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Urban governance in Ghana: the participation of traders in the redevelopment of Kotokuraba Market in Cape Coast

Lewis Abedi Asante

Department of Geography, Humboldt-Universität Zu Berlin, Berlin, Germany; Department of Estate Management, Kumasi Technical University, Kumasi, Ghana

ABSTRACT

This article contributes to the discourse of participatory urban governance through a qualitative analysis of the redevelopment of a market infrastructure in Cape Coast, Ghana. It demonstrates that problems arise with the quantity, distance and size of trading spaces when traders are not made to participate at the construction phase of market redevelopment. The responses of the municipal authorities and the market traders in Cape Coast to these problems are discussed. The wider implication of the findings of this study is that citizens should be engaged from the conception through planning to the implementation of urban regeneration.

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Introduction

Since the dawn of the twenty-first century, there has been renewed interest from municipal authorities in Africa in modernizing and/or beautifying the inner parts of city districts (Amoah, Owusu-Sekyere, & Angmor, 2018; Lindell, Ampaire, & Byerley, 2019; Obeng-Odoom, 2010). This is largely a response to the derelict urban infrastructure, as well as the chaos and disorder, that pertain in the central business district of African cities (Murray & Myers, 2006; Owusu-Sekyere, Amoah, & Teng-Zeng, 2016). This has been manifested through large-scale urban regeneration projects that seek to facilitate economic growth and improve the quality of life in African cities (Fält, 2016; Houghton, 2013; Myers, 2015). Following the path of neoliberal urban reforms and development instigated elsewhere, municipal authorities in most parts of Africa have become entrepreneurial in outlook and orientation (Murray & Myers, 2006; Obeng-Odoom, 2013). According to Murray and Myers (2006, p. 18), ‘neoliberal modes of urban governance hold out the promise of renewal and rejuvenation.’ Interventions to regenerate inner city infrastructure have been characterized by heavy-handed demolition of informal settlements and eviction of street traders and hawkers from the urban space (Fält, 2016; Gillespie, 2016; Lindell et al., 2019; Obeng-Odoom, 2011), with the ultimate intention of facilitating private sector investments (Gillespie, 2016). However, these demolition and eviction exercises in the city center have achieved little success, because street traders and hawkers are attracted by the large footfall and attendant high profit in and around designated municipal marketplaces (Lawal, 2004; Steel, Ujoranyi, & Owusu, 2014).

Nowadays, there is a growing perception among municipal authorities that people are compelled to trade by city center streets because they are unable to secure space in the heavily congested municipal marketplaces (Asante & Helbrecht, 2019a; Asiedu & Agyei-Mensah, 2008). More to the point, due to the poor infrastructure and insanitary conditions in municipal marketplaces in many African cities, they are considered as informal spaces and as stains soiling the image of the modern African city (Lindell & Ampaire, 2017; Monteith, 2015). Therefore, in recent years, city authorities...
in some African countries have taken keen interest in the redevelopment of municipal market infrastructure not only to reduce congestion but also to improve and expand this urban infrastructure, to provide a new shopping experience and to formalize the activities of street traders and hawkers (Battersby & Muwowo, 2019; Lindell & Ampaire, 2017; Lindell et al., 2019; Monteith, 2015). In Ghana, for example, we have witnessed, in the past few years, the redevelopment of municipal market infrastructure in Kumasi, Cape Coast, Ho and Tamale (Asante & Helbrecht, 2019a, 2019c). Several other markets in Accra – Makola Market, Mallam Atta Market and Kantamanto Market – have also been scheduled for redevelopment (Ministry of Finance, 2015).

It is the complex urban governance processes and unanticipated outcomes of the redevelopment of this municipal market infrastructure that I explore in this article.

A brief review of the existing literature shows that municipal markets are social spaces because they provide employment, food, clothing and income to the urban agglomeration in most African cities (Asante & Helbrecht, 2019c; Sowatey et al., 2018; Storr, 2008, 2009). It is argued that traders understand the craft of their businesses and, therefore, are able to determine the locational attributes that are suitable for their daily activities (Owusu-Sekyere et al., 2016). However, several studies have remarked that traders are not adequately involved in the governance and decision-making processes of market redevelopment (Asante & Helbrecht, 2019a; Battersby & Muwowo, 2019; Inkoom, 2014), which supports the broader argument of low citizen participation in contemporary urban regeneration and development (Amoah et al., 2018; Cobbinah, 2017). At best, traders are invited to stakeholder meetings during the official announcement of market projects and informed about the schedule of trader relocation and duration of construction of the new market (Asante & Helbrecht, 2019a; Atkinson & Cope, 1997). These studies notwithstanding, few studies have analyzed the challenges of non-inclusion of traders in the construction phase of market redevelopment projects and how both state agents and traders respond to these challenges. By exploring this important research gap, I contribute to the growing discourse of participatory governance of urban regeneration and market redevelopment in Ghana and beyond (Asante & Helbrecht, 2019a, 2019c; Gonzalez, 2018).

In this study, I contend, through an empirical scrutiny of the redevelopment of Kotokuraba Market in Cape Coast, that trading spaces in newly-developed markets may fall short of the number of displaced traders and the requirements of market trading if vendors are not deeply involved in the construction phase of market redevelopment. In making up for the shortfall in trading spaces, state agents are compelled to create additional spaces in the new market. Likewise, traders activate their activism and self-governance practices by undertaking unauthorized extensions to ensure suitability of allocated spaces for market trading. The rest of the study is organized as follows. The next section reviews literature on urban governance in Africa with a focus on Ghana. Section Three discusses the context of Cape Coast and Kotokuraba Market. Section Four describes the methods. In Section Five, I discuss the findings of the study. The study is concluded in Section Six.

Urban governance in Ghana and Africa

This study dwells largely on the combined conceptualization of urban governance as decentralization, entrepreneurialism, democratization and activism (DEDA) by Franklin Obeng-Odooom (2012, 2013, 2017)) and Asante and Helbrecht (2019a). Obeng-Odooom (2013) developed the urban governance as DED which, he argues, reveals a three-stage analytical approach. The first stage sketches the nature of urban governance in operation in order to account for the context-specific issues. The second stage ascertains the outcomes or consequences of urban governance in terms of the provision of urban infrastructure and services and improved quality of life. The third stage examines how citizens respond to the nature and kinds of urban infrastructure and services delivered by municipal authorities. Asante and Helbrecht (2019a), in a recent study, have argued that an additional dimension of activism is necessary because the responses of citizens are yielding a positive change in urban governance. Therefore, the last stage of the analysis is to understand the strategies adopted by citizens to achieve the desired change in urban governance. This
conceptualization is a useful lens for the literature discussion of this study because it enables an understanding of the governance processes of urban redevelopment from conception through planning and financing to implementation.

In unpacking the context-specific issues, urban governance as decentralization emphasizes political decentralization, where elected or appointed mayors together with assembly members (or local councillors) are clothed with the power to lead local-level governance and to facilitate the provision of urban infrastructure (Fuseini, 2016; Obeng-Odoom, 2013). Studies show that, where mayors are appointed by the President, they are very often autocratic in their decision making, and remain accountable to the appointing authority and not the people at the local level (Adaawen & Jorgensen, 2012; Bob-Millar & Obeng-Odoom, 2011). However, the election of mayors may not necessarily be the way out because national governments may be reluctant to fund urban development in cities that are controlled by opposition political parties (Resnick, 2010, 2014b, 2014a). But whether mayors are elected or appointed, it is argued that decentralization in most parts of Africa remains largely ideological because municipal authorities generate very little revenue locally and are heavily reliant on national governments to provide critical urban infrastructure and services for the people (Gough, 1999). This is why urban governance as entrepreneurialism requires leaders of local authorities not to be absolutely dependent on central government for financial resources but, instead, to possess the qualities to attract, negotiate and promote private investment for the provision of urban infrastructure (Gillespie, 2016). In recent years, due to the huge infrastructural deficit, successive national governments in Ghana have adopted the strategy of assisting municipal authorities to secure market-based large-scale infrastructural financing while committing these municipal authorities to repay the funds from the operation of the new infrastructure (Asante & Helbrecht, 2019b).

Urban governance as democratization demonstrates that the decision-making process of urban redevelopment is a shared responsibility among local politicians (mayors and Assembly members), professional bureaucracy and the citizenry (Yeboah & Obeng-Odoom, 2010). Nevertheless, in Ghana, for instance, the National Urban Policy acknowledges that the participation of the people in urban development is limited and that Ghana is unlikely to benefit from a comprehensive urban intervention without active participation of the people (Government of Ghana, 2012). In response to this issue, new laws have been enacted to open up opportunities for citizen participation in local governance (Devas & Grant, 2003). In 2016, the Ghana government has repealed the old local government law (Local Government Act, 1993, Act 462) and replaced it with a new one (Local Governance Act 2016, Act 936), which has a dedicated section on citizen participation at the local level. Despite the policy and legal support for participation, municipal authorities remain adamant in involving local communities throughout the decision-making process (Maginn, 2007). To paraphrase Arnstein (1969), municipal authorities accommodate participation of citizens in urban development at the manipulation and therapy level while little room is provided for participation at the level of partnership, delegated power and citizen control. Studies in Ghana, Kenya and Uganda show that even when municipal authorities open up to greater participation, it is usually elitist as it largely involves citizens in high-class neighborhoods while ignoring those in low- and middle-class neighborhoods (Cobbinah, 2017; Devas & Grant, 2003). It is important to state that inadequate citizen participation is not only a feature of urban governance in Africa but also in many Western countries (Atkinson & Cope, 1997; Gonzalez, 2018; Maginn, 2007; Monno, 2016). In most cases, municipal authorities justify the exclusion of citizens from urban development on the basis of the technical nature of the activities, limited time for implementation and the fear of objections (Atkinson & Cope, 1997; Maginn, 2007).

In his assessment of the consequences of urban governance in Africa, Obeng-Odoom (2013, p. 194) bluntly indicated that ‘entrepreneurial urban governance has made most citizens worse off. The political aspects of urban governance have been equally unsuccessful. Indeed, there is little to show for participation in urban governance, even in the best-case scenarios.’ Additionally, empirical research by other scholars has demonstrated that urban governance in Africa has neither delivered desired outcomes in terms of the provision of high-quality municipal services and infrastructure
nor provided regular avenues for citizen participation in decision-making (Devas, 2004; Fuseini, 2016; Lindell, 2008). Asante and Helbrecht (2019b), for instance, have shown in a recent study in Cape Coast that economic (loss of capital, loss of customers and inability to save) and socio-psychological (illness, depression and death) consequences arose because current modes of urban governance did not consider the micro-geography of market trading during periods of market redevelopment and relocation.

Scholars have argued that, owing to the poor consequences of urban governance, urban regeneration in many African cities have been resisted by citizens, and often result in violent confrontation between municipal authorities and citizens (Asante & Helbrecht, 2018b; Goodfellow & Titeca, 2012; Lindell & Ampaire, 2017; Murray & Myers, 2006). However, recent studies on resistance have argued that citizens are not just resisters of the poor outcomes of urban governance but activists who, most often, deploy multiple and simultaneous resistance strategies and self-governance practices to cause a change in urban governance (Asante & Helbrecht, 2019a; Lindell, 2008; Lindell et al., 2019; Mitlin, 2018). Recent waves of activism experiment with new kinds of collective action and use a wide spectrum of unconventional forms of contestation (Gillespie, 2017; Mitlin, 2018; Monno, 2016; Obeng-Odoom, 2017; Polanska, 2018). In a 2019 study in Kumasi by Asante and Helbrecht (2019a), they observed that the activism of traders compelled the municipal authority to heed their demands for a written agreement and the right of first refusal during the allocation of trading spaces in the new market. They argue that urban residents have moved away from mere resistance, where they fight against the poor ends of urban governance with little or no results, to a more vigorous activism where they push the boundaries of democratization, project themselves as independent stakeholders and innovate new practices that produce tangible and positive results.

The Cape Coast and Kotokuraba Market context

Cape Coast doubles as the capital of the Central Region of Ghana and the Cape Coast Metropolitan Assembly (CCMA). It occupies an area of 122 square kilometers and has a population of about 170,000 (Ghana Statistical Service, 2013). By its size and population, it is one of the smallest cities in Ghana. Cape Coast was one of the first communities in pre-colonial Ghana to encounter the European traders. Like many West African towns in the colonial era, trade was the original function of Cape Coast, and the close interaction with the European traders promoted this function and the development of the town and its market (Agyei-Mensah & Ardayfo-Schandorf, 2007). During this time, the trading activities in Cape Coast took place in a vibrant marketplace, located by the beach. Cape Coast was popular for the sale of crabs, salt, fish and other commodities and soon became fondly known as ‘Oguaa,’ which translates in English as ‘market.’ The vibrant commercial center in the town made the Europeans and other foreign nationals settle in Cape Coast in huge numbers. Over time, Cape Coast became the first colonial capital of the Gold Coast (Agyei-Mensah, 2006; Agyei-Mensah & Ardayfo-Schandorf, 2007). As the capital, Cape Coast saw massive improvement in its social and economic infrastructure. It held the capital city status till 1877 when it was moved to Accra (See Agyei-Mensah & Ardayfo-Schandorf, 2007 for relocation reasons). Despite losing its capital city status, Cape Coast was one of the largest municipalities in the Gold Coast and hence continued to see some improvement to its urban infrastructure.

In the late 1930s, the colonial government developed triangular-shaped Kotokuraba Market in Cape Coast (See Figure 1). Several reasons accounted for this decision by the colonial authorities to build a new market inland. The beach area was intended to be developed as an administrative enclave. The market activities created an atmosphere of congestion, noise and dirt that did not blend well with an administrative area. The traders in the old market by the beach were relocated into the new market. Since its development, the wholesale and retail trade in Kotokuraba Market has been one of the largest sources of revenue for the municipal authority in Cape Coast (Asante & Helbrecht, 2019c). In recent years, it is argued that an increasing proportion (25.1 percent) of the employed population in Cape Coast are in the wholesale and retail trade (Ghana Statistical Service,
most of which takes place within the vicinity of Kotokuraba Market. Moreover, 34.6 percent of the female employed population in Cape Coast are in the wholesale and retail trade (Ghana Statistical Service, 2013), implying that Kotokuraba Market provides a considerable measure of economic independence for women (House-Midamba & Ekechi, 1995; Owusu & Lund, 2004; Wrigley-Asante & Mensah, 2017). Notwithstanding the contribution of Kotokuraba Market to the urban economy of Cape Coast, the municipal authority spent very little on the maintenance and expansion of the market infrastructure, making it fall into a state of disrepair. Rather, the attention of the municipal authority has been on promoting Cape Coast as the hub of tourism in Ghana. Some of the major tourist attractions include the Cape Coast Castle and the Kakum National Park. Therefore, the large-scale capital investments that have taken place in Cape Coast remain largely concentrated in the tourism-related enterprises and the improvement in road networks (Murray & Myers, 2006).

In 2012, the municipal authority in Cape Coast secured Chinese infrastructure finance to redevelop Kotokuraba Market. This study examines an aspect of the issues which have emerged from this redevelopment. Figure 2 shows an image of the old as well as the newly-developed Kotokuraba Market. Figure 3 is a map of the newly-developed Kotokuraba Market.

It is important to note that Kotokuraba market is a formal and regulated municipal market in the city center of Cape Coast and not an informal and unauthorized street market that has been the focus of the majority of academic literature since the 1970s. Kotokuraba market is formal because it is a designated market center managed by the CCMA. The market generally supports formal trading, characterized by licensed businesses selling legal goods and offering services within an established premises. Because of its formality, there is usually an orderly form of financial arrangements for payment of rents, taxes and dues by traders to either the CCMA, market associations or other state agents (Ikioda, 2012). This distinction is important because most studies are quick to characterize ‘all’ socio-economic activities in the African city centers as informal, irrespective of whether they take
place in designated market centers. It is argued that the informality tag on socio-economic activities has urban governance implications, as it portrays traders as not having the right to the market space because of the perception that they are unlicensed, untaxed and do not belong to any organized grouping (Ammann & Forster, 2016; Murray & Myers, 2006). Conceptualizing the marketplace as a formal space recognizes the setting as governed by a set of rules that are not necessarily written nor enforced by the municipal administration but emerge from a myriad of interactions that traders and their leadership engage in on a daily basis (Ammann & Forster, 2016).

Methods
This study adopted a qualitative approach. The data for this research was gathered in two periods: March to May, 2017 and March to July, 2018. In 2017, the data collection could not be completed for this study because the traders were yet to be allocated trading spaces in the newly-completed market. Therefore, I identified the key respondents of the study and engaged in informal interviews with them to understand the issues. In 2018 – at which time the trading spaces had been allocated to the traders – I returned to Kotokuraba Market to interview all the relevant respondents. A combination of purposive and snowball sampling techniques was used in selecting 78
respondents. They comprise 52 traders (37 females and 15 males), eight Assembly members, five bureaucrats, one traditional ruler and 12 market leaders (eight females and four males).

I adopted purposive sampling because I was interested in interviewing key respondents who have been at the forefront of the market redevelopment and were conversant with the issues. In a market of over 1,500 traders, it was difficult to identify all the key trader respondents. Therefore, snowball sampling was handy in tracing the market leaders and traders whose experiences were useful for this study. I adopted the key qualitative data collection methods: interviews, observations and gathering of documents. All respondents were interviewed and these interviews were audio-taped. Interviews with the traders and their leadership were conducted in Fante, the local Akan dialect in Cape Coast, and lasted between 65 and 121 minutes. English was the mode of communication for all interviews with the local government officials, traditional rulers and bureaucrats, which lasted between 38 and 55 minutes. Interviews with the traders and officials were conducted in the markets and offices respectively at their convenience. The major themes that emerged from the interviews include the context (the interplay of the dimensions of urban governance), consequences (shortage of trading spaces, the short distance between trading spaces, the small size of some trading spaces) and responses (creation of additional trading spaces by the CCMA and vertical extension of trading spaces by traders).

Additionally, I captured useful data through observation of the activities of CCMA and the traders in Kotokuraba Market. Specifically, I observed the construction of new stores by CCMA and the vertical extension of stalls by traders and took photographs of these activities to support the primary data. Secondary data was also gathered from the municipal authority in Cape Coast, Cape Coast Archives and Cape Coast High Court among others. All interview data were transcribed by the author. A thematic approach was adopted in analyzing the data, which involved a careful read-through of the transcripts, taking note of important quotes, coding, grouping codes into broader themes, and writing up the interview material (Morris, 2015). In maintaining participant confidentiality, I adopted pseudonyms to identify the respondents: AM = Assembly member, PB = Professional bureaucracy, FT = Female trader, MT = Male trader, ML = Market leader.

Figure 3. Map of the newly-developed Kotokuraba Market in Cape Coast.
Source: Asante and Helbrecht (2019b)
The context of urban governance and market redevelopment in Cape Coast

In June 2012, the Cape Coast Metropolitan Assembly (CCMA), under the administration of the National Democratic Congress (NDC), secured a Chinese government concessional loan to redevelop the old Kotokuraba Market into a modern market complex. This funding came as a relief to the CCMA, since it lacked the financial resources to undertake the redevelopment of the market (Gough, 1999). Findings show that CCMA requested an amount of US$200 million from the Chinese authorities but were only granted US$30 million. From the interviews with the Assembly members and bureaucrats, it was unclear why the Chinese government granted only 15 percent of the needed funds. Per the agreement, the loan attracted an interest rate of two percent per annum. The municipal authority agreed to repay – from the proceeds generated from the new market – the principal and the interest on the loan over a period of 25 years. Although the central government guaranteed the loan for CCMA, the decision to repay the loan within a stipulated period of time signifies entrepreneurial urban governance in Cape Coast (Gillespie, 2016; Murray & Myers, 2006; Obeng-Odoom, 2013).

Once the funding was secured, the Mayor of Cape Coast convened a stakeholder meeting to officially inform the traders about the impending redevelopment of the market, the schedule for relocation and duration of construction works. In many urban regeneration settings in Ghana and West Africa, participation is limited to this form of superficial or passive consultation (Arnstein, 1969; Asante & Helbrecht, 2019a; Atkinson & Cope, 1997). The Mayor assured the traders that everyone who was relocated would be allocated a space in the new market. The traders were subsequently relocated into two temporary markets: China and Dubai markets (See Figure 3). Information gathered from the municipal authority in Cape Coast revealed that a total of 1,567 traders were relocated from Kotokuraba Market. Preparation for construction of the new market began soon after relocation.

CCMA engaged Design Associates, a Ghanaian firm, to produce the engineering and architectural drawings for the new market. Design Associates, upon completion of its work, arranged a series of meetings with the traders to make a PowerPoint presentation of the proposed market project to them. The proposed market constituted five market buildings – Sectors A to E – accommodating stores, stalls, supermarkets and other complementary facilities such as a restaurant, clinic, offices, banking hall, bathroom and toilet facilities, underground storage and a car park for traders and shoppers. Interviews with the leadership of the traders revealed that they were happy to see the design of the market prior to the redevelopment. However, because the traders were not built environment professionals, they could not imagine what the dimensions in the design would look like on the ground. The designs were also not presented in a format that would have enabled the traders to visualize the types and sizes of trading spaces and the distances between them. It was the expectation of the traders that their leaders would be engaged during the construction phase so they could better appreciate the design of the market and the trading spaces therein. Nevertheless, this was not the case in Cape Coast.

A major condition of the loan was that the new market was to be constructed by a Chinese construction firm, which happened to be China Railway Construction and Engineering Group Limited. Previous studies have indicated that Chinese-funded infrastructural projects require a considerable use of Chinese goods, technology and services (Brautigam, 2011; Obeng-Odoom, 2017). Findings revealed that the municipal authority put together a team of built environment professionals – architects, quantity surveyors, planners and engineers – to supervise the construction works by the Chinese construction firm. This technical team comprised Assembly members and the professional bureaucracy at the municipal authority in Cape Coast. However, the leadership of the traders were not members of this committee. One of the leaders commented that

We were not involved at all during the construction phase of the project. We made an attempt by writing to the municipal authority that we would like to regularly visit the project to assess the progress of construction works. But we never received any response to our letter (ML, Interview, 16 March 2017).
When I asked a member of the technical committee why the leadership of the traders were not part of supervisory team, he remarked that

Our work was purely technical. If you want to have any trader involvement, that should be at the pre-construction stage, when you are designing, to take care of their concerns and culture (AM, Interview, 12 April 2018).

This statement echoes the perception ‘that the technical issues involved [in urban regeneration] are so complex as to prohibit the involvement of lay people’ (Atkinson & Cope, 1997, p. 217). Although Yeboah and Obeng-Odoom (2010) indicated that urban governance in Ghana is a tripartite activity among local politicians, professional bureaucracy and citizens, this comment suggests, otherwise, that trader-citizens had no role to play in the construction phase of the Kotokuraba Market project. This statement confirms the findings of several studies which have argued that non-state actors are excluded from urban regeneration and market redevelopment projects in Africa (Asante & Helbrecht, 2019c; Cobbinah, 2017; Lindell & Ampaire, 2017). It is my firm conviction that the involvement of traders would have been crucial because they are the end users. As noted by Kujala (2003, p. 12), ‘users are experts in their own field but they do not need to be experts on design.’ More importantly, Kujala added that ‘field [involvement is] a particularly promising approach for understanding users’ implicit and non-verbal needs’ (p. 12). In other words, as end users, traders have a deeper understanding of the spatial requirements of the market and its suitability for trading than most of the professionals (Owusu-Sekyere et al., 2016). This reflected in the interview of one of the trader respondents:

We know we are not construction professionals but we would have been able to advise the construction professionals about the suitability of the stalls for trading purposes (FT, Interview, 30 March 2018).

In summary, trader involvement in the construction phase would have revealed that they did not really appreciate the dimensions in the design during the PowerPoint presentation and this could have been remedied at an early stage of the market redevelopment process. In the next section, I explore the consequences of non-inclusion of traders in the construction phase of the Kotokuraba Market project.

**The consequences of urban governance in Cape Coast**

Most large-scale infrastructural projects are subject to minor or major modifications as they progress. If end users are part of the development process, they can be updated with these modifications and their inputs can immediately be factored into the design. In Cape Coast, the traders were denied knowledge of important information that led to a major modification of the design of the market. I found that the market design – Sectors A to E – presented by Design Associates to the traders was based on the hope of securing the US$200 million. A major modification was made when the Chinese offered to give Cape Coast only US$30 million. A member of the technical committee remarked that

We hived off three sectors from the design, I mean Sectors C, D and E, and incorporated some of the things into a newly designed Sector C. For instance, the Butchery and the cold room were incorporated into the new Sector C. Luckily for us, under the three-story car park, we had a big basement, so we used that space to take care of the bulk haulage storage or warehouse. We did not inform the traders because we had taken care of the modifications (AM, Interview, 12 April 2018).

One major implication of the modifications that the officials were not comfortable talking about was that they knew right from the start of construction that there would be fewer trading spaces than were traders in the new market. Yet, throughout the whole construction phase of Kotokuraba Market, they did not see the need to inform the traders nor invite them for regular inspection. The traders only had the opportunity to see the ongoing market construction when a high government official was visiting Cape Coast to inspect ongoing projects. During one of those visits, they were unhappy about the size of stalls, number of stores and the distance between some of the stores and stalls. A market leader commented that
I remember one time the Vice President, Amissah-Arthur, came to inspect the ongoing construction. We were invited as leaders to be part of the inspection. Upon seeing the stalls, he asked if the stalls were for the traders. The stalls were too small. I realized the man was not happy. He told them to make some adjustments to the stalls so that the market women would be happy and comfortable. I was there and I heard what he told the officials. But the contractor had already erected the majority of the stalls; by this time, it was too late to make any changes (ML, Interview, 29 March 2018).

He further indicated that

And let me say this. What I saw during the presentation of the design to us is different from what I saw during the inspection with the Vice-President. I do not remember the exact figures, but I know the number of lockable stores was almost 1,000. But during the inspection, I counted a little over 250. I became worried (ML, Interview, 29 March 2018).

A market leader, who took note of the short distance between some stores and stalls, commented that

We got to a certain location in the market and I realized that the distance between the stores and stalls was too short. In our market, we display some of our items in the frontage of the store and that is what we use to make shoppers know what we have inside the store. The space I saw during the inspection with the Vice President is too small for two traders to use (ML, Interview, 16 April 2018).

These comments suggest, indeed, that traders understand the dynamics of their profession and their involvement in the construction phase would have corrected some of the problems they identified. As expected, this revelation sparked a lot of discomfort among the traders in the market. Even before the allocation of the trading spaces, several trader participants interviewed in 2017 for this study had indicated that they could not trade in the stalls because they were too small. A trader remarked that

I don’t want to believe these small stores are for some of us. What am I going to do in that hen coop if it is allocated me? (FT, Interview, 10 May 2017).

Most of the traders were worried because the new market would have more stalls (490) than stores (271) and supermarkets (30). One of the traders questioned that

Why have they constructed so many of these stalls when majority of us were trading in lockable stores in the old market? This is not right at all (MT, Interview, 15 April 2018).

Additionally, some traders indicated that the new market looked too much more like a western-style shopping mall than a typical Ghanaian market. This assertion was based on the building’s porcelain-tiled floors, its large supermarkets and the flowers planted in several places in the new market. Moreover, the organization of traders in lanes according to the commodities they sold, a typical feature of a marketplace in Anglophone West Africa, was absent in the new market (Asante & Helbrecht, 2018a). As a result, the traders concluded that the construction of the stores was an afterthought. Clearly, the trader-citizens were unhappy about the outcomes of the governance of the market redevelopment in Cape Coast. This is in consonance with previous studies which indicate that urban governance in Africa does not deliver desired outcomes in terms of the provision of urban infrastructure and services (Asante & Helbrecht, 2019c; Devas & Korboe, 2000; Lindell, 2008; Lindell & Ampaire, 2017).

By December 2016, when the construction of the market was nearing completion, there was a change of government from the NDC to New Patriotic Party (NPP). This means that the municipal authority was now run by an NPP Mayor. In April 2017, the market was completed and was ready for allocation to the displaced traders. Assessment of the spaces in the old and new market revealed that there was a shortfall of 551. In the next section, we will learn how the municipal authority responded to the shortfall and the short distance between trading spaces, and traders to the small size of stalls.
State and trader responses in Kotokuraba Market

In the DEDA conceptual framework, Obeng-Odoom (2013) and Asante and Helbrecht (2019a) emphasized the responses of citizens to the outcomes of urban governance. In this study, I show that the state also responds in an attempt to correct its governance failures. In Cape Coast, while the allocation of the trading spaces in the newly-developed market was ongoing, the municipal authority took the decision to create additional trading spaces in order to make up for the shortfall. According to the officials, the shortage could translate into intensified street trading if it was not properly addressed, and they would not have the moral right to evict the unauthorized traders. In Figure 4, I captured an ongoing construction of new stores by the municipal authority in Kotokuraba Market. Findings revealed that the location where these new stores were constructed was deliberately provided by the Chinese construction firm as an emergency exit in the event of fire outbreak or related incidents in the market. Additionally, the municipal authority reclaimed and converted open spaces in existing market buildings into stores. They further demarcated ground spaces they believed could accommodate some of the displaced traders. It did not really matter if these demarcations would affect the esthetics of the new market. The municipal authority displayed commitment to ensure that the majority, if not all, of the traders displaced from the old Kotokuraba Market would have spaces in which to trade. However, they did not inform or involve the traders in these new constructions, extensions and demarcations. The traders indicated that they were silent because it did not significantly affect their daily market activities.

In the morning of 11 April 2018, as I started my first interview for the day, I heard loud confrontations between traders and a group of construction workers at a car park outside the new market. The trader participant excused herself to find out what was happening at the car park. Immediately she left, I took the opportunity to do the same. I chanced on one of the market leaders who told me the car park in question was meant for heavy duty cars to offload goods for the traders in the new market. They were particularly empowered to take action because they pay a fee to the CCMA whenever they use the parking space. On the basis of this formal arrangement (Ikioda,
the traders did not understand why the municipal authority would instruct the construction of new stores in that location. Unlike the other stores, the construction of stores in the car park would affect the activities of the traders. Within a short period of time, the traders quickly surrounded the construction workers in their hundreds and questioned why they were constructing stores in the car park. The workers indicated that the municipal authority had asked them to construct the stores. The traders responded that they would not allow them to do so because the space in question is a car park and that they have not been informed of any construction works in that space. In venting their anger, the traders destroyed the few blocks which had been erected. They threatened that if the construction works were not stopped, they would vote against the NPP in the next general election and this news might even have reached the Presidency in Accra. A female trader who has a close relationship with the new Mayor commented that

the Metropolitan Chief Executive told me that he stopped the construction because he was called from the Jubilee House to stop and not because of the threat from the market traders (ML, Interview, 11 April 2018).

I had scheduled interviews at the municipal authority the following day, so I decided to seek further details from the officials. The bureaucrats and Assembly members in Cape Coast denied knowledge of the construction works at the car park. But whether they were aware or not, the resistance by the traders was successful, as the workers never returned to continue the construction of the stores. This shows that the resistance strategies of non-state actors are, indeed, causing a change in urban governance and that state actors are responding positively (Asante & Helbrecht, 2019a; Goodfellow & Titeca, 2012). This positive response was also evident in the way the municipal authority addressed the short distance between some stores and stalls. A member of the allocation committee said that

What we have agreed to do at our committee is that the store owners who have stalls directly in front of them should be allocated those stalls to be part of their trading space so that they can even display some of their wares in the stalls. I must admit that this will create further shortage. But that is why we are constructing new stores and making floor demarcations (AM, Interview, 7 April 2018).

Aside from the state action, the traders also responded to the small size of the stalls. I found that many of traders rejected allocation of the stalls for their small size. As remarked by a trader, ‘[a]s it is now, anyone who is allocated a space and comes to see that it is a stall does not return’ (FT, Interview, 7 April 2018). The officials at the municipal authority did not understand why the traders were rejecting the stalls because many of them were allocated similar open stalls in the old market and they extended and converted them by themselves into lockable stores. However, they continued paying rents for stalls and not lockable stores. But while the traders did not dispute this fact, they challenged the municipal authority, arguing that if they were displaced from a lockable store, then there was no reason to allocate them a stall. The traders argued that the market redevelopment should make them better, and not worse, off. Nevertheless, some traders accepted the allocation of stalls. For these vendors, the municipal authority gave the directive that they were only permitted to construct a wooden compartment in the stall (See Figure 5 for example) and not to undertake any vertical extension on the dwarf wall.

However, my observation in the market revealed that the traders were boldly flouting this directive. Some had started making vertical extensions to their stalls (See Figure 6). They justified the vertical extensions by arguing that the space in the stall was too small to contain the quantity of their items. A trader commented that

You can see I sell cloth. In the old market I used to occupy a big store. When I was being allocated this stall, I told them that it is too small for my trade but they refused to change it for me. I have no option but to extend it so I can keep all the cloth in it (FT, Interview, 14 May 2018).

I found that these extensions were intended to modify the stalls to look like stores in the old market (See Figure 7). Although the traders indicated that the vertical extensions were quite expensive for them, they were compelled to make them in order to increase the size of the trading space. They indicated that they spent between US$133.135 and US$285.30 on the extensions,
depending on the building material used. Traders who used steel spent more than those who used wooden materials. I asked the traders if they had thought about the risk of demolition of the extension by the municipal authority. A trader responded that
I know it involves risk but everything in this life involves some level of risk. I do not think they will destroy the extension that I have done. The officials come to the market every day but no one has approached me to destroy the extension (MT, Interview, 18 May 2018).

This was confirmed in an interview with a bureaucrat, who commented

We have seen that some of the traders have started extending their stores. We understand their situation. So, for now, we will be lenient on those who have done it. But we will not announce to all the traders to do same, else it will affect the beauty of the market (PB, Interview, 8 May 2018).

Worthy of note, here, is the fact that the bold extension of the stalls by the traders is a mark of a more vigorous activism that defies conventional practices (Asante & Helbrecht, 2019a; Mitlin, 2018). While the risk-takers had started enjoying their expanded space, those who were risk-averse watched with some envy and hoped that the municipal authority would allow everyone to do the same. In referring to an extension by a colleague, a trader remarked that

We all want it this way. If I could have the opportunity to do it this way, I could arrange my items during the day, and in the evening, I could just leave them where they are. But they have instructed that we should not extend it. I think at a point in time, they will allow us to extend like my friend has done. When you do it this way, it becomes a lockable store and you can place a lot of items in it (FT, Interview, 13 April 2018).

One can only hope that the municipal authority will allow vertical extensions at a later time since it seems to be the preferred approach of the traders in expanding their trading spaces. We have learnt, in this section, that traders adopt resentful resistance strategies and subversive self-governance practices in response to the poor outcomes of urban governance (Lindell, 2008; Mitlin, 2018). Furthermore, the study demonstrates that traders do not just resist against the undesirable outcomes of urban governance but also engage in a form of activism that pushes the state to compromise its earlier stance (Asante & Helbrecht, 2019a).
Concluding remarks

This study has confirmed the general assertion by studies in developing and developed countries that citizens are not given the opportunity to participate in crucial aspects of urban regeneration and market redevelopment (Asante & Helbrecht, 2019c; Atkinson & Cope, 1997; Cobbinah, 2017; Gonzalez, 2018; Goodfellow & Titca, 2012; Maginn, 2007). However, this study fills a knowledge gap in the wider literature of participatory urban governance by revealing the consequences and responses that emerge when market traders are not deeply involved in the construction phase of market redevelopment. It draws on the concept of urban governance as decentralization, entrepreneurialism, democratization and activism and a case study of Kotokuraba Market in Cape Coast to demonstrate that these consequences include shortfall in the number of stores, small size of stalls and reduced distance between different trading spaces. The socio-economic implications of the findings of this study for market trading are that several traders cannot secure trading spaces in the new market to sustain their livelihood; business expansion will be curtailed because their trading spaces are small; and they would be unable to display enough items to attract shoppers and customers. Moreover, a key lesson for municipal authorities anywhere in the world is that, while traders may not have the technical knowhow of construction works and design, they are experts in the trading profession (Kujala, 2003). Therefore, their expertise is crucial at the construction phase of market redevelopment.

For the most part, studies have argued that it is non-state actors who respond to the outcomes of urban governance (Obeng-Odoom, 2013, 2017). In Cape Coast, the resistance to new construction at the car park shows that this is largely true. Moreover, I have also demonstrated that activism and its associated self-governance practices are deeply gaining ground as important dimensions of urban governance in Africa (Asante & Helbrecht, 2019a; Mitlin, 2018). An example in Cape Coast is the vertical extension of the stalls in the newly-developed Kotokuraba market. In a nutshell, this study, like Asante and Helbrecht (2019a), has indicated that the successful resistance strategies of non-state actors is changing urban governance for the better. Nevertheless, I have pointed out from Cape Coast that state agents also respond when they assess that the outcomes of urban governance would create problems. This is evident in the construction of new stores, the conversion of open spaces into stores and the demarcation of floor space. While this state action is positive, its drawback is that it does not prioritize the participation of the traders.

This study suggests that it is important for governance of market redevelopment and urban regeneration around the world to become more inclusive and participatory (Amoah et al., 2018; Fuseini & Kemp, 2016). It shows that it is not just enough to change local governance laws and expect to see obvious changes. For instance, Ghana has, to a large extent, institutionalized the co-production of urban development. However, what is still lacking is full implementation of these legal provisions. As a concluding statement, I argue that participation or democratization should not be limited to asking citizens to comment on designs of new urban projects, but also to genuinely co-producing the whole urban development process from conception through planning to implementation. As noted by Atkinson and Cope (1997, p. 213), this desired genuine participation would ‘require a fundamental re-think of the attitudes of politicians and officials in . . . local government’ (p. 213).

Notes

1. In Ghana’s local governance, Assembly members act as a liaison between communities and municipal authorities. 70% of them are elected while 30% are appointed by the government. They participate in general or committee meetings that take crucial decisions on infrastructural projects.
2. In Ghana, city mayors are appointed the President. The President selects mayors from members of his political party.
3. This figure is captured in the Parliamentary Hansard of 31 October 2012.
4. Jubilee House is the Presidential Palace in Ghana.
5. I used the Bank of Ghana Daily Interbank FX Rates for 1 July 2019: US$1 = 5.258 Ghanaian cedis.
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Notes on contributor

Lewis Abedi Asante is a doctoral candidate at the Department of Geography, Humboldt-Universität Zu Berlin, Berlin, Germany. He holds an MSc in Urbanization and Development and BSc in Land Economy from the London School of Economics and Political Science (LSE) and the Kwame Nkrumah University of Science and Technology (KNUST). His doctoral research scrutinizes the nexus between the urban regeneration process and urban governance in Ghana. Lewis’ recent works are published in international journals such as the Canadian Journal of African Studies, Urban Geography, Journal of Urban Affairs, GeoJournal, and Sage Open.

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