



(Re)envisioning the prognosis of SWM tragedies in Ghana (1950 – 2020)

Martin OTENG-ABABIO

University of Ghana

**Ghanaian urban population growth,
the economy and solid waste
generation rates**



Ghana - a snapshot

Description		Unit	1984	2000	2010	2020
People	Urban growth rate		1970-1984	1984-2000	2000 - 2010	2010 - 2020
	National	Per annum	3.3	4.6	4.2	4.1
	Regional (Accra)	Per annum	3.5	3.7	3.5	3.2
	Regional (Tamale)	Per annum	4.9	3.1	4.4	4.6
Economy	Per capita income					
	National	¢/capita	52	40	24.2	32.8
	Regional (Tamale)	¢/capita	26	5	5.6	4.1
	Regional (Accra)	¢/capita	63	69	50.4	68.3
Waste generation rate						
	National	M ³ /per day		9,501	12,710	14,130
	Accra	M ³ /per day		1,552	2,605	3,000
	Kumasi	M ³ /per day		962	1,689	2,600
	Tema	M ³ /per day		636	721	901
	Sekondi -Takoradi	M ³ /per day		255	424	531



Conceptual issues



Spaces of neoliberalism – creative destruction

- Interpret the spatio-temporalities realities within exiting neoliberalism from two dialectically intertwined but analytically distinct “moments”
 - First – (partial) destruction of extant institutional arrangements and political compromises through market-oriented reform initiatives; and
 - Second, (tendential) creation of new politico-institutional infrastructure for market-oriented economic growth, commodification & rule of capital

- Such conceptualization offers the basis for exploring its wide-ranging, transformative impacts upon inherited politico-institutional configurations and geographical infrastructure.



- **Major institutional choices**



Major institutional choices (1950-2020)

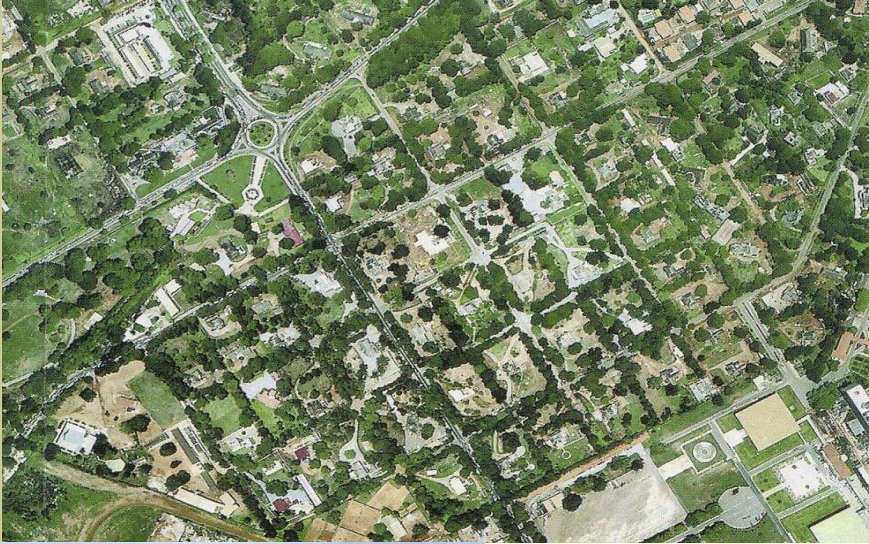
- Broadly, local government Act 462, revised 2016 (Act 936) mandates MMDAs to provide SWM services
- 1950 – 1970 -
 - **Focus** – protect health and aesthetic - to provide universal access through the adoption of rudimentary tools and techniques
- 1980 – 2005
 - **Focus** – cost recovery- pay-as-you - dump, also known as variable rate or unit based pricing under the Structural Adjustment Programme
- 2006 – 2020
 - **Focus** – cost recovery and profit - the polluter-pays-principle under urban entrepreneurism



Waste collection architecture



Characteristics of high-income areas



- Mainly through - **House-to-House**
- Average waste per capita - **0.9 kg/d**
- Average waste density - **0.3 t/m³**
- Average persons/house - **7**
- Frequency of collection - **1/week**





Characteristics of middle-income areas



- Mainly through - **House-to-House**
- Average waste per capita - **0.6 kg/d**
- Average persons per house - **15-20**
- Frequency of collection – **1/week**





Characteristics of Low-income areas



- The use of communal container collection (CCC)
- Average waste production per capita - 0.5 kg/d
- Average persons per house - 50
- Frequency of collection per week 3–6 times





Waste collection outcomes



Waste collection impact — low-income areas

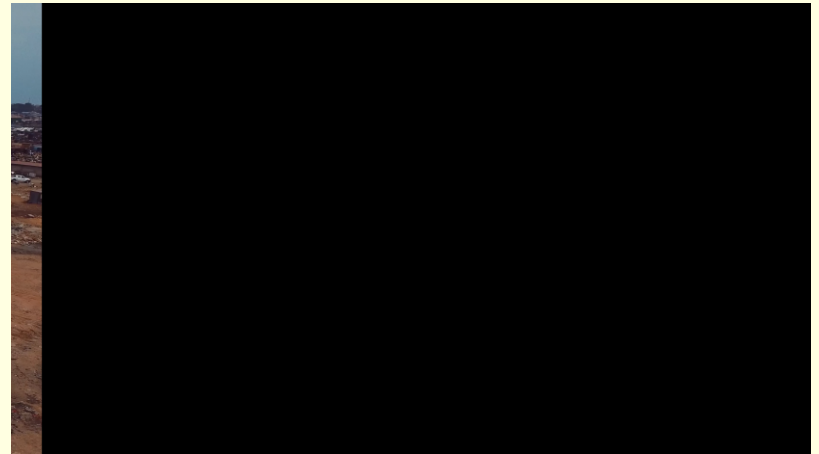
- Exhibiting cities within a city
 - clean affluent areas vrs insanitary poor areas
 - Manual collection of sacks
 - No plastic bins available
- Accra, Kumasi, Tema and Sekondi-Takoradi generate about 4.500 tons per day
- About 60% waste is collected while 1.800 tons per day is disposed irresponsibly





Waste collection impact — low-income areas

- The current public infrastructure is not suitable to manage the daily waste streams, and not designed to meet the future needs of Ghana
- Current policy over emphasizes solid waste collection at the expense of waste management





Reasons



Institutional (in)congruence

- The challenges associated with **Pay-as-you-throw**
 - The distance decay
 - The skip challenge
 - The assemblymen 'WAHALA'

- The backlash of neoliberalism and entrepreneurism
 - The strategy for pricing **SWC** and **disposal services** is analogous to that used by local utilities electricity, gas, water, and sanitary sewer services where customers pay for what they use, except in this case, citizens pay for how much they throw away or **find somewhere to throw your waste**



Institutional (in)congruence

- The polluter-pays-principle does not make room for recalcitrant polluters
- Service providers are handicap in handling non-subscribers
- The environment and open drains are the ultimate losers



Institutional (in)congruence

- The ‘waste bans’.
 - Prohibit the disposal of hazardous and hospital waste on landfills
 - By emphasizing prohibitions also calls for well-established and well-infrastructured pathways which are non-existent

- A private transfer station





Prospects of SWM in Ghana



ESPA has overwhelming local capacity

- The need to control the **Big Elephant** in the industry
 - Adopt and implement comprehensive SWM practices and processes backed by appropriate infrastructure and enforceable policy
 - Leverage and synergize ESPA overwhelming capacity for efficient and effective SWM – managing generation, storage, sorting, recovering, reuse, recycling, reprocessing, collection, transport, treatment, and disposal of all wastes,
 - ESPA has over 80 members nationwide in different segments of of the waste management chain
 - ESPA has about 46 members in sanitation services

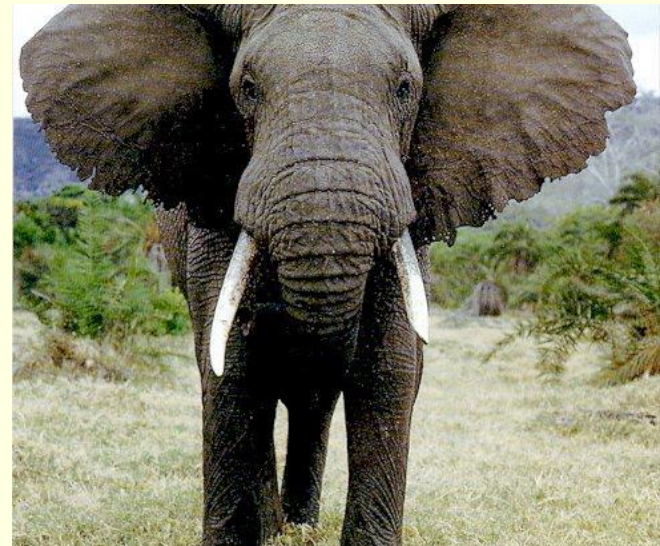


Conclusion



Conclusion

- While we must avoid rigid conservatism, our quest for modernity and technology must necessarily be rooted in our noble traditions and local knowledge
- MMDAs are as heavy and slow as the elephant in movement (bureaucratic)





THANK YOU
For Your Attention