GLOBALIZING THE INFORMAL CITY: NEOLIBERALISM AND URBAN TRANSFORMATION IN ACCRA, GHANA

by

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Abstract

Over the last decade, and particularly the last five years, state officials in Ghana’s capital city, Accra, have intensified their resolve to ‘modernize’ the city and make it a competitive destination for global investments. In the same period, exercises by city authorities to remove or at least suppress practices of ordinary residents in the informal sector have become more frequent and intensified. Groups such as street hawkers, market women, and slum dwellers have become the main target of periodic ‘decongestion exercises’. In this dissertation I investigate how the policies and practices associated with the ‘globalizing’ and ‘modernizing’ ambition of the state intersect with the interests of the majority of urban residents whose everyday social and economic practices are concentrated in the informal sector, a sector deemed to be deleterious to the desired image for the city. I argue that contemporary city-making in Ghana is driven mainly by a combination of economic, nationalist and individual interests. In examining how cultural and social locations such as gender and ethnicity mediate the relationship between the state and residents, I demonstrate how contemporary forms of neoliberal urban governance shape, and are being shaped by, the unique historical, cultural and developmental dynamics of African cities.
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I am most of all thankful to Almighty Allah for His constant watch over me.
Dedication

To the memory of Abdul-Razak Issahaku, my childhood best friend whose promising life was senselessly cut short by a thug. Zakus, as I used to affectionately call you, rest in perfect peace. I have missed you dearly.
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<tr>
<td>AMA</td>
<td>Accra Metropolitan Assembly</td>
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<tr>
<td>ARG</td>
<td>Anti-Relocation Group</td>
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<tr>
<td>CBD</td>
<td>Central Business District</td>
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<td>CCTV</td>
<td>Close-Circuit Television</td>
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<td>CEPA</td>
<td>Centre for Policy Analysis</td>
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<td>CPP</td>
<td>Convention Peoples Party</td>
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<td>DACF</td>
<td>District Assembly Common Fund</td>
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<tr>
<td>GAFUP</td>
<td>Ghana Federation for the Urban Poor</td>
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<tr>
<td>GAMA</td>
<td>Greater Accra Metropolitan Area</td>
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<td>GAMWA</td>
<td>Greater Accra Market Women Association</td>
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<tr>
<td>GDC</td>
<td>GaDangme Council</td>
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<td>GDP</td>
<td>Gross Domestic Product</td>
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<td>ERP</td>
<td>Economic Recovery Program</td>
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<td>FAO</td>
<td>Food and Agriculture Organization</td>
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<td>FDI</td>
<td>Foreign Direct Investment</td>
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<td>FGD</td>
<td>Focus Group Discussions</td>
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<td>GIPC</td>
<td>Ghana Investment Promotion Centre</td>
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<td>GLSS</td>
<td>Ghana Living Standard Surveys</td>
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<td>GSS</td>
<td>Ghana Statistical Service</td>
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<td>GDYA</td>
<td>GaDangme Youth Association</td>
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<td>HDMC</td>
<td>High Density Middle-Class Area</td>
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<td>IFIs</td>
<td>International Financial Institutions</td>
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<td>IMF</td>
<td>International Monetary Fund</td>
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<tr>
<td>KLERP</td>
<td>Korle Lagoon Restoration Project</td>
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<td>LEAP</td>
<td>Livelihood Empowerment Program</td>
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<td>LDHC</td>
<td>Low Density High Class Areas</td>
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<td>MCI</td>
<td>Millennium City Initiative</td>
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<tr>
<td>MDMC</td>
<td>Medium Density Middle Class Areas</td>
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<td>MNC</td>
<td>Multinational Corporations</td>
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<td>MTMCC</td>
<td>Ministry of Tourism &amp; the Modernization of the Capital City</td>
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<tr>
<td>NDC</td>
<td>National Democratic Congress</td>
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<td>NMA</td>
<td>Novotel Market Association</td>
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<td>NPM</td>
<td>New Public Management</td>
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<td>New Patriotic Party</td>
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<td>Pro-Relocation Group</td>
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<td>There Is No Alternative</td>
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<td>T&amp;CP</td>
<td>Town and Country Planning</td>
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<td>Transnational Corporations</td>
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<td>United Nations Development Program</td>
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<td>UNCHS</td>
<td>United Nations Centre for Human Settlement</td>
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<td>USAID</td>
<td>United States Agency for International Development</td>
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Chapter 1
Introduction

Introduction and research questions

In January 2013, the New York Times published a list of what it considered to be the best cities in the world to tour in 2013 (New York Times, 11 January 2013). In that publication Accra, Ghana’s capital city, was ranked fourth. While commenting on Accra’s ranking Alfred Vanderpuije the current mayor of the city (henceforth Mayor Vanderpuije), made the following remarks:

“When we… [declared Accra a Millennium City] one of our objectives was to make Accra an area for tourist destination and to also ensure that the business community will begin to look into Accra and for that matter Ghana as a business centre. So this recognition by the New York Times brings to the forefront [that] we have worked diligently on the beautification of the city.” (Radio Gold 15 January 2013; my emphasis)

This comment raises significant issues that form the basis of this dissertation. As highlighted, the statement has two important parts: first, the disclosure that a central goal of the local state is to make Accra a competitive destination for global tourism and investments; and second, the belief that this goal is best attained by transforming the city and improving its aesthetic appeal.

Indeed, this statement only brings to the fore government ambitions towards Accra that go back at least a decade. In the late 1990s, the Ghanaian state embarked upon an ambitious project ‘to enhance Ghana’s competitiveness,’ called the ‘Gateway Project’. This project was one

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1This publication was reproduced by at least a dozen Ghanaian media outlets, all of them in celebratory tones.
2By local state here I mean the city government of Accra, i.e. the Accra Metropolitan Assembly (AMA). Ghana, since the late 1980s, has adopted a decentralized form of governance. The local governments, also called Local Assemblies, have since become the main agents of development at the local level. My use of the term ‘local state’ here is therefore consistent with the understanding that the Assemblies play the role of the state at the local scale.
3Throughout this dissertation, I use the term transform (or city transformation) interchangeably with modernize (or city modernization) or globalize (or city globalization). I do so partly because with the exception of the latter, the terms are similarly used interchangeably by city officials and policy makers in Accra.
of the highlights of the persistent effort by the World Bank and the IMF to neoliberalize the Ghanaian economy since the early 1980s (Chalfin, 2010). The main focus of that project was Accra and the aim was to make the city serve as the connecting node with the global economy (Grant, 2009).

Since then, other initiatives have been taken to link Accra more firmly with the global economy. One of the most ambitious was the policy of ‘capital city modernization’ adopted in 2003. This policy was linked with tourism and, obviously, intended to position Accra, among other things, as an ideal tourist destination in Africa. The most recent such project is the Millennium City Initiative (MCI), adopted in 2010 to facilitate economic growth and poverty reduction in the city. Its approach is to productively link the city internally with the rest of the country and externally with the global market (MCI, n.d.). There are two elements consistent in all of these initiatives. One is a required spatial transformation of the city; the other, an expansion of the market and private participation in city management processes. The latter, in particular, bears testimony to the tenacity of the neoliberal paradigm that became the driving force of the Ghanaian economy in the 1980s and 1990s.

My overall objective in this dissertation is to explore how contemporary urban neoliberal practices are shaping, and being shaped by, the unique historical, cultural and developmental dynamics of Accra. This objective is informed by the fact that these recent and largely market-based city-making initiatives and practices are unfolding in the context of a long history of urban development that is rooted in the project of nation building, and urban social life that is still defined by local cultures and traditions.
Accra’s recent development initiatives appear consistent with what critical urban scholars describe as *urban neoliberalism*, or *urban entrepreneurialism* to be more specific (Johnston, 2000; Lovering, 2007; Bayirbağ, 2009). Urban neoliberalism entails attempts to structure the parameters for the governance of contemporary urban development around a market-dominated governance regime (Harvey, 2007; Brenner and Theodore, 2005; Hackworth, 2005). This governance regime has become widespread since the early 1980s when neoliberalism gained acceptance in many parts of the world as “the central guiding principle of economic thought and management” (Harvey, 2005, p. 3). This entails the shift towards ideas of maximum entrepreneurial freedoms, private property rights, individual liberty, unencumbered markets, and free trade (Harvey, 2007a, p. 22).

Urban scholars generally concur that nowhere has the ethos of neoliberalization been better absorbed than in cities (Harvey, 2007; Brenner and Theodor, 2005). Over the last two decades, significant academic output has swelled around the theme of urban neoliberalism, exploring how the principles of private property rights, unencumbered markets, and free trade are reshaping urban processes and experiences around the world. In this academic work, the term *urban entrepreneurialism* has been employed to explore the promotion of local economic development by urban governments in alliance with private capital and unions (Harvey, 1989; Johnston, 2000).

The driving force behind this approach is the broader restructuring of a global economy facilitated by improvements in information and communication technologies (Castells and Hall, 1994). It is asserted that the increased capacity of capital to shift from less to more profitable locations has intensified the already existing competition among places to attract this capital,
with cities at the centre of it. In the growing inter-city competition, city governments are driven to embrace policies targeted at improving local business environment (Johnston, 2000). Besides fiscal, legal, and institutional reforms, city governments are also engaged in a variety of place-making interventions to restructure urban space and, by implication, urban society (Sager, 2011; Crossa, 2009; Yeoh, 2005; Harvey, 1989a). Such interventions, designed to promote or market the city, often involve image-development and image-enhancement strategies, exemplified by major investments in leisure facilities and world events (Johnston, 2000; Lovering, 2007). These projects are mostly market and private sector-led with the overriding aim of making the city more attractive for investors, tourists, and consumers (Harvey, 1989a; MacLeod, 2002; Sager, 2011).

To a large extent, African cities have been at the margin of this urban neoliberalism scholarship. This, in a broader sense, reflects their general absence on ‘the map’ of mainstream urban scholarship (Robinson, 2002, 2006; Grant and Nijman, 2004). The neglect of these cities is quite surprising given that Africa as a whole and African cities in particular have been some of the epicentres of the global neoliberalization process (Harrison, 2010; Davis, 2006; Simone, 2004a, 2005; Riddell, 1997). Since the early 1980s, the IMF and the World Bank have worked to neoliberalize the economies of many countries on the continent, mainly through Economic Reform and Structural Adjustment Programs (ERSAPs) (Bayat, 2000, 2012; Davis, 2006). These programs generally required the debtors to abandon state-led development strategies in return for new loan facilities (Davies, 2006). The programs advocated for devaluation, privatization, removal of import controls and food subsidies, enforced cost-recovery in health and education
and ruthless downsizing of the public sector (Bayat, 2012; Harrison, 2010; Mensah, 2008; Davis, 2006; Konadu-Agyemang, 2000; Riddell, 1997).

The urban impact of these market reforms in Africa has been far-reaching and long-lasting. Over the last two decades, there has been serious academic effort to understand the nature of this impact. Some of the issues examined include growing urban poverty (Simon et al., 1995; Konadu-Agyemang, 1998); increased practices of informality (Bayat, 2000, 2012; Lourenço-Lindell, 2002; Riddell, 1997; Meagher and Yunusa, 1995); and demanding livelihood challenges (Johnston-Anumonwo and Oberhauser, 2011). Other themes include the increased visibility of global corporations (Grant, 2001); changing urban forms and urban sprawls (Briggs and Yeboah, 2001; Briggs and Mwamfupe, 2000; Yeboah, 2000, 2003); and the emergence and expansion of gated communities in many of the cities (Landman, 2002; Grant, 2005).

So far, only a few studies have examined how neoliberalization affects the nature of urban governance on the continent, especially the specific role of the state in shaping the urban space and economy. Miraftab (2004, 2007) for instance explores the governance decentralization system that was actively encouraged under the World Bank/IMF reform programs in Africa as a technology of neoliberalization (Miraftab, 2004, 2007). She suggests that the system has opened up decision making at the urban scale to a range of powerful actors by shifting control over service delivery not only from central to local governments but also from state to not-state actors. Governance decentralization in Africa is therefore akin to what urban geographers describe as state rescaling⁴.

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⁴Generally, this term is used to describe the contemporary transformation of the spatial logic of the state, characterized by devolution of national state power and functions upwards to the supra-national institutions and downwards to the sub-national ones (Brenner, 2004, 1999; Jessop, 1990). The downward rescaling is particularly important in the current context because it
Other scholars have tried to explain the impact of neoliberalism in terms of how urban
governments seek to integrate the local economies with global flows—of investments, capital,
ideas and tourist (see McDonald, 2008; Houghton, 2008; Miraftab, 2007; Linehan, 2007;
Robinson and Parnell, 2006; Parnell, 2006; Jenkins and Wilkinson, 2002; Bremner, 2000;
Rogerson, 2000). Similar to governance processes in the global North, some city governments in
Africa have in recent times demonstrated the desire to turn their cities into dominant economic
hubs comparable to cities such as New York, London, and Tokyo. McDonald (2008) describes
this desire as “World City Syndrome”. Part of this discussion is the question of what becomes of
the ordinary residents of these cities (see Watson, 2013; Murray, 2011; Bremner, 2000; Bayat
and Biekart, 2009), those considered “superfluous to the requirements of the global economy
and… [the] position [of the cities] within it” (Beall, 2002, p. 41; emphasis added).

These accounts of changing urban governance processes in Africa within the context of
neoliberalization have undoubtedly been revealing. Yet, the literature falls short on two
important grounds. The first is the obvious bias towards cities in Southern Africa, more
specifically South Africa. The second, and more characteristic of the urban neoliberalization
scholarship in general, is the assumption that economic factors are the only driving forces behind
the changing urban governance processes and their impact on space and society of cities.

This dissertation is designed to address both shortfalls; first, by focusing on Accra, and
second, by exploring which place-specific and non-economic factors mediate how a market-

citation here.

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5 The term ordinary residents is central to this dissertation. It is generally employed to refer to the urban unemployed, partially
employed, causal labor, street subsistent workers, street children and members of the under-world—groups that are
interchangeably referred to as ‘urban marginals’, ‘urban disenfranchised, and ‘urban poor’ (Bayat, 2000b). In this dissertation, I
use it in specific reference to groups such as street hawkers, market traders, and slum dwellers.
driven city project in Africa unfolds on the ground. The choice of Accra, however, is also and perhaps more importantly a recognition that the city is one of the most ambitious on the continent to assume ‘global’ economic significance. As explained at the beginning of this chapter, the city in recent times has been at the centre of state policy to make Ghana the ‘gateway to West Africa’. Over the last decade in particular, this city-promotion agenda spearheaded by Mayor Vanderpuije has become a self-imposed mandate of the city government.

But as pointed out above, it is misleading to suggest that neoliberalism solely explains the political and socio-spatial transformations taking place in African cities. To fathom the true nature of this transformation, I will argue, there is the need to recognize the role of certain place-specific and non-economic factors in shaping how these market-driven city projects unfold on the ground. This aim is consistent with the call by some of the key analysts in this academic genre for researchers to pay attention to the “…the diverse pathways through which neoliberal political agendas have been imposed upon and reproduced within cities…” (Brenner and Theodore, 2002, p. 368-72). With respect to African cities, there are three important factors worthy of consideration in this regard. These are developmentalism or modernization; informality; and social location specifically ethnicity and gender.

The nature of state-driven urban transformation in Africa cannot be understood outside of the historical context, particularly the postcolonial project of national development referred to in some circles as developmentalism. First, the postcolonial project of national development has

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6 I use the term developmentalism in this dissertation loosely to mean both the assumption of the universality of social progress as understood in the North (Norgaard 1994) and the consistent normative political endeavor by both national and international apparatuses to convert this idea of progress into achievement of well-being of the people in the global South. Developmentalism, as Nabudere (1997: 204) critiques, is the logic that “modernization and development… [are a] universally desirable end to be achieved by all countries.” With respect to African cities, the lens of developmentalism through which the cities are interpreted understands these places to be lacking in the qualities of city-ness, and thus is concerned to improve capacities of governance,
cast cities as sites of modernization (Freund, 2007; Gugler, 1996; Brand, 1972). Despite the rhetoric by post-independence governments, especially the first generation leaders, to indigenize or ‘Africanize’ the cities (Myers, 2011; Grant and Yankson, 2003), this modernization project only reincarnated the western modernist planning model of the colonial era (Kamete, 2012; Watson, 2009; Harrison, 2006; Swillings et al., 2002; Hess, 2001). Second, this modernization project in many respects was/is viewed as a means to ‘catch up with the West’ (Watson, 2013), which is consistent with the rest of the global South where urban planning and development is associated with overcoming a country’s backwardness (Caldeira and Holston, 2005). What this suggests is that official city-making practices must not be seen merely as a means of capital accumulation but also as nation-building projects.

Another factor worth considering in terms of making sense of recent official city-making agendas in Africa is informality. Across the continent, informality has become a defining feature of urbanism, especially since the introduction of the IMF/World Bank’s economic reform programs in the early 1980s (Riddell, 1997; Simone, 2005). Notwithstanding the fact that a significant portion of it is driven by survival imperatives, this economic practice has generated tremendous entrepreneurialism and individual initiative on the part of ordinary people.

Yet, for the most part, city officials have shown tremendous lack of tolerance for groups and individuals engaged in this economy (Kamete, 2012). This runs contrary to the neoliberal principles that celebrate individual autonomy and self-dependence. The explanation for this intolerance therefore has to be sought in a broader context of urban development that has

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service provision and productivity (Robinson, 2002: 531). Throughout this dissertation, I will, as some scholars have (see Caldeira and Holston, 2005), equate developmentalism with modernization.

7Informality is generically defined as all activities that take place in small scale, unregulated and untaxed enterprises (Falco et. al, 2011), often within unauthorized locations.
historically been driven by modernist planning models. These models uphold ‘order’ and the functional differentiation of space; both of which informal actors appear to disregard. In many African cities, informal actors, dominated by traders and other small-scale producers, are notorious for their ‘illegal’ and inappropriate occupation and utilization of urban space. The drive to eliminate or at least suppress them has to be seen partly as a consequence of the desire to produce a ‘modern’ city and not merely due to a wish to generate local economic growth through global capital.

The third important mediating factors to consider in examining the neoliberal urban agendas in Africa are social and cultural locations, specifically ethnicity and gender. In many African cities, ethnicity and gender influence how spaces are produced and governed (Oberhauser, 2010; Adetula, 2005; Beall, 2002; Yeboah, 2000). With respect to gender, urban spaces in Africa are significantly differentiated, with men dominating formal spaces and women occupying the informal ones. This differentiation is more pronounced in the realm of government. This division suggests the need to pay attention to how city policies differentially shape the lives of both men and women. With respect to ethnicity, empirical evidence in the nature of conflicts and contestations in many African countries suggests a significant role of ethnic identity in shaping governance processes (Watts, 2004; Blanton, et al., 2001; Nnoli, 1998). Yet, studies on ethnicity-governance relationship remain at a broader scale of the nation state. In the current times where the major African cities such as Accra are becoming increasingly multi-ethnic, is it not likely that these conflicts and contestations could have significant influence on the nature of urban governance?
Taking all these place-specific factors into account, this dissertation explores the following specific questions with respect to Accra’s current presumably entrepreneurial city-development agenda:

1. How/why has urban entrepreneurialism been embraced in Accra and how does this approach influence the production and governance of the city?

2. How does this market-driven ambition to reproduce and globalize the city articulate with the long-standing nationalist adventure to ‘modernize’ the city?

3. In what ways and to what effects do these city-globalizing/modernizing practices intersect with the everyday livelihood engagements of the ordinary city dwellers, specifically hawkers, market women, and slum dwellers?

4. How do social locations, especially gender and ethnicity mediate the outcomes of the nexus between the state and ordinary city dwellers relative to the mission/ambition to modernize/globalize the city?

By these questions, this dissertation seeks to offer insight into the intersecting dynamics of power at work in the urban neoliberal policies embraced by Ghana and what that means for ordinary residents. It specifically employs three case studies to show not just the why of the increasing conflict between those attempting to survive (and thrive) and those desiring to formalize and globalize the city but also the how of attempts by dominant groups to shrink the space of the former.

The study contributes mainly to the evolving literature of globalization and urban neoliberalization both in terms of empirical detail and theoretical richness. It does so by demonstrating how geography and history matter in the urban translation of neoliberalism: what some analysts have termed “actually existing neoliberalism” (Peck et al., 2009, p. 50). The study does so even as it improves our understanding as to “who shapes the [African] city, in what image, by what means, and against what resistance” (Mabogunje, 1994, p. 22). While I direct my
research questions to Accra, the issues examined are relevant to the rest of urban Africa as well since most of these cities not only share similar histories but current trends of expanding neoliberalization as well.

1.1. Accra: the study area

Accra, the capital city of Ghana, is physically located on longitude 0 10’West and latitude 5 36’North (Figure 1.1) and covers an area of about 173sq km (AMA, n.d.). Accra Metropolis is located within the Greater Accra Region (GAR), one of the ten administrative regions in the country. The GAR is itself divided into ten lower-level administrative districts, namely Accra Metropolitan Area (AMA), Tema Metropolitan Area (TMA), Ledzokuku/Krowor Municipal, Ga East Municipal, Ga West Municipal, Ga South (Weija), Adenta Municipal, Ashaiman Municipal, Dangbe West, and Dangbe East. Until 2010, there were only five districts, namely Dangme West District, Dangme East District, Ga District, Tema District, and the AMA (Figure 1.2).
Administratively, Accra is defined as the Accra Metropolitan Area (AMA). This area has a total population of 1,848,614 (GSS, 2012). Functionally, however, the city covers a much broader area. Except Dangbe West and Dangbe East, Accra covers essentially all the areas mentioned. Together, these areas originally formed what was called the Greater Accra Metropolitan Area (GAMA). Including the daily influx, this broader region has an estimated population of about 4.5 million (Republic of Ghana, 2012), and forms the center of industrial and commercial activity of the country. The Area has an annual growth rate of 4.1 percent, compared with the national average of 3.2 percent. This makes the city the fastest growing settlement and largest urban agglomeration in Ghana.

Figure 1.1: Map of Ghana showing the location of Accra (source, AMA, 2011)
Administratively, the Accra Metropolitan Area is under the purview of the Accra Metropolitan Assembly (AMA). The Assembly was established with the passing of the local government Legislative Instrument (L.I) 1615 in which the Assembly’s functions were fully outlined and its spatial area of jurisdiction delineated.

![Map of Greater Accra Region](source GSS, 2002).

**Figure 1.2:** Map of Greater Accra Region (source GSS, 2002).

Historically, the city was founded by groups of Ga-speaking coastal communities (Freund, 2007; Grant and Yankson, 2003). Even though historians believe that Accra was already an active place even before the arrival of Europeans (Nuno-Amarteifio, 2011), it is generally agreed that it was European colonial intervention that progressively turned it into the dominant city that it is today. Perhaps the most important was the relocation of the colonial capital there from the town of Cape Coast in 1877 (Benneh et al., 1993; Grant and Yankson,
The presence of the colonial administrative apparatus there facilitated the concentration of key economic processes in the city (Benneh et al., 1993). For instance, the Accra port became the busiest on the Gold Coast by 1899, linking the increased economic activities of the country with a number of European metropolitan centers (Dickson, 1969; Grant and Yankson, 2003).

The city maintained its countrywide dominance even after independence. Its role as one of the growth poles of President Nkrumah’s modernization agenda strengthened its pre-eminence in the country (Songsore, 2003). The city currently has the most diversified economy in the country. Additionally, it has the strongest presence of corporate institutions including banks, telecommunications, hospitality, advertising, media, and large retail establishments, among several others. These corporate activities have been encouraged significantly by the IMF/World Bank’s liberalization programs of the 1980s and 1990s. Even so, the city still reels under its colonial past in which commerce was elevated above (manufacturing) industry (Grant, 2001; Berman, 2003). This partly explains why over 65 percent of the city’s population is employed in the informal economy (UN-Habitat, 2009), most operating mainly in survivalist modes.

Another colonial legacy is intra-city differentiation in Accra. As a colonial city, its physical space was divided between the ‘modern’ organized European zones, and ‘traditional’ unplanned Native Towns (Benneh et al., 1993; Grant, 2009; Nuno-Amarteifio, 2011): what Konadu-Agyemang (1998, p. 70) describes as “a city within a city”. This spatial polarization has become more entrenched in recent times (see Owusu and Agyei-Mensah, 2010). The city currently shows well-planned high class neighborhoods and several unplanned low-income

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8The colonial policy deliberately deprived colonies of manufacturing industry so that the colonies did not challenge/compete with the metropoles (Drakakis-Smith, 2000). So despite favorable conditions for manufacturing, Accra was deprived of developing a strong manufacturing base. This has remained the case to date, despite several attempts to change the situation since independence.
zones, many of them slums and squatter settlements. These polarities present a key governance challenge to the modernization regimes of local or city government.

1.2. Chapter outlines

The dissertation has a total of nine chapters, grouped into two parts. The first part discusses the ambition of the local state to transform and more intensely connect Accra with the global economy and the broader national development context within which that ambition can be located and understood. The second part presents three case studies that highlight how this ambition by a top-down modernizing regime intersects and conflicts with realities on the ground, specifically the endeavors of ordinary people to survive and thrive within the city. In a more holistic sense, the dissertation is structured as follows.

Chapter 2 lays out the literature and conceptual foundation upon which the dissertation draws and intends to advance. The dissertation engages theoretical debates around the changing nature of neoliberal globalization. More specifically, it is driven by discussions around urban neoliberalization that attempt to make sense of the recent restructurings of the global economy and the role of, and impact on, cities across the world. These discussions emphasize the increased importance of markets and private actors in governance and management of cities. Despite being less attentive to African cities, these debates have raised relevant issues that lie at the core of the changing governance orientation in many of these cities, including the growing ambition of cities such as Accra to become more economically liberal and strategically position themselves as vital places for global capital.
There is much more to the current changes taking place in African cities than the urban neoliberalization literature can singularly capture. Several leading scholars of this literature have themselves drawn attention to the need to take local particularities seriously in interpreting how neoliberalism manifests in different places. In many African cities, the changes currently taking place are partly rooted in the complex history of European colonialism and the ever strong cultural factors that shape individual and group perceptions about place. These particularities of African urban dynamics are some of the issues explored in the critical development literature.

As a complement, this dissertation draws on this critical development literature to highlight some of the key factors that mediate how neoliberal policies are adopted and operationalized in African cities. These factors are the postcolonial project of developmentalism that became synonymous with western-style modernization of African cities; the enormous presence of informality in many of these cities that, for the most part, conflicts with the modernization models of the state; and cultural factors, including ethnicity and gender, that challenge the liberalizing drive of official urban development processes and agendas.

In a less elaborate manner, I discuss a third body of scholarship that explains why and how cities that seek to become ‘global’ in terms of economic influence strive to suppress actors and practices deemed incompatible with that vision. This scholarship revolves around two different, yet intersecting, concepts: revanchism and governmentality. The enormity of informality in African cities, as stated earlier, means that any modernizing regime that seeks to restructure urban spaces purely in accordance with large, corporate vision must come up against the resistance of the majority of urban residents whose modes of operation run contrary to that vision. The revanchism concept, on the one hand, highlights the punitive technologies of control
by the state to discipline the marginal groups in the city. The governmentality concept, on the other hand, reveals other, less direct ways that the state often seeks to make citizens more responsible and amenable to control. The reference to multiple theories in this dissertation highlights the multifaceted nature of the topic under investigation and adheres to the growing recognition that urban issues are too complex to be understood within a single theoretical framework (Bridge and Watson, 2000).

Chapter 3 discusses the specific methods and analytical framework employed in this dissertation. Generally, the dissertation employs a mixed-method approach, drawing on both qualitative and quantitative methods. However, there is greater emphasis on the former since the core aim of the study is to get to the depth, rather than breadth, of the relationship between the entrepreneurial city-making agenda of the state and the informal economic practices of the urban majority. This relationship is a complex one that takes multiple forms, including subtle and not-so-subtle negotiations among the actors involved to assert control over the urban space. To unravel such a complex relationship, qualitative analyses are invaluable, and consequently are emphasized in this chapter.

Chapter 4 provides an overview of the national historical context in which the governance and place-making processes in Accra can be understood. Even though this historical account spans the entire period since independence in 1957, emphasis is placed on the period post 1983 when Ghana began its experimentation with market economy. This neoliberal era has been characterized by at least two important and relevant processes. The first is the increased exposure of the country to global economic forces, which has facilitated relative macroeconomic growth but worsened material inequalities in the country. The second relates to the adoption of
the decentralized system of governance that has sought to devolve power from the national to local entities. Both the neoliberalization and decentralization processes have had a unique impact on Accra as the national capital. While the latter has made the city government relatively more active as an agent of urban development in its own right, the former has played a powerful role in shaping the approach by which that development project is pursued.

Chapter 5 traces the evolution of urban development discourses with respect to Accra. These discourses seek to establish that Accra’s future can be guaranteed only if the city is cast within the broader competitive global economy instead of limited to the narrow domestic sphere. In many respects, this discursive shift is the local manifestation of the long-term effect of the neoliberalization of the Ghanaian state that was spearheaded by the IMF and the World Bank in the early 1980s. The chapter further examines how this imaginary is shaping the nature and outlook of the local government and its spatial practices in the city. Here, there is attention to the specific triggers that propel the city government to resort to the entrepreneurial approach and the challenges that arise thereof.

Chapters 6, 7, and 8 consist of three empirical cases that highlight what it means to modernize a predominantly informal city. Specifically, they show how the attempts to ‘modernize’ Accra intersect, and often conflict, with the social and economic interests of the ordinary residents whose lives and livelihoods are concentrated in the informal economy. The argument that I seek to advance in these chapters is that the entrepreneurial urban development approach that is increasingly embraced by city officials in Accra (deliberately or not) has necessarily meant that certain groups of urban residents become a threat mainly because of the ‘disorderly’ ways that they appropriate and use urban space. What binds these cases together, in
other words, is the fundamental idea that the competition among cities in the global marketplace to attract resources poses governance challenge to local authorities (Madanipour et al., 2001). Part of this challenge is how to ‘clean up’ city streets and spaces by removing the ‘undesirables’, those with proclivity to undermine the positive outlook of the city (Mitchell, 2003; Merry, 2001; Bremner 2000). My main aim in these cases is to explore the multiple, even if incoherent, alliances, architectural forms and institutional practices through which the entrepreneurial city is being tightly ‘disciplined’ so that, as MacLeod (2002) puts it “the enhancement of a city’s image is not compromised by the visible presence of those very marginalized groups” (p. 603).

Chapter 6 specifically deals with the case of street hawkers (popularly called Aba eh) who more than any of the urban economic groups are believed to compromise the ‘modernizing’ image of Accra. They have come under more intense suppression mainly because of their intense physical mobility and apparent ubiquity within the city. These characteristics seem to render the city disorderly and by implication unappealing to global investors and tourists. My main aim in this discussion is to uncover the specific technologies and techniques of control employed by the state to limit the presence of the street hawkers, especially in sites that are viewed to symbolize the modernizing image of the city. But unlike many other similar studies, I go beyond the punitive/disciplinary repertoire of control to explore other tacit, indirect but equally penetrating techniques of instilling spatial order (e.g. barbed wirings and fence offs). Although in a limited way, the chapter also discusses the agency of street hawkers, specifically in terms of how they resist attempts to render them invisible in the city of Accra.

Chapter 7 looks at urban exclusion from the specific perspective of gender. Here, I draw on the case of market women to examine how the current development trajectory of Accra is
shaping the urban experience of women. The chapter shows that market places, where women historically showcased their economic power and entrepreneurialism, have come to be regarded as an obstacle to the city’s globalizing ambitions. Most of such markets emerged spontaneously in response to the unwillingness on the part of the state to supply well-developed and adequate markets. No longer are these spaces merely neglected by the state, they are being actively shrunken in order to make way for ‘modern’ developments, such as ‘ultra-modern’ shopping malls. The chapter focuses on the case of the Novotel Park Market that became a centre of intense conflict and contestation between some groups of market women and the local state. The market began as a space invasion by a group of hawkers. After almost a decade of existence, the market with a capacity of nearly 4000 traders, mostly women, was razed to the ground in 2010. Even though some of the traders have been relocated to another market, they still struggle after three years to find their economic balance, not least because the new market is comparatively more remote. The relocation, as I will show, has had serious impact on the women and their families.

**Chapter 8** is the last of the three cases to deal with some of the obstacles to the ambition of the local state to modernize Accra. The chapter mainly addresses how both ethnic politics by selected groups and land encroachment processes by ordinary people intersect with the official city transformation agenda of Accra. The chapter reveals that Accra is currently being shaped by growing tensions between globalizing and localizing forces that are operating simultaneously. On the one hand, the state is striving to open up the city to the already expanding global corporate interests. And on the other hand, ethnic-based groups are determined to stamp local (ethnic) identity and control on the city. This tension manifests itself through the eviction
case of the Old Fadama slum. How this tension plays out is the principle concern of this chapter. The reason for doing three case studies is to point out the pervasiveness of the exclusions generated by the modernization program. Additionally, it is meant to reveal the intersectional nature of these forms of exclusion in the sense that certain groups by virtue of gender, housing tenure and occupation experience overlapping forms of exclusion and punishment. In theoretical terms, however, the case studies offer insights into the messiness of actually existing neoliberalism in Africa. Chapter 9 summarizes the key findings and offer a conclusion in light of the various theoretical debates that guided the study.
Chapter 2
Theoretical and conceptual framework of the study

2.0. Introduction

The urban effects of neoliberal globalization have become an important area of geographical enquiry in recent times. Particularly, the changing relationship between state and city and its impact on urban economic governance and spatial restructuring have received much attention. The general understanding is that urban, rather than national, governments have over this period become the driving forces of urban change and that cities for the most part are governed according to the principles of the market. This includes emphasis on economic growth rather than distribution and private sector rather than state-led solutions to urban development challenges. This situation is generally described as urban neoliberalism or urban entrepreneurialism.

This chapter examines these theoretical debates and assesses their relevance for understanding current urban changes taking place in Africa, a region largely ignored in these debates. I argue that although these debates are relevant to African cities, they are inadequate because they do not take into account the historical and socio-cultural specificities of these cities. I argue in this chapter, therefore, that there is a need to draw on postcolonial development scholarship in order to make sense of how neoliberalism shapes the experiences of these cities in their specific contexts.

Because I also aim to understand how local states in Africa pursue their city-modernization ambitions in the face of widespread informality, I further discuss two complementary concepts – governmentality and revanchism. Employed together, these concepts
can help shed light on how local states exercise power to enforce urban order by forcing informal actors to either conform to the ‘modern’ standards or ‘get lost’. I adopt a multiple-theory approach in this dissertation because cities are now “sites of complex global/local interconnections producing a multiplicity of social, cultural, political, and economic spaces and forms” (Bridge and Watson, 2000, p. 1).

2.1. Globalization, Neoliberalism and the City

Many theorists of globalization concur that we currently live in a new, universally capitalist economy which is characterized by strategic activities such as financial markets, international trade of goods and services, advanced business services, multinational production, and highly skilled specialty labour. What is distinct about this economy is the capacity of these activities to work as a unit on a planetary/global scale in real/chosen time (Castells 1996, 1997, 1998, and 2000). Advancements in information and communication technologies are likewise driving this global economic change (Castells, ibid) and consequently, expanding MNCs and TNCs’ capacities to rapidly switch capital investments between countries and regions (Hall and Hubbard, 1996; Lash and Urry, 1994).

At least two important effects of this rapidly changing global economy have been identified. One is increased competition among countries and regions to serve as command and control centers of the global capital (Castells and Hall, 1994); and the other, a rescaling of governance processes driven by the struggle to determine who controls the flow and function of that capital (Brenner, 1999, 2004). The competition is generated largely by changes in the global economy defined by dual processes of spatial flows (of money, capital, goods, credit and migrant
labor) and spatial fixities (attempts at embedding capitalist production in particular locations) (Harvey, 1989b).

In terms of governance, many geographers have observed that the capacity of capitalist production to function at a planetary scale has fundamentally reconfigured space and scale. Meaning, under these globalization processes, the relative positions and significance of nation state, region, city and neighborhood within the socioeconomic and political space of the world are undergoing complex forms of rescaling (see Leitner and Sheppard, 1999; Brenner, 1999 and 2004; Swyngedouw et. al, 2005; Jessop, 2004; MacLeod and Goodwin, 1999). This rescaling is characterized most importantly by the devolution of national-state power upwards to supra-national institutions and downwards to sub-national governing bodies (Brenner, 1999; Jessop, 2004; Cox, 1998).

The downward rescaling is particularly important in the context of this dissertation since much of it relates to the role of cities and city governments. The assertion is that in this ever more competitive global economy, cities rather than nation-states have become the focal point of economic and social governance (Madanipour et al, 2001; Sheppard, 1995). Unlike national governments that increasingly lack the capacity to act upon the functional processes that shape their economies and societies:

“…cities are more flexible in adapting to the changing conditions of markets, technology and culture. True, they have less power than national governments, but they have a greater response capacity to generate targeted development projects, negotiate with multinational firms, foster the growth of small and medium endogenous firms, and create conditions that will attract the new sources of wealth, power, and prestige” (Castells and Hall, 1994, p. 7).

This explains why city governments now shoulder more responsibilities for local economic growth and prosperity (Borja et al., 2003; Leitner, 1990). Thus, whereas cities have traditionally
served as administrative and/or economic centers within the national sphere, they are now increasingly located in a deterritorialised network of flows, exchanges and concentrations (Clark, 1996, p. 9).

Yet governance rescaling, even though a universal process, has some geographical particularities. Unlike in the global North where the process appears organic, in the South and particularly in Africa, the rise of sub-national entities as important governance actors was actively procured. In many African countries such as Ghana, the downward rescaling of the national state was encouraged, if not imposed, by the World Bank and the IMF through the programs of governance decentralization as part of broader neoliberalization projects (Miraftab, 2004, 2007; Mohan, 1996). Regardless of who triggered it and by what means, however, decentralization has led to the rise of certain entities as agents of local development, especially at the city level. In Accra, for example, the AMA has become an important entity, extending its role of management of basic city services to include projects meant to facilitate local economic growth. As my empirical chapters will show, this task includes a mission to compete at the global scale for capital.

2.1.1. Capital, neoliberalism and the city

One of the most fundamental features of the currently competitive city-dominated global economy is neoliberalism. Neoliberal ideologies, it is widely argued, now drive the responses of governments to the fast changing and ever more competitive global economy (Harvey, 2007; MacLeod, 2002; Hackworth and Moriah, 2006). As an ideology, neoliberalism revives classical liberal ideas that situate individual autonomy at the center of social organization; posits the
market as the most efficient and normatively ideal way to allocate goods and solve social problems; and casts the state almost entirely as a potential impediment to both individual autonomy and market efficiency (Hackworth, 2005; Harrison, 2010; Harvey, 2005). Neoliberalism, as Harvey (2007a, p. 22) defines it, is:

“a theory of political economic practices proposing that human well-being can best be advanced by the maximization of entrepreneurial freedoms within an institutional framework characterized by private property rights, individual liberty, unencumbered markets, and free trade.”

In short, neoliberalism is generally employed to characterize the post-1980s resurgence of market-based institutional shifts and policy realignments across the world economy (Brenner and Theodore, 2005, p. 101-102).

In recent times, the term urban neoliberalism or neoliberal urbanism (see Kern and Mullings, 2013; Jones and Popke, 2010; Wilson, 2004) has been widely used to refer to the widespread acceptance of neoliberalism by urban governments as “the central guiding principle of economic thought and management” (Harvey, 2005, p. 3). This coupling of neoliberalism and urbanism is informed largely by the observation that cities have been the prime theatres where neoliberalism has found most expression, particularly since the 1990s (Harvey, 2007b; Brenner and Theodore, 2005). Neoliberalism has become a framework that powerfully structures the parameters for the governance of contemporary urban development around a market-dominated governance regime (Harvey, 2007; Brenner and Theodore, 2005; Hackworth, 2005).

Over the past few decades, urban entrepreneurialism has become a dominant dimension of the neoliberalism debate. Much of this specific debate is linked to Harvey’s (1989) work that argued that urban governance has shifted from managerialism to entrepreneurialism. Urban entrepreneurialism is used to refer to the promotion of local economic development by urban
governments in alliance with private capital and unions (Harvey, 1989; Johnston, 2000; Hall and Hubbard, 1996, 1998). The assertion is that prior to the economic crisis of the 1970s and 1980s, urban governments were typically restricted to managerial roles and functions within the welfare state. But since then, they have become key actors in local economic development, often impelled to adopt “more initiatory and … entrepreneurial … forms of action” (Harvey, 1989, p. 4). This downscaling of economic governance to the city level is itself viewed as a response to a broader restructuring of the global economy, characterized by shifts from industrial to service economies, spatial concentration of economic activities, increased financialization of the global economy, and drives toward flexible forms of accumulation (Scott, 2008; Castells and Hall, 1994).

Besides the restructuring of the global economy, the rise of urban entrepreneurialism has been facilitated by a powerful discourse. This discourse states that urban growth can best, if not only, be secured by enhancing the global competitiveness of the city (Hubbard and Hall, 1998; Sager, 2011; Parnreiter, 2011; Carmona et al., 2009; Scott, 2008). Proponents of this approach (both academics and policy ‘experts’) claim that the ability to remain at the top among cities or move up is dependent on the cities’ capacities and strategies for acquiring complex, strategic activities and/or promoting innovative production (Kratke, 1995; cited in Jessop, 1998).

In line with its neoliberal underpinnings, the entrepreneurial approach almost always promotes a growth-first approach to urban management (Sager, 2011). Furthermore, it emphasizes a shift from government/publicly planned to market-oriented/private strategies (Sager, 2011; Harvey, 2006; Hackworth and Moriah, 2006; MacLeod and Goodwin, 1999). These market-led policies and practices are often couched in the elevated discourse of “best
practice” (Siemiatycki, 2005) and economic growth that benefits all, even though dominated by more powerful business interests (Harvey, 2007, 1989a; Brenner and Theodore, 2005; Purcell, 2002).

Closely associated with this market-led approach to urban governance is what is referred to as New Public Management (NPM). NPM is public sector organizational change founded on instruments of disaggregation, competition, and incentivization (Dunleavy, et al., 2006; Larbi, 1999; Hood, 1995). This processes involves instilling in the public sector the outlook and techniques of private-sector management, requiring local officials to be enterprising, risk-taking, inventive, and profit motivated (Sager, 2011). The NPM also encourages PPPs not only as means for governments to raise capital and deliver large infrastructure projects but also as an effective tool to redress issues of political influence and poor transparency in economic governance (Siemiatycki, 2005 2006; Miraftab, 2004). In short, urban neoliberalism currently rests upon a set of powerful discourses and practices that seek to transform “the dominant political imaginaries on which basis people understand the limits and possibilities of the urban experience” (Brenner and Theodore, 2005, p. 106).

Another relevant facet of the neoliberalization process concerns urban spatial change (Jones and Popke, 2010, p. 115). Urban entrepreneurialism has been intimately linked with strong desires and efforts by urban governments to transform the physical image and function of their cities (Crossa, 2009; Lovering, 2007; MacLeod, 2002). Mostly meant to advertize cities as competitive sites of economic and social activities, these spatial interventions often take the form of flagship or mega-urban projects and monumental urban designs, malls, sport stadiums, convention centers and cultural space, all aimed at attracting consumers (Raco and Henderson,
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2009; Carmona et al., 2009; Ford, 2008; Smith, 2008; Jacobs, 2004; Swyngedouw et al, 2002; Boyle, 1999; Knox, 1997; Loftman and Nevin, 1995; Hubbard, 1995).

Other projects include out-of-town retail parks and high-rise up-market residential blocks; waterfront developments and walkways; high-tech transportatio nodes; and gentrified inner city neighbourhoods (Lovering, 2007, p. 344). The need to attract consumers as well as investors drives the desire and commitment to enhance the city’s image (Harvey, 1989a). By such strategies, cities become products to be promoted, marketed and sold (Philo and Kearns, 1993). One distinct feature of these projects is that they are often carried out under PPP arrangements, even though they mostly tend to benefit private investors more than the public (Harvey, 2006, 2007; Siemiatycki, 2006; Brenner and Theodore, 2005). This explains why Lovering (2009, p. 4) describes neoliberal urban planning as one of “providing private interests with public resources.”

The last, but certainly not the least, outcome of urban entrepreneurialism is the intensifying polarization of urban space and society and the constant and consistent effort to render certain groups and individuals invisible in cities. These include homeless people, errant youth, and prostitutes; those that Beall (2002) describes as being superfluous to the requirements of the global economy and the role of cities within it (see also Slater, 2009; Crossa, 2009; Uitermark and Duyvendak, 2008; Whitehead and More, 2007; Swanson, 2007; Mitchell, 2003; Smith, 2002; MacLeod, 2002).
2.1.2 The neoliberal experience of African cities

To a great extent, urban neoliberalism debates have dealt with cities in the global North more than those in the global South (Crossa, 2009; Swanson, 2007). In particular, African cities have been rendered structurally irrelevant (or off the map) (Robinson, 2006, 2002). Yet, these cities have over the last three decades experienced intense globalization and neoliberalization, driven by external as much as internal forces and actors (Grant, 2009; McDonald, 2008; Freund, 2007; Falola and Salam, 2004; Simone, 2004a, 2005; Mbembe and Nuttall 2004; Yeboah, 2000, 2003; Riddell, 1997; Simon, 1992). As Bayat (2000a, p. 534) generally asserts, “the economics of globalization, comprised of a global market ‘discipline’, flexible accumulation and ‘financial deepening’, has had a profound impact on the post-colonial societies.”

Clearly outstanding in the case of Africa and the global South in general is the role of international development agencies and IFIs, mainly the World Bank and the IMF (Ferguson, 2006; Riddell, 1992, 1997; Mkandawire and Soludo, 1998; Boafo-Arthur, 2007). The direct role of these institutions in shaping the neoliberal experience of the region began in the 1980s when they used the indebtedness of these countries as a weapon to coerce them to “privatize everything, open up to foreign investment, foreign trade, [observe] no barriers to repatriation of private property, [and] have an export led growth model” (Harvey, 2007, p. 5-6). Since then, neoliberalism has somehow taken on a life of its own, with the national development approach of most of the countries revolving around import liberalization, devaluation, reductions in public expenditure, and the contraction and privatization of the public sector (Mkandawire, 2001; Mensah, 2006).
As in the global North, the process of neoliberalization in Africa has had a distinct urban impact, socially, economically, and politically. The IMF/World Bank-sponsored market reforms have reconfigured time and space, fundamentally reshaping the day-to-day life in the cities (Oberhauser and Yeboah, 2011; Oberhauser, 2010; Simone and Abdelghani, 2005; Pryke, 1999; Simon et al, 1995; Riddell, 1997). In many countries on the continent, the hitherto somewhat socialist states have increasingly retreated from public provision and collective welfare. Public sector firms have been rationalized, private enterprises increased, and urban employment opportunities have diminished due to the shrinking of the traditional labor-intensive public sector (Bayat, 2000a, 2012). These interventions have made life more difficult for most people, driving a significant number of residents into a survivalist mode of existence mostly within the informal sector (ibid; Riddell, 1997).

In the area of governance, the market-driven reforms have fundamentally reshaped what is considered the ideal role of governments at both national and municipal levels (Pryke, 1999). The political goal of such reforms was to reduce governments to mere enablers and facilitators of the development of market-based solutions (ibid). Consequently, private-sector financing of urbanization processes, especially in the area of infrastructure provision and service delivery—mainly urban transport, waste disposal, power supply, airport managements, and water supply—has become central. The corollary is that governments have become increasingly attentive to external credit ratings and assessments of their macroeconomic performance (Pryke, 1999; Ferreira and Thatami, 1996).
One of the latest developments in the growing privatization of the city-making process in Africa is the explosive growth of foreign architectural and private, property development firms.\(^9\) These firms have emerged all over the continent with fantastic and often unrealistic proposals to transform African cities into the likes of Dubai, Singapore, and Shanghai (Watson, 2013). These incursions, Watson (2013) argues, are driven by the potential for profit-making that modest economic growth and rising urban middle class has promised.

The role of local states in these urban development processes is particularly important. Under the system of decentralization, local governments are encouraged to serve as harbingers and promoters of entrepreneurial activity within communities. Thus, in cities like Accra, the city government has increasingly assumed the role of entrepreneur and has taken over the overhaul of the social and physical landscapes of the city. The entrepreneurial practices of the local state are increasingly informed by the generic neoliberal urban policies such as city branding and marketing. These policies are becoming central even when the local environment appears ill-suited for them.

While African cities can be understood within an urban neoliberal framework, the current literature, with its excessive focus on cities in the global North, does not fully account for the factors and actors shaping African urban experiences. In particular, the mainstream literature does not account for the role that history and culture play in shaping how city building-in Africa actually occurs.

\(^9\) They include Oz Architecture Team of the United States (for Kigali, Rwanda), Eko Atlantic of Beirut (for Lagos, Nigeria), La Cité du Fleuve-Hawkwood Properties, US (for Kinshasa, Democratic Republic of Congo), Promontorio, Portugal (for Maputo, Mozambique), and Dodi Moss S.I.r, Italy (for Dar es Salaam, Tanzania) (Watson, 2013).
2.2. ‘Actually-existing neoliberalism’ in Africa: capital, nation, and culture.

The neoliberalism framework, even though celebrated for its capacity to shed light on contemporary urban dynamics, has been critiqued for assuming all-encompassing and hegemonic dimensions (see Parnell and Robinson, 2012; Castree, 2006; Larner, 20005). Scholars like Neil Brenner and Nik Theodore (2002, p. 368-72) have called for attention to “…the diverse pathways through which neoliberal political agendas have been imposed upon and reproduced within cities…” They call this “actually existing neoliberalism,” which means emphasis on how the inherited institutional and spatial landscapes influence the neoliberal projects of restructuring (Peck et al., 2009, p. 50). Others have been far more critical and have argued

“that the conceptual framework of neoliberalism is useful for making sense of contemporary urban restructuring, but only if we recognise that the resulting city can be mapped along axes other than those fixated on capital and class” (Hubbard, 2004, p. 665 emphasis added).

Nowhere is this observation more relevant than in African cities, a point that Parnell and Robinson (2012) make when they call for the conceptual framework to be “provincialized” in order to create intellectual space for alternative ideas that may be more relevant to cities in the global South. In other words, they call for a more urgent reflection on the variety of processes other than neoliberalization that are shaping specifically African, cities. They, among other suggestions, espouse the “importance of theorizing the agency of the local state as potentially developmental, even progressive” (ibid, p. 594). This perspective contrasts that of the mainstream neoliberalism scholars who perceive the local state mainly as facilitator of resource redistribution to the benefit of wealthy individuals and corporations.

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2.2.1. Developmentalism and urban entrepreneurialism

The tendency within neoliberal frameworks to view developmental interventions in the city as purely economic, growth and profit-driven is too simplistic for African urban contexts. Such interpretations do not account for the historical roots of such interventions, many of which had their genesis in the earlier nationalist project of nation building. In the dominant accounts of urban neoliberalization, including those that reference African cities, governments are posited as having been reduced to mere enablers and facilitators of market and private-sector driven urban development (Pryke, 1999). Yet in places like Accra, the state, both national and local, is directly engaged not just in partnership with the private sector but also singularly as an agent of transformation. How is this to be explained?

The explanation is that despite the consistent effort by global development institutions to limit their roles, African states never abandoned the post-independence project of nation building (Mkandawire, 2010). In post-independence Africa, the new nations “were understood to be in the process of construction—stepping out, as it were, for the first time onto the stage of world history” (Ferguson, 2006, p. 94). The activist state naturally became the protagonist in the optimistic narrative of “national development” (ibid), construed for the most part as ‘catching up with the west’ (Ake, 1996). This national project in many cases was intimately tied with urban development.

In the context of urban development, plans and planning practices were modeled mostly after western modernist models (Watson, 2013; Kamete and Lindell, 2010; Harrison 2006; Swilling et al., 2002). It is ironic that at a time when nationalist governments preached for the indigenization and ‘Africanization’ of cities (Myers, 2011; Grant and Yankson, 2003; Hess,
that they relied upon modernist models that sought to create homogenous, modernized spaces that did away with the look and feel of the old world. Thus as Teresa Caldeira and James Holston observe, the adoption of these modernist models aimed “to create a radically new urban development as a means to overcome the nation’s backwardness, as a means to bring the nation, through leaps in history, into the vanguard of modernity” (Caldeira and Holston, 2005, p. 395; emphasis added). Governments embraced “a concept of total design” (Caldeira and Holston, 2005, p. 393), couched in centralized master plans and conceived as an instrument of social change and economic development. Consequently, the modernist model became indistinguishable from “developmentalism” itself (ibid, p. 395).

The key lessons in the discussions in this section are that urban development interventions in Africa are a) as much about elevating the image of the nation state as they are about facilitating economic growth, and b) as much a reflection of national political ambitions and politics as they are a reflection of local ones. Herein lies the tension and contradiction between neoliberalism and developmentalism. While the motivation for neoliberalism comes from a commitment to economism and a minimal, indirect role for the state; developmentalism is driven by nationalism and a need for the state to be in the thick of all affairs (see Ferguson, 2006, p. 94-97). Urban entrepreneurialism in Africa then ought to be understood in terms of the constant struggle by African states to balance these two contradictory impulses. The common element between the two, however, is the misplaced pursuit of the western modernist models as
the most ideal urban development framework (Harrison, 2006; Swilling et al, 2002; Watson, 2002a and b; Robinson, 2002; Thrnton, 1996; Parnell and Mabin, 1995).10

2.2.2. Informality and urban entrepreneurialism

The dominance of informal economies in African cities sets their urban experiences quite apart from that described by the central neoliberalism literature. A central principle of neoliberalism, and indeed one of the strongest bases upon which it is critiqued, is that the ultimate responsibility for well-being is placed on the shoulders of the individual. Thus as Wendy Larner has observed, neoliberal strategies of rule require not only firms to be entrepreneurial, enterprising and innovative, but also individuals who are encouraged: “to see themselves as individualized and active subjects responsible for enhancing their own well being.” (2000, p. 13). Without a doubt, many of those engaged in economic activities that take place in small scale, unregulated and often untaxed enterprises fit the profile of ‘neoliberal subjects’ as Larner describes. Since the introduction of the neoliberal reforms in the early 1980s, a significant number of people have found their way into informal economies largely as a contingency measure to survive the social cost of the adjustments policies (Bayat, 2000, 2012; Riddell, 1997). But ‘informality’ in most African cities is not entirely a neoliberal phenomenon. It has for several decades served as means through which ordinary Africans negotiate the spatial practices, politico-economic processes and social relations that entangle place, identity and power (Ndi, 2007; Abdoul, 2005; Diawara, 1998).

10The dominance of this model in Africa despite its proven lack of suitability can be linked to developmentalism, which as Dussel (1993, p. 67-68) says insists that the path of Europe's modern development must be followed unilaterally by every other culture. It promotes and justifies certain interventions (Western notion of modernity) and delegitimizes and excludes others, such as subaltern knowledge and experience (Crush, 1995, p. 5)
Whether a new or an old phenomenon, informality offers many urban Africans the opportunity to exercise their ingenuity and entrepreneurialism as economic and social actors (Ndi, 2007; Diawara, 1998; Robertson, 1974). It allows a significant number of urban citizens such as hawkers, market women, and slum dwellers to participate in the processes of city-making without which their socioeconomic conditions would have been debilitating (Simone, 2005, p. 1, 2004b; Bayat, 2000a; Gugler, 1996; Riddell, 1997). Just as neoliberal orthodoxy demands, informal actors have proved to be self-dependent, entrepreneurial, enterprising and innovative.

Despite the ingenuity and entrepreneurialism of these urbanites, their “enormous creative energies have been ignored, squandered, and left unused” (Simone, 2004a, p. 2; see also Diawara, 1998). In many African cities, not only are informal actors ignored, they are also suppressed and oppressed by state officials (Kamete, 2012; Obeng-Odoom, 2011, 2012). Particularly in neoliberalizing cities such as Accra, this hostile attitude has become more pronounced, even though city managers routinely adopt approaches that celebrate individual autonomy and entrepreneurhip. I believe that the reasons for this apparent contradiction, reside in the modernist model that underscores the developmentalist aspirations of postcolonial African states. For this model, as I earlier explained, requires the total and ordered design of the urban space in order to overcome what is perceived as backwardness in African societies. Hostility towards informal actors can therefore be explained as an attempt on the part of the state to rid the city of groups that render the city both disorderly and unpredictable: the very condition that “modernity works so hard to eliminate” (Popke and Ballard, 2004, p. 105). State hostility cannot therefore be simply explained by the dominant claim that these groups are superfluous to the global economy that the entrepreneurial cities strive so hard to command (see for instance
Crossa, 2009; Swanson, 2007; Beall, 2002; MacLeod, 2002, Smith, 2002) because these economic actors are certainly not. Rather, such hostility must be viewed also as a reflection of dominant perception on the part of state officials that informality is not modern enough. It is “dirty and unsightly, an aberration from the ideal of a modern city” (Hart, 1991, p. 70). As Swilling et al (2002, p. 307) aptly capture it:

“[p]ostcolonial relationships in African cities are fraught with tensions and disjunctions. On the one hand, there are the efforts of independent states to constitute modern cities in reference to prevailing forms of Western management, architecture, and urban production inspired inevitably by the great traditions of western modernity. On the other, are the efforts urban majorities, almost always disenfranchised and marginalized, make to constitute modern African cities and compensate for the massive inadequacies in the state’s ability to provide basic urban services.”

The gender dimension

In almost all major cities in Africa, the formal and informal economies are dominated respectively by males and females (see ILO, 2009). This makes the state’s hostility towards informal sector workers a particularly gendered issue but one that is largely invisible. The invisibility of the gender inequalities embedded in current city decongestion exercises, however, should be seen as indicative not only of the patriarchal proclivities of the African state, but also, of the general silence within dominant political economy approaches on the relationship between social constructions of gender and state and market-led capital accumulation strategies. This is a silence, Sahle (2008) asserts, that ultimately “limits their analytical power in the study of neoliberal economic restructuring in Africa” (p. 73).

The marginalization of women in mainstream analyses of urban neoliberalism can be partially attributed to the tendency of macroeconomic models to divorce productive from
reproductive work (Mullings, 2010; Acker, 2004; Nagar et al., 2002; Freeman, 2001). This separation has tended to mask the indispensability of the socially reproductive work to the smooth functioning of capitalist systems. The expansion of neoliberalism has only exacerbated the marginalization of social-reproductive responsibilities and withdrawal of state support in the name of individual responsibilization (Kern and Mullings, 2013; Mullings, 2010).

Even in the realm of ‘productive work,’ the informal economic spaces where women’s labor is mostly concentrated are often undervalued and ignored (Nagar et al., 2002; Acker, 2004) even though in Africa women’s economic activities in this sector have often been critical to the sustainability of the formal economy (Freeman, 2001; Razavi and Pearson, 2004; Pearson, 2000) and the economic progress of the cities overall (Chamlee-Wright, 2002; House-Midamba and Ekechi, 1995; Pellow, 1977). This contribution notwithstanding, it remains the case that increasingly entrepreneurial cities like Accra continue to govern in ways that reflect what Leslie Kern and Gerda Wekerle describe as “a masculinist and corporatist view of city life” (2008, p. 233).

But it is misleading to conclude that the marginalization of women and the economic spaces where they are disproportionately represented are wholly an outcome of the entrepreneurial models that state officials and policymakers have opted to pursue. Of equal explanatory value are the particularities of Ghana’s gender regimes and the ways that ‘appropriate’ roles for both men and women in economic and social life have been historically constructed.
2.2.3. *Ethnicity and urban entrepreneurialism*

Perhaps the least considered, yet important, driving force in shaping urban neoliberalization in Africa is ethnicity. Broadly speaking, several scholars have identified a relationship between the intensification of identity-based struggles and neoliberal globalization (see Watts, 2003, 2004; Held, 2004; Gupta and Ferguson 1997; Massey, 1995). In many parts of the world, local activism is often about distinguishing ‘the real local people’ from ‘aliens’ (Massey, 1995). Particularly in places where resource distribution is skewed in favor of certain groups, as is the case in many parts of Africa, such identity-based contestations can be more pronounced (Watts, 2003, 2004; Held, 2004).

In Africa, one of the most easily recognizable identity-based fault lines is ethnicity. Ethnic differentiations and inequalities have a long history on the continent but were worsened by colonialism which operated largely on a divide and rule basis (Gugler, 1996). The first generation post-independence governments worsened the situation by ignoring intra-group inequalities and tensions (Cheru, 2009). The deadly ethnic conflicts in places like Nigeria, Ivory Coast, Rwanda and Ghana bear testimony to the currency of the ethnic factor in Africa.

What is not entirely clear is how ethnicity shapes urban experiences. This is mainly because the issue has not attracted the needed academic attention. Yet the few analysts that have ventured into this domain have established the significance of ethnicity as a factor in the shaping of urban processes and experiences on the continent. The role of ethnicity is observed in many facets of urban life including urban politics (Adetula, 2005), spatial location of residents (Agyei-Mensah and Owusu, 2009), and urban exclusions (Yeboah, 2008).
In Ghana, ethnic distribution is significantly contiguous with geographical regions. Each of the nearly four dozen ethnic groups identifies with and claims ownership of particular places. Consequently, those places that have over the years become recipients of enormous migrants from other regions are becoming increasingly uncomfortable. Accra encapsulates this ethnic dynamic as the indigenous ethnic populations of the city have become increasingly agitated by what they perceive as marginalization of the groups by ‘alien’ ethnic groups, particularly the Akans. Thus, the struggle to determine who has the right to shape the future of the city is assuming significant ethnic colorations. The case of Accra therefore lends some credence to Parnell and Robinson’s (2012) critique of the neoliberalism literature for being overly parochial. This is because this literature has the “tendency to overlook the rapidly growing cities of the global South where traditional authority, religion, and informality are as central to legitimate urban narratives as the vacillations in modern urban capitalist public policy” (p. 595-6).

2.3. Revanchism and Governmentality in the (informal) African city

Whether informed by pure economic interest or nationalist concern, or the intersection of both, current city-making policies and practices in Africa, as elsewhere, are generating new, or at least intensifying old patterns of socio-spatial exclusion (Bayat and Biekart, 2009; Crossa, 2009; MacLeod, 2002; Beall, 2002; Bayat 2000). In many cities, residents who are perceived to be incompatible with the kind of city being produced are systematically being rendered invisible. As much as there is the need to know why, we also need to understand how these people are suppressed. Two closely related concepts—revanchism and governmentality—have been usefully
employed to reveal how officials strive to overcome threats posed by marginal groups against the urban order imagined by states.

**Revanchism in the informal African city**

The concept of revanchism as used in the neoliberal context can be credited to the work of Neil Smith who employed it in reference to the growing desire and effort by dominant classes to restructure the urban geography of New York City (see Smith, 1996, 1998). He describes a “revanchist city” as one in which the dominant classes demonstrate little tolerance for marginal groups, such as homeless people,11 manifested in their quests and strategies to “tame the wild city” and bring it under their control (see also Mitchell 1997; Mitchell and Heynen, 2009; Atkinson, 2003). Over the years, the concept has been widely used in other urban contexts as well, including the cities of Quito and Guayaquil, Ecuador (Swanson, 2007), Glasgow (MacLeod, 2002), Rotterdam (Uitermark and Duyvendak, 2008) and Mumbai (Whitehead and More, 2007). And like Smith, these studies have used the concept mainly in relation to urban entrepreneurialism and policies of “revitalization” or “renewal” that seek to revive city centers as places of investment and consumption.

Urban revanchism then constitutes an attempt by the dominant groups to banish those not part of that (city revival) vision to the urban periphery (Slater, 2009). MacLeod (2002) thus argues that there are “dialectical relations between urban entrepreneurialism, its escalating contradictions, and the growing compulsion to meet these with a selective appropriation of the revanchist political repertoire” (p. 603). This political repertoire entails a “range of architectural

11Other such groups are panhandlers, prostitutes, squeegee cleaners, squatters, graffiti artists, ‘reckless’ bicyclists, and ‘unruly’ youth. These groups are widely viewed by the state to constitute the most visible threat to urban order.
forms and institutional practices” that seek to ensure that the enhancement of a city’s image is not compromised by the visible presence of those very marginalized groups. The distinguishing feature of this form of urban socio-spatial control, therefore, is its *brutality*.

In many African cities, revanchist forms of control against informal actors such as hawkers, market women, and slum dwellers often take the form of constant harassment, beatings, and in some instances incarcerations (Kamete, 2012; Popke and Ballard, 2004). Yet, as penetrating as these punitive techniques are, ordinary residents often find ways to negotiate their way out. While at the same time, officials often devise new technologies to bring the ‘wild’ practices of these actors under its control. The use of these ‘novel’ technologies of control is a key issue in the governmentality literature.

**Governmentality and the technologies of space ordering in the informal city**

Foucault’s concept of governmentality, provides a useful framework for understanding the devices employed by states to achieve a ‘disciplined’ city (Kern, and Mullings, 2013; Kamete, 2012). The concept generally focuses on the rationalities and techniques used to shape and guide how groups and individuals conduct themselves (Raco, 2003; Huxley, 2008) Some geographers have used the governmentality framework to examine how individual conduct is regulated through the manipulation of space (Huxley, 2006, 2008; Herbert and Brown, 2006; Rose-Redwood, 2006; Voyce, 2003; Hannah, 2000). Sally Merry (2001), for example, argues that there has been a general shift from disciplinary mechanisms of social control—such as arrest and incarceration or rehabilitation—to regulation of space. Described as a ‘spatial governmentality’ she argues that the shift in governance is one that emphasizes the regulation of
space rather than people, and on populations as a whole rather than individuals. For Merry, neoliberal governmentality means more than a reliance on individual self-governance- it also includes mechanisms that regulate how individuals act within the urban space. Typical examples include the use of modern hi-tech surveillance systems (e.g. close-circuit television cameras [CCTV]), bylaws on the use of spaces or community watch brigades (Mitchell and Heynen, 2009). The main concern of such spatial mechanisms is how to regulate space in order to exclude offensive behavior (Merry, 2001; Perry 2000).

This quite indirect way of state control of its citizens is becoming a norm in terms of governance practices in African cities. Yet, the urban literature on the continent continues to dwell on punitive measures of state control of urban spaces such as violent evictions (see for instance, Kamete, 2012; Asiedu and Agyei-Mensah, 2008; Brown, 2006). I argue that we need to go beyond the punitive technologies of state control to explore the diverse instruments by which African states try to get individuals “to embody better ways of being” (Schutz, 2004, p. 15). Employed together, the revanchism and governmentality concepts can reveal how governments in Africa work to bring their cities under control.

2.4. Conceptual framework for the study

In Figure 2.1, I synthesize all the theoretical propositions discussed above into a conceptual framework to guide my empirical analysis of Accra’s modernization agenda and its social and spatial ramifications.
In this conceptual framework, I pose the project of city transformation in Africa as the outcome of the intersection between global/external and local/internal forces and processes. By forces and processes, I mean conditions that influence and shape the decision-making of state officials concerning how to shape the future of the city. I identify the global/external forces to be neoliberalism, neocolonialism, and developmentalism; and the local/internal forces to be nationalism, informality, culture, and state revanchism and/or governmentality.

As demonstrated in the conceptual diagram, neoliberalism is fundamental to the current governance changes that are taking place in African cities and is shaping African cities in two main ways. The first is through the influence wielded by the World Bank and the IMF over governance processes at the national scale. This influence is linked to the market reform programs that debt-ridden states were obliged to adopt in the 1980s/90s.
The second is linked specifically to the decentralization policies that accompanied these liberalization reforms. For it is here that local states, tasked with the responsibilities for local development, become entrepreneurs, encouraging and facilitating the spread of market-based solutions to city development challenges. In cities like Accra, the urban government now opens its doors to private-sector participation in city governance, adopting entrepreneurial practices such as city branding and beautification in order to create a favorable local environment for global business and tourism.

A third external factor shaping life in African cities are neo-colonial forces and processes that undergird developmental practices of the national states. The western ‘development partners’ have proved quite successful in entrenching among state officials in Africa the notion that western models of modernization and development are universal standards (Nabudere, 1997). The effect of this acceptance of the idea of universality of western models is the widespread perception that African cities lack the qualities of city-ness and thus ought to be reproduced in accordance with the western standards (Robinson, 2002, p 531). Why the pursuit of such models constitutes a form of neo-colonialism is because for the most part the outcome is more to the benefit of western countries than African countries. A classic example is the trade liberalization, advocated by western development agencies, that has further turned African cities into sites of consumption of western goods rather than creating ideal conditions for industrialization. Together, these three external factors—neoliberalism, neocolonialism, and developmentalism—have significantly shaped both the material and intellectual foundation on the basis of which African cities are produced and governed.
In a city such as Accra, internal factors, such as nationalism, informality, ethnic difference, and gender ideologies also influence how these external factors manifest locally. The intersection between the growth-driven entrepreneurial agenda and the pride-obsessed nationalist city modernization mission creates an environment where informality comes to be regarded as a practice that must be controlled or preferably, removed. However, the tenacity of actors engaged in this practice opens the city up for contestations and negotiations. The outcomes of these contestations and negotiations become what actually shape African cities. In summary, the conceptual framework that I employ recognizes the influence that flows of travelling external ideologies and materials play, but also power of internal structures to mediate and transform those flows. Since neoliberalism is considered the dominant factor, I concur that it ought to be viewed as “a contingent discourse and process … [that] is always in conversation with other discourses and processes” (Larner, 2005, p 12).
Chapter 3
Research Methodology

3.0. The approach

In this chapter, I discuss the overall methodology of this dissertation and the specific methods employed to meet the objectives of the study. The methodology adopted was a combination of both qualitative and quantitative approaches. Even so, there was more emphasis on qualitative methods, specifically in-depth interviews, participant observation, and analysis of documents. This is mainly because the overarching goal of the dissertation is to explore the project of urban development not just in terms of how it is conceptualized but also how it is experienced by different segments of the urban population.

Researchers have extolled the benefits of the qualitative approach. Briefly described, qualitative methods “are concerned with how the world is viewed, experienced and constructed by social actors. They provide access to the motives, aspirations and power relationships that account for how places, people and events are made and represented” (Johnston et al., 2000, p. 660). They are widely associated with unique advantages for exploring issues in unparalleled detail due to their emphasis on “richness, texture, and detail, rather than parsimony, refinement, and elegance” (Ortner, 1995:174). Furthermore, this method helps to “convey the inner life and texture of . . . diverse social enclaves” (Lowe and Short, 1990, p. 7).

This attention to diversity and detail is critical in making sense of cities generally, and African cities in particular, given the increasing complexity of the social, cultural, political, and economic interconnections that are emerging (Bridge and Watson, 2000; Cloke et al, 1992; Kitchin & Tate, 2000).
Despite being overwhelmingly qualitative, however, this dissertation also utilizes a significant amount of quantitative data, most of it sourced from Ghana’s Statistical Service. Quantitative data are “generally structured” and consist of “numbers or empirical facts that can easily be ‘quantified’ and analysed” (Kitchin and Tate, 2000, p. 40). I adopted this mixed-method approach not least because it is highly encouraged by geographers and other social science researchers on the basis that the results tend to be far more reliable, valid and convincing than those produced by each of the methods singularly (Silverman, 2011; Gerring, 2007; Golafshan, 2003; Patton, 2001; Cresswell, 1998; Yin, 1994). As Johnston et al (2000, p. 664) assert “research which combines different qualitative methods and exploits the complementarity of qualitative and quantitative findings looks poised to gain a new respectability within the discipline’ (see also Kumar, 1996, p. 12). This combination of multiple methods is called triangulation (Golafshan, 2003). Each of these methods, Berg (2001) affirms, offers a “different line of sight” directed towards the same point; and together they offer a researcher the opportunity to “obtain a more substantive picture” of the phenomenon under investigation (p. 4-5).

Still, some fundamental challenges typical of all social science research remained. The first challenge was representation. Given that the research was designed to obtain in-depth understanding of the issues pertaining to the agenda of city transformation, only a manageable number of participants could be interviewed. Consequently, findings that emerged from this research could not be confidently generalized to the wider population (Shaw, 1999). The trade-off here, however, is that the research was able to generate results that could lead to a substantive understanding of the issues at stake.
Perhaps a far more important issue is the problem of research bias. The challenge associated with personal involvement in research is a daunting one indeed. A key concern in this direction is: to what extent can a researcher be detached from the subject matter and avoid the dangers of being biased in favor of/against a particular viewpoint, to the extent that s/he is unable to fully assess the circumstances? Throughout my fieldwork, and even during the data analysis stage, this concern was at the forefront. There were at least two reasons for this.

The first was intrinsic to the data collection methods themselves. As mentioned, the key methods employed were interviews, participant observation, and document analysis. Each of these necessarily entailed some degree of selectivity not least because of the sheer volume of the potentially valuable information to be gathered. All the same, because the study had clearly identified objectives, mainly relevant data required to meet those objectives were gathered. Furthermore, as much as possible, each specific question of the study was answered with multiple data sets, both qualitative and quantitative. In any case, the use of qualitative method as the main approach allowed me to gather rich and detailed information on each of the main issues being examined. Detailed answers were derived from the groups by asking similar questions in different ways.

The second relates more to my positionality as a researcher. It is important to point out that my political views reflect a particular commitment and solidarities with the poorest. Thus, throughout the course of research, I maintained a commitment to listening and trying to rely on the experiences of the poor. This approach is also influenced by my commitment to the historical materialist method that underlies radical approaches to political economy as well as my reliance
on feminist methodologies. Furthermore, my identity as a Northerner\(^{12}\) had an added significance in terms of my positionality. This is because the slum dwellers of Old Fadama, one of the three groups included in this study, are about 80 percent Northerners. This positionality meant that a detached research was not prioritized, although attempts at a fair assessment and presentation of each group’s voice were strictly adhered to.

### 3.1. Research design and process

As mentioned, this research employed a triangulation design that involves simultaneous collection and analysis of both qualitative and quantitative data. As Creswell et al., (2003) point out, triangulation is a concurrent mixed methods research design that allows a researcher to gather and adequately assess and verify data collected on each issue under consideration. As typical of the triangulation approach, the specific methods employed in this dissertation were interviews, observations, and document analysis.

To facilitate the data collection exercise, the entire process was divided into four phases (see Figure 3.1). Each phase covered a month, from May to August 2011. **Phase 1** involved document analysis, both primary and secondary. **Phase 2** entailed in-depth interviews and discussions with state officials. In-depth interviews and Focus Group Discussion (FGD) with hawkers and market women occurred in **Phase 3**. The last Phase (**Phase 4**) dealt with in-depth interviews and two FGDs with Slum residents of Old Fadama. Personal observation and recording occurred throughout the four months.

\(^{12}\)Ghana is divided into 10 administrative regions. However, the combined effect of colonialism and uneven distribution of natural resources produced a North-South development gap in favor of the latter. The three out of the ten regions that form the northern part of the country presently possess a common identity not only on the basis of a common ethnic ancestry but also, and perhaps more importantly, on the basis of their lack of resources relative to the rest of the country. Thus the term Northerner is now commonly used, especially by people in the South, to refer to people with origin in any of the three regions in the North.
**Figure 3.1:** The four phases of the research design, the research tasks and locations

**Phase I: Documentation**

The activity in this phase targeted three main types of documents: official urban policy documents and statistical data; relevant media publications; and academic outputs, published or unpublished. Most of the documents, particularly the last two, were collected and reviewed at the Balm Library, the central library of the University of Ghana in Accra. The library has a large collection of both published and unpublished research and graduate theses, with a substantial
number that deal with urban issues in Ghana. Information concerning macroeconomic performance of Ghana was however mostly sourced from the Institute of Statistical Social and Economic Research (ISSER) library, also at the University of Ghana. About twenty documents were consulted (which are marked with asterisks in the bibliography).

With respect to the media publications, the review focused on two prominent and relatively reliable national dailies, the Daily Graphic and the Ghanaian Times. The review was narrowed to the period since 2000, mainly because the project of urban entrepreneurialism in its current manifestation became central during this period. The review of both kinds of documents was conducted with the specific objectives of the study in mind. All information related to the theme of urban development interventions in Ghana, particularly Accra, and their implication on various segments of the population was collected. The data was then examined closely to observe possible trends and patterns.

Urban-specific policy documents and statistical data were sourced directly from the relevant institutions including the AMA; Town and Country Planning (T&CP); the Housing, Tourism, and Local Government Ministries; and Ghana Statistical Service, all in Accra. Key documents obtained included the Strategic Plan for the Greater Accra Metropolitan Area (GAMA) and nearly all recent AMA publications and public presentations on Accra’s modernization agenda.

Both the academic and official planning and policy documents obtained provided the necessary information on the broader political economy of Ghana (past and present) and the situational context of Accra’s ‘modernization’ and transformation programs, as well as the link
between the two. This made it possible to reconstruct the historical transitions of discourses and practices concerning the role of Accra as a national capital and as a city in its own right.

I wish to reemphasize the importance of the popular/media sources. These sources proved more relevant than I initially thought. This is because they made it more plausible to observe the connection not only between mundane practices by city official, such as city beautification, and their global agenda for Accra but also between this agenda and the increasing tendency to exclude ordinary residents of the city. Besides, for poorly resourced bodies like the local Assemblies, keeping historical records on urban governance issues is the exception rather than the rule. Media sources rather often tend to provide better access to such information. Furthermore, some analysts have affirmed the usefulness of media sources mainly on the basis that official records are generally diluted and restricted, especially when it comes to issues about slums and the informal economy. Hence, accounts by local journalists can provide more valuable information (Obeng-Odoom, 2011; Yahya, 2006). It is important, however, to pay attention to the political leanings of such media sources as this often leads results to biased reportage.

In addition to those mentioned, I also sourced information from a diverse range of media outlets including the Ghana News Agency, the Ghanaian Chronicle; myjoyonline.com, peacefmonline.com, and ghanaweb.com. These were mostly accessed online. Other invaluable sources of information were Radio and FM stations in Accra, especially Joy FM, Peace FM, Citi FM, and Radio Gold. Live programs were personally monitored using a portable radio that I carried throughout the fieldwork period. These live programs have become the prime medium through which competing claims over urban space are advanced. Such competing claims often
involve city officials, informal actors, and ethnic-based groups, each wanting to promote and articulate its vision and opinion about the city.

3.2. **In-depth interviews: gaining entry, building rapport, and trust**

In this section, I discuss phases II, III, and IV of the fieldwork process. Although media sources, official documents, and personal observation and recording were vital, in-depth interviews were considered the core of this study. From the start, this study was intended to capture the multiple sides to Accra’s globalizing and modernizing project. A two-pronged approach that involved the state, on the one hand, and the ordinary, often marginalized residents, on the other hand, was adopted intentionally. This was in accordance with the main objective of the study to explore how place-making by the state articulates with claims-making by residents. But it was understood that those who constitute the ordinary/marginalized residents were themselves diverse. Thus, three different socioeconomic groups—i.e. hawkers, market women, and slum dwellers—were purposely selected for the study. The sampling technique adopted was purposive since the groups were not necessarily selected on the basis of being a representative subset of some larger population, but rather to serve a very specific need or purpose (Miles and Crush, 1993; Valentine, 1997).

Also, an accidental (or convenience) sampling technique was adopted in the selection of respondents such that in each of the subgroups, respondents were selected mainly on the basis of who was close at hand and willing to participate in the research. These two sampling techniques

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13In this study, I make a distinction between market traders and hawkers. The former is used to denote traders who operate mainly within established markets and have specific spots within these markets where they sell their wares. The latter are traders who have no specific places to ply their trade but instead move around from one location to another to sell their merchandize. The logic behind this distinction shall be made clear in subsequent chapters.
were adopted because the study did not seek to make generalizations about the total population from this sample (Eleanor et al. 1997). Although the selection of respondents was not random, the haphazard manner in which individuals were included ensured that the shared experience of at least each subgroup is fairly captured. The selection of city officials for this project, however, was quite different. They were included in the study based of their role as key policymakers and implementers of Accra’s development agenda. In this case, even though a couple of officials were interviewed based on convenience, the study mainly targeted those at the core of decision making (such as senior planning officers and executives).

Generally, potential respondents among all groups were identified and contacted during the documentation stage. In all, the research was principally informed by 66 individuals; all were ‘key’ informant interviews using semi-structured format. This composed 6 government officials/policy makers and 3 Metro Guards; 20 market women; 15 street hawkers; 20 residents of Old Fadama slum and 2 rights activists working on behalf of the slum. More than 100 one-on-one conversations also took place with individuals belonging to the four main groups, but these were neither based on any prepared interview instrument nor long enough to be considered in-depth interviews. I did so in most cases to crosscheck some of the details that I obtained from my key informants. In total therefore, over 160 respondents can be said to have participated in the research in one way or another.

**Phase II: In-depth interviews with Officials**

City officials were the first to be contacted. This was done mainly through the official channels. First, applications were submitted as officially required to the relevant departments to
request interviews with relevant officials. Due to slow response to my requests, I established direct contact with potential respondents in order to overcome excessive bureaucracy. The first officials that I was successful in contacting, also acted as “gatekeepers” and provided access to others within their network(s) in addition to providing their own insights. In this case, just as many researchers have recognized (Herod, 1999; Mullings, 1999), ‘gatekeepers’ proved useful indeed. As Herod (1999) points out, accessing elite informants can provide access to entire networks through direct and indirect means, and provides credibility to researchers when asked “how did you get my name” (p. 316). In all, six city administrators and technocrats and three Metro Guards were interviewed as key informants: the former at the AMA headquarters and T&CP, and the latter at the Holy Gardens at the Kwame Nkrumah Circle where they are stationed.

Interviews touched on a variety of themes. They revolved around the agenda to transform Accra (what they often refer to as city modernization), city spatial bylaws and their enforcement, decongestion exercises and their impact, etcetera. It must be pointed out that no direct questions about neoliberalism were posed. References to it were rather extracted indirectly from the responses provided by the officials, coupled with what was gathered from the written policies and the practices that officials pursue. Most of the interviews lasted about one and a half hours.

**Phase III: In-depth interviews with hawkers and market women**

Interviews in this phase involved hawkers and market women. The market women included in the study are those that were evicted from the Novotel Park Market and relocated at the Odawna Market near the Kwame Nkrumah Circle. Again, I relied on the ‘gatekeepers’. In the
case of the market women, ‘Market Queens’\textsuperscript{14} were of immense help. Not only did they permit but also assisted me in identifying potential respondents. Individuals within the group were approached and interviews scheduled with those readily available and willing to participate. But where very specific information was required, I relied on the Market Queens themselves since they presumably know more about the markets and their internal and external dynamics than anybody else. A total of twenty market women and fifteen street hawkers were included in the study.

All the interviews took place at the Kwame Nkrumah Circle and the Odawna Market where they conduct their economic activities. Staging the interviews within the working environment of the respondents was very useful as it allowed me to combine interviews with personal observations: an ideal way to capture the unspoken power dynamics at play between each group and the city officials and within each of the groups. To complement and also crosscheck the responses obtained from the in-depth interviews, a FGD with ten of the market women was also conducted.

Interviews revolved around similar themes as those discussed with city officials, however with different emphasis. That is, the interviews broadly touched on the views of hawkers and market women concerning efforts by the state to transform Accra. But more extensively, discussions related to how they appropriate and use urban space, the state-led decongestion exercises that largely target them and ways that they have been impacted by and respond to such exercises. Specifically with respect to the market women, factual details were obtained from

\textsuperscript{14} These are women internally chosen to steer the affairs of ‘traditional’ markets places. Each market in Accra has its own Market Queen who shoulders the responsibility of settling disputes among the traders and serving as the representative of the traders at all external engagements.
Market Queens concerning the events at Novotel Park Market. This included an account of how the park was originally converted into a market, how the market became structured and made to function, and the processes that led to their eviction from the market.

The interview process itself followed standard guidelines. I began each interview on a very informal note. Cautious about the potential impact of my positionality (explained in detail below), I assured the interviewees that they were not being judged by what they said. Because the purpose was to gather in-depth data, interruptions were minimal. I did, however, probe the interviewee’s responses through follow up questions, particularly when I was not clear on certain specifics. As much as possible, leading questions were avoided and effort was made to keep interviewees focused. Most of the interviews were tape recorded, with the permission of the respondents, and later transcribed (much of it “verbatim”). On a few occasions, however, notes were taken during interviews.

Overall, there were no incidents that derailed the interview process. I had an anticipation of language barrier though, but this was easily surmounted. Many of the market women that I interviewed were from Ga and Adangme ethnic groups. Even though the participants and I had a common language of communication, twi, I still felt the need to hire someone who spoke their dialect. This was done to make sure that I did not lose out on some of the innocent but important verbal gestures and interjections the respondents were deemed likely to make in their native dialect.

There were also some challenges with the chosen settings. Because interviews were conducted within the naturalized environment of the respondents (in the market, for the market women; and in the open space of Nkrumah Circle, in the case of hawkers), the level of
interruption and distraction was quite high. This was particularly the case with the street hawkers who I noticed were quite in a hurry to attend to their businesses. But this was not much of a concern because such attitudes surfaced only towards the tail end of the interviews. I took those gestures to be signs that the interviewees wanted to bring the interviews to an end. In some cases, interruptions came from colleague hawkers, market traders or slum dwellers who wanted to provide answers for the main interviewee. This had the potential to redirect or lead the conversation towards something else. With gentle caution, however, such interjections were kept at a barest minimum. In some other instances, the participants lost focus of the discussion. This was particularly so with the market women who were driven to express detailed, more immediate frustration with city officials rather than focus on specific issues that I sought answers to. This had the danger to limit the scope of the conversation. With little finesse, however, I usually managed to redirect the discussion back to the themes. In all cases, the number of participants was deemed sufficient when “data saturation” was noticed. This is when additional participants were not necessarily providing additional (new) responses.

**Phase IV: In-depth interviews with slum dwellers of Old Fadama**

The last group to be interviewed was the slum dwellers of Old Fadama. As in the case of market traders, chiefs, who constitute the gatekeepers of the slum, were the first point of contact and who not only gave permission but also assigned a resident to help me touch base with potential respondents. The assistance by this individual proved very useful as it helped ease any anxiety that the potential respondents had about the study. A total of twenty-five slum dwellers were initially contacted but only twenty were actually interviewed. Additionally, two FGDs (one
with eleven participants and the other seven) were conducted with the slum dwellers. As in the case of the traders, this was necessary to allow me to obtain further information even as I crosschecked some of the doubtful claims made by my in-depth informants. To allow for multiple perspectives, two rights activists, one with the Ghana Federation of the Urban Poor and the other with People’s Dialogue, were also interviewed. The former was a face-to-face interview and the latter was conducted over the phone.

As with the city officials, hawkers and market women, issues covered during the interviews generally related to the project of urban transformation. But in the case of the market women, there were some questions specific to the group. In addition to the profile of the community itself, the information sought related to the views of the slum dwellers regarding the decade-long threat to evict them from the space, how the threats have affected them, and how they have managed to remain rooted there in the face of such threats. Regarding the interview process itself, nearly all measures and concerns raised with respect to the hawkers and market women apply in this case too, except the additional ease created by my identity as a Northerner. At the same time, however, that identity also made me more susceptible to bias. This suggests that my positionality as a researcher was an important element during the data gathering process.

**Positionality**

As typical of interview-based research, my fieldwork revealed a somewhat complex but predictable power relationship. The important issue of positionality has been well explained by several qualitative researchers (e.g. Smith, 2010; Skelton, 2001; Mohammed, 2001; Mullings, 1999). These analysts strongly suggest that we, in any research work, consider our positionality
and what that might mean in relation to the ways in which we do our research and how the people we work with perceive us. Ones positionality is defined by several factors including race, ethnicity, gender, class, and age. In my case, class, gender and ethnicity were the most important.

In the first place, none of my respondents shared my specific ethnicity, even though being a Northerner automatically tied my identity with all ethnic groups from the North that currently dominate the slum of Old Fadama. Yet, rather than viewing this relationship as negative, I viewed it positively in the sense that it made the community more receptive towards me and the respondents more honest in their responses. (I have already addressed what the latent sympathy for this group due to this affiliation means for the integrity of the study). Secondly, the fact that most of my respondents, particularly hawkers and market women, were women also meant that gender defined my positionality. But unlike my geographical/ethnic affiliation, it was not very obvious what role gender played. Nevertheless, I have reflected on the following questions: would I have had a better sense of what the women had to say if I were a woman? And would they have told me more detailed or slightly differently answers? Obviously, these are questions that cannot be answered with degree of certainty and therefore cannot be brought to bear on the question of whether or not gender had any impact on the findings.

The third basis of my positionality was class. The fact that I was a Ph.D. candidate and coming from one of the wealthiest countries in the world (Canada) made the research process quite tricky. There arose the need to constantly switch my position between predominantly low-income and less-educated groups (hawkers, market women, and slum dwellers) and an equally educated group (the city officials).
My attention was first drawn to issues of positionality much earlier on, at the interview-preparation stage. It began while I sought interviews with city officials. I observed they were quick to demonstrate to me that they were in charge. They did so, for instance, by strictly dictating the terms of their participation in the research, be it in terms of interview dates or duration of the interviews, (though I ultimately got my way on the second in almost all cases). The power dynamic also manifested through the long periods that I was made to wait during my initial visits to the state departments. At the interview state, the officials were often quick to suggest that they were more conversant with the topic by asking seemingly self-indulging rhetorical questions such as “I know this is a complex topic but I hope you do understand what I am trying to say.” Despite this rather overly assertive attitude, I found the officials more informative and more direct in their responses. This is quite consistent with the experiences of other geographers who suggest that elite subjects provided the most useful interviews, especially during the initial stages of fieldwork. They are able to, as Gertler and Vinodrai (2005) assert, speak with authority and help inform or direct research questions.

On the contrary, I found the rest of the groups rather self-deprecating, often questioning “what does a trader like me have to say that a university graduate like you do not already know?” (Adwoa, one-on-one discussion, June 2011). It was with these other groups that I became much more aware and cautious about positionality. Not only was I a university student in the midst of much less educated groups of urban residents, I was also coming from one of the wealthiest countries in the world. In the midst of these groups, I had to switch my positionality to fit the changed sites of interviews. In other words, I had to adapt my behaviour in order to avoid “mis-fitting” (Vanderbeek, 2005). This entailed being more attentive to my use of language (used very
little English to avoid alienating my less literate respondents) and general demeanor (appear more modest in both appearance and attitude). Also, I was less inclined to emphasize my institutional affiliation(s) in contrast to when I was interviewing the officials. As several researchers have shown, these personal attributes influence the relationships between researcher and subjects (McDowell, 1998; Ward and Jones, 1999).

**Participant observation**

I wish to briefly discuss at this stage another method I employed in this study: participant observation and informal discussions. Direct observation of the urban practices and relationships in Accra was performed throughout the four months duration of field data gathering. I paid particular attention to and recorded information (in both writing and photographing) on how Accra is being impacted by the planning interventions; how traders and hawkers relate among themselves and between them and state officials over access to inner-city space. I focused particularly on contested spaces within the inner city, where evictions, demolitions and disciplining by state officials are more intense. My observations were guided by the thought that “[m]eaning is expressed through actions as well as text (or images)” (Dey, 2005, p. 30). Through these observations, I gathered very useful information on how state interventions to ‘modernize’ Accra unfold; ways that officials try to enforce spatial discipline; how the ‘informal’ actors (traders, hawkers, and slum dwellers) negotiate such spatial exclusions by the state; and so on. What is remarkable about this method is that it allowed me to gather relevant data without having to rely on the sole accounts of my informant.
**Ethical consideration**

Throughout the course of the fieldwork, especially with respect to the interviews, I was sensitive to the ethical implications of my work. All my conduct during the research was, as much as possible, in accordance with the ethical standards on the basis of which my research was approved by the Queen’s University Social Research Ethics Review Board. For instance, unwarranted information was avoided and confidentiality of data strictly maintained in order to preserve the anonymity of the participants. The right of respondents to refuse participation or opt out at any stage of the interview if they so wished, was also respected. This right was clearly captured in the participant consent form which participants filled out or affirmed orally. All of the interviews that were audio recorded were so done with the permission of participants. This said, at least two issues that border on research ethics came up.

The first was that the specific group of market women (at the Odawna Market) that I chose to study were, unbeknownst to me, divided into two rival groups. This schism appeared following their eviction from the Novotel Park Market. I discuss this rivalry in more detail in chapter 7. The point I wish to make at this stage is that it proved tricky dealing with both groups that were (and still are) suspicious of each other. Each rival group, for instance, wanted to know what the other had told me. I somewhat resolved the conundrum by insisting that my presence in the market was to explore broader issues and challenges working against their market and by implication all markets in Accra. Again, experience such as mine is not entirely strange to qualitative researchers. Herod (1999) for instance, touches on the struggles with ethical conundrums when research involves adversarial networks. He finds the need not to divulge the entire research agenda to rival subjects ethical and consistent with critical and engaging research.
The second ethical question related to financial compensation of participants. This particularly took me by surprise in the sense that participants were the first to signal ahead of the interview process that I compensate them for their time wasted during the interviews. I was surprised not least because I had done some work with market women in Accra before (in 2004) when no such demands were made. I did comply with the request but not without a common understanding with the participants that the gesture was not meant to ‘buy’ their voices. There are at least two plausible explanations to this ‘strange’ attitude on the part of my respondents. The first relates to the generally harsher economic realities of the market women (some of them were quite explicit about this). The second, and perhaps more convincing explanation, is that I was viewed to be in a position to provide that compensation not least because I had identified myself to them as being a Ph.D. student from Canada. Some local researchers that I spoke with link this change in the mindset of respondents to the practices by foreign researchers.

3.3. Data analysis and presentation

In terms of analysis and presentation of the data, this study was somewhat influenced by theory-guided process tracing approach (Falleti 2006). This approach is a variant of the ‘process tracing approach’ that involves gathering multiple forms of evidence and large numbers of different observations to construct a narrative with attention to sequences in causal chains (George and McKeown 1985; King et al. 1994; Mahoney and Rueschmeyer 2003; George and Bennett 2005). By being theory-guided, the approach advocates for presenting narratives based on empirical data against a backdrop of ‘theoretical priors’ (Bennett 2006; Mahoney 2010).
As clearly explained in chapter two, the overarching theoretical debates driving this study are globalization and urban neoliberalism. These theoretical understandings offer a particular perspective to observing urban dynamics. This perspective was dominant in ways that I proceeded with the data collection and certainly the interpretations that I brought to bear on the data. It is important to make this point because, as Aminzade (1993) argues, by making the theories that underpin our narratives more explicit, we avoid the danger of burying our explanatory principles in engaging stories. Equally significant, theoretical priors allow us to pursue data that can validate or invalidate particular theoretical propositions. In my case, this theory-guided approach allowed me to, for instance, observe, analyze and interpret field data in the light of the overarching theory without blinding me to the other urban occurrences that could not be explained by these theoretical frameworks.

The entire research from data collection to its analysis and interpretation relied on the principle of dialectics, which assumes a tight relationship between ideas and data. As Dey (1993) asserts, while we cannot analyze our data without ideas, our ideas must be shaped and tested by the data we are analyzing (Dey, 1993). My employment of the dialectic approach began in the field in the sense that the themes around which the data was later categorized emerged during the fieldwork itself. So despite the large volume and variety of data collected, it was not difficult to decipher the main trends of the issues being explored in the study. A distinction had already been assumed between the experiences of city officials on the one hand and those of the three groups identified on the other hand. So after the fieldwork and during the main data analysis stage, the data were sorted out according to this macro distinction.
First, interviews from the field survey were reviewed to draw out themes from the questionnaire responses of participants. The analyses of responses were done through the aggregation of all the responses from the various stakeholder groups sampled (city officials, hawkers, market women, and slum dwellers), into respective files. For instance, all responses from market women at Odawna Market were aggregated in one file, the Market Traders’ file. The same was done for hawkers, slum dwellers, and government officials. This approach to analyzing the data collected facilitates a discussion of trends, relationships and topics based on a particular theme, at a particular study site. Thus, assessing the views and experiences of various stakeholder groups relative to the project of city making was straightforward. The major themes included knowledge and interpretation of the city modernization project, factors driving spatial evictions, impact of evictions/threats of eviction, and resistance to evictions. Mainly quotes were extracted to support a particular view/observation rather than the use of any kind of statistics. Any of the observations was then compared with date collected from other sources, mainly media, official, and academic documents, as well as personal observations.

In terms of presentation, a chapter is dedicated to each of the four groups—i.e. city officials, hawkers, market women, and slum dwellers. Each chapter, in addition to the primary responses, develops a thorough and comprehensive description of the group. This strategy of date presentation is known as ‘thick’ description (Geertz 1973, Denzin 1978). In contrast to ‘thin’ description that merely states ‘facts’, ‘thick’ description, as Denzin suggests, includes information about the context of an act, the intentions and meanings that organize action, and its subsequent evolution (Denzin 1978, p. 33). Thus, description encompasses the context of action, the intentions of the actor, and the process in which action is embedded. In presenting the
primary data, I employ the interpretative analytical tool—i.e. using expressive language and voice of the respondents succeeded by interpretation and explanation, using theory alongside empirical data obtained from other sources. It is important to note that while the presentation highlights the depths of perspectives from participants’ viewpoints, this approach is not uniform throughout the dissertation. Depending on the nature of the issues in question, some parts of the dissertation relies more on interview data than others. Chapter 5 in particular relies heavily on official documents and media sources because its main objective is to construct a historical narrative about city-modernization interventions in Accra. It also relies heavily on pictorial representation of the city in the form of photographs and images. The rest of the empirical chapters draw more heavily on interviews, even though they too are complemented by media sources, photographic representation, and statistical information. These diverse sources are brought together to analyze the complex practices within the informal economy, with a specific focus on socio-spatial dimensions of such practices. For reasons of confidentiality, by way of preserving the anonymity of my informants, I employ only pseudonyms throughout the presentation, except where the information being quoted is already in the public domain. Furthermore, most of the exchange rates quoted in the study are based on August 2011 average of 1 GHS = 0.62192 USD (source: exchange-rates.org), the month that I concluded my fieldwork. Additionally, photographs used in the presentation were personally taken during fieldwork. Where others’ photographs are used, owners are dully acknowledged.
4.0. Introduction

Certainly, Accra as a city cannot be discussed in isolation. In this chapter, I discuss the national context in which the city’s development experience is deeply embedded. The discussion focuses mainly on the period since 1957 when the country gained its political independence from Britain. The highlight is Ghana’s journey from its relatively wealthy beginning in the 1950s to the near total economic collapse by the early 1980s (Mensah, 2006; Konadu-Agyemang, 2001; Herbst, 1993) and the ushering in since then of an economic and political philosophy that is based on neoliberalism. This transition marks a stark reversal of the earlier period when the state was in significant control (Mensah, 2006; Tettey et al., 2003).

The neoliberal era, the chapter will argue, has witnessed some restoration of national economic growth. However, this growth has been largely jobless (Aryeetey, et al, 2004) even as the increased openness of the national economy to global forces has in some instances accentuated poverty and worsened income distribution in the country (ibid). Accra has become a primary site where the effects of neoliberalism are felt the most. From economic to spatial dimensions, the city amplifies how neoliberalization has reconfigured the country as a whole. This national background is important if we are to make sense of how the city is currently governed and the consequences thereof.

Ghana (see Figure 1.1) currently enjoys a reputation as one of Africa’s most stable and progressive nation-states, “often seen as a model for political and economic reform in Africa” (BBC, 10 December 2012). This perception follows over two decades of uninterrupted constitutional governance and a continental rarity of peaceful transfers of power between opposing political parties during the period. The positive economic outlook of the country was recently boosted by the discovery of oil. Yet, this economic growth potential is one that is still deeply circumscribed by the country’s rough socioeconomic and political history.

At independence in 1957, Ghana had the enviable status as one of the most potentially prosperous countries in the south (Konadu-Agyemang, 2000; Aryeetey and Mckay, 2007). The newly independent state possessed one of the highest annual GDP growth rates (about 6 percent) in the global South (Donkor, 1997) and fairly significant external reserves, as well as an educated population. Yet the Ghanaian economy, like nearly all colonial economies (Ake, 1996; Freund, 2007), was characterized by poor internal integration of its various sectors (Konadu-Agyemang, 2000). Its key economic sectors such as cocoa, banking, shipping, and mining were oriented externally, mainly through trade (Kay, 1972, p. xv). Consequently, capital investments were concentrated in ports, rail and road transport infrastructure that sought to facilitate the movement of export commodities to Europe (Ninsin, 1991). This economic arrangement was designed and functioned in such a way as to undermine the industrial sector (Berman, 2003).

After independence, much of the effort by the new Ghanaian governments was to overturn the colonial economy through deliberate state-led industrialization. Nkrumah’s Convention People’s Party (CPP) government in particular pursued a vigorous industrialization
program that resulted in the creation of a diverse sector of mostly large and medium sized plants engaged mainly in light industrial manufacturing of consumer goods (Berman, 2003). The overthrow of Nkrumah and his government in 1966 thwarted the modernization/industrialization agenda that in any case was already under stress due to insufficient funds. Successive governments after Nkrumah in one way or another did attempt to continue with the state-led, mainly through import substitution industrialization. But by the beginning of the 1980s, the state-driven economy had approached a crisis point (Mensah, 2006; Herbst, 1993).\textsuperscript{15} The national economy was characterized by declining output, runaway inflation, critical scarcity of foreign exchange, acute shortage of consumer goods, a deteriorating social infrastructure and increasing poverty in both rural and urban areas (Songsore, 2000; Aryeetey and Mckay, 2007). Essentially, the once ‘shining star’ of African states was on the brink of collapse.

Including many academics, the World Bank and IMF blamed the crisis largely on internal factors such as poor quality economic policies, several policy reversals due to frequent changes in power (i.e. political instability), institutional weaknesses, and pervasive patronage and corruption both in the state and private sectors (Aryeetey and Mckay, 2007; Ayee, 2000; Herbst, 1993). Others, however, have pointed to the external environment that was characterised by falling commodity prices, high interest rates and protectionism in the global North at the time of the crisis (Songsore, 2000). Many more, however, concur that both internal and external factors were at play in causing and, particularly, prolonging the crises (Mensah, 2006; Aryeetey and Tarp, 2000; Songsore, 2000). The crisis, most significantly, marked a turning point in the [15] For instance between 1978 and 1983, the real GDP dropped by over 10 percent and real income per capita by 27 percent (NDPC, 1991, p. 3). At the same time, government revenue declined from 16 percent of GDP to a mere 7 percent over the period, and by 1983 public sector investment declined from 6 percent of GDP in 1975 to less than 1 percent of GDP (Songsore, 2000, p. 2).
economic and political history of the country as it led to the shift from the state-led to market-led economic development approach, beginning in 1983.

4.2. The neoliberal turn, since 1983

Under intense pressure, both locally and internationally, President Jerry John Rawlings\textsuperscript{16} adopted the standard IMF and World Bank economic liberalization program, contrary to his prior radical rhetoric and state-centered approach. The reform began with the ERP in 1983 followed by SAPs from 1986 to 1991. The ERP/SAP packages, in accordance with the neoliberal orthodoxy, comprised devaluation, monetary reform, and withdrawal of state institutions from the market (Konadu-Agyemang, 2000). They advocated for elimination of marketing controls, divestiture or privatization of state-owned enterprises, cuts in public services, and service reduction of public sector employment (Songsore, 2000; Aryeetey et al., 2000). These measures were supposed to, among other things, “free markets and ‘get the prices right’ to bring forth the anticipated supply response of local producers” (Berman, 2003, p. 22). Generally, however, the objective of the policies was to correct structural imbalances of the economy in order to engender healthy economic growth. Critical emphasis was placed on the role of the private sector, especially FDIs. This essentialization of the private sector and FDIs, I will argue, is one of the lasting legacies of the reform programs.

The increased focus of the neoliberal economy on FDIs took several forms. In addition to the intense reorientation of several state institutions, an investment specific agency called Ghana Investment Promotion Centre (GIPC) was established in 1994 to facilitate improvement in

\textsuperscript{16}Rawlings came into power through a military coup d’état in 1981 under a military junta called the People’s National Defense Council (PNDC). He overthrew a constitutionally elected President Hilla Liman.
business environments for FDIs. Its task was to serve as “the one-stop agency that facilitates and supports local and foreign investors in both the manufacturing and services sectors as they seek more value-creating operations, higher sustainable returns and new business opportunities” (GIPC, n.d). The obsession with FDIs is often rationalized on the basis that they will inject into the national economy the much needed investment capital and also help to modernize local industrial technology and management systems. Consequently, a central concern for development assistance initiatives in Ghana over the period focused on strengthening the so-called competitive standards of the country.

Since the 1990s, analysts have debated the impact of Ghana’s liberalization and structural adjustment programs from various angles and with varied conclusions (see Mensah, 2006; Hilson, 2004; Herbst, 1993; Konadu-Agyemang, 2001; Aryeetey, et al, 2000; Appiah-Adu, 1999; Yeboah, 2000, 2003). Some of the major themes that dominate this debate are macroeconomic performance, socio-spatial impacts, and political and ideological reconfigurations.

4.2.1. Macro/microeconomic impact of reforms

In terms of macroeconomic performance, the reforms have generally been adjudged a relative success (Aryeetey and Mckay, 2007; Appiah-Adu, 1999). For example, there has occurred a sustained levels of economic growth of over 4.5 percent per year since 1985, in contrast to negative growth rates from a decade prior (Aryeetey and Mckay, 2007; Songsore, 2000; Owusu, 2005). Also, domestic inflation that had rocketed from 10 percent (1970) to 50.1

---

17 Overwhelmingly, however, the attention of the agency has been on FDIs.
18 For instance programs such as Ghana Trade and Investment Reform Program (TIRP), sponsored by the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID) and the Ghana Trade and Investment Gateway Project (GHATIG), sponsored by the World Bank, both began in the 1990s, aimed to increase the competitiveness of the private sector to compete nationally, regionally and within the global marketplace (USAID/Ghana, 2003; World Bank, 2010).
percent (1980) and then further to 123 percent (1983) fell considerably to a little over 25 percent after 1986 (Ghana Government ERP, 1984–86; Sowa and Kwakye, 1993); and has remained under 20 percent over the last decade. It is not surprising, therefore, that the World Bank and the IMF initially touted Ghana as a shining example of success of SAPs in Africa (Mensah, 2006; Appiah-Adu, 1999).

Yet, a closer look at the composition of Ghana’s economy suggests that the structural imbalances that the reforms sought to address remain largely intact. Agriculture remained the dominant sector until mid-2000s (see Table 4.1) when the services sector took over (see Table 4.2). More importantly, the agricultural sector has continued to depend on unreliable rainfall and ‘age-old’ technology as it was prior the reforms. Indeed several studies have shown that the sector, except the cash-crop subsector, has been rather negatively affected by the reforms, partly due to the removal of subsidies on farm inputs such as fertilizer (Clark, 2001).

Table 4.1. Sectoral Distribution of Real GDP, Period Averages %

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Agric</td>
<td>52</td>
<td>51</td>
<td>52</td>
<td>46</td>
<td>42</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>42</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Industry</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>26</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Services</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>44</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>34</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note that the drastic change in the figures after 1995 for industry and services are a consequence of a major data rebasing exercise in 1994 that reclassified a number of service activities as industrial activities (Source: Aryeteey, 2005, p. 6).

Perhaps the most important category to observe is the industrial sector, particularly manufacturing, since it is generally agreed that it holds the key to a more sustainable economic growth and employment generation in the country (CEPA, 2012, p. 1; Berman, 2003). The sector experienced marginal growth during the first couple of years of the reform period (see Table 4.1).
but has since undergone a progressive decline due significantly to lack of state protection and insufficient injection of FDIs into the sector as initially anticipated (Berman, 2003; Ninsin, 1991). Both sectors—i.e. agriculture and industry—have since the mid-2000s been overtaken by the services sector (see Table 4.2), led by subsectors such as Hotels and Restaurants, Information and Communication, Financial Intermediation, and trade (GSS, 2010).

It is safe to conclude, therefore, that although macroeconomic stability has improved relative to the 1965-1984 period, the structure of the Ghanaian economy has not changed very much for the better. The industrial sector, particularly manufacturing, that is viewed to hold the key to a more sustainable and job-creating growth remains weak. If any at all, the change has been in the services sector, which has experienced a growth rate of over 6 percent (GSS, 2008). It is noteworthy that not many think that this sector is capable of generating a robust economic growth since it is barely rooted in direct production.

Table 4.2: GDP by economic activities and respective sectoral distribution (%)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Agriculture</th>
<th>Industry</th>
<th>Services</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2006</td>
<td>30.4</td>
<td>20.8</td>
<td>48.8</td>
<td>100.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2007</td>
<td>29.1</td>
<td>20.7</td>
<td>50.2</td>
<td>100.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2008</td>
<td>31.0</td>
<td>20.4</td>
<td>48.6</td>
<td>100.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2009</td>
<td>31.7</td>
<td>18.9</td>
<td>49.5</td>
<td>100.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2010</td>
<td>30.2</td>
<td>18.6</td>
<td>51.1</td>
<td>100.0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Ghana Statistical Service (GSS, 2010).

It is important to mention, however, that some modest increases in FDIs have been/are being recorded. The most recent figures (2012) reported by the GIPC show a total number of FDI-related projects of 399, with a total estimated value of US$5.63 billion, compared to 296

19It must be noted however that on account of oil production that began in 2009, Industry exceeds both Agriculture and Services in terms of growth rate (CEPA, 2012)
projects registered in 2008, with a total estimated value of US$3.54 billion (see Table 4.3). It is equally significant to note that nearly 88 percent of the inflows in 2012, for instance, went into the Manufacturing (23.44 percent) and Building/Construction (64.14 percent) of the industrial sector subsectors alone (GIPC, 2013). While this looks encouraging relative to concerns about the weakening industrial sector, a closer scrutiny will reveal that much of these inflows end up in mining and quarrying, modern construction, and electricity: sectors that are noted to be “capital intensive” and thus only contribute to “jobless growth” of the economy (CEPA, 2012, p. 1).

Table 4.3: FDI inflow for the period 2008 to 2012

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>2008</th>
<th>2009</th>
<th>2010</th>
<th>2011</th>
<th>2012</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Total No. of Projects</td>
<td>296</td>
<td>257</td>
<td>385</td>
<td>514</td>
<td>399</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total Estimated Value (US$ M)</td>
<td>3,540.1</td>
<td>620.00</td>
<td>1,278.90</td>
<td>7,680.0</td>
<td>5,630.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FDI Component (US$ M)</td>
<td>3,446.8</td>
<td>551.30</td>
<td>1,108.93</td>
<td>6,820.00</td>
<td>4,900.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No. of Joint Venture Projects</td>
<td>99</td>
<td>90</td>
<td>136</td>
<td>187</td>
<td>160</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No. of 100% foreign Projects</td>
<td>197</td>
<td>167</td>
<td>249</td>
<td>327</td>
<td>239</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total Initial Capital Transfer (US$ M)</td>
<td>112.87</td>
<td>108.60</td>
<td>58.84</td>
<td>213.29</td>
<td>98.97</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Expected employment to be Created</td>
<td>23,158</td>
<td>22,486</td>
<td>119,578</td>
<td>46,761</td>
<td>24,562</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Another significant point to raise in relation to Ghana’s neoliberal economy is the role of small-scale enterprises (SSEs). Activities of such enterprises span a wide range in both the informal and formal sectors, including food processing and other agro-based industries, tailoring, bakeries, wood-related industries, shoemaking and shoe repair, manufacture and repair of metal
products, motor fitting and bodywork repairs, electric repairs, black- and goldsmithing, handicrafts, pottery, printing and diversified manufacturing activities (Sowa et al, 1992).

The SSEs have always been a strong component of the Ghanaian economy, providing a good source of private employment and even a useful income supplement for some in public employment (ibid; Songsore, 2000). In line with the neoliberal mantra of individual entrepreneurialism, there was emphasis by the sponsors of Ghana’s reforms on lending support to the SSEs (Ninsin, 1991; Berman, 2003). Yet, at the same time, it was the consequences of the same excessive liberalization policies that further stunted the growth of these enterprises (Ninsin, 1991; Berman, 2003; Clark, 2001). This is mainly because the nature of the reforms is such that the “Ghanaian government cannot pursue a more active program of national development and protect much of the local manufacturing from the effects of global competition” (Berman, 2003, p. 43). So rather than growing into medium to large-scale industries, these enterprises have either remained small or slipped into survivalist modes of operation (Ninsin, 1991).

The corollary is the expansion of the informal economy, led significantly by petty trade. The sector currently employs nearly 80 percent of the country’s non-agricultural labour force (see Table 4.4), most of it in the urban areas (GSS, 2008).

Table 4.4: Sectors of employment in Ghana

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sector of Employment</th>
<th>percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Public</td>
<td>5.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Semi-public / Parastatal</td>
<td>2.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Private formal</td>
<td>7.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Private informal</td>
<td>80.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>3.0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Ghana Statistical Service (2008)
The enormous size of the informal economy is particularly noteworthy because it has tremendous implications for urban socioeconomic and physical development planning, particularly in Accra where informality has become deeply engrained on the landscape. The city has about 65 percent of its population employed in the tertiary sector (see Table 4.5). A significant component of the tertiary sector is in the informal subsector (UN-Habitat, 2009), where most actors rely on household savings (60 percent) and assistance from relatives or friends (20 percent) (GSS, 2008).

Table 4.5: Sectoral Employment in the AMA Economy

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sector</th>
<th>Number</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Primary Sector</td>
<td>107,723</td>
<td>13.08</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Secondary Sector</td>
<td>183,934</td>
<td>22.34</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tertiary Sector</td>
<td>531,670</td>
<td>64.58</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>823,327</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Accra Metropolitan Assembly (2006)

It is important to note however that the informal economy, dominated by a multiplicity of activities identified above, has a much longer history in Ghana. Not only that, it has also always been very dynamic, with the actors involved demonstrating remarkable degrees of entrepreneurialism. Yet, the modernist state of the early post-independence era and the modernist/neoliberal state of the present have hardly given such economic actors the chance to play a significant role in the development process of the country. Therefore the survivalist status of much of the informal economy stems from the complete neglect by the state rather than being intrinsic to that mode of economic practice.
4.2.2 Social and spatial impact of reform

Most analysts concur that the relative success of Ghana’s neoliberal economy at the macro level has not translated in equal measure at the individual levels. Indeed the reforms in many instances worsened social and spatial inequalities of the country (Songsore, 2000; Konadu-Agyemang, 2000; Mensah, 2006), manifesting principally in conditions of unemployment, poverty, migration, urbanization and urban management.

As already noted, Ghana’s liberalized economy has been characterized by jobless growth (CEPA, 2012; Aryeetey and Baah-Boateng, 2007; Songsore, 2000; UNDP, 1997, p. 43; Ninsin, 1991). The most direct impact of the liberalization on employment, however, was the sharp public sector retrenchments (Aryeetey and Mckay, 2007; Songsore, 2000). Worsening the situation was the fact that the much coveted private-sector could not generate the anticipated wage employment since the sector, especially manufacturing, suffered low productivity and generally poor performance over that period (Berman, 2003). The employment challenges from these sources were further compounded by generally poor performance of the agricultural sector. In combination, these outcomes have pushed many people to the non-farm informal sector (Aryeetey and Baah-Boateng, 2007; Songsore, 2000; Ninsin, 1991). As Ghana Statistical Service (GSS, 2008) recently revealed, approximately 46 percent of all households in Ghana operated non-farm enterprises, much of which occurred in cities especially Accra. Another significant point to note is that these economic dynamics are highly gendered, as over 72 percent of actors operating in the non-farm enterprises are women (ibid).

Closely related to the subject of wage unemployment and growing informality is the issue of poverty. Significantly, the contraction of wage employment opportunities over the period has
deprived many people of a potentially powerful mechanism for escaping poverty. While the growth is said to have been accompanied by some margin of poverty reduction over the 1990s and even beyond, this strategy has been socially and spatially uneven (Aryeetey and McKay, 2007). Those in the public and private formal sectors have seen some increment in income but not the majority who are in the informal sector (Songsore, 2000; Aryeetey and McKay, 2007). The conditions of ordinary citizens have been worsened by the increasing non-income poverty due largely to ever rising costs of secondary and tertiary education (Dadzie 2009), and health (FAO, n.d) among other means of social reproduction. These inequalities have both gender and ethnic manifestations. Similarly, the inequalities have been spatial such that poverty reduction is felt more in urban centres than in rural areas and more in the forest zones of the South, where most of Ghana’s key exports are produced, than in the North (GSS, 2008; Aryeetey and McKay, 2007; Anyinam, 1994).

Uneven spatial development at both national and urban scales is particularly germane in making sense of the socioeconomic dynamics in Accra. These inequalities, as indicated earlier, have specific North-South and urban-rural dichotomies (Konadu-Agyemang, 2000), even as they are mediated by gender and ethnic differentiations. Nearly all major socio-economic indicators show disparities along these divides. A recent UN report, for instance, reveals that, in general, urban residents tend to have better access to social services such as basic education, health, drinking water and sanitation than their rural counterparts. It shows that government health facilities, which account for 70 percent of the entire health service delivery system in the country, cater only to an estimated 30-40 percent of Ghana’s population who are mainly
residents in urban areas. These inequalities, the report concludes, tend to promote rural-urban (I will add North-South) migration (GNA, 30 January 2012).

These findings only confirm the consistent reports in the Ghana Living Standard Survey (GLSS) by the Ghana Statistical Service (GSS). The GLSS Report 5 (GSS, 2008), for instance, shows a disparity in average annual per capita income across the ten administrative regions of the country (see Figure 1.1). The most stark, unsurprisingly, is the income disparity between the Greater Accra region (GHS544.00 or US$500.48) and the three regions in the Northern part of Ghana (i.e. the Northern, Upper West [UW] and Upper East [UE] Regions). Both UW and UE regions for instance show an average annual per capita income of less than GHS130.00 or US$119.16.

A similar pattern of asymmetrical conditions accompanies social indicators such as access to pipe-borne water, education and health, where the three northern regions rank lowest in the country (GSS, 2008). Both the rural/urban and north/south inequalities have partly compelled many to migrate to Accra and other urban centres in the south (Awumbila and Ardeifio-Schandorf, 2008; Konadu-Agyemang, 2000). Importantly, most of these migrants end up in slums and are more often than not forced to make a living under precarious conditions. For example, nearly 80 percent of the residents of Accra’s largest slum, the Old Fadama, are migrants from the three northern regions (Housing the Masses, 2010), most of them engage in the informal economy either as head potters or scrap dealers.

Accra has indeed experienced population-related challenges partly due to migration into the city. Its population has grown tremendously over the years. From a mere 6.23 persons per hectare in 1970, Accra’s gross population density reached 82.33 persons per hectare in 2000 and
further increased to 250.73 persons per hectares in 2010 (ibid). Yet, the city’s physical infrastructural components such as housing, market places, and transport networks, as well as utilities such as water and electricity have not seen corresponding expansion. The infrastructure gap has resulted in pressure on the existing facilities, manifested in congested roads and markets, water-rationing programs, overflowing garbage bins and so on. Such conditions are particularly acute in low-income areas where the urban poor reside.

It is important to note, however, that these spatial inequalities are partly a colonial legacy, reinforced and accentuated by post-colonial development policies and strategies (Songsore 2003, 2009; Tsikata and Seini, 2004). Under the current neoliberal era, where market forces more freely determine prices and the allocation of resources, there is hardly any chance that these inequalities will narrow anytime soon. This is because the resource-rich areas of southern Ghana and the large urban centres will, to a large extent, continue to attract key investments (see Table 4.6) due to the economies of scale and relatively superior infrastructure enjoyed by these areas. (Songsore 2003; Owusu, 2005). Accra by all indications will remain relatively favoured and consequently will continue to attract unskilled economic migrants who move in search of economic opportunities.

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20 The British colonial power divided the country into provinces/regions and districts largely on ethnic basis to facilitate effective administration of the country (Dickson 1971, 1975; Bening 1999). Furthermore, there were selective investments based on availability of exploitable and exportable resources and conditions for cultivation and exportation of cash crops (mainly cocoa, coffee and rubber). This selectivity led to the neglect of northern Ghana, that became a reserve of labour for the cash-crop sector in the South (Dickson 1971, 1975)
4.2.3. Urbanization and urban development in Ghana

Ghana has been urbanizing rapidly over the last couple of decades, becoming predominantly urban for the first time in 2010. The proportion of the country’s population living in urban areas has grown from a mere 23 percent in 1960 to 50.9 percent by 2010 (GSS, 2012, 2005) and is estimated to reach 60 percent by 2030 (Farvacque-Vitkovic et al., 2008). Regionally, Greater Accra is the most urbanized (90.5 percent), followed by Ashanti (60.6 percent), with the least urbanized being the three regions in the North (Northern, Upper East and Upper West) (less than 31 percent each) (see Figure 4.2).

### Table 4.6: Regional Distribution of Investment Projects by Sectors, 2005

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Region</th>
<th>Total</th>
<th>% Of Grand Total</th>
<th>SECTORS</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Agriculture</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Greater Accra</td>
<td>1545</td>
<td>79.64%</td>
<td>64</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ashanti</td>
<td>129</td>
<td>6.65%</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Western</td>
<td>85</td>
<td>4.38%</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Central</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>3.00%</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Eastern</td>
<td>56</td>
<td>2.89%</td>
<td>29</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Volta</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>1.44%</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Northern</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>0.98%</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Brong Ahafo</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>0.62%</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Upper East</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>0.26%</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Upper West</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0.05%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>1,940</td>
<td>100%</td>
<td>147</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

While urbanization has offered better opportunities for ordinary people to escape poverty (Aryeetey and Mckay, 2007), its rate and trend have been a source for concern (Farvacque-Vitkovic et al., 2008; Acquaah-Harrison, 2004; Owusu, 2010). For decades now, no comprehensive urban-specific development policy (or Urban Development Strategy)\(^{21}\) has been produced to guide the urbanization processes (Acquaah-Harrison, 2004; Owusu, 2010; Yankson, 2006; ISSER, n.d). Rather, urban interventions by most successive governments after Nkrumah have been piecemeal and fragmented (Owusu, 2010; Gough and Yankson, 1997; Ministry of Local Government, 1992). Besides, investments in infrastructure and housing, governing institutions and agencies have failed to keep pace with the rate of urbanization and urban growth. The results are the rapid urban sprawl (Gough and Yankson, 2000; Yeboah, 2000) and generally unplanned physical developments (Acquaah-Harrison, 2004; UN-Habitat, 2009), with the attendant environmental and sanitation challenges (Songsore, 2000).

\(^{21}\) A National Urban Plan was recently launched (in 2012) after this research had been concluded.
Accra typifies this condition. Since the late colonial period, the city was expected to grow according to a Master Plan and Sector Layout plans that made provisions for separate, sectoral physical developments. Rooted in the modernist conceptualizations, the plans allocated separate zones for residential, institutional and special uses, civic and cultural, commercial, industrial, and open space. However, successive governments have failed to enforce the plans, resulting in mixed developments, in many cases unapproved by city planners. This situation has become more pronounced since the early 1980s partly as a result of the liberalized market in the country which includes real estate and land markets (Yeboah, 2000; Kasanga and Kotey, 2001).

Aside from the growing strength of property developers who have taken advantage of the liberalized land market to expand their real estate practices, individuals and families driven by the pressure to acquire residential accommodation in the absence of state housing schemes have generated a fully-fledged informal housing market. By the latter, individuals develop housing properties even before seeking the official permit to integrate their developments into the existing formal land-use plans of the city (UN-Habitat, 2009).

Another dimension of Ghana’s urbanization process is the intra-urban inequalities. The case of Accra has been particularly remarkable. It is observed that the city has undergone hyper-differentiation of spatial development; much of it linked to the liberalization processes (Owusu and Agyei-Mensah, 2010; Grant and Nijman, 2004). Both large corporate entities and petty businesses have been growing side by side. Likewise, upper-class residential communities, several of them increasingly gated, are developing in close proximity of unplanned lower-class neighbourhoods and slums which are equally growing in numbers. Accra is thus typical of a

22 I must note that this housing market pre-dates development companies. The point being made here is that the scale of this market has expanded tremendously in more recent times.
condition the UN-Habitat (2009) describes as “urban divide”: a condition Harvey (2007) significantly attributes to urban neoliberalization. As he puts it: “we now have divided cities; gated communities here, impoverished communities there. The city is being dissolved into micro-states of rich and poor” (2007, p. 12). In Accra, these polarities sometimes result in contestations over the inner city space. Yet, it is over this complexity that the local state strives to superimpose its own modernist vision of Accra, a mission that largely seeks to turn the city into an ideal location for business and consumption.

4.2.4. Decentralization and rescaling of the Ghanaian state

The adoption of the decentralized system of governance is certainly one of the highlights of Ghana’s recent history. The system, for some, is part of the key technologies of neoliberalization by the IFIs and western donor communities in the south. It is based on the neoliberal principle of minimalist government and, consequently, devolves power not just from the central to the local governments but from state to non-state (private sector) actors as well (Beard et al, 2008; Miraftab, 2004; Mohan, 1996). Ghana began this system of governance in its current form in 1988 with the support of the World Bank and IMF (Mohan, 1996). The objective was to encourage bottom-up development in order to overcome the uneven spatial development in the country linked to the centralized, top-down development administration and planning approach of the earlier period (Owusu, 2005).

The system is characterized by a shift from a command approach to more consultative processes, and devolution of power, competence, and resources to the district/local level. It

\footnote{This was under the PNDC Law 207 Act 463.}
requires that development planning and implementation be carried out by the District Assemblies or local government units. Under the system, the local/sub-national governments are responsible for translating and implementing national development plans, policies and programs at the local level. By this devolution of power from the centre, the Ghanaian state has essentially been rescaled.

Arguably, the system has substantively empowered the local assemblies, especially the metropolitan ones, as agents of development at the local level. Yet, while continuously expanding their mandates the central government has not been equally willing to extend the needed resources to the assemblies to fulfil that mandate (Ayee, 2008; Berman, 2003; Nuno-Amarteifio, in Mills-Tettey and Adi-Dako 2002). The consequence is the pressure on the assemblies to resort to crafty means to meet their development aspirations, including turning to the private sector and civil society, even as they adopt market-based principles in their governance processes. This is how neoliberal entrepreneurialism primarily gets established in urban governance processes: local states, driven by the imperative to secure resources to undertake development projects, must rely on the private sector in order to produce and manage urban infrastructure and services. Accra, more than any other settlement in Ghana, presents a typical case of this situation.

The AMA emerged out of the decentralization process as Accra’s highest governing body. The Assembly traces its roots to the Accra Town Council (ATC) established in 1898. The ATC metamorphosed into the Accra Municipal Council and later Accra City Council before

24 The Assemblies now have about 85 functions, compared to mere law and order functions they performed in the past.
25 The largest source of support to the Assemblies from the central state is District Assembly Common Fund (DACF). But this support more often than not rarely comes in full and in time.

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acquiring its current name—AMA. Indeed, the decentralization system gave the city government much more than a mere change of name. As Korsah-Dick and Mensah (2010, p. 32) fully capture:

“From the simple, basic concerns of law and order and environmental sanitation of the early Town and Council years, those functions have now grown into a complex web of responsibilities covering virtually every need of human activity in the Metropolis.”

One of the most vital organs of the metropolitan government is the Metropolitan Chief Executive, popularly called the Mayor. The Mayor, who is appointed directly by the President rather than elected by the residents, heads the executive arm of the Assembly and technically the entire metropolitan government. By virtue of this arrangement, loyalty of the mayor is often to the appointing authority rather than the citizens that s/he directly serves. Over the years, as a result, successive mayors have gained the notoriety of being dictatorial, especially in ways that they handle issues related to the ordinary residents of the city. Thus, to make sense of Accra, it is imperative to pay attention to the specific role that the mayor plays. More often than not, their personal ambitions and development orientations have uniquely significant bearings on the nature of urban visions and interventions. The role of Mayor Vanderpuije is particularly germane in terms of ways that Accra is presently being imagined and (re)shaped.

4.2.5. Neoliberalization of the state and the convergence of political ideologies

One critical, yet quite often underestimated, point in the discussions concerning Ghana’s neoliberalization process is the reconfiguration of political ideologies. The recent Ghanaian political landscape is dominated by the supposed centre-left National Democratic
Congress (NDC) and the supposed centre-right New Patriotic Party (NPP). Between them, they share well over 90 percent of popular support in the country. A significant observation is that over the years both political parties, whilst in government, have been consistent in terms of their pursuit of market-oriented policies.

The case of the NDC is particularly curious because despite being left-leaning, it has carried out the most far-reaching market reforms in the history of the country. The two parties therefore have substantively converged ideologically; both endorse with no reservation, the orientation of a more globally integrated national economy with a substantial role for the private sector. This orientation is embedded in the national development framework itself, Ghana-Vision 2020. The Vision 2020 framework that replaced both the ERP and SAP templates is still fundamentally rooted in neoliberal philosophies, with its strong emphasis on growth, markets and private sector competitiveness (see Table 4.7).

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26 This is based on electoral outcomes since the beginning of the Fourth Republic in 1992. Both parties combined, for instance, account for 271 out of the 275 members of parliament of the current Parliament.
27 I must note, however, this to some degree is quite typical of the centre-left in most countries since the 1990s.
28 Both the NDC and the NPP that have governed the country in successive terms over the last two decades have pursued similar policies of openness and focus on FDIs despite professing leftist and rightist political ideologies, respectively. The NPP government governed on the mantra “golden age of business” and “private sector as the engine of growth” whiles the NDC in line with its “better Ghana agenda” is currently pursuing “the Private Sector Development Strategy [PSDS]”. Both lay strong emphasis on growth through a competitive private sector with FDIs playing a large role.
The most fashionable trend in recent times is the strong emphasis on PPPs. Both political parties have touted such partnerships as an ideal governance principle. Recently, a full Minister of State in charge of PPPs was appointed by none other than the populist NDC government. Ghana’s case thus lends credence to Harvey’s (2007b, p. 6) assertion that the “strong processes
of neoliberalism have transformed the world, transformed us to the point that all of us are neoliberals, whether we like it or not.”

Meanwhile, as Harvey adds, nowhere has the ethos of neoliberalization been better absorbed than in cities in terms of “the ways that cities have been transformed during this period” (ibid, p. 6). This is certainly true for Accra as the city has become the primary site where the national neoliberalization experiment is taking place. A good evidence of this is the *Gateway Project*. Designed to thrust the Ghanaian economy more firmly into the global system (Chalfin, 2010), the project specifically aimed “to enhance Ghana’s competitiveness” by “promot[ing] Accra as a gateway city serving as a connecting node with the global economy” (Grant, 2009, p. 23). This liberalized approach starkly reverses the inward-looking, state-centric development strategy for Accra in the 1950s/60s, which Grant and Yankson (2003) describe as “Ghanaization”²⁹ (see also Hess, 2000). The latest of the ambition to more firmly connect Accra with the global economy is being spearheaded mostly by the metropolitan government itself and it is this particular dimension that the next chapter extensively explores.

### 4.3. Conclusion

Ghana’s experience with development projects since independence has been characterized by major swings. It began as a potentially wealthy country but suffered progressive decline. Its dominant state-centric approach was widely cited as the source of the decline. Since the early part of the 1980s when the country embarked upon consistent neoliberalization of its economy, it has been on a more or less sustained path of economic growth. Yet, this growth has

²⁹This is when the government made effort to obliterate the footprints of European colonialism in Accra by allowing Ghanaian businesses to dominate zones that were previously the exclusive realm of European economic activities.
not been evenly distributed, socially or spatially. In remarkable ways, neoliberalization processes have reconfigured national politics, economy, society, and space. Accra, more than anywhere else, encapsulates these reconfigurations. Its economic and political governance processes are becoming ever more market-based and globally oriented, and its space is being splintered mainly along class lines: high-income neighbourhoods and corporate spaces on the one hand and low-income neighbourhoods and informal economic spaces on the other hand. These historical, socioeconomic, political, and spatial dynamics at the national and urban levels require serious attention if we are to make sense of recent ambitions and attempts by the state, central and local, to transform Accra into a quintessential twenty-first century city. Beginning with the next chapter, I explore this ambition and all the social and spatial processes that it engenders.
Chapter 5
‘Modernizing’ and Neoliberalizing Accra

5.0. Introduction

Over the last decade, the central and local Ghanaian state has nursed the desire to ‘transform Accra into a world-class city’. In particular, Mayor Vanderpuije, since his assumption of office in 2009, has consistently declared his personal ambition to ‘modernize’ Accra. He recently interpreted this modernization agenda to mean transforming the city into an ideal and competitive destination for global business and tourism in Africa (Radio Gold 15 January 2013). In this chapter, I explore the genesis of this particular orientation of city transformation, what drives and sustains it, as well as the ways in which it (re)shapes governance and place-making practices within Accra.

I argue that this orientation and practice of city-making is borne out of current ‘universal’ discourses of global-level city competitiveness, inspired largely by forces and agents of neoliberalism. I further assert, however, that how the local state has come to actually embrace this global-oriented approach to urban transformation in Accra is significantly mediated by historical and institutional contexts and specificities of the city. These include the persistence of modernization discourses in state development imaginaries; the postcolonial nation-building project that equated the national capital with the nation-state itself; and the role of specific city managers as agents of urban entrepreneurialism in their own right. This chapter generally reveals how economic imperatives intersect with nationalist tendencies to shape governance and spatial processes of African cities such as Accra.
5.1. Understanding the entrepreneurial city: the African perspective.

Many Southern scholars would concure that “much of the discussion surrounding neoliberal urbanism has been empirically grounded in the North” (Swanson, 2007, p. 708). Yet, the urban processes that these discussions interrogate have significant presence in the South as well. In Africa particularly, processes of urban neoliberalization have gone largely unexplored. African cities, with the exception of a few mostly South African cities, are rarely considered to be important sites to explore ways that neoliberalism shapes the urban experience. Perhaps this is because not many of the cities on the continent are viewed to have global significance and influence.

Concerning cities in the North, discussions surrounding urban neoliberalism have commonly touched on the theme of entrepreneurialism (Harvey, 1989; Hall and Hubbard, 1996, 1998). This entails the promotion of local economic development by urban governments in alliance with private capital and unions (Johnston, 2000). In part, this governance approach is said to be driven by global economic restructuring over the last three decades that has made capital more mobile and cities more dominant units of global economic control (Castells and Hall, 1994; Scott, 2008).

Yet, this dominance has come with inter-city competition in attempts to attract and embed capital within the city. Consequently, certain generic urban policies viewed to be ideal for cities desiring competitive advantages now circulate the globe (Sager, 2011; Parnreiter, 2011; Carmona and Burgess, 2009). Underpinning these urban development policies are neoliberal principles, which are identifiable by the market-dominated logic used to structure the parameters for governance (Harvey, 2007; Brenner and Theodore, 2005; Hackworth, 2005). This entails
both institutional reconfigurations and spatial transformations of cities (Sager, 2011; Parnreiter, 2011; Carmona and Burgess, 2009; Harvey, 1989a).

Aside from favoring the private sector, at least in the form of PPPs, urban entrepreneurialism requires public institutions to imbibe the outlook and techniques of private-sector management. By an approach called New Public Management, local officials are required to be enterprising, risk-taking, inventive, and profit motivated (Sager, 2011).

Spatial transformations represent the most visible aspect of urban entrepreneurialism. They entail a myriad of place-making practices by city managers, including city branding, waterfront developments, building of post-modern shopping malls and other spectacular mega-urban projects. These interventions are commonly meant to ‘promote’ or ‘market’ the city as a vital location for both business and pleasure (Sager, 2011; Harvey, 1989a). Both elements of urban neoliberalization—i.e. the institutional reconfigurations and spatial transformations—are captured in Table 5.1. The table shows four areas, with some examples, commonly emphasized by this development approach: economic development, infrastructure provision, management of commercial areas, and housing and neighborhood renewals.

**Table 5.1: Major neoliberal urban policies and the targeted aspects of urban development**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Urban policy</th>
<th>Urban economic development</th>
<th>Infrastructure provision</th>
<th>Management of commercial areas</th>
<th>Housing/neighborhood renewal</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Targeted areas</td>
<td>- City marketing - Urban development by attracting the ‘creative class’ - Economic development incentives - Competitive bidding</td>
<td>- Public-private partnership - Private sector involvement in financing and operating transport infrastructure - Private sector involvement in procuring water</td>
<td>- Business-friendly zones and flexible zoning - Property-led urban regeneration - Privatisation of public space and sales-boosting exclusion</td>
<td>- Liberalisation of housing markets - Gentrification - Privately governed and secured neighbourhoods - Quango organised market-oriented urban development</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Adapted from Sager (2011)
As already mentioned, African cities have not been the focus of these debates. Yet, there is sufficient reason to suggest that these cities are going through similar, if not the same, policy-making processes. This is partly because African countries have been at the centre of global neoliberalization over the last three decades mainly through the influence of the global development institutions, particularly the IMF and the World Bank (Bogaert, 2012; Bayat, 2000, 2012). Additionally, several African cities have demonstrated their ambitions to become globally competitive through policy interventions (McDonald, 2008; Robinson and Parnell, 2006; Jenkins and Wilkinson, 2002). Yet, outside the region of Southern Africa, and mostly South Africa, relatively little or nothing is known about urban governments in Africa that engage the neoliberal framework in urban governance.

This chapter offers an account of urban neoliberalization from the perspective of Accra. The city, since the early 1980s when Ghana set off on the path of neoliberalism, has become ever more firmly integrated with the global economy. Over the last decade, the ambition to strategically position the city as an ideal destination of global capital has proceeded along trajectories that seem to be consistent with the entrepreneurial approaches discussed above. My main aim in this chapter is to explore the genesis of these entrepreneurial regimes and what governance and place-making practices they inspire relative to the current ambition of the state to transform and modernize Accra.

It is important to state however that it is not plausible to explain all interventions by state officials in their quest to transform Accra in the context of urban neoliberalization. The city, like all other African cities, has its unique history and place-specific circumstances that do not allow it to be analyzed purely through the theoretical lens of urban neoliberalization that has Northern
cities as its main focus. To understand Accra’s ‘actually-existing’ neoliberalism, therefore, there
is the need to pay particular attention to: a) the persistence of modernization discourses in state
development imaginaries; b) the postcolonial nation-building project that equated the national
capital with the nation-state itself; and c) the role of specific city managers as agents of change in
their own right. The task then is to explore how these factors intersect with the ever-strong
economic-growth considerations to drive the desire and ambition to intervene and transform the
city.

5.2. Global (re)positioning of Accra: tracing the neoliberal discourses

Consistent with theories of the urban neoliberalism, recent deliberations by officials to
transform Accra are not only driven largely by economic considerations but also rest on
powerful discourses of global competitiveness. My data from multiple sources when pieced
together point to the growing acceptance that economic growth of Accra can only (or at least
best) be secured by enhancing its global competitive edge. Nearly all the city officials that I
interviewed were convinced that Accra cannot experience any reasonable economic prosperity
without significant in-flows of capital, particularly in the form of FDIs. In the words of one of
the officials:

“We need to step up our effort to attract foreign direct investments into Accra. The city needs such investments in order to create employment for the residents. We encourage local investors too, but they are already here. Accra is in a position to become the best place to invest or tour in Africa but we need to put our acts together as a city in order for that to happen” (Frank, Interview, July 2011; emphasis added).
What stands out in this response is the element of urgency: *the city needs such investments*. The justification for this outlook is that such in-flows are the surest way to address the city’s employment challenges, which the “local companies” have failed to help address.

Much more so than concerns about employment, the dominant view among state officials is that Accra has become too enormous and complex to be managed within the narrow confines of the national domain. As another city official opined:

> “When I first came to the AMA, our main concern was how to maintain law and order and provide basic infrastructure. Today things have changed. Accra has grown both in terms of physical size and economic strength. So we must also begin to think big for the city. Many investors are beginning to look at Ghana and Accra in particular and we need to meet them halfway. *That is why we [the AMA] are working with other state institutions to make sure that Accra becomes the most favorable destination of investment in the sub-region. The world has changed and so must we.*” (Opoku, Interview, June, 2011; emphasis added).

In this case, the yearning to make Accra a “favorable destination” is measured against the changes that have occurred over the years, physically and economically. After all, Accra already seems to enjoy some attention of the ‘picky’ global investors. The challenge is to meet the latter halfway.

Another significant point to note in this statement is the notion that “the world has changed and so must we.” What this suggests is the broader (external) influences that shape the views and actions of state officials concerning city-making. This point comes out more clearly in the following response by a different official concerning the growing emphasis on global and private-sector oriented urban strategy:

> “I think… you know [referring to me the interviewer] *that it is the order of the day, because of the obvious reasons of expertise, capital and other things*. So that is the way to go and that is why we [the AMA] are also going that way” (Adjetey, interview, 2 August 2011; emphasis added).
What this official emphasizes is the supposedly universal norm of this approach. Indeed, the drive to open up state management systems to private actors in the name of efficiency and cost effectiveness is at the core of urban neoliberalization. This market and private-sector-led public-sector management approach forms the basis of the NPM. The latter approach is largely sustained by a neoliberal mindset which many scholars have christened “There Is No Alternative (TINA)” (Hamann, 2009; Munck, 2003). As this official proclaims, “that is the way to go.”

As evident from these quotes, the view that Accra needs to be made globally competitive is widely shared by city officials. Yet, as I seek to show, this ‘global talk’ about Accra is a fairly recent one. It is important to outline the contours of this discourse in order to understand its relationship with other, equally dominant, imaginations about the city. One such imagination is the view of Accra representing the image of the nation-state itself.

Upon a careful reading of relevant literature and analysis of both primary (interviews) and secondary (official and media) sources, I identify, in broad terms, four periods within which the official view of Accra transitioned. The city was once the fulcrum of nation-building (the nationalist period), then a strategic place (the strategic period), then the gateway to West Africa (the gateway period), and then finally a destination of global capital (the destination period). This categorization is very general and is intended to provide a background to the current ambitions to transform the city. It does not, therefore, account for the nuances of each period identified. In each period, I highlight the key factors that influence how the city is imagined. These include: the desire for economic growth; the nationalist project of state modernization; the status of Accra as the capital city; and the role of certain public officials in their own right.
The nationalist period

The nationalist period spans between 1957 and the late 1980s, much of which coincides with the era of military dominance in national politics and development processes. Throughout this period, governance was centralized at the national level (Acquaah-Harrison, 2004; Owusu, 2010; Yankson, 2006; ISSER, n.d), which meant that Accra did not have its unique development plan as a city. It, however, had a master plan, developed first during the colonial era in 1944 and revised in 1958 and 1961. This plan, notably, was mainly concerned with the physical expansion and planning rather than all-round, comprehensive development of the city (Ministry of Local Government, 1993). Not least because of its colonial roots, the plan was couched in modernist principles of total design that made provisions for functional differentiation of the city.

Yet, the postcolonial planning had to overcome the race-based spatial divide of the city that characterized the colonial era. During the colonial era, the European dominated residential and commercial spaces were planned and controlled while the indigenous areas developed haphazardly (Grant and Yankson, 2003). Driven by nationalistic impulses, the postcolonial government sought to ‘indigenize’ the city in order to erase the remnants of the colonial presence on its physical landscape. This was partly done by encouraging mainly Ghanaian-owned companies to establish themselves in the core commercial areas hitherto the preserve of European businesses (Grant, 2009).

On similar nationalistic grounds, the early post-independence governments, particularly that of Kwame Nkrumah, sought to construct a sense of nationhood through architectural design and planning of Accra (Hess, 2000). Yet, even though his emphasis was on promoting a national or indigenous identity, Nkrumah’s interventions were largely consistent with the modernist
template inherited from the colonial administration. This is not surprising because Nkrumah was himself one of the strongest advocates of modernization, manifest in the numerous high-profile projects\(^{30}\) that he undertook during his tenure as the head of state. The only distinction is that his urban interventions, especially in the case of Accra, were driven by the desire to demonstrate the progressive status of the Ghanaian state (Hess, 2000). In this period, therefore, national-identity construction appears to be the overriding factor in shaping how Accra was perceived, and thus formed the fundamental basis upon which the state sought to reshape the city. Most significantly, there is no evidence to suggest that there was any drive to position the city as an economic force within the international setting.

**The strategic period**

The strategic period covers the late 1980s to mid-1990s. Like the previous one, this period shows no evidence to the effect that any conscious effort was made to position Accra as a city in global terms. What distinguishes this period, however, was the call for “more effective planning and coordination of development in Accra” (Ministry of Local Government, 1992, p 1). Two processes are particularly noteworthy in this period. The first was a series of direct interventions by the World Bank to reshape the governance and physical architecture of Accra. In terms of the city’s governance structure, the World Bank was influential, through the decentralization program, in strengthening the role of the AMA in the development agenda of the city. In line with its increased interest in urban development in the South (Gulyani and Connors, 2002), the World Bank sought to strengthen the local administration by working together with

\(^{30}\) These include the Akosombo Dam, the Accra-Tema Motorway, and Tema Township.
the Assembly to improve its management operations, particularly its financial administration (Korsah-Dick and Mensah, 1993).

In the area of physical change, the Bank funded some of its most direct interventions in the provision of the city’s physical infrastructure. Such interventions were undertaken under the Bank’s Urban Projects portfolio, including Urban II and Urban V. The increased focus on the city’s physical infrastructure was driven by a conviction that “rehabilitation, general improvement, and modernization of the urban fabric will induce cost savings and greater reliability in the operations of public services and private enterprise” (World Bank, 1990, p. 33).

The second noteworthy process relative to Accra’s evolution as a city during this period was the drafting of what was called Strategic Plan for the Greater Accra Metropolitan Area (GAMA). For the first time, this plan provided a comprehensive framework that sought to “provide a vision as well as serve as a guide to the future of Accra” (Ministry of Local Government, 1992, p. 3). It differed from “the traditional master plan in that greater emphasis… [was] placed on economic and social planning to generate the resources needed to finance the essential hard and soft infrastructural projects outlined in the plan” (ibid, p. 3). One important dimension to this process is the overriding role played by international agencies including the United Nations Development Program (UNDP) and United Nations Centre for Human Settlement (UNCHS now UN-Habitat). These agencies provided most of the funding, in addition to other technical and professional assistance that went into producing this plan.

There are also two important points that need to be made about this period as discussed so far. The first has to do with the external influence in shaping perceptions about, and interventions to change, Accra. While the World Bank’s role sought to redirect the attention of
the state to the need for efficient management and infrastructure supply of the city in order to facilitate “the operations of public services and private enterprise,” the involvement of the UN agencies highlighted the need to view and manage the city as an integrated whole. What both bodies called for was a strategic intervention to shape the current and the future of Accra. In some sense, this convergence marked the beginning of how external forces and processes directly influence and shape Accra.

The second point relates to the Strategic Plan itself. One remarkable observation is that, just like the previous plan, there is barely any reference to global economic restructuring and the position of Accra within it. Reference are made instead to the national economy, as captured in the plan’s text:

“[S]ince economic activity in GAMA is affected by other centres or regions and ultimately linked to the national economy, GAMA’s economy must be examined in terms of its linkage with the national economy” (ibid, p. 18; emphasis added).

This juncture is worthy of note because beyond it, Accra ceases to be confined to the national territorial boundary but is instead discussed mainly in reference to the global urban system. The developmentalist approach to Accra that treated the city more as a national administrative capital gives way to that which saw it as a ‘wide-open’ globalizing city.

**The gateway period**

The gateway period covers the later part of the 1990s and mid-2000s. This period marks the beginning of the shift towards the imagination of Accra in significantly global terms. This shift was the culmination of a decade-long neoliberal agenda to intensify the global integration of the Ghanaian economy through the ERP/SAP. The shift began with an economic experiment
called the *Trade Gateway and Investment Project*, or the Gateway Project for short, approved in July 1998 under the sponsorship of the World Bank. The objective of the project was to implement measures designed “to attract a critical mass of export-oriented investors to Ghana to accelerate export-led growth as well as [to] facilitate trade” (World Bank, n.d; see also World Bank, 2010, p. 10).

This gateway project marks an important turning point in terms of the external-internal relationship in the history of Ghana’s economic governance with significant consequences for Accra. The gateway concept was part of a broader discourse that proceeded on the premise that a more intense global integration of the Ghanaian economy is ‘indispensable’ and inevitable. For instance, the former British High Commissioner in Ghana, Nicholas Westcott, asserted that “[i]t is in Ghana’s interest to build an open economy, both in the region and globally. *Only through globally competitive business* will Ghana be able to sustain a middle-income status” (Westcott, 2010, n.p; emphasis added). This attitude partly explains the view held by some city officials of Accra that there is no alternative to more widely opening up the city to external capital and expertise.

Expectedly, most of the plans in the 1998 gateway project were oriented towards Accra and its adjacent city of Tema. The associated interventions mainly centred on the Kotoka International Airport and its adjoining key economic spaces, and the Port and its export processing zone in Tema (Grant and Nijman, 2002). It is important to note that even though the project mainly manifested in Accra, its scope was national in two main senses. Firstly, it was mainly undertaken by the central, rather than local, government; and secondly, it was designed to
facilitate material exports and imports throughout the country, albeit with Accra and Tema at the centre of it.

But by the beginning of the twenty-first century, this external orientation had taken a new tangent, this time assuming a more specific policy to ‘modernize’ Accra. This shift was symbolized by the establishment of a new Ministry called the ‘Ministry of Tourism and Modernization of the Capital City (MTMCC)’ in 2003. The external focus of this new policy was by no means implicit. As the then coordinator of the program at the Ministry Crosby Tekyi-Mills emphasized:

“Modernization of the Capital City Portfolio was created to facilitate the development of a competitive capital city to make it a destination of choice for international gatherings, attract investment and boost tourism” (GNA, 20 July 2004; emphasis added).

The key operative term here is competitive capital city. For the first time in official discourse, Accra was being placed in a competitive relationship with other cities around the world. At this point, the city had essentially ceased to be a territorialized place within the national domain but rather a deterritorialized space within the abstract global urban system. This stage marked the beginning of urban entrepreneurialism in Accra, at least in discursive terms.

But the fact that this policy was pursued by the central rather than the local state makes it unique relative to the experiences of Northern cities, as captured in the urban neoliberalism literature. In this literature, city officials in collaboration with private business elite are largely credited with such initiatives. In the case of Accra however, its history of developmentalism in which the central state acts like an octopus mediates this shift of the city towards the direction of

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31This Ministry was carved out of the already existing Ministry of Tourism. The name has since 2006 reversed to the latter.
global competitiveness. In other words, in what is clearly the domain of the city government, even in accordance with Ghana’s local governance rule, the weight of the central government looms large.

This is not the only feature that sets the experience of Accra apart from those of the Northern cities; the influence of the nationalist impulse is also quite strong. Fundamental to the interpretation of urban entrepreneurialism in the North by the critical urban scholars is that the competitiveness-obsessed city ‘revitalizers’ are driven purely by economic and class motives. The case of Accra is a lot more complicated than this characterization. Even though the state actors engaged in these exercises make references to the ‘universal norm,’ they also seem to be engrossed in the postcolonial ambition to modernize the city mainly on the basis of national pride. Take for instance the following statement by the former minister in charge of the MTMCC Jake Obetsebi-Lamptey32:

“[our aim is to] recast Accra as a statement of pride and resurgence. [We] Want a situation where you come out of the international airport and you get the headlines which tell you the full story of the country….this city must state that this country is modern and is Ghanaian. We don’t want to create a mini-Los Angeles or a mini-New York. We want to create an Accra that reflects Ghanaian certainties (Building & Design, 2004, p. 1; emphasis added).

This attitude is not surprising given the historical importance attached to the national capitals by early nationalist governments across Africa. In this nationalist imaginary, the capital cities are essentially synonymous with the nation-states themselves. This imaginary has endured and partly drives the ambition to transform these cities. As Ghana’s current President John Mahama recently stated:

32 He made the statement during a meeting with a group of investors and architects in London to solicit external input to the capital city modernization policy.
“[w]e need to make Accra a city that is dignified and worthy of the name Ghana has; Ghana has a lot of international respect and people expect that its capital city and its capital region should be befitting of the country. And so we will work with you [the chiefs of Accra] to see how we can bring up Accra to that standard” (Myjoyonline, 2 August 2012; emphasis added).

Similar sentiments towards Accra as an embodiment of the Ghanaian nation-state itself can be noted in the following statement by an influential academic and politician, Professor Kofi Awunoo that:

“our commitment to Accra is a commitment to our nation, and failing to achieve that would mean that we have undermined our country” (Ghana Business News, 8 August 2011; emphasis added).

These sentiments collectively substantiate my point that the current ambition to transform Accra in reference to the global norm transcends the economic imperative that many analysts have pointed to in the case of Northern cities. It also reflects the postcolonial project to cultivate national identity or ‘Ghanaianness,’ whatever that means.

Subsequent to the adoption of the capital city modernization portfolio in 2003, the ambition to globally position Accra became the overriding focus of the metropolitan government itself. I must note, however, that this discursive shift and policy reorientation by the metropolitan government had earlier roots. In 2000, the former Mayor of the city Nat Nuno-Amarteifio (1994-1998) made what appears to be one of the earliest propositions about the need to imagine Accra in a broader context. Speaking at a conference in Accra on the theme “Visions of the City: Accra in the 21st Century” (see Mills-Tettey and Adi-Dako, 2002), he argued that within the next few years “competition for business and prosperity may no longer be between the states in the region [of sub-Saharan Africa] but between their major cities” (ibid, p. 11). It was imperative, he adds, that Accra “recognize[s] its potential role in the sub-region and the competition it faces from
other sub-regional capitals and plan how to wage this struggle to the benefit of its residents” (ibid, p. 14; emphasis added).

The war-like expression in this statement, “wage this struggle,” was obviously intended to move the discourse on globalizing Accra from the realm of mere desirability to that of indispensability and urgency. Yet, even though another former mayor, Nii Adjiri Blankson (2004-2009) was already pontificating on the need “to make Accra a world-class city” (GNA, 26 February 2004), it took the appearance of Mayor Vanderpuije on the governance scene of Accra in 2009 to infuse that element of urgency into urban policy, and, more importantly, official practices in the city.

The destination period

The destination period is typically marked by the coming of Mayor Vanderpuije into the governance scene of Accra. His role in the changing discourse and development practices in Accra is largely indicative of the enormous influence of individuals, rather than institutions, in shaping socio-spatial dynamics of African cities. Since his appointment in 2009 by President Mills and subsequent confirmation by the General Assembly of the AMA (see Figure 5.1), Mayor Vanderpuije has worked to strengthen the conversation about Accra’s role in the global context. He seems to be uniquely positioned to shape this conversation due to his personal experience and outlook.

33It must be noted that in Accra, and many African cities for that matter, there is always the need to make a distinction between urban policy and urban practice. In the specific case of Accra, for instance, certain individual officials, e.g. mayors, have become so dominant that what they think and do are more far reaching than what is contained in urban policy documents.
Prior to his appointment, Mayor Vanderpuije sojourned nearly two decades in the United States of America, much of it in Atlanta, Georgia. He was quick to point out how his experience in the West shaped his views about what an ideal/modern city should look like. As he declared not long after his confirmation:

“...I have the experience and know what cities look like. I have worked with community leaders and mayors [in the United States], and as an educator and public school administrator part of my work was to develop the area I worked” (Daily Graphic, 2 August 2009; emphasis added).

The premier state-owned media, Daily Graphic, described him as a man with an “enviable world view, particularly [regarding] the development of modern cities” (ibid; emphasis added). How his professional status as a High School principal gives him the expertise in city modernization, as he claims, is not entirely clear.

What is unmistakable is the mayor’s passion to transform Accra. In his words, “the greatest injustice I will do to Accra is not to bring my experience gained outside to bear on the development of Ghana’s national capital, for which I will regret later” (Graphic.com,
Tuesday 23 February 2010). To Mayor Vanderpuije then, the mission “to modernize Accra,” as he often terms it, is not just an institutional one but also a personal responsibility, if not more so. He even compared his role as mayor to that of a king: “It’s God who sets up kings and when the time of reckoning comes everybody will realize that I played my role and God’s name will be glorified” (*Daily Graphic*, 2 August 2009).

My elaboration about the mayor is only to buttress my earlier point that sometimes we get a better understanding about governance trends in cities, especially African cities, by focusing on the ambition and orientation of certain individuals in their own right. Even though their role is to facilitate the economic practices of several interests groups, it will be a mistake to reduce that role to such economic imperatives. Sometimes that role is shaped by the desire to cultivate personal legacies and political successes as well.

Since becoming the Mayor, Mr. Vanderpuije’s influence on the city has been felt in a number of ways. Indeed many of the city officials are of the view that “never before have we had such a dynamic and passionate mayor who is so focused on transforming Accra” (Quartey, interview, August 2011). One of his missions is to redirect the discourse about Accra. To Mayor Vanderpuije, the reference to the city as being the gateway to West Africa was not befitting enough. He thus insists, emphatically, that “Accra is no longer just a gateway, it is a destination” (*GNA*, 8 August 2011; emphasis added).

The prime outcome of the Mayor’s passion to ‘modernize or globalize’ Accra was the designation of the city in 2010 as a Millennium City. The Millennium City is an initiative of the

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34 The term ‘modernize Accra’ has become one of the mayor’s most favored expressions. A few instances that he used it include “Accra’s stride to move from an average city into a modern city” (*Daily Graphic*, http://ghanaian-chronicle.com/?p=18702); “we should not be content with the present situation of Accra but rather gear up for total change to conform to modern and acceptable practices” (*Ghanaian Chronicle*, 7 Oct. 2009); the need to “transform Accra into a modern city” (AMA, 2011a, p. 3) or a “world class metropolis” (*GNA*, 1 March 2010).
Earth Institute of Columbia University in the USA. Led by Jeffrey Sachs, the initiative is meant to facilitate the achievement of the UN’s Millennium Development Goals by assisting the selected cities to become viable and sustainable, “each with distinct livelihood opportunities, improved access to public services and links with the countryside and international markets” (MCI, n.d.; emphasis added). Even though the MCI is geared more toward poverty reduction/alleviation rather than economic growth, Accra’s version quickly became the defining conduit through which the mayor and the AMA as a whole pursued their already envisioned globalizing agenda for Accra. The MCI for Accra fits perfectly with the current narrative about the city in that it also seeks to project the city as one of the three most strategically placed urban centres to dominate the African continent. Japhet Aryiku\textsuperscript{35} describes them as “three triangular cities that are most critical to the economic development of the African continent; Accra in the West, Cairo in the North and Johannesburg in the South” (Myjoyonline, 14 September 2011). The AMA affirms Accra as a rising continental and global force by opening its 2011 brochure “Investment Opportunities in Accra” with a bolded quote from US President Barack Obama: “The 21\textsuperscript{st} century will be shaped by what happens not just in Rome or Moscow or Washington, but what happens in Accra as well.” Thus, by latching onto this bold claim to showcase Accra’s “Investment Opportunities”, the official discursive shift towards imagining Accra beyond the national scope has reached a crescendo. Accra is no longer just another Ghanaian city but one among the three “most critical to the economic development of the African continent.” Even more than that, Accra now stands on the same platform as “Rome or Moscow or Washington.” The city is now mainly promoted as a competitive destination of choice for international

\textsuperscript{35}Japhet Aryiku was the Ghanaian Special Advisor to Jeffrey Sachs on Accra’s Millennium City Initiative
gatherings, tourism, and investment. But what does it actually take for an African city like Accra to become a globally competitive city, beyond the rhetoric?

5.3 Urban entrepreneurialism in practice in Accra

So far, the discussion has focused on discourses of global integration of Accra. In this section, I look at how this ‘global talk’ influences and shapes urban practices in Accra. This is important because as Rose (1999, p. 29) advocates, we must go beyond mere words to appreciate how language “functions in connection with other things, what it makes possible, the surfaces, networks and circuits around which it flows, the artefacts and passions that it mobilizes and through which it mobilizes”. He adds that

“It is possible to govern only within a certain regime of intelligibility—to govern is to act under a certain description. Language is not secondary to government; it is constitutive of it. Language not only makes acts of government describable; it also makes them possible” (ibid, p. 28).

The concern here is: in what substantive ways is the rhetoric about ‘globalizing’ or ‘modernizing’ Accra shaping the social and spatial interventions concerning the city? According to the urban neoliberalism literature, some of the key characteristics of the entrepreneurial cities are institutional reconfigurations and spatial restructurings. My assessment of Accra relative to the ambition to modernize it and turn it into an ideal investment location revolves around these two characteristics. But first of all, there is the need to establish what actually drives city officials to embrace city entrepreneurial approaches and what exactly those approaches are.
**Institutional reconfiguration and urban entrepreneurialism**

One of the highlights of Ghana’s political governance history since independence is the adoption of the decentralization system. The system resulted in the devolution of power from the central state to the local Assemblies. The AMA came out of this system as one of the several local Assemblies (216 of them so far) granted the autonomy under the 1992 Constitution “to plan, initiate, co-ordinate, manage and execute policies in respect of all matters affecting the people within [the metropolis]”.  

This so-called bottom-up administration and planning approach was radically pushed by the World Bank and other western development actors as an antidote for the inefficient top-down development approach led by the national state (Owusu, 2005).

In the broader context of Africa, several critics have interpreted the decentralization project as one of the technologies of state neoliberalization by the Western institutions (Mohan, 1996; Miraftab, 2004, 2008). In some sense, this is part of the institutional reconfiguration mentioned by the neoliberalism scholarship. More directly so, in the specific case of Ghana, is the constant effort to make the local Assemblies absorb the spirit of competitiveness and entrepreneurship in ways that they approach the management of their jurisdictions. Part of the challenge is to address the ever expanding mandate that comes with no corresponding resource allocation. To get a better sense of the specific case of the AMA, there is the need to bring the urban challenge of Accra into relief. This will help to put into proper perspective the key elements and forces that are driving the city authority towards entrepreneurial adventure.

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36 The Constitution Of The Republic Of Ghana (1992), Article 240(2)(b)
Currently, the metropolis has a daily shortfall in water supply in excess of 130,000m³ (supply is at 401,800m³ against daily demand of 532,570m³). Hence, water rationing has become the norm, negatively affecting socio-economic activities within the city (Republic of Ghana 2012, p. 10), particularly in low-income areas. Similarly, the sewerage system of the metropolis currently covers only 15 percent of the city, exposing large sections of the city, again mostly low-income neighbourhoods, to serious environmental pollution and degradation because much of the rest of the liquid waste runs in open gutters. The story is replicated in the area of solid waste management as well. Of the 2,200 tonnes of garbage the city generates daily, the Assembly is able to collect only 1,500 tonnes (i.e. 68 percent) daily, with a daily backlog of about 700 tonnes (Republic of Ghana, 2012; AMA, 2011b). The huge backlog is reflected in choked drains, overflowing garbage bins, littered pavements etc. The situation has persisted despite aggressive privatization of the sector over the past decade.

The housing sector fares no better. The city currently has an accumulated backlog of 300,000 housing units, resulting from the fact that only 21.4 percent of the estimated annual housing need of the Metropolis (25,000 units) is produced (Republic of Ghana, 2012). Of this figure, the formal sector—the state and the private estate developers combined—account for only 10 percent. The remaining 90 percent is contributed by private individuals, much of it in the form of sub-standard structures and environmental conditions. It is not surprising, therefore, that the metropolis currently hosts about 29 squatter and slum communities (UN-Habitat and AMA, 2011; Republic of Ghana, 2012), with slum dwellers alone forming 38.4 percent of the population but occupying only 15.7 percent of the total land area of the city (UN-Habitat and AMA, 2011). Additionally, over 60,000 children within the city are estimated to be living on the
street, according to a recent Report (Ghanaweb, 12 February 2013). The city also exhibits some stress in the road and transport sector. This is manifested in long waiting times and long walking distances that characterize urban trips. There is also a problem of congestion due to the fact that bus transport, that serves about 70 percent of the motorized persons, utilizes only 30 percent of available road space in the city (AMA, 2011a). The rest is taken by private cars that serve only a few residents.

Added to the basic infrastructural concerns of the metropolis are urgent social needs such as healthcare and poverty reduction. Despite increasing life-style-related diseases (Songsore, 2004), the major health problems of Accra remain communicable diseases due to poor environmental sanitation, ignorance, and poverty. Indeed over 70 percent of diseases in Accra are attributed to inadequate sanitation (UN, n.d). Malaria has consistently been the number one disease, accounting for about 95.01 percent of all the Out-Patient Department (OPD) presentations (Republic of Ghana, 2012). Cholera is also endemic, with seasonal outbreaks that coincide with the onset of the rainy season (ibid). Furthermore, poverty levels have also grown consistently over the last decade, increasing from 4.4 percent in 1998/99 to 10.6 percent in 2005/06 (GSS, 2008). The poverty trend is directly associated with high unemployment levels, that currently stand at 10.6 percent and increasing (Republic of Ghana, 2012).

Some may argue that many of these functions such as healthcare provision and poverty reduction, fall outside the mandate of the AMA. While this is indeed the case, there are certainly interlinkages among these urban challenges. For instance, it is poverty that drives people to hawk on the streets and build low-standard, low-cost housing that ultimately becomes the
responsibility of the AMA to address. Therefore, all challenges of the city end at the door step of the AMA, directly or indirectly.

Yet despite this enormous task placed on the Assembly, resource allocation by the central government to the Assembly is a far cry of what is required. For example, the District Assembly Common Fund (DACF), the largest direct Government of Ghana transfer to the local Assemblies, given to the AMA for fiscal years 2009, 2010, and 2011 combined amounted to a mere GH₵10,435,698 (about $5,806,042). This amount hardly covers the city’s waste management cost of GH₵550,000.00 (about $306,000) per month (Republic Of Ghana, 2012), which translates into GH₵19,800,000 (about $11,016,000) for the three years mentioned. This cost of waste management amounts to over 60 percent of the Assembly’s internally generated funds (UN-Habitat and AMA, 2011, p. 13). It is this inadequate support from the central state, I will argue, that pushes the AMA towards entrepreneurialism. What then are the entrepreneurial approaches the Assembly pursues? The answer lies in the pro-market and pro-global interventions that are becoming the norm in official management practices in Accra.

**Pro-market strategies**

The central feature of urban neoliberalism or entrepreneurialism as argued by many urban scholars is the dominance of market principles and strategies in city governance processes. Over the last decade, Accra has experienced some of the most intense efforts by local Assemblies in the country to expand the reach of the market. This is particularly manifest in ways that the Assembly has tried to roll in the private sector in the delivery of management services in Accra. This pro-market strategy has entailed either outright privatization of municipal services or
adoption of PPPs, or both. From the perspective of the NPM approach that largely informs these strategies, PPPs and private-sector led urban management not only creates conditions for better financing and provision of public infrastructure but also leads to more efficient allocation of resources than state bureaucracy (Siemiatycki, 2006; Miraftab, 2004; Beard, 2008).

In Ghana, the notion of market and private-sector supremacy in the provision and management of public services has its roots in the neoliberal reforms that were undertaken in the early 1980s under the watch of the World Bank and IMF. Since then, the successive central governments, regardless of their ideological leaning, have endorsed private-sector led principles, especially the PPP component. In the specific case of Accra, however, one of the earliest to advocate for PPPs was former mayor, Nat Nuno-Amarteifio. In his address at a conference in 2000 on the future of Accra in the 21st century, he noted that:

“As Accra emerges into a mega-city, the role of the business establishment will become important in shaping and financing the growth of the metropolis. This is necessary if the city is to harness funds and creative energy to compete with other megacities in the region” (2002, p. 11).

Since then, the AMA has progressively tilted towards PPPs. This shift is clearly captured in the following statement by the Assembly in its recent publication on investment opportunities in Accra:

"Having collaborated with development partners for a long time, the Assembly has now recognised the importance of extending to the private sector fruitful partnerships to assist the Assembly perform its functions as best it can. Accra, generally, is considered as the economic capital of the West African Sub-Region and the gateway to Africa” (AMA, 2011, p. 3).

One of the earliest urban services to be privatized, or at least have PPP arrangement, in Accra is waste management. This began mainly in the mid-1990s (Demanya, 2006; Post and Obirih-Opareh, 2003, p. 50). Since then, the list of PPPs between the AMA and private
institutions has grown longer by the day. So too have the aspects of city management which such arrangements cover. These include revenue collection, management of local markets, management of advertising spaces and many more (see Table 5.2 for detail list).

Table 5.2: Some of the key urban services advertised by the AMA as “Investment Opportunities in Accra”

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Services</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• Car park development</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Land for lease for motel development for the tourism industry</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Street and drain cleaning in the Central Business District and ceremonial roads</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Development and beautification of open spaces</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Financial services</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• House numbering and street naming</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Construction of fishing harbors, landing beaches and storage facilities</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Managing outdoor billboards and advertising</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Real estate development</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Health and medical infrastructure</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Construction of the planned Accra Convention Centre</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Construction of a multi-purpose building with offices</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Construction of the Accra Community Centre.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• The development of office complexes in the Central Business District of Accra</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Market development and construction</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: based on AMA (2011c)

The net of privatization has been cast so wide as to create the impression, following MacLeod (2002), that social and economic life within the city is undergoing commodification and demunicipalization; or what Larner (2000) describes as rolling out market metrics into further realms of social life. These partnerships, according to Mayor Vanderpuije, are necessary “because the AMA cannot do it alone...” (Ghanaian Chronicle, 9 December 2010). The city, the Assembly claims, needs “a ‘win-win Public-Private Partnership’ to…create the necessary driving force for the transformation of Accra into a Modern City...” (AMA, 2011a, p. 3; my emphasis). Here there is the need to note the attempt to link PPPs with the ambition to
‘modernize’ Accra. Quite apart from the partnership arrangements, the AMA itself has been striving in recent times to take on an entrepreneurial outlook by adopting crafty techniques to maximize its revenue generation. One such technique is the use of point-of-sale devices to overcome evasions (AMA, 2012).

**Pro-global strategies**

Over the last five years, the effort to engage the private sector in the governance process of Accra has taken an important tangent. This entails the moves to court ‘global’ investors into Accra. One form of this ‘global’ orientation is sister-cities arrangements, that the Assembly believes can help to explore ways to source capital and expertise.37 Another entails international travels by Mayor Vanderpuije and other executives of the AMA to promote Accra as a safe place to invest.

The most audacious pro-global strategy yet is what the AMA christens international investment forums. The first of its kind was scheduled, in collaboration with the Earth Institute of Colombia University, to take place in New York City in October 2011. The forum has since been postponed twice due to logistical challenges. The important point here, regardless, is that the ambition to trigger the transformation of Accra through (global) private capital and expertise is taking concrete forms. The following is how the Assembly advertizes the forum and Accra as an investment destination:

The purpose of the event is to showcase Accra, the capital of Ghana, as the Investment destination in Sub-Saharan Africa and to bring to the attention of the US investor community, the African and Ghanaian expatriates communities living in the United States and Canada, and other interested business representatives,

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37Some of the sister cities are Atlanta and Chicago, USA; and Samsun City, Turkey.
commercially viable foreign direct investment opportunities in the Millennium City of Accra (AMA, 2011e).

Here again there is emphasis on Accra’s ambition to become an ideal “investment destination in Sub-Saharan Africa”. Included in the list of urban services and infrastructure that the Assembly invites the ‘global’ investor community to participate in delivering are Financial Services (Banking, Insurance, Stock Market); Real Estate Development (luxury and affordable housing and hostels); Power and Energy (solar, thermal, solid/liquid waste); Communication; Transportation; Tourism & Hospitality; Medical Tourism; Sports and Entertainment; ICT; Pharmaceuticals; Education (Tertiary and Skill Training); the Garment Industry; and Infrastructure (AMA, 2011e). Obviously, most of these functions fall outside of AMA’s mandate. Hence, the effort by the latter to court foreign investors into these areas suggests how ambitious the city officials have indeed become in recent times.

But there is a curiosity here. In a typical case of urban entrepreneurialism, as described by the dominant scholarship on the topic, city officials highlight the superiority of their basic infrastructure as means of attracting external investors and tourists. In the case of Accra, however, the strategy seems to be the reverse. A closer look at the urban functions being advertised for private participation (including those mentioned shortly above and those in Table 5.2) reveals that external capital is rather being directed at basic infrastructure provision: that which the city ordinarily ought to be drawing on as some of its positives to attract external investors and tourists.

It is difficult to assess the response of external investors to the marketing drive of the city government, due to lack of credible data. This challenge can be extended to include recent investment in-flows into the city, in the sense that it is difficult to link these in-flows directly to
the city-marketing campaigns of the Assembly. This notwithstanding, I wish to briefly point out some of the indicators that suggest growing participation of external players in the city’s economic dynamics.

Over the last decade, Ghana has consistently ranked among the top recipients of FDIs into Africa and Accra is at the core of it. For both 2011 and 2012, for example, the country ranked among the top five recipients of FDIs into Africa (GIPC, 2012). Of the total estimated value of GH¢10.14 billion (US$5.63 billion) of investment projects registered in 2012 by the GIPC, the FDI component was estimated at GH¢8.83 billion (US$4.90 billion), approximately 88 percent (GIPC, 2013). The sources of these FDIs are quite instructive. In terms of the number of registered projects, China topped, followed by India, Nigeria, Lebanon and Britain in that order. In terms of value of investments, however, Lebanon topped, followed by British Virgin Island, Mauritius, US, and Netherlands. This picture does not match the overwhelming attention accorded Western investors by the Ghanaian state, including the AMA.

What is more instructive is that consistently, Accra ranks top as the destination of the FDIs into the country. For instance, about 80 percent of all the projects registered in 2012 were located in the Greater Accra region. Some of these in-flows have gone into changing the pattern of urban spatiality of Accra (GIPC, 2012). It is quite observable that a number of remarkable landmark projects have sprang up on the landscape of Accra. Notable ones include ‘world-class’ hotels (e.g. Movenpick Ambassador Hotel, Marriott Hotel, Kempinski Hotel Gold Coast City) and ‘modern’ shopping malls (e.g. Accra Mall, West Hills Mall, and the Octagon). In addition, there has been a growth in the number of high-rise apartment and commercial buildings within the metropolis (e.g. the Accra World Trade Centre, the XGI Tower, the Villaggio Vista Towers
etc. [see Figures 5.2 and 5.3). Most of these developments are either wholly or partly owned by foreign investors.

**Figure 5.2:** The Villaggio Vista towers under construction. Located in the Airport Residential suburb of Accra adjacent to the Tetteh Quarshie interchange, the towers consist of three residential structures, the tallest being a 27 floor tower. (Source: the Villaggio Vista)

**Figure 5.3:** The 15-Floor XGI Tower. It is a commercial development with one of its distinguishing features being a revolving restaurant at the top floor. (Photograph: Abdul Alim Habib)
5.4. The entrepreneurial Accra: re-imaging and re-presenting the city

Besides institutional reconfiguration and reorientation, the entrepreneurial approach advocates maximum attention to the quality of urban environment. Typical of entrepreneurial cities is a strong desire on the part of officials to project their cities as innovative, exciting, creative, and safe places in which to live, tour, invest, and consume (Crossa, 2009; Harvey, 1989a; Ashworth and Voogd, 1990; Philo and Kearns, 1993; Carmona and Burgess, 2009; Swyngedouw et. al, 2005). This approach often entails the development of “flagship” projects, including large modern shopping malls and recreation facilities, entertainment districts for a sophisticated public, Waterfront developments, and World Trade Centers.

Accra, in many respects, can be said to be towing this line. The city’s globalizing ambition has come with some spatial implications. Over the past decade, place-making or city-representational exercises by the AMA have become relatively more elaborate. The reality, however, is that the city lacks the capacity to undertake some of the “flagship” projects often associated with ‘global’ cities (including the relatively less dominant ones in Africa) with whom Accra seeks to compete for investments. For instance, the city’s capital investments, which include infrastructure, for both 2009 and 2010 combined amounted to only about GHC 9 million (about $5million) (Table 5.3). It is outweighed even by personal emoluments; which means the city spends more on administration than on infrastructure supply and management.
Accra’s figure on capital expenditure is clearly a drop in the ocean when compared with the R4.6 billion (or $460 million) that the city of Johannesburg spent on infrastructure in 2012/2013 financial year alone (City of Johannesburg, 10 May 2013)\(^\text{38}\). I cite Johannesburg here mainly because it, more than any other African city, has made explicit its desire to become/remain the most competitive city on the continent. It recently revealed a plan to revamp its infrastructure with about R110 billion (about $11 billion) over the next 10 years, which it says “will result in Johannesburg competing favorably with other major cities on the African continent…” (ibid, n.p).

Yet, despite being cash strapped, the local state of Accra is still manifestly committed to ‘flagship’ projects. The first evidence to this effect is the proposed redevelopment of the Korle Lagoon and its catchment areas, including the Old Fadama slum (AMA, 2011a). Originally conceived to rehabilitate the polluted Korle Lagoon, the project has metamorphosed into a mega proposition to transform the zone into a vital business and tourism center, made up of a mixture

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\(^{38}\)It is important to note however that the expenditure on infrastructure for Accra may be much higher than stated here because of the normal practice of direct spending on infrastructure projects within the city by central governments. But even so, this expenditure come nowhere close to that of the City of Johannesburg
of modern high-rise residential and commercial buildings, and recreational and leisure facilities (The Statesman, 15 January 2007). A close look at the project design reveals a classic case of inner city revitalization where business, culture and leisure are blended with aesthetic, modernist architecture (see Figure 5.4). As other similar ones, this project remains on the shelf for obvious reasons: funding.

![Figure 5.4: Proposed re development plan of Old Fadama. Source (AMA 2011a, 22)](image)

The same can be said about the plan to develop and corporatize Accra’s beachfront. Waterfront developments are some of the most typical of entrepreneurial city strategies that aim to make cities more attractive and competitive as places to visit and spend (Sager, 2011; Ling, 2004; Harvey, 1989; Gordon, 1997; Lehrer and Laidley, 2008). They form an important part of a new paradigm of mega-project development and urban revitalization within the framework of city competitiveness (Lehrer and Laidley, 2008; Bianchini et al., 1992; Gordon, 1997).
Accra’s embrace of the strategy of water/seafront developments is rather recent. The city, admittedly, has had some limited private-led seafront developments for at least two decades. The difference with the current proposed schemes is that they are both more comprehensive and more active by way of state interests and involvement. Furthermore, the objective behind them is quite typical of the city competitiveness model. The proposed projects are expected to turn the seafront into a hub of recreation, business and trade; with strong global orientation (see Figures 5.5 and 5.6). Some of the specific projects currently under consideration include a 500-room five-star hotel, 21-floor World Trade Centre apartment, office and exhibition buildings and development of the beach (The Ghanaian Times, 23 February 2010).

Figures 5.5 and 5.6: Artist impressions of part of the proposed development of Accra’s beachfront (Source: AMA, 2011c)

Other proposed capital-intensive projects in line with the modernization vision for Accra include construction of Accra’s first ever monorail system and a new Bus Rapid Transport System (BRTS). The monorail project, called the “Greater Accra Transit System,” was formally announced by Mayor Vanderpuije in February 2011. The $1.5 billion project, to be financed
largely by a US company, Transco Company Limited of Virginia, (Government of Ghana, 2011) will run on electric power above ground at a speed of 80 kilometers per hour, with an estimated 700,000 rides a day. Like nearly all similar abstract, or even phantasmagoric, projects intended to modernize the city, the monorail project is designed to include hotels, business and conference centers, multi-storey modern shopping complexes, mixed-use buildings with apartments and condos, a beach resort with luxury villas and a golf course, and other real-estate developments (GNA 23 July, 2010; Ghanaian Chronicle 26 July 2010). This project too is yet to see the light of day.

As I indicated earlier, these capital-intensive projects are beyond the means of the city. Even if conceived within the popular PPP framework, the Assembly does not possess the financial muscle to be able to partner the private sector in such projects. The question that arises then is: what happens when an aspiring entrepreneurial city lacks the financial wherewithal to undertake such ‘flagship’ projects as considered typical of entrepreneurial or global cities? In the specific case of Accra, the local state has turned attention to mundane practices that at least give the city a semblance of ‘order’ and vitality. I elaborate this point further in the next section.

5.4.1. From phantasmagoria to reality: the everyday practices of city modernization

‘Flagship’ projects, as I have suggested, are beyond the reach of the city government of Accra, at least for the moment. Yet, the city is far from letting go the desire to become, or at least look, ‘modern’. Over the last decade, consequently, the city government has turned attention to strategies that are nothing more than mundane urban governance practices but which are intensely laced with the quest to boost the ‘modern’ image of Accra. Some of such practices, all
the same, entail elements that have come to denote urban entrepreneurialism. One such practice is city branding. Traditionally associated with American and European cities (Paddison, 1993), city branding has now become a global tool for pursuing urban economic growth. According to Gotham (2007, p. 828), branding strategies clearly define the local attractions of the city, differentiate it from competitors in the minds of target groups, and creating a ‘promise’ that frames the destination experience for visitors.

Harvey (2007, p. 9) argues that New York City is one of the very first to employ that strategy, which culminated in the adoption and popularization of the logo “I love New York”. In the global south, cities such as Ahmedabad, India; Hong Kong, China; Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia; and Seoul, South Korea, have developed their unique brands. And so has the city of Johannesburg in South Africa that has strived since 2001 to distinguish itself as the most competitive city in Africa. It has settled on a catchy brand name “Joburg”, with a logo that reads “my city, our future” (City of Johannesburg, 24 November 2012).

Accra began the search for a ‘competitive’ identity only recently, unveiling its brand logo in 2010 that carry the slogan “Live in, Love it” (see Fig. 5.7). To complement this abstract method of boosting the image of the city, the AMA now often decorates its publications with a city image that seeks to project the ‘modern’ view of Accra’s cityscape (see Figure 5.8). Accra’s entrepreneurial project then is akin to what Lehrer and Laidley (2008) describe as “performative governance,” that which is characterized by relentless “fixation of policy-makers and property developers on the visual” (p. 786).

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39 City branding operates under the assumption that there is a direct link between a “city’s image or reputation and its attractiveness as a place to visit, live, invest, and study” (Baker, 2011: xiii)
Yet another undertaking by the AMA to boost the image of Accra is ‘city beautification’. The beautification initiative has principally entailed the removal of hawkers and unauthorized structures from principal streets and key locations within the city: locations I call Accra’s ‘sites of modernization’. These sites are islands of ‘beauty’ within the city viewed to embody the image of ‘modernity’. Examples include the Kwame Nkrumah Mausoleum, Independence Square, the National Theatre, Kotoka International Airport, Accra International Conference Centre, Accra Mall, Tetteh Quashie Interchange, and the Kwame Nkrumah Circle. These sites symbolize what Accra can fully become, hence the effort to project them as the city’s ‘modernizing’ trajectory.

Epitomizing the city aestheticization agenda is the Kwame Nkrumah Circle rehabilitation schemes. Over the past five years, this symbolic space, named after Ghana’s first president, has come under renovation and constant surveillance to improve its visual appeal. The street hawkers that used to ply their trade in or close to the site have all been removed (see Figures 5.9 and
with Mayor Vanderpuije touting that achievement as a good reason for foreign tourists to visit the city (Myjoyonline, 20 Jul 2011). The intense focus on central Accra is not farfetched. The belief is that, as former Minister in charge of modernisation of Accra said, “the CBD is the heart of a thriving city like the human anatomy, once the heart becomes defective, the body degenerates in tandem” (Jake Obetsebi-Lamptey; cited in Afenah, 2009, p. 15).

As already explained, it is difficult to determine with certainty the impact of these interventions on the intended desire to attract foreign investors and tourists. What is certain, however, is that there have been some increases in the tourist arrivals in the country and in Accra, particularly. For instance, tourist arrivals, according to World Bank figures, increased from a little over 500,000 in 2002 to about 900,000 in 2010. It is important not to overestimate these ‘successes’. Ghana’s 900,000 international tourist arrivals for 2010 for instance is a far cry from the over 8,000,000 that toured South Africa, led by Johannesburg, for the same year.
Neither is the ambition to transform the physical landscape of Accra any more remarkable. The visible modern structures that the city officials relish to cast Accra as a ‘modernizing’ and ‘globalizing’ city are still few and far in-between. The city still has a long way to go in becoming the ‘global’ city that the city officials dram of.

5.5. Conclusion

Over the last decade, Accra has consistently drifted towards policies and practices akin to what some analysts call urban entrepreneurialism. The seeds of this governance reorientation were sown nearly two decades earlier when Ghana embarked upon economic reforms that sought to expand the reach of the market and private sector in national economic processes. Throughout the period since the early 1980s, one of governments’ top priorities has been to make Ghana attractive as an investment destination in Africa. Resulting from Ghana’s decentralization system that has empowered local Assemblies to lead the development undertakings at that level, this otherwise national policy to attract foreign capital has become the self-imposed mandate of the local states. The AMA in particular has been at the forefront in the attempt to position Accra as an ideal investment and tourism destination in Africa. In both discursive and practical terms, Accra has been on the path of urban neoliberalization.

Discursively, the notion of transforming Accra into a modern city or world-class city has become a popular mantra among officials, often translated to mean turning the city into one of the most ideal places in Africa to invest and tour. This attitude towards Accra is the culmination of the nearly half a century of a shifting imaginary about the city: from one of a mere national administrative capital to that of potential global economic player. In practical terms, both the
governance institutions and spatial constitution of the city are undergoing reconfiguration as a result of the ambition to achieve the ‘global’ status. The institutional reconfiguration entails the growing strength of the AMA as the city’s governing body and, more significantly, the reorientation of the city’s management processes towards market principles and private-sector driven solutions. Part of this market and private-sector based approach is the drive to more intensely open up the city to external investors, who at the same time are expected to facilitate the production and revamping of the city’s inadequate physical infrastructure.

Some of the interventions to boost the image of the city as a credible investment and tourism location, in the absence of capacity to undertake flagship projects, are city branding and city beatification. These are both means and ends in themselves in the sense that they are intended to make Accra beautiful and modern but at the same time serve as means to attract investors and tourist into the city.

Much as Accra’s entrepreneurial adventure seems to mimic the ‘universal’ trend, it has some element of specificity. The first has to do with the strong influence of nationalistic impulses in the ambition to modernize the city. In other words, Accra’s globalizing ambition somehow transcends economic interests. Related to this is the fact that Accra is the capital of the country and therefore occupies a special place in the national consciousness. But this also means overlapping jurisdictions between the central and local state in terms of who has more influence to shape the city. Furthermore, resulting from the country’s history of individualization of political power, certain actors, especially city mayors, have become powerful in determining how the city is produced.
In the remaining chapters, I explore how the place-making practices of the local state that are intended to position Accra as a modern city and vital location for global business come into direct conflict with the spatial practices of the ordinary residents of the city who strive to survive and thrive.
Chapter 6
Sanitizing the Modernizing City: revanchism and governmental technologies of rendering the street vendor invisible in Accra

6.0. Introduction

The recent ambition of the local state to ‘modernize’ Accra and position it as an ideal location for global investment and tourism is not only reshaping governance institution and physical space of the city but also the lives and livelihoods of ordinary people of the city as well. In this chapter, I examine the impact of this ambition on one of Accra’s most despised economic groups that is often accused of undermining or threatening the general vitality of the city: the street hawkers. The latter is one of the largest sub-groups in the informal economy\(^{40}\) that has itself been declared the bane of African cities for decades now. Over the last decade, street hawkers in Accra have come under more intense assault by the local state, epitomized by sporadic forced evictions officially named ‘decongestion exercises’.

My aim in this chapter is to examine why street hawking (or street vending) is suppressed and, more importantly, how and where the state primarily conducts such exclusionary acts. I argue that street hawkers are increasingly suppressed mainly because they do not fit the ‘global’ vision for Accra. The interesting dimension to this argument, however, is that the neoliberal approaches that inform this ‘global’ vision also celebrate the informal ‘entrepreneurs’. This contradiction can be resolved by adding that Accra’s ambition to become more globalized is also

\(^{40}\)The term street economy is used in this dissertation to embrace economic activity that depends for its existence on access to the street or other publicly accessible spaces (Brown et al., 2010). Street vendors, accordingly, are persons who offer goods for sale to the public without having a permanent built-up structure from which to sell. They mostly sell their goods on the roads, in alleys, and on street pavements.
a reflection of the Ghanaian state’s long-held modernist spatial planning model that places maximum premium on spatial order.

By their criteria of modernist planning and global vision, city officials perceive street hawkers as totally antithetical. First is the street vendors’ intense physical mobility that generates chaos and thus threatens the city’s sense of order; and second, their ‘vile’ visibility that tends to discredit the aesthetic appeal of Accra’s ‘sites of modernity’.

To rid the city of the street vendors and their deleterious practices, the state adopts a combination of governmental technologies: punitive, persuasive and manipulative. To truly understand the mechanisms employed by the state to regulate its valuable urban spaces, therefore, there is the need to look beyond the usual repressive technologies of control, such as arrests and incarcerations. The discussion in this chapter draws mainly on in-depth interviews of hawkers and city officials, including City Guards, as well as participant, covert observation.

6.1. Urban neoliberalism, socio-spatial exclusions, and street trade in Africa

Much of the debate concerning urban neoliberalization is “empirically grounded in the North” (Swanson, 2007, p. 708; see also Crossa, 2009). Consequently, a great deal of what takes place in Southern cities in the name of urban improvement goes unexplored. In the North, issues concerning what happens to the least powerful urban groups under the conditions of urban neoliberalization have received serious attention. Employing the concepts of urban revanchism, the Northern scholars have made clear connections between the increasing suppression of marginal groups and neoliberal or entrepreneurial practices of city officials (see for example Smith, 1996; MacLeod, 2002)
In the South, especially in African cities, where similar vengeful acts are taking place, however, little if any such connections are made (for exception see Beall, 2002; Bremner, 2001). Over the last few decades, less powerful urban dwellers in Africa, mainly those in the informal economy, have come under increasing repression by state officials. This has been the case despite the fact that these actors have demonstrated immense entrepreneurialism and self-responsibility in the face of dwindling opportunities and state support linked to economic liberalization of the 1980s/1990s (Riddell, 1997).

One specific group of informal actors that has come under very intense suppression by state officials is street hawkers. They are deemed not only to be prone to transgression against urban planning and spatial order but also as “dirty and unsightly, an aberration from the ideal of a modern city” (Hart, 1991, p. 70). Their presence, in other words, is viewed to compromise the enhanced, and thus competitive, image of the city (Crossa, 2009; Swanson, 2007).

In many cities in the South, and as discussed in Chapter Two, the suppression of the informal actors has taken punitive forms akin to urban revanchism (see Kern and Mullings, 2013; Swanson, 2007; Kamete, 2012). The use of crude state power to punish and suppress informal actors with the objective to render them invisible in the city has been noted in several southern countries and cities including Harare (Kamete, 2012), Accra (Obeg-Odoom, 2012; Asiedu and Agyei-Mensah, 2008), Ecuador (Swanson, 2007) and Mexico City (Crossa, 2009). This widespread use of crude power by state officials to eliminate street vendors points to the relevance and importance of the revanchism concept in making sense of contemporary space governance in the southern cities. Yet, it is quite evident that despite several years of heavy-handedness, street trade in African cities still persists. What this suggests is the need to go
beyond the punitive technique to explore other means through which African states attempt to control street trade.

Indeed, the expansion of rationalities, technologies and techniques of social control in recent history forms the basis of debates around Foucault’s concept of governmentality. The concept has been usefully employed as an analytic tool to understand modern forms of state power and control. The ‘new’ demands for social and spatial order brought about by the polarizing effect of neoliberalism has led researchers to explore the interrelated dimensions of the rationalities and techniques of government which seek to shape and guide what Foucault (1991, p. 15) refers to as “the conduct of others” (Low 1999; Raco, 2003). The techniques of government, in other words, are “imbued with aspirations for the shaping of conduct in the hope of producing certain desired effects and averting certain undesired ones” (Rose, 1999, p. 52).

In accordance with their disciplinary perspective, geographers have mostly focused on the spatial dimension of governmentality. They have highlighted how the ordering of space serves the broader rationality of rule in terms of producing particular behaviors and subjectivities (e.g. Huxley, 2006, 2007, 2008; Herbert and Brown, 2006; Rose-Redwood, 2006; Voyce, 2003; Hannah, 2000). Describing it as spatial governmentality, Merry (2001), for instance, suggests that there has been a general shift from disciplinary mechanisms of social control to the regulation of space. In other words, governance is less about arrest and incarceration or rehabilitation of individuals than it is about control of populations as a whole by focusing on space (Merry 2001, p. 16; see also Perry 2000). Governmentality, therefore, entails both techniques to encourage individuals to govern themselves and use of various mechanisms to regulate the behaviours of individuals within the urban space. Such mechanisms include modern
hi-tech surveillance systems (e.g. close-circuit television cameras [CCTV]), bylaws on the use of spaces and use of community watch brigades (Koskela, 2000; Mitchell, 1997; Mitchell and Heynen, 2009).

Both the revanchism and governmentality concepts are relevant to making sense of current exclusionary conduct of the local state relative to the practices of street hawkers in Accra. Nevertheless, I do not entirely subscribe to the economism that informs the debates around these concepts. In other words, I do not think that the effort to exclude informal actors from the urban space is exclusively driven by economic interests of the urban elites and officials. I view the case of Accra as also a reflection of the modernization ambition of the postcolonial Ghanaian state. As Caldeira and Holston (2005) suggest, this nationalist-inspired city modernization, defined by “a concept of total design” (p. 393), is informed by the desire “to create a radically new urban development as a means to overcome the nation’s backwardness, as a means to bring the nation, through leaps in history, into the vanguard of modernity” (p. 395). Therefore, the exclusionary attitude of the local state towards the informal actors ought to be viewed as a product of the intersection between urban neoliberalization and nationalistic desire to achieve city modernity.

My first task in this chapter is to examine why street vendors, more than any other group, are the most repressed by the state in Accra. The second is to uncover the specific technologies through which the state attempts to control them, particularly those operating within central Accra. I begin this discussion with a brief profile of street trade in Accra. This is followed with an examination of some of the key characteristics and practices that make street trade particularly irritating to city officials. In the section after that, I discuss some of the key techniques/mechanisms with which officials attempt to conceal, or at best eliminate, street
vendors operating in central Accra, and particularly within the ‘sites of modernization’. The final section concludes the chapter.

6.2. **Street trade in Accra**

Nationally, trade is the second largest occupational category after agriculture, employing over 30 percent of Ghana’s urban population, and much higher in the case of women (GSS, 2008). In Accra, the informal economy is estimated to employ the largest share of the city’s labor force (UN-Habitat, 2009), employing nearly 65 percent of the residents (AMA, 2008). Statistical figures for street trading, as a sub-group of the informal economy, are currently unavailable. But even so, a cursory observation shows that the practice is quite dominant in Accra.

Informality, generally, and street trade more specifically in Accra can be understood only in historical terms. Two events are of particular importance in this regard. The first is the choice of Accra as the national capital in 1877; and second, the liberalization of national economy in the early 1980s. By becoming the capital of the colonial Ghana (the Gold Coast), on the one hand, Accra progressively became the center of political power and control in the country, and with it the concentration of national resources as well as private business firms. This created ideal conditions which facilitated the rapid growth of Accra into a primate city (Benneh et al., 1993; Songsore, 2003) and consequently the most attractive place in the country for multiple economic practices and social life of all kinds.

The liberalization of the national economy in the early 1980s, on the other hand, more forcefully opened the metropolitan economy to external economic forces (Grant and Yankson, 2003; Yeboah, 2000). At the same time, it drove people towards the city who had been
negatively impacted by the reforms in the form of state withdrawal from social services and support for the agricultural sector (Konadu-Agyemang, 2000; Songsore, 2000). The metropolis consequently and simultaneously experienced the expansion of corporate activities and rising unemployment among the unskilled and semi-skilled residents due largely to public sector retrenchments and jobless growth of the Ghanaian economy over the period (Songsore, 2010).

The result is that many of the residents of Accra, a large section of whom are immigrants, have ended up in the informal economy, mainly as street hawkers whose primary goal is to survive. It is not surprising that most accounts of street hawking in Ghana, and elsewhere in Africa for that matter, are couched within the narrow prism of survivalism. Such accounts conform to Simone’s notion of “people as infrastructure” (Simone, 2005, p. 1, 2004b). This is a situation whereby many urban Africans have nothing to draw upon except their own bodies in order to survive the increasingly treacherous urban terrain. In this sense, informal economic actors in general and street hawkers in this specific case are at the margin rather than center of the national economy. But are they?

Just as their numbers, the contribution of street traders to the urban economy as a whole is uncertain. All the same, like elsewhere in Africa (Chukuezi, 2010), some more positive accounts of the traders in Ghana in terms of their enormous entrepreneurialism are surfacing (see Solomon-Ayeh et al, 2012). Besides personal benefits to those involved, street hawking is an important socio-economic function. Apart from the fact that an overwhelming majority of the

41 Items often traded include fresh and cooked food items, cosmetics, clothes and shoes, mobile phones and accessories, as well as services such as hairdressing, shoe repair and head-porting (known locally as ‘kayayee”).
hawkers are engaged in permissible forms of exchange and distribution\textsuperscript{42}, they also provide cheaper alternatives to accessing commodities and services, compared with the formal retail stores. This form of retail is particularly vital for the survival of the urban poor. Therefore, informal trade is a significant component of what drives the growth and prosperity of Accra.

Yet, this positive view of informality is not shared by the Ghanaian state, especially the metropolitan government of Accra. The attitude of the officials towards street trade has been that of hostility. So pervasive is this hostility that it has clouded any rational judgment about what is otherwise genuine concerns about planning implications of the recent phenomenal growth in street trading activities in the city. Rather, street trade in all its forms is often viewed as one of Accra’s most serious forms of indiscipline and sources of governance challenge.\textsuperscript{43} Consequently and consistently, “the AMA declares war on street hawkers” (\textit{GBC} 15 Jan 2013), even as the trade persists and expands.

Over the years, a number of city bylaws have been passed targeted at restricting street hawking within the city. The most recent of such bylaws came into effect in 2011, part of which read as follows:

- A person shall not sell or offer for sale any merchandise to a driver who is in charge of a vehicle or a passenger while the vehicle is in the traffic.
- A person shall not buy from a seller in the street unless the street has been so designated for that purpose as a street market on a particular day.
- A person shall not throw litter about on the to the street or pavement or from a moving vehicle.

\textsuperscript{42} As a matter fact, they form an intricate part of a network of distribution that links them with large store owners and market women who import from China, Dubai etcetera.

\textsuperscript{43} The former mayor of Accra, E.T Mensah, catalogued the acts of indiscipline in Accra as follows: open defecation on beaches, lagoons and large drains; the dumping of refuse in unauthorized places; indiscriminate parking of mostly commercial vehicles and the loading and off-loading of passengers in the middle of streets; excessive noise pollution usually from Night Clubs, Churches, and other celebratory drumming and singing events; the closing of neighborhood streets for public functions without police permit; and the building of structures without due permit (see Korsah-Dick and Mensah, 1993).
A person in charge or the owner of a vehicle shall provide that vehicle with a waste bin and a notice directing passengers to deposit litter in that waste bin.

A person who contravenes any provision of these bye-laws commits an offence and is liable on summary conviction to a fine not exceeding ten penalty units or in default to a term of imprisonment not exceeding three months or to both or be commuted to perform communal labor for a period one month under the supervision of the metropolitan guards.

The departure of this particular bye-law is that it extends the criminalization of the practice to include those that patronize the services of hawkers (see Appendix 1 for a full list of prohibitions under this bye-law). It is important to establish what really drives this antagonism by the state towards street traders.

6.3. The modernizing city and the ‘unsightly’ street vendor

What is it about street trade that makes it particularly irritating to city officials? So far, studies on major Ghanaian cities have answered this question by pointing at the tendency of street vendors to (1) worsen, and in some cases induce, vehicular and human traffic congestion; (2) complicate urban planning and management; (3) generate poor environmental sanitation, largely arising from the littering of the streets and sidewalks and dumping of garbage in open drains; and (4) assembling of makeshift structures in vantage locations (see Solomon-Ayeh et al, 2012; Asiedu and Agyei-Mensah, 2008; Yankson, 2007). The city officials that I interviewed made references to these negative impacts of street trade. As one of them said:

“the decongestion exercise is a necessary evil. In as much as we would want to improve the standard of living of the people in the city, the city must also be seen as clean. The CBD area was really congested and the traffic condition become worse because traders had virtually taken over the pedestrian walkways, thereby increasing the man hours needed to do business within the city. The traders also created a lot of filth at the close of their activities and the assembly had to spend huge sums of money to collect the refuse” (Lydia, Interview, August, 2011).
They also claimed that the decongestion or removal of street hawkers is in the interest of the hawkers themselves because the latter unnecessarily endanger themselves through exposure to intense vehicular traffic. Some of the officials cited instances, and this has indeed been the case, when street hawkers have been knocked down and killed by moving vehicles. Indeed, my close review of media sources and my personal observation of informality indicate that the nature of the practices associated with street trade can be linked with the deleterious urban condition mentioned.

Yet, despite these links, it is difficult to argue with certainty that the repressive attitude of officials towards street traders is mainly because of these outcomes. There are two reasons for this. The first is that there is no evidence that street trade poses the worst threat to the circulation of human and vehicular traffic and the general quality of sanitation within the city. Second, there is abundant evidence that not all areas of the city attract the same repressive response from the officials, even if the outcomes of street trade mentioned exist in equal proportion. Areas that I have referred to as Accra’s sites of modernization get the most attention, even as low-income areas such Nima that experience similar degrees and effects of street trading activities are ignored. My argument therefore is that the very presence of street hawkers, and not necessarily the planning and economic impact of their practices, elicits the hostile attitude of the officials. This is especially true at this time than ever before where the ambition is to modernize the city, with special focus on the sites of modernization.

My argument, in other words, is that the decongestion exercises to remove street traders and the ambition to modernize Accra are causally related. Admittedly, the suppression of street

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44In fact several studies on congestion in Ghanaian cities have instead pointed to relative excess of private cars, narrow roads, etc. The private cars alone use 70 percent of the city’s roads even though they covey less than 30 percent of the road users.
Hawkers in Accra predate the ambition to modernize and globalize the city. All the same, the growing intensity, frequency, and punitive nature of such practices suggest a new element and interest. As Cresswell (1996, p. 103) tells us, the greater the interest in particular spaces the greater the desire to expel and exclude; and the greater the desire to exclude, the easier it is to upset those who invest in an existing order.

There are several clues as to the link between AMA’s constant eviction of street hawkers and its ambition to make Accra ‘modern’ and a destination of global investor and tourists. But for now the following two quotes by Mayor Vanderphuije should help to make that connection.

While in the US to market the city, the mayor made the following remark:

“Today if you should come to the city of Accra it has never been as clean and more beautiful than it is today (sic). Today Circle is a beautiful place to sit at night and enjoy the breeze of Accra…Today we have no hawkers on our streets in Accra as a result of that the coconut trees are growing so that we can have fresh air…” (Myjoyonline.com 20 Wednesday July 2011; emphasis added).

Here, the mayor makes a direct connection between the removal of hawkers at the Nkrumah Circle (one of the sites of modernization) and the certainty that visitors to the city will have a great time. He made very similar connection following the publication by the New York Times that ranked Accra as one of the best places to tour in 2013, quoted at the beginning of Chapter 1. Additionally, the mayor on another occasion emphasized that there is the need to decongest in order to lay the ground for the city to develop and modernize.
“The reality is that we need to take the city seriously. The city means business about development. The city means business… and will do whatever it takes to provide what is necessary for the development of the people of Accra… So when people say we are demolishing or we are decongesting, I tell them no, rather we are developing… [the fact is] that in doing all that we are preparing the ground for the development of Accra” (Interview on TV Africa, 9 August 2011).

Other state officials have made comments with similar effects. These include “let us keep Accra clean to attract tourists” (former Vice President Aliu Mahama, GNA, 26 January 2006); “No one will invest in a filthy city” (Kofi Awunoo, Myjoyonline.com, 14 September 2011); “Of course we cannot modernize a dirty city…” (Tekyi-Mills, GNA, 20 July 2004). But still, what is it that makes the street hawker incompatible with the modernizing and globalizing city?

6.4. Mobility and visibility of the street hawker: the aberration from the ideal of a modern city.
By piecing together the data that I gathered from multiple sources, I argue that the hostile attitude of city officials towards street hawkers stems from the latter’s two important characteristics that appear to undermine the ‘modern’ outlook of the city. First is their intense physical mobility, and second their visibility or apparent ubiquity. These two characteristics irritate officials particularly in the way that street hawkers tend to occupy Accra’s ‘sites of modernization’.

Physical Mobility

Physical mobility is one of the definitive characteristics of street trade in Accra. The hawkers trek on foot often very long distances across the length and breadth of the city, with their merchandize mostly sitting on their heads or hanging over their bodies. They move about for at least three reasons. The first is that they lack the financial wherewithal to secure stalls in
which to sell their wares. Second, the metropolitan authorities have not demonstrated any serious commitment to provide secured sites within the city where trading could be controlled. And third, they are constantly on the move in order to avoid harassment by the city authorities. But the most powerful immediate push factor, according to most of the hawkers that I interviewed, is the need to maximize daily sales. The increase in the number of hawkers has come with an increase in competition among the hawkers for clients.

While physical mobility inure to the benefit of street hawkers, it serves as a source of great irritation for city officials. As one of the AMA officials told me:

These guys [street vendors] give us lots of headache. You drive them away from one location and they move to another. Our men (sic) are few; so obviously we cannot be everywhere simultaneously to put their practices in check (Odarney, Interview, June 2011; emphasis added).

This official is not alone in this expression of irritation concerning the inability to pin street traders down to a particular location. The AMA public relations officer, Numo Blafo, equally laments: “our men are not enough on the streets, so when they drive them away from the streets, the hawkers quickly move to the other lane” (Ghanaian Chronicle, 6 April 2011). An AMA City Guard\(^45\) buttresses this concern as follows:

“This is a very difficult job [controlling street vendors]. Throughout the day we are constantly on our feet. We drive them away here and they reappear moments later or move to somewhere else. So constantly we must be on the move. This is our daily routine. We go home always exhausted, only to return the next day for the same routine” (Ahmed, Interview, 17 August 2011; emphasis added).

Why is my claim that the physical mobility of hawkers is the bane of city officials not farfetched? Much of it has to do with a particular notion of ‘order’ that forms the bedrock of the

\(^{45}\)The City Guards are quasi-security officers employed by the AMA to enforce its city by-laws. Their activities have mostly focused on interdicting informal actors, particularly street vendor, who are viewed as violating the city’s spatial by-laws.

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modernist urban planning to which Accra has long subscribed. This particular notion of ‘order’ not only requires that things be at their proper place, but also that everything must be predictable and capable of being accounted for and controlled (Scott, 1998; Bauman, 1991; Berman, 1988). Thus, measured against the modernist standard of order or the “spatialized ordering principle seen by many to be central to modernity” (Cresswell, 2006, p. 16), the practices of street hawkers constitute a violation. Their intense physical mobility renders their practices both chaotic and unpredictable, and therefore they are “the very embodiment of the spatial ambivalence that…modernity works so hard to eliminate” (Popke and Ballard, 2004, p. 105). Thus, street trade in Accra, as elsewhere, and the nature of official response it attracts lays bare the “perpetual battle between makers of order and the incessant change which is the condition of modernity” (Taylor, 2000, p. 551).

Visibility

Trade in general and street trade in particular is described by some as Accra’s “most conspicuous social feature” (Dakubu, 1997, p. 21). This visibility is neither accidental nor purposeless. Many recent studies in Accra and elsewhere hold that street vendors do not locate haphazardly; rather, their choice of trading spaces is highly influenced by their assessment of which areas offer greater locational advantage than others (Harrison and McVey, 1997; Yankson, 2000; Solomon-Ayeh et al, 2012). They do so mainly because the most important catalyst for their sustenance is the ability to induce impulse buying (Solomon-Ayeh et al, 2012). Thus, locational decisions are influenced by perceptions about the extent to which one can be visible or

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46This notion of order has become even more central in the current entrepreneurial logic of governance that links the city’s order with its economic well-being.
exposed to potential customers. My discussions with street hawkers in Accra confirm the above conclusions. In fact some of them told me that their sales volume is often directly related to the part of the city they get to operate in, and the length and time of the day that they work there.

From the perspective of city officials, however, the visibility of street vendors is perhaps the biggest threat to the city’s aspiration to become, or at least look, ‘modern’. As the former mayor of Accra, E.T. Mensah, laments: “Street hawking has grown over the years to become…one of the most visible manifestations of indiscipline in the city” (Korsah-Dick and Mensah, 1993, p. 19; emphasis added). The degree of apprehension among city officials about the visibility of street vendors is quite striking, to the extent that it does not appear to lend itself to the often simplistic explanation that officials are merely wary of the congestion, filth and traffic obstructions that activities of street vendors generate. More fundamental, I will argue, is the perception mainly by officials that these street vendors are, by their very physical appearance, incompatible with the image of a ‘modern city’ that the state seeks to build. This can be affirmed in two ways. First is the perceived ubiquity of street vendors. As one official stated:

*These guys [street hawkers] are everywhere.* Sometimes one is even tempted to think that they are the only people in Accra. You pass every corner of the city and you encounter them with their items hanging all over their bodies and really giving the city a bad look (Adjetey, Interview, August 2011; emphasis added).

This apparent ubiquity of street hawkers (their ‘everywhereness’), in the mind of the officials, tends to give the false sense that Accra is a city of street hawkers. It is this same perceived ubiquity of the latter that induce wild media headlines such as “Accra Is Becoming

47Indeed hawkers in Accra are drawn to popular intersections; heavy-traffic roads, streets and intersections; lorry stations and parks; zones with traffic lights on major streets. Specifically, preferred trading locations in Accra include Kaneshie 1st Traffic Light; Odorkor (Traffic Light); Mallam Junction; National Theatre; Flag Staff House; 37 Hospital and Air Port Road; Elwak Traffic Light; Air Port Road; Golden Tulip; Kawu Kudi Junction; Cathedral; TUC; Polo Court Traffic Light; Graphic Road; Kaneshie Pamprom; and Kwame Nkrumah Circle; High Street, from Old Parliament towards Kimbu Gardens.
Ungovernable” (*Modernghana.com*, 24 June 2009) and “Hawkers Take Over Accra Pavements-Again!” (*Daily Graphic* 17 October 2012). My argument is that it is this apparent visibility of street hawkers that discomforts city officials the most, hence their apprehension about the former.

Furthermore, this apprehension is further accentuated by the tendency of street vendors to ply their trade within or close to Accra’s ‘sites of modernization’.* As these are key spaces held by the state as symbols of modernity. Such spaces range from zones with vital national monuments (e.g. the Kwame Nkrumah Mausoleum and the National Museum); nodal points of historical significance (e.g. the Kwame Nkrumah Circle); major interchanges (e.g. Tetteh Quarshie and Ako-Adjei Interchanges); national ceremonial parks (e.g. the Independence Square) and streets (e.g. from the Kotoka International Airport traffic light up to the Parliament House through the 37 Military Hospital and Flagstaff House road); functional zones of government (e.g. the Ministries area); national conference centres (e.g. the Accra International Conference Centre and the National Theater); and ‘world class’ business locations, such as hotels (e.g. the Movenpick Ambassador Hotel) and malls (e.g. the Accra Mall).

As I argued in Chapter Five, the city government has placed a premium on these spaces in their effort to market Accra, in part, because it lacks the capacity and financial wherewithal to initiate larger, spectacular projects such as those often identified with urban renewal/revitalization elsewhere. It is this city-marketability consideration that motivates the officials to want to rid all these spaces of the visible presence of the ‘undesirable’ street

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*48 As explained earlier, street vendors prefer these spaces because they offer most profitable locational advantages.*

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vendors. Characterizing spatial struggles and conflicts in Accra then is the contradiction between state efforts to render street vendors invisible and the goal of the latter to maximize visibility. How then does the state ‘purge’ or attempt to ‘purge’ the city of these ‘undesirable’ elements?

6.5 From revanchism to governmentality: rendering the street vendor invisible.

Purging Accra of street vendors and their practices has been one of the most thorny governance issues in the city. According to a recent World Bank survey, over two thirds (77 percent) of residents of Accra viewed street vending as a problem and felt that it should not be permitted (World Bank, 2010, p. 113). Only a fraction of the residents held a moderate view that “only a few” vendors should be allowed on a fee-based permit system (14 percent) or that anyone should be able to be a roadside vendor (8 percent). On the basis of these figures, the Bank recommended that “Roadside vending should be sharply curtailed” (2003, p. 114; my emphasis).

Yet, realities on the ground suggest that public opinion on what to do with street vendors is a lot more complex than that which the Bank has captured in its study. Indeed, intense public criticism of the AMA has, time and again, been cited by the officials as one of the main reasons why the Assembly is unable to sustain its eviction exercises against street traders. As a matter of fact, four out of the six officials that I interviewed attested to this fact. Mayor Vanderpuije himself admitted that public support for street vendors is a serious obstacle to the effort to curtail street trade in Accra (TV Africa—Bare Fact—Interview 9 August 2011). Serious public opposition to the AMA’s draconian responses to street vendors are mostly vented through the over two dozen radio and TV stations that dominate the media landscape of Accra.

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49 I do not however suggest that these spaces have necessarily experienced the most frequent evictions of street vendors. What is undeniable however is that these spaces have tended to witness a zero-tolerance attitude from officials and are therefore the most intensely guarded. Nearly all the officials that I interviewed expressed the need to protect these spaces from “all informal activities” (Odartey, interview, August 2011).

50 As a matter of fact, four out of the six officials that I interviewed attested to this fact. Mayor Vanderpuije himself admitted that public support for street vendors is a serious obstacle to the effort to curtail street trade in Accra (TV Africa—Bare Fact—Interview 9 August 2011). Serious public opposition to the AMA’s draconian responses to street vendors are mostly vented through the over two dozen radio and TV stations that dominate the media landscape of Accra.
the percentage of residents, in the Bank’s own study, who demanded that officials found alternative sources of livelihood for street vendors was nearly as high as the proportion that wished to see street vendors evicted. This suggests that many of those who were in favour of eviction may have premised their responses on the condition that the state is able to provide alternative livelihood sources for vendors.

While public opinion on evictions is important, my main concern in this section is to uncover the various means and mechanisms by which the Assembly evicts/tries to evict street vendors. The data suggest that the governmental technologies employed to curtail, or at least conceal, street trade have vacillated between highly repressive, persuasive (or negotiable) and manipulative.

6.5.1. The revanchist city: repressive/punitive technologies of spatial control

Most studies on state responses to street vendors in Ghana, and Africa generally, have commonly focused on the repressive apparatuses of the state (Joseph, 2011; Asiedu and Agyei-Mensah, 2008; Yankson, 2007; Popke, 2004; Nduna, 1990). Even so, analyses are barely detailed (for exception see Kamete, 2012). In all major cities in Ghana, and in Accra more specifically, discussions on state repression of street trade are directed mainly at decongestion, demolition, and relocation exercises by city officials (see Yankson, 2007; Asiedu and Agyei-Mensah, 2008).

Admittedly, this focus on the repressive techniques is justifiable, even if quite limited in scope as I hope to show in my discussion here. It is justifiable mainly because these highly repressive mechanisms of socio-spatial control have been extremely popular among city governments for quite a while now. Whereas relocations are relatively rare (partly because they
are more financially demanding), forceful removal of street hawkers are frequent occurrences in Accra. The latter involve occasionally unannounced swoops on the street vendors by a combined state security personnel usually drawn from the Police Service, Fire Service, Prison Service and Metro Guards. During these swoops, hawkers either are chased away or arrested. Their permanent and makeshift structures where they either store their merchandize or live, or both, are also demolished. These exercises have become popularly known as “Aba ei” (meaning they—the city officials—are coming).

One unmistakable characteristic of these decongestion/demolition exercises is the spectacular and spectral nature of their performance. Some of these operations are not only given weird codenames, example “Operation Nimrod,” but are also carried out by a stone-faced security personnel who chase, capture and seize in dramatic fashion. In these exercises, interdiction of hawkers must not only be executed but must be seen to be so (what I mean by spectrality). The most notable actors in this display of state power over street vendors are the AMA City Guards (see Figure 6.1a). Mostly male, barely educated and poorly paid, the City Guards have over the years gained notoriety for their excesses in dealing with residents, especially traders (see Figure 6.1b). The following was the response of a Guard when I enquired why they appear merciless to street vendors:

51Nimrod is equated to a hunter in some accounts. This seems to be what is in reference in this case.  
52 The rise of City Guards dates back to the late 1980s, then called the Traffic and Sanitation Improvement Task Force (TASIT). The man who until today has become the symbol of that notoriety was retired WOII Salifu Amankwa—referred to by some as ‘the dreaded man of Circle’. His reign, under the P(NDC), of maintaining law and order in the area was characterised by heavy-handedness and wanton human right abuses, including allegations of murder.  
53The guards were paid GH¢140 (about $70 US) a month as at the end of 2011 (interview)  
54The leadership of the Assembly seems to be aware and have been admonishing them to be of good behaviors. Also, some of the City Guards that I interviewed conceded that they have a bad image in the eyes of the public.
“The hawkers know they do not have to trade on pavements. It is a matter of doing the right thing. The law requires that they do not sell on pavements and that is what we are here to enforce” (Oduro, Interview, August 2011)

Figure 6.1a (left): AMA Guards on duty in Accra (photograph: Abdul Alim Habib, June 2011); Figure 6.1b (right): some overzealous City Guards blocking a taxi cab from driving along an unapproved route (photograph: Kweku Addae Mensah, 2012)

It is unclear whether this intolerant attitude is by design (in the sense of being part of what they are trained to demonstrate) or by nature (in the sense that there are more chances of abuse when power is handed to those who least expect it). Whatever it is, spectrality (visibility of domination over hawkers) and spectacularity (dramatic nature of that domination) play a role in how the state deals with street trade. Perhaps the best explanation of this situation yet is provided by Amin Kamete in his study of street trade in Harare, Zimbabwe. According to Kamete (2012), this spectrality is not incidental to but rather at the core of state technology of rule over street

55In a surprise twist of events, the Guards recently threatened to withdraw their services because the Assembly delayed in paying their allowances. “What does the Mayor want us to do?” one of them said “We are hungry. We have borrowed monies to take care of our families. How are we going to pay those outstanding debts with no pay?” The assembly either pays us immediately or “we will wear the assembly uniform to carry out armed robbery duties, so that when we get arrested, we will tell the police and the general public that it was the Mayor who sent us” (Ghanaian Chronicle 21 October 2011)
vendors. The state’s lack of capacity to sustain control over the hawkers is compensated by its occasional use of visible violence. This is certainly true in the case of Accra as well. In this display of state power, it is the City Guards that happily ‘pull the trigger’.

It must be added, however, that the repressive/punitive technologies neither start nor end with relocations and decongestions/demolitions. In recent times, confiscations, fines, and incarcerations have become more common instruments as well. Over the last few years, the Assembly, in concert with the judiciary, has established several tribunals called Sanitation and Motor Courts. The tribunals punish offenders in the form of hefty fines and/or incarcerations. Between September 2010 when the first court was inaugurated and June 2011, the three Courts combined had tried over 2,190 cases, with total monetary fines of GHC2 million (about $1.2 million USD) (AMA, 2011a, p. 11). Many of the culprits so far are hawkers.

Therefore, the AMA has not only become progressively more punitive over the last decade, but also more elaborate in terms of the punitive/repressive instruments it employs to govern.

It is important to note, however, that the street hawkers have not been passive in their response to these repressive practices of the city officials. They have equally been violent in the attempt to resist such repressive acts. On numerous occasions, they have subjected some of the city guards to severe physical molestation.

“Last year a group of AMA guards seized by merchandize. All my pleas to have my items back fell into death ears. Barely a month after that, another guard came to confiscate my goods which I resisted. My colleagues later joined me and we fought with him until he finally run away” (Dzifa, Interview, July 2011).

The courts are established to tackle general issues of indiscipline in Accra. But it seems that attention is more on traders and hawkers. So far, three of such courts have been established with an extra six currently being considered.

Fines against hawkers have raged from GHC120 (about $65 US) to GHC600 (about $310 US) and jail terms have so far averaged about 90 days.
But this form of resistance sometimes comes with serious consequences in the form of hefty fines or incarceration or both by tribunals on the charge of causing unlawful harm to public official. Most hawkers, however, prefer a less confrontational form of resistance. They either bribe their way out of a tricky situation (when their items get sized) or use ‘gorilla tactic’ by constantly shifting their hawking positions. The latter tactic means carefully thinking through what goods to carry, in what form and at what time. In more recent times, they use mobile phones to alert one another about the escapades of the city officials.

6.5.2. Governmentality: the persuasive technologies

For reasons not entirely clear, most studies have not managed to go beyond the repressive or punitive disciplinary technologies employed by the state to deal with street vendors. This is the case even though nearly all studies on this topic concede that the repressive responses by officials have not achieved their desired goal. To ignore other forms of control then is to assume that the state has simply succumbed to the resilient informal actors. This assumption will be hard to sustain in the sense that the need to maintain ‘order’ is more pressing now than ever before given the current unyielding intent of the state to modernize and globalize Accra. I argue, drawing on the concept of governmentality, that in order to determine whether state efforts to modernize the city are effective we need to look beyond the repressive measure, to also consider other technologies of control that rely on other strategies: some persuasive, others manipulative.

A case in point was the three months jail and GHC120 fine handed to eleven hawkers for selling on the streets, near the Graphic and Beyeeman Intersections in Accra in 2011. They were charged on four counts: conspiracy to commit a crime; sale of merchandise on the streets contrary to AMA bye-laws; assault and battery; and causing unlawful harm (Source Citifmonline.com, July 19, 2011). Another case involved Georgina Owusu who was fined GHC600 (about US$ 373) with additional GHC30 (US$ 19) fine for the torn shirt of a metro guard (ghanatoghana.com, June 23, 2011).
In Accra, the less direct and less punitive approach proceeds in at least two ways: one through attempts to confine and the other through what governmentality scholars call “responsibilization”.

Responsibilization, to put it crudely, constitutes the attempts by the state to make its subjects take responsibilities for their own government (Ong, 2006; Huxley, 2007), what others call neoliberal citizenship (Hamann, 2009; Larner, 2003; Peck, 2001). In Accra, what the state does partly is to encourage self-consciousness and self-critique relative to how residents use urban spaces, as well as engage in some semblance of inclusivity in practices of urban governance. For instance the city branding exercise discussed in Chapter Five that led to the adoption of the logo “Accra, live in, love it,” was supposedly adopted with the aim to inculcate in the residents of Accra the love for their city. The goal is to instil discipline in the residents with the hope that once the residents successfully buy into the idea of ownership of and love for their city there will be less need for direct control of their actions. Closely related to this technology is another form of responsibilization that seeks to link self-responsibility to patriotism, and then draw on both tropes to carve a discourse about how the urban space is to be utilized. This formula that states that ‘responsible attitude towards the urban space equals patriotic citizenship’ appears in patriotic songs such as the Millennium City theme song (see Appendix 2) and on metro billboards, some of which read “responsible citizens don’t litter”.

Another less direct technology of bringing street hawking under control is by means of confinement. In this case, the Assembly has been working to incorporate what it calls Street Markets into the socio-spatial landscape of Accra (Frank, Interview, July 2011). By confining street trading to certain recommended streets on specific days and time, street traders can be
located, isolated, and controlled—i.e. so that “we [the AMA] can more formally regulate them”
(Opoku, Interview, June 2011). This measure is to ensure that hawkers do not disrupt what
Popke and Ballard (2004) refer to as the truth and order of urban space.

6.5.3. **Spatial governmentality**

Governmentality in Accra also takes specifically spatial forms in the sense that the
technologies of control involve various ways that the state manipulates urban space in order to
indirectly regulate the behaviour of the residents in general and street hawkers more particularly.
These technologies have ranged from barbed wiring or metallic fence-offs to Close Circuit
Television (CCTV). This approach is meant to slow/hinder the mobility of street vendors whilst
also making them constantly aware that they are being watched. This mode of shaping the
conduct of others is one of the main themes of the surveillance studies that draw on Foucault’s
notion of the panopticon (Murakami Wood, 2007; Koskela, 2000, 2003). Some geographers have
shown how this technology of spatial control is penetrating the lives of certain groups such as
homeless and youth in New York and other Northern cities (see Mitchell and Heynen, 2009).

In Accra, metallic fence-offs (see Figures 6.2a, 6.2b, and 6.2c) are becoming
increasingly common as means of manipulating the movement of hawkers and other
undisciplined residents. These obstructions can be seen in key parts of the city including Accra
Central, near the Kimbu area; the Kenshie Market area; between 37 Military Hospital and the
National Theatre; and the Kwame Nkrumah Circle. One of the AMA officials told me that the
fences have been quite effective but was quick to concede that hawkers still manage to scale over
them. A complementary measure is to deter would-be trespassers through warning sign/notice boards (see **Figure 6.2d**)

**Figure 6.2a**: A long metallic fence at Kwame Nkrumah Circle to keep hawkers from trespassing. Note: photograph taken from an overpass; **Figure 6.2b**: Metallic fence at Accra Central to keep hawkers and other boundary violators off (note the presence of hawkers under the “No Hawking” sign) (Photograph: Abdul Alim Habib, June 2011).

**Figure 6.2c** (left): Metallic fence on the 37 Military and Accra Central road (picture taken from inside a moving car); **Figure 6.2d** (right): A sign board near the Kotoka International Airport in Accra warning hawkers and other potential trespassers to stay clear or face prosecution (photograph: Abdul Alim Habib, June 2011).
The CCTV form of surveillance is the latest addition to the repertoire of state spatial control in Accra. As Mayor Vanderpuije explains it:

In a bid to implement the Street Hawking by-law, 2010, the Assembly hired One Hundred and Fifty (150) personnel and procured Fifty (50) digital videos and still cameras for the operation (sic) within the Central Business District (CBD) and major ceremonial roads (AMA, 2011, p. 13).

There was no sufficient time during fieldwork to observe the functioning and effectiveness of this latest control technique. Suffice it to say, however, that the move towards camera technology is a remarkable one in the sense that it may well be the beginning of a change in how Accra governs its citizens.

It is important to emphasize that no sharp boundary exists between all these forms of spatial control. Rather, they all exist side by side and in a complementary rather than oppositional relationship. What is undeniable, however, is that the ‘softer’ forms of control have become necessary due to the proven limitation of the more punitive techniques to achieve any meaningful outcomes. This is true even though officials still express faith in the punitive techniques. The closest that they have come to conceding the limitation of such measures is when they say that “What we are doing basically is to leave no stone unturned in making sure that we curtail hawking in Accra” (Odartey, Interview, June 2011).

In the next section, I discuss how all these state apparatuses of enforcing spatial order (decongestions, confiscation, surveillance etc) come together within one particular ‘site of modernization’: the Kwame Nkrumah Circle. In this brief example, I show how ideas about national image intersect with modernist spatial planning mechanisms and neoliberal urban policy to generate unique technologies of control over citizens whose only desperation is for inclusion and, to a large extent, survival.
6.6 In defense of Kwame Nkrumah Circle

The Kwame Nkrumah Circle is one of the most important nodal points and fulcrums of socioeconomic activity in Accra. The functional zone revolves around an averagely sized roundabout that connects five major roads leading to different parts of the city and beyond. The roundabout—decorated with a flamboyant, yet only occasionally functioning, water fountain (see Figure 6.3a)—has some historical significance. Constructed by the first post-independence government of the CPP and named after Ghana’s first President, the circle changed names over the years until 1972 when the original name became permanent. Inconsistency also characterized its physical appearance, though its symbolism remained undiminished. Over the years, the space has tacitly acquired the status of one of Accra’s symbols of modernity of national historical significance, reflected in the way different governments have desired or attempted to upgrade it.59 Within the last five years or so, the Circle has become the ‘ground zero’ of the AMA’s mission to transform and ‘modernize’ Accra. Consequently, the Assembly gave the space a facelift and planted its two biggest monuments of the Millennium City Initiative there (see Figure 6.3b).60 Additionally, the site has become an ideal space on the back of which the Assembly advertises its city modernization agenda.61

59 One of the most elaborate policies of recent times to transform the place was called the Kwame Nkrumah Circle Redevelopment Scheme in mid 1980s. It was an urban renewal scheme that sought to reorganize and revitalize the area to meet the challenges of urbanization. Since 2009, the AMA has resolved to upgrade and beautify the area through a program called Kwame Nkrumah Circle Revitalization Project.
60 The AMA installed hand railings, boosted the street lights, rejuvenated the lawn, among others to enhance the aesthetic image and value of the place.
61 On July 19, 2011, Mayor Vanderpuije invited the whole crew of a popular current affairs program Good Evening Ghana of Metro TV to stage a live hour-long interview broadcast from the inner perimeter of the Circle where he touted some of the key achievements of his modernization agenda and his future plans in that regard. Elsewhere, the Mayor expressed great excitement about CNN coverage of an event that took place at the Circle (AMA, 2011).
Despite state efforts to bolster its image as a symbol of Ghana’s modernity, the Nkrumah Circle has remained infamous for strong and competitive presence of persons engaged in hawking activities (and prostitution at night). Its broader functional zone harbors some of the busiest traditional markets and lorry stations that send and receive passengers nationwide. It is this intense human and vehicular traffic that makes the Circle an ideal location for street vendors. Until the AMA undertook an exercise to secure the place, vendors could be seen weaving through the thick flow of pedestrians and the snail-paced vehicular traffic to court potential buyers, mostly impulse buyers. This apparently uncontrolled merchandizing gave the Circle a chaotic outlook (of course depending on where one stands) (see Figure 6.3c).

Figure 6.3a (left): the Kwame Nkrumah Circle now (Photograph, AMA, 2011) and Figure 6.3b (right): One of the Millennium City monuments inside the perimeter of the Nkrumah Circle (Photograph: Abdul Alim Habib, July 2011).
The key question is: how does this “artificial man-designed and man-built (sic) island of order [survive] among a sea of chaos” (Bauman, 1991, p. 6)? The AMA’s answer to this question is as intriguing as it is remarkable. The Assembly has programed the defense of this enclave to revolve around the City Guards. The defense as it unfolds on the ground weaves through acts of intimidation, confiscation, extortion, torture, and deal-making. First of all, the Guards assemble each morning at the Metro Guard Station, two minutes away from the Circle. After taking a briefing from their leadership, the Guards disperse to go and ‘defend’ the Circle. They circumambulate the Circle to ensure that no hawker enters the inner zone. Others reach further into the close by markets and lorry stations to ensure that hawkers are stopped even before they get close to the Circle. Simplistic as this setup may seem, what occurs within it is both complex and fascinating. It encapsulates how a system set in motion by the state is negotiated and worked
out on the ground between guards and hawkers, with rule systems of payments, punishments and various forms of retribution. Here, I highlight some of my observations.

First, the way in which the guards pursue the street vendors at the Circle is quite atypical of what pertains in most parts of the city. Unlike many parts of the city where guards single-handedly confront street vendors, at the Circle the guards move in droves and in waves. In droves because, as one guard explained “the hawkers often attack us” (Ahmed, Interview, August 2011). And in waves because “sometimes we purposely allow them [the hawkers] to congregate. It is the best way to capture and seize the goods of as many of them as possible” (Akushika, Metro Guard, brief personal discussion, August 2011).

But there is a lot more to the Circle story. Over the years, the guards and the hawkers have worked out a system that functions on the basis of a principle that I will call ‘scratch my back, I scratch yours”. By this system, the guards manifestly harrass the hawkers by initiating a struggle to seize their merchandize, except that in many instances, the struggle is nothing but a charade, to give the impression that the guards are dutiful. In return, the latter take bribes from hawkers in order to turn a blind eye. In another form, the guards alert the hawkers in advance in case there is an overzealous member on duty whose preoccupation is to ‘do the right thing’.

But this system is a highly selective one in that not every hawker is covered. Those that are outside it are frequently the subjects of ‘genuine’ harassment and violence: one that is sometimes bloody and deadly. A case in point was the intense scuffle between a group of metro guards and a hawker—Ebenezer Obeng—in 2011 that resulted in the latter sustaining a severed ear after his goods were set ablaze by the former.\(^62\) The guards and the hawkers have both

\(^62\)It is useful to note that the Guards are occasionally subjects of this kind of bodily harm as well.
become masters of this game to the extent that it is always difficult for an external observer to distinguish between charade and genuine exchanges. In one of the cases that I witnessed during fieldwork, three men who were selling Chinese-made cell phones and accessories at the foot of the overhead bridge at Nkrumah Circle came under assault from the guards (see Figure 6.4). It was an intense struggle (or so it seemed) that ended in favour of the Guards. The phones were ultimately seized and taken to the Metro Guard Station. But a few hours after the raid, the three hawkers were back to that same spot to begin their routine, as the guards looked the other way in pretence. To the metro guards then, protecting Accra’s sites of modernization is less about modernizing Accra as it is about personal (illegal) gains.

Figure 6.4: An army of AMA Task Force, at the foot of the Circle Overpass in Accra, confronting and snatching items from three hawkers, amid contestations (Photograph: Abdul Alim Habib, July 2011).
Another example of the fascinating yet complex relationship between hawkers and city guards is the case of Akos. Akos is a hawker whose items were seized in my presence for trading on pavements close to the Circle. She followed the guards to the station where she was fined GH¢2 (about US$1.30), she later told me. Considering that the seized items were valued at only GH¢20 (about $13), this fine is by no means insignificant (it is as high as 10 percent of the value of the item). Also, her response to the negative when I inquired whether she was issued a receipt for the fine bears strong testimony that the fine was not destined to state coffers.

In a more sinister fashion, retributions are also exacted by the guards in the form of sexual demands mostly on female hawkers. I take on the gender dimension of urban marginalization and exclusions in more detail in Chapter Seven. Suffice it to state at this juncture that women are uniquely positioned as victims of urban spatial interdictions in Accra. Many of the female hawkers, including Akos, alleged that the Guards, in a practice tagged “barter system”, often demand sex before they release seized items back to traders. It is difficult to verify such allegations for socio-cultural reasons, specifically family and societal stigma. The female hawkers that I interviewed for instance were quick to confirm that the practice does occur but were not ready to admit that they or anyone close to them has been a victim before.63 One of the dimensions of Accra’s technology of control then is the performance of a certain form of masculinity in the meting out of punishments, including sexual harassments.

63 A rare case however was when a lady admitted on a local radio, Asempa FM, that on three occasions she had had to offer sex before her items were released back to her. She claimed that she had no choice than to give in since she could not raise the GH¢50 (about $33) the guards demanded. Under strong public criticism, the AMA on September 14, 2011, organized an identification parade where alleged victims of such sexual exploitation were supposed to come and identify the culprits. Unsurprisingly, none showed up clearly for fear of social stigma and potential backlash from the Guards whom they would continue to deal with, as long as they remain hawkers.
From this Circle case, we see how the modern city-building project of the state and the technologies that are marshaled to cultivate a disciplined society, accordingly, produce complex socio-spatial systems on the ground. The systems are made up of, on the one hand, those who are vested with the power to produce order, even if that means inflicting pain, and those, on the other hand, whose crime is that they stepped beyond their limits, regardless of how their dire economic circumstances make it difficult for them to observe those limits. The lesson here then is that in cities of the South such as Accra that are aspiring to modernize or globalize, what is often fascinating is not the relatively glamorous islands of ‘modern’ architecture but rather the layers of technologies of social control around such sites designed to sustain their allure. As an object, the Circle is an attractive place upheld by officials as a symbol of modernity and national image. Yet in terms of social relations, the Circle enters the picture as a source of struggles, extortions, violence, and deal makings.

6.7 Conclusion

In Chapter 5, I examined the ambition of the local government to ‘modernize’ Accra and position it as an ideal location for ‘global’ business and tourism. In this chapter, I show how this ambition comes up against the reality of urban condition that is rooted in informality. Focusing on the case of street hawkers, I examine how the desire to enforce ‘modernist’ form of order propels city authorities to exclude street hawkers whose nature of economic practices appear to undermine that order. The deteriorating economic realities of many ordinary people demands that they increasingly engage in the less structured economic activity – informality – not just to survive but also to thrive in the city. The increasing internal competition among the hawkers
resulting from their increasing numbers requires that they become more physically mobile and visible in order to maximize daily sales. This mobility and visibility, however, take them into prime and cherished locations of the city, those that the city government is highlighting as indicators of Accra’s modernizing status.

To render the street hawkers invisible has demanded that the city government more seriously activates its punitive technologies of control, including evictions, confiscations, fines, and incarcerations. Yet, the more the local state expands these revanchist forms of control, the more the street hawkers find novel means to overcome them. Even though the revanchist techniques remain active, the city government has had to resort to less confrontational forms of spatial control akin to what Merry (2001) describes as spatial governmentality. These mechanisms include ‘moral suasion,’ where the state appeals to the violators of urban spatial order to be self-responsible; and concrete obstacles (such as barked wirings and fence offs) that are meant to regulate and control the movement of street hawkers. In Accra, these constitute what Crossa (2009, p. 43) describes as the “processes of socio-spatial exclusion under entrepreneurial forms of urban governance.” The caveat in the interpretation of the case of urban exclusion in Accra, however, is that it is not just about economic imperative of urban entrepreneurialism but also the nationalistic impulse of attaining urban modernity.

The key conclusion from the discussion in this chapter is that the project of city transformation, whatever the motivation is and wherever it occurs, affects lives and livelihoods of ordinary people. It is often a source of tension between top-down modernizing regimes, on the one hand, and ordinary people on the ground who strive on daily basis to secure decent lives and livelihoods, on the other hand. In the case of Accra, the specific source of this tension is the
contradiction between state efforts to render street hawkers invisible and the goal of the latter to maximize visibility. Under current condition where the urban poor hardly share in the growth of national/urban economy and are compelled to make a living on the streets, “there is no form of repression that can get rid of them for long—they will always be back” (Berman, 1988, p.154).
7.0. Introduction

The Novotel Park is a 4.5-acre state-owned piece of land located in central Accra, close to the Novotel Hotel and the National Theatre. Between 2003 and 2010, the park was invaded and gradually converted into a market mainly by a group of street vendors, predominantly women, who had come under the constant assault of the AMA for hawking on pavements and streets within the vicinity. In May 2010, the Novotel Market, which had attained nearly 4,000 traders, was razed to the ground by a group of armed state security personnel under the instruction of the AMA. The eviction was to pave way for work to begin on an ultra-modern, multipurpose mall—the Octagon; one of the main features of the modernizing path that Accra is currently charting.

In this chapter, I draw on this Novotel Park Market case to explore the gender dimension of Accra’s modernizing and globalizing ambition. The chapter underscores the tension that characterizes this ambition by examining what Bayat (2000) calls “quiet encroachment” by market women on the urban space and the drive of city government to hinder such encroachments. The chapter argues that the increasing marginalization of informal spaces of Accra by the top-down modernizing and ‘neoliberalizing’ regimes, as discussed in Chapter 6, have particularly gender implications not least because these spaces are

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64 I base my use of the term gender on Acker’s (2004) definition of it as “inequalities, divisions, and differences socially constructed around assumed distinctions between female and male”. But based on the aim of the chapter, the analysis focuses on women in terms of how they are disadvantaged relative to power, material and status rewards. I am most interested in how actions mostly by men shape day-to-day urban experiences of women.

65 He defines it as the silent, protracted and pervasive advancement of ordinary people on those who are propertied and powerful in a quest for survival and improvement of their lives (Bayat, 2000).
predominantly under the control of women. In other words, the replacement of informal economic spaces by formal, corporate ones necessarily results in the replacement of women by men since the latter overwhelmingly possess the corporate establishments of the city. The consequences of such exclusions can be debilitating not just for women but also their immediate families to whom many of them have become primary breadwinners. The discussion in this chapter draws primarily on in-depth interviews with the market women who were evicted from the Novotel Park, complemented by relevant media sources and personal observations.

7.1. Urban entrepreneurialism, socio-spatial exclusions and gender

The urban neoliberalism literature has been critiqued on a number of grounds. One such ground is that the discussion has not paid due attention to gender issues (Hubbard, 2004), particularly in relation to the entrepreneurial urban agenda. Thus, many analysts have expressed the need “to prise open these debates on the neoliberal city by highlighting the gendered injustices wrought by neoliberal policy…” (Hubbard, 2004, p. 666). It is important to note, however, that the intersection between gender and the expansion of global capitalism has been at the core of feminist scholarship for decades. This scholarship has raised both conceptual and policy/empirical questions about the gender dimensions of global political economy.

On conceptual grounds, feminist scholars have critiqued the mainstream scholars of economic globalization for privileging a masculine view of the process (see Nagar et al., 2002; Acker, 2004; Freeman, 2001; Gibson-Graham 2002). Nagar et al. (2002), for instance, argue that scholars of globalization have tended to focus on (1) economic processes in the formal sector, (2) only certain places and scales, and (3) only certain actors. By so doing, such analysts have failed
to recognize gender as “a focal point both of and for [global] restructuring” (Marchand and Runyan 2000, p. 18; see also Acker, 2004; Freeman, 2001; Katz, 2001). Freeman (2001) asserts that these analysts are deluded by claims to neutrality and thus tend to mask the “implicit masculinization of [their] macro-structural models” (p. 1008).

Acker (2004) asserts that the macro-structural models are inherently gendered because they are based on the notion of a separation between capitalist production and human reproduction (See also Katz, 2001a and b; Mullings, 2009). Invariably, social reproduction is subordinated to economic production (Acker, 2004) even though the former is a “necessary component of capitalist systems” (Mullings, 2009, p. 174; see also Sassen, 2000). And because female labor is disproportionately expended on social reproduction (Pearson, 2000), “women’s actions [are inherently] overlooked, or consigned to a less important, particularized arena” (Scott 1993, p. 242), even as “men’s actions come to be considered a norm, a representative of human history” (ibid, p. 242). The fundamental point is that social reproduction where women’s labor is concentrated is not accorded sufficient recognition as a vital component of capitalist production.

This point is critical, but my interest in gender in this chapter is slightly different. What interests me is why it is that in many places women’s role in productive, not reproductive, practices is often undervalued and marginalized (Razavi and Pearson, 2004), as is apparently the case for market women in Accra. This point requires a shift from the conceptual realm of macro-structural economic models to the empirical realm of state policy. The connection is that these models have influenced policy making to the extent that states officials tend to privilege economic processes in the formal sector and, by implication, only certain actors (large corporate businessmen) (Nagar et al., 2002). This point is significant because it helps to explain why it is
that ‘informal’ economic spaces dominated by women, as opposed to the corporate sectors, have come to occupy such a peripheral place in official policy calculations in places such as Accra. This is the best way to make sense of the neglect of market places in state development policy, in cities like Accra, despite the known fact that these places serve as incubators and theatres of female entrepreneurialism and economic power (see Clark, 2010; Simone, 2004a; House-Midamba and Ekechi, 1995; Dumor, 1983; Robertson, 1974).

The influence of the World Bank and the IMF in the economic governance of many African countries over the last few decades (Mkandawire and Soludo, 1998; Harrison, 2011; Mensah, 2006 and 2008) is partly connected with the intense focus of state officials on the large corporate sector. This is true regardless of the fact that these institutions have in the past drawn the attention of African states to the informal economy. This is because for the most part this ‘directive’ is only tangential, with the main focus being the large corporate sector, often under the cloak of FDIs.

In the specific context of the city, policies advanced by the proponents of neoliberal capitalism such as the World Bank and IMF have been seriously critiqued on the basis that “such policies are not just about the re-centralisation and accumulation of corporate capital, but are also about the re-inscription of patriarchal relations in the urban landscape” (Hubbard, 2004, p. 666). Thus in places such as Accra where discourses of modernization are woven with those of urban entrepreneurialism, the outcome is akin to what Kern and Wekerle (2008, p. 233) describe as “the redevelopment of urban space in ways that reflect a masculinist and corporatist view of city life”. By Accra’s envisioned modernist standards, market places, often viewed to be occupied by
mainly unproductive and survivalist market women, are incompatible and ought to give way for more productive corporate sectors.

The discussion in this chapter is organized as follows. In the section that follows immediately, I discuss Ghana’s development journey from a gender perspective, zeroing in on market places and what they mean for women and their economic and social emancipation. The section after that examines the historical attitude of the Ghanaian state towards the markets and market women, highlighting how the economic practices of the latter in major cities are no longer only marginalized and undervalued but are being actively replaced by more formal corporate spaces and actors. The discussion in this section draws on the in-depth study of the Novotel Park Market that since 2010 has been replaced by a multi-million dollar Mall. The section after that gauges the impact of these exclusionary practices on women; while the last section concludes the chapter.

7.2. Gender and development in Ghana

Gender is certainly an important dimension in terms of assessing the Ghanaian society (FAO, 2012; Levin et al., 1999; Brown, 1994; Ardayfio-Schandorf, 2004; Kuada, 2009). On multiple dimensions of the national life including production and reproduction, livelihood and expenditure, and domestic and public spatial practices, men and women have different experiences. In nearly all these facets of life, women have been at a disadvantage. ‘Disadvantage’ in this sense should however not be taken to mean that women’s contribution to the national development agenda has been marginal. Women have indeed played significant roles over the years not just in the area of reproduction, where they indeed bear the
overwhelming responsibility, but also in the realm of production where their participation rates have equally been relatively high. Their productive work has particularly been overwhelming in the informal sector where the majority of them are engaged mostly in agriculture, agro-based industries and trade.

Over the years, women in Ghana have increasingly shouldered responsibilities for social reproduction not just in terms of childbirth and care but also by way of economic contribution to household welfare (FAO, 2012; Levin et al., 1999; Yeboah, 1998; Brown, 1994). This increased social responsibility is linked to socio-cultural changes in the sense that the traditionally defined gender roles that had men as the main household breadwinners have been significantly undermined (Brown, 1994; Lloyd and Gage-Brandon 1993). But for the most part, the increased burden on women is attributed to the neoliberal policies that have resulted in the rising cost of social reproduction and therefore driven women into taking on multiple productive roles in order to meet this responsibility (Oberhauser and Yeboah, 2011; Gugler, 1996; Baden et al, 1994).

Significant as their productive activities are, the role of women as economic actors has not been adequately valued. Their contribution and the corresponding economic spaces where they dominate (the ‘informal’ sector) have been historically marginalized, often viewed as nothing more than an extension of their reproductive responsibilities. In many parts of the country, women’s access to resources vital for productive ventures, such as land, labor, credit, education, and extension services are severely limited, compared to men (Hampel-Milagrosa, 2009; Kuada, 2009; Brown, 1994). They face many more hurdles in terms of starting a business, running a business and obtaining formal employment, all due to rigid regulations (Hampel-
7.2.1. Women and the market places in Ghana

Unlike most other sectors of the urban economy, trade in market places is the preserve of Ghanaian women (Lloyd and Gage-Brandon 1993). They comprise 60 to 80 percent of the workforce in such market places (Ruel et al. 1998). It is not surprising that some hold the view that the power of the Ghanaian woman is nowhere more forcefully expressed than in the market place (Dumor, 1983). Yet, from the perspective of officials, rather predictably, this active presence of women in the market, along with the intense entrepreneurial practices that characterizes it, is nothing remarkable. The dominant perception of the market, as a matter of interest, is that of a place where women engage in mainly survivalist or subsistence income-earning activities. The market is nothing more than a place where the illiterate and unskilled women conveniently balance childcare/homemaking responsibilities with some income-generating activities (Levin et al., 1999; Lloyd and Gage-Brandon 1993). It is true that some of these assertions are meant to project women’s vital role as household breadwinners. However, I argue that such assertions have been excessively patronizing of women and have rather fueled the perception that economic practices in market places are merely complementary rather than serious business ventures in their own right, hence the neglect of markets in totality in national economic policy making.

In contrast to this patronizing view of market traders, some studies have uncovered that market places in Ghana as elsewhere in Africa are some of the most complex and sophisticated
centers of economic organization (Ngeleza and Robinson, 2011; Ortiz et al, 2010; Aguda, 2009; FAO, 1998; Diawara, 1998; Robertson, 1974). These studies have dispelled at least two popular misconceptions about the market place. The first misconception is that it is chaotic and disorganized. What these studies show is that behind the apparent chaos are well organized systems and institutions on the basis of which the market functions. One key aspect of this system is the multiplicity of Trade Associations, presided over by “Market Queens” who supervise them and serve as the fulcrum around whom dispute resolution within the market occurs (Comfort, Interview, July 2011; see also Aguda, 2009; Ortiz et al, 2010). The second misconception is that all traders in the market merely buy and sell in-situ. What is often ignored is that market women play a much more varied role in the economic chain beyond mere distribution or retail. In the national food chain, for instance, market women do not merely serve as “itinerant wholesalers” of agricultural produce but also play the role of “primary financiers of farming costs and thus share any risk of crop failure” (Ortiz et al, 2010, p. 2; also FAO: 1998; Ghana Audit Service, 2004).

Added to these functional and organization strengths is also that the “market women…of the capital city are [in their own right] a pragmatic, shrewd, gregarious, and formidable lot” (Robertson, 1974, p. 657; see also Clark, 2010). In some African cities, these highly enterprising market women with strong business acumen are referred to as Mama Benz, in reference to their wealth and influence symbolized literally by their possession and use of expensive cars.66 In Accra, specifically, traders operating in the popular Makola Market (widely called Makola

66Mama Benz was the story of an hour long documentary titled “Mama Benz: An African Market Woman” directed by Karin Junger. The film focused on the case of one woman who presided over a cloth market in Lomé, Togo.
Women) are known to control import trade from China and Dubai, usually in commodities such as toys, clothes, shoes etcetera.

Yet, for reasons stated earlier, markets in Ghana are generally ignored (Ghana Audit Service, 2004, p. 5). Even so, they form an integral part of Accra’s physical and social landscape mainly due to the ingenuity of the traders themselves. The city currently has at least 47 markets (see Appendix 3). Some of them are large and serve as hubs of wholesale of specialized commodities. But most of them remain small, trading in a plethora of goods ranging from food items such as yam, cassava, maize, meat and various fruits and vegetables to household items and clothing.

In the remaining sections, I explore how Accra’s modernization and entrepreneurial drive are reshaping the experiences of market women who increasingly seem to be facing more intense forms of marginalization and exclusion.

7.3 The politics of socio-spatial exclusion in Accra

Like hawkers, market traders have come under more frequent and more intense acts of exclusion by the state relative to access and use of urban space. Markets and market women who mostly trade in them, have increasingly come up against the strong forces of the globalizing and modernizing state and the increasingly more powerful corporate actors. There are three main channels by which markets and market women are facing exclusion in Accra: by neglect, by bypass, and by eviction. It is important to recall my earlier caveat that these exclusions and marginalization of market women are driven by neoliberal forces but only in their interaction with city “modernization” agendas.
7.3.1. Exclusion by neglect

By exclusion by neglect, I mean the endemic and deep-seated neglect of market places as important economic spaces within national and urban development policy and practice in Ghana. This neglect came up as one of the key concerns of the market women that I interviewed. The neglect, they say, takes the form of unwillingness on the part of the AMA to develop adequate markets at vantage locations within the city. A typical response on this issue was:

There are so many traders in Accra who do not have places to ply their trade. The AMA has refused to build more markets. Any time we complain, they point to us a few existing markets that they say are still empty. Yet when you go there, the spaces there are either already allocated to others or the markets are too isolated for any meaningful trading activity to occur there (Deborah; interview, July, 2011).

At least three key reports—i.e. the Food and Agricultural Organization (FAO) (1998), the Ghana Audit Service (2004), and the AMA (2008)—confirm this particular concern of the traders. These reports conclude that despite being a critical pillar of the national/urban economy, markets have always suffered neglect in terms of state policy. This neglect comes in two forms: lack of development of new markets and insufficient attention to the already existing ones. By law, it is the AMA that is mandated to provide and manage public markets in Accra. However, the Assembly has over the years developed “no new markets…The existing markets [rather] developed from community initiatives…” (Ghana Audit Service, 2004, p. 5). Most of such markets emerged “spontaneously, near rail stations or in new residential areas” (FAO, 1998, p. 5).

Admittedly, the original layout plan for the Accra Metropolis included sites for markets (Nyanteng, 1998). However, due to the prolonged period of failure by the state to provide
functional markets, individual developers have stepped in to convert the sites into residential buildings (Nyanteng, 1998). Consequently:

“marketing activities take place in the old city [i.e. central Accra], in spite of its limited space for traffic, lorry parking, access points, banking and wholesale facilities. The spillage of traders and hawkers onto roads close to markets and at all traffic lights all over the Metropolis is a manifestation of planning failures (FAO, 1998, p. 5).

These “planning failures” in terms of provision of new markets have also filtered into the management systems of the already existing ones. To be fair, some form of rehabilitation and upgrading of some selected markets have occurred in recent times. The AMA has built some stores and stalls, and provided some services like urinals, toilets, washrooms, security and general sanitation services in some of the markets (Ghana Audit Service, 2004; AMA, 2008).

Yet, the responses I got from the market women are strikingly consistent with the conclusion by the Ghana Audit Service report that the:

“AMA seems to regard the markets as a principal source of revenue, contributing about 20% of total I.G.F [Internally Generated Fund] but the provision of services to traders who pay the fees have not been given the necessary attention” (2004, p.31; emphasis added).

In addition to poor services traders receive from the AMA:

“Conditions of structures in the markets are also a source of concern with dilapidated stalls, leaking roofs and poor drainage systems. There are no preventive maintenance schemes in place due to lack of funds since revenue from the markets are lodged in a common fund of the Assembly and used for other purposes” (Ghana Audit Service, 2004, p. 31; emphasis added).

These kinds of neglect have hampered the economic vitality of the markets and thus undermined the potential of market women to transition from petty traders to full-blown entrepreneurs.
The Assembly has in more recent times adopted the policy to ‘modernize the markets’. But this so far has meant little more than turning the markets into private hands. Even though the private involvement in the management of some of the markets is said to have yielded some positive results (Ghana Audit Service, 2004, p. 31), it is curious that traders have been up in arms lately against any further privatization of the existing markets. (The Chronicle, 9 Dec 2010). Some of the market women that I interviewed alleged that the privately managed markets are far more expensive to trade in due to the high cost of stores and stalls in these markets.

7.3.2. Exclusion by bypassing

The AMA since declaring the intention to ‘transform Accra into a modern city’ has been making overtures to the private sector to engage in PPPs in managing the city. To this end, the Assembly has held investment forums in Accra and proposed to hold same in other cities abroad.

At a forum in Accra, Mayor Vanderpuije stated that

“Accra was endowed with abundant potential and opportunities and the AMA was prepared to partner with local and foreign businesses to provide a wide range of services towards the development of the capital” (GNA, 8 August 2011).

Expectedly, the attention of the Assembly has utterly been on the large corporate sector, particularly the financial institutions. It has completely written off market women as worthy partners in the urban transformation agenda. Not even in relation to the so-called policy to ‘modernize’ Accra’s markets has the Assembly engaged the market women themselves. This is

67 The management of several of Accra’s markets including the Makola Mall, Kaneshie Market, and Dansoman Market, has been privatized.
68 All the market women that I interviewed had some knowledge about Mayor Vanderpuije’s ambition to beautify Accra but expressed a complete lack of information about the details of that agenda.
unsurprising because informal spaces have rarely ever been viewed by the state as serious economic enclaves worthy of central policy consideration. Nearly all state intervention in these spaces are done on the basis of benevolence rather than as means of striking serious economic relationship with the actors involved in this sector.

Parenthetically, it is tempting to conclude, even if on linguistic grounds, that the policy to modernize Accra’s markets is driven more by the desire to make the markets conform to the envisioned modern (aesthetic) standards of the city rather than a genuine desire to ease the distress of market women who trade in these spaces. This is perhaps the only way to make sense of why the Assembly and some urban elites now prefer to use the term mall rather than market for the very few upgraded or rehabilitated markets within the city (e.g. Makola Mall for Makola Market and Pedestrian Shopping Mall for Odawna Market). The shift away from markets to malls is suggestive that city officials do not perceive markets, and perhaps those trading in them, as modern enough.

Meanwhile, writing off market women as credible partners in the city transformation project is one form of exclusion; failure to consider their unique needs as social and economic actors is another. To the market women, it is unconscionable that the AMA exclusively equates city transformation with beautification and aestheticisation, while overlooking the survival interests of market women and their families.

“Of course we all want to see Accra beautiful, but at whose expense? Since we were dumped at this place [Odawna Market], the AMA has totally forgotten about us. Is this the way to make Accra beautiful? If it is, then we totally reject it. Why should we the poor [market women] suffer in order to make Accra beautiful? In fact, the AMA and the Mayor have done nothing to transform Accra except to molest women [meaning traders]. The city obviously does not look any better than it was when this Mayor [Alfred Vanderpuije] took over” (Focus group discussion, July 2011, emphasis added).
What stands revealed here is the connection between official city making processes and the day-to-day survival needs of ordinary residents. The market women may not have a full comprehension about the city modernization agenda of the Assembly, but they do appreciate its direct impact on their sources of livelihood. More importantly, the principle of city modernization itself does not appear to be what the women are contesting but rather the specific priorities being pursued in that regard. Another trader underscores this point as follows:

“The Mayor says he wants to beautify Accra and make it attractive. But please excuse my language: must a hungry person decorate his house before s/he searches for food to eat? Many women in this market are taking care of many dependents from their primary level to the university level of education. These days most fathers are not even helping out that much; the responsibility is mostly on the mothers. So how can anyone be talking about beautification of the city when our children need to eat and go to school? We do not necessarily disagree with the effort to transform Accra. All that we are saying is that the AMA needs to pay attention to us the market women too, or don’t we matter to them? …it is clear so far that they are not interested [in addressing our situation]. Here we are at the mercy of the weather; constantly being beaten by rain and sunshine” (Adjokor; interview, July 2011, emphasis added).

Here, the Ghanaian state stands accused of prioritizing aesthetics over and above the basic survival needs of the ordinary market women. The gender dimension is even more vividly captured by the accusation that men increasingly shift the responsibility of social reproduction to women. The case being made by these women then is for the state to pay more attention to the specific needs of women since such attention is likely to have a much broader social benefit.

The market women further advanced a much more nuanced challenge against the Assembly’s mode of city transformation and re-presentation.

“The AMA officials say they want to turn Accra into a modern city like those in America and Europe. Has Mayor Vanderpuije suddenly forgotten that in Europe and America people work and get paid? Where are the jobs in this country and how does the Mayor expect us to survive together with our children?” (Ramu; interview, July, 2011, emphasis added).
What is remarkable in this statement is that the market women seem to appreciate the fundamental absurdity in the effort to equate Accra to a western city. They challenge this equation not because they think Accra is comparatively inferior but because the latter has its unique circumstances and functions on fundamentally different set of socioeconomic and political dynamics. One such dynamic is that Accra largely functions on the basis of informality (citizens hire themselves) compared with Europe and America that are defined by formality (citizens are hired and get paid).

In all, what these women reveal are the inherent contradictions of the urban entrepreneurialism and city modernization ambition. The contradiction is that on the one hand there is the attempt to court investments to supposedly make life in the city better; yet at the same time, the perceived needs of those investments drive officials to adopt measures that marginalize the sources of livelihood of the ordinary citizens. This is done because such livelihood sources are deemed incompatible with the requirement of these investments. What makes it more noteworthy is that this shrinking of the livelihood sources of women is occurring at the time when the latter are taking on more and more productive and reproductive responsibilities.

7.3.3. Exclusion by eviction: the case of the Novotel Park market

The worst form of exclusion of women in Accra is eviction. Over the last decade, a number of market women have lost their trading places through demolition by the local state, with others facing similar fate. For the most part, such demolitions are rationalized on the
grounds that these markets are illegally built. Much as this rationalization holds, it begs a critical interrogation.

Nearly all markets in Accra, and other cities and towns in Ghana, today developed despite and not because of deliberate state plan and support. Not only are the existing market places in the metropolis inadequate for traders but also many of the markets developed “spontaneously” and as a direct response to “planning failures” (FAO, 1998, p. 5). Many of the markets developed out of space invasion by individuals looking for space to ply their economic activities. In Accra today, consequently, ‘open spaces’ are directly associated with ‘open conflicts’ because such spaces, especially within central Accra, have become vortexes of claims and counterclaims. The clash is often as a result of unresolved disputes between traders who are in search for open spaces to trade and land owners, including the state, who are pondering over how to protect their spaces from encroachment (see Figures 7.1 and 7.2).

![Figure 7.1 and 7.2: Signs warning potential encroachers to keep off. Empty spaces such as these are open to "illegal" occupation, as traders quickly turned them into mini markets. (Photographs: Abdul Aim Habib, 2011)](image)

But rather than viewing these market places as developing “spontaneously,” as described by the FAO, I think it is more appropriate to describe them in Bayat’s (2000a) terms as “quiet
encroachment,” defined as “the silent, protracted and pervasive advancement of ordinary people on those who are propertied and powerful in a quest for survival and improvement of their lives” (2000a, p. 24). This description is apt in explaining how markets in Accra emerge because even though they begin impulsively, such markets progressively become deliberately structured, both spatially and socially. They further acquire the status of what I shall call ‘sites of resistance and claims-making’ against the state and property owners, even as the latter employ all means necessary to shrink them.

To elaborate on these issues, I shall draw on the case of the Novotel Park Market in central Accra. I show how market women come to occupy urban spaces and how they justify such occupation, as well as ways that they are swept away by forces of modernization. The discussion draws primarily on the firsthand accounts of the traders themselves, who have since 2010 been evicted and relocated at the Odawna Market (or the Pedestrian Shopping Mall).

The Novotel Park (see Figure 7.3) is a 4.5-acre land located in a prime area of Accra, surrounded by key landmarks including Ministries to the East, the Novotel Hotel to the North, Kinbu Senior High Technical School to the West, and Kinbu Garden to the South.

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69 The Ministries’ area is a vast area occupied by national state institutions, predominantly Ministries and agencies.
Figure 7.3: the Novotel Park Market. Also depicted are few important locations such the Novotel Hotel, the Ambassador Hotel, the National Theatre, and Ministries’ zone.

The Park was an open space predominantly used as a car park until 2003 when a few hawkers began to use it as a place to store their goods for safekeeping. Following a major decongestion exercise in 2005 that displaced all hawkers selling on pavements within the vicinity, a few of the affected hawkers moved into the Park where they began to ply their trade. As months went by, several others joined, with the permission of those who had first moved in. By 2006, the space had assumed a full-fledged market, nearing 4,000 petty traders by 2010.\(^7^0\)

From 2006, the traders began an exercise to ‘formalize’ the market, putting in place all the needed social and spatial structures that are typical of a legitimate market. Key elements of this exercise were:

- Establishing a leadership and subsequently an association (Novotel Market Association-NMA) that would advance the cause of the market traders, particularly gaining legitimacy for the market.

\(^7^0\)This figure is in dispute. The quotes have ranged between 2500 and 4,000 traders.
• Registering all members trading within the market, issuing them with ID cards, and charging them fees that went towards developing the market.

• Taking control of and formalizing space allocation processes in the market for the members, especially when new entrants were involved.

The social and leadership structure of the market was set up in a nested form typical of all organized markets in the country. The setup is as follow. At the general level, traders are organized into various groups based on items that they sell—e.g. tomato sellers, orange sellers, okra seller and so on. Each of these “itemized groups”71 then selects a leader to represent the group’s interests in all processes of bargaining within and without the market. The leaders of each itemized group then collectively form the next level of the market hierarchy. At the peak is the ‘Queen Mother,’ democratically chosen from one of the leaders of the itemized groups. She automatically assumes the leadership of the entire market. At the city-wide level, the Queen Mother becomes one of several other Queen Mothers that represent each of the nearly four dozen markets of Accra from whom the overall Queen Mother for the entire city is, also democratically, chosen. She then becomes the leader of the Greater Accra Market Women Association (GAMWA), the umbrella group that embodies all recognized market associations within the Greater Accra Region.

Like most markets in the city, the Novotel Market began as an illegal entity72. So the first pressing challenge of the Queen Mother of the NMA was to gain legitimacy for the market. By 2008, the NMA had managed to join the GAMWA. At this point and by this membership, the

71There were 33 itemized groups in the market at the time of eviction in 2010.
72 I define illegal in this context to mean that the markets are often not state sanctioned neither do they conform to the laid down city/town physical plans.
Novotel Market had seized to be an entirely illegal or illegitimate entity. But more importantly, the market had ceased to be a spontaneous product but rather a well-structured entity with its own system of governance. By this status, the market had assumed Bayat’s description of ‘quiet encroachment’.

Yet, this legitimacy was partly cosmetic. This is because this membership with GAMWA, vital as it was, did not shield the market from the destructive force of the state. In May 2010, the market was reduced to rubble by the AMA to pave way for a ‘modern’ city project: a multimillion-dollar, multipurpose city mall called the Octagon. Given its growth in recent times and the implications on markets and market women for that matter, the phenomenon of western-style modern shopping malls requires a special attention. I therefore punctuate the discussion of the Novotel Market case with a brief anecdote on shopping malls in Accra.

Indeed, the retail economy of major Ghanaian cities, Accra especially, is currently being re-spatialized by the rise of shopping malls. The phenomenon of shopping mall is indeed one of the means through which international corporate capital is currently reshaping the geography of African cities (Miller, 2011; Miller et. al., 2008). Accra has over the last three decades experienced increased presence of global corporations as a direct consequence of the liberalization of the national economy (Grant, 2009; Grant and Nijman, 2002; Yeboah, 2000) and shopping malls are the latest manifestation of this corporate expansion.

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73 According to the traders, the AMA indeed collected daily tolls from them, which was taken by the traders to mean legitimization. It is not clear why the AMA did not act much earlier to evict them. My guess however is that the AMA may have thought that trading within that space was the lesser of the two evils because it took a large chunk of hawkers away from the streets and pavements at the time.

74 The project is a PPP between the AMA and the Accra City Management Company (ACMC). The ACMC intended to develop a 15-storey structure on the land, part of which would be a four-storey office complex for use as official AMA City Hall (Daily Graphic/AMA, May 2010; http://ama.ghanadistricts.gov.gh/?arrow=nws&read=34840).

75 These include banks, hotels, telecom networks, advertising agencies, and media networks.
One of the earliest shopping malls to establish in Accra is the A&C Square, formerly known as A&C Mall. Since 2005 when this mall opened, nearly a dozen other malls have either opened or are about to open (see Table 7.1)\(^7^6\).

**Table 7.1:** Some ‘modern’ shopping malls in Accra, their locations, and size of retail space.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Location</th>
<th>Start date</th>
<th>Retail space in sq metres.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A&amp;C Square</td>
<td>East Legon</td>
<td>2005</td>
<td>10,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Accra Mall</td>
<td>Spintex road</td>
<td>2008</td>
<td>22,900</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>West Hills Mall</td>
<td>Dunkonah</td>
<td>2014</td>
<td>27,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Phoenix Mall</td>
<td>Adjinganor</td>
<td>No data</td>
<td>No data</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Airport Square</td>
<td>Airport</td>
<td>2014</td>
<td>2000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Octagon,</td>
<td>Accra central</td>
<td>2014</td>
<td>50,000 office; 6500 retail spaces</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GLA Oxford Street</td>
<td>Osu</td>
<td>2013</td>
<td>5000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Marina Mall</td>
<td>Airport City</td>
<td>No data</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source, author (information gathered from various media sources published online).

Most of the malls are foreign-local partnerships, some of them directly involving the state. For instance, the Accra Mall, the largest so far with a retail space of about 23,000 square metres, was developed by a joint venture between a private Ghanaian investor and a UK-based private equity firm, Actis. The mall, described by some as Accra’s “pride of the moment” (*GNA*, 22 February 2013) opened in 2008 at a total cost of $34m and currently attracts approximately seven million visitors per year (*Oxford Business Group*, 28 March 2012). The biggest mall yet is the West Hills Mall (see **Figure 7.4**). The 27,000 square metres retail-space mall is expected to open in 2014 at a total cost of US$96 million (*SA Commercial Prop News*, 13 March 2013).

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\(^7^6\)Similar malls have also emerged in Kumasi, the country’s second-largest city. The notable ones so far are Sun City Mall and Garden City Mall, the latter costing about$48m being built by the Methodist Church and due to open in 2013 (*Oxford Business Group*, 28 Mar 2012).
Unlike the Accra Mall, the West Hills Mall project is a public-private joint venture between a state-owned Social Security & National Insurance Trust (SSNIT) and Delico Property Developments Limited of Mauritius. This partnership shows clearly that ‘modern’ shopping malls are emerging in Accra not just with the blessing of the state, but also through its active encouragement and involvement. As captured in a story by the state-owned Ghana News Agency of 22 February 2013, officials are enthusiastic and expectant that shopping malls could significantly improve Accra’s economy, society, and physical landscape. This point is noteworthy taken into account the dismissive nature of state response to the needs of ‘traditional’ markets.

The connection between ‘traditional’ markets and shopping malls goes beyond the role of the state. The mall owners are themselves striking this connection by identifying local, informal retail as one of their potential stumbling blocks. The latter currently accounts for nearly 90 percent of all retail activity in Accra. Mall owners/managers such as Edmund Asamoah of the A&C Square, view this dominance as one of the key challenges facing shopping malls in terms of access to consumers (Oxford Business Group, 28 Mar 2012). It is not surprising therefore that
some of the new malls are becoming community-oriented (ibid). Additionally, it is to be expected that the growth in the number of malls, along with its high demand for locational advantage, could increase competition for vital spaces of the city. Needless to add that the less politically influential market women are the most likely to lose out in this competition, as the case of the Novotel Park Market amply demonstrates.

As already mentioned, the Novotel Park Market eviction was to make way for the construction of the Octagon—a 50,000 sq. metres office and 6,500 sq metres retail space mall in central Accra (see Figures 7.5a 7.5b, 7.5c, and 7.5d).


Figures 7.5c and 7.5d: the Octagon at the early stages of construction after the demolition of the Novotel Market (photographs: Abdul Alim Habib, 2011)
The eviction of the Novotel Market traders and subsequent demolition of the market for the Octagon mall project unfolded with substantial drama. Even though I suggested earlier that the legitimization of the market by the GAMWA was cosmetic, it was partly significant too. The latter played a crucial role in the negotiations with the AMA that resulted in the development of the Odawna Market for the registered members of the NMA. Not all members of NMA, however, were satisfied with arrangements that led to the establishment of the new market. Most of them expressed disquiet about the location and condition of the new market, citing floods\textsuperscript{77} and limited space\textsuperscript{78}.

These concerns had barely been addressed when the AMA began its relocation exercise in 2009. Some of the traders relocated voluntarily but a significant number did not. The recalcitrant ones threatened “naked” demonstrations and even petitioned President Mills at the Castle—the seat of Presidency—after staging a couple of hours of street procession. In these actions, we see how ordinary people in cities like Accra demonstrate their agency. They do so through direct engagement with the highest authority above: a form of resistance akin to what geographers describe as ‘jumping scales’ (Smith, 1993). The traders were clad in black and red: an appearance that in many cultures in Ghana symbolizes misfortune, in most cases bereavement. My interpretation is that the traders by this appearance sought to convey that the impending eviction was a tantamount to bereavement.

On 23\textsuperscript{rd} May 2010, barely two days after the Presidency assured the petitioners that “We are there for you. At the appropriate time, we will do all we can to make you happy,” bulldozers

\textsuperscript{77}This claim has been borne out by events over the last couple of years. Two major floods in the area due to heavy downpours flooded the market with traders losing their goods worth tens of thousands of Ghana cedis.

\textsuperscript{78}But in my discussion with them, I gathered that the traders were most concerned about the location of the new market relative to the Novotel Park where they originally traded. The traders were under no illusion that the new market would pick up anytime soon. This doubt has also been borne out somewhat because over two years after the relocation business is still sluggish.
razed the Novotel Market to the ground, amid tight state security. The demolition began at dawn, according to the traders, which made it difficult for them to protect their wares. The traders were still taken by surprise even though the Assembly gave them prior warning about the date of the exercise. This can be explained by the fact that several similar warnings had been issued in the past to no effect.

The immediate impact of the eviction on the traders was quite severe. One of the traders recounted to me her loses as follows:

I lost about GHC 3500 [about $3000 USD]. Even as I speak with you today, I still owe many of my creditors. Was it fair that the AMA treated us that way? (Maame Yaa; interview, July, 2011)

Beside the claims of inadequate space and general condition of the Odawna market, I inquired about why they (the traders) felt the need to resist relocation despite being aware that the park had an owner. The responses were both varied and intriguing. One of traders said: “are we not Ghanaians too? Couldn’t they have allowed us to make a living there? After all the market was already well developed” (Emma, interview, July, 2011). There are two essential rationalizations here. One is that market women are Ghanaians too and so must be given the chance to utilize the urban space. This argument sits well with those made by the ‘right to the city’ scholars and advocates. But there is a more logical argument being made here, which is that the space was already a full-blown market sustaining thousands of households. This also implies that if attended to, the market could be a profitable business centre like any other.

Another trader provided a different dimension to the resistance. She asserted that “we were only trying to get them [the officials] frustrated; perhaps they would grow tired and allow

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79 A team of 53 police officers and about 20 AMA Task force members were stationed there during and hours after the demolition exercise (http://newtimes.com.gh/story/ama-finally-ejects-traders-from-novotel-market)
us to remain there”. Much as this response sounds humorous and perhaps infantile, it makes perfect sense to anyone who pays attention to urban land claims in Ghana. In many instances, people lay claims on or even buy pieces of land that they know quite well are in contention. The strategy is to frustrate whoever else is claiming the land to a point where they would ultimately give up. This strategy has served traders and hawkers quite well, even if for a limited time period.

7.4. Gauging the impact of evictions/spatial exclusions on women

If the actual process of eviction from the Novotel Market had a serious impact on the market women, the aftermath has not been any less so. The relocation of the traders to the Odawna market has deeply impacted them on three dimensions: time, networks, and money. In Table 7.2, I provide a snapshot of these three dimensions, based on the subjective views of the market women themselves.

Table 7.2: Selected Traders at the Odawna Market: their traded items, hours of trade and sales (in Ghana cedis)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>No. of dependents</th>
<th>Years at Novotel Park mkt</th>
<th>Daily hours at Odawna mkt</th>
<th>Items sold</th>
<th>Daily sales at Novotel mkt (GHC)</th>
<th>Daily sales at Odawna mkt (GHC)</th>
<th>% decrease</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Ema</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>4am-4pm</td>
<td>Cereals</td>
<td>300</td>
<td>120</td>
<td>60</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grace</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>3:30am-6pm</td>
<td>Fish</td>
<td>200</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Deborah</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>4am-5pm</td>
<td>Okro</td>
<td>220</td>
<td>130</td>
<td>40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dzifa</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3:30am-6pm</td>
<td>Meat</td>
<td>250</td>
<td>150</td>
<td>40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Zainab</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>4am-7pm</td>
<td>Banana</td>
<td>150</td>
<td>80</td>
<td>47</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ramatu</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>4am-4pm</td>
<td>Flour</td>
<td>180</td>
<td>80</td>
<td>56</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Comfort</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>4am-7pm</td>
<td>Tomatoes</td>
<td>250</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>60</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Akosua</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>4am-7pm</td>
<td>Fruits</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>40</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: filed data, 2011
**Time:** according to the traders, they spend, on average, 13 hours trading in the Odawna Market (see **Table 7.2**) compared to about 10 hours at the Novotel Park Market (the 10 hours is based on the average per the figures given by the traders). One of the traders explained the time factor this way:

> Now I have to come to the market even on Sundays. I sell tomatoes, so if I don’t come they will perish. When I was at the Novotel Park, my consignment was always sold out before week end, so I did not have to trade on Sundays (Comfort; interview, June, 2011).

In most of the responses, I found the traders face the grim choice of either cutting back on household expenditure or increasing the trading time to make up for the shortfall in household income due to relatively lower sales at the new market (see previous table). For obvious reasons, most of my respondents indicated that they had chosen the latter.

It is important, however, not to underestimate the impact of this choice. Indeed, several studies have established that in Ghana women’s social life is much more sensitive to time constraints than men’s (see Baden et al., 1994; FAO, 2012; Levin et al., 1999). In particular, a wide gender gap exists in the time allocated to domestic activities. While 65 percent of men spend from 0 to 10 hours per week on domestic activities, 89 percent of women spend 10 hours per week or more (FAO, 2012). Even more significantly, the average amount of time that women spend per week on domestic activities is greater than that of men even if women spend almost the same amount of time as men on productive activities outside home (ibid). What this implies in the case of the Odawna Market traders is that their commitment to domestic chores remains the same even though their trading hours have increased by about three hours.\(^80\). Yet, those

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\(^80\) Ordinarily, house helps are employed to assist but this comes with an extra cost to the household. In some cases Kids offer some help but this is not an adequate replacement of women’s domestic labor.
among them who see the need “to save time in food preparation,” the single most time-consuming activity for women, “[must] increase the share of the food budget spent on processed foods, convenience foods, snacks, and meals available as street foods” (Levin et al., 1999): foods that are usually less healthy and more expensive (Maxwell et al., 2000).

Social networks in market places are invaluable resources and take a long time to build. The networks take two important forms: those among the traders themselves and those between traders and their customers. As a consequence of the Novotel eviction, both forms of networks were severely disrupted. With respect to the first kind, in the events leading up to the eviction, strains emerged between those who agreed to relocate (I call them the pro-relocation group or PRG for short) and those who either completely refused or demanded that certain conditions were met before they relocated (the anti-relocation group or ARG for short).

The AMA exploited these cracks by closing the channels of communication on the ARG. The PRG peacefully relocated to the new market while the PRG were eventually forcefully evicted. But they, after the forceful eviction, decided to occupy the outer perimeter of the new market, partly as a form of protest and partly because most of the ideal trading spots had already been taken by the PRG. Furthermore, they formed a rival association to the one formed by the PRG prior to their forceful eviction. A battle line, represented literally by the walls that divide the inside and the outside of the new market, emerged between the two groups, occasionally manifesting in direct conflicts. The dynamics are that the ARG by virtue of trading outside of the market tend to have more immediate access to customers, much to the irritation of the PRG who occupy the market proper. To the latter, the situation is ironic since the former is benefiting from
its lawlessness. The AMA has persistently sided with the PRG but has yet to muster the courage to push the ARG into the market, where they should be.

Both have since been fighting a ‘proxy war’. In one of the conflicts that I witnessed during fieldwork in 2011, the two groups, proxied by rented thugs, engaged in physical altercations that resulted in some injuries, to both body and property. Thus, the once vibrant and strongly networked group of market women (at the Novotel Park Market) is now an entangled web of antagonistic rivals. In her work on urban exclusions in South America, Crossa (2009) advocated that we view those that the state seeks to exclude as themselves highly differentiated groups who also interact through differential power relations. What the case of Accra shows is that sometimes the state seeks to accentuate, if not generate, these differences in order to be able to exclude.

Regarding the trader-customer based networks, many of the traders bemoaned the loss of their customer base, including some of their most intimate ones with whom they shared experiences about life beyond the confines of the market. Recent study by Kuada (2009, p. 85) concluded that:

“female entrepreneurs tend to have more difficulties in accessing bank financing but they compensate by cultivating social relationships and using the social capital derived from them as a resource leveraging mechanism. Women also tend to depend more on their social relationships for moral and emotional support during the initial stages of their enterprise development.”

More than just business, women’s livelihood strategies as a whole in Ghana are largely dependent on social networks (Levin et al., 1999). Undeniably, market places are some of the most powerful, if not the most powerful, sites where women build social capital. Needless to say that wanton destruction of markets can have serious social consequences for women beyond the
realm of the economy. These effects become even more pronounced if situated in a context where the number of female-headed households in Accra is on the rise (GSS, 2008).

**Monetary loss**, expectedly, came across as the biggest concern for the traders. Most of the traders claimed that sales had dropped more than half since they moved to the Odawna Market (Table 7.2). Based on estimates provided by the traders, their daily sales on average have dropped by between 40 and 60 percent compared to the Novotel Market. This drastic change in income has brought tremendous hardships on the traders and their families. Consistent in the responses of each of the traders was the concern about the tougher challenge to meet household financial demands, particularly those that relate to their dependents, including provision of food, clothing, and shelter, and payment of school fees and other education-related expenditures for their children. As one of the traders stated:

> “When I was at the Novotel Park Market, I was able to pay my children’s school fees without any sweat. I have three children, two in Senior High School and one in Junior High School. Three days ago, I had to go and borrow money from a friend in order to pay my children’s school fees” (Cynthia; interview, June 2011).

While it is common knowledge that differences exist between men and women’s livelihoods and expenditure patterns in Ghana, it is not as widely agreed that women have been making increasing and disproportionate contributions to household welfare. Yet this is the conclusion of many studies that add that women earn lower incomes, but tend to allocate more of their budget to basic goods for themselves and their children compared to men (Baden, et al., 1994; Levin et al., 1999; Maxwell et al., 2000; FAO, 2012). Thus, by virtue of these gender differentials in intra-household expenditure patterns in favor of men, any move that negatively impacts the livelihood sources of women threatens the very survival of entire households.
Some of the respondents, however, expressed concern beyond the challenge of meeting recurrent household expenditures. For example:

*My husband and I started a housing project* when I was at the Novotel Park Market. The project was proceeding at a good pace until we were evicted from Novotel. Now I can barely contribute to the family’s upkeep let alone proceed with the building project; mainly because what I make here is a fraction of what I used to make when I was at the Novotel Park Market. [Given the current situation] we probably will be paying rent [house rent] for a very long time to come (Adwoa; interview, June, 2011; emphasis added).

The emphasis in this statement is on capital intensive household investments such as housing projects. Women, by this claim, have not only become more directly involved as household daily breadwinners but are also more directly engaged in the processes of acquisition of permanent household assets. This suggest that there has been some shift in household arrangement in the past whereby “pooling of resources and joint decision making between men and women …[were] generally not the norm, with men and women tending to have separate income and expenditure steams” (Baden, et al., 1994, p. ii). The lesion to be drawn from the Novotel Park Market case is that evictions should not be treated lightly and that future exercises in this direction should exhaust all possible alternatives to ease the likely economic dislocation of women who increasingly shoulder the lion’s share of the cost of social reproduction at the household and community levels.

**7.5. Conclusion**

In this chapter, I demonstrate that gender is an important factor in urban spatial exclusions in Accra. Drawing on the case of the Novotel Market, that was demolished by the AMA in 2010 to make way for an ultra-modern city/shopping mall project, I explore how the
socioeconomic interest of women is being sacrificed on the altar of the economic interest of corporate elite and aesthetic interest of the adventurous city officials. I show that women are encountering increasing exclusion from the urban space by city modernizing regimes that are fixated on formalizing the city and turning it into a favorable zone of global corporate activities. Market women in particular are not just being ignored and bypassed, but also physically excluded from urban socioeconomic practices, with serious consequences for them and their households. The officials’ city-making practices are shattering the social relations, sharing and collaboration that market women rely upon to nurture their entrepreneurialism.

Ironically, the exclusion of market women is partly driven by neoliberal urban policies that revere and extol individual entrepreneurialism. The irony in this is that market women have been shown to possess tremendous entrepreneurial qualities. In addition to individual qualities of being “pragmatic, shrewd, gregarious, and formidable” (Robertson, 1974, p. 657), market women have also been shown to be risk takers, by directly investing in productive sectors such as agriculture (FAO, 1998). So why then are they being ignored, bypassed or sometimes even physically eliminated from the core spaces of the city? The answer lies in the particular way in which both macroeconomic management, on the one hand, and city representation, on the other hand, are historically constructed. Whilst in the former, the attention of governments and policy makers is almost always on large, corporate capital to the neglect of all other forms of economic practice (Acker, 2004; Nagar et al., 2002; Freeman, 2001), in the latter, their attention is largely on aesthetics and visuals. What these intersections suggest is the need for analysts to be attentive to the messiness of neoliberalism as a feature of urbanism in contemporary Africa.
Some may argue that the corporate sector, such as shopping malls, offer good employment opportunities for women. This is indeed the case in Accra where a cursory observation of malls reveals female-domination in the labor front, mostly in the area of sales attendants. However, there can be no doubt that the malls displace many more women, for instance in the case of the Novotel Park Market, than they hire. Also, the women working in the malls are mostly likely to become dependent on meager salaries and come under the dictates of men (mall owners), thus likely to lose the independence that market spaces offer them. The dynamics of spatial contestations as analyzed in this chapter point to a need for serious attention to the unique needs of women. This entails, among others, a shift away from viewing their economic practices as merely anecdotal to the broader macroeconomic processes and urban regeneration to recognizing the enormous entrepreneurialism that underpin these practices.
Chapter 8
Beyond the state? ethnicity and urban exclusion in Accra: the case of Old Fadama slum

8.0. Introduction

In this chapter, I examine the experience of *slum dwellers*: another group that is facing marginalization in the globalizing Accra. But unlike in the previous two cases where the state practice was singularly linked with increasing disenfranchisement in the city, here I introduce the element of *ethnicity* as an important filter through which discourses and practices of urban exclusion occur. At the centre of the discussion is Old Fadama slum\(^{81}\): Accra’s largest squatter settlement of nearly 80,000 residents of mainly ethnic groups from the north.\(^{82}\) For about a decade now, the slum has come under constant threats of eviction. What is quite unique in this case is that these threats emanate not just from the state, as in the previous two cases, but also from groups belonging to the GaDangme. The latter is the amalgamation of two closely related ethnic groups—Ga and Adangme—that form the indigenous ethnic populations of the Greater Accra region, which the city of Accra forms a part.\(^{83}\)

This chapter mainly addresses how both ethnic politics by selected groups and land encroachment processes by ordinary people intersect with the official city transformation agenda of Accra. The chapter reveals that Accra is currently being shaped by growing tension between

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\(^{81}\) In strict definitional terms, Old Fadama is more of a squatter settlement than a slum. This is mainly because it has no tenure security but rather occupies the space illegally. For the sake of consistency, however, I maintain the use of the term slum to describe the settlement. I do so also because the settlement is already widely referred to as a slum.

\(^{82}\) The North comprises three out of the ten administrative regions of the country—i.e. Northern Region, Upper East Region and upper West Region. The slum is occupied by economic migrant but was originally settled by groups and individuals who fled ethnic conflicts in the North in the early 1990s.

\(^{83}\) The amalgamation is fairly recent and is led by some selected groups, particularly the GaDangme Council and GaDangme Youth Association (GDYA). The bond is partly a response to the perceived marginalization of the groups in the country (Yeboha, 2008). Even though strictly speaking GaDangme is not a primordial ethnic group but rather more of a political creation, in this dissertation I describe it in ethnic terms. This approach goes beyond mere convenience since the two groups are known to have a common ancestry (Dakubu, 1997).
globalizing and localizing forces that are operating simultaneously. On the one hand is the state that is striving to open up the city to the already expanding global corporate interests and, on the other hand, the ethnic-based groups that are determined to stamp local (ethnic) identity and control on the city. Meanwhile, the Old Fadama slum is caught up in between these two forces. While the state is driven to remove the slum in order to make way for ‘productive’ and dignifying utilization of that space, the ethnic-based groups are using the slum as a bargaining chip to exact a broader claim on the state that they accuse of marginalizing their ethnic groups. Ultimately, Accra emerges as a city that is being pulled in different directions, with serious implications for the ambition of the state to globally position the city.

The discussions in this chapter underscore the point that city making in Africa does not simply conform to but also diverges from the theoretical debates of urban neoliberalism. These debates, for the most part, give no attention to the myriad of forces shaping contemporary cities beyond those of economy and class. In this specific case, the broader globalizing (economic) forces are shown to be still dominant. But what emerges also is that these forces are significantly mediated by local historical and socio-cultural relations of power. The chapter principally draws on in-depth interviews involving three groups: the Old Fadama residents; AMA officials, and local rights activists with roots in the slum. The analysis is triangulated with data from media publications—audio, video and print—and academic as well as policy publications related to the topic.
8.1. Slums in the entrepreneurial city

Even though the critical urban neoliberalism/entrepreneurialism scholarship can be credited with the recent increased attention to issues of urban exclusion and marginalization, it has barely dealt with the question of slums. Yet slums, regardless of where they are, are an important component of neoliberal urbanism (Davis, 2006) and thus “cannot be left at the periphery of urban theorising” (Kern and Mullings, 2013, p. 27). This is particularly true in the global South given the acceleration of urban slum growth in this part of the world, on the one hand, and the growing fixation of state officials on aesthetics and visuals of the city, partly driven by the desire to market the city as an ideal place to tour and to do business, on the other hand.

In its 2010 State of the World's Cities report, UN-Habitat reveals slums to be a major feature of the emerging cities of the global South (see also Davis, 2006). The report shows that in the previous decade, the slum population jumped from 776.7 million (2000) to some 827.6 million (2010), and is expected to reach 889 million by 2020. Sub-Saharan Africa, it indicates, has seen some of the largest increases among all regions in the world, with its urban slum population currently at 199.5 million (representing 61.7 percent of the region’s urban population). The case of Ghana is typical of this trend. In 2001 more than half of the urban population in Ghana was living in slum settlements (Farvacque-Vitkovic et al, 2008), and there is nothing to suggest that this has improved since then.

At the same time, forced evictions of slum dwellers have become more frequent in many countries over the last decade (Du Plessis, 2005). In proportional terms – i.e. relative to the total
urban population – Africa recorded most evictions over the period than any other region in the world (see Table 8.1).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Region</th>
<th>Persons Evicted</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Africa</td>
<td>2,004 171</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Europe</td>
<td>16 127</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Americas</td>
<td>174,180</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Asia and the Pacific</td>
<td>3,452 093</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>5,646 571</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 8.1: Estimated Number of Reported Forced Evictions by Region between 2003 and 2006. (Source: COHRE, 2006: 11)

Examples of evictions include the Njemanze settlement in Port Harcourt, Nigeria (Amnesty International, 2010); Kibera settlement in Nairobi, Kenya (BBC, 16 September 2009); as well as settlements in Johannesburg, South Africa (The Zimbabwean, 5 May 2010); Greater Casablanca, Morocco (North Africa United, 22 December 2011); and West Point and Peace Island in Monrovia, Liberia (Think Africa Press, 11 April 2012). What are the main triggers of these kinds of evictions and why care?

There has been much more global concern about issues of urban evictions in recent times in part because of the UN’s declaration of ‘war’ on urban poverty, captured in its Millennium Development Goals (MDGs). A general consensus is that any effort to address urban poverty has to take the question of slum growth and conditions seriously. This entails, first of all, sufficient understanding of forces and processes behind such evictions. Over the years, several analysts have cited as underlying forces of evictions the hosting of international sports events and conferences, political conflict, ethnic cleansing, targeted social exclusion, demographic control, and large-scale infrastructure projects (COHRE 2006; UNCHR 2005).

From a more theoretical perspective, recent urban evictions, specifically, and the generally more antagonistic attitude of Southern states towards slums are situated within the
structural processes of neoliberal globalization (see Kern and Mullings, 2013; Murray, 2011; McDonald, 2008; Beall, 2002). Such marginalization and exclusions are linked significantly to the growth-driven economic approaches that emphasize place promotion or marketing as one of the best ways to generate such growth. In Ghana, the phenomenon of socioeconomic and spatial exclusions in general (Obeng-Odoom, 2011, 2012) and the urban evictions in particular (Afenah, 2009, 2012) have attracted similar interpretations. These analyses, undoubtedly, have shed light on the underlying causes of urban exclusions in Africa. However, their focus on both the state and economic factors has been excessive. In the specific case of Accra, Grant (2006 and 2009) has been more encompassing, linking threats of evictions not only to the state but to ethnic interests as well. But even so, his focus on the ethnic factor is marginal and lacks nuance.

In this chapter, I undertake an in-depth exploration of the role of ethnicity in urban spatial contestations. Yet, while the direct focus of the chapter is slum eviction, a much bigger picture is what the chapter aims to paint. This concerns the growing tension between forces that strive to globalize Accra and those that are determined to localize it in the sense of skewing its identity and function towards a particular group of people. This ethnic interference in city-making dynamics is itself a product of both the uneven nature of national development and the unyielding culturally based identity constructions. The ultimate goal of the chapter then is to show how both ethnic politics by selected groups (GaDangme) and land encroachment processes by ordinary people (slum dwellers of Old Fadama) intersect with the official city transformation agenda of Accra. It shows how both the state and the ethnic-based groups collaborate and contest each other over the proposed eviction of Old Fadama community, as well as how the latter perceives its own presence in Accra relative to this threat of eviction.
I divide the chapter into five sections. The first section begins with a brief survey of slums in Accra, focusing on Old Fadama and the threats of eviction that it has endured over the past decade by both the state and ethnic-based groups linked to the GaDangme. This is followed by a brief historical account of the nexus between ethnicity and nation building in Ghana. The third section examines how this nexus gave rise to the GaDangme nationalism. The fourth section explores how the GaDangme nationalism intersects with and diverges from the city-making agenda of the state and how this intersection drives the planned eviction of the Old Fadama slum. The fifth section discusses the eviction threats from the perspective of the Old Fadama community itself. The final section brings the chapter to a conclusion, gauging how these state-ethnicity dynamics mean for the ambition to globalize Accra.

8.2. Old Fadama: Accra's slum of all slums

Accra has experienced tremendous growth both economically and spatially over the last three decades. The adoption of neoliberal macroeconomic policies has opened up the city to more intense economic and social forces and processes of both local and global origin (Grant, 2009; Grand and Yankson, 2003). The spatial imprint of this more liberalized urban environment has been remarkable and has taken many forms. These include the emergence and growth of gated communities (Asiedu and Arku, 2009; Grant 2005); sprawl at the city margins (Yeboah, 2000) and the expansion of slums, both in numbers and sizes.

According to a recent study by UN-Habitat in collaboration with AMA, Accra currently has at least 33 slum communities, accommodating nearly 1,652,374 people (38.4 percent) of the
city’s total population (UN-Habitat and AMA, 2011). The expansion in slum communities in Accra is not particularly surprising. The city currently has an accumulated backlog of 300,000 housing units (Republic of Ghana, 2012). Only 21.4 percent of the estimated annual housing need of the Metropolis (25,000 units) is being met (Republic of Ghana, 2012), over 90 percent of it by private individuals.

Of the given figure of slum population in Accra, 282,556 people (17.1 percent) have no tenure security, and thus qualify to be described as squatters. In this latter category falls Accra’s largest slum, Old Fadama. More than any other, it is Old Fadama that has come to represent the contradictory path that Accra as a city is currently on: expanding high-income neighbourhoods on the one hand and equally expanding slum and squatter settlements on the other hand. In many cases, both sit side-by-side and in close proximity.

The Old Fadama slum

Old Fadama slum is situated near the Agbogbloshie market in Central Accra, beside the Odaw River and close to the Korle Lagoon (Figure 8.1). The slum developed on 31-hectares of state land, originally acquired from Ga family owners in the 1960s, partly due to its ecological value and sensitivity (Adjetey, Interview, 15 August 2011).

\footnote{Another study by People’s Dialogue of People’s Dialogue on Human Settlement in collaboration with the UN and Ministry Of Local Government has painted a grimmer picture, estimating the slum population in Accra to be at 80%. This study was based on more encompassing definition that includes lack of access to improved sanitation and clean water, poor physical condition of the houses, tenure security, and overcrowding (Citifmonline.com 24, April 2013)}

\footnote{One of Accra’s largest ‘traditional’ markets}
The slum first took shape in the early 1990s when groups and individuals fleeing ethnic conflicts in the north began to squat there, with tacit state approval at the time. Subsequent settlers pushed the boundary of the settlement further by reclaiming part of the lagoon using dry materials, mostly sawdust, from the timber market close by. From its modest population size of few hundred in the early 1990s, the settlement grew rapidly to 24,000 people by 2004; 48,000 by 2007; and almost 80,000 by 2009 (Farouk and Owusu, 2012; Housing the Masses, 2010). At this size and rate of growth, Old Fadama is easily one of the largest and densest squatter settlements in the country.

Although the growth of the slum was first fueled by conflict-driven migrants from the North, more recent expansion is attributed to two factors: internal population growth and an influx of economic migrants from various parts of the country in search of better employment.
The latter group includes a large population of women head-porters (*kayayei*)\(^\text{86}\) mainly from northern Ghana (Farouk and Owusu, 2012; Housing the Masses, 2010). It is not surprising, therefore, that the slum is currently inhabited predominantly (over 72 percent) by ethnic groups of the three northern regions (Housing the Masses, 2010) and why it is typically viewed as a Northerner settlement.\(^\text{87}\) For many people migrating from the North, the slum is a vital point of transition into full city life in the South (Focus Group Discussion, August, 2011). It has become the primary/first point of call for most seasonal migrants from the North who come to the city to “work for money so that they can go back to either take care of their families or settle their college and university fees” (Gafaru, Interview, August 2011).

As typical of most slums, Old Fadama suffers from poor quality housing, poor environmental conditions and infrastructure. Most of the dwelling places in the community comprise shacks of wooden structures built around narrow, winding and unpaved rough streets (see Figure 8.2).

\(^{86}\)The head porters are mostly young girls in their teens and early twenties who use head pans to cart goods from one point to another for a fee. Several studies have established both their utility to the urban system and vulnerability to social (rape, teenage pregnancy, extortion and molestation by miscreants, mostly men etc.) and environmental (exposure to vagaries of weather, filth, mosquitoes etc.) ills of the city. Most of them live in dormitory-style rooms of 8–20 people per room.

\(^{87}\)The category ‘Northern’ or ‘Northerners’ has become reified even though it began as a descriptive term for people who originate from the three Regions (i.e. Northern, Upper East and Upper West).
Since its establishment, Old Fadama has rarely enjoyed a favorable view from the general public. It is mostly tagged with violence, armed robbery, prostitution, joblessness and hopelessness, culminating in its current pejorative name “Sodom and Gomorrah”. This generally negative view, however, obscures the innovative, industrious and structured community that several studies have shown the slum to be (see Housing the Masses, 2010; Farouk and Owusu, 2012). The view also seems to have shaped the community’s image about itself. One of my most immediate observations during the first stage of my interaction with the residents was how defensive they sounded when discussing issues related to the community. The following three unsolicited responses by the residents buttress this point:

“This community is not the way people perceive it to be. We have got politicians, police commissioners, teachers and ministers of state who grew up here. But none of them will today accept that they came from this community” (Wumpini, Interview, August 2011).
“This place is not as crime prone as it is being made to seem. Many criminals, when being chased, run into this community even though they may not reside here, giving all of us a bad name. We want everyone to know that we are just as human as everybody else in the country” (Focus group discussion, August 2011)

“We do have criminals among us. But just like any other community, we also have good people. I am sure that when you were coming here you thought you would come and meet criminals; but as you can see we are as normal as any other people in the city” (Azindow, Interview, August 2011).

Similar sentiment is shared by rights groups working on behalf of the community. As one of them told me: “Old Fadama is occupied by hardworking people, just like you and I, with hopes and aspirations for a better future” (Mensah, Interview, June 2011).

Yet, there is certainly no denying that the slum is faced with serious socio-economic and environmental challenges. Besides its dilapidated structures, the community has some of the highest rates of poverty and low levels of education in the city. But the worry of the community, by far, is the constant threat to eliminate it.

8.2.1. The threats of eviction: between city entrepreneurs and ethnic nationalists

Old Fadama came under threats of eviction by the state (backed by some GaDangme groups) in the early 2000s. The state has always considered the slum a transient settlement because the space it occupies was acquired for ecological or environmental conservation purposes (Adjetey, Interview, 15 August 2011). The first serious attempt by the state to evict the slum dwellers was in 2002. This occurred after an Accra High Court on 24 July 2002 rejected the community’s application that sought to place an injunction to prevent the AMA from carrying out the eviction. Since then, at least two major attempts have been made to eliminate the slum, one of the most recent being in 2009. But like all previous attempts, the recent moves to evict
have been unsuccessful due to the combined effect of resilience of the community itself and active opposition by national and international rights groups (including Centre for Public Interest Law, Centre on Housing Rights and Evictions [COHRE], and Ghana Federation for the Urban Poor). These groups have brought the plight of the residents into the clear view of the global community, making it increasingly difficult for the state to enforce the eviction order without credible assurance of resettlement.

The justification for the planned eviction has officially centred on one important consideration—the environment. Part of this concern relates to the internal environmental conditions of the slum itself. As the Public Relations Officer of the AMA lamented:

“Have you been in that community yourself? And what did you see there? Do you think human beings should be left to live under such conditions? (Numo Blafo, Interview on Joy FM, September 2011; emphasis added).

Another official of the AMA echoed similar sentiments. He wondered why anyone would object to the proposed eviction given the dire environmental state of the settlement:

“If you go there, no one should tell you that the environmental conditions are not good enough for human habitation. I took many politicians there and they wept [because of the grim conditions they witnessed]. Those people who are advocating that the people [slum dwellers] be allowed to stay there fail to take into account the carrying capacity of the land. This [the slum] is a disaster in waiting” (Adjete, Interview, 15 August 2011).

Far more disconcerting to the officials is the supposed spill-over impact (or the collateral damage) of the slum on the Korle Lagoon. The claim is that not only is the settlement polluting the lagoon with both solid and liquid wastes, but also that its very location has made it nearly impossible to implement the Korle Lagoon Ecological Restoration Project (KLERP). KLERP is a donor-funded/loan project that is aimed at restoring the marine and river system to a cleaner and more natural ecological state. The US$98 million project has remained on the shelf for
several years since its conception: a situation many officials blame on the presence of the slum
on or near the site. In reference to the standstill of the proposed restoration project, a senior
official of the AMA charged that “When society encourages illegality, development and progress
become more expensive to attain” (Adjetey, Interview, August 2011). This particular charge
against the slum, however, has been disputed by some. The skeptics have argued that the slum
accounts for less than 5 percent of the lagoon’s pollution load and does not in any serious way
obstruct the KLERP (COHRE, 2004). Even so, that ecological charge still remains one of the
strongest bases for the eviction threat.

The ecological arguments are occasionally weaved through concerns about the image of
the city and nation. The nationalist project of using urban planning and architecture to “promote
a sense of national identity” in Ghana (Hess, 2000, p. 10) is still strong and occasionally finds
expression in concerns about the presence of the slum within the nation’s premier city. Speaking
in reference to the slum, for instance, an official of the AMA stated that:

“Accra is the first entry point to Ghana for most outsiders; so we need to bear in
mind that their impression of the entire country is shaped by their first
impression about Accra” (Frank, Interview 7 July 2011).

In simple terms, the slum compromises the image of Ghana as a ‘modern’ nation state.

It would appear, however, that the economic argument trumps both the ecological
concerns and nationalist imaginary of Accra. As I have shown in previous chapters, the Ghanaian
state, particularly the local state of Accra, is increasingly drifting towards entrepreneurialism,
with emphasis on ‘pro-growth’ policies and practices that largely prioritize inward investments.
By this outlook, Old Fadama becomes a waste of valuable real estate, by virtue of its location in
central Accra where some of the city’s most valuable lands are. Not only that, the slum is also a
blight on the touristic landscape of the city. From this perspective, the Old Fadama case is simply
an impending “large-scale displacement” propelled by processes of “urban regeneration” (Afenah, 2012, p. 12). This “urban regeneration” thesis is affirmed by the redevelopment projects proposed for the site (refer to Figure 5.2). Encompassing a mixture of modern residential, commercial, recreational and leisure uses, the proposed redevelopment is envisioned to meet at least two important goals simultaneously: first, to rehabilitate the ecology of the Korle Lagoon; and second, to boost international business and tourism of the city (Adjetey, Interview, 15 August 2011).

The uniqueness of the Old Fadama eviction case, as mentioned earlier, is the ardent support by some GaDangme groups. The latter have over the last decade heaped tremendous pressure on the state through public protests, accusing the latter of lack of commitment to the eviction order. Some of the earliest protests occurred in 2001 involving largely members of the GaDangme Youth Association (GDYA) who carried placards, some of which read: ‘Give us back our land–Ga Youth’, ‘Beware of potential bloodshed’, ‘No room for squatters’, ‘Ga land keep off’ (GRi Newsreel Ghana, 19 April 2001). The protests were not only a call on the state to expedite the eviction process but also to voice opposition to the proposition by government to relocate the slum dwellers to Adjenkotoku. The latter is a piece of land at the outskirt of the metropolis, which the group argues belongs to the GaDangme people and therefore ought not to be freely given to ‘other’ people.

Again in September 2009, the group repeated its threat:

“In the event of inaction on the part of the state, the Government and other concerned parties, we shall take steps and measures to recover such lands in the name of posterity…We will not tolerate any ‘imported fracas’ which will
undermine the peace and tranquility we all enjoy in our day-to-day activities in the metropolis” (Peacefmonline.com, 2 September 2009; emphasis added).

The ethnic undertone of this threat is located in the single phrase “imported fracas”. This, I suggest, is in reference to the view of the slum by these groups as an ‘alien’ settlement: the Northerners. What is quite curious is that the threat is directed at the state and not directly at the slum dwellers themselves. This situation is quite inconsistent with the dominant mode of land claims and conflicts in the country.

Why are the GaDangme groups so vociferous about the Old Fadama eviction case? This question is important because these groups have no direct stake in that piece of land, in the sense that it is state-owned. Granted that the land was acquired from indigenous Ga families, there is no evidence to suggest that it will revert to those families after the eviction. The most plausible explanation then is that the protests by the groups have little to do with the slum itself. As I hope to demonstrate, the protests have to do with broader concerns about marginalization and disenfranchisement of the GaDangme people in the country, real or perceived. Old Fadama, I believe, is only one conduit through which the ethnic-based groups exact these broader claims on the state. To understand how this occurs, I briefly examine the ethnic dynamic in the political economy of postcolonial Ghana. This historical account is important to understanding how the GaDangme nationalism emerged.

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88 It must be noted that the presence of Northerners in Accra long predates the establishment of Old Fadama. Accra, like most towns and cities in Ghana, has a number of immigrant settlements, mostly called Zongos. Many of such settlements are occupied by people of Northern origin, in addition to other immigrants from the Savannah and Sahel of West African sub-region.

89 In many of land-related conflicts in Ghana, opposing actors would often resort to direct confrontation with each other rather than issuing threats through the nation state.
8.3. Ethnicity and uneven development in Ghana

Ghana, like most countries in Africa, is diverse ethnically. Even though the country has over two dozen different ethnic groups, it is dominated by only a few major groups. These include Akan\(^90\), Mole Dagbani, Ewe, GaDangbe, Guan, Gurma, Grusi and Mande-Busanga (Ghana Statistical Service, 2000). Due to years of geographical and social mobility, none of these ethnic groups is now exclusively fixed in a particular region or place, even though each to a large extent still dominates its place of origin. Yet, despite this mobility that has scattered people from various ethnic groups throughout the country, ethnic bonds and polarization are still strong (Asante and Gyimah-Boadi, 2004; Adjibolosoo, 2003). Distinctive of this ethnic divide is the dominance of southern groups over those in the north and the dominance of the Akan group over all others in the country (ibid; Tsikata and Seini, 2004).

The relationship between ethnicity and state formation in Africa has always been a tenuous one. Many analysts situate the current ethnically driven tensions that plague many African countries (e.g. Nigeria, Rwanda and Ivory Coast) largely within the colonial rule (Gugler, 1996; Cheru, 2009). The ethnic cleavages emerged, or at least exacerbated, when the colonial governments deliberately privileged certain ethnic groups (both materially and linguistically) over others. This situation was not helped by the first generation postcolonial leaders who “applauded [their own policies of ‘indigenization’ and ‘Africanization’] in the face of growing intra-group inequalities” (Cheru, 2009, p. 276).

\(^{90}\)The Akan is the largest ethnic group in Ghana comprising several sub-groups such as Asante, Fante, and Brong.
Though less dramatic compared with the situation in many other African countries, ethnic diversity has been one of Ghana’s developmental challenges. As Adjibolosoo (2003, p. 127) argues:

“Ethnic diversity in Ghana has now become a stumbling block to national consciousness and the desire to build a powerful nation state. Ghanaians are divided, splintered, and scattered even as they cohabit a geographical region.” (p. 127).

One of the causes of this ethnic polarization is material inequalities among the various ethnic groups in the country. Asante and Gyimah-Boadi (2004) trace these inequalities and the associated tensions to ethnic rivalries during the colonial era and the effect of colonialism on different groups and regions of the country. In both colonial and post-independence eras, Ghana experienced uneven distribution of power and resources, with the south enjoying relative dominance. This imbalance largely accounts for the unceasing north–south flow of migrants, many of whom end up in slums such as Old Fadama.

Another dimension of this unevenness is the inter-ethnic differences, manifest in the relative dominance of Ghana’s largest ethnic group, the Akan. The various sub-groups that form this group are more favourably represented in nearly all sectors of the Ghanaian society compared with any other group in the country. This relative dominance is a source of tension between the group and other major ethnic groups, particularly Ewe and GaDangme. Under the current multiparty democracy, this divide and tension have assumed party lines, with Akans predominantly identifying with the NPP and the rest of the other major groups, the NDC. 91 In the

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91One of the recent manifestations of this tension was the call by an Akan Member of Parliament (MP) in the opposition New Patriotic Party for members of his ethnic group to rise up against Ewes and GaDangmes over claims that a Ga parliamentary candidate for the ruling NDC tried to prevent Akans from being registered on the basis that they were not Gas and therefore could not be allowed to vote in that part of Accra. That MP was arraigned before court first on charges of genocide and treason which were later dropped for lesser charge of causing public fear and panic.
view of Asante and Gyimah-Boadi (2004), the reason why inequality and ethno-regional rivalry have not transformed from mere tensions into full-scale violent conflicts is largely because successive Ghanaian governments have practiced symbolic distribution, representativeness and inclusion.

Recent analyses of the urban dimension of the ethnicity factor, especially in the specific case of Accra, have looked at spatial segregation/clustering (Agyei-Mensah and Owusu, 2010); health status of residents, especially infant mortality (Weeks et al, 2006); and claims of disenfranchisement (Yeboah, 2008). What these studies have in common, despite differences in the specific angles of study, is that ethnicity is an important factor in understanding socioeconomic and spatial processes in Accra. Agyei-Mensah and Owusu (2010), for instance, found that the ethnic history of migration to Accra was an important mediating factor in residential segregation even though the economic factors, they insist, are the dominant organising force.

My specific interest in these studies on Accra is the status of the GaDangme groups in relation to other major ethnic groups. The studies, first of all, show that the GaDangme groups are disproportionately concentrated in the severely congested and overcrowded indigenous neighbourhoods. To the contrary, the group is under-represented in the high-class neighbourhoods, being the lowest represented for any of the major ethnic groups in some of these neighbourhoods (Agyei-Mensah and Owusu, 2010; Weeks et al, 2006). Similarly, Weeks et al (2006) found that patterns of child mortality in Accra are associated with this kind of residential segregation—i.e. areas with the lowest child mortality are neighbourhoods dominated by the relatively more privileged Akan group, whereas areas with the highest child mortality are
contiguous to, if not exactly the same as, neighbourhoods dominated demographically by the GaDangme.

In part, the more recent ethnic-based inequalities in Accra are the legacies of Ghana’s neoliberalization turn (Agyei-Mensah and Owusu, 2010; Owusu, 2008; Aryeetey et al., 2007; Grant and Nijman, 2002). This is particularly manifest in the realm of access to land or housing. In recent times, the practice or policy of land access in Accra has become market-led. As a result, land prices have skyrocketed over the years, beyond the means of many ordinary residents. The corollary is that the relatively more privileged ethnic groups, mostly the Akans, are able to acquire land and develop standard housing, while others, including the GaDangme, are pushed into sub-standard houses in low-income neighbourhoods (Agyei-Mensah and Owusu, 2010).

8.4. The rise of the GaDangme nationalism

In part, the recent amalgamation of the Ga and Adagme to form GaDangme is the outcome of the relative underrepresentation of the two closely-related ethnic groups within the economic, political and social profiles of the country. More immediate concern to the groups is the apparent loss of control by the groups over their indigenous territory of Grater Accra. One of the first to lead this ethnic revival in recent times is a group called the GaDangme Council (GDC). Founded in the mid-1990s, this group, together with its more youthful counterpart, the GDYA\(^{92}\), have increasingly championed the interest of the ethnic groups in all matters, particularly those that concern the territory of Grater Accra. Their voices have echoed matters

\(^{92}\) Some analysts view these groups as political rather than ethnic interest groups (see Yeboah, 2008). This view is valid, but not entirely so. This is because much, if not all, of the concerns raised by these groups is shared by nearly all members of the ethnic groups. The differences between these groups and other members of Ga and Adangme ethnic groups is more about who has the authority to speak for the groups than the legitimacy of the issues raised.
such as violation of the groups’ traditions and customs; marginalization of their languages; appropriation of lands belonging to them by the state and state officials; and discrimination against their members in public appointments (see Appendix 4 for detailed list of some of these concerns). What drives this ethnic revival is both material and cultural.

Manifestly, the primary concern of the GaDangme groups is material. At the heart of this material question is the issue of land. During the colonial and early post-independence eras, the Ghanaian state compulsorily acquired large parcels of land from Ga indigenous land-owners (chiefs, family/clans heads, and communities) for public good. Over the years, successive governments have leased out some of these lands to private developers, a state practice that has been laced with cronyism and corruption (Kasanga and Kotey, 2001). The agitation by GaDangme groups against the state has largely revolved around this issue, with some contending that the lands ought to have been offered to the indigenous land-owners first (GNA, 19 December. 2008).93

Over the years, the agitation has broadened to encompass issues of socioeconomic marginalization of the entire ethnic group. Often highlighted in this respect is the plight of Ga-Mashie, Accra’s largest indigenous settlement, which comprises both James Town and Ussher Town. Even by local standards, this settlement is a deprived one (Razzu, 2005). Most of its houses (about 70 percent) are in bad condition, with many of them deemed unworthy of human habitation (Daily Graphic, 2 December 2010). Most its 46,699 residents are “cluttered in groups of four and five in dilapidated, leaking single rooms with broken windows,” with nearly 3,000 of them sleeping on streets (ibid).

93 In this case a genuine question arises as to who the true owners of the lands in question are. It is not uncommon to find different Ga families and individual contesting for the same parcel of land.
Additionally, the settlement lacks basic services, with less than half of the community having access to sewage, potable water and toilet facilities, making environmental sanitation a big challenge. This is compounded by the fact that more than one third of the alleys between houses are unpaved (CHF International, 2010a). It is not surprising that the community consistently features among the worst settlements with poor basic health. It has high incidences of environmental-related sicknesses such as malaria, diarrhea, typhoid fever, and intestinal worms (see Appendix 5). This marginality of Accra’s most indigenous ethnic community has provided explicit expression of the endemic deprivation among the GaDangme ethnic groups. No wonder that the ethnic-based claims against the state by groups such as GDC and GDYA has consistently appropriated the experience of this settlement.

It is important to point out that not everyone is convinced that these ethnic sentiments are rooted in convincing fact. Yeboah (2008), for instance, argues that these claims of marginalization and disenfranchisement of the group are more imaginary than real mainly because such levels of deprivation are universal across all ethnic groups in the country rather than typical of the GaDangme groups. He, however, concedes that the growing manifestation of corporate capital in the city, with its attendant rise in the number of wealthy enclaves and gated communities (see Grant, 2009; Asiedu, and Arku, 2009; Grant and Nijman, 2002), constantly highlights the deprivation that is endemic among the indigenous group, and thus fuels resentment among the latter over what it deems acts of disenfranchisement on ‘its own land’.

Yet, there is much more to the GaDangme issue than material deprivation. Part of what fuels the groups’ claim of marginalization relates to the apparent decline of the relative

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94The community also features poorly on account of infant mortality in the country (see Weeks et al, 2006).
population sizes and languages of the ethnic groups. The anxiety of the groups about their progressive socio-cultural decline is not entirely without basis. In terms of population, the groups’ proportion relative to other major ethnic groups have been declining over the years, even in the Greater Accra (see Table 8.2). In the city of Accra, more specifically, their population proportion has dwindled from over 50 percent in the 1960s (Thompson, 1999; see also Table 8.2) to less than 30 percent in 2010 (GSS, 2012). Besides, the ethnic groups are the only ones that currently constitute a minority within their own indigenous region (see Table 8.3).

**Table 8.2:** Proportion of Ga-Dangme population in Accra relative to other ethnic groups since 1948*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Major ethnic groups</th>
<th>Total in 1948</th>
<th>% in G. Accra</th>
<th>Total in 2000</th>
<th>% in G. Accra</th>
<th>Total in 2010</th>
<th>% in G. Accra</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Akan</td>
<td>12,734</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>1,065,509</td>
<td>39.8</td>
<td>1,528,722</td>
<td>39.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ga-Adangme</td>
<td>70,261</td>
<td>53</td>
<td>794,881</td>
<td><strong>29.7</strong></td>
<td>1,056,158</td>
<td><strong>27.4</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ewe</td>
<td>14,343</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>481,583</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>775,332</td>
<td>20.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mole-Dagbani</td>
<td>936</td>
<td>0.7</td>
<td>136,848</td>
<td>5.1</td>
<td>200,735</td>
<td>5.2</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*The 1948 figures were obtained from a secondary source

**Source:** calculated from the 1948, 2000, and 2010 population and housing censuses (Ghana Statistical Service)
Table 8.3: Ghanaians by major ethnic group and region (%)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Major ethnic groups</th>
<th>Total %</th>
<th>Western</th>
<th>Central</th>
<th>Greater Accra</th>
<th>Volta</th>
<th>Eastern</th>
<th>Ashanti</th>
<th>Brong Ahafo</th>
<th>Northern</th>
<th>Upper East</th>
<th>Upper west</th>
</tr>
</thead>
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<tr>
<td>Akan</td>
<td>47.5</td>
<td>78.1*</td>
<td>81.7*</td>
<td>39.7</td>
<td>2.8</td>
<td>51.1*</td>
<td>74*</td>
<td>58.9*</td>
<td>3.1</td>
<td>2.3</td>
<td>1.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ga-Adangme</td>
<td>7.41</td>
<td>3.1</td>
<td>2.5</td>
<td>27.4**</td>
<td>1.5</td>
<td>17.9</td>
<td>1.2</td>
<td>1.3</td>
<td>0.3</td>
<td>0.1</td>
<td>0.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ewe</td>
<td>13.9</td>
<td>6.2</td>
<td>6.2</td>
<td>20.1</td>
<td>73.8*</td>
<td>18.9</td>
<td>3.8</td>
<td>3.7</td>
<td>1.7</td>
<td>0.3</td>
<td>0.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Guan</td>
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<td>0.8</td>
<td>5.3</td>
<td>1.9</td>
<td>8.1</td>
<td>5.3</td>
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<td>4.1</td>
<td>8.6</td>
<td>0.3</td>
<td>0.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gurma</td>
<td>5.7</td>
<td>0.9</td>
<td>0.9</td>
<td>1.6</td>
<td>11.3</td>
<td>1.6</td>
<td>2.8</td>
<td>6.9</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>4.7</td>
<td>1.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mole-Dagbani</td>
<td>16.6</td>
<td>8.6</td>
<td>1.7</td>
<td>5.2</td>
<td>0.5</td>
<td>3.2</td>
<td>11.3</td>
<td>18.2</td>
<td>52.7*</td>
<td>74.7*</td>
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<tr>
<td>Gursi</td>
<td>2.5</td>
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<td>8.6</td>
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<tr>
<td>Mande</td>
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<td>0.8</td>
<td>0.4</td>
<td>0.7</td>
<td>0.1</td>
<td>0.3</td>
<td>2.0</td>
<td>1.8</td>
<td>0.5</td>
<td>5.6</td>
<td>0.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Others</td>
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<td>0.6</td>
<td>0.8</td>
<td>2.0</td>
<td>1.8</td>
<td>0.8</td>
<td>1.1</td>
<td>1.3</td>
<td>2.1</td>
<td>3.4</td>
<td>2.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
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<td>100</td>
<td>100</td>
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<td>100</td>
<td>100</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

*regions with proportionately higher indigenous ethnic population  
**regions with proportionately lower indigenous ethnic population  

**Source:** calculated from the 2010 population and housing census (Ghana Statistical Service, 2012)

Even more remarkable source of anxiety among the group is the relative decline of its language, particularly in its own city of Accra. There is no debate that Twi, the major Akan dialect, is now the prevailing local language of Accra. Hence:

“To many Ga, if left unchecked this situation would eventually lead to the extinction of the Ga language. And since language...is the temple that embodies the soul and the customs of a people, the decline and possible extinction of the Ga language becomes a matter of grave concern to the Ga people” (Thompson 1999, n.p).

The GaDangme agitation, therefore, has socio-cultural underpinnings, besides material needs. One notable dimension of this ethnic nationalism is that it has gone global.
8.4.1. GaDangme nationalism goes global

Across the world, several GaDangme associations have been formed, all with the common goal to assert and advance the interest of the group in Ghana. Most of these associations are, however, concentrated in Europe and North America (see Table 8.4) and are in constant interaction among themselves.

Table 8.4: Some GaDangme Associations in diaspora and their main locations

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name of the Association</th>
<th>Location</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>GaDangme International, Inc. (GDI)</td>
<td>North America</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GaDangme Europe (GDEU)</td>
<td>Hamburg, Germany</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>South Eastern Ghana Development (SEGDEV) Fdn</td>
<td>New Jersey, United States</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Ga-Dangme Youth Association</td>
<td>Accra, Ghana</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GaDangme Association</td>
<td>Italy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GaDangme Renaissance Union (GRU)</td>
<td>Accra, Ghana</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GaDangme Association Of NJ</td>
<td>New Jersey, United States</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ga-Dangme Foundation of Metropolitan Chicago</td>
<td>Chicago, United States</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bokemei</td>
<td>Amsterdam, Netherlands</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GaDangme Nikasemo Asafo</td>
<td>London, United Kingdom</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GaDangme Association of Toronto</td>
<td>Toronto, Canada</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GaDangme Council</td>
<td>Accra, Ghana</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: various websites

One of the key mediums of interaction among the groups is international conferences where the groups meet to discuss issues affecting their members (see Appendix 6 for some of the concerns of the groups). Since 2005, at least six such conferences have been organized, most of them well-attended (see Table 8.5). One such conference was the three-day 6th Annual Conference that took place in Toronto under the theme GaDangme in the 21st Century, Uniting for Progress and Development in Ghana. This conference brought together over 300

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95I must note that Ghanaians in the diaspora organizing themselves on ethnic lines with the aim to better the lot of their counterparts living in Ghana is not limited to the GaDangme. Groups such as Akans, Ewes, and Dagombas also have many associations scattered across the globe. What is novel in the case of the GaDangme though is that it is the only one, as far as I am aware, that directly lays claims against the state and other ethnic groups in the country, particularly with respect to matters bordering on social and governance processes in Accra. This is somewhat understandable given the intense pressure on, and the relative loss of control by, group in its native region of Accra.
representatives of GaDangme organizations across North America, Ghana and the United Kingdom (GaDangme International Inc., 2005).

Table 8.5: Selected international conferences by Ga-Dangme diaspora since 2005

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Venue</th>
<th>Country</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2005</td>
<td>York University, Toronto</td>
<td>Ontario, Canada, Canada</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2008</td>
<td>Greensboro, NC, NC A &amp; T State University Conference Center, North Caroline, USA</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2009</td>
<td>Lithia Springs, GA, The Pointe Plaza Conference Center, North Caroline, USA</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2010</td>
<td>Bronx, NY, The International Gospel Assembly Building, New York, USA</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2011</td>
<td>National Harbor, Gaylord National Resort &amp; Convention Center, Maryland, USA</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2012</td>
<td>National Harbor, Gaylord National Resort &amp; Convention Center, Maryland, USA</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Author (information gathered from the various websites of the associations)

The 2005 Toronto conference, typically, was preoccupied with issues about the relatively marginal state of the group in Ghana currently. High on the agenda were concerns about access to resources, particularly the increasing poverty and lack of educational opportunities for GaDangme youth and, of course, the highly political issue of state “acquisition of GaDangme lands” in Accra. Yet, and perhaps more passionately, the conference raised serious concerns about threats to Ga and Dangme languages, culture and traditions: threats it says border on the possible extinction of the GaDangme ethnic groups. Quite intriguing was the lamentation by the keynote speaker of the event, Samuel Odoi Sykes, who incidentally was Ghana High Commissioner in Canada and a GaDangme himself:

“If the capital of Ghana had not been transferred from Cape Coast to Accra in 1877, the GaDangme people would not today be a minority in their own land. Our lands, languages, and cultures would not have come under constant siege” (GaDangme International Inc., 2005, p. 2).

It is difficult not see merit in this concern. Quite apart from the thorny issue of state lands, several GaDangme individuals and families are being squeezed up by the economic pressures of the city. The increasing globalization of Accra has meant rising cost of living, pushing the
indigenous families to sell their remaining pieces of land so as to meet that cost (Aryeetey et al., 2007).

Not all the participants of the conference were pessimistic about the future of the groups. According to mathematician Samuel Boitei Doku: “[the GaDangme will prevail in] our determination to fight for what is ours. Our language and our culture will not be lost” (GaDangme International Inc., 2005, p.5). In both statements, there is clear emphasis on not just material wellbeing (land and poverty) but also socio-cultural heritage (language and culture). What is most significant is the close collaboration between the diaspora groups and those in Ghana. Particularly active in Ghana are the GDC, which in fact sent representatives to the Toronto conference, and GDYA.

8.5. Ethnic nationalism and city modernization agenda

Generally, how does the GaDangme nationalism impact official and unofficial daily practices in Accra? More specifically, in what ways do the GaDangme agitations meddle with the ambition of the local state to modernize and globalize Accra? Over the last decade or so, the groups have made claims against both the state and the entire urban system of Accra. Besides the thorny issue of land that I discussed earlier, the groups, the GDC in particular, have for instance accused the central governments of unfair or biased treatment against its members in terms of public (dis)appointments (see Ghana News Agency 30 August 2002). Yet, far more relevant to the specific theme of Accra’s governance and development aspiration are the following.
First is the issue of symbolism. This has taken a number of forms, most notable being the naming of Accra’s landmarks. Few examples in this direction include the hue and cry by some of the groups about the renaming of certain streets from GaDangme names to ‘foreign’ ones—e.g. Asafo Janete Road to Ghana Telecom road and the Nii Armah Olleonu Road to Obasanjo Road (see Ghanaian Chronicle, 31 March 2009). Similar agitations greeted the change in name from the Accra Sports Stadium, the main sport stadium of the city, to the Ohene Djan on the basis that the latter, a former national sports icon, was not a GaDangme (the name has since been reversed). The most recent agitation was the demand by the groups that the Akan greeting “Akwaaba” that welcomes visitors to Ghana at the Kotoka International Airport ought to be replaced with a Ga version. As La Mantse⁹⁶, Nii Kpobi Tettey Tsuru III, charges:

“The Akwaaba is a certain ethnic language and where the airport is situated belongs to a certain tribe, so what we all need to know is that where the airport is situated now is for the GaDangme people…We also want to project our language, Accra is cosmopolitan but belongs to a certain tribe” (citifmonline.com, Sep 28, 2011).

The second issue relates to agitations over alleged violations of traditions and customs of the GaDangme people in Accra by ‘foreigners’. The most contentious in this case is the specific issue of ‘drumming and dancing’. This has to do with the refusal by some churches in Accra to observe a ban on noisemaking during the period of homowo, the key annual traditional festival by the Ga people in Accra. Consequently, each year of celebration of this festival is marked by Ga youth, often on the orders of the Ga Traditional Council, forcefully interrupting church services with the aim to enforce the ban (see Myjoyonline.com 1 August 2009).

⁹⁶ La Mantse is the chief of La, one of the sub-chiefs of the Ga paramount state in Accra.
The third issue entails claims about marginalization of the groups in the governance processes of Accra. It has become quite common whereby different GaDangme groups and Ga chiefs jostle to determine who becomes/remains the mayor of Accra. This often involves a declaration of support for or opposition to the mayor relative to public criticism of his/her works (see Daily Graphic 20 May 2011). In a more daring attempt to influence governance processes of Accra, some Ga groups and individuals have threatened to share the function of toll collection with the Ghana Private Road Transport Union (GPRTU). As one self-acclaimed leader of one of the Ga Stools contends in the following unedited statement:

“If GPRTU can collect money from all the stations and me, the land owner, I can't collect money (sic). From today and tomorrow all Trotros [local commercial vehicles] will be on the road and I have to collect my tolls…Trotro stations are not acquired lands, they are lands that belong to the Ga Dzaase Stool, they must know that they have to pay me tolls for working on my land and making profit (myjoyonline.com 14 August 2011).

All these agitations point to one important conclusion, which is that ethnicity is one of the significant forces and processes shaping the contemporary image of Accra. They suggest that the globalizing or neoliberalizing forces that drive the city towards cosmopolitanism (or diversity) are being seriously attenuated by localizing forces that are determined to stamp the identity of a particular group on the city. This trend of growing localizing tendencies in the face of the ever more intense globalization of the city is not atypical of the universal trend. As several scholars point out, more intense local activism, often in the form of efforts to strike a distinction between ‘the real local people’ and ‘aliens’, is one of the outcomes of contemporary globalization (see Massey, 1995; Gupta and Ferguson 1997). This classification becomes even more pronounced in areas such as Africa where neoliberal policies create or at least worsen material inequalities (Watts, 2003, 2004; Held, 2004). The uniqueness about the case of Accra, however, is that the
resultant ethnic nationalism is a network with local-global interface. This alliance is clearly manifest in the case of the planned Old Fadama eviction.

8.6. Old Fadama: a site of multiple claims making

Frequent collaboration between the diaspora and local GaDangme associations to push the interest of the groups in Accra is not uncommon. In 2009, such a collaboration involving GaDangme Global Alliance, GaDangme International, and GaDangme Europe resulted in a press release that partly read:

“The Ga and Dangme people have always welcomed and lived peacefully with other ethnic groups…However, we can no longer continue to disregard the abject poverty, despondency, massive unemployment, deteriorating infrastructure, and poor sanitation of Ga Mashie and other Ga and Dangme urban and rural areas” (Modernghana.com, 30 March 2009).

As obvious in the statement, a link is established between the material deprivation of members of the ethnic groups and the presence of other ethnic groups in the Greater Accra. More significantly, the proclivity by the groups to appropriate Ga Mashie’s poor socioeconomic condition lurks in the foreground. This narrative is what is often brought to bear on the planned eviction of Old Fadama.

In September 2009, members of GaDangme Europe made a courtesy call to Ga Mantse, the paramount chief of the ethnic group, in Accra. The group on the occasion charged the traditional authority to do all it took to ensure the removal of the Old Fadama slum (Ghanaian Chronicle, 2 September 2009). Barely two weeks after the visit, the Ga Mantse, Nii Tackie Tawiah III, and his Council issued a statement that partly read:

“We are in support of the Mayor and the Greater Accra Regional Minister that the squatters be ejected from the place…We have been too generous…Let the
government take the boldness of steps in ensuring that Sodom and Gomorrah [Old Fadama] is rid of the squatters...It is our hope that government would take the appropriate decision on this sensitive issue which borders on our sensibilities” *(Daily Guide, 15 September 2009)*.

Three years on, the plea turned into a stern warning. Speaking on behalf of the Ga Traditional Council, the Queen Mother of Ga Paramount Stool, Naa Dedei Omaadru warned that:

“We the overlords of the Ga State are now giving the Accra Mayor up to the end of this month to take action of clearing the people of Sodom and Gomorrah…. if Dr. Vanderpuije refuses to abide by our call then he should count himself out of the appointees of the ruling National Democratic Congress (NDC)” *(Today, 12 June 2012)*.

There are two important puzzles in these statements. First, why is the threat directed at the state officials rather than the slum dwellers that directly occupy the land? And second, on what authority does a Queen Mother of an ethnic group threaten a public official with dismissal? The first question, on the one hand, suggests, as I have argued, that these agitations are more about exacting attention from the state apparatus than they are about the presence of the slum. The second question, on the other hand, points to the complex interconnection between traditional authority and state power in Ghana. It is power dynamics such as this one that sets African cities like Accra apart from those in the North relative to urban neoliberalization processes. Urban change in these cities involves seemingly benign forces such as traditional authorities much as state officials and elites.

A more relevant question, however, is: why Old Fadama? My answer to this question is that first, the slum appears to be in a much weaker position than any other settlement in Accra so it is easier for the groups to assert authority; and second, the state has direct and immediate interest in that space so it offers an opportunity for the groups to use the space to draw attention to themselves and their plight, even of perceived.
Interestingly, however, the agitation by the GaDangme groups has offered yet another justification on the part of the state to remove the slum. Of course the ‘traditional’ justification for the planned eviction—the need to safeguard the ecological integrity of that space—is still strong. However, it is not uncommon now to find state officials citing the agitations by the GaDangme groups as a good reason to evict the slum dwellers. A top official of the AMA for instance told me:

“The original owners [Ga families] had to sacrifice that land for a national cause and you have some other people [the Northerners] who have come to settle there. Now look at the amount of waste being generated to pollute the lagoon. The lagoon used to serve as a veritable source of fishing for the native [Gas] when there was a reduction in fish stock in the ocean. In the name of social justice ... is it fair for others to come and occupy the land when the original landowners are now contending with extreme congestion in the indigenous neighbourhoods?” (Adjetey, Interview, 15 August 2011).

At least three issues stand out in this statement. The first is the usual reference to the GaDangme plight. There is a clear attempt to link the presence of the slum with “extreme congestion in the indigenous neighbourhoods [mainly the Ga-Mashie]”. The second is the reference to the slum dwellers as “others”. The third is the intriguing manner in which the concept of “social justice” is interpreted. Rather than used in support of the marginalized groups, as it is typically the case in the critical urban scholarship (see Harvey, 2009; Mitchell, 2003; Purcell, 2002), the ‘social justice’ concept is employed by this official against the marginalize slum dwellers. In this sense, the meaning of the concept has essentially been turned on its head. It is important to note here, however, that the official was neither employing the concept in favour of an elite group but rather in favour of another equally marginalized group – the poverty-stricken Ga Mashie residents.
Yet, the nexus between the state and ethnic groups relative to the planned eviction of Old Fadama is not this straightforward. There is a more complex interface between the two that require disentangling. This is important because this nexus has broader implications for the future of Accra as a city. In Ghana as a whole, the distinction between ethnic and state interests is often quite faint. In most instances, which of these two interests influences the decision of a state official becomes quite difficult to establish. The AMA, which technically constitutes the Ghanaian state at the city level, is disproportionately led by the GaDangme members\textsuperscript{97}. This situation creates a condition whereby officials are forced to engage in constant juxtaposition between state agenda and ethnic interests. This situation reveals itself clearly in the case of Old Fadama.

In this specific case, pronouncements and actions of some key officials of the AMA leave one to wonder whether the officials are doing so as state officials or members of GaDangme. Consider the following statement by the PRO of AMA, Numo Blafo:

So they [Old Fadama residents] cannot just take the land and say because they are Ghanaians. Do you think \textit{me a Ga} can just go to any town or region [in Ghana] and occupy a place and say I am Ghanaian and so I am entitled to occupy the land? Is it possible…The land [Old Fadama] belongs to some people [the Gas] and the people have appealed so much to the AMA and the [central] government [to return their land to them]. So the bottom line is that Sodom and Gomorrah must go. [If] they came here for economic opportunities and the place is not good for them what do they do? [In the 1980s, many] Ghanaians traveled to Nigeria for economic reasons, to seek greener pastures. When it was not OK what did they do? They came back. [In much the same way] if they [Old Fadama residents] have also come to seek greener pastures [in Accra] which are not there, why the need to [continue to] be where they are? (\textit{Joy FM}, Interview 10 September 2011; emphasis added).

\textsuperscript{97} Indeed, every single Mayor of Accra, since the introduction of local governance system in mid 1980s, has been a GaDangme. It is not surprising that the AMA is often accused of nepotism (\textit{The Citizen Newspaper}, 29 August 2011).
This official clearly identifies his ethnic identity ("me a Ga") rather than the state official as the primary influence of his attitude towards the slum. He buttresses this by a strange analogy. In his view, much the same way that Ghanaians who travelled to Nigeria in the 1980s returned when the economic interest that took them there could not be satisfied, residents of Old Fadama should go back to the North because Accra does not have much economic benefit to offer them. This is a strange analogy because: first, Ghanaians did not return to Ghana, they were repatriated; and second, the Old Fadama residents are not in a foreign land, they are Ghanaians living in Ghana.

Yet, it is difficult, if not unnecessary, to overstretch this point in the sense that these officials have constantly had to explain to their own folks why they are left to endure such level of indignity and dreadful human conditions in ‘their’ native territory of Accra. This is worsened by the vivid material disparity between the squalid indigenous communities and the glamorous, ‘alien-dominated’ high-class neighbourhoods, where “state resources are concentrated” (Adjetey, Interview, 15 August 2011). Besides, ethnic influences in political and social actions in Ghana are not peculiar to the GaDangme groups in Accra. Every ethnic group in the country has had a fair share of this accusation.

8.7. State, ethnicity, and the slum: what the Old Fadama residents say

Numo Blafo, the PRO of AMA, recently affirmed that: “the bottom line is that Sodom and Gomorrah must go…I mean nothing can stop it” (Joy FM, Interview, 10 September 2011). But how is the community processing these multiple threats to eliminate it? First of all, the
residents of Old Fadama are under no illusion that their future in that space is guaranteed. The community has over the decade endured various kinds of treatments including denial of basic social and municipal services, criminalization and delegitimization, and in some cases direct intimidation and brutalization.

Basic social and municipal needs such as toilets, schools, clinics, water, etcetera, are in short supply within the community, except the few that the residents have acquired through their own ingenuity and self-help initiatives. Expectedly, these initiatives are barely adequate substitutes. For instance, “school children enrolled [in the community schools] do not learn the government standardized curriculum and are taught by teachers who are not properly trained…” (Dzila, 2011, p. 7). Parents who desire to put their children in better schools outside the community “pay exorbitant fees” and “those who are unable to afford, leave their children to roam the streets” (Myjoyonline, 21 July 2012).

Another significant source of concern for the residents is the constant criminalization, delegitimization and disparagement of their community by officials through mass media. They are not unaware of the fact that this “normative discourse of ‘squatters’ and ‘informality’ situates ... [them] within the sphere of illegality, that serves to legitimise the planned forced removal to the wider electorate” (Afenah, 2012, p. 2). Some of the residents also recalled the direct intimidation and brutalization by the state in what became known within the community as “dawn raids”. This entailed frequent ransacking at dawn by military/police task forces in the name of hunting armed robbers. A resident recounts one of the events in the following words:

98 Most individuals that I interviewed were constant in their reference to the unavoidability of being evicted from that space. Only few entertained some hope that their resistance can lead to a permanent residency within that space.

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“In 2001/2002, there were military swoops here. They called it ‘join the line’. You will be in your room and they will knock—it was raining actually—and [when] you come out they will cane you into line. I was part of those that got arrested. We were tied together like slaves and finally we were handcuffed and sent to the Central police station. I was locked up for two days and was released. I did not commit any crime…they were just arresting everybody and beating people up. In fact in the course of that, some people fell into the lagoon and got drowned” (Joy FM, Interview, 10 September 2011).

All these technologies of control have failed to make it easier for the state to enforce the eviction order, at least for now. This planned eviction has been made more difficult for the state by the close collaboration between the slum dwellers and local and international rights groups: a collaboration akin to what many geographers describe as ‘jumping scale' or what Ferguson and Gupta (2002) refer to as “transnational governmentality.”

But how do the residents justify their resistance to the order to remove them from that ‘illegally’ occupied space? Responses to this question varied but most of them quite consistent with findings by an earlier study that Accra offers them better opportunity in terms of livelihood (see Housing the Masses, 2010). A typical response by the residents to my question as to why they do not consider returning to places where they originally migrated from was: “Here is where I call home. There are no jobs in the North, how do they expect me to go back home; to do what?” (Gafaru, Interview, August 2011).

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99 The politics of “jumping scale” is used to describe the efforts by groups to mobilize powers or resources available at different geographical scales in the course of power struggles with respect to the regulatory activities (Cox, 1989).
Significantly, there was also the ethnic dimension to the responses of the residents. This dimension can be gleaned from the following two statements.

“If the AMA forcefully evicts us, we will also drive away all foreigners who currently live in our part of the country. The right to free movement is guaranteed under the national constitution. But if ours if violated, we will also violate those of others who reside in our part of the country” (Issahaku, Interview, August 2011; emphasis added).

“We Northerners are not the only ones living on a foreign land. There are many Southerners living peacefully in the North too. If they [the GaDangme groups] drive us away, why not, we will also drive all the Southerners living in the North back to the South” (Focus group discussion, August 2011).

The first important point to note in these statements is the attempt to claim citizenship through nation-state membership. The argument the residents appear to be pushing is that they could not be expelled because, like the GaDangme groups, they are Ghanaians too and can thus freely choose where in Ghana to live. More significant point, however, is the reference to Southerners living in the North as “foreigners”\(^\text{100}\). What this suggests is that the place/ethnic-based categorization of citizenship in Ghana is not peculiar to the GaDangme groups. Indeed my personal experience in Tamale (the leading city in the North) confirms this point. During my several years of residence in this city, I heard non-Dagombas (Dagomba being the main ethnic group of the city) constantly queried “aya mbogo” (are you a native of this city?). This question is invariably intended to remind those questioned of their difference (alien status) rather than ascertain their identity.

\(^\text{100}\) It must be noted that in Ghana, the category north-south is often more ethnic than geographic. This is mainly because ethnic groups in Ghana, especially in the North, are still tied to particular geographical areas. Thus, a mention of a particular region is more often than not an indirect way of pointing at a particular ethnic group.
But beyond the claiming of citizenship through common nation-state membership, the residents gave a more functional justification of their presence in Accra. Consider the following two statements.

“This place [Old Fadama] is the home to almost all the head porters of Accra. In addition to paying their tolls to the AMA, they [the head porters] also render important service to the city by conveying goods for the residents. Can you imagine what life will be for most people in Accra without the services of these head porters?” (Focus Group Discussion, August 2011)

“We are also very helpful to government. We deal in scraps\(^1\). The metal industry—more specifically the iron rods industry—largely depends on our activities. So if we get evicted, all these activities could be seriously affected too. You see all those beautiful houses that they [the rich] are building in Accra, it is we the scrap dealers who work so hard to produce the iron rods used to build those beautiful houses” (Focus Group Discussion, August 2011).

The emphasis here is their role as urban citizens. In other words, their presence within the city is not only because they are Ghanaians but also that they perform critical functions that sustain the city. Thus, the city needs them as much as they need the city. This adds another layer to the complex relationship between state, ethnicity, and citizenship in Ghana. On what basis, really, must citizenship in Accra be based: membership of the nation state, ethnic identity, or functional importance? Each option has its own implication for the current ambition to globalize the city.

8.7 Conclusion

The quest to shape the future of Accra along entrepreneurial lines has become a contentious one, and slum dwellers and ethnic-based groups are some of the main actors driving

\(^1\)Scrap dealers are groups or individuals who scavenge the entire city and beyond for discarded metals that they hazardously process before supply to the metal industries. The supplies form the input of these industries in the production of iron rods. Most of the young, mostly male scrap dealers reside in the slum of Old Fadama.
the contestation. In this chapter, I examine the historical, material and cultural factors that generate this contestation and how it impacts the ambition of officials to modernize and globalize Accra. Through the case of the decade-old planned eviction of the Old Fadama slum, I show how state interest to ‘modernize’ and globalize Accra intersects with ethnic-based claims to generate a unique circumstance that runs against the very logic that underpins a global city.

To strive to become global is partly to suggest, as the urban neoliberalism scholars have, that the city is open to diversity with capital as the common uniting factor. Yet in the case of Accra, the interest of capital is being undermined by that of ethnicity. The city entrepreneurs are busy trying to attract and embed capital within the city, which automatically comes with the need to make the city as embracing as possible. Yet, at the same time, some ethnic-based groups, rightfully or wrongly, are also striving to channel the identity and resources of the city towards a section of the urban population, specifically the GaDangme people. Old Fadama has become a common ground where these claims are negotiated. The squatter settlement over the last decade has come under threats of eviction from both the state and the ethnic-based groups. The latter entails global-local alliances with a broader agenda to contest the disenfranchisement of the ethnic groups in the country, real or perceived. This makes the contestations both historical and cultural.

In Accra therefore, urban entrepreneurialism has to reconcile history, geography and culture. It has to balance both globalizing and localizing forces. The result of this reconciliation and balancing act is what constitute Accra’s actually existing neoliberalism.
Chapter 9
The ‘Actually-Existing Neoliberalism’ in Ghana: state, ethnicity, and the modernization of informal Accra

Urban geographers have drawn our attention to the widespread adoption of neoliberal principles in urban policy making in recent times, by powerful and not so powerful cities around the world. They argue that local economic development is now pursued through an alliance between urban governments, private capital and unions. Urban entrepreneurialism, as it is widely called, orients urban governance towards market-dominated regimes. Its driving force is economic growth rather than distribution. In this form of governance, the city itself becomes a product to be advertised, marketed and sold. Consequently, the quality of urban physical environment becomes a major concern, as city managers emphasize place-making interventions to boost the aesthetic appeal of the city.

Accra has served as an important site for neoliberal experimentation since the early 1980s when market-based reforms were introduced by the World Bank and the IMF. These reforms progressively opened up the city not only to economic forces of all kinds but also to some very specific ideas as to what constitutes the ideal way to generate urban economic growth and ultimately transform the city. Most influential of such ideas was that it was only by competing at a global level that the national and urban economies could be transformed. And to do so required a symbiotic relationship between the state and the private sector. This notion has since become a truism and plays a large role in ways that officials imagine and attempt to reimage the city. What this dissertation has explored is the distinct form of urban neoliberalism that has emerged and the extent to which this form has made a positive contribution to urban transformation.
Even though an overarching policy to ‘globalize’ Accra does not exist, the range of policy instruments and everyday state practices that the city has embraced over the last decade, suggest that the desire to turn Accra into a hub of global investment and tourism in Africa is no longer a mere wish. This urban entrepreneurial script has in one way or another found expression in urban policy and practice. For instance there are initiatives aimed at making Accra’s cityscape and physical infrastructure attractive to global investors, tourists and consuming regional elites. These initiatives have included a $1.5 billion monorail system project; the revitalization of Korle Lagoon and its vicinity into ‘modern’ business and tourism hub; and, the development of the beachfront into a world-class business, entertainment and leisure enclave. What is fascinating about these proposed projects is that they are for the most part phantasmagoric because neither the city nor central government has developed the financial capacity to undertake such projects. Is the fact that these ‘flagship’ projects have remained at a planning stage indicative of the marginality of urban entrepreneurialism in Accra? Not really. Over the last few years, the city government has engaged in a number of alternative exercises aimed to achieve the same or similar results as those associated with ‘flagship’ projects. The most notable ones are city beautification and decongestion exercises that are meant to boost the physical appeal of the city. Even simple and mundane city practices as clean-up exercises are now couched in city-marketability discourses, as evident in Mayor Vanderpuije’s statement quoted in the opening of Chapter 1 of this dissertation.

Furthermore, there is the intense drive to recruit the private sector as a partner in the supply and management of urban infrastructure and basic social services. Over the last decade, in particular, waste management, revenue collection, and management of traditional markets have
increasingly been privatized. Typical of the neoliberalization practices everywhere, the privatization of these services is justified on grounds of capital and efficiency injection by private investors into urban management services. Also advanced is the argument that creating space for private participation in city-making will attract the much needed global private capital into the city. Therefore privatization of urban services in Accra has a dual purpose: to inject capital into infrastructure provision and to create the right conditions for foreign investors. Already, the city government has begun venturing into the realm of global financial market by directly courting investors on Wall Street and Ghanaian and African diaspora and business entities abroad. This undertaking is quite remarkable because until fairly recently, only the national state could engage in such international economic missions.

In no small measure, this drive to become entrepreneurial is a creation of the decentralized/local governance system. This system has increasingly placed local-level development on the shoulders of the local state. Yet, this expanded mandate has not been matched with resource allocation from the centre. Thus local states, especially those with highly ambitious Chief Executives or Mayors, are driven to assume the role of entrepreneurs, of which Mayor Vanderpuije exemplifies. But because their entrepreneurialism is driven mainly by developmental considerations, these mayors have to first direct potential investments to improving the urban physical infrastructure. They need to do so if they are to attract further rounds of global investments, especially in the area of business.

The interpretations of contemporary city-making by neoliberalism scholars leave little room for state nationalist ambitions. Yet, as this case has shown nationalism, has remained an
important consideration in the effort to transform and globalize Accra as the state’s embrace of neoliberal policies.

Before the 1980s, the modernist/developmentalist model was at the center of urban development in postcolonial Ghana (Hess, 2000; Uduku, 2006), where “the government, as part of its new role in national development, became the main instigator of [among others] public sector housing development in the city [Accra]” (Grant and Yankson, 2003, p. 68). These interventions, as Hess (2000) points out, were carefully orchestrated to facilitate the project of nation-building. After the early 1980s even as the state began to lose its ability to exert control over the production of urban space its desire and ambition to do so remained quite strong. But how does the state take control of city modernization when the neoliberal path that it is charting dictates that it scales back and allow the private sector to take charge? Can the vision of urban development held by states and the private sector ever be completely one and the same? These questions have a much broader resonance in Africa. At the very least, they point to the ongoing tension between the ‘hands-off’ state dictated by the neoliberal framework and the ‘hands-on’ state that defined the developmentalist model which underpins the city modernization agendas.

In the case of African cities like Accra then, it is within this seemingly absurd exercise to balance neoliberalism with developmentalism that we can locate what critical urban scholars call “actually existing neoliberalism”. This exercise represents “complex mutations” (Peck, 2004, p. 396) that generate neither neoliberal nor developmental outcomes. Perhaps it is important to heed Hubbard’s (2004) caution “that the conceptual framework of neoliberalism is useful for making sense of contemporary urban restructuring, but only if we recognise that the resulting city can be mapped along axes other than those fixated on capital and class” (p. 665; my emphasis).
State-society relationship in neoliberal city-making

In addition to revealing the key forces driving official city-making practices in Ghana, this dissertation also sought to understand how such practices intersect with the everyday social and economic lives of the ordinary residents of Accra. I found that in Accra, as in nearly all major African cities, local state efforts to render certain groups invisible in the urban landscape have been targeted at three particular groups: hawkers, traders, and slum dwellers. Collectively, these groups have become the quintessential urban ‘undesirables,’ attracting a repertoire of state technologies of suppression and control. The city government’s growing “hostility against informality,” to use Kamete’s (2012, p. 73) expression, is justified in a number of ways, key among them - the tendency of the actors involved to occupy urban spaces illegally and inappropriately, thus compromising the environmental integrity of the city. Yet, as my research has demonstrated, it is the very presence of these groups in the centre of the city that is a source of anxiety for city officials and not necessarily the spatial impact of their practices.

My focus in this study was as much about how, as it was about why officials attempt to render the poorest groups invisible. The revanchist perspective allowed me to reveal some of the punitive techniques that have been devised in recent times to deal with these groups. They include intimidation, arrest and seizure of merchandize, and hefty court fines and incarceration. Disturbingly, the punitive measure sometimes goes beyond the confines of what is state sanctioned. The City Guards, the increasingly militarized wing of the city government responsible for maintaining law and order, have fashioned their own form of exacting retribution against the informal actors, particularly market women. In a practice codenamed ‘barter system,’
the guards coerce market women into sexual relationships in order to guarantee them more lenient treatment, especially when their merchandize gets seized. This reliance upon forms of sexual violence to discipline women in the public sphere reveals the gendered nature of revanchism in African cities.

Arguably, the issue of gender is that which looms the largest in the current neoliberal city-making practices of the state. Women, by virtue of their disproportionate presence in the informal economy, tend to suffer relatively more by way of urban exclusion, even as their historical socio-cultural marginalization renders them more easily dispensable than others. Over the last decade, market places that traditionally symbolized economic freedom and sites of social networking for women have come under threat from both the state and corporate powers. As Accra aspires to attain modernity and global status, market places are being squeezed to give way to ‘modern’ shopping malls. The consequence is the wiping away of the vital social ties, reciprocity, sharing and collaboration that women rely on to cultivate and elaborate their entrepreneurialism. The drive to create a ‘modern’ entrepreneurial city is based on an imaginary that constructs women as a threat to modernity. This remains so despite the availability of substantial evidence to the effect that many of the activities of these women involve the same financial risk taking and innovative behaviors that the state is so busy trying to cultivate in the formal sector. This attitude can be squarely situated in the hegemony of western views of the entrepreneurial city: a perspective that reproduces the idea that African cities lie outside of modernity. In Chapter 7, I used the case of the Novotel Park Market to illustrate how women have come under the suppressive weight of the state.
But, rendering the informal actor invisible in Accra does not always involve the punitive technologies of the state. For numerous scholars have noted that punitive spatializing practices of the state often propel ordinary residents to generate their own “counterspaces” of resistance and transgression,” challenging the official “growth-machine-dominated representations of space” (MacLeod, 2002, p. 618; see also Bayat and Biekart, 2009; Bayat, 2000; Kamete, 2012; Crossa, 2009). What officials achieve through direct punitive technologies is a disciplinary, not a disciplined, society. The local government of Accra seems to have learnt this lesson to some extent. Over the years, it has increasingly complemented its punitive techniques with various forms of persuasive and manipulative methods. These range from patriotic messages that aim to encourage residents to embrace a better way of being and inhabiting the city to physical obstacles in the form of barbed wirings and fences that aim to limit the spatial circulation of these ‘unruly’ actors. This form of enforcing spatial order is akin to what some describe as spatial governmentality (Merry, 2001). Yet, the limitations of these measures always propel the state to fall back on its more traditional punitive/disciplinary technologies.

A key question to ask at this juncture is that if these informal actors are hardly superfluous to the urban economy, as many think, but are rather entrepreneurial and risk-taking as I and several analysts have asserted, why the state hostility towards them? It is naïve, admittedly, to ignore the planning challenges posed by the seemingly disorganized practices of the informal actors. Yet, what is true is that any human activity, however important it is, when neglected or marginalized for so long, as the informal economy has, assumes a precarious and disorganized existence. The precariousness of the informal practices in Accra stems from the fact that even though market traders act as both retailers and active financers of production, they are
still deemed superfluous to the urban economy. Thus, no conscious effort was made by the state to build more markets to meet the growing demand of traders. The only choice left to the teeming traders then was to cleverly, even if illegally and forcefully, occupy any available space where trading activity looked plausible.

Even though I critique the increasingly entrepreneurial stance of the local state and their undervaluation of groups in the informal economy I want to resist the temptation to be overly cynical about the motive of the officials. It is often difficult to see beyond the elitist economic motives of state/city officials who embrace neoliberal policy options, but, as Tania Li reminds us, “the rush to identify hidden motives of profit or domination narrows analysis unnecessarily, making much of what happens in the name of improvement obscure” (Li, 2007, p. 8-9). My impression during fieldwork was, and still is, that the officials are genuinely overstretched by the constant pressure to keep, as Partha Chatterjee’s (1986) observes: “the contradictions between capital and the people in perpetual suspension” (p. 168). The urban project is not necessarily always a class project, by way of an imposition of the economic interest of the elite. It is also quite often a genuine attempt to balance the need to provide urban services and that of generating local economic growth. If the class motive is not the dominant force in the marginalization and disenfranchisement of the ordinary residents of these cities, what then is? I suggest, as do a number of recent urban scholars who deal with African cities, that the driving force is the urban planning and development paradigm itself (see Watson, 2002b, 2009; Harrison, 2006; Pieterse, 2010a and b, 2011; Robinson, 2002, 2006; Simone, 2004; Mbembe and Nuttall, 2004; Myers, 2011; and Ndi, 2007; Swilling et al., 2002; Parnell, 1997).
For the most part, urban theory and practice in Africa is circumscribed by the western models that partly are a colonial legacy. The western modernist models demand what Caldeira and Holston (2005) describe as ‘total design’ and driven by what Berman (1988) argues to be “a desire to wipe out whatever came earlier, so as to achieve a radically new departure, a point that could be a true present” (Berman, 1988, p. 331). To be able to make city managers see the potential in local actors in the informal realm therefore requires a fundamental shift in urban planning and development orientation itself. This requires a reinterpretation of African urbanism removed from the straightjackets of the western modernist conceptualizations and devoid of what Chakrabarty (2000) describes as “methodological Eurocentrism.” This new thinking can and must take lesions from urban experiences in the west itself where urban spaces created by modernism, as Jacobs (1961) contends, are physically clean and orderly, but spiritually dead. Accordingly, official urban practice must be less mechanical and reductive but rather look beyond the “chaos” of the informal actors to see the complex human order that informality entails.

In summary, city-making in Africa must avoid what Lefebvre (1991) describes as an authoritarian and brutal spatial practice that aims to produce the homogenous and monotonous architecture of the state (1991, p. 126, 308). Even if it proves impossible to completely abandon the western modernist models, we can still engage in what Harrison (2006) calls “border thinking” that “allow us to find ways of reasoning (and of place-making) that lie somewhere between Western rationality and the diverse rationalities of everyday life in the South” (p. 326).

102 This is the unreflected use of concepts, theories and methods that emerged in the West and were shaped by its particular regional conditions in other contexts. It is considered problematic because it sees Europe’s historical genesis as “natural”, elevating it to a blueprint for the entire non-European world (Fischer-Tiné, 2010).
Ultimately, it should become less difficult for city officials to accommodate groups such as hawkers, market women, and slum dwellers. These groups would then assume the guise less of contaminators of the modernizing city than as equally important contributors to urban growth and sustainability. This ‘benevolent’ attention by the state is itself what is required to render the activities of these groups less ‘illegal’ and ‘chaotic’.

But there is yet another important finding of this study that is worth commenting on. This relates to the issue of ethnicity. In Accra, ethnicity has become a primary force in determining not only what the state can and cannot do but also and more importantly who is more deserving to live where. One of my objectives in this study was to explore how ethnicity mediates ways that the state seeks to transform and govern Accra. In this regards, at least three lessons can be gleaned from the discussions. First, ethnicity complicates the identity and function of the nation state itself. In Accra, state officials are constantly caught between their official identities and functions and their ethnic allegiances and expectations. This situation clearly manifests itself in ways that officials attend to issues related to the Old Fadama slum. In this particular case, many of the state officials who also belong to the GaDangme ethnic group are manifestly pursuing the eviction order against the slum mainly on ethnic terms. Many of them have expressed the need for the slum dwellers to go back to their ‘home’ regions as though they were different breeds of Ghanaians. By this attitude, these officials have lost their default status as ‘neutral’ arbiters among all groups, representatives of the national state itself.

This leads me to the second point that ethnicity, and particularly the ethnic-based claims on the state, complicates issues of social justice and the right of urban residents to the city. Specifically with respect to the evictions case of Old Fadama slum, ethnicity challenges our
common understanding of whose right to live in the city deserves to be fought for, first and foremost. In this eviction case, social justice was evoked both for and against the slum dwellers. The slum dwellers themselves and the rights activists that supported them argued for the need to respect the rights of the residents to shelter. The subtext to this argument was that these groups were poor and vulnerable. And yet it is on this same basis that the GaDangme groups and state officials among them called for the elimination of the slum dwellers. They pointed to the grim social and environmental conditions in the indigenous Ga-Mashie community to suggest that the rights of members of this community had been violated since they, the original owners of that piece of land, languished in a congested settlement while slum dwellers occupied ‘their’ land for free. But for the undue ‘ethnicization,’ it would have been manifest to the ethnic nationalists that both the Ga-Mashie and Old Fadama communities share a common status. They are both Ghanaians who have had to endure marginalization resulting from the highly skewed national resource distribution. From this ‘national’ perspective, both groups should be on the same side in the battle against the dominant group rather than against each other.

The final point regarding ethnicity is that it renders Accra’s globalizing ambition quite contradictory. One the one hand, state officials that desire to globalize the city had to encourage diversity based on the capacity to invest within the city. Yet, on the other hand, ethnic attachments propel the desire of endogenous groups to preserve the city for those who ‘own’ it.
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APPENDICES

Appendix 1—The AMA by-laws on street hawking

Accra Metropolitan Assembly (Street Hawking) Bye-laws, 2011

In exercise of the powers conferred on the Accra Metropolitan Assembly by section 79 of the Local Government: (Act 462) these Bye-laws are hereby made.

1. A person shall not sell or offer for sale any merchandise to a driver who is in charge of a vehicle or a passenger while the vehicle is in the traffic.

2. A person shall not buy from a seller in the Street unless the street has been so designated for that purpose as a street market on a particular day.

3. A person shall not throw litter about on to the street or pavement or from a moving vehicle.

4. A person in charge or the owner of a vehicle shall provide that vehicle with a waste bin and a notice directing passengers to deposit litter in that waste bin.

5. (1) A person shall not solicit for alms in a public place.
   (2) A person shall not aid or encourage another person to solicit for alms in a public place.
   (3) These Bye-laws do not apply to a religious or a charitable organisation.

6. A parent shall not allow a child or ward of school going age to loiter or engage in delinquent activities within the area of authority of the Accra Metropolitan Assembly.

7. A person shall not engage in commercial entertainment and or promotional activities in a street or a market without a permit from the Accra Metropolitan Assembly.

8. A person who contravenes any provision of these Bye-laws commits an offence and is liable on summary conviction to a fine not exceeding ten penalty units or in default to a term of imprisonment not exceeding three months or to both or be compelled to perform communal labour for a period of one month under the supervision of the Metropolitan Guards.

   a. In these Bye-laws unless the context otherwise requires :-
      “Street” includes a road, an alley, a lane and a pavement;
      “Delinquent activities” includes commercial activities.

Made at a meeting of the Accra Metropolitan Assembly held on 1st September, 2010

DESMOND ADDO-BINEY
Presiding Member Accra Metropolitan Assembly

J. A. TUFUOR
Metropolitan Coordinating Director
and Secretary to A.M.A.

Approval by the Regional Co-ordinating Council Greater Accra on behalf of the Ministry of Local Government

F. T. NARTEY
Regional Coordinating Director & Sec. to R.C.C.

The Accra Metropolitan Assembly will start implementation of these Bye-laws from Friday, 1st April, 2011. All Hawkers, Passengers, Residents and Visitors to the City of Accra must note.
Appendix 2—the Accra Millennium City theme song

There is development; this place looks so neat, so beautiful and hygienic too;
The gutters are all cleaned up, so there’ll be no floods, when it rains, hey hey hey!
The gutters are all cleaned up, there’ll be less malaria when it rains. Millennium City, yeah: a new Accra for a better Ghana!”

It’s possible to make Accra clean and orderly;
Progress and decongestion is there for all to see!” oh yea!!

So residents support the decongestion exercise;
There are more changes to make a better Ghana (transcribed by author; emphasis added)
Appendix 3—List Of Markets & Their Locations within Accra

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>No.</th>
<th>MARKET</th>
<th>LOCATION</th>
<th>SUB METRO</th>
<th>MANAGER</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Agbogbloshie</td>
<td>Agbogbloshie</td>
<td>Ashiedu Ketekye</td>
<td>A.M.A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Mallam Atta Market</td>
<td>New Town</td>
<td>Ayawaso West</td>
<td>A.M.A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Tuesday Market</td>
<td>Mamprobi</td>
<td>Ablekuma South</td>
<td>A.M.A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Nima Market</td>
<td>Nima</td>
<td>Ayawaso Central</td>
<td>A.M.A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
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<td>Tema Station</td>
<td>Tema Station Accra</td>
<td>Osu Klotey</td>
<td>A.M.A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
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<td>Adabraka</td>
<td>Osu Klotey</td>
<td>A.M.A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
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<td>31st December Market</td>
<td>Accra Central</td>
<td>Ashiedu Ketekye</td>
<td>A.M.A</td>
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<td>Mamobi</td>
<td>Ablekuma North</td>
<td>A.M.A</td>
</tr>
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<td>Santana</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>A.M.A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
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<td>Achimota</td>
<td>Okai Koi North</td>
<td>A.M.A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
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<td>Osu</td>
<td>Osu Klotey</td>
<td>A.M.A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
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<td>Accra Central</td>
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<td>A.M.A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
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<td>Ashiedu Ketekye</td>
<td>A.M.A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14</td>
<td>Amamomo Market</td>
<td>Timba Town</td>
<td>Ashiedu Ketekye</td>
<td>A.M.A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
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<td>Salaga Market</td>
<td>Near Wato</td>
<td>Ashiedu Ketekye</td>
<td>A.M.A</td>
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<tr>
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<td>London Market</td>
<td>James Town</td>
<td>Ashiedu Ketekye</td>
<td>A.M.A</td>
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<tr>
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<td>Okaishie Lane</td>
<td>Accra Central</td>
<td>Ashiedu Ketekye</td>
<td>A.M.A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
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<td>Mallam</td>
<td>Ablekuma North</td>
<td>A.M.A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>19</td>
<td>Teshie Market</td>
<td>Teshie</td>
<td>Teshie</td>
<td>A.M.A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20</td>
<td>La Market</td>
<td>La</td>
<td>La</td>
<td>A.M.A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>21</td>
<td>Nungua Market</td>
<td>Nungua</td>
<td>Nungua</td>
<td>A.M.A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>22</td>
<td>Freedom Market</td>
<td>Latbiokosie</td>
<td>Ablekuma South</td>
<td>A.M.A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>23</td>
<td>Nil Boiman Market</td>
<td>Abeka Lapaz</td>
<td>Okai Koi South</td>
<td>A.M.A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>24</td>
<td>Kaneshe Market</td>
<td>Kaneshe</td>
<td>Okai Koi South</td>
<td>Private</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>25</td>
<td>AgbogbloshieNo.2</td>
<td>Agbogbloshie</td>
<td>Ashiedu Ketekye</td>
<td>Private</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>26</td>
<td>Dansoman Market</td>
<td>Dansoman</td>
<td>Ashiedu Ketekye</td>
<td>Private</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>27</td>
<td>Odorkor Market</td>
<td>Odorkor</td>
<td>Ablekuma North</td>
<td>Private</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>28</td>
<td>Abeka Market</td>
<td>Abeka</td>
<td>Ablekuma North</td>
<td>Private</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>29</td>
<td>Makola Shopping Mall.</td>
<td>Accra Central</td>
<td>Ashiedu Ketekye</td>
<td>Private</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>30</td>
<td>Pedestrians Shopping Mall</td>
<td>Odawna</td>
<td>Osu Klotey</td>
<td>A.M.A</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Appendix 4—Some of the concerns of the GaDangme people in Accra

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Key concern</th>
<th>Explanation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Names of landmarks</td>
<td><strong>Major roads</strong>—uproar about the change of names from Asafo Janete Road to Ghana Telecom road and from the Nii Armah Olleonu Road to Obasanjo Road (Ghanaian Chronicle, 31 March 2009)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><strong>Sports stadium</strong>—The Accra Sports Stadium was re-named Ohene Djan Stadium in 2004. Following agitations by groups of GaDangmes that Ohene Djan is not a Ga, the Stadium, under the initiative of the Accra Metropolitan Assembly (AMA), reverted to the Accra Sports Stadium in September 2010.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><strong>Kotoka International Airport</strong>—agitations that the welcome greeting “Akwaaba” at the Kotoka Airport be changed to reflect Ga custom and language. The Akwaaba is a certain ethnic language and where the airport is situated belongs to a certain tribe, so what we all need to know is that where the airport is situated now is for the GaDangme people...We also want to project our language, Accra is cosmopolitan but belongs to a certain tribe (La Mantse, Nii Kpobi Tettey Tsuru III; citifmonline.com, Sep 28, 2011)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Violation of traditions and customs</td>
<td><strong>Drumming and dancing</strong>—Ga youth on several occasions interrupted church services to enforce ban on noisemaking on the order of the Ga Traditional Council in line with Ga customs (Myjoyonline.com 1 August 2009).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Declining Language</td>
<td>Our lands, languages, and cultures...have come under constant siege (GaDangme International, 2005).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>The GaDangme Council [says S.K. B. Asante] will continue to vigorously resist the marginalization of GaDangme languages and culture (Ghana News Agency, 30 August 2002).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>GaDangme will prevail: our language and our culture will not be lost (GaDangme International, 2005)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unfair Public (dis)appointments</td>
<td>The GaDangme Council expresses grave concern about the termination of the appointment of Mr Seth Ago Adjetey [a Ga] as Director General of the Ghana Broadcasting Corporation (GBC) (Ghana News Agency 30 August 2002)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Marginalization in governance of Accra</td>
<td>We the Ga people have carefully observed a negative trend creeping surreptitiously into our societal fabric that is alien to the Ga traditional and cultural values…we were very surprised when a group of faceless persons began agitating for the removal of the AMA Chief Executive for policies the assembly is implementing…Within this short period [under Mayor Vanderpuije] we have witnessed tremendous improvement in sanitation and discipline on some of our roads (Daily Graphic 20 May 2011)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>---</td>
<td>---</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Toll collection in Accra</td>
<td>If GPRTU [Ghana Private Road Transport Union] can collect money from all the stations and me, the land owner, I can't collect money. From today and tomorrow all Trotros [local commercial vehicles] will be on the road and I have to collect my tolls…Trotro stations are not acquired lands, they are lands that belong to the Ga Dzaase Stool, they must know that they have to pay me tolls for working on my land and making profit (myjoyonline.com 14 August 2011)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Appendix 5—Selected statistics on social and environmental conditions of Ga-Mashie

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>INDICATOR</th>
<th>Jamestown</th>
<th>Ussher Town</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Population</td>
<td>17,784</td>
<td>28,915</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No. of Households</td>
<td>3,312</td>
<td>5,728</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No. of Houses</td>
<td>1716</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>% using public dumps</td>
<td>79.15%</td>
<td>88.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Access to Sewage</td>
<td>12.88%</td>
<td>1.82%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Access to potable water</td>
<td>41.52%</td>
<td>25.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Access to toilet facilities</td>
<td>55%</td>
<td>5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No of rooms</td>
<td>17,139</td>
<td>5,761</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Room occupancy</td>
<td>5.0</td>
<td>4.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Population growth rate</td>
<td>3.4</td>
<td>3.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Age Dependency Ratio</td>
<td>1:1.55</td>
<td>1:1.55</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Economic Dependency Ratio</td>
<td>1:2.2</td>
<td>1:2.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Top 5 reported Outpatient Dep’t(OPD)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cases</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Malaria</td>
<td>62.1</td>
<td>66.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Diarrhea</td>
<td>14.1</td>
<td>13.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Typhoid Fever</td>
<td>8.1</td>
<td>3.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Intestinal Worms</td>
<td>14.2</td>
<td>13.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Malnutrition</td>
<td>1.5</td>
<td>3.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unemployed</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Feeling good about being a GaDangme</td>
<td>Feeling less comfortable about being GaDangme</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>--------------------------------------</td>
<td>-----------------------------------------------</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The seat of government and the capital for the country is located in GaDangme land.</td>
<td>Not nurturing our talents.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Proud because of our rich heritage, culture and festivities such as Homowo and Dipo.</td>
<td>Lack of unity and solidarity.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The part played by GaDangmes in Ghana’s independence.</td>
<td>Lack of self-confidence.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Love for the characteristics of the Ga people, including being friendly and happy people.</td>
<td>Too liberal and accommodating.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Feel good about passing on our heritage to my children.</td>
<td>Very forgiving and not fighting for their rights.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Proud about our attitude; proud within and content with the little they have.</td>
<td>Disregard for authority.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pride of GaDangme names.</td>
<td>Not good team players</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GaDangmes are peace loving, generous, and flexible in everything they do.</td>
<td>No foresight</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Proud that Ga and Dangme are no longer divided but act as one people (GaDangme).</td>
<td>GaDangme people are easily swayed</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>In the past people like the Gas they even claim to be Gas.</td>
<td>They fail to favour their own.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Natural talent such excelling in sports.</td>
<td>We lack unity in every area of our actions.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GaDangme people are welcoming and accommodating</td>
<td>We are selfish and Lack of respect for one another</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Appendix 7: Table itemizing the four-month field research activity by date, place, participants, and information collected.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Place</th>
<th>Activity</th>
<th>Who</th>
<th>What</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1st -30th May</td>
<td>University of Ghana; Accra Metropolitan Assembly (AMA); Town and</td>
<td>Primary and secondary Documentation</td>
<td>State planning and administrative officials; University of Ghana</td>
<td>Collected documents regarding planning interventions in Accra; urban</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2011</td>
<td>Country Planning; World Bank Headquarters, Accra; Police Headquarters;</td>
<td></td>
<td>Liberians;</td>
<td>poverty reduction programs; urban housing programs; land conflicts</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Land Commission; Ministry of Tourism; Ministry of Local Government;</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>in Accra; investments in Accra; Accra city bylaws on hawking and</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Ministry of Works and Housing</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>trading;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1st -30th June</td>
<td>Accra Metropolitan Assembly (AMA); Town and Country Planning; Land</td>
<td>In-depth interviews and brief one-on-one discussions</td>
<td>Official planners, administrators, activists; planners;</td>
<td>Planning interventions in Accra and their impacts on: physical space</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2011</td>
<td>Commission; Ministry of Local Government; Ministry of Works and</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>of Accra; hawkers and traders in Accra; slum dwellers in Accra;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Housing, People’s Dam Dialogue</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>investments in Accra etc.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1st -30th July</td>
<td>Novotel Park area; Odawna Market, Circle; Circle Station; Railways;</td>
<td>In-depth interviews; Focus Group Discussion; one-on-one</td>
<td>Hawkers and traders; AMA Task Force</td>
<td>Evictions and relocations; contestations with officials; internal</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2011</td>
<td>all in Accra</td>
<td>brief discussions;</td>
<td></td>
<td>struggles over access to trading and hawking;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Date</td>
<td>Location</td>
<td>Methodology</td>
<td>Participants</td>
<td>Focus</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-------------------------------</td>
<td>-------------------</td>
<td>-----------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>--------------------------------</td>
<td>----------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1st-30 August 2011</td>
<td>Old Fadama Slum</td>
<td>In-depth interviews; Focus Group Discussion; one-on-one brief discussions;</td>
<td>Slum dwellers and Rights activists</td>
<td>Threats of forced eviction; life and livelihood in the slum; perceptions on city planning interventions and Accra;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1st May-30th August 2011</td>
<td>Accra</td>
<td>Personal observations and recording; media monitoring and recording;</td>
<td></td>
<td>How Accra is being impacted by the planning interventions; how traders and hawkers relate among themselves and between them and state officials over access to inner-city space; how officials promote their vision for the city on radio and tv; how the general public perceives and articulates their opinions on radio and tv.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15th May-30th August 2011</td>
<td>Accra</td>
<td>Questionnaire surveys</td>
<td>Randomly selected areas in Accra</td>
<td>Perception of broad residents on state city interventions, slum dwelling, hawking, trading etc. vision of residents about Accra and how to transform it vis-à-vis that of the state and city officials</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Appendix 8: Sample Letter of introduction and Consent

To Whom It May Concern:

My name is Abdul Alim Habib, a PhD Candidate at the Department of Geography, Queen’s University, Canada. My research examines current policies and programs of governments to transform the city of Accra. More specifically, the research examines the city modernization agenda that is currently being pursued by the Accra Metropolitan Assembly (AMA). The goal of the study is to gain a better understanding about how interventions associated with this ambition shape the city and its social and economic relationships.

In order to be able to achieve this objective, I need to conduct in-depth interviews with the key stakeholders of this city development ambition. Individuals who agree to participate in these semi-structured interviews will be asked several questions regarding their view on the effort to (re)shape Accra and how the related interventions affect them, directly or indirectly.

The interview should take no longer than an hour and will be audiotaped if participants grant me permission. Participation is voluntary and participants are free to withdraw at any time. Participants are not obliged to answer any questions that they find objectionable or which make them feel uncomfortable. For these reasons, there are no known risks to participation in the study.

Confidentiality will be protected through the following steps:
1. Every precaution will be taken to protect the identity of participants.
2. The data will only be used for academic purposes. These include the current PhD dissertation, conference presentations, and journal and book publications. There are no foreseeable secondary uses of the data.
3. Data will be stored on password- and firewall-protected and data encrypted computers.
4. Only my thesis supervisor, mentioned below, will view collected data in detail.

If you have any questions about this study, you should feel free to ask them now or anytime throughout the Study by contacting Abdul Alim Habib @ 1-613-533-6000 ext.75941 or habalim@yahoo.com. Any ethical concerns about the study may be directed to the Chair of the General Research Ethics Board at chair.GREB@queensu.ca or 1-613-533-6081 or my dissertation supervisor, Dr Beverley Mullings @ 1(613) 533 6000 ext. 78829.

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This study has been granted clearance according to the recommended principles of Canadian ethics guidelines, and Queen's policies.

Thank you