Introduction

One of the critical issues for cities and urban centres in the developing world is the influx of people from rural areas to the cities. Access to employment is the primary reason for many migrant households relocating into the city. As people move from various locations in Ghana to the Greater Accra Metropolitan Areas (GAMA) in search of employment or to pursue education among other things, they come to form households. Such mobility patterns suggest that fundamental social change is underway (Ghana Statistical Service 2000). Several authors and demographic surveillance systems have also shown that changes in households are becoming profound in urban centres, leading to household structural transformation over time and shifts in residential patterns. However, empirical evidence on change in households remains surprisingly scanty. In his attempt to compare household structure over time and between cultures, Sanjek (1982) sees households as more than mere tables of personnel. As economic and political institutions are changing, so also are social institutions like households. The two variables that have widely been associated with household alteration are industrialization and urbanization, a situation typical in GAMA.

Trends in the proportion of households formally headed by women have changed. They have risen roughly by 7 per cent over a 27-year span to 29.4 per cent (Ghana Statistical Service 1988). Changes in the number, composition and characteristics of households, either headed by males or females, are of paramount importance to determine the variations of household structure for a number of reasons. The size, composition and characteristics of households are essential in evaluating their housing needs even as they serve as determinants in evaluating housing preferences. Again, the household characteristics affect procurement of consumer goods and services since the household is the basic unit of consumption. The relevance of household unit for consumer behaviour is important for various aspects of the economy such
as security, transportation and communication, provision of water, energy and especially housing. The Population and Housing Census (1960 to 2000) shows that there has been a 4 per cent increase in average urban household size as compared to an 8.7 per cent increase in average rural household size of the total of Ghana by residence. Accra is the first metropolitan area to experience a high demographic growth over the past three to four decades, as examined in Chapter 1.

As Accra settlements grew in number and trade developed, larger aggregations of people that replaced the scattered original settlement came into being. The urban settlement phenomenon was to require new modes of readjustment, which GAMA is still seeking today. People of all social classes, especially the middle- and high-class status populations, are no longer clustered around the Central Business District or the core but are moving out. The major factor in the explanation of the changing residential pattern of the city is that of demand for space, in a sense the question of public taste in the matter of space consumption.

Settlement patterns are both complex and dynamic and constantly adjust to changing conditions over time. Such changes in residential patterns are, however, not without important implications for the human condition and therefore for public policy goals. Knowledge of the mechanisms producing change in households and residential patterns provides an important basis for such public policy. It is the intent of this chapter to examine these changes in household forms and residential patterns, and to attempt to explain and identify some of the implications of these for public policy. It is believed that studies of household dynamics and residential patterns can make an important contribution to understanding the determinants of household dynamics and identifying factors associated with different housing patterns.

**The Concept of the Household**

The literature contains a variety of views on the concept of the household. One notion that seems to have gained support is that, throughout developing countries, households represent the main institution responsible for the mobilization and distribution of goods and services between generations. They may also be the principal avenue through which age and kinship roles are expressed (Thornton, Chang and Sun 1984; Becker 1991; Kuznet 1978).

Working towards a universal definition, the United Nations has recommended that the concept of household should be considered on the basis of arrangements made by persons, individually or in groups for providing themselves with food and other essentials for living. This implies that a household may be a single-person household, i.e. a person who makes provision for his/her own food without combining with any other person. This concept differentiates between household and family where, in the latter case, to set up a family there is by definition a need to be more than one person. With the family, these persons have to be related by blood, marriage or adoption. The household may also be a multi-person one, i.e. a group of two or more persons who make common provisions for food or other essentials for living. The persons in the group may pool together their incomes and have a common
Budget to a greater or lesser extent. They may be related or unrelated persons or a combination of both. Households may occupy the whole, part of, or more than one housing unit. They may also be found in boarding houses, camps, hotels or as administrative personnel in institutions, or they may even be homeless. Though it is observed that the distinguishing factor of a household is the cooking pot, Vercruysse et al. (1974) defined the household using four concepts, distinguishing between the sleeping unit, cooking unit, eating unit and earning unit.

This makes households institutions within which interpersonal transactions at the micro-level can be studied. Residentially, distinct households are relatively easy to identify in most settings. They provide efficient units within which to study people’s domestic lives and assess their relative welfare. In her work on household headship and women’s earnings in Ghana, Ardayfio-Schandorf has discussed the concept of household and household headship. She pointed out that in the context of the Ghana Population Census, a household is used to cover members or persons who live in the same dwelling unit and share a common pot.

Within the extended system, the household is the basic unit for the day-to-day organization and management of its members. Household sizes vary greatly by rural/urban location and ecological zones. Sizes range from one-member to more than ten-member households. The average household size in urban Ghana is 4.7. Whenever the economic system expands through industrialization, household patterns change. Extended kinship ties weaken, lineage patterns dissolve, and a trend towards some form of the conjugal system generally begins to appear, i.e. the nuclear unit becomes a more independent kinship unit (Goode 1963). Presumably, this weakening of ties refers to a reduction in social interactions and financial and other forms of support. The household seems to be undergoing structural and functional modification with urbanization. Almost all households are undergoing dramatic changes, owing to the modernization process.

Changes in the number and composition of households are of paramount importance to determine the variation of household size. The dimension of co-residency in the household automatically makes the household the perfect and essential unit of analysis and prediction underlying policy formulation in the field of housing. The predictors of household sizes, which include occupation, income level and education, have led to variations in household sizes, especially in relation to the number of people per household.

In the patrilineal Ghanaian society, the head of the household is used generally to refer to the oldest male in the household, though in a few societies in the ‘north’, this may also be a woman. In certain cases, the household head may not be co-resident, but residing elsewhere. He is, however, consulted in all major decisions by either the nuclear or extended family. In Ghana, rural/urban and other forms of migration, as part of modernization and the economic process, are raising the number of de jure female household heads including widows, the divorced, abandoned wives or single parents. Ardayfio-Schandorf further observed that many women in unions are also practically de facto household heads. Women, as important economic actors,
provide income and other resources for themselves, husbands, children and other members of the extended household. She argued that married women are heading households and carrying out responsibilities in households that were traditionally considered the preserve of men. Beyond the traditional head of household, the presence of an adult male in the household is an important factor in the structure of the household, its characteristics and dynamics, its mobilization of resources, residential pattern and mobility.

The issue is not necessarily the one who contributes most or takes the decisions, but the presence or absence of an adult male or female in the household could be decisive. The presence of the male adult is expected to impact on household access to and mobilization of resources, decision-making and type of residence. It may also affect the type, space, location, residential pattern as well as propensity of the household’s intra-urban mobility. Sex is also an important determinant of the composition of households and their intra-urban mobility. Though some studies have been carried out on families, households, residential patterns and housing, there have been no studies so far on types of households, their tenure and socio-economic status and changing intra-urban residential patterns. Neither are there studies that attempt to analyze household composition with reference to the presence of adult male or female and how that impacts on household residential change and housing patterns in the Greater Accra Metropolitan Area.

Objectives

The study attempted and adopted the following objectives:

• To find out the existing structure and structural characteristics of households in GAMA;
• To investigate changes in the structural characteristics of households between 1984 and 2003;
• To discuss the factors that have accounted for these changes;
• To examine the effect of these changes on the housing demands of households and residential characteristics of households; and
• To find out the policy implications of change in household structure and housing patterns for urban development.

The study was premised on the propositions that change in housing patterns and lack of change in residential patterns is not the result of satisfaction with current residential status, but the inability to move, owing to certain socio-economic factors. It is further proposed that age and gender of household head is a factor in the change of residential patterns and that socio-economic status affects residential location of households today. To some extent, it can be suggested that residential choice, particularly in intra-urban relocation, which plays an important role in determining the total pattern of residence, is the function of total activity systems such as work, social functions and recreation, among others.
Conceptualizing a Model for Household and Residential Pattern

Moriarty (1970) states that there are two sorts of activity which could control residential patterns. One is directed towards employment and place of work and the other to social and leisure activities. According to Moriarty, the ‘economic competition’ hypothesis in which the ability to pay is the basic factor, and in consequence journey to work and the site cost are the major influences in the residential decision. In other words, differences in the locational behaviour of residential decision-makers relate to differences in their budget cost and income resources. These differences determine the spatial distribution of socio-economic groups in urban space. However, such a proposition is nowhere supported by empirical evidence on quality of the housing environment. Perhaps the most useful and the one closer to the goals of this chapter is that of Butler and Chapin (1969), who came out with a nationwide survey in the United States, with reports on what metropolitan households preferred in residential location in relation to their household characteristics. Many theories relating to net-migration as a transfer of population from one place to another have been put forward and tested. These theories attempt to explain why people move from one place to another, especially from rural areas to urban centres, but not why households would want to maintain or change residence or move from one place to another in relation to structural changes in households.

The work of Bahr (1990) is more relevant in this respect. According to him, given a variety of housing alternatives, households with different socio-economic characteristics may make different choices, often in terms of the taste and lifestyle of the household members. When these lifestyles change, the household may decide to leave a particular neighbourhood, location and residence for another one that befits its new socio-economic status. The model developed for the study highlights changes in the needs and expectations of the household, and in the characteristics of both dwelling and the environment. What is emphasized in the model in Figure 3.1 is that all households make decisions about where to live within a set of individual and societal constraints, which in turn lead to marked differences in residential patterns, whether squatting or renting. It may also lead to moving to the periphery where the growth of the city is determined only to a slight degree by squatting and the attendant increase of squatter settlements. Sharing with friends and relations will mean moving into an existing household. People may also remain in the parental household even after having started their own household, giving rise to large households existing side by side in the same house.

The gender of the household head, type of marriage, size and composition of the household affect the household structure. The Government Statistical Services report (1989) indicates that females head a significant number of households, and that their proportion has increased and their marital situation has changed as well. Between 1987 and 1998, a larger proportion of females, 59.5 per cent, who headed households, were widowed and divorced. Thus in 1990, about four million Ghanaians were living in households with a divorced or widowed female head (Lloyd and Gage-Brandon 1993).
Residential choice by households is best presented in residential location decision model, which sets out the reasons operative in the selection of a particular location (Fig. 3.1). The individual household can be considered to be under the influence of two sets of forces. One is internal, in that it is generated by the household itself and defined in terms of its own needs, changes, characteristics and expectations at every stage of the household cycle. The other is external and defined by the characteristics
and environment of the locale. These two sets interact in creating ‘place utility’, which essentially measures an individual’s level of satisfaction or dissatisfaction with a given location. It is only when the place utility is reduced below a certain threshold level, either by internal or external sources of stress or both, that the household decides to move.

The significance of the model lies in its emphasis on the need to consider housing and environmental stress within the context of the needs, expectations and aspirations of households. The household cycle is certainly one of the major precipitators of housing patterns. Marriage, the production of children, rearing and education of children are obvious stressors. Socio-economic status is a complex notion but it certainly subsumes the household’s own view of its social standing, which the households might wish its house to display and also the money it can afford to spend on that. This chapter has not dwelled much on the external consideration but on the internal. That is, the changes that households go through that motivate them to change residence or maintain the same house. A change in household is certainly a major factor in the housing of the household.

**Geographical Background and Location of the Study Area**

The Greater Accra Metropolitan Area (GAMA), as defined, includes the Accra Metropolitan Assembly (AMA), or the Accra District in addition to the Tema and Ga Districts. These three districts have become physically and functionally one single and urbanized area, as the capital city of Ghana. These three districts form part of the Greater Accra Region (GAR), the smallest of the ten administrative regions in Ghana, located in the south-central part of Ghana (see Table 1.2). GAMA had a combined population of 450,000 in 1960, which almost doubled by 1970 and stood at 1,300,000 in the 1984 census. The population currently stands at 2,903,753 (Table 3.1). It is expected to reach the four million mark by 2010, accounting for about 15 per cent of the estimated national population at that time.

An analysis of urbanization in Ghana between 1940 and 1960 suggests that the natural increase of the 1948 urban population accounted for no more than one-quarter of town growth during the succeeding twelve years. One-fifth was probably explained by foreign immigrants, mostly from Nigeria, Togo and Upper Volta, now Burkina Faso. But over half of the growth must be attributed to Ghanaians who moved from the countryside to the towns (Caldwell 1965).


<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>District</th>
<th>Population growth</th>
<th>Annual growth</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Accra</td>
<td>338,396</td>
<td>624,091</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tema</td>
<td>27,127</td>
<td>102,431</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ga</td>
<td>33,907</td>
<td>66,336</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Ghana Statistical Service, Population Census.
The study area covers a wide geographical area with a heterogeneous population. The condition of households also differs in the various residential areas. Residential area was, therefore, used as sampling areas. Low-class residential and indigenous and migrant areas contain high population densities, which have resulted in some of the most overcrowded areas in GAMA (AMA 1990).

Medium-class residential areas are often planned and consequently tend to contain low densities. The level of overcrowding in such areas is not as severe as in the low-class residential areas. The same applies to the high-class residential areas, which are also planned and carry low density. Socio-economic conditions in medium- and high-class areas are better than those in the low-class residential areas. Conditions in the peri-urban and periphery depend on whether these are planned or unplanned. Whereas the unplanned areas tend to have high densities, often exhibiting stressful conditions, the planned areas carry relatively low densities.

In conducting the survey, the household was used as a sampling frame by adopting the definition of the 2000 Population and Housing Census. Out of the total number of houses in GAMA, 19.5 per cent is of rural stock, leaving 80.5 per cent as urban stock. The three localities from which the residential areas were selected comprised the Accra District, with Nungua as the low-class residential area, Tesano and Kaneshie as middle-class and Airport Residential Area representing the high-class residential area. The second locality is the Ga District, where the low-class residential area is represented by Madina and high-class area by McCarthy Hill. The third locality, the Tema District, has Lashibi as low-class and Community 9 as middle-class (Table 3.2). Out of the 428 valid questionnaires that were analyzed, 77 per cent were from the low-class, 18 per cent from the middle-class and 4.7 per cent from the high-class residential areas. The low-class areas were made up of indigenous as well as migrant areas.

Key variables measured included the current household structure and household characteristics, the changes in household structure, i.e. size and component, using the scale and nominal. Factors that affect residential changes and patterns, such as socio-economic status of the household and age and gender of household head use the scale and ordinal. Housing characteristics from and to where household moves use ordinal and scale. Data values for scale are numeric values on an interval or ratio scale.

**Socio-economic Characteristics of Household Heads**

The background characteristics of households were considered within the study area with household head as a point of reference. There was a comparative analysis of the variations in the sample of the three selected residential classes. For purposes of the welfare of the household, what does the household head signify? Some of the pertinent issues that need to be raised are the role of the head of the household not only *de jure* but *de facto*. Of particular importance are the issues of decision-making, contribution of resources and the actual presence of the head in the household and how this impacts on spouses and household members. It will be useful if the questions raised about the head could be further investigated, especially in cases where men are absent in female-headed households.
Table 3.2: Classification of Ecological Areas in GAMA

A. Low-class residential areas
A1. Old residential areas
- Chorkor James Town South Labadi, Adedenkpo, Old Dansoman, Old Teshie, Teshie, Mamprobi, Labadi, Korle Dudor, Osa Christianburg, Accra Central, KorleGonno, Nungua
A1.2 Old migrant residential areas
- Accra New Town, Sabon Zongo, Nima, Maamobi, Tudu Sakura
A2 Other low-class residential areas
- Bubiashie, Laterbiokorshie, Alajo, New Mamprobi, Darkuman, Abeka, Achimota, Avenor, Odorkor, North Industrial, South Industrial
A3 Medium-class residential areas
A4 High-class residential areas
- Airport Residential Area, Kpehe, North Labone, Ridge, West Ridge, Cantonments
A5 Fringe developments:
a: Planned developments
- Dzorwulu, East Legon, McCarthy Hill, New Achimota
b: Partly unplanned developments
- Madina, Mallam, Gbawe
A6 Rural residential areas
- Small settlement nuclei within Ga District in the fringe such as Ofankor, Old Ashaley Botwe, Pantang, Old Dome, Pokuase, Bortianor, Amasaman, Weija, etc.

Tema District Corporation (TDC)
B.1.1 Planned residential area
- Community 1, Community 2, Community 9
B.1.2 Planned medium-class residential
- Community 4, Community 10, Community 12
B.1.3 Planned high-class residential area
B.2 Residential areas
- Community 6
B.2.1 Tema New Town (planned)
B.2.2 Ashiaman (squatter)
B.3 Rural residential areas
- Tema New Town
- Ashiaman
- Rural areas around Tema

Source: Accra Metropolitan Area, 1990.

In all the various residential classes, there were more male-headed households than female-headed ones. The male-headed households represent 70 per cent while the female-headed households were 30 per cent. The latter was made up of 23.6 per cent from the low-class residential areas, 4.7 per cent from the middle-class and 1.6 per cent from the high-class areas. This is not an unexpected finding, given established social customs throughout Africa. In the traditional Ghanaian household the man has always been looked up to as the head of household and the breadwinner charged with the responsibility of the welfare of all household members. The head is expected to have control over the necessary economic and other resources even when he is not the sole breadwinner or provider.

The low-class residential areas, however, indicated quite a significant percentage of female-headed households. In her research, Ardayfio-Schandorf (1994) came up with a finding whereby women whom she personally interviewed named a woman...
as head of household with decision-making and maintenance responsibilities in the household when there was no man present. Significant is the observation that almost all the male-headed households had females either as a spouse or relation, whereas the female-headed households had no adult male present. This confirms Bruce and Lloyd’s (1992) assertion that a household labelled male-headed almost invariably has one or more females present, whereas a female-headed household is most often a male-absent household.

Undoubtedly, the majority of households in Ghana, irrespective of whether they are in rural or urban areas, have males as heads. Since headship usually goes with authority, men tend to occupy the loftier positions in the domestic hierarchy, hence their being more amenable to certain privileges than women (Addai-Sunduata 1995). This can be attributed to patriarchy whereby African societies construct gender in different ways so that in any locality, gender roles and gender relations give a specific meaning to being female or male. This has resulted in unequal access to areas of politics, education and employment among many others for Ghanaian women. This notwithstanding, women remain the bedrock in almost all households.

**Attributes and Characteristics of Households in GAMA**

The ages of household heads range from below 20 to above 70. Within the low-class residential areas, a majority of the household heads (33%) were within the 31–40 age cohort. The middle-class household heads had a majority of 28.6 per cent within the 41–50 year bracket. The high-class heads also had a majority within the just-mentioned age group. This indicates that majority of household heads were quite young, i.e. between 31 and 50 years. Unlike in traditional households, when old persons are designated heads, a majority of the heads in GAMA have come to work, and can be described as economically active. The youngest household head interviewed was 19 years old and the oldest was 77 years old.

The size of a household ranges between 1 and 12, with the largest household being recorded in the low-class residential areas. An average household size in 1960 was 3.2 in the Accra Metropolitan Area; this rose to 4.2 in 1984 and 4.6 in 2000. Some household members were unrelated persons who share a common pot, but there are other households with both relative and non-relative members. The 1-to-2 household sizes had an almost equal number of males to females. However, the households with large numbers are female-headed, indicating that female household heads tended to accommodate more dependants.

A component of social variation in cities, which was isolated by Shevyk and Bell (1955) and has been confirmed by many component analyses, is ‘ethnicity’ or ethnic status. This is concerned with the degree to which cultural and racial groups became separated in the city and hence with urban slums. Most respondents, with a total of 37.8 per cent, made up of respondents from all the various classes, were of Ga-dangbe origin. This is not surprising because GAMA is predominantly Ga, and almost all the indigenous areas are mostly Ga. The 2000 census put the Ga-dangbe population of the country at 7.5 per cent and those in the Greater Accra alone at
4.3 per cent. The Ga, residing outside the indigenous areas, occupy households where spouses, children and dependants live in the houses typical of urban areas in Ghana. The Ashanti with 14 per cent, Fanti 13 per cent and Akwapim 5.6 per cent are also well represented in GAMA, residing in specific neighbourhoods, especially in low-class residential areas.

A majority of household heads from all the various classes claimed to be Christians, with 63 per cent from low-class areas, 15.4 per cent from the middle-class and all interviewed from the high-class residential areas. Islam followed, with 10.3 per cent from the low-class areas, 1.4 per cent from the middle-class, and none from the high-class areas. A few respondents, namely 4 per cent and 1.2 per cent from the low-class and middle-class groups, respectively, were traditionalists. As most people associate Christianity with modernization and westernization, only a few traditionalists in the city were found. The focus group discussions show that religion, for example Christianity and Islam, promoted male household headship.

As much as 60 per cent of respondents from the high-class residential areas had access to university education while 7 per cent from low-class areas had no formal education. A majority of the highly educated respondents were males, comprising over 85 per cent, implying that high education favours males more than females. Even without such high levels of education, most of the female household heads contributed to the household budget.

Most of the heads of households were employed, with 62 per cent employees, 21 per cent self-employed and 11 per cent self-employed with employees. The remaining 6 per cent included the categories of apprentice, unpaid family worker, domestic employee and the unemployed. Some of the unemployed in all the residential areas were pensioners. In addition to their domestic and child-bearing and rearing responsibilities, many women in the study were highly engaged in economic activity. The proportion of Ghanaian women currently working is 92 per cent. However, important gender disparities still exist in employment opportunities.

**Resource Mobilization of Households**

The household does not necessarily represent a unified economy, but rather a loosely knit set of overlapping economies, some of which are fully contained within the household, but most of which reach into other households. The allocation of resources within such households has been described as a system of cooperative conflict, where individuals within the household are motivated not only by personal welfare but also by their perception of the obligations and legitimate behaviour that should characterize household members. Some scholars maintain that financial responsibility is shared between husband and wife but the former usually takes a greater share of responsibility. Others argue that though there seems to be division of responsibilities in the household, women usually contribute significantly to and spend a large share of their income on the upkeep of the household. What emerges most clearly in each case during the focus group discussions is that domestic work is almost exclusively the responsibility of women, who normally work longer hours.
than men when domestic and economic work is put together. Household responsibilities and maintenance are most often divided along gender lines.

The income status of the household heads in all the areas did not necessarily reflect the socio-economic status of the household, as respondents in high-class residential areas declared income as low as 1 million cedis a month. Considering the types of house in which they lived and the residential area, the income was significantly less. It was only 6.3 per cent among the high residential class who reported income above 2 million monthly. Surprisingly, as many as 81.3 per cent within income range and 38.1 per cent within low residential class areas admitted having monthly incomes of 2 million cedis or above. The discrepancy may be due to under-reporting or/and unwillingness on the part of the high-class household heads to disclose their real income, and the fact that some are retired from active service and therefore do not earn a full salary.

Apart from the income of heads of households, some spouses also contributed financially to the household. Income per spouse ranged between 100,000 cedis and more than 2 million cedis per month. However, 31 per cent of spouses from low-class, 4 per cent from middle-class and 1 per cent from high-class areas received no monthly income from their spouses. In all this, it is difficult to generalize about the extent of women’s contribution to the household given the great cultural diversity throughout the different areas. The division of labour between the sexes translates into separate though overlapping spheres of economic activities for men and women. In addition to the spouse, other members of the household also contributed towards the household budget. As many as over 6 per cent did contribute in some households, particularly those from low-class and middle-class areas. In most households, the male heads did not accept this fact and claimed that they were solely responsible economically for the household. The percentage income contributed by other members towards the household income ranges from below 20 to 100 per cent. As many as 57.9 per cent, 10 per cent and 3 per cent of respondents from low-, middle- and high-class areas, respectively, contributed 20 per cent of their income towards upkeep of the household. Such household income contributed towards household maintenance and payment of residential accommodation.

**Changing Household Structure and Dynamics**

The household structure and dynamics within GAMA provides a basis for analysis of socio-economic transformation that took place in Ghana between 1984 and 2003. The Economic Recovery Programme, the Structural Adjustment Programme and the liberalization of the economy affected many households in GAMA in one way or the other. It also manifests the rapid social, economic and political transformations that are taking place in households as well as the way households were perceived by society in the past and contemporary times. The varied households that have been generated in the urban setting demonstrate how traditional institutions accommodate change and adopt themselves to new conditions.

The extent to which the various factors of change have affected the size of households and the authority structure within the household, the relationship between
members of the household and the socio-economic status of the household were clarified. The opening up of new job opportunities for people in the urban areas, such as GAMA, has effects on the households. Young people in the city no longer rely on their fathers or kinsmen for a profession. Through formal education, or learning of vocations, they obtain the chance of entering into jobs that generate steady and regular income and which remove them from their traditional surroundings. Likewise, liberalization of the economy has attracted many people from other regions as well as foreigners to settle in GAMA.

This research revealed that most females between the ages 20 and 30 were heads of households just like their male counterparts. This trend of young heads of households attested to the fact that there is a form of independence being exhibited by the youth. The high rate of female-headed households is supported by Gage-Brandon and Njogu (1994) who found that the average Ghanaian woman spends 50 per cent of her productive life without the benefit of a co-resident partner. The same authors further showed that proportions have risen even more sharply in Ghana, reflecting a number of factors, such as non-co-residence of spouse, pre-marital child-bearing and marriage disruption. After age 31, there were more males as heads than female heads. In most instances, such households can be said to be autocratic, at least in principle, with the husband or patriarch in a firm position of dominance (Oppong 1974). In recent times, the attitude is changing in some urban households as a result of increasing education.

Change in household structure and size from the time households settled in GAMA was caused primarily by altered residence patterns and by natural increase. Most household heads came to GAMA with only their spouses and one or two children. A majority had all their children in GAMA. Other structural changes were related to joint living arrangements common among artisans, apprentices, and single household heads living alone or in a co-residence with siblings, friends or non-relatives.

**Movement of Household Members**

There is evidence that while some people were added to households, others also left their households within GAMA. Considering the past twenty years, 7.9 per cent from the middle-class and 2.5 per cent from high-class areas, respectively, had additions to the household. In the past five years, 34.8 per cent, 8.2 per cent and 2.1 per cent of heads from low-, middle- and high-class, respectively, reported additions to the household. This cumulatively shows a slight increase in additions to households in the last twenty years.

The size of the household affects relationships among members of the group when they are of diverse family types. This tends to increase the process of differentiation, which ultimately leads to segregation. Under such circumstances, the bonds of kinship, of neighbourliness and the sentiments arising out of living together for generations under a common indigenous tradition are likely to be absent or at best relatively weak. Rather, members have diverse origin and backgrounds, live closely and work together as individuals who have no sentimental and emotional ties.
The ages of members who joined the household ranged from one year to above 70 years. Some members who joined the household were siblings of the head, constituting 20 per cent of the members; 24 per cent were children of the head, 7 per cent were house helps, 22 per cent nieces and nephews, 8 per cent in-laws and 3 per cent grandchildren. The balance of 16 per cent were non-relatives and friends who stayed with the household while searching for accommodation. About 25 per cent of these members were employed and 30 per cent were unemployed; the rest were children and students. The composition of additions to the household shows the nature and structure of the changing urban households, which range from siblings of head, nieces and nephews to large numbers of non-relatives, friends and in-laws. The high dependency burden rate is demonstrated in the fact that 48 per cent of those added to the household were unemployed. In addition, it was mostly the low-class households that received most additions, at least more than 32 per cent for each period investigated (Table 3.3).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Last time someone joined the household</th>
<th>Low-class</th>
<th>Middle-class</th>
<th>High-class</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>0–5 years</td>
<td>32.7</td>
<td>7.0</td>
<td>1.6</td>
<td>41.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6–10 years</td>
<td>34.8</td>
<td>8.2</td>
<td>2.1</td>
<td>45.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11–16 years</td>
<td>32.9</td>
<td>7.9</td>
<td>2.6</td>
<td>43.4</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


With respect to those who left, 20.8 per cent of household members left the household about 20 years ago, 33.4 per cent left over ten years ago, 33.7 per cent left within ten years and 53.5 per cent left in the last five years (Table 3.4). The ages of those who left ranges between 3 and 70 years. Of the total members who left the various households, 49 per cent were children of the head, 14 per cent in-laws, 13 per cent cousins, 6 per cent parents, 6 per cent spouses and 12 per cent non-relatives. Of those who left, 23 per cent were employed while the 6 per cent who were unemployed were mostly students. These people left the household for various reasons. Close to 16 per cent of those who left were married, 4 per cent were divorced and 41 per cent were single. Others also left to further their education, or for employment reasons. Yet, others moved to occupy their own houses or left Accra on transfer. A few departed through death. It is clear from the patterns of movement of household members that the single are the most mobile members of the household. These are younger members without family and less attachment who therefore found it relatively easier to move.

Members who were likely to leave the household but had not yet done so were likely to leave on the grounds of marriage, employment, education outside GAMA and proximity to work. When the percentage of members added to the household was compared to those who left, it was obvious that more members were being added than were leaving at each respective period.
Household Size at First Settlement and at Present

Contrary to the notion that married males often left their spouse and children behind when migrating and came for them later, this research found a new development whereby a majority of married heads came to GAMA with their spouse at the same time they settled, or within the same year they came to GAMA. Some came with relatives and non-relatives right from the beginning to assist with settling-in activities. The size of the household when they first settled in GAMA was much smaller. Generally it is believed that high-class households are smaller in size, but the findings show that owing to the presence of domestic employees who reside in the house and share meals and sleep in the house, the size of their household in fact tends to be larger.

Table 3.4: Distribution of Members who Left the Household (percentages)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Last time someone left the household</th>
<th>Low-class</th>
<th>Middle-class</th>
<th>High-class</th>
<th>Percentages</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>0–5 years</td>
<td>30.8</td>
<td>15.2</td>
<td>7.5</td>
<td>53.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6–10 years</td>
<td>23.6</td>
<td>4.7</td>
<td>5.4</td>
<td>33.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11–16 years</td>
<td>16.8</td>
<td>9.6</td>
<td>7.0</td>
<td>33.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Above 17 years</td>
<td>7.5</td>
<td>3.3</td>
<td>10.0</td>
<td>20.8</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


Another interesting observation was the fact that the common basic factor that determines the household size was family ties. There was, however, an appreciable number of persons who formed a household who were not related in any way in the findings. This form of household is also becoming prominent where friends or unrelated members share a house, meals and appoint one of them as a leader. There were households where couples on transfer were staying with friends owing to lack of accommodation. They shared common house-keeping arrangements and meals, and contributed substantially towards the household budget.

In GAMA households, a clear distinction can be made between settler or migrant households and indigenous households. It was observed that at Nungua, an indigenous area, there was more than one household in a compound with a mixture of indigenous and migrant households. Most of these households had family ties. Poorer households accommodated kinsmen who had moved to the city or from one part of the city to another, till they found their own accommodation. In certain cases most people who were working and staying with other kinsmen or even friends were not fed. Others took only evening meals with the household, whereas others contributed to the household budget and ate breakfast and supper.

Composition and Relationship of Family Members to Household Head

The relationships that existed in the household were divided into those of relations and non-relations. Relations included spouse, children, niece, nephews, in-laws and siblings. Non-relatives included friends, house helps and other domestic workers. The assertion by Lloyd and Gage-Brandon in 1993, that in Ghana the household...
structure is characterized by strong lineage ties and weak conjugal ties, was not confirmed in GAMA. Most heads saw the spouse and children as their immediate household, invariably equating a household to a family.

The shift from the number of own biological children to other relatives and non-relatives stands out clearly in GAMA. Households with other members apart from relatives were very common. Though most household members did leave home to form their own households, households with several generations did still exist. Many grown-up children who should have left home remain because they were not able to find a place of their own. On the other hand, the few vacancies that opened up in the household because children did move out had been filled by persons who did not belong to the immediate household. The most common statement about household dynamics is the move from nuclear to extended units. Though the change is recognized, there are many variations and permutations in it, necessitated by financial constraints and other complexities of modern urban life. The co-existence of matrilineal and patrilineal traditions in Ghana is a matter of special significance. Although households may be geographically dispersed and autonomous, they still value and maintain extra-nuclear kin relationships.

The actual situation as found in most households in GAMA can be summarized by the saying that an urbanized African is outside the ethnic group but is not beyond the influence of the ethnic culture. There are changes in households but most households in GAMA have adapted to new conditions without losing their ethnic identity or abandoning their culture. The problems of co-residence with other relatives were at play. Sharing with friends and relations will mean moving into an existing household (Fig. 3.1). This tended to lead to formation of large households existing side by side with small ones in the same compound house. Single-member households were, however, becoming prevalent in GAMA, reflecting the fact that many workers are unmarried and live on their own. The needs of the household, cultural values and the stage of life cycle and the type of marriage all affect household change.

Causes of Residential Change of Households in GAMA

Many household heads would like to continue to stay in GAMA for a whole range of reasons. Most of them felt GAMA had all the necessary amenities and facilities and was the best place to reside in Ghana. Some of the reasons given were that people had built their homes and businesses in GAMA. Eighteen of the twenty respondents from the high-class residential areas who either had their own houses and business in GAMA felt it was easier for them in GAMA than elsewhere in Ghana. A combined 12 per cent of households from the three residential areas together would like to continue to stay in GAMA because of marriage, friends and family.
Table 3.5: Reasons for Continuous Stay in GAMA by Residential Class (percentages)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Reasons</th>
<th>Low-class</th>
<th>Middle-class</th>
<th>High-class</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Social amenities</td>
<td>3.5</td>
<td>0.9</td>
<td>0.2</td>
<td>4.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Marriage/family/friends</td>
<td>9.3</td>
<td>1.2</td>
<td>0.0</td>
<td>10.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Peaceful environment</td>
<td>3.5</td>
<td>2.6</td>
<td>1.4</td>
<td>7.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Own house</td>
<td>7.0</td>
<td>0.5</td>
<td>0.0</td>
<td>7.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Work opportunities</td>
<td>21.3</td>
<td>1.9</td>
<td>0.5</td>
<td>23.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Education</td>
<td>3.3</td>
<td>0.0</td>
<td>0.0</td>
<td>3.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Technological advancement</td>
<td>0.2</td>
<td>0.7</td>
<td>0.0</td>
<td>0.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nearness of house to workplace</td>
<td>27.1</td>
<td>5.4</td>
<td>1.6</td>
<td>34.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Have no choice</td>
<td>0.7</td>
<td>4.9</td>
<td>0.9</td>
<td>6.5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


About 60 per cent would want to stay because of a combination of work opportunity and nearness of work to their residence. According to 7.5 per cent of households, the environment in their residential area is so peaceful they would not dream of leaving GAMA. However, 7 per cent of households stated that they had no other choice but to be in GAMA and 3.3 per cent said they would stay because of education (Table 3.5). The low-class areas were highly positive that opportunities for work and the nearness of their residence to work were so advantageous that there was no need to move elsewhere. Accordingly, 33.4 per cent had never changed residence since they settled in GAMA. Those from the low-class areas who had never changed residence were mainly indigenous and few came from the migrant areas, where they were still seeking better and affordable rented premises. Those from the high-class areas who have not yet changed residence bought their houses while they were outside the country, and moved in when they returned. Out of all the respondents, 41.6 per cent had never changed residence in GAMA. This contrasts the finding of Obeng-Manu (2001), who found out that almost 95 per cent of his respondents in Accra had changed residence. This may be a function of the fact that he studied migrant households who had more tendencies to move than indigenous households.

Most migrants moved in with relatives, friends and acquaintances, as has already been said, and they remained until such time as they got jobs and started their own households. Most indigenous Ga, however, because of their system of inheritance and rent-free accommodation, prefer to remain in the extended family residence. This is not to say that they are not moving at all, because the research found GAs in all the sample residential areas. There were certain moves that were of forced nature as 7.2 per cent of household heads had to move owing to eviction, 2.6 per cent...
as a result of retirement, 3.3 per cent for health reasons, 1.6 per cent divorce and 0.9 per cent because of death of spouse (Table 3.6).

Lack of privacy, poor sanitation, harassment by property owners and eviction were some of the basic determinants of household residential mobility in GAMA. Residential change is becoming very common in Accra, and 54 per cent of household heads in the study expressed dissatisfaction with their current residential areas and wished to move out. The respondents who had changed residence once did so for reasons of divorce or moving from rental premises to their own house, change in household size and employment, dislike for previous neighbourhood, acute water problems or experience of earthquakes.

**Table 3.6: Reasons Attributed to Forced Nature of Move in GAMA (percentages)**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Reasons</th>
<th>Low-class</th>
<th>Middle-class</th>
<th>High-class</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Property eviction</td>
<td>5.1</td>
<td>1.6</td>
<td>0.5</td>
<td>7.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Retirement</td>
<td>1.9</td>
<td>0.7</td>
<td>0.0</td>
<td>2.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Health</td>
<td>2.8</td>
<td>0.5</td>
<td>0.0</td>
<td>3.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Divorce</td>
<td>0.7</td>
<td>0.5</td>
<td>0.2</td>
<td>1.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Death of spouse</td>
<td>0.9</td>
<td>0.0</td>
<td>0.0</td>
<td>0.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NR</td>
<td>32.2</td>
<td>7.7</td>
<td>2.8</td>
<td>42.7</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


Most households had not changed residence, not because they liked their place of residence, but rather because of financial constraints and lack of time to search for suitable and affordable replacements. Many obtained their current places through friends and agents who charged on each trip to inspect vacant houses. This is on top of the charge of 10 per cent on the cost of the residence chosen. Out of the 32.2 per cent who had changed residence more than once since they settled in GAMA, the highest numbers were those who moved from initial residence in order to settle in their own houses. This was followed by households that moved owing to change in the size and composition of the household and marriage. Others changed residence because of unsatisfactory conditions at the previous place and changes in socio-economic circumstances.

Most households did not rent their places of residence. These were made up of 61.9 per cent from the low-class, 15.1 per cent from middle-class, and 3.9 per cent from high-class areas. They comprised households that owned their personal accommodation, built or bought the house and stayed in company accommodation. Others had free accommodation, or stayed with relatives or non-relatives. Some of these were also households living in uncompleted houses as caretakers. A total of 14 per cent of households rented accommodation, most of which were from low-class residential areas. Despite the fact that most households enjoyed free accommodation, only 10 per cent actually owned their residence. Households that have free accommodation far outnumbered those renting, though some of the arrangements may be temporary, especially those of caretakers and those staying with friends and relatives.
In GAMA, residential mobility is explained in terms of tenure status. Property-owners and those who occupied family houses tended to be stable while tenants were mostly found to be mobile within cities. While a considerable number of households in GAMA moved to occupy their own houses, others moved because of change of jobs, transfers, search for jobs and provision of accommodation by employers. Some mobility was also attributed to the need to join relatives and friends, unsanitary conditions, transportation problems and over-saturation of shops, stores and other commercial activities in the Central Business District (CBD) as previous place of residence.

**Relationship between Household Change and Residential Pattern**

As some scholars have observed, life-cycle change or stages in the life cycle correlate with residential pattern. The composition of the household and its size affect residential location and pattern in GAMA, although 32 per cent of households did not acknowledge any relationship between change in household composition and residential location. Many heads, mainly from the middle- and low-class areas, moved from a single-room apartment to a double room; and some middle-class heads moved to a three-bedroom and even a four-bedroom house. Although it is believed that most households within the low-class find it difficult to adjust living conditions to change in the life cycle of the household, it was evident in the research that 63 per cent within the low-class residential area made some initial move because of the size and composition of their households. When the movement could not be sustained with a further increase in their numbers and the composition, it led to overcrowding, with many members, including adults and children, sharing the same room.

Similarly, there is a relationship between socio-economic status and household change in GAMA. Most households in single-room accommodation, upon change in income and social status, moved to low-rise single-family or self-contained apartments. The moves of low-income households were often within quite a limited area and often within the same or similar neighbourhood. About 75 per cent of high-class households felt their area was one of the best places in GAMA and, therefore, a change in their economic status would not necessarily initiate a move. A number of middle-class household heads explained that, owing to lack of space, they would prefer to move or renovate their residence for a face-lift befitting that of a high-class area to reflect their socio-economic status. Some households were forced to continue to live in single rooms even after they had additional numbers to the household because they could not afford better accommodation.

**Types of Residence Ever Occupied by Households**

Residential location decisions based on level of income variations are made in relation to an existing stock of houses and a complex market situation (Carter 1981). In any urban system, there will be differential access to the highest-order services, and the sector of the population with least access constitutes a deprivation category. To be able to see the relationship between housing type and decision to move, a chi-square
test was conducted, which demonstrated that there was no relationship between housing type and decision to move among low-class residences but a strong relationship among middle- and high-class residences. The high-class residential areas follow a certain pattern, bringing in values and class-consciousness that at the same time was associated with dispersed community living. Most of the fringes of GAMA are occupied by mobile middle- and high-class households, dominated by urban lifestyles.

In choosing a housing location, the high- and middle-class households tend to evaluate, albeit imperfectly, the range of opportunities available in general and with respect to their own specific situation. Household heads tended to weigh the potential location against resources and potential social services in terms of friends and relatives, and ultimately choose the destination that maximizes both. Information about possible location comes from contact with friends, relatives and until recently ‘agents’, which exposes the household to a more comprehensive spatial setting. In such situations, the first choice of destination would appear to be the nearest medium-sized residence or areas for which relatives and friends had already paved the way, and the socio-cultural environment closer to the household’s previous experience. After acculturation to the urban milieu, the households became equipped to move to more heterogeneous areas of the city. This implies that when households had to move, they became concerned with certain preferences that guided them in choices that would avoid communities and places they disliked.

**Mobility of Households within GAMA**

Mobility is a fundamental human activity and need. It is a need that sets the tone for the voluntary and involuntary movements of people from one location to another. The friction of distance, cost and other factors restrict mobility. Households are more likely to move only when a place is accessible and there is the means to do so. In GAMA, being single had a large positive effect on women’s ability to move for career and other purposes. According to the female household heads, having no partner increased their mobility rate. This was not true of men whose residential mobility is not affected whether they are in relationship or not. While divorce increased men’s mobility in most western societies, the opposite was observed in this research. Separation, be it divorce or death, increased women’s residential mobility more than men’s in GAMA.

Transportation is not easy in GAMA owing to bottlenecks and traffic congestion that affect residential mobility. Almost 50 per cent of respondents mentioned difficulties that arose out of this problem. Respondents from the high-class areas, however, had easy access to both telephones and means of transport, but pointed out that actual movement was quite difficult at certain times of the day because of traffic jams, depending on the housing location.

**Housing Conditions of Households**

One of the few widely argued shifts in economic viewpoint has recently resulted not from a change in perception of housing, but rather as part of movement away from
a pure economic growth concept to that of basic needs. Urban housing is supposed to be well-planned to conform to regulations that govern the design and housing types that can be built. This is not the case in some parts of GAMA, and was the reason cited by some respondents for disliking certain areas. Private homes are designed to meet the taste, life style and needs of the individuals that formed the household.

However, mass-designed and mass-constructed houses aimed at simply providing sleeping spaces for a lot of people may have supplied minimum facilities in recent years. But demand for housing units in the city has become so great that it has led to uncontrolled and random residential building. Uncontrolled building development and overcrowding had brought about fast development of slums in some parts of GAMA. At the same time, many of the existing houses in the low-class residential areas lacked basic amenities and infrastructure, and were deteriorating rapidly in the absence of a consistent maintenance culture.

The low quality of the housing stock in some deteriorating neighbourhoods engendered high levels of dissatisfaction for over 50 per cent household heads in low-class areas. Almost 90 per cent from the high-class areas were satisfied. The 10 per cent who were not satisfied felt insecure because the area was earthquake-prone. Comparing location with neighbourhood, 57.2 per cent from the low-class residential areas expressed dissatisfaction with the location, while 76.3 per cent were satisfied with the neighbourhood. To them, the neighbourhood is friendly and accommodating, but 10 per cent from the high-class area had a contrary opinion.

A significant correlation of almost 0.394 was achieved between a desire to move and locational stress. The most stress was experienced by those households who felt they could find a better residence elsewhere and who were the least satisfied with their present location and neighbourhood. As to why respondents chose a particular neighbourhood, nearness to workplace, affordability and access to friends were some of the reasons cited. Many heads from the high-class areas cited affordability, comfort, less noise, absence of overcrowding and social status of the residential area as reasons for their choice.

**Current Residential Status**

Most houses owned by heads in the high- and middle-class residential areas were either built or bought by the household heads themselves. However, a majority from the low-class residential areas who owned houses inherited them as rent-free. In the low-class residential areas in Nungua, for example, 60 per cent of households lived in family houses. Such family houses accommodated different types of households including single-person households, nuclear and extended households where the elderly son’s wife catered for the mother-in-laws and father-in-laws who were in their own households. About 30 per cent of sample households in low-class residential areas had done extensions to transform their portion of the compound house to some form of self-contained apartment. The remaining households were sharing housing units with other households. Grown-up children tended to work and, even when
they got married, they still remained in their family house. They only try to make some extension when there is available land. Others stay in their extended household till they build their own house at the periphery and move out.

The availability of rooms in housing units ranged from 1 to 20. Forty per cent of households in low-class areas live in single rooms; out of these 80 per cent are in a chamber and hall and 10 per cent are in a self-contained apartment. As many as 8 people share one room in some low-class households, but the average was 4.5 in a room. Ten per cent of middle-class households live in a single-room apartment, out of which 40 per cent live in a hall and chamber and 50 per cent in either detached or semi-detached houses. All the respondents in the high-class residential areas are living in detached houses with an average of two people in a room. Sixty-five per cent of respondents as against 45 per cent agreed that their residential space is adequate for the household.

With regard to the type of bathroom and toilet facilities being used, 58 per cent of the houses in the low-class areas had shared facilities with property-owners and or co-tenants. As many as 11 per cent within low-class residential areas lived in houses with no toilet and kitchen. In these areas, pan or bucket toilets were still in use.

About 98 per cent of households used electricity as their source of lighting in GAMA and 2 per cent used other sources. In the case of cooking, 75 per cent from the low-class areas used charcoal, 15 per cent gas and the remaining 10 per cent firewood. The source of drinking water was pipe-borne water. All households in high-class and some middle- and low-class areas had this facility but others from the middle- and low-class areas fetched water from outside the household, other houses or from public pipes. This confirms the report of the demographic health survey (1999), which indicates that more than 50 per cent of households in GAMA can draw water within a 15-minute walking distance, and they take less than 10 minutes to reach a source of water supply.

In the middle-class and high-class residential areas, the household lived mostly in detached and semi-detached houses. This was quite significant and showed that most of the houses in these areas housed nuclear units, with some having other relations and non-relatives like house helps, garden boys and watchmen. The type of housing in GAMA can be divided into five groups: the courtyard or compound house, flats, detached houses, semi-detached and traditional storey buildings.

Throughout GAMA, provision of housing for households nowhere kept pace with population growth. The gap is even widening because of the high rate of inflation, which has led to a high cost of building materials, affecting mostly the low-class households. Lack of proper housing facilities has given rise to the emergence of residence associations, with 44 per cent of residential areas having such associations.

**Conclusion**

The study has demonstrated that the household in GAMA is ever-changing in size, composition and function. Many have the nuclear unit as the basis of the household. One clear finding that emerged is that the general concept of a household has
changed at least for the past ten years in GAMA, according to the study. The typical household is no longer one with parents, children and relatives, but rather one that includes extended family members, friends, co-workers and other non-relatives. These different forms of emergent households have common residential arrangements for meals and accommodation. There was also a significant emergence of single-member households in GAMA because of unmarried workers, who lived on their own. A total of 70 per cent households from all classes were headed by males, with 30 per cent headed by females. Male-headed households had women as co-residents whereas many of the female-headed households had no elderly male present, making them de jure female-headed households. An increase in the age of the head of the household, coupled with growth in the household size, brought in more disposable income, as a greater number of household members became employed and contributed to the household budget. Other characteristics of the households are affected by factors such as marital status, education, occupation, income and cultural beliefs of the households, and changes in any of these parameters. Household change is affected by cultural values, stage of the life cycle, type of marriage and the needs of the household.

The findings seem to confirm the proposition that there is a weak correlation between changes that take place in households and their residential patterns, especially among the low-class residential areas. But improvement in socio-economic factors was found to impact positively on the type of residence, location and neighbourhood.

Most household heads were aged between 40 and 60 years. The older household heads tended to have larger households with grown-up household members who contributed towards the upkeep of the household. Comparatively, young household heads had smaller household size, some of them consisting of a single member. Large household size was not associated with low-class residential areas, as most literature contends. This might be related to the fact that the households in GAMA are being compelled by the rising cost in household maintenance to reduce the size of the household. This may also be a consequence of the positive result of the birth control programmes to encourage people to have fewer children. It is also obviously more expensive to bring up children in GAMA than in the rural hinterland. The household size of high-class residential areas was relatively higher, owing to the presence of other relatives and non-relatives and not necessarily the number of own biological children. The determinants of the household size, however, were income, sex, age and educational background of the household head.

Low-class areas have been found to be often associated with larger household size and low income, but this was not clearly the case in GAMA. This might be owing to the fact that areas designated as low-class as a result of their poor planning, bad roads and high density had gone through drastic changes from 1984 to 2002. There are very expensive buildings in such areas, with some of the elite and wealthy in societies remaining there, as found in places like Nungua, Madina and Lashibi.

The high-class areas in certain cases have household heads with relatively high education, but there was no evidence to show that the households were wealthy. The
indigenous extended household units of GAMA have the same characteristics as those in the rural areas because they have no room for further physical expansion and there is also a very high demographic density.

As most indigenous households enjoy free accommodation, only a few of the members leave the social areas in which they were raised. When they move, such moves occur within a neighbourhood of similar characteristics. Those who wish to move and relocate because of housing needs could not do so because of unavailability of affordable suitable housing and high costs. Households’ preferences based on their values, income and occupation affected their interpretation of opportunities and their changing character. Because of this, access to housing, both in the public and private sectors, has become a constraint to urban householders in GAMA.

In the area of household structure, it is now evident that new types of households apart from the traditional ones headed by males have emerged. Female-headed households are increasing and there are others headed by siblings and friends of the same or similar age groups. At the same time, the family system and the concept of the nuclear family continue to be still valued in Ghana. As Addai-Sundiata (1995) stated, the household remains a primary focus of cohesion and a source of stability and control, especially in the urban milieu.

Unfortunately, much of GAMA’s expansion has taken a heavy toll on the environment. Unenlightened and hasty building of shoddy high-rise apartment buildings has scarred the urban fabric of the city. The spread of housing, offices and store buildings and unfettered expansion in all forms has spawned vast networks of roads, power lines, pipelines and other needed infrastructural facilities. The rapid urban sprawl has engendered many social problems that can be linked to the break-up of neighbourhood and the degradation of the urban environment, with congestion, especially in the low-class areas. GAMA is in dire need of proper planning in line with housing production by large private companies such as the Ghana Real Estate Developers Association (GREDA).

From the analysis, it can be generalized that households in GAMA have gone through transformations in size, composition, structure and function within the period under review. A majority of households were maintained by the economic contribution of other members of the household and not necessarily the head alone, as previously conceived. Household headship, therefore, presents a mixed picture of who is really supporting and bearing responsibility for the household. Further research could investigate the actual contribution of individual adult members within the household, and how this affects the cohesion and mobility of the household.

**Recommendations and Policy Implications**

As the largest urbanized area in Ghana, GAMA, with its rapid rate of population and physical growth, needs proper planning as the population is projected to reach over four million in the year 2020. This points, in the first place, to the need for improvements in the housing situation in GAMA, as adequate and affordable housing was a major problem for many households. There should be implementation of a
series of measures to improve the quality of existing housing stock. Diverse policies and strategies, aimed at increasing housing production and affordability in GAMA, should be enforced. The government’s National Shelter Strategy of 2001 (Ministry of Works and Housing 2002), which seeks to work with private developers to build new housing for rental as well as for private sale to various socio-income group in Accra, should be vigorously planned and pursued to meet corresponding needs and abilities of households. This calls for limitation and control of the present form and extension of housing allocation.

In pursuance of this goal, private developers should be assisted with loans. The Social Security and National Insurance Trust should be empowered to use part of the workers’ contribution to develop residential buildings for contributors, to be deducted at source if they so prefer. The state should equally ensure that social and cultural amenities, schools, crèches, youth clubs, playgrounds and markets, among others, are planned for and completed at the same time as the production of houses in all residential areas.

There should be maintenance and modernization of old buildings in good repair. GAMA is in dire need of proper planning, restoration and enhancement in the process of urban renewal. For this purpose, the Town and Country Planning Department should provide for direction in connection with land-use planning and policies for social and economic development. For instance, in their national planning, in order to cope with the increasing urbanization of the Paris region, the French authorities have adopted a scheme to encourage growth in selected peripheral cities, designated as regional metropolises. Great effort is being put into equipping these cities with high-level facilities in higher education, medical care and communications, among others, in an attempt to counterbalance the lure of Paris. Those cities should soon be functioning as full-scale regional metropolises. The same policy can be applied to selected communities to serve as receiving points for households in an effort to decongest GAMA.

Further research could explore the impact of economic and political developments on the urban households. Particularly, there should be a study on the emerging and changing concepts of households. This should include both nuclear and extended households without male members present, but larger in size, to investigate further and determine their impact on residential mobility, resource allocation, cohesion and welfare of the household for development.

References


