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Global South growth machines? A political-economic view of urban redevelopment and dispossessions in sub-Saharan Africa

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ABSTRACT

The dynamics of urban redevelopment processes in sub-Saharan Africa (SSA), especially around retail spaces, have gained currency among scholars. Some scholars frame these processes as state-led, informed by party politics, clientelism and meddling, and often resisted by traders and residents. Drawing from Growth Machine theory, this article uses a qualitative case study of the Takoradi Central Market (TCM) in Ghana to reframe this conversation in two important ways. First, it takes a broader view of these redevelopment processes by arguing they are constitutive of often-overlooked neoliberal processes that are disciplining the political-economic and spatial logics of people and spaces across sub-Saharan Africa. The TCM case illustrates the (mis)aligned spatial, economic, and political motives driving various actors within Ghana's neoliberal placemaking processes that foster accumulation and dispossession around retail spaces under the cover of civic boosterism. Second, rather than simply focusing on local resistance and activism, the article orients us toward a relational understanding of the conflict that exists between market traders and the state by interrogating the embedded alliances and conflicts within and between different actors as they pursue their myriad (mis)aligned economic, spatial, and political motives. It is these inherent conflicts and alliances, and the neoliberal urban redevelopment contexts within which they occur, that must remain central to urban research and policy discourses in SSA.

KEYWORDS

Urban redevelopment;
retailing; growth machine;
sub-Saharan Africa; Takoradi

Introduction

Retail spaces support the economic vitality of cities and play a significant role in private wealth accumulation (Morales, 2011; Morales et al., 1995; Owusu & Lund, 2004). Retail spaces can also help foster social bonds and produce social capital (Storr, 2009), create opportunities for cultural exchange (Ayittey, 2006; Bromley, 1998), and generate revenue for municipal governments through taxation on sales of goods and services and on property values (Morales, 2011; Owusu & Lund, 2004). Sometimes, these spaces spur increased on-site sales activity, nearby land (re)development, and/or other social and economic changes (Barata-Salgueiro & Erkip, 2014; Bilal et al., 2018). Depending on the surrounding context, such work often results in low-income neighborhood gentrification (González & Waley, 2013; Mermet, 2017). Given these roles and outcomes, retail spaces are undeniably vital to the social, cultural, and economic processes of organized human settlements.

Because of this prominence, retail spaces are often viewed as contested sites embodying the ongoing neoliberal urban place-making processes in both Global North and South countries. In the UK, retail-led urban development processes are argued to reveal the spatializing of urban entrepreneurial regime politics and neoliberal place-making tools (Lowe, 2005; Sager, 2011), where in African cities these processes are said to reflect the ongoing neoliberal “supermarketization” and its resultant socio-spatial

transformations (Peyton et al., 2015; Rogerson & Rogerson, 2010). These phenomena are of course present in the U.S. as well. Indeed, it is routine for local government officials and/or residents to recruit high-end grocery store chains or urge renovations of long-standing local/farmers' market spaces. Regardless of geographic locale, these processes are conducted to spur (re)development of adjacent land (e.g., Anguelovski, 2015; Joassart-Marcelli & Bosco, 2014; Mandel Group, Inc., 2020; Mele, 2013; Perry, 2015; Rovito, 2004) with the expectation that doing so will produce the previously described revenues, "improve" the aesthetic and/or social conditions, or improve access to food (e.g., Caceres & Geoghegan, 2017) in and/or from these neighborhoods.

In Ghana, the emerging retail-led urban (re)development processes have been studied with a heavy empirical focus on market redevelopment projects in Cape Coast, Kumasi, and Accra. Existing studies have focused on activism and resistance strategies, including two studies that similarly focused on strategies employed by traders to resist displacement caused by the redevelopment of the Kejetia Market (Akuoko et al., 2021; Asante & Helbrecht, 2019a). Other studies in these locations contend that the ongoing redevelopment of retail spaces is state-led displacement and clientelism favoring political elites (Asante & Helbrecht, 2020a) embodied in six process stages: scoping, financing, planning, relocation, construction and allocation (Asante, 2022). Some urge caution as increased instances and levels of Chinese financing supporting these retail redevelopment projects bring peril in the form of higher risk of loan defaults as the financing model shifts from conventional resource-backed to cash flow repayments (Asante & Helbrecht, 2019b). Others (e.g., Frimpong Boamah et al., 2020) have described these "retailscapes" as being spatialized political sites encapsulating modernist urban planning imaginaries that expropriate urban spaces from historically marginalized and "informalized" groups such as traders, street vendors, and hawkers (see also, Gillespie, 2016), as is seen demonstrated in the spatialized politics of retailscapes at the Konkomba Yam Market in Accra, Ghana, wherein the market embodies productive and agnostic relationships between formal and informal actors that work to silence context and power relations in urban planning and policymaking (Akuoko et al., 2021; Stacey et al., 2021).

Drawing from growth machine theory (Logan & Molotch, 1987; Molotch, 1976), this article purposefully serves to expand our understanding of these redevelopment projects in two ways. First, it argues that ongoing redevelopment around urban retail spaces in SSA should be viewed not only as state-led processes (Asante & Helbrecht, 2020a; Frimpong Boamah et al., 2020) that are informed by party politics and meddling (Asante, 2022; Asante & Helbrecht, 2020a) and often resisted by local activism (Akuoko et al., 2021; Stacey et al., 2021), but also as being constitutive of broader, often overlooked neoliberal processes that discipline the political-economic and spatial logics of people and spaces across sub-Saharan Africa. Second, we contribute to the literature by arguing that rather than solely focusing on the resistance strategies employed by traders and other community organizations, we need to further examine how shifts in (mis)aligned interests and incentives drive coalition building among various actors who either push for or against these retail (re)developments in SSA cities. This process includes traders, who may either promote or protest these projects by building alliances with other (sometimes competing) actors if/when their motives align.

In the following sections we discuss growth machine theory's accounting of actors' motivations for pursuing urban redevelopment, these actors' involvement in redevelopment processes and their respective interests therein, and the adverse impacts of status quo urban redevelopment processes and outcomes. This discussion is followed by a presentation of a contextual case study of the Takoradi Central Market, data and methods, and the results from our case study context. The discussion section distills four key findings to reflect growth machine theory's arguments about actor motives, actions, and impacts, thereby supporting growth machine theory's applicability in SSA urban land (re)development policy analysis. We conclude with recommendations for improved urban planning practices, especially in SSA, and for further research. As with cities in the global north, global south cities are growth machines.

Urban (re)development as a growth machine process in SSA: A review of the literature

The ongoing neoliberal placemaking processes in SSA constitute the factors inherent in historically contingent actor-networks of political-economic discourses, interests, alliances, and practices (Olajide & Lawanson, 2021; Watson, 2014). Used as a lens of analysis, growth machine theory reveals which of, and how, these factors (actors, interests, discourses, practices, and alliances) drive the physical-economic restructuring of a place through its centering of land and its use (Harding, 1995; Logan & Molotch, 1987). Sekondi/Takoradi, where the ongoing redevelopment of the Takoradi Central Market (TCM) is occurring, presents an exemplary case through which to study growth machine politics. The somewhat recent discovery of oil in this area drives its socio-spatial transformations partly due to the activities of transnational oil corporations and elites in this city (see Fiave, 2017; Obeng-Odoom, 2014). As the city emerges as one of the country's real estate frontiers, we observe an ongoing redevelopment process that includes the conversion of residential buildings into commercial properties (especially in the city center), the sprawling of the (peri)urban areas, increases in land values (including those due to the activities of speculators and other actors), and infrastructure redevelopment and expansion, including the TCM (Eduful & Hopper, 2019; Fiave, 2017). Growth machine theory allows for unpacking the ongoing socio-spatial transformations of this city as driven by the (re)configuring of motives/incentives of various stakeholders working within the broader neoliberal processes and its economic imperatives, including accumulation through rent and land dispossession (see, Harvey, 1976; Kan, 2019; Moreno, 2014).

According to growth machine theory, a city's (re)development agenda, and its actions implementing that agenda, are driven not by elected government officials, but by local property owners—"rentiers" or "parochial capital" (Harding, 1995, p. 42)—interested primarily in the exchange value (driving up market value—rents or sales prices) rather than the use value (best use for highest public good) of their (and neighboring) land/properties. Rentiers form, support, and sometimes lead (as representative political candidates), growth coalitions (Logan & Molotch, 1987; Molotch, 1976) that rely on both local and out-of-city partners to attract investments to, or using, their properties, resulting in cities being "growth machines" (Molotch, 1976). Growth coalitions compete against one another at the inter-city scale (Peterson, 1981) while also operating and competing as sub-coalitions at the intra-city scale, but they always seek/spur land (re)development investments of their preferred type(s) in their preferred location(s) (Farahani, 2017; Rodgers, 2009).

Growth coalitions are said to promote (re)development projects as being "value-free" (Logan & Molotch, 1987, p. 467). Some argue this value-free proposition represents most of the members of growth coalitions being under the spell of the hegemonic political-economic narrative (C. Cain, 2014; Vogel & Swanson, 1989), meaning, that land (re)development is simply what good government permits, pursues, or produces. Others assert the value-free narrative is purposefully, knowingly, and continually utilized to deemphasize the relationship between economic growth and property values (the coalition's covert motive), and to reinforce the hegemonic narrative tying "growth" to the production of better lives for the majority (the coalition's purported motive; Molotch, 1976). The strong belief in the perceived relationship between economic growth and citizen wellbeing in turn explains why growth coalitions' proposals are supported by not just other rentiers, but by all manner of persons interested in improving the lot of the city and, subsequently, the lives of its residents, such as business owners, university faculty, local news reporters and media outlet owners, and, critically for Molotch (1976), government officials (who, recall, are sometimes members of the rentier class). Over time, this relentless combination of civic boosterism and need/promise of economic good to come from governmental action has reduced neighborhood groups' opposition to—and has sometimes garnered their support for—government-sanctioned (re)development projects, including those that dispossess themselves and/or others of their land or other valuable rights (Farahani, 2017; Gotham, 2001).

Beyond this theoretical elucidation, recent empirical evidence also suggests growth machine theory remains useful for revealing urban (re)development actors and their motivation(s). For instance,

Zhang (2014) argues the creation of an economic coalition among the private developers and central and local governments was determinative of the growth of Suzhou and Shenzhen provinces in China. In declining cities in the U.S., growth through urban revitalization remains a principal strategy of the growth coalitions in those cities (Silverman et al., 2015). Growth machine theory has also proven flexible and adaptive, as others have offered useful expansions of its explanatory power. Berglund (2020), for example, found that the growth coalition in Detroit includes philanthropic foundations, and Chilton and Jung (2018) determined that a group of local, unelected elites in Chattanooga, Tennessee, including many philanthropists (or representatives of their organizations) unduly influenced, and then subsequently benefitted from, economic growth and land development policies centered on Chattanooga's municipal broadband initiative.

Urban (re)development motives

Members of growth coalitions either have, or purport to have, myriad interacting political-economic and spatial motives driving their pursuit of urban (re)development. Stakeholders or actors within cities pursue or support growth or anti-growth based on all or any of these motives (Rivero, 2017; Rivero et al., 2017), and conflicts or alliances emerge among stakeholders as these motives align or misalign (Logan & Molotch 2007; Molotch, 1976). In other words, growth coalition motives are not isolated from each other—they are relational as stakeholders interact and drive their agendas (various forms of and/or locations for growth).

Some suggest that *economic or financial motives* or incentives mostly drive urban (re)development processes (Rivero et al., 2017). This motive manifests in several ways including the seeking of higher returns on investments, increases in rent, increases in local tax revenue (Croese, 2018) and/or increases in employment wages and/or levels. All urban redevelopment has the tendency to increase local tax revenue (Park, 1985). Urban renewal programs that include retail spaces increase property values first for the subject parcel(s) and subsequently for those nearby (Collins & Shester, 2013; Jayantha & Ming, 2015; Ki & Jayantha, 2010; Song & Sohn, 2007). Similarly, sales prices of homes in neighborhoods with poor food access increase more than the neighborhood average if they are near land development projects that include grocery stores (Caceres & Geoghegan, 2017). Studies on the redevelopment of retail spaces in sub-Saharan Africa find increases in rent and tax revenue to be motives partly driving these redevelopments (Asante & Helbrecht, 2020b; Cobbinah et al., 2019; Gillespie, 2020). Some have labeled this process of modernizing and extracting exchange value from traditional food retailscapes in sub-Saharan Africa as “supermarketization” (Peyton et al., 2015).

Undergirding the economic motives that drive land (re)development projects are *spatial/physical* and political motives. Urban redevelopment is historically argued to improve the physical appearance of blighted cities (Macgregor, 2010; Park, 1985) that then imparts other benefits to residents (e.g., economic, health, etc.). Notwithstanding the colonial values inherent in understanding (re)development as “improvement,” the motivation to change the aesthetics of the built environment through urban (re)development is comprised of two sub-motives. The first of these is “enhancing” the aesthetic appeal of cities’ architecture (Gotham, 2015). In the global south, this has manifested in the construction of, or attempts to construct, new cities mimicking those of the developed world—or as Watson (2014) dubs them “urban fantasies.” The desire to reconfigure spaces has driven many urban renewal policies in many parts of sub-Saharan Africa, including demolishing informal settlements, clearing street vendors, and resettling traders, with the motive of cleaning the city of filth and modernizing cityscapes to attract capital investment (Fält, 2019; Gillespie, 2016; Okoye, 2020; Roeveer & Skinner, 2016). These spatial motives go hand-in-hand with the second sub-motive: economic motives. Studies suggest that urban redevelopments, including retail spaces, are informed by the motives of “cleaning” the city of undesirable conditions and people (i.e., informal settlement and businesses) to attract foreign capital, increase land values, and expand and modernize existing infrastructure to increase tax revenue (Gillespie, 2020; Grant, 2009; Obeng-Odoom, 2014; Watson, 2009).

Similarly, these economic and spatial motives reinforce *political motives*. For instance, Croese (2018) found that the development of the Bay of Luanda in Luanda, Angola was not only to make the city economically competitive (both locally and globally), but also to “achieve political legitimacy and stability” (p. 198) for the political actors and patrons sponsoring and conducting the development. Some also discuss how the redevelopment of retail spaces in Ghana is connected to “party politics” and clientelism where the entry and exit of political actors into (re)developed market infrastructure foments instances of possessions and dispossessions around land for political, economic, and spatial motives (Asante, 2022; Asante & Helbrecht, 2020a). Growth machine theory connects these political-economic and spatial motives by highlighting how urban redevelopment projects serve as lynchpins for the political and economic elites to generate civic boosterism and a collective “we feeling” among residents, accumulate wealth, increase local tax revenue, and reconfigure spaces through blight removal and expanded modernist infrastructure (Berglund, 2020; Boyle, 1999; Logan & Molotch, 1987).

Urban (re)development actors

As local governments shift from managerial to entrepreneurial governance modes, the economic, spatial, and political motives begin to align with those deriving direct and indirect benefits from increased land values in “the entrepreneurial city” (Berglund, 2020; Harvey, 1989; see also, Molotch, 1976). The growth coalition is formed by those actors with shared primary interests in urban (re)development. These include rentiers (land-based elites) who build alliances with three groups of allies, each of whom is claimed to profit differently from development (Harding, 1995). First, there are those who directly benefit from the development process, such as financiers, construction companies, and professional teams and second, there are those who indirectly benefit because the development boosts demand for their products and services and are often place-based, such as the media and utility companies. Lastly, there are the auxiliary players, constituting agencies with local ties and partially benefit from some but not all types of growth, including local governments who are often concerned about redeveloping infrastructure, removing blight or informal areas, increasing tax revenues, and garnering political votes (Cox, 2017; Harding, 1995; Molotch, 1976).

The rentier class and their allies together have power over resources and decision-making, including about land use and development, as well as over other monetary and non-monetary resources and policies (Cox, 2017; Molotch, 1976). In sub-Saharan Africa, apart from private and indigenous landowners, real estate developers and transnational elites, including nationals in the diaspora, are an emerging class of rentiers who are prioritized by local governments in these countries (Dawson, 2021; Gillespie, 2020). This (emerging) rentier class and their growth allies not only have aligned spatial, economic, and political motives, but, more importantly, have the political and economic *power* to act on their (re)development agenda. Here, we are reminded of the power wielded by local governments in sub-Saharan Africa to evict traders, slum dwellers, sell publicly acquired lands to private developers, and collect or increase market rents paid by traders (Frimpong Boamah & Amoako, 2020; Korah et al., 2020).

Actors opposed to the pro-growth (re)development agenda, such as housing tenants and small business operators (Jiang et al., 2020; Vogel & Swanson, 1989) often lack economic and political power to contest the prevailing growth agenda. Emerging research on the activism, protests, and coping mechanisms of traders dispossessed through urban redevelopment initiatives provide some insights around other likely actors opposed to the hegemonic growth agenda (Akuoko et al., 2021; Asante & Helbrecht, 2019a; Frimpong Boamah et al., 2020; Stacey et al., 2021). What is needed is a careful analysis of (mis)aligned motives within and between the growth proponents and opponents, and how these engender the formation of coalitions or conflicted relationships among actors in urban redevelopment.

Urban (re)development's adverse impacts

Growth machine scholars recognize that a city's growth is not always a blessing because it can have unintended negative consequences, especially on those opposed to growth (Logan & Molotch, 1987). These negative consequences include segregation and inequality, gentrification and rising rents, decline in environmental quality, congestion, and increased fiscal hardships (Logan & Molotch, 1987; Molotch, 1993; Vogel & Swanson, 1989). Although not framed in growth machine terms, some of these adverse impacts are discussed within the context of urban redevelopment in sub-Saharan Africa, including gentrification, displacement, the increasing rent gap, and loss of income (Cobbinah et al., 2019; Nikuze et al., 2020; van Noorloos & Kloosterboer, 2018; Watson, 2014). For example, farmers experienced lost income through their forced relocation from the urban core to the outskirts in Addis Ababa (Yntiso, 2008), and traders in Cape Coast had similar experiences in their income and revenue when they were relocated during the redevelopment of the Kotokuraba market (Asante & Helbrecht, 2020b). The purpose here is not to refute the evidence in the literature, but, rather, to highlight that a growth machine lens emphasizes the need to connect the dots for a holistic understanding—the desire for growth catalyzes coalition-forming among actors with aligned economic, spatial and political motives while coalitions opposed to such motives disproportionately pay the adverse costs of this growth. This article aims to establish, and begin to address, the need for such theoretically grounded and holistic understanding of urban (re)development in SSA.

Data and methods

To better understand these “under-the-surface” tensions as they relate to retail-space led urban land (re)development in SSA, we conducted a qualitative case study research project on the redevelopment of the Takoradi Central Market (TCM). Case studies are useful for explaining, describing, or exploring events or phenomena in the everyday contexts in which they occur (Yin, 2009). Apart from drawing lessons from the under-studied TCM to buttress existing findings in the literature, the focus on TCM serves as a useful case to examine growth machine politics in an oil-rich city, which is increasingly emerging as a real estate frontier and a hub for transnational corporate elites and (see, Fiave, 2017; Obeng-Odoom, 2014).

We employed a stratified sampling technique, a recommended sampling approach for a case study (Onwuegbuzie & Leech, 2007), to select a sample frame of interviewees. Stratified random sampling divides the population into mutually exclusive and non-overlapping groups known as “strata,” from which samples are drawn at random (Nguyen et al., 2019). The first-level strata were three groups of interviewees knowledgeable about and enmeshed within the operation and (re)development of the TCM; these were identified and recruited to participate in this study. These first-level strata included relocated traders ($n = 31$), city officials ($n = 2$), and the developer or construction company ($n = 3$). We understand that market redevelopment can have significant impacts on a variety of stakeholders, including traders' customers and clients, nearby property owners, vehicle operators, and municipal guards, however, we focused on those directly involved with and impacted by such construction projects, in this case, traders, the city government, and the construction company.

Traders ($n = 31$) differ in terms of the nature and size of their trading environments, which we considered in our subsequent dividing of the traders' strata into four sub-strata for sampling purposes. These four sub-strata were: (1) big store operators or those with large and permanent structures built from concrete and/or cement blocks ($n = 3$), (2) small and medium store operators or those with relatively small to medium stores built from metallic and wooden materials ($n = 5$); (3) those operating businesses in stalls or sheds ($n = 10$); and (4) those selling in lanes/walkways ($n = 13$). More traders were operating stalls or selling in lanes/walkways, which influenced the decision to sample more within these two sub-strata.

We interviewed two government officials directly involved with the redevelopment of the TCM—both officials worked in planning and architecture and public works departments within the local

government (Sekondi-Takoradi Metropolitan Assembly or STMA). We also interviewed three individuals working with the construction company, including the community liaison representative. In all, 36 respondents were interviewed: 31 traders, two STMA representatives, and three construction company representatives. Information redundancy (or saturation point) was achieved after interviewing the 31 traders.

We drew from constructivist philosophy to inform our interview questions. Constructivism posits that people construct their meaning from the experiences and events to which they are/have been subjected, which then inform their individual and shared realities (Charmaz, 2006; Mills et al., 2006). We asked respondents what they perceived to be the motives for redeveloping the market, decision-making processes and governance arrangements around the redevelopment (e.g., actors involved or excluded, communication and participatory channels), and individual and collective impacts from the market’s redevelopment. Following our Institutional Review Board’s protocol, the interviews (audio-recorded with the permission of the interviewees) were conducted and transcribed during July and August 2021. Following LeCompte’s (2000) five stages for analyzing qualitative data, we prepared, organized, reviewed, and explored the data, and created initial codes to ascertain the frequency, omission, and declaration of statements related to the research objectives. These codes were compared and contrasted until thematic patterns were identified. The data were analyzed using QDA miner lite qualitative data analysis software.

Brief overview of the case study context

Takoradi is the largest city in the Western region of Ghana (see, Figure 1), and the third largest city in the country. The region is noted for its rich natural resources, including minerals, cocoa, and timber. An important infrastructure facility in Takoradi is its central market. The market facility is located in

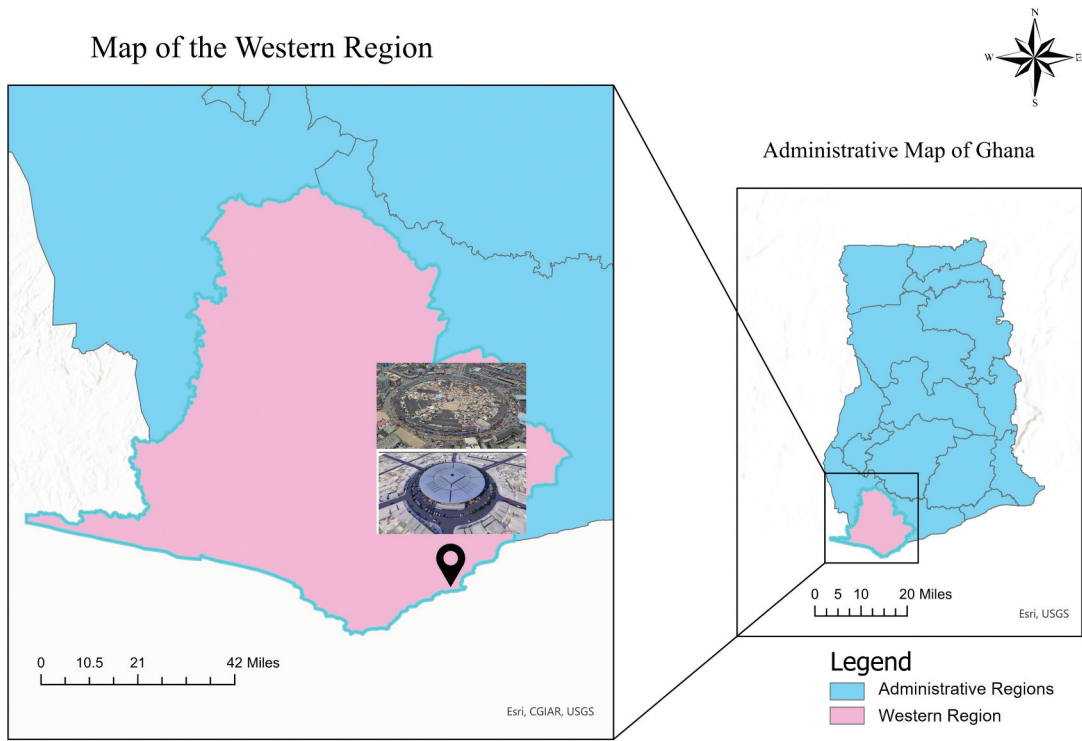


Figure 1. Context map of the study area. Source: Authors’ construct.

Takoradi's Central Business District (CBD), serves as the commercial center of the city, and houses myriad economic activities—both formal and informal. The market is noted both for housing a variety of enterprises offering specialized commodities, and for being the site of diverse forms of social and economic associations amongst its vendors and visitors. In 2007, Ghana discovered its first oil reserves in the region, and, consequently, Takoradi has been undergoing dramatic transformations, especially in areas of employment, the development of real estate, urban transportation, and its nightlife (Obeng-Odoom, 2014).

Calls to redevelop the market began soon after the oil discovery, directly suggestive of the influence land value has in spurring its (re)development as identified by Growth Machine theory. The most notable of these early pronouncements was made in 2008 by the then Municipal Chief Executive (MCE) of the Sekondi-Takoradi Metropolitan Assembly (STMA) during a meeting of the assembly's members (Ghanaweb, 2008). Despite the redevelopment of the TCM being on the regional political agenda at that time, no work was begun, and the market continued to operate as it had. In 2018, there was a new proposal for the redevelopment of the TCM, costing around €48 million and to be financed by an export credit from Deutsche Bank. Under the terms of this new proposal, which is being implemented, the market is expected to provide many more spaces for both historic and new economic, administrative, and social activities than had previously existed. Once the redevelopment work is completed, the market will accommodate 2,408 stores, 33 restaurants and food courts, a bulk produce/commodity breakdown area, visitors parking, union offices, a police station, a fire station, a post office, an administrative office, a waste separation dock, and changing rooms for staff (Ghanaweb, 2020). The timeline at Figure 2 denotes various recent activities that have occurred related to redevelopment of the TCM since the emergence of this most recent proposal.

Results and findings

Perceived motives for redeveloping the TCM

Myriad intersecting spatial, economic, and political motives manifested prominently in the data analyzed. Perceived spatial/physical motives were expressed by both city officials and traders. The themes of modernizing the market, enhancing the place reputation of the city, and contributing to the collective health and welfare of residents emerged in the responses of city officials and some traders. For instance, an official noted, “it [the TCM] is to deliver a modern market that meets the needs of Sekondi-Takoradi and its environs” (STMA representative 2, August 2021), which aligned with a trader's sentiment:

...the market was outmoded and almost all other regions in Ghana were having their share of the “modern market cake” and we also deserved a good portion of that which will play a good role in lifting the image of Takoradi. (Interviewee 17, August 2021)



Figure 2. Timeline of activities relating to the redevelopment of the Takoradi Central Market. Source: Authors' construct based on archival data from Ghanaweb (2018; 2021a; 2021b).

Sentiments around modernity and enhancing the reputation of the city were a recurring theme, including responses such as, “The new market when completed will enhance the beauty of the city. It will also serve as a site for tourist attractions like how people are visiting the Kumasi central market just to see it” (Interviewee 4, July 2021). These spatial motives and logics around a modern market (see [Figure 3](#)) and reputation building for the city were reinforced by motives of ensuring the collective safety and welfare,

The facility [old TCM] was old and dilapidated; it was almost a hundred years . . . there was also the case of old electrical wiring which could spark a fire outbreak . . . poor sanitation, leakages of the roofs, there was no emergency exit and mostly the traders were affected by these issues. (STMA representative 1, August 2021)

There will be modern market facilities provided with water, proper electric cable wiring, proper entrances including disability friendly entrances . . . fire stations will be provided as well. (STMA representative 2, August 2021)

These perceived spatial motives co-existed with perceived economic and political motives. Economic motives were evidenced when one city official alluded to the need for redeveloping the TCM to expand revenue because “the general assembly was losing revenue,” and the redeveloped market will help increase revenue from rent from the market partly because “The new structure will make maximum use of the land . . . much bigger than that of the old one . . . has over 2000 shops” (STMA representative 1, August 2021). This economic motive was also expressed by the president of Ghana in 2020 during the groundbreaking ceremony for redeveloping the TCM when he noted “the redevelopment is expected to also increase trading, the number of rentable shops in the city” (Ghanaweb, 2020). Beyond increasing rental shops and revenues generated from them, traders and city officials were also aware of potential increases in rental revenue that may accrue to those with properties within the market and adjoining areas. Similarly, traders, city officials, and developer/construction company officials noted they perceived direct financial gains going to the private developer (Contracta) and loan financier (Deutsche Bank) and indirect monetary benefits going to political elites through lobbying for and negotiating access to the renovated rental shops for party loyalists, and their relatives and friends.

Importantly, the president’s comment signaled the imbrication of these spatial and economic motives with the political motives held by government officials (elected, appointed, and other bureaucrats). Traders were keenly aware that the redevelopment of the TCM represented political promises

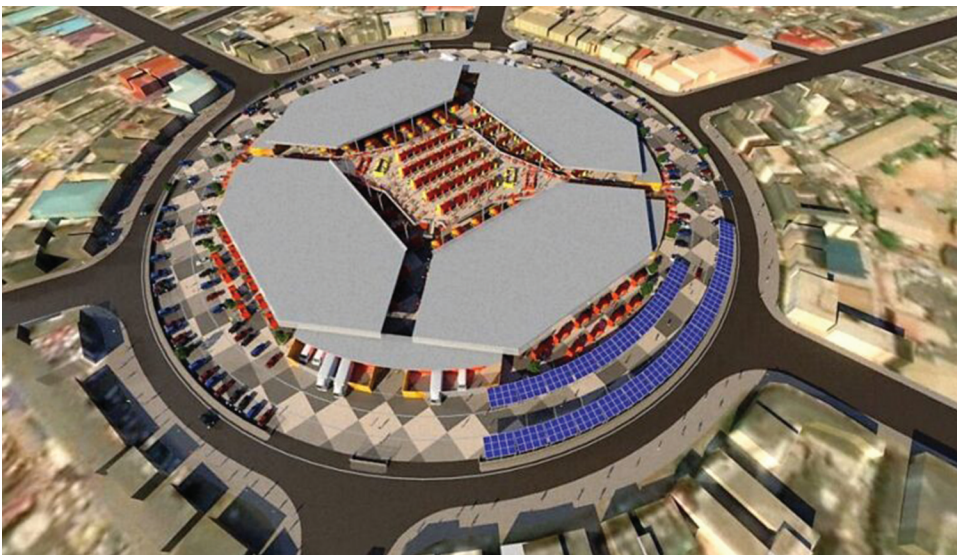


Figure 3. Aerial image of renderings for the new Takoradi Central Market. Source: <https://gh.opera.news/gh/en/economy-finance/f66c38f8952ff1215b4f193d5da065ad>.

that had to be repaid with votes, “every government that comes into power promises us they will refurbish our market ... ” (Interview 3, July 2021), “ ... before the current Akuffo-Addo led government was elected to power, he promised to reconstruct the market. He said he wanted to make it like the Kumasi central market” (Interview 8, July 2021).

Besides winning votes, political motives also manifested in an implicit understanding that the career survivability and progress of the mayor and city bureaucrats partly depended on realizing the political promise of redeveloping the TCM by the ruling political party. Redeveloping this market has been a political promise of successive governments for over 20 years, and city officials and traders understood the political motive for the ruling government to leverage this erstwhile promise to canvass within this rapidly urbanizing city and its environs. For some respondents, the very fact that the previous government prioritized the redevelopments of the Kotokuraba (Cape Coast) and Kejetia (Kumasi) markets made the TCM a political imperative for the ruling government.

We next trace how these overlapping motives allow us to distill the growth and anti-growth alliances and conflicts as these motives (mis)align among various actors/stakeholders directly involved in the TCM redevelopment.

Actors' motives, alliances and conflicts around the TCM

We used the spatial, economic, and political motives to trace relationships (conflicting or otherwise) among groups of stakeholders that could explain growth and anti-growth coalitions around the TCM. Table 1 summarizes these motives and how these put respondents into allyship or conflict with growth and/or anti-growth coalitions.

Growth alliances. The desire to modernize the TCM is common to most actors, and this desire frames the growth agenda shared by some specific groups of actors: central and local government, loan financiers, current and prospective rental property owners (some of whom are traders), and utility companies. For these groups of actors, their economic motives are varied, but have the same primary goal: increased rent or revenue from the renovated TCM. Interviews with some traders highlighted interests in retaining or gaining ownership of, and increasing rent from, rental property within and adjacent to the TCM. Some of these traders operated stalls in the TCM or rent properties adjacent to the TCM and are already foreseeing increases in rents by some property owners in anticipation of the renovated TCM. Similarly, the economic motive of extracting exchange value from the TCM is also shared by other actors, including the central government and financing institution. STMA seeks higher revenues generated from the TCM to service the loan secured for its redevelopment, and Deutsche Bank seeks to recover the loaned amount with interest within the loan repayment terms and timelines.

The shared economic motives among some of these actors drive and are driven by spatial and political motives. For these interviewed traders, the TCM was introduced to them as an opportunity to replace a depilated market infrastructure for a modern one with improved access to safety and quality services, including electricity, water, and sanitation. As expressed by some traders and STMA officials, this new modern edifice is overtly connected to the ruling party's political motive of winning votes as it fulfilled its campaign promise of refurbishing the TCM. While a spatially/physically attractive edifice may seem unrelated to overt economic motives, the connection is becoming clear to some traders who already anticipate increases in rent within the renovated TCM and adjacent properties, especially as they come to terms with (1) the STMA's interest in increasing local revenue from the renovated TCM, and (2) possible increases in utility tariffs with improved access to utility, water, sewage and other services. At the core of the TCM redevelopment project are certain economic and political logics/motives benefiting certain groups of actors. Even though not all traders may benefit economically, they find themselves acquiescing to these political-economic motives in order to gain access to a promised modern market with improved services that may increase both their sales and the reputation of their beloved city.

Table 1. Summary of motives, growth alliances, and conflicts around the TCM.

Actors	Motives	Alliances and growth politics coalition	Conflicts and antigrowth coalition
Traders	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • M1: Modernize the TCM [with improved safety and access to quality services] • M2: Enhance the reputation of the city • M3: Keep rent and services at affordable prices 	Traders' spatial motives (M1 & 2) align with those of most other actors (e.g., government actors and property owners)	Traders' economic motive for affordable rent and services may not align with other economically motivated actors
Prospective (property developers]	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • M1: Modernize the TCM [with improved access to quality services] • M2: Enhance the reputation of the city • M3: Increase rent from rental properties within and adjacent to the TCM • M4: Retain or gain access to ownership of rental property 	Prospective owners' spatial motives (M1 & 2) align with traders and other actors; and their economic motive (M3) aligns with local and central government actors	The economic motive of increasing rent (M3) may conflict with traders; and retaining or gaining access to property ownership (M4) may conflict with local and central government
Local gov. (STMA)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • M1: Modernize the TCM [with improved access to quality services] • M2: Enhance the reputation of the city • M3: Increase local revenue from the TCM • M4: Support the development [and political agenda] of the central government 	STMA's spatial motives (M1 & 2) align with traders, their economic motive (M3) align with both central government and Deutsche Bank, and their political motive (M4) align with central government	STMA's economic motive (M3) may conflict with traders, and its economic and political motives (M3 & 4) may conflict with property owners
Central gov.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • M1: Modernize the TCM [with improved access to quality services] • M2: Generate revenue to service the loan secured for the TCM • M3: Leverage the TCM to gain political support [and support from party foot soldiers through patronage] 	The central government's spatial motive (M1) aligns with most actors, its economic motive (M2) align with both STMA and Deutsche Bank, and its political motive (M3) aligns with STMA	The central government's economic motive (M2) may conflict with traders, and its political motive of patronage (M3) may conflict with Deutsche Bank
Loan financier (Deutsche Bank AG)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • M1: Recover loan from the renovated TCM with interest within the stipulated contractual time 	Deutsche Bank's economic motive (M1) aligns with the central government and STMA	Deutsche Bank's economic motive may conflict with the central government's political motive around patronage, and traders' economic motive for affordable rent
Contractor/ Developer (Contracta Costruzioni Italia)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • M1: Get paid from renovating the TCM within the stipulated time frame 	Contracta Costruzioni Italia's economic motive (M1) aligns with other economically motivated actors	N/A
Utility companies	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • M1: Gain better access to the TCM to improve the quality of services (e.g., water, electricity, refuse management) • M2: Leverage such improved access and service quality to generate more revenue from traders 	The spatial motive (M1) of utility companies align well with most actors, and their economic motive (M2) also aligns with central and local government actors	The economic motive of utility companies may misalign with traders' economic motive of keep services affordable

(Continued)

Table 1. (Continued).

Actors	Motives	Alliances and growth politics coalition	Conflicts and antigrowth coalition
Security agencies	<ul style="list-style-type: none">● M1: Gain better access to the TCM to improve safety for traders and commodities		

Source: Authors' motives and coalitions rubric based on field data (July and August 2021).

Anti-growth coalitions. The conflicts between traders and the state are more nuanced, and remain one of several inherent conflicts. For instance, one may observe a coalition of traders opposed to redevelopment of the TCM, which has been thoroughly discussed in the literature (e.g., Akuoko et al., 2021; Asante & Helbrecht, 2020a; Stacey et al., 2021). Our analysis suggests parsing the underlying motives surrounding these conflicts reveals how other forms of conflict could emerge in other coalitions. For instance, the STMA's economic motive for increasing revenue through renovated stalls conflicts with that of traders, but could also conflict with the motives of current and prospective property owners. Some traders expressed concerns that rather than being permitted to own the renovated stalls, the STMA may want to rent the stalls at high prices, and keep increasing the price because it may be most economically lucrative for the STMA to rent directly to vendors rather than sell to them to lease the renovated stalls to third parties. Other traders also hinted at the possibility that the STMA will acquire adjacent properties (through eminent domain) for future expansion of the TCM, especially if the renovated TCM serves as a viable source of increased revenue.

The interview data also reveals other possible conflicts. Apart from traders' activism and protests against the state, there remains a possibility for other actors, such as property owners (some of whom may be traders), to also join these oppositional coalitions of traders. For instance, some interviewees perceived that the STMA may not generate sufficient revenue from the redeveloped TCM due to patronage from central government officials. Within Ghana's corrupt and patron-based governance environment, some respondents expressed concern that the allocation of stalls in the redeveloped TCM could be a highly competitive, unfair, political process that favors certain traders or individuals due to their political connections to top central government officials. In such instances, the local government's economic motive of raising revenue and Deutsche Bank's economic motive to recover its loan (with interest) from the redeveloped TCM may conflict with central government patrons' political motives. The extent to which such internal strife among these economically motivated actors might bolster or subvert activism and protests against the TCM redevelopment project remains an ongoing empirical question.

Adverse impacts

Amidst the motives, alliances, and conflicts are the negative impacts suffered directly or indirectly by some groups of actors, especially those within the anti-growth coalitions. For some traders, their forced move to a temporary market location during the TCM redevelopment project has had some negative impacts. Some of these include traders losing their customers and connections to other traders, and an attendant decrease in sales levels:

...our customers knew our very location at the [old] TCM but now here, we are mixed up, so they find it that hard to locate us. (Trader, Interviewee 13, August 2021).

We have been mixed up together. For instance, the fish sellers have been separated from the meat seller. However, in the old market, they were our immediate neighbors because we sell a similar product. Due to this disorganized arrangement, we do not get customers to buy our products. (Trader, interviewee 8, July 2021)



Figure 4. Images of ongoing works in the temporary market. This shed is being constructed for the livestock traders in the temporary market. Source: Field Survey (2021).

Very low and poor patronage of goods and services since we came to our current location. Traders now have to carry their wares on their head and roam the market to find buyers. (Trader, interviewee 12, August 2021)

Others also reported that the temporary market was not fully finished and thus not ready to host them. At the time of data collection, the temporary market lacked some basic amenities and facilities such as electricity, water, and toilets, with some of the promised structures still under construction (see, Figure 4).

The absence of electricity here is a major factor especially for those who use electricity for their work such as tailors, phone repairers. (Trader, interviewee 14, August 2021)

We don't have any toilet facilities here, so we have to use this bush; even the kind of snakes there is very worrying. (Trader, interviewee 29, August 2021)

...improper refuse disposal and no constructed gutters in the market to allow the flow of wastewater. Most traders urinate in containers and pour them anywhere. (Trader, interviewee 12, August 2021)

The gradual erosion of trust and social capital among these relocated traders also impacted the attendant benefits and responsibilities,

We are scattered here. At the market circle [old TCM], I could leave my keys with my co-trader and travel for months and come back to receive sales but I cannot do the same here ... (Trader, interviewee 18, August 2021)

Our social relations are not good here ... (Trader, interviewee 30, August 2021)

Discussion

This article offers four main insights as key takeaways for practice and scholarship on urban redevelopment processes in sub-Saharan Africa, especially those centered around retail spaces.

First, the ongoing urban redevelopment processes in SSA, especially around retail spaces, are not simply state-lead, but embody broader neoliberal placemaking processes and its economic disciplining

logics of multiple stakeholders. Earlier discussed, a summarized reading of existing literature suggests a three-staged story: these redevelopment processes are state-led, with political and patronage motives, often resisted by traders (Akuoko et al., 2021; Asante & Helbrecht, 2020a; Stacey et al., 2021). A growth machine analysis of the TCM suggests a more nuanced story. Rather than beginning with an actor or set of actors (i.e., state actors), the analysis should center the set of spatial, economic, and political motives driving various actors working within broader neoliberal processes and its economic imperatives to foster accumulation and dispossessions around retail spaces (see, also Young, 2021). Refocusing attention on the prevailing motives provides opportunities to trace the overt and covert, direct and indirect beneficiaries of these ongoing redevelopment processes—growth coalitions. The state facilitates these processes, but it is simply responding to larger neoliberal political-economic and spatial motives—the growth regime—embodied in different degrees by several actors.

Second, a growth machine analysis of the TCM foregrounds the role of boosterism in fostering the ongoing urban redevelopment processes around retail spaces in sub-Saharan Africa. The rhetoric around modernizing the TCM and improving the reputation of the Sekondi/Takoradi area remained prominent among the various respondents. The craze for urban modernist infrastructure fantasies (Obeng-Odoom, 2014; Okoye, 2020; Watson, 2014) and its dispossession moments in SSA are well known (Asante & Helbrecht, 2020a; Gillespie, 2016). However, the way these fantasies are reinforced and reproduced are less discussed. The analysis of TCM suggests the prevalence of civic boosterism, the generation of a “we feeling” as traders feel, “we must modernize the TCM to improve access to improved amenities and build the reputation of the city.” Growth machine theory reminds us that this civic feeling remains powerful in so far as it enables political and economic elites to garner support for their reconfiguration of spaces through blight removal and expanded modernist infrastructure for accumulation and political support (Berglund, 2020; Boyle, 1999; Logan & Molotch, 1986).

Third, a growth machine analysis of the TCM presents a relational view of the trader-state conflict, providing a more situated understanding of the multiple and inherent conflicts within these ongoing redevelopment processes in sub-Saharan Africa. Existing studies discuss coalitions of traders who mobilize themselves to protest the redevelopment of these retail spaces (Akuoko et al., 2021; Asante, 2020; Stacey et al., 2021). While our study corroborates these findings, we also uncover a much larger narrative about other possible conflicts within and between actor-networks as they are driven by their motives. For instance, the state is not homogenous, but constitutive of heterogenous actors at local and central government levels with diverse motives, including the political (patronage) motive to leverage the redeveloped TCM to reward party members which may misalign with the economic (rent-seeking) motives of the STMA to increase local revenue from the redeveloped TCM. Similarly, traders also constitute heterogenous groups with varied motives, including those with rent-seeking motives hoping to rent out properties within and adjacent to the redeveloped TCM and those hoping for affordable rent. The narratives from existing studies may seem to suggest that most, if not all, traders oppose the state in these redevelopment process, but we may expect acquiescence, especially from those whose rent-seeking motive aligns with the growth (economic) motive of some state actors. Put differently, not all traders are opposed (anti-growth) to the redevelopment of the market, especially those who stand to benefit economically from this project.

Fourth and lastly, there are material and immaterial adverse effects from such urban redevelopment processes, which are experienced differently by anti-growth coalitions, including those (e.g., traders) benefiting less from such redevelopment. Instances of displacements from gentrification and associated increases in rent gap, and the loss of income were also identified in this case study, which echoes similar findings in the literature (Cobbinah et al., 2019; Nikuze et al., 2020; van Noorloos & Kloosterboer, 2018; Watson, 2014). Growth machine theory has historically highlighted some of these adverse material effects in non-SSA contexts (Logan & Molotch, 1987; Molotch, 1993; Vogel & Swanson, 1989) and has effectively done so here. However, adverse immaterial effects, especially around the loss of trust and social capital among the relocated traders, requires emphasis here. Studies on retailing, especially the informal nature of retail activities in SSA, foreground the importance of trust and social capital to traders (Asomani-Boateng, 2016; Bohannan & Dalton, 1962; Clark, 1994,

2010). It is one thing for traders to lose their trust for government actors, but it is quite more consequential for these traders to lose their trust for each other, and the attendant support or capital they have historically relied upon. As conversations emerge and continue around these urban redevelopment process, there is the need to deeply probe these adverse immaterial losses among traders and other residents as they are dispossessed of their land and other material resources.

Conclusion

The dynamics of urban redevelopment processes in sub-Saharan Africa (SSA), especially around retail spaces, have gained currency among scholars from multiple disciplines. Extending beyond traditional empirical studies, the application of the growth machine theory permits a more nuanced understanding of the ongoing Takoradi Central Market retail and urban redevelopment project (and these processes more generally in SSA). It does this by facilitating the interrogation, for instance, of what rationale(s) and whose motives undergird the redevelopment of these retail spaces, and revealing that we must consider these projects as an imbroglio of motives, actors, alliances, and conflicts that foster urban land and wealth accumulation for elites while simultaneously dispossessing the poor and marginalized of these same economic resources (see also Young, 2021).

This study also reveals the need supplement the extant studies on anti-growth resistance strategies with more studies on how (mis)aligned motives among actors engaged in urban (re)development projects inform their decisions about with whom and for what they form governing coalitions. Our having done thusly underlines the explanatory power realized by simultaneously considering the interaction of land use and the identification of real estate development protagonists and their motives across multiple scales. Indeed, given that all human activity is, at base, the use and development of land, and that capitalism is predicated upon the need for continual growth, land (re)development projects conducted in capitalist societies under the auspices of planning are most thoroughly analyzed and understood through application of growth machine theory. It is further suggestive that rather than there being a multitude of governing regimes in modern capitalist societies (Stone, 1989) there is only “the growth regime” as articulated through various preferred ends and means (e.g., Audretsch & Fritsch, 2002; Boyer, 2000; Onaran et al., 2009) that by default all involve land and its use.

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