

Efforts at evicting street hawkers from the streets of Accra: the good and the bad

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Abstract

By operating in public spaces not authorized for trading activities, street hawkers offer various products for sale in order to eke out a living. However, the activity of street hawking finds itself at the wrong side of the laws governing the use of city-space. Several attempts by city authorities to evict hawkers operating at these unauthorized locations have yielded limited results. The number of street hawkers multiply day in and day out, even at locations previously not noted for hawking on the streets of Accra. This study sought to understand the motivation for the return of street hawkers amidst city authorities' ban of street hawking and subsequent forceful eviction by city taskforce personnel.

The study finds that hawkers have and will continue to resist eviction from the street as their own survival and that of an average of four (4) dependents solely rest on daily incomes made from hawking. The study also finds that the persistence of traffic congestion, the lack of effective policing of hawking spots, the minimal entry capital required to start hawking and the potential of obtaining substantial turnover over and above public sector wage will continue to fuel street hawking in Accra. The study recommends that an assessment and enforcement of the land use regulations as well an effective management of traffic flows in the city are likely to serve as a disincentive to hawking. Again street hawking is likely to be controlled if policies are directed at keeping children in school beyond junior high school level. Hawking in Accra is dominated by people who are not able to pursue academic study beyond senior high school and therefore have little employable skills. Suggestions are also made with regards to the reconciliation of data on street hawkers and their contributions to the economy both at the local and national level, in order to appreciate the demographic characteristics of city dwellers as well as their need to survive even as they strive to maintain modern cities and towns.

Key words: Hawking, Metropolis, Accra, Taskforce, Living, City

1. Introduction

Street hawking on the streets of Accra, Ghana is characterized by traders selling various types of goods, which may consist of: fruits and vegetables, newspapers, cosmetics, jewelry, watches, ladies' bags, wallets, second-hand clothes to shining of shoes on the streets, highways, sidewalks, avenues etc. The Encarta 2009 edition defines a street hawker as a person who engages in the selling of merchandise on the street or from door to door. Street hawkers essentially transform streets into arenas of economic activities in a bid to earn a living (Wang, 1998). Street hawkers are found virtually in all major cities of the developing world; they are present in Cartagena in Colombia, Quito in Ecuador (Bromley, 1998; Jimu, 2003), Dhaka the capital of Bangladesh, Bangkok in Thailand (Bhowmik, 2005), Lagos in Nigeria (Oyefara, 2005), Nairobi in Kenya (Kamunyori, 2007), Zomba in Malawi (Kayuni and Tambulasi, 2009) among others. In recent times the debate has shifted to the hikes in the volume of street hawkers and the associated congestion of public space. Particularly, the swelling numbers which has become a subject of intense discussion is attributed to the mass rural - urban migration, and the non - existent job vacancies in the formal sector to absorb the influx of migrants (Dickson and Benneh, 1988).

In Ghana, the issue of street hawking has also enjoyed immense attention both within the media and in academia, due to the ever-increasing numbers of street sellers in almost all major cities of the country (Asiedu and Agyei-

Mensah 2008). Concerns expressed include the street congestion they contribute to, the negotiation for power and the resultant friction that ensues between these street hawkers and city authorities (Nduma, 1990 and Jimu, 2005). However, street hawking in the major cities of Ghana and particularly in Accra is not a recent phenomenon (Overa 2007), although the spatial configuration and its impact on city dynamics has intensified since the dislocations in the Ghanaian economy in the 1970s and further entrenchment by structural adjustment, economic recovery program and globalization in the early and late 1990s. The major economic downturn that hit the Ghanaian economy led to the implementation of the Economic Recovery and Structural Adjustment Programme in the 1980s, resulting in massive layoffs of formal sector workers (Asiedu and Agyei-Mensah, 2008) which saw poverty levels in the Greater Accra region risen from 5.2% in 1998/1999 to 11.8% in 2006 (GSS, 2007). In addition the educational reforms of the early 1990s reduced the length of stay in the formal education system, while many teenagers could not make the grade cut-off point required to pursue tertiary education and therefore curtail their education at the senior high school level with no employable skills to be absorbed to the formal sector. For the thousands who were either retrenched, could not be absorbed by the formal sector or whose income could no longer support the basic necessities of life, the informal sector, particularly street hawking provided hope and relief, owing to its low skill and financial entry requirements (Meagher and Yunusa, 1996).

The propensity for an individual to engage in street hawking was further augmented with the inception of trade liberalization, which led to the influx of imported, relatively cheap goods, providing a supply avenue for street hawkers. These imported goods make up the majority of the products the street hawkers sell, and with the continuous increase in the street hawker population all of whom sell some substantial amount of imported goods; Ghana has invariably become a market for cheap foreign products from China and other countries (Overa, 2007). Given that the Ghana Government has no backup plan to savage local economy, many nationals thinking of daily survival see street hawking as an immediate avenue for meeting one's daily survival needs. circumstantial evidence suggest that Accra's daytime population exceeds 5 million, most of the inflows originate from the city's outlying towns and villages, and converge at the city centers to engage in commercial activities including hawking but return home after the day's economic activity closes (Asiedu and Agyei - Mensah, 2008).

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

The business of street hawking however exhibits some temporal dynamics. Street hawking generally has its peak periods which is synonymous with that of vehicular and human traffic peak periods. The morning peak period (rush hour) is usually between 7am and 10am whereas the afternoon experience is between 1pm and 3pm. The evening rush hour is between 5pm - 8pm. The population of hawkers edges up in response to the human / vehicular traffic peak / rush hour periods locating at strategic points especially routes where pedestrians come by, while others walk from one place to the other frantically in the lookout for buyers. Other hawkers also alternate with the signal of the traffic light. When the red light switches on for the vehicles to stop, hawkers then take their turn to move onto the streets, meandering between the vehicles advertising their products and selling as quickly as possible. The competition among hawkers as well as the approach to attract customers create conflict with vehicles and sometimes make them vulnerable to vehicular collusion. City authorities classify these hawkers as violators of city rules and by-laws who deserve to be evicted and punished. They violate land use codes by selling in open spaces not designated for that and above all, congest the city and impede traffic flow in the city.

In a bid to correct these anomalies in the urban commercial areas and restore the respect for city laws, the Accra Metropolitan Assembly on April 21, 2011 embarked on the exercise of decongesting the metropolitan city of Accra by effectively evicting hawkers, and also removes all unauthorized structures. It was hoped such an exercise will bring sanity to the capital, show adherence to the laws governing space allocation in the city and in effect make Accra the true Millennium City that the Mayor promised to bring about during the July, 23rd, 2010 edition of the Accra Partners Conference. The exercise was carried out at many hawking locations, including Kwame Nkrumah Circle, some sections of the Independence Avenue (close to the Novotel Hotel). In less than a day after the exercise, hawkers were seen back on the streets doing business as reported in the April 21, 2011 edition of Joy FM 6pm news. It is however worth noting that hawkers resistance and return after eviction

exercise was not new (Bhowmik 2010; Mitullah 2003). Such resilience and resistance in every dimension of it leaves one to wonder what at all could be that powerful driving force which keeps motivating street hawkers to return to the streets (Cross 2000; Kayuni and Tambulasi 2009).

In an effort to answer this quintessential question of street eviction and return of hawkers, the following research questions were posed:

- i) Why do hawkers return to the streets shortly after eviction?
- ii) What must be wrong with the approaches adopted by city authorities?
- iii) What are the opinions of major stakeholders– (Hawkers, City Authority and the general public) on eviction and return of street hawkers in Accra?

2. Materials and Methodology

Within the Metropolitan Area of Accra, hawkers are literally found on all major roads and commercial areas. However, a thorough survey of the various hawking locations dotted across the metropolis reveals 18 major hawking points which were in existence before the ban and exercise to evict hawkers on 21st April 2011 (Owusu et al 2013), although there are several minor spots which have emerged after the ban. These locations are places within the Accra metropolis with vibrant hawking activity as a direct result of the concentrations of transit bus terminals, daily markets, shops, banks, public offices, public institutions and their location along principal thoroughfares and attendant traffic jams, these locations experience high concentration of people, traffic and commercial activity. Figure 1, shows the major hawking locations within the AMA.

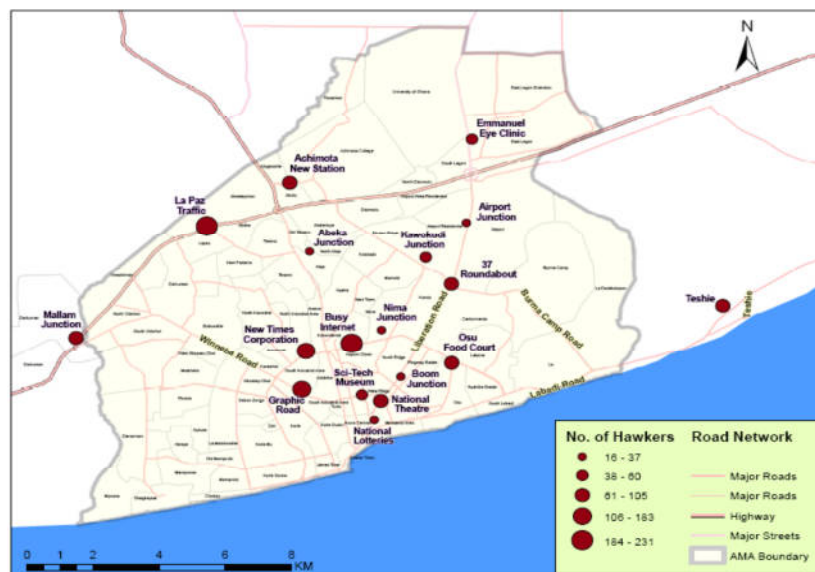


Figure 1: Major hawking locations and the estimated number of hawkers as of March 31st 2011 (Owusu et al, 2013)

However 9 locations out of the 18 were randomly selected for questionnaire administration. These locations include: the main Graphic Road Traffic Light, the New Achimota Station Traffic Light, 37 Roundabout Traffic Light, Mallam Junction Traffic Light, Airport Junction Traffic Light, Osu Food Court, Busy Internet of the Nkrumah Circle, Nima Junction and Lapaz Traffic Light. Figure 2 shows the sample locations used for this study.

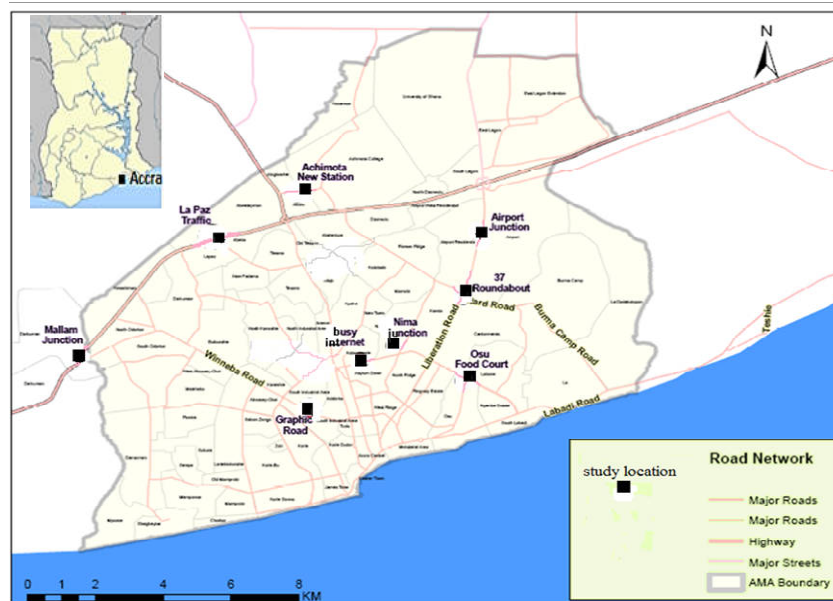


Figure 1: Study locations within the AMA (source: field work 2012)

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

The target population among other key informants comprised of street hawkers who were sampled at the selected locations. In all, 180 hawkers were sampled from the 9 locations mentioned above. In view of the number of the study sites, the stratified sampling technique was used to obtain representative number of locations. Spreading the total number of sample hawking population of 180 hawkers were from the 9 study locations while 20 respondents were selected for each hawking location. The 20 respondents from whom data was solicited were accidentally sampled for interview. Hawkers were sampled given their mobile nature which allowed them little or no space for non-trade related activities such as interrogations. Hawkers were also hesitant for interactions other than buying due to frequent arrest and beating by plain cloth city law enforcement task force detail to forcefully evict street hawkers.

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

3. Major Findings and Discussions

3.1: The street hawker and the need to survive

The study included 52% males and 48% female street hawkers sampled from 9 different locations of the city. Analysis of the age structure of the sampled population grouped the respondents into five (5) categories as follows <18, 18-28, 29-39, 40-50, > 50. The dominant age group was the age brackets of 29-39 years, who made up 44.4% of the sample. The second dominant age group was between 18-28 years followed by those between 40-50 years, recording 27.22% and 20.6% respectively. One important observation was the dominance of females in all the age except for the category 29 - 39 years. This observation corroborate other research works which finds that females generally join street hawking at tender ages and stay till old as it offers them the flexibility of combining this activity with household chores (Mitullah, 2003). The predominance male

population and in particular between the ages of 29-39, that is the most active economic ages may be due to the non existence of job vacancies and lack of skills to qualify them to formal sector employment. Most of the able young men engage in hawking as short term survival employment until they find a more desirable job then they may decide to quit hawking. It is also worth noting that street hawkers require resilience and toughness to persist in the raids and conflict ridden activity of hawking. The physical energy required means that these group of persons would have enough energy, which is a key element in successful hawking (Iyenda 2005).

The survey recorded that 11% of the respondents reside outside Accra but commute to Accra daily to take advantage of economic opportunities. This supports the observation by Asiedu and Agyei - Mensah (2008) that Accra's daytime population exceeds 5 million and most of the inflows originate from outlying towns and villages, converging at the city centers for commerce as a means to living. With Accra's relatively higher concentration of government businesses, socio-economic and educational facilities and amenities, the city was and it's still the one place people in the rural areas and small towns seeking economic prospects and better life look up to. The ILO however reports that economic opportunity in the area of job vacancies for the ever increasing population still remains in a deficit. This situation necessitates the emergence of various kinds of businesses, initiated by individuals in an attempt at mitigating the economic challenge of joblessness. People who are unable to obtain work within the formal sector, among others, engage in some informal economic activity including hawking for sustenance (Cross 2000).

The study analyzed the highest level of education attainment and the length of time the respondents have been hawking on the street. It is observed that 58.33% of the sample population have obtained only basic formal education i.e. primary and junior high school level of education. Approximately 12% have primary education, while 46% of respondents have obtained up to the Junior High School level. On the other hand, 22.2% of respondents revealed they have obtained Senior High School education, whereas 11.7% of the respondents divulged they have gone through the 6th form educational module. A diminutive 1% of the respondents stated they have received tertiary education. Nonetheless, about 7% of the respondents have no form of formal education whatsoever. Table below correlates highest education attainment with number of years in hawking business. Interestingly whooping 31% who have hawked for between 6-10 years have attained formal education up to junior high school level while 14% have secondary education and have hawked between 1-5 years. At all levels of formal education 47% have been hawking between 6-10 years, while 24% have been hawking between 1-5 years. Hawkers who have been in the trade for less than 1 year constitute 16% while 13% have been hawking for more than 10 years.

Table 1: Level of Education and Length of Hawking

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

It is often argued that due to accessibility challenges, mainly availability and affordability and inappropriate curricular in the educational systems of most African countries, young people with little or no formal education dominate in the informal economic activities. It is primarily so, because the JHS level of education does not

equip its leavers with the rigorous skills necessary for hiring. In such an undesirable situation, we find people turning to various avenues for employment including the streets to hawk for a living (Hart 1973). This is because lack of employable skills becomes barriers to one's participation in today's formal sector employment which is seen by many as knowledge economy. Other arguments for lack of motivation to pursue formal education to higher levels were that in cases where people are fortunate to obtain employment in the formal sector, the wage level paid are not competitive enough as compared to what street hawkers earn per day. In situations where they obtain employment, the contention has also been that the JHS/SHS qualification attracts a lower remuneration in the formal sector of employment as compared to what one can earn while hawking. Jones (1997) concluded in a study that the low-skilled and less educated workers tend to earn less than the minimum wage even within the formal sector of employment. In Ghana the minimum wage as of 2010 was around GH¢3.73, as compared to the revelations by Aseidu and Mensah (2008) that majority of street hawkers of Accra earn between GH¢ 5-10 as daily incomes. With this income differentials, which favors hawking, coupled with the already non-availability of formal jobs vacancy, street hawking and other informal sector economic activities tend to be an economically attractive venture to indulge in.

Another interesting revelation on why some people enter street hawking trade at early age was that some hawkers use street hawking as a hopping stone; that is they enter into the business, accumulate enough funds and move into other fields of endeavour. Below is an excerpt from an interview with a hawker between the ages of 18 - 28 years to buttress this observation:

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

While some hawkers save and continue their education, others invest into properties or gain capital to invest in the formal sector.

Given that street hawker eviction is not new yet in each eviction hawkers return in a day at most. The study sought from respondents why they return in spite of the forceful eviction and sometimes the physical assault they receive from the AMA eviction task force. The study finds that the motivation to hawk is partly fuelled by the responsibility of these hawkers in the family. From the study respondents 48.9% are the sole bread winners of their families and by virtue of that, the very survival of the entire family solely depends on what they are able to make on the street. Below is an extract from an interview with a 52 years old woman who has been hawking for over 10 years.

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

About 29% of respondents hawk in order to support their families, although they are not the sole bread winners. To this category of hawkers income from hawking is used as a supplementary income for the general upkeep of the household. This extra money is critical most especially in the African circumstance where daily wages are relatively low and cost of living is high (Bhowmik 2005). Hence for a family to stay afloat there is the need to adopt various means of earning additional income to increase the family's resource base and make for better standards of living (Middleton 2003).

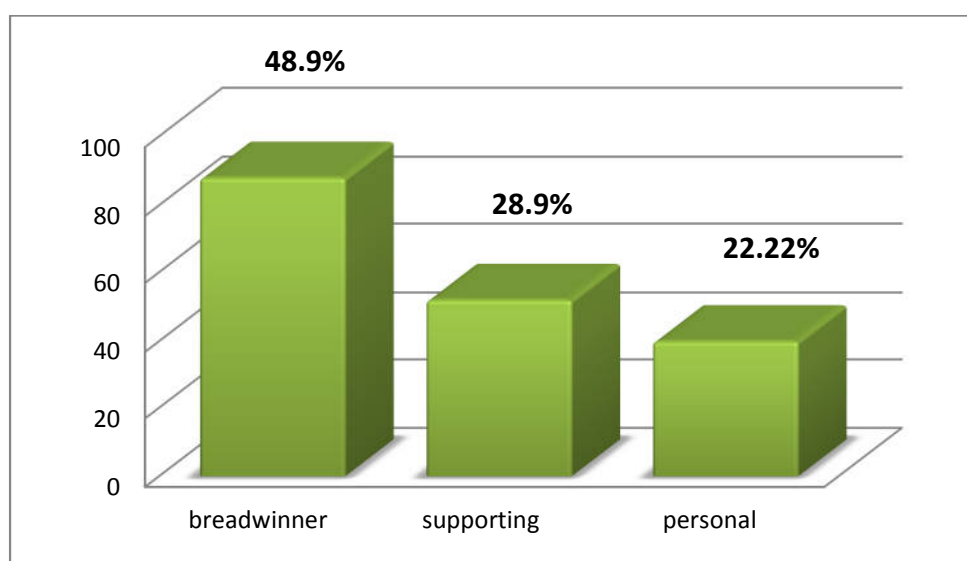


Figure 3: Hawkers and their responsibility in taking care of family needs

Further on, 22.2% of the respondents stated that they engage in hawking for their personal upkeep. To this group, hawking provides them a means to securing their portion of the national cake. A necessity they ensure via offering products for sale on the streets and hence their resistance at any attempt at depriving them this opportunity. An issue affecting a person's ability to give up an economic activity includes the level of dependants the participants in question has (Rogerson and Hart 1989). The number of people who depend on a hawker for survival is key to understanding hawkers' inability to desist from moving back to the streets. Table 2 below displays the analysis on whether street hawkers sampled had dependants whom they cater for.

Table 2: Hawkers with or without dependents they are responsible for taking care of

	Hawking Location									Total
	Os u FC	Busy Interne t	Nima Junctio n	Lapa z TL	Mallam Junctio n	Airport Junctio n	Graphi c Road	Achimot a New St	37 M H	
Ye s	16	14	7	16	14	20	20	16	17	40(77.8%)
No	4	6	13	4	6	0	0	4	3	40 (22.2%)

A colossal 77.8% of the respondents from almost all the study locations except the Nima Junction disclosed that they are sole bread winners of their families and have dependants ranging between 2-5 people. The survival of these dependents depends solely on what the hawker is able to make on the street. From this exposé, one can appreciate the reasons based on which hawkers return to places they are cautioned not to trade at (Mitullah 2003). A portion of this dominant group, however in discussion revealed that they hawk in order to support their partners whom they disclosed were hawking elsewhere. A revelation which brings up once more the objective of families to widen their resource base to meet their various needs (Middleton 2003). Further on, 40% of the respondents stated that they had no dependants. Noticeable with all the groups is the fact that the size of turnover one makes is critical whether one has dependants or not since that keeps the business running.

The study was interested in assessing livelihood alternatives for street hawkers. Hawkers persistence on the streets amidst the numerous warnings and raids, makes it necessary to enquire about whether the street hawkers, aside the street trade had any another avenue of earning a living. The analysis of this is presented in Table 3.

Table 3: Alternative source of income

Response	Street Hawking location									Total
	Os u FC	Busy Intern et	Nima Junctio n	Lapa z TL	Mallam junctio n	Airport junctio n	Graphi c Road	Achimot a New St	37 M H	
Yes	5	3	1	11	8	2	0	0	1	31 (17.2%)
No	15	17	19	9	12	18	20	20	19	149 (82.8%)

Source: fieldwork 2011

A total of 82.8% of the respondents revealed that hawking is their only means of making ends meet and for that reason they cannot afford to quit street hawking. This partly explains the apparent difficulty in keeping them off the street in view of the fact that hawking has now assumed the function of ensuring the economic survival of a significant proportion of the urban population of Accra. On the other hand, 17.2% of the sampled hawkers in locations as Lapaz Traffic Light and Mallam divulged that they had alternative sources of income. For such persons leaving the activity of hawking would probably not be as difficult as people who solely depended on hawking for survival.

3.2: Managing Street Hawking City Authorities perspective

This section presents discussions on the approach(es) adopted by the AMA who are the managers of urban space of Accra, the coping mechanisms adopted by hawkers in response to the AMA confrontations and suggestions of other means of dealing with the phenomenon of street hawking in the Accra Metropolis. The views of the AMA were sought concerning the institution's perception of hawking, the institutional approach to dealing with the phenomenon and the results of the approaches so far. Speaking to the Metropolitan Assembly's Public Affairs officer, he stated that the by-laws governing the jurisdiction of the Accra Metropolitan Area clearly makes street hawking unacceptable, unlawful, illegal, criminal and has to be halted by all legal means. Touching on how to deal with street hawking, the authorities explained that the AMA's initial approach in dealing with this unacceptable act was dialoguing and cautioning. However, these approaches did not yield the desired results and that the street hawkers failed to adhere to the stipulated rules and in his words "since they failed to heed to the caution, force was applied".

The institution believes that years of dialogue and caution have not stopped street hawking and in fact, it is on the ascendency, hawkers are now visible in every nook and cranny of the city. In the assessment of the AMA, the recent approach (ban and forceful eviction) has chopped some success, although not across board. The public affairs officer was however of the conviction that the policy is gradually gaining grounds, and upon stepping up the policy by prosecuting offenders, hawkers would be deterred and hopefully put a stop to their activity or carry it out at least at the designated places which the Assembly has provided. Data on head counts at the various study locations also suggest that some gains have been made. Absolute numbers have indeed decreased for all study locations except for the Nima junction and Airport junction. The point however needs to be made that a comparison of data before and after the AMA's ban of hawking presented in figure 4 shows that although number of hawkers have reduced, there are still a sizable number of street hawkers on the streets of Accra.

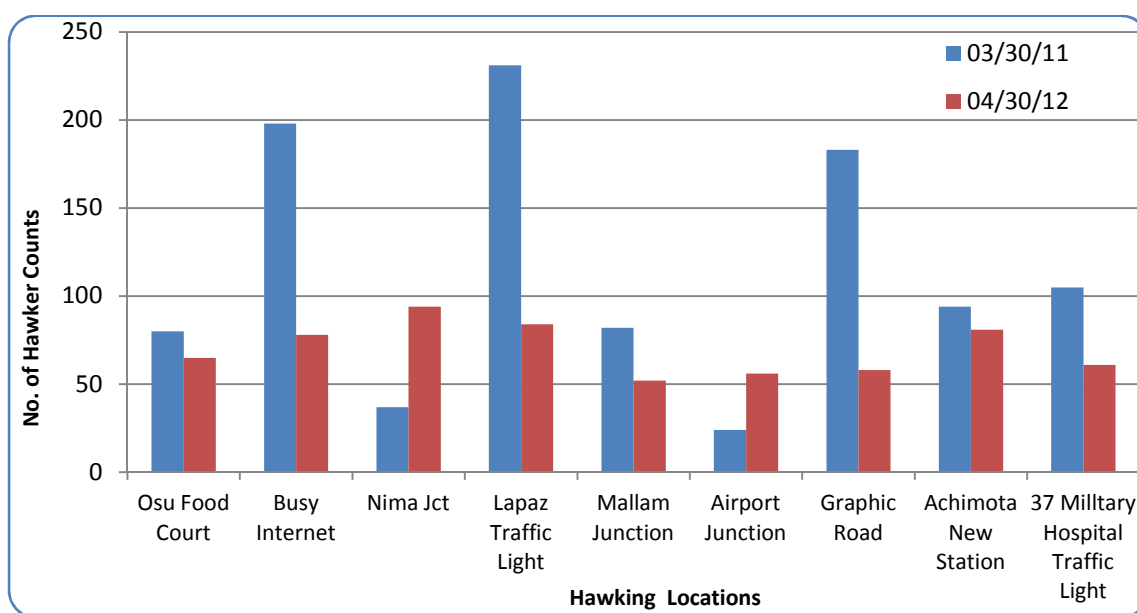


Figure 4: Street Hawker count before and one year after the ban of street hawking

The study sought to know from the AMA what they consider as the challenges hindering the progress at ending the hawking phenomenon. In responding to this question, the AMA official attributed the continual existence of hawkers to the lack of enforcement. He was of the opinion that the lack of implementation of the law to the latter has contributed to the almost acceptance of the phenomenon. Table 4 below provides respondents assessment of city authority’s taskforce detailed to enforce the ban at various hawking locations sampled.

Table 4: How often AMA taskforce inspect

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

The Busy Internet environs according to respondents happen to be a hawking location with very visible presence of the taskforce personnel. Aside Busy Internet, respondents in locations as the Osu food court, Nima junction, Airport junction, Graphic road and Achimota New Station accounting for 42.8% reported that they rarely see taskforce personnel around. About 46% of respondents from the same locations also disclosed that they are yet to see any taskforce personnel around

This lack of enforcement to the latter supports the finding by Asiedu and Agyei-Mensah (2008) as well as Nunoo (2005) who described city authority’s management of street hawking as checkered. They believe that the checkered approach adopted by city authorities explains their inability to fight the phenomenon. In reaction to the checkered approach, street hawkers have adopted a spatial strategy of relocating to other streets or public places where there are no taskforce agents policing the space. It was observed that in locations where taskforce personnel are present, the kind of relationship that ensues between themselves and the hawkers can also indicate how successful laws are carried through. A more friendly approach is bound to bring little achievement whereas

an approach which shows no favoritism would likely achieve more. Figure 5 presents an enquiry to the above deductions and seeks to bring to the fore the nature of this relationship.

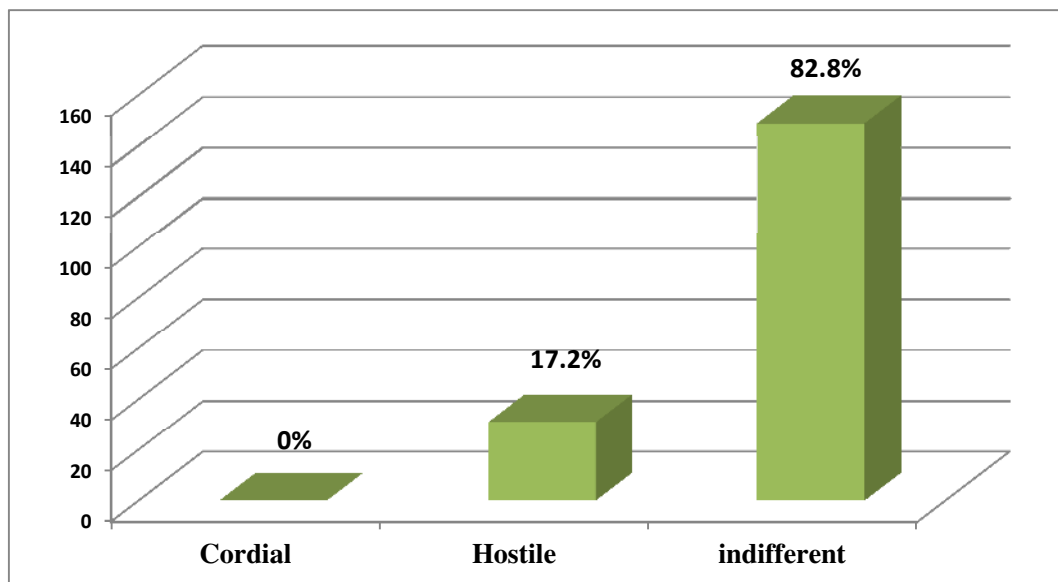


Figure 5: Relationship between Hawkers and Taskforce personnel (Source: fieldwork 2012)

Respondents at the Busy Internet environs defined their relationship with taskforce personnel as hostile, the remaining locations labeled their relationship as indifferent. As a result of the absence of the taskforce personnel at many of the hawking locations marked for this study, majority of the respondents making up 82.8% of the sample described the relationship between themselves and the taskforce personnel as indifferent. The congenial atmosphere enjoyed by hawkers in most of the hawking locations, has partly contributed to their proliferation and intransigence to move from the unauthorized locations. Figure 6 presents hawkers view why they are unwilling to be evicted and hence their resistance to eviction. It emerged that 78% of the respondents explained that they have no alternative source of livelihood hence eviction means a seizure of their means to live.

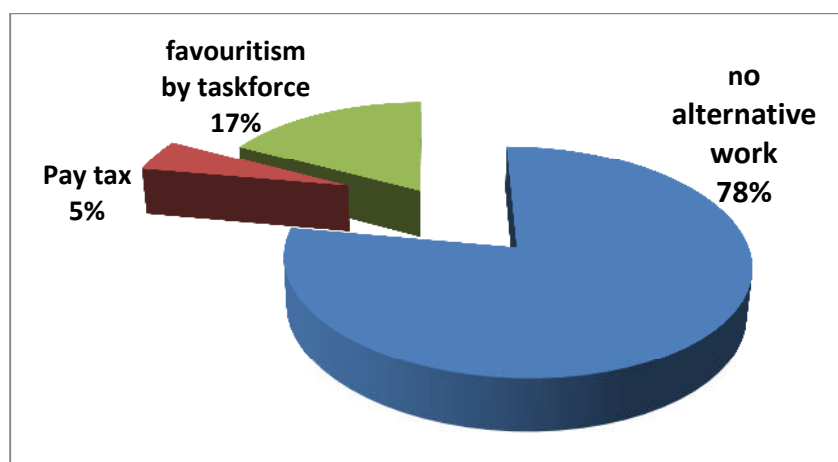


Figure 6: Reasons for Hawkers unwillingness to be evicted from the streets (Source: fieldwork 2012)

Hawkers also disclosed that these locations ensure decent profits, substantial enough to sustain their families and their businesses. In an interview with a 53 year old hawker, he had this to say;

“This is all I do my son. I sell, pay my suppliers and care for my wife and three children. And now they say we should leave. They say they have provided new places, the problem is that those new places have lesser people

passing and that means fewer sales which is not good for our business and family upkeep. If I had a better job or location, do you think I would stay here to be beaten like a goat?"(Field interview 2012).

To add to this, 5% of the respondents in locations as the Busy Internet area and the 37 military hospital circle disclosed that they pay monies to taskforce personnel with the assurance that their places of operation have been legitimized, and documentations were issued to that effect. Hence with a feeling of betrayal, lost capital (money paid to taskforce personnel) and the perceived favoritism which the remaining 17% of the respondents alluded to as their reason for resistance. Hawkers are therefore bent on not succumbing to the pressure from AMA and its taskforce.

In all past hawker-eviction attempts, some street hawkers have tried to resist eviction by adopting strategies that enable them outsmart the taskforce personnel and effectively persist on the street (Cross 2000). In bringing to bare the nitty-gritty of this observation, this subsection presents some analysis on the situation on confiscation of merchandise and the coping mechanisms adopted by hawkers in the Accra Metropolitan Area. Table 5 shows the analysis regarding the seizure of merchandise of hawkers by city taskforce and some strategies adopted by hawkers in outmaneuvering city authorities. It came out that about 46.7% of the respondents emanating from locations including; the Busy Internet, Nima Junction, the Airport junction and Achimota New Station responded in the affirmative that their merchandise have been confiscated before.

It is realized from table 5, that some of these locations happen to experience some taskforce patrols which usually leads to the confiscations and the sour relationships that hawkers expressed to be existing between themselves and the taskforce personnel. This unpleasant working circumstance under normal circumstance, Jimu (2005) agrees with Cross (2000) should serve as a disincentive for hawkers, but by the fact that hawking is a major employer and has become a sole income avenue, people overlook these challenges and return to the streets to hawk for a living.

Table 5: Confiscation of merchandise and ways of escaping

	Hawking Locations									
	Osu FC	Busy Internet	Nima Junction	Lapaz TL	Mallam Junction	Airport Junction	Graphic Road	Achimota New St.	37 MH	Total
1. Have your merchandise been seized before										
Yes	4	17	12	3	3	13	10	14	8	84(46.7%)
No	16	3	8	17	17	7	10	6	12	96 (53.3%)
Total	20	20	20	20	20	20	20	20	20	180 (100%)
2. Ways of outwitting										
Run away	1	3	3	-	-	7	4	3	9	30 (31.25%)
Have formed acquaintance	4	-	5	2	3	-	1	3	-	18 (18.75%)
Notseenraids before	11	-	-	15	14	-	5	-	3	48(50%)
Total	16	3	8	17	17	7	10	6	12	96 (100%)

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

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

The remaining 50% of this sub-group, mostly in locations such as the Osu food court, Mallam junction, Lapaz traffic light and the 37military hospital circle, however stated that they have just not experienced raids before. A revelation which somewhat points to the very basic question of law enforcements on the streets of Accra. Even though hawking at unauthorized places is prohibited, people hawk on the streets in violation of the law without any cautioning nor apprehension. This disregard for the law by hawkers goes on till a time that people almost feel they have the right to do what they desire on the streets before reactionary steps are taken to get them out. This hence leads to the shocks and vulnerabilities in the livelihood of the hawker affected. To the 84 people of the total sample, who responded in the affirmative to the 1st question in table 4 regarding whether hawkers merchandise have ever been seized before, a follow up was necessary to ascertain whether one was able to obtain his or her goods and how they obtained them. About 26.2% of the 84 people with representation across the study locations stated that in almost all cases of confiscation, hawkers have been able to obtain their seized merchandise. Whereas 73.81% of this category mainly in locations as the Busy Internet environs, Nima Junction, Airport Junction and Achimota New Station disclosed their merchandise have been seized before, and that they could not obtain the seized goods.

Of the 26.2% who revealed that they were able to obtain seized goods, 81.8% of them disclosed that they paid money to retrieve their confiscated goods, whereas 4.6% of this group stated that they offered sexual favours in order to retrieve their goods. In support of an earlier observation, 13.6% of this group disclosed that they received their wares via their relations within the taskforce without cost. Even though the group who are able to receive their good are relatively small, it still proves that there exist a means via which hawkers are able to retrieve their confiscated goods. In South Africa, Nesvag (2000) noted that the availability of the means to obtaining seized goods serve as an incentive for people to persist on the street with the mindset that even if goods are confiscated there are ways one can retrieve merchandise. In Nesvag's (2000) interview it was revealed that usually those hawkers with no means of retrieving seized goods would call on fortunate hawkers with acquaintance within the taskforce for the return of goods to affected hawkers. All of which builds the attitude of hawkers to persist in street hawking. In addition to the various schemes that hawkers adopt to outsmart and obtain confiscated goods, other hawkers make use of spatial strategy which has to do with the number of places one hawks at. The logic being that, as taskforce personnel clamp down on one of the locations, hawkers then relocate to other locations to continue the trade. Notwithstanding, 51.7% of the respondents disclosed that they trade at only one location citing the relative calm in doing business at those locations as the reason. Dominant in this group are respondents from the Osu food court, Lapaz traffic light, Mallam junction and the Achimota New Station. They explained that due to the absence of taskforce personnel to disrupt the trading activities, coupled with the realization of substantial amount of profit between 40-60%, there was no propensity to seek other hawking locations.

On the other hand, 48.3% of the respondents revealed that they hawk at more than one location. Whiles some respondents cited differences in market days as their reason for the adoption of multiple locations, other hawkers in locations as the Busy Internet, Nima Junction and the 37 Military hospital circle indicated that their adoption of many hawking locations was their way of escaping taskforce personnel patrols and raids. In a related study Boadi (2000) noted that hawkers within the Kumasi Metropolitan Area also adopted the spatial strategy of hawking at more than one place in a bid to escape taskforce raids. Another strategy adopted by hawkers is the formation of interest groups. Street hawkers form interest group in the hope to advance their course and aspiration in a more unified fashion (Jimu, 2003). By virtue of their sheer numbers, it is anticipated that city authorities would offer a listening ear to their grievances and respond favorably bearing in mind the electoral prospects that lie therein for the sitting government.

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

treatment from city authorities and the government. Of the 18.3% of the sample who responded to have knowledge of the existence of hawkers Interest Group, actual members of such unions were less than half of the respondents. The Ghana Trade Union Congress (GTUC) in 2003 initiated a national alliance for market and street traders – the Street Net Ghana Alliance. The GTUC gave market and street traders a representation on the informal sector desk for many years, but the lack of unity ensured that the alliance made little strides in the struggle to securing a better deal for traders (War on Want, 2006). The lack of unity in the front of the hawkers culminates in the less effectiveness of the existing interest groups, as the old adage goes “strength resides in unity”.

From AMA perspective, it does not accept the presence of hawkers on the streets of Accra and based on the authority vested in them by the constitution and district assembly’s bylaws, the Assembly is willing to do everything possible to ensure that street hawking does not flourish in the city. To cure this hide-and-see and ensure across board success of street hawker eviction from the streets of Accra, the AMA officials proffered that arrests and increased law enforcement personnel on the streets would be the antidote.

3.3 Managing Street Hawking Street hawkers’ perspective

Views of hawkers concerning the decongestion exercise were also captured to bring to the fore their general impression regarding the eviction/decongestion exercise. These sentiments expressed, to a large extent underscore their resistance to the decongestion exercise. Majority of the sampled hawkers, (76%) described the exercise as a bad one, whereas 24% of the respondents though had some reservations, generally felt that the exercise was in the best interest of the larger city and hence described the exercise as good. As was expected of any policy that seeks to halt an activity upon which people depend almost entirely for their sustenance, there were bound to be negative votes especially from the adversely affected party. Below is an extract of an interview with a disgruntled hawker:

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

As cited in Kayuni and Tambulasi (2009), Mitullah (2003) argues that: although it is believed that street hawking attracts those who have limited opportunities, street hawking is increasingly becoming the only option for many citizens. Morales (2000) spoke about the fact that street hawking is a lifestyle. Morales (2000) argued ‘hawkers are individuals, but hawking is an outcome of socio economic interplays’. From this back drop, one can analyze the decongestion exercise in the context that it did not only mean a termination of an economic activity but rather a termination of a product of a complex socioeconomic and historical process. The negative responses the exercise attracted from the majority of hawkers can be understood in this perspective. The negative stance is born out of the assessment of the repercussion they are bound to suffer if the exercise is to succeed. Further interrogation revealed that the 26% of the sample who supported the exercise are, as Bhowmik and Nitin (2001) observed, that section of the hawkers who understand they are flouting the city rules and regulation, all others are of the view that survival must be the ultimate consideration and not rules. The contrasting positions of city authorities and street hawkers inevitable create the antagonistic stands which serve no one’s interest.

3.4 Managing Street Hawking- Shop Owners’ Perspective

Speaking to some shop owners who are members of the Central Shop Owners Association in Accra, divergent views were expressed. In general majority made negative remarks concerning the phenomenon of hawking and commended the city authorities in their attempt at halting it. Among the 15 shop owners we interacted with, nine (9) of them spoke in favor AMA attempt to evict street hawker. On the other hand, a minority of store owners sampled (6) recounted the benefits hawking activity bring to the hawkers and called for a more subtle approach to dealing with the activity. Quotes cited below are some of the views expressed by shop owners in answering the question ‘What is your view on street hawking and the approach adopted by the AMA at dealing with it?’

These scalawags (referring to street hawkers) are a big problem to our business in this commercial area, we pay VAT, huge rents in order to operate rightfully and these young boys and girls will not let us have our peace, selling inferior goods, causing congestion and creating filth in the end. The AMA is trying but it's obviously not the best because as you can see behind you they are still all over. They should be serious with enforcing the laws, effect arrests and stop accepting the small bribes that hawkers give to them to obtain their goods. (Shop owner I)

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

The main concern raised by shop owners who were against street hawking and for that matter supporting their eviction stem from the fact that hawking activities divert potential buyers and also the fact that hawkers sell cheap which help the attract all kinds of buyers. The argument raised was that hawkers have little to no overhead cost, do not pay tax and above all have no storage hence they sell at any price with limited profit margins. The minority of shop owners supporting street hawking argued on moral ground. They argued that government failure to provide jobs and failure in the education reforms is the root cause and that government should rather see the emergence of street hawking as a savior. They question what would have happened to thousands involved in half if it does not exist.

3.5 Managing Street Hawking -Perspective of the General Public

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

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

Personally I think it is not the best showing for Ghana as we pride ourselves as the gate way to Africa. The streets should be free for movement for pedestrians. At times you might even be having nothing in your pocket and yet these street hawkers would be pulling you to buy their stuff, its irritating to say the least. I commend the AMA; Africans obey force than quiet-talk. But they have to extend the work to other streets across the metropolis and as the other city and town managers see the positive impact they would emulate and Ghana would be a beautiful place. (General Public II)

In spite of the efforts made by the AMA in controlling the phenomenon of hawking, one still observes the presence of hawkers on the streets of Accra. Most hawkers and the general public see hawking as a normal activity by people seeking a means to a living. In line with this thinking, any effort at evicting hawkers are seen as inhuman and invariably an attempt to deprive hawkers and their dependants their sources of livelihood. This kind of perception, an AMA officer intimated, adversely affects the AMA's ability to go all out to enforce the law.

3.6 The future of Hawking in the City of Accra

The challenge of managing metropolitan areas like AMA is not limited to Ghana but to all developing countries particularly those with large rural population the fuels urban growth. Its also important to see the other side of urbanization since on global scale there is no developed country which is not urbanized. This means that so long as developing countries seek development, they must urbanize and urbanization comes with its own challenge of lack of jobs, land use conflicts and urban land management, traffic congestion, crime etc. there is therefore the

need for participatory approach which ensures collective effort and amicable solution. The study therefore sought the views of the main protagonists, the city authority and the street hawkers the way forward in managing the metropolitan area and its people to make the city livable for everyone.

The representative of the Public Affairs unit of the AMA in speaking to the issue of “the way forward regarding dealing with street hawking”, stated that hawkers as well as buyers found selling or buying on the street would now face the full rigors of the law. This he said would range from fines to imprisonment or both. He further indicated that there was going to be a 24-hour patrol team who will randomly inspect places to curb night hawking. He also entreated the public to desist from patronizing these hawkers as a move to discourage the activity. He again encouraged the hawkers to make use of the hawkers market provided to ensure peaceful co-existence and the overall development and beautification of the city. He was however hopeful that with the continuous application of city bylaws, the city will soon be free of street hawkers.

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

It became important especially in this era of participatory development to seek from the hawkers suggestions they believed can help develop a sustainable solution to hawking in the city of Accra. Table 6 shows that a majority of the respondents with significant representations at Airport junction, 37 circle, Busy Internet area, Graphic road and Achimota opted for the creation of formal jobs as a means to curbing the proliferation of hawkers on the street. Approximately 24% of the respondents were of the view that the procurement of a better location would see hawkers vacate the streets and other unauthorized places. Also 12% of the respondents mentioned that dialoguing was the way to ensuring that hawkers conduct themselves according to the agreed terms which will lead to the birth of a more sustainable solution. A category of the respondents constituting about 6.1% however divulged that an increase in law enforcement was the way to go whereas 5.6% were clear in their minds that halting the sales of profitable market areas to private investors and big multi-national companies was a sure antidote.

Table 6: Suggested alternatives to forceful eviction

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

Hawkers held the view that city authorities frequently sold out profitable locations where traders had their stalls to investors with no move at re-settling or compensating them. Consequent to which they are forced to get on the streets and pavements and sell for a living. This revelation brings to the fore the phenomenon of gentrification

which is fast transforming the high value urban space currently being used for low income activities to one that will yield higher return.

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

Table 7: Suggested alternatives to street hawkers

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

It is observed in Table 7 above that a dominant section of the sample (25.6%) preferred to be engaged as factory hands. A fact Dickson and Benneh (1988) studied as the number one dream of most migrants when relocating to the big cities. The next significant category constituting approximately 21% of the sample surprisingly hinted that they would rather remain in the petty trade business, but called for institutional recognition and regularization to legitimize the activity. A view which might be born out of the obvious desire for continuous self-employment and control of profits that accrues to one's effort. Another sections of the sample craved for the opportunity to gain formal education, whilst others expressed interest in vocations such as catering, plumbing, teaching, soap making as well as engaging in the batik tie and die business. These job options and vocations, with the help of policy makers and Non-Governmental Organizations can equip people with acceptable occupations and hopefully wean people off the street and transform them from being mere retailers to actual producers to the greater benefit of the community and the country.

4. Conclusion

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

to comprehensively reconcile data on street hawkers and their contribution to the economy both at the local and national level. In most regions where developments have been realized, statistics have often played an important role. Kamunyor (2007) for example partly attributes the success story of Kenya's hawkers control to the multiple local surveys and the 2005 National Economic survey done on the informal sector. The latter survey found that for every one job created in the formal sector, 1000 jobs were created in the informal sector and calculated that the informal sector contributed 18.4 percent of Kenya's Gross Domestic Product (GDP). These kinds of statistics are important not only for adjusting perceptions but also for informing the planning processes.

In the case of Accra, lack of data on the number of hawkers, their contribution to the economy, the number of dependents that are likely to be affected and above all the absence of alternatives have not been well-understood. This means that city authorities tend to underestimate the nature and magnitude of the phenomena under consideration. The resistance of hawkers to eviction, in spite of brutalities and confiscations is motivated by the need to ensure living for hawkers and their families. Their relentless hold to the hawking business emanate from a combination of factors including: their generally low level of academic qualification, their lack of employable skills, the lack of alternative employment avenues, the minimal entry capital requirement, the consistent traffic congestions and the potential to realize substantial profit. All of these factors and more have led to the emergence of hawking as the main avenue for income earning for its participants and by extension their dependants and hence their unwillingness to give it up.

Efforts at countering street hawking needs to start with clearer understanding of the phenomena and its ramifications; from both the supply and demand side. From the supply side, Ghana as a whole needs to look at its educational policy and implementation. The educational system should be directed at providing employable skills and also eliminate early school dropouts to the level where school pupils leave school with employable skills demanded by the job market. Again overemphasis on academic qualification should be minimized to allow on the job training such that early dropouts can enter and learn on the job. It also important to pay attention to the demand side of street hawking; this creates opportunity for hawkers to hawk at a particular location. Principal among them is the traffic congestion that has engulfed the metropolis. To do this there is the need for enforcing the land use codes and application of technologies and measure to see to the reduction of traffic jams on the streets. Also there is the need to formulate strategies that will fight the socio-economic challenges that the hawker is grappling with which may include: taking steps to offer them education / training in diverse vocational occupations as well as putting up measures to fine-tune and regularize the operations of hawkers, as it serves as a possible avenue of employment.

Furthermore, there is the need to look at the possible adoption of the system of weekly markets. During which, for a selected day or two of the week, a market is set up at designated venues. Hawking could then be done legally only at these centers on the designated days. These venues in all cases shall be cordoned off by the Authority for this specific purpose. This approach would as a matter of national economic growth extend the avenue of employment and livelihood. Again, hawkers should be provided with avenue to improve themselves with regards to training and retraining in diverse vocations. This step would equip people with the requisite skill for self-employment, take them off the street and at the long run would increase the nation's lot. Moreover, decongesting the city center, which would invariably reduce the extent of congestion on the streets of Accra; hawking is mostly driven by traffic congestion, hence any action that would free the flow of traffic in the city would make hawking unattractive and less profitable due to the likely reduction in sales.

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

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