

**NEOLIBERALISM, URBAN DEVELOPMENT AND ACCRA'S (GHANA)  
SHOPPING MALLS AS NEW SPACES OF URBAN CONSUMPTION**



Thesis submitted in Partial Fulfilment of the Requirements for the  
degree of

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Candidate: **Alexander Kofi Eduful**  
**St. Antonys' College**

Supervisor: **Professor Patricia Daley**

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## Abstract

This study is focused on urban transformation of Accra, the capital city of Ghana, under neoliberalism. Situated within the field of urban geography, and drawing from Harvey's (1989b) urban entrepreneurialism thesis and consumption theorists, such as Bourdieu (1984), as well as attention to the literature on the middle class, the study investigates how urban governance transformation in the neoliberal era have led to the proliferation of western-style shopping malls and their consequent impact on the city's urban development, in particular, coalition building, consumption and local economic development impacts. This is done through a case study of two of the city's shopping malls, which have been the product of increasing foreign direct investments (FDI). The two case studies are the Accra Mall, the first fully enclosed mall in the city opened in 2008, and the West Hills Mall, West Africa's biggest mall, opened in 2014.

The study uses a mixed methods approach involving both qualitative and quantitative methods in the relevant areas of the study. Thirty-three semi-structured interviews were conducted with key/expert informants, city authorities, mall developers and operators as well as customers. Additionally, 409 semi-structured questionnaires were administered to mall shop staff (343) and shop managers/owners (66).

In particular, three key findings are outlined: first, that contrary to the urban entrepreneurialism thesis derived from the experiences of global North cities, Accra's malls have largely been led by the private sector who tend to ally more with national political actors rather than those in local government. I argue that shopping mall development may have been delayed due to the subservient role of the local government and other challenges, including *institutional* and *procedural bureaucracy*, that tend to constrain local governments. As such, I indicate a need for reframing the idea of *private-public partnerships* (PPP) as a fulcrum in urban entrepreneurial policies to *local (private)-global partnership* as pertains to Accra's malls. Second, in framing mall projects as local economic development process, the results suggest that though they may be helping in poverty reduction, they may be low on local wealth creation. Finally, I argue that, as pertains to malls as spaces of consumption and projectors of modernity, in Accra, and other global South cities, malls need to be viewed more as '*nodes of global convergence*'.

## **Dedication**

To the Peter Eduful Family,

To Suzie

and

To Panyin Aseda and Kakra Nhyira;

who endured years of my absence whilst they were still toddlers.

Boys! You mean so much!!!

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## ACRONYMS

AfDB	Africa Development Bank
AgDB	Agricultural Development Bank
AMA	Accra Metropolitan Assembly
CBD	Central Business District
CDC	Commonwealth Development Corporation
DFID	(UK) Department for International Development
ECA	Economic Commission on Africa (of the UN)
ERP	Economic Recovery Program
FDI	Foreign Direct Investments
GAMA	Greater Accra Metropolitan Area
GAR	Greater Accra Region
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
GIPC	Ghana Investment Promotion Center
GIS	Geographic Information System
GPRS	Ghana Poverty Reduction Strategy
GSGDA	Ghana Shared Growth and Development Agenda
GSMA	Ga South Municipal Assembly
GSS	Ghana Statistical Services

GVCF	Ghana Venture Capital Fund
HIPC	Highly Indebted Poor Countries' Initiative
ILGS	Institute of Local Government Studies
IMF	International Monetary Fund
LaDMA	La Dadekotopon Municipal Assembly
LeKMA	Ledzokuku-Krowor Municipal Assembly
MLGRD	Ministry of Local Government and Rural Development
MoFEP	Ministry of Finance and Economic Planning
MTGR	Ministry of Tourism and Gender Relations
NCT	National Capital Territory
NDPC	National Development Planning Commission
PNDCL	Provisional National Defence Council Law
PPP	Private Public Partnerships
PSI	Presidential Special Initiatives
RCC	Regional Coordinating Council
SAP	Structural Adjustment Programme/Policies
SPSS	Statistical Package for Social Sciences
SSNIT	Social Security and National Insurance Trust
UN	United Nations
UNCTAD	United Nations Commission on Trade and Development

UNICEF	United Nations International Children’s Emergency Fund
USAID	United States Agency for International Development
VCTF	Venture Capital Trust Fund
WBG	World Bank Group
WTO	World Trade Organization

# CHAPTER ONE

## THE URBAN TRANSFORMATION OF ACCRA UNDER NEOLIBERALISM

### 1.1 Introduction

Foreign direct investment (FDI) to... [Africa] increased five times between 2000 and 2010, and it now exceeds that received by many of the world's largest emerging markets, including Brazil... More than 70 percent of the 50 largest packaged goods producers in the world are already tapping into Africa's rapidly growing consumer market (Signe, 2018: 15).

By 2030, the largest consumer markets will include Nigeria, Egypt, and South Africa. There will also be lucrative opportunities in Algeria, Angola, Ethiopia, Ghana, Kenya, Morocco, Sudan, Tunisia, and Tanzania, among other African countries (ibid: 1)

Since 2000, new modern consumption spaces/outlets, such as shopping malls, in African cities have been increasing rapidly in cities across the continent of Africa. According to *Sagaci Research*, a markets intelligence group that focuses on malls in Africa, in 2010, there were about 225 malls across the continent, excluding South Africa. By 2018, they had increased to 579 and it is projected that there will be some 200 new malls added by 2020. The rapid expansion of malls in Africa in a sense demonstrates the rising tide of neoliberal globalisation across the globe (Swyngedouw et al., 2002) and, by extension, across Africa (Miller et al., 2008; Knox and McCarthy, 2012). While this reflects the emergence of new economic opportunities in African cities, it also reflects how neoliberal globalisation is shaping new consumption tendencies (Chikweche and Fletcher, 2014), new labor relations (Miller, 2006) and, more broadly, new urban development trajectories in African cities, including Accra, Ghana. Yet, some scholars (Sundaram et al. 2011; Potts, 2012) have critiqued the view that such foreign investments are necessarily beneficial to Africans.

For Ghana and most Sub-Saharan African countries, globalisation and neoliberalism have come with both opportunities and challenges. Relying on structuralist and behavioral

theoretical approaches, this study investigates Accra's urban development through the lens of shopping malls as new spaces of consumption. Specifically, the research explores how, under increasing neoliberalisation, Accra has been shaped by, and in turn shaped, the construction of new western-style shopping malls, through its urban governance transformation, local economic development, and consumption in the wider context of a globalising world. I do this through a conceptual understanding of urban transformation in a neoliberal era, drawing on David Harvey's (1989b) treatise on urban governance restructuring, that is 'from managerialism to entrepreneurialism', as well as the development policies emanating from organisations such as the World Bank (2000) and World Bank Group (WBG, 2015), that focus on the competitive city - that is market-led urban economic development.

Critiquing the impact of the shift from Fordist-Keynesian regulatory regime to free market logic in the post-war decades, Harvey (1989b) argues that local governments tended to become more entrepreneurial in an attempt to overcome city-wide economic challenges. As Harvey (1989b) points out, the economic challenges since the last decades of the twentieth century led to cities, particularly in the global North, shifting from managerial to 'entrepreneurial' (pro-growth) form of urban governance. Peck and Tickell (2002:380) note that neoliberalism provide the 'ground rules' for lending agencies such as the World Bank in the application of free-market logic to debt-stricken countries across the globe. In urban development and policymaking, the World Bank framed these policies around city competitiveness (ibid). According to the WBG (2015) the objectives of becoming competitive are to increase jobs, reduce poverty, and create wealth in cities, particularly for citizens. This is viewed as part of the extant local economic development (LED) process (Gunder, 2009). Indeed, it has been indicated that LED is a process whereby local communities may have a leverage during globalisation (ILO, 2006) through accompanying decentralised political governance.

Neoliberal globalisation has become an almost new ideological pursuit in the world after the Cold War era (Harvey, 2005) where governments in both the global North and South have adopted neoliberal ethos and in fact pursue neoliberal policies. Indeed, the neoliberal turn has led to many countries positioning themselves to attract increased foreign direct investments (Peck, 2004) such that since the last decades of the twentieth century, the world has seen an increase in transnational flow of capital, information and people. Kotz (2002:70) has identified three key global flows that have intensified since the last two decades of the twentieth century; namely, ‘merchandize trade, foreign direct investments and cross-border financial investments’. There is also increased flow of information through new media technologies and advertising (Castells, 1996; Zhao and Belk, 2008) as well as increased movement of people through tourism (Skrbis and Woodward, 2007). People who travel get exposed to different cultures and diversity, some of which they carry back home and may attempt to replicate given the chance (Hobden, 2014). Consequently, new jobs have been created leading to economic growth around the world, transfer of knowledge and skills, increased diversity and understanding of (new) cultures.

Given its tendency for spatial restructuring, neoliberalism finds expressions in cities and urban areas. Some urban and other scholars (Peck and Tickell, 2002; Brenner and Theodore, 2002; Gooptu, 2009) indicate that neoliberalism involves ‘creative destruction’ where there is both a ‘roll-back’ of the welfare state (i.e. destruction) and a ‘roll-out’ of state-supported market-led policies (creation). According to Peck and Tickell (2002:384) new modes of (urban) governance become part of this roll-out process. Typically, urban governance could be managerial, welfarist, corporatist or pro-growth (Pierre, 1999; DiGaetano and Strom, 2003; Deng, 2019). Under neoliberalism however, pro-growth urban governance is favored (Deng, 2019) where other actors in the private and voluntary sectors join public officials, in forming development coalitions and alliances, in addressing urban development issues (Harvey, 1989b;

Hubbard and Hall, 1998; Peck, 2003; Peck and Tickell, 2008). This amounted to the restructuring of urban governance to a market-led one (Harvey, 1989b) in which cities become more enterprising in their attempt to attract increased foreign direct investments (Logan and Molotch, 1987; Harvey, 1989b) and more competitive than other cities competing for the same investments (Harvey, 2005; WBG, 2015) on account that ‘the task of urban governance is... to lure highly mobile and flexible production, financial and consumption into its space’ (Harvey, 1989b:10).

Since Harvey’s seminal work, a growing body of scholarship refers to a city which adopts such an urban governance restructuring in addressing urban economic challenges as the ‘entrepreneurial city’ (e.g. Roberts and Schein, 1993; Parkinson and Harding, 1995; Jessop, 1997, 1998a, 1998b; Hubbard and Hall, 1998). The entrepreneurial city, however, has transcended its global North borders to the global South (Wu, 2003; Zetter, 2004; Stackhouse, 2009).

In the global South, the neoliberal era reflected a shift from state developmentalist models to market-driven ones led predominantly by the World Bank and the IMF (Williamson, 1997, 2003; Zetter and Hamza, 2004). Recently, however, there is a resurgence of state developmentalism in parts of the global South, such as in contemporary Rwanda, Botswana, and Ethiopia (Booth and Golooba-Mutebi, 2011; Routley, 2014). In the last decades of the twentieth century, since the 1980s, neoliberalism was extended to most of sub-Saharan African countries through the implementation of structural adjustment programmes (SAP) promoted by the IMF and the World Bank (Dasgupta, 1998). The SAPs involved an economic stabilisation package and restructuring of national economies (Zetter and Hamza, 2004) that decidedly changed the economic structure of most sub-Saharan African countries.

Though African cities have not been left out of the neoliberal transformations, systemic challenges persist, which tend to constrain the full pursuit of pro-growth form of urban governance (Brillantes and Moscare, 2002; Zetter, 2004; Zetter and Hamza, 2004; Bryceson, 2014). One such constraint is the non-autonomous nature of city governments who are still subservient to national governments (Ayee, 2008, 2012; Ahwoi, 2010). As a result, city governments may be bedeviled by some of the challenges that tend to confront national governments, including weak and inefficient bureaucracy. Amongst others, this study attempt to explore some of the challenges that face a non-autonomous African city, like Accra, in its governance transformation to a pro-growth, or in the words of Harvey (1989b) entrepreneurial, one as well as to question the extent to which a non-autonomous African city may be understood as an entrepreneurial city.

Further, another reason cities and governments adopt neoliberal policies is to create appealing images of specific city locations to attract the middle and the creative class to enhance consumption and thereby shore up local economies (Harvey, 1989b; Florida, 2002; Knox and McCarthy, 2012). Such rationalisations tend to link the neoliberal or the entrepreneurial city with the standards of ‘global cities’. Global cities, in addition to being command and control centers, hosting international economic hubs in finance, insurance, and legal services (Sassen, 2000, 2005), are also outposts for display of urban infrastructure projects, such as new office complexes, resorts, parks, gated communities, shopping malls, etc. that tend to enhance consumption. Inasmuch as these developments enhance and maximise the economic (exchange) value of urban lands (Savini and Aalbers, 2016), they are consciously and deftly created such that they come to embody modern images of cities (Knox and McCarthy, 2012) and, concurrently, tend to redefine the concept of modernity as being associated with global cities (Robinson, 2002, 2006). Consequently, the notion that western-style shopping malls, steep in the ethos of middle-class consumerism, are the hallmarks of global cities thus becomes

grounded in the collective imagination of policymakers, planners and, indeed, ordinary citizens. As such, most cities (including those in emerging economies) aspire to become global cities, with attendant promotion of consumerist developments, such as new shopping malls (Harvey, 1989b:12; see also Robinson, 2002).

The concept of modernity tends to be built on the notion of 'being like the west' (Ferguson, 1999); on the basis that global North cities are seen as the 'have arrived cities' which Southern cities aspire to (Sheppard, 2014). In the era of globalisation, where all cities are ranked based on the extent of their embeddedness into the global economy, modernity seems to have become a common aspiration of all cities and, in fact, nations, particularly, in the global South. However, as I demonstrate in this study, the concept of modernity needs to be viewed from a different lens. That is, and particularly for sub-Saharan African cities, though the notion of modernity construed as 'being like the west' may be still pervasive, as Ferguson (1999) argues, modernity needs to be conceived on the basis reach of globalisation in cities or their embeddedness into global flows and networks (Amin and Graham, 1997; Robinson, 2002). In that case, there may be 'pockets of globalness' within such cities (Robinson, 2002). Robinson (2002:538/539) indicates that 'since globalisation... affects all cities in the world... to varying degrees, [a sub-Saharan African] city continues to perform... functions of national and regional centrality... and operates as a significant market (and production center) for goods and services from across the country and the world'. Such 'pockets of globalness' arise on account that they contain nodes where the ethos, methods and materialities of globalisation tend to converge. That is, at such nodes, one is easily confronted with evidence of a confluence of global forms and images. I argue that shopping malls represent one such node of convergence. To that extent, whilst Salcedo (2003) indicates that malls are 'artefacts of globalisation', I submit that malls also represents outposts where cities may showcase local artefacts (Cohen, 2004, 2006; Robinson, 2002) to the global community. In that sense, '[globalisation] does not always call

the shots', as Cohen (2006: 412)<sup>1</sup> notes. Local products and culture may challenge global ethos or, rather, use these 'nodes' to showcase itself to a global community. In that sense, this study explores how malls may be conceived as nodes where there is local-global interaction and/or contestations.

Nonetheless, globalisation does not produce only positive effects but negative ones too (Sundaram et al. 2011), in both the global North and South. It has led to loss of local production capacities and jobs, destruction of local cultures, and over-urbanisation, where its effect on cities in parts of the global South draw increasing numbers of population than economic and social amenities can cater for (ibid). It also leads to increased socio-economic challenges as the state pulls back on provision of public and social amenities (ActionAid, 2010). Yet, city governments, and indeed national governments, continue to pursue neoliberal policies in cities to attract foreign investments (Grant and Nijman, 2002; Grant, 2009). Again, the push for FDI stems partly from dwindling state investments in urban development.

In sub-Saharan Africa, nations that undertook the neoliberal project experienced acute socio-economic challenges (Herbst, 1993; ActionAid, 2010). Urban dwellers, one of the hardest-hit groups, tended to adopt survival tactics such as building contacts and networks with other people in various sections of the Ghanaian society and beyond, exploring side-jobs to earn additional income whilst others migrated overseas to seek employment. Over time, such survival strategies by city citizens may produce positive outcomes for their various societies at various levels including, in particular, urban development. This study conceptualises strategies citizens adopt in mediating harsh conditions brought by neoliberal policies as amounting to accumulation of social capital (Bourdieu, 1984, 1986; Putnam, 1993, 1995; Knack and Keefer, 1997). The study thus looks at how cities may have benefitted from social capital accumulation

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<sup>1</sup> She cited Watson (1997)

by citizens and explores the motivations behind citizens who attempt to shape urban development through, among other things, their accumulated social capital.

Finally, following from the preceding discussion, the study attempts to construe malls' development as a local economic development (LED) process and hence explores the urban development initiatives by citizens within the LED thesis, especially through the wealth creation and poverty reduction binary. On that score, some practical and potential impact of the development within city localities are explored. Since LED is thought to be a bottom-up process, the study explores the role of actors, including public, local and diaspora middle class citizens as well as local chiefs in urban projects. Typically, LED has been construed as a process involving public, private and other voluntary actors (Bennington and Geddes, 1992). This, therefore, calls for investigating the role of actors such as local community chiefs who embody the traditional state in Africa, and whose role in LED has, in fact, been less explored. Using Accra's shopping malls therefore, this study attempts to bridge this gap in the LED literature on Africa, in general, and Ghana, in particular.

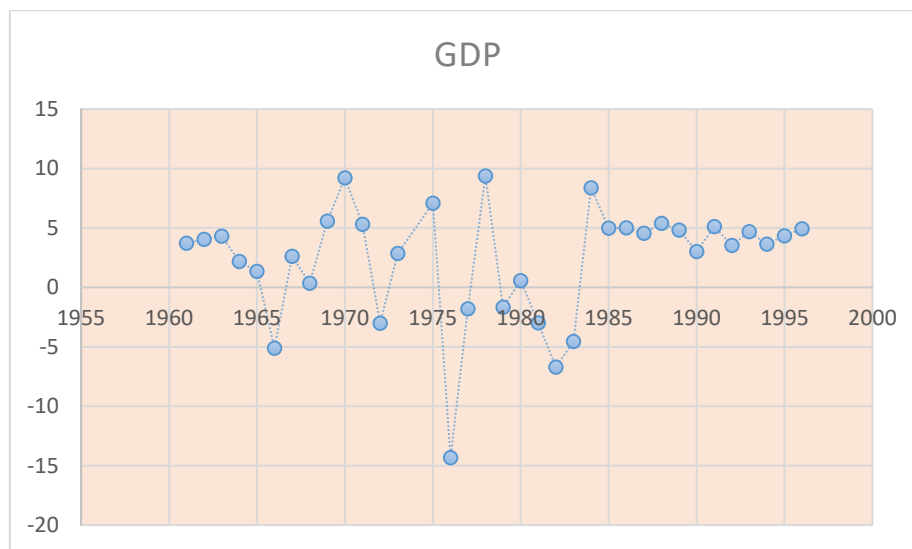
### ***Neoliberalising Ghana and Implications for Accra***

Ghana adopted the SAP in 1983, after decades of economic challenges. The economy recorded impressive growth rates in the ensuing years from 1984 (Table 1.1 and Fig. 1.1). The country's return to constitutional democracy in 1992 after decades of military dictatorship, a successful change in government to the opposition party in 2001, and the discovery of large quantities of oil in 2007, all cemented the economic gains and Ghana's international appeal to investments in several sectors of the economy.

**Table 1.1:** Ghana’s Real GDP Growth

Year	1983	1984	1988	1992	1996
GDP/%	-4.54785	+8.386862	+5.381699	+3.532426	+4.926395

(Source: Fosu, 1998)



**Figure 1. 1:** Ghana’s GDP Percentage Growth Rate (After Fosu, 1998)

Ghana’s capital city, Accra (Fig. 1.2), has been a prime beneficiary and, perhaps, also victim of the current wave of globalisation. Several scholars (Grant and Nijman, 2002; Grant, 2009, 2012; Hobden, 2014, 2015) have studied Accra’s transition into the global economy. Grant (2009) has referred to Accra as a ‘globalizing city’, while the Globalisation and World Cities (GaWC) research at Loughborough University listed it as a Gamma Minus<sup>2</sup> global city in 2010.

<sup>2</sup> Gamma minus global city means Accra is at a level where it is minimally important in global economic flows with regard to the presence of institutions such as banking/finance, legal, accountancy and other services (Sassen, 1991; GaWC, 1998) as well as participation of national economic actors in global markets (Sassen, 2005) .

One sector of Accra's economy that has seen increased capital flow is the retail industry, specifically shopping mall development, which symbolises to many citizens the expansion of modernity and western consumption patterns. Perhaps, the decade of the 2000 may go down in Accra's (and for that matter Ghana's) history as the decade where western-style shopping malls became entwined with the city's consumption history; in terms of their economic and spatial impacts, as part of the processes of Accra's urban transformation. From the first one developed in 2006, shopping malls quickly grew to seven in 2014, not counting other hypermarkets and supermarkets. Indeed by 2014, the city hosted West Africa's biggest mall: West Hills.



**Figure 1. 2:** Maps showing Africa, Ghana and Accra

(Source: <https://www.google.co.uk/search?q=maps+of+ghana> )

The proliferation of shopping malls in Accra seems to fit the 'Africa Rising' narrative that has become popular in the decades of the 2000s (MGI, 2010; BBC, 2013; Obeng-Odoom, 2015), when most African economies, including Ghana's, experienced increased economic growth. In this era, it is also thought that the middle class in Africa grew between 300 and 500 million (AfDB, 2012). Though this number is contested (cf. Rowden, 2013; Mwiti, 2015), it was

generally thought that the African middle class has been growing and that presented an important constituency for consumption to spur economic growth (UNDP, 2013; Melber, 2013, 2016).

Ghana's middle class<sup>3</sup> is reported to have grown from about 27 percent of the population in 2000 to over 46 percent in 2013 (Lentz, 2016; BBC, 2013). They have been argued to have spurred the growth of the western-style shopping malls and other real estates in Accra (Grant and Nijman, 2002; Grant, 2009, 2012; Hobden, 2014, 2015). Grant and Nijman (2002) and Grant (2009) outline in detail areas of the city that are largely seen as affluent and middle class. They demonstrate how transnational flows of capital have entered the city's real estate sectors leading to a rise in gated communities, hotels, office accommodation, and shopping malls in the more affluent eastern part of Accra. While their study is very insightful, focusing predominantly on the eastern side, these scholars fail to show how global flows affect other parts of the city including the western part, given that, especially, the city may be read as one spatial or monolithic entity (Fox and Goodfellow, 2016). Hobden's (2015) study of Accra Mall also shows how middle-class Ghanaians, through overseas travel experience, bring back cosmopolitan worldviews and explore global connections to undertake urban development projects, including malls. However, Hobden's (2015) study lacks adequate insights on the historical, cultural, and even political backgrounds behind the enterprising attitudes she finds amongst Ghanaians. For instance, it has been argued that the first decade of structural adjustment coincided with a decade of silence in political and general development discourse within the nation (Ankomah, 1987; Herbst, 1993). According to Ankomah (1987), there was a reign of terror in parts of the country, especially the cities. Local business elites and other pressure groups, such as the Trades Union Congress (TUC), among others, were cowed into silence on account that their open discourse were viewed with suspicion and inimical to the

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<sup>3</sup> This middle class is based on the AfDB (2012) definition of those with disposable income of more \$2/day

interest of the state or the neoliberal project (Herbst, 1993; Dzorgbor, 2001). These events, among others, had a debilitating effect on local businesses (Dzorgbor, 2001) and citizens' general entrepreneurial attitudes. Overall, these events ushered in the culture of silence (Ankomah, 1987). Yet, neoliberal reforms amount to giving space for actors beyond the state, particularly the private sector (local and foreign citizens), to operate freely in the market to enhance economic growth (Harvey, 1989b, Jessop, 1998b; Bardhan, 2002; Grant and Nijman, 2002; Grant, 2009). Hence, this study attempts to understand the extent of citizens' involvement in mall development - if and how they were emboldened to become entrepreneurial.

Finally, despite economic growth for several decades, scholars have argued that Ghana has largely experienced a jobless growth (Aryeetey, 2005). Taking a broader view, this could be explained in globalisation terms. That is, mass produced goods from abroad have been distributed to far-flung markets, including sub-Saharan African countries (e.g. Ghana) that adopt neoliberal policies. Arising from that, local production capacities have been negatively impacted. Hence, local industries have either closed or are unable to become profitable. This has ultimately led to loss of jobs such that those who lose jobs explore opportunities in the informal sectors. As such, globalisation and liberalisation tend to increase the growth of the informal sector (Sundaram et al. 2011; Potts, 2012). Oteng-Ababio and Arthur (2015) highlight how the proliferation of informal economic activities are competing with the formal Accra Mall. They argue that informal dealers buy from the mall and resell to customers and frame this as 'continuity' of malls influence and survival in the Accra economic space (ibid: 160). However, they fail to show that malls may indeed adopt informal tactics (including for instance mode of employment and sales) to enhance their survival.

Yet, it is thought that to the extent that new investors are attracted, neoliberalism leads to job creation in new sectors (e.g. services), as the economy undergoes structural changes (Aryeetey,

2005; Aryeetey and Baah-Boateng, 2016). However, a study by ActionAid (2010) argues that the structural adjustment reforms in Ghana led to retrenchment of public sector workers, and reduced subsidies to the agricultural, health, and education sectors. These impacted negatively on overall job creation, skills acquisition, and hence societal welfare (ibid). Consequently, the unemployment rate continues to increase. One conclusion that may be drawn is that the new jobs created are fewer relative to job losses. But, how does this generalisation or the argument that neoliberalism in Ghana has produced little or no jobs specifically relate to the retail industry, i.e. the shopping malls? Among others, this study tries to understand these dynamics as part of Accra's urban transformation. It is in this context that this study explores the transformations that have taken place in Accra.

Neoliberal globalisation has ushered in the restructuring of urban governance, an increase in foreign direct investment, and an increase in people with middle class consumptive aspirations. Together, these may have contributed to the development of shopping malls, which have undetermined impacts on local economic development in the city and the labor market. From this background and gaps identified in the existing literature on Accra's urban transformation, I arrive at the following research aims and objectives, which are outlined in the next section. This is then followed by definition of key terms and finally an outline of how the thesis is organised.

## **1.2 Aims and Objectives of the Research**

The primary objective of the research is to investigate how urban governance transformation in neoliberal Accra may have led to shopping mall development and the consequent impact of malls on Accra's urban development, related to consumption and local economic development.

By using the case of two of Accra's malls (Accra and West Hills Malls), therefore, the study seeks to examine the inter-relationship among the political and economic changes brought by neoliberal globalisation, shopping mall development and urban development in Ghana. By extension therefore, the study seeks to understand whether Accra can be understood as an entrepreneurial/competitive city. The study has four aims:

- i) To understand how (neoliberal) urban governance reforms affect urban development and whether they were significant for the development of shopping malls.*

Stemming from Brenner and Theodore's (2002) 'actually existing neoliberalism', philosophically, the concept of governance is fundamental to neoliberalism. Hence, entrepreneurial (or pro-growth) urban governance is a logical response to neoliberal reforms in cities, in particular, and urban development, in general. Under neoliberalism, therefore, it is axiomatic that urban governance undergoes transformation which involves creating space for other non-state actors to participate (Harvey, 1989b). Among others, this is done through various regulatory and institutional changes which have concurrent and/or consequence spatial implications for the urban (Tickel and Peck, 2002; Peck, 2004). An important regulatory tool here is the need for decentralisation of political, administrative and financial functions from the national to the sub-national levels, with the view to make the local state more autonomous to pursue policies and projects that grow the urban economies at the local levels (Bardhan, 2002). With decentralisation also, it is anticipated that there will be increased participation of local people in urban decision and policy making, resulting in equitable urban development (Owusu, 2015). I therefore investigate how various regulatory and governance instruments enacted in Ghana in the neoliberal era have tended to make Accra an entrepreneurial city. I try

to understand whether Accra's shopping malls have been conceived as part of the pursuit of urban entrepreneurialism.

- ii) To find out who were the key actors (both local and foreign, state and non-state) in mall development and what factors informed their decision-making process; and what role, if any, did the various levels of government in Accra play in mall development*

Here, I am interested in knowing who the principal actors of the shopping malls are, i.e. the investors, both local and foreign. I am also interested in knowing other actors, both state and non-state, if any, and the various roles both public and private actors have played in the malls' development. I intend to understand their motives and motivation for these development. I am particularly interested in the sort of alliances/coalition they developed to succeed. Harvey (1989b) has pointed to the resort to coalition formation by actors in the restructuring of urban governance. Yet, other networks beyond (pure) coalitions have been noticed to be useful in achieving urban outcomes (Knack and Keefer, 1997; Pattillo, 2007). As such, I attempt to understand, as well, the various (social) networks actors might have relied on to realise their vision.

- iii) To understand how shopping malls affect consumption patterns in Accra, and also how the city's spatialities have been affected by, and in turn, affect the shopping malls, in terms of their economic viability.*

Under neoliberalism, it is thought that economic austerity ensues and as such one of the visions attendant to the pursuit of urban entrepreneurialism is to increase consumption in the city to enhance economic growth. The strategies adopted here have included creating salubrious images of cities in specific locations and attracting and growing the creative and the middle

class (Harvey, 1989b, Florida, 2002; Knox and McCarthy, 2012). My intention here is to understand how malls have tended to shape consumption tendencies in the city and how they, in turn, have been impacted by consumption patterns especially in relation to their spatial locations across the city. It is known that Accra is socio-spatially differentiated (Grant, 2009, 2012; Quayson, 2014). I, therefore, attempt to understand the extent to which such socio-economic and spatial differentiation impact the viability of the malls and what strategies mall developers/operators adopt to enhance consumption and consequently the viability of the malls.

*iv) To examine the local economic impact of shopping malls on Accra, particularly on its labor market, in terms of job creation as well as the type of labor employed, and the effects on workers' welfare and wealth creation.*

Policymakers adopt urban governance restructuring from the point of view of its overall positive impact on local economies (Rachmawati, 2016) and to side-step neoliberal austerity. As such, projects such as convention centres, resorts, shopping malls, etc. may be developed as part of the processes of urban entrepreneurialism (Harvey, 1989b; Roberts and Schein, 1993; Knox and McCarthy, 2012). However, such pursuits are shaped by realities of local conditions; particularly the people (i.e. social actors: local government officials, investors-local/foreign, operators, land owners, customers, mall staff, etc.) who are impacted by reforms. Therefore, the outcome of urban governance in addressing urban economic development issues could somewhat differ from what is envisaged under neoliberalism. This could be the case, especially, because, more often than not, private capitalists tend to act on their profit motives which tends to affect the welfare of the working class, making Harvey (1989b) see the entrepreneurial city as an extension of capitalist accumulation. Particularly in sub-Saharan Africa, the pursuit of neoliberal policies has come with such dualism of opportunities and challenges. The opportunities are seen in increased (national) economic growth, reduction in

poverty levels as well as growth in the middle class. This is on account of the increased foreign direct investments, on the one hand, leading to creation of new jobs, whilst, on the other, are associated with challenges, such as loss of local jobs. Potts (2012) also argues that foreign companies do not pay locals better salaries and, as such, poverty continues to persist in African cities. How do these perspectives relate to Accra's shopping malls developed in an era of increasing national economic growth? I attempt to investigate, therefore, how Accra's malls shape micro-economic issues related, in particular to labour. Beyond the labour markets, I intend to investigate the impact of the malls on their localities and frame these around the local economic development thesis.

In sum, these objectives will aid in my examination of how the contradictions of neoliberal policies in Ghana play out through the lens of shopping malls as spaces of urban economic development and transformation.

### **1.3 Definition of Terms**

In this study, there are some key words and terms that run throughout. Given that various meanings may be ascribed to various words and phrases in academic circles, in general, and the social sciences, in particular, it is important to offer a brief discussion on the meaning of these terms as used in the thesis. These include globalisation, neoliberalism, neoliberalisation, urban governance, urban entrepreneurialism and social capital.

On this basis, it is equally important to highlight that this study is situated within the sub-discipline of urban geography, a discipline concerned about the study of urban settlements and how political, social, economic and physical development processes condition the urban environment and which tend to favor the use of structuralist and behavioural approaches to their analysis (Knox and McCarthy, 2012). According to Knox and McCarthy (2012:7/8)

structural approach to urban analysis draws from political economic, social and development theories whilst behavioural approach draws on social psychology and social philosophy theories. Structuralist approach takes a broader view of how urban groups' decision-making and actions are shaped by broader macro-economic, macro-social and macro-political forces, e.g. globalisation and neoliberalism, beyond immediate reach (ibid).

Robertson (1995) posits that globalisation has been part of world development history since the dawn of civilisation when human explorations began leading to socio-economic relationships between differently-situated cultures. As such, globalisation is not a new phenomenon. Yet, it has been argued that it is a slippery term and not easy to define (Peck and Tickell, 2003). This may be partly because, according to Jameson and Miyoshi (1998:xi), globalisation as a concept 'falls outside the confines of established academic disciplines'. Hence, it can mean many things to different people (Jameson and Miyoshi, 1998).

Since the last decades of the twentieth century, however, globalisation and neoliberalism tend to be elided, merged and have been used interchangeably on account that both dwell on a resort to free market and competitive logics (Peck and Tickell, 2003:163). Kotz (2002) argues that they are seen as two sides of the same coin. Globalisation has to do with the notion of a growing borderless world within which market and competitive logics predominate (Peck and Tickell, 2003). Neoliberalism, on the other hand, according to Kotz (2002:64),

is both a body of economic theory and a policy stance. Neoliberal theory claims that a largely unregulated capitalist system (a free market economy) not only embodies the ideal of free individual choices but also achieves optimum economic performance with respect to efficiency, economic growth, technical progress, and distributional justice. The state is assigned a very limited economic role: defining property rights, enforcing contracts, and regulating money supply. State intervention to correct market failures is viewed with suspicion, on the grounds that such intervention is likely to create more problems than it solves.

Peck (2004: 394) also argues that ‘as an economic discourse, neoliberalism seeks to establish market deference as a necessary (pre)condition, attempting to re-naturalise - and therefore insulate from... politics – those economic relations that Keynesian and development economics so fatefully politicised’. So, Peck and Tickle (2003:163) invite us to think about neoliberalism as a ‘network of interconnections and flows’.

For the purpose of this study, therefore, neoliberalism means resort to free market policies in the economic organisation attendant to urban management and human social behavior on belief that neoliberalism is more rational and, perhaps, more effective due to its reliance on competition and removal of regressive (public) welfare policies. Yet, the caveat here, from the point of view of Brenner and Theodore (2005:102), is that neoliberal projects are deeply contradictory in relation to their social and economic development outcomes, and could indeed result in market failures, governance failure or, even, state failure. This thus leads to the conclusion that the envisaged/plan and the reality may diverge.

But, most scholars (Kotz, 2002; Peck, 2003, 2004; Peck and Tickell, 2002, 2003; Brenner and Theodore, 2002, 2005, Harvey, 2005, among others) agree that neoliberalism is not a condition or an event but rather an ongoing process. On that score, neoliberalisation is the process of neoliberalism or resorting to market and competitive logics, with a concurrence of shrinkage of state interventions in their operations (Brenner and Theodore, 2005:102).

This process of neoliberalisation comes along with structural transformations, including that of governance and, in urban settings, there is shift from urban government to urban governance (Harvey, 1989b, 2005; Pierre, 1999; Brenner and Theodore, 2002). Harvey (1989b) posits that the purpose of urban governance restructuring is to address economic development needs of cities. Within that understanding, cities whose political leadership take such mode of governance transformation in respect of particular urban development projects are thought to

become more entrepreneurial and such projects are referred to as urban entrepreneurial projects (Ward, 2010).

This study therefore construes the meaning of urban governance, within the confines of the neoliberal doctrine, as how urban government officials collaborate with other non-political actors to address urban development issues such as economic development, transportation, sanitation, among others. Resultantly, urban entrepreneurialism, for the purposes of this study, refers to the process in which (local) state and non-state actors undertake urban development projects through the urban entrepreneurial (or neoliberal) mode.

Finally, the concept of social capital, which has become of a subject of intense academic inquiry, is also slippery. According to McCall (2002:442) ‘social capital has become so diverse that no...[one] could claim... a comprehensive examination of the topic’. Similarly, Robison and Flora (2003:1187) argue that social capital is defined differently depending on the discipline of the scholars defining it and its intended application. In the sociological and community development literature, however, two key views frame the discussion on social capital, namely the Bourdieu view and the Putnam view (Baum and Ziersch, 2003) which this study finds relevant. Bourdieu (1986) identified 3 forms of capital, namely economic, cultural and social capital and that each of these capitals can be converted into another form. Economic capital refers to capital, in the Marx’s sense, (Siisiainen, 2000:11) while cultural capital refers to resources an individual accumulates through education, socialization, professional certification, among others (Allen and Anderson, 1994). Social capital, in the Bourdieu (1986:248) view, is the ‘aggregate of the actual or potential resources which are linked to the possession of a durable network of more or less institutionalised relationships of mutual acquaintance and recognition’. In the Bourdieu view, social capital, in essence, refers to the resources that an individual who becomes a member of a group benefits from. According to

Portes (1998), the Bourdieu (1986) social capital is predicated on two elements, namely, the social relationship itself and the amount and quality of the resources that accrue therefrom. All the forms of capital, according to Bourdieu (1986), enhance an individual's position in society.

In the Putnam (1995:2) view, 'social capital refers features of social organization such as networks, norms and social trust that facilitate coordination and cooperation for mutual benefit'. According to Siisiainen (2000) the Putnamian social capital concept also has three components, namely, moral obligations and norms, social values (e.g. trust) and social networks (e.g. voluntary associations). As such, social capital 'is a measure of the level of trust in the stability and reciprocity of the supporting networks within communities' (McCall, 2002:440). Further explicating on Putnam (1995) and others (Narayan, 1999; Woolcock and Narayan, 2000), Baum and Ziersch (2003:321) indicate that there are multiples forms of social capital and that social networks, defined as ties between individuals and groups, can be in the form of bonding, bridging and linking. They argue that bonding social capital refers to horizontal tight knit ties between individuals or groups sharing similar demographic characteristic whilst bridging and linking social capital refer to ties that cut across different groups and communities. Linking actually refers to vertical connections that span differences of power (ibid:320). Similarly, bridging social capital cuts across social groups and involves heterogeneous demographics and, as such, it is good for 'getting ahead' whereas bonding is only good for 'getting by' (Leonard, 2004:930).

In this study, social capital is defined as the sum total of the social networks and connections between people and the benefits that accrue to an individual or a group as a result of such networks and which ultimately enhance the individual's or group's social reputation. In that sense, this study borrows from both the Bourdieu and the Putnam views.

## **1.4 Organisation of the Thesis and Chapter Summary**

The thesis is structured into nine chapters. This introductory chapter (one) is followed by the literature review, then the methodology, a contextual chapter and four empirical chapters and a conclusion. Each empirical chapter advances a conceptual understanding of urban transformation in a neoliberal Accra.

### ***Chapter Two: Conceptualising Urban Transformation in 21<sup>st</sup> Century African City***

This chapter reviews the literature on the entrepreneurial and competitive city that informs the conceptual framework used by this study. I show how the entrepreneurial city (based on David Harvey's seminal work on urban government restructuring, from 'managerialism to entrepreneurialism') with its original Northern focus works in a neoliberal city and how Harvey (1989b) argues the attempt at creating an entrepreneurial city becomes another extension of capitalists' accumulation to the detriment of the working class and, in some cases, equitable urban development. I also point out that the World Bank's competitive city provides a neoliberal policy framework for Harvey's entrepreneurial city. I show where the entrepreneurial city has been used as an analytical lens for studying global South cities and argue that it is relevant for studying Accra's urban transformation.

Following this, I discuss other relevant theoretical and empirical studies on urban transformation in a neoliberal age, focusing on urban governance for local economic development and middle-class consumption that appear to relate directly to an understanding of shopping mall development. This include the need for decentralisation, shopping malls as spaces of consumption and as projectors of western-modernity, the middle class and cosmopolitanism. The chapter ends on the outcome of the conceptual framework for the study which informs the methodology and the organisation of the empirical chapters.

### ***Chapter Three: Methodology and Research Design***

In Chapter Three, I discuss the research design, the case study methodology, the mixed methods approach adopted, my sources of data, sampling techniques, and the research ethics and data analysis. I discuss my justification for use of a mixed methods approach and show how reliability and validity of the results was ensured through triangulation and participant checking. The chapter also discusses a brief development history of the two malls, their spatial location within the city of Accra as well as the justification for their selection. A section within the chapter is devoted to describing the demographic characteristics of research participants. The chapter ends by outlining some limitations of the research.

### ***Chapter Four: Urban Change in Accra: From the Past to the Present***

This chapter provides an overview of the historical and contemporary socio-economic, cultural and political processes that have shaped Accra's urban spatial development since the colonial times, using empirical data collected from government and other primary sources as supporting evidence. The question asked is how does an understanding of historical socio-cultural events and political economic process help our understanding of Accra's contemporary urban spatial form and how these inform present-day urban development projects, such as shopping malls. The chapter contends that an understanding of such changes is helpful in examining the economic viability as well as the overall impact of the city's new shopping malls.

## ***Chapter Five: Accra's Urban Governance and Coalition Building in Shopping Mall***

### ***Development***

This chapter investigates the role of local governments and how changing regulatory regimes in Ghana have shaped urban governance. Divided into two parts, the first part investigates how liberalisation reforms have led to increasing transparency and freedom of expressions and their implications for shopping mall development and operation. It further explores how liberalisation may embolden citizens, making them more entrepreneurial in pursuing urban projects (e.g. malls). As such, the questions asked are: i) how has the role of local governments impacted on urban governance in Accra's (effective) urban development and what has been their role in the development of the malls?, and ii) where are key decisions, in relation to the city's urban and economic development made and how were the development of the malls impacted by such decisions? My key argument here is that partial decentralisation, as opposed to total decentralisation envisaged by neoliberalism, has led to the limited role of local governments in shopping mall development across the city. In the second section, I explore how citizens seize opportunities within the changing urban governance system to establish growth coalitions to develop malls. As such, I question how the team of investors came together to form shopping mall development coalition/alliance and their motivation as well as the expected benefits to the various stakeholders? Drawing on historical and cultural backgrounds, I argue that though citizens have always been entrepreneurial, the neoliberal era has given further impetus where citizens with or without entrepreneurial track record are able to connect with global capitalist to shape urban outcomes.

### ***Chapter Six: Accra's Shopping Malls as New Spaces of Urban Consumption***

In this chapter, I examine how malls, as new spaces of consumption, have been received by Accra's citizens, including, in particular the middle class, as evidenced in their various spatial locations. Additionally, I also question what has been the marketing and other public relations strategies and the narratives that have sought to endear malls to their clientele in the city and how citizens perceive malls in relation to the questions of modernity? I argue that mall operators have noticed that exclusive reliance on the middle class would not generate sufficient returns on their investment. Therefore, though targeting the middle class, they operate an open-door policy of attracting all social classes and sometimes adopt informal commercial tactics, such as side-walk table-top sales, to attract low income clientele. The chapter also discusses the multiple modes of use of the malls as spaces of consumption (e.g. recreation, shopping, eating, photography, etc.) by residents and how residents perceive them in relation to the globalisation of modernity. I argue that this, in part, reflects the benefits accruing from the pursuit of urban entrepreneurialism. The chapter ends with a discussion of the malls' modern appeal by unpacking how users conceive or understand modernity as represented by the new malls and Accra's urban transformation.

### ***Chapter Seven: Accra's Malls and Local Economic Development Impacts***

This chapter investigates the local economic impact of the malls. The question asked here is: What has been the economic impact of the malls (on wealth generation) in the city, in general, and, on the various localities within which they are embedded, in particular? It is divided into two parts. In the first part, which focuses on wealth creation, I discuss local content in mall development. I argue that local content in the malls is low and consequently, wealth generation impact of the malls to local citizens is expected to be low. This notwithstanding, I argue that

the potential for increased wealth generation may be considerable for which a local content policy/law will be needed to address. In the second part, I explore the practical and potential local economic development impact on the localities within which the malls are located. I investigate, in particular, how a decision arrived with local chiefs has impacted the economies of the malls' localities. Here, I do a comparative analysis of the two malls and argue that whereas West Hills Mall has a strong local economic impact on its immediate localities, Accra Mall's is diffused over the entire city.

### ***Chapter Eight: Labour and Employment Impacts of Accra's Malls***

This chapter investigates the impact of the malls on labour and employment. It examines the effects of the jobs created on the citywide unemployment levels. It also discusses the extent to which the malls are providing enough secure jobs for city residents and the long-term prospects of workers in the malls. Two key questions are:

- What are the impact of the malls on labor and employment generation?
- Are the investments in shopping malls creating enough secure jobs for urban residents, particularly the low income group?

The chapter argues that the persistence of low salaries (which are attributable to factors such as macro-economic challenges, mode of appointment and government position, among others) constrain ability to save, create wealth and spur increased consumption; the *sine qua non* of economic development. It finally advocates for a need for local content policy or law to manage and regulate operation of shopping malls in the city and the country as a whole.

## ***Chapter Nine: Conclusions***

This chapter reviews the study's findings against the initial research questions within the conceptual and the theoretical framework. By reiterating the key findings and the conclusions drawn, the chapter discusses how the study contributes to the literature on city entrepreneurialism under neoliberalism, and to the debates about urban transformations in the cities of the global South. It ends with some policy recommendation (including for instance the need for a national local content policy on malls, formation of mall staffs' trades' union association, etc.) as a means of making the study's findings relevant to policymakers. Areas of possible future research are also highlighted.

### **Conclusion**

With the pace of increasing globalisation across the African continent with its attendant pursuit of neoliberal policies adopted by several states, an understanding of the impact of globalisation in various sectors such as retail industry cannot be over-emphasized. Yet, most importantly, the wider impact of globalisation-led retail development on general urban development in sub-Saharan African city is timely as most, if not all, governments seemed poised to pursue neoliberal policies. This study seeks to contribute to the literature on the urban impacts globalisation through the lens of shopping mall development. The next chapter reviews the literature within which the study is framed.

## CHAPTER TWO

# CONCEPTUALIZING URBAN TRANSFORMATION IN 21ST CENTURY AFRICAN CITY

### **Introduction**

This chapter sets out the conceptual framework within which this study is situated. To do so, the chapter draws on and reviews overlapping bodies of literature on the entrepreneurial city, consumption, shopping malls and modernity tracing their origins from the global North and their transferral via globalisation to the global South, generally, and Africa, specifically.

The entrepreneurial city theoretical frame provides the analytical lens through which the study is conducted. Generally, the chapter explores David Harvey's entrepreneurial city theory which helps to understand how a city becomes competitive in attracting investment capital into various sectors of its economy through a range of urban development strategies and policy initiatives. Among others, the strategies and policies must lead to increased consumption, a key catalyst for economic growth. However, advertently or inadvertently, the entrepreneurial city tends to become an extension of capitalism, in which pursuit of urban entrepreneurialism tends to enhance the profit motives of private capitalist to the detriment of the working class. As evidenced in its advocacy for city competitiveness through various policy documents and applications, the World Bank has universalised the entrepreneurial city in the global South (Zetter, 2004). By studying global South cities through the entrepreneurial city thesis, urban scholars have also played a role in its universalisation. The chapter thus argues that it is a relevant theoretical framework to conceptualise this study.

Additionally, the chapter reviews the literature on shopping malls and consumption within the context of a growing middle class and an urbanising Africa. Several studies (Hattingh et al., 2012; Fletcher, 2013; Lentz 2016; Melber, 2016) attest to Africa's rising middle class who, by

their consumption tendencies, are driving growth and have particularly become a target market during this era of globalisation. These have implications for the local economy and labor practices, as suggested by entrepreneurial city theorists. Moreover, under neoliberal austerity, the middle class may become enterprising and acquire cosmopolitan dispositions and worldview (Skrbis and Woodward, 2007) that could, among others, impact urban development.

Using these overlapping literature, I develop a conceptual framework for understanding shopping malls as part of Accra's urban transformation. The chapter is divided into four sections. The first explores the relevance of the entrepreneurial and competitive cities framework to the study, highlighting particularly the transformation from government to governance for urban economic transformation. The second section reviews the literature on consumption and urban systems, dwelling particularly on shopping malls as spaces of consumption and how consumption is theorised by scholars. The third section explores the literature on shopping malls as artefacts of global modernity and the African middle class as consumers of global modernity and a conceptual understanding of how middle class may be defined in the African context. To this end, the section also explores the literature on cosmopolitanism and argues that middle-class' cosmopolitan dispositions and visions have important implications for urban development in Africa. In the conclusion, I set out the conceptual framework to clarify how they inform the empirical chapters.

## **2.1 Neoliberalism and the Entrepreneurial City**

### **2.1.1 Theoretical Frame: Entrepreneurial and Competitive City Theory: Neoliberal Governance and Role of Public/Private Sector in Urban Change**

According to Harvey (1989b) since the decades of the 1970s through the 1980s, structural changes in the world economic system, specifically deindustrialisation in the global North,

economic recession and world oil crises of the 1970s have led to severe challenges in city economies on the grounds that the nation-state was unable to keep up with support in public investments in urban management. The period marked the beginning of the neo-liberal era with roll back of the welfare state (Peck and Tickell, 2002). As such, Harvey (1989b) suggests that city governments needed to become more entrepreneurial in attracting private capital as alternative. He indicates that there is ‘a strong consensus: that urban governance had to be much more innovative and entrepreneurial, willing to explore all innovative avenues through which to alleviate their distressed conditions and thereby secure a better future for their populations’ (ibid:4). That is, as economies of cities (and in fact nations) experience internal and external shocks, the need for strategic positioning to capture increased private capital to mediate economic difficulties is heightened. This, amongst others, amounted to creating a conducive environment to be attractive to the private sector. That way, the private sector could provide jobs to increase income and reduce poverty among city citizens as well as boost public revenue through increased consumption and taxation. As such, cities have become entangled in a competition to become more attractive or competitive. WBG (2015)<sup>4</sup> defines city competitiveness as the sum total of strategies and policies (activities and actions) that are adopted by city authorities and stakeholders to make a city a preferable investment destination to increase jobs and productivity, with the objective to increase income for the city’s citizens and thereby reduce poverty. Hence, the neo-liberal era dwells on competitiveness.

There are two periods that have been associated with making cities competitive; the period from 1970s through the 1990s and that from the 2000s onwards (Osterby, 2015). The first period, which coincides with rise of globalisation, is associated with urban governance re-

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<sup>4</sup> Harris (2007) indicates that so far there is no consensus on what a competitive city is and that the World Bank has taken pro-economic growth bias, market-led approach in determining a competitive city.

structuring whilst the second is associated with giving ‘culture, entertainment, consumption and urban amenities an important role in enhancing locations, as a means of withstanding the global competition among cities’ (Clark, 2004 cited in Osterby, 2015:10).

The concept of the competitive city may be credited to the World Bank’s pioneering policies, as seen in their policy papers on urban development. According to the Bank,

Efficient urban development requires an enabling environment for and within cities that permits firms and individuals to become productive or – in a world of liberalized and integrated markets – *competitive*. In **competitive cities** output, investment, employment, and trade respond dynamically to market opportunities. The basic conditions for competitiveness of cities are efficient markets... to ensure that the benefits of urban agglomeration are achieved (World Bank, 2000:48; emphasis original).

Despite this background, the idea of making cities competitive may not be attributed solely to the World Bank. Local and national politicians have, since the second half of the twentieth century, used a range of urban policy measures to re-invent urban economies in the midst of crises arising from deindustrialisation (Dannestam, 2004). Other stakeholders include investors and non-governmental actors who have acted in consort with political actors to effect urban change. Scholars in urban studies, sociology and geography have also played key roles in a pluralistic and incremental way. Harvey (1973, 1989b), Wallerstein (1979), Castells (1977), Friedman (1986), Logan and Molotch (1987), King (1990), Sassen (1991, 2000, 2005), Florida (2002) among others have made important contributions in various respects. Logan and Molotch (1987:50) have argued that ‘the city is a growth machine, one that can increase aggregate rent and trap related wealth for those in the right position to benefit’. Actors (including from public, private and voluntary sectors, etc.) who organise themselves to engineer and steer the ‘growth machine’ to, among others, ‘trap the wealth’ are referred to as urban coalition (Dzorgbor, 2001) whilst the process has been referred to as the ‘urban growth coalition’ thesis (Bennington and Geddes, 1992; Rodgers, 2009). Rodgers (2009) notes that the

‘urban growth coalition thesis’ theorised that the effect of urban economic growth on land values tends to unite a pluralistic group of actors (called growth machine) to compete for (mobile) investment capital. Within the coalition are the main and secondary actors. The main actors, referred to as ‘place entrepreneurs’ (ibid:9) include land and property owners, investors, developers and financiers. The secondary group include city government officials, media practitioners, academics, sports personalities, organised labour and retailers, among others (Rodgers, 2009). Despite its (early) influential nature in urban studies, Logan and Molotch’s (1987) ‘growth machine’ thesis was however criticised as being weak on methodological grounds, lacking universalism and poorly theorised (Rodgers, 2009:19) while it de-emphasized non-coalition members within the city who are invariably impacted by ‘urban growth’ policies.

In urban geography, David Harvey may be seen as the one who set the tone for the emergence of city *competitiveness* when he used the term *entrepreneurialism* in his treatise on urban government restructuring in the era of neoliberalism (Knox and McCarthy, 2012). He argue that ‘the shift from urban managerialism to some kind of entrepreneurialism remains a persistent and recurrent theme in the period since the 1970s’ (Harvey, 1989b:4) and the crises led to cities taking their destinies into their own hands. That meant a change in the structure of governance and distributive policies from the hitherto direct state control (Fordist-Keynesian) system to free market. He continues further (1989b:5) that:

[T]here is a general agreement... that... deindustrialisation, widespread and seemingly structural unemployment, fiscal austerity at both the national and local levels, all coupled with rising tide of neo-conservatism and much longer appeal... to market rationality and privatisation, provide a backdrop, to understanding why so many governments... have all taken a broadly similar direction.

Harvey suggests three propositions that characterise the restructuring from the managerial to the entrepreneurial approach, in essence, to make a city competitive or entrepreneurial. These include: i) Private-Public Partnerships (PPP): PPP becomes the driving force for local

economic development. He suggests that the city government collaborate with other sectors including private and non-governmental actors for city economic revitalisation in order to become competitive, arguing that ‘traditional local boosterism is integrated with use of local government powers... to attract external sources of funding, new direct investments, or new employment sources’ (1989b:7); ii) Speculation and risk taking: entrepreneurialism is associated with PPP because the private sector engages in speculative activities partly on account that the public sector bears most of the risks, and the iii) Political economy of place: that ‘entrepreneurialism focuses much more on the political economy of place rather than of territory’ (1989b:7). This, he explains, among others, to mean ‘economic projects’ that re-creates the image of the city in specific locations to encourage working, living and consumption in the city and such projects, he argues, ‘can have impacts either smaller or greater than the specific territory within which such projects happen to be located’ (ibid). As an example, he points out that the construction of cultural, entertainment, office and shopping centers in specific places within cities of Baltimore, Halifax, and Glasgow produced a salubrious effect that enhanced city image, conditions and overall urban development. However, since these projects may be speculative, the envisaged results may not be obtained as he noted in the case of a development in New York that fell short of such expectations but rather only enhanced the profit of the private developers. Building upon Harvey’s work, Graham (1995) and Hubbard and Hall (1998) argue that a city characterised by entrepreneurialism primarily uses political power to create and achieve growth of small firms, increase job avenues, and attract new investments; leading to expanded city revenue.

In the decades of the 2000s, other scholars have argued that cities need to attract talented and skilled people to help grow local economies. This amounts to creating aesthetic and cultural amenities in cities that appeal to such class of people. A key figure is Florida (2002) who, in *The Rise of the Creative Class*, demonstrates the role of talented people in remaking city

economies. Florida's (2002:232) work highlights how the co-location and co-evolution of (skilled) people, place and local economy lead to a vibrant city district, creating an effect he refers to as 'quality of place'. The overall effect of the 'quality of place' leads to increased production and consumption which positively impact city economies. Osterby (2015:10) notes that 'quality of place' is 'dependent on the physical and functional combination of buildings... the natural environment, diversity of people... and specific activities and events'.

The entrepreneurial city thesis however, has been developed based on western cities (Judd and Parkinson, 1990; Hubbard and Hall, 1998; Jessop, 1997, 1998a) and most studies have maintained and theorised mainly global North cities within the framework of entrepreneurial urbanism (e.g. Ward, 2003; 2010; Panebianco, 2005; Gillen, 2009). Yet, the idea of making cities competitive has always had a persistent and universal appeal in a globalising and urbanising world that shares, to a large degree, common social, economic and environmental problems. For instance, the crises of the 1970s affected not only developed countries but also developing countries (White and Whitney, 1992; Dasgupta, 1998; Zetter, 2004). It may, therefore, not be surprising that the World Bank opted for a nuanced version of the entrepreneurial city in its use of competitive city in its policy papers. However, the characteristics of the competitive cities are strongly underpinned by pro-market, neoliberal policies (Berg, 1999) which Harvey's treatise succinctly analyse.

Analysing how the crises of the 1970s affected global South cities, Zetter (2004) reveals that during the oil crises of 1973-74 and 1978-79, developing countries came under severe debt burdens. To help them deal with the debt crunch, the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and World Bank (WB) resorted to structural adjustment and lending (SAL) policies, which has been christened 'the Washington consensus' (Williamson, 1990). A debt-ridden developing country to receive IMF/WB bail out was mandated to adopt a set of inter-related programs,

during the era from the 1970s through the 1980s, which included: i) Economic stabilisation package, as the first stage; and ii) Restructuring of the national economy, as the second stage.

The first stage involved short term austerity measures to ensure macro-economic stability, fiscal and monetary policy reforms including debt rescheduling, debt service and tax reforms to ease balance of payment deficits, severe reduction in public expenditure as well as international and domestic trade liberalisation by removing foreign exchange controls. In the second phase, recipient countries were to adopt longer term measures to restructure their economies to increase productivity and efficiency. This included privatising state enterprises, adopting long term structural measures to liberalise trade, restructuring roles and relationships between private and public sectors in development and provision of services, among others (Dasgupta, 1998; Williamson, 1997, 2003; Zetter and Hamza, 2004). Once these policies were in place, the World Bank was able to set the tone for re-structuring urban environments of the global South in the decades of the 1990s. This subsequently opened up global South cities for foreign direct investments, principally from the global North. Zetter (2004:14) writes that:

In 1991, the World Bank set out the pivotal role for cities in its now landmark policy statement. This encapsulated... shift in urban-sector policymaking under conditions of market enablement... from the 1990s onwards, the urban agenda has been the market enablement agenda.

Against this background, some urban geographers (e.g. Kipfer and Keil, 2002) have studied Global North cities using competitive city analytical framework, whilst others (Davila, 2014) have studied Global South cities along the framework of neoliberalism and competitive cities. For instance, Davila's (2014) study, *'urban fragmentation, good governance and the emergence of the competitive city'* was focused on the city of Medellin, Columbia's second largest city. He shows how the city government had overcome, creatively, the city's violent image by recasting and attracting foreign capital to construct the city's metro-cable cars.

Medellin was awarded the ‘innovative city of the year 2013’, beating cities like New York City and Tel Aviv.

Furthermore, some scholars have also studied global South cities in Asia and elsewhere using the entrepreneurial city framework. For instance, Jessop and Sum (2001) analysed Hong Kong’s emerging inter-urban competition as being part of the wider narratives associated with the entrepreneurial city while Wu (2003) theorised Shanghai’s globalisation as a ‘socialist entrepreneurial city’. Stackhouse (2009) has also studied land use patterns in Pudahuel, a section of Santiago, Chile, and framed it around the entrepreneurial city concept. Still, others (e.g. McGuirk, 2004) have used both competitive city and entrepreneurial city concepts interchangeably in studying global North cities, leading Harrison (2007:311) to note that ‘the complex web of flows and processes spawned by globalising forces appear to have homogenised practices across an increasingly borderless world’.

In the context of sub-Saharan Africa, the literature that has analysed cities along the entrepreneurial city concepts mostly focus on South African cities (Devas and Rakodi, 1993; Didier et al., 2012). For example, Didier et al. (2012:931) studied private-public partnership adopted in the city improvement district (CID) of Johannesburg and Cape Town, concluding that ‘the CID can be considered as one of the tools that paved the way for the neoliberalisation of urban policies and practices’ in South Africa. Rogerson (1999) also studied place-marketing in local economic development in South Africa. Beyond South Africa, Wrag and Lim (2015) recently studied the attitudes of residents of Lusaka, Zambia, towards new master plans for the city and contextualised these imaginaries as being part of the neoliberal ideologies of urban entrepreneurialism. They note that a shrinkage of demand in the global North has led international property developers proposing African city plans, like Lusaka’s, that mimic Asian cities (Dubai or Shanghai) to pique the interest of Africa’s policymakers. They argue that

citizens view such imaginaries positively not so much because of their enhancement of city images, but more on the potential of such projects to produce for them greater 'access [to] livelihoods, basic services and transport in a rapidly growing city' (ibid:269).

With this background and looking further afield across the continent, it can be said that a number of African cities are adopting or have adopted measures that are associated with entrepreneurial cities. On that score, I argue that the entrepreneurial city offers me the theoretical basis to study the urban transformation of Accra; as occasioned by the proliferation of shopping malls since 2000. Additionally, focusing on shopping malls in Accra also help better understand the underlying reasons for citizens' acceptance or otherwise of malls in the city.

### ***Challenges with the Entrepreneurial/Competitive City and an Alternative Strategy***

Harvey's (1989b) treatise could be summed up this way: in the quest to mediate economic difficulties, public officials must attract private sector capital. This, amongst others, amounts to creating a conducive environment. That way, jobs could be provided, income increased, poverty reduced and city revenue improved, etc. As such, officials may perhaps act with altruistic motive. Yet, since capital is more mobile, it means cities become tied up in pursuit of competitiveness, and some of these competitions become self-destructive to cities.

Also, becoming competitive may mean, in essence, bearing much of the risks of investments, providing incentives, etc. not just to attract capital but to keep it in town. As a result, it turns out that, given the power of capital and its flow being 'a hegemonic force' (ibid:15), the entrepreneurial city itself tends to become an extension of capitalist accumulation, perhaps inadvertently on the part of public officials and advertently on the part of the private sector.

Resultantly, ‘redistribution of real income (better housing, education, healthcare, etc.)’ to other city population, especially the lower income bracket, tends to suffer (ibid:7).

Such rationalisation is based on two reasons. First, since capital is footloose, the policies undergirding urban entrepreneurialism especially in the light of the increasing competition among cities have tended to make capital a lot more mobile because investors are looking for cities that give more security, less risk, high return, etc. to investments. Once a city out-competes others, capital/investors fly to such cities and so cities are under-cutting each other in a kind of ‘race to the bottom’ (Fischel, 1982; Rodnik, 1997; Olney, 2013). In that case, city governments and planning officers continue to pursue regressive policies like increased subsidies to the private sector. This tends to limit investments in public amenities such as water, transportation, health and education, etc. As a result, the rich continue to get richer whilst the poor continue to get poorer (Harvey, 1989b). Second, these projects tend to be focused on specific locations. These locations may have little connection to the larger city such that large scale benefits, such as may be obtained in say a city-wide transportation system, is diminished. With little or no risk to the private sector, larger urban development may suffer. On that basis, whilst the investors may have their profit motives met, broader urban development issues such as (social) housing, improved labour markets, and skills training for the working class, among others tend to be neglected (Harvey, 1989b; Brueckner, 2000). Again, these projects may lead to appreciation of property values around the locality and ultimately lead to gentrification which could have a public backlash.

Finally, urban entrepreneurial projects create modern images of cities that tend to attract the middle class to enhance consumption. Harvey (1989b) indicates that though city citizens appreciate the role that nice city images have on their identities, such image ascriptions tend to mask the real issues such as the potential of such projects widening the income gap between private capitalists and the working class/citizens. This is a case of inequitable urban

development. In that sense, he argues, urban entrepreneurialism tend to project ‘image over substance’ (ibid:14).

Thus, overall, urban entrepreneurialism has both opportunities and challenges. This therefore calls to scrutiny the pursuit of entrepreneurial urbanism or city competitiveness by governments, which tends to be framed, among others, on poverty reduction, increasing income for citizens as well as revenue to the city, etc. as advocated by lending agencies such as the World Bank.

That said, it is noteworthy that given the capacity of urban entrepreneurialism to become another avenue for capitalist accumulation with its attendant socio-economic and ethical challenges, policymakers, development agencies and practitioners as well as scholars have continued to explore how urban localities could enhance their economic lot in the midst of increasing neoliberal globalisation and capital accumulation. A number of interventions have centered on the extant local economic development strategies which are seen as a veritable means by which local citizens can have a leverage from globalisation (Blakely, 1994; Gunder, 2009).

### **2.1.2 Urban Government to Urban Governance and Local Economic Development**

In the entrepreneurial city, Harvey (1989b:7) suggests there is an ‘institutional shift from *urban government* to *urban governance*’ (emphasis mine). Stone (1989, 2012) also notes that governance refers to the ‘power to act’ as opposed to ‘power over’ the city’s population. To achieve effective results in the urban context, Stone (2012) further notes that, it is important to move beyond who governs in the immediate sense and consider how actors collaborate or contest when collective decisions are made. According to Roberts and Schein (1993) the main thrust of governance is the ability of local political leaders to marshal local political resources,

liaise with diverse non-governmental actors to achieve set goals. Consequently, Parkinson and Harding (1995:66) note that the entrepreneurial city is ‘one where key interest groups in the public, private and voluntary sectors develop a commitment to realising a broadly consensual vision of urban development, devise appropriate structures for implementing this vision and mobilise both local and nonlocal resources to pursue it’. Thus, in the governmental arrangement, there is a transition from government to governance (McGuirk, 2004).

So firstly, whilst underscoring a shift from state-controlled managerialism to market-led urban policy making, this reveals the importance of urban governance as a major fulcrum, or rallying point, for urban development or the privileging of market-oriented, market-dependent and pro-economic growth policies over public-led, welfare and distributive policies in urban management (Swyngedouw et al 2002; Osterby, 2015). Within this framing, there is tacit understanding local government actors in the entrepreneurial city enjoy a degree of autonomy, such that they can act without much recourse to national political actors. That is, there is decentralisation of administrative, political and financial functions from the national level to the local level (Rondinelli, 1990). Through decentralisation, local and regional development can thus be equitably achieved (Bardhan, 2002).

Decentralisation, therefore, is a major part of neoliberal reforms (Owusu, 2015) where local governments benefit from increased capacity building in manpower and skills development, economic development, sanitation and environmental protection (Rachmawati, 2016) as well as revenue generation and budgeting (Colin, 2010). In the extant literature, decentralisation may be a de-concentration, devolution or delegation. De-concentration, the weakest form of decentralisation, is where responsibilities at the central government level are shifted to the sub-national or local level whilst devolution is where decision-making, management and other responsibilities for services including some opportunity to raise some revenue are devolved to sub-national authorities. Delegation, the highest form of decentralisation, is where decision-

making for political, administrative, and financial functions are transferred to the local/sub-national levels such that the sub-national governments are more autonomous (Rondinelli, 1990; Bardhan, 2002; UN, 2008). Yet, typically in most developing countries, especially, the challenge of resource constraints and wide disparities across regions are such that local governments continue to rely on central governments for revenue and other logistics. Additionally, governmental bureaucracy itself has potential of making both national and local governments less proactive (Feiock and Kim, 2000). As such, even with decentralisation local governments may be less proactive.

Borrowing from ‘regime theory’, Hamilton (2002) notes that in situations where the local government is found to be weak or less proactive, nongovernmental and private sector actors which are able to build collaborations with the local governments establish ‘coalitions’ to address urban development issues. In other instances, even in advanced countries, according to Beauregard et al. (1992), market-led neoliberal economic strategies in cities have involved public-private sector arrangements involving the central state and private sectors, effectively subordinating the role of the local government in such local economic development.

However, whilst in some global South cities like Latin America (e.g. Medellin, Colombia) and Asia (e.g. Hong Kong) decentralisation is effective, in several others, notably sub-Saharan Africa, government is still top down where most local governments are not autonomous (Ayee, 2008). As such, economic development decisions have been dictated largely by national level political actors whose immediate focus is not at the local level. Additionally, national politics are overly bureaucratic such that local economic development results are less effective (Jones, 1997; Rachmawati, 2016). There are also challenges at the local government levels in the areas of technical skills and manpower, logistics and low revenue/tax base, infrastructure and amenities, among others.

The question that arises then is to what extent urban entrepreneurialism could be achieved in the context where the local government is not autonomous? This will be a major theoretical point of departure for my study which aims is to investigate how significant urban development outcomes have been achieved in shopping mall development when city government is not autonomous. This is to contribute to the literature on global South cities.

Secondly, the study investigates how shopping mall development may be conceived as a local economic development process. Local economic development is a key attribute of city competitiveness (WBG, 2015). According to Gunder (2009) local economic development involves creating an entrepreneurial philosophy that leads to poverty alleviation and increase wealth. Rodriguez-Pose and Tijmstra (2009) uses the pro-poor/pro-growth binary where ‘pro-poor’ is understood as a process involved in poverty reduction in city localities and ‘pro-growth’ relates to enhancing wealth creation for citizens. This typically requires leadership from the local government (Harvey, 1989b; Rachmawati, 2016). However, it has been noted that local economic development requires a need for flexibility and ability to transitions between objectives and activities of both the key actors and the economic development process itself (Blakely, 1989; Rachmawati, 2016). To that end, local economic development can be initiated, financed and managed, not only by local government practitioners but, by private actors/financiers who have access to capital (Bennington and Geddes, 1992). Such actors need to show a commitment to collaborate with other stakeholders including city government officials and land owners. In that vein, city government officials play a more subservient role in the economic development program. In this study, one of my foci is to understand the role the city government played in the development of shopping malls leading to revitalising local economies.

Revitalising local economies rely on: i) New businesses (created by both local and foreigners), ii) Increased job outlets, iii) Increased production, and iv) Consumption; leading to increased

income for the citizenry (Harvey, 1989b; Florida, 2002; WBG, 2015). Economic development objectives must ensure improvement of overall social welfare of the local population (Jessop, 1997) and contribute to increased city revenue (WBG, 2015). In the shift to entrepreneurialism, Harvey (1989b) points to the need for city governments to explore various possibilities in alleviating economic distress in their cities.

The maxim that globalisation is to think global while acting local (Hubbard and Hall, 1998; Doel and Hubbard, 2002) means attracting global capital to improve local economic conditions and reducing poverty. This may be judged by the number of new jobs created, how people's economic aspirations are met in terms of wages (i.e. welfare), new consumption tendencies, proportion of investments owned by local people and organisations as well as tax revenue generated for the city (WBG, 2015).

Yet, it is also necessary to point out that in developing world contexts local economic development has produced varying results. In Latin America, there has been a reasonable degree of success (Davila, 2014, Stackhouse, 2009) while in Asia and Africa, there are systemic challenges in India (Pradeep, 2005), Indonesia (Rachmawati, 2016), Philippines (Brillantes and Moscare, 2002), Kenya (Akama and Kieti, 2007; Mohajan, 2013), Ghana (Mensah et al. 2017), and South Africa (Oranje and Voges, 2014).

Rachmawati (2016) indicates that the notion that decentralisation causes effective local economic development, especially in developing countries, is a contested one. For instance, in several global South cities, even where jobs are created they may not meet the aspirations of the working class (Gooptu, 2009) leading some scholars (Zetter and Hamza, 2004; Bryceson, 2014) to note that the blanket pursuit of market enablement policies by the World Bank (2009), as outlined in its World Development Report [WDR, 2009] (using the same approach in both developed and developing countries), have produced unintended results in, especially sub-

Saharan African cities largely due to policies that neglected the history and peculiarities of the (African) cities. Davila (2014:476) also indicates that the structural reforms created exponential levels of unemployment and informality in sub-Saharan Africa than in Latin America. Potts (2012) point out that in most sub-Saharan African countries, foreign businesses pay very low salaries to staff such that sustained consumption leading to higher quality of life gets curtailed in several African cities.

In Ghana, there is a longstanding disquiet over the fate of Ghanaian workers under neoliberalism as documented by several scholars (Konadu-Agyemang, 2000; Songsore and McGranahan, 2000; Songsore, 2003; Aryeetey, 2005). Aryeetey (2005) has indicated that in the first place the much-touted job creation potential attendant to increased foreign direct investment (FDI) is over-hyped. He argues that there is only little linear association between the total FDI flows (between 1980 and 1990) and employment. Additionally, FDIs have rather led to a decline of formal jobs; both in the public and private sectors since 1990s. This is contrary to reports from the Ghana Investment Promotion Centre (GIPC) that impact of FDI flows on job growth have been very positive. However, citing Gorg and Strobl (2002), he argues that there is some positive effect of FDIs on technology transfer (Aryeetey, 2005: 19/20). Yet this skill/technology transfer is with respect to high level manpower instead of the low-skilled employees.

Within a context of increased liberalisation, Ghana's economy has been one of the best performers in Africa in the decade of 2001-2011, and in 2011, at more than 12 percent rate, it was the world's fastest growing economy. Narratives of poverty reduction and improved living conditions are usually associated with growing economies (WBG, 2015). Yet, how 'improved' has the Ghanaian workers' condition being in the cities' retail sector remains largely unexplored.

In the recent case of Accra's shopping malls, no study has been done on labour, a key component of local economic development. This study, therefore, seizes the opportunity to contribute to the scholarship on labour in local economic development in the entrepreneurial city through the lens of shopping malls, in a sub-Saharan African context. More broadly, also, on local economic development, the study investigates new jobs created, revenues generated to the city, and the extent of local business participation in the malls. The study also considers how malls have shaped (and, in turn, being shaped by) urban consumption.

## **2.2 Consumption and Urban System: Shopping Malls as Spaces of Consumption**

Consumption assumes an important part of urban development because it is thought to spur economic growth and development. It does so by spurring production of goods. Consumption is also key to survival within the urban space economy. This level of basic consumption for survival derives from the anthropological/biological perspective and has been referred to as under-consumption. Frederick Engel made reference to this when he opined that 'under-consumption' in which consumption by the masses is restricted to only what is necessary for maintenance and reproduction is not new (O'Donnell, 2012). This type is based on needs, determined by instinct and as such based on what is barely necessary (Stobart et al., 2007). At the same time, consumption can assume an ostentatious perspective where it is resorted to for sociological purposes or as a status symbol and been referred to, by the famous Austrian-American economist Thorstein Veblen, as conspicuous consumption (Zukin, 1998; Stobart et al., 2007). This type, based on desires and determined by self-gratification – what can be obtained beyond what is necessary (Stobart et al., 2007), has largely characterised capital accumulation and seen as leading to a consumer culture, especially in western societies (Dunn, 2008). Marcuse's (2009:187) argument that 'greed is not an aberration of the system; it is what makes the system go on' attest to the position that present-day capitalism-induced

consumption, which is more than basic, has superfluity at its core. The atavism and criticism induced by conspicuous consumption within sections of society and academia, is appropriately captured by Goss (1993:18) that ‘there persists a high-cultural disdain for conspicuous mass-consumption resulting from the legacy of a puritanical fear of the moral corruption inherent in commercialism and materialism’.

Evidently, however, both those born out of needs and desires, thrive on production and vice-versa. According to Mansvelt (2012), material goods and services are the result of extraction of resources which go through production (processing and manufacturing), then distribution to consumption. Patel (2014) has noted that urban systems work within spheres of production, consumption, exchange and politics. As such, production and consumption are *sine qua non* of the market. The process (of production, distribution and consumption) has critical implications for order, function and running of (urban) societies in both advanced and developing economies. For instance, Cohen (2004:236), seeing consumption as a public policy tool, asserts that in postwar America, rather than consumption being an exercise in personal indulgence, it was viewed as a civic responsibility designed to foster collective prosperity of the American public. In the same way, destabilisation, or more appropriately the ruffling, of political economic systems seen in some developing and advanced countries in the last two decades can be said to be an issue of consumption; including the struggle against capitalism (i.e. class struggle) is, in essence, a struggle in defense of consumption, collectively or individually, and by extension, production and (equitable) distribution (Castells, 1977; Susser, 2001). A case in point is the water wars of Bolivia in the late 1990s when water supply was privatised in the city of Cochambamba.

In essence, therefore, consumption tendencies have shaped social relationships, identity formation, and spatial production (Mansvelt, 2012) as well as resulting in the emergence of a virtual consumer space. The virtual space is seen in the form of advertisements encouraging

consumption; leading, overall, to the production of ‘an imagined matrix of spaces, practices, values and attitudes’ (Stobart et al. 2007:2) in the urban space. Consequently, shopping malls embody not only the spatial expressions of consumption but also social, cultural, imaginary, and virtual expressions.

The section is divided into two parts. In the first part, I look at the historical evolution of shopping malls as spaces of consumption focusing, among others, on their spatiality and the emergence of a consumer culture, from the global North and later transported to the South. In the second part, I look at the literature on how consumption is theorised, which this study draws on.

### **2.2.1 Historical Evolution of Shopping Malls as Spaces of Consumption**

Shopping malls represent important spatial expressions of consumption in the urban locale. Their invention has been credited to the US (Reikli, 2012). This section outlines the historical processes/events that led to the emergence of shopping malls.

There are different interpretations and meanings given to shopping malls (Reikli, 2012).

Shopping malls are form of shopping center which are typically fully enclosed. The International Council of Shopping Centers (ICSC, 2004) defines shopping center as:

A group of retail and other commercial establishments that is planned, developed, owned and managed as a single property, with on-site parking provided. The center’s size and orientation are generally determined by the market characteristics of the trade area served by the center. The three main physical configurations of shopping centers are malls, open-air centers, and hybrid centers.

Various accounts persist as to which country or city first developed a mall. There is the account that the 15<sup>th</sup> Century *Grand Bazaar* of Istanbul, Turkey is the ‘medieval precursor’ of shopping mall. There is also the 53,000m<sup>2</sup> *Gostiny Dvor* in the Russian city of St. Petersburg built in 1758; London’s Burlington Arcade built in 1819 as well as Milan’s (Italy) *Galleria Vittorio*

*Emanuelle II* built in 1870 (Reikli, 2012) all seen as important milestones in mall development. The terminology *mall*, however, is American and to that extent Minnesota's *Southdale Center* designed by Gruen and Associates architects in the city of Edina, Minnesota in 1956 in the US is seen as the landmark for the birth of (the fully enclosed) shopping malls, as known today (Salcedo, 2003; Reikli, 2012). Given the range of consumer goods they house, coupled with their aesthetic appeal, shopping malls have been described as the spatial and symbolic embodiment of a new consumer culture (Goss, 1993; Glennie, 1998) which emerged during the industrial revolution.

### ***Industrial Revolution, Urban systems and the Rise of Consumer Culture***

Through the 'magic of the mall' (Goss, 1993), consumption culture continues to evolve, not only in western societies but, around the globe. Yet, historically, it has been said that the industrial revolution, which began in the late eighteenth century and became grounded in the nineteenth marked the birth of a consumer society (Berg, 2005). It began in Britain and spread out to mainland Europe and America (Hall and Tewdwr-Jones, 2011; Knox and McCarthy, 2012).

During this time, new forms of energy and new technologies including discovery of machine tools led to increased production. Increased production made a range of goods and services ubiquitously available. Such dynamics heightened towns as centers for demand and supply, leading to economic growth (Stobart et al., 2007).

With sustained economic growth in cities, including a swell in disposable incomes of both the proletariat and bourgeois, towns became important centres of consumption. Following after industrialisation and commerce was growth of towns, in population and size (Hall and Tewdwr-Jones, 2011). With growing urbanisation, the working class, middle class, and society's elites,

including professionals, merchants and industrialists increased in numbers. Growing towns led to new building infrastructure, including warehouses and retail outposts for distribution of consumption goods (Glennie, 1998).

In tracing the spatial impacts attendant to consumption, Stobart *et al* (2007:9) talk about ‘moments of consumption’ which revolve around selecting and purchasing of goods, attending plays and promenading. These ‘moments of consumption’ are spatially articulated. The attendant spatial effects are produced and in turn molded by shopping practices. So, in Western Europe, the marketplace and later the shop came to represent spatial expressions of consumption.

The departmental store, selling a range of commodities, came to displace the domestic scale shop that had been the abode of family businesses specialised in selling a particular item and which had existed before the industrial revolution. The department stores were designed with attractive interior decorations to entice consumers (Logemann, 2009; Trevinal, 2013). Use of shopkeepers, who were well-dressed, displaying appropriate customer and shop attendance manners, became the order in most department stores (Stobart et al. 2007). The shop became not only a site for commerce, but also of ‘polite mannerism’ (Sweet, 2002) leading to conflation of (social) manners and consumption in the urban locale (Stobart et al. 2007).

Led first by society’s upper class, a new era of conspicuous consumption was ushered in. According to Simmel (1971), the middle class then followed by emulating consumption patterns of the upper class. Later the rest of the society followed. In no time, the urban space became a consumer space. Berg (2005) refers to this as ‘emulative consumption’, a concept I will draw on later in Chapter Six.

The home, together with its (family) occupants, obviously became key for displaying conspicuous consumption due to the range of consumer goods that became part of the home,

especially of the ‘middling sorts’ (Shammas, 1990; Glennie, 1998; Stobart et al. 2007). New house forms reflected the range and usage of new consumption patterns (Glennie, 1998) that were steep in luxury. Consumption here transcends the basic (based on needs) to conspicuous (based on desire).

The pattern of consumption in Europe, according to Miles and Paddison (1998), was later mimicked in America by the *nouveaux riche*, during America’s economic boom, especially occasioned by American industrialisation of the late nineteenth and twentieth century, leading Thorstein Veblen to criticise the American society as copying from European lifestyle of ostentatious consumption (Stobart et al. 2007). Increased production arising from economic boom led to heightened consumption resulting in significant changes in the structure of western societies. A significant development in this era was scientific management of labour, which came to be known as Taylorism in Europe and later Fordism in America, during the first decades of the twentieth century. The gains were in increasing productivity of labour, mass production and subsequently increasing purchasing power of the working class. According to Anon (2017):

When Henry Ford, automobile manufacturer, uniformly raised the wages of his workers to \$5 a day and limited them to 8-hour work days in 1914, he was giving concrete recognition that his workers were also consumers who were in need of time and money to participate in the new world of commercial goods and leisure activities.

Such developments, in actuality, marked significant changes to the geography of consumption, including conflating needs and desires, thereby giving unprecedented impetus to consumption. The marketplace significantly expanded as a result (Miles and Paddison, 1998). In addition to the department stores, large supermarkets started establishing presence around the turn of the twentieth century in America (Feinberg and Meoli, 1991) and elsewhere in Europe (Jessen and Langer, 2012). Other unconventional markets sprang up, including car boot sales. As such distance between factory-produced goods and citizens was significantly reduced (Stobart et al.

2007). This gave people increased freedom to associate closely with goods and services. Within the milieu of ‘proximity and association’, the working class or more appropriately the citizenry, came to believe that they had a claim on goods and services (Breen, 1993). Thus, it was only a matter of time before the whole citizenry converted into the new consumer class.

The large supermarkets introduced new culture of self-service in shops as well as providing space for car parking which were either absent or inadequate in the department stores leading to efficiency and convenience for shoppers (Bailey, 2007). In Woodward’s (1999) review of Kim Humphrey’s (1998) *Shelf Life: Supermarkets and the Changing cultures of Consumption* he comments that “the pioneering shoppers in early, large supermarkets were set free to serve themselves and experience shopping as a form of leisure”.

By the 1930s groups of shops in cities in Dayton-Ohio, California, Baltimore-Maryland and Kansas City-Missouri have been strung together with car parking provisions (Feinberg and Meoli, 1991). These began to pave the way for the emergence of the shopping mall as we know today. By the 1950s several shopping centers had opened across the US, after Vitor Gruen’s Southdale Center, and in Europe. According to the Dayton Corporation, who were Southdale’s developers, the intention was to ‘create a completely new concept’ that incorporated both big anchor tenants and small retailer shops (Salcedo, 2003:1085) within a special ambience of a modulated temperature, humidity, ease of access, security, safety and convenience. Feinberg and Meoli (1991:426) indicate that Victor Gruen revealed that his concept was to offer ‘a community center where people would converge for shopping, cultural activity and social interaction’. Due to the success of Southdale Center, Victor Gruen got other commissions while other developers replicated the new form such that by mid-1970s it had become the dominant prototype where over 800 of such enclosed malls had been developed, including, *Harundale*

*Mall* in Maryland (in 1958), *Big Town Mall* in Texas (in 1959) and *Chris-Town Mall* in Arizona (in 1961).

Overall, in the US, “by 1960 there were 4500 malls accounting for 14 percent of retail sales [and] by 1975 there were 16,400 shopping centers accounting for 33 percent of retail sales. In 1987, there were 30,000 malls accounting for over 50 percent of all retail dollars spent (about 676 billion dollars, 8 percent of the labour force, and 13 percent of... gross national product) (Feinberg and Meoli, 1991:427<sup>5</sup>). In ‘1992 the U.S. Census Bureau counted already 38,000 shopping centers, with a sales area of 4,586 billion square feet and a turnover of 717 billion dollars’ (Reikli, 2012:23).

The story is the same in Europe where the retailing industry expanded significantly after World War II [WWII] (Jessen and Langer, 2012). Other western societies like Canada, Australia and New Zealand followed the new American mall prototype (Voyce, 2003, 2006; Bailey, 2007). Logemann (2009:57/58) argues that in western societies, malls became the central focus for mass consumption with important differing spatial implications, on both sides of the Atlantic, after WWII. Thus, a new culture of consumption was born through the ‘magic of the mall’ (Goss 1993) which is actually ‘dreamlike spaces’ created by capitalists to seduce consumers to spend money (Goss, 1993, 1999). Indeed, a reading of Firat and Venkatesh (1995), Goss (1993), Logemann (2009) and Trevinal (2013) leads to the conclusion that malls are ‘a glamorous locus of consumption’. For instance, Firat and Venkatesh (1995:251) argue, on the basis of Debord (1983), that ‘[i]n the... [postmodern] market, ordinary gestures and the activities... are prepackaged as glamorous and seductive; commodities come complete with preordained roles and lifestyles’ while Trevinal (2013:32) suggests that ‘the shopping mall is a locus for particular experiences, a territory that... proposes social and symbolic dimensions.

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<sup>5</sup> They cited Keinfeld, 1986; Turchiana, 1990

In Goss' (1993) *'Magic of the Mall'*, he argues '[t]he [mall's] floorplan exerts strong centripetal tendencies, and the shopper is drawn further into the fantasy by tantalizing glimpses of attractive... features,... into the colorful and well-lit wonderland of consumption'.

Some innovations that have come into new mall configurations, like in the *Mall of America*, include incorporating conferences and leisure facilities, hotel facilities and even residential apartments (Staeheli and Mitchel, 2006). The traditional malls, therefore, are currently undergoing evolution, and could more appropriately be referred to as mixed-use facilities.

### ***Global Consumer Culture and Shopping Malls in the Global South***

Through colonialism, European lifestyles, including consumption patterns and settlement forms, were spread around the globe (King, 1995) when Europeans acquired colonies abroad, in Asia, Latin America and Africa in the latter part of the nineteenth century onwards (Knox and McCarthy, 2012). Amongst others, European colonialist intended to 'civilise' and modernise these colonies through urban planning (Simon, 1992; Ferguson, 1999; Knox and McCarthy, 2012), religion and education (Wellington, 2010) and consumption lifestyles (Oteng-Ababio and Arthur, 2015). The urban areas, especially capital cities, several of which were established by colonialists, were prime sites for articulation of European lifestyles. In their desire to consume home goods, colonialists established shops and department stores in colonial cities (Oteng-Ababio and Arthur, 2015).

Aided by the US, collective consumption continued to assume expanded imagination in most parts of the world throughout the twentieth century. Woodard (2012:380) relates that:

Amid the triumphant consumerism buoying the U.S. economy in the mid-1920s, the General Motors Corporation (GM, the world's second-largest advertiser) and the J. Walter Thompson Company (JWT, Madison Avenue's top-billing advertising agency) reached an agreement under which the advertising agency would open an office in every country in which GM maintained assembly operations... As a result, JWT... brought what has been called 'the central

institution of consumer culture' to audiences in Africa, Asia, continental Europe, and South America.

After WW II, when the US increasingly assumed lead role in world affairs, Euro-American culture, including the American-style shopping mall, has transcended the boundaries of western societies since its emergence. After colonialism, post-colonial rulers from the 1950s onwards in most parts of the global South attempted to reinvent local identities through experimentation or re-creation of new socio-economic and geo-political relationships; in attempt to industrialise, modernise and develop their newly independent nation-states (Lofchie, 1997).

In the last decades of the twentieth century, referred to as the postmodern era (Harvey, 1989a), the rise of globalisation led to the era where transnational investors', predominantly from western societies, operations intensified. The era led to decentralisation of production from the global North to parts of the global South leading to increased economic growth and consequently growth of shopping malls in the global South. Salcedo (2003)<sup>6</sup> notes that malls have become 'artefacts of globalisation' as they have been carried across the globe. As such, malls have sprung up in several global South cities from Asia to Latin America to Africa during this era. Indeed, the global South now houses both the world's biggest mall by total area (Dubai Mall) and by gross leasable area (South China Mall).

One reason for the proliferation of malls in the South is that in the global North malls have reached their peak and a number of malls have been closed or are struggling economically. Ferreira and Paiva (2017) indicate that in both America and Europe profitability of malls have come under challenge: by 2005 more than 3800 enclosed malls in the US had closed. The global South thus remains a key investment destination for the investors.

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<sup>6</sup> He cited de Mattos (1999)

Nonetheless, the postmodern era has been associated with a new consumption culture by Baudrillard (2002) who argues that consumption is the semiotic code of postmodernity. Al (2017) notes that emerging new mall configurations around the world, and for that matter malls generally, attest to the increasing growth of consumerism and evolving taste around the world.

### **2.2.2 Consumption Theories**

It may be an understatement to suggest that studies on consumption have been longstanding. Equally, the theoretical analyses on consumption, which are nothing short of a palimpsest, have produced a mosaic of views on the subject. Various scholars (Featherstone, 1990; Dunn, 2008; Stobart et. al., 2007) have attempted to trace the evolution of analytical frameworks adopted in consumption studies. Despite overlaps, analytical frameworks identifiable include historical and causal analysis, interpretive, cultural, semiotic and gender analysis, ethnographic studies as well as instrumental discourse analysis.

Historical and causal analysis predominantly focus on consumption in the medieval and renaissance period (Benjamin, 1983; Berg, 2005). Others such as Max Weber, Thorstein Veblen and Werner Sombart have also taken an *interpretive* slant in which consumption is described as an experience and the transformative power behind capitalism (Stobart et al. 2007). Thorstein Veblen has indicated, in reference to American capitalism, certain goods and services have become ‘markers of social prestige and status’ (Miles and Paddison, 1998:817) that have spurred on increased production. Then, again, the coupling of consumer goods (i.e. material objects) and the consumer (i.e. human subject), in which material goods are seen as or reflect individual or group identities are viewed as the underpinnings for consumer preferences/tastes, what is called [Pierre Bourdieu’s (1984)] *cultural analysis*. McCracken (1990:xi), for instance, states that ‘in western developed societies, culture is profoundly

connected to and dependent upon consumption... without consumer goods, certain acts of self-definition and collective definition in this culture would be impossible'. More recently, the post-modernist, Jean Baudrillard's simultaneous decoupling (of material and subject) and coupling (of material and signs), popularly called *semiotic analysis* has posited that 'consumption entails active manipulation of signs' (Featherstone, 1990:7). These may be viewed as the main analytical methods. Yet others (Vickery, 1998; Finn, 2000) have previously relied on what is seen as *gender analysis* in consumption studies whilst *ethnographic methods* have increasingly gained traction lately, having been adopted by scholars including Stillerman and Salcedo (2012) and Miller (2014). Previously, also, Goss (1993) pointed to the need for *instrumental discourse analysis* which uses the medium of design as the mode of analysis especially with respect to spaces of consumption like shopping malls in which the consumer 'interpret[ing] the design, aberrantly or intentionally, appropriate[s] meaning for her/his own purposes' (ibid:19). To further explicate the theoretical positions:

First, Douglas and Isherwood (1980) have argued that there are three levels of consumption that corresponds to the primary, secondary and tertiary levels of production. The first level, corresponding to the primary production and where most low-income earners are restricted, is the 'staple set'. As one's income level increases, the individual is given to the consumption of 'technology set' goods (including leisure) of the secondary production and finally the 'information set' which corresponds to the tertiary level of production. Douglas and Isherwood's (1980) gradations resonates with Veblen's theory of trickle down consumption in which a social group emulates the consumption patterns of those higher as their income level increase in a growing capitalist economy. These gradations help to understand consumption as social markers; that is, might be a determinant as to what social status an individual belongs based on his/her level of consumption. As persuasive as this classification may be in helping

our understanding of consumption, it is argued that it is stereotypical and acutely deterministic on the grounds that: i) it neglects goods (e.g. vintage wines) that may be purchased not for the purpose of ‘physical consumption’ but as a status symbol to be dreamt or talked about by visitors though it may belong to the staple set, what Featherstone (1990:8) refers to as ‘symbolic consumption’; and ii) it tends to suggest that low income earners are deficient in the consumption of secondary and tertiary goods and services. Yet lately, advancements in technology, since the last decades of the twentieth through the twenty-first century, have somewhat conflated tertiary and secondary products’ consumption such that cheap smart phones make ready information (news, etc.) and entertainment (You-tube, Facebook, WhatsApp videos, etc.) available to low income people at a very low cost. Indeed, evidence suggests high penetration of mobile phones in many least developed countries, especially in sub-Saharan Africa (EY, 2014). As such, most low-income earners have become much more sophisticated than others might readily admit, to the extent that the lines between income groups based on categories of consumption products get increasingly blurred. As Featherstone (1990:11) has argued, in a capitalist society, the constant supply of new fashionably desirable goods or the usurpation of existing marker goods by lower groups tends to blur the social distinction existing in society. As a result, higher income people need to ‘re-invest in new informational goods to re-establish original social distance’ (ibid). In reference to the post-modern era, according to Miles and Paddison (1998), consumption conflates, rather than blurs, the forces of elitism and subalternism. They argue that ‘reality [...] is seen to implode in a postmodern world, in the sense that distinctions between high- and low-brow culture become obscured, as history, for instance, becomes [everyone’s] heritage and the museum a hands-on multi-media consumer experience’ (ibid:20).

Additionally, new marketing techniques, adopted by capitalists in predominantly emerging economies, such as selling miniature versions of consumables (at a fraction of the cost for the whole), have led to increasing patronage of various goods and services around the globe. For instance, in sub-Saharan African countries, as in Nigeria, Nestle sells Milo and Nido in small sachets that increase affordability across a large spectrum of income groups (Hattingh et al., 2012). Harvey (1989b:11) notes that arising from sensitivity to variations in production and consumption at various places, ‘multinational capital now has the power to organise its responses to highly localised variation in market taste through small batch and specialised production designed to satisfy local market niches’. Furthermore, according to McKinsey Global Institute (MGI, 2012:27), in developed nations, as people age, consumption of (health) services increases, as evidenced in increased healthcare budget. This is irrespective of the socio-economic class. Consequently, though consumption of services (so-called ‘technology and information sets’) increases with per capita income, this is far from being a general case, as the MGI evidence indicates. As such, it will be argued that a broad spectrum of consumers, irrespective of class status in both advanced and developing economies, approach consumer sites, such as shopping malls, to satisfy consumption, social, psychological and cultural needs and desires (Rosenbaum, 2005), making the use of socio-economic status as a proxy for consumption classification problematic.

Second, human needs and desires are seen as what led to emergence of the consumer societies (Stobart et al., 2007). Human beings convert natural resources around them to meet their physiological or survival needs. On the other hand, human beings have desires or wants to make them comfortable or meet certain image aspirations or psychological cravings. Material production, as such, arises out of a combination of both needs and desires. Dunn (2008:3) corroborates this assertion by stating that ‘consumption links exchange value and the

satisfaction of material need and want to the production of meaning, identity, and a sense of place and social membership'. Based on the Max Weber theorisation (Dunn, 2008), the interplay of or inter-relationship between consumption and production has led to the market logic of demand and supply within capital accumulation. Therefore, Dunn (2008) argues that consumers have become agents (of the market) who are unconsciously manipulated to serve the needs of capitalist's interests. That is, to spend money in consumption settings (Stillerman and Salcedo, 2012). Such perspective has been articulated by scholars, including Goss (1993) and Cohen (1996, 2004), who, in their analysis of US malls as spaces of consumption, view the consumer as being induced and at the mercy of the capitalism-led consumer culture. This viewpoint is quite useful in elucidating the almost omnipotent role of global capitalism in re-shaping or re-structuring local identities to conform to a homogenised global identity. Indeed, it has been argued that consumption can actually lead to convergence in which the global South may catch up with global North (Allen and Hamnett, 1995; Massey and Jess, 1995) not only in terms of economic progress but also in cultures of consumption, identity formation and worldviews. On the other hand, Salcedo and Stillerman (2012) posit that such analysis arises from the semiotic model. Relying on ethnographic field research in Santiago (Chile) malls, they argue that far from consumers being seduced, they act very rationally in a way that can defeat economic motives of mall developers given peculiar 'patterns of urbanisation, land use and transit planning' (ibid: :330) of particular cities; especially in the global South where a consumption outpost may be located.

Alternatively, Karl Marx rather saw consumption as a by-product of production. This viewpoint, though in tandem with the logic of the market, differs in the sense that it focuses on material production rather than the consumer to the extent that materials are produced not so much for people to consume but for the market. Thus, materials are there for their economic

(exchange) value as opposed to their social (use) value. As such, all actions and relationships in human society are subordinated to the logic of the market (Miles and Paddison, 1998). However, market logic as a driver of consumption is only part of the picture. Bourdieu's cultural analysis goes a step further by binding consumption to an individual's position in society. For him, consumption is a 'field<sup>7</sup> of power relations' (Allen and Anderson, 1994:70) within which there is a contestation for 'capital' to distinguish oneself from others in society (Bourdieu, 1984). Once an individual has accumulated this capital, his position (what he called habitus), i.e. influence, in the society is accentuated. As such individuals engage in consumption to increase their capital and to enhance their social status or lifestyle. Consumption then becomes a process of self-identification. As Allen and Anderson, (1994:71) point out, 'one's... origin is not, therefore, a structural straight jacket that determines with certainty one's actions. But... there is a certain probability that persons exposed to similar life experiences will display similar lifestyles and behaviours'. Bourdieu identifies forms of capital, the foremost ones of which are economic and cultural. Economic capital is made up of economic wealth/resources while 'cultural capital includes: 1) cultural knowledge, skills, experiences, abilities; 2) linguistic competence, modes of speech, vocabulary; and 3) modes of thought, factual knowledge, world views, etc. ... that [are]... generally acquired unreflectively via socialization in one's family, social class, neighborhood, sub-culture, etc.' (Allen and Anderson, 1994:70). It is clear from Bourdieu's theorisation that consumption can indeed lead to convergence where lower-placed members of society can catch up with the higher-placed members by means of cultural capital accumulation. However, his theory has been criticized as suffering from ambiguity (Honeth, 1990). For instance, it is not clear where the line is drawn between consumption as a socialising process (of building one's cultural capital) and where it

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<sup>7</sup> In Bourdieu's theorization, fields are sites of struggle where people contest to appropriate capital to enhance their state/position (habitus) within the field. Examples of field include nation-state, religious organization, professional/academic disciplines, etc.

stops to become a lifestyle-signifier (thereby extracting recognition from others within the field) if consumption is viewed as a 'field', like a profession. He had also neglected the role of advertising as a key instrument of postmodern consumption for which Baudrillard (1988/2002) sought to fill in with the famous semiotic analysis.

Third, Baudrillard's (1988/2002) semiotics lends some credence to the cultural analysis in that it takes a view that consumption is a social marker but departed from the Marxist view because 'the productivist metaphor in Marxism was inappropriate for comprehending the status of commodities in the post-war era' (Poster, 2002). It is qualitatively different from the Bourdieu view on account that it does not see consumption as a field of power. He claims that consumption has more to do with its symbolic significance than needs and desires of people and that, indeed, consumption is the semiotic code of postmodernity (Stobart et al. 2007:1). That is, materials have intrinsic values or act as signifiers on their own accord. To that extent, Baudrillard's position is that people consume goods and services not so much because of needs and desires but for the fact that materials have intrinsic values that help people project their own identity (Dunn, 2008). In consuming materials, the intrinsic meaning such materials hold get transferred or imputed onto the consumer. Within this understanding, there has emerged a new pattern of consumption that is not contingent upon increased material productivity or its corollary spatial dimensions but rather the result of a cultural production (Stobart et al. 2007:12) or that consumption is a characteristic of the times rather than its spatiality. Consequently, consumption becomes a fashion good that keeps shifting with the changing times. But Harvey<sup>8</sup> (1989a:26) indicates that 'fashion... combines attraction of differentiation and change with... similarity and conformity'. In other words, consumption is in a state of being re-made through time.

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<sup>8</sup> He referenced Georg Simmel

Despite its enormous impact on consumption studies, the coupling of materials and semiotics have been criticised as downplaying if not entirely neglecting the processual and spatial issues attendant to consumption (Stobart et al. 2007). This is on the basis that processual and spatial effects of consumption could indeed be a marker to identity formation. Gregson and Crew (2003) have argued that mode of acquiring consumption goods and circumstances surrounding such acquisition can also impact identity formation in societies. For instance, a person may choose to visit a plush mall for a particular commodity when s/he could have obtained it at a cheaper or same price at a local/community market close by. As Stobart et al (2007:13) note ‘what people do when they visit shops and malls is just as important in producing and reproducing their identity as the goods which they might (or might not) buy’. Yet, in arguing for materials as signifiers within the Baudrillard (1988) view, as opposed to the importance of their spatiality, it will also be argued that the semiotic analysis has in fact turned on its heels; within the era of explosive growth of advertising, which has become an intrinsic appendage to the current consumer culture. Indeed, in most emerging economies the spatiality of such new consumption culture (i.e. advertising symbols/furniture) in the urban space are as important as the materials/commodities and shops themselves. It is not uncommon to see huge free-standing advertising billboards in global South cities displaying new products’ arrival in shops, inviting consumers to consume. Goss (1993) also moved the debate slightly higher by including the spatial logic attendant to semiotics by indicating that mall designers create symbolic landscape or ‘ideological dreamland spaces’ that entice consumption and hence sustain malls as spaces of consumption. In other words, the malls themselves perhaps become ‘advertising boards’ and together attract consumers. On the contrary, according to Stillerman and Salcedo (2012) such semiotic analysis is not supported by data on consumer practice and interpretation of malls and emanates from a view of malls as impenetrable structures immune to changes through human usage. They argue that in Santiago (Chile) malls, far from customers being seduced to perform

the bidding of mall designers' and developers' aspirations, they behave very rationally in ways that suit their own needs and aspirations including relaxation and social needs that do not necessarily entail commercial benefits to mall operators.

Finally, it has been argued that post-modern consumption in the neoliberal society may offer hope for 're-territorialisation of the urban space' (Miles and Paddison, 1998:822) by citizens disenfranchised by globalisation. Territoriality, here, is defined as 'the tendency for particular groups of people to attempt to establish some form of control, dominance, or exclusivity within a localised area' (Knox and McCarthy, 2012:294). This is because consumption has become the new hegemonic order in both the global North and South. Given the extent to which global capital has become unhinged since the last decades of the twentieth century, urban space has come under attack (Kohn, 2004; Voyce, 2006) as urban space increasingly get commercialised. Hence, as a hegemonic order, through the agency of consumption citizens can seek to recapture some lost grounds by not necessarily catering to the commercial interests of capitalist. Such posture can be viewed as citizen adopting neoliberal lifestyle for reterritorialization'. Dunn (2008:4), noting the ambivalence space that post-modern consumption occupies, posits that 'consumption is a complex, multivalent phenomenon, a manifestation of economic, social, cultural, historical and psychological processes and effects. As a result, consumption practices occupy a tension between commercially-based commodification and subjectivity-based satisfaction and meanings'. In terms of spatial occupation with reference to consumption related to shopping malls, as I show in Chapter Six and Seven, this could be read as a balancing act between the economic (exchange) and the social (use) value.

## **2.3 Malls, Modernity, and Cosmopolitanism: The African Middle Class as Consumer of Global Modernity**

### **2.3.1 Malls as Artefacts and Creators of Images of Global Modernity and Cosmopolitanism**

Usage of the term modern ‘originated from fifth century Latin word *modernus* which was then employed to distinguish the Christian present from the pagan past’ (Lu, 2011:4). The term gained widespread usage in the seventeenth and eighteenth century Western Europe and America to signify ‘something of the moment’ when scientific and technological advancement produced significant changes in economic, social and political spheres (Lu, 2011; Ogborn, 2012; Strohmayer, 2014). The term became an accepted concept (as *modernism*) in the arts, literature, architecture, and popular culture in the late nineteenth century to signify progress, rationality, technological advancement, civility and order (Harvey, 1989a; Lu, 2011). Ogborn (2012:480) argues that it involves ‘the application of scientific processes to human and natural world... [and]... the transformation of spaces, places and landscapes’. Thus, for the Global North, modernity means something of the moment or a radical break from the past (Ogborn, 2012; Willis, 2012) though it may also refer to an era (Lu, 2011). Radical break from the past has come with, among others, ‘creative destruction’ involving obliteration of existing culture, built forms and bedrock of society itself (Berman, 1982; Ogborn, 2012), especially in cities and urban areas which have become prime sites for articulation of modernisation tendencies. It has, concurrently, involved replacement with (or establishment of) new cultures, built forms and lifestyles including new patterns of consumption and spaces of consumption (Stobart et al, 2007; Besnier, 2004; Willis, 2012). For instance, the modernisation of Paris in the 1850s entailed significant destruction of (old) buildings and social life and consequent replacement with entirely new ones (Ogborn, 2012).

For the rest of the world, especially the global South, modernity may be construed as becoming like or to look like the west (Ferguson, 1999; Erkip, 2003; Ogborn, 2012). Resultantly, pursuits of modernisation to become as developed as the global North have been key policy objectives of a number of countries of the global South after decolonisation (Ogborn, 2012). Relying on various theories including developmentalism (Prebisch, 1950), modernisation (Rostow, 1960) and dependency thesis (Gunder-Frank, 1967), postcolonial governments attempted to modernise their economies through the pursuit of policies like import substitution industrialisation, etc. (Willis, 2012).

Presently, it has been argued that the rise of globalisation and neoliberalism since the last decades of the twentieth century are rooted in the idea of propagating modernisation around the world (Brenner and Theodore, 2002; Peck and Tickell, 2002). Indeed, globalisation and neoliberalism are the vehicles being used to pursue the modernisation agenda through flow of people, information technology and capital (Sassen, 1991, 2005). These network of flows (Castells, 1996) have led to the universalisation and institutionalisation of modernity in the urban space. Lately, the more modern a city is, the more global or world city it is thought to be (Sassen, 2005; Sheppard, 2014).

In a globalising world, such flows have led to the production of cosmopolitan identities on account that, as Bernier (2004:9) notes, modernity is ‘a reasonably unified phenomenon’. For instance, international travels, for leisure or otherwise, by the middle and upper class expose people to varied forms of modernity, including the consumption of new and diverse global culture. As people travel, consumption and shopping become integral to their sojourning (Cohen, 1996). Moreover, advances in information technology and the media have brought western modernity closer to all classes of people across the globe. Lower income groups

through media/internet exposures tend to be influenced by images and lifestyles of modernity. Given that malls represent the symbolic and spatial expressions of consumption, it follows that modernity, malls and consumption are closely associated (Stobart et al., 2007; Dunn, 2008).

On capital flow, recent increase in foreign investments in shopping malls in the global South (Singh and Tripathi, 2012; Fantoni et al. 2014; Elliot and Schipani, 2015) have produced new attractive built forms, that give distinctive and attractive city image (Harvey, 1989b; Florida, 2002). These new malls are fitted with international brand commodities that accentuate the notion of malls as ‘artefacts of globalisation’ (Salcedo, 2003). Exotic commodities and international brands invoke feelings and lifestyles of cosmopolitanism and modernity. Thus, Erkip (2003:1074) ‘suggest[s] that the mall satisfies modernity requirements of various segments of... urban society’. On that score, coupled with a desire to improve their local economies, some leaders in the global South actually seek to attract mall investors. Again, this is partly on account that malls, as artefacts of global modernity, are seen as intrinsic to global cities, which most global South cities aspire to become (Lofchie, 1997; Sheppard, 2014). Sheppard (2014) notes that ‘global cities’ represent the image of modernity that post-colonial cities aspire to attain. Modernisation may thus cause some governments in the global South to attract foreign capital into mall development in order to transform city images and localities.

Beyond the place-driven and space-driven analysis applied to modernity, Strohmayer (2014:212) highlights the discursive field of analysis in which he references the role of political processes. Drawing from Habermas’ Bourgeoisie ‘public sphere’, he argues that the political process involves two main handles, namely, the realisation of individual freedoms and formation of social cohesion (ibid:217). Thus, modernity allows society’s privileged class the

freedom to meet in particular public spaces to engage in ‘democratic’ discourse that has ability to effect social change. In this vein, new (social) relations are formed.

Yet, Robinson (2006) argues that the notion of modernity construed as being like the west makes it a problematic concept to forge in urban studies given that non-western people are increasingly engaging critically with their own hybrid modernities. Patel (2014:37) has also posited that ‘the experiences of modernisation of the rest of the world are significantly different... [and as such]... this thesis cannot be accepted today’. Robinson therefore calls for a ‘comparative gesture’ (2011) with a ‘cosmopolitan approach’ (2002:532) in which there is a ‘...restructuring [of] the terrain on which different kinds of cities that are thought within urban studies could enhance the understanding of cities everywhere’ (ibid). It is precisely this call that this study, in part, responds; to help understand urban transformation in neoliberal Accra that has been penetrated by western-style shopping malls since year 2000. Robinson (2006:9) insists that ‘modern’ invokes the idea of change and relevance to the contemporary times. This is a universal human ideal. As such, ‘if being modern is to be contemporary, to embrace change and dynamism, then the condition of modernity is present in every changing society’ (ibid).

Given African cities’ long association with Europe as well as the adverse effects of globalisation on the continent (Sundaram et al., 2011), the concept of modernity attracts debate. In the Zambia copper belt towns, for instance, Ferguson (1999) indicates that the idea of modern meaning ‘to be like the west’ is widespread while in Nairobi, Kenya, per Spronk (2012), young professionals insist on modern African lifestyle that is respectful of African tradition rather than blindly copying Euro-American lifestyle. Robinson (2006:66) also suggests that ‘cities everywhere can be framed as modern, defined neither in hierarchical relation to others, nor in terms of their lack or deficiencies’.

Within these perspectives, this study explores what the notion of modernity means for Accra's citizens; including the middle class and the lower income class, in terms of how their lifestyles are being shaped by association with Accra's shopping malls.

### **2.3.2 The African Middle class and their Consumption Potential: Implications for Mall**

#### **Operators**

There has been much touting about Africa's growing middle class and the hope it offers based on the class' ability to spur growth by reason of their skill/expertise and consumption level (Hattingh et al., 2012). Tied to the recent wave of globalisation, there has been argument that the centre of gravity of the world's middle class has shifted from the global North to South, which is expected to house about 80 percent of the global middle class<sup>9</sup> by 2030. This group would account for about 70 percent of world consumption budget in 2030 (UNDP, 2013). The UNDP (2013:14) points out that 'continued expansion of the middle class is certain to have profound impact on world economy'.

Africa's share of global middle class is estimated between 300 and 500 million (AfDB, 2012; Melber, 2016) and has been touted as Africa's hope to drive economic growth (Hattingh et al., 2012; Fletcher, 2013). The World Bank posits that the middle-class accounts for over 60 percent of sub-Saharan Africa's economic growth (Wilson and Corkin, 2014). The consultancy firms McKinsey (2012) and Ernst and Young (2014) among other industry watchers have all paid glowing tribute to a growing middle-class Africa. Urbanisation and impressive GDP growth across Africa over the last 10 to 15 years have been the catapult to Africa's middle-class expansion (Fletcher, 2013). In the early 2000s, sub-Saharan Africa average GDP growth of 6.2 percent was higher than both Europe's average of 3 percent (Obeng-Odoom, 2015) and

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<sup>9</sup> In 2009, the global middle class totaled 1.845billion, projected to rise to 3.249billion and 4.884billion in 2020 and 2030 respectively (UNDP, 2013).

US's average of about 5.2 percent. Again, though relatively small<sup>10</sup> compared to global standards, the service<sup>11</sup> sector in Africa grew from 45.5 percent in 2001-2004 to 49 percent in 2009-2012. In real terms, this was about \$271 billion in 2012 (UNCTAD, 2015).

Yet, there are some who have called for moderation to the heightened level of optimism accorded sub-Saharan Africa's middle class on the basis that the 'real' middle class number is 18 million<sup>12</sup> (Mwiti, 2015) and overall purchasing power is low, estimated to account for a mere 2 percent of global consumption by 2030 (Melber, 2016) and they do not patronise local producers to spur local economic development (Schule, 2016). So, who is Africa's middle class and how are they defined? Alexander et al's (2013) work on middle class in Soweto revealed that the definition of middle class linked to upward mobility and self-respect produces reasonable ambiguity, at least in the African context.

To some degree, the terminology 'middle class' is an imported concept, not originally produced by Africans but part of a grand scheme 'for capitalists to invest and siphon resources from the continent' (Melber, 2016:8). Lentz (2016:19) argues that 'the popularity of the term... seems to be... a result of the appropriation of academic category by policymakers' and that 'how people categorise themselves influences the ways in which they experience their social locations, and... political action'.

Within academic discourse, there is no consensus on who actually is or belongs to the middle class. Lentz (2016:26) indicates the concept itself is a fussy one with no 'neat class divisions'. Usage of the term 'middle class' or its variant such as 'middling sorts' in Europe and America has been around since the eighteenth century (Glennie, 1998; Stobart et al. 2007) in which the

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<sup>10</sup> Africa's export share of global services trade is only 2.2%

<sup>11</sup> Sector includes tourism, telecommunications, retail, wholesale, hotels and restaurants, etc.

<sup>12</sup> This figure is based on the Swiss multinational financial firm, Credit Suisse's estimates which defines the middle class as one with income between \$50,000 and \$500,000 (US).

description had political economic and social stratification connotations, within a Marxist framing of class relations (Lentz; 2016).

In Africa, according to Lentz (2016) discussion of 'middle class' is credited to Peter Lloyd and Abner Cohen's work on Africa in the 1960s and Sierra Leone in the 1980s respectively. Lloyd, studying immediate post-colonial Africa social organisation preferred to use 'African elites' arguing that due to socio-cultural loyalties and homogeneity, class descriptions, as obtained in Europe based on Marxist understanding, were inappropriate for Africa (Lentz, 2016). According to Lentz (2016) Lloyd argued that the African elites were 'middle class' only in the sense that they occupied an intermediary role between colonial administrators and the African masses but, post colonialism, their role shifted to occupy leadership of their various independent countries. In the case of Abner Cohen, Lentz (2016:22) indicates he argues that in Sierra Leone, 'a growing Creole middle class' used education, culture and 'symbols of eliteness... [to bridge] the gap between the higher and lower sections of Creole society'. In each case, it is evident that both the 'functional elites'<sup>13</sup> (ibid:22) and the 'middle class' were well educated, relatively rich, exposed and upwardly mobile. Over time, as the elites became associated with corruption and mismanagement, people distanced themselves from the term.

Recently, with globalisation, development, and increased education the use of the term middle class has become more acceptable to those who formerly preferred to be referred to as African elites (Lentz, 2016). Different conceptual positions have been proposed for defining Africa's middle class. The perspectives have been based on consumption abilities, income levels or socio-cultural factors. Kharas (2010) argues it should be based on consumption levels while Ravallion (2009), using the World Bank's categorisation, argues that anybody who can spend between \$2 and \$13 (US) a day is a middle class. Southall (2016) posits that professionals and

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<sup>13</sup> The 'functional elites', who were the minority population, included the ruling class, the intelligentsia, and the top civil and public servants.

their socio-economic levels mark them out as middle class. Schule (2016) in her study of middle class in Dar es Salaam suggests that lifestyle and cultural tastes are markers for this middle class and Orji (2016) argues that Nigerian middle classes are educated urban dwellers, deeply rooted in the private sector and show capacity for communication and information sharing. From these perspectives the middle class are categorised by income levels, socio-cultural factors (education, profession, social status), consumption factors (lifestyle and tastes) as well as location factors (urban or rural dweller). Thus, Lietchy (2003:25) views the middle class as progenitors of a ‘new space’, i.e. sitting in the niche between local and global, tradition and modernity, low and high as well as old and new.

In any case, none of the definitions adequately produce a clear view of who a middle class is, objectively or subjectively. Ravallion (2009:17) agrees that his definition is problematic in that ‘the vulnerability of this new middle class to aggregate economic contraction is obvious’. In Ghana, according to Lentz (2016), the BBC organised a discussion on Ghana’s middle class at Accra Mall in 2013. When Martin Ravallion’s classification was announced, most attendees, bemused, retorted that their daily expenditure is in multiples of the amount but do not feel middle class. Indeed, per Hattingh et al. (2012:4), an estimated 55 percent of the population in Accra, have a disposable income of more than \$5000/year. While this statistic may be questionable especially given the large numbers of undocumented informal economic activities, it is arguable that large numbers of Accra’s population, including less educated informal sector operatives, have in excess of \$5000 disposable income.

In her transnational studies, Lentz (2016) documents several characteristics that may be associated with the new middle class in the global South for which this study finds useful. These include: individuals/families i) with reasonable education, ii) with regular means of income either from one or multiple sources but not through illegal/illicit means, iii) who engage in new consumption lifestyle, iv) who uphold democratic ideals of equality and freedom of

expressions, v) who uphold upward social mobility of the (nuclear) family; and vi) have a transnational/cosmopolitan experience or worldview. To this extent, in this study, reference to Africa's middle class refers to person(s) who exhibit(s) multiples of these characteristics including having education, with regular source of income, being an urban dweller, as well as upholding upward social mobility, among others.

That said, the growth of Africa's middle class has been recognised by some international businesses which are taking advantage to meet the demands of emerging middle-class Africans. Michael Lalor, the director of Ernst and Young's Africa Business Center in Johannesburg, is reported to have said that Africa's emerging middle class makes the region probably the fastest growing consumer class in the world (Fletcher, 2013). Mall investors are among such business groups seeking to take advantage of the middle-class growth (Fifield, 2011).

In Ghana, Anning-Dorson's (2013:136) study of Accra and A&C Malls indicates that 74 percent of those who visit the malls are tertiary education graduates whilst 14.6 and 6.4 percent have secondary and basic education respectively. His sample shows that several nationalities visit the malls: Ghanaians (71.3 percent), Americans/Europeans (10.3 percent), Asians (8.8 percent), other Africans (8.4 percent) and others (1.3 percent). Based on income levels (Table 2.1), among others, he concludes that 'those considered in [his] study had purchasing power and therefore visit the mall with the possibility of spending' (ibid:135).

Additionally, Oteng-Ababio and Arthur (2015) indicate that more than 91 percent of visitors to Accra Mall are urban dwellers (who live within Greater Accra Metropolitan Area [GAMA]), nearly 1 percent come from the rural districts of the Greater Accra Region (GAR) whilst about 5 and 3 percent respectively are from other Ghana regions and West African nations.

**Table 2. 1:** Income Level of A&C and Accra Mall Visitors in 2013

<b>Monthly Income Level of Mall visitors/GHC(\$)</b>	100-500 (\$50-\$250)	501-1000 (\$250.2-\$500)	1000+ (\$500+)	Unreported/Missing
<b>% Respondents</b>	32.8	26.9	22.9	17.4

(Modified After Anning-Dorson, 2013)

The data in Table 2.1 suggest that for developers/investors, the target is on those who have purchasing power. Data from GSS<sup>14</sup> (2014:136) indicates that 56.6 percent of residents of Greater Accra Region (GAR) have a monthly per capita expenditure of at least GHC528. The regional average is GHC406. The bulk of this expenditure is for food and non-food items (Table 2.2) which may go into shopping in malls.

**Table 2. 2:** Monthly Consumption Expenditure

<b>Region</b>	<b>Average Monthly Exp/ GHC</b>	<b>Percentage Share for Food items</b>	<b>Percentage Share for Non-food</b>	<b>Percentage Share for Housing</b>
Ghana	260	46.7	40.9	12.4
Greater Accra Region (GAR)	406	42.0	41.6	16.4
Greater Accra Metropolitan Area (GAMA)	420	41.7	41.6	16.7

(Adapted from GSS, 2014)

Although, as Anning-Dorson's (2013) study shows, middle class may be the majority in terms of those who visit the malls, nearly 60 percent of these majority middle class mall visitors earn less than \$6,000/annum (Table 2.1) which is consistent with the data from the GSS (2014). By the World Bank and Africa Development Bank (AfDB) classification, those who spend

<sup>14</sup> The GSS (2014) was based on Ghana Living standard survey (2005-2013). The exchange rate in 2013 was \$1=GHC2. Average for the nine year period was \$1= GHC1.3

between \$2 and \$20 a day, i.e. \$60-600/month (Fletcher, 2013; Wilson and Corkin, 2014), are Ghana's middle class. However, by western standards, this effectively belongs to the bottom of the ladder on the income levels; classified as poor. This level of consumption potential base for the malls reflects what Rowden's (2013) argues as amounting to a fragile middle class and may not offer the necessary returns for mall investors/operators in Ghana. Consequently, this study questions how malls are surviving or succeeding in Accra.

### **2.3.3 Cosmopolitanism, Modernity and Malls**

Robinson's (2002:532) 'cosmopolitan approach' is useful for this study because it hinges, in part, on openness to diversity as a means to understanding global South cities. However, her approach seems to bear on a latent oxymoron that invites reflection, especially as she built on "Clifford's (1997) 'discrepant cosmopolitanism' [-a means of de-localising cultures], instead of a universalising or homogenising cosmopolitan impulse". Whilst cosmopolitanism refers to universalising standards and acceptance of common values (Nussbaum, 1994), diversity, on the other hand, seems to eschew universal acceptance of common values. Yet, it needs to be underscored that universalism may not so much mean rejection of diversity but, as I argue later in Chapter Five, recognition of alternative modes of being, and perhaps, a recognition of 'actually existing' differences and the promise (of a unifying force) such differences hold in a search for common universal or unifying values. Indeed, Robinson (2002:532) posits that there is in fact 'diverse cosmopolitanism', though Holton (2002) argues that the concept of cosmopolitanism raises questions about coherence when being used as analytical tool. Szerszynski and Urry (2002), cited in Ward (2010:1178), argue that cosmopolitanism is 'an empty signifier' that 'needs to be filled with specific and often rather different content, in a number of different situated cultural worlds'.

From this background, Ward (2010) notes that one way of defining cosmopolitanism is how cities have been universalised and argues for ‘diversifying the empirical base’ underpinning the theorising of cosmopolitanism by including varieties within and beyond the global North. Consequently, he conceptualises cosmopolitanism in terms of, among others, ‘diversity and varieties of strategies’ (ibid:1179).

Skrbis et al. (2004:116) view ‘cosmopolitanism as a progressive humanistic ideal which continues to be embedded in the structural conditions of modernity’. In this view, cosmopolitanism is inter-twined with modernity and globalisation (Skrbis and Woodward, 2007). Skrbis and Woodward (2007) and other scholars (e.g. Beck, 2002) note that the cosmopolitan agenda embodies attempts to shift towards a culture of global openness, cultural cross-pollination, hybridity and fluidity. As such, individuals may become cosmopolitan, not only through travels but from within national societies due, partly, to flow of information, media, goods and services.

As such, people have become imbued with, what Skrbis and Woodward (2007:732) call, ‘cosmopolitan dispositions’. They argue that people with ‘cosmopolitan dispositions’ are characterised by three attributes, namely; international travel experience including consumption of global products, possessing cultural-symbolic competencies construed as inter-cultural mastery and openness to diversity of cultural forms. After a degree of reflexive engagement at the cosmopolitan disposition level, Skrbis and Woodward (2007) argue, one acquires a cosmopolitan vision (ibid: 733). These citizens then transcend merely local to become cosmopolitan citizens (Hutchings and Dannreuther, 1999).

Cosmopolitan dispositions and visions are useful for this study due to the role of local private actors involved in Accra’s shopping mall development on account of their 100 percent

international travel experiences and how that shaped their perspectives and worldviews (Hobden, 2014, 2015). As noted by Hobden (2014), people who travel get exposed to different cultures and diversity, some of which they carry back home and may attempt to replicate given the chance, thus leading to urban transformation; including creation of new jobs, transfer of knowledge and new skills, etc. around the world.

Resultantly, both the global North and South are thought to be on the path to some sort of global homogenisation and standardisation (Robertson, 1995; Zukin, 1998), especially in relation to the spread of Euro-American culture across the globe (Ritzer, 1998; Zukin, 1998); to such extent that cultures, lifestyles and built forms of the global South are increasingly mimicking Euro-American forms. As such, it is not uncommon to find in global South cities, conditions and processes similar to the global North. In that vein, Robinson (2002:532) argues for attention to (transnational) processes, on account that global South cities are part of ‘a broad range of diverse global political, economic and cultural connections’, instead of a focus on categories (as world/global city or not) which has become the standard measure of analysing cities in the era of globalisation. Consequently, this study partly focuses on processes, including how Accra is becoming or not becoming an entrepreneurial city and how citizens expand their cultural (Bourdieu, 1984) and social capital/network (Putnam, 1993; Knack and Keefer, 1997) under neoliberalism to contribute to urban entrepreneurialism in Accra. Indeed, as Ward’s (2010) study reveals, a fixation on categories may even lead to neglecting certain global North cities. Hence, the usefulness of Robinson’s (2002) cosmopolitan approach which allows for inclusivity and diversity.

This seem to synchronise well with Skrbis and Woodward’s (2007) cosmopolitan disposition. Beck (2002), cited in Skrbis et al. (2004), argues that cosmopolitanism enforces solidarity with

strangers as well as creating conditions for legally binding relations. Much akin to the expansion of social network, within such context, economic, cultural and symbolic capital accrue (Bourdieu, 1984) which could be deployed in urban development, especially in the way local citizens may connect with global capitalists for urban development projects such as malls. Such networks may be construed in terms of Kanter's (1995) and Sklair's (2001) observation that business elites' and capitalists' dispositions may typify more transnational cosmopolitanism. Yet, less emphasis has been paid to analyse how and why individuals', particularly from less-developed countries, cosmopolitan dispositions and orientations have helped shape urban development; a gap which this study attempts to fill.

The foregoing has provided an overview of the literature on shopping malls, consumption and modernity as well as David Harvey's entrepreneurial city theoretical frame within which the study is set.

## **Conclusion: Towards a Conceptual Framework for Accra's urban Transformation**

Neoliberal globalisation and urbanisation have both promises and challenges for cities in both the global North and South. From the literature review, a background for understanding urban transformation in neoliberal cities in the global South has clearly been outlined. The entrepreneurial city thesis provides the theoretical basis for neoliberal urban development through urban governance restructuring which, supposedly, leads to overall improvement in the quality of life in urban areas. Yet the tacit predisposition to overall positive outcome in the entrepreneurial and competitive cities has been questioned through the extensive literature review. For instance, in several sub-Saharan African countries, as suggested by Obeng-Odoom (2015), growing national economies in the first decades of the twenty-first century did not

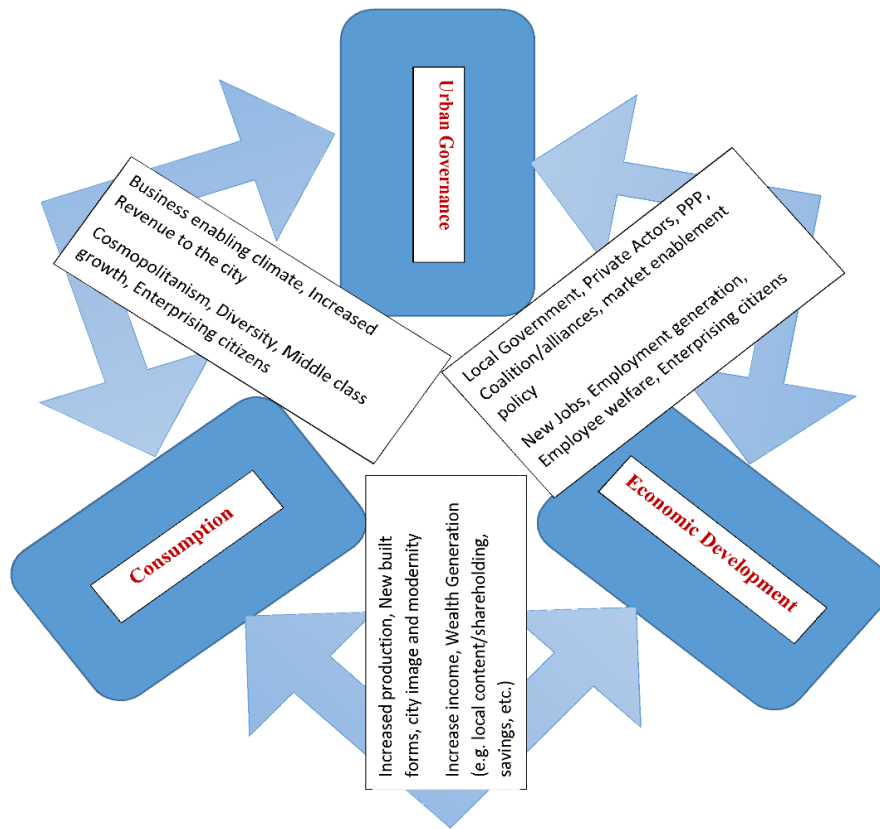
mean improved quality of life for majority of people, partly because the drivers of the economic growth were foreign investors (Potts, 2012) who repatriated profits. Indeed, Harvey (1989b) himself argues that the practical results might be different from the theory and that the entrepreneurial city is nothing short of an extension of capitalist accumulation that continues to marginalise the working class. In the empirical chapters, particularly Chapters Seven and Eight, I will demonstrate that there is, indeed, not an overall positive outcome but citizens, particularly the low-income group, are still kept in poverty. This notwithstanding, the theoretical frame provides the conceptual basis for understanding urban transformation in the study of a neoliberal African city.

Resultantly, the conceptual framework builds on the role of urban governance, consumption, and economic development as the keys to unlock urban transformation. The transformation is understood to be a process of spatial, social, economic, and political change. Consequently, the framework I develop to study Accra builds on how the overlaps of urban governance, consumption and (local) economic development (Fig. 2.1) may help us better understand its urban development transformation in the neoliberal era. On that score, it eschews the seeming linearity from urban governance restructuring to local economic development by opting for a more cyclical and iterative process where governance, consumption and economic development coexist, interlink and coevolve.

The study takes the assumption that, from the outset, the neoliberal policies re-structured urban governance and consequently attempted to make Accra an entrepreneurial city. The research questions, therefore, address the effects of shopping mall development under the tripod of governance, consumption and (local) economic development. Arising from the theoretical

basis of the entrepreneurial city thesis, as extensively espoused in this literature review, the conceptual framework thus uses various sub-themes to establish and define the limits of urban governance, consumption and (local) economic development in the empirical chapters. These sub-themes form the specific drivers of the urban change and hence what the study seeks to understand as they impact Accra's transformation. They include:

- i. ([for urban governance] local government role, citizen participation, urban coalition groups, and private-public partnerships;
- ii. [for consumption] socio-economic classes, levels of consumption, cosmopolitanism and modernity e.g. city image/branding and new built forms; and
- iii. [economic development] revenue to the city government, wealth creation for citizens (e.g. shareholding, local content, etc.), new jobs/employment, income levels, savings potential, and role of labor



**Figure 2. 1:** The Urban Transformation Conceptual Model

The findings may be useful in helping to understand urban transformation in other sub-Saharan African and global South cities that have experienced increased shopping mall development.

## **CHAPTER THREE**

### **METHODOLOGY AND RESEARCH DESIGN**

#### **Introduction**

Following the approach of methodology scholars (Creswell, 2003, 2014; Berg, 2007; della Porta and Keating, 2008; Yin, 2009; Bryman, 2016), the selection of appropriate methodology and methods for this research has been informed by the theoretical frame, my philosophical position for this study, as well as what other researchers in urban geography have used. Throughout the research process, I have adopted an integrated approach, which dwells on mixing various philosophical perspectives (as outlined in Chapter One), theories, methods, and analysis, from the research design stage through to the reporting stage. This, I argue, leads to a better understanding of the subject matter; which straddles the disciplines of urban geography, political economy, and social theory (Knox and McCarthy, 2012).

As outlined in Chapter One, the central objective of this research is to explore how urban governance transformation in neoliberal Accra may have contributed to shopping mall development and the consequent impact of shopping malls on Accra's urban development. The theoretical basis of this concept stems from a structural view of national and local economic development in the sense that it has political economic underpinnings. Political economic analyses are largely, epistemologically, positivistic (Knox and McCarthy, 2012) and as such given to quantitative analytical approach. Yet, as posited by Knox and McCarthy (2012), urban economies, particularly, do not exist in vacuum; they are about people. As such, the social effects of economic development are as important as the economic rationalisations attendant to the political economic processes themselves; hence the need for integrated approach to this research.

This methodology chapter is divided into five sections. In the first section, I discuss the research design, including the choice of case study methodology as a framework for use of mixed methods as well as the selection of the case study malls. The second section is devoted to data collection techniques including outlining sources of data and sampling techniques used and tools for data analysis. This is followed by a brief overview of the demographic background of research participants to contextualise the study and help better understand a study on urban transformation via the agency of shopping mall development in sub-Saharan Africa. In the fourth section, I discuss the research ethics, positionality and reflexivity where I reflect on the general process of field research work. I show how the reliability and validity of the results were ensured through triangulation and participant checking. Finally, the last section presents some limitations and challenges I encountered in the field.

### **3.1 The Research Design: Case Study Methodology and Use of Mixed Methods**

According to Creswell (2014), a researcher's experiences and worldview, among others, affect the choice of a research design and approach adopted. The impetus for this research stems from a number of personal experiences. Firstly, as an architect, I am enthralled by urban development projects that make bold imprints on the built environment, not only by reason of their aesthetics but also by their economic and socio-cultural impacts (Knox and McCarthy, 2012; Storper et al., 2015). Shopping malls are some of these 'bold' urban projects and like other scholars (Grant, 2009; Hobden, 2014, 2015), I view their entry into Accra as important part of Accra's modernisation. Secondly, between 2011-2013, I studied for the Master in Design Studies (with concentration in Urbanism) degree at the Harvard University Graduate School of Design where among others, various courses (e.g. Urban Governance and the Politics of Planning in the Developing World) exposed me to neoliberal and global forces impacting the global South. I ultimately wrote a term essay on '*Recalibrating Accra, Ghana as an*

*Entrepreneurial City in West Africa* for this course. Finally, in mid-2015, while shopping in an anchor shop in one of Accra's malls I engaged a staff in a conversation by suggesting that his job feels good and I would love to get a job in the mall. He retorted "*you wouldn't want to work here*". Probing further, he suggested (after seeing my phone) that "*even looking at your phone, you can't work here*" by which he explained his monthly salary could not buy my phone. Perhaps, these events impacted me to the extent that getting the opportunity for an Oxford DPhil study, I opted to research into Accra's urban transformation through the role of shopping malls and with approval started my research design from this background.

Bryman (2016:39) posits that a research design 'is a framework for the generation of evidence that is chosen to answer the research question(s) in which the investigator is interested'. The framework I chose to answer the research question therefore is a case study of Accra's malls. A case study methodology involves an in-depth investigation into a single entity that could be related to or maybe generalised to other similar cases (Creswell, 2002; Bryman, 2016). It might also involve the study of one setting, a single subject or a particular event whether the issue being investigated is a simple or complex event (Yin, 2003; Berg, 2007). Besides, a case study lends itself to both qualitative and quantitative research methods (Creswell, 2002, 2003). They may also be used for theory testing or theory building (Alexander and Bennett, 2005; Berg, 2007; Blaikie, 2010). As such they are useful for both deductive and inductive research approaches.

Given the complexities of the economic and political forces at work in Accra's urban transformation, leading to the proliferation of shopping malls, I argue therefore that a case study methodology offers a useful approach to understanding these processes.

Yet, a case study may have shortfalls, a key one of which is the argument of its overall generalisability. To deal with these, Yin (2009) argues for validity and reliability. This may be

achieved if the case is critical, unique, exemplifying, revelatory or longitudinal or a combination of these (ibid; Bryman, 2016). On that basis, two malls are chosen on account of their being either an exemplifying (for Accra Mall) or a unique (for West Hills) case, as I have outlined in Section 3.1.1 below. Another means is through triangulation where multiple sources of data collection and validation is adopted to ensure reliability of findings and results (Opperman, 2000). Yeung (2003) has argued that resort to multiple sources of data is needed to achieve reliable and valid results. In that respect, this study makes use of the mixed methods approach, in which a combination of qualitative and quantitative methods were employed to optimise the benefits whilst minimising the pitfalls of pure qualitative and quantitative research (Creswell, 2003).

Qualitative interviews (Appendix 1) were pre-designed but a flexible approach was adopted during interviews. Two questionnaires were prepared, one for staff (Appendix 2) and one for managers/owners of shops (Appendix 3). The questionnaires were pre-tested in a one-day survey to check suitability of questions and slight modifications made to both. Oppermann (2000) notes that drawing from multiple sources of evidence improves accuracy of findings, which is especially important when studying a recent and context-rich phenomenon. Accra's malls, to a substantial degree, represent new phenomenon within the city's consumption landscape and urban development space. Hobden (2015) indicates that when the first fully-enclosed mall was opened in 2008, it generated an intense interest and excitement from both citizens and city officials. On the first night of its opening, it generated unprecedented traffic build up in the city which made the Mayor of Accra drive, under police escort, to the mall to warn mall operators to do something about the situation otherwise he would shut the facility down. An altercation ensued between the Mayor and a (South African) manager of an anchor shop. This led to a long meeting the following day at the offices of the Accra Metropolitan Assembly (AMA) between city officials and mall owners/developers, represented only by the

architect (Hobden, 2015), among others because the Mayor wanted to shut the operations of the mall down<sup>15</sup>. Whilst this may be illustrative of inadequate integrated planning at the city level, it is my position they are demonstrative of the intense interest and excitement malls have brought into the city and coupled with their subsequent proliferation, they represent a context-rich area that piques academic interest.

Little wonder scholars (Anning-Dorson, 2013; Anning-Dorson et al., 2013 and Hobden, 2014, 2015) followed up with various studies, relying exclusively on quantitative or qualitative methods. From a business and management background, Anning-Dorson (2013) and Anning-Dorson et al. (2013) have relied on quantitative methods whilst from a sociology background Hobden (2015) used ethnographic qualitative methods to study Accra Mall, where she was focused on the processes of penetration of global capital into Accra as well as Accra's increasing embeddedness into the global economy. I argue that a mixed methods approach will enhance further understanding of the impacts of mall development in the city.

Creswell and Clark (2011) suggest that a mixed methods approach broadens understanding and knowledge in various socio-scientific research. Mixed methods are also useful for the structural and behavioural theoretic approach, since the qualitative part helps to bring out the depth needed with respect to exploring individual cases whilst the quantitative aspects bring out the general trends and caters well to the 'positivist nature attendant to structural analysis' (Knox and McCarthy, 2012:8). This research will therefore add to the work of urban geographers like Oteng-Ababio and Arthur (2015) who adopted a mixed methods approach. However, their study, which was focused exclusively on Accra Mall, falls short in exploring the impact of other malls such as West Hills on Accra's urban development.

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<sup>15</sup> Information obtained from the field study

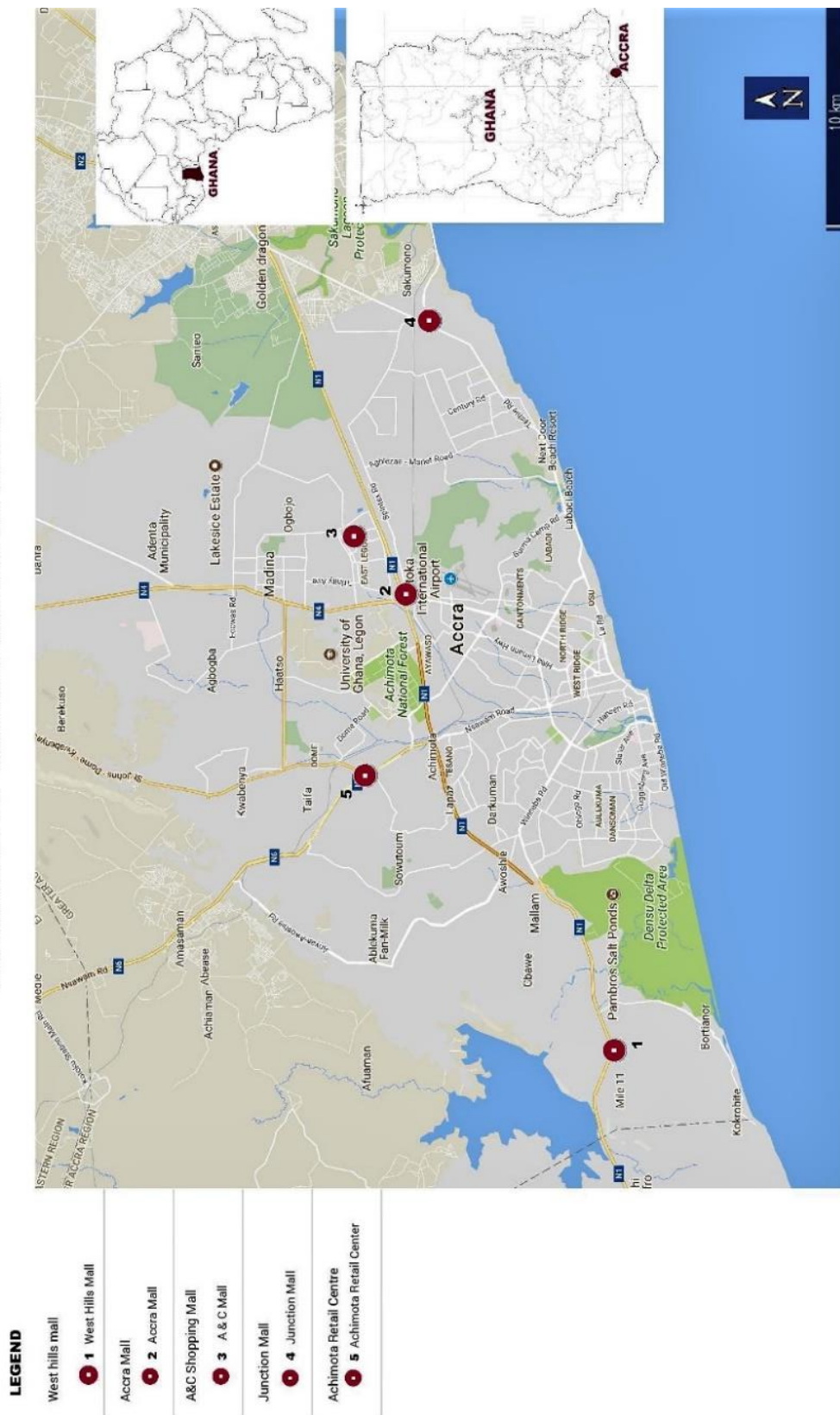
### **3.1.1 Case Study Selection**

Since shopping malls were first developed in the 1950s by Victor Gruen and Associates (Salcedo, 2003) until now, they have assumed an important part of contemporary urban development (Goodman, 2006). This is because they offer urban dwellers access to basic commodities, space for cross-class social interactions, recreation and jobs (Salcedo, 2003; Stillerman and Salcedo, 2012). Salcedo (2003:1084) points out, as ‘artefacts of globalisation’, shopping malls are generally seen as quintessential ‘globalised spaces’ in which, concurrently, ‘tendencies of homogenisation and segregation of consumption are expressed’. Thus, shopping malls offer a good case study to understand processes of neoliberalism and globalisation in many parts of the world, including global South cities like Accra.

#### ***The Malls***

My case study involves a selection of two of the seven shopping malls in the city of Accra. These are the Accra Mall, the first fully-enclosed mall to be completed in 2008, and West Hills Mall, completed in 2014 and reported to be the biggest mall in West Africa (Fig. 3.1). Including their car parks, each of these large malls consume a minimum land area of 35,000m<sup>2</sup> in the city.

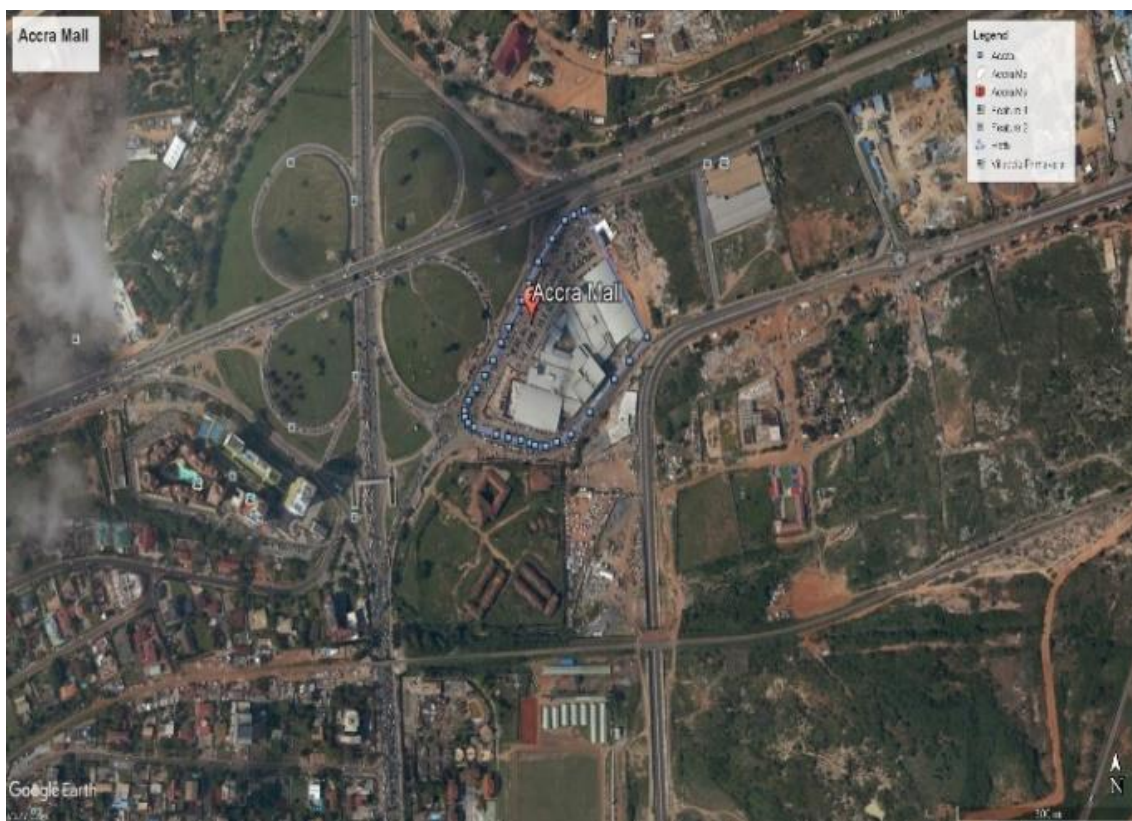
# LOCATION OF MAJOR MALLS IN ACCRA



**Figure 3. 1:** Location of Major Shopping Malls in Accra  
(Adapted from Google Maps)

The justification for their selection include:

The Accra Mall (Fig. 3.2 and 3.3) is located at the north-eastern side of Accra central, in one of the city's most affluent neighborhoods; which contains some of Accra's best hotels, gated residential communities, and within 15 and 45 minutes walking distance of the nation's only international airport and presidential palace, respectively. A number of the diplomatic missions in Ghana are within 5km radius from the mall. It is about 30 minutes' drive from the Port City of Tema, which is reputed to be Ghana's industrial city.



**Figure 3. 2:** Location of Accra Mall  
(Map adapted from Google Maps)



**Figure 3. 3:** Front View of Accra Mall  
(Photo by Author)

Accra Mall's realisation was made possible by a private Ghanaian businessman, Joseph Owusu-Akyaw (15 percent of the investment) who secured funding from Actis (85 percent) - an emerging markets equity funds arm of the Commonwealth Development Corporation (CDC) of the British Department of International Development (DFID). The opening of Accra Mall set the stage for the rise of several malls in the city, according to Broll Ghana Ltd., a facilities management firm, that manages all malls in Accra. I therefore deem Accra Mall as an exemplifying case since it significantly changed the retail landscape as well as the ethos of consumption in Ghana (Hobden, 2015; Oteng-Ababio and Arthur, 2015). Russell and Tyler's (2002) study of 'Girl Heaven, UK' retail chain argue that though the retail landscape in the UK has been extensively studied, the case was exemplifying because it typified the connection between 'gender and consumption and the commodification of childhood in modern society'

(Bryman, 2016:63). According to Bryman (2016:62) a case may be exemplifying if it ‘exemplifies a broader category of which [the relevant case] is a member... [and] therefore allows the researcher to examine key social process’.

As with most malls, Accra Mall is home to shops of international brands, including Shoprite and Game from South Africa, and franchised shops of Woolworths, Nike, Mango, Mac, among others. The Mall also contains a cinema that shows Hollywood movies (Spio, 2011). Given its success, a number of other international brands, including Tommy Hilfiger, have expressed interest in securing a retail space<sup>16</sup>. As such, it is undergoing expansion works which is likely to see it become West Africa’s biggest mall. At the time of its opening in 2008, Accra Mall was under the jurisdiction of the Accra Metropolitan Assembly (AMA) local government. It then came under the jurisdiction of Ledzokuku-Krowor Municipal Assembly (LeKMA) between 2010 and 2012 when it moved under La-Dadekotopon Municipal Assembly (LaDMA) when the latter was carved out of AMA.

In contrast, the West Hills Mall (Fig. 3.4 and 3.5) is located in the western part of Accra. I view this as a unique case particularly because of its locational oxymoron: it is the biggest and modern architectural artefact located in a low to middle income neighborhood. According to Broll, investors had assumed they were moving into a middle-class neighborhood, but this assumption was predicated on a demographic study which had changed during the period of development. As such, it is reported that the mall has been experiencing economic challenges. It is, nonetheless, re-shaping consumption patterns and the local economies, aspects which this study investigates. According to Yin (2009:47) a unique case ‘may be so rare that any single case is worth documenting and analysing’.

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<sup>16</sup> Information obtained from mall operators

The mall has franchise shops for some of the world's biggest brand names including GAP, Edgars, Foschini, American Swiss, Woolworths, Truworths, among others. It is the first mall that introduced children-focused activities indoors. However, as the children's recreation business grew beyond the indoor space, operators have re-appropriated a section of the outdoor car parking area as extension to the children recreation business. Additionally, the outdoor car park occasionally becomes a site for organisation of functions like musical shows, product launching, among others which adds to revenue generation for the mall. Finally, facility managers of the mall indicate that before the mall was developed a decision was made at a meeting between mall developers and local community chiefs to provide jobs for the youth of the communities. This research investigates the effect of this decision and its impact, if any, on local economic development in the area.

Since its opening, West Hills has always remained under the jurisdiction of the Ga South Municipal Assembly (GSMA), a local government carved out of AMA in 2008. West Hills was developed by a South African-based Ghanaian businessman, Kofi Sekyere, acting through his real estate firm (Sandpark Ltd.), which teamed up with South African investors Atterbury, who bought Actis' share in Accra Mall in 2012, to form Delico Investments (60 percent) and Ghana's Social Security and National Insurance Trust (SSNIT; 40 percent), a public organisation that manages Ghana's pensions fund.

The different location and neighborhood characteristics render the selection of these two malls most appropriate for a comparative study in order to understand clearly the underlying dynamics of mall development and urban transformation in Accra.



**Figure 3. 4:** Location of West Hills Mall  
(Map adapted from Google Maps)



**Figure 3. 5:** Side View of West Hills Mall (Source: Web)

### 3.2 Data Collection: Sources and Techniques

Field work for the study was undertaken in two trips. The first was a three-week reconnaissance study in February 2016. This initial study helped build contacts, secure initial information and helped determine which of the city's malls will be used in the case study. The second trip was a nine-month extended study (July 2016-March 2017) involving collection of both qualitative and quantitative data (Table 3.1). The qualitative method relied on semi-structured interviews, personal observations, field notes, and photographs. The quantitative data was obtained through administration of structured and semi-structured questionnaires.

**Table 3.1:** Field Data Collection Activity Schedule

Month	Activity
July 2016 to mid-August 2016	Mall visitations, collection of information from national archives, government ministries/agencies, sending emails and arranging interviews to potential interviewees and waiting for CUREC ethical approval (Form 1A).
Mid-August 2016-January 2017	Interviews, Additional literature review at the university of Ghana library, GIS mapping of Accra's malls, designing of questionnaires, arranging permission with shop owners/managers
February 2017	Administration of Questionnaires
March 2017	Initial Transcription of interviews, additional interviews, literature review, follow-up at government agencies and Ghana Investment Promotion Center (GIPC) for revenue/other data

In the field, the approach to data collection became more flexible and iterative. This is where both the structuralist/positivist and behavioural/interpretivist approaches got conflated or complementary such that it became obvious that both data may be useful to throw light on any of the research questions (see Creswell and Clark, 2011). I conducted the interviews and other qualitative methods first. As such, semi-structured interview questions were prepared before

the field work. However, it needs to be pointed out that during interviews, follow-up questions emerged which had not been pre-determined (Berg, 2007). In total, thirty-three interviews were conducted with various city authorities, mall operators, expert informants and customers (Table 3.2). Each interview took average of between 45 and 60 minutes. Interviews were audio recorded with interviewees' prior consent and were transcribed later. Only one interviewer objected to audio recording, for that reason the interview was manually recorded.

**Table 3.2:** List of Interviewees

No	Designation/Type of Interviewer	Number of People	No	Designation/Type of Interviewer	Number of People
1	Architects (Local architects of the case-study malls)	2	7	Other National Government ministry officials	1
2	+Engineers	1	8	Mall Developers	5
3	Urban Planners (in private practice)	2	9	Mall Managers	7
4	*Academics	2	10	Other City Facility Managers (including director of research)	2
5	Former Mayor (Also an architect and former lecturer at the City University of New York)	1	11	++Mall Customers	3
6	City Authority Officials (Including Planners, City Engineer, Budget Officers)	6	12	Other real estate developers (e.g. Fortune City near West Hills)	1

(\* Included one member of the Ghana Academy of Arts and Sciences; + He is a former president of the Ghana Institution of Engineers and consultant to the World Bank's Accra urban transport project; ++ Three customers and a family were jointly interviewed and each is counted as one interview)

The questionnaire for the quantitative data was, however, developed during the course of the field work. As such, some of the ideas/information obtained during the interviews became useful in the questionnaire design. Thus, the research design tended to be more exploratory in nature (Creswell and Clark, 2011). In all, a total of 409 questionnaires were administered, 343 on staff and 66 on managers/owners in the shops in the two malls (Table 3.3).

**Table 3.3:** Number of Questionnaires Administered

<b>Name of Mall</b>	<b>Staff</b>	<b>Managers/Owners</b>	<b>TOTAL</b>
Accra Mall	175	37	<b>212</b>
West Hills	168	29	<b>197</b>
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>343</b>	<b>66</b>	<b>409</b>

Staff questionnaires collected information on demographics, employment/labour, shops, work ethics/aspirations and city image/modernity. Managers/owners questionnaires collected information on demographics, shops, employment and work ethics as well as city image/modernity. Given some of the delays encountered during the interviews and arranging for permission for administration of questionnaires, it became necessary to use three research assistants to help in the administration of questionnaires. The assistants included two young men and one woman, all of whom are recent social sciences graduates from Ghanaian universities and had previously engaged in a research survey with a non-governmental organisation. These research assistants were given a one-day orientation on the survey, its objectives, the subject matter as well as ethics and etiquette needed in administering a survey in a mall. The use of three well-informed research assistants was a useful part of triangulation in research where field notes compiled by each was checked for consistency or conflict (Oppermann, 2000).

I also compiled notes through personal observations at the malls. Fyfe (1992) notes that (personal) observation (during fieldwork) adds to the epistemological value of the research by providing access to social life that may be less evident to quantitative methods. On that score, a method that relies on quantitative approach benefits from additional insight through observation. Thus, in addition to the quantitative data gathered through the questionnaires, I adopted personal observation in the study malls on different times of the day to form opinion about the work culture, consumption tendencies in the mall as well as other aspects useful for the research. Such observations took place at various sites within the malls and through various dispositions, e.g. sitting or walking. For instance, I observed through sitting at the food courts, at the mall entrance, the entrance of the mall cinema as well as walking through the corridors, the shops and other spaces in the mall, etc. In order not to arouse suspicion, I recorded my observations later in my field notebook in a car, during lunch break or after the day's work before leaving the malls. I did this in the morning, afternoon and at night.

Finally, I obtained other qualitative and quantitative data from the Ghana Investment Promotion Centre (GIPC), Ministry of Local Government and Rural Development (MLGRD), Ministry of Tourism and Gender Relation (MTGR) [formerly Ministry of Tourism and Modernization of the Capital City], Institute of Local Government Studies (ILGS), Ghana National Archives, Accra Metropolitan Assembly (AMA), La Dadekotopon Municipal Assembly (LaDMA) and the Ga South Municipal Assembly (GSMA). These data, which were both secondary and primary data, included responses to itemised questions, investment and quarterly reports, government bulletin, statutory codes, tax/revenue information, among others.

### 3.2.1 Sampling Techniques

Three non-probabilistic sampling methods were adopted in both the qualitative and quantitative data collection. In the **qualitative interviews** purposive, snowball and convenience sampling were concurrently used. In the first place, city officials, expert informants and mall managers and developers were selected via purposive sampling because of their knowledge in the subject matter (Palys, 2008). Those who were so selected were also given opportunity to nominate other people who might know something about the subject matter, in a snowball approach. Then finally, the convenience sampling was used in the case of the customers in which customers were approached and those willing were interviewed. In the **quantitative survey**, however, only the convenience sampling was used. After distributing letters of introduction to all the shops in the two malls, each mall was divided into four wings where each questionnaire administrator was assigned to one wing. This was to ensure 100 percent coverage of the shops as well as avoiding overlaps and to offer each employee opportunity of being selected such that findings can be generalised as representative of the entire staff population (Bryman, 2016). From there, every staff in all the shops was approached and those willing answered the questions. From the research design, the plan was to administer 200 questionnaires in each mall, 150 on staff and 50 on managers/owners. After the process however, the results obtained is as listed in Table 3.3 above. It is important to state however that despite the disparity between the plan and the reality, all shops in all the malls were covered, the only exceptions were a computer shop in West Hills Mall, where the manager indicated he needed clearance from head office in central Accra, and Shoprite in Accra Mall, where after managers had received and sent copies of the questionnaires to their head office in South Africa, they declined. However, the West Hills' Shoprite branch manager allowed the survey, which served to balance the distribution between businesses. In the case of the computer shop, several other computer shops in both malls were administered and hence the results are representative. With respect to the

administration proper, some of the staff took the questionnaires and filled them on their own, whilst some of them were also filled by questionnaire administrators who read to the respondents. At the end of the day, about half were self-filled and the other half administrator-completed.

### **3.2.2 Data Analysis**

Taking a cue from methodology scholars (Berelson, 1965; Hsieh and Shannon, 2005; Berg, 2007; Saldana, 2012) who discuss the relevance of content analysis to a mixed methods research, I used thematic content analysis for the qualitative and statistical package for social sciences (SPSS) for the quantitative data analysis. Where both the qualitative and quantitative data interface, they are checked for consistency and/or conflict as part of the triangulation validation process.

I transcribed the interviews and together with other field notes, manually coded the dataset into explicit categories and subsequently narrowed these categories into themes. At first instance, I initially coded eight of the interviews, using the four thematic headings of urban governance and coalition, consumption, local economic development and labor/employment to sort out the responses. Thereafter, having sorted the responses, I then used the codes so generated from the initial set of interviews to guide the rest of the coding process. The codes built were then narrowed into themes and thereafter both explicit and implicit meanings were deduced from the themes so created to make inferences and conclusions (Saldana, 2012).

With respect to the quantitative data, after initial sorting of the nominal (e.g. working hours, wage levels, transportation cost, etc.) and categorical (mall, shop, merchandize type, etc.) data, I coded the questionnaires into SPSS. Thereafter, I run the analysis to produce descriptive statistics, Pearson chi-square, and performed post-hoc chi test to check for significance and robustness of associations between the variables and the cases. Inferences and conclusions were then drawn from the analysis.

### 3.3 Demographic Characteristics of Research Participants

This section outlines the demographic characteristics of research participants for both the qualitative (semi-structured interviews) and the quantitative (questionnaire survey) data.

#### i. Semi-structured Interviews

As outlined above, the interviewees included city officials, expert/key informants, and mall managers and developers. They were asked about their views on how the malls have impacted the city's urban development, including urban governance, consumption, and local economies. Of the customer interviews<sup>17</sup>, the first one was a Nigerian young man, currently domiciled in Ghana, who completed secondary school. He indicated he is a petty trader, who deals in second-hand clothing in a local market in Accra. The second one involved three women (pseudonymed Agnes, Beatrice and Cecilia) who were jointly interviewed during Christmas festivities at the mall. Agnes is a primary school leaver; Beatrice, a secondary school leaver and Cecilia is currently a part-time student (in management) at a private university in Accra. These would be classified as low-income people. Another one involved a couple (Patrick and Kate), in the company of their four children<sup>18</sup>, who were also jointly interviewed at the West Hills Mall. The couple (he works at a logistics company and she works at a bank) are tertiary education graduates. These interviews were arranged to have an idea of how various socio-economic groups perceive and view the emergence and proliferation of malls in Accra, including their impact on consumption and local economies.

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<sup>17</sup> In all nine customers were interviewed. Three during the reconnaissance survey in February 2016 and six during the extended nine months period.

<sup>18</sup> One of the children (aged about 6yrs) is the man's nephew

## ii. Questionnaires

### a) *Description of Shop Staff*

Of the questionnaire respondents, Accra Mall made up 51.7 percent whilst West Hills 48.3 percent. In total, the male staff were more than the female staff (that is 52.5 percent to 47.5 percent). Specifically, in the various malls, male respondents in Accra Mall constituted 58.3 percent of all Accra Mall respondents whilst female were 41.7 percent. In West Hills, however, males constituted 46.4 percent as opposed to female (53.6 percent) (Table 3.4).

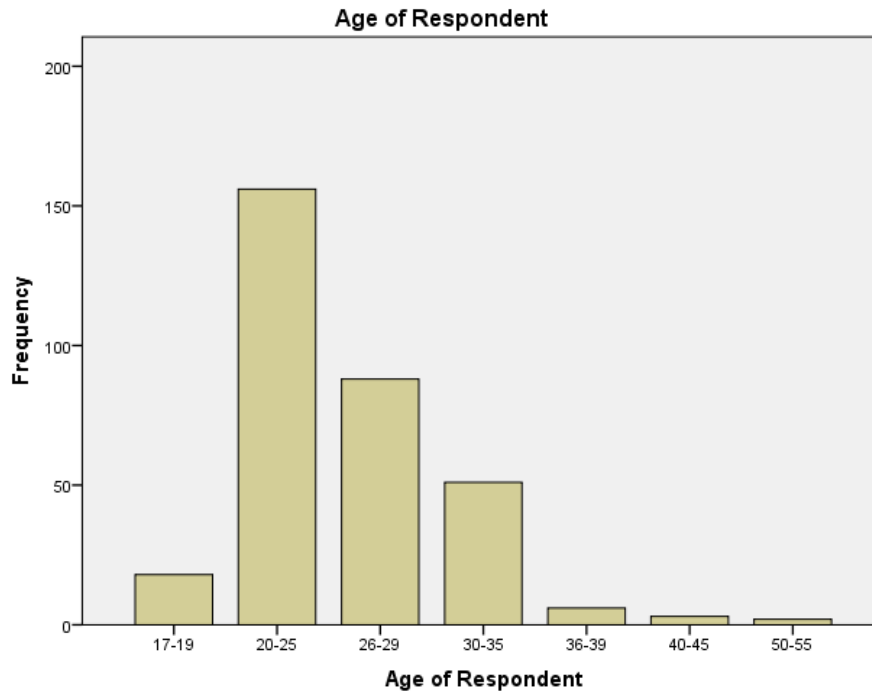
**Table 3.4:** Gender of Respondents

	Mall Respondent Works in		Total
	Accra Mall	West Hills	
<b>Male</b>	102 (58.3%)	78 (46.4%)	180 (52.5%)
<b>Female</b>	73 (41.7%)	90 (53.6%)	163 (47.5%)
<b>Total</b>	175 (100%)	168 (100%)	343 (100%)

It was found that the staff are predominantly youthful: 96.6 percent of them are between the ages of 17 and 35<sup>19</sup> years (Fig. 3.6). Most (56 percent) are secondary school graduates whilst about 34 percent are tertiary graduates (Table 3.5). Only about 13.3 percent are married and as much as 86.1 percent are single whilst 0.6 percent (i.e. two people) are divorced.

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<sup>19</sup> In Ghana, the Ghana Statistical Service define youthful age between 15 and 35 years (GSS Labor Force Report, 2014)



**Figure 3. 6:** Age Distribution of Staff in the Two Malls

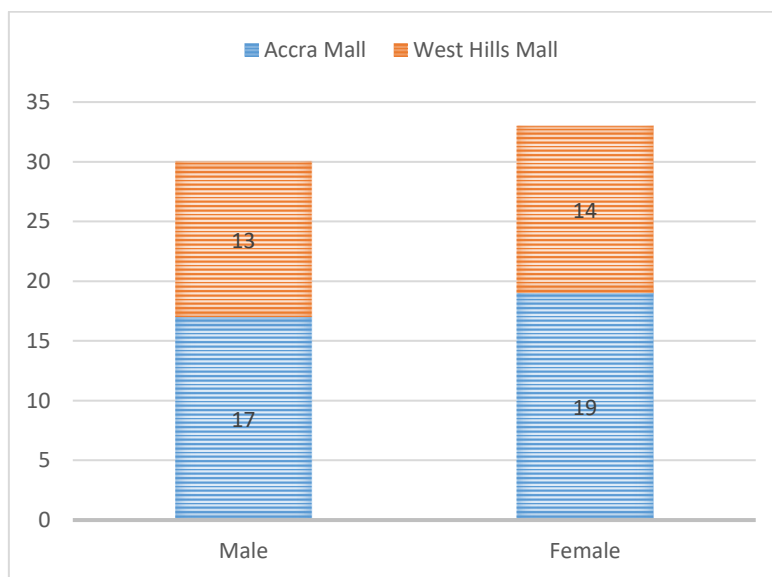
About half of the respondents do not rent accommodation but live with parents, friends or shop-rented accommodation. Those who live with relatives indicated they are not paying any rent. There were a few (about five people), however, who said that though they were living with parents, they still contribute to paying for household utilities.

**Table 3.5:** Staff Education Level

Education Level	Frequency	Percentage
First Cycle (Primary and JHS)	13	3.8
Second Cycle (Secondary School)	192	56.0
Tertiary (University/Polytechnic/Post-Secondary)	118	34.4
Others (Vocational, etc.)	14	4.1
Didn't Answer	6	1.7
Total	343	100

### *b) Description of Managers*

The 37 managers of Accra Mall represent 56.1 percent whilst West Hills' 29 represents 43.9 percent of shops managers who filled the questionnaires. Males constitute 47.6 percent whilst females are 52.4 percent<sup>20</sup> (Fig. 3.7).

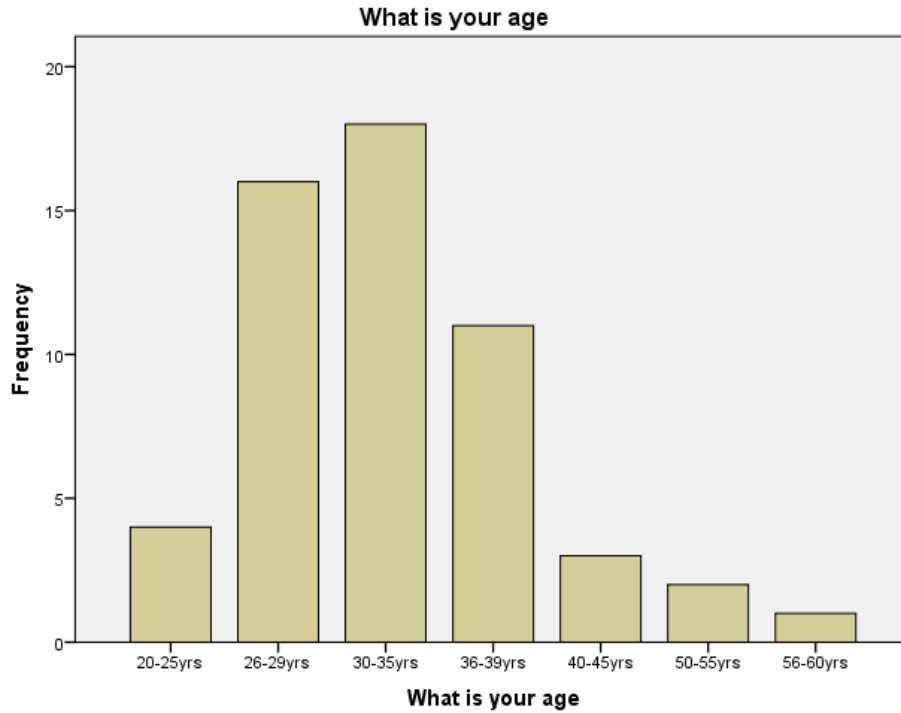


**Figure 3. 7:** Gender Distribution of Managers

Most managers (69.1 per cent) are between the ages of 20 and 35 years while 30.9 per cent are 36 years or more (Fig. 3.8). Twenty-nine managers (representing 43.9 per cent) are married, 33 (representing 50 per cent) are single whilst 4 (6.1 per cent) did not answer the question. At the same time, 27 (40.9 per cent) have children, 33 (50 per cent) do not and 6 (9.1 per cent) did not answer.

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<sup>20</sup> Three people did not indicate their gender



**Figure 3. 8:** Age Distribution of Managers

About 14 percent of the managers are secondary school graduates whilst the rest (about 86 percent) are tertiary school (university, polytechnics or other post-secondary) graduates (Table 3.6). In all, 7 people (10.6 percent of the managers) indicated they hold a master’s degree.

**Table 3.6:** Managers Education Level<sup>21</sup>

	Education Level		Total
	Secondary	Tertiary	
<b>Accra Mall</b>	6	29	35
<b>West Hills</b>	3	26	29
<b>Total</b>	9	55	64

<sup>21</sup> Two didn’t answer the question

Though the research did not set out to establish the number of Ghanaians and non-Ghanaian managers, it was found that nearly all are (black) Ghanaians except about five of them. Of the five, two were Indians and three were Ghanaians of Lebanese descent<sup>22</sup>.

### **3.4 Research Ethics, Positionality and Reflexivity**

Research ethics are part of the key considerations that affect the reliability and validity of research findings in any social sciences research (Judd et al. 1991; Bryman, 2016). Bryman (2016:125) indicates that ethics for researchers revolve around four key questions related to participants/respondents: whether there is consent, harm, privacy ensured and deception of participants is involved. Other key considerations are i) a researcher's positionality, including ethnic background, sex, age, and other physical attributes which have the potential of influencing the research positively or negatively, and ii) reflexivity which has to do with his/her knowledge of the context, worldview, and general background as well as how research participants accept or view him/her. Both positionality and reflexivity have impact on the research from design to final reporting. I have therefore been sensitive to these three throughout to ensure they impact positively or mediate their negative impact (Punch, 2014).

To this end, the research is undergirded by the Central University Research Ethics Committee (CUREC) rules. Throughout the period of research design and literature review, I attended a number of workshops and seminars on research ethics across the university. Then before the start of the field work, the necessary approval of CUREC and pre-requisites were sought and adhered to, including seeking participants consent for interviews and surveys; explaining the purpose of the research to participants, etc. After the fieldwork, the need for confidentiality and

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<sup>22</sup> This information was gathered through conversation with the respondent.

data protection requirements have been adhered to, including participant checking by sending interview transcripts back to interviewees for their review, use of pseudonyms, among others.

Apart from the CUREC approval (Form 1A), a letter of introduction from Oxford and my supervisor explaining the purpose of my research served to give me access especially with the city authorities, expert informants and mall operators. CUREC informed consent forms were also given to interviewees who read and signed the forms. Those who did not have the time to read all the information, after explaining to them, signed the informed consent form. With respect to the questionnaire administration, a letter of introduction was written by mall managers which was distributed to all shop owners/managers. This to a large extent gave me access. The visit of my supervisor to Ghana in November 2016 also served to give additional credence as she met and interacted with centre managers of both malls and one of the developers.

The three-week reconnaissance survey in February 2016 had given me some contacts in three malls before the actual fieldwork which I built on. During the interviews itself, a number of times, interviewees wanted to find out whether I grew up or lived in Ghana. When I respond in the affirmative, in some cases, some would respond “*then in this particular case because you are recording let me say it in Twi*” (the local Akan dialect). Getting to know I was brought up in Ghana was useful in some cases, as my interviewees then knew I understood the cultural context. This meant an additional level of acceptance where some even went to the extent of revealing sensitive information and had to issue a disclaimer or do damage control. But it had not been all positive. Sometimes meetings had to be rescheduled even after waiting for several hours for prospective interviewees at their office or were cut short and reconvened later because some needed to attend meetings.

The same can be said of the quantitative survey. Despite the letter of introduction from mall managers, it was not always easy because, in the process, some people complained that the questions relating to labour and their living conditions were too personal. In these cases, I had to take time to explain, and, of course, with my understanding of the cultural context, in a respectful way, the purpose and benefits including the possibility of the research's findings to shape government policy (Judd et al., 1991) on malls. Even after that, in one instance, a young lady in an anchor shop asked what personal benefit would it be to her. I assured her I will give her lunch and we laughed about it. Far from coercing her, which may be viewed to be unethical, the camaraderie opened up to a very fruitful interview with her that even went beyond the questionnaires. She told me about the merchandizers<sup>23</sup> in the shops and how being one was much better than being a mere shop assistant. In the end she refused to take the 'lunch money' when I attempted to give her. In some cases also, others (e.g. multi-racial groups and Ghanaians of Asian descent) in the malls were less accommodating. For instance, the computer shop referred to earlier confiscated filled questionnaires given to his staff though his deputy had given permission and staff were willing to fill. As earlier indicated, the refusal of this computer shop to join was more than compensated for by other shops that filled. In another instance, one shop, Sunglass Huts, the manager after collecting four of the forms, gave all to his assistant manager to fill. It became clear to me that the answers were doctored. So, I discarded the forms and used only one, so that the results would not be negatively impacted. Also, my research assistants faced difficulties, especially with more senior respondents and I would be called to come in, to plead and explain.

The understanding gathered was that some felt the information were too personal and may be traced back to them. In that case, an earlier suggestion from my supervisor at the questionnaire

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<sup>23</sup> Merchandizers are young people who promoted particular products whose producers had rented shelves in the anchor shops.

design stage to leave out the portion asking for names and telephone numbers became a useful explanation. Some of the shop managers also felt the information may be used to attack them perhaps if it became public which is why they were apprehensive. In that case, I showed them my Oxford ID card and letter of introduction from the School of Geography and the Environment (SoGE) and explained that it is purely academic exercise. In addition, I assured them of utmost confidentiality of the information they provided.

In sum, being sensitive to these fieldwork challenges, as well as my positionality and reflexivity had well-prepared me ahead of the fieldwork and during the analysis and (thesis) writing stage. To that extent, the results and the findings are robust and representative.

### **3.5 Limitations of Research**

Besides the challenges I have already outlined in the preceding section, there are other limitations that I encountered on the field. The first is inability to interview some very key personalities. Within these cohort of personalities include the former president, John Kufuor and the immediate past mayor of Accra. In the case of the President, emails sent to his administrative secretary to arrange interview were never responded to though the President's posture in my brief meeting with him at his residence when he hosted Oxford and Cambridge alumni implied that he was willing to grant interview. In the case of the mayor, his secretary suggested that because of the impending December 2016 national presidential and parliamentary elections he could not meet me until after the elections. The mayor stood as a parliamentary candidate and won. However, since his party lost the presidential, he automatically lost his role as a mayor and the fluid political atmosphere made it impossible for the interview to be arranged, because of, among others, his relocation to parliament and subsequent training as a parliamentarian. Indeed, generally, the national elections made it

somewhat difficult to arrange interviews, particularly with city authorities. However, after the elections I was able to get some interviews arranged.

Also, the politically-charged atmosphere sometimes made interviewees apprehensive about some of the questions relating to the role of national political actors in urban development. At times, respondents became somewhat elusive or retorted “*let’s keep politics out of this*”. I had to assure them that this a purely academic exercise and strictly guided by the Oxford CUREC which adheres to strict data protection including confidentiality. As such, I indicated to them that where they needed to be cited, I will anonymise them if it touched on politicians. Such expressions of apprehensions and my re-assurances even continued during the transcripts stage when I sent transcripts back to interviewees for their validation. In one particular case, after I sent the transcript for him to review, he responded that I transcribed everything verbatim, including where he veered off the subject to talk about political leaders, but he thought I was only interested in retail. I had to explain that the political environment was necessary and assured him if he is cited on such issues his name will not appear. In the light of these, all the names used in the thesis are pseudonyms, to protect identity of people.

A second challenge was intermittent distraction during the course of some of interviews, as mentioned earlier, especially those with city officials and professionals. Due to their extreme busy schedules coupled with the political atmosphere in the city, some interviewees were constantly being called either on mobile phones or by people who needed to see them. Some of them had to take time off in some instances and had to come back later. As previously indicated, in some cases, I was even asked to come the next day to continue. It became evident to me that at times these events tended to break their line of thought, especially so with answers to follow-up questions.

A third limitation with respect to the interviews is that most interviewees did not return their feedback after I sent them the transcripts. A good number of them indicated they had received and would get back to me but never did and also did not reply follow up emails. Only about ten responded that the information captured in essence is reflective of their thoughts. Out of these, one official responded that she would be unable to go through the material but once I have decided on which one to use, I should send the relevant portion to her to have a look. Upon sending her the relevant portion, she revised what she said during the interview to dilute the significance of her comments. It was evident that as a public staff she was not happy with the context within which her information had been used.

In the case of the questionnaire administration, a major limitation had to do with non-compliance of some of the managers, as well as some of the staff who felt the questions were too long or too personal. Despite assurances of confidentiality and data protection and letter of introduction from mall managers, some managers still did not agree to participate. As such, I administered questionnaire to only 66 managers instead of the originally planned 100. However, I was able to administer to 343 staff, instead of the 300 originally planned, which served to cover nearly 100 per cent of all shops. Additionally, the 66 managers represent about 80 percent of the shops in the malls. Therefore, the findings are representative of the existing situation.

With respect to the administration of the staff questionnaire, tertiary education graduates were generally elusive about revealing the actual level of their salaries, choosing rather to opt for ‘Above GHC500’ option. Indeed, in all cases again, respondents tended to avoid certain questions. However, this situation did not affect the analysis of the results since most of the answers obtained fell within the 95 percent significance levels. In the case of the tertiary graduates’ salaries also, the response obtained from those who obliged suggested that tertiary graduates have relatively better salaries.

Moreover, in the case of the analysis of the questionnaires bordering on the income and welfare of staff, the study focus a lot more on the low-income staff as opposed to center managers, shop directors/owners and managers on account that these are relatively better paid, and moreover represent less than ten percent of the entire shop staff. The study is therefore skewed towards shop assistants, security staff, cleaners, and other low income staff and, to an extent, supervisors who form the majority.

A final limitation was my inability to obtain revenue data from both mall operators and the Ghana Revenue Authority (GRA). Mall operators indicated to me that this information was confidential. As such, the West Hills center manager gave me a range whilst Accra Mall did not. However, the GRA officials were less straight forward. Despite assurances that they would release to me, they kept making excuses each time I went to the office until my return to Oxford.

## **Conclusion**

Throughout this methodology chapter, I have shown how I adopted an integrative approach, involving occupying a middle ground epistemological position, mixing of methods, use of triangulation and adopting an iterative and flexible approach from the research design to the write-up/reporting stage. I also outlined the justification for major (case study) methodological approach adopted for this study. I have also reflected on some of the challenges I faced in the field and how I negotiated them to ensure accuracy of findings. Whilst reflecting on the entire fieldwork, I have learnt that the research activity, far from being a neat, linear process, actually involves a cyclical and iterative process in which, oftentimes, the planned and the reality may tend to progress on different trajectories. This demands the researcher to make accommodation for, and sense of, surprise outcomes. This might as well lead to a shift of conceptual positions and new theoretical discoveries. Further, in reflecting particularly on fieldwork challenges, it has become evident to me that adopting various reflexive positions, with respect to various

participants so as to obtain the needed information include tactfulness, boldness, friendliness and sometimes benignly or respectfully ignoring participants whose objective suggest they may want to simply create problems for the researcher. Both how the researcher makes sense of what is planned and the reality on the field and how s/he deals with challenges, it seems to me, the researcher's work and personality tend to be enhanced through new discoveries and maturation, especially for the novice researcher. On both counts, I will admit, I have been a beneficiary of surprising outcomes and indeed become a matured independent researcher. In the next chapter, I discuss Accra's urban development context within which the study is situated.

## CHAPTER FOUR

### URBAN CHANGE IN ACCRA: FROM THE PAST TO THE PRESENT

#### Introduction

From its early years in the sixteenth century until now, Accra's growth and current structure arise from a combination of historical and contemporary socio-economic and political events that continue to shape it. With its sea coast, Quayson (2014) maintains that the city's growth has been radial. The radial expansion has, however, been non-uniform and continuous, in temporal and socio-economic terms. In this contextual chapter, Accra's historical formation and subsequent development (into a major West African metropolis) are narrated to help better contextualise its current socio-economic and spatial structure. This is important, again, partly because it provides a better understanding of the malls under study. Quayson (2014) observes that examining historical events and records provide an insight into how present events and conditions in Accra have been shaped by past events. This historical analytical method, involving study of past contexts, qualitative and quantitative materials, is what Braudel (1980) calls the *longue duree*. Recently some scholars (e.g. Adarkwa, 2012; Obeng Odoom, 2012) have relied on historical accounts in studying Ghanaian cities. The chapter also examines Ghana's experience with the Bretton-Woods institutions since the 1960s with special focus on the 1983 structural adjustment program (SAP) which ushered Ghana into the neoliberal era. This is then followed by how Accra has become increasingly competitive under neoliberalism within the West African sub-region, leading to attraction of investments into various sectors, such as real estate, services and the retail industry. I also discuss some of the legal and regulatory frameworks enacted by government during the SAP. Though these laws are of nation-wide application, they have made Accra more competitive within the sub-region than any of the other cities in Ghana.

It is obvious that as a metropolis, Accra is unevenly differentiated in terms of competitiveness. However, competitiveness in one local government area is likely to affect another on account of their propinquity and contiguity. Indeed, various scholars have conceived metropolitan areas as a regional economic unit whose competitiveness, in terms of combined population, market size, labor pool, and investments lead them to outcompete other regions (Ward and Jonas, 2004; Simmie and Carpenter, 2008). Ward and Jonas (2004:2123) postulate that ‘the metropolitan region should be conceived of as a coherent territorial organisational unit from the standpoint of mapping new geographies of competition’.

Finally, I end the Chapter with a brief account of FDI in shopping mall development in the city, focusing particularly on other malls besides the case study ones to provide a broader perspective on the burgeoning shopping mall industry.

#### **4.1 How Historical Events Have Shaped Accra’s Current Urban Form and Development**

In this section, I discuss a number of key events and processes that have impacted the city’s socio-spatial growth. This is to help better understand the economic context in which the case study malls are situated. These events include European contact, political, transportation, environmental and natural disasters as well as contemporary globalisation.

From historical accounts, the Ga people, who are the indigenes of Accra, migrated in family or clan groups at different times in the thirteenth century (Quayson, 2014; Nuno-Amarteifio, 2015). It is said that the name Accra, which refers to ‘hordes of ants’, came from a description given by the earlier inhabitants of the area to the Ga people as they were seen arriving from the eastern horizon in large numbers (Quayson, 2014). In the local (Twi) parlance, ants are called

*nkran* but European merchants could not pronounce it well, and thus the name *nkran* evolved to become Accra. The Akan (Twi-speaking) people still call the city *Nkran*.

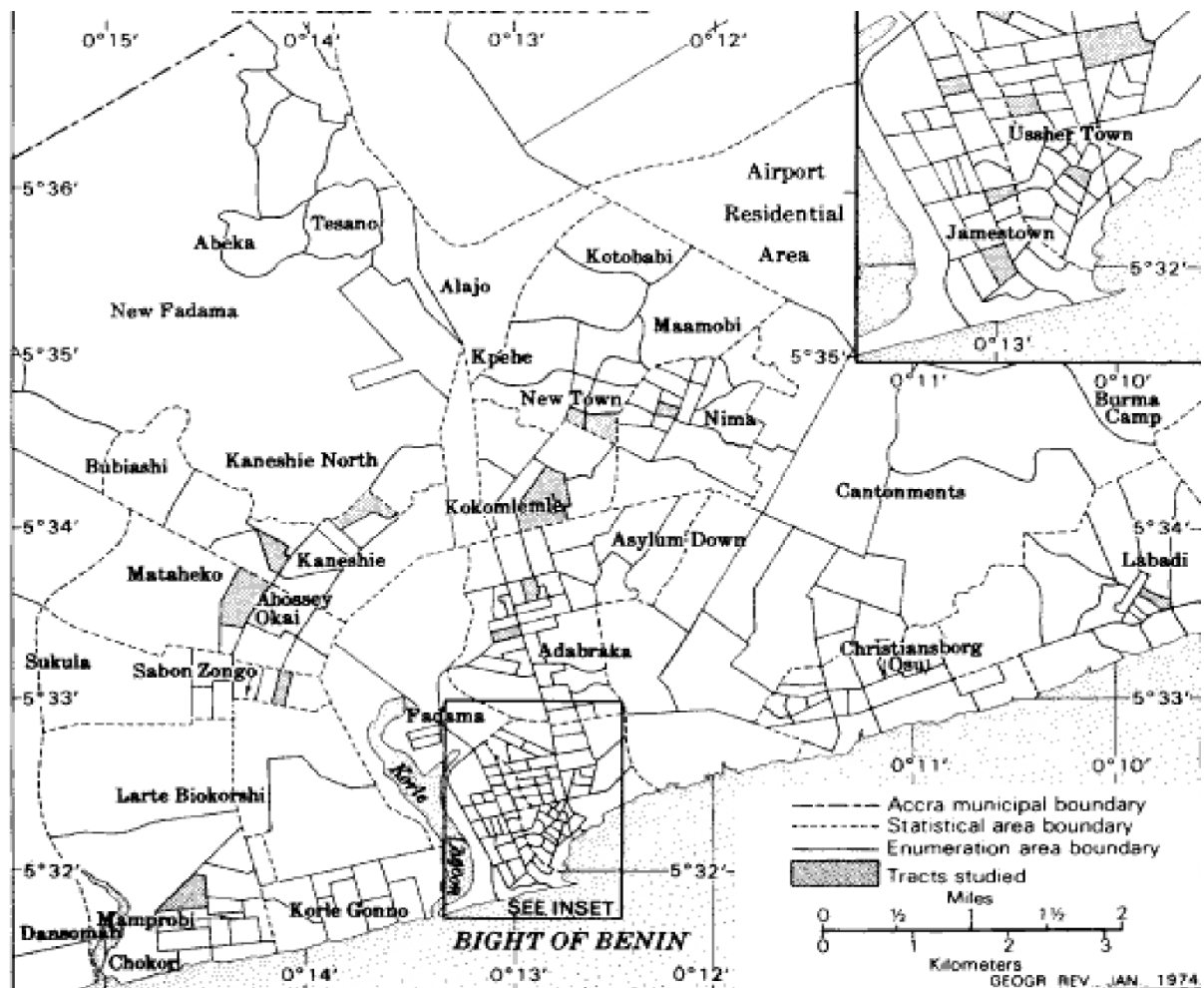
The settlement used to be a small fishing village where the inhabitants traded with Akan people in the hinterland (Nuno-Amarteifio, 2015) before contacts with European traders. By the sixteenth century, the Accra coast was known to European merchants who had built various forts to the eastern part of Accra's coastline<sup>24</sup>. Increased trading with European merchants expanded the settlement in the ensuing centuries. According to Quayson (2014) by the seventeenth century, the indigenous Ga population had organised themselves into six settlements, namely, Ga Mashie (also known today as Jamestown or Old Accra), Osu (which came to be called Christianborg because of the castle), Labadi, Teshie, Nungua and Tema<sup>25</sup> (Fig. 4.1). As European merchants consolidated their economic interests and security needs, particularly with the onset of slave trade, castles such as Christianborg, Ussher and James Forts and others were built by the seventeenth century. Economic imperatives<sup>26</sup> led to political strategies and building of structures (socio-economic and political) between European states in Europe, their merchants in Accra and elsewhere within the country and links to other parts of West Africa and the new world of America (Quayson, 2014).

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<sup>24</sup> It is believed that the Portuguese built Fort Kongenstein by the 1590s at Ada, a town located about 30 km to the east of Accra (See: [https://www.ghanaweb.com/GhanaHomePage/tourism/castles\\_overview.php](https://www.ghanaweb.com/GhanaHomePage/tourism/castles_overview.php))

<sup>25</sup> Using Jamestown as reference point, these six family groupings' settlements mainly gravitate towards the eastern side of the city.

<sup>26</sup> The economic interest was seen in the temporal shifts: first from mutual trade (with local people) in gold and agricultural products to slaves and then to exploitation of agricultural and other natural resources after abolition of slave trade in the first half of the nineteenth century.



**Figure 4. 1:** Map of Accra Central (Source: [http://www.accraexpat.com/maps/accra\\_map.gif](http://www.accraexpat.com/maps/accra_map.gif))

Pursuit of economic interests ultimately led to wars between various European powers as well as with and amongst local traditional states/kingdoms due to attempts to gain access to the coast to trade directly with Europeans. By the first decade of the twentieth century Britain was in firm control over the entire colony, which became known as the Gold Coast.

It is important to highlight that the European forts were all constructed to the eastern part of the city, though European merchants came via the western coast. Most likely the eastern part had a better seacoast that catered well to the construction of forts and ultimately the Jamestown harbor. Thus, the castles provided the first growth pole around which the settlement developed.

European ships brought goods and loaded slaves from the castles: Christainborg, Ushher and James.

The long centuries (1470s-1950s) of associations between natives and Europeans and trading activities on this part of Accra led to inter-marriages with Europeans. The offspring from such unions were educated first in the Christianborg castle, which had a school, and some sent to study in Europe (Wellington, 2010; Quayson, 2014). Some of the offspring, e.g. James Bannerman and Henry Richter, became businessmen and middlemen between natives and Europeans leading to their descendants inheriting the family wealth (Nuno-Amarteifio, 2015). Some of them also became lawyers, politicians, doctors, among others. Several scholars (Wellington, 2010; Quayson, 2014) on Accra have documented such families as James Bannerman, John Hansen, William Bruce, Engmann, Quist, etc. who mostly settled on the eastern part of Accra.

Yankson and Bertrand (2012) argue that after abolition of slavery in 1806, Accra's economic fortunes dwindled until the relocation of the capital of the Gold Coast colony to Accra in 1877. Perhaps this political event not only marked the ascendancy of Accra city as a major metropolis in Ghana (and by extension, West Africa) but also its contemporary spatial structure today. This is likely because the relocation of the capital and other events made imperative, in the minds of colonial administrators, the need for distinctive land-use. Such distinctive land-use came along with racial segregation in the city. For instance, after the Berlin Conference on partition of Africa in 1881 and moving into the early part of the 1900s, the colonial government started passing laws to segregate Europeans and indigenes (Nuno-Amarteifio, 2015). The castle area at Osu (then known as Christianborg area), Cantonments, Ridge and Labone were demarcated as European areas and collectively came to be called Victoriaborg (Quayson, 2014). The area between the Christianborg Castle and James Fort was developed as a government enclave. The Africa natives were restricted to the Jamestown area and the areas to

the west and north including Chokor, Korle Gonno, Kaneshie, Mamprobi and Adabraka (Fig. 4.1). Asian traders were also located in the highstreets at Jamestown. Today, the European areas have maintained some of the highest property values in the city (Quayson, 2014).

Transportation offers impetus to urban development (Fox and Goodman, 2016). In early twentieth century Accra, railway became the link that tied transportation to resources (minerals, and agricultural produce) and commerce, leading to increased growth of the city. Accra's railway was constructed in 1905 (Quayson, 2014). Between 1905 and 1915, railway line, terminating at Jamestown harbor, was extended from Accra to connect hinterlands towns (Nsawam, Akwatia and Koforidua) where cash crops and minerals were located (See Fig. 1.2). The Jamestown fishing harbor (originally built in 1871 and presently known as the 'Lighthouse') had a breakwater added by 1905 to make it a port<sup>27</sup>, and its neighborhood area continued to be a prime site for commerce. Merchants built warehouses and shops, including G.B. Ollivant, Paterson Zochonis (PZ), United Trading Company (UTC), Kingsway supermarket, in the Jamestown neighborhood which were outposts for European products (Quayson, 2014; Oteng-Ababio and Arthur, 2015). Though most of the area is in ruins, some of the shops and warehouses continue to operate today. The growing importance of the Jamestown area also attracted Asians, namely, Lebanese, Syrians and Indians into the trading sectors. In 1923, the railway was extended to Kumasi (Ghana's second largest city, located 275km northwest of Accra). In 1954, the railway line was extended from Accra to the new port of Tema, 23km to the east of Accra.

Yet Accra's structure has been shaped not only by positive events but by negative events too. These include epidemics and earthquakes. Firstly, the outbreak of bubonic plague in 1908 and

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<sup>27</sup> The Jamestown harbor however ceased operation in 1928 when a larger harbor was built by the colonial administration at Sekondi-Takoradi, located 250km west of Accra. Sekondi-Takoradi has much proximity to mineral and agricultural rich hinterland towns and became more preferable for colonial exploitative interests.

then yellow fever in 1912 led to the colonial administrators taking measures to forestall spread of the diseases. Up until the epidemic, colonial administrators had not made any efforts towards proper town planning, at least in native settlement areas (Quayson, 2014; Nuno-Amarteifio, 2015). The events therefore brought about the need to act, particularly by decongesting the Jamestown area, the epicenter of the outbreak, where building forms had given little concern to sewage disposal and ventilation within the settlements. As such, the colonial administration planned and built new settlements at Adabraka, Asylum Down and Tudu for the middle class between 1914 and 1920. The government incentivised indigenes to move into these new houses. A makeshift low-income settlement was also planned at Korle Gonno, west of Jamestown (Quayson, 2014). This policy led to the growth of areas such as Adabraka and Asylum Down as indigenous middle-class areas whereas Korle Gonno became low income (Quayson, 2014). After these initiatives, some local chiefs subsequently argued for new government housing schemes. Additionally, the construction of the premier government hospital, the Korle Bu hospital, some 5 km to the west of James' Fort, in 1930 led to the building of new accommodation at Ridge (near Osu, in the eastern part) for the (white) medical staff of the hospital. Later on, upon pressure from the people, the government resourced the low-income housing at Korle Gonno<sup>28</sup> to become accommodation for the local workers/staff of the hospital (Quayson, 2014).

Secondly, an earthquake in 1939 was another significant event in Accra's urban structure. After the earthquake which destroyed most mud buildings, the government passed the lands acquisition ordinance in 1940 to acquire large tracts of lands in the city including areas at Kaneshie, Mamprobi, Chokor and Osu. The second type of multi-ethnic African middle-class housing were then constructed on some of these lands, e.g. at Kaneshie and Mamprobi, targeted at the lower to middle level civil servants (Quayson, 2014). Other low-income housing were

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<sup>28</sup> Korle Bu Hospital falls within the Korle Gonno neighborhood.

also constructed at Chorkor, in the 1940s. The resultant effect of the Kaneshie lower middle-class housing and the Korle Gonno low-income housing is that it led to a situation where the western part of the city became a less affluent area, compared to Adabraka and the Osu areas, to the east. The effects of these housing provisions in various parts of the city came to establish what Quayson (2014:64) calls ‘differential social ecologies located in space’ where the city is segregated, substantially, on socio-economic and, to an extent, ethnic levels. Taking Jamestown as the reference, Kaneshie, located north-northwest, has more Akan people; Mamprobi, Choker, and Korle Gonno, due west, is more indigenous Gas, whilst Adabraka and Asylum Down, located north-northeast, is more mixed/cosmopolitan with high Ghanaian middle-class people. Consequently, the re-organisation of the city following the natural disasters, to an extent, persists until now.

From the background of the epidemics and natural disasters a need for organized planning became more imperative. In 1944, the colonial government then tasked the renowned British architect/town planner, Maxwell Fry to plan the first Accra structure plan. The plan proposed a number of new roads as well as widening and upgrading of existing ones. However, only part of the plan’s recommendation was incorporated into a new Accra plan (in 1958), ‘*A Plan for the Town*’, which became the blueprint for the city immediately after independence.

Additionally, in 1945, the colonial government passed the town and country planning ordinance, CAP 84 to direct general physical development. In that ordinance, there was a provision for an area to be declared a planning area or matured for planning before planning was undertaken<sup>29</sup>. Most of Accra, beyond the core areas, by 1945 was not yet matured for planning. In 1948, the University College of the Gold Coast, then affiliate college of the University of London, was founded at Legon, about 14km northeast of Jamestown, by the

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<sup>29</sup> Information by Ahmed Tchawey, principal town planning officer of the Land Use and Spatial Planning Authority (formerly town and country planning department), Accra.

colonial government. Prior to the founding of the university, in 1924, the Prince of Wales College (later Achimota School) was founded some 2km from Legon. As such, the colonial government, in the 1950s, built high-class low-density housing for the increasing number of expatriate teaching staff of the university and Achimota School at Tesano, located about 10km north of Jamestown and some 4km west of Legon. According to Quayson (2014), this community was supposed to be an automobile commuter one. Over time, the university and the Achimota School became another growth pole, attracting some of the country's intelligentsia to settle in neighboring communities, such as East Legon.

Finally, following independence in 1957, the postcolonial leaders embarked on bold policies that significantly impacted Accra's structure and perhaps continued to cement eastern Accra as the wealthiest part of the city. One of such is the construction of a new town and harbor at Tema and construction of two major highways, called the motorway and beach road, and a secondary road, which later came to be known as Spintex road, between Tema and Accra. The new town and harbor, completed in 1962, became the industrial heartbeat of Ghana. The motorway itself terminates in the vicinity of Ghana's only international airport. The only airport also has a constraint on the diplomatic community in terms of how far they could live in the city. An international trade fair center was constructed in the early 1960s in Labadi, off the beach road and about 15 minutes' drive from the airport. Additionally, postcolonial administrators moved to occupy bungalows that had been built for government workers in the colonial times. Thus, Ridge, Osu RE, Cantonments (which was created by the British colonial administrators for military officers) became the residential neighborhoods for the ruling elites, and other wealthy individuals.

This account outlines how Accra spatial development has been shaped by historical processes. Presently, neoliberal policies adopted by the state also seem to be adding additional layer upon the aforementioned events, for which I expatiate further in the succeeding section.

## 4.2 Ghana's Economic Restructuring under the IMF and the World Bank

Ghana's relationship with the Bretton-Woods institutions dates back to the 1960s, specifically in 1965 when the Nkrumah administration approached the IMF for economic stabilisation loans. However, Nkrumah rejected the conditionalities and so could not receive a loan. Immediately after his overthrow, though, the succeeding *National Liberation Council* (NLC) military government went to the IMF for its first loan in May 1966 (ActionAid, 2010). The conditionalities included currency devaluation, reduction in the public expenditure, retrenchment of some public-sector workers as well as restructuring of external debt and restriction on government borrowing (Frempong-Ansah, 1991). The IMF policies were continued during the democratic rule of Dr. Abrefa Busia's *Progress Party* government of 1969-1972. According to ActionAid (2010), despite the policies helping to ensure seven percent average increase in GDP growth between 1969 and 1971 it did not change the structure of the economy. As such, fiscal and current account deficits actually increased by 1972. Amidst increasing economic difficulties, the administration was toppled by another military coup in 1972, curtailing the program. In 1979, the nation returned to democratic rule but, again, in 1981 the Jerry Rawlings military junta (Provisional National Defence Council-PNDC) toppled the administration. The PNDC approached the World Bank/IMF for economic bailout in April 1983. The neoliberal era is, therefore, seen as starting from 1983, the year that has been referenced as the beginning of Ghana's economic recovery (see Table 1.1) and within which Ghana has experienced the longest political stability (Herbst, 1993; ActionAid, 2010). Rawlings returned Ghana to constitutional rule in 1992 with himself being elected as a constitutional President in 1993. He handed over after democratic elections in 2000 to John Kufour in 2001.

In the twenty-first century, after signing on to the highly indebted poor countries initiative (HIPC) in 2002 and benefitting from debt cancellation in 2004, the state again resorted to IMF bailout in 2009. Additionally, from 2015, it signed on for another three-year loan facility. Around the end of 2017, the new government reported it was important to extend the relationship to benefit from additional loan facility to help ensure sustained economic growth. In this section, however, my focus is on the initial relationship that sought to shift the Ghanaian economy to a market-oriented one. As such, emphasis is placed more on the structural reforms of the 1980s.

Poor economic management by successive governments since independence may have necessitated a need for IMF/World Bank interventions in Ghana (Jeong, 1993). There are however both exogenous and endogenous factors including the oil crises of 1973, world market price of raw materials, and political instability. During the immediate post-colonial era, Ghana shifted from its open economy of the 1950s and adopted a policy of import substitution and closed economic system from 1961 until February 1966 when the Nkrumah government was ousted (Herbst, 1993). The economic growth of Ghana was very impressive during the 1950s and the early 1960s. By 1964, however, among others, the pursuit of large developmental projects and slump in world price of cocoa, which was the main backbone of the Ghanaian economy, exposed the fragility of the economy and the appropriateness or otherwise of government policies. The economic growth rate in 1964 was -5.1 percent (Fosu, 1998).

Between 1966 and 1983, Ghana was largely under military rule; only interspersed with two democratic rules, from 1969-1972<sup>30</sup> and 1979-1981, each of which did not last for more than

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<sup>30</sup> The military junta, National Liberation Council (NLC), that ousted Dr. Kwame Nkrumah in 1966 organized a democratic election in which Dr. Abrefa Busia's Progress Party (PP) won in sworn in October 1969. Busia was ousted by another military junta, the Supreme Military Council (SMC 1), in January 1972.

three years. The economy under-performed or recorded negative growth during most part of this era (Table 4.1; see also Fig. 1.1).

Overall, reasons put forward for the low economic performance included both act of God and poor policies by successive governments (Herbst, 1993). These included over-valued currency, inefficient tax system, decreasing exports, low investment in infrastructure, neglect of the rural economy, over-staffed public sector, and droughts in 1982, among others (Jeong, 1993).

**Table 4. 1:** Ghana’s Real GDP Growth Rate

Year	1965	1970	1975	1979	1980
GDP/% growth	+1.359	+9.225	-14.333	-1.679	+0.558

(Source: Fosu, 1998; See also Fig. 1.1)

Jeong (1993:56) reveals that the share of cocoa (agriculture) sector to gross domestic product (GDP) decreased from 14 percent in 1970 to 2.6 percent; manufacturing from average of 11.4 percent in 1970-1972 to average of 6.2 percent in 1980-1982 while gold production reduced from 690,000 ounces in 1970 to 230,000 ounces in 1982. Balance of payment deficits resulted in serious shortages of essential commodities, spare parts and raw materials on the Ghanaian market. The banking sector also came under severe pressure arising from excessive government borrowing (Jeong, 1993).

Political instability also partly accounted for the gloomy situation. According to Fosu (1998:2) ‘in 1966, 1972, 1975-1976, 1979, 1980-1983, the growth rate was negative [and] the years in which negative growth was experienced generally coincide with change in government and sometimes with policy changes or reversals’. Dzorgbor (2001:256) also argues that ‘the policies pursued by these governments... were incoherent and often destructive of the socio-

economic and political environment for investment and production'. By 1982, according to Herbst (1993), policy illogicalities had left the average Ghanaian citizen poorer than s/he was in 1957.

From April 1983 onwards, the longest relationship with the Bretton-Woods institutions came to be established. The relationship also led to substantial restructuring of the economy and subsequently urban impacts on the capital city, Accra. The Rawlings administration in 1983, a year after seizing power, approached the IMF/World Bank for economic bailout or what has been universally referred to as structural adjustment program (SAP). The structural adjustment was meant to re-orient the nation from state-centered control/regulation to one that is market-led, typical of western-style market economy (Harvey, 2005). Dzorgbor (2001:288) argues that 'by its thrust, the SAP... [amounted to] capitalist development in the long run' whilst Konadu-Agyemang (2001:529) maintains that the rationale behind the SAP are 'rooted in neoclassical economics and the modernisation theories'. Indeed, the government rationalised that the program was to lead to 'a growth-oriented, competitive, efficient and integrated economy (GoG, 1987:i)<sup>31</sup>.

The program, referred to as economic recovery program (ERP) in Ghana, had three phases with different timelines and specific policies, some of which overlapped in practice (Jeong, 1993). These are ERP I (1983-1986), ERP II (1987-1990) and ERP III (1990-1993). Jeong (1993) summarises that ERP I involved short-term economic stabilisation, ERP II involved emphasizing growth through the liberalisation and relaxation of price controls. This period also involved 'deregulation of the financial sector... recapitalisation of the banks and encouraged the development of new forms of financial intermediation in the economy' (USAID/Ghana, 1996:4). The ERP III gave priority to incentivising growth by reducing government intervention in market mechanism. ERP II and III amounted to structural change to the

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<sup>31</sup> Also cited in Jeong (1993:59)

economy (Herbst, 1993; Jeong, 1993; Dzorgbo, 2001). In the early part of the 1990s, the donor community (both multilateral and bilateral) added additional conditionality of democracy and good governance for Ghana and other African countries as a pre-requisite for international economic support.

The program involved a financial package of some \$1 billion (US) of which 60 and 14 percent, respectively, were loaned from the IMF and the World Bank. As such, from the outset, the IMF took the lead role. The World Bank later took over from 1987 (Herbst, 1993). The government, as part of the conditionality, was to reduce or eliminate macro-economic imbalances, devalue the currency, allow flexibility in the foreign exchange regime, increase export and enhance Ghana's international creditworthiness (Herbst, 1993; ActionAid, 2010). This was followed by the structural adjustment policies and economic transformation; particularly the adoption of trade liberalisation policies; including removal of tariffs on imported goods, divestiture of state owned enterprises, as well as a general reduction or ultimate removal of government intervention in the market. Additionally, there were retrenchment of public sector workers, removal of subsidies on education, food, transportation, and health, etc.

Generally, these helped to resuscitate the economy to a large extent. In particular, the currency's value moved from 2.7 to the dollar in 1983 to 650 in 1989 whilst the producer price of cocoa shot up from 4000 cedis per ton in 1982 to 85,000 cedis in 1987; and real gross domestic product (RGDP) growth rose from -4.55 percent in 1983 to 8.39 percent in 1984 and +4.93 percent in 1996 (Jeong, 1993; Fosu, 1998; Dzorgbor, 2001). Foreign direct investments increased, particularly in the mineral and mining sectors (Grant and Nijman, 2002).

However, the downside of the adjustment, it has been argued, is the level of socio-economic hardships on the populace, particularly urban dwellers, the urban economy and labour (Herbst,

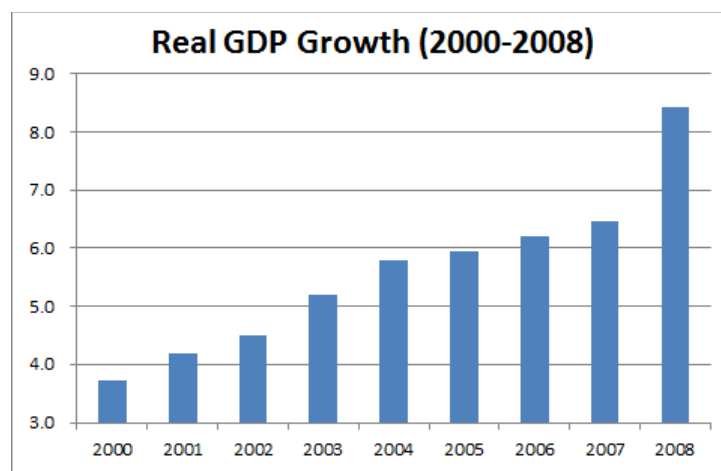
1993; Potts, 2012). For instance, retrenchment of workers, moratorium on public sector employment, as well as removal of subsidies on health, agriculture and education brought harsh living conditions to the people (Herbst, 1993; ActionAid, 2010). Herbst (1993) maintains that with a fragile local capacity, the devaluation affected local exporters and ability to broaden the export base beyond primary commodities like cocoa and minerals. Additionally, the banking and financial sector were also affected due to non-performing loans owed them by both state-owned enterprises and local businesses. As such recycling of loans to businesses including members of the Ghana National Chamber of Commerce and the Association of Ghana Industries had become problematic. Indeed, the Association of Ghana Industries had bemoaned the ‘hardening of liquidity problems since the early days of the recovery’ in 1989 (Herbst, 1993:135). The international community also recognized the adverse effects of the adjustment policies. The UN Economic Commission on Africa (ECA) saw the reforms as generally inimical to Africa’s future while UNICEF called for ‘adjustment with a human face’ (Dzorgbo, 2001:5).

The economic challenges undoubtedly affected Accra’s urban development in a number of ways, including: 1. Government’s inability to maintain and expand existing urban infrastructure; 2. Inadequate amenities to meet the needs of urban population; 3. City citizens’ ability to invest in urban development projects, as has become evident in the era after 2000; and 4. Citizens’ lack of access to credit from financial institutions which meant low capacity for local businesses to expand.

As a result, Accra, and other urban areas, experienced reduced in-migration from the rural areas and other West African countries (Songsore, 2010). However, there was out-migration of Ghanaians (especially educated and skilled) urban dwellers to countries like Nigeria, Cote D’Ivoire, US and other European countries (Herbst, 1993; Dzorgbor, 2001). It is estimated that

there are more than three million Ghanaians living abroad (Anarfi et al. 2003) and such large-scale migration started in the 1970s (Grant 2009). I would argue later (in Chapter Five) that in the era after 2000, with a growing (open-market) economy, some of these Ghanaians have, in turn, become important catalysts in the urban transformation of Accra.

Yet, Ghana's case has always been touted as a model of IMF/World Bank reforms success (Herbst, 1993). Between 2004-2007, after successfully completing the HIPC initiatives, against a background of increasing growth (Fig. 4.2), improving democracy and investor confidence in the Ghanaian economy, the government raised its first Eurobond, and first in sub-Saharan Africa, on the international financial market in 2007 which yielded some \$750 million (US).



**Figure 4. 2:** Ghana's Real GDP from 2000-2008<sup>32</sup>

Since then, Ghana has borrowed from the international financial market on five occasions<sup>33</sup>.

There has also being increased financial injection from other sources including particularly

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<sup>32</sup> Bawumia, 2012:7

<sup>33</sup> (<https://www.ghanaweb.com/GhanaHomePage/business/Ghana-to-issue-fifth-Eurobond-by-October-443642>; Accessed January 22, 2018)

Ghanaian residents abroad, whose remittances have been claimed as rivalling loans from IMF/World Bank. It has been argued that this healthy development partly stems from the SAP's liberalisation of the foreign exchange market (Dzorgbor, 2001:289). The Ghanaian diaspora, it must be said, do not only support their families in various parts of the country, but some have also partnered international investors to establish notable (urban) economic investments. This has been conceptualised as 'in-between globalisation' by Grant (2009). The increasing inflow of foreign direct investment in the economy, which has been noted by scholars (Grant and Nijman, 2002; Grant 2012), is directly attributed to the liberalisation reforms. In the mid-1990s, the government created an agency, the Ghana Investment Promotion Center (GIPC), to among other goals, 'encourage, promote and facilitate investment in the country' (GIPC Law, Act 865:4) in order to 'make Ghana the first destination of choice for investing in Africa'<sup>34</sup>.

### **4.3 Regulatory and Legal Framework to Enhance Ghana's Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) Attraction**

This section traces the liberalisation of the Ghanaian economy leading to the establishment of an investment promotion centre as the government agency responsible for, among others, creating a competitive environment to drive investment into Ghana within the West African sub-region. I will relate some of the key functions of the centre, other laws/legal framework developed and outline how FDIs have continued to grow within a growing economy and evolving regulatory framework. Traditionally, Ghana receives FDI inflows as capital injection into new or existing companies or capitalisation of goods and services, which are supposed to aid especially the transfer of technology and knowhow<sup>35</sup>. Other investment models, including those that have been experimented in the past such as presidential special initiatives (PSI), will

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<sup>34</sup> (<http://www.gipcghana.com/about/our-mission-and-vision.html>); Accessed: January 22, 2018)

<sup>35</sup> Information obtained from the GIPC

also be touched on. The section will end with how Ghana has become one of the preferable investment destinations in Africa.

Immediate post-independence Ghanaian leaders favored a closed economy that relied on import substitution industrialisation. In 1962, a law was passed that mandated all foreign investors to re-invest at least 60% of their profit into the Ghanaian economy<sup>36</sup>. Dzorgbor (2001) maintains that, prior to the SAP, the state's reach in the market was too extensive. This is against neoliberal ethos where governments are only expected to set rules regarding property rights and protection of democratic freedom and did not bode well for foreign investment drive. As Simon (1992:67) indicates, 'it is basic political and economic environment, rather than specific foreign and investment incentive, that determines the attitude of foreign capital'.

Subsequent governments, especially since the era of the 1980s – the neoliberal era – have taken a more liberal, pro-business and pro-market policy position. For instance, during his inaugural speech in January 2001, President Kufuor announced to the world that Ghana was now ushered into the golden age of business and that the country was open for business (Mensah, 2016). The government also signaled a shift from poverty alleviation to wealth creation in the Ghana Poverty Reduction Strategy (GPRS I) of 2003-2005 and the Ghana Growth and Poverty Reduction Strategy (GPRS II) of 2006-2009 (Adu-Ampong, 2018) with the private sector leading in investments and job creation. This notwithstanding, some administrations in the neoliberal era have had a history of introducing price control and other market distortion policies (Dzorgbor, 2001). For instance, in the early 1980s and beyond, pressure groups had called for nationalisation of private multi-national businesses like United Africa Company (UAC), Volta Aluminum Company (VALCO), CFAO, Agritpetco (American petroleum drilling company), Barclays, etc.; though none of these were nationalised (Dzorgbor, 2001).

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<sup>36</sup> ([http://www.crawfurd.dk/africa/ghana\\_timeline.htm](http://www.crawfurd.dk/africa/ghana_timeline.htm); Accessed: January 22, 2018)

These experiences undoubtedly have informed new direction in Ghana's dealings with the international community during the neoliberal era.

A key part of the SAP involved 'liberalisation and deregulation' (Grant and Nijman, 2002:326). This involved, among others, re-engineering the legal framework to open up the market to external investors. New laws were passed that allowed foreigners to own up to 100% of businesses and to repatriate their profit, if necessary (Grant and Nijman, 2002). One of such is the Free Zones Law 1995 (Act 504), which creates specific development zones within the country where foreign companies have sweeping incentives like 100 percent ownership, import exemptions, tax incentives, no minimum starting capital, repatriation of profit without any charges, immunity from nationalisation or expropriation, among others, though investors must demonstrate they can export 70 percent of their products.

Prior to the passage of Act 504, the government had set up the Ghana Investment Promotion Center (GIPC) in 1994. Subsequently, government passed the GIPC law (Act 865) in 2013 to replace GIPC Act 478 (1994)<sup>37</sup> that grants the center the powers to initiate policies, actions and incentives to drive investors into Ghana. Aryeetey (2005:12) lists the plethora of incentives outlined in the Act 478 as follows:

- depreciation of the capital allowance of 75% of capital expenditure incurred in the year of investment and in subsequent years,
- free transferability of profits and dividends,
- foreign exchange retention accounts through which all foreign payments including dividends can be made,
- exemption from payment of customs duties on machinery and plant for the establishment of mines and further relief for selected items for on-going mining companies, and
- the establishment of well-defined rules for dispute settlement, including international arbitration

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<sup>37</sup> Act 478 itself replaced the 1985 Investment Code promulgated by the PNDC government

Foreign investors<sup>38</sup>, whose investments are also immune from expropriation within the Act 865, are mandated by law to register with the centre. Among others, the Act stipulates use of Ghanaian labour to ensure technology transfer to the Ghanaian economy, though in terms of managerial positions, the Act allows foreign investors to appoint to managerial positions non-Ghanaians. Even in terms of the non-managerial labor, the Act allows investors to employ non-Ghanaians where expertise does not exist in Ghana.

Together with other ministries and agencies, government, through the GIPC, attempts to continue to create an enabling environment as a means of increasing investment in the country. These actions have been driven, in the twenty-first century, by three needs, namely; increased competitiveness, technology transfer, and keeping watch on the business/investment environment through regulatory systems, as means to ensure continuous competitiveness within the West African sub-region where the weight of countries such as Nigeria, especially, tilts heavily on sub-regional competitiveness<sup>39</sup>. Hence, the GIPC embarks on road shows, including presenting at international events, to attract investors. Also, governments, since 2001, have embarked on international trips to meet investors in other countries, like India, Brazil, UK, China, among others, to invite them to invest in Ghana (Mensah, 2016).

According to a GIPC official, Ghana's attractiveness as a destination for investment capital (i.e. competitiveness) rests on its development of infrastructure, resource availability (physical and labor), productivity and workforce skills, and the development of the business value chain. The level of maturation of these elements can make Ghana more attractive for FDI relative to other nations, such as Nigeria, that compete and vie for the same investment capital. A growing and developing economy requires infrastructure<sup>40</sup> and resources in order to facilitate the

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<sup>38</sup> This refers to any investor who invests in the country, including those who operate within and beyond the free zones enclaves.

<sup>39</sup> Information from GIPC

<sup>40</sup> Roads, highways, bridges and other forms of physical infrastructure should be present, maintained and provide sufficient safety for the transportation of goods as well as for the commute of employees.

production and distribution of goods and services. Lower transaction cost, due to the maturation of these elements, enables investors to earn returns on their investments as their enterprises are able to generate profits. That is a key issue in competitiveness. Additionally, within the provisions of the GIPC law (Act 865), FDIs must have a technology transfer objective where various investments do not only generate profits and jobs for investors and employees but equip employees with requisite skills so citizens can be competitive in the global market place. Indeed, such a policy, it is anticipated, leads to improvement in the quality of goods and services, enhances service delivery and productivity as well as increasing competitiveness.

This liberalisation led to marked increase in foreign investment inflows into the Ghanaian economy, first in the mining sector [where an estimated investment of \$2 billion was made by multinational mining firms in the decades of the 1990s (Awudi, 2002)] and subsequently into other sectors like services, manufacturing, agriculture, tourism. Grant and Nijman (2002:327) reveal that ‘in Accra, over 80 percent of all foreign companies currently active were established since the initiation of reforms in 1983’. Data from the Ghana Investment Promotion Center (GIPC) indicate that there has been increased foreign direct investment (FDI) inflows. In particular, across the country, annual FDI values have increased from less than half a billion dollars in the decades of the 1990s until the mid-2000s where it increased to over a billion with the highest of 6.8 billion in 2011 (Table 4.2) when the economy grew by over 14 percent. The GIPC has targeted about \$5 billion in 2017 (GIPC Quarterly Report, 2017).

Apart from the free zones enclaves, investors are also encouraged into other sectors of the economy; what the GIPC has indicated as government’s priority areas due to the social demand and economic viability of projects within those sectors. GIPC outlines these priority areas as energy, oil and gas, infrastructure, manufacturing, construction/real estate, agriculture/agro-

processing and tourism. Within all these sectors, the legal framework has been eased to make the investment environment conducive.

**Table 4. 2:** Annual FDI Inflow to Ghana

No	Year	Number Registered	Value in USD	No	Year	Number Registered	Value in USD
1	1994*	17	4,157,000	12	2005	229	167,159,704
2	1995	145	148,443,380	13	2006	256	2,317,467,010
3	1996	192	194,907,980	14	2007	307	4,929,494,696
4	1997	233	475,026,810	15	2008	296	3,446,828,888
5	1998	191	160,220,390	16	2009	260	558,922,344
6	1999	199	226,980,083	17	2010	391	1,124,159,731
7	2000	180	114,906,399	18	2011	514	6,821,492,792
8	2001	184	89,949,527	19	2012	399	4,889,954,398
9	2002	153	61,577,190	20	2013	418	3,945,657,935
10	2003	164	88,602,446	21	2014	184	3,387,162,356
11	2004	201	152,658,732	22	2015	170	2,329,308,193

(Data obtained from the Ghana Investment Promotion Center; \*Data from September-December only)

Furthermore, besides the free zones development enclaves, in the decade of the 2000, government introduced the presidential special initiatives (PSI) as well as the private public partnerships (PPP). The PSI model, a flagship program by the Kufuor administration and administered under the office of the president, was set up to address “*peculiar needs of the community*”<sup>41</sup>. The idea was to transform rural communities into becoming economic centers. The government led the way by organizing people into a (corporate) body of out-growers and assisting them with technical know-how to grow raw materials. It also collaborated with the

<sup>41</sup> (<https://www.ghanaweb.com/GhanaHomePage/NewsArchive/President-Kufuor-launches-two-Project-Initiatives-17424>; Accessed: January 24, 2018)

private sector, which takes advantage, to establish an export-oriented enterprise within the community to buy the produce for processing and export. However, the policy was not continued after the Kufuor government though some modest investment success was achieved. Out of this scheme came Ghana's first international starch company, the Ayensu Starch Factory in the Central Region in 2003. This model bears a semblance to the Kenya Tea Development Authority (KTDA) small-holder out-grower scheme which was developed with the technical and financial support from the Commonwealth Development Corporation (CDC) in 1973 (McWilliams, 2001). It is important to draw this analogy because the CDC group, which experienced difficulties cooperating with the nationalist Nkrumah administration after 1957 (McWilliams, 2001), became instrumental in the Accra Mall development. PPPs are a special model in which the government partner to work with the private sector to take up projects. According to the GIPC, Private Public Partnerships (PPP) arrangements became popular over the last decade when the government sought to engage foreign private investors in most of its infrastructural and rural projects while offering investors the security of their investments and assurances of return on investments in such collaborations.

The objective of PPP for Ghana, according to the GIPC, is to improve the legislative, institutional, financial, fiduciary and technical framework to generate a pipeline of bankable PPP projects. There are three components to the project, the first component being institutional, fiduciary, legislative, and financing capacity building. This component is focused on developing the in-house capacity within the Government of Ghana, beginning with Ministry of Finance and Economic Planning (MoFEP), *“to identify, assess, develop, implement and manage PPP transactions”*. The second component is the PPP pipeline preparation and transaction advisory support. Finally, the third component is the project management and

monitoring and evaluation<sup>42</sup>. The PPP model seem to be catching up where the local governments in Accra have been authorised by the state to undertake PPP projects in areas like development of community markets, waste treatment plants, among others<sup>43</sup>.

More recently, also, mergers have been a popular alternative for foreign investors. The merger between Ghana's Social Security Bank and Societe Generale Group of France in 2004 and Ghana Telecom and UK's Vodafone in 2008 are two cases in point. Currently, the government is strongly promoting joint-venture partnerships with local businesses as a way of improving existing businesses as well as mitigating the risks most investors face when investing in a growing economy like Ghana's.

One sector that has seen increased growth in FDI more than any other after manufacturing and building/construction is the service sector, where the retail and consumer industry belong, over the last two decades. The sector has attracted cumulatively more than \$6.7 billion (USD) from 1995 to 2015 which is about 19.1 percent of the total FDI inflow within the twenty-year period (Table 4.3).

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<sup>42</sup> Interview with official at the GIPC

<sup>43</sup> Interview information from the head of development planning, Accra Metropolitan Assembly (AMA)

**Table 4. 3:** Ghana's Total FDI Inflow by Sector, from 1995-2015

No	Sector	No of Projects	Value of Project (USD)
1	Agriculture		1,348,314,475.68
2	Building/Construction		11,509,508,407.93
3	Export Trade		130,668,115.48
4	General Trading		1,921,827,982.11
5	Liaison		1,090,748,058.91
6	Manufacturing		11,972,065,871.07
7	Services		6,794,154,021.16
8	Tourism		832,915,709.54
	<b>TOTAL</b>		<b>35,600,202,641.88</b>

(Data Provided by the Ghana Investment Promotion Center)

In the retail and consumer industry, there are specific rules related to foreign direct investments into this sector. According to GIPC official, the objective is to protect local traders from unfair competition. For instance, trading companies either entirely or partly-owned by foreigners require a minimum capital contribution of USD 1,000,000 and are required to employ at minimum 20 skilled locals. But the capital contributions may be satisfied by remitting convertible foreign currency to a bank in Ghana or by importing goods, entering into lease agreements, incurring construction costs, or making local purchases valued at the required amounts. This minimum capital requirement does not apply to portfolio investments (i.e. bonds, equity security, stocks, and debt security), enterprises set up for export trading, or their branch offices. However, these rules and regulations are changed when the person is a citizen of Ghana. In other words, if the business is a franchise, owned/bought by a Ghanaian, the rules do not apply. The relevance of this specifically to the shopping malls is that if a Ghanaian buys

a foreign franchise, s/he will be exempted from such rules. For foreigners who intend to operate a franchise, the rules will apply.

### ***Other Neoliberal Laws and Regulations***

Other key laws passed include the Securities Industry Law (PNDCL 333) and the Venture Capital Trust Fund (VCTF) Act 680 (2004) which attempt to create conditions for growing domestic capital. The VCTF Act is important because of the connections to key actors in Accra Mall's development. In the early 1990s a key need identified by Ghana's development partners was venture capital to provide financial backbone to private sector small and medium scale enterprises for long term economic growth. The United States Agency for International Development (USAID) in Ghana mooted the idea and need for establishing the Ghana Venture Capital Fund (GVCF) to government in November 1991. The CDC decided to join the USAID in setting up the fund. Other local and international financial institutions joined. A total of about \$6.8 million (US) was raised. The financial institutions provided \$3.8 million, the CDC \$2 million, whilst the USAID donated a grant of \$1 million for first three years' recurrent expenditure. The \$5.8 million went into investment funds. Through its operations in Ghana the GVCF, together with its management arm, the Venture Capital Management Company<sup>44</sup> (VFMC) worked with the Bank of Ghana and other government agencies to create the enabling environment, such as the legal and regulatory framework, for the operation of venture capital and the private sector in the Ghanaian economy. Yet, being more of an experimental project, the financing was targeted at specific medium to large companies some of which have international shareholding, such as Accra Brewery, Ghana Pioneer Aluminum Company, etc. who could show some track record. As such it had a restricted reach and did not benefit directly indigenous small to medium scale companies.

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<sup>44</sup> Both the GVCF and the VFMC were registered as private limited liability companies under the laws of Ghana

By the early 2000s, the need for expanded capacity was still needed due to a persistent lack of long term equity financing for small and medium scale businesses (Mensah, 2004). With the space created, amidst a growing economy the partners of the GVCF and other development partners advised government to formalize the regulatory framework. Government followed up by passing the Venture Capital Trust Fund (VCTF) Act 680 (2004). The national VCTF was then set up between 2004 and 2006. The venture capital market has since grown; giving entrepreneurs (both local and international) some leverage in sourcing equity financing even on the domestic market. This has added to Ghana's, and hence Accra's, competitiveness.

Government has also streamlined business registration processes. For instance, it takes fourteen days to register a business now (WBG, 2017) as opposed to previous sixty days during the decades of the 1990s. Other processes include reducing the cost and time spent in export and import activities. To that extent, government has sought to improve upon operations at Ghana's ports to make them investor-friendly.

The resultant effect of these reforms is that, within the West Africa sub-region, Ghana has been ranked number one on World Bank's ease of doing business since its inception in 2005. Between 2007 and 2015, Ghana ranked highly on the global rankings, occupying between 63 and 92 out of 190 countries of the world, attaining the highest ever rank of 63rd in 2012. In 2014, it was ranked sixth in Africa on the doing business report (Mensah, 2016). On the World Economic Forum's 2016/2017 global competitive forum, Ghana (114<sup>th</sup>) comes fourth after Cote D'Ivoire (99<sup>th</sup>), Cape Verde (110<sup>th</sup>), and Senegal (112<sup>th</sup>) in the sub-region. As such Ghana is viewed as one of most favorable countries in Africa to invest. For instance, the *Financial Mail* (FM, 2015) mentions Ghana and Nigeria as the two West African nations where natural resources and urbanization are driving growth in real estate investments. The Washington-based *International Business Publications* (IBP) (2016) also suggests that investment benefits

including custom import duty exemptions, income tax incentives, carry forward losses and investment guarantees have made Ghana one of the preferable destinations in Africa. Hence, the influx of South African investors, especially in the retail sector.

Despite these seeming positive developments, like most sub-Saharan countries, there are still challenges to Ghana's competitiveness. The World Economic Forum's 2016-2017 global competitiveness report (GCR) on Ghana shows that the country is still a 'factor-driven' economy which means serious inadequacies in infrastructure, institutions and the macro-economic environment. The report specifically highlights inadequate access to finance, high tax rates, corruption, and high inflation as major problems affecting businesses. UNCTAD (cited in Aryeetey, 2005:14) also identifies problem of access to land as another drawback. Against this background, investors need to be aware of the systemic risks attendant to investing in Ghana, and for that matter Accra, and might require a 'leap of faith' (Brasse, 2011).

In sum, passage of new laws or amendments of outdated laws and regulations to attract foreign investors, facilitating access to credit on the local market, improved collaboration with the private sector have tended to increase confidence in the governance structures, largely at the national level and to a much lesser extent at the local government level, where a lot more work needs to be done for citizens to have increased confidence in cities (Cities Alliance, 2016). In the next section, I discuss attempts at improving governance at the local level through decentralization.

#### **4.4 Ghana's Decentralisation and Implication for Accra**

Another major fulcrum of the structural adjustment reforms in Ghana was decentralization, which was seen as part of the processes of reducing the involvement of the central state (Owusu, 2015). It was additionally viewed as a means by which development would devolve

to the lower level of the Ghanaian society (Ayee, 2011; Owusu, 2015). As a result, not only were laws enacted to restructure the financial and economic sectors, but in planning and, consequently, general socio-spatial development of cities.

The decentralisation reforms itself started in 1988 through the promulgation of a local government law, PNDC Law 207. In 1993, under constitutional rule, the District Assemblies Common Fund Act (Act 455) and Local Government Act (Act 462) were enacted by parliament. Act 455 entitles local governments to a percentage share of total government revenue whilst Act 462, which replaced Law 207, equipped the 110 local governments created under Law 207 within Ghana's ten regions<sup>45</sup> with administrative, legislative, executive, planning and rating authority functions (Addo et al., 2016). To ensure proper coordination of sub-national<sup>46</sup> level development, the national Development Planning Systems Act (Act 480) was promulgated in 1994 which established the regional coordinating councils (RCC) in the various regions to ensure that all local government development and spatial plans are harmonised. The head of the RCC is the regional minister appointed by the President.

Under the 1992 Constitution, Ghana, operates a unitary sovereign republican state, that borrows from both the British parliamentary and the American presidential systems, with three basic arms of government (the executive, judiciary and the legislature) which ensure a horizontal separation of powers (Ayee, 2011). Based on the provisions of the Constitution, Act 462 and Act 480, Ghana operates a vertical three-tier government structure which includes the national, regional, and local levels (Ahwoi, 2010; Owusu, 2015) that attempts to replicate the national level power structure at the sub-national levels. The local level is further divided into the zonal

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<sup>45</sup> A region is the equivalent of a province in other countries

<sup>46</sup> I use sub-national levels to refer to either the regional or local levels. In Ghana, usually, the local governments are referred to as districts assemblies. As such, I use local level (government) and district assemblies interchangeably in this study.

and unit committee levels, which makes Ayee (2011) see a four-tier structure. However, this may be unacceptable since zonal and unit committees, being part of the local governments, do not operate separation of powers on their own mandate.

A local (level) government may be called a metropolitan, municipal or district assembly. Definition of what is a metropolitan, municipal or district assembly depends on the population, the economic and the public amenities and infrastructure base of the area (Owusu, 2015). As a district grows in these matrices, it is elevated to a municipal then ultimately to a metropolitan status. Between 2003 and 2012, new local governments were created, under legislative instruments through Act 462, leading to a total of 216 local governments. In 2017, additional 38 were created (Table 4.4).

**Table 4.4:** Number of Local Governments in Ghana and Accra City

Year	Metropolitan		Municipal		District		TOTAL	
	Accra	Ghana	Accra	Ghana	Accra	Ghana	Accra	Ghana
1989	1	3	-	-	1	107	2	110
2003	1	4	1	10	1	124	3	138
2007	1	6	5	40	1	124	7	170
2012	1	6	13	49	2	161	10	216
2017	1	6	18	50	2	198	21	254

In late 2016, a new law (the Land Use and Spatial Planning law, Act 925) was passed to guide land use and spatial development. It needs to be underscored that though Act 462 endowed local governments with planning functions, spatial planning and land use administration have largely operated under the legal framework of the colonial law (CAP 84) enacted in 1945. The CAP 84 law dwelt on the concept of centralised state planning. Hence, whilst Act 462 attempted decentralisation of planning and spatial development at the local government level,

the town and country planning department which is largely responsible for urban development and national spatial planning was still operating under CAP 84. The contradiction is therefore evident. Act 925 therefore replaces CAP 84 and seeks to give impetus or closer coordination with Act 462 through decentralised system of planning, among others. Additionally, the first ever national urban policy launched in 2013 and a new law, the Public Financial Management law enacted in 2016 (Act 921) seek to ground the focus on urban development by, amongst others, giving capacity to local governments to raise funds for urban development.

### ***Implications of Neoliberal Reforms for Accra's Administration and***

#### ***Primacy/Competitiveness***

The city of Accra with a population of about 1.7 million (GSS, 2014) doubles as the capital of the Greater Accra Region (GAR), one of Ghana's ten administrative regions. With a total land area of about 3245 Km<sup>2</sup>, the GAR is the smallest of all Ghana's regions. Before November 2017, GAR had sixteen of Ghana's 216 local governments in which Accra city alone had ten (Table 4.4, 4.5 and Fig 4.3). Within the GAR, there is the Greater Accra Metropolitan Area (GAMA) of which Accra city is a part.



**Figure 4. 3:** Map of Greater Accra Region indicating Local Government Extents<sup>47</sup>

**Table 4.5:** Administrative Districts within Greater Accra Region until November 2017 and Mall Locations

No	Name of District	Area Extent	Malls
1	Accra Metropolitan Assembly (AMA)	Accra City/GAMA/NCT	A& C Mall Oxford Street
2	Tema Metropolitan Assembly (TMA)	GAMA/ NCT	Meridian Mall
3	Ga Central Municipal Assembly	Accra City/GAMA/ NCT	
4	Ga South Municipal Assembly	Accra City/GAMA/ NCT	West Hills
5	Ga East Municipal Assembly	Accra City/GAMA/ NCT	Achimota Mall

<sup>47</sup> (Source: [https://www.google.co.uk/search?q=maps+of+greater+accra&tbm=isch&source=iu&ictx=1&fir=ilkfsZJp2cffRM%253A%252CdbeMCeRI\\_mjinM%252C\\_&usg=AFrqEzchx-vH-yS5OEpaniBrPNUhlZx1cA&sa=X&ved=2ahUKEwiorsXyiM\\_cAhVKQhoKHeohBY8Q9QEwBXoECAIQCA#imgrc=ilkfsZJp2cffRM](https://www.google.co.uk/search?q=maps+of+greater+accra&tbm=isch&source=iu&ictx=1&fir=ilkfsZJp2cffRM%253A%252CdbeMCeRI_mjinM%252C_&usg=AFrqEzchx-vH-yS5OEpaniBrPNUhlZx1cA&sa=X&ved=2ahUKEwiorsXyiM_cAhVKQhoKHeohBY8Q9QEwBXoECAIQCA#imgrc=ilkfsZJp2cffRM); Accessed: August 2, 2018)

6	Ga West Municipal Assembly	Accra City/GAMA/ NCT	
7	La Dadekotopon Municipal Assembly	Accra City/GAMA/ NCT	Accra Mall Marina Mall
8	Ledzokuku Krowor Municipal Assembly	Accra City/GAMA/ NCT	Junction Mall
9	La Nkwantanan Municipal Assembly	Accra City/GAMA/ NCT	
10	Ashaiman Municipal Assembly	Accra City/GAMA/ NCT	
11	Adenta Municipal Assembly	Accra City/GAMA/ NCT	
12	Kpone Katamanso	GAMA/ NCT	
13	Ningo Prampram	GAMA/ NCT	
14	Shai Osudoku District	GAMA/ NCT	
15	Ada East District	GAR	
16	Ada West District	GAR	

The GAMA has a population of between 3.6 and 4.3 million (Owusu and Oteng-Ababio, 2015; Cities Alliance, 2016). According to a senior town planning officer, Ahmed Tchawey, at the head office of the national town and country planning department, Accra can mean several things to different people. Consequently, defining Accra city has become conceptually and practically difficult, partly because of the metropolis' fast urbanization. For instance, whilst the limits of the GAR are clear enough, the boundaries of Accra city and the metropolitan area are always in a flux. He indicates that:

*Accra is [now] the limits of the metropolitan footprints where typically people live... it may not be Accra but they are so interactive with the CBD of Accra that practically it is comfortable to say we are in Accra. Now, anybody who lives within this functional region, falls within the Greater Accra Metropolitan Area. And this area cuts across 3 regions; about 70-80% of Greater Accra (Dec., 2016).*

Owusu (2015:3) agrees that ‘there is difficulty in determining the boundary of... [GAMA] due to the constant movement of this boundary’. Not surprisingly, a review of policy documents and academic papers reveal that there is no consensus on the boundaries of Accra city or GAMA. For instance, the World Bank (2017) refers to the whole Greater Accra Region as the GAMA whilst Owusu and Oteng-Ababio (2015) exclude the rural districts of Shai Osudoku and Ada East and West. In his analysis, Owusu (2015:3) indicates that GAMA refers to ‘the functional city-region of Accra-Tema and surrounding municipalities’.

For the purposes of this study, GAMA is taken as defined by the Greater Accra regional office of the land-use and spatial planning department (formerly town and country planning office). This includes 14 local governments but excludes only the Ada East and West Rural districts. In defining the boundaries of Accra city, I exclude Tema, Ningo Prampram, Kpone Katamanso, Ada East and West and Shai Osudoku districts. I use Accra metropolis<sup>48</sup> and Accra city interchangeably. Also, Accra Metropolitan Area (AMA) refers to the administratively bounded area that includes old Accra and the central business district (CBD) of Accra (Fig. 4.1 and 4.3). This jurisdiction, which is headed by the mayor of Accra, has a population of between 1.66 and 1.84 million (GSS, 2012, 2014).

Given Accra’s strong influence on other nearby settlements, as observed by the planning officer (Ahmed Tchawey), planning authorities have identified a national capital territory (NCT) where planning systems are now envisaged as a continuum because of strong functional linkages established with other jurisdictions that fall outside the GAR. The NCT is therefore made up of 18 local government areas. Of these, two each are in the Central and Eastern Regions whilst Greater Accra’s 14 districts include all but Ada East and West Rural districts.

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<sup>48</sup> GSS (2014) refers to AMA as the Accra metropolis but this does not seem to reflect the contemporary reality of the city’s urbanization and urban development.

The two districts in the Central Region include Gomoa East district, within which the fast sprawling urban center of Kasoa is located, and parts of Awutu Senya district. The Gomoa East district is contiguous with the Ga South Municipal where West Hills Mall is located. Those in the Eastern Region are parts of Akuapim South district (which contains Aburi<sup>49</sup> and Nsawam) and the Akwapim North districts.

Given Accra's multiple roles as a national, regional, and district capital it exerts a major pull on the whole nation in terms of political, economic and social influence. Data from the GIPC on FDI countrywide indicates that the Greater Accra Region (GAR) remains the biggest pull for foreign investments. For instance, from 2005 to 2015, 83.6 percent of all registered investments were located in the GAR which make 60.2 percent of the total investment value (Table 4.6).

**Table 4.6:** Total Number of Investment Projects Registered by GIPC from 2005-2015

No	REGION	No OF PROJECTS	VALUE OF PROJECT (USD)
1	Ashanti	183	3,198,585,015.53
2	Brong Ahafo	34	292,111,322.22
3	Central	60	393,651,677.61
4	Eastern	67	237,590,401.47
5	Greater Accra	2863	20,407,059,777.22
6	Northern	33	1,433,446,980.54
7	Upper East	3	3,307,100.00
8	Upper West	3	361,961.74
9	Volta	38	48,715,381.39
10	Western	140	7,902,778,728.45
	<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>3424</b>	<b>33,971,608,346.71</b>

<sup>49</sup>The mountain top city of Aburi is where the colonial government in 1891 built an agricultural research station and arboretum and it is where the Ghana presidential holiday and resort, the Peduase Lodge, is located

Additionally, 79.59 percent of all projects registered with the GIPC in the first quarter of 2017 were in the GAR (GIPC Quarterly Report, 2017:3). Undoubtedly most of the projects are located in the GAMA which includes the three most affluent districts, namely Accra Metropolitan Assembly (AMA) (Fig 4.4), Tema Municipal Assembly (TMA) and the La Dadekotopon Municipal Assembly (LaDMA).



**Figure 4. 4:** Downtown Accra (AMA), with the Accra Financial Center (AFC) in the foreground; Bank of Ghana’s Cedi House and World Trade Center (WTO) buildings to the immediate left and right of AFC respectively (Source: The Quotes<sup>50</sup>)

Grant and Nijman (2002) corroborate the fact that Accra attracts higher levels of foreign capital flow than any other urban area in Ghana. By virtue of their job creation potential, especially in urban areas, FDIs affect urban growth and development in terms of technology transfer, which

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<sup>50</sup>(<https://www.bing.com/images/search?view=detailV2&ccid=N26Aiep3&id=7B75979D24363856B1D156E42FFD0E50C65CB362&thid=OIP.N26Aiep3w8WyamHoCkYIDwHaFP&q=Accra+Nigeria&simid=608044870119260739&selectedindex=15&mode=overlay&first=1>)

enhances labour, increased income to urban citizens, and increased revenue to the state as well as provision of new urban infrastructure (Awudi, 2002; Maurer, 2009; Vonpraseuth and Choi, 2014). These, among others, are what Harvey (1989b:8/9) highlight as part of the alternative strategies for urban governance in urban entrepreneurialism. This study of Ghana's shopping malls explores how malls, which are part of increasing FDI flows, have impacted Accra's urban transformation from the mid-2000s onwards.

#### **4.5 Physical and Economic Transformation of Accra's Development in the Neoliberal Era**

Harvey (1989b:11) argues that if urban governance does not create 'good business climate' they lose out in the neoliberal competitive world. De Soto (1989) has also indicated that (formal) economic paths to poverty reduction is inhibited when processes and cost of doing business are high in a country whilst Otto and Prinsloo (2016:27) suggest that:

When thinking about... investment, some of the most important risks to consider... are political instability, changing government policies, social instability resulting from inequality, lack of economic diversity... and legal aspects such as property ownership rights and investment restrictions. In addition,... the time frame of investments, and the restrictions on possible exit strategies are also considerations. Then, looking for strong economic drivers is the next step that can help refine one's investment focus.

Over the years, Ghana has attempted to position itself as the gateway to West Africa by pursuing policies that seek to make it more competitive. One of the decisive changes to the Ghanaian economy brought by the structural adjustment program (SAP) was the impetus given to other sectors like services. Historically, the economy had been dominated by the agricultural sector (Fosu, 1998). In 1960, the agricultural sector made up 51.1 percent of gross domestic product (GDP) and by 1978, it had moved to 60.7 percent with significant decline in the manufacturing and services sectors (Jedwab and Osei, 2012). From 1983, growth in foreign

investments resulted in structural shift where agriculture share of GDP reduced with consequent increase in the share of the manufacturing sector in the 1980s and the 1990s (Awudi, 2002). Presently, it is the service sector that accounts for 50 percent of GDP (IBP Inc. 2016). This section explores how a consequent ripple effect on Accra' urban development has resulted from Ghana's overall competitiveness outlined above. I will also highlight on other important events that gave impetus to the city's competitiveness leading to the emergence and proliferation of shopping malls.

To put things in perspective, the Ghanaian economy and, by extension, market is not big enough, compared to other countries even in Africa: it is only about the eleventh biggest economy in Africa, according to data from IMF<sup>51</sup>, though according to the IBP Inc. (2016:10) Ghana is Africa's sixth by purchasing power parity and by nominal GDP. In West Africa, however, it is ranked second biggest after Nigeria. With GDP of about \$50 billion (US) and a population of 25 million (GSS, 2012), Ghana's economy is less than a tenth of Nigeria's \$538 billion, and a population of about 190 million. Yet, Ghana's strength lies in: a) being the fifth most stable, seventh best governed and one of the five countries with a free press in continental Africa (IBP Inc. 2015); and b) increasing pro-business and growing investor confidence. Recent discovery of large hydrocarbon deposits has been a further boost.

Undoubtedly, Accra has benefited disproportionately from Ghana's growing competitiveness than any Ghanaian city, especially in the era after 2000, with an increased number of urban development projects, occasioned by foreign investments. These have also enhanced the local economies within various localities in the city. However, most of these investments are located mainly in three areas, eastwards, of the city where Grant and Nijman (2002:335) identified as three locales of central business districts (CBD) that reflect the city's new globalising identities.

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<sup>51</sup> (<https://www.cnbc.com/zdnl-mc/2017/10/21/africas-economies-ranked-gdp-really-largest/>; Accessed: January 27, 2018)

These areas are: 1. Accra Central, which they refer to as a ‘local CBD’ that caters mainly to local economic needs; 2. Old Accra (around Jamestown/Ussher town) and the ministries area, which they reference as ‘national CBD’, catering to the economic needs at the national scale; and 3. Osu, Cantonments and Airport areas referred to as ‘global CBD’; areas which are intensively embedded in the global economy.

As such, in the era of neoliberalisation, these areas, eastwards, have continued to maintain high land values which have continued to entrench elitism. Far from accepting the ‘compartmentalised’ CBDs Grant and Nijman (2002) suggest, there is indeed a mixture of both commercial and residential accommodation for some of the world’s global business operators in financial, real estate, insurance and telecommunications sectors in all the three areas, such that, according to Grant (2009:3), ‘Accra is now a more internationally-oriented city as opposed to the former typical Africa city conceptualised primarily in local and regional terms by the early post-colonial nationalists’. Fifield (2011) mentions Accra as one of West Africa’s cities where a buoying economy has created opportunity for real estate investment. As such, property developers have taken advantage to develop retail investments and other ‘A-grade office building[s] in the centre of Accra’ (ibid:15). The A-grade office building Fifield (2011) refers to is the *Accra Financial Center* (AFC) (a mixed-use facility that hosts a bank, offices, restaurants and a shopping center) developed by South Africa’s RMB Westport in partnership with Ghana’s Agriculture Development Bank (AgDB) (Fig. 4.5).



**Figure 4. 5:** The Accra Financial Centre<sup>52</sup> located within the AMA or ‘National CBD’ Area

Beyond AFC, there have been other high end real estate projects in various parts of the city that have contributed to shape the city’s physical structure and image. Notable among these are the *Icon House*, developed by Stanbic Bank (Ghana) and RMB Westport as well as the *One Airport Square* developed by Actis<sup>53</sup>(Fig. 4.5 and 4.7). Both are mixed-use facilities and located at the Airport (city) area, the so-called ‘global CBD’. The restaurant in the Icon House was mentioned on CNN as one of the top 10 restaurants in the world in 2014<sup>54</sup>(Fig. 4.7, left). At the time of the fieldwork, Actis was undertaking their single biggest development, another mixed-use facility, the *Exchange*, within the vicinity of the Airport and about fifteen minutes walking distance from Accra Mall. Apart from mixed-use buildings, there are also other urban

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<sup>52</sup> ([http://www.rmbwestport.com/current project AccraFinancial.asp](http://www.rmbwestport.com/current_project_AccraFinancial.asp); Accessed: January 29, 2018)

<sup>53</sup> Actis is an emerging markets private equity investment firm created out of the Commonwealth Development Corporation (CDC) in 2004

<sup>54</sup> Information obtained from developers/managers of the facility.

development schemes including gated communities (Fig. 4.7, right), hotels and shopping malls by foreign investors from the US, Europe, Asia and South Africa (who are particularly visible in the shopping mall retail space) that continue to shape the city's structure and image (Asiedu and Arku, 2009; Fifield, 2011; Wilson and Corkin, 2014).



**Figure 4. 6:** One Airport Square (Left) and Icon House (Right)

(Photo by Author)

Such growing investor interests has led to Accra currently hosting the biggest shopping mall in West Africa. Accra's preferability partly stems from the fact that investors have good return on investment, in the region of 10 percent and above.

Yet, I will argue, equitable urban growth is still lacking in the city, where development has heavily tilted in favour of the more affluent eastern part. Other parts of the city, including the western side, are lagging behind. Grant (2009:7) suggests that the city is still evolving and 'fragmented, chaotic and spatially messy' with areas that, comparable to other global cities in Africa, such as Johannesburg or Nairobi, are deeply embedded in global flows whilst in other places poverty levels are extremely high. The study of the emergence of Accra's shopping malls helps to understand, at one and the same time, Accra's increasing global connectedness and the widening levels of socio-economic and spatial asymmetry in the city.



**Figure 4. 7:** Eating Area of Icon House’s Restaurant (Left) and The Polo Heights, a gated residential Apartment at the Airport area in Accra (Right) (Picture by Author)

#### **4.6 Development of Shopping Malls in Accra**

The first mall in the city was the Andrew and Cecilia (A&C) Shopping Centre located at East Legon (see Fig. 3.1) in 2006. This was started by Andrew Asamoah and his family who had lived in Geneva until late 2000 when he relocated to Ghana after decades of work at the World Health Organization (WHO). Following immediately thereafter, Accra Mall and West Hill Mall were completed in 2008 and 2014 respectively, as outlined in Chapter Three. Accra Mall became the first fully enclosed mall in the city built along western-models and enormously changed the retail landscape in the city. Delico Investments (Sandpark Ltd/Delico Ghana and Atterbury) took their partnership further to develop the Achimota Retail Center (Fig 4.8, Left) which is more of a strip mall. The two companies formed a joint venture partnership, Delico Achimota Ghana Ltd, to develop and own the mall. Unlike other malls, the company leased the land, and has a 50 years’ lease renewable, from the pharmaceutical company Phyto-Riker (GIHOC) Pharmaceuticals Ltd., a partnership company of Ghana Industrial Holdings Corporation (GIHOC) Pharmaceuticals and the international pharmaceutical company, Phyto-Riker Inc. The Achimota Retail Center was completed in 2015.



**Figure 4. 8:** Achimota Retail Center (Left) and Junction Mall (Right)

(Photo by Author)

Another one developed to the far east of Accra, at the border with Tema metropolitan Area (TMA) is the *Junction Mall* (Fig 4.8, Right), also completed in November 2014 by Rand Merchant Bank (RMB) Westport of South Africa, the owners/financiers. Dale Ramsden, a South African entrepreneur, who worked for Actis as property investment principal in West Africa between 2003 and 2008, has been responsible for the development of the Accra Mall and Lagos, Nigeria's Palms Mall opened in 2005. With the experience of developing two novel malls in different jurisdictions, Ramsden left Actis in 2008 to establish his own Westport Property Group (WPG). WPG then went into a merger with RMB's real estate and investment banking division in 2008 to create a real estate investment management and development firm called RMB Westport which invests in sub-Saharan African countries. Simon Fifield of RMB's real estate and investment banking division and architect Michael O'Malley were key individuals who helped found the new company, RMB Westport. With Dale's experience in Ghana and Nigeria, it was "*easy to pull another one off*", according to Daniel Quacoe the financial manager of RMB Westport in Accra. The experience of the Owusu-Akyaw family who developed Accra Mall had also created awareness in the Ghanaian community. Enterprising individuals then started looking for joint venture partnerships like the Owusu-

Akyaw/Actis partnerships. According to Quacoe, during the late 2000s the economy was good and private individuals approached international investors like theirs for partnerships. Thus, another Ghanaian Paul Kofi Jacquaye (with his land located to the far east of Accra, within the catchment area of the port city of Tema) approached RMB Westport with a proposal for a joint venture for the Junction Mall. RMB Westport fully financed the project. The shareholding is RMB Westport 90% and Jacquaye family 10%.

Apart from these, there are mall developments in various areas in the eastern part of the city. There is the Osu Oxford Street Mall developed by Ghana Libya International Holding Company (GLIHC) as well as the Marina Mall, which is appropriately a mixed-use development, by a French group<sup>55</sup>. The Palace Mall, owned by Ghanaians of Lebanese descent, on the Spintex road also needs to be mentioned, though this is more of a hypermarket than a mall.

## **Conclusion**

The account of Ghana's and Accra's historical and contemporary (urban) development give insight into how the city has been impacted by a myriad of forces including political, economic, social and even environmental factors.

The chapter discussed Ghana's adoption of the IMF/World Bank's structural adjustment program (SAP) in April 1983 and highlighted some of the legal and regulatory frameworks put in place to ensure increased decentralisation of spatial, economic and administrative functions. The chapter took the view that such SAP policies have led to increased foreign direct investments (FDI) in various sectors of the Ghanaian economy. With the increased FDI, the service sector, within which the retail industry belongs, became one of the attractive sectors to

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<sup>55</sup> Information provided by Research Director of Broll Ghana Ltd.

investors. This led to the proliferation of shopping malls in Accra and other cities across the nation. The era from April 1983 until now, therefore, represents the neoliberal era of free market in Ghana.

The chapter indicated that Accra has been both the biggest beneficiary and victim in the neoliberal era, more than any Ghanaian city. This chapter has, therefore, given a better context to understand Accra's current spatial and socio-economic asymmetry which also have implications for the economic fortunes of the malls as well as their urban development impacts. Advertently or inadvertently, present endogenous and exogenous forces continue to entrench such asymmetry. It would be noted, however, that in the neoliberal era, the greatest impact on the city now seem to be the market logic. This study on the city's shopping malls attempts to add to our understanding of how neoliberal globalisation led to reshaping of Accra's political and economic structures; leading to proliferation of shopping malls in the city.

In the succeeding chapters, based on empirical evidence from the field, I will discuss how neoliberalism has shaped the city's urban governance, consumption and the local economy through shopping mall development.

# CHAPTER FIVE

## URBAN GOVERNANCE AND COALITION BUILDING FOR SHOPPING MALL DEVELOPMENT IN ACCRA

### Introduction

*Frankly... running Accra is such an all time-consuming affair, much more akin to fire-fighting than anything else... You rarely had time to look at the long term. Where you even had the luxury of long-term envisioning, the facilities to patiently put it in place is not always available... [B]ut you are not the only person who is shaping the city. The city is being shaped by a multitude of forces of which you are just one. And what you can do is give it tone, give it shape, make people realise that you care for certain things and try to harness the energies of the city in that direction (Former Mayor of Accra; Sept 2016).*

Accra's urban governance has been affected by a myriad of forces that are occasioned by the city's multiple roles as 'a site of exchange, transaction and power' (Parker, 2000:36) within the country as a whole, as the former mayor reveals. Since the 1980s, when neoliberal reforms were adopted, leading to increasing global penetration in Ghana, Accra has been additionally impacted by global forces, which, as well, shapes its governance. Urban governance, as a process of achieving urban results, coordinates interest groups from public, private and civil society sectors in the city (Knox and McCarthy, 2012). Therefore, the over-arching question this chapter seeks to answer is:

*How has governing Accra transformed during the neoliberal era and what impact has this transformation had in delivering urban development, in this case shopping malls?*

In the neoliberal era, a key tool in urban governance restructuring is decentralisation (UN-Habitat, 2010; Rachmawati, 2016). Over the last ten to fifteen years, Ghana's central government, with a view to deepen gains arising from decentralisation and acting through the mandate of the local government law (Act 462), has created new local governments (i.e. municipalities and districts) across the nation, including the city of Accra. Despite

decentralisation's potential usefulness at the local level, as suggested by policymakers and scholars, it has been argued that the process has been slow in Ghana, led to fragmentation of Accra's development and created local governments that lack the ability to thrive (Ahwoi, 2010; Owusu, 2015). Concurrently, however, there seems to have been an increased involvement of citizens in how the city is governed, a development that is in tandem with neoliberal ideals.

Accra's shopping malls have been developed in this era of evolving urban governance and decentralisation where citizens become emboldened to seize opportunities to form coalitions for urban development. Harvey (1989b) outlines how coalition and alliances may be formed to transform the urban economy of the (neoliberal) entrepreneurial city.

'Coalition and alliance formation is so delicate and difficult a task that the way is open here for a person of vision, tenacity and skill (such as a charismatic mayor, a clever city administrator or a wealthy business leader) to put a particular stamp upon the nature and direction of urban entrepreneurialism, perhaps to shape it, even, to particular political ends. Whereas it...[may be] a public figure like [mayor]... who play[s] the central role... in [other] cities... it has been private entrepreneurs who have taken the lead. In other instances, it has been a more intricate mix of personalities and institutions that have put a particular project together' (Harvey, 1989b:7).

This chapter examines such urban governance transformation and how, among others, such changes impacted the development of malls in the city, specifically in the formation of coalitions and alliances for the mall projects. To do so, this leads to the formulation of three further and more specific questions:

- *How has the role of the local governments impacted on urban governance in Accra's (effective) urban development and what has been their role in the development of the malls?*

- *Where are key decisions, in relation to the city's urban and economic development made and how were the development of malls impacted by such decisions?*
- *How did the team of investors come together to form shopping mall development coalition/alliance and what was their motivation and the expected benefits to the various stakeholders?*

In answering these questions, I begin, in Section 5.1, by discussing governance transformation in the city since the neoliberal reforms of the 1980s. I proceed thereafter, in Section 5.2, to examine how citizens form (development) coalitions to shape urban development outcomes through shopping mall projects. My main claim in Section 5.1 is that the subservient role of local governments as well as procedural and institutional bureaucracy has led to delayed or derailed execution of urban development projects whilst in Section 5.2, I argue that the neoliberal era emboldened middle class citizens to acquire additional social capital: cosmopolitan dispositions and visions, which they exploited to develop malls.

### **5.1 Accra's Urban Governance Transformation**

As indicated in Chapter Four, Accra city contains metropolitan, municipal and district assemblies, each of which houses 'head offices' for various sub-national political, legislative and judicial heads. The various branches of the ministries, departments, agencies and other public institutions are also supposed to have their sub-national offices in these various localities. Moreover, given its role as the national capital, the city also hosts the presidential palace, the parliament house, and the Supreme Court. Beyond these, Accra is the capital of the traditional Ga state. As indigenes, following after colonial, post-colonial and customary laws, the Gas are the allodial land owners of Accra.

Each of these multiple roles impact the city in time and space and in different ways, for better and for worse. This section explores how these multiple roles impact governance and urban development in the city including impact on development of infrastructure such as malls. I progress on this trajectory by looking at *local versus national state in Accra* and *urban impacts* of the changing phases of local government and other legal regimes.

### **5.1.1. Local and national state in Accra**

Generally, in Ghana the nation-state sets the agenda for the overall development of the country, including urban development. Typically, this is done through various government ministries and sent down to state agencies and departments within the various local governments for implementation at the local levels. Of course, there are several programs/projects that, by their nature may have trans-boundary impacts and/or special interest nationwide, etc. (e.g. national highways, national gas pipeline projects, etc.), are handled from the national level even though they may be implemented at a particular local level. A case in point is the national gas pipeline project in Takoradi.

Given this framework, it follows to reason that when national level programs are not forthcoming only little can be done at the local government level. But how do these levels of responsibility impact on urban governance and development in the city. Two key issues of concern identified after analysis of the qualitative data relate to the role of the local governments in Accra in relation to the central state and how such subservient role leads to delays in decision-making and delivery of urban development. I explore how these two concerns have affected the city's urban development.

*i. Role of local governments*

In Ghana, according to Ayee (2008, 2012), the role of local governments in relation to the national government is one of subservience and this is seen as one key factor in the way that it shapes urban outcomes in the city. Despite decades of decentralisation in Ghana, the relationship has not changed (Owusu, 2015), a situation which goes against the tenets of neoliberal decentralisation where the state was expected to minimise the top-down approach to governance (Rondinelli, 1990). As such, major initiatives cannot be taken by the local governments and where they are taken they need approval from the state. This situation has been highlighted as a challenge especially when it comes to raising funds on the capital market for urban development. It needs to be underscored however that the recent public financial management law 2016 (Act 921) and the national urban policy (launched in 2013) seek to change this by allowing some local governments in the big cities (Accra, Kumasi and Takoradi) a much bigger autonomy in raising capital for urban development (Owusu, 2015).

Yet, within the prevailing state of affairs the city mayor, who is the chief executive of the Accra Metropolitan Assembly (AMA) and other municipal chief executives are unable to take certain initiatives, especially if, among others, they have potential of hurting the political fortunes of the governing party, even if such initiatives may be helpful to citizens. As such, local governments may not, acting on their own, attract foreign investors. A case in point is the eviction of street traders that has become an intractable issue for successive governments due to its politicisation (Gillespie, 2015). For example, in 2012 the central government called a mayor to halt the eviction process (Bob-Milliar and Obeng-Odoom, 2011; Adaawen and Jorgensen, 2012).

It has also been argued that one reason for this local governments' subservient role is that the chief executives and mayors are appointed by the President (Ahwoi, 2010). As such, his/her

first responsibility is to the President rather than the people within his/her jurisdiction. This view is also shared by majority of those interviewed. One person insisted that mayors are like dummies from the President sent to do his bidding. An urban expert and UN consultant in Accra, Johnson Bandoh, who favors *100 percent*<sup>56</sup> election of mayors indicated that:

*They (mayors) are accountable to just one person. You don't prepare a city plan, implement a plan and manage a plan when you are not responsible to the citizenry. So... if I organize all the people here and we have a protest, it is only the President who can remove the mayor. So, they don't really account to anybody. They only take instructions from one source and that is it (March, 2017).*

Despite Bandoh's position, Ahwoi (2010) reveals that the mayors are not accountable only to the President on the basis that within the law, the local government chiefs are supposed to be approved by the local government's legislative assembly before his/her appointment. In practice though, the influence of the President over the mayors towers above that of the local government's legislature.

Yet there is also agreement that merely reverting to a more democratically elected system itself may not be a panacea if the people themselves do not demand accountability from their mayors and the President. Christian Antwi of Cities Alliance notes that:

*The mayor in Amsterdam, Netherlands is appointed... The Queen appoints the mayor... The mayor of London is elected. You can't say that because they were appointed in Amsterdam, he is not effective. He is still effective. So... the election of a mayor only goes so far. It is the attitude of the government and the citizenry that determine the effectiveness of the mayor. Accountability! you have to look at it from both the supply and the demand side... On the supply side, which is the perspective that we have tended to look at it; it is the willingness of the party at the top to yield, to provide information, to make information available. If he decides that he doesn't want to give information; and people tend to look at that; that their mayors are not accountable because of how they are appointed into office. But what have the governed, what have the citizenry done to compel the mayors to be accountable to them? So the citizenry themselves sometimes are to blame in the sense that they have not come forward*

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<sup>56</sup> *100 percent* is his own words

*to demand accountability and have just sat back and waited for that accountability to be supplied to them; you know? (March 2017).*

Though a more democratic election of mayors could be useful, Antwi's position is insightful on the account that decentralisation, whatever the form, thrives on citizenry who are aware of their civic responsibilities (see Stone, 1989; Rondinelli, 1990; Owusu, 2015). Merely going through elections without continuous demand for accountability from elected officials may not be enough to achieve the needed urban outcomes. This is on the basis that the transition from government to governance (Stone, 1989, 2012) in urban transformation includes collaborations/contestations among government officials, citizens and other stakeholders (Harvey, 1989b; Hubbard and Hall, 1998).

That said, it is important to highlight that the subservient nature of local government situation in Accra goes against the entrepreneurial and competitive cities concept in that the reach of the state is still much stronger (Dzorgbor, 2001). As such, the local governments are not autonomous to 'develop a commitment to realising a broadly consensual vision of urban development' (Parkinson and Harding, 1995:66). So how does this affect delivery of specific urban projects e.g. the shopping malls?

A careful scrutiny shows that perhaps these developments may have been achieved much earlier in Accra given the history of Ghana as one of the best performing economies in Africa in the 1950s (Konadu-Agyemang, 2000), having a per capita income comparable to the best of the 1950s third world developing countries (Herbst, 1993; Dzorgbor, 2001). Oteng-Ababio and Arthur (2015) also suggest that departmental stores existed in Ghana during the pre-colonial and colonial era; an era consistent with evolution in the retail industry and the rise of the consumer society in the western world (Stobart et al., 2007). Again, Johnson Bandoh underscores that Ghana should have had these earlier:

*[I]t is something that should have been in existence for years and has been absent and suddenly comes in. And as a novelty you get the applause. But, it is*

*a civilized way of shopping, clearly... I mean, the benefits of it in the western world are applicable (March, 2017).*

It is admissible however that in various parts of the world (e.g. Russia, China and some Latin American countries, etc.) shopping malls have still developed within a context where the reach of the national state is stronger than the local state. Yet these are countries where the resources of the state are much stronger than Ghana's. Even in Ghana, it has been noted by Oteng-Ababio and Arthur (2015) that shrinkage in state resources produced discontinuity in the growth trajectory of the retail industry and, by extension, the logical growth of shopping malls. It is therefore argued that, among others, the subservient nature of local governments in Accra serve to hold back and *delay* the delivery of key urban development projects, such as shopping malls, as I outline in the next section.

#### *ii. Delays to Delivery of Urban Development Projects*

In Accra, there is a general sense that the process of achieving urban development is dilatory because governance is slow at the local level. At the start of the decentralisation reforms in the 1980s, it was touted as the vehicle to deliver development at the local level. However, decentralization has not progressed as fast as was expected (Ahwoi, 2010; Awortwi, 2015). A former mayor also pointed this out:

*There was... much talk about decentralisation. In terms of decentralisation the local government was one of the principal aims but decentralisation had been slow (Sept. 2016).*

Since urban development is seen generally as a public good, it is the government that has responsibility to ensure its optimal delivery. Yet, the tardy state of affairs at the local level also stems largely from the top-down national-to-local governmental arrangement, as previously espoused, where major policies and visions flow from the national level. Hence, once policies

get delayed at the top, this ripples to the local level and this has been the story with urban development.

Ghana has progressed without a nationally espoused urban policy until 2013 when the first one was launched by the then President Mahama. This is not to suggest, however, that no urban development initiative has been undertaken. According to Awortwi (2015), urban development programs have been spread across several ministries, departments, agencies and local governments since independence but without any proper coordination. The World Bank, in the period of the 1990 and the 2000s, has also been spearheading various urban interventions in Ghana (Awortwi, 2015) while the UN has championed various urban programs through its agencies in Ghana. The National Development Planning Commission (NDPC) in its *Ghana Shared Growth and Development Agenda (GSGDA)* document (2010-2013) had some focus on urban development. The point, however, is that the lack of a national policy document on urban development gives a sense of lack of emphasis on, if not absence of, national focus on critical issues, especially at the local government levels which look to the national government for direction. The GSGDA and similar documents prepared by various governments also end up being abolished by succeeding governments of different political persuasions (Awortwi, 2015; Owusu, 2015).

On that score, the late launching of a policy document on urban development after sixty years of independence attest to how slow the nation has been with respect to urban development. Perhaps this stemmed from the position that the nation's population has remained largely rural until 2010 when more than 50 percent lived in urban areas. But the tardy response in addressing urban development systematically has undoubtedly produced the present state of urban development in the nation as a whole where urbanisation is so skewed to an extent that 34 percent of Ghana's urban population live in the five biggest cities (Awortwi, 2015) leading to

acute urban challenges such as congestion, lack of jobs and housing, pollution, etc. in these cities. As such, the potential benefits of urbanisation are not fully evident (World Bank, 2000).

Yet again, this is not to suggest that the launching of the urban policy is a panacea for the urban development malaise. There may as well be such challenges as socio-political and economic forces (e.g. capital availability and urban land market) which impact urban development. Indeed, as noted by Awortwi (2015), the document, after its launching, has yet to be given a legal backing. But it is anticipated that a policy document is an important step, given that most states which obtain optimal benefits from urbanisation and urban development are guided by national policy documents that systematically address such critical urban issues as well as anticipating solutions to existing and emerging challenges. Therefore, making these interventions within a nationally espoused vision with the necessary legal backing, it is argued, maximises the potential impact.

Apart from receiving policy direction from the state, local governments also rely on the state for financial and logistics support for execution of development projects. In all these streams of top-down delivery, there could and in fact have been delays. A case in point is the delay in releasing the statutory common fund to the local governments (Okrah and Boamah, 2013) especially between 2013-2014 economic downturn. Again, in terms of logistic and personnel, the local governments are only able to hire low skilled personnel such as cleaners, security, etc. However, recruitment of technical persons are handled from the national level and sent to the local governments. Thus, any policy decision on these resources at the national level affects the local governments and hence their responsiveness and proactiveness in urban development. For instance, in 2013-2014 as part of IMF conditionalities, the government put a hold on further

hiring of staff in public sectors which obviously impacted negatively under-resourced local governments.

Another source of delay is the attendant governmental bureaucracy that bedevil both national and local governments. Whilst this thesis did not set out to audit urban projects, information gathered indicated that bureaucracy affects urban outcomes. The need to seek official approval from higher authority at every point in the governmental structure leads to a situation where projects get delayed or derailed. A case in point is a project to decongest Accra central by creating a bulk breaking market at the north-western part at Adjin Kotoku, about 12 miles from Accra central started by the Kufour administration. The rationale for the project was to move the Markola and Salaga Markets constructed in Accra central by the colonial government in the 1920s. Today this market fields timber products, vegetables and smoked fish right in close proximity to the Supreme Court and ministries buildings; a vicinity that houses the five-star Movenpick Ambassador Hotel, multinational offices as well as the newly constructed mixed-use facility, the Octagon. The literature on Accra by Grant (2012) and Grant and Nijman (2002), reveal that the location of these markets in the city presently is incongruous and anachronistic. Amongst others, administrative bureaucracy derailed this decongestion project after the Kufuor administration. Johnson Bandoh, who was the consultant to this project and who has been invited now and then by successive governments to address various urban issues, bemoans such governmental tardiness:

*Nothing has been done... Yes! They [governments] call again and again and again and again and everybody talks and goes and talks and goes! (March, 2017).*

He revealed that another project, the marine drive project, he helped to conceive in the mid-1990s, is now being implemented by the current government and the cost of executing gets

escalated with such delays. This bureaucracy invokes Feiock and Kim's (2000) observation that governmental bureaucracy delays local economic development and increase transaction cost.

Such bureaucracy, as I established, may be found in two areas; which I refer to as *institutional* and *procedural bureaucracies*. Institutional being the arrangement of governmental structures and procedural being the need to seek official approval from superiors at every stage before a project is executed. In terms of structures (i.e. *institutional*) in Accra, given the role of the city as national, regional, metropolitan, municipal and district capital, every ministry's department is duplicated at these various levels in the city; e.g. the department of urban roads which works under the ministry of roads and highways has its head office within the ministry. But it is duplicated at the regional level, with its offices, and at all the metropolitan, municipal and district assemblies levels, a number of which are contiguous with very small geographic areas. Thus, to build Accra's urban roads virtually all these levels of governments need to be consulted. There also seems to be many departments even within the local governments, some of whose work are similar or close. For instance, the Accra Metropolitan Assemblies' (AMA) city engineer indicated that AMA has thirteen departments, including the finance department and the budget and rating department. It seems obvious that finance and budget and rating department could be joined under one department. With respect to *procedural bureaucracy*, as indicated, projects need to travel through these departmental/agencies' hierarchy before approval for execution. Undoubtedly such layers tend to slow delivery of urban outcomes (especially so where synchronisation/coordination is also problematic) on the basis that all these layers come with their own set of administrative and institutional challenges and, in some cases, projects are abandoned (especially if the delay coincides with change in government). The Greater Accra Regional Director of Town and Country Planning Department, Rachel

Amoah, agrees that the system is dogged by challenges but emphasised the need to forge ahead with hope in spite of:

*We have administrative and institutional challenges; yes we have process issues, standards issues; manpower issues, we have compliance issues, and enforcement challenges. One needs to really put these within the right context of how it affects one's work BUT work assiduously towards solving them. Countries never lose hope despite challenges! Indeed, that is what governance is about... knowing the challenges and solving them. So, we can't lose hope!! (December 2016).*

Indeed, urban transformation in a context like Accra where, among others, officialdom *talks and goes* with little or no action, amidst a myriad of challenges only calls for *hope* that the needed result will be achieved.

### **5.1.2. Urban Impact of the Changing Phases of Local Government Legal Regimes**

As I indicated in Chapter Four, decentralisation came as part of the structural adjustment reforms of the 1980s (Ayee, 2008). I also outlined how, as part of the neoliberal policies, the changing legal regimes in Ghana came along with increased spatial and development planning and other functions to the local governments. Arising from the plethora of legislations, the narratives that have attended decentralisation, among others, has been the issue of deepening citizens' participation and increasing development (Dauda, 2016).

In this section I explore how the various legal regimes have also impacted the city's governance and urban outcomes through increased freedom of speech and capacity for local governments. I discuss these under i) Vocal Citizens: Bigger say bigger role, and ii) Greater opportunity for capacity building.

*i. Vocal Citizens: Bigger say bigger role*

One major change decentralisation and the changing legal regimes produced in Accra is giving a voice to citizens. The onset of decentralisation started with the rhetoric of power to the people during the Rawlings' PNDC era (Herbst, 1993). The narratives about power to the people were, among others, to take responsibility in their neighborhoods, including waste disposal and other popular citizen mobilisation. Within this same period, also, was the era where the airwaves were liberalised which gave renewed impetus to free expression; as highlighted by Daniel Armah, the mayor:

*First of all, for me as the Mayor in 1994, the first hint of changes to come was the decommissioning of the air waves. When the government decided to decommission the air waves and suddenly you had a whole raft of new radio stations. And suddenly the air was filled with new voices. Today it seems so obvious nobody thinks what impact it may have had. But it did have a serious impact. It gave people confidence that they had a right to manage their world.*

*The residents also have greater access to city hall, to express their opinions. The greater multiplicity of media houses means that the Mayor is not the 'only game in town'. Other sectors can rise up to challenge. Accra has always had quite a hectic market-place of ideas competing to manage the city; from market women to local politicians to traditional rulers to businessmen (both local and foreign). If anything, it has become fairly accentuated now (Sept., 2016).*

Such freedom of expression needs to be understood within a background of what Ankomah (1987) argues to be the return of the 'culture of silence' across the country where 'many Ghanaians [had] genuine concerns to express but [were] afraid to do so out of uncertainty' (ibid:17) in the 1980s. Citizens were largely cowed into silence on issues of political discourse (Ankomah, 1987), which undoubtedly affected discourses on urban development, which hitherto had been top-down. The former mayor's point (*the mayor is not the 'only game in town'. Other sectors can rise up to challenge*) therefore underscores the transition from government to governance, as noted by entrepreneurial city and regime theorists (Harvey,

1989b; Hubbard and Hall, 1998; and Stone, 2012). Such citizens' participation, it has long been argued, enhances acceptance of urban projects (Arnstein, 1969). Changing legal regimes underpinning decentralisation and a burgeoning media gave citizens greater *access to city hall* where increasing number of citizens have shown interest in how the city has been changing whether in the area of evicting street traders or slum dwellers or decongestion. As Kenyah (2011) points out, citizens' voices and participation are needed on urban issues of concern including the quality of service, jobs, and equity.

One area where this has been evident in spatial planning is participation with respect to preparation of local spatial plans. Planning officials indicate that within the demands of the law they are supposed to display proposed local plans for citizens' input. As a result, they mount such plans in community centers where the public/citizens come to make input or ask questions.

*Just last week we did community exhibitions with the updates and the reviews we are doing. So, we mounted [...]. Yeah. Even presently what we are doing we are trying to involve all the stakeholders that we can think of; the community members. So... we did three (3) days continuous exhibitions at vantage points in all the areas [East Legon]. So... at least so far what we have done, trying to get community people to have a look at what we are doing, ask questions, and give us feedback (Felicia Manfo, Deputy Director, Town and Country Planning Department, Accra Metropolitan Assembly; Dec., 2016).*

Though officials indicate that the process is a bit slow because of low attendance and the quality of input from the public, this is an important step in urban governance and planning. To help mediate some of these challenges in terms of having quality input and increasing participation Felicia Manfo indicates that they send prepared plans to “*other publics*” such as civil society groups and relevant governmental agencies for inputs. This is a strict departure from the old system under CAP 84 where technocrats entirely planned urban neighborhoods for citizens, without much recourse to citizen involvement. I argue that this also reflects attempts tailored at aligning with the transition from government to governance as postulated in the entrepreneurial city thesis.

However, it must be said that there is still a lot that needs to be done in this area of citizens' participation in urban governance. Accra now has a sizeable middle class who could be mobilised within this urban governance transition. Ghana recently has witnessed the rise of middle class coalition groups, such as 'Occupy Ghana' who demand accountable governance from national political leaders. As Christian Antwi of the UN/World Bank agency *Cities Alliance* bemoans, the city needs some of "these publics" to show interest in urban issues, especially Accra. He admitted however that recently the Center for Democratic Development (CDD)<sup>57</sup> has started an annual ranking of local governments' performances.

*There has to be some sensitisation. That is where you expect that civil society organizations would come in and do a lot of sensitisation. Because when you look at the question of national level governance issues, you have a lot of civil society organisations... trying to get national level actors to be more accountable in their decision-making (March 2017).*

He argued that the recent spate of increased armed robbery in the city needs such interest groups to come together for collective action to ensure a safe and secure city. Such role for the middle class could be expanded due to the potential effect of the middle class who may well represent Ghana's creative class, since as Florida (2002) defines, the 'creative class' includes scientists, engineers, artists, actors, poets, architects, university teachers, think tank researchers, lawyers as well as IT experts. Ghana's middle class reflects substantially these group of people. The role and usefulness of the middle class is not only in their potential consumption tendency to spur economic growth, as noted by Florida (2002) in the competitive cities literature but, in the case of Accra, what they could contribute by way of ideas in governing the city, particularly in championing the needs of disadvantaged groups like street traders, hawkers and slum dwellers. This among others is what equitable cities, spelt out in the

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<sup>57</sup> This effort has been supported by the UN-Habitat and other development partners who provide funding for the project

UN sustainable development goals, entails. Indeed, there is evidence of growing awareness in the area of mobilisation and advocacy where middle class-led civil society groups such as *People's Dialogue* champion the cause of slum dwellers and other disadvantaged people in the city and even beyond by networking with such international groups like the Slum Dwellers Federation (SDF).

Yet, the multiplicity of voices is not understood in only positive terms. Indeed, it poses a challenge for city authorities because they are unable to match up with the pace of city-wide development.

*[T]o be honest with you, the management side of it; the city has also been handicapped in terms of, maybe, the human and then the logistical resources... So we are not able to strictly enforce the permits... I can say that more than 50 percent of the people will deviate from even what they were permitted to develop. And unfortunately, as the authority... we are handicapped when it comes to that aspect: enforcing what is approved... the dynamics is very complex. There are a lot of factors that come into play (Felicia Manfo; Dec., 2016).*

A multitude of voices, therefore, seems to overwhelm and drown city managers due partly to the fact that the local authorities are under-resourced whilst many citizens want to have their way. While city authorities may be under-resourced the citizens themselves increasingly get access to ever growing resources, such as the media and information communication technology (ICT). With “*greater access to city hall*”, which tends to create a “*hectic marketplace*”, as the former mayor indicated, there tends to be clashes of voices, not only of “*ideas*”, between the citizens and city authorities and, almost invariably, citizens’ voices drown out city authorities’. Sometimes the drowning of city authorities’ voices is not only through the agency of the media but, especially in the case of their dealings with private businessmen, also through financial inducements. Paying to get their way even when it goes against the law is a major constraint to the city’s urban development.

*For every actual or perceived awkward development you find, is a reflection of the muscling of local government authority in favor of private businessman. So if you see a [gas] filling station which you think is wrongly-sited or it is the case that in reality that it is wrongly-sited, then obviously somebody's interests has over-ridden. How that has occurred? I explained... that there are so many factors that come in: it can be exertion of political pressure, it can be corruption on the part of somebody, it can just be... the law enforcement break down, you know, somebody has inertia; is not doing his work... All of these! (Ahmed Tchawey, Principal Town Planning Officer, National Head Office, Accra; Dec. 2016).*

Beyond these, urban governance ensures, to some degree, equitable urban economic development if various citizens become involved in the governance process (Knox and McCarthy, 2012) on the basis that various voices articulate areas of critical concerns like socio-economic needs (Kenyah, 2011). In this direction, in the specific case of the malls, the participation of chiefs in decision-making, as I will later show in Chapter Seven, has produced interesting local economic development dynamics within the West Hills area.

Thus, in sum, changing legal regimes in Accra has created a space for new voices that have potentially impacted urban governance and outcomes to varying degrees.

#### *ii. Opportunity for capacity building*

Unlike the era before the 2000s, local governments now have increased opportunity for capacity building partly due to increasing openness in the governance process. Transformation processes attendant to or associated with urban governance in neoliberal cities demonstrate capacity for openness, networking, and ideas sharing to enhance the development process (Bardhan, 2002). With the changing legal regimes, local governments may now i) hire much needed technical staff, ii) have opportunity to raise funds from the capital market for development, iii) enter into public private partnerships (PPP), and also iv) have opportunity to collaborate with civil society organisations and other international agencies, among others.

Despite the challenges they face, all these have tended to increase capacity of the local governments, particularly in Accra, to deliver the needed urban outcomes. It is admissible that there may still be shortfalls yet officials agree that it is a process they need to keep working at.

The central government in 2003 through another law (Act 656) set up the local government service that provides legal and institutional framework for local governments to recruit personnel at their local levels (Addo et al., 2016). In this way, local governments hire the necessary technical staff. However, despite this law, the central government is still able to put a hold on employment as was the case in all public and civil service during the 2013-2014 period. This is because such technical staff are paid through the consolidated fund. But the law is an important step in helping build technical capacity of local governments.

As indicated under Section 5.1.1 (ii) above, in the recently launched urban policy, local governments, especially those at the metropolitan levels (like Accra, Tema, Kumasi, Takoradi), may now raise funds from the capital market for development as pertains in other jurisdictions, for instance Medellin, Colombia. The mandate to borrow had been stipulated in Section 13 of Act 462 but without the government's approval local governments could not borrow more than GHC2000<sup>58</sup>. Lately, it is clear, the central government seeks to give local governments bigger latitude. Linked to this is ability to enter into PPP for important urban development projects. As I found out, the Accra AMA had used the PPP system to execute a waste management project, the *Lavender Hill*<sup>59</sup> waste management treatment plant in the city. Additionally, it has also entered into PPP arrangements to construct local markets under its jurisdiction. What these mean, therefore, is that gradually, the system is being eased for local governments to position

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<sup>58</sup> This figure is quoted in the new Ghana currency which came into effect in 2007. At the time of the passage of the law in 1993, this was the equivalent of about \$29,000 at the prevailing exchange rate. In 2016, this amount was equivalent to about \$500

<sup>59</sup> (<https://www.graphic.com.gh/features/features/transforming-lavender-hill-into-the-pearl-of-accra-jospong-group-invests-41-2-million-in-wealth-creation-from-faecal-matter.html>; Accessed: April 9, 2018)

themselves more as entrepreneurial in their urban development initiatives. This is an important step in becoming a truly entrepreneurial city, as conceptualised.

Beyond these, local governments are increasingly getting to the point where they are able to deal directly and get support from other international organizations, such as the World Bank, UN-Habitat, Millennium Cities Initiatives (MCI) and Cities Alliance. Such collaborations help consolidate their capacity and hence effectiveness in pursuance of their objectives. Bardhan (2002) has indicated that local governments in developing countries suffer from disadvantages of isolation, poor training and low interactions with other professionals that constrain effective governance and, by extension, city competitiveness which has governance as a fulcrum (Harvey, 1989b; Jessop, 1997).

A platform that seeks to connect local government practitioners with colleagues and experts in other jurisdictions may help to mediate such disadvantages. Currently, Accra local governments are part of Cities Alliance's '*Future Cities Africa Program*' which is funded by the UK's Department for International Development (DFID). The program entails training and other interventions related to climate change and resilience/adaptation, citizens participation in local governance, among others. Between 2009 and 2011 Cities Alliance collaborated with local governments in the city to address urban specific challenges such as slum and urban poverty in what was called the land services and citizens (LSC) program.

Such collaborative plans create platforms for civil society organisations and local authorities who work in the same space to collate and share ideas of common interest. Working with diverse interests groups in the city not only serves to build the capacity of city officials, but the reputation of the city as well. These initiatives, undoubtedly, may additionally serve as counterpoints to the multitude of opposition voices that attempts to drown the city authorities.

It will be argued therefore, that these have led to a relatively much richer city governance than it used to be, a fact attested to by various interviewees, including the former mayor, Daniel Armah, who admitted that the city is now better governed, establishing itself as “*an urban presence and its [governance] role... in the country presently is far more solid now than it was 30 years ago*”. With such increased capacity, the city is now in a stronger position to make stronger case for its governance and development at the national government level. This, in sum, evidences increased capacity of the city within the evolving legal regimes.

The aforementioned discussion involving the city government, together with the discussion in Section 5.2 focusing on local citizens, evidence that the process of neoliberal government transformation, or more appropriately, the idea of being or becoming an entrepreneurial city for sub-Saharan African cities, such as Accra, should be seen as a continuum, an ongoing process that has progressed well beyond the so-called first period governance re-structuring, and not an event. This continuum involves capacity building, among others. It might be the case that within such continuum comes the opportunity for exploration, to find best fit methods. The result may be the production of a unique city, not exactly like a global North city, but as Robinson (2006:19) noted, one with a ‘hybrid modernity’.

## **5.2 Coalition/Partnership Building in Mall Development in Accra**

Entrepreneurial and competitive city theorists have argued that in ‘economically-challenged’ cities, local state and non-state actors ‘develop a commitment to realising a broadly consensual vision of urban development, devise appropriate structures for implementing this vision and mobilise both local and nonlocal resources’ to turn around the local economy (Parkinson and Harding, 1995:66). This orthodoxy is framed within the context of a strong autonomous local state in consort with pro-active private and voluntary sector actors with clearly espoused vision.

In other words, there is supposed to be an existence of a *private (sector)-public* common vision. As such, in most developed and emerging economies, mall development has been the subject of systematic planning within the urban space, where they may be planned as part of the local strategic and (spatial) plans and executed over time (Roberts and Schein, 1993; Erkip, 2003; Knox and McCarthy, 2012, Storper et al. 2015). I demonstrate in this section that there is a need to reconsider this general conception, especially as it pertains to the context of a neoliberal African city. I show that significant urban development outcomes may still be achieved within the context of a non-autonomous local state, which may not necessarily subscribe to an entrepreneurial (city) vision. In such a milieu, enterprising citizens can act in a way that bypasses the established channels to shape urban development. Therefore, *local (private actor)-global connection* becomes the new link or vision that leads to the achievement of urban outcomes in the entrepreneurial African city.

But how did the enterprising citizens create alliances/coalitions and how have such alliances impacted Accra's urban development? I argue that enterprising citizens, with or without entrepreneurial track record, increased their social capital (Bourdieu, 1984) through cosmopolitan dispositions (Skrbis and Woodward, 2007), which led to their connecting with the global network of flows to enable them to shape urban outcomes. While this may seem to reiterate the local-global dialectics (Swyngedouw, 1992; Amin and Thrift, 1992, 1994; Peck and Tickell, 1994), the focus here is more on local citizen's cosmopolitan disposition and worldviews in urban entrepreneurialism. These processes partly underscore, as Harvey (1989b) noted, the transformation of urban governance in which other stakeholders beyond public officials are increasingly part of addressing urban economic development issues in neoliberal cities.

Despite Oteng-Ababio and Arthurs' (2015) position that malls are not new in Ghana, the development of western-style malls in Accra (which are a twenty-first century phenomenon)

has been largely a subject of incremental and organic development led predominantly by the private sector in an increasingly neoliberal Ghana. I explore, therefore, the role of the private, and possibly public sector in coalition building for mall development.

### *Private versus state sector*

In the entrepreneurial city, mall development may be led by a coalition involving the local government and other sectors, particularly the private sector, with a view to shore up the local economy (Harvey, 1989b; Storper et al. 2015). In the case of Ghana, this has not been the case, as pointed out by senior officers of the town and country planning department in Accra.

*As the city authority, it has the mandate that you cannot do anything within its jurisdiction without at least getting approval from the city (i.e. the development permit)... So definitely, the assembly has a role. The other aspect... the assembly... as far as I know... doesn't have predetermined development projects or blue prints that... if a developer wants... we say "Oh we have this... planned, prepared"... We don't have such a thing. So, it is the market that is determining what is happening. So the investors... do their own analysis and once they think that something is viable... they... present to the city... [to] look at, assess it, take it through the process and approve it (Deputy Town and Country Director, Accra Metropolitan Assembly, Dec. 2016).*

*I dare say that about all these malls' [sites], some 90 percent were not originally for mall. I mean, **we never knew malls in any case [My Emphasis]**, and like I said, a large majority were not originally zoned as commercial areas. I can also say that for a fact (Senior Town Planner, National Head Office, Accra. Dec. 2016).*

There are three reasons why Accra's case is different from the extant entrepreneurialism thesis. Firstly, city entrepreneurialism as a concept is nascent in Accra. As such, concepts such as local economic development (LED) and private public partnerships (PPP) are only beginning to occupy the national development discourse. In fact, it is fairly recent, in 2010, that the Ministry of Local Government and Rural Development (MLGRD) brought out the first ever policy on LED (Mensah et al., 2017). Mensah et al. (2017) also posit that successive

governments have not made LED a priority. Hence, there is a weak planning framework within which investors and city officials operate.

As a result, the structures relating to private-public partnerships (PPP) are inchoate<sup>60</sup>. Yet, the history of shopping mall development around the world shows that they have not only come through processes such as PPP arrangements. Where private sector actors have led these developments, they tended to operate in a well-structured or strong market economy or in the case of state-led economy, strong state with a developmentalist focus. In contrast, Ghana's development slowed during the period from the late 1960s to the mid-1980s when neoliberal policies were adopted. Dzorgbor (2001) has also indicated that between this period, Ghana experimented with various development models and was less firmly grounded in any particular course for reasonable length of time to yield systematic, well-structured and incremental political economic environments that set the base for such urban development projects. The second reason is that to the extent that decentralisation has not fully been entrenched, and the state has hitherto dictated urban development direction, local governments are not allowed by the state to enter into large scale public private ventures like mall development. The role of local governments in such urban projects would be expected to be minimal, especially where it involves foreign investors. It is admissible that in the early 1990s the city government had partnered with Social Security and National Insurance Trust (SSNIT) and other private sector companies to develop a multi-storey car park, the Accra Abattoir, and re-built the burnt down Markola Market, among others. The former mayor notes:

*The Markola Market which exists now which was built to replace an earlier version of the market which burnt in 1992 was rebuilt on the PPP with Accra Metropolitan Assembly (AMA) and SSNIT; SSNIT being a major financier and a couple of smaller companies. The Accra Abattoir was also built between AMA and SSNIT, as the major shareholders. That is just one example of PPP. The Accra Car Park on High Street is another example of a municipal facility which*

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<sup>60</sup> Recently, the Accra Metropolitan Assembly (AMA), for instance, has been exploring partnerships with the private sector to develop local traditional markets.

*the city decided it needed and managed to put together a coalition of financiers to put up* (Former Mayor of Accra, September 2016).

However, SSNIT, which was the biggest financier, is a quasi-state organisation and hence it was not difficult for the central government to grant permission for these projects. Additionally, the other partners, as reported by the former mayor, were Ghanaian firms. These projects undoubtedly gave the city authorities experience in private–public partnership. In addition, the retail industry, where shopping malls belong, are businesses that are traditionally supposed to be operated/managed by private businesses and, in Ghana’s case, laws, including the Ghana Investment Promotion Center (GIPC) laws (Acts 478 and 865), have stipulated the industry be operated by Ghanaians. The local governments are expected to merely tax local retail businesses. Hence, local governments, as public sector operators, have not seen themselves to be key players in terms of retail (sector) development against the background that PPP was also not known as a means where local governments may raise revenue and create jobs for their localities. This notwithstanding, from 1961, as part of the Nkrumah government’s ‘seven-year (socialist) development plan’, the state-owned Ghana National Trading Corporation (GNTC) had been set up to operate, among others, in the retail sector (Gocking, 2005:134). However, during the Rawlings era when the neoliberal policies were pursued, state involvement in several of such investments were divested to the private sector.

Using the shopping malls case to take a broader view of urban entrepreneurialism in Accra, a closer scrutiny suggests that there is, concurrently, reverse-convergence, convergence and divergence with Harvey’s theory of city entrepreneurialism. Firstly, his argument dwells on strong and autonomous local governments that innovate in a more entrepreneurial manner. By extension therefore, in non-autonomous local governments, there could be no urban entrepreneurialism. To the extent that Accra local governments have hitherto not been autonomous, as a result of which there has not been urban entrepreneurialism, I argue that this

is a case of reverse-convergence (Kiguel, 2014) with Harvey's theory. Secondly, Harvey (1989b:5) notes entrepreneurialism is a 'shift... with a rising tide', suggesting a process rather than an event. However, slow it may have been, Accra's urban governance has been 'shifting' since the neoliberal reforms, as I showed in Section 5.1. With time, Accra is bound to see PPP arrangements that seek to deliver large scale urban projects, such as malls. This represents a convergence. Indeed, examples of the gradual 'shift' include SSNIT's (a quasi-public entity) involvement in West Hills and, as indicated in Section 5.1.1 (ii) above, the promulgation of the National Urban Policy in 2013 and the passage of Public Financial Management Bill in 2016 (Act 921) which now gives power to some local governments to build PPP coalitions to undertake large scale urban projects with the consent of the central government. Finally, there is a divergence, if the argument is considered in the present, rather than the future, time. Harvey (1989b) argues that urban entrepreneurialism is the concomitant result of urban economic challenges, including soaring unemployment rates and low income in cities. He indicates that 'there seems to be a general consensus emerging throughout... that positive benefits are to be had by cities taking an entrepreneurial stance to economic development... [and] that the shift has something to do with the difficulties that have beset... economies' (ibid:4/5). The Accra case indicates that despite economic challenges (e.g. high unemployment, etc.) urban entrepreneurialism has not been pursued. This represents a departure from Harvey's (1989b) thesis.

That said, the challenges associated with neoliberal reforms as evidenced in many sub-Saharan African cities are suggestive that further extension of neoliberalism, including urban entrepreneurialism/competitiveness, needs to be carefully considered else, as Zetter (2004) notes, we risk more problems in African cities than we try to solve. In that sense, his admonition that 'for most, if not, all developing countries the ambition now is not so much to build entrepreneurial cities connected to the global economy; rather, what is at stake is the basic

survival of the cities in an era of declining social, economic and environmental conditions and the legitimacy of government to protect the needs and livelihoods of its citizens' (ibid:22) needs to be taken seriously.

In sum, this background has contributed to the non-involvement of the local government in mall developments in the city presently. The question is what then accounted for the growth of this sector and to what extent have the local governments been involved? I find the answers in the new political economic space enacted since the 1980s and enterprising Ghanaians.

**i. Political economic space**

I have already pointed out in Chapter Four how the Ghanaian economy grew in the decades of 1990s and the 2000s after its slump in the 1970s and the 1980s. The successful change in government in 2000 after the election of the opposition had the effect of improving the image of the state. Several legislations arising from the structural adjustment policies (financial services and investment laws) as well as a growing confidence in the institutions of government, especially the judiciary, also helped to give a positive signal. Furthermore, as indicated previously, the growing media and freedom of expression within the democratic space among others improved the level of transparency in the country. This is underscored by the former mayor of Accra:

*You see, the changes... are not simply the shopping malls. You are talking about a whole urban change; a whole chain of urban facilities which, in retrospect seems like one was linked to the other, and so on... [including]... decommissioning of the air waves (September, 2016).*

In his inaugural speech in January 2001, President Kufuor indicated that his administration was ushering Ghana into the golden age of business and invited both local and foreign investors to invest in the country. This governmental posturing, together with the factors discussed above, were important signals to both local and foreign investors who started to have confidence in

the economy or at least were ready to give investment in Ghana, and Accra for that matter, a try. An important constituency among the cohort of potential investors are the Ghanaian diaspora some of whom decided to relocate to invest in Ghana (Grant, 2009). Additionally, locals who also had cosmopolitan world views attempted to exploit the new business climate. Both of these types of Ghanaian investors, I will refer to as enterprising Ghanaians.

**ii. Enterprising Ghanaians**

Mall development has been led by middle class Ghanaians who had global connections. It is important to note that Ghanaians have always been entrepreneurial, even during pre-colonial times where in the 1880s some local businessmen were worth over £60,000 (Dzorgobr, 2001). Within a growing economy and the opening of a democratic space aided by a burgeoning media, citizens became more emboldened to consider large investments. Self-belief and a can-do spirit begun to be exhibited within this atmosphere. Hobden's (2015) study of Accra Mall confirms such emboldened/enterprising character exhibited by citizens, explaining it within a complex of socio-cultural, political economic, religious (of charismatic Christian teachings) and cosmopolitan worldview, among others.

*I mean, we've been president of the world before—we've had Kofi Annan as president of the world—de facto president of the world before. We have footballers who are making money in Europe. We have professors in America. We have more Ghanaian doctors in New York than in Ghana itself. We have people in South Africa. Everywhere! ... the individuals had developed more than the government. The people and their mindsets have developed better than the government. That way, if you talk to the average Ghanaian professional entrepreneur, his mindset, what he envisages for Ghana, is totally different from what the politicians are envisaging. So, as a people, we have developed faster than our politicians can keep up with the pace of national development (Local Entrepreneur interview in Hobden, 2015:59).*

While Hobden (2015) frames these as contemporary virtues in a globalising Accra, a reading of Dzorgbor (2001) and Parker (2000) indicates that these qualities go much further into pre-colonial era of the nineteenth century. It is admissible that in a more liberalised environment

such qualities could be expanded and well-channelled to maximise the benefits for national development. This seems to be the trajectory leading to the development of the shopping malls.

*Then the city's economy changed. In the 1960s-1980s, we still depended on the government to provide much of the infrastructure. In the 1990s, it was no longer government that was providing the infrastructure. During my time, as mayor, the assemblymen and their businessmen friends discovered that the city was full of, not vacant lands, but large pieces of government lands occupied by sanitary stations and they started to requisition these spots and turn them into shops. The excuse went that they will rebuild the public toilets, make them more efficient; put them in one small corner of the big lot and then use the rest for commercial purposes... as shopping centre. So that preceded the whole idea of the shopping malls... Then after that, of course, that set the stage for a shopping emporium which is not exactly a local market, which is several stories high; 3 or 4-storeys high with shops on the first two floors with offices on the top, and distributed all over the city. They were not engineered for vehicular traffic as such but they were certainly much better use of the land than they had been previously. And that set the stage for shopping malls which, many of whom had started from South Africa, have proliferated in Nigeria and then came here. But by the time they came here the market was ready, the electorate was ready. (Former Mayor; Sept., 2016).*

Among others, cosmopolitan disposition/worldview is one key point that enterprising Ghanaians exploited to make the development of the malls feasible. All the local developers interviewed gave the impression that models from the western world and South Africa had impact on local proponents. In the case of Accra Mall, ideas picked up through travels to the United Kingdom made significant impressions on Joseph Owusu-Akyaw, the local investor (Hobden, 2014). In the case of West Hills Mall, Kofi Sekyere, the local investor, had lived in South Africa for a long time. Similarly, the investors in the first mall (A&C Mall), Andrew Asamoah and family, had lived in Switzerland for several years. Cosmopolitanism gained through foreign travel has meant that malls are seen not just as business models, but also as intrinsic to urban development.

*Before A & C came into the picture... East Legon was a bush. You see what I am saying? It's the same way Accra Mall has also added to the element of Accra city, Tetteh Quarshie, Spintex, etc. Because of Accra Mall, it has helped boost the growth of that area... the area will naturally grow. But once there is an*

*ignition, it attracts more growth and I think that is why East Legon has grown so huge* (Managing Director, A&C Mall; November, 2016).

*On the contrary, West Hills came through our [Sandpark Ltd] development. Out of our economic difficulties we were looking at how to grow this area. And we thought developing a mall here will bring development to this area to help our [real estate] properties. So out of our difficulties we now have four malls [West Hills, Achimota, Kumasi and Accra Malls]* (Construction Manager, Sandpark Ltd. Nov. 2016).

These dispositions, including cosmopolitan visions, etc., can be read as a process of capital accumulation to increase one's position of influence in society, in Bourdieu's (1984) cultural analysis. In this case, such accumulation of capital is for the purposes of becoming influential to enable connections with global capitalists, among others, to aid in the production of spaces of consumption (i.e. shopping malls).

Yet, it is one thing to have an idea or influence to aid mall development and another to translate them into reality. The question then is how did these enterprising Ghanaians translate the influence and ideas occasioned by their cosmopolitan outlook into tangible mall development? This I explore through an analysis of the *coalition* built for the development of the two case study malls.

### **5.2.1 Coalition Building**

Scholars argue that creating and keeping vital contacts is an important key for building trust and facilitating alliance in community and urban development (Putnam, 1993; Knack and Keefer, 1997; Requena, 2003; Pattillo, 2007). Establishing and keeping vital contacts may well be the bridges between dreams and reality such that those without such contacts are greatly disadvantaged (Stone, 2012). Such contacts could lead to further accumulation of cultural capital, according to Bourdieu (1984).

In the case study malls, these contacts, from both international and local sources, led to the formation of private sector mall development coalitions. In the case of Accra Mall, the planning took years because the political economic environment was evolving. Within this period of maturation, private individuals were also becoming entrepreneurial, though they may not have been entrepreneurs from the outset. This may be read against the background of the economic changes in the 1980s which accentuated the informal economic sectors as retrenched formal workers found space in the informal sector (ActionAID, 2010) whilst for those remaining formal sector workers the idea of keeping a formal job whilst exploring different sources of income, be it in the informal sector, became pertinent (Grey-Johnson, 1992). This situation underscores the point that accumulation of cultural capital evolves and expands over time both in terms of the institutions of capital building, what Bourdieu (1984) specifically calls *fields*, and the individual's position of influence, i.e. the *habitus*. The point being that as the political economic structures of Ghana changed, despite attendant systemic problems, opportunities for a section of the population also expanded making them more influential and effective leading to achievement of goals.

As such, whilst the neoliberal reforms have been blamed for the expansion of the informal sector, it opened up other possibilities for capital accumulation for enterprising individuals. For instance, one overlooked positive of such alternative sources of income may be that active pensioners, whilst reserving opportunity to use their time profitably, could financially support themselves adequately. Yet, in Ghana, such a desire to secure alternative source of income may not so much have to do with immediate economic survival, but for most people, it is important to leave a legacy for one's descendants. Even where this is practically not feasible, the thought holds sway within Ghanaian cultural ethos. In the Akan setting, for instance, a man who passes on should be seen to have *lived well* i.e. '*woabo bra*' (in the local parlance). Such narratives come with the connotation that the individual lived a responsible, rather than a wasteful life,

by leaving a legacy for his descendants. This legacy is usually measured in properties/assets left behind: houses, businesses, etc. The cultural understanding, amongst others, explain why migrants who travel outside the country will scrimp and save to, at least, build a house in Ghana. There is a cultural capital that one stands to gain from ‘woabo bra’: i.e. to be accorded as a respected and responsible member of the community.

*Look, my Dad said... “I want you [my family] to take this and move it; whatever equity in it had to go to the next mall... you know what? I am going to create opportunity”. Yea, [because] people are quick to say that “did he create opportunity in his children?” They [people] always look at that side; ‘how much are they worth; how much will they make out of this? ‘Are they fronting for somebody? I mean, ‘how did he get the money to do it?’ (Son of Joseph Owusu-Akyaw, Oct. 2016).*

Consequently, the drive by enterprising Ghanaians to create contacts that lead to establishment of monumental urban projects like malls is an important signifier/marker in the Ghanaian society, reminiscent of Bourdieu’s cultural capital.

This perhaps became the case with Owusu-Akyaw, who might have retired<sup>61</sup> in the year 2000. Until his passing in 2010, having lived for about seventy years, he had occupied himself with Accra Mall for well over twenty years, according to his son. As staff of the quasi-state entity, SSNIT, Owusu-Akyaw explored the idea of another source of income. According to his son, Albert Manu, he had originally intended to build a hotel as his side-business, registering it as Inter-City Hotels Ltd. under Ghanaian laws. Over time, through his travels, he switched to build a mall, for which he ultimately joins with Actis to make it a reality, as explained further below. In the case of West Hills, the idea and the formation of the coalition was predicated more on economic rationalisation. With Atterbury’s acquisition of Accra Mall in 2012, it took less effort to convince them to participate in a second mall development.

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<sup>61</sup> Retirement age for most public sector workers in Ghana is 60 years

### ***Key Connections in High Places: Did it Play a Part?***

Raising the needed funds to develop Accra Mall had proved herculean within Ghana but Owusu-Akyaw kept speaking to potential local investors including SSNIT, his employers who turned it down. With the coming into office of the Kufuor administration in January 2001, against the background outlined, he was linked up through a friend to Lagos-based Dominic Adu, investment manager for Actis' West Africa office in Nigeria. According to Owusu-Akyaw's son, Albert, the connection to Dominic proved crucial to the success of Accra Mall.

*So when my Dad was looking for financiers and everything was failing, somebody [...]; Dominic flew from Lagos to meet my Dad! That is when Accra Mall then set. My Dad then said, look I have this project, Dominic came to the site, bare land, looked at it, went to Nigeria, brought the Actis team. That started Accra Mall. (Oct. 2016).*

Though Albert did not mention the role of former Minister for Tourism and Modernisation of the Capital City in the Kufuor government, the late Jake Obetsebi-Lamprey, Albert indicated that “*Jake helped make this happen*”. Another interesting connection is the former President Kufuor himself who happened to be the secondary school classmate of Joseph Owusu-Akyaw. However, I need to point out that, the local architect indicated that the former President had absolutely no hand in the realisation of Accra Mall. Everything was by due process. Evidence gathered from other sources indicates that this project went through all due process<sup>62</sup>. Nevertheless, Albert indicates that there were a number of times, during the construction phase, the President called his father on the phone to discuss about the progress of work, as the President saw from his residence some 300 metres away from the mall site, and both expressed excitement about progress then. While the question of whether or not Owusu-Akyaw's connection to highly-placed individuals (in government) contributed to the success of Accra Mall may be moot, it is important to highlight that connections by themselves are important

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<sup>62</sup> One official indicated that he does not have any information to the effect that such high level connections may have helped but the nature of the project and its novelty was such that a support from higher authority may not be completely out of place.

contributions to social capital formation (Putnam, 1993) and can certainly increase an individual's influence and effectiveness, i.e. *habitus* (Bourdieu, 1984), in delivering relevant urban development outcomes.

### ***The Coalition-Special Purpose Vehicle (SPV)***

Actis already had a history of equity financing and had been operating in Ghana, as the Commonwealth Development Corporation (CDC), since Ghana's independence. Actis' preliminary studies based on the site location and A&C Mall's track record suggested a mall to be a viable venture. Hence the two: Actis and Inter-City Hotels Ltd. created the first ever mall development coalition (they christened special purpose vehicle, SPV) with Actis taking 70 percent with Inter-City maintaining 30 percent. Originally, Accra Mall had two floors planned, estimated to cost some excess of \$60million. Through its knowledge on foreign investments in Ghana, Actis applied for tax rebates, which saved the coalition \$3 million in taxes. Thereafter Actis pushed for reduction in scope, a move which other partners think should not have been made given that the mall is currently going to develop a second phase, because of a backlog of prospective tenants, including the American menswear company *Tommy Hilfiger*. Yet, at the time, it was attempting to minimise risks in a market that retained uncertainties. With the project cost halved, Actis raised about \$6 million whilst Inter-City's equity, in terms of land and work done, was estimated between \$2 and \$3 million<sup>63</sup>. Standard Bank of South Africa (Stanbic), which had entered Ghana in 1999 as a result of the financial services reforms and the growing economy, was approached by the coalition. An initial loan of \$18 million was advanced. At the end of the development phase, Actis' share had increased to 85 percent whilst Inter-City had reduced to 15 percent on account of additional equity financing from Actis.

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<sup>63</sup> Information obtained from local partners

The involvement of Actis gave confidence to major South African retail anchors (Game and Shoprite) who signed long term leases with the investors. A host of other preferential tenants were also lined up before and during construction. Thus, on the first opening day in November 2007, the shop units were almost 100 percent occupied<sup>64</sup>.

In West Hills' case, Kofi Sekyere, through his company, Sandpark Ltd., conceived the idea and made initial contacts with SSNIT which gave a positive signal. Sandpark then developed the proposal and approached Atterbury who agreed. A joint venture was then formed called Delico Investments. Delico then approached SSNIT, who having lost the Accra Mall opportunity, thought this would be a worthwhile venture on its land, a portion of which had already been released to Sandpark for a residential complex, to develop West Hills. SSNIT, reasoning that *"malls are sited either at active or dead areas to develop the areas"* (Dec., 2016), then takes 40 percent whilst the Delico Investments maintained 60 percent of the investment. The project was estimated to have cost in excess of \$90 million.

It is therefore evident that the development of Accra Mall had been more organic than a series of programmatic steps as found in the entrepreneurial cities literature. However, the West Hills' case, closely resembles the entrepreneurial city framework where such investments are used to turn around the economic fortunes of a locality. Yet, the point of departure is that the city authorities were only an appendix to such economic rationalisations. Recalling Rodgers' (2009) 'urban growth coalition thesis' two types of 'place entrepreneurs' can be identified. In the case of Accra Mall, Actis and the Inter-City Hotels seized the opportunity of a place/land that already had high economic value by consolidating the economic (i.e. exchange) value of the land. Alternatively, Delico Investments and SSNIT seized the opportunity to stem the tide of a place whose economic value was low to shore it up. In both instances, it reveals the effect,

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<sup>64</sup> Information obtained from mall operators

or the role, of malls in consolidating already high economic value or reversing the low value of land/place. In Chapter Six, I will show how mall operators are strategising to continue to sustain the exchange value of these places to ensure increasing profitability of their investment.

In sum, it is clear for Accra Mall, the local investor (Joseph Owusu-Akyaw), a civil servant who possessed no entrepreneurial record but had an entrepreneurial vision networked with global actors to by-pass established framework in delivering urban development result, however, for West Hills, the local investor possessed an entrepreneurship background, and acting in a rational economic way similar to entrepreneurial city framework, delivered their envisaged project. Yet the common strand in both cases however, is their ability to link with larger global networks that inured positively to the benefits of the city. I therefore argue that in both instances (local) *private actor-global connectedness* replaced the *private-public sector connectedness* in delivering urban outcomes, as discussed in the literature.

## **Conclusion**

In this chapter I have shown that the local governments are not completely autonomous despite several laws that seek to ensure complete decentralisation. I have suggested that key decisions in the city are taken at the higher central state level. This has produced what might appropriately be termed as mixed results because there could be delayed, dispatch or even derailed execution of urban development projects. That is, urban projects could be delayed depending on whether the procedures are to be adhered to or dispatch if the ruling government have political interest, as shown in the case of the road overlays, or derailed if the opposition party takes over power, as in the Adjin Kotoku relocation project. In the case of delays, I identified procedural and institutional bureaucracy as two factors that occasion delays in urban development in Accra.

As such, the benefits of entrepreneurial city are not fully realised. On that score, I have argued, based on the evidence gathered that in the case of the shopping malls, their emergence in the

city has been delayed likely because the city has so far been less entrepreneurial. I indicated the inability of the city governments to attract investors on their own, as pertains in the entrepreneurial cities literature, is key in such delayed achievement of urban results. Yet, I have also suggested that the process of being or becoming an entrepreneurial city is an ongoing process and there has certainly been progress made over the last ten to fifteen years. This has contributed in making the city build capacity in key areas especially as pertains with collaborating with other interest groups and international development agencies.

One area that has witnessed impressive transformation however has to do with citizen's role in the transformation from government to governance. I indicated that the liberalisation of the media and other popular rhetoric such as power to the people and increasing engagement with citizens, among others, led to active citizens in the city.

I demonstrated later in Section 5.2 how such active citizens turned themselves into enterprising citizens to network with international investors to establish mall development coalitions leading to proliferation of malls in the city. I argued that two strands of strategic coalition are evident. Accra Mall's which happened in a more organic form through the toils of an enterprising individual and which does not neatly cater to the entrepreneurial city framework. On the other hand, the West Hills' closely aligns with the theory which sees coalition as a strategy to shore up distressed local economies. In both cases however, proponents built upon their global connectedness through cosmopolitan dispositions and worldviews to achieve their aims. As such, the local governments have not been an intrinsic part of the process, but rather adjunct to it. This, also, is a departure from the literature's prescription.

In the next chapter I explore the role of malls as spaces of consumption and transport of global modernity in Accra.

## CHAPTER SIX

### ACCRA'S SHOPPING MALLS AS NEW SPACES OF URBAN CONSUMPTION

#### Introduction

In this chapter, I argue that malls represent nodes of global convergence which set them off as multiple loci of glamour that appeal to all citizens, allowing them to associate with malls to enhance their status as 'modern' citizens. Such association, I argue, is done through the agency of consumption. As such, I construe consumption not only in its narrow classical economic terms, but in sociological or multi-disciplinary terms of sensing, embodying and identity formation akin to Trentman's (2005) argument, cited in Stobart et al (2007:168), that 'consumption is ultimately about the attitudes, behavior and identity of individuals and groups in which they express themselves'. Based largely on qualitative interviews, this chapter explores the following questions:

- *What has been the marketing and other public relations strategies and narratives that have sought to endear malls to their clientele in the city?*
- *How have malls been received by Accra's various socio-economic groups, as evidenced in their various spatial locations in the city, and how do citizens perceive malls in relation to the questions of modernity?*

From 2006, western-style shopping malls have captured the imagination of the Ghanaian consumer in a way that marveled city residents, city authorities, and even international capitalists such that the broader questions of consumption invite academic inquiry. A&C and Accra Malls opened in 2006 and 2007 respectively. A&C Mall's development, which started in a rather modest way, had been incremental and did not generate the same level of citizen euphoria and urban governance furore that greeted the opening of Accra Mall. Since Accra Mall was planned long before its realisation, there is little wonder that after it made its imprint on Accra's retail landscape, it captured the imagination of the city in unprecedented way, both

in terms of consumption and the city's economy. Charles Hanson (the local Ghanaian architect who partnered with South African architects to design the mall), sounding excited and seeming to lack words to describe the event, noted:

*Look when we opened Accra Mall... it's just a novelty, the city actually froze! Because the whole city was coming to see London in Accra! They never seen anything [...]. The corridors looked like some place in America and people just came there, did nothing, just stood in the corridor. You know? The place was [...] you know, the parking was [...] the interchange was all choked up, everywhere! You know? It was the usual fun-fare. Things like that happen, even in Europe; Eastern Europe and those places, when a mall like that opens and it happened here, perhaps much more (Nov. 2016).*

That was the first night of opening in November 2007 when Accra came to a stand-still because of the new retail centre in town - the Accra Mall. There was a huge traffic jam in the city, as the architect indicates; and, as pointed out in Chapter Three, the Mayor of Accra had to drive to the mall under police escort to warn mall operators to do something about the (traffic) situation; otherwise he would close down the mall. In the ensuing days and years, city inhabitants would throng the mall for shopping, for banking, for cinema shows, sight-seeing, photographs and for relaxation at the food court and other spaces offered by mall designers/developers. Such trips with their variegated purposes inured positively to the capitalist's interest too. Five years after the mall opened, in mid-2012, Actis, the firm that raised the equity for the project, sold its 85 percent stake in the mall at a cost of \$55million (US). The total project cost after construction amounted to some \$35million (US). One official put it this way: “Actis came to invest about \$6million and went away with more than \$30million after 5 years”. When this went public in the retail investment community, especially in South Africa where Actis had raised the equity, international attention came to be focused on Ghana, and for that matter Accra, as the new destination for investment, especially in spaces of consumption.

Subsequently, several of such large scale<sup>65</sup> malls sprung up in various localities in the city, giving rise to a total of seven (7) by 2014, excluding other medium scale malls that may be appropriately described as hypermarkets or supermarkets.

In the recent opening of the Kumasi<sup>66</sup> City Mall (May 2017), the first to be built outside Accra in the center of Ghana 275km north-west of Accra, it was rumored that someone pulled his live goat (under leash) to the mall on pretext that a new mall, opened by the President, has come to town and everybody can bring his/her 'wares' to market. It was alleged that Accra citizens teased Kumasi citizens, among others, that this is the first time they ever saw a mall with the first escalator in Kumasi. The escalator itself was another nightmare. Citizens had to be educated on its use, yet people still got it wrong and some fell whilst using. When the current President, Nana Akuffo-Addo, opened it, he opined rather humorously that "*Kumasi citizens are being teased by Accra because Kumasi stole Accra's bragging rights! Accra can no more say they have the largest mall in West Africa. The title now belongs to Kumasi*". Kumasi City Mall<sup>67</sup> was reported to be bigger than the West Hills Mall.

These perspectives demonstrate how popular discourse around shopping malls are being framed in the city and beyond. Additionally, they provide a window for understanding how malls have or are redefining consumption, as broadly construed in theory and practice, in the city of Accra. Indeed, malls have become places where Accra's upper class like to hang out for tea and for business discussions (Hobden, 2015), while the middle class like to shop to reinforce their status; because, as some interviewees indicated: "*malls are civilised way[s] of shopping*" and "*here the wares are not displayed on the floor like our local markets*". The idea of progress

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<sup>65</sup> By world standards for classification of malls, Accra's malls largely belong to the small-centers category while only one, the West Hill belong to the lower rungs of the medium-sized centers. Thus, in this study, the usage of large scale and medium are context-specific.

<sup>66</sup> Kumasi is Ghana's second biggest city after Accra.

<sup>67</sup> Checks with the local architect on the Kumasi City Mall indicates that it was going to be bigger when its phase II is completed. Developers decided to complete only 18000m<sup>2</sup> of the planned 29,000m<sup>2</sup> when some prospective tenants declined to go ahead to take spaces.

and cleaner environment obviously references local traditional markets which the growing middle class see as outmoded and, to an extent, insanitary mode of shopping. Such visions seem to fit the narrative of modernity where the middle class aspire to what is seen as modern lifestyles. It, additionally, re-invokes the recreation of identities through consumption (Stobart et al. 2007) or emulative consumption where middle income people may copy upper class' consumption tendencies (Berg, 2005) such that as a middle class, an individual should be involved in '*civilised... shopping*'. For the general citizenry, particularly the young people who may not have the necessary purchasing power, they would love to dress, then visit, perhaps eat fried rice and soda from the food court and later pose for a memorable photograph. Such a photograph may end up on a social media platform to get several 'likes' from friends. Associating with the mall this way, one could read this concept of consumption as a social marker (Dunn, 2008) within Accra's changing consumption landscape.

However, most recent studies on consumption in Accra have been centered on commodity, such as food and alcohol consumption (Firibu et. al. 2013; Da Pilma-Lekettey, 2017), consumer perception (Duah et al., 2016) or food retailing (Aryeetey et al., 2016). Over the last ten (10) years when shopping malls started to shape city imaginaries and identities, a few studies have focused, still, on consumer perception or strategic positioning, from business point of view, in the increasingly competitive retail industry (Asiedu, 2015) or retail factors influencing shop selection (Anning-Dorson, 2013) or shop visitation motivation for shoppers (Anning-Dorson et al. 2013). As previously indicated, three recent studies that offer departure from the existing studies are Hobden (2014, 2015), which focus on Accra Mall as the result of trans-national flows into an increasingly globalising Accra, and Oteng-Ababio and Arthur (2015), which focus on the economic success of Accra Mall within a sea of a thriving informal economy and how both formal and informal retail shape urban poverty in the city. Thus, within the city and taking due cognisance of the burgeoning formal retail centres, the broader questions of urban

consumption are virtually unexplored. Hence, this study on consumption within the context of sub-Saharan Africa contributes to scholarship on consumption in the global South, against the backdrop that the increasing pace of globalisation is enmeshing most of the developing world into the new consumerist<sup>68</sup> society.

The chapter is organised around topics that reflect the dynamic inter-relationship amongst (transfer of global) capital, goods, people and the production of consumer tastes and spaces in the city of Accra, since the mid-2000s. It is divided into two sections. Section 6.1 entitled *transport of global taste and questions of modernity* tries to understand the extent to which Accra's malls, as spaces of consumption, have shaped tastes and lifestyles and in turn being shaped by the various socio-economic groups inhabiting the areas within which they are located. The central argument in this section is that malls represent 'nodes of global convergence' that epitomizes modernity and hence appeal to aspiring citizens. Section 6.2: *marketers' strategies: target customers, merchandise and niche markets*, explores the means Accra's mall operators use to expand their market reach, such as framing malls around narratives of convenience and one-stop shop, and how they have endeared themselves to Accra's citizens, through the deployment of, in the words of Sweet (2002), cited in Stobart et al. (2007:4), 'polite mannerisms'. It further explores how malls have thrived or are being challenged in the increasingly saturated retail market and how operators are reinventing strategies, including operating an open-door policy, to still capture their market segment. The central argument here also is that, as nodes of global convergence, malls become multiple loci of consumption, an extension of the idea of malls as 'glamorous locus of consumption' (Goss,

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<sup>68</sup> Some scholars have tried to distinguish between consumer society and consumerist society (Dunn, 2008). Consumer society is associated with 'modernism' whiles consumerist references postmodernism. Consumer society is collective and consumerist society seen as individualistic in the sense that postmodernism fragmented and individualized consumption. Glennie (1998:928) also argues that the definition of consumption and consumerism occur many times in the literature and most of them are contradictory anyway.

1993; Firat and Venkatesh, 1995; Logemann, 2009; Trevinal, 2013), which attract all citizens to associate with modernity.

## 6.1 Transport of Global Taste and the Question of Modernity

It is in the post-modern city that the realization of consumption contributes both to the changing form of the urban and to *social life* and practices within it. If the *social distinction* is traceable in terms of consumption patterns so too cities and their reinvention during the contemporary restructuring are defined through the *deliberate employment of consumption as a mechanism of change* [and] to foreground the centrality of consumption in the postmodern city is not to underestimate the historical connection between cities and consumption in modernity (Miles and Paddison, 1998:821; Emphasis added).

Miles and Paddison's (1998) observation underscores the inter-connection between consumption, social life and modernity in post-modern cities of the global North. It also highlights the allure that consumption wields, even in western societies, such that consumption becomes glamorised because of its potential to confer on individuals and groups the identity of being modern, and thereby conveying the impression of the individual/group being civilised, well-cultured and sociable (Stobart et al., 2007). For that reason, many want to associate with consumption, thus leading to the creation of a consumption culture. Such allure invokes Karl Marx's commodity fetishism where capitalism extracts exchange value from commodities whilst concurrently downplaying their use value (Morris et al. 1966). Hence, consumption becomes the agency through which allure and glamour are commodified. But just how may consumption patterns shape social life and modernity and in turn be shaped by social distinctions and modernity in a globalising sub-Saharan African city (Grant, 2009) that bears the vestiges of precolonial, colonial and postcolonial cultural tendencies? How does the emergence and proliferation of malls as new spaces of consumption in Accra help our

understanding of modernity in Africa? I explore these questions further in my discussion of malls as nodes of global convergence and carriers of modernity.

### **Malls as ‘Nodes of Global Convergence’ and Transporters of Modernity**

I focus specifically on the role of malls in active transformation of tastes/lifestyles and consumption patterns in the city to ground the understanding of modernity. I do this by arguing, *ab initio*, that malls constitute a ‘*node of global convergence*’, a concept or theme I developed from the interview data, where global capital, global built forms, merchandize and global brands conflate to produce a glamorous image. This image of the mall then appeals, if not advertises itself, as (the new) modernity to all classes of people, including the low-income groups and, particularly, the middle and upper classes, both of whom are embedded in western cosmopolitanism, where modernity holds sway. To clarify: firstly, I have pointed out in Chapter Six and elsewhere in the thesis that Accra’s malls have been funded through international capital, particularly from South Africa. Secondly, for both Accra Mall and West Hills, the architectural forms have been pioneered principally by South African architects (Bentel and Associates in the case of Accra Mall and Arc Architects for West Hills). In sub-Saharan Africa, South Africa has long been connected to the global retail industry and is quite advanced in shopping mall development than many countries in the region and beyond (Steyn, 2014). Architect Hanson commented that South African architects literally copied shopping mall built forms from the US; arguing that this is a universal form and sought to justify, that there was no need for variation but rather a wholesale import into Accra:

*But [shopping mall] is not something that is of place. It is an experience that has become global and it hasn’t been an experience that you can easily customize. A mall in Chicago is like a mall here [in Accra]. A mall in Brazil is like a mall in Rome. I have been to all of them. All these places; and I see that it’s an experience on its own. And so, in design here, when we tried to see whether there was a need for [...] you see the need is the problem... So I am yet to see anybody who has been successful [at customising it] (Nov. 2016).*

Similarly, the local architect for West Hills Mall, who indicated it was his first experience working on malls, noted that the design came from the South African Arc Architects, and, the bulk of the local architect's role was for post-contract supervision and advising on statutory permitting processes from the local government.

*I must say, I had never done a mall before so it was a great learning curve for me but from a role point of view what it then became was a joint venture partnership, particularly to manage the post-contract supervision aspects and to also inform on standards locally here, especially at design stage to ensure that we meet compliance; to ensure that the building will meet local standards at the Town and Country Planning Department (Andrew Benson, Local Architect for West Hills, Aug. 2016).*

Lastly, the malls contain a host of merchandize and brands which are deeply rooted in global networks. In Oteng-Ababio and Arthur's (2015) study, they found that the shops in Accra Mall are from North America, Europe, Asia and continental Africa and these control about 81 percent of the retail space. These are international or foreign shops. By extension, Ghanaian-owned, i.e. local, shops control 19 percent. From the questionnaires I administered, 62.1 percent of shop owners/managers indicated their shops were international (foreign) shops.

In addition, a cohort of middle class shoppers with cosmopolitan outlooks tend to accept the malls as closer to their expectations, on account of, among others, the "*civilised way of shopping*" malls offer. These middle class, most of whom have foreign travel experiences tend to help ground malls' sustainability to an extent, and by their lifestyles additionally tend to become important pointer to the transport of western consumption lifestyle and culture. This was amply shown in the qualitative interviews conducted. About 90 per cent of the interviewees have all had travel experiences outside Ghana, either for study or tourism. In their narratives, they would all make references to their experiences overseas including first-hand experience with shopping malls in the US, UK, Denmark, Switzerland, South Africa, or Dubai.

*To be very frank, the West Hills Mall, if you look at it from outside, **those of us who have travelled**, it reminds you of some area you know... [T]he mall at Nungua [Junction Mall], recently last year, I went to Worcester, Ohio, and we went to a place where they have the malls, and if you look at the way the malls have been arranged at the Junction Mall..., it resembles this Worcester Mall area. (Jerry Smith; Head of Department of Marketing, Ashesi University College, Ghana; August 2016; Emphasis added).*

Undoubtedly, these experiences help shape the city's evolving worldview on consumption, including serving to entrench the shopping mall culture in Ghana. Of course, there is also the expatriate/foreign community in Accra most, if not all, of whom are already acculturated by the shopping mall culture. Though the research did not focus on this group, together with the growing middle class, they represent an important constituency and, for that matter, additional variable in the notion of 'malls as nodes of global convergence' that are helping to shape the consumption culture brought about by the malls.

Finally, being nodes of global convergence, malls are presented as new and contemporary in Accra. Something 'new' invokes the idea of modernity, not merely by the nature of the thing but by the way malls enhance efficiency and lifestyle (Robinson, 2006). This is in tandem with what most people interviewed agreed on: that modernity means "*new ways of doing things*". Also, 94 and 96 percent of staff and managers respectively agreed that malls in Accra make the city modern. While this is a departure from the notion that modernity means 'to look like the west', the thought that modernity is to replicate the western world is fairly grounded in Accra, where nearly all interviewees' responses tend to reflect modernity as looking like the west. Furthermore, 11 and 22.5 percent of managers and staff respectively indicated that modernity means to look like the west or something imported from abroad.

But how do malls as 'nodes for global convergence' in Accra shape lifestyles and consumption tendencies? And how do these lifestyles help citizens define modernity? I discuss the middle

class and low-income group in turn. Particularly for the middle class, I explore, among others, the changing structure of the family under neoliberalism and how malls cater to such evolution of lifestyle in Accra. For other low-income people, I explore how they view malls as artefacts of modernity in the way they associate with and appropriate malls' modernity to accentuate their individual identities.

### ***Malls, Modernity, Middle Class and the Nuclear Family***

[M]iddle class professionals... have played a distinctive and important part in the reshaping of the inner city... [through] an orientation to an urban lifestyle, the cosmopolitan opportunities of central city living... [and] wholesale modernization of the city (Ley, 1996:4/5).

In western countries, as Ley (1996) notes for Canadian cities, public policies have favored construction of shopping malls, extension of public parks, development of plazas, waterfronts and other urban imaginaries that are attuned to the middle and upper classes. Thus, Ley (1996) posits that consumption preferences of the western middle class reflect a taste for aesthetics and architectural appeal, cultural and social diversity, and attractive neighborhoods. That is, for the middle class, consumption transcends from basic (merely life-sustaining) to incorporate a degree of conspicuous (or lifestyle) consumption (Zukin, 1998). Mall owners and operators seem to play on this fact, especially as far as the middle class is concerned. As previously indicated, Idoko et al. (2017:7) found that international brands and merchandize that are difficult to obtain on local (Nigerian) markets are made available by malls, hence malls have become sites of attraction to local consumers who want to 'catch up with western culture through consumption'. In Accra, the shops bring largely foreign consumer goods within easy reach of the population. Some of these goods, which to a large extent are unavailable in traditional local markets, are seen by local consumers as appealing and attractive. Also, there

is the notion that foreign goods sold in the malls are of high quality. A manager in a jewelry shop at West Hills indicated that their location in the mall gives added layer of trust to their clientele on account that clients can always find them if they have issues with the products; therefore, the products must be genuine. The common assumption, then, is that mall products are more expensive and those who patronise are thought to be better off:

*[My] company [where I work]... deal in home appliances... same items here. When I compare the prices, our prices are lower than here. This place has the name: West Hills. So, you know our **big men and women**? They want to come here and buy.* [Customer Interview (Cecilia), Dec. 2016; Emphasis added].

Consequently, there is a certain prestige associated with those who patronise these stores. Purchasing from the malls (even at higher price) is a signifier of affluence and prestige: the prestige of being accorded a “*big man [or] woman*” status. Hence, a middle-class consumer at once becomes a (socially) significant person (Dunn, 2008; Oteng-Ababio and Arthur, 2015) once s/he engages in consumption of these foreign products.

Yet, it is not only the prestige. As discussed further in Section 6.2, due to malls’ convenience and perhaps efficiency, middle class people view them as being sympathetic to their busy schedules in a neoliberalising Accra. Indeed, the increased traffic congestion in the city and harsh economic situations occasioned by demands of neoliberal policies are such that lifestyles that achieve more within less time is highly prized. Most interviewees agreed that modernity means efficiency. For instance, the marketing manager of West Hills opined that “*modernity is the advancement of the way things are done... an efficient and a better way of doing things, compared to what it used to be done*”.

There is also a certain degree of finesse and hygiene that malls bring to bear that appeal to the middle class. Engineer Quansah's<sup>69</sup> perspective throws more light:

*It is not just the structure [of the malls] but **it has changed our lifestyle**; whether we like it or not... today, you can go to one place and probably get some basic necessities you need... Ghana's middle class is really growing, ok. And that is what comes when people have extra money. They have to spend it. So, people prefer to buy tomatoes in the mall than going to Agbobloshie<sup>70</sup> to stand there..., there, the tomatoes is on the floor; so probably in terms of modernity that is the other positives because traditionally we, every food you buy [...], is [displayed] on the floor... You see tomatoes, everything, is on the ground, in the sun and then they arrange, they take it from the sun, they give it to you... So, with a growing middle class, it is only expected that the malls will be so attractive. [October, 2016; emphasis added].*

On how malls appeal to present lifestyle of middle class families, excerpt of the interview with one family sheds light on how malls have shaped their lifestyle:

*Que: So what is your impression about how these malls/shops are shaping lifestyles in Accra?*

*Patrick: Hm! They are relieving tension. That is what I can say. Sometimes you just want the kids to have fun and just sit and think of other things. That is good for us; at least, for us.*

*Kate: I think this really helps the nuclear family... Previously, you had your cousins and other neighborhood kids to play around with but now it is not like that. You come back and you are so tired; everybody is in their room; their houses actually... I think we are heading towards the place where people are keeping to themselves. So, this is also opening up a bit; so okay, now this is the lifestyle, there are other people you can meet around. So, the new modern trend now.*

*Patrick: Exactly! For me, you think you have a bigger family but you come out of a bigger family to yourself; then you come out here and you realise that there is even a bigger family [...] you can make friends here, to get acquaintances.*

Among others, Kate indicated that sometimes, depending on where she happens to be, she may be forced to buy from the mall though the items are a bit expensive. But generally, they indicated that they compare prices in the mall with other local shops/markets because now there

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<sup>69</sup> After obtaining a first degree in civil engineering in Ghana, he studied for a Masters in the Netherlands in the 1990s and currently runs a medium-sized engineering and planning consultancy in Accra

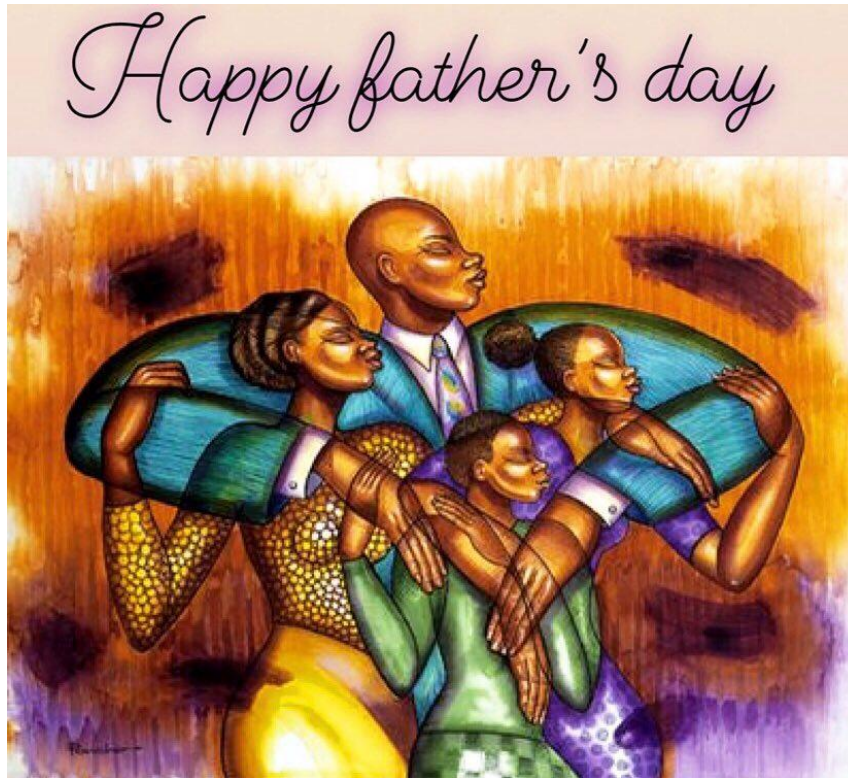
<sup>70</sup> Agbobloshie is one of the large local markets, like Markola in the city.

are abundance of commodities from everywhere in both the local shops and the shops in the malls, a comment that is contra to the era of commodity goods shortages of the 1970s and the 1980s.

How does this modernity reflect in the evolution of middle class families in Ghana? I argue that a shift of the Ghanaian (middle class) family structure towards nucleated one under neoliberalism lends itself more to the consumption ethos of the malls. In western societies, the evolution in retail and the emergence of the consumer culture was framed around the home and the family (Cohen, 2004, 2006; Stobart et al., 2007). For instance, Cohen (2004:237/8) argues that:

[N]ew house construction provided the bedrock of the... mass consumption economy, both through turning “home” into an expensive commodity for purchase by many consumers... and by stimulating demand for related commodities, such as cars, appliances, and furnishings... [A]s mass consumption became... more central to the health of the economy, shopping centers and the stores within them celebrated the family as a consumer unit.

An important aspect in Ghana, deducible from the conversations, is the changing family structure, particularly of the middle class, which is increasingly assuming the western notions of nuclear family: one man, one wife and immediate children. According to Bianca (2010), the idea of the family comprising one man, one wife and immediate children (growing up at home) is of western origins. In Africa, and Ghana for that matter, the family is (or was) much more extended. Yet, this western notion of (nuclear and patriarchal) family structure is portrayed as modern and ‘source of security’ (ibid: 113). This has been imported into Ghana and the malls seem to tailor their branding around this family structure notion (Fig 6.1).



**Figure 6. 1:** A Father's Day wish sent on Instagram by Accra Mall on June 17, 2018<sup>71</sup>

In the post-independence era (1960-1970), Bianca (2010) indicates that the 1967 ideal home exhibition<sup>72</sup> in Accra was used by Ghanaian leaders and their supporters to project a culture of consumerism and modernity in an evolving free society underpinned by the logic of free market. The target of this attempt, he argues, was firstly, the Ghanaian public and then the (largely western) international community in Ghana. Whilst the free market was fully promoted in the era after 1980s, the initial attempt was 1966-1971 when the state first dealt with the IMF.

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<sup>71</sup> (To all the special dads out there! Happy Father's Day to you all! [#fathersday2018](#) [#themallwithitall](#); Accessed September 20, 2018).

<sup>72</sup> The exhibition, which was held in 1967, typified a nuclear family occupying single family housing units stuffed with new 'modern' consumer goods including home appliances and furnishings quite opposite to the traditional compound houses that accommodates scores of households (Bianca, 2010).

In neoliberal Ghana, especially in urban areas like Accra, young and educated middle class view family structure quite differently in the twenty-first century as opposed to the middle of the twentieth century. Then, families had a more extended family leaning in terms of outlook and it was not uncommon to see several households involving several members of the extended family including nephews, nieces, aunties, grandparent, cousins, etc. all living together. Kate's observation that "*When we were growing up you had your cousins and everybody around to play with*" needs to be understood within that notion.

In the minds of the *nouveau* middle class, at least in terms of its immediate outlook, it seems, the ideal family comprises of the man, with a tertiary education (preferably a university degree for the quintessential new middle class Ghanaian family), the wife, also of reasonable education (even if not a university degree) who can contribute to the family's economy [a direct antithesis of the gendered roles Bianca (2010:106) refers to, pertaining to housewife/breadwinner middle-class family model, as envisioned by the leaders of the 1967-1969 era] and three kids<sup>73</sup>. In the mid-twentieth century, Ghanaian households, even nuclear families, were relatively large. Coupled with members of the extended family, who lived with the nuclear families, the households were even larger. In cities, all member of the family lived in the same house (Bianca, 2010) or neighborhood. Though vestiges of such family structure still persist in Accra's middle class families, I will argue that today, there is somewhat disentanglement of the old (extended) family structure and its worldview which are becoming part of the rapid urbanisation of the society. Harsh economic conditions of the 1970s and the 1980s, as well as cultural imperatives and increasing penetration of education, have served to unbundle, to some degree, extended family attachments. Further evidence of this can be obtained by looking at

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<sup>73</sup>Recently in 2017, there was discussion in the Ghanaian media that the new government wants to introduce a legislation that allows each family to have up to 3 children and no more. The public sentiments against the so-called legislation (to come) have however not been palatable. It remains to be seen whether indeed the government will still want to carry this through. Ideologically, the present government is aligned to the 1967-1972 leadership.

new residential housing development by built environment professionals and developers, most of whose worldviews have been shaped by western education (Okoye, 2002), cultural idiosyncrasies and economic imperatives. Indeed, shifts in Ghanaian family structure as epitomised in new housing designs has been highlighted much earlier in Ghana's post-independence history by Bianca (2010) in relation to state-constructed single-family homes in new towns like Accra, Tema and elsewhere. Relatedly, the traditional urban compound houses which catered for several members of the extended families in the immediate post-independence era, for various reason, according to Korboe (1992), are no more attractive to the growing middle class who, with their 'more westernised and acculturated... nuclear lifestyle... opt for uni-nuclear villa-type accommodation' (ibid:1160). Additionally, monogamous marriages invoke western notions of modernity and caters to (or are markers of) elitist lifestyle and consumerism in African cities like Accra (Bianca, 2010).

Now, why is this important in consumption analysis? The small nuclear family with two full-time breadwinners, as opposed to earlier housewife/breadwinner model, increases the disposable income. With increased disposable income, leisure and recreation including taking children to play at mall's children's playgrounds, buying from toyshops, and eating from food courts of malls after a busy day's work, become the new consumption lifestyle. And Accra's malls attempt to feed into these families with disposable income, as evidenced by their advertisement and branding policies (Fig. 6.1 and 6.2): West Hills brands itself as 'the family destination' (Sekyere, 2016) whilst Accra Mall's branding usually framed around 'fashion'<sup>74</sup> has enormous focuses on families, including young kids and the youth.

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<sup>74</sup> In October 2016, the branding was "Shop, Play and Mall" with a kid as the image.



Figure 6. 2: Advertising Images on Accra Malls Facebook Page<sup>75</sup>

In another sense, these narratives, in the context of Accra, can be framed within the idea of ‘commodity exchange networks and concentration of market activity’ identified by Quayson (2014)<sup>76</sup> and the ‘commodity fetishism’ (Morris et al. 1966). Quayson (2014) indicates that such ‘commodity exchange networks and concentration’ can be understood in other dimensions: availability of range of new products from different parts of the world, supply/demand cycles between the commercial outposts, which supply such new commodities and the local consumers who demand such items, as well as inducing new tastes and consumption patterns within local people. Traditionally, foods such as burgers and pizzas have not been part of an African diet. With globalisation and a new middle class steep in western

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<https://www.facebook.com/AccraMallLimited/photos/a.525202137525028/2026945474017346/?type=3&theater>; Accessed September 20, 2018

<sup>76</sup> He cited Kea, Ray (1982). *Settlements, Trade and Politics in the Seventeenth Century Gold Coast*. Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press

way of life and tastes resulting from education, largely based on western models, international travels, as well as media advertising, Accra's new middle class, and indeed ordinary citizens, are increasingly exposed to the world of consumerism.

### ***Malls, Modernity and the Low-Income Group***

With respect to the wider public, particularly the low-income group, Goss' (1993, 1999) view of malls as 'ideological dreamspaces' (that attract people to spend money); Berg's (2005) idea of emulative consumption and Breen's (1993) concept of proximity and association seem to apply. However, I argue, that far from being victims of the ideological dreamspaces, low-income people rather use malls to advance their self-promotion as modern citizens in a globalising Accra (Grant, 2009). They do this largely through envisioning malls as more of a social space (i.e. extract the use value) rather than a commercial space that supports investors profit motives (i.e. exchange value).

For this analysis, I reference particularly two low-income customer interviews involving three women and a man at West Hills' food courts, personal observations, as well as some of the survey responses from the 343 shop staff. I also draw from other interviewees where necessary. Of the women, the youngest (Cecilia), who completed secondary education in 2007 and holds a certificate in Microsoft Office application, is currently pursuing a part-time degree program in communications in a private tertiary institution, in addition to holding a full-time job as a shop assistant (in a Samsung shop at Adabraka, one of Accra central's residential/commercial neighborhoods); while Agnes and Beatrice have only basic education and are petty traders in Madina<sup>77</sup> market. Excerpt of the interview, which took about 40 minutes, is produced below:

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<sup>77</sup> Madina is a sprawling suburb located at the north-north-east of Accra, and about 10 minutes from the University of Ghana. About 25 years ago it was considered as outskirts but intensive urbanization have joined it tightly to the city.

*Question: So you called yourselves to meet here?*  
*Beatrice: Most of our friends have been telling us that this place is very fun... When you come here to enjoy you feel okay. That is why we are here today.*

*Question: Is this your first time?*  
*Beatrice: Actually this is my first time... and I really enjoy the environment and the people I met here*

*Agnes: No, this is my second time*  
*Cecilia: No. I have been here so many times.*

*Question: Judging by where you are coming from, you could have had fun also at Madina and Ashalebotwe where you live?*  
*Beatrice: I should have said this earlier. I have been tasting a lot of pizzas but this place's pizza is different... and I really enjoy it.*

*Question: So did you come here with a mind to buy clothes or some footwear or something?*  
*Beatrice: No! No! No!*

*Question: Where do you buy those things?*  
*Beatrice: In Accra central or Madina*

*Question: So you have not entered the shop?*  
*Beatrice: No! We've not entered. When we finish eating we will like to go inside and see what they are selling*

*Question: So what do you think about all these malls in the city?*  
*So what do you like about Accra?*

*Beatrice: I like Accra because you see good things and it is closer to what others want to travel outside the country for*

*Question: You talked about the building that it is nice. What makes the building nice?*  
*Beatrice: So many decorations around it, yea. [It is] like being in the States (laughter)*

*Question: You mean being in the U.S.A?*  
*Beatrice: Yeah!*

*Question: Have you travelled to the U.S before?*  
*Beatrice: No! I have been watching it in films, so it looks like, sort of, in the U.S.*

*Question: How about you? What do you think about the building?*  
*Cecilia: The building is so, so nice. The atmosphere is cool, when you are here at night you think you are in the U.S. or UK or Dubai. Let's say Dubai.*

*Question: So that is why you like coming here?*  
*Cecilia: I love coming here. Any least time that I get, I love to come here. I come here to go round, have a look at the items they have in their shops, take pictures, eat, etc.*

The three women informed me that they do not intend to shop in the mall; instead they prefer to shop at Accra central or Madina market, because of their cheaper prices and the need to sustain the livelihoods of people in the local markets. However, Cecilia indicated that she has

previously bought from Shoprite supermarket because she found some items cheaper than in the local market. As with the middle class, they compare prices; yet, the fact that they themselves are part of the local markets accounts for their bias in patronising local markets. This notwithstanding, eating pizza in the mall actually amounts to shopping, despite the insistence, especially, of Agnes and Beatrice that they will never shop in the mall. This suggests, in one sense, that malls acculturate citizens, particularly low-income people, with cosmopolitan tastes. It further reveals that malls' sustainability partly lies in attracting low income groups as well as dealing in products that are not readily available in local markets.

Matthew Okwonkwo, the Nigerian interviewed, views the mall as potential place for networking and making friends, as exemplified in the interview excerpt below:

*Question: So what do you think about these malls in Accra, for example West Hills?*

*Okwonkwo: West Hills is the place you can come and make friends, chat, have a contact to make you become something in life. You can come to West Hills Mall and have a connection that can make you something in life.*

*Question: What do you think about the building?*

*Okwonkwo: The building is okay. The infrastructure [...] they tried a lot... when you come here, you think that you are in Abuja [Nigeria]*

In Accra, it is the existence of malls as nodes of global convergence that set them out as dream-spaces where the upper and middle classes develop new taste of consumption. This tends to have a ripple effect on other groups in the society; the low-income group in this case, who tend to copy the consumption patterns of the higher income group, as Berg (2005) argues. After all, as Cecilia indicates (above), being in the mall gives a feeling of being in US or Dubai. Hence, their desire to associate with it. That may well represent modernity: to experience a bit of what obtains in the western world. As Architect Hanson said regarding the first night of Accra Mall's opening "*those who had never had the opportunity to travel... were [psychologically] transported by this environment... [to America] and it was exciting, really exciting!*" However,

as a marketing manager opined, the low-income people grapple with having to overcome the inertia arising from fear of sophisticated mall/shop fronts. As such, they seem to connect well with mall operators' open-door policy. Malls undoubtedly benefit in turn from such emulative consumption on account that it potentially increases market reach. Yet again, experiences of other customers and even low-income shop assistants additionally serve to eliminate the fears, as Beatrice remarked that friends encouraged her to visit. Once entered, the constellation of the malls' (consumer) goods reduces distance between the (low-income) consumers and the goods leading to the realm of association with the goods (Breen, 1993). Finally, with reduced distance, i.e. proximity, and increasing association, consumers are led to the point where they have a claim on these goods and hence move to appropriate material goods, however small the purchasing power may be, which feeds into the vision of managers, as noted by the Accra Mall marketing manager.

*I feel like, in this mall, we have a whole lot of range of shops that anybody can shop from. There are some shops that it would be ambitious even for me to shop there, because it's a bit high end. And then you have some shops that would be accessible for everybody and that would go for our anchor tenants and that would be Shoprite and Game. I feel like those shops are very versatile and you can get almost everything from your grocery to your cosmetics to your electronics and, you know, the prices are pretty reasonable (Sept. 2016).*

Over time, irrespective of his/her income level, the consumer easily enters the mall without a second thought.

Yet again, individuals may visit the malls without having to appropriate physical goods but rather have leisure and enjoy the ambience; sometimes taking a selfie, as Cecilia said. Some also believe that such association with the mall may lead to, perhaps, a business connection, as Okwonkwo pointed out. In that case, it is not only the upper class who use malls as places to meet business associates, as reported by Hobden (2015), but low-income people as well.

Indeed, as I show in Chapter Eight, some of the low-income staff have relied on informal *contacts* to secure jobs in the malls.

I argue that the process involved in low-income people being drawn through emulative consumption to proximity and association and finally appropriation (either tangible or non-tangible goods) amounts to “re-territorialising the (mall) space”, as described by Miles and Paddison (1998). In that case, they do not merely become pawns or victims to capitalists’ profit motives, in Goss’ (1993) typical ‘ideological dreamspaces’. More than that, they become reflexive consumers (Stillerman and Salcedo, 2012) who use malls for their (social) benefits.

In sum, the success of the malls therefore cannot only be seen in terms of their exchange (economic) value which is extracted largely from the middle class to shareholders and shop owners but indeed in their social (use) value to the entire citizenry, particularly the low-income and even the middle class. This is attributable largely to the constellation of built forms, commodities, international brands as well as media orchestration that tend to portray them as modernity and glamorous images creating new tastes and desires in the citizenry leading to a rising tide of middle class tendencies. In the next section, I explore how mall operators consciously sell the malls as multiple loci of consumption to attract all citizens.

## **6.2 Marketers’ Strategies: Target Customers, Merchandise and Niche Markets**

Elsewhere in the world, especially the advanced countries where mall concept emanated, it is not in the nature of Presidents nor in the line of their duties to be opening or commissioning shopping malls. And so, in Africa and for that matter Ghana, why would this be the case? In the case of Accra Mall, the official opening had to be rescheduled simply because the President would not be available until July 4, 2008. The mall opened to the public in April 2007 and

November 2007<sup>78</sup>. Perhaps in Accra Mall's case, as the first ever (completely enclosed mall) with its symbolic representation, coupled with the personal relationship between the President and the developer (Owusu-Akyaw) it is understandable. But, thereafter it seems to have become the normalcy and perhaps reinforcing the view that the central state is more visible in such urban development projects in the city than local governments; a departure from the 'urban entrepreneurialism' thesis.

On both sides, however, benefits accrue. From political perspectives, the President seeks to be seen as supporting businesses and entrepreneurship with the concomitant benefit of job creation. This definitely has a political capital during elections. Malls afford the government a platform to espouse national development vision. For instance, when he inaugurated the West Hills Mall in 2014, President Mahama espoused the government's vision on urbanization. He highlighted government's idea of decongesting the city centre through the agency of malls as new growth centres by ensuring that they are strategically dispersed in various locations across the city to enhance equitable urban development<sup>79</sup>. On the other hand, mall developers use the presence of the President as an occasion to solicit state and citizen patronage by way of political legitimisation of their endeavors and enterprise: that is the President not only gets first-hand view of issues that confront businesses but also, importantly, mall operators use it to connect with their niche markets. Given that majority of the citizenry legitimised the presidency through the ballot box, the President's presence and public statements at the opening of a mall tends to legitimise the malls to Ghanaians. Indeed, the President's support base comes from a broad spectrum of the Ghanaian society, cross-cutting class and employment categories.

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<sup>78</sup> When the mall first opened to the public, in April the Shoprite end of the mall got destroyed by fire. Operators needed to work on this side until November when the whole building was opened for public use

<sup>79</sup> Information obtained from the centre manager of West Hills Mall.

In this section, I examine the malls' marketing strategies as a means to connect with their niche markets and general customers. Arising from a need to broaden their customer base, mall operators adopt a range of tactics, including conceptualising malls as one-stop convenience shopping center, operating open door policy and adopting polite mall culture that appeal particularly to the middle class.

### **6.2.1 One-Stop Shop Convenience Center: Multiple Loci of Collective Consumption**

Mall operators conceive malls as a one-stop shop where individuals should conveniently be able to access virtually everything one needs, including food and non-food items, and more (Salcedo, 2003). Indeed, a major reason why this is so important is the congested nature of the city and the difficulties of getting from one shop to another. As such, I argue that the malls become more of multiple loci for collective consumption than merely a 'glamorous locus of consumption' (Goss, 1993; Firat and Venkatesh, 1995; Logemann, 2009; Trevinal, 2013). All the marketing managers in both malls noted that the malls' idea is to "*provide shopping at your door-step*". Some shop managers share this view too. One manager, a master's degree holder of an ICT shop at West Hills, in responding to the beneficial impact of the mall to his business opined that "*its wide range of goods and services makes it a one-stop shop for customers*".

On that score, from the outset, Accra's developers and operators see malls as meeting needs (and perhaps desires) of people in the immediate locality and beyond, as indicated by two developers.

*When my father moved back [to Ghana] and he looked at the area, he noticed that there was no shopping facilities in the... area. This was almost 11 plus years ago... So the idea of the shopping mall came into effect in the sense that it didn't make sense that we always had to travel across town to get your basic needs. So that was where the initial concept and the idea came. So, we... decided that we will start with the shopping mall... that would accommodate all the different needs that the community would need at the time (Edward Andoh, Managing Director of A&C Mall, Nov. 2016).*

*Koala has been there... Koala and Max Mart... So, Koala has been there in the 1990s and Max Mart came after 2000. But these are department [...] they are grocery, department stores for food... standalones. We call them standalones, you know. Koala started in the 1990s... and before Accra Mall opened, how many taxi drivers used to shop at Koala and the rest? Some of us [middle class] even didn't [shop from Koala]... It was only for expatriates... We are trying to go in all directions so that our customers, people are comfortable to come there... This is where malls will win! It is convenient, we put it 'convenience through you!' And you see, we are trying to tell our community that I am here to bring convenience into your lives. And I am trying to give you a secured place where you are convenient enough (Albert Manu, Local Investor, Accra Mall, Oct. 2016).*

During their operation, Accra's malls are sites for providing a broad spectrum of services: shopping, recreation, health, money exchange, banking and other services, including sometimes hosting radio talk shows that bring renowned local hosts, musical concerts, product launching, and local fairs, etc. One of the ideas is purposely to draw large foot traffic in the hope that, as pointed out by the marketing manager of West Hills, it will lead to increased turnover. In that light, facility managers seem to be aggressively pursuing various community-wide marketing strategies and this is particularly pronounced with respect to West Hills.

To situate this observation in the broader consumption literature, I argue that, from the Accra case, malls are not merely *glamorised locus* for collective consumption (Goss, 1993; Firat and Venkatesh, 1995; Logemann, 2009; Trevinal, 2013). Indeed, for the low-income group, the malls may well represent glamorous locus for collective consumption, as they may be drawn by the glamour to enjoy the spectacle of malls. I make this distinction because several interviewees take the position that the youth and the low-income people patronise the mall not so much in terms of meeting mall owners' economic aspirations but meeting their own recreation needs. For instance, Architect Hanson indicated that "*Malls are patronised [by all including the low income groups] but it doesn't necessarily mean they [low income groups] are buying from it*". However, for the middle and upper class, malls may well represent a *multiple loci* of collective consumption in that they are attracted not merely by the glamour

they provide but by the services they offer. Of course, in Accra, given the glamorous outlook, the middle and upper class may easily construe glamour as additional service: of quality and finesse, as discussed in Section 6.1. It is indeed the case that in a globalising Accra (Grant, 2009), the glamorous images malls offer are attuned to middle class tastes. Thus, if glamour is seen as another service, one might well speak of *recreation locus*, or *shopping locus*, etc. with all these combining to make malls *multiple loci* of collective consumption.

In the light of this, I discuss three *loci* of consumption within the malls, namely; the food court, children's play ground and cinema, and demonstrate how they have become attraction for the middle class and other income groups.

The food courts represent one of the key strategic marketing tools for mall operators. In both malls, presently, they are among some of the conspicuous spaces in the malls with landscaped water fountains close by that serve to reinforce the social experience. In fact, Accra Mall recently re-organised and expanded its food court area to make it more attractive. According to the local architect, shopping mall design is a sensitive project which involves a need to attract people with anchor shops and the food courts, consisting of western-style fast food chains.

*I mean, the principles are clear. You have the anchors who are the magnets that draw people through a circuit. At the heart of it, you have the social space for foods, restaurants and so on... In the end when you are designing a mall you are designing to a certain end. You are trying to condition the minds of the people to shop. There is a model that works (Nov. 2016).*

Hobden (2015), writing on Accra Mall, also reports that the food courts have become not only a social space for the middle class but a meeting place for the affluent and businessmen who meet to discuss business plans, among others. My data suggests that food courts have a strong influence on customers, both middle class and low-income people. The marketing manager of West Hills notes that:

*[W]e have had a lot of events, either a musical concert or events that are targeted at families, that bring the families here because [...], and that has also worked when you do such activities on weekends: Saturdays, Sundays; it brings a lot of families and they end up either spending at the food courts or from Shoprite or even end up going to some of the fashion shops to spend money there (Dec. 2016).*

Most of the customer interviews in both field trips were done at the food courts. The middle class family indicated that after their children had finished playing they will go to a restaurant before leaving for the home.

*Question: Okay, the 3 are here? Oh! Great. Nice kids! So you just come, sit and let them have fun?*

*Answer: Exactly. And then after we take some food, then purchase some items. In fact, last week we purchased some Christmas gifts for them. (Dec., 2016)*

Even though the food courts are providing social and business space for citizens as well as meeting economic aspirations of mall managers, not everybody views them positively. Some interviewees, particularly city officials and professionals, fear the health implications of the food courts. One interviewee bemoaned that “*these are fast foods with high salt, sugar and oil contents*”. Architect Hanson pointed out that “*there is a gradual transforming of the palate of the Ghanaian; they eat more and more of the fast food*”. On the demerits of the malls, the former president of the Ghana Institution of Engineers, Andrew Quansah, indicates that

*The other things the malls bring... is the dedicated eating places. So, you have food courts. So that is the other thing that I see where particularly because we don't have a balanced or any entertainment places. So, what you see is that there is concentrated eating. So, we use the mall as entertainment... people are like, 'Oh! Let's go to the mall!' And then we have introduced things like, which is not common, cinema halls in the mall. So, there is cinema, there is eating, so every time you go [there] people are eating. And what I see is probably contributing to all the obesity issues in the city and things like this (Oct. 2016)*

With less than GHC10 (\$2.2)<sup>80</sup>, about the equivalent of the daily minimum wage, an individual can buy from the food courts. As such, people from different class backgrounds use the food courts. These perspectives indicate that people are gradually being ensnared by the malls to depend more and more on fast foods. This could be read as being part of the malls' seductive powers where, as dreamlike spaces, they seduce consumers to spend (Goss, 1993, 1999; Stillerman and Salcedo, 2012), even to their detriment. Whilst fast foods, by their ready-made nature, may be convenient for the middle and working class who put premium on efficiency of time, the potential health implications cannot be overlooked. Yet, inspite of Engineer Quansah's observation, it is yet to be established by any study the extent to which malls' food courts contribute to obesity in the city. Additionally, the foods sold in the malls are not only fast foods. After the opening of Accra and West Hills Malls, there were calls from some citizens for introduction of Ghanaian dishes in the malls. Consequently, Achimota Retail Center has one of its tenants operating a restaurant, *Chop Bar*, which sells local dishes. Shoprite also introduced a 'deli shop' where various local dishes are sold based on weight, a departure from what pertains in local restaurants where meals are sold based on 'per plate'. This notwithstanding, malnourishment and obesity are becoming a serious problem among Nairobi's middle class due to the consumption of western-style fast foods (Migiro, 2016).

The children's play ground and cinema, respectively, are particularly attuned to middle class families and the youth. In Accra, as indicated by Engineer Quansah, "*entertainment places*" are few and far between. Recreation parks are also not many. Therefore, the provision made in the malls therefore tends to be attractive to people who seek to meet recreational needs. During weekends and holidays, these spaces draw lots of patrons. The children's playgrounds have become places where middle class family deepen their family bonds and meet acquaintances.

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<sup>80</sup> In February 2017, the exchange rate was \$1(US)~GHC4.5

The family I interviewed noted that the malls, by providing these children play areas, really helps the nuclear family to bond.

*When we were growing up, you had your cousins and everybody around to play with, so you don't really value this kind of playground, kind of things. But now you are hiding in your apartments. No further kids, and stuff. So, when the kids come out like that, in this modern world, this is the best that you can find (Kate; Dec. 2016)*

*I don't remember my parents taking me to places like this... So definitely it has helped change from the usual home setting to this setting (Patrick; Dec. 2016).*

The cinemas have become spaces where the youth reconnect with themselves and perhaps meet their partners. In the evening of 2017 Valentines' Day, I observed from the lower lobby leading up to the Accra Mall cinema where predominantly the youth moved past to watch the premiering of a new movie. With a ticket costing between GHC20-30 depending on the type of movie, an individual is entitled to a cup of soda and popcorn and a sofa in the air-conditioned auditorium. Spio (2011) reports that the cinema shows predominantly Hollywood movies. Managers of the cinema indicated that they show "quality movies". As such, both foreign and African movies that make the grade of "quality movies", by their judgment, are shown. During the period of fieldwork, I saw the premiering of a local movie, *Keteke*, which featured a number of rising young Ghanaian talents. However, it became evident to me that western and other foreign movies are shown more frequently, followed by Nigerian and then Ghanaian and other African movies. It follows to reason therefore that through the malls' cinemas, western culture is increasingly being exported to Accra's youth and middle class.

Finally, Accra's acceptance of the malls due to its 'one-stop convenience shop' nature also seems to stem from the inordinate traffic jams in the city. Thus, the strategic distribution of malls across the city seems to cater well for middle class people, as highlighted by the marketing manager of Accra Mall.

*But our location has helped us a lot! We are in the middle: you can go to Tema, you can go to Spintex, East Legon, Achimota and all of those other places. It helps us a lot. So therefore our foot traffic, in terms of the different people, is huge! And, we also have a very good expatriate community because, again, of the location and where they would tend to reside. It is the most convenient for them to come to (Sept. 2016).*

In that sense, to the middle class, malls may not merely be about status but, additionally, about time management. If they could secure all basic items in one place, time-poor professionals are likely able to make savings on time and money; on that score. Hence, the appeal of malls as a one-stop shop to middle class people.

### **6.2.2 Open Door Policy**

As previously indicated, though mall developers and investors may focus on the middle class, the focus of operators/managers is not just to attract the middle class and the affluent. This is grounded in theory too. Salcedo (2003) reports that Southdale<sup>81</sup> Centers' first press release invited everybody, including window shoppers, to take a walk within the new mall. Such open-door policy stems from the view that malls have a seductive power such that given the chance to walk freely through, a person may be enticed to purchase (Goss, 1999; Stillerman and Salcedo, 2012). In Accra, Engineer Quansah's response is reflective of such perspective:

*The thing about the malls is the other trappings: it allows you to walk inside, there are things you can see. So, there are... a cross-section of some of the things you need. So, from clothing to food, and hardware. So, the malls offer new experience (Oct. 2016).*

One reason for Accra's malls managers' position is that the income levels of the middle class alone may not be able to support the viability of malls, against the background that the middle class and the affluent are not the majority in the city. Consequently, managers operate an open door policy to attract everyone on the assumption that every little spent by a customer raises

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<sup>81</sup> Southdale is the first mall prototype built in the US

turnover. Indeed, as stated earlier, producers and marketers have devised miniature-sized products that are affordable to very low-income people. Harvey (1989b:11) notes that ‘miniature-sized products are part of the alternative strategies in urban entrepreneurialism as a means of increasing consumption to all classes of people as well as producers’ attempt at mopping up liquidity from a large base of less affluent consumers’. Additionally, it is difficult to decipher, based on appearance alone, who does and does not belong to the middle class (Alexander et al., 2013) in a city whose cosmopolitan identity is fast evolving. Well-dressed individuals holding mobile phones may come into the mall and just take selfies. They add to the foot-traffic but not spend. Indeed, some mall visitors visit the mall purely on a sight-seeing basis. A deputy director of Town and Country Planning Department of Accra Metropolitan Assembly pointed this out:

*For instance, the big malls [loud laughter]. Now the big malls have become one major attraction; people just dress up, go and walk there, see the nice things there and go home! [louder laughter still]. No! They don’t buy anything! Even that has become a tourist attraction for people. It’s amazing when you go there and... see the young people there (Felicia Manfo; Dec. 2016).*

Yet, less affluent people need to be invited to the malls before those who are able can access the miniature-sized, or even normal-sized, products. So, how do the malls attract customers? Some of the marketing strategies adopted include side walk sales, radio talk shows, and incentive marketing.

This position, among other things, is deducible from the statements of the marketing managers.

*The statistics that we can have is the fact that we have really good foot traffic: our catchment area being at where we are in Accra, we have a very mixed culture or demography of people. We are surrounded by a lot of areas that are very affluent where a lot of very affluent people reside. So areas like East Legon, Cantonments, Airport, Spintex; those places where, you know, a lot of affluent people live. **But also in those areas, we mustn’t also forget that we have a lot of people that are on low income. And so there is always little shanty towns in a very affluent area... The difference is, trying to get those people on very low income to change their minds of shopping in a mall than shopping in Markola***

*or Madina market or wherever surrounding areas. However, you always find that [...] and what I try to do is to create the experience. And people will come here and buy a coke from Shoprite, but at least they've walked in, and they have experienced and they have also accounted for your turn-over for that month (Florence Ocran, Marketing Manager, Accra Mall. Sept. 2016. Emphasis added).*

The marketing manager of West Hills Mall commenting on the mall's branding policy notes:

*Our position is that we are a high-end shopping mall. So, inasmuch as we **have brands that cater for everybody**, we've positioned ourselves as a high end shopping mall and so all our communication is done and targeted at the middle to the high end clients. **But we are a mall for everybody**... and that is one of the challenges that some of the tenants had that you've positioned yourself as a high end mall, **unfortunately where you sit the demographics** do not support these high end brands you have in the mall... so that was one of the conflicts that we had... as a high end mall, **yet we sit in a low income area and those people cannot simply support those high end** [...]. We've tried... but you see..., the challenge is that we don't own the shops and again we also didn't want the shops to leave because then it affects the image of the mall (Frederick Arthur, Marketing Manager, West Hills. Dec. 2016. Emphasis added).*

Both managers' statements reveal, concurrently, the vision of mall owners and the reality of business operations in neoliberal Accra. As shown in Chapter Four, Accra Mall is located in an affluent part of the city whilst West Hills is in a low middle income neighborhood. Both managers therefore try to attract all categories of people.

Even, though Accra Mall is located in an affluent area, Ms. Ocran recognises that there are “*always little shanty towns in very affluent areas*” in Accra. Ms. Ocran is of British/Ghanaian origin. She was born and raised in London, UK where she completed a Law degree. She applied online to Atterbury's office in South Africa and was employed as the Marketing Manager in Accra Mall in 2014. Her time with Accra Mall has revealed to her the socio-spatial and socio-economic asymmetry in the city. Her mall is situated at a “*location [that] has helped [them] a lot*”. Yet she recognises that even within such degree of disproportionate affluence, there are still embedded ‘pockets of deprivation’. Thus, as a marketing manager, she tries to make the mall accessible for everybody including the low-income groups, through “*side walk sales*”, to

access products in the mall. Indeed, she recognizes that sometimes some of the low-income people feel intimidated entering the mall, let alone entering sophisticated shops. Thus, her strategies include making the atmosphere less intimidating. She does this by trying to bring into the mall, what the local Architect Hanson called “*the spirit of Markola*”.

*For the side walk sale, I give the tenants that want to participate all a table and they will display all their sale items on those tables on the side walk in front of the shops. It is to create a good atmosphere for people to automatically see what is on sale and come... Like a field market with all the vibrancy. It worked pretty well! The tenants liked it and people liked it as well because they didn't necessarily had to walk into shops. And our strategic idea was, because, you know, not every single Ghanaian is there in terms of their experience, in terms of how they shop. So, walking into certain shops that may have more sophisticated shop fronts, may be a bit intimidating to the average Ghanaian. It is already intimidating enough walking to a shopping center that is fully air conditioned throughout. And you know, coming in and entering into a shop? First of all, they will feel a bit alienated because they don't know what that particular shop sells and, secondly, they don't know whether it is affordable (Florence Ocran).*

Markola market, the biggest traditional market in Accra, was built in 1921. It is that ‘field market... where commerce spills over onto walkways and roadways’ (Grant and Nijman, 2002:330) and customers and sellers haggle over price and create social relations through commerce. During the planning stage, whilst local designers and the proponents of Accra Mall were thinking through how to make it a success because the “*culture was different and the people don't shop but rather go to the market*”, according to Architect Hanson, the architects had intended to resort to a design that citizens can identify with. Consequently, they proposed a space where shops will have the “*spirit of Markola*” i.e. where shop owners and shoppers will haggle, just like Markola. However, after the entry of Actis, with their architect, Bentel Associates from South Africa, the architects were asked by the investors to “*take out Markola from the Accra Mall design... because a mall is the same everywhere in the world*”, according to Charles Hanson. This example may well reflect the position that, in one sense, global capitalism ostracizes local identities and demands conformity to western forms and identities.

Yet, from these perspectives and the *modus operandi* of current managers, it appears as if a place within the mall like Markola would not have been a bad idea after all. That would have been a Ghanaian identity to the orthodox mall, a Ghanaian or African variant. Perhaps, in that case, the mall's popularity, economically and socially, may have been heightened.

For West Hills, the options for attracting affluent people remains rather more herculean which has tended to make them more aggressive in their approach. From the account of the marketing manager, developers/investors' position is to project the mall as a place for the middle and upper class - the majority of whom reside in the eastern part of the city. So, managers/operators have attempted to market the mall as a "*high end family shopping center*". As such, the operators have embarked on what seems to be the most aggressive marketing drive, compared to Accra Mall, to attract the middle class. But they also have an eye on all income groups, judging by their marketing strategies. Thanks to their large and less busy car park, they organize programs like music shows and product launching which seek to attract all income groups and radio talk shows, etc. that seek to connect with their niche market.

*Every now and then we do live broadcast with Joy FM<sup>82</sup>. In fact this weekend: tomorrow, Saturday and Sunday, we have Joy broadcasting from here at the mall and it brings a lot of high-end people here... They do it at the food court. They bring their studios outside and they start... and run till about 8pm... And anytime they [radio talk show stars] are here, you see the numbers and the calibre of people who come here... so they [public] come wanting to see them [talk show stars]. But in the end they [public] sit at the food court to buy, to eat with the family or go shopping and stuff like that. (Frederick Arthur, Marketing Manager, West Hills, Dec. 2016).*

They also do incentive marketing where they give free or subsidised vouchers to attract consumers. Such strategies are done sometimes through media promotions where the public

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<sup>82</sup> Joy FM is a local FM radio which has high popularity among the city's middle class

call in to answer related questions and win the vouchers. The marketing manager indicates that they found that those who came to redeem the vouchers usually spend beyond the stated amount.

During the Christmas of 2016, they came out with the first ever West Hills shopping magazine, printed and shipped from Dubai. These, according to the marketing manager, were distributed to offices and middle class gated community homes, such as the *Polo Heights* in the eastern part of the city (Fig. 4.7) near the airport whose facility manager I interviewed for this research. In 2016, West Hills' operators organised a 'focus group discussion'<sup>83</sup> for middle class women and wives of members of the diplomatic community to find out how the mall can tap into these niche markets. As it turned out, most participants came from the eastern part of Accra and the women, among others, complained of the traffic jams and stress of having to drive from the far eastern to the western side. Following the recommendations from the focus group, the mall decided to contact Ghana Airports Company Ltd (GACL) to allow them to place a bus on the GACL car park to convey prospective customers who may want to shop at West Hills. This strategy did not materialise, partly because they reasoned the challenge was not a desire to drive but traffic congestion in a fast urbanising city, which lacks adequate transport network including, say, a functional rail transport. Beyond the effort of facility managers, shareholders (particularly SSNIT and Sandpark Ltd.) are indirectly supporting the growth of a more middle class consumer base through the development of high-end housing estates in close proximity to the mall. SSNIT does this by leasing land to developers such as the Chinese company *Fortune City*, as highlighted in Chapter Seven (Fig. 7.4) while Sandpark Ltd. is pursuing its own high-end gated housing estates.

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<sup>83</sup> This is the terminology used by the marketing manager

### 6.2.3 Polite Mannerism

Stobart et al. (2007:17) posit that ‘it is possible to view shopping as a cultural context... [where] goods and social practices [are] given meaning... highlighting the emergence of a polite shopping culture as part of public sociability’. In Accra, it seems, this polite sociability is strongly articulated in the new shopping malls and much more evident perhaps compared to the traditional markets and the existing retail outlets. This, amongst others, likely makes the malls a threat to the dominance of the traditional markets and the existing retail outlets. This is in view of the sheer visibility of display of polite mannerism in terms of the concentration of shop assistants as well as the conscious effort by mall operators and shop owners to invest, through training of shop assistants, in the culture of public sociability and mannerisms. During the survey, it was found out that 47.5 per cent of shop staff have undergone in-service training and substantial number of such training involved self-presentation, customer service skills and general human relations; attributes Stobart et al (2007) refers to as ‘polite mannerism’<sup>84</sup> in spaces of consumption. Managers also agreed (89 per cent) that they organise orientation and in-service training to staff to be abreast of the knowledge of their products. Obviously, the ultimate purpose of such trainings is to ensure staff satisfies customers with concomitant accrual of economic benefits to shop owners (Ngari, 2015; Storper et al. 2015).

The strategy of polite mannerism, which pertains more to the shops, coupled with the convenience and ambience mall operators create, I argue, tend to endear the malls to the middle class, in particular, and their customers, in general. Therefore, polite mannerism becomes part of the commodified items where shop staff and their bodies get conflated as direct sales agents (Gooptu, 2009).

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<sup>84</sup> Stobart et al (2007) cited Sweet (2002) who uses ‘polite mannerism’ to refer to a customer service behavior where shop operators accord and treat customers with civility with the object of maintaining customers.

On entering any of the city's malls, besides the glamour of the buildings' materiality and the range of consumer goods, a very potent spectacle that greets the visitor is the sheer number of uniformed young people within the shops and the malls. These shop assistants, who usually appear neat and speak or demonstrate ability to speak English,<sup>85</sup> attend politely to prospective customers, relate well to them by answering questions, attempt to persuade customers to buy as well as in some cases offering a helping hand by carrying purchased goods to the car. Undoubtedly, such courtesies are attuned to middle class Ghanaians and perhaps also in tandem with the traditional Ghanaian hospitality.

Culturally, Ghanaians tout themselves as being hospitable. One context where such hospitality gets loudly articulated is within the spatialities of local commerce, particularly in the traditional markets and some department stores. In such contexts, business owners including their helps/assistants build social relations with their clientele through appropriate manners with the idea that such manners lead to maintaining a cohort of loyal customers. Thus, in several local markets, it is not surprising for traders/assistants to greet new shoppers with the title "*Royal*", "*Daddy*", "*Daa*", "*Mummy*", "*Maa*", "*love*" etc. as a means of starting conversation that leads to the visitor buying the trader's wares and the offer to carry purchases to the car or a convenient place as needed. Of course, after carrying purchases to the car, if it is the assistant, the shopper may have to give a tip. Such salutations may start off social relations that could perpetuate (business) relationship between the trader and shopper for a long time. With time, the greeting may evolve to "*customer*" where, either real or perceived, the shopper is guaranteed discounts, credit purchases or bonus products for being a loyal patron.

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<sup>85</sup> Typically though, they mix local dialect with English when interacting with customers.

Moving into a typical mall shop, a shop assistant quickly moves closer to the visitor once the visitor starts looking around; rather demurely from the outset. Once the visitor notices his/her presence, there is a tendency to look at his/her direction or ask a question and then the interaction begins. They are ready to answer questions on products and may call in another assistant or refer to a superior if needed. In that sense, shop assistants represent a repertoire of product information as well as being the interface between the profit motive of shop owners and the visitor on the basis that for a shopper who has the purchasing power, the attitude of an assistant could persuade or dissuade a prospective buyer. Once they have been able to persuade a visitor to buy, an assistant's effectiveness is underscored by shop owners/managers, sometimes through monthly sales bonus. As indicated, for bulky items some assistants may help in packaging and sending to a shopper's vehicle, even if in a wheeled cart, who in turn might offer a tip. In that practice, the mall shops copy from traditional markets ethos.

Beyond the economic motive undertones, such overtures need to be understood, again, in another cultural context, namely; that traditionally, the younger ones are expected to help older people carry their loads if they meet in the street. This is a sign that the young person is empathetic, respectful and well-cultured. Though modernisation seems to be eroding such cultural practices, in places such as market centres, churches, town halls, etc. the practice still persists. Thus, the courtesy is extended to 'reputable' mall shoppers. It could be argued therefore that some of these local mannerisms are indeed being transported into the malls' shops, and may well be construed as a process of 'localisation' of globalism (Cohen, 2006:412).

Further, the malls act as a site for grounding the shopping experience as a leisure and reflexive activity, for both middle class and low-income consumers. This, in one sense, is tied to the notion of the malls as a one-stop convenience shop. Given the variety of consumer goods they

field, shoppers move from shop to shop and mall to mall or in some cases from local retail shops to the malls.

Both historically and theoretically, it is known that prospective buyers tend to ‘shop around’ before making up their minds (Stobart et al. 2007), all the while listening to several shop assistants in different shops. In listening to various versions, the shopper gathers relevant information through a process of briefing and debriefing, by asking questions and comparing information and pricing. The proliferation of malls in Accra seem to have brought this reality home to both the middle class and low-income shoppers.

*Yes, because the prices are the same in almost all the malls. But when it comes to the drinks, I think the malls are cheaper than the shops around... if you go there and you want to buy something, of course, you check the price as well to see whether the price within the mall and out of the mall, which one would [...]. We normally shop at... a supermarket. But if I am around the mall, I check and compare the prices (Middle class wife; Dec., 2016).*

In moving from shop to shop, connected by mall corridors, or sometimes mall to mall, observing new fashions, asking questions and comparing information, the whole shopping experience thus becomes both a leisure and reflexive exercise (Stillerman and Salcedo, 2012). In that sense, shoppers become astute consumers in distinguishing tastes and fashions matching them against the price. This is even true of low-income people, as seen in the case of the low-income customers interviewed.

*I should have said this earlier on. I have been tasting a lot of Pizza's but this place's Pizza is different! Actually... I was told that this place's [West Hills] pizza is different and I really enjoyed it! (Dec., 2016)*

Finally, my observations in the malls revealed that this polite mannerism does not have universal application. That is, if in the shop assistant's estimation an individual does not appear

middle class 'enough' or may not have the purchasing power, one risk losing such courteous overtures. In that sense, the shop floor becomes a site of social segregation rather than social inclusion. One urban planning expert interviewed indicated, on that score, that malls can actually "*reinforce the [social] stratification*" in the city. For instance, in West Hills, some shop managers have complained about school children who come to the shops for sight-seeing even though the evidence indicates that the pupils purchase from some shops, particularly the anchor shops, and additionally represent tomorrow's middle and upper-class consumers.

## **Conclusion**

I have argued that malls represent a node of global convergence where western modernity has been brought within easy reach of citizens who are able to visit the mall. Due to their promise of being a one-stop shop, among others, middle class citizens find them particularly attuned to their needs and desires. The low-income people, in attempting to emulate middle class consumption practices, have also joined the consumption bandwagon offered by the malls in order to identify or associate with modernity. The almost universal acceptance by the citizens particularly favour mall operators' vision of operating an open-door policy of attracting every demographic group. Additionally, I have argued that mall operators and shop owners pursue marketing strategies and ethos that in some sense mimic traditional market ethos and rooted in local cultural practices. This notwithstanding, I argue, malls are concurrently challenging and complementing local markets existence. These have implications for the future of both the new shopping malls and the local markets, relating to respective viabilities of both, the city's image/modernity, livelihoods and employment generation, among others. But how beneficial have malls been to the city, generally, in terms of employment generation? This I explore further in the next chapter.

## CHAPTER SEVEN

### ACCRA'S MALLS AND LOCAL ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT IMPACTS

#### Introduction

This chapter and the next focus on the economic impact of malls' and malls as catalyst for economic development. As such, I will explore the economic role malls play in people's lives and in reinvigorating the economies of the localities within which they are situated and the larger Accra city economic space. Around the world, shopping malls as enablers or tools for economic development has received enormous attention in the research community, in both the global North and South, including Chile (Salcedo, 2003), Turkey (Ertekin et al., 2008), India (Kalirijan and Singh, 2009), South Africa (Jogee and Callghan, 2014) and the US (Storper et al., 2015). Indeed, in California, the US state with the highest penetration of shopping malls, local governments have used shopping mall development as a tool for local economic development (LED), improving local revenue and providing jobs through a series of incentives that attracted the private sector into mall development in specific localities (Storper et al. 2015: 120; see also ICSC, 2013). In Ghana, less has been written about the malls' economic benefits. This study therefore fills this gap. Hence, the key question this chapter seeks to answer is:

- *What has been the overall economic development impact of the malls in the city and, in particular, the various localities within which they are embedded?*

As such, this Chapter Seven focuses on aspects of local economic development (LED) impact of the malls. Progressing on this line, I explore two aspects of the malls' LED impacts; namely i) The potential of malls for wealth generation, and ii) Their impact on the local communities within which they are embedded. Firstly, on wealth generation, discussed under Section 7.1, I

attempt to understand wealth generation impact, through *local content in the malls*, by exploring, among others, revenues that have accrued to the city (citizens and government) from mall development. The question of local investors' shareholding in the mall investments, which represents one major local content or wealth creation source, has already been dealt with extensively in Chapter Five and would not be dwelt on again here<sup>86</sup>. My main argument in this section is that despite the malls' potential for increased wealth generation, presently they may not be encouraging wealth creation to any substantial degree. Secondly, in terms of their impact on local communities, discussed under Section 7.2, I explore the extent to which Accra's malls' development, *ab initio*, may be construed as a local economic development process, by analysing the involvement of local community people. I then discuss three observed/practical and three potential impact of the malls on the localities within which they are embedded. LED has been touted as a strategy where localities could have optimal benefits from global flows (ILO, 2006). Since LED is thought to be a bottom-up approach, the objective of the chapter, amongst others, tries to establish which of the malls has a stronger connectivity to its locality in terms of enhancing the economic lot of the staff through the empirical data available. As discussed in Chapter Five, both malls have been established through a[n] (urban) coalition of developers who worked largely through nationally-established channels (for investment drive) without much recourse to involvement of local (community) people as opposed to the theoretical underpinnings of the LED frameworks. Yet evidence suggests that local people (i.e. traditional authorities) have become one of the stakeholders, at least in the case of West Hills Mall, at the development phase. Through a comparative study of the two malls, I explore the impact of the malls on their localities as the result of this involvement of community chiefs in the mall development process. My main argument here, also, is that based on the intervention

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<sup>86</sup>Local Investors in Accra Mall hold about 6 percent whilst in West Hills, SSNIT has 40 percent whilst Delico Ghana which is a joint venture between AttAfrica and Delico Investment properties hold the other 60 percent. Delico Investment, the Ghanaian counterpart is likely to hold something in the region of 10 percent.

of the chiefs, West Hills Mall represents the mall that has the highest local economic development (LED) impact than Accra Mall, whose economic impact is dissipated across the entire city rather than its immediate localities. I situate this arguments within shopping mall as a catalyst for development and the LED thesis, where involvement of different actors (including those from non-governmental and voluntary sectors) in urban entrepreneurialism leads to local economic development (Gunder, 2009). I therefore contend that such level of involvement, albeit organic rather than well-thought out process, can be construed as an LED process.

Beyond these, it is important to point out that, as socio-economic sites, the malls' development and operations have not been without contestations. Indeed, since malls are sites that hold economic value (Rodgers, 2009), various stakeholders and interest groups have had (and continue to have) confrontations, collaborations, and compromises in an attempt to maximise the economic benefits accruing therefrom during both the development and the operations phases. As such, under Section 7.3, I explore how the mall sites have become sites of contestation among various stakeholders and citizens. Particularly for low-income citizens who may have been disenfranchised by globalisation, they engage in confrontations with mall developers and operators to press their claims and this, I argue, amounts to a 're-territorialisation of the urban *economic* space' rather than the *physical* space, as argued by Miles and Paddision (1998).

### **7.1 Malls as Source of Wealth Generation: Local Content**

In this section I explore how and the extent to which local citizens appropriate some of the wealth created by the presence of the malls. I frame this as *local content in mall development*. I seek to understand this through local participation. By local participation, I mean: 1) Local

shareholding in the mall investments, 2) Local shops/tenants, 3) Revenues generated for the city and the nation, and 4) Employment for local people. Employment for local people is discussed extensively in Chapter Eight and as such will not be treated here. On the question of revenue to the state, as indicated in Chapter Two, all parties were quite reticent. Data from the Ghana Revenue Authority (GRA) could not be obtained to confirm with what I received from the malls, particularly West Hills. Accra Mall was also unwilling to release data on revenue paid to the state. As a corporate body, they posit they fulfil their tax obligations. West Hills, on the other hand, gave a range rather than actual figures. I will, additionally, discuss briefly other potential channels of local participation: local products, to build capacity for local entrepreneurship.

These five modes of local participation determine, to a large extent, how much the malls help in wealth generation for the city/nation. It is admissible that international companies could embark on corporate social responsibilities/initiatives or list on the Ghana Stock Exchange (GSE), or other systems that may lead to wealth re-distribution within the Ghanaian society. However, such methods are outside the scope of this study. It is known however, that most of the international shops have been in Ghana only recently and checks on the GSE website reveal that none of the big name international shops are listed.

### **7.1.1 Local Shops**

Malls have three categories of tenants, namely anchor, preferential and fill-up tenants (Reikli, 2012). Anchor tenants are typically supermarkets or hypermarkets shops which take large percentage of the leasable floor area and sign much longer lease with mall developers. However, they pay relatively lower rent per unit floor area. Due to the range of consumer goods they offer, they are magnets for attracting foot traffic into a mall (Stoffel, 1988; Reikli, 2012). According to Stoffel (1988:np), ‘the anchor store has substantial influence - mall plans have

been held up until an anchor is firmly in place, and a successful anchor can inspire new development or continued expansion'. On the other hand, '[p]referential tenants are situated in the middle [between the anchors and the fill-up],... and often represent brand names, around which the shopping center builds its own image and adjusts the standards of its offerings. The fill-up type of tenants operate on small trade areas, pay high rents [per unit floor area] and generate little customer traffic' (Reikli, 2012:43). Fill-up tenants may also deal in only one particular good or service whilst the others may typically have more variety.

In Accra Mall, the anchor tenants are Shoprite and Game whilst at West Hills, they are Shoprite, Palace and Edgars. Some of the preferential tenants in Accra Mall include Mango, Mr. Price, Mac, Identity, Puma, Payless Shoes, etc. In West Hills some of them are Truworths, Markham, Woolworths, Foschini, American Swiss, Payless Shoes, etc. Some of the line shops in Accra Mall may be Compu Ghana, Say Cheers Wine, Nallem Clothing, etc. In West Hills, there are Woodin, Nallem Clothing, Treasure Jewellery, Exotic Trends, etc.

I contend, on the basis of the evidence available, that the share of mall revenue to local shops is expected to be much lower compared to the international (or foreign) shops. This is because, the degree of representation in terms of volume of rental space and products range/mix determine customer numbers/mix and by extension trade volumes (Reikli, 2012) which has a direct correlation with revenues/profit generated.

Generally, local businesses representation in the shops are few compared to the international shops. Personal observations and anecdotal evidence reveal that local shops are in the minority. In West Hills, managers indicated that 32 percent of tenants are purely locally-owned whilst 39 percent are purely international and 29 percent are those with international franchise, some of whom are Ghanaians. South African shops (e.g. Truworths, Identity, Mr. Price, etc.) still maintain control over their brands in Ghana while other international shops work through

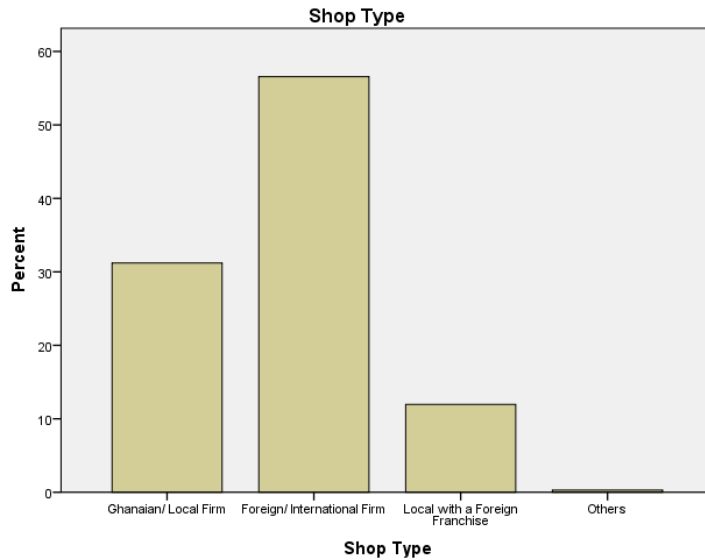
franchisers (OBG, 2016). Some of the international franchise holders, according to Frederick Arthur, the marketing manager of West Hills, include the Azadea Group from the Middle East who hold the franchise for Mango, Mango kids, Payless Shoes, Violeta and Sunglass Huts in Accra and West Hills Malls. On the other hand, managers at Accra Mall indicated they keep information on tenants confidential so they would not release the status of tenants. However, they corroborated that international shops dominate their rental spaces. Oteng-Ababio and Arthur (2015) have also indicated that there are about 37 foreign companies who control about 81 percent of the 20,000m<sup>2</sup> leasable space in Accra Mall. In the questionnaires administered on both staff and managers, 31.2 percent and 27.3 percent respectively indicated that their shops were Ghanaian shops whilst 56.6 percent and 62.1 percent said international shops respectively, in both malls (Fig. 7.1 and 7.2). This is indicative that local businesses are much fewer than the international shops.

Also, most of the local shops belong to the line shop category who rent small spaces. During the field work, it was realised that most local shops occupy small spaces, some of them as low as 36m<sup>2</sup>. This partly accounts for the observation made by Oteng-Ababio and Arthur (2015) that local shops control some 19 percent of the rental space in Accra Mall. Even where their absolute number seems comparable to the international shops, as in the case of West Hills Mall, the control over retail space is still much lower. According to Albert Manu, in Accra Mall, the anchors take up spaces in the order of 2500m<sup>2</sup> or more whilst the preferential<sup>87</sup> tenants are between 1000 and 2500m<sup>2</sup> and line shops may go for anything between 30m<sup>2</sup> to 1000m<sup>2</sup>. Indeed, in the case of West Hills, mall managers have had to reduce sizes occupied by some tenants, notably line shops (e.g. Nallem Clothing and Woodin), as part of the overall strategies to enable shops to deal with the economic challenges the mall is facing. That said, it must

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<sup>87</sup> Preferential tenants are called *nationals* by mall operators in Ghana, a term I was told, references South African multi-nationals

however be noted that Palace, an anchor tenant at West Hills, is a local shop whilst the Mall Pharmacy/Life Health Care (located in both malls) are also reasonably big space renters, much like the international shops.



**Figure 7.1: Staff Shop Types**



**Figure 7. 2: Managers Shop Types**

One reason why local shops typically belong to the line shop category obviously is the high rent levels. Oteng-Ababio and Arthur (2015:159) indicate that the rent remains a significant

barrier to local businesses in the malls. Mall operators also admit that ability to pay rent is perhaps the most over-riding criteria for signing up a tenant. Within this understanding, and given that monthly tenancy rate in Accra's malls are between \$45-60/sqm (Oteng-Ababio and Arthur, 2015; Broll Ghana, 2017), excluding additional service<sup>88</sup> (between 10-15% of rent) and electricity (8% of rent) charges (OBG, 2016), local tenants are few and far between. Albert Manu also observed that local entrepreneurs are “able to take up only small slices of floor space, unlike the internationals who take up large floor areas, because renting is capital intensive”. Thus, local businesses who take up tenancy in the malls almost invariably end up as ‘line shops’. Though being a line shop has its advantages such as lower upfront rental payment, a challenge they need to grapple with is inability to enjoy economies of scale. Because they are unable to garner enough capital they take up small spaces which can only perform at the subsistence level. The rising cost of energy and exchange rate instability have posed significant challenge to their viability within the malls. In the process, some of the local businesses have capitulated over time. Oteng-Ababio and Arthur (2015:159) indicate that the high tenancy rate has led to ‘high tenancy movements... over time and space’ where predominantly existing local tenants exit and new ones come in. In both malls some local shops were found to have closed. At West Hills Mall, *Enda Foods* closed up whilst in Accra Mall, *Springfield*, a local franchise holder, also closed.

Another worthy point is the merchandize type local shops deal in. Typically, these are merchandize or services that cannot be shipped or have low value addition that do not yield bigger profit margins compared to the merchandize dealt in by the international shops. For instance, most local shops (53.3 percent) are in the *other merchandize* category. These include pharmacy/clinic, playgrounds, beauty/hair dressing, cleaning, security service, etc. Typically,

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<sup>88</sup> Service charge include water, sewerage, security, etc. provided by the mall. Managers at West Hills indicated this is about \$7.90/sqm.

such products or services are low yielding compared to say computer/electronics, especially when considered against the backdrop of the low scale economies that the local businesses operate within. The pharmacy/clinic needs to be isolated in this generalisation due to, among others, the strong regulatory framework under which the health industry operates. Fashion/Clothing/general wares, food/grocery/general goods, restaurants/food courts, computer/electronics, and ICT follow at 18.1, 14.3, 11.4, 1.9 and 1 percent respectively. This stands in contrast to the international shops which are fairly distributed, in all streams of merchandize categories<sup>89</sup>. The fashion/Clothing/general wares have 30.4 percent of the international shops within this category. Food/groceries/general goods, restaurants/food courts, computers/electronics, other merchandize, ICT follow at 28.4, 13.5, 10.3, 10.3 and 7.2 percent respectively.

Thus, it is evident that in terms of size, numbers, and merchandize local businesses occupy the lower rungs in the economy of the city's malls. On this basis, I argue that the wealth generated for local citizens is also on the lower side. But just how low is the wealth generated? Certainly, other evidence that would have made the argument that local shops' share of total mall revenue is lower compared to international shops is actual revenue data from the shops or mall managers who keep such data. However, both parties indicated that the oath of secrecy sworn between the malls and the shops preclude them from revealing this to third parties. This challenge on the mall's secrecy with revenue data is also highlighted by Oteng-Ababio and Arthur (2015:163) who indicated they 'had no independent way of determining' such economic information.

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<sup>89</sup> Internationals also dominate local shops in all the merchandize categories except the *others category* where local has 70 percent to international shops 25 percent. The rest (International versus local) are Fashion/Clothing/general wares (62.8 vs 20.2 percent), food/grocery/general goods (78.6 vs. 21.4 percent), restaurants/food courts (55.3 vs. 25.5 percent), computer/electronics (57.1 vs. 5.7 percent), and ICT (93.3 vs. 6.7 percent)

### **7.1.2 Revenue to the City**

In the developed world, economic benefits of malls are well-known. Due to reliable data, the benefits are easily measurable. In the US for instance, shopping center sales have grown from \$1.65 trillion in 2000 to some \$2.4 trillion in 2012 and sales tax to US states amounted to about \$136.2 billion in 2012 (ICSC, 2013). In other middle-income countries such as Turkey, shopping malls have given impetus to both urban and rural economies (Ertekin et al. 2008) while in Latin America, malls are known to reinvigorate local community economies (Salcedo, 2003; Stillerman and Salcedo, 2012). In South Africa where shopping mall is much integrated into the national economic fabric than most parts of sub-Saharan Africa, measurable data are available for assessment of their economic impact. However, in other sub-Saharan African countries such reliable data are few (see Jerven, 2013) to facilitate assessment of local and national impacts of malls because the industry is still evolving. Despite the scanty information I attempt to assess the revenues generated by the malls at both the local and national government level.

In Ghana, by the local government law (Act 462), local governments have two sources of revenue generation, namely: internally generated and external funds. External funds come from the government of Ghana, typically the consolidated fund, among others. Internally generated funds come from 1) Property rates and a poll tax on every person aged 18 years or older, 2) Fees, including those on slaughterhouses, markets stalls, trading kiosks and other commercial facilities; and 3) Licenses, including those issued on ... sales, artisanal and other vendor sales, gas stations and lorry parks (Colin, 2011:12, Act 462, Sixth Schedule).

As far as the operations phase of the malls are concerned, the most important revenue to local governments are perhaps the business operating permit (levied on all the shops) and property

rates. During the construction phase, developers also pay fees such as development, building and other statutory permits fees.

Information from the LaDadekotopon Municipal Assembly (LaDMA) which took jurisdiction over Accra Mall in 2012 indicates that tax revenues have increased since 2012. In the Ga South Municipality (GSMA) which has oversight over the West Hills Mall, officials could only give a range (Table 7.1). A budget officer who was tasked to furnish me with the needed information by the municipal chief executive later sent me a text message weeks after my letter that “*I worked on your information. It seems my people are not keeping proper records. They are telling me it would be difficult to get. I would let them estimate a range for you.*”

**Table 7. 1:** Tax Revenues Paid by Malls to Local Governments

No	Paid by Accra Mall to LaDMA**		Paid by West Hills to GSMA**
	Year	Amount/GHC	Amount (Range)/ GHC
1	2012	254,080.04	N/A
2	2013	2,180,514.95	N/A
3	2014	4,046,198.87	N/A
4	2015	5,885,166.23	75,000-80,000 <sup>++</sup>
5	2016	6,514,819.01	75,000-90,000 <sup>++</sup>

(\*\* Information was collected from local Governments Offices; <sup>++</sup> both property rate and business operation permits)

The West Hills Mall center manager, Prince Tsabalala, indicated that “*property rate and taxes*” they pay to the local government is between \$8000 and \$10,000<sup>90</sup> annually. Whilst this is lower than the figures from the GSMA, it is consistent with only the business operating permit levies.

At the national level, West Hills noted they pay income tax, sales tax, and value added tax to the state. Value added tax (VAT) payment to the state range within \$6 million annually and the monthly average for October 2016-January 2017 range between about \$500,000 and \$600,000. Whilst Accra Mall refused to release any information, Yakubu (2010: np)<sup>91</sup> writes that ‘Accra Mall [has]... a potential to create 5,000 jobs and taxes amounting to \$60million dollars from the two anchor tenants over a ten-year period’. Given that Accra Mall is performing better than West Hills, revenue to the state are bound to be relatively higher.

As pointed out in Chapter Five, there is a high degree of disparity between the revenue to the state and that to the local government. This again highlights the patrimonial nature of the Ghanaian governance structure. However, as provided for in the local government law, Act 462, a percentage of the taxes is sent back to the local governments for development at the local levels. For those taxes collected by the local governments, Act 462 offers the latitude to spend on local level development including on public services and assets such as rehabilitation of community roads, sanitation, etc. Officers at the Ga South Municipality indicated that they have used some of these taxes on the construction of an ongoing local government office building complex, vehicles, as well as for recurrent expenditure like office maintenance and for compensation, including payment of staff allowance, etc. That being the case, the chance for abuse of local taxes cannot be completely swept under the carpet. On that basis, it would

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<sup>90</sup>In February 2017, the exchange rate was \$1(US)~GHC4.5

<sup>91</sup>(<http://www.ghanaweb.com/GhanaHomePage/NewsArchive/The-Rise-And-Rise-of-Accra-Mall-180648>)  
Accessed: 19th May 2016)

therefore not be out of place for citizens to demand increased transparency from their local governments with respect to use of local taxes.

### 7.1.3 Other Potential Channels

Beyond the points already discussed, with the support of mall operators and some international shops, local entrepreneurs use other strategies to appropriate some of the wealth. One such method is where small scale local entrepreneurs sell in mall corridors for a period of time. They rent a small space over a period, say one week to bring their products to customers in the malls. Another strategy is where local businesses buy shelves in the anchor shops to display and sell their wares. Through special arrangements with the shops a percentage of the profit goes to the anchor tenants. This system is used, not only by the small-scale entrepreneurs but, even by well-established medium and large scale multi-nationals in Ghana in the water and alcoholic beverage industries. There is also the emerging situation where international shops are collaborating with local farmers to supply them with fresh produce. The observation by Albert Manu, of Accra Mall, and Mark Boakye, center manager of Achimota Mall, shed light:

*[W]hen Shoprite came they were bringing probably 80% or 90% of their stuff from S.A. Now, almost 50% of that merchandize you see in Shoprite is coming locally. Yeah!...they sell you the shelf! Shoprite is bringing things but Shoprite can sell you the shelf. You pitch your products with them. You want the shelf? You do the shelf! And with Game, when you go through their till, your mark-up goes to your account theirs goes to their account. People are coming...I want to pitch things with Shoprite... you go [...] see them. I mean, meat, vegetables. They're always chasing up vegetable farmers. You supply them and then they pay you. The more they can get locally, the better for them. There is no need to keep shipping. (Albert Manu; Oct., 2016)*

*Shoprite... has identified certain farmers in the country and then they give them seed. They inspect their farms... there is a shortage in the market. So, to be proactive, we see [...] Shoprite going out actually to farmers, giving seeds and encouraging farmers to go by what modern methods and trusted... scientific way [of planting and supplying to Shoprite]. So that they can get healthy and [...] because whatever you buy from Shoprite they certify it. (Mark Boakye; March, 2017)*

Occasionally also, fairs are organised on mall car parks where local businesses display their products to the public. In one such fairs I witnessed in December 2016, the organisers included the Ghana Ministry of Trade working in partnership with the small-scale business association and the Junction Mall managements (Fig. 7.3).



**Figure 7. 3:** Local Products Fair on Car Park of Junction Mall in December 2016

Mall managers also pointed out that local agents are contracted to handle services such as security, cleaning, air conditioning and heating servicing, generator servicing, electrical and plumbing works, sewage treatment plant management, as well as landscape and refuse disposal. Undoubtedly, these systems create a leverage for local businesses to take opportunity of the mall's reputation and clientele base to appropriate some of the revenues going to the malls' shops whilst avoiding the high rents the malls charge for rentals. Oteng-Ababio and Arthur (2015) argue that the process of periodically hiring 'a stand' for promoting their products helps small local businesses by-pass the high ground rent. Beyond that, it helps them build a customer base for future business. Additionally, they bring a range of Ghanaian products which serve as an interlude to the usually foreign merchandise that are sold in the malls.

#### **7.1.4 Why local participation is low?**

On why local participation is low in the malls, a number of factors account for this. Among them include: the high rent, low access to local capital, low national support, and the high incidence of informal markets.

In the first place, the high rent is a constraint to the entrance and sustainability of local businesses in the malls. Local businesses do not have the capital base needed to pay the high ground rent in addition to the service charges and the utilities charges. As Albert pointed out, “*rent[ing] is capital intensive*” and a significant constraint to local businesses. Even those who are already tenants grapple with enormous challenge keeping up with the rents. One mall official at Accra Mall intimated that the mall is not enthused about local tenants because, unlike the international tenants who understand and respect their obligations within the tenancy agreements, they resort to excuses like not making enough sales in a month to be able to pay bills, etc.

Access to local capital is also low on the Ghanaian capital market. As such locals in the retail industry are not able to build the necessary capacity to grow. Local retailers have thus remained traditionally small even within the Ghanaian retail industry. Hence, they are not able to match up with regional and international competitors in the malls. Of course, there are medium-sized local shops like Melcom owned by Ghanaians of Indian descent but these, with their already long-established presence, do not operate from the new malls. Previous attempts have been made to build medium-to-large scale local retail in the grocery and general goods sector earlier (in the early to mid-1990s by shops like A-Life supermarkets) but yet again lack of capital, political and macro-economic challenges, among others constrained their growth.

National support to businesses has been traditionally low and in some cases the political economic climate has really constrained or entirely collapsed local businesses. Under national leaders, particularly some military leaders who espoused socialism, local businesses like

Appiah Menka (soap industry), Addai cutlass, etc. were seen as undermining efforts of the (welfare) state. This national antagonism against businesses was even extended to international businesses operating in Ghana in the early 1980s, as reported by Dzorgbor (2001). As such, there has not been specific government policies that sought to support growth and sustainability of local businesses over a sustained period of time, including those in the retail industry. Consequently, most local retailers have remained small and largely operating within the informal sector.

Resultantly, the informal sector has continued to expand, accounting for more than 80 percent of all urban employment in Ghana (Grey-Johnson, 1992). Most local retail shops which have even grown to medium sized outlets thus find extensive articulation in the informal economy in Accra and beyond. Indeed, Oteng-Ababio and Arthur (2015) argue that the informal sector presents a potent competition to the new malls. And it is for good reasons: the rent is low, the initial capital outlay is very low, little or no utilities and service charges are required and less bureaucracy is entailed, given that a starter in the informal market does not necessarily need to go through business registration, though it is required once the business begins to grow. Then, also, most of the local shops who operate within the informal systems are able to by-pass the tax systems leading to low operating cost, among others. Consequently, wares/merchandise in these local shops in the informal sectors are generally lower than those in the malls. Customers therefore find the informal shops more attractive on account of low cost. Indeed, some of the middle-class people even prefer to shop in these informal shops. The middle-class couple mentioned in Chapter Six suggested that by the time they leave the mall on that day, they might have spent some GHC1000, a figure they thought was high though admitting that, of course, this was Christmas where they intended to give their children a treat at the malls' playgrounds.

*Because honestly, this is expensive!...[So] You don't do [mall] all the time, it's like occasions... we wouldn't move... to come and shop here on a regular day;*

*it is not a regular something. So, the traditional ones will take care of regular and then once a week you want to change environment. (Kate, Dec., 2016)*

They also indicated that some of the informal operators now have mobile phones where a customer may call and purchase items sent to them in the convenience of their homes or offices. Consequently, some customers shop at the malls occasionally and also compare prices with the informal/traditional shops.

Thanks to technology, the practice where informal operators resort to use of technology obviously challenges the malls' selling point of being convenient, as espoused in Chapter Six, as well as demonstrating how the informal economy is competing with the malls for customers, as I will show further in Section 7.3. With this trend of affairs, the impetus for local entrepreneurs to take up space in the new shopping malls is low resulting in the current low local participation in the malls. Therefore, I argue that, on the basis of existing low local content in the malls, wealth creation potential to citizens is also low.

## **7.2 Accra's Shopping Malls' Development as Local Economic Development (LED) Process**

In this section, I explore how local economic development (LED) process may be understood in a rather organic form in Accra's malls, instead of a series of programmatic steps as pertained in the local economic development (LED) literature. I then link this process to explore how the mall development alliances/coalitions built leading subsequently to the construction of the shopping malls have impacted the local economies, practically and potentially.

Whilst economic development may have a much broader spatial context, LED is locality specific (Ellen and Schwatz, 2000; Ward and Jonas, 2004). Ward and Jonas (2004) see LED strategy within the larger theory of city competitiveness which, they argue, is more of a bottom up approach and Ellen and Schwatz (2000) indicate that LED needs to be understood in terms

of jobs, firms, income and their impacts on the locality. LED process may be achieved through a series of incentives that attract the private sector and other stakeholders (Storper et al. 2015: 120). As such, LED approach, in both the global North and South, is a series of conscious programmatic economic development initiatives started at the local level. The strategy is usually initiated by a coalition led by elected leaders (Rachmawti, 2016) but also sometimes by non-elected leaders (Bennington and Geddes, 1992). Yet, the question is what if the strategy comes in a more organic structure rather than a planned strategy? Would this then be considered an LED strategy? I argue on the basis of the available evidence, such non-programmatic, more organic structured initiatives may have a demonstrable impact on a local community, as found in Accra. This is important to the extent that it helps to understand how organic and non-formal arrangements in urban development initiatives in sub-Saharan Africa may produce positive local economic development outcome. But how may shopping mall development be conceived as an LED initiative in Ghana?

In Ghana, like most parts of the world, it is not uncommon to find planners and developers who attempt to build bridges with the citizenry or key stakeholders (i.e. local residents/land owners) and ultimately get legitimacy for proposed development projects, including shopping malls. For a shopping mall, this may be seen as part of the planning phase (Reikli, 2012). Specifically, in Accra, part of the reason for ‘bridge-building’ is to avoid the constant contestation over land ownership, which could take years in some cases. As will be shown in Section 7.3, Accra Mall had its share of such contest over land ownership.

In the case of West Hills Mall, in line with the practice of ‘bridge-building’ and perhaps taking lessons from the Accra Mall experiences, among others, the developers met with chiefs and opinion leaders of the various communities where the mall is located before construction begun. In the said meeting, it is reported, the chiefs made a plea to the developers to employ

the indigenes of the various towns. The developers agreed and devised a policy that those to be employed need to live largely in the surrounding communities.

Such a policy is interesting on account of its practical and potential to enhance local economic development by reducing poverty and creating wealth in the local communities. The question then is to what extent did such a policy impact on the local economy? I investigate this question by analyzing three practical impacts with respect to staff, namely place of residence, duration to work, and transportation cost. I compare these with Accra Mall and explore how staff in both malls fare in terms of their income vis-a-vis transportation and rent expenditures. Potentially, I also argue that such a policy has a positive effect on local markets, housing, and staff saving potential. I then frame such processes as how local economic development may be construed in another sense in Ghana.

As will be discussed in Chapter Eight, Accra Mall staff earn higher than West Hills. On this basis given the same expenditure patterns/levels, Accra Mall staff should be expected to have a relatively higher capacity for poverty reduction and create wealth by relatively higher level of savings. However, it turns out that on all the expenditure streams, namely transportation and rent, Accra Mall staff had higher expenditure than West Hills' staff; thus constraining staff's capacity than West Hills'.

Firstly, in terms of transportation cost, Accra Mall staff generally have higher transportation cost than West Hills' and this association was shown to be statistically significant ( $\chi^2 = 49.221$ ;  $df = 4$ ;  $p = 0.000$ ). The mean transportation cost is GHC4.73/day and 37.4 percent of Accra Mall's and 52.5 percent of West Hills' staff spend less than GHC5/day on transportation (Table 7.2). Indeed, 10.6 percent West Hills' respondents indicated they do not pay anything because they walk or ride a bike to work because their houses are within 30 minutes walking or biking distance of the mall.

**Table 7. 2:** Daily Transportation cost of Respondents

		Mall respondent works in	
		Accra Mall	West Hills Mall
Less than GHC2	%	1.7%	1.3%
GHC2.1-2.9	%	6.4%	16.9%
GHC3-3.9	%	13.5%	12.5%
GHC4-4.9	%	13.5%	11.2%
GHC5-5.9	%	14.6%	16.9%
GHC6 or more	%	48.0%	30.6%
Nothing	%	2.3%	10.6%
Total	Count	171	160
	%	100	100

This is generally consistent with the duration of the journey to work. Transportation cost is directly related to duration such that the longer the duration the higher the cost. Seventy four percent of West Hills staff get to work within 45 minutes of setting off as opposed to Accra Mall’s 38.8 percent while the rest (61.2 percent) of Accra Mall staff get to work after 45 minutes of setting off. Answers on staff’s residential neighbourhoods showed that most West Hills staff live within communities closer to the mall whilst Accra Mall staff come not necessarily from its surrounding communities but largely from across the city. It is therefore concluded that the policy of ensuring that people within the surrounding communities of West Hills get employed had practical effects. Mall managers indicated that to give effect to the policy, they asked the chiefs to inform their people to send curriculum vitae (CVs) to them. Some of these CVs were given to shop owners to interview and employ if qualified. This notwithstanding, some respondents indicated they lived outside Accra but had to relocate to the West Hills vicinity after securing the job.

Secondly, in terms of accommodation, a Pearson chi-square test shows a significant association ( $x^2 = 18.527$ ,  $df = 5$ ,  $p=0.002$ ). That is, many Accra Mall staff have generally higher rental

expenses than West Hills'. For instance, of those who pay rent, respectively, 31.2 and 20.9 percent pay between GHC50-GHC100; 20.6 and 11.8 percent pay between GHC101 and GHC300; 5.3 and 5.9 percent pay GHC301 and GHC500; and 1.8 and 0.0 percent pay above GHC500. Even for those who do not pay, Accra Mall has relatively lower percentage of staff than West Hills: respectively, 38.3 and 53.6 percent live with relatives whilst 2.4 and 7.8 indicated they live in their own houses or shop-rented accommodation or other description. This is indicative that Accra Mall has higher rental expenses than West Hills. However, a post-hoc chi-square test did not indicate a significant association between staff's rent and mall.

On potential benefits, the fact that West Hills' staff generally live within the mall's vicinity certainly brings benefits to the community. Generally, the malls have provided jobs to the youth. Some scholars in local or community economic developments (CED) (e.g. Chapple, 2012; Rachmawati, 2016) have argued that in some cases, local jobs created do not go to local residents thus defeating the purpose of LED/CED. This may be the result of several reasons, such as lack of expertise, highly technical nature of the new jobs or less willingness of local residents to seek employment in the job sector. This is what makes the intervention of the chiefs very useful for the malls' local economic development impact. As will be shown in Chapter Eight, in terms of job targeting, the relevant demographic group, aged 17-25 years, has been appropriately catered for in the jobs created by the malls. Even if the jobs created are not many, it is still a positive step. Some youth who might otherwise be unemployed and vulnerable to engaging in anti-social vices have become usefully engaged. That staff live in communities closer to West Hills certainly bring potential benefits from the point of view of patronising local markets, saving potential and providing rental revenues to landlords, aspects I discuss in turn.

Firstly, there will be a boost to local consumption and West Hills' communities are likely to benefit more. These staff, judging by their income levels, as Potts (2012) argues, may not be

able to spur higher levels of consumption as such. However, it is these small-scale consumers who sustain most sub-Saharan informal sectors whose role in local economies are well-articulated by scholars (e.g. Hart, 1973 and Grey-Johnson, 1992; Gough et al., 2003). Indeed, the employees, both local and non-local citizens, patronise small scale businesses/local traders in the communities. In the vicinity of both malls, there are local informal markets and taxi/lorry stations that have developed largely because of the malls. The one closer to Accra Mall, which was first identified by Oteng-Ababio and Arthur (2015), is relatively bigger and more organised than at West Hills, probably because Accra Mall has been established much longer. Yet, the local communities around West Hills has a host of small scale informal businesses, catering for the local people, including the mall staff. Some of the staff indicated that they spend some GHC5/day on food whilst at work. These staff are more likely to spend such monies in such local markets as opposed to the relatively more expensive food courts in the malls.

Secondly, once they spend less on transportation and most do not pay rent or potentially less on rents, there is likely to be a beneficial impact on their living conditions and ultimately the local communities. That is, given two staff with the same salary, each from a different mall, all things being equal, the West Hills staff is likely to have a slightly higher potential to save and increase his/her economic fortunes than the staff of Accra Mall. S/he is also likely to contribute to the economy of the neighbourhood at West Hills than Accra Mall. The reason being that the West Hills staff are more likely to live in the community nearby whereas Accra Mall staff are likely to live further out from the mall, a reason which accounts for the relatively higher transportation cost of Accra Mall's staff. It is important to note also that the vicinities closer to Accra Mall, including East Legon, Airport, Ridge, Spintex Road, etc., are affluent areas that do not necessarily cater for affordable housing for low income staff, such as those workers found in the malls. On the other hand, West Hills area communities, such as Dunkuna, Tuba, SCC, Weija, Kasoa, etc. are all relatively low-income areas where property values are amongst

the lowest in the city and caters to the needs of a varied stream of income groups. Thus, the presence of a mall in this part of the city might have a higher local economic impact on the communities than Accra Mall. For instance, a Broll Official at the Polo Heights apartment near Accra Mall indicated that Accra Mall's presence within the locality has been useful but not decisive against a background that before and after Accra Mall's construction, there had been other equally important projects, including the Airport City development, among others, that keep the locality economically vibrant. On the other hand, West Hills has become a major attraction in the western part of the city and has spiraled off a number of growth including transportation interconnections between the mall and nearby towns as well as the emergence of new residential gated communities just behind the mall. All these dynamics, I argue, make West Hills' impact on the local economy much vibrant than does Accra Mall on its local communities and economies.

Finally, the local housing market is likely to get a boost in terms of increased patronage and landlords are likely to earn increased revenues. Indeed, there are already signs of general increases in property values in the mall vicinity. This was revealed by the marketing manager of Fortune city<sup>92</sup>,

*[F]rom time to time the value of places go up depending on the value of the development that comes to those areas. Yes, the value of this place has really gone up... [t]he land value probably some years back that was GHC5000 has now gone up to about GHC50,000 (Fortune City Marketing Manager; February, 2017)*

The local investors of the mall, Sandpark Ltd., also indicated they calculated that developing the mall would boost the market for their real estate property in the area and hence approached the South African investors and SSNIT to develop the mall. But the extent to which the mall

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<sup>92</sup> Fortune City is a new gated community springing up at the West Hills area ([www.fortunecity.com.gh](http://www.fortunecity.com.gh)). The developers are Chinese who secured the land from SSNIT

has impacted their real estate property is yet to be researched. Nonetheless, the possibility of the mall leading to increases in rental values in the neighbourhoods cannot be overlooked. This situation, undoubtedly, is likely to impact on the low-income people, including the mall staff, who rent accommodation nearby. Indeed, some of the West Hills Mall staff who relocated to the area after securing mall job resort to various strategies such as jointly renting to reduce rent per head whilst most of other individual tenants opt for rather low-quality accommodation with low cost. The results show that 61.4 percent of West Hills staff do not pay rent at all. Though these strategies may be seen as staff strategies in expenditure management, the fact remains that the local housing and property market is at its incipient stages of being significantly impacted by the mall. Local property owners are likely to gain positively from increased property values arising from the mall's location within their neighbourhoods. This is important factor in local economic reinvigoration. Further studies, undoubtedly, would be needed to understand the extent to which properties have been impacted by the mall.

That said, it is important to underscore that the western part of Accra, as a result of the relatively lower property values compared to the eastern part and with the presence of West Hills Mall and other new economic activities, is recording some of the fastest growth in the city over the last five to ten years. SSNIT indicated that they went into developing West Hills Mall because they had noticed there was an opportunity in that part of the city since *“malls are sited either at active or dead areas to develop the areas”*. As such, there is also increasing number of gated communities being built, especially in the vicinities of West Hills. Indeed, SSNIT itself pioneered construction of residential accommodation before 2005 but pulled back after its new policy of off-loading residential real estate assets. Consequently, they released some of their lands to private developers, such as Fortune City, for residential development (Fig. 7.4). Information indicates that SSNIT's decision to release lands to developers was, among others, to shore up the economic fortunes of the West Hills Mall area.



**Figure 7.4:** Ongoing New Residential Communities at the West Hills Area

These dynamics also have important implications for the west of Accra's economic and urban development, although this is spearheaded by the private sector rather than the state. One such is the attraction of middle class people to Accra's west side. Though this may be seen as an attempt geared towards enhancing the long term economic fortunes of the mall through a strategy aimed at attracting the middle class through these residential facilities, it can, at the same time, be seen as local economic development and city competitiveness strategy. Florida (2002) has argued that attraction of the talented and the creative class to a particular locality is a strategy in city economic revitalisation on account of, among others, their ability to spur consumption. While the middle class may not necessarily be equated to the so-called talented and creative class, in Ghana, it will be argued, the middle class represents an important constituency within the creative and the talented class, deemed key to (local) economic development and whose choice of accommodation include such gated communities that companies like Fortune City and Sandpark Ltd. construct. Indeed, one of the economic strengths of Accra's east end is the presence of a host of these gated residential communities which cater for the middle class (Asiedu and Arku, 2009). Given that the middle class has a

relatively higher purchasing power, their aggregate number within a particular locality has a potentially positive effect on consumption.

In sum, it has been demonstrated that local economic development has not come as a result of urban planning by the local government and the private sector. If anything, it was rather a quasi-governmental body in the form of SSNIT joining other private sector actors/investors. And the role of the chiefs/local opinion leaders (in the development of the West Hills Mall) came in an informal or rather organic arrangement. Yet, giving effect to the suggestion from the chiefs seem to have led to a major impact on the staff and by extension the local communities within which the mall is situated. It has led to a situation where most of the staff live in the local communities as opposed to the situation at Accra Mall where staff come from across the city. This situation has likely given a boost to local markets and the housing market within the communities around West Hills.

### **7.3 Mall sites as contested socio-economic spaces**

Rodgers (2009:8/9) argues that:

[T]he [urban growth machine] thesis relies fundamentally on place as a concept, and particularly how place becomes commodified... Place is defined here in a quite particular way: as the outcome of social activities and constructions seeking to stake out a living, or otherwise a monetary return, from a piece of land. Therefore, there is a fundamental conflict over urban places... Individuals or groups seeking exchange value hope to generate some form of rent from real estate... coalitions of narrower individuals and organizations... are oriented toward exchange values... the growth machine thesis posits exchange value as a product of concerted activities on the part of various actors to make money off real estate.

In this sub-section, I discuss three types of contest over the mall's socio-economic space. As per Rodgers (2009), the contestations are largely for the purpose of exacting economic value from mall sites. I consider contest at the development/planning phase and operation phase. At the development/planning phase, I look at how the two malls contested or collaborated with

other interest groups to succeed with their vision. At the operation phase, I discuss how mall operators side-step or negotiate with city authorities to pay less revenue, as well as how the informal sector also attempts to capture a share of the market.

As sites of contested socio-economic spaces, in Ghana, mall sites immediately raise concerns or attract the attention of several interest groups from the outset, who contest over the land right/ownership, sometimes before the start of construction. The land question in Ghana, especially Accra, has been highlighted as one major drawback to the nation's competitiveness in the *Global Competitiveness Report*. Such contests are not peculiar for mall developers alone. Gillespie (2015) reports of contest over the lands used for the luxury African Union village housing built in 2007. Indeed, the problem of land 'guards'<sup>93</sup> is one such problem confronting private developers in Accra (Darkwa and Attuquayefio, 2012). Yet, how mall developers addressed this issue may provide interesting lessons for future developers and academics, as well as policymakers who continue to grapple with solutions to the land question within Ghana's developmental space.

With respect to Accra Mall, the main challenge came from the allodial<sup>94</sup> land owners who mounted a challenge against developers on the basis that the government needed to give back the land to them if the originally intended purpose was not adhered to. But the director of Greater Accra Regional Town and Country Planning Department indicated that this is a wrong interpretation of the law by allodial land owners on the basis that the clause refers to where compensation was not paid. The Accra Mall lands were part of the airport acquisition in the colonial era where compensation was duly paid. That notwithstanding the allodial land owners

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<sup>93</sup> Land guards are self-styled protectors of (private) lands intended for development in Ghana. They use unorthodox and sometimes illegal methods in protecting lands from encroachers. Their activities is much pronounced in Accra than any Ghanaian city

<sup>94</sup> Allodial land owners are indigenous people who may possess freehold title to a native land by reason of inheritance

mounted a legal challenge and sought a court injunction on the development until the land ownership question was addressed.

Typically, for small individual projects in Accra, developers may rather deal with allodial owners who have constituted themselves into land guards. According to Darkwa and Attuquayefio (2012:146) these land guards see themselves as ‘protect[ors] of the communal inheritance’, in this case ‘their’ land. Other land guards also mount such challenge to developers to extort money from them (ibid:147). In both cases, among others, Darkwa and Attuquayefio (2012) suggest land guards exploit a lapse in property rights within rapid urbanisation to ensure their socio-economic survival. In these cases, they do not, ordinarily, resort to the courts but fight developers with all sorts of implements: machetes, clubs, fists, and sometimes guns.

The question then is why would the allodial owners of the Accra Mall rather mount a legal challenge in court? During the Kufuor administration several allodial owners across parts of the country, including Accra, raised issues with previously acquired state lands where compensation was not paid. The state released such lands back to the allodial owners. Hence, while Accra Mall’s allodial land owners need to be praised for adopting a civil approach to press their claims, the hypothesis I adduce are two. Either i) they were very sure of their ownership of the land and unfair treatment by the state which sold ‘their’ land to developers, or ii) once they perceived this to be a large foreign investment development, they stand to gain large sums of money, if successful, through a re-sale of the land or some other arrangement/negotiations.

According to the local architect, the developers petitioned the court that due to the nature of the project every delay involves substantial cost, as such, if the claimants were sure of their case, they should submit a surety (of money) and a bond that if they lose their case, developers

shall use the surety to offset the cost occasioned by the delay. The allodial owners refused to progress further with the case when the judge confronted them with these conditions. This therefore rules out the option that the state erred in releasing the land to private developers. According to both the local architect and the Owusu-Akyaws, the land was legally acquired and had been re-zoned by the state to a mixed-use (commercial/industrial) site. To stop extra-legal disturbance of the work therefore, according to the architect, Owusu-Akyaw found some money for them. He indicated that in the recent extension the mall is trying to do the same group have shown up.

*There are always frivolous injunctions that come when they see the scale of the project. So such an injunction came up but it was frivolous from the start. I mean, it is the same people. Once you start anything along that they will show up and their nuisance [...], Mr. Owusu-Akyaw's words were, they do these things for their nuisance value. They become a nuisance and then you call them aside and then settle them with something to go away. But they showed up and recently in the extension that [...], we hoarded off the site for the extension, they showed up. There is even a small contempt of court case which was from them. That kind of thing. But these things, we know them. They will always happen. (Local Architect, Accra Mall, Nov., 2016).*

In the case of West Hills Mall, it was not the allodial owners but rather informal scrap dealers and traders who had erected stalls and other shelters within which they operated their businesses. Private estate developers who also previously were allocated some of the mall lands by SSNIT also contested with them. SSNIT re-possessed these lands because they had not been developed. SSNIT indicated that local shop owners in the area raised concerns about the mall swaying their customers to patronise shops in the mall. According to SSNIT, the estate developers were duly compensated whilst the informal workers and local shop owners were dealt with through dialogues and open public discussions, etc. leading to final eviction from the land. As indicated, since SSNIT was involved with this project, allodial owners, i.e. the chiefs in this case, rather made a plea for mall operators to employ local community people

during such dialogues. On whether West Hills is still grappling with some of these interest groups, SSNIT indicated that *“Yes! Some estates developers are still battling with SSNIT for lands they initially rejected because their values have significantly appreciated, with the siting of the mall”* (December, 2016).

Though they did not explain the nature of such contestation, it is most likely a legal battle with SSNIT. The land values at the West Hills area has shot up and as such estate developers have taken advantage to provide middle class accommodation, as discussed in Section 7.2 above.

It follows to reason that the experiences from Accra Mall’s development most likely informed the developers of West Hills on how to proceed as far as such community and local people engagement is concerned. As a result, a number of the challenges Accra Mall grappled with were better resolved in West Hills, including even the issue of transportation/vehicular access to and from the mall. Yet, it is deducible that the neoliberal turn in the city has led to situations where some previous occupants (or encroachers) of the land have had to lose their livelihood or means to livelihoods. It is not clear what alternative arrangements have been made for those dis-enfranchised by the developments. Since this is outside the scope of this study, it would be interesting to follow up on future research to establish the socio-economic situation of, especially, the disenfranchised informal workers of the West Hills’ land.

During operation period, again, Accra Mall’s local government jurisdiction has undergone changes due to central government creation of new local government areas. Local government officials indicate that usually business operators who find themselves on the borderline between two local government areas opt towards where they pay lower taxes. In 2008, when the Ledzokuku Krowo Municipal Assembly (LeKMA) was carved out of Accra Metropolitan Assembly (AMA), Accra Mall came under LeKMA. Accra Mall was just on the border between the two. Then in 2012, La Dadekopon Municipal Assembly (LaDMA) was also carved

out of AMA and the mall came on the border between AMA and LaDMA. This resulted in disputes between AMA, LeKMA and LaDMA on who has jurisdiction over the mall within the changing boundaries of the local governments at various times as pointed out by planning officers.

*What I know of is that... four [malls] are located in four local authorities... Then Accra Mall is in [...] Hmm! There is a contest between La Dadekopon and AMA as to which one has jurisdiction over them. (National Town Planning Officer, Dec., 2016)*

*Accra Mall is no longer under Accra Metropolitan Assembly (AMA) jurisdiction... It's now under Ledzokuku Krowo Municipal Assembly (LeKMA)... I am aware there is some sort of dispute between Ledzokuku and La Dadekotopon Municipal (LaDMA) as to who actually has control over Accra Mall (Laughter). Because LeKMA and LaDMA were all originally part of AMA and then LeKMA was carved out to be a municipality and then later, I think 2012 LaDMA also carved out of AMA and now there is some sort of dispute as to who controls Accra Mall, between those 2 districts... Yea; the revenue, the business permits and everything that comes with it [goes to the assembly that has jurisdiction] (Deputy Director, AMA Town and Country Planning Department; Dec., 2016)*

At the time of the field study, LaDMA had control over the mall. Information indicated that AMA's taxes are a bit higher than other local governments in Accra and as such 'boundary' business operators may opt out of AMA control.

West Hills, however, has not been affected and continues to remain under the Ga South Municipal Assembly (GSMA) created in 2012. Officials of GSMA indicated that through negotiation they have reduced the amount of local government taxes for their clients including West Hills. The argument is that the mall was only beginning to get established as a business presence and so the local government was requested to consider a reduction in the tax burden. This information could not be confirmed from West Hills though<sup>95</sup>. This is also consistent with the literature, where as reported by scholars (Knox and McCarthy, 202; Storper et al., 2015),

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<sup>95</sup>There was no response to email sent for confirmation from West Hills operators

local governments adopt a range of tax rebates and tax holidays for new businesses. Given that it reduces the financial burden on local businesses, it enhances the competitiveness of localities as means of attracting businesses. However, the literature's position (Harvey, 1989b; Knox and McCarthy, 202; Storper et al., 2015) has to do with a pre-planned, front-loading process where incentives are laid out as a means of attraction. Harvey (1989b:8) indicates that 'local costs may be reduced by subsidies (tax breaks, cheap credit). Hardly any large-scale development now occurs without the local government... offering substantial package of aid and assistance as inducements'. The West Hills' experience differs in the sense of being an '*in-situ*' incentive process. As such this might be more adhoc or informal/organic arrangement. Indeed, the Ghanaian law (Act 462; Sections 94-96) grants discretionary powers to local governments to set and establish levies as it deems appropriate. It seems mall operators also benefit from this discretionary power through either direct negotiation or side-stepping to join a less expensive local government areas. Either way, this situation tends to reinforce Harvey's (1989b:12) observation with urban entrepreneurialism projects that 'since capital tends to be more rather than less mobile..., it follows that local [government] subsidies to capital will likely increase while local provision for the under-privileged will diminish, producing greater polarisation in the social distribution of real income'.

A review of recent base-map indicates that Accra Mall is within LaDMA's jurisdiction and no information was obtained to the effect that the mall on its own volition opted to join LaDMA. However, other maps show inconsistent boundaries. Owusu (2015) suggests that a number of maps may be produced until the final one in government gazette comes out. This demonstrates that boundaries could be contested until finally agreed upon. The local government boundaries themselves are created based on electoral boundaries which, according to city authorities, are blurred on the ground. Therefore, it is not surprising for boundary businesses to exploit such ambiguities to their benefits. The point, however, is that such existing ambiguities and

disparities existing within the local government jurisdiction lead to situations where the expected revenues to the state is not optimised.

Finally, another area of socio-economic contest over the mall site may be seen in the co-location of informal economic sites close to mall sites, which have been alluded to by Oteng-Ababio and Arthur (2015). Informal operators who deal in various items (food, clothes, shoes, groceries, etc.) similar to those of the shops in the malls have established their businesses closer to the mall sites. This is much more prominent at Accra Mall. Clearly, informal operators are targeting lower income customers who visit the malls but are not able to afford the goods in the malls. At the West Hills, except for taxi operators, informal operators are not close to the vicinity of the mall, a situation which is due to the mall's siting and configuration in relation to the road network. Obviously, these informal commercial outposts may sway customers from patronising mall shops that have very low prices. As noted in Chapter Six, marketing managers of both malls indicated that some customers feel intimidated by the mall's sophistication. These customers may feel less confident to purchase from the shops once they have even mustered courage to enter the malls. Additionally, the informal operators use various inviting tactics, including dissuading customers from purchasing from the malls on the basis that the items in the malls are expensive. They play music, ring bells, whistle or call passers-by to "buy it cheap" from them instead of the malls' shops. This invokes Miles and Paddison's (1998) re-territorialising of the urban space by citizens who may be disenfranchised by globalisation. Whilst this may be similar in essence to Miles and Paddison's theorisation, this obviously is not an attempt to capture the physical space, but the potential economic benefit that may otherwise accrue to mall owners.

In sum, given the socio-economic benefits of malls, they have become a site of contestations between various interest groups all of whom seek to extract some economic benefits. It will be argued that majority of all the interest groups to the contest win, yet the quality of the victory depends on the strategy of the particular interest group.

## **Conclusion**

The chapter explored economic impact of malls where, framing it under local content in mall development, it discussed wealth creation potential of the malls to local citizens and the city. I argued that since local participation is low, the wealth creation benefit to the city and its citizens are also low. This notwithstanding, I could not secure empirical revenue data from either the malls or the Ghana Revenue Authority to help in the analysis. However, I identified other potential sources where citizens could, and in fact, use to secure more economic benefits such as indirect job creation including local producers supplying shops with local produce, local entrepreneurs renting corridor spaces in malls or buying shelf space in the shops to sell their products. It is important to underscore however that such increased benefits can happen if policymakers take pragmatic steps in this direction. One of such may be the promulgation of a local content policy on malls, which I advocate later in Chapter Eight.

The chapter also argued that local economic development (LED) could be achieved not through a series of programmatic steps through the leadership of the local government, as prescribed in the literature, but through community opinion leaders such as chiefs who seek the welfare of their citizens. This reveals that non-orthodox systems of enhancing local economies is possible and such processes may sometimes be more fortuitous. Yet this does not negate the role of planning. It demonstrates, however, the need for increased participatory approach in the planning and development processes relating to localities within cities.

Finally, I also highlighted the various stakeholders/interest groups who might have been disenfranchised by the mall's development and how some of them are still contesting to appropriate some of the economic benefits arising therefrom. I have argued that in essence, apart from the informal scrap dealers who occupied the West Hills site and who this study did not focus on, other interest groups such as the informal operators close to the mall vicinities are, to some degree, benefiting from the presence of the mall, including the local governments who exercise jurisdiction. Even the allodial land owners, especially in Accra Mall's case also benefited because they were *settle[d]... with something to go away*, while for West Hills, appeal by chiefs has led to a relatively more robust local economic development impact.

Overall, the chapter has demonstrated the economic impact of the malls on the city and surmised that a lot more could be achieved if pragmatic steps are taken by stakeholders and policymakers. In the next chapter, I explore the labour and employment impact of the malls.

## CHAPTER EIGHT

### LABOUR AND EMPLOYMENT IMPACTS OF ACCRA'S MALLS

#### **Introduction**

Economic development rationalisations attendant to the entrepreneurial and competitive cities framework lean toward a situation where citizens ultimately benefit or should benefit from the processes of making cities competitive (Harvey, 1989b; Jessop, 1997; Hubbard and Hall, 1998; WBG, 2015). This chapter therefore focuses on two micro-economic development impact of malls: employment and labour. While I refrain from detailed (legal) definitions of labour and employment, suffice it to note that labour generally refers to work in which the worker does not necessarily earn wages, though some sort of benefit (e.g. skill development, etc.) may accrue to the worker, and employment, on the other hand, is necessarily governed by legal relations in which the employee receives wages for work done (Befort, 2001). In both cases, though, the employer has a duty of care for the employee (Befort, 2001; Tarantolo, 2006). This notwithstanding, globalisation presently is re-structuring such duty of care legal expectations (Stone, 2005). Hence, in this study, I construe labour as the overarching term for work while employment is a category or subset of labour. I therefore tend to use the terms interchangeably, partly because in Accra's malls, both labour and employment are evident where some staff do not earn income. Consequently, the objective of this chapter is to investigate the number of jobs that have been created by the malls and the quality of these jobs. I am also interested in investigating the extent to which the jobs created reduce poverty and enable wealth creation for the malls' staff. Hence, the key questions this chapter seeks to answer are:

- *What are the impact of the malls on labour and employment generation?*
- *Are the investments in shopping malls creating enough secure jobs for urban residents?*

As studied by Aryeetey (2005), and also shown in Chapter Four, the neoliberal era brought increased foreign investment in several sectors, including the retail sector. This has contributed to overall economic growth in Ghana (ibid.). However, there is a debate among scholars in urban geography and other disciplines that economic growth (at the national level) do not necessarily translate into people's welfare (at the local level). The ILO (2015:5) also posits that too many countries have experienced jobless economic growth since the 2008 financial crisis and that a lack of decent jobs is not sustainable. This is particularly the case with sub-Saharan African cities (Potts, 2012) such as Accra. One argument is that while macro-economic indicators show positive trends, sections of the (African) societies may still be very poor with little or no access to opportunities, services and income (Langevang, 2008; Sundarem et al., 2011; Potts, 2012; Obeng-Odoom, 2015). Nevertheless, African governments continue to pursue liberalisation policies, including attracting foreign investments, since these are seen as sure ways of creating employment for their people.

According to Gooptu (2009), neoliberalism led to a roll back of the state in the labour market such that welfare protection for employees got diminished or curtailed across the world (see also Peck and Tickell, 2002). This meant, among others and especially in the global South, the need for downsizing the public sector, ostensibly to make it more efficient. Hence, in Ghana, there was retrenchment of public sector workers and privatisation of state-owned enterprises (ActionAid, 2010) as well as removal of subsidies in education, agriculture, health and other sectors of the national economy.

As such, the public sector, as a veritable avenue for employment, became increasingly diminished. Removal of subsidies meant diminished productivity in key economic sectors especially where the private sector did not expand quickly within a context of growing population, as found in several global South countries (Amsden, 2010). The resultant effect is

increasing unemployment and poverty (Topalova, 2006; Amsden, 2010; Meagher et al., 2016) such that workers in the global South are thought to be in a sort of ‘adverse incorporation’ into the global economy, ‘defined as inclusion on worse terms’ (Meagher et al., 2016:472). Meagher et al. (2016:472) posit that ‘the central issue [under neoliberalism] is not just the presence or absence to the global economy, but the economic and power relations embedded in those connections’.

Labour has become largely subservient to capital where the bargaining power of organised labour has been broken through the weakening of trade unions (Bardhan, 2007:145). There has therefore arisen flexibilisation of jobs where ‘firms no longer use internal labour markets or implicitly promise employees lifetime job security, but rather seek flexible employment relations that permit them to increase or diminish their workforce, reassign and redeploy employees with ease’ (Stone, 2005:1). Labour has, as a result, become more precarious and insecure (Gooptu, 2009).

In the midst of labour insecurity, individuals tend to seek individualised solutions to structurally- or systematically-generated problems in the economy and the workplace (Gooptu, 2009:46). Such individualised solution may include exploring alternative sources of support/welfare (to mediate economic challenges) including from religious circles, friends, elders/influential people in societies, etc. (Langevang, 2008). Whilst in one sense, Gooptu (2009:46) suggests the cause to be the ‘absence of public policy measures’, I will demonstrate that in Ghana, it might not only be the absence of public policy but the presence of policy that do not go far enough.

In Accra, the increased investments, particularly in the retail sector, has led to new employment opportunities for citizens (Grant, 2009; Hobden, 2014, 2015). But, questions are raised about the kind of employment created. For instance, Langevang (2008: 2045) argues that the neoliberal reforms in Ghana has contributed to make Accra’s youth’s ‘pathways to responsible

life increasingly precarious'. This is because young people's access to employment are narrowed. Besides they are not guaranteed gainful employment<sup>96</sup> for any reasonable length of time, even where they could secure jobs. These are due to the 'economic hardships and uncertainties' unleashed on Accra's urban space by the reforms (ibid). Yet, without jobs, the youth are open to 'risky behaviours' that could threaten socio-political foundations of societies (Urdal, 2006; WDR, 2007). The question then is what is the volume of jobs created and what is its impact on the unemployment rate? And what are the perception of citizens, including city authorities and the staff themselves, regarding these jobs? What kind of jobs do Accra's malls create?

According to the GSS (2014) the unemployment rate in Ghana is 5.2 percent while America's CIA (2015) peg it at 11.9 percent. That for Greater Accra Region (GAR) is given as 7.2 percent (GSS, 2012). The Greater Accra Metropolitan Area (GAMA) has the highest unemployment rate of 7.4 percent compared to all urban areas in Ghana. The economically active population for GAR is 1,867,977 (GSS, 2012) giving an unemployed population of about 134,494. GAMA make up 83.6 percent of the population of the GAR, excluding Tema Municipal Area (TMA) and two rural districts (GSS, 2012). The unemployment figure for GAMA is estimated to be about 112,437. Thus, the unemployed figure can be assumed to be between 100,000 and 130,000.

Furthermore, are the employees adequately prepared for the sort of jobs provided by the malls? According to Kilimani (2017:24) there is a high level of unemployment among the highly educated youth of sub-Saharan Africa whilst, at the same time, firms complain of lack of qualified personnel. Yet, Hobden (2015) found that most of the jobs in Accra Mall go to the

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<sup>96</sup> Gainful employment is typically associated with employees, who by virtue of their (tertiary level) education and skills, have a regular paid jobs, as a part- or full-time (<http://www.businessdictionary.com/definition/gainful-employment.html>); Accessed: 5 May, 2018. see also Kantrowitch, 2010)

youth of the city. Do malls in Accra suffer from labour supply deficiency? And how is labour being used in the malls? These questions will be explored through an analysis of the quantity and quality of jobs that have been created, which will be understood, among others, in terms of how labour is being used in the malls.

I make three main arguments in this chapter. Firstly, I argue that although a number of jobs may have been created (and these are well targeted at the demographic group that needs jobs most), new jobs may not be enough to produce significant impact on the metropolitan unemployment rate. Secondly, whilst the malls may be fulfilling the poverty reduction goal of the competitive/entrepreneurial cities framework, they fail on wealth creation. This is on account of the generally low salary levels and welfare packages, which, particularly for the low educated staff, tend to severely constrain ability to save and create wealth. Even so, it is also interesting to highlight that though Accra Mall tends to have relatively higher salary levels, yet because the staff tend to have higher expenditure levels their welfare tends to be further aggravated, as indicated in Chapter Seven. This is because they tend to reside further away from the mall on account of higher property values of the mall's immediate communities. This is a case of how land-use patterns can shape urban workers' socio-economic situation (Savini and Aalbers, 2016). Finally, I argue that the malls hold wealth generating economic potential even beyond the local and the city economies, however, without a national policy on mall operation within the retail sector, as it currently pertains, these cannot be realised.

The chapter is divided into two sections. The first part focuses on employment and labour use in the malls whilst the second part focuses on wealth creation for staff. The chapter concludes by recommending a local content policy or law to optimise the economic benefits from malls. Such a policy may include the need for labour union within malls and targeted skills

development, such that staff could learn new skills if they choose. This is likely to help with staff's upward social mobility, even after leaving the mall jobs.

## **8.1 Employment and Labour in Accra's Malls**

To assess the extent to which Accra's malls hold economic potential for the city and its residents, I explore the case study malls as potential catalysts for economic development by focusing on two factors: i) malls as sources of employment and job creation, and ii) labour and employee welfare.

### **i. Malls as Sources of Employment and Job Creation**

Around the world, particularly in the global South, job-creation potential and overall economic benefits of shopping malls are well documented; in Chile (Salcedo, 2003), India (Kalirijan and Singh, 2009; Gooptu, 2009), South Africa (Jogee and Callaghan, 2014) and elsewhere. This sub-section investigates the volume of jobs created, who are the target demographic groups, and how significant the jobs are in helping to reduce unemployment in the metropolitan area.

In Ghana, many people see shopping malls as avenues for job creation and growing the local economy (Oteng-Ababio and Arthur, 2015). This view is held widely by city authorities, professionals and other officials, some of whom call for measures to ensure their sustainability.

*I think the malls are doing something. At least when I walk into the mall and I see all the young people who, at least, are working: the attendants, the sales attendants; at least, I see it has generated some employment to some of our youth. (Deputy Director, Town and Country Planning Office, Accra Metropolitan Assembly; December, 2016).*

*Yes! That [West Hills Mall] is the biggest... Accra Mall is doing an extension now, to add a bit more space... to make it bigger... Of course, you see... the fact that they provide jobs and things like that, it must be in the city's interest to ensure that it works! (Engineer Quansah, Immediate Past President, Ghana Institution of Engineers/Traffic Engineer/Consultant to the Malls; Oct. 2016)*

Since entering Accra, malls have become new sources of employment. Yet, in Ghana, the quantity and quality of jobs created demand careful scrutiny. This is on the basis that malls have developed during the time of Ghana's high economic growth. But scholars (Alagidede et al., 2013; Aryeetey and Baah-Boateng; 2016) agree that job creation and employment growth in Ghana have been much slower than economic growth over the last fifteen years. Alagidede et al. (2013) posit that in Ghana the service sector including finance, retail, etc. are part of the low labour intensive sectors, employing only few people and partly accounts for the low employment growth.

As far as the operation stage is concerned, in both malls, operators indicated that though they do not collect employee information from shops, one mall creates about 1000 direct<sup>97</sup> and up to 1500 indirect jobs. Accra Mall has about 64 shops whilst West Hills has about 65. Of the 66 managers (across the two malls) who filled out the managers' questionnaires, those from the 37 shops in Accra Mall employ 677 people whilst the 29 shops in West Hills employ 523. Anecdotal evidence suggests that Accra Mall's Shoprite, which opted out of the survey, employs between 120 and 200 people. Additionally, staff in the banks within the malls were not included in the survey questionnaire. Thus, 1000 staff seems to be a more likely estimate of direct jobs each mall has created. This is consistent with Oteng-Ababio and Arthur's (2015:163) assertion that Accra Mall employees increased from about 275 in 2010 to 800 in 2013. But what quantity of these jobs are new (for first time workers), and what effect does this have on the unemployment rate?

Across Ghana, unemployment is highest amongst the 15-25 (youth) age group, at 10.9 percent (GSS, 2014). Reasons include the lack of enough jobs to absorb this age group or skills mismatch (Kilimani, 2008; Betcherman and Khan, 2015) arising from low education levels. Hence,

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<sup>97</sup> Direct jobs refers to people directly working in the malls as employees

many youth explore alternative tactics through street trading and hawking to survive the harsh economic challenges whilst some engage in anti-social vices (Langevang, 2008). Langevang (2008:2040) further indicates that Accra's youth refer to this survival/coping strategies as 'managing' and that some of this 'management strategies' are illegal. She views these 'management strategies' as part of the processes of youth social navigation. It is important, however, to distinguish between those with at least secondary education and those with less than secondary education within this group.

Aryeetey and Baah-Boateng (2016) indicate that unemployment in Ghana is highest amongst secondary school graduates, aged 17 years and older, than the less educated because the secondary school graduates find informal sector activities somewhat demeaning to their educated status. On the other hand, the less educated may engage in informal ventures (ibid). Indeed, in the questionnaire survey for staff, I found that none of the staff is uneducated, i.e without even basic education. Most are secondary school graduates: 3.8 percent were basic school<sup>98</sup> graduates, 56.4 percent secondary school, 35.4 percent tertiary and 4.4 percent indicated other qualification.

The current education structure in Ghana is based on 6-3-3-4 system, which implies an individual spends 6 years in primary school, 3 years each in junior and senior secondary schools and 4 years in a post-secondary: a university, polytechnic or other tertiary institution (Baah-Boateng and Baffour-Awuah, 2015). According to Baah-Boateng and Baffour-Awuah (2015:4) for 'those with a secondary education or better, the quality of skills acquired in school relative to what the economy requires is... a challenge'. They argue that secondary schools provide semi-skill (or middle level skill) manpower while tertiary education are meant to equip graduates with high-level skills for the job market. Yet, due to a number of reasons, such as

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<sup>98</sup> Basic school in Ghana includes primary and junior secondary schools

inadequate resources, teacher motivation as well as over-emphasis on grammar, among others, secondary graduates tend exhibit deficiencies in their expected semi-skills acquisition (ibid). It would therefore be surmised that, given the structure of the Ghanaian secondary education, which is not meant to be terminal, it does not equip graduates with high level employable skills, beyond numeracy and literacy, needed by industry to be gainfully employed or self-employed.

Mall jobs do not require special skills<sup>99</sup> (Storper et al. 2015). For most young educated people also, mall jobs are associated with modern lifestyles which they aspire to (Gooptu, 2009). On that score, it is argued, the mall jobs seem well tailored to secondary school graduates who may not possess any special skill.

Mall employment target predominantly the youth as evidenced by the age distribution of both staff and managers. The 17-25 year group represent 53.7% of the staff. Several staff who work in the food courts indicated that they took the jobs to make money in order to continue their education after secondary school. A 19 year old girl in one of the anchor shops at West Hills said:

*I live with my parents. After completing my [secondary] education, whilst waiting for my results, I want to get something doing before going back to school.*

Asked what his family and friends think about his job, another staff at a food court said: “*They feel you are no more a liability*”. Given that most of the employees (96.6 percent) are between 17 and 35 years, it would therefore be argued that malls have created an outlet for the youth who would otherwise be unemployed and engaging in risky behaviours (WDR, 2007).

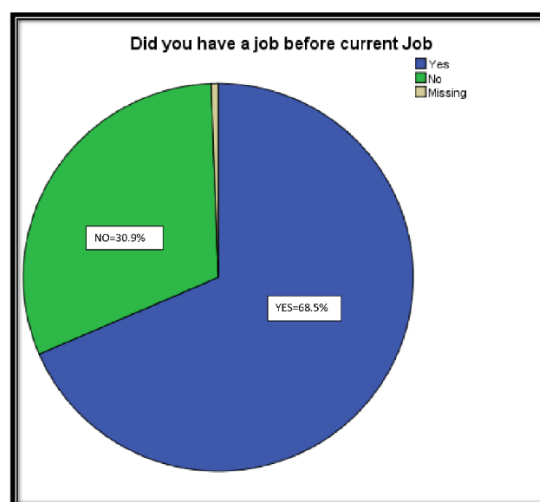
That young people are using mall employment to secure money to continue their education suggests that these youth desire to engage their time and future profitably. Gooptu’s (2009:46) study of Indian shopping mall staff identified young people who, due to structural changes in

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<sup>99</sup> 54.3% of staff agrees that no special skill is needed to work in the mall.

the labour market occasioned by neoliberalism, have ‘cultivate[ed] enterprising personality traits’ including training and skills acquisition, among others. Gooptu (2009) suggests that the pull back of the state from the labour market has resulted in a curtailment or shrink of employment welfare (for labour) and consequently a fragmented labour front tend to fight for their own individualised welfare. In Ghana, a combination of neoliberal reforms, long run economic hardships and socio-cultural conditions have led to citizens resorting to social networks (churches, families and acquaintances) as alternative welfare supports (Langevang, 2008). It is, however, evident that for several young people, such as the shopping mall staff in Accra, they can no longer view these alternative sources as sustainable. The response that getting a job in the mall no longer makes you a “*liability*” to your family suggests that the family support has a limit and young people are therefore increasingly relying on mall jobs as a means of building capital for future training, education or job.

Additionally, of the 343 respondents to the staff questionnaires, about 31 percent, indicated that they did not have a job before their employment in the mall whilst the rest (69 percent) were previously employed (Fig. 8.1).



**Figure 8. 1:** New Jobs Created

There are currently seven shopping malls in the city. Recalling that the number of unemployed people are about 100,000 in the Greater Accra Metropolitan Area (GAMA), thirty-one percent (direct) new jobs (Fig. 8.1) translates to only about 2 percent of the number of unemployment. Yet, those who changed from different jobs amount to more than twice the new jobs created (Fig. 8.1). This situation invokes Krumholz's (1999) (cited in Rachmawati, 2016:42) argument that urban economic development is a 'zero-sum gain'. Jobs gained in one side of the urban economy equals jobs lost at another. As such the urban/national economy does not experience any material growth in the employment rate. Other scholars (Bartik, 2012:547; Storper et al. 2015:116) also explain that total jobs created in a locality can, in fact lower the per capita income if these lead to lower salaries/wages for employees. This could ultimately lead to, not only decreased consumption but also, reduced savings and hence lower wealth creation. In the next section, I will show that, on average, with the exception of tertiary graduates in West Hills, all those who relocated jobs to work in the malls ended up with relatively lower salaries than in previous jobs.

Between the two malls, though, West Hills represents the mall that has highest percentage (34.1% versus 28.2%) of new jobs created (Table 8.1). It may thus be concluded that its location has indeed provided an outlet for the unemployed within the various communities thus further grounding the observation that it has the strongest connectivity to the local communities and higher local economic development impact, as discussed in Chapter Seven.

**Table 8.1:** New Jobs Created by Individual Malls

		Did you have a job before current Job		Total
		Yes	No	
Accra Mall				174
	% of respondents	71.8%	28.2%	100.0%
West Hills				167
	% respondents	65.9%	34.1%	100.0%
Both Malls*	Total Count	235	106	341
	% of respondents	68.9%	31.1%	100.0%

(\* One person from each mall didn't answer the Question)

That said, indirect jobs represent alternative modes by which additional jobs may be created for people to derive additional benefits from the malls. Indirect jobs involve suppliers of products such as foodstuff to shops like the anchors. As indicated in Chapter Seven, some anchor tenants such as Shoprite, have built a base of local suppliers/entrepreneurs for supply of some of their products, such as grocery and beverages, and even some imported products are now sub-contracted to local entrepreneurs. This is a departure from earlier practice, according to mall operators, when virtually everything had to be shipped from South Africa and elsewhere. Another official at Achimota Retail Centre also corroborated that anchor tenants are collaborating with local farmers.

*Shoprite will do the due diligence and buy vegetables that are green label certified [from local farmers]. (Mark Boakye, Center Manager, Achimota Retail Center; March, 2017).*

Though it is obvious that the intention is to meet the business strategies and visions of the shops (including reducing transportation cost, risk, and product delivery time) these strategies are helping to create indirect jobs as well as building local capacity. These initiatives are considered to be useful in local economic development aimed at poverty alleviation (Weiss, 2005). Against a backdrop that the agricultural sector is still the largest employer in Ghana

accounting for some 50 percent of all employment (Aryeetey, 2005; Aryeetey and Baah-Boateng, 2016), such initiatives, if developed into a well-rounded policy, are likely to have significant impact on poverty alleviation and the unemployment situation.

However, thirty percent of new jobs created per mall is impressive and represents a positive step in terms of reducing unemployment. The jobs are also well targeted in terms of their location (within GAMA) and demographic group but the aggregate effect on city-wide unemployment rate is insignificant. Again, given that several industry practitioners (including developers, facility managers and market researchers/experts) take the view the Accra retail market is now saturated, it is doubtful substantial additional new jobs will be created anytime soon by the existing malls that would make a significant impact on the city's unemployment rate. The indirect jobs represent an important window, therefore, where policymakers may focus to create additional employment benefits for the city and the country.

## **ii. Use of Labor and Employee Welfare**

The decade of the 2000s saw increased economic growth in many African countries leading, among others, to reduction in poverty levels across the continent, especially for those living in extreme poverty, earning from \$0-1.25/day (AfDB, 2012; Potts, 2012). Ghana was one of such countries. However, as Potts (2012) asserts, poverty continues to thrive in African cities due not only to the proliferation of informalities but also the proliferation of low wages across the frontiers of formal urban economies in Africa.

In this sub-section, I argue that staff salaries are not based on any particular standard but the minimum wage. I will also demonstrate that wages of most staff are so low that they are barely surviving and argue that the wage levels only lift staff off the extreme poverty level and still leave them in poverty. In other words, whilst the jobs fulfil poverty alleviation objective of the entrepreneurial/competitive cities concept (WBG, 2015), it defeats wealth creation objective. I

will highlight staff working conditions (i.e. remuneration and welfare), the type of labour employed, how some of them get employed, aspirations and the motivation for working in the malls. I will then theorise why low wages persist in the malls.

I should, however, point out that this section focuses more on low-wage staff which includes the shop assistants, cleaners, security staff, etc. and to an extent supervisors. This is because other staff such as directors/owners, managers, supervisors, etc. are usually the highest earning staff in the shops, earning in several instances about thrice that of the low income staff. They also usually have relatively better welfare packages. For instance, managers reported the highest paid workers' roles are managers (71.8 percent), supervisors (15.1 percent) and Others [medics, technical support, jewellers, shop assistants] (13.2 percent) with mean monthly salary of GHC1487.7; median= GHC1200; and mode=1500. Additionally, such staff are minority amongst the mall workers.

### ***Remuneration and welfare***

There is a long standing believe that salary levels in most African countries, including Ghana, are generally low, especially for less educated working class people (Aryeetey, 2005; Potts, 2012; Bhorat et al., 2013; Aryeetey and Baa-Boateng, 2016; Bhorat et al., 2017). Such low salaries constrain savings and continue to perpetuate poverty. Amongst reasons adduced for the persistence of low salaries includes the level of the minimum wage. In many African countries, such as Ghana, governments set the daily minimum wage (Bhorat et al., 2017). Presently, the daily minimum wage in Ghana is only GHC9.6<sup>100</sup> (i.e. about \$2.13<sup>101</sup>). Thus, a person is paid, at the minimum, an amount between GHC220 and 300/month (about \$50-67/month). Clearly, the level is very low, only barely above the extreme poverty level of about

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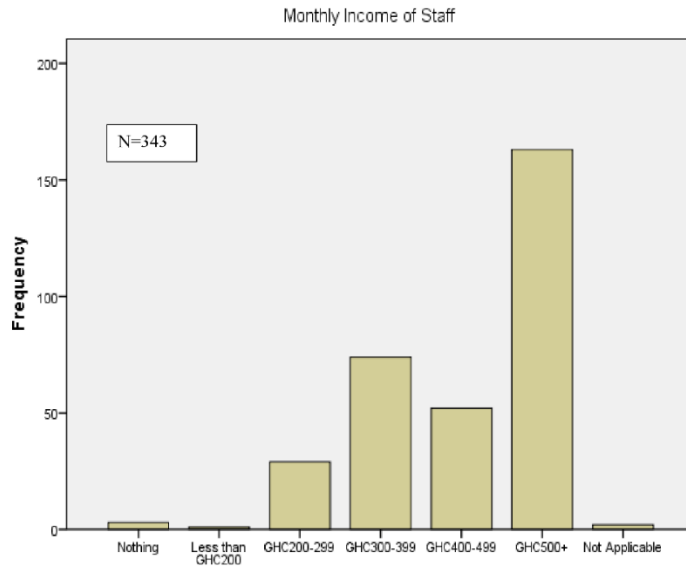
<sup>100</sup> (<https://www.graphic.com.gh/news/general-news/minimum-wage-goes-up-to-gh-9-60-from-jan-1.html>;

Accessed: February 12, 2018)

<sup>101</sup>In February 2017, the exchange rate was \$1(US)~GHC4.5

GHC169/month. Historically, this low level has been a concern for workers' associations, as well as scholars. According to Herbst (1993:63), the Employers Association in Ghana indicated (in the 1980s) that the minimum wage is 'so low that most employers... are already paying it'. Jones (1997) argues that the minimum wage has a significant negative impact on formal sector employment. Low salary levels are a disincentive to young prospective workers who tend to move to non-formal sectors where they think they can earn higher.

The low-level salaries do not persist only in the public sectors. Aryeetey (2005) agrees that low level salaries exist both in the private and public sectors which led to decline in formal sector jobs in an increasingly open economy between 1991 and 2000. The position of low wage levels is confirmed by this study. Specifically, it was found out that some nine percent of the staff were within the minimum income range, earning up to GHC299/month. Nearly 23 percent earn between GHC300 and 399/month whilst about 16 percent earn between GHC400-499/month and a little more than 50 percent earned GHC500 or above (Fig. 8.2). The average salary range for the staff was found to be within the GHC400-499 range, around GHC410, which is somewhat consistent with manager's reported least paid staff's salary (mean=GHC460.3, median=GHC450; mode=GHC400; standard deviation=GHC172.4; standard error=GHC25.15).



**Figure 8. 2: Monthly Income of Staff**

That said, it needs also to be pointed out, however, that generally there are very wide variations in the income distribution, when the quantitative and the qualitative data are put together. A closer scrutiny shows that the variation is the result of a combination of factors. These are: i) Employee’s role, ii) Mall itself, iii) Type of shop, iv) Merchandize, v) Level of education, and vi) Miscellaneous factors like age, etc.

Employee’s role can be explained in terms of the position in the shop as well as additional skills a staff possesses. For instance, supervisors tend to receive higher wages than shop assistants while having a skill/vocation (e.g. pedicure/manicure) can mean a relatively higher salary. Generally also, Accra Mall shops tend to pay higher wages than West Hills’ shops (Table 8.2).

**Table 8.2: Staff Education and Income Levels**

Mall	Education Level					Income Level							Total
	Basic	Secondary	Tertiary	Other	No Answer	Nothing	Less than GH¢200	GH¢200-299	GH¢300-399	GH¢400-499	GH¢500+	No Answer	
AM	6 (3.4%)	96 (54.9%)	69 (39.4)	1 (0.6%)	3 (1.7%)	1 (0.55%)	1 (0.55%)	14 (8.0%)	29 (16.6%)	29 (16.6%)	92 (52.6%)	9 (5.1%)	175 (100%)
WHM	7 (4.2%)	96 (57.1%)	49 (29.2%)	13 (7.7%)	3 (1.8%)	4 (2.4%)	0 (0.0%)	15 (8.9%)	45 (26.8%)	23 (13.7%)	71 (42.3%)	10 (5.9%)	168 (100%)

West Hills has more staff clustering within lower income levels and vice-versa for Accra Mall at higher income levels. Indeed, in some instances, even for the same shops located in the two malls, the Accra Mall shop pays higher. Specifically, 8.0 and 8.9 percent respectively of Accra and West Hills Malls' staff earn between GH¢200 and 299 monthly whilst 16.6 and 26.8 percent earn between GH¢300 and 399 monthly. Between GH¢400-499/month, it is 16.6 and 13.7 percent whilst above GH¢500 it is 52.6 and 42.3 percent respectively. This observation is confirmed by the more robust post-hoc chi-square test with adjusted p-value of 0.00417 (Table 8.3).

**Table 8.3: Post-hoc chi-square Test on Income Levels (Adjusted p-value: 0.00417)**

No	Mall	Income Level/GHC	Chi-Square	P-Value
1	Accra	300-399	5.5696	0.00000***
2	Accra	500+	3.5721	0.00035**
3	West Hills	300-399	5.5696	0.00000***
4	West Hills	500+	3.5721	0.00035***

\*\*\* refers to significance at the 1% level; \*\* represents significance at 5%

The likely reason for this disparity is that Accra Mall does better in terms of business than West Hills, a fact that is attributed to Accra Mall's locational advantage within the city, as discussed in Chapter Four.

If locational differences is removed, the most single biggest determinant of a staff's income level is the level of education. This was also confirmed by a post-hoc chi-square test with

adjusted p-value of 0.00178 indicating significant association between education level and income except for primary/basic school leavers (Table 8.4).

**Table 8. 4:** Income Level Against Level of Education

		Level of Education				Total
		First Cycle	Second Cycle	Tertiary	Other	
Income Level	Nothing	0.0%	0.0%	2.7%	0.0%	3 0.9%
	Less than GHC200	8.3%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	1 0.3%
	GHC200-299	0	15.0%	0.9%	7.1%	29 9.1%
	GHC300-399	41.7%	33.3%	5	2	72 22.6%
	GHC400-499	25.0%	21.7%	5.3%	14.3%	50 15.7%
	GHC500+	25.0%	29.4%	86.7%	57.1%	162 50.8%
	Not Applicable	0.0%	0.6%	0.0%	7.1%	2 0.6%
<b>Total</b>	Count	12	180	113	14	319
	%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%

Generally, those with higher education tend to earn much higher salaries such that, tertiary or other post-secondary education staff were more likely to earn above GHC500. Indeed, some of them earn as high as GHC3300/month. One reason is that highly educated staff usually tend to be given higher roles, e.g. supervisors, than the secondary education graduates. Generally, staff with tertiary education were reluctant to reveal their actual salaries. Most indicated that they earn above 500 cedis but chose not to disclose exact amount. On the other hand, secondary school graduates were more likely to earn lower, typically between GHC300 and GHC399/month. This is in tandem with most studies on urban economies. For instance, even in the global North, as shown in Storper et al.'s (2015) study in California, highly educated, highly skilled personnel who do non-routinised work tend to earn higher than less educated personnel who do more routinised jobs. Further, between Accra Mall and West Hills, it is seen

that whilst the two have virtually the same education level at the basic and secondary levels, Accra Mall has much higher tertiary education graduates (Table 8.2) which likely accounts for why its staff tend to earn higher.

Despite the association between income and education levels, it was found that primary school graduates earn quite higher and indeed some actually earn GHC500 or above. Primary school leavers only make up 3.8 percent of the respondents. Most shops generally employ people with at least secondary education. The reason why primary education graduates tend to compete well on earnings comparable to the tertiary graduates is that virtually all have a vocation or special skills. Those in the salon and beauty shop trade at West Hills Mall offer a good example. As a local shop it represented a deviation from the norm that salary levels are comparable to some of the international shops. One of its staff noted that when the economy was good and patronage was better, their salaries were even better. This staff, who has secondary education and works as a nails and spa specialist earning GHC800 commented:

*Previously I used to earn GHC1200 to 1500 (on commission basis) when things were better. Now my salary is fixed and it has rather decreased (February, 2017)*

The anchor shops are amongst the shops with the lowest levels of salaries, typically in the range from GHC200-300, but employ higher numbers of employees. This echoes Burchell et al.'s (2014) point that employers view high salaries as constraint to job creation. The argument being that once salaries are low, many people may be employed. The exception to this is Edgars, one of West Hills' anchors where salaries average GHC500. Even so, a 42 year old single parent with secondary education who has worked as a shop assistant for more than two years in Palace

shop<sup>102</sup>, one of the anchors in West Hills, is paid GHC400. It would be surmised that her salary has probably more to do with her years of service and experience rather than educational level.

**Table 8. 5:** Distribution of Income Levels within Shop Types

		Type of Shop			Total
		Ghanaian/ Local Firm	Foreign/ International Firm	Local with a Foreign Franchise	
Nothing	% response	100.0%	0.0%	0.0%	3 100.0%
Less than GHC200	% response	0.0%	100.0%	0.0%	1 100.0%
GHC200-299	% response	44.8%	55.2%	0.0%	29 100.0%
GHC300-399	% response	36.5%	59.5%	4.1%	74 100.0%
GHC400-499	% response	46.2%	38.5%	15.4%	52 100.0%
GHC500+	% response	22.7%	60.1%	17.2%	163 100.0%
Not Applicable	% response	50.0%	50.0%	0.0%	2 100.0%
Total	Count	105	180	39	324
	% response	32.4%	55.6%	12.0%	100.0%

The type of shop (Table 8.5), whether international, local shop, or franchise also tends to have some association with a staff's salary level. Generally, international shops pay better than the local shops and locals with foreign franchise. This generalisation however does not include the majority of the international anchor shops, where salary levels are among the lowest, and locals (e.g. beauty shops) where salaries are comparable to some of the international shops.

Also, the type of merchandize a shop sells has an impact on the salary levels (Table 8.6). Typically, those in the information and communications (ICT) and computer and electronics shops pay relatively higher while those in the food, groceries and general goods shops, mostly

<sup>102</sup> Palace is a local Ghanaian hypermarket shop with ownership belonging to Ghanaians of Lebanese descent. Most shop attendants with secondary education are paid less than GHC300/month.

the anchor tenants (except Edgars, West Hills) and the restaurants and food courts pay much, much lower.

**Table 8. 6:** Merchandize and staff Income Levels

Merchandize	Percentage earning GHC150-499	Percentage earning above GHC500	Percentage Not Reporting
ICT	7.1	92.9	0
Computers and Electronics	26.7	73.3	0
Fashion/Clothing/General Wares	37.3	60.5	2.2
Food/Groceries/General goods	65.7	32.9	1.4
Restaurants/Food courts	74.5	25.5	0

Apart from these dominant factors, in some rare cases, an individual may be placed within a salary range that may be higher based on his/her age, experience level, etc. There does not seem to be standardisation amongst the shops. As such, drawing from Herbst (1993), once shop owners know they are paying the minimum wage, there does not seem to be any more pressure to ensure staff welfare. As far as income is concerned, this is a classic case of government policy not going far enough to ensure labour welfare. Yet, apart from the minimum wage, are there other reasons why such low levels of salaries persist? I explore this further in the next sub-section.

### ***Why Low Salaries Persist?***

Both exogenous and endogenous factors may also account for the persistence of low wages and salaries besides the minimum wage. Notably, government’s lack of willingness to supervise or hold the private sector to account, macro-economic conditions and economic

downturn, high rents, utilities and other expenses, possibility for annual increase/lack of organised labor action, and how staff are contracted/employed are some of these factors.

Historically, government has not supported the course of employees, particularly low income earners. Worker agitations and strikes over wage level increments in Ghana are common, especially in the public sector (Kraus, 1979). In the private sector also, there is weak supervision of employers, in relation to their dealings with employees' remuneration. According to Herbst (1993), though the minimum wage is very low, government is unable to monitor employers who do not pay the minimum wage. This obviously leads to a situation where employers do not get sanctioned for non-compliance with the law.

Again, the government itself has not encouraged increment of wages and payment of a living wage to employees. As Herbst (1993:63) notes, it seems government has 'not [been] in the business of promoting... wages of workers'. And government has a history of kicking against wage increments. Herbst (1993:63) reports that in 1988, government directed a company to cap workers salary increment at 25 percent when its anticipated increment was 30 to 50 percent. The justification being the proposed increment would create distortions in the national salary structure, creating disaffection in government workers within the labour market. Such posturing of national leadership in relation to the Ghanaian worker has not gone unnoticed. In contemporary times, anecdotal evidence from sectors such as the construction, mining and oil and gas sectors corroborate this. Whereas foreign staff are paid much higher, local counterparts with about the same qualifications and experience but better context-knowledge earn a fraction of what is given to foreign staff (Sakyiamah, 2014). Sakyiamah (2014) points out that some expatriate staff believe that the remuneration asymmetry existing between foreign and their local counterparts is not a sustainable path to equitable development. It is important to highlight that such practice of short-changing the Ghanaian worker, if permitted in the 1980s, need not be reconsidered in the twenty first century where quality of life rationalisations (e.g. the need

for decent jobs) permeate several development policies, such as the UN sustainable development goals. And it will take government to give a signal on this.

But it is the case that the private sector is helping to deal with the high unemployment rate which in itself is seen as the nemesis of successive governments. Hence, the last thing a government might want to do is to antagonise the private sector by exerting pressure to set high minimum wage and stricter monitoring, when overall macro-economic conditions constrain businesses. And indeed, macro-economic conditions have been one of the main challenges businesses have had to grapple with over the last four years (Anane, 2016), including the malls.

The head of research at Broll Ghana Ltd. noted that the economic downturn in Ghana from 2014 onwards has had a toll on the fortunes of the malls. Consumers were not consuming as much as was the case during the economic boom from 2010-2014, the era which also saw the proliferation of malls. Both mall developers/operators and shop owners also bemoan the macro-economic challenges. Albert, a local partner/shareholder of Accra Mall and owner of a local restaurant at Accra Mall, highlighted particularly the depreciation of the national currency (cedi) from 2013-2016<sup>103</sup> and the energy crises of 2014-2015 as two factors that challenged the malls' sustainability. Instability of the exchange rate made it difficult to plan whilst operators grappled with ever-increasing cost of energy as they switched between generators and power from the national Electricity Company of Ghana (ECG).

*You see, had we moved to GHC1.8=\$1, then after 1 year, 2 years we move to 2.0, then it moves marginally; then you plan. But there was a jump from 1.8 straight to 2.5, so if I charged \$500,000 in September 2013 and I made 2 million and I ordered stuff from the U.S., by the time it got here and I sold it; I am going to get the dollar back my working capital has halved!... Instantly, that tenant would have a problem paying rent. It has worried retail a lot. It has taken us time because you have to recapitalize.*

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<sup>103</sup> Around Jan 2013, the dollar was exchanging at GHC1.9, then GHC3.3 in Jan 2015 and at GHC4.2 in Dec 2016 when the interview was granted.

*When you have a generator, generator is costly. And generator doesn't let ECG give you a break. You can be on generator [...], Ah!... when the "dumsor" happened? Your power can be off but your meter is running! Your bill doesn't change! I will tell you, in Accra Mall, when we started in 2008, our electricity bill was about C110,000 and then it instantly moved to C600,000. It moved to C800,000. In what country? Even the Mall of Dubai, do they pay \$200,000 electricity bill a month? A mall of 100,000m<sup>2</sup>! How can a 20,000m<sup>2</sup> mall [...]. Electricity is more expensive in Accra Mall than any mall in the world!... Electricity? It is the basic for the mall to run... So we have so much lost... Look, during this power problem, the malls have struggled (Albert Manu, Oct. 2016).*

Perhaps Albert's observation may be exaggerated but this could be seen as reproducing national discourses about the energy crises, referred to locally as "dumsor"<sup>104</sup>, on ever-rising cost of electricity bills when power was not guaranteed any day. Ghanaians referred to new meters issued by ECG as "Usain Bolt meters", in reference to the Jamaican sprinter, on account of how those meters 'run' in measuring what the public observed to be unrealistic energy consumption. Corporate Ghana bore the brunt of such energy crises. For instance, in his study of small and medium scale businesses in Kumasi, Anane (2016: v) concluded that the energy crises 'hamper[ed] performance and operational efficiencies of... businesses'. Most invariably, increasing costs are passed on to tenants. The centre manager of West Hills Mall indicated that tenants pay for the power they use to the mall and the mall in turn pays to ECG.

As a result of such challenges, tenants struggle to pay rents, utilities and other expenses. Rent, for instance, is charged in dollars but payable in *cedis* (¢) or dollars. So shop owners whose wares are sold in cedis grapple with maintaining reasonable profit margins when there is constant depreciation of the local currency, as Albert noted. This is particularly worse in shops where most merchandize are imported. A manager of an international franchise shop in Accra Mall indicated that her rent used to be \$2500/month but it was increased to \$3000/month. She

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<sup>104</sup> 'Dumsor' is a local neologism of two words: 'dum' meaning off and 'sor' means on. It was used to describe the instability of power at the height of the crises but also carried a cynical connotation in reference to government's inability and perhaps ineptitude in addressing the crises.

employs four shop assistants. However, at West Hills, some shop managers indicated that mall operators have reduced rents for some shops, particularly the international shops from South Africa whilst some local shops have had their space allocation reduced, in an attempt by management to ensure shops deal with economic challenges. It is likely that management wants to ensure the continued presence of the South African multinationals to forestall the possibility of closing their shops since some foreign shops such as *Mango*, *Violetta* and *Outlet Italia* closed their shops.

Within such economic challenges amidst low patronage of wares by consumers, especially at West Hills, it is understandable that most shop owners would try to keep salaries at a minimum and salary increases for most would not be an immediate option. As discussed earlier, the staff at a beauty shop who were previously earning higher salaries through the commission mode had their income reduced when management introduced fixed monthly salaries during the economic downturn. Even so, most staff (about 52 percent) indicated that they have had some increases, whilst 40.2 percent had no increases since they started working in the malls, against a background that 47.7 percent have worked for less than one year. Indeed, most shops generally give salary increment to staff after at least six months of employment (Chi square test:  $\chi^2=108.46$ ,  $df=9$ ;  $p=0.000$ ). This is consistent with the general labour practice in Ghana where most employees expect to earn annual increments from their employers. It was found that most of the salary increments were marginal, in the order of a few tens of cedis (say GHC320 to GHC350). Therefore, it would be argued that shops start employers at low levels because there will be yearly increments, either as a result of demand from staff or in tandem with the general labour situation in Ghana.

Also, information from the malls suggest that the staff in the shops have not yet constituted themselves into an organised labour front who speak with one voice. There are indications, though, that unionisation may have started as staff in anchor shops (i.e. Shoprite and Game)

have formed staff associations. However, this is yet to involve all the mall shops' staff. As such, there was no information to suggest whether the Trades Union Congress (TUC) has links with shop staff/employees. The lack of organised (mall) labour union therefore leads to a situation where not many benefits are received from employers. This reminisces Gooptu's (2009) study which found that lack of organised labour front among shopping mall staff in India produced less benefits from employers. In Accra, it was learnt from some of the staff though, especially those working in the anchors which have outlets across Africa that they are learning about trends in other African countries like Kenya, Nigeria and Uganda, where staff have constituted themselves to demand improved working conditions.

How staff are contracted/employed is also a contributory factor regarding the persistence of low salaries. Those who are likely to receive higher salaries are also likely to be given written contracts (i.e. *appointment letters* as referred to in Ghana). In all, some 40 percent of the staff do not have such letters. It was found that those who are in the ICT shops (Vodafone, MTN, Busy Internet, etc.) are more likely to be issued with contracts, with 86.7 percent of all staff indicating in affirmative. This is followed by those in the fashion, clothing and general wares (75 percent), then foods, groceries and general goods shop (57.1 percent), computer and electronics (51.4 percent), restaurants and food courts (51.1 percent) and finally those who indicated *others* (44.9 percent). It is evident that apart from the computers and electronics, the hierarchy is consistent with those which pay higher salaries (see Table 8.6).

Appointment letters give job security. Once an individual does not have it, it follows to reason that they do not have a contract of employment and as such cannot insist on their right as staff. They can also be sacked at any time. But why would people work without contract of employment? For some, the desperation for job seems to weigh heavily and as such may not ask for appointment letters before starting. Indeed, sometimes the appointment process does not go through any formality. The prospective worker approaches management and once there

is vacancy s/he is asked to start. This is especially the case with the local shops but in some cases with the international shops as well. For instance, in an anchor shop, a staff who was employed in less than a month before the survey indicated she does not know how much her salary will be and also does not have appointment letter. She indicated that she got the job through her previous headteacher who is friend of one of the leaders at the shop. There is also a staff who works on contract basis at another anchor as a beauty advisor/therapist who indicated that she was “*highly recommended*” to the shop by somebody else. Yet, perhaps because of her skill, she had a formal contract signed with the shop. These show how (informal) social networks may ripple on employment dynamics leading to (formal) economic benefits. They also suggest that in a neoliberal context where state intervention in labour market is rolled back (Gooptu, 2009) formal sector could copy informal employment practices.

Additionally, some staff are also employed on casual basis at the outset. Then as time progresses, management formalises their contract to become permanent. During the period of being a casual, staff work precariously and are less likely to push for increased salaries as this may likely send the wrong signal. It is evident that management uses casual employment to assess particular staff before making a decision to employ them permanently. However, this is sometimes abused. Indeed, some staff indicated they are still casual staff even after one year of employment, contrary to the Labour law (2003, Act 651) which indicates no employer can hire a casual staff for more than six months. Such a situation however, leaves the staff vulnerable in the labour market and keeps them at low salary levels for a long time. In that case staff are no better off than the informal sector employers who are also seen to be in precarious economic conditions (Kilimani, 2017). This is because informal sector workers lack job security, secure/regular income and have no recourse to welfare packages like pension, leave with pay, sick leave, etc. (Hart, 1973; Gough et al, 2003; Langevang, 2008). The situation also demonstrates ‘flexibilisation’ in shopping malls in Accra such that flexibilisation of labour

(Stone, 2005) in sub-Saharan Africa may well be defined, in this context, as where formal private sector work practices conflates with informal practices under neoliberalism. Yet, it would be argued that the informal process of appointing or sourcing for staff does not fall within the purview of best practice as some equally qualified people may be denied a fair chance for employment.

It is, therefore, clear that a combination of government position and policies, as well as unstable macro-economic conditions are the primary reasons why low salaries persists in the malls. Then a secondary reason relates to informal recruitment process and a lack of organised shopping mall staff labour union. But how does such low salaries affect the welfare of staff? I explore this question further in the next sub-section.

## **8.2 Welfare and Wealth Creation for Staff**

The notion of welfare, in this context, involves building capacity for citizens through knowledge/skills acquisition to be relevant to the job market. This capacity building has potential to increase one's earnings and savings leading to improved quality of life (Giloth, 2007; Chapple, 2012). I discuss what, I argue, have effect on staff current and future socio-economic welfare/living conditions. These include potential for savings (in relation to their current situation such as level of salaries, basic expenditure, and hours spent at work) and acquisition of new skills. This is because these could lead to increased individual wealth creation and upward mobility, and ultimately lead to improved living conditions.

I argue in this section that low wage levels generally make the staff, particularly the less educated with no particular skill, less capable of saving when considered in relation to their basic daily/monthly expenditure (e.g. food, transportation and rent) and other working conditions. This is because in addition to the low wages they have no time to engage in secondary/informal economic activity to make additional income. Also, their incentives and motivation package do not cover adequately their expenditure. Inability to save impairs

individual's wealth creation (Chapple, 2012). Without individual wealth creation, an individual's welfare in terms of increased consumption is impaired. Low individual consumption means low aggregate consumption for the entire community/city (Ellen and Schwartz, 2000).

As indicated, the average monthly salary of all the staff is about GHC410-460. Also, the average daily transportation cost is GHC4.73<sup>105</sup> i.e. GHC123/month for 26days/month or GHC113.5 for 24days/month; 30 or 28 percent of monthly salary. The average rent for those who rent accommodation is GHC163. Assuming an individual spends about GHC5.63/day (i.e. \$1.25 daily) on food consumption, this leaves the average worker with a deficit at the end of the month with nothing at all to save, as the case of Kingsley (below) elucidates. This is besides miscellaneous and incidental expenses.

Within such harsh economic situation, it is argued that an individual's welfare gets diminished. Consequently, most workers devise (survival) strategies to reduce monthly expenditure including not renting accommodation if possible, or, if need be, opting for cheap accommodation or jointly renting with friends. Nearly 50 percent of respondents do not pay rent on account that they are living with relatives, friends or shop-rented accommodation<sup>106</sup>. For the others who rent accommodation, more than half (85/159) go for the cheaper types with rents between GHC50-GHC100/month (Table 8.7). In Ghana, these are typically single room accommodation in compound/passenger houses which have little or no amenities like toilets, piped water, kitchen, etc. Some staff (at West Hills) said when they contribute to rent a place, the rent per head is low. Yet, living together has its own challenges including compromise on

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<sup>105</sup> Transportation costs of more than GHC6/day were all taken to be GHC6

<sup>106</sup> The shop rented accommodation are only a fraction of 4.4 percent who indicated other type of accommodation

privacy, occasional quarrels, etc. It is clear these positions taken by staff to survive undoubtedly reduces their well-being and welfare.

**Table 8.7:** Staff Monthly Rent

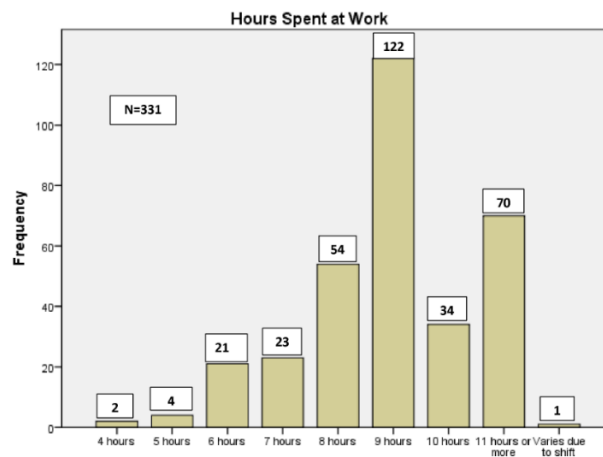
Monthly Rent	Frequency	Percent
GHC50-100	85	24.8
GHC101-300	53	15.5
GHC301-500	18	5.2
>GHC500	3	0.9
Nothing	16	4.7
*N/A	148	43.1
Didn't Answer	20	5.8
<b>Total</b>	<b>343</b>	<b>100.0</b>

\*N/A refers to those who live with relatives

In Ghana, low salaries could be compensated for in some cases by other informal economic activities (Grey-Johnson, 1992; Gough et al, 2003) and/or other forms of incentives (such as study leave with pay, enhanced bonuses, medical insurance, etc.) or some form of skills/knowledge transfer that helps individuals to ‘build a career and wealth’ at the workplace (Chapple, 2012:484). The quality of these, especially the incentives and skills acquisition, could lead to increased worker welfare now and the future in terms of ‘employability, wages and upward mobility’ (Chapple, 2005, 2012:485). However, a closer scrutiny in all three reveals staff have little or no opportunity to leverage on their welfare/low income.

In the global South, including Ghana, people engage in secondary economic activities in the informal economy to supplement their regular income (Owusu, 2007; Hart, 1973). However, by reason of the length of time spent at the shops, most of the staff have no opportunity to take up such ventures. The mall, which operates on all days throughout the month including public holidays, opens from about 7a.m. and closes at 10p.m. whilst most shops open to the public at 10a.m. and closes at 9 p.m. As such staff spend long hours at the workplace: 68 percent of them

spend 9 hours or more, including break time. Respectively, 10.3 and 21.1 percent spend 10 hours and more than 11 hours daily (Fig. 8.3).

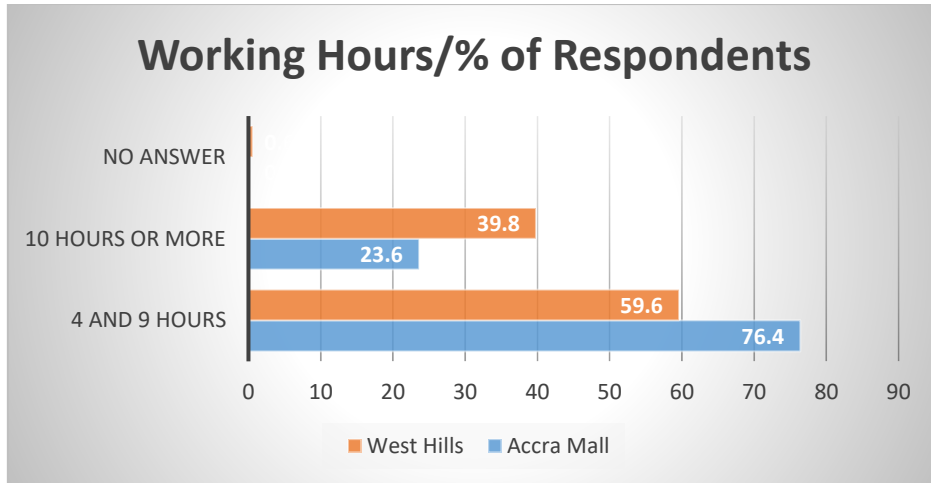


**Figure 8. 3:** Hours Spent at Work

Typically, those who spend extremely long hours are the least-educated and least-paid staff. A staff in a computer/electronics shop at Accra Mall said his family and friends think that:

*[the job is] very bad because all the time [I am] at the work, not able to be with the family on weekends and holidays (February, 2017).*

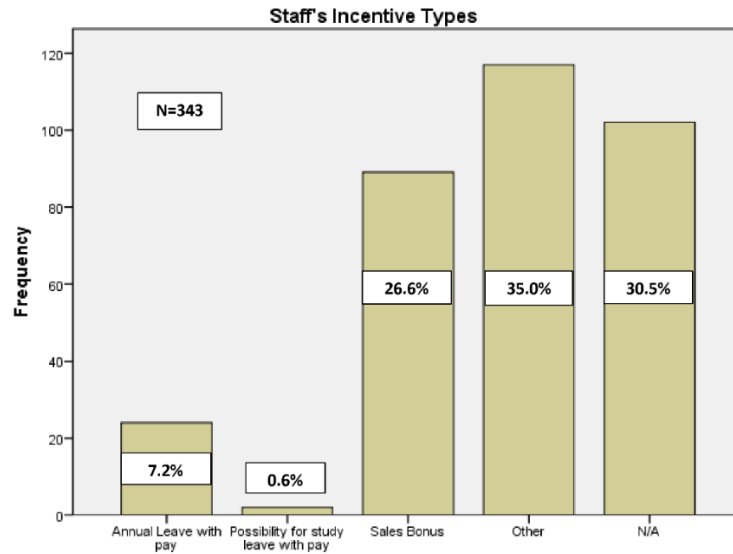
Further to that, it was found that West Hills staff spend the longer hours relative to Accra Mall (Figure 8.4). This may lend support to the position that West Hills shop operators are more aggressive in their attempt to enhance the economic position of the shops in a less affluent location. Couple with the result that West Hills has relatively less educated staff, who typically spend long hours, this is not unexpected.



**Figure 8. 4:** Duration of Working Hours

With these long hours, the average staff, or rather most of the least paid staff, can do no additional work to supplement their meagre income. Some better-paid staff have been able to purchase taxis and hired drivers for additional income. However, most of the low income earners do not have such capacity.

In spite of the long hours, generally employment welfare package/incentives are on the low side and most staff do not earn overtime. Overall, a good number of staff (69.5 percent) indicated they are entitled to various incentives: lunch, transportation fare, sales and Christmas or holidays bonuses, which themselves do not amount to much in terms of their financial benefits. Indeed, however small incentives may be, there are several staff who indicated they receive multiple forms, such as lunch and transport fare or leave with pay and holiday bonuses, and so on. Of all staff, 30.5 percent indicated they do not get any incentives (Fig. 8.5). In fact, 11 percent of shop managers also indicated that their shops do not have any motivation packages for their staff. Yet, again, the 40 percent of staff who work without employment contracts is one major disincentive.



**Figure 8. 5:** Staff’s Incentives

Kingsley’s case explains it better. He is a bachelor of 33 years old who works as a shop assistant in one of the international shops at West Hills. He received GHC100 (\$22.23) as Christmas bonus in 2016. He is a secondary school graduate and works for 40 hours a week. His monthly salary is GHC570. He has no children and lives with his relatives where he contributes to paying for water, electricity and food. This, he said, costs him some GHC300/month. He spends GHC4/day on transportation, commuting between Kwashieman and West Hills. This amounts to GHC88/month. Because he also eats at home, on average he spends about GHC5/day on food. This amounts to GHC110/month. He has a phone for which he spends at least GHC20/month. Granted his contributions to the home is the GHC300/month, then he has a monthly deficit of GHC28. He explained to me that:

*Another of my worry is that the shop doesn’t give you medical insurance or treatment, but when you are sick they want you to bring medical report (Feb., 2017)*

For such an individual starting a family of his own might likely be a secondary consideration.

He only offered a smile when I asked when he was going to marry.

Kingsley's point is that with such low level salary, attending hospital where he incurs additional charges, such as paying doctor's consultation fees, etc. is another burden! A good number of Ghanaians buy medicines from pharmacy/drug shops for routine ailments by explaining their symptoms to the pharmacist/drug dispenser. In that way, people avoid additional medical cost. He therefore found it problematic that the shop insists on submitting medical report when he falls sick when they do not give him medical insurance. It is clear that the shop management has instituted this rule to stop absenteeism on the pretext of bogus illness. This suggests that the shops demand a lot from employees but give back little for their welfare. Asked whether he was satisfied with his job, he responded "*I am 60 percent satisfied*".

On the question of *acquisition of new skills*, there is evidence that staff are acquiring some new skills (Table 8.8). Yet these are not as the result of a purposeful attempt by management and shop managers. This is because it seems shops appoint staff with the primary purpose of doing specific work for which they may need new skills. Hence training and staff (knowledge) development are only incidental to the main purpose. It may be understandable that malls *ab initio* are not established for purposes of developing skills of employees or for knowledge transfer. However, the Ghana Investment Promotion Centre (GIPC) indicates that one of the government's vision in respect of foreign investments is that there will be transfer of knowledge and opportunities for labour to learn new skills to aid Ghana's competitiveness in the global economy. Additionally, new innovations have been introduced into the retail industry where malls offer other social and community-related purposes (Staeheli and Mitchel, 2006). It would therefore not be out of place to begin to conceive malls as spaces for acquisition of new skills and knowledge transfer where staff may learn skills such as report writing, business plans, new recipes, or in the current information technology age, computer knowledge, among others. But even beyond national aspirations and individual's upward social mobility (i.e. gaining knowledge and skills for a different job in the future), a knowledgeable

and happy workforce enhances current workplace productivity (Giloith, 2007). Thus workforce development is viewed as a key tool in progressive productivity (Chappel, 2012; Storper et al., 2015).

**Table 8. 8:** New Skills learnt by Staff

No	Type of New Skills	% of staff	No	Type of New Skills	% of Staff
1	Customer service/relating to people	52.2	6	Packaging and merchandizing	3.2
2	New cooking recipes	5.8	7	Products and shop management	2.3
3	ICT and computer knowledge	4.3	8	Nothing learnt	3.5
4	Book-keeping and Advertising	3.8	9	Didn't answer	8.2
5	Beauty and fashion styles	3.5	10	*Others	13.2
*Others (including phone repairs, report writing, business plans, etc. each recorded 1.3% or less and are thus lumped together)					

It is clear that the new skills are only incidental to the extent they aid a staff's role in a shop. For instance, staff traineeship programs are done only when shop owners view such skill acquisition will enhance staff performance. As such, new skills acquisition are diffused with what may be seen as key skills for job progression, e.g. computer knowledge, business proposal writing, new cooking recipes, etc., recording low number of staff. While not belittling the usefulness of customer service relations in shopping mall operations, it would be argued that customer service relations by itself may not be seen as one that can impact a staff's upward mobility unlike ICT usage/knowledge. For instance, only 50 percent of staff use computers in their work. When asked whether staff have attended any training program in the last year, 54.3

percent said no and 45.7 percent said yes. Of those who attended training programs only 43.5 percent said it involved use of computers. On the question of what else the training entailed, for those who attended training programs, 36.3 percent involved customer service delivery, 15.1 percent said introduction to new products, 8.9 percent said management and organisation policy whilst only 5.1 percent said it involved ICT usage/knowledge. Others, 34.6 percent, involved a host of activities such as new beauty styles, new recipes, fire safety and security.

With the role of computers and the internet in the new world economy, emphasis on ICT knowledge may not be out of place. Indeed, in most parts of the world, eCommerce is gaining prominence. The penetration of ICT in everyday transactions such as mobile money transfer and trading is widespread in some African countries including Ghana. Indeed, it is evident that Accra's formal retail sector is beginning to respond to such global trends where 46 percent of managers indicated they do online shopping and 93.2 percent said between one and 50 percent of the transactions in their shops are by Visa or MasterCard. There is also evidence that ICT knowledge can benefit the (low income) staff, especially those with vocational skills, to improve upon their skills. For instance, those in the beauty/saloon shops indicated that they watch and learn new (beauty/hair-do) styles on YouTube on their own. This, they agree, has led to new knowledge which they apply in their work. Betcherman and Khan (2015:3) note that in addressing the Africa youth unemployment conundrum, policy responses that are tailored to skills upgrade of young people are likely to 'improve [their] access to jobs'.

Finally, comparing staff's previous employment salaries with their current salaries in the malls, all the staff with the exception of tertiary graduates at West Hills showed reduction in salary levels. These, who are about 70 percent of the staff, relocated from both formal and informal sectors (Fig. 8.6).

A closer scrutiny of the previous jobs indicates that the lines between the formal and informal sectors are blurred since what is thought to be formal sector may involve informal practices. For instance, those in the retail or automobile, construction and mining sector which may be seen as formal sectors involve use of informal practices. Thus, these may be appropriately called semi-formal sectors. Given that staff salaries have not improved through change of previous job to the mall job, it will be argued that this is tantamount to diminished welfare (Bartik, 2012).



**Figure 8. 6:** Staff's Previous Jobs

(Not Applicable refers to those who did not have a job before work in the mall)

Against this background, staff are generally split on whether or not their expectations for working in the malls (Tables 8.9 and 8.10) have been met, with 51.5 percent saying no whilst 48.5 percent said yes. Even so, there is a widespread feeling of general dissatisfaction among the staff, especially the least paid, relating specifically to employment conditions: salaries, motivation packages and to some extent the number of hours spent at work. Even those who

are paid relatively higher complain about salary levels. A tertiary graduate in one of the international beauty shops in Accra Mall who receives more than GHC500 said: *“the salary needs to be improved so that I can be able to meet other financial obligations, save and invest”* (February, 2017).

**Table 8. 9:** Motive for Working

	Frequency	Percent
Meet my economic needs	182	53.1
Higher salary	13	3.8
Mall's general atmosphere	8	2.3
Job security	86	25.1
Money to go back to school	31	9.0
Other reasons	4	1.2
Total	324	94.5
Didn't Answer	19	5.5
<b>Grand Total</b>	<b>343</b>	<b>100.0</b>

**Table 8. 10:** Work Aspiration

	Frequency	Percent
Student trainee/Internship	12	3.5
Get experience to move on	198	57.7
Meet basic economic needs	114	33.2
Remain here until pension	4	1.2
Total	328	95.6
Didn't Answer	15	4.4
<b>Grand Total</b>	<b>343</b>	<b>100.0</b>

That said, most people are happy that they work in the malls on account that the public accords them respect, or malls offer nice ambience or they get to interact with different kinds of people. Indeed most shops and their staff attempts to enhance their own image and personality to continue to enjoy this public respect. They have unique uniforms and are supposed to appear tidy. Some of them use fanciful descriptions for their roles/position. For instance, in several shops, it was common for a shop assistant to refer to him/herself as ‘retail executive’ or ‘sales executive’. Further, several staff indicated that the public assume you are rich once you work in the mall. Because the public views malls as places where money is made and as such once someone is an employee s/he is assumed to be also making money. As noted, some mall

operators (e.g. Albert) also expressed these sentiments: *They [people] always look at that side; “how much are they worth; how much will they make out of this?”*. These attitudes reinforce the views and images ascribed to malls as ‘artefacts of globalisation’ (Salcedo, 2003) and projectors of western modernity (Idoko et al., 2017) as indicated in Chapter Six, in which an association with it produces for an individual an identity: as being modern and progressive. This may be construed as part of the ‘symbolic consumption’ ascriptions to shopping malls (Goss, 1993; Glennie, 1998), in a sub-Saharan African context. This is on the basis that, particularly for most of the less educated least paid workers, though they are not benefitting much economically, as has been demonstrated so far, they enjoy the prestige and respect (from society) they get in being shopping mall staff. In this sense, it seems, West Hills less educated least paid staff tend to value such ascriptions relatively higher than Accra Mall on account that 50.6 percent indicated their expectation have been met as opposed to Accra Mall’s 46.4 percent. This may be suggestive that staff from less affluent communities (where West Hills is located) have a relatively higher acceptance for the mall and its role, not just in economic development terms, but also on the (modern) image it helps project for the western part of the city. On that score, low-income staff tend to also benefit from the positive ascriptions emanating therefrom (Bourdieu, 1984). Yet again, it points to some of the criticisms against urban entrepreneurialism projects: a tendency to offer ‘image over substance’, as Harvey (1989b:14) argues.

Overall, given that staff spend all their days at the malls with no recourse to additional income they may be caught in the perpetual cycle of low income and poverty for, at least, the foreseeable future if the status quo continues since the low levels of salaries constricts capacity to save. As such, mall operators, shop owners and policymakers need to assess conditions of staff for equitable urban economic development. As Potts (2012:179, 180) emphasises urban residents in Africa need ‘steady well-paying jobs... [and]... formal enterprises with steady

wage-paying jobs for semi-skilled workers are key to significant increases in consumption and the capacity to afford the monetary demands of a better serviced, healthier, urban environment in Africa... this is what urban economic development means'. It has also been shown, despite the low wages that the malls present opportunities for staff to learn new skills and I surmise this evidence presents an opportunity where policymakers could explore to enhance staff's upward mobility. I must add though that the research did not set out to study extensively the depth of knowledge of staff on the new skills they purport to have learnt. Thus, further studies may be needed to establish this.

## **Conclusion**

In this chapter, I have argued that the malls offer a very useful jobs outlet for city residents, especially the youth. These jobs are targeted at the low skilled, low income workers. Together with the indirect jobs created, Accra's malls in general offer several thousand jobs to low income workers. However, in terms of direct jobs created, and given that the Accra retail market is now saturated, from the point of view of industry experts, the effect on reducing unemployment rate in the metropolitan area and the entire city is insignificant.

Additionally, I argued that, in terms of the direct jobs, salary levels are generally very low for those with low education. Such low salaries is the result of multiple factors including government policy on minimum wage, government position, macro-economic challenges, as well as a lack of organised labour front within the malls, among others. The salary level for the low educated staff with low skills are so low that they will continue in the cycle of poverty for at least the foreseeable future unless the salary levels and other incentive packages are increased. Such a situation also constrains savings and general wealth creation that could enhance high level consumption which is necessary for overall city/nationwide economic growth and development. In spite of that, the malls offer a huge potential for low income and

low skilled staff to learn new skills but this is not being pursued in a systematic and well organised manner to allow the maximum realisation of the potential the malls hold for overall national development. This is something that policymakers may need to consider in fashioning out a local content law of a sort, perhaps like what has been promulgated in the oil and gas industry where at least five percent<sup>107</sup> local participation in the industry is by law allocated to Ghanaians (LI 2204). There is in fact an urgent need for a local content policy on the malls to ensure an increased ‘wealth capture’ for the citizens and the city.

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<sup>107</sup> Where it works is for supply of goods and services, the local participation is raised to at least ten percent.

## CHAPTER NINE

### CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATION

#### **Introduction**

The impetus for this thesis has been occasioned by a desire to understand Accra's rapid urban transformation in the neoliberal era through a case study of shopping malls. Two decades of structural adjustment reforms laid the foundation for a neoliberal Ghana such that in the first decade of the twentieth-first century, Ghana saw unprecedented increase in foreign direct investments (FDI) in various economic sectors. Accra, as the capital city, has been the greatest beneficiary of such foreign investment flows more than any other Ghanaian city, as amply demonstrated in this thesis. The concomitant urban development impacts of the reforms in Ghana, particularly on Accra, is therefore well-established (Owusu, 2015). An important part of the urban development impact is urban governance transformation. The aim of the thesis was therefore to understand how neoliberal urban governance transformation may have been enabling of western-style shopping mall development and, in turn, investigate the impact of shopping mall development on Accra's urban development. Thus, I attempted to understand such transformation through a conceptual framework based on Harvey's (1989b) entrepreneurial city treatise and the World Bank's (2000)/WBG (2015) competitive cities concept which focus on urban transformation in neoliberal era. These were amply outlined in Chapters One and Two. Generally, the results in the study has shown that urban entrepreneurialism is still evolving in Accra with its advantages and disadvantages.

In this concluding chapter, I summarise key findings and outline the contributions the study has made to knowledge, policy recommendations and suggested areas for future research.

## **9.1 Summary of Key Findings**

Through the study, it has become evident that Accra, and for that matter Ghana, has been oriented towards a market-led development. This process has effectively been undertaken at level of the nation-state but with implications at the local/city level. As such, Accra's urban development is undergoing transition.

As pointed out, one of the sectors that has particularly benefitted from foreign direct investment (FDI) inflows in the city is the service sector. Within this sector, the retail service sector is one that experienced high growth which has led to increased development of shopping malls, as new spaces of consumption in the city. As indicated in Chapter One, the thesis had a dual objective: i) to understand whether or not urban governance transformation has been enabling of shopping mall development in the city, and ii) the impact of shopping malls on the city's urban development. As such, with respect to the first objective, the study took the position that neoliberal reforms have led to changes in how the city is governed, specifically at the local level. This assumption is predicated on several laws, regulations, and policies enacted or adopted by the state to change the structure of the Ghanaian economy from the hitherto state developmentalist model of the pre-1980s era to a free market system as well as review of several literature, both published and grey. Some of these regulations, including their impact on Accra's urban development were outlined in Chapter Four, which set out the contextual frame for the study, and additional ones discussed further in Chapter Five. Chapter Two was devoted extensively to review of the broad literature on urban entrepreneurialism whilst Chapter Three was devoted to extensive explication and discussion of the methodology used for this study.

From this background, the study found, as discussed in Chapter Five, that at the city scale, particularly at the local government level, a lack of thorough decentralisation, as envisaged in theory, has led to a situation where urban development decisions and progress have been

somewhat constrained. This state of affair results because the national government still set urban development agenda for the local-state. As an example, the Ghana national urban development policy was launched only recently in 2013. Consequently, the research found that shopping mall projects and their development, being the results of urban entrepreneurial strategies in urban development, have likely been delayed. Nonetheless, the research found that within this period, the local-state has made incremental progress in pursuance of urban entrepreneurialism. Additionally, the neoliberal reforms have opened up space for freedom of expression especially on matters concerning urban development. Coupled with decades of austerity, citizens became emboldened to take their destinies into their own hands by: a) exploring various economic opportunities, including, for those in public/civil sector formal employment, side businesses, or b) travelling overseas to seek economic opportunities. As such, the study found that both local citizens and the Ghanaian diaspora explored opportunities to network with global capitalists to establish coalitions for development of shopping malls in Accra. I argued, in this chapter, that the situation where neoliberal reforms concurrently produce challenges and opportunities enable certain citizens to appropriate social capital to increase their position or influence (*habitus*) in society (Bourdieu, 1984). One of such social capital acquired is cosmopolitan dispositions/visions (Hutchings and Dannreuther, 1999; Skrbis and Woodward, 2007). I also argued that, in that sense, neoliberal policies have had a positive outcome in Accra's urban development, a situation that is opposite to the widely held view on negative social and economic impacts of the structural adjustment policies.

In the second objective, where the study explored the impact of shopping malls on Accra, the focus was on consumption and local economic development, which was predicated on conceiving the malls' development as local economic development process and hence assessed their impact (potential and practical) on local communities, revenue to the city and labour and employment.

In Chapter Six, on shopping malls as spaces of consumption, I explored how malls have shaped or are shaping consumption tendencies in the city and how citizens view malls as artefacts of modernity. I argued that malls represent ‘nodes of global convergence’ which, among others, shapes citizens idea of modernity. I found that unanimously, research participants agree that the malls project Accra as modern, and being modern largely means new, efficient, and convenient ways of doing things. But, what does this mean? Considering the traffic congestion in Accra, middle class citizens particularly find the malls’ one stop-shop policy useful in meeting their schedules. Yet again, the middle class find malls shopping as more hygienic compared to the traditional markets and shops. Amongst others, these explain why malls have become acceptable to all classes of people, particularly the middle class. Yet, the notion that modernity means to look like (or importations from) the west is fairly grounded where some 11 percent of managers and 22 percent of staff, including nearly all interviewee respondents take the view that modernity somewhat reminisces western models or lifestyles. To that extent, the study argued that , in particular, low-income groups associate with malls as a means of having a taste of the western world whilst for middle income groups who hold cosmopolitan views, the malls represent an experience of what they may previously have become accustomed to during their travels.

Finally, I argued in the chapter that there seems to be an unbundling of the hitherto extended family structure of Ghana’s middle class resulting, partly, from western notions of family, neoliberal/adjustment austerity, and a host of other factors including housing designs that reflect western (nuclear) family needs. I argued that the small (nuclear) family size with two full-time (middle class) working parents has the potential of increasing family disposable income. These middle class, I argued, represent the niche market for the shopping malls. Consequently, mall operators seem to target such middle-class families in their marketing outreach in a most aggressive manner.

In Chapter Seven, the study analysed the local economic impact of malls. I argued that since local participation is low, the wealth generation from malls to citizens is bound to be low. Yet, in terms of revenue to the city and the state, lack of adequate information arising from unwillingness of both malls and the Ghana Revenue Authority (GRA) to release data made it difficult to make a better assessment. This is also on account that there were no benchmarks for comparisons. This notwithstanding, I however concluded given the patrimonial nature of the Ghanaian government arrangements, the revenue obtained by the nation-state is bound to be higher than that of the local governments. The chapter also explored the practical and potential local economic development benefits of mall development within their embedded localities. I pointed out that a collaboration between local chiefs of the communities around the West Hills Mall has a more demonstrable local economic development impact than Accra Mall, whose local economic development benefits is practically dissipated across the entire city. On that basis, I argued that West Hills has a higher local economic impact than Accra Mall. I finally argued that, as socio-economic space, the malls have become a site of collaboration and/or contestations where various stakeholders collaborate and/or contest to accumulate the rent emanating therefrom and on that score, primary and secondary place-entrepreneurs' (Rodgers, 2009) as well as informal economic operators all win some amount of economic benefits, to some degree.

In Chapter Eight, where I explored impact of malls on labor and employment, the study found that malls have become a veritable source of job creation for the youth who constitute about 96 percent of the employees. It is evident therefore that given the precariousness of youth un/employment and the challenges associated with being a youth which may lead to risky behaviors, the mall jobs are well targeted. As such, the study has revealed that the malls may be helping to reduce poverty; a key vision of the entrepreneurial and competitive cities thesis. However, it is evident that given the rather low role or participation of local people and the

general low salary levels of employees, the malls may not be particularly enabling of wealth creation; a departure from a key objective of urban entrepreneurialism.

Further, I found that one mall provides about 1000 direct jobs and about 30 percent of this direct jobs created are new jobs. In the light of this, and, given that industry experts consider the Accra market to be currently saturated unless there is further economic growth, I argued that, since the new jobs created represent only about 2 percent of the citywide unemployment numbers, the jobs created do not make a substantial impact on the unemployment rate in the city. In spite of this, the study found that malls represent spaces where low-income people can develop employable skills to aid in their social upward mobility. Yet, mall managers and operators have not consciously positioned malls as spaces or agents for transfer of skills. But, amongst others, the government's vision is that all foreign investments should be able to transfer some skills to citizens.

Moreover, even though the study did not set out to establish indirect job creation, it has become evident that indirect job-creation presents an important avenue for additional job creation in terms of supply lines, networking and collaborating with local farmers and suppliers, importers and producers of local products sold in some of the anchor shops, among others. As such, it is one area the government may be able to scale up the benefits obtained from the malls. In the light of that, I have argued for a need for a local content policy or law to direct and regulate the entire retail industry with a particular focus on shopping malls. The objective of such a policy/law will be to ensure that the nation, local communities and citizens have increased benefits from mall development.

In summary, therefore, the key findings of the study are as outlined below:

- ❖ Urban entrepreneurialism is still evolving in Accra. There is, concurrently, reverse-convergence, convergence, and divergence with Harvey's (1989b) entrepreneurial city.

Consequently, local governments have not been intrinsic part of mall development. It has essentially been led by the private sector. By reverse convergence, I refer to a form of convergence in which there is agreement on the end result (i.e. convergence) but a divergence (or disagreement) on the factors which give rise to the end result, as typically expected. In that sense, it is also not divergence but more appropriately intermediate between pure convergence and pure divergence. That is, in Harvey's (1989b) thesis, urban entrepreneurialism is pursued by autonomous local governments. Thus, any city with an autonomous local government which pursues entrepreneurialism, is a case of (direct) convergence. However, conversely, if a local government is not autonomous, all things being equal, then there can be no entrepreneurialism. This is what I refer to as 'reverse convergence'.

- ❖ The neoliberal era has emboldened citizens, particularly the middle class with cosmopolitan dispositions and views, who connect with global capitalists to develop malls that help to shape the city's urban development
- ❖ Malls represents nodes of global convergence in Accra which defines citizens' idea of modernity.
- ❖ Modernity to many respondents (about 80 percent) of the quantitative survey (totalling 409) mean 'new, efficient, and convenient ways of doing things'; yet some agree (about 20 percent) that it means to 'look like the West or something imported/reminiscing the West'
- ❖ Malls operate an open door policy that target people beyond their niche market as well as adopt informal tactics to shore up their competitiveness in the city economic space
- ❖ Traditional chiefs' intervention in the development of West Hills Mall led to a situation where the impact of West Hills on its local communities is much stronger than Accra Mall

- ❖ About 30 percent of new direct jobs are created by the malls. Hence, all the seven malls in the city together make about 2 percent reduction on the city-wide unemployment rate

## **9.2 Contribution to Knowledge**

Through the case study of shopping malls, the study has helped to enhance understanding of neoliberalism and globalisation processes in the context of a sub-Saharan African country, especially in how urban governance restructuring in the neoliberal African city may be understood. Previous studies on urban entrepreneurialism (McGuirk, 2004; Panebianco, 2005; Gillen, 2009; Davila, 2014) have had less focus on the experiences in sub-Saharan Africa. The few on sub-Saharan Africa are focused largely on South Africa (Rogerson, 1999; Didier et al., 2012) whilst those beyond South Africa are related to new urban entrepreneurialism proposals yet to be implemented (Wrag and Lim, 2015). Specifically in Ghana, previous studies have focused more on transnational flow of capital (Grant, 2009; Hobden, 2015) with less on governance structures, consumption and local economic development impact. As such this study is as timely as it is seminal, since it has added additional dimension to the impact of urban entrepreneurialism in a sub-Saharan African city.

The important contributions this study has made to knowledge include redefining urban governance restructuring in addressing local economic development, by focusing on the role of middle class citizens with cosmopolitan dispositions and visions (Skrbis and Woodward, 2007) and traditional chiefs in local economic development. It has also exposed some of the challenges that non-autonomous city governments face including bureaucracy. Finally, the study has enhanced our understanding of how malls shape understanding of modernity (in a neoliberal African city) where malls are seen as nodes of global convergence. I have categorised these contributions under: i) contributions to the literature on urban entrepreneurialism, ii) urban governance challenges, and iii) to the literature on shopping malls in Africa.

**i) To the general literature on urban entrepreneurialism in the global South**

Through the entrepreneurial city thesis, the study attempted to understand how Accra's shopping malls fit into the narrative of urban entrepreneurialism projects where public and private sector actors coordinate to address urban economic challenges. I make two contributions, namely, redefining urban entrepreneurialism in the neoliberal African city and chiefs' role as an organic form of local economic development.

***1. Re-defining urban entrepreneurialism in the Neoliberal African city: How cosmopolitan citizens (with or without entrepreneurial track record) shape urban development***

The study has unearthed how urban economic outcomes may be achieved through alternative route. I pointed out how cosmopolitan citizens help shape urban outcomes by playing key roles in urban governance re-structuring in neoliberal Africa but whose role in urban governance restructuring has been less articulated, particularly in the global South. This amounts to diversifying urban studies (Robinson, 2002). On that score, the study has expanded the borders of urban governance restructuring in the global South.

Coupled with the non-autonomous status of their local governments in relation to the nation-state, neoliberal African cities, as noted in Chapter Five and elsewhere, also have limited capacities of urban social amenities and infrastructure. Neoliberal austerities seem to have further exacerbated their constraints. Consequently, citizens tend to chart their own course for survival. Concurrently, it is understood that the African middle class continue to expand (AfDB, 2012; Melber, 2016). Due to increased globalisation, these (middle class) citizens continue to be imbued with cosmopolitan dispositions and visions: foreign travels, exposure to diverse global cultures, collaborating and networking with foreigners, particularly global

capitalists. Definitely, these citizens constitute a huge potential that could be tapped for Africa's urban development. Cosmopolitan dispositions expose middle class citizens to cultural diversity and models in other countries which some attempt to replicate back home (Hobden, 2014, 2015). It also helped to shape their worldviews, including exposing them to the needs of a globalising city, such as modern shopping malls and how malls help shape urban development. Yet, their contributions to Africa's urban development and particularly urban entrepreneurialism has been less researched. This study therefore has opened up cosmopolitan middle class citizens' role, including those in diaspora, in urban development for further debate, especially given their role in the development of Accra's shopping malls.

Against this backdrop, one important finding in the study is that urban entrepreneurialism may not always be achieved through a series of programmatic steps where local governments and other non-state actors 'develop a commitment to realising a broadly consensual vision of urban development, [and] devise appropriate structures for implementing this vision and mobilise both local and nonlocal resources to achieve it' (Parkinson and Harding, 1995:66). The study revealed that even in contexts where the local government is not autonomous and/or pro-active, private sector actors, who possess social capital and other networks, are able to connect with global capitalists to side-step the prescriptions of the entrepreneurial city theorists. One such social capital, as I argued in Chapter Five, is cosmopolitan dispositions/visions acquired through foreign travels.

On that score, urban governance restructuring in the neoliberal African city, such as Accra, benefits from the involvement of middle class citizens who have become cosmopolitan citizens (Hutchings and Dannreuther, 1999) such that with or without entrepreneurship track record, they connect with global capitalists for urban development. Consequently, in neoliberal African city, private (sector)-public partnership (PPP) is replaced with local (private)-global connection/partnership.

Bennington and Geddes (1992) argued that where the public sector may be less active, the private sector could take lead role in urban entrepreneurialism. Yet, this is predicated on private sector actors who are already (well-established) entrepreneurs or investors. Nonetheless, it has been shown in this study, especially in Accra Mall's case, that non-entrepreneurs with cosmopolitan visions and enterprising spirit can, through networking with global capitalists and local power-brokers, start off coalition that have a deterministic impact on the urban economy and development. As such, in this study, I have extended the boundaries of urban entrepreneurialism by positing that private sector actors in urban coalition may as well be spearheaded by individuals who do not necessarily have an entrepreneurial track record but possess cosmopolitan dispositions to achieve urban development outcome similar to what obtains with PPP.

## ***2. Chiefs' role in entrepreneurial urban development can have very deterministic effect on local economy development (LED): Organic Form of LED Process***

Neoliberalism amounts to a roll back of the state (Peck and Tickell, 2002; Gooptu, 2009) and creative destruction (Berman, 1986; Brenner and Theodore, 2002) where pre-existing national level state structures and welfare distributive systems which may be antithetical to the free-market logic are disrupted, eliminated or subordinated to the free-market (Harvey, 1989b, 2005).

Arising from such a situation, as already indicated, neoliberalism produces austerity that impact negatively on cities. Under neoliberalism therefore, global South cities, particularly in sub-Saharan Africa, with limited capacities tend to bear the brunt (Davila, 2014). Arising from such austerity, local citizens in the labour market have become subjugated to the lower rungs of the urban economic hierarchy (Gooptu, 2009), a position this study has confirmed.

From the finding in this study, I argued that in Ghana, where the nation-state is co-opted in the neoliberalism project whilst the local state is constrained (through non-autonomy), unorthodox urban power brokers (e.g. community opinion formers and traditional leaders) may enter the urban governance structure to ensure local citizens' economic welfare. I refer to these as 'unorthodox' because, given its global North bias, the entrepreneurial city thesis does not factor in the role of traditional chieftaincy institutions. In this study, I found that local chiefs could have a deterministic role in the local economic development process in urban governance.

In the local economic development (LED) literature, the role of such traditional chieftaincy institution in contemporary urban development in the Ghana has been less researched. In Ghana, previous study on LED has been focused on the role of the local governments (Ofosu, 2015, 2016) or on the role of international development agencies (Mensah et al, 2017). This study therefore added to the LED literature and the LED processes in Ghana. As such, the study has contributed to our understanding of how urban governance in Africa may be understood in an organic way. For instance, it shows how the role of local chiefs who were only consulted in the process rather than being part of the process from the outset had an important impact especially in the case of the West Hills Mall. It also demonstrates how existing traditional/local systems could be linked with modern/global systems to address economic challenges such as poverty reduction, etc. in local communities. Given the historical role of local chiefs in the Ghanaian society, the findings of this study also reveal that further research is needed to understand better the role of traditional authorities in contemporary Ghana's urban development and thereby inform future policymaking.

## ii) To the literature on urban governance (challenges) in Africa

According to Pierre (1999), urban governance is influenced by the form of local government. By the same logic, challenges of the local government has consequential impact on urban governance. Urban governance takes the form of managerialism or entrepreneurialism (Harvey, 1989). They may also take the corporatist or welfare modes (Pierre, 1999). In practice though, according to Deng (2019), a local government may in fact have a combination of two or more forms depending on the objectives, the actors and what pertains at the nation-state. These factors may pull in different directions. Additionally, contextual and relational factors relating to historical, socio-cultural, land-use and economic exigencies, etc. may also impact the governance system. In essence, all these are bound to produce their own set of challenges.

This study has helped to better understand some of the challenges that inhibit local governments, even in the context of decentralisation, in pursuit of urban entrepreneurialism. Of course, in Harvey's (1989b:6) treatise he has pointed out that entrepreneurialism may be championed by 'some cabal of local financiers, industrialists and merchants, or some "roundtable" of business leaders'. This gives a pointer, albeit indirectly, to the potential of a 'local-state capture'<sup>108</sup> by private investors which in itself is a challenge to the pursuit of urban entrepreneurialism. In Accra, I argued that some of these challenges have likely derailed or delayed execution of urban development projects. Yet, in the urban governance literature on Accra, particularly in their bid to pursue urban entrepreneurialism, less attention has been focused on challenges confronting local governments.

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<sup>108</sup> See World Bank (2000). *Anticorruption in Transition: Contribution to the Policy Debate*. Washington, DC: World Bank Publications for a discussion of the concept of 'state capture'.

To be sure, there are several studies on governance, focused largely at the national and other local government levels, vis-à-vis the latter's subservience (Ayee, 2009, 2011; Ahwoi, 2011). Others also focus on decentralisation (Mohan, 1996) and spatial impacts of decentralization and urban governance (Owusu, 2015) or on urban governance in peri-urban areas (Gough, 1999). Thus, this study has added to the stock of knowledge on urban governance in Accra by bringing out some of the challenges confronting local governments in pursuit of urban entrepreneurialism. I identified specifically bureaucratic challenges, which I categorised as either institutional or procedural bureaucracy, which adversely impact local government function. In terms of *institutional bureaucracies* I indicated it stems from the governmental structures which tend to replicate all agencies and departments within each level of government (from local to national) irrespective of size, location and resources available to relevant (local) government. Such replications tend to lead to duplication of functions and turf protection all of which add to the bureaucratic milieu. A number of urban experts interviewed who work closely with the local governments in Accra share the position that there is a desire to protect turfs amongst local government practitioners.

*[P]eople [in the local governments] have turfs they protect.* (Andrew Quansah, Oct. 2016)

*But everybody wants to do turf [...] protect my turf. I am not really interested; I am just interested in my... business* (Johnson Bando, March, 2017)

For *procedural bureaucracy*, I identified it as resulting from the multi-layered and hierarchical administrative and governmental structures from the local level through regional to the national where each layer has its own set of bureaucracy that local government officials need to grapple with in seeking approval for the execution of urban development projects.

### iii) To the literature on shopping malls in Africa and the global South

While a lot has been written about shopping malls around the world, in sub-Saharan Africa this is not the case. This is partly because, apart from South Africa, shopping malls have only recently, in the first decade of the twenty first century, begun to engage the attention of researchers in Africa. This study therefore makes an important addition to the literature on shopping malls in Africa and by extension the global South, as spaces of consumption and projectors of modernity. The contributions the study makes include the need for malls in the global South/sub-Saharan Africa, to be seen as '*nodes of global convergence*' and as '*multiple loci of consumption*'. Whilst the former is an original contribution, the latter is an extension of the notion of malls as 'glamorised locus of consumption' (Goss, 1993; Firat and Venkatesh, 1995; Logemann, 2009; Trevinal, 2013).

#### 1. *Malls as Nodes of Global Convergence*

In the literature on shopping malls, Al (2017) notes that malls are pointers or predictors of evolution in consumption patterns around the globe. Al's (2017) observation points to the fact that a new mall developed anywhere could help redefine new consumption patterns. This seem to give credence to Goss' (1993) earlier argument that malls are 'ideological dreamspaces' that seduce people to consume; in other words, they induce new consumption lifestyles. With their expansion into the global South, Salcedo (2003) indicate that malls are 'artefacts of globalisation' on account of both their physical form, their tendencies of segregation and homogenisation as well as their intrinsic global origin. Arising from these perspectives, I have argued in this study that malls in Ghana are more than 'artefacts of globalisation'. They also represents 'nodes of global convergence'.

In arguing that they are nodes of global convergence, I made a number of propositions, namely, that they i) have been funded by international capital ii) have been developed with international

architectural forms imported or pioneered principally by South African architects, iii) have been occupied and run by international brand names and merchandize, though local products are also showcased, and iv) are patronised by various categories of people including Ghanaians, Africans and people from around the world who live in Accra and beyond, including expatriates, diplomatic corps, etc. Additionally, the practices, including how operators and shop staff conduct their affairs, are all steeped in the global mall culture. In that sense, I argued that the malls in Accra, in point of fact, represent a node of convergence of global capital, products, and culture. In that case, whilst they may be referred to as ‘artefacts of globalisation’, they also convert places and spaces in cities into nodes where global culture, products and indeed materialities of the mall itself are showcased. And in being showcased, products, practices and materialities also tend to interact/intermingle, and in interacting they coevolve. In coevolving, all these (products, practices/culture and materialities), both foreign and local, get conflated to produce a glamorous image. These, I argue, lead to redefining (or the re-emergence of) a new consumption pattern made up of both the global and local forms.

It might well be the case though that since, especially in Accra, the global (brands, products, etc.) predominate, the new lifestyle of consumption is heavily tilted to the global North patterns, which is almost invariably associated with the idea of modernity. Hence, malls are projected as modern because they are nodes of global convergence.

As I indicated, for most Accra residents who visit the mall, as obtained through the interviews and the questionnaires, modernity means ‘new and efficient ways of doing things’. On that basis, the citizens have largely accepted the malls not so much because of how they are reminiscent of the West, but on how they help them to meet their consumption needs efficiently, conveniently and hygienically as well as serving to redefine their identity (through associating with malls) as also being modern.

## ***2. Malls as representing multiple loci of consumption***

I indicated previously that malls are seen as ‘glamorous locus of consumption’ and as such they attract customers partly on account of their glamour. In arguing that malls are nodes of global convergence, I indicated (above) that malls are then projected as modern from that point. Modernity, or a desire for efficiency or rather for ‘transformations of... [any] kinds’, according to Robbinson (2006:21), is a common human aspiration. Thus, once malls are seen as modern all classes of people, including the upper class, middle class and the low-income group are all attracted.

On that basis, arising from my data, I argued that the low-income group may be drawn to the malls much more on basis of the malls being ‘glamorous locus’. This was predicated on the view that the low-income citizens tend to visit the malls not so much for the purpose of purchasing goods but to enjoy the spectacle of the malls and to associate with modernity. As such, one may find people visiting malls for sight-seeing and taking selfies. Though this is in no way to suggest that all who take selfies belong to the low-income group. On the other hand, for the upper and the middle class citizens, I argued that, glamour may itself be an additional service provided by the malls. These category of consumers visit the mall for shopping, recreation, securing and negotiating business deals, among others. Yet, additional reasons are for convenience; that is, the malls are doing a one-stop shop, especially in a congested city where mobility is impaired, and their hygienic nature compared to the traditional shops and markets. As a result, I argued that the malls represent ‘multiple loci of consumption’, rather than mere locus of glamorous consumption. This contribution to the literature on shopping malls is therefore an extension of the notion of malls as glamorous locus of consumption (Goss, 1993; Firat and Venkatesh, 1995; Logemann, 2009; Trevinal, 2013).

### 9.3 Policy Recommendations

Following the 2013 national urban policy and the 2016 public financial management law (Act 862), two institutional frameworks that seek to advance urban development, this thesis has a number of policy recommendations that will, hopefully, serve to enhance urban development in Accra, in particular, and Ghana in general. It is anticipated that some of the recommendations may find useful applications in other sub-Saharan African nations where western-style shopping malls have been expanding rapidly.

#### i) Need for Local Content Law

It is important for government to consider enacting a law to regulate the emerging retail industry. This will help optimise the benefits from malls including increasing revenue to the state, projecting Ghanaian identity, and ensuring that mall and shop operators work within a common regulatory framework. Indeed, I found that the lack of such legislation has resulted in a situation where transnational retailers chart their own courses. Albert Manu, a mall developer, noted the usefulness of such a law both to the state and the international shops, who tend to find out if there are any local laws regulating the industry:

*As much as possible, bottom line, you need local content in your mall... even... When foreigners come to our mall, are they coming to eat burgers, are they coming to eat Pizza? Look, they have bigger malls and there are better malls. Somebody wants to try “Kokoo and beans<sup>109</sup>”, and you lack it in Accra Mall, right next to your airport! What happens? Are you selling Ghana or you are selling a western mall?... Okay, so... local content is always key. Even Shoprite [...], when the international players come in, they ask you; ‘what local content is mixing in?’ (Albert Manu, Oct. 2016)*

A local content law could focus on aspects related to ensuring a certain minimum local shareholding in the mall investment, as highlighted in Chapter Eight, as well as local shops that could, perhaps, serve to project Ghanaian identity in the malls. It is hoped that these would be

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<sup>109</sup> Kokoo and beans is a local dish of fried ripened plantain and beans stew-sometimes it is also called ‘red-red’

part of the means of ensuring some ‘localness’ in these global nodes, which could reflect Cohen’s (2006) observation of how McDonalds adapted to fit the Chinese local culture.

Also, such legislation may consider the need for the establishment of a Ghana markets trust fund, of a sort, akin to SSNIT. Such a fund could be run by both the private sector and the public sector (e.g. local state) with the mandate to invest and take shares in the emerging shopping malls to increase local wealth creation. The private sector could be the traditional markets and, in this case, they could be organised into local cooperatives who could make contributions into the fund. Of course, in exploring options to sustain such a fund, local governments who tax the malls could consider putting a fraction of such taxes into the fund. During the fieldwork local governments indicated that they use part of the taxes from malls for their recurrent expenditure. Therefore, it should not be difficult to consider exploring means of investing some of these revenues, as being proposed here. As a matter of fact, the operation of this fund can learn a lot from the SSNIT and other international systems.

Contrary to the position that calling for a local content law may be akin to a state involvement in the market which is, presumably, against the neoliberal ethos, Brenner and Theodore (2002) and Peck and Tickell (2002) have posited that the state still has a role in ensuring social, economic and even environmental justice where private actions might out-step boundaries that could spell collective (or ‘mutually assured’) destruction of the entire social, economic, political and environmental system. It is known that the youth could start agitation if they feel unemployed and economically helpless (Urdal, 2006). Furthermore, there has been cases where labour has led destructive social agitations across the world when it felt short-changed (Susser, 2001). Miller et al. (2008:36) also notes that there have been threats in Nigeria to ‘burn down Shoprite shops’. In the case of Accra’s malls, I have shown that they are predominantly youthful and there is a rising level of dissatisfaction amongst low income staff relating to their employment conditions which needs to be addressed. Ghana has had its fair share of labour

agitations in both private and particularly formal public sectors for a long time (Herbst, 1993) and this history need to inform urban policymaking in the twenty-first century. On that score, government may need to reconsider the minimum wage and perhaps may have to start debate on categorising minimum wages instead of the currently existing blanket/general one which does not go far enough for low income groups.

Finally, I pointed out that the malls are challenging local traditional markets and there is evidence that the middle class is being swayed from patronage of local markets to the malls for reasons such as convenience and hygiene. As such, it is important to ensure local markets also become concerned with providing convenient and hygienic shopping environment. But, given their low capacity, they may need government intervention. This way, traditional markets will be able to compete quite well for (middle-class, etc.) customers. With a potent competition from a re-organised local traditional markets, customers are likely to benefit from low prices in both malls and local markets. As such, there is need for the local markets to be modernised. On that basis, recent modernisation works in some big markets in the country (i.e. the Kumasi Central Market and the Cape Coast Kotokoraba Market) embarked on by the central government is highly commendable. But then, local governments need to lead a crusade to ensure, encourage and enforce local market operators refrain from displaying their wares on the floor to make them appeal to middle class consumers.

ii) The need for organised labor unions in the malls

In Chapter Eight, I argued that a lack of unionisation does not afford the mall labour to speak with one voice and this state of affair makes them unable to push for improved conditions of service that usually local labour unions are noted for. I further indicated that there was no evidence of the mall labour having links to the larger Ghana Trades Union Congress (GTUC). Consequently, they are unable to benefit from such things as collective bargaining, etc. As

such, each individual within the mall labour is left to his/her own devices. With an established union, connected to the GTUC, issues related to general employee welfare, salary levels, contract of employment, and upward social mobility can be taken up not only at the local level but also at the government of Ghana level through the TUC.

iii) Increased linkage of mall operations with the larger Ghanaian society

I have argued the malls could spur local economic development through indirect and even direct job creation, among others. However, there is a need for targeted interventions such as attempts at linking their operations with the larger Ghanaian economy. This will among others involve, again, a national development policy on malls. Such a policy may consider using malls for equitable urbanisation, linkages to other economic activities (out-growers, cooperatives, etc.), increasing skills of staff and boosting consumption. On that score, three reasons inform this view.

First, systematic attempts by governments to decentralise development fairly across the city will lead to convergence of development across the city. There is evidence that national leadership considers projects like malls could be used to ensure equitable urbanisation in the city relating to where they are sited, job creation and general local economic revitalisation. The centre manager of West Hills said that when then President Mahama opened the West Hills Mall, he noted that it was government's plan to use the malls to enhance the local economies across the city of Accra which is why they have attempted to disperse their development across the city<sup>110</sup>. Again, when current President, Akuffo Addo, opened the Kumasi City Mall (KCM) on May 10, 2017, he indicated that:

*Our priority is to do all we can to give our entrepreneurs the certainty of a positive business environment, devoid of arbitrary and irrational policy initiatives, so that they*

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<sup>110</sup> I could however not get a copy of the President's speech to verify

*can do what they should do best—invest in the numerous opportunities to create jobs and prosperity* (Emphasis original)

On that basis, it is suggested that one such intervention will be to incentivise investors to move to less affluent areas e.g. west of Accra. This strategy has been well-documented by scholars such as Storper et al (2015). Yet, in Accra, such policies need to be considered together with a slew of urban development projects including upgrading infrastructure such as roads, power, schools, hospitals, etc. which could lead to attraction of new (gated) community development (such as Fortune City is developing) into such areas. Particularly for transport infrastructure, given the high vehicular congestion in Accra, it is important for the state to consider seriously transport the transportation infrastructure across the length and breadth of the city. Also, the setting up of academic and research centers will enhance other parts of Accra that are underserved. For instance, in the west of Accra, a state of the art center of excellence (say local economic development research) could be set up in the nearby University for Management Studies. This could come as a collaboration between the government and the investors/proprietors of the university in a sort of private-public partnership arrangement. Such initiatives will be helpful in attracting some of the knowledgeable, talented and skilled individuals to this part of the city.

Second, increased linkages to the local economy could be achieved through many local people/suppliers having access to the malls to sell their products, e.g. on the shelves, like what is currently being done by shops like Shoprite and Game, or side walk sales, etc. A national debate could be generated through the media to inform policy direction. This is especially critical against the background that President Akufo Addo indicated at the opening of KCM that *“the items originating from Ghana and from our local entrepreneurs constitute barely a paltry 5 percent of goods on sale [in the malls]. All over the world, new enterprises, such as this mall, have spawned the creation of jobs and investments, and triggered increased local*

*spending*". Also the issue of indirect job creation where local producers work with the transnational retailers needs to be taken seriously. It follows to reason, therefore, that if the nation wants to increase the benefits from malls the need for increased linkages to the Ghanaian economy needs to be taken seriously.

But such a scenario will be feasible with increased local capacity through cooperatives and out grower schemes as indicated, which could enhance ability to access funding. In terms of capacity building, networking with civil societies and researchers, including the research outfit of Broll Ghana Ltd which is responsible for management of all the malls in the city, will be step in the right direction in learning about best practices.

Finally, some challenges with the labour market in Africa, particularly the youth and accounting partly for the high un(der)employment, are skills mismatch and low skills of the youth (Betcherman and Khan, 2015; Kilimani, 2017). Thus, to deepen the (economic) connection between malls and the local economies, one way will be to explore how malls could be conceived as a place of skills acquisition. Again, national policy on malls could address this. Such could be done through incentivising mall operators and shop owners through tax subsidies. Such policies could focus on employable skills needed for upward social mobility for staff such as computer skills, programming, writing of business reports/proposal, new cooking recipes, etc. I will argue that this would not be out of place but would be another creative means of using malls to benefit local people and staff and may as well be the malls' cooperate social responsibility. Indeed, in the US, some malls have created dedicated spaces for social and community-related meeting rooms, as reported by Staeheli and Mitchel (2006). Elsewhere, local governments have collaborated with business owners through tax holidays, grants, loans, etc. to ensure local people are trained to increase their skills and job-preparedness as part of the processes involved in local economic development (Carmeli, 2007; Kilimani, 2007; Betcherman and Khan, 2015; Rachmwati, 2016).

#### **9.4 Areas of Further Research**

In the course of the research, new issues cropped up that have opened up new areas that need further research to deepen our understanding of. Amongst these are:

- ❖ The current state of the evicted informal scrap dealers who occupied the West Hills Mall site
- ❖ The impact shopping malls are having on local/traditional markets. For instance, the market that adjoins the Achimota Retail Market which also fields a local bus station. It will be interesting to know the effect the mall has had on this market and generally how the emerging malls are affecting livelihoods of the informal markets women, as pointed out in Chapter Seven and Eight.
- ❖ The impact of the malls on the property market, particularly those within the mall localities around the West Hills Mall. Mall development and attendant increasing property values have been known to lead to gentrification (Ley, 1996).
- ❖ The impact of shopping mall development on indirect job creation. I found this to be a potential area of tremendous benefits to local citizens. But, our understanding of it remains quite weak.
- ❖ The role of the foreign/expatriate community in Ghana in shaping new consumer culture in the city of Accra in new consumption spaces like the malls.
- ❖ A need for research on auditing of urban development projects to ascertain the extent of delays and the cost/benefits to the nation and the local-state.

Finally, in concluding, the study has shown that mall development has come to Accra with a number of local economic development benefits. First, they have created new jobs for youth who are just entering the job market for the first time and also have created a number of channels for indirect jobs which indeed have huge potential. Second, they have obviously led to reduction in poverty and undoubtedly created some degree of wealth for some citizens,

particularly the local investors and shop owners. Third, they create an avenue for revenue stream for both the national and local-state. Four, they have led to growth of other informal economic activities, despite the ambivalence surrounding proliferation of informalities. On consumption, they have introduced international brands that hitherto have not been in Ghana and thereby redefined consumption in the city. They have enhanced image of the various city locations and brought western or global modernity to the city in as much as they have given opportunity for local culture, in the sense of hospitality customs, etc., to be showcased to a global community. These are all part of the positives or the advantages that are associated with urban entrepreneurial projects, as noted by Harvey (1989b).

However, it is evident that they fall short of some of the rationalisations attendant to the competitive cities such as wealth creation to citizens, especially the low income staff who I indicated that their remuneration and welfare do not go far enough as to enhance savings and wealth creation. To this I argued that they are only lifted off from the level of extreme poverty but still left in poverty. And even the local investors, it is clear that their share, apart from SSNIT, are normally small, between 5 and 10 percent. Further, local shop owners also occupy the lower rungs on the wealth creation ladder. So, the malls in Accra are not meeting the objectives attendant to wealth creation rationalisation of the competitive cities theorists. On that score, the project closely reinvokes Harvey's (1989b, 2005) criticism of urban entrepreneurialism and the neoliberal turn in which it is rather the 'fat' private/international capitalists who benefit. As indicated, tax revenues which would have otherwise gone into improving urban amenities (water, sanitation, housing, etc.) have been enjoyed by the investors through tax holidays, rebates and subsidies, before and during operations, as highlighted in Chapter Five and Seven. But, to be fair, mall shop owners have also borne some of the brunt of the economic difficulties in the nation in the last four years, especially during the energy crisis.

However, the potential for increased benefit exists and policymakers need to critically assess and devise measures to maximise them. There is no denying the fact that Accra, and for that matter Ghana is now increasingly embedded in the global economy. As such, there is a need for rethinking (or a national consciousness on) the role of the state in the global economy. Yet, given that Ghana is signatory to almost every neoliberal laws/treaty such as the World Trade organization's (WTO) free trade agreements, it remains to be seen how much the state could maximise its benefits in the global economy.

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# APPENDICES

## Appendix 1-Interview Guideline

### i. Urban Governance

1. What is your role in the organization?
2. What is the specific role of your organization in Accra's urban development, generally?
3. Do you have idea which investors (local and international) developed the malls?
4. How were the international investors attracted into the consumer retail sector?
5. If you are a local investor/developer, what was your motivation for entering into mall development in the city? If you are not, do you know what might have motivated the local investors?
6. If your organization is a local investor, what are the organizational policies that guide decisions to enter into such investments, and what do you think are the motivations?
7. Are there specific government policies that guides and protects local investors' interest in these investments? If yes, what are some of these?
8. If you a local investor, what specific roles and responsibilities have been assigned you in relation to administration and governance of the malls?
9. Is there a specific issue that as a local investor/developer you have ensured was maintained in the development and the operation of the malls?
10. How was the land acquired for developing the malls?
11. The land areas where the malls are located were originally zoned as industrial or residential, but malls are considered as commercial. How come the sites were allowed for construction of malls?
12. Were the original land owners adequately compensated?
13. How did the investors/developers engage with the local community?
14. Was there any opposition from the local community/pressure group/civil society organization, and, if yes, how were they dealt with?
15. What are some of the decisions or factors taken into consideration for siting of the malls?
16. What are some of the specific confrontations/contestations/challenges encountered before and during the construction of the projects and how were they dealt with?
17. Do you still grapple with some of these challenges even after the mall's opening?
18. Are you aware of specific tenant-related problems/challenges in the malls and how are these addressed?
19. It is speculated that the some malls are wrongly sited and were going to be demolished around 2009/2010. If this is true, how was the land acquired and permission granted for its construction?
20. What is your personal opinion about the location/siting of the malls in the city?
21. To what extent was the local government involved in the malls' public private partnership (PPP) arrangements?
22. Are there established legal frameworks for entering into PPP arrangements in the city? If yes, who developed them?
23. How involved was the local government in the construction of the malls?
24. Do you know whether any local government policy or by-laws were changed to allow for the construction of the mall? If yes, what are these?

25. Can you name any specific national politician who was involved the implementation and development of the malls, that made them successful?

**ii. (Local) Economic Development**

1. What is your role in the mall management structure?
2. If you are a local investor, how much have you or did you invest in their development?
3. Overall, how much revenue is generated by the mall in a year?
4. How much revenue has accrued to you, as a local investore, since you invested in the partnership?
5. How were such revenues applied?
6. What percentage of revenue goes into recurrent expenditure and taxes?
7. How many people are employed by the mall management?
8. What activities does the management oversee?
9. What other creative ways do the mall management adopt to raise revenue?
10. How much revenue is made from these activities?
11. As a local partner, do you have a policy to ensure that a certain percentage of Ghanaians are employed in the malls?
12. Do you make some of the decisions regarding employment and remuneration of people in the malls or the shops?
13. How many Ghanaians are employed by the various shops in the mall?
14. Roughly how many customers/visitors visit the mall in a month/year?
15. Is there a system of knowing how many of these customers/visitors are Ghanaians and foreigners?
16. How many shops are available or the total rentable area and what is the distribution of the shops? Local/international/international franchise/not-rented?
17. How many shops are for local people/organization?
18. How much revenue does the city generate from the malls in a month/year?

**iii. City Image, Modernity and Branding**

1. What is your understanding of modernity?
2. Have you heard of the term global city before?
3. If so what do you think it is?
4. Do you think Accra is a global city? Why or why not?
5. Do you think Accra is a modern city? Why or why not?
6. How do you think the malls have helped project an image of modernity in Accra?
7. If I asked you to select one of these factors as what attributes of the mall as what is projecting Accra's modernity (architecture design, origin of merchandise, presence of international brands) which one will you choose, and why?  
7b. If you think it all of the three, then rank them in order of importance:  
1st.....2nd.....3rd.....
- For Local Government officials only**
8. Does the city government have a specific branding policy to market the city?  
If yes, what is the objective of such policy?

9. When did city branding policy begin as part of the urban development policy of the city?
10. Is there a budgetary allocation made for branding the city in the city's annual budget?
11. What are some of the strategies that have been adopted so far to market/brand the city?
12. Is there a department within the local government responsible for branding the city?
13. Are there development strategies for specific city locations, such as areas in the city ear-marked for specific development to attract investors? If yes, what are the programs/projects and which specific locations in the city?
14. Do you think such policies were influential in attracting the mall investors to the specific locations they are now?

## Appendix 2- Questionnaires for Shop Staff/Assistants

### INTRODUCTION

I am a student at the Oxford University studying for the Doctor of Philosophy (DPhil) degree. I am organizing this study to enable me write my dissertation, which is an integral part of the program of study. My thesis topic is “**Neoliberalism, Urban Development and Accra’s (Ghana) Shopping Malls as New Spaces of Urban Consumption**”.

The information you provide will be treated as confidential and will be used only for academic purposes. Thank you for agreeing to help.

### Personal Information

1. Identification Number.....Sex: M/F
2. Age.....
3. Marital status i) Married ii) Single iii) Divorce iv) Widowed
4. Do you have children? Yes/No
5. Level of Education and qualification.....i) First cycle (primary/Junior High) ii) Second Cycle (Secondary: WASSE, SSCE, O’ and A’ levels) iii) Tertiary (University/Polytechnic/Post-Sec) iv) Other (state).....

### Shop Information

6. What is the name of the shop you work in?.....
7. Which mall do you work for? i) Accra Mall ii) West Hills Mall
8. What does your shop deal in? i) Fashion/Clothing/general wears ii) Food/groceries and general goods iii) Computer and electronics iv) Others (state).....
9. How do you describe your shop? i) Ghanaian/local firm ii) Foreign/International firm iii) Local with a Foreign Franchise iv) others (state).....

### Employment/Labour information

10. Did you have a job before your current work? Yes/No
11. If yes, what was your previous place of work? State.....
12. Was your previous job in the formal or informal sector? State.....
13. How much were you earning in your previous job? i) Nothing ii) GHC300 iii) GHC500 iv) More than GHC500
14. How do you describe your current appointment/job? i) Student Trainee/Attachment ii) Probationer staff iii) Casual worker iv) Permanent staff
15. What is your role/position in the shop? i) Supervisor ii) Shop Assistant iii) Cleaner iv) Others (state).....
16. Is your job full time or part time? i) Full time ii) Part-time
17. What is your working hours? i) 8am-5pm ii) 8am-12pm iii) 12pm-9pm iii) other (state).....
18. How long have you worked in this shop? i) Less than 6months ii) 6months-1year iii)

- 1 year-2 years iv) More than 2 years
19. Do you have appointment letter? Yes/No
  20. How much do you earn a month? i) Nothing ii) GHC300 iii) GHC500 iv) More than GHC500 (state).....
  21. When did you last receive a pay rise in this shop? i) More than 1 year ago ii) About 6 months ago iii) About 3 months ago iv) Other (state).....
  22. How much were you paid before your current salary? State.....
  23. Are there any other incentives attached to your appointment apart from your monthly salary? Yes/No
  24. If yes, what are some of these? [Tick all that applies] i) Annual leave with pay ii) possibility for study leave with pay iii) sales Bonus iv) Other (state).....
  25. Where do you live in Accra? State.....
  26. How do you get to work? i) By private car ii) By public transport (trotro/bus) iii) By company vehicle iv) Other (state).....
  27. How long does it take you to get to work?.....
  28. How much do you spend on transportation per month/week/day trip to work?.....
  29. Do you live in a rented accommodation or with relatives?.....
  30. If you pay rent, how much per month? i) GHC50-100 ii) GHC101-300 iii) GHC301-500 iv) More than GHC500

### **Aspirations and Work Ethics**

31. Were you given job orientation on your appointment? Yes/No
32. Do you wear uniform to work? Yes/No
33. Do you use computer in your work? Yes/No
34. Have you attended any refresher course/in-service training in the last year? Yes/No
35. If yes, did the training entail use of computers? Yes/No
36. What else did such training entail?.....  
.....  
.....
37. What new skills have you learnt since you started working here?.....  
.....  
.....
38. What motivated you to apply to work here? i) to help meet my economic needs ii) higher salary iii) the general atmosphere of the mall iv) job security v) to get money to go back to school vi) Other (state).....
39. What is your aspiration for working in this shop? i) Student on industrial training ii) to get experience and move on iii) to help meet my basic economic needs iv) to remain here until my pension
40. Would you say your aspirations have been met? Yes/No
41. Explain why yes/No.....  
.....  
.....
42. Is the experience of working in a shopping mall different from working in a shop facing directly on the street? Yes/No

43. If Yes,  
 explain.....  
 .....  
 .....
44. Do you think you need different skills to work in a mall? Yes/No
45. If yes,  
 why?.....  
 .....  
 .....
46. What do your family and friends think about your job in the  
 mall?.....  
 .....  
 .....

**City Image and Modernity**

47. Does the presence of the malls make Accra a modern city? Yes/No
48. What is your understanding of the term ‘modern’? i) something that has relevant use in the current/contemporary world ii) something developed or made in Ghana iii) something imported from abroad iv) something that looks like what is in the western world
49. How do you think the mall have helped project an image of Accra as a modern city?  
 i) Because it looks like what is in the western world ii) Because it has everything one needs iii) Because there are people of all cultures who patronize it iv) Because it offers an excellent shopping experience
50. Which attribute of the mall do you think helps put Accra on a ‘world map’? i) the architecture design ii) the international brands iii) origin of merchandize iv) All three
51. If you think it is (All three), rank them in order of importance:  
 1<sup>st</sup> .....2<sup>nd</sup> .....3<sup>rd</sup> .....

Thank you for your cooperation

## Appendix 3- Questionnaires for Shop Owners/Managers

### INTRODUCTION

I am a doctoral student at the Oxford University studying for the Doctor of Philosophy (DPhil) degree. I am organizing this study to enable me write my dissertation, which is an integral part of the program of study. My thesis topic is “**Neoliberalism, Urban Development and Accra’s (Ghana) Shopping Malls as New Spaces of Urban Consumption**”.

The information you provide will be treated as confidential and will be used only for academic purposes. Thank you for agreeing to help.

#### Personal Information

1. Identification Number.....Sex: M/F
2. Age.....
3. Marital status i) Married ii) Single iii) Divorce iv) Widowed
4. Do you have children? Yes/No
5. Level of Education and qualification.....i) Second Cycle (Secondary: WASSE, SSCE, O’ and A’ levels) ii) Tertiary (University/Polytechnic/Post-Sec) iv) Other (state).....
6. Select other higher educational qualification you have i) Bachelors ii) Masters iii) PhD iv) Other (state).....

#### Shop Information

7. What is the name of your shop?.....
8. In which mall is your shop located? i) Accra Mall ii) West Hills Mall
9. What does your shop deal in? i) Fashion/Clothing/general wears ii) Food/groceries and general goods iii) Computer and electronics iv) Others (state).....
10. How do you describe your shop? i) Ghanaian/local firm ii) Foreign/International firm iii) Local with a Foreign Franchise iv) others (state).....
11. Why did you choose to locate your business in this mall?  
Explain.....  
.....
12. What is your role/position in the shop? i) Shop Owner ii) Shop Manager iii) Owner Manager iv) Others (state).....
13. How much is your (current) rent per month (in cost per square meter)?  
State.....
14. How often is your rent reviewed? i) Every two years ii) Every one year iii) Every Six months iv) Other (state).....
15. How much was your previous rent before the most recent review?  
State.....
16. Which currency does your lease agreement stipulate/set your rent? i) US Dollars ii) Ghana Cedis iii) Set in dollars but payable in cedis iv) Other (state).....

17. In which currency do you normally pay your rent? i) US Dollars ii) Ghana Cedis iii) Other (state).....iv) Prefer not to answer

**Employees and Work Ethics**

18. How many people does your shop employ?  
State.....
19. What is the monthly salary of the least paid worker in your shop?  
State.....
20. What is the least paid worker’s position/role in the shop?  
State.....
21. What is the monthly salary of the highest paid worker in your shop?  
State.....
22. What is the highest paid worker’s position/role in the shop?  
State.....
23. Do you give job orientation to your employees? Yes/No
24. Do you organize periodic in-service training/refresher course for your employees?  
Yes/No
25. Do you stipulate wearing of uniform for your workers/staff? Yes/No
26. Do you have motivation package available to your employees? Yes/No
27. If yes, please list the type of motivation package.....  
.....  
.....
28. Do (some of) your staff make use of computers in their work? Yes/No
29. Do you do shop online marketing? Yes/No
30. Do you accept MasterCard or visa for payment/transactions? Yes/No
31. About what percentage of your payments/transactions are by MasterCard or visa? i) less than 10% ii) Between 10 and 25% iii) Between 25 and 50% iv) More than 50%

**Other Economic Information**

32. How much do you pay on utilities (electricity, water, telephone, etc.)?  
(State).....
33. List taxes you pay to the state/city government?.....  
.....  
.....  
.....

**City Image and Modernity**

34. Does the presence of the malls make Accra a modern city? Yes/No
35. What is your understanding of the term ‘modern’? i) something that has relevant use in the current/contemporary world ii) something developed or made in Ghana iii) something imported from abroad iv) something that looks like what is in the western world
36. How do you think malls have helped Accra to become modern Accra?  
Explain.....

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37. Which attributes of the mall do you think help put Accra on a ‘world map’?

- i) the architectural design
- ii) the international brands
- iii) the origin of the merchandize
- iv) All three

38. If you think it is (All three), rank them in order of importance:

1<sup>st</sup> .....2<sup>nd</sup> .....3<sup>rd</sup> .....

39. What is beneficial about the mall in which your shop is located?

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40. What could be improved in the mall where your business is located?.....

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41. What could be improved in the environment around the mall where your business is located?.....

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Thank you for your cooperation