THE NEW MIDDLE CLASS AND URBAN TRANSFORMATION IN AFRICA: A CASE STUDY OF ACCRA, GHANA

by

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Abstract

The ascendance of the so-called global middle class—characterized as young, ambitious, highly-credentialed, well-paid, urban-based, professionals in the so-called emerging economies of the Global South—as a new socio-economic force has captured much international attention in the scholarly, business and media circles. For the most part, however, the discourse on this nascent social group has geographically focused on emerging Asia and thematically centered on their lifestyle characteristics and their related political and economic ramifications, locally and globally. In Africa, where the growth of the middle class has been paralleled by widespread socio-economic and urban transformation, little, if any, scholarly and policy effort have been made to understand the nature and ramifications of the nexus between the middle class expansion and the reconfigurations taking place in the urban form and space economies of cities. Seeking to tell the African version or story of the rise of the new middle class and their role in the ongoing remaking of urban Africa, this thesis examines patterns of new economic activity and occupations, secondary service centres, housing, education and conspicuous consumption, including their broader spatial attributes and internal configurations, in one transitional African city, Accra, the capital of Ghana, as a case study. Drawing on a range of methods that include analyses of media coverage, policy briefs, scholarly works, plans and census data, the study unravels deep connections between the forces of globalization, structural change, class (re)production and new industrial and spatial formations in metropolitan Accra. The case study also highlights the different place-making strategies and tactics—covert and overt, direct and indirect, practical and ideological—employed by the new middle classes to reshape, territorialize and control urban space through the production and consumption of “privileged” landscapes that fits their vision and ideals of contemporary urban structure and social life. In addition to analyzing the impact and implications of these emergent middle-class landscapes for Accra’s spatial harmony and social cohesion, the research underscores the need for African urban governments to adopt innovative land use and social engineering approaches that encourage the mixing of diverse social groups in planned new residential communities, protect urban green space, and minimize the gentrifying effects of middle-class place-making.
Table of Contents

Abstract........................................................................................................................................ii
List of Tables....................................................................................................................................vi
List of Figures..................................................................................................................................vii
Acknowledgement..........................................................................................................................viii

1 Introduction ..........................................................................................................................1
   1.1 Economic Renaissance, Class Production and Urban Remaking in Africa........ 2
   1.2 Perspectives on the Causes, Characteristics, and Developmental Implications of Africa’s New Middle Class Growth...............................................................................5
   1.3 Introduction to the Case: The Emergent Middle Class Urbanism in Accra...... 11
   1.4 Problem Statement................................................................................................. 13
   1.5 Methodology and Data Sources........................................................................... 13
   1.6 Overview of Chapters.......................................................................................... 14
   1.7 Scope and Limitations ....................................................................................... 15

2 Development, Urbanization and New Class Formation in Africa: A Closer Look at the Story of African Renaissance ..........................................................16
   2.1 From Glory to Doom and Hope: Retelling the Story of Africa’s Rise and Fall and New Rise ......................................................................................................................19
   2.2 Notable Aspects of Africa’s New Rise....................................................................36
   2.4 The Making of the New African Middle Class and the New African City...... 52
   2.5 Summary and Discussion ....................................................................................58

3 Socio-Economic and Urban Transformation in Ghana: An African Success Story? ..................................................................................................................62
   3.1 Regime Change, Policy Shifts and Development Outcomes in Post-Colonial Ghana: A Brief Political-Economic History.................................................................63
   3.2 Analysis and Conclusions...................................................................................78
       3.2.1 Growth Record............................................................................................78
       3.2.2 Welfare: Employment, Poverty and Inequality Trends...............................82
       3.2.3 Structural Transformation? .......................................................................85
       3.2.4 New Trends in Urbanization......................................................................89
   3.3 Class Reformation and the Arrival of the New Ghanaian Middle Class ........ 95
       3.3.1 Timing, Size and Growth Factors ..............................................................96
   3.4 Summary and Discussion ...................................................................................102
# 4 Case Study of Accra: Outline of Past and Recent Developments

## 4.1 Pre-reform Accra: Growth History and Trajectory of Urban Development

## 4.2 Post-Reform Accra: Outline of Recent Development Features

### 4.2.1 Weakening Demographic Growth

### 4.2.2 Strong Suburban Growth

### 4.2.3 An Emerging New City Skyline

### 4.2.4 Construction Boom and New Spatial Formations

### 4.2.5 An Emerging New Urban Economy

### 4.2.6 Growth and Shifting Patterns of FDI

## 4.3 The Rise of the New Middle Class in Post-Reform Accra

### 4.3.1 Growth Drivers

### 4.3.2 Some Empirical Measures of New Class Formation in Metropolitan Accra

## 4.4 The New Middle Class in the Restructured Metropolitan Economy

## 4.5 Discussion and Summary

# 5. The New Middle Class in Place

## 5.1 Population Distribution by Class, Income, Occupation and Industry: Mapping the Residential and Economic Geography of Accra’s New Middle Class

## 5.2 New Middle Class Spatialities in the Rapidly-Transforming City

### 5.2.1 New Secondary Centres

### 5.2.2 Patterns of New Housing Development

### 5.2.3 New Conspicuous Consumption Spaces

### 5.2.4 Multi-Use, Mega Urban Projects

### 5.2.5 Links to New Education

## 5.4 Summary and Discussion

# 6 For Good or For Bad? Interrogating the Socio-Spatial and Environmental Impact of New Class Place-making in Accra

## 6.1 Where they are: Mapping the Geography of Accra’s New Middle Class Spaces and Development Trajectory

## 6.2 The Spatial Impact of Accra’s New Middle Class Spaces

## 6.3 Cohesion or Segregation? Counting the Social Cost of Accra’s New Middle Class Urbanism

## 6.4 Weighing in the Natural Environment

## 6.5 Discussion: Perspectives on the New Middle Urbanism in Accra
7 Conclusion: Summary of Findings, Implications and Suggestions for Future Studies ................................................................................................................................................................................................. 251

7.1 Salient Generic Facts about Africa’s Middle Class Growth ........................................... 253
7.2 The New Middle Class and Urban Remaking in 21st Century Africa ...................... 262
7.3 The Accra Experience: Commonality and Distinctiveness ................................. 266
7.4 Implications for National and Urban Development Policy .................................. 270
  7.4.1 Implications for Public Policy ............................................................................. 271
  7.4.2 Implications for Urban Policy ........................................................................... 273
7.5 Conclusion and Suggestions for Future Studies ..................................................... 278

Bibliography .......................................................................................................................................................................................... 282

Appendix ............................................................................................................................................................................................................. 302
List of Tables

Table 2.1  Number and Sectoral Composition of Intra-African Investment Projects, 1990-2011..............................................................46
Table 3.1  Top Ten Investment Countries in Ghana by Value and Number of Registered Projects.................................81
Table 3.2  Shifting Patterns of FDI in Ghana...............................................................82
Table 3.3  Employed Population as a Proportion of the Labour Force in Ghana by Gender, 1960-2010......................................................83
Table 3.4  Sectoral Contribution to GDP and Employment, 1960-2010.........................86
Table 3.5  Industrial Structure of Employment in Ghana, 1960-2000........................87
Table 3.6  Occupational Structure of the Ghanaian Economy, 1960-2000..................89
Table 3.7  Urbanization Trends in Ghana, 1960-2010.............................................91
Table 3.8  Growth and Change Trajectories among Ghana’s Power Metropolises.................................................................93
Table 3.9  Decomposition of Poverty Incidence in Ghana, 1990-2013.....................95
Table 3.10 Foreign Banks in Ghana as of 2014 and their Basic Characteristics........101
Table 4.1  Population Trends in Accra, 1960-2010................................................115
Table 4.2  Population (6 years and older) with Post-Secondary Educational Attainment in Accra, Tamale, Sekondi-Takoradi and Tema........127
Table 4.3  Population in Managerial and Professional Employment in Accra Compared to Kumasi, Tamale, Sekondi-Takoradi and Tema........129
Table 4.4  Ownership of Cell Phones, Personal Computers and Internet Usage among the Population 12 years and above in Accra, Kumasi, Tamale, Sekondi-Takoradi and Tema, 2010.........................130
Table 4.5  Domestic Air Passenger Fleet in Ghana, 2010-2013.................................130
Table 4.6  Industrial Structure of Employment in Accra, 2000 and 2010.............134
Table 4.7  Occupational Structure of Accra and Ghana, 2010..............................141
Table 5.1  Neighbourhood Classes in Accra............................................................152
Table 5.2  New Shopping Malls in Accra.................................................................194
List of Figures

Figure 2.1: Growth in intra-African trade, 1995-2011………………………………………………………..42
Figure 2.2: Inward and Outward FDI in Africa, 2000-2014.................................43
Figure 2.3: Size of the Middle Classes in the Various African Countries………………55
Figure 3.1: GDP and Per Capita GDP Growth in Ghana, 1960-2014…………………79
Figure 3.2: Annual FDI Flow in Ghana, 2000-2011.................................80
Figure 3.3: Poverty Incidence in Ghana, 1991/2—2012/13…………………………84
Figure 3.4: Comparison of GDP and Employment Shares for Agriculture,
        Industry and Service in Ghana, 1960-2010........................................87
Figure 3.5 Population, Urban and GDP Growth Rate in Ghana, 1970-2010...............90
Figure 3.6 Share of Urban Population for Ghana’s Major and Minor Cities........91
Figure 3.7 Annual Growth Rate for Ghana’s Power Metropolises..........................94
Figure 3.8 University Enrolment in Ghana, 2005-2010.........................................97
Figure 4.1 Present-Day Jamestown, showing the Lighthouse Close to James Fort......106
Figure 4.2 Map of Accra in 1922 Showing Victoriaborg………………………….108
Figure 4.3 Expansion of Accra, 1900-1969..........................................................113
Figure 4.4 Crystalline Landscapes of 21st Century Accra.................................118
Figure 4.5 Signs of Property Boom in Accra..........................................................119
Figure 4.6 Regional Distribution of FDI in Ghana, 2007-2011..........................124
Figure 4.7 Changing Industrial Structure of Accra, 2000 and 2010.........................133
Figure 5.1 Neighbourhood Classification in Accra Based on Social Class...........155
Figure 5.2 Comparison of Housing Densities in a Selected 1st and 3rd Class
        Neighbourhood in Accra from Google Earth.........................................156
Figure 5.3 Types of Secondary Centres in Accra................................................157
Figure 5.4 ‘Wall Street’, Accra’s New Financial District, West Ridge...................163
Figure 5.5 Selected Images of West Ridge .........................................................164
Figure 5.6 Selected Images from Oxford Street, Osu........................................168
Figure 5.7 Emerging Technology Spaces and Entrepreneurs in Osu, Accra.........170
Figure 5.8 Types of New Apartment Housing Targeting Accra’s New Middle Class…174
Figure 5.9 Some Gated Communities and Town Homes in Accra.....................175
Figure 5.10 Geography of New Middle Class Housing in Accra........................177
Acknowledgement

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1 Introduction

The rise in the past decade of the global middle class, broadly defined as young, highly-educated, very aspirational, above-average income earners domiciled in the large cities of the developing world, has been described as ‘one of the most important features of today’s global economic landscape’ (the Brookings Institute, 2011, p. 1). This world-wide expansion of the middle class, currently estimated at some 1.8 billion people and expected to swell to 3.2 billion by the end of the decade (*ibid*), has been accompanied by two other historic shifts. The first is the massive reduction in global poverty, resulting for the first time in history more people living above the international poverty threshold than those beneath it (UNDP, 2013). The second shifts is what has been described as the changing balance of economic and political power from the global North to the global South¹ (see Hadar, 2008; OECD, 2009; Fidelity International, 2010).

In the so-called emerging economies of the Global South, where the bulk of current and future middle class growth is located, the middle class boom has been accompanied by massive urbanization, industrialization and increased consumer spending (Wonacott, 2011; KPMG, 2012; Drabble et. al, 2015). Many observers, including the Brookings Institute (2011), have welcomed these developments as key to the economic prosperity of developing nations and their cities, whilst shoring up global demand for goods and services caused by the middle class squeeze in developed nations, which is considered vital for the recovery of the sluggish world economy. Given the huge spending and space-shaping powers of this new social cohort and its related spill-over effects on the rest of society, particularly the poor, it is perhaps not surprising that the lifestyle and developmental implications of the middle class ascent in emerging markets have become the dominant themes of the budding new middle class dedicated scholarship. By contrast,

¹ There is debate as to whether power, economic and political, is actually shifting from the North to the South of the hemisphere, given recent slowdown in the Chinese, Indian and Brazilian and other developing world economies as well as the US’s proven ability to demonstrate military superiority anywhere in the world. Perhaps, a more accurate description of the current situation would be a diffusion or increased spread of economic growth and development from the core to the peripheries, or even the emergence or trend towards a multi-polar world.
however, African urban scholarship has yet to give adequate treatment to the transformative impact of the middle class emergence in their cities.

This thesis tells the story of Africa’s economic and urban renaissance and the role being played by the rising new middle class in that transformation. Focusing on one transitional African city, Accra, it sheds light on how the external forces of economic globalization, structural change and new international labour division have interacted with internal political and social change to spur class (re)formation and urban change. The findings and conclusions of this research are expected to be of value to urban scholars and policymakers seeking to understand and respond to the underlying dynamics and restructuring effects of the middle class upsurge in urban Africa.

1.1 Economic Renaissance, Class Production and Urban Remaking in Africa

Over the past few years, the field of international development has witnessed the sudden birth of a new narrative which is increasingly being used by some pundits and observers to describe the nature and scale of change taking place in one of the world’s most impoverished regions: continental Africa. This is the story of “Africa Rising”. It is a story that is being told with a certain amount of optimism, not only to capture the remarkable socio-economic feats Africa has achieved in the past few decades relative to the past, but also re-brand the continent in the 21st century and at the same time give meaning and hope to the dream of Africa’s renaissance2, envisioned over half a century ago by its forefathers.

Of course, as with the parallel story of developing Asia’s rise, not all experts concur with the assertion that Africa is rising, something I will discuss in the next chapter, when I

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2 The African Renaissance, inasmuch as it represents the dream of Africa’s total liberation from all of its myriad ills, including poverty, conflicts and intermittent starvation, is more than a mere desire for the economic and political transformation of Africa, it should be noted. As conceived by its proponents (including the likes of Senegalese historian and scientist Cheikh Anta Diop and Ghana’s first president Kwame Nkrumah) and championed by present-day adherents, the African Renaissance is also a philosophical project, an ideology of some sort that, at its core, seeks the socio-cultural oneness of the people and nations of Africa, advocates African-made solutions to Africa’s problems, and promotes African values. Institutionalized in 1999 with headquarters in Gaborone, Botswana, and commemorated in 2010 with a 49-meter tall bronze statue near Dakar, Senegal, the African Renaissance, whose derivatives include the African Union, is very much a living project today, as it was many years ago, whether or not its attainment is viable.
interrogate the empirical realities of Africa’s rise. But suffice to say here, an objective scrutiny of some key development indicators show that, since the last quarter century, continental Africa has chalked some impressive socio-economic and political successes, which signify that the region is at a leading edge of change. Notable among the assorted signs of Africa’s ascent include unprecedented and sustained decade-long, region-wide, across-sector economic growth (of about 6 per cent), effectively tripling the size of the region’s economy and elevating 13 additional countries on the continent into the ranks of middle income nations. It also includes marked improvement in living conditions, as corroborated by, for example, the 13 percentage points dip in extreme poverty incidence between 1990 and 2012 (World Bank, 2015); rising average incomes and soaring consumption levels (McKinsey and Company, 2012: Standard Bank, 2014); improvement in literacy, accessibility to basic services; and a steady decline in morbidity and mortality (The Economist, March 2, 2013). Meanwhile, on the political front, aside the drastic decline in the incidence of conflicts on the continent, democracy, institutional accountability and respect for human rights are now being entrenched in Africa (see Chapter Two).

These developments—or more aptly the story of Africa’s rise—has been reflected in notable transformations in both the social and built environments, connoting some important shifts that are redefining the fundamental socio-economic structures and spatial organization which have long characterized African societies and their cities. In the social milieu, the most significant development has been the rise of the middle class, which, according to a 2011 African Development Bank (AfDB) brief, is expanding at a rate (3.1%) faster than population growth (2.6%) (AfDB, 2011). Specifically, the number of middle class individuals, the Bank notes, has dramatically mushroomed over the years to now encompass some 326.6 million Africans, representing a third of the continent’s estimated 1 billion population, up from 115 million or 26 per cent in 1980 (ibid). This middle class boom, they add, has fuelled new consumer spending which now accounts for about a quarter of Africa’s GDP (ibid), with the market for technology-based consumer products and services such as cell phones, personal computers, the internet, household gadgets and automobiles being the fastest growing in the continent, followed by financial
services, entertainment, and real estate (*African Business*, March 20, 2012). Africa’s burgeoning middle classes are also said to be the main driving force behind the growth of the private sector, which has replaced the state as the new engine of economic growth in many African nations (AfDB, 2011). They have also been implicated in the rise of a vocal civil society as well as the deepening of democracy and government accountability on the continent (Fletcher, 2013). In short, the middle class expansion in Africa, as Harvard University professor Calestous Juma asserts, is a reality that is widening by the day—a trend he notes is marked by lifestyle changes, more spending power, extra recreational activity, cultural self-confidence, the harnessing of technology, and a new political assertiveness (Juma 2011). Juma’s observation is indicative of the rather distinctive character of the new emerging African middle class, who are the subject of this enquiry, from the older middle class. Apart from being older, mostly male-dominated, conservative and trained in traditional fields, the older African middle class are essentially a product of bureaucratic expansion in the post-colonial, nationalist African state.

At the same time as the economies of African nations record stronger growth and the number of people upwardly moving into middle class status escalate, the cities of Africa, particularly the large ones, continue to experience rapid growth and sweeping changes that are reconfiguring both the structural characteristics and the quality of life in urban Africa. In relation to the spatial form, the most salient changes have included the emergence of a new city skyline, typified by the rise of skyscrapers and condominiums; the growth of multinationals in the central business district (CBD); the birth of secondary centres; the formation of edge cities; new housing patterns; and the rise of multi-functional, mega urban projects, amid a construction boom. In terms of growth, the dominant feature has been the incidence of sprawl, resulting in the underbounding of major African cities. In the economic domain, there has been visible industrial restructuring and occupational change, characterized by the tertiariization of the urban space economy, as evinced by the ascendance of producer services and the emergence of the knowledge and cultural sectors. These new sectors include education, research, consulting, software development, graphic design, fashion and media production, and their related professional classes. And in the social environment, the expanding presence of expatriates and international migrants in
the urban core, alongside new conspicuous consumption patterns—the most common being massive automobile and cell phone usage, mall shopping, outdoor recreation, cosmetic spending and tourism—have been noteworthy (Pezizini, M., 2012; Borg and Nurse, 2015).

Considering the fact that the majority of Africa’s flourishing middle classes are congregated in the large and growing cities on the continent where most of the observed shifts are taking place, it is impossible to dissociate the emerging middle classes from the on-going urban remaking in Africa. This thesis seeks to uncover and map out the middle class-led transformations taking place in the built environment and space economy of African cities, including divulging the processes through which the middle classes are influencing those changes.

1.2 Perspectives on the Causes, Characteristics, and Developmental Implications of Africa’s New Middle Class Growth

Since coming into the limelight, the story of Africa’s middle class proliferation, as do the bigger story of Africa’s renaissance, has generated stimulating yet intense discussions and debates in both academic and popular discourse. These conversations, though widespread, include issues surrounding the ‘why’, the ‘how’, the ‘who’, and the ‘and so what’ of Africa’s middle class proliferation. And, as expected, varied conceptual and practical viewpoints have been advanced to explain the causes, characteristics, impact and consequences of the middle class surge in Africa.

Concerning the factors and processes underlying the growth of the African middle class, some attribute it to external forces or influences such as globalization and neoliberalism, international labour division, regionalism and aid relief, pointing in particular to increased trade and foreign direct investments (FDI) in Africa, both of which have soared dramatically over the past two decades, as evidence (see chapter 2). Apart from creating millions of high-profile jobs locally, opening up access to international goods, markets and technology, whilst deepening Africa’s exposure and connection to global culture with the resultant middle class expansion in the continent, proponents of the ‘international factors’
thesis argue strongly that the penetration of global capitalism into Africa has re-oriented the pre-capitalist modes of production that existed before toward capitalist production systems. This is in turn transforming traditional African communitarian social structures toward capitalist forms, with class increasingly becoming an important form of social division and organization, besides gender, ethnicity, lineage and clan.

The opposite view is that internal factors have played a more decisive role in turning around the fortunes of African nations and their citizenry, leading to higher inter and intra-generational mobility—a position now incidentally held by some of Africa’s skeptics, including editors of The Economist magazine. Adherents of this ‘domestic’ proposition cite better economic governance, democratic entrenchment and institutional reforms. They also point to increased government spending on education, healthcare, physical infrastructure and welfare as well as other economic empowerment programs (such as the Black Empowerment Program in South Africa) as some of the government-led initiatives in Africa in the past few decades that have combined with a new spirit of entrepreneurship to engender upward mobility among the populace (AfDB, 2011; Juma, 2011; The Economist, 2013).

A third, rather unsuspecting, narrative being advanced by other entities, including international news outlets such as the UK Guardian, to explain the middle class upsurge in Africa is the exodus of Africans in the diaspora back to their homelands, either to take up employment in multinational companies operating locally or set up their own businesses, while practicing or displaying their acquired ‘western’ taste, social status and wealth (see The Guardian, January 29, 2013). This claim is incidentally buttressed by the rather unprecedented increase in the rate of return migration by Africans domiciled abroad, including African Americans, to take advantage of the job and investment opportunities offered by the economic resurgence or in the case of the latter connect to their ancestral homeland (Hirsch, 2012; Butty, 2013; Haidara, 2013).

The second element of the discourse on the emergent African middle class is centred on the question of who qualifies to be part of the middle class and what major attribute(s) define this new social class cohort emerging in Africa. As expected, there is little
agreement on the first issue—that is, the real size of the middle class and the parameters for delineating the boundaries of the middle class in Africa—as does the second: what constitutes the defining characteristic of the new middle class in Africa? However, the latter seems to be taking the center stage among these two contending issues in the debate on the identity of the emerging African middle class. In the popular media as well as special reports released by influential international organizations and market think tanks such as the World Bank, Deloitte and McKinsey, the dominant image of Africa’s new middle class is that of new affluent consumers, rather than producers, with hard cash ready to spend on the latest consumer products and other quality of life enhancing goods such as private education and health care (see Deloitte, 2012; McKinsey, 2012; World Bank, 2013). This view is reinforced by most analytical studies on the African middle class such as the African Development Bank and the Standard Bank reports, which define the middle class in monetary terms, based on per capita and household daily consumption thresholds of $2-$20 and $15-$115 respectively.

This populist, materialistic view of Africa’s emerging middle class has led some observers (e.g., Simmons, 2013) to conclude that Africa’s emerging middle classes lack the cultural traits (such as advanced education, white collar occupation, sophisticated thinking and aspirational values) that are considered important middle class signifiers in western context. However, a 2011 study by Grail Research found that majority of the new African middle classes are working professionals with higher education, specialized knowledge and stable income (Grail Research, 2011). This finding by Grail Research connotes the emergence of a professional-managerial cohort, originally coined by Barabara and John Ehrenreich (1977), among Africa’s emerging middle classes. This later observation also reinforces Jamrozik, Boland and Urquhart’s assertion that the superior knowledge or cultural-power of the new middle class has become more influential than the finance-power of the old middle and upper classes (Jamrozik, et al, 1995). More recently, concepts such as Florida’s ‘creative class’ and the ‘entrepreneurial class’ are being used by some to describe the emergent middle class in Africa or segments of them (see for example Rosenberg, 2013).
The third and perhaps the most salient issue of public interest in the debate on the rising African middle class is whether the middle class can bring about the needed socio-economic and political transformation that will propel Africa to a better future, so-called ‘the African miracle’, in the 21st century. And just like the above issue, opinion is divided on this matter. On one side of the debate are the hopefuls. These, including the AfDB (2011), Smith and Lamble (2011), Juma, (2011) and Fukuyama (2013), relying on the historical experience of western nations as well as emerging trends in Africa, make the case that Africa’s bourgeoning middle class hold the key to the continent’s future prosperity and transformation. The famous story of how the middle class—thought to have emerged in medieval Europe, provided the impetus for the industrial revolution, spearheaded the development of capitalism and international trade, provided a stable demand for goods and services, and consolidated democratic rule which undergirded the rise of the West—is invoked by Afro-optimists such as those mentioned above as an indisputable historical analogy that foretells the positive changes to come to Africa from the rise of its middle classes. Some of the ground events in Africa that are pointed to by these optimists include the growth in private consumption (McKinsey, 2012), the rise of the spirit of entrepreneurialism, increased productivity (Block, 2010; Leke, et. al, 2010), and Africa’s young demographic advantage (Smith and Lamble, 2011), which continues to act as a draw for global companies that are increasingly eying the continent’s growing cheap skilled labour as an alternative to dealing with rising labour costs and unionization in Asia.

On the political front, reference is often made to the rise of a middle class-dominated vocal civil society that is increasingly becoming critical of government and focused on issues considered as obstacles to Africa’s development: graft, poverty, human right abuses, public service inefficiencies and environmental degradation. The struggle against autocratic rule in places like Egypt and the rest of North Africa from the late 2000s by discontented middle classes, which was labeled as the Arab Spring, is also cited (Fukuyama, 2013). All of these developments in Africa today, linked directly or indirectly to the growing presence of the middle classes, have served as a source of inspiration to those optimistic about the ability of Africa’s teeming middle class to act as agents of real
and lasting transformation on the continent. Perhaps none other than Sudanese business tycoon and avid campaigner of good governance in Africa, Mo Ibrahim, echoes this belief more convincingly. This is what he had to say about the development potential of Africa’s new middle class in a 2011 interview with the UK Guardian:

I think they’re going to play a crucial role, because it does tend to be the educated young sector of the population, and those guys are better educated than our generation and much much better informed. They’re growing up in a society which has lots of media around them – satellites, TV- they watch everything that goes on around the world. You have so many newspapers, you have the internet, you have mobile phones, you have all these things. In our time we had only one newspaper published by the government, one TV channel run by the government.

(Source: http://www.theguardian.com/world/2011/dec/25/africas-middle-class-hope-continent)

The views of these African middle class hopefuls are supported by some scholarship. These include Doekpe and Zilibotti (2007), Banerjee and Duflo (2008) and Solimano (2008) which assert that the growth of the middle class is positively correlated with income per capita, consumption per capita, income equality, per capita savings, employment rate, share of small and medium-scale enterprises (SMEs) in employment and output data, and democracy.

However, those on the other side of the debate such as Thandika Mkandawaire, former director of the UN’s Research Institute for Social Development and current professor of international development at the London School of Economics and Political Science London School of Economics, are not too convinced about the prospects of any major breakthrough from the middle class growth in Africa. Like their opponents, they, too, base their argument on contemporary experience elsewhere, ground events in Africa as well as
studies that refute the existence of any connections between middle class expansion and development. They frame their argument this way. First, they assert that Africa’s growing middle class is only a consuming, rather than a producing, class. By contrast, any real hopes for Africa’s economic miracle can only be premised on a massive expansion in production as is being witnessed in India and China today, rather than mere consumption, which is both unsustainable and of little economic value to the continent, particularly given the fact that most of the goods consumed by the middle classes are imported, as argued by Mkandawaire when giving his reaction on the AfDB report to CNN in 2011:

When we talk about China, we don’t talk about China as a consumer society as much as we talk about it as a producing society. If Wal-Mart goes to China to buy goods, it goes to Africa to sell goods, and that’s a problem. The more important thing countries should look at is investment and employment rather than consumption.

(Source: http://edition.cnn.com/2011/BUSINESS/05/20/middle.class.africa/)

The second political argument is that if the experience of China and other non-democratic Asian societies witnessing a middle class boom is anything to go by, then not much can be expected from their African counterparts by way of significantly transforming the political landscape. This is because, despite the massive growth of the middle classes in those countries and the related unprecedented access to smarter tools for social mobilization, they have failed to deliver the democratic change that many had hoped for or anticipated would occur. The failure of the middle classes to spur the growth of democracy in several Asian countries, including China (Chen and Lu, 2011), Singapore (Lam, 1999) and Indonesia (Bell, 1998), is often attributed to the very key ‘political’ behavior of the middle class: preference for stability, rather than revolution, driven by selfish economic interest. In those sub-Saharan African countries such as Nigeria, Kenya and Ghana where the

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3 Although the Chinese government is encouraging domestic consumption to offset revenue losses attributed to the volatility of the international demand curve, of which their middle class is key, China’s economy is still overwhelmingly a producing (rather than consuming) one.
growth of the middle classes has been strongest, there has been a wave of criticisms
against them for not doing enough to demand better and responsive government. And
elsewhere in North Africa, where the so-called Arab Springs recently unfolded with its
unsettling outcome, some observers (e.g., Cambanis, 2015), attribute the revolution itself
to the poor and working classes rather than being the handiwork of the middle classes,
albeit others (e.g., Fukuyama, 2013) disagree.

At the urban realm, a similar divided opinion has shaped the discourse on the
ramifications of African’s middle class for its cities. Some commentators, including
Calestous Juma (2011), view the rise of the African middle class as key to unlocking the
prosperity of urban Africa, providing the critical skill base for innovation, scale
economies, higher productivity and the attraction of FDI, citing the myriad
transformations already taking place in African cities highlighted above as examples. But
critics such as South African urban scholar Vanessa Watson argue that, among other
things, the new urban formations associated with the new middle classes only serves to
sharpen already existing urban inequalities, deepening spatial fragmentation and social
polarization in African cities (Watson, 2014). These pessimists cite instances of the
displacement of poor communities through gentrification as well as the dislocation and
erosion of vital land uses, including green spaces and historic sites, due to mega
redevelopment schemes that favour middle class housing and office development. They
also cite loss of agricultural land on the fringes of African cities owing to middle class-
driven suburbanization as well as increased congestion and pollution, with its attendant
health and climate change impact, linked to the proliferation of cars on the streets of urban
Africa to buttress their claim. My case study will help provide a balanced perspective on
the validity or otherwise of the claims being made by the two contending sides.

1.3 Introduction to the Case: The Emergent Middle Class Urbanism in Accra
The city of Accra, Ghana’s capital and primate city, has grown and transformed rapidly
since 2000, witnessing substantial changes in its morphology, economy, demography,
social structure (Grant, 2008). These changes, which set in following the liberalization of
the Ghanaian economy in the mid-1980s, include, among others, a racial diversification of
the metropolitan population; a respatialization of the CBD alongside the birth of new urban commercial centres; and new industrial formations, including a resurging cultural and knowledge economy. They also include the transformation of the property market; an aviation industry and construction boom; massive sub-urbanization; and the emergence of new luxury residential and consumption landscapes. These changes have helped put Accra on the global spotlight, having been designated in 2010 by the UK-based Globalization and World Cities Research Network (GaWC) as a Gamma-minus tier global city, due to its growing role and embeddedness in the global urban system.

These changes have taken place against the backdrop of an expansive growth of the Ghanaian middle class, which is now considered the fastest growing in Africa (Mahama, 2015), the majority of whom reside in Accra, the national capital. Accra’s booming middle class population, considered the vanguard of its rapid growth and transformation, has been fuelled by record economic growth in Ghana, particularly during the past two decades. This has helped reduce poverty considerably (see Chapter 3), while raising income and wealth levels. In 2015, the Mauritius-based Afrsia Bank in its New World Wealth Report named Accra the fastest growing millionaire city in Africa, with the number of millionaires in the city expected to almost double in size from 2300 in 2015 to 4,100 by 2020.

However, a 2014 report by Tax Justice Network Africa and Christian Aid shows that, despite falling poverty and stronger growth, inequality in Ghana is on the rise (Tax Justice Network Africa and Christian Aid, 2014). And nowhere is this rising inequality in Ghana more pronounced than in Accra. Meanwhile, Accra’s middle class-propelled growth has been accompanied by patterns of socio-spatial fragmentation, polarization and segregation, amid growing concerns about traffic congestion, skyrocketing land values, affordable housing shortage, burdened infrastructure, and encroachment into ecologically sensitive areas. These issues have raised important questions about the sustainability of the city’s growth trajectory and in particular whether the middle class expansion is good or bad for social cohesion and spatial harmony. Accra’s rapid and interesting, yet
problematic, development experience makes it as an instructive case for understanding the opportunities and constraints presented by Africa’s nascent middle class urbanism.

1.4 Problem Statement
The purpose of this research is to investigate the role of the new middle class in the on-going urban remaking in Africa, using the city of Accra as the site of analysis. Specifically, its objective is to analyze the processes and spatial outcomes of economic change and class (re)formation in Accra. In an attempt to contribute to the emerging scholarship and on-going discourse on the causes, attributes and impact of the middle class expansion in urban Africa, this thesis seeks to address the following pertinent questions provoked by the nature of the engagement on the subject:

1. What are the key signifiers and distinguishing marks of Accra’s new middle class?
2. What role does the rising new middle class play in the process of urban remaking in Accra?
3. What opportunities and challenges does the incipient middle class urbanism in Accra pose for public policy and urban planning?

1.5 Methodology and Data Sources
This thesis draws extensively on secondary information sources, comprised of literature review and documentary analysis, to explore the nexus between economic change, class production and urban restructuring in Accra. Scholarly essays reviewed include works on globalization, structural change and the international division of labour, as well as urbanization, class reformation and urban economic change, and their applicability to the African context. Notable scholars whose works were consulted include international development expert Celestous Juma of Harvard University and Froker Frobil, Jurgen Heinrichs and Otto Kyrere’s seminal 1982 work on the new international division of labour. Other documents analyzed include special reports, policy briefs, surveys, and articles on the ‘new Africa’ and its middle class boom. These are complemented by relevant national and metropolitan level information on economic growth and urban
development in Accra, including census reports, policy plans, scholarly articles and news stories. Images and maps obtained through online publications, social media and internet sources, including Google Maps, were used to offer insight into specific imprints of the new middle class in Accra. Finally, useful knowledge gained through informal interaction with some middle class Ghanaians and experts are incorporated to enrich the discussion.

1.6 Overview of Chapters
Following this introduction, chapter two provides a tightly focused discussion of Africa’s renaissance, delving into the incipient political, economic, socio-cultural and urban transformations taking place in post-colonial Africa and the factors driving these changes. Chapter three provides a more trenchant analysis of Ghana’s development experience, looking at patterns of economic growth and restructuring, poverty and inequality, class reproduction and urbanization, including the positionality of Accra, and the opportunities and challenges posed by it. In chapter four, Accra’s development trajectory is chronicled, outlining past and recent features of urban growth and change, including the rise of the new middle class as an important marker of urban change in Accra. In addition to discussing the factors driving the growth of the new middle classes, the chapter also uses empirical data to access the growth of the middle class and examines their role in the process of Accra’s economic transformation. Chapter five then interrogates the spatial outcomes of economic change and class formation in Accra, focusing specifically on five typologies of new middle class-dominated spaces in Accra: new/secondary service centres; exclusive new housing formations; conspicuous consumption spaces; mix-use mega urban projects; and new educational landscapes. Using case studies, it examines the characteristics of these spaces and the role played by the new middle classes in the production and consumption of these privileged landscapes. How the emergence of these elite new middle class landscapes examined in chapter five is affecting Accra’s land use structure, built form, social cohesion and environmental wellbeing is the subject matter of chapter six. In the concluding chapter, seven, the key findings from my study are stated, alongside the implications for development policy and urban planning as well as suggested directions for future research.
1.7 Scope and Limitations
As with any other African city with a burgeoning middle class, the impacts of Accra’s middle class boom are multi-faceted and expansive. This makes comprehensive coverage and analysis of all the middle-class related transformations occurring in the city, impossible, though desirable, for a master’s thesis. Therefore, this thesis focuses only on the spatial expressions of economic change and class production in Accra, its intent being to produce a limited, but informed, analysis for further studies on the topic of middle class and urban remaking in Africa. Also, as with all case study research, the generalizability of the findings from Accra’s experience of middle class urbanism to other African cities is necessarily limited.
As hinted in the introductory chapter of this thesis, the evolving story of Africa rising has been greeted with mixed reaction the world over, provoking a sea of commentary from both believers and skeptics alike, each seeking to either affirm or disprove the new tale being told about the continent. For believers of the new mantra being chant about Africa, who have been tagged ‘Afro optimists’, the signals of Africa’s renaissance all are too glaring—to too visible and tangible—to be ignored by anyone reading the statistics. These statistics, they claim, include: the downsizing of the number of poor people on the continent by 13 percentage point between 1990 and 2012 (World Bank, 2015); and a 10% increase in life expectancy (The Economist, 2013). They also include, as previously mentioned, record increase (57%) in primary enrolment (Sulaiman, 2015; UNESCO, 2015); massive growth in consumer spending reaching some $800 billion in 2015 (African Wise, 2015); and the much-talked about decade-long 6% GDP growth from 2000, raising per capita income up by over 70% since 2000 (Standard Bank, 2014), which have all happened since the onset of the 21st century. In the minds of these Afro optimists, failure to recognize that continental Africa, as borne out by these milestone achievements, is rapidly changing for the better represents nothing more than a mere mischief deeply rooted in negative stereotypical views about Africa, an unfortunate reality that still persists in the minds of many outsiders today, in spite of the numerous changes taking place on the continent, thanks in part to western media bias, they contend.

But to ‘Afro skeptics’ such as Smith (2013) and Rowden (2013), who are obviously less convinced by the enchantments being made by Africa’s praise singers today, the much celebrated story of Africa rising is simply an overhyped contortion or interpretation of data, a romanticization of facts that bears little semblance to ground realities. For these ‘doubting Thomases’, the incessant images of malnourished children, famine, disease and wars, along with persistent appeals by western charities and celebrities for a dollar or two from their publics to help ease the plight of the ‘suffering masses’ in Africa—compounded by negative events such as the 2014 mass abduction of female students in Nigeria by the radical terrorist group Boko Haram and others that still dominate the international
headlines on Africa—make the much touted progress the world is being made to believe Africa is making not credible. For these non-believers, the gulf between the story and reality of Africa’s rise is simply large enough to render the former suspect, if not a myth (Smith, 2013; Oyo, 2015).

Considering the manner in which both the defenders and debunkers of the Africa rising narrative are constructing their case, it appears, first of all, that much of the debate surrounding the story of Africa’s rise has been about numbers and observations, statistical facts being pitched against empirical reality. Therefore, the believers of Africa’s rise accuse the unbelievers of ignoring the facts in their attempt to paint a bleak picture about the continent; their opponents in turn accuse them of overlooking ground events in their quest to create the impression that present-day Africa is an unfolding paradise. What seems clear, though, is that, secondly, in their attempt to solidify their entrenched positions on the matter, each side has been engaging in the game of cherry-picking statistical facts and scenes that favour their respective views about Africa today. Mainstream and particularly western media, including some influential international organizations, covertly or overtly aware of their enormous power in shaping international opinion on Africa, seem particularly obsessed with showing everything wrong in and about Africa, often consciously choosing to overlook many positive developments on the continent. The unavoidable outcome of this conventional posturing is that the big picture is often skipped in international media reportage and expert analysis on Africa. Similarly, in their attempt to tell the big picture as buttressed by recent statistics on Africa, the Afro optimists seem to pay little attention to the finer details of how the much touted socio-economic and political progress is transpiring in the everyday lives of ordinary Africans.

Not surprisingly, this selective, one-sided approach to telling or debating the story of Africa rising has created some confusion in the minds of many independent inquisitors who are not sure of who and what to believe about what is happening in contemporary Africa. What is urgently needed, therefore, is a dispassionate analysis of emergent trends in Africa’s development based on honest data and observations, situated within its own recent (post-colonial) history. This is what Mo Ibrahim (2013) calls ‘Afro realism’.
This chapter represents a timely response to Mo Ibrahim’s admonition by undertaking a deeper introspection into the story of Africa’s renaissance, telling—as accurately as possible—the new directions that are (re)defining post-colonial Africa’s development trajectory. Rather than focus on one or two areas of change, I instead consider the broader transformations that have and are occurring in the economic, political, socio-cultural and urban landscape of Africa. More importantly, however, I go beyond mere statistical analysis, unpacking and interrogating the forces that are propelling the changes taking place on the continent in a bid to address some of the pertinent questions that are being asked about Africa’s rise. These often-asked questions have included the following: Is Africa’s renaissance inwardly-driven or externally-influenced? How pervasive is the story of growth and transformation in Africa? Is the recent high GDP growth rate in Africa being fuelled by a commodity boom as is being presented, as opposed to a broad-based transformative growth? What, in particular, is the role of emerging economies, especially China, in Africa’s recent economic development? How is Africa’s recent growth and change being mirrored in the lives of ordinary Africans? Who are the rising new middle classes on the continent? What are their causalities and distinguishing marks? And what traction does the (western) meaning of middle class have in Africa? Finally, what position and role do African cities occupy or play in Africa’s on-going economic resurgence?

Addressing these germane questions will provide the bigger picture for answering my primary research questions outlined in the previous chapter. In doing so, I first provide a brief account of Africa’s political-economic and urban development trajectory from independence to the present day, noting how the continent’s socio-economic development has been shaped by varying ideologies, and has, for the most part, been characterized by episodic growth and declines attributed to instabilities in the political and economic environment, while its urban history is dominated by the growth of few large cities to the detriment of other centres. Second, I focus on recent advances in economic growth, poverty reduction, social transformation and urban development in Africa, to discover

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While I seek to provide a balanced assessment of contemporary developments in Africa, it is important to stress here that my focus is on new happenings in Africa, what are their causative factors and distinctive features, rather than an equal descriptive treatment of the development successes and failures of Africa. Materials on the latter abound elsewhere for readers interested in these.
what distinguishes these trends from previous development experiences as well as uncover the forces, both internal and external, driving these changes. I acknowledge the enormous contributions made by such powerful outside forces as globalization, neoliberalism, foreign direct investments and trade, donor aid, debt relief and economic guidance from the two Washington-based, Bretton Woods institutions in the growth of democracy, peace, security and the economic resurgence in Africa today. At the same time, however, I also argue that changing internal dynamics in Africa, chief among them the rise of a new generation of political leaders, better economic governance, institutional reforms, greater investment in human capital development, a better educated citizenry, an active civil society, and a growing and dynamic private sector, have played a pivotal role in turning the tide in Africa today. Third, I look at the state of re-distribution in Africa today, noting that while enormous progress has been made in the area of shared development or poverty reduction through a range of institutional reforms and increased public spending on social policy, the gap between the ‘haves’ and the have-nots’ keeps rising in Africa, leading to what I call the paradox of Africa’s renaissance: rising inequality amid poverty-reducing growth. Fourth, I search for the meaning and faces of the ascendant new middle class in Africa, examining their causalities and how their defining attributes conform to or depart from Western notions of middle class. Lastly, I examine the new African city in the 21st century and how emergent trends have reimaged urban Africa to look differently from its 20th century character.

2.1 From Glory to Doom and Hope: Retelling the Story of Africa’s Rise and Fall and New Rise
When the long struggle against the near one century-old brutish European colonialism—which culminated in the birth of some 52 new nation states in the continent—ended, Africans brimmed with hope for a new future devoid of the untold hardships they had endured under the twin evils of slavery and colonialism, which dominated much of their prior history. For many Africans, however, the dawn of independence, which for majority of the continent occurred in the second half of the 20th century, not only heralded a new beginning free from oppression and foreign domination, but also, and perhaps even most importantly, enabled them to regain control of their own destiny.
In a bid to realize this dream, most of Africa’s new leaders, who, having now succeeded the departing colonial governments and replacing the pre-colonial indigenous chieftaincy institution as the modern custodians of political power and decision-making in the new state, prescribed a socialist path to development. Only a handful of nations, including Nigeria, Ivory Coast and Botswana, adopted a semi-capitalist, democratic system of economic and political development, at least from the start. But the socialist development model, subscribed to by an overwhelming majority of Africa’s early independence governments, was a path in which the newly created state apparatus was to lead the way to a modernized, industrial and egalitarian society (Friedland and Roseburg, 1964; Mbaka, 1996)—a sort of socialist paradise free from the evils of capitalism. For these leaders, the likes of which included Ghana’s Kwame Nkrumah, Kenya’s Jumo Kenyatta, Tanzania’s Joseph Nyerere, Ethiopia’s Haile Selassie, Senegal’s Leopold Senghor, and Zaire’s Patrick Lumumba, who also pioneered the vision of a united Africa, the exploitative effects of western imperial capitalism on the continent left much to be desired. Besides, capitalism, with its ‘craze’ for unbridled individualism and the pursuit of wealth at the expense of the greater social good was, in the view of these Africanists, an ideology that was in itself unAfrican and anemic to the course of human welfare (Brockway, 1963). Similarly, the democracy that was being nurtured by the departing colonial masters on the continent offered too much liberty that could prove disastrous for the social stability of African societies, they believed.

Pre-colonial African societies, maintained these leaders, were, after all, communitarian, humanist, and classless, though hierarchical, in nature (Mohan, 1966). They also possessed such values as cooperatism, respect for authority and the subordination of individual interest or will to collective social order (Thompson, 2010). These attributes, in the thinking of these leaders, made traditional African culture and economic system superior to western liberal, capitalism. Therefore, as the new economic, political and moral guardians of the new African state, whose responsibility included protecting and preserving the rich cultural heritage of their people, Africa’s early post-colonial leaders embraced the socialist worldview of development, which was already gaining traction in many ex-colonies around the world in the post war era (Lewellen, 1995). They argued that
socialism was the only development paradigm compatible with the structure, culture, beliefs and aspirations of the African people, although, as we will shortly see, it was “Africanized” and infused with two other notable ideologies—nationalism and pan-Africanism—as well as the personal philosophies of those African leaders who imbibed it.

Friedland and Rosberg (1992) identify three key principles of African socialism, to wit: 1. prohibition of private ownership of land; 2. prohibition of social classes; and 3. prohibition against shirk. While retaining these central tenets of Marxism, Friedland and Roseburg (1964) and Mohan (1966) have noted that African socialism differed from classical socialism, or communism, in its rejection of the validity of the theory of class struggle and consciousness, as its proponent African leaders unequivocally refuted the existence of the notion (or reality) of class struggle in (a classless) Africa, proposing instead a solidarity based on nationalism, as will be explained later. But as it turned out to be, there was no single interpretation of what socialism meant in the African context. Instead, each African leader offered their own blueprint of what an ideal socialist African state should look like, based on their own personal philosophy, education and national circumstances, which were blended with elements of Marxist-Leninism, anti-imperialism, traditional African culture, religions and family system, as well as nationalism and pan-Africanism (Friedland and Roseburg, 1964; Mohan, 1966). As Mohan (1996) notes, this made African socialism necessarily idiosyncratic and collectively incoherent in theory and practice, often assuming the name of the leader-theorist. For instance, while Kwame Nkrumah, considered father of African nationalism, permitted some amount of private ownership of property in his development philosophy known as Nkrumaism, Ethiopia’s Mengistu Mariam outlawed all forms of private property (see Smith, 2014).

Contrary to popular perception, however, Africa’s socialist leaders did not harbour an anti-materialistic view of modern science and technology, otherwise known as ‘utopian socialism’. Rather, as Thompson (2010:39) aptly explicates, they hoped that by “combining traditional African values of cooperatism and humanism with new technology and strong state institutions, Africa could stage-skip the Marxist stage of dictatorship of the proletariat”, in order to catch up with the rest of the ‘developed world’. This
perspective made mathematics and applied science, rather than humanities, the benchmark of post-colonial educational policy in Africa.

Nationalism and pan-Africanism, as pointed out above, constitute the two other potent ideologies that strongly shaped the development policies of Africa’s first post-colonial rulers. Given the multi-ethnic composition of African societies, with a long history of tribal antagonism and warfare, nationalism naturally became the unifying idea invoked by Africa’s early independence leaders to foster a sense of unity and equality among the constituent tribes in the new nation state, while instilling in them a sense of pride and loyalty toward the new nation states (Science Encyclopedia, n.d; Pamir, 1997). Prior to political independence, nationalism was synonymous or associated with the quest for de-colonization and nationhood—an insistent desire that was pressed home—and eventually attained—by nationalist movements that sprung up all across African colonies in the post-War era (Keller, 1995). After independence, however, nationalism became the symbol of identity, purpose and social cohesion within the nation state, as these new states created, among others, national anthems, flags and colours, while erecting many ‘national’ and celebratory structures such as monuments and theatres to signal a departure from their colonial past, inspire patriotism and glorify the new nation state, thus giving nationalism a cultural dimension (Pamir, 1997). Most importantly, however, nationalism in independent Africa served as the guiding framework for political and economic governance, one which implied placing national interest above and beyond any other interests, being commonly associated with the rejection of non-unitary forms of statehood; a national approach to development planning; and the nationalization of economic production, including state takeover of previously European-owned companies and plantations (see below).

However, sensing nationalism’s potential and imminent danger to the grand vision of a united Africa, Africa’s new independence leaders quickly revived and preached the doctrine of Pan-Africanism—the oneness of all African people (Harris, 2004; Dagnini, 2008; Science Encyclopedia, n.d ). This was a philosophy propounded by academics, such as W.E.B Du Bois, who saw it as necessarily constituting the ultimate aspiration of all development efforts on the continent. As Joseph Nyerere remarked: “African nationalism is meaningless, dangerous, anachronistic, if it is not, at the same time, pan-Africanism”
Like nationalism, pan-Africanism evolved as an anti-colonial/anti-slavery project into a full-scale Afrocentric development ideology and epistemology (Asante, 2009). At its core is the solidarity of all black people everywhere, both within and outside continental Africa, for their collective social, economic and political progress (Harris, 2004; Dagnini, 2008). As Makalani (2011) puts it, pan-Africanism was a belief that was anchored not only on “the shared history of all black people” but also faith in “their common destiny”. Thus, where African nationalism sought to ensure internal cohesion within the nation states, pan-Africanism’s goal was to engender continental or interstate harmony. The Organization of African Unity (now African Union), founded in 1963, and its subset regional economic communities are the most practical manifestations of pan-Africanism (African Union, n.d).

Armed with these three intersecting radical ideologies, Africa’s charismatic leaders embarked on a program of national development, often outlined in ambitious national development plans, characterized by the following events and outcomes. First, in terms of process, there was a high level of centralization in the planning and execution of development, including political governance (Rakodi, 1997). Second, in terms of content, many of these plans were infrastructure-laden, as Africa’s new governments sought to lay the critical foundation needed for the development of a modern state. No wonder that the ensuing decade into independence would thus go down in history as one of the most development intensive epochs in Africa, with massive infrastructure, inclusive of education, healthcare, transportation and energy, many which have survived to become signature projects, being built as part of the ‘modernization’ drive. But besides raising the quality of life of their citizenry, the raison d’être for the huge infrastructural investment made by Africa’s early post-colonial governments was to facilitate the execution of what became the most significant economic legacy of Africa’s first independence governments, socialists and capitalists alike: import substitution industrialization (ISI), seen as key to attaining economic independence. This is because the nature of the colonial African economy, centered on the export of extractive resources in exchange for manufactured goods, was externally oriented and heavily tilted to benefit their European metropoles, in what had been the dominant 19th century international economic development theory:
international division of labour based on comparative advantage (Herman, 1975). In the post-war era, however, this economic theory lost its steam in the developing world as the unequal trade terms between rich and poor countries, worsened by declining real prices of primary commodities and rising real prices of manufactures in industrialized nations, led to its abandonment in favour of important substitution industrialization (ISI), which had already gained momentum in Latin America following the Great Depression of the 1930s, with relative proven success. Given the several backward and forward linkages with the domestic economy and the perceived numerous associated benefits of employment, higher incomes, increased government revenue and improved balance of trade, the new African governments saw domestic industrialization as the only viable means of escaping underdevelopment and transforming the commodity-based structure of the colonial economy into a secondary, manufacturing economy capable of sufficiently meeting domestic needs. Furthermore, the ISI was considered the most potent means of breaking away from the extant asymmetric core-periphery relationship with Western economies and the perpetual cycle of dependency it forged.

The execution of this policy resulted in the nationalization of the economic assets (e.g., plantations, mines, etc) left over by the Europeans, or, as seen in the case of capitalist states such as Kenya, redistribution to locals, mostly cronies of the new ruling elites (Jannikasi, 2012). In addition, several new state-owned manufacturing and trading companies (SOEs), ranging from large-scale industrial establishments employing several hundreds of people to small and medium-sized firms hiring only dozens of people, were set up to process and distribute the bulk of Africa’s resources for local consumption. As well, a climate of protectionism, effected through a raft of regulatory regimes, including import quotas, exchange rate controls, foreign direct investment restrictions and direct state subsidy to local firms, was imposed by African governments to shelve their infant industrialization program from external competition. This close door policy in the 1950s-70s effectively disengaged post-colonial Africa from the prevailing postwar international economic order, considered the second wave of globalization (Johnson, 2008). Politically and economically, however, individual African countries, depending on ideological posturing, maintained strong ties with selected Western nations, including ex-colonizers,
or those in the Eastern communist bloc, making Africa not immune from the ensuing Cold War and its ramifications.

Hart (2002) and Ogujuiba et. al (2011) have noted that Africa’s domestic industrialization program had three distinctive phases or objectives. Phase one entailed the production of consumer goods; phase two the production of intermediate goods; and phase three the production of capital goods, by which time the economies of African nations would be highly industrialized. But the reality was that, many African nations (with the exception of South Africa, which has a very distinct political-economic history) could not advance past stage two of the industrialization program (that is, to reach high tech manufacturing) (Hart, 2002; Ogujuiba et. al, 2011). Manufacturing was confined mostly to non-durable consumer goods such as foods, clothing and pharmaceuticals, followed by intermediate goods such as sawn wood and building materials, with vehicle assembly being the most advanced product. Thus, the early African leaders’ dream of transforming the continent into a modern, high-tech manufacturing powerhouse was never attained, as industrialization only made modest contributions to the economic growth of African countries, both in terms of GDP and employment, during its peak in the 1960-70 decade, with Zimbabwe achieving the highest manufacturing in GDP share of 20% (Mendes et al, 2014).

Fourth, the creation and large-scale expansion of state bureaucracy, far bigger than what existed during the colonial days, accompanied national development in early post-colonial Africa (Mbaka, 1996; USAID, 1999, Stambuli, 2002). This bureaucratic enlargement, justified to oversee the execution of the grand national development vision, though used in reality as a tool for fuelling patronage politics, facilitated the ascension of a new (state-made) middle class in post-colonial African societies. These middle classes comprised civil servants and managers of the several thousand state-owned enterprises (SOEs), who also became the occupants of the former European-built residential areas as well as the luxury components of the new housing estates put up by the new governments. This ascendant state-created middle class displaced the wealthy merchants and the independent educated elites who occupied the apex of the nascent indigenous colonial class structures.
to become the dominant occupational and social cohort in post-colonial Africa, often serving as political agents in the emergent clientele-based political system in post-colonial Africa. In the view of the renowned political theorist Walter Rodney (1975), the rise of the indigenous ‘political-middle class’, represents the most significant observed social change in early post-colonial Africa. Specifically, it set in motion class and ethnic politics and struggle in independent Africa, including simmering racial tensions in settler colonies such as Kenya, Zimbabwe and South Africa, where the policy of Africanization of public service and productive capital, especially land, led to the forceful dispossession of the many propertied White farmers, administrators and wealthy Asian business owners and migrants, who hitherto constituted the upper and middle classes in those societies (Rodney, 1975).

Finally, in common with socialism, the creation of a strong welfare state attended national development in early post-colonial Africa (Olukoshi, 1998; Blundo and Meur, 2009). Thus, it was common in many African countries during this period for citizens to enjoy education, healthcare, transportation and housing provided by the state at zero or subsidized rate. The latter sector, housing, it must be stressed, received greater attention, because, as argued by Arku (2009) in the case of Ghana and others elsewhere, not only did the new African governments see the need for massive state investment in public housing to address both the critical qualitative and quantitative shortfall in housing delivery caused by the discriminatory policies of the colonial administration, but also as a tool for improving public health, and, even more importantly, secure labour and improve productivity, considered vital to the success of the nascent industrialization program.

African cities and their larger urban systems underwent significant modifications during the nationalist epoch as the post-colonial national development planning ethos left vivid imprints on the nature of urbanism as well as the image and structural configuration of towns and cities inherited from the colonial days. First, in an attempt to ensure national cohesion, the new administrations quickly moved to de-Europeanize African cities by removing the strict racial segregatory policies of the past, which limited the movement of indigenes into the cities, especially those inhabited by the Europeans and also regulated
their movement within those cities through zoning, land use planning and building codes enforcement (Grant, 2002; Owuor and Mbatia, 2008). Second, they also embarked on the mission of nationalizing their urban spaces, especially their capital cities and CBDs, by erecting several landmark buildings and public monuments, including administrative quarters, judicial complexes, national theatres, parliament buildings, sport stadiums, cultural centres, fountains, squares and gardens in strategic areas of the city. They also named or renamed several streets and public buildings after iconic national and continent-wide heroes who were instrumental in the liberation struggle, either home or the entire African continent, or even after memorable events or causes. Ghana’s Independence Square Avenue in Accra and the Nyerere Road in Nairobi are few examples of such symbolic structures and features that emerged in early post-colonial urban Africa, giving spatial expression to the prevailing ideologies of nationalism and pan-Africanism (Grant, 2002; Owuor and Mbatia, 2008).

As several urban scholars have confirmed in their independent studies of the historical development of major African cities, the central business districts (CBDs) of capital cities witnessed the most dramatic transformation during the national times as the new African governments were keen to re-spatialize their business centres to reflect the new economic landscape they had created or sought to create. In their analysis of Accra, Lagos and Nairobi, Grant (2002), Abiodun (1997) and Owuor and Mbatia (2008), for example, observed that the CBDs of these cities were intensively corporatized through the sitting of headquarter offices of many of the SOEs that were established as part of the ISI development strategy. Also, the gridiron street pattern which defined the colonial CBD was relaxed and later overlooked, thereby re-imaging and altering the built form of the colonial CBD from that of a low-form into a middle-rise urban form. Lastly, these interventions aided in transforming the function of the colonial CBD from that of commerce into a command and control centre of the nascent manufacturing-oriented post-colonial economy.

However, the broader urban system changes that occurred in many African nations during the nationalist period came from the nationalist vision of egalitarian development
espoused by Africa’s first post-independence governments. This sought to correct the uneven patterns of geographic development created by colonial settlement policies. These colonial policies concentrated development through building administrative and port cities, including some economic and social infrastructure, along the coastal regions of their colonies, connected mainly by rail systems to their resource-rich hinterlands for staples and minerals exploitation and shipment to distant European markets. As a result, the interior regions of the colonies were left impoverished. Underpinned by the domestic industrialization program, the new African governments, however, sought to diffuse development more evenly—and rapidly—by creating new growth poles based on processing, major transportation routes, administration and key social infrastructure such as higher education and major health centres in selected parts of their countries, either singularly or combined. This was to stem the tide of population flows into the older bustling cities. Many of these new post-independence African cities, including new national capitals such as Linongwe, Malawi; Abuja, Nigeria; and Yamoussoukro, Ivory Coast; as well as industrial townships, such as Tema, Ghana, were modern and well-planned, housing mostly civil servants, other state employees and factory workers (Adarkwa, 2012).

As Adarkwa (2012) and other scholars have noted, the (attempted) socialist model of development pursued by Africa’s early independent governments disengaged and reconfigured their national urban systems from the exploitative transnational core-periphery functional relationship they were embedded in during the colonial days, where the colonial city functioned as the centre of wealth accumulation for their European capitals into a national core-periphery urban system where primary resource producing centres will feed secondary metropolitan cities. However, the overconcentration of production and other key economic, social and political functions in one or two primate cities, often the colonial capitals, due in part to pre-existing advantages of skilled labour, transportation facilities such as sea and airports, and agglomeration economies, combined with the highly centralized nature of planning and administration, led to the dominance of a few large cities in the newly created post-colonial urban system.
This unequal spatial arrangement, or problem of primacy, that emerged in post-independence Africa (UN-Habitat, 1991; Abou-Korin, 2010), essentially a local replica of the prior asymmetric core-periphery meta-geographic structure colonial African cities were embedded in, set the stage for unprecedented urbanization on the continent. This led to the rapid and disproportionate growth of ex-colonial African cities, both physical and demographic, to the detriment of smaller urban centres which successive governments have grappled to reverse. For instance, the population of Lagos, Nigeria; and Dakar, Senegal, which at independence stood at 665,000 and 374,700 respectively, had after just a decade of self-rule ballooned to 1.4 million and 600,000, about double their previous levels. On a continent-wide scale, the level of urbanization rose from 14.6 per cent at mid-century or the eve of independence to 20.7 per cent by 1965, representing a nearly 50 per cent spike in the urban share of the population (see World Urbanization Prospects, 1996 Revision), presenting a number of growth management challenges to the new governments in power.

Nonetheless, for about a decade and in some cases even more, the statist approach to socio-economic and spatial development in Africa seemed to yield some impressive results and the much vaunted socialist paradise that Africa’s visionary leaders promised their followers somehow seemed no longer a future promise, but an unfolding reality. With all the basic necessities of life—education, health care, housing, transportation, employment and sometimes food—virtually provided by the state for free, many Africans could not imagine any better life that existed elsewhere other than what they experienced. Of course, propaganda played an equally important role in perpetuating this belief. That said, however, many of these ex-colonies that were written off by their colonial masters for departing from the liberal political-economic doctrine they thought they had imbibed in their leaders, would soon make international headlines, to the discomfort of the West, including former colonial powers. Between 1960 and 1965, Ghana, for instance, boasted of an income per capita of about $250, higher than many of their counterpart Asian nations, including Malaysia, Korea and Singapore, alongside the provision of free healthcare, education and subsidized housing. As a matter of fact, some of the Asian tigers, which later overtook Africa, began looking to African nations such as Ghana for
cues on state-driven industrialization and development. And during that period, it seemed, not least from the African development experience, that liberal capitalism was not superior to socialism and other competing development ideologies.

However, the glory that the state-led development model brought to Africa was short-lived. An economic crisis, set in motion by years of state production and the provision of state-subsidized goods and services, artificially shielding domestic firms and the citizenry from the realities of market forces, would culminate in the eventual grinding of the ISI project and the entire economy in the face of diminishing national income, managerial incompetency, ballooning national debt, cheaper imports from other new industrializing countries, shortage of critical imported inputs and the impact of the 1970s global oil crisis, among others. Soon, many of the social and economic achievements chalked during the expansionist period in African development would be eroded, and the relative economic boom experienced in early post-colonial Africa bust, despite failed attempts to revamp it. In a matter of years, many of the heroic national figures, such as Ghana’s Kwame Nkrumah, would be ousted from power, although several others managed to cling on to power, either by means of the gun and or by exploiting deep sentiments often in combination with shambolic elections that guaranteed their continued stay in power.

The failure of the African nationalist-socialist project as well as the domestic industrialization program it was anchored is a matter of interest within the development community. Some blame the failure on outside interference or Western sabotage in varied forms, including CIA-orchestrated coups of those African leaders, including Ghana’s Kwame Nkrumah and Zaire’s Patrick Lumumba, perceived to be aligned to the communist bloc (Lewellen, 1995). Others, such as Ayittey (1990), Okuku (2008) and Page (2010), cite internal challenges and personality failures of African nationalist leaders, including poor economic management, corruption and an anti-democratic style of rule. Another variable is the problem of indebtedness, caused by deficit spending to finance infrastructure development, social services and to address the balance of payment imbalances. What is clear, though, is that Africa’s high welfare state and the inward-looking ISI model in the early post-colonial period were unsustainable without corresponding productivity improvements, agricultural investments, institutional and land reforms, and, as seen in the
successful South East Asian model, a deliberate focus on export-based manufacturing (Ogujiuba, et. al, 2011).

The period between the departure of Africa’s first generation post-independence leaders and the later onset of neoliberal economic reforms in the 1980s, including the arrival of the second democratic wave on the continent in the 1990s, is often described as the dark years in post-colonial African history. This is because, this destabilizing, transitional epoch, the exact duration of which differs from one country to another, was marked by a series of repressive military dictatorships, abbreviated in some nations by brief experiments with democracy and market-oriented economic reforms, which were either too limited in scope or truncated by coups even before their outcomes could be seen. Many African economies stagnated and later declined during the 1970s (Donge et.al, 2012). Others, such as Liberia and the Democratic Republic of Congo, which were marred in protracted conflicts and civil wars, had their economies completely collapse. Overall, African income per capita dropped and the poverty situation worsened (ibid). And the oil crisis that set in during the 1970s made an already bad situation worse.

Meanwhile, on the urban front, African cities continued to experience swelling populations, aided by the urban-biased policies of succeeding governments and a vast income gap between villages and cities. This untamed rural-urban population drift increased the level of urbanization to nearly a third of the continent’s population by 1980, and it took place in the presence of serious urban governance deficiencies and economic hardships. By the mid-1980s, many illegal migrant settlements that sprung up on the fringes of major African cities, such as Nima, Accra; Kibera, Nairobi; and Makoko, Lagos, including older inner city neighbourhoods, had developed into full-scale slums (Abiodun, 1997; Owuor and Mbatia, 2008). In short, many African cities were in a state of blight.

Saddled with mounting domestic and international indebtedness, high unemployment, skyrocketing inflation, food shortages, collapsing industries, and their attendant widespread social unrests and dipping regime popularity, amid a declining Soviet aid to pro-communist regimes and heightened Western economic sanctions, many cash-strapped African governments, military and civilian alike, capitalist and socialists, sought financial
bailout from the West in the early 1980s. This offered Western powers the opportunity to re-school African leaders about the inherent structural failings of command economies and the superior advantages of liberal, market-driven economic development, which had then evolved into what become known as neoliberalism (see Sparr, 1994; Simmon, 1995).

Led by the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund (IMF), as many as 40 African nations, beginning with Ghana in 1983, adopted widespread market reforms, known as structural adjustment programs (SAP). The centerpiece of the SAP included trade deregulation, privatization of SOEs, loosening of currency controls and elimination of barriers to foreign direct investments, which were combined with fiscal austerity, cutbacks in health, education and welfare spending (Cleary, 1989; Adedeji, 1999; Briggs and Yeboah, 2000). While the original scope of the reform agenda was trade liberalization, virtually all sectors of the domestic economy were eventually opened up to outside investments and participation. Later, other political and institutional reforms, chief among them administrative decentralization, were added, as these changes were posited as necessary for the full scale actualization of the benefits that a market-driven economic policy was supposed to bring. Soon, many African leaders bought into the logic of the neoliberal agenda and initiated additional reforms in other spheres of the society, including education, housing and health care delivery. By the early 1990s, a number of African nations, yielding to both domestic agitation and sustained international pressure, had either returned to, or were in the process of returning to, constitutional rule and multiparty democracy—a phenomenon that was considered part of Huntington’s (1991) third democratic wave.

The impact of the SAPs on the economies and societies of African nations is a matter of active debate in both academic and public spheres in Africa. One school of thought, supported by the renowned development economists Farhad Noorbaksh and Alberto Paloni (2000), posits that the SAPs in Africa led to de-industrialization, widespread unemployment and the worsening of poverty on the continent. This claim is largely corroborated by almost all country-level studies of the impact of the restructuring (see for example Rono, 2002; Kingston et. al, 2011). But another school of thought, backed by
economists such as Shantayanan Theverajan (2013), insists that it was a necessary step to bringing Africa out of its economic doldrums and providing the right fundamentals that has spawned the economic dynamism being witnessed in Africa today. Moreover, it positioned the continent to weather the recent global financial crisis, and spared it from the current debt crisis that has gripped many advanced economies.

What is undeniable, however, is that it was a painful restructuring process that has had profound and far-reaching consequences on the socio-economic, political and urban landscape of Africa, which we can catalogue as follows. Economically, first, the adoption of the neoliberal reform agenda in Africa, which coincided with the so-called third wave globalization, facilitated the re-integration of African economies into the global economy, albeit in much deeper or complex ways than previous episodes of connection. This is because apart from the unparalleled growth in the volume and diversity of transnational trade between Africa and outside world since the economic reforms, foreign direct investment (FDI) in Africa have hit a record new high in recent years, averaging 52 billion USD per annum in value and reaching 5.7% in terms of global share (AfDB/OECD/UNDP, 2015). This shows dramatic improvement in investor confidence in the continent, currently considered the second most attractive region for doing business (Ernst and Young, 2014). However, besides the surge in FDI, foreign capital is now permeating other (non-extractive) sectors of the economy such as banking, tourism and producer services—sectors which have traditionally not been of interest to foreign capital on the continent (ibid), revealing a much wider and deeper level of fusion into the international economy.

Second, it has helped in the on-going sectoral restructuring of the national and urban economies of many African nations and cities, which have been of two major types. The first has been the rise and growth of a dynamic private sector, as the scaling back of the public sector and the government’s role in the economy has indirectly helped unleash a new wave of entrepreneurship in Africa, some of whose products are penetrating the international market. The second transformation, of an industrial nature, has been the on-going tertiarization of the national and urban space economies of many African countries and cities linked to the concomitant rise of the service sector and the attrition of the
agricultural and industrial sectors in proportional terms. This transformation is corroborated by recent statistics which show that services have overtaken agriculture as the largest contributor to GDP growth in as many as 27 African nations (The World Factbook, 2015), more than double the situation two decades ago, even though agriculture still remains the largest employer in Africa, accommodating about 60 per cent of the African labour force. But the ascendancy of the service sector, which include significant informal activity such as petty trading, has attracted serious criticism from some pundits like Rick Rowen, whose much debated 2013 article, The Myth of Africa’s Rise, argues that the on-going transition from agriculture to services without industrialization cannot amount to a “rise” as the conventional story of development elsewhere has been. But this assertion has been rebuffed by others such as Renaissance Capital chief economist Charles Robertson, who in a co-authored rejoinder, “Sorry but Africa’s Rise is Real”, insists that industrialization is not the only, and necessary, path to escaping poverty and achieving economic advancement (Robertson and Moran, 2013). Robertson and Moran’s thesis is corroborated by the experience of countries such as Singapore which was able to leapfrog into advanced nation status by capitalizing on the growth of services, high-tech and knowledge-based sectors without a undergoing a typical industrialization phase.

In the political sphere, the liberalization drive served as a precursor for important institutional and governance reforms in Africa. Two of these are paramount. Administrative decentralization, the first, was seen as necessary for the full scale actualization of the benefits that the market-driven economic policy was supposed to bring. It was argued that growth was more efficient and its benefits (or development) is more evenly distributed spatially when central government responsibilities (including service delivery) and powers were reduced and “off-loaded” to smaller, sub-national government levels as well as private entities (Brosio, 2000; Smoke, 2003; Caldera, 2012). The acceptance by African leaders of the supposed inescapable links between decentralization, efficiency and stronger economic growth led to the devolution of political, administrative, financial and development management functions, including planning, from the centre to the local level, with the creation of semi-autonomous local government bureaucracies representing the most significant change in political governance
or public administration in post-colonial Africa. The second major indirect political outcome of the liberalization policy was the return of democracy or pluralistic politics in many parts of Africa, which began in the early 1990s when a number of Africa’s military governments—yielding to both domestic agitation and sustained international pressure—initiated moves to restore constitutional rule and multiparty democracy, which had largely been suppressed in many parts of the continent following independence (Conteh-Morgan, 1997; Oxhorn et al, 2004; Lync, 2011).

In the socio-cultural domain, Africa’s greater open door policy since the 1980s and its restructuring effects and later growth have interacted with social forces and cultural change to spur class re-formation, with declining poverty and the rise of a new middle class being the most significant. The reduction in poverty incidence in Africa, which range from as high as 27.3 percentage points between 1991/92 and 2012/13 in Ghana (Ghana Statistical Service, 2014) to as low as 8 percentage points in 2005-2012 in the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) (IMF, 2015), has been coupled with rising household incomes (Standard Bank, 2014). This has facilitated upward social mobility for a significant component of the African population, resulting in the growth of the middle class. This emergent class, markedly different in composition, values and behaviour from previous groups of the middle class, has helped re-shape the image of Africa internationally and is playing a significant role in engendering political change and government accountability, however slow it may be.

Lastly, at the urban scale, the new flood of foreign investments and related activities, mostly concentrated in large cities, spurred on by the market reforms, have increased the level of interaction between African cities and other international cities. As a result, the position of many African cities, which previously sat at the periphery of the global urban system, have been elevated into more significant statuses. The 2012 classification of sub-Saharan African cities, such as Lagos and Nairobi, as well as Accra and Dar Salaam, as globally-significant cities by the UK-based GaWC in their Beta-minus and Gamma-minus categories5 is an attestation of the growing international importance of African cities,

5 According to the GaWC classification system, Beta-level global cities are those that ink moderate economic regions into the global economy, while Gamma-level cities are those that connect smaller
particularly those south of the Sahara. This, of course, excludes South African cities, such as Johannesburg, which have long received international recognition for their relatively strong integration into the global economy. Also, as pointed out above, the economic reforms have helped grow and diversify the economies of major African cities, with knowledge-based producer services, such as banking and ICT, becoming an important, if not the leading growth, sectors. Meanwhile, the overall structure and form of most cities have been transformed, amid rapid population growth, with the birth of secondary centres, suburbanization and the upward elevation of the skyline of urban Africa being the most visible changes.

While economic recovery in the post-adjustment period in Africa, that is, between 1985 and 2000, was slow, the arrival of the 21st century seemed to have marked a turning point in the African economic growth and transformation story. With an average 6% GDP growth from 2000, Africa has steadily overtaken other regional economies to become the world’s fastest growing region since 2013 (The Economist, 2013; AfDB, 2013). This new, sustained growth spurt, accompanied by major advances in technology innovation, economic empowerment, human rights improvement and urban resurgence, is what has become the story of Africa’s renaissance in the 21st century, the elements of which I next examine.

2.2 Notable Aspects of Africa’s New Rise
Having provided a narrative of Africa’s post-colonial development, it is perhaps important to highlight certain pertinent attributes about the current revitalization in Africa that sets it apart from previous episodes of growth and transformation.

More than Just Economic Growth
The first key feature about Africa’s current rise is the fact that it is more than just a story of rapid economic growth (Leke, 2010; The Economist, 2013). As shown above, the current renaissance taking place in Africa, far from being just new spurts in economic

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6 See also the 2014 A.T. Kearney’s Global Cities Index which also includes Dhaka, Addis Ababa and Kinshasa in their top 84 global cities. See https://www.atkearney.com/research-studies/global-cities-index/2014
growth as is often portrayed, is equally—and to a certain extent even more importantly—about improvement in the quality of political governance, including growing and entrenching democracies, strengthening of institutions, and an overall improvement in human development and human security. To put this in perspective, according to Alence (2009), there were only three functioning democracies in Africa at the end of the cold war, based on the assessment of the Washington-based Freedom House: Rwanda, Botswana and Mauritius. Today, however, almost all African nations, with exceptions to Eritrea and Swaziland, have embraced democracy, not least electoral democracy, even if elections are not always perfect. Also, tolerance for divergent opinions and other civil liberties, although varying in degree from one country to another, has been growing, and political pluralism is increasingly gaining traction in Africa (The Economist, 2013). Similarly, peace and human security, or stability, previously confined to a dozen countries on the continent, now appear to be spreading, although pockets of instability still exist. This situation is the outcome of two factors: the decline in the incidence of inter and intra-state conflicts (Economist, 2013). Already considered a model of peace and democracy in Africa, Ghana’s human security and democratic credentials include the absence of civil war since attaining independence, a free media landscape that was ranked 1st in Africa in 2010 by Reporter Without Borders, and a transparent, free and fair electoral system that has witnessed four successive elections and two changes in government since the onset of constitutional rule in 1992.

Apart from the growth of democracy and peace or stability, the overall quality of political leadership and governance, including economic management, has also improved dramatically in Africa. African leaders are investing more in the well-being of their citizenry: building good roads, providing quality and more accessible education, expanding social services and introducing some social safety nets—a stark recognition by the current generation of African leaders that improving the lot of their citizens is required to win the confidence of the electorate and renew their mandate, rather than pilfering and stashing their country’s wealth in financial havens outside the continent, as has been the custom in the past. More importantly, they are investing in the kind of infrastructure such as ICT, industrial parks and scientific research necessary to drive economic growth faster
and encourage innovative-based growth—a marked departure from the statist approach of the past. These investments have resulted in considerable development gains: poverty is down, incomes are up, more children are in school and less are dying before age five; people are living longer and better. Rwanda—much remembered for the 1993-4 horrendous genocide that resulted in the demise of more than one million Rwandese in a period of just six weeks, leaving the entire world in total dismay—is an example of the kind of new leadership emerging in Africa as well as the new development path they are championing or embarking on. Led by Paul Kegame, the country’s post-conflict rebuilding effort has been so impressive that Rwanda is now being paraded as an African success story, a model of economic progress courting admiration from both within and outside the continent (Davis, 2014; Hua, 2014; Coates, 2015). Adopting a business philosophy or approach to economic management and development, the country has focused on building one of the most competitive economies in the world by ensuring macro-economic stability, eliminating institutional corruption, and embarking on the most audacious pro-business, pro-investment reform programs on a scale never seen in the history of Africa before (World Bank, 2010; Langfitt, 2012; UN Dispatch, 2015). These reforms have also been accompanied by investments in poverty reduction, human capital development, infrastructure provision, services and tourism. Not surprisingly, the World Bank ranked the country as the 46th best place of doing business globally and 3rd in Africa on its 2015 “Ease of Doing Business” rankings, up from 139 in 2009, making Rwanda a hotbed of foreign investment in East Africa. With above 8 percent growth record in the last decade projected to hit double digits in the next decade, Rwanda—with a strong, ambitious developmentalist regime—is predicted to become the “Singapore of Africa” (Hua, 2014). Rwanda’s remarkable story of post-genocide recovery is particularly instructive, because it provides a good example of how good leadership, combined with the right kind of policies, can help a conflict-ridden, poverty-stricken, resource-deficient, landlocked country overcome its dark past, forge ahead, and transform itself into a shining star.

Rwanda’s respectable accomplishments, perhaps an extreme case, nevertheless mirror the broader transformations taking place in 21st century Africa. In the absence of reliable
country-level data, Mo Ibrahim, the Sudanese business tycoon who was quoted as one of the ardent believers in the transformative potential of the emerging African middle classes in chapter one, set up the Mo Ibrahim Foundation in 2006, to encourage transformative leadership and governance in Africa through four initiatives, one of which is the Ibrahim Index of African Governance (IIAG). The IIAG annually scores African countries on a range of governance-related indicators, ranging from infrastructure provision to freedom of expression and sanitation to property rights, measured across four thematic areas: safety and rule of law, participation and human rights, sustainable economic opportunity, and human development. From its 12 years assessment, the overall conclusion is that governance has improved in all but six countries on the continent, accounting for 94% of the population, with the highest performance occurring in the area of human development, mostly centred on education and healthcare—yet another evidence of how keen African leaders are determined to better the lives of their citizens though education and healthcare. Apart from the Mo Ibrahim Foundation, other international organizations such as the Aga Khan Development Network have played an important role in promoting good governance, poverty reduction and economic development in Africa.

**Not Just a Commodity Boom**

The second notable attribute about Africa’s rise today concerns the very nature of the economic growth currently taking place on the continent. For many years, the story of economic growth in Africa has been the story of commodity boom, driven by spikes in demand and prices of Africa’s major resource exports: oil, minerals and forestry products, and their plummeting only served to expose the fragility of African economies, a viscous cycle or trap the continent has not been able to break free from. Today, however, the story is changing. Seeing the risks posed by the over reliance on commodity exports, African leaders are taking steps to diversify their economies away from agriculture and raw

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7. The other three initiatives are: the Ibrahim Prize for Achievement in African Leadership, a 5 million dollar cash award given to a former Africa head of state who has demonstrated exceptional leadership while in office; the Ibrahim Forum, an annual high-level forum that brings together leaders in government, business and civil society from across Africa and beyond to discuss solutions to the pertinent challenges affecting the continent; and the Ibrahim Fellowship and Scholarship Program, which provides mentoring and scholarship opportunities to prospective African leaders.

8. For the comprehensive report, including the methodology and standing of various countries on each and all the four thematic areas, please visit [http://www.moibrahimfoundation.org/iiag/](http://www.moibrahimfoundation.org/iiag/)
materials export to one comprised of many high-paying sectors. Thus, not only are African exports being diversified, both in terms of composition and destination—with manufactured goods gaining an increasing share of African exports, the receiving countries of which are now expansive—but whole new or previously insignificant sectors such as producer services, construction, transportation, telecommunication and the cultural economy are becoming an important part of the African growth story today (Leke, et. al, 2010). In addition, there have been signs of growing domestic consumption, which, as mentioned before, now accounts for a 3rd of Africa’s GDP, according to the AfDB (2011), albeit most of this opportunity is currently being harnessed by global companies. Nevertheless, these developments have helped to both diversify and stabilize African economies, reducing their volatility to global economic shocks—the reason several analysts believe that Africa was better able to weather off the late 2000s global downtown (see IMF, 2009; Nova Capital Partners, 2011; Political Economy Research Institute, 2014).

But the subsequent dip in crude oil and other commodity prices, including gold, which have slowed growth and weakened government revenue in many African countries, and revealed how exposed African economies are to external shocks. This latest trend reveals is that the commodities sector is and will continue to play a significant role in economic growth in Africa in the foreseeable future; however, its relative contribution to GDP, now standing at 24%, is expected to decline further in the future.

**Not Just A Few Countries**

The third salient feature about the story of Africa’s rise, somewhat alluded to above, is its ubiquitous nature (Sala-i-Martin and Pinkovskiy, 2010; Sy, 2014). Up until the late 1990s, all the positive news of accelerated economic growth, poverty reduction, declining corruption and or successful elections in Africa, particularly in the south, were confined to only a select few countries on the continent: the likes of South Africa, Botswana, Ghana, Kenya and Mauritius, which have been stable democracies for decades now; and in the case of high economic growth, resource-wealthy countries, such as Nigeria. The remaining countries always seemed to be buried in poverty and or conflict, while in the North democracy was sacrificed on the altar of growth and stability. The picture is different today, however. While North Africa seems to be grappling with the post-Arab Spring
political and economic crisis, Sub-Saharan Africa appears to be enjoying relative stability and growth. Yet, what is even more striking about the resurgence happening down south is that it is not being exclusively led by the traditional economic and democratic giants on the continent, but by economic laggards and erstwhile unstable nations such as Ethiopia, Zambia, Tanzania, Mozambique, Angola and the much-talked about Rwanda. These countries, which are pulling surprises in the areas of economic growth (of no less than 6%), poverty reduction and massive infrastructural development, are challenging the likes of Ghana, Nigeria and Kenya to be at the forefront of the 21st century African growth and transformation story. But the most intriguing part of the story of the rise of these new African ‘lions’ is this: excluding oil-rich Angola, all the other countries mentioned above are considered resource-poor nations by African standards, which is to say, their growth is underpinned by sound macroeconomic policies and political stability. It is this new growth momentum and wind of change that appears to be galvanising the entire Sub-Saharan Africa, placing 15 more African countries in the World Bank’s middle income category in two decades (prior to 2000, only Cape Verde, Seychelles, Namibia, Botswana, Mauritius and South Africa were middle-income African nations), while trebling Africa’s GDP to $2.39 trillion under the same period. Predictions are that all but only a minority of (13 fragile) African nations will become middle income by 2025, if current trends continue (World Bank, 2012).

A New Regionalism on the Scene
Another noteworthy observation about Africa’s recent growth and transformation story is the fact that it is being accompanied by increasing regional integration. Prior to the 1990s, African nations barely traded among themselves following the collapse of the first round of regionalism championed by early pan-African leaders, such as Kwame Nkrumah owing to mistrust, widespread political instabilities and xenophobia, which led to expulsions, counter-expulsions and the freezing of ties between some countries. Since then, commitment to the long-desired vision of a united Africa remained rhetorical, with cooperation often limited to small movement of people and goods across national boundaries. However, with greater awareness of the benefits of regional cooperation in parallel with globalization, African governments have, since the 1990s, undertaken many
significant and concrete steps to strengthen regional blocs and foster greater intra-African trade and investments, with the coming into force of the 1991 Abuja treaty. Included among these initiatives have been the easing of red-tape to goods and population movement; the development of regional transportation infrastructure, the most significant being the 53,683 km long trans-African highway linking all the nations across the continent by road; and the setting up of bilateral trade agreements and investment initiatives.

Already, these efforts seem to be yielding significant economic dividends. According to the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD) organization, Africa-to-Africa trade and investments has risen by over 55% up to 2011 since the 1970s, both in volume and in value (UNCTAD, 2013), with regional trade reaching $131billion in 2011 (Figure 2.1) while that of investment flows stood at $6billion in 2007 (African Investor, 2012). As can be seen from Figure 2.2 FDI inflow to Africa from other African countries has been climbing up steadily over the years, especially from 2000 (see footnote below Figure 2.2), although, intra-regional FDI accounts for about 5% and 12% of total FDI value and projects in Africa, respectively (African Investor, 2012), suggesting that
Data on intra-African investments are hard to come by; however, FDI outflows from the continent can be used as a proxy for Africa-to-Africa investments since bulk of investment outflows from Africa go to other African nations.

*Figure 2.2 Inward and Outward FDI in Africa, 2000-2014*

(Source: UNCTAD Statistics, retrieved in January 2016)

external FDI, which took a new upturn in 2000, still dominates Africa’s investment landscape, making the continent a new frontier for foreign investors seeking to capitalize on its growth and middle class expansion. But apart from the exponential surge in intra-African trade and investments, there have been fascinating new trends about the new wave of regionalism in Africa. First, intra-African investments and partnerships have permeated new greenfield sectors such as banking, real estate, housing, manufacturing and telecommunications, areas that were not previously covered in regional economic relations. Thus, non-primary sector investments—principally, manufacturing and services—now account for the bulk (97%) of intra-African investments, compared to 74% for external FDI, according to the 2014 World Investment Report. This is a remarkable feat that shows that African investors recognize both the importance and potential of investing in other African countries, especially in the non-traditional sectors of the economy, which is helping to modernize and diversify African economies. Second, unlike before, South Africa is not the only source of significant regional investment in Africa; countries such as Nigeria, Angola, Kenya and Egypt have become important sources of
African investments. Although South Africa remains the largest source of regional FDI in Africa, the country has now become a receiving country of African investments, too. Thirdly, although efforts have been by African governments to encourage broad-based economic exchanges, there seems to be a certain level of specialization emerging in intra-African investments. For instance, South African outward FDI is concentrated in communication, mining and retail, while Nigeria has emerged as the most important source of regional FDI in building materials and financial services. Meanwhile, other countries, such as Ghana—a traditional destination rather than a source of FDI, both external and regional—appears to have succeeded in becoming an educational hub within the sub-region, with its schools hugely patronized by Africans from within and across the sub-region.

Boâs (2001) has argued that Africa’s new regionalism propensity is the product of what he calls “globalization of regionalisation”, that is to say, the solidifying of regional trading blocs as a counterforce to (overcome the marginalizing effect of) economic globalization on Africa, rather than by pure ideological reasons, as seen in the past. Thus, judging from Boâs’ argument, we can posit that although the current democratic crop of African leaders have emerged as the champions of the new or intensified regional integration, the relative success or growth of regional economic cooperation in Africa appear to be impelled first by the stark reality that Africa could be left behind other regions in the new, unprecedented wave of globalization sweeping across the globe; and second, by the awareness of the fact that greater trade and investments among Africans serve to benefit Africans themselves in mutual ways. To the extent that majority of the intra-African investments involve private capital, then globalization and Africa’s new regionalism drive can be said to be complementary. That said, however, the unprecedented growth in the scale and intensity of Africa’s regional economic cooperation is a healthy development that is providing a strong internal or alternative driving force for economic growth and innovation, with huge benefits, including the creation of local supply chains that have greater multiplier effects compared to external FDI, the returns from which tend to be mostly funneled out of the continent.
The Rise of African Multinationals

One other salient feature characterizing Africa’s recent rise has been the emergence of African multinational corporations. They include regional transnational corporations, such as the Nigeria-based, United Bank for Africa which has presence in several other African nations, and a host of other transnational corporations that have emerged in Africa through acquisitions and mergers. But apart from these, there are emergent new African multinational corporations, many of which were started post-2000, often through individual initiatives, that are establishing presence in other parts of the world. Examples include the Ghanaian-based, RLG Group of Companies, a telecommunications conglomerate that has subsidiaries in China and the United Arab Emirates, including several other African countries. The other is Bourbon Coffee, a coffee chain that began in Rwanda in 2007 and has now succeeded in permeating the US market, with cafes in Washington; Manhattan; and Cambridge, Massachusetts. The emergence of African transnational (ATNCs) and multinational corporations (AMNCc) marks a new turn in Africa’s development story. As with their foreign counterparts, African TNCs have contributed to the growth of high-salaried, professional occupations that have in turn contributed to the growth of the new middle classes in Africa. Furthermore, they have played (and continue to play) an important role in the growth, expansion, diversification, modernization of African economies. As can be seen from Table 2.1, the majority (i.e., 65.8%) of the 840 major investment projects or transnational corporations that were formed in Africa between 1990 and 2011, either through mergers and acquisitions or greenfield projects, were concentrated in the services sector, followed by industry (25.8%), with the smallest proportion (8.4%) going into primary production (i.e., agriculture, mining and petroleum production). Furthermore, in the service domain, bulk of the ATNCs are concentrated in higher-order services, especially finance, which by far has the largest number of TNCs—365, or 41.6% of all projects, higher than the total number of ATNCs operating in the industrial and primary sectors. Similarly, in the industrial sector, manufacturing TNCs dominate, with 213 projects which accounts for 24.3% of all projects. However, over 70% of these manufacturing ATNCs are engaged in low-to-medium technology manufactures, including food, textile, leather, chemical and mineral products, with only about (if not less than) 30% engaged in high-tech
Table 2.1: Number and Sectoral Composition of Intra-African Investment Projects, 1990-2011

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Broad sectors</th>
<th>Detailed sectors</th>
<th>Total Number of Projects</th>
<th>Project Type</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Number</td>
<td>%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Primary Sector</td>
<td>Agriculture, hunting, forestry &amp; Fishing</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>0.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Mining, Quarrying &amp; Petroleum</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>3.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Primary sector total</td>
<td></td>
<td><strong>37</strong></td>
<td><strong>8.4</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Secondary Sector</td>
<td>Manufacturing</td>
<td>213</td>
<td>24.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Food, beverages and tobacco</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>5.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Textile, clothing and leather</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>1.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Wood and wood products</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>0.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Rubber and plastic products</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Coke, petroleum products and nuclear fuel</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>1.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Chemical and chemical products</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>2.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Metals and metal products</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>1.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Non-metallic and mineral products</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>3.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Precision instruments</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>0.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Electrical and electronic products</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>3.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Machinery and equipment</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>0.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Motor vehicles and other transport equipment</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Publishing and Printing</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>0.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Other manufacturing</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Non-manufacturing industries</td>
<td><strong>13</strong></td>
<td><strong>1.5</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Electricity, Gas &amp; Water</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>0.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Construction</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>0.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Industry sector total</td>
<td></td>
<td><strong>226</strong></td>
<td><strong>25.8</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tertiary sector</td>
<td>Trade</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>3.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Hotels and restaurants</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>2.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Transport, storage &amp; communication</td>
<td>68</td>
<td>7.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Finance</td>
<td>365</td>
<td>41.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Business services</td>
<td>83</td>
<td>9.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Education</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Health and social services</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Community, social and personal services</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Other services</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Service sector total</td>
<td></td>
<td><strong>577</strong></td>
<td><strong>65.8</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td></td>
<td><strong>840</strong></td>
<td><strong>100</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Computed from UNCTAD, 2013
manufactures such as machinery, electronic products, motor vehicles and precision instruments. The above data implies that the contribution of ATNCs towards the industrialization of the continent is somewhat limited, albeit the relatively high concentration of ATNCs in manufacturing has aided in revamping the sector following the mid 1980s economic reforms that led to significant deindustrialization and retrenchment. In addition, it also connotes a growing interest or confidence by African investors in the (future) prospects of industrialization on the continent Africa. That said, however, the two dominant sectors of operation of ATNCs, financial and manufacturing, have, as previously indicated above, played a no meager role in the creation of high-skilled, high-income professional jobs that have contributed to the expansion of the new middle classes, as will be more evident in the Ghanaian context.

A New Generation of Entrepreneurs and Innovators
The rise of African transnational and multi-national corporations is a pointer of yet another important trend characterizing Africa’s 21st century renaissance: the rise of a new generation of entrepreneurs and innovators. Whereas the heroes of 20th century Africa comprised of politicians such as Kwame Nkrumah, Joseph Nyerere and Nelson Mandela, who wrestled against the dark forces of colonialism to bring emancipation and dignity to their people, the heroes of 21st century Africa are its new generation of young business entrepreneurs and innovators are who are braving the odds to bring hope and dignity to the lives of Africans by solving some of the most important development challenges facing the continent and beyond. They include 33-year old Ghanaian Bright Simmons, the brain behind mPidegree, a mobile-based technology application widely used across the globe for detecting counterfeit drug products, saving millions of lives and lost company profits; Kenya’s 30 year old Jamila Abass, founder of M-Farm, a mobile-based app that provides vital market information to rural Kenyan famers; and 29-year-old Nigerian physician Ola Orekunrin, founder of Flying Doctors, West Africa’s only charity-based, air ambulance service. Others include 40-year old Zambian Monica Mosunda, who founded Java Foods, a food processing company that produces affordable nutrition from local products for the southern African market; 35-year old Bethlehem Tilahun of Ethiopia whose company, Sole Rebels, employs local artisans to manufacture internationally-
patronized shoes from old rubber from vehicle tires; South Africa’s 26-year old Siya Zuya, known for inventing a homemade rocket fuel; Verengai Mabika, a 35-year old Zimbabwean environmental activist whose organization, Development Reality Institute, has created a virtual climate change school that recruits, trains and equips climate change activists across Africa to fight climate change through local actions and activism; and a host of other unsung heroes who are helping to change the story of Africa in both big and small ways. Many of these change-makers, who belong to Africa’s emergent new middle class generation—some of whose contributions to socio-economic and urban transformation will be unveiled in the Accra case study—hold the promise of Africa’s development revolution.

**A New and Increasingly Role for China**

The final, and undoubtedly the most controversial aspect of Africa’s 21st century rise, has been the role of China. What began or appeared to be a search for new raw material sources, particularly oil, by a resource-hungry nation, China’s economic relations with Africa has deepened and transformed over the past decade in ways that is now beginning to be a source of concern both within and outside the continent. With Sino-African trade now valued at some $160 billion, China has now surpassed the West to become Africa’s biggest trading partner. But beyond trade, China has over a million of its nationals across Africa, selling Chinese-made goods, building all kinds of infrastructure (e.g., hospitals, roads, schools, power dams, stadia, refineries, and so on), directly mining and drilling for minerals and oil, and setting up other businesses (e.g., restaurants, casinos, and so on), following what Brautigam (2010) has called China’s two pronged, three-pillar approach. This approach encompass resource-backed, development loans and aid, whereby the Chinese government provides low-interest loans and aid for infrastructure development in Africa, in return for oil and mineral concessions; and the creation of special trade and economic cooperation zones. Thus, trade, aid, investment have become central pillars of China’s new dealings with Africa (*ibid*)

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Beyond the bourgeoning economic ties between China and Africa, the manner in which China pursues its interests in or with Africa is controversial, however. Unlike Western loans and aid that come with so-called conditionalities such as transparency, good (or rather democratic) governance and privatization, the Chinese development financing model typically has no strings attached (ibid). This potentially facilitates Western-maligned African governments and leaders, such as Zimbabwe’s Robert Mugabe, who has been under sustained sanctions, to obtain alternative funding source, to the discomfort of Washington and London. But apart from Western powers, many locals, through vocal civil societies, have expressed disapproval over how Beijing seals lucrative deals with their governments, with details that are virtually shrouded in secrecy, leaving no room for public accountability or scrutiny. They also accuse Beijing of allocating the bulk of Chinese-funded projects to Chinese companies, with little or no local involvement which some consider as indirect industrialization. But China dismisses such criticisms as the West’s attempt to soil their ‘good’ relations with Africa.

A second disquieting aspect of China’s style of engagement with Africa is about the disregard for environmental protection, local staff wellbeing and insensitivity to important cultural norms, often generating local backlash to Chinese activities (ibid). Thirdly, China’s dumping of cheap goods in African markets, including direct participation in the retail business, often leading to the loss of jobs and income, is an ongoing issue of discontent.

These unsettling issues in the Sino-African relations have led many (mostly Western) observers to label the China’s presence in Africa as a new form of colonialism, a conquest of some sort that seeks to make Africa China’s new colony (Goodal, cited in Caulderwood, 2014; Tiffen, 2014). Obviously, the unease and suspicious between Western powers and the government in Beijing emanates from the former’s fear of losing its influence or hegemony in a territory it seems more interested in dictating to rather than cooperating with to develop; and, of course, their polarized worldviews of what an ideal Africa should be and their resulting differences in development practice. As Brautigam (2010) aptly describes, the two powers share differing perspectives on Africa. While the West, led by the United States, wants better government and democracy for Africa, China
is interested in building infrastructure like roads and dams that Africa badly needs to propel its economic growth and development; while Western governments advocate trade liberalization and open markets in Africa, the Chinese are establishing special economic zones that facilitate investments and technology transfer to Africa; whereas the West is providing micro-credit schemes to support the poor in Africa, China is setting up multi-billion dollar equity funds to support massive investment projects.

However, for many African governments, already weary of the West’s pretentious love for Africa, the Chinese model—the so-called Beijing consensus, even with its imperfections—at least offers a better promise or more concrete development outcomes than what the Washington consensus offers. The new Sino-African ties have created new economic opportunities through trade, investments and other exchanges that have helped create jobs, wealth and other advantages that in one breadth bode well for the middle classes on the continent. In another breadth, however, the new Sino-African relations has led to the demise of several high-income jobs especially in the manufacturing sector in Africa due to the dumping of cheap Chinese goods, implying that Africa’s engagement with its new-found partner, China, has both positive and downsides for the middle classes.

2.3 On the Question of Distribution Today
How the spoils from Africa’s new growth impetus are being spread to benefit the masses, not the ruling elite, has become an issue of concern to some outside the continent. For some observers, the continued existence of poverty in Africa, some in extreme forms, raises important questions about how the purported wealth and investments flooding into Africa is trickling down to the poor, if not casting doubt about the authenticity of the Africa rising narrative itself. Having adequately dealt with the second claim in chapter one, I focus my attention here on addressing the second, more important, question: that is, the state of poverty and inequality in Africa today. First, it is important to underscore the fact that the validity of poverty data on African produced by international organizations, such as the World Bank and the UN, which had previously painted a picture of worsening poverty situation in Africa despite the recent impressive economic growth, has been
challenged by new independent researchers. One of these is Xavier Sala-i-Martin and Maxim Pinkovskiy, a former World Bank economist and a respected former MIT economics student, respectively. In a seminal 2010 paper titled “African Poverty is Falling....Much Faster Than You Think”, which meticulously computed income distributions, poverty rates and welfare between 1970 and 2005 using the same datasets relied upon by the afore-mentioned institutions—Xavier Sala-i-Martin and Maxim Pinkovskiy—found that not only is African poverty falling as conventional doctrine contrarily suggests, but that it was declining much faster than expected (see Sala-i-Martin and Pinkovskiy, 2011). Sala-i-Martin and Maxim Pinkovskiy’s claim is corroborated by other studies, including, incidentally, recent reports by the World Bank and the UN, all which now show that poverty has and is indeed falling in Africa.

Second, by even taking our attention off the numbers game, there abound several proxy signs that suggest that African poverty is on a downward trend. One of these is the boom in consumption of both essential basic and non-basic (luxury) goods such as household goods, personal automobiles and cell phones, which have trebled since 2000 (Mckinsey and Company, 2012). Second, there are today several government-funded, social intervention schemes, including health insurance, income welfare and other subsidized programs all across Africa that are aimed at cushioning those unable to benefit from the current economic boom. Perhaps, the expansive growth of the middle class in Africa constitutes the most enduring proof of falling poverty, rising incomes and better wealth distribution in Africa.

But at the same time as poverty levels dip in Africa, and as more and more Africans move up the social ladder, the income and wealth gap amongst the population, it seems, keeps growing (Frimpong, 2014; Blas, 2014). This new dynamic of falling poverty amid rising new inequality is what I refer to as the paradox of Africa’s 21st century rise. How is this so? The underlying reasons are vast, but what is clear is that even though the general welfare of the populace is improving, some are benefitting more from the current economic growth than others, and this is different from the rhetoric that says that the poor keeps getting poorer while the rich is getting richer.
2.4 The Making of the New African Middle Class and the New African City

As with the bigger story of Africa rising, the related growth of the African middle class and the on-going transformation of African cities have invited some pertinent questions that need answers. Among these, the most vital have been: who are the new middle classes in Africa? What are the key causalities of the rise of the African middle class? And how do they compare with mainstream western notions of middle class?

Whilst my study of the Ghanaian middle class and their role in Accra’s rapid transformation will help uncover some answers to these vital questions, certain important traits about the emergent middle class and their connection to the re-making of African cities are quite glaring, even without any deep investigation. First, in terms of definition and size, as Juma and other have noted, it is not easy to come up with one single satisfactory definition of the new middle class in Africa, nor tell exactly how many people fall into that category (Juma, 2011:8; see also chapter 7 of this thesis where I revisit the issue to explain from a conceptual standpoint the difficulty in delimiting the boundaries of the middle class everywhere, not just Africa).

As was indicated in chapter one, the AfDB estimated the size of the African middle class to be around 336 million (or 34% of the African population) in 2010, based on a daily consumption threshold of $2-$20 (AfDB, 2011). However, this figure has been refuted by several other studies, which suggest a more modest size of the African middle class, albeit these studies use higher income or consumption brackets, which they argue reflect or afford true middle class living. These newer studies include one conducted by the US-based Pew Research Centre, which places the African middle class around 6% of the African population, based on $10-$20 daily income. Another is the 2014 study done by the South African-based, Standard Bank, which used a daily income range of $15-$115, and estimated the middle class to comprise 15 million African households, located in 11 sub-Saharan African economies outside South Africa. In a recent article, *The Economist* also described the Africa middle class as being ‘few and far between’ (*The Economist*, 2015, October 24).
While it is true that the AfDB threshold or definition of the middle class is agreeably quite low, the Bank acknowledged that about 20.8% of the estimated 336-million people in the African middle class belongs to the ‘floating class’—that is, those who live barely above the international poverty line of $2 per day, spending $2-$4 a day, and thus do not enjoy a full or true middle class living, as they are vulnerable to economic shocks (AfDB, 2011:5). Thus, if a $4-$20 margin is used a standard, the size of the African middle class is about 128 million, which corresponds to 13.4% of the African population. This I consider to be a more realistic estimate of the middle class in Africa.

Recently, there have been reports of the closure of some recently-opened multinational retail chains in some parts of Africa following failed expectations on the size and spending power of the emerging African middle class (see The Economist, citation above). This has cast further doubt about the magnitude of the middle class growth on the continent. However, it is important to bear in mind that the real size and dynamics of the middle class differ from one country to another. For instance, in Ghana, which is the focus of my study, many of the international investments that have gone into the country in response to the growth of the middle class continue to thrive, despite the slowing economic growth. For instance, the 7th shopping mall in Accra opened in October, 2016, which is indicative of the fact that the purported middle class demise may not be as severe as it is in other African countries, or as one real estate developer put it out in an interview with a CNN reporter who visited Accra recently, the recent economic slowdown (and by implication the middle classes dip) is temporal. But these new trends indicate that African middle class is potentially much smaller or vulnerable than first believed.

Second, in terms of the specific causal factors underlying the rise of the middle class in Africa, it could generally be said that the phenomenon is the outcome of several interlacing factors, besides the obvious known causes of strong economic growth and poverty reduction. One of these factors has been the restructuring of the economies of many African nations from agriculture to services, which include high-skilled, high-income paying jobs. This plausible reason is corroborated by the rise of the service sector as the largest GDP contributor in 27 African economies (The World Factbook, 2015). The
second is the growth of the local private sector (AfDB, 2011), which is partly the outcome of the mid-1980s economic reforms, which scaled back government involvement in economic activities and transferred production to the private sector. The other factor is new expressions of globalization and the new international division of labour, resulting in the growth of high-income, professional occupations in Africa linked to new floods of investments in both traditional (but especially more recently) in non-traditional sectors, such as banking, real estate, aviation, education and telecommunications. These new manifestations of globalization and the new international labour division differ from earlier rounds which mostly created low-skilled, blue-collar jobs, often in low-tech manufacturing and resource extraction. Related to the above is the reinvigorated regional integration, which has poured in new investments in high-order services such as banking and in manufacturing, with their accompanying formation of professional and managerial occupations taken up the middle classes. Apart from these factors, there are other demand and supply-side factors, such as increased supply of, and demand for, higher education which is contributing to the growth of the middle classes in Africa, as will be seen in the Ghanaian case study. The other factor has been the increasing return of Africans in the diaspora which was mentioned in the previous chapter.

While all of these factors have contributed to the growth of the African middle classes, yet their weight differ from one country to another, just as the size and attitudes of the middle classes themselves vary from one African nation to another (see Figure 2.3). The availability of information on each of the afore-mentioned causal factors in each African country would have enabled a comparative analysis of their relative weights in terms of contributing to middle class formation within their respective countries. But as we can see from Figure 2.3, North African nations tend to have proportionally larger middle classes than Eastern, Central and Southern African countries, which have the smallest middle class populations, percentage wise. The former’s larger middle class populations could be attributed to the relatively high economic growth and political stability enjoyed in the sub-region until the 2011 political upheavals, while the latter’s low middle class population is likely the consequence of decades of conflict, poverty and political instability, despite recent changes. However, in absolute terms, some countries have larger
The floating class include all individuals with a consumption budget of $2-$4/day; those spending between $4 and $20 a day are the real middle class.

Figure 2.3: Share of the Middle Class in the Various African Countries
Source: African Development Bank, 2011
Table 2.3: Some Proxy Indicators for the Differential Size of the Middle Classes Among Selected African Countries

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Indicator</th>
<th>Ghana (19.8%)</th>
<th>Nigeria (9.8%)</th>
<th>Tunisia (46.5%)</th>
<th>South Africa (19.8%)</th>
<th>Kenya (16.8%)</th>
<th>Liberia (1.9%)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>GPD (Current, 2014 ($b))</td>
<td>$38.62</td>
<td>568.5</td>
<td>48.61</td>
<td>350.1</td>
<td>60.94</td>
<td>2.013</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GDP per capita</td>
<td>4,081.7</td>
<td>5,911.2</td>
<td>11,435.6</td>
<td>13,046.2</td>
<td>2,954.1</td>
<td>840.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gross tertiary enrolment ratio (2012)</td>
<td>12%</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>35%</td>
<td>20%</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Urban population (2014)</td>
<td>53.4%</td>
<td>46.9%</td>
<td>66.6%</td>
<td>64.3%</td>
<td>25.2%</td>
<td>49.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Income Gini coefficient (2013)</td>
<td>42.8</td>
<td>48.8</td>
<td>36.1</td>
<td>63.1</td>
<td>47.7</td>
<td>38.8</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Constructed with data from World Bank Development Indicators, Various Years

middle class populations, even with smaller percentage compositions, than others. A typical example of this is Ghana and Nigeria: in percentage terms, Nigeria’s middle class population of 9.9% is far smaller than Ghana’s 19.8%; however, in numerical terms, Nigeria’s middle class population is 17.45 million, which dwarfs Ghana’s 5.04 million, going by the AfDB’s estimates. Ghana’s proportionately larger middle class population compared to Nigeria as well as Kenya, Liberia and other countries in Figure 2.3 is reflective, among others, of its higher education participation rate, lower poverty incidence, lower income inequality and higher rate of urbanization, as revealed by the data in Table 2.3, as does Tunisia, which has the largest composition of the middle classes in Africa, rate better than Ghana on all class formation-related indicators (Table 2.3).

Notwithstanding these contextual elements, we can make the following generic claims about Africa’s emerging middle class, based on available information. First, they belong to the category of people statistically found somewhere between the continent’s small rich elite who sit at the top of the socio-economic ladder and the large poor population occupying the bottom of the same ladder, defined as those living on less than $2 a day
Second, the new African middle classes are qualitatively different from the rest of the populace, including previously known middle class groups. Generally, they tend to be young and well-educated (i.e., tertiary degree holders); hold professional employment; earn stable and above-average income; are technologically more adept; are more exposed or connected to the global world; are urban-based; and have or aspire to acquire durable assets like housing, digital technology and personal automobile. The middle classes also tend to share values such as democracy, tolerance, economic and political stability, having a small family size, and supporting various kinds of activist groups or causes (AfDB, 2011). Third, despite these similarities, the new middle classes emerging on the continent are far from being a uniform group. They can be differentiated along the lines of occupation, income, wealth, education and lifestyle. Fourth, there are some elements of emerging African middle class that resemble the middle classes in developed nations in terms of wealth, education, lifestyle and spending patterns, while others are more local, less affluent and less sophisticated. Lastly, albeit the middle classes are driving rapid urbanization in Africa, which currently stands at about 40%, their role appears to be limited to internal economic and socio-spatial transformation, rather than demographic based-expansion.

Meanwhile, the 21st century has witnessed urban Africa increasingly taking on a new image and identity. While (previous) characterizations of the 20th century African city was rife with such descriptors as ‘overpopulation’ (e.g., Regan and Cremlin, 2000; Fourchard and Albert, 2003); ‘poverty’ (e.g., UN-Habitat, 1999); ‘informality’ (e.g., Macharia, 1997; Simone, 2004); and ‘chaotic’, ‘dysfunctional’ and ‘non-productive’ (e.g., Locatelle and Nugent, 2009; Geiger, 2015), the 21st century African city is being (re)branded positively in some circles. Contrary to the depressing image of African cities painted by those 20th century negative labels, African cities are today being described with captions such as ‘engines of growth and innovation’ (KPMG, 2014); ‘dynamic centres’ (e.g., Pricewaterhousecoopers, 2014), bastions of consumption (e.g., AfDB/OECD/UNDP, 2015), and ‘new frontiers of global investment and opportunities’ (e.g. Southern Innovator, 2013). These new themes, which appear intended to reimage African cities and change the old narrative about African urbanization, capture or reflect new trends in urban
development in 21st century Africa: shiny skyscrapers, multi-billion dollar shopping centres, swanky new business districts, smart cities, luxury entertainment districts, technology incubation centres, and a spending boom, just to mention a few.

Although many of the problems that characterized African cities in the past century have not disappeared, these appear being given less emphasis than before by some international media entities and businesses with interest in the continent’s resurgence. While this may seem refreshing in the sense of helping to balance or counteract the dominant downbeat picture of life in African cities, such limited laudatory remarks about contemporary African urbanization appear restricted to the journalistic and business realms; the scholarly world seem oblivious to many of the important shifts taking place in urban Africa.

Interestingly enough, one group that is often invoked whenever the new African city is mentioned is the new middle class. They are seen as the driving force behind many of the emergent trends in urban development in Africa. These trends, as mentioned above, include the growth of conspicuous consumption infrastructure such as western-style shopping malls and luxury recreational facilities; modern new, globally-connected business districts and smart cities; new, up-scale housing developments; the proliferation in use of high-tech products and services, including the internet, cell phones and personal computers; and the growth or emergence of certain higher-order service activities, inclusive of banking, aviation, real estate and information-based services such as media broadcasting, film production, and education. The parallel expansion of the middle classes in Africa and the on-going remaking of African cities underscore the need for an academic inquiry to divulge the nature of the nexus between the two exciting 21st century phenomena.

2.5 Summary and Discussion
In this chapter, I have examined the story of Africa rising in greater detail, including the varied perspectives and interpretations that have been given to it by different observers. In looking at existing data, as well as recent developments on the continent, it is hard to deny the fact that change—and, for that matter, positive change—is happening in continental Africa in several areas. These positive developments, as I have examined in detail in this
chapter, include, among others, sustained economic growth; the lowering of poverty; rising household incomes; improved access to basic services, including health and education; increased consumption; increased life expectancy; and the growth of the middle class. Perhaps to some skeptics, these developments are quite modest or not substantial enough to warrant the kind of ‘noise’ being made about it. These may have a point, especially when one considers the fact that not all the changes happening in Africa have been spectacular, combined with the negative stories that continue to spring out of the continent almost on an everyday basis. However, on balance, some developments, such as the rise of African translational and multinational corporations, are dramatic, yet others, such as the lowering of poverty, have been less enchanting. But like the ‘half-full/half-empty’ glass analogy, there are others who interpret what they see in, or read about, Africa today in a positive light. For these individuals, who may be acquainted with the reality of where Africa has come from, every story of positive change, no matter how insignificant it may seem, is a drop of water that is adding to other drops to fill the cup of development in Africa. To these, every little accomplishment represent hope of a brighter future for Africa.

Moreover, it is important to reiterate the point, made elsewhere in this discussion, that the assertion or claim that Africa is rising does not amount to a declaration of Africa’s triumph over all of its developmental challenges. Indeed, Africa is still confronted with an array of challenges that include both known problems such as poverty, inadequate infrastructure and conflict as well as new challenges like inequality and climate change. But neither does the existence of these new or old challenges invalidate the reality of the story of transformation taking place in most parts of Africa. Certainly, no one country on earth, not even the mighty United States, can claim to have eliminated poverty from its boundaries or achieved equal geographic development within its territory.

Furthermore, it is imperative to add that this is not the first time Africa is experiencing significant change or resurgence. There have been moments of glory in the past, particularly in the immediate post-independence era, as we saw in the early part of this chapter. However, when juxtaposed to the recent happenings, one discovers a number of important differences between the current wave of change and previous experience of
transformation. Two of these differences are at least noteworthy. One is that compared to the past, the current wave of change appears to have occurred over a shorter time period, mostly from the middle of the opening decade of the 21st century, which roughly translates into a period of one decade. Second, and most importantly, compared to previous episodes of change, the current wave of change is quite expansive, spanning economic, political, social and physical spheres. In other words, the current story of change in African is shorter in time and wider in scope and space compared to the past.

In many ways, the issue of the middle class growth on the continent is akin to the bigger story of Africa rising. It is faced with denials and exaggerations, positive interpretations and negative interpretations. Perhaps it is too early to get a complete picture of what is happening with the growth of the middle class, let alone make accurate predictions of how they will shape their future of their respective societies or nations.

That said, however, focusing on one African nation where the middle class is growing can help us to gain a better understanding about the group, the unique set of factors that are contributing to their growth and the kind of impact that their growth is having on the character of the place where they live. And, as indicated above, Ghana and its capital city, Accra, provide a good laboratory for conducting this investigation. The country is one of those African nations that has experienced remarkable economic growth, political stability, poverty reduction, increased foreign investments and some level of structural transformation, which have impacted on class reformation and urbanization. As well, its middle classes have been considered the fastest growing and one of the most sophisticated in Africa. Meanwhile, Accra, the city with the largest concentration of the Ghanaian middle classes, is experiencing phenomenal changes its spatial, economic and social structures, positive and negative as well, which have been linked to growth of the middle classes. In a bid to uncover the relationship between Ghana’s story of economic growth, class formation and urban remaking, the next four chapters of this thesis will focus on the story of change in Ghana and Accra. My interest in the story of class formation and urban change in Accra is also driven by my Ghanaian nationality and residence in Accra, a city I have lived in for over 15 years and has been fascinated by the speed of change taking place there. The approach is multi-scalar, proceeding from macro-level (i.e., at national
level) analysis of economic growth and change, urbanization and class reformation to the metropolitan level to the micro scale, where expressions of urban change driven by the new middle classes are investigated.
3 Socio-Economic and Urban Transformation in Ghana: An African Success Story?

The story of economic and political renaissance, class reproduction and urban transformation in Africa, as we saw in the previous chapter, is shared by majority of Africa’s 52 nations, both in relation to the larger causative factors and outcomes. But notwithstanding these broad similarities, each country’s story, when examined closely, reveals certain distinctive patterns or tendencies that highlight the unique impact or weight of the contributing exogenous forces, namely economic globalization, new international labour division, foreign direct investments and diaspora effects on the process of class formation and urban transformation in each African nation. Similarly, they reveal the varying degrees of local or internal factors such as policy change, culture, economic and social milieu, politics, and history in mediating the external forces and the resultant manifestations of change.

The West African nation of Ghana provides a good case for understanding the nature of the interplay between local factors and external conditions in shaping the process and outcomes of the economic change, class reformation and urban remaking in Africa. Being the first African country to attain independence, the first to undergo an IMF/World Bank supervised restructuring program and the first sub-Saharan African nation to achieve the UN millennium development goal of halving the number of poor people by 2015, the country’s record on economic growth, poverty reduction and FDI have often been described as impressive. Touted as a shining star, its stable democracy, strong educational system, respect for human rights, social cohesion and inclusiveness have also won international admiration. It has a strong diaspora presence who are quite active in national development. Its middle classes, albeit not the largest in Africa, is quite dynamic, playing an instrumental role in the country’s transformational story. Similarly, Ghana’s story of urbanization has been accompanied by the significant urban system reconfigurations, a dwindling of urban primacy, strong investments and the lowering of urban poverty—a feat that was recently described in a 2014 World Bank report as an “example of successful urbanization (World Bank, 2014:1). These exceptionalities have made the country a site of preference in sub-Saharan Africa for scholars in the field of international development and
urbanization, both within and outside Africa, seeking to unearth the set of factors that have underpinned Ghana’s transformation story. However, as in many parts of Africa, Ghana’s story of economic transformation has been accompanied by growing inequality.

This chapter’s aim is to unravel that story of economic, social and urban transformation in Ghana, interrogating the county’s record on economic growth, structural transformation class reproduction and urbanization, including the forces driving these shifts. The analysis divulges both patterns of consistency with or conformity to the wider Africa rising story as shared by other African countries as well as points of departure or exceptionalism from the development experience of other African nations. While Accra understandably remains the primary site of analysis for understanding the connections between the new middle class ascent and urban change, this can be better be understood when situated within the broader national and historical context of socio-economic development and urban change in Ghana. Having this in mind, section one provides a brief account of Ghana’s political-economic history, highlighting the key events and policies that have shaped the county’s socio-economic and urban landscape. Section two then interrogates Ghana’s record on economic growth, sectoral restructuring, poverty reduction and urbanization (including the positionality of Accra within it) from 1960 to 2010, highlighting the major shifts that have occurred in the above trajectories and the factors underpinning those changes. Section three then looks at class reformation in Ghana, with a specific focus on the arrival of the new middle classes, including the major growth drivers and distinguishing marks. Section four contains a summary of my key conclusions about Ghana’s story of socio-economic and urban transformation. The outcome of the above analyses is expected to provide the context for my in-depth study of the middle class-led spatial and economic transformations unfolding Accra.

3.1 Regime Change, Policy Shifts and Development Outcomes in Post-Colonial Ghana: A Brief Political-Economic History

In order to better appreciate the shifts that have occurred over the years in the trajectories of economic growth, structural transformation, class production and urban change in post-colonial Ghana, it is important to provide a brief political-economic history of Ghana. This
account will provide useful reference points for understanding the major turns in the country’s development since attaining independence in 1957. In general, we can delineate the political-economic history of Ghana into four major epochs, which represent major shifts in the nature of the political and policy environment with implications for economic development, class production and urbanization. They are: 1957-66, representing the period of Nkrumah’s rule; 1966-1981, reflecting the ‘dark’, transitional years of predominantly military dictatorships; 1981-2000, covering the period of the economic reforms and its immediate aftermath; and 2000-2010, covering developments in the late post-reform era.10

1957-1966: The Nkrumaist Era

Kwame Nkrumah, Ghana’s first president, could be described as the only Ghanaian leader under whose watch the most important—and radical—changes in the country’s defining structures took place. In many aspects, Nkrumah’s policies conformed to the broader state-dominated, socialist-guided development path adopted by majority of Africa’s early post-independence governments, including their underlying ideologies, which he was instrumental in formulating (Grant, 2001, 2005; Adarkwa, 2012). But there were certain points of departure, too. In one breath, Nkrumah was more radical than his compatriots; in another breath, he was more moderate, making him a pragmatist.

Nkrumah’s radical policies stemmed from his desire to decisively breakaway from the sordid colonial past by dismantling colonialism’s important relics, including all of its incipient neo-colonial guises, and to chart a new, independent path for his country, Ghana, that would serve as a model for other Africa states, many of which, still reeling under colonialism during Nkrumah’s early days, would replicate many of his policies on attaining independence.

Consequently, in the political arena, Nkrumah—who was initially elected prime minister in 1957—led Ghana to become a presidential republic by 1960, just three years into office.

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10 Again, it is important to stress the point that these periods only represent changes in the previous’ order or policy environment, but not necessarily a change in government; neither does each epoch necessarily represent a single administration—something that will become clear as we proceed.
He opposed the British government’s policy of converting all their ex-colonies into monarchistic parliamentary democracies headed by the Queen of England, as he did not consider that (neo-colonial) arrangement as a mark of true independence. He also declared Ghana a unitary state, resisting domestic calls for a federation, arguing that federalism would sharpen existing regional inequalities and serve as precursor for separatism and state collapse, although he saw the latter as a better framework for a united African government to which was actively involved.

In the socio-cultural domain, Nkrumah invested massively in human capital development and welfare by injecting a huge amount of money into developing social infrastructure, including education, health and other social services, combined with other interventionist programs that included subsidized housing, healthcare and free education. He also vigorously sought to revive and promote the suppressed pre-colonial Ghanaian culture through a range of initiatives that included the insertion of cultural studies as a vital element of post-colonial Ghana’s educational curricular as well as the use of the media and national and community events to propagate Ghanaian culture. He also provided resources in the form of both hard and soft infrastructure, including the establishment of several cultural amenities (e.g., theaters, community centres, etc), and cultural institutions (including an African studies department at the University of Ghana) for the academic and social development of Ghanaian and African history and culture (Ghana Districts.com, n.d). This is because, as intimated by the Ghanaian historian Kwame Botwe-Asamoah, Nkrumah saw cultural reawakening as essential to cultivating the right values (e.g., communalism and cooperatism) among Ghanaians to support his socialist-oriented development agenda (Botwe-Asamoah, 2005).

In the economic sphere, Nkrumah sought to fundamentally alter the economic structure of the inherited Gold Coast economy, considered too small, rudimentary and inefficient, through a three-pronged approach. The first was economic modernization, which entailed the development of modern economic infrastructure to boost economic activity and productivity. In achieving this dream, Nkrumah embarked on a massive infrastructure development program, considered one of the most ambitious of its kind in Africa, which saw the construction of vital transportation, energy and other economic infrastructure,
executed under his famous 7-year national reconstruction and development plan (1963/4-1969/70). These myriad infrastructures include Ghana’s premier international airport, the Akosombo Hydroelectric Power Dam, the Tema Harbour and a plethora of schools, hospitals, network of roads, rail and waterways—laying the foundation for the country’s economic takeoff.

The second component of Nkrumah’s economic transformation agenda—economic expansion—entailed the enlargement of the country’s economic base by adding whole new sectors such as construction, energy and manufacturing onto the Ghanaian economy. These sectors were either small or virtually non-existent in the colonial economy, given the exploitative, rather than developmental, aspirations of the colonial regime. It also included expanding already existing sectors, such as education, public transportation, banking, housing, and, most importantly, government bureaucracy, which became a significant component of the Ghanaian economy.

The final, and perhaps the most salient economic policy objective of the Nkrumah regime, was to transform the structure of the Ghanaian economy from primary production (i.e., agriculture and resource extraction) into a semi-industrialized economy through import-substitution industrialization (ISI). This domestic industrialization program, executed under the so-called ‘big push’ strategy, led to the establishment of numerous state-owned manufacturing enterprises, running in their hundreds and churning out anything from food processing to vehicle assembly, which succeeded in making early independent Ghana one of Africa’s rapidly industrializing nations.

And in order to ensure the continued survival of the country’s nascent manufacturing sector, Nkrumah nationalized many of the extractive industries, including the mines created by the colonial administration and added new ones such as state-owned farms, to ensure constant supply of inputs for the newly established manufacturing plants. He also enacted a strong protectionist regime, including severe import restrictions, to shield the nascent industrial sector from external competition. However, despite being an avowed socialist with strong belief in state-driven economic development, Nkrumah pursued a
more liberal form of socialism, permitting both private property and capital ownership alongside a limited degree of foreign participation in the Ghanaian economy (Grant, 2001; Adarkwa, 2013). This stood in stark contrast to the extreme, closed-door, totalitarian Marxist versions preached and practiced by many of his contemporaries such as Tanzania’s Joseph Nyerere, Senegal’s Leopold Senghor and Guinea’s Sekou Toure.

Lastly, in the area of urbanization and human settlement development and planning, Nkrumah’s policies could be summed up in five major ways. First, he sought to alter the colonial function of extant Ghanaian towns and cities from commerce to industry by establishing some form of processing activity in many towns and cities across the country, in a bid to support his ISI program (Adarkwa, 2012). Second, in order to ensure functional interaction among the towns and cities, Nkrumah developed major (and minor) transportation and communication linkages between settlements by constructing several road, railway and water-based transportation projects, including river and sea ports and harbours.

Third, to promote the egalitarian development of all areas, Nkrumah sought to use his domestic industrialization, transportation and wider infrastructure development program to correct regional imbalance in development created by the exploitative colonial policies of the past. The colonial development policies confined economic activity, wealth, and infrastructure to the resource endowed regions of the country, mostly located in the forest and coastal belts of the south, creating what became known as the north-south divide—a challenge which subsequent post-colonial Ghanaian governments, starting from Nkrumah, have grappled to reverse, with varying degrees of success. In attempting to bridge the development gap, Nkrumah built factories, roads and schools in various parts of the country, especially the northern hinterlands, to create new growth poles, in hopes of spreading development more evenly across Ghana.

Fourth, Nkrumah’s settlement development policies included a significant social housing component, which, as Adarkwa (2012) elucidates, was intended to address three different issues: first, to provide decent shelter to the teeming factory workers and civil servants
created through his economic development and domestic industrialization program; second, to address the acute housing shortage created by the influx of migrants into the new industrializing cities and towns; and third, to tackle some of the health and sanitation problems created by the lack of proper urban housing due to the neglect and segregatory policies of the erstwhile colonial government. Consequently, several state-housing schemes were planned and executed in various parts of the country, with Adarkwa (2012) noting that more than 25,000 new dwelling units were built in the three key industrial cities of Accra-Tema, Sekondi-Takoradi and Kumasi. However, many of these housing schemes also resulted in the creation of new townships, such as Tema and Akosombo, which were either necessitated by the need to resettle displaced communities caused by massive infrastructure projects such as the hydropower project at Akosombo, and or the need to relocate workers to major industrial establishments with little or no prior settlement activity such as Tema. These new townships, which were much more organized and amenity-rich, became the first kind of planned cities in post-colonial Ghana.

Finally, Nkrumah’s urban policy sought to re-image the character of colonial Ghanaian cities by discarding the restrictive and segregationary policies of the colonizers that restricted native population movement into important European-inhabited urban centres such as Accra and prohibited them from the European-occupied portions of the city, by de-Europeanizing them. He also decorated and nationalized urban space by mounting aesthetic features and symbolic national structures such as fountains, statues, museums and public plazas in cities.

The effect of Nkrumah’s 9-year rule and transformative agenda on economic growth and production structure, welfare, class production and urbanization in Ghana could be summed up as follows. With respect to growth, the Ghanaian economy grew by 4% per annum on average between 1960 and 1966; consequently, the country’s GDP expanded nearly by nearly 100% over the same period, from $1.2billion in 1960 to $2.1billion in 1966 (World Bank Development Indicators, accessed in 2015). This represented the most significant growth statistic in more than two decades prior. While data on employment, poverty and other welfare indicators under Nkrumah’s Ghana are impossible to come by, it
is historical knowledge that quality of life in Ghana during Nkrumah’s early days was high—something that is corroborated not least by the almost 50% climb in per capita GDP capita from $180 in 1960 to $263 in 1965—higher than that of many now-advanced Asian countries such as South Korea ($106), India ($121) and China ($97) (World Bank Development Indicators, retrieved in 2015). Of course, with the availability of many freebies from the state such as free education and near-free health care and housing, combined with an industrialization program that prioritized full employment over efficiency, who would not have found life enjoyable under Ghana’s Kwame Nkrumah?

In terms of the impact of Nkruaist economic policies on the production structure of the Ghanaian economy, the results were more mixed, however. For instance, in terms of the sectoral composition of GDP, official records from the 1960 population and housing census indicate that industry’s share of GDP rose to 18.2%, with manufacturing alone accounting for 10% of value added, which was quite an impressive record, considering the low base from which the Ghanaian economy under Nkrumah took off, with virtually no manufacturing activity. On the other hand, the contributions of services and agriculture stood at 30.7% and 51.1% respectively, showing that the Ghanaian economy was still dominated by agriculture, something that is additionally confirmed by the data on employment: in 1960, agriculture employed 64% of the Ghanaian workforce, while industry employed a small fraction of 12.8%, lower than services’ 23.2% (2000 Population and Housing Census Report, 2005). The higher service employment share was attributed to the massive expansion in government bureaucracy, as evinced by the huge jump in the number of publicly-paid employees from 140,000 in 1957 to about 280,000 in 1966 (Jedwab and Osei, 2012), while the lower employment share of industry is often attributed to the rather capital intensive nature of the ISI strategy, which relied heavily on imported technology. But the domination of agriculture in both national output and employment compared to the small industrial share in same during Nkrumah’s reign is considered by many as amounting to an unsuccessful industrialization program (Frimpong-Ansah, 1992).

Regarding the urbanization impact of Nkruaist government settlement policies, there were at least five major discernable outcomes. The first was the massive increase in the
both the size and share of the urbanized populace, which rose from 15.4% in 1950 to 23.1% in 1960, in percentage terms. This was triggered by the massive influx of people into towns and cities in search for formal employment, whether in industry or public administration, and or to enjoy the generally good life in cities brought about by Nkrumah’s development agenda. The second was the spike in the number of urban centres (localities with population 5,000 and beyond) in Ghana, linked to Nkrumah’s industrialization, modernization and equitable development aspirations, which, as mentioned above, resulted in the birth of new set of post-independence townships and cities in Ghana. The third major impact of Nkrumah’s settlement polices was the reconfiguration of Ghanaian’s urban system from its previous colonial orientation, whereby Accra occupied an intermediary role in an exploitative core-periphery system, into a nationalized urbanized system, whereby Accra replaced London as the command and control centre of the new semi-industrialized space economy. Fourth, although Nkrumah sought to achieve even spatial development through his economic development program, the overconcentration (i.e., 80%) of manufacturing capacity within the three key cities/city-regions of Accra-Tema, Sekondi-Takoradi and Kumasi, due to their pre-existing locational advantages, resulted in the disproportionate growth and concentration of wealth in these three cities/city-regions, together which became known as the golden triangle (Songsore, 2010; Adarkwa, 2012), with Accra alone widening its share of the urban population to 21.8% in 1960 from 3.4% in 1950. The emergence and importance of the so-called golden triangle, which is geographically located in southern Ghana, exacerbated the extant north-south gap.

Finally, in the area of class production, seeing himself as a socialist, Nkrumah discarded all reference to social class, a concept he had previously described as alien to Africa (Takacks, 2015), positioning himself instead as the champion of equality for all and an advocate of the poor. Thus, he ignored the incipient native bourgeoisies, comprised mostly of educated elites such as lawyers, academics and wealthy businessmen, known as the intelligentsia, who were a product of the colonial educational system and trade. These, in fact, founded the first official political party in Ghana, the United Gold Coast Convention (UGCC) People’s Party, in 1947, which Nkrumah, who was then based in London, was
invited to join, to advance the struggle for self-rule. However, he later broke off with the UGCC to form a new Convention People’s Party (CPP), accusing same of being too ‘gentlemanly’ with the quest for self-rule. Whilst the UGCC’s wanted ‘self-rule in the shortest possible time’, Nkrumah wanted ‘self-rule now’. He also identified himself as a common man and connected more with and fought for the interest of the poor and working classes unlike the intelligentsia who were elite minded.

But at same time, however, through his domestic industrialization and bureaucratic expansion programs, Nkrumah directly or indirectly created a new middle class cohort—a group mostly comprised of civil servants, heads of SOEs and the ruling political elite. These became the new face of status and power. Thus, whilst the previous middle class was capitalist, drawing their wealth and status from private capital and education, the Nkrumah-made middle class, was socialist, drawing their status and wealth from the state.

Despite Nkrumah’s unparalleled contributions to Ghana’s socio-economic progress following independence, the seemingly “good life” enjoyed by Ghanaians under Nkrumah would be short-lived. A series of difficult economic conditions caused by plummeting cocoa prices, which provided the financial base on which his populist policies were funded, combined with rising unemployment, hyper inflation, food shortages and falling industrial output linked to economic mismanagement, compounded by his flawed Marxist prescriptions to the economic challenges, including high taxation, fuelled public discontent against his administration (Yergin and Stanislaw, 1998). This was overlain by Nkrumah’s dictatorial style of leadership and clampdown on dissent. This eventually culminated in his deposition in a military coup on February 24, 1966, while on a state visit to Northern Vietnam. Nkrumah would remain exiled in Guinea until his death in 1972, aged 62, while on a medical trip to Bucharest, Romania.

1966-1981: Era of Instability and Stagnation
As noted in chapter two, the period following the demise of the first independence governments in many African countries was characterized by instability, political and economic-wise, of varying degrees and length. In the case of Ghana, this lasted for about a
decade and half, spanning 1966 to 1981, a period described by many historians as the dark years in post-colonial Ghana’s history\textsuperscript{11}.

In total, five different administrations—two civilian governments, interspersed by three military regimes—governed Ghana during this period. All these regimes tried to fix the ailing Ghanaian economy and pursue an agenda of economic transformation, based on their own doctrines. In general, however, the juntas—the National Liberation Council (NLC), 1966-69; the National Redemption Council (NRC), 1972-78; and the Provisional National Defense Council I (PNDC) I, June-September, 1979—practiced a closed door economic policy akin to Nkrumah’s, except with ruthless supervision, as they blamed the country’s economic woes on managerial rather policy incompetency (Agyemang-Duah, 2008). But the two civilian administrations pursued ideologically different economic paths. The first, the Busia government (1969-72), which replaced the National Liberation Council that ousted Nkrumah, was a right-wing government that introduced liberal economic reforms, including the introduction of cost recovery in higher education and the relaxation of restrictions on import and foreign investments in the industrial sector. The second, the Limann government (1979-1981), was a centre-left regime that combined strong state involvement with limited economic liberalization.

The growth impact of the dark period in Ghana was the volatility that characterized GDP growth between 1976 and 1981, with the worst ever performance of -14% being recorded in 1975 (see Figure 2.1). Similarly, in terms of structural change, the period saw intermittent shifts in the production structure of the Ghanaian economy. For instance, available data suggests by the Brooking Institute suggest that industrial GDP rose from 19.3% in 1970 to 21% in 1975 (with manufacturing increasing its share from 12.7% to 13.9% over the same period), whilst agriculture’s share fell from 50.7% to 47.7% against a spike in services’ contribution from 27.4% to 31.0% (Ackah et. al, 2014) This shift suggests further economic modernization, albeit it was less deep compared to the Nkrumah-era transformation. But by 1980, all the gains had been reversed, with

\textsuperscript{11} While pundits are right in describing this period which, was characterized by oppressive military regimes and the overthrow of elected civilian governments, as dark, events in Ghana at that time pale in comparison to the level of atrocities and anarchy witnessed in other African countries in past or recent times. Also, Ghana, unlike many other African states, has avoided a civil war since becoming independent.
agriculture taking up 50% plus share of economic output, against declining industrial and service share.

Overall, however, the welfare of Ghanaians during the dark years deteriorated, with per capita GDP dropping by 34% between 1979 and 1983, which could be attributed to the incessant changes that occurred in the political environment at that time. Similarly, the epoch had a devastating effect on class structure and reproduction for three reasons. First, many of the Nkrumah-era middle classes, who were accused by the junta of mismanaging the SOEs and accumulating personal wealth at the expense of the wellbeing of the general populace, were either arrested and or assassinated. Second, in line with their redistributive policies practiced in a way known as ‘kalabule’ in local parlance (which means intimidation), many private business owners and other wealthy individuals including traders who engaged in the black market owing to the price control policy of the military governments had their assets confiscated by the state and given to the so-called poor. Third, the suspension of the constitution, the imposition of emergency rule and the resultant suppression of free speech and political activity that characterized military dictatorship silenced the middle classes, albeit the brave ones continued to engage in political activism for change. While the return to civilian rule twice during the period may have brought some respite to the middle classes, those periods were abbreviated by the comeback of the junta, such that any previous gains, especially in the political arena, were quickly eroded.

The unpleasant economic and political environment led to a mass exodus of middle class Ghanaian professionals, including teachers, engineers, doctors, and accountants, who fled the county to live and work abroad and to neighbouring West African countries in the late 1970s, especially Nigeria, which was experiencing an oil and construction boom, to seek better life as economic migrants. According to Brown, stated in Mberu and Pongou (2010), for example, an estimated 2 million West African migrants, about half of whom were Ghanaians, were employed in Nigeria in the early 1980s, including oil-related industries.
The urban impact of this turbulent period in Ghanaian political and economic history was akin to its welfare consequences. In general, the period was characterized by slowing rate of urban growth, which declined from 4.7% per annum in 1960-70 to 3.7% per annum in 1970-84 (Figure 3.5). However, the level of urbanization increased from 23.3% of the population in 1960 to 28.9% in 1970 and further to 32% in 1984, respectively, albeit at a smaller margin of increase compared to subsequent decades. Within cities and towns, however, the period was marked by urban decline, high unemployment and poverty, especially in large cities like Accra and Kumasi (Adarkwa, 2012). The challenge was exacerbated by the mass expulsion of over one million Ghanaians from Nigeria in 1983-85, whose return worsened housing conditions in cities like Accra.

The seeming failure of the Limann government, the last civilian regime during the dark season, to find quick solutions to the extant socio-economic challenges and urban blight spurred a second military takeover in 1981 by the John Rawlings-led PNDC, which had previously toppled the NLC military regime in May, 1979, only to transfer power back to the elected Limann administration after four months.


After grappling to solve the myriad economic problems inherited from the Limann administration, which was aggravated by a severe 1983 drought leading to a near collapse of the Ghanaian economy, Mr. Rawlings sought help from the IMF and World Bank. The subsequent bailout package, which became known as Structural Adjustment Program (SAP), was rolled out in two phases: Economy Recovery I (1983-86), focused on stabilization and recovery; and Economic Recover II (1987-89), concerned with restructuring.

While economic transformation remains the key word or goal of all SAPs, it is however important to stress that the main policy objective of the Bretton-Woods reform program is not the modification of the industrial and employment structure of recipient economies, but rather the alteration of the institutional structure of the economy, from one of government-centred economic system to a market-driven or private sector-led economy, in
line with its underlying neoliberal philosophy. Thus, structural change, in the eyes of these institutions could be achieved even without any significant shift in the industrial and employment structure of an economy, an issue I shall return to when I examine the nature of structural transformation in the Ghanaian economy in section 3.3.3.

But in common with all IMF/World Bank-led reforms, the centerpiece of the Ghanaian SAP program included privatization of SOEs, trade liberalization, exchange rate deregulation, austerity and the opening up of the key sectors of the economy, including manufacturing, telecommunications and retail, to foreign participation, alongside a raft of other reforms intended to attract foreign capital. What makes the 1980s reform program unprecedented in Ghana’s development history is its scope and depth compared to previous internally-initiated reforms. Also, unlike other African nations that accepted limited reforms, Ghana’s structural adjustment program was quite extensive, covering the areas of transportation, education and healthcare delivery, making it one of the most extensive reform programs in the world (Baah-Nuakoh and Teal, 1993).

The SAP was later accompanied by two other important political reforms with significant consequences for economic development, class formation and urbanization. The first was an extensive decentralization program implemented in 1988-99, which saw the devolution of powers, including planning, from the centre to newly created autonomous local governments; the second was the return of multi-party democracy in 1992.

The SAP and decentralization programs have had far-reaching implications on the economic base, class and urban structure of Ghana, both in positive and negative terms. Generally, however, economic growth resumed and stabilized between 1985 and 2000, while the amount of FDI in the country soared to about 20% of GDP (Fosu, 2001). These investments and reforms further aided in revamping the key sectors of the Ghanaian economy, including industry which (temporarily) grew by 9.7 per annum between 1984 and 1989 (ibid).
But the social consequences of the neoliberal reforms were unpleasant, particularly in the immediate few years following. For instance, it had a wrenching effect on formal employment, as the government was forced to lay off thousands of public sector workers in a bid to shrink the size of the public purse. Similarly, many of the SOEs that were sold to locals or foreign private owners undertook extensive job cutting to ensure efficiency. Many of these retrenched workers would seek refuge in low-wage service sector jobs, in what became known as the so-called informal economy. The outcome of this was high incidence of poverty, which stood at more than half of the population (i.e., 51.7%) in 1991/92 (see Figure 3.3).

Regarding the impact of the reforms on class formation, there were both winners and losers. For instance, as was hinted above, the living conditions of those public sector workers who were laid off as a result of the SAP worsened, pushing many of them to join the ranks of the poor and working classes. But others, too, benefited from the SAP: those with political connections were able to purchase or acquire a stake in many of the SOEs that were liquidated saw their economic status improve. Also, the decentralization program helped to (re)distribute development more evenly, providing opportunities for others to climb up the social ladder, especially local elites who ended up dominating the newly created local government structures. In general, though, economic conditions improved over time with more FDI and aid flowing into the economy, alongside the gradual emergence of a local private sector, especially in deregulated sectors, such as the print and electronic media sector as well as in transportation. This created new employment opportunities, both high-skilled, high-wage and low-skilled, low-wage jobs, for Ghanaians, allowing some to climb into the middle class stratum. Furthermore, the improved economic and now democratized political climate paved the way for many middle class Ghanaians who had earlier fled the country due to the hash economic and or political conditions to return home, shoring up the size of the middle classes.

One other factor that spurred the growth or reformation of the Ghanaian middle classes during the reform era was the rise of the non-governmental organizations (NGOs) sector. Widespread discontent about the social cost of the SAP led to the flood of foreign NGOs
in Ghana, particularly the rural and northern regions of the country, where the impact of the reforms had hit hardest. These poverty reduction-minded NGOs, mostly headquartered in Accra, created a huge cohort of professionals and administrators, helping in the emergence of a new NGO-based professional class.

Finally, these were the major impacts of the decentralization and the neoliberal economic reforms on the pattern of urbanization in Ghana. First, the number of urban localities across the country increased massively due to the decentralization program, which saw the upgrade of many rural communities into towns and district capitals for administrative purposes. For instance, according to the National Analytical Report of the 2000 Population and Housing Census, the number of urban settlements in Ghana rose by 80% from 47,769 in 1970 to 88,656 in 2000, most of which occurred after the introduction of the decentralization program (2000 Population and Housing Census Data Analysis Report, Vol 2: 322). Second, and expectedly, the urban population more than doubled in size from about 3.5 million 1984 to about 8.3 million in 2000, representing a massive increase of 110%, at an annualized growth rate of 4.6%. Lastly, the period was characterized by massive suburbanization in cities such as Accra, where it became a common practice for the newly-formed middle classes, including those who benefitted from the NGO sector, to build their own homes on cheaper land outside the central city.

**2000-2010: A Decade of Economic Boom and New Class Formation**

The turn of the 21st century coincided with the arrival of a new government in Ghana: the New Patriotic Party (NPP), a right-leaning party led by John Kuffour with roots in the UGCC, the first middle class political party from which Nkrumah broke away to form the Convention People’s Party (CPP). Having declared their reign as ‘the golden age of business’, the NPP embarked upon further liberal economic reforms, including opening up additional sectors of the economy to private and foreign participation. The outcome would dramatically alter the story of economic growth, welfare, social structure and urbanization in Ghana, as will be evident from the next analysis. But suffice to say, the economy grew by 7% per year on average between 2000 and 2010, resulting in more than a 500%
enlargement in the size of Ghanaian economy, from 4.9billion to 32billion\textsuperscript{12}, placing the country in middle income status by 2010, with remarkable gains in poverty reduction as well as significant shifts in the production structure of the Ghanaian economy, accompanied by the arrival of a new middle class. However, after two successive terms in office, the NPP was replaced in another democratic elections by the National Democratic Congress (NDC), a social democratic party formed out of the erstwhile PNDC at the inauguration of the 1992 constitution. The NDC, which has been in office since 2008, completes their second term under John Dramani Mahama—successor to the now deceased John Atta-Mill who died in 2012—in 2016.

3.2 Analysis and Conclusions
This section analyses the recent shifts that have occurred in the trajectory of economic growth, welfare, structural transformation and urbanization in Ghana. It does so by considering and comparing official data on economic growth (i.e., GDP growth rate and size), welfare (i.e., employment rate, poverty situation, and inequality), economic structure (i.e., industrial composition of GDP, and employment distribution by sector and industry), and urbanization (i.e., level of urbanization, urban growth rate and spatial distribution of the urbanized population) in Ghana between 1960 and 2010, to underscore salient certain features about the story of socio-economic change and urban transformation in Ghana.

3.2.1 Growth Record
Figure 3.1 shows the GPD growth rate and income per capita for Ghana from 1960 to 2014. Looking at the trend, it is clear, first, that the pattern of economic growth in Ghana differ markedly between three periods: 1960-1983; 1984-2000; and 2000-2010. The first period (1960-1983) could be described as a period of low and erratic growth, where economic growth, averaging 0.5\% per annum, oscillated between positive and negative rates. This coincides with the mismanagement and decline experienced during Nkrumah’s latter days as well as the turbulent political milieu of the dark years, characterized by

\textsuperscript{12} To be fair, though, another factor that contributed to the massive enlargement in the size of the Ghanaian economy in 2010, 60\% in fact, was the rebasing of the country’s GDP that year, which captured previously unaccounted for economic activities valued at $10billion (BBC, 2009)
incestant changes in government and policy reversals, and compounded by major international events such as the 1970s global crude oil shocks. The second period (1984-2000) could be described as a period of stable growth, which hovered around 4.8%, brought about by the IMF/World bailout and reform program. The third period (2000-2010) could be described as a period of high and roaring economic growth, which averaged 7.2% per annum. The last two periods are the most stable times in post-colonial Ghana’s political environment.

The fundamental shift in the nature and style of economic governance from the previous state-dominated, tightly-regulated economy to a deregulated, market-based economy could be explained for the resurgence experienced during the 1985-2000 period, according to Aryeetey and Tarp (2000) (cited in Alagidede, 2013). However, the real source of the rebounding and growth in the early post-reform era came from massive infrastructure spending, FDI investments and aid flows or what they generally refer to as mostly donor-funded, capital application. But unlike the earlier post-reform growth, which was hugely contributed to by aid and debt relief, the post-2000 growth is driven by a combination of
non-aid factors; key among these include increased trade, high commodity prices, private sector investment, tourism, and a new wave of FDI (Figure 3.2). Furthermore, as evinced from Table 3.1 and 3.2, there have been significant shifts in the source and composition of FDI in Ghana between the early and late post-reform periods. While four of the top five sources of FDI projects in Ghana in 1992-2002 were Western nations (i.e., Europe and the United States), in the period 2002-2011, four of the top five leading FDI countries in Ghana were non-Western nations, highlighting the growing role of Asia and other African countries in the FDI sector in the country, especially Nigeria, which is now the fifth largest investor in Ghana, both in terms of projects and value, something that was unimaginable the decade prior. Also, in terms of sectoral composition, it could be seen that while services dominated the FDI sector in 1994-2002, manufacturing and construction or real estate are taking the greater share of FDI in Ghana (Table 3.2).

In 2011, however, the GDP growth was further bolstered, reaching an all-time high of 14%, buoyed by oil production, which attracted another wave of investments, making Ghana the fastest growing economy that year. Since then, growth has plummeted to about 3.2 per annum, raising fears about initial overconfidence in the growth spurt.
Table 3.1: Top Ten Investment Countries in Ghana by Value and Number of Projects, 1992-2002; 2001-2011*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Rank</th>
<th>Top 10 Investors in Ghana Ranked by total Registered Projects in 1992-2002</th>
<th>Top Ten Investors in Ghana by Value and No. of Projects in 2001-2011</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>By Value (US $M)</td>
<td>By Number of Registered Projects</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Country</td>
<td>Value</td>
<td>Country</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Malaysia</td>
<td>4,867.54</td>
<td>Britain</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>USA</td>
<td>4,819.17</td>
<td>Korea</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Switzerland</td>
<td>2,413.84</td>
<td>USA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>United Kingdom</td>
<td>2,065.16</td>
<td>United Arab Emirates</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>France</td>
<td>1,396.32</td>
<td>Nigeria</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lebanon</td>
<td>526.70</td>
<td>India</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ireland</td>
<td>449.66</td>
<td>China</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Korea</td>
<td>255.43</td>
<td>Bermuda</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Italy</td>
<td>251.60</td>
<td>Singapore</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>China</td>
<td>248.49</td>
<td>Trinidad</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* Excludes Oil and Mining FDI
Source: Ghana Investments Promotion Centre, 2012

Factors that have been cited for the current slowdown include falling commodity and crude oil prices, a deteriorating fiscal imbalance, a crippling energy crisis, the sharp fall in value of the Ghanaian cedi, and high inflation and interest rate. While the government has been quick to blame external forces for the weakening economic growth, its opponents attribute it to sheer managerial incompetence. In reality, both points of view are right, in that both poor economic management (mostly fiscal indiscipline) and unfavourable international commodity prices are the cause of Ghana’s recent economic difficulties.

To conclude this section, there are two important observations to state. The first is that economic growth in post-colonial Ghana has generally been cyclical and is highly dependent on the stability of the political environment. Second, Ghana’s economic performance is highly influenced by external conditions, demonstrating a high degree of fusion into the global economy.
Table 3.2: Shifting Patterns of FDI in Ghana*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Amount ($M)</td>
<td>%</td>
<td>Amount ($M)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Agriculture</td>
<td>203.96</td>
<td>11.52</td>
<td>101.040</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Manufacturing</td>
<td>345.64</td>
<td>19.52</td>
<td>7,718.55</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Construction</td>
<td>125.63</td>
<td>7.11</td>
<td>770.47</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>General Trade</td>
<td>101.25</td>
<td>5.72</td>
<td>115.40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Export Trade</td>
<td>15.63</td>
<td>0.88</td>
<td>49.95</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Liaison Office</td>
<td>.101</td>
<td>0.01</td>
<td>47.92</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tourism</td>
<td>34.21</td>
<td>1.93</td>
<td>116.27</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other Services</td>
<td>994.37</td>
<td>53.32</td>
<td>1,810.09</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>1,771.06</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>19,611.92</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* Excludes Oil and Mining FDI
Source: Constructed with Data from Ghana Investment Promotion Centre, 2013

3.2.2 Welfare: Employment, Poverty and Inequality Trends
One way of gauging the impact of Ghana’s economic growth trajectory on the welfare of Ghanaians is by looking at data on employment, poverty and inequality. Given the absence of accurate year-on-year (un)employment data in Ghana, census data remains the most reliable source of (un)employment information in Ghana. As evinced from table 3.3 below, the proportion of the employed labour force (or employment rate) has slightly decreased over the (post-adjustment) years, albeit remaining high. Interestingly, the gender dynamics of employment appears to have shifted over the years as well, with males slightly edging out females among the employment population after 1984. The high employment rate and impliedly low unemployment rate in Ghana, if taken on face value, suggests that decades of economic growth has generally been accompanied by increased job creation. Of course, there are several problems or limitations with relying on such a ‘crude’ measure of welfare, as they do not, for example, given us any indication about the type of jobs being created, which sectors where they are being created in, and the
Table 3.3: Employed Population as a Proportion of the Labour Force in Ghana by Gender, 1960-2010

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
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<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Employed as % of the Labour Force</td>
<td>94.0</td>
<td>94.0</td>
<td>97.2</td>
<td>89.6</td>
<td>94.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Male</td>
<td>93.5</td>
<td>92.3</td>
<td>96.8</td>
<td>89.9</td>
<td>99.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Female</td>
<td>94.8</td>
<td>96.1</td>
<td>97.5</td>
<td>89.3</td>
<td>94.2</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Population and Housing Census, 2000 and 2010 National Analytical Reports

distribution of employment in space, something I shall interrogate in the next section when I examine the issue of structural change.

In the area of poverty, available data point to considerable gains in poverty reduction over the past one and half decades in particular. As seen from figure 3.3, the incidence of poverty and extreme poverty in Ghana, as measured per the international upper and lower poverty lines (corresponding to Gh₵1,314 and Gh₵792.05 at 2006 prices) respectively, have dropped considerably over the years, with the incidence of poverty falling from as high as 51.7% in 1991/92 to just 24.4% in 2012/13, and that of extreme poverty reducing from 36.5% to 16.4% over the same period. This represents a remarkable feat of 27.3% and 20% percentage point dip in the incidence of poverty and extreme poverty in Ghana.

But the greatest news in the fight against poverty actually came in 2006 when the results of the 2005/06 round of the Ghana Living Standards Survey (GLSS), the official poverty and welfare assessment exercise conducted every seven years, showed a little over 50% drop in the number of poor people in Ghana from the previous 1991/92 headcount. This news made Ghana the first Sub-Saharan African nation to attain the United Nation’s millennium development goal of halving the number of poor people, far in advance of the targeted 2015 deadline.

However, despite the welcome news of impressive poverty reduction, data on regional distribution of poverty indicate marked spatial inequalities in both the level of, and success at reducing, poverty across Ghana. The capital region of Greater Accra is the least
poor (administrative) region in Ghana (7.5% incidence), whilst the Upper East region in northern Ghana is the most impoverished region (70% incidence). This highlights the extant north-south development divide, albeit in terms of poverty reduction the latter recorded the largest margin of decline between 1991/92 and 2012/13, perhaps an indication that efforts at bridging the longstanding north-south development divide is yielding results. Further proof of growing inequality in Ghana is highlighted by the marginal increment in the national Gini coefficient, the measure of the equality of welfare distribution among Ghanaians. Already high, it increased from 41.9% in 2005/06 to 42.3% in 2012/13. Underscoring the problem of rising inequality, the latest GSS report states that 7.1 percentage point reduction in the incidence of national poverty between 1995/6 and 2012/13 came from growth rather redistribution, as inequality contributed to worsening poverty by 1.1 percentage points, adding that ‘..over time Ghanaians are not benefitting evenly from the growth process’ (Ghana Living Standards Survey Round 6: Poverty Profile in Ghana, 2014:20). The challenge of growing inequality against the backdrop of falling poverty in Ghana is a clear confirmation of what I described earlier in chapter 2 of this thesis as one of the biggest downsides of Africa’s renaissance in the 21st century—the

![Figure 3.3 Poverty Incidence in Ghana, 1991/92-2012/13](image)

Source: Constructed with Data from Round 5 and Round 6 of the Ghana Living Standards Survey Report, 2012 and 2014
paradox of falling poverty amid rising inequality—something that requires new or more redistribution aggressive strategies by leaders on the continent to ensure more inclusive growth, particularly if they desire to elevate more of their (poor) populations into the ranks of the middle classes.

3.2.3 Structural Transformation?
What has been the impact of past and recent economic policies aimed at altering the structure of the Ghanaian economy, including the mid 1980s and subsequent reforms, on the basic structure of the Ghanaian economy? The answer lies in the information contained in the tables and graphs below, especially tables 3.4 and 3.5. As is evident from both tables, the industrial and occupational structure of the Ghanaian economy have evolved over the past five decades.

Table 3.4 below gives the breakdown of the contributions of the main sectors of the Ghanaian economy toward GPD and employment from 1960 to date. As we can see, the most revealing aspect about the data contained in the table is the markedly different roles played by agriculture and services in value addition and employment generation in 2010. Prior to 2010, agriculture was the mainstay of the Ghanaian economy, contributing over 50% to employment creation and no less than 35% to GDP from 1960 to 2000. But in 2010 the sector lost its dominance to services, which has now become the largest employment and GPD contributor to the Ghanaian economy, accounting for more than half (i.e., 51.4%) of the national output and nearly half (i.e., 42.8%) of total employment, with that of agriculture shrinking to 29.9% of GDP and 42% of employment, from a record high of 51.1% and 64% in 1960, respectively.

The growth of the service sector over the years and its subsequent elevation as the leading economic sector in Ghana has been linked to productivity gains in the agricultural sector as well as the general expansion in service activities (especially low-skilled, low entry barrier service activities such as retail trade) following the liberalization of the Ghanaian
Table 3.4: Sectoral Contribution to GDP and Employment, 1960-2010

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
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<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>GDP Share (%)</td>
<td>Employment Share (%)</td>
<td>GDP Share (%)</td>
<td>Employment Share (%)</td>
<td>GDP Share (%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Agricul-</td>
<td>51.1</td>
<td>64.0</td>
<td>50.7</td>
<td>57.0</td>
<td>47.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ture</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Industry</td>
<td>18.2</td>
<td>12.8</td>
<td>19.3</td>
<td>15.8</td>
<td>19.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Services</td>
<td>30.7</td>
<td>23.1</td>
<td>27.4</td>
<td>27.2</td>
<td>22.1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Employment Figures from 2000 and 2010 Census Reports, GSS; GDP figures from GSS Quarterly Reports and Jedwab and Osei, 2012.

But the other reason accounting for the huge growth of the service industry is the high amount of FDI going into high-order services such as banking, telecommunications, education and hospitality services and the growth of the local private sector, all of which have shored up (the share of) professional, managerial and clerical occupations in the economy (table 3.6)—an issue I shall pick up in the next two sections when I discuss the arrival of the new Ghanaian middle class. Also, looking at Figure 3.4 below, it seems that periods of high economic growth are accompanied by an increased share of agriculture in both GDP and employment, while periods of low economic growth are associated with increasing agricultural share of GDP and employment. The reason could be that periods of slow economic growth, such as witnessed in the early 1980s, lead to cutbacks in manufacturing and mining jobs as well as other services, which push people into farming—an observation that is corroborated by the dip in industrial and service employment between 1970 and 1984 (see table 3.4).

Contrary to the dramatic shifts in the trajectory of agriculture and services, the contributions of the industrial sector, both in relation to employment and national output, remains virtually the same from 1960 to 2010, hovering between 12% and 15%. But while the overall trajectory of the industrial sector has not changed, the various sub-sectors, comprised of manufacturing, public utilities (electricity, water and gas), mining and construction, have showed varied performances in the past decades. For instance,
while the growth and contributions of the manufacturing and mining subsectors have been sporadic since the reforms, oscillating between 10% and 6% between 1990 and 2012 (Alagide et al., 2013), the later being reactive to price shocks for gold, the country’s main ore, the construction subsector seems to have picked up in recent years, thanks to massive investment in real estate post-2005. With the 2007 discovery of oil and gas, industrial GDP and employment are expected to increase over the next few years.

The transition from agriculture to a service-based economy in Ghana, without a corresponding rise in manufacturing, has been viewed by many analysts, including Alagide et al. (2013) and Jedwab and Osei (2012), as either as a lack of structural transformation or better still an undesirable form of economic transformation, as it departs from conventional models of structural change, which involve the shift from agriculture to industry before service. Whilst it is true that the Ghanaian (and perhaps African) experience of economic transformation does not conform to the path experienced by the
Table 3.5: Industrial Structure of Employment in Ghana, 1960-2000*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Industry</th>
<th>Share of the Employed Population</th>
<th>Change (1960-2000)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Agriculture, forestry &amp; fishing</td>
<td>39.1</td>
<td>61.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mining and Quarrying</td>
<td>1.9</td>
<td>0.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Manufacturing</td>
<td>11.1</td>
<td>10.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Electricity, Water &amp; Gas</td>
<td>0.6</td>
<td>0.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Construction</td>
<td>3.5</td>
<td>1.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wholesale and Retail, Restaurants</td>
<td>3.7</td>
<td>14.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Transport, Storage &amp; Communication</td>
<td>2.6</td>
<td>0.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Finance, Insurance, Real Estate &amp; Business</td>
<td>0.2</td>
<td>2.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Community, Social &amp; Personal Service</td>
<td>5.6</td>
<td>8.7</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Information for 2010 for employment distribution by industry and occupation were excluded from this and the next table because of the different classification system adopted by the Ghana Statistical Service from 2010. The new classification system for industry include the addition of new industrial classes (e.g., education) as well as the breakdown or separation of other industries (e.g., Transport, Storage and Communication) into two distinct industries, making it impossible to compare and draw important conclusions with past data. The same changes have occurred in the occupational classification system, although the changes do indicate or reflect important new trends that have occurred in the Ghanaian economy over the past few decades.

Source: Population and Housing Census: 2000 Analytical Report, GSS

West and to some extent Asia today, the evolution from agriculture to services does not make it any less an experience of economic change in my view. Most importantly, it is being characterized by the shift from rural-based farming activities to urban-based services, with implications for class formation and urban change, which leads me to the next subject of analysis: shifting patterns of urbanization in Ghana.
Table 3.6: Occupational Structure of the Ghanaian Economy, 1960-2000

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Occupational Type</th>
<th>Share of the Employed Population</th>
<th>Change (1960-2000)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Administrative and Managerial</td>
<td>0.5</td>
<td>0.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Professional and Technical</td>
<td>2.3</td>
<td>3.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Clerical and Related Workers</td>
<td>1.7</td>
<td>2.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sales Workers</td>
<td>11.5</td>
<td>13.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Service Workers</td>
<td>2.2</td>
<td>2.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Agric./Animal Husb/Forestry/ Hunting</td>
<td>61.1</td>
<td>57.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Production/Transport Equip. Operators</td>
<td>18.7</td>
<td>19.6</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Population and Housing Census, 2000 and 2010 National Analytical Reports

3.2.4 New Trends in Urbanization

As with the economy, the pattern of urbanization in Ghana appears to have shifted significantly in recent years. But before we look at these shifts in detail, the first important thing that the data on urban growth rate and GDP growth rate in Ghana tell us about the nature of urbanization in Ghana is that the rate of urbanization in post-colonial Ghana is generally a reflection of prevailing economic conditions. This is because periods of high economic growth are correlated with rapid urban growth and vice versa (Figure 3.5; Table 3.7). For instance, between 1961 and 1984, at a yearly GDP growth rate of 0.9%, the rate of urbanization averaged 3.9% annually, whilst the period 1984-2010 saw an escalation in the urban growth rate to 4.5% per annum, when economic growth averaged 5.6% per annum. The reasonably strong correlation between urbanization and economic performance in Ghana is a challenge to the popular characterization of African urbanization as a problematic, contradictory picture of population implosion against the backdrop of weak or worsening economic growth.
Second, despite slowing rate of urbanization, Ghana has enjoyed a relatively high rate of urban growth averaging 4% since independence, compared to the continental average of 3.5%. Consequently, Ghana has attained its urban transition ahead of many African nations, including the likes of Kenya and Nigeria.

Third, an analysis of recent urbanization trends point towards important shifts in the trajectory of urban growth in Ghana. Up until the 1980s, urban growth was centred around the primary cities of Accra-Tema, Kumasi and Sekondi-Takoradi (i.e., inside the so-called ‘golden triangle’). But since 1984, the share of these three major urban centres in the urban population has steadily been falling, while that of smaller urban centres has been climbing concurrently (Figure 3.6). A number of factors account for this important change; however, there are two proximate reasons. One is the sheer growth in the number of urban localities, which has dramatically expanded over the past few decades. The other is the high growth of secondary cities, comprised of medium-sized (i.e., 20,000-50,000) towns such as Winneba, Tarkwa and Kintampo; and large-medium-sized (i.e., 50,000-100,000) cities, including Cape Coast, Sunyani and Ho, particularly since 2000.
## Table 3.7: Urbanization Trends in Ghana, 1960-2010

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Country Population</th>
<th>Urban Population</th>
<th>Proportion (%)</th>
<th>Population Growth Rate</th>
<th>Urban Growth Rate</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Period</td>
<td>(%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1960</td>
<td>6,726,815</td>
<td>1,551,174</td>
<td>23.3</td>
<td>1960-70</td>
<td>2.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1970</td>
<td>8,559,313</td>
<td>2,472,456</td>
<td>28.9</td>
<td>1970-84</td>
<td>2.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1984</td>
<td>12,296,081</td>
<td>3,938,614</td>
<td>32.0</td>
<td>1984-00</td>
<td>2.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2000</td>
<td>18,192,079</td>
<td>8,274,270</td>
<td>43.8</td>
<td>2000-10</td>
<td>2.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2010</td>
<td>24,658,823</td>
<td>12,549,229</td>
<td>50.9</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Compiled from 2000 and 2010 Census Report, GSS

For instance, between 2000 and 2010, the population of the city of Cape Coast grew at 7.5% per annum, more than doubling its population from 82,291 to 169,984 and widening its share of the urban population from 0.9% to 1.4%, a similar feat achieved by Ho over the same period. In all, the total number of large-medium sized cities in Ghana has spiked from just 9 in 2000 to 36 in 2010, revealing the extent of urbanization taking place outside the ‘golden triangle’. The shift in growth momentum from the 1st to 2nd and 3rd tier Ghanaian cities could be attributed to the massive decentralization program introduced as part of the wider economic reform program in 1998-89, as well as an attestation of the relative success of the initiative, which has helped spread development more evenly.

Another notable urban system change is the shifting growth dynamics among Ghana’s power metropolises: Accra, Kumasi, Tema, Sekondi-Takoradi and Tamale, since the economic reforms, particularly among the first two. As it could be seen from table 3.8, since 1984, Accra’s share of the total urban population has been dwindling steadily, from 25% in 1984 to 16.5% in 2010, whilst Kumasi has been expanding its share of the urban population over the same period, from 12.6% to 16.2%. Accra’s diminishing primacy is particularly an important development for two reasons.

---

13 Although Tamale and Tema are not the 4th and 5th largest cities in Ghana, they are classified as metropolitan cities within the Ghanaian taxonomy due to their highly developed nature and complexity of functions performed.
The first is that it challenges dominant views about urban primacy in developing societies, including Africa, which suggest urban primacy as an increasingly and worrying phenomenon in the developing world (UN-Habitat, 1999; Abou-Korin, 2010). However, this finding and the previous suggest that urbanization in Ghana is becoming more even in recent times. Second, if current growth rates continue (Figure 3.7), the city of Kumasi will likely overtake Accra to become Ghana’s primate city, not least in demographic terms by 2020, which will be a historic event. Although Accra is and will remain Ghana’s leading city in the foreseeable future in economic, political and cultural terms, its position within the national urban system as the main population centre remains slippery.

The fourth major counter mainstream development or observation about recent urbanization trends in Ghana is the fact that urban growth in the post-reform era is being accompanied by remarkable dip in urban poverty, particularly since 2000. As can be seen from Table 3.9, the incidence of poverty in urban Ghana has been falling consistently since
Table 3.8 Growth and Change Trajectories among Ghana’s Power Metropolises (1960-2010)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Populat-</td>
<td>% of</td>
<td>Populat-</td>
<td>% of</td>
<td>Populat-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>ion</td>
<td>Urban</td>
<td>ion</td>
<td>Urban</td>
<td>ion</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Accra</td>
<td>388,396</td>
<td>21.8</td>
<td>636,067</td>
<td>25.8</td>
<td>969,195</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kumasi</td>
<td>217,172</td>
<td>14.1</td>
<td>346,333</td>
<td>14.0</td>
<td>496,628</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sekondi-Takoradi</td>
<td>123,313</td>
<td>7.9</td>
<td>143,892</td>
<td>5.8</td>
<td>188,203</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tamale</td>
<td>40,443</td>
<td>2.6</td>
<td>83,653</td>
<td>3.4</td>
<td>135,952</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tema</td>
<td>27,127</td>
<td>1.7</td>
<td>60,676</td>
<td>4.2</td>
<td>100,052</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Calculated from Past Census Data

the early 1990s, declining from 27.7% in 1991/92 to 10.6% in 2012/13. This is almost four times lower than the current rural poverty incidence of 37.9, which also fell from 66.7 in 1991/92, suggesting that poverty in Ghana is largely a rural problem (Songsore, 2010), albeit the pace of poverty reduction in rural Ghana is higher than that of urban Ghana. However, the breakdown also reveals significant regional disparities or inequality in both the incidence and rate of poverty among cities and towns in Ghana. In all, the capital region of Accra (or GAMA, comprised of the cities of Accra, Tema and five neighboring municipalities surrounding Accra) is the least poor (urban) region, while rural northern savannah is the poorest (rural) region in Ghana. In terms of poverty reduction, the rural forest belt recorded the highest overall margin of decline between 1991/92 and 2012/13, whilst the lowest gain was made in urban northern savannah. Between the last two headcounts, however, GAMA made the greatest stride in poverty reduction, compared to the abysmal performance seen in the rural coastal region (as well as urban coastal, urban forest and rural forest) for which the incidence of poverty actually worsened. But the overall pattern confirm the north-south development gap, seen from the earlier analysis of national poverty in section 3.4. However, many, including the World Bank, have praised the reduction in urban poverty in Ghana, calling it an example of ‘successful urbanization’ (World Bank, 2015:1).
Last but not least, the face of Ghanaian cities and towns has changed significantly since the economic reforms, particularly in the 2000 years. Major cities, such as Accra, Sekondi-Takoradi and Kumasi, have undergone significant shifts in their space economy, land use structure, social profile, and skyline. These changes include the proliferation of multi-storey structures, the emergence of secondary service centres, the continued tertiarization of the urban space economy, increased FDI activity, and the rise of new professional cohorts, including the new middle classes, to which I now turn.
Table 3.9: Decomposition of Poverty Incidence in Ghana, 1990—2013

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Region</th>
<th>Poverty Incidence</th>
<th>Change from Previous Headcount</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Accra (GAMA)</td>
<td>23.1</td>
<td>4.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Urban Coastal</td>
<td>28.3</td>
<td>31.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Urban Forest</td>
<td>25.8</td>
<td>18.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Urban Savannah</td>
<td>37.8</td>
<td>43.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rural Coastal</td>
<td>52.5</td>
<td>45.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rural Forest</td>
<td>61.6</td>
<td>38.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rural Savannah</td>
<td>73.0</td>
<td>70.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Urban</td>
<td>27.7</td>
<td>19.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rural</td>
<td>63.6</td>
<td>49.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>All Ghana</td>
<td>51.7</td>
<td>39.5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Ghana Living Standards Survey, 2006 and 2015

3.3 Class Reformation and the Arrival of the New Ghanaian Middle Class

The constant reference to the ‘new’ or ‘emerging’ middle class in Africa in the media and other circles, occasioned by the recent increase in the size of Africa’s middle class population, has often created the impression that the middle class is only a 21st century phenomenon in Africa. But as we have seen from the discussion above, the middle class is not a new trend in Ghana and arguably the rest of Africa; it has only gone through successive restructurings over the years just like the national economy and the urban system, with the current middle class cohort representing the new face of the African middle class. Having captured the previous middle class cohorts in Ghana, I shall concentrate on the new middle class in this section, discussing the factors that have spurred their ascent and which distinguish them from previous middle class cohorts.
3.3.1 Timing, Size and Growth Factors
As I indicated earlier on, the new Ghanaian middle class emerged during the most recent (i.e., 2000-2010) phase of economic development in Ghana, a phenomenon both confirmed externally by studies such as the 2011 AfDB brief and internally by the constant talk or mention of the new middle class in contemporary public discourse as well as recent awareness of other key new middle class signifiers. In terms of size, as was underscored in the introductory chapter, it is difficult to arrive at an accurate estimate of the middle class in part because of the conceptual or (definitional) problems and differing measurement techniques associated with the middle class, besides the practical absence of data on income levels and distribution predominantly used in mainstream calculations of the middle class. However, going by the 2011 AfDB report, which defines the middle class to include anyone whose daily consumption expenditure falls between $4 and $20, the middle class constitutes 19.8% of Ghana’s estimated 22million population, translating into about 5.4million people. Lastly, whilst the sustained economic growth recorded in the opening decade of the century constitutes the overreaching factor behind the rise of the new Ghanaian middle class, the group’s arrival is the outcome of a confluence of factors or events, including both economic and non-economic ones, as I shall explain below.

Industrial Restructuring
Apart from higher economic growth and significant poverty reduction, which have enabled many Ghanaians to join the ranks of the middle class from poverty, the first major event that has facilitated the rise of the new middle class in Ghana is the restructuring of the Ghanaian economy from agriculture to services, which was realized sometime in 2010 (see Table 3.5). The expansion of the service sector, inclusive of higher-order service industries such as banking, telecommunication and media broadcasting, has paved the way for some Ghanaians to acquire high-income paying jobs in these expanding sectors, enabling them to enjoy better life equivalent to middle class living.

Higher Education
Another factor that has significantly contributed to the rise of the new middle class in Ghana is increased enrolment in higher education. As underscored by Bawakyillenuo et. al (2013), there has been an increased demand for tertiary education in Ghana lately, a
situation attributable to a myriad of reasons, the most important being the desire for a better life, which include getting an edge in an increasingly competitive labour market, which tertiary education (especially college degree) provides. And whilst all sectors of the tertiary educational sector in Ghana—which comprise universities, polytechnics and specialized professional training institutions—have seen increased enrolment levels recently, universities, which occupy the apex of the educational system, have witnessed the most profound increase in enrolment levels (Adu, 2009).

Figure 3.8 shows the enrolment data for universities in Ghana between 2005 and 2010, which was obtained by Bawakyillenuo et. al (2013) from the country’s higher education accreditation institution. As evinced from it, university enrolment increased from 73,408 in 2005 to 107,058 in 2010, representing 45% spike in a period of five years. This increase is further indicative of the enhanced access to higher education in Ghana, which has also been contributed to by a huge expansion in the number of higher educational institutions across the country—an issue I shall pick up in chapter 5 when I discuss the educational dimension of middle class urbanism in Accra.

However, besides the increased patronage of higher education locally, there are many Ghanaians who are either pursuing or have obtained higher credentials from outside the country, which has contributed to the huge increase in the number of people with post-secondary educational credentials in the country over the past decade, from 710,036 in 2000 to 789,029 in 2010, representing an increase of 11%, according to the 2010 Population and Housing Census. Possessing higher educational credentials, particularly university degree, which allows holders of such qualifications to obtain high-income paying jobs as well as attract high social prestige, is considered one of the important marks of the new middle class (AfDB, 2011; Fukuyama, 2013; Deloitte, 2013).
Professional Occupations

One other factor that is directly responsible for the emergence of the new middle class in Ghana is the growth or availability of high-skilled, high-income jobs, otherwise known as professional occupations. They include traditional professions such as managers, physicians, lawyers, accountants, pharmacists, engineers, financial advisors and bureaucrats, as well as emergent professionals in the creative industry such as media broadcasters, software developers, graphic designers, beauticians and entertainment professionals with higher education qualification. In total, the number of Ghanaians engaged in these professional occupations, according to figures from the 2000 and 2010 Population and Housing census, rose from 510,043 in 2000 to 796,838 in 2010, representing a respectable 56% increase. Like higher education, professional employment is considered one of the key characteristics of the new middle class (Ehrenreich, 1977; Buris, 1986; Ulbrich, 2015).

Growth of the Local Private Sector

A factor accounting for the huge expansion in the number of professional occupations in Ghana is the growth of the local private sector, which has expanded over the years following the economic reforms in the mid-1980s. But more recently, many educated Ghanaians, including university graduates, are turning to the private sector either to find or
create employment (Bawakyillenuo et. al, 2013), rather than look to the state for employment, which used to be the dominant practice. The increasing importance of the private sector as the main source of professional employment in Ghana is corroborated by the results from the 2000 and 2010 population and housing census, both of which show that the share of the private sector exceeds that of the public sector in formal employment: in 2000, the private sector’s share in formal employment (which also include parastatals and international organizations) stood at 52%; it then shrunk slightly to 49% in 2010, a change that was contributed to by the increased share of international organizations, including NGOs. But the continued importance of the private sector as the primary source of formal employment in Ghana is being driven by two other reasons. One is the formal sector’s growing inability—and reluctance—to absorb additional workers, including the teeming army of university graduates, which is also the outcome of the current moves to manage the fiscal space. As a tangible proof of this, a moratorium on civil service employment has been in place since 2010. But the other reason for the continued shift towards private employment is the existence of better wages and service conditions in some private sector entities.

**Globalization and New Expressions of the New International Division of Labour**

The second reason behind the expansion of professional occupations in Ghana is increased FDI in higher-order services, linked to globalization and the new international division of labour. As was divulged from the analysis of Ghana’s growth performance, foreign direct investments play an important and growing role in the growth and expansion of the Ghanaian economy, as evinced by the current FDI to GDP ratio of 7.8%, higher than that of many other African countries, including Kenya (1.5%), Nigeria (0.8%), South Africa (1.6%) and Ivory Coast (1.2%). The increased presence of FDI in the country is partly the outcome of the new international division of labour, a phenomenon which entails the relocation of capital from the advanced regions of the world to developing countries as part of what Frobel, et. al (1982) describe as the global reorganization of production. But while the idea behind the practice has not changed, the current expression of globalization and new international division of labour in Ghana (and arguably the rest of Africa) differ from previous rounds.
Earlier rounds of globalization and new international division of labour in Ghana were concentrated in primary industries (i.e., the extractive sectors) and in low-technology manufacturing, which resulted in the creation of mostly blue collar jobs for locals, with the few high-income, high-skilled jobs (i.e., upper and senior level managerial positions) being reserved for expatriates. But the current manifestation of globalized division of labour is different from two ways. First, although the extractive sector remains the dominant destination of FDI in Ghana, specifically mining and oil, some or part of the new wave of FDI are increasingly moving away from the extractive industry towards (non-extractive) service industries such as real estate, telecommunications, banking, education, cultural production (e.g., media, and accommodation and food services), accounting and legal services, and, more recently, aviation, as well as high-tech manufacturing. In addition, the sources of these FDI have changed over time (see section 3.2.1 and Table 3.1 above). Second, in response to lower labour cost and local policy changes (often known as the local content policy), an increasing portion of the managerial and other skilled positions in foreign firms, in both traditional and new sectors, are being allocated to local employees or outsourced to local companies. These important shifts have contributed to the growth or availability of professional occupations in Ghana, which are mostly occupied by the middle classes.

One non-extractive service field in Ghana that has benefitted from the new round of international division of labour is the banking industry. In about a decade and half, the number of foreign banks operating in Ghana has spiked from 8 to 15 (Table 3.10). And apart from having multiple branches that have created thousands of professional jobs for Ghanaians, the top management positions in these foreign banks are mostly occupied by Ghanaians, as suggested by the Ghanaian nationality of the Chief Executive Officers (CEOs) of 7 out of the 8 international banks operating in the country.

**Diaspora Comeback**

The last factor responsible for the expansion of the new middle class in Ghana has been the recent return of Ghanaians in the Diaspora. The trend, which is attributed to the recent spurt in economic growth, is part of a bigger continent-wide phenomenon, which I
Table 3.10: Foreign Banks in Ghana as of 2014 and their Basic Characteristics

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name of Bank</th>
<th>Year of Establishment</th>
<th>Source Nation</th>
<th>No. of Branches as of June 2014</th>
<th>Nationality of CEO</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Barclays</td>
<td>1917</td>
<td>Britain</td>
<td>59</td>
<td>Ghanaian</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Standard Chattered</td>
<td>1896</td>
<td>Britain</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>Ghanaian</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Societe Generale (SG) Ghana</td>
<td>1975</td>
<td>France</td>
<td>45</td>
<td>French</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ecobank Ghana Limited</td>
<td>1990</td>
<td>African</td>
<td>78</td>
<td>Ghanaian</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>First Atlantic Bank</td>
<td>1994</td>
<td>Nigeria</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>Nigerian</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stanbic Bank Ghana</td>
<td>1999</td>
<td>Pan-African</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>Ghanaian</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>International Commercial Bank</td>
<td>1996</td>
<td>Switzerland</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>Nigerian</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bank of Africa</td>
<td>1997</td>
<td>Pan-African</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>Ghanaian</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Guaranty Trust Bank</td>
<td>2004</td>
<td>Nigeria</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>Nigerian</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>United Bank (Ghana) for Africa</td>
<td>2004</td>
<td>Nigeria</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>Ghanaian</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Zenith Bank (Ghana) Limited</td>
<td>2005</td>
<td>Nigeria</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>Ghanaian</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bank of Baroda (Ghana) Limited</td>
<td>2007</td>
<td>India</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>Indian</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Access Bank (Ghana) Limited</td>
<td>2008</td>
<td>Nigeria</td>
<td>39</td>
<td>Nigerian</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BSIC Bank (Ghana) Limited</td>
<td>2008</td>
<td>Libya</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>Senegal</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Energy Bank</td>
<td>2010</td>
<td>Sao Tome and Principe</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>Nigeria</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Pricewaterhousecoopers, 2014

mentioned in chapter 2. But apart from the sheer escalation in the GDP growth rate, some of the other drivers of the middle class expansion discussed above, such as the growth of the private sector and the new expressions of globalization and international division of labour have arguably played an important role in the decision of some Ghanaians resident abroad to return home. As well, there seems to be a growing sense of nationalism among some non-resident Ghanaians, including young, highly-educated, gainfully-employed professionals, to return home and start their own businesses, to contribute to national development. Three examples of such individuals are Patrick Awuah, founder and president of Ashesi University, a new private liberal arts college located in Accra; Nana Kwame Bediako, CEO of Wonda World Estates, a high-end property development company in Accra; and Herman Chinery-Hessie, CEO of SofTribe, an Accra-based, software development firm. The first was a former senior computer programmer at
Microsoft Incorporated, who returned to Ghana in 1997 to found Ashesi University, which has become one of the most prestigious universities in Africa. The second, 33-year old Nana Kwame Bediako, returned home about a decade ago after living in the UK to pursue his dream of transforming the property sector in Ghana, resulting in the birth of Wonder World Estates, which has built several high-profile office and residential properties in Accra. Herman Chinery-Hessie, the third, came to Ghana after working stints with various IT firms in England and the United States to set up SoftTribe, which develops a range of software products for a variety of clients that include the Ghanaian government and businesses across the West African sub-region. Therefore, whilst there may not be any official statistics on the number of Ghanaian professionals going back to settle home, there is plenty of anecdotal evidence to back this claim.

3.4 Summary and Discussion
The purpose of this chapter was to examine the story of economic transformation, class reformation and urbanization in Ghana, as a microcosm of the Africa rising story. As was evident from the analysis, Ghana’s economic performance, as with the rest of the continent, has generally been chequered over the years, with periods of high and stable growth interspersed by periods of low and unstable growth. At the same time, however, the country has chalked considerable success in economic growth, poverty reduction and investment in human capital, particularly in the post-reform era, attributed to better economic and political governance and resulting high levels of FDI. Furthermore, in addition to high growth, the post-2000 era has been accompanied by important shifts in the economic structure, social structure and the pattern of urbanization in Ghana. With respect to the economic structure, there have been three important shifts, namely: first, the shift in the institutional structure of the economy from a state-dominated economic system to a market-oriented economy, as evinced by the rise of the private sector over the public sector in formal employment; second, the shift in the production structure from agriculture to services in terms of GDP contribution; and third, the shift in the industrial structure of employment from agriculture to services.
In the area of urbanization, the most significant changes have been the shift from rural to urban-based society; the relatively higher growth of secondary cities; the fall in urban poverty incidence; and the sharp reduction of Accra’s primacy, as evidenced by its drop in the share of the urban population from 20% in 2000 to 16.5% in 2010. Lastly, in terms of social structure, the most significant development has been the rise of a new middle class. The emergence of this new middle class is the outcome of high economic growth; falling poverty; expanded access to higher education; growth of the private sector; the return of Ghanaian diaspora; and increased availability of professional occupations, linked to industrial restructuring favouring service occupations as well as new expressions of globalization and the new international division of labour, resulting in high-income jobs in both new and traditional sectors.

From the discussion on the new middle class and other observations made about them as part of this research, we can deduce a few salient characteristics Ghana’s new middle class. The first is that it is a fairly homogenous group, comprised of locally-educated individuals and returnees, including some top-tier business executives (e.g., CEOs of international banks) who maintain multiple residences in different countries over the course of a year, who I would refer to as the global cohort of the Ghanaian middle class. The second is that they are fairly well-credentialed, professionals who are mostly engaged in the private sector. Thirdly, they are a materialistic group whose growth has been accompanied by increased consumption of certain non-basic goods such as personal automobiles, personal computers, aviation, the internet, cell phones—the latter which has a current penetration of 119.41%. Finally, they are mostly concentrated in large Ghanaian cities such as Accra, where their imprints on the urban structure and social life are most discernable. This latter point leads us to the next two chapters on the new middle class and urban transformation in Accra, beginning with an overview of past and recent developments in Accra, including the growth of the new middle class and their role in Accra’s economic transformation.
4 Case Study of Accra: Outline of Past and Recent Developments
This chapter, which examines the case study, tells the story of urban growth and change in metropolitan Accra. It divulges how local and international forces, including changes in the political economic structures, migration, class relations, globalization, neoliberalism, have shaped the structure, size, growth direction and fate of the city from the past to the present. The discussion proceeds in the following order. Section one chronicles Accra’s evolution from a pre-colonial fishing village into the centre of modern government, business, education and social life during the colonial era and its subsequent adornment as a befitting capital of a newly-birth independent African country within a framework of central planning, modernism, nationalism, industrialism and the so-called African socialism in the immediate post-independence era. It also narrates the city’s later decline in the 1970s and early 1980s, symbolic of the larger political and economic instability that characterized the post-Nkrumah era, precipitating the neoliberal economic and political reforms. In section two, I examine post-reform Accra’s development trajectory, outlining recent development features, including changing physical growth directions, changing city skyline, new investment patterns, and emergent new spaces. In section three, I discuss the rise of the new middle class as an important marker of urban growth and change in Accra, highlighting the growth factors, major signifiers and defining attributes. This will provide a context for examining the spatial imprints of the new middle class in Accra in chapter five, including the place-making strategies employed by them in territorizing these spaces. Section four provides a summary of Accra’s development history.

4.1 Pre-reform Accra: Growth History and Trajectory of Urban Development
Accra traces its history to the 15th century, when it was first settled by the Ga people, who upon discovering many ant hills where they settled, named the place ‘nkran’, which means ‘an army of ants’, from which Accra derives its name. However, Accra was not a significant settlement until the 17th century, when European traders established forts along the coast of Accra to serve as trade outpost (Grant, 2008). This began with the Dutch, who

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14 This section draws on the works of Skidmore (2003) and Rain, et. al (2011).
15 The Ga people, who migrated from the interior of Africa, are considered the native inhabitants of Accra. They make up about 15% of the city’s population and are generally a low-income group.
constructed Ussher Fort in 1650, followed by the Danes, builders of Christianborg Castle in 1661, and the British, who established James Fort in 1673. Other European traders, including the Swedes, the French and the Portuguese, who all participated in the slave trade, also established smaller forts. However, it was the three major forts mentioned above that became the growth poles around which the city of Accra grew as the indigenes moved closer to the Europeans, to deepen the lucrative slave trade relations that had ensued between them. And today, ‘old Accra’, also known as ‘Gamashie’, comprised of Jamestown, Ushertown and Osu, the respective names of the three indigenous settlements that developed around the three European forts, form the historic part of the city of Accra, possessing certain unique characteristics that distinguishes it from other parts of Accra.

Following the abolition of the slave trade in 1807, the Danes sold Christiansborg, the largest of the three European fortifications in Accra, to the British, who had already established their base in Cape Coast, along the central coast of Ghana. Following a troubled relationship with the Asante Kingdom in the middle belt of Ghana, the Ashanti stronghold of Kumasi was attacked and almost destroyed by the British in 1874, who subsequently declared the kingdom a Crown protectorate. At the end of the second Anglo-Asante war in 1877, Kumasi was captured by the British, who also annexed Accra. Ghana—then named Gold Coast—was then officially declared a British colony, and Accra succeeded Cape Coast as the capital of the Gold Coast due to its dryer climate and safe haven from tsetse fly, making it conducive to animal transport, the major means of transportation then (Skidmore, 2003).

The next eight decades of British rule in Ghana, separable into pre- and post- World War II, would see Accra transform from a small indigenous settlement into a purpose-built colonial capital, shaped by Eurocentric architecture and vision of urban planning, and evolving alongside national and regional economic and political trends (Rain et. al, 2011). The centerpieces of this European planning ideal included land use segregation, racial segregation, well-built infrastructure, large public realms, and a core-periphery spatial organization. Important pre-World War II landmarks in Accra underpinning these principles of European urban planning and design included the construction of the Accra-
Kumasi railway in 1908, which linked Accra to Ghana’s cocoa producing and resource rich hinterlands; the development of the Accra port for the transshipment of gold and staples out of the Gold Coast and the offloading of European goods and personnel who came to do business and to govern the gold coast; the construction of the large Makola market (or the central business district) in 1924; a teaching hospital (1919-27), which opened the area west of the Korle lagoon, up until which formed the western boundary of Accra, for settlement; and the elite Achimota School, amid several other beautification projects, such as fountains, monuments and public squares. The establishment of Achimota School combined with the much older Mfantsipim School in Cape Coast built by missionaries in 1876 and later additions, including the University of Ghana, became the local incubator of the Ghanaian political class and civil servants who took over from the Europeans after independence.

These developments became a magnet which attracted migrants from other parts of Ghana, including those from the north, who thronged the capital city in search of employment opportunities created by the large scale construction and other projects, as
well as those emanating from other parts of southern Ghana. The latter group was made up of those who had learned the ‘Whiteman’s’ language, education and skills as a result of their initial contact with the Europeans, in addition to having privileged access to the educational institutions put up by the colonialists and missionaries. These sought work in the bureaucratic and commercial sectors that were growing fast and important by the day.

However, the rigid racial segregation policy of the colonialists ensured that there was a sharp divide between the European and non-European areas of the city, both of which were expanding rapidly due to an escalation in the intensity of the two waves of migration flooding the capital. One was represented by the indigenous Ghanaian population moving into Accra from various parts of the country in search of ‘greener pastures’. The other featured the European population settling into the city as businessmen, administrators, missionaries, educators, engineers and other technical professionals to undertake and supervise the construction of large scale projects, including mines, transportation (road, rail, harbours) and social infrastructure (e.g., schools and hospitals), the funding of which came from taxes raised from economic activities fuelled by the booming mercantile economy. As noted by Rain et. al (2011), in the non-European parts of Accra, new settlement formations, including Mamprobi, Tudu, Korle-Gono, Sobon Zongo and Adabraka (the last two being enclaves that hosted the Muslim population from the northern Sahel and other West African countries), emerged around Gamashie and to the west and north of the CBD around 1927.

Due to the introduction of British town planning ordinance, which required the use of cement block for housing construction and large spacing in the new neighbourhoods, the overall quality of life in these newer migrant neighbourhoods, perhaps with the exception of Sabon Zongo, was better in comparison to Gamashie, even in the absence of very stringent building requirements and the provision of social amenities. Administration of the city was given to the Accra Town Council, composed of white men, established under the Accra Town Council Ordinance of 1898 (revised in 1943), which was responsible for the city’s physical regulation.
Apart from extensions to Christianborg, Victoriaborg—an exclusive European enclave—was developed east of the city’s limits to provide housing, office, social and religious amenities for the colonial civil servants and businessmen moving into the Gold coast. The historic district (Figure 4.2), separated from the rest of the city by means of a cordon sanitaire of vacant land, was built on land behind cliffs where there was “always a breeze” (Skidmore, 2003). With its niceties of luxury homes, golf course, race course, polo and cricket grounds, churches, and special hospital, Victoriaborg fit no better description than that given by Skidmore (ibid): ‘a piece of England grafted into the townscape of Accra’.

Sir Frederick Gordon Guggisberg, governor of the Gold Coast from 1919 to 1927, under whose watch many of the developments mentioned above occurred as part of his ten-year development plan, is credited with much of Accra’s early modernization.

Accra was hit in 1939 by a devastating earthquake, in the early days of the Second World War, leaving many parts of the city in ruins. The city’s reconstruction saw additions to
both the European and non-European quarters of the city. This expansion was driven by an astronomical increase in Accra’s population, which rose from 60,726 in 1931 to 133,192 in 1948. The increase is attributed to an intensification in the two migratory streams mentioned above, local and international, buoyed by a booming mercantilist economy. To house the growing European community, three new neighbourhoods, Ridge, Ringway Estates and Cantonments, were founded further north and east of the city, in addition to extensions to Victoriaborg, in the post-WWII era. These areas were developed as low-density, elite residential neighbourhoods for the expatriate population, some of who hired the local population as servants. Later additions included Airport residential area, built adjacent to Accra’s airport.

Concurrent with the creation of new European neighbourhoods, new settlement formations were underway in the non-European parts of the city as new migrants arrived from northern and rural Ghana. But because these neighbourhoods developed outside the official boundaries of Accra, and were therefore considered ‘illegal’, construction occurred in a rather haphazard manner, without recourse to any zoning ordinance or building codes, resulting in sub-standard housing and amenity-deficient communities. Nima and Accra New Town are emblematic of these informal settlements in contemporary Accra, having origins in the colonial epoch.

The fate of the emerging native middle class population was, however, different. With the support of the city council, new neighbourhoods were constructed to accommodate them—among these were Kanashie, Kokomlemle, Tesano, Achimota and Kanda Village, all of which were incorporated into the boundaries of Accra upon completion in 1954. Therefore, as observed by Rain et. al (2011), as early as the mid-1950s, Accra was already depicting three distinct residential gradations: the low-density, well-planned, elite European neighbourhoods, typified by enclaves such as Victoriaborg, Ridge and Cantonments, sharply contrasted by the poorly-planned, high-density native and migrant enclaves of Gamashie and Nima, with the emerging semi-planned, medium density, middle class neighbourhoods of Kanashie and Adabraka and the likes mentioned above moderating the two kinds of neighbourhoods.
Another visible transformation that occurred in post-WWII Accra’s landscape was in and around the CBD. New commercial buildings were put up in the CBD, including multi-storey structures, elevating the skyline of the city centre, while making it more vibrant. In addition to this, a massive judicial and administrative complex, housing Ghana’s highest court as well as offices for the colonial administrators, was constructed at the fringe of the CDB. By 1948, Ghana’s first university, the University of Ghana (originally named as the University College of the Gold Coast as an affiliate of the University of London Ghana) was established. Moreover, politically, a new Gold Coast constitution was passed in 1945, one that was designed to accommodate local grievances over British colonial rule. Among other things, it created a new Accra City Council, composed of seven members—five appointed by the governor and two by local chiefs—with British town planner Maxwell Fry serving as Accra’s city planner, charged with the task of devising a master plan for Accra. Fry’s 1944 plan (which later became known as the Fry/Treavallion plan as the latter, with the input of one Allen Flood, helped to revise Fry’s initial proposal) outlined “the British vision of how Accra should develop” (Skidmore, 2003). Truly aristocratic, the Fry/Treavallion plan, as elucidated by Skidmore (2003), which revealed the colonialists’ ambition for a complete Europeanization of Accra, included:

- the reorganization of the CBD, including the superimposition of a tight grid north of Usher fort; the preservation of a large recreational space for restaurants, country club, cricket and polo field east of the redeveloped CBD; the development of a large parliamentary block in the city center; and the extension of Victoriaborg to incorporate the entire coastal area south of it as an exclusive elite leisure space; and the construction of large public squares, fountains, ornamental pools and statues throughout the capital.


But the rather unanticipated or hurried transition to self-rule in 1957, triggered by a series of popular revolts representing widespread discontent with British colonial rule, the most
decisive being the 1948 Accra Riots, led to the abandonment of the Fry/Treavallion plan by Ghana’s new independent government, headed by Kwame Nkrumah. Left-leaning and nationalist in ideology, Kwame Nkrumah’s sought to de-Europeanize the city, de-segregate its landscape, and reconfigure its urban form by creating new spaces to instill a sense of nationalism, pride and Africanism. To achieve this, Nkrumah constructed landmark nationalist buildings such as the Independence Square, the State House, and the Organization of African Unity building close to the city center. He also densified the CBD and respatialized Victoriaborg, siting the Bank of Ghana, government ministries and head of national companies there.

Nkrumah’s planning ethos represented a decisive break with the aristocratic traditions and aspirations of the colonialists. Whereas Britain’s vision for Accra, as articulated by the Fry/Treavallion plan, emphasized order, aesthetics, land use and racial segregation, and guided development, Nkrumah’s plan, which was less orderly, was aimed at fostering national and social cohesiveness and a shared sense of (African) identity (Skidmore, 2003), in addition to laying the groundwork for a modern African city run by Africans. Thus, in addition to declaring Accra as a city and appointing a new city council exclusively made up of local Ghanaian intellectuals, Nkrumah also ensured that all the European spaces of living, work and interaction, including Victoriaborg, Ridge, beach fronts and the several sporting arenas, which were previously ‘cordoned off’ to the indigenous Ghanaian population, were opened up for local utilization, with a number of streets being renamed and re-routed to pass through formerly inaccessible neighbourhoods, especially Gamashie (Rain et. al, 2011).

Although Nkrumah’s sought to diffuse development more evenly through the creation of new growth poles, rather than specific geographies of concentrated wealth, Accra’s position within Ghana’s emergent urban system remained dominant. This is because additional functions were added to its role as it became the command and control centre of the nation’s domestic industrialization program. But as pointed out above, Accra had its fair (and in actual fact, the greatest) share of Nkrumah’s transformative plans. This is because several projects were undertaken to link the capital to other Ghanaian towns and cities, making Accra in effect the epicenter of the different economic and social
development projects that were being embarked upon by the Nkrumaist government. These projects included new dual-carriage roads and intersections, the most popular being the ‘Kwame Nkrumah Circle’, which is Accra’s busiest traffic intersection, as well as street lighting projects, the refurbishment of the Accra International Airport, the upgrading of existing and construction of new tertiary institutions, such as the Ghana Law School and Accra Polytechnic, amid other cultural artifacts and aesthetic projects, such as the National Cultural Centre and the Ghana Films Industry. These projects were undertaken to give the city a facelift befitting the status of a national capital while projecting its rich cultural heritage.

These developments attracted a high population influx, both skilled and unskilled labour, into Accra, resulting in a somewhat spontaneous formation of new settlements, both planned and unplanned, increasing the physical extent of the city and the number of neighbourhoods dramatically (Figure 4.3). Not surprisingly, the first post-independence headcount of Ghana’s population yielded a figure of 338,000 for Accra, representing a 185 per cent jump in the city’s inhabitants since 1948. However, what was more intriguing was the fact that the 1960 enumeration revealed striking patterns of inequality and class segregation in Accra’s socio-spatial landscape, despite Nkrumah’s attempt at unifying the city, socially and physically. In the elite neighbourhoods of Ridge, Cantonments and Airport Residential Area, there were new occupants: ministers, senior civil servants and heads of the many state-owned enterprises in and outside Accra, with a few remaining European expats. Also, new purpose-built working class neighbourhoods had been built to accommodate the new class of factory workers, teachers, health professionals, middle and lower rank civil servants, alongside security and army quarters, all of whom were direct employees of the state. These neighbourhoods include Lartebiokoshie, Kotobabi and Mekaheko.

Arguably, the new professionals that occupied the erstwhile European neighbourhoods represented the new face of Accra’s middle class—one directly created by the state—as the previous middle class, some of whom espoused a different political (democratic) and economic (free market) view from Nkrumah, were sidelined, if not marginalized, by
Nkrumah’s socialist, one-party state government (see chapter 3). Meanwhile, the deprived communities of Nima and Gamashie witnessed no substantial improvements in their economic conditions during Nkrumah’s near decade rule, which was truncated by a mutiny led by one General Kotoka, who accused Nkrumah of being a dictator, corrupt, inept and insensitive to the plights of the Ghanaian masses. This happened in 1966, at a time when plummeting cocoa prices and economic mismanagement led to inflation, massive depletion of Ghana’s foreign reserves, and shortage of industrial inputs (which rendered many of the SOEs operating below capacity), resulting in high unemployment and food scarcity, amid a heavy-handed clampdown on opposition figures, which made Nkrumah’s government unpopular.

Figure 4.3: Expansion of Accra, 1900-1969
Successive governments following Nkrumah’s abruptly ended 9-year rule (1957-66), including both juntas and civilian regimes, have, with varying degrees, influenced the urban structure, space economy, growth, social dynamics and political landscape of Accra through their various policy instruments. But they shared one thing in common: they lacked a clearly defined, long-term vision for Accra. That said, however, it is important to highlight one defining moment in Ghana’s (and for that matter Accra’s) history—a juncture which marked the turning point in the political-economic order of Ghana. This came in the mid-1980s when the Rawlings government (itself a military regime), reeling under severe economic crisis—stagflation, recession, industrial output decline, mounting national debt, mass unemployment and famine—(somewhat akin to the situation in Greece today)—succeeded to IMF and World Bank loan and aid conditionalities, under the ambit of structural adjustment (see chapter three). Among other things, the reforms marked a seismic shift in Accra’s spatial structure, growth trajectory, urban economy and class structure, the nature and extent of which I next examine.

4.2 Post-Reform Accra: Outline of Recent Development Features
Accra has profoundly changed in many ways in the three or so decades following the liberalization program, as hinted above. However, five key features have characterized the city’s post-reform growth trajectory. While some of these developments emerged early in the post-reform era, others have been more recent. Thus, from a temporal perspective, we can delimit post-reform Accra’s development into early (i.e., 1985-2000) and late (i.e., post-2000) restructuring eras. As well, while some of the features that emerged in the immediate post-reform era have continued to the present, others have been supplanted by newer trends starting 2000, indicating patterns of continuities and change.

4.2.1 Weakening Demographic Growth
The first, perhaps rather unexpected, attribute about post-reform Accra’s development trajectory is the slowing rate of urbanization or population growth, which I revealed in the previous chapter. As table 4.1 reveals, Accra’s population has steadily been growing at a decreasing rate since 2000, which is indicative of the fact that, despite strong numerical increase in the city’s population, the margin of growth has been smaller compared to the
Table 4.1: Population Trends in Accra, 1960-2010

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<tr>
<td>Population</td>
<td>338,396</td>
<td>636,667</td>
<td>969,195</td>
<td>1,658,937</td>
<td>2,076,546</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Intercensal Growth Rate (%)</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>1960-70 5.1</td>
<td>1970-84 3.1</td>
<td>1984-2000 3.4</td>
<td>2000-2010 2.3</td>
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Source: Calculated from Past Census data obtained from the Ghana Statistical Service

pre-reform and the early post-reform decades, except, of course, for the 1970-84 period, where the steep economic decline slowed urban growth considerably, as corroborated by the percentage changes in the population between 1960 and 2010. By contrast, other cities, such as Kumasi and Tamale, recorded stronger growth over the same period (see Table 4.1). While the emergence and growth of secondary cities in Ghana and the consequent reduction in Accra’s primacy since 2000 could easily be implicated for the city’s slowing population growth, within the context of greater Accra metropolitan region, what really accounts for Accra’s dwindling population growth rate has been the relative higher growth of neighboring municipalities such as Ga East, Ga West, Ga South, Adenta alongside the port city of Tema, which recorded proportionately higher increment in their population sizes and rate of growth over the same period. For instance, between 2000 and 2010, the combined population of the erstwhile Ga District (now divided into Ga East, Ga West, Ga Central and Ga South) grew by 75% and 5.8% in percentage and annualized growth terms respectively, while that of Tema was 41.5% and 3.5%, both far in excess of Accra’s 25% and 2.3%.

4.2.2 Strong Suburban Growth
Correlated to the shifting demographic growth from Accra to its surrounding regions has been the incidence of massive suburbanization, which constitutes the second salient and visible feature of post-reform Accra’s growth. According to Angel et. al (2005), between 1985 and 2000, Accra’s built-up area expanded from 133 square kilometers to 314 square
kilometers, that is, a 181km² areal enlargement, representing a 136% increase, compared to the limited pre-reform (i.e., 1975-1986) expansion of just 61km², or 46%, as found by Yeboah (2000). Furthermore, according to both Yeboah (2000) and Angel et. al (2005), most of this (early post-reform) growth occurred at the outer suburbs, rather than on land immediately abutting the built-up area of 1975 (Yeboah, 2000; Angel et. al, 2005), suggesting massive areal growth of Accra, particularly in the immediate post-reform era. In addition, Angel et. al. (2005) notes that the rate of Accra’s physical growth rate between 1985 and 2000 (6.6%) exceeded demographic expansion (3.4%) over the same period, a trend that has continued to the present day.

Whilst there is considerable disagreement among scholars on the exact spatial model(s) that post-reform Accra’s suburbanization fits into—ranging from Yeboah’s (2000) unicentric pattern to Doan and Oduro’s (2011) diverse patterns—there is one consensus amongst these studies, that the nature of urban sprawl in post-reform Accra comprise low-density residential development, driven by single-family housing. This is what Yeboah (2000:70) has described as “quality residential sprawl”. These high-quality, low density housing developments were built with ‘concrete’ and ‘modern’ or imported products and designed as ‘self-contained structures’ owned by the wealthy. They were ‘built in anticipation of infrastructure and services like water, roads, drainage and electricity’ (ibid). This is both a testament to, as well as an important spatial marker of, the (re)growth of the city’s middle class (who sharply diminished during the late 1970s to early 1980s due to the economic crisis and related political persecution and urban decline) in the post-reform era.

The city’s massive suburbanization in the early post-reform era, reflecting increasing land values at the urban core and a desire for bigger, more comfortable housing by the middle classes (Yeboah, 2000), resulted in the shift or diffusion of development momentum from the central city to peripheral Accra. And the major outcome of this phenomenon has been the underbounding of metropolitan Accra (Songsore, 2010) and the consequent fusion of the city’s boundaries with that of neighbouring municipalities such as Tema, Adenta Ashiaman and the four Ga districts, forming a single, integrated mega-urban region, commonly referred to as the Greater Accra Metropolitan Area (GAMA). This contiguous
urban development stretches westward from Central Accra to as far as Kasoa in the Central Region, eastward to Mitsio in the far away Gangme West District of the Greater Accra, Nsawom in the Akuapim South municipality in the Eastern Region to the northwest, and northward to Aburi in Eastern Region. The emergence of GAMA has since been a subject of investigation by local urban scholars such as Songsore (2010) seeking to understand its economic potential and governance implications.

Although suburbanization still remains a salient feature of post-reform Accra’s development, the new wave of investments that have flooded into the national capital since 2000, spurring massive physical developments, including luxury housing, office and recreational infrastructure targeting the new middle classes, appears to be swinging back the development momentum to the urban core. Reasons for this include the desire to build close to the prime business areas and important landmarks such as the airport and wealthy neighbourhoods such as Cantonments which are all located in the central city, albeit some of the new developments are taking place at the fringes of Accra. In sum, it could be asserted that whereas the older middle classes were mostly responsible for the massive urban sprawl in the immediate post-reform era that resulted in the diffusion of urban growth from the core to the peripheries, the rise of the new middle class in the latter post reform epoch, which is associated with renewed investments in the central city, has facilitated the revival and reassertion of the core’s primate position and role within Accra’s reconfigured space economy.

4.2.3 An Emerging New City Skyline
Another conspicuous feature defining post-reform Accra’s development has been the ongoing transformation of the city’s skyline, which has been of two major forms. The first is the upward elevation of the city’s built form from a predominantly low rise to a middle-to-high-rise built form. This change has been occasioned by a proliferation of multi-storey structures in the metropolis since 2000. Prior to 1997, there was only handful of skyscrapers in Accra, the tallest being the 49 metre, 14-storey Cedi House, built in 1973 to serve as the annex of the country’s central bank, the Bank of Ghana. Moreover, the majority of the tall buildings in pre-2000 Accra were office structures, which were mostly
Figure 4.4: Crystalline Landscapes of 21st Century Accra

(Last Accessed: 26/04/2016)
Image B: http://dronegram.altervista.org/photo/downtown-accra-with-the-octagon-building-under-
(Last Accessed: 26/04/2016)
(Last Accessed: 26/04/2016)
concentrated in the CBD. Today, however, metropolitan Accra boasts of several tall
buildings of varying heights and floors, both completed and underway, scattered across
the city, with the 27-floor Azure Tower located in Villaggio Vista, a new upscale
apartment housing development at East Airport, becoming Accra’s tallest building. But
more importantly, unlike before, a significant number of the new high-rise structures
emerging in the city are more diverse in function or use: they comprise single-use
structures such as condominiums (e.g., Polo Heights); hotels (e.g., Airport Hotel);
shopping malls (e.g., Marina Mall), as well as mix-use structures combining office,
housing and commercial spaces (e.g., The Octagon). The second aspect of Accra’s
transformed landscape has to do with the architectural properties of the new tall buildings
rising in the city. As with the changing utility of tall buildings in Accra, the new
skyscrapers popping up in Accra portray different architectural styles, ranging from post-
modernist designs to new urbanism-inspired concepts, some of which have become iconic
landmarks, capturing international attention. That said, however, the new architectural
fabric of 21st century Accra’s skyline is more fashionable, glassy and shiny compared to
the more formalized and simplistic modernist architecture of 20th century Accra, making
21st Accra look more cosmopolitan (Figure 4.4). In a way, the rise of a new city skyline
symbolize the dawn of a new era in Accra’s development story, one that is linked to the
growth of the new middle class, as I shall later demonstrate.

4.2.4 Construction Boom and New Spatial Formations
The rise of a new skyline in the atmosphere above Accra is symptomatic of a far bigger,
more consequential, event occurring aground: a massive construction boom (Figure 4.5)
and the growth of the local property market. From what could be described as a
lackadaisical and low-end urban development, characterized mostly by the erection of
single-family housing and small office and commercial structures in the immediate post-
reform era, Accra’s landscape and development story has been transformed since 2000,
with a huge explosion in high-end property development and new spatial formations of
various kinds. These include luxury apartments, gated communities, office towers, hotels,
shopping complexes, entertainment centres, and large-scale, mix-use, mega urban projects,
including mini (smart) cities and globally-connected business centres, which seem to have
become the new norm in urban development in 21st century Accra.
A – One Airport Square, one of several new mix-use Property Developments at the New Airport City

B – An Office Construction at North Ridge

C – A new Beachfront Apartment Housing Construction at Labadi

D – The newly-opened Kampisky Hotel at the proposed Gold Coast City

**Figure 4.5: Signs of a Property Boom in Accra**

(Last Accessed: 26/04/2016)  
Image B: [https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:North_Ridge,_Accra_Pedestrian_Crossing.jpg](https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:North_Ridge,_Accra_Pedestrian_Crossing.jpg)  
(Last Accessed: 26/04/2016)  
(Last Accessed: 26/04/2016)  
(Last Accessed: 26/04/2016)
So intense and widespread is the development that it attracted a recent visit by CNN’s Marketplace Africa’s\textsuperscript{16} host Zain Asher, who on touring the city just few months ago, made the startling admission that:

It’s hard to find any part of the city where there isn’t a construction crane or a sign advertising a new property

(Source: http://www.cnn.com/2015/10/02/africa/shopping-malls-africa/)

The boom in real estate development in Accra is being driven by the growth of middle class Ghanaians (both as producers and consumers) as well as by a new wave of globalization and foreign investments, as we shall later see. However, some are speculative developments, being in hopes of a boom in the economy as well as an increase in foreign capital penetration. And interestingly, as Zain Asher discovered, not even the current lull in economic growth is slowing down the pace of construction in the city—perhaps a sign of confidence in the long term prospects of the Ghanaian economy.

4.2.3 An Emerging New Urban Economy
Accompanying the boom in property development in Accra and the rise of the city’s new middle class has been the emergence of new economic activities and occupations, collectively which I would refer to as the new urban economy. This new urban economy comprise elements of luxury goods consumption (e.g., automobiles, cell phones, personal computers, home appliances, and so on), formal retail, real estate, and the emergence or growth of new higher-order, knowledge-intensive service industries and allied occupations which have grown in importance in the Ghanaian capital since 2000. These new industries include media broadcasting, telecommunications, aviation and related services, banking

\textsuperscript{16} Marketplace Africa is a new CNN program that attempts to cover the biggest economic trends in Africa. It is one of several new initiatives by the international media to cast a spotlight on Africa’s rising story, perhaps a response to criticisms of their biased coverage of Africa. In this particular (i.e., October 25, 2015) edition, Zain focuses on the real estate boom in African cities, including offices, luxury apartments and shopping malls, and points to these as clear expressions of the growing domestic middle class and their lavish taste and spending power. The Accra story included interviews with key industry players, including Nana Kwame Bediako, one of the emerging cohort of young Ghanaian real estate developers who owns a number of the new properties being developed in Accra, which I argue as an indication of the active involvement of the local middle class in the production of privileged space. See the link provided above for the full story.
and financial intermediation, real estate services, computing and software development, education, research, policy think tanks, social work, specialized medical care and consulting—legal, accounting, management, engineering and so on. It also includes resurgent cultural industries such as film production, craft making, entertainment and professional sports, fashion, graphic design, tourism, hospitality services and Spa, which have proliferated in the Ghanaian capital in the past few years, and, together with the above, continue to employ a growing number of the urban populace, as we shall shortly see.

Another important component of Accra’s incipient economy is the growth of e-commerce, which continues to expand and gain traction, particularly among the middle classes. From what used to be a complete cash-oriented economy only few years ago, the Ghanaian economy has witnessed the emergence of online shopping, e-marketing, and e-payment systems, which are concentrated in Accra. The emergence of the e-economy in Accra has been aided by the rise of exclusive online retail companies such as Zoobershop, Tissu and Jumia Ghana as well as traditional retail outlets with online purchase options; classified online advertising services such as Lacanto and Ghanaweb; and more recently e-commerce marketplaces such as Tanoton.com that allow buyers and sellers to transact in goods and services. Electronic payment technologies that have also enabled the growth of the sector include e-zwich, a national fingerprint-based e-payment system that allows e-zwich smartcard holders to carryout electronic transactions, including banking and goods purchase at any point of sale terminals. The other important sector is mobile banking, which is by far the most popular e-based payment system that allows people to pay for goods and services as well as undertake branchless banking services, including money transfer, on their cell phone. The other kind of infrastructure that is facilitating the expansion of Accra’s e-economy, and, by extension the new economy, is formal retail space such as shopping malls (many of which accept e-payment systems), which has expanded vastly in the Ghanaian capital in the past few years.

Accra’s emerging new economy differs fundamentally from the old urban economy. The latter comprise mostly lower-order urban services, including the large informal economy,
and related informal retail infrastructure, such as open markets, and a small, mostly government-based, formal sector. But the new economy is dominated by highly educated and well-paid professionals in both public (but mostly) private sector employment, whose main capital is knowledge. It also includes the use of formal retail infrastructure and upscale commercial spaces. While the informal sector still dominates Accra’s economy, it is gradually being overshadowed by the new economy, as we shall see in section 4.4.

4.2.4. Growth and Shifting Patterns of FDI
A major factor propelling the growth of the new middle class, the construction boom, the transformation of the city’s skyline, the emergence of the new urban economy and the proliferation of up-scale residential, commercial and recreational landscapes in Accra is the dramatic shift in the volume and direction of foreign direct investment (FDI) in the Ghanaian capital. As noted in chapter 3, prior to the economic reforms, FDI inflow to Ghana was meager and mostly limited to the mining and to a limited extent the manufacturing sectors of the economy due to the restrictive policies of the early post-independent governments, particularly Kwame Nkrumah’s. Furthermore, most of the inflows emanated from the West. Following the 1980s economic reforms, which opened up virtually all the sectors of the national economy to outside participation, the volume of FDI inflows to Ghana has more than trebled, while the sectoral composition of FDI has transformed dramatically, as we saw in chapter 3.

But more importantly, Accra has been receiving the lion share of the non-extractive sector FDI in Ghana since the economic reforms (Figure 4.6). Although the above figures reflect regional (i.e., provincial) distribution, the city of Accra, which is the most important city within the Great Accra (GR) region and the country receives bulk of the FDI in Ghana. Moreover, the majority of the FDI in Accra has gone into the services sectors, although in recent times the construction sector has also received a substantial share of FDI in Accra, which in part explains the on-going construction boom in the metropolis.
4.3 The Rise of the New Middle Class in Post-Reform Accra

As underscored above, one of the important makers of urban change in post-reform Accra has been the emergence of a new middle class. The growth of this new class has had a significant impact on the socio-economic and land use structure of the city, as we shall later see in the chapter five and six. But who make up this new social cohort in the city? What factors have aided their ascent and what key measures signify their arrival? And how are they contributing to Accra’s economic transformation? These are the key issues I address in the remaining paragraphs of this section, starting with the last two questions before returning to the first.

4.3.1 Growth Drivers

To a degree, the combination of factors that have spurred the emergence of the new middle class in Ghana—namely, strong economic growth and poverty reduction, political stability, increased higher education enrolment, urbanization, globalization and new rounds of international labour division, and return migration—have been the same drivers of the new middle class formation in Accra. Apart from these macro-level factors,
however, there are certain micro-level or contextual elements contributing to the large size and disproportionate concentration of this new social group in Accra. One is the city’s primate position within Ghana’s urban system, which has clearly played to its advantage as far as class reproduction and social differentiation are concerned. Accra has the largest concentration of private universities; broadcast media—print and electronic (there are over 10 private television stations and more than 30 radio stations in Accra); and the best health care and hospitality services in Ghana. It is also the largest urban recipient of FDI in Ghana, as we saw above. As I stated earlier, Accra is also the economic, cultural, financial and political hub of Ghana, having the largest concentration of industries (after Tema), banks, public sector institutions, international organizations and corporate offices, and, by extension, formal employment. The city also accommodates Ghana’s wealthy population, as well as famous entertainment, sports and media personalities, and has the largest presence of foreign nationals (both expats and visitors) in Ghana, making it the most internationalized Ghanaian city.

All these factors have coalesced to make the city a constant draw for Ghanaians from across the breadth and length of the nation, both the poor and the well-to-do, seeking good education, employment and a better life. For the poor seeking to climb up the social ladder, the metropolis offers the right combination of opportunities (education, jobs, goods and services, and so on) and imagery necessary to alter a migrant’s destiny, and enjoy the good life they see the wealthy and educated enjoying. For the already educated or recent graduate (be they local or foreign-trained), Accra is the right place to start out in life, the only city one can find a good, formal, well-paying job or even create one, and the right place to establish or build the needed social or political capital for upward social mobility. In effect, for many Ghanaians, Accra is about the only city in Ghana where intra or intergenerational mobility can be attained quickest, even if this turns out to be an elusive dream. A similar, albeit different, sentiment is shared by those returning from the diaspora: Accra is about the only Ghanaian city that comes close to whichever western city they lived prior, in terms of the quality of the built environment, social mix, service diversity, and business connections, and so on. Consequently, the temptation to build or buy a home there is high.
The unique combination of these factors make the Ghanaian capital a huge breeding grounds for middle class formation in Ghana, as different social groups, nationalities and institutions, exposed to the outside world, compete and interact among themselves, and in the process new values are formed and transmitted alongside new lifestyles and identities, in this context the so-called new middle class. No wonder Accra has the largest concentration of the new middle classes in Ghana.

Having now established the reasons for Accra’s preeminent role in the production of the new middle classes in Ghana, I will now look at some verifiable markers of new middle class formation in Accra.

4.3.2 Some Empirical Measures of New Class Formation in Metropolitan Accra
While there exist different avenues for gauging the rise of the new middle class in Accra, including some of my earlier described recent features of urban development in post-reform Accra, such as urban sprawl, property boom, the emerging new urban economy (including rising consumption and e-commerce), new high-end housing developments and other new up-scale spatial formations such as shopping malls and entertainment centres, which I argued signal the birth or arrival of new middle class, some analysts (or rather skeptics) base their conviction of a new (middle) class formation in any given society or place on such benchmarks as education, occupation, income and wealth, the so-called standard measures of class formation. Thankfully, I have been able to obtain some educational, occupational and asset data for Accra and the other four leading metropolitan cities in Ghana (i.e., Kumasi, Tamale, Tema and Sekondi-Takoradi) from the 2010 National Population and Housing Census, which, as well shall see below, provide some convincing proof of the emergence or growth of the new middle class in Accra.

Higher Education
One of the known traits of the new global middle class, to which Accra’s emerging middle class cohort belong, is their high educational credentials (Kharas, 2010; AfDB, 2011; Fukuyama, 2013). Within the Ghanaian context, and in cities like Accra, individuals with post-secondary education are largely considered to be higher status individuals, which often (though not necessarily) translates middle class status, as they are more likely to
posses the values and aspirations held by the middle classes as well as obtain high income paying jobs that afford them the opportunity to practice middle class lifestyle.

Table 4.2 shows the educational attainment level for the population 6 years and older having post-secondary qualifications, divided into non-tertiary (i.e., post-secondary diploma/certificate) and tertiary or university (i.e., bachelors, post-graduate diploma, masters, PhD and so on) education, for Accra and the next four major cities in Ghana in 2010. From the data displayed, Accra has the highest population with post-secondary educational qualifications compared to any Ghanaian city, although in proportionate terms Tamale and Sekondi-Takoradi have the highest population with post-secondary and university education, respectively, as of 2010. While the trend likely remains unchanged past 2010, it is more likely that the number of people with such qualifications (especially, tertiary degrees) in all three cities is higher then and now for two simple reasons: first, the data excludes those currently studying in school; and second, because more people would have graduated from school since 2010. However, Accra has the largest numerical concentration of highly educated Ghanaians, and by extension the middle classes, due to the disproportionately high concentration of post-secondary institutions in the city (as we shall see in the next chapter) as well as being the leading Ghanaian metropolis home to people with foreign educational credentials due, among others, to the higher prospects for formal and skilled employment in the city. The relatively higher concentration of university-educated individuals in Sekondi-Takorodi, which is a much recent phenomenon, could be attributed to the nascent oil and gas industry in the Western Region which it has become the hub of.

**Professional Employment**

Holding professional employment, which signifies workplace autonomy and earnings that enables one to enjoy a higher standard of living, constitutes yet another vital symbol of middle class attainment (Ehrenreich, 1977; Buris, 1986; Ulbrich, 2015). Professional occupations typically associated with the middle classes include managers, academics, scientists, physicians, pharmacists, administrators, professional accountants, social
Table 4.2 Population (6 years and older) with Post-secondary Educational Attainment (2010) for Accra, Kumasi, Tamale, Sekondi-Takoradi and Tema

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Metropolis</th>
<th>Post-Secondary Diploma/Certificate</th>
<th>Tertiary Education (Bachelors, Graduate, Post-graduate degree, etc)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Number</td>
<td>%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Accra</td>
<td>77,561</td>
<td>8.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kumasi</td>
<td>67,415</td>
<td>7.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tamale</td>
<td>37,622</td>
<td>12.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sekondi-Takoradi</td>
<td>23,449</td>
<td>2.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tema</td>
<td>19,348</td>
<td>9.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ghana</td>
<td>728,505</td>
<td>3.6</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Calculated from the 2010 Population and Housing Census

workers, engineers, economists, planners, architects, financial advisers and lawyers. Over the past few decades, the number of individuals engaged in these high-skilled, high-income occupations—popularly and collectively known as the professional-managerial class or workforce—has risen significantly in Accra, as we shall see in the ensuing section. However, as we can see from the Table 4.3, although the port city of Tema, Ghana’s industrial heartland, has the highest proportion of people in professional-managerial occupations, Accra has the largest number of people in professional employment in Ghana—101,767 in 2010, which is higher than the combined professional-managerial workforce in the cities of Tema, Tamale and Sekondi-Takoradi. Interestingly, however, Kumasi has slightly more people than Accra in professional employment, albeit the latter has more people in managerial positions than the former.

Ownership and Use of Information Communication Technology
Ownership or consumption of technology-based goods such as personal computers, cell phones and the internet, which allow the owners or users of these assets to participate in the highly-connected global world, is also considered one of the important material
Table 4.3: Population in Managerial and Professional Employment in Accra, Kumasi, Tamale, Sekondi-Takoradi and Tema in 2010

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>City</th>
<th>Managers</th>
<th>Professionals</th>
<th>Non-Professional/ Managerial Occupations</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Number</td>
<td>%*</td>
<td>Number</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Accra</td>
<td>40,725</td>
<td>5.3</td>
<td>61,042</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kumasi</td>
<td>31,164</td>
<td>4.4</td>
<td>61,731</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tamale</td>
<td>2,018</td>
<td>2.4</td>
<td>6,766</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sekondi-Takoradi</td>
<td>9,199</td>
<td>4.3</td>
<td>18,983</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tema</td>
<td>9,132</td>
<td>6.8</td>
<td>13,198</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ghana</td>
<td>250,170</td>
<td>2.4</td>
<td>546,668</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* Percentage of the employed labour force

Source: Calculated from the 2010 Population and Housing Census

signifiers of middle class achievement (Juma, 2011; African Business, 2012; Drabble et.al, 2015). The inclusion of this information in the most recent (i.e., 2010) National Population and Housing Census in Ghana is testament to how important and common the consumption of these technological products is becoming among the Ghanaian populace, particularly the middle classes who are the largest consumers of these technologies. As expected, Accra had the highest population of people having cell phones, personal computers and internet access in Ghana, followed by Kumasi, although in percentage terms the city of Tema, seen as Ghana’s wealthiest and elite metropolis, had the highest population of cell phone, personal computers and internet users, as corroborated by the data in table 4.4. The proportion of people having access to these technologies in Accra exceeded by far the national rates of 47.7%, 7.9% and 7.8% for cell phone, personal computer and internet usage, respectively. However, it must be underscored that there has been a dramatic spike in national consumption of these products, especially cell phones and the internet since 2010, following massive capital injection and competition amongst players in the country’s telecommunications sector, resulting in the introduction of new products and deals, including high-speed broadband and wireless internet products for cell phones as well as home or office use. In July 2015, the cell phone penetration rate stood at 114%, according to the national Communication Authority.
Table 4.4: Ownership of Cell Phones, Personal Computers and Internet Usage among the Population 12 years and above in Accra, Kumasi, Tamale, Sekondi-Takoradi and Tema in 2010

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>City</th>
<th>Population Having Cell Phones</th>
<th>Households with Desktop/Laptop Computers</th>
<th>Population with Internet Access</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Number</td>
<td>%</td>
<td>Number</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Accra</td>
<td>961,999</td>
<td>75.4</td>
<td>72,203</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kumasi</td>
<td>918,395</td>
<td>72.4</td>
<td>67,645</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tamale</td>
<td>83,221</td>
<td>53.7</td>
<td>3,356</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sekondi-Takoradi</td>
<td>277,816</td>
<td>67.3</td>
<td>22,765</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tema</td>
<td>170,546</td>
<td>76.5</td>
<td>18,759</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ghana</td>
<td>8,049,408</td>
<td>47.7</td>
<td>431,917</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: 2010 Population and Housing Census, National and District Analytical Reports

Air Travel

Patronage of air travel, which is another lifestyle trait associated with the new middle class, has been on an upward trajectory in Accra recently, and is a sign of the city’s growing middle classes. Since the deregulation of the domestic aviation industry in 2010, the number of domestic airlines operating in Ghana has increased to four, while the level of patronage has grown phenomenally (table 4.5). Most importantly, the majority of the users of these airlines are Accra-based middle class Ghanaians.

Table 4.5: Domestic Air Passenger Fleet in Ghana (2010-2013)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Period</th>
<th>Passenger Uplift</th>
<th>% Change</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>May-August, 2011</td>
<td>51,330</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>September-December 2011</td>
<td>78,323</td>
<td>53</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>January-July, 2012</td>
<td>270,516</td>
<td>71</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>January-July, 2013</td>
<td>540,674</td>
<td>67</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2011 (total)</td>
<td>181,863</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2012 (total)</td>
<td>544,183</td>
<td>199</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Ghanaweb.com, 2013; Graphiconline.com, 2015
4.4 The New Middle Class in the Restructured Metropolitan Economy

In line with trends in the national economy, the economy of Accra has grown and undergone significant restructurings following the mid-1980 neoliberal economic reforms. However, a comparative analysis of post-reform Accra’s economic performance and structure reveals significant differences between the metropolitan and national economies. These differences in part highlight the large concentration of the new middle class in Accra and their role in the city’s economic transformation. In terms of size and growth, there are no available official estimates on the size and growth of the metropolitan economy; however, as of 2000, the City of Accra estimated that Accra contributes about 10% of Ghana’s GDP, while in 2005, Angel et. al suggested that Accra’s economy grew at an average of 2.1% per annum between 1985 and 2000 (Angel, et. al, 2005 in Adarkwa, 2012). Speaking to Angel et. al’s statistic, one could say that Accra’s economic growth in the aftermath of the economic reforms was much slower than that of the national economy, which grew at an annualized rate of 5.2% between 2000 and 2010.

On the subject of transformation, there is available census data on the industrial and occupational structure of employment for Accra for 2000 and 2010 (although I was not able to obtain the occupational data for 2000), which can offer some insights on the nature of changes that have occurred in the metropolitan economy since 2000. However, as was pointed out in chapter 3, the detailed classification system adopted by the Ghana Statistical Service in the 2010 Population and Housing Census differ from previous consensus. This inhibits direct comparison of certain industrial and occupational classes in terms of their share of the employed labour force, although equally valuable insights can be drawn by comparing the numerical and percentage change in the workforce employed in the key sectors of the urban economy which remain the same under the new classification system. In addition, the basic tripartite classification of the economic structure into agriculture, industry and service remain unchanged, making it possible to observe the shift that has occurred in the overall structure of the metropolitan economy between the two periods. As well, the new classification system itself is indicative of some of the important shifts in the industrial and occupational structure of Accra in the past few years—something the Ghana Statistical Service alludes to. Finally, in order to overcome
some of the limitations posed by the data challenges highlighted above, I rely on the personal stories of selected members of the new middle class in Accra, to underline their contributions to, or role in, the restructuring of Accra’s economy. Having outlined these background issues, we can now proceed with the analysis.

Figure 4.7 shows the broader industrial structure of employment for Accra for 2000 and 2010. Table 4.6 shows the detailed industrial structure of employment for Accra for 2000 and 2010 while Table 4.7 shows the occupational structure of Accra and Ghana for 2010. As it could be seen from Figure 4.7, post-reform Accra’s economy continues to evolve on the path of greater tertiarization as the service sector continues to expand against shrinking agricultural and industrial employment. In 2000, the industrial structure of employment for Accra was as follows: agriculture – 11.2%; industry – 24.3%; and service – 64.6%. In 2010, however, the share of agriculture and industry fell to 2.4% and 19% respectively, whilst that of services rose to 78%. This represents 8.7 percentage point decline in the share of agriculture; 5.3 percentage point reduction in industrial share of employment; and 14 percentage point increase in services’ share of employment. In absolute terms, the number of people engaged in agriculture fell from 91,556 to 18,817, representing 81.1% decrease; that of industry also fell from 200,101 to 148,180, representing a decrease of 25.9%; and that of services increased from 531,668 to 606,510, reflecting a 14.1% increase between 2000 and 2010.

The relative and absolute decline in agricultural employment in Accra could be linked to a number of factors. One could be the growing lack of interest in agriculture by the urban populace as the city becomes more globalized and its economy becomes more advanced and increasingly service-oriented, where incomes are often higher and quicker to obtain. The other likely reason is the massive physical development or construction boom underway which I talked about earlier, which is resulting in urban green space, some of which previously used for urban agriculture, being converted for property development, both within and outside the urban core—an issue I shall revisit in chapter six when I examine the environmental impact of the new-middle class driven urban transformation taking place in and around the city.
Figure 4.7: Changing Industrial Structure of Accra (2000 and 2010)

Source: Constructed with data from the 2000 and 2010 Population and Housing Census

For industry, despite the overall decline in industrial employment, both in actual and proportionate terms, one can better appreciate the nature or dynamics of the shift by looking at table 4.6. Evident by the data, the bulk (i.e., over 80%) of the industrial sector’s loss came from mining and quarrying, where the workforce dropped by a colossal 91% from 16,166 in 2000 to just 1,343 in 2010. The massive dip in the mining and quarrying sectors follow the trend of agriculture, together which make up primary production, which expectedly declines as the economy of a city (and nation) advances and becomes more sophisticated. Also, manufacturing recorded a loss of 25,793 people in its workforce between 2000 and 2010, representing a 19% decrease, albeit this is a smaller margin of decrease compared to that of mining and quarrying. The availability of 1984 data on the manufacturing workforce and employment share in Accra would prove helpful in gaining a better, long-term appreciation of how Accra’s manufacturing has fared since the economic reforms, but considering the fact that manufacturing employment nationally actually increased by 37% between 2000 and 2010, the decline in manufacturing in Accra could mean that manufacturing industries are relocating from Accra to other cities, including surrounding or suburban districts. This observation was confirmed in a recent World Bank study (World Bank, 2014:13).
Table 4.6 Industrial Structure of Employment in Accra, 2000 and 2010

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Industry</th>
<th>2000</th>
<th>2010</th>
<th>Change 00-10</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Number</td>
<td>Number</td>
<td>%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Agriculture Forestry &amp; Fishing</td>
<td>91,556</td>
<td>18,187</td>
<td>-81.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mining &amp; Quarrying</td>
<td>16,166</td>
<td>1,345</td>
<td>-91%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Primary Sector Subtotal</strong></td>
<td><strong>107,723</strong></td>
<td><strong>19,593</strong></td>
<td><strong>-2.7</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Manufacturing</td>
<td>134,692</td>
<td>108,899</td>
<td>-19%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Electricity, Water &amp; Gas</td>
<td>5,234</td>
<td>5,367</td>
<td>2.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Construction</td>
<td>44,009</td>
<td>32,569</td>
<td>-26</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Secondary Sector Subtotal</strong></td>
<td><strong>183,935</strong></td>
<td><strong>146,835</strong></td>
<td><strong>-20.2</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wholesale &amp; Retail Trade</td>
<td>249,164</td>
<td>271,780</td>
<td>9.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Accommodation &amp; Food Services</td>
<td>47,010</td>
<td>77,560</td>
<td>65.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Transportation, Storage &amp; Communication</td>
<td>60,693</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Transportation and Storage</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>40,581</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Information &amp; Communication</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>11,401</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Financial &amp; Insurance activities</td>
<td>12,284</td>
<td>14,770</td>
<td>20.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Real Estate Activities</td>
<td>22,618</td>
<td>1,315</td>
<td>-94.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Public Administration</td>
<td>31,916</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Public administration and Defence; Compulsory Soc. Sec</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>23,051</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Administrative and Support Ser.</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>13,634</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Professional, Scientific &amp; Technical Activities</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>16,260</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Education Services</td>
<td>28,415</td>
<td>30,593</td>
<td>7.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Arts, Entertainment &amp; Recreation</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>11,863</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Extraterritorial Organizations</td>
<td>2,147</td>
<td>1,128</td>
<td>-47.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Human Health &amp; Social Work</td>
<td>12,518</td>
<td>15,752</td>
<td>25.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Private Households</td>
<td>15,327</td>
<td>10,467</td>
<td>-31.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other Services</td>
<td>49,306</td>
<td>66,355</td>
<td>34.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Services Sector Subtotal</strong></td>
<td><strong>531,668</strong></td>
<td><strong>606,510</strong></td>
<td><strong>14.1</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>823,327</strong></td>
<td><strong>772,877</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Compiled from National Population and Housing Censes, 2000 and 2010 Reports

The other industrial sector that recorded a surprising decline over the period under review is construction, whose actual and proportionate contributions to employment dropped from 44,009 to 32,999, and from 5.3% to 4.2%, respectively. This decline looks counter-
logical, when juxtaposed to my earlier claim of an on-going construction boom in Accra. However, the above figures may not reflect the situation on the ground for two reasons. One is that given high rental cost in the central city, many low income workers, including construction labour, live in suburban towns like Kasoa and Adenta where rental rates are cheaper, and commute daily to Accra to work. These non-residents workers in Accra are not captured by census. The other plausible reason is that most of the new construction projects rely on capital intensive arrangements to save cost on labour, using highly efficient equipments like cranes, which was previously limited in use but is now widespread, as was reported by CNN’s Zain Asher when she visited Accra few months ago.

But beyond census data, there is ample evidence of a boom in property development in Accra, and even more importantly the involvement of the city’s new middle class in that process. Nana Kwame Bediako, earlier mentioned in chapter 3, is an example of young, middle class Ghanaians who are spearheading Accra’s construction boom. The 33-year old property developer, who moved to Ghana from the UK in his 20s to pursue his dream of transforming the country’s real estate industry, founded Wonder World Estates, which has become one of Ghana’s leading property developers. The company has undertaken several successful projects in Accra since 2000. One of Nana Kwame Bediako’s highly acclaimed projects is Lincoln’s Court Apartments, a lavish 16-unit gated community featuring rectangular-shaped, semi-detached, two-storey town homes, located at Ridge. Other well-known projects in Accra bearing Mr. Bediako’s name are Kwarlez, a 43-unit apartment building near the airport, and other commercial properties. Currently, Wonda World Estates has three on-going projects in Accra, all mix-use developments: one at the famed Osu Oxford Street, another a 40-storey structure at the new Airport city. Apart from these, Nana Kwame Bediako’s biggest project is Pretonia City, a proposed 2000-acre artificial city to be built in the oil city of Takoradi to target the industry’s expatriate workforce. With a commitment to transform communities across Africa from ‘third world’ into ‘world class’ communities’ (Boadi, 2013), the young Ghanaian real estate mogul is making it big in Ghana’s expanding real estate sector.
The 14.1% increase in service sector employment in Accra between 2000 and 2010 suggests further or deeper tertiarization of the urban space economy which, unlike the national economy, was already tertiarized prior to 2000. However, the increase is not surprising, given recent trends in investments which favour urban-based service industries, including consumer and producer services, as well as the growth of the local private sector. And it is here that we find other new middle class Ghanaians who are contributing to the expansion of Accra’s service sector.

As seen from table 4.6, the service subsectors or industries that experienced growth in 2000-2010 include, in increasing order: education (7.7%); wholesale and retail (9.1%); finance and insurance (20.2%); human health and social work (25.8%); non-specified (i.e., other) services (34.6%); and accommodation and food services (65.0%), while the following industries experienced de-growth: private households (-31.7%); extraterritorial organizations (including international NGOs) (-47.5%) and real estate (-94.2%). From the above figures, we can see that, excluding education, the largest growth in service employment in Accra in 2000-2010 occurred outside the retail and wholesale sector, which further corroborates my earlier assertion that the expansion of the new middle class has enabled (and been enabled by) the growth of higher-order services such as education, financial intermediation, social work, accommodation and food service, including new industries such as information and communication, arts and entertainment and professional, technical and scientific activities, which were added to the 2010 listing, either as new or standalone industries. Even within the wholesale and retail sector, the industry’s growth and on-going transformation could partly be attributed to the emergence of formal retail infrastructure such as the Accra mall, which are mostly patronized by the middle classes. Excluding extraterritorial organizations such as foreign NGOs whose employment decline could be attributed to cuts in aid budget by Western governments following the recent economic downtown, all the other higher-order service industries that experienced de-growth in 2000-2010 could be linked to the emergence or isolation of other high-order service industries, such as arts and entertainment, information and telecommunication, and professional, scientific and technical activities, all of which are sectors that tend to be dominated by the new middle classes. For instance, the 94.2%
contraction in real estate services, which, like the construction sector, was expected to expand its workforce size over the period due to the reported boom in real estate, could likely be due to the fact that certain real estate services, such as property management, are now subsumed under the newly-created ‘professional, scientific and technical activities’ rubric.

In the financial services domain, for example, which grew by 20.2% over the past decade, one individual who has contributed to the sector’s growth is 48-year old Ken Ofori-Atta, CEO of Databank Financial Group, one of Ghana’s leading financial institutions. The company, co-founded in 1990 by the Yale University-educated economist and investment banker alongside two other Ghanaians, has metamorphosed from a traditional banking institution into a huge multinational financial conglomerate, headquartered in Accra. The company’s expanded ranges of services include corporate finance, brokerage, fund management, securities and research, and it has presence in other neighboring West African countries such as Liberia and the Gambia, including several other Ghanaian cities. Mr. Ofori-Atta’s Databank, along with other local and foreign banking and insurance institutions that have proliferated in Ghana and Accra since 2000 (as we saw in the previous chapter), employ thousands of young educated Ghanaians who play an important role in many of the new products and innovations that are being introduced in the Ghanaian banking industry such as telephone banking, contributing to Accra’s economic growth and transformation.

The other important service industry whose emergence or growth in the Accra economy is revealed by the inclusion of information and communication as well as arts and entertainment in the 2010 industrial classification system is the cultural or creative industry. These include activities such as telecommunication, computing, software development, broadcasting, film production, music, Spa and sports, all of which have grown over the years in Accra, and whose growth is being driven by the new middle classes. In the media sector, for instance, Accra over the past few years has witnessed the proliferation of private media houses, both print and electronic, together numbering more than 50, which are mostly owned and staffed with middle class professionals. One of these
companies is Multimedia Group, Ghana’s largest private media organization founded in 1994 by Kwesi Twum, a graduate of the University of Ghana. With six radio stations, six news websites and one satellite television station, the award-winning Ghanaian company employs about 400 staff. Other foreign entrants that are staffed with young middle class Ghanaians include Metropolitan Television (Malaysia), TV3 Network (Malaysia) and DSTV (South Africa).

Besides the massive increase in the number of new entrants in the electronic media landscape in Accra, the industry’s growth has been accompanied by the rise of a new cohort of young, well-educated professionals who have transformed the industry with specialized programs and presentation styles. They include newsreaders and hosts or presenters of varieties of radio and TV programs in specialized areas like current affairs, entertainment, health, business and market trends, social issues, talk shows, and personality interviews, creating a host of professionals, many of whom have become popular and highly influential. One such person in the radio sector is Kojo Yankson, host of the award-winning program, the Super Morning Show, a popular morning show program with a very wide audience that include high-ranking Ghanaian politicians. The 33-year old, who returned home few years ago after spending some time in the UK, has helped to boost the station’s audience with his unique style of presentation, high-profile interviews and critical analysis of trending news, including new program features such as daily motivation messages, management tips, online documentaries and the use of social media in broadcasting.

Another creative sector in Accra that has been transformed by the presence of the new middle classes is the Accra-based Ghanaian movie industry, now christened Ghallywood. The industry, which was diminishing few years ago, has been revived and transformed by the penetration of a new cohort of young, well-educated, actors and actresses such as Yvonne Nelson, John Dumeleo and many others, who have introduced new themes that seem to have attracted new audiences. They have also formed collaboration with Nollywood, the Nigerian movie industry, resulting in the production of new movies that
feature a mixture of Ghanaian and Nigerian actors and actresses which are often staged in both countries.

In the emerging technology sector, there are have been a host of dot.com, cell phone and related companies emerge in Accra over the past few years that are engaged in software development, computing services and cell phone manufacturing and repairs. Five famed technology entrepreneurs who are making it big in Accra’s emerging IT sector are Bright Simmons, Herman Chinery-Hessie, Farida Bedwei, Estella Akofio-Sowah, and Roland Agambire. The 33-year old Bright Simmons, first mentioned in chapter two of this thesis, is the CEO of mPidegree, which developed a widely-used, anti-drug piracy software that allows buyers of pharmaceutical products to verify the authenticity of products through SMS, saving millions of lives and profits of genuine drug manufacturers. Similar applications are being used for detecting counterfeit textile products in Ghana. Mr. Simmon’s numerous international recognitions include, being listed on MIT’s Technology Review’s ‘35 Innovators Under 35’ (2013); a 2010 Technology, Entertainment, Design (TED) conference fellow; and a 2012 Young Global Leader by the World Economic Forum.

Herman Chinery-Hessie, popularly referred to as the ‘Bill Gates’ of Africa, is the CEO of SOFTribe, a software development company whose products, which include payroll management, are being used in Ghana and beyond. 37 year-old Farida Bedwei defied her early childhood cerebral palsy to become one of Ghana and Africa’s finest technology entrepreneurs, co-creating gKudi, a cloud software platform that is currently being used by over 130 micro-finance companies in Ghana and earning the enviable award of being named Africa’s most influential woman in business and government for the financial sector by South Africa’s CEO Magazine in 2013. Estella Akofio-Sowah’s tenure as the CEO of Google Ghana has, among others, seen the country spatial landscape incorporated into Google Maps, which provided a tremendous resource support in undertaking this research project, something that will become more glaring as we move to the next chapter. Roland Agambire, who was also first mentioned in chapter two, is a former trained-teacher-turned-businessman and technology entrepreneur. His company, RLG
Communications Limited, formed in 2001, is the first indigenous ICT manufacturing, assembling and training firm in Ghana. RLG, which employs and trains thousands of Ghanaians in computer engineering, software development, cell phone manufacturing and repairs, has now expanded to become a global technology conglomerate (the RLG Group), having presence in China, the United Arab Emirates, and several African countries.

In the lifestyle and Spa industry is Zdibordi Dosoo, founder of Allure Africa, one several young middle class Ghanaians who are changing the face of the local wellness and beauty industry. Like Roland Agambire, Mrs. Dosoo was a former investment banker who later discovered and channeled her passion into Spa, founding Allure Africa, a premier Spa business headquartered in Accra. The company has grown over the years to become a transnational company, with specialties in Spa and grooming services delivery, product distribution, education and training, and Spa, grooming and image consulting. It has presence in the United States and other African countries. Its core Spa and grooming service operations in Accra, Allure Spa in the City, is popular with middle class Ghanaians. In 2012, Zdibordi Dosoo was named among Ghana’s top ten CEOs.

Lastly, within Accra’s growing education sector is Patrick Awuah, founding president of Ashesi University established in 2002. The former Microsoft engineer who founded one of Africa’s leading private universities is an example of the new generation of private education providers who are helping grow and transform Accra’s education sector, which include other international entrants such as the UK-based Lancaster University, all of which are employing some middle class Ghanaian academics.

Apart from these individuals who are expanding or creating new frontiers in both traditional and new service sectors in Accra, there are several other young middle class Ghanaian professionals who are making significant impact in other professional domains such as law and public policy. In the legal fraternity, for example, one of those changing the face of the practice is Ace Ankomah, a young, Queen’s University-educated astute layer who has built the largest and one of the most respected law firms in Ghana: Bentsi-Enchi, Letsa and Ankomah. Another is Franklin Cudjoe, founding president of IMANNI.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Occupational Class</th>
<th>Accra</th>
<th>Ghana</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Number</td>
<td>%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Managers</td>
<td>40,725</td>
<td>5.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Professionals</td>
<td>61,042</td>
<td>7.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Technicians and Associate Professionals</td>
<td>30,713</td>
<td>7.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Clerical Support Workers</td>
<td>28,303</td>
<td>3.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Service and Sales Workers</td>
<td>297,509</td>
<td>38.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Skilled Agricultural and Fishery and Forestry Workers</td>
<td>13,068</td>
<td>1.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Craft and Related Trades Workers</td>
<td>154,972</td>
<td>20.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Plant and Machine Operators and Assemblers</td>
<td>47,346</td>
<td>6.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Elementary Occupations</td>
<td>97,547</td>
<td>12.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other occupations</td>
<td>1,616</td>
<td>0.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>772,877</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: 2010 Population and Housing Census, District Analytical Report: Accra Metropolis

Ghana, a highly influential policy think tank that was recently ranked the 2nd most influential think tank in Sub-Saharan Africa by the 2014 Global Go To Think Tank Index Report. The growth and transformation of Accra’s service sector, which is being contributed to by the new middle classes, has assisted in transforming Accra’s occupational structure (Table 4.7), with the rise of occupational groups that are associated with the new middle classes, which judging by their sheer numbers and contributions highlight their important role within the restructured metropolitan economy, even in the absence of past census data to compare the changes that have occurred in their numbers over time. From table 4.7, the two main occupational classes associated with the new middle classes are managers and professionals, which together comprise 13.2% of Accra’s working population. The first group include all the individuals profiled above (excluding the three media personalities), who perform management responsibilities in an organization or firm; the second refers to staff or independent workers with specialized knowledge and training, mostly university education, such as the three media personalities mentioned above. The growth and importance of this professional-managerial class in
Accra’s transformed economy is revealed by the overconcentration of these professionals in the city, compared to the rest of the country, as corroborated by the location quotient of 2.2 and 1.5 for managers and professionals respectively.

4.5 Summary and Discussion
This chapter undertook to review the trajectory of urban development in metropolitan Accra from the historical to the present as well as the emergence of the new middle class, including their growth drivers and impact on Accra’s economic transformation. In a temporal sense, we can distinguish Accra’s development into three major phases, defined by these three important epochs: the colonial, national and neoliberal or global era, with each having a distinct imprint on urban structure and form as well as marking a departure from the previous urban development ethos. Colonial Accra (1877-1957) saw the city’s emergence and transformation from a fishing and trading outpost into a colonial capital, based on Eurocentric vision of urban planning and in accordance with the exploitative agenda of European colonialism. In line with this, Accra served a dual role of functioning as the centre of colonial administration and trade, while its internal configuration featured well-demarcated residential, commercial and recreational spaces and infrastructure catering to the needs of colonial administrators. Segregation of the European-inhabited parts of the city from the native quarters that existed before and grew during colonial rule, including restriction of native movement and use of urban space, also constituted an important feature of colonial Accra’s development. The national period (1957-1984), which saw the rise of strong socialist and nationalistic-minded governments in the early post-independence era, most notably Kwame Nkrumah’s, was characterized by state-guided urban development, driven and shaped by the ideals of nationalism, central planning, modernization and beautification, with important symbolic landmark ‘national’ structures (e.g., central bank, national theater, statues, etc), public arenas (e.g., public squares, stadium, etc) and social intervention programs (e.g., public housing) being commonplace. The period also witnessed the attempt to make Accra the command and control centre of a failed industrialization program.

The onset of the neoliberal or global era (from 1985) marked a new turn in Accra’s development, with the erosion (or reduction) of state power in urban development and the
ascendence of market and global forces in shaping urban development. Since then, foreign
direct investments, consumption and private capital have become a major feature of urban
development in post-reform Accra. Among the three epochs, the neoliberal era, which
Hodben (2014) has described as consumption-oriented urban development trajectory, has
had the most decisive influence in shaping the course of urban development in Accra.

One of the major social developments in neoliberal Accra has been the rise of a new
middle class generation, qualitatively different from the rest of the urban populace. Their
growth has been driven by a combination of factors that include urbanization, poverty
reduction, educational expansion, globalization, the new international division of labour
and the growth of the local private sector. It is difficult to tell how many people make up
this emergent social cohort, but trends in education, consumption, occupation and physical
development in Accra provide ample evidence about the rise of this new group. Based on
available information on these signifiers, we can deduce a few salient observations about
this group. Key among them is the fact that despite being a diverse community, the new
middle classes in Accra comprise mostly young, tertiary-educated, upwardly mobile
individuals holding professional employment. They also posses or consume luxury and
branded goods and services that include cell phones, personal computers, air travel,
personal automobiles and the internet.

The emergence of the new middle class has played a huge role in Accra’s economic
transformation not least in five ways. First, given their high educational credentials and
desire to engage in professions that match their qualifications and provide them with
stable income and social prestige, the occupational choice of the new middle classes has
contributed to the massive expansion of Accra’s service sector over the years, with a
concomitant attrition of agriculture and industry. Second, as skilled professionals, the type
of the service activities undertaken by these new middle class individuals is helping in the
expansion of high-order services such as banking and administration in Accra, compared
to low-order services such as wholesale and retail, which have long dominated (and
continue to dominate) the urban economy but is experiencing a relative decline. Third,
having the spirit of innovation and creativity, Accra’s new middle classes are helping to
spur specialized new economic activities such ICT, Spa and media broadcasting that were previously not a significant component of the urban economy. Fourth, the expansion of both new and old economic activities associated with the new middle classes has resulted in the creation of new industries and occupational categories, resulting in the introduction or adoption of a new industrial and occupational classification system in Ghana, highlighting the importance of these. Finally, some of the entrepreneurial elements among the new middle class have built successful businesses in both traditional and new service fields, contributing to employment generation and economic change in Accra. These individuals—which include the likes of Bright Simmons, Flarida Bedwei, Ace Ankomah, Franklin Cudjoe, Roland Agambila Nana Kwame Bediako, Dzigbordi Desoo, Patrick Awuah and a host of other young Ghanaian professionals, including those in the media and the creative sector previously mentioned or not captured in this work, who are making a difference in their respective fields of practice—are the ones I would collectively refer to as Ghana’s new generation of change-makers: a breed of young, talented, highly-motivated Ghanaians who are braving the odds to bring about change and make a lasting impact in society (Figure 4.7). These are the ones in whose dreams and endeavours lie the future of Ghana.

But where exactly are these individuals and their larger new middle class cohort to which they belong located in Accra? How are their activities, choices, lifestyle and growing presence directly and indirectly transforming Accra’s physical landscape? And what are the characteristics of these new spatialities created by the new middle classes and how are these themed and marketed to appeal to them? These are the important issues that the next chapter deals with.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Occupation &amp; Field</th>
<th>Known for</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Bright Simmons, CEO, mPedigree</td>
<td>Software Developer, ICT</td>
<td>mPedigree, a globally-used, anti-counterfeit drug detection app.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Farida Bedwei, Co-founder of Logicel</td>
<td>Software Engineer, ICT</td>
<td>gKudi, a business app used by over 130 micro finance institutions in Ghana.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Name</td>
<td>Occupation &amp; Field</td>
<td>Known for</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>--------------------------</td>
<td>--------------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>---------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ken Ofori-Atta, Co-founder, Data Bank Ghana Ltd.</td>
<td>Economist/Investment Banker; Finance</td>
<td>Data Bank Ghana</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Petra Abo Asamoah, CEO, MG Radio Ltd; Occupation and field: Chattered Marketer; Corporate Leadership</td>
<td>Business Development</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Maximus Ametorgoh, CEO, PopOut</td>
<td>Technology Consultant, Social Media Strategist; Technology &amp; Business</td>
<td>TopApps, an annual technology fair that showcases and awards top Ghanaian app developers.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Patrick Awuah, President, Ashesi University.</td>
<td>Educator/Entrepreneur; Higher Education</td>
<td>Ashesi University</td>
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<tr>
<td>Franklin Cudjoe, Founding CEO, IMANNI Ghana</td>
<td>Policy Analyst; Governance, Public Policy</td>
<td>Advocacy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kojo Yankson, Host, Super Morning Show, Joy Fm.</td>
<td>Journalist, Media Broadcasting</td>
<td>Broadcasting, Advocacy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ace Ankomah, Partner, Bentsi-Enchil, Lettsa &amp; Ankomah, Ghana’s largest private law firm.</td>
<td>Legal Practitioner; Law</td>
<td>Voted 5th Most Influential Ghanaian, 2015</td>
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<tr>
<td>Roland Agambire, CEO &amp; Chairman, RLG Communications</td>
<td>Businessman; Entrepreneurship, Technology</td>
<td>Entrepreneur of the Year, 2012</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dzigbordi Dosoo, CEO, Allure Africa.</td>
<td>Wellness, grooming and lifestyle consultant; Spa &amp; lifestyle.</td>
<td>Motivational Speaking, Mentoring.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Kofi Yankson, Host, Super Morning Show, Joy Fm.</td>
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<td>Patrick Awuah, President, Ashesi University.</td>
<td>Educator/Entrepreneur; Higher Education</td>
<td>Ashesi University</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
5 The New Middle Class in Place

The purpose of this chapter to examine the spatial expressions of economic change and class formation in post-reform Accra, to ascertain the nature and extent to which the ascendance of the new Accra’s middle classes is directly and indirectly transforming Accra’s physical landscape. My account of Accra’s development trajectory in chapter four showed that the city’s history and contemporary structure and growth direction is not just the outcome of successive shifts in the national political-economic environment over the years, combined with the impact of dynamic international forces, but it has also shaped by different social classes. A popular concept urban geographers use to explain how different social groups attempt to capture and control or dominate urban space is territoriality.

Advanced by Sack, territoriality is defined as “the attempt to affect, influence or control actions and interactions (of people, things and relationship) by asserting and attempting to enforce control over a geographic area” (Sack, 1983: 51). Territoriality, then, is a basic human instinct (also present in some animals) to assert exclusive control over a defined space (or territory) or property they consider their own, including, if necessary, defending it from intrusion or invasion by perceived “foreigners”, and is applicable at all scales, from the micro level (e.g., the home) to the national scale. Put simply, human territoriality is the securing of social power through the control of space (Choon Piew, 2009). In his widely accepted theory of human territoriality, Sack (1983:21-26) outlines three basic systematic tendencies or actions necessary for territorial formation or behaviour. The first is classification by area, which entails the categorization of objects by their location in space rather than by their type, based abstract notions of ownership (Choon Piew, 2009). The second, communication, involves the construction of spatial markers such as a physical sign or boundary or statement about possession or exclusion to delimit the territory. Classification and communication are then backed by the third element of enforcement, which restricts freedom of movement, access and control through various interventions (Choon Piew, 2009).

In his study of gated community formation in Shanghai, China, Choon Piew (2009) posits that the place-making strategy of the global middle class often entails both the use of spatial violence (i.e., the displacement of certain spaces and social groups and the
imposition of new groups and spaces) as well as the employment of subtle, ideological tactics through the active mobilization different cultural resources or tools (e.g., values, symbols, rhetoric of the good life, etc) to lay claim to certain spaces while limiting or keeping at bay low-status groups (i.e., the poor and working classes) from utilizing these territories. Place-making, as used in this context, refers to the process and methods through which the new middle classes create or make urban space, including the qualities of those spaces—thus, more or less synonymous with territorial formation. Piew further intimates that middle class territorial formation is driven by the social desire for members of the same status group to congregate in a particular geographic area and is underpinned by a consumerist ethos of space. This latter view of the new middle class as mere consumers (rather than active producers or organizers) of new economic and social space resonates with the widespread consumerist view of the new middle class, and is a common theme that runs in studies of emergent urban landscapes of conviviality and spectacle and in developing world cities, including Africa.

But are the new middle classes only at the receiving end of newly-formed, high-end social and economic landscapes rather than being active agents in the production of these elite spaces? In other words, does middle class place-making in all societies always reflect Sack’s hypothesis that the middle classes are actively involved in the whole territorial formation process (i.e., right from conception to production and consumption) or Piew’s and others’ empirical observation of selected middle class territories which discovered them as principal consumers of such high-end spaces? Simply put: are new middle class territorial formations in all places driven by the same factors and entail the adoption of the same place-making strategies for all typologies of space—private or public, social or economic? Or that the particular set of territorizing tools adopted by an elite group in a society to capture, redefine and or control material space is contingent on the type of place being created as well as sensitive to the spatial and cultural attributes of the particular urban society where they live in? And what role, if any, do market and global forces play in the creation of new middle class territorialities in transitional cities like Accra?
This chapter looks at the nature and characteristics of five distinct types of new middle class dominated economic, social, and institutional spaces emerging in and around the city of Accra, including an exploration of the connections between the growth of the new middle classes and the ascendance of these nascent urban land uses. These new spatialities include: new or secondary service centres or employment clusters that mostly contain middle-class workers or occupations; new exclusive housing enclaves; high-end commercial consumption and recreational spaces that include large-scale shopping malls, hotels, restaurants, fast-food joints, entertainments centres and outdoor recreational facilities; mega new urban projects that combine office, residential, commercial and recreational uses; and new educational landscapes. More specifically, it seeks to understand the role being played by the new middle classes in the formation of these modern urban land uses, including the tools and strategies being employed by them in territorizing these spaces, as well as the structural configurations or design attributes of these spaces and how they embody middle class values and help perpetuate new class identities and privileged lifestyles. The analysis begins by mapping the geography of Accra’s middle class population by looking at the distribution of the city’s population by class, income, occupation and industry, using the limited available data as well as the city’s own classification system. It then proceeds to examine the five emergent typologies of new middle-class dominated socio-economic and institutional landscapes in and around metropolitan Accra, including their distinctive marks and locational characteristics. In interrogating the background as well as external and internal structure of these new middle class spatialities, I do an in-depth analysis of selected projects. The interrogation of these case studies reveal how the new middle classes are actively engaged in the production, marketing and consumption of those so-called elite landscapes, while globalization, foreign direct investments, local land and labour market conditions, and new agglomeration economies have combined to shape the location, size, composition and architecture of the new upscale industrial, residential, commercial, recreational and educational land uses in Accra. The analysis further highlights the common themes that define these spaces as well as how their physical attributes and place narratives reveal the middle classes’ pretentions or attachment to these landscapes and at the same time epitomizing their vision for urban development.
5.1 Population Distribution by Class, Income, Occupation and Industry: Mapping the Residential and Economic Geography of Accra’s New Middle Class

The estimated 2.5 million or so people currently living within the city limits of Accra reside in neighbourhoods, which are quite diverse. The definition—and by extension the number and boundaries—of these neighbourhoods are often subject to local interpretation which means that one can arrive at anywhere between 100 and 120 neighbourhoods. However, 50 of these neighbourhoods are officially recognized and defined. For the purpose of administration, however, the city is organized into electoral areas—political units formed from an amalgamation of different neighbourhoods, which are further put under sub-metropolitan district assemblies, which perform decentralized lower-level governance and functions ceded to them by the Accra Metropolitan Assembly (AMA), the highest political authority in the city.

Using recent data on population, household income, wealth, education, industry, occupation and housing characteristics aided by GIS, it is possible to construct a spatial distribution of the city’s population based on social class, income, occupation and industry. Unfortunately, the absence of both up-to-date and spatially-disaggregate data on these social class signifiers prevent me from achieving this end. But using demographic, employment and household income data from the previous (i.e, 2000) census as well as neighbourhood characteristics (including housing, infrastructure, community amenities and environmental quality), the City of Accra classifies the various residential neighbourhoods in Accra into four categories—1st, 2nd, 3rd and 4th class neighbourhoods. These roughly conforms to the four typologies of social classes resident in the city: upper, middle, working and low income classes (Table 5.1), albeit some neighbourhoods contain a mix of social and residential classes (in particular the 1st and 2nd class areas, some of which contain a mix of upper and middle class groups). However, as we shall see, these neighbourhood classes are qualitatively different from each other, not just between the various classes, but also within classes. They also differ not just from a physical point of view but also the income and occupational profile of their residents including their lifestyle and values, and the cost of land and property.
The first class neighbourhoods, which number 25 and accommodate about 10 per cent of Accra’s populace, include such areas as like Cantonments, East Legon and Roman Ridge. These are the wealthiest and most prestigious residential neighbourhoods found within the city’s boundaries. Residing here are the most affluent people in Accra, including the emerging or expanding millionaire cohort, and those at the upper end of the middle classes. They include top business men and women, high-ranking government officials, academics, top management and CEOs of corporate entities, and some renowned legal and medical practitioners. Also found here are Accra’s expatriate population: diplomats, heads of multinationals, and staff of international NGOs, foreign missions and multilateral agencies such as the World Bank and the UN. Per capita household income in these zones, based on 2000 census data, is €12,462,499 (or $1,519.82), the highest in Accra. So is the vehicle-population ratio. Similarly, the quality and value of residential properties in these zones are the topmost in Accra, as do the state of planning and infrastructure or amenities within these zones: well demarcated, often tree-lined, streets and avenues, good drains, constant utility supply, mostly private schools and clinics, and functioning public spaces, including green spaces, characterize these areas. Housing structures are predominantly low-rise apartments and 3/4 four bedroom semi-detached units sitting on large lots, with landscaped surroundings and walls or fenced structures equipped with security features protecting the properties.

Apart from these 1st class central city neighbourhoods, there are a number of suburban neighbourhoods that contain some of Accra’s wealthy and elite populations, having attributes similar to those found within the urban core, as shown in Figure 5.1. They include suburban neighbourhoods include Haatso, MaCarthy Hills, Taifa, Mallam and many smaller estates along the Accra-Tema motorway. While some of these high-income, suburban neighbourhoods lack the kind of public infrastructure like goods roads and uninterrupted water and electricity supply enjoyed by the 1st class neighbourhoods in the central city, others are more even plusher those at the urban core. And it is in these areas that one finds many of the arriving new wealthy members of the middle class, who, due to a combination of factors such as high land cost and housing shortage in the central city and a desire for bigger or more luxurious houses, either choose to rent, buy or build their
own houses at the outer suburbs. Although these high-income inner and outer suburbs contain Accra’s top earners, there are appreciable differences amongst them in terms of their physical character and social profile of their residents. For instance, the Ridge (East, West and North Ridge) contains top government officials and bureaucrats, including judges, senior civil servants and heads of government agencies, while Burma Camp houses senior officials from Ghana’s security agencies. Besides, most of the structures found in these colonial-era neighbourhoods are either state-owned or state-built properties, and are of bungalow form. On the other hand, places like Roman Ridge and Dzorwulu mostly accommodate academics, doctors, bankers and other highly paid professionals, and the structures there were individually built and are also more sophisticated. On the other hand, East Legon is known as the base for Ghana’s popular celebrities, as well as returnees and top business owners and executives, while Cantonments and Airport Residential area are mostly associated with Accra’s expatriate population, many of whom acquired the properties from the government or subsequent owners and either renovated or reconstructed them to suit their taste. Finally, it must be underscored that the property values in some 1st class neighbourhoods are higher than those in found other 1st class neighbourhoods. For instance, average house prices in Airport Residential Area, considered the most expensive area to live in metropolitan Accra, is Gh¢ 950, 000 ($262, 250), while that of East Legon is Gh¢ 800,000 ($220,842)

Accra’s 2nd class residential neighbourhoods, which include Dansoman Estates, North Kanashie Estates, Kanda Estates, Tesano and Achimota, comprise 32 per cent of the population. Similar to the 1st class neighbourhoods, these are planned developments, although both housing and infrastructure quality is lower. However, unlike the 1st class areas, the housing found here are moderately-dense, low-rise apartments and semi-detached structures built by the state or parastatals or private companies for their employees. With average 2000 per capita household income of ¢7,242,187 (US$ 883), many of the residents here belong to the lower middle class category—middle-level civil servants, health professionals and other administrative workers.

The 3rd and 4th class neighbourhoods together accommodate 58% of Accra’s residential population. Found here are low-skilled, low-income working groups and the poor, who
### Table 5.1 Neighbourhood Classes in Accra

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Residential Class</th>
<th>Defining Attributes</th>
<th>Representative Neighbourhoods</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>1st Class</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Housing and Neighbourhood Characteristics</td>
<td>- Detached single-family structures; bungalow style houses; buildings have fence walls or hedge around them (some with private security); spacious, landscaped properties; individually-built structures (non-state owned properties)</td>
<td>Central City: Cantonments, Dzorwulu, North Dzorwulu East Legon, Kanda Estates</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Well-planned; good infrastructure/amenities; low population and housing density (17-40 persons/ha);</td>
<td>Suburban: Haatso, Adenta, Tafiya,</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Comprise both colonial government estates and affluent post-colonial neighbourhoods</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Residential Profile</td>
<td>- Highly educated and influential Ghanaians</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Include expats</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- High-income groups: high-profile politicians; heads of security agencies; senior civil servants; upper echelons of the judicial service; senior medical staff; renowned legal practitioners; academics; heads of SOEs; CEOs/top executives of multinational corporations; wealthy business owners</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Income source include salaries and or professional fees</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Per capita Average Income (2000): $1,519.82</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Locational Characteristics</td>
<td>- Mostly located in the urban core; some found at the suburbs</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Composition of Urban Population and Housing Stock</td>
<td>- Accommodate 10% of the urban population</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>2nd Class</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Housing and Neighbourhood Characteristics</td>
<td>- Detached and semi-detached single-family houses with or without fence walls; some low-rise apartment structures.</td>
<td>Central City: Dansoman,</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Well-planned; modestly good infrastructure; low-to-medium population and housing density</td>
<td>Suburban: Adenta,</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Include significant state owned/state-built housing and quarters built/owned by parastatals</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Residential Profile:</td>
<td>- Highly educated</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- High/middle-income income earners</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Professional occupations: middle-level politicians and civil servants; administrators; senior state-employed health workers; staff of security agencies; middle/lower-level staff of SOEs</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Income source mostly salary</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Per capita average income (2000): $883</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Locational Characteristics</td>
<td>- Mostly located in the urban core; few located at the suburbs</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Composition of Urban Population and Housing Stock</td>
<td>- Accommodate about 32% of the urban population</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Constructed using information from the Accra Metropolitan Assembly, 2002; as well as other researched information about new middle class housing acknowledged elsewhere in the thesis.
### Table 5.1 Neighbourhood Classes in Accra (continued)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Residential Class</th>
<th>Defining Attributes</th>
<th>Representative Neighbourhoods</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>3rd Class</strong></td>
<td><strong>Housing and Neighbourhood Characteristics</strong>&lt;br&gt;- Multifamily, compound style houses with or without fence walls; lack of water closet; no running water in homes; individually-built structures&lt;br&gt;- Poorly planned; bad or absent infrastructure; medium to high population and housing density&lt;br&gt;<strong>Residential Profile:</strong>&lt;br&gt;- Below tertiary education&lt;br&gt;- Low-income earners&lt;br&gt;- Semi-professional occupations: factory workers; low-level civil servants (e.g., clerks); - Income sources include some salaries and wages&lt;br&gt;<strong>Per capita average income (2000):</strong> $883&lt;br&gt;<strong>Locational Characteristics</strong>&lt;br&gt;- Located within the urban core&lt;br&gt;<strong>Composition of Urban Population and Housing Stock</strong>&lt;br&gt;Accommodate about 32% of the urban population</td>
<td>Osu, Darkuman, Alajo, Bubuashie, Sakura, Korle Gonno.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>4th Class</strong></td>
<td><strong>Housing and Neighbourhood Characteristics</strong>&lt;br&gt;- Substandard structures; lack basis housing infrastructure (e.g., bath, toilet); individually-built structures&lt;br&gt;- Unplanned; absent or low-grade amenities; high population (250 persons/ha) and housing density; depressed conditions&lt;br&gt;- Neighbourhoods can be classified into two: native and non-native (migrant) areas&lt;br&gt;<strong>Residential Profile</strong>&lt;br&gt;- Limited education or no formal education&lt;br&gt;- Comprise migrants and low-income groups (underclass)&lt;br&gt;- Low-skilled, low-wage jobs: artisans; petty traders; hawkers; labourers; illegal/underground occupations (e.g., prostitution)&lt;br&gt;<strong>Locational Characteristics</strong>&lt;br&gt;- Mostly located in the urban core; suburban ones are migrant quarters</td>
<td>Native Zones: Jamestown, Chockor, Labadi, Teshie (native areas); Non-Native Quarters: Nima, Sakura, Abeka, Odorkor</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Constructed using information from the Accra Metropolitan Assembly, 2002; as well as other researched information about new middle class housing acknowledged elsewhere in the thesis.
Table 5.1 Neighbourhood Classes in Accra (continued)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Residential Class</th>
<th>Defining Attributes</th>
<th>Representative Neighbourhoods</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| New Middle Class Areas (New 1st Class?) | • **Housing and Neighbourhood Characteristics**  
- Mostly detached single-family structures; luxury town homes and apartments; high-rise condominiums  
- Modern, stylish architectural designs; houses/communities have luxury features (e.g., swimming pool, golf course, etc); some custom-built homes  
- Secluded, with gates and restricted access  
- Communities and houses built by private developers  
- Well-planned; good infrastructure/amenities;  
- Density levels vary: very low in single-family enclaves; modestly high in apartment and condominium housing  | Central City: East Airport Gated Community, Cantonments Gardens  
Suburban: Trasacco Valley, ACP Estates, Devtraco Villas |
|                   | • **Residential Profile**  
- Highly educated  
- Returnees; transnationals; some expats  
- High-income groups: rich business executives; rich celebrities and international soccer stars; academics; heads of SOEs; wealthy business owners  
- Income source include salaries and or professional fees  | |
|                   | • **Locational Characteristics**  
- Mostly located in the urban core; some found at the suburbs  | |
|                   | • **Composition of Urban Population and Housing Stock**  | |

Source: Constructed using information from the Accra Metropolitan Assembly, 2002; as well as other researched information about new middle class housing acknowledged elsewhere in the thesis.

who sit at the base of the city’s social strata. They include lower-level government employees such as pupil teachers, office clerks and many of those engaged in the informal economy, including petty traders, migrant workers and artisans, with a 2000 per capita household income of ₡6,509,090 ($793).

Bereft of basic amenities, these low-income, mostly depressed areas are characterized by sub-standard housing structures, narrow (sometimes untarred) streets, poor drainage and crowded conditions, as corroborated by the rather high population (over 250 persons per hectare) and housing densities extant in these localities, in sharp contrast to the low
Figure 5.1: Neighbourhood Classification in Accra based on Social Class

Source: Author’s construct based on AMA neighbourhood classification system

population (60 persons per hectare) and housing densities in the first class areas (see Figure 5.2 and 5.3). Whilst conditions are slightly better in the 3rd class areas, both neighbourhood categories generally suffer from a state of neglect. And similar to the 1st class areas, Accra’s low-income neighbourhoods can be differentiated into two based on their character. The first comprise of indigenous communities, including the historic district of Gamashie (i.e., Osu, Jamestown and Ussher Town), La, Teshie, Nungua, Chockor and Adedenpo, which residential structures are built of mud and sandcrete, and residents there are primarily fisher folks. The second group, made up of communities such as Nima, Kwashieman, Odorko and Bubuashie, house non-indigenous, mostly migrant, populations, particularly those from Northern Ghana and elsewhere, who are employed in lower-order service jobs. Here, the building structures tend to be of temporary nature
Figure 5.2: Comparison of Housing Densities in a Selected 1st and 3rd Class Neighbourhood in Accra from Google Earth

Source: World Bank, 2010
Figure 5.3: Views of Selected Neighbourhood Class Types in Accra

(A) 1st Class - East Legon

(B) 2nd Class - Kokomlemle

(C) 3rd Class - Nima

(D) 4th Class - Bukom

(E) New Middle Class (Moderate) Areas - Devtraco Estates, Tema

(F) New Wealthy (Elite) Neighbourhoods - Crystal Homes, Cantonments

(i.e., wooden shacks). Apart from these, there are also enclaves of low-income communities found in suburban towns like Kasoa, Ofankor and Madina fringing the city, often adjacent to middle or high-income neighbourhoods.

By carefully looking at table 5.1 and Figure 5.1 above, we can deduce a few salient observations concerning Accra’s residential geography in general and that of the new middle classes in particular. First, it can be seen from Figure 5.1, Accra is not a homogenous or mixed income city with residents living in spatially differentiated neighbourhoods or suburbs; as a matter of fact, as we saw in chapter three, Accra’s spatial disparity is rooted in its colonial past and has since remained an integral part of its post-colonial history, in spite of (failed) attempts by successive national and metropolitan governments, particularly Kwame Nkrumah’s, to reverse this pattern. To the contrary, the emergence of the new secluded housing communities and related luxury consumption spaces patronized by the new middle classes has served to sharpen existing socio-spatial inequalities in new forms, an issue we shall turn in the next chapter when I discuss the social and other implications of Accra’s new middle class-driven growth trajectory or territorial formations. Second, Figure 5.1 further tells us that middle classes are mostly concentrated in the northern and northeastern sections of the city and to a limited extent the western part of the city, as well as at the eastern, western and northern fringes of the city. On the other hand, the poor are mostly concentrated in inner city areas to the immediate west of the CBD and along the coast to the east of Accra. Third, there are discernable differences in the residential geography of Accra’s middle class population. This is linked to the age of the neighbourhood, ownership of residential structures, type of occupation and level of wealth of residents, and residents’ social profile level, which can be described as follows. The old (upper) middle classes of senior politicians, bureaucrats, managers of SOEs, state-employed doctors and other senior medical staff, senior university teaching staff, and the upper echelons of the security agencies, who are public sector workers, are generally found in the older affluent neighbourhoods of Ridge (East, West and North Ridge), Cantonments, Roman Ridge, Dzorwulu, Achimota and Legon to the east and north of the CBD, which were built by the government (both colonial and post-colonial), whilst semi-affluent neighbourhoods like Dansoman, Kaneshie, Tesano and
accommodate the lower middle class population of health professionals, middle level civil servants and middle level staff of SOEs. On the other hand, older business elites and retiree civil servants and academics reside in affluent post-independence neighbourhoods such as East, West and North Legon, Airport Residential Area. But the new young, upwardly mobile middle classes of business owners, bankers, consultants, private medical practitioners, techpreneurs, well-paid media practitioners, celebrities and recent returnees are found in the relatively younger and more plusher post-colonial neighbourhoods as well as in enclaves of new exclusive housing estates located both within and or adjacent to the older high income central city neighbourhoods such as Cantonments and the Airport area and in nearby suburban districts, which we shall examine in section 5.3.

Given the already-explained information challenge, it is impossible to provide any meaningful spatial depiction of the spread of the middle classes in the city in terms of occupation and or industry, which, if possible, could have aided an insightful comparative analysis of the relative concentration of the various occupational and industrial classes among the various neighbourhoods vis-à-vis the wider metropolis. However, notwithstanding the dearth of this vital information, we can make some generic assertions on the spatial distribution of the urban population by occupation and industry based on the above population distribution by class, which, in fact, utilizes some occupational data. First, since majority of the middle and upper classes in Accra, as we learned from chapter four, are engaged in higher-order services, we can posit that the 1st and 2nd class neighbourhoods in the city are dominated by high-skilled service workers of two types: public and civil servants on government payroll and private sector professionals. On the other hand, the poorer neighbourhoods contain low-skilled, low wage workers engaged in the primary and tertiary sectors, with few engaged in small scale semi-manufacturing activities such as carpentry. Furthermore, people in indigenous communities such as Teshie, Jamestown and Chorkor along the coast are mostly into fishing and sand winning, while those in migrant communities such as Nima are petty traders, labourers and other related activities. Again, these assertions are based on the above neighbourhood classification information as well as personal knowledge, which may be either be confirmed or disproved by empirical data.
5.2 New Middle Class Spatialities in the Rapidly-Transforming City

Having gotten a broader picture of the residential, industrial and occupational concentrations of Accra’s middle class, I will now proceed to examine the five emergent types of spaces in Accra that are being shaped by the growing new middle classes. These new middle-class spatialities or territories represent the major spatial imprints that Accra’s bourgeoning new middle classes are having on the city’s landscape, and which, as we shall in chapter six, are reconfiguring the broader urban form and social morphology of the city. The assessment begins with new service clusters, followed by an analysis of new housing patterns, conspicuous consumption spaces, mega urban projects and new educational landscapes, which are complemented by cases studies.

5.2.1 New Secondary Centres

The first recognizable spatial formation associated with the growth of the new middle classes in Accra has been the birth of secondary centres. Up until the 1980s, Accra was essentially a unicentric city, having one large central business district (CBD), around which all economic activities revolved. This CBD, a product of colonial planning, comprise of “Accra Central” (made up Tudu, Assylum Down and the areas around the popular High Street) and Ussher Town, and house important commercial, business and corporate entities. Together with the adjoining “ministries district” and the judicial quarter (which respectively accommodate central government ministries and the upper tier of the Ghanaian judicial service) and the cultural landmarks of the Independence Square, the Ghana National Theatre, the Ghana International Conference Centre and the Accra Sports Stadium, these make up the region of “Central Accra”, which the serves as the economic, administrative and cultural epicentre of both Accra and Ghana, an area delimited by the ringular Ring Road. Although there were other activity centres that existed outside Central Accra in the pre-reform era, these were comparatively small employment nodes that emerged around important transport nodes (such as the Kwame Nkrumah Circle), large market infrastructure (e.g., Kaneshie) or manufacturing enclaves (e.g., South Industrial area), all of which were state engineered.
But since the liberalization of the Ghanaian economy and the related rise of new industrial sectors and occupational classes, there has been the ascendance of new CBDs in the central city. However, these new secondary centres differ considerably from both the pre-reform satellite business districts and the traditional CBD in size, character, form and function, as well as underlying impetus. First, unlike the pre-reform secondary centres, the post-reform centres have emerged out of market forces emanating from both within and outside the country, with the state only playing a facilitative role. In other words, they are a product of the growth of the local private sector and the influx of foreign capital into both traditional and new economic sectors, including the local property market. Second, these emergent CBDs are more sophisticated in structure, more cosmopolitan in view, and less dense but higher in form, having modern, middle-to-high rise structures with greater architectural appeal, and well-demarcated spaces. Third, compared to the smaller pre-
reform CBDs, Accra’s new emergent secondary centres are made up of higher-order services, which are increasingly agglomerating into spatial clusters distinguishable by particular service types, connoting a high degree of specialization. For instance, there are exclusive enclaves for financial institutions (e.g., West Ridge), public administration (e.g., East Legon), NGO’s (e.g., Cantonments), cultural industries (e.g., Osu Oxford Street) and high-tech manufacturing (e.g., Tema Export Processing Zone), signaling the new forms of localization and urbanization economies evolving in the capital (Figure 5.3). At the same time, however, some of the emergent secondary centres in Accra have greater land use diversity compared to both the pre-reform secondary CBDs and the old CBD at Central Accra. A classic example of this is Airport City, a large mixed-use business district developing around the Kotoka International Airport (which we will explore in section 5.3.5). Fourth, the new CBDs are more global than the local ones, in that many of the companies or offices operating there have stronger international connections or interactions than those found in the local ones. Lastly, and perhaps most importantly, majority of the workforce at these secondary centres are young, middle class Ghanaians, as our two case studies will show.

Case Study 1: Accra’s ‘Wall Street’, West Ridge

Previously an exclusive residential area for high-ranking government officials, Accra’s West Ridge neighbourhood is being transformed into a prime office area (Broll Ghana, 2012), with several new office property developments, both completed and under construction, springing up there. Whilst the area has become home to a variety of offices, a segment of it, delimited by Castle Road to the north, Independence Avenue to the east, Liberation Road to the south and Barnes Road to the west, is being clustered by financial institutions (Figure 5.4). Prior to 2000, the only significant financial office structure found here was the 14-storey Cedi House, the annex of the central bank office at the old CBD. Today, however, there are numerous tall and small office buildings occupied by banks and other financial institutions, both local and foreign-owned, dominating the skyline of West Ridge. The pace of growth and intensity of concentration has been so high that the area is now colloquially referred to as the ‘Wall Street of Accra’ (Broll Ghana, 2011). Some of the notable financial institutions dominating the landscape include First Atlantic Bank,
Ecobank, Zeneth Bank, Stanbik Bank, Guarantee Trust Bank, United Bank of Africa, HFC Bank, Société Général and Data Bank Financial Services, the leading local and award-winning financial group co-founded by the highly ambitious Ken Ofori-Atta. Other important new office landmarks at West Ridge are the 16-storey, multi-office Heritage Tower; the Ridge Tower; and the just-opened, iconic World Trade Centre Accra (WTA), now occupied by 20 international companies representing ten different nations, including Ghana. Apart from these, there are other new office developments currently under different phases of construction in the area, especially along Independence Avenue. They include the country office of the International Financial Corporation (IFC), a new head office for MTN Ghana and a new head office for the Agricultural Development Bank.
Figure 5.5: Selected Images of West Ridge

Sources:
Image A: [http://www.panoramio.com/photo/50691491](http://www.panoramio.com/photo/50691491)  
(Last Accessed 26/04/2016)

(Last Accessed 26/04/2016)

(Last Accessed 26/04/2016)
At the micro-scale, West Ridge's on-going transformation from a low-dense, highly planned residential neighbourhood into Accra’s new exclusive financial district is indicative of the level of congestion and associated land constraints present in downtown Accra, which is driving new businesses as well as some existing ones to look for or relocate to alternate environments that offer more space to build or move into more modern office facilities, quieter ambiance and better view, which West Ridge appears to offer. But the disproportionate concentration of financial service institutions in the area marks a new pattern in Accra, where competitive firms in the same industry are beginning to form spatial clusters for benefits that likely include access to a pooled skilled labour market and competition-induced innovation.

As suggested by Figure 5.5 (C), the nature of the development appears to be that of in-fill, as many of the new office buildings are interspersed with residential and other smaller office and commercial structures and green spaces. But given the speed with which new structures are being built in the area, there is a high possibility of the phenomenon of gentrification and dislocation occurring, albeit not a class-based type as many of the houses and property there are owned by middle class Ghanaians, including politicians.

At the macro-scale, however, West Ridge's emergence into a financial hub constitutes a visible expression of the expansive growth of the financial services sector, which, as corroborated by the success stories of Data Bank Group and the rest, is being propelled by the rising new middle classes. And, as expected, majority of the workforce in these new office spaces are young, middle class Ghanaians living in Accra, who have become the target of both local and foreign firms penetrating Accra’s fledging financial services industry. For these highly-skilled young professionals, the opportunity to work in such prestigious and cozy office environment is an indication of their achieved social status and sense of worth. In short, these spaces satisfy their taste for modernity, as evinced by the following Google review comment from a supposed office worker at the Heritage Tower:

“This is my office and love it here”

(See https://www.google.ca/search?q=Heritage+Towers,+Accra&ludocid)
Case Study 2: Osu Oxford Street, Accra’s New Creative District

Oxford Street in Osu is another fast-growing activity centre in Accra worth paying closer attention to. What makes this district particularly unique from other emerging secondary centres in Accra is its cultural and technological richness. Once a thoroughfare that connects the neighbourhoods of Cantonments and Osu through Dunkwa Circle, providing a shortcut to downtown Accra by circumventing the heavy traffic laden Kwame Nkrumah circle-Accra City Centre route, Oxford Street, named after London’s Oxford Street, has over the years metamorphosed into Accra’s prime cultural and creative district. Entering the 2 km narrow stretch of road from either side, one is immediately struck by the sudden change in view, form and unusually colourful ambiance conspicuously missing from the scenery and order defining the areas immediately abutting both sides of Oxford Street. Vehicles, commercial and plush private ones as well, slowly navigate the path flanked on both sides by a sea of pedestrians (comprised of workers, tourists and shoppers) and vendors eager to sell whatever products they carry, from fresh fish to sunglasses, to both pedestrians and drivers. Large and small commercial buildings, predominantly restaurants—ranging from popular Chinese, French, Italian, Japanese and Indian restaurants to American fast-food restaurant chains such as Papaye, Frankies and Kentucky Fried Chicken-KFC—sit alongside banks, entertainment centres (pubs, night clubs and casinos), internet cafes, forex bureaux, hotels, specialty stores (including jewellery, clothing, cosmetics and consumer electronics, etc), and offices of major cell phone companies (e.g., MTN, Zain and Tigo) adjacent to each other. Fronting these structures are giant bill boards advertising everything from mobile phone companies to airlines and satellite dishes, some with popular local and American celebrities like Jennifer Lopez staring demurely from the background, all with the intent of enticing the perceived moneyed users of Oxford Street to empty their pockets for what this vibrant street has to offer (Quayson, 2012).

Oxford Street is bustling with life and activity at any given point in time. During the day, one can find a mix of foreign nationalities and upper class Ghanaians busily moving on the streets or packed inside the plethora of commercial buildings on Oxford Street: from workers, tourists or expats having a launch break in one of the high-end restaurants,
busy shoppers window or actual shopping in the supermarkets or specialty stores along the street, to foreign tourists browsing in nearby cafes, to visitors and visiting diaspora-based Ghanaians on holiday converting dollars to cedis in many of the forex bureaux on Oxford Street or bargaining with sellers. At night, and especially on weekends, Oxford Street is more or less a recreational district. Restaurants and night clubs extend their premises unto the pavements, giving their customers a direct feel of street life, while well-lit casinos and night clubs get packed with holidaymakers and fun lovers seeking to cool off. To the expat living in Accra or the foreigner visiting the Ghanaian capital, Osu Oxford Street looks like a replica of the high street and life found in downtown London or New York, albeit tempered with a local feel. To the ascendant middle classes, however, who fancy Oxford Street, it is a dual place where they can taste the good life offered by the presence of international retailers, and to and display their financial power and social status in space.

It is these characteristics that have made Oxford Street the most globalized street space in metropolitan Accra, as argued by the Toronto University-based Ghanaian professor Ato Quayson, who also views Oxford Street as a reproduction of the global high street (Quayson, 2012). With over 100 international companies housed in stylish structures, amid the huge presence and sheer diversity of foreign nationals conglomerated in this small urban space, it is perhaps difficult to dispute Quayson’s claim. But a deeper inspection of Oxford Street also shows a significant presence of Ghanaian owned companies, small and large. Thus, a more befitting description of Oxford Street would perhaps be a place where globalization and localization exist side by side, where converge and divergence are reproduced.

Rightfully and arguably, Oxford Street ought to be considered an elite consumption and recreational space. But Oxford Street and its environs are more than just a place of luxury spending and relaxation for the new middle classes; it is also the locale of Accra’s resurging creative workforce: fashion designers, IT professionals, musicians, artists, etc. Along the main street and on adjoining streets and by-ways off Oxford Street within 300 meter radius there are local craft shops, clothing retailers, graphic design companies, start-up firms, web design companies and a host of other technology-based companies.
A – A Shopping Centre and Office Buildings

B – A busy Day on Oxford Street

C – Frankie’s, a Popular Restaurant for Middle class Ghanaians

D – A New KFC Outlet opened in 2011

E – A Street Carnival on Oxford Street

F – Monsoon, a pub popular with foreigners

**Figure 5.6 Selected Scenes from Oxford Street, Osu**

Sources:
Two notable spaces with significant concentration of technology professionals and activities in the Osu Oxford Street district are Hub Accra and ISPACE Foundation. The former was founded in 2013 by a group of graduates from the new private Osu-based, technology-oriented Open University of West Africa, in a quest to create a collaborative space where they can share ideas to build their own firms and products, while the latter was founded about a year later on a similar premise. Both organizations, which have gained widespread international attention, have become popular incubator spaces in Accra, attracting a pool of technology lovers (entrepreneurs, designers, bloggers, etc) from across the city. They specialize in supporting young, talented Ghanaians to develop innovative technology solutions and products suitable for the Ghanaian, West African and even international markets. These forms of support include software development, web and mobile application development, business creation, marketing, as well as mentoring, mobilizing seed funding for viable products or ideas, and other forms of support. There are over dozen permanent staff as well as several clients that use the resources and infrastructure provided in these spaces, which are opened 24/7, to nurture, test and develop their own business proposals and start-up ideas. Give the high cost of setting up an office space (e.g. rent, staff, etc) in Accra, especially in prime areas like Osu, these co-working spaces, as Hub Accra’s co-founder William Senyo has argued, are filling up a need for young, ambitious entrepreneurs with limited resources (Senyo, 2015).

Interestingly, it is not just young men who are taking advantage of these spaces to incubate and sell their business ideas and solutions, there are a number of young, female Ghanaians who are actively utilizing these spaces to unearth their potentials too, as corroborated by the image D in Figure 6.5. Besides, other women are benefiting from other related economic opportunities such as call centres and smart card retail offered by the growth IT services in Accra. And already, these efforts are yielding significant results. Hub Accra, for example, has grown to host over 20 startups, some of which have developed successful products for several clients, including mobile apps used by many of the country’s largest telecoms operators such as MTN Ghana and Tigo Ghana.

Although there are other startup ecosystems and software developers in other parts of Accra with equally, if not greater, success stories, including Bright Simmons’ mPedigree
Figure 5.7 Emerging Technology Spaces and Entrepreneurs in Osu, Accra

Sources:
Network at Dzorwulu, Chinery-Hersie’s SofTribe at Airport Residential Area, and Mobile Web Ghana at Madina, Osu appears to becoming the epicenter of Ghana’s emerging technology industry, itself considered the technology hub of West Africa (Degadjor, 2014). The high concentration of technology professionals around Oxford Street is adding another layer of complexity onto this highly acclaimed global space in Accra. But with plans far advanced to build special technology cities such as Hope City in and around Accra to accommodate the city’s burgeoning technology entrepreneurs, it remains to be seen whether Oxford Street will retain its current place as Accra’s prime innovate hub.

5.2 Patterns of New Housing Development
The emergence of new housing forms, which I captured in chapter four and mentioned in locating where the middle classes live and work in Accra in the early part of this chapter, is the third visible inscription of Accra's burgeoning new middle unto the metropolitan landscape. These new middle class residential properties are plusher, more stylish, better secured, and represent the latest trend in housing development in the Ghanaian capital. They comprise of individually-built structures erected on individually-acquired vacant lots, or acquired old properties either renovated or pulled down and replaced with more modern structures as well as whole new enclosed communities put up by private developers. While the first building tradition is not new in Accra, it is the quality of structures (inclusive of the size, design, building materials used and interior decor), and the speed of construction as well as mode of financing that distinguishes the kind of housing being put up by the new middle classes from those constructed by the old middle classes and, of course, the poor. Compared to the older middle classes who built their homes—typically 3-5 bedroom detached units in an incremental way, taking up to 15 years sometimes to complete with personal savings (Grant, 2005)—the type of housing infrastructure being erected by today's middle classes in Accra are of a wider range (from 2 bedroom single-family units to multi-million dollar mansions having several rooms), contain more imported content with respect to building materials and interior elements, have more luxury features (e.g., Jacuzzi, air conditioners, aquarium, home theatre, etc.), and are more Western in design: glass windows, porch, etc. They also take a relatively shorter period to complete, are more likely to utilize professional services, and are also mostly being financed through a combination of bank loans and personal savings.
But the second system or form of housing development, which is gaining traction among Accra’s rising new middle class generation, and of greater interest to me, are planned residential communities, comprising luxury condominiums and gated enclaves of single family housing, town homes, and low to mid-rise apartment structures. Up until the 1990s, the phenomenon of high-rise condominiums and enclosed communities was completely non-existent in Ghana and Accra; the only planned residential communities that resembled these two housing forms were mid-rise apartments (not exceeding five storeys) which were owned by the state or its parastatals (e.g., SNNIT Flats in Dansoman) and single-family housing estates with non-uniform walled structures without any strictly-controlled entrance. But since the liberalization of the national and metropolitan economy, Accra’s housing market has undergone massive transformations, resulting in the emergence of new housing forms and types, including multi-storey tower blocks and gated communities.

These changes that have permitted, or given birth to, the rise of luxury apartments and enclosed residential communities in Accra have been quite striking or deep, as calibrated by Grant (2005). First, the deregulation of the housing sector and the penetration of market and global forces have allowed for the re-organization of the traditional land system into a private land market system, whereby land is being commodified and freely exchanged in a swifter, more transparent manner. Second, the withdrawal of the state’s role as the principal provider of housing and the concomitant opening up of the local housing sector to both local and foreign private sector participation, including the reduction of barriers to, and incentivization of, foreign investment in the local property market through the revision of land laws permitting foreign ownership of land and property (by 50-year renewal lease) among other initiatives such as land banking and the concept of serviced plots, have facilitated the emergence of a private commercial real estate market, with significant international dimension (Grant, 2005). The third is the deregulation of the financial sector, spurring the growth of mortgage programs and international money transfer systems tailored towards home buying in Accra (Grant, 2005). The fourth contributory factor is the growing taste for more lavish homes by Accra’s new dream homeowners, especially the new middle classes, and changing cultural connotation of the home as a private asset. Finally, the tussle of building one’s own house.
in Accra (including finding suitable land parcel in an area with good amenities), which appear catered to in the new housing forms becoming available in Accra, added to the promise of comfort, privacy and other elements of the good life assured by the new housing forms, have made them particularly attractive to the new middle classes.

Among Accra’s emergent housing forms, multi-storey apartment towers, enclaves of luxury town homes\textsuperscript{17} and single family gated communities have become the most common. While all three forms of housing have spiked in post-reform Accra, the growth of the first two have been more recent compared to the latter, which has been more phenomenal, partly due to their huge sizes. Thus, although the current spate of condominium and luxury town house development in Accra seems to be outpacing that of new single family gated communities, with several projects littered across the city, most of them are still under construction and are comparatively small. It must be stressed, though, that technically-speaking, all three typologies of housing are gated communities since they all have enclosed walls with regulated access. As a matter of fact, some of the new developments coming up are blending elements of single-family housing and high-rise apartment towers. That said, however, many of the extant new planned residential communities are either of three forms described above.

Whilst it is true that all the planned new residential developments in Accra fit the three housing forms, there are appreciable differences in the size, layout, density, form, height and appearance among them. For example, among the high-rise category, there are single independent or stand-alone condominiums located on small land parcels within existing neighbourhoods as well as blocks of apartment towers of different sizes and heights forming almost entire new communities, all with varied room numbers and sizes (Figure 5.9). Similarly, the predominantly single-family gated communities range from very small compounds with as few as 6 executive multi-million dollar mansions (e.g., Crystal Homes,\textsuperscript{17} This new concept of town housing differs from traditional town houses, which tend to be small units targeted at low-income groups. The new town homes being built in Accra are luxury buildings that just happen to share common external wall.)
A – A Medium-rise Apartment Housing at Airport Residential Area

B – Polo Heights, a 2-Bedroom Apartment Housing at Airport

C - A 3-Bedroom Apartment Housing at Roman Ridge

D – A 2-Bedroom Apartment Housing at Kwabenya, near Accra

**Figure 5.8: Types of New Apartment Housing Targeting Accra’s New Middle Classes**

(Last Accessed: 26/04/2016)
Image B: https://sphynxpc.wordpress.com/2013/09/22/polo-heights-apartments-for-rent-
(Last Accessed: 26/04/2016)
(Last Accessed: 26/04/2016)
A - The Entrance of East Airport Gated Community, East Airport

B – Crystal Homes, a Small Executive-style Gated Community at Cantonments

C – Palmer’s Place, a Modern Townhouse Development at Airport Residential Area

D - Heritage Homes, a Modestly-priced Gated Community at Oyibi, near Accra

**Figure 5.9: Typologies of New Single-Family Gated Communities in Accra**

(Last Accessed: 26/04/2016)

(Last Accessed: 26/04/2016)

Image C: [http://ghanarising.blogspot.ca/2013_10_01_archive.html](http://ghanarising.blogspot.ca/2013_10_01_archive.html)
(Last Accessed: 26/04/2016)

(Last Accessed: 26/04/2016)
these new residential developments in Accra and the factors shaping these. As seen from the map, it is clear, first, that majority of the new housing developments, when taken together, are concentrated in the central city, which corroborates my assertion in the previous chapter that despite embodying a huge suburban component, the emergent new middle class driven urbanization in Accra has helped to revive development momentum within the urban core, as opposed to the immediate pre-reform era physical growth trajectory which was largely suburban, an issue I shall return to in the next chapter when I analyze the morphological and other impacts of Accra’s new middle class urbanism. Second, even at the urban core, there seems to be an uneven distribution of the various housing typologies in space. Generally, most of the new planned housing developments are clustered in the north eastern segment of the city—an area comprised of Cantonments, East Legon, Roman Ridge, the vicinity of the airport—and along the Accra-Tema Motorway and Spintext Road, both linking Accra to the port city of Tema. As well, this area contains the largest mix of the three housing forms, while the other areas (both within and outside the urban core) with some of the new housing developments tend to be dominated by one particular housing form. In particular, there are no condominiums and town housing developments outside the urban core, which is likely due to the small land space they occupy.

In order to shed additional insights on the characteristics of the new emergent housing patterns targeting Accra’s new middle class, including their physical characteristics and residential profile, we shall examine two case studies of new residential developments, Villaggio Vista and Trasacco Valley, respective examples of small high-end condominium developments and large-sized, single-family suburban gated enclaves in Accra (both incidentally owned by the same company), which have become the prototype of modern living in Ghana.
**Case Study 1: Villaggio Vista**

Villaggio Vista is a stylish four-part apartment complex located in Accra’s prestige airport residential suburb. The striking property, overlooking the scenic skyline and serenity of the airport and its rapidly transforming vicinity, is owned by Trasacco Valley Estate Development Corporation, the largest (Ghanaian-owned) property development company in Ghana. The award-winning project, which opened in 2011, was designed by British architects Allford Hall Mowogahan Morris, uniquely blending local and international elements with the latest green technology and ideas. Each of Villaggio Vista’s four towers is magnificently wrapped in distinctive façade or skin inspired by the colours of the popular Ghanaian fabric, Kente, giving it a decidedly local feel (Koigi, 2015). As well, each block has cantilever upper floors uniquely themed to address a specific local and
international landmark; however, they all share a common architectural language and 
materiality (ibid). Azure, the first tower, is a 17-floored building, while Aqua is the 
shortest but largest block, having 8 to 12 floors; Prime Vera, the smallest structure among 
the four, stands at 12 storeys high; and Alto, set to be Villaggio Vista’s flagship project 
(which is almost completed) is 27 storeys high, making it the tallest residential building in 
Accra, Ghana and the whole of West Africa.

With its height or density as well as exceptionally modern and forward-looking design, 
Villaggio Vista has become the symbol of innovation, progress and a new standard for 
housing development in a city that is grappling with the consequences of its 
predominantly low-rise, sprawling form. Its imposing view and superb amenities has made 
it an attraction for the young and new rich in Ghana’s capital, who are looking for more 
efficient and elegant living spaces, spaces that offer them a sense of prestige and comfort 
while fitting their aspirations or expectations for “smart” urban living. Some of Villaggio 
Vista’s green architectural highlights that sets it apart from other residential developments 
in Accra, including other modern condominiums, include the rain screen façade treatment 
and recessed and shaded partially-opened exterior windows that insulate the buildings 
from the tropical heat; solar hot-water heating to reduce energy demand; and a ground 
treatment comprised of a landscaped courtyard featuring native plantings, waded pools 
and permeable pavements interlocking with the vegetation to form “rugs” around each 
building, providing a cool ambiance for residents (CTBUH, 2012). Other luxury or 
attractive features in the complex include secure underground parking, a lobby with 
concierge service, a restaurant, coffee bar, gym, stand-by generator and 24-hour security. 
In addition, decorating the top of each building are rooftop pools and terraces that offer 
breath-taking views of metropolitan Accra.

Together, the four Villaggio Vista blocks provide 200 apartment spaces, differentiated 
according to size, number of rooms, level, interior design and other specifications. They 
comprise two, three and four bedroom duplexes spread over two floors, with total unit 
area ranging from 139 square meters to 310 square meters. But the differences aside, each
A – A Panoramic View of Villagio Vista
Showing All Four Towers

B – The Alto Tower

C – The Aqua Tower

D – Prime Vera and Azure Towers

E – Interior views of a 4-Bedroom Apartment at Villaggio Vista

**Figure 5.11 Selected Views of Villaggio Vista**

each apartment comes with a master bedroom with en-suite bathroom, a living and dining area with a balcony, a fully-fitted kitchen with state-of-the-art appliances, including a wine cooler, a utility area, power room, and centralized air-conditioning (see Figure 5.11). The Azure and Alto towers also boast of two superior luxurious, five-bedroom penthouse types having large spaces and terraces. Villaggio Vista allows for a mix of tenantship, giving would-be residents to either rent or buy apartments in the complex.

It is these uncommon features that, in essence, make Villaggio Vista, which has already become an iconic feature on Accra’s rapidly transforming landscape, look like a dream 21st century urban village planted at the heart of metropolitan Accra. And this is what is luring Accra’s new rich like Gladys Abire, a prospective resident, who could not hide her admiration for, and excitement to move into, the community when caught up with by the BBC’s George Alagiah during his tour of the facility to make a news story back in 2013:

It’s brilliant; it’s fantastic; the architecture is beautiful. The location is perfect. I would move in any day


Gladys epitomizes Accra’s rising new middle class whose high education, affluence, global exposure and proclivity for lavish living have made them the target of Accra’s new luxury residential property market. But for Gladys and her ilk, however, it is not just the superb architectural adornment of Villaggio Vista, or its green technology or luxury components that makes living in it irresistible, but also, and perhaps more importantly, the privacy, exclusivity and the imagined or heightened sense of prestige or importance that comes with living in a place like Villaggio Vista, whose height alone could be construed as symbol of upward elevation. As a matter of fact, the language of advertisement adopted by the property owner to pitch the apartments to people like Gladys are imbued with themes of privacy, tranquility, amiability, beauty, style, elitism and exceptionalism, which are reinforced by careful and selective use of words such as “peace”, “exclusive”,

180
“exceptional”, “comfort” and “quality”, as evinced by the following statements contained on the project website and in the brochure given to potential would-be buyers and tenants like Gladys:

Welcome to Villaggio Vista, an exceptional residential development in a landmark location. Located in the Airport residential suburb of Accra.......the setting of Villaggio Vista is both uniquely and highly desirable....Residents can enjoy peace and ambiance associated with prestigious residential suburb while experiencing the energy and convenience offered by proximity to the (i.e. Accra) shopping mall, international schools, restaurants and the airport. ...ideal solution for those searching for quality, comfort and design. Residents and their guests can enjoy exclusive communal facilities such as round-the-clock concierge desk, coffee bar, roof top pool, Jacuzzi and sky garden with breathtaking views of the city
(Source: http://www.villaggiovista.com/home.html)

Thus, as we can see from above and even more lucidly subsequently, conviviality, spectacle, exclusivity, privacy, prestige, order, branding and place qualities are constant themes that are invoked by the producers of Accra’s new luxury housing and other commercial developments in a bid to woo the city’s new middle classes to inhabit or patronize them—values that are strongly upheld and defended by the middle classes themselves. And in spite of the fact that the rental and purchase prices of the apartments in Villaggio Vista, conspicuously missing from advertisements about the property, will likely be in the hundreds of thousands of dollars, they are not likely to deter people like Gladys who are prepared to pay the premium to enjoy the good life presumably lying within the confines of such a privileged landscape.

Case Study 2: Trasacco Valley
Our second case study of Accra’s new middle class residential developments is Trasacco Valley, an upmarket, medium-sized, suburban gated community located on the edge of
Accra’s northern eastern boundary, 8 miles from the city centre. The property is owned by the Trasacco Group, a multi-billion dollar transnational corporation with an expansive, but focused range of, interests in the Ghanaian building industry—spanning land acquisition and development, construction, real estate, transportation services, building materials production, and, most recently, interior design and furnishing, incidentally its first speciality. The company, which also owns Villaggio Vista, was founded in 1974 by Ernesto Tricone, son of an Italian industrialist Baron, who, on visiting Ghana, fell in love with the county and decided to naturalize and contribute to its development by setting up furniture, pharmaceutical and quarrying companies. Following the neoliberal economic reforms, however, Mr. Tricone took advantage of the now liberalized economic environment with new investment opportunities and financial capital to forge partnerships with both local and international players and to enlarge the group’s portfolio, forming what has now become an empire of 13 separate companies (with over 2,000 workforce in Ghana alone), each carving a niche in the property development market, with branches across Africa and Europe.

According to the group chairman Ernesto Tricone, who prides himself as being (more) Ghanaian rather than Italian, his purpose for building the community was to “fulfill the luxury property niche”, and the Trasacco Valley as it stands today is a reflection of his “vision for an ideal community” (http://www.trasaccovalley.com, n.d), a vision invariably shaped out of his lived and travelling experience in Europe and other global cities as well as an interaction with his fellow middle class Ghanaian partners and staff. That vision, made real, is the 600 acre lush semi-autonomous, gated housing development based on “a garden city” master plan community, sitting on land previously earmarked for industrial development—another visible proof of how the forces of globalization, privatization, neoliberalism and new class formation are coalescing to shape or tilt post-reform Accra’s development trajectory towards consumption-oriented urban development.

Though, unlike other residential and commercial property owners who bluntly state the new upper middle class as their target, the subtlety of the following statement by chairman
Figure 5.12: Panoramic Views of Trassacco Valley

Source: https://atghana.wordpress.com/2012/01/11/trasacco-valley-properties/
(Last Accessed: 26/04/2016)
Tricone is a clear reminder of how Accra’s new luxury housing developers draw on imageries of the distasteful experience of building a dream home in a suitable location in Accra, sharply contrasted with the effortlessness of buying an ideal home in a well-planned, well-serviced, residential area built to finest quality by so-called experienced professionals with knowledge of the local real estate market, not only for the sake of consumption but as an investment in itself, to entice the middle classes to (re)locate to such properties:

obtaining a dream home [in Accra] is one of the most challenging experiences in one’s life. It is a venture that can be fraught with disappointment, frustration and even ruin. Alternatively, it can be a rewarding and hassle-free investment you ever make...provided you make the right choice. By choosing Trasacco Valley, you are not only investing in the most prestigious area in Ghana, you are investing in our exceptional expertise, which you will be enjoying long after you move in. Excellent craftsmanship, state-of-the-art products and superior construction techniques, exclusive to Trasacco Valley, guarantee that your home will be of the highest quality.

(Source: http://www.trasaccovalley.com)

A 2004 survey conducted by Grant provides a good glimpse into the kind of people who reside in Trasacco Valley, how they financed the acquisition of their property, and their motivations for electing to live in Ghana’s most expensive community. Per the outcome of his interview with property managers and 30 homeowners, Grant uncovered that, as of 2004, 65% of the occupants were Ghanaians while the remaining 35% were foreign nationals, including expats and companies that had acquired some of the properties to use to as guest houses for business purposes (Grant, 2005). The above statistic is indicative of the overwhelming or rising number of Ghanaians who are climbing into the upper echelons of the economic ladder and who are increasingly investing in luxury housing both for consumption and for investment purposes, considering the rather hefty prices of
the houses in Trasacco valley. This assertion is further corroborated by the fact that 50% of the households owned extra residential properties in Accra, while 80% owned properties abroad, which reveals other important, but interesting, characteristics about the caliber of people living in Trasacco Valley, and the social cohort they represent. The first is that, for majority of the occupants of Trasacco Valley to own additional house(s) in Accra and or outside Ghana suggests that quite a number of the middle classes (indisputably the upper echelons of them) are already propertied individuals who are promoting the culture of a second home, mostly for consumption purposes, further underscoring the importance of luxury consumption as an important lifestyle value of the new middle classes. The other interesting trait revealed by the fact that the over 70% of the same occupants have other residential assets abroad indicates or confirms that a segment of Accra’s new middle classes are transmigrants—Ghanaians living and working abroad who have maintained (or are maintaining) strong connections with their homeland through residential investment—as well as businessmen and corporate executives with strong international connections who end up spending part of their year working in different countries. These two groups, distinct from Ghanaian returnees from the diaspora who have resettled home for good, are part of the subset of the Accra's new middle class group I labeled the “global cohort” in chapter four, who are also shaping or contributing to the proliferation of gated enclaves and other luxury consumption spaces in Accra. As posited by Grant (2005), for these individuals, owning multiple properties in different locations—that is, “local Accra” (i.e., Accra outside the gates); “global Accra” (i.e., Accra inside Trasacco Valley); and their particular international or global city of residence (e.g., London, New York)—helps maintain a foothold in several cultural realms while continuing their split identity. Pelow (2003), cited in Grant (2005), has labeled such structures “transnational houses”, which Grant (2005: 679) further describes as ‘a means of cementing socio-economic and cultural ties that span beyond the borders of Ghana’.

But proof of transnationalism in Trasacco Valley is confirmed by the identities of the some of the publicly-known Ghanaian occupants of the enclave such as the soccer star John Pantsil, who now plays for popular South African club Maritzburg United with past stints with top English clubs like Westham United and Fullan FC. Painstil and his cohorts
like AC Milan-based Michael Essien and Sule Muntari spend most of their off-season holiday in Accra, hiding inside in gated enclaves such as Trasacco Valley, where they 'cool' off with their nuclear family and selected friends, far from the prying eyes of the public.

Additional evidence of transnationalism, leisure and seclusion at Trasacco Valley is revealed by Grant's findings on the means of house acquisition and primary usage of property by residents. In terms of the means of financing, 74% said that they paid for their house with personal savings, while 3% received them as gifts from their families, showing the level of personal wealth and perhaps generosity of those in the upper tier of the middle class. But the remaining 23% percent used bank loans to acquire their property; of this, half were obtained through international mortgage programs, showing additional attestation between globalization, transnationalism and local urban development in Accra (Grant, 2005).

Concerning the primary use of their property, 63% reported using their house as an exclusive nuclear family home, while 33% use it as holiday-home, that is, a place of relaxation. What the first figure suggests is that a number of the middle classes who have houses in other parts of Accra are relocating into the gated enclaves to settle with their nuclear families, perhaps to avoid “interference” from extended relations or generally enjoy greater privacy, as one homeowner put it:

“It is crucial to have a secluded residence for close family members so as to avoid the hassles and headaches of contemporary African city life”

(Source: Interview, June 26, 2001 in Grant, 2005)

As a matter of fact, no homeowner, according to Grant, reported using their house as an extended family home, even though it was one of the options indicated under the question pertaining to main purpose of the house (see Grant, 2005: 677). The latter, on the other hand, indicates that a significant proportion of the middle classes in Accra are using their new houses in gated enclaves as a second home just for leisure purposes, underscoring the saliency of consumption as a cherished middle class value or lifestyle culture.
Interestingly, thus, none reported using their house for rental income, yet another pointer to the kind of use value the middle classes place on their acquired assets in gated enclaves.

Finally, an examination of residents' motivations for buying a house at Trasacco Valley by Grant provide another insight into the kind of values preferences or factors driving Accra's new middle classes into gated enclaves, values which, in effect, tell us more about the group and to an extent their vision of what Accra ought be like. The largest number (40%) indicated the quality of the project (including the houses, community design and kind of amenities available) as the primary motive for either purchasing a property or relocating to Trasacco Valley, which tells us to a degree, that Trasacco Valley is a lifestyle or prestige community, rather than a security zone, which places greater emphasis on safety and security, not least from the view of residents. This belief is even more substantiated by the fact that an additional 23% admitted buying a home in the enclave specifically due to its prestige, with one resident asserting that:

> the prestige and exclusivity of the area is widely known and for those that can afford it living in the most exclusive and luxurious residential area in Ghana is a recognition of business success

(Source: Interview, June 26, 20014 in Grant, 2005)

The second largest group (30%) mentioned the property's investment potential as their primary reason for purchasing a house at Trasacco Valley, again underscoring the fact that, for some elements of the new middle class, both consumption and investment are dual, perhaps, compatible or mutual goals. Another 7% cited the higher caliber of other residents as their primary rationale for deciding to move into Trasacco Valley; though small, it suggests that the profile of other neighbours is an important consideration for some members of the middle class in deciding where they live.

The two, somewhat in-depth, case studies on Villaggio Vista and Trasacco Valley have shed additional insight on the characteristics of the new residential landscapes emerging in
Accra as well as the mindset of those inhabiting them. In the proceeding sections of this chapter, we shall examine the four other distinct landscapes adopting the same approach.

5.2.3 New Conspicuous Consumption Spaces

Closely linked to the ascendance of new elegant and secluded residential and office spaces in Accra, representing new forms of living and working territorialities and lifestyles being out-doored by its new middle class residents as a means of projecting their economic and socio-political power in space, and to re-order urban space in ways that reflect their normative values of urban design and social life, is the sprouting of new conspicuous commercial consumption landscapes, adding another layer of change to a rapidly-globalizing landscape. These emergent middle-class consumption landscapes in Accra, which come in different forms, sizes and shapes, include new mega retail spaces (e.g., shopping malls and department stores), swanky new restaurants (such as fast-food joints and coffee shops), specialized health and body care centres (e.g., beauty clinics, massage palors, plastic surgery clinics and gyms), specialty stores, and new luxury recreational and entertainment spaces (e.g., opulent hotels, purpose-built casinos, night clubs, golf courses, cinemas and other cultural spaces, including arts and exhibition centres, which were covered under the creative new sector).

On one hand, the growth of these new luxury commercial consumption landscapes is an outward expression of the heightened degree of economic and cultural globalization fast eclipsing the Ghanaian capital, which, due to a combination of political and economic stability and a pro-investment local climate, continues to attract floods of foreign capital, expats and visitors, for whom Accra has become an ideal place in Africa to invest, visit, live and or work. Inwardly, however, they symbolize the spending power and distinctive material tastes of the city’s ascendant middle classes, who are the main (domestic) targets or consumers, and, in many cases, financiers or owners of these new commercial spaces. With more money at their disposal and new opportunities for spending same, Accra’s increasingly young, affluent and upwardly mobile middle classes have found it simply lovable to flaunt their wealth and classiness by indulging in new opulent (spending) habits and lifestyles such as flying, mall-shopping, holidaying and other outdoor elitist recreational activities such as golfing that match with their acquired values and attained
social status. Although Accra’s new class of consumers differ substantially from Thorstein Veblen’s (1899) leisure class of wealthy owners of productive capital who practice individious consumption, they are nevertheless engaged in parallel conspicuous consumption as a means of expressing their acquired social status.

Many international brands have been quick to react to Accra’s growing consumer class who have developed an obsession for high-end goods and services (including well-known international brands, ranging from household appliances to fashion and body care) by setting up local branches, often in partnership with middle class Ghanaians. Although the expansion of these privileged consumption spaces is widespread, three particular sectors that have witnessed unusually high growth with a telling effect on Accra’s topography are the hospitality, entertainment and retail sectors. Since 2000, the number and variety of high-end accommodation and food service providers, entertainment joints and retail outlets, including their related ancillary services operating in Accra, have spiked tremendously—thanks in part to the growth of a materialistic, business and leisure-minded middle classes, whose busy lifestyles and taste for exotic products lure them to these exclusive commercial and recreational spaces where the quality and assortment of goods and services provided and the environment in which they are offered make an irresistible appeal. But for recent returnees from Europe and North America, the proliferation of these sumptuous consumption landscapes in Accra represent nothing more than an opportunity to continue their previous lifestyle.

However, as expected, many leading global hotel, fast-food and retail chains have established a foothold in Ghana’s capital not just to cater to its thriving middle classes but also the bourgeoning expat population, international conference attenders and tourists, the latter which has risen from an average of 200,000 visitors in the 1990s to a million-plus annually now. Of note here is the growing number of regional tourists, especially wealthy Nigerians, who travel to Accra for weekend relaxation—a new phenomenon that is strengthening, and being strengthened by, the growth of the regional airlines industry, linking Accra to major African cities, including Lagos, Nairobi and Johannesburg. Whilst on one hand, the growing tourism industry and frequency of international conferences
being hosted in Accra is an attestation to Accra’s rising position as an important recreational hub and site of international (academic and political) engagement in Africa, the rising number of African nationals visiting the Ghanaian capital, and vice versa, points to an emerging trend whereby wealthy Africans are increasingly choosing to visit and vacation in other African countries to learn and discover their cultural heritage and recreational offerings instead of (or in addition to) the conventional practice of travelling abroad for visit and holidaying. And for a country that Forbes recently ranked as the 11th mostly friendly nation in the world and the first in Africa, this represents a huge potential that, if well harnessed, can boost the city’s economic fortunes, as I will argue in chapter seven.

Some of the upscale transnational hotel chains that have already established presence in Accra to cash in on the city’s affluent middle classes and growing business, tourist and conference attenders include Best Western, Golden Tulip, Novotel, Movenpick, Kempinski and Holiday Inn Express. Other international hotel brands with property currently under development in Accra include Marriott and Raddison Blu. For restaurants and fast food chains, the major new entrants include Frankies, Kentucky Fried Chicken (KFC) and a host of Italian, Chinese, French and Japanese restaurants selling all kinds of exotic cuisines including the now-famous Japanese sushi. In the retail sector, there have an assortment of stores, ranging from small specialty stores dealing in one branded product such Sony and whirlpool, to large, multi-store shopping malls, such as the Accra Mall, which we shall examine for our case study.

Although in theory, these new upscale commercial and recreational spaces are, unlike the much more privatized and heavily defended middle-class residential and office spaces, accessible to the wider urban populace, they, in reality, remain predominantly middle and upper class territories for a number of reasons. First, an examination of the geography of these new commercial and recreational landscapes reveals that they are located either in or adjacent to wealthy residential, commercial or educational areas, or important national facilities such as ports (air or sea), which are mostly elite-patronized spaces (see chapter six). Alternatively, they may be located within, or combined with other, facilities which
Figure 5.13 Selected New Luxury Recreational Spaces (Mostly Hotels) in Accra

Image A: http://www.hoteltravel.com/ghana/accra/movenpick_ambassador_hotel_accra_8kmmov.htm
   (Last Accessed: 26/04/2016)

   (Last Accessed: 26/04/2016)

   (Last Accessed: 26/04/2016)

   (Last Accessed: 26/04/2016)

Image E: https://roiskid.wordpress.com/2012/04/13/places-marvels-mini-golf-club/
   (Last Accessed: 26/04/2016)
Figure 5.14: Other New Up-scale Recreational and Commercial Spaces Frequent by the New Middle Classes in Accra

are themselves inherently middle-class places, thus rendering such places inaccessible to
the poor. For example, the pairing of *On the Run* stores with gas retail facilities make
them impervious to those who do not own automobile, while the siting of some casinos,
golf courses and recreational spaces in Accra within hotels and resorts which limits their
access only to the guests of these facilities further isolates them from the less privileged.
Second, the high cost of goods and services provided by or within these spaces simply put
them out of reach for the poor masses. As the young techpreneur Bright Simons remarked
in an interview with a foreign reporter at the Accra mall, such commercial spaces are not
meant for the ‘ordinary’ Ghanaian (the poor) who prefer to purchase their goods from the
open, informal markets, where goods do not only cost less, but also they can bargain to
bring down prices to favourable terms. Third, the internal configuration of these new
spaces as well as the language used in marketing are consciously framed to target or
attract only segment one of the populace, the privileged class, as we will shortly see in our
case study of the Accra mall.

But apart from these more obvious or explicit strategies that are employed by the owners
of these emergent commercial and recreational centres in Accra to preserve these
landscapes for Accra’s elite and wealthy population, there are other subtle ways that the
middle classes—the clients or users of these new places—themselves adopt to dominate
and capture these spaces that affirm their values and suit their lifestyle away from the
those perceived to have values and lifestyle not meriting the use of such spaces, thereby
preserving their exclusive status for themselves. I will illustrative how this happens, with
examples, in chapter six.

**Case Study: Shopping Centers, The Accra Mall**

Of all the new middle-class driven consumption landscapes rising in Accra, perhaps the
most distinctive, most conspicuous and most patronized places are large, formal, western-
style, shopping malls. Starting in 2000 with the opening of the A & C Mall (now A & C
Square), the number of these multi-million dollar, mega retail centres with over 5,000
square meters of retail space in Accra has surged to six, excluding the several medium-
Table 5.2: New Shopping Malls in Accra

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Mall Name</th>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Size (m²)</th>
<th>Cost ($m)</th>
<th>Location</th>
<th>Shops</th>
<th>Ownership</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A &amp; C</td>
<td>2000</td>
<td>6,000</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>East Legon (central city)</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>Ghanaian</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Accra</td>
<td>2008</td>
<td>25,500</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>Tetteh Quashie Interchange</td>
<td>65</td>
<td>Atterbury and Salam (South African)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Legon</td>
<td>2010</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>Legon, opposite University of Ghana (central city)</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>N/A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Marina</td>
<td>2013</td>
<td>9,000</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>Airport City (central city)</td>
<td>45</td>
<td>Marina Group (Burkina Faso)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Junction</td>
<td>2014</td>
<td>11,597</td>
<td>33.7</td>
<td>Nungua (suburban)</td>
<td></td>
<td>South African</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Oxford Street</td>
<td>2014</td>
<td>6,230</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>Osu (central city)</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>Ghana/Libya</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>West Hills</td>
<td>2014</td>
<td>27,700</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>Dukonah (Suburban)</td>
<td>57</td>
<td>Ghana/South Africa</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Achimota</td>
<td>2015</td>
<td>15,000</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>Dome (central city)</td>
<td>51</td>
<td>Ghana/South Africa</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


sized ones and those under construction (see Table 5.2). The emergence and growth of mall shopping in Accra represents a major new trend in the city’s retail landscape that was until recently small, unsophisticated and largely informal, with few supermarkets, department stores (specifically Melcom) and specialty stores constituting the only formal shopping spaces in a sea of open air markets, street markets and small convenient shops. But the huge spike in the presence of these massive shopping precincts in Accra particularly from 2008 is indicative not just of how fast shopping habits are changing in Accra but also of the growing expansion, sophistication and formalization of Accra’s retail sector, which also include the emergent phenomenon of online shopping as well as cell phone and card-based or cashless system of buying and selling. Despite the absence of data on shopping habits in Accra, a cited ‘academic’ study on the African Report website in November 2014 suggests that most Ghanaians (69%) do their weekly shopping in open air markets or from street vendors (26%), with only a small proportion of the population (13%) resorting to the use of supermarkets, including shopping malls (see African Report,

The picture is arguably different in Accra, where anecdotal evidence connotes a shifting pattern away from traditional shopping towards modern retail shopping formats, including digital or online shopping and, most notably, mall shopping\(^{18}\), albeit the likelihood of mixed forms of shopping, and the dominance of cash-based, informal shopping, is high, given the fact that majority of Accra’s population are still, by income and education, in the lower class who are yet to catch up with these new shopping behaviours, even if they are able to overcome the financial, technological and other barriers to the use of these new shopping facilities. Besides, the relatively small number and distribution of the emergent shopping infrastructure in Accra means that they are accessible to only a limited segment of the population. That said, however, as the leading and wealthiest Ghanaian metropolis, Accra remains the epicenter of cultural and economic (re)volution in Ghana, where new trends—in fashion, music, industry, education and lifestyle, including online and mall shopping—are unveiled and diffused unto the wider populace and country. And having the largest concentration of this new retail infrastructure only reinforces this role or reality (so far, no single Ghanaian city has a modern shopping mall, although there is one is under construction in Kumasi, Ghana’s second largest metropolis).

A large composition of those patronizing these new malls are middle class Accra residents who find the distinctiveness of the shopping experience offered by these western-style retail infrastructure—right from their shinny, gigantic physical and architectural appeal to their internal cozy, air-conditioned ambiance, well-organized settings, quality and variety of goods and services available, including other features such as security and parking space—unique and rewarding, compared to the chaotic, less safe, inconvenient and unattractive milieu of the open air markets, as one shopper remarked in the above mentioned BBC interview some two years ago in one of Accra’s new malls:

\(^{18}\)As a matter of fact, in a November 29, 2013 BBC news report about the shopping boom in Ghana and the growth of shopping malls, shoppers at the most popular shopping district in Accra for upper income groups and foreigners, Osu Oxford Street, complained of losing shoppers and income to the rising new shopping malls. See full story here: [http://www.bbc.com/news/world-africa-25154082](http://www.bbc.com/news/world-africa-25154082)
You’re more comfortable here than you go to the local markets in town. You go to the local markets at this time, and it’s so scotching and you’re sweaty, and who wants to do that?


So here again, we see the middle classes invoking their normative values—safety, order, allure, prestige and conviviality—in explaining their decision to shun the traditional shopping places with less desirable place qualities and associated values fitting their perceived social status and ideals of modern day retail shopping for the new malls that embody these attributes. But as hinted earlier, it is not the just the rising new middle classes who are endorsing and encouraging the growth of these modern new retail landscapes in Accra for their consumption. The owners and managers of these new shopping spaces, many of who are themselves upper and middle class Ghanaians, do not only admit being driven by the same ideals of modern shopping as shared by their middle class consumers but also sound unapologetic about the fact that it is they (i.e., the middle classes) that they (i.e., the developers) are interested in satisfying, as evinced by the following comments from Moses Luri and Florence Menson, respective managers of the Accra and Marina malls:

We have favourable economic conditions here. A growing middle class with disposable income, so now people are actually able to afford some of the brands that they are used to outside the country, or even their basic necessities….People also want to shop in a modern environment.

Retail is coming all over the place. I think a lot of people are interested in malls and shops….the setting of the malls where you can go in and get everything is more inviting than going to a market where everything is open and it’s crowded and it’s crazy.

“We want to create a Little Dubai in Ghana” (quoted by McTernan, 2014), says the enthused retail manager of Westhills Mall, the newest and largest dedicated mall in Accra. This is also suggestive not only of the broader vision they hope to achieve for Accra through the development of shopping malls, but the international consciousness put into the design and marketing of these retail spaces, as we shall from the case of Accra mall.

But before we consider the ‘inside’ story of Accra, to learn how the middle classes interact with and attempt to territorize these incipient urban spaces, it is salient to highlight a few important characteristics about Accra’s ascendant new shopping malls, as revealed in Table 6.3 above. First, in relation to geography, majority of Accra’s new shopping centers are located within the central city, although the bigger ones tend to be located in the suburbs, understandably so because of the availability of large tracts of land there. Furthermore, a careful observation of locational attributes of those located within the urban core shows that they are either sited within or close to wealthy residential or commercial neighborhoods such as East Legon, Airport residential area and the famous Oxford street in Osu, reinforcing my earlier thesis that these new upscale commercial spaces are geared towards the middle and upper classes.

Second, in terms of ownership, only a few of these malls are sorely Ghanaian or foreign-owned; majority are joint partnerships, mostly involving Ghanaian and international partners. This reveals not only how local and international players (or forces) interact to facilitate and mediate the process of globalization but also the success of the Ghanaian government’s investment policy of encouraging strong local participation in and ownership of the opportunities created by its adopted neoliberal path from the 1980s.

Third, although there a few other entrants and many more international players, including American and European companies, are eyeing Accra’s fledging retail mall shopping business, currently South Africa appears to be the lead foreign player in Accra’s new retail market, with at least four of Accra’s six operating shopping malls being wholly or partially owned by South African companies: Accra, Junction, Westhills and Achomota malls. They are also the lead international player in the actual property development and
goods dealership, with South African-based retailers such as Shoprite, Woolworths and Mr. Price anchoring many of Accra’s new shopping malls, indicating the country’s strong interest in the emergent Ghanaian high-end retail market. This contrasts with Nigeria whose primary investment interest remains in Accra’s banking sector.

Fourth, despite the fact that Accra’s new shopping malls share certain common traits, there are also certain perceptible differences among them. With regards to the common features, they all accommodate a mix of retailers, both local and foreign, as well as entertainment and leisure, making them more than just shopping spaces, distinguishing them from the supermarkets, department stores and shopping arcades that preceded them. In addition, compared to their predecessor structures, these malls are run under a complex management regime, with different companies responsible for property management, marketing, security, facilities maintenance, etc, connoting the level of specialization entailed in their upkeep. In terms of the variety of functions performed, the new malls can be put into two categories, however. The first, including the likes of Accra, Junction and Oxford Street malls, accommodate mostly retail services alongside leisure, making them primarily retail-dedicated, while few ones such as Marina mall combine retail with leisure, office and other commercial functions such as banking, making them more diverse, which leads us to the next typology of middle-class space we shall consider in this chapter: new, multi-purpose landscapes.

Finally, the role or involvement of the Ghanaian government (or some state institutions) in the growth of the new shopping malls seems to be evolving from that of a facilitative role to including ownership, as evinced by Ghana’s state insurance’s (SNNIT) 40 per cent stake in the new Westhills mall at Dukonah, west of Accra. This is a rather interesting phenomenon as it seems to contradict the neoliberal rhetoric post-reform governments in Ghana have been affirming, although the present administration under whose watch this is occurring is socialist by ideology.
The Accra Mall

Despite being preceded by the A&C Mall, now A&C Square, the Accra Mall set the pace for modern retailing in Accra and Ghana, because of its mammoth size, magnificent view, and diversity of products sold, in comparison to the then A&C Mall which was more of a neighbourhood centre then, specifically built to cater to the residents of the affluent East Legon neighbourhood. The 25,000 square meter edifice, pegged at 36million dollars, is the pioneering work of the late Joseph Owusu-Akyaw, a product of the Ghanaian diaspora. The retired banker and businessman, who admits being inspired to put up such a mall in Ghana from his mall shopping experience abroad, including London’s Brent Shopping centre, dreamed not only of “providing European and American style amenities for Ghana’s growing middle class”(Hobden, 2013), but also make a mark on the country’s development by constructing an infrastructure that would become a symbol of national pride, standing for “the betterment of the quality of life today’s Ghanaian” (Boateng, 2010), and at the same time inspiring the younger Ghanaian generation to take up the opportunity and challenge of nation-building, as borne by the follow remarks from his speech during the mall’s opening ceremony:

I set out to realize a dream that I believe would contribute to the growth and modernization of this nation…In the end I have been driven by a sense of purpose to realize a vision that is contributing to my country at a critical point in its economic development and hope will inspire a young Ghanaian to believe that with integrity, sacrifice and dedication to a purpose it can be done

(Source: http://global-ejournal.org/2014/09/08/vol8iss7/)

Strategically built on land abutting the Tetteh-Quashie interchange (a major intersection linking the popular Tema Motorway and the Spintex road that both connect the northeastern part of Accra with the harbour city of Tema), just minutes away from the Kotoka International airport, the Accra Mall was up until recently (and to some extent is) the premier shopping destination in Accra, attracting wealthy buyers from all corners of the
city and beyond, including foreign tourists and retailers from the sub-region, who throng there to have a feel of world-class shopping experience in an otherwise informal retail landscape. To the latter (i.e., high-end goods retailers from outside Ghana), the Accra mall serves as alternative hub for acquiring and supplying branded, foreign-made goods to their affluent customers in their countries, as corroborated by the following claim from Olympio Oagboza and Joe Ofori-Atta, the mall’s manager, and director of Woolworths Ghana, one of Accra’s clothing company, respectively:

People use Accra Mall as a shopping hub, where they come and shop in huge quantities to go and stock their shops in Lome or Lama-Kara or wherever…..Nigerian shoppers have gone into Woolworths and spent tens of thousands of dollars in one visit

(Source: http://www.theafricareport.com/West-Africa/bigger-is-better-for-ghanas-malls.html)

With a magnificent exterior, a spacious parking lot (capable of accommodating over 900 vehicles), and an exquisite, well-planned interior layout, the fully-air-conditioned, wireless-equipped mall is a draw for the city’s thriving middle classes, including students, professionals, politicians and the co-called celebrities who are prepared to pay a premium for a place of comfort, style and serenity to purchase branded goods, far away from the frenzy scenes that characterize Accra’s the roadside and open air markets. Featuring some 65-line shops (70% foreign and 30% local), showcasing a vast expanse of products, ranging from fashion to stationery, electronics, beauty clinics and general merchants, as well as banks, a clinic, entertainment centers and a large food court operated by international franchises such as Becelos, Ocean Spring and Rhapsody, the Accra mall has become a one-stop location for these high income and perhaps busy individuals and their families to shop, eat, bank, have fun and receive healthcare, all under one roof (see Figure 5.15). It also functions as an important social space for meeting and interacting with people, as one shopper puts it:
Figure 5.15 Selected Images from the Accra Mall

C: [https://mpage1867.wordpress.com/2012/07/11/accra-mall-day-3/](https://mpage1867.wordpress.com/2012/07/11/accra-mall-day-3/) (Last Accessed: 26/04/2016)
D: [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=HEUAHughhu](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=HEUAHughhu) (Last Accessed: 26/04/2016)
When you come in here, you get whatever you need. You know, there are different varieties of items are found here. The place is also conducive for marketing. You meet new friends, and it’s a whole lot of enjoying, that’s why we do come around.


With the availability of other cultural-dedicated spaces, the Accra mall has, over time, assumed an iconic cultural status, where all sorts of creative and cultural activities, interest or source of attachment to the middle classes include flash mobs, live music performances and promotional events held by many of the mall’s tenants, including all the major telecommunications companies in Ghana. All these events combined with the mall’s outward and internal physical appeal have made it a popular spot for movie-shooting by the celebrity-laden local film industry, Ghallywood, which is eager to showcase the mall as a symbol of Ghana’s economic progress and modernity.

The arrival of other malls in and around the city, including the much larger, even more opulent, Westhills Mall in the suburban neighbourhood of Dukonah, west of Accra, which is now the largest mall in West Africa, is arguably having some adverse impact on the popularity and fortunes of the Accra Mall, as shoppers farther away from the mall begin to patronize the new ones opening closer to them. However, the Accra Mall still remains a place of choice for many of the city’s well-to-do residents, especially those residing at the northeastern areas and fringes of the city. Perhaps, the institution of the annual Accra Mall Day on Boxing Day, December 26, a day where talent and entertainment shows are organized for the youth alongside massive discount sale, is helping the mall to reassert its preeminence within Accra’s newly emerging formal retail landscape.

5.2.4 Multi-Use, Mega Urban Projects
Mixed-use or multi-purpose mega urban projects constitutes yet another distinctive, conspicuous and spatially-significant urban form or land use structure emerging in and around metropolitan Accra that is connected to the growth of the new middle classes.
These developments are not significantly different from the other three elite or luxury residential, commercial (including recreational) and office spaces examined above in terms of their grandiose look or appeal and profile of their user population, per se. Their uniqueness, however, derives from their near-equal or balanced land use mix—namely the combination or amalgamation of residential, commercial and recreational functions all in one large, spatially distinct project—and—of course, to an extent—their substantial nature and considerable impact. In other words, what makes these incipient middle class spaces standout from the previous ones covered above is that they are large investment and often complex projects that bring together all three different land uses in one massive development having the semblance of an independent community or city, where people can concurrently reside, work, shop, and relax, often founded on the concept of live, work and play.

Similar to the new housing forms, however, these multi-use mega urban projects are of different typologies, and can be differentiated by size, form and variety of land use functions they accommodate. They include Airport City, a massive new economic hub emerging around the Kotoka International Airport, which will be our case study, as well as several other on-going or proposed urban developments of similar purpose within or adjacent to Accra. These other mega projects include Hope City, a proposed multi-billion dollar cyber city to be constructed in Prampram, northeast of Accra; administrative complexes, such as the just-opened new court complex; and a proposed new international airport, also in Prampram.

**Case study: Airport City**

Airport City is an emerging commercial and retail hub in the vicinity of the Kotoka International Airport (KIA). The budding business district covers a stretch of land, about 43 acres in size (Figure 5.16), on what was formerly an undeveloped area owned by the Ghana Civil Aviation Authority (GCAA), the statutory body in charge of regulating air transport in Ghana. The project, which is part of the so-called Gateway and Investment Project—a massive expansion and redevelopment scheme, comprise a major upgrade of KIA’s aeronautical infrastructure and the development of its non-aeronautical
infrastructure—aimed at making KIA a major aviation hub in West Africa (Graphic Online, 2013, June 17). The Airport City project, the overarching name and aim of the non-aeronautical aspect of the scheme, entails the development and lease of highly-serviced plots for mix use commercial development to investors, who, on being selected following a competitive bidding process, develop their own proposals subject to the approval of the Ghana Airport Company Limited, managers of KIA. Currently, there are 19 different investors operating on the site, with over 40 different projects, which include offices, banks, hotels, retail and leisure centres (Figure 5.17).

Some of the landmark developments within the enclave are One Airport Square, a nine-storey, eco-friendly stylish building featuring nine floors of corporate office and 2000 sq foot of retail space with a rooftop terrace and public gardens. Jointly owned by the international equity firm Actis and Belo Osagie of Boston Investments, One Airport Square, when complete, is expected to become the first commercial green building in West Africa. Other developments include the 13-storey Atlantic Tower, housing several

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**Fig 5.16: Map of Airport City from Google**

(Source: https://www.google.ca/maps/place/Airport+City,+Accra,+Ghana/data)

(Last Accessed: 26/04/2016)
high-class offices, banks and small high-end retail outlets; Manet Towers, a new head office for the Manet Group of Companies, developers of the luxury Manet Court mentioned in section 5.3.1; the SNNIT Emporium, an multi-complex building for the Ghanaian state insurer, SNNIT; Una Home, another multi-storey office building; the Marina Mall, a new multi-level shopping mall; and several other developments underway (figure 5.18).

According to Mr. Yeboah, the vision behind Airport City project is to transform KIA from being a mere aviation terminal into a globally connected business hub that enriches the travelling experience of users of KIA (Graphiconline, 2013). Although majority of the companies operating in the enclave are foreign-owned, and the location and expectedly-high land cost, property rates and related high goods and service cost might project Airport city as an exclusive expatriate zone (and rightly, but partially, so), Accra’s new middle classes have found active presence within the new city. Some are there as employees of many of the new companies (both local and foreign-owned) operating in the enclave; few as business owners; but the majority go there as consumers of the diverse commercial, recreational, health and other specialized services available within the district. Apart from the Marina Mall, which is a big pull for middle class shoppers working in or living around the airport, there are specialized medical, body and hair clinics, restaurants, night clubs, hotels, casinos and recreational gardens drawing the new middle classes into the small city.

Besides these more obvious place-use properties of the Airport City, other distinct features about the space that is making it an attraction point for Accra’s new middle classes include the classy architectural highlight of extant structures, green technology, wifi, uninterrupted electricity and water supply, security, and, of course, view. Although about 70 per cent complete, Airport City, already dubbed “the city within the city” has become a new catchment area for Accra’s new globalizers, the very rich, and famous sect among the middle classes who covert exclusive new territories more global in character and devoid of

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19 In thinking about the level of local patronage of such a pricy environment, it is important to bear in mind that KIA itself employs over a thousand Ghanaians, many of them being highly-paid professionals with earnings that put them in the market for many of the service providers in the enclave.
A - View of Airport City with structures under development (2010)

B – View of Airport City with some Completed Buildings (2015)

Figure 5.17 Airport City

(Last Accessed: 26/04/2016)
Figure 5.18 Some Landmark Developments at Accra’s Airport City

‘unwanted elements’ such as the poor. Marked a high-security zone (due to the presence of the airport), the mini city is heavily guarded with security features, including CCTVs, and regular security patrols, combined with strict urban planning regime that keeps “unwanted” structures out of the zone. Thus, unlike other emerging high-end commercial spaces where the poor are able to infiltrate, Airport city appears to be a whole new exclusive elite space, making it the preserve of the most affluent residents and visitors to the city.

5.2.5 Links to New Education
As we saw in chapter four, notwithstanding their heterogeneous composition, one major defining characteristic of Accra’s new middle class as a fraction of the global middle class is their relatively high educational credentials, or cultural capital, compared to their predecessor generation. Arguably, education constitutes the single-most important asset that not only distinguishes the new middle classes from the rest of the populace, but also gives them access to other forms of capital, including finance, political and cultural.

Although many middle class hopefuls anywhere place a utilitarian value on education as a means of escaping the poverty trap and upping their social status, there appears to be a particularly strong and growing appetite for academic degrees among the Ghanaian populace living in Accra and elsewhere. This strong craving for education by Ghanaians is principally driven by certain economic, socio-cultural and political reasons somewhat peculiar to the Ghanaian society and culture, including the position and role of Accra, the national capital. Economically, following the liberalization of the Ghanaian economy, there has been the growth of high skilled, high-income jobs, mostly knowledge-based, service-oriented occupations, linked to the expanding wave of foreign investments, particularly in advanced producer services (including more recently the emerging oil industry), and the growth of the local private sector. Thus, the restructuring of the Ghanaian economy towards knowledge-based service occupations and its associated investment growth is driving up strong demand for education among Ghanaians from all walks of life who are seeking to participate in the globalizing economy. The second, perhaps surprising, economic reason is the increasingly competitive nature of Ghanaian labour market, incidentally also driven by the growth of a skilled workforce, further
attributed to two factors. One is the growing (and constantly changing) demand for new and higher skills as the national economy becomes more sophisticated. The other is the proliferation of job seekers with already high or good qualifications, including university degrees. And for many current job-holders as well as current and future jobseekers, the only viable means of adapting to the recurrent shifts in, or precariousness, of the Ghanaian job market is by having more education, and to keep an edge over others in an ever increasingly competitive society not just economic but also social and political, as I shall explain below.

Third, and in connection with the first two factors cited above, there is a small but rising number of older Ghanaian men and women—retirees, retrenched public sector workers from the 1980s structural adjustment program, and (semi)illiterates—who are going back to school to upgrade themselves or acquire new skills, either with the intention or hope of re-entering the labour market for the bourgeoning services industry and oil sector, or to set-up their own businesses, or simply improve upon themselves, which leads us to the fourth reason behind the growing thirst for education in Ghana.

A very strong force behind the longing for (more) education among the Ghanaian populace is the (often) hidden desire for societal recognition as well as the political and social reward of educational accomplishment. This is because, as explained in chapter three, since colonial contact, although wealth, family ties and political connections still remain vital status-enhancing factors, the relative importance of these factors in the Ghanaian society has waned over the years in comparison to education, which is now the single most important vehicle to, and determinant of, social and economic mobility. But the benefits of having lofty education is also gaining traction within the Ghanaian political arena, where allegiance and financial support have in the past been the key factors in determining who gets what from the spoils of electoral warfare. However, with growing public demand for competent governance and a gradual but shifting political culture away from ethnic and other partisan-based politics to issue-based politics, contributed to by the growth of the so-called ‘independent voters’ (i.e., the middle classes), political parties are being pressurized to prioritize education and experience in their choice of public office
holders, something that is pushing many aspiring Ghanaian politicians to get more education. Even within the chieftaincy institution, where enthronement is based on lineage, the value of education is gaining currency, with several traditional rulers seeking some formal or higher education.

But the underlying reason for the pre-eminence of education as one the most valuable life assets in the Ghanaian society is more cultural, and it is that, within the Ghanaian social psyche, academic accolades simply carry more weight in determining a person’s ascribed social rank or prestige than wealth, such that highly educated people tend to command greater respectability in society compared to mere wealthy individuals, although a combination of education and affluence tend to give people higher social esteem. This contrasts sharply with the situation in other African nations like Nigeria, where wealth plays an equally important, if not higher, role in measuring success (Thomas, 2002; Valesquez, 2013). However, it is very common for the typical Ghanaian to flex their academic muscle in their attempt to show superiority over another, especially if they are western-educated; neither is it uncommon for discourses and debates, both private and public, about the competency of people to metamorphose into analysis and comparison of their academic accomplishments, especially if they are public figures, sometimes to the delight of observers. A case in point was the recent media war between the influential IMANI Ghana’s founder Franklin Cudjoe and Fiifi Kwetey, the deputy agricultural minister, when the former—in an attempt to prove his superior intellectual prowess over the former after his think tank and the nascent OccupyGhana movement he is part of were accused by same as being “a bunch of hypocrites” for making the ruling NDC regime unpopular with their anti-corruption crusade. In attempting to prove his better intellectual acumen over the latter, Mr. Cudjoe posted excerpts from his CV, including a tall list of his educational qualifications that included a certificate from Harvard University’s short Executive Education Program, a move that provoked counter attacks from his opponents, insinuating that his few weeks stay in Harvard did not qualify him as an alumni of the “prestigious” university.
Whether fortunate or unfortunate, over time, however, the perception that education is the most valuable asset in life in Ghana has only increased, as the general Ghanaian society becomes more and more enlightened and also exposed to the global world. In sum, the Ghanaian society is becoming increasingly intellectual; therefore, to stay relevant in it, a lot more Ghanaians have resorted to getting good education, especially prestigious education.

The combined outcome of these factors has been a general spike in demand for education in Ghana and an obsession for so-called prestige education in particular. And nowhere is the craving for quality education is more spatially expressed than Accra, the national capital. Accra’s emergence as the epicentre of the heightened demand for education in Ghana is further linked to its position and role within the national economic and educational system, as well as the unique dynamics of its labour market. First, being the principal economic and financial centre of the Ghanaian economy, Accra—having the largest and most advanced urban economy in Ghana (comprising 10% of national GDP) and receiving a disproportionate share of local, regional and international investments in Ghana (see chapter 4)—is the natural attraction point for Ghanaians seeking to enter the skilled labour market through education. In other words, the desire to participate in the expanding and emerging new knowledge-based economy in Ghana—the so-called middle class occupations, such as banking, ICT, media broadcasting, NGO positions, graphic design, research, public administration, legal, healthcare and middle and upper-tier construction and project management positions—which are geographically concentrated in Accra—is inducing many (and especially young) Ghanaians to seek education where (the new) jobs are mostly found: Accra. Second, as Ghana’s educational hub, Accra, with the largest concentration of primary, secondary and tertiary institutions in Ghana, has naturally become the converging point for Ghanaians seeking good education as an entry route to the expanding labour or job market. Thus, the desire for better or respectable employment which is intertwined or coupled with the desire for quality or prestigious education, both of which are concentrated in Accra, is to explain for the disproportionate demand for education in metropolitan Accra compared to any Ghanaian city. Put
differently, Accra’s dual role as the primary centre of employment and education in Ghana is the underlying reason for the intensification of educational demand in the city.

But apart from these two more obvious reasons, Accra’s competitive labour market and (Ghana’s) relatively higher educational quality in Africa are also contributing to the rising demand for education in the city. With competition for jobs in Accra being the fiercest in Ghana, more and more people are acquiring more educational credentials in order to outdo their competitors in the city’s increasingly competitive labour market compared to any other Ghanaian city. Likewise, Ghana’s strong educational system has made Accra a hub for students from across Africa and beyond to enroll in one of the several institutions located in the Ghanaian capital.

But the boom in demand for quality education has led to significant quantitative and qualitative transformations in Accra’s educational sector, which are having a telling effect on the city’s urban form. In terms of numbers, while it is difficult to lay hold on exact figures, there has been an unprecedented expansion in the number of basic, secondary and tertiary institutions operating in Accra within the past two decades, with daily local media advertisement of a recently-opened or about-to-open school now commonplace. But it is not just the exponential spike in the number of schools in Accra that is most striking, but the type of educational institutions that are emerging as well as the nature of education being offered. In terms of composition, there has been a disproportionate increase in the number of private and international schools, compared to public or government-owned institutions. Concerning the qualitative aspects, major changes include curricular transformations as well as changes in the type and mode of knowledge delivery.

While the record increase in school enrolment is internally to explain or blame for the high expansion in the number of schools in Accra, globalization and the economic liberalization program have played a huge role in Accra’s educational sector transformation. Up until the economic reforms, Accra’s educational sector was essentially a public one, as the government assumed full responsibility for education provision and control, right from the basic to the tertiary level, a system which was mostly designed to
feed the manpower needs of the country, as determined by government. As a matter of fact, only three international schools—namely, Ghana International School (established in 1955 by a British national), Soul Clinic (another British school opened in 1968) and Lincoln Community School (founded by a visiting American missionary couple in 1965), all located in the expat-dominated neighbourhood of Cantonments and Ablekpe, providing international pre-college education to the children of the expatriate workforce—existed in pre-reform Accra.

But with the loosening of government control over education supply and the opening up of the entire educational sector to both private sector and foreign participation as part of the bigger liberalization agenda, Accra’s educational landscape has witnessed profound transformations in ways similar to the housing sector. First, the rolling back of the state’s role in education provision and the opening up of the sector to local and external players has allowed many private education providers to setup independent schools in Accra, resulting in the proliferation of private schools, including both locally and foreign owned ones, at all levels: basic, secondary, post-secondary. Second, the relaxation of the tight government control over what programs schools can offer, particularly private and international post-basic institutions, has meant that schools are free to offer courses based on emergent trends in industry. Thirdly, the globalization of education has led to the internationalization of the educational curricular, calendar and admission of many educational institutions in Accra, with the emergence of some institutions and programs that train people for the international market and charge fees in dollars.

Although the transformations in Accra’s educational sector permeate all sectors, the higher education sub-sector, which is directly linked to the production of the middle classes, has witnessed the most remarkable changes. Up until the 1990s, Accra’s post-secondary educational sector comprised of just one public university, the University of Ghana, a polytechnic and a handful of government-run professional institutes such as the Ghana Institute of Journalism and the Institute of Professional Studies—the latter which were specifically set up to meet the manpower needs of the civil service. Currently, however, Accra boasts of over 30 fully-fledged, degree-awarding tertiary institutions, 24
of which are privately owned (see appendix I). While few of the new private post-secondary institutions such as GIMPA are upgraded former public professional institutes, the vast majority of them are new local private and international entrants.

Notably, about a third of Accra’s new private colleges and universities are religiously (mostly Christian) owned, illuminating the extent to which religious bodies are taking up an increased role in the provision of tertiary education in Ghana, the demand for which the government or the public universities have clearly been struggling to meet (since the reform era, only seven additional fully-fledged public universities have been established by the government; of this, four are either training colleges or professional institutes converted or upgraded into university status). Before the liberalization program, the role of religious bodies in the provision of higher education was confined to teacher training colleges and seminaries; however, following with the liberalization of the tertiary sector, the major churches in Ghana—orthodox, Pentecostal, charismatic alike—have been keen to fill in the vacuum created by the state’s inability to absorb the ever growing masses of young, qualified, degree-seeking Ghanaians. Central University College, founded in 1998 by the visionary and inspirational preacher-cum-entrepreneur leader of the Central Gospel Church, Dr. Mensah Otabil, was the first and is currently one of the most prestigious private universities in Ghana, setting the pace for other denominations to follow suit.

The list also shows that two of Accra’s new universities, namely Wisconsin International University College and Lancaster University, are satellite campuses of two well-known American and British universities, respectively, which have taken advantage of Ghana’s now liberalized educational landscape to offer competitive education to the teeming army of Ghanaians hungry for internationally-recognized education and the economic and social rewards that come with it. Both schools have onsite or nearby accommodation facilities for students and offer courses up to the graduate level; the latter, as a matter of fact, fly some of its instructors from the UK to teach courses fortnightly.

Another important observation about the geography of Accra’s new private universities and colleges is that majority of them, particularly the large ones, are located outside the
central city, while the small ones tend to be located within the urban core. The reason for the fewer number of Accra’s new large and medium-sized colleges and universities in the city proper is obviously due to dual challenge of land scarcity and high cost within the urban core. That notwithstanding, they are intimately connected to the urban core, as many of their students and workforce commute daily from the central city. As a matter of fact, to maintain a presence within the urban core, some of the new institutions, including some of the larger publicly-owned Ghanaian universities, have opened small, satellite city campuses, particularly around the major activity centres such as the CBD, in order to be close to their target population. A typical example of this is Central University College’s three satellite campuses in metropolitan Accra—at Mataheko, near the busy Kanashie commercial district, Dansoman, a rapidly transforming residential and business suburb, and West Ring road, near downtown Accra—in addition to the central campus at Miotsio, a suburban community. This phenomenon of urban-based, multi-campus institutions is one of several emerging trends within Ghana’s globalizing higher educational landscape, and one that I shall later return to.

In examining the mission statement, academic programs, student composition, marketing and recruitment strategy, and delivery mode of the degree-granting institutions in Accra, my research uncovered a number of interesting findings that underscore the importance and role of globalization and educational transformation (or more aptly globalized education) in the cultural (re)production of the new middle classes in Accra. First, concerning their mission statements, majority (i.e., over 90%) of the institutions, both local and foreign-owned, brand themselves as centers for providing a truly international educational experience, using words like “global”, “international” and “world-class education”, while the old public institutions incorporate both national and international phrases in their mission statements, perhaps to maintain their nationalistic mandate as publicly-owned and publicly-financed institutions. Other themes emphasized in the mission statements of many of the universities include leadership, liberal education, and engaged—common lexicons used by leading or aspiring global universities. The adoption of such phrases as “global”, “liberal” and “engaged” represents a stark departure from the pre-reform forms of institutional branding which projected Ghanaian tertiary institutions...
as local or national in character. This rebranding connotes a redefinition of institutional mandate from that of training an educated workforce solely for national development to that of producing globally-conscious and internationally-competent graduates who are suitable for both local and international labour markets. And to achieve this international disposition, almost all the schools have exchange programs with other popular Western universities that allow their students to go abroad to as part of their training.

The new globalized institutional branding by Accra’s tertiary institutions is also meant to portray them as international colleges of higher learning. In other words, by rebranding themselves as global learning centres, Accra’s universities are restating their mandate to include not only training Ghanaians for the national and international labour markets, but also foreign nationals for the global marketplace, including their domestic economies. To realize this, majority of the schools have introduced a range of so-called international programs as well as other related infrastructure (particularly accommodation facilities and a special international students office), amid some aggressive marketing and recruitment strategies, all in a bid to attract or increase the presence of foreign students on their campuses. These marketing and recruitment strategies include having well-functioning websites containing well-packaged information about the institution such as recent successes, major selling points, video messages from institutional heads, scenic photos of students and facilities, and personal stories of current or former students’ experience; having international offices or agents in target countries; offering merit-based scholarships; organizing or participating in educational fairs; advertising in international media; and creating online application systems. One particular university—Lancaster, a new entrant—has gone as far as having a 24-hour, online staff ready to and answer program and admission-related questions to visitors on their website.

It is quite interesting to note that the intensive marketing and recruitment strategies being adopted by Accra’s tertiary institutions has engendered competition among the schools, not just in wooing foreign students to study on their campuses but also local students, something that did not exist before. This intensified competition for local students is, however, more pronounced among the private players rather than the public ones who
already seem to have an already large market for most of their programs, albeit certain program offerings, particularly those in the non-traditional fields such as business and ICT compete fiercely with those of the new private colleges for students.

My examination of the international student composition and national background of the student population at the afore-listed institutions as an assessment of the level of ‘internationalness’ of Accra’s tertiary schools revealed a varied degree of successes for those available, as evinced in appendix I. But despite the disappointing absence of this basic information on many institutional websites, there are a few clear findings, however. First, the new private universities tend to attract more foreign students than the public ones in proportionate terms, while the University of Ghana, having the largest number of foreign students on its campus, is the most international (public) university in Accra, in absolute terms. Second, among the private schools, the results appear more mixed: for example, Wisconsin, which has been around since 2000, has fewer foreign students than Ashesi University, a relatively new Ghanaian-owned university, which by far has the largest proportion and diversity of international students on any Ghanaian university campus. Thus, the mere origin of a school (i.e., whether local or foreign) does not appear to be a critical factor in determining institutional popularity among foreigners seeking to study in Ghana. Rather, factors such as reputation, quality of infrastructure, types of programs offered, diversity of teaching faculty, the accomplishments of their founder(s), and appearance or performance on global university rankings which many local schools have been keen to participate in or be featured on lately, appear to be more important considerations for international students in deciding which Ghanaian university to study at. Lastly, in looking at overall success, according to the Ghanaian Ministry of Education, there are currently some 10,383 international students studying within the country’s tertiary education sector as of 2015; this represents 3.2 per cent of the student of the estimated 315,000 student population at the country’s tertiary sector. Although this information does not give the breakdown of the national background and geographical distribution of the foreign student population in Ghana, that majority of them are concentrated in Accra, which accommodates over 60% of tertiary institutions in Ghana, is not in dispute. Given the absence of such information for other (and especially
neighboring) African states and cities, it is difficult to rate Ghana or Accra’s performance on this scale relative to other nations or cities on the continent. What is clear, however, is that although the composition of foreign students at Accra’s higher education sector is likely smaller than other global cities such as London or even Dubai, their numbers keep swelling, both in actual and proportionate terms. Also, albeit the number of nationalities keep widening by the day, Nigerian students—whose number is estimated to be in the region of 75,000\(^\text{20}\), top the list—a factor that attests to the popularity and relative strength of Ghana’s educational system.

In considering the nature of academic programs offered by the schools and their delivery mode, I discovered, first, that whilst the older public institutions (with the exception of the professional institutions like GIMPA and UPS) are general in the sense of offering a broad spectrum of programs, the new private ones are more specialized, with most heavily tilted towards non-natural science and partially non-humanities fields such as business (banking, finance, marketing, accounting, human resource management, etc), law, economics, computer science, technology science, communication studies and procurement and supply—programs which are obviously less costly to provide (from the training point of view) but which are incidentally more profitable for the institutions (as they charge higher than normal tuition for them), particularly those in the business field, which is by far the most popular or trendy field in Ghana. As a matter of fact, nearly all the tertiary schools in Accra offer business-related programs; and even among the public institutions, business-related programs are more popular and expensive than natural science programs. And it is in these areas that the competition among the schools is strongest. While not all the reasons for the growing popularity of the business, law, technology and other allied fields are entirely clear, the growth of banking, finance and information-based services in Accra is certainly a driving factor.

Concerning the delivery structure, I found that majority of the institutions combined regular, full-time studies with flexible, part-time study options that include a mixture of different models: weeknights, weekends, and, most importantly, online learning combined

\(^\text{20}\) Some believe that there are more Nigerian students studying in Ghana than the above figure suggests.
with periodic, face-to-face contact. Obviously, the most significant of these findings was the introduction or use of or online learning option, which represents a major new trend in Ghanaian education. However, only one school, Lancaster to be specific, has succeeded in rolling out majority-based online degree programs, while most of the others are partially using online learning to complement traditional classroom teaching, with on-going plans for full online programs. Related to the introduction of online learning is the digitization of other components of the educational system, including electronic library system.

The growth of private universities, the internationalization of the academic environment and the introduction of online education, as well as multi-campus and e-library concepts all represent major new developments in tertiary education provision in Ghana, which until recently was public in ownership, national in scope and character, and traditional in education delivery. But the most important question to be addressed here is how Accra’s expanded and rapidly-transforming tertiary education sector is fostering the growth of the new middle classes and their lifestyle. There are several points of connection we can pick between Accra’s transformed educational landscape and the emergence or growth of the new middle classes. First, the massive expansion in higher education simply implies that more and more Ghanaians are accessing tertiary education, which is considered a key measure of middle class attainment, than before\(^{21}\) (see chapter 4). But perhaps for the new middle class hopefuls, it is not just having any college degree that is the most important ‘game changer’ in their quest for upward social and economic mobility, but rather getting one that sells. This accounts for the growth and popularity of business, legal and technology and other related professional programs within Accra’s globalized post-secondary educational sector.

A second way through which Accra’s new tertiary educational system is spurring the growth of the new middle classes relates to how the tertiary education has been

\(^{21}\) Apart from the degree-granting institutions which I talked about, there are countless array of small privately-owned post-secondary professional institutes (both accredited and unaccredited) dotted across the city, providing specialized, non-degree training for both high school leavers and university graduates in healthcare, fashion design, hospitality, media, among others that are invariably contributing to the growth of the middle classes, too.
commodified and repackaged. Currently, higher education has been repackaged in Ghana as a commodity that anyone can easily buy if they have the means (and will) to do so, with several upgrade programs available to those who do not meet the traditional requirements for university education. As well, as we saw above, the introduction of the multi-campus and online learning systems, including flexible studying options, are making it easier for Accra’s busy professionals and others who cannot disrupt their current routine to be able to study without having to quit their jobs or other commitments.

Thirdly, Accra’s globalizing educational landscape is contributing to new middle class formation through the value system being taught in those campuses. As we saw above, terms like global education, global citizen, liberal education, leadership, civic engagement, community service, etc, which are being infused into the educational curricular, are helping to cultivate a new breed of intellectuals in the Ghanaian society whose thinking patterns and value system are similar to those upheld by intellectuals elsewhere.

Related to the value system is the social environment of the campuses. With increasing number of international students and academics visible on Ghanaian campuses, locals now have a greater opportunity to interact with foreign nationals than before. And in the process, new values, lifestyles and beliefs are learned and acquired, some of which are undeniably ‘new middle class’ thinking.

Lastly, the vastly expanded tertiary educational landscape in Accra is contributing to an upshot in the number of people who are training to become academics in the hope of being hired by one of the new private schools or even the public ones, as demand for tertiary education continues to escalate. Then there are already existing academics (particularly those at the public universities), retired professors and some practitioners who have been enriched by the growth of the new universities and programs, as they have been hired by the private colleges to teach courses there or even teach new ones on their own campuses, most of which charge hefty tuition. The increased or additional incomes for these professionals means that they can now enjoy the better material life associated with middle class status, which, some despite having high educational credentials that place
them within that social category, were materially not experiencing middle class living. The below case study will illuminate us further on the connections between globalization, privatization, educational transformation and new class formation in Accra.

**Case Study: Ashesi University**

Located about an hour’s drive from Accra in the town of Berekuso, in Ghana’s Eastern Region, is one of the several new up-scale private universities that is significantly shaping the growth of the new middle classes in Accra: Ashesi. Opened in 2002, Ashesi was founded as a liberal arts college by Patrick Awuah, a former programmer at Microsoft Incorporated and an alumnus of both Swarthmore College and the University of California Berkley’s Haas Business School. Like the late Accra mall founder Joseph Owusu-Akyaw and many recent Ghanaian returnees from the diaspora, Mr. Awuah was consumed with a new fortitude of entrepreneurship, doused with a sense of nationalism, faith and a dream to do something transformational for his country, in this case within the higher educational sector. Consequently, the young, passion-consumed Microsoft engineer gave up his lucrative career (and prospects) in the United States and returned home in the late 1990s to commence his dream project—to build a new kind of university that would champion ethics, innovation and entrepreneurship in Africa.

With a pioneering student body of 30 inside rented buildings in the metropolis, the unprecedented success rate of Ashesi’s first cohort of graduates in the Ghanaian job market won Mr. Awuah public and international praise, bringing him huge financial support from international foundations to help realize his dream. Patrick was galvanized to expand his vision, resulting in the construction of a permanent campus in Berekuso, not too far from Accra.

As connoted by its name, Ashesi, meaning “beginning” in the local Akan language, the not-for profit school, which brands itself as “a Pan-African University with a global reach” (Ashesi.edu.gh, n.d), has pioneered an educational experience unmatched anywhere in the country and the African continent, championing several innovative approaches to higher education—right from the physical design of the learning
Figure 5.19: Selected Images of Ashesi University

Source: [http://www.ashesi.edu.gh/about/campus-tour.html](http://www.ashesi.edu.gh/about/campus-tour.html)
(Last Accessed: 26/04/2016)
environment to the structure and delivery of educational curricular. Its stunning 100 acre hillside Berekuso campus, overlooking the city of Accra, meshes traditional architecture with modern technology and best green practices (Figure 5.16). Set in a courtyard fashion, the academic campus features a series of uniformly designed structures, arrayed in courtyards interconnected with landscapes of trees, lawns, benches and stairs, creating a natural and peaceful ambiance for study, community building and relaxation. The school’s current program offerings, comprised of three four-year bachelor’s degrees, are centred in the fields of business administration, computer science, management information system and recently engineering, which have been uniquely designed to “raise a new general of ethical and entrepreneurial leaders in Africa” (Ashesi.edu.gh, n.d), with inputs from a range of local and international players, including leading academics from Swathmore, UCB and the University of Washington. At the core of the Ashesi educational experience are ethics and civic engagement, critical thinking, communication, leadership, innovation and technological competence—values which are inculcated in all program curricular, values which are trumpeted by educational globalism, and values which are shared by the new middle classes, including those emerging in Accra.

With just 100 foreign students from over 21 countries, including the United States, Canada and the United Kingdom, Ashesi has risen to become Ghana’s most internationalized university. Other exceptional features at Ashesi include state-of-the-art facilities; the international diversity of its faculty; high level of student funding (40% of its students receive some level financial assistance); community service learning; and an assortment of green technologies and practices that include rainwater harvesting, waste-reduction and recycling, use of biogas from waste treatment, and energy conservation.

Despite being young and small, many of Ashesi’s graduates have gone to pursue successful careers in ICT, business and other sectors of the metropolitan and national economy, contributing significantly to national development, with some already making headlines in the local media. Others, too, have pursued further studies in elite global universities such as UK’s Oxford University. One of Ashesi’s alumni who is making a mark in industry is Maame Dufie Cudjoe, a 2005 business administration graduate. After
working at Fidelity bank, one of Ghana’s largest private banks, Ms. Cudjoe moved to Airtel Ghana, one of the nation’s telecommunications company, as corporate social responsibility (CSR) coordinator. Since then, the young, energetic ambitious woman has risen through the ranks to become Airtel Ghana’s CSR manager, helping her company give back to their community in more effective ways. The award-winning initiative which she helped create, *Airtel Touching Lives*—a program that provides resources to unsung heroes in society to expand their work and mentor others—has shown a light on her company, winning several awards in community engagement and public relations, including Ghana Telecom Award for CSR Company of the Year, the Institute of Public Relations’ Best Community Relations Programme of the Year, and Corporate Social Responsibility of the Year at the Association of Ghana Industries Awards (Ashesi.edu.gh, 2015). Recounting the impact of her Ashesi education on her career success, this is what Ms. Cudjoe had to say:

> Ashesi made us see in a very real way, the challenges and needs of many people across Africa. A lot of the projects we worked on focused on actual cases and challenges, and we learned to build solutions that could have real impact.


Maame Cudjoe is an embodiment of what Accra’s globalized education seeks to produce: young, talented, assertive and ambitious graduates with strong entrepreneurial drive and a passion to create innovative solutions to problems, and to impact their societies in real, meaningful ways. It is these attributes that define the new generation middle class emerging in the Ghanaian capital, which Ms. Cudjoe represents. They are locally-educated but are globally aware and infused with the similar values shared by their counterparts elsewhere.

Whilst, on the surface, Ashesi’s contribution to the growth of the middle classes may seem small, given its relatively small size, its role in the class production process in Accra, as
evinced by Ms. Cudjoe’s success story, is by no means meager. But apart from this, the school’s success story and the life of its founding president, Patrick Awuah, are in many ways contributing towards the transformation of higher education in Ghana and the rise of the new middle class generation. For instance, elements of Ashesi’s educational model and wider teaching philosophy are being adopted by other universities in Ghana. On another level, the school’s founding president Patrick Awuah, who has won numerous local and international awards and recognitions—including a Young Global Leader, 2007 World Economic Forum; Ghana’s Most Respected CEO, 2012; 50 Greatest Leaders in 2015, Fortune Magazine (2015); and more recently the recipient of the 2015 UCB Haas Distinguished Alumni Award—is having a telling impact on many aspiring young entrepreneurs and others seeking to emulate him in other spheres of endeavour in Ghana. He—like Bright Simmons, Herman Chinery-Hesse, Ken Ofori-Atta and other successful young entrepreneurs—has become the new role model for business success, leadership and innovation that many of the emerging middle classes in Ghana are looking for up to.

Transformations Beyond the Tertiary Level

Admittedly, the biggest and deepest changes seen in Accra’s educational landscape have occurred in the tertiary sector. However, there are significant transformations taking place at the basic and secondary levels with considerable implications for the process of new class formation and urban change in metropolitan Accra. This change is specifically related to the proliferation of so-called international schools in Accra—private local and foreign owned pre-tertiary educational institutions which provide international education from the elementary to the high school level, culminating in the award of such as international qualifications like the International Baccalaureate (IB) diploma and those affiliated to the Cambridge International Examinations (e.g., Cambridge International General Certificate of Secondary Education (IGCE), the Advanced International Certificate of Education (AICE)).

As previously stated above, there were only three international schools in pre-reform Accra—Ghana International School, opened in 1955; Lincoln Community School, opened in 1968; and Soul Clinic, also opened in 1968—which were primarily set up by and for
children of the expat population in Accra: wards of diplomats, international organizations and embassy staff. However, in a matter of a decade or so following the economic liberalization program, the number of these independent schools in Accra has grown exponentially. My count of the number of internationals schools in the metropolis yielded an estimate of 15 (see Appendix II), with two additional ones located in the nearby port city of Tema. From that table, we can see that majority of the schools were established in the post-2000 years, further attesting to the new wave of globalization in 21st century Accra. Of particular interest is the number of new non-British and non-American entrants. Also, majority of these new educational institutions are located within the core city compared to the new private colleges; however, as expected, over 90% of them are found in affluent neighbourhoods, particularly East Legon.

As with the globalized tertiary academic campuses, these new international schools have become breeding grounds for the incubation of elite values that mould the new middle classes. Interestingly, however, compared to the new private colleges and universities in Accra, these schools are consciously and conspicuously more international in every sense than the private new colleges in Accra. Their educational curricular, which feature ‘foreign’ elements such as creativity, action and service and international summer trips that are copiously missing from those of their local counterparts, tend to be British or American or that of the originating country, albeit few run hybrid curricular that include Ghanaian educational content. In addition, their faculty and student populations are more multicultural compared to even the most internationalized university in Accra, Ashesi. And their stated mission is to raise global citizens, something they also do by training their students for international universities. Moreover, until recently when the Ghanaian government prohibited all transactions in foreign currency in a bid to control the dollarization of the local economy as a measure to stem the local currency’s decline, all the international schools charged their fees in US dollars or Euros (currently, fees are collected in local currency but indexed to the dollar or Euro at existing market rates)—yet another proof of their global status.
The boom in the number of these international schools in Accra could, in one breath, signal a massive expansion in the presence of foreign nationals living or working in the Ghanaian capital. Interestingly, apart from the nearby port city of Tema, which has two of such schools and Kumasi, which has just one, no other Ghanaian city has an international school. This is further indication of the uneven impact globalization is having on urbanization in Ghana, with the bulk of the new high-end housing, office, educational and commercial developments being concentrated in Accra and other coastal cities.

At the same time, however, there is substantial evidence of heightened local patronage of these elite schools. And despite the unavailability of official statistics on the extent of local participation in these schools, the fact of the growing Ghanaian student presence at these campuses is common knowledge. Ms Andah—whose parents—a doctor and a professor at the University of Ghana—I personally know—is a typical example of the new generation Ghanaians being educated at these locally-based international schools. On completing her program at SOS-Herman International School in Tema, she is currently pursuing her bachelor’s degree at Yale University, one of America’s topnotch universities. Ms. Andah’s parents’ decision to send their ward to an international school in Accra rather than one of the local elite secondary schools such as Wesley Girls High School or Holy Child School is likely driven by a number of factors, the most obvious being the brighter prospect of gaining admission into an Ivy League institution. But beyond this dream, there could be other unspoken motives driving the desire of rich, educated Ghanaian parents to send their wards to these new expensive, elite schools. Known for immersing their students in some of the finest global education and culture, doused with elements of classism that include mastery of the English language, expressiveness, proficiency over the internet and digital technology, the ability to do independent research, international etiquettes as well as intercultural competence comparable to some of the finest and elite schools in Europe and North America, these international schools have become the new allure for affluent Ghanaian parents seeking to immense their wards in a globalized world. Thus, for middle class parents such as Ms. Andah’s, the aspiration to see their children join the elite segment of the society begins at the basic level—that of enrolling them in locally-based international schools.
Although the spatial impact of the proliferation of international schools in Accra is comparatively smaller, they are nevertheless superimposing another layer of transformation onto Accra’s urban form. Mostly located in enclosed environments, some in hotel-like structures, these new well-planned, amenity-rich smaller campuses are aiding Accra’s modernization, whilst shoring up its international significance, in this context as an emerging centre for global education.

5.4 Summary and Discussion
I have examined in this chapter five distinct emergent landscapes in post-reform Accra being shaped by rise of the new middle classes—secondary service centres; new exclusive, luxury housing developments; luxury consumption spaces; mix-use, mega urban projects; and globalized academic campuses—including how the new middle classes facilitate the formation of these urban spaces and how the structural configurations and place qualities associated with these spaces give them some sense of exclusive attachment to them. In a way, these elite spaces may appear to be a sheer product of the growth of the new middle class in Accra, which is factual, given the dominant use of these spaces by them, including the use of explicit symbols and language that target them. But at the same time, it is important to underscore the fact that these spaces play a huge role in the production of the new middle classes and privilege identifies in Accra. For example, the new globalized educational institutions, such as Ashesi, are helping to produce a new class of professionals and entrepreneurs who may work in the new office spaces such as Airport City and West Ridge or even Osu’s emerging ICT sector, as either employees or employers. These professionals may subsequently buy or rent a house in one of the prestige gated communities such as Villaggio Vista and patronize the new commercial and recreational spaces such as the Accra mall or even the nearby Santoku restaurant at Villaggio Vista, where they meet with people of similar social standing and interact with spaces that are designed in way to reinforce or even give them a certain sense of prestige or importance. As well, there may be others of lower class identities who may find themselves in these spaces whether by invitation (e.g., visiting a friend who lives a gated community) or merit (e.g., gaining admission into one of the universities in Accra) or by the ‘public’ designation of the space (e.g., the new shopping malls) or simply through
employment (e.g., a cleaner at Holiday Inn). And by encountering or interacting with people of higher social standing (e.g., students and professors on campus) as well as interacting with these high-end spaces (their magnificence, style, comfort, and so on) and the supposed feeling of importance that come from using those spaces, they may be inspired to work their way up the social ladder. In this case, therefore, place characteristics may contribute to new class formation. This shows that the relationship between new spatial formation and class production in Accra is two-way.

Also, whilst on the surface these spaces may appear to be spatially and functionally separate, they are connected in ways that afford the new middle classes and other privileged groups in Accra to live or create a different world which is completely different and secluded from the rest of the populace, particularly the poor. For instance, there are some residents in Trasacco Valley or any of the new gated communities in the capital who may work in the new Airport city, do their shopping at the Accra or Marina mall closest to their place of work, utilize private hospitals when ill, send their wards to one of the new international schools that have recently opened in the capital, belong to a circle of friends that share similar social status, and attend professional meetings and recreational activities in spaces reserved for groups like that. In this case, the opportunities for them to connect and interact with those below their social status may get slimmer and slimmer by the day, which may increasingly drive the wedge between the poor and well-to-do. In other words, the emergence of the new housing, commercial, recreational and educational spaces in Accra could be encouraging social divisions within the population. As well, there have been other concerns and criticisms about the impact that the new spatial formations are having on Accra’s spatial structure, identity, and natural environment. Whether or not these concerns and criticism are true and how those impacts are manifesting is the subject of the next chapter.
6 For Good or For Bad? Interrogating the Socio-Spatial and Environmental Impact of New Class Place-making in Accra

As I noted at the end of the preceding chapter, the emergence and growth of the new middle class shaped landscapes in Accra, as in other major African cities, has begun stoking important public and scholarly conversation regarding the suitability and sustainability of this new urban development trajectory in and for urban Africa. However, as I hinted in the very first chapter of this thesis, views on the nascent middle class urbanism in Africa is far from being uniform. For some experts and residents, the rise of these new upscale urban spaces and structures, which include whole new “smart” cities, luxury recreational facilities and complex shopping malls, and the associated elitist lifestyle they promote; the tertiarization of the urban space economy, including the emergence of knowledge economy and the creative sector; the liberalization and internationalization of the educational landscape; the upward elevation of the city skyline; and the emergence of a new, highly educated, semi-entrepreneurial, professional and consumerist class who are driving up the growth of these plushy-looking formal spaces all herald the onset of a new chapter in Africa’s urban development story, one that is positive.

However, critics of Africa’s nascent urbanism, including Cape Town University urban scholar Vanessa Watson, have described the new course as an unhelpful direction that only favours a small elite who makeup just a tiny fraction of the urban populace, while neglecting and disempowering the unprivileged and voiceless masses who make the bulk of Africa’s urban residents, thereby driving the wedge between the have and the have-nots (Watson, 2014; see also http://edition.cnn.com/2013/05/30/business/africa-new-cities-konza-eko/). As well, they have labeled many of the grandiose developments characterizing this incipient urbanism as utopian fantasies that ignore the realities of life in urban Africa, citing examples of flamboyant projects such as Angola’s Lilamba city, a luxury new housing estate built afresh some eight years ago just outside Luanda, the oil-wealthy East African country’s capital, which is struggling to find suitable buyers due to high cost and location, thus turning into a white elephant. This raises questions about the desirability and viability of the new flashy, neoliberal, consumerist development path underway in urban Africa. Undoubtedly, the multimillion dollar question that this latter
criticism of Africa’s new-middle class inspired urban development trajectory invites is whether the new model will eventually become the new norm, or, like past epochs, remain ephemeral with many of the structures in future becoming relics of the current neoliberal urbanism. (I shall deal with this issue in the concluding chapter of this work, but for now I will restrict myself to examining the on-going impact of the new middle class territorial formations in our case study city, metropolitan Accra, to offer insights into the nature of the physical and social structural transformations being spurred on by the rise of the new landscapes, including how local residents are reacting to, or coping with, these changes).

While Accra is by no means the only African city witnessing rapid respatialization linked to birth of the new elite commercial, residential and institutional spaces and the related lifestyle formations and associated effects, the speed at which the new urbanism is occurring and the scale of change (or impact) associated with it is beginning to significantly alter the course of urban development and social interaction compared to other African cities. Thus, given the speed at which Accra’s new growth path is surpassing, and to some extent subsuming, the old urban development order, the need for an unbiased assessment of the socio-spatial and environmental consequences of the new middle class territorial formation could not be stronger. This chapter attempts to do that. In doing so, section one maps the locationality and directionality of the new spaces being driven by the growth of the new middle class. These spaces can collectively be referred to as the new middle class urbanism—a term I use here to imply the nature of urban transformation being introduced by the new middle class in Accra, both directly and indirectly, consciously and unconsciously. Section two then analyzes the morphological impact of the growth of these new spaces, focusing on the elements of density, height, view, land use structure, spatial harmony and neighbourhood change. The next session, three, looks at how the new spaces are shaping social interaction, welfare and the distribution of wealth, while the fourth section focuses on environmental issues. The adopted approach comprise not only technical analysis of the various impacts, both positive and negative, but also includes the experiences and views of city residents either affected by or observant of the changes taking place in Accra, something I consider in the
final section when I return to the topic or debate on the suitability of the incipient new middle-class propelled urbanization in Accra and Africa.

6.1 Where they are: Mapping the Geography of Accra’s New Middle Class Spaces and Development Trajectory

In order to properly appreciate the full-scale impact of the on-going new middle class-led urban remaking in Accra, it is important to get a sense of the location where these new developments are taking place in the city, including the physical direction in which they are proceeding. To enable us accomplish this, I have plotted below all the major new commercial, residential and other developments that have sprung up both within and the outside the metropolis, and which have been linked to the growth of the new middle classes. These new upscale developments represent the five major typologies of new middle class spaces I examined in the previous chapter: secondary service centres; new housing patterns; conspicuous consumption spaces; mix-use mega urban projects; and globalized educational institutions.

A look at Figure 6.1 both reinforces and provides some additional insights about the geography of the new urbanism in Accra, some of which were highlighted in the previous chapter and some of which will be divulged in the ensuing sections when I examine the various impacts of these new spatial formations in the ensuing sections. That said, however, four generic observations are evident from the below map. First, majority of the new spaces are located within the central city (with the exception of the new housing forms, which is about equally split between the urban core and the periphery\(^\text{22}\)), reinforcing my assertion in chapter four and reiterated in chapter five, that while suburbanization may have weakened the development momentum at the urban core in the immediate post-reform era, the emergent new urbanism partly being driven by the new middle classes is revitalizing and repositioning the urban core to be the anchor of the new development trajectory in the city. Second, even within the urban core, the new landscapes

\(^{22}\) I must be quick to add, though, that the above map only captures completed projects as of September 2015; however, there are many more luxury housing developments at the outskirts of the city and beyond (including completed projects in the neighboring port city of Tema and as far as the eastern region), which, when counted, would mean that majority of the new housing developments are outside metropolitan Accra.
are not evenly distributed in space; instead, most of the new developments are concentrated in the northeastern quadrant of the city, an area that can roughly be delimited as 3 mile radius from the airport. Third, notwithstanding the large concentration of the new upscale spaces in the central city, there seems to be some discernable spatial or locational differences among the various categories of the new spatial formations. For the planned new housing developments, the large (and less expensive) ones seem to be located at the peripheries, whilst the more luxurious and expensive ones (excluding Trassacco Valley) are located within the urban core, a pattern that is obviously linked to differences in the cost and availability of land as well as proximity to Central Accra. A similar trend applies to the other types of spaces—shopping malls, hotels and new educational institutions—except for the new service centres, all of which are located within the urban core. Lastly, in the terms of growth direction, the new urbanism, not least for now, appears to be proceeding predominantly in an eastward direction from the central areas to the northeastern edge of the city, with scattered developments in the western and northern suburbs of the city.
Having now seen the geographical characteristics of the new middle class inspired urbanism in Accra, let us turn our attention to the impacts they are having on spatial organization, as well as the society and the natural environment.

6.2 The Spatial Impact of Accra’s New Middle Class Spaces
The rise of the new middle class dominated spaces in Accra, as depicted in Figure 6.1, is impacting significantly on the city’s urban structure and form in several ways, which could be viewed as both desirable and undesirable. First, given the fact that many of the new office, commercial and some residential (i.e., condominiums) and recreational (e.g., hotels) developments comprise high-density, multi-story structures, they are contributing to the on-going transformation of Accra’s urban form from a predominantly low-rise, low density city to a high-density, medium and high-rise form. This could be seen as a positive development, because what it generally means is that land, which is already proving to be a scarce commodity within the urban core, is being put to more efficient use, as more people (residents and workers) are relatively being accommodated in smaller space, in terms of square footage. This is particularly a welcome development for Accra, especially in low-density neighborhoods such as the Ridge and North and South industrial areas, where majority of the developments taking place there are occurring in-fill. In residential areas like Ridge, vacant plots or plots with uncompleted or abandoned structures are being acquired by property developers to put up new office and other commercial structures; in the North and South industrial areas, brownfield sites once occupied by obsolete industries are being converted into commercial warehouses and showrooms by both local and foreign wholesalers and distributors of imported goods, including luxury cars that target the middle classes. Given Accra’s ever-growing local and international importance, densifying and going upward seems to be the only and preferred option for a city whose population is projected by the UN to swell to 3.5 million by 2025.

However, the upward growth ushered in by the new urbanism is far from being regular or uniform. To the contrary, many of the new plushy residential communities springing up in the metropolitan core such as Airport Hills, Manet Court and Cantonment Gardens have much lower housing and population densities when compared to the old wealthier neighborhoods such as the Ridge, Dzorwulu and Airport Residential Area, which in itself
raises questions about the suitability of the new-middle class driven urbanism.

Another related positive morphological impact that the new spatial formations is having on Accra is that the new structures and spaces are modernizing or enhancing the city’s view or physical appeal. With many of the new residential and commercial developments decked with stylish and appealing architectural designs and shiny glass exteriors, some incorporating innovative local and international design concepts as well as green features, Accra could be said to be undergoing what I call “a new facial makeup”. These diverse architectural designs and concepts appear to be giving the city a new eye-catching, somewhat post-modernist feel or image. But like the built form, not every part of the city is being touched by this latest respatialization. As seen from Figure 6.1, majority of the new developments are occurring to the east and north of (including parts of) the CBD, mostly in the wealthy and better parts of the city, as well as the eastern and to some extent the western and northern fringes of the city. By contrast, poor, inner city areas, including Nima and old Accra (excluding Osu), seem virtually untouched by the wave of modernization taking place in other parts of the city.

A third area where Accra’s current development is being felt is the urban land use structure. Although pre-reform Accra lacked a cohesive land use structure, one of its defining attributes was its mono-functional layout or Euclidean zoning, a feature that was strongly preserved or regulated especially in the well-planned areas by the city administration. But the neoliberal reforms, which eventually paved the way for the current epoch, exalted market forces and private interest above the state as the principal land use determinants. Since then, rapid and often unplanned and unsupervised land use conversion, mostly in the form of alteration of residential spaces and structures into small commercial and other mix-use developments, has become a defining feature of contemporary urbanization in post-reform Accra, often resulting a chaotic or dysfunctional land use pattern, particularly in areas where planning regulation is weak, including those outside the remit of AMA. But the kind of developments propelled by the new middle classes, whether residential communities such as Oasis, offices districts such as West Ridge’s Wall Street district or shopping precincts such as the Accra Mall, tend to be of
larger scale and combine more functions or activities in a more planned and effective way, compared to the types of developments that preceded them. Therefore, the rise of the new well-planned and multifunctional landscapes directly or indirectly propelled by the new middle class is not only helping to diversify Accra’s land use structure from a single-use organization to mix-use structure but in a more efficient way. A classic example of this is the new Airport city, which, as we saw in chapter five, is fusing together housing, office and commercial needs in one development or zone. And there are other economic benefits accruing from this new development trend, which I will explain in addressing the next typology of spatial impact linked to the growth of the new middle class territorialities in Accra.

Perhaps, the most significant positive impact that the growth of the new elite landscapes is having on Accra’s morphology is the on-going transformation of its urban structure from a monocentric city to a polycentric one. Prior to the emergence of these spaces, Accra was essentially a unicentric city. However, as explicated in the previous chapter, pre-reform Accra’s unicentricism was not due to the absence of secondary CBDs, but rather the small and or mono-functional orientation of those activity centres (e.g. Kaneshie), compared to the traditional CBD, thus reinforcing the domineering role and position of downtown Accra as the city’s major commercial hub, with its concomitant congestion and vehicular traffic. With the rise of more complex and some comparatively more diverse CBDs such as Oxford Street, West Ridge and Airport City containing mostly new middle class workers and consumers, human traffic is gradually been spread away from Central Accra.

But the biggest gains from the emergent polycentric model Accra appears to be inching towards have been the redistribution or dispersal of employment and economic activity away from the old CBD to the predominantly residential areas in the northern, eastern and western portions of the city, as well as to the outer suburbs, and the resultant savings on travel time and pollution. With the upspring of shopping malls such as the Accra mall and Westhills mall, as well as restaurants, offices and private colleges in central city areas like Legon, Cantonments and outer suburbs like Dukona and Sowutuom, (some) residents in the eastern and western segments of the city no longer have to travel long distance to
downtown Accra to access these facilities or look for jobs. This is far from becoming the norm, however. Central Accra continues to remain the primary employment and activity node in the metropolis for majority of the urban populace, particularly the poor for whom access to many of the new spaces remain limited, structurally and physically. For these people, downtown Accra remains the only locale where informal and low-wage employment opportunities abound, albeit some have started devising strategies to infiltrate or benefit from opportunities created by the new elite spaces, creating other spatial problematics, as I shall unveil in the succeeding session. That notwithstanding, we can argue that the new centres have helped to spread development more evenly across Accra, especially as many of them have become new growth poles stimulating other employment activities around them.

But as hinted above, there are a number of spatial problems that are also being created by the new urbanism in Accra. One is the fact that many of the new territorialities are contributing towards the fragmentation of urban space, especially in the outer suburbs, given their exclusionary design and locations. At the urban core, and especially within the central area, the new spatialities are creating contradictory imageries, built form, densities and incongruent land uses, as new, high density office structures stand side-by-side low density houses, and formal spaces are abbreviated irregularly by informal spaces, resulting in a lack of spatial cohesion. Another is the impact the new spaces are having on neighbourhood character and urban mobility. As many of the new developments bring new populations and activity, often which attract vehicular traffic, the character and ambiance of certain neighbourhoods in the city are significantly being altered. An example of this is West Ridge, which used to be a quiet area, residential in function and low density in form, but with the emergence of high-rise office and commercial buildings, West Ridge is losing its distinctive character. In sum, spatially, while the new urban formations facilitated or orchestrated by the new middle classes is helping to revitalize and transform Accra’s land use structure, built form and view as well as creating other economic advantages (which, in fact, constitute another category of impact worth investigating), they are also fostering new challenges, including those explicated above and in other spheres of the city, which I shall unveil in the proceeding sections.
6.3 Cohesion or Segregation? Counting the Social Cost of Accra’s New Middle Class Urbanism

One issue that has been of keen interest to this study and is incidentally becoming a topic of public conversation is how Accra’s nascent middle class urbanism is affecting social cohesion in the Ghanaian capital. Obviously, even without any careful investigation, the answer seems quite clear: the growth of the elite landscapes is widening and deepening the gap between the rich and poor. But as noted elsewhere in this thesis, right from its early days, Accra has remained an unequal city (see chapter 4 and section 5.2.1 of chapter five). What is, however, interesting and therefore worthy of attention here is the new forms of social interaction, welfare and inequality being induced by the rise of the new middle class and the elite spaces they are fostering in Accra.

There are several ways in which these new forms of inequality and exclusion are expressed. One useful way to gauge and envision how the emergence of the so-called elite landscapes is affecting the distribution of wealth and access to opportunities as well as social interaction in Accra is by re-examining the broader geography of the new elite landscapes, as depicted in Figure 6.1. Clearly, these endowed spaces are mostly concentrated in the already better-off parts of the city which are already inhabited or dominated by the middle and upper classes. And these are areas with better quality public infrastructure such as good roads, utility supply, leisure facilities and the best performing public schools as well as numerous private health and educational facilities, while disadvantaged neighbourhoods such as Nima, Teshie and Old Accra, which are hardly witnessing any significant public investment, let alone any huge injection of private capital, have barely surviving public infrastructure. Therefore, the implantation of the new upscale spaces including shopping malls, hotels and restaurants, offices and private educational and international colleges in Accra’s wealthy areas to the neglect of the depressed areas of the city, is further deepening the imbalance of wealth and access to opportunities created by these new spaces, between the privileged and underprivileged segments of the urban populace.

A second way to understand how these new spatial formations are affecting social interaction in Accra is by paying attention to the structural configurations of those spaces,
as well as the language employed in marketing them. As revealed in the previous chapter, most of the new elite spaces—be they commercial or residential, private or supposedly public in use (e.g., hotels, banks)—are seclusionary by design. Certainly, the most obvious of these spaces are the new planned housing developments, which, as we observed in chapter four, are barricaded with walls and other protective features (e.g., 24-hour security systems and guards) that insulate them from the poor and other ‘unwanted elements’ in the city. But gated housing enclaves are not the only spaces containing entry barriers for the poor population. Many new offices, banks, hotels, restaurants and malls are fully or partially covered with glass exteriors, private security guards and security cameras, while their insides are well-polished, formalized and often staffed with young, smart-looking western-ascented English-speaking professionals (i.e., the very same new middle classes) that, in themselves, make these spaces intimidating and unwelcoming to the poor (see Figure 6.2). However, besides these glaring physical barriers, there are other subtle, less detectable symbols employed by the owners of these spaces to seclude these spaces from being utilized by the marginalized populations. One of these is the marketing language used to advertise these spaces to the preferred segments of the urban populace, which emphasize themes like ‘comfort’, ‘elegance’, ‘style’, ‘prestige’, ‘dream place’, ‘sophisticated’, etc—words that connote that these spaces are not for the impoverished elements in the society. Another is the use of inscriptions (e.g., dress codes) which may often be presented as neutral place components, but are in reality intended to regulate access to these spaces, in terms of who is allowed into and who is not, as evinced by this bold caption I discovered on the website of Santoku, a new deluxe Japanese restaurant that was recently opened at Villaggio Vista, one of Accra’s new luxury apartment enclaves built in the affluent airport residential suburb:

Dress Code: Smart and Elegant. We do not accept….shorts or flip-flops

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23 Shorts and flip-flops are common marks of the poor in Ghana; the latter’s use outside the home is identified with being poor.
But apart from these, the new middle classes—the primary consumers of these elite landscapes—may also engage in attitudes that exhibit a sense of entitlement to these spaces, to the exclusion of the poor. For instance, in his rather interesting 2013 piece on life in Accra Mall through a class-based lens, titled “Marxism in the Accra Mall”, the young Accra-based blogger Carl Yao observed that one way Accra’s bourgeoisies, who consider the mall to be their ‘own’ shopping space, attempt to dominate space is through their lavish dressing and spending habits. In this way, the poor, shabbishly dressed and non or insignificant buyers may be seen as suspicious characters who ought to be monitored for any potential unwanted activity (e.g., pilfering) or simply be overlooked and devalued by shop attendants and affluent consumers (see article at https://craytales.wordpress.com/category/accra-mall/). Therefore, we can readily see how place qualities invoke certain class identities and enforce privileged lifestyles, which in turn empower those so-called privileged groups, who interpret such place qualities and
design elements as physical or spatial expressions of their values, thereby giving them exclusive right to consume these spaces and to preclude those they deem less fit to utilize those places.

The last, and perhaps the most potent, feature about the ascendant new formal landscapes in Accra that shapes social accessibility is price. Often seen as an impersonal economic force, price discrimination—whether seen in the form of expensive goods in Accra mall that sell three times the average prices of the same goods in the open markets, or the exorbitant prices of new homes or rental apartments in places like Villaggio Vista, or the whooping tuition fees charged in the so-called international schools—is a reality that is keeping many of Accra’s low income populations from having a taste of the good life associated with the new spaces.

The effect of these emerging trends is that 21stcentury Accra is becoming a more and more socially and spatially polarized city, a city of distinctly separate worlds, with dissimilar access to opportunities, life chances and quality of life. Albeit prior to the arrival of these elite landscapes, Accra was socially and spatially unequal, these divisions were not as sharp as they are now. This is because despite the fact that the various neighborhoods or suburbs (including related amenities) in the city could be differentiated on the basis of income as affluent, moderate or poor, there were hardly any exclusive residential and commercial spaces with tightly regulated access. But with the arrival of the elite landscapes such as the shopping malls, gated communities and international schools, new geographies of wealth and exclusion seem to be emerging in 21stcentury Accra, exacerbating the differences between spaces, between communities, and between residents, to the degree that the spatial fragmentation being created by the latter is metamorphosing into social fragmentation.

At a certain level of simplification, we can describe the resultant socio-ecological structure as a spatially explicit development continuum or “splintered urbanism” (after Graham and Marvin), with contradictory realities or worlds in the communities or spaces sitting at the
extreme ends. At one (left) end of this structure are the very poor neighbourhoods and migrant enclaves such as Jamestown, Chorkor and Nima, where conditions are depressed, congested and poor. Found here are the poor, migrants and the underclass who live in a survivalist mode of life. Almost the entire setting is very indigenous and local in character: children play on the streets (Figure 6.3); schools, if attended by them, are of low grade; residents sleep in sub-standard structures, often in crowded conditions; and household facilities (e.g., toilets, TV set, etc) are commonly shared. Other poverty-induced problems, including crime, teenage pregnancy, unemployment, illiteracy and malnutrition, are rampant, resulting in effect in low quality life. Collectively, we can refer to these areas as
“local Accra” (after Grant): areas that are farthest away from the current wave of modernity and globalization sweeping through the city. Standing in sharp contrast to “local Accra” is “global Accra”, comprised of the new elegant secluded communities like Manet Court and business centres like Airport city having amenities, people and lifestyles that resemble middle class neighbourhoods and urban environments found in global cities like London or New York. Residents here, many of whom have travelled outside Ghana before, some being returnees, are highly educated, high-income professionals who live in multi-million dollar plush homes having lavish features such as Jacuzzi, swimming pools, manicured gardens, guest rooms, etc (see Table 5.1 on neighbourhood classification in Accra). They drive luxury SUVs or other branded vehicles. They have international connections, business or familial, or sheer interest in what is going on in other parts of the world, that keeps them in constant touch with the outside world, whether via satellite TV, cell phones or the internet. Their children, who attend international schools like the American International School at East Legon where exotic sports like basket ball (Figure 6.3 A) are taught alongside British or American curricular. They mingle with other nationalities and Ghanaians of similar social standing; they have smart phones and tablet computers that connect them to one another and to the global world, and frequently use social media as a medium of interaction and engagement. They also watch American soap operas and may be fans of popular celebrities like Justin Bieber and Janet Jackson. In effect, life in the two socio-spatial worlds in Accra is qualitatively and experientially vastly different, with residents, and especially children from the two spaces, having unequal opportunities in life.

In between the two extreme worlds is a vast array of communities and spaces with residents having a mixture of experiences of Accra’s local and global worlds; these we can label “semi-global” Accra. With the arrival of other elite spaces and specialized facilities such as the Accra Mall and private clinics, the opportunities for real cross-class interaction among the inhabitants of local and global Accra are getting slimmer, something that, if not reduced consciously, could in future create serious rifts and tensions within the city, the (early) signs of which may already be visible. This is in spite of the fact that some of the new elite spaces are also creating opportunities for new forms of social integration, which
were hitherto non-existent. A typical example of this is the phenomenon happening in Osu whereby developers are giving spaces to previous land or property owners in their new high-end residential, commercial or mix-use developments, thereby creating mixed income spaces. Another could be seen in the new malls where, despite attempts by the new middle classes to territorize the shopping space for their exclusive use, lower class people still utilize those spaces, creating opportunities for cross-class interaction. But as to whether this is really happening or not is a matter for research to answer.

**Interdependences and Co-existence**

While in one breadth the emergence of the new middle class spaces and growing economic and spatial wealth between ‘global Accra’ and ‘local Accra’ may suggest the conquest or disappearance of the latter by the former, the latter actually continue to exist and, in some cases, expand side by side the new privileged spaces and people, as suggested by Figure 6.1. This is because the rise of the new middle class spaces in Accra has created some opportunities for mutual interdependencies for the co-existence of the two split or unequal worlds or spaces. One area where such interdependencies exist is the economic sphere. For instance, many of the new secondary business districts (e.g., Airport City) as well as new offices, shopping centres, recreational facilities and schools patronized or used by the middle classes resident in 1st class neighbourhoods such as East Legon and East Airport gated community utilize the services of low-skilled, low income workers such as security guards, janitors, store keepers, kitchen staff, bar attendants and others like them who hail from 3rd and 4th class neighbourhoods such as Jamestown, Nima and Bukom. The inhabitants of these lower-class neighbourhoods in turn rely on the emergent upscale spaces and their consumers for employment and other economic opportunities. Another example of the expression of these co-dependencies is the situation around many of the new shopping malls in Accra, particularly the Accra mall, where several makeshift commercial structures and informal trading activities have popped up around the mall, with retailers selling cheap goods to mall shoppers. A third example of this can be seen in the residential spaces where a number of the new middle class families and individuals directly employ and house low income persons from Accra’s poorer neighbourhoods to serve as housekeepers and watchmen (i.e., security guards), the latter
which typically work at night and return to their place of abode during the day, a practice common among those living in non-gated communities. Therefore, from these and other examples, we can see how spatial inequality and segregation, aggravated by the rise of the new middle class, has intrinsically become part of the process of middle/upper class formation, consumption and privileged lifestyle production in metropolitan Accra.

**The Aggravated Affordable Housing Challenge**

One major social challenge that is being mirrored and exacerbated by the growth of the new middle class spaces is affordable housing. With most of the new housing developments targeting the upper end of the market, Accra’s low and middle income housing sector, which has lagged behind demand since the state virtually axed its role as a major supplier of affordable or non-market housing as part of the 1980s neoliberal market reforms, has been worst hit. With a projected need of 5.7 million new rooms to adequately shelter the city’s population in 2020, according to the World Bank, the situation seems to have reached an alarming level, with some (e.g., Benzoni, 2013; Mwanza, 2013) calling it a crisis. The problem, which already existed before the new spurt in property development, is blamed on several factors, key among them a dysfunctional informal housing market, escalating land values linked to roaring economic growth (Benzoni, 2013), and, as mentioned above, the state’s systematic withdrawal from housing provision.

Incidentally, however, it is not the poor masses who are the hardest hit by Accra’s ballooning housing crisis, but those at the lower end of the middle class as well as new arriving members of the middle who have just entered the labour market, and whose earnings are not high enough to enable them purchase or rent a home in one of the lush new communities or buy land to build their own. Consequently, many of these moderate income earners, who desire to own or rent decent single family houses, feel squeezed out of Accra’s housing market and are thus being pushed out of the city onto the suburbs, where land and rental rates are more affordable. As for the urban poor and migrants, who are unwilling to relinquish their right to the city, they seem to be surviving the crisis by relying on their informal networks or by simply sleeping in shacks or on the street (Benzoni, 2013).
6.4 Weighing in the Natural Environment
At what cost to the environment is Accra’s nascent middle class urbanism? Unfortunately, this is an important issue that has not attracted much attention in the public and policy arena relative to the socio-economic and spatial aspects of Accra’s new growth path.

However, in order to fully appreciate the extent of the environmental impact from the current growth trajectory in Accra, it is important to revisit one salient feature about the middle class driven urbanization in the city which I extensively talked about in chapter four as an important element of urban growth and growth in post-reform Accra: sprawl. As I noted in chapter four, most of the city’s physical growth in the immediate post-reform era came from suburbanization rather than growth in the central city, and most of this growth comprised of low-density, housing development, which occurred in a leapfrog pattern. Although the emergence of the new middle class urban development in the latter post-adjustment (or post 2000) epoch, which include high-density office, commercial and residential developments in the urban core (including in-fill development), has in a way helped to redirect development towards the central city, thereby containing or slowing the speed of urban sprawl, suburbanization still remains a significant feature of the new middle class inspired growth underway.

A number of reasons account for this. One is that given the fact that land is both scarce and expensive in the urban core, most of the new planned single-family housing enclaves as well as more humongous shopping structures (e.g., Westhills) and new educational institutions with on-site residential facilities (e.g Ashesi) could only be built outside the city proper, despite the target population living in the urban core. Second, and relatedly, the quantity of land needed for such large scale developments are non-existent in the central city, so the peri-urban areas, where large tracts of unused land exist, remain the only possible location for such developments. This further highlights or reinforces another distinctive mark of the nature of the new middle class driven urban transformation in Accra, compared to other African and transitional cities, which I explicated in the preceding section: the limited scale of gentrification and displacement linked to the growth of the new elite spaces.
But apart from these, there are other ways in which the new upscale developments are indirectly fueling urban sprawl in Accra. One is that, as the new flood of investments flow into the urban core, competition for land at the urban core has become rife, with land values continuing to skyrocket. And local land owners are happier selling their lands to rich and international investors with more ambitious projects rather than to local individuals for single-family housing. The second is due to the fact that, while many modest middle-income workers and families desire to reside in the new planned communities, including gated enclaves, they are simply priced out of the market for those new luxury housing developments (especially those in the central city), which seems to target the upper end of the middle classes. Therefore, faced with grim prospect of being able to build or buy a decent, modestly priced home in metropolitan Accra, many new arriving members of the middle class, who aspire to own their dream home, are pushed to buy land in the suburbs to put up their own housing, even if incrementally. Lastly, many of the new large scale sub-urban housing, commercial institutional spaces targeting the middle classes have simply become new growth poles or magnets that are in turn attracting and spurring the growth of other residential and commercial developments (e.g., hostels, restaurants, etc) or settlements around them, thus creating mushrooms or fragments of unplanned growth that keep spreading over time.

The result of these is massive suburbanization, which has more than doubled the built up area in Accra over the past few decades (Figure 6.1), with many undesirable outcomes. One of these is the serious and on-going loss of green space, which hitherto provided some layer of beauty and serenity around the city. But today, most of these spaces have disappeared and replaced with dots of houses and other structures. At the urban core, some green spaces have also been eroded as a result of the new residential and commercial developments linked to the new middle classes. As many of the new developments have taken place in the absence of important public infrastructure, including public transit, the sprawled growth is also fueling car dependence, with its attendant negative consequences such as increased greenhouse gas emission, pollution and congestion.
Another problem is the impact that the sprawl is having on urban agriculture and food security. Although according Maxwell et.al (2000), locally-grown food constitutes less than ten percent of Accra’s food supply, urban agriculture, which used to be a source of livelihood and employment for some residents, is diminishing as more and more arable land is being converted into housing and other commercial developments. Unfortunately, there have not been any studies to ascertain how much urban agricultural land has been converted into non-agricultural uses. But perhaps the greatest impact from the heightened level of suburbanization in Accra has been the increased contribution to climate change, caused by the concomitant removal of greenery and the heightened emission of greenhouse gasses linked to car-dependent, low-density urban sprawl, and its related impacts, the most common being flooding. While flooding in the capital is not new, the situation seems to have been aggravated by the new developments occurring within and outside the city. This is because some of the new developments are built on flood prone areas, often in the absence of any proper flood risk assessment. Resultantly, as more and
more land is being covered with impervious surface, run-off increases, making floods in Accra more deadlier. Ernest Addae-Bosompra, a UK-based Ghanaian planner, has gone as far as describing the level of sprawl in Accra as the “the new epidemic destroying our city” (Addae-Bosompra, 2009). Whilst there is no scientific basis for Mr. Adae-Bosompra’s assertion, there is plenty of evidence that should give reason to worry.

6.5 Discussion: Perspectives on the New Middle Urbanism in Accra
As I mentioned at the beginning of this chapter, local and international perspectives on the new urbanism in Accra and elsewhere in Africa is far from being uniform. In a number of articles that have recently surfaced on the subject, a number of people have criticized the new development path in Accra and elsewhere on the continent. But the most vocal of these is Vanessa Watson, an urban planning professor at Cape Town University in South Africa. As I hinted above, Vanessa’s criticisms against the new urbanism has centred on two things: the polarizing effect of the new spatial formations and the unfamiliarity or unsuitability of the new urbanism in an otherwise informal urban landscape (Waston, 2014).

Locally, there are some who view the new urban development trajectory as a good thing for Accra. They praise the new trend as marking the dawn of a progressive new urbanism whereby the old, inefficient, limited state-led and hugely informal-based, urban development path, with its concomitant disorganization of the urban structure, economic stagnation and near-isolation urban Africa from the network of globally important cities is giving way to a new, more globalized, market-driven, consumerist and technology-oriented urban trajectory that is changing the face and fate of urban Africa by modernizing and formalizing its space economies, ensuring efficient land utilization, and transforming African cities into hubs of innovation, growth and wealth creation, with strong global connections. But others disagree with that view.

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24 Over the years, the death toll and or destruction to property from floods in Accra have been rising, a situation that has been attributed to a range of factors, including development in flood-prone areas, many of which lie outside the urban core. The most recent, in July 2015, claimed 175 lives; 25 of these was directly linked to the deluge, while the other 150 was caused by gas explosion at crowded gas station where people were seeking shelter during the rains. Although the government has vowed to deal with all the contributory factors, including mass demolition of unauthorized structures, it remains to be seen how effective the proposed measures will be without a comprehensive strategy that include growth management.
A round-table discussion was held sometime in 2015 to discuss Accra’s rapidly changing urban landscape. The event brought together over 100 individuals drawn from different segments of Accra’s population—ordinary residents, professional planners and architects, photographers, bloggers, expats, students, visitors, returned diaspora, and a former Accra mayor. Participants expressed mixed, albeit mostly worrying, views about how the city is developing. The common themes that run through the views expressed were identity, tension and the impact of the new development on an already overstretched urban infrastructure. Nana Kofi Acquah, a well-known Accra-based, Ghanaian photographer and blogger aptly captured the feelings and concerns of him and his fellow local residents as follows:

When I look at Accra, I see a city that has an identity crisis. If you look at the city, there is nothing that tells you where we were, where we’ve been, where we are, and where we’re going.

(Source: http://africanurbanism.net/2013/07/09/changing-accra/)

Looking at the evidence from the Accra case study as I have examined as well as the nature of the comments expressed at the above cited forum, it seems that most of the development have occurred without any articulated vision by the City government and without any serious consultation with ordinary residents, something I will address in the final chapter that, among other things, looks at the implications of the new middle class urbanism for urban policy in Accra.

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25 This event was organized by Adventures in the Diaspora, an Accra-based organization that organizes monthly conversations on contemporary developments in Ghana. The full audio conversation as well as key highlights can be found here: http://africanurbanism.net/2013/07/09/changing-accra/
7 Conclusion: Summary of Findings, Implications and Suggestions for Future Studies

The rise of the global middle class as a new socioeconomic cohort in the economies of the Global South has emerged as a topical issue in both popular and academic discourse, inviting both laudatory and critical views, and debates, pertaining to their size, generative causes, distinguishing marks, and their ramifications for economic, social, political and environmental stability. But despite the ubiquity of the middle class surge in the developing world, much of the geographic coverage of the group’s rise and their impact within the scholarly and international policy circles remain overwhelmingly centred on Asia, where the growth of the middle classes has been quite dramatic. By contrast, the scholarship on the middle class expansion in Africa remains scanty. In seeking to bring to bear a more nuanced African perspective on what has obviously become a stimulating topic within the development literature and urban scholarship, this thesis has recounted the story of the middle class ascent in Africa within this century, and examined how their growth is in turn affecting the character of its cities, physically, socially and economically, by concentrating on one African city whose rapid transformation is visibly being shaped by its growing middle class: Accra. The overwhelming conclusion of this research enterprise, employing a variety of methods, is that Africa’s middle class is real and having a demonstrable impact on the structure, form, growth, social profile, economy and cohesiveness of its cities, both positive and otherwise, not least from the Accra case study.

There are valuable insights to be generated from the broader African middle class rising story and the more trenchant analysis of their urbanizing effects in the Ghanaian capital of Accra, which we shall be getting into in the final chapter of this study, which aims to distil the key findings and implications from my investigation into the incipient middle class-urbanization nexus in 21st city Africa. My treatment of these matters is undertaken in six sections, guided by the key questions posed in chapter one of this thesis, namely: who are the new African middle class? What are their key growth drivers and distinguishing marks? What role is being played by the new middle class in the on-going remaking of African cities? And what opportunities and constraints does the incipient new middle class urbanism pose for Africa? In addressing these questions, the first three sections of this
chapter discuss the key findings from the study pertaining to the rise of the new African middle class and its connections to the economic and spatial transformation of African cities in the 21st century, while the latter two deal with the implications of these findings for national and urban development policy. More specifically, section two underscores the reality of Africa’s middle class rise, highlighting the major factors and key processes shaping the middle class expansion on the continent, including their distinguishing marks and internal dynamics, thereby contributing a new (or missing) perspective to the extant literature on the group. I reiterate the thesis that, first, apart from sharing some semblances with the middle classes in developed societies, the emerging African middle class is internally differentiable along educational, occupational and income terms; and that, secondly, contrary to the popular image of the African middle class outside the continent, the middle classes emerging in Africa today are more than just consumers but comprise professionals, entrepreneurs and other working cohorts who are making important contributions to the continent’s socio-economic development. In section three, I look at the nature of the relationship between class production and urban change in Africa, as observed from the Accra storyline and from the experience of other African cities. In section four, I re-examine the Accra case study, to divulge how it both conforms to and departs from mainstream theories or observations about the urban impact of class formation, as seen in the literature and replicated in other transitional cities with growing middle classes, highlighting the importance of contextual elements in producing distinctive urban identities and experiences from the interaction between the processes of class formation, structural change and urbanization. In section five, I discuss the public and urban policy implications of the African middle class boom, with specific reference to my case study, making the case for African governments to rethink their orthodox approaches to development by prioritizing the incipient middle classes without ignoring the poor, while their city managers, I argue, ought to focus on implementing some equalization and sustainability strategies through smart land use policies, social engineering, and investment in quality public services. Finally, I conclude with some suggestions for future studies in section six.
7.1 Salient Generic Facts about Africa’s Middle Class Growth

Despite the proliferation of materials on the growth of the middle class in Africa, there remains some controversy (and confusion) about who the emerging middle classes in Africa are, how large they are, how ‘global’ or ‘western’ they are, and the dimensions of the new middle class. In this section, I hope to bring greater clarity on the discourse about the rise of the African middle class, using my case study of Accra.

First, contrary to the skepticism about the reality of the middle class ascent in Africa, this thesis (and other studies) support the view that Africa’s middle class is a significant phenomenon, despite the hype often made about it, as numerous studies have affirmed the formation of this social cohort on a region-wide scale, besides the AfDB brief and the McKinsey study cited in chapter one and two of this thesis. As an example, the continent’s largest lender, the South Africa-based Standard Bank Group, in a 2014 report titled “Understanding Africa’s Middle Class”, concluded that “powerful rise in household income has allowed the formation and strengthening of a substantial middle class” (see http://www.blog.standardbank.com/node/61428). However, unlike the AfDB, the Standard Bank, like the McKinsey Group, relies on household income and consumption rather than on individual data (using what it refers to as a more nuanced measure of living standards, translated into $15 daily consumption, based on what it calls the South African model). Besides, the study is limited to eleven leading African economies outside South Africa: Ghana, Kenya, Angola, Nigeria, Sudan, South Sudan, Uganda and Tanzania. Consequently, it arrives at a much smaller figure of 15million middle class households in Africa—albeit representing an increase of 4.6 million since 2000—a figure it forecasts to more than double to 40 million by 2030. More importantly, however, the report corroborates other attributes about the emerging African middle class underscored in this thesis, namely the fact that majority are urban-based households, headed by individuals engaged in professional occupation, with over 90% having gadgets like television and frequently resort to the use of formal retail space as opposed to informal markets (York, 2014).
While it is indeed difficult to get an accurate picture of the size of the African middle class (something I will address in the next point), all across Africa—from the small, relaxed Algerian seaside city of Annaba in the north, to the bustling streets of Johannesburg in the south, to the colourful scenes of the sprawling megacity of Lagos in the west, to the towering skyline of Addis-Ababa in the east—one is confronted with numerous physical signifiers of Africa’s new middle class. These signifiers and proxy measures include the huge spike in consumption of luxury goods such as personal automobile, cell phones, personal computers, cable television, home appliances, and beauty products, the aggregate value of which rose exponentially to $1.3 trillion in 2013 (Delloitte, 2013). They also include emergent new lifestyle patterns such as mall shopping, use of social media, recreational spending and assertiveness, linked to upward social mobility and global exposure, as well as the rise of new economic activities and associated occupational types such as private education and health care, IT specialists, graphic artists and clothing designers, independent researchers, think tanks and financial advisors, which are middle class occupations or domains.

The second is the issue of the size of the African middle class which has become a debated topic. Given the scarcity of hard data, this is understandably an important item for both researchers and outside investors: to the latter, a critical information piece needed to make ‘risky’ business decisions. Yet the debate about the data also detracts from other issues that the emergence of the African middle class raises. However, there are two issues that many scholars interested in the topic should appreciate. First, the difficulty in getting an accurate estimate of the African middle class is not so much the problem of the lack of reliable data (although this is a huge challenge in Africa, one that needs to be improved particularly at the metropolitan scale for more informed decision-making), but secondly, rather the more complex, unresolved problem of defining middle class cohorts—a universal challenge not peculiar to Africa, as I underscored in chapter 2. Essentially, there are various schools of thought on defining the middle class. These can be put into two broad groups: those that rely on objective, quantitative or observable measures (typically income or expenditure), and those that rely on subjective sociological elements (such as education, prestige, status and lifestyle values). The income-based approach to defining
the middle class can further be distinguished into two methods: the absolute approach, which classifies individuals (or households) as middle class if they fall within a certain defined income or consumption bracket; and the relative approach, which defines the middle class relative to other income groups within their regional or national context, using percentiles or median incomes (Ulbrich, 2015; Ncube and Lufumpa, 2015). But the income-based definition of the middle social class suffers from a number of problems. For instance, there is no consensus on what should be the ideal income or consumption threshold for the absolute method, besides the deeper moral question of whose value or living standards should be used as the yardstick for determining who belongs to the middle class in any given society. The relative approach appears to be more sensitive or relevant to a particular regional or national context, but because the median income or consumption differs from one country to another, the definition of the middle class changes from one country to another, making cross-country comparisons difficult. Then, there is the unsettled issue of focusing on individuals as opposed to households.

This accounts for the vastly different estimates of the African middle class as churned out by the numerous entities that have attempted to quantify the group using different income or expenditure thresholds: from as few as 15 million households based on the Standard Bank’s middle class definition of per capita daily consumption of $15-115, to the much larger, often-criticized African Development Bank’s estimate of 326 million middle class Africans computed based on a daily consumption expenditure range $2-20, and the host of estimates in between them. In any case, monetary-based definitions of the middle class are insufficient as they capture only one signifier of middle class attainment, income, to the neglect of other important parameters such as occupation, education, wealth, values and lifestyle, thereby failing to portray the true life experience of the middle class in their respective national or regional contexts. While the socio-political perspective offers a much more inclusive approach to defining the middle class, incorporating elements such as education, occupation, skill level, lifestyle, political orientation, association and even self-identification, the subjective nature of some of these signifiers makes it difficult to measure and thus quantify the middle class.
In part, the disagreements over defining who is middle class today have arisen from the massive transformations in the economic and socio-political structure of contemporary societies compared to the more orderly, less sophisticated and hierarchical structures of the early industrial societies, when the two major intellectual forefathers of class theory, Karl Marx and Max Weber, could easily stratify societies into upper, middle and working class, either based on property relations (i.e., whether as owners, managers or labourers of production capital), or their affiliated wealth, social status and political power or consciousness. But in today’s complex societies, characterized by recurrent shifts in the nature of capital and the organization of the production process such as that conventional ‘white-collar’ and ‘blue-collar’ distinction between middle and working class occupations tend to blur, while the breakdown of traditional social hierarchies and barriers to upward mobility has, for example, made it possible for lower-class individuals to attain higher social status through education, marriage, political power, etc, without a necessary change in their class position per the Marxian system. Therefore, simplistic definitions of social class based on the ideal Marxian and Weberian types may no longer hold in contemporary societies—leading some critics such as Kingston (2010) to question the usefulness of social class as an important rubric for social differentiation, although neo-Marxist and neo-Weberian theories emphasize the importance of market capacities in shaping life chances, and argue that deeper observation and analysis of the combined socio-economic and lifestyle characteristics of the population in any given society today reveals the preponderance of the three social classes (Fitzgerald, 2012).

In line with that reasoning, one way of capturing the middle class is by fusing elements from the various perspectives, combining economic and sociological measures such as higher education, professional occupation, above-average incomes, and ownership of assets such as personal automobiles, personal computers, which are widely considered important marks of middle class attainment, as was done in the Accra case study. Unfortunately, none of the estimates of the African middle class so far uses a more inclusive approach, perhaps due to the absence of reliable data on the above elements. Given the paucity of such data, one helpful way to gauge the size and rate of expansion of the African middle class is the use of proxy indicators, based on our knowledge of the
attributes of the middle class wherever they emerge. These proxy measures, many of which have already been mentioned above, include the spike in consumption of certain non-essential, material goods inclusive of cell phones, internet and home appliances (e.g., microwaves, refrigerators, television and sound systems), and services such as private clinics, banks, domestic insurance products, legal services and massage therapy, as well as emergent elitist lifestyles linked to upward social mobility: for example, air travel, luxury recreation (e.g., golfing, skiing and wildlife tourism), writing, use of social media and consumption of western media. The other way is to examine the emergence or growth of new infrastructure linked to the middle class—for example, shopping malls, private clinics, gated enclaves, broadcast media, and luxury recreational facilities such as golf courses, which are easier to count. While these surrogate measures of middle class formation in Africa are agreeably inadequate in themselves, they do, to a reasonable extent, reliably inform us about the scale of the middle class expansion taking place on the continent. In sum, the imprints of the middle class presence in continental Africa are so indelible and so glaring to ignore, even if we cannot tell how many they are.

The third vital fact that needs to be underscored about the rise of the middle class in Africa is that the middle class proliferation on the continent is not an isolated event, but rather part of a bigger story—the story of Africa’s 21st century renaissance, popularly framed as the ‘Africa Rising’ mantra, but actually connoting real, sustained economic growth (as measured by GDP, incomes, consumption, etc). This Africa rising story, just like its offspring—the middle class enlargement on the continent—was initially greeted with skepticism, although it seems to be gaining currency over time, as more and more evidence of change in Africa, both in statistical and experiential terms, surface. More importantly, however, the African renaissance is, contrary to popular thinking, more than just accelerated economic growth but also includes important trends in the socio-cultural and political landscape of Africa: the dwindling incidents of armed conflicts; the downsizing in the number of poor people on the continent; better access to quality education and health care; the significant halt in the spread of HIV/AIDS as well as infant mortality; the spread of electoral democracy and the rule of law, coupled with the rise of a new generation of political leadership and an active or engaged civil society; and the new
sense of pride among Africans about their own identity and culture are but few of the positive developments that characterize Africa's recent rise. Even on the economic front, Africa's new growth momentum is not only being driven by a commodity boom caused by the discovery of new resources and the surge in global demand for Africa's resource wealth, particularly from newly industrializing nations like China, although revenue from commodity exports remain the largest source of foreign exchange. But, as observed in Chapter 2, Africa’s growth is being impelled by the strengthening of the non-extractive sectors such as services, investment and consumption vis-à-vis the extractive domain, the latter now accounting for a third of Africa’s GDP. In a sense, therefore, the middle class expansion Africa is witnessing is another demonstration of Africa’s 21st century renaissance.

Fourth, Africa’s middle class growth cannot be attributed to one particular set of factors but a culmination of several, both local and external. The external elements include economic globalization, international trade, the new international division of labour, social change and the diffusion of western culture (i.e., cultural globalization), and new international mobility patterns—specifically, the new wave of diasporan Africans returning to their home countries. The local factors engendering upward social (in particular, inter-generational) mobility, and thus the growth of the middle classes in Africa, include economic liberalization; improved economic and political governance, including decentralization and investment in human capital, as evinced by the large-scale expansion in access to higher education, affordable health care and targeted poverty reduction programs; structural and occupational change, including the rise of new industries and new occupational categories; urbanization; and the growth of the local private sector. It also includes changing social behaviour and norms in Africa such as shifting attitudes towards (or perceptions about) education, women, family life, work, success and social relations and communication. Here again is another important point worth re-echoing: that Africa’s middle class expansion is not being propelled, as conventional wisdom suggests, only by the influence of exogenous forces such as intensified globalization and international spatial division of labour, increased trade, investments and labour mobility, and cultural influence from the West. Equally, it is also
the outcome of local policy shifts by African governments towards a more inclusive growth ethic and social change, including new understandings of social mobility and the rise of a new entrepreneurial spirit which have reacted with the external factors to create opportunities that facilitate upward social mobility for those able to take advantage of them.

Fifth, the emerging African middle class (or a section of it) share certain traits with their international counterparts that accord with the notions of the so-called global middle class. Despite the ambiguity of the term global middle class, popular characterizations are rife with depictions of young, ambitious, smartly-dressed, highly educated, techno-savvy professionals domiciled in important (global or globalizing) cities of the world, having jobs with high incomes that afford them the privilege to consume branded products like Iphones and whisky, and travel abroad. They are also said to cherish small family sizes, invest substantially in their children's education, hold liberal economic views, and extol the virtues of meritocracy, government transparency and political accountability or democracy—values purportedly shared by their counterparts everywhere. It is these qualities and preferences that are being displayed by the growth of the African middle class, as, for example, divulged by the 2011 survey of the Nigerian middle class involving some 1,004 respondents across three Nigerian cities by Renaissance Capital, one of several new multinational financial groups operating in Africa (Renaissance Capital, 2011. See full results here: http://www.fastestbillion.com/res/Research/Survey_Nigerian_middle_class-260911.pdf).

At the same time, however, Africa’s middle classes display certain traits that qualitatively distinguish them from their counterparts elsewhere. These variations arise from their differential financial and cultural contexts, namely, that middle class Africans have lower spending power and are more religious compared to their Asian and Western counterparts—the latter implying that religious considerations still play a key role in decisions relating to spousal choice, association and spending among the middle classes in Africa. Also, while factory employees constitute a sizeable portion of the middle classes in emerging regions like Asia and Latin America; in Africa, the overwhelming majority of
the middle classes are service workers or small business owners—a fact that leads to my sixth observation about the African middle class: their heterogeneity. Compared to Western nations, however, Africa lacks a substantial well-paid, managerial-professional class among its middle class cohort.

Mainstream depictions of the African middle classes tend to portray them as a homogeneous group, typically as a new, affluent cohort—something Simons (2013) calls the all-purpose-middle class African consumers (APAMCs). But as my broader story and investigation of the group in Ghana has shown, the sprouting middle class in Africa today are far from being a uniform consumerist segment emerging out of the African population. Instead, they comprise a complex array of professionals, ranging from highly-mobile, top business executives with incomes running in their hundreds of thousands of dollars, to modestly paid, stationary civil servants who have to save for months in order to embark on vacation or foreign trip, and the host of professionals in between them. There are employers and employees; salaried workers and those who earn professional fees; academics with multiple degrees and celebrities without university education; public and private sector workers; and those who hold international passports and those who are yet to travel beyond the boundaries of their country. In other words, the new African middle classes are highly differentiated internally, and consumption is just but one way of recognizing them from the other segments of the population, especially the poor masses—incidentally, one that also highlights their internal differences.

At the macro-level, these internal dynamics can be viewed in two principal ways, in a temporal and spatial sense. From a temporal perspective, there are two major divisions within the African middle class population. The old(er) middle class generation who principally grew out of bureaucratic expansion and state-led industrialization prior to the economic reforms; and the new(er) generation middle class, who emerged in the post-adjustment epoch starting from the 2000s to the present. Given the distinct historical, social and political-economic factors shaping their respective formations, there are some perceptible differences in appearance, preferences and values amongst the two middle class cohorts in Africa today. The older, mostly retired, predominantly male cohort, who thrived at a period of state-dominated economies and limited interaction between Africa
and the outside world, have greater attachment to the state—to the welfare state to be specific—have likely previously worked in the public sector, have limited knowledge and use of modern technology, received their training in traditional fields such as medicine, law, engineering and public administration, tend to live in government-built or owned housing units within the central city, and tend to be socially conservative. But the progeny of this older middle class—sprouting in an era of unprecedented globalization, economic liberalization, privatization, expanded educational opportunities, rapid technological and social change, and the spread of neoliberalism—tend to have more diverse educational backgrounds. These backgrounds include such new fields as business administration, finance, computer science, governance, international relations, and development studies as well as specialized degrees in subfields of both traditional and new academic disciplines such as corporate law, human resource management, actuarial science, marketing, purchasing and supply chain management, packaging, web design and programming. They are also more demographically diverse, more technologically adept, more globally connected, more materialistic, more liberally-minded culturally, and tend to reside in secluded housing enclaves.

From a spatial standpoint, there exist vital national and regional variations amongst the various segments of the African middle classes, both in terms of size and internal structure. For example, proportionately, Ghana has a larger middle class population than Nigeria, even though the latter's GDP is ten times larger than the former's, mirroring the disparities in inequality among the two nations (see the discussion on the emergence of the new African middle class in Chapter two, section 2.4). Also, still in Nigeria, the profile of the middle class residing in the city of Abuja, the country's capital, is overwhelmingly made up of civil servants and other public sector employees compared to Lagos, Nigeria's financial hub, which has a more diverse middle class population, with only a small proportion being public sector workers. These dissimilarities reflect the dynamic nature of the forces undergirding the growth of the African middle class as well as the unique contextual elements that are at play within each African country and city, giving rise to recognizably distinct middle classes across time and space, an important issue I shall revisit in the succeeding sessions.
Finally, while the impact of the middle class surge in Africa can be felt across multiple spectrums and scales, the urban realm represents the most salient terrain where the consequences of Africa's middle class expansion is most vivid—a fact simply attributable to the disproportionately large concentration of Africa's middle classes in the large metropolitan cities on the continent, which are the centres of political power, culture and wealth accumulation.

7.2 The New Middle Class and Urban Remaking in 21st Century Africa
The second important set of lessons, of more theoretical value, that we can derive from the Accra case study is a more nuanced understanding of the nature and dynamics of the interconnections between the processes of urbanization, economic change and class reproduction in Africa. First, as this study has shown, the process of urbanization, class formation and socio-economic change are closely intertwined in Africa than previously thought. This is because most of the opportunities for upward social mobility such as education (and especially higher education), non-farm employment, higher incomes, social networks, start-up capital, and higher quality of life are found in cities and towns, rather than in rural Africa. As we saw in chapter three, the emergence and growth of higher-status groups (i.e., the middle and upper classes) in Ghana, particularly in the post-reform era, coincides with high rates of urbanization and economic growth, while periods of massive decline in the rate of urbanization and economic growth, as seen in the early 1980s, are associated with the concomitant attrition of higher income groups and the expansion of low income groups.

The presence or growth of the middle classes is in turn associated with the emergence of new industries (and related occupations), new housing patterns, secondary centres and complex, spatially-significant and physically-distinctive structures that mark a stark departure from the old forms of urbanization in Africa, with consequential impact on urban structure and social life, as we have seen in the Accra case study. In this sense, therefore, middle class aspiration is both a driver and consequence of urbanization. But given the fact that most of these shifts have only recently began to occur in Accra and other African cities when the expansion of the middle has been significant, it is only reasonable to posit that there is a threshold at which point the growth of the middle class
will have significant repercussions for urban transformation, something that could be worthy of empirical research.

Second, the Accra case study has shown that the role of the middle class in the process of urban transformation itself goes beyond what I call passive consumption. As previously mentioned, Africa’s emerging middle classes are often depicted as mere consumers of the new forms of wealth being introduced in African cities, including those elite landscapes examined above. But as the Accra case study has shown, the new middle classes are actively engaged in the production of these privileged spaces to varying degrees. They may act as project proponents, owners or financiers, as seen with the example of the young property developer Nana Kwame Bediako; or as professional employees (e.g., architects, engineers, planners, accountants, graphic designers, etc) whose services are directly or indirectly used up in the production of these landscapes; or as independent consultants contracted to advertise, sell or manage the project upon completion (e.g., Broll Ghana)—a phenomenon we have seen with many of the new residential, office and commercial developments in Accra that are increasingly relying on local professional expertise in the construction, operation and marketing of these spaces.

In addition, many of the new middle classes are the faces behind the new type of economic activities and business innovations that are helping to change the economic base of African cities. From the ever-inviting tranquil ambiance at Dzigbordi Dosoo’s award-winning Allure Africa Spa clinic in Osu, where Accra’s growing appearance-conscious professionals go for specialized beauty and wellness care, to the busy corporate environment at Roland Agimbire’s RLG Communications office in Osu, where passion-driven, young Ghanaian technology enthusiasts congregate daily to develop, produce, market and sell all sorts of high-tech cell phone and computer-based products and services to local clients, to the more serious academic campus of Patrick Awuah’s Ashesi University in nearby Berekuso, where young intelligent Ghanaians hungry for a new kind of education with vigour and prestige are being trained to become change-makers in society, the new middle classed in Ghana, like their counterparts elsewhere on the continent, are helping to reshape the destiny of African societies and cities, however small.
it may seem. While critical urban scholarship, including Vanessa Waston’s, have focused on the problematic aspects of the new consumption spaces serving the middle classes, they simply overlook the many other important contributions being made by the group towards the economic renaissance of African cities through, for example, technological and business innovation, employment generation, education provision, knowledge creation, social development and new revenue to the state, including many other spill-over effects.

Lastly, the rise and contributions of the urban middle class presents a challenge to dominant views about African cities and related theories on urban change. Previous literature on urbanization in Africa, as in other developing world cities since the last quarter century, have linked the processes of urbanization and social change to two major exogenous events: globalization and the new international division of labour, which are interpreted through the lens of the global city framework propounded by leading urban scholars like John Friedman and Saskia Sassen, and the theory of new international division of labour advanced by Frobel, Henrich and Kreye in the 1980s. These theories, more or less the spatial or urban version of the meta developmental world system theory, posits that urban growth and change in cities outside the so-called ‘core’ countries of the world is principally a function of the global reorganization of production and capital involving the dispersion of production functions from the core regions to distant peripheral and semi-peripheral regions (Frobel, Henrich and Kreye, 1982; Friedman, 1986). Within this narrative, urbanization is said to come about as a result of the incorporation of developing world cities into the global economy through the establishment of new modern (mostly manufacturing) industries and related service occupations in major developing world cities, resulting in mass rural-urban population drift. But given the fact of the rather limited scope and scale of foreign capital and its overwhelming concentration in primate cities of the Global South, the common outcome is a dichotomous urban economy featuring a tiny formal, semi-skilled, semi-industrial urban economy, contrasted by a large low-skilled, low-wage informal domain of microscopic survival (Friedman, 1986). Thus, social differentiation in the local population, it is posited, emanate from the marked differences in income and wealth between a small ascendant, politically-connected elite who benefit from rent and taxes on primary resources
incorporated into the ‘globalized’ production process, and the impoverished mass of informal workers, resulting in social polarization and spatial or regional inequality (Frobel, Henrich and Kreye, 1982; Sassen-Koob, 1984; Friedman, 1986). In this process, therefore, peripheral cities, as remarked by Friedman, “lacked a substantial middle class” (Friedman, 1986: 77) capable of reconfiguring the socio-economic structures of cities and urban environment in any significant way, as most of the ‘white-collar’ jobs in the ‘modern’ sector were reserved for expats, leaving majority of the locals employed by foreign companies in ‘blue-collar’ and low-level clerical occupations, thereby lacking the professional characteristics, financial means and related elitist lifestyle akin to those possessed by the middle classes in the core.

However, as this thesis has shown, the growth of a new highly-educated and professional middle class in Africa now constitutes a significant phenomenon in African societies and cities. And, as underscored above and demonstrated in the main chapters of this work, the significance of the new middle class growth in Africa does not lie in their sheer numerical increase, but in the many different ways in which the new middle classes are significantly altering the economic and physical landscape of cities where they have a huge presence directly or indirectly. Arguably, the emergence of the new middle class in African cities such as Accra is partly the outcome of new forms of globalization and international labour divisions (which differ from earlier rounds of globalization and international division of labour) that increasingly involve the movement of finance capital, higher-order (producer) services, education, cultural production and new investments in (non-traditional) sectors like real estate, telecommunications and aviation and their related high-paying jobs into Africa from both the core and non-core regions, including the associated shifts in investment policies and practices, resulting in significant component of highly-skilled, highly-paid professional and managerial-type jobs in international companies now being allotted to locals, as my analysis of FDI trends investment in Accra in chapter 4 show. But at the same time, the concurrent growth or emergence of a dynamic local independent professional and entrepreneurial middle class in Africa has equally been noteworthy. In either case, as Ncube and Lufumpa (2015) have argued, the rise of the middle class in Africa represents a challenge to the traditional imagery of binary social structures and
economic stagnation African cities have long being depicted. In other words, the growth of the middle class requires a new theoretical paradigm for analyzing the dynamic processes of urbanization, economic change and new class formation in Africa.

7.3 The Accra Experience: Commonality and Distinctiveness
One other issue of interest to this research enterprise was to ascertain how the nascent middle class urbanism in Accra compares to the situation elsewhere—that is, in other African and developing world cities with substantial middle class populations—as observed through this research and from the empirical literature on class and urban change. While the specific factors underlying class reformation differ from one region to another, and the impact that the growth of the middle class will have on any city is both contingent on the attributes of the group and the particularities of the urban (and national) environment in which they reside, there is some convergence in the (empirical) literature on the general economic, spatial and social outcomes of middle class ascent in any given city, regardless of its regional or national setting—perhaps an attestation of the international character of the middle class.

In the economic sphere, the growth of the middle class first tends to be associated with structural transformations in the economic make-up of cities, entailing both industrial and sub-industrial shifts. The industrial change manifests either in the concomitant ascendance and attrition of certain industries or the relative growth of one industry over others—typically, services over traditional manufacturing, in what urban geographers (e.g., Hutton, 2004; Lin, 2004) refer to as the tertiarization of the urban space economy. The sub-industrial restructuring entails the shift from lower-order services (e.g., wholesale and retail trade) to higher-order urban service (e.g., banking, aviation, telecommunication, ICT, broadcast media, etc) as well as the emergence or birth of new service industries, including the cultural production and specialized, knowledge-based sectors such as think tanks, specialized medical care, legal consulting, accounting and real estate services. Also, as Young (1999) and others have observed, the growth of the middle class also elevates consumption to become an important component of the economy of cities. Another important macro-economic consequence of the expansion of the middle class, more specific to the African context, which observers of the middle class growth in Africa,
including the African Development Bank (2011), Zuma (2011) Ncube and Lufumpa (2015) have stated, is the relative growth of the private sector compared to the public sector.

The second type of middle class-associated economic change in cities is the rise of new occupational cohorts linked to the afore-described industrial changes. More broadly, it entails the growth of the knowledge workforce, comprised of highly-skilled, well-paid scientific, technical, professional and managerial occupations such as physicians, legal practitioners, researchers, academics, accountants, etc—that is, the so-called managerial-professional class carved by Ehrenreich and Ehrenreich (1977)—and more recently the creative class (after Florida, 2002) such as graphic and fashion designers, software developers, architects, artists, media broadcasters, and body care and entertainment professionals (e.g., cosmeticians, actors, film producers, musicians, etc) with the resurgence of the urban cultural economy, all of who can be distinguished by the fact that they ‘think’ for a living.

At the spatial level, the rise of the middle class is often associated with the emergence of new service centres; patterns of new (luxury) housing; and new consumption landscapes—or what Hodben (2014) refers to as consumption-oriented urban development. Middle class urbanism is also often characterized by low-density suburbanization and the formation of new or edge cities (Jackson, 1985; Garraeu; 1991; Yeboah, 2000; McCrory, 2015). Lastly, in the social realm, the literature on the middle class and urban change also point to, and draws a causal link between, middle class formation and the emergence or deepening of social challenges such as segregation, inequality and polarization, linked to the phenomenon of gentrification, displacement, seclusionary landscape formations and the uneven distribution of wealth and development (see Ley, 1996; Bagaeen and Oduku, 2010; Ncube et. al, 2015).

The underlying narrative behind all these observed or expected changes in developing world cities with growing middle class populations is that being a group of highly-educated, skilled and globally-aware people having new set of values, lifestyle and expectations similar to their counterparts in the developed world, the emerging middle
classes in developing world cities like Accra create or encourage the creation of living, working and recreational spaces or environment commensurate with their acquired values and perceived social status, bringing about urban transformation.

Situating Accra’s experience within this middle-class-shaped urban transformation narrative, one finds a number of semblances between events in Accra today and other cities that have or are experiencing burgeoning middle class populations, including other African cities such as Lagos, Luanda, Addis Ababa, Dakar and Nairobi. In the economic domain, for instance, the growth of the middle class in Accra is being accompanied by the higher growth of the urban service sector, including the resurgence of cultural production and the emergence of technology-based service industries, as my analysis of the 2000 and 2010 census data in chapter 4 suggests. Furthermore, the growth of the city’s middle class has paralleled the rise of previously-missing or insignificant occupations such as financial advisers, software entrepreneurs, web designers, cosmeticians, property managers and real estate agents, just to name a few. In the area of consumption, Accra’s middle class growth is correlated with a dramatic rise in the consumption of non-basic products such as housing, personal automobiles, television sets, personal computers.

In terms of morphology, the changes that have attended the growth of the middle class elsewhere—including low-density, urban sprawl, the emergence of luxury housing, the rise of mega urban projects, the birth of conspicuous consumption landscapes, and the ascendance of secondary CBDs—are similar to what is happening in 21st century Accra. Finally, on the social side, the case study reveals rising levels of social inequality and emergent new patterns of class-based residential segregation in Accra as the city’s middle class population expands, as was seen in chapter 5. In sum, it could be asserted that, overall, Accra’s nascent middle class urbanism is consistent with the narrative on middle class formation and urban remaking.

These emergent trends in Accra have been observed in other African cities like Lagos, Nairobi, Addis Ababa and Luanda. For example, the 2011 Renaissance Capital Survey of the Nigerian middle classes found a connection between the growth of the middle classes
and the expansion of the private sector, the consumer market and professional occupations in Lagos, Abuja and Port Harcourt. Likewise, Juma (2011) specifically attributes the growth of ‘Nollywood’, Nigeria’s vibrant multi-billion dollar, Lagos-based, movie production industry (the largest in Africa and second largest in the world after India’s ‘Bollywood’), and the transformation of Ikeja into Lagos’ new high-tech district to the growth of the city’s middle class. Similarly, Llesamni, (2012) links the proliferation of gated communities in Lagos to the growth of the city’s middle class and links the phenomenon to rising social polarization. In Kenya, and Kroeker (2014) and Kapchanger (2015) have found connections between the growth of the Kenyan middle class and the boom in real estate, financial services, conspicuous consumption and the emergence of the creative industry, including Nairobi’s dot.com sector. In Ethiopia, Haileselasie (2013) attributes Addis Ababa’s new retail culture to the city’s emerging middle classes.

Notwithstanding the consistency of the Accra story with the observed trajectory of urban development linked to the expansion of the middle class, the Accra case study, when examined more closely, also reveals some distinctiveness, especially when juxtaposed to the experience of comparable African cities such as Lagos and Nairobi. These differences, it must be underscored, do not so much relate to the broader manifestations of the middle class-driven urbanization described above, but rather the discernably differential spatial expressions of these changes and the resultant consequences. For instance, the types of gated communities that are emerging in Accra are principally of the prestige and lifestyle forms, reflecting a desire for status, rather than overcome security concerns. As we saw in chapter 5, the dominant themes used in the design and marketing of the new up-scale residential enclaves in Accra are prestige, privacy, comfort and luxury. While security is also featured in the marketing of these communities, it is not used in the sense of physical safety but rather freedom from the hassle of developing one’s own property in Accra, as Grant (2005) pointed out. To the contrary, many of the gated communities in cities like Lagos and Nairobi (including Johannesburg and other South African cities) are security zones or at least incorporate security as a major element of community design (Llesanmi, 2012; Mwangi, 2013). This is due to the extant high rates of urban crime in those cities, which is further reflective of the relatively high degree of polarization and socio-spatial
inequalities visible in those cities, another difference between Accra and other African cities with growing middle class populations.

Another significant distinct feature about the Accra case study is the limited scale of gentrification and dislocation linked to middle class place-making, as highlighted in the previous chapter. Compared to Lagos, Nairobi and Addis Ababa, the level of gentrification associated with the development of middle class spaces in Accra is of a smaller scale. Several reasons account for this. One is simply the (greater) availability of land at both the urban core and the peripheries. The other reason for this is the fact that many of the houses found in the low-income (especially native) areas of Accra are family rather individually owned properties on lands which are vested in custodial structures. This makes them unattractive, if not impossible, for private developers.

7.4 **Implications for National and Urban Development Policy**

There is no doubt that the rise of the new middle class in Africa has huge implications for the development of African nations and cities. Following complains about the social cost of the mid-1980s World Bank and IMF-led structural adjustment programs, African governments—national and urban alike—were made to make poverty reduction the centerpiece of their development effort through the so-called empowerment or poverty reduction strategy (PRS), which became the new debt relief conditionality (Imboela, 2005; ODI, 2009). Similar anti-poverty criticisms of the economic reforms led to a tsunami of international NGOs in Africa, thriving on the business of poverty alleviation and capacity building. But after decades of unimpressive results, the PRS approach has severely been criticized—among others for failing to unleash Africa’s economic potential while forging a cycle of dependency (Ayodele et. al, 2005; Williamson, 2009; Juma, 2011).

In the wake of the ascendance of the global middle class in recent years, however, there have been calls for governments in emerging economies to shift the development focus away from the poor to concentrate on the middle classes as the new engine of growth. This call, which was initially made by the Norwegian government minister for International Development, Erik Solheim, in 2010, and has been supported by African development pundits, including Callestous Juma. The proposition is premised on the argument that
supporting the middle classes generate higher rates of economic growth that also benefits all, including the poor (See Juma, 2011). Given the historical role of the middle classes in the socio-economic and political advancement of Western societies and the current contributions being made by the emerging middle classes in Africa, such an argument is not out of sync. But while the push for a middle-class-oriented development policy in Africa continues to intensify, concerns about the ills that have accompanied the rise of the rise of middle classes such as widening levels of social, income and spatial inequality, environmental pollution, congestion, loss of urban green space, gentrification and affordable housing shortage, which critics like Vanessa Watson have advanced, continue to grow. In light of these, the right question to ask, it seems to me, is how do African national and municipal governments properly respond to the opportunities and challenges posed by the growth of the middle classes? Below, I share my opinion on the public and urban policy implications of the middle class growth in Africa, focusing on Ghana and Accra.

7.4.1 Implications for Public Policy
Like many other African nations, the thrust of development policy in Ghana remains pro-poor. But despite the populism of this approach, many of the recent economic successes that post-reform Ghanaian governments proudly associate themselves with—including the dynamic growth of the private sector, the expansion of the domestic aviation industry, the surge in FDI inflows, and the country’s ascension to middle income status, not to mention the numerous other non-economic gains such as the entrenchment of democracy and the emergence of a vibrant media landscape—have been contributed to by the middle classes. Yet, in spite these achievements, the language and practice of development in Ghana is overwhelmingly focused on the poor.

But as we saw from the role of the middle class in Accra’s economic transformation, it is the emerging middle classes, the new change-making generation, who, together with the upper classes, are pioneering new economic enterprises, businesses and investments that are radically transforming the nation’s economic landscape. Paying greater attention to the needs of this cohort seems a prudent policy to me, therefore. Although poverty reduction and upward social mobility are intertwined, policies that bring people out of poverty are,
as Fiereira, et.al (2013) have noted, not necessarily the same as those that move people into the middle classes or help them.

While there has been a significant improvement in the business climate in Ghana today compared to what existed in previous eras, there is still a number of bottlenecks faced by the nation’s emerging young, ambitious entrepreneurial class. One of these is the lack of affordable credit for small businesses, which is partly the outcome of excessive government borrowing from the domestic market, crowding out credit available to the private sector. The other is the high corporate tax rate, which has been rising in recent years. Apart from these, the recent challenges in the macro-economic climate, including rising inflation and the depreciating cedi, have combined with the unsolved energy crisis to compound the challenges facing the middle classes, as evinced by the country’s recent slip in both the World Bank’s Ease of Doing Business and the World Economic Forum’s Global Competitiveness latest rankings from 112 to 114, and from 111 to 119, respectively.

Thus, in addition to urgently addressing these challenges, the government needs to invest more in the right kind of infrastructure and support—like transportation, affordable working space and soft loans—that would enable young talented, would-be entrepreneurs like those at Accra Hub and elsewhere who often lack start-up capital and space to launch their good business ideas. It must also undertake the necessary institutional reforms, including stronger contract enforcement and the reduction of bottlenecks to starting a business (which the country falls behind neighboring countries like Nigeria and Ivory Coast), that are crucial to creating a much more conducive and competitive environment for both local entrepreneurs and other professionals wishing to start their own businesses as well as outside investors. Furthermore, forging closer ties with existing and new private education and research-focused institutions through initiatives like competitive grant, including a commitment by government to buy or use successful products, services and ideas from Ghanaian businesses and educational institutions, both the new and more established ones, will go a long way to boost the morale, profit and employment-generation capacity of middle class Ghanaian entrepreneurs and education providers. Also
related to the above is the need to promote industry-academia partnerships, to better align the needs of industry with education providers to help address the growing situation of graduate unemployment. Finally, there is the need to further strengthen regional trading blocs in order to foster cross-border business collaborations and open up access to regional markets for middle-class businesses. These proposals, when implemented alongside others, will not only go a long way not only to boost the entrepreneurial potential of the Ghanaian middle classes with many positive spill-over effects such as revenue generation and job creation, but also create ladders of opportunity for more and more lower class Ghanaians to climb up the social ladder.

Whilst the above policy recommendations stand to benefit the poor too when implemented, there are other pro-poor policies that could be enacted by the Ghanaian government in order not appear like sacrificing the welfare of the poor for the middle classes. These pro-poor policies, some of which are already in implementation or under consideration, could include subsidized housing, transportation and healthcare for the poor and vulnerable segments of the population, which could be funded in part with revenue from higher taxation on the wealthy and upper echelons of the middle classes in order to ensure better redistribution of wealth and reduce the growing socio-economic inequality in Ghana. More importantly, a number of these and other innovative initiatives could be adopted at the metropolitan level by the city governments in a bid to correct or even out the spatial imbalance in development that is increasingly becoming a glaring and unacceptable feature of the new middle class-driven urbanization in urban Africa, as I shall explain next.

**7.4.2 Implications for Urban Policy**

As with national governments, African city governments have a significant, if not greater, role to play in addressing both the opportunities and challenges created by the growth of the middle classes since they have direct responsibility for the management and development of their cities. In the case of Accra, the City of Accra (or AMA), could harness the opportunities created by the large concentration of the Ghanaian middle classes in Accra by adopting policies that would position Accra to become the preferred creative hub of West Africa. These policies could entail a two-pronged approach that
addresses both the hard and soft infrastructural requirements for creative urban environments, as advocated by David Yencken (1988), developer of the creative city concept. In the Accra context, the former could include the provision of subsidized office space for incubators and other young entrepreneurs with promising business ideas as well as the creation of dedicated cultural spaces (e.g., art galleries, cultural shops and lanes, heritage buildings, etc) at selected sites such as the new Airport city and within the new large-scale commercial and residential developments such as the Accra Mall and Trassacco Valley, in collaboration with their property owners. This would create avenues for the city’s emerging creative workforce to showcase and sell their products or talents. The other types of hard infrastructure that the City needs to pay attention to in order to make Accra a more friendly city for middle class Ghanaians and also attract talents from outside, including the Ghanaian diaspora, are general urban services like water, waste management and transportation, the latter which needs serious investment in smarter transportation options like rapid rail, in order to overcome the serious mobility challenge in Accra, linked in part to the preponderance of personal automobiles.

The soft component of a pro-creative city strategy for Accra could include the following. One is the adoption or creation of a special city-level pro-business and investment climate, including among others an attractive tax regime and a swifter and more transparent land transaction process. The other is organizing events that bring together Accra-based businesses and entrepreneurs together to exchange ideas and forge potential business partnerships. The third is the adoption of a more aggressive marketing approach to pitch Accra to foreign investors; and the last is sponsoring events and awards that celebrate and recognize the city’s creative talents.

But making Accra a more vibrant creative city also means making it a city where all Ghanaians and non-Ghanaians, regardless of their standing, can co-habit and realize their dreams. And this requires tackling the numerous social and environmental problems that the growth of the middle class is creating in the city, as elaborated in chapter 6. Perhaps, the most serious of these is the rising levels of social and spatial inequality and related issues such as lack of affordable housing brought about by the production and
consumption of privileged spaces occupied or dominated by the middle classes and the affluent. These require some innovative approaches and shifts in the old way of doing planning and governance.

One of way of reducing the heightened levels of spatial inequality in the city is by investing a significant portion of the revenues accruing from the new developments in the poorer, western and southern sections of the city, especially in the form critical infrastructure upgrades and other rejuvenation programs. Apart from obviously helping to ensure a more equitable urban development, it will also aid in curing the perception, real or imagined, of the connivance between the existing political establishment and private developers in spreading the current neoliberal, consumption-oriented urban development in the city that unequally favors the rich.

Another way is to utilize and expand the repertoire of planning tools available to the City to encourage the mixing of diverse economic groups in the emergent new urban spaces, particularly in planned or proposed new residential projects. In a way, this is already happening with some of the new developments taking place in areas like Osu, where, as I indicated above, some new property developers are offering existing (mostly low income) land and other property owners the option of living or owning a commercial space in the new developments (depending the previous land use type), with its positive outcome in terms of minimizing the gentrifying effects of such new developments. However, this is of a limited scale, in the sense that the only beneficiaries of this arrangement are the land or property owners. Besides, apart from Osu and its vicinities, there are no reports of this phenomenon happening in other parts of Accra and beyond bursting with new developments. But with more large-scale developments underway and on-board, the AMA has the opportunity to give a big push to the idea of promoting greater social cohesion in space through the new developments, incidentally which have been blamed for the growing schism among the city’s populace, to achieve greater outcome.

There are a range of policy options available to the AMA to achieve this. One, and perhaps the most potent, tool available for achieving this end is zoning. By adopting new
inclusionary zoning policies, the AMA can mandate new private residential developers, both rental and non-rental property developers, to dedicate or reserve a portion or percentage of their proposed new housing schemes for low income or non-market housing, in return for some benefits such as density bonuses, as is being practiced in other developed cities. This could go a long way to promote mixed-income neighbourhoods in Accra since inclusive zoning could be used to create mixed-tenure housing developments, which is currently not a significant feature of the emergent new residential patterns in Accra as only a handful of the new developments incorporate rental and non-rental units; the vast majority of them are for sale. The same policy could be applied to new commercial real estate developments in Accra, especially shopping malls and other large-scale, mix-use property developments such as the Octagon and Airport City, encouraging local and foreign companies, as well as rich and poor business owners, to thrive side by side.

Besides zoning, there are other alternatives, both market and non-market, that the AMA could adopt to incentivize developers to provide more mixed-income housing and commercial spaces. These options include granting tax reliefs to would-be mixed-income housing and commercial property developers as well as subsidizing some units in some of the new developments. The execution of these policies, when combined with other social engineering programs, could result in the creation of new communities in Accra that contain diverse income (and arguably social) groups as a way of addressing the extremities created by the new upscale housing and commercial developments. But apart from helping to promote greater social harmony in Accra, a new inclusionary zoning policy would also help a great deal in tackling one of the major social problems aggravated by Accra’s nascent urbanism: the shortage of affordable housing.

Apart from the above equalization policies meant to tackle the social impact of the new middle class-driven urbanization, the AMA needs to critically pay attention to the physical environment and historical structures which are increasingly threatened by the new developments. As was explained in chapter 6, one of the banes of the new urban growth trajectory in Accra has been the loss of urban green space and agricultural land, linked to both in-fill developments within the city and uncontained sprawl or suburbanization in the
outlying areas of Accra, which are partially responsible for the growing phenomenon of flooding in Accra, including other challenges such as increased vehicular traffic and pollution and their related potential public health challenges. Although there are no quick and easy fixes to the challenges of rapid development and urban sprawl in Accra, as in any other major fast-growing city, the City must be aggressive not least in protecting existing heritage structures and urban green spaces which are an integral part of Accra’s history and character. Heritage planning, which currently appears to be a missing ingredient of urban planning in Accra, needs to be introduced and institutionalized, so that the City can take stock of, and fashion out policies to protect, important historical landmarks and neighbourhoods in Accra that risk being eroded by the new consumption-oriented urban development and other forms of urban renewal. Similar approaches must be adopted to safeguard the remaining green spaces in the city.

But, like the policy of encouraging more diverse through inclusive zoning, the AMA could, as a matter of fact, increase the amount of green space in the metropolis by negotiating with new developers to convert portions of their acquired lands into parks in return for bonus density or some other incentives. It could also rezone some of the remaining brown-field sites and publicly-owned lands in the city into parks, allowing private developers to develop them into amusement parks. Regarding the problem of sprawl, there is the need to ensure more efficient land use in the city. As well, there is an urgent need for regional planning amongst the six municipalities that form the GAMA in order to ensure better land use coordination and growth management to contain urban sprawl.

Lastly, the City needs to undertake frequent and genuine consultation with all residents of Accra, to seek their views and concerns about the new pattern of urban development and work with them to come up with realistic solutions or remedial actions. The process must among others also produce a new vision and framework to guide Accra’s development in the next decade or so, so that citizens (especially the poor) would not feel alienated in the management and future of their city. For now, it is fair to say that the AMA appears to be
reacting to the forces of change at work rather than being proactive, and the process seems to be influenced by the rich and the powerful.

7.5 Conclusion and Suggestions for Future Studies

In a bid to shed light on the rise and implications of the African middle class as part of the so-called global middle class, this thesis has examined the story of class reformation, place-making and urban change in Accra, one of Africa’s leading and rapidly transforming cities. In doing so, the study—which is structured into seven chapters—the first four providing a context for the middle class rise and the latter three treating the substantive issues associated with the middle class expansion in Accra—also touches on topical issues connected to the growth of the African middle class, including the popular and often-debated Africa rising narrative and the role of China in Africa’s rise. The key finding of this study is that the growth of the middle class is having a profound and far-reaching impact on the urban structure and character of Accra through the production and consumption of five distinct up-scale landscapes that include luxury housing, global business centres, opulent commercial and recreational spaces, private educational facilities and mix-use mega urban projects. There are several implications from the growth of the new middle class for public policy and urban governance in Ghana and Accra. Among others, I have argued for the government of Ghana to adopt policies that support middle class businesses to create greater spill-over benefits, while the Accra city government needs to adopt smarter business, land use and equitable development policies in order to ensure a more inclusive, equitable and sustainable urban development.

The rise of the middle class and other associated developments in 21st century Africa and their cities, including Accra as we have seen from this study, provide huge opportunities for a range of studies, both for academic and policy consumption. Whilst this study has contributed to a greater knowledge about the processes and spatial outcomes of the middle class expansion in Africa through the Accra case study, there is scope for deeper and more focused investigations to foster greater understanding about class formation and urban remaking in Africa. These future studies, which I will outline below, could include empirical, comparative and theoretical research. First, on the empirical side, there is the need for more national and city-level surveys of the emergent middle class in Africa,
covering their socio-economic (e.g., income, occupation, wealth, etc), political (e.g., party affiliation), locational and lifestyle characteristics such as on the scale of the 2011 survey of the Nigerian middle class conducted by Renaissance Capital. This is because much of the existing information on the African middle class is based on estimates derived from macro-level income or expenditure data analysis, as well as observations and selected profile of individual middle class Africans, devoid of any extensive, in-depth, research-based quantitative and qualitative data on the group. Given the absence or outdated nature of city-level, class-related data in many African cities, theses studies could be used to complement existing information to formulate more evidence-based decision making. Academically, these studies could be used for comparative studies of the middle classes both within and across national boundaries, to shed light on their internal dynamics, thereby enriching the literature on the group.

The second type of research, which is more relevant to the Accra case study but potentially applicable to other African cities undergoing similar changes like Accra, is focused investigations on the nature of the economic, spatial and social changes that are being driven by the middle classes. Whilst there is virtually no limit on the scope of possible inquires about the subject, the following areas appear quite immediate, interesting and crucial. One is the nature, size and characteristics of the emergent new urban economy and the specific types of new occupations associated with it, including the gender composition, education, skill level and income of the constituent workforce and their interactions with the traditional economy. Of particular interest will be Accra’s emerging cultural economy, including its driving factors, geographical characteristics and nature of existing internal and spatial linkages, if any. Similarly, the emergent new secondary centres in Accra could be further interrogated to appreciate their differences, including, for example, the number of local vis-a-vis foreign company presence in these spaces; the diversity of foreign companies operating within each centre and the degree of their international connectedness; and the type of professional groups working there, including how new ‘self-organizing’ specialized spatial clusters involving competitive firms such as West Ridge’s finance-laden Wall Street have or are evolving in Accra in relation to the labour market.
Other areas of interrogation could include neighbourhood change in areas like Ridge which is experiencing a dramatic transformation and the impact on existing residents. Other potential impact studies include the impact of the new up-scale commercial spaces such as shopping malls and online retail on traditional markets in Accra and shopping patterns.

There are other areas that could be of interest to urban sociologists, too. One is how the new privileged landscapes, especially the exclusive residential spaces, is affecting extended family relations and notions of privacy and understandings of family. Another is the impact of these new spaces on class consciousness and perceptions of status in Accra. The impact that the new international schools are having on the attitudes and values of young Ghanaian children enrolled at these institutions could also be of interest. Lastly, there is scope for a number of insightful investigations on the gender, (in)equality and social justice dimensions of Accra’s new middle class-driven urbanization. For example, it would be useful to know the gender composition of the new middle classes, including their educational and occupational characteristics as opposed to the older middle class, as a way of gauging how the different signifiers (or qualifiers) of new middle class formation affect (i.e., enhance or impede) women’s ascension into the middle classes or more broadly social and economic mobility, as a broader indicator of the effectiveness of the economic and social reforms started in the 1980s, especially in the areas of education, employment and access to technology. The other is how the new middle class spaces (or urbanism) is promoting or reducing vulnerability, exclusion and right to the Accra for the different, but especially native and migrant, elements of the urban population.

The political attitudes of the emerging new middle class and its impact on national and urban politics constitute another potential area of investigation for students of political science. This will be particularly important and interesting in the wake of the growing popularity of Occupy Ghana, a vocal middle class-based activist movement that initially began on July 1, 2014 as a protest by intellectuals and professionals in Accra against what they referred to as poor governance, weak economic management, corruption and poor service delivery, the first of its kind in Ghana. Since then the group has been using
unconventional approaches, including social media, to raise public awareness about, whilst encouraging displeasure on, the failures of government.

Finally, as earlier pointed out, there is the need for new theoretical studies to explicate the processes and consequences of class reformation and urban change in African cities like Accra that challenge existing paradigms, employing both inductive and deductive reasoning based on observations and evidence from some of the suggested studies above.
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### Appendix I: Inventory of Accredited Degree-Granting Tertiary Institutions in Accra

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Institution</th>
<th>Year of Establishment</th>
<th>Location</th>
<th>Ownership Type</th>
<th>Focus/Specialization</th>
<th>Student Population</th>
<th>Foreign Students</th>
<th>#</th>
<th>%</th>
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## Appendix I: Inventory of Accredited Degree-Granting Tertiary Institutions in Accra (continued)

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Institution</th>
<th>Year of Establishment</th>
<th>Location</th>
<th>Ownership Type</th>
<th>Focus/Specialization</th>
<th>Student Population</th>
<th>Foreign Students</th>
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## Appendix I: Inventory of Accredited Degree-Granting Tertiary Institutions in Accra (continued)

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<tr>
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<td><strong>Location</strong></td>
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<td><strong>Focus/Specialization</strong></td>
<td><strong>Student Population</strong></td>
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<td>Almond Institute</td>
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### Appendix I: Inventory of Accredited Degree-Granting Tertiary Institutions in Accra (continued)

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<tr>
<th>Institution</th>
<th>Year of Establishment</th>
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<th>Ownership Type</th>
<th>Focus/ Specialization</th>
<th>Student Population</th>
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<td>Private International (Switzerland)</td>
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Source: National Accreditation Board; Website of the Various Schools

**Legend**
- R=Religious
- C=Circular
- CC=Central City
- SU=Suburban
## Appendix 2: Inventory of International Schools in Accra and Tema

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Name of School</th>
<th>Country of Origin</th>
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<th>Curriculum</th>
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<td>France</td>
<td>1963</td>
<td>East Legon (CC)</td>
<td>French</td>
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<td>German Swiss International</td>
<td>Germany, Switzerland</td>
<td>1966</td>
<td>Ring Road Central</td>
<td>German/Swiss/British</td>
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<td>Lincoln Community</td>
<td>The United States</td>
<td>1968</td>
<td>Ablempke (CC)</td>
<td>American and International Baccalaureate</td>
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<td>Soul Clinic</td>
<td>United Kingdom</td>
<td>1968</td>
<td>East Cantonments (CC)</td>
<td>British</td>
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<td>United Kingdom</td>
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<td>East Cantonments (CC)</td>
<td>British</td>
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<td>British</td>
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<td>Galaxy International</td>
<td>India</td>
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<td>East Legon, Roman Ridge, Airport Residential Area (CC)</td>
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<td>American</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Springforth International</td>
<td>American</td>
<td>2006</td>
<td>East Legon (CC)</td>
<td>Hybrid</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>British International School, Ghana</td>
<td>United Kingdom</td>
<td>2007</td>
<td>East Legon (CC)</td>
<td>British</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vilac International</td>
<td>Ghana</td>
<td>2008</td>
<td>East Legon, Achimota</td>
<td>Hybrid</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Multikids Academy</td>
<td>United Kingdom</td>
<td>2010</td>
<td>East Legon</td>
<td>British</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### Appendix 2: Inventory of International Schools in Accra and Tema (continued)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name of School</th>
<th>Country of Origin</th>
<th>Year Opened</th>
<th>Location</th>
<th>Curriculum</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Liberty American School</td>
<td>The United States</td>
<td>2013</td>
<td>East Legon</td>
<td>American</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>De Nederlandse School</td>
<td>The Netherlands</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>Ring Road Central</td>
<td>Dutch</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Canadian International</td>
<td>Canada</td>
<td>2014</td>
<td>East Legon Hills (CC)</td>
<td>Canadian</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SOS Herman</td>
<td>Britain</td>
<td>1993</td>
<td>Tema</td>
<td>International Baccalaureate</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tema International</td>
<td>Ghana</td>
<td>2003</td>
<td>Tema</td>
<td>International Baccalaureate</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: [http://buzzghana.com/20-elite-schools-ghanai](http://buzzghana.com/20-elite-schools-ghanai); online research