Urban Families and Residential Mobility in Accra

Elizabeth Ardayfio-Schandorf

Introduction

In recent times, the family, as a basic unit of society in Africa, has attracted increasing attention for the critical role it plays in development. In the Ghanaian society, the concept of the family defies easy and simplistic definition. While some researchers consider it from the perspective of the conjugal family to extended family relationships, others see it from the point of view of descent to clanship association. The case of Ghana is complicated by changes in the socio-cultural milieu in which new family forms are emerging. Whereas traditionally, the Akan, for instance, would denote only their matrilineage as their family, the formally educated Akan may refer to their wife and children as their family. Certain forces seem to be changing the traditionally accepted relationships between male and female, parents and children, among siblings and among generations, both vertical and lateral of related kin.

In Ghanaian society, enormous transformations in social interactions have taken place in the past two decades in particular. Changes in the structure have given rise to much discussion and controversy. It is observed that the extended kin still plays a prominent role in the familial residential arrangements of Africans in urban areas, and that this phenomenon persists even though the kin network no longer functions as effectively as it did as a traditional unit (Goode 1970). The type of marital arrangement greatly affects and influences the demographic and residential pattern of the family. Polygyny as a major form of marriage, practised by over 80 per cent of African societies, complicates the issue.

Although extensive work has been done on the family in Ghana, there is a paucity of research output and literature on relationship between families, household and residential mobility and the mobility behaviour of families. This has meant that there is a lack of information on intra-urban mobility of all this too-important human institution and the places in which families reside. Apart from being dynamic,
the family is highly susceptible to the effects of such phenomena as urbanization, industrialization and modernization in towns with the high rates of population growth found in Accra.

Orientation of the Family and Residential Mobility

It has been noted that there is a relatively small proportion of home-ownership among urban families, and this has resulted in a pattern of high residential change each year. This has propelled residential mobility through which many urban families satisfy their housing needs (Burgess and Locke 1960). Residential mobility is defined as the number of times a family changes its location within cities and towns.

The family as a social organization is in a state of flux and the changes that take place in it are manifested mostly in its size, forms, structure and composition. Current trends include fewer marriages, fewer children, more divorce, more single-parenting families, step-families, more working mothers and increasingly less connection to kin network. Several other forms of family are also emerging. While some see the recent changes in the family as an indication of serious trouble and warn that if nothing is done about it, the family will collapse, others regard these developments as a reflection of the flexibility of the family and its ability to adapt to the increasing challenges of modern life. Most families in urban areas are not spared the changes in the sense that, apart from the inter-family developments that occur, they are also faced with the challenges associated with urban life. All these have conspired to add stress, ranging from the need to find more spacious decent accommodation, which is often impeded by inadequate finance; to starting fresh rental agreements, arbitrary increases in rent, eviction, lack of accommodation in other parts of the city to such factors as tradition and habit. Some housing problems of the urban family could be solved when a change of residence is possible. However, for various reasons, not all urban families in Accra and other urban areas of Ghana can change their places of abode.

It is time for a reassessment of the dynamics and residential mobility behaviour of urban families in Accra. Many pertinent questions arise, such as the nature of families in Accra, and how the structure of the family has changed within the last ten years. How has this change reflected in space needs, hence in the residential mobility of families in the city? Of particular importance are the basic characteristics of families, the residential mobility patterns of indigenous and migrant populations, the space needs of urban families, why some urban families are mobile and others are not, and the implications of residential mobility for urban planning in Accra.

Objectives

In order to study the nature and changing structure of urban families in Accra and the relation to their changing residential space needs, the following specific objectives were adopted:

- To identify the basic characteristics of urban families in Accra.
- To examine and analyze the changing nature of urban families in Accra over the past ten years.
To analyze the relationship between urban family dynamics, space needs and residential mobility.

To investigate variations in the movements in various residential zones of Accra.

To examine reasons for the residential mobility in Accra.

To identify sending and receiving areas of residential mobility in Accra.

The Concept of Family

The family is not an easy concept to define in general terms in Ghana. In western connotation, a family is considered as ‘any two or more related people living in one house’ (Rice 1999). This definition covers only people who are present at a particular time because it states that family members must live together in one home. This means that if adult children move out of their parents’ home and establish families of their own, they are no longer considered as part of their parents’ family. In Africa, the conventional family is conceptualized differently. Bell and Vogel (1960) define the family as a social group characterized by common residence, economic cooperation and reproduction. It includes adults of both sexes, who maintain a socially approved sexual relationship, and one or more children, own or adopted.

In Ghana, family members may share a common residence, economic cooperation and also reproduce to ensure the continuity of their lineage. But it is not always the case that family members share a common residence. Some members may stay in separate residences according to custom and others may choose to stay in residences away from their neo-natal homes. Regardless of their residential location, they are still regarded as members of their respective families. In many urban areas in Ghana, family members do not stay together under one roof. A family may be considered as a domestic group in which parents, children and other dependants live together and cooperate economically. A family is a group of persons linked by kinship connections, with the older members taking care of the younger ones.

Of importance to the concept of the family are marriage and kinship. Marriage can be defined as the socially acknowledged and approved sexual union between two adult individuals while kinship ties are connections between individuals established through descent or marriage. In Ghana, the family is recognized within wider kinship groups. The essence of the family lies in the unique combination of its functions. These reflect procreation, child bearing, nurturing and rearing, socialization of the young and maintenance of family members including provision of food and shelter. Even though these functions can be attained outside the family, it is only in the family that they are all fulfilled together, with a reinforcing mechanism that guarantees their fulfilment (Ardayfio-Schandorf 1994).

The family ensures its continuity through marriage, procreation and adoption. It applies a principle of consanguinity to determine members born into it and a principle of affinity through marriage to ensure a supportive kinship structure. The simplest form of family is the conjugal or nuclear family, which comprises a husband and
wife, with or without children. This type of family as a proportion is declining in recent years as compared with the extended family that consists of married persons, their children and other relatives who might live with them in their households. The extended family, which is usually a lineage group, is more widespread in Ghana.

In Ghana, single-parent, nuclear, extended, polygamous and cohabiting families are common. With this wide variety of family forms, ‘family’ in this study refers to such forms as nuclear, extended, single-parent, monogamous, polygynous and cohabiting. These family forms may also be identified in the urban milieu. Thus, in this context, when one speaks of the family, one is referring not to the nuclear family consisting mainly of husband, wife and children but to the extended family which comprises a large number of blood relatives who trace their descent from a common ancestor who may be patrilineal or matrilineal. The family forms have implications for space needs and residential mobility. Accra, the focus of the study, exhibits interesting family characteristics, composition and residential patterns, and even more so the ethnic and indigenous traits of the Ga who are the indigenous people of the area.

The Ga are duo-local. Men live separately in a compound called hiiamli (men’s compound) and women in yeiamli (women’s compound). When a man marries, he continues to live with his father, and the wife also lives with her mother. Each couple thus tends to be more attached to his/her parents than to each other. Children of a union initially live with their mother in yeiamli, but when sons attain the age of seven they join their father in hiiamli. The wife visits the husband mainly at night. But in polygynous families, wives visit their husbands in turn. Wives cook in their mother’s compound and bring the food to their husbands in hiiamli (Field 1940; Azu 1966). When the sons grow, they do not leave their fathers’ homes altogether; rather, they build a plama (outhouse) near their fathers’ compound. The future sons of young fathers will also live around this compound. This gives rise to a specific residential arrangement, which strengthens the patrilineal system of the Ga. In this study, indigenous family refers to the Ga traditional family.

Conceptual Model for the Urban Family and Mobility

In view of the above, a model is adopted to demonstrate the linkages between urban family dynamics and residential mobility choices and behaviour. The model explains urban families’ residential mobility in relation to their dynamics and environmental conditions. It states that the decision by an urban family whether or not to move from one part of the city to another is viewed as a product of the changes that occur within the family and the socio-economic and environmental conditions in the city, which may produce stress on the urban family. As shown in Figure 2.1, the urban family will either improve the conditions and stay or decide to move. It will search for available vacancies in other parts of the city and match vacancies with its needs and aspirations before moving out. Even here, it still has the option of improving conditions at the current residence and remaining there. The model is viewed as a continual process because at any point in time, stress can set in and urban families have to redefine their aspirations and needs to suit the situation or move out.
Specifically, the model considers the conditions that may precipitate or hinder urban residential mobility. It further shows the main dynamics and characteristics of urban families in Accra and socio-economic and environmental conditions that occur in the city. Some of the changes in the families, e.g. increase in family size, single-parent headship and grown-up children, can combine with such environmental conditions as congestion.

**Figure 2.1 Conceptual Model of Residential Mobility by Urban Families**

**Some dynamics and characteristics of the urban family**
- Family sizes are mostly small
- Few/no other relatives in the house
- Few polygamous families
- Presence of co-workers, house helps
- More tenant families
- Some grown-up children bring their spouses into their parental houses to increase family sizes
- Single-parent families
- Families largely migrants
- Female-headed families
- Many families headed by young people
- Cohabiting families
- Family members forming household
- Some members forming different households

**Socio-economic, political and environmental conditions in the city causing stress on the urban family**
- High rental charges and unfavourable tenancy agreements
- Eviction
- Unemployment
- Poor state of facilities, e.g. latrine, water and electricity
- Over-saturation of stores
- Unsanitary conditions/slums
- Congestion in existing room
- Transportation problems
- Harsh government policy, e.g. Structural Adjustment Programme

**Other conditions leading to movement**
- Moving to own/extended family house
- Moving to a rent-free house/to take care of a house

**Constraints to movement**
- Satisfied with current conditions
- Unable to pay high advance rent
- Tradition/habit
- Imperfect information
- Lack of accommodation

Source: Population Census

Many families may move as a result of the increased stress, but some try to contain the stress and remain in the same place. Other conditions causing movement of families include moving to own or extended family houses, or moving to occupy rent-free housing or taking care of a house. It is also true that some families do not relocate at all. These families may either be constrained by certain factors or are
motivated by certain conditions in their present residential areas. The last category may include families that occupy their own or extended family housing, rent-free occupants and those who fail to move out because of attachment to a particular area. The model directs us to find answers to such questions as: what are the basic characteristics of urban families in Accra? What types of families are common in Accra and in which part of the city are they found? Do changes occur in urban families of Accra? Is residential mobility in Accra the result of stress created by the interplay of environmental conditions and family dynamics? What is the pattern and direction of urban mobility in Accra among other cities?

The Urban Family Survey

Studying the nature and changing structure of urban families in Accra in relation to changing residential space needs calls for both qualitative and quantitative methodology, hence the two-stage research methodology used here. The first stage involved focus group discussions (FGDs) of 50 family heads, selected from six indigenous Ga settlements and migrant areas in the Greater Accra Metropolitan Area (GAMA). Eight participants were selected on the basis of age and sex. Two separate discussions were carried out at Accra Central and in the migrant areas. At least one Ga participant was included in order to capture intra-city mobility patterns of the indigenous people. There were five participants in each male and female group. The ages of the respondents were categorized into 21–30, 31–40, 41–50, 51–60 and over-60 groups.

The second stage was a sample survey of 400 families, selected from six residential areas. Random sampling methodology was used in choosing the family heads. The survey covered both nuclear and extended family homes, and was carried out between February and May 2003. As a family differs from a household, as already pointed out, care was taken not to include households that were not families. Only those people who were related through blood, marriage or adoption and their dependants were selected. The families used as the sampling frame and respondents were selected randomly among the residential areas, using the number of houses as the basis for selection. The Statistical Package for Social Scientists (SPSS) was used for the analysis and for generation of frequencies and tabulations.

Based on the history, spatial development, location and place utility, the study identified two major forms of family in the GAMA with regard to zonation: the core or indigenous areas and the migrant areas. The latter zonation is divided into old and migrant areas as each zonation is distinguished by different family structures, characteristics, dynamics, space needs and intra-urban residential mobility. The use of zonations is an attempt to establish the variations that exist in movement of families in the core and migrant residential areas and to account for the differences.

The core areas accommodate localities more associated with the unemployed, informal activities and more deprivation, as in Central Accra or other peripheral core areas like South La. The expansion and growth of Accra from the nineteenth century give generally the direction of movement of new development areas in the
The settlements selected for the study are Accra Central, Osu and South La, representing core indigenous areas, Nima as an old migrant area and Madina and Ashaiman, representing new migrant areas. All discussions on urban families were based on these categories.

**Figure 2.2: Study Settlements and Expansion of Accra**


**Accra as the Study Area**

The study area focuses on Accra, as the most urbanized area of Ghana. It provides residences for families with varied backgrounds and at different levels. Accra in the study is defined to include Tema Municipal Assembly and Ga District as urbanization and residential mobility in the city has occurred towards these areas. It is the capital city and also the financial, economic, transportation and industrial hub of the country.
The city began in the sixteenth century as a collection of fishing villages, namely James Town, Usher Town and Osu. The Ga people were believed to be the main occupants of the area. Later on, they were joined by various groups of Europeans and Africans who either settled for trading purposes or came there for administrative services (Boateng 1959; Acquah 1958). The settlement began to grow at a faster rate with the transfer of the headquarters of the Gold Coast from Cape Coast to Accra in 1877. The city has extended beyond its boundaries and has now merged with Awoshie, Taifa, Ofankor, Dome, Haatso, Madina, Adenta and other peri-urban areas around it within the neighbouring Ga District and Tema Municipal Assembly (Ghana Statistical Service 1960, 1984, 1987, 2001).

In addition to the spatial expansion is increased crowding in the existing residential areas. This has resulted in the infilling of vacant plots of land in the existing residential areas. Presently, the Accra District forms the Greater Accra Metropolitan Area with Tema Municipal Assembly and Ga District (Fig. 2.2). For the sake of this study, Accra has been divided into three categories, namely core/indigenous areas, old and migrant areas.

Many urban families are migrants, especially those living outside the core areas of the city. They arrived from other parts of the country with some of them being nationals of Nigeria, Burkina Faso, Togo, Benin, Mali, Niger, Liberia and other West African countries. The 2000 Population and Housing Census gives the population of GAMA as 2,725,896. Figure 2.2 shows the expansion of Accra, GAMA and the study areas.

The Dynamics and Socio-economic Characteristics of Families

The empirical evidence demonstrates the patterns of residential settlement and the gender characteristics of heads of urban families. A total of 73 per cent of the sample families were headed by males while 27 per cent were headed by females. Differences, however, exist in the residential areas. New migrant areas had the highest proportion of female-headed families at 31 per cent. In indigenous Ga and old migrant areas, female-headed families constituted 26 per cent and 24 per cent, respectively.

Women were family heads in core/indigenous Ga settlements mainly because of polygyny. Husbands married to two or more wives may live with some of them while other wives lived in different houses owing to duo-local residential arrangements. In all, 31 per cent of the female heads in core areas said their husbands were living with other wives in different houses. Female-headed families resulting from widowhood constituted 24 per cent. Families headed by single females formed 17 per cent and those whose husbands had travelled as well as those who gave other reasons formed a small percentage of female-headed families in core areas. The latter comprised 7 per cent each of the female-headed families found in those areas.

In predominantly migrant areas, most of the female family heads indicated that their husbands had travelled in contrast to those in the core areas. Specifically, about one-third of all female heads of old migrant and new migrant areas respectively said that their husbands had travelled. According to them, the husbands were working in another town in or outside the country. In new migrant areas, death of husbands and husbands living with other wives elsewhere were the next popular reasons. But in old
migrant areas, those female-headed families resulting from a polygynous residential arrangement formed the smallest proportion of all the reasons given by female heads. Again, female heads who had not married before formed only 9 per cent of all the female heads in new migrant areas, but in old migrant areas such families constituted 18 per cent.

In addition, some females were heads of their families because their husbands agreed that they should stay in a separate home for various reasons. However, others were living separately from their husbands in order to look after their ageing parents, younger brothers and sisters or other relatives. Female-headed families resulting from temporary absence of husbands formed the highest proportion, with about 25 per cent of the female heads falling into this category.

Residential Areas and Age of Urban Family Heads

There is a general notion that most families in the urban areas are headed by young people. The study found instead that most families in both core indigenous areas and predominantly migrant areas were headed by people who were not that young. In the core areas, these families formed 27 per cent; in old migrant areas, they constituted 35 per cent and in new migrant areas 34 per cent. Overall, nearly one-third (32%) of the sampled families were headed by people within the 31–40 age cohort. Notwithstanding the zonation similarities, differences can be observed in the ages of family heads in the various residential areas. Families headed by people in the 21–30 age cohorts formed the least proportion in core and new migrant areas; but in old migrant areas, families whose heads were over 60 years constituted the least proportion, indicating a predominance of retired people.

If family heads below the age of 40 are classified as young, then it can be said that at the time of the study, 43 per cent of the families in Accra were headed by young people while the remaining 57 per cent were headed by old people. This shows that more families in Accra were headed by old people. The findings in this study do not corroborate the general notion of young family heads in urban centres.

Residential Areas and Educational Level of Urban Family Heads

A large proportion of families in all the residential areas of Accra were headed by people who had completed second-cycle schooling, i.e. they have had secondary, technical, commercial or vocational education. In core and old migrant residential areas, about 30 per cent of family heads had completed second-cycle institutions. In new migrant areas it was 23 per cent. The proportion of families headed by people with no formal education was higher, with 33 per cent in core indigenous areas. None of the family heads in core areas had had Koranic education, but this was important in old and new migrant areas. Also in migrant-dominated areas, junior secondary school was the level with least proportion of families. On the whole, 79 per cent of the families in Accra were headed by people with some form of formal education, while 21 per cent were headed by people with no formal education. It can also be said that in both old and new migrant areas, more people were exposed to other forms of education than junior secondary school-level education.
Residential Areas and Marital Status of Urban Family Heads

Marriage is a very important social institution in Ghana because it ensures the continuity of the family. It was not surprising, therefore, that in Accra, 69 per cent of urban families were headed by married people. They formed the majority in both core indigenous Ga settlements and predominantly migrant areas. In the core and old migrant areas, 72 per cent of the families were headed by married men and women, respectively. In new migrant areas, families headed by married people constituted 56 per cent. Cohabiting families were as important as families headed by divorced people in both core indigenous and migrant areas, with each group constituting 10 per cent. Families headed by separated and single parents were not common in Accra (Table 2.1). In core areas, for example, no family was headed by married people who were separated.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Marital status</th>
<th>Residential areas of families</th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Core areas</td>
<td>Old migrant areas</td>
<td>New migrant areas</td>
<td>Total</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>No.</td>
<td>%</td>
<td>No.</td>
<td>%</td>
<td>No.</td>
<td>%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Married</td>
<td>82</td>
<td>72</td>
<td>101</td>
<td>72</td>
<td>83</td>
<td>56</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Single</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Separated</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Divorced</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Widowed</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cohabiting</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>113</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>140</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>147</td>
<td>37</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


One-third of the male-headed families in old and new migrant areas of Accra were polygamous, with the exception of core areas where 51 per cent of the female heads were in polygamous union. Higher proportions of female heads in old and new migrant areas were found to be monogamous. This shows that as many as 89 per cent of the female family heads in old migrant areas were monogamous, thus confirming the reasons given by female heads in old migrant areas that their husbands had travelled. Those female-headed families resulting from polygamy constituted the least percentage of all the reasons given by old migrants in Accra.

Apart from the fact that 69 per cent of the families were headed by married people, 27 per cent were headed by women. Though available literature indicates that most urban families do not live with their relatives, the study showed that most families in Accra are of the extended type. A total of 71 per cent of the families in Accra stayed with relatives from either of the spouse’s extended families, in the case of married people, or from the heads’ family, in the case of single-parent families. About 89 per cent of the families lived with other dependants who may be aunts, uncles, nieces or nephews and others.
Occupation Status of Families in Accra

The occupations of family heads and their earning capabilities among other things could put a stress on urban families in Accra and their tenure status. This is generally manifested in employment status, though other means of support such as remittances from children and other close relatives may also augment and provide financial means for family heads. Accordingly, 68 per cent of urban families were gainfully employed, 11 per cent unemployed, 6 per cent retired while students and apprentices, categorized as other, comprised the remaining 15 per cent. Spatial variations showed that in indigenous areas, 66 per cent of families were headed by working people, and 25 per cent by the unemployed. In old migrant areas, 78 per cent of families were headed by workers and in new migrant areas 61 per cent. Family heads in Accra were mostly self-employed, in private ventures or organizations. Spatial variations characterized the nature of jobs done by the family heads as well. Indigenous family heads were self-employed, mostly fishermen and carpenters, whereas 50 per cent of old and 42 per cent of new migrant family heads were in the public/civil service.

Accra is characterized by a high proportion of tenants. This corroborates the findings that most African cities have a higher proportion of tenant families (White and Tsui 1986). Migrants in Accra formed 78 per cent while the indigenous Ga constituted 22 per cent. Of the families studied 34 per cent were small-sized, 66 per cent were medium or large-sized. This does not corroborate the general observation that families in urban areas are usually small in size (Bongaarts 2001). With regard to ethnicity, as expected, the Ga can be found in the peripheral and core areas, but also were well represented in the migrant areas.

Among the urban families can be identified several different ethnic groups ranging from Ghanaians and others from the West Africa sub-region. These notwithstanding, the four major ethnic groups encountered were the Ga, Akan, Ewe and Mole Dagbani. The others included ethnic groups from countries like Togo, Nigeria, Côte d’Ivoire and Niger. On the whole, 22 per cent of families in Accra were Ga and 78 per cent were migrants of mixed ethnicity. Variations could be found in each residential area.

In the core areas, the indigenous Ga families formed the majority with 52 per cent, followed by the Akan with 31 per cent, Mole Dagbani 4 per cent and other ethnic groups 4 per cent.

In old migrant areas, Akan families formed the majority, representing 43 per cent and other ethnic groups forming 25 per cent. For instance, in Madina, families of Akan ethnicity dominated with over 50 per cent. In new migrant areas, families of other ethnic groups dominated; though in Ashaiman, families from other groups constituted 33 per cent.

Tenure Status of Urban Families

Tenure status of urban families is one of the important variables that affect and influence frequency of residential mobility. The findings in this regard confirm some of the studies conducted elsewhere in Ghana and other parts of Africa that cities in Africa contain a high proportion of tenants (Gilbert 1999; Gilbert and Gugler 1982).
Up to 51 per cent of all families in Accra were found to be tenants, 31 per cent owners, and 10 per cent occupied extended family property (Table 2.2). In old and new migrant areas, 57 per cent and 58 per cent respectively were in tenant houses. The table further demonstrates that old migrants were more likely to occupy their own personal houses. On the contrary, indigenous families were mostly found to occupy extended family property. Many people who would wish to own a home were constrained by a number of factors, prominent among which were low levels of income and the process of land acquisition. Consequently, it generally takes a longer time in Accra to become a home-owner than it is in many cities in the developing world. Similarly, Asiamah (1994) maintained that access to land was the principal barrier to ownership in urban areas. Another phenomenon that was found to have emerged in Accra is that families were rent-free occupiers or caretakers of new housing developments in the city, a factor in all the three residential areas.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Tenure status</th>
<th>Residential areas</th>
<th>Core areas</th>
<th>Old migrant areas</th>
<th>New migrant areas</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>No.</td>
<td>%</td>
<td>No.</td>
<td>%</td>
<td>No.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Owner</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>48</td>
<td>34.3</td>
<td>43</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Caretaker</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tenant</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>80</td>
<td>57</td>
<td>87</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rent-free</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Family property</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>113</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>140</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>147</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


The Nature of Urban Families in Accra

The nature of families, both Ga and non-Ga, and their residential characteristics have undergone transformation with time. Majority of the indigenous Ga of Accra were found concentrated in the core zone. Migrants from one geographical area or region outside Accra were also found in specific zones of the city. The implication is that migrants to Accra tended to settle in zones where people from their home towns or ethnicity were found. Such people used to meet very often to discuss matters affecting their welfare, and occasionally went home together and celebrated funerals and festivals together. Similarly, in the quest to buy land or build a house, they were normally guided to areas where people from their home town could be found. This type of community living was being enjoyed by migrants, and according to most of them, they least felt that they had been away from their traditional family members in their home towns. In terms of structure, the family included many people from the extended families of the wives and husbands, in addition to the spouses’ own biological children.

The family heads, however, indicated that this pattern is dying out in many parts of Accra in contemporary times. Only few people from the same ethnic area meet
to do things in common these days. An individual way of living is now taking over from community living. The respondents claimed that ‘many houses in the city are walled, as if to prevent people from other families from entering’. Participants of the focus group discussions (FGDs) affirmed that the nature of work of many urban dwellers and problems associated with urban life did not allow family members to visit each other and interact as they used to. Young men and women often leave their parents’ residence and stay elsewhere in the city. Even if this occurred in the past, it is now becoming more widespread. Owing to the cosmopolitan nature of Accra, only a few areas such as indigenous areas and old migrant areas like Chorkor and Nima have contiguous areas of particular ethnic groupings.

In terms of composition, even though many families are still composed of other relatives, the number of such members is declining. What is noticeable currently is the presence of house helps. Most families in Accra were found to be staying with people who were not their biological children. In all, 85 per cent of urban families in new migrant areas were staying with non-biological children. The percentage in indigenous and old migrant areas was almost the same.

**Family Types in Accra**

The relationship between family heads and the people with whom they lived was investigated as a way of establishing whether families in the city of Accra were nuclear or extended. The findings show that a large proportion of families in Accra are extended families, with 71 per cent of the families in all residential areas of Accra including relatives in their homes. Those families who lived with only their biological children (nuclear families) constituted 16 per cent and those with only house helps or other non-relatives formed the remaining 13 per cent.

It follows that in spite of the influence of urbanization and other socio-economic and political pressures on urban families, the extended family linkage is still strong in Accra. This finding does not corroborate the assertion made by Burgess and Locke (1960) that the changes that have occurred in the family have brought about less connection between most family members and their kin. It also refutes the notion that few families in Accra accommodate relatives in their homes. It, however, corroborates the findings of White and Tsui (1986) that the nuclear family has been declining in proportion in many urban areas. It also confirms what Addai-Sundia (1995) stated that despite the changes in the traditional institutions on which the family is based, the family system and the African concept of the family persist.

**Households within Urban Families in Accra**

Family members may form a household in urban areas. That is to say that people forming a family can make common living and catering arrangements. But it is also possible to have more than one household within a family, especially within extended families. One of the issues in the conceptual framework for this study was that urban family members form households. Most families provided accommodation and/or meals to the people with whom they stayed. The dependency of people on
their families is very important to this study because it can, in a way, influence the choice of residence and, hence, residential mobility.

In Accra, about 89 per cent of the families shared common catering arrangements. In core areas, 88 per cent of the families formed households, with only 12 per cent of the families sharing catering arrangements with the people they were staying with. In old migrant areas, about 93 per cent of the families formed households with their dependants, while only 7 per cent of them had separate catering arrangements. In new migrant areas, those families that shared common catering arrangements were 86 per cent while the families forming separate households were 14 per cent. This shows that in Accra, a large number of families formed shared common catering arrangements.

**Indigenous and Migrant Families in Accra**

Most urban families are largely migrants. The indigenous Ga families formed 52 per cent of the families in core areas, the migrant families constituting the remaining 48 per cent in peripheral areas. In old migrant areas, 11 per cent of the families were indigenous Ga while 89 per cent were migrants. New migrant areas like Ashaiman had a lower proportion of Ga families; 9 per cent of the indigenous Ga families were identified in new migrant areas. The migrant families formed the overwhelming majority of 91 per cent. It was also observed that 48 per cent of the families in Accra were migrants. The indigenous Ga families constituted the remaining percentage.

Small families, as used in this study, signify families whose members number no more than six. Seven- to nine-member families are regarded as medium while those with ten or more members are large. Most families in core areas are smaller than in old and migrant areas, where small-sized families formed 45 per cent. It was also observed that 33 per cent of the families in old migrant areas were small-sized. In new migrant areas, 25 per cent of their families were identified as small, more than half were medium and 21 per cent were large. Overall, 34 per cent of families in Accra were small while medium and large ones constituted 66 per cent. This negates the observation made by (Bongaarts 2001) that urban families have small sizes.

**Determinants of Residential Mobility in Accra**

The level of residential mobility found among urban families in Accra demonstrated that residential mobility is an important phenomenon in the nation's capital city, thus confirming the mobile nature of households in Accra. Frequency of movements has, therefore, been examined in relation to family types and residential areas. Movements occurring within the last ten years showed that 67 per cent of the sample families had moved within Accra, at least once, and 33 per cent had not. However, there were variations in the levels of movement among types of family and within different residential zones (Table 2.3).
Table 2.3: Movements by Families within Accra

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Frequency of movement</th>
<th>Residential areas of families</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Core areas</td>
<td>Old migrant areas</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Once</td>
<td>14 12</td>
<td>47 33</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Twice</td>
<td>8  7</td>
<td>39 28</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Three times</td>
<td>4  4</td>
<td>14 10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Four times</td>
<td>0  0</td>
<td>11 8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Over four times</td>
<td>0  0</td>
<td>4 3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>None</td>
<td>87 77</td>
<td>25 18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>113 28</td>
<td>140 35</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


The level of movement by families showed that 23 per cent in core areas had moved, with 12 per cent of them moving once, 7 per cent twice and 4 per cent three times. The remaining 77 per cent had not moved. In old migrant areas, families that had moved at least once formed the majority, 82 per cent of the families having actually moved with 33 per cent moving once, 28 per cent twice and 21 per cent thrice or more. Thus, families that had not moved in old migrant areas constituted 18 per cent. Similarly, in new migrant areas, as many as 86 per cent of the families had moved, with 39 per cent moving once, and 47 per cent moving twice or more. Only 14 per cent of the families in new migrant areas had not moved at the time of the study. Movements within Accra have a common pattern in terms of frequency. As the number of movements increased, so did the number of mobile families decrease in all the residential areas, contrary to the observation of some scholars that residential mobility was not an important feature of households in Accra.

Residential Mobility among Nuclear and Extended Families

Nuclear families in Accra had a higher propensity to move: 68 per cent of such families had moved in the past ten years as compared with 32 per cent of extended families who had not moved. Among the extended families, 65 per cent had moved while 35 per cent had not moved. Variations in the different residential zones indicated that nuclear families in core areas had a higher propensity to move than extended families in core areas. Specifically, 69 per cent of nuclear families in core areas had moved, with 46 per cent having moved once, and 23 per cent twice. Only 33 per cent of the nuclear families in core areas had not moved. Among the extended families in the same residential areas, however, it was observed that 23 per cent had moved at the time of the study: 11 per cent moved once, 7 per cent twice and 5 per cent three times. This shows that a higher proportion of 77 per cent of extended families in core areas had not moved. Even though nuclear families in core areas had a higher propensity to move, their frequency of movement was lower, as compared with that of extended...
families of the same areas. None of the nuclear families moved three times in core areas but 5 per cent of extended families moved three times within Accra.

This implies that movement by both nuclear and extended families in core areas was low, owing to the fact that most families there are indigenous Ga, who are the custodians of the land. This makes most of the families more or less free from problems like eviction, and payment of high rent advances that leads to many families in other residential areas of the city deciding to move. This may also explain why many families in core areas of the city were engaged in limited mobility. In old and migrant areas, a larger proportion of extended families moved than nuclear families: 83 per cent of extended families in old and new migrant areas, respectively, had moved within Accra in the past ten years.

It follows from the above mobility pattern that families in core areas of Accra were more stable than those in the migrant areas. In core areas, the proportion of both nuclear and extended families that moved was 30 per cent as compared with 70 per cent of the latter. On the other hand, in old migrant areas about 78 per cent of both nuclear and extended families moved, while 22 per cent did not move. In new migrant areas, 81 per cent moved while 19 per cent did not move. The relative stability of extended families may be explained by the fact that because they were comparatively larger in size, it was not easy for them to move as they might need larger forms of accommodation and at higher cost.

Gender of Family Heads and Residential Mobility

About 73 per cent of families in Accra were headed by men, as shown in Table 2.4. In core areas, movements by both male and female family heads were low. Less than 25 per cent of both sexes had moved. However, the male heads had a greater tendency to move than the female heads. It was observed that 24 per cent of the male-headed families had moved, out of which 13 per cent moved once, 6 per cent twice and 5 per cent three times. Female heads moved less at 20 per cent, with 10 per cent moving once, and another 10 per cent moving twice. None of the female-headed families in core areas had moved more than twice.

In addition, male-headed families were more mobile in old migrant areas, with a mobility rate of 83 per cent. A third moved once, with 30 per cent moving twice, 10 per cent three times and another 10 per cent at least four times. The pattern is different in new migrant areas where female-headed families had still a higher propensity to move: no less that 91 per cent female-headed families had moved, with about half of them moving once, 20 per cent twice, 13 per cent three times and 7 per cent at least four times.

With regard to the relationship between the age of family heads and mobility within Accra, families headed by both young and old people in core areas were less mobile. However, their residential mobility pattern differed in terms of frequency. Families headed by people within the 31–40 and 51–60 age cohorts were the most mobile families in core areas: 28 per cent of each of these families headed by people within the two age groups had moved. The middle group of 41–50 years had the least propensity to move in core areas.
Only 12 per cent of these families had moved while 88 per cent of them remained stable. In case of old migrant areas, families whose heads were over 60 were the most mobile group since 90 per cent of them had moved. Out of this percentage, 30 per cent had moved once, 40 per cent twice and 20 per cent three times. Families whose heads were within the 31–40 age group had the least number of movements in old migrant areas. Furthermore, families headed by people who were 60 years and above moved in new migrant areas. They comprised 95 per cent of those that had moved.

Marital Status of Family Heads and Residential Mobility

The levels of movement by families headed by married and single people were considered with respect to the various residential areas of Accra. In the core areas, families headed by married couples and single parents had almost the same level of movement. In old migrant areas, single-parent families tended to be more mobile than families headed by married parents. At the time of the study, 93 per cent of single-parent families in old migrant areas had moved. Movements by both married-headed families and single-parent families within new migrant areas were not different from those occurring in old migrant areas, where single-parent families had a higher rate of movement, with 89 per cent of them having moved, of which 44 per cent had moved once. It can then be said that with the exception of the core areas, single-parent families were more mobile within the city of Accra.

Tenure Status and Frequency of Movement

A clear pattern of tenure status of families and their propensity to move shows that in the core areas tenant families had the highest rate of mobility: 30 per cent of such families had moved, with 18 per cent moving once, 8 per cent twice and 4 per
cent three times. A quarter of the families in the core areas that are owners had moved, of which about 9 per cent had moved once, another 9 per cent had moved twice and 6 per cent three times. Families occupying rent-free housing and those that are caretakers are the most immobile in the core areas, as no family in these two groups had moved. The pattern in the old migrant areas contrasts with that in the core areas. Families occupying rent-free houses had the highest propensity to move, as 50 per cent had moved at least once within Accra in the past ten years. They were followed by tenant families in the old migrant areas.

In new migrant areas, families in rent-free houses were the most mobile group, following the same pattern as in the old migrant areas. All the families in rent-free housing in new migrant areas had moved, 57 per cent moving once, 29 per cent twice and 14 per cent three times. Families who were owners and tenants also had a high propensity to move within the new migrant areas: 91 per cent of the families that were owners and 88 per cent of tenant families had moved, respectively. Families occupying their extended family property had the lowest propensity to move within the new migrant areas: whereas 67 per cent of these families had moved, about 33 per cent had never moved. No family among the extended families had moved more than four times. It can then be concluded that in core areas of Accra, tenants had the highest propensity to move, but in old migrant areas, those in rent-free housing moved more than the other families in those areas. In new migrant areas, it was the property-owning families who had moved most.

The relatively high number of property-owning families in new migrant areas and families occupying rent-free housing in old migrant areas who were most mobile could be related to the fact that those families had been mobile for a while before moving to their own and current residence. As the families based their answer on the history of their residential mobility within Accra for the past ten years, it was possible that most of such families had been tenants for some time. That might have accounted for the high mobility rates among them since tenants are usually mobile.

**Determinants of Residential Mobility in Accra**

So far, the discussion has demonstrated that residential mobility is very important in Accra, and as much as 67 per cent of families in Accra had moved from one part of the city to another at least once in the past ten years. Several factors account for such mobility within Accra. Generally, people moved to be near their work places or when their family circumstances change, particularly when there is increase in family size, or when ejected. Besides this general pattern, variations of determinants of mobility could be found from one residential area to another.

Moving to an extended family house or joining other relatives provides a major reason why families moved into core areas, with 46 per cent families moving for these reasons. Moving for marriage reasons is the second important factor: 32 per cent had moved to join their spouses, and 11 per cent moved as a result of separation, divorce or death of their spouses (Table 2.5).
In old migrant areas, about 30 per cent of families who had moved within the past ten years did so because their family sizes increased and they wanted more spacious accommodation. This reason confirms the life-cycle model, which states that as the size of the family increases, members try to look for alternative accommodation, especially if provision was not made in the initial stages for capacity to expand. Other important reasons given by families were eviction (12%), and affordable rent and proximity to jobs (11%). For instance, construction activities in and around Madina in the 1990s accounted for the many labourers and artisans including masons, carpenters, painters, plumbers and steel fabricators who moved to the area to work. This also caused about 10 per cent of the families to move to the old migrant areas.

Moving for safety concerns was not popular among the families in the old migrant areas, as shown in Table 2.5. Most families moved to new migrant areas because they wanted to live near their workplaces. Many families at Ashaiman said that they were staying in other parts of Accra but moved when they got jobs at Tema because Ashaiman had many more places to accommodate them. Once it becomes problematic for many workers to commute to work owing to heavy traffic congestion associated with their residential areas, they find it prudent to stay near their workplaces.

Eviction is another important reason underlining the movement of families in new migrant areas of Accra. Most landlords are accustomed to collecting high advance rents before tenancy. As soon as the period of the advance expires, some of them either demand another huge amount of money as a further advance or ask the tenants to move. This seems to be a common occurrence in almost all the residential areas of Accra. Moving to own house was one of the important factors causing movement of many families into new migrant areas. Many people were encouraged by affordable and easily available building plots in the 1960s and 1970s in new migrant areas as Ashaiman, Awoshie and Haatso. Many families took advantage and built their own houses there and moved. Rents also became affordable in these areas.

Other reasons that also caused families to move included an unfavourable residential environment such as facility-sharing, lack of privacy, unsanitary conditions, urban sprawl and lack of playing grounds for children.

In spite of the clear evidence that the city of Accra is on the move there were certain families that never relocated. In all, about 33 per cent of families claimed that they had never moved from their places of abode as already indicated. A total of 40 per cent of these families who lived particularly in indigenous areas resided in their extended family houses, which were rent-free, so they found the arrangement convenient; 14 per cent were in their own house, and 13 per cent were satisfied with the conditions in their current houses. Other reasons that discouraged families to move included inability to pay high rent advances, unavailability of suitable vacancies, and living in employer-provided housing.
Table 2.5: Main Reasons for Last Relocation in Accra

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Reasons</th>
<th>Residential area</th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Core areas</td>
<td>Old migrant</td>
<td>New migrant</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Total</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>No</td>
<td>%</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>%</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>%</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Safety concerns</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Move to extended family house</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>46</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>34</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Proximity to jobs</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>47</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Eviction</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>33</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Marriage reasons</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Separation/divorce/death of spouse</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>To own house</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Increase in family size</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>48</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Affordable rent</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>37</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>108</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>123</td>
<td>46</td>
<td>268</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


Pattern and Direction of Residential Mobility in GAMA

Several views have been expressed on the direction of residential mobility in cities. The most prominent among them is that there is an outward movement from the inner city to the outer zones. Many urban families first settle in the inner city, and when they become established they move to the periphery. Studies in Lagos and Benin City respectively support this observation (Afolayan 1982; Azu 1966; Vaughan and Feindt 1973). In Accra, it has been shown by earlier scholars that movements within the city are mainly directed from such areas as the Central Business District (CBD), the old Ga settlements and areas like Chorkor, Maamobi and Nima to outer peri-urban areas of Accra, Tema and Ga Districts. These areas of out-migration are areas of stress from which many families try to move out to communities where conditions are relatively better. It is also maintained that areas like Madina, Haatso and Adenta in the Ga District, Dansoman and East Legon in Accra District as well as Ashaiman and Tema in the Tema District serve mainly as receiving areas. Movement from one zone to another is also common, and it is possible for families in the core areas to move to another residential area within the core zone. Families that moved from residential areas other than those found within the three zones of Accra were not considered. This is because the study was concerned with the movement from one part of Accra to another.

As Table 2.6 shows, 82 per cent of movements into core areas were directed from other core areas of Accra. The families that moved into core areas of Osu, South La and Accra Central came from other core areas like James Town and Old Teshie, while the remaining 10 per cent and 8 per cent came from the old migrant
areas and new migrant areas, respectively. In old migrant areas, movements of families into the areas were directed from other old migrant areas such as Accra New Town and Achimota. Some 45 per cent of the families moved from other old migrant areas; another 40 per cent came from new migrant areas and 15 per cent from the core areas.

In new migrant areas like Ashaiman, many families came from other new migrant areas like Tema and Awoshie. It was found that 78 per cent of all the families that moved into these areas were from other new migrant areas, particularly neighbouring Tema. Many migrant families at this residential area were former workers of Tema Harbour, the Ghana Armed Forces and other industries in Tema who were living in retirement. They took advantage of the relatively available land in the area some time ago, and built their own houses. ‘Adjei Kojo’ and ‘Lebanon’ are examples of suburbs of Ashaiman that contained many retired workers. Also in the area were Ghanaians who had lived abroad and had returned, popularly known as ‘burgers’. The situation in Ashaiman shows that home owners are more likely to be found in either the inner zone or the recent periphery (new migrant areas) than in the former periphery (old migrant areas) as shown in Table 2.7.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Present location</th>
<th>Residential areas</th>
<th>Core areas</th>
<th>Old migrant areas</th>
<th>New migrant areas</th>
<th>Total</th>
<th>No.</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Core areas</td>
<td></td>
<td>40</td>
<td>82</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Old migrant</td>
<td></td>
<td>5</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>44</td>
<td>45</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>areas</td>
<td></td>
<td>4</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>39</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>47</td>
<td>78</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>New migrant</td>
<td></td>
<td>49</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>97</td>
<td>37</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>areas</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>206</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


Many families also moved from the old migrant areas such as Nima, Maamobi and Kaneshie to the new migrant areas like Ashaiman. Specifically, 44 per cent of the movements in Accra were directed into the new migrant areas alone. Few of the movements were from the new to the old migrant areas. Individual families whose previous residences were in new and old migrant areas were less likely to move to the core areas.

**Consequences of Residential Mobility**

Residential mobility combines with other factors to lead to expansion of towns. Knox (1987) argues that the city begins to expand in spatial terms when families and households move from one part to settle in another. As this occurs, the city moves into its neighbouring peri-urban areas. This process is true of Accra. The city began as three small fishing towns, namely James Town, Osu and Ussher Town, with
Dodowa, Ada and Pokuase at the farther end. The town began to expand with the arrival of the European traders whose activities attracted many merchants and other migrants from the interior parts of the country and the rest of West Africa (Dickson 1969). Further expansion of the town in precolonial days is attributed to the bubonic plague that hit Accra in 1908 and the earthquake of 1938. These led to the resettlement of many families in such areas as Korle Gonno, Mamprobi, Adabraka, Odorkor, Chorkor, Kwashieman and Tesano (Engmann 1971). It is apparent that residential mobility has combined with factors such as mass movement and resettlement to cause the expansion of Accra into its current status as a metropolis.

Residential mobility can lead to land invasion and subsequently squatter settlements, as found in many developing countries. In Accra, access to land in many urban areas is attained through monetary transactions, which in most cases are beyond the capability of many families. The difficulty in acquiring land for housing purposes has tended to reduce the level of house-ownership in Accra.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Tenure status</th>
<th>Residential Areas</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Core Areas</td>
<td>Old Migrant Areas</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Owner</td>
<td>32 28</td>
<td>48 34.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Caretaker</td>
<td>7 6</td>
<td>3 2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tenant</td>
<td>40 35</td>
<td>80 57</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rent-free</td>
<td>8 7</td>
<td>2 1.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Family property</td>
<td>26 23</td>
<td>7 5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>113 28</td>
<td>140 35</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Author’s Field Survey, 2003.

Change of residence within the city also results in the weakening of family ties. As a family changes residence, its regular networking and interactions may be reduced. This situation applies mostly to the indigenous families in Accra. Even though there is an improved transportation and telecommunication network within many urban areas of Ghana, which makes it easy for many families to remain in contact with their relatives, such families are sometimes constrained by the numerous challenges associated with city living. Furthermore, the ever-increasing demand for housing against the limited number of housing supply favours land-owners and house-owners. This has lead to land and housing speculation in Accra to the detriment of tenants. In the old and migrants areas, 62 per cent and 78 per cent of family heads, respectively, paid rent advances. This has become a prohibiting factor on residential mobility in Accra.

Conclusion

In addressing the major concerns of urban families and residential mobility in Accra, this study identified the main dynamics and characteristics of urban families in the city. It also identified the changing nature of these urban families and the major
factors leading to residential mobility in Accra, the direction and pattern of the movements and their consequences in the past ten years.

The findings clearly demonstrate that Accra, which started as a small fishing settlement, has really been on the move since the sixteenth century. The growth has accelerated since it was established as the capital city in 1877. In contemporary times urbanization and modernization, giving rise to a rapid rate of population growth, physical development and urban sprawl to the peri-urban areas has been instrumental in the transformation of Accra from a village to a town, city and now a metropolis. While physically and spatially Accra is on the move, the population and families in relation to residential spaces are equally on the move, creating conditions of stress for urban families and acting as a push factor precipitating mobility among them. As stressful as the determinants of residential mobility can be, some families managed to overcome the challenge and were able to move, while others for various reasons such as unemployment, poor environmental conditions, congestion, high rent charges, eviction and transportation, were unable to move. Other major determinants of residential mobility in Accra are the dynamics and the characteristics of the urban family itself.

Many forms of family, like young families, cohabiting families, monogamous, single-parent, female-headed and predominantly migrant families, are putting down roots in Accra. As the institutions on which the family is based change, so is the tendency for families in urban areas to change as a result of socio-economic and political factors, with some families reducing in size. In spite of the changes, the extended family system is still strong, with most urban families characterized by medium to large sizes, headed by old men and women. Most families were extended, with only 16 per cent being nuclear; 71 per cent of all families included relations, which enlarged the family size.

Apart from the core Accra areas, where only 33 per cent of families moved, in both old and new migrant areas, over 80 per cent of families had actually moved at least once. As the frequency of mobility decreases, so did the number of families who moved. Male family heads had a higher propensity to move than female heads. However, when the spatial variation was considered, 83 per cent of male heads moved in old migrant areas, while in the old migrant areas 91 per cent of female family heads had moved once. In the core areas, the male heads moved more than the female heads. Females moved less and at a lower frequency rate. In addition, single-parent families tended to move more to other core areas and new migrant areas. In old and new migrant areas, many families came from other new migrant areas.

Variations clearly exist in movements among family types in Accra and from one place to another. In indigenous areas most families (46%), moved to extended family houses with free accommodation. In old migrant areas, increase in family size was the major reason but in new migrant areas, it was nearness to jobs and workplaces. In new migrant areas, the greatest proportion of those who moved was rent-free occupiers, including caretakers of new housing developments. Another reason that
accounted for mobility of families was eviction. Mobility among families is directed towards new migrant and peri-urban settlements. Female family heads and single-parent families tend to move more than old and married family heads. Among the families in Accra, some did not move because they are occupying their own houses or extended family houses that are rent-free or the fact that they are satisfied with their current situation. Others were compelled by circumstances such as inability to pay high rental advances, and the unsanitary current environment.

**Recommendations**

The pattern and direction of residential movements in Accra has implications for urban policy and provision of housing in large and growing urban centres. Aggregate demand for accommodation and housing, arising out of increases in family size and urban sprawl, changes in marital circumstances and nearness to workplaces, accounts for major determinants of residential mobility of families in Accra. Most of the settlements such as Ashaiman, Haatso, Awoshie and Madina, which are the receiving areas, are characterized by high rates of urbanization and over crowding in the Greater Accra Metropolitan Authority.

This observation calls for proper planning of such identified areas in view of the ever-increasing rise in population. There is, therefore, a need to ensure proper and timely planning and development of housing in fringe and new migrant areas to facilitate movement of families. Lack of such planning usually results in encroachment, overcrowding and development of slums. Similarly, development plans for new suburban areas should be sufficiently equipped with social services including schools, clinics, markets, places of convenience, water and roads to make such settlements self-sufficient, if at all possible.

In Accra and other urban centres in Ghana, residential sprawl and development tend to be forerunners of urban planning and regional development by the state. At this level, the state and related ministries and agencies should ensure that major plans exist for new areas demarcated for residential development. Mechanisms should then be instituted to ensure the implementation and execution of the plans by the state, private development agencies, traditional authorities and individual house owners and all landowners and landlords. At another level, tenants should be encouraged to enter into formal or proper agreements with landlords in order to avoid harassment and unwarranted evictions. In furtherance of a follow-up to this research, the problems of core indigenous areas that constitute bottlenecks in the Central Business District have to be tackled, because of their limited space for mobility. At the same time population growth contributes to overcrowding, stress, poverty and insanitary conditions, yet families may find it convenient to remain there because of affordability. The implications could be costly in so many aspects that the state should endeavour to find ways and means of resolving the issue of the core indigenous families occupying the city centre of Accra.
References


