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After Resistance:
The Resistance-Institutionalisation Gap in Aboaso and Adwumakase, Peri-Urban Kumasi, Ghana

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Abstract
Peri-urban land conflict is often analysed at the moment of dispossession, protest or negotiation. Less is known about what a claim becomes afterwards. This article compares Aboaso and Adwumakase on Kumasi's northern fringe, where residents confronted similar disputes over land conversion, compensation, revenue and chiefly authority but produced different institutional outcomes. Drawing on doctoral fieldwork conducted from January to July 2020, the study uses a 60-household contextual survey, six focus groups, stakeholder interviews, field observation and documentary evidence, analysed thematically and comparatively. The article develops the resistance-institutionalisation gap to distinguish immediate dispute outcomes, repeatable governance arrangements and durable accountability. The comparison shows that persistence matters when a claim enters an institutional opening and is converted into an organisational rule. Institutionalisation is therefore best understood as the movement of a claim across governance interfaces, not as evidence that accountability has already been achieved. The findings support early disclosure, representative oversight and accessible objection mechanisms in peri-urban land governance.

Keywords: Resistance-institutionalization gap, institutionalization, customary authority, land governance, accountability, peri-urbanisation, Kumasi

INTRODUCTION

On Kumasi's edge, urbanisation often announces itself quietly. Survey pegs appear in a field. A buyer visits. Blocks arrive. For a household that has cultivated the same plot for years, however, entitlement may still be understood through inheritance, occupation and customary use. The land has not simply changed use; the authority to decide its future has shifted around the people who depend on it.

The peri-urban fringe is not governed by a clean division between customary and statutory systems. In practice, households, chiefs, land buyers and planning authorities may recognise different bases for deciding who can allocate a plot and on what terms. Research across African urban peripheries identifies these encounters as central to changing livelihoods and land access (Meth et al., 2021; Nuhu, 2019; Babalola et al., 2025). Around Kumasi, metropolitan growth has made customary allocations increasingly valuable while leaving chiefs influential in land transactions and public agencies responsible for planning and registration. This combination creates multiple sites of decision-making without necessarily giving affected residents a reliable way to challenge decisions (Boamah & Amoako, 2020; Cobbinah et al., 2020; Geyer, 2025).

Aboaso and Adwumakase make that problem unusually visible. Both communities faced outward urban pressure, shrinking farmland, difficult-to-trace transactions and complaints about land revenue. Residents in both places resisted. They petitioned, challenged allocations, obstructed disputed development, demanded compensation and sometimes transferred land outside chiefly approval. The grievances were familiar. What followed them was not. Adwumakase developed a local land-management committee with

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community representation; comparable demands in Aboaso remained largely outside the structure through which allocation and revenue decisions were made. The current debate has moved beyond the observation that customary tenure survives urbanisation. Recent research instead shows how peri-urban transformation redistributes authority, access and procedural voice through hybrid institutions, land markets and planning systems (Akaateba, 2019, 2023; Anane & Cobbinah, 2022; Geyer, 2025). Two newer strands sharpen the problem. Work on land-management committees in Ghana asks whether collaborative institutions can resolve disputes and protect rights, while recent justice-oriented research shows that customary land transitions continue to reproduce procedural, distributive and recognitional inequalities even where formal reforms or new institutions exist (Ibrahim et al., 2020; Kpeebi & Asibey, 2026). Research on African peri-urban planning likewise documents increasingly hybrid and contested governance arrangements rather than a simple formal-informal divide (K'Akumu & Gateri, 2025). What remains less developed is the conversion problem: how does a grievance move from resistance into an arrangement that can shape the next land transaction? The literature is rich on why conflict emerges and increasingly attentive to hybrid governance; it is thinner on the institutional afterlife of contention itself.

I describe that distance as the resistance-institutionalisation gap. The distinction is small in wording but consequential in analysis. A household may stop a developer at the edge of a farm, secure compensation, or force a disputed allocation back into negotiation. That is an outcome of resistance. It does not yet alter the rules of the next transaction. Institutionalisation begins when a claim acquires a repeatable place in governance - a representation rule, an oversight body, a recorded procedure, or another arrangement through which future decisions can be questioned. Durability is a third matter. An institution may exist on paper and still be captured, bypassed or emptied of influence. Keeping these outcomes separate prevents a familiar analytical slippage in which visible protest, institutional change and effective accountability are treated as if they were the same achievement.

This article asks: why did broadly similar community resistance produce an institutionalised oversight arrangement in Adwumakase but not in Aboaso? The comparison is not offered as another demonstration that customary governance is hybrid. We already know that. Its purpose is to explain a narrower and more difficult transition: how a contentious claim acquires institutional durability. The article makes three linked contributions. Conceptually, the resistance-institutionalisation gap separates immediate resistance success, institutionalisation and demonstrated governance effectiveness - outcomes that are often folded together. Explanatorily, I develop claim mobility as the mechanism connecting contention to institutional change: collective persistence keeps a claim alive, institutional opening gives it entry to an authoritative arena, and rule conversion gives it a repeatable organisational form. Empirically, the paired cases show why committee formation cannot be read simply as 'participation'; Adwumakase converted pressure into an organisational address, whereas Aboaso retained pressure without comparable rule conversion. The policy contribution follows from that distinction. Planning systems may process development while leaving the customary dispute beneath it institutionally stranded. Conflict at a building site can therefore be the downstream expression of an upstream interface failure. The paper proceeds from this theoretical problem to the comparative design, results, rival explanations and implications for land-governance practice.

The study pursues the following specific objectives:

i. To examine how community resistance to peri-urban land conversion develops in Aboaso and Adwumakase.
ii. To compare how similar resistance produces different institutional outcomes in the two communities.
iii. To explain how persistence, institutional opening and rule conversion shape the institutionalisation of community claims.

THEORY

The theoretical task is to explain a particular transition: how a community claim that is expressed through resistance comes to have a recognised place in later land-governance decisions. The discussion first examines competing forms of authority, then considers the limits of resistance as

an outcome, and finally specifies the institutional processes to be compared.

Peri-urban Land, Customary Authority and Institutional Hybridity

A land allocation can be accepted within customary authority even while its implications for existing land users remain contested. Conversely, statutory permission to develop does not necessarily settle the social question of who was entitled to the land or to compensation. The concept of institutional hybridity captures the coexistence of these arrangements, but coexistence alone does not explain whether a grievance can affect a subsequent allocation. This study therefore uses the literature on plural authority to ask where a claim is heard, who can carry it into another forum, and what happens once it arrives (Ubink, 2008; Ubink & Amanor, 2008; Chimhowu, 2019; Boamah & Amoako, 2020; Anane & Cobbinah, 2022).

The financial attraction of converting farmland into residential plots adds a further difficulty. Actors who control allocations may also control information about transactions and proceeds, whereas households dependent on customary use rights may have limited influence over those decisions (Akaateba, 2019; Abdulai, 2024). Studies of Land Management Committees in Ghana suggest that collaborative bodies can offer a forum for disputes, although participation, resources and interference affect their operation (Ibrahim et al., 2020). Questions about the performance of customary land institutions remain equally important (Kwakye et al., 2025). Rather than treating the existence of a committee as the starting point, the present comparison examines the preceding contest: how demands for oversight were accepted in one locality but resisted in another. It also separates the creation of an organisation from evidence that the organisation later performed effectively.

Resistance is not Institutional Change

Residents do not necessarily begin by mobilising publicly. They may first raise a concern privately, seek intervention through a recognised leader, or pursue a claim at the disputed site. Scott (1985) and Bayat (2000) help explain political practices that do not take the form of organised movements. The idea of invited and invented spaces (Miraftab, 2004, 2009) helps explain why residents may organise beyond formal participation channels when their concerns go unanswered. Roy (2009) further shows why informal action cannot simply be placed beyond state power: the selective application of rules helps constitute what is treated as informal. Read together, these perspectives illuminate the repertoire available to residents of Aboaso and Adwumakase, but none by itself establishes that a protest changes subsequent land-allocation procedures.

An immediate gain for an affected land user should not be confused with a collective governance reform. Blocking construction may secure negotiation or compensation for a particular parcel, while the authority to make the next allocation remains unchanged. This is consistent with cautions against treating all resistance as emancipatory (Shrestha & Aranya, 2015) and with accounts of conflict in planning that do not presume institutional resolution (Pløger, 2004). The empirical issue is therefore whether repeated disputes created a procedure through which other residents could subsequently question decisions.

From Contentious Claim to Repeatable Rule

I treat institutionalisation as a conversion problem rather than an organisational end-state. Collective persistence means that a claim survives beyond one parcel, confrontation or spokesperson. Institutional opening occurs when actors controlling an authoritative arena permit, negotiate or can no longer prevent that claim from entering. Rule conversion is more demanding: the concession must be translated into something that can recur - a committee, representation rule, recorded objection procedure, disclosure requirement or another organisational routine. This formulation extends the collaborative-governance debate in one important respect. Existing studies can tell us why committees are useful, how hybrid institutions operate, or why participation fails; the resistance-institutionalisation gap asks what must happen before contention becomes one of those institutional forms at all. The three processes are therefore not universal stages or a recipe for reform. They identify distinct points of failure in the passage from grievance to governance. The proposition is conditional and testable. Resistance acquires an institutional afterlife when a claim remains collectively salient, crosses an institutional boundary and is converted into a repeatable rule or organisation. Movement is the

key. Institutionalisation changes both the location and temporal reach of a claim: what began at a farm boundary, petition or community meeting gains an address inside arrangements governing later transactions. This also clarifies what the framework does not claim. A halted development is not institutionalisation. A committee is not proof of accountability. A committee that exists but cannot shape subsequent decisions may represent symbolic incorporation rather than meaningful rule conversion. If committees routinely emerge without prior pressure, if persistent claims become rules without an opening, or if institutional entry leaves no repeatable trace, the framework requires revision. The resistance-institutionalisation gap therefore identifies an observable intermediate outcome between contentious action and durable governance performance.

Conceptual Framework

The analytical relationships underpinning the resistance-institutionalisation gap are presented in **Figure 1**.

The framework presents the resistance-institutionalisation gap as a process through which a contentious claim may become an enduring institutional arrangement. It begins with grievances over allocation, revenue or compensation. Collective persistence enables the claim to survive beyond an isolated dispute, while an institutional opening allows it to enter an authoritative decision-making arena.

Institutionalisation occurs when a concession is converted into a recurring procedure, representation rule or organisation, producing an institutional trace capable of influencing later decisions. However, an institutional trace does not necessarily demonstrate effectiveness. The framework therefore distinguishes between successful resistance, institutionalisation and the subsequent effectiveness of the resulting institutional arrangement.

A resistance outcome may stop at the first box. Institutionalisation requires a claim to acquire a repeatable organisational or procedural form. Long-term effectiveness is evaluated after, not assumed from, institutional creation.

The position of the resistance-institutionalisation gap within the current debate is summarised in **Table 1**.

RESEARCH METHODS

The comparison centres on a difference in how local authorities responded to demands for community oversight. The methods below explain the selection of Aboaso and Adwumakase, the material assembled in each location, and the approach used to interpret accounts of resistance and institutional response. Household survey evidence is distinguished from the qualitative material used to examine the course of particular disputes.

Comparative Case Design

The two communities lie along the Kumasi–Mampong corridor but were not equally affected by urban expansion when the research took place. Aboaso, nearer the expanding city, had experienced more intensive development; farming remained more apparent in Adwumakase. Both nevertheless combined customary authority over land with statutory planning arrangements. Comparing them makes it possible to examine why demands for oversight took different organisational paths under broadly comparable pressures. These cases

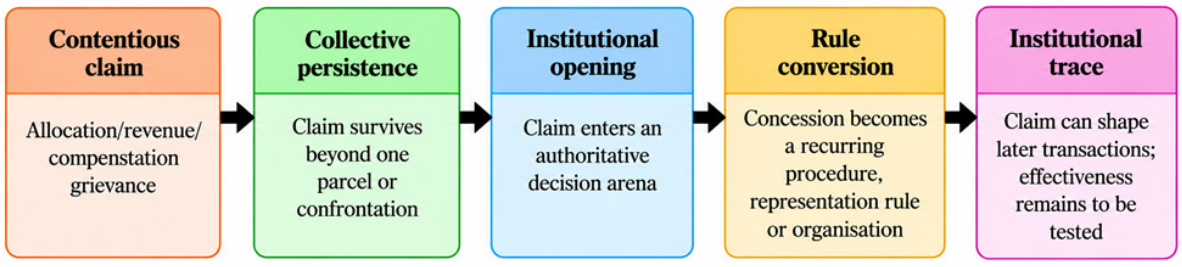


FIGURE 1
Analytical framework for the resistance-institutionalisation gap
Source: Author, (2026)

TABLE 1
Positioning the resistance-institutionalisation gap in the current debate

Current debate	What it explains well	Remaining analytical problem	Contribution of this article
Institutional hybridity / co-production	How customary and statutory actors interact	Hybridity does not show whether a contested claim changes later rules	Focuses on claim movement across governance interfaces
Resistance / insurgent participation	How marginalised actors contest decisions	Visible contention may end without institutional follow-through	Separates resistance success from institutionalisation
Land-management committees / collaborative governance	Why committees form and how they perform	Often begins after an organisational form already exists	Explains the conversion from recurring claim to organisational form
Justice / accountability	Whether outcomes distribute voice, benefits and recognition fairly	Accountability can be assumed from institutional creation	Treats effectiveness and justice as subsequent empirical tests

Source: Author, 2026

cannot stand for peri-urban Ghana as a whole, and the comparison cannot establish a single determining cause. Instead, it follows the local negotiations and decisions associated with each outcome.

Participants and Data Collection
The research drew on fieldwork undertaken between January and July 2020. Sixty households took part in a contextual survey, with 30 drawn from each community. The qualitative material included six focus-group discussions—three in each locality, usually attended by nine to fifteen people—alongside interviews with chiefs, opinion leaders, assembly members, planning personnel, land-sector officials and other relevant actors. Field observations and documents concerning customary administration and local governance supplemented these accounts. Household respondents were identified through purposive and snowball recruitment because a comprehensive list of indigenous households affected by land loss was unavailable. Consequently, survey responses describe the participating households rather than the wider population. Among surveyed household heads, 83.9% were men and 16.1% women; their mean age was 45.2 years and mean household size was five. These details are relevant to the interpretation of claims because experiences of land and livelihood change vary across household positions. Although the source material identifies the stakeholder groups consulted, the available record does not establish one verified total for all stakeholder interviews. No numerical total is inferred here.

Role of the Survey and Qualitative Material
The household questionnaire documented conditions surrounding access to land, livelihood change, housing and household finances. These responses help characterise the pressures accompanying peri-urban development; they are not estimates of how often resistance occurs across Kumasi. Focus groups and stakeholder interviews provide accounts of how disputes unfolded, from initial complaints and petitions to encounters with developers and discussions with customary leaders. Observational and documentary evidence provides further context for interpreting those accounts. The principal comparison therefore concerns sequences of action and response rather than statistical relationships between survey variables.

Thematic and Comparative Analysis
For each locality, I assembled accounts of disputed reallocations, compensation demands, disagreements over proceeds, petitions, site-level obstruction and negotiations into an event sequence. The material was then examined for three proposed processes: whether claims persisted beyond a particular dispute, whether they gained

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entry to a recognised decision-making arena, and whether any concession became an ongoing rule or organisation. Accounts inconsistent with these categories were retained for consideration. I compared the cases at moments when their paths separated, including the treatment of individual claims, authorities' responses to requests for oversight and the establishment—or absence—of an organisational arrangement. Differences in development pressure, political relationships, local leadership and the timing of events were considered as possible alternative explanations. Survey information was used to illuminate the setting, not to test these mechanisms statistically. Where necessary, accounts given in Twi were translated into English.

The evidence also imposes limits on interpretation. Fieldwork covering January to July 2020 cannot show whether a committee remained effective in subsequent years. Recollections of particular incidents sometimes differed, and not every allegation about a land transaction could be independently confirmed. Interview and focus-group accounts are therefore used to understand reported practices and institutional reactions, rather than presented as definitive legal findings. Moreover, interests within each community were not uniform: livelihood, gender, age, lineage and access to land could affect both exposure to loss and the ability to challenge a decision.

Methodological Summary

The data sources, sampling approaches and analytical roles are summarised in **Table 2**.

RESULTS

The findings trace the issues that prompted resistance, the responses residents pursued, and the different arrangements that emerged from their demands for oversight.

Why Residents Resisted

Participants' concerns focused less on urban growth itself than on decisions about who could allocate land, how affected users were treated, and where the proceeds went. In Aboaso, an opinion leader reported that land considered by residents to be set aside for a market, school expansion and public space had been allocated without consultation. Community representatives subsequently sought a share of land revenue for local development. Members of the Local

TABLE 2

Data sources, sampling and analytical roles

Evidence source	Coverage	What it contributes	Limit / use in inference
Household survey	60 participants: 30 Aboaso; 30 Adwumakase	Land/livelihood context; descriptive comparison	Purposive/snowball; not population estimates
Survey profile	83.9% male household heads; 16.1% female; mean age 45.2; mean household size 5	Makes participant composition explicit	Household-head profile does not represent all community voices
Focus groups	6 groups; 3 per community; usually 9-15 participants	Shared and contested accounts of land conversion, resistance and accountability	Group dynamics and retrospective accounts require triangulation
Stakeholder interviews	Chiefs, opinion leaders, assembly members, planners, land-sector officials and other governance actors	Decision pathways, jurisdictional boundaries and institutional responses	Single verified total unavailable in archived manuscript record
Field observation & documents	Both communities; institutional and site material	Triangulates disputed development and governance arrangements	Does not independently verify every allegation about individual transactions

Source: Author, 2026

Committee and the Elected District Representative petitioned the Asantehene about the disputed land sale. According to participants, no response had been received by the time of the research. One recorded account stated that the Chief had sold land at the new site that had been set aside for future development. The sale led to conflict with community members, who repeatedly requested a substantial share of the proceeds for community development. Participants reported that these requests remained unmet. This testimony is presented as a participant's account, not independent verification of the sale. It shows how residents connected a particular allocation with wider questions about public benefit and the authority to scrutinise customary decisions. Disagreement extended beyond compensation to the distribution of revenue and the ability to demand an explanation. Participants also described the social difficulty of openly challenging chiefs. The petition thus demonstrates an attempt to use an established channel without showing that the channel generated an ongoing means of oversight.

From Petition to Obstruction

Where complaints and negotiations did not bring an acceptable settlement, some disputes were pursued directly at development sites. Accounts describe affected families stopping developers from proceeding, confronting customary leaders and, in certain instances, seeking assistance from the government agency responsible for Lands under Stools or the court. In one Adwumakase dispute, a purchaser was reportedly denied access to a plot until the affected land user received compensation. Such incidents indicate that intervention on the ground could provide leverage when earlier approaches had not resolved the underlying claim.

Not all resistance involved attempts to prevent land sales. Some households reportedly disposed of farmland without chiefly approval because they feared later reallocation would leave them inadequately compensated. These actions contested control over allocation while also drawing residents into the same market processes driving land conversion. They caution against describing the community as having a single position on development. Household livelihood needs, lineage relationships and expectations of future loss influenced the choices available. The relevant issue for this study is whether these varied forms of contestation changed the procedures governing later transactions.

Similar Grievances, Different Institutional Outcomes

The clearest organisational response was reported in Adwumakase. Elders and youth groups advocated a Land Allocation Committee (LAC) that would provide scrutiny of plot allocation and the distribution of proceeds. The source material describes committees of this kind as drawing membership from chiefly representatives, local leaders, Members of the Local Elected Committee and other local elders. After repeated disputes—including a reported incident in which development was halted pending compensation—an agreement was reached to create a local land or plot committee. The change did not settle the question of how well oversight would work. It did, however, give a previously contested demand a continuing organisational setting in which subsequent allocations might be considered.

A different response emerged in Aboaso. Local representatives also called for a land committee, but the chief did not accept the proposal. Participants associated this refusal with further petitions, legal action and confrontations involving prospective buyers or developers. Both communities therefore exhibited sustained resistance. The important difference was whether the request for accountability became part of an accepted local decision-making arrangement. In Aboaso, that step had not occurred in the evidence available from the fieldwork.

Comparative Pattern

The comparative resistance patterns and institutional outcomes are presented in **Table 3.**

DISCUSSION

The discussion evaluates whether the observed contrast is consistent with the proposed resistance-institutionalisation gap, and considers other conditions that might explain the different outcomes. It does not assume that the formation of a committee demonstrates its long-term effectiveness.

Explaining the Resistance-Institutionalisation Gap

The central comparative result concerns what

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TABLE 3
Comparative resistance and institutional outcomes

Analytical point	Aboaso	Adwumakase	What the comparison shows
Recurring grievance	Allocation without consultation; compensation; land revenue; community benefit	Allocation; compensation; land revenue; accountability	Contention was not unique to one community
Recognised-channel action	Petition by Unit Committee/ Assembly Member to higher traditional authority; court/ OASL use in some disputes	Negotiation and community pressure alongside direct obstruction	Both cases used more than informal resistance
Direct action	Developers restrained; confrontation around disputed plots	Buyer/developer blocked until affected user compensated in reported case	Site obstruction became bargaining leverage when upstream routes failed
Demand for oversight	Land Allocation Committee proposed but resisted by chief	Land Allocation Committee established with community representation	Divergence lies in rule conversion, not simply mobilization
Institutional outcome	Claim remained largely external to allocation structure	Claim acquired repeatable organisational address	Evidence of institutionalisation, not proof of durable accountability

Source: Author, 2026

happened after grievances became public. Scholarship has documented the unequal effects of land commodification, the overlapping roles of customary authorities and statutory bodies, and how planning can privilege some interests over others. (K'Akumu & Gateri, 2025; Kpeebi & Asibey, 2026). These insights help explain the circumstances in which disputes arose in both communities. The paired evidence adds a more specific observation: the same broad category of demand for community oversight did not acquire the same institutional standing. The resistance-institutionalisation gap names this difference between making a grievance visible and establishing a recognised procedure through which future decisions may be questioned. It is an intermediate outcome, not a measure of justice or effective governance.

Adwumakase suggests that persistence was necessary but insufficient. Residents kept community oversight on the agenda beyond a single parcel dispute. Yet repetition alone did not create the LAC. An opening occurred when chiefly authority accepted - or could no longer exclude - the proposition that allocation and revenue should be subject to a broader local structure. Rule conversion then gave that concession organisational form. Aboaso stalled earlier. Demands persisted, but the proposed committee remained outside the accepted governing arrangement. The comparison therefore locates divergence at an institutional interface rather than in the mere presence or absence of protest.

Alternative Explanations and Causal Caution

Resistance alone cannot carry the causal claim. Adwumakase and Aboaso differed in urbanisation intensity, land-market pressure and leadership relationships; personalities, political connections and the timing of particular disputes may also have changed the cost of concession. The evidence cannot rank these alternatives conclusively. It can, however, reject a simpler account in which mobilisation automatically produces reform. Aboaso had mobilisation without conversion. Adwumakase had mobilisation plus an opening and organisational follow-through. The inference is therefore processual: the three mechanisms help explain the observed sequence, while the paired cases remain too few to establish a universal causal law.

Social differentiation complicates the story

further. Youth could supply collective pressure; farmers had direct livelihood stakes; lineage position could strengthen or weaken claims; women, tenants and less-connected residents might face different barriers to voice. The original dataset does not support a full intersectional comparison, so these differences cannot be quantified here. They matter theoretically because 'community representation' is never automatically representative. Institutionalisation can relocate exclusion as easily as it can reduce it.

What is Theoretically New

The contribution is more specific than the claim that resistance can influence institutions. First, the article disaggregates outcomes. Compensation, a halted development, a petition, committee creation and durable accountability are analytically different achievements; treating them as one category of 'successful resistance' obscures the mechanism between them. Second, claim mobility gives institutionalisation a process content. A grievance becomes institutionally consequential when it crosses a governance boundary and acquires temporal reach beyond the dispute that produced it. Third, the paired comparison identifies a negative case that committee-centred research often lacks. Adwumakase shows conversion; Aboaso shows persistent contention without conversion. The absence is theoretically productive because it reveals where the process can stall. Fourth, the framework recasts the statutory-customary boundary as an interface problem. Planning may be formally competent to approve development yet institutionally unable - or unwilling - to carry unresolved customary claims into the approval process. Fifth, institutionalisation remains normatively open. A committee can widen scrutiny, reproduce chiefly dominance, marginalise women or younger residents, or become symbolic. The argument is therefore not that resistance produces accountability. It explains how a claim becomes governable, why some claims fail to do so, and why governability must still be distinguished from justice.

The statutory-customary boundary is visible in the planner's own account: "the staff had been directed not to meddle in land matters and could not compel the Paramountcy to sign the relevant paperwork". Read narrowly, this is a statement about jurisdiction. Read institutionally, it shows how a development-control system can require documents for a permit yet disclaim authority over the customary relations that make those documents politically contested. That boundary condition is central to the article's policy contribution.

That last point matters for area-development policy. Development institutions are often evaluated organisation by organisation: a planning department has a mandate; a land agency has a registry; customary authorities have local legitimacy. The Kumasi evidence shows why that lens can miss the problem. Failure can sit between institutions. A claim recognised socially may be invisible administratively; a permit may be processed while compensation remains contested; a petition may reach a higher authority without changing the next allocation. The relevant policy object is therefore the interface through which claims should travel. Early disclosure, recorded objections, referral rules and feedback obligations are not procedural extras. They are the infrastructure of institutional mobility.

Institutionalisation is not Effectiveness

Adwumakase's committee is evidence that a contentious claim acquired institutional form. Nothing in the 2020 fieldwork proves that the committee subsequently delivered durable accountability, equitable representation or transparent revenue management. That distinction is essential. Institutions can be captured, ignored or reduced to symbolic participation. Longitudinal evaluation must therefore ask who sits on the committee, how decisions are recorded, whether women and younger residents can influence outcomes, how conflicts of interest are handled and whether community-benefit commitments are actually implemented.

CONCLUSION

This section draws together the principal conclusions arising from the comparative analysis of resistance and institutional change in Aboaso and Adwumakase.

Resistance itself is not the finding. The contribution lies in explaining its institutional aftermath. Aboaso and Adwumakase contained comparable grievances, petitions and direct challenges, yet only Adwumakase converted a recurring demand for oversight into a Land Allocation Committee.

The resistance-institutionalisation gap captures that divergence; claim mobility specifies the mechanism. Persistence keeps a grievance alive, institutional opening gives it entry to an authoritative arena, and rule conversion extends it into later decisions.

This advances current debate by locating an intermediate outcome that studies of resistance, hybrid governance and committee effectiveness often approach from opposite ends but rarely theorise directly. Immediate dispute success, institutionalisation and durable accountability should not be collapsed. They ask different empirical questions and require different evidence.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The following are recommendations for planning and land policy, customary governance, statutory land institutions and future research:

Strengthen the recording and referral of customary land claims in planning processes.
For planning and land policy, the implication is upstream and inter-institutional. Where development affects occupied agricultural or community land, planning authorities should record unresolved customary occupation, compensation and community-benefit claims before permit decisions become detached from the dispute that produced them. A referral should identify which institution must respond, what counts as resolution, and how the answer returns to the planning file. Without that feedback loop, residents may encounter several institutions and still have no route through them.

Strengthen representative oversight within customary land governance.
For customary governance, representative oversight requires design rather than symbolism. Local land committees should make membership, decision procedures, conflicts of interest, allocation records and community-benefit commitments visible. Representation should be reviewed for farmers, women, youth and lineage groups rather than inferred from the presence of a committee. Adwumakase demonstrates institutionalisation; only longitudinal evidence can show whether that institutionalisation became accountable governance.

Strengthen institutional interfaces within statutory land governance.
For statutory land institutions, the practical priority is to govern interfaces. Ghana's experience with land formalisation already cautions that creating institutions or procedures does not by itself resolve fragmented practice. The more demanding task is to ensure that a claim can move from customary allocation to objection, planning review, land administration and dispute resolution without disappearing at jurisdictional boundaries. That is where the resistance-institutionalisation gap becomes a policy diagnostic rather than only a conceptual label.

Undertake longitudinal and comparative research on institutionalisation.
Future research should follow institutionalised arrangements over time. The decisive test is not whether a committee was created, but whether it endures, broadens meaningful voice, changes allocation practice and redistributes accountability. Comparative work across additional African peri-urban settings could also test whether persistence, institutional opening and rule conversion travel beyond Kumasi, or whether other mechanisms better explain when resistance acquires an institutional afterlife.

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