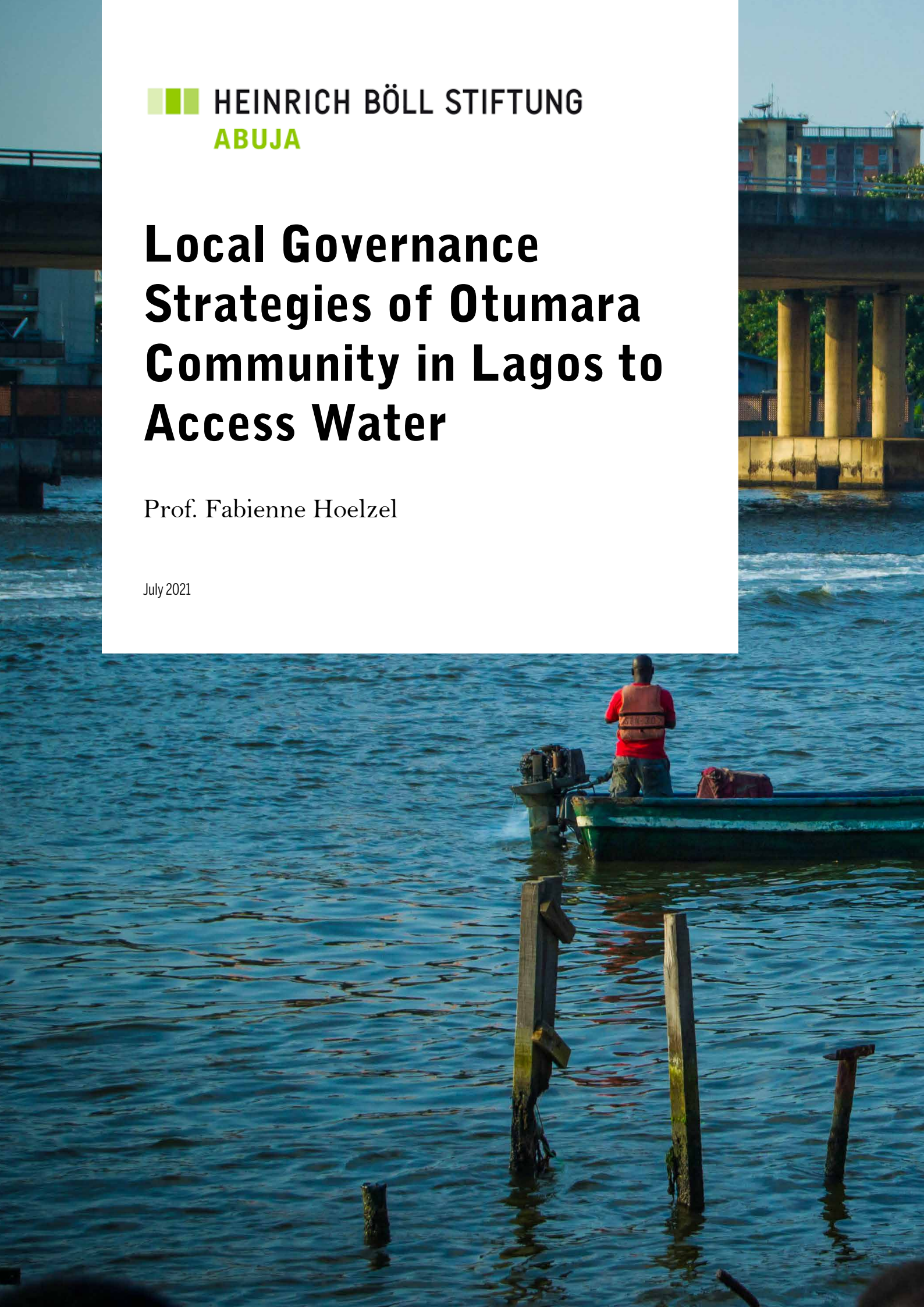


Local Governance Strategies of Otumara Community in Lagos to Access Water

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Acronyms

APC	All Progressives Congress
CDA	Community Development Association
Federation	Nigerian Slum/Informal Settlement Federation
JEI	Justice & Empowerment Initiatives
LASG	Lagos State government
Lasura	Lagos State Urban Renewal Agency
LWC	Lagos Water Corporation
PDP	Peoples Democratic Party

Executive Summary

This report analyses the provision of urban services in the low-income community of Otumara, Lagos, with a focus on water supply, examining the relevant actors, actor constellations and modes of interaction. Otumara basically runs without any government support, representing a particularly suitable case to study the realities of urban governance in Lagos. The pervasive mode of survival here is informality - with processes happening outside government tiers and official structures whilst being blended with the pre-colonial traditional ruling system of Baales and Baloguns. The report suggests strengthening the governance structure at the micro-level, the community, as this seems to be the only level currently where interventions can yield results. The role of government tiers, on the contrary, needs to be reconsidered given their weakness and limited reach. The report supports a form of local urban governance, in which governments play a certain role, but certainly not the only or even the major role.

Urban Governance in Lagos State

All citizens of Lagos, poor and rich, join in the constant struggle of maintaining and operating their everyday life infrastructure, given the fact that urban services like water, electricity or waste are only erratically available or constantly faulty. This led, among others, to a city driven by people who have developed enormous capacities to provide urban services (Hoelzel, 2018) and which is – to a large extent - produced and operated informally. . Most Lagosians are poor or very poor. Even if government would provide the urban services, most people could not pay for them. Here, Lagos is no exception to other cities in sub-Saharan Africa and the global South where everyday life is constructed at a micro-scale, and not through normative planning approaches and master plans.

Governance is generally understood, at least in the global North, as a process that moves from state-centric to society-centric, leading to collaborative decision-making processes in urban planning. Collaborative approaches require collective goals. In a context like Lagos, the relationship between the government and its citizens is often characterized by serious disagreement (Hoelzel, 2018) or “*conflicting rationalities*” (Watson, 2009). Technical and managerial efforts undertaken by government are often imported and collide with the complex and messy reality on the ground, where human beings simply try to survive and thrive. Even though the efforts of the informal sector more or less succeed, the Lagos state government tries to impose a technical-instrumental approach that does not acknowledge these small-scale and decentralized responses.

Urban futures in Lagos and beyond in the sub-Saharan region can only take off once these micro-level processes are understood and constitute the basis for further development efforts. It is true that action at that level is very limited; nevertheless, there needs to be a deep understanding of how those processes could benefit the overall society. Lagos functions relatively well at the community level because people – individuals and groups of all kinds in changing constellations – manage to implement small-scale decentralized infrastructures as well as small-scale decentralized urban services. People show enormous inventiveness and cleverness in doing so. While the purpose – for instance, providing water for cooking – may be achieved, it remains a very local and very hand-to-mouth approach. Still, even when thinking of scaling-up or creating lasting and reliable improvements in daily life, one has to start at the level of communities. They have gained enormous abilities to respond to their own daily needs which they implement,

operate and maintain under very harsh circumstances, including climate, vandalism and forced evictions, just to name a few. As precarious and poor these solutions might be, they succeed in a certain way, contrary to the actions of the government, which are often quite ineffectual both socially and technically (Hoelzel, 2018).

The Case of the Otumara Community

Selection of case-study community

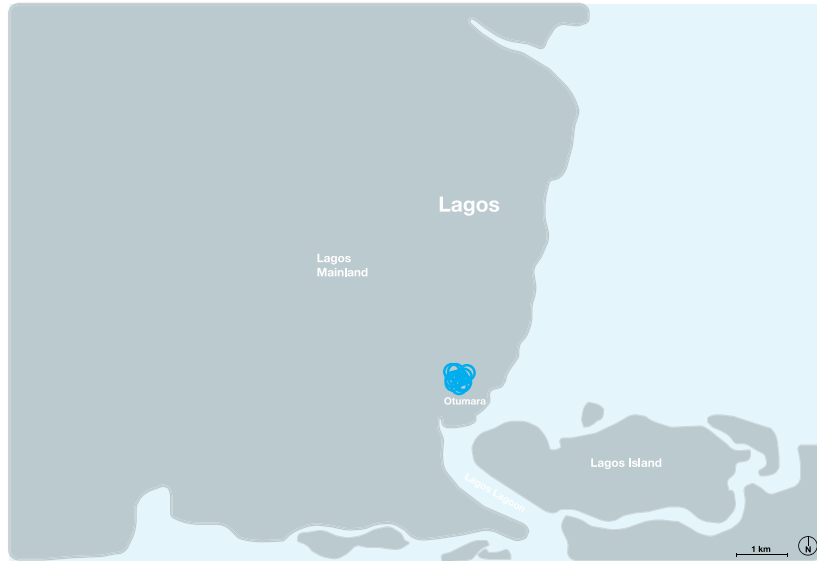
The Otumara community in Ebute-Metta, Lagos Mainland Local Government Area in Lagos State is the case-study community for the present report. A larger DAAD-funded field research was undertaken in August and September 2019 in four low-income communities in Lagos State as part of the author's doctoral thesis. It was based on the assumption that state and local government tiers do play a role in water provision, with regard to the infrastructure as such and related services.

Based on rough preliminary investigations, four communities were selected for in-depth research, each representing a different structure for water provision, as set out in the table below.

	1	2	3	4
Governance structure for water provision	Community-driven	NGO-driven	State or local government-driven	International organization-driven
Description	Community members initiate and render urban services; government tiers have a subordinate role	Local or regional NGO initiates and renders urban services; community members play an active role; government tiers have a subordinate role	State or local government authorities initiate and render urban services; community members play an active role; possibly other actors as well	International organization initiates and renders urban service; community members play an active role; state actors play an active role; possibly other actors as well
Community selected for in-depth field research	Otumara	Orisunmibare	Amukoko	Mafowoku

Criteria for Community Selection Before the Start of Field Research in August/September 2019

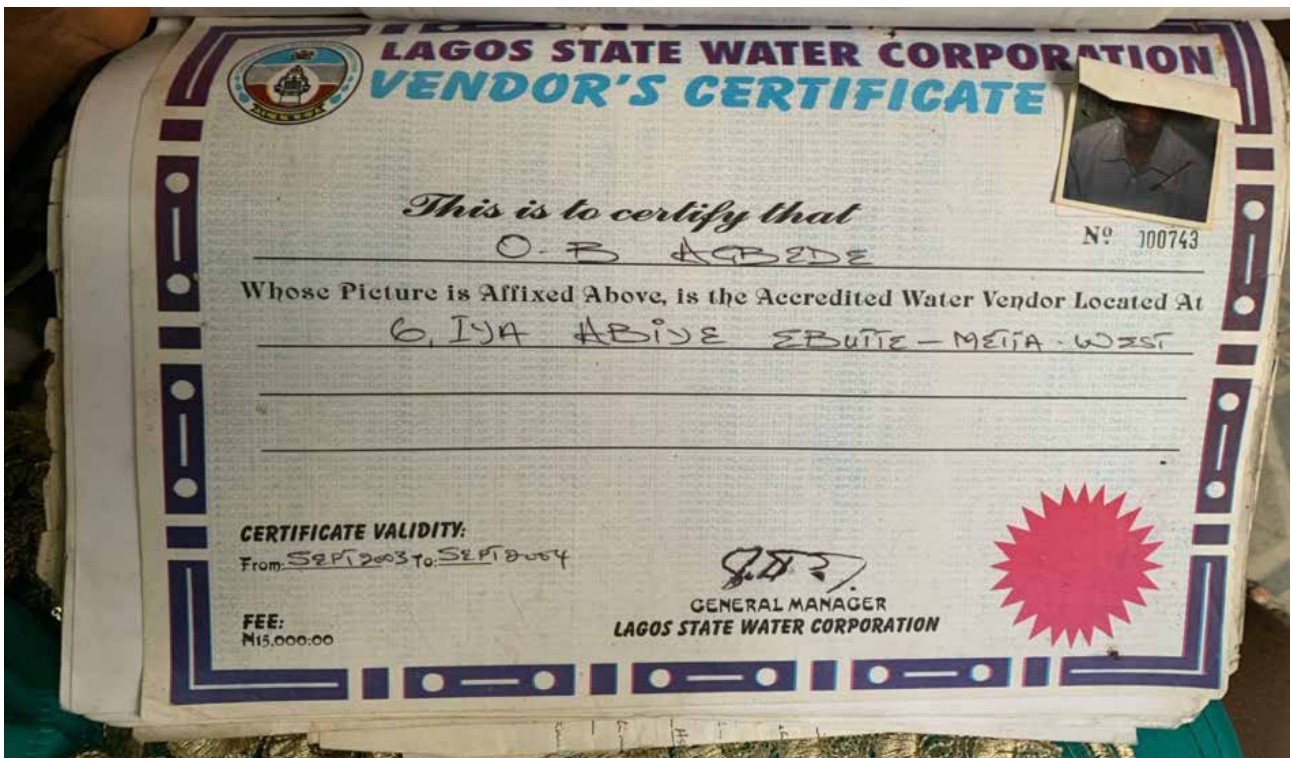
The assessment of the in-depth field research clearly showed that, to a large extent, all four communities provide their own water supply (infrastructure and services) in relatively complex actor-networks.



Location of Otumara community

Source: Author's own drawing, based on Google Earth, 2019

The Otumara community was consequently selected for this comparative research on community water provision with Kano and Onitsha. Preliminary investigation suggested that the community is internally well organized, based on strong informal structures and influential community leaders as well as community organizations that are able to relate with each other and with official authorities. Furthermore, some residents (in their function as water vendors) were among the founders of the erstwhile Water Vendors Association stretching across several communities, an informal and loose coalition of residents authorized by the Lagos Water Corporation (LWC) to sell water. In the early 2000 years, their water reservoirs were officially connected to the LWC main pipe. The association stopped functioning in 2010.



Certificate issued by LWC in 2004 (Photograph: taken by author during field research in August/September 2019)

Their decision to voluntarily terminate all business relations with LWC in 2010 after officials destroyed water pipes in reaction to residents' and water vendors' unpaid bills¹ is another reason for choosing Otumara as the case study community. The community members deliberately decided here to play an active role despite their high vulnerability and precariousness.

There is general recognition among Southern scholars and scholars working in the global South that, in world regions like sub-Saharan Africa where people are exposed to conditions of (extreme) vulnerability, residents develop resourceful responses (Harrison, 2006). Otumara community underlines this assumption, especially with their strong will to confront the Lagos state government, which comes from a certain confidence in their strength (as precarious it might seem). Nonetheless, the community finds itself caught up in differences and conflicts; this applies to both the leaders and the residents, male and female. This might sound contradictory – and it is – but the community is also divided into interest groups that dominate one another.

This report suggests that any effort to improve urban service delivery in Lagos should be sensitive to the realities and processes on the ground. The field research shows that communities are in effect responsible for their own water provision and are able to do so. This should also be the basis for any further planning approach.

Methodology in field research

The field research in the Otumara community was conducted during August and September 2019. The applied methods included:

- mapping;
- one-to-one open-ended field interviews with “*key people*” and “*more people*”, based on the knowledge and experience of the interviewee:
 - residents;
 - water vendors (who are also residents);
 - representatives of community development associations (CDAs);
 - two Baales (traditional leaders);
 - Baloguns (appointed by the Baales);
- group interviews and focus-group discussions with persons of similar backgrounds or experience to discuss a specific topic of water supply in daily experience:
 - water vendors;
 - women, both as water vendors and as bearing primary responsibility for water in the household;
- expert interviews with individuals, based on their knowledge and official functions and positions:
 - state and local government representatives;

¹ Findings of field research, 2019 (interview w/Mr Agbede, 13 August; focus group discussion w/water vendors, 11 September; several interviews w/residents in the community throughout August and September)

- NGO representatives; and
- planning professionals.

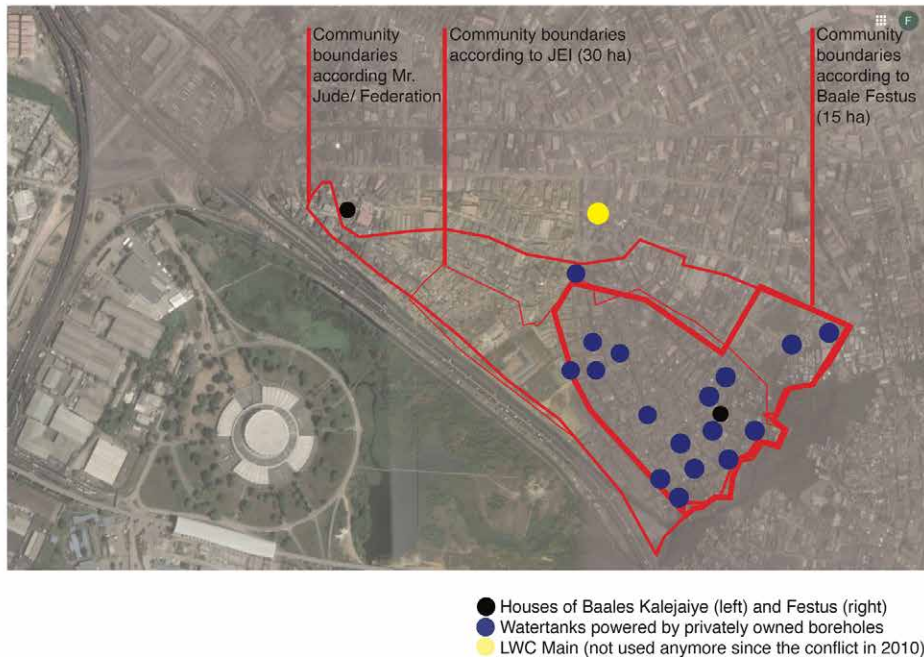
Since there is no official or recorded planning material available at all, mapping via GPS coordinates and interviews was the best methodology to understand the community's:

- boundaries;
- water supply;
- water infrastructure;
- water quality;
- water use.



Focus group discussion (left); Field interview (right, including mapping of water infrastructure, provided by the water vendor, seen at the left corner of image) (Photo credit: author)

Otumara



Community boundaries and water infrastructure in Otumara

Founding history, community leaders and land ownership

The founding history and current land ownership status of Otumara is unclear in that these so-called “slum” or low-income areas are all contested, with several authorities and families claiming ownership. The name Otumara comes from Otu-mi-lara, meaning “a place of comfort and peace” in the Ilaje dialect. The land ownership structure of Otumara is unresolved, and there was one forced eviction, when Governor Babatunde Fashola invoked the Land Use Act to construct a canal in 2012. There are currently two traditional community leaders (Baales) in power, though they have not yet been confirmed by local and state government and are hence not yet on the government payroll:

- Baale Kalajaiye is seen as more influential as he has funds to use for community infrastructures, such as the recently built healthcare centre (2019) and a new public toilet facility (2018). The origin of his funds is unclear. Apparently, according to several community sources, he is “on good (informal) terms” with the local government and, as such, accessed public funds unofficially which he used for those projects. Baale Kalajaiye is Baale by appointment, having been appointed in 2016 by the head of the long-established Otto family, King Otto.
- Baale Festus, crowned in 2001, is Baale by heritage. According to his own accounts, he inherited his position from his father, who founded the community in 1932. He has been accused of not always treating the community people with respect, which led King Otto to appoint Baale Kalajaiye. When King Otto died in 2016, the issue of the two rivalling Baales as well as their land disputes were left unresolved. Baale Festus and the Otto family are currently in court, but according to community members organised by two NGOs - the

Nigerian Slum/Informal Settlement Federation (the Federation) and Justice & Empowerment Initiatives (JEI) – it is a “*feigned*” court case. They discovered that Baale Festus and the Otto family may have cut a deal so that the court would confirm the Otto family as owners of the land, while Baale Festus would, informally, receive his own share of land in return. The case is still in court and the outcome is uncertain.

However, according to officials from the Lagos State Urban Renewal Agency (Lasura), which falls under the Ministry of Physical Planning and Urban Development, the land belongs to the federal government of Nigeria. They acquired it already in 1967, prior to the creation of Lagos State, and the father of Baale Kalejaiye received by then compensation as he was the recognized owner of the land by the government.

People have continued to settle in Otumara and the community currently includes about 2,500 households and between 25,000 and 50,000 residents. More precise numbers are not available, due in part to the fact that there are more tenants than landlords.

In terms of ethnic groups, the community is diverse. Yoruba, Igbo and Hausa people share the neighbourhood. Originally, the Yorubas were in the majority; today, the majority are Igbo. Igbo people traditionally vote for the opposition Peoples Democratic Party (PDP), which causes a problem for the Baales, as they serve under an All Progressives Congress (APC) local and state government. The Hausa people are mostly engaged in the water-pusher sector.

Actors and their relations

Otumara is ruled by a complex, largely hidden network of informal rules, rationalities and desires. The community does live quite well with the two rival Baales, who have somewhat subdivided their areas of influence, and, more importantly, residents are quite able to assert themselves, thanks to their own organization in, for instance, the Federation and, more informally, as water vendors (formerly the Water Vendor Association). Another interesting detail is that Baale Festus is a member of the Federation.

The governance structures within the community (“*civil society*”) and outside (“*public sector/state*”, “*private sector*”) were understudied at the example of water provision. Water for drinking, cooking, bathing, and washing is vital. People fetch their water from different sources for different uses (see below). The table below underlines the strong position of the water vendors, who are usually residents of Otumara and landlords, as they provide most of the water in the community.

Purpose	Source	Quality	Providers
Drinking	Water sachets	Good	Private sector actors, daily delivery (truck), distribution mostly via small shops in the community
Cooking	Boreholes outside the community, mostly drilled around Brickfield Road	Relatively good	Private water vendors, usually residents of Otumara, usually landlords
Bathing	Boreholes outside or inside the community	Moderately satisfactory	Private water vendors, usually residents of Otumara, usually landlords
Washing	Boreholes inside the community	Moderately satisfactory	Private water vendors, usually residents of Otumara, usually landlords; Water pushers

Overview of water quality in Otumara according to purpose, source and related actors

Source: Field research, 2019

In order to analyse the relationships between stakeholders, the insights of Table 2 were mapped into Figure 5. The field research revealed that the water vendors have enormous power. Note that they are marked with a “V”, indicating their capacity to veto or otherwise hinder water-provision projects.



Stakeholder mapping for water provision

The two Baales are not involved in water provision like in other communities, where the Baales often provide water for free at their houses, relieving a bit the distress of the community. Both tried to contribute: Baale Festus has two boreholes in the courtyard of his house, one installed by himself and one donated by a politician, but they are both not functioning. Baale Kalajaiye tried to supply the community with free water, in cooperation with the government, but failed due to the strong position and the resistance of the water vendors. This was confirmed by the water vendors.

Various sources holding different positions within the community confirmed a lack of solidarity among the community residents. The reasons given were lack of time for pursuing common goals and the prevalence of poverty. According to the field research, people are too busy with their own struggle for survival to engage in larger community goals. Community representatives lamented the difficulty of organizing people, for instance, against the dominance of the water vendors. They claimed that it would be the task of a sincere, honest and straightforward Baale to mobilize the people. This opinion was equally shared by Lasura officials.

The water pushers, usually young boys from the Hausa communities, are important actors on the ground. Their position is ambiguous. On the one hand, they are definitely among the key players in water provision. Even though the water they deliver is only usable for washing, people very much appreciate that they deliver water to the doorstep, especially given the fact that most parts of Otumara do not have tarred roads. On the other hand, their relation to the resident water vendors is naturally tense, as they compete for customers. The field research also revealed that they are seen as a necessary or “welcome” evil, but they are clearly not respected as persons.



The water pushers, usually young boys from the Hausa communities, are definitely among the key players in water provision

Hausa water pushers in Otumara (Photo credit: author)

Unlike a Baale, who receives his position by appointment or inheritance, Community Development Associations (CDAs) are community organizations that elect their own leaders. Any resident may become a CDA member and any member may be elected to a position. CDAs hear about needs and problems, such as broken or dysfunctional infrastructure, and report these to the local government to take action. In Otumara, there is a CDA in place but it is accused of inefficiency and corruption. According to the residents, it is not fulfilling its duties.

To better understand the actors and their relations in water provision within the Otumara community, I divide the actors into “*key people*” and “*more people*”, following the Reflecting on Peace Practice (RPP) framework for evaluation and intervention strategies (CDA, 2009). “*Key people*” are decision-makers and leaders, with or without formal positions. “*More people*” are ordinary members of the group or community affected. I also subdivide the “*key people*” into “*effective*” and “*not effective*”. RPP stresses that the involvement of both “*more people*” and “*key people*” is necessary to achieve either individual/personal or socio-political change as a benchmark for success in an intervention project. In other words, everybody needs to be carried along to achieve a lasting structural change, which in this case is a functioning water supply system that is reliable in the long run.

Key people: Effective	Key people: Not effective	More people	External
Water vendors w/boreholes inside community (<i>always landlords, male or female</i>)	Baale Kalajaiye	Women (<i>responsible in the families to fetch the water</i>)	JEI (<i>active since 2017</i>)
Water pushers (<i>always tenants and migrant workers from the north/Hausa tribe</i>)	Baale Festus	Tenants (<i>male and female</i>)	Spaces for Change (<i>left in 2017</i>)
	Representatives of Landlord Association		The Federation (<i>active since 2017</i>)
	Representatives of CDAs		

Stakeholders in water provision in the Otumara community (“civil society”)

Source: Field research, 2019

The above table shows that a number of key people and organizations, including the Baales, the landlord association and the CDAs, are not effective in managing water supply within the community. In Otumara, power lies with the water vendors who are, without exception, landowners.

The role of Lagos Water Corporation

Officially, the Lagos Water Corporation (LWC) is in charge of the water supply. Lagos State as a whole – despite a wealth of water resources – is facing a major water crisis, like many other African cities (Chiori, 2018).

Potable water supply in Lagos began in 1910, with the construction of the Iju Waterworks to serve Lagos Island. In 1915, it was upgraded to serve Apapa and Ebute-Metta. Further expansion led to coverage of Ikeja, Ikorodu Road via Iddo and eastern Lagos State. In 1977, the Isashi waterworks were commissioned to serve Isashi and Satellite Town to Festac Town. In 1982, the Iju Waterworks was modernized to boost the pressure in the existing mains and ten additional mini-waterworks were built. In 1992, in the Adiyani Phase 1 of the Lagos Water Supply Expansion Project, additional main, secondary and tertiary mains were constructed, and 88,200 properties were connected to the water supply systems (Lagos Water Corporation, n.d.).

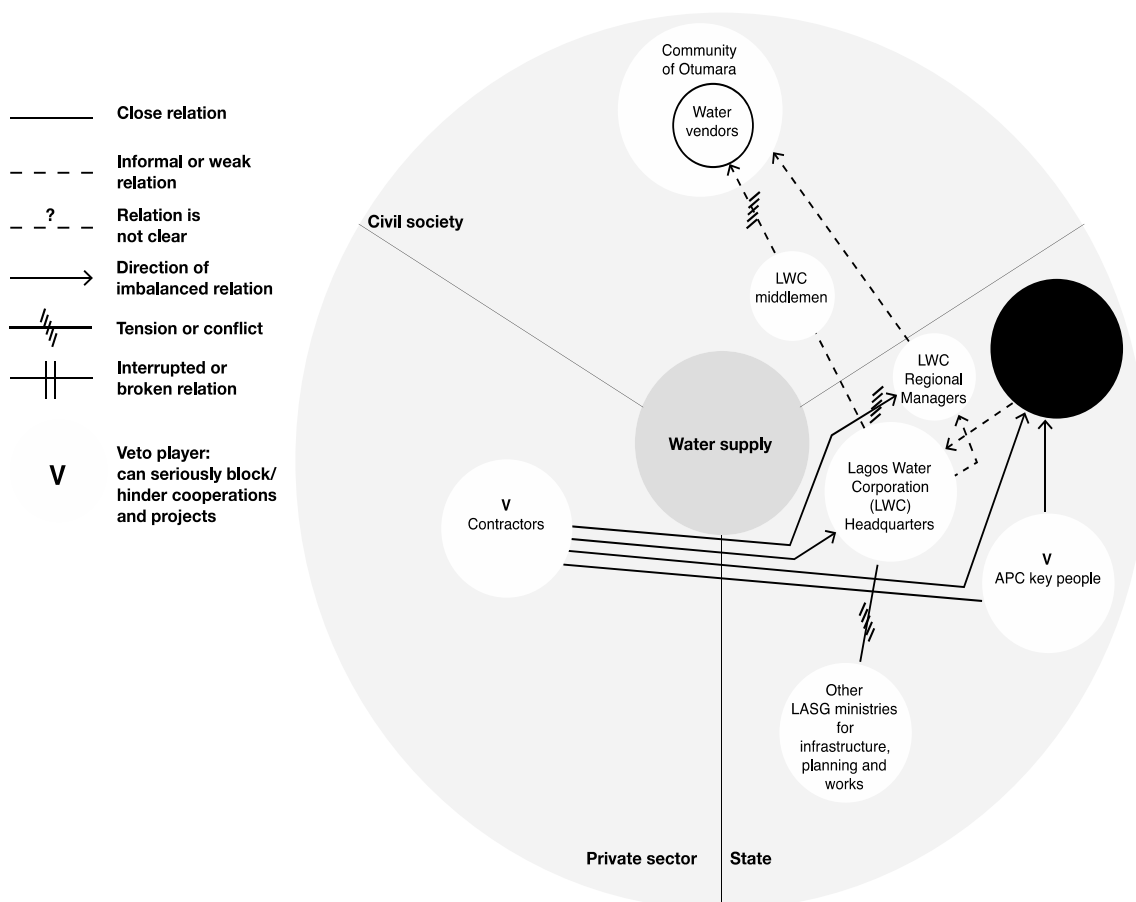
The Lagos Water Supply Master Plan was supposed to be updated in late 2019, but Covid19 pandemic likely interfered with the implementation. However, from the information gathered during the field research, one can assume that the updated version would not differ a lot from the current plan in place.

The following challenges for public water supply can be identified in Otumara:

1. *Intergovernmental.* LWC must compete with other ministries and departments for funding. Also, insufficient information and exchange between the ministries means that upcoming or pending projects are not coordinated. For example, new or existing water infrastructure is often destroyed when roads or drainages are repaired or constructed.
2. *Urbanization.* The already insufficient and faulty water infrastructure cannot keep up with the rapid growth of the population in Otumara and Lagos in general.
3. *Developmental model.* Governor Fashola's administration tried to implement a public-private partnership approach to attract foreign direct investment through large-scale infrastructure projects (Hoelzel, 2018). This mostly failed due to the lack of participation of residents during planning stage and lack of maintenance culture. Despite heavy investments, loans and grants from the World Bank in recent decades, West African economies primarily develop from the informal fringe (Chenal, 2014: 9). So far, the investments through loans and grants have not yet offered solutions to relatively simple problems, such as the affordable and sustainable provision of clean drinking water (Günther, 2016). And yet, despite these failings, international organisations and international development cooperation seemingly continue to make attempts to implement "*classic developmentalism*" with heavy donor involvement in infrastructure provision.
4. *Revenue.* Unpaid bills, especially in the poorer neighbourhoods, are a major challenge. LWS usually bills customers a flat rate, no matter how much water is being consumed or whether water is provided by the public means at all. The latter reinforces an unwillingness to pay the bills. As people cannot afford or are unwilling to pay for the service, LWC stops the supply or, worse, willingly destroys the pipes in the communities.
5. *Informal water vendors.* People must then purchase water from informal water vendors who sometimes illegally tap into LWC pipes.
6. *Corruption.* The most difficult aspect to analyse is corruption and nepotism. According to LWC officials, pro-forma contracts are used to commission repairs for broken or faulty mini-waterworks and other infrastructure. The contracts are paid but the work remains undone and the existing infrastructure continues to decay.

To conclude, LWC is largely not able to meet its obligations. The Lagos Water Supply Master Plan focuses mostly on the quantity of water supply, water demand and the demand gap. There is little or no attention to issues of maintenance, supply and distribution or to address customers' unwillingness or inability to pay.

**Actor Mapping
Water Supply in Lagos State**



The role of women in the supply and purchase of water

The study finds that women play two major roles in the supply, distribution, and organization of water in Otumara. First, they have to ensure water supply in the household. This is stressful as water scarcity is extreme. The water taken from boreholes located within the community is of bad quality and requires chemical treatment; while better quality water can be sourced from boreholes outside of the community (see mapped water sources in Figure 1). In both cases, boreholes only function if there is electricity. Constant blackouts make the use of generators necessary, which in return increases the price of the water. Selling price equally rises for high quality water and for water that is available at close proximity. To balance the different costs and purposes, women must fetch water from four different sources (see Tables 2 and 4), creating additional stress for the women.

Second, a significant number of women are active in the water business. There are about 12 active water vendors in Otumara. More than half of the tanks (and the related boreholes) are possessed by women who, then, are automatically landlords. Usually, the landlords are important decision-makers in all kinds of community affairs, and especially when it comes to negotiating with the government. The division line of the powerful and powerless in low-income communities usually runs between landowners and tenants.

The female water vendors understand that most tenants live on very low daily incomes and they allow community women who are their regular customers to pay in instalments, even when the debt has already grown significantly. However, considering that the investment cost of a functioning borehole is at least N500,000. they seem torn between the need to cover their own investment and maintenance costs and their solidarity for others.

Source	Price (approx.)
Inside the community (price increases when generator used for power)	N50 per large bowl
Hausa water pushers	N20–30 per can
Outside the community, Brickfield Road (drinking, cooking quality)	N20 per bowl

Overview of prices for borehole water

Source: Field research, 2019

Comparison of formal and informal stakeholders in the water supply

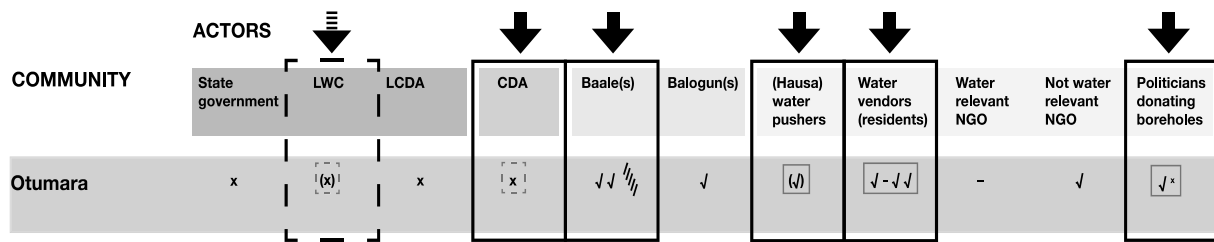
The above mentioned conflicts with LWC in 2010 led to the community’s subsequent decision to stop any cooperation with the government-owned corporation. Figure 8 shows that the formal state actors are not significantly involved or effective in the water supply. There is still an existing water main in Brickfield Road, but it has not been in operation since 2010. However, some of the interviewed residents and water vendors said that some pipes are still (or again) in use and currently three of the landlords receive water from LWC. They had applied to the head office of LWC and after making the required payment, LWC connected the pipes to the principal main, from there, the landlords had to organise and pay for their own connection to their house. They complained that this does not go without having to bribe officers and that LWC immediately stops delivery if bills are not paid - even though LWC often does not supply water, sometimes for more than three months. LWC seems to blame this non-supply to people tapping water illegally (not certified water vendors) or even packaging the water from the mains for sale; although such a case could not be identified in Otumara.

In summary, the water supply in Otumara is basically run by the private water vendors. They have high level of expertise in providing the respective infrastructure, which includes drilling of boreholes and laying of pipes several hundred metres into the community. This infrastructure needs to be financed, maintained and protected against vandalism and vehicles. Selling the water only partly redeems the high investments costs.

LWC Lagos Water Corporation
 LCDA Local Council Development Area
 CDA Community Development Association

Formal actors Actors at intersection Traditional actors Informal actors

———— Key actors in water supply – effective
 - - - - Key actors in water supply – ineffective



- N/A
- x In place but not effective
- (x) In place, hardly effective
- √x In place, out of order
- (√) OK, partly w/ restrictions
- (√√) Good to very good, partly w/ restrictions
- √ OK
- √√ Good to very good
- √√√ Serious tension

Summary of water supply:
 - On technical scale: moderately good
 - On governance level: poor

Comparison of formal and informal actors and their effectiveness in water supply (Source: Field research, 2019)

Conflicts between and within governance systems

The Otumara community’s decision to implement their own water system, independent of all government tiers, makes this a particularly interesting case study to investigate the effectiveness of informal and/or traditional ruling systems.

As described above, the decision followed a severe conflict over unpaid bills and the subsequent destruction of water pipes by LWC officers. The community does not dispute these facts. However, it is unclear according to the community whether the LWC officers destroyed the pipes in their official function or in their personal capacity because the community refused to pay the bribes they demanded.

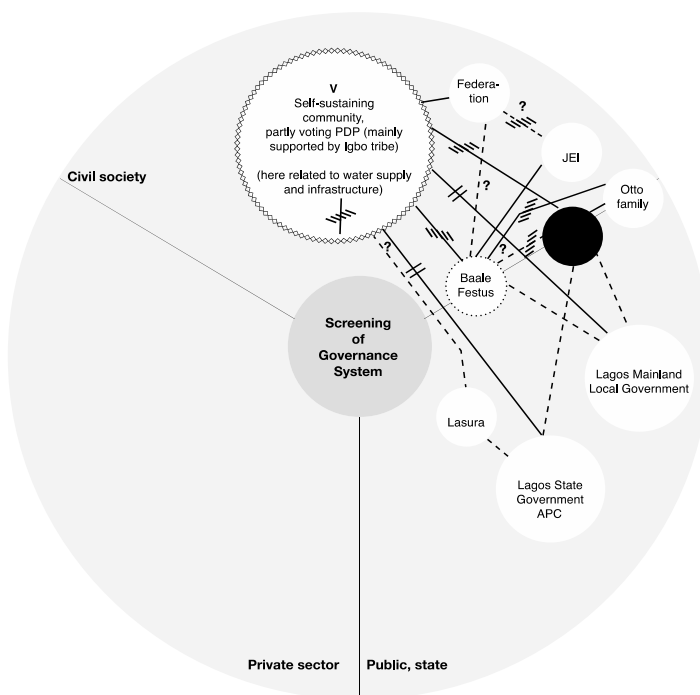
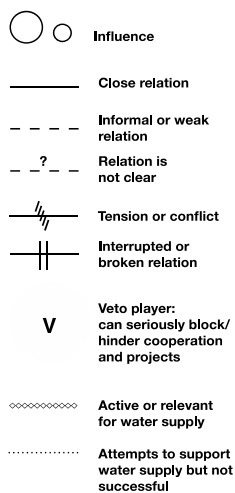
As of the August 2019 field research, the community has developed a remarkable capacity and expertise in providing vital infrastructure and services. The investment and maintenance costs for the infrastructure are significant, leading to relatively expensive water prices, according to the women. Unlike the other communities in the larger study, there is no free water available in Otumara. Baales usually offer free water at their houses, but the boreholes of Baale Festus do not function and Baale Kalejaiye’s attempts failed completely, due to the resistance of the powerful water vendors who fight against losing their business.

These high costs make the women complain about the lack of solidarity for investing in shared public goods, and of the selfishness of their fellow community members who “rather feed themselves” than engaging in joint or overarching projects. One of the reasons seems to be the fact that the majority of residents are tenants, originating from other states, who are not willing to invest in shared public goods as they say they will go back to their villages at some point.

In interviews, key stakeholders and ordinary residents expressed their conviction that the local government authorities neglect their needs because the majority of the community votes for the opposition party PDP. The residents are convinced that the ruling APC only channels funds into well-inclined communities. Different sources equally describe the CDA as corrupt, since its elected members collaborate with the APC dominated local government instead of representing the interests of the community.

The above comparison between formal and informal actors attempts a more general analysis of the relations between the actors. It shows that all of the key stakeholders and stakeholder groups are either in tension with one another or have completely stopped cooperating. Collaboration between civil society (the Otumara community) and the state (state and local government tiers) does not exist. Only the two Baales have, by virtue of their function, contact with the local government. Seen from outside, the community is quite successful in its fragile and voluntary self-supply, which is even more astonishing considering that the official actors mandated to link them with government, the CDA (extended arm of local governments) and the two Baales, are seemingly limited in their influence. On the other hand, both Baales play some sort of double game, whilst being in court against each other over land issues in which they have a personal interest.

Stakeholder Mapping
Otumara
Conflict Between Traditional and
Modern/Constitutional Governance Systems



Conflict Between Traditional and Modern/Constitutional Governance Systems in the Otumara community (Source: Field research, 2019)

Discussion

The community seems to be quite efficient and able to join forces when there is a threat from outside (LWC in 2010) or from above (aborted forced eviction by Lagos state government of Otumara Market 2 for a proposed secondary school).

When it comes to joining forces to build free and shared public goods – water infrastructure and supply, in this case – the solidarity vanishes. Without exception, people report that “greedy” and “selfish” attitudes would prevent a solidary approach. However, the current “radical market-liberal” approach, in which a handful of private water vendors control the water supply and dictate the prices, seems to guarantee the badly needed access to water.

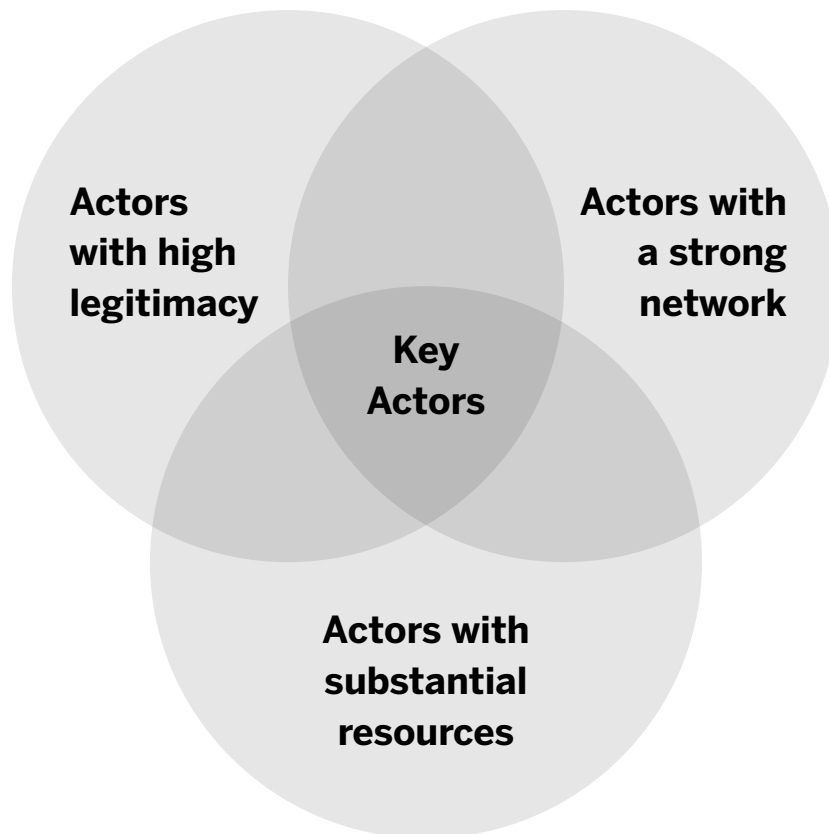
There are at least three overlapping and/or intentionally grown conflicts:

1. The land tenure conflict between the Otto family (represented by Baale Kalejaiye) and the Awolujoro family (represented by Baale Festus). This might be a classic case of postcolonial states: it is rooted in the traditional ruling system which does not provide the necessary official certificates. There are attempts now to resolve it through the modern/ constitutional judicial system.
2. The APC vs. PDP political rivalry is turned into a tribal conflict between Yorubas and Igbos. As a modern, democratic government that Lagos State claims to be this cannot be justified, but it can be seen as a typical example of Nigeria’s ongoing history of politically induced violence.
3. There is a smouldering tension between the minority indigenous residents, mainly landowners, and the majority of the residents, who are tenants and often migrants. They are attracted by the city’s economic opportunities and usually show no interest in building and supporting community infrastructure.

The only actors who could seemingly mobilize and unite people are the Baales. Positioned between the traditional and the modern governance system; they are usually respected and heard by both. In Otumara, neither of the two Baales in power is sincere, honest and straightforward and both, more or less openly, pursue their own business and power interests. This weakens their own positions within the community considerably. The community on the other hand, basically surviving without government support, is an example of a self-containing supply system, in which certain actors – here the water vendors – control each other suspiciously. In a certain way, this type of water supply system can be described as “radically market-liberal” – offer and prices depend on the logic of a free-market approach. One could even call it anarchic, a situation in which the state is absent and the “law of jungle” applies.

The knowledge, effectiveness and efficiency with which the community of 25,000 to 50,000 residents has organised its water supply services since 2010 are remarkable. However poor and precarious life might appear at first glance, people in Otumara successfully struggle to provide and access basic infrastructure water services. This is a problem at the same time: with their daily survival struggles, the community is too busy to advocate the relevant public actors for more lasting solutions. The weak commitment of tenants again shows the close link between land ownership, influence and veto power. In Otumara, the water vendors and landowners have the big say.

The role of the Baale(s) is theoretically extremely important and potentially key, but it is weak in the case of Otumara. The figure below introduces the tool of “stakeholder positioning”, which defines key actors through a combination of legitimacy, resources and network.



Defining key actors

Neither of the Baales meets the criteria to be considered a key actor:

- *High legitimacy.* Neither of the Baales fulfils this aspect. *Festus* is accused of not treating people correctly. His main concern is currently to get on the payroll of government as he believes this would increase his legitimacy. *Kalejaiye* is more of the “shadow” Baale and is suspected of supporting forced evictions. He is not really present in the community; his house being located outside the community.
- *Strong network.* *Festus* seems to be respected among other Baales as he was elected as chairperson among Baales of different local areas. His relation with the government tiers seems ambiguous. On the one hand, he represents an Igbo/PDP-dominated community (despite supporting APC himself); on the other, he wants to get on the government payroll which makes him look more like a petitioner than a strong representative of his community. The fact that his own boreholes do not function and therefore do not offer any relief for the community makes him weak. Otherwise, by virtue of his function as traditional leader, he should be able to break the dominance of the water vendors, on whom he now even depends himself. The same can be said for *Kalejaiye* who claims to have good relations with the local government.
- *Substantial resources:* *Festus’s* material resources as well as his personal resources like knowledge and expertise are limited. His boreholes are both out of order and it is doubtful that he will be able to save his community from forced eviction through his “feigned” court case, especially as Lasura sees the federal government as the owner of the land. *Kalejaiye* seems to have substantial material resources, which enabled him to provide facilities like the public toilets and healthcare centre – whether the resources are his own or, as residents alleged, from unofficial access to public funds.

The water vendors do have a lot of influence and power, as repeatedly shown in this report. They implement a sort of market-oriented water supply system, as there are no other reliable sources of water. The field research revealed that many female residents buy from them on credit as they are not able to pay the price for daily water. They repay their debts in instalments to the water vendors, who often are women themselves. It is quite unthinkable that LWC would agree to such instalment payments. While this model is also precarious it seems to give the water vendors the legitimacy and power to be key actors .

The government tiers, both state and local, have no positive impact at all. Moreover, they do not even show interest in fulfilling their role and assist this community with basic services. The state-owned LWC is more or less dysfunctional making the centralized water infrastructure and supply very volatile and scanty.

Recommendations

The level of informal provision of community infrastructure and services operating outside of government structures and processes is significant, as the case of Otumara shows. Thus, the starting point for improvement lies in a practical-normative orientation to urban planning and urban governance based on “what works”, and not in an “ideal” technical-instrumental orientation. The focus must be on drawing on everyday ways of life and not trying to achieve the big vision that will never happen. What might work in Otumara may not work in Orisunmibare. The example of the Water Vendors Association shows that communities can successfully organise beyond their own borders, at least for a certain period of time.

The Baales and the CDAs could play a key role in community governance as they are located at the intersection between the formal government tiers and the informal and complex community structure. Local governments are required to consult the Baale and the CDAs, but mostly fail to do so. The government tiers seem neither willing nor able to support these communities in a meaningful way. The communities are left to fend for themselves, and they do so – sometimes rather badly, sometimes rather well. The key is to support these communities in such an effective and efficient way that services can actually be delivered and are, at the same time, affordable to everyone.

Who could replace the local or state government in taking action? One possible approach could be that local or international organizations work directly with the Baales and the CDAs to improve the urban infrastructure and services, with the government taking only a monitoring role to ensure that laws and regulations are observed whilst learning from this cooperation at the same time.

One complicating aspect is that communities like Otumara are home to migrant workers from all over Nigeria and West Africa. It is not clear how these people, who do not own a house or land in the community, can be better integrated into governance and planning issues in the community. This is important insofar as successful service delivery in Lagos is currently only achieved at the community level. For example, although the water supply largely does not work at the city or state level, it does seem to work within certain communities. It is an open question but, at this moment in time, only decentralized infrastructure solutions seem feasible.

Taking a perspective *from within the community*, the role of functioning CDAs and strong Baales seems crucial, as the example of Otumara shows. The water vendors are only able to dominate because the two Baales and the CDAs are so weak.

The Baales are well rooted in the communities, they live there and know the everyday challenges. The fundamental question seems to be how governance structures have to look like that efficiently install, empower and manage the Baales, especially when they have a weak personality and problems with integrity.

Traditionally, the Baale's only function is to solve disputes and minor crimes like thievery and fraud among the community members. More severe cases must be reported to the police. Ideally, this role could be upgraded to some sort of community leader (some sort of community CEO), covering a wider range of strategic goals. The Baale could be supported by NGOs to lead activities like implementing community profiles or actions plans, whilst the CDA's function like a parliament and controlling body to the Baale, again potentially supported by NGOs with tools and knowledge. The Baales and the CDAs must be supported in their autonomy, which seems only possible if they are not on the payroll of the government. Only as independent figures and personalities can they stand for the interests and needs of their communities.

It also seems clear that all key people within the *community* have to be involved, bypassing the Baales does not seem to be a good approach.

Conclusion

The way forward seems to be twofold: interventions must focus on the community and draw from the enormous technical knowledge they have gained in their struggle for survival. The communities must be supported in developing functioning governance structures with leaders and supervisory boards. Government must be kept involved in a learning and potentially supporting role although it often does not show interest in developing such communities..

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