

LAGOS

In every department, form disintegrated: except in its heritage from the past, the city vanished as an embodiment of collective art and technics. And where, as in North America, the loss was not alleviated by the continued presence of great monuments from the past and persistent habits of social living, the result was a raw, dissolute environment, and a narrow, constricted, and baffled social life. Even... where the traditions of urban life had lingered on... the most colossal blunders were committed in the most ordinary tasks of urban planning and building. As the pace of urbanization increased the circle of devastation widened.

Lewis Mumford, 1938

Lagos is white-hot... Take care! An old black legend exists, exerting a perverse fascination nurtured on strange fantasies...Lagos, Mecca of cheats and gangsters...Jagua Nana... Negropolis under the malarian tropics...

Revue Noire, 1999

The fundamental conundrum of Lagos, considered here as both paradigm and pathological extreme of the West African city, is its continued existence and productivity, in spite of a near-complete absence of modern infrastructures, systems, organizations and amenities that define the word "city" in terms of western planning methodology. Lagos inverts every essential characteristic of the so-called modern city. Yet, it is still-for lack of a better word-a city; and one that works.

Anguish over its shortcomings in traditional urban systems obscures the reasons for the continued, exuberant existence of Lagos, and other megacities like it. These shortcomings have generated ingenious, critical alternative systems, which demand redefinition of ideas such as carrying capacity, stability, and even order: canonical concepts in the fields of urban planning and related social sciences. The operation of the Lagos megalopolis illustrates the large-scale efficacy of systems and agents considered marginal, liminal, informal, or illegal in traditional understanding of the city.

This document is no more a study of Lagos than it is a study of more radical

possibilities in the discipline of urban planning, and a proposal of new ways to examine the modern city. While the conditions identified in Lagos are extreme cases, the extremity is generally a very rational response to a dysfunctional scenario. The material logic of Lagos is convincing.

We resist the notion that Lagos represents an African city en route to becoming modern. Or, in the more politically correct idiom, that the city is becoming modern through an equally valid, "African" way. Rather, we think it possible to argue that it represents an extreme and paradigmatic case study of a city at the forefront of globalizing modernity. This is to say that Lagos is not catching up with us. Rather, we may be catching up with Lagos.

The African city forces the reconceptualization of "city" itself. The fact that many of the trends of modern, Western cities can be seen in hyperbolic guise in Lagos suggests that to write about the African city is to write about the terminal condition of Chicago, London, or Los Angeles. It is to examine the city elsewhere in the developing world. It is to reconsider the modern city and to suggest a paradigm for its future.

The structure of this book is neither a replication of the city, nor a metaphor

for its processes. The body of texts, larger essays packed into a matrix of short references and anecdotes, follows a documentary trajectory through the material and mythical construction of Lagos. Loosely arranged along a spectrum of Scape, Building, and Flexible Infrastructure, each section deals with varied processes at work in this seemingly incomprehensible milieu. The comparative position of essays illustrates their relevance and impact at different scales of operation, and with varying degrees of official sanction and permanence.

Scape

Due to a multiplicity of demands put upon public open space, the landscape in Lagos is extremely accommodating. Landscape conditions have been, and continue to be of urban form and performance from their inception, through its evolution, to its present state. The Lagos landscape, and the land-use system underpinning it, are defined by use.

Building

"Eko Akate, ile ogbon, as they say in Yoruba: Lagos, den of iniquity, house of wisdom." The constructions of Lagos define both the material and mythical space of the city. Professional planning and built production offer a tangible detritus of the complex processes and systems powering the city. Documentation of plans and constructions reveals the operation of the city at the scale of the street, block, building and door.

Flexible Infrastructure

Given the paucity of conventional infrastructures and services in the African city, survival itself seems almost impossible. But West Africans do survive. Even more, they make money and raise families. The fact of their survival can be explained by a new type of infrastructure, as the services of conventional infrastructure have been adopted by the "marginal" or informal sectors of the economy. Small-time traders, entrepreneurs, thieves, unlicensed electricians and plumbers, independent contractors, and hundreds of thousands of trucks swarming to pick-up and deliver. This is a new kind of infrastructure-neither fixed nor expensive, capitalized by little more than pure ingenuity, these free agents and vehicles cater to the day-to-day needs of millions of West Africans.

From macroeconomic aspects of multinational capitalism, to informal distribution or construction schemes, essays - and their apparently unrelated subjects - are organized by adjacency to communicate relevance. This relation may assume the form of symbiosis, conflict, or simply geographic convergence. Links among groups of related essays are established by a set of archetypal images of Lagos, depicting graphically the intersection of diverse processes, policies, and materials in the life of the city. The result is a series of ten graphic indices, or portals, embedded in the text, providing local orientation to the varied subject matter.

This assemblage of texts accommodates several thematic trajectories through the collection, providing continuity of subject, even as processes germane to the theme locate themselves according to scale or permanence. These multiple narratives, indicated by a secondary system of links within the text, suggest alternatives to the Scape-Building-Flexible Infrastructure spectrum, allowing use of the book as a subject-oriented reference.

The intention of this narrative assembly is established in the opening section, a sort of driving tour of the city, and in the postscript, a historical summary of the city in various types of collaged data. The initial opacity of individual images in the introduction is the impetus for many of the investigations compiled in the body of the text. The ambiguity of the photo-tour is, after the investigations of the text, matched by the disturbing inadequacy of the statistical tour of Lagos-Abuja in the Postscript, illustrating the shortcomings of traditional analysis in this new kind of city.

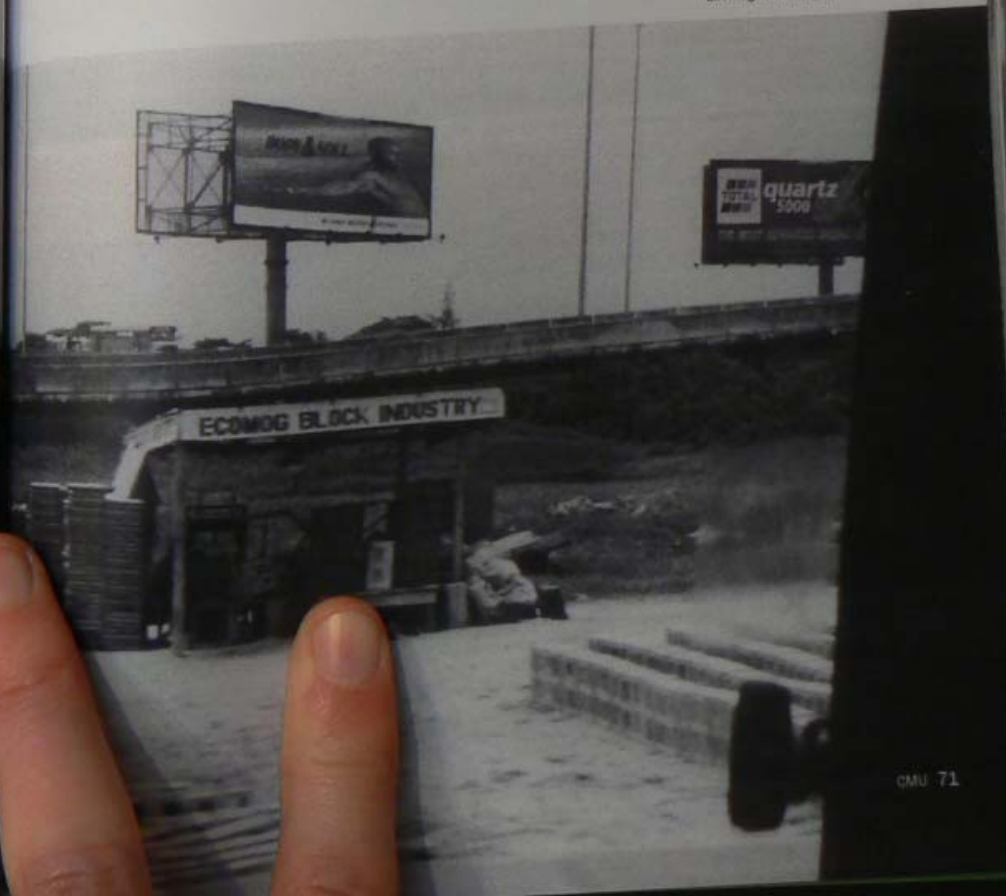
CMU

The concrete block was introduced as a fortification material by the British as a means of disposable protection (the tropics were never intended to be a place of permanent settlement) against the physical environment and indigenous contamination. Because cement had to be imported overland, concrete block was usually prohibitively expensive for use in village housing, but colonial planners preferred the block wall because it did not need to be rendered, and provided a decent weather seal and insulation. The variety of block most frequently utilized in West Africa became known as sandcrete block because of the high proportion of sand (and subsequent structural instability) used relative to cement (8:1). E. Maxwell Fry preferred the use of whitewashed clay bricks and Bakelite for tropical architecture, but he agreed that concrete had its most useful application in the tropics as a floor or foundation material.

[“Floors and foundations will be the main use for concrete in village work. A concrete floor is pleasantly cold but hard to the feet. It must be laid on a good, sound solid foundation or it will crack, unless reinforced. It should be brought to a smooth finish, preferably with a steel trowel, and the edges slightly covered up against the walls to permit easy washing. In buildings with mud walls the concrete floor should be taken through to the outside of the wall, which should then be erected thereon. The mix of concrete will vary according to the job it is required to do, but never more than ten parts of coarse aggregate to one part of cement should be used. A usual mix for foundations is one of cement, three of sand and six of coarse aggregate; and for floors, one of cement, two of sand, and four of coarse aggregate.” ->E.M. Fry and J. Drew, *Village Housing in the Tropics* - With Special Reference to West Africa (London, Lund Humphries, 1947), p.108.]

[An ambitious low-income housing scheme implemented by President Shagari in 1980 created an excessive demand for twenty million tons of cement that bred an import licensing scheme allowing any importer with a floatable object and a line of cement supply to enter Lagos harbor with an instantaneous credit. A foreseeable bottleneck emerged overnight in a port with an off-loading capacity of only two million tons of cement per year. Boats in Lagos harbor were forced to anchor as far out as fifty nautical miles, approaching shore in life boats while accumulating demurrage fees from the Nigerian government. Savvy European captains abandoned their crews in the nine-month queue and returned with another boat. The situation became an international freak show. “[P]ilots on commercial airlines would deliberately fly over the flotilla... and invite passengers not to miss the unique festival of light on the left

Ecomog Block Industry



or right side of the plane... catamarans, freighters, dredgers, lighters, First World War ironclads, rafts from the Kon-Tiki expedition, converted oil barges, sailboats, and Mississippi paddleboats... anything at all that could limp into Lagos." >>W. Soyinka, "The spoils of power: The Buhari-Shagari casebook," *The Open Sore of a Continent* (Oxford, Oxford University Press, 1995), p 81.]

Horizontality

Every year, the beleaguered Nigerian Institute of Architects organizes a forum for Nigerian companies in the building and construction industry to exchange ideas in a wholesome and competitive atmosphere. During the six-day event, professionals in the construction industry - Architects, Quantity Surveyors, Town Planners, and Estate Surveyors - are each given a Special Day dedicated to papers given by distinguished members of each milieu. Participants at Archibuilt'95, in the midst of an inflationary blister that was crippling local construction professions, unanimously agreed that the nurturing of local material technology as a national micro-industry was a potent impetus for fiscal recovery and a salve for the teeming population crisis. In a paper given by A.O. Madedor on the development of local building materials, the Quantity Surveyor suggests that the inflexibility of large-scale industries inhibited innovation in material technology while ineffective project management and ad-hoc services have adversely affected productivity and efficiency in construction. Notable individual contributions to Nigerian material technology that have been silenced by multinational industrial firms include cement stabilized with lateritic soil and industrial waste, pozzolana cement produced through vertical shaft kiln technology (thereby minimizing the footprint of cement technology in tightly zoned industrial estates), and cement bonded wood, wool, and rice husk boards: "The building materials specified have perhaps the most significant effect on the building process. This is because the building materials are largely used to concretise the design conceived by the architect. The walling materials demarcate the use of space. The so-called 'architectural' material and finishes of paints, tiles, glass, plastics etc are employed to ensure the aesthetics of the building." >>A.O. Madedor, "Re-appraisal of local initiatives in materials development and technology to increase efficiency in the building process," a paper given at Archibuilt'95 and subsequently published in *Journal of the Nigerian Institute of Architects*, 9 (1995), p.20.

The reintroduction of laterite soil into concrete mixtures recalls the practice of building communal houses out of mud walls manufactured on-site by



Block Walls and Tin Roof Constructions

danfo
Market in Sunjiera



groups of young boys who excavated soil, red sand (laterite), and hauled water to mix mud with their feet. Arc. J. Osadolor blames urbanization and the need for quantifiable building materials for the obsolescence of the simple mud wall: "... the ability these days to own a house built with cement blocks and roofed with zinc, aluminum, or asbestos roofing sheets is a mark of achievement... In yester years [sic] however, to own a mud wall and thatched roof building was no mean feat. It was cherished." >> J. Osadolor, 'Mud wall and thatched roof houses: Coming back with a touch of class,' *Real Estate Development*, 4 (1989), p. 37. The return of the mud wall is being championed by E. Olabiran, principal research officer of the Nigeria Building and Road Research Institute (NBRRRI), who is responsible for the development of the NBRRRI machine, a manually operated fuel-less machine that produces 50 mud blocks in an hour. Despite the fact that the new mud or Adobe(tm) blocks are 30 per cent smaller than concrete blocks, Mr. Olabiran emphasizes the natural indigenous beauty of the mud blocks, and their cost and time advantages over concrete. [concrete block 450x225x225mm (18x9x9in) N2.5 per unit / mud block 300x200x150mm (12x8x6in) N0.8 per unit >>NBRRRI Cost Comparison Report, published by O. Nwagwu, *Real Estate Development* 4 (1989), p. 18.] Adobe(tm) was officially introduced in 1989 by NBRRRI with the target of shelter for all by 2000. However, the block cannot be used in swampy areas



for obvious structural reasons, and it cannot support multi-storied buildings without the reinforcement of concrete or steel beams and columns.

[“We should speak of two cuts through the world’s substance, the longitudinal cut of painting, and the transversal cut of certain graphic productions. The longitudinal cut seems to be that of representation, of a certain way it encloses things; the transversal cut is symbolic, it encloses signs.” >> W. Benjamin, 'Peinture et graphisme,' *La Part de l’oeil* 6 (1990), p.13.]

The horizontality of African urbanism has created a condition of subdensity which necessitates construction of excessively expensive infrastructure. The isolated horizontal house is a typology that strives to suburbanize the urban condition. By retaining a ground-floor courtyard, direct access to the street, no neighbors above or below, and the flexibility to evolve as the family expands, the aggregation of horizontal housing reflects the accumulation of wealth for the newly urban individual. Financially, horizontality is encouraged by the granting of individual loans to private citizens and the slow machinery of policy, which supports private lending by landlords and speculators. The ultimate triumph of this tendency - where lines of horizontal settlement stretch on monotonously, and the absence of defined plots discourages right angles - is the horizontal collective, a tipping-down of the modernist vertical collective in which the communal staircase becomes the footpaths to the dwellings, and the covered terrace flattens out to become the urban garden. In the case of Lagos, where unplanned building characterizes the city’s infrastructure and outpaces government building, the modernist dream of vertical collective housing remains a fiction. Although it is understood that vertical housing is more expensive and necessarily requires full services (as opposed to horizontal housing, which can be serviced by the street), the tipped-down density of horizontality increases the cost of transportation and exacerbates sprawl. Can horizontality be urban?

Defensible Space

[“The metropolis, in its final stage of development, becomes a collective contrivance for making this irrational system work, and for giving those who are in reality its victims the illusion of power, wealth, and felicity, of standing at the very pinnacle of human achievement. But in actual fact their lives are constantly in peril, their wealth is tasteless and ephemeral, their leisure is sensorially monotonous, and their pathetic felicity is tainted by constant, well-justified anticipations of violence and

sudden death. Increasingly they find themselves strangers and afraid, in a world they never made: a world ever less responsive to direct human command, ever more empty of human meaning." >>L. Mumford, *The City in History* (New York, Harcourt, Brace & World, 1961), p. 546.]

The specter of armed robbery in Lagos GRAs has created lines of security fences to demarcate expensive properties. The most sophisticated fences are invisible, but - lest the resulting yard take on the meaning of public space - these too are often accompanied by a physical reminder that the boundary does indeed exist. Visible fences are unsightly agglomerations of concrete block crowned with some version of barbed wire, shards of glass from molue accidents, rusted scrap metal. The walls are intentionally left at an unimposing height, lest the armed robbers - Ijaw youths, area boys, the OPC, unemployed disillusioned UniLag graduates, whichever group is the sworn enemy of the most recently hired neighborhood vigilante group - begin to believe that there is something of real value behind them. The NIA journal from more troubled economic times when architects designed only furniture for the deep allowances of government employees and fences for their homes suffered from poor readership, an incomplete office building, and general professional apathy. >>see 'Orlooker' editorials from 1982-1989, *Journal of the Nigerian Institute of Architects*. A shortage of articles was often compensated for by an excess of advertisements for galvanized metal sheeting, white paint, cement, furniture hardware, security systems. Since the beginning of Governor B. Tinubu's term, crime has risen sharply in high-income areas on Lagos Island, Lekki, and Ikoyi. In the past few months, welders and bricklayers have become popular figures on residential streets, constructing security gates that rose in price from N25,000 to N50,000 during the past few weeks of increased violence and President O. Obasanjo's threatened state of emergency. The Rapid Response Squad (formerly Operation Sweep), the special paramilitary crime force, declared the gates illegal because they impede their ability to intercept serious criminal activities. >>'Lagos residents take cover behind bars amid crime wave.' *Agence France Presse Internationale* (3 September 1999).

"Within the present atmosphere of pervasive crime and ineffectual authority, the only effective measure for assuring a safe living environment is community control. We are advocating a program for the restructuring of residential development in our cities to facilitate their control by the people who inhabit them... The essential ingredient of our proposal is territorial definition coupled with improvements to the

capacity of the territorial occupants to survey their newly defined realm. Territorial definition may appear to be the antithesis of the open society, and surveillance a further restriction on its freedom... We, however, are advocating territorial definition and the creation of surveillance opportunities to allow the citizen of the open society to achieve control of his environment for the activities he wishes to pursue within it - to make him instrumental in curtailing others from destroying his habitat, whether the others are criminals or a reactionary authority." >>O. Newman, *Defensible Space* (New York, Macmillan Company, 1972), p. 204.]

A sea of decaying abandoned buildings seems to mar the horizon in Ikoyi, but property is only ever allowed to lapse in Lagos when there are other plans for it. Discolored concrete surfaces make convenient chalkboards for changing intentions in a city that has no need for addresses. The geography of place in the Lagos metropolis is not marked by a familiar ordinate system but, rather, by landmarks. During occasional spurts of nationalism, local governments undertake efforts to survey property. Briefly, indistinguishable concrete buildings get the distinction of belonging to Block__ Plot__ off of ____, marked on their free-standing sides by white chalk. In Ajegunle, Igbo residents write 'Liberia House' on their buildings to dissuade OPC raiders. Their nationality changes when the organized violence assumes a different ideology. >>B. Malori, conversation with students (15 December 1999).

Speed Please

The profession of Quantity Surveyor has become vitally relevant in the Nigerian construction industry to combat the redundancy and ambiguity of land tenure policy and project realization in the wake of indirect colonial rule. The Quantity Surveyor is relevant in the building process for his (and very rarely her) ability to forecast construction costs, oversee the bid and contract document production processes, and oversee competitive procurement to efface the disastrous delay between tenuous land deeds and construction. Empty demarcated plots of land quickly breed informal settlement, and scavenged permanent building materials - concrete blocks, corrugated sheet metal, asbestos roofing shingles - suggest a durability that outlasts land ownership. Even the makeshift dwellings, temporary shelters, and backyard shacks built by self-help on fragments of ambiguously claimed land are assembled from prefabricated building components. >>C. Rakodi, 'Residential property markets in African cities.' *The Urban Challenge in Africa: Growth and Management of its Large Cities* (Tokyo, United Nations University Press, 1997), p. 392. In a booklet published by Quantity

Surveyors for the efficient realization of projects in the 21st century, this completion anxiety is repeatedly stated: "Every project that is considered necessary at one time must be followed through to completion before a similar one or a substitution is made in a new project. Where abandoned projects are still feasible for completion, succeeding administration should for the sake of national interest pursue the completion of such projects before embarking on new projects." >>M.M. Aiyu, Procurement of Consultancy Services (ADB, Lagos, 1999)

(In an effort to combat the practice of erecting illegal structures of corrugated tin and scavenged concrete block and the habit of sleeping under bridges, in classrooms, in abandoned lorries, government officials encouraged the concept of 'general yards' or 'face-me-I-face-you' buildings which will accommodate 100 people in a single corridor building of 14 rooms on government parcels in de-facto townships and slum areas. >> 'Lagos City, Nigeria's number one megapolis,' The Guardian (14 October 1999).)

Amuwo Odofin, LAGOS: In the FESTAC area of Lagos, the Town Planning Authority has ordered the stoppage of the structure that is being illegally built on plot 2004. Following the allocation of the plot by former governor of Lagos State, A.L. Jakande, the land became a playground for local children while it exponentially gained value. Under General B. Marwa, the land was reallocated to Captain Alfa who later sold it to an unidentified Igbo man. The unidentified Igbo man has started to build several concrete block walls to delineate his intentions. After being ordered to stop by the Lagos State Land and Urban Development Authority (LSLUDA), the unidentified man extended his allocation by 6 meters. >> Joe Ajaero, 'Planning authority halts illegal development in Festac,' Vanguard (7 December 1999), Property & Environment. The Lekki 2004 Housing Estate has been commissioned by the Lagos State Government to the Las Vegas company, ASI Overseas Building Systems Incorporated, for "nine billion, five hundred and sixty-one million, five hundred and sixty thousand, three hundred and eighty-five naira, thirty-one kobo" and will be completed in 24 months. A residential anomaly on the Lagos horizon, the 2004 units of housing will be developed as 14-story structures in the Eti-osa GRA on Lekki Peninsula. Governor Tinubu, upon declaring the project "an American village being transferred to Lagos" views the housing as part of a program to stop the brain drain of the country by appealing to cosmopolitan high-income citizens. To date, ASI Overseas Building Systems Incorporated holds the record for construction speed for the housing project it built for the Daewoo Incorporation in South Korea in under three months. >> Kenneth Ehigbator, 'Lagos government to build 2004 housing units in Lekki, signs agreement with US firm,' Vanguard (22 December 1999), National Newsreel.

["The sleazy yard, rectangular, indeed almost rhomboid in shape, totally laughable and preposterous yet standing majestically like a Goliath in comparison to others on the street, boasted a grotesque architecture that has neither a front, side nor top elevation. And its adventurous tenants never got tired of tinkering with its cloudy shape: nailing here today, chiseling there tomorrow and sand-papering all over the day afterwards, if only to confirm fears in certain quarters that the residence was fast becoming a shapeless amoeba... And naturally, free movement from one apartment in the yard to another was impeded, leaving only a little space within the compound for little ones, multiplying like eggs in it, to loaf about, scavenging as usual." >>T. Okponipere, 'In the spirit,' Post Express (31 May 1997), Fiction.]

Because of the rapidity with which designated park space in Lagos becomes



House as school

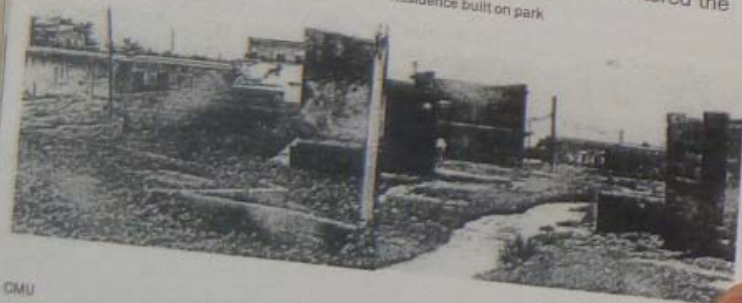
House as hospital

House as mosque

a motor park, market, micro-industrial estate, garbage dump, praying ground, formal landscape architecture is an anomaly in the metropolis. DexDee, a Lagos-based fountain construction firm, has announced plans to incrementally introduce landscape infrastructure throughout Nigeria in the form of small fountains with seating as "centres where people can relieve stress and relax because of the serene and natural environment they offer." The company's managing director, D. Odiase, also sees the fountains as an impetus for tourism and foreign investment, and an aesthetic improvement that will increase the value of all property beautified by fountain infrastructure. >> "Nationwide fountain construction," *The Guardian* (17 January 2000). There is not enough time or room in Lagos for modern pastoralism. A uniquely American construction emerging from an assembly-line tradition associated with corporate identity and a thematic romanticization of individual freedom in the rural wilderness, the leisurely slow burn of modern pastoralism has produced an expansive middle landscape at the urban fringe. Distance in the middle landscape is measured by highways. Lagos is simultaneously too fast and too slow for this: "the putrid jungles bordering the highways into the city have fallen under cultivation by part-time farmers, including Nigeria's professional classes... economic crisis and structural adjustment in Nigeria fostered the

Mosque built on road

Residence built on park



development of multiple modes of social livelihood, and many public servants moonlight as part-time urban cultivators." Sasaki wouldn't last very long here. >> C.M. Rogerson, "Globalization or informalization? African urban economies in the 1990s," *The Urban Challenge in Africa: Growth and Management of its Large Cities*, ed. C. Rakodi (Tokyo, United Nations University Press, 1997), p. 357. >> P. Rowe, "Modern Pastoralism and the Middle Landscape," *OZ 11* (Manhattan, Kansas State University College of Architecture and Design, 1989), p. 4-9.

Parcel

Although the Land Use Decree of 1978 vested the ownership of all (legally) undeveloped land in the state, attempts to regulate the ownership of land and the transfer of rights has never been effective. Despite the fact that no distributable land is available through the Land Use and Allocation Committee, professionals connive to backdate transactions to make them appear to precede the Decree while the private sector distributes land through continuous illegal subdivision. Speculators rent land for the construction of temporary structures while they wait for its value to increase. Subsequently, much



of the legal coverage by the judicial correspondents of Lagosian newspapers is on real estate disputes and contradictory land claims. Necessarily, every major newspaper has its own court-side reporter. Suit ID/333/80 regarding a 50x200 ft plot in Surulere (CD97/83) has been in dispute since 1985. The parcel, purchased by A.O. Agbokere and J. Agbokere in 1967 was officially surveyed in 1983 and sold to M. Ajala in 1985. Both parties have filed suits in high courts at opposite ends of the Lagos metropolis. After nearly 20 years of accumulating potential wealth on fallow land, the Agbokeres have recently fenced the land with cement blocks, built a toilet and planted mature bitter leaf trees to suggest occupation. >> Gbolahan Gbadamosi, 'Couple seek presidential intervention in Surulere land dispute', *The Guardian* (17 January 2000), *Metro*.

["Inevitably buying land leads to litigation. It is only by gambling that you will know that it is a good piece of land. You may have to make a thorough investigation; even then you may win or you may lose, it is just a game of chance. Now I think that on three occasions the parcels of land that I bought had to be let go because I did not want to go to court, I failed on three occasions and lost money, but two other times I was successful. Many suffer. But everyone is willing to take the chance." >> Mushin schoolteacher quoted in S. Barnes, *Patrons and Power* (Manchester, Manchester University Press, 1986), p.54]

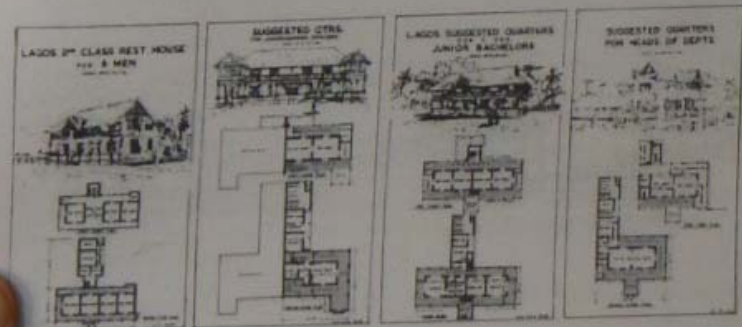
Verandah

Historically, when Mushin was not a part of Lagos, migrant settlers asserted their permanence by acquiring property and incrementally building upon it. The simple ownership of land was not accompanied by a territorial identity because, as today, boundaries were continually redrawn, reduced, renamed. Room rental financed future construction toward a typical urban residence: a

Encroachment on streets



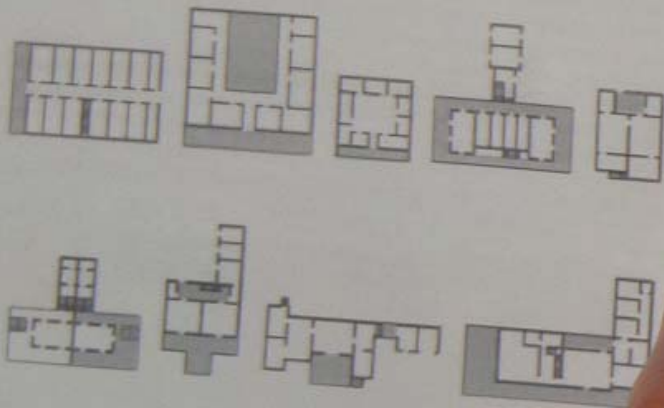
rectangular plan with 8-12 rooms opening onto a central corridor with a verandah on one end for household chores. After dark, the rented rooms became supply depots for hawkers, the verandah became the site of bars, gaming establishments, places for ping-pong, lotteries, record-playing, hawking tables for the women of the house. >>5. Barnes, *Patrons and Power* (Manchester, Manchester University Press, 1986), p.71, 73. As the macrophage encroachment of the Lagos metropolis progressed, 'divide and rule' became a means by which to solidify and centralize control of outlying areas. Mushin became Mushin East and Mushin West in 1975 and then, when its population reached 2 million, it was redistributed and renamed - Mushin Central, Odi-olowo, Ojuwoye, Onigbongo, Itire-Ikate, Oshodi-Isolo, Kosufe, Shomolu. This constant reparcellation is analogous to the need for associative networks in a city that lacks a Yellow Pages. Nobody is actually from Lagos (48% of residents have arrived within the last twelve months). Here, kinship ties are replaced by a network of religious, neighborhood, and economic associations. Every citizen is a member of at least two or three clubs, and at least one of those is a credit association where 10-12 members donate US\$10 a month and the lump sum is rotated. >>B. Matori, conversation with students (15 December 1999). The physical proximity of residences throughout the metropolitan area transforms the verandah into a viable open space. In the Dolphin Estates LSDPC scheme on Lagos Island, a large parcel of open land between units that was designated to become a park was rapidly parcelled, claimed, and built-up as informal residences for the service economy sector of the estate population. The vast open space that killed Pruitt-Igoe in St. Louis operates similarly, but



at a different scale, in Lagos. The modernist dream of slab housing floating in belts of green has no place in Lagos. Embedded within a carpet of micro-infrastructure, markets occur at the scale of a footpath, trade happens at a table, episodic nightclubs rise-up on verandahs.

(Appendix 6-A: Description of a Typical 'Instalment House' Built at Ajegunle [sic]. The house consists of six rooms of 10 feet by 12 feet each. The rooms are arranged on both sides of a six-foot wide central passage. This passage is used as storing space for bicycles and large boxes. The rooms are used by a number of tenants. Attached to the main house is another room which can be let out as a shop. The walls and foundations are made of pressed concrete blocks of low strength. They are all four inches thick. The roof consists of corrugated iron sheets supported by soft wood timbers. This information was obtained from interviews with instalment builders by the Chief Architect and Chief Quantity Surveyor of the Lagos Executive Development Board. >>D. Koenigsberger, C. Abrams, S. Kibbe, M. Shapiro, M. Wheeler, *Master Plan for Metropolitan Lagos* (UN, 1964)]

[The abominable structure is made of corrugated iron, roof and all, with just its



skeleton and floors made of wood. Sometimes the underpart of the house is closed in and used for stores and offices, sometimes it is left open. But always the living rooms are on the first floor and open out on the verandah. The sides of this verandah are usually kept closed in by venetian shutters and windows usually have to be closed up on an average of twice a day. During the wet season they are kept closed most of the six months spell. Consequently, the verandah became the living room for them the inner rooms are as dark as ignorance and the venetians only keep out a percentage of rain and divide the fierce tornado winds into strips which cut into you and send papers flying, while the tornado or wet season rain plays like fifty thousand devils on the tom-tom roof." >>M. Kingsley, *Travels in West Africa* (London, Everyman Library, 1993 (1897))]

[Verandahs are the outside rooms of houses and are pleasant to live and work in. The design of verandahs in village housing can be improved. In the tropics the verandah should always be regarded as an essential room. It has two particular and separate functions besides its use as a covered way and a weather-shade for other rooms, i.e., as a social meeting place and outdoor shaded sitting room, and as a place on which to do the housework. These functions are so separate that most houses should have two verandahs; one at the front, the other at the side or the rear of the house.

To take each separately, the social verandah is usually placed at the front of the house so as to be welcoming to visitors and to give the occupant a good view. It should be a social shape and not, as often built, a passage shape. It should give a sense of community without being so deep as to destroy the open-air feeling.

It should give a sense of privacy. This can be got by recessing it slightly into the house shape or by a low wall or railing. This sense of privacy will be increased if the verandah is raised above the garden or road level. The social verandah could make much more use of trellis work, ferns and flowers than is at present usual. There is no reason why it should not be decorated with trellis and climbing plants such as Morning Glory and Bourgainvillea as commonly as the South of France and Italian verandahs are decorated with vines.

The housework verandah performs a different function. It is often called upon to do the duties of both verandah and covered way. It is probably more useful passage shaped. It will protect the house windows from driving rain and the walls of the house from sun. As with the social verandah, it should be raised above ground level and given a firm hard surface.

A detail in the furnishing of both back and front verandahs which would save much

SARE

floor cleaning in wet weather, and which it should be possible to provide locally, is a coconut mat. Verandahs should, of course, be slightly sloped so that they drain away from the house " >> E.M. Fry and J. Drew, *Village Housing in the Tropics: With Special Reference to West Africa* (London, Lund Humphries, 1947), p.33, 35.]



RITUALS OF URBANIZATION

Coping

A profound reality in the life of the urban migrant is the fact that urban space is not neutral. For the urban migrant, it is often threatening, confusing and inexplicable. The urban setting is perceived as dangerous territory where survival is questionable. In this situation, the migrant turns to coping mechanisms that hold together the chaotic vitality of the West African City. Traditionally, this role was successfully played by the extended family. There is an Ashanti saying, "if your elders take care of you while you are cutting your teeth, you must take care them while they are losing theirs." But the extended family is now a whose foundations are cracking. Decades of western education and urban migration have lured families into different worlds. The rural old and the urban young have separated by hundreds of miles of bad roads and centuries of development. If the family cannot survive under western economic and political systems, neither can the values of an African morality and spiritual pride and strength.

With the weakening role of the extended family, the task of integrating the new migrant into urban society is performed by a variety of voluntary associations. Ethnic or town associations serve as a reception body, helping the migrant find accommodation and jobs. Often, the result is that trades become specific to ethnic groups. Popular associations are based on primal ties, religious societies, occupational associations, savings societies (asusu), football pools, recreation clubs, etc. The unions function mainly as socio-economic and psychological security, and promise guardianship during the early, most critical stage of urban adjustment. They help to speed acclimation to the city. These organizations operate highly disciplined and effective mini-planning and mini-development machinery at the community level, and reach the pulse of the populace better than more formal or governmental associations. They can be useful tools in the urban planning process.

Some young people find kinship obligations onerous, but most people contribute to the furtherance of kin and hometown interests. New associations form constantly, centered around church, mosque, politics work or leisure interests.

Religious tropes

The notion of religious institutions as the conscience of society has been overawed by the implosion of the autocratic state, which has allowed political leadership to define politics and legitimate modalities of both exercise and limits of power. The indigenous response to the autocratic state is an entrenched belief in religions. The importance of popular religion in the community reflects the power of ordinary people to take charge of their own spiritual, if not economic or political life. Traditional deities are very important in helping people move to modern spaces, to cope with challenges in the urban areas. Although West Africans have embraced modernization, Christianity, Islam and other "non-native" forces developing in the Sub-Saharan Africa, they have done so within a socio-cultural context that is profoundly African.

The African Church has become a very potent economic and political force in Africa today. There has been an increase in the penumbra religious zone. (Case in point. International Convention of witches in Benin, 1990). The equation of witchcraft with the attainment of power and wealth is commonplace. The idiom of African witchcraft is a discourse of history and power in that many Africans recognize the existence of witchcraft to be inevitable and ubiquitous. There is also a positive value in the fact that some figures of authority are believed to wield mystical power to ward off the malignancy of others. Witchcraft persists as a political discourse among the elite and masses alike because economic development in the larger sense has not lived up to expectations. Juju remains a powerful and pernicious force. Ritual murders afflict modern West Africa in the way that shopping mall and school shooting sprees afflict the U.S. Abhorrent, unpredictable, and atypical though the violence may be, it is a symptom of how tradition, myth and modern stress can twist human behavior.

There are groups formed at the grass roots level to mobilize support based on ethnicity or "new ethnicity," such as secret societies, interest groups, blood pacts, and age sets. Secret societies offer a variety of services: food, shelter, African medicine, and music in an aesthetic-ritual event that helps mitigate the hardships of radical and harsh political changes. Despite the presence of strong inter-group relationships, members learn the rules and boundaries accorded to them in an urban environment, where rights and

obligations are frequently decided by the marketplace rather than by the customs of societies in which age, sex and lineage status largely determine behavior. This is strengthened by the fact that they also have strong political undercurrents as well as alliances that are put into action for the sake of its members. Initiation into a secret society is very important in the life of many Lagosians. Masquerades, which are a statement of mobilizing power and creating social control, are an important ritual in the life of these societies.

Urban growth due to migration has effected a new class, whose behavior is less in accordance with the traditional economy and more within the guidelines of free enterprise. This means that wage earners are more inclined to follow national platform politics that addresses the problems of the common man. This is more attractive than traditional chieftancy, which is ill-equipped to handle the problems of the newly emerging class. This class, though nurtured on the aesthetic of masquerade and ritual, has moved one step away from the traditional political sphere. For instance, gang societies like the Rainbow in Sierra Leone have prospered in areas where the interests of an evolving class were best served by grassroots organization. This has represented a shift from the traditional tribal authority, in which the chiefs stood at the apex.

[Witchcraft: making contact with some other person's life and destiny. Sorcery: Implied when tactile connections are made with a person's body or articles. Juju: Portuguese word to describe the happenings in the African community. Divination: Revelatory representation.]

Religion and Ethnicity have become more potent in modern political space. This is not just a futile, theological, simplistic line of thinking. Religion has far reaching dimensions - it involves power, authority, legitimacy and economic growth. Religion has always been political: It has ready audiences even with the secularized medium.

And now its political salience is increasing as a direct result of urbanization and swiftly growing population. Interaction between religion and politics is of paramount importance, especially with regard to urban land development process. Playing the rituals of Religion, Politics, and Land becomes the means for the migrant to establish him successfully in the city. The intersec



tion of Religion, Politics, and Land become a powerful nexus for the actual process of urbanization. This is brought out in the three primate cities of Nigeria - Ibadan, Lagos and Abuja: the past, present and future primate cities

Urban land

The Yoruba galvanize around their place of origin and land-ethnic issues: two brothers can be an imam and a pastor and still maintain their strong Yorubaland identity. In Ibadan, land is the main parameter for kinship, identity and ownership: the land you belong to is of paramount importance as is tribal ethnicity and religion. Ibadan inherited this perspective of urban land but has undergone various modifications in its tenure systems since colonial times. The viewpoint shifted from communal and sacred to capitalist and profane. Indigenous land tenure consisted of various linkages:

[Vertical: Social hierarchy, power, and rights over land vested in a hierarchy of groups, pyramiding to the chief or king. Horizontal: Multiplex tenure: land put to a variety of uses with separate tenures. Historical: Fluidity of tenure, the pervasiveness of change over time. Personal: Viewpoint of developing land based on opportunities and constraints of age and gender.]

The indigenous land tenure system was like a bundle of rights. Land was treated like a bundle of sticks with dynamic transactions happening within the family. Sometimes the whole bundle would be held by one person or it could be held by groups of persons such as a company, or a family or clan or tribe, but very often sets of sticks were held by different persons. Sticks out of the bundle could be held for different periods, acquired in many different ways through inheritance, loan, lease, pledge, gift, grant, status in household. But the ownership of land was not in itself one of the sticks, but was like a vessel or container for the bundle, the owner being the person (individual or corporate) who had the 'right of disposal'.

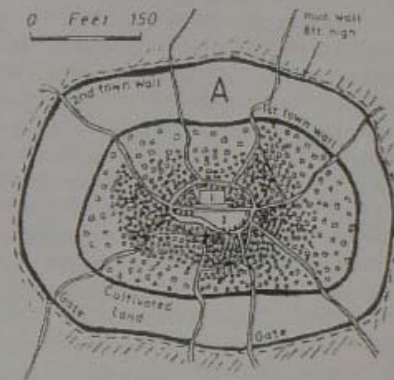
Customary law was artificially manufactured by the colonial state, converting flexible traditions into hard prescription, to justify colonial governance. The revisionist view was one of the manufacture, transmission and assimilation, intact, of a new world view, and the corresponding destruction of existing cognitive and normative foundations of the lifeworld. In terms of tenure, the colonial period was one of discontinuities, abrupt transformation, and coercive domination which left members of the communities exposed to the

intersecarbitrary rule of neo-traditional authorities and were drawn to their disadvantage into new forms of economic relations. Second, the transformation of new legal rules was a product of the development of capitalism. Individual land and family tenure emerged, largely as a result of the nexus between new economic opportunities and new court-created rules. Cocoa cultivation on the outskirts of the town led to the commercialization of land and family. This created a mix of gross transformations, from lineage to individuals to family back to individuals. As a result of that colonial policy, 75% of fields on the Ibadan outskirts have now become individualized inherited property, since family members now favor partitioning of land that leave many adult males landless and create familial property disputes.

The colonial indirect rule strategy involved a hierarchical organization of administration. The administrative hierarchy (village-district-paramount rule) was well suited to North Nigeria where land was individually owned (for instance in the well-structured Sokoto State with its Emirs and Viziers.) However, this was totally unsuited for the Yoruba since it conferred on the Oba in the metropolitan center of the kingdom and to warrant chiefs (some from non-traditional families) and unprecedented status. The power of the head of the lineage and compound also deteriorated because of youth seeking other opportunities and the individualist, nuclear family structures propagated by Islam and Christianity. The accumulation of power in the city also indirectly led to concentration of all modern amenities in the metropolises. Consequently, Ibadan was over-urbanized for its meager economic resources.

Land rites and power

Social Landlordism is important in the successful adaptation and residence of immigrants. In Ibadan, the largest settlements of migrants are Sabon-garis, which are heterogeneous strangers' settlements with a prevalent culture. The immigrant Sabon-garis of the Yoruba Ijebu, Hausa and Ibo are located just outside the walled city. Upon their arrival, the migrant Hausa Muslims used the ritualization of political authority to maintain their identity and create successful urban communities. The economy of their Sabo quarter is organized on the basis of Landlords who control land and buildings that cater to visiting Hausa traders, act as middlemen and insurers. Control of the quarter is the means of their livelihood. The hierarchy of landlord



- Palace
- Central Market
- Compound house
- ▨ Home forest
- A Communal Land
- Ditch 6ft deep and 10ft wide

called 'House of Power' has intimate connections with the religious heads malams; and together they form the permanent core of the quarter. They are the Big Men, or hajjis (literally, those who have completed a pilgrimage to Mecca). Their foremost clients are the new migrants. The chief of Sabo acts as a Shariah judge, appoints occupational chiefs, runs public services like maintaining the mosque and cemetery. This composite nature of power is derived from networks of moral, ritual and client relations. Since the penetration of the Tijaniyya Order in 1950, the urban visibility has increased with collective mid-Friday prayers in the central mosque. Malams, in their capacity as diviners have also become the principal channel through which political communication is affected in the urban area. The hajjis have become the link between chief and citizens, age-groups, landlords and clients. They directly participate in the process of decision making and political action for the quarter. The different processes of mobilization, routinization, and ritualization of power relations operate through countless minor episodes in the lives of individual groups within the quarter.

The need for a new power structure was felt since the period of colonization when European economic institutions and European-influenced architecture were grafted to Ibadan. Unlike that of the French colonialists in Cote d'Ivoire, the urban layout was made segregated and eccentric, with the establishment of new garden cantonments called Government Residential Areas in peri-urban areas. The urban void was filled by the settlements such as Bodija, an expensive planned residential area. Part from this, they provided housing for specific categories of employees such as railway workers and policemen, and set aside areas (zongos and sabon-garis) for long-distant migrants. Another primary goal for European and African settlements and infilling tracts of swampland (as in the Lagos Marina).

French expats came in larger numbers and tended to live in the central parts of towns, initially sharing town-centers with indigenes, but then finding it more convenient to house the new migrants elsewhere. The Medina at Dakar was established as a native quarter because of the bubonic plague of 1914. There were two kinds of variability in towns: some have a European-modeled town center with a cluster of government buildings. Hotels, department stores, upper income housing were placed at the center, while the masses contended with long distances to services and poor transportation. In effect,

a twin-town was created where meaningful relationships between people at different levels in the social hierarchy became rare. Yet, relationships between the French and Ivoirians were less strained because people may have felt less of a foreign intrusion into their territory, due to its diffuse, low-density development pattern

Despite the colonization of land, Ibadan maintains its pre-colonial spirit, but with modern interlinkages. Many older ritual centers of Ibadan remain active. For instance, it was only when the Olubdan of Ibadan became a member of the Fifth Tabernacle Society, a reformist Christian movement, that the oba's palace for a brief period stopped being ritual center for the populace. The marketplace is another encounter between the land-religion-political power nexus. Much more than a social arena, the market is the center of ritual dramas and has remained the location of ceremonial participatory events for the installation and celebration of the new oba.

The Marketplace with its elements of production, exchange and distribution is considered as sacred as agriculture and has its own divinity Esu. According to an old Yoruba saying, the world is a market, the market is the world. If you set a stone in the market, you are likely to strike your kinsman. The market is a public meeting ground for kinsmen, friends, patrons, clients, prospective lovers: it is a place of familiarity and continuity. It is also laden with risk, uncertainty and spirits. The crossroads are where Esu, the trickster divinity resides these should be avoided, especially at night.

Government housing projects were an important factor in limiting interracial mixing and interaction, and promoted the development of class-consciousness and socio-economic differentiation.

New alignments of power have been articulated in Ibadan through the nexus of Landlords, religious personages and merchant-traders. These are of particular significance in the life of migrants that form the majority of urban populations in the cities of West Africa. These new alignments lead to cooperation and the creation of new patterns of urbanization linked to interaction between different ethnic groups, which calls for detribalization. On the other hand, the ethnic group adjusts to the new realities by reorganizing its own traditional symbols and settlement forms, norms, and ideologies

enhance its distinctiveness within the contemporary situation, i.e calling for 'retribalization'. These shifting dynamics in the issues of religious and tribal identity coupled with political power define the patterns and processes of urbanization in traditional cities such as Ibadan.

SHELL STATE

Hell state

Amidst global euphoria about the newfound potential of joint public and private projects to succeed where public governance projects spectacularly failed, the quote from Obadina's analysis on privatization in Africa is not as vagarious as it sounds....

[...]multinationals should be invited to run African nations under leases of up to 21 years" A free market guru quoted in Obadina, Tunde: 'A dangerous way to privatize' in *Africa economic Analysis*, Sept. 24, 1998.]

At last year's World Economic Forum annual meeting, held at the exclusive Swiss Alps resort of Davos, corporate logos are on display alongside national flags, a sign of the times perhaps. Summits once staged by and for heads of state, are now also run for the new breed of world leaders, the captains of industry.

Despite the fact the Oil Multinationals employ a relatively small percentage of Nigeria's workforce, they are responsible for the production, and therefore the handling, of approximately 90% of the country's GDP. This phenomenon puts these corporations in a commanding position within Nigeria's political power structure, enabling them on one hand to manipulate country and government to their benefit, but on the other cursing them with an, admittedly unwelcome, role as the country's most immediately discernible system of power-governance.

In a country where corruption and bribery have become the way of life, the gradual but systematic erosion of political institutions as stable systems, is inevitable. For the people, the juxtaposition of the state's eroded systems and mechanisms of governance with the multinational's sleek and highly effective ones, is striking, and it comes as no surprise that it is the multina-



tionals that they turn to, for nearly all the services traditionally associated with the state, provisions that range from the supply of water and electricity, to expert advice on agriculture and farming.

In a recent meeting between a Multinational's representatives and local politicians from the area in which it operates, a politician put his priorities for development as follows: "you [the multinational] must give us water and light, the federal government must give us more money, foreign investors must come, and then we will have development".

Shell and SPDC

In the Oil producing regions of the Delta State, the Oil Multinationals are perhaps the only manifestation of any formal system of governance.

Shell, the Anglo-Dutch Petro-chemicals firm, is perhaps the largest multinational corporation operating in Nigeria, and handles (through its Nigerian subsidiaries) about half of Nigeria's Oil production. Shell's major Nigerian Subsidiary, SPDC - (Shell Petroleum Development Corporation: 55% NNPC, 30% Shell, 10% Elf, 5% Agip) has in recent years become so entangled with



the politics and governance of the region—some would argue unwillingly—that it wouldn't be a hyperbole to claim that the Delta State has slowly morphed into a Shell State.

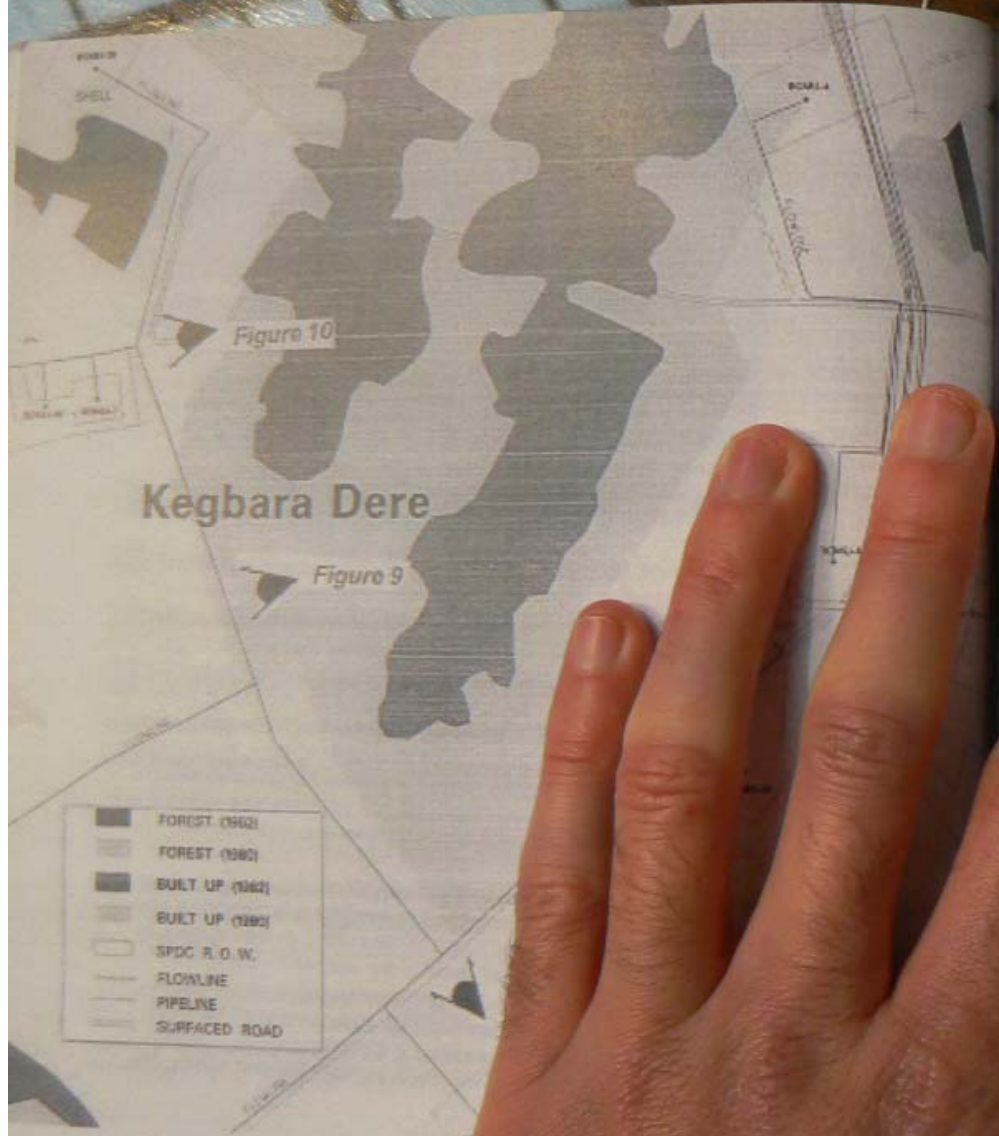
Last year alone, in an ongoing effort to improve relations with the local communities, SPDC handed over \$43 million in the form of aid, development projects and compensations. SPDC's mission statement proclaims: "the new approach to community development, is increasingly focused on long-

term goals in partnership with the communities themselves. The emphasis is on community participation and direction in order to increase their capacity, confidence and self-reliance so that they are better able to take charge of their future in a sustainable manner."

Interestingly, in order to prepare for the new approach to community development, a major restructuring process was embarked upon within the company itself. SPDC has established a new Community Program Development Department in order "to guide and implement the new approach." During 1998 alone, 25 Nigerian and foreign professionals were recruited into this department. The company is slowly mutating into a new, radical machine, that combines capitalist expansion with local/regional governance. SPDC has entered into multiple domains of governance/development, where it is acting not unlike a traditional governmental development agency. It has ventured into such areas as education, agriculture, health care, and water and electricity provision.

In the domain of education, SPDC has helped set up and equip a number of schools at various educational levels. More interestingly, the company has recently innovated and now helps unemployed youths in the Niger Delta acquire skills, principally to assist them to set up their own small businesses. SPDC reports: "We do this [vocational training] through youth training schemes, which focus on basic skills in trades such as welding, plumbing, masonry, carpentry, auto engineering, and electrical engineering. More traditional skills are also taught, such as soap production, hairdressing and palm oil processing. A popular subject is outboard engine maintenance." In 1998, some 400 graduates from previous schemes were provided with starter packs, the aim of which is to help them establish their own businesses.

The company continues its emphasis on healthcare, supporting a network of 22 Community hospitals and health centers within its area of operations. A range of equipment, including ambulances, x-ray and laboratory equipment, as well as drugs and other consumables on a case by case basis, are also provided. All this in areas where the State government had traditionally failed to provide even basic health services. In Agriculture, SPDC's support for farmers continues to provide benefits to communities in the Delta. The



Kegbara Dere

COMPARISON OF DEVELOPMENT
K-DERE AREA O

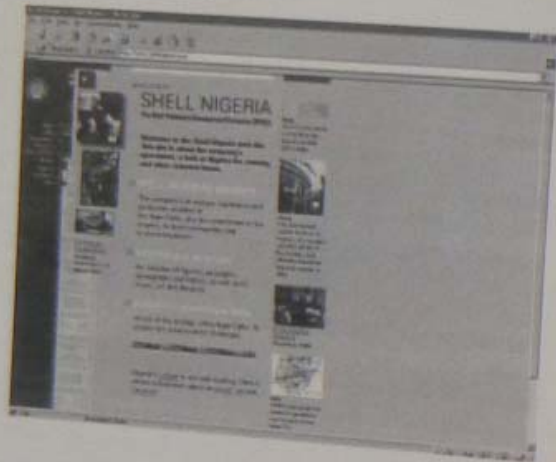
company has set up a number of research farms, that act as demonstration and training facilities for the local farmers, offering advice on new techniques and technologies that improve efficiency and production.

A very interesting development in the role that the SPDC plays in the region, has unfolded through its recent venture in the domain of (micro)finance and (regional) strategic planning. Lack of access to finance is a key inhibitor to business development and self-employment in the rural parts of the country, and the company has innovated again, with a Micro-Credit and Business Development Program. The aim, SPDC proclaims "is to help revive the economy of the host areas by promoting self-help enterprise development... a key objective is to build up local capacity to operate and manage micro-credit schemes." SPDC continues: " In 1998 we developed instruments and plans, identified partners and viable community based organizations including banks and NGO partners for credit administration - for effective implementation of the scheme. Interest in the scheme is high and processing of applications was underway by the end of 1998."

Shell has recently recruited experts from development agencies to ensure that community programs really do take off, and that the money does not end up being squandered, or worse being embezzled by corrupt politicians and/or local chiefs. The efficiency of their monitoring system is yet to be proven, but if it does work, the mechanism should be an interesting paradigm for other domains in Nigeria.

Interesting as it is, SPDC's morphing into the governor of a SHELL STATE, is not as rosy as it sounds. The corporation still has to deal with systems and mechanisms that have been eroded through years of kleptocracy. In fact SPDC itself is not without blemish, as corrupt elements within it do exist, further compromising the outlook of its innovative efforts.

A recent report on a Oil operations related fire at the village of Ughelli (an all too common phenomenon), is a telling example: "Shell had, however, on Thursday, September 30, sent in food supplies including 30 cows, lorry loads of rice, beans, garri, and vegetable oil. But as supplies run out, the people lamented what they, farmers and fishermen dread each dawning day. No supplies have been sent by the state government to the bewildered locals.



Instead, a game of supremacy is on, as local politicians and the elite scramble for clean up contracts being dished out by the oil company".

The Guardian, October 13th 1999.

Interestingly enough the model is not one that the multinationals are ecstatic about. George Soros, global venture capitalist admits that, "...due to its success (capitalism) penetrates into areas of life where it doesn't really belong. There are needs in society which cannot be fulfilled by the market..."

New trends in the oil drilling domain suggest that the Oil Multinationals in Nigeria seek to avoid the trap that Shell has seemingly fallen in (80% of Shell's operations and long term investments are on-shore, and concentrated within the Delta States). The number of off-shore drilling licenses (vs. on-shore) has risen dramatically in the recent years, a trend that seems set to persevere, suggesting that perhaps the corporations prefer a 'leaner' model of operation, one that disentangles them with the responsibilities of dealing directly with communities and systems of local governance.

Nevertheless, Shell and SPDC, continue to increase their involvement with the communities in the areas which they operate. Whether their actions are sincere or not, is perhaps of less significance, to the fact that Shell State, logistically at least, seems to be working.

To whose benefit and at what cost is another issue.

ANONYMITY

The Nigerian road generates its own kind of citizenry. As a concentration of opportunities, and a terrain of heightened vulnerability, the road is popularly mythologized as a demon that both endows and annihilates. The road citizen is a consequence of both conditions. Roads check anonymity with licenses, tolls and formalities on the one hand, and peril and vulnerability on the other.

Formalities

The road is a manual means to execute policy. When all else fails, governments, bandits and entrepreneurs can depend on the road's axiomatic characteristics to police, tax, extort, or sell on. Simply put, roads concentrate

goods and people along lines and at intersections - physical structures that can be controlled. Nigeria's many roadside checkpoints and tollbooths provide various services and remind the population of central authority. Checkpoints are used as points of "informal taxation," and as places to collect information and explain policy. In many ways, these structures are the most constant evidence of the existence of government. (Chilson, p 110) Imperfect and inefficient as they may be, they are one of the least capital intensive and most workable methods of rule possible.

In Niger it is a crime to be without a national identity card. The identity card is requisite in a country where the many roadblocks and checkpoints turn road journeys into perpetual border crossings. Identity cards provide information for a running census on population size, where people live, what they do, and most importantly, which ethnic group they belong to. The information is invaluable for organizing services in an environment where few other means of social control make sense. In Niger, as in much of West Africa, people spend most of their day outside moving. Controlling movement is an efficient, grassroots way to control a country.

Accidents

When Professor Wole Soyinka established the Federal Road Safety Commission in 1987, it sought to address a road safety "epidemic." Its mission was to "become a social instrument for seizing our fate in our two hands and to entrench this awareness in the psyche of the Nigerian road-user and of the nation." (Automag, March 1989) Soyinka's commission was charged with coming up with a "truly scientific means of combating the menace of road accidents which continues to devour Nigeria's human, emotional and material resources." The establishment of such a commission underscores the place road accidents have in the national consciousness. Road accidents are front-page news. They are constant.

"Every Tuesday morning the Lagos State Government buries its unknown dead." Mass burials at the Atan cemetery in Yaba claim 40 to 50 people a week. Most of the victims of these burials are victims of hit-and-runs on the expressways. Other graveyards (Ikoyi) and even hospitals (Ikeja) have similar sites for the anonymous dead. "Analysts advise 'responsible people' not to become victims of mass burial by always wearing a form of identity and a contact address at all times and places." (Africa News Service, November 9, 1998)



AKA KOSOFIYEMAN, L'ESTI KEALI VE, L'ESTI KEALI VE, BINA
L'ESTI KEALI VE, L'ESTI KEALI VE, BINA
L'ESTI KEALI VE, L'ESTI KEALI VE, BINA
L'ESTI KEALI VE, L'ESTI KEALI VE, BINA

Mobile churches

New breed evangelists use the dependence on mass transit, and the paranoia's of road safety as an opportunity to hold a captive audience. The 'bus preachers' as they are called, lead the riders in incantations promising protection from witchcraft and accidents. Taking advantage of the increased anxieties of road travel, the preachers tailor the incantations to the perils of transit and deliver them with such effort that they are known to sometimes collapse and die with fanatical enthusiasm. (*New African*, March, 1999)

Ogun

The Yoruba cult of Ogun is associated with the supernatural aspects of rapid technological evolution. Ogun mediates anxieties aroused by innovation and radical change. The fears and dangers engendered by technological advance are given a structured focus in the Ogun cult. Paradoxically, the Ogun cult has flourished in the last 50 years, while most other traditional Yoruba deities have been supplanted by Christian and Islamic religion. Ogun succeeds by providing a rationale for contemporary existence that is consistent with the kind of road cultures experienced in the contemporary Nigerian city. Unlike the Christianity, the Yoruba religion tends towards pragmatism. It tends toward the immediate explanation, prediction, and control of the world that makes up its pantheon. The Yoruba religion is collectively organized by bureaucracy, it is decentralized, flexible and soft. The cult has no leader. The Ogun cult is identified with iron and potentially dangerous technology (weapons, motor vehicles, trains and electricity). Ogun is perceived as both a pariah and a recluse; he is fierce, angry, and vengeful, and at the same time positively credited with innovation and discovery.

In the last twenty years, occupational groups have embraced Ogun as their patron deity: transporters, taxi drivers, road laborers, mechanics, railway-men, and engineers. These groups have proven enormously successful in the dissemination of the cult practices. Commuters are the ultimate captive audience. Transporters' and mechanics' unions which take Ogun as their patron deity, carry out sacrificial and propitiatory rites in the course of their work. The cult serves as a unifying mechanism for these cosmopolitan workers... Ogun is the wayfarers' divinity of the present, providing a common code for the very occupational group that specializes in travel. Transporters'

unions give the cult's promulgators an institutionalized base. The mobile sectors of society are Ogun's evangelists. (Barnes, p.41)

In 1972 a series of nation-wide rituals centered on "all events connected with iron: that is, road accidents and kidnapping" coincided with Nigeria's changeover from left to right-hand drive. The changeover grounded transporters for an entire day while the public paid tribute to Ogun before going out on the road. The cult of Ogun is representative of the extent to which road safety issues are part of a national consciousness.

Sunny Ada's Chant

You, drivers of Charity Motors
We're changing to the right-hand side of the road.
Let's be careful
Let's pay tribute to Ogun
Before we go out

You, Motorcycle riders and bicycle riders
We should drive on the right hand side of the road.
Please,

Let's be careful, let's be careful.
Let's pay tribute to Ogun
Before we go out

I hear the sound of iron rods
When I pass the forge
Blacksmith, I too will survive today.

We shall be taking the right hand side of the road in Nigeria.
Let's be careful, let's be careful.
Let's pay tribute to Ogun
Before we go out.

And, you, the owner of carts
We should take the right-hand side of the road.
Let's be careful, let's be careful
Let's pay tribute to Ogun
Before we go out

All drivers of Charity Motors
We are going to change to the right
Please, let's be careful, let's be careful.
Let's pay tribute to Ogun
Before we go out.

Hail Ogun, Honor the visitor (the new system of right hand drive).

Disappearances

The road, a locus for incidental hazards, has also become the targeted zone for unexplained abductions. Ritual as a possible motive for swelling numbers of 'road kills' is suspiciously held afar, despite the unabated sadism of some roadside violations. Anonymity, not only burdens the task of identifying the violated, but has also become the preferred weapon of roadside violators. It facilitates dissimulation, where perpetrators can easily shadow their intentions and lure victims to un-imagined fate. 'In fact, the bus conductor could probably be an area boy, the foodstuff trader a bag-bitch or the taxi driver an airport vigilante (Aduzi, 1992) waiting to dump you on the eastern edge of Ajegunle, the margin of the West African World.' There are other realities operating here. Or so, it is said.

The roads of Lagos operate on a fluctuating gradient of, what westerners might call, either corruption and crime. In Lagos, it's considered a measure among others. Though at one instance, roadside accidents can foster the spontaneous exchange of market goods, while at other times, it can become the burial ground for the ill-informed. Anonymity is simultaneously taxing and opportunistic. The question lies no more in whether or not one manages to escape un-violated, it really becomes a matter of how little or how much.

Reports

For those who do not say their morning prayers before leaving for work or their business engagements, perhaps recent happenings in Lagos with regards to ritual murders may make them change their minds.

For example, Jide Dada, a trader, residing in Ipaja, a suburb of Lagos, would have been a dead man now but he could be said to be lucky, as he escaped the ugly knives of ritual murderers at Ikorodu. "Four weeks ago, I wanted to rush to Ikorodu to see a friend and come back before 8.00 p.m. I took a bus from Ojota going to Ikorodu. To me, it was natural. There was no trace of anything funny. A conductor was calling Ikorodu and people were entering the bus, and I entered also with them. As we left for our destination about 10 minutes later, the conductor brought out something from his pocket that looked like white powder. He threw it into the air and that was the end of my knowing what was happening to me."

Dada said when he regained conscious was when somebody was asking in a harsh voice why these people were not killed. It was then Dada looked

around him and noticed some of the people that were in that same bus with him. "We were about 10 men and women. We were all looking like people that were helpless. We could not talk or move. But I was conscious of all that was happening to me."

Dada said a man dressed like a native doctor was demanding from two men why he (Dada) and the rest were not killed. They replied that they could not complete the job before moving. The man who spoke in Yoruba then told the kidnappers that the oracle would not accept the remaining people because it was morning. Dada conveyed that the native doctor now instructed the men to return the remaining people to the place they brought them from. "But instead of that, the men took us to somewhere else. They gave us something that looks like sponge and asked us to wash our heads with it when we got home." Dada said they were asked by the men to find their way. "I tried finding my way even though I was feeling funny. I got to a stream and then decided to wash my head as they instructed. Immediately I did that something I cannot describe changed in me." Dada said he ran and raised an alarm attracting some people and he told his story to them. They conducted a search but the unfortunate thing, Dada said, was that he could not remember the place or anything he could even use to remember the place. Dada was missing for two days.

For many, the fate of ever returning from such incidents unhurt or unviolated, remains a game of chance and fate. Though authorities remain persistently baffled by the increasing numbers of disappearances. The police are besieged with reports of missing persons referring to the 'illiterate animals', in an article of the Guardian on 21 November 1999. Though there is no documented proof, it is possible that the condemnable act of ritualism is a major cause of the sudden disappearance of persons in recent events.

Ngozi Nwokolo's case may still remain a mystery. Though her people said she was missing in Lagos and was later found in the east, they were happy that she was eventually found after intensive police search for two months. But for Mr. Okey Nwabunike with whom Ngozi was staying before her disappearance, it was not an easy experience. According to him, the most mysterious and disturbing thing to him is that Ngozi has not been able to tell him where she was for those two months. 'I have asked her hundred times where she was for those months. And she has answered, 'I was somewhere.' But my



greatest happiness is that I have handed her back to her people. And all these have thought me a lesson." Ngozi Nwokolo went missing for two months. [Post Express, 21 November 1999, Sunday Orisakwe]

If lucky, they are found.

Giving credence to the findings of The Guardian, on Sunday 21 November 1999, was the death of one Mrs. Oluwaranti Abu who was raped and strangled, while her breast was cut off on October 24. There was the death two days after also in Ikorodu of a woman, Juliana Ibadien, 22 who was accosted in mysterious circumstances together with her husband. Her capture was allegedly orchestrated by some highly placed individuals. Just at the time the police were busy trying to unravel the perpetrators of the Ikorodu killings, the most dastardly of which was the Ibadiens in which the wife died and was beheaded while the husband narrowly escaped into the bush with bullets lodged in his body, the remains of young undergraduate Anene was found around Bisam. His brain was removed, the head and the left hand were also cut off.

According to the police public relations officer in the Lagos State Command, Mr. Fabulous Enyaosah, police in most cases are wary to conclude a killing as ritually inclined, until it is proved. Enyaosah who said the statistics of ritual killing may be low, however confirmed that it is true that men indulge in the wholesome act. "It is a horrendous act and often something that depresses the psyche of any reasonable man for one to observe in this modern times that human beings engage in such illegal act," he said. He said the act was mostly perpetrated by people of lowly minds whose desire and quest for money can not be satisfied. "Have you ever heard that any ritual murder has been credited to a professor? I am yet to be aware of any - most of them (suspects) are illiterate uneducated animals," he submitted.

Advising people to be wary of keeping late nights so as not to become victims like Anene who was killed around Bisam, the police public relations officer said. "In my candid opinion, people who bring their wards or househelps into Lagos should ensure adequate identification and dossier on those people under their care. Our experiences are that when a child is declared missing their surnames at not known by their guardians," he lamented.

He also advised that people also who walk the streets of Lagos should do so in groups. "People should avoid boarding filled up vehicles where there are already two or three guys at odd times. If they must do so, let them endeavour to memorize the numbers," he said. <<[The Guardian, 21 November 1999, Lekan Fadiyi]

SAP

Lost labor

The Lagos labor market, as all sectors of her economy, has traditionally been measured by the maxim of accumulation. In 1986 The Economist described Nigeria's economy as 'organized chaos' and lamented the country's inability to achieve any semblance of systematic capitalist accumulation. <<[The Economist, May 3 1986, 3]. In the same year President Babangida accepted the country's first Structural Adjustment Program (SAP) from the World Bank and the IMF. The medicine was Western liberalization, and it came through a devalued Naira, trade deregulation, and across the board privatization. Since these measures, the performance of Nigeria's economy has, predictably, been less than illustrious. Manufacturing and commercial sectors have atrophied, and the quaternary sector (financial and business services), after a brief period of growth, has been subject to many liquidations. While the riches gained through oil money may have been limited to the formal state sector, the effects of the SAPs were felt unilateral across the labor divide. Most drastically, the minimum wage crashed to \$16/month in 1991, and unemployment plagued all sectors. Resistance to the austerity measures, by students, academics, and organized labor groups, shaped in the 'Great Debate' of 1985. By the 1990s however, their voices would be reduced to echoes in the hollowed out space of Lagos's once petrol rich economy.

Social scientists and urban researchers have attempted to make sense of Nigeria from the vantage point of these grim terms. All proposed models, however, remain strapped within the dialectical framework of the new colonizing financiers. The insidious effects of the global ties should not be dismissed, but a view from inside the internal Nigerian economy reveals quite another picture. What is quantified as loss from the 'outside', can be recast, substantially, from the 'inside'

The Lagos citizenry has invented a host of ways to manage the economic wasteland wrought by the SAPs. In the scramble for work and money, people have adopted multiple occupations, multiple work-places, and multiple work schedules. They have done so outside of the traditional structures of work, such as having a boss, an institutional place of work, or employment contract. By turning occupation, place, and time into flexible components, the laborer has fashioned for her/himself an elastic modality of working. In the absence of authority, the worker can change these according to will or circumstance.

These inventive strategies have typically been referred to as 'coping mechanisms'. Upheld by various disciplines, they prove at best the resilience of Nigerians in the face of harsh circumstance, and at worst that the impact of structural adjustment can be softened through the rise of an 'informal', 'indigenous', economic sector. While it is true that they may have at first originated as self-subsistence strategies, these new modalities of work, through their repetition and multiplication, are becoming generalized in society. Rather than adding up to a grassroots movement, they amount to a society wide reconfiguration of work, at the base of which is an overall shift in the city's economic structure. In this sense, the loss and negative values of the World Bank's indicators have been radically transformed. The correct economic standard has become dispersion, not accumulation.

Dispersion

The transformation of work outlined above has rendered the univocal relation between the workplace and remuneration obsolete. As illustrated by the changed sociology surrounding the paycheck, the scarcity of money (on April 23 1984, the Nigerian chief of staff sealed the countries borders and withdrew all money from circulation) has effected the system of work-related monetary allocations, transfers, and distribution. Going to work no longer assures receiving a paycheck. Granted, the oil economy had created an artificial billowing of jobs in the public sector, jobs which gleaned salaries without the actual execution of work. However, the atrophy of the public sector after re-structuring meant that even the known and practiced corrupt remunerative options could no longer hold a means of livelihood in check. Furthermore, the destabilization of the workplace and the salary made contracts a risky undertaking. Overall, working citizens dispersed their

efforts and increased their options, shifting the labor market, in various forms, underground. These included the reinscription of existing physical places, the territorialization of open spaces in the city, and a graduated scale of migration.

Traditional sites in the city are daily being reinscribed by groups of area boys, vigilante faith healers, and self-employed traders. The emerging religious sects, in addition to their church building frenzies, have physically taken over hotels, cinemas, and night clubs, for their religious performances and faith healing sessions. Nomadic religious spectacle has turned into one of the most lucrative industries in Lagos. Furthermore, small scale enterprises have moved out of the traditional commercial centers and re-installed in residential low and middle income areas. The recent rise in home-made video production has had the effect of dispersing cultural entertainment throughout the city.

The nomadic trader, or street hawker, is of course not new to Lagos. Following re-adjustment however, a growing number of industries have taken the same form. No sooner did the religious groups move out of the city's entertainment district, than the entertainment industry moved out onto the streets. Performance groups roam the city and set up, spontaneously, in open spaces in the city such as curb-sides and bus-stops. Performances have even been known to take over the 'Molue' commuter buses.

A central component of the emerging migratory work force is its ability to perform or produce at any physical juncture. This de-territorialization has made it as flexible to time as to location. The value of instantaneous set-up can turn opportunity into profit. Remuneration is hence, improvised, and can take the form of theft, sale, loan, or cheating.

Labor and Dispersion

The emerging labor force, is neither codified through a specific work schedule, work ethic, or work dress, but through its tactics of de- and re-territorialization. It sees every coordinate point in the city as the potential for production, and treats every moment of the day and night as the potential for remuneration. By the multiplication of these rules, the emerging labor force is changing the rules of production and consumption, despite, and against the liberalizing agenda of the SAPs.

THE GHOST OF THE ZERO

K

The theory of optimum city size is used to describe the ideal distribution of population in social and geographical space. The success of this model is based on American experience and the premise that cities will reach a saturation point when their cultural, economic and political advantages begin to decline. A stochastic distribution (Bell Curve) of successful urban agglomerates reveals that orderly distribution approximates a rank-size rule $r \cdot P^q = K$ where q approximates stability, K is a constant for a given group of cities, r is the rank of the city in terms of its population, and P is its population. According to this rule, the distribution of cities follows a law of proportional effect wherein each city has a fixed number of satellite cities of the next lower order with a determined size and at a determined geographical distance from the center. The results of this equation are then implemented to suggest optimum city size and associated social conditions. For example, a city of 100,000-200,000 is the optimum for the development of municipal services; a city of at least 200,000-500,000 is necessary for the full development of manufacture; any city with a discretionary commute into a CBD must have between 50,000 and 300,000 inhabitants to provide amenities and exist autonomously from the center city. The unevenness of West African history has instead produced an uneven distribution of unformed cities and a collection of unrelated productive island-cities in a sea of emptiness. (Joseph J. Spengler, 'Africa and the Theory of Optimum City Size,' *The City in Modern Africa*, ed. Horace Miner, New York: Praeger, 1967). Spengler suggests that, given the disproportionate relationship between large African cities and small African cities, center cities such as Lagos should be constrained for several decades until smaller urban islands can catch up and produce their own satellite networks. Ideally, through the realization of the rank-size model, a complex hierarchic system of cities will emerge alongside a modern economy and the evolved autonomous system will become self-adjusting and self-maintaining.

Given the unavailability of an accurate population statistic for metropolitan Lagos, inadvertently dropping a zero could have disastrous effects.

The neogeographer Constantinos Doxiadis developed the idea that five forces and five elements combined uniquely to give each settlement its own character. Ekistics - the science of human settlements - sought to describe the matrix between these five elements (nature, anthropos, society, shells,

networks) and five forces (economic, social, political, technical, cultural). The tendency in ekistics towards taxonomy led to a classification of things at a global scale - laying out the groundwork for global planning. With zero-laden figures, Doxiadis dreamt of global ecological balance, but a planned balance. With the courage of the planner bolstered by figures, Doxiadis Associates was able to tread rather fearlessly into any country in need of planning. The Doxiadis Associates' Master Plan for Lagos State was completed in 1973. The plan was ultimately rejected, but the UNCHS-Habitat Plan for Metropolitan Lagos of 1981 (with Wilbur Smith Associates) adopted several of the guidelines set forth by the ekistic model towards establishing a new alternative model for decision-making, planning, and designing. Briefly, the UNCHS master plan loosely suggests long-range peripheral development to alleviate the sprawl of Lagos through land reclamation, satellite industrial areas, and transport links that occur simultaneously with development, not as an afterthought. The guidelines begin with the much-needed provision of a base map reconnaissance study at 1:50,000 in an effort to upgrade and standardize existing maps. Through the construction of these maps, goals will be established for land, population, infrastructure, transportation, facilities, and housing. Read against the logistical - economic, social, and physical forces - an alternative dynamic model will be suggested for long-term development (by 2000).

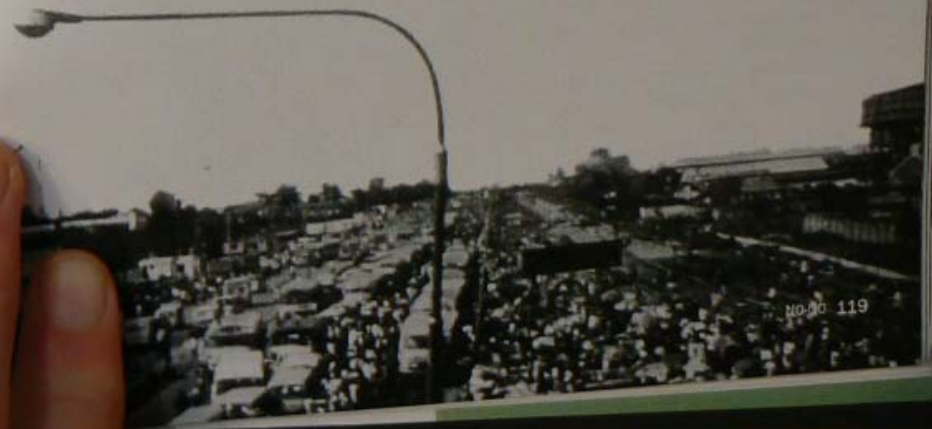
NO-GO

Asphalt

The terms 'go-slow' and 'no-go' are part of a popular lexicon replete with nomenclature that uses patterns of traffic and movement to describe the urban condition. Go-slow describes the ubiquitous traffic jam, lulled in congestion, captive to the road's breadth, and thriving with entrepreneurial activity. The go-slow is a transient condition, swelling diurnally with the usual peaks of urban movement. The no-go, on the other hand, is less a condition than a place. Defined by failed planning, bankrupted initiative, regular banditry, or physical collapse, the no-go stalls circulation in a space of maximum vulnerability. As such, the incomplete road or constricted intersection is in many ways recuperated, becoming controllable, i.e. valuable, real estate. The botched artifact becomes something more: redefined by systems of use that take advantage of its geography and congestion. As an area of

enormous physical friction it becomes charged with a kind of social traction.

"Lagos has, if anything, too many roads and road intersections, but its roads are used for too many different purposes. As a result, no purpose is satisfied, it is disorder not lack of size which causes Lagos roads to become insufficient," said Otto Koeningsberger in his seminal diagnosis of West Africa's largest city. (Koeningsberger, p.10) "A much more efficient use of land now available for transport purposes could be achieved by a classification of roads into the following groups: limited access roads, main thoroughfares, residential streets, parking streets, trading streets (some of these may be covered and converted into galleries and colonnades with shops), and streets reserved for cyclists and pedestrians only." (Koeningsberger, p.49) Approximately 1/3 of Lagos' land area is dedicated to roads, expressways, car parks, flyovers and turn-outs. Road construction and maintenance is guided by supply-side strategies that tend to maximize navigable surface at the expense of more strategic resource allocations.



Koenisberger's 1964 UN report gave the Lagos State Government a succinct recommendation to build expressways. Its prescription for the state was twofold: "to increase the supply of roads by having more roads, and... second, to ensure that vehicles can move fast." (Fabohunda, p.23) This wisdom could not be acted on until the oil-fueled building binge of the late 1970s when Lagos State undertook more than 14 major expressway and bridge building projects. These projects, including the Apapa-Ikeja Expressway, the Badagry Expressway, the Third Axial Bridge Complex [a fiasco that remained incomplete until the Early 90s], the Lagos-Ibadan Expressway, the Ijora Causeway Complex and others, were not built with the simple premise to "make cars move fast." They also had larger mandates ranging from increasing national security to regional integration. Speaking at the inauguration of the Ijora Causeway complex in 1973, then military leader General Yakubu Gowon stated that the complex had an "inter-African flavor, being the possible termini of two major proposed Trans-Continental Highways: the Lagos Mombassa and the Trans-Saharan... it will bring several independent African countries closer together." (From: Apapa-Ijora Causeway Complex, Collected Speeches, p.9) As an edifice, Lagos' expressway network is more a product of political ambition than a planned accommodation of known traffic volumes. Overcompensation is its generating logic.

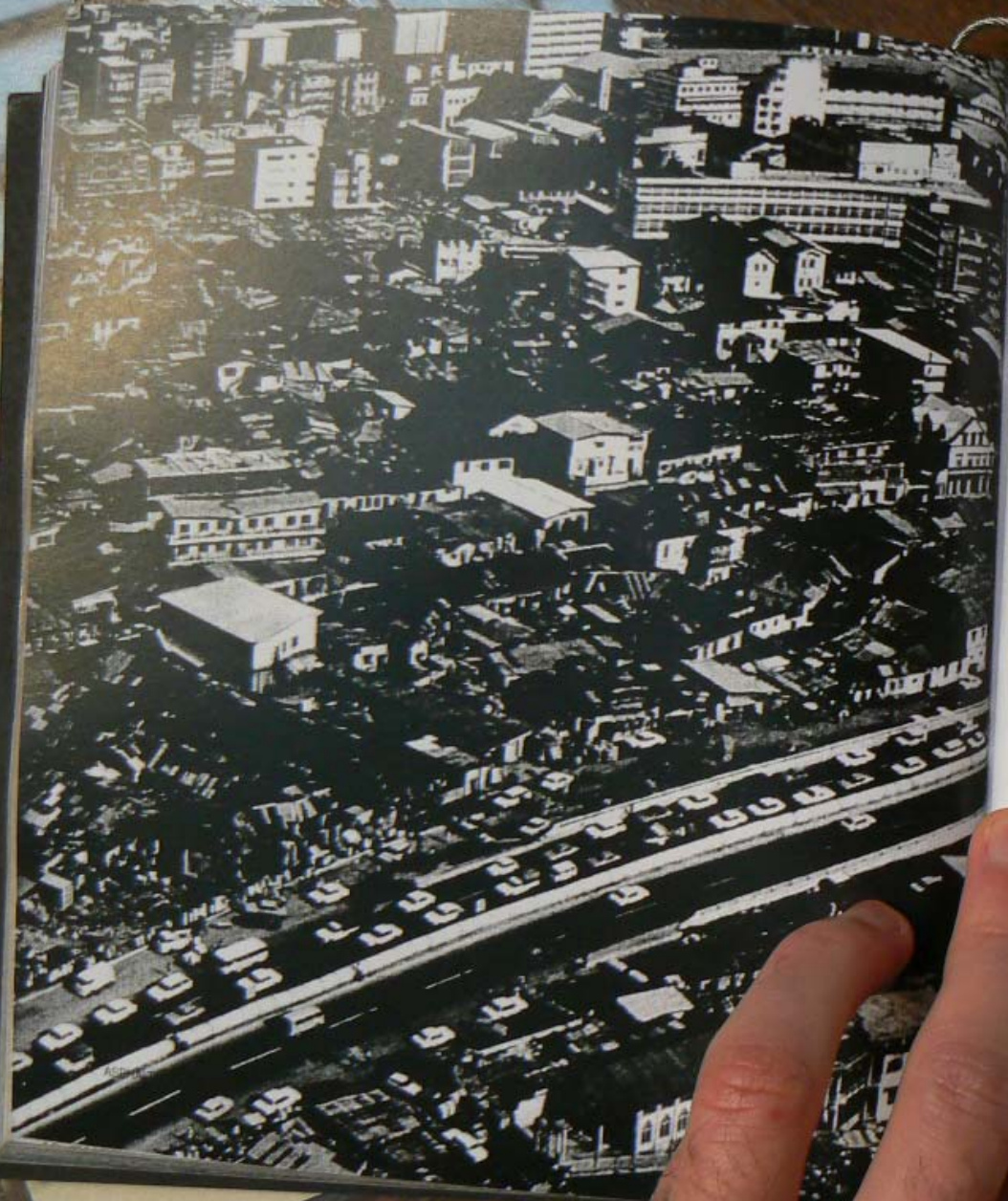
The N1 billion spent on Lagos expressways between 1975 and 1980 alleviated traffic congestion as much as it exacerbated road functions. On the one hand the new expressways allowed the port facilities in Apapa and Tin Can Island a more fluid connection to north-bound transport routes, on the other, the same expressways put tremendous pressures on local roads at points of interchange between the two types. The sheer scale of the linear edifices generated entirely new systems of road use exactly because they were overblown. As one of the few durable landscapes in the metropolis, the expressways become magnets for enterprise and opportunity. Highway Housing, for example, is a system of inhabitation that appropriates the elevated roadways as housing, "making infrastructure architecture." (Nomadic Urbanism, p.104) Similarly, Architecture describes the tendency of the edifice to adopt functions beyond their design. Lagos flyovers and expressways are frequently colonized by "hawkers, mechanics, lunatics, illegal food spots, churches as well as places of abode." (Abuja Mirror, February 24, 1969) Such adaptations increase the performative scope of the infrastructure. As botched c

wasteful exercises in physical excess, they compel and accommodate new and unforeseen urbanisms. (Nomadic Urbanism, p.84)

Dual Carriageways

In the 1970s many of the more heavily traveled colonial roads were converted to limited-access divided highways. These "dual carriageways" consolidated the functions of the curb to the center of the road in order to channel traffic efficiently in only one direction on either side. The physical form of the this dividing curb was amplified in many cases to become a low concrete wall topped by a high mesh fence and sometimes even programmed with coaxial sewage or electric lines. Limiting the number of access points to the highway facilitated traffic flow. However, both the fence and the access consolidation had radical secondary consequences on circulation patterns. The fence limited the pedestrian's ability to cross the roads, thereby generating new points of commercial activity at more concentrated road crossings. In turn, the restricted highway access produced a new class of road by forcing local traffic to parallel the dual carriageways between access intersections. (Fabohunda, p.29) The road building projects of the late 70s succeeded by measures of quantity and, to some extent, efficiency. What their designers did not account for, however, was a near total dependence on public transportation that places its own demands on the form and effects of the city's road infrastructure.

A 1991 survey found that about 4,223,000 people relied on public transit to move about Lagos - 80% of the population. (Adelofolalu, p.105) Some studies claim even higher rates of dependence on public transport. For example, a 1988 survey by Professor Ajibade Ogunjumo of the University of Ile-Ife, found that 11.7% of the population resorts to walking or bicycle riding for inter-city movement, 6% uses private automobiles and around 86% of Lagos residents depend on the various forms of public transportation. Small, unofficial operators provide the brunt of this transportation amenity. According to the Lagos State Licensing Authority, the Lagos State Transportation Corporation - the state's official carrier - had an estimated fleet of only 73 buses in 1985. Private owners compensated by operating an additional 1,850 buses in the state. An additional 5,300 private molues (small buses) and 19,500 danfoes (micro-buses) offset the paucity of official bus services. Finally, the State reported that over 30,000 taxis were licensed to operate in the Lagos area. Given that the state's 73 buses circulated between 580 official bus stops



along 128 official routes, they were spread pretty thin. (Dyeleys, p.104) Private sector and even illegal services picked up the slack. The state made up for its lack of vehicles by a kind of infrastructural overshoot, establishing a relatively cheap bus shelter system which was used as an armature for the private, unofficial services - a classic corruperative exchange.

The dependence on bus services has been exacerbated by a number of factors. For example, five days before the opening ceremony of the Festival of African Culture in 1977, Lagos State Governor Commodore Adekunle Lawel was panicked with the prospect that the event would be crippled by the city's notorious congestion. The Commodore's solution was as drastic as it was effective. He proposed an edict to ground half the city's vehicles on any given day. The command banned the use of vehicles with odd plate numbers on Mondays, Wednesdays, and Fridays, and those with even plate numbers on Tuesdays, Thursdays, and Saturdays. A report in *Spear* claimed that as a result of the edict, "the long queue of cars otherwise known as the go-slow (was) a thing of the past." A drive from Ikeja to the Marina that had previously taken as long as four to five hours could be made in less than thirty minutes. The action prompted two behavioral responses. On one hand, many automobile owners simply purchased a second plate, alternating plates with the days of the week. This practice continued until last year, when the edict was abandoned. A second consequence was the increase in the demand for public transportation services.

Martial transportation policy has found other ways to congest the city's transportation systems. In 1998, for example, Lagos State Administrator Mohammed Marwa announced that the same 'odd and even' vehicle registration numbers would be used to regulate the sale of fuel in the state. To insure the orderly sale of petrol, Marwa launched "Operation 72 Hours." Placing over 2,000 armed personnel at petrol stations throughout the state, Marwa hoped to put an end to the riots that had occurred as irate transporters who had been queuing for days set fire to buses and erected roadblocks. (Pan Africa News Agency, May 15, 1998) Similarly, in 1972, traffic wardens were set up to facilitate the national changeover from left to right hand drive. After several years of service, the military government expanded the warden's role, ordering them to literally whip drivers through intersections. In a city where traffic lights are pillaged of their valuable electrical circuitry, the wardens fulfilled a vital service. Unlike electrified traffic systems, the warden could

physically whisk offending vehicles through intersections. (Pel, p.173) The most drastic shift in transportation needs occurred as a result of the devaluation of the Nigerian currency in the 1987 under the structural adjustment programs. The SAPs made the maintenance and replacement of vehicles prohibitively expensive for most Nigerians. Marginalized by the adjustment programs, many gave up their vehicles and were forced to place an even greater burden on public transportation.

Total saturation of public transport is matched by a total failure on the part of the state to provide adequate bus service. This is, like so many other needs, is compensated by a private network that operates mimetically by piggy-backing the official route structure, enabling it to capitalize on established transportation infrastructures. The informal does more than take up the slack. It expands the bus system to under-served areas like Ajegunle and extends service into the night, beyond 11 p.m. when the state operation shuts down. Lagos State unofficially sanctions the informal operators by importing spare parts, for example, to distribute to the Taxi Drivers Association and other industry groups. Without the infrastructural devices - the turnouts, bus shelters, depots, workshops and fuel stations - that allow the state system to operate in a way that does not molest regular traffic, the tolerated private companies simply usurp sidewalk space around bus depots and shelters. The official stop is consequently augmented by a line of buses and attendant opportunists including mechanics, fuel sellers, hawkers, market women, tailors, spare parts dealers, touts, and thieves. The compounding effect begins with the formal construction of the bus stop and ends with the annihilation of the sidewalk as a pedestrian zone - putting pedestrians in the streets. A 'no-go' results when this coagulation occurs in conjunction with failed road infrastructure.

Oshodi

At the precise point in the metropolitan diagram where the east-west ring road meets the north-south spine the micro-scale of the plan hemorrhages. The two ends don't quite snap together. Oshodi is a failure of construction mechanisms to connect closing segments, a cloverleaf intersection with only two-and-a-half leaves. But the point somehow works. Tentative, and even officially temporary, Oshodi's 'incomplete' layout in many ways increases the number of things it can do. It is a no-go par excellence. With the exception of Mopti market on the banks of the Niger in Mali, Oshodi





Oshodi Motor Park

is probably the largest continuous open market in West Africa. It has been popularly referred to as an "interface between time and destinations... the planner's blurred vision, the administrator's ineptitude and a police nightmare, the pickpocket's dream, the lay-about's vineyard, the transporter's gambling area for time and passengers, and the jousting place for sellers and buyers." (Glendora, p. 51) Initially an important rail stop and market area, Oshodi mushroomed in 1978 when the Apapa Oworonsoki road intersection was built. The Apapa Expressway, as it is commonly called, made Oshodi an important food distribution center for those in the ring corridor, particularly in the west. Together with the Yaba/Idi-Oro/Tejuosho node and the Iddo/Oyongbo junction, Oshodi is part of a tripartite urban spine that is connected by the rail line. Between the stations the tracks function as a kind of pedestrian highway, providing a far more protective route than the vehicular motorways alongside it.

As a sidewalk, the rail line has its problems. But as a pedestrian access route to Oshodi market, it is invaluable. The aborted Oshodi cloverleaf system respects the right of way of the Nigerian Railway Corporation but ignores the logic of the flow of vehicular traffic between perpendicular axes. Survey maps of site describe how the eastern portion of the interchange was left stillborn, truncated by the railway. (see diagram) The dysfunctional off-ramps, otherwise impediments to circulation, have been recuperated as programmed cul-de-sacs. Taking advantage of the interplay between the two different traffic patterns - a fast moving upper level overpass, and the slow moving pedestrian along the rail line - many services and amenities have colonized the off-ramps and roundabouts. Taken together these form a complex overlap of programs: a train station, urban and suburban bus stations, a hauling station, several different markets, auto garages, a school, at least one church, and hundreds of less formal service stalls.

The Oshodi no-go turns congestion into destination. As such, proximity to the road and rail line determines the relative success or failure of any business. In 1998, for example, a consortium of developers bought a large church adjacent to the southeast interchange. Led by Toma Services Limited, the N50 million construction scheme of the Oshodi Methodist Church involves converting the large structure into a multilevel shopping complex. Directly opposite Oshodi's main motor park, the project is premised on demolishing

most of the church to build a 1,600 square meter, four level mall with 'lock-up multi-purpose shops.' (Africa News, 11.2.98) Speaking after the sign-on ceremony at the church headquarters, the managing director of the developing firm, Prince Oluseye Adedipe stated that the project was "a collaboration between the interests of the church and a consortium of banks and private investors" that would help relieve an overburdened market area. (Africa News, 11.2.98) The developer's investment in the church extends the logic of the botched interchange to adjacent buildings, and, in a way, orders failure.

Left incomplete, the intersection has a deleterious effect on metropolitan traffic circulation. But when measured in terms of efficiencies other than speed, the intersection is enormously functional. To physically control it, all that is required are lines of provisional fences and concrete dividers - devices that act as deployable curbs to influence the directions of travel. The markets and motor parks are taxed by neighboring city councils that sometimes violently compete for the cash intensive revenue that these industries generate. In turn, lorry operators, driver's associations and touts (agbreros) also jostle for control of the various levies and daily taxes different groups must pay to use the place. Further down the Apapa Expressway, at the interchange with the Badagry expressway, the Mile 2 motor park operates in a similar way.

Initially dreamt up as a FESTAC recreation area that included "sizzling fountains and glittering lamps," Mile 2 was later conceived as a relaxation spot for fatigued residents. But soon the cross formed by the Lagos-Badagry and Oshodi-Apapa expressways divided the land of the park into four parts, "loops," that are administered by three separate town councils: Amuwo-Odofin, Surulere, and Ajeromi. The councils have turned the former recreation area into motor-parks to collect levies from the users. The councils agree to provide electricity to the parks and public taps for businesses such as "car wash outfits." "If the spaces had been left unused," argues one council member, "they would be turned into safe-havens for robbers and criminals." (Guardian, 12.14.98) The official rates paid to the local governments by users of the motor parks are: N30,000 and N10,000 yearly for each car dealer's premises and sign post; N2,500 yearly for lesser businesses premises; big-time transporter, N15,000; interstate N5,000; petty trader, N500; and gravel traders, from N15,000 to N25,000 yearly. (Guardian, 12.14.98) The motor park is a residual middle ground. It is a fuse box that allows the

informal sector and the state enterprise to 'meet halfway to negotiate some mutually beneficial or mutually exploitable' arrangement based on the potential differences between the two sectors that are consolidated at the motor park. (Charter, p.15) At the Mile 2 interchange formal political structure benefits from informal transport industries. The Mile 2 interchange motor park is not, however, a no-go. It's performative advantages are a consequence of its geographic position, not physical failure. Oshodi, on the other hand, succeeds in many ways because it fails in others.

[Detour. As roads decay their traffic spills into surrounding areas, expanding motorable terrain by default. The road hemorrhages at points of maximum utility, subjecting neighboring communities and adjacent landscapes to the perils and opportunities of dispersed road traffic. In 1996 the 600 km Onitsha/Owerri road east of Lagos "caved in on several spots, making motorists detour in selected places, driving through farmlands and remote villages, crisscrossing abandoned terrain to reconnect to the highway. Many lives were lost in the process, vehicles endangered and many lost their way in far flung communities." (Vanguard, 9.1.99) Groups normally neglected by road traffic sometimes take advantage of the detour. Area Boys, for example, purposefully destroy road surfaces to redirect road traffic into ambush areas or under-patronized commercial districts. (Daily Times, 27.9.98) The detour is an inverse of positive proximity theory: rather than relying on proximity to fixed infrastructure for residual economic benefits, the detour redirects the infrastructure's patrons to an under-served area. In this case the no-go becomes deployable: a provisional system of road blocks that redirect traffic, supplying consumers to under-served markets.]

Ketu

In the northeast corner of the city a 10-lane road - the largest in Lagos State - abruptly ends in a 2 lane road. Beyond bottleneck, the scale shift is so dramatic that it prompts the formation of a street market that sometimes stretches for over a kilometer. Commuters leaving the city from the nearby Ojota Lorry Park vie for road surface with hawkers in one lane and trucks bringing goods into the city in the other. Consequently, an informal market has developed street side to serve the departing motorists, but this market is forever competing with transport operators who store goods in roadside warehouses. Beyond an artifact of a botched transportation policy, Ketu road is a massive market both in and around one of the most important entry points into the city. Like the Oshodi interchange, competition is fierce for control over this point. Recent press has described how over 40 people were

killed in riots between Hausa and Yoruban traders in the market. Investigations by the news organization TEMPO revealed that the incident started when traders at the market attempted to block a bulldozer deployed by a contractor engaged by authorities of the Kosofe Local Government to pull down the shanties in the market pursuant to its reconstruction and modernization. Mrs. Moyo Thorpe, who led the council, claimed that the local government destroyed the shanties in an effort to reconstruct and modernize the market, recruiting a developer who was to execute the project on a contractor-financed basis and manage the property for an agreed period to recoup his investment. When the market indigenes resisted, the local council called in Lagos States' finest, the soldiers of Operation Sweep, who proceeded to spray the market with bullets. (Africa News 4.22.99) The violence caused most of the Hausa traders to leave the market, allowing it to be modernized.

Ketu's no-go has a correlate in the southern part of the city: Malu road. Malu connects the Apapa port road with Ajegunle and, like Ketu, is contested between Hausa and Yoruban business interests. In the case of Malu, however, it was the simple act of paving the street that had enormous social consequence. At one end, Ajegunle functioned exactly because its road surface is unpaved and thereby free to expand and contract as required by use. When the government paved Malu road - at the end of Ajegunle's main thoroughfares - the improved surface's new linearity attracted the attention of fuel tanker operators who were then able to more quickly reach the seaport. (by Combing, p.23) Riots quickly ensued between transporters and Hausa cattle herders who used slaughter houses along the old Malu road. Both a cow path and a port service expressway, Malu can't reconcile its two users. Because the two types of velocities, the cow and the tanker, are incompatible, the street is popularly referred as a no-go. Both Ketu and Malu roads are dysfunctional in the sense that they involve destabilizing scale shifts between road surfaces. But whereas Ketu's geographic position transforms this liability into market opportunities, Malu's successful surface engineering condemns it to relative non-functionality.

Third Axial Bridge

On the morning of April 22, 1990 Lagosians woke to the by then familiar martial music followed by the statement: "fellow Nigerian citizens. On behalf of the patriotic and well-meaning peoples of the middle belt and the south-

ern parts of the country, I Major Gideon Orkar, wish to happily inform you of the successful ousting of the dictatorial, corrupt, drug baronish, evil men, sadistic, deceitful, homosexually-centered, prodigalistic, unpatriotic administration of General Ibrahim Badamasi Babangida." (Fernandez, p.121) And with that, a coup commenced. One the first moves of the coup perpetrators was to place a single armored car at the Obalende end of the near complete Third Axial Bridge, effectively blocking the only swift ground escape route for the military government ensconced at the Dodan Barracks. The coup failed. It did, however, make first use of the incomplete bridge, identifying its greatest utility - as a choke-point.

Begun in 1972 under the Lagos State administration of Yakubu Gowon, the Third Axial Road was to link Lagos Island with the Ibadan Expressway in the north of the city. Planners had projected that the project would relieve Iddo island of approximately 40% of its traffic. The massive bridge would essentially join the affluent estate areas of Ikoyi and Victoria Island with national transportation systems directly, without the congestion or threat of having to pass through the city, in many ways it is a ten-kilometer driveway. Built and even partially funded by a consortium of contractors led by Julius Berger - the builders of Iddo's Eko bridge and most of Abuja - construction on the bridge did not start until 1979. No sooner had construction commenced than it was abandoned as the oil money of the 70s quickly ran out. Later, in 1987, a foundation ceremony was held on the bridge with General Babangida promising that his administration would take as its principle charge the completion of all the "unfinished projects" of previous administrations. In May of 1990, Babangida reiterated this promise claiming that the bridge would be done by his 50th birthday. It was. On the 17th of August, 1991, a dedication ceremony was held on the deck of the bridge nearly twenty years after its inception. After giving Lagos the bridge, the Babangida Administration left for Abuja.

Measured from the two interchanges at either end of the bridge, the Third Axial is over 12 kilometers long - the longest bridge in Africa. A generation of Lagosians came to know the bridge as an icon of the military government's failed initiatives, a huge road to nowhere spanning the city's lagoon. As a no-go, the Third Axial came to represent the fits-and-starts political history that was responsible for its staggered evolution. As the coup

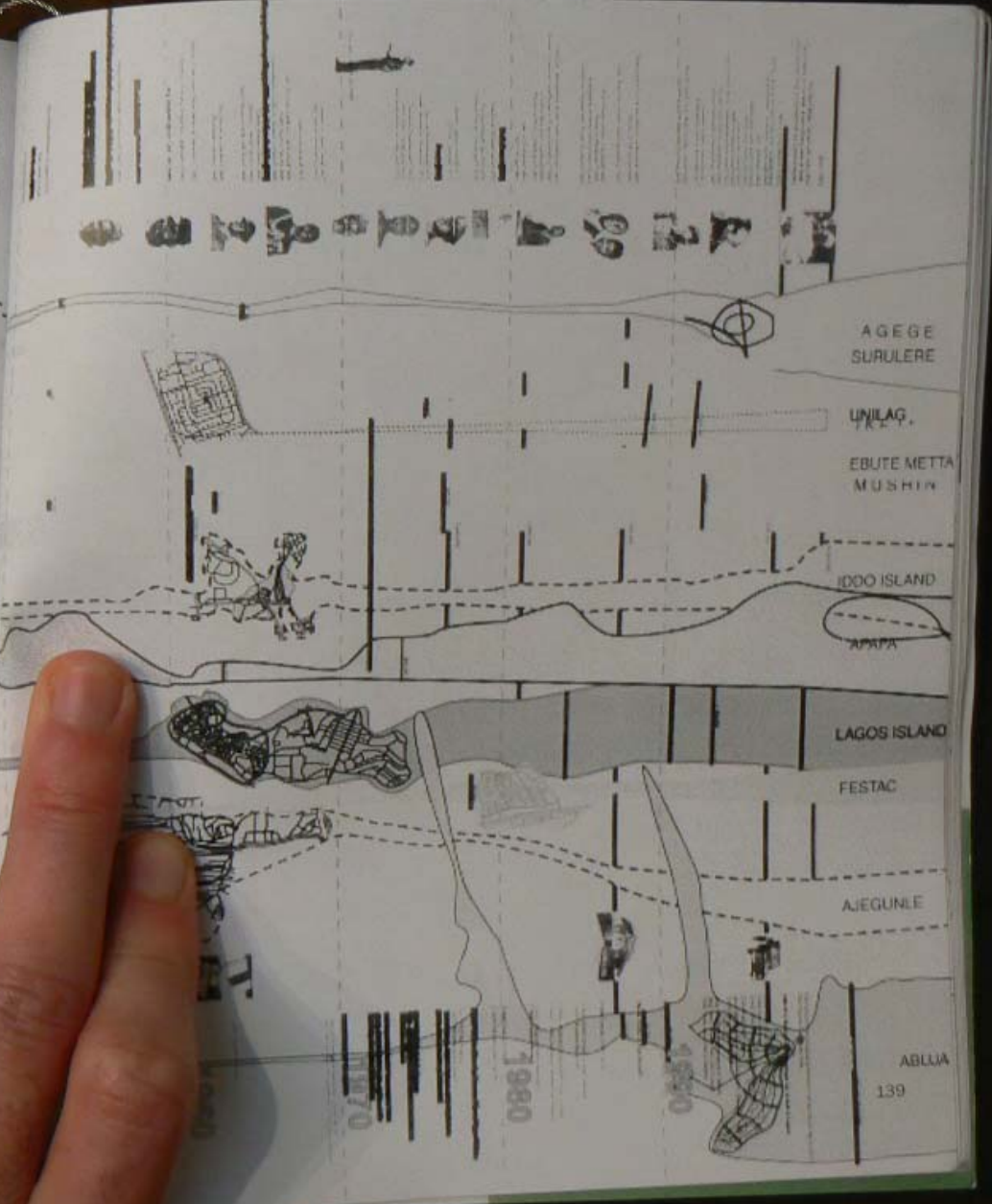
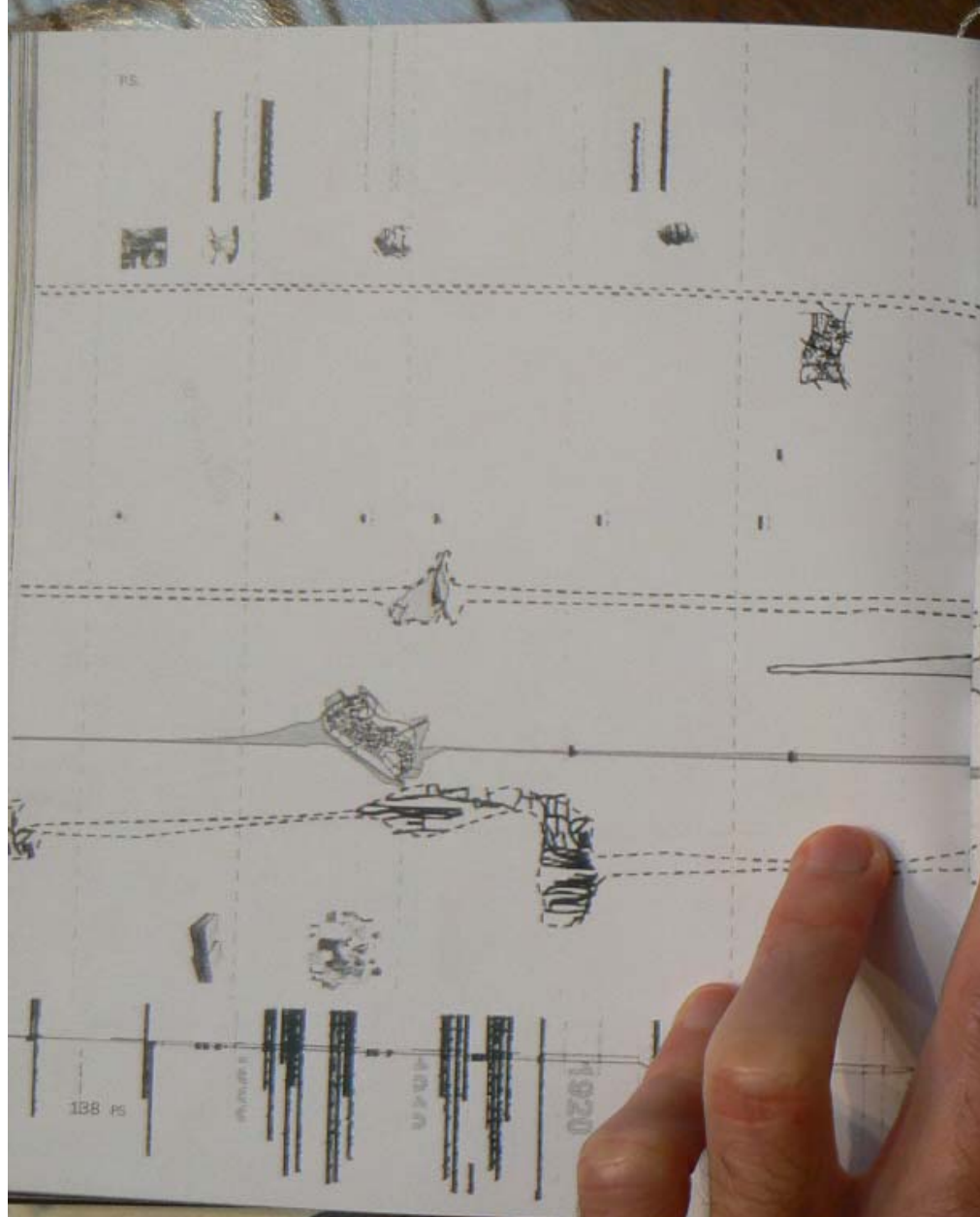
NO GO

of 1990 demonstrated, the gross scales of the 1970's road edifices often expanded the range of their functions. The hyperbolized length of the Third Axial allowed it to evade the scourge of the mainland and made it strategically important for interests wishing to control movement to and from the island.



Michael of Detroit

POST-SCRIPT

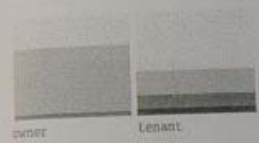






Lagos Crime Density: Reported District Crime as Percentage of Metropolitan Average Crime
 Source: "Lagos, Nigeria," in *Urban Crime: Global Trends and Patterns*, Ed. W. C. Brantley, 1999

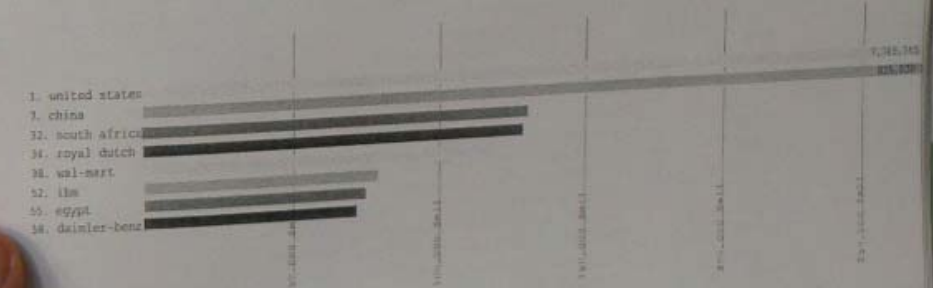
District	Percentage
Agege	1.99
Ikeja	1.2
Surulere	2.44
Mushin	19.96
Alimosho	1.29
Ibeju-Lekki	0.72
Badagry	1.26
Surulere	1.54
Ybeju	0.57
Ojo	8.98
Eti-Osa	1.39
Shomolu	0.5
Lagos Island	1.75
Ikeja	0.91
Surulere	4.2
Agege	1.77
P.M.A.	2.51
Mainland	2.44
Victoria Island	0.87
Badagry	1.1



professional, highly skilled worker, manager
 unskilled worker, trader, merchant, day labourer
 educator, military, religious specialist
 prostitute
 S. Barnes, 1986.



motor vehicles, ship building
 food, beverage
 printing, paper, textiles, cosmetics, plastics, drugs
 metal, concrete, glass, clay, wood, paints
 LISRC, 1989.



Source: Fortune 27 April 1990, World Bank, World Development Report 1990/1991.

Acronym

The prevalence of acronyms in Nigerian society is in part a product of competing and often redundant social organizations. In some ways it also evidences the tendency of militarized societies to streamline nomenclature in an effort to peddle confidence in ostensibly efficient organizations. The acronym is part of an emerging culture of social and political groups that take up the slack of more formal state institutions. It gives structure and alleged validity to guilds, unions, trade groups and professional organizations that provide grassroots governance.

ALDMAN	Association of Local Content Manufacturers of Nigeria
BYDI	Bring Your Own Infrastructure
ESC	Environmental Sanitation Corps
ESD	Environmental Sanitation Day
LCC	Lagos City Council
LCV	Low Cost Vehicles
LSRA	Lagos State Roads Authority
LSTFESSO	Task Force on Environmental Sanitation and Special Offences
LSTC	Lagos State Transport Corporation
LMTC	Lagos Municipal Transport Corporation (replaced by LSTC)
LAWMA	Lagos Waste Management Administration
LEDB	Lagos Executive Development Board
LIMGE	Lagos Island Millenium Group on the Environment
LSBA	Lagos State Bus Owners Association
LSDPC	Lagos State Development Property Corporation
NEPA	National Electric Power Authority
NITEL	Nigerian Telephones
NPA	Nigerian Ports Authority
NTDA	New Town Development Authority
NMTOU	Nigerian Motor Transport Operator's Union
NAMA	Nigerian Automobile Manufacturer's Association
NURTW	National Union of Road Transport Workers
NYSC	National Youth Service Corps
OWFC	Operation Weed for Flower Campaign
OSADAN	Organizing Secretary Advanced Drivers Association of Nigeria
OWF	Operation Weed for Flower campaign
R&PT&CSU	Railway and Ports and Clerical Staff Union
STFES	Special Task Force on Environmental Sanitation
TLDAN	Tipper/Lorry Drivers Association of Nigeria
WAI	War Against Indiscipline
WAF	War Against Filth
WDB	Waste Disposal Board
010	Zero for Breakfast, One for Lunch, Zero for Dinner

Slang

area boys	gang members, petty thieves, local criminals
bature	stranger
beke	white man
buka	shanty restaurant
don	'I don chop'
el hadjis	business men (visitor to Mecca) <i>with hijab</i>
go	'I go chop'
go slow	traffic jam
hear	understand, 'I hear Igbo'
kabukabu	private car used as a taxi
kiss	bump another car
machine	motorbike
moto	car
nawa	broken or an expression of dismay
NEPA	usually 'offed', so Never Electric Power Anytime
night fighters	women who have customers at night
NITEL	telephone company, also frequently 'offed'
o-ibo	white person <i>(white man)</i>
off/on	verbs 'make you off the engine'
oga	boss, including police men
quench	break down
sabi	know, 'I sabi am'
shucking	drinking <i>(shucking)</i>
tay	to stay <i>(stay)</i>
419	commercial fraud
dash	tip or small bribe
wrap	cannabis
chanwe chunke	cocaine
chib	cheat
119	emergency number
goof	marijuana
drink money	bribes
kola money	smaller bribes
colimentality	feigned europeanness
moving coffin	molue bus
kill	to get rid of trash

Abuja, NIGERIA, FCT Master-plan: Where are the Areas ?

The sophistication of the concept of a new Federal Capital leaves much to be desired. It is expected to be a far departure from the rowdy, almost impossible setting and often times wild tales about Lagos, the former capital city. And so, for those visiting Abuja, the new Federal Capital, the expectation of the serene city with everything in place becomes very high. But, unlike Lagos, and several other major cities in Nigeria, where the use of streets are prevalent for the identification of places, those who designed Abuja chose for it 'Areas' and 'Zones'.

The main city of Abuja is divided into two major districts: Garki and Wuse Districts. This is apart from major satellite towns such as Gwagwalada, Suleja, Kubwa, Nyanya and Karu, among others. However, out of omission or commission, those who designed Abuja adopted names for these places without due recourse to chronology of numbers. For instance, Garki District has upto 11, and for anyone visiting, it is expected (and only natural) that after Areas 1, 2, and 3, Area 4 should follow. Again, one could imagine that the omission is only even numbers, but a step further will reveal that after Areas 7 and 8, Area 9 is conspicuously absent.

With the absence of Areas 4, 5, 6, and 9, beating all arithmetical logic, the parameters used for the numbering of Garki districts can only be imagined. Perhaps, having realised the mistake inherent in the numbering of the 'Areas' in Garki, the designers of Abuja, apparently improved upon these shortcomings in Wuse, the second district. It has seven zones. Zone 1 begins from the terminal point of what is left of Area 10 and some part of the central area shortly after the new market, and terminates at the popular Berger Junction.

Efforts by Abuja Post to get an official explanation on these irregularities have not been successful, but unconfirmed sources said the Federal Capital Territory (FCT) masterplan the sequential numbering of the Areas in Garki. The source however hinted that distortion of the FCT masterplan right from the on set may have been responsible for the incoherence in numbering the Areas.

One little consolation is that in each cluster of streets in those Areas is normally a big signpost listing the streets that are included in the immediate neighbourhood. However, a former Administrator of the Federal Capital Territory, between 1980-1986 Chief Ignatius Nomhwange, explained that the design and execution of Abuja was completely different from the normal village pattern of settlement in Nigeria. He said that because various experts were involved in the planning of the city, different ideas from the numerous Japanese, British, French and German experts were borrowed and incorporated into the development of Abuja. According to him, the various experts advice necessitated the division of Abuja into eight districts of Garki one and two, Wuse one and two, Central Abuja, Maitama, Asokoro and the Power Zone.

"The essential thing," he pointed out, "is for one to identify which district you are living out of the eight districts. Chief Nomhwange maintained that from the district you move from top down to area and street levels in order to easily identify particular section of Abuja. "What appears to have set in a sort of confusion was the fact that Abuja was developed faster than envisaged thereby destroying the original concept of phase development," he explained.

Monday, 29 July 1999, *The Abuja Post*.

A college town, USA, Planning with a Purpose

Two decades or so ago, a group of Nigerian students arrived the United States in pursuit of higher education. At the airport to receive them were members of the Nigerian Students Association as well as members of the American Organisation whose interest was in the welfare of foreign students. The new arrivals got such a homely welcome, none of them ever suffered the so-called transplantation shock.

Each new arrival was attached to a well-established Nigerian student with whom he lived for at least a week before he moved to his own accommodation. He also had to himself a host family from the friendship association. These people saw to his adjustment problems and broke him gently into the American society. Familiarisation tours, religious fellowships, cultural events and dinners were freely employed to help the new comers feel at home. And when it came to moving out to paddle his own canoe, the new comers were amazed at the incredible order and planning that was so visible and tangible in their new location. Information was available on all sorts of available accommodation in and off campus. Rates, rents and bus routes were generously available for the accommodation hunter. In other words, there was an opportunity to exercise their right to choose, and they did.

The graduate student housing was exquisitely built and landscaped. Obviously self-contained, the flat had working faucets for both cold and hot water, a heater (for winter) and air-conditioner (for summer). All doors and windows were mosquito-proof, in a land whose mosquito population was negligible. There was a mail box for receiving and sending of mails, and the mail man was regular on his beat. Monday through Saturday. Electricity supply was not an issue because it was taken for granted. The most intriguing addition was a small socket on the wall, not for plugging an electric iron or water heater, but for plugging your telephone.

In this way, we see how the planning of societal environment can affect the order and stability of the individual in the society. This probably explains why behavioural psychologists like B.F. Skinner are betting their lives that human behaviour can largely be explained in terms of the influence of the environment. That may be the reason for such great respect for architects and builders in the civilised world. In no country of the world, except Nigeria, would a former governor of Lagos State who designed such architecture-unfriendly residential houses and chicken school buildings, ever be made minister of works and housing. May be that is why we still glory in loving prison cells as residential homes. Houses that constrict our freedom to be free. Houses that curtail our liberty by the sheer lack of vision of our planners and the tyranny of armed robbers which has imposed its own peculiar restrictions on windows and door architecture. Without water, light, proper sewage and ventilation, occupants of our houses can hardly experience the freedom that can lead to great thinking and visions. It is, therefore, important for government to know that the consideration for appointing functionaries to certain positions should include competence, foresight and sensitivity to the ripple effects of every decision. If other countries have already built the future into their houses in the past, it will be foolhardy for us in Nigeria to insist on projecting our dismal past into the future. Any government that will be sensitive enough to build the kind of houses and provide the kind of facilities that those Nigerian students benefited from decades ago, will have our votes to continue beyond the next millennium.

Friday, 13 March, 1997, *The Post Express*.

This is Lagos
where men hold their lives
in their pockets.

This is the city
where men make pockets leak
like the wicker.

This is Lagos
where empty pockets make men hollow

In the morning
men scrawl the face of fog
like wisps of ghosts
waking in rumbling
devotion to 'daily bread'
and dream that once
brimmed lofty visions
in the land planted with oil money

The burning embers of teh sun
kiss illusions out of dreams
leaving quivering coals of burning
fear in wandering sojourners.

Walking is the work of the walker
working is the walk of the worker.
Lagos is not for the faint hearted

Lagos is not for the walker
It is for men who run
and keep their pockets full.

That is Lagos
the sunlight ebb
of dawn's tide.

The green smell
of newly mown lawn
the brown smell
of rain drenched earth.

That is Lagos
where men twinkle
in the twilight dazzle of stars

That is Lagos
where sleeky limousines
burnish the royal
pathways to paradise

Oh that is Lagos
where dreams are hatched
and rosy cheeks tended
and pot bellies pampered.

The soothing hum of the AC
caress the chicks of dreams
sitting radiant flames of desire
in the passion pores of trundling
millionairas.

That is Lagos
where we only point

our fingers.

Franklyn Ikhinwin,
*Voices from the Fringe. An ANA Anthology
of New Nigerian Poetry*, ed. Harry Garuba
(Lagos, The Guardian Press, 1988).

Oshodi, LAGOS, 20 feared dead as molue, tanker crash in Lagos

With at least 20 persons feared dead, Lagos experienced yesterday its first major automobile crash this year and among the most fatal in record.

The accident involved an urban transit bus, known as molue, and a fuel tanker belonging to Mobil Oil Producing Nigeria Unlimited, on the ever-busy Western Avenue, Ojuelegba in Surulere, Lagos mainland.

About 25 persons, including an eight-year-old boy on the ill-fated bus heading to Mushin from Ijora, were reckoned to have survived the tragedy which occurred at about 3 p.m.

The tanker, marked XA 325 KTN, was reported to be coming from Oshodi when its brakes failed on the bridge linking Ojuelegba to Jibowu, Ikorodu Road forcing the vehicle to skid over to the other wing of the eight-lane road, and into the approaching molue marked XA 370 AGL conveying passengers to Mushin from Ijora. The tanker reportedly collided with the transit bus right in front of Abati Barracks, crushing a part of its concrete fence.

What could have been an inferno from the impact with the fuel tanker was immediately prevented by fire fighting men from Reverend Nwake Barracks.

Scores of sympathisers openly wept and shuddered as soldiers, joined by traffic wardens, laboured to remove charred bodies of the victims; while others assisted injured persons to hospitals. Some of the injured persons were said to have been taken to the nearby Lagos University Teaching Hospital (LUTH).

Foodstuffs such as fresh tomatoes, pepper, fishes, and hide (ponmo) were strewn over the accident scene where soldiers kept viewers at bay.

About 15 metre-long section of the barracks, concrete fence was damaged as the tanker rammed the transit bus against the wall.

Some of the dead were conveyed to morgues by officials of the Federal Road Safety Commission (FRSC) who reportedly arrived at the scene minutes after the incident.

For more than four hours, traffic on the ever-busy Western Avenue was halted, while a combined team of policemen, soldiers, FRSC officials and fire fighters laboured to control the situation.

Although the driver of the tanker reportedly survived the accident, he sustained severe injuries.

As at press time, the specific identity of the victims were yet to be known. But it was learnt that they were mainly petty traders.

Thursday, 20 January 2000. *The Guardian*