

OUR EXISTENCE MATTER: EXPERIENCES AND BELONGING OF URBAN SPACE  
FROM STREET HAWKERS PERSPECTIVE-A CASE STUDY OF LA-NKWANTANANG  
MADINA MUNICIPAL AREA

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## Abstract

The study examines the experiences of street hawkers and contributes to the current but less represented debate on hawkers' ways of appropriating the urban space through space modification and codification that serve greatly their capitalist purposes and how those daily activities influence their sense of belonging to the urban public space. The hawkers in the study area; La-Nkwantanang-Madina Area, Ghana show some social concerns in their informal day-to-day street activities that account for some of the relocation issues that render the repressive measures of city authorities futile. In understanding the space appropriation and sense of belonging from the hawker's perspective, the study introduces the concept of "right to the city" for which the purpose of this study conceptualizes it as "*the right to the street*" so it can better attend to the experiences of place and sense of belonging by the hawkers, the informality concept and the urban citizenship. The study uses qualitative approach which included methods; participant observation, in-depth interviews and Focus group discussion to help unearth some of the issues that contribute to the debate. The research finds that although the space contestations between the street hawkers and city officials still lingers on, the hawkers are able to successfully reproduce their belonging to the urban streets through exchange value of space and the diversification of urban streets which forms part of the urban fabric without dominating the streets to obstruct the use value for other urban dwellers.

Keywords: Space appropriation, belonging, right to the city, urban citizenship, Informality, Exchange Value, Use Value.

### **Contributions/Originality**

This qualitative study is one of the few studies which has examined and explored street hawkers' sense of urban space belonging in Ghana through their daily experiences. Street hawkers do not have voice to influence urban spatial planning but manage to claim their rights to work on the street.

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# CHAPTER ONE

## GENERAL INTRODUCTION

### 1.0 Introduction

Street hawkers have for long been part of the urban street life in cities of both developed countries and the Global South. Street hawking, an informal activity has become a permanent part of the urban street setting both spatially and over time. However, for decades city authorities have implemented diverse repressive measures to either manage or forcefully eradicate the informal activities from the urban space as they recognize it as a societal nuisance especially as it contradicts and distorts urban elites and city planners' image of 'modern city'. Street hawking has been widely discussed as selling of goods and/or services in public places including in open streets, sidewalks, alleyways etc. The activity is classified the second highest contributor in the informal economy and is constantly on the increase. Indeed, the presence of hawkers exponentially surges in the Global South during economic hardship and stagnation (Dick, 2002).

Informal economy in general has in many times been catalogued as a threat to the formal economy which is seen as the desirable trajectory of development in the global south and the former, street hawking in particular has constantly received forcible response from the authorities and informal strategies devised by the hawkers result in perennial tensions between the two groups. This has made the integration of the two economies a problem that successive governments in multiple urban areas of the global south must contend with.

Due to the informal nature of street hawking as a result of authorities' inability to structurally manage and regulate the street activities, hawkers in their quest to maximize daily profits of their street businesses heterogeneously carve out the urban space that supports their street life. Street hawkers contribute to the urban fabric, with their activities not rendered to the urban poor and vulnerable only but are also of importance to the urban elites. Yet still, such players in the informal economy are more often than not denied the right to the urban space. This, therefore, sees hawkers

appropriate the urban public spaces through diverse and informal means in favour of their street businesses.

Understanding the hawkers' ways of appropriating the space they operate in was tied to the exhibition of their sense of belonging and entitlement to these urban spaces. Further, when seen through the lens of Lefebvre's concept of the "right to the city" we see hawkers claim space in the city through their day-day street life in spontaneous and informal ways. This irregularity and in most cases unauthorized operations characterize street hawking activities making revenue collection from these informal actors exceedingly difficult. Nevertheless, extensive recent literature (Bromley, 2000; Bhowmik, 2005; King 2006) show that, amidst the irregularities, unformalized nature and rampant mobility of hawkers, majority of them succumb to the payment of street levies and taxes as part of their quota to the economy and in return, they use such street act and other means as leverage for their rights to the city.

Conversely, the study conceptualizes Lefebvre's theory as the street hawkers "*right to the street*" for the purpose of exploring further how the hawkers portray their sense of belonging and the successful ways of constructing the urban space for their capitalistic purposes as less is researched on the space appropriation and belonging of the hawkers. In furtherance, the research does not debate the tensions that linger on between the hawkers and the authorities but in focus, the study tries to fill the analytical gap and contribute to the societal relevance as it also discusses on the relocation processes instigated by city authorities that seem to prove futile in many cases.

## 1.2 Motivation

The debates around street hawking in cities of the Global south have in recent years gained more scholarly attention. Street hawking has remained a bigger part of the informal economy, diverse protest movements have risen against such operations as activities to be performed in the streets of cities in the developing world. These protestations are largely attributed to the constant increase in the number of hawkers, the threats they pose to urban spaces as well as the danger they pose to the city authorities in their aspiration of achieving a modernised city (Robinson, 2002; Nduna, 1990). This has continually fuelled the tensions between the city authorities and the street hawkers

as the former sees this as an informal act that distorts the image of a ‘modern city’ and must therefore be eradicated while the latter sees it as an extreme opportunity for eking out a living, taking into account that the formal sector has a limitation of providing jobs for the dwellers in the urban environment.

Considering it as a key characteristic of the economy of a developing country, Ghana is of no exception as the informal sector contributes to the majority of the country’s economy. The surge in the informal sector in Ghana and similarly in other developing countries is as a result of the economic disparities between major cities in these countries and their peripheral areas and this has caused population drift from the rural areas to the urban spaces. As a result of rapid urbanisation, the formal sector has not expanded quickly enough to supply forms of employment for the rising population, particularly for the urban poor. This leads to the increasing number of jobs in the informal economy which requires little capital and low or no skills to set up (Owusu and Abrokwah, 2014). This has made the informal economy in the global south a major contributor to the urban job opportunities providing about 90 per cent of new urban jobs in the last two decades (ILO, 2002a, p.16). This statistics in Ghana in recent years is indifferent as the Ghana labour Sector recorded 90 per cent of the labour force in the informal sector (GSS, 2016) and street hawking is considered as one of the livelihood opportunities in the urban environment as a means of reducing staggering unemployment in the urban spaces.

Street hawkers are considered one of the major contributors to the informal economy in the global south and their activities have over the years been argued by ‘city elites’ as a distortion of an image of a ‘world class city’ and must therefore be removed. Inasmuch as prolonged protest movements have risen against the street hawking activities in most cities in the global south, recent research works for instance by Bromley (2000) and Yatmo (2008) have put forth justification for the continuation of such informal economic activities in the urban spaces as they immensely contribute to poverty alleviation in the urban areas. Despite the constant criticisms from the government and the general public towards the street hawking activities which is virtually found in almost every city in the global south, street hawking has survived and keeps increasing in numbers because not only does it ease the pressure off urban unemployment, it also provides daily goods and services for the urban population. The activities of street hawkers do not only benefit the urban poor but

also for the urban middle-class (Bhowmik, 2005). Among other attributes of street hawkers, they are also mobile-hawking from one street corner to another in search of profitable returns and also provide readily cheap goods and services to the urban population. This does not only result in tension between hawkers and the city authorities but also exhibits a lingering conflict between the hawkers and formal shop owners (Asiedu and Mensah, 2008).

Reviewed literature for this study for instance by Swanson (2007) and Bhowmik (2005) show that almost in all Asian countries, activities of street hawkers are carried out without legal status and that has put the hawkers into constant conflicts with the city authorities. Also, extensive research on street hawking have been carried out in major African cities including Democratic Republic of Congo- Kinshasa (Iyenda, 2005), Malawi- Lilongwe (Tonda & Kepe, 2016), Zambia- Lusaka city (Bruce, 2005), South Africa- Johannesburg (Benit-Gbaffou, 2016), Nigeria- Lagos (Oyefara, 2005) Ghana- Accra (Yankson, 2007) and findings are indifferent.

In the case of Ghana, negotiations over rights of appropriation to the urban spaces by street hawkers have become the protracted contestations between the street hawkers and the urban authorities who have consecutively been unable to jointly construct a lasting policy for these informal activities in the urban centers. In the broad array of research conducted in Ghana which has discussed the negotiating factors between the street hawkers and the city authorities, have in most cases less represented the views of the street hawkers and how their experiences on the urban streets determine their space occupation which are constantly in contradiction with that authorities' policies. Therefore, the study aims to add to literature on how the street hawkers construct their space of operations as well as how they portray their sense of belonging and entitlement to urban streets through their daily experiences and subsequently understand why the relocation efforts always seem unsuccessful thus, bringing the hawkers back to the streets.

### 1.3 Research objective and questions

From the study's aims outlined above, some specific objectives have been framed to make the study achieve its societal and academic relevance. The objectives were;

- To identify how street hawkers, acquire and appropriate their hawking space.
- To explore street hawkers' sense of belongingness to the streets through their experiences
- To find out what makes the relocation of hawkers from the street not so effective and that hawkers are always seen on the streets.

## 1.4 Research Questions

- How do the street hawkers construct their space of operation?
- How do the experiences of the street hawkers reflect their sense of belonging to the streets?
- Why do relocation processes fail to keep hawkers off the streets?

## 1.5 Structure of the study

This study comprises seven chapters. The introductory chapter presents the background of street hawking from the informal sector perspective. It also shows the purpose, justification of the study as well as the research questions showing how the aims of the study can be achieved. The second and third chapters present some of the extensive literature and the theoretical framework adapted for the study. Chapter four describes the methodology and the research approach used in the collection of empirical data. The chapter also talks about the ethical consideration for the study and the limitations encountered in the process of conducting this research. The fifth chapter presents the results from interpreted data and findings from the empirical framework. The six chapter comprises of the discussion part of the study and finally the seventh chapter concludes the study with some recommended policies from the views of street hawkers.

## CHAPTER TWO

### 2.0 LITERATURE REVIEW

#### 2.1 Background Study of Street Hawking

Increasing unemployment rate as an economic and livelihood problems continues to linger on in the global south and has therefore become a key characteristic in defining the economy of many developing countries. Unemployment is often seen as the condition where the available and willing labour force exceeds the existing and suitable job opportunities (Gbosi, 1997). This, the World Bank (1998) also sees as the gap between employed labour force at a paid wage and conditions and the labour surplus at those levels. Considered as a trending issue in the global south, unemployment becomes an attributing factor to the constant increment in the informal sector of most economies as the urban centers continuously receives influx of people with low qualifications to land them a formal job.

However, when expectations of these economic migrants are cut off and are rather faced with the frustrations of the urban settings. Upon realising that the urban places do not have jobs for them, economic migrants set up their own source of livelihoods to make ends meet which mostly add up to the informal sector of the economy. Many of such people either lack basic education or do not possess the necessary skills education to land them gainful employment. Formal sector employment, then, becomes unattainable to rural immigrants This therefore makes eligibility of formal sector employment difficult to attain and the influx of the economic migrants in the urban spaces have fuelled the large increment in the informal sector. Such economic activities require little capital and skills to start and this among other reasons have made street hawking activities very much visible in the urban spaces over decades and in many countries in the global south (May, 2005; Jimu, 2005).

#### 2.2 General Review Of Street Hawking

Street hawking is considered a global and ancient occupation which has contributed to many economies of the world. In this study “street hawking” “street vending” and “street trading” represent the same thing and may be used interchangeably. Also considered in this study, the term street hawkers is used as an occupational group and not as a separate entity or a subset of a larger

group such as economic migrants, underemployed, petty services and goods providers. Street hawking, for centuries till date has been an economic practice across the world and its global status have warranted several definitions. Depending on where street hawkers may find themselves, their activities could either be a full-time occupation, part-time, or seasonal. Location is a determining factor on the status of hawkers as some places in the urban centers are accessible by people at throughout the day whereas some are opened as specific times resulting in full-time or part-time hawking. Bromley (2000) in his “Street vending and public policy” paper described street hawking as taking the form as a continuous mobile venture or stationary (semi-permanent) structure. He reiterated, some urban locations have both forms and such is common in Asian countries as Bhowmik (2005) stated in his study “Street Vendors in Asia”.

The kind of wares and services provided by those hawkers are influenced by the type of hawking activities they engage in. Hawkers who deal in heavy merchandise tend to operate in semi-permanent structures in fixed locations for months or years, usually within heavy stalls or kiosks under the supervision of watchmen when hawkers are not operating. Street hawking has been a part of a central discussion for years when it comes to discourses on informality and informal economies and has over the decades brought researchers attention for more scholarship. This has made the term “street hawking” acquire different definitions. The International Labour organisation (ILO, 2004) generalises the street hawking activities as the operations carried out by all types of traders who display all kinds of wares along road sides, streets, open squares, parks and other public spaces, usually require less capital to operate and mostly make use of labour and are highly subject to irregular and unstable income.

To refer to the people behind such activities, Bhowmik (2005) defines street hawkers as self-employed people who form part of the informal sector, provide goods and services for sale on the street and usually operate from temporary constructions . In light of that, Asiedu & Agyei-Mensah (2008) indicate not all of these street hawkers fall into the categories of self-employment but some are employed by the middle class urban citizens who have the means to set up such ventures but do not have the time to operate it themselves.

## 2.3 Street Hawking In La-Nkwantanang Municipal Area

In this study, street hawkers cover all types of street trading including those in small kiosks and huge stalls; seasonal traders; mobile and immobile traders. Street hawking in La-Nkwantanang Municipal like any other city in the developing countries contributes immensely to the informal economy. The constant increasing number in the informal economy can be attributed to several reasons but common ones amongst developing countries include the population drift due to economic disparities between urban centers of developing countries and their peripheries. The more developed urban centers tend to pull dwellers from the rural areas towards the urban spaces to benefit from such economic opportunities (Dickson & Benneh,1988). As these populations drift from the rural areas to the urban spaces, they come with the economic intention to partake such existing opportunities. Unfortunately, the types of these economic migrants to enjoy a better lifestyle are cut off and are rather faced with harsh conditions thus adding to the increase of poverty rate in the cities. Bhowmik (2005) indicates that the majority of such migrants in the city have a 'reduced' lifestyle compared to their previous lifestyle in the rural areas. Some of these economic migrants lack proper accommodation, adequate livelihoods and to an extent lack affordable healthcare Bhowmik (2005) added. To those people who persist and go in search of better jobs in the formal sector to eke out a living are unfortunate and consequently settle for the informal sector. This has proven the rapid increase in the informal sector in the global south.

In addition, as the people who move to the urban centers for economic reasons settle for the informal sector due to low level of education or lack of required skills, the number in the informal sector surges as the people with required skills and relatively higher level of education and have been rendered redundancy from the the formal sector join the informal economy to make ends meet (Mitullah, 2003; Bhowmik, 2005). Furthermore, rapid population increase has burdened most countries in the global south and that has put pressure on the existing jobs, accounting for the increasing number of people found on the street selling. This again is indifferent from the case in Madina which is part of the capital seat of the country has since in decades been a part the centre for all major activities. This has resulted in a direct concentration of people who are mostly spotted on the streets selling goods and providing services as their main source of livelihoods.

Consequently, this rapid urbanisation creates vibrant economic hub out of La-Nkwantanang-Madina Area, this in itself is not a bad situation since it helps contribute to the GDP of the country and generates trickling down as these city dwellers remit to their various rural areas but what makes it become more of a burden is that the rapid urbanisation occurring in La-Nkwantanang Municipality has increased the number of street hawkers and their diverse activities brought with it some problems such as heavy traffic congestion, pressure on city resources, congestion and other socio-economic problems that are associated with the street occupation of these class of people. Madina like many sub areas-city in the developing countries has a long history of street hawking and over a decade ago, the 2008 economic hardship that saw several households and trade liberalisation as part of the Structural Adjustment Program (SAP) made it possible for cheap products to be sold on the street. This warranted more unemployed city dwellers with little capital to venture into street hawking.

In furtherance to the above, the activities of the street hawkers' can be seen in two ways. First, the city authorities and planners represent street hawkers as a nuisance and distort the image of the city they envisage. Conversely, street hawking operations contribute heavily to the economy and poverty alleviation. Their activities are not seen to only benefit the urban poor but also provide comparatively cheaper goods and services for all city dwellers. As it may be economically beneficial to the urban vulnerable, it is also convenient for the middle class in the society as everyday items are made available on the street for easy purchase. To add up, this shows that the initiation to join street hawking goes beyond the fringe benefits as being self-employed and an upliftment in the standard of living for the hawkers. Street hawking generates a high demand for other jobs within the informal sector i.e. commercial transport systems (Trotro in Ghana), market porters (Kayayo) and among others (Cambridge,167). In addition to the extensive service provisions, their operations are sometimes in congruence with the formal sector as well where some formal shops outsource to these hawkers.

Significantly, Bromley (2000) in his research suggests that street hawkers avoid taxes and operational license and to him it accounts for one of the reasons why street hawkers are mobile in their operation. But recent literature points out that street hawkers adhere to street tax policies and levies as their license to operate on the street. As these levies and taxes are channelled into

government revenues, some countries consider street hawking activities as a legitimate venture that add up to the National Gross Domestic Product (GDP) and are therefore treated as a part of the urban set up. For instance, street hawking in Malta is considered as part of the city make-up and as such hawkers are regulated and taxed to contribute to the local and national revenue (Ministry of Communication Malta, 2012). Likewise, in India, the supreme court amends national policy to incorporate the activities of the street operators which they consider from the consumer perspective a “considerable addition to the comfort and convenience of the general public, by making available ordinary articles of everyday use for a comparatively lesser price”.

Much like the situation in the rest of sub-Saharan Africa, street hawkers in major city centres in Ghana often pay taxes and licenses through their association heads. Members belonging to hawkers’ associations mostly pay their levies yearly, quarterly or monthly. Some are also set for daily ticketing to ensure their legitimacy of space occupation (Adamtey, 2014). Dwelling on street hawkers in Ghana, King (2006) recounts levies and taxes from hawkers in Kumasi represent a very significant amount in the total revenue derived on Metropolitan level. For the hawkers, these contributions legitimise their right to operate in the street and mean they should not face resistance from the city.

**Plate 2. 1: Daytime street hawking in La-Nkwantanang Municipal Area**



Source: Author’s Fieldwork, 2020

## Plate 2. 2: Night street hawking in La-Nkwantanang Municipal Area



Source: Author's fieldwork, 2020

### 2.4 Space Appropriation in Street Hawking

Scholarship on street hawking has outlined these tensions between city authorities on a global scale. Whilst this thesis does not disagree with this, I suggest space attachment has been subjugated to other issues surrounding street hawking, and as such has remained understudied.

. Indeed, there has been a lack of attachment to how street hawkers choose where they will operate from and the motivations behind this, and how they establish themselves in spaces has, hitherto, received less attention.

From a scientific analysis of some of the major studies conducted on street hawking, activity in major cities of the global south is constantly marked as urban informality through the lens of urban

area appropriation and location decision by the hawkers (Bromley R., 2000; King, 2006; Mitchell, 2003). In the discussion of urban space appropriation for commercial purposes, more of often than not the discourse is faced with bifurcation into formal and informal economy where in most cases, the latter is termed a threat to the former (Mitullah, 2003; Skinner, 2008). Although treated as a plague (Bromley,2000; Turner, 2012) the informal appropriation of urban space has become a form of development shaped by day to day activities of the cities.

It is under this view that the study and recent research focuses on the daily life of the street hawkers in their modification and codification of the public space through some spatial strategies. These strategies in exploiting the urban public space for their business purposes requires the hawkers to have control over the space. These appropriation strategies by the street hawkers are to evade city authorities and whether collectively or individual carried out occur in an informal manner and also spontaneously through their daily activities. The absence of structured framework in appropriating urban space makes it more informal and problematic as the activities of the street hawkers keep increasing.

As many cities especially major ones in the Global south recognize street hawking as nuisance and negative to be a part of city make-up because they are “out of order” with the city plans, the cities in entity refuse street hawkers the right to contribute in urban planning decisions and reflects in hawkers response in informal appropriation of public spaces to meet their commercial needs. However, India through the supreme court order has become one of the first countries to acknowledge the importance and contribution of street hawking to the development of their economy (Ministry of Law and Justice, 2014) and has in accordance been able to assign and allocate specific hawking spaces that hawkers appropriate to suit their businesses without harassment. As human instinct for survival demands, hawkers in their process of eking out a living from the informal sector that they are open to will constant devise ways and employ diverse strategies to modify the urban space from their use value to the exchange value even if it will perpetually put them in opposition to the city authorities (Colin, 2018).

## 2.5 Relocation for Street hawkers

Just as in many African countries, street hawkers in Ghana typically in the major cities have been positioned as an informal activity that is inadequately fit for modernity and such activities have constantly and forcefully been susceptible to eviction (Du Plessis, 2005). Majority of street hawkers begin their business venture without space affiliation but with the initial intention of projecting towards areas with heavy traffic where they perceive more potential clients. This makes it difficult for hawkers to move their businesses indoors into an enclosed market where they lack the power to pull potential consumers. The processes involved in relocating hawkers are mostly long and difficult resulting in the poor turnout of the hawkers who successfully move into the new sites.

Few governments in the developed countries have been successful in evacuating hawkers from the streets. And in the global south, cities that forcefully move hawkers from the street are not able to enjoy that success for long because when conditions in the new sites are not favourable for their business, hawkers tend to hit the street corners that are profitable to the business. More often than not, relocation processes are carried out forcefully without much preparation from the hawkers. This is also a reflection of the fact that behind the closed doors of urban planning for city sustainability, little or no room is left for informal operators like the street hawkers to partake in city planning even though these groups continuously express their desire for public participation (Potts, 2007).

Another strand of research on eviction and or relocation of street hawkers pertains to the economic misfortunes and space reclaiming after unsuccessful relocation. Öz and Eder (2012) again point out that hawkers who get involved in unsuccessful relocation plans lose their original spots to new hawkers on the streets and as urban space becomes scarce to acquire, these people either have to be out of business or move to other vicinity that will support their business. This also accounts for some of the relocation problems that make it difficult for street hawkers to abandon the open streets and move to an enclosed market which mostly they deem not supportive for their economic venture.

The research strand extends to some of the relocation problems as failure to look beyond aesthetic measures. Mostly, government relocation efforts hardly take into account the desires of the hawkers to move nigh the public open spaces but rather stipulates a minimal integration into the

urban fabric resulting in limited public access to the hawkers and low trading turnouts and patronage (John & Lily, 2016). The spatiality of the new facilities for relocation also goes beyond the location of such facility to consider the locational arrangements within the urban public spaces and the interior setup to support the aesthetic feature that has the power to pull consumers just as the street experiences.

## CHAPTER THREE

### 3.0 THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

#### 3.1 Background of Relating theories

There has been recent and rich literature on the usage of public spaces in the urban centres that examine the various roles of urban space occupants and how that can better be improved. As most of the recent scholarships delve into the purposes of the urban space and the benefits to the urban poor (Brown, 2016) as they form the majority of the city vulnerables. Brown continues in her research in concluding that the urban space possesses not a static feature but with boundaries that can be shaped over time as a result of social negotiations even though it is classified as a common property for diverse purposes and to make the urban centres function better.

Other literature, proves that governments who in most cases determine which activities deserve to be in the urban spaces are in constant battle of wills with informal sectors and most of their interventions go against how these informal workers conduct their businesses (Suharto, 2004). The subject of street hawkers under the informal sector and the tension they face with city authorities have long existed and have taken different dimensions in recent years. Some are of the argument that, until the street hawkers change their way of operation without distorting the image city authorities envisage, they will always be victims of harassments from the authorities all in the name of eviction and or relocation.

Yatmo (2008), in his discussion of street vendors as part of the urban environment used “out of place” theory to explain some of the controversies that still linger on between these two extremities. Many researchers have used the “out of place” theory in different contexts (Cousins, 1994; Cresswell, 1996; Neyrey, 1996) but the common element that runs through the logic of the theory in explaining the positions of the objects or people in question is that *whatever* is considered ‘out of place’ can not be separated from the environment of location they are situated. In other words, objects or people can be rendered ‘out of place’ when they are in relation to the environment they exist in. Therefore, what might be considered ‘out of place’ in Location A might not be rendered the same position in Location B and vice versa.

As these former writers use “dirt” as an illustration in explaining the theory of ‘out of place’ (Yatmo, 2008) , so is such an analogy applied in the context of street hawkers. Street hawkers in their activities in many cities of developing countries are treated as “dirt” when such activities do not fit well with the entire pattern in the environment (Douglas, 1996).. This raises the question of how to form a sense of belonging or place attachment, in a place where you and your activities are deemed not fit for the urban environment.

In the quest for modern cities in the global south just as there is in the global north where everything is in its place, Lofland’s (1973) term “appropriate” points out how cities are orchestrated to prompt limitations to certain activities or people in certain places in the urban sphere. The term “appropriateness” as used by Lofland over four decades ago is still evident in the spatial segregation in the urban places as street hawkers claim their part of space for their activities depicting and dictating what those areas are meant for. Similarly, as the city authorities perceive the area in question from a specific context, there comes in play a duality of the urban sphere where the former activities are deemed inappropriate or out of place. Application of the ‘appropriateness’ of space and the activities or people is also used by Douglas to show that the purpose of space and its functionality is not static nor absolute, meaning the socio-cultural make-up of a place may perfectly fit the certain activities or certain people and in other places there may be rendered ‘out of place’. For instance, taking into account the street hawking, the daily operations of the hawkers are considered in certain streets of the urban spaces where they can trade their goods and services without harassment or confrontation by the urban task force whereas in other street corners, their activities become nuisance to both the city authorities and the “city elites”.

The above literature inform the decision on the selection of some theories in this section to help explain further the experiences of the street hawkers in relation to the space they operate in. To provide theoretical relevance to this study, Lefebvre’s “right to the city” approach serves as a gateway to discussing the literature which on its own may seem abstract. The informality theory is also discussed to further clarify the study relevance and also to help answer some of the questions this research poses. In addition, the urban citizenship concept is introduced to buttress the illustrations of the “right to the city” and in furtherance help in the discussion of the results. The

three concepts are selected because of the interconnectedness they prove for the specific case of street hawkers and how their space of operations is constructed.

### 3.2 The right to the city

The argument whether hawkers belong to the urban environment or not arises as I introduce Lefebvre's "right to the city" concept (1968). In applying the concept in studying street hawkers, I again make reference to Lofland's (1973) term "appropriateness" of space to help understand who is in the position to be able to determine how the urban public space is used, decision of powerplay over the space and to know who has the capacity to modify the purpose of the public space (Mitchell, 2003) to reflect on earlier literature on street hawking and informal economy (Hart, 1973; Robertson, 1983; Bromley R. D., 1998), until recent scholarship (Mitchell, 2003; Bhowmik, 2005) street hawkers have been identified as part of majority who add up to the informal economy and are mostly found on open public spaces and yet still they are in dire classification as groups who have no right to either make decision on the space of operation or in the rightful position to make claims of the spaces in the urban space. For the purpose of this study, I conceptualize Lefebvre's theory as "the right to the street". This is not to denounce the fact that "*right to the city*" is like a cry and demand on behalf of the informal operators but to examine emplacement in the context, areas where hawkers dominate for their economic existence. Likewise, it cannot be conceived of as a simple visiting right or as a return to the traditional cities.

Further contextual discussion of the theory in understanding the experiences of street hawkers' highlights bifurcation of the urban space. First of such part is what (Lefebvre, 1968) terms as the exchange value of space and the latter he calls use value of space. Similarly, as the French philosopher used the theory, the exchange value of the public space is projected when the hawkers modify the space to suit their business operations which is mostly in contradiction to its intended purpose. To the hawkers, a value is placed on the urban space especially in prime areas where they have heavy flow of their potential clients. This makes the hawking spots very valuable to the business and as such most of these spots are either rented out or sold to other hawkers by some dominating and powerful associations among the street hawkers who first appropriated the space. More often than not, the sale or rental of these hawking spots are done off the books of the local

authorities thus, sparking a series of conflicts between the authorities and the hawkers in those areas.

On the other hand, the use value of the space in question which is dominated by street hawkers affects other public uses of the space. Some of these open spaces are used for the public spaces and serve as a common resource for the entire society as such children's playgrounds, avenues for socialization among dwellers, but these spaces become marginalized if hawkers are able to codify them to meet their business needs. This gradually changes the purpose of the space to satisfy the demands of the dominating groups of the street hawkers who are able to appropriate the space. This gradual process of space appropriation takes place in informal arrangements unnoticeably and if impending measures are not put in check by the authorities, the areas soon gain code-functionality as hawkers operate daily. This thus, becomes difficult for authorities to successfully act in contradiction.

Consequently, the perpetration of their actions generates some street dominance and such expressions become more dire when hawking spaces are illegally rented out or sold to hawkers by some powerful groups. Not all hawkers attribute their "right to the streets" through the purchase of their vending spots or rental of operation spaces but for others through the longevity of their appropriation granting them a dismal legitimacy of the streets where they trade. Similarly, the majority of the street hawkers who succumb to the daily ticketing carried out by the local authorities deem such monetization as their license to the street and as such, they choose to commercialize the urban public space to meet their daily needs. As most of these payments and purchase are done behind closed doors and are not properly accounted for, it is difficult to segregate hawkers based on records of those who rent or pay levies from the rest and as the former claim rights to the streets on such basis, the rest of the majority joins the flow. Therefore, lack of formal records or proper regulations make implementation of considerable measures to control the activities of the informal sector very difficult.

### 3.3 Situating Street Hawkers in Informality Concept

Informality as a conceptual understanding has since been part of discourse in both urban planning and international development. Not only is there a growing scholarship on the agenda of informality but also, informal works significantly form part of the urban economies. With informality seen as a concept pursued at international levels in both advanced governments and the global south has also gained much more definitions over the time. Although, there are recent and rich scholarships on informal economies but De Soto's (1989) argument made over two decades still presents relevance in modern discourses and as such this study relates to Hernando's definition of informal economies as "the people's spontaneous and creative response to the state's incapacity to satisfy the basic needs of the impoverished masses" (p. 14).

From the inception of the concept by Hart in the 1970s, the advancement of the concept through time has also established a bifurcation between the non-state regulated and state regulated practices. Lindell (2019) stresses on how recent research works focus on informal urbanism where the first part of the divisions reflects the activities of the urban dwellers shaping their everyday lives through informal activities and the second part which lies on the state to fetter those activities. Mostly, the former research of informal urbanism depicts the activities of the marginalized groups in the urban sphere whereas the latter, which is always in contradiction to the former research, as Lindell continuously puts it relays the state's (in)action on urban regulations and policies that act in precedence "urban competition over social equity" (2019, p. 6). In many instances, such contradictions result in the displacement of street hawkers especially in the urban public spheres in the global south.

The informal sector constantly posed as opposite to formal sector, has obtained many attributes as a sector of ease entry, less capital required, uses adapted technologies and labour intensive, mostly family oriented and highly unregulated (ILO 1972). With the concept originally introduced in Ghana by Keith Hart to describe its economy has been on the increase as many southerners are not able to meet the qualities to fit in the formal sectors as well as those who have been rendered redundancy by the formal sector. In the duality of economies in the developing cities, the unlimited surplus labour from the formal sector settle in the informal sector where reproducible capital is not needed and the output per head is comparatively lower.

The informal sector throughout its inception has become an essential part of the economy of developing countries and is seen as a majority contributor to job creation in these economies (Skinner, 2008); Lyons and Brown, 2010). Next to jobs conducted in homes, street hawking is considered the majority of informal jobs and has become an integral part of the economies in Africa (Skinner, 2008). For many years, the sale of goods and rendering of services have either been partial or an entire source of livelihood for people especially on the streets in developing countries. Such informal practices in African urban development keep expanding in heterogeneity as the activities and their fringe benefits contribute to the sources of livelihoods to both the urban poor and the middle class.

Street hawking is considered an integral part of the informal economy of Africa and is constantly on a surge. Its contributing factors like migration and urbanization are also on the increase as the population drift from the urban peripheries in search of non-existing jobs. Consequently, these urban dwellers fall on the informal economy to generate livelihoods. From numerous scholarships on street hawking in the informal sector where several importance of street hawking has been extensively discussed. It is however in most countries less recognized and very much unaccounted for in national statistics. Review from both past and recent literature has perceived street hawking as unhealthy, unregulated and in most instances an underground practice that offsets the functionalities of the formal sector (Mitullah, 2003). This perception accounts for the perennial contestations between the street hawkers and the urban authorities over operational spaces, licensing, revenue collections and working conditions resulting in a perception of 'out of placeness' which also leads to a formal denial of their right to the city coupled with a reassertion of their sense of belonging whereby, their sense of belonging is also informal and temporally sensitive.

Conversely in some instances, local authorities who form the frontiers of the revenue collection from these informal operators do not keep records and as such are not able to understand the activities of street hawking. From this, Mitullah (2003) argues that most of the local authorities are not able to plan and come up with long-lasting policies to regulate the practices that they have for long tagged as "nuisance".

Hence, focusing on informality as another conceptual framework, helps the study to critically examine some of the experiences the street hawkers face and amidst the harassment of urban authorities, the number of hawkers in the urban spheres is still increasing and also demystify their importance on the streets to both the urban dwellers and the entire economy as well.

### 3.4 Urban Citizenship

Citizenship has assumed a much political connotation creating a gap between what is formally discussed as a “membership of a political community, or nation” (Lazar, 2014: 65) and what “practically experienced as citizenship” (Holston, 2008). Citizenship from the political angle is considered something that can be possessed by people through legal status and rather from the anthropological perspective, Gálvez (2010: 20) poses it a constant negotiation between individuals’ belonging and their rights to polity. This positions recent literature on citizenship on the reflection of individuals’ exhibition of social norms and cultural engagement for the common good. Although, extensive research shows how the legal status of citizenship is on the low due to the practice of democracy especially in global south, there is still the portrayal of citizens’ “accommodation of inequitable power relations and structures of authority” (Mills, 2012: 87). This in practical sense sometimes denies the marginalized individuals and the urban poor the citizenship status and are pushed into the class of “otherness” by the urban elites (Anjaria, 2006).

As Rutherford (2012) confers citizenship as how people think and act in relation to their social confinement, the idea of individuals’ belonging is been inflected and this, questions their right of existence in the space-community. Consequently, this brings to light how the urban poor in their collective efforts demand and influence their sense of belonging to the urban space and represent their needs, however possible that prove to them. From the perspectives of the street hawkers, urban citizenship is not only been a member of the urban space but also be able to claim, modify the space to suit their existence and the support of their capitalistic purposes.

Submerged in the urban space contestations between the authorities and the street hawkers, strategies deployed by the hawkers to represent their needs in the urban sphere and exercise their belonging triggers the ethics associated with citizenship depending on how “wrong” or “right” those actions are, the hawkers are ascribed the “otherness status” or considered as part of the urban fabric respectively. The ethical part of the urban citizenship can be well understood by focusing

the responsive measures the state—the authorities use to exert “right” citizenry through relocation processes or forcible eviction.

Citizenship has for long been seen as trickling down policy in the political sphere where the powerful elites get to infringe upon the entitlement of the marginalized group. Ong et al. (1996) shows that citizenship can in turn be viewed as bottom up engagement as citizens assume the active position of right-claiming and expression of belonging in a collective effort. This is less represented by scholars and to reveal the practical expression and inflection of citizenship amongst the chosen urban poor, it is therefore needful to go beyond the legal status of citizenship and focus on the ethnographical representation of how these individuals portray their citizenship and belonging through the daily construction of their street life (Lambek, 2010).

## CHAPTER FOUR

### 4.0 METHODOLOGY

This chapter discusses the research methodology employed for the study. It explains the motivation and choice of the study area, the design of the study, the study participants as well as the strategies used. The chapter also describes the acquisition of the empirical data which involved open interviews, in-depth interviews and participant observations

#### 4.1 Motivation for the research strategy and design

The methodology adopted for this study explains the motivation, the study, the research design, strategy and selection of participants. The study employs a case study design which is helpful in studying and understanding real-life phenomena. The study uses several methods under qualitative research approach including in-depth interviews, focus group discussions, participatory observation and mapping. Case study design is preferred in this study as to get an in-depth understanding of the case in question. This Yin (2009, p. 18) defines it as “an empirical inquiry that investigates a contemporary phenomenon in-depth and real-life context”.

The case study design also makes use of qualitative research approach favourable in answering the ‘how’ and ‘what’ of research questions (Bryman, 2012), to further enable the study to examine and explore the feelings that these street hawkers have towards the use of urban spaces and the perennial tensions that exist between the various groups. Also, the use of case study in this research makes room for the use of multiple sources of qualitative methods thus, making it possible for reception of those sources to create evidence and crossed verification in analysing the phenomenon. The use of the adopted research strategy and design makes it more feasible in adding alternating approaches to help establish the element of comfortability on the path of the study participants and to ensure fieldwork ethics as well as helping to create a sense of validation of the empirical data through the ethnographic measures. The choice of this qualitative approach and the use of case study in this research will make it possible to critically explore the real-life urban encounters faced by the various parties involved in terms of street access and the *philia* associated with the activities of the street hawkers.

## 4.2 Choice of study Area

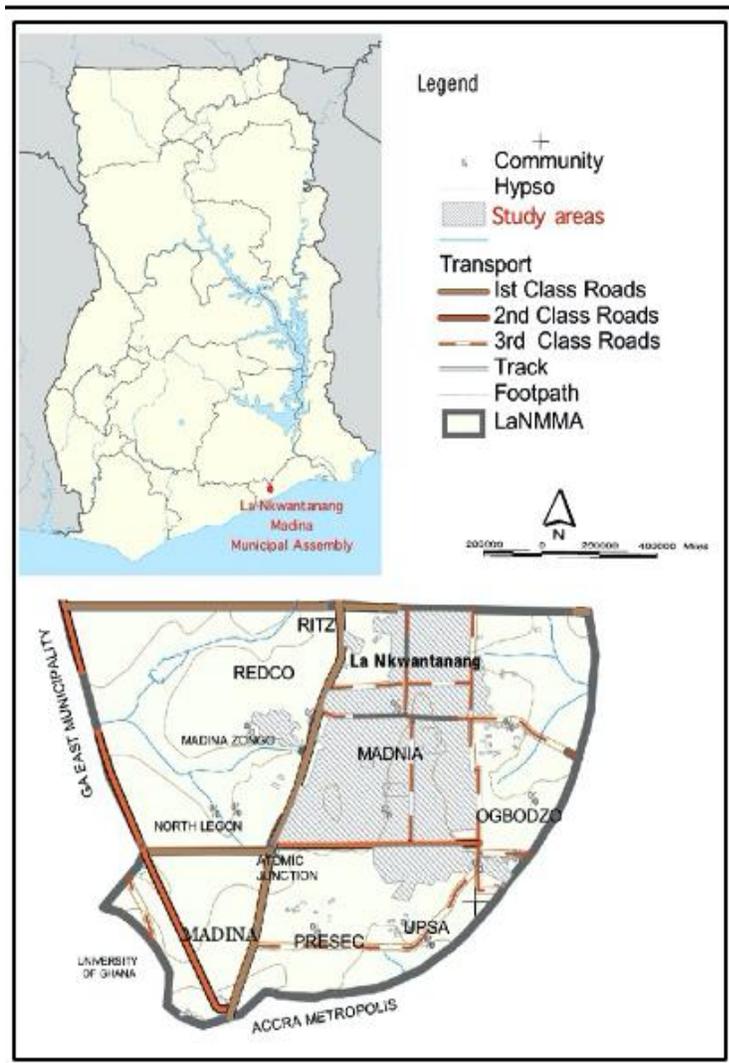
The choice of study area is the La-Nkwantanang-Madina Municipality Area. The municipality is considered one of the 16 Metropolitan, Municipal and District Assemblies in the capital region of Ghana. As part of the decentralization and improvement of economies in the region, the municipal was created in 2012. The la-Nkwantanang-Madina Municipality Area was carved out of the Ga-East Municipality and is bordered on the East by Adentan Municipal, the west by the Ga East municipal, the north by the Akwapim South and the south by the Accra Metropolitan Area. The Area covers approximately 70.887 square kilometres. The study area is considered the main hub for informal economy, making it a hotspot for activities both regularized and otherwise like street hawkers.

For the purpose of this study, some part of the vast Area will be selected and focused. The main economic activities of the area among others are commerce and Agriculture. Madina which is the central hub of economic activities in the municipality is about eighty-seven percent urban (GSS, 2012). Trading is considered the main economic activity in the Madina Municipality and that includes the operations of industries like Nkulenu, Special ice drinking water, Royal Aluminium Company and among others. The Madina area has the largest market in the municipality area which serves as the major central business hub, supporting major informal economic activities.

The area has major first-class roads connecting the municipal area to other business centres. Such roads and streets have becoming hotspots for hawking and the number of such informal economic activities on the surge. The study focused on the main Madina market areas, Zongo Junction, Ritz Junction Madina Police station Area. These areas were deliberately selected because they serve a great commercial nodes for street hawkers because of the major road intersections which often have huge traffic jams with high population concentration and also part of the places that the urban authorities deem the face of the face of the city (Urban Forum, 2020) and that such activities are not entertained.

Additionally, the areas were selected due to its high occupancy level of the street hawkers which forms an integral part of the informal economy majority contributor to the nation's economy.

**Figure 4. 1: MAP OF STUDY AREA**



**Source: LANMA, 2020**

### 4.3 The study participants

The main participants of the study are the street hawkers who trade in the study area. The participants included hawkers who have been part of the relocation processes and had since left the new relocation sites to be back onto the streets as well as a proportionate number of hawkers who have never taken part in any of the relocation processes. The selected individual hawkers either had their wares displayed on the street corridors or some who hawked from one traffic intersection to another in the flow of heavy pedestrian movements while others also displayed their

goods on trucks and carts that they moved from one place to another in maximization of good purchases. Methods of selection of study participants were purposely done especially with the street hawkers and the formal shop owners. The selection of the formal shop owners took into consideration those who have/ had constantly encountered problems with the hawkers. Criterion-based sampling was performed amongst the street hawkers. According to Islam (2015), such deliberate selection takes into consideration the people, settings, venues, and events which helps to provide the necessary data for the required study.

Additionally, strategically selecting study participants helps to make data comparisons, and also examine various opinions in the research area (Bryman, 2012). Likewise, is it important to consider mixed backgrounds of the participants particularly amongst the street hawkers which brings into context different perspectives of the real-time issues (Ritchie & et.al, 2014) Therefore, the selection covered both female and male street hawkers within the selected areas of study to have diverse responses in terms of gender influences on street hawking. Much attention was geared towards the types of street hawkers who moved with flow of heavy traffic in search of high sales of their wares. This type of street hawkers had different spatial experiences during their activities and the type of tensions that comes with it. This sampling helped in answering the research questions that guided the study (Bryman, 2012)

#### 4.4 The research process and methods

The initial research process for the empirical data collection started as a transnational communication where key informants were contacted via phone calls and emails. The purpose of those calls was to find out on secondary level the established news and the trending social media handles about the street hawking in the study area. This was crucial in the initial stage because data resources about the issues are of limited access and also getting front liners to deal with during the field work. The main informants for the research were the local people who some of them are part of the associations of the petty traders in the study area, therefore it was easy to locate some of the participants and to get them informed about the study and the part they could play before the field study commenced. Not forming part of the initial research plan, the fieldwork was carried out in two parts; first field study was before the severe outbreak of the global pandemic of the Novel COVID-19 in the country and the second part took place after the lifting of partial lockdown in the major cities of the country of which the study area was part. These periods of the field studies

influenced some of the methods of data collection and is also believed to have influenced the results from the gathered data.

To ensure proper engagement with the study participants, two locals were hired as gatekeepers for the informants. These locals were themselves part of the main participants and also held positions as section leaders for the street hawkers in the areas. Also, in the process of data collection, another local who has formal education and is also the chairperson for the street hawkers Association in the La-Nkwantanang Municipal Area and himself a hawker voluntarily offered assistance as a gatekeeper introducing me to some of the street hawkers who were willing to partake in the interviews and focus group discussion. This approach also influenced the selection of the participants and the sample size as well. The method used in the empirical data collection included;

**Figure 4. 2 Research methods employed in field studies**



#### 4.4.1 Focus Group Discussion

Many qualitative researches have seen the use of focus group discussion as an effective way of gathering data in a collective order. Focus group discussion goes beyond the individualistic views in research methods and rather projects the collective point of views, experiences and attitudes of multiple participants (Caretta, 2015). For similar purpose of which many researchers use focus group discussion in qualitative research, this method adopted in the study helped reveal some collective beliefs and perspectives which would not have been discovered from an individualistic point of view (Ritchie & et.al, 2014). Two sets of focus group discussion were carried for this study. The division of the groups were based on locations; the first group comprised of street hawkers who were located in close proximity to the main Madina market and the second group were hawkers who were randomly situated by the main streets and the pavements.

Both groups were made of hawkers of varying ages with majority above age thirty. Gender balance was ensured to ascertain the diverse opinions of both males and females. The order of the group discussion was not purposely structured but was conducted based on availability of the street hawkers. Also, the locational criteria used was motivated by the idea of how space is appropriated

and perceived by the hawkers in the study area. This was criteria was purposeful to the study bring forth the understanding of how the street hawkers construct the space they operate in and determine the exchange value and use value of those places. Both discussions focused on thematic areas of space appropriation in an unregulated sphere of operation, access to urban space and how they acquire them, some livelihood challenges during the phase of confrontations by the city authorities. During the discussion, a sense of patriarchal setting was identified in the group. In both discussions, women hawkers always referred to the men in the groups to first give answers to questions asked and the women will mostly second the point of views put across by the men. Consequently, some of the questions were gender driven to avoid the male dominance in the group discussion. This worked well as women were able to express themselves freely without sway of the male figure. This dominance has not only been recorded in this study but like the area of study other areas in the country is structured in patriarchal nature and thus, the phrase *“our husbands know better than we do so whatever they say is true”* is a common term used in Ghanaian societies.

As part of the practical consideration of the fieldwork, the venues for the group discussions were decided by the participants to ensure some convenience and open consent from them. The first group discussion took place under a shed of a formal shop which was secured by one of the hired locals and lasted for an hour. Similarly, the second group discussion lasted for about fifty-six minutes and was also took place at one of the participants’ hawking spot on the street corridors. This venue was voluntarily given out by the street hawker who was part of the discussion. The initial number for the second group discussion was eight but in the processes of the discussion, other passers-by joined who were mostly hawkers joined (stood by and listened) as observers without contributing.

**Table 4. 1 Study participant selection criteria**

GROUPS	LOCATION	NUMBER OF PARTICIPANTS	AGE	GENDER	
				MALE	FEMALE
<b>A</b>	CLOSE TO MAIN MARKET	11	40- 56	5	6
<b>B</b>	STREET CORRIDORS AND PAVEMENTS	8	29-43	4	4

Source: Research’s elaboration, 2020.

#### 4.4.2 In-depth Interviews

To understand the sense of belongingness of trading space from the perspective of hawkers, open-ended interviews and semi-interviews were conducted among fifteen street hawkers in the study area. Most of the interviews were open because since the aim was to seek the opinions of the street hawkers on their street experiences concerning their businesses, it was appropriate to leave the interviews open to the interviewees so to get to express themselves with little or no interruption. Some of the participants were selected from the focus group discussions, some were also recommended by participants who had already taking part in the interviews and the rest were hawkers I had approached on my own. All the interviews were conducted on the streets at their various vending points. Interviews with footloose hawkers were conducted on the streets but available resting points. The in-depth interviews were carried out to gained further understanding of how the hawkers feel on the urban space, how they acquire and appropriate the space they operate in. this qualitative approach of data collection helped the researcher to steer the study in different directions as relevant details were obtained (Ritchie & et.al, 2014).

#### 4.4.3 Participant Observation

Participant observation and data mapping are seen to be one of the most effective ways of data collection in qualitative studies where researchers get the opportunity to informally discuss relevant matters with participants ( (Ritchie & et.al, 2014; Bryman, 2012). Since this was a fieldwork study dealing with urban space and its appropriation, it was well thought of to observe how the hawkers conduct their businesses as well as their space occupation. So, during the field study, I observed how streets were appropriated in diverse ways during the day and at night. This also helped me identify some of the strategic measures that the street hawkers use in acquiring vending spaces on the streets. The participant observation again contributed to more data and visual collection as well as walk-interviews that gave me the opportunity to discuss spatial matters with the night hawkers.

#### 4.4.4 Limitation of the study

The first identified limitation of the study is participant selection. The selection was seen as biased on the basis that the majority of the participants for the focus group discussions and the in-depth

interviews were selected at the influence of key informants and from the recommendations of other study participants. This is seen to have influenced the responses from the participants. Although, the criteria for participant selection posed as a limitation, it also contributed in the establishment of trust and a better relationship with the participants as I was led by their fellow hawkers.

Also, there was a patriarchal display during the data collection that is assumed to have swayed the discussions. Ghana in general is a patriarchal country and this has extended to other aspects of the economic settings. This was more evident during the focus group discussions where women mostly gave the platform to men to talk on their behalf. Statements made by the male participants were mostly seconded by the female counterparts. This, in assessment was seen as a limitation to the study and if things had gone otherwise, it is believed things other relevant issues would have been revealed.

The research was conducted in an election year and as such, methods of data collection were associated with politics. Some respondents in the initial stages of the interviews and FGDs thought information to be gathered were for political purposes. This made some of the respondents to ask spontaneous questions like *“which political party do you stand? It better be this party (name of one political party was mentioned) if not I will not answer.”* This again influenced some of the questions that were asked during the fieldwork.

### **Statement of Impact (COVID-19)**

Majority of the limitations of this study was due to global pandemic, novel COVID-19. This had a lot of influences on the thesis especially the fieldwork. The schedule for fieldwork was from March to April 2020 in the capital city of Ghana and the country began recording cases on 2<sup>nd</sup> March 2020. The impact of the COVID-19 affected the initial research aim and some of the generated questions. The thesis objectives initially included views of the local authorities in how they handle issues of street hawking in the study area that distorts the belonging of the street hawkers and whether they feel in place or out of place. The research also planned to find out the roles the local authorities play in the street appropriation of the urban public spaces.

Due to the rippling measures that the country adopted to reduce the infection of the virus, there was partial lockdown which meant all activities and dwellers in the two major cities in the country were halted. This made it difficult to conduct scheduled interviews with the local authorities. Few interviews had been conducted with the street hawkers before the presidential directives was

enforced. Consequently, much attention was focused on the street hawkers since that was the available data. This made me change part of the research aim and questions to suit the initial data collected. I made the decision under the directives of thesis supervisor. This decision was arrived at after measures of conducting online fieldwork study in uncertain times had proven futile. Not knowing when the movement restrictions in the capital city was going to last, measures like online interviews were implemented but it could not work because almost all the contacted respondents did not agree to it and to them it was better to see face-face the person they are talking to and that they could only partake if the restrictions were lifted. This applied to the local authorities who indicated they could not contribute via mobile means. Two out of the initial selected participants agreed to a telephone interview and partook in the interview. It was noted that the interviews conducted via telephone did not last long and also did not reveal more relevant issues compared to the face-face interviews that was crucial for the discussion of the research. Since the study was planned to include the feelings (attachment) of the hawkers to the vending spaces in the urban centres, such emotional expressions, facial expressions and other gestures would have been lost in the interviews (Novick, 2008).

The number of planned interviews before the commencement of the fieldwork was 40 in-depth interviews and 3 focus group discussions. This number was considered feasible taking into account time limitation for the study. Having 5 out of 40 in-depth interviews was seen as an insignificant percentage in the analysis and discussion chapters of the study. The country lockdown was lifted after 3 weeks and it took traders to resume activities on the streets. Further interviews were planned to add up to the existing ones even though time was far spent for data collection.

The second phase of data collections also came with extra limitations. Participants were not much more responsive post-corona lockdown. Most people also associated the interviews with exercises conducted to help eradicate coronavirus. Preventive measures like the use of nose mask, social distancing and others distorted the method of data collection. Although hawkers had fully resumed to their street activities, impact of the COVID-19 coupled with the above measures influenced the number of interviews and FGDs conducted for this study. Ten more in-depth interviews, two Focus group Discussions and participant observation and mapping were conducted post-lockdown in the country. In conclusion, these limitations changed the fundamental research aims, theoretical framework, the data size, findings and discussions resulting in re-adjustments of some aspects to suit the emerged issues.

#### 4.4.5 Positionality

Positionality in research is deemed a personal encounter and that makes it more challenging (Webster, 2016). This makes positionality well determined as the stand one takes in relation to “the other (Merriam & et.al, 2001, p. 411) Conducting a self-reflection as an interviewer, my positionality as an indigene of the place just as the study participants, being familiar with the language and the societal norms of the informal sector, I bear similar sentiments and connection with the participants of the study. In addition, being a native and understanding the local language brought about some level of familiarity and a personal relationship which I believe would not have existed otherwise. All the same, the point of familiarity brought about openness which made data collection easy in spite of the global pandemic which in general restricted lot of communication. Similarly, my position as a native made me figure out from the onset, how patriarchal the society is and therefore informed me more on how to include more women in the fieldwork to help create gender balance in the study.

Also, my gender as a male researcher played a role in my participant selection. Male hawkers were more welcoming to partake in the study more than women and this I believed would have been a different story in my gender was otherwise. My educational background I believe shaped the study in another dimension. Many of the participants had low level of education and they felt their answers were not going to contribute that much to the study and in turn did not want to open up more from the initial stage.

Furthermore, my choice of methods and theoretical framework as an ethnographer positioned the study in a way as this portrayed my reflectivity (Mitra, 2010). I might have taken my positionality in the study for granted in attempting to engage with participants in the informal sector with relatively low level of education. Therefore, knowing how much my position have impacted the study, I tried my best through my data analysis and application of theories to be open minded and objective to help understand and portray the sense of belonging through their expressions and illustrations.

#### 4.4.6 Ethical consideration

Ethical concerns as well as practical considerations were very well maintained as part of the qualitative approach in the study (Ritchie & et.al, 2014). The purpose of the study and the role of the participants were clearly explained to the various participants of the study. Participants who could not read English were given the liberty to invite people who could read to also explain it to them what the research was about while the rest who were comfortable in reading were given printed copies of the research purposes illustrating their roles. The study participants were made aware that they had the power during both the in-depth interviews and the Focus Group Discussions to contribute freely without any obligation or whatsoever. They were at liberty to not answer questions they were not comfortable with. With these preliminary considerations, study participants understood clearly what the research was about and what it intended to achieve and on that established grounds they gladly partook in the study knowing how much they can contribute to literature and inform decision-making someday.

Also, in practical consideration, participants were given the chance to decide venues they were comfortable with for the interviews as well as the FGDs likewise the appropriate times, so their working hours were not much affected. As it suitable and convenient for the researcher to audio-record the interviews and discussions so much attention is paid to the interviewee with less note taking (Ritchie & et.al, 2014), all participants were asked the permission to record and they all consented to that measure. This permission was sought before recorder was turned on. In addition, during the participant observation, permissions were sought from participants before imageries were taken even though none of such images had an identifiable face of participants or passers-by.

To conform to issues of anonymity as part of the ethical concerns of the study, pseudonyms were given to every participant so no information relayed could be traced to any participants although most of them indicated they did not have issues having their real names in the study. Some also insisted their images be displayed but the ethical concerns in the study were very much explained to them to ensure total anonymity.

Generally, it could be said, and I believe the research enforced a very strong ethical concerns and practical considerations so neither the participants nor the gatekeepers of the fieldwork could be

associated with future issues concerning information provided for the accomplishment of this study.

**Plate: 4. 1: Participant reading the purposes of the research and participant roles**



Source: Author's fieldwork observation, 2020

#### 4.4.7 Data Analysis

The qualitative data collected for the study was analysed from a 3-tier approach; translation-transcription, coding and interconnection. Both the in-depth interviews and the FGDs were conducted in the one of the local languages (Twi) in the country. And in analysing the data, interviews were first translated into English language and transcribed for easy interconnection. Also, coding was done to identify some phrases and words that were mostly used by the participants such codes included; eviction, task force, formalisation, street hawkers, tickets, confiscated goods etc.

The analysis and interpretations of the data were done and displayed through pictures and quotations from the participants

**Figure 4. 3: Snapshot of a subset of the data**

A	B	C	D	E	F	G
Anonymous Name	Region of Origin/Country	Age	Start year of trading	Family Situation	Trading Items	Forms of trading
Victoria	Volta Region	33	2012	Single, no kids	fresh fruits and vegetables	Footloose hawker
OB	Nigeria	30	2014	Married, 2 Children	Mobile phones	sedentary hawker
Mustapha	Nigeria	34	2011	N/A	Electronic accessories	sedentary hawker
Paul	Niger	32	2016	Married with 2 kids	Belts and vests	footloose hawker
Usman	Niger	41	2016	Married No child	Electronic repairer	sedentary hawker
Linda	Greater Accra	38	2006	2 Kids no husband	female footwear	dual hawker
Stephen	Eastern Region	47	2003	Married with 3 kids	Male shirts	dual hawker
Frimpong	Eastern Region	51	2002	wife and one kid	watches and other African wearbles	sedentary hawker
Maame Esi	Eastern Region	36	2011	4 kids no husband	dresses	footloose hawker
Faustina	Eastern Region	37	2010	Married two kids	snacks	footloose hawker
Ericus	Eastern Region	46	2009	Married	drinks	footloose hawker
Edward	Ashanti Region	29	2009	Married with 2 children	Unisex clothes	sedentary hawker
Akwesi B	Ashanti Region	43	2013	Married, one child	male footwear	footloose hawker
Solomon	Ashanti Region	36	2014	Married with 3 children	only Male jeans wear	sedentary hawker
Osei	Ashanti Region	29	2017	Married, 2 children	Second clothings	dual hawker
Adwoa	Ashanti Region	36	2010	Married 1 child	Second clothings	sedentary hawker

Source: Author's elaboration, 2020

## CHAPTER FIVE

### 5.0 FINDINGS

This chapter presents the findings of the empirical data collected for the study. The chapter begins with an overview of street hawking in the study area and further presents the analyses under four thematic findings; the acquisition and appropriation processes of the urban space they operate in, claiming their belonging

#### 5.1 Inability of space construction and mode of hawking

Based on the preliminary discussions with the groups and other respondents of the study, it was clearly identified that the inability of hawkers to construct a fix space for their business result in the diverse modes of hawking. One of the research questions is geared towards how the street hawkers construct their space of operation but in such quest comes an adjunct reflection on what happens to hawkers who due to certain factors are not able to appropriate their operating spaces. Some of the diverse mode of hawking by the hawkers as a result of inability to appropriate trading spaces found by the study includes footloose hawking and another mode I call “dual-hawking”. For this, Eric one of the respondents expressed

*“I have been moving up and down with my items to meet people who can buy some of my items. As you can see, I sell belts, singlets (vests), flying ties and braces. I do not have any fix place in the markets or on the streets where I can put these items for passers-by to watch and maybe buy. Since there is no available space and also, I do not have money to rent a space, I move about to make ends meet.”*

It was also found out that hawkers’ mode of operation in relation to space construction changes over time. Some hawkers transition from footloose hawking into sedentary when they are able to acquire space to conduct their business. Stephen in similar experiences expressed

*“I started selling on the street about eleven years ago and for about five to six years, I was moving in the traffic selling watches and calculators. To get a place to set up my watches was difficult but after selling for a while I was able to get a place alongside the pavement and I began adding other*

*wares to the watches. Later, the watches were not selling as I wanted so I decided to stop dealing in the watches and I went for a bail of second-hand clothes (mostly for guys) and when I started increasing sales, I added shoes to it. I put all of them on the truck and sometimes I hang some on under the umbrella here.”*

As some hawkers’ transition from footloose to sedentary, others also use this as an opportunity to make multiple streams of income by toggling between footloose and sedentary mode and such people I refer to as “dual-hawkers”. During the focus group discussion, it came to light that three participants of the discussion of whom are all women had formed some form of alliance to help themselves gain extra money for the upkeep of their families.

**BOX 5.2- The trio-network for extra “helping hand”**

After the focus group discussion, three women who are all street hawkers and are neighbors on the street asked me to have further discussion with them so they could tell me more about their network. This whole discussion came about when I asked them if they were part of some street hawking associations. Almost all the participants said they were part of a union in the area except these three women. Given pseudonyms, the first hawker named Gifty, second, Lizzy and the third Afua. all these women have kids but with little or no support from their husbands. Lizzy, who is the youngest among them is 34 years old and Gifty, the oldest is 47 years old. The whole network idea started about 3years ago when there was going to be a footbridge construction meaning some of the hawkers and their space of operation were going to be affected. Gifty lost her space to the construction and began to share space with Afua. These women have known each other for a very long time and have created some kind of sisterhood amongst themselves. Both Afua and Lizzy decided to reduce the quantity of items they display on their tables so Gifty could manage the little space created. This went on for a while and they decided to pursue other means of extra income. Gifty sells lady’s footwears and necklaces, Lizzy deals in lady’s briefs, and make-up kits while Afua sells kitchen wares. Since these items are heavy to carry around, they all decided to add other items that they could easily carry on their head and move around to meet potential customers. Afua decided to sell fruits in addition to her wares, Lizzy added iced-drinks and water and Gifty also added pastries and other snack bars. So what these ladies agreed on was that , for the six days in a week that they operate, two of them become stationary and look after(make sales) the items of the other who is away in the streets selling. The cycle repeats for every member for two days each. The purpose was to make more sales amongst themselves and also most importantly, on occasions where the local assembly forcefully evicts them

from the streets, they would still be able to sell in traffic lanes to eke out a living. They are of the view that this for the past two years before the interview has helped them to cater for their children. Gifty, the oldest narrates that “ *sometimes we allow our children to help us on the street, especially at times that one is not feeling well. For instance, I have two children and they are all boys and you see how boys are, they never like the idea of helping us on the streets even though this is what puts food on the table. So when I am not feeling well, Afua and Lizzy know where I keep my items so they will display them on the table and sell them in the evening one of them brings me the money. This has become very helpful. This goes beyond the street relationship. When I was 6 months pregnant and couldn't stand on my feets to sell on the streets, my sisters (she meant Afua and Gifty) would sell my items for me and brought me every pesewa sold on those days. I know that even if something happens to me, they the people my children will run to- Lizzy added.*

Afua also concluded by highlighting why they did not need any union that would take their monies on monthly basis and never show them any proper help.

### Plate 5. 1: Mode of hawking



Sedentary hawkers along footbridge



Footloose hawkers in traffic

Source: Author's elaboration, 2020

## 5.2 Space acquisition and appropriation by hawkers

### 5.2.1 Reasons for the hawkers' choice of Location

In street hawkers' way of constructing their business spaces on the streets, location decision plays a greater role just as it is in other formal business settings. Locational patterns for street hawkers in the urban public spaces may seem scattered and unregulated especially in Ghana but, such locational dispositions have underlying reasons that have been overlooked on the part of the urban authorities in their planning and management schemes. In the study area, street hawkers among other reasons for choosing location for their wares, first decide on the availability of the urban public spaces before they consider the proximity to their potential consumers. This applies mostly to the sedentary traders who have heavy wares that cannot be moved around. Ericus in his description of locational setting for his wares on the pavement said;

*“Deciding on the location, I first thought of getting a place close to the main markets or the lorry stations but it was impossible so because all the open spaces are occupied by other hawkers and what you may get around the market squares are formal shops and I do not have that huge sum of money to rent. Therefore the next thing was to look for available open space to squeeze my table and sell my things, so far as people pass there and can see my things.”*

The results of the La-Nkwantanang Municipal area revealed that even though the primary decision for location selection for street hawking was based on availability, their scattered location pattern in different urban public spaces reflected on their dependence on other economic activities on the streets or close by that draws people to the street corridors.

*“ i do not have a fixed location to sell my items but I mostly hawk on this street lane because of the fuel station.”*

Above is an expression of a footloose hawker indicating his proximity to a commercial landmark. Revealed in the study, any type of street hawking mentioned above are in reliance of location availability and proximity to economic activities that supports heavy concentration of people in the urban public spaces. In addition, another locational pattern was drawn from availability of potential consumers as street hawkers especially the footloose and those located on pavements positioned themselves to meet the pedestrian flow. Such people may not have a permanent location to display their wares but incessantly show up at the same location every day. In some cases as some of the participants indicated, the type of items sold also influence

their spatial patterns. Trading in some complementary goods and services, hawkers are drawn into some particular areas that attract desired consumers. A man through his 11 years of street trading expressed such sentiments by saying;

*“I used to walk the streets mostly in the traffic lanes to sell phone accessories. Daily sales were not much and sometimes the accidents in traffic made it worse, so my friend (he point to a phone shop) made me use the frontage of his shop so that when people bought new phones or came to repair their old phones, he would direct them to me to give them some of the need the accessories so they do not walk far for similar products elsewhere.”*

### 5.2.2 Acquisition of operating spaces by hawkers

In line with the diverse reasons leading to the locational patterns of street hawkers, decisions considered for space acquisition and occupation are also dependent on other various factors. Based on the preliminary findings of this study, it can be argued that, the street hawkers do not consider highly important an organised environment with proper security as a factor for acquiring space for their businesses. They accord priority to no payment of rental fees and access to consumers of their merchandise as motivating factor for space acquisition. This also to some extent explains why the hawkers are found on urban public places like the street corridors, pavements. To the respondents, how to acquire urban spaces within the municipality was their problem. They added, since most of the hawkers just like themselves do not have the financial means to rent ‘proper stalls’, finding themselves spaces in the open areas mostly on the bare floor and pavements becomes best alternative option as to some of them required not rental fees. The story in the study area was seen to be a bit different from the normal mode of securing a vending space on the street. Most of these respondents are part of traders’ union but they indicated the benefits of such unions were limited to the getting a vending space and that to acquire such spaces was dependent on “*who you know*” and how close you are with people who have enough space to sublet. A man sharing his opinions on how he acquired his vending space indicated that;

*“I got my place here through a friend whose brother is the shop owner (he points to a shop). I started hawking from Tudu and Kantamanto and when I moved to madina, I did not have any space on the pavement. Before getting this place in front of the shop, I had to serve the shop owner by helping him unpack his wares during the day and pack them back into the shops after days service. I did this for about a year whiles I was hawking in the traffic until my service to him was rewarded with the frontage of his*

*shop. Now I do not render that service any longer, I sometimes step in to help attend to a customer when he is not around,”*

These expressions indicate that some urban public spaces for hawking activities may be free of charge in monetary terms, but occupant make payment in kind gestures to make them eligible for the hawking spots. This method of acquisition was common amongst the hawkers and they understood it as an initiation process that creates a cordial relationship between the hawker and the formal shop owner. Also, following such commitments to the shop owner whose frontage is let out to the hawker, the traders are sometimes left with set of instruction that the formal shop owners hold unfrivolous. These sometimes include rules that the hawkers must abide by to maintain their vending spots. Victoria expressed her sentiments during the in-depth interview and said;

*“she told me I could set up a table in front of shop and sell my merchandise so far as I do not sell any of the items she sells in her stall and also not to mount an umbrella stand in front of her shop.*

It can be argued from the expressions of the respondents that, sometimes the items hawkers deal in also influence where they are able acquire their operating space. Hawkers who are able to situate themselves on the pavements in front of formal shops are mostly cautioned by the shop owners about the task forces and their random eviction, prompting them;

*“I may have given you the place to sell your items, do not display them in such a way that deprives other people the access to the pavements and the sidewalks and also bear in mind you are subject to eviction when the local authorities or the task force come”- Victoria (narrates her how she was addressed by the shop owner)*

Again, the interview revealed that some of the hawkers acquire their spaces through inheritance: as either a parent or a relative who is too old to continue trading on the streets or cannot continue the business due to ill health. Such people take over the spots and continue to operate from there as the predecessor appropriated it. Not using the collected data in generalization of the entire study area, the findings creates an overview of some of the methods and ways hawkers in the area acquire their vending spots that in one way or the other generates tension between them (hawkers) and the city authorities. During the FGDs it was identified that inasmuch as majority of the participants expressed no payment of rental fees for their vending spaces on the streets. Some

outlined a different experience as to how they got their places on the streets. Three members of the first group discussion expressed their views about their space acquisition as;

**BOX 5.3 snapshot of urban public space acquisition**

*“my case was different because the person who gave me the place, I display my merchandise sold it to me. My place is not in front of any shop just that it is so close to the road. Even though I know where we sell are not permanent places for this kind activity and that the authorities can come and sack us from the street but, since we do not have any better place like the market to sell, I took the risk and bought it from him. At least on the days that we do not get evicted from the street, I am able to sell some items. The person who sold it to me was also a hawker for about 18 years and he was going back to the village and was not sure when he was coming back and since he knew people are in need of space on the streets, he took the advantage and sold it to me. This was about four years ago and in spite of the numerous unsuccessful evictions by the local authorities I have been able to recoup the amount I used to purchase the place. I also myself selling the space when I am leaving here because I know there are people who will be ready to buy it from me because every now and then people are looking for vending spaces on the street corridors.”- Akwasi*

Asking OB who is a Nigerian street hawker how he got his vending space came with a similar acquisition method. He also explained it as;

*“I also got my place after a massive eviction exercise from someone who used to work in the municipal office (he withheld the officer’s name). I used to hawk with mobiles and got to know him when he became my customer. After the eviction, it took about two months and the hawkers started coming back to the streets and I must add that before the eviction exercise, there used to be a small kiosk that was demolished during the exercise. This made my current space vacant and people were somehow afraid to mount a semi-permanent structure there because it was almost in the middle of the pavement. That was when the officer informed me about the space and told me it was legal to sell there and to make it available to me, I would have to pay an amount for that. As desperate as I was to get a fixed place so I could expand my business, I took the risk and got him the money although I did not get a legal document to confirm my purchase. I have encountered several issues with my place, and I have been asked to evacuate by the local authorities on several occasions, but I am still here, “**you know what I mean**” (he smiled)- OB*

In addition, Faustina introduces her side of acquisition process as;

*“I have not bought nor rented my vending spot, but I share the space with the owner who appropriated the space. The original owner (the first person who operates from there) was a daytime hawker who used to sell cosmetics and other hair product. I am her neighbor at home and when she decided to change her line of business to become a food vendor, she asked if I wanted a place to start an on-street business and make use of her place during the day and she will use the same spot to sell her food in the evenings. The cost that came with me using her space was that, I was the one going to provide the table and bench and for our use. Meaning when I close for the day she comes to use the table and the bench and the same spot to set up her “food joint”. This I will say is the price I pay and also because she starts by 6:00pm I have to close before she comes. But in some cases, I have fields day when she doesn’t come.”*

### 5.3 Space Appropriation

Reflecting on the space acquisition processes by the hawkers, the vending spots (space) become assets with price tags and based on demand and supply, the urban public spaces are seen as an economy on its own. Initial hawkers who first constructed the place had it for free but as the demand of the vending space increases, these hawkers when no longer in business tend to associate monetary value to the space and in their own capacity rent or sell the space illegally. In appropriating hawking space by the street hawkers in the study area, the research sees it from two perspectives; from hawkers who are part of the traders’ union in the area and the others who do not belong to any association. Much attention is given to those in the association because they represent a powerful and semi-organized group in the area. The study through empirical data found out that the hawkers who do not belong to any association do not have great relationship with their fellow hawkers unlike those in the union. Although they all appropriate their space in diverse ways, hawkers in the union outline some informal codes that makes them more organized in their space construction in such a way that hawkers are not registered to their spaces on the open street yet still they are able to operate from the same spot every day and if a hawker is absent on the street for a day, nobody uses that space.

*“I know where I sit to sell my stuff, it is true we do not have our names on the tables and we even pack the tables from here every day after work but still, when I come the following morning I know where to mount my table to sell and so is everyone. And when someone does not come to work nobody comes to sit here to sell.”*

In general, the hawkers have a very good sense of how to appropriate and utilize the urban public spaces to maximize their various businesses. Also having an understanding of the original meaning designated for the open streets, they adapt strategies that make them in their initial business operations occupy the street corners. They do so with the initial intentions not to obstruct other users of the street corridors. Such strategies include; creating wooden slabs to cover the gutters to construct more operating spaces, making other wooden structures to help them display their wares in a vertical order, expanding their market facade. Consequently, when hawkers maximize business, their wares increase in quantity and that means more space for their merchandise and this is when they gradually take over the available open spaces on the pavements. This expansion creates more commercial value of the space for the hawkers while other social groups are disincentivized. The gradual appropriation of space in this manner brings about diversity in the urban space usage and this, in a space of time propagates into an informal codification of the business space. The in-depth interview and the participant observation revealed that some of the urban space in the area have been appropriated for different purpose. An example can be found on the street of the Madina Police station which as diverse functions at different days and times of the week. It was observed that during the day in the weekdays, shoulders of the streets are used as parking lots and during the evenings throughout the night, those streets become attractive for food vending for all social classes. Similarly, throughout the day on weekends the shoulders of the streets serve as hawking space.

During a walk-in interview, a hawker expressed her views in such space appropriation;

*“we come here to sell on weekends because hardly would the task force (Abayie) come here to sack us from the streets. For me and most of the people here sell in traffic and we come mount tables here to sell. When we do so, I think we do not distract the movements of the cars and people who come to the stores here and the banks.”*

Also, during an evening observation, another hawker who uses the streets in the evenings shared her thoughts on why she decided to appropriate the space during the evenings, and she mentioned;

*“when I come here to sell my food in the evenings, nobody has time to come and evict me nor ask me to pay tickets for using the space. This even helps the economy as we provide food for those who do not have enough money to purchase expensive meal from the restaurants and besides, we do not disturb other activities and those who use the pavements because the people in town are not much”*

The above expressions explain the balance street hawkers construct out of the urban public space and their actions outline in their expressions also show how they tend not to dominate the streets with their hawking activities and deprive other users from make use of the open streets. As part of the informal activities which dominates the economy of Ghana, these people show how their urban space appropriation can contribute to the economy especially their services patronized by the marginalized majority in the urban centers. This imply how successfully these informal operators have appropriated their spaces in the urban sphere.

*“you have no idea the number of people who come here to buy because of how cheap the street foods are. Some laborers come here after their day’s work with Ghc 5 (less than \$1) for full meal and with that amount, no one can get food in a restaurant. So why shouldn’t they allow us to use the street at night and weekends in these places to help ourselves and the economy.” - She added*

**Plate 5. 2: Parking spaces used as food vending point at night by hawkers**



Source: Author's fieldwork, 2020

## 5.4 Urban Space Belonging

### 5.4.1 Ticketing as part of our rights to the city

The study found that the hawkers in the study area are on daily basis taxed for their presence on the streets and to them they are entitled to something that the local authorities mostly deprive them of. Many were of the view that the payment of the tickets issued them was an approval of their existence on the streets. An expression recorded from one of the hawkers on the streets during narrated;

*“The local authorities come around every day to collect levies from us on the streets. We gladly pay because we assume that the money is used for the development of the country. That is how we the hawkers also pay our taxes to the government. I have not seen anyone resist payment because if you do not pay the money your items will be confiscated and since the amount to pay on daily basis is small...Ghc 2 (\$0.32) we all pay without reproach. But yet still they come and chance us out of the streets obstructing business. This is what we think is not fair. If they think we should not*

*be here, then they should not come for the money and in that case, they can have some genuine grounds to evict us.*

Narrating an incidence, another member of the group discussion added;

*“there was a day they came around with megaphones to announce an upcoming eviction exercise and they gave us five days to evacuate and during those five days they came and issued us tickets. So if you think we are here illegally, why do they condone illegal practice by taking money from us. Unless someone somewhere is squandering the money and it is not going to the local authorities but all the same the tickets have the stamp of the municipal assembly on it. We are part of the economy so we should be properly regulated by the authorities and we should be left to operate.”*

Furthermore, most of the hawkers in the area have been operating for over a decade and when talked to, the interviews revealed that previous administrative government in the year 2003 to 2008 brought up a petty trading scheme which permitted the hawkers to trade on the streets provided they complied with the laid-out policies from the authorities. Majority of the respondents made reference to those periods and wished the current government had done same to regulate their operations for proper management. This the chairman of the Traders’ union expressed;

*“In Kufuor’s administration (2000-2008), we the traders on the street were asked to register with the Abokobi municipal authorities (before Madina became a Municipal area) and during the registration processes we paid BOP (Business Operating Permit) for a year which allowed us to sell on the streets. They then came on the streets and marked the roads where hawkers could mount their stands and operate. Those who flouted those rules were fined and this worked for us all. That made us feel that we belonged in the urban spaces (streets).”*

In addition, the chairman mentioned one of their aims as a union was to regulate their activities on the streets, so they do not distract other street purposes.

*“we pack our tables and chairs and sweep the streets after work and once a month we organize a communal cleaning of the streets. This also shows we care about the streets and the space we operate*

Above is an expression the chairman added to show that they do not only commercialize the streets but they take care of streets as well and that just as they obey and make the daily payments for the tickets, they deserve to operate in the space they have appropriated.

#### 5.4.2 Social Concerns

Aside the issue of regular ticketing depicting hawkers “right to the streets”, there are some social concerns that were raised by the hawkers which they think is also denying them space on the streets

*“other nationals are taking over the streets with their hawking activities and our businesses are going down. There are lots of Nigerian hawkers who have spaces to sell their items and we the indigenes do not have space on the streets. Also, Nigeriens (someone from Niger) have taken over the streets with their cheaper goods making some of us change our merchandise. I for instance started sell belts and vests at the frontage of the filling station but now there are more Nigeriens with cheaper products, and I was forced to stop and start selling shoes.”*

The above quotes highlight some concerns that face the hawkers and their issues rise to the point that when the hawkers with fixed locations are been evicted, these footloose Nigeriens are not affected, and they just move from one vending point to another. These foreigners do not pay tickets because they are not stationed, and it is difficult to get them. It was also revealed that these group of people do not join the trade unions and it is even difficult to regulate them to conform to the street policies.

To add up to hawkers’ numerous concerns of their space of business operations, urban road constructions and other urban land use have become an obstruction to their business space and have equally infringed on their belonging on the street. The recent construction of footbridges to ease pedestrian movements in the city centers has not sit well with the street hawkers as they deem it a deliberate measure of the local assembly to evict them from the streets. This meaning was deduced by the hawkers based on the design of the footbridges which they considered out of the ordinary. One of the hawkers bitterly expressed;

*“they intentionally made the footbridge so long to occupy most of the places we operate. It took them more than one year to construct this footbridge and during this period nobody could come here to sell and after construction, many hawkers have lost their spaces they appropriated.*

*Hawkers will gradually mount their stands on the footbridge and soon than later it will become a vending point. Now some of us have to re-appropriate the space and those who could not get space have moved beyond the road markings to sell.*

**Plate 5. 3: hawkers re-appropriating space under the newly constructed footbridge**



*“Elongated footbridge obstructing appropriated space for hawking”*

## 5.5 Evacuation and Relocation to new market Centre

Forcible relocation and or eviction have never departed from street hawkers in developing countries especially with cities striving to attain a modern status. This is same for street hawkers in Ghana who are in constant tensions with the local authorities. Hence, in examining the hawking spaces constructed by the hawkers, the chronic problems they pose to the environment, it is equally important to listen to the hopes, frustrations faced in their businesses. From further extrapolation, hawkers in the study area reacted angrily to the constant and forceful relocation recounting their frustrations and why they deem such actions of the authorities uncalled-for. The collective reflection of their frustrations confirms Anjaria (2006) allusion on authorities’ inconsistency in the regulations and policies concerning street hawking thus, making them an eyesore in societies. The hawkers indicated through further expressions how the authorities want to move them from an

already prepared and accessible open streets to a facility that is not fully completed to support their business venture. Frimpong, one of the hawkers who was involved in the initial relocation process but now back on the street expressed;

*“The road that leads to the new facility is one-way drive and it is difficult for customers to drive to the market and that drives some of our customers away. Also, the entire floor is not tarred or properly constructed so there is always dust which is not conducive for operations like this”.*

Likewise, Lizzy, another hawker who had abandoned her space in the new market facility and now selling her wares on the street reiterated the poor condition of the new place that the authorities are forcing them to occupy. She added by saying;

*“How can they move us to a place that has no toilet nor urinary for the convenience of both the hawkers and the customers who will come there”.*

Adducing from the interviews and the focus group discussions, street hawkers explained how politicking on the issues of eviction have affected their ways of operation and their livelihoods. Hawkers are left on the streets to operate in many forms when elections are approaching. Through those periods, hawkers are promised better working conditions in exchange of votes and when these political exercises are over, the conflicts between the extremities are reignited. This, some of the participants classify as a major problem that makes them continue their activities on the streets. In their denunciations, some expressed;

*“They always come to make empty promises on how to get us a proper marketplace before they relocate us so that we on the street corridors can have decent spaces to operate. These promises are always made during election periods and after the politicians have gotten our votes and are in power, they are the same people who will issue commands for our forceful relocation. There were numerous eviction exercises throughout last year and since the beginning of the year, we have not been chased out of the streets and we know it is because of the election.”*

In addition, the relocation processes have also proven futile due to corruptible measures on the part of some local authorities as well as some powerful groups on the streets. From the apparent data, extortion by some power groups of hawkers deter the rest from getting a place in the new

market areas. Also, the location and the market structure is another factor that pushes hawkers from acquiring spaces in the market. The hawkers lamented on their refusal to relocate to the new market due to some inappropriate measures. They asserted;

*“It is true we wanted a place to sell so we get out of the streets but the place the authorities provided for us does not qualify to be a market. The place is disorganized and far from major bus terminals. The market does not have proper connecting roads leading to the major streets making it difficult for people to access. Also, the floor of the new market is unprepared, full of stones and dusty making selling difficult. I sell clothes and my goods all got dirty as a result of the dust. So, I could not continue to sell there.*

**Plate 5. 4: New market facility to host relocated street hawkers**



Source: Author's fieldwork, 2020

**Plate 5. 5: New market facility for street hawkers looks unprepared and abandoned**



Source: Author's fieldwork, 2020

In continuation, others also expressed vehemently the payment aspect of the space in the market and how people who were not in the Madina Zone had gotten spaces in the market and the hawkers in the study area had no place.

*“I was asked to pay Gh1,000 (\$500) by the unofficial [was self-enstooled because she moved there first] queen mother of the market queen before I could get a space in the market. I knew I was not going to get that amount of money to pay so I did not worry myself taking my table there to sell. Also, it was shocking to know that some market women in Kasoa had gotten spaces in the market whiles we in madina struggled to get a vending space. We think if the authorities had listened to our union leaders, some of these problems would have been known to them and be solved so they can peacefully relocate us and have a free street for other purposes but until then we will always find ourselves on the streets.”*

In summary, the hawkers in the study area are of the vast opinion that if authorities will listen to their views concerning the urban open spaces rather than imposing some policies that they know will in the long run not work, relocation exercises would be simple and cooperatively carried out. Also the empirical findings have shown how the hawkers claim their right to the streets through their levy payments and space rentals. In addition to scarce open urban spaces for hawkers to trade, spaces in vantage points have been appropriated for diverse use in different times of the day as well as different days of the week.

## CHAPTER SIX

### 6.0 DISCUSSIONS

This chapter shows discussions of the empirical findings collected in the study through the theoretical insights presented in chapter three. This chapter also uses some examples to deepen the discussions of the experiences of the street hawkers through their space acquisition to eviction and relocation. The structure of the discussion derives from the questions posed for this thesis.

#### 6.1 How do the street hawkers construct their space of operation?

As earlier introduced under Lefebvre's theoretical framework, street hawkers appropriate their spaces of occupation through gradual codification of the space in relation to the exchange value that suit their business purposes. As in many cases where hawkers make up the space of operation in an illegitimate manner, the commercialization of the space and the longevity of their stay on the streets make them a temporary owner of such spaces. First of all, the hawkers approach the urban public space that they do not own nor do they have the permission to use, they assign codes of functionalities, altering the use value of the space and as those places (i.e. spaces) support the exchange value they intend to create to generate and support their livelihood and as the strategies work out for them, they claim the right to such spaces by their occupation.

Considered under the general laws of economics, as the number of street hawkers increase in the urban public spaces, the new cohorts join the existing street operators to generate an economy of the spaces. The scarcity of urban open spaces makes the street hawkers mostly the sedentary types to devise strategies in creating more spaces out of the non-existing. This strategy was more evident from the empirical findings and in line with Lefebvre's (1991) perceptive, the hawkers who already have constructed a vending space, appropriate more spaces out of the open gutter spaces by making wooden structures in a vertical shapes to expand their market façade and to the hawkers who do not have a stationary point also seize the opportunity to create a commercial identity out of such street corners.

Also, inasmuch as hawkers are fixated on the availability of urban spaces to occupy, locational distribution is an attribute factor on how street hawkers appropriate and/or acquire their spaces.

Discussing this from the informality concept, street hawking activities especially the footloose and the sedentary modes which are mostly classified as undocumented urban space occupants situate their activities in proximity to formal industrial location (Yankson, 2000) where forth their businesses assuming legitimacy, also attract consumers who are mostly people from the formal sector or passers-by. In addition, (Suharto, 2004) in his study in Indonesia asserted the locational distribution of street hawkers are mostly widespread in many different locations but also in affirmation this study shows that the locational pattern of the street hawkers are in reliance on other economic activities where the concentration of people is high. This locational decision is accounted on a lot of this, but the paramount reason is the proximity to commercial centers, mostly market centers and major transport terminals.

In furtherance to the discussion on street hawkers' activities and their street appropriation, the hawkers create a diversity of use in the urban public spaces. As population drift increases in the urban spheres, urbanization rate also increases thus, generating an indirect proportional relationship between the influx of people and available urban spaces. Therefore, the scarcity of vending spaces propels hawkers to construct a more diversified usage of the urban spaces to meet their economic desires. Such diversity in the space appropriation is by far considered by the hawkers as an indication of a striking balance between what the space was meant for and what is used for now.

Under informality concept, many of the labour surpluses from the formal sector whom with little start-up capital to venture into the informal economy such as street hawking. as these people lack the space to operate, they tend to construct a different functionality for an existing commercial space at different times. This finding showed that, some hawkers construct their working spaces (exchange value) when the spaces in question have fulfilled the intended purposes (Use value). An instance discovered in the study areas was that some street hawkers used space which served as car parks in the mornings as vending points at night, mostly as food vending spots. The reason behind this night space appropriation was recounted by some of the hawkers as;

*“we do not want the authorities to think that we are dominating the streets again so when the cars leave in the evenings the spaces become vacant and that is when we come to sell. We do not have*

*certificates to get a 'proper job' but we still have to feed our families, so we see this as an opportunity to make a living and it is profitable. When we do this, those who use the space in the mornings till evening get to do so and we also have time and liberty for our businesses without generating conflicts amongst other social groups."*

This therefore affirms that, the diversification of the urban streets by the hawkers especially those who vend food in the evenings show the relevance of their activities in the urban fabric and also shows how they have successfully claimed their rights to the streets since they barely face the contradiction with authorities' policies resulting in relocation or eviction.

## 6.2 How do the experiences of the street hawkers reflect their sense of belonging?

One of the dominant questions asked when dealing with the street hawkers in the informal economy is; why they also come back to the street after series of eviction? Many researchers have tried to answer this question in several ways and in most cases, the views of the street hawkers are less represented. Findings from this study revealed that, hawkers' feelings of "in place" is tied to their contribution to the revenue of the country through their levies and taxes they pay to the local authorities. These informal operators assert that just like the formal sector has regulations in their daily operations where businesses pay taxes and are allowed to operate without interference, so should they be given the same chance to operate on the streets they pay for. To them, their understanding of the daily, weekly and monthly payment of taxes and levies is their warrant to the open streets so far as they do not obstruct other social groups in the usage of the street corridors.

In the light of urban theories and discussion, there is an interplay of politics and economic processes in the diversity of urban spaces (Lefebvre, 1968; 1974). The power dynamism at play is always at the disadvantage of the informal operators who form the marginalized majority in the urban space and as such for the street hawkers to be able to eke out a living, they keep dominating the urban open space to commodify it. And in this study, the drive in search of livelihood and exhibition of belonging were evident through how the hawkers negotiate for the urban spaces as upon series of authorities' attempt to remove the hawkers from the street since their capitalistic purposes in the streets are always in contradiction with the policies and regulations of the local authorities.

The street hawkers claim their right to the city not only as group in the informal sector contributing to the job creation and helping in poverty alleviation but also their economic standards situations should not determine their citizenship status in the urban spheres. As common in many countries, peoples' right of citizenship is bound by the rule of law but, in practice this is not so evident for many inhabitants especially in cities in Africa (Chatterjee, 2004; Holston, 2008; Ong, 1999). When it comes to the urban citizenship, some classified inhabitants are denied such rights to benefit from the structures that come with urban dwelling. The hawkers expressed they have always been victims of harassment in their space occupation and that their membership to the less represented groups in the informal economy shows a form of "differentiated citizenship" as James Holston (2008) puts it. They also put across that, their ways of operation may not be regulated nor somehow undocumented but their services and provision of goods at various points in the urban sphere do not only serve the urban poor but also to the urban elites.

Hawkers' sense of belonging to the urban space materializes also on the fact that they are able to modify and codify the streets to suit their capitalist purposes. This space modification and codification by the dominant street hawkers was an evident of their street belonging as some locations in the study area were noted for agglomeration of some commodities. In addition, the sense of belonging was identified from the empirical findings. The fact that hawkers acknowledge the hawking spots of their fellow hawkers in their absence even though they do not have their names or any form of identification attached to the spaces show how they have successfully proven their sense of belonging of the urban space to other hawkers and how the rest of the people recognize they belong there.

In summary, the hawkers keep resurfacing on the urban open streets to conduct their business because their fees and in some instances the rental of vending spots gives the urban liberty to operate in places that can yield them more profits. They know such places have use value and that they try their best to not obstruct other people's usage of the space. They claim their activities are regarded as an eyesore in the sight of the urban elites and the local authorities and they are more so classified with the "outsider status", but to them so far as they are also levied which is accounted for as part of the national revenue, they will keep commodifying the street corners to meet their capitalistic purposes.

*“it is not that we are destroying anything on the streets, the formal operators especially those who run the supermarkets see us as threats to their businesses, so they nourish the thoughts of the local authorities to chase us out of the open spaces. Meanwhile the urban elites run to us when they are in need of more affordable goods and readily services”.*

This is an assertion by some of the hawkers portraying how they feel they need to be left alone on the streets to operate as they claim they have *“the rights to the streets”*.

### 6.3 Why do the relocation processes conducted by the authorities fail to keep hawkers off the streets?

Street hawking has always been seen as a sign of poverty and distortion to urban planning, synonymous to underdevelopment and that urban authorities deem the disappearance of such informal activities as progress to modern city they envisage. Eviction policies and in some cases relocation strategies become a rule that most urban authorities resort to target the street hawkers and their rampant activities. This action is more perspicuous and forceful in many African cities as in some instances, Police and Soldiers are involved in evacuating the hawkers from the streets. For instance, about 200 military and policemen were tasked and deployed on the streets of in Kumasi Metropolitan Area to help in the eviction on street hawkers and other informal operators who were nuisance to the areas (King, 2006).

Before recent years, hawkers were evicted from the streets without provision of alternating measures to match their economic activities. This without any negotiating factors made the eviction mostly unsuccessful. The findings from this study again revealed that location for the new market considered for the relocation did not support the business flow of the hawkers thus, making such decision a failure. It has also failed to look beyond the aesthetic measures that inasmuch as it provides conducive atmosphere for trading, has the power to pull potential consumers. The sites of the new market for the street hawkers was reported as customer-unsupportive and as Lyons and Msoka (2009, p. 1092) put it *“a location that is customer-poor which makes it difficult for many- and impossible for some- to rebuild their businesses following the trauma and losses od eviction”*. From the empirical data and the ethnographic, the hawkers are of the views that until the relocation processes involve customer concentration and conducive setting, it will be almost impossible to chase all the hawkers off the streets. *“we will resurface when the eviction exercises are laxed*

*because the government does not have enough resources to run the eviction every day and everywhere at the same time”.*

Poor market infrastructure and less motorable locations for market shun potential consumers away (Lyons & Msoka, The World Bank and the African Street: The impact of Doing Business reforms on Tanzania’s street traders, 2009). This as part of the relocation measures hawkers in the area demanded and lamented would help them move out of the streets and still be able to make a living. Decisions on relocation of street hawkers into an enclosed area should involve the opinions of the group in question to make it more successful. Usually the forceful relocations are presented as surprises to the hawkers. The pictorial view below shows a forceful relocation conducted on the streets during the ethnographic study.

**Plate 6. 1 Hawkers forcibly relocated from the streets with their wares been confiscated**



Source: Author’s fieldwork, 2020

Street hawking is a long-lasting phenomenon that cannot be easily eliminated therefore addressing such issues should involve the various organizations and other structural components and above all relocation should be incentive based.

In another context, this study divulged that payment involved in acquiring vending spaces in the new market area dissuaded the hawkers from relocating. One of the characteristics of street hawking is that it requires little capital to start and that makes it easy for the urban poor to join this informal economy and when money of high amount is demanded from these people before assigning space in the market areas, however small the amount may be, hawkers would be pushed away and the street again becomes their “home-base”.

From the various questions raised, it can be inferred that, hawkers in the study area are aware of their actions and the repercussion of them, how their attachment to their vending spaces are expressed through their contribution to local authorities, how they also perceive the importance of their services to the urban dwellers are. Therefore, they are of the opinions that if they and their activities are not considered as out of place and are welcomed, together with the local authorities, much effective relocation processes can be implemented to ensure the disappearance of street hawking from the municipal area.

Extensive literature on street hawking and broader topic perspective on informal economy make mention of economic diversification among the urban poor and the marginalised city dwellers. As many cities in the global south have witnessed a surge in mobility of street hawking activities (Asiedu & Agyei-Mensah, 2008), many of these street operators find other means of maximizing their daily profits. Street hawkers in some cases serve as extra labour force in the informal economy. King (2009), addressed how some street hawkers in Kumasi render other informal services like head portering as a part-time job to help make ends meet. The story is not so different in the area of study. This has constituted another type of street hawking that I term as ‘dual-hawking’.

## CHAPTER SEVEN

### 7.0 CONCLUSION

The activities of the street hawkers should be carefully and strategically addressed to gain the maximum mutual benefits for the economy and the street operators as it improves the livelihood standards of the street hawkers. As many literature have pointed out the immense contribution of street hawking to the economy of many developed countries likewise countries of the global south (Bhowmik, 2005; Bromley, 2000; Mitullah, 2003; Hart, 1973), it is therefore needful to integrate such activities into the mainstream economy to ensure a sustainable street economy and a long-term economic growth of the country. The study looked at street hawkers' space appropriation and their sense of space belonging from the perspectives of street hawkers. Further revelations were found on the issues of the relocation processes that have become a chronic discussion that lingers on between the local authorities and the street hawkers. Therefore, in conclusion, when we look at this from the street hawkers' perspective, we see that these things are very important that we would not see otherwise and that is what my contribution is.

The explorative case study has examined how hawkers have commodified and commercialized the urban spaces in La-Nkwantanang Municipal Area. It did so by examining the experiences of the hawkers' day to day street activities. The empirical evidence acquired through the interviews with the hawkers and the observational mapping show how the hawkers have successfully portrayed their sense of belonging to the urban open space. This, as part of the study aims was achieved through the theories introduced. The street hawkers used the right to the city theory to claim their hawking spots in the urban space amidst the series of forceful relocations in the Madina Area. However, the theoretical concept used in the study does not intend to bulwark the interest of a particular group but rather see the value of urban spaces from a broader perspective. Also, reflecting from the wider perspective shows that the street hawkers just like other actors in both the informal and formal economic sectors have the right to partake in the city-setting process and therefore, expressing their interests in the physical urban space through their street lives should not be hindered. In light of the exchange value component of the right to the city theory, street hawkers through their daily street mark-ups show a gradual dominance of the urban space to meet

their capitalistic purposes and in the attempt to claim their right to the space modify the quality of the space from its use value through space diversification.

An interesting contribution from the Madina case study to the body of geography is how the diversified activities of the street hawkers at various times of the day in relation to available urban spaces show the relevance of time geography and spatial planning, contributing to the urban fabric of the city. The example of the diversity of the urban space (setting up street parking-during the day lot into food vending points at night ) altered by the hawkers clearly shows how successful they have become in appropriating the urban spaces they operate in and in which through the lens of informality concept shows how beneficial the hawkers activities contribute to the larger economy countries of the global south precisely Ghana, in this case study. In addition, the informality sense of the street hawking activities adds up in answering the first question posed in this research. The street hawkers again through the empirical evidence showed their sense of entitlement to the space they operate through their revenue contribution to the informal economy as they adhere to the regular payment of levies and taxes to ease their operation on the urban streets. Their understanding of these economic contributions implied their activities were condoned by the authorities and that better repressive measures to control their spatial patterns would have been a better solution than a forceful eviction.

The case study, in answering the second question of the research, contributed to literature on the issue of citizenship of the urban poor. With the marginalized urban dwellers who in most cases have their citizenship in the urban space questioned, try to portray their sense of entitlement to the physical urban space through any possible chances they get. And in the case of Madina municipal area, street hawkers successfully expressed their sense of belonging to the urban space through their daily operations on the streets. From the interviews with the hawkers, their daily occupancy of the exact urban space for their activities without any form of identification shows their sense of belonging to the space. This does not only show to hawkers that certain spots are appropriated by their fellow hawkers but also to their regular consumers who are able to associate certain urban spaces to some particular hawkers without any form of identification.

Concluding on the relocation problems faced by the street hawkers, the case study saw that planning for new facility to support the activities of the hawkers in reality proved otherwise. The relocation strategy from the authorities failed to consider the aesthetic features of the facility. As to whether, the location, the arrangements and the accessibility of the new facility has the power to pull consumers for the sustainability of the hawkers' street business. The relocation policies in the area has failed to keep the hawkers off the street because again, the authorities in their futuristic plans failed to consider emerging needs of the hawkers tied to the new facility. The hawkers, in their quest for a successful and lasting relocation expressed that authorities would enjoy long term success in relocating them if their opinions are drawn to the table of city planning as they are certainly part of the urban sphere, contributing informally to the bigger economy of the country.

Finally, to offer some thoughts for future research on the topic, a qualitative approach to the relocation policies of street hawkers in the global south could include a bigger dataset for a better sense of generalization. In this case, the effect of the global pandemic (COVID-19) on fieldwork affected the availability of empirical data. Also, a different research approach for instance, a quantitative approach in assessing how the street hawkers' relocation and space appropriations affect the income levels of hawkers and the profit they make and also how the amount of taxes and fees paid by hawkers show how much and the extent to which the street hawkers express their sense of belonging.

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## ANNEX A

### Interview Guide

1. Can you please give me a history of what led to your street activities?
2. What do you mainly trade in?
3. Is this what you have been trading in ever since you started hawking? If NO, what led to the change in wares?
4. Tell me, do you think of the places available to sell before deciding on what type of wares to sell or you choose what to sell and then look for a place that would be suitable for such wares?
5. So do you think what you sell now can only be profitable here (I mean these particular streets) and not anywhere else in the city?
6. Are you aware that by law, it is illegal to trade on streets and pavements?
7. If yes, why do you still continue to trade on the street?
8. Do you pay levies (license) for the product you sell? Give reason for your answer, please
9. I see the task force chase street hawkers; have you ever been chased? If yes, how did that affect your sales on those days. / what changed in those days concerning your work?
10. How do you deal with the city authorities (task force)?
11. Do you think that the city is meant for some particular jobs and not street hawking, that's why they chase you away? How does that make you feel as a street hawker?
12. Do you think Madina is made for some people and not others? Can you explain that for me please? You can use examples and that's fine.
13. Do you think that where you come from has a role to play in how you feel as a street hawker? And does that also influence where to operate?
14. How do you relate with other street hawkers? How they treat you I mean.
15. Have you witnessed a relocation process here since you started street hawking?
16. what do you think of the relocation processes put in place by the authorities?
17. What makes you (hawkers in general) come back to the street after all the relocations and evictions?
18. Give me a general overview of the relocation efforts what you have witnessed.