



Redefining Urban Spaces: Grassroot Perspectives on the Transformation of Accra's Central Business District

Eunice Hogba

University of Ghana, Ghana

Abstract- Accra's central business district (CBD) has undergone significant transformations over the past decades, reflecting Ghana's evolving economy and social landscape. While several studies have documented Accra's CBD transformation, most of these studies primarily focused on macro-level changes and official planning perspectives, leaving a gap in our understanding of how these transformations are perceived and experienced at the grassroots level. The paper therefore used a qualitative approach, comprising interviews, focus group discussions, and direct observation to understand these transformations from the perspectives of those directly engaged in the CBD's economic activities and daily life. The findings revealed a complex interaction of factors reshaping Accra's CBD, including 1) Trade liberalization and globalization have expanded the size and scope of businesses within the CBD 2) The demand for commercial space has led to the conversion of old residential buildings into modern office spaces and high-rise structures, amplifying gentrification. 3) The commercialization of motorcycles has altered the transportation dynamics within the CBD. Based on the paper's findings, recommendations emphasize the necessity for integrated urban planning and effective land use regulations to balance commercial growth with social equity and environmental sustainability. It also offers valuable insights for scholars, policymakers, and stakeholders concerned with the future of Ghana's capital city.

Index Terms- Central Business District, Accra, Stakeholders, Urban Space

I. INTRODUCTION

urbanization, particularly in the Global South, has emerged as a defining phenomenon of the 21st century, profoundly reshaping the social, economic, and spatial landscapes of cities [1]. The United Nations projects that by 2050, 68% of the world's population will reside in urban areas, with the most rapid growth occurring in developing countries [2]. This unprecedented urban expansion is not merely a demographic shift but a complex process that engenders multi-layered transformations in urban spaces, economies, and social structures [3][4]. Turok and McGranahan (2013)

argue that while urbanization can drive economic growth and innovation in the Global South, it often outpaces infrastructure development and institutional capacity, leading to issues such as informal settlements, inadequate service provision, and environmental degradation. Moreover, as Roy (2009) posits, the urban experience in the Global South often deviates from Western models of urbanization, necessitating context-specific approaches to urban development and governance.

Ghana, like many countries in the Global South, is experiencing rapid urbanization. The World Bank (2015)



reports that Ghana's urban population grew from 32% in 1984 to 55% in 2016, with projections indicating continued urban growth. This urbanization trend is particularly pronounced in Accra, the nation's capital and largest city. Accra's population has more than doubled since 2000, reaching over 4 million inhabitants in the greater metropolitan area, with a daily influx of 2.5 million business commuters. (Ghana Statistical Service, 2021).

Within this context of rapid urban growth, Accra's Central Business District (CBD) stands as a microcosm of the broader transformations occurring in the city. Historically the hub of commercial activities, the CBD is undergoing significant changes in its spatial configuration, economic functions, and social dynamics. Grant and Yankson (2003) note that economic liberalization policies implemented in the 1980s have accelerated these changes, attracting international companies and spurring demand for modern office spaces and high-end services. The transformation of Accra's CBD is complex. Physically, the area is witnessing a surge in high-rise developments and modern commercial complexes, often at the expense of historical buildings and traditional markets (Agyemang et al., 2017). Economically, there is a shift towards service-oriented industries and formal sector employment, potentially marginalizing informal economic activities that have long been a staple of the CBD (Obeng-Odoom, 2013). Socially, these changes are altering the demographic composition of the area, with potential implications for social cohesion and cultural identity (Yankson et al., 2017). Understanding these transformations is crucial for several reasons. First, as Parnell and Pieterse (2014) argue, the experiences of African cities like Accra are essential for developing more inclusive and sustainable urban theories that reflect the realities of the Global South. Second, the CBD, as the economic engine of the city, plays a vital role in shaping Accra's overall development trajectory. Changes in the CBD can have far-reaching implications for the city's economic competitiveness, social equity, and environmental sustainability (Agyemang et al., 2019).

However, there is a notable gap in the literature regarding how these transformations are perceived and experienced by the diverse stakeholders who inhabit and use the CBD daily. While available analyses provide valuable insights into broad trends, they often overlook the realities of everyday urban life. As Watson (2009) contends, understanding urban transformations requires engaging with the lived experiences and perspectives of urban residents, particularly those who may be marginalized in formal planning processes.

This study addresses this gap by examining the transformation of Accra's CBD through the lens of

grassroots perspectives. By focusing on the views and experiences of local stakeholders, this research seeks to contribute to a holistic understanding of how urban spaces are being redefined in the face of rapid urbanization and economic change. The paper also contributes to academic debates on urban transformation in the Global South, offering practical insights for policymakers, urban planners, and development practitioners working to create more equitable and sustainable urban futures. As cities in the Global South continue to grow and transform, there is an urgent need for urban policies and interventions that respond to the needs of the diverse urban populations.

II CHARACTERISTICS OF THE CBD

The term "central business district" (CBD) was initially postulated by E. W. Burgess, an American urban geographer, in 1923 in his famous concentric zone model of urban structure. Burgess (1923) proposed that a city expands outward in concentric circles. The spatial structure could be divided into five zones: the commuter zone, the residential zone, the working-class zone, the transition zone, and the center, which is the CBD, the city's functional core. He characterized the CBD of modern society as one integrating financial, business, cultural, and service institutions, with high traffic concentration and numerous supporting facilities such as office buildings, hotels, and apartments (Burgess, 1923).

Urban studies have attempted various empirical evaluations to identify and delineate the CBD (Borruso & Porceddu, 2009; Hollenstein & Purves, 2010). Conventional studies in urban geography characterized the CBD by mapping land zones with the highest concentration of central activities and high land values (Yu et al., 2015). Traditionally, it was defined as a zone characterized by obsolete and deteriorated property (Alonso, 1960). At the most visible level, the CBD can be identified by its tallest buildings, the heaviest concentration of traffic and pedestrian flows, large daytime working population, and low residential population.

It is important to note that variations exist across cities. While some show clear demarcations, others might not, and in many developing countries, mixed land uses are more common (Okoye et al., 2010). These observations provide only crude indicators of the CBD's characteristics and are not entirely satisfactory (Thurstain-Goodwin & Unwin, 2000). Recent methods for computing indices of central business activity include statistical approaches to derive the concentration and density of commercial activities in area units (Yu et al., 2015).

The main theoretical contributions for delimiting the CBD have come from approaches that employ land values and indices, including floor space, business intensity, and property valuation. The application of land rent theory is



based on principles associated with Von Thünen's explanation of agricultural land uses. His central idea is that the economic gain from farming land decreases with distance from the market (CBD) due to higher transport costs. In urban environments, individual land uses compete for the most desirable central location in or near the CBD. Potential benefits include strategic location, local market demand, integration with regional clusters, and access to human resources.

These benefits come at the cost of paying the highest rent to be closest to or at the peak land value intersection (PLVI). The PLVI is an area in the CBD where main roads and transport links intersect, though its position can shift depending on CBD growth patterns. This highlights the core of the city in terms of the dominance of economic activities (Sun et al., 2015).

The CBD is thus delimited as an area of very high land valuation, characterized by a high concentration of retail businesses, service businesses, and offices, and by very high traffic flow (U.S. Census Bureau, 2021). Consequently, increases in distance from the PLVI result in a drop in land values, altering physical urban land use patterns, notably in the high-rise structure of the CBD as developers seek to maximize the use of costly sites.

Pacione (2009) argues that the need for, and willingness to pay for, accessible sites determine the internal land-use pattern of the central city. Murphy and Vance (1954) suggested that certain parts of the city have higher commercial values than others, particularly for retail activities that depend on high pedestrian concentration. This intensity declines as one moves away from the CBD. Competition and invasion by succession are significant concepts that explain the probable expansion into areas where dominant land-use functions could maximize the use of space (Pacione, 2009).

It is crucial to recognize that the spatial structure of the CBD is dynamic, and continually shaped by both internal and external forces. These forces include globalization, changing market conditions, technological advancements, and shifting urban policies (Hall, 1997; Gospodini, 2006). Recent studies have also highlighted the impact of digital technologies and the COVID-19 pandemic on the evolving nature of CBDs, suggesting a need for more flexible and resilient urban planning approaches (Batty, 2020; Florida et al., 2021).

III FACTORS INFLUENCING TRANSFORMATION IN ACCRA'S CBD

The transformation of Accra's CBD is the result of a complex interplay of factors, rooted in decades of economic policy changes, globalization, and shifting urban dynamics. This transformation, which began in the 1950s, took a dramatic turn in the 1980s with the implementation of neoliberal economic policies (Grant, 2009). The

neoliberal paradigm, which advocates for resource allocation based on price signals and demand-supply conditions (Brenner et al., 2010), has been a significant driver of change in Accra's CBD. The introduction of policies such as trade liberalization, relaxation of import controls, and financial deregulation created the foundation for the ongoing transformation (Grant, 2009; Obeng-Odoom, 2013). These changes allowed traders to import a wider variety of goods from global markets and set their prices freely, fundamentally altering the nature of businesses in the CBD. However, the impacts of these policies have been double-edged. While they have led to increased economic activity and diversification, they have also resulted in the displacement of some existing commercial activities and dominant trading groups (Otiso & Owusu, 2008). This reshaping of the economic landscape has had profound implications for the social fabric of the CBD.

Globalization has been a key factor in the rapid transformation of Accra's CBD, leading to the diffusion of ideas and innovations that have altered the culture of the area's occupants (Harvey, 2008; Yeboah et al., 2013). This process has not only affected the business practices within the CBD but has also influenced the daily lives and social interactions of traders and residents. The impact of globalization on Accra's CBD aligns with Sassen's (2001) concept of the "global city," where urban centers become nodes in the global economic network. This has resulted in the CBD becoming a melting pot of global influences, reflected in the diversification of goods, services, and cultural practices.

The influx of migrants, both from other parts of Ghana and from abroad, has significantly contributed to the changing sociological makeup and norms in the CBD (Owusu & Agyei-Mensah, 2011). Internal migration, driven by the search for better economic opportunities, has led to a diversification of the CBD's population and the introduction of new social practices. Moreover, the arrival of foreign businesses, particularly from countries like China, India, Lebanon, Nigeria, and other West African nations, has further transformed the social and economic landscape of the CBD (Darkwah, 2013). This international migration has introduced new business models, cultural practices, and social dynamics, contributing to the area's cosmopolitan character.

An emerging factor in the transformation of Accra's CBD is the increasing impact of climate change and environmental pressures. Issues such as flooding, waste management, and air pollution have become critical challenges for the CBD, influencing both economic activities and quality of life (Codjoe & Afuduo, 2015). These environmental factors are shaping new urban policies and business practices, contributing to the ongoing transformation of the area.



IV STUDY AREA

Accra's central business district, often referred to as the CBD or simply "downtown," is the economic and administrative heart of Ghana's capital city (Frimpong & Amankwa, 2015). Located in the Korle Klottay District, the CBD is characterized by a mix of colonial-era architecture and modern high-rise buildings (Grant and Yankson, 2003). The CBD's origins can be traced back to the colonial period when Accra became the capital of the Gold Coast in 1877. The British administration established key governmental and commercial structures in this area, laying the foundation for its future as the city's primary business center. Today, the CBD houses important national institutions such as the Bank of Ghana, the Supreme Court, and various ministries, alongside numerous corporate headquarters and financial institutions (Quarcoopome, 1992). One of the defining features of Accra's CBD is its high concentration of formal and informal economic activities. This area encompasses major trading points, including Tudu, UTC, Makola market, Post Office Square, and Agbogbloshie. Makola market is considered the core of Accra's CBD, exhibiting the highest land value and concentration of commercial activities (Owusu & Oteng-Ababio, 2015). These markets, alongside street vendors and small businesses, contribute significantly to the informal economy, which is estimated to employ about 80% of Accra's workforce (Owusu, 2008).

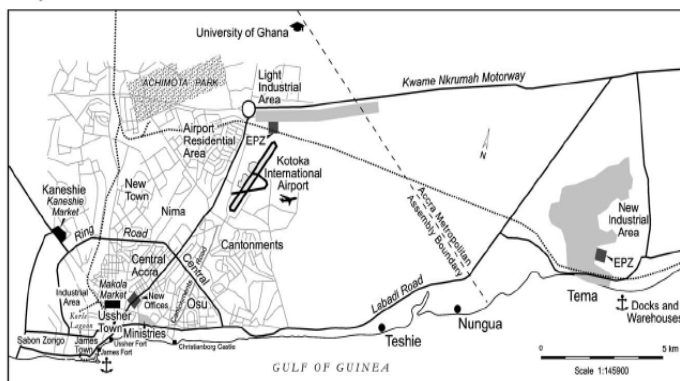


Figure 2: Map of Accra showing the Central Business District

Source: Grant and Yankson (2003)

V METHODOLOGY

The study is grounded in the interpretivism paradigm, which emphasizes understanding social phenomena through the meanings people assign to them (Creswell & Poth, 2018). Data collection methods include semi-structured interviews, focus group discussions (FGDs), and direct observation.

In-depth, semi-structured interviews were conducted with 25 participants representing diverse stakeholder groups,

allowing for flexibility in exploring participants' views while maintaining a focus on key themes (Bryman, 2016). Two FGDs were organized, each comprising 4-6 participants, to explore shared experiences and generate collective insights (Morgan, 2019).

Convenient and purposive sampling techniques were employed to select retailers, drivers, business owners, and key informants for interviews. These techniques were chosen due to the participants' limited accessibility during retail and business transactions, and their in-depth knowledge of the research subject, respectively (Etikan et al., 2016). The sampled respondents comprised individual market traders, street hawkers, long-term residents, daily commuters, drivers, business owners, members of the Ghana Union of Traders Association (GUTA), commercial motorcycle riders, Accra Metropolitan Assembly (AMA) Task Force members, and representatives from the Ghana Private Roads and Transport Union (GPRTU).

Direct observation of activities and the environment of Accra's CBD was undertaken throughout the fieldwork period. This approach was primarily employed to understand the geography of the CBD environment pertaining to the study area and to identify various structures and commercial activities (Merriam & Tisdell, 2015).

Thematic analysis was employed to identify, analyze, and report patterns within the data (Braun & Clarke, 2021). The process involved familiarization with the data, generating initial codes, searching for themes, reviewing themes, defining and naming themes, and producing the report. This method was chosen for its flexibility and capacity to provide rich, detailed, and complex accounts of data (Nowell et al., 2017). Ethical considerations were paramount throughout the research process. Informed consent was obtained from all participants, and they were made aware of their right to withdraw at any time. Confidentiality was maintained by using pseudonyms and securely storing data (Saunders et al., 2015).

VII FINDINGS

A. Economic Transformation

The economic landscape of Accra's CBD has undergone substantial changes, driven by globalization, trade liberalization, and local economic policies. Respondents consistently highlighted the expansion and diversification of commercial activities within the district. A 31-year-old cosmetic trader provided insights into the shifting trade patterns: "We used to travel to Nigeria and Togo to bring our goods but now there are wholesales here in Makola that we go and buy them from, so I don't travel to Nigeria



to get my goods." This statement reflects not only the development of a more robust local supply chain but also the changing nature of cross-border trade in West Africa.

The influx of foreign investors, particularly Chinese wholesalers and retailers, emerged as a significant theme in discussions on the economic changes. A representative from GUTA expressed concern about this trend "Why should we allow Chinese wholesalers to set up right here in Makola and push us out of business when our laws prohibit such practices? It is unfair because they have bigger capital and can afford to sell their goods cheaply. All our businesses are collapsing, very soon, the whole of Makola will become little China." This perspective highlights the tensions between local and foreign businesses and raises questions about the enforcement of trade regulations and the protection of local enterprises. The transformation of the CBD has also led to the emergence of new economic activities and adaptations to existing ones. The rise of 'Okada' (motorcycle taxi) services is a notable example of this trend. An Okada rider explained their role in the changing urban transport ecosystem: "The police harass us because they claim our services are illegal, but we provide essential services to our customers who are mostly in a hurry to beat the traffic. We are prepared to go through any legal process to legalize our operations." This statement accentuates the informal sector's role in filling gaps in urban services and the challenges they face in gaining formal recognition (see Figure 2).

Findings further show that the economic transformation of Accra's CBD is characterized by the intensification of land use and conversion of residential areas to commercial spaces. The CBD is characterized by three main zones including civic, residential, and commercial. However, it was explained by the stakeholders that, though, the zoning and use of the CBD have not changed there has been an intensification of land use towards commercialization. Respondents explained that the key features of this phenomenon are mostly seen in the construction of high-rise buildings and gentrification to accommodate the increasing number of commercial activities. With inner-city areas being converted into more affluent communities through renovation and redevelopment. This development is usually predominant with relatively old properties mostly built with bricks and mud within the district. The vertical construction sought to maximize the use of the scarce land within the district as well as reduce the lateral expansion. However, this has led to increased property values and the emergence of new commercial spaces.



Figure 2: Unauthorized Okada Station
Source: Field Survey

B. Spatial Transformation

The physical landscape of Accra's CBD has undergone extensive changes, characterized by intensification of land use, vertical growth, and the repurposing of existing structures. Respondents consistently mentioned the proliferation of high-rise buildings and the changing skyline of the district. A 65-year-old trader at Makola No.2 market observed, "There used to be few tall buildings in this area, however over the past 20 years the numbers have increased and they keep getting taller. It's like a different city now." This statement reflects not only the physical changes but also the rapidity of the transformation, which has occurred within a single generation.

The process of gentrification was evident in respondents' accounts of property repurposing. A GUTA member cited a specific example "The conversion of the Kinbu Gardens into the ultra-modern Octagon building is just one instance. We're seeing old residential buildings torn down and replaced with office complexes and shopping malls all over the CBD" (see Figure 3). This trend highlights the changing priorities in land use and the pressure on existing residential areas within the district.



Figure 3: High-Rise Building-The octagon

The expansion of the CBD along transport corridors has been observed by several respondents, indicating a significant spatial reorganization of commercial activities. This expansion affects traffic patterns and the distribution of economic activities within the district. Nowadays, the increase in vehicle ownership has led to limited parking spaces and increased congestion within the CBD of Accra. The transformation of the CBD and the concentration of commercial activities generate additional trips to the area, contributing to heightened congestion. Interviews with transport operators reveal that congestion has worsened over the years due to the growth in commercial activities and the rise in vehicle ownership. One transport operator noted, "It took over three hours for me to get here from Madina because of the traffic situation on the road leading to the CBD. I am considering seeking alternative transport stations and routes because I am expending a lot of fuel. Additionally, the rising fuel prices make it increasingly difficult to afford."

The spatial transformation has also led to the emergence of informal settlements at the fringes of the CBD, stressing the complex relationship between formal and informal urban development. A trader in Makola Market explained her living situation, "Accommodation is very difficult to get in Accra and I live at Agbogbloshie and pay 15 Cedis per night so I can come and sell in the Makola Market. I don't like where I stay but I have no choice." This account underlines the housing challenges faced by low-income workers in the CBD and the spatial inequalities that have emerged as a result of the district's transformation.

C. Social Transformation

The social fabric of Accra's CBD has been significantly impacted by its economic and spatial transformations. The formation of strong trade and commercial associations

emerged as a key theme, reflecting the need for collective action in the face of changing economic conditions. A representative of GUTA emphasized their role in advocating for local traders "We have to fight for our members' rights. The influx of foreign traders is just one issue. We also deal with high rents, lack of proper infrastructure, and harassment from city authorities." This statement highlights the multiple challenges faced by local businesses and the important role of civil society organizations in negotiating these challenges.

The displacement of local traders was a recurring concern among respondents. A 39-year-old second-hand clothes trader lamented, "Now there are more shops around than it used to be some 15 years ago but the shops are being occupied mostly by foreigners and we the Ghanaians do not have a place in there because we cannot afford to pay the rent. A shop is being given out for over GH¢150,000. How will I pay for it with my small capital?" This account reveals the economic pressures faced by small-scale traders and the potential for social exclusion in the development process. Changes in housing patterns were also noted by several respondents, reflecting the broader spatial reorganization of the CBD. A resident of Ga Mashie stated, "I used to have a room to myself until the ground floor was turned into shops and unfortunately that was my room so I had to relocate after my rent was due. I had to join my brothers in their room because the cost of rent is high in this area now and I couldn't afford it." This account highlights the social costs of commercial expansion and the pressure on existing residential communities within the CBD. The transformation of the CBD has also led to changes in social interactions and community structures. A long-term resident observed, "In the past, we knew all our neighbors and there was a strong sense of community. Now, with all these new buildings and businesses, it feels like we're living in a different world. Many of our old neighbors have moved away." This sentiment reflects the social disruptions that can accompany rapid urban transformation and the challenges of maintaining community cohesion in a rapidly changing environment.

VIII DISCUSSIONS

The study's findings shed light on Accra's CBD transformation, presenting complex factors of spatial, economic, and social shifts that both confirm and contradict preconceived notions about sub-Saharan African urban development. The economic changes observed in Accra's CBD exemplify the tension between global economic forces and local realities, a theme widely discussed in urban studies literature (Sassen, 2001; Robinson, 2006). The influx of foreign investors, particularly Chinese wholesalers and retailers, aligns with what Dittgen (2017) terms the "urban footprint" of China



in Africa. This phenomenon raises questions about the nature of South-South economic relations and their impact on local economic structures. The concerns expressed by local traders echo Mohan and Tan-Mullins' (2009) observations on the ambivalent reception of Chinese migrants in African urban contexts. The development of a more robust local supply chain, as evidenced by the reduced need for cross-border sourcing trips, suggests a maturation of Accra's role in regional trade networks. However, the displacement pressures faced by small-scale local traders highlight the uneven impacts of this economic transformation, resonating with Harvey's (2008) concept of "accumulation by dispossession" in urban contexts. The emergence of new economic activities, such as 'Okada' services, demonstrates the adaptive capacity of the informal sector, a theme extensively explored by scholars like Roy (2005) and McFarlane (2012). These developments challenge conventional notions of urban economic development, suggesting a need for comprehensive approaches that recognize the vitality and resilience of informal economic activities.

Spatial Transformation and Urban Morphology. The spatial changes observed in Accra's CBD, particularly the verticalization of the urban landscape and the expansion along transport corridors, align with classic urban growth theories such as Alonso's (1964) bid-rent theory and more recent work on African urban morphologies (Andreasen et al., 2017). The intensification of land use reflects broader trends of urban densification in rapidly growing African cities (Pieterse and Parnell, 2014). The gentrification processes evident in the repurposing of properties and displacement of residents echo similar trends observed in other Global South contexts (Lees et al., 2016). However, the specific manifestations in Accra, such as the conversion of the Kinbu Gardens into the Octagon building, suggest a need for more contextually grounded understandings of gentrification in African cities, as argued by Lemanski (2014). The emergence of informal settlements at the fringes of the CBD highlights the persistent challenge of housing provision in rapidly urbanizing contexts. This phenomenon aligns with Davis' (2006) observations on the "planet of slums" but also calls for a more nuanced understanding of the relationship between formal and informal urban development, as proposed by Simone (2004) in his work on African cities.

The formation and strengthening of trade associations in response to economic pressures exemplify what Bayat (2013) terms "quiet encroachment" – collective actions by marginalized groups to secure their livelihoods and rights in urban spaces. These developments highlight the importance of civil society organizations in urban governance and development processes, a theme emphasized in recent literature on African urbanism (Myers, 2011). The displacement of local traders and

residents, and the resulting social disruptions, point to the need for more inclusive urban development strategies. This aligns with calls for "just" or "equitable" urbanism in African contexts (Watson, 2009; Miraftab, 2018). The experiences of displaced traders and residents in Accra's CBD provide concrete examples of what Yiftachel (2009) terms "gray spaces" – urban areas and populations caught between legality and illegality, inclusion and exclusion. The changing social fabric of the CBD, particularly the erosion of community ties noted by long-term residents, resonates with broader discussions on the social impacts of rapid urbanization. This phenomenon calls for a reconsideration of how social sustainability is conceptualized and operationalized in urban development policies, as argued by Dempsey et al. (2011).

The findings from Accra's CBD transformation contribute to ongoing debates about the applicability of Western urban theories in African contexts (Robinson, 2006; Parnell and Oldfield, 2014). While some aspects of the transformation align with classic urban models, others, such as the persistent vitality of informal economic activities and the complex interplay between formal and informal urban development, challenge these models.

The study underscores the need for what Pieterse (2011) calls "richer repertoires" for understanding and intervening in African urban contexts. Future research and policy initiatives should develop nuanced frameworks to understand the interplay between global economic forces and local urban dynamics in African cities, explore innovative urban planning approaches that accommodate both formal and informal economic activities, investigate mechanisms for more inclusive urban governance that effectively balance diverse stakeholder interests, examine the long-term social and environmental sustainability implications of current urban transformation processes, and create context-specific indicators and metrics for assessing the impacts of urban transformation on various social groups.

IX CONCLUSION

The transformation of Accra's CBD reflects a complex interplay of global economic forces, local development initiatives, and grassroots adaptations. This study's findings highlight the multifaceted nature of urban transformation, encompassing economic diversification, spatial reorganization, and social restructuring. While the CBD's development has brought economic growth, modernization, and new opportunities, it has also led to significant challenges, including displacement of local businesses and residents, increasing inequality, and environmental pressures.

The experiences and perspectives of local stakeholders, as captured in this study, underscore the importance of



incorporating grassroots voices in urban planning and policy-making. The tensions between formal and informal economic activities, the challenges faced by small-scale traders, and the housing pressures experienced by low-income residents all point to the need for more inclusive and equitable development strategies.

Future research and policy initiatives should focus on balancing economic growth with social equity and environmental sustainability. This may involve developing participatory planning mechanisms that give voice to marginalized groups, implementing policies to support local businesses in the face of foreign competition, improving transportation systems to enhance mobility and reduce congestion, and developing strategies to integrate informal economic activities into the formal sector while recognizing their vital role in the urban economy.

Additionally, efforts should be made to preserve affordable housing within the CBD and to mitigate the negative impacts of gentrification on long-standing communities. Environmental considerations, including green building standards and investment in public spaces, should be prioritized to improve the CBD's livability and long-term sustainability. Addressing these complex and interrelated issues, Accra can work towards a more equitable and sustainable transformation of its CBD, one that benefits a broader spectrum of its urban population while positioning the city as a vibrant and inclusive economic hub in West Africa. This approach not only has the potential to improve the lives of Accra's residents but also to provide a model for sustainable urban development in rapidly growing African cities.

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AUTHORS

Eunice Hogba, MPhil, Geography and Resource Development,
University of Ghana, eunicehogba@gmail.com

Correspondence Author – Eunice Hogba,
eunicehogba@gmail.com