

Associated Researcher

Dr. Afia Afenah



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Curriculum Vitae

Dr. Afia Afenah has been working as a researcher in the Wits-TUB Urban Lab project at the Habitat Unit since October 2018. She has also been a lecturer for the Urban Management Master's Programme at the Technical University (TU) since 2015.

Afia is an urban anthropologist whose research combines urban ethnography, critical geography and African studies. Thus far her work has focused on low income housing and 'informality', urban inequality, the role of non-state actors in urban governance and how social and political processes, such as urban renewal policies, are reflected in the everyday life of residents living in various African cities. She holds a Dr. phil. in Anthropology from the Free University of Berlin, an MSc in Development and Planning, from the Bartlett Development Planning Unit, University College London and a BA in Social Anthropology and Economics from the School of Oriental and African Studies, University of London.

In her PhD thesis Afia explored how urban planning, land conflicts and migration patterns intersect to reconfigure social and political relations in Accra. Based on ten months ethnographic fieldwork in Old Fadama, the city's largest 'extra-legal' settlement, the thesis provides a contextualized and historically situated analysis of the diverse social and political practices at play in the co-production of space and the urban order in Ghana.

Before embarking on her doctoral programme, Afia worked for a London-based international urban planning firm, where she provided research and project management on a diverse range of urban planning and housing projects in cities in the global South.

Education

2012-2018

Doctorate in Social Anthropology (Dr. phil.), Free University Berlin, Thesis Title: "Porous Boundaries: On Space, Power and Practices of Urban Local Governance in Old Fadama, Accra", supervised by PD Dr. Tilo Grätz and Univ.-Prof. Dr. Cilja Harders

2007-2009

Master of Science Development and Planning, Bartlett Development Planning Unit, University College London, UK, Thesis title: "Conceptualizing the Effects of Neoliberal Urban Policies on Housing Rights" (distinction), supervised by Prof. Yves Cabannes

2002-2005

Bachelor of Arts in Social Anthropology and Economics, School of Oriental and African Studies, University of London, UK

Employment History

Since 2018

Researcher
Habitat Unit, TU Berlin

Since 2015

Lecturer
Urban Management Master's Program, TU Berlin

2015-2017

Research Assistant
Land Matrix Project, GIGA, Leibniz Institute of Global and Area Studies, Hamburg

2012-2015

DFG Research Fellow
Center for Metropolitan Studies, TU Berlin

2010-2011

Research Fellow
Center of Excellence in Global Governance Research, Helsinki
University, Finland

2007-2010

Consultant: Urban and Regional Planning, Happold Consulting
International, London, UK

Teaching activities

SS 2018

'The Politics of Land in Urban Africa', International Joint Master of
Science in Regional Development Planning and Management
Programme, Technical University Dortmund

SS 2018

WITS-TUB Urban Lab 2nd Bilateral Summer School, MA & PhD
Architecture, Urban Planning, Sociology, Witwatersrand University
Johannesburg, South Africa

SS 2017

'Ethnographic Field Methods for Research in Urban Africa', Summer
School on "Co-producing Urban Sustainability Transformations" of the
Habitat Unit, Technical University Berlin

Since WS 2015

Seminar: Urban Governance and Planning
MA Urban Management, TU Berlin

Publications

Refereed Articles

Afenah A. (2012) "[Engineering a Millennium City in Accra, Ghana: The Old Fadama Intractable Issue](#)", Urban Forum - [Special Issue](#), in *Networked City Life in Africa*, Volume 23, Issue 4.

Other articles and publications

Afenah A. (2011) Review article of Harvey D. (2009) *Social Justice and the City - Revised*, University of Georgia Press and Fainstein S. (2010) *The Just City*, Cornell University Press, in *Suomen Antropologi: Journal of the Finnish Anthropological Society*, Volume 36, Issue 2.

Afenah A. (2011) "Towards Increased Rights Protection for Kenya's Urban Slum Dwellers? The Susan Waithera Kariuki Case", in *Helsinki Review of Global Governance*, Volume 3, Issue 1, Center of Excellence in Global Governance, Helsinki.

Afenah A. (2010) "(Re)claiming Citizenship Rights in Accra: Community Mobilization Against the Illegal Forced Eviction of Residents in the Old Fadama Settlement", in Habitat International Coalition (2010) *"Cities for All: Proposals and Experiences Towards the Right to the City"*.

Conferences

Conference Papers

(2014) *Contested Claim Making: On the Politics of Land in Old Fadama, Accra* at the International Conference on Urban and Regional Planning, Lagos University, Lagos

(2013) *Geographies of Power: Land, Displacement and 'Glocal' Urban Contestation in Accra, Ghana* at the 5th European Conference on African Studies Conference "African Dynamics in a Multipolar World?" in Lisbon

(2012) *Engineering a Millennium City in Accra, Ghana: The Old Fadama Intractable Issue* at the Space and Flow Conference, Detroit

(2011) *(Re)claiming Citizenship Rights in Accra: Community Mobilization against the Illegal Forced Eviction of Residents in the Old Fadama Settlement* at the 4th European Conference on African Studies, Uppsala

Convened Conferences

Disrupting and (Re)Contextualizing Urban Informality (workshop participants included AbdouMaliq Simone, Ayona Datta and Solomon Benjamin) at the Centre for Metropolitan Studies, Berlin

Ethnographic Methods and Writing with Suzie Hall (LSE, London) at the Centre for Metropolitan Studies, Berlin

Working papers

Afenah A. (2011) "Conceptualizing the Effects of Neoliberal Urban Policies on Housing Rights: An Analysis of the Attempted Unlawful Forced Eviction of an Informal Settlement in Accra, Ghana", *Development Planning Unit Working Paper 139*.

Invited Lectures

(2018) Input Lecture on *Governing Urban Transformations*, Urban Talks, Floating University Berlin

(2016) '*Righting' the City? On the Politics of Land in Old Fadama, Accra* at the Centre for Social Science Studies on the African, American and Asian worlds (CESSMA), University Paris Diderot, Paris

(2014) *Contested Claim Making: On the Politics of Land in Old Fadama, Accra* at the Anthropological Colloquium, University of Basel, Basel

Grants, Awards and Fellowships

2012-2015

(DFG) Deutsche Forschungs Gemeinschaft:
PhD Scholarship, International Graduate School "The World in the City: Metropolitanism and Globalization from the 19th Century to the Present", based at the Technical University Berlin.

2011

Laura Kolbe and Thomas Forss Fund, Helsinki:
Postgraduate scholarship awarded for the advancement of research in urban studies.

2010

Nordic Africa Institute, Uppsala:
Research scholarship to spend three months at the NAI.

2007

Happold Consulting International, UK:
Tuition fee scholarship for the completion of a Master of Science programme.