised as a fluid, multi-faceted construct, a process subject to continuous social and spatial reconfigurations, involving simultaneous attachments to different places and collectives, often evoking feelings of in-betweenness or hybridity (Pfaff-Czarnecka, 2011a; Lähdesmäki et al., 2016).

The previous chapter has identified three interdependent dimensions of belonging (see Fenster, 2005; Yuval-Davis, 2006; Antonsich, 2010; Anthias, 2016) that correspond to the different spatial modes of Lefebvre's triadic model, and which were termed the politics of belonging, practices of exclusion or inclusion, and place belonging.

2.5.2 Operationalisation of spatial justice

This final section summarises the three spatial perspectives, namely the lived space, the perceived space and the conceived space, and briefly introduces the methodological tools adopted to look into each perspective. The operationalisation of the core concepts with their respective methodological tools is visualised in terms of the structure of the thesis in a diagram in Figure 2.

The conceived space

The most abstract spatial mode, the conceived space, is a strategic space, purely ideological in nature, comprised of numerical data, instructions, signs and symbols (Lefebvre, 1991; Zhang, 2006). Strategic, because it imposes economic, political or cultural values and significations of the powerful that form the pillars of society and are designed to tolerate little flexibility to interpretation (de Certeau, 1984). This level is, consequently, where the most power is concentrated and where the state operates (Wiedmann, Salama and Mirincheva, 2014). It is also the operational sphere where we can situate the politics of belonging, where difference is produced discursively and institutionalised, and primed for implementation and reproduction by civil society. The state – as one of the most prominent and powerful agents operating in this mode – as such must be seen as an active participant in the production of social identities and difference (Hayward, 2003; Williams, 2018), and thus in the granting of belonging (Antonsich, 2010).

Relating this explicitly to justice, understood in terms of the different modes of recognition based on Yar (2001), the moment of universality constitutes the official, legal recognition by the state extended to individuals in the form of rights and duties. Rights in this sense legitimate individuals' expectations and claims to equal opportunity to participate in the production of institutional order (Honneth, 1992). Extending equal rights to every member of the polity possesses a distinctive universalising, de-differentiating dynamic. When individuals or groups are denied such rights, they are *'not deemed to possess the same degree of moral accountability as other members of society'* (Honneth, 1992, p. 191). This is the politics of belonging, a discursive resource that *'constructs, claims, justifies and resists forms of socio-spatial inclusion/exclusion'* (Antonsich, 2010, p. 4). It is wielded by the powerful to remove certain social groups from spaces that they control. It necessarily implies the carving up and classification of space into bounded categories, whether by imagined, metaphorical or material boundaries.

The conceived mode, because of its level of abstraction, universalising logic, strategic nature and resistance to change can be argued to be the most relevant on the operational scale of the urban and higher.

Methodological tools adopted to investigate this spatial mode are accordingly discourse analysis of policy documents and historical analysis of urban maps, with a focus on how difference is used, produced or reproduced among the urban population, with specific interest in how the research population – youth – is represented in these documents. These tools allow the tracing

of shifts in ideology over time to understand current constellations of legal frameworks and urban planning mechanisms that determine how infrastructure, services and other resources are spatially distributed throughout the city, and how this affects different social groups.

The perceived space

The mode of perceived space is a purely material one that consists of patterns and flows of capital, labour, and information (Harvey, 1990; Zhang, 2006). It is the main space of production and of collective agency, where capitalist forces dominate. The perceived mode is an 'objective', empirical and therefore indifferent space (Lefebvre, 1991) and it is highly visual: space is reduced to images, depictions and plans.

It is the realm where the private and the public collide, and where, through encounters with difference and exposure to market forces, diversity is generated (Wiedmann, Salama and Mirincheva, 2014). In terms of justice, it can accordingly be tied to the recognition of particularity, the sphere of social life in which individuals develop a sense of worth in ascribing to certain practices and in wielding certain socio-cultural features and histories. This sense of value is dialogically acknowledged in an exchange of mutual respect and solidarity with others, and materially reflected in the differential access to resources (Yar, 2001). The main resource this thesis is concerned with is public space, as access to it is a basic requirement for justice (Nussbaum, 2002; Mitchell, 2003) and for acquiring social and financial capital, particularly in cities of the global South, as has been argued elsewhere (van Riel, 2015). Injustice then is constituted by 'the denigration of individual or collective life-styles' (Honneth, 1992, p. 191). This form of recognition revolves around the evaluation of difference (Yar, 2001), a central aspect of justice (Fraser, 1999) and belonging (Antonsich, 2010; Pfaff-Czarnecka, 2011a).

The dimension of belonging implied in this spatial mode is termed the practices of exclusion and inclusion. To every claim of belonging there is a party doing the claiming, an opposing party 'which has the power of 'granting' belonging' (Antonsich, 2010, p. 13), and a third party that mediates: the 'public' constituted by the collective agency and the relations between citizens, communities, organisations and businesses that actively – yet not necessarily consciously, deliberately or maliciously – participate in processes of belonging and contribute to shaping the city through their spatial practices. The public interprets, adapts, negotiates, values, rejects or ignores difference generated in political, cultural and other ideological discourses of belonging, producing a space in which narratives of exclusion and inclusion are applied, enforced and

materialised. This dimension is where collective agency, through socio-spatial practices in society, becomes locally embedded in the landscape as built form – the material manifestations of flows of capital and social relations. It is closely associated with the public realm, as it is the arena where encounters with difference occur, and where processes of exclusion and inclusion are acted out (Madanipour, 2003).

Tools adopted therefore focus on physical characteristics of the public realm and on the activities of important players in civil society that manage or control activities in public space. The tools used are expert interviews with lawmakers and administration officials, and the documenting of place through systematic photography of selected places. Additionally, the framework can accommodate mapping exercises of infrastructure, land use, and market value for a more robust understanding of economic forces of production, but these fall outside of the scope and possibilities of this thesis.

The lived space

The lived mode of space is a bodily, subjective space constituted by experience, meaning, affect, emotion, and imagination (Lefebvre, 1991; Elden, 2004; Zhang, 2006). Place – defined here as a dynamic node in a vast network that connects places and human agents (Massey, 1991) – is where everyday life is situated, hence where the experience of lived space finds its grounding (Merrifield, 1993; Cresswell, 2004). Lived space comprises the dynamic and contentious interface between the public and the private realm (Lefebvre, 1991; Zhang, 2006) where processes of identification and association with place and with people – affective dimensions of belonging – unfold, understood here as a central component in the production of relations of justice. Every individual identifies with different aspects of place and attributes different meanings to place dependent on their individual history, behaviour and power-relation to that place. Place is rooted in individual constellations of shifting connections, intimately tied to the power relations that produce and reproduce them, and therefore has multiple simultaneous and coexisting identities. This thesis therefore explicitly recognises place as a relational and dynamic – its specificity arising from its particular pattern of connections rather than its confining limits – fluid and plural – having multiple coexisting identities – bearer of meaning (Massey, 1991).

Concerning justice, lived space can be seen to align with the moment of singularity, the most intimate realm of recognition, in which the individual is able to establish basic autonomy and self-confidence through primary relations, a prerequisite for all other forms of self-realisation.

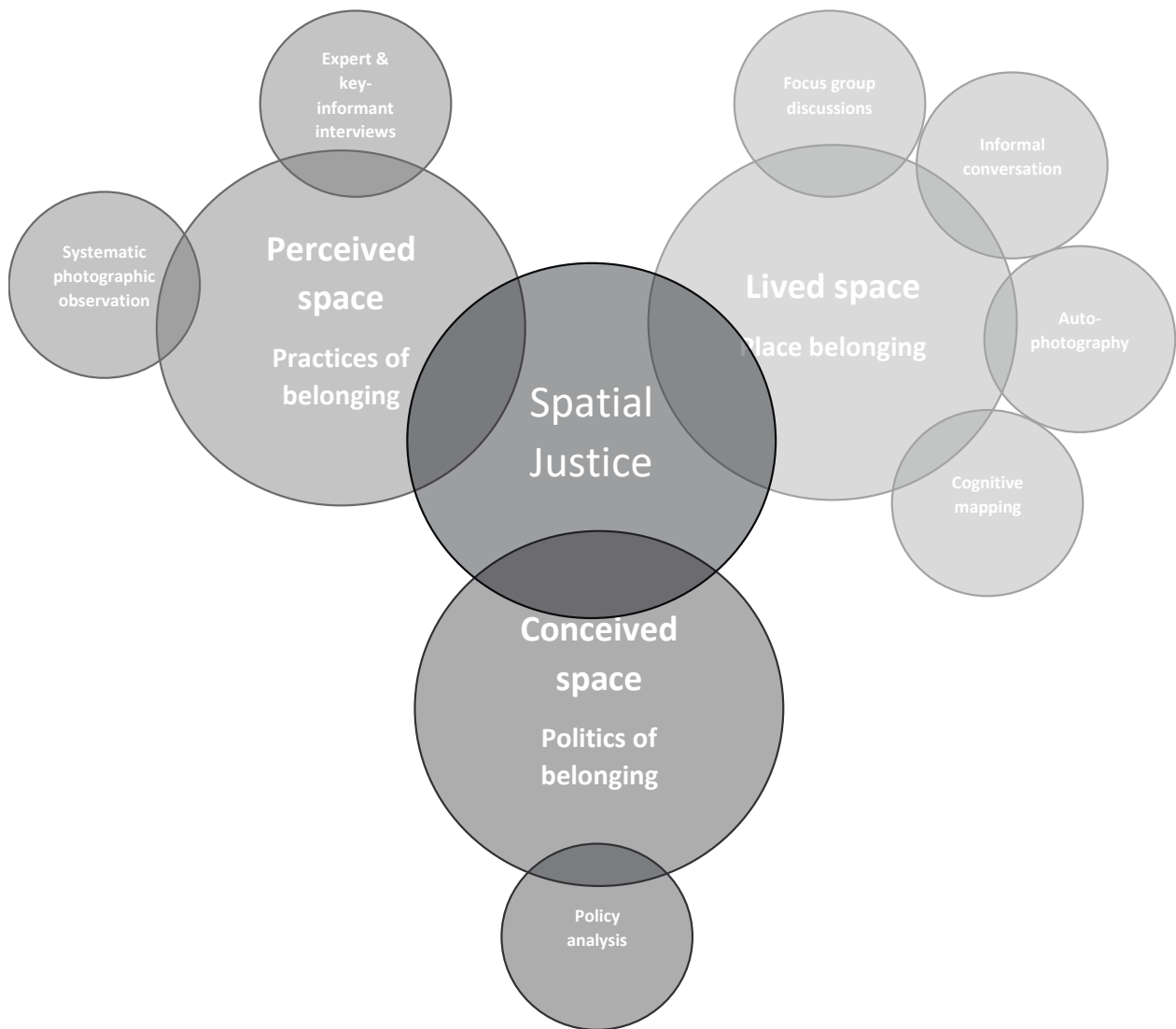


Figure 3: A diagrammatic illustration of the framework (Source: Author).

Injustices or threats on this level have a 'profoundly destructive impact on an individual's practical relation to self' as they deny an individual this most fundamental dimension of self-respect and bodily autonomy (Honneth, 1992, p. 190).

This dimension of belonging is a subjective, personal and intimate attachment to place, firmly rooted in the everyday and the routine (Fenster, 2005). Antonsich (2010) emphasises that the sense of belonging can be embodied and affectively felt, but it is always socially constructed and thus never isolated from power dynamics in place. This framework is illustrated in Figure 3.

Chapter 3: Research Design

This chapter develops the research design and methodology. To set the stage, the first section introduces the research context. The research areas are framed in successive steps starting with the macro-economic level of the African city. Next, a brief historical account of how Accra's urban landscape was shaped, with particular attention to the main political and planning processes that contributed to its current form. The discussion then further focuses on the research areas, the neighbourhoods of Ga Mashie and Sabon Zongo, describing their main cultural, demographic and spatial characteristics. The discussion moves to frame the research population – youth – briefly in literature and discusses the methodological implications of doing research with young people in this particular African context.

The second section comprises the design and procedures of the mixed methodology and the tools. It is important to note here that, due to the complexity of the issues examined and the diversity of the adopted tools, it was chosen to deviate from a linear approach to explain the methodology. Rather, in order to avoid needless repetition and confusion, the tools are outlined separately but simultaneously with their purpose, and the procedures for their implementation. Based on the conceptual framework, the tools are categorised according to the spatial modes that they address: namely *focus group discussions*, *cognitive mapping* and *auto-photography* for the lived space; *key-informant interviews* and *systematic photographic observation* for the perceived space; and *policy analysis* for the conceived space. In the subsequent part the analysis of the data discusses the steps taken and how the diversity of data is compiled and combined to generate new knowledge. In the concluding part of this chapter, the implications for research ethics are discussed, including the measures adopted to account for, or mitigate the risks and consequences.

3.1 Research context

3.1.1 The African city: macro-economic context

The world is slowly waking up to the importance of public space provision and design in urban Africa (UCLG, 2015). Mainly under impulse of UN-Habitat's (2015b) 'Sustainable Development Goals' (SDG) framework, a global movement has urged for urban policies to increase focus on public space. According to this movement, focusing urban policies on public space can be a viable approach to improve the general quality of life in cities, by making urban areas more

attractive and comfortable, by creating opportunities for employment, and by making the city more inclusive and safe for everyone, but especially for vulnerable or marginalised groups. The association of United Cities and Local Governments (UCLG, 2014, 2015), for instance, strives for the recognition of public space as a diverse and multifaceted issue of global importance, instead of merely as another form of land use. They contend that such a focus is only possible with new types of governance that rely greatly on a participatory approach, where citizens are included in every phase of the development of public space, from the planning and design, to resourcing and maintenance, and to the enjoyment and use thereof.

As has been made clear, many of the current challenges facing the Sub-Saharan African region can be directly or indirectly related to the severe pace of urbanisation of its cities. According to speculations, the Sub-Saharan African urban population is expected to double over the next 15 years (UCLG, 2014) and it is commonly agreed that most African cities are very poorly equipped to provide even the basic services of housing, water and sanitation for the anticipated additional urbanites. Despite the vast size of the African continent, and the enormous variety in particular contexts and histories of African cities, it is possible to identify some commonalities and patterns between many African cities, especially those with Colonial histories, that can be related to the development of public spaces (UCLG, 2014).

During the colonial period, the development of urbanised areas was generally focused on housing and entertaining the European ruling elite. The areas around – yet often strictly separated from – these urban centres would then house the black African work force. When these Africans were no longer of use as labourers, they were expected to move back to their rural homes. These settlements were therefore supplied in terms of infrastructure and services for temporary residence only, wellbeing and comfort would often be compromised not to encourage long-term stay.

After independence, a new optimism about improved lifestyles, increased employment opportunities and the promise of freedom and autonomy – reflected in a policy bias towards the urban – inevitably attracted ever more Africans to the cities. Cities represented the new centres of development and progress during efforts of industrialisation and modernisation in the early years of independence. The economy shifted from a focus on the extraction of mining and agricultural produce, with a central importance of transport infrastructure, to one focused on industrial production, with factories and service infrastructure for the citizens centralised around

the major cities (Riddell, 1997). The increased housing demand from this new wave of migration was met by post-colonial governments with large-scale housing programmes, which generally failed to meet the high demand and were often implemented without appropriate planning strategies and designed with little attention to the quality of public space or public life (Mabogunje, 1990). In an alleged attempt to stabilise African economies, smoothen their integration into the global economy and alleviate some of the severe challenges encountered by governments, many international institutions and their Western donor countries endorsed austerity measures that forced administrations to drastically cut public spending (Ian E. A. Yeboah, 2000; Konadu-Agyemang, 2001b).

Most notorious and heavily criticised among those measures were the 'structural adjustment programmes' (SAPs) adopted in many African countries since the 1980s; large loans were given to indebted governments by the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and World Bank (WB) to support them in their efforts to increase economic growth, on the condition that they restructure their public sectors and decrease public expenditure (Easterly, 2003). Most critics agree that the implementation of SAPs disproportionately affected the poor and had devastating effects on those countries that adopted them. Some critics even liken SAPs to a new, more obscure form of colonialism, tying the fate of African nations once again to the influence of the West in a relationship of dependency (Riddell, 1997).

In spite of the SAPs' focus on the national economy, and specifically on resolving the urban bias implemented in prior decades, their effects on the African urban landscapes, Accra included, were profound. Currency deflation, the resultant devaluation of local wages, and increased land speculation, as a result of the liberalisation and globalisation of the housing market, resulted in a sharp increase in housing costs, which escalated the ongoing housing crisis (Konadu-Agyemang, 2001b). Simultaneously, in order to reduce public spending, social sectors – notably health and education – were grossly underfunded and starved of subsidies, and the government – one of Ghana's largest employers in the 1970s (Acquah, 1972) – severely decreased staff size, resulting in exceptionally high rates of unemployment, especially among young men, which severely reconfigured gender-roles and expectations (Overa, 2007). Taken together, all of these factors, combined with sustained rural-urban migration and overall rapid urban growth, were to a large extent responsible for the intensification of the 'informalisation' of urban Africa and an overall sharp decline in living conditions for the urban poor (Konadu-Agyemang, 2001b; Overa, 2007). This is exemplified by overcrowding, lack of sanitation and of basic urban services, infrastructure,



Figure 4: The location of Ghana on the African continent (Source: Author).



Figure 5: The location of the main urban areas within Ghana, with the capital Accra on coast (Source: Author).

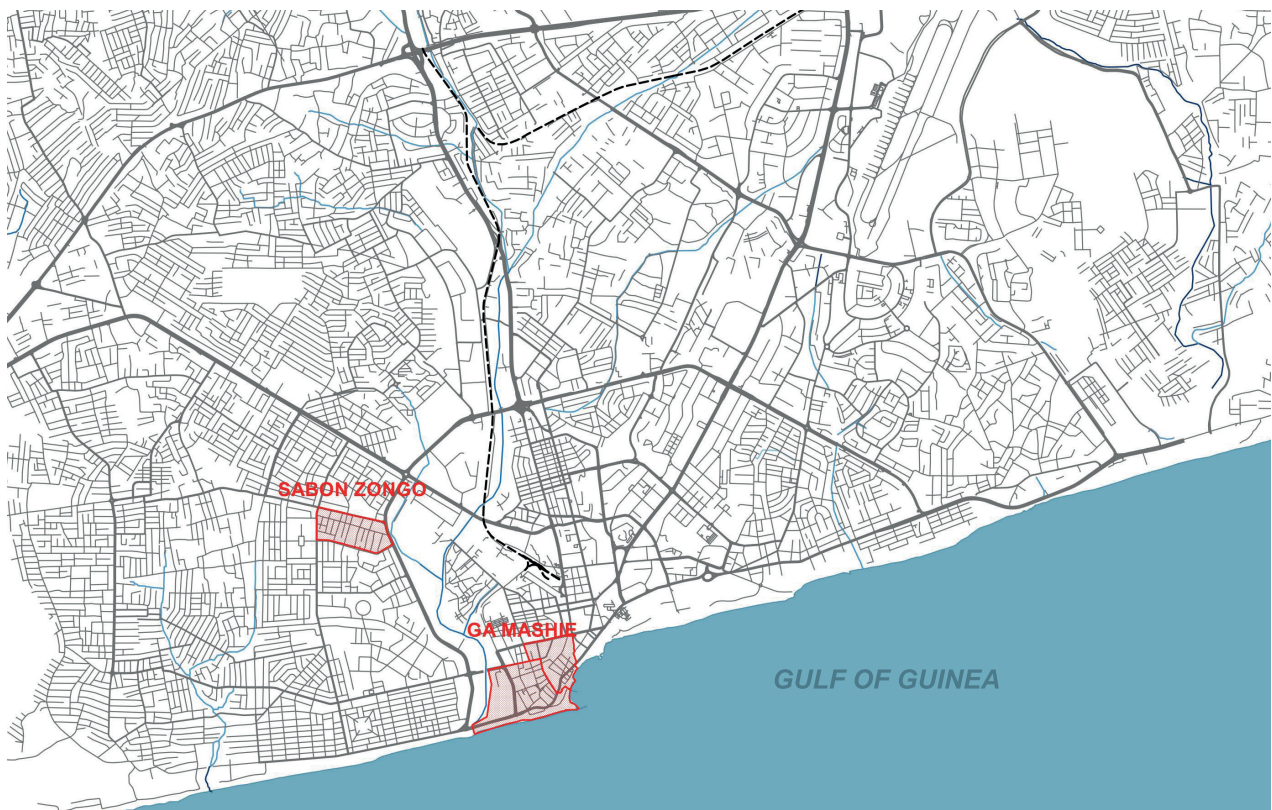


Figure 6: The location of the research areas within the urban centre of Accra Metropolitan Area (Source: Author).

and of quality urban spaces in many parts of Accra, including the research areas Ga Mashie and Sabon Zongo (Konadu-Agyemang, 2001a).

Urban growth under these conditions encouraged the development of high-density settlements, and further densification of existing settlements, without regard for the public realm, as the creation of qualitative open spaces would drive up the costs (UCLG, 2014). Parallel with the rapid urbanisation of African cities, and resultant growth of informal areas and illegal settlements, the informal economic sector has grown at an unparalleled pace (UN-Habitat, 2010; UCLG, 2014). In most African cities the largest segment of society depends on informal activities for their daily livelihoods, rather than on formal employment. These informal activities in public space are perceived by governments to smother other forms of use and eliminate the enjoyment of open areas (UCLG, 2014).

UCLG (2014, 2015) summarise in their reports some of the issues that many African cities are currently struggling with concerning public space. Many of these challenges are particular to African cities, due to the nature and diversity of informal activities and cultural dispositions, and the particularly poor state of many African economies. However, it is important to note that the quality and quantity of public space varies widely between and within African cities. They report for instance that because of increased demand for public space, road and sidewalk congestion has become unbearable in many African cities. According to these authors, the aesthetics of the public realm have deteriorated in many cities as a result of inadequate maintenance and deficient infrastructure. They also highlight concerns for security and public safety in many African cities. Figure 4 demonstrates the location of Ghana on the West-African subcontinent.

3.1.2 Accra, the capital of Ghana: a historical account

This thesis focuses squarely on contemporary Accra, and specific aspects of its urban landscape. Yet, many of its current characteristics and its fast-paced urbanisation cannot be understood without expanding on its history. An important and devastating period of its history was undeniably characterised by colonial rule, the introduction of Western capitalism by the British and how these forces transformed the landscape of Accra. Many of the current issues of spatial injustice tied to the rapid urbanisation, such as segregation, unequal distribution of infrastructure and services, unequal access to open spaces, and even urbanisation itself, can to a large extent be traced back to decisions made by colonial powers and the way divisions and difference were implemented in space (Miner, 1967; O'Connor, 2013). Figure 5 and Figure 6 respectively show the location

of Accra in relation to Ghana's main urban settlements, and the location of the research areas within the urban structure of the Accra Metropolitan Area.

Precolonial history (13th – 19th century): The Ga people of the Accra plains

The Ga people of today are historically composed of several related tribes, with different customs, traditions and languages, who were more often than not at odds with one another, and which have fused into one society with distinctive characteristics. Currently the Ga state is composed of six towns: Ga Mashi – the capital – La, Osu, Nungua, Teshi and Tema. In each of these towns a hierarchy of akutsei or quarters can be distinguished, which are further divided into wei, patrilineal houses. Ga Mashi was divided into seven akutsei, each of which had a separate Mantse, or king, who answered to the paramount chief, the secular ruler of the Ga kingdom: the Ga Mantse (Odotei, 2013). The Ga originally built a string of agricultural settlements on the Accra plains possibly as early as the 13th century and established important trading relationships with neighbouring kingdoms (Odotei, 2013).

When the Europeans arrived in the 15th century they built trading posts on the coast to establish trading routes between the sea and the forest regions deeper inland. Around many of these trading posts, settlements emerged with vibrant markets that rivalled and often surpassed the existing market towns in size and activity. These settlements were often reinforced with fortifications to protect their valuable resources from European rivals. At first, these trading posts dealt in natural resources, mostly gold and salt, but with the arrival of plantation farming in the Americas, and with it an urgent need for affordable labour, the Europeans quickly shifted their attention to the lucrative slave trade, and the 'Gold Coast' became pivotal in the transatlantic slave trade (Arn, 1996). Many of the coastal chiefs, including the Ga, benefited considerably from the presence of the Europeans, as they became important intermediaries between the Europeans and African tribes further inland, trading modern weapons, fabrics and alcohol against gold and slaves from the North (Agyei-Mensah and Owusu, 2010).

The Ga were initially opposed to Europeans building any fortifications on their coast, but in 1649 the Dutch were reluctantly allowed to build a first fortified trading post on the Accra coast, which they called 'Fort Crevecoeur'. The fort was later renamed 'Ussher Fort' when it was bought by the British in 1868. Today it still lends its name to the populous neighbourhood which surrounds it, 'Ussher Town' often also referred to as Old Accra, or Dutch Accra. In 1661 the Danish built 'Christiansborg Castle' a few kilometers to the East near Osu, a settlement of a different Ga clan.

The last and smallest of the three European structures built on the Accra coast, 'James Fort' was built by the British in 1673, just two kilometres to the West from the Dutch castle (Nuno-Amarteifio, 2015).

Mid-17th century, the Ga Mantse was determined to control the slave trade in the region and attempted to monopolise direct contact with the Europeans. This political move deeply deteriorated the relationship with the tribes of the forested regions of Ghana, important trading partners, which led to a succession of wars, and ultimately to the defeat and conquest of the Ga state by the Akwamu in 1677. The Akwamu rule severely eroded the authority of the Ga Mantse and donned the akutsei increasing autonomy over the Ga territory. Over time, this divided the Ga kingdom, a division further fuelled by the intense hostility between the Dutch and the British who picked sides with the divisional Ga chiefs of different akutsei. This hostility between James Town and Ussher Town divisions of the Ga kingdom has endured the centuries, almost degenerated into civil conflict towards the end of the 19th century and led to numerous legal disputes over land and power well into the 20th century. From 1742 it was the powerful Asante kingdom, with its capital in Ghana's second city Kumasi, that occupied Accra. This led to the Asante wars that lasted for several decades and culminated in the defeat of the Asante and liberation of Accra in 1826 by an alliance of united Gas, several coastal clans and a small regiment of European troops (Odotei, 2013; Nuno-Amarteifio, 2015).

The political and military unrest of the 18th and 19th century threw Accra into a period of insecurity and lawlessness, under which slave trade, banditry and crime flourished, which had significant repercussions on the fabric of the city. Houses during this period were built in close proximity, separated by a network of narrow alleys, intended to confuse and discourage potential rovers. Without organised waste collection or sanitation, the narrow streets became polluted with solid and liquid waste. The native areas became plagued by disease and frequent fires, as the low hanging thatch roofs were extremely vulnerable to fires. In the early 19th century the colonial government used these adverse conditions to strengthen their rule in Accra, but only in the early 20th century were planning rules implemented to 'clean up' the streets of Accra, prescribing 'modern' building materials and adopting master plans for the development of the city centre (Nuno-Amarteifio, 2015).

Radical changes in the social, economic and political climate in 19th century Europe, through trade and colonial influence, had a profound impact on the region of West Africa. The incidence

of numerous slave revolts, and especially their brutal suppression, slowly started to change the public opinion on slavery. The French Revolution in 1789, introduced notions of equality and liberty to the people. Meanwhile the industrial revolution presented the mechanisation of labour in large factories, which decreased the demand for unpaid labour. Furthermore, the evolution of maritime travel from sail vessels to steam powered boats transformed intercontinental trade, driving the early moments of globalisation and boosting the European economies. The abolitionist movements found in these altered conditions the necessary stimulus to effectively urge governments to end slavery in the first decades of the 19th century. However, slave trade was so deeply engrained into the region's economy that both African and European merchants consistently neglected these regulations for more than 50 years, until 1874 when slaves were finally liberated.

British occupation (1877-1957): Gold Coast

In 1877 the British annexed the area of present-day territory of Ghana as a colony to its empire and renamed it Gold Coast. When slavery was finally abolished in the 19th century, the economy, which was until that point heavily based on slave trade, needed to adapt. Trade shifted towards agricultural products, primarily palm oil, rubber, and later also cocoa and coffee (Nuno-Amarteifio, 2015). Because Accra is situated close to the fertile Eastern and Volta Region, where most of these crops were elevated, it naturally became the main centre for the export of these profitable goods. The increase in trade generated a demand for unskilled labour around the port, and warehouses of Accra, a demand which was at first met with migrants from neighbouring countries, and later from the Northern regions of Ghana. Many prominent merchant families of Ga Mashie adapted well and became important traders in these goods. This thoroughly transformed the coastal neighbourhoods of Accra, who had until then been important centres for slavery (Nuno-Amarteifio, 2015).

While the arid Northern regions were exploited for cheap labour, the benefits of this trade stayed mostly in the South, leaving the Northern more arid regions relatively underdeveloped (Agyei-Mensah and Owusu, 2010). This economic imbalance was further exacerbated by economic policies that adversely affected the production of food crops, implemented first by colonial administrations, but which lasted well into independence until they were finally reversed in the early 1980s (Herbst, 1993; Arn, 1996). Around the turn of the 20th century the combination of a relatively impoverished rural North, an increased labour demand and higher wages in the

Southern cities, generated the first major wave of rural-urban migration from the largely agricultural Northern regions to the more urbanized South, with Accra exercising the strongest attraction (Agyei-Mensah and Owusu, 2010). The formal job market, however, proved grossly inadequate to absorb the vast amounts of migrants looking for employment in the cities. The bulk of migrants instead found refuge in the informal economy of petty production and trade that supported the consumption of the expanding work force. Arn (1996) observes that ironically Ghana's initial move towards capitalism produced a non-capitalist informal sphere.

Colonial planning in Accra

In 1877 the British also relocated the capital of the Gold Coast colony from Cape Coast to Accra. This stimulated commercial activities and kindled the modern expansion of the city. Under the impetus of modernised transportation, industry and trade, fuelled by European demand, Accra quickly grew to an important trade hub on the coast. Its growth dramatically increased after World War I in the 1920s, and had another spike after the Second World War, when troops from the British empire decided to stay in the city, often accompanied by their extended families (Brand, 1972).

The methods and implementation of colonial planning differed on important aspects between colonising powers and colonised regions, but their central objectives were consistent, namely to exert control over local populations and extract resources and profitable goods (Cooper, 1983). Urban growth was generally perceived as an undesirable side effect of labour and the production process and treated as such in planning efforts. This way colonial urban development schemes in Africa were ultimately designed to exploit the colony and their subjects (Mabogunje, 1990). However, colonial occupation in West African countries followed slightly different methods from other major regions in the world. Settling in a sizeable European population was impractical, so in order to manage labour and resources, colonial administrations implemented an even more explicit and rigorous form of 'architecture of control' (Mabogunje, 1990).

The colonial project in Ghana was therefore mainly aimed at the erection of effective government to exert control and at the construction and operation of modern means of transport to facilitate extraction. Colonial influence on the social and physical space is most evident in the landscapes of colonial capitals, such as Accra. In general, colonial cities were modelled after cities from the home country, with little regard for the particular context. The colonial city was generally segmented in three parts, one area was designated for the indigenous population, another area

was designed for a small European population of settlers – often physically separated from the rest of the city – and then sometimes there was a third area, a ‘stranger’ area where immigrants from other colonies were settled (King, 1976).

In the final decade of the 19th century the area of Victoriaborg was planned and constructed by the British, as an exclusive neighbourhood to house British citizens. Spatially segregated from the surrounding African residential areas by a green boundary, with its luxurious homes and amenities, including tennis courts, a golf course, and a Western hospital, (all of which were out-of-bounds for the native population) Victoriaborg was reportedly ‘like a piece of England grafted into the townscape of Accra’ (George, 1898, pp. 199–200 quoted in Grant, 2009). When most of the white population moved out of Accra after independence, the residents were replaced by a new African elite. These areas have retained their status, and are to date much greener and open, better serviced and maintained than most other areas in Accra. In contrast, the native and stranger settlements were largely neglected by urban development schemes, deprived of services and infrastructure, and marked by poor living standards. This social and spatial fragmentation still characterises modern day Accra (Pellow, 1991).

It is therefore accepted that a large degree of issues in urban development can be sourced to the way Europeans isolated themselves from the traditional and migrant settlements in the city centre. In South Africa, the rigorous implementation of comparable exclusionary practices reached a sober climax with the institutionalisation of apartheid (Mabogunje, 1990). The urban landscape of Accra today is still marked by these segregating principles of colonial planning.

Indirect rule and indigenous authority

The continued existence of this spatial and demographic segregation is important because it is partly rooted in, but simultaneously reproduces the unequal power relations between traditional, ‘modern’ political and migrant leadership. In spite of Accra’s many modern features, traditional authorities play an important role in the urban governance, particularly concerning the urban growth and land management of the city. The British governed their African colonies by indirect rule (for a comprehensive discussion of indirect rule and its implementation by French and British colonial administrations in West Africa see Mamdani, 1999; Firmin-sellers, 2000), leaning on local leadership to mobilise labour and collect taxes, leaving the indigenous power structures, including conflicting claims between leaders and tribes, in place relatively intact. This has had a profound impact on the current power distribution between formal political institutions

and traditional institutions in the capital. The British administration relied heavily on existing customary institutions and relegated most power to the paramount chiefs. To this end they clearly defined, but also expanded the judicial and legislative responsibilities of traditional states and institutions. However, they did so without providing adequate incentives to reward productivity – chiefs were considered civil servants, they only received a small salary and were not allowed to retain any of the collected taxes or revenues – nor effective measures to sanction for deviant behaviour, rendering the institutions often ineffective. These practices provided both opportunity and motivation to simultaneously undermine the British authority and the traditional institutions (Firmin-sellers, 2000).

An attempt was made to incorporate traditional authorities into the local political administration of Accra. The Ga Native Authority (GNA) was erected, a native council constituted by the Ga divisional chiefs and presided by the Ga Mantse (the paramount chief) that was recognised by, yet still subordinate to, the colonial authorities. The GNA received some legal responsibility over the Accra Municipal Area and was allowed to set up courts to uphold traditional law. However, the GNA's influence on the governing of Accra was limited, its function largely symbolic, as it was seen by the colonial administration as conservative and impeding progress (Acquah, 1972). In 1957, shortly after independence the GNA was removed entirely from the local government, its function officially restricted to ceremonial activities, but most local conflicts and issues continued to be settled outside of official courts by the chiefs (Vigah, 1977).

Ghana's independence movement was born, not out of revolutionary anti-colonial struggle, but rather out of the idea of pan Africanism, an ideology that attempted to erase all difference with a unifying nationalism and ethnic pride. However, because the chiefs still represented the traditional localised rule, it left them at odds with the new centralised governing structures. Ghana's attempts to incorporate both traditional and modern power structures into government, left an uneasy friction between the two. This led to a multitude of racial and ethnic hierarchies that were institutionalised during colonial rule, but persisted to some extent after independence (for a postcolonial reading of this issue see Pierre, 2013).

An important consequence of the British indirect way of ruling is the preservation of many customary rules and regulations, crucially the customary land laws. The origins of Gold Coast customary law were in traditional landownership, which set an intimate connection between land ownership and chieftaincy (Pellow, 1991). Large tracts of land in the Accra area are currently still

owned by powerful Ga and La traditional councils, designated by Ghana law as either family or stool land. In the case of family land, rights are held by family heads or elders on behalf of a royal family, in the case of stool lands, rights are held by traditional chiefs on behalf of a community, in the South of Ghana symbolically represented by a stool. The chief or warden of this stool is thus a “trustee holding the land for and on behalf of the community, tribe, or family” (Ollennu, 1962, p. 6 in Pellow, 1991). This distinction is important because stool land is recognised by the government in the 1992 constitution (Government of Ghana, 1992) and the duties and liberties of the chief – including the distribution of land profits and revenue – towards the welfare of his community are relatively well defined and regulated by the state.

The duties of family elders concerning their land and community remain comparatively unspecified, and the 1992 constitution implicitly likened family land to private property. This meant that compared to chiefs, family heads or elders are far less restrained by regulations and enjoy more autonomy in how they choose to allocate or distribute their land and revenue from the land. Data on customary land is not easily accessible and deciding exactly how much land is communally owned in Accra is therefore difficult (Andrews, 2017). The vast majority of customary land in the Greater Accra Region is classified as family land, and that stool land only covers a proportionally small area. The continued importance of land ownership in the acquisition of status and power, combined with ambiguous legal definitions and inadequate systems of registration in place, continue to cause many conflicting claims over land, chieftaincy and political power in contemporary Accra (Andrews, 2017).

3.1.3 Independence, the struggle for democracy and economic growth

After independence, most Sub-Saharan African countries have been going through consecutive economic and political crises, and Ghana unfortunately is no exception. Even more, Ghana is considered a fine example of how political misconduct and policies can erode the economy and social security of a nation. It has moved from Colonialism more prosperous, with a relatively robust network of infrastructure, positive balance of foreign exchange, and an efficient public sector when compared to many other African countries upon independence (Herbst, 1993). However, successive governments in the decades after independence adopted policies that effectively bankrupted the Ghanaian economy, culminating in the economic crisis of the early 1980s.

Ghana's economy started spiralling downwards almost immediately after independence in 1957. In the euphoria of the early years of independence, with considerable colonial resources still at

their disposal, Ghana's first government under Nkrumah set in motion an unsustainable pattern of excessive spending that would mark the financial mismanagement of the coming decades. The earliest signs of real trouble arose in 1961, when the government increased its control on the economy in response to a trade deficit, and used it to implement a series of measures that further discouraged foreign investment and trade (Herbst, 1993). The government expansion fitted in Nkrumah's vision for Ghana's transition to socialism. However, the approach enjoyed a broad appeal on the continent, as many leaders saw in it ample opportunity to extend their political power and personal fortune (Bretton, 1967).

It is necessary to see this in the economic context and mood of the 1950s and 1960s, when there was more general agreement that the state was a competent regulator of the economy, and many governments worldwide reinforced their control on the economy (Herbst, 1993). The Nkrumah government rolled out a 7-year plan in 1964 to establish control over the main branches of the economy, most importantly the public utilities, natural resources, heavy industry, and commodity industry (Office of the Planning Commission, 1964). The formation of vast amounts of state-owned enterprises (SOEs), most of which were severely unproductive, funded either with loans or by printing additional money (Kofi and Hansen, 1983), rapidly led to steep inflation and the collapse of confidence in the Ghanaian government of the public, international banks and organisations (Herbst, 1993).

By 1965 the government initiated talks with the IMF and the WB to appeal to funding for reform programmes, but before any reforms could be made, the government was toppled by the National Liberation Council (NLC) in the first of a series of military coups. The NLC struck a deal with the IMF and in return for resources implemented certain conditional economic policies, which managed to temporarily stabilise the economy, but made no attempts to resolve any of the structural economic problems. A pattern emerges over the next decades, involving a sequence of economic crises, a revolving succession of military and civil governments that strike similar deals with the IMF and WB, but despite warnings and pledges, the economic policies continue to serve political goals (Price, 1984), and the state's negative influence on the economy is never fundamentally altered (for a more detailed discussion see for instance Herbst, 1993). Corruption and mismanagement of the economy spiralled out of control, further corroding the economy and effectively bankrupting Ghana by the late 1970s (Rothchild, 1980; Huq, 1989).

The long era of Rawlings (1979-2000)

This situation sparked a particularly violent coup in June 1979 led by the controversial figure Flight Lieutenant Jerry John Rawlings. Enraged by the impunity of those responsible for the disastrous state of the country, he ordered a wave of executions among military and judicial top-ranking officials, an act unprecedented in Ghana which had largely been spared the political violence that plagued many of its neighbours (Herbst, 1993). Additionally, he cracked down heavily on the markets and informal sector, which he largely blamed for the corruption and economic decline. Rawlings – who maintained that he had no ambition to rule – supported new presidential elections, which were held swiftly and a civilian government under president Hilla Limann was installed, but there was little the new government could do to save the country. In the following two years inflation soared and credit plummeted, international organisations and banks refused any more loans and the lack of resources largely halted any activities of vital public services.

In December 1981 Rawlings staged a second coup, upended the constitution and banned political parties, declaring that he intended “nothing less than a revolution - something that will transform the social and economic order of this country” (Rawlings, 1981). Curiously, at first the military government he installed, the Provisional National Defence Council (PNDC), did not significantly alter the political course from that of its predecessors, albeit significantly more hard-handed in its implementation, characterised by persistent human rights violations, political abductions and assassinations (Herbst, 1993). Between 1981 and 1982 an estimated two million Ghanaians fled from the country, many of them to Nigeria. In 1983, at the height of the crisis, with the economy and civil society at the brink of collapse, Nigeria forced almost one million Ghanaians out of the country for working illegitimately, further destabilising the country (Herbst, 1993; Kessler Associates, 2019).

To avert imminent disaster, in April 1983 the PNDC completely reversed its course, introducing for the first time since independence a set of policies and practices that profoundly changed the relationship between the state and the economy, and revoking the urban policy bias in the process. However, in order to liberalise the economy and let market mechanisms regulate and boost its growth, currency was devalued substantially, which raised prices on basic products and further increased the pressure on a population under severe strain. The decision was ill-received by most of the public and distanced Rawlings’ from much of his political support, resulting in student and union demonstrations and several failed coup attempts. Most of his political allies were set against economic liberalisation and particularly hostile towards further involvement of

“imperialist” financial organisations such as the IMF and the WB (Jeffries, 1989).

Rawlings responded to this opposition with his usual tactics of repression and intimidation, but also by propagating a rhetoric of socialist and radical democratic revolution. At the time, the WB was desperate for a success story of economic reform in Africa, found a promising candidate in Ghana and was eager to inject substantial resources into the Ghanaian economy, solidifying the PNDC’s political support (Herbst, 1993; Adedeji, 2001). In return for resources, the IMF and WB demanded strict economic policies, and the dismantling of the state, which became known under the term Structural Adjustment Programmes (SAP). Despite Rawlings’ initial reluctance to govern and the emphasis of his discourse on increased public participation in local and national politics, the reforms were implemented very much under his authoritarian rule, public participation was limited to a small amount of referendums and no democratic elections were held for a decade until 1992 (Herbst, 1993).

The SAPs under the Rawlings regime shifted economic emphasis to agricultural (mostly cocoa and coffee) and industrial production, which benefited mostly landowners and commercial farmers, but also local and international capitalist corporations involved in the export of raw materials and agricultural produce (Killick, 1993; Sawyer, 1998). The SAPs did have a positive impact on the macro-economic level, and to some extent Ghana was on track to slowly climb out of a long deep recession. However, most critics argue that very little of this economic growth trickled down to the poor populations, either rural or urban. Additionally, the removal of subsidies for social services, crucially in the education and health sectors, significantly increased costs for the urban population, while the drastic decrease in government size generated enormous amounts of urban unemployment. By 1980 an estimated 50 percent of formal employment was either directly for the government or through SOEs (Herbst, 1993). The PNDC struggled to build a dependable constituency, as the main beneficiaries of their economic policies were rural cocoa farmers, and foreign or expatriate business owners, who proved difficult to mobilise for political support. They appealed to the clergy and to local chiefs, seen as influential agents of public opinion, to arouse support and reverse a negative image of the government in the rural populations, a strategy that was successful in urban areas as well (Adedeji, 2001).

The geographic distribution of the positive and negative effects of policies, taxation and restructuring has been uneven over time. In a country that is as ethnically diverse as Ghana – as many West African nations are, a legacy of the arbitrariness of the borders drawn by European

colonial powers when the continent was dissected and distributed between them – economic and political issues have often become entwined with, and complicated by geographic and ethnic difference (Jeffries and Thomas, 1993). Mikell (1989) argues that, by reaching out to various ethnic communities, the regime achieved the broad support necessary for political control without significant ethnic or geographic discrimination or preference that plagued previous governments.

Towards the end of the 1980s the awareness slowly emerged that social costs of structural adjustment had disproportionately fallen on the poor, which produced widespread discontent and critique among urban Ghanaians and African leaders. The IMF and WB feared that political instability would jeopardise the SAPs further implementation in Ghana, and by extension their future on the African continent where they were becoming increasingly unpopular. The donors urged the PNDC to increase spending on social services and infrastructures that cater to the poor, mainly in order to gain political support for the sustained implementation of reform policies (Adedeyi, 2001).

In the early 1990s donor organisations' projects shifted focus from economic liberalisation to include political reform and democratisation. The international community mounted pressure on the government to transition towards a multi-party democratic system, motivated at least partly by evidence of progress after reforming its institutions (Jeong, 1995). A new constitution was established in 1992 that reinstated multi-party elections, upon which general elections were held, which Rawlings' newly formed National Democratic Congress (NDC) won by a significant margin (Jeong, 1995). The political process evolved into its current multi-party democratic system, in which the NDC and the New Patriotic Party (NPP) dominate the political landscape. Ghana seemed to have effectively transitioned from a country plagued by successive military coups and repressive regimes, to a stable democracy characterised by relatively uncontentious elections and peaceful transfer of power ever since. In 1996 the NDC under Rawlings became the first civilian government in Ghanaian history to complete a full term, and was even reconfirmed for a second one (Onadipe, 1997). In Chapter 5 (p. 208) the current and past administration and planning structures are discussed in more detail.

3.1.4 Strangers in Accra

The creation of zongo areas

African migrants that settle into urban centres of other regions are often referred to by local

residents – and sometimes the migrants themselves – as strangers. Such strangers have been part of West African settlements for centuries, and formed permanent communities in many societies, as there was continuous trade and migration between different regions and kingdoms of this sub-region (Pellow, 1991). Often migrants were recognised as agents of trade and progress and therefore seen and treated as valuable assets to host societies, but sometimes they were regarded and treated with suspicion (Skinner, 1963).

Strangers would often live in separate wards – generally referred to as zongos, a Hausa word for stranger area – governed by their own chiefs, where they would obtain certain privileges and sometimes political rights from local authorities if they obeyed their rules, generally in exchange for taxes. This way they remained closely tied to the local community, because for most of their rights – crucially those pertaining to property and land – and livelihoods they were dependent on the local authorities and population. This compelled migrants to understand and adapt to the culture and customs of the local population, in order to negotiate and participate in livelihood activities and exchanges. Also, in the pre-colonial era, migrants fulfilled important roles of trade in many societies, often the only people who spoke foreign languages or had knowledge of distant places, they were the likely connection to other kingdoms, acting often as interpreters and mediators for travellers and merchants. They were responsible for introducing novel cultural forms and practices from other African and non-African areas, one introduction of significant consequence was that of Islam. Until mid-19th century, the bulk of migrants arriving in Accra would settle in one of the seven Ga towns that composed the city at that time. Through marriage they would gradually integrate into the Ga population (Pellow, 1991).

Contrary to earlier cases, these new migrants tended not to adjust to local customs and values, but rather maintained their own cultural identities. Many of these migrants settled close together on the Northern borders of Ussher Town, what is still called Zongo Lane. The Muslim population in this part of Accra increased rapidly, sustained by an influx of Nigerian troops and an increasing rural-urban migration, largely from the Northern and predominantly Muslim regions. By the first decades of the 20th century central Accra was so densely populated that it could no longer absorb migration (Arn, 1996).

However, this course of migration altered significantly under influence of colonialism, and later processes of nation building after independence. After the arrival of Europeans and the establishment of colonial governments, the status of strangers and – perhaps more significantly –

the relationships between indigenous and migrant leadership changed drastically. Vast amounts of migrants from other colonies, among them many Hausa soldiers from Northern Nigeria, were introduced under protection of the British. This meant they derived most rights from them, and relations with local leadership became secondary. Their numbers further increased as Europeans built new urban centres and expanded agriculture and mining activities in the South which required volumes of affordable labour. These new migrants no longer fulfilled necessary trade functions, but rather competed actively with the local population for employment and for benefits from the Europeans (Skinner, 1963). This way they were less dependent on the local authorities and population, and therefore developed little sense of loyalty or responsibility towards the local populace. Contrary to earlier migrants, they tended not to adjust to local customs and values, but rather maintained their own cultural identities, and many of them continued to see themselves as strangers and created relatively self-centred communities (Skinner, 1963). Many settled close together on the Northern borders of Ussher Town, an area still called Zongo Lane. The Muslim population in this part of Accra increased rapidly, sustained by an influx of Nigerian troops and an increasing rural-urban migration, largely from the Northern and predominantly Muslim regions. By the first decades of the 20th century central Accra was so densely populated that it could no longer absorb migration (Arn, 1996).

By the end of the 19th century Europeans had dissected the African continent and divided it into colonies delimited by arbitrary boundaries that took little to no account of the distributions of native populations. In Ghana the long and tumultuous process towards independence further deteriorated the relations between strangers and indigenous people. Throughout the colonial period, most collectives – migrants or natives alike – in this region identified themselves primarily in terms of kinship or tribal groups, certainly not as citizens of these newly formed nations. It was only after migrants settled into designated areas of towns and cities with other migrants that their loyalties started to extend beyond their traditional kinship or tribe. Islam played a crucial role in the unification of this heterogeneous group of people. Migrants of various origins were then clustered together by natives under the umbrella of ‘strangers’, and often shared the negative stigma this process typically entails. It was against this general ‘stranger’ that many natives developed new collective identities, largely because after independence the new government of Ghana exploited its polarising effects for their nation-making efforts to manufacture and legitimise a new national identity (discussed in more detail in section X). The riots and unrest that followed were used to further stigmatise the strangers, and to justify the removal of many ‘non-Ghanaians’

by the government (Skinner, 1963).

These processes generated tension, both internally between the different Muslim migrants, and externally between the migrants and the indigenous Ga, signalling an urgent need for tribal representation beyond that of the Ga. This situation was turned to the advantage of the British, following common colonial practice to generate and reinforce subdivisions among local populations in order to maintain power (Pellow, 1991). The colonial government appointed headmen among the migrant communities to fulfil roles equivalent to the chiefs in their hometowns: provide leadership, protection and to settle disputes among the community. However, the migrant chiefs were never granted any real authority, their jurisdiction was restricted to the people within their own community, and they were refused to hold courts or collect taxes from their subjects (Acquah, 1972). This way the British made certain that relations with the British were more important than those with the Ga chiefs (Pellow, 1991). The migrants could also not truly possess land, but were allowed to divide, redistribute and rule the land that was administered to them by the Ga stools. They were allowed to organise their own internal hierarchies within the community, but because the authority of their chiefs was restricted and not attached to the possession land, their power was always subject to both colonial and indigenous authorities (Works, 1976). In Accra, contrary to the Northern parts of Nigeria, the British would generally back the Ga chiefs' authority rather than the newer Muslim chiefs (Hiskett, 1984).

In 1909 the headmen of different ethnic groups assembled, to discuss the establishment of a new zongo community with their own territory. In order to become a migrant chief, contrary to Ga custom, it was not necessary to be descendent from or affiliated with a royal family, as long as they were approved by the Ga divisional chief (Acquah, 1972). The community nominated Malam Baako, a well-respected Hausa elder and Muslim scholar from central Accra, as their leader (Baako, 2016). He received a mandate by the British to rule as their chief, and the Baako royal family was granted custodial rights to a plot of land just North West of the Korle Lagoon by the Ga stool of James Town, to settle the zongo community. They named it Sabon Zongo, Hausa for new zongo, and its land was divided along a rectilinear grid and distributed among the members of the community, and it remains the only zongo area in Accra that follows a proper site plan. Malam Baako allegedly payed a considerable tribute to the Ga stool, and in return received a relatively large degree of autonomy (Baako, 2016).

Sabon Zongo became the primary recipient for long distance migrants, and continued to be until

the emergence of squatter neighbourhoods after World War II (Brand, 1972). The area is currently inhabited by many different ethnic groups of various nationalities, many represented by their own chiefs, and as such demonstrates a wealth of languages, customs, and traditions, yet the majority of people are united under the Muslim religion. Furthermore, the National Mosque, the mosque where the country's head Imam preaches, was built on the doorstep of Sabon Zongo. Historically therefore, Sabon Zongo is considered the heart of Accra's Muslim community. In the 1960s the Accra Municipal council decided to change the name of 'Sabon Zongo' to 'Lartebiokorshie', but this was met with fierce resistance from the community and Sabon Zongo retained its name (Baako, 2016).

3.1.5 The research areas

As articulated earlier, a characteristic feature of Accra's contemporary urban form is the relatively intact social segregation that resulted from decades of divisive colonial planning. Certainly, Accra has changed drastically in the decades after independence. It has become more heterogeneous, and continues to do so, but it is argued that to an extent the social and cultural characteristics and identities of some areas, notably the oldest neighbourhoods originally designated for 'indigenous' residents and those for African migrants, have remained relatively distinct. Some of the original Ga villages, areas that were later reinforced by Colonial planning institutions to house indigenous Ga people, such as Ga Mashie still mainly house Ga people, and the Ga culture remains dominant. Similarly, in many of the 'migrant' areas designated during Colonial rule as 'stranger' settlements to house African migrants from other British colonies, such as Sabon Zongo, Maamobi or Nima, the dominant culture is dictated by Northern migrants, most prominently the Hausa people from Northern Nigeria, and - intimately tied to their customs - the religion of Islam.

The selection of these two very distinct areas for this research serves not so much to prove the continued segregation apparent in Accra's spatial form, or even to explore in detail the distinctiveness of their cultures and peoples. Rather, their distinctiveness serves to explore the wide variety of urban form and social composition in urban Accra. They are two examples situated as far as possible on the spatial and social continuum of Accra, against which to compare youth's behaviours and perceptions in the public realm. It is argued that the comparison of place experience and youth culture within these very dissimilar areas provides an important entry point and opportunity to investigate how place affects the experience of belonging and exclusion among young people. Two case study areas are proposed; the neighbourhood of Ga Mashie as



Figure 7: A map of the Ga Mashie research area (source: author).



Figure 8: A map of the Ga Mashie research area (source: author).

a case for a primarily indigenous area, and Sabon Zongo as a migrant study area.

Research area A: Ga Mashie

Ga Mashie, the capital of the Ga kingdom, houses 42 530 people on 1,08 square kilometer of surface area, and is sometimes divided in two areas, James Town and Ussher Town (see a map of the research area in Figure 7). James Town, or British Accra, makes up the largest share of its surface, but has the lowest density with an average of 212,5 persons living on one hectare. The much denser Ussher Town, often referred to as Dutch Accra, has a significantly larger population living on about half the surface area, averaging a density of 795,8 residents per hectare, one of the highest residential densities in Accra. The main religious affiliation here is Christianity with 77,8 per cent of the population subscribe to some form of this belief, the largest share are followers of the various charismatic churches (Ghana Statistical Services, 2010). Despite the Ga people being indigenous to Accra, with 29 per cent of the population in 2000, they are a minority in their own city. It is the Akan people, originally from central and south Ghana, who are the most populous ethnicity in Accra, forming 42 per cent of its population in 2000 (Agyei-Mensah and Owusu, 2010). However, in James Town the Ga residents with 56,5 per cent in 2000 still formed a majority (Agyei-Mensah and Owusu, 2010). The houses in James Town are mostly family houses, typical South Ghanaian walled compounds, passed down through generations, as opposed to rented houses which are much more common in the rest of Accra (Agyei-Mensah and Owusu, 2010). The lack of urban development plans for Ga Mashie has allowed this part of town to deteriorate and socially downgrade (Melara Arguello et al., 2013). It now demonstrates insufficient sanitation, dilapidated infrastructures, rampant over-crowding, and rundown housing. These factors, the lack of space in particular, have likely contributed to halt the influx of migrants into the area (Agyei-Mensah and Owusu, 2010).

Research area B: Sabon Zongo

Sabon Zongo now consists of a small area just to the North-West of Ring Road which housed a population of 27,550 averaging in density of 666 residents per hectare in 2010 (see a map of the research area in Figure 8) (Ghana Statistical Services, 2010). The most common religious affiliation is Islam, with a percentage of 56.6 of its residents ascribing to the Muslim religion, significantly higher than the Accra average of 11.8 per cent (Ghana Statistical Services, 2010). The term zongo now reflects a certain cultural identity, often including the principal use of Hausa language and their comparatively sober dress, the practice of the Islamic religion and

education, and often a certain aversion or withdrawal from Western culture. The zongo culture is visually embedded into the neighbourhood of Sabon Zongo, through its numerous mosques and Koranic schools, but also sonically, when the morning and evening prayers are announced through speakers on the mosques. Because most of the migrants have roots in rural regions, people describe the area as much more rural in character than most neighbourhoods of Accra. This is reflected in cattle being reared inside of the urban fabric and other domestic animals such as goats and sheep roaming freely around in the streets of Sabon Zongo. The spaces of Sabon Zongo feel distinctly different from the surrounding areas, its streets are narrow, and little disturbed by automated traffic. Children and animals roam free through the streets. The open spaces are small and few, but they are 'fluid, flexible and multifunctional' and the activities conform to the availability of space (Pellow, 2001, p. 71).

3.1.6 Research population: Youth

Demography and the position of youth

Young people are a very visible feature of Accra's urban landscape, often scattered in small groups, sitting idle or hanging out in the city's open spaces (as observed by for instance Langevang, 2008a). Like many other cities in the Global South, and Sub Saharan Africa in particular, Accra experiences an overrepresentation of young people in its demographic composition, referred to often as a 'youth bulge'. This particular demographic profile is sometimes connected to potential economic growth when it is accompanied by enough opportunities and supportive socio-economic conditions (Arnot and Swartz, 2012), but it is more regularly mentioned in relation to elevated potential for civic conflict and societal instability, especially in simultaneous occurrence with deprivation and social exclusion (Beehner, 2007; Urdal, 2011). Presently young people are the biggest demographic group among the African population (Diouf, 2003b). In Accra in 2000 roughly 56% of residents was under the age of 25 (Accra Metropolitan Assembly, 2000). As their share in Africa is gradually increasing, in the Global North reduced fertility rates have produced the reverse condition, an increasingly aging population. A sequence of interrelated economic, political and social tragedies has resulted in the marginalisation of the vast majority of young Africans, often being excluded from spaces of politics, labour, education and leisure (Diouf, 2003b).

A troubled story

The story of young Africans must be understood in relation to a general shift of the African identity since independence, the intensification of a series of economic crises, subsequent restructuring that produced mass-unemployment and the troubled course of democratisation around the end of the 1980s. Diouf (2003b, p. 2) speaks of the 'triple crisis' that enveloped Africa 'involving the family, the nation and the state' that struck the youth particularly hard. In the domestic sphere, gender roles and responsibilities within the household shifted dramatically, as men were no longer able to support their families and their authority deteriorated. During the post-independence optimism and the nation-building exercises between the 1950s and 1970s, young people were the main focus of strategies of economic development and national emancipation. Youth symbolised the hope of Africa because they represented 'promises of restored identity, both national and pan-African, as opposed to colonial alienation and postcolonial forms of domination and subordination' (Diouf, 2003b, p. 4). However, the nationalist project explicitly maintained traditional African distinctions – including intrinsic power relations – between youths and adults, young people's prominent position was only conceivable under the guidance and control of adults. When this project failed, and the public and domestic realms were suddenly flooded by dissatisfied youth, their positive status quickly deteriorated. National policies that prioritised youth shifted and started a long decline of public institutions for education and health provision. Instead of symbolising a better future for Africa – agents of modernity and progress – youth suddenly became synonymous with vice and immoral behaviour, reflected in displays of unrestrained sexuality, violence and criminality (Diouf, 2003).

Presently, young people carry the blame for many of society's problems; they are seen by elders as lazy and unproductive, their purposeless, drifting and playful presence in public space often perceived as hostile or dangerous. Young people, by contrast, perceive the situation quite different. They blame the previous generations for high unemployment – especially among young men – crumbling infrastructures and an economy in crisis. According to the youth, it is their parents and grandparents that have failed to provide them with a viable living environment. These oppositions create strong tensions, which are generally acted out in the public realm. Simultaneously, the availability of dedicated public open spaces in Accra is grossly inadequate and their distribution throughout the city highly unequal. Furthermore, the rare open spaces are often designed, constructed and managed in such a way that they discourage free use by the public, in order to protect them from undesirable users such as street hawkers, homeless people



Figure 9: A few young people playing football and hanging out at a deserted building (source: author)

and loitering youth that might otherwise spoil the spaces with their presence. In most residential neighbourhoods, public space is generally limited to local expansions or extensions of the street, unused open lands, or inner courtyards often enveloped by the urban fabric.

Youth in public space

In response, youth often produce new forms of social space that reflect and reproduce their difference, by claiming, occupying and appropriating spaces vacated by the establishment, liminal places on the fringes of society and of dominant cultures, often beyond the reach of social control and surveillance (see for example Figure 9) (Diouf, 2003b; De Boeck and Honwana, 2005; Langevang, 2008a). Diouf (2003b) states that these spaces – understood here as a geography of the street, a metaphor for spaces outside conventional categories of public space such as squares, parks, gardens or plazas (Matthews, Limb and Taylor, 2000) – fundamentally challenge local customs, normative practices and public judgement, and instead act as a platform for creative, spiritual and sometimes violent expressions of a longing for identity, belonging and recognition. Accomplishment, social status and fortune are conceived here outside of conventions or universally accepted values, often in conditions of violence or illegality. In the aftermath of successive political, social and economic crises these spaces offer African youth a stake in a globalised and mediated future that society has deprived them of. As spaces of resistance they might offer youth a sense of agency: the street here provides a stage on which to perform their struggles against the establishment (Giroux, 1994). It therefore remains a vital social space for young people to express, negotiate and affirm their identities and define their sense of belonging, both in cities of the Global North (e.g. Matthews, Limb and Taylor, 2000) and those in the Global South (e.g. Gough and Franch, 2005; Winton, 2005). Access to public space, as a scarce resource central to the production of social and economic capital, and crucially, a sense of agency and belonging, becomes contentious, and young people are often targeted by a combination of covert and overt exclusionary mechanisms to deter them or block their access (Brown, 2013).

Representation

At once cause and consequence of their marginalisation, young people's views and opinions are largely unrepresented in, often even deliberately withheld from political decision making processes in many cities, even if their lives are equally affected and shaped by these processes (Freeman and Tranter, 2011). Skelton and Gough (2013) recognise that, similarly, despite youth's visibility in the public realm, urban research has for a long time largely ignored their presence.

Their absence from urban literature until the 1990s reflected and reproduced their marginalisation in the city. Since then, a range of authors (e.g., Malone and Hasluck, 1998; Massey, 1998; Vanderbeck and Dunkley, 2004; Langevang, 2008b, 2008a; Langevang and Gough, 2009a; Hopkins, 2010; Skelton and Gough, 2013) have contributed significantly towards bridging this gap and have struggled for the recognition of youth's agency and for their empowerment in both theory and practice. Yet young people in Africa are – perhaps more than anywhere else – situated at the intersection of local and global forces, suspended between the universal values of modernity and African traditional cultures. For this reason, young Africans continue to be at the frontline of change. This project is urgent and important precisely because their activities and behaviour in urban spaces often deviates from the culturally and socially accepted norms, and because they are crucial agents in the production and consumption of urban culture and identity (Skelton and Gough, 2013). Investigations into African youth in particular have been too scarce and a methodological discussion is long overdue (Langevang, 2007). As mentioned before, the thesis addresses these gaps with a discussion on justice claims of urban youth in Accra and reflections on the use of a methodology adjusted to this specific population.

3.2 Methodology and tools

As indicated earlier, the framework adopts different methodological tools to activate issues of justice in the different modes of the conceived, perceived and lived space. The way in which modes interconnect and overlap defines how information is exchanged between the tools, in terms of scale and subjects. The language of belonging is adopted here to focus the tools on issues of justice, triggering with it the politics of belonging and practices of exclusion/inclusion. The choice to emphasise young people's sense of belonging in the public realm serves on the one hand to address a critical gap in research and policy practice, but on the other, also to explicitly highlight and attend to their perceived and real lack of agency and voice in democratic processes. The lived mode is adopted as the main focus of this research and serves to orient the other modes, their tools serve to support, frame and contextualise investigation into the lived.

3.2.1 Lived space

To investigate the experiences of belonging in the young people's lived space – the main focus of this research – a combination of qualitative, participatory methods were designed that aim to capitalise on the critical voice of youth, capture their particular way of seeing and using the

urban realm, and are sensitive to their specific vulnerabilities. The adoption of participatory tools that maximise the involvement and agency of the subjects in the research process, is generally acknowledged as imperative when working with vulnerable or marginalised groups, and young people in particular (Driskell, 2002; African Union Commission, 2006; Langevang, 2007; Ministry of Youth and Sports Ghana, 2010; United Nations, 2010). The tools presented here have demonstrated value in a range of different contexts and subjects, and have a broad operational capability.

The analysis reveals overlap between the different perspectives, and produces insight into perspectives of perceived and conceived space, this way providing a point of entry into exploring and understanding the relations and causal links between these modes of space and the lived space. The methodological tools of informal conversation, auto-photography, and cognitive mapping are used to reveal aspects of place and belonging (Noland, 2006; Langevang, 2007; Anderson and Jones, 2009; Lombard, 2013). The participatory interpretation of the results as an integral part of both auto-photography and cognitive mapping, in the shape of a one-on-one interview is part of the analysis process that links. These are participatory and therefore particularly well adapted to investigate young people's perceptions of their environment (Driskell, 2002), their lived spaces, and therefore their experiences of exclusion and injustice (Lefebvre, 1991; Soja, 1996). Each of these methods are well documented and are easily tailored to focus on issues of place experience, mobility and identity, demonstrated in this section. These tools each highlight different aspects and perspectives, but also reveals overlap in different areas. Consequently, this fundamentally links lived, perceived and conceived space and reveal embedded relationships that together draw a more detailed picture and give a richer account than any separate perspective would of how the landscape produces and reproduces the social exclusion of young people.

Participant recruitment and selection criteria:

Young participants were recruited through members of the non-governmental organisation 'People's Dialogue on Human Settlements' (PD) – the local branch of the international network 'Slum/Shack Dwellers International' (SDI) – which functioned as a gatekeeper: the first and crucial connection between the researcher and the participants. The organisation has extensive and widespread expertise in mobilising grass-roots networks and savings groups in poor urban communities throughout Ghana, and have several active members within the communities of the selected research areas. They assigned me one knowledgeable and well-networked insider



Figure 10: Focus group discussion in Sabon Zongo (source: author)

from each neighbourhood, who simultaneously performed the tasks of interpreter, local guide and adviser during the research period.

Larger groups of young people (around 10-25 participants per session, two sessions were held in each research area) from the research areas were invited to sessions of focus group discussions through youth leaders, prominent young people of informal youth groups (see Figure 10). These focus group discussions were an important first step to break the ice, introduce the researcher and the research, test the water and identify important topics and issues, and finally to recruit individual participants to participate in the following research activities, auto-photography and cognitive mapping. To familiarise them with the research, the youth were asked several open questions about their views on issues concerning their everyday experiences and the spaces of their neighbourhood. During these group conversations the group dynamics were observed that might reveal aspects about the nature of the issues, and the internal power relations between the youth. When a discussion would become particularly animated, whether in agreement or in disagreement, this could mean that a particular issue is very topical. The opposite reaction, more careful and contained might indicate more controversial issues.

Ten participants were recruited in each research area, based on feasibility, time and budget. Every participant filled in a basic identification card that identified him or her as the individual with certain characteristics that served to organise the data. It simultaneously served to anonymise the individual by asking to provide a preferred pseudonym. There were three main selection criteria for participants:

The first is the participants' residential location and length of residence. The residential location should be within the boundaries of one of the two research areas, Ga Mashie or Sabon Zongo. Length of residence should be at least one year. Length of residence has been consistently linked in the literature to place involvement and attachment (Lewicka, 2011). This threshold guarantees a certain degree of familiarity and involvement with the social and physical environment of the neighbourhood.

A second selection criteria is based on their age. Participants should be over the age of 18, so they can admit to their own legal consent. Participants should also be below the age of 30, a somewhat arbitrary choice of age demarcating the end of youthfulness or start of adulthood, based on local cultural knowledge. Admittedly, this subjective limit can be influenced by other factors, including social status, marital status, parenthood, and other culturally defined aspects,



Figure 11: A local base, a social space where young people spend much time (source: author).

but generally people within this age category will be considered youthful.

A third selection criteria is based on gender. Gender should be equally represented among participants; therefore, five male and five female participants were selected from each research area. There were no additional distinctions made based on social status or profession.

Apart from their time, there were no costs for the participants, therefore no payments were offered as economic incentives could be seen to partly delegitimise the results. Snacks and drinks were provided during longer sessions, and participants were told to have the small digital cameras after the research activities were finished. It is hopefully seen as an opportunity for the participants to voice their struggles and desires, and share their worldviews with a local audience, local authorities and the academic community.

Informal conversation

Informal conversation and 'hanging out' as a research method is understood as spending unstructured time in the company of, or participating in the activities of, a relatively small group of young people (see one location where the author often spent time with local youth in Figure 11). During this research, informal conversation as a method was adopted perhaps not as deliberately or systematically as in some (anthropological) investigations, but rather used in some situations as a way to kill the time and to get to know the neighbourhood and participants a bit better, but this has in no way reduced its importance. As many will agree, in Ghana a significant portion of the day is often spent waiting for people to arrive, for people to start or finish a certain activity, or more often, a combination of these. Hanging out is also considered an important social activity for many young people (Driskell, 2002), accordingly many young people in Accra spend large amounts of time seemingly sitting idle in public space (Langevang, 2008a; van Riel, 2015). When actively working together with other people one has no choice but to adapt to this daily pace, and informal conversation, being seen often in the neighbourhood and regularly hanging out with the young community member proved a vital skill to establish trust and gather information.

The method in this sense consisted of the 'opportunistic' use of time spent with the youth, listening, joking and discussing, sometimes joining in a game of football or cards, and afterwards writing down some of the things that were deemed interesting or important. Generally, a notebook was kept near to quickly scribble down some words, but the details were written down afterwards, so as not to disturb the youth too much during the activities. This time was used to as a way to



Figure 12: The small digital camera that was used during the auto-photography exercise (source: author).



Figure 13: Overexposed photograph rendering it unusable (source: participant).

explore relevant themes to the youth, and explore their willingness to participate using certain methods and eagerness to discuss certain themes. It was also used to collect background knowledge of the area and the youth's perspectives on the uses and activities occurring in public space. An important advantage of this method is the simultaneous development of rapport with the youth, contributing to a sense of trust between the (in this case white) researcher and the young participants. This is crucial to establish a relationship in which meaningful communication and participation is possible and encouraged. This process of bonding has been demonstrated vital to gain insight into young people's use of space, especially into their meaningful 'secret' places, the 'liminal' spaces that often remain unseen and misunderstood by outsiders (Chawla, 2002; Driskell, 2002).

Auto-photography

Auto-photography is used to shed light on participants' perspectives on, and experience of, place and its relation to identity and belonging. The method has a long history in psychological inquiry into issues of individual identity (Worth, 1964; Ziller and Rorer, 1985; Ziller and Christina Camacho de Santoya, 1988) but has more recently been used to provide a glance into everyday place experiences of specific groups of people, for instance marginalised people such as homeless or urban poor, or children. In a prominent recent enquiry it has revealed great potential to investigate perceptions, place meaning and identity in a phenomenological research with similar objectives to the present one (Lombard, 2013, 2014). It is seen as especially appropriate for work with young people, as you engage them in an enjoyable and creative activity with a relatively low threshold to participate (Driskell, 2002).

The method involved providing the participants with a small inexpensive digital camera and asking them to take pictures of specific parts of their environment that hold meaning to them. The participants received printed instructions with the camera that visually explain how to operate the camera, along with instructions for the subject of the photographs. The participants were invited to use the provided camera or choose to use the camera on their smart-phones if preferred. Most participants ended up using their own devices, as the cameras provided performed very poorly under the local lighting-conditions (see Figure 12 for an example of the cameras provided, and Figure 13 for an example of an unusable photograph). They roughly followed the instructions to take photographs of their environment from the following card:



Figure 14: Participants during the cognitive mapping exercise (source: author).

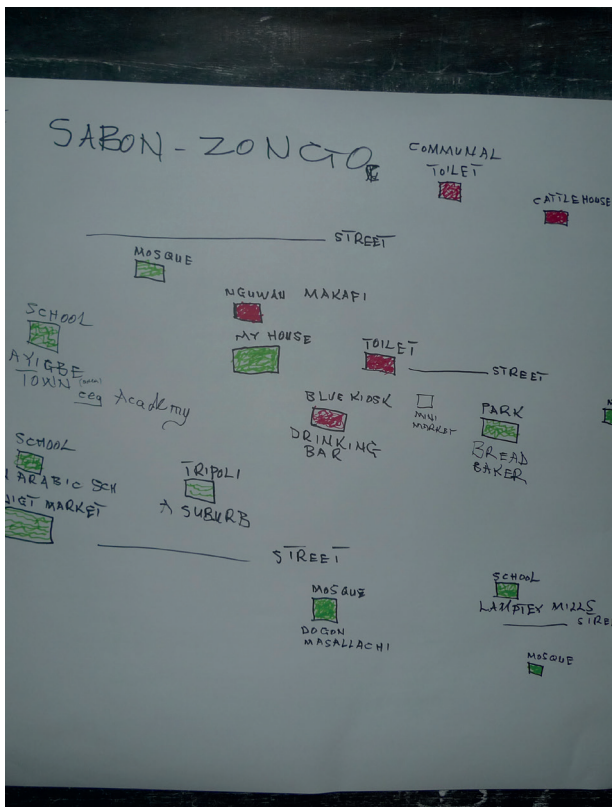


Figure 15: Two drawings in very different styles made by young participants (source: author).

Using the camera provided, could you please take at least two (2) pictures of each of the following (more are allowed):

3. outdoor place in your area that is special to you;
4. outdoor place where you feel at home or safe;
5. outdoor place where you feel out of place or unsafe, problem area;
6. positive aspects of living in the neighbourhood;
7. negative aspects of living in the neighbourhood;
8. part of the neighbourhood that makes you proud/ residents' achievements in the neighbourhood

This way the pictures were guided by the researcher, in terms of providing a focus, or an object to capture, but left the participants with a degree of freedom to interpret the object and apply it to their environment. They were then left alone with the camera for a week to complete the requested pictures at their own convenience and in privacy. During this week the participants were contacted once to monitor their progress and to resolve any possible material issues that occurred. After the exercise they were invited for a separate interview, during which the photographs served as a guide to stimulate an in-depth discussion. Afterwards the photographs are also kept as a valuable piece of data in its own that holds abundant visual information about the captured place. The participants here played a crucial role in the interpretation and analysis of the photographs, discussing their meanings and the motivations behind capturing each scene.

Cognitive mapping

Cognitive mapping has proven a successful method to capture how an individual or a small group understands its environment (Driskell, 2002). Letting the young participants draw their local area allows a different insight into their perceptions, their activities and use of space, their range of movement, and into the places that have prominence and importance to these young people (Driskell, 2002). Like auto-photography, the drawing of a map provides a starting point for a more detailed discussion about the local spaces and spatial practices, and visual information for participative interpretation. Letting the young participant draw a mental map is a good way to break the ice and the one-on-one interview can be incorporated into the same session. It is also a more creative and enjoyable exercise compared to some more conventional qualitative methods, more suited to the use with young participants.



Figure 16: A local photographer produced the photographs for the SPO exercise (source: author).



Figure 17: A photo-strip documenting the use of a public space throughout a day (source: author).

The participants were invited in small groups of two to three to a secluded space where they were provided with a large sheet of paper and a range of pencils and markers, and the instruction to draw how they personally see and experience their neighbourhood, that included some of the spaces and places that they frequent and were important to them (see Figure 14). Important was that the participants were given the liberty to interpret the exercise in their own way. This means not necessarily as a conventional top-down map, but rather as a free spatial, visual or artistic representation of how they perceive their environment. The issue here is that many Ghanaians are largely map-illiterate (Clarke, 2007), and have little to no experience or familiarity with the use of maps, in contrast to the way most people are currently accustomed to them in a Western context. As a result, the individual drawings were very diverse in nature, style and content, some drawings were very expressive, others rather analytical and precise, some were succinct or detached, as illustrated in the two examples in Figure 15. During the exercise the participants were largely left to themselves, some observations were noted such as the order and comparative size in which the specific components were drawn. After finishing the drawing the participants were invited to sit for an interview, similarly to auto-photography, in which the drawing acted to stimulate the discussion about the spaces they inhabit and use in their daily lives, the activities that they host and their perceptions of their surroundings. Emphasis is placed on outdoor spaces, and on feelings of belonging or exclusion as elaborated on in the lived space of the framework.

3.2.2 Perceived space

The perceived space is investigated using two tools that focus on the physical characteristics and the collective appropriation of open spaces, and on the activities and motives of important agents that control and manage the public realm, documenting of place and expert interviews. The framework can easily accommodate a combination with other tools – for instance mapping exercises of infrastructure or land use – for a more detailed and robust understanding of this space. However, because this perspective is not the main focus of the research, time and resources were directed primarily towards capturing the lived mode, and some of these tools therefore fall outside of the scope and possibilities of this thesis.

Systematic photographic observation

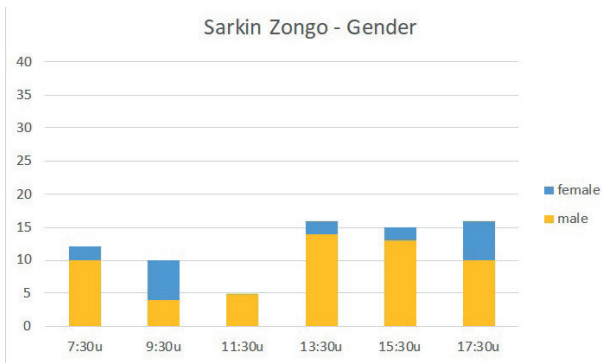
This tool what will be called systematic photographic observation, a method borrowed from Chenal (2006, 2013) in an anthropological study of three different West-African cities. This method is based on what he terms ‘a day in the life of a city’, a series of methodically captured



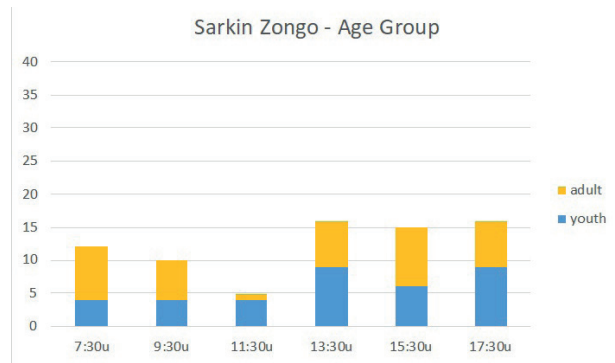
Figure 18: Users by gender (source: author).



Figure 19: Users by age group (source: author).



Graph 1: Users by gender (source: author).



Graph 2: Users by age group (source: author).



Figure 20: Users by type of activity (source: author).



Figure 21: Vehicles (source: author).

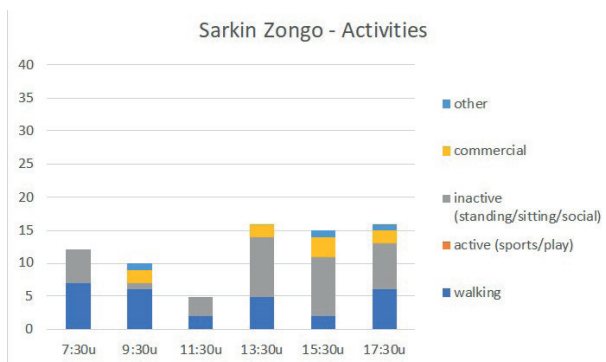
photographs of urban places using fixed frames on a set timescale, in order to understand the dynamics and social practices within the public realm throughout the course of an average day, and compare them between different locations. Because the photographs are taken in series of identical frames, it allows the superposition and comparison of the different photographs, which allows tracing of different uses, weather conditions throughout the day, in order to understand the variable and fixed qualities of the urban spaces (Chenal, 2006).

Different open public spaces of interest were identified, and three prominent locations were chosen for observation within each of the two research areas. The locations were chosen as a typical yet diverse sample of spaces in the research areas, based on the level of activity and diversity of practices and users, and as such do not represent a complete collection of all open spaces. The choice of locations and frames was made in deliberation with a local photographer, and over the course of several weeks on site to allow the researcher to become familiarised with the research areas, and the local community to become accustomed to his presence. However, the presence of the researcher often attracted unwanted attention, altering normal daily proceedings of the spaces' users. Therefore, following Chenal (2006, 2013), two local photographers were commissioned to take the photographs in their own neighbourhood, and after a briefing accompanied by the author for a practice session (see Figure 16).

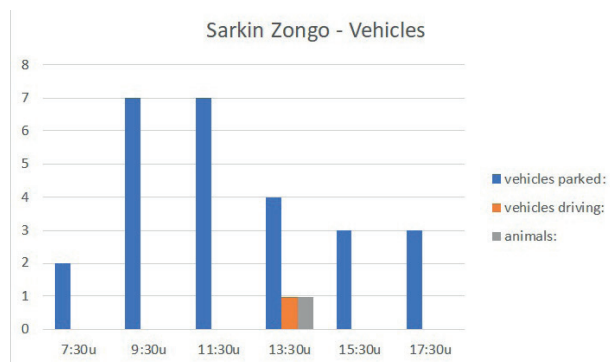
In each location, a photograph was taken every 1.5 hours from the exact same spot and with the same angle, from sunrise to sunset, six in total (see an example of a photo-strip in Figure 17). The photographs are given a time-and-date stamp and are compiled in NVivo, superposed and methodically analysed and compared to identify, trace and quantify within the spaces the various types of users and activities on different times of the same day. This data is collected in tables, digitally attached to the photographs and used predominantly to document the demographics of the users, and the nature and variety of activity within the public sphere of the research areas (see Graph 1 - Graph 2). Features that are considered during the analysis are: the types of users in terms of gender (see Figure 18) and age group (see Figure 19), the types of activity – walking, watching/sitting, playing, commercial activity, other (see Figure 20); and the vehicles – parked or driving (see Figure 21).

Expert and key-informant interviews

Experts of different organisations, and key informants and local decision makers were interviewed as a way to get an insight into local power structures and decision-making processes, with a



Graph 3: Users by activity (source: author).



Graph 4: Vehicles (source: author).



Figure 22: Group discussion with a council of elders in Sabon Zongo (source: author).

focus on how young people are represented in these structures and processes (see for example a session with a council of elders in Figure 22). The questions focus on issues surrounding the use of, and activities in the public realm. Experts were chosen from local authorities, traditional authorities and from the Youth Authority. Experts interviewed are:

Function	Research area
Traditional chief of Sabon Zongo	Sabon Zongo
Traditional chief of Akanmajen quarter (Ga Mashie)	Ga Mashie
Council of elders	Sabon Zongo
Unit committee Kinka	Ga Mashie
Assemblyman of Nmenmeete constituency	Sabon Zongo
Assemblyman of Odododiodioo constituency	Ga Mashie
Director of Ga Mashie Development Agency	Ga Mashie
Director of National Youth Authority	-

3.2.3 Conceived space

Finally, to shed light on how urban planning and governance produce difference and influence the sense of belonging by shaping urban landscapes, to reveal the politics of belonging in conceived space, a discourse analysis was performed on policies concerning public space and young people.

Policy analysis

The method adopted to investigate the conceived space is discourse analysis of government policy and urban planning documents from the past 20 years relevant to the issues of public space and youth. The conceived space is not the focus of this research, discourse analysis should therefore be seen as a secondary tool that mainly supports the primary tools and provides context and emplacement. This means the analysis will be limited to provide an overview of policy and planning process and tendencies, offer a rendering of the official representation and prioritisation of issues of youth and public space in these documents, and what type of – if any – resolutions are proposed to address them highlighted in the problem statement. More comprehensive scrutiny of policy and planning documents is necessary and important but falls outside the scope of this investigation. The thesis mainly aims to deliver a conceptual frame that allows a focus on the spatiality of justice relations, and is designed to be flexible and adaptable to different methodological tools and different scenarios or contexts. To this end the thesis concludes with recommendations, an open-ended list of suggestions and possible contributions to this framework that allow a more holistic, detailed and diversified picture to be generated of spatial

justice. The discourse is traced on two scales: the international level, focusing on the discourse as shaped by relevant and prominent international agencies, mainly the United Nations; and then more in detail (3) policies at the urban level of Accra.

An important first stage was the selection and collection of relevant documents. Most documents on Accra proved difficult to obtain or locate, in spite of their status of publicly accessible. The documents are scanned for content, according to chronology and priority, the data is classified and analysed using thematic analysis in the NVivo software. This allows an understanding of how urban policies and urban planning practices have shaped the public realm in Accra over the course of this period. This allows the identification of any adverse effects of practices on the wellbeing and inclusion of young people in public space. Conclusions from this step then serve as input for the generation of questions for the expert interviews.

Documents that are analysed for issues of youth and public space are:

Year	Document	Institution (Ghana)
1999	National Youth Policy	Ministry of Youth and Sports Ghana
2010	National Youth Policy	Ministry of Youth and Sports Ghana
2014	Medium Term Development Plan 2014-2017	Accra Metropolitan Assembly
2015	Youth Policy Implementation Plan	Ministry of Youth and Sports Ghana

Year	Document	Institution (international)
2006	African Youth Charter	African Youth Commission
2010	World Programme of Action for Youth	United Nations
2013	Youth Development Index: Results Report	The Commonwealth
2014	Report on 1 st Global Forum on Youth Policies	Various (UN, UNESCO, EU)
2016	World Youth Report – Youth Civic Engagement	United Nations

3.2.4 Combined analysis of the data

The data from the tools here discussed are mixed in nature in its most explicit sense: the amount of data is vast, and it is both qualitative and quantitative, it is composed of many different formats and types of data, and collected using many different devices. It is therefore crucial that the data is consistently and rigorously compiled, stored and organised to allow a systematic analysis. To this end NVivo software is used to digitise and bring all of the different data formats together, keep them organised and easily accessible, and perform an exploratory qualitative analysis to reveal apparent correlations between separate sources. The qualitative data is analysed using content and thematic analysis, which are facilitated by Nvivo's functionality.

The empirical data is combined into a visual format that demonstrates important spatial relationships. To this end the data is compiled into maps using QGIS software that combines

quantitative data (tables, locations, counts) with qualitative data (pictures, narratives, drawn maps) from different tools. In a first stage, separate maps are compiled from individual participants' data. In a second stage, the data from different sources are compiled into aggregate maps that display an overview and represent collective views on the environment. These aggregate maps reveal collectively held views, for instance important social hubs or community services in the urban environment, but they also reveal conflicting views on the environment and its use between different actors. Where these perspectives are opposed, the narratives further reveal if there is real experienced conflict over space, and what the role is of community actors, urban planning and governance in stimulating, relieving or negotiating these conflicts.

3.2.5 Research ethics

Some considerations must be made regarding research ethics according to the sensitivity of the subject and the predicted vulnerability of some of the participants. The main ethical concern with this research is the involvement of human participants and the handling of private information. This information was treated with the greatest respect for the participants' privacy and several measures were adopted to guarantee confidentiality to the participants. Their identities were anonymised with pseudonyms in any written dissemination, and visual data that included identifiable people was also anonymised. However, it is important to note that the possibility exists that participants can be identified by locals, as social control tends to be high in many residential areas of Accra and some of the methods are also used in plain view in public space (e.g., informal conversations, auto-photography, documenting of space). Therefore participants were informed of the possible risk of exposure before giving their signed consent.

Because the focus of the research is on the experience of belonging and exclusion in public space, in the natural, everyday environment of young people, it is important to conduct the fieldwork as much as possible 'in-situ'. This means while sitting at the base or walking through the participants' neighbourhood. The bases, or meeting spaces are produced by and among youth themselves, and can be considered a comfortable zone or 'safe-haven' where authority figures cannot exert too much pressure or social control. This choice of location may lead to a perception of increased agency and freedom that likely translates to increased validity of the responses. The issue of peer pressure among youth, however, remains, which indicates that caution is required during phases of interpretation and analysis. The interpretation of auto-photography and cognitive maps were for this reason conducted in a private space, away from influential peers.



Figure 23: A community exhibition was organised at the end of the fieldwork (source: author).

Because the research included participants in socially deprived circumstances and sometimes with limited levels of literacy, it was important that the researchers developed a sensitivity for their situation. Researchers have to be able to make participants feel comfortable with, and guide them through the research process. An important part of this is guaranteeing the participants understand fully what is asked of them. This is done by providing instructions in a simple and plain language, both in the forms and in verbal communication. Verbal communication was therefore favoured as it is considered more effective in such settings. Despite English being the official language of Ghana, the investigation involves many non-native English speakers. Many of the participants will use other, local, languages as a first language. English is the language of formal education, but many people have not finished their schooling or dropped out of education on an early age. For most research activities therefore, the researcher relied on support from an interpreter.

The participants were informed of any benefits they might experience by taking part in this research. On longer sessions snacks and drinks were provided, and the participants of auto-photography were told that they may keep the provided digital cameras as a token of appreciation for their participation. Another benefit was the opportunity to voice their perceptions and views on the exclusion they experience and particular complaints and grievances they have. This way their voice, which is often overlooked both in literature and in politics, is represented towards a larger audience of scholars, urban planners and policy makers. At the conclusion of the fieldwork period, a community exhibition was organised in collaboration with the participants, where some of the preliminary results were shared with the audience and a range of pictures and cognitive maps were presented (See Figure 23). The printed photographs were donated to the GAMADA organisation.

3.2.6 Overview of methodology

In summary, in the opening section of this chapter the research context is introduced. The development of Accra is framed within the macro-economic context of Africa and traced through its historical trajectory, from its modest origins as a small fishing town, through massive urban growth and divisive planning as the colonial capital under British rule, further urban decay under the influence of consecutive political and economic crises met by military and civilian governments after independence, and finally to the slow improvements under the new democratic governments influence increased globalisation in the from the early 1990s. Particular attention goes to the

political and cultural processes that contributed to its current urban form. The research areas, the distinct inner-city neighbourhoods of Ga Mashie and Sabon Zongo, are identified as representative examples of an indigenous and a migrant neighbourhood respectively, and their main cultural, demographic and spatial characteristics are described.

The next section moves the discussion to frame the research population – youth – briefly in literature and to discuss the methodological implications of performing research with young people in an African context. It characterises young Africans as entangled in a larger identity shift, on the interface between modernity and tradition, while simultaneously being marginalised from spaces of politics, education and employment. On a backdrop of high residential densities and competition for (public) space, youth respond by producing alternative social spaces within the public sphere, leading to a very visible – and perceived by some as threatening – presence in the urban realm.

The research design responds to the complexity of the issues, and the sensitivity of the research population by approaching the subject from several angles, by using a multi-level approach, adopting different complementary tools to illuminate different perspectives of the urban environment. Rather than concentrating on the most powerful actors, top-down planning and political processes in the conceived space, or decision makers and influential stakeholders in the perceived space, the research intentionally adopts a bottom-up approach and focuses on the perceptions and everyday experiences of users in the lived space, in this case young people. To this end a qualitative (participatory) methodology is designed and adopted on a small sample of young participants (10 participants in each research area) which provides depth and a rich spatial narrative. This is linked to a supporting secondary investigation into the perceived and conceived space, that provides width and is designed to contextualise and frame the main case of youth. Because each tool highlights a different aspect of the urban process, it is possible to highlight the discrepancies and contradictions between processes and actors, and identify their impacts on the urban landscape and on the use and perception thereof. 4.1 lists the adopted tools and summarises the most important parameters, including the procedure, type of data and purpose of each tool.

The methodology responds to the research questions, by approaching every research question and corresponding objective with an appropriate and interlocking set of tools. It is worth restating the main research question here:

How can we understand the effects of spatial planning and youth policies (conceived space) on the one hand, and collective action and local power dynamics (perceived space) on the other, on young people's perception and use of the public realm (lived space), and what are the implications for urban policy, planning and design?

The methodology explicitly delivers on objective 2: *Investigate the power relations between the different spatial actors in the urban landscape.*

Conducting a multi-level empirical investigation which is captured through a methodology that operationalises the research questions and integrates three lines of inquiry: (1) on young people's use and perceptions of the public realm; (2) on collective activities and local power dynamics that produce and manage the public realm; (3) on urban policies and planning that organise and structure the public realm. This is achieved by connecting and aligning methods adapted from different disciplines in a mixed-method framework, combining qualitative and quantitative methods, and focusing their tools on different aspects, perspectives or experiences of the urban landscape.

In the next two chapters the results of the analysis as outlined in the methodology are discussed.

Table 1: Tools adopted in the methodology

Tool	Type	Conceptual framework	procedure	Participant / data source	Purpose
Focus group discussion	Empirics – participatory	Lived space – place belonging	Groups (15-20 youths) discuss issues and challenges	46 Youth	Capture main youth issues & challenges Recruit for participatory methods
Informal conversation	Empirics – participatory		Spend unstructured time with youth	Youth	Enrich & verify narratives
Cognitive mapping	Empirics – participatory		Draw interpretation of local environment	20 Youth	Reveal perceptions & experience of urban realm
Auto-photography	Empirics – participatory		Take photographs of key elements of local environment	20 Youth	Reveal perceptions & experience of urban realm
Key informant interviews	Empirics – interviews	Perceived space – collective practices	Individual and group interviews of key stakeholders	13 Stakeholders	Reveal power relations between key community stakeholders and youth
Systematic photographic observation	Empirics – photography		Document different uses of several public spaces over course of day	Public	Capture collective practices and local use of community spaces
Policy & planning analysis	Desk – discourse analysis	Conceived space – cultural politics	Assess key youth policy and planning documents	Policy & planning documents	Evaluate effects of political and planning processes on urban realm

Chapter 4: Discussion of Empirical Findings - The Lived and Perceived Spaces

This chapter follows the presentation of the research design in Chapter 3, which elaborates on how different methodological tools are innovatively combined and adapted to the context and population, and how they are deployed and analysed to investigate the issue of spatial injustice according to the conceptual framework presented in Chapter 2. This chapter represents the heart of the empirical work and provides a discussion of the empirical results after analysis, presented here according to the conceptual perspective adopted and the methodological tools used. The first part (4.1 on page 121) is composed of three sections and presents the results from tools that are used to examine the lived space, the central focus of this investigation, discussing the everyday spatialities of the young participants and how these contribute to their sense of belonging. Each tool is granted a separate section: *focus group discussions*, *cognitive mapping*, and *auto-photography*. The second part (4.2 on page 171) then holds two sections, and focuses on the perceived space, which renders an account of the collective spatial practices and local power dynamics: *key-informant and expert interviews*, and *systematic photographic observation (SPO)*. A concluding section provides a discussion and preliminary conclusions for this empirical chapter that compares and correlates findings between the lived and perceived spatial perspectives. The next chapter provides a discussion after the analysis of policies and planning documents – in the conceived space – after which these preliminary conclusions on the empirical work are revisited, and combined into a comprehensive conclusion in the final chapter.

4.1 Lived space

4.1.1 Focus group discussions (FGD)

Focus group discussions were held with groups of young participants in the research areas as an introduction between the researchers, the topic and the participants. To familiarise them with the research, the youth were asked several open questions about their views on issues concerning their everyday experiences and the spaces of their neighbourhood. The responses in this section are arranged according to the topics that guided the questions: (1) challenges and negative aspects; (2) opportunities and positive aspects; (3) stakeholders; (4) main activities and occupations; and (5) bad places.

Challenges and negative aspects

Universal issues that the young participants experienced as negatively affecting their well-being,

no matter the neighbourhood, were the lack of education among the population, financial hardship, unemployment and the bad state of infrastructure in general. Most youth were acutely aware of the lack of education as it affected many of them personally, most of them had not finished Senior High School. Many perceived this had a significant negative impact on their employment opportunities. The general poor state of infrastructure and public services was also frequently mentioned as a serious concern, prominent examples were the state of sanitation, gutters and the roads, especially in Sabon Zongo.

In both areas the participants identified the specific spatial issue of density as problematic. In Ga Mashie the emphasis was on overcrowding, in terms of a burgeoning population and the unavailability of living space, resulting in very high occupancies of up to ten people per room. In Sabon Zongo the emphasis was rather on the lack of outdoor spaces, with explicit mention of recreational facilities, and the congested nature of the urban fabric in general. A related grievance was the unregulated nature of building in the area, which over a long period of time resulted in the encroachment on, and the gradual decrease in size of, the few open spaces in Sabon Zongo.

In Ga Mashie the youth took offence with the morals and values of many people in their neighbourhood, particularly among their parents and other adults. They highlighted corruption, and a lack of support for the youth, in terms of education and job opportunities as important issues that were blamed on the previous generation.

In Sabon Zongo there were many complaints about the availability and accessibility of a range of public services, including hospitals and clinics, schools and banks. This is argued to be attributed to its poorly connected geography and the unjust distribution of services in Accra in general. Despite Sabon Zongo's rather central location in Accra, on the central ring road, it is relatively disconnected from the city centre and many of its amenities, separated from the city centre by the Korle Lagoon on the Odaw river, and on its banks the largest informal settlement in Ghana, Old Fadama. The unequal distribution of services throughout the city of Accra, particularly in many Zongo areas, is a recurring issue in literature (see for instance Pellow, 1991, 2001) which is addressed in more detail in the subsequent chapter.

Opportunities and positive aspects

In both areas, youth highlight the level of security as a positive aspect, indicating that their neighbourhood is generally safe, even at night. This was referred to by several participants

during research activities – and repeated several times in other conversations – in terms of the possibility to sleep outside without being disturbed. Most participants in both areas agreed that the level of sociability, collective sense of unity and cohesiveness, and a readiness to assist and support others in need contributes to a positive perception of their neighbourhood. In Ga Mashie specifically, the youth indicated that they are very proud of their many athletes, and that this strongly contributes to a positive image of their area. Especially James Town is well-known for its many boxing academies that have produced some of the world's most awarded boxers.

Stakeholders

Most of the participants, regardless of location, agreed that the chiefs are the most influential stakeholders in the neighbourhood. It was clear that the chiefs are greatly respected by the youth, and have an important impact on their everyday lives, both as spiritual and secular leader figures. The youth agreed the chiefs decide on most matters pertaining to the use and management of open spaces, in terms of where, at what times, and by whom, spaces can be used for leisure activities, ceremonies or festivals. In Ga Mashie the Wulomoi or traditional priests⁶, were mentioned as influential on decision making processes. In Sabon Zongo, youth cited the imams and tribal chiefs were influential because of their good relations with chief Bako. The city authorities and politicians were seen by youth as less influential than traditional authorities on decision-making affecting the neighbourhood.

Leisure activities

Leisure activities that some of the youth of Ga Mashie reportedly participated in were football, basketball and boxing, performed in some of the outdoor spaces and gyms in the neighbourhood, and joking and hanging out, playing card or dice games at the base. In Sabon Zongo, playing and watching football was also mentioned, along with hanging out with friends and spending time at the mosque. They mentioned political and religious discussions as significant activities held among friends. The female participants in both areas were remarkably evasive to questions on the topic.

Places with negative associations

In Ga Mashie, several areas were highlighted where some participants did not feel comfortable, especially at night because they were dangerous, dirty or because some activities happened

6 Traditionally the Ga people were a theocracy ruled by Wulomei (TheGaDangme, 2016)

which they did not approve of, namely Bukom square, Ganshona or 'Small London', Bodé or the slaughterhouse site. In Sabon Zongo, similarly a few places were highlighted as dangerous, largely because of anti-social activities, the 'Blue Bar', Gaskia cinema, Angua Makafi or 44, and Zongo market. Many of these places reappear in the auto-photography and cognitive mapping exercises and will be more elaborately described in their respective sections.

4.1.2 Cognitive mapping

This section discusses the results obtained from cognitive mapping, an important exercise adopted to provoke a detailed conversation with participants about the spatiality of their everyday lives, and the way they perceive their immediate environment. To this end the participants were invited to draw their individual interpretation of the spaces that host and shape their daily lives. The method is adopted as an inclusive and enjoyable activity with a low threshold for participation, to encourage young participants to discuss personal feelings and thoughts they might otherwise be hesitant to share. Cognitive mapping can provide opinions on the availability and proximity of certain important features, services or facilities within a designated area. The participants give value judgements about these features of their everyday environment.

Challenges encountered are covered in Chapter 3 (3.2.1 on page 98), notably, the map-illiteracy and resultant timidity of many participants towards drawing. The open-endedness of the exercise allowed each participant to express themselves in their individual way, but also resulted in drawings that were extremely diverse in nature, and therefore difficult to compare; ranging from precise top-down maps to abstract geometric compositions, to landscapes drawn in perspective, from sober monochrome line drawings to colourful and artistic arrangements reflecting their emotional connections to aspects of their environments. Some drawings included dozens of different features of their area, others focused on only one or a few places central to their experience (see various different drawings in Figure 24, Figure 26 and Figure 27).

Like auto-photography, the focus of this exercise was on locations and spaces in the participants' immediate environment that played an important role in their everyday lives. Some of the drawings reflect similar topics and capture some of the same spaces as the subsequent section on auto-photography, some spaces are therefore deliberately covered in more detail there. However, there were significant differences, and because the nature of this exercise was perhaps more restricted by boundaries of paper and spatial imagination, the emphasis was generally more on places closer to and related to the home. The places that were included by participants were

categorised in 10 groups: home; landmark; traditional place; religious place; open space; service and facilities; food and drink; leisure; negative place; and other. Because of the assembled nature of the medium of cognitive maps, and some of the overlap with auto-photography, rather than covering every category or painstakingly describing every separate drawing, the discussion focuses on some of the more outstanding results.

First, four outliers in the results are covered, categories that were included significantly more often in drawings of one specific group, either a gender group or participants of one research area: traditional places, religious places, negative places, and leisure places.

Traditional places were included in almost all the drawings of Ga Mashie, and in almost none of the ones of Sabon Zongo. Clearly there could be an important objective difference to be considered. In Ga Mashie, this result reflects both the prominence of these places in the landscape, and the importance of their occupants and families in Ga society (further elucidated in the next section). Ga Mashie, as the home of the Ga people for centuries, has a large population that shares a long historical connection to place, and therefore has a larger concentration of palaces and prominent family homes, compared to Sabon Zongo. These palaces and their chiefs play a central role in the everyday lives of the Ga Mashie residents, both through the open spaces adjacent to the buildings, and through cultural significance and traditions, maintained and strengthened through special events and ceremonies inside and around the palaces. This is explained by Kristalline, a Ga Mashie participant who chose to focus her drawing entirely on the Agbona Ngleshie palace (see Figure 25):

'This is Mantse Agbona park. People come to pray there in the evenings on the park. Boys from the area come to play ball every day there. [...] In the palace itself also there are many events and ceremonies. There are outdoor ceremonies, there are celebrations inside the palace, social gatherings, weddings, commercial events. This year even the president gave a speech here. Only there are no funerals. Because the dead they are not allowed inside the palace. They have a cleansing ceremony when somebody dies. There also used to be a court here, with a judge here, to decide on important issues. But now they moved him to the court complex at high street.' (Kristalline 2017)

Sabon Zongo – as the first dedicated migrant area – has a more heterogeneous demographic composition with many residents with migration backgrounds. Much of its population arguably has a less straightforward relation to place, combined with more complex and diverse leadership and kinship structures. Currently, place-based leadership in Sabon Zongo divides the neighbourhood in loyalties between two competing families, with two main palaces. Furthermore, different

migration histories of the residents dictate different kinship loyalties to chiefs that might have palaces dispersed throughout the city, so the concentration of traditional places of importance is much lower in this area. However, there are other factors. The Ga palaces are generally large houses, lavishly decorated to express the wealth and power of the occupant, while the existing zongo palaces are sober and discrete structures, largely inconspicuous for the untrained eye between the other homes. This in turn reflects the disparity between the wealth and status of the Ga chiefs, whose political power is still largely relevant, and the zongo chiefs, whose power has long been in decline as it is not vested in land and is rivalled by religious and political leadership. However, this observation is not uncontested or unambiguous, and must be nuanced. The Zongo chief is located geographically and socially nearer to his constituents, and seen by many as more influential than the Ga chiefs or the politicians, therefore many residents remain fiercely loyal to the Zongo chiefs. This is exemplified by Carter, one Sabon Zongo participant, as he explains the prominent placing of the palace on his drawing (see Figure 30):

'This is Kan Tudu. It is where the chief palace is located, this is the main landmark. The chief is much more important than all the politicians. When I have an issue, I go there to consult my brother who is in the palace, to get my issue resolved.' (Carter 2017)

Places of worship were almost exclusively included in drawings by participants of Sabon Zongo, most of whom included at least one mosque in their maps, and many included several, compared to only one Ga Mashie participant drawing a church. This can likely be attributed to the difference in religious experience between the various religions of the area. In Ga Mashie, the overwhelming majority of residents follow one of the many Christian movements, most popular are the charismatic churches, which generally congregate once a week in large centralised venues. In Sabon Zongo the majority of residents is Muslim, and who generally assemble in prayer at a mosque several times a day. For convenience many people visit a mosque close to where they happen to be when it is time for prayer. Mosques in this area are therefore decentralised, smaller and scattered throughout the area. Additionally, this observation suggests that the mosque is an important part of many people's everyday experience, and a crucial part of the social infrastructure of a neighbourhood, more so than the church is for the residents of Ga Mashie. The mosque for many men is a key location to develop and maintain social networks, where they feel safe and among equals, where they go to discuss pressing topics among friends, neighbours and acquaintances. Many men reportedly spend substantial amounts of time at their local mosque, as Mallam (2017) expresses, *'there are many mosques in Sabon Zongo, but the mosque at my*

house is very safe. I feel very safe there. I go there all the time, when I pray, but also when I am free you can find me there.' In spite of the significantly larger physical size and visual prominence of Christian churches, they are fewer and arguably less entangled in people's social lives and everyday experience because of differences in religious practice. This finding, however, does not claim to demonstrate anything of the relative importance of faith in the different participants' lives. Most Ghanaians consider religion an integral part of their daily lives, regardless of belief system (Crabtree, 2010).

Then, an observation that is supported by much of the other data acquired for the lived space, but is harder to convincingly attribute to objective physical, social or cultural elements, is the highly critical attitude of Sabon Zongo participants towards parts of their neighbourhood, especially when compared to their Ga Mashie counterparts. Participants of Sabon Zongo neighbourhood have consistently criticised aspects of their neighbourhood significantly more often than the participants of Ga Mashie criticised theirs, and no other categories were mentioned more often by Sabon Zongo participants than negative aspects. This likely points to larger issues of discontent with their environment and with their inability to effectively influence decision making and general low quality of life. The objects of complaint – cattle farming, pollution of the area and antisocial behaviour – match those encompassed in the auto-photography exercise, and are discussed in more detail in the next section.

The last notable irregularity in the results were places that fit in the category of leisure, which were mentioned significantly more often by male than by female participants. The leisure category includes various places that host activities of leisure, amusement or sports, but excludes larger outdoor open spaces; bars, internet-café's, gyms, and bases were the most prevalent places. Similarly, in the previous section on focus group discussions (p. 121), a reluctance of female participants to discuss leisure activities was noted. Considering the popularly accepted view that the public realm is considered a predominantly male territory, it is perhaps unexpected that the results did not demonstrate a similar bias towards the category of 'open space'. The female participants might have been less eager to share their hangout spots, but perhaps they do not regularly frequent many bars, gyms, or internet café's. This raises questions about the genderedness of space, but also of activities, and leisure in particular. It is often argued that women in Ghanaian society carry the multiple burdens of simultaneously providing for, and taking care of the household, leaving very little – if any – time or energy for other activities such as leisure, education, or political engagement. Furthermore, lack of means and education on

sexual health and contraception in Ghana contributes to many young pregnancies, which often increases the marginalising effects and the impact it has on their opportunities. In combination with the general genderedness of space, this marginalisation represents an important injustice that requires further explicit scrutiny.

Another notable feature is the prevalence of the category of 'open spaces' in the drawings; the single most included category in total, equally distributed between the two research areas and between the genders. This equal spread is remarkable because of the wide disparity in size, quantity and nature of open spaces between the neighbourhoods, but also the reported difference in activity and presence in public space between the genders (see for instance 4.2.2 on page 185). This result seems to establish the universal importance of open spaces in the everyday lives of young people, unaffected by specific social or geographic location. Their widespread inclusion in cognitive maps confirms open spaces are fundamental anchors for orientation and wayfinding purposes, but also crucial platforms and resources for neighbourhood sociability and building of community. The category, however, might obscure significant variances in the practices and activities between the areas, and the types of open spaces that are referenced. In Ga Mashie, the young men referred to open spaces predominantly as a location for sports, generally football, for example this response from one of the participants:

'Across the road there is a park, Gardiem. It is a football park, I go there to watch and play football. I spend so much time there with the boys. Maybe from one to six every day. There is only boys that go there.' (Fazigogo 2017)

Richard, a participant from Ga Mashie describes a specific incident when young people challenged the authority of the traditional leaders concerning the use of an open space, Agbona park:

'Just in front of the palace there, is the football park. It is also important because the Chale Wote festival starts just there. Some time ago there was a conflict between the players and the palace elders. They did not like all the youth making noise there, and making trouble there. So the elders they stopped the football. But this was not accepted by the people, so they just played. In the end the palace elders had to make arrangement with the youth, they had to come to an agreement. So now the youth is again allowed to play there.' (Richard 2017)

In Sabon Zongo only one participant mentioned sports in relation to open space, most other participants highlighted the cultural or practical significance of open spaces, as places where ceremonies are held, where people park their cars, or where various items and foods are sold, for instance Musa:



Figure 28: Aggregate map of recorded photographs in Ga Mashie (source: author).



Figure 29: Aggregate map of recorded photographs in Sabon Zongo (source: author).

'The night market is also very important. This is where ceremonies are always. At night you can buy food there. and during the day there are many things, like ceremonies, naming ceremonies, funerals.' (Musa 2017)

Another aspect worth noting, is the prevalence of 'services and facilities' in many of the drawings; a category that includes places and infrastructure of different scales that benefit the public, such as clinics, communal toilets, schools, and government buildings. In Ga Mashie, the emphasis was mostly on buildings that represent a public sector public services, for instance the police station, the municipal offices or the clinic. In Sabon Zongo participants included mostly public toilets, bathhouses, and schools.

4.1.3 Auto-photography

In the auto-photography exercise, the young participants identified and captured a range of different spaces that inspired an affective connection and had meaning to them, guided by the questions they answered with the photographs (as described in Chapter 2 and Chapter 3). They have been classified into two main categories based on the type of affective association indicated by the participants, discussed in two separate sections: (A) places that positively contribute to a sense of belonging or feeling at home, and (B) those that provide a negative feeling of non-belonging, often described as 'feeling out-of-place'. Within these broad categories, it is possible to further distinguish between different types of spaces, based on their physical characteristics and purpose. The spaces with positive meanings were divided into: (1) landmarks; (2) infrastructure and services; (3) open spaces; (4) spaces of home and belonging; and (5) local points of interest. The spaces that carry negative associations were divided following the perceived cause of the negative affect: (1) illicit or undesirable activities; (2) pollution and unpleasant aesthetics; and (3) insecurity. A third section (C) summarises and discusses the main differences between the two neighbourhoods and, in preparation for the next chapter when different governance and policy models are introduced, attempts to identify any cultural differences that may be partly at the root of the spatial differentials. Figure 28 and Figure 29 show aggregate maps of the locations of recorded photographs, respectively in Ga Mashie and Sabon Zongo.⁷

Positive sense of belonging

The spaces with positive meanings were divided into: (1) landmarks; (2) infrastructure and services; (3) open spaces; (4) spaces of home and belonging; and (5) local points of interest.

⁷ Separate maps per subject can be found in Appendix.



Figure 31: Photograph of Ga Mashie taken by a participant Kohler (source: participant).



Figure 33: Photograph of Ga Mashie taken by a participant Possy Gee (source: participant).



Figure 32: Photograph of Ga Mashie taken by a participant Blue Ivy (source: participant).



Figure 34: Photograph of Ga Mashie taken by a participant Naa White (source: participant).



Figure 35: Photograph of Ga Mashie taken by a participant Blue Ivy (source: participant).

Landmarks

Many of the participants brought forward landmarks in their area, as particularly positive representations of their neighbourhood. As a landmark is a socially produced term, and there is no single definition, they varied vastly in nature, size and character, yet they were all prominent points, way markers for the area. The landmarks are here categorised in three distinct types: historical, traditional and religious landmarks.

Historical landmarks

Included were landmarks that were significant because of an important, though sometimes dark, part in history, and often a certain prominent aesthetic that differs much from the vernacular style. An important example of this is the James Fort (Figure 31) and Ussher Fort (Figure 33) and their dark and violent roots in colonial histories and slave trade. Another prevalent site that made many residents proud was the James Town lighthouse (Figure 32), a veritable beacon because of its visibility from afar, its prominent aesthetics and bright colour scheme, and the fact that it draws tourists into the neighbourhood, were most often mentioned reasons. It also has a special place in many locals' hearts because of its obvious relation with the sea, and the fishermen that many youth are in some way related to, as illustrated in this comment by Ranking:

'The lighthouse, yes it is very important to me and to all people of Ga Mashie. When the fishermen they go away, when they come back, the lighthouse lets them know that they have reached home' (Ranking 2017).

Ga Mashie demonstrates a significant amount of colonial structures and relatively luxurious merchants' houses with rich family histories, reflecting the prominence of the area before and during the Colonial period, when most of the intercontinental trade and its benefits were concentrated in this area. Examples of this are the 'Flatiron House' and the 'Bible House' (Figure 28 - Figure 29).

Sabon Zongo is one of the older neighbourhoods of the modern Accra, yet much younger than the original Ga towns, such as Ga Mashie, which were the location of much of the European construction before independence. Additionally, Sabon Zongo has been designed and planned from its conception as a residential area for low income migrants outside of the colonial city centre. For these reasons it has, beside arguably several old mosques, no real historical landmarks.

Traditional landmarks

Many of the young participants chose to include some of the traditional palaces and royal houses



Figure 36: Photograph of Ga Mashie taken by a participant Naa White (source: participant).



Figure 38: Photograph of Ga Mashie taken by a participant Possy Gee (source: participant).



Figure 37: Photograph of Ga Mashie taken by a participant Possy Gee (source: participant).

as positively contributing to a sense of belonging in the neighbourhood. This was mostly the case in Ga Mashie, where a large percentage of the divisional chiefs of the Ga state reside, reflecting the status of Ga Mashie as the capital of the Ga state. The palaces in Ga Mashie are built in prominent locations within the neighbourhood, often along primary axis. Additionally, the palaces and stool houses visually stand out due to their size, often multi-story buildings against a backdrop of mostly single-story compound houses, and their lavish decorations, often with gold and colourful murals of animals and traditional symbols, reflecting the importance and wealth of the royal families. Most of the open spaces in these areas are located directly in front or adjacent to a traditional palace, contributing both to the visibility of the palace, and therefore to the prestige of the chiefs. The Agbona Park in front of the Ngleshie Alata palace is the most striking example, seen in Figure 36, but most of the smaller spaces in Ga Mashie such as Gardiem square are also spatially joined to a palace, the Basahene palace looming over the square in this case (Figure 37). This makes sense from both a functional and historic perspective, as the ceremonies that typically require open space were historically performed inside or adjacent to the palace, and presently the traditional chief or members of the royal family still often perform a symbolic role at such ceremonies.

Most prominent, and often mentioned, among these palaces is the Ga Mantse stool house, the place where the Ga paramount chief is crowned and where important parts of the Ga traditional ceremonies take place or start celebrations, including the lifting of the drum-ban, the Chale Wote and Homowo festivals (Figure 38). The importance of this space extends to the neighbouring street, as the Gbese palace, the second ranking chief, or 'deputy' as locals call him, is located on the other end of the same street. This highlights how, through ceremonies and events, the palaces and surrounding spaces are embedded in people's daily lives:

'In the palace itself also there are many events and ceremonies. There are outdoor ceremonies, there are celebrations inside the palace, social gatherings, weddings, commercial events. This year even the president gave a speech here. Only there are no funerals. [...] There also used to be a court here, with a judge here, to decide on important issues. But now they moved him to the court complex at high street' (Kristalline 2017).

The traditional authorities, according to the youth, hold powerful positions in the neighbourhood, exerting significant control on movements and activities in the areas. Their reputation among youth, however, is somewhat ambivalent. On the one hand, several young participants admit that many chiefs are corrupted by politics, and that they do not share their considerable wealth



Figure 39: Photograph of Ga Mashie taken by a participant Blue Ivy (source: participant).



Figure 41: Photograph of Sabon Zongo taken by a participant Mallam (source: participant).



Figure 40: Photograph of Sabon Zongo taken by a participant Musa (source: participant).

with their community. On the other hand, the chiefs certainly demand respect and are admired as important public and symbolic figures that represent the history, traditional values and cultural traits and customs that they identify with.

Religious landmarks

In both areas the religious places were often photographed as they too serve as landmarks in the areas. Several participants have argued that religion, regardless of the neighbourhood or religion, and the morals and values that it teaches people, is an important ingredient to living in peace and harmony with so many different people in their area. As for instance Blue Ivy, a participant from Ga Mashie says when talking about a photograph of her church (Figure 39): *'I really love that James Town is very religious. This really brings the morals and values to the people for harmonious living. So people in James Town live in harmony. This is why it is always very safe in James Town. This is the church of Pentecost on Silent City Road, the one where I go'* (Blue Ivy 2017).

Contrary to churches, the many mosques in Sabon Zongo do not necessarily stand out very much from surrounding buildings, the smaller mosques often only distinct from neighbouring houses because a speaker is attached to, or the occasional star and crescent painted somewhere on the outer premises. However, a few larger and older mosques are located on important intersections and points of entry into the neighbourhood and certainly serve as landmarks in the area. The Mosque at Angua Makafi (Figure 40) is located on a central, busy junction in Sabon Zongo (see section 4.2.2 p. 185) in an area that is known to have a large community of blind people inhabiting the area.

Musa, one of the participants, said *'The old chief gave the area to blind people for humanitarian reasons, more than 50 years ago. The chief was a very generous and a righteous man, and he cared much for the people. So there are many blind people living and sitting in the area, they are always sitting and chatting and begging at the mosque'* (Musa 2017).

One very prominent mosque, the Central Mosque of Accra, (Figure 41) is located on the ring road just outside Sabon Zongo and serves as a landmark and reference point for the entire neighbourhood. It is where the Chief Imam, or Grand Mufti of Ghana – the highest Muslim authority in the country – often leads the prayer. Many of Accra's thousands of Muslims come to pray on Fridays and celebrate important days on the Islamic calendar. Several of the participants mentioned the mosque as a source of great pride because it is located so close to their



Figure 42: Photograph of Ga Mashie taken by a participant Richard (source: participant).

neighbourhood. As Mallam explains:

'This place makes me very proud. Because of the chief imam in the front. Not all areas have such a large mosque. So when the Chief Imam prays at your mosque it is something to be very proud of. [...] Every Friday, it gathers Muslims from everywhere. So many people come for the chief Imam. It is always very crowded, very lively. There is also much business and much marketing going on around this place. So many people are selling things there for the people who patronise the mosque, mostly on Fridays when it is very busy. So, it also boosts the businesses there. It is here where I see my many friends from outside of Sabon Zongo. At times we go there with friends'
(Mallam 2017).

Markets

Marketplaces have traditionally been crucial pieces of infrastructure, central to the everyday social and commercial life of cities, especially in Africa. Because of their size and historical continuity, markets often serve as landmarks and reference points for larger areas. As discussed previously, space in many African cities is highly gendered, the domestic and private spheres are considered female space, and the public realm is primarily a male territory, which can be temporarily shared with women, but generally on men's terms. Women are not expected to appropriate or claim the public realm like men do (this is reflected in the results of systematic photographic observation, section 4.2.2 p. 185). As discussed in chapter 3, repeated economic crises, structural adjustment policies and large-scale unemployment have unsettled and complicated many traditional values and norms. Research indicates that in some instances gender roles are becoming increasingly fluid in Ghana (Overa, 2007; Langevang and Gough, 2009b). The informal trade in fruit, vegetables and prepared food, however, has traditionally been a female dominated sector, and the marketplace – where 'Market Queens' are firmly in charge – is a prominent public space where the power balance between gender has been contested. This solidifies the marketplace as a central social institution in Accra's neighbourhoods, yet simultaneously exposes and nuances the gendered reality of space.

London Market is one of the oldest markets of Accra, an important market space in Ga Mashie, located in a structure of colonial architecture (Figure 42). Salaga Market, the other major marketplace in Ga Mashie has been closed for reconstruction for several years, further increasing London market's importance to the area. Richard, a male participant who works most days in his mother's food stall in James Town – and in this sense in defiance of these gender prescriptions – and depends on the market for his livelihood. It is clear that for him the market is of crucial significance in his daily routines:



Figure 43: Photograph of Ga Mashie taken by a participant Kohler (source: participant).

'You can see here, London market. It is so very important to the neighbourhood, so many people come to buy their things here. Me too, I come here every day, in the morning, with my mother to buy the things for the restaurant. You can find everything there. And it is cheap. The prices are very cheap here. especially for the meat. It is the most cheap in all of Accra. That is why so many people come here' (Richard 2017).

Public facilities, infrastructure and services

Many participants included photographs of public facilities as positively affecting their sense of belonging in their neighbourhoods. These places arguably also serve as landmarks within the neighbourhood, but it is not so much their physical presence, but the services they offer to the neighbourhood are often of vital importance to the social fabric of the area. They are further grouped here under educational, healthcare, commercial and other public facilities.

Educational facilities

Many young respondents credited the schools as strong positive contributions to the neighbourhood. This reflects the importance that youth attribute to education, and to the perceived impact it has on their employment prospects and opportunities for social mobility, as earlier indicated in the focus group discussions. Sabon Zongo has several smaller schools scattered throughout the area – often no larger than one classroom or two classrooms – one large Islamic primary school, and no larger secular or secondary schools within its confines. It is also an indication of how society, education and the Islamic faith have become intertwined in this neighbourhood. Haiba, one of the young participants, was a student and now teaches at the same koranic school and expresses why this makes him proud:

'This is the Rahmaniya mosque and Islamic school. It is one of the oldest in the area. I attended there and now I teach Islamic studies and Arabic language there. So I am very proud of this mosque. It is also very beautiful to me' (Haiba 2017).

In Ga Mashie the perception prevails among the youth that education is insufficient, and improvements to the educational system an urgent issue, as the focus group discussions pointed out. This might explain why the area's only secondary school was seen by several participants as having a very positive impact on the area, even if none of them had attended it (Figure 43). As Kohler describes:

'This is the only secondary school in James Town. It is very huge. It has so many classes, and so many students but they are all from somewhere outside of James Town. Because of the tall buildings it has a strong presence here. But I have never gone there. I finished SHS in the Eastern region. Kids go very far away from home to school. Many people go in another city, in the



Figure 44: Photograph of Ga Mashie taken by a participant Naa White (source: participant).



Figure 45: Photograph of Ga Mashie taken by a participant Blue Ivy (source: participant).

North or in the East.’ (Kohler 2017).

Another featured school in the photographs, and commended for its achievements, is located in the informal neighbourhood that lies on the beach between the lighthouse and the port area – referred to by participants as ‘Small London’ – which targets the children of this deprived community, a small clinic is attached to it (see Figure 44). It is adjacent to – but reportedly unaffiliated with – the JayNii Streetwise Foundation, another special place admired by several participants for the valuable work they perform, a charity organisation that provides training, education and social support for orphans and disadvantaged children and young people of the area (see Figure 45).

‘This place here is JayNii Streetwise, it was started because of a cultural dancer, he performed here together with some friends as a tourist attraction. Then they erected the foundation that helps the children and the youth from the area and takes them to school. There are cultural events there, with the youth doing drumming, dancing’ (Blue Ivy 2017).

Open spaces

A central feature of this section on infrastructures and public services, many participants included pictures of open spaces they frequent, and shared reflections on how these spaces contribute positively to a sense of belonging. Open spaces come in a variety of types, shapes and sizes, and fulfil different roles simultaneously but also shift through different functions in a day. Section 4.2.2 on page 185 on ‘systematic photographic observation’ focuses more objectively on the types of use and users in several open spaces in the research areas. This section here squarely focuses on the subjective attribution of value and meaning to these spaces. Both research areas deal with real issues of population density and congestion, as previously discussed and confirmed by the participants in the focus group discussions. This highlights the crucial importance of open space, and the urgent need to provide more adequate space and maintain the available space. However, the areas suffer from different types and aspects of density, and are therefore affected differently, which leads again to diverse perceptions and experiences among the participants.

In Sabon Zongo, the issues concerning density can be attributed to a scarcity of open spaces, because of the very densely built up area. The few available spaces suffer heavily from conflicting uses, which will be dealt with in detail in the next section dedicated to negative aspects of the areas. Within the confines of Sabon Zongo there are only two spaces that are arguably large enough for play, of which only one was featured in the photographs.



Figure 46: Photograph of Sabon Zongo taken by a participant Haiba (source: participant).



Figure 47: Photograph of Sabon Zongo taken by a participant Haiba (source: participant).

Ojo Park

This is what locals refer to as Ojo Park, during the day it serves as the recreation ground of the Da-Awatul Islamic School, but every day after school hours large groups of young people gather here to play and watch competitive football, as Haiba, one of the participants tells (Figure 46):

'In the evenings I always go here, every day in the evening I am there with my brothers. They call this place Ojo park. It is also the playground of the school. I spend a lot of time here. All the evenings we go there with our friends to sit and chat and laugh and watch the game, we watch the football. And we also play sometimes. It is always very exciting here, a lot of liveliness. In the weekend they play championships here between the people from all around these parts. We play very well, but unfortunately our team has never won the title' (Haiba 2017).

But even in this space there is evidence of pressing issues concerning the lack of space and the conflicting different uses of space between the neighbours this causes (Figure 47). In one corner adjoining the playground, one of the neighbours has built an open lattice-construction to house his cattle. The faeces, food and waste this activity generates is spread over a significant part of the playground. It attracts swarms of flies and produces a strong unpleasant odour which fills the air in a vast area, and could pose a risk to the health of the children playing next to it every day.

'These are the stables next to Ojo Park. They are owned by a local herdsman. They hold the cattle in these buildings you see there. But I don't like that they are there. It is very shameful. You can see it is very disturbing, the smell, the waste is everywhere. They pollute the place, they leave the food for the cows and the waste lying around, and it smells very bad. All day you smell them, in the class even. You can smell it from far around. And it looks very bad also. And for the children it is dangerous for their health. They are playing around in this rubbish.

The council say they will come and make clean this place, but they never come. Nothing happens. It has been like this for a long while now, and nobody does anything about it, except complain.' (Haiba 2017)

This also highlights a related issue that is touched on in section B.1 of this chapter, but further addressed in the next chapter, namely that many young people feel they have little voice or power, that authorities do not take their concerns seriously, and that conflicts such as these are generally resolved in favour of more wealthy and powerful residents, like the land and cattle owners.

In Ga Mashie, the issues surrounding density are certainly as serious but different in nature. As concluded in the previous chapter, and established in the group discussions, Ga Mashie suffers from severe overcrowding and lack of housing, with an average of 48 residents per house, and 10.6 occupants per room in one of the densest parts of Ga Mashie (CHF International, 2010a,



Figure 48: Photograph of Ga Mashie taken by a participant Blue Ivy (source: participant).



Figure 50: Photograph of Ga Mashie taken by a participant Blue Ivy (source: participant).



Figure 49: Photograph of Ga Mashie taken by a participant Naa White (source: participant).

2010b). This inevitably has a strong impact on the availability and use of open spaces. Ga Mashie is so overcrowded that many of its open spaces and streets are strewn with sleeping bodies at night, as witnessed by the author and confirmed by different sources (e.g. Benzoni 2013). Reportedly as many as 3000 people in Ga Mashie resort to sleeping in public spaces. This puts immense pressure on the existing network of spaces, but also sets completely different requirements on the available spaces, in terms of comfort, and security. This is evidenced by many references by both the young participants and key informants, as many refer to the quality of open spaces as safe or quiet 'enough to sleep in'.

For example, speaking of the Nii Ayikai square, (Figure 48) Blue Ivy, one of the female participants in Ga Mashie says:

'This square is always full of children. A lot of children go and play there, they are safe from cars. Sometimes I go there and sit to watch passers-by, just to kill the time. And some people even sleep there, they prefer to sleep outside, and it is very safe there. Anyone can sleep, and nobody will disturb you' (Blue Ivy 2017).

Naa White, another female participant expressed very similarly about a roundabout closeby (Figure 49):

'This is the roundabout close to where I live, near the police station. I hang around here pretty often, because I feel very safe here. During the evening people even sleep here' (Naa White 2017).

Ga Mashie does have more total open space than Sabon Zongo, some areas even convey a spacious and open feel, particularly those closer to the coast and the beaches. Some public spaces – those (re)constructed in the past decade – demonstrate well-designed lay-outs and public furniture, a rare feature in most other areas of Accra.

Agbona Park

One important space that was featured by participants in Ga Mashie is called Agbona Park, a large walled space adjacent to the Ngleshie Alata palace, and just across the main coastal road High Street, the James Fort and James Town lighthouse, all three important landmarks in the area (Figure 50). During the day it is used by youth and children as a football field, and at night a church congregates on its premises. On special occasions, under supervision of the royal family, larger events for the community are hosted here. Blue Ivy indicated from the photograph that the palace conveys a sense of security to the area: *'This park is very very safe because of the palace. The chief is there to keep everyone safe. There are many shows there. The chief allows*



Figure 51: Photograph of Ga Mashie taken by a participant Blue Ivy (source: participant).



Figure 52: Photograph of Ga Mashie taken by a participant Blue Ivy (source: participant).

anyone to organise something there if it is positive for the community' (Blue Ivy 2017).

Naa White also included a photograph of Agbona Park, saying *'I like to watch the football there. Some of our friends play in the evenings. We can sit in there, or on the walls. Sometimes we bring our own seating. Sometimes I jog around the field, even when they are playing inside. It is very big, the field, so you can make some good distance here'* (Naa white 2017).

Nii Ayikai place

Another space featured several times in this exercise was the Nii Ayikai square, mentioned above, which was completed in 2009 (E7_Director Gamada 2017) (Figure 51). It is an intersection at the heart of James Town, formed by the convergence of several important roads and two roundabouts in front of the Akanmajen palace (this square is also featured in section B.2). At the centre of the space is a small triangular football field surrounded by a concrete barrier and integrated benching, decorated with colourful murals. It is conceived so that the square defines different spaces that can be separated by diverting the traffic to the other side of the concrete barrier. It is generally very busy with diverse activities. The concrete barrier/furniture serves as benches for people to sit, chat or watch the football and other games happening within its confines during the day and evening, but equally serves for local traders to stall their wares, or for locals to dry laundry. During the night, like many spaces in Ga Mashie, it serves as a sleeping spot, and the benches become beds for some of the area's 'homeless' people. In the weekends tents and large speaker systems are hauled onto the square for all sorts of ceremonies. Naa White describes it fondly: *'This place is a really nice place. I sit there very often. It is so interesting. I just sit there on the bench and watch the people go by'* (Naa White 2017).

Beachfront

One more space that was included in several respondents' series of photographs is the beachfront of Ga Mashie. Not necessarily always included in a positive sense (see section 1.7), however most participants indicated a strong affinity to the ocean and to the beach. Because many of the families in Ga Mashie historically depended on the ocean for their livelihoods, the seaside has a powerful symbolic meaning for the residents, and evokes a strong sense of belonging in place. This is perhaps best demonstrated in the next two images taken by Blue Ivy. The first photograph is of an artistic graffiti rendering on the side of the municipal building, a remnant of the past Chale Wote Festival⁸ (Figure 52):

⁸ Chale Wote Festival is an international arts festival that is connected to traditional Ga ceremonies and held every summer in Ga Mashie.



Figure 53: Photograph of Ga Mashie taken by a participant Blue Ivy (source: participant).



Figure 54: Photograph of Ga Mashie taken by a participant Naa White (source: participant).



Figure 55: Photograph of Ga Mashie taken by a participant Blue Ivy (source: participant).



Figure 56: Photograph of Ga Mashie taken by a participant Blue Ivy (source: participant).

'This is an important painting on the side of this building. It is from Chale Wote Festival, and everything that is important in James Town is in there; the boxing, the fishing, education, the lighthouse, unity. I really love it!' (Blue Ivy 2017).

The other image depicts an abstract statue located on the Nii Ayikai square (Figure 53):

'This one here we call "big catch". It reminds the fishermen towards the festive season they have to catch enough fish to satisfy everyone when they go out.' (Blue Ivy 2017).

The beach is arguably Ga Mashie's largest open space, yet large parts of it are rendered unusable or unsafe for leisurely activities, either because of the encroachment of an informal community or by heavy pollution (see section 1.7). But other parts of the beach are certainly used by the youth to practice sports, to sit with friends or to find a quiet space to reflect or be alone (Figure 54). Naa White expresses that she enjoys going there to find some solitude by the ocean:

'To this place you can go and be alone if you are lonely. Sometimes I just go sit and watch the sea, feel the breeze. And you can swim and have fun there.'
(Naa White 2017).

Located on the beach, just behind the James Town lighthouse, is the JayNii Streetwise Foundation (Figure 55) that was briefly featured earlier, which is seen by several participants as a beautiful place, but also one that gives a positive character to the area. Blue Ivy explains:

'This place here JayNii Streetwise, it was started because of a cultural dancer, he performed here together with some friends as a tourist attraction. Then they erected the foundation that helps the children and the youth from the area and takes them to school. There are cultural events there, with the youth doing drumming, dancing. They also have a playgarden for the children, colourful and beautiful. It is very safe there for children. Everybody can go there and play and use the library if they want. Behind is the beach of James Town. It is also a tourist attraction, and when I was very young I used to go there to swim.' (Blue Ivy 2017).

Municipal sports field

A last open space that must be mentioned is located inside the Ga Mashie municipal building complex, which also houses the Ga Mashie Development Agency, an organisation that is involved in most projects of development, enumeration and planning in the neighbourhood (Figure 56). Blue Ivy explains its impact on the community:

'This building here is our AMA, the electoral commission office. It is very safe there. We can come here and hang out. I sometimes work together with the electoral commission. It is really where you need to go if you want to learn new things, if you want to know more. You come here. They



Figure 57: Photograph of Ga Mashie taken by a participant Blue Ivy (source: participant).



Figure 58: Photograph of Sabon Zongo taken by a participant Mallam (source: participant).

have the programmes, all kinds of programmes. [...] They have skills programmes, teaching things like tailoring, woodworking and these things. And an educational center, where you can learn all kinds of skills. You can learn sowing, you can learn sports. There is even two boxing gyms inside. It is very clean too, so very well maintained. [...] They have so many events here, inside the hall, workshops. So many things. There is even a radio station inside.' (Blue Ivy 2017)

These spaces are situated around an inner courtyard, a paved square that can serve as a basketball or football field (Figure 57). Because it is located in the courtyard of a public building, its categorisation as public space is somewhat ambiguous, access and use are not unrestricted but managed by the public servants. During the day it generally hosts specific activities organised by the AMA, such as basketball or dance training, or other sportive activities, but youth are generally tolerated to hang out or use the space when not in use.

Local and personal points of interest

Home/bases

One space that strongly impacts young people's daily lives, the base is certainly a space where young people – mostly men – spend a lot of time (see Chapter 3 p. 94). Bases as such are characterised by a range of different physical forms and qualities, from a semi-fixed location where the base is mostly demarcated by the bodies of the young people themselves or the movable furniture they bring, to larger permanent appropriations on the public domain, such as a small wood structure with a roof, to veritable clubhouses, some even equipped with electricity and TVs and elaborately painted.

In Sabon Zongo not many of these structures are erected. Not only are bases generally more sober in size and materials, in the form of physical structures, they seem to be less prevalent than in some other parts of Accra. This was observed in countless visits to the research area, and as an indication, only one participant included a base in his photograph selection. This is likely partly due to the pressing lack of space that the area suffers, but also because of the dire poverty of its residents. But another reason might be that the local mosque's social function overlaps at least to some extent with those of the bases. Many young residents of Sabon Zongo spend considerable amounts of time socialising at the mosque. As indicated by Mallam (Figure 58):

'This is the space where I feel most at home. It is the mosque near here. Just around the corner. It is peaceful and very very safe. You can just go there, without interference, to talk about anything at all. It always very quiet. Because people respect the mosque a lot. If you want to speak privately or



Figure 59: Photograph of Sabon Zongo taken by a participant Mallam (source: participant).



Figure 60: Photograph of an elaborately decorated base in Ga Mashie taken by a participant Kohler (source: participant).

even if you want to sleep. For every Muslim can go there. I usually sit outside, at the space around for abolition'⁹ (Mallam 2017).

However, also in Sabon Zongo the base remains an important space in the public realm for socialisation (mostly between men), not only for young participants but also for adults and elderly. This is indicated by Mallam in the following comment on Figure 59:

'This is my very special place for me. This is where I always get advice from the elderly. They are to me like mentors, a source of inspiration, inspiration about life. They tell me about how they spent their life when they were my size. They are like family, extended family. We are related through Islam. Without this space we cannot sit down and chat' (Mallam 2017).

This quote is interesting for several reasons, because it simultaneously defines his connection to his elders, the role of his religion – Islam – in this connection, but also indicates that he occasionally sits at a base with elderly, an interesting feature and proof of mutual respect and appreciation that is arguably not all so common in most parts of Accra.

As aforementioned, in Ga Mashie, some of the bases are more elaborate in forms and materials. Kohler shows his impressive club house on one of his photographs and explains (Figure 60):

'This where I hang out, with my friends. Anytime I'm in a bad mood. Anytime I feel like coming out to talk with friends. This is where I come to. This is where we call Bantama. You can see it is in the political colours of the NPP. Specially made for us by the NPP people. But it is a base for everybody, it is a base for all the people living in the community.

We call it Bantama after one constituency in the Ashanti region, where the party (NPP) recorded a massive success in an assembly election. This place always records massive figures. We were proud of this election result, so we honoured it.

But we are currently done with politics now at the base. Not everyone here is NPP. We all belong to different political parties now, but the NPP has the majority at the base' (Kohler 2017).

Kohler's photograph and comments reveal several things. On the one hand, it demonstrates how this type of space is located at the centre of social life for many young people. On the other hand, it also reveals the extent to which Ghana's party politics have become entwined with everyday life. The base is equipped with a flat screen TV and a sound system that was provided by the NPP party, and the party's political colours adorn the outside of its structure. However, Kohler indicates that everyone is welcome and that his friends do not necessarily share his political views. Despite the appearance and the clear link to one political party, political allegiance is not



Figure 61: Photograph inside a base in Ga Mashie taken by a participant Possy Gee (source: participant).



Figure 62: Photograph inside a different base taken by a participant Blue Ivy (source: participant).

a decisive factor for inclusion or membership of this community: it is not a critical component of their sense of belonging in this particular place, other commonalities seem to be more important.

Blue Ivy briefly commented on the youth's link with politics when discussing one of the bases near her place:

'The political parties help them set up the place. They give them TVs or games, in return for support during the campaigning' (Blue Ivy 2017).

Another participant in Ga Mashie who is identified here by the pseudonym Possy Gee, admitted a glimpse into a base where he spends a lot of time (Figure 61). It is located inside a friend's woodworking shop just adjacent to the open space called Gardiem. His response evokes a sense of security and belonging, and clearly indicates a strong emotional attachment to the place and to the community that it accommodates:

'Here we are at Gardiem playing cards. We go there so often, just go there and have fun. We play here, we make jokes here. The place is for a friend, he works there, he is a carpenter. So he makes chairs, and any other thing from wood, tables, sofa, coffins. And we don't disturb him when we are there. There are always so many friends there, I know all the people, we are like one family. I spend so much time there. Sometimes I even go just to sleep for some small time. Nobody disturbs you there' (Possy Gee 2017).

An issue that often arises concerning public space in Ghana is gender division, which is addressed in several sections throughout this Chapter, but particularly when discussing the base there is something to be said. As established in earlier work (van Riel, 2015) and by Langevang (2008a), a base is a social space predominantly produced, occupied and frequented by young men. However, women occasionally do sit at bases, but generally spend less time there compared to the men. As Blue Ivy confesses, the base makes her feel somewhat uncomfortable, yet not unwelcome (Figure 62):

'This is the base. Girls are also invited here but we come and feel shy there. But sometimes I go there to play Awari¹⁰ with some of the guys. Not many other girls come here, only when I bring a friend. But the boys they don't care. They feel boisterous when we are there and want to impress us' (Blue Ivy 2017).

Negative sense of belonging

Spaces that negatively affect the participants' sense of belonging in an area can be categorised by the type or source of perceived disruption. These are the main reasons stated by participants of a negative affiliation with space: (1) illicit or undesirable activities; (2) pollution and squalor;

10 Awari: Ashanti boardgame played with beans on a board with cups



Figure 63: Photograph of an unsafe area in Sabon Zongo taken by a participant Ras (source: participant).



Figure 64: Photograph of a different unsafe place in Sabon Zongo taken by a participant Ras (source: participant).

and (3) insecurity. Clearly, because these are experiential aspects, every individual will attribute other reasons to a negative affiliation with space. Some might feel more sensitive or strongly affected by a certain aspect than others, some might even be drawn to a space that others find repelling. These factors are also closely related and often coincide in spaces, their classification into three distinct categories is therefore arbitrary to some extent. These categories should not be interpreted as strictly separated or hierarchical, but rather as a set of interrelated indicators that were prevalent among the different participants. A pattern seems to emerge, expanded on in the conclusion of this chapter (p. 203), participants in Sabon Zongo were much more critical of their environment, generally highlighting the negative aspects of spaces more than the positive ones. The reasons behind this disparity are likely partly subjective, perhaps partly because of difference in translation and interpretation of different interpreters in the two neighbourhoods. However, the focus here is on the participants' perceptions and how the environment affects the subjective sense of belonging.

Illicit activities and anti-social behaviour

In Sabon Zongo, there were several participants who complained about illicit activities going on in some parts of the neighbourhood. The main negative activity mentioned was the alleged distribution and consumption of illegal drugs by young men in the area, and the disturbance of others while under influence of the substances. These activities were already highlighted as an important issue by youth during the focus group discussions, (and painfully obvious when we were disturbed several times by unruly youth during these proceedings), and confirmed by the council of elders, the chief and the assembly member during interviews with them. Most participants agreed that it was a longstanding problem, and that everybody knew who the perpetrators were, but that despite many attempts, it was difficult to resolve this issue, largely because the youth were known and respected in the community.

Ras, one of the young participants explains the gravity of the situation from Figure 63:

'This picture is taken around 44 (Angua Makafi). There are people there, sitting in the middle of the street, smoking, harassing people while children are running around. It is very unsafe. It is the people that make it feel unsafe and uncomfortable. The people that are living around this area are scared to complain' (Ras 2017).

When commenting on another photograph (Figure 64), he says that other activities also cause trouble in the area. He expresses caution about who is to blame, but does mention the area's



Figure 65: Photograph of a dirty and unsafe place in Sabon Zongo taken by a participant Carter (source: participant).

Christian minority, because they adhere to different values than the Muslim majority in Sabon Zongo:

'This is a negative aspect of Sabon Zongo. It is a dangerous building. There is gambling, smoking, drinking, dumping. It is very dirty and the graffiti says many bad words and bad names. It is there to harass and intimidate people. There are mostly Christians that gamble and drink. But also Muslims misbehave, but in general the people that drink and harass people are Christians around here' (Ras 2017).

Musa, who lives close to, and hangs out at his base just across the mosque at Angua Makafi, one of the trouble areas, describes that he likes this area a lot, it is where he lives and spends most of his time, *'but now unfortunately many drug users have taken over the area and there is plenty of crime there. They sit behind the area here, inside one of the places, and sell and smoke and cause troubles in the area. I am not scared to go anywhere, they know me well, so they will not disturb me, but some people are scared to go there. They rather stay far away, especially in the evenings'* (Musa 2017).

Another infamous location known for illicit activities is the space around and between the old Gaskia cinema and the old dilapidated public toilet building (Figure 65). Carter explains:

'The place, the building is old and dilapidated. There is a new one [public toilet] built next to it, so almost noone is using it. [...] The field in front is where young guys hang out and smoke. [...] At night it is very dark there, and some guys do petty theft there. I know most of the guys there that smoke, so they won't harass me. But they could harass somebody else. In the back some guys are always hanging out, sometimes causing trouble' (Carter 2017).

Carter and Musa here express an issue that frequently arose in conversations with many of the respondents – youth and adults alike – namely that these young 'troublemakers' are familiar among most residents of Sabon Zongo. Several respondents have suggested that some of these youth are members of prominent families of the area, and that this has been a key reason they have so far escaped any real punishment.¹¹ Important to remember here is that this implies they are not as marginalised or disconnected from the social fabric as might be imagined. During the focus group discussions and informal conversations with the participants, peer-pressure among youth came up as an important reason behind the use of illegal substances and anti-social behaviour in the area. None of the participants admitted to joining in any similar activities, yet a consensus on the subject implies that many of the youth have experienced this social pressure.

¹¹ Despite voices against harsh sentences and pending policy proposals that would decriminalise drug consumption, the distribution and consumption of marihuana can currently lead to a minimum of 5 years imprisonment (Ane, 2018).

Another aspect is that this unwanted activity or deviant behaviour generally coincides with, or is adjacent to, rough looking or derelict spaces in the area. These spaces are either left uncared for by their owners (e.g., in the case of the Angua Makafi area), the activity of the owner on the premises specifically renders it unattractive or polluted (e.g., rearing of cattle, see next paragraph) or the ownership and responsibility is unclear or collective (e.g., in the case of public toilets, market spaces). The squalor, often in addition to signs of incivility, such as visual territory markers or offensive slurs in graffiti and the presence of rowdy youth, can often evoke an increased sense of fear (Skogan, 1986). This deters many of the nearby residents from unnecessarily passing through or nearby these spaces, or even from reporting or complaining about the activities to authorities, leaving them largely unchallenged. This in turn introduces questions of ownership and mutuality between the youth and the residents, central to the notion of belonging.

During the focus group discussions in Ga Mashie, (see section 4.1.1 on page 121) some places were cited as hosting some illegal or anti-social behaviour, but surprisingly, none of the young respondents mentioned this type of behaviour in the individual activities as particularly problematic or a cause of conflicts inside their neighbourhood. In privacy, some confided that the practice of Sakawa, a form of fraud, is common inside the area, but it does not affect the local population (see section 4.2.1 on page 171 for a perspective from key-informants on this issue). The reason behind the disparity in responses between the two research areas is difficult to prove, but it is unlikely that an absence of users of substances in Ga Mashie is to blame. However, it is possible that the attitudes towards and perceptions of the use of illegal substances are different and influenced by cultural and religious differences between the different communities. Many residents in Sabon Zongo are devout practitioners of Islam and its strict prohibition of intoxicating substances such as alcohol, tobacco and non-medicinal drugs, whereas Ga Mashie's residents are predominantly followers of Christian belief, which has decidedly more lax prescriptions on the use of alcohol and tobacco. It is however likely that the difference in spatial layout and availability of open spaces has a determining influence on the actual and perceived disturbance or conflicts caused by incivilities. Ga Mashie provides significantly more spaces and opportunities for play and leisure outside of the social control or supervision of the dense urban fabric that Sabon Zongo simply does not.

Pollution and squalor

Despite the current government's early ambitions to make Accra Africa's cleanest city by



Figure 66: Photograph of cattle held inside Sabon Zongo taken by a participant Carter (source: participant).



Figure 67: Photograph of cattle held next to a playground area in Sabon Zongo, taken by a participant Haiba (source: participant).

2020, which was recently extended to 2024 (Annang, 2019; Ngnenbe, 2019) – a plan that was understandably received with a degree of scepticism – Accra currently suffers from severe pollution and environmental degradation, caused largely by inadequate sanitation and waste disposal systems. Many areas in Accra suffer from recurring flooding because of insufficient capacity of the drainage and sewage systems and because open gutters are regularly clogged with solid waste, because of inefficient waste collection. In both research areas the participants included photographs of polluted spaces and squalor and highlighted these spaces as highly detrimental to the positive image of their neighbourhood, which can be seen to negatively affect their sense of belonging.

In Sabon Zongo, there is one major contributing factor that was mentioned by almost every participant as the cause of frustration and conflict in the area, and that is the rearing of large cattle within the Sabon Zongo residential area, often even within the confines of houses or plots. According to the 2010 census all the cattle is owned and reared by approximately 1% of the residents of Sabon Zongo (Ghana Statistical Services, 2010), yet they occupy and pollute a significant portion of the available open space and seriously affect the well-being of the surrounding residents. Several participants complain about an unbearable smell of the animals, their manure and fodder, often rotting for days in the hot Ghanaian sun. Some express a concern for the spread of diseases when living in close proximity with cattle.

Carter indicates his frustration with the cattle owners when he discusses Figure 66:

'The stench here is awful for the houses. It is where they keep the animals at Gaskia. It is not safe, because the cows have very big horns. Behind the mosque, there is another road, and there are more animals there.' (Carter 2017)

Haiba similarly complains about cattle kept in stalls adjacent to the Da-Awatul Islamic school playground, his preferred outdoor space Ojo Park (Figure 67):

'These are the stables next to Ojo Park. They are owned by a local herdsman. They hold the cattle in these buildings you see there. But I don't like that they are there. It is very shameful. You can see it is very disturbing, the smell, the waste is everywhere. They pollute the place, they leave the food for the cows and the waste lying around, and it smells very bad. All day you smell them, in the class even. You can smell it from far around. And it looks very bad also. And for the children it is dangerous for their health. They are playing around in this rubbish.'

The council say they will come and make clean this place, but they never come. Nothing happens. It has been like this for a long while now, we have complained and complained and nobody does anything about it.' (Haiba



Figure 68: Photograph of cattle held inside Sabon Zongo taken by a participant Musa (source: participant).



Figure 69: Photograph of a polluted section of the beach in Ga Mashie, taken by a participant Naa White (source: participant).

2017).

Musa also expresses frustration about this issue not becoming resolved, despite regular complaints to elders, traditional and local authorities (Figure 68):

'This picture is to the side of Gaskia cinema, behind. This place is very disturbing because of the smell. They are rearing cows on private land, people are paying them to rear them there. I have complained many times to the elders, and they always say they will talk to the owners, but they don't. Sometimes the authority comes, health inspectors or something, but nothing ever happens. Also the place is full of garbage. This place could better be used to build a bank or a clinic, because the closest clinic is very far, in Sukura.' (Musa 2017).

Another complaint emerging from the auto-photography exercise was the number of commercial toilets in Sabon Zongo, the lack of care and hygiene and the troubling odours they produce for the surrounding residents. Like many residential areas of Accra, Sabon Zongo has serious sanitation issues; almost none of the houses have private toilets within the houses, and most residents resort to the use of public toilets or commercial toilets, constructed, owned and operated respectively by the city authorities or by privately individuals. There are several larger public toilets in the Zongo area, but their use is relatively expensive and the capacity is insufficient. To meet the demand, many homeowners decided to construct toilet blocks within the walls of their homes, and charge visitors for its use to earn a small wage. Because of their smaller size they can be built deep inside the dense existing urban fabric, increasing the extent of hindrance to surrounding neighbours.

In Ga Mashie there are two main concerns arising from the auto-photography exercise, namely the severe pollution of the beaches and the issue of solid waste disposal within the community, more specifically around London market.

Several participants have highlighted that the beaches of Ga Mashie, more particularly the area stretching from the informal community the youth call "Small London" (see next paragraph) to the site of an old slaughterhouse in the West – are severely contaminated. This stretch is regularly used as a garbage dump and open toilet by people from the impoverished communities that surround it. These views were corroborated in informal conversation with the participants, in interviews with key informants, and personal observation. Naa White discusses Figure 69 she took on the beach just outside of the community:

'This place is no good, it is very dirty. Those people don't even take care of the place. It is a breeding place for malaria and cholera. It smells so very bad



Figure 70: Photograph of a polluted section of the beach in Ga Mashie, taken by a participant Blue Ivy (source: participant).



Figure 71: Photograph of a road piled with refuse next to London Market in Ga Mashie, taken by a participant Richard (source: participant).

there' (Naa White 2017).

Blue Ivy shares this view, and contributes to the topic with her comments on Figure 70, another photograph taken on the beach only a small distance from the previous picture:

'This place is only a bit further than the last one [another photograph taken of an agreeable place on the same beach], this is also on the beach, but there people are defecating all the time. This is not a nice place, so I don't enjoy coming here' (Blue Ivy 2017).

In this image children can be seen playing on the beach and in the ocean, amid the trash that has been dumped or has washed onto the beach. Just on the other side of the Korle Lagoon – where the highly polluted Odaw river flows into the ocean – not more than a kilometre to the West of where these photographs were taken, there is a location affectionately known as “Lavender Hill” where each day hundreds of tons of untreated sewage are released straight into the ocean. This practice was picked up by media and portrayed as an impending environmental and public-health disaster. In 2010 the practice has become illegal, and after years of pledges by the government and pressure from the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), in 2017 the first treatment plant became operational in Ga Mashie, yet the large-scale illegal dislodging of waste from Lavender Hill continues. Every day, many people wade in the ocean on the beaches of Ga Mashie, and many fishermen catch their fish not too far from the shore, all in the wake of this vast spill of waste.

The second issue that was raised by one of the participants was the dumping of solid waste in some parts of the community, more specifically around the London Market. Richard, who works in his mother's restaurant and joins her every morning to the market to purchase provisions, criticises the state of the waste-collection in Ga Mashie (Figure 71):

'Behind the market the people dump a lot of rubbish. They dump it on top of this structure. All of this rubbish is from the market. It is very dirty there. Some days it will be cleaned up, but the next day there is the rubbish again. And it smells bad. In the heat of the sun it will start to smell immediately, and it will be there for several days before the AMA come and collect it. They should come here every day to collect, so it will no longer disturb the people around the market' (Richard 2017).

In the picture, a large amount of garbage can be seen piled on a walkway, blocking it for pedestrians and exposing the surroundings to unpleasant odours and dangerous vermin who might be attracted to it. The garbage is littered on the bank of an open drain or gutter, which seems already burdened with solids. When solid waste spills into the gutters it often ends up



Figure 72: Photograph of an illegal settlement on the beach of Ga Mashie, taken by a participant Naa White (source: participant).

obstructing the flow, which poses genuine risk during the rainy season. When rainwater can no longer evacuate through the drains, it floods the streets and houses with contaminated water. Unfortunately, the issue of littering is common in many parts of Accra, which suffers heavily from inadequate waste disposal capacity, and so are the yearly floods that accompany it.

Insecurity

The third major reason of discontent among participants was related to perceived insecurity. As stated earlier, this aspect is closely related to the other two given categories that negatively contribute to a sense of belonging, and the comments on photographs often mention at least two different categories. Furthermore, security was mentioned by most participants as one of the most positive aspects of their neighbourhood, which indicates that issues of security and their effects on the sense of belonging are strongly localised, which will be demonstrated in the photographs and narratives.

In Sabon Zongo, perceived insecurity corresponded with illicit activities and anti-social behaviour inside select spaces of the area, which were discussed in detail in the previous paragraph.

In Ga Mashie however, the prevailing source of perceived insecurity was external to the area, namely 'Ganshona' or 'Small London', an informal settlement that stretches from the port area, behind James Fort and the lighthouse to the old slaughterhouse site. This area reportedly houses mostly fishermen and deprived migrants from other parts of Ghana who have settled there illegally. The residents are regularly evicted and the entire settlement has been cleared by the government several times in order to start construction work on the port area.¹² But as soon as the bulldozers disappear and the construction project halts, residents quickly return to build a new iteration of the informal settlement. In the focus group discussions, auto-photography and cognitive mapping exercises, the participants painted a very negative image of this community. Many participants seem to foster some form of prejudice against the residents of this area, the consensus seems to be that it is a community of vice full of bad individuals that come into Ga Mashie to commit crimes and harass the residents. Naa White, one of the female participants, expresses her fears of the place (Figure 72):

'This is the beach side community we were talking about before. There are lots of bad people there. I don't go there, they can even collect your things, they will take everything. There are so many thieves living there' (Naa White 2017).

¹² The development of a luxurious port area has been planned and subject of election campaigns for over 50 years, but has never seen fruition.



Figure 73: Photograph of an illegal settlement on the beach of Ga Mashie, taken by a participant Blue Ivy (source: participant).

Blue Ivy, another female participant, has a very similar view, but personally feels her sense of security is affected only at night, during the day she feels safe to move through the settlement (Figure 73):

'This is one of the bad places. We call it "Small London". It has small small houses. We don't know where they are coming from. They are prostitutes and thieves, and armed robbers. During the day there is no problem to go there for swimming, or for buying fish. But at night we don't go there, because it is dangerous.

The buildings that are just before the light house are also not safe. There are some bad people living there' (Blue Ivy 2017).

In both pictures we can see the same community, composed of makeshift houses on the beach. The photograph Naa White shares is taken from behind the James Fort towards the beach, from a safe distance. The photograph of Blue Ivy is taken from much closer perspective, showing how close the community is built to the James Town lighthouse. None of the male participants have explicitly included this community in their photographs, however, many have expressed during focus group discussions and in informal conversation that they have security concerns only because of the residents of Small London, citing a 'bad attitude' of the people living there, and that they cause trouble for the people in Ga Mashie.

4.2 Perceived space

4.2.1 Key-informant and expert interviews

Interviews with different key-informants and experts were conducted to cast light on the perceived dimension of the research setting, as part of the empirical work in Accra. The questions guiding the interviews were focused on the participants' relationship with, and attitudes towards young people of the research area, and on the spaces they use. The questions aimed to uncover the power relations in the research areas, and the young people's particular position within these networks. A particular emphasis was placed on the governance and use of open spaces, and on narratives and practices that might include or exclude young people from decision making and participating fully in the area.

The main three themes are youth, space, and power, and all responses weave in-between and around these themes. This section attempts to organise the responses and opinions of key-informants and experts interviewed between these different themes. The main goals are then

to understand the structures and power hierarchies present within the research areas, to reveal the relationships between different stakeholders and the decision-making processes concerning public space, and to appreciate how young people fit in this intricate web of relations. This section is divided into four separate paragraphs: (1) Perspectives on youth, (2) Perspectives on space, and (3) perspectives on power.

The first paragraph focuses on different stakeholders' perceptions of young people, particularly the issues they face. The second paragraph concentrates on the different perceptions of stakeholders on issues concerning space. The third paragraph focuses on how different stakeholders influence decision making processes and how youth fit (or do not fit) in this web of power relations. The final paragraph draws some preliminary conclusions from the interviews, concerning power relations, decision-making processes and the position of youth.

Perspectives on Youth

Currently this chapter has focused on issues and environment from the perspective of youth themselves, but it is argued crucial to correspondingly understand how other, perhaps more powerful actors perceive youth and their challenges, in order to evaluate if there are important discrepancies between their perspectives, and what might be the underlying causes of these. The different stakeholders of the two research areas express challenges that generally fall into one or – more often – several of four main categories: unemployment, lack of education, density and overcrowding and other socio-cultural challenges.

Unemployment

Many stakeholders argue unemployment among youth is the central challenge that they face, at the root of the hardships they experience. Different stakeholders do hold different positions on the causes of and solutions to this issue.

In Sabon Zongo, the traditional authorities claim the responsibility of mobilising development efforts for the area. The traditional chief generally acts as an intermediary between his people and the local government. The people come to him for advice and share their grievances, either directly or through the council of opinion leaders, and he uses his influence to negotiate a response from the government. However, because the authority of the Sabon Zongo chief is not rooted in ownership of land – contrary to that of the Ga Mashie chiefs – his executive power is limited, but he will be consulted by the government on any projects that involve the area. The

chief prioritises his efforts to counteract unemployment, but realises working together with the government on issues of employment is essential:

'The most important problem is unemployment. We are in contact with the government for skills training and jobs. But the government is new, [they have] only been in power for three months, so we cannot expect a lot from them yet.¹³ We must give them some time. Then we will put pressure on the government to improve things for Sabon Zongo.' (Chief Bako 2017)

The assembly member for Sabon Zongo, representative of the local government in charge of the implementation of policies and programmes and the distribution of funds for the area, argues that the main issue concerning youth is a lack of education. This has strong implications on the level of employment and employment opportunities for young people, arguing that the jobs follow where highly educated graduates are. In 2010 Accra, only 15.7% of the people had successfully completed secondary education, and only 5.1% received a tertiary degree. The author does not possess the data aggregated on neighbourhood level, but following the demographic context compiled in Chapter 3, it is assumed that the average school attendance in the research areas is at least equal to, or lower than the average in Accra.

To several stakeholders, the issue of unemployment is caused by the practical absence of a formal job market. This means that, even the young people that receive education are not finding their way to the job market. Education is reportedly not focusing on delivering the right skills for employment, and do not prepare them sufficiently for the job market. Many different stakeholders, the chiefs and assembly members but also the director of the National Youth Authority (NYA), are therefore leveraging for different sorts of skills training that are more adapted to employment in the informal job market (comprising 73.4% of the work force in Accra (Ghana Statistical Services, 2010; Ghana Statistical Service, 2012))¹⁴ and the prospects of self-employment. Self-employment is by far the largest 'sector' of employment in Accra accounting for 48.4% of the work force, and is significantly larger in the two research areas, with 56.8% and 60.5% in Ga Mashie and Sabon Zongo respectively (Ghana Statistical Services, 2010; Ghana Statistical Service, 2012). The director of NYA, blaming policies of the 1980s that were implemented under heavy pressure of the IMF and World Bank, recognises the issue is with the formal employment market, and that it is necessary to recognise the reality of the informal sector rather than attempt to work against it, and to invest in opportunities in this sector.

¹³ He refers here to the government in power since 9 December 2016

¹⁴ No statistics were available aggregated for the research areas, however it is almost certain that their figures are higher than the average for Accra.

'Because of certain economic policies that were pursued some time back, like economic recovery programmes, our formal employment avenues have grinded. Most parents are not working, people are not getting jobs to pay their food for their children, and their children are also not working.'

Also there is a mismatch between education and labour, so that is why a lot of people come out of tertiary institutions every year and not getting jobs. Our economies are not supporting job creation. That is the problem. A mismatch between the institutions and the world of industry. [...] We have graduates who have completed school, about ten years, who are still not working.'

That is why, as an institution, we are now changing the focus of our mandate. We are now looking at the informal economy, we are shifting towards skill development. Adding value to the common things around us. The formal and the informal economy are together, but it has been neglected for a long time by the policies. So that is where the opportunities are for young people, to create jobs for themselves or get employed by their colleagues, or in partnership, they can put up businesses.' (Director National Youth Authority 2017)

The opinion leaders interviewed agreed that the generation of formal jobs is an obligation of the state, that it is the state's responsibility to develop the formal job market. This discourse has played an instrumental role in the previous (successful) election campaign of the current administration. Befitting the general strategies of decentralisation (see Chapter 3, section A.1 for a discussion on decentralisation policies, an electoral promise was made to develop a factory in every one of the 216 districts of Ghana. It is unlikely the administration will be able to fulfil its promise within this term, but many voters have taken this promise at face value and expect the government to take a decisive role in expanding the formal employment sector. Especially in communities with high levels of unemployment, low levels of education and an unskilled labour force, such as both Ga Mashie and Sabon Zongo, the promise of a factory in within the sub-metropolitan district was very effective in persuading voters.

'The lack of work is everywhere. [everyone nods in agreement] That is why we are looking for factories. For example in North Kaneshie there are some factories. The production industry has really changed the area. They provide skill training to the youth' (Opinion leader 1 Sabon Zongo 2017).

The consequences of unemployment among young people are diverse and worrisome, as indicated in the introduction chapter, and are sometimes linked to a variety of illegitimate activities. In Ga Mashie for instance, opinion leaders complain that unemployment is increasingly drawing youth towards the practice of sakawa, a form of internet fraud for which assistance is sought in traditional divination and witchcraft. Sakawa is documented in various different sources, and even the focus of a feature film in 2018 (Stelley, 2011; Korboe and Williams, 2012; Government of Ghana: National Development Planning Commission, 2015; Asamoah, 2018), and many different

participants admitted during informal conversation it is common practice among youth in Ga Mashie.

'During our short term in the office, all we do mostly is jobs, unemployment. Most of the youth are complaining about them not getting jobs. [...] But because they are not working, most of the youth are involved in fraud, we call it sakawa. Most of the youth get themselves into fraud, they go and chat with people to get money. Because there is no work.' (Unit committee member Ga Mashie 2017).

Education

Perhaps unsurprising, considering how intimately it is tied to the previously discussed issue of unemployment, the second theme most stakeholders brought up as a major challenge for youth is a lack of education. Many stakeholders mentioned a lack of education in relation to few opportunities on an exhausted (formal) job market, but there are several ways its effects are distinct.

In Sabon Zongo for instance, many of the youth are not well educated, and from a young age, many of them will drop out of school to start working for the parents rather than furthering their education. Chief Bako expressed his frustration with the perception that politicians promise to resolve these issues to get elected, but never seem to accomplish any progress once in power:

'All is not good. There are a lot of school dropouts. They want to proceed but their parents are not capable of support. Even after finishing JHS or secondary school, there are still no jobs. The government is aware of the problems. They use them on the campaign, but then finally they do nothing.' (Chief Bako 2017).

The assembly member that represents the Sabon Zongo electoral area certainly acknowledges education is the main challenge for youth:

'The problem is one: education. That is the main challenge. If you educate somebody, you see, you have given him everything. You give him the weapons to work everywhere. [...] Because the child does not come from an educated background, they cannot employ him into an office. They cannot ask them to head a position where he or she would be writing. So the only job he will get is a labourer job.' (Sabon Zongo Assembly Member 2017).

In Ga Mashie the perception prevails that the population is relatively highly educated, and that lack of education is not necessarily the main challenge. The assembly member for Ga Mashie claims that most residents agree education is crucial, and that peer pressure positively affects youth, but that the lack of parental support causes additional challenges for those that are determined:

‘...[E]ven though we have challenges, people in James Town are well educated. About 95 percent of James Town is well educated, JHS, SHS, even many have been to University. Compared to other electoral areas, James Town has a higher education. Even within the sub-metro¹⁵, James Town will be the number one. But when they get their degree they will go. The only challenge for the youth is that most of their parents have no good job. So they have to work for themselves before going to school. They go do some job, and then they use that money to pay their fees. [...] From infancy, when you look up to your fellow friends, you will not see any of them working. Any time you see them, he or she is going to school. So you will also go to school. As compared to other places, when you see a lot of the young guys play. The attitude of the place. But here, somebody will come and pick you and say, go to school, go and learn. We believe in education, for our elders and our brothers and sisters ahead of us, they will always advise us, whatever you want to do, you have to educate yourself. Most of the young guys, they all want to be somebody some day. So they will have to learn’ (Ga Mashie Assembly Member 2017).

Several stakeholders claim the main problem behind issues of unemployment and education is the lack of parental support and guidance, an observation that was echoed among young participants (discussed in section 4.1.1). Earlier generations were, because of their difficult circumstances, unable to provide a situation of security or stability. The unit committee members of the area agree that parents are partly to blame for the current hardship many youth face, as many parents do not provide for, or educate their children, leaving them vulnerable for other influences and – sometimes illegal – occupations (for example sakawa, see previous paragraph). They argue it is the responsibility of the government to educate the youth and instil them with good morals, and provide them with training and activities that keep them from engaging in anti-social or illegal activities:

‘Most of the problems start with the parents. It starts when they don’t educate their children what they are supposed to do. We need the authorities to educate the youth. They can make programs, to educate the youth on what they are supposed to do. The government is not doing that, they are not doing enough. Engaging them in more programs will stop them from doing these things. We have capabilities. If you interact with a person, you can find out what he can do. So engaging that person with things he knows he can do, will not engage him in things that are not necessary to him.’ (Unit Committee member Ga Mashie 2017).

The director of the NYA claims that this lack of support, combined with the severe challenges they face – the lack of education, unemployment, and a severe housing shortage – many of Accra’s young people essentially live on the streets. Even if they are not technically homeless, their unemployment or their particular modes of employment often compel young men to spend much of their life in the public realm, away from parental or adult supervision and exposed to

15 Ashiedu Keteke Sub-metropolitan district, one of 10 districts under the Accra Metropolitan Assembly

some of the negative influences of street life and gang culture:

'You know the challenge with most young people is, I put it, the economic empowerment. Many of them are not under employment, that is a very big challenge for many people. We have deficit also in accommodation. We see young people sleeping outside and when it is like that, they begin to form gangs. So you can imagine, armed robbery and stealing and all these things come about when young people are not seriously engaged in any activity. They have no parental guidance, because most of them are living on the streets' (Director National Youth Authority 2017).

In Sabon Zongo the opinion leaders expressed a similar concern:

'Unemployment, drug abuse is rampant. Because of the lack of jobs, young guys seek opportunities. That is how they end up selling drugs in the streets, this is the only job available to them.' (Opinion Leader 1 Sabon Zongo 2017)

Density and overcrowding

Several informants and experts voiced concern about spatial issues as explicitly challenging for young people. As discussed earlier in section 4.1 both research areas suffer from issues of high density and overcrowding, however, the effect and experience is argued as vastly different between the neighbourhoods. First, it is required to differentiate between the notions of (over) crowding and density, as they are related but often (mistakenly) used interchangeably (Stokols, 1972). Density is considered an objective measure, expressed usually in population per area unit (Gray, 2001). Crowding, however, generally indicates a level of density that produces adverse psychological effects in people, such as a lack of privacy, undesirable interactions or mental stress (Crothers, Kearns, & Lindsey, 1993; Gove, Hughes, & Galle, 1979). In an attempt to define crowding analytically, it is often expressed in terms of persons per room or per dwelling (Alwash & McCarthy, 1988; Gray, 2001; Stokols, 1972). Like many other neighbourhoods of Accra, both research areas exhibit high levels of residential density, as both are officially designated as slum areas, partly on account of their high densities (UN-Habitat, 2008). In order to avoid confusion, it is helpful to distinguish between the different types of density in the two research areas. The term 'crowding' is used here to indicate a high number of persons per dwelling. In contrast, the term 'density' is used here to express a high number of residential units per spatial unit, or rather the amount of dwellings relative to the amount of open space.

The director of the Ga Mashie Development Agency (GAMADA), the agency in charge of development efforts in Ga Mashie, which deals with a severe lack of accommodation under a burgeoning population, firmly asserts that lack of space is the biggest challenge facing youth in

Ga Mashie. According to him, finding and developing open spaces in the neighbourhood is the organisation's the highest priority:

'Obviously it is lack of space, because the space is congested. They don't have places where they can meet and play, and have other social activities. [...] Of course, there need to be more spaces for them, but unfortunately it is a built area, so you can't provide as sufficient as they would all need. That is what we need to consolidate for them. So that is what the institution is doing. [...] There are not enough spaces or rooms for them. Those are the main problems.' (Director Ga Mashie Development Agency 2017)

In Sabon Zongo overcrowding is perhaps less pronounced, at least in terms of people forced to sleep in the streets, but the sheer absence of open spaces makes the situation certainly not less pressing. The opinion leaders expressed concern for the lack of outdoor spaces for the youth, arguing they have nowhere to spend their leisure time without disturbing the residents. As a consequence, without a space to claim for play and hanging out, the youth end up spending much time in the streets, in the small alleyways between the houses or just outside of their homes, inside the dense urban fabric. Inevitably, this results in conflicts with other residents, and amplifies the disturbance from any possible incivilities or anti-social behaviour.

'But for leisure, inside Zongo there is not much space, there is no place. Outside young people have some spaces to do these things, like the beach. [...] But inside there is nowhere they can go. Only the school grounds. And there are some small small spaces inside. But they are only causing trouble there.' (Opinion Leader 4 Sabon Zongo 2017)

The director of the NYA sees unemployment, growing informality and socio-spatial issues such as overcrowding and congestion as connected to decades of policies that prioritised the urban areas and fuelled a massive rural-urban migration. This reflects the position of the Ghanaian government, which is increasingly invested in a discourse of decentralisation, promoting policies that restore the balance between rural and urban areas as a long-term remedy to many of Ghana's problems.

'Our industries are too much centred, clustered in four major cities: Accra, Kumasi, Tamale and Takoradi. So all the young people are coming to the cities. The current system means the person is not relevant in his own community, so he has to migrate to urban areas. Looking for a formal job, but where are the formal jobs? The opportunities are not there. So we are now experiencing urbanisation, and now it is the informal that is growing. That is why you see all these spatial problems. In Accra, you go to James Town, people there, they sleep in the street, there is no space. If you have travelled in the night in Accra, you see them sleeping. And all are coming from the rural areas.' (Director National Youth Authority 2017)

Official representation youth

How does the state perceive and represent youth? It is an important question, as it determines how young people are treated and supported by the state in terms of policies and regulations, and often by extension in popular discourse and society in general. In the next chapter a response to this question will be expanded and discussed along with a review of contemporary policy documents, but policies and regulations are interpreted and implemented in a context of local power relations.

As the senior official in charge of implementing and developing youth policy, the director of the NYA has an outspoken opinion on what the attitude of the government should be towards youth. His demeanour is compassionate, and his concern for the youth sincere, yet his responses betray familiar elements of a patronising attitude towards youth that seems influenced by early nationalist narratives. As he is describing the work of the institution, he evokes the image of youth as an important resource for the future of the nation that should be invested in, but also of youth as somewhat ignorant, reckless and naïve, in need of guidance and supervision, to be modelled and instilled with appropriate (nationalist) values before they can be deployed in the service of the country. The motivation does not necessarily seem rooted in a genuine concern for their well-being, separate from their value as a resource:

'Our mission is to develop young people, how they can use their potentials for the good of national development. [...] We say that we create an opportunity for young people to develop themselves and how they can become productive citizens and responsible adults. [...] The idea with this program is to instil certain values, to young persons: service, service to humanity, to your country, to your society, and to your community, and self-reliance, leadership and entrepreneurship. [...] All that we want to do at the end of the day, the young person should be contributing towards his society, his community. And building on his personality.' (Director National Youth Authority 2017)

Perspectives on Space

Young participants claimed that they do not feel appreciated or valued by society, many do not feel listened to, or taken seriously by most adults and decision makers. They have little opportunities for participation in decision-making processes, and when they can, they do not feel as if they participate on equal terms with the adult population, their voice is not equal to more powerful agents in the neighbourhoods. The director of NYA highlights that the lack of voice for youth in decision making processes affects also their availability of space.

'It will never happen without any form of advocacy. Even spaces that are legally designated to be space for young persons are being taken over for

commercial purposes and interests. [...] But when people are planning, they are not thinking of young people. So almost all the spaces have been taken over by commercial interests. And this is where the issue of corruption comes in, people compromise youth for their gain. There is no money being gained by giving young people the space. We see young people as liabilities, but not as assets. That is how society perceives them.' (Director National Youth Authority 2017)

The director of NYA is a strong advocate of the vision behind the Nationalist project of the independence government, which heavily invested in young people to employ them for the development of the nation, supporting them through various programmes and, perhaps more importantly, reinforcing a predominantly positive perception of youth as the 'hope of the nation' (for the discussion see 3.1.6 on page 94).

'It all depends on leadership and philosophy, and a vision. The Nkrumah government had a vision. They saw that investing in youth would lead to the wealth and the health of the nation, because they are the custodians of the heritage of the nation.'

He continues his argument, criticising the current and previous governments' lack of long-term planning and vision:

'And then, because of limited resources and corruption, investing into young people, when are you going to get returns from them? There is a general lack of long-term planning in this respect. If that vision had been continued, maybe our institutions would have been different.' (Director National Youth Authority 2017)

Ga Mashie has been relatively successful in protecting and improving public spaces within the area, largely because of significant efforts of the GAMADA agency. The director claims their efforts conform to the city authority's agenda of improving the quality and quantity of public spaces all over the city. However, following observations and reports of the poor availability and quality of public space in Accra, there is little evidence to support the execution of this agenda in other parts of the city. The authorised agency, the National Development Planning Commission (NDPC), have published in full the development plans up to 2010, but only drafts or outlines of more recent versions are publicly available. An evaluation of current efforts and state of affairs concerning the development of public spaces is included in the subsequent chapter (section 5.2 on page 217).

'The assembly itself has a policy to develop more public parks, not only in Ga Mashie but in other parts of the city. So [the activities of the agency] fit into the assembly's policy of creating more public spaces, green areas in the city. That is the agenda. It has been an issue since the past two decades, since we started working here. If you don't concern with the public spaces, people will encroach and then you lose it. Once you have invested in it, it becomes

public good. The public then, the beneficiaries, protect it and make sure nobody encroaches on it.’ (Director GAMADA 2017)

The director makes two observations that he claims drive the GAMADA approach: investing in public space is necessary to keep others from encroaching upon it, and thus to keep informal construction at bay; and, perhaps more importantly, that the public plays an important role in managing and protecting public space, when they are involved and feel they own a space. Only with approval and assistance from the public can the local government effectively police the spaces or enforce the regulations in place:

‘If you put the wrong thing at the wrong place you have to remove it because you need a permit to put anything anywhere. If you don’t have a permit, then sub-metro officers will go and remove it. That is the strategy to protect and police those public spaces for the public use. [...] On every project, at least we have to remove some structure that were placed in the wrong places. So it happens frequently.’ (Director GAMADA 2017)

But it is not only the local government that is involved in management of spaces. The Ga traditional authorities are powerful agents in Accra, and a few families and stools control much of the land the city is built on. In Ghana’s contemporary political system, originating in indirect forms of rule in the colonial era, the traditional authorities are officially recognised by the government and represented to some extent in the political system. In planning processes, especially those regarding public space and other land-based decision-making, the power relations between the various traditional and political authorities are complex and ambiguous, and responsibilities and jurisdictions often ill-defined (see section 3.1.2 on page 76 for a discussion on indirect rule and customary land laws). This can lead to greatly reduced accountability of both sides, which is often related to ineffective governance and corruption in literature (Holm, 2000; Ubink, 2008; Jackson et al., 2009). The complexity of this system is demonstrated in the following response of the assembly member of Ga Mashie about the responsibilities and enforcement of planning and building regulations:

‘This is the city authority. [...] Even if a family is having a space somewhere, and they want to undertake any construction work, they have to follow the city authority to acquire a permit before they can do a construction.

When there is a nuisance in the community, and if someone is building or littering somewhere illegally, we as the city authority we have a task force to take care of these things. Currently, the president wanted to construct the landing beach for us. So those [living on the beach], we see them as squatters. Nobody recognised them, nobody has given the place to them. It is the city authority who can demolish or chase them from the place.

But we have traditional authorities too. We have [authorities] in different categories. We have a season that there will be a ban on drumming. It is the traditional authority that do arrests and punish those that break the laws. They [...] will go and keep the order. So it depends on the offense who is in charge.’ (Assembly Member Ga Mashie 2017)

This exemplifies that space is a commodity in Accra that is managed and regulated by a complexity of different formal and informal rules, and that power and decision making concerning space is similarly divided between many different groups. In the next paragraph these power relations, young people’s position within these networks and existing mechanisms of democratic participation are discussed.

Perspectives on power

The complex and obscured nature of the networks of power relations described in the previous paragraph make it arguably easier for the powerful to abuse established power and resources, and harder for the powerless to meaningfully participate in, or influence decision making, making them more vulnerable to exploitation or further marginalisation. As a group excluded from political, economic and spatial participation, it is then crucial to understand how young people in Accra organise themselves to combat this marginalisation, influence decision making processes and claim spaces for their self-development. To this effect, the existing mechanisms for public participation are examined, in order to understand how democratic these mechanisms really are. Procedures of participation and consultation are common in different stages and levels of decision making, from the local community to the National level.

An interesting observation in this regard, is that young people are relatively well organised. Many young people spontaneously form into informal collectives for various purposes, and then nominate some of their peers to represent their views, and to act and speak on their behalf in larger assemblies or meetings. On the advisory council of traditional leaders, there is often a youth chief that represents a larger group of youth from an area or kinship group.

‘It is mostly through the youth leaders that they organise themselves. And through the youth leaders that they express concerns, and through them that youth come to us, and give their thoughts and grievances. They discuss these things among themselves, and then the leaders express these things to us. When there are things happening, they organise themselves.’ (Assembly Member Sabon Zongo 2017)

These youth groups can become formalised or registered with the NYA in order to be eligible for certain benefits or apply for funding for projects. The government keeps a directory of youth

groups, and consults them to assess youth challenges and needs, to inform the youth policies and the promotion of youth development. The NYA has attempted to give these groups a voice by creating a platform, the 'Federation of Youth Organisations' and linking them to various stakeholders₁₆:

'We have youth organisations that are registered with us, so what we did was, we created forums for them. Focus groups discussions, we have a Ghana federation of youth organisations. The federation was the mouthpiece of the young people. So it was the leaders, they interacted with the members of the federation. Our role was only to create a platform, connecting them to all sorts of authorities, including chiefs, traditional leaders, religious groups and so on.'
(Director National Youth Authority 2017)

Community-based organisations (CBO) were highlighted by several stakeholders as important resources for community participation and consultation processes. The nature of these organisations remains somewhat vague, but they can include various communities and informal organisations. The director of the GAMADA specifically cited CBO's as an important entry point for a community involvement in decision making processes:

'We've held meetings and interactions with them, planning workshops, to identify their needs. Participatory planning with focus groups discussions. The need was there [...], this is a very crowded community with very few spaces, so we have to consolidate a space for the use of the community. We did a workshop. We can't go around and ask every individual what they want and then build whatever it is they need. That is why we use their representatives through the CBO, the community-based organisations. We have different community based organisations who participated, who represent the various communities, women groups, youth groups, and so forth.' (Director GAMADA 2017)

The prevailing opinion, however, was that most participation initiatives do not live up to expectations of residents and youth alike, as they were generally ineffective in achieving short term results. As the Sabon Zongo assembly member claims, however, that youth have shown up in large numbers, and participate actively and outspokenly:

'We organise a gathering, a forum in the neighbourhood, and from there we set the priorities for the action plan.[...] A lot of people come and participate. I would say, a hundred plus. We call the imams, the stakeholders, and the community leaders. And then the youth. Most of our gathering is the youth. They are most vocal, they are very very active. When we are discussing, we look at the majority, we look at what the majority supports. When we take a decision this is what the majority wants, that is what we are going to accept.'
(Assembly Member Sabon Zongo 2017)

He expressed the importance of keeping personal relations with his constituents, and therefore the need for a public servant to be approachable, especially to the youth. He maintained that

16 This forum currently has no online presence, there is no proof of their current existence.

youth are included in decision-making processes on the municipal level:

'I am a young man, and most people within this community are the young people, about 70% percent. Most of them we bring them on board whenever we do anything concerning the community and their lives. They are actively involved in decisions.'

For instance, this office, you see where I was sitting before, in front of the building? I was sitting there with some six young guys. [...] I'm advising them. And because I am a young man, they always feel very comfortable coming to me. They don't come to the office, but because I am there (outside in front of the building, not in the office) they will come.' (Assembly Member Sabon Zongo 2017)

On the national level, the director of the NYA also insists that youth consultation was a core principle that guided the drafting of youth policies. This process reportedly lasted three years and included a long sequence of consultations with various youth groups.

'We did this consultation with the young people themselves, it took us about three years. We had to interact with young people in the grassroots, meet them, get a consulting committee that are to come out with the draft policies, they then did a series of consultations with the young people. Then validation through stakeholder meetings, validation processes. We wanted young people to own the policies.' (Director National Youth Authority 2017)

In the next chapter the latest available youth-policy documents¹⁷ are studied to reveal to what extent they are aligned with, or where they differ from the perceptions and opinions reflected in this chapter.

'It has become time-tested in the sense that, for all of us to accept it, including the political parties, we make sure that youth-wings of the various political parties took part in all the consultations.' (Director National Youth Authority 2017)

The reliance on a system of registered youth organisations and CBO's, however, likely overlooks and disempowers some of the most marginalised individuals, who are either less connected, or out of suspicion for authorities or other reasons, prefer not to register with the NYA. The director explains the agency attempts to contact these individuals through certain activities:

'We try to reach out to the marginalised, through activities. For instance through football. You know football is a passion of the Ghanaians. So if you want to talk to young people that are marginalised, that have these problems, endemic unemployment, teenage pregnancies, we use the medium of football. We have competitions, the challenge cup. Two teams from different communities, they play each other. And during the breaks we talk to the spectators. Then also alongside that we have peers that go around, educating.' (Director National Youth Authority 2017)

¹⁷ At the time of writing, July 2019, the newest Youth Policy document publicly available dates to 2010.

Whether this attempt is enough to convince the most marginalised of youth is unlikely, and it raises again the difficult issue of gender representation in public space.

4.2.2 Systematic photographic observation

After considering the topics of space and youth from the perspectives of the various stakeholders involved in the neighbourhoods, this second tool, termed systematic photographic observation (SPO), serves to deliver a more objective perspective on the spaces inside the neighbourhoods and the people that use and appropriate them. Several spaces were identified to study in each research area, that were systematically recorded (3.1.5 on page 91) and analysed according to a range of different parameters. The choice of specific scenes was made after a period of getting acquainted with the neighbourhood, in accordance with a local photographer.

Parameters

Gender

The division of gender in public space is severely distorted in many African cities, resulting in a polarisation between the private and public spheres. The balance between male and female users is therefore a central parameter that has a defining effect on the character, the power dynamics and workings of a space.

Age-group

This parameter is likely the most controversial one, and admittedly open to the largest margin for error. As seen in Chapter 3, identification of youth by age-group itself is a contested practice, and exact measurement of the age of a person based on appearance on a still image is difficult, if not impossible. The arbitrary age of 35 was chosen for inclusion of young participants and will be maintained here. However, especially as some people's facial features are not visible, body language, type of activity and clothing are taken into consideration for the identification of the age group.

Activities

Walking: This category includes all people seen on their way (on foot) from one activity or one place to another.

Active: This category includes all types of sport and play, generally practiced by youth and



Figure 74: Scene 1 of the SPO exercise, the Angua Makafi junction in Sabon Zongo (source: author).

children; football, cycling, and other types of games.

Inactive: People that display a passive or static posture are categorised here, standing or seated, waiting, socialising, or watching another activity, but not visibly engaged in any of the other categories (see commercial).

Commercial: This category includes people that are likely to be engaged in, or aspiring to commercial activity. No distinction is made between the side of the transaction. It includes all people interacting with a seller, opening the possibility to critique that some might be engaged in social interaction without commercial intent. There is no way to know for certain from a still image. It includes people that are otherwise passive but seated behind goods for sale – they are therefore not included in the category of inactive – or people that are walking carrying goods for sale, both for their intent at commercial activity. People that are walking or moving to or from a shop are not included as engaged in commercial activity, for it is impossible to know for certain their intent and destination from a still image.

Other: This category includes all other activities that do not fit in any of the four other groups, examples found in the frames are domestic work, construction work, religious practices.

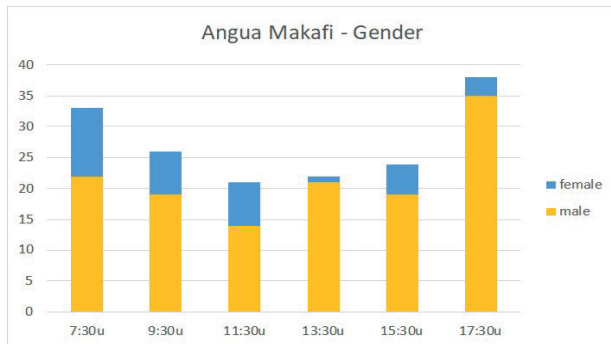
Vehicles

As a secondary indicator of place use and activity, motorised vehicles are counted within the spaces. A distinction is made between moving and parked vehicles, but no further distinction is made between types of motorised vehicles, such as cars, trucks, or motorbikes.

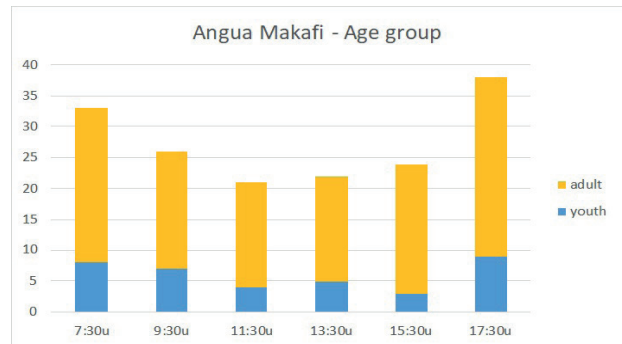
Public space in Sabon Zongo and Ga Mashie

Sabon Zongo: Angua Makafi junction

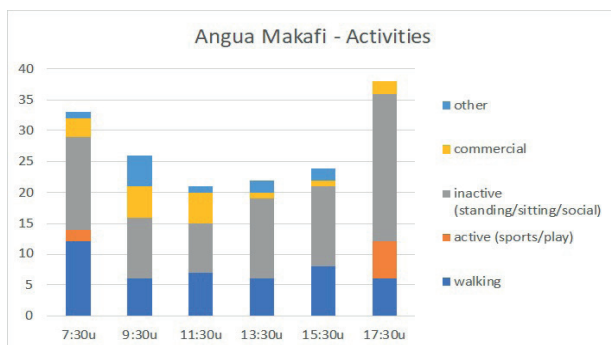
The first scene in Sabon Zongo captures what locals call the Angua Makafi junction, a small space at the heart of the neighbourhood, produced by the intersection of the main artery street and commercial axis Sarkin Zongo Road (SZR), and another important street, Chief Shaibu Street (Figure 74). The photograph is taken along SZR towards the West. This space hardly counts as an open space, because of its small size and its main function as thoroughfare. However, as discussed earlier, the street in Accra performs an important social function as public space, especially here because open spaces in Sabon Zongo are few and small, and the residents manage with the available spaces. Consequentially, Sabon Zongo has very lively streets, with a



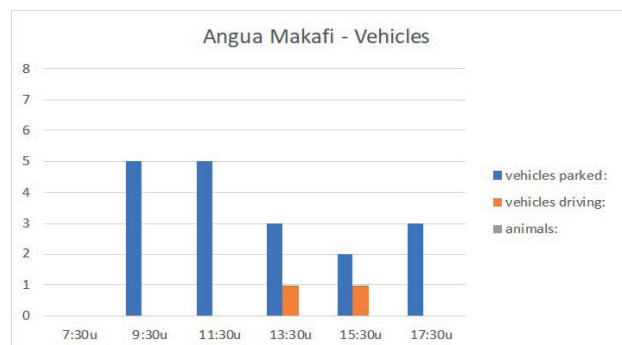
Graph 5: Angua Makafi, users by gender (source: author).



Graph 7: Angua Makafi, users by age group (source: author).



Graph 6: Angua Makafi, users by activity (source: author).



Graph 8: Angua Makafi, vehicles (source: author).

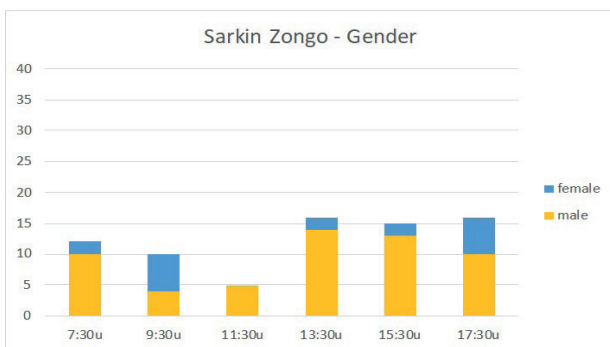
mix of domestic and commercial activities occurring in the streets throughout the area.

The junction is unpaved but both roads are in relatively good condition, demonstrating only small potholes and dents in the road surface. Both streets have concrete gutters on both sides to evacuate wastewater and streetlights are seen lined along SZR, both uncommon features in this underdeveloped area, reflecting the significance of the streets that compose the junction. On one corner of the junction stands one of the most prominent mosques in Sabon Zongo, which attracts many Muslim visitors, and provides a seating area on its doorstep inviting social interaction. Many of the blind people that the area houses¹⁸, assemble in front of the mosque. On the other corner of the frame, a two-story house is visible, adorned with several TV-antennae and a satellite dish, indicative of a prosperous owner. From the corner into SZR, a myriad of shops and social spaces have formed in the shade of small canopies, makeshift roofs and the few trees that surround the junction. The shops and commercial activities on SZR attract considerable pedestrian traffic, and along with the mosque, generate a lively atmosphere, and concentrate much of the public life in the neighbourhood on this junction, affirmed by the large total number of people observed in the frames (164).

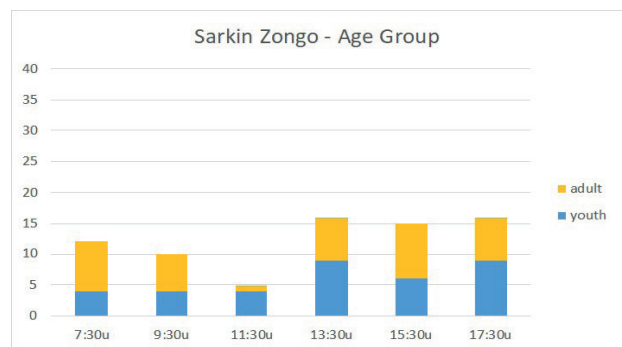
From the photographic observations it appears that the space is used by people throughout the day, with most people observed in the mornings and afternoons and a slight decrease during the hottest hours of the day (see Graph 5-Graph 8). A similar trend is observed in the number of vehicles, mainly motorbikes, parked around the space declining after the morning (see Graph 8). Very little automated traffic is seen driving through the space in the photographs. As observed in all the monitored spaces – with one notable exception – women are strongly outnumbered by men in this space, representing only 21% of the observed users (see Graph 5). They are captured mostly in the mornings, either moving through the space or engaged in some form of commercial activity such as buying or selling merchandise or foodstuffs. Men are present in this space throughout the day, many of them are not engaged in any clear or specific activity, but rather passively seated, socialising or watching others. The largest concentration of men is consistently located in front of the mosque, sitting on the pavement or on chairs underneath its overhanging roof. The users of this space are mainly adults and elderly, outnumbering young users with 78% to 22% (see Graph 7). This, again, is mainly due to the large group of adults and elderly men that are positioned in front of the mosque. In the morning and late afternoon children can be seen playing with a football table in the opposite corner. In the morning more people are



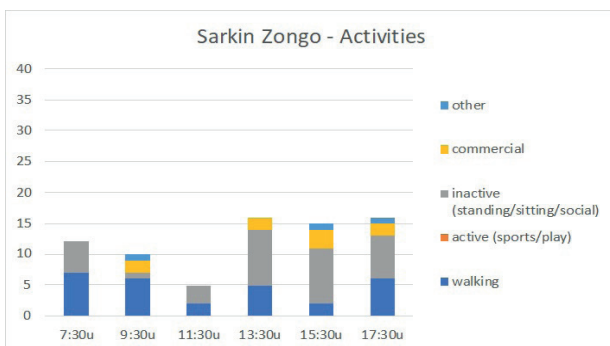
Figure 75: Scene 2 of the SPO exercise, the Sarkin Zongo junction in Sabon Zongo (source: author).



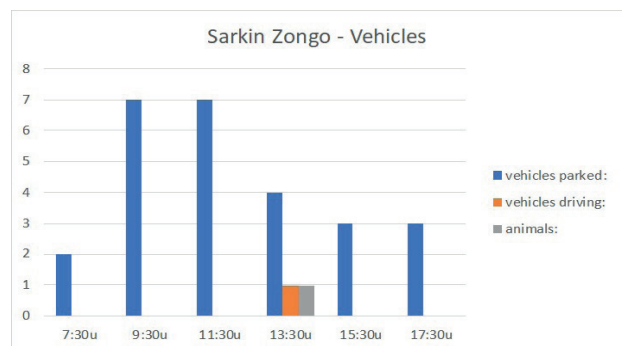
Graph 9: Sarkin Zongo, users by gender (source: author).



Graph 11: Sarkin Zongo, users by age group (source: author).



Graph 10: Sarkin Zongo, users by activity (source: author).



Graph 12: Sarkin Zongo, vehicles (source: author).

passing through the space or engaged in commercial activities mainly on SZR, whereas in the late afternoon a larger percentage of people can be seen seated or inactive around the space (See Graph 6). This indicates the importance of the sun and shade as crucial factors, largely dictating the geographies of movement and rest of people in this frame.

Sabon Zongo: Sarkin Zongo junction

The next scene of Sabon Zongo captures a different junction on the same artery street, Sarkin Zongo Road, only 50 meters towards the East where it crosses Chief Idrisu Lane (Figure 75). The part of SZR coming into the junction is paved and in good condition, the rest of the junction is partially paved and in reasonable condition. Similarly to frame 1, both streets are lined with concrete gutters, and on SZR several streetlights can be seen hanging from electricity poles. The frame captures several seating areas, marked by wooden benches and plastic chairs, sheltered from the sun by overhanging roofs. On SZR, several shops and food stalls can be seen. The remaining buildings are typical residential single-story courtyard houses. No landmarks or attractions are located in this frame that potentially draw large crowds.

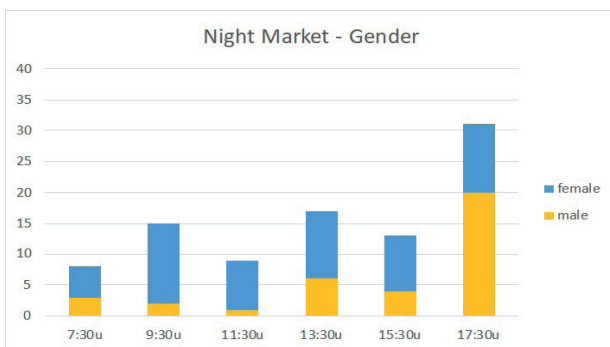
In this frame, markedly less activity is observed throughout the day, with 74 people counted in total. Again, women are outnumbered, 76% to 24%, they are seen generally passing through the space in the morning and in the late afternoon, the men mostly occupy the seating areas in the afternoon (Graph 9). In terms of age groups, the space use is much more balanced than the first frame, with 49% young people counted (Graph 11). This is mainly because one of the seating areas is prominently occupied by a large group of young men. Yet there is no play recorded in this frame. Most of the movement happens in the morning and the late afternoon, but during the hottest hours of the day – between 1.30h and 16.00h pm – most people can be seen stationary, sitting in the shade (Graph 10)-. In the morning there are also markedly more stationary motorbikes present than in the afternoon (Graph 12).

Sabon Zongo: Night Market

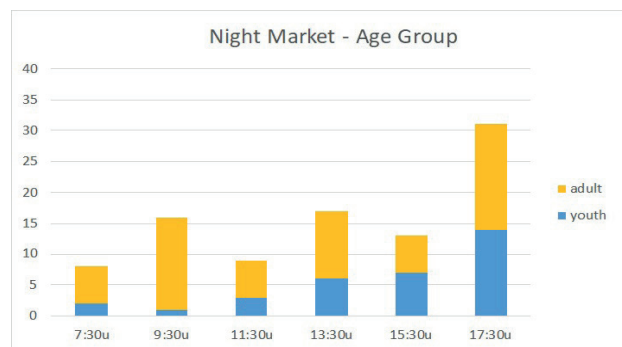
The third scene in Sabon Zongo captures the Night Market (Figure 76), a square located at the heart of the neighbourhood, both geographically and symbolically. It is a rectangular open space situated only a few meters from the old Chief's palace, flanked by Shaibu Bako Street and a smaller alleyway. It is one of only a few public spaces that are not part of the road infrastructure; the two notable exceptions are Ojo Park (featured in the section on auto-photography), which



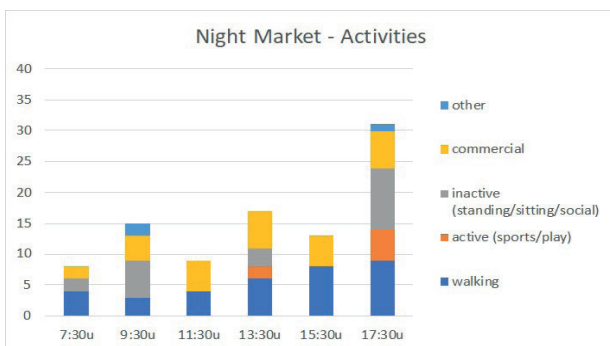
Figure 76: Scene 3 of the SPO exercise, the Night market in Sabon Zongo (source: author).



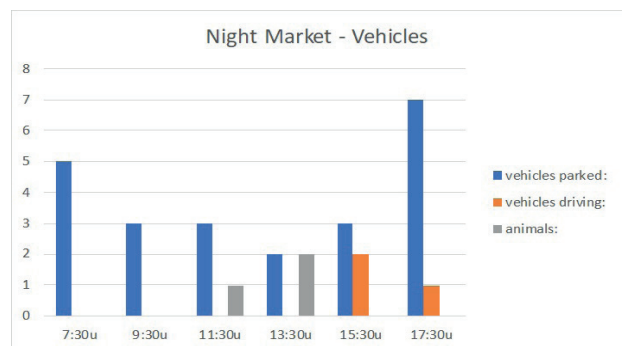
Graph 13: Night market, users by gender (source: author).



Graph 15: Night market, users by age group (source: author).



Graph 14: Night Market, users by gender (source: author).



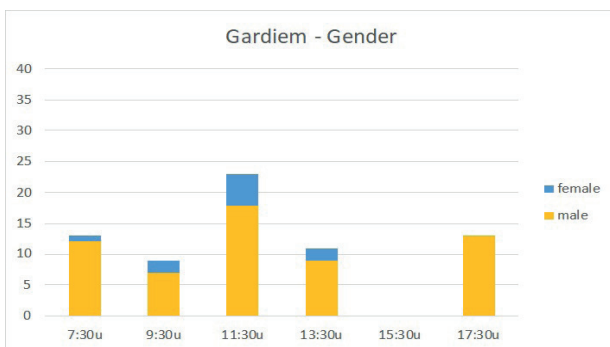
Graph 16: Night Market, users by age group (source: author).

is a school playground during the day, and Zongo market, which is a dedicated marketplace, and is technically located outside of the neighbourhood boundary. Despite its significance for the community, it is a rather small unpaved space, enclosed mostly by unremarkable single-story residential buildings, some with attached small shops. Two buildings stand out: on the left, a double-story residential building can be seen, supporting an air-conditioning unit under the window, and across the street is a larger double-story mosque still under construction. The space receives its name from the fact that in the evenings (not captured in the photographic observation) the square becomes occupied with food stalls and kiosks. However, despite its nightly function, the only streetlights are located on the side of the road, the square itself has no dedicated fixtures to illuminate it. During weekdays it is used as a parking space, and a playground for smaller children, and in the weekends the space is appropriated for a range of different events and ceremonies.

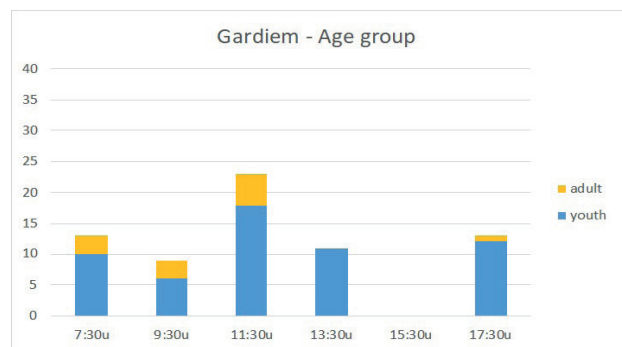
As the name Night Market directs, the space is most actively used towards the evenings, and hence sees a spike in activity in the late afternoon. It is the only space between the two neighbourhoods that demonstrates, not even an equal gender distribution, but a positive balance for women, representing 61% of the people captured, against 39% men (Graph 13). Women's presence stays relatively stable throughout the day, while (young) men are remarkably absent for most of the day, their presence peaks in the late afternoon. On the one hand, the relatively small presence of young men might be explained by the absence of a base or social space within the frame. This might be due to its location, very close to the Chief's palace. Social control is likely higher here, and young people might prefer to take their activities further from the watchful eyes of the Chief's court. On the other hand, many shops and kiosks are visible, which are most often operated and patronised by women, increasing the likelihood of women being caught on frame. A high average of commercial activity (30%), and a very low number of inactive or static individuals recorded (23%) compared with other spaces seems to confirm this. Youth (35%) are outnumbered here by adults (65%), mostly younger children use this space for play in the afternoon (Graph 15). Adverse to its inclusivity and potential to host many different activities, is the high number of parked cars in the space throughout the day (Graph 16), which is reflected in low occupation during most of the day (Graph 14). This is remarkable because Sabon Zongo is known for having little car traffic, largely because many of its streets are unpaved or too narrow for cars to pass.



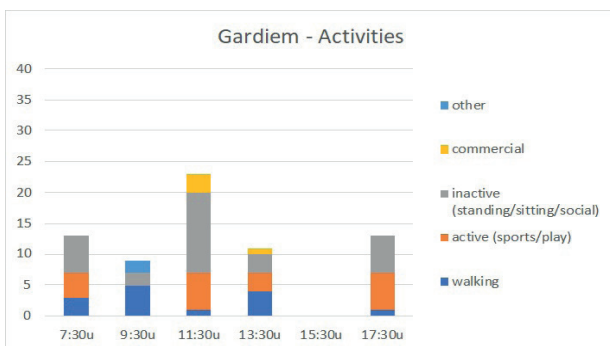
Figure 77: Scene 4 of the SPO exercise, the Gardiem Square in Ga Mashie (source: author).



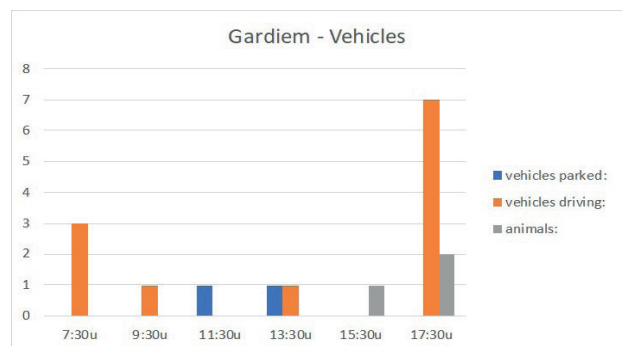
Graph 17: Gardiem, users by gender (source: author).



Graph 19: Gardiem, users by age group (source: author).



Graph 18: Gardiem, users by activity (source: author).



Graph 20: Gardiem, vehicles (source: author).

Ga Mashie: Gardiem

The first scene in Ga Mashie records the activities on and around a square called Gardiem by locals, which translates to 'inside the garden' in Ga language (Figure 77). This small space is wedged between, on one side the busy coastal road Professor Atta Mills High Street, generally referred to as High Street and the imposing blank wall of the Ussher Fort, and a local street surrounded by residential buildings and small shops on the other. The space is set slightly lower than the main street and shielded from traffic by a low wall, two kiosks and a club house for the local youth. On the opposite side the Basahene palace, one of the lesser chiefs, faces it. In contrast to Sabon Zongo, there are a handful of open spaces of similar size and character scattered throughout Ga Mashie, one of them is featured here in frame number 6. The surface of the roads and the square are all paved and in good condition, High street is lined with streetlights and two light posts are oriented to illuminate the square. High street carries heavy vehicular traffic (Graph 20), especially in the morning and evening, and its wide sidewalks are used by pedestrians throughout the day. The local street serves as a bus stop in the afternoon.¹⁹

Despite its modest size, the square is very lively with sport, play and other activities on most days. During weekdays it is generally occupied by young people who use it predominantly for football. It serves as a community space for ceremonies and festivities in the weekends. The space demonstrates the youngest audience of the monitored spaces, young people representing 83% of the recorded individuals (Graph 19). The users of the square are almost all young men, as the space also has the lowest rate of women (14%) observed in any of the frames (Graph 17). It has the highest number of individuals engaged in play (28%), and a significant group of people passively involved on the square, watching or socialising nearby the club house or on the wall (43%), good for a combined 71% of the recorded activities (Graph 18).

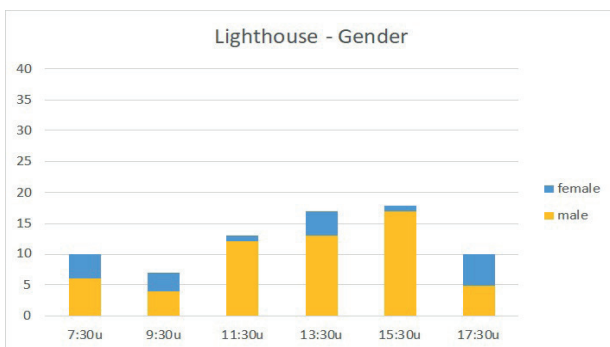
Ga Mashie: Lighthouse

The second scene in Ga Mashie, the space in front of the lighthouse poses a serious challenge to capture in one frame: it is essentially a composite space, or a network of open spaces that stretches approximately 200 meters from the James Fort to the Ga Mashie Municipal Authority building, strung together by High Street. In doing so it connects three prominent landmarks: the James Fort, the Ngleshie Alata palace and the lighthouse. A choice was made to focus on the central and busiest part of the space, the intersection of High Street and Hansen Road,

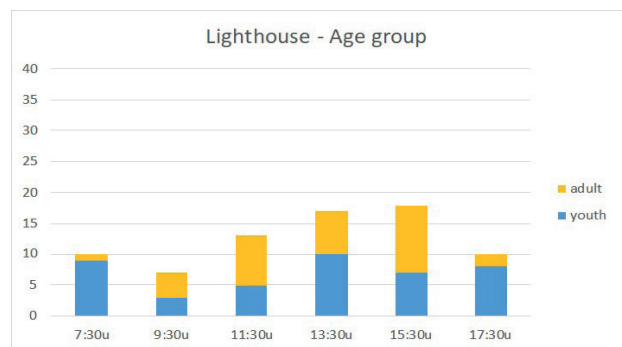
¹⁹ This situation has unfortunately interfered with the counting of other activities, in one of the afternoon photographs the view towards the square was entirely obstructed by waiting mini-buses.



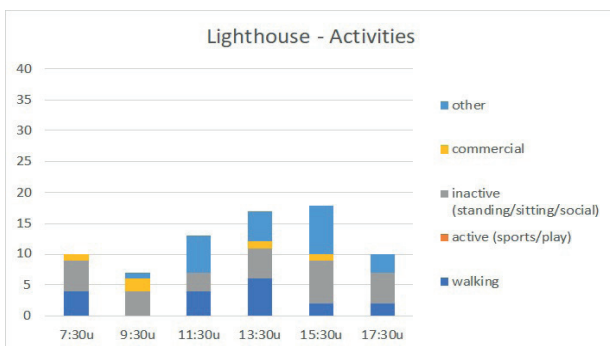
Figure 78: Scene 5 of the SPO exercise, the Lighthouse Junction in Ga Mashie (source: author).



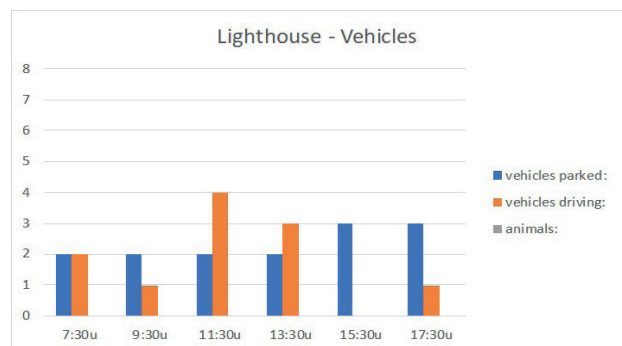
Graph 21: Lighthouse, users by gender (source: author).



Graph 23: Lighthouse, users by age group (source: author).



Graph 22: Lighthouse, users by activity (source: author).



Graph 24: Lighthouse, vehicles (source: author).

comprising the Lighthouse and the space surrounding it (Figure 78).

The photographs frame the lighthouse prominently at the centre and shows a taxi rank and bus stop directly in front of it and a brightly coloured kiosk is visible on the left. On the right of the lighthouse and slightly to the back, a seller and her goods are protected from the sun by several umbrellas next to a small structure that shelters a base for young people. High street, which passes in front of the lighthouse, at this intersection is paved and is flanked by a wide pavement, both in good condition. The space is wide, open and exposed, and has no visible public furniture, no streetlights and besides the youth base, nowhere to shelter from the sun.

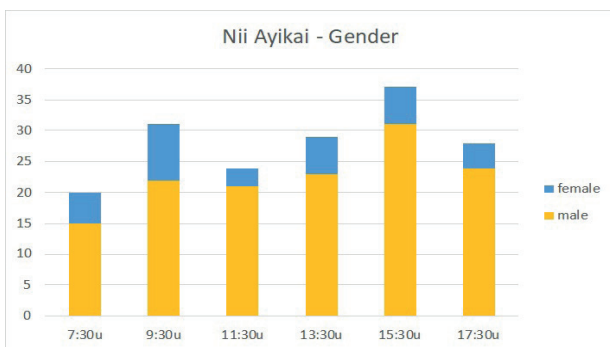
Despite its central location at a significant intersection in the neighbourhood, the frame shows relatively little activity, and little vehicular and pedestrian traffic (Graph 24). The chronology of activity throughout the day is also somewhat irregular, with the least activity recorded in the mornings and late afternoon, the busiest time is between noon and early afternoon, during the hottest time of the day. Again, the scene depicts a male dominated space, men outnumbering women 76% to 24% (Graph 21). Age demographics are more balanced in this frame, 56% young people against 44% adults, approximating the age distribution in the city from the 2010 Census (Graph 23). This space seems to be a place of transit; most of the people seen in frame are moving through it, either walking or driving, and the people that are passive or static seem to be waiting on a bus or taxi. The frame sees very little commercial activity, no play and little social interaction seem to confirm this suggestion (Graph 24). Around the lighthouse occurred some irregular activity, namely a team of men, some wearing protective clothing and helmets, are seen working, putting up scaffolding around the lighthouse, and painting its exterior.

Ga Mashie: Nii Ayikai square

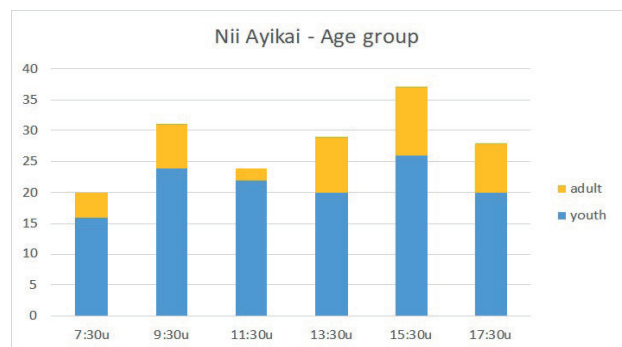
The final scene in Ga Mashie is taken on another composite space, composed of several roundabouts and a larger space with a central triangular road divider, a concrete structure that defines a small football field in the middle. This structure also defines the spaces around it, spaces that are frequently used for ceremonies by blocking parts of the road. The space joins three important roads of Ga Mashie, Hansen Road, Nii Ayikai Road, and London Market Road, and is named after the Akanmajen Mantse, the traditional chief of the quarter, whose palace overlooks this space. The scene was chosen to face the football space to include part of Hansen Road in the direction of the lighthouse, one of the small roundabouts and a range of kiosks and shops that surround the space, and a betting office where men congregate to watch sports



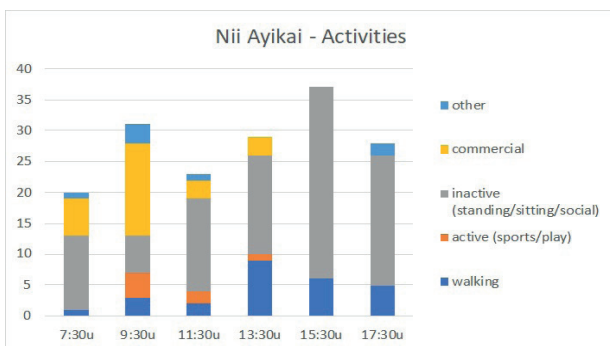
Figure 79: Scene 6 of the SPO exercise, the Nii Ayikai Roundabout in Ga Mashie (source: author).



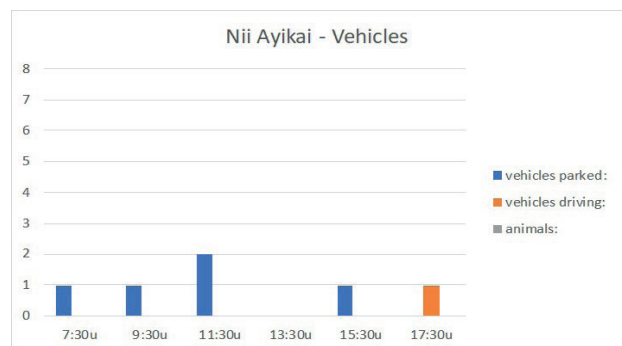
Graph 25: Nii Ayikai, users by gender (source: author).



Graph 27: Nii Ayikai, users by age group (source: author).



Graph 26: Nii Ayikai, users by activity (source: author).



Graph 28: Nii Ayikai, vehicles (source: author).

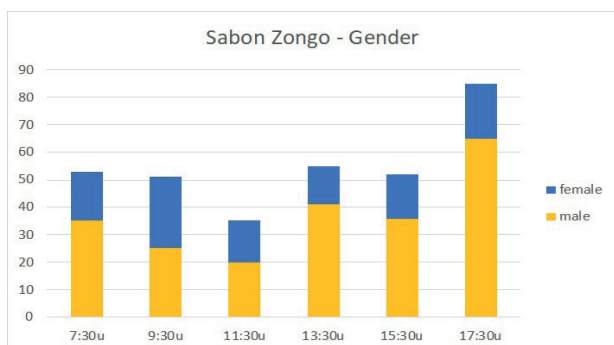
games and place bets (Figure 79). The roads are all paved and in good condition, and several streetlights can be seen within the space. In the forefront a poster can be seen depicting one of the area's boxing champions.

The square is very busy throughout the day, with 169 total people recorded, the highest number of any of the scenes, with a light increase in activity towards the afternoon. Once again, this scene recorded very little presence of women, representing only 20% of the public (Graph 25). Women were mostly seen either working in, or buying from one of the kiosks or moving through the space on some other errands, while a host of men and young boys can be seen spending extended time inside and around the space. Its public is very young, approximately 76% of the people seen in this scene are youth, large groups of boys and young men can be seen playing and watching on the football field (Graph 27). Commercial activities are largely limited to the morning and diminish towards the afternoon, when there are still not many people inactive, hanging out or sitting in or around the space. This changes in the afternoon, when many more people fill the concrete benches around the square, and many people move through the space. The betting shop opens its doors in the afternoon and men flock to it to watch sports on a big screen. In the afternoon people can be seen to haul in and set up a large sound system on the left behind the square for festivities planned, likely later the same evening. Very little automated traffic was seen on this square (Graph 28).

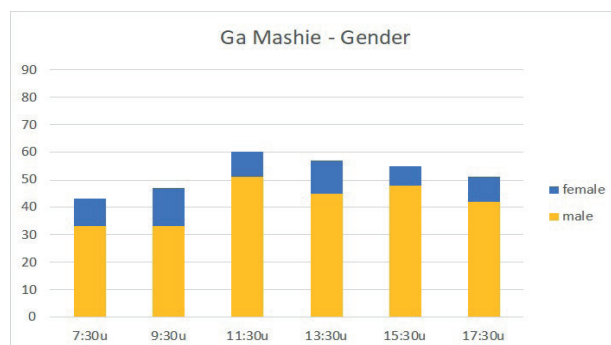
Summary – Sabon Zongo and Ga Mashie

The amount of people recorded in the selected spaces are fairly evenly distributed between the research areas. Some significant differences can be distinguished when the findings are aggregated on gender, age and type of activity.

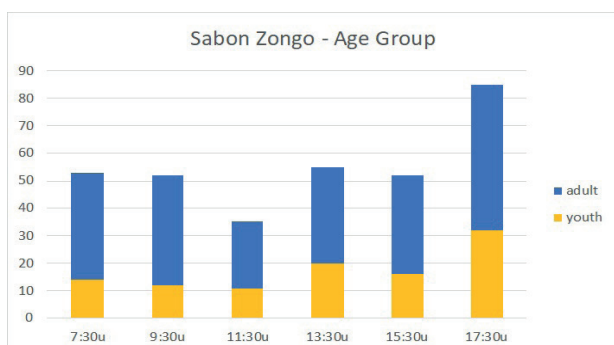
When we look at gender, the difference in recorded activities is striking (Graph 29 and Graph 32). In both areas, the amount of females moving through or dwelling in public space is only 26.4% of the total amount of people recorded, in Ga Mashie this is even lower 19.5%, compared to 32.9% in Sabon Zongo. This difference between the areas might be significant, considering the prevailing perception that Islamic cultures are generally more restrictive on the freedom of movement of women. It seems to imply that in this context, religious practice might not be the presumed determining factor for gender imbalance in space. Consistently more females are recorded in the mornings, and their presence gradually declines towards the evening. They are more often engaged in active behaviour compared to men, mainly commercial activities or walking. Males



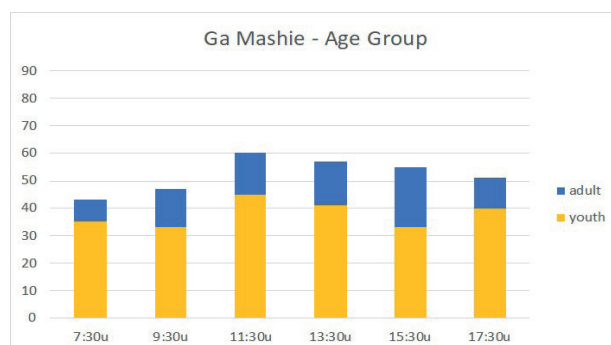
Graph 29: Summary Sabon Zongo users by gender (source: author).



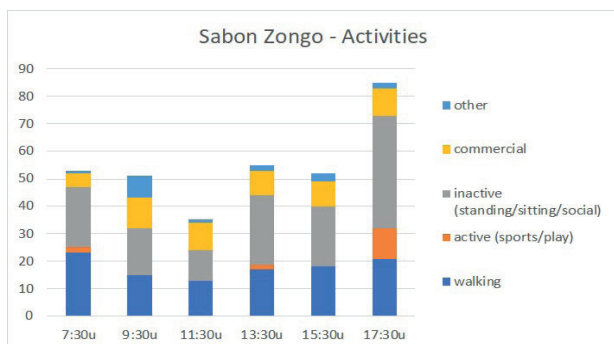
Graph 32: Summary Ga Mashie users by gender (source: author).



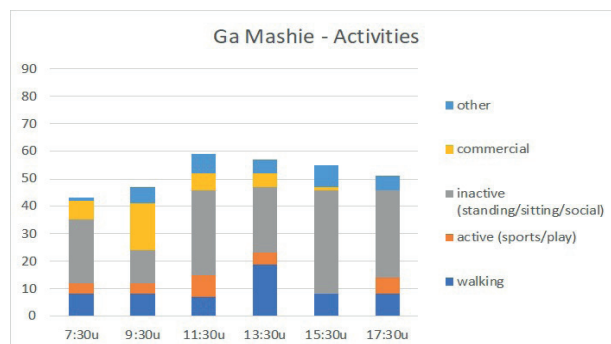
Graph 30: Summary Sabon Zongo users by age group (source: author).



Graph 33: Summary Ga Mashie users by age group (source: author).



Graph 31: Summary Sabon Zongo users by activity (source: author).

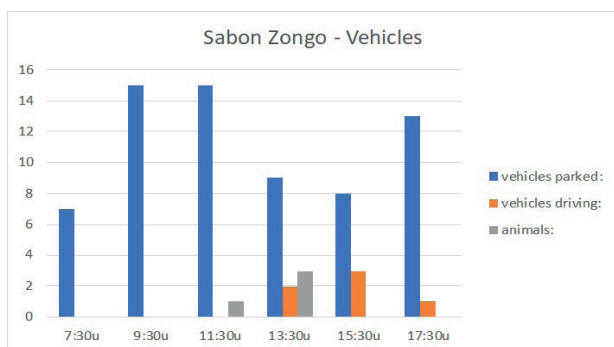


Graph 34: Summary Ga Mashie users by activity (source: author).

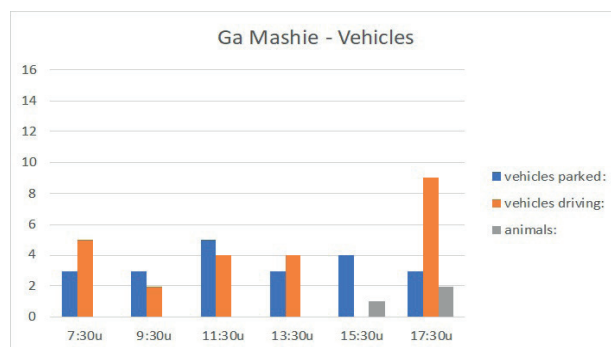
present an opposite tendency, their presence is highest in the afternoon and evening, and many of them are seen displaying more passive body language, seated or standing in place, often involved in conversation or watching other activities within the spaces. These disparities seem to confirm the initial perception discussed in section 4.1 of this chapter, that women are generally not seen spending much time inside, but rather seen passing through public spaces, unless engaged in commercial activities. Men, on the other hand, can be seen using public space for extended amounts of time, and for many different activities, their body language often more relaxed as if the public is an extension of the domestic.

The distribution of age-categories displays some remarkable disparities between the research areas (Graph 31 and Graph 33). In Sabon Zongo, young people only represent 31.7% of the recorded individuals, against 68.3% adults, a vast underrepresentation, especially when taking into account the youthful demographic profile of the city. In Ga Mashie, however, counted youth vastly outnumber adults in the spaces, with 72.5% against 27.5%, approximating more the actual demographic composition. When analysing these differences, it is important to factor in the size and different nature of the open spaces concerned, which were chosen as a representative sample of the open spaces in the research areas. The observed spaces in Ga Mashie are larger than the ones in Sabon Zongo and suffer less from conflicting uses. Two out of three spaces in Ga Mashie are relatively well suited for play, whereas in Sabon Zongo, two spaces are part of the road infrastructure, and the third larger space serves as a parking lot for vehicles during most of the day. It seems reasonable to assume that, because the spaces in Ga Mashie are overall more accommodating to young people, they are more likely to use these spaces, which reflects their higher numbers observed. Conversely, the spaces in Sabon Zongo are more restrictive in their use and do not encourage play, owing to physical characteristics and conflicting uses, likely pushing young people out to other parts of the neighbourhood, or in absence of alternatives, even other parts of town, reflected in a much lower presence recorded. This, however, forgoes any assumptions about the effects that other factors, such as school-attendance, might have on the presence of young people, which is unfortunately beyond the scope of this thesis.

It seems that many purposeful activities witnessed, such as commercial activities and movements on foot, occur most in the mornings and gradually decrease towards the evening (Graph 31 and Graph 34). It also appears in both areas that more spontaneous activities such as sitting, standing and playing occur more in the evenings. In Sabon Zongo there is a noticeable dip in general presence and activities around midday, coinciding with the hottest hours of the day. In



Graph 35: Summary Sabon Zongo vehicles (source: author).



Graph 36: Summary Ga Mashie vehicles (source: author).

Ga Mashie, oddly enough, the opposite is witnessed; a slight spike in presence and activity, and especially more strenuous activities such as walking and playing, can be observed during those hours. Regrettably, the sample obtained here is not sufficiently large or consistent to derive from it larger generalisations or conclusive assumptions. However, it serves to support or refute other observations made in the research, but mainly highlights remarkable variations in the character and use of space between the areas, and which might warrant further exploration into the causal relations with cultural and/or spatial factors.

4.3 Conclusion

The first part of this empirical chapter focuses on the lived space, and discusses the findings of the participatory methods used: *focus group discussions*, *informal conversation*, *cognitive mapping* and *auto-photography*. The findings demonstrate that the combination of these methods manifests the potential to open a window into otherwise difficult to reach accounts of belonging and place, and is suitable for – yet by no means restricted to – implementation in an urban African context. It is, however, imperative that participatory methods are used reflexively and are adapted with sensitivity to the particular constellations of power within the socio-spatial context. In essence, these methods can reveal experiences of belonging and exclusion that are often oversimplified, ignored or suppressed by political schemes and formal narratives.

The second part of this chapter focuses on the perceived space, and attempts to uncover the power dynamics and the collective spatial practices within the research areas through *key-informant interviews* and *systematic photographic observation*. The interview questions focus on the stakeholders' relationships and attitudes towards young people and the management of space within the neighbourhood. The SPO reveals the diversity of users and activities in 6 representative open spaces within the research areas, and allows for a relatively objective comparison of their urban realms. An overview of the tools can be found in 4.1.

Table 1: Overview of empirical tools used

Tool	Conceptual framework	procedure	Participant / data source	Purpose
Focus group discussion	Lived space – place belonging	Groups (15-20 youths) discuss issues and challenges	Youth	Capture main youth issues & challenges Recruit for participatory methods
Informal conversation		Spend unstructured time with youth	Youth	Enrich & verify narratives
Cognitive mapping		Draw interpretation of local environment	Youth	Reveal perceptions & experience of urban realm
Auto-photography		Take photographs of key elements of local environment	Youth	Reveal perceptions & experience of urban realm
Key informant interviews	Perceived space – collective practices	Individual and group interviews of key stakeholders	Stakeholders	Reveal power relations between key community stakeholders and youth
Systematic photographic observation		Document different uses of several public spaces over course of day	Public	Capture collective practices and local use of community spaces

The findings confirm the universal importance of open spaces in the everyday lives of young people despite important differences between research areas. Open spaces were recognised as crucial platforms and resources for neighbourhood sociability and building of community. The findings also highlight the pressing need for more qualitative open spaces, particularly in Sabon Zongo. Both research areas deal with serious and pressing issues of density but are affected in distinctly different ways. Sabon Zongo suffers mainly from high residential density, a severe scarcity of open spaces, and a resulting competition for space and conflicting uses. Ga Mashie has significantly more open spaces, but suffers from crowding and housing shortage, which puts immense pressure on the existing network of open spaces, especially at night, but also sets different requirements in terms of comfort and security. This highlights the urgent need to

provide more qualitative public spaces and to maintain and improve the existing network. It also underscores the need for a localised approach specific to place, which is – crucially – informed by local users' needs. It is vital then to engage and involve the public in every step of the process: when they claim ownership, they play a vital role in managing and protecting spaces from encroachment and improper use.

Space is a commodity in Accra that is managed and regulated by a complexity of formal and informal rules and in most areas traditional leadership – in Sabon Zongo in close connection with religious leadership – is responsible for managing space on behalf of the community. The power relations between traditional and political authorities are complex and ambiguous. Responsibilities and jurisdictions are often ill-defined which can lead to reduced accountability, ineffective governance and corruption (Holm, 2000; Ubink, 2008; Jackson *et al.*, 2009). Additionally, the complex and obscured nature of power relations can make it exceedingly difficult for the powerless to meaningfully participate in, or influence decision making. The findings also reveal that many youth have little confidence or trust in the government and its ability – or intention – to improve their situation. Many feel they can only benefit from the political system through clientelist relationships, exchanging short-term tangible gains for political allegiance or actions.

The findings demonstrate that in Ga Mashie ethnic and customary identities – partly through the traditional leaders that embody the customary values and attachments – are central to the youth's sense of belonging in place. The leaders are also closely intertwined in their everyday lives in various concrete ways: They exert control over activities and movements in the spaces that youth inhabit and use, assume the highest political and social roles in the community, uphold indigenous laws and customs, negotiate disputes and form the primary connection between subjects and outside groups, including the local government and development partners.

In Sabon Zongo the findings indicate that religious identity instead serves as a unifying element, central to a sense of belonging. The many mosques are a crucial part of the social infrastructure of the neighbourhood, where especially men develop and maintain social networks and spend substantial amounts of time. The Zongo chiefs are also symbolic of the community's unity and ethnic continuity, and they hold high diplomatic and political positions in the community. However, as a very heterogenic migrant community many residents might have a less direct and robust relation to place, and maintain strong connections and attachments to places outside of Accra. Similarly, the leadership structures of Sabon Zongo are plural and complex, and loyalties extend

to many different ethnic, religious and social groups and their leaders. Additionally, the zongo chiefs' legitimacy is not vested in land and is rivalled by religious and political leadership. This disparity in status and power naturally affects the leadership's ability to influence policy-making and planning for their areas, and attract development projects and funds.

Furthermore, the relationship between youth and traditional leadership is complicated and ambivalent, as other studies have suggested (Gichuki, 2014; Iya, 2017). The narratives repeatedly demonstrate that young people feel their voice is not heard, that they do not participate on equal terms and that authorities and community leaders do not take their concerns seriously or act in their genuine interest. It appears then that a sense of mutuality, or reciprocity between youth and the community – even society – is often weak, constituting a significant barrier to the development of a positive sense of belonging.

The findings reveal a large disparity in negative attitudes and perceptions between the two research areas, with participants of Sabon Zongo consistently and significantly more negative of their environment. It is conceivable that some of the differences in attitudes can be attributed to the considerable cultural and religious differences between the communities. The disparity in spatial layout and availability of open spaces likely also contributes to the actual and perceived disturbance and conflicts caused by incivilities, as Ga Mashie provides significantly more spaces and opportunities for play and leisure outside of social control or supervision of the dense urban fabric that Sabon Zongo simply does not. However, it is probable that this critical attitude additionally points to broader issues of discontent and distrust with governmental and external agents, and a perceived inability to influence decision making. Long histories of spatial injustices and hostile cultural politics have likely embedded this sentiment in collective memory of zongo communities.

The findings confirm and highlight that space in Accra is highly gendered: the domestic and private spheres are thought of as predominantly female territory, and the public realm is primarily male. Women are not expected to appropriate or claim the public realm like men do, and unless engaged in some domestic or commercial task generally do not spend much time in public space. It is often argued that women in Ghanaian society carry the multiple burdens of simultaneously providing for, and taking care of the household, leaving very little – if any – time or energy for other essential activities such as education, political engagement or leisure. Furthermore, lack of education on reproductive health and contraception in Ghana contributes to many young

pregnancies, which can considerably increase marginalising effects and discrimination of young women and the impact it has on their opportunities.

In summary, the tools revealed public space as characterised by copresence and diversity, its use reflects temporalities and spatialities that are conditioned by power in place, and hence are prone to expressions of uneven power relations. These positionalities differentiate public space, and the relationships between users and locations in space. Issues of density and competition for space, combined with uneven power relations can have marginalising effects on young people – particularly young women – and trigger enduring spatial conflicts.

The findings demonstrate strong connections between youth and aspects of their community and environment, but simultaneously challenge, nuance and confirm views of youth as powerless. It suggests that most youth, despite experiencing significant forms of marginalisation from spaces of power and labour, develop connections to the community and to place in positive and meaningful ways. Many experience a deep sense of belonging in place, but the relations with the community and its leadership are complex and often problematic. The prevailing sentiment seems to be one of only partial belonging to place. In order to develop a full sense of belonging in place, young people should feel free to express their identities, feel appreciated and taken seriously by, and be able to contribute to the community and place (Antonsich, 2010). But many participants reported the sense of being powerless, having little or no voice in decision making that affects them, with a full sense of belonging out of reach.

The next chapter moves on to investigate how the state represents youth and public space in the conceived space. This determines how young people are treated and supported in terms of policies and regulations, and by extension how they are perceived in popular discourse and seen by larger society.

Chapter 5: Examination of Issues in the Conceived Space

The current chapter builds upon, and attempts to frame the issues encountered in the investigation into the lived and perceived space of the previous chapter. To this end the chapter investigates issues that are located in the strategic mode of the conceived space, comprised of regulations, legislations and policies (Lefebvre, 1991). The state – as one of the most prominent and powerful agents operating in this mode (Wiedmann, Salama, & Mirincheva, 2014) – must be seen as an active participant in the production of social identities and difference (Hayward, 2003; Williams, 2018), and thus in the granting of belonging (Antonsich, 2010). When related explicitly to justice, the conceived space situates the official, legal recognition by the state extended to individuals in the form of rights and duties. This is the politics of belonging, a discursive resource that *‘constructs, claims, justifies and resists forms of socio-spatial inclusion/exclusion’* (Antonsich, 2010, p. 4). It is wielded by the powerful to remove certain social groups from spaces that they control, through the production and reproduction of difference. It necessarily implies the carving up and classification of space into bounded categories, whether by imagined, metaphorical or material boundaries.

In this chapter the main focus is on the ways in which young people are represented and treated in national policies and urban planning, with particular emphasis on their access to, and use of public open space. To this end a selection of policy and planning documents were reviewed in order to understand current constellations of legal frameworks and urban planning mechanisms that determine the way infrastructure, services and other resources are spatially distributed throughout the city, and how this affects different social groups, youth in particular.

The chapter is separated into three parts, respectively on *youth policies*, *urban planning*, and a *conclusion*. The first part reviews a selection of Ghana's youth policies and situates their current state, developments and issues among global movements and in local recent history; part two correspondingly studies urban planning documents and developments, focused on issues of public space, and frames the current state in international tendencies and Ghanaian recent political history. The concluding part briefly summarises the main issues, highlights the commonalities and differences between youth policies and urban planning and relates these to the conceived space and the politics of belonging. This prepares the reader for the final chapter, in which issues of the lived, perceived and conceived spaces are brought together in a larger discussion,

after which general conclusions are drawn and societal and academic recommendations are articulated based on the lessons learned.

5.1 Youth Policies

5.1.1 Youth policies: International

Year	Document	Organisation
1995	World Programme of Action for Youth	United Nations
2003-	World Youth Report – Youth Civic Engagement	United Nations
2018 2006	African Youth Charter	African Youth Commission
2009	African Youth Report	United Nations Economic Commission for Africa
2013	Youth Development Index: Results Report	The Commonwealth
2014	Report on 1 st Global Forum on Youth Policies	Various (UN, UNESCO, EU)

Since early 2000's there has been a noticeable increase in international awareness and concern over youth issues, both in academic literature as in the policy community. Likely the leading catalyst in this surge has been the United Nations and its various youth initiatives, the first significant one was proclaiming 1985 the International Youth Year to draw attention to youth challenges. Perhaps their most prominent initiatives are the World Programme of Action for Youth (WPAY) and the World Youth Report (WYR) (United Nations, 2010, 2018). The WPAY is a policy framework initiated in 1995 that prescribes guidelines for government action towards youth development. It identifies fifteen priority areas for youth and proposes measures to deal with these issues.²⁰ No explicit mention or reference is made of public space, only secondary references under 'leisure-time activities' relating to cultural spaces are included (United Nations, 2010). The WYR provides a biennial update on the situation of young people worldwide since 2003, focusing on the priority areas identified in the WPAY. The last available report discusses the situation of youth in relation to the UN 2030 agenda and the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), another central development framework that arguably puts too little emphasis on youth issues (Senanu, 2014; United Nations, 2016a, 2018). Despite the SDGs making specific reference to public space in Goal 11 to make cities and human settlements inclusive, safe, resilient and sustainable.²¹ Youth is a key stakeholder it is remarkable that the WPAY report then is also entirely silent on issues concerning public space (Senanu, 2014).

²⁰ The fifteen areas are: education, employment, hunger and poverty, health, environment, drug abuse, juvenile delinquency, leisure-time activities, girls and young women, full and effective participation of youth in the life of society and in decision-making, globalization, information and communications technology, HIV/AIDS, armed conflict, and intergenerational issues.

²¹ Target 11.7 By 2030, provide universal access to safe, inclusive and accessible, green and public spaces, in particular for women and children, older persons and persons with disabilities (United Nations, 2016a).

Two major African initiatives are the presentation of the African Youth Charter in 2006 at a summit of the African Union (African Union Commission, 2006), and the African Youth Report in 2009 by the United Nations Economic Commission for Africa (UNECA) (2009). The African Youth Charter, which was ratified by Ghana and 34 other member states of the African Union, represents a regionalised policy framework that underlines the responsibilities of its member states in the development of youth and *'paves the way for the development of national programmes and strategic plans for their empowerment'* (African Union Commission, 2006, p. 3). The African Youth Report offers an account on key economic and social development issues most relevant to young people, it evaluates policies that affect these issues, and provides recommendations (United Nations Economic Commission for Africa, 2009). However, parallel to the previous documents mentioned, none of these documents contain any specific reference to young people's claim to, or use of public space, besides a peripheral mention concerning necessary infrastructure for sports and leisure activities.

5.1.2 Youth policies in Ghana

Year	Document	Institution (Ghana)
1999	National Youth Policy (draft)	Ministry of Youth and Sports Ghana
2010	National Youth Policy	Ministry of Youth and Sports Ghana
2014	Medium Term Development Plan 2014-2017	Accra Metropolitan Assembly
2015	Youth Policy Implementation Plan	Ministry of Youth and Sports Ghana

Fragmented youth development

Since independence youth agendas in Ghana have been fragmented and incorporated into larger, more prominent ministries such as education or sports. This way youth development has been systematically subordinated to other political processes and agendas in the national development discourse, inspiring critical views that the government efforts towards youth development are not sincere. The government's lack of genuine engagement with youth well-being can be traced back to the original justification for these programmes. In fact, the first set of youth initiatives under the National Youth Employment Programme (NYEP), implemented by the Kufuor administration in 2006, were conceived as an emergency solution to prevent an impending security threat. Instead of a well-engineered and long-term strategy to improve young people's prospects, the first programme was conceived as a short-term solution to satisfy – and pacify – those seen as a threat to the establishment; mostly young men in urban areas (Gyampo, 2012b). This spatial and gender bias towards urban males endures in the recruitment processes of many of the existing programmes (see gender imbalance)(Korboe, 2014). It is not unthinkable that the lack of

sincere engagement with youth is intentional, as has been suggested by Korboe (2014), because it allows youth policies to be malleable to political purposes, and leaves youth vulnerable to be manipulated or recruited for political purposes (see political interference).

Nonetheless, various ministries, agencies and organisations strive to improve the situation for youth, but the approach has always been problematic. Currently, different aspects of youth development are scattered over different ministries, notably the Ministry of Education, Ministry of Local Government, and the Ministry of Employment and Labour Relations, but the main responsibility for youth development falls under the Ministry of Youth and Sports (MoYS). In 2011 an assessment report presented to the president recognised that the ministry seems ‘more vibrant in its sports programming than its youth programming’ (Government of Ghana: Constitution Review Commission, 2011, p. 725). The same report was very critical about the disorganised state of the youth development sector, stating that ‘... at present there are a lot of Ministries, Departments and Agencies [...] and numerous youth organizations – formal and informal, registered and unregistered, all addressing youth-related issues in an uncoordinated manner’ (Government of Ghana: Constitution Review Commission, 2011, p. 725). This lack of direction and oversight is not helped by the fact that the Ghanaian government counts 38 separate ministries, many with ambiguous and overlapping mandates. The government itself – and most major institutions agree – recognises the lack of coherence and coordination of youth policies as a key obstruction to effective youth development (Hoetu, 2011; Korboe, 2014).

The National Youth Policy

In 2011 the constitution review noted that the 1992 Ghana constitution does not specifically target or even mention youth (Government of Ghana: Constitution Review Commission, 2011). Unsurprisingly then, many youth organisations and development partners voice the urgent need to mainstream youth in national policy (Hoetu, 2015b; Youth Empowerment Synergy (YES-Ghana), 2017), to ensure support and protection for the interests of youth in all sectors of the government – but also to improve coordination and oversight, and resolve issues of transparency, corruption and political interference. The main piece of legislation that addresses youth development is the National Youth Authority Act, 1974, (N.R.C.D 241), which establishes the National Youth Authority (NYA), an agency within the MoYS with the specific mandate to coordinate and facilitate the youth development effort (Government of Ghana, 2016b). Their operations include the mainstreaming and endorsement of youth interests in other ministries and policies and ‘*ensure youth are*

recognised as a distinct constituency in Ghana and with special needs that must be addressed' (Government of Ghana: Constitution Review Commission, 2011, p. 724).

Because the government is officially required to consult the NYA on any substantial youth issues or initiatives, the NYA is expected to assume a leading role in the coordination and organisation of the youth development process. However, it is reputedly ill-equipped for this task; heavily under-resourced and lacking a physical presence in most of Ghana's 216 districts. As a result, the NYA has been passive and largely unsuccessful in its attempts to coordinate and monitor other institutions and organisations (Korboe, 2014). The lack of effective leadership further undermines the coherence of policies, services and training provided.

Arguably the NYA's most significant achievement is the development of the National Youth Policy (NYP), which was implemented in August 2010 (Ministry of Youth and Sports Ghana, 2010). The NYP was conceived to outline a national framework and a common direction for the various youth development agendas, and to inspire collaboration between the government, youth and other stakeholders towards the shared goal of "an empowered youth impacting positively to national development" (Ministry of Youth and Sports Ghana, 2010, p. 1; Hoetu, 2015a).

The NYP identifies the main structural drivers that perpetuate inequality and youth poverty:

- The lack of voice and political consciousness
- The lack of access to empowering education
- The lack of marketable skills in a modernising economy

Several organisations endorse the NYP's identification of these drivers (Youth Employment Network, 2002; Korboe, 2014; Youth Empowerment Synergy (YES-Ghana), 2017). It recognises young people's potential and firmly promotes increased youth participation in decision making and improved access to enabling resources, such as education, skill development and financing. However, its language is often overly rhetoric, yet ambiguous and scarce on details of how exactly it should be implemented.

Only in 2015 did the NYA present a corresponding action plan, policies in Ghana are rarely accompanied by a credible financial or implementation plan, but it failed to reassure critics – it did not include directions on how its implementation will be financed (see section on budget) (Hoetu, 2015b). Prior to 2010 there was no framework that specified an official strategy for youth development, consequently various stakeholders separately identified the challenges facing

youth, and independently developed solutions and interventions; generally without consulting, deliberating with or involving in any way either the MoYS or young people. In reality, however, the process has changed very little after the implementation of the NYP, its implementation is still largely left to the interpretation of local governments (Hoetu, 2015a). Unsurprisingly then, Korboe (2014) reports little awareness of the policy among the Ghanaian youth, and little evidence of its implementation or of any substantiable progress on the structural drivers identified in the NYP.

Furthermore, the policy takes its cues largely from a severely outdated law from 1974, of which the Constitution Review Commission agreed that its *'provisions have lost touch with the needs of the present times'* (Government of Ghana: Constitution Review Commission, 2011, p. 724). The National Youth Bill that was drafted to revise and update the outdated legislation and *'give the necessary legal backing to the ministry's youth development agenda'* has been repeatedly presented to government since 2000 but has not seen fruition implementation as of this writing²² (Government of Ghana, 2014, p. 1; Korboe, 2014; Government of Ghana: National Development Planning Commission, 2015; Hoetu, 2015b). Hoetu (2015b) asserts that new effective legislation is essential to secure the rights and responsibilities of youth, commit the state to arrange appropriate funding mechanisms for youth development initiatives, provide a framework for the mainstreaming of youth in the national development agenda and increase participation in local and national decision making processes.

Political interference

A plausible clarification for this failure to deliver on this new law is that the policy does not enjoy national consensus and – as is too often the case with matters of national development – it has become entangled in the fierce political struggle between the main parties, NPP and NDC (Korboe, 2014). When the political parties change sides, contributions of the previous government are often immediately neutralised by the new government, effectively freezing progress.

Political interference in youth development is indeed a serious and persistent concern recurring in the literature and raised often by many sources, including several participants and stakeholders during the fieldwork of this research (Applerh and Hoetu, 2012; Gyampo, 2012a; Korboe, 2014). Concerns include high levels of political interference and corruption, both in the internal operation of the governmental and non-governmental organisations, and in the allocation of contracts to service providers, often rewarded to companies with improper ties to the ruling political

party (Korboe, 2014). Additionally, the procedures for selecting participants for development programmes are infamously non-transparent and have little objective selection criteria, including a very 'flexible' age bracket (see section on definition of youth). Typically, the most senior or well-connected individuals claim the majority of programme benefits, often through political association. This way youth policies, the benefits of its programmes and the resources reserved for their implementation are often held captive to the political processes and deployed by political leaders to mobilise youth votes, reward them for their loyalty or used as an incentive to encourage the intimidation or silencing of political rivals, further deepening the political conflict in the process (Applerh and Hoetu, 2012; Korboe, 2014).

Youth programmes

The NYP lays out a strategy to support youth, on the one hand by expanding access to (secondary) education and skills training, and on the other by facilitating self-employment and entrepreneurship through various state-led programmes and public-private initiatives. However, despite correctly identifying some of the main drivers of youth marginalisation, for the implementation of the NYP, a narrow interpretation of youth development is adopted that largely limits its focus to unemployment.

A string of programmes and public-private partnerships were called upon to decentralise and facilitate the implementation of the NYP. These partnerships were generally set up through intermediary organisations (e.g., LESDEP²³, YESDEC²⁴) that coordinate private sector contractors or service providers (e.g., RLG²⁵ and MASLOC²⁶) who then provide the services and skill-training for the government. In this arrangement, the intermediary organisations could consume significant amounts of resources reserved for youth development. Also, providers are commonly paid based on registration numbers, perpetuating a vast discrepancy between the quality of the services and the number of participants (Korboe, 2014). Furthermore, this process further removes youth from, and stifles their voice in the selection and decision-making processes, ensuring that the development agenda, the services provided, and the types of skills offered are driven only by the service providers.

The single most substantial state-led initiative is GYEEDA²⁷, the government agency that

23 Local Enterprise and Skills Development Programme

24 Youth Enterprises and Skills Development Centre

25 Roagam Links Ghana

26 Micro Finance and Small Loans Centre

27 Ghana Youth Employment and Entrepreneurial Development Agency

oversees the facilitation of youth employment and the coordination between public and private sectors. Like many public institutions in Ghana it suffers heavily from poor management, and has experienced severe problems with legitimacy, efficiency and transparency. A largescale corruption-scandal in 2012, involving the criminal conviction of several high-profile businessmen and politicians for the embezzlement of millions in taxpayer money, ruined the agency's public image and severely undermined its moral authority (Kwaku S. Asare, 2013; Ministry of Youth and Sports, 2013). Despite attempts to repair its reputation, no genuine effort was made to increase youth participation in the development of the new youth agenda and the monitoring of youth programming (Korboe, 2014).

Definition of youth

Gyampo (2012b, p. 13) reported that policies and development processes have largely been *'formulated and implemented with little or no participation of the youth'*. He further argued that the young voices represented in policy and decision-making processes are largely limited to those of young men living in Accra. Korboe (2014) agreed that youth leaders were largely unaware of existing participation schemes, and oblivious to who represented their views in the development of the NYP. Considering this spatial and gender bias, it is remarkable that none of the urban participants in this investigation were aware of any recurring efforts to consult them about matters of policy or decision making. Furthermore, in the process to determine the types of training necessary and support provided to the youth, if consultation is sought at all, it is typically limited to local leaders, such as traditional and religious leaders or assembly members. Youth is clearly excluded from major participation in this fundamental decision-making process (Korboe, 2014).

A recurring issue encountered in policies, literature and during this fieldwork is that many stakeholders, particularly decision makers in governmental and non-governmental organisations, but also members of youth groups, are well beyond any credible age bracket for youth. As we've seen in chapter 3, youth as a category is socially constructed, it is culturally and context specific and therefore very difficult to define. The age bracket identified with youth varies greatly between different societies, and accordingly many organisations use very different age-brackets to classify this social group. The United Nations (1981)₂₈ introduced probably the most universally accepted

definition, characterising youth as persons between the ages of 15 and 24, whereas the National
 28 The United Nations, for statistical purposes, defines 'youth', as those persons between the ages of 15 and 24 years, without prejudice to other definitions by Member States. This definition was made during preparations for the International Youth Year (1985), and endorsed by the General Assembly (see A/36/215 and resolution 36/28, 1981). All United Nations statistics on youth are based on this definition, as illustrated by the annual yearbooks of statistics published by the United Nations system on demography, education, employment and health.

Youth Policy (Ministry of Youth and Sports Ghana, 2010) follows the definition of the African Youth Charter (2006) and expands the age bracket significantly to include people between the ages of 15 and 35. The NPP, the current ruling political party, classifies young people between 18 and 39 years, and several youth programmes place no age restriction on its selection procedures (Korboe, 2014). These discrepancies matter for at least two important reasons. Firstly, as detailed in chapter 3 (p. 94), youth have physiological and emotional needs and aspirations particular to this stage of life, which might be overlooked by more general policies that are endorsed by members outside of this age-bracket. Secondly, in the Ghanaian culture respect for senior people is strong, so when senior individuals infiltrate its ranks it tends to generate a natural hierarchy within a group, which intrinsically weakens the voice of the other youth.

Gender imbalance

When discussing the marginalisation of youth, it is important to remember that this social group is extremely heterogeneous, and to reflect on differences and inequalities within the category, particularly gender imbalances. Korboe (2014) suggests that among registered youth group members, males far outnumber females, and that there were no registered all-female youth groups. On top of the range of barriers mentioned, women suffer from gender-stereotyping and are often barred from training for technical professions. But also geographically, despite more than three decades of increased decentralisation efforts, resources are still generally focused on urban regions (Opore et al., 2012). It is evident that rural young women in Ghana are consistently marginalised and excluded from formal policy making, participation schemes, benefits of youth programmes and from community and domestic decision making. Youth programmes and agencies such as the NYA or GYEEDA are propagated as instruments for social protection and should therefore target and prioritise the most vulnerable among youth, rather than focus on the average or even the privileged (Korboe, 2014).

Budgeting of youth development

To evaluate the effectiveness and understand how policies influence youth it is important to take a brief look at how the state budgets its projects and policies. Youth development is currently significantly underfunded, and this is not projected to improve in the near future (Korboe, 2014; Hoetu, 2015b). Two factors have strongly impacted current funding difficulties. The first factor is the reclassification of Ghana to a Lower Middle-Income Country (LMIC) status since November 2010, an analytical category used by the WB to classify economies based on Gross National

Income (GNI) per capita (ref WB). This reclassification assumes Ghana has substantially surpassed conditions of food insecurity, economic decline, widespread poverty and reliance on development aid, characteristic of low-income countries. On the one hand, this reclassification has adverse implications for its access to concessional funding, yet on the other, it opens up avenues of private sector funding (Ghartey et al., 2014; Korboe, 2014). This leads to the second factor, namely that development partners have been displeased with Ghana's progress on managing its economic challenges and problems with corruption, which deteriorated the investment climate.

However, the IMF reports significant progress since the adoption of a range of financial reforms under the Extended Credit Facility (ECF)-supported programme in 2015, most notably an increase in transparency and financial stability (IMF, 2019). It also recognises the many challenges Ghana still faces, mainly high debts, low tax income and a continued dependence on external aid. Ghana's current medium-term development policy framework – the GSGDA II 2014-2017²⁹ – does acknowledge the decrease in concessional funding and considers its repercussions on the trade balance and national budget (Government of Ghana: National Development Planning Commission, 2010; Ghartey et al., 2014). Unfortunately, the action plan of the NYP launched in 2015 fails to specify how the ministry expects to fund the implementation of the plan moving forward (Hoetu, 2015b).

5.2 Public space and urban planning

5.2.1 Urban planning in Africa

Year	Document	Organisation
2016	Public Space Policy Framework	UCLG
2015	Habitat III - Issues Paper on Public Space	UN Habitat
2015	Global Public Space Toolkit: From Global Principles to Local Policies and Practice	UN Habitat
2016	Habitat III: Barcelona Declaration	UN Habitat
2017	Habitat III: New Urban Agenda	United Nations

As has been alluded to in Chapter 3, the importance of public space, and the broader need for effective urban planning, is increasingly acquiring traction in urban agendas globally, including recently in Africa (UCLG, 2015, 2016; UN-Habitat, 2015b, 2015a, 2015c; United Nations, 2017). Under impulse of UN-Habitat's (2015b) 'Sustainable Development Goals' (SDG) framework, and the explicit inclusion of public space in its goals³⁰, a global movement has urged for urban policies and planning to increase focus on public space. The main argument is compelling: focusing urban policies on public space can be a viable approach to improve the general quality of life in cities, by making urban areas more attractive and comfortable, by creating opportunities for employment, and by making the city more inclusive and safe for everyone, particularly for vulnerable or marginalised groups. The association of United Cities and Local Governments (UCLG, 2014, 2015), for instance, strives for the recognition of public space as a diverse and multifaceted issue of global importance, instead of merely as another form of land use. They contend that such a focus is only possible with new types of governance that rely greatly on a participatory approach, where citizens are included in every phase of the development of public space, from the planning and design, to resourcing and maintenance, and to the enjoyment and use thereof.

Many of the specific challenges facing the Sub-Saharan African region can be directly or indirectly related to the pace of urbanisation of its cities, and the failure of urban planning to effectively alter its course towards more sustainable development (Cobbinah, Erdiaw-Kwasie and Amoateng, 2015). According to speculations, the Sub-Saharan African urban population is expected to double over the next 15 years (UCLG, 2014) and it is commonly agreed that most African cities are very poorly equipped to provide even the basic services of housing, water and sanitation for the anticipated additional urbanites, and Accra is no exception. Despite the vast size of the African continent, and the enormous variety in particular contexts and histories of African cities, it is possible to identify some commonalities and patterns between many African cities, especially those with Colonial histories, that can be related to the development of public spaces (UCLG, 2014).

Under the rule of colonial administrations or their puppet-governments, the development of urbanised areas was generally focused on housing and entertaining the European or African elites. The areas around – generally strictly separated from – these urban centres would then

³⁰ Goal 11, target 7: By 2030, provide universal access to safe, inclusive and accessible, green and public spaces, in particular for women and children, older persons and persons with disabilities (UN-HABITAT, 2016).

house the black African work force. When these Africans were no longer of use as labourers, they were expected to move back to their rural homes. These settlements were therefore supplied in terms of infrastructure and services for temporary residence only, wellbeing and comfort would often be compromised not to encourage long-term stay.

After independence, a new optimism about improved lifestyles, increased employment opportunities and the promise of freedom and autonomy – reflected in a policy bias towards the urban – inevitably attracted ever more Africans to the cities. Cities represented the new centres of development and progress during efforts of industrialisation and modernisation in the early years of independence. The economy shifted from a focus on the extraction of mining and agricultural produce, with a central importance of transport infrastructure, to one focused on industrial production, with factories and service infrastructure for the citizens centralised around the major cities (Riddell, 1997). The increased housing demand from this new wave of migration was met by post-colonial governments with large-scale housing programmes, which generally failed to meet the high demand and were often implemented without appropriate planning strategies and designed with little attention to the quality of public space or public life (Mabogunje, 1990). In an alleged attempt to stabilise African economies, smoothen their integration into the global economy and alleviate some of the severe challenges encountered by governments, many international institutions and their Western donor countries endorsed austerity measures that forced administrations to drastically cut public spending (Ian E. A. Yeboah, 2000; Konadu-Agyemang, 2001b).

Most notorious and heavily criticised among those measures were the 'structural adjustment programmes' (SAPs) adopted in many African countries since the 1980s; large loans were given to indebted governments by the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and World Bank (WB) to support them in their efforts to increase economic growth, on the condition that they restructure their public sectors and decrease public expenditure (Easterly, 2003). Most critics agree that the implementation of SAPs disproportionately affected the poor and had devastating effects on those countries that adopted them. Some critics even liken SAPs to a new, more obscure form of colonialism, tying the fate of African nations once again to the influence of the West in a relationship of dependency (Riddell, 1997).

In spite of the SAPs' focus on the national economy, and specifically on resolving the urban bias implemented in prior decades, their effects on the African urban landscapes, Accra included,

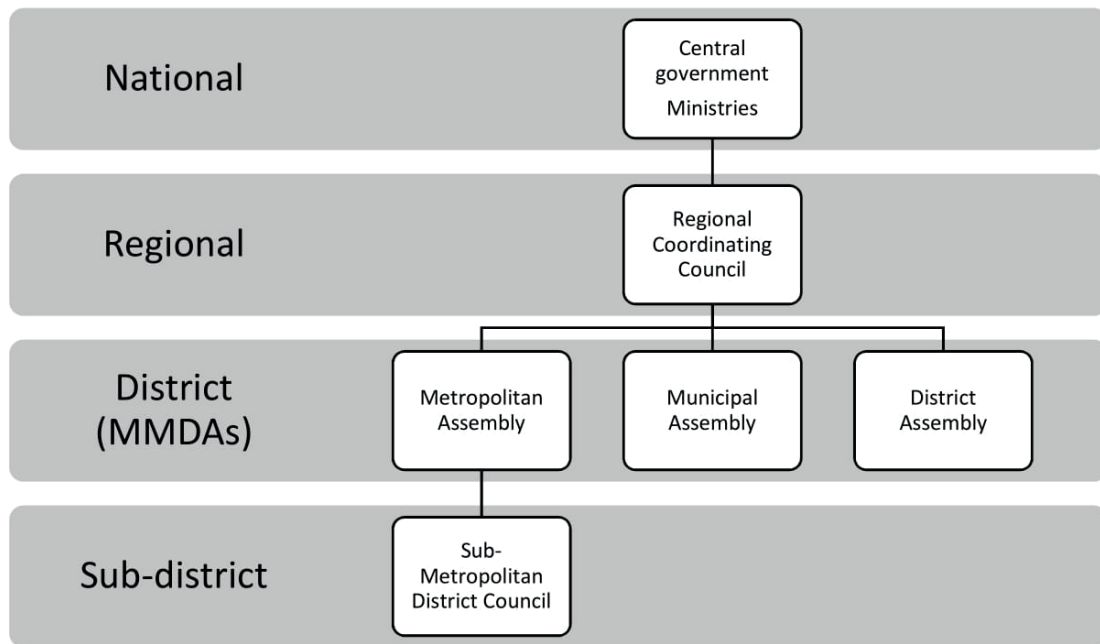


Figure 80: Current administrative structure of Ghana (Adapted from Acheampong, 2019c).

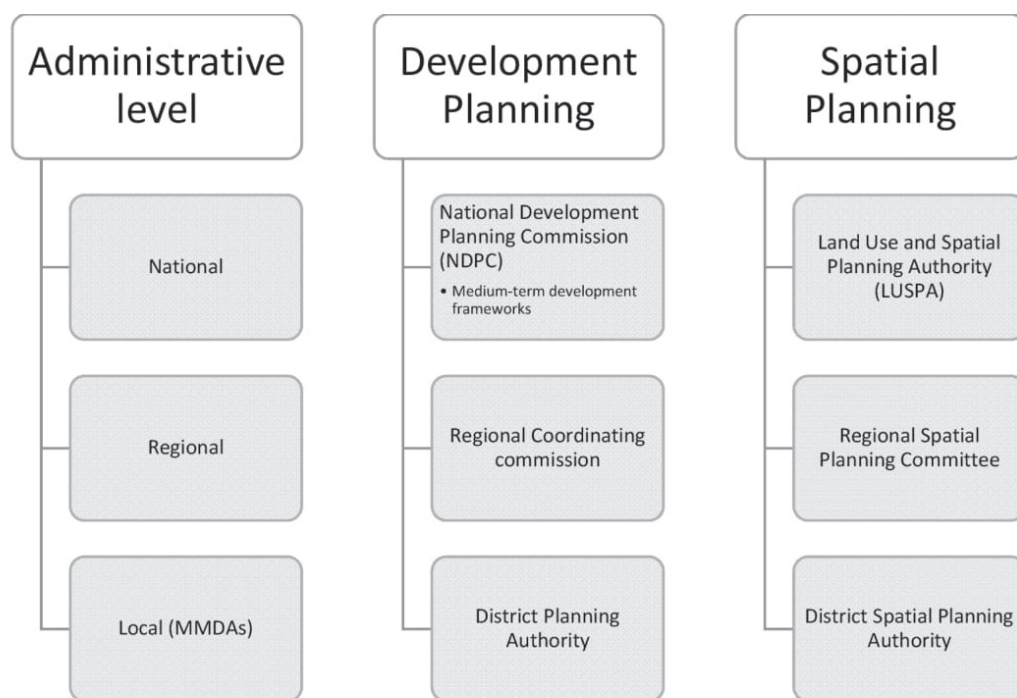


Figure 81: Development and spatial planning structure (Adapted from Acheampong, 2019c).

were profound. Currency deflation, the resultant devaluation of local wages, and increased land speculation, as a result of the liberalisation and globalisation of the housing market, resulted in a sharp increase in housing costs, which escalated the ongoing housing crisis (Konadu-Agyemang, 2001b). Simultaneously, in order to reduce public spending, social sectors – notably health and education – were grossly underfunded and starved of subsidies, and the government – one of Ghana's largest employers in the 1970s (Acquah, 1972) – severely decreased staff size, resulting in exceptionally high rates of unemployment, especially among young men, which forced the reconfiguration gender-roles and expectations (Overa, 2007). Taken together, all of these factors, combined with sustained rural-urban migration and overall rapid urban growth, were to a large extent responsible for the intensification of the 'informalisation' of urban Africa and an overall sharp decline in living conditions for the urban poor (Konadu-Agyemang, 2001b; Overa, 2007). This is exemplified by overcrowding, lack of sanitation and of basic urban services, infrastructure, and of quality urban spaces in many parts of Accra, including the research areas Ga Mashie and Sabon Zongo (Konadu-Agyemang, 2001a).

Urban growth under these conditions encouraged the development of high-density settlements, and further densification of existing settlements, without regard for the public realm, as the creation of qualitative open spaces would drive up the costs (UCLG, 2014). Parallel with the rapid urbanisation of African cities, and resultant growth of informal areas and illegal settlements, the informal economic sector has grown at an unparalleled pace (UN-Habitat, 2010; UCLG, 2014). In most African cities the largest segment of society depends on informal activities for their daily livelihoods, rather than on formal employment. These informal activities in public space are perceived by governments to smother other forms of use and eliminate the enjoyment of open areas (UCLG, 2014).

UCLG (2014, 2015) summarise in their reports some of the issues that many African cities are currently struggling with concerning public space. Many of these challenges are particular to African cities, due to the nature and diversity of informal activities and cultural dispositions, and the particularly poor state of many African economies. UCLG reports for instance that because of increased demand for public space, road and sidewalk congestion has become unbearable in many African cities. According to these authors, the aesthetics of the public realm have deteriorated in many cities as a result of inadequate maintenance and deficient infrastructure. They also highlight concerns for security and public safety in many African cities. However, it is important to reiterate that context, conditions, histories, and urban planning practice differ

tremendously between different African cities, the quality and quantity of public space accordingly varies widely. It is therefore required to closely examine the particular constellations and histories of planning and policies that have contributed to Accra's contemporary urban landscape.

5.2.2 Urban planning in Ghana

Table 2: Policy and planning documents reviewed

Year	Document	Organisation
1991-1992	Strategic Plan for the Greater Accra Metropolitan Area	Town and Country Planning Department (TCPD)
2010-2013	Ghana Shared Growth Development Agenda (GSGDA): Medium Term Development Plan	National Development Planning Commission (NDPC)
2011	The New Spatial Planning Model Guidelines	TCPD
2014-2017	GSGDA II: Medium Term Development Plan	NDPC
2015	Ghana National Spatial Development Framework (2015-2035)	TCPD
2016	Land Use and Spatial Planning Act (Act 925)	Government of Ghana
2017	Greater Accra Regional Spatial Development Framework	Land Use and Spatial Planning Authority (LUSPA)
2017	Long-Term National Development Plan of Ghana (2018-2057)	NDPC

Modern and traditional pressures

Spatial planning in its current form finds its origin in the 19th century industrialisation and urbanisation in the West. It was a practice predominantly concerned with the design of plans to develop new or reconstruct existing settlements, grounded in principles of orderliness, aesthetics,

safety and public health (Watson, 2009). Increasingly, the need to shift from Western philosophies of urban planning towards a focus on inclusivity, equity and pro-poor approaches in African cities is gaining traction in academic and planning circles. This should, however, not come at the expense of well-designed and attractive urban environments, which are fundamental components for achieving inclusivity, equity, and as argued in this thesis, spatial justice (Watson, 2009).

Around the turn of the 20th century, spatial planning became an institutionalised tool for governments to implement state policy to deal with urban change. Urban planning aims to control or influence the process of urban change by administering laws, guidelines and land use regulations (Cobbinah and Darkwah, 2017). Urban change can be seen as a gradual process of transformation determined by the interactions and relationships between urban actors (Lefebvre, 1991; Cobbinah and Darkwah, 2017). The main stakeholders of urban change – the residents, the state and the private sector – hold very different power-relations to one another, and therefore the management and negotiation of power relations between these different actors is central to urban planning. It also involves the redistribution and repurposing of resources, which often produces winners and losers (Adams, 1994). Urban planning is therefore inherently a deeply political process (Watson and Agbola, 2013; Cobbinah and Darkwah, 2017).

Several sources identify political interference as one of the main causes for poor urban planning in Ghana (Yeboah and Obeng-Odoom, 2010; Cobbinah and Korah, 2015; Fuseini and Kemp, 2015; e.g., Cobbinah and Darkwah, 2017). Urban planning is generally recognised as a government's most potent tool to manage rapid urban growth, but its success depends on the available resources, the amount of authority wielded by its institutions, and its relationship and engagement with the main stakeholders (Watson and Agbola, 2013; Fuseini and Kemp, 2015; Cobbinah and Darkwah, 2017). It is also commonly accepted that urban planning should be a collaborative endeavour that reflects the desires and needs of the constituents (Cobbinah and Darkwah, 2017). However, activities from both political and traditional leadership in Ghana have been deeply detrimental to this process and contributed to a situation in which both residents' views are inconsequential, and urban planning institutions are incapable of positively influencing urban processes (Yeboah and Obeng-Odoom, 2010).

In Ghana, traditional authorities oversee approximately 80% of all land (Cobbinah and Darkwah, 2017). They assume full responsibility for land management and defining land use, and regularly assign land to development projects without informing or consulting with planning authorities

(Amoateng, Cobbinah and Owusu-Adade, 2013; Cobbinah and Darkwah, 2017).

The Local Government Act has left modern political authorities in charge of urban planning and management. However, the perception prevails that the main incentive of political agents is gaining or retaining political power, which is dependent on winning votes (Cobbinah and Korah, 2015; Fuseini and Kemp, 2015). The planning process therefore generally adheres to the logic that will deliver the most votes, major planning activities often coinciding with or preceding important political events, such as election campaigns (Cobbinah and Darkwah, 2017). Many sources agree that this dual pressure of both political interference at the national and regional levels and traditional leadership at the local level contributes heavily to the failure of planning agencies to effectively influence urban processes, and consequently to the poor urban planning situation in Ghana (Yeboah and Obeng-Odoom, 2010; Fuseini and Kemp, 2015; Cobbinah and Darkwah, 2017).

A brief history of Ghana can be found in Chapter 3, but in order to fully appreciate the current urban situation, it is necessary to recount some of Ghana's history with a more explicit focus on its planning, the main planning events are summarised in Table 3.

Colonial planning

The earliest examples of spatial planning were several development plans made by colonial officials between 1927 and 1947 during the British occupation of the Gold Coast. These plans proposed a largescale expansion of important infrastructure and social services. A substantial proportion of the infrastructural interventions – notably ports, railways, roads and mines – were located in the resource-rich South, and aimed at increasing the efficiency of the resource extraction endeavour (Adarkwa, 2012; Fuseini and Kemp, 2015).

In 1945 the colonial administration instituted the first formal planning system through the Town and Country Planning Act, which mirrored the new planning system that was introduced in Britain to repair the economy and manage the reconstruction effort after World War II. The act specified the role, capacity and legislative basis of spatial planning and articulated progressive goals towards the modernisation and social transformation of towns and urban areas. Instead, this new device of spatial planning was deployed to forcefully consolidate and expand the project of colonial exploitation. Rather than serving broader society and improving the conditions of the local populations, planning was employed to pursue the well-being of the Europeans and the loyal

African elites. The planning system it prescribed was highly centralised, and required all major planning decisions, even concerning local interventions, to be made at the level of the ministry (Acheampong, 2019c). On the other hand, it did incorporate a degree of community participation through the traditional chiefs, corresponding with the British indirect way of governing their African colonies (Fuseini and Kemp, 2015).

Development efforts were largely limited to where the Europeans and the African elites resided, in the Southern urban settlements, which further intensified the disparity between the North and South (Acheampong, 2019c). In Accra, spatial planning was used to dissect the city along ethnic lines to segregate the Europeans from the indigenous and migrant populations, a practice that was entertained all over the African continent and regressed into its severest form under apartheid in South Africa (Mabogunje, 1990). Planning ordinances of 1876 and 1895 relieved the government of responsibility for providing public services and infrastructure in migrant areas, under the pretext that these were meant for temporary settlement only (Brady and Hooper, 2019). The legacy of this divisive planning on the city is remarkably intact, visible in the vast inequality of amenities, services, greenery and open space between some of the inner-city neighbourhoods. Not only has colonial planning permanently scarred the urban landscape, but it has had an enduring influence on planning practice today. In literal terms, urban planning still largely leans on the act of 1945, regardless of its many amendments made after independence (Fuseini and Kemp, 2015; Acheampong, 2019c).

Planning after independence

The first government after independence under Dr. Kwame Nkrumah intended to bring about a socio-economic revolution, to modernise the country and explicitly bridge the gap between the impoverished North and the wealthier South, fiercely driven by the principles and values of socialism (Acheampong, 2019c). To achieve this goal, the government needed to considerably expand the social and economic infrastructures of the country in order to improve the welfare of its citizens. In 1961 the National Planning Commission (NPC) was established to coordinate this vast project and convert the vision into feasible workflow and planning guidelines (Acheampong, 2019c). Several ambitious development plans were drawn up that sought to transform the economy, mainly by industrialising and modernising agriculture, thereby restoring employment opportunities to the rural areas of Ghana (Fuseini and Kemp, 2015).

This period, even if short, did have important consequences for urban planning. These measures

combined with a sense of national optimism generated a massive rural-urban migration and populations of urban areas exploded. Between 1950 and 1960 the population of Accra increased by 240% (Fuseini and Kemp, 2015). Despite aspiring to invest heavily in the rural areas of the country and remedy the inequality between North and South, most of the industrialisation under Nkrumah still occurred around the three largest urban areas – Accra, Kumasi and Sekondi/Takoradi – in the Southern parts of the country (Songsore, 2009). The spatial imbalance generated by colonial planning was thus never successfully resolved, and many current challenges facing Ghanaian urban areas, such as the unguided urban development, poor sanitation and deficits in housing and vital services, can be traced to adverse planning of the colonial administration, but also to poor execution of planning in the early days after independence (Songsore, 2009; Owusu, 2010; Adarkwa, 2012). However, implementation and further spatial planning efforts were abruptly suspended when Nkrumah's government was overthrown in 1966, after which followed a prolonged period of successive military regimes in which no substantial planning projects were attempted (Fuseini and Kemp, 2015).

Decentralisation and planning in the 1990s

The era of oppressive military rule, between 1966 and the late 1980s was characterised by political and economic instability, which eroded the little gains achieved by urban planning (Acheampong, 2019b). In the late 1980s heavy reforms were imposed on Ghana by international organisations as part of the structural adjustment programmes (SAPs) in response to the severe economic crisis which had enveloped most of the subcontinent (Konadu-Agyemang, 2001b). These reforms would have immense effects on the further trajectory of urbanisation and planning, and Ghana had to fundamentally restructure its planning system to respond to, and prepare for the new challenges and opportunities raised by processes of liberalisation and decentralisation (Fuseini and Kemp, 2015).

The ratification of the new constitution in 1992 introduced the first of a range of decentralisation efforts with the objective to reform the government structure and increase local involvement and participation in the development process in a new attempt to reverse the urban bias of spatial development and decongest the largest urban areas (Fuseini and Kemp, 2015). In 1993, the Local Government Act (Act 462) redefined the administrative structure of government in Ghana to its current composition of four institutional levels as shown in Figure 74: the national, regional, district and sub-district levels. The ministries at the national level engage in monitoring,

evaluation and drafting of policies, and planning on a policy level. Each of the ten regions of Ghana have a Regional Coordinating Council (RCC) which harmonise the plans and policies and coordinate their implementation between the districts. Act 462 entrusted considerable executive responsibilities and powers to the local branches of government – the Metropolitan, Municipal and District Assemblies (MMDAs)₃₁ – mandating them as the decisive planning authorities in charge of the local development and planning process and the implementation of policies (Fuseini and Kemp, 2015).

In 1994 the National Development Planning (System) Act (Act 480) established the National Development Planning Commission (NDPC) in charge of socio-economic and spatial planning on the national scale, to monitor the planning of the MMDAs and ensure local development reflects the national development agenda (Owusu, 2004). With the policy-shift to decentralisation and the establishment of the NDPC, planning was explicitly separated in two types: ‘development planning’, which involved itself with social and economic issues, with a particular focus on poverty reduction; and ‘land use planning’, which fixated on physical planning and drafting of plans for the development of urban areas. In reality, the introduction of development planning shifted the discursive emphasis firmly away from any specific spatial form of planning. The Town and Country Planning Department (2011) recognised the fundamental gap between the socio-economic focus of development efforts and their spatialised realities. Acheampong (2019c) notes that this dichotomy between the spatial and the socio-economic produced a parallel structure with strict divisions between development and spatial planning activities at every level and very little coordination or dialogue between the different agencies and departments (see Figure 75). This resulted both in spatial planning that is often detached from any social and economic reality, and development planning with little understanding or consideration of the spatial consequences (Acheampong, 2019c). For example, different iterations of the two most important planning documents, the National Development Plan (NDP) and the Medium Term Development Plan (MTDP), have never been supported by a convincing spatial strategy to implement the predominantly socio-economic development agendas (Acheampong, 2019c). This leaves the implementation of plans and policies often open to different interpretations of the various MMDAs charged with local execution, and vulnerable to all types of interference (see political interference p.20).

31 At district level, further distinction is made between three district types based on population size, the regular district (75 000+), municipal district (95 000+) and metropolitan districts (250 000+), the latter are further divided into sub-metropolitan district councils (Town and Country Planning Department, 2011).

Contemporary urban planning

In 2011 the New Spatial Planning Model (NSPM) was presented to address the neglect of spatial planning and the lack of a coherent planning system; a hierarchical structure of plans where each lower plan conforms to the higher levels to ensure a direct correlation between national development strategies and the local implementation of spatial planning activities (Town and Country Planning Department, 2011). The NSPM identifies three different plan-levels based on Ghana's administrative structure: the Spatial Development Framework (SDF), the Structure Plan (SP), and the Local Plan (LP).

Furthermore, in 2016, in order to aid in the implementation of this model and to '*streamline the use and management of land in a sustainable manner*' the Ghanaian parliament approved the Land Use and Spatial Planning Act (Act 925) in 2016. The act marks a substantial leap in the development of Ghana's spatial planning system, as it finally replaces and updates the legal planning framework of the archaic Town and Country Planning Ordinance, in place since 1945. It explicitly posits effective planning as a basic requirement for the just distribution and use of limited resources, most importantly land. To this end the act mandates the Land Use and Spatial Planning Authority (LUSPA) to take over planning responsibilities of the Town and Country Planning Department (TCPD) (Government of Ghana, 2016a). The act similarly establishes a three-tier planning structure that specifies responsibilities and tasks for different agencies on the national, regional and district levels that largely coincide with the plan-levels of the New Spatial Planning Model. Furthermore, Acheampong (2019c, p. 50) notes that this new department fittingly couples the terms 'land use' and 'spatial planning' to indicate '*a deliberate attempt to institute a new tradition of integrated and multi-scale planning that delivers wider socio-economic and environmental development imperatives with the traditional design and regulatory function of town planning.*' In other words, LUSPA is meant to coordinate between, and synchronise the domains of development and spatial planning in order to achieve a more effective, integrated planning practice in the pursuit of more sustainable development.

The Spatial Development Framework (SDF), the highest plan-level of the NSPM, provides a strategic vision for development on the national, regional and district levels and has a planning horizon of 20 years. It addresses the spatial implications of social and economic developments and provides a spatial expression to policies on these administrative levels, and is as such coherent with the National Development Plan (NDP) and the Medium-Term Development Plan (MTDP). The most important issues considered are population growth, natural resources,

economic development and employment, infrastructure, tourism and the environment. On the basis of these developments and policies, the SDF provides direction to the distribution of future residential areas, development projects and prospects for local and foreign investments (Town and Country Planning Department, 2011).

The Structure Plan (SP), the next level of plan, is a geographically specific plan that manages the development and redevelopment of towns, urban areas and other development sites. Generally, SPs further define proposals in the SDFs to guide the direction of development, mainly by specifying conservation and protected areas, layouts of major infrastructures and road networks, and development and land use patterns. SPs plan for a window of 15 years and should include a detailed budget and implementation plan (Town and Country Planning Department, 2011).

The Local Plan (LP), the most detailed and focused plan level, further specifies the broad land use patterns within the confines of the permitted land uses from the SP, by adapting land use to meet with present and future community needs within the planned time-frame of 15 years. The local plans form the basis for the application of building permits (Town and Country Planning Department, 2011).

Participatory planning

It is commendable that the NSPM clearly seeks to advance from former feigned attempts to include the public, to more genuine participation in the planning process, by imposing a minimum of three rounds of consultation and participation with the main stakeholders during the preparation of plans at every planning level. The stakeholders are different at every plan level, but the local plan identifies the most important stakeholders of the affected area as: the district administration and their technical departments; identifiable interest groups including developers, land owners and users or residents of the larger plan area affected by the plan; chiefs, elders or traditional rulers; and utility providers (Town and Country Planning Department, 2011). The document recognises that in the past participation efforts served merely to inform rather than involve the public in decision making, and explicitly asserts an ambition to '*a process of active involvement that affords actors the opportunity to learn, and hence, own the process and break and transform past habits in order to achieve the desired objectives of the plan. Participation may involve information sharing, consultation and collaboration*' (Town and Country Planning Department, 2011, p. 43). Unfortunately, a comprehensive analysis of the new participation process, the outcomes and implications for spatial planning in Ghana is beyond the scope of this research, but it is included

in the final chapter in the recommendations for further research.

Table 3: Timeline of landmark planning events

1945	Town and Country Planning Ordinance (CAP 84)
1957	Independence of Ghana
1958	Town Plan of Accra
1961	National Planning Commission (NPC)
1992	Constitution of the 4 th Republic of Ghana
1993	Local Government Act (Act 462)
1994	National Development Planning (System) Act (Act 480)
2011	New Spatial Planning Model
2016	Land Use and Spatial Planning Act (Act 925)
2017	Ministry of Inner Cities and Zongo Development

Budgeting of spatial planning

Similar to youth development, in spatial planning it is imperative to evaluate how policies and planning activities are funded, as planning agencies require sufficient resources in order to effectively influence spatial processes. The central government distributes its budgets through the ministries, that are responsible for allocating sufficient funding to the agencies and departments, but this has historically always been inadequate (Acheampong, 2019c). The institutionalisation of the New Planning Model and spatial planning under LUSPA were largely financed by external sources, mainly development partners and international companies in the emergent petrochemical industry (Acheampong and Ibrahim, 2016). Acheampong (2019c) highlights that, further developing spatial planning and capitalising on its prior merits will necessarily involve generating considerable amounts of internal resources by the central and local governments. To this end, Act 925 proposes the establishment of the Land Use and Spatial Planning Development Fund to provide funding for planning activities, including research and capacity building, reporting,



Figure 82: Distribution of major open spaces in the 1958 Master Plan for Accra (source: digital adaptation from analogue maps obtained from PRAAD, Accra)



Figure 83: Areas designated as slums for demolition (dark gray), remedial treatment (gray) and reduced structural standards (light gray) in the 1958 Master Plan for Accra (source: digital adaptation from analogue maps obtained from PRAAD, Accra)

promotional activities and public education (Government of Ghana, 2016a). The funds is presently not yet in operation, but should receive resources from the Ministry of Finance, from MMDAs and development partners, which would mark an important step forwards in improving the functioning of spatial planning in Ghana (Acheampong, 2019c).

5.2.3 Accra

Despite Accra being the largest urban area and the main economic and administrative centre of Ghana since its appointment as the colonial capital in 1875, because of the lack of spatial focus on planning, it has been the subject of only very few specific spatial planning efforts. A brief overview of the most prominent plans that include Accra as a planning area are provided here.

1958 Master Plan for Accra

During the Nkrumah period a master plan was developed for Accra, which represented one of the first significant city-level spatial planning efforts. Its modest objectives were to *'improve present conditions and to give future development to be carried out in a manner fitting to the dignity of a capital city and which is also practically and economically feasible'* (TCP Ghana, 1958). The plan defined the extent of urban expansion and delineated residential zones for future developments. Several studies identified the need for improvements to the existing roads, and the development of new roads that were to serve the new developments. This road network outlined the urban structure, and defined the limits to the expansion of the city (Acheampong, 2019c). The plan recognised the value of open public space and accordingly identified an existing network of open spaces in the city to be protected, including several parks, gardens and leisure facilities (see Figure 82). The city was considered spacious, green and open around the time of the development of the plan, and - ironically - the TCPD even commended their own efforts for successfully controlling the rapid urban development and having *'the foresight to retain extensive building free zones'* and therefore foresee *'no shortage of open space since the basis for a very fine open space system to meet all the needs of the community already exists'* (TCP Ghana, 1958:23). Several areas were also identified as slum developments - largely for unacceptable densities and lack of essential services and infrastructure - to which the plan proposed different remedies, from remedial treatment to complete demolition. Both research areas fall within the confines of slum areas designated in 1958 for remedial treatment (See Figure 83).

National Spatial Development Framework 2015-2035

In 2015 the National Spatial Development Framework (NSDF) 2015-2035 was published, a long-term strategic vision, which was the first spatial planning document to include the Accra area. However, this document is composed within the ambitious vision of establishing and planning for the mega-region Lagos-Accra-Abidjan. Its proposals therefore involve large-scale and long-term interventions and planning that affect urban areas in all of Ghana. As such, at this scale the spatial directives are very general, do not provide detailed or geographically specific guidelines on district or settlement level, and are mainly concerned with macro-level development indicators such as urban growth and mobility. The NSDF concentrate on five main pillars: emphasise balanced polycentric development; improve regional, national and international connectivity; strengthen the metropolitan city regions of Accra and Kumasi; promote development in networks and secondary cities; and ensure sustainable development and protect ecological assets (Government of Ghana, 2015, pp. 22–23). The document makes no specific reference to youth development or public space, and mentions open spaces only in reference to natural environments and green networks. From this document it is argued reasonable to assume that on a national planning level, the government has not prioritised the improvement of the public realm or any spatial measures that might actively improve young people's wellbeing.

Greater Accra Regional Spatial Development Framework

The latest published urban planning document that includes spatial directives on Accra is the Greater Accra Regional Spatial Development Framework (GARSDF) in 2017, a more geographically specific framework that follows from and further specifies the proposals laid out in the NSDF. This document's jurisdiction is the region that includes the Accra Metropolitan Area, but as a SDF it still requires further detailing in a Structure Plan (SP) and Local Plan (LP) to further zoom in on district and settlement level, but as of writing no such plans are available. The GARSDF indicates that all 16 districts within the Greater Accra Region (GAR) have Medium Term Development Plans but that none of these are currently accompanied by spatial planning documents that provide spatial articulations of their proposals (GIBB, 2017). The document does include the instructions to prepare structural plans for every district, and special local plans for, among other, the Ga Mashie area, and a vast area to the West of the Ring Road that includes Sabon Zongo.

The GARSDF proposes spatial development for Accra based on a polycentric compact region

composed of the following components: A strictly demarcated urban area that determines the service delivery and infrastructure provision; an extended transport network based on a robust public transport system supported by mixed modes of transport; protected environmental resources and areas from pressures of urban expansion; a hierarchy of urban nodes and rural centres to facilitate and rationalise planning and service provision; and improved connectivity and mobility provide free and equal movement of people, goods and services that should improve overall spatial and economic functionality of the urban system (GIBB, 2017, pp. 108–111).

In terms of current and prospective land use, the document – similarly to the NSDF – cites open spaces several times, but generally in reference to the preservation of natural environments (wetlands, water courses and coastal areas) and threats of encroachment and pollution to these areas. Public space is only briefly referenced in the context of the creation of new public transportation hubs. Recreation and sport facilities are discussed, but generally in reference to tourism. No particular attention is afforded to the evident problematic situations of high density, minimal availability of open spaces and low quality of the public realm in many parts of Accra. The document indicates that 15% of the total land surface within the urban development boundary should be allocated to parks, open space and sports fields, 15% of the total land surface within the urban development boundary, a guideline which should also be maintained for new developments (GIBB, 2017, p. 143). Beyond the definition of a boundary that delimits urban growth and some arbitrary figures for land use allocation, no detailed approach is provided to describe how open spaces should be preserved, or how existing dense urban areas should be confronted. From the available information it seems that no formal priority is given to the planning and provision of qualitative public spaces in dense settlements such as the research areas. Additionally, the documents demonstrate no clear intent to increase inclusivity or equal access to urban services and spaces, or to implement any form of participatory decision-making processes moving forward. This means that with little formal guidelines or legislative imperative, the implementation of participation schemes and provision of inclusive and qualitative public spaces are largely reliant on the capacity and willingness of the local political and planning authorities, with all the apparent risk that poses.

5.2.4 Ministry of Inner City and Zongo Development

One of the more recent strategies of the current government in the ongoing struggle to manage urban development, and to engage with marginalised populations has been the erection of the

Ministry of Inner City and Zongo Development (MICZD) in 2017 to deal exclusively with the development of urban low-income and zongo areas. This move must be seen both in a global context of emerging initiatives of governments to activate marginalised segments of populations with the goal to increase (at least the perception of) state legitimacy (Brady and Hooper, 2019), but also in the specific historical and political context of enduring neglect and marginalisation of zongo communities in Ghana. The history of the relationship between zongos, the indigenous authorities and the state is discussed in more detail in Chapter 3 (p. 87), but it is necessary to briefly reiterate important events to explain the social and political significance of the establishment of this ministry.

Before colonialism zongo communities' relationships with indigenous leadership were largely based on allegiance and protection (Allman, 1991). Indirect colonial rule altered the existing power structures and complicated the relationships between zongo headmen and the indigenous chiefs as the British became the dominant authority. Colonial planning segregated the city along ethnic lines, into indigenous areas, migrant areas and European areas and withdrew government responsibility for providing public services and infrastructure in migrant areas (Brady and Hooper, 2019). Effectively abandoned by the government, their unrestricted development rapidly led to dense, disordered settlements with often squalid conditions, devoid of basic amenities or infrastructure. These zongo areas increasingly reflected the otherness and powerlessness of their minority and migrant populations (Pellow, 2008). After the introduction of a National multi-party political system in the early 1950s, the zongo areas were increasingly seen by political agents as an important voting bloc, and several parties tried to appeal to zongo voters with promises to expand infrastructure and services (Allman, 1991; Hanretta, 2011).

However, the economic and social instability of the 1960s and 1970s, which was widely blamed on foreigners and migrants, generated a wave of resentment and suspicion towards zongo residents (Kobo, 2010). In 1969 the PP government (a predecessor of the current ruling NPP party) under president Busia issued the *Aliens Compliance Order*, which required all immigrants without valid residence permits to leave the country within a period of two weeks. This drastic measure, supported by a significant part of the population, was reportedly intended to resolve soaring unemployment rates among Ghanaians and high rates of criminality and prostitution, but is generally perceived as a desperate attempt to increase the popularity of the regime. The order forced many thousands of migrants to abruptly move or sell their businesses and properties, and disproportionately affected Nigerian migrants, who had become well integrated into Ghana's

economy (Aremu and Ajayi, 2014). These events profoundly traumatised the zongo communities, and even though the 1992 constitution amended citizenship rights and improved legal security for most zongo residents, it embedded a natural suspicion and scepticism of government projects which persists until today (Brady and Hooper, 2019).

At the same time, the used rhetoric altered the public perception of zongos, which are still commonly viewed as distinctly separate from other parts of the city (Osman, 2017; Brady and Hooper, 2019). As a result, zongos have been able to attract little national resources or attention to their specific development issues, and have continued to lag behind in terms of infrastructure and services (Brady and Hooper, 2019). However, in the past decade local and national government, and civil society organisations have made several efforts to reduce inequalities, but these programmes are regarded as uncoordinated and their outcomes underwhelming (Osman, 2017; Brady and Hooper, 2019).

The MICZD was set up in 2017, along with the Zongo Development Fund to support its mission to *'coordinate and facilitate critical interventions through collaborative and affirmative actions that progressively address the developmental deficits of inner-cities and Zongo communities in Ghana'* (Ministry of Inner-City and Zongo Development, 2018). Its creation has been extremely controversial; supporters see it as a legitimate and long overdue effort to engage with marginalised zongo communities and remedy spatial injustices; opposition sees it as a political move intended to garner Muslim votes and an attempt to erase the stain of the Aliens Compliance Order on the NPP party (e.g., Amorse, 2017; Frimpong, 2017; Ibrahim, 2017; Osman, 2017; Brady and Hooper, 2019). Another criticism is that the MICZD duplicates and overlaps with some of the tasks of other agencies and ministries, most prominently the Ministry of Local Government and Rural Development (MLGRD), whose planning and administrative jurisdictions very much include inner-city and zongo districts.

Whatever might be the main motivations behind its creation, at the time of the study it is too early to conclusively state how the ministry will achieve its goals or predict its long-term impact on zongo communities. The first years of its existence it focused mainly on setting up the Zongo Development Fund that finances much of its work, and organising the legislative and administrative structures necessary for its operations (Government of Ghana, 2017). The Medium-Term Expenditure Framework lays out a range of interventions for the period 2020-2023, many of which focus on provision of services and infrastructure: building access roads and drainage,

sports and recreational infrastructure, community upgrading and shelter, community greening, safety and security and street addressing (Ministry of Finance Ghana, 2019, pp. 47–51). It also includes several measures that focus on economic and social development of the communities: education rehabilitation projects, youth vocational training, business development support and cultural promotion (Ministry of Finance Ghana, 2019, pp. 52–58).

The ministry has developed an ambitious agenda, and has successfully allocated substantial resources to accomplish its goals. It seems to have generated excitement and cautious optimism in the zongo communities, but many residents reportedly remain sceptical (Abdulai, 2017; Osman, 2017; Brady and Hooper, 2019). As Brady and Hooper (2019) report, there can be important discrepancies between the aspirations and desires of zongo residents and leadership and the objectives of the ministry. The ministry tends to prioritise infrastructure projects – tangible developments are popular with political agents because they can be celebrated in visible symbolic events – whereas zongo communities and leaders often remain unconvinced of such developments and prefer approaches that combine physical interventions with efforts to stimulate social and economic development (IMF, 2002; Hillman, 2004; Brady and Hooper, 2019). Brady and Hooper (2019) argue that in order to overcome the multiple challenges of communities' mistrust of government initiatives, and diverging stakeholder priorities and aspirations, it is crucial to move beyond the inadequate forms of participation previously adopted and increase residents' sense of inclusion in decision making processes. Despite the ministry's strong rationale of engaging and empowering marginalised communities through enhanced dialogue, its initial activities have failed to include the types of sustained and inclusive participatory decision making that might lead to the genuine empowerment and transformation the ministry imagines (Brady and Hooper, 2019). It remains uncertain if the ministry will survive the erratic election cycles of Ghanaian politics, historically development projects that target marginalised populations have often been deployed for political purposes, and their transformative effects therefore often underwhelming and short lived. However, if the MICZD manages to use its current momentum to establish a progressive platform for community participation and confront the described challenges, it has the potential to redefine the relationship between the government and marginalised populations and become a major catalyst of spatial justice and sustainable urban development for the foreseeable future.

5.3 Conclusion

The current chapter builds upon, and attempts to frame the issues encountered in the investigation into the lived and perceived space of the previous chapter. To this end the chapter inves-

tigates issues that are located in the strategic mode of the conceived space, comprised of regulations, legislations and policies (Lefebvre, 1991). In this chapter the main focus is on the ways in which young people are represented and treated in national policies and urban planning, with particular emphasis on their access to, and use of public open space. To this end a selection of policy and planning documents were reviewed in order to understand current constellations of legal frameworks and urban planning mechanisms that determine the way infrastructure, services and other resources are spatially distributed throughout the city, and how this affects different social groups, youth in particular.

The chapter is separated into three parts: The first part on *youth policies* reviews a selection of Ghana's youth policies and situates their current state, developments and issues among global movements and in local recent history. Part two on *urban planning* correspondingly studies urban planning documents and developments, focused on issues of public space, and frames the current state in international tendencies and Ghanaian recent political history. This third concluding part briefly summarises the main issues, highlights the commonalities and differences between youth policies and urban planning and relates these to the conceived space and the politics of belonging. This prepares the reader for the final chapter, in which issues of the lived, perceived and conceived spaces are brought together in a larger discussion, culminating in the articulation of some general conclusions and societal and academic recommendations.

Since the early 2000s there has been a noticeable increase in international awareness and concern over youth issues in literature and in the policy community, including in Africa, propelled forwards to a large extent by the United Nations and its various youth initiatives (African Union Commission, 2006; Senanu, 2014; United Nations, 2016, 2018; United Nations Economic Commission for Africa, 2009). Youth is a socially constructed category which makes it difficult to universally define. States and organisations commonly use an age bracket to delineate the category of youth, but Ghana adopts an exceptionally wide age bracket to include people between the ages of 15 and 35, which might have unexpected and problematic consequences (Ministry of Youth and Sports Ghana, 2010). Principally, youth have specific physiological and emotional needs and aspirations, and these might be overlooked by more generalised policies. Additionally, respect and admiration for senior people is deeply embedded in Ghanaian cultures, consequently when older individuals infiltrate youth's ranks it tends to generate a natural hierarchy within groups, which intrinsically weakens the voice of the younger members.

It must be recognised that cultural politics also affects how other social groups are represented in state policies and popular discourses, and how additional layers of difference might com-

pound to a greater sense of marginalisation in (young) individuals. In the case of the zongo communities, the events and rhetoric used against foreigners in the late 1960s embedded a lasting suspicion and scepticism towards government projects, but also permanently altered the public perception of zongos as distinctly separate parts of the city (Brady & Hooper, 2019; Osman, 2017). Zongos have been able to attract little attention or resources to their specific development issues, and have consequently continued to lag behind in terms of infrastructure and services, contributing to an image that reflects their distinctness (Brady & Hooper, 2019). The establishment of the Ministry of Inner Cities and Zongo Development in 2017 marks the most substantial initiative in a limited range of uncoordinated and underwhelming attempts to reduce inequalities, but it is surrounded by controversy and it remains too early to determine to what extent its efforts will have lasting effects on the development and the image of the zongo communities (Brady & Hooper, 2019; Osman, 2017).

The Ghanaian government has been described in literature as inefficient and ineffective, the cases of youth development and spatial planning illustrate how many government agencies are plagued by systemic challenges that obstruct their operations, undermine their objectives and disadvantage or harm the beneficiaries of their efforts, in this case youth. Four main issues stand out: fragmented governance roles and lack of coordination between institutions; outdated legislation; funding shortages; and political interference and corruption.

The findings identify fragmentation of government roles over different departments or agencies, but also a lack of oversight and coordination between these different institutions, as some of the most pressing issues resulting often in the duplication of roles and activities and the gross misuse of resources. Youth agendas in Ghana continue to be fragmented and subordinated to other political processes, inspiring critical views that government efforts towards youth development are insincere or even malicious (Korboe, 2014). The National Youth Authority, the main agency mandated to coordinate and facilitate the youth development effort, has been largely unsuccessful in coordinating and monitoring other institutions and organisations. Similarly, in planning, a strict dichotomy between *spatial* and *socio-economic planning* produced parallel institutions with very little coordination or dialogue between the different agencies and departments (Acheampong, 2019). In reality, spatial planning was largely dismantled and development planning was executed with little understanding or consideration of the spatial consequences (Acheampong, 2019). This way, the implementation of both spatial plans and youth policies are largely left to the interpretations of local governments, and vulnerable to political interference (Hoetu, 2015a; Korboe, 2014).

Additionally, much of Ghana's legislation is severely outdated, with some of the fundamental regulations of youth development and spatial planning dating back as far as the colonial era. Critics have asserted that new legislation for youth development is essential to secure the rights and responsibilities of youth, commit the state to arrange appropriate funding mechanisms, provide a framework for the mainstreaming of youth in the national development agenda and increase participation in local and national decision making processes (Hoetu, 2015b). In recent years, the government has responded by gradually drafting proposals and implementing resolutions to revise and replace these legislations, but many are still pending approval. The most prominent updates are the National Youth Policy in 2010, and the Land Use and Spatial Planning Act (Act 925) in 2016, which both mark substantial leaps for Ghana's youth development and the spatial planning system respectively.

Sufficient funding is imperative for effective policy-making, and like many governmental sectors in Ghana, both youth development and urban planning have histories of severe funding shortages that extend into the present (Acheampong, 2019; Hoetu, 2015b; Korboe, 2014). Two main factors contribute to the current funding difficulties: First is the reclassification of Ghana to a Lower Middle-Income Country (LMIC) status since 2010, which impedes its access to concessional funding, but also opens up avenues of private sector funding (Ghartey, Oteng Asante, Jee Eun Chung, & Lal, 2014; Korboe, 2014). Secondly, development partners have been displeased with Ghana's progress on managing its economic challenges and reducing corruption, which deteriorated the investment climate (Ghartey et al., 2014; Korboe, 2014). Funding for youth development remains inadequate and is not projected to increase in the near future (Hoetu, 2015b; Korboe, 2014). In planning, many recent developments and initiatives were financed by external sources, mainly development partners and international corporations (Acheampong & Ibrahim, 2016). Leaning on external – especially corporate – donors, however, requires caution against pressures on policymaking and planning. Further developing spatial planning will necessarily involve generating considerable internal resources, and the *Land Use and Spatial Planning Development Fund* proposed recently to serve this purpose should mark an important step forwards in improving the functioning of spatial planning in Ghana (Acheampong, 2019; Government of Ghana, 2016).

Findings from both planning and youth discourses indicate that too often policies become entangled in Ghana's fierce political struggle between the two main parties which has plunged the country into a cycle of all-or-nothing politics which has effectively halted any major progress (Korboe, 2014). Unsurprisingly, political interference is recognised as a serious and persistent

concern in both youth development (e.g., Applerh & Hoetu, 2012; Gyampo, 2012a; Korboe, 2014) and urban planning (e.g., Cobbinah & Darkwah, 2017; Cobbinah & Korah, 2015; Fuseini & Kemp, 2015; Yeboah & Obeng-Odoom, 2010). Political interference and corruption is facilitated and exacerbated by several factors that make these policies and institutions vulnerable to political appropriation. In youth development, the selection procedures for development programmes are infamously non-transparent and have little objective selection criteria, allowing the benefits and resources for programmes to be held captive to politics and to be deployed by politicians to mobilise youth votes, reward them for their loyalty or to be used as incentive to intimidate or silence political rivals (Applerh & Hoetu, 2012; Korboe, 2014). In urban planning, which is inherently deeply political, the dual pressures of political and traditional leadership have been recognised as intensely detrimental to the planning process (Adams, 1994; Cobbinah & Darkwah, 2017; Watson & Agbola, 2013). This contributed to a situation in which residents' views have become inconsequential, and urban planning institutions are incapable of effectively influencing urban processes, resulting in the poor urban planning outcomes currently seen in Ghana (Cobbinah & Darkwah, 2017; Fuseini & Kemp, 2015; Yeboah & Obeng-Odoom, 2010). The findings highlight the necessity to stress existing gender and spatial bias in policies. Youth as a social group is extremely heterogeneous, and that it is therefore crucial to account for differences and inequalities within the category, particularly gender imbalances. Important geographical differences also persist: despite decades of decentralisation policies, resources remain focused on urban regions, but also within cities certain neighbourhoods have attracted significantly less resources than others (Opare, Egbenya, Kaba, & Baku, 2012). Youth policies and programmes have generally been *'formulated and implemented with little or no participation of the youth'*, but when contribution is sought, it is generally limited to young men living in Accra (Gyampo, 2012b, p. 13). Exacerbating the range of difficulties encountered by most youth, young women often encounter additional cultural and institutional barriers and gender-stereotyping, excluding them from employment opportunities, participation schemes, benefits of youth programmes and from community and domestic decision making.

Many of the specific challenges facing the Sub-Saharan African region are often directly or indirectly related to the failure of urban planning to effectively manage the pace of urbanisation, which lead to an overall sharp decline in living conditions for the urban poor, exemplified by overcrowding and acute shortages of sanitation, basic urban services, infrastructure, and open spaces (Cobbinah, Erdiaw-Kwasie, & Amoateng, 2015; Konadu-Agyemang, 2001b, 2001a; Ove-

ra, 2007). Under impulse of the 'Sustainable Development Goals' (SDG) framework³² a global movement urges for urban planning to increase focus on public space as a way to improve the general quality of life in cities by making urban areas more attractive and comfortable, by creating opportunities for employment, and by making the city more inclusive and safe for everyone, particularly for vulnerable or marginalised groups (UCLG, 2014, 2015; UN-Habitat, 2015). Such a focus would require new types of governance that rely on participatory approaches, where citizens are included in every phase of the development of public space (UCLG, 2014, 2015). At the time of writing, no recent detailed spatial plans for the research areas were published and from the limited available documents it seems that no explicit attention is afforded to the planning and provision of qualitative public spaces in dense settlements such as the research areas. Additionally, they demonstrate no clear intent to increase inclusivity or equal access to urban services and spaces, or to implement any form of participatory decision-making processes moving forward. With little formal guidelines or legislative imperative, their implementation is thus largely reliant on the expertise, capacity and willingness of the local political authorities. The last few decades have seen increased global attention to more participatory forms of governance as a way to improve state legitimacy, which coincided in Africa with academic pressures to shift from western planning philosophies towards a focus on inclusivity, equity and pro-poor approaches, and government initiatives to activate marginalised segments of populations (Brady & Hooper, 2019; Watson, 2009). In order to overcome such challenges as communities' mistrust of government initiatives, or diverging stakeholder priorities and aspirations, it is crucial to move beyond the inadequate forms of participation previously adopted and increase residents' sense of inclusion in decision making processes. Unfortunately, a comprehensive analysis of new participation models, outcomes and implications for youth development and spatial planning in Ghana is beyond the scope of this research, but it is included in the final chapter in the recommendations for further research.

In summary, the findings establish that both youth development and spatial planning have been neglected by the Ghanaian government for decades which has had devastating effects on the urban and social fabric of urban areas, including those of the research areas. The government seems to slowly recognise that both sectors are strategic and long-term investments that are in urgent need of attention and resources.

In the last decade several noteworthy measures have been implemented by the government designed to alleviate some of the mentioned challenges – notably a lack of coordination between agencies, political interference and corruption, underfunding and poor democratic legitimacy – including the National Youth

32 Goal 11, target 7: By 2030, provide universal access to safe, inclusive and accessible, green and public spaces, in particular for women and children, older persons and persons with disabilities (UN-HABITAT, 2016).

Policy in 2010, the New Spatial Planning Model in 2011, the Land Use and Spatial Planning Act (Act 925) in 2016 and the erection of the Ministry of Inner Cities and Zongo Development in 2017. However, despite significant moves in the right direction, the literature agrees that most government efforts have not been sufficiently comprehensive or thorough to produce the types of transformative and sustained effects to lift the marginalising effects of current discourses and policies (Brady & Hooper, 2019). Each of the discussed ministry sectors expresses the ambition to engage their respective stakeholders, but so far none has successfully adopted the type of progressive and empowering participation measures that would significantly reduce political, traditional or private pressures on marginalised populations and locations and lead to increased inclusive and sustainable urban development.

Chapter 6: Discussion, conclusions and Implications for future research

This concluding chapter is divided into three parts that represent distinct intentions, the discussion, conclusions and implications for future research. In the discussion section, the findings of the empirical work in chapter four are summarised and compared in relation to the findings of policy and planning discourses discussed in chapter five. Then the findings of this exercise are positioned within existing research to demonstrate how this research responds to the knowledge gap identified in the introductory chapter, by going beyond current limited interrogations of the urban realm by: adopting a multi-level investigation that focuses on perspectives from youth, but also evaluates them in broader context of views from community leaders, and discourses of planning and policies, rather than a more narrow focus generally adopted in urban research; using a particular set of participatory tools that are especially suitable for working with disenfranchised populations, that might empower the young participants. Subsequently the challenges and limitations of this research are discussed. The limitations and challenges of the research are then summarised and explained how these were addressed. In the second section on conclusions the research questions are reiterated and answered as a final summary of the main conclusions. In the final section on implications for future research, several avenues of possible investigations are examined and laid out based on the conceptual or methodological framework of the current research.

6.1 Discussion

Firstly, the findings demonstrate that the participatory methods used manifest the potential to open a window into otherwise difficult to reach accounts of belonging and place, and is suitable for – yet by no means restricted to – implementation in an urban African context. It is, however, imperative that participatory methods are used reflexively and are adapted with sensitivity to the particular constellations of power within the socio-spatial context. In essence, these methods can reveal experiences of belonging and exclusion that are often oversimplified, ignored or suppressed by political schemes and formal narratives.

The order and flow of the participatory research methods adopted here was crucial in order to gradually build rapport and trust between the research team and the participants, but also the rest of the community. The focus-group discussions (FGD) served as an important first contact with the young participants, to introduce the research and probe about issues concerning their experiences and the spaces of their neighbourhood. It also served to recruit participants for the

subsequent research activities CM and AP.

Secondly, after considering the perspectives of young participants, a counterbalance is offered by involving perspectives of various crucial stakeholders through *key-informant interviews* (KII), that aim to uncover practices (of inclusion or exclusion) that might influence young people's ability to participate fully in their respective communities. This view is accompanied with *systematic photographic observation* (SPO), in order to provide a more methodical, objective assessment of the various users and activities in public space inside the neighbourhoods.

Many findings touch on both the research areas: the prevailing lack of education, rampant poverty and unemployment rates and an overall poor state of infrastructure in the areas were universally agreed by participants as some of the main challenges to young people's wellbeing. It was also agreed that, in spite of the existence of smaller pockets of vice, both areas were generally safe, even during the night. But despite their geographical proximity, the research areas also exhibit very different cultural, demographic and spatial characteristics. Besides the commonly held challenges, the findings reveal a range of issues that were specific to, or have different effects or consequences for youths' sense of belonging in each research area that reflect their unique characteristics.

6.1.1 Youth and space

Public space

The importance of public space, and the broader need for effective urban planning, is increasingly acquiring traction in urban policy agendas globally, including recently in Africa (UCLG, 2015, 2016; UN-Habitat, 2015b, 2015a, 2015c; United Nations, 2017). Many of the specific challenges facing the Sub-Saharan African region can be directly or indirectly related to the pace of urbanisation of its cities, and the failure of urban planning to effectively direct its course towards more sustainable development (Cobbinah, Erdiaw-Kwasie and Amoateng, 2015). Under impulse of UN-Habitat's (2015b) 'Sustainable Development Goals' (SDG) framework³³ a global movement has urged for urban policies and planning to increase focus on public space as it could improve the general quality of life in cities by making urban areas more attractive and comfortable, by creating opportunities for employment, and by making the city more inclusive and safe for everyone, particularly for vulnerable or marginalised groups. The UCLG (2014, 2015) contends that such a

³³ Goal 11, target 7: By 2030, provide universal access to safe, inclusive and accessible, green and public spaces, in particular for women and children, older persons and persons with disabilities (UN-HABITAT, 2016).

focus is only possible with new types of governance that rely greatly on a participatory approach, where citizens are included in every phase of the development of public space, from the planning and design, to resourcing and maintenance, and to the enjoyment and use thereof.

As has been a central premise throughout this thesis, public space is not only a fundamental requirement for the well-being of people, and particularly for youth, it is also a highly political space, in which power relations on different levels are negotiated, challenged and affirmed. Equal access to public space should therefore be an essential component of development efforts to empower and emancipate marginalised segments of the population.

The findings confirm the universal importance of public space in the everyday lives of young people, and recognises open spaces as crucial platforms and resources for neighbourhood sociability and building of community. However, they also highlight the pressing need for more qualitative open spaces, particularly in dense areas such as Sabon Zongo. The broad category of public space, however, might obscure significant variances in the practices and activities between different locations and contexts, and the types of spaces described. More specific and rigorous investigation of the typologies and uses of open spaces in this particular context is therefore recommended.

The findings reveal that both research areas deal with serious and pressing issues of population density and congestion, but issues are different in nature and affect the areas in distinct ways. Sabon Zongo suffers mainly from a severe scarcity of open spaces as a result of the very densely built up urban fabric. The open spaces are small and few and suffer heavily from conflicting uses. Youth therefore has no choice but to seek refuge in spaces within the dense urban fabric, inevitably leading to friction and conflict with other residents, a point that was echoed by opinion leaders. Ga Mashie suffers mainly from overcrowding and lack of housing, which puts immense pressure on the availability and use of spaces, but also sets entirely different requirements on the existing network, in terms of comfort and security. However, Ga Mashie has, compared to areas such as Sabon Zongo, a relatively generous network of open spaces, but also has managed to improve its existing stock significantly, largely as a consequence of their influential traditional leaders and an effective local government agency.

The findings suggest that significantly more young people use the open spaces in Ga Mashie than in Sabon Zongo. An attempt at explaining this phenomenon should factor in the differences in size and character of the open spaces. The spaces in Ga Mashie seem more accommodating

to young people and are also more likely to be used by young people. Conversely, the spaces in Sabon Zongo are more restrictive in their use and do not encourage or allow play and likely push young people out to other parts of the neighbourhood or to other parts of town, reflected in a much lower presence recorded. This, however, cannot account for the effects that other factors, such as school-attendance, might have on the presence of young people.

The work thus demonstrates that open space is a rare and valuable commodity in Accra that is managed by a complexity of stakeholders and regulated by numerous formal and informal rules. It highlights the crucial importance of open spaces and the urgent need to provide more qualitative spaces and to better maintain the existing spaces. It also underscores that for development every context demands an adaptive approach and localised measures that are specific to the place, and – crucially – informed by the users' needs.

Considering the prominence of Accra as the nation's capital and its industrial, financial and administrative centre, it is at least remarkable that no recent detailed spatial plans of the city have been published at the time of writing. From the available planning framework it seems that currently no explicit attention is afforded to the planning and provision of qualitative public spaces in dense settlements such as the research areas. Additionally, these documents demonstrate no clear intent to increase inclusivity or equal access to urban services and spaces, or to implement any form of participatory decision-making processes moving forward. It is then reasonable to assume from their absence that participation schemes and provision of inclusive and qualitative public spaces will not be central to the efforts of urban planning as advocated for example by UCLG (2014). With little formal guidelines or legislative imperative, their implementation is thus largely reliant on the expertise, capacity and willingness of the local political authorities, with all the apparent and latent risks that poses.

Gender

It is important to remember that youth as a social group is extremely heterogeneous, and therefore crucial to account for differences and inequalities within the category, particularly gender imbalances. But also geographically important differences persist, despite more than half a century of decentralisation efforts, resources generally remain focused on urban regions, and certain neighbourhoods have historically attracted significantly less resources than others (Opere et al., 2012). Policies and development programmes have generally been '*formulated and implemented with little or no participation of the youth*', but even when contribution is sought,

it is generally limited to young men living in Accra (Gyampo, 2012b, p. 13). This spatial and gender bias towards urban males endures in the recruitment processes of many of the existing programmes (Korboe, 2014).

Exacerbating the range of difficulties encountered by most youth, young women often encounter additional cultural and institutional barriers and gender-stereotyping, excluding them from employment opportunities, participation schemes, benefits of youth programmes and from community and domestic decision making. Youth programmes and agencies are propagated as instruments for social protection and should therefore target and prioritise the most vulnerable among youth, rather than focus on the average – or even the privileged – as is too often the case (Korboe, 2014).

Space in many African cities is considered highly gendered, often seen in function of the dichotomy between private and public realms, where the domestic and private spheres are thought of as predominantly female, and the public realm is primarily male territory. Public space can be temporarily shared with women, but generally on men's terms, and women are not expected to appropriate or claim the public realm for activities like men do. The findings seem to confirm that women spend little time inside public space, unless they are engaged in some commercial or other specific activities. Men, on the other hand, are seen dwelling in public space for extended amounts of time, claiming the public as an extension of the private sphere.

In both areas, the number of women observed moving through, or dwelling in public space was only a fraction of the total amount of people recorded, and was significantly lower in Ga Mashie than in Sabon Zongo. This difference between the areas is provocative considering that Islamic customs and laws prescribe various restrictions on rights, freedom of movement and public life in general for women (e.g., Sechzer, 2004; Moghissi, 2005; Sidani, 2005). It might imply that in this context, local customs and cultural patriarchal practices have at least an equally – if not more – dominant influence on gender imbalance in public space than religious practices.

It is often argued that women in Ghanaian society carry the multiple burdens of providing for, and taking care of the household, leaving very little – if any – time, energy or resources for other vital activities such as education, political engagement or leisure. Furthermore, lack of means and education on sexual health and contraception in Ghana contributes to many young pregnancies, which can increase marginalising effects and the impact it has on young mothers' opportunities (Korboe & Williams, 2012).

Negative perceptions

An observation that is difficult to convincingly attribute to physical, social or cultural elements, is the consistently more critical and negative attitudes of Sabon Zongo participants towards aspects of their neighbourhood when compared to their Ga Mashie counterparts. It is conceivable that some of the differences in attitudes towards, and perceptions of some undesirable aspects of the environment and the community can be attributed to the considerable cultural and religious differences between the communities. However, the disparity in spatial layout and availability of open spaces likely contributes to the actual and perceived disturbance and conflicts caused by incivilities. Ga Mashie provides significantly more spaces and opportunities for play and leisure outside of social control or supervision of the dense urban fabric that Sabon Zongo simply does not.

However, it likely also points to broader issues of discontent and distrust with governmental and external agents, and a perceived inability to influence decision making and improve their quality of life. It is likely this sentiment is embedded in the collective memory as a result of histories of spatial injustices and antagonistic cultural politics towards the zongos and their residents. The unequal distribution of services throughout Accra as a result of policies and urban planning that have consistently neglected migrant neighbourhoods since their occurrence during colonial occupation (Enid Schildkrout, 1978; Pellow, 1991; Brady and Hooper, 2019). The current government has established a new ministry in 2017 specifically to address this issue and appease zongo voters, the Ministry of Inner City and Zongo Development (MICZD), but unfortunately it is still too early to speak of any significant impact.

6.1.2 Youth and power

Traditional power dynamics

The findings reveal an intricate connection between traditional leadership and identities and their central importance to a sense of belonging among youth, particularly in Ga Mashie.³⁴ Many residents of Ga Mashie have developed robust historic and symbolic attachments to place through kinship and cultural ties to their ancestral home. Their traditional and ethnic identities are

³⁴ It must be stressed that notions of tradition, and in particular the interaction of kinship, ethnic and religious identities in an urban African context are profoundly complex. An in-depth study of the interconnections and intricacies of these notions would require long-term anthropological investigation of these research areas and is therefore outside of the scope of this thesis. These observations must therefore be interpreted in this light and require further nuancing. (More comprehensive studies of kinship and ethnicity in Ghana can be found in works such as Enid Schildkrout, 1978; Lentz and Nugent, 2000).

likely an important uniting factor among community members. To many Africans, the traditional leaders represent the embodiment of those attachments and identities, and of their customary values and indigenous laws, which are intimately connected to a sense of belonging and feeling at home in place. Additionally, the chiefs are closely intertwined in (young) residents' everyday lives in various concrete ways. The chiefs exert effective authority over activities and movements in the spaces that their subjects inhabit and use in their everyday lives. They also assume the highest political and social roles in the community, they uphold indigenous laws and customs, negotiate disputes and often form the primary connection between subjects and outside groups, including the local government and development partners (Enid Schildkrout, 1978). Moreover, the Ga chiefs are also considered powerful agents outside of their neighbourhoods, as they own and manage vast amounts of land in and around the capital, granting them not only considerable revenues, but influence on the local government (Thurman, 2010; Dodoo, 2011; The World Bank, 2013; Andrews, 2017).

The Zongo chiefs similarly are symbolic of the Sabon Zongo community's unity and cultural continuity, and they occupy powerful positions in the community (Pellow, 1991). A crucial difference, however, is that zongo chiefs' authority is rooted in their subjects' loyalties rather than vested in the ownership of land (Pellow, 2001). Additionally, the Sabon Zongo was designated as a migrant community mainly for Hausa migrants, and has become vastly more heterogeneous through continuous migration from predominantly Muslim areas of Northern Ghana and West Africa. The area currently houses numerous different ethnic communities of different generations, each with different migration backgrounds, customs and traditions, ethnic identities and loyalties. Many members of its communities arguably have a less direct and robust relation to place, and many maintain strong connections and attachments to a place outside of Accra. Similarly, the leadership structures of Sabon Zongo are plural and complex, and loyalties extend to many different ethnic, religious and social groups and their leaders. The wealth and authority of the Sabon Zongo chiefs is, thus, not rooted in ownership of land but dependent on their subjects and rivalled by religious and political leadership.

The findings also reveal the importance of religious identity to a sense of belonging in Sabon Zongo, but reveal a major difference in religious experience between the research areas. In Ga Mashie, the vast majority of residents practice the Christian faith and congregate once a week in relatively large centralised venues. In Sabon Zongo most residents are Muslim and generally assemble in prayer at a mosque several times per day. The area's many mosques are

decentralised, often small and scattered throughout the area, but they are an important part of many people's everyday experience, and a crucial part of the social infrastructure of a neighbourhood. Especially for men, it is a key location to develop and maintain social networks, but also a place where they feel safe and among equals, and where many reportedly spend substantial amounts of time. Christian churches are arguably less fully entangled in people's everyday experience and the neighbourhood's social fabric because of these differences in religious practice. In no way does this claim to estimate piousness or assign any relative importance to faith in the different participants' lives, as most Ghanaians consider religion an integral and central part of their daily lives, regardless of belief system (Owusu, 1997; Crabtree, 2010).

Many of the differences between the research areas thus reflect a gap between the wealth and status of the Ga chiefs, whose political power is legitimised by the state, and the zongo chiefs, whose power has been in decline since independence and might be rivalled by other chiefs, political and religious leaders (Pellow, 1991, 2008). This disparity in real and perceived power undoubtedly reflects the varying success of traditional leaders' efforts in influencing policy-making and planning for their areas, and attracting development projects and funds from the government and development partners.

Power and belonging

In these dense areas, where the availability of open spaces is limited, especially young men tend to spend large amounts of time in public space, as a consequence and reflection of their marginalisation from spaces of labour and education, and because domestic spaces are considered off-bounds for them during the day. Public space is characterised by copresence and diversity, its use reflects temporalities and spatialities that are conditioned by power in place, and hence prone to expressions of uneven power relations. Clearly, in most parts of Accra traditional leadership – and in Sabon Zongo in close connection with religious leadership – is responsible for managing space on behalf of the community. Additionally, in most African societies the social hierarchy generally affords higher status to elders and puts youth in lesser positions (e.g., Enid Schildkrout, 1978; Gichuki, 2014). These positionalities differentiate open spaces, and the relationships between users and locations in space.

It is beyond doubt that most youth deeply admire and respect the traditional leaders, because of their central and symbolic role in the protection and maintenance of the communities and spaces of belonging. However, the relationship between youth and leadership is complicated

and ambivalent, as other studies have suggested (Gichuki, 2014; Iya, 2017). It appears that a sense of mutuality, or reciprocity between youth and traditional leadership is often weak, as most young participants feel the chiefs and elders do not listen to their concerns or act in their genuine interest. Several young participants stated that the traditional leaders are often corrupted by politics, wealth and power, and that they do not share their considerable wealth with, or deploy their influence to the benefit of the larger community, and certainly the youth.

The narratives demonstrate that many young people feel they have little voice or power, and feel unappreciated or undervalued by society, their concerns not taken seriously by authorities and community leaders. Their perception is that they do not participate on equal terms with more wealthy or powerful agents in the neighbourhoods. The findings also reveal that youth are disillusioned with Ghana's political system, which they see as deeply corrupted. They have little confidence or trust in the government, and its ability or intention to improve on their situation.

The findings thus reveal strong connections between youth and aspects of their community and environment but simultaneously challenge, nuance and confirm views of youth as powerless and marginalised. It suggests that most youth, despite experiencing significant forms of marginalisation from spaces of power and labour, develop connections to the community and to place in positive and meaningful ways. Many experience a deep sense of belonging in place, but the relations with the community and its leadership are complex and often problematic. The prevailing sentiment seems to be one of only partial belonging to place, often accompanied by a longing for an imagined elsewhere (Yuval-Davis, 2006; Antonsich, 2010). In order to generate a full sense of belonging in place, young people should feel free to express their identities, feel appreciated and taken seriously by, and be able to contribute to, the community and place (Antonsich, 2010). Many participants, however, reported the sense of being powerless, having little or no voice in decision making that affects them, with a full sense of belonging out of reach.

This sentiment has contributed to a situation of suspicion and opportunism wherein many young people feel the only way they can benefit from politics is through the exchange of short-term tangible gains for political allegiance or actions, consciously or unconsciously further undermining the fragile democratic system (Brady and Hooper, 2019). The complex and blurred nature of political and traditional power dynamics in Accra – perhaps best exemplified by the obscure and problematic distinctions between customary and statutory land rights in Ghanaian law (Danso and Barry, 2012; Boamah and Walker, 2016; Andrews, 2017; Cobbinah and Darkwah, 2017)

– might contribute to reduced accountability and increased likelihood of corruption, abuse of power and ineffective governance (Holm, 2000; Ubink, 2008; Jackson et al., 2009). Additionally, the ambiguity could make these intricate power dynamics more difficult for the powerless to negotiate, and impede their access to meaningful participation in decision making, potentially rendering them more vulnerable to exploitation or further marginalisation.

Representations of youth

This view of youth as powerless should perhaps be balanced with perspectives of different stakeholders. Since the early 2000s there has been a noticeable increase in international awareness and concern over youth issues in literature and in the policy community, propelled forwards to a large extent by the United Nations and its various youth initiatives (Senanu, 2014; United Nations, 2016a, 2018). In Africa the most prominent initiatives are the African Youth Charter in 2006 (African Union Commission, 2006), and the African Youth Report in 2009 (United Nations Economic Commission for Africa, 2009). According to different stakeholders, youth are relatively well organised and often participate actively and outspokenly during official consultation efforts. Additionally, on the council of elders that advise traditional chiefs, young people are commonly represented by a youth-chief that is nominated to articulate their issues and grievances and to defend youth interests on their behalf.

Youth is a socially constructed category which makes it difficult to universally define. States and organisations commonly use an age bracket to delineate the category of youth, but its range varies greatly between different cultures and societies. Ghana adopts an exceptionally wide age bracket to include people between the ages of 15 and 35, which might have unexpected and problematic consequences (Ministry of Youth and Sports Ghana, 2010). Firstly, youth have specific ‘physiological and emotional needs and aspirations’, and these might be overlooked when more generalised policies are endorsed by members outside of this age group (Korboe, 2014, p. 18). Secondly, as previously discussed, respect and admiration for senior people is deeply embedded in Ghanaian cultures, consequently when older individuals infiltrate youth’s ranks it tends to generate a natural hierarchy within groups, which intrinsically weakens the voice of the younger members (Gichuki, 2014).

To be fair, the government formally acknowledges youth in policies as a crucial and valuable asset in the development of the nation that deserves serious support and investment (Ministry of Youth and Sports Ghana, 2010). However, this image is often tempered by language that characterises

youth as only partially autonomous or responsible, and in need of strict guidance and supervision, which hereby seems to rationalise existing power structures that deny youth equal political or social participation. This official position could be seen to endorse and reproduce more popularly held stereotypes that emphasise young people's immaturity and inexperience, or characterise them as having underdeveloped or impeded judgement and morals. In this view youth require the guidance and leadership of adults, their concerns and contributions are therefore not taken seriously. Youth policies and programmes are correspondingly perceived by critics as inadequate, incapable of mainstreaming youth challenges and delivering the required progressive measures in order to educate and empower youth and genuinely involve them in decision making, and to maximise their positive impact on local and national development. Instead, policy makers seem focused on providing short-term and tangible solutions (such as improving sports-infrastructure and providing skill-development programmes) within the existing framework, and seem content with maintaining the status quo rather than supporting any radical or progressive changes that redistribute the current power dynamics (Korboe, 2014).

Similarly, it is necessary to understand how other social groups face types of marginalisation in state policies and popular discourses, to recognise how these forms of cultural politics might compound to a greater sense of marginalisation in individuals. In the case of the zongo communities, the events and used rhetoric against foreigners in the late 1960s – most notoriously the Aliens Compliance Order – embedded a lasting suspicion and scepticism towards government projects, but also permanently altered the public perception of zongos, still commonly viewed as distinctly separate from other parts of the city (e.g. Aremu and Ajayi, 2014; Osman, 2017; Brady and Hooper, 2019). Zongos have generally been able to attract little national attention or resources to their specific development issues, and have consequently continued to lag behind in terms of infrastructure and services, contributing to an image that reflects their distinctness from surrounding areas (Brady and Hooper, 2019). Several uncoordinated efforts have been undertaken to reduce inequalities, but their outcomes have generally been considered underwhelming (Osman, 2017; Brady and Hooper, 2019). The establishment of the MICZD in 2017 along with the Zongo Development Fund marks the most remarkable and substantial initiative to date, however it is surrounded by controversy and at the time of writing it is too early to appraise its achievements or conclude to what extent its efforts will have lasting effects on the development and the image of the zongo communities.

6.1.3 Governance and policy challenges

The Ghanaian government has often been described in literature as inefficient and ineffective in many ways, the cases of youth development and spatial planning illustrate how many government agencies are plagued by systemic challenges that obstruct their operations, undermine their – often ambitious – objectives and disadvantage or harm the beneficiaries of their efforts, in this case youth. Four main issues stand out: fragmented governance roles and lack of coordination between institutions; outdated legislation; lack of funding; and political interference and corruption.

Role fragmentation and lack of coordination

One of the most prominent issues includes the fragmentation of government roles over different departments or agencies, but also a lack of oversight and coordination between these different institutions, resulting often in the duplication of roles and activities and the gross misuse of resources. This lack of direction and oversight is not helped by the fact that the Ghanaian government counts 38 separate ministries, many with ambiguous and overlapping mandates.

Youth agendas, for example, in Ghana continue to be fragmented – different aspects of youth development are still scattered over different ministries – and subordinated to other political processes. This has inspired critical views that government efforts towards youth development are insincere or even malicious, as this fragmentation keeps both policies and youth themselves vulnerable to manipulation for political purposes (Korboe, 2014). Most stakeholders recognise that the lack of coherence and coordination of youth policies is a key obstruction to effective youth development (Hoetu, 2011; Korboe, 2014). Furthermore, the National Youth Authority (NYA), mandated to coordinate and facilitate the youth development effort is reputedly ill-equipped for this task; heavily under-resourced and lacking a physical presence in most of Ghana's 216 districts. As a result, the NYA has been passive and largely unsuccessful in its attempts to coordinate and monitor other institutions and organisations, and without its leadership implementation of the youth policies are largely left to the interpretation of local governments (Korboe, 2014; Hoetu, 2015a).

In planning, a strict dichotomy between spatial and socio-economic planning produced a parallel structure with strict divisions and very little coordination or dialogue between the different agencies and departments (Acheampong, 2019c). In reality it shifted the emphasis away from spatial planning and resulted both in spatial planning that is often detached from any social and economic reality, and development planning with little understanding or consideration of the

spatial consequences (Acheampong, 2019c). The implementation of plans and policies is left open to interpretations of the various MMDAs charged with local execution, and vulnerable to many types of interference.

Outdated legislation

Additionally, much of Ghana's legislation is severely outdated, with some of the fundamental regulations of youth development and spatial planning dating back as far as the colonial era. In recent years, the government has responded by gradually drafting proposals and implementing resolutions to revise and replace these legislations.

Critics have asserted that new legislation for youth development is essential to secure the rights and responsibilities of youth, commit the state to arrange appropriate funding mechanisms, provide a framework for the mainstreaming of youth in the national development agenda and increase participation in local and national decision making processes (Hoetu, 2015b). The National Youth Bill was drafted to update youth legislation and has been repeatedly presented to government since 2000 but has not seen implementation as of this writing³⁵ (Government of Ghana, 2014; Korboe, 2014; Government of Ghana: National Development Planning Commission, 2015; Hoetu, 2015b).

Similarly, in urban planning the government has only recently updated the Town and Country Planning Act of 1945, which mirrored the post-war British planning system, despite its many amendments made after independence (Fuseini and Kemp, 2015; Acheampong, 2019c). Since 2016 the Land Use and Spatial Planning Act (Act 925) finally replaces and updates the archaic legal planning framework, marking a substantial leap in the development of Ghana's spatial planning system. It explicitly posits effective planning as a basic requirement for the just distribution and use of limited resources and mandates the Land Use and Spatial Planning Authority (LUSPA) to take over planning responsibilities of the Town and Country Planning Department (TCPD) (Government of Ghana, 2016a).

Funding deficiencies

Sufficient funding is imperative for effective policy-making, and like many governmental sectors in Ghana, both youth development and urban planning have histories of severe funding shortages that extend into the present (Korboe, 2014; Hoetu, 2015b; Acheampong, 2019c). Two main factors

contribute to the current funding difficulties: First is the reclassification of Ghana to a Lower Middle-Income Country (LMIC) status since 2010, which impedes its access to concessional funding, but also opens up avenues of private sector funding (Ghartey et al., 2014; Korboe, 2014). Secondly, development partners have been displeased with Ghana's progress on managing its economic challenges and reducing corruption, which deteriorated the investment climate (Ghartey et al., 2014; Korboe, 2014).

Youth development is currently significantly underfunded, and this is not projected to improve in the near future (Korboe, 2014; Hoetu, 2015b). Additionally, the ministry fails to specify how it expects to fund the implementation of the NYP moving forward (Hoetu, 2015b).

In planning, many of the recent developments and initiatives, such as the institutionalisation of the NSPM and LUSPA, were largely financed by external sources, mainly development partners and international companies in the emergent petrochemical industry (Acheampong and Ibrahim, 2016). Caution is required of pressures on policymaking and planning when leaning on external – especially corporate – donors. Acheampong (2019c) highlights that, further developing spatial planning and capitalising on its prior merits will necessarily involve generating considerable amounts of internal resources by the central and local governments. To this end, the Land Use and Spatial Planning Development Fund was proposed to provide funding for planning activities, which – when finally in operation – should mark an important step forwards in improving the functioning of spatial planning in Ghana (Government of Ghana, 2016a; Acheampong, 2019c).

Political interference and corruption

Evident from both planning and youth discourses, too often when policies do not enjoy national consensus they become entangled in the fierce struggle between the two main political parties, NPP and NDC (Korboe, 2014). When political parties change sides, contributions of the previous government are often neutralised by the incoming government, which has plunged the country into a cycle of all-or-nothing politics which has effectively halted any major progress. Unsurprisingly then, political interference is recognised as a persistent concern and a major cause of failure in youth development (e.g., Applerh and Hoetu, 2012; Gyampo, 2012a; Korboe, 2014) and urban planning (Yeboah and Obeng-Odoom, 2010; Cobbinah and Korah, 2015; Fuseini and Kemp, 2015; e.g., Cobbinah and Darkwah, 2017). Political interference and corruption is facilitated and exacerbated by several factors that make these policies and institutions vulnerable to political appropriation.

In youth development, the selection procedures for development programmes are infamously non-transparent and have little objective selection criteria, including a 'flexible' age bracket, which allows the most senior or well-connected individuals to claim the majority of programme benefits, often through political association. This way youth policies, the benefits of programmes and the resources reserved for their implementation are held captive to the politics and deployed by politicians to mobilise youth votes, reward them for their loyalty or used as incentive to intimidate or silence political rivals (Applerh and Hoetu, 2012; Korboe, 2014).

Urban planning itself is inherently deeply political as it involves the management and negotiation of power relations, and the redistribution and repurposing of resources, which often produces winners and losers (Adams, 1994; Watson and Agbola, 2013; Cobbinah and Darkwah, 2017). It is generally agreed that the dual pressures of political and traditional leadership have been detrimental to the planning process. Traditional authorities regularly assign land to development projects without informing or consulting with planning authorities (Amoateng, Cobbinah and Owusu-Adade, 2013; Cobbinah and Darkwah, 2017). Political authorities are often seen as mainly motivated by winning votes, and major planning activities often seem to follow Ghana's election cycles (Cobbinah and Korah, 2015; Fuseini and Kemp, 2015; Cobbinah and Darkwah, 2017). This contributed to a situation in which residents' views have become inconsequential, and urban planning institutions are incapable of effectively influencing urban processes, resulting in the poor urban planning outcomes currently seen in Ghana (Yeboah and Obeng-Odoom, 2010; Fuseini and Kemp, 2015; Cobbinah and Darkwah, 2017).

The controversy around the creation of the MICZD is another example of how negative perceptions of politics have taken to the national stage. Its supporters see its creation as a legitimate and long overdue effort to engage with marginalised zongo communities and a remedy for profound spatial injustices; opposition sees it as a political move intended to garner Muslim votes and an attempt to erase negative associations with the NPP party (e.g., Amorse, 2017; Frimpong, 2017; Ibrahim, 2017; Osman, 2017; Brady and Hooper, 2019). Another criticism is that the MICZD duplicates and overlaps with some of the tasks of other agencies and ministries, most prominently the Ministry of Local Government and Rural Development (MLGRD), whose planning and administrative jurisdictions very much include inner-city and zongo districts.

6.1.4 Participation and the way Forward

The last few decades have seen increased global attention to more participatory forms of

governance as a way to improve state legitimacy. In Africa this coincided with academic pressures to shift from western planning philosophies towards a focus on inclusivity, equity and pro-poor approaches, and government initiatives to activate marginalised segments of populations (Watson, 2009; Brady and Hooper, 2019).

Participatory rhetoric has been part of the Ghanaian policy discourse for some time, however, most authors agree that past attempts have been disingenuous and weak. The Ghanaian government has adopted several initiatives in the past decade to comply with global and local pressures to improve its legitimacy and transparency. Accordingly, the new planning model adopted in 2011 seeks to advance from past weak attempts of mere consultation, to pursue more genuine participation in the planning process, and generate *'active involvement that affords actors the opportunity to learn, and hence, own the process and break and transform past habits in order to achieve the desired objectives of the plan. Participation may involve information sharing, consultation and collaboration'* (Town and Country Planning Department, 2011, p. 43). The current government has also recently erected the Ministry of Inner City and Zongo Development (MICZD) in the ongoing struggle to manage urban development, and to engage with the historically marginalised and neglected zongo communities in Ghana (Brady and Hooper, 2019).

As Brady and Hooper (2019) report, important discrepancies between the aspirations and desires of community and government objectives highlight the need for more genuine forms of participation. Governments often prioritise infrastructure projects, likely because they are tangible accomplishments that can be celebrated in visible symbolic events, whereas communities might prefer approaches that combine physical interventions with efforts to stimulate social and economic development (IMF, 2002; Hillman, 2004; Brady and Hooper, 2019).

Brady and Hooper (2019) highlight that in order to overcome such challenges as communities' mistrust of government initiatives, or diverging stakeholder priorities and aspirations, it is crucial to move beyond the inadequate forms of participation previously adopted and increase residents' sense of inclusion in decision making processes. Unfortunately, a comprehensive analysis of new participation models, outcomes and implications for youth development and spatial planning in Ghana is beyond the scope of this research.

It has been established that both youth development and spatial planning have been neglected by the Ghanaian government for decades which has had devastating effects on the urban and

social fabric of urban areas, most prominently those of Accra. The government now seems to slowly recognise that both sectors in urgent need of attention. In the last decade several noteworthy measures have been implemented by the government designed to alleviate some of the mentioned challenges that inhibit genuine progress in these sectors.

However, despite significant moves in the right direction, the literature agrees that most government efforts have not been sufficiently comprehensive or thorough to produce the types of transformative and sustained effects to lift the marginalising effects of current and historic discourses and policies (Brady and Hooper, 2019). Each of the discussed ministry sectors expresses an official ambition to engage their respective stakeholders, but so far none has successfully adopted the type of progressive and empowering participation measures that would significantly reduce political, traditional or private pressures on marginalised populations and lead to increased inclusive and sustainable urban development.

6.1.5 Challenges and limitations

During the undertaking of this research some challenges were encountered that might have had influence on the data collection or analysis. It must be recognised that it is unclear how the author's position as a white European male might have influenced research participants' responses and interactions. Several measures were adopted to increase trust between participants and researcher, and increase reliability of responses: several participatory methods were set up with the same participants to successively increase participants' efforts and research intensity, in order to gradually build rapport; local gatekeepers from a respected NGO served as guides and interpreters for the participatory exercises; the researcher spent significant amounts of time inside the research areas before, but also during research exercises to familiarise the residents and participants with his presence.

Despite these measures, it is reasonable to assume that some disposition towards the researcher as an outsider persisted, with interests different from those of the participants. Therefore a reflexive position was explicitly adopted during the analysis process. It is for example possible that participants might have been hesitant to share their grievances, not wanting to misrepresent their area, or conversely might have conflated their issues in the hope the researcher might be in a position to resolve these. On the other hand, it is also possible that some of the participants confided in the researcher certain matters that they might have been more hesitant about sharing with people within their social networks.

Not unrelated, language might have been a constraining factor concerning the interaction with the participants. Even though English is officially the main language of Ghana, for most Ghanaians English is a second or a third language. Most young people in urban Ghana are relatively fluent in English, but at times the level of comprehension was somewhat uncertain, especially in places where 'western' education levels are relatively low, such as Sabon Zongo. Therefore, the services of an interpreter were necessary for parts of the interactions with participants in Sabon Zongo.

One limitation of the research was the small sample size, which was a result of the feasibility with limited time and resources. Some of the methods adopted were relatively time, labour and resource intensive. The limited sample size in this case is offset by the depth and richness of the data acquired, which is considered crucially important when dealing with narratives of marginalisation and topics of considerable complexity such as this study.

Finally, the sensitive issue of gender inequality has emerged throughout the investigation. Despite attempts to reflexively deal with challenges of gender bias and inequality, and the adoption of measures that served to encourage confidence and participation among female participants, in retrospect, an additional measure that might have been adopted is the use of a female gatekeeper/interpreter with female participants. Both the interpreter and the researcher were male which might have influenced the willingness of some of the female participants to share their experiences and their perspectives.

As this investigation studies specifically the spatial experiences of a sample of young people in Accra, and the spatial relationships with their respective communities and society at large, it is difficult to credibly generalise its lessons to distinct populations in different contexts. Framing this study of a particular sample in larger discussions of the challenges of African urbanism and youth, however, hopefully helps to highlight the urgency of the topic and contribute to a comparative record of similar experiences in places of different settings. In spite of these limitations, significant measures and a reflexive position sensitive to the subtleties and uncertainties of the encountered challenges were adopted in order to negotiate or mitigate some of their effects on the research outcomes, to allow for several significant contributions to academia and practice.

6.2 Conclusions

As a way of concluding this thesis it seems fitting to reiterate the research questions posed at the start of this work and phrase a brief and concise response.

How can we understand the effects of spatial planning and youth policies on the one hand, and collective action and local power dynamics on the other, on young people's perception and use of the public realm, and what are the implications for urban policy, planning and design?

This main research question is broken down into manageable parts, and addressed separately below.

6.2.1 How do young people perceive and use the public realm of Accra? How can we characterise their sense of belonging in place?

In order to answer this question, this thesis used participatory methods to explore young people's everyday experiences of belonging and exclusion, and the everyday political activities of spatial and temporal tactics they adopt and adapt to challenge existing power relations and negotiate the urban environment of Accra. It remains a challenge to answer in a concise and precise way, considering the subjective and individual nature of the livedspace that this question pertains to, and the incredible variety in responses and experiences recorded that reflect the complexity of the subject. The thesis has demonstrated that the participatory methods used manifest the potential to open a window into otherwise difficult to reach accounts of belonging and place, and are suitable for – yet by no means restricted to – implementation in an urban African context. It is, however, imperative that they are used reflexively and are adapted with sensitivity to the particular constellations of power within the socio-spatial context. In essence, these methods can reveal experiences of belonging and exclusion that are often oversimplified, ignored or suppressed by political schemes and formal narratives. It is important to remember that youth as a social group is extremely heterogeneous, and therefore crucial to account for differences and inequalities within the category, particularly gender imbalances. There are several significant observations that deserve to be recounted that answer this question and conclude this work.

Several major variations were demonstrated in the ways that youth perceive and use the urban environment, and experience belonging in the different research areas. The findings revealed how an intricate connection between traditional leadership and ethnic identities form an important uniting factor among community members, and are central to a sense of belonging among youth, particularly in the Ga Mashie area. Clearly, many residents of Ga Mashie have developed robust historic and symbolic attachments to place through kinship and cultural ties to their ancestral home. To many Ghanaians, the traditional leaders represent the embodiment of those attachments, customary values and indigenous laws, which are intimately connected to a

sense of belonging and feeling at home in place. Additionally, the chiefs are closely intertwined in (young) residents' everyday lives, through their authority over activities and movements in the spaces and the political and social roles they assume in the community: they uphold indigenous laws and customs, negotiate disputes and often form the primary connection between subjects and outside groups, including the local government and development partners.

Sabon Zongo, by contrast, was originally designated as a community for Hausa migrants and has become vastly more heterogeneous through continuous migration from predominantly Muslim areas of Northern Ghana and West Africa. This translates to a very different experience of belonging in place, with different identity markers that signify collectiveness and unity among the community members. The area houses numerous ethnic communities with different migration backgrounds, customs and traditions, ethnic identities, and loyalties. As a result, many residents' relationships to place can be seen as less direct or centralised, but rather more diffuse, as many also maintain strong connections and attachments to places and communities outside of Accra. Similarly, the local leadership structures are more decentralised, plural and complex, and loyalties of residents are spread over multiple ethnic, cultural and social groups and their leaders. It seems that these aspects have contributed to a lesser prominence of traditional elements and leadership in the recordings of young people's lived experience. It might suggest that traditional and indigenous elements do not represent the central uniting element that generates cohesion and solidarity between community members, as seen in Ga Mashie. Rather, the Islamic religion, its practices, places of worship and leadership appear to serve much more as a unifying element and source of continuity that is central to a sense of belonging among Sabon Zongo participants. For men, young and old, the mosque is a key location to develop and maintain social networks, a place where they feel safe and among equals, and a central space in their everyday lives where many spend substantial amounts of time.

A substantiating observation for a claim that many participants in Sabon Zongo experience a less robust sense of belonging in place, yet is difficult to convincingly attribute to separate physical, social or cultural elements, is the consistently more critical and negative attitudes towards aspects of their neighbourhood when compared to their Ga Mashie counterparts. It is conceivable that this disparity in attitudes towards, and perceptions of undesirable aspects of the environment, can be partly attributed to the considerable socio-cultural and religious differences between the communities. However, it is argued that the difference in spatial layouts and availability of open spaces could have a significant impact on the actual and perceived disturbance and conflicts

caused by incivilities. Ga Mashie offers young people decidedly more spaces and opportunities for play and leisure outside of social control or supervision of the dense urban fabric compared to Sabon Zongo. This critical attitude likely also points to broader issues of discontent and distrust with the government and external agents, sentiments that have been embedded in the collective memory of zongo communities as a result of long histories of spatial and social injustices, inflicted on the zongos and their residents in the form of planning and policy neglect and blatantly antagonistic cultural politics (Enid Schildkrout, 1978; Pellow, 1991; Brady and Hooper, 2019).

The narratives demonstrated persuasively that many young people feel powerless, voiceless, unappreciated or undervalued by society. Many feel that their concerns are not taken seriously by authorities and community leaders alike. Young people perceive that they do not participate on equal terms with other members of the community, particularly wealthy or powerful agents. It is beyond doubt that young people deeply admire and respect the elders and traditional leaders, mainly because of their central symbolic roles in the communities, but their relationship is complicated and ambivalent, as other studies have suggested (Gichuki, 2014; Iya, 2017). It appears that a sense of reciprocity between youth and traditional leadership is often weak, as many young participants feel the chiefs and elders do not listen to their concerns, or rule in their genuine interest. Additionally, many are seen as motivated by selfishness or perverted by politics, wealth and power. Participants were also disillusioned with Ghana's political system, which they see as deeply eroded by corruption. Most youth reported little confidence or trust in the government, and its ability – or indeed, its intention – to improve their situation. This sentiment has contributed to a condition of suspicion and opportunism towards politics, wherein many young people feel they can only benefit from politics through (clientelist relationships) the exchange of short-term tangible gains for political allegiance or activities, consciously or unconsciously further undermining the fragile democratic system. It seems that the social contract between youth, society and the state has been allowed to degrade over decades of neglect, stigmatisation and mismanagement, and it is arguably primarily up to the government to restore this bond of trust with young people.

In summary, the findings reveal strong affective connections between youth and aspects of their community and environment, but they simultaneously challenge, nuance and confirm views of youth as powerless and marginalised. They reveal important variations in lived realities between young people in the different research areas, yet also suggest that most youth, despite experiencing significant forms of marginalisation from spaces of power and labour, develop strong connections

to the community and to place in positive and meaningful ways. Many young people experience a deep sense of belonging in place, but the relations with the community and its leadership are complex and often problematic. The prevailing sentiment therefore seems to be one of only partial belonging to place, often accompanied by a longing for an imagined elsewhere. In order to experience a full sense of belonging in place, young people must feel free to express their identities, feel appreciated and taken seriously by, and be able to contribute to and participate fully in the community in place (Antonsich, 2010). Many participants, however, reported the sense of being powerless, having little or no voice in local and national decision making that affects them, fundamentally driving a full sense of belonging further out of reach.

6.2.2 How do local power dynamics affect young people's use of the urban realm of Accra?

After considering the perspectives of young participants, an answer to the second research question requires a counterbalance by involving perspectives of various crucial stakeholders through key-informant interviews, that aim to uncover collective practices affecting young people's use of the public realm and ability to participate fully in public and social life. This view is accompanied with systematic photographic observation (SPO) to supplement a methodical, empirical assessment of the various users and activities in public space inside the neighbourhoods.

The findings confirm the universal importance of public space in the everyday lives of young people, and recognise open spaces as crucial platforms and resources for neighbourhood sociability and building of community. It has been a central premise throughout this work that public space is not only a fundamental requirement for the well-being of people – and particularly for youth – but also a political space, in which power relations on different levels are negotiated, challenged and affirmed. The public realm is characterised by copresence and diversity, its use reflects temporalities and spatialities that are conditioned by power in place, and are hence prone to expressions of uneven power relations.

The work demonstrates that open space as such is a rare and valuable commodity in Accra that is managed by a complexity of stakeholders and regulated by numerous formal and informal rules. It is argued that the provision of equal access to public spaces should be an integral part of development efforts to empower and emancipate marginalised segments of the population. This motivates the urgent demand to provide more inclusive, qualitative spaces and to protect and maintain the existing spaces, particularly in dense areas such as Sabon Zongo. However, it

must be recognised that the active involvement and ownership of the local community is a central requirement for the successful management and protection of the public realm. It must therefore be emphasised that every place demands an adaptive approach and localised measures that are sensitive to the power dynamics in place, and – crucially – informed by the users' needs.

The work supports the view that power relations between the traditional and political authorities in planning processes are highly complex and ambiguous, and the contours around responsibilities and jurisdictions are often ill-defined. This confused arrangement might lead to reduced accountability on both sides, which is often connected to ineffective governance and corruption in literature (Holm, 2000; Ubink, 2008; Jackson et al., 2009). Additionally, it might further increase barriers for the powerless to meaningfully participate in, or influence decision making, making them more vulnerable to exploitation or further marginalisation.

The findings illustrate that local power dynamics have a determining effect on young people's use and perception of spaces. Local leaders in Ga Mashie have been relatively successful in commanding a positive influence on planning and on the protection, provision and improvement of public spaces in the area. This was only possible because of significant efforts of the local planning agency, coupled with the influence of powerful traditional leaders on the local planning process. Ga Mashie currently houses several large open spaces, and many smaller places, some of which have seen recent improvements and refurbishments, making them more inclusive and accommodating to young people.

Conversely, Sabon Zongo seems to have remained largely unaffected by any major form of planning or infrastructural improvements in recent years. Most of the original open spaces have significantly decreased in size or disappeared completely under the pressure of encroachment over many decades. Likely, traditional leaders' comparatively lesser political influence and the ongoing effects of a century of policy neglect for zongo areas are to blame here. The few remaining spaces in Sabon Zongo are restrictive in their use and do not encourage or allow play, which pushes young people out to other areas in search of spaces for leisure or play, or deeper into the dense urban fabric often resulting in tensions and conflict.

The findings demonstrate also how the lack of voice for youth in planning processes can directly affect the availability of spaces to them. Because their perspectives are not represented in planning processes, young people's interests are routinely compromised for commercial interests. This way even spaces legally designated for youth or public use are often – through corruption – seized for

more profitable land use destinations. This highlights the absence of long-term perspective both by spatial planning departments and local stakeholders, and speaks volumes about how society perceives ‘young people as liabilities, but not as assets’ (Director National Youth Authority 2017). It further serves to emphasise the need for advanced forms of advocacy for young people in decision making processes.

This view of youth as powerless should perhaps be balanced with other stakeholders’ perspectives on how they organise themselves in Accra to combat their marginalisation, influence decision making processes and claim spaces for their self-development. According to local stakeholders, youth are relatively well organised and often participate actively and outspokenly during consultation efforts. Additionally, on the council of elders that advise traditional chiefs, young people are represented by a youth-chief that is nominated to articulate their issues and grievances and to uphold youth interests on their behalf. Community-based organisations (CBOs) and registered youth groups were highlighted by government officials as important resources for community participation and consultation processes. The reliance on a system of registered youth organisations and CBOs, however, likely overlooks and disempowers some of the most marginalised individuals, who might be less connected or – out of mistrust or other reasons – might prefer not to engage with authorities.

The prevailing opinion among youth remains that neither traditional nor political leadership take genuine interest in their issues and that official participation initiatives are little more than symbolic measures that are inconsequential to decision making outcomes. While it must be acknowledged that the government has made significant attempts to implement participatory decision making processes, the literature agrees that most initiatives have not been sufficiently coordinated or comprehensive to produce the types of transformative and sustained effects that would significantly reduce political, traditional or private pressures on marginalised populations or lead to more inclusive and sustainable urban development (Brady and Hooper, 2019).

6.2.3 How do spatial planning and youth policies affect the availability of, and youth’s access to qualitative inclusive public spaces in Accra?

In order to respond to this question, it is necessary to recount how the government sectors of youth development and urban planning have encountered similar governance challenges, and how failures in both sectors have compounded to create a dire situation for young people, but also how recent developments have attempted to address the situation.

Despite increased global attention to the importance of public space, and the broader need for effective urban planning (UCLG, 2015, 2016; UN-Habitat, 2015b, 2015a, 2015c; United Nations, 2017), Ghana has been slow to implement changes to improve its spatial planning process (Acheampong, 2019c). Successive economic and political crises combined with sustained urban growth escalated the ongoing housing crisis and the 'informalisation' of urban Ghana (Ian E. A. Yeboah, 2000; Konadu-Agyemang, 2001b; Easterly, 2003). In the absence of appropriate planning strategies, this encouraged the development of high-density settlements and further densification of existing settlements without regard for the public realm (Mabogunje, 1990; UCLG, 2014). This led to an overall sharp decline in living conditions for the urban poor, exemplified by overcrowding and acute shortages of sanitation, basic urban services, infrastructure, and open spaces in many neighbourhoods of Ghana's cities, including the research areas which both suffer from serious and pressing issues of density and congestion (Konadu-Agyemang, 2001b, 2001a; Overa, 2007).

Despite Accra's prominence as the nation's capital and economic and administrative centre, no recent comprehensive spatial plans have been drafted for Accra. The existing regional planning framework dedicates no explicit attention to increased access to qualitative public spaces in dense settlements such as the research areas, nor does it indicate a clear intention to implement any form of participatory planning processes moving forward. With little formal guidelines or legislative imperative, their implementation depends on the expertise, capacity and willingness of the local political authorities, with all the apparent and latent risks that poses. This lack of coordination and clear guidelines likely explain the vast disparity in approaches and outcomes between different planning areas, clearly demonstrated in the two research areas.

Since the early 2000s there has been a noticeable increase in international awareness and concern over youth issues in literature and in the policy community, to a large extent under influence of the United Nations, exemplified in Africa by the declaration of the African Youth Charter in 2006, and the African Youth Report in 2009 (African Union Commission, 2006; United Nations Economic Commission for Africa, 2009; Senanu, 2014; United Nations, 2016a, 2018). However, this seems to have had only limited effects on Ghana's youth policy landscape and on young people's actual situations and sense of belonging. In the National Youth Policy youth is formally acknowledged as a crucial and valuable asset in the development of the nation that requires and deserves serious support and investment (Ministry of Youth and Sports Ghana, 2010). However, this image is often tempered by language that assumes youth are only partially autonomous, and

in need of strict guidance and supervision. This imagery can be seen to rationalise the existing power structures that deny youth equal political, social or cultural participation, and reproduce popularly held stereotypes and delegitimise young people's concerns and contributions. Most critics agree that current youth policies and programmes in Ghana are inadequate, incapable of mainstreaming youth challenges and delivering the required progressive measures in order to educate and empower youth and genuinely involve them in decision making that affects them (Hoetu, 2011, 2015a; Gyampo, 2012b; Youth Empowerment Synergy (YES-Ghana), 2017).

Additionally, cultural politics that affect other social groups might exacerbate the marginalisation in young individuals' lived experiences. Various historic policies embedded a suspicion and scepticism in residents of the zongo communities towards the government, but also altered the public perception of zongos and their residents, still commonly viewed as distinctly separate from other parts of the city (Osman, 2017; Brady and Hooper, 2019). Zongos continue to lag behind in terms of infrastructure and services because they have generally been able to attract little attention or resources to their specific development issues, contributing to their distinctness from surrounding areas (Brady and Hooper, 2019).

Numerous sectors of the Ghanaian government have been described in literature as inefficient and ineffective, and the cases of youth development and spatial planning illustrate how many public agencies are plagued by systemic challenges that obstruct their operations, undermine their objectives and disadvantage or harm the beneficiaries of their efforts. Four challenges stood out: fragmented government roles and lack of coordination between institutions; outdated legislation; funding deficiencies; and political interference and corruption.

One prominent issue encountered is the fragmentation of government roles over different departments or agencies, made worse often by a lack of oversight and coordination between these different institutions, resulting generally in the duplication of roles and activities and the gross misuse of resources. The lack of coordination and leadership generally means that implementation of plans and policies is left open to interpretations of the various MMDAs charged with local execution, vulnerable to forms of (political) interference.

Furthermore, much of Ghana's legislation is severely outdated, with some of the fundamental regulations of youth development and spatial planning dating back as far as the colonial era. Finally, in recent years the government has responded by gradually drafting proposals and implementing resolutions to revise and replace these legislations.

Youth development is also currently significantly underfunded, and since the ministry fails to specify how it expects to fund the implementation of the National Youth Policy – its central policy document – moving forward, it is not expected to improve in the near future (Korboe, 2014; Hoetu, 2015b). In planning, many of the recent developments and initiatives were to a significant extent financed by external sources, mainly development partners and international companies in the emergent petrochemical industry (Acheampong and Ibrahim, 2016).

Finally, political interference is recognised as a persistent concern and a major cause of ineffectiveness in both youth development (e.g., Applerh and Hoetu, 2012; Gyampo, 2012a; Korboe, 2014) and urban planning (Yeboah and Obeng-Odoom, 2010; Cobbinah and Korah, 2015; Fuseini and Kemp, 2015; e.g., Cobbinah and Darkwah, 2017). It is understood that youth policies, the benefits of programmes and the resources reserved for their implementation are often held captive to politics and deployed by politicians to mobilise youth votes, reward them for their loyalty or used as incentive to intimidate or silence political rivals (Applerh and Hoetu, 2012; Korboe, 2014). In planning, the dual pressures of political and traditional leadership have significantly contributed to a situation in which residents' views have become inconsequential, and urban planning institutions are incapable of effectively influencing urban processes (Amoateng, Cobbinah and Owusu-Adade, 2013; Cobbinah and Korah, 2015; Fuseini and Kemp, 2015; Cobbinah and Darkwah, 2017).

It has been established that both youth development and spatial planning sectors have been neglected by the Ghanaian government for decades, and that this has had devastating effects on the urban and social fabric of Ghana's urban areas, perhaps none more so than those in Accra. The government seems to gradually have recognised that both sectors were – and still are – in urgent need of attention and investment. In the last decade several measures have been implemented by the government, designed to alleviate some of the discussed challenges that have blocked genuine progress and led to poor performance in these sectors. However, despite significant moves in the right direction, the literature supports the view that so far government efforts have not been sufficiently comprehensive to produce the types of transformative and sustained effects to lift the marginalising effects currently experienced (Brady and Hooper, 2019).

The Ghanaian government has adopted several initiatives in the past decade to comply with global and local pressures to improve its legitimacy and transparency. The last few decades have seen increased prominence of more participatory forms of governance as a way to improve state

legitimacy (United Nations, 2015b). In Africa this coincided with academic pressures to shift from western planning philosophies towards a focus on inclusivity, equity and pro-poor approaches, and government initiatives to activate marginalised segments of populations (Watson, 2009; Brady and Hooper, 2019). Participatory governance has been part of the Ghanaian policy repertoire for several decades, however, most authors agree that past attempts have been disingenuous and weak (Gyampo, 2012b; Korboe, 2014; Eze, 2015; Acheampong, 2019a; Brady and Hooper, 2019).

Both sectors express a formal ambition to engage their respective stakeholders through enhanced dialogue, but so far neither has successfully adopted the type of progressive and empowering participation measures that would significantly reduce political, traditional or private pressures on marginalised populations and lead to the inclusive and sustainable urban development envisioned in this thesis. In order to overcome some of the challenges posited, it is likely necessary to move beyond the inadequate forms of participation previously adopted and increase residents' sense of inclusion in decision making processes (Brady and Hooper, 2019). A further comprehensive analysis of existing and new participation models, outcomes and implications for youth development and spatial planning are regrettably beyond the scope of this research, but could prove fertile territory for future investigations.

6.2.4 What are the implications for spatial planning and urban design in an African context?

The implications and recommendations proposed on the basis of the research findings for urban planning, design and policy are the following:

It is crucial that the capacities and available resources of planning agencies are expanded well beyond their current or historic levels. Significant investments are required to attract trained planning and urban design professionals and invest in capacity-building of current staff. Despite its intentions, in reality decentralisation policies have resulted in the unequal spread of capacities, which has in many cases placed too much responsibility on local institutions that do not have the capabilities to deal with many of the complexities and challenges of urban planning. Urban planning should therefore be the responsibility of trained professionals working in multidisciplinary teams in close interaction with local leaders and stakeholders. Only this way a sustainable urbanist approach is possible that looks and moves beyond separate social, economic or spatial aspects of planning and allows holistic, longterm and resilient solutions to spatial justice issues.

It is vital to mainstream the central importance of public space in policy and urban planning frameworks. Currently, the state of the public realm in many parts of Ghana is severely neglected and considered highly inadequate. Additionally, current planning frameworks and policies do not include any meaningful reference to the development of qualitative and inclusive public spaces, or the implementation of guidelines for the improvement of existing spaces or how to deal with the current inadequacies and challenges. Particular attention should be dedicated to the greening of the public realm and the provision of public parks and leisure facilities that cater to young people, especially in and around dense residential areas such as the research areas. This should include the implementation of urban design standards that focus on the provision of functional street furniture, sporting infrastructure and street lighting that might increase the security and inclusivity of the public realm.

It is also crucial to mainstream youth in national and local policy making, including urban planning, and increase harmonisation and dialogue between different governmental and non-governmental agencies. In Ghana it is the main responsibility of the National Youth Authority to coordinate and educate government agencies on how to increase participation of young people in decision making and the development of effective youth programmes that might lead to the genuine emancipation of young people. The NYA will therefore also require adequate funding and capacity to provide effective leadership.

It is consequently imperative to improve on current inadequate practices of participation, especially in urban planning and youth development. The emphasis should be on including voices of marginalised populations, particularly women and young people. Sustained and widespread efforts of consultation and participatory planning should be at the basis of all levels of decision making, including programming, budgeting and implementation. As demonstrated in this thesis, innovative types and methods of participation could be adopted to increase participation rates of hard to reach or marginalised segments of society. Finally, this increased focus on participation should not remain limited to forms of decision making and planning practice but should extend to the academic realm to increase the democratisation of research and knowledge production.

6.3 Implications for Future Research

In this final section several implications for future research are presented, in order to locate the study in its field. The research has raised many more questions, and clearly demonstrates that this type of research in architecture and urbanism – particularly in an African setting – is still in

its infancy. Much more research into similar issues of spatial justice, methodological discussions and African urbanism is clearly needed. Because the research is of a fundamentally multifaceted and cross-disciplinary nature it might have possible implications for a range of fields and might be enriched by investigations that focus on different perspectives of the urban landscape or replicated in different settings, with other research populations. As such, this investigation might support future inquiries into for example:

- A further investigation into formal and/or informal organisations of youth and how their coordination could enable them to reclaim their democratic rights, rally behind common causes and resolve issues associated with their needs in the urban realm.
- The potential replicability of this study in different settings will enable the benchmarking of the study of youth and the urban realm, and support further research from a comparative perspective. This could include comparative studies into different neighbourhoods of Accra, but also other cities in Ghana and/or Africa.
- Other studies might explore methodologies that advance the ones instigated in this thesis. Adaptations or improvements might include additional or different combinations of participatory tools, but might equally expand on quantitative tools that use GIS and statistical data.
- Adopting the conceptual framework the study of spatial justice issues across different types of populations or across different types of inequalities would allow a comparative investigation into the position of young people, and into the intersectionality of belonging.
- The explicit investigation of gender issues in relation to the use and perception of public space in African cities, and in relation to (paternalistic) biases in different cultures.

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APPENDICES

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Appendix A: Key participants

code/ pseudonym	description	community	name
KVR	researcher	N/A	Kristijn van Riel
BMP	interpreter/research assistant	N/A	Baba Musa Pachaka
E1	Traditional leader	Sabon Zongo	Alhadji Yahya Hamisu Bako
E2	Assembly member	Sabon Zongo	Honorable Yakubu Abame Asoke
E3	Assembly member aid	Sabon Zongo	Honorable Ibrahim Alhassan
E4	Assembly member	Ga Mashie	Honorable Joseph Addo
E5	Traditional leader	Ga Mashie	Nii Ayikai III
E6	Stool father	Ga Mashie	J. R. Myers
E7	Director National Youth Authority	N/A	Stephen Mensah-Etsibah
E8	Director Ga Mashie Development Agency (GAMADA)	Ga Mashie	Gabriel Nii Teiko Tagoe
O1	opinion leader	Sabon Zongo	
O2	opinion leader	Sabon Zongo	
O3	opinion leader	Sabon Zongo	
O4	opinion leader	Sabon Zongo	
O5	opinion leader	Ga Mashie	Annonte Heh Flex
O6	opinion leader	Ga Mashie	Hon. Alfred Roland Laryea
O7	opinion leader	Ga Mashie	Gabriel Allotey
Y1	youth group 1	Sabon Zongo	
Y2	youth group 2	Sabon Zongo	
Y3	youth group 3	Ga Mashie	
Y4	youth group 4	Ga Mashie	

Angeli	youth	Sabon Zongo	
Starcool	youth	Sabon Zongo	
Musa	youth	Sabon Zongo	
Mallam	youth	Sabon Zongo	
Fati	youth	Sabon Zongo	
Dekenzy	youth	Sabon Zongo	
Haiba	youth	Sabon Zongo	
Ras	youth	Sabon Zongo	
Carter	youth	Sabon Zongo	
Dorcas	youth	Sabon Zongo	
Possy Gee	youth	Ga Mashie	
Fazigogo	youth	Ga Mashie	
Ranking	youth	Ga Mashie	
Kristalline	youth	Ga Mashie	
Meyer	youth	Ga Mashie	
Shee	youth	Ga Mashie	
Schneider	youth	Ga Mashie	
Richjoy	youth	Ga Mashie	
Naa White	youth	Ga Mashie	
Richard	youth	Ga Mashie	
Kohler	youth	Ga Mashie	
Naa White	youth	Ga Mashie	
Blue Ivy	youth	Ga Mashie	

Appendix B: Auto-photography



Type of data: auto-photography

Author: Blue Ivy

Community: Ga Mashie

Content:

This is the traditional wear, we call it Otofo. Everyone in Ga Mashie has one. This dress even has its own dance, especially for when wearing this dress. We wear it on traditional occasions, many occasions, like this woman wearing Otofo here is my cousin.



Type of data: auto-photography

Author: Blue Ivy

Community: Ga Mashie

Content:

You can see here the product of the sea. There is this show on TV, they call it “Jamestown Fishermen” which is about the fishermen of James Town. You can see there that fish is very important to the community.



Type of data: auto-photography

Author: Blue Ivy

Community: Ga Mashie

Content:

Boxing, James Town is known for it. I watched it many times, I love watching it. Many young guys in James Town want to become big boxers. But it is not easy money, it is actually very hard training, hard suffering for them. So it is only those without education that go for it. They go to Akotoku Academy, it is the best in the country. Some of the strongest boxers in the world were training there.



Type of data: auto-photography

Author: Blue Ivy

Community: Ga Mashie

Content:

I really love that James Town is very religious. This really brings the morals and values to the people for harmonious living. So people in James Town live in harmony. This is why it is always very safe in James Town. This is the church of pentecost on silent city road, the one where I go.



Type of data: auto-photography

Author: Blue Ivy

Community: Ga Mashie

Content:

This is the base. Girls are also invited here but we come and feel shy there. But sometimes I go there to play Awari(oware) with some of the guys. Not many other girls come here, only when I bring a friend. But the boys they don't care. They feel boisterous when we are there and want to impress us.

The political parties help them set up the place. They give them TVs or games, in return for support during the campaigning.



Type of data: auto-photography

Author: Blue Ivy

Community: Ga Mashie

Content:

This is the only secondary school in our community. I never went there, but I am very proud of it, because it is the only one.



Type of data: auto-photography

Author: Blue Ivy

Community: Ga Mashie

Content:

Here I took the iron building. It is very old and one of the most beautiful buildings in James Town.



Type of data: auto-photography

Author: Blue Ivy

Community: Ga Mashie

Content:

This square is always full of children. A lot of children go and play there, they are safe from cars. Sometimes I go there and sit to watch passers-by, just to kill the time. And some people even sleep there, they prefer to sleep outside, and it is very safe there. Anyone can sleep, and nobody will disturb you.



Type of data: auto-photography

Author: Blue Ivy

Community: Ga Mashie

Content:

This one here we call “big catch”. It reminds the fishermen towards the festive season they have to catch enough fish to satisfy everyone when they go out.



Type of data: auto-photography

Author: Blue Ivy

Community: Ga Mashie

Content:

This picture I took also to show religion, that it is very important. What type of religion is not so important. This is the mosque in James Town. There are not so many Muslims here, but there are. There are almost never any problems between the Muslims and the Christians here.



Type of data: auto-photography

Author: Blue Ivy

Community: Ga Mashie

Content:

This is Nii Hansen Prison. There is a traditional shrine in there for the people of the community.



Type of data: auto-photography

Author: Blue Ivy

Community: Ga Mashie

Content:

This building is the bible house, it is ancient and beautiful, and it also helps spread the words of James Town.



Type of data: auto-photography

Author: Blue Ivy

Community: Ga Mashie

Content:

James Fort, so many people boast of it. Everyone is very proud of it. It is a tourist attraction.



Type of data: auto-photography

Author: Blue Ivy

Community: Ga Mashie

Content:

This park is very very safe because of the palace. The chief is there to keep everyone safe. There are many shows there. The chief allows anyone to organise something there if it is positive for the community. I was born in this palace, and my aunt and cousins still live there. I go there sometimes and hang out there.



Type of data: auto-photography

Author: Blue Ivy

Community: Ga Mashie

Content:

This is a statue from the World War II, many soldiers that fought for the British were coming from James Town. They say some of the bravest soldiers were coming from here. This statue is for them.



Type of data: auto-photography

Author: Blue Ivy

Community: Ga Mashie

Content:

This one is connected to the statue, it is located right next to it. It is very safe there, because there are always people sitting. You can move and walk freely there. They said they were going to make a beautiful garden of it.



Type of data: auto-photography

Author: Blue Ivy

Community: Ga Mashie

Content:

The lighthouse, it represents the whole of James Town.



Type of data: auto-photography

Author: Blue Ivy

Community: Ga Mashie

Content:

This is the taxi rank, it is very beautiful our transportation system. It works very well. It is always full of colours and people. I am very proud of this.



Type of data: auto-photography

Author: Blue Ivy

Community: Ga Mashie

Content:

This place here JayNii Streetwise, it was started because of a cultural dancer, he performed here together with some friends as a tourist attraction. Then they erected the foundation that helps the children and the youth from the area and takes them to school. There are cultural events there, with the youth doing drumming, dancing. There is a school for the children next to the foundation. There is even a small clinic right next to JayNii, for family planning for the community.



Type of data: auto-photography

Author: Blue Ivy

Community: Ga Mashie

Content:

They (the JayNii Streetwise Foundation) also have a playgarden for the children, colourful and beautiful. It is very safe there for children. Everybody can go there and play and use the library if they want.



Type of data: auto-photography

Author: Blue Ivy

Community: Ga Mashie

Content:

This place is very unsafe. It is a breeding place for malaria and cholera. It smells so very bad there.



Type of data: auto-photography

Author: Blue Ivy

Community: Ga Mashie

Content:

This is the beach at James Town. It is also a tourist attraction, and when I was very young I used to go there to swim.



Type of data: auto-photography

Author: Blue Ivy

Community: Ga Mashie

Content:

This place is only a bit further than the last one, also on the beach, but there people are defecating all the time. This is not a nice place.



Type of data: auto-photography

Author: Blue Ivy

Community: Ga Mashie

Content:

the gutter. It smells really bad.



Type of data: auto-photography

Author: Blue Ivy

Community: Ga Mashie

Content:

The buildings that are just before the light house are also not safe. There are some bad people living there.



Type of data: auto-photography

Author: Blue Ivy

Community: Ga Mashie

Content:

This is the courthouse. It is good to have a courthouse in the community, to settle the disputes and to keep the order in the community.



Type of data: auto-photography

Author: Blue Ivy

Community: Ga Mashie

Content:

This place is where the old Seaview Hotel was. It is now not a safe place. It was very beautiful, the first hotel in Ghana, but since they broke it down, it is not safe. There could be animals hiding in this place. But I think they are going to build a church there.



Type of data: auto-photography

Author: Blue Ivy

Community: Ga Mashie

Content:

This thing is our AMA. The electoral commission office. It is very safe there. We can come here and hang out. I sometimes work together with the electoral commission. It is really the place to go if you want to learn and know more. You come here.



Type of data: auto-photography

Author: Blue Ivy

Community: Ga Mashie

Content:

This is an important painting on the side of this building. It is from Chale Wote festival, and everything that is important in James Town is in there; the boxing, the fishing, education, the lighthouse, unity. I really love it!



Type of data: auto-photography

Author: Blue Ivy

Community: Ga Mashie

Content:

This is also still part of the same building. They have so many events here, inside the hall, workshops. They have skills programmes, teaching things like tailoring, woodworking and these things. So many things. There is even a radio station inside. And an educational center, where you can learn all kinds of skills. You can learn sowing, you can learn sports. There is even two boxing gyms inside. It is very clean too, so very well maintained.



Type of data: auto-photography

Author: Carter

Community: Sabon Zongo

Content:

This is the new public toilet at Gaskia. It is very large, about twenty rooms for men and also twenty rooms for the women. It is very good, much better than the old toilet. It would be better if they break the old one.



Type of data: auto-photography

Author: Carter

Community: Sabon Zongo

Content:

This is the public toilet at Gaskia. It is a very big public toilet. The place, the building is old and dilapidated. There is a new one built next to it, so almost noone is using it. A few out of thousands. I believe they should break this thing down and make something useful. Like a Western Union or a bank. Or a shopping center, because many things are hard to find in Sabon Zongo, so we go to the filling station. But that is expensive. The field in front is where young guys hang out and smoke. It has no real good purpose. How can two huge public toilets be right next to each other at the same place?



Type of data: auto-photography

Author: Carter

Community: Sabon Zongo

Content:

At night it is very dark there, and some guys do petty theft there. I know most of the guys there that smoke, so they won't harass me. But they could harass somebody else. In the back some guys are always hanging out. sometimes causing trouble.



Type of data: auto-photography

Author: Carter

Community: Sabon Zongo

Content:

The stench here is awful for the houses. It is where they keep the animals at Gaskia. It is not safe, because the cows have very big horns. Behind the mosque, there is another road, and there are more animals there.



Type of data: auto-photography

Author: Carter

Community: Sabon Zongo

Content:

This is food lying around the animals. Mostly cabbage, gives some bad smell.



Type of data: auto-photography

Author: Carter

Community: Sabon Zongo

Content:

Right next to the chief's house, there is a commercial toilet. There are too many commercial toilets in Sabon Zongo. They make the atmosphere uncondusive. It feels bad for our health. There are too many, people don't care about their health and our health.



Type of data: auto-photography

Author: Dorcas

Community: Sabon Zongo

Content:

(laughs) this is the roof of my room. It is where I spend most of my time. I don't like going out too much. Most of the time I study inside or I watch TV.



Type of data: auto-photography

Author: Dorcas

Community: Sabon Zongo

Content:

This is I think where I usually sit. My brother sells purewater here, and I sit there and chat and fool around with my friends. I don't like sitting outside too much, because I don't know so many people here. But in this place I know everybody.



Type of data: auto-photography

Author: Dorcas

Community: Sabon Zongo

Content:

This the alleyway behind the house where they always dump garbage. The rubbish collectors sometimes they go and just dump the rubbish in between the houses. They do this because they are greedy, because they have to pay to get rid of the rubbish.



Type of data: auto-photography

Author: Dorcas

Community: Sabon Zongo

Content:

This is the place behind the park, just behind here (gestures towards the back of the place). It is very dirty. It is always full of charcoal on the ground and it smells like rubbish.



Type of data: auto-photography

Author: Dorcas

Community: Sabon Zongo

Content:

You cannot see it well, but this is our family shop. My mother sells clothing from there, and shoes sometimes. Me and my sister we often help her there, or we take over the shop when my mother goes to the market.



Type of data: auto-photography

Author: Haiba

Community: Sabon Zongo

Content:

This are the stables next to Ojo Park. They are owned by a local herdsman. They hold the cattle in these buildings you see there.

But I don't like that they are there. It is very shameful. You can see it is very disturbing, the smell, the waste is everywhere. They pollute the place, they leave the food for the cows and the waste lying around, and it smells very bad.

All day you smell them, in the class even. You can smell it from far around. And it looks very bad also. And for the children it is dangerous for their health. They are playing around in this rubbish.



Type of data: auto-photography

Author: Haiba

Community: Sabon Zongo

Content:

Behind here is where I live. It is a very nice story building in front, and we stay just behind. They are building a mosque up there. Now the people place the prayer mats outside and they pray outside sometimes, in the street because it is not finished.



Type of data: auto-photography

Author: Haiba

Community: Sabon Zongo

Content:

In the evenings I always go here, every day in the evening I am there with my brothers. They call this place Ojo park. It is also the playground of the school. I spend a lot of time here. All the evenings we go there with our friends to sit and chat and laugh and watch the game, we watch the football. And we also play sometimes. It is always very exciting here, a lot of liveliness. In the weekend they play championships here between the people from all around these parts. We play very well, but unfortunately our team has never won the title.



Type of data: auto-photography

Author: Haiba

Community: Sabon Zongo

Content:

This here is the school where I teach. I am very proud to teach in this place. I was going to school here before, now I teach among my old teachers, and they have some of the best teachers here. The teachers are very well respected in the community.



Type of data: auto-photography

Author: Mallam

Community: Sabon Zongo

Content:

For the positive aspect of Sabon Zongo I chose this place. It is the central mosque of Accra. Every Friday, it gathers Muslims from everywhere. So many people come for the chief Imam. It is always very crowded, very lively. There is also a lot of business and a lot of marketing going on around. So it also boosts businesses. It is here where I see my many friends from outside of Sabon Zongo. At times we go there with friends.



Type of data: auto-photography

Author: Mallam

Community: Sabon Zongo

Content:

This place also makes me very proud. Because of the chief imam in the front. Not all areas have such a large mosque. So when the Chief Imam prays at your mosque it is something to be very proud of. So many people are not happy that it is moving to Kanda soon. (the mosque is moving to the new national mosque that is currently still being constructed with Saudi Funding)"



Type of data: auto-photography

Author: Mallam

Community: Sabon Zongo

Content:

This is the space where I feel most at home. It is the mosque near here. Just around the corner. It is peaceful and very very safe. You can just go there, without interference, to talk about anything at all. It always very quiet. Because people respect the mosque a lot. If you want to speak privately or even if you want to sleep. For every Muslim can go there. I usually sit outside, at the space around for abolition.



Type of data: auto-photography

Author: Mallam

Community: Sabon Zongo

Content:

This is the space where I feel most at home. It is the mosque near here. Just around the corner. It is peaceful and very very safe. You can just go there, without interference, to talk about anything at all. It always very quiet. Because people respect the mosque a lot. If you want to speak privately or even if you want to sleep. For every Muslim can go there. I usually sit outside, at the space around for abolition.



Type of data: auto-photography

Author: Mallam

Community: Sabon Zongo

Content:

This is my very special place for me. This is where I always get advice from the elderly. They are to me like mentors, a source of inspiration, inspiration about life. They tell me about how they spent their life when they were my size. They are like family, extended family. We are related through Islam. Without this space we cannot sit down and chat.

at the back of this place (where we had the interview, Baba Gambo's place), the next road there are bad people there (one guy comes by that supposedly belongs to these people, and deals in drugs and other illegitimate business)

But these young guys they respect me a lot (the guy bended his head down deeply towards Mallam when passing by) They will not feel at ease when I go there. They will respect the distance.



Type of data: auto-photography

Author: Musa

Community: Sabon Zongo

Content:

This picture is to the side of Gaskia cinema, behind. This place is very disturbing because of the smell. They are rearing cows on private land, people are paying them to rear them there. I have complained many times to the elders, and they always say they will talk to the owners, but they don't. Sometimes the authority comes, health inspectors or something, but nothing ever happens. Also the place is full of garbage. This place could better be used to build a bank or a clinic, because the closest clinic is very far, in Sukura.



Type of data: auto-photography

Author: Musa

Community: Sabon Zongo

Content:

This is the mosque at Angua Makafi. There are always many blind people begging there. It is my mosque, I always go to pray there. I think it is the most beautiful mosque, it is very elegant, and nice looking. And the best people are there, I know many of the people that go and pray, so I also go there.



Type of data: auto-photography

Author: Musa

Community: Sabon Zongo

Content:

The old chief gave the area to blind people for humanitarian reasons, more than 50 years ago. The chief was a very generous and a righteous man, and he cared much for the people. So there are many blind people living and sitting in the area, they are always sitting and chatting and begging at the mosque.

But now unfortunately many drug users have taken over the area and there is plenty of crime there. They sit behind the area here, inside one of the places, and sell and smoke and cause troubles in the area. I am not scared to go anywhere, they know me well, so they will not disturb me, but some people are scared to go there. They rather stay far away, especially in the evenings.



Type of data: auto-photography

Author: Naa White

Community: Ga Mashie

Content:

These are remnants of the Chale Wote festival. Maybe from the past year. Now children are playing there, they are using it as a goal to play football.



Type of data: auto-photography

Author: Naa White

Community: Ga Mashie

Content:

Here used to be a building, but then they tore it down. Now it is very ugly, it is nasty and unsafe.



Type of data: auto-photography

Author: Naa White

Community: Ga Mashie

Content:

I love this building. I believe it is very nice looking. But it is also a very important place for James Town. It is a secondary school. Sometimes I've been going there for programs of the electoral commission. For training.



Type of data: auto-photography

Author: Naa White

Community: Ga Mashie

Content:

This is my family house, it is called Amarte, but we call it the iron house. I don't stay here anymore, but for me this is more important than where I stay now.



Type of data: auto-photography

Author: Naa White

Community: Ga Mashie

Content:

This is the roundabout close to where I live, near the police station. I hang around here pretty often, because I feel very safe here. During the evening people even sleep here.



Type of data: auto-photography

Author: Naa White

Community: Ga Mashie

Content:

This is the police station of James Town. I feel very safe there because of the police, they are my friends. You can go in there, and through there and sit and have fun in front. It is harmless.



Type of data: auto-photography

Author: Naa White

Community: Ga Mashie

Content:

This place is a really nice place. I sit there very often. It is so interesting. I just sit there on the bench and watch the people go by.

note: people in the picture seem to be unhappy about the pictures being taken



Type of data: auto-photography

Author: Naa White

Community: Ga Mashie

Content:

This is James Town mosque. It is really safe here, people are sleeping inside, you can just be inside and relax. But I am not a Muslim so i don't go there. But some of my friends are there.



Type of data: auto-photography

Author: Naa White

Community: Ga Mashie

Content:

I like to watch the football there. Some of our friends play in the evenings. We can sit in there, or on the walls. Sometimes we bring our own seating. Sometimes I jog around the field, even when they are playing inside. It is very big, the field, so you can make some good distance here.

note: picture taken from quite far - maybe not so comfortable going inside taking pictures?



Type of data: auto-photography

Author: Naa White

Community: Ga Mashie

Content:

This is the beach side community we were talking about before. There are lots of bad people there. I don't go there, they can even collect your things, they will take everything. There are so many thieves living there.



Type of data: auto-photography

Author: Naa White

Community: Ga Mashie

Content:

This is one of the bad places. We call it “small London”. It has small small houses. We don’t know where they are coming from. They are prostitutes and thieves, and armed robbers. During the day there is no problem to go there for swimming, or for buying fish. But at night we don’t go there, because it is dangerous.



Type of data: auto-photography

Author: Naa White

Community: Ga Mashie

Content:

This place is no good, it is very dirty. Those people don't even take care of the place.



Type of data: auto-photography

Author: Naa White

Community: Ga Mashie

Content:

To this place you can go and be alone if you are lonely. Sometimes I just go sit and watch the sea, feel the breeze. And you can swim and have fun there.



Type of data: auto-photography

Author: Possy Gee

Community: Ga Mashie

Content:

This is the most beautiful church of the area, it is Saint Mary's catholic church. I like the design of it, its architecture is very beautiful.



Type of data: auto-photography

Author: Possy Gee

Community: Ga Mashie

Content:

Here is the Methodist church, it is very well known in Accra, because it is the oldest church in Accra.



Type of data: auto-photography

Author: Possy Gee

Community: Ga Mashie

Content:

This is one of the oldest buildings of James Town, from 1905. I feel really moved by old buildings, that after all this time it is still there, it brings all this history with it and everybody can enjoy it. It is sad that some of the old buildings are not better maintained.



Type of data: auto-photography

Author: Possy Gee

Community: Ga Mashie

Content:

This is London market. I go there often to buy for the old lady. It is the only place to buy some things, you can find nowhere else in the city.



Type of data: auto-photography

Author: Possy Gee

Community: Ga Mashie

Content:

This is the only secondary school in James Town. It is very huge. It has so many classes, and so many students, because of the tall buildings it has a strong presence here. I have never gone there, I finished SHS in the Eastern region. Kids go very far away from home to school. Many people go in another city, in the North or in the East. It is a computer system that chooses where you go.



Type of data: auto-photography

Author: Possy Gee

Community: Ga Mashie

Content:

This is the only secondary school in James Town. It is very huge. It has so many classes, and so many students, because of the tall buildings it has a strong presence here. I have never gone there, I finished SHS in the Eastern region. Kids go very far away from home to school. Many people go in another city, in the North or in the East. It is a computer system that chooses where you go



Type of data: auto-photography

Author: Possy Gee

Community: Ga Mashie

Content:

This where I hang out, with my friends. Anytime I'm in a bad mood. Anytime I feel like coming out to talk with friends. This is where I come to. This is where we call Bantama. You can see it is in the political colours of the NPP. Specially made for us by the NPP people, if you're not one of us you don't come here. But it is a base for everybody, it is a base for all the people living in the community.

We call it Bantama after a constituency near Kumasi where our party (NPP) had a resounding success. We are proud of this election result, so we honour it with this name. But not everyone here is NPP. We all belonged to different political parties but the NPP has the majority at the base. We are currently done with politics now at the base.



Type of data: auto-photography

Author: Possy Gee

Community: Ga Mashie

Content:

This is the lighthouse, you know this place of course. It is a tourist attraction. But for the fishermen it attracts money to James Town.



Type of data: auto-photography

Author: Possy Gee

Community: Ga Mashie

Content:

Oh, I like this thing, it is from 1910, it is also very old and very beautiful. It is an ancient water fountain.



Type of data: auto-photography

Author: Possy Gee

Community: Ga Mashie

Content:

The James Fort, also has much historical value. The first president of the country, doctor Kwame Nkrumah, he stayed there when he was in prison.



Type of data: auto-photography

Author: Possy Gee

Community: Ga Mashie

Content:

This here is the Ghana Commercial bank. It is very important, all the savings are there. All the money is there.



Type of data: auto-photography

Author: Possy Gee

Community: Ga Mashie

Content:

Here you can see Vodaphone café, I go there to browse. all the time I am there to browse, and to research.

note: Browsing is often used as a euphemism for the practice of Sakawa, an illegal activity that combines internet fraud with fetish rituals, which is reportedly commonly practiced by many young people in Accra.



Type of data: auto-photography

Author: Possy Gee

Community: Ga Mashie

Content:

Here you see we call bushmli (inside bush) it was a forest there before. It is now a parking lot during the day, but from 4 something in the afternoon we are free to play football there.



Type of data: auto-photography

Author: Possy Gee

Community: Ga Mashie

Content:

This here is another internet café, it is called “Kinshasa” also for browsing. It is right next to James Town Café.



Type of data: auto-photography

Author: Possy Gee

Community: Ga Mashie

Content:

This place we call it the Old Kingsway building, or San Siro (stadium of AC Milan) we call it. We play football here, always together with the same people. We are one family.



Type of data: auto-photography

Author: Possy Gee

Community: Ga Mashie

Content:

Ussher Fort has real historical value. It is very old. And it gives the neighbourhood history. We are very proud of it. Not before when it was a prison, but now it is a museum. Now the people really like it there.



Type of data: auto-photography

Author: Possy Gee

Community: Ga Mashie

Content:

Nii Djan friend's family house. I go there for playing games sometimes.



Type of data: auto-photography

Author: Possy Gee

Community: Ga Mashie

Content:

The Basahene stool house. This is where our chief stays.



Type of data: auto-photography

Author: Possy Gee

Community: Ga Mashie

Content:

We also have videogames at the base. Most times the young guys play, but I am also very good. I play fifa. I can beat everyone here at fifa. We should play.



Type of data: auto-photography

Author: Possy Gee

Community: Ga Mashie

Content:

This is my family house, this is where I stay. It is important to me, and only me (laughs). It is also his (Ranking) place, he stays there too. But I don't spend much time here, I am always out of the house.



Type of data: auto-photography

Author: Possy Gee

Community: Ga Mashie

Content:

Here to the left is the electric pole (see drawings) and the street that goes to my house.

This entire street is very special for us the Ga's. There are many palaces and stool houses next to each other. You can see the Gbese royal house in the back. Many of the cultural and traditional festivities for the Ga's are held here, around the palaces, in these streets.

This house here, this is the real Ga Mantse palace. The paramount chief stool house, of all the Ga's in Accra.



Type of data: auto-photography

Author: Possy Gee

Community: Ga Mashie

Content:

Here we are at gardiem (gardenmli) playing cards. We go there so often, just go there and have fun. We play here, we make jokes here. The place is for a friend, he works there, he is a carpenter. So he makes chairs, and any other thing from wood, tables, sofa, coffins. And we dont disturb him when we are there. There always many friends there, so many. I know all the people there, we are like one family. I spend so much time there, sometimes I even go there just to sleep.



Type of data: auto-photography

Author: Ras

Community: Sabon Zongo

Content:

This is taken in front of my house. There is nothing bad here, only good. Nobody smoking, everyone behaves well. The elders here are very caring, they take good care of the children. My brother is constructing a story building here. We are making the area better, and more beautiful.



Type of data: auto-photography

Author: Ras

Community: Sabon Zongo

Content:

This picture is taken around 44 (Angua Makafi). There are people there, sitting in the middle of the street, smoking, harassing people while children are running around. It is very unsafe. It is the people that make it feel unsafe and uncomfortable. The people that are living around this area are scared to complain.



Type of data: auto-photography

Author: Ras

Community: Sabon Zongo

Content:

This is a negative aspect of Sabon Zongo. It is a dangerous building. There is gambling, smoking, drinking, dumping. It is very dirty and the spraypaint says many bad words and bad names. It is there to harass and intimidate people. There are mostly Christians that gamble and drink. But also Muslims misbehave, but in general the people that drink and harass people are Christians around here.



Type of data: auto-photography

Author: Ras

Community: Sabon Zongo

Content:

This is a special place for me. It is well planned, very safe. It looks nice. Everyone is working and living together there. There is real unity among the people. This is where I hang out a lot, there are never troubles, it is very safe. The people are my brothers and sisters, we are a family. That is why there are no troubles caused here. (corner of Happy days and Sarkin Zongo street, 2 corners away from picture 018)



Type of data: auto-photography

Author: Richard

Community: Ga Mashie

Content:

This is the deep sea club. It is a very nice club. A lot of my friends go there, in the weekend, I sometimes also go there. But not too much. I don't have much time to go there.



Type of data: auto-photography

Author: Richard

Community: Ga Mashie

Content:

This here is the shrine you meet when you enter James Town. It is there to protect the people from James Town. You go there to pray and to pour libation for the spirits, if someone has betrayed you. You must go there and sacrifice maybe a chicken. If this thing is very strong, if you need much power, you go and sacrifice a chicken or a goat. Something bigger. Then you will be protected.



Type of data: auto-photography

Author: Richard

Community: Ga Mashie

Content:

This here is the shrine you meet when you enter James Town. It is there to protect the people from James Town. You go there to pray and to pour libation for the spirits, if someone has betrayed you. You must go there and sacrifice maybe a chicken, if this thing is very strong. If you need much power, you go and sacrifice a chicken or a goat.



Type of data: auto-photography

Author: Richard

Community: Ga Mashie

Content:

Here you can see the fire academy. It is the only training school for firemen in Ghana, so it makes us very proud in James Town.



Type of data: auto-photography

Author: Richard

Community: Ga Mashie

Content:

You can see here, London market. It is so very important to the neighbourhood, so many people come to buy their things here. Me too, I come here every day, in the morning, with my mother to buy the things for the restaurant. You can find everything there. And it is cheap. The prices are very cheap here. especially for the meat. It is the most cheap in all of Accra. That is why so many people come here.



Type of data: auto-photography

Author: Richard

Community: Ga Mashie

Content:

Behind the market the people dump a lot of rubbish. They dump it on top of this structure. All of this rubbish is from the market. It is very dirty there. Some days it will be cleaned up, but the next day there is the rubbish again. And it smells bad. In the heat of the sun it will start to smell immediately, and it will be there for several days before the AMA come and collect it. They should come here every day to collect, so it will no longer disturb the people around the market.

Note:

A further number of images were captured by respondents but unfortunately are no longer available due to a technical problem.

Appendix C: GIS maps



Type of data: GIS Map

Author: Researcher

Community: Ga Mashie

Legend: home and belonging

● base



Type of data: GIS Map

Author: Researcher

Community: Ga Mashie

Legend: Services

- Open space
- Commercial
- healthcare
- Educational



Type of data: GIS Map

Author: Researcher

Community: Ga Mashie

Legend: Landmarks

- Markets
- Historical
- Religious
- Traditional



Type of data: GIS Map

Author: Researcher

Community: Ga Mashie

Legend: Landmarks

- Insecurity
- Pollution
- Illicit activities



Type of data: GIS Map

Author: Researcher

Community: Sabon Zongo

Legend: home and belonging

● base



Type of data: GIS Map

Author: Researcher

Community: Sabon Zongo

Legend: Services

- Open space
- Commercial
- healthcare
- Educational



Type of data: GIS Map

Author: Researcher

Community: Sabon Zongo

Legend: Landmarks

- Markets
- Historical
- Religious
- Traditional



Type of data: GIS Map

Author: Researcher

Community: Sabon Zongo

Legend: Landmarks

- Insecurity
- Pollution
- Illicit activities

Appendix D: Cognitive mapping



Type of data: Cognitive map

Author: Angeli

Community: Sabon Zongo

Content:

This thing here is Gaskia, the old cinema building. It is not nice. So many troublemakers there, and it is dirty because of all the cattle.

This here is the municipal. We have choked gutters everywhere. And we have flooding everywhere. When it rains the whole place floods. even the mosque gets flooded.

Here is Abossey-Okai (neighbouring area) with all the spare parts dealers. It is not very nice. The ground is black there and very polluted.

Everywhere in Sabon Zongo there is lack of space. The lungu lungu (small alleyways) are dirty and congested.

In my house there is also lack of space. Children they play football in the house and everyone else just stays in their own room because.

Behind the mosque here they rear cattle. It smells very bad and it is very dirty. People are living there between the cattle. They get many diseases. It is very unsanitary.

This is Otabil church. The building is nice, I like it. There are always people praying, and this gives a nice feeling. I like to hang around there.

There are not really any places I like in Sabon Zongo.



Type of data: Cognitive map

Author: Carter

Community: Sabon Zongo

Content:

The main street is Ankobra avenue. This is also the area where I live.

It is where the chief palace is located, this is the main landmark. The chief is much more important than all the politicians. When I have an issue I go there to consult my brother who is in the palace, to get my issue resolved.

On the same street is a food vendor, it is a large place so also a landmark. I don't go there often.

This mosque is not far. It is very important to me. I go there every day to pray.

This is the park area. There is bread making there. It used to be a much larger area but then the vendors took over and the space became much smaller.

This is the Angua Makafi area. I think it looks nice, because it has the only trees in all of Sabon Zongo. But the people around there are doing things that are no good. There are so many people living there, it is too much. And they are doing no good, doing drugs, taking wee. Very bad.

Then there is a clinic. It is the only clinic in Sabon Zongo, so they are doing very good work. But they are not enough, there should be more.

Gaskia is on the same street. You know Gaskia. It used to be used a lot. When it used to be a cinema, it was very popular. And then it was an office or something. For an NGO I think. But not anymore. Now it is also no good. They are keeping cattle in the back. There is a public toilet there, and it smells bad. Because of the cattle, and because of the toilet. And it is very dangerous. The people there are no good.

There is sweet father, it is a storey building, a landmark for the area.

I moved to a new area now, the blacksmith area. There is my base, behind the lungu at Baba's place.



Type of data: Cognitive map

Author: Dekenzy

Community: Sabon Zongo

Content:

The bath house is in the next street from my house. It is a nice place, that is why I like to go there. It is clean.

This is the road to the market. It is also the road to the chief's palace.

This building is the mosque where I go. It is close to the bus stop

I like more Dansuman, behind Sukura. It is a nice area. It is open there, it is not so dirty there as Sabon Zongo and not so crowded. I went to Eastern region for secondary school but I was born and raised in Sabon Zongo.

night market park

gutters

this is my house

the place where the blind people stay, Angua Makafi

The road to the cinema (Gaskia)

the busstop (for trotro's to Nkrumah Circle)

main road (Sarkin Zongo street)



Type of data: Cognitive map

Author: Dorcas

Community: Sabon Zongo

Content:

This is the Angua Makafi junction, where the mosque is.

The small lungu where we were sitting when we first saw each other. (After they were dislodging the public toilet)

cam park (at the park) where they make the bread

text: Where I sat when am free. It is a store.

The pure-water place, where you get pure-water. This is where I sit with friends.

note: this is the mosque where Baba prays

the bath house and public house, where I bath sometimes.

text: this is a road.

the road ends, it is blocked behind the mosque.

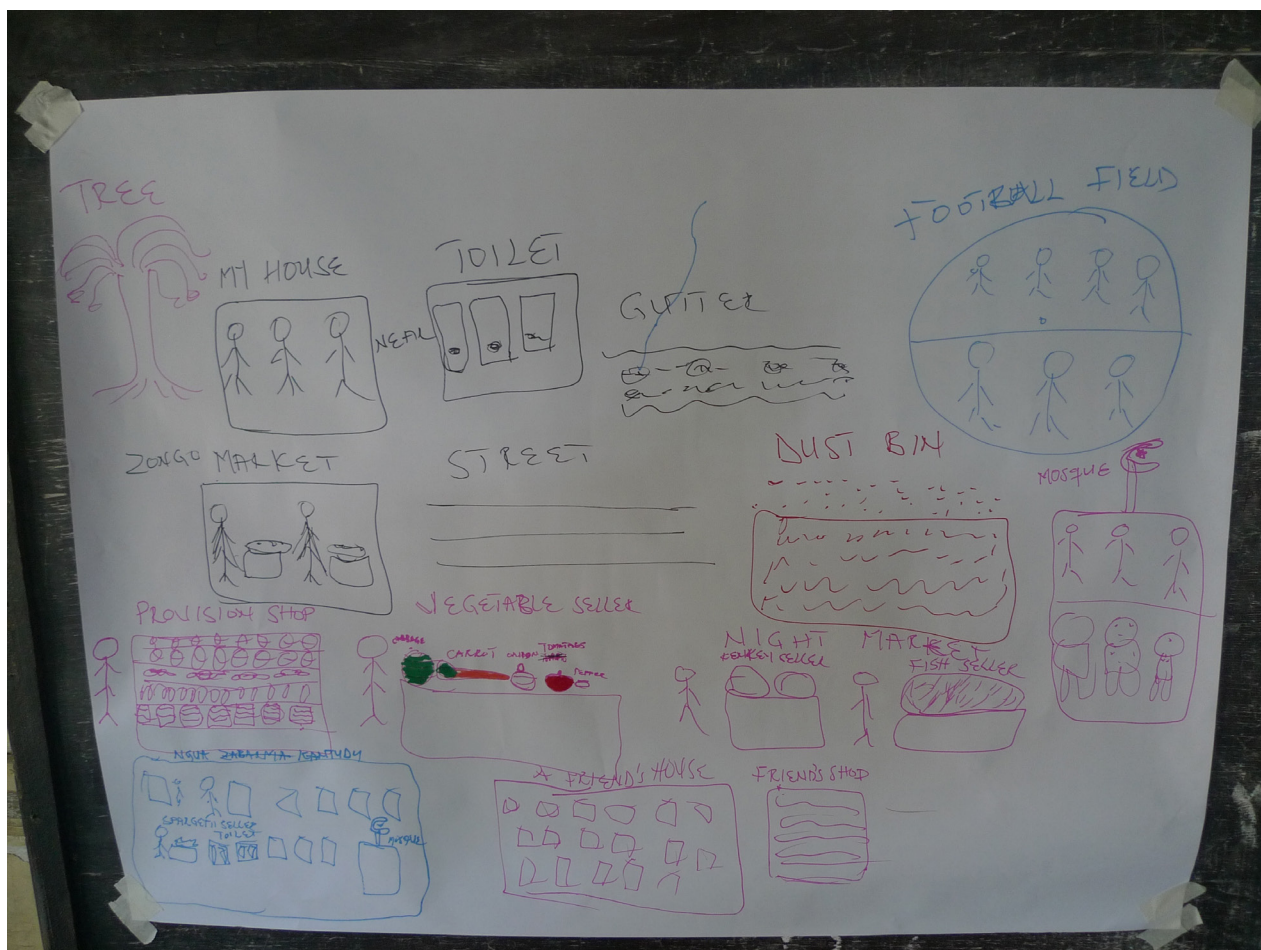
There is no church in Sabon Zongo, only Otabil church (on the outside of Ring road, near Agbobloshie). But I go to circle (Kwame Nkrumah junction) because I like it there. A friend showed it to me and I liked it.

Sabon Zongo is too crowded, but the people get along very well. The girls are also highly educated.

In the weekends sometimes I go to Korle Gonno beach, because there is a nice atmosphere. There are many joints. Many places to eat and sit. Sometimes I go there jogging. On Sunday everyone goes.

It is easy to move in Zongo. It is easy to get to, and you can get to everywhere with no problem.

I want to go study in UDS (University of Development Studies) in Tamale. I want to study statistics, because it is easy to find jobs in this work.



Type of data: Cognitive map

Author: Fati

Community: Sabon Zongo

Content:

There is my house. I live next to the toilet. It smells and it opens into the gutter, this gives a really bad smell.

This is Italian Park, the football field next to Zongo Market. I go there sometimes just to watch the football, in the evenings. But it is not very safe there. So I do not go very often.

This is the dust bin, next to the market. It is not clean there.

This is the Zongo market. My mother goes there every day, sometimes I go with her. It also smells, because of the gutter.

The next street after the market is a rough road. Because it is rough, it is difficult for cars to come and go, and for people to move around. Especially when it rains it becomes very difficult to move around.

On this rough road, you pass the mosque there. On Friday they put a canopy there, so people can sit outside. Because it is not very big inside and many people come to hear the imam speak.

Close to my house there is a provision shop, where we buy provisions. They have everything.

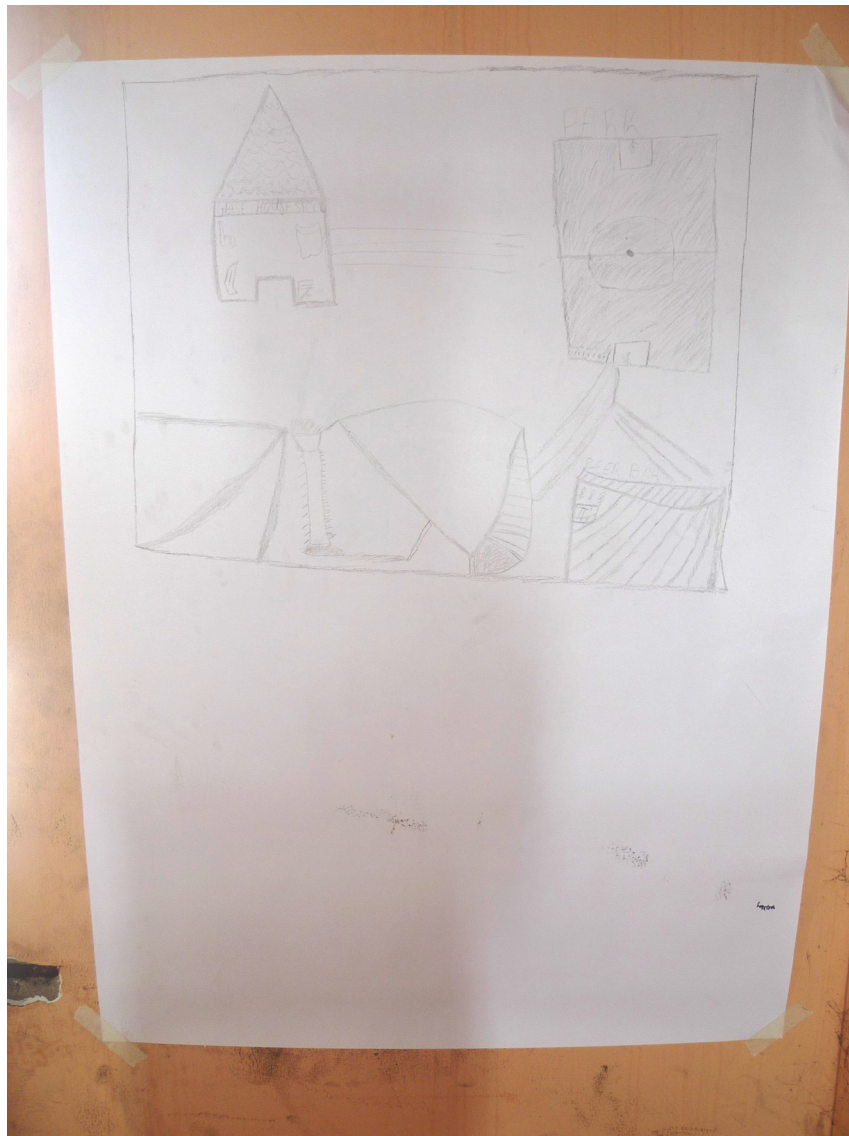
There is a mosque opposite of the chief palace. I go there everyday. the area is called Ngua Kan Tudu.

I go to my friend's house almost every day. I go there to gossip about each other. There or the friend's shop if she is there. We gossip a lot, about everything. It is close to the night market.

My house is my favorite place in Sabon Zongo. But I also like to go to New Town. Because I have a lot of friends there. And because it is nice there.

She has drawn a tree next to her house.

she has drawn a lot of sellers.



Type of data: Cognitive map

Author: Fazigogo

Community: Ga Mashie

Content:

Gbese house stool

Ocheami means standing in front of chief. I live inside the Gbese stool house. This is the Lion here, the symbol of the Gbese stool on the house. It is a very nice house, I like very much living there. I have many friends and a good relationship with everyone in the house. And there are a lot of people always coming to the house. So there is always much atmosphere there.

park

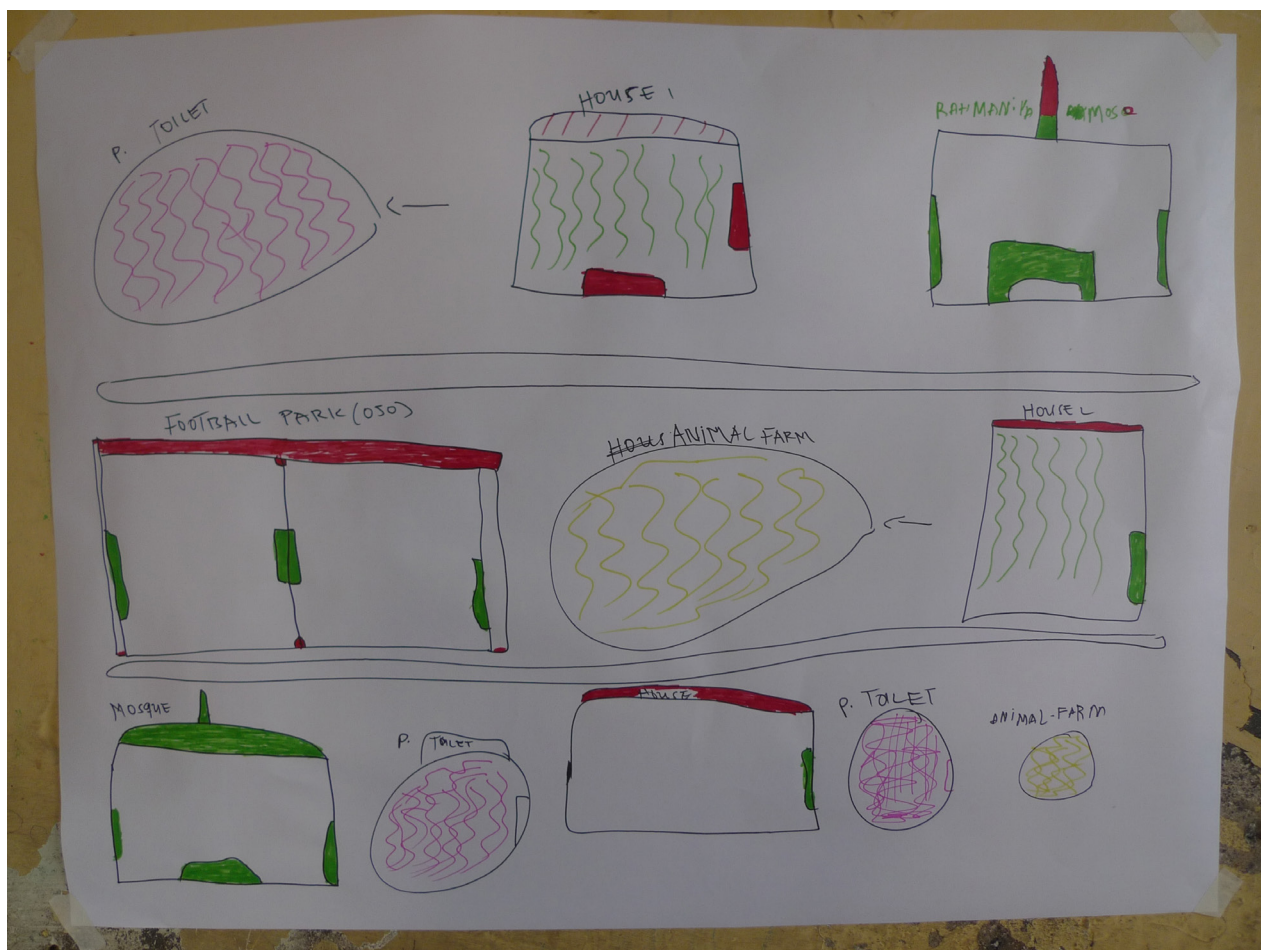
Across the road there is a park, gardiem (garden mli). It is a football park, I go there to watch and play football. I spend so much time there with the boys. Maybe from one to six every day. There is only boys that go there. In the weekends I go to Legon park with my manager, for training. I train the whole weekend. I am a professional player.

beer bar

If you come down towards Lim, around the corner there is a beer bar there. I go to sit there every day to relax after the park. After I had a drink then I go to sleep.

At the back of the beer bar there is fishing nets and a paddle laying on the ground. My father is also a fisher, so this gives a good feeling to me. It reminds me of the fishermen.

After the beer bar there is the beach. I often go running on the beach. When I want to be alone. I go running alone, then you can be fast.



Type of data: Cognitive map

Author: Haiba

Community: Sabon Zongo

Content:

Football park: Ojo park is the biggest space in Sabon Zongo. It is actually a school, so during the day there is only children there. But during the evenings and the weekends, people from outside of Zongo come there. To play football. To have fun. I am there, every evening.

This is the Rahmaniya mosque and Islamic school. It is one of the oldest in the area. I attended there and now I teach Islamic studies and Arabic language there. So I am very proud of this mosque. It is also very beautiful to me.

the public toilet here, it disturbs because of the stench. It is really bad. People go and urinate everywhere.

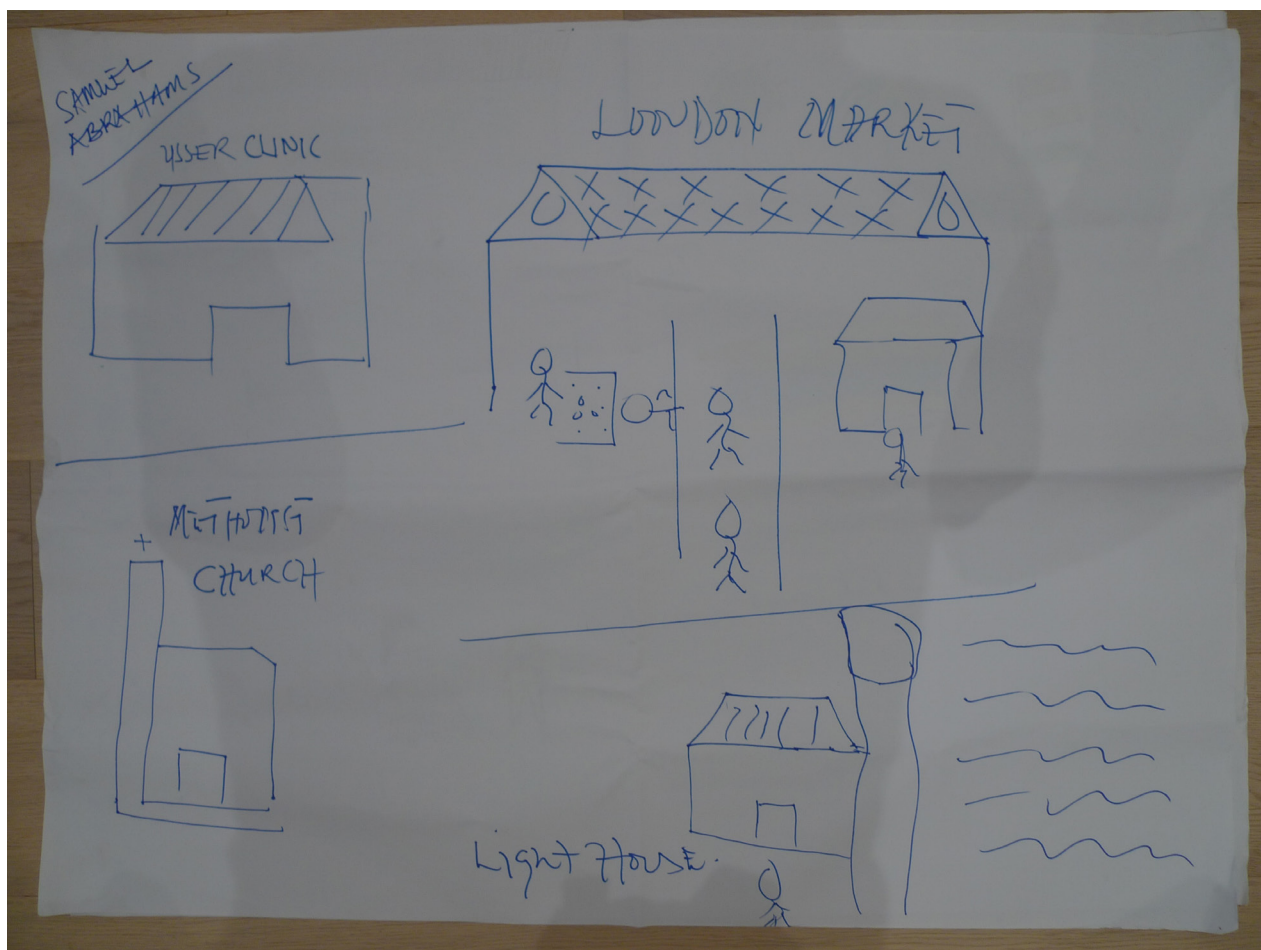
then there is also the animal farm. It has a very strong smell. There is bad air there.

there is another mosque there, there are so many mosques in Sabon Zongo. Too many mosques.

There is also many public toilets in Sabon Zongo. They are everywhere. And they are very bad.

I usually sit at the base at Tripoli, in front of my house. Close to my school where I teach, I sit with my friends. I am either there or I am at Ojo Park. Or I am at school.

note: Haiba was a bit shy and insecure about his drawing. He did not really want to participate and it was rather difficult to get answers from him about his drawing. There might have been some language barrier too (Baba was very tired to translate).



Type of data: Cognitive map

Author: Kohler

Community: Ga Mashie

Content:

started with the Ussher Clinic:

It provides facilities that provide medical attention for the people of James Town. So it is very very important, because there is no other clinic around. It is also a nice building. It is just in the back of the Saint Mary's church and school.

London Market:

Then the London Market. It is close to Police station, at the roundabout. it is a big big market. Very big. It is a very strong wooden structure, very nice. Just behind Universal Cosmetics, the only factory at Ga Mashie area. The market in Ussher Town is now closed so the London market is the only one around now. So it is very important because it is the only market. Some people

are selling here, tripping to buy.

Methodist Church:

This is the oldest church in James Town, the Methodist church. It is meant for the elderly, mostly the elderly go there. It is a nice very strong building, it is built by the British. Every time I pass there I am so enticed by the building, I am always moved by the church.

Lighthouse:

The lighthouse here is important because it attracts tourists and it helps fishermen navigate. You can see the sea here. It is good there, because of the wind, there is fresh air here. Always coming from the sea.

I spend more time indoors, or at the park, the one in front of the Mantse palace.



Type of data: Cognitive map

Author: Kristalline

Community: Ga Mashie

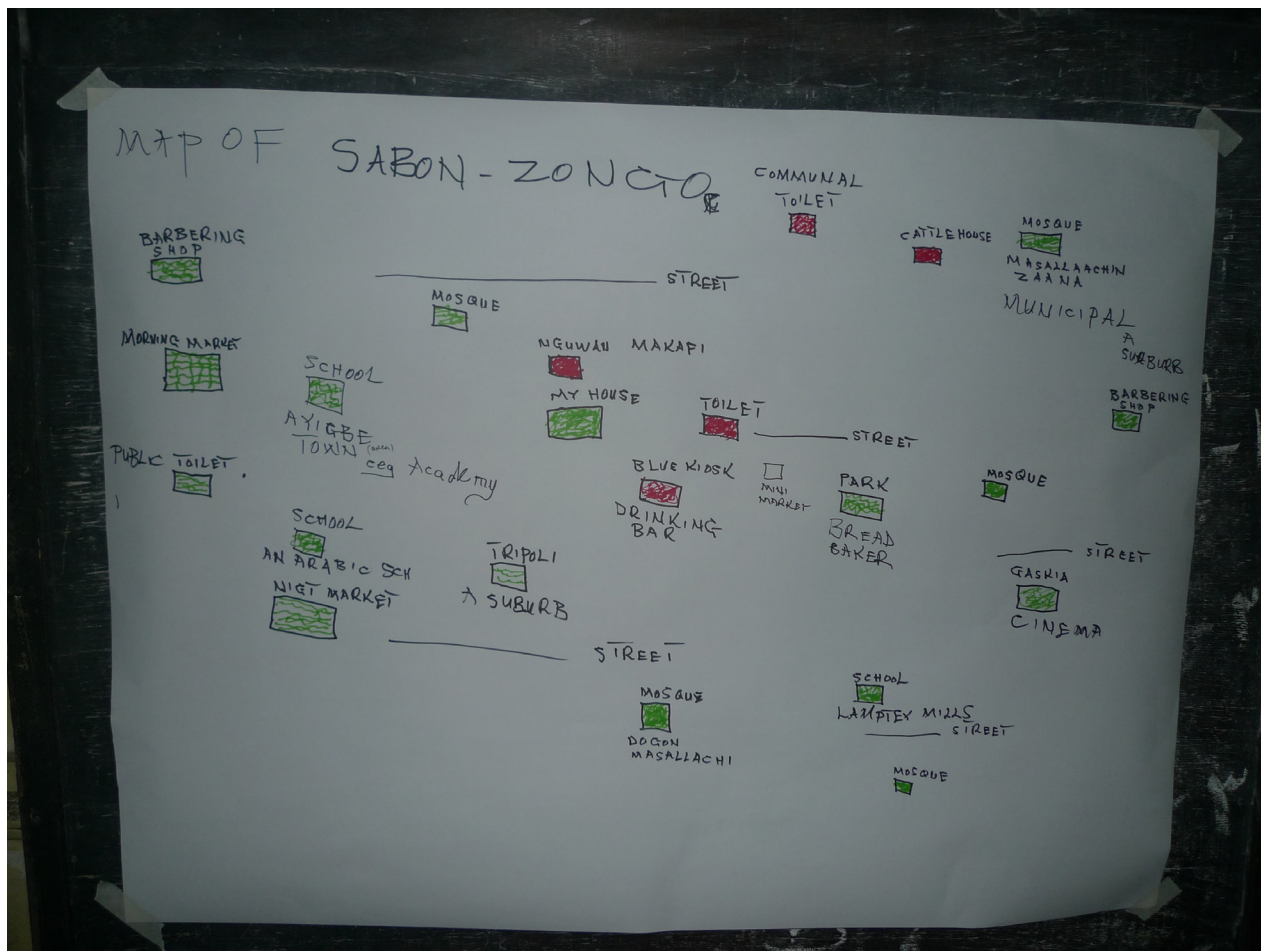
Content:

note: the three young participants on 11.07.2017 were very reluctant to draw. They said they had no experience and could not draw because they had never tried it. After some time an elderly lady came in and started directing the girls (without talking to the researcher).

This is Mantse Agbona park, which means outside the chief's place park. People come to pray there in the evenings on the park. Boys from the area come to play ball every day there.

In the palace itself also there are many events and ceremonies. There are outdoor ceremonies, there are celebrations inside the palace, social gatherings, weddings, commercial events. This year even the president gave a

speech here. Only there are no funerals. Because the dead are dirty, they are not allowed inside the palace. They have a cleansing ceremony when somebody dies. There also used to be a court here, with a judge here, to decide on important issues. But now they moved him to the court complex at high street.



Type of data: Cognitive map

Author: Mallam

Community: Sabon Zongo

Content:

this is the map of Sabon Zongo.

This is where my house is. It is the safest place, that is why it is green. It is very good.

This toilet, it was very nice before. It used to be a base. But now they converted into a toilet, with no ventilation. It is very unsafe. (red)

Blue kiosk is red. people go there to drink and to cause trouble. They get drunk and then they wil disturb people and cause trouble. It is not safe. It is really close to my house. The police come there often.

The park, it is a famous name, is a public space, where they bake bread now. It used to be much bigger, that is why they call it park. Because before it was a large space. Before, people could play ball there. But now there is no more space left, the people have encroached on the space and left nothing.

the gaskia cinema is good. There are many ceremonies there so I coloured it green.

there are two barbering shops, they are just for barbering.

There are many mosques in Sabon Zongo, I drew five of them. They are the most important ones. (He named two: Dogon Masallachi and Masallaachin Zaana = mosque at corner of Happy Days)

Dogon Masallachi mosque

The mosque at my house is very very safe. I feel very safe there. I go there all the time, when I pray.

Lamptey Mills school, it is a nursery and kg 1 and 2.

They call this place Tripoli, because a lot of the youth here, they go to Lybia, for jobs and hoping they can go to Europe.

right next to the night market there is an arabic school too. The night market is where you can find food in the evening, and during the day there are kids playing, and cars parking, and sometimes there are ceremonies from the chief.

The morning market is special to everyone in Sabon Zongo. You can find special items here that you cannot find anywhere else. And the food is very cheap.

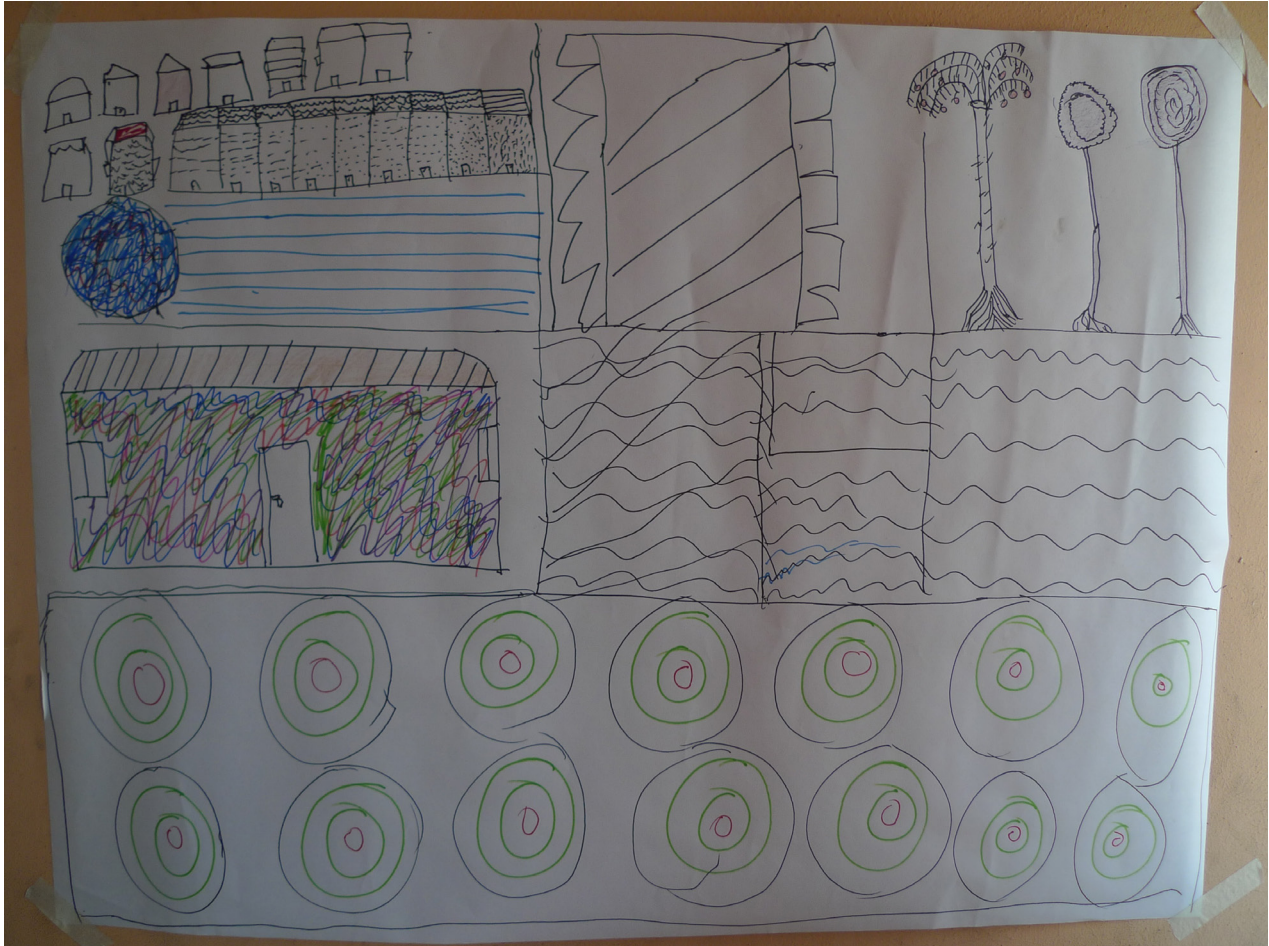
right next to the market is a public toilet. This helps the people because the government provided it in the public space. It is pretty clean.

It is the communal toilet that is bad. This is privately owned for commercial reasons, and it is not very clean. Not clean at all.

The cattle house is a small house, and it has so many cattle inside, very big cows, about 7 or 8. The stench is very strong.

If I want to be alone, I go in my room. It is very peaceful, noone can disturb me there.

The most attractive place I find is Melcom shopping centre. It is modern and it is so big and beautiful.



Type of data: Cognitive map

Author: Meyer

Community: Ga Mashie

Content:

note: the three young participants on 11.07.2017 were very reluctant to draw. They said they had no experience and could not draw because they had never tried it. After some time an elderly lady came in and started directing the girls (without talking to the researcher).

First thing that comes to mind is the seaside and the houses, and the breakwater, because it is so important to the people of James Town. It is important for the fishermen, without it they cannot go fishing.

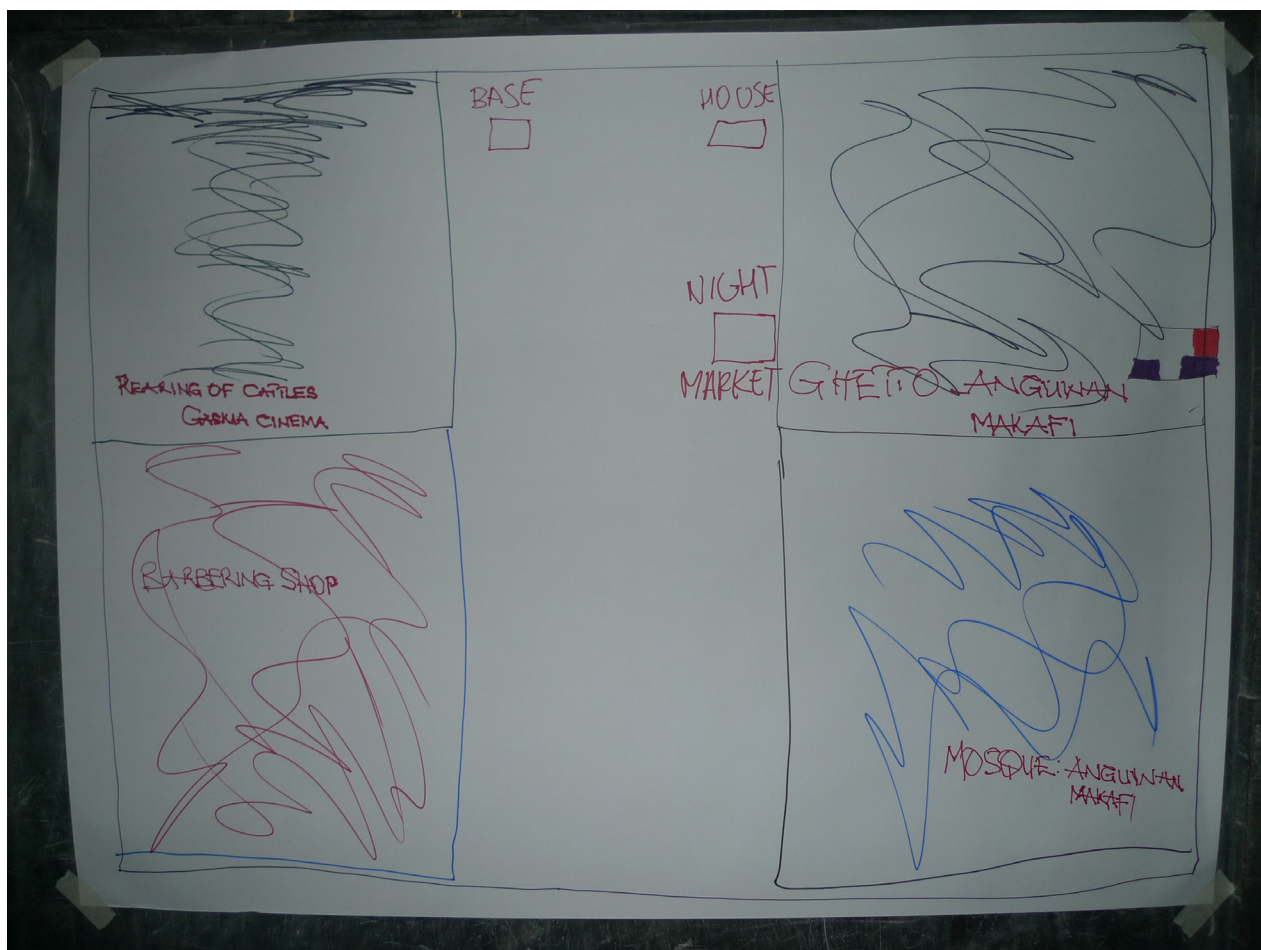
These circles they represent clusters of shacks on the beach, they are so many shacks. I don't like there, there are many bad people living. They come into James Town to steal and to cause trouble.

This is my house, I made it very colourful because it is a happy place for me.

This here are the trees, they are beautiful. There are palm trees next to the customs building. But not so many. Just three I think. There should be more trees.

Like I said, the sea here is very important to us. We are a fishermen people, many of our fathers and brothers are fishermen. It brings us money and food so we respect the sea.

This is the Ga Mantse palace. The ruler of the whole of James town.



Type of data: Cognitive map

Author: Musa

Community: Sabon Zongo

Content:

This area is Angua Makafi. It is not good. There is smoking going on there. This annoys me. It is bad for them, and bad for me. They disturb the people. That is all they do. Disturb the people.

black area (very bad) this represents the area behind the gaskia cinema. there is rearing of cattle there. this smells very bad. This is very close to my house and really disturbs me. It affects my life a lot. every day it disturbs me.

the bad areas are coloured black, these are the ghetto Angua Makafi and the area behind gaskia cinema. There are no places where I feel unwelcome or unsafe. I can go wherever I want and no-one disturbs me. I am respected here. This is my area, I live here.

the mosque at Angua Makafi is drawn in blue because it is very dear to me. I go there daily. Blue means it is very good.

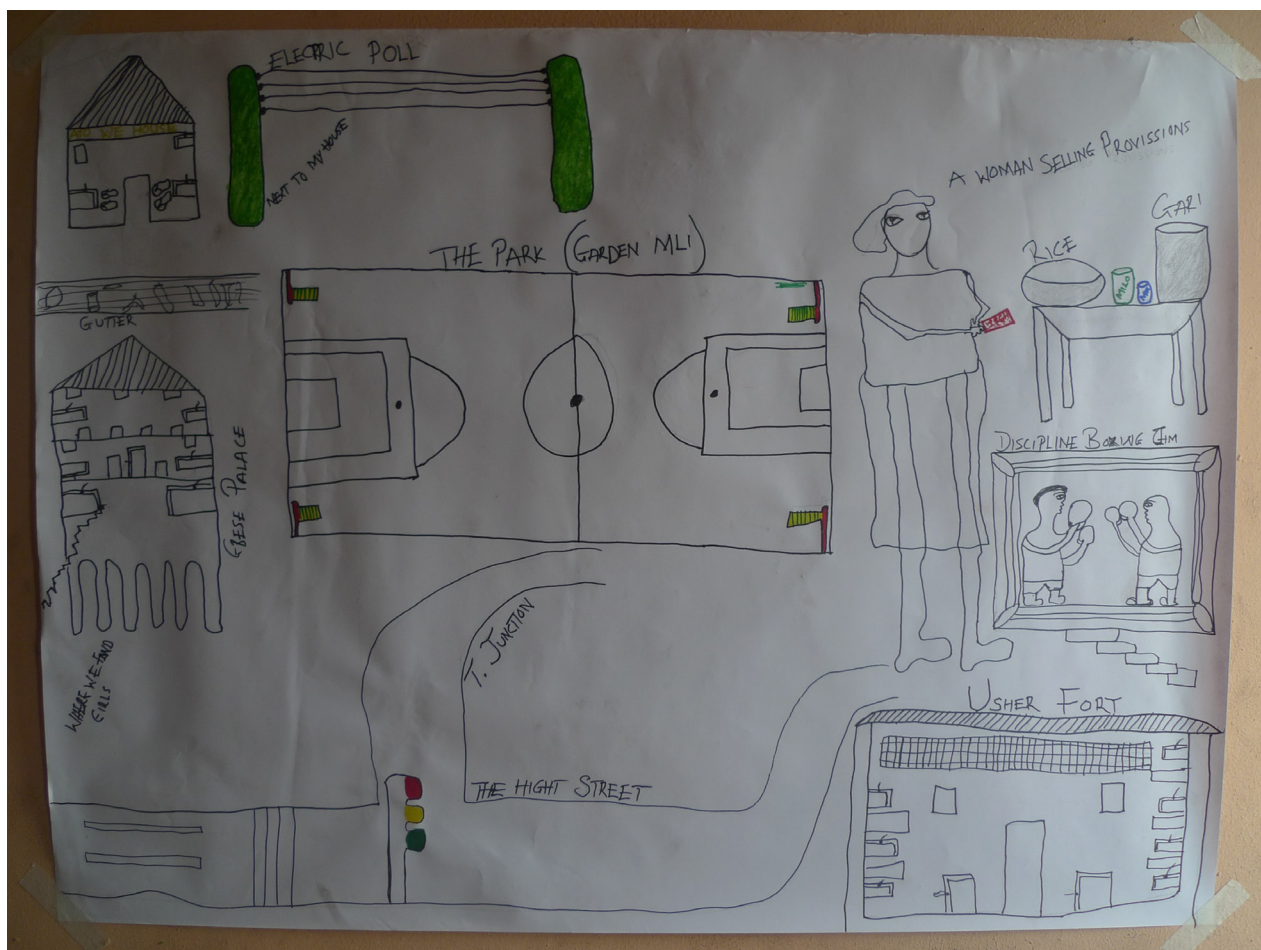
the barbering shop is in red, it is where I sit very often. where my friends are.

There or at my base at the junction behind Angua Makafi. This is where I sit the most. every day I sit here, when I have nothing else to do, I go there.

This is all very close to my house. I live just around the corner here. Where you always sit with Baba. just there.

The night market is also very important. This is where ceremonies are always. At night you can buy food there. and during the day there are many things, like ceremonies, naming ceremonies, funerals.

My favourite area is not inside Sabon Zongo. I like black star square in Osu. It is very beautiful, very nice. That is why I like to go there.



Type of data: Cognitive map

Author: Possy Gee

Community: Ga Mashie

Content:

Ato we house:

Started with drawing his house.

This is my house, the Ato We house (from the Ato family). It has 3 rooms. But I don't spend a lot of time there at the house. It is nice to have this electricity pole right next to the house. I think it is beautiful and it shows everyone we have electricity. What I don't like is the gutter. It is also next to the house, but that one smells.

Gbese Palace:

My house is really close to the Gbese Mantse palace. It is a very big house, it is very nice. I have a positive relationship with the people inside the palace and the chief. There are lot of beautiful girls inside the house, we go there to find girls.

The park (Garden Mli):

the park is where I spend most of my time. We call it gardiem, which means “inside the garden”. I am also barbering there at the base, but just for friends. We also have a football team there. We play against many other teams of the neighbourhood, but we don’t have a manager yet. So we are not getting paid.

Every day I buy food at this woman’s place. She sells provisions there.

T-junction, high street:

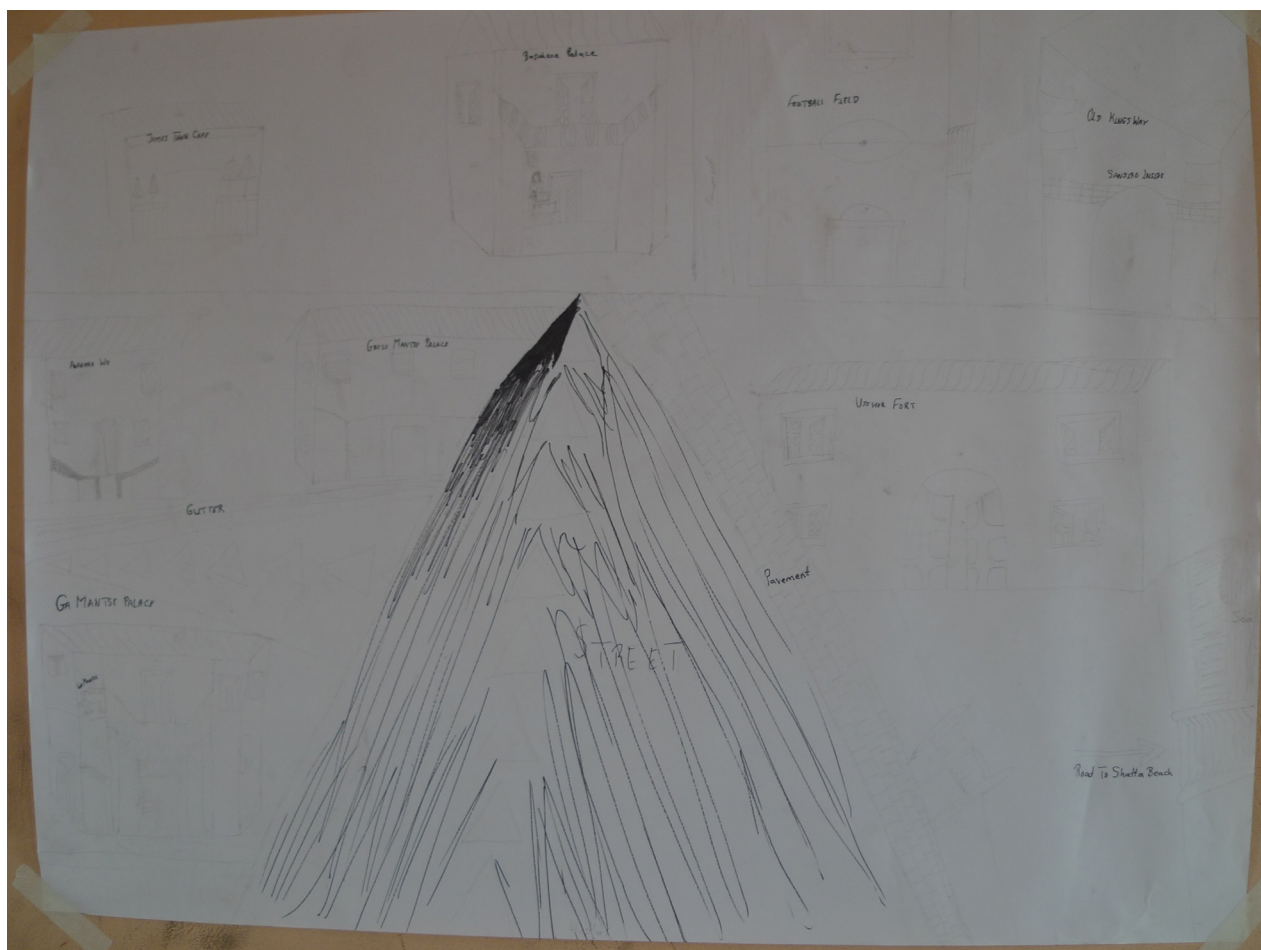
At the T-junction is a traffic light there. It is very important because it keeps the community safe. You have Osu to the left, and then you have Osekai, and Salenko and Shatta beach there. All very nice places.

Then you have Ussher Fort there. It is a very nice building, and it helps coordinate society.

This road here at Ussher Fort, it goes to one side to Sansiro, a small park. And then behind gardiem it goes through Salaga (market). But the market is closed now.

Discipline boxing gym

This is also right next to Ussher fort, and to gardiem. It is right next to it, just before. This is the gym where I go boxing every day. Every day I am there from 3 or 4 o clock. I become very strong there, and very fast. Even this guy (points to Fazigogo, a much larger friend) is too small for me (laughs).



Type of data: Cognitive map

Author: Ranking

Community: Ga Mashie

Content:

Me and Possy Gee live in the same house near the Ga mantse palace. The chiefs chop up all the money themselves, they don't share it with their people like they say.

football field.

The football field, we call garden mli (inside garden) used to be a garden, it used to be wilderness. Then it became a shell station. But now it is a park where we hang out a lot.

Ankamar We

Ankamar We is a palace, but it is the smallest palace. He is the third in charge.

Here is the Ga Mantse palace, it is the biggest palace. He is the paramount chief in all of Greater Accra.

Here is the Gbese palace, our chief lives there. He is the second in charge. Underneath the Ga Mantse it is him. He is the vice.

Basahene Palace

Then there is another palace, Basahene palace, of one of the divisional chiefs.

I put arrows on the street here. This is high street. Because cars drive very fast here. It is very dangerous for us. But it is also very important to us.

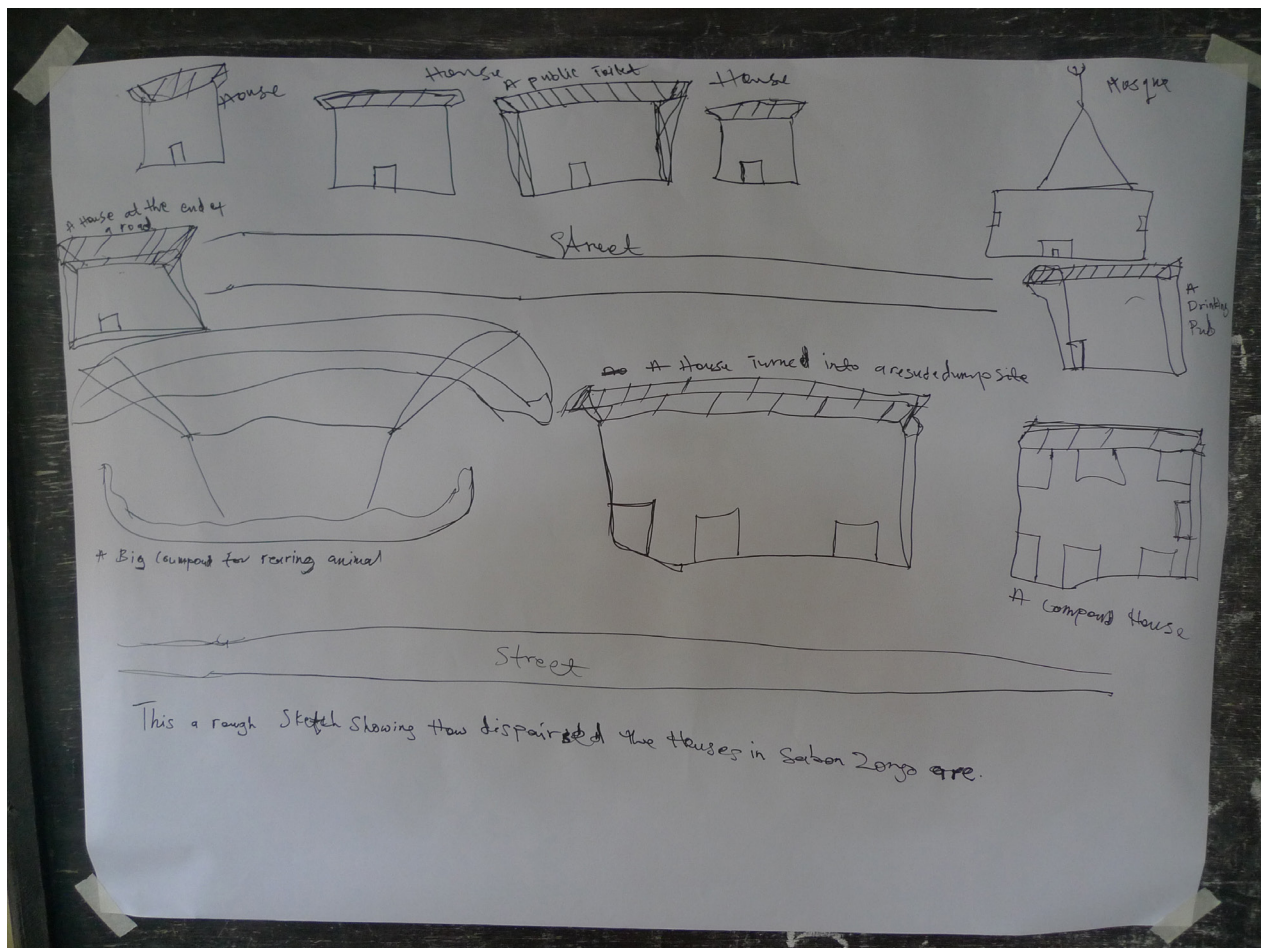
James Town café:

This here is James Town café, it is an internet café. I am there sometimes, for browsing the web.

I have a wife and a young daughter, so I am working a lot to support them. I used to play football, but now I have no more time for this. I still sing and rap and have fun.

I go to Shatta beach to meditate and to relax. To think. It is very quiet there, very peaceful. Just not in the evenings.

We can go there always, yes we know the owners. They are one of us, we are brothers. So they leave us alone when we go there, even if I don't have cash, if I can't buy things.



Type of data: Cognitive map

Author: Ras

Community: Sabon Zongo

Content:

Ras first drew the mosque: this is the Zaana mosque. It is the most important mosque for me, because it is very close to my house.

The lane where I live is called woodlane, there is a drinking pub there. People sit here and they drink and smoke.

There is also a public toilet in the middle of all the houses. This is very bad, because of the smell. It is very disturbing to all the people living there.

A house at the end of the road.

There is a house blocking the street, traffic cannot pass here. This is bad because you cannot get there with a car, with transport. People are not following the rules, they just build a house there where there was a road. And then there is nothing the authorities can do. There is politics there. The politicians they allow it, and they take money for it.

A house turned into a refuse dump site.

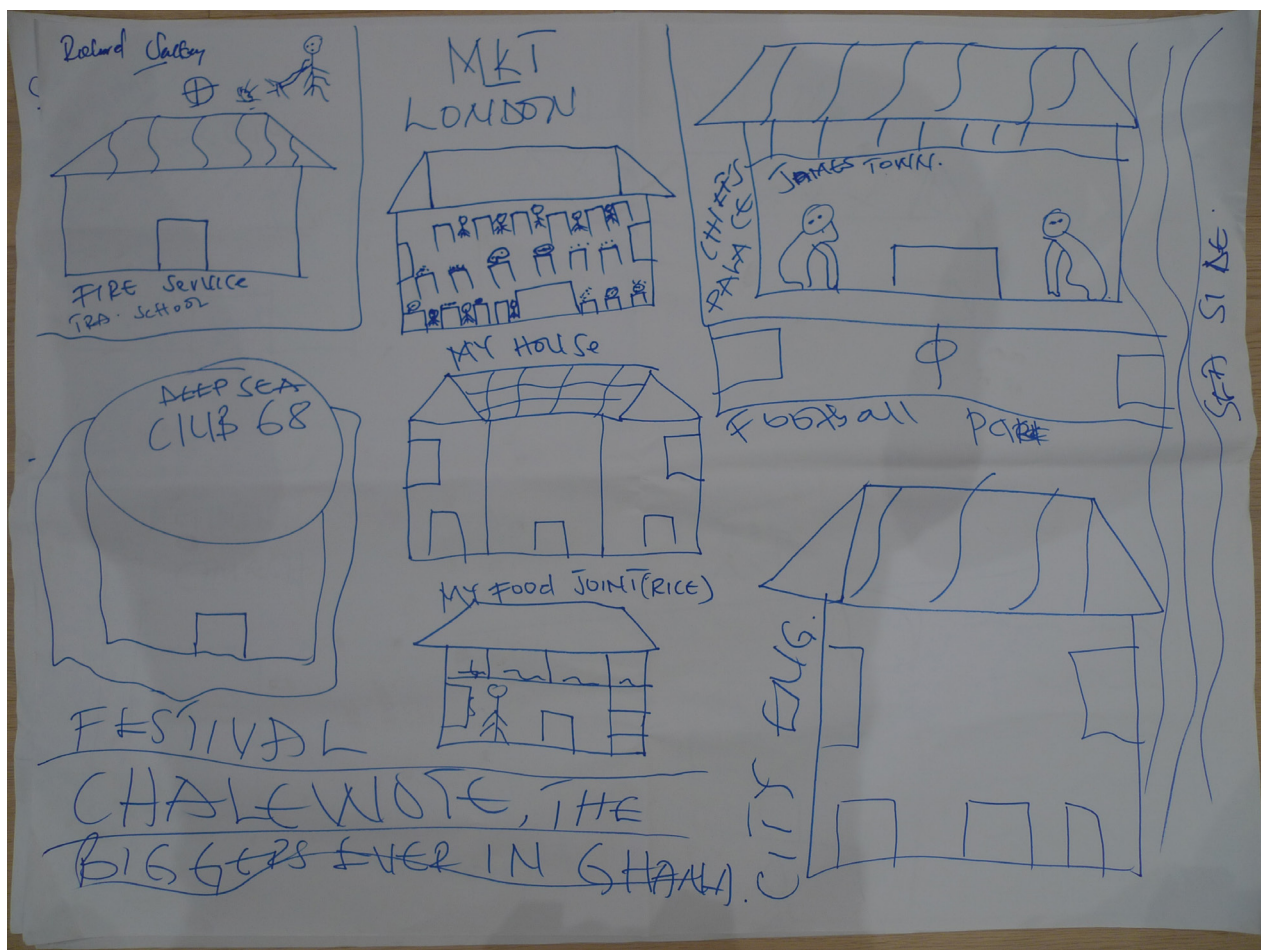
In the next lane there is a story building there, but the residents left some time ago. And now it is all demolished, and people throw their garbage there.

Big compound for rearing animals.

There is a big compound there at the end of the lane. Now it is used for rearing animals. It is very very big, and it smell very bad. All the people around are very disturbed. This place could be used for something useful instead of disturbing for the community. Like a clinic, or a community space.

I meet people in front of my house. There we sit with friends.

Sometimes I go outside of Sabon Zongo to enjoy the air, like James Town. Sometimes I go to James Town for the beach. Yes, many of the youth go there in the weekends.



Type of data: Cognitive map

Author: Richard

Community: Ga Mashie

Content:

The fire service here, it is almost at the lagoon. It is the only fire service training school in Ghana. It brings employment to the people of James Town. So it is very good for us.

Here is the deep sea club 68, at the old filling station. It is very nice in the weekend, there are so many people there. I often go there in the weekend, because it is close to my house. And because I know many many people who go there.

This thing here is London Market, it has been built for the white, for the British. It is an ancient structure. Very old. For me it is very important, because I go there every day to buy for my mum. I go there to buy food stuff for my mum. She sells Rice for the people of James Town, so every

day we go and buy a lot.

This house here is my house. It is the family house. It is big, about 13 or 14 rooms. But I don't spend much time there. I have almost no time there.

Because I spend all my time here, at the food place. It is called Ayele special. It is here at the next road. Very close. I am always working there, selling the rice for my mum. All my friends come here and sit around when I am selling.

Here is my chief's palace, the Mantse Agbona palace. He is a very important man here because he is the decision maker here. He holds most of the property of James Town. People go there direct, to buy and to sell land and always to discuss things.

Just in front of the palace there, is the football park. It is also important because the Chale Wote festival starts just there. Some time ago there was a conflict between the players and the palace elders. They did not like all the youth making noise there, and making trouble there. So the elders they stopped the football. But this was not accepted by the people, so they just played. In the end the palace elders had to make arrangement with the youth, they had to come to an agreement. So now the youth is again allowed to play there.

The city engineering building here, this is a nice place. You can find many things here. The local government is here, and revenue comes here. Odododiodoo constituency projects from the government that benefit the community, like the library, the boxing gyms, the basketball, are all here.

the seaside is also here. The seaside is very important to everyone in James Town, to all the fishermen.

The chale wote festival, is the biggest thing in Ghana. The biggest festival. It is what makes James Town and the Ga Mashie area famous all over the world. All the best artists and the best musicians from all over Accra and Ghana and even from other places come here and they show their arts. It is very nice, so many people in the streets. I look forward to it all year. The whole year we are busy with preparations for the festival. It is really the best time of the year. You have first the Homowo, when the chiefs go around and they spread food around the area, and then starts Chale Wote.



Type of data: Cognitive map

Author: Richjoy

Community: Ga Mashie

Content:

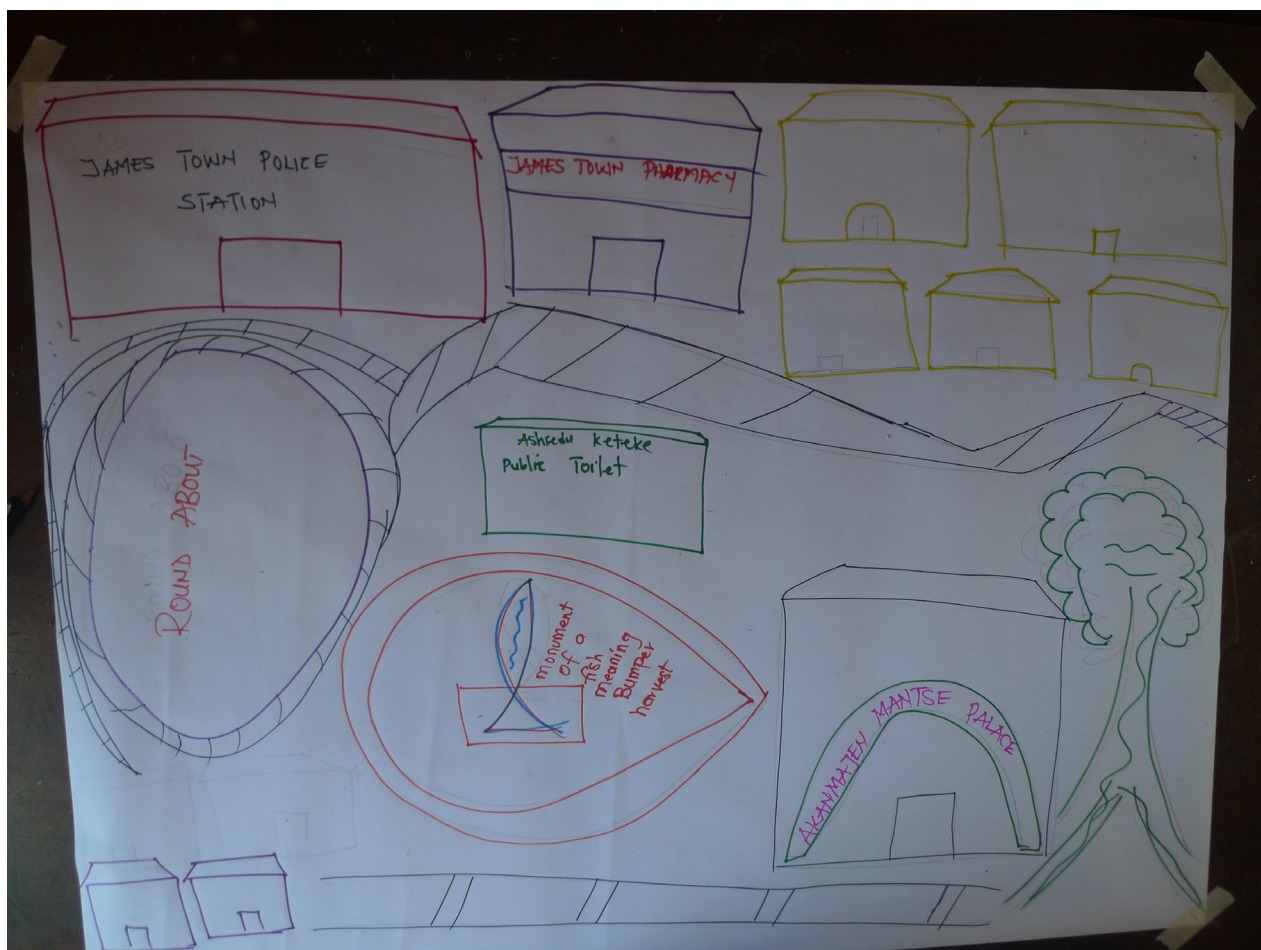
I drew the kitchen which is outside in my house. You can see a fire and a coalpot cooking. The kitchen is on the first floor.

there is also an umbrella in our courtyard.

These are my sister and my brother. They are still small.

Next to the house is a mango tree and a palm tree. And the flag is next to the customs building. we learn the flag at school.

Here is the filling station just behind our house. These are the cars and trucks in the station coming for fuel.



Type of data: Cognitive map

Author: Schneider

Community: Ga Mashie

Content:

There is a big tree in the garden of the palace (Akanmajen Mantse palace), which is just 200 m behind the Mantse Agbona. This used to be a traditional court, but it still holds a polling station when there is elections.

There are only two public toilets, one on the seaside and one inside Ashiedu Keteke area.

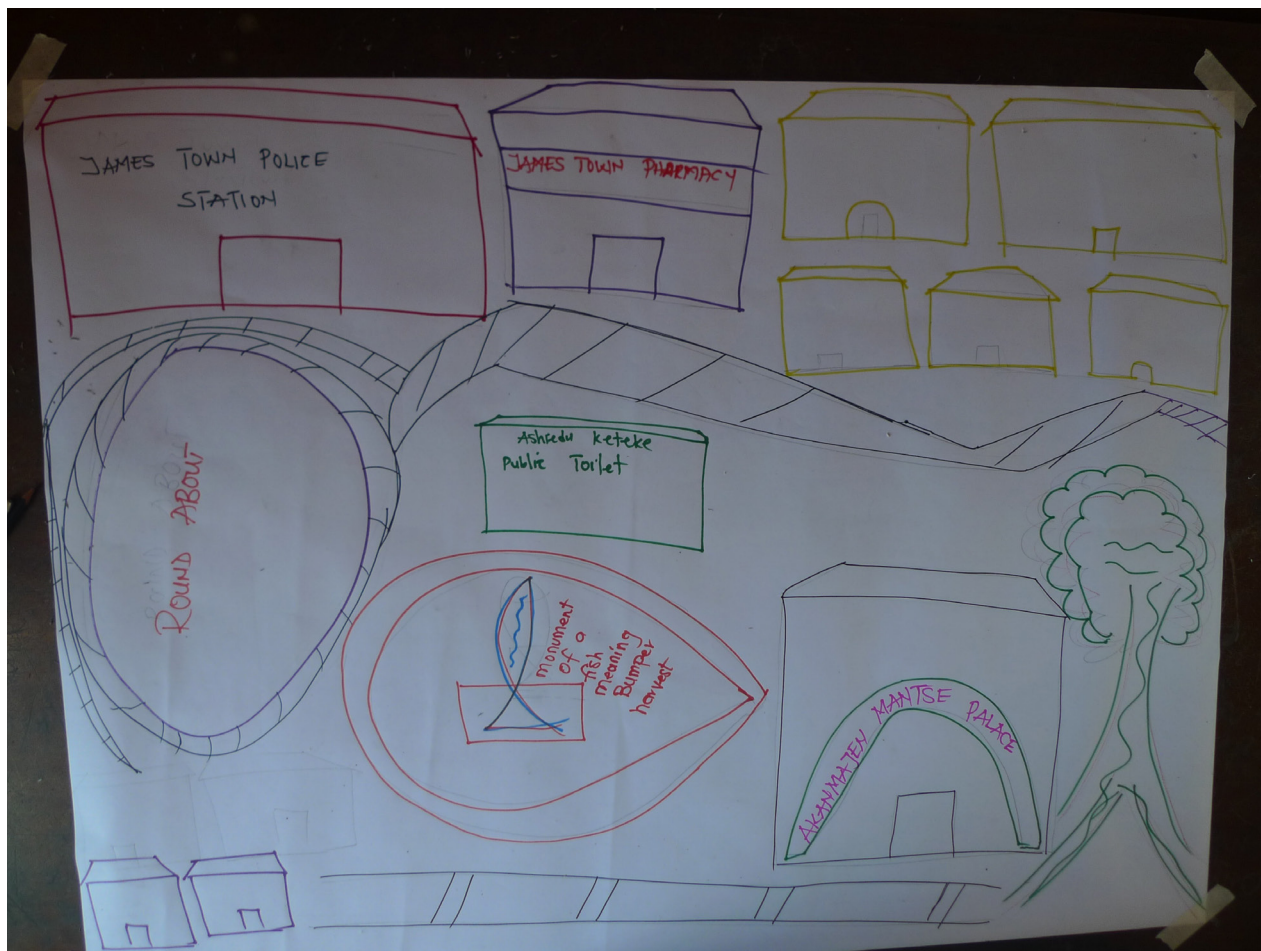
This James Town pharmacy is important because the drugs are cheap there. Some other places are more expensive.

There is the James Town police station. It has a vast space around it, but it has recently been

fenced because of people were using it for events, and they were disturbing the police.

On the roundabout is a big billboard. We go there and have small gatherings there in the middle.

Then there is another roundabout there. An open space too, right in front of the palace. And there is a monument in the middle of a fish. It means bumper harvest, something like big catch. It will make the catch of the fishermen bigger. The open space is also nice. I think it was people from Legon (i.e. University of Ghana) who designed it and built it with funds from a foreign based NGO. It's very nice because they created seats on the square you can just sit there everywhere.



Type of data: Cognitive map

Author: Shee

Community: Ga Mashie

Content:

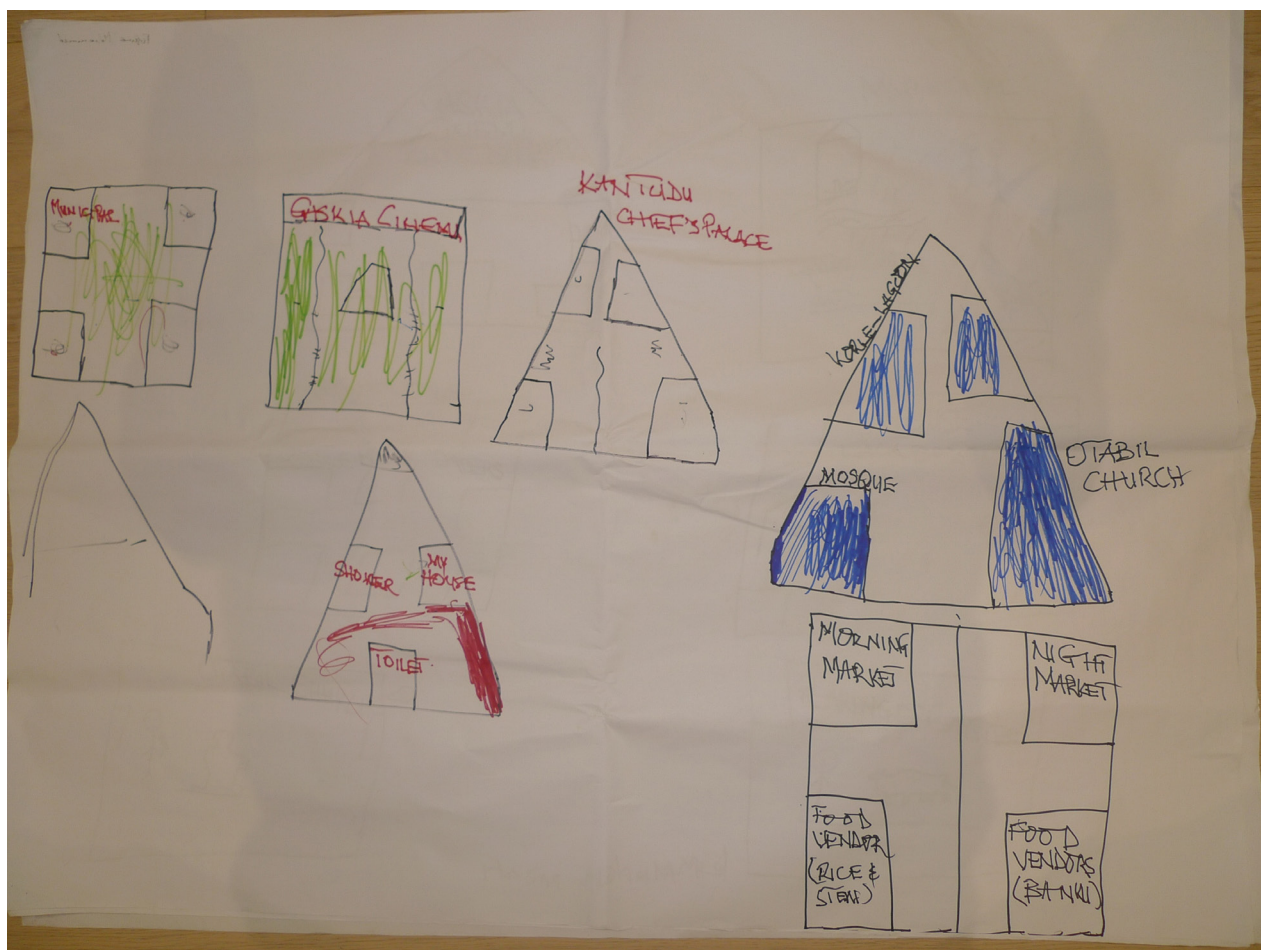
note: the lighthouse was the first thing she drew and it has more detail than any other part on the drawing.

To me the lighthouse is the most important part of James Town. It is a great landmark. If someone comes to my house, it is very easy to explain how to get there because everybody knows where the lighthouse is and you can see it from all over James Town.

this here is the Mantse Agbona palace. I used to pray there in the evenings, but not every day. On the park in front of the palace the boys play football in the afternoon. And the girls, we watch and support the boys.

The roundabout behind the palace, where the fish statue is, I pass there a lot to buy different things there. My baby's father also stays around there. This place is really nice because you can go sit there on the wall to chat with friends.

This place here is called Deep Sea. We go clubbing there in the weekend. The place is always bash (very alive). It is a big compound, it has a washing base inside, and another bar inside.



Type of data: Cognitive map

Author: Starcool

Community: Sabon Zongo

Content:

This municipal, it is a small square. The road everywhere you pass you see dirt. That's why it is green. I don't like it.

The gaskia cinema. There is a small space in the middle where they smoke. So many rubbish there and cigarette buds. Very dirty.

Here is Kan Tudu, the chief's palace. I make it a triangle because the space there is very small, very lungu. Too narrow.

Here is the place across the road, the main road. Outside of Sabon Zongo. You have Otabil

church, and there is the big mosque there. And the Korle lagoon. It is all very dirty there. I don't like going there.

This is my house. I don't like it there, it is very small also. I have no friends here. I go to Sukura to meet friends. But I really like estates, because it is not dirty there.

Then the morning market and the night market. Food vendors are there, you can buy many types of food there. You can chop plain rice, T.Z. (i.e. tuo zaafi, Hausa specialty based on cornflower and often served with okra stew) and banku.

Appendix E: Systematic photographic observation



Type of data: Systematic photographic observation

Author: Local photographer

Location: Angua Makafi junction

Time: 7.34 am

Community: Sabon Zongo

Content:

Users: 33	Activity:	Other:
male: 22	walking: 12	vehicles parked: 0
female: 11	active (sports/play): 2	vehicles driving: 0
n/a:	sitting/standing/watching: 15	animals: 0
young: 8	commercial: 3	
old: 25	other: 1 (buying)	
n/a:		



Type of data: Systematic photographic observation

Author: Local photographer

Location: Angua Makafi junction

Time: 9.36 am

Community: Sabon Zongo

Content:

Users: 26	Activity:	Other:
male: 19	walking: 6	vehicles parked: 5
female: 7	active (sports/play): 0	vehicles driving: 0
n/a:	sitting/standing/watching: 10	animals:
young: 5	commercial: 5	
old: 19	other: 5	
n/a:		



Type of data: Systematic photographic observation

Author: Local photographer

Location: Angua Makafi junction

Time: 11.33 am

Community: Sabon Zongo

Content:

Users: 21	Activity:	Other:
male: 14	walking: 7	vehicles parked: 5
female: 7	active (sports/play): 0	vehicles driving: 0
n/a:	sitting/standing/watching: 8	animals:
young: 4	commercial: 5	
old: 17	other: 1 (washing prayer)	
n/a:		



Type of data: Systematic photographic observation

Author: Local photographer

Location: Angua Makafi junction

Time: 13.34 pm

Community: Sabon Zongo

Content:

Users: 22	Activity:	Other:
male: 21	walking: 6	vehicles parked: 3
female: 1	active (sports/play): 0	vehicles driving: 1
n/a:	sitting/standing/watching: 13	animals:
young: 5	commercial: 1	
old: 17	other: 2 (washing feet for prayer)	
n/a:		



Type of data: Systematic photographic observation

Author: Local photographer

Location: Angua Makafi junction

Time: 15.33 pm

Community: Sabon Zongo

Content:

Users: 24	Activity:	Other:
male: 19	walking: 8	vehicles parked: 2
female: 5	active (sports/play): 0	vehicles driving: 1
n/a:	sitting/standing/watching: 13	animals: 0
young: 3	commercial: 1	
old: ?	other: 2 (washing prayer)	
n/a:		



17:35 18.07.2017

Type of data: Systematic photographic observation

Author: Local photographer

Location: Angua Makafi junction

Time: 17.35 pm

Community: Sabon Zongo

Content:

Users: 38	Activity:	Other:
male: 35	walking: 6	vehicles parked: 3
female: 3	active (sports/play): 6	vehicles driving: 0
n/a:	sitting/standing/watching/	animals: 0
	social: 24	
young: 9	commercial: 2	
old: 29	other: 0	
n/a:		



Type of data: Systematic photographic observation

Author: Local photographer

Location: Sarkin Zongo Junction

Time: 7.46 am

Community: Sabon Zongo

Content:

Users: 12	Activity:	Other:
male: 10	walking: 7	vehicles parked: 2
female: 2	active (sports/play):	vehicles driving: 0
n/a:	sitting/standing/watching: 5	animals:
young: 4	commercial: 0	
old: 8	other: 0	
n/a:		



Type of data: Systematic photographic observation

Author: Local photographer

Location: Sarkin Zongo Junction

Time: 9.40 am

Community: Sabon Zongo

Content:

Users: 10	Activity:	Other:
male: 4	walking: 6	vehicles parked: 7
female: 6	active (sports/play): 0	vehicles driving: 0
n/a:	sitting/standing/watching: 1	animals:
young: 4	commercial: 2	
old: 6	other: 1 (domestic)	
n/a:		



Type of data: Systematic photographic observation

Author: Local photographer

Location: Sarkin Zongo Junction

Time: 11.35 am

Community: Sabon Zongo

Content:

Users: 5	Activity:	Other:
male: 5	walking: 2	vehicles parked: 7
female: 0	active (sports/play): 0	vehicles driving: 0
n/a:	sitting/standing/watching: 3	animals: 0
young: 4	commercial: 0	
old: 1	other:	
n/a:		



Type of data: Systematic photographic observation

Author: Local photographer

Location: Sarkin Zongo Junction

Time: 14.10 pm

Community: Sabon Zongo

Content:

Users: 16	Activity:	Other:
male: 14	walking: 5	vehicles parked: 4
female: 2	active (sports/play):	vehicles driving: 1
n/a:	sitting/standing/watching: 9	animals: 1
young: 9	commercial: 2	
old: 7	other:	
n/a:		



Type of data: Systematic photographic observation

Author: Local photographer

Location: Sarkin Zongo Junction

Time: 15.34 pm

Community: Sabon Zongo

Content:

Users: 15	Activity:	Other:
male: 13	walking: 2	vehicles parked: 3
female: 2	active (sports/play): 0	vehicles driving: 0
n/a:	sitting/standing/watching: 9	animals:
	commercial: 3	-
young: 6	other: 1 (domestic)	
old: 9		
n/a:		



Type of data: Systematic photographic observation

Author: Local photographer

Location: Sarkin Zongo Junction

Time: 17.37 pm

Community: Sabon Zongo

Content:

Users: 16	Activity:	Other:
male: 10	walking: 6	vehicles parked: 3
female: 6	active (sports/play): 0	vehicles driving: 0
n/a:	sitting/standing/watching: 7	animals: 0
young: 9	commercial: 2	
old: 7	other: 1 (cycling)	
n/a:		



Type of data: Systematic photographic observation

Author: Local photographer

Location: Night Market

Time: 8.30 am

Community: Sabon Zongo

Content:

Users: 8	Activity:	Other:
male: 3	walking: 4	vehicles parked: 5
female: 5	active (sports/play): 0	vehicles driving: 0
n/a:	sitting/standing/watching: 2	animals: 0
young: 2	commercial: 2	
old: 6	other: 0	
n/a:		



Type of data: Systematic photographic observation

Author: Local photographer

Location: Night Market

Time: 10.32 am

Community: Sabon Zongo

Content:

Users: 15	Activity:	Other:
male: 2	walking: 3	vehicles parked: 3
female: 13	active (sports/play): 0	vehicles driving: 0
n/a:	sitting/standing/watching: 6	animals: 0
young: 1	commercial: 4	
old: 15	other: 2 (domestic)	
n/a:		



Type of data: Systematic photographic observation

Author: Local photographer

Location: Night Market

Time: 12.29 pm

Community: Sabon Zongo

Content:

Users: 9	Activity:	Other:
male: 1	walking: 4	vehicles parked: 3
female: 8	active (sports/play): 0	vehicles driving:
n/a:	sitting/standing/watching: 0	animals: 1 (goat)
young: 3	commercial: 5	
old: 6	other: 0	
n/a:		



Type of data: Systematic photographic observation

Author: Local photographer

Location: Night Market

Time: 14.33 pm

Community: Sabon Zongo

Content:

Users: 17	Activity:	Other:
male: 6	walking: 6	vehicles parked: 2
female: 11	active (sports/play): 2	vehicles driving: 0
n/a:	sitting/standing/watching: 3	animals: 2
young: 6	commercial: 6	
old: 11	other: 0	
n/a:		



Type of data: Systematic photographic observation

Author: Local photographer

Location: Night Market

Time: 16.36 pm

Community: Sabon Zongo

Content:

Users: 13	Activity:	Other:
male: 4	walking: 8	vehicles parked: 3
female: 9	active (sports/play): 0	vehicles driving: 2
n/a:	sitting/standing/watching: 0	animals: 0
young: 7	commercial: 5	
old: 6	other: 0	
n/a:		



Type of data: Systematic photographic observation

Author: Local photographer

Location: Night Market

Time: 18.33 pm

Community: Sabon Zongo

Content:

Users: 31	Activity:	Other:
male: 20	walking: 9	vehicles parked: 7
female: 11	active (sports/play): 5	vehicles driving: 1
n/a:	sitting/standing/watching: 10	animals:
young: 14	commercial: 6	
old: 17	other: 1 (waiting taxidriver)	
n/a:		



Type of data: Systematic photographic observation

Author: Local photographer

Location: Gardiem

Time: 9.51 am

Community: Ga Mashie

Content:

Users: 13	Activity:	Other:
male: 12	walking: 3	vehicles parked: 0
female: 1	active (sports/play): 4	vehicles driving: 3
	sitting/standing/watching: 6	animals: 0
young: 10	commercial: 0	
old:	other: 0	
n/a: 3		



Type of data: Systematic photographic observation

Author: Local photographer

Location: Gardiem

Time: 11.36 am

Community: Ga Mashie

Content:

Users: 9	Activity:	Other:
male: 7	walking: 5	vehicles parked:
female: 2	active (sports/play): 0	vehicles driving: 1
	sitting/standing/watching: 2	animals:
young: 6	commercial: 0	
old: 2	other: 2	
n/a: 1		



Type of data: Systematic photographic observation

Author: Local photographer

Location: Gardiem

Time: 13.35 pm

Community: Ga Mashie

Content:

Users: 23	Activity:	Other:
male: 18	walking: 1	vehicles parked: 1
female: 5	active (sports/play): 6	vehicles driving: 0
young: 18	sitting/standing/watching: 13	animals:
old: 5	commercial: 3	
	other: 0	



Type of data: Systematic photographic observation

Author: Local photographer

Location: Gardiem

Time: 15.30 pm

Community: Ga Mashie

Content:

Users: 11	Activity:	Other:
male: 9	walking: 4	vehicles parked: 1
female: 2	active (sports/play): 3	vehicles driving: 1
young: 11	sitting/standing/watching: 3	animals: 0
old: 0	commercial: 1	0
	other: 0	



Type of data: Systematic photographic observation

Author: Local photographer

Location: Gardiem

Time: 17.43 pm

Community: Ga Mashie

Content:

Users: ?	Activity:	Other:
male:	walking:	vehicles parked: 3 (trotros)
female:	active (sports/play):	vehicles driving:
young:	sitting/standing/watching:	animals: 1 (goat)
old:	commercial:	
	other:	



Type of data: Systematic photographic observation

Author: Local photographer

Location: Gardiem

Time: 19.35 pm

Community: Ga Mashie

Content:

Users: 13	Activity:	Other:
male: 13	walking: 1	vehicles parked: 0
female: 0	active (sports/play): 6	vehicles driving: 7
young: 12	sitting/standing/watching: 6	animals: 2
old: 1	commercial: 0	
	other: 0	



Type of data: Systematic photographic observation

Author: Local photographer

Location: Lighthouse

Time: 9.28 am

Community: Ga Mashie

Content:

Users: 10	Activity:	Other:
male: 6	walking: 4	vehicles parked: 2
female: 4	active (sports/play): 0	vehicles driving: 2
n/a:	sitting/standing/watching: 5	animals: 0
young: 9	commercial: 1	
old: 1	other:	
n/a:		



Type of data: Systematic photographic observation

Author: Local photographer

Location: Lighthouse

Time: 11.16 am

Community: Ga Mashie

Content:

Users: 7	Activity:	Other:
male: 4	walking: 0	vehicles parked: 2
female: 3	active (sports/play): 0	vehicles driving: 1
n/a:	sitting/standing/watching: 4	animals:
young: 3	commercial: 2	
old: 4	other: 1 (domestic)	
n/a:		



Type of data: Systematic photographic observation

Author: Local photographer

Location: Lighthouse

Time: 13.14 pm

Community: Ga Mashie

Content:

Users: 13	Activity:	Other:
male: 12	walking: 4	vehicles parked: 2
female: 1	active (sports/play): 0	vehicles driving: 4
n/a:	sitting/standing/watching: 3	animals:
young: 5	commercial: 0	
old: 8	other: 5 (labourers) 1 (cycling)	
n/a:		



Type of data: Systematic photographic observation

Author: Local photographer

Location: Lighthouse

Time: 15.18 pm

Community: Ga Mashie

Content:

Users: 17	Activity:	Other:
male: 13	walking: 6	vehicles parked: 2
female: 4	active (sports/play):	vehicles driving: 3
n/a:	sitting/standing/watching: 5	animals: 0
young: 10	commercial: 1	
old: 7	other: 4 (labourers) 1 (cycling)	
n/a:		



Type of data: Systematic photographic observation

Author: Local photographer

Location: Lighthouse

Time: 17.23 pm

Community: Ga Mashie

Content:

Users: 18	Activity:	Other:
male: 17	walking: 2	vehicles parked: 3
female: 1	active (sports/play): 0	vehicles driving: 0
n/a:	sitting/standing/watching: 7	animals:
young: 7	commercial: 1	
old: 11	other: 7 (labourers) 1 (waiting for trotro)	
n/a:		



Type of data: Systematic photographic observation

Author: Local photographer

Location: Lighthouse

Time: 19.21 pm

Community: Ga Mashie

Content:

Users: 10	Activity:	Other:
male: 5	walking: 2	vehicles parked: 3
female: 5	active (sports/play): 0	vehicles driving: 1
n/a:	sitting/standing/watching: 5	animals:
young: 8	commercial: 0	
old: 2	other: 3 (waiting trotro)	
n/a:		



Type of data: Systematic photographic observation

Author: Local photographer

Location: Nii Ayikai Roundabout

Time: 9.34 am

Community: Ga Mashie

Content:

Users: 20	Activity:	Other:
male: 15	walking: 1	vehicles parked: 1
female: 5	active (sports/play): 0	vehicles driving: 0
n/a:	sitting/standing/watching: 12	animals:
young: 16	commercial: 6	
old: 4	other: 1 (domestic)	
n/a:		



Type of data: Systematic photographic observation

Author: Local photographer

Location: Nii Ayikai Roundabout

Time: 11.23 am

Community: Ga Mashie

Content:

Users: 31	Activity:	Other:
male: 22	walking: 3	vehicles parked: 1
female: 9	active (sports/play): 4	vehicles driving: 0
n/a:	sitting/standing/watching: 6	animals: 0
young: 24	commercial: 15	
old: 7	other: 3 (domestic)	
n/a:		



Type of data: Systematic photographic observation

Author: Local photographer

Location: Nii Ayikai Roundabout

Time: 13.20 pm

Community: Ga Mashie

Content:

Users: 24	Activity:	Other:
male: 21	walking: 2	vehicles parked: 2
female: 3	active (sports/play): 2	vehicles driving: 0
n/a:	sitting/standing/watching: 15	animals: 0
young: 22	commercial: 3	
old: 2	other: 1 (pushing trolley)	
n/a:		



Type of data: Systematic photographic observation

Author: Local photographer

Location: Nii Ayikai Roundabout

Time: 15.41 pm

Community: Ga Mashie

Content:

Users: 29	Activity:	Other:
male: 23	walking: 9	vehicles parked: 0
female: 6	active (sports/play): 1	vehicles driving: 0
n/a:	sitting/standing/watching: 16	animals: 0
young: 20	commercial: 3	
old: 9	other: 0	
n/a:		



17:55 11:04:2013

Type of data: Systematic photographic observation

Author: Local photographer

Location: Nii Ayikai Roundabout

Time: 17.55 pm

Community: Ga Mashie

Content:

Users: 37	Activity:	Other:
male: 31	walking: 6	vehicles parked: 1
female: 6	active (sports/play):	vehicles driving: 0
n/a:	sitting/standing/watching: 31	animals:
young: 26	commercial: 0	
old: 11	other:	
n/a:		



Type of data: Systematic photographic observation

Author: Local photographer

Location: Nii Ayikai Roundabout

Time: 19.47 pm

Community: Ga Mashie

Content:

Users: 28	Activity:	Other:
male: 24	walking: 5	vehicles parked: 0
female: 4	active (sports/play):	vehicles driving: 1
n/a:	sitting/standing/watching: 21	animals: 0
young: 20	commercial: 0	
old: 8	other: 2 (domestic)	
n/a:		

Appendix F: Interviews

Type of data: Interview

Participant(s): Chief Alhadji Yahya Hamisu Bako (E1)

Function: Traditional leader

Community: Sabon Zongo

speaker	content
KVR	Could you tell me a bit of the history of Sabon Zongo and the roles the former chiefs played in creating it?
E1	Mallam Bako was the first chief. Sabon zongo is 108 years old (received the rights to Sabon Zongo in 1909). There were initially only Hausa people in Sabon Zongo. He gave the land free of charge. Mallam Bako was also a herbalist, and cared for the welfare of the people. There was an Islamic school in the house. During the Mallam Bako era, marriages were held inside the palace. But for all festivities, people had to seek permission from the chief. During Big Eid all animals were slaughtered at the palace. Mallam Bako migrated from James Town. His father lived in Zongo lane.
KVR	Who was responsible for the planning of the area? Who decided which area stayed empty, where the market goes, which streets are paved, ...
E1	It was the responsibility of the British governors, planning was done by the British authorities. But they consulted Mallam Bako for everything. The AMA (Accra Metropolitan Assembly) still consults me. They cannot do anything without my permission, because Sabon Zongo is not Ga stool land. It was given to Malam Bako and belongs to him.
KVR	What is your official function within the area?
KVR	What are your tasks and responsibilities for the area and the people of Sabon Zongo?
E1	I go to naming ceremonies, to funerals, to weddings. Most importantly I solicit for development in the area of Sabon Zongo. Mostly for sanitation. People consult me for any project.
KVR	How are they affected by official and legal frameworks and regulations?
KVR	How would you describe your relationship with young people in Sabon Zongo? Do you feel in touch with their issues?

KVR	What is your personal perception of young people and their situation?
E1	There are good ones and bad ones. The good ones come to me for development. They help in the neighbourhood with sanitation, dislodgement of the gutters. There was an exchange of bullets at sunshine 4 days ago with the police. I called the cabinet to clear the rogues that damage the image of Sabon Zongo.
KVR	Who is represented in your cabinet? Is youth represented?
E1	The cabinet of advisors is a group of stakeholders, the youth is represented by some of the youth leaders.
KVR	Have you had similar experiences before with delinquent youth?
E1	We have tried this same thing before. The police arrests the rogues, but they come back. They are family of people in the neighbourhood, of politicians. The parents pay their bail and then they are set free, and they will sit there again in the same place next week, doing the same things. But this time we will use more permanent measures. (would not specify exact measures)
KVR	What are according to you the main challenges for young people?
E1	The most important problem is unemployment. We are in contact with the government for skills training and jobs. But the government is new (refer to new elected government, in power since 9 december 2016), only been in power for three months, so we cannot expect a lot from them yet. We must give them some time. Then we will put pressure on the government to improve things for Sabon Zongo. In terms of education we are doing well, most Hausi are in school, and the parents support youth. (his son speaking) All is not good. There are a lot of school dropouts. They want to proceed but their parents are not capable of support. Even after finishing JHS or secondary school, there are still no jobs. The government is aware of the problems. They use them on the campaign.
KVR	What are the main opportunities?
KVR	Are there enough opportunities in terms of employment, entertainment, education, influencing decision making?
KVR	Who are the most important (powerful) players that create, manage and control public space?

E1	<p>I am in control. If someone does something against zongo rules or Islamic rules, like they do not respect the drum ban, they have to abide. Because we want to be on good terms with the Ga chiefs.</p> <p>We sometimes mobilise the youth (to keep people following the rules?)</p> <p>There are some banks around Sabon zongo, and some companies. But the AMA or companies are not giving them here (?).</p>
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Type of data: Interview

Participant(s): Honorable Yakubu Abame Asoke (E2), Honorable Ibrahim Alhassan (E3)

Function: Assembly member (local government), assembly member aid

Community: Sabon Zongo

Speaker	Content
KVR	What is your official function within the area?
E2	I am the assemblyman of Sabon zongo. My jurisdiction is the electoral area of Nmenmeete. It starts from the traffic light at zongo-junction, prudential bank, all the way to the other traffic light, at happy days, over there. It has a muslim community and a christian community. I am one of seven (7) assemblymen, representing the electoral areas in the submetro of Ablekuma North. I am currently also the chairman of the submetropolitan assembly, and since 1992 I have won this position twice. I am also the chairman of the Muslim Caucus.
KVR	What is your relation with the area of Sabon Zongo?
E2	I was born and bred in Sabon Zongo.
KVR	What are the specific tasks you perform or responsibilities you have relating to the areas Sabon Zongo or James Town?

E2	<p>You know, when they say somebody is an assemblyman, it got to a point, the government realised, he is sitting at the top. The president is there. He is not coming down to Sabon Zongo. He has has to decentralise it, break the goverment into smaller pieces. So that the government can be with the people, and that the people can feel the government is between them. If the assemblyman is not from within the community, they will not vote for you. You need to be much inside, you need to be born and bred over there, you need to be somebody who has stayed your entire life, over 20-30 years in the community. So that when they tell you, this and this problem is coming from there, that you will know exactly where it comes from.</p> <p>So I represent the area, but I also represent the government, I am a liason officer between the people and the government.</p> <p>I am a development agent, we develop the community. It is the assembly, normally when there is any development, it goes to the assembly to approve. This school has to be constructed, this streetlight it is not functioning, the drains are choked with refuse it has to be desilted. It is the assembly that makes sure the refuse is dumped in the appropriate quarters. And secondly when there is any disaster, for instance there is a flood, the assemblyman makes sure he calls the appropriate officers to come and to assist the people.</p>
KVR	But who is it that sets the budgets for the development?
E2	<p>It is the assembly that budgets for, it is the assemblyman that demands for a budget, because, the people within the community they pay taxes, every business, every store pays. We also have public toilets in the area, everybody pays, it goes to the assembly coffers. After it goes to the assembly coffers, this same money, don't think the government will squander it. This budget, you will also allocate some budget from the local government.</p> <p>*interruption from phonecall*</p> <p>So the assembly has IGF, internal generated funds. But there is also money coming from the central government. Every district in the country will have its own budget which is allocated to them.</p>
KVR	How are your tasks and responsibilities affected by policies, legal frameworks and regulations? (i.e. the National Youth Policy 2010) Do you deal with these frameworks on a regular basis? Do they speak about youth participation, or development of public spaces?

E2	We have action plans, coming from the government. They speak about these things. For instance, the government has been building compounds, where if a programme wants to take a place within the community, the chief, the community, the assemblyman can go there with his people to work over there. So community spaces. The government can bring in, as a joint programme with a member of parliament, a nice city center, or a library for the youth within the community.
KVR	So are these things that are on the action plan?
E2	Yes. We have it. For instance, Sabon Zongo has a great action plan, I didn't know you were going to ask this or I would have brought the document. It is a whole booklet like this. It took us about twenty years. It is a very long term plan. For instance we need a hospital in Sabon Zongo. We don't have JHS, no junior high school. It is up to classics, primary school, that is all. We need junior high school, we need senior high school, we need a library, we need ICT center, etcetera etcetera. You name it. So it is in the action plan. Our first priority is the action plan. We organise a gathering, a forum in the neighbourhood, and from there we set the priorities for the action plan.
KVR	So what does such a gathering or forum look like? How is it organised and how often? And what is discussed?
E2	<p>Well, I would say after election we have done it only once. But we did some here last year. A lot of people come and participate. I would say, a hundred plus. We call the imams, the stakeholders, and the community leaders. And then the youth. Most of our gathering is the youth. They are most vocal, they are very very active.</p> <p>When we are discussing, we look at the majority, we look at what the majority supports. When we take a decision this is what the majority wants, that is what we are going to accept. What the majority says, we want this, that is what we are going to call it. At times when one person raises a concern, for instance, as our first priority, we ask the gathering. So how many of you want that we should put it in our action plan? Do you want us to take it to the local government, so that local government will put it somewhere? And then the hands go up, and then you can see. If they don't want it then that is fine. For instance, some people say, they need more streetlights. But the streetlights fall somewhere in the middle, it is not part of our responsibility. But we can take it up with the central government.</p>
KVR	How would you describe your relation with youth in the area? Are you in touch with their problems? Do they come to you for council? What is your (personal) perception of young people and their situation? What are the main challenges?

<p>E2</p>	<p>Yes I am very close to the youth. As I am a young man myself. The problem is one: education. That is the main challenge, education. If you educate somebody, you see, you have given him everything. You give him the weapons to work everywhere.</p> <p>And secondly, it is unemployment. Yes unemployment is everywhere, but it is in Sabon Zongo. For instance in East Legon (where the main university campus is located) there are many companies, shops, and their appearance is due to education. There they are learned people, they have some ideas, they are graduates. That is where all the jobs are. They are not here. Because the child does not come from an educated background, they cannot employ him into an office. They cannot ask them to head a position where he or her would be writing. So the only job he will get is a laborer job, and with this laborer job, none of the youth, you know them, you have seen them, none of them will desilt the drains or whatever. Everybody wants to be in a good place. So for instance, if there is a factory within the community. Like shoes. Most of them are into the slippers business. So if there is a way for the government to open this kind of factory to the community, most of them will be involved.</p>
<p>KVR</p>	<p>But is there space inside Sabon Zongo to allocate to a factory?</p>
<p>E2</p>	<p>We have a space, for instance, when you get to the market there is a whole lot of space. You have a vast land. This space is currently being used as a football pitch. But, how many people plays football? When the government said, there is a partnership programme. Let's build the market this way, in a modern style, and let's build the factory here. The factory can be within the market. We have a big place. That is what the chief is praying for. To get an investor, even the AMA. To lobby.</p> <p>When I got to Sabon Zongo, all of the gutters were like four. They were only four in all Sabon Zongo, six years back. So in time I know we will get there.</p>
<p>KVR</p>	<p>What is your (personal) perception of young people and their situation? Do you think there are enough opportunities in terms of education, employment, leisure, decision making?</p> <p>Are young people involved in decision making? How? Who is involved and who is not?</p> <p>Youth associations are mentioned in policy as the main tool used to create participation between young people and decision making. Do you think this is actually happening? What is their function?</p>

E2	No I don't think, what I know or what I have seen is, the youth (unintelligible) their leaders. We don't even have JHS (Junior high school) in the community, so when the person completes class six, he thinks that is all. He doesn't have any experience, he doesn't have any skills, training.
KVR	I'm trying to understand how organised the youth are. Are they truly getting together to influence politics?
E2	Yes they do. Just last week, you know Ramadan (Islamic holy month of fasting) is about to start, they were getting together to prepare, to make sure that everybody has a good health. Bringing water. They organise healthwork. It is mostly through the youth leaders that they organise themselves. And through the youth leaders that they express concerns, and through them that youth come to us, and give their thoughts and grievances. They discuss these things among themselves, and then the leaders express these things to us. When there are things happening, they organise themselves.
KVR	Is there also a dialogue with disenfranchised youth, youth that might want to talk with the government?
E2	They don't participate, the persons that you are referring to, because the person is already into drugs. And with every gathering that we do, they will condemn drugs, they will condemn it. And this person doesn't want somebody who condemns drugs, so they don't participate. So with these people, if they have something to do, I don't think they would go into drugs. But this person, in the morning he has no work. By all means, he will be influenced by somebody, let's go and sit here, and try this thing. They will try. This is why he does these things, because he has no work, and there is peer pressure there.
KVR	Have you tried to resolve these issues with disenfranchised youth? How have you tried, and has it helped?

<p>E2</p>	<p>Let me tell you one thing. There is a joint that sells food, and everybody likes that food, everybody is taking this banku (local dish). If you want to stop the people from taking banku, what do you do? You ask the banku seller not to sell banku again. So that in the end nobody will get banku. But the banku seller is our brother, he is our son, he is our blood. So how can we tell him what to do?</p> <p>The same people that sell the drugs are the same people that are in the community, that are in the opinion leaders. So if I ask to remove them, I am causing harm to myself. It is our children that we are arresting. So there is a way of dealing with this issue. It has been there since a long time. The crime officer to the police station, they will tell you. They know the youth very well.</p> <p>What happened was, now in zongo they have some festival that's called Mawlid. The birthday of the profet, we normally celebrate. With this Mawlid, all the youth they normally join hands, because it is the birthday of the prophet, this one will bring water, this one will bring mineral, this one will bring rice. It brings them together, as well as the women too. You are my brother, my sister, we are now together. Due to this organisation, if there is a problem, he will report it to their leader, and it will be solved.</p> <p>The community has become more religious. Before, people were not even praying. At first I was not praying. But because of some social gathering. It will make you feel as, oh this group is nice. It brings people together.</p> <p>During the gathering, when they are doing Mawlid for instance, the chief imam talks a lot. When we are getting to election period, he preaches, we are one people. Same family, we are Muslims. During Mawlid, you get that platform. Thousands of people. Then you educate them. So that platform changes the youth a lot. Every year there is more youth following.</p> <p>Leaders are doing well, leaders are condemning things. What you did the other time, is no good.</p>
<p>KVR</p>	<p>But the troublemakers might not feel represented by this leadership. They might feel this leadership does not listen to them. They might have different rolemodels. If their leaders condemn these acts, but does not listen to them, why should they listen to the leadership?</p>

E2	<p>If the person was smoking something at all. In the morning he should report in a particular joint. You think he can smoke? He be there untill lunchtime. It will be very difficult for him to go and smoke. He will come back to the office, the others will be there. He will not be able to do his job very well. Gradually the person will see this is not right. But this person, he will get up, get something small to eat. And he has nothing. By all means he will say what will I do. Let me go sit here. When he sit there, ...</p> <p>Something else to do. Do you know Ataya. This herbal tea. If you are not doing anything. Every day you go there, you start drinking that thing. Definitely you will be drinking this thing. Me myself I've been drinking this thing, I drink it. It's a pasttime. So if the zongo have something to keep the youth busy, it will go down.</p>
KVR	How are you addressing this issue? What measures are you taking to keep the youth busy?
E2	For instance, right now I have some people, there is this company that teach people to make the shea butter, handwash soap, everything. I want to bring them on board. We have built a place at Agbye Town. We wanted to use a portion as ICT center. We are putting some kids through driving school, teach them to be drivers. You know Latex Foam? I spoke to the manager, they need another six people. So this way we try to give them the skills, training.
BMP	But how are you tackling the drug users? We have spoken to the chief, to the elders, they are taking measures. What are the measures you are taking to reduce the taking of drugs?
E2	<p>You know, one person cannot fight this thing. We have to join hands. My main solution is, when we are able to cut down the one who is selling the thing. We want to call those people. We know them, they are with us. That is we want to sit down with them, invite the people. Have some dialogue with them. Just last week I went there. We should make sure, it is not about fighting. The mp must be involved. If you don't have work, we will give you a job. The young ones, we musn't spoil them. They are the future of the nation. In Nima they did it. First we dialogue them. After that, we will bring the media in. Sometimes we bring the police in. After the dialogue. With this decision, the MP (member of parliament) is there, the chief is there, the imam is there, and myself.</p>
BMP	But everybody knows that when some of the youth get arrested, they will be back in the streets some hours later. They will pay bail, the police will take some money. There may not be proof for this. How will you address this? Who will you take it up with?

E2	I don't think the police will take money. You the commander will see there will be problem if you take money. At the end of the day, you will still take him to court. You cannot take money, and release the kid. If you are sitting there, over time you will have a problem. You can't take money, because they will say it. And we are within the community, so I don't think any commander will take money.
KVR	We know where some of the 'troublemakers' stay. Why are they there? Who allows them to be there? Why are they not chased away?
E2	<p>Let me give two examples. We have one at the market, the morning market. The one who sells there, claims that the area is for them. He is coming from the chief. He is a nephew to the chief or whatever. So who is an assembly man to go and say "don't sit there"? I am a servant. When you go to Angua Makafi, for instance, the one who sells there, where they sell is a house. That is their house. Who am I to go and say, get out from your house. At first they were selling at Agbye Town. But there was no house there. The people have condemned it. So now nobody sells there. There was an incident that somebody died there, so they moved.</p> <p>So now they are at zongo market, Angua Makafi. Gaskia they are there but they don't sell. They lock themselves inside. They buy it somewhere and sit inside. So if you add Gaskia, there is only three places inside Zongo. At Angua Makafi, there are three joints where they sell. But it is the same place.</p>
KVR	So what are some of the good things, some of the opportunities of Sabon Zongo for young people?
E2	With Sabon Zongo, when you are here, you are safe. There is hardly somebody who attack you, and take something from you. There is hardly anybody, if you are in your room, he will enter. There is no crime, because there is always people in the street. And everybody knows everybody.

Type of data: Interview

Participant(s): Honorable Joseph Addo (E4)

Function: Assembly member (local government)

Community: Ga Mashie

Speaker	Content
KVR	What is your official function within the organisation/area? What are the specific tasks you perform or responsibilities you have relating to the areas Sabon Zongo or James Town?
E4	<p>Let me start by saying that I am Honorable Joseph Addo. Currently I am the assembly member for James Town, that is Ngleshie electoral area. I am also the acting chairman for the Ashiedu Keteke submetro. This has seven electoral areas. We have Ngleshie electoral area, we have Kinka electoral area, and so forth. All these come together to form the Ashiedu Keteke submetro. So these are the seven electoral areas of the submetro assembly, of which I am the overall chairman.</p> <p>My main responsibility as the assembly chairman is to oversee the activities within the submetro. This submetro reports to the main office, that is the Accra Metropolitan Assembly. This is the submetro, that is the main AMA. So we have to oversee the activities within this jurisdiction.</p> <p>Some of the activities are the daily sweeping in the central business district areas, we have to make sure we send our laborers there to sweep all the daily refuse there.</p>
KVR	Why is that the responsibility of James Town, that is not within your jurisdiction?
E4	<p>I was talking about the responsibilities as submetro chairman. So let me start with James Town. As an assembly man for James Town, it is my responsibility to assure that every day we have to send laborers from the submetro to the James Town community, to clean the gutters, they will sweep the streets, they will collect all the refuse within the James Town area.</p> <p>And secondly, as a representative of the people, before I go to an assembly meeting I have to assure that I meet with my community leaders, that is the opinion leaders, so that we will discuss, discuss.</p>
KVR	And who are the opinion leaders?

<p>E4</p>	<p>We have the chiefs, we also have elderly people, those are the opinion leaders. And some of the youths.</p> <p>I have to organise something like a gathering to discuss what problems and challenges they are facing in the James Town community, put it on paper and then I send it to the assembly for them to know what we want in the community. Based on that they can come out with an action plan for us for what we call 'electoral area projects'. Maybe in my electoral area, we might like to undertake streetlights. Then the asphaltting of the streets, construction of drains.</p> <p>So after we have collected these thoughts, I as a representative of the people would take this to the assembly, for them to put it in my electoral area projects, to say that at this particular time they are going to undertake these particular projects.</p> <p>Then, after the general assembly meeting at the head office, I have to come back to the people again. This and that they said they would do, they cannot do this thing, this thing. Maybe they can do the streetlights, they cannot do the drains, so maybe in another year they will do the drains. That is what you have to do as an assemblyman, make sure you have an interaction with your people.</p> <p>That is the reason why we also have the 'unit committee' to back us. They are being selected from different areas within the electoral area, so that they will go around every day to find out if there are challenges within the area, so that they report to me. And then I also report to the submetro.</p>
<p>KVR</p>	<p>So then how are your responsibilities for the submetro different than the responsibilities as an assembly member for the electoral area?</p>

E4	<p>We all come together. As the head of all the assembly members, we normally have a meeting to discuss what is happening at various electoral areas.</p> <p>But as the assembly man of this electoral area, that is not the only responsibility. We have extra responsibilities. You are representing the people. Somebody might approach you that maybe the daughter or the son is thrown out of school, based on school fee issues or whatever. You as an assemblyman, you are not supposed to go and pay the fees, but you have to go there and speak on their behalf so that they are given the chance to maybe take some exams. Then later the school fees will be paid by the parents. I completed Accra Technical University, 2013, and ever since I went there I have sent about 100 people to the school to get that graduation. Because of my name. I was in school politics too, I have links over there. When you finish SHS and you want to go to the Technical University, I will take you through the process and make sure you get that graduation.</p> <p>Most often too, we normally get some casualties, from accidents, as the assembly member we need to bring attention to the police and make sure that any casualty is brought to the hospital, from there the police will make investigation into what the problem is. And most often too, when the police, want to make some arrests, because I am the leader of the election area they will come to me and say, we wanted to do an arrest, John has committed some crime and they can't find him. So they will report to you. When they do the arrest, families will also approach the assemblyman. If they know the person or they know his whereabouts, make sure they bring him in yourselves. Sometimes you have to sit down and talk about the issue. In some cases they have to go to court, fine, the law will take care of it. In some cases you can solve it.</p>
KVR	<p>The unit committee goes around the neighbourhood. They are the first point of contact, and people go to them with issues and challenges. But people also come straight to you with issues. Is it only with more serious issues that they come to you? Why do some people come straight to you and others go through the unit committee?</p>
E4	<p>The situation is that, the unit committee members do not have offices. But we as assembly members, we have offices. So most of them, they prefer to come straight to you. Because the unit committee members, they've not been stationed. You have an office that everybody knows, that is his office, he will be there.</p>
KVR	<p>You were born and raised in James Town, that means you know the area quite well? What is your perception of young people in James Town? What are the major challenges in the neighbourhood?</p>

E4	I know everything about James Town. As a born and bred in James Town, even though we have challenges, people in James Town are well educated. About 95 percent of James Town is well educated, JHS, SHS, even many have been to University. Compared to other electoral areas, James Town has a higher education. Even within the submetro, James Town will be the number one. But when they get their degree they will go. The only challenge for the youth is that most of their parents have no good job. So they have to work for themselves before going to school. They go do some job, and then they use that money to pay their fees. I can use myself as an example. When I was in primary school, class four (4), after school I have to go to Makola (market) and go and cook egg. Then I can get some fees so I can take care of myself. Then on vacations too, every day I would go to Makola market and do the thing there.
KVR	Does that not affect your studies?
E4	It does not affect my studies, because I know what I want. Since I want to be educated, I went to go to school. And my parents are not there to support me. I have to make money. I want to someday be a teacher. So on vacation I will go to market and do some selling activities. Then I'll use some of the money to buy my school gear, buy my books. From primary up to university.
KVR	Why do you think people are so well educated in James Town? Because the challenges are probably quite similar to other areas.
E4	When you take a place like Kinka, for example, I can give you the ratio, about 40 against 60 are well educated. From infancy, when you look up to your fellow friends, you will not see any of them working. Any time you see them, he or she is going to school. So will also go to school. As compared to other places, when you see a lot of the young guys play. The attitude of the place. But here, somebody will come and pick you and say, go to school, go and learn. We believe in education, for our elders and our brothers and sisters ahead of us, they will always advise us, whatever you want to do, you have to educate yourself. Most of the young guys, they all want to be somebody some day. So they will have to learn. In Kinka for instance, there they are more into fishing. They are fishermen and fish mongers. Even though we have some over here that are into fishing, most of the people are well educated. There are more businesses and commercial people.
KVR	Are there any other challenges for young people? You say they are well educated, but whenever you speak to young people, there are always challenges coming up.
E4	It is all about the financial problems. Most of the young ones over here, their parents are not doing anything, so they don't get money from them, to educate them. We in James Town in particular, we get NGO's to train the youth in James Town. To learn trades.
KVR	So you've had successful partnerships with NGO's to educate youth? Do you think this might have made the difference between James Town and other areas?

E4	Yes, that one too has had a positive effect on the community. GAMADA, they usually bring in NGO's from various places. And there is one man over there, he is our president. He has the link with other agencies.
KVR	Do young people in this area feel like they are being listened to? Do they have influence in decision making and in their future?
E4	Yes, take me for instance I am a young man, and most people within this community are the young people, about 70% percent. Most of them we bring them on board whenever we do anything concerning the community and their lives. They are actively involved in decisions.
KVR	Do you think that they perceive it this way? That they feel like they are being listened to?
E4	For instance, this office, you see where I was sitting before, in front of the building? I was sitting there with some six young guys. They have completed SHS, they want to gather some more money before they can further their education. I'm advising them. And because I am a young man, they always feel very comfortable coming to me. They don't come to the office, but because I am there (outside in front of the building, not in the office) they will come. If there is something for them, we organise something. In three months time there will be these vacancies at these places. We will make sure, before that month will come, we have to make sure we are prepared. These are the requirements, those of you that meet them we take them there, and make sure there will be no problem. So we make sure we call the youth. If you are not qualified for that, what you are qualified for we will find something for you.
KVR	Are all the youth being engaged in James Town? What about the marginalised ones, the troubled youth?
E4	In every society there will be an exception. Certainly we have them. Those that are very stubborn. Lots of them, they will tell you they don't want any work, they want only money. Those guys too, what they like is, just temporal jobs to get something for them right now. They don't want full employment. Just temporal, one day job. They won't pick money, they won't save. We've tried as much as we can to get them on board. We have reached out to them. They are my guys, all these guys are. I go to them, they come to me. But what they prefer is, this is what they want to do. Just imagine someone who has not attended any school, they have no education. So we try to understand their situation.
KVR	Do you have any action plans for the area? Does it talk about young people in particular?

E4	<p>It talks about youth employment. Most of the young guys over there, they are unemployed, that is very urgent. We have a youth employment agency within the sub-metro, their office is just here. All the sub-metros within the AMA have a youth employment office. We work closely together. Most of our young people they want skill-training. Hair dressing, tailoring, carpentry, ... When we get an NGO, they have normally been helping us.</p>
KVR	<p>We have talked mostly about young people, but I am also an urban planner, I am also interested in public space inside James Town. Who decides what spaces can be used by who? If someone wants to build in the area, or if someone is doing something that is not right, who are the most important players that decide about these matters?</p>
E4	<p>This is the city authority. We have some friends that belong to the city authority, and we have some friends that belong to some particular family. Even if a family is having a space somewhere, and they want to undertake any construction work, they have to follow the city authority to acquire a permit before they can do a construction.</p> <p>We have it different categories.</p> <p>When there is a noise nuisance in the community, and if someone litters somewhere illegally, we as the city authority we have a task force to take care of these things. But we have traditional authorities too.</p> <p>We have a season that there will be a ban on drumming. It is the traditional authority that do arrests and punish those that break the laws. They say we shouldn't play music, we shouldn't play drums, and they will go and see what is happening, and they will go and keep the order. So it depends on the offense who is in charge.</p>
KVR	<p>So it depends on what is happening who decides what is the law. Then for instance, concerning the settlement on the beach. Who allows the people to settle and build their houses there? The authorities have cleared the area on several occasions for a plan to build a new fishing harbour, but people keep coming back. Who is in charge of this?</p>
E4	<p>What I can say about that, it is the city authority who can demolish or chase them from the place. Currently, the president wanted to construct the landing beach for us. So those over there, we see them as squatters. Nobody recognised them, nobody has given the place to them. They have gone there to live on their own. So at any point in time, if the government wants to use the place to do any profitable venture, the city authority will go there and make sure they clear there. The city authority is not happy at all that they are there, but because of political interference they come there. Most of the people living over there are not from this community. They are from outside communities, they migrated from different places to that place.</p>
KVR	<p>Do they come to you then with issues they have?</p>

E4	Most of them reject issues over there. It might be they have recorded somebody has died over there. You go over there and you find out the person is a pauper. He or she migrated from somewhere to live in that area. He or she has a relative over there who will appeal to the assembly man and we will report to the police. And they will go there and find out what actually caused the death. But because they are paupers, they will come first to the assembly man, and then I have to call in the police and then the body will be taken to the morgue. For example, one man died inside a public toilet facility at one of the electoral areas. So I have to go there, we bring the police and we have to find out who can identify the individual, because he is not from the community.
KVR	But if the chief says that he does not want the squatters there, would they not be forced to leave?
E4	When AMA, the city authority comes to clear them, the decision was taken by both the chiefs and the city authority. It wasn't the chiefs who allowed them to be there. They were there themselves. Everybody can just come there and do what they want. But we're taking a decision very soon about this. Because the place has to be developed, to benefit the whole nation, and the community as well.
KVR	So that decision is made by the chiefs, the assembly, and also the central government?
E4	Yes, the city authority is there to represent the central government. What happens is, the chief executive elects the central government. Quite recently, the president wanted to do that, and he was honoured by the paramount chief of James Town. And on that very day, they make it very critical, stating that, it is in his dream, and very soon he is coming to construct the landing and the harbour for James Town. This will benefit the whole community. People will be engaged in employment. A lot of young people, the youth, we will be engaging them when the project starts. Afterwards, most of them too will work to maintain.
KVR	So who is funding the development of this project? And who is asking party?
E4	<p>The construction of the harbour will be financed by the central government. We are trying for that as a community for a long time. But the president also has it in his manifesto that he wanted to construct a harbour area. The current president, his excellency Nana Dankwa Akufo-Addo, said that he will construct the harbour for James Town. This is what we have been yearning for as a community. Because formerly it was a rubble.</p> <p>Even in AMA we have, every four years, the planning office do what we call 'developmental planning assessment', so in every summit every assembly member over there you have to come up with whatever you wanted to do, your 'action plan.' And in my action plan I even captured the harbour, I captured the slaughterhouse. We have a former slaughterhouse over here which was demolished by ex-president J.J. Rawlings. Currently the mayor of Accra said very soon it will be constructed. That one too will be constructed concurrent with the harbour.</p>

KVR	<p>Finally, I wanted to ask about some of the newly developed squares with sports and playing infrastructures for the youth scattered around James Town and Ussher Town. Can you tell me a bit more about the development process of these? Were they community driven projects?</p>
E4	<p>It was done, somewhere done last year. Most of them were done, early part of last year and towards the ending of last year.</p> <p>It was a community driven project, because it was GAMADA who brought in the NGO where the money is coming from, they are affiliated with CHF (CHF International, now Global Communities) and other outside partners. So a research was done for a long time, for about a year or two. After, they presented to the partners and they finance for them.</p> <p>But they talk for one year, two years to the community, so whatever they tell us they want, is what will come. We have architects who design the place, they come to the site and do their work and they go and present it.</p> <p>Currently, the minister of tourism is also embarking on 'marine drive' tourism investment projects. Yesterday we had a meeting with them. All the way from Osu Castle, they want to develop the place. They want to bring in investors and they want to develop the place. So they have started engaging the stakeholders, the chiefs, the assembly members and the people living around.</p> <p>They have it in phases. The first phase they have to make sure the place is clean before you bring in an investor who has interest in the place. If the place is dirty, how do you bring in an investor? So we are engaging the people to make sure that they clean the place. The second phase is where they will bring in the investors to come and have a look at the place. And the third phase will be developing the place. This is what we discussed yesterday. I have a copy of the plans whatever they want to do along the shore.</p>
KVR	<p>Is this also within your jurisdiction?</p>
E4	<p>Parts will fall within our jurisdiction, others will go to Osu-Klottey sub-metro.</p>
KVR	<p>So there is cooperation between the sub-metro's for larger projects?</p>
E4	<p>Yes. And the people within the community will benefit a lot. When there is this marine drive, there will be jobs for the people. During construction and after. It will reduce unemployment rate within Osu-Klottey and Ga-Mashie. A massive infrastructure project like this will cause, there will be local improvement. It is not easy. Cleaning up the beach will be a big task, but we shall get there.</p>

Type of data: Interview

Participant(s): Nii Ayikai III (E5); J. R. Myers (E6)

Function: Traditional leader; Stool father

Community: Ga Mashie

Speaker	Content
KVR	Could you tell me about the history of the quarter and the role of the former chiefs in establishing the quarter?
E6	<p>This area is called Akanmajen. This means vultures world. In the ancient time, according to history, this place was all bush. And Accra was centred in old Accra, around Fort Crevecoeur, now Ussher Fort. Built by the Dutch, but it was sold to the British. And the British came and they built James Fort, which was named after king James the Second. But the origins of this place, before the white men came were the Ga's. And we were all centred in old Accra. But there were some differences, skirmishes that brought about the elders, the one ruling that area Nii Ayikai I who abdicated his stool there and left with his following to vultures world, where the vultures are. So that vultures may eat his flesh. Amongst some fighting he left the old place. So this area was outside of Accra, before the old man came. The old man was a hunter, and he went hunting with his son. And they made some hamlet around somewhere here. Where this house is, there was a big tree called Papla tree. Under that tree he built his hamlet. And when he goes to hunt his prey, he brings them there, he dry and dress them there. The unwanted parts of the carcass he goes and throws them away. And somewhere around there was a little pond. And the vultures come, they drink and they bath there, there were a lot of vultures.</p> <p>So when he started throwing this, the vultures started eating. So when the first trouble arrived from old Accra, he would leave the stool for them and go to vultures world. Whenever he dies the vultures would eat his flesh, so that nobody would see the body. So he killed three people and left them at this place. So these three people who came and joined him, they started building this quarter. Before the British, the Sempe people also came. Because Sempe also had trouble with the old Accra people. They have abdicated themselves to come and find this place. So when the founders of this clan came, the British also came. And they started trading and having business with the British directly, as the Dutch were having this with Old Accra, Ussher Town. Before the Dutch came, the Portuguese came. They first discovered Elmina where they found gold. And the campaign started from there. So they explore all the coasts around, from the Central Region and the Western Region to this side.</p>

	<p>Ten years after they founded Elmina, Christopher Columbus was in that fleet that came. And then Christopher Columbus also discovered America. It became necessary that they send some black people to America. Then they started hijacking some of the blacks. Slavery. So when they intended building the castle at Elmina, the chief then, refused them to allow them to build the house because he knows the moment they build this thing there will be trouble with the white men. So the white men also went and planned the area where they would build. They came negotiating with the chief. The people were also putting up the castle. So these people started exploring all the coast. Later on other people from Europe heard that there is something here, the mines, the gold. The British, the Dutch, the Danes. So here, later on the Dutch came and they occupied this area. And later the British came. The British opened the eyes of the black men more, by buildings schools and more. So we have scholars of high repute in James Town.</p>
KVR	<p>How was the relationship then between the British and the chiefs? Was it always friendly?</p>
E6	<p>When they came, because there were tribal wars, they always sought for the help of the white man, those on the coast. Mostly for buying guns and flints and gun powder.</p>
KVR	<p>So James Town was built around the fort, there was a village here...</p>
E6	<p>There was a village here founded by Nii Ayikai I and Nii Paku Samua of Sempe, they were the original chiefs of this area. They were the first. The second was installed two hundred years after the first has died, because of so many troubles. So it was in my grandfather's time that they installed the second. His original name was Jacobus Vanderpuije, a Dutch name.</p>
KVR	<p>How was James Town planned? Was it the British? Who was responsible for laying the roads, dividing the plots?</p>

E6

It was the British, specially, those who came were retired naval officers who came and manned the fort. It was actually during governor Hill (i.e. Henry Worsley Hill, governor of the British protectorate Gold Coast 1843–1845, (McLaughlin & Owusu-Ansah 1994)) who signed a bond with the coastal people. And the whole of the Ghana land would go under the British rule for a hundred years. After a hundred years the British would hand independence to them. That was 1844(?). In 1944 it was celebrated, by that time it was Second World War. Most of our elder brothers joined the forces to fight for the British in East Africa, and in India and Burma. So the British suspended handing over the independence of the people to them in 1944. So after these people have fought at the battle, they came back. They were the people who fought the Japanese in the Arakan and Birmese jungles. The Japanese gave a lot of credit to our soldiers in the jungles, the 81st and 82nd Royal West African divisions. So I think there were some things that had to be given to the soldiers who fought in the Second World War. But the British forces they were all given houses. So it was in 1948 that they marched with a petition to the governor then, governor Creasy (i.e. Gerald Hallen Creasy, governor of the British colony of Gold Coast 1948 – 1949, Wikipedia). I joined them marching to that site, at that time I was ten years. I took part in the looting that came. So I saw a lot from that time. It was at that time, one English police commissioner, by name of Imray (Colin Herbert Imray, British Head of Police, Wikipedia), he was then in Palestine he saw the violence they use on the people and thought he do the same thing here.

So when they was trying to stop the troops from marching to the castle, troops says because they have been writing so many things, they have to see the governor face to face and give him this thing (the petition). They started firing upon them, and three of the servicemen fell down and died. First he ordered the African police to fire, but they refused to fire. So he took the pistol himself and started firing. So the soldier became wild and charged, and charged and the police ran away. They started destroying the big shops and looking for guns. And the people when they saw these people they also started looting, of which I was part. All these buildings around here. There were so many Indian companies, and Lebanese stores.

E6

In 1925 one governor came, his name was Sir Gordon Guggisberg (Frederick Gordon Guggisberg, governor of British 1919-1927, Wikipedia), he was a Major-General, I understand he was an architect and an engineer. So he planned the country well. He built roads, and bridges all over the country, namely the old Korle Bu, and the beach bridges (over the Korle lagoon). He built the Korle Bu hospital, he built the Accra port, the breakwater. You see at the lighthouse there, there is a breakwater there, it was completed in 1928. Accra was in the ancient times the center, supplying natural salt to all parts of Africa. So the British took advantage, and mostly they brought in methodist missionaries and the Basil missionaries who brought in teachers and they started teaching the people. But before then, most of the children born of the white men they were made to attend school at the forts. As in the days of my grandfather. Most of the people in old Accra, they refused to go to school. But in James Town people went to school, and in Osu they went to school. So they had doctors and lawyers, mostly from these areas, from James Town and Osu. So when soccer came, before then they played cricket. Cricket was mostly played in the schools. So this governor started building roads.

Type of data: Interview

Participant(s): Stephen Mensah-Etsibah (E7)

Function: Director National Youth Authority (NYA)

Community: N/A

Speaker	Content
KVR	First of all, thank you very much for making time for me because I'm sure you have a busy schedule usually.
E7	We are at the service of young people so anything concerning them we are happy to help.
KVR	Ok, that is great to hear. So I am Kris, I am from Belgium and I study in the UK right now for my PhD. I don't know if there is anything you would already like to ask before we start?
E7	As I have told you, we are working for the good of the young people, so if there is a project like that that works to the betterment of young persons why do I have to hesitate?
KVR	Ok so in any case please feel free to interrupt me or to ask any questions. It's a discussion so feel free. Can I have your name?
E7	Stephen Mensah Etsibah
KVR	What is your official function within the National Youth Authority?
E7	I am directly in charge of the direction of programmes. My department looks at programmes that are lined up or implement programmes for youth development, the National Youth policy, at the same time also supervise youth focused NGO's and the youth organisations that are registered with us. We keep a database of youth groups and associations, provide technical support to some of these youth groups.
KVR	How do they end up in the database?

E7	We register them, we have a form for registration. They come here. We have district offices, we are now at the head office of the National Youth Authority and we have ten regional secretariats, we have ten regions. Then under the regions too we have the district offices.
KVR	I am focusing on two areas in Accra, because obviously it is big and it is difficult to focus on everything, so I focus on Sabon Zongo and James Town. So they would also have district offices?
E7	Yes we have sub-metros, because Accra is a big city, we have sub-metros that take care of this. We have a youth office here in Kaneshie. It is now that we are moving offices to the sub-metro level, we are now going to move into the sub-metros. We already have an office of the Youth Authority in Accra, but Accra has sub-metropolitan districts, and we are going to have district offices in every sub-metro, to get closer to the people.
KVR	What is the mission of National Youth Authority?
E7	Our mission is to develop young people, how they can use their potentials for the good of national development, involving any decision making processes and also engaging them in teaching activities. But basically, as a government institutions we implement government policies for youth development. We say that we create an opportunity for young people to develop themselves and how they can become productive citizens and responsible adults.
KVR	So you are mostly implementing the National Youth policy? How then was this document created?
E7	<p>The institution for some time has worked very different in the various regions. So there was the need for us to have a National Youth Policy, that connects all the government wants to do for young people so that we have a very well coordinated process of developing young people.</p> <p>So we did this consultation with the young people themselves, it took us about three years. We had to interact with young people in the grassroots, meet them, get a consultative committee that are to come out with the draft policies, they then did a series of consultations with the young people. Then validation through stakeholders meetings, validation processes. We wanted young people to own the policies. This is why we move the system from the central government to the districts, the decentralisation process took a long time. Because of our varied cultural diversities, we have to be sensitive to certain things, that is why it took a very long time but eventually it has been a very good exercise.</p>
KVR	So it took approximately 10 years to do all the consultation processes?

E7	Yes, also remember that we have had changes in government, so you can imagine a lot changes then. The previous government around 2010, when it took office, they turned the youth policy around again. The drafting and everything, so the project became delayed. But it has become time-tested in the sense that, for all of us to accept it, including the political parties we make sure that youth-wings of the various political parties took part in all the consultations.
KVR	How did the consultation processes with the youth look like? Was it groups of officers going into the neighbourhood? Or was it more like in consultation with local groups?
E7	What we did was, we have youth organisations that are registered with us, so what we did was, we created forums for them. Focus groups discussions, we have a Ghana federation of youth organisations. The federation was the mouthpiece of the young people. So it was the leaders, they interacted with the members of the federation. Our role was only to create a platform, connecting them to all sorts of authorities, including chiefs, traditional leaders, religious groups and so on.
KVR	Was it specific questions that were being asked or was it more to put an ear to the street and to hear what is going on among youth?
E7	They looked at the challenges of young people. Apart from the mainstream challenges of unemployment and other economical aspects, we have certain socio-cultural challenges that young people face. So we took all these into consideration, that is how we went and did it. For instance, when it comes to culture, you know our chiefs are the custodians, so you have activities so that certain challenges that are culturally inspired, we look at it and redefine it with the person. And we have opportunities also for young people to send us their grievances, and we allow them to send us ideas for policy too, individually.
KVR	How exactly is the relationship between the ministry of Youth and Sports and the National Youth Authority?
E7	We are an agency or department under the ministry. So we are the youth sector of the ministry, the ministry formulates policies, then we implement them. They supervise what we do. So we work with the youth, we do what is necessary, we come out with inputs to inform policy formulation. In implementing our youth programmes and other government investments, there is monitoring and evaluations. So we give feedback, we say, "we feel there is the need for so, so and so in an area." Then when we have given our input, it is the ministry that then formulates the policies.
KVR	And in terms of budgeting for programmes, is this coming from the central government, from the ministry?

E7	<p>Yes, it comes from the central government, it goes to the ministry, and then the ministry divides it. There are also the sports authority and the sports college also under the same ministry. We prepare our budgets according to the programmes that we intend, so we go over the budgets at a hearing and we defend why we need this money. So the distribution between the departments varies, according to the programmes.</p>
KVR	<p>Are there any specific tasks you perform regarding the specific areas that I mentioned, or is it at the level of Accra that you work?</p>
E7	<p>I am sitting here, you know I am working under somebody who is my boss. So what this department does is we cover all the regions, it is the national department, we work all over Ghana. We sometimes come up with the programme, and it should be nation-wide, all over the regions they implement the program.</p> <p>Then we have other programmes that come from the region specifically, like Greater Accra for instance, they will come up with a program to suit, or to meet a certain aspiration of young people that we are aware, that informs us where we have to come in and give the necessary support.</p> <p>As I have said, we have district offices, and we have youth organisations, and here in Ghana we have so many community associations, so they are in their various communities, they organise programmes according to their interests and focus. So our officer there at the district office supports them in whatever.</p> <p>For instance in Nungua they want to organise a talk, a symposium on a certain concern, our officer there helped to assist them and making sure that the program falls within the legal confines. And you step in, maybe you need a space, from the university, so you know the youth group cannot try to get it. So we will come and find the resource.</p> <p>And we go to certain places and we realise that there is no youth group over there, so we encourage the young people to come together, to give community services in their areas. So that is how we go about at the micro-level.</p> <p>At the national level, we can say at this area we are going to have about one hundred volunteer workers. We locate projects within the regions, projects that is of benefit to society. Such a program is nation-wide.</p>
KVR	<p>So who makes the decision what is to be implemented and where?</p>

E7	<p>So it is the district officer who gives us indication that there is a project here. This is organised from the community, because the community will supply the various materials. So the district officer will go to the Teshi authorities and say we want to put up a public library. So the traditional authority they have the materials that go into it. And the youth they mobilise their labour, and their services. We have new institutes, where we give young people skills in artisanal trades, we are doing woodwork, masonry. So we mobilise them, we say "there is this project taking place, will you go and assist in that project?" We don't choose the project, we ask the community. Then we go in and mobilise the youth.</p>
KVR	<p>I can imagine there is more demand for projects than can be delivered? What happens then? Who prioritises them in terms of resources on a national scale?</p>
E7	<p>Yes, we go and look at it, it benefits what person? When we are assessing projects we look at the benefit young people will have, even before the community, sometimes when there are competing demands.</p> <p>You know we get reports, from the regions, we take into consideration the performance of earlier programmes and the prospects of that project. If an earlier project has proven successful, then it means you as the team-leader or as the head can carry on with this kind of program.</p>
KVR	<p>Are there currently any of such programmes that are implemented in Sabon Zongo or James Town?</p>
E7	<p>You know James Town, we didn't go into community projects in the fiscal year, but something like education program or reproductive health. I hope you have been there, so you see the density of the population. So you can imagine teenage pregnancies. So we try to get in touch with them, recruit them. We have institutions like the PPAG (Planned Parenthood Association of Ghana), youth action movements, you know we have all these groups so they can interact with them.</p>
KVR	<p>This community is thriving in its own ways, but it also has many challenges, who decided these were the main priorities for this area? Is that the youth themselves?</p>
E7	<p>In most cases, I am aware that in some instances the various traditional authorities have a rapport with the youth. Because almost every community have the youth leader, or we call it youth chief, so they interact with them. If you have heard of Asafo, they are local battallions, young people have organised themselves to influence decisions. But they are usually under the chief, he is the mobiliser.</p>
KVR	<p>So the youth chief is important in establishing and implementing the programmes?</p>

E7	<p>Yes, the youth chief becomes the link between the youth and the traditional authorities and even us, our officer there liaises with the government. So he reports here and knows what is happening. That is when the community is organised.</p> <p>But if we are organising a project, for instance a volunteering project, we give a period of, say, 21 working days, three weeks is how long they will live in the communities. We mobilise them, from other communities. You know the communities themselves they have their projects. We organise some camps within some communities, and while we are organising we put the groups there in residence. They erect the project during the period, depending on the availability of materials and resources. But it can't take three weeks to put up a building project of any meaningful size, when the young people go home, most of their work is completed, and the rest the community will finish.</p> <p>The idea with this program is to instill certain values, to young persons: service, service to humanity, to your country, to your society, and to your community, and self reliance, leadership and entrepreneurship.</p> <p>We are looking at the economic and the social contexts. We create an opportunity to go and do a volunteer camp, an opportunity to work in teams, going to learn leadership, opportunities to create things. Maybe you find yourself in a deprived community, so how can you put up this thing. So it brings a certain skillset, leadership, certain sense of creativity, innovating ways and means to survive within a certain context.</p>
KVR	And these youth that are taking part in these programmes, where do they apply for it? How are they selected?
E7	We select them. Within the community they come from the various youth groups. But if we are organising, as a National institution, we advertise for people to apply. They learn from other regions. Young persons from Accra will go to Western region, people from Western region will go to Eastern region, so that at the end of the day you have been exposed to your own country.
KVR	How many of those programmes are being organised yearly? How many young people are we talking about?
E7	Every camp depending, is between 80 and 100. They do it once a year, but now we are thinking of increasing it to twice a year.
KVR	Is that because the programme has been quite successful?

E7	<p>Yes its success, otherwise, we rely on resources from the government which is not forthcoming. And the communities too, they mobilise themselves, and when they are short of resources... But we also make sure that, going back on an activity there are enough materials, enough everything for projects.</p> <p>It is so many different things, we combine many things, we work on many fronts. It is an exchange programme for youth to be outside of your community. Also instilling certain values.</p>
KVR	What do you believe are currently the main challenges facing young people in Accra?
E7	<p>You know, this morning I was listening to the news, it's been published that the most costly country to live in is Ghana. So the cost of living is very high. You know the challenge with most young people is, I put it, the economic empowerment. Many of them are not under employment, unemployed, that is a very big challenge for many people. We have deficit also in accommodation. We see young people sleeping outside and when it is like that, they begin to form gangs. So you can imagine, armed robbery and stealing and all these things come about when young people are not seriously engaged in any activity. They have no parental guidance, because most of them are living on the streets.</p>
KVR	<p>Because many of these young people, even if they are not literally living on the street, even if they have a place to go to at night, because they are unemployed often, or their modes of employment forces them to spend a lot of time on the streets, they still live on the streets. Is that a correct interpretation?</p>
E7	<p>Yes, you know because of certain economic policies that were pursued some time back, like economic recovery programmes, our formal employment avenues have grinded. Most parents are not working, people are not getting jobs to pay their food for their children, and their children are also not working.</p> <p>Also there is always a mismatch between education and labour, so that is why a lot of people come out of tertiary institutions every year and not getting jobs. Our economies are not supporting job creation. That is the problem. A mismatch between the institutions and the world of industry. And also, as a country, we are too much tied to the developed economies. So our productivity level has not been as expected.</p>
KVR	So the highly educated also suffer from unemployment?

E7	<p>Yes we have graduates who have completed school, about ten years, who are still not working. That is why as an institutions, we are now changing the focus of our mandate. We are now looking at informal economy, we are shifting towards skill development. Adding value to the common things around us. The formal and the informal economy are together, but it has been neglected for a long time by the policies. So that is where the opportunities are for young people, to create jobs for themselves or get employed by their colleagues, or in partnership, they can put up businesses. Our industries are too much centered, clustered in four major cities: Accra, Kumasi, Tamale and Takoradi. So all the young people are coming to the cities. The current system means the person is not relevant in his own community, so he has to migrate to urban areas. Looking for a formal job, but where are the formal jobs? The opportunities are not there. So we are now experiencing urbanisation, and now it is the informal that is growing. That is why you see all these spatial problems. In Accra, you go to James Town, people there they sleep in the street, there is no space. If you have travelled in the night in Accra, you see them sleeping. And all are coming from the rural areas.</p>
KVR	<p>But on the other hand, that does mean that Accra does provide opportunities for young people? Or at least perceived opportunities? Otherwise they would not keep coming?</p>
E7	<p>It provides opportunities, but opportunities are limited. What needs to change is the attitudes of the human person himself. Am I living well? How is my standard of living? You know that our present government has come out with a policy of one district, one factory. This is an opportunity for young people. We are looking at getting the rural economy revitalised, reenergised. Ghana is an agrarian economy mostly, and all over the world agriculture, or agrobusiness is growing. You see if you have travelled in Ghana, we have massive tracts of land everywhere.</p> <p>In the rural areas life is very affordable there. Leaving your village, coming to stay in Accra, doing your small business there, hustling.</p> <p>We believe that, our economy is too much profit oriented, we don't bring social welfare into our economic plan.</p>
KVR	<p>But on the other hand, there is a certain logic why cities have been successful at attracting people and businesses, because they have been a way of centralising and concentrating resources and services. In terms of centralisation versus decentralisation, if you are working with limited resources it is often beneficial to concentrate your resources to some extent, because it allows you to decrease spending on infrastructure. What is your view on this perspective?</p>

E7	When dealing with limited resources, the success of centralisation depends on the distributive system that you have. This profit motive in economic development is bringing about this urbanisation. But we are looking at rural industrialisation, which is also feeding into the cities, because that is where much of the machinery is coming from. We are looking at bringing in sync the urban and the rural. I am not against industrialisation in the cities, but what I am saying is that in the cities industrialisation goes with technology. But we are looking at an economic system that linkages the urban and the rural, that can keep people where they are. They don't need to come to Accra to improve their living standards. People should be in the village and be able to live well.
KVR	But if you are speaking of linkages, you are also talking about infrastructure and about resources that make this mobility and links possible. What is then the strategy to make this possible?
E7	It all depends on the government. It also depends on resources, but more on the focus of the government. It boils down to the kind of leadership, the kind of mission we have. Let me give you a scenario. I know of leadership in certain jurisdictions, they are modest in their lifestyles. But you see the type of vehicles some people are riding? See the distributive system, one person is riding a vehicle that can provide an infrastructure for an entire community. That is the problem. We are not poor. You see?
KVR	Youth associations are mentioned in policy as the main tool used to create participation between young people and decision making. Are you working through youth associations? What is your relationship with them? How do you reach out to them?

E7	<p>Yes so there are so many youth associations in Ghana, and they are in many different types. We categorise the youth according to several groups. You have the student groups, adventure groups, religious groups, and the settlement groups. You know some of our tribal institutions we have here in Ghana, Fante, Ashanti, and so forth. In settlements, say Gas who are not living in Accra, they are living in Takoradi, they organise themselves. They mobilise themselves, and come to work towards the interest of the Gas. So we encourage the youth until we reach all these diversities. You see so that everybody has the chance. They are very inclusive. Even if you don't belong to a religious group, or an ethnic one, everybody belongs to some community.</p> <p>So that makes it very easy to get to the youth. Sometimes when we are organising programmes we look at the type of programs, the target in the project. If you organise a programme that is not of an interest to the people it will fail. But we secure it to reach every district, we go to the settlement and direct it exactly at the goal population.</p> <p>If you look into the youth policy we categorise them also, because their needs are separate. For instance we go out to talk on awareness on reproductive health. I can go to a youth particular like the catholic church, and talk about condoms, and I can go in front of a traditional elder and be talking about sex and aids. So we know how to get around the taboo of some of the topics.</p>
KVR	<p>Imagine me and my friends we are engaged for a community, we want to set up a youth association, we go through the process and we get checked, now we are a registered association. What does this mean for us? Do we receive more rights, do we receive any resources? How do we organise a program?</p>
E7	<p>What happens is that if we as an institution are organising the program, we know you and your group, we invite you to participate. Likewise if you also have a program you can bring it to us, that you are organising this program and maybe you need support. If we have, fine we give you. If we don't, we look for opportunity, resources. That is how we go about it. Then our officers too, because they are on the ground, they will be looking at how the group is faring and will be reporting on them.</p> <p>All that we want to do at the end of the day, the young person should be contributing towards his society, his community. And building on his personality.</p>
KVR	<p>So if I understand it correctly, there already has to exist a feeling of engagement towards society before they can actually apply. So what happens to those that are disenfranchised, that are already outside of the communities, the marginalised?</p>
E7	<p>Yes we try to reach out to the marginalised, through activities. For instance through football. You know football is a passion of the Ghanaians. So if you want to talk to young people that are marginalised, that have these problems, endemic unemployment, teenage pregnancies, we use the medium of football. We have competitions, the challenge cup. Two teams from different communities, they play each other. And during the breaks we talk to the spectators. Then also alongside that we have peers that go around, educating.</p>

KVR	Won't there be a strong bias towards boys if you are going through the medium of football? Definitely the girls also cheer for the boys, but there will be more boys attending because of the nature of the sport?
E7	We are able to get the girls, and as we speak we are trying to get sponsorship from one of the commercial institutions for us to mount a project for girls, a sports and recreation project for girls.
KVR	It is good to see that efforts are done to include the marginalised, but I think that young people that might be suspicious towards the government, might not be easily convinced that forming a youth association will benefit them.
E7	<p>I want to assure you that in our case, we have so many organisations. In Ashanti region we have over 900. That is the interesting thing.</p> <p>Let me look it up for Greater Accra. In Greater Accra we have 250, youth associations here. But these are only the ones that are registered. There are many more that are not.</p>
KVR	I find it very interesting that young people, and people in general here are well organised. People get together, to discuss problems, challenges and solutions in a way that we don't necessarily see in the North.
E7	<p>It is the communal spirit, it is the community that is so important. As you know here in Accra we are not related in any way, and when we go to a meeting in another town, because you are from Accra, there is immediately this bond. This is a very unique part of our system. People always will try and come together, especially in times of difficulties, that is when you see the typical communal spirit coming in. And most of the organisations, the groups, they come out of some of these challenges.</p> <p>Even within one community, people are belonging to different groups. Many young people are members of different groups. There is even competing, sometimes you have so many youth groups that everybody wants to show off theirs. To some extent some competitions can be very healthy. Even between the political parties. Whenever it comes to our electoral system, unlike our sister countries, where it has degenerated into war and these things. In our place it is not like that. You see in the competition, different political groups in their various attire running on the same teams.</p>
KVR	As a final question, because I am looking at public space and planning, is there a link between the department of planning and the National Youth Authority? Do cooperations happen between the departments?

E7	<p>It will never happen without any form of advocacy. Even spaces that are legally designated to be space for young persons are being taken over for commercial purposes and interests. For instance Tema, we had a place that was made for young people, but there I was able to step in and it was given to the young people there as a playground. But in Accra here, all the playgrounds they are demarcated but they are not enforcing it. It brings about the perception of young people's involvement in society. But when people are planning they are not thinking of young people. So almost all the spaces have been taken over by commercial interests, and this is where the issue of corruption comes in. People compromise youth for their gain. There is no money being gained by giving young people the space.</p> <p>We see young people as liabilities, but not as assets. That is how society perceives them.</p>
KVR	<p>When and why do you think this changed? If we look at the early days after independence youth was looked at as the hope of the nation and much priority was given to their development.</p>
E7	<p>It all depends on leadership and philosophy, and a vision. You know the first government that you are talking about, the Nkrumah government had a vision. They saw that investing in youth would lead to the wealth and the health of the nation, because they are the custodians of the heritage of the nation. You know we have gone through so many different movements in between. You know they came and they crushed even the Young Pioneer Movement (YPM), they saw them as a threat. But if they had seen the vision behind the YPM, and most of them even went through these programmes. You know politics of hatred... But then, let us always build from the ashes. You don't throw everything away, the baby with the bath water. Make sure that always that there is a positive thing in the previous.</p> <p>And then, because of limited resources and corruption, investing into young people, when are you going to get returns from them? There is a general lack of long-term planning in this respect. If that vision had been continued, maybe our institutions would have been different. Nkrumah had a vision, the YPM, to get training and technical education to the young people.</p> <p>Grammar type of schooling has brought about all these problems. We have to get people as planners, we have to get them. But you look at the solution as a nation.</p>

Type of data: Interview

Participant(s): Gabriel Nii Teiko Tagoe (E8)

Function: Director Ga Mashie Development Agency (GAMADA)

Community: Ga Mashie

Speaker	Content
E8	I am the head of the institution, I am the director, my profession is development planning, but I am the head of the GAMADA.
KVR	[JA] mentioned that you were involved in the planning of some of the new squares in Ga Mashie? I am talking about two specific public spaces, the one at the roundabout at the police station, and one closer to Ussher Fort, the triangular one.
E8	Yes it is part of my job.
KVR	Some of these spaces in Ga Mashie are very well designed and very well used, especially by the youth. Could you explain to me the process behind their development? Who was involved in the decision making and the designing of them?
E8	We engaged the community and they identified some of this as their needs, to sanitise the community, so it was with community involvement.
KVR	How was the community involved in the decision making process?
E8	We've held meetings and interactions with them, planning workshops, to identify their needs.
KVR	What did those workshops look like? And who was involved
E8	Participatory planning with focus groups discussions. We have different community based organisations who participated. Then we involved various sections of the community, women groups, youth groups,...
KVR	I would like to understand, was the project already there? Was there a need and a budget or how did this project develop? Who initiated it?

E8	The need was there, so we have to look for the budget. Realise, this is a very crowded community with very few spaces, so we have to consolidate a space for the use of the community. So we did a workshop, we can't go around and ask every individual what they want and then build whatever it is they need.
KVR	And where did the budget come from for these projects, is it from the local government?
E8	The local government, and then our development partners, and some from private investors, NGO's.
KVR	And do these parties involved also have a say in the decision making process?
E8	It's just to give them recognition, that this is what they've done. They show where they want to do their investment, so they are involved in selecting which particular area they want to work in.
KVR	These two particular areas that I mentioned, was there any architect involved?
E8	Yes, we have architects from the works department that were involved. From parks and gardens.
KVR	Could you tell me when they were completed?
E8	The square at the roundabout? The graffiti one? That was completed 8 years ago. The one on high street was one year ago. So it is really new.
KVR	Could you explain to me your specific responsibilities within the institute?
E8	I am the head of the institute. So I see to the management and execution of activities here.
KVR	So you are at the top of any decisions concerning development in Ga Mashie? Where does your jurisdiction reach?
E8	Yes, that is why the agency is called Ga Mashie development Agency, to focus on development of the Ga Mashie area. It is James Town and Ussher Town.
KVR	What do you believe are some of the most urgent challenges that young people face in Ga Mashie?

E8	Obviously it is lack of space, because the space is congested. They don't have places where they can meet and play, and have other social activities.
KVR	Ok. Considering the amount of people living in Ga Mashie and the overcrowding that many people mention, if you compare Ga Mashie to some of the other spaces around Accra, in my opinion Ga Mashie already has significantly more spaces than, say for instance Sabon Zongo, or Nima. Would you say a lot has been achieved by this institution already? Do you believe young people are still struggling to find space for their development?
E8	Of course, there need to be more spaces for them, but unfortunately it is a built area, so you can't provide as sufficient as they would all need. That is what we need to consolidate for them. So that is what the institution is doing.
KVR	What do you believe other parts of Accra could learn from what you have been doing here?
E8	What we are doing is participatory slum upgrading, and it is supposed to be replicated.
KVR	Are there any other important challenges facing the youth, besides lack of space?
E8	There are not enough spaces or rooms for them. Those are the main problems.
KVR	And what do you believe are some of the opportunities for Ga Mashie, and for the youth?
E8	Opportunities available are that the people are willing to seize an improvement in their living environment, and they are prepared to cooperate.
KVR	So you would say there is a strong will of the community to make changes? So the people of Ga Mashie are relatively easy to work with as a community?
E8	Yes, they can be depending on their views and suspicions of the intentions of who and why is engaging them.
KVR	Do you think that everybody in Ga Mashie is represented in these workshops and participation moments?
E8	Not everybody, we are talking about 150 000 plus they can't all be present at workshops that is why we use their representatives through the CBO, the community based organisations. We deal with the CBOs who represent of the various communities.

KVR	Of course it is impossible to have everyone represented at the decision making process, but you think there are no social groups that are outside of this representation? Are there currently specific strategies or policies relating to public space or to young people that influence your work? Or that limit your work?
E8	No, the assembly itself has a policy to develop more public parks, not only in Ga Mashie but in other parts of the city. So it fits into the assembly's policy of creating more public spaces, green areas in the city. That is the agenda. It has been an issue since the past two decades, since we started working here. If you don't concern with the public spaces, people will encroach and then you lose it.
KVR	What is the main strategy behind consolidating the public space then? How do you keep it from being encroached upon?
E8	Once you have invested in it, it becomes public good. The public then, the beneficiaries, protect it and make sure nobody encroaches on it.
KVR	So the investment itself makes sure that no other people can claim it? Surely this must be done then in close cooperation with the chiefs?
E8	The chiefs themselves are aware of the demarcation and the spatial plan for the area so they know the public spaces. They will also want to protect it for the community.
KVR	Are there any other ways this is enforced? Are people sometimes removed from spaces?
E8	We don't remove. If you put the wrong thing at the wrong place you have to remove it because you need a permit to put anything anywhere. If you don't have a permit, then submetro officers will go and remove it. That is the strategy to protect and police those public spaces for the public use.
KVR	Does this happen frequently in this area?

<p>E8</p>	<p>Oh yes on every project at least we have to remove some structure that were placed in the wrong places. So it happens frequently.</p> <p>The next big strategy is to improve the houses and then create spaces within the houses for the families and the youth and children as well. Based on the traditional houses. We will restore those that have to be restored, and rebuild those that have to be rebuilt, consider redesigning and rebuilding them to create more accommodation for the families.</p> <p>For instance the Sea View Hotel, that was destroyed a few months ago. But that was a family property, so before anybody could say anything. Even the city authorities have policed it and it shouldn't have been demolished because it was an enlisted building. It happened on the blind side. But UNESCO has declared the whole area an heritage area because of the history and culture. So what we intend to do is an instituted development, no relocation of the people, because they have nowhere to go. This is their ancestral home. So we have to make sure we improve the living conditions, without dislodging or dislocating the people.</p>
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Type of data: Interview

Participant(s): Opinion leaders Sabon Zongo (O1-O4)

Function: Opinion leaders

Community: Sabon Zongo

Speaker	Content
BMP	Time is moving fast, and the sun is approaching. (referring to the people that are late for the meeting)
KVR	How would you describe your role as opinion leaders? What are the topics that you discuss and decide about? What are your responsibilities?
O1	The way it works is that the chief calls for a meeting, to deliberate on issues regarding the development of the neighbourhood and the challenges it is facing. Together we decide which issues to tackle first. The elders always go and meet the chief with their issues. Also visitors come and discuss what is happening with the chief, about all the issues and conflicts in Sabon Zongo.
KVR	How are your decisions influenced by legal frameworks, laws and regulations? What do you feel are some of the main problems or challenges facing Sabon Zongo?
O1	This new administration has appointed a zongo minister (Minister of Inner City and Zongo Development). They (the minister and the chief) have met together to discuss the most pressing issues. Such as the need to attract investors to improve the employment situation for youth. They have also talked about improving the gutters and roads, hospitals and schools.
KVR	How would you try and resolve an issue in Sabon Zongo? Who would you approach?
O1	Before the new minister, the only channel to the government was the assembly member and the member of parliament. But politicians they can dribble. You are never hundred percent sure they will do what they say.
KVR	How is your relation with youth in the area? Are you in touch with their problems? Do they come to you for council?

O2	The relationship between the elders and the youth is cordial. The youth look to the elders for guidance. They also come to the elders with any issues they may have, they will look to them to resolve them. Any small thing they need advise and guidance they will come.
KVR	What are according to you some of the main challenges for youth?
O1	Unemployment, drug abuse is rampant. Because of the lack of jobs, young guys seek opportunities. That is how they end up selling drugs in the streets, this is the only job available to them.
O3	Or people go rearing cattle in their houses to earn money. This is also done a lot. And it is disturbing the people a lot.
KVR	Do you think there are enough opportunities in terms of education, employment, leisure, decision making?
O1	Jobs, there are definitely not enough jobs. Most have the opportunity to go to secondary (school).
O4	But not tertiary, this involves a lot of money. Still not many parents have means to send their kids to university. But for leisure, inside Zongo there is not much space, there is no place. Outside young people have some spaces to do these things, like the beach. They also only have their leisure time. So they can go in the weekend for leisure. But inside there is nowhere they can go. Only the school grounds. And there are some small small spaces inside. But they are only causing trouble there.
O1	The lack of work is everywhere. (everyone nods in agreement) That is why we are looking for factories. For example in North Kaneshie there are some factories. The production industry has really changed the area. They provide skill training to the youth.
BMP	Skills should be provided together with capital. There is currently no skills training in Sabon Zongo. There was some skill training at Gaskia (cinema), but the youth are not using the skills, they continue hawking (petty sales in the street).
KVR	Are young people involved in decision making? How? Who is involved and who is not? Who are the most important people that make decisions on public space? About which activities are allowed when and where? About wich street is paved?

O1	<p>Every space within Sabon Zongo is owned, everywhere is owned, everything is private space. Even where we sit now. We have asked permission from somebody, the landlord to sit here. The chief doesn't have control on this very space. Likewise, other spaces in Sabon Zongo. You ask permission and then it is granted. But they will look at the activities that you want to do. Maybe if he doesn't like the activity that you want to do.</p> <p>But how many spaces do we have here? We have very limited spaces, like the night market, the morning market, and the Gaskia cinema. These are the only spaces that we have. So all these places are controlled by the chief and the elders. The most decisions go through the chief. He decides if it brings benefit or any misunderstanding to the community.</p>
KVR	<p>But then what about the streets themselves? They are in some way also public space, and because of the lack of space, many people have been using it as such for events, and festivities and more. Who decides these things?</p>
O2	<p>Sometimes people block the roadside, but then the people have to see the police for a permit. It is their mandate, not the chief. But sometimes permission is not sought, and then the police has to come. They will make some troubles, and they have to shake their hands, so that they will allow activity to go. (refers to bribes) Do you understand what I am saying? Then if there is no conflict they are left alone. But the chief has the authority to block some of these things if he does not agree. But if there is no conflict, the people are quite free to organise things in Sabon Zongo. The chief is a very liberal person, very open.</p> <p>Only if the activity will bring a problem, then the chief will quickly stop that gathering. He will advise them to stop this, and if they do not heed the warning he will not allow that. He will send somebody that will stop the gathering.</p>
KVR	<p>Is there a dialogue with these disenfranchised youth, with the troublemakers?</p>
BMP	<p>Those that will not go to the chief for consultation, will also not be heard by the chief. Unless there is some trouble, then they will hear from others. But there is no direct dialogue with the trouble makers.</p>
O2	<p>(lot of noise and inner discussions)</p> <p>They don't have dialogue with them. Taking them to prison is no solution, because they always come back. Some of them may be doing it because of peer pressure, maybe because they don't know any better, some of them do it because they are youth and they feel they have to act against others. But the tongue is like a very sharp knife (Hausa saying). Sometimes, the mouth is a strong weapon. Talk is the best defence.</p>
O1	<p>The troublemakers in the community, they are more or less our children and our grandchildren. We can mobilise them, bring them to the chief's house and talk some sense into them.</p>

BMP	<p>In all the groupings, you have the so-called leaders. But without these leaders, sometimes they may be scared to go. But maybe the leaders can mobilise them. It is a very good topic. If they have a voice, if they are part of the community, they will engage with the community and help.</p>
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Type of data: Interview

Participant(s): Annonte Heh Flex (O5), Honorable Alfred Roland Laryea (O6), Gabriel Allotey (O7)

Function: Opinion leaders

Community: Ga Mashie

Speaker	Content
KVR	What is your official function within the organisation/area? What is your relation with the area of James Town? What are the specific tasks you perform or responsibilities you have relating to the areas Sabon Zongo or James Town?
O5	We were elected in our various electoral areas to support the assembly man. We are normally on the ground. We get our information on the ground. We take it to the assemblyman, so that he can take it to the assembly. And then that after the discussion they will come back to us and give us our specific roles. But within the period after the election, all we do is based on sanitation.
O6	Every first week of the month we do sanitation, we are doing together with committee members.

O5	<p>After the sanitation, after the first week, what we have to do again is go house to house, collect their informations, interact with the youth, what are the problems they are facing. During our short term in the office, all we do mostly is jobs, unemployment. Most of the youth are complaining about them not getting jobs. Once we are on the ground that is our main thing to do, just to collect information. They elected us.</p> <p>But our biggest challenge is people coming to us for money. Honorable, my brother is in the hospital. As unit committee members, we are not being paid, we are not receiving salary from anywhere. Some people will come to your house, asking for school fees. People are struggling, but there is no money coming in from the assembly.</p> <p>And sometimes, we also go and educate them, about the way they comport themselves. We also have some foreigners come and educate us. So we have to give out what we have experience and what we have been taught. We organise, we have a van with a speaker that goes around to inform the people that, this week we are doing a program, they have to come to the center.</p> <p>For instance, we don't have toilets in most of the houses. We have public toilets. But most of the people go to the toilet in their houses, and then later they go and throw it away, inside the gutters. It is very worrying. We go around and teach them what to do. Right now we have a program, they want to build a toilet in every house.</p> <p>We work together with the assemblyman. And sometimes he goes to the MP (member of parliament), so that whenever he is speaking in parliament, he can bring these issues up. Then the government can support, because they have the budget.</p>
KVR	How is your relationship with young people inside the area?
O5	<p>We have a good relationship with the youth. Most of us we sit with them, we eat with them, chat with them. But because they are not working, most of the youth are involved in fraud, we call it sakawa. Most of the youth get themselves into fraud, they go and chat with people to get money. Because there is no work.</p> <p>Aside that most of the young girls growing up stop schooling, because there is no money for the parents to pay education for them. So they just go out, dating the young guys who also give them small small money. It is a worrying thing for the committee members and the assembly man.</p> <p>*note: the devil finds work for the idle (internet scamming in ghana: VICE, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=o26Eks801oc)</p>
O6	Another thing is child labour. They will take them out of school, and they will sell fish, tomatoes. Because they can get money for them easily.
KVR	Are there there young people that are difficult to talk to?

O5	Some of them don't like to talk to authorities, yes. A lot of them are very confidential to me. What got them involved in those things, most of them they have finished SHS, that is secondary school, they want to do something just to further their education. Then not getting jobs, if a friend advises them to get into it, they will also get into it. Peer pressure, that's the word. Under the peer pressure a lot of the youth have engaged themselves in smoking, nowadays a lot of the youth have engaged themselves in marijuana. It's a challenge.
KVR	What is your personal perception of young people and their situation? What is causing all these issues? Is there blame coming from the community?
O5	Most of the problems start with the parents. Most it starts when they don't educate their children what they are supposed to do. And also to the authorities. Yes education. We need the authorities to educate the youth. They can make programs, to educate the youth on what they are supposed to do. The government is not doing that, they are not doing enough. Engaging them in more programs will stop them from doing these things. Activities. We have capabilities. If you interact with a person, you can find out what he can do. So engaging that person with things he knows he can do, will not engage him in things that are not necessary to him.
KVR	Are there enough opportunities for young people? For employment, for entertainment, for education, for influencing decision making? Does Jamestown provide for young people?
O5	I have drawn a program, I have asked him (JA) to find an NGO that can, let me put it in this way, I have interacted with a lot of young guys and young ladies, who are willing to learn a trade; hairdressing, sewing, any learning of a trade. Always we want to engage them, if you learn something today, it is something that is very beneficial to you.
KVR	So who is initiating these programs? Is it the government or the people?
O5	It is the youth that asks for it. We have come up with this idea, but there is no money. We don't want to involve the government. Because they will use it in politics. That is why we as unit committee members want to come out, find an NGO.
O6	Sometimes the MPs and other politicals they want to use us unit committee members to partake in their politics. We are resisting those things.
O5	That is why we find non partizan NGO to engage in this program.
KVR	So the government always has an agenda? They will help you if you help them?

O5	<p>The assembly helps us. But there is not enough budget. We want to get involved with most of the assembly issues. We want to get more directly involved. Because they decide.</p> <p>*they discuss things among themselves in Ga language*</p> <p>We want to be more involved with the assembly. So that the people that voted us know that we are also working. And they complain about that they voted for us but nothing has changed. They always blame us. We are not taking their informations to the authorities. We know that we take their informations to them. But nothing has come out. And then it is up to us to calm them down, talk to them. The information that we get from the assemblyman is, he has to sit down with the AMA, discuss it, for it to be a law. They have to draft it. It is a process, it takes a long time.</p>
KVR	<p>What are according to you the main challenges for young people?</p>
O5	<p>The main challenges of the young people, like I said earlier on, are unemployment, housing and overcrowding, where to sleep. Because maybe in a single room we have thirteen people sleeping. Education. Sanitation. Child labour. Peer pressure. Marriage problems. After giving birth the marriage breaks up. This is happening a lot since ten twenty years ago. Men leave their wives after they have a child, and they go again with another lady. And then the kids will not get the right education. They will not get educated.</p> <p>Twenty, thirty years ago you need to compare the population with now. Now the population is getting big. Since the population is increasing very fast, we need to engage the people in something, so that they will not engage in things that will not benefit them. But there are no jobs, there is no education.</p> <p>This government wants to build one factory in every district. We have two hundred sixteen (216) districts in Ghana, ten in Accra. If the government really builds these, the youth will get jobs. And when you have a job, nobody will ask you come here and smoke. You will not even get the time to do that.</p> <p>Also, most of the youth get jobs, but the salary is not right. My friend he stays at Cape Three Points. He works for twelve hours every day. Do you know how much they pay him? Two hundred and fifty Ghana cedis. Even the transport is more than that. It is not enough. The salary is too low. It is not that they do not want to work. But they are not getting paid.</p>
KVR	<p>Youth associations are mentioned in policy as the main tool used to create participation between young people and decision making. Do you think this is actually happening? What is their function?</p>

O5	<p>There are a lot of youth groups, a lot. But the politicians they like to influence them, with money. After giving out the money, they will not engage them in any job or anything.</p> <p>A politician can come and say if you support me, if you rally behind me, I will fight for you. But then if they win the election, they forget them. We have a lot of youth groups who are strong. Physically strong, they intimidate the people. We also have those youth groups, if they speak in the community, people will listen to them. So they go to these groups and try to influence them.</p>
KVR	What are according to you the most important players that create, manage and control public space?
O5	<p>Aside politicians, we have kingmakers. If you want to do anything in James Town, you have to go to the chief, ask permission from him before you are allowed to do it. The paramount chief, Nii Kojo Ababio, the chief of Ngleshie Alata. Even if the assembly man wants to do something, they have to inform the chief. Then you have the assembly members. And then you have the opinion leaders also, in the community. If you would have a problem, you go first to the assembly man. He will take your issues to the chief. You contact me or my brother. You come to the unit committee. And then we will take you to the assembly man. If somebody is doing something that is not right, I have to inform the assembly man, we have to go to the assembly and they will come and check if what the person is doing is right or not. Then the assembly will write to the person and tell him what he is doing is no good.</p>
KVR	And does the chief or the assembly ever get overruled?
O5	Yes it happens.

Appendix G: Focus Group Discussions

Type of data: Focus group discussion

Participant(s): Youth participants - group 1 (Y1)

Community: Sabon Zongo

Speaker	Content
	<p>summary issues:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - lack of space - lack of schools - lack of hospital or clinic - bad and unsafe roads - lack of recreational facilities (playgrounds, event space, ...) - too congested
Y1	<p>summary positive aspects:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - security: you can sleep outside - peaceful community - everyone helps each other
	internal heated discussion about Old Fadama
KVR	I will write down some things on the board. For it is also new so we will see how this goes. What are the main issues that young people face in Sabon Zongo? What are some difficult or negative aspects of living in Sabon Zongo?
Y1	We lack space in Sabon Zongo, the spaces are limited. There is need for space, also the school buildings. Because in Sabon Zongo, 60% of the youth are not well educated. That is because we lack also the schools inside the area. We do not have a secondary school inside the area. The distance is very far.
Y1	We lack hospitals, and we lack clinics. The healthcare is not good. Also the roads, are not good. Most of the roads in Sabon Zongo bad, only few are not, only few have gutter and are paved.
Y1	The roads are very unsafe here, they are also not tarred. And because there is no recreational space, everyone is just in the street. The kids are playing in the streets. There is no other place. Everyone is just in the street. And then also with the motorbikes and the cars, it is a very unsafe situation. We should require maybe speedbumps, to slow the cars down.
KVR	And what types of recreational facilities would you want in the area?

Y1	Playgrounds! We need playgrounds. But it is a general concern, not only for the kids. Any space. In case you have a programme, you must block the roads before you do anything. In the whole neighbourhood.
KVR	Is it because there is no space, or rather because the spaces that are there are not big enough or unusable?
Y1	There are spaces, but our settlement, the layout of the community is very congested. Some spaces are there. But the place is very dense, very populated.
Y1	Also the planning of the place. The authorities, they have to do something about it, because many of the roads become blocked, and many of the spaces become built. People just go and they block the road with a structure. First one person builds and blocks the road and then the next one does the same thing, before the whole place is congested.
KVR	What are some of the good things about living in Sabon Zongo? What are the things you are most proud of in Sabon Zongo?
Y1	You can stay here for the whole night, until daybreak, nothing will happen to you. Full assurance. You can even sleep outside here without any problem. Security wise it is very good.
Y1	Security is one of the reasons why we like staying in Sabon Zongo.
KVR	Why is it so safe then? What makes Sabon Zongo so safe?
Y1	We protect each other, because we are each others' brothers and we are peaceful. Even you, I don't know you, but I won't allow somebody to come and do something. Very peaceful.
Y1	Once somebody is having a problem, maybe you are traveling, and you are coming in Sabon Zongo maybe at 1 am, and something happens to you. People will come to your aid, that is why it is a very safe place.
Y1	You know we have a boundary with Old Fadama and with the motorway road, where the road ends, that is a place where it is dark, and people are not living there, when it happens that you are passing by, people can attack you anytime. But inside the community it is really safe. Nothing happens in Sabon Zongo. Maybe once a while, it's not something that happens often.

Y1	I would like to add, you know Sabon Zongo, you come here and you see people selling. The place is always busy, with light and everything. People don't sleep at Sabon Zongo, you come here at any given time you see people around who will stop an attack. But where people are asleep at ten or eleven o'clock, when the place is very quiet, it is there where you can be attacked. Maybe at Sukura or other places.
Y1	Maybe some incident would happen in Sabon Zongo, maybe some people are making some noise, fighting and all these things, most often you see that those in that act are not really residents of Zongo. But it does happen once in a while. But that one is normal.
Y1	The youth do experience peer pressure in this area, and this is what creates all this kind of vices in the community.
Y1	*Takes some convincing of BMP that there are also positive things in Sabon Zongo, or that it makes sense to discuss the positive aspects*
Y1	There are some things happening in Sabon Zongo, they are happening because of peer pressure. There are some guys within the community that are selling some wee, some drugs, and even then there are people that are taking them here. Because of the peer pressure. And most parents don't want people to talk about these things, especially when their children are involved. Maybe this man has taken some wee, but whatever he has taken we will not talk about it because of the relationship between the elders and the children.
Y1	Public toilets, is our biggest problem. You must go outside of your house. Because we don't have a household toilet. We lack the household toilets. Seriously it is a very big problem. The assembly have been saying they will provide the houses with separate toilets, household toilets. They say every house must have a toilet. But then they built a public toilet, just here, a new one (indicates the new public toilet just outside Gaskia). So they propose that every house pays a certain amount of money to provide a toilet, but the money is too much. The people cannot pay this much. So it will not get solved.
Y1	You see there are so many factors. One factor is the lack of space. But one is also the lack of money. It can take 20, 30 pesewas in the morning, and then 40 pesewas in the evening. Multiply this by every day, and you get a lot. So it can save them a lot of money

Type of data: Focus group discussion

Participant(s): Youth participants - group 3 (Y3)

Community: Ga Mashie

Speaker	Content
KVR	What are the main issues facing young people in James Town?
Y3	<ul style="list-style-type: none">- education: the level of education in James Town is not good.- financially: there is a lot of unemployment, this is partly due to insufficient education.- parenting: parents use the money for other things, they do not spend it on education for their children. There is a lot of early parenthood.- sanitation: there are not enough public toilets or other sanitation in the area. Also the gutters are not wide enough.- morals: There is too much gossip in James Town. <p>James Town is a country on its own: you have James Town Miami, Small London, ...</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">- slum: it is a slum because of overcrowding
KVR	What are positive aspects of life for young people in James Town?
Y3	<ul style="list-style-type: none">- security: it is always safe walking around James Town.- affordability: food is affordable.- social capital: James Town is very hospitable, everyone likes socialisation.- social capital: people help each other.
KVR	What are the main activities you participate in outside of work? Which space would you go for these activities?
Y3	<ul style="list-style-type: none">- gambling and betting, anywhere.- football, in front of "fire service".- swimming, in the sea- boxing, in the gym- clubbing, deep sea 68- scamming, internet café- basketball, "modern school" (Gamada?)
KVR	What is your favourite place in James Town?

Y3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - deep sea - chief's place - cinema, wooden structure - beach: this side is unsafe but clean, other side (towards Korle Gonno) is safe but not clean.
KVR	What is your least favourite place in James Town?
Y3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Miami (beach community), dangerous people living there - slaughterhouse (behind Gamada), very dirty - lagoon, it smells - public toilet, it smells - London market, it is choked
KVR	Are there any times/places where you feel unsafe in James Town? Are there any issues concerning safety in Sabon Zongo?
Y3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - You have to watch out when you are on the beach (also during the day). - there is a lot of theft coming from the "Miami" area. - thieves they go outside of their own area.

Type of data: Focus group discussion

Participant(s): Youth participants - group 4 (Y4)

Community: Ga Mashie

Speaker	Content
KVR	What are the main issues facing young people in Ussher Town?
Y4	<ul style="list-style-type: none">- education- financial problems- unemployment- difference: we are one people but there are differences- parental control: parents do not support education for their children- corruption and bribery
KVR	What are positive aspects of life for young people in Ussher Town?
Y4	<ul style="list-style-type: none">- people do things on their own, even without education- proud of people who do sports and athletics
KVR	How would you try to resolve an issue in Ussher Town? Who would you speak to to try and resolve a spatial conflict?
Y4	<ul style="list-style-type: none">- exchange for sex (?)- assemblymen don't help, they only care about their own family- "politics is just a game" they do not care about our problems. They educate themselves in politics, they promise many things to get elected, but then during political times nothing happens. One district, one factory; one village, one dam; free education based on grades.
KVR	What are the main activities you participate in outside of work? Which space would you go for these activities?
Y4	<ul style="list-style-type: none">- football in front of Ussher Fort: Garden Mli (gardiem)- cardgames at the base (gardiem) dames- dice games- acting, comedy (watch?)- basketball (gamada)- boxing
KVR	What is your favourite place in Ussher Town?

Y4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - gardiem, opposite Shatta beach - Gbese (area around the Gbese palace)
KVR	What is your least favourite place in Ussher Town?
Y4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Shatta beach: people are smoking wee there - bokum: it is dirty there, a lot of poverty - Akuma village (next to Osekan resort) culture and arts place, people are always smoking there, it is dirty and there are many animals there. - Bodé (slaughterhouse): it is very dirty and dangerous there. People get cutlashed there for no reason. - Ganshona (seashore) small London: the attitude of the people is bad. They come from outside, so they cause trouble to the people here.
KVR	Are there any times/places where you feel unsafe in Ussher Town? Are there any issues concerning safety in Ussher Town?
Y4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - It is safe everywhere, noone bothers you in Ussher Town. There are some areas where we stay away from, but you can sleep anywhere.