

The Sociocultural, Economic, and Environmental Contestations of Agbogbloshie: A Critical Review

Authors : Khiddir Iddris, Martin Oteng - Ababio, Andreas Bürkert, Christoph Scherrer, Katharina Hemmler

Abstract : Agbogbloshie, as an informal settlement and economy where the e-waste sector thrives, has become a global hub of complex urban contestations involving sociocultural, economic, and environmental dimensions due to the implication that e-waste and informal economic patterns have on livelihoods, urbanisation, development and sustainability. Multi-author collaborations have produced an ever-growing body of literature on Agbogbloshie and the informal e-waste economy. There is, however, a dearth of an assessment of Agbogbloshie as an urban informal settlement's intricate nexus of socioecological contestations. We address this gap by systematising, from literature, the context knowledge, navigating the complex terrain of Agbogbloshie's challenges, and employing a multidimensional lens to unravel the sociocultural intricacies, economic dynamics, and environmental complexities shaping its identity. A systematic critical review approach was espoused, with a pragmatic consolidation of content analysis and controversy mapping, grounded on the concept of 'sustainable rurbanism,' highlighted core themes and identified contrasting viewpoints. An analytical framework is presented. Five categories - geohistorical, sociocultural, economic, environmental and future trends - are proposed as an approach to systematising the literature. The review finds that the sociocultural dimension unveils a mosaic of cultural amalgamation, communal identity, and tensions impacting community cohesion. The analysis of economic intricacies reveals the prevalence of informal economies sustaining livelihoods yet entrenching economic disparities and marginalisation. Environmental scrutiny exposes the grim realities of e-waste disposal, pollution, and land use conflicts. The findings suggest that there is a high resilience within the community and the potential for sustainable trajectories. Theoretical and conceptual synergy is limited. This review provides a comprehensive exploration, offering insights and directions for future research, policy formulation, and community-driven interventions aimed at fostering sustainable transformations in Agbogbloshie and analogous urban contexts.

Keywords : Agbogbloshie, economic complexities, environmental challenges, resilience, sociocultural dynamics, sustainability, urban informal settlement

Conference Title : ICGPE 2024 : International Conference on Geography, Planning, and Environment

Conference Location : Ottawa, Canada

Conference Dates : July 11-12, 2024