open city Lagos

RESILIENCE

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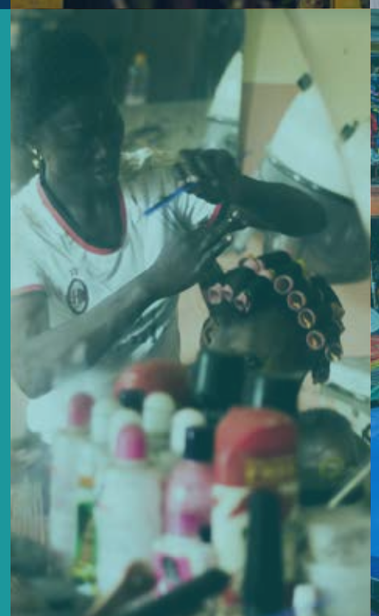


Resilience and Realities

The idea of 'urban Africa' has gone from being a new focus of urbanists, analysts, and journalists to becoming an established subject—finally recognising what has in any case been a longstanding de facto reality for many countries on the continent. Lagos has been something of a 'poster child' in this shift in global attention, being the largest and often the loudest force of urbanisation in sub-Saharan Africa, asserting its prominence through dramatic population and urban growth, cultural reach, and equally dramatic development strategies from the government. These have ranged from the much-praised governance transformations brought about by Governors Tinubu and Fashola, to callous forced evictions of its most vulnerable citizens (most recently Otodo Gbame), to green-lighting the megaproject of Eko Atlantic. Yet despite the sustained focus on Lagos and other African cities, there are still problematic ways of looking at them and significant gaps in understanding. Regarding research, this results firstly from the fact that much urban theory originates from Western Europe and North America and doesn't include experiences from African cities, and secondly a lack of funding and international exposure for urban researchers located in African countries that further side-lines knowledge and experience from urban Africa. In policy, there is still a similar sense of grafting 'international' norms on to cities such as Lagos, without due consideration of their own contexts and norms. There are also very real gaps in all kinds of data; from cadastral maps, to population estimates, to indices of the informal economy to name just a few. These gaps and shortcomings in understanding, however, have not stopped urbanisation from continuing rapidly, nor have they stopped the production of urban policy to 'fix' it, or the application of new ideas to make sense of it, creating a counterproductive disparity between urban realities and urban solutions. The idea of resilience opens up this issue and shows what is at stake in the need to understand cities such as Lagos on its own terms, from the ground up, and to better incorporate this into urban policy.

Resilience has been taken up as a particular theme across academic disciplines, by governmental and non-governmental organisations and by decision makers on several levels, particularly in regards to cities. 'Resilience' has in some ways replaced 'sustainability' as the chosen watch-word regarding urban development, and it forms a rapidly expanding research area and basis for investment. The idea of resilience, originally used in regards to ecological systems in the 70s, is now being applied to disaster and risk management, planning, international development, engineering, and especially climate change adaptation[1]. However, resilience is not clearly defined and it is applied inconsistently and ambiguously with its meaning often left as implicit. Definitions tend to be very broad or simplified, usually some variation on: being able to respond (or withstand, rebound, absorb, adapt, recover, be dynamic, limit impacts, future proof, bounce back) to stresses (or changes, shocks, disasters, disturbances, un/predictabilities, calamities, hazards, radically destructive events)[2]. Despite this lack of clarity, 'being resilient' has become a key agenda point for cities, and there is an increasing number of propositions being developed for cities on how to do this. In some sense, to be taken seriously, a city must now be able to prove its 'resilience'.

Perhaps because of its loose definition, resilience has been able to speak across academic, policy, and practitioner discourses, and also across their internal divisions[3]. In this way, it has the potential to address crucial urban challenges in a truly trans-disciplinary way, which has been identified as a crucial method for tackling the urban. Further, in a resilience approach, challenges and uncertainty are framed as opportunities for innovation in a broad sense, rather than the doom-and-gloom approach to the urban challenges of cities of the global South in the past. The concept of resilience also reflects the recent paradigm shift in seeing cities and the urban not as linear and bounded, but as complex, unpredictable, and operating through multiple timeframes at multiple scales[4]. In this way, resilience works with the idea of approaching cities as complex socio-technical, socio-spatial, socio-ecological systems[5]. Resilience has also been identified as having the potential to be part of a radical and transformational agenda, where cities are not able to just respond to or rebound from shocks but can use the opportunity to implement meaningful change[6].

There have also been significant criticisms of resilience. Despite the noted potential for transformation, resilience is more usually framed as developing the ability to weather crises and recover from them, implying a return to the status quo. Beyond the improbability of this return occurring, critics of resilience recognise this wouldn't even be desirable for many people, especially in cities with high levels of inequality and poverty where a return to the status quo would simply mean the continuation of poor conditions and oppression. Work on resilience is frequently apolitical in this way and does not take into account the socially constructed and contested nature of the urban, meaning plans for how a city can be resilient are often untethered from its urban realities, especially for how it will impact different groups of people[7]. This is where the conceptual weakness of resilience and the ambiguity of its definition becomes important—resilient how? For who? By who?

Resilience is in fact so widely adopted and poorly defined as to have become something of a buzzword adopted by various people to various ends. There is subsequently the risk that people can implement their own agendas under its name, co-opting funding and political will meant for resilient urban development to serve their own interests instead[8]. For instance, Lagos State Government often portrays Eko Atlantic as a 'climate change adaptation strategy' that is protecting Lagos from ocean surges and coastal erosion[9]. This plays into resilient city narratives, despite Eko Atlantic being a privately-funded and executed megaproject that has been shown to have disastrous environmental effects including increasing coastal erosion along the Lekki peninsula (see Image 1), and increasing overall inequality in Lagos[10].

Image 1
Coastal erosion along the Lekki Peninsula has worsened since the construction of Eko Atlantic, affecting both poor and wealthy residents: such as in this estate between 2nd and 3rd Roundabout in Lekki
Source: GoogleEarth, 2016

Image 2

Much-welcomed road resurfacing by the government in Ikotun, however doesn't reach inside to the ordinary neighbourhoods where roads are still mostly unsurfaced and prone to flooding Source: L. Sawyer, 2013

Image 3

"Stop calling me RESILIENT" Quotation attributed to Tracie L. Washington, Louisiana Justice Institute and distributed on a poster in New Orleans after hurricane Katrina Source: Posted on Twitter 25 November, 2013 and reposted by Tom Slater in his blog post 'The Resilience of Neoliberal Urbanism' http://www.opendemocracy.net/opensecurity/tom-slater/resilience-of-neoliberal-urbanism. (2014)

Resilience has come to be seen as a neoliberal tool that adds another dimension to damaging 'competitive city' narratives, that often serves the interests of the powerful over the people. In this way, city governments such as Lagos seemingly have little choice but to prove their city as competitive according to 'world city' norms in order to attract the investment necessary for urban development, including proving their resilience, even if this does not address fundamental issues. Lagos State Government has embraced this appeal to world city narratives through the last 15 years, bringing significant urban governance reform and infrastructural improvements to certain portions of the city. Yet there have arguably been ambivalent outcomes for the majority of residents, who will not, for instance, have seen their road resurfaced, their access to dependable power increase or their transportation costs decrease (see Image 2). Further, in another neoliberalising aspect, when resilience is used to recognise the ingenuity and hard work of the people, it can be used to limit the responsibility of urban governments and place additional burdens on residents. For instance, when the state government of Louisiana was praising the resilience of the people in the aftermath of the Katrina hurricane – at the same time as the government was being roundly criticised for its inadequate response - one resident[11] proclaimed: "Stop calling me RESILIENT. Because every time you say, "Oh, they're resilient," that means you can do something else to me. I am not resilient." (see Image 3).

As with approaches to 'urban Africa' in general, the resilience debate reiterates the need for researchers, practitioners, and policymakers to engage with the urban realities on the ground in cities, understanding their local social, political, cultural, economic, and historical contexts, and connecting each city to the broader network of cities all over the world. In this way, resilience makes the gaps in current understandings an even more urgent issue. As this edition of Open City Lagos sets out, the concept of resilience can help us to see 'resilient' strategies that are already happening. However, as a 'solution' resilience risks introducing ill-fitting initiatives if they don't engage sufficiently with a city's wider urban realities.

To give an example of how mismatched realities and policies have had serious impacts on Lagos, you only have to consider the issue of affordable housing. By affordable I mean housing that is affordable to different socio-economic groups from wealthy homeowners to low-income renters. The colonial, military and democratic governments of Nigeria had very little impact on housing provision throughout the 19th and 20th Centuries, and what was provided usually ended up benefitting the relatively wealthy. For the colonial administration, it was not a priority (they chose to focus on segregated housing estates) and was mostly beyond their quite limited administrative capacity that could not exert planning and land use controls in the African residential areas of Lagos Island, or on most of the mainland beyond the old municipal boundary (that included Apapa, Surulere, and Yaba). After independence, there were only small windows for state and national governments to implement housing initiatives during the tumultuous political climate up until 1999. Instead, the majority of people in fast-growing Lagos have found and built places to live on land bought or leased from customary landowners. In this way, it is in incrementally built, piecemeal neighbourhoods like Itire, Bariga, Ikotun, and Ikorodu that most people find affordable rents or make income as landlords, and how Face-Me-I-Face-You have grown to be the idiosyncratic building typology of Lagos[12] (see Images. 2 & 4). Yet despite this largely being the ordinary way of doing things, official housing policy does not take account of this form of housing and brushes these complex neighbourhoods off as 'informal' or worse as 'slums'. Lagos State Government introduced the Lagos Home Ownership Mortgage Scheme (Lagos HOMS), an affordable housing scheme that is aiming to produce higher volumes of housing than any previous administration and has attempted to streamline the process of getting a mortgage. This scheme has been welcomed by relatively wealthy 'middle classes', but remains unaffordable to most. In fact, most people are not eligible for the mortgage scheme, as it requires regular income, a large deposit, and a proven tax record. By contrast, in ordinary neighbourhoods, people often save through weekly or monthly savings groups (Esusu) and pay for the construction of their houses incrementally, in a way that works with their incomes. There is surely a missed opportunity here: to think of housing finance that works with the way people live and organise their lives, instead of excluding them for it by grafting on models that were formulated for a different socio-economic context and in a different time[13]. Further, the living conditions and exploitative tenancy practices in Face-Me-I-Face-You need urgent improvements that require support (at least) or actually implementable policies and interventions (if only)

Image 4
Affordable housing in Lagos: areas like Itire (this Fig) and Ikotun (Fig 2) provide a variety of affordable plots and rents catering to the vast majority of people in Lagos, yet this incremental, piecemeal model isn't reflected in official housing policy
Source: L. Sawyer, 2012

from the government. This could be an ideal opportunity for transforming the everyday lives of millions of Lagos's residents but would require careful collaboration between all sorts of governmental and resident groups to ensure that benefits were distributed evenly. As it is, there is little government engagement with these areas and they remain a blind spot, and an untapped resource, in housing policy.

Reflecting on this mismatch between policy and reality opens up a crucial set of questions regarding contemporary urban development that can be used to frame any resilience debate in our cities: how can we better understand and engage with the specific urban realities of cities? What are the challenges, who do they most affect, and what existing strategies do people have to respond to them? What methods can we use to find this out and who gets to produce this knowledge? How can this knowledge be translated meaningfully across researchers, practitioners, policymakers, and the public, and be accessed by a broad range of people? Can we imagine and find ways to implement initiatives that are transformational and bring about real change in a way that does not further or newly exclude certain people from the benefits? Can we think across scales – how has this worked elsewhere, and what will the social, political, cultural, economic etc. effects be on the street, the neighbourhood, the region, globally? And can we think across time – how has this worked in the past, what will the immediate effects be, and how can this be balanced with long-term visions?[14]

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Endnotes

1 As discussed by Bahadur and Tanner, 2014; Chelleri et al. 2015; and Meerow et al. 2016

2 See the review of resilience literature by Meerow, Newell, and Stults (2016).

3 These issues are expanded on by Shaw and Davoudi especially in the special issue by Davoudi et al., 2012

4 For example Brenner and Schmid argue not just that cities are not bounded, but the reach of urbanisation is planetary in scale (2015)

5 See Ernstson et al. 2010 for a discussion regarding urban political ecology

6 *Op. cit.* Shaw, Davoudi and Ernstson et al.

7 *Op. cit.* Bahadur and Tanner, Meerow et al., and Davoudi et al.

8 *Op. cit.* Davoudi

9 For instance on a panel at a conference on Resilient Cities, 2011: http://resilient-cities.iclei.org/bonn2011/program/saturday-4-june-2011/c5-reality-check-lagos/

10 See Martin Lukacs's article from 2014 in The Guardian, and Heinrich Boell Foundation's collation of reports

11 Attributed to Tracie L. Washington, Louisiana Justice Institute and distributed on a poster, shown and discussed by Tom Slater in his blog post 'The Resilience of Neoliberal Urbanism' http://www.opendemocracy.net/opensecurity/tom-slater/resilience-of-neoliberal-urbanism. (2014)

12 I have written about this as a process of urbanisation (Sawyer, 2014)

13 This mismatch between housing policy and urban realities has been noted in many other African cities (see Rakodi and Leduka 2004)

14 The work of Edgar Pieterse and those at the African Centre for Cities in particular grapple with these questions in regards to African cities (for example see Pieterse 2014; and Parnell and Pieterse 2016)

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Eseosa Ikponmwosa (mrwentz) is a freelance street photographer based in Lagos Nigeria. He started photography in 2015. His work focuses on capturing the everyday life of the people around him and as well as capturing the mundane elements of everyday life that tend to be ignored. He tries to express himself through portraits as he believes everybody he photographs is somehow truly a part of him. He is influenced by social issues, youth and humanity

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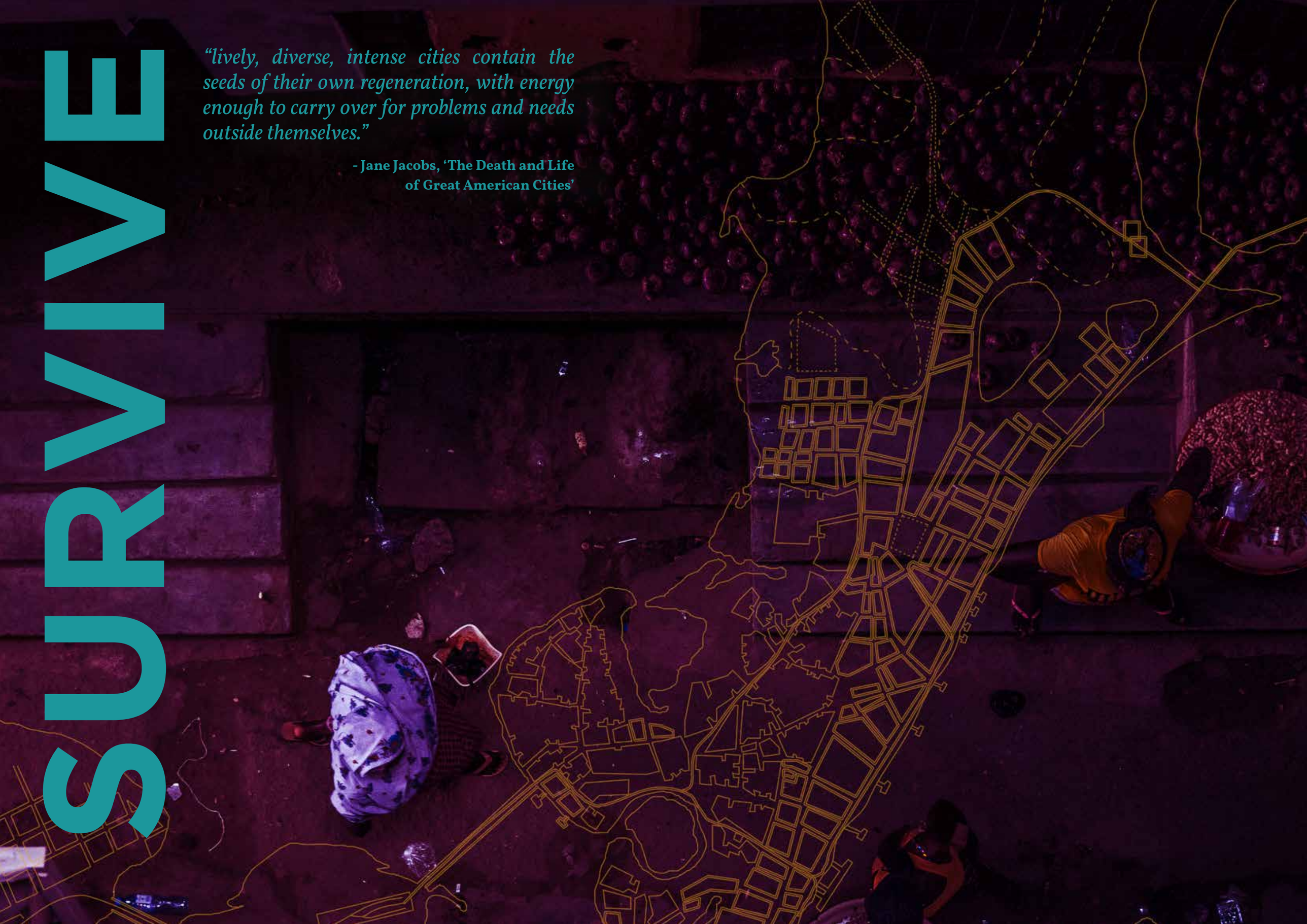
SURVIVE

"lively, diverse, intense cities contain the seeds of their own regeneration, with energy enough to carry over for problems and needs outside themselves."

- Jane Jacobs, 'The Death and Life of Great American Cities'



Self-Determination and Resilience: A Paradox for Spatial Governance in Lagos

by Kolade Akiyode

Lagosians, irrespective of socioeconomic status, resort to alternative forms of local scale spatial governance. This article discusses the relationship between these self-determined spatial actions and city resilience and the consequences thereof.

In Lagos, many roads are in disrepair, there is hardly water supply, power is erratic, sanitation systems are inadequate, crime rates are high, and there are housing deficits. These incidents – realities in many developing countries – are partly consequences of systematic inadequacies in the decentralised structure of the pervasive neo-liberal urban governance model, which is unable to manage the built environment to match rapid urbanisation.[1] To mitigate this somewhat dire situation, Lagosians, irrespective of socioeconomic status, are resorting to alternative forms of local scale spatial governance. The new norm is a reliance on privatised initiatives scaled and organised through both unitary and collective actions, commonly based on explicit voluntary contracts of people with similar civic standings. Coping strategies include the use of private security initiatives, off-grid power generation, water supply from boreholes, the habitation of informal settlements, and engagements with informal economic enterprises amongst other measures. As such, Lagos can be described as a 'self-service city',[2] where it appears that an ostensible dysfunctionality in the built environment continually thrives in the face of challenging circumstances—a likely signal that the city is resilient. Resilience in this regard is reflected by the capacity to survive, adapt and grow in the face of persistent disturbances that strain the fabric upon which a city is built.[3] Thus, the motives and consequences of actions through privatised initiatives frame how Lagosians are persisting to meet infrastructure deficits. This essay briefly discusses the relationship between the self-determined spatial actions and city resilience and the consequences thereof.

Image 1
Power Generation and Water treatment plant
Source: Deji Akinpelu

Resilience and Urbanisation

To discuss resilience in the context of 21st century cities, dynamics of urbanisation must be highlighted as they play a critical

Image 2
Waste in Water Channel
Source: Deji Akinpelu

role. These cities are characterised by the interdependencies they facilitate, and they exist and function by sustaining high densities of human activities and physical assets. Due to the quest for and limited supply of prime locations, the consequences of the urbanisation process has been the densification of the built environment and the uncontrolled siting of people at locations often not ideal for habitation. Common sites that are unfavourable for urban development but are now being developed include conservation areas, natural drainage basins, floodplains, and swamps. Even with suitable infrastructure, such spatial location choices tend to increase the vulnerability to natural and human-made disasters. In order words, the more urbanised a city is, the more it tends to be susceptible to risks and challenges due to demands for space placed on the urban system by a large population.

In the event of a hazardous occurrence in a densely populated urban area, a more significant number of people will be affected over a smaller land area in comparison to a dispersed sub-urban or less populated rural area.[4] In the aftermath, the capacity and potential to recover are higher in the former because factors like the economic, social, and infrastructural networks of interdependencies and connections can be leveraged. Similarly, the financial cost per person of fixing such problems in the former is lower than the latter. So even though urbanisation increases the susceptibility of a city's system to fail, it also shows signs of increasing resilience.

Lagos can be described as a 'self-service city', where it appears that an ostensible dysfunctionality in the built environment continually thrives in the face of challenging circumstances

Urban Fragmentation in Lagos

Urbanisation in Lagos has occurred intermittently in a discontinuous urban pattern of 'formal and informal' areas much like many post-colonial cities. As a result, the city's urban fabric consists of a complex collage of fragments which include residential communities (planned and unplanned), squatter settlements, slums, industrial estates, shopping malls, campuses, institutional, religious and office complexes. Often, these fragments function as introspective self-determined entities and have control mechanisms in place to either exclude non-contributory publics or to limit the occurrence of the oft-cited 'tragedy of the commons'.[5] A typical way control is achieved within settlements with legal status, is by using physical barriers to limit spatial access, which inadvertently results in the creation of urban enclaves. The territories of these urban enclaves are not restricted to privately owned spaces and often include public and ancillary spaces. Due to the nested nature of urban systems, the effects of actions taken within these enclaves - attributes which reflect the resilience of Lagos through a self-service city lens - are not limited to the scale of intended intervention, rather negative externalities are also produced.

From an ecological and morphological standpoint, the emergence of such sectorial actions is a cause for concern when left unchecked, as this can result in a highly splintered urban grain. In this light, the situation in present-day Lagos is troubling because urban enclaves are being created and redefined extensively within a densely populated urban setting - a phenomenon not limited to new developments but also prevalent in already established communities. The consequence is that at a magnified scale, the networks of interdependencies of the urban system are being eroded, thus diminishing the relationships and interactions possible within the urban fabric of Lagos. The dynamics of urbanisation alluded to earlier as essential characteristics that promote resilience would appear to diminish in such scenarios. However, these same fragmented actions are also a means of achieving resilience for many city dwellers, who utilise privatised actions to supplement the inadequacies of the government. This contradiction is where the effects of self-determination through privatised actions on resilience manifests as an essential topic of discussion, and borders on how fragmentation can produce a paradoxical effect on resilience.

Self-determination and Resilience Paradox

The resilience paradox from a built environment perspective in Lagos manifests in waste management, air pollution, water pollution, groundwater extraction, and traffic management systems to name a few. As a case in point, incidents of flooding when it rains in Lagos are discussed subsequently to illuminate the self-determination and resilience paradox. Before delving into the discussion, it is essential to note that the buck stops with the government in the provision of infrastructure to prevent flooding, and the assessment that follows does not in any way try to absolve the state's failures. Instead, it is a critique of the inadequacy and fragility of the alternate system of spatial governance that is taking shape in Lagos.

In areas like Lekki – where planned housing estates are common – property owners and developers typically provide drainage infrastructure specific to individual projects in line with the self-subsisting ethos of how resilience is being built in Lagos. However, as there are no continuities or synergies with neighbouring developments and, perhaps more importantly, an adequately integrated central drainage system into which to discharge, rainwater and wastewater channelled from these developments have limited outlets. Instead, what often happens after rainfall is that areas down the channel of these drainage lines become flooded due to an insufficient rate of runoff. In some of these instances, the flooding is so severe that rainwater reverses into the developments from whose drainages it was discharged in the first instance. At old established settlements in other parts of Lagos, the situation is similar and maybe more significant as the distribution of drainages are disaggregated to individual streets within neighbourhoods. What is happening is that through privatised initiatives, a supplementary skeletal drainage system is gradually being developed in a piecemeal fashion. This system is however inefficient, as it is not integrated into a more extensive system with the capacity to handle large volumes of rainfall runoff.

In Ajegunle, a network of canals, creeks and highways has created a different typology of urban fragments from Lekki. The urban fragments in Ajegunle and its environs are best described as an agglomeration of densely populated low-income settlements. Similar to Lekki, its dwellers have constructed makeshift gullies to complement the grossly inadequate drainage infrastructure provided by the state. One would assume that Ajegunle's proximity to a network of canals would ease the runoff of rainwater. However, a lack of sanitation infrastructure means that the disposal of solid and liquid waste is conducted indiscriminately, and a significant proportion of this waste ends up in the surrounding canals, ditches, and open spaces. The accumulation of such waste disposal practices inevitably clogs the already limited capacity of rainwater runoff channels, thus causing floods whenever it rains and has over time contributed to the insalubrious and polluted environment in Ajegunle.

In this case, flooding is compounded by the consequences of waste disposal, and this is a common trend in other parts of Lagos. The repercussions of waste disposal as in the case of Ajegunle indicate that individualistic actions can have negative consequences in the broader populace.

the more urbanised a city is, the more it tends to be susceptible to risks and challenges due to demands for space placed on the urban system by a large population

Image 3
Newly buit residential estate
Source: Deji Akinpelu

even though urbanisation increases the susceptibility of a city's system to fail, it also shows signs of increasing resilience

In Lekki and Ajegunle, the effect of the self-deterministic initiatives is diminished not just because of the fragmented nature of their physical configuration, but also because of the fragmented nature of individual actions. For Lekki, integration into a more extensive system for rainwater runoff is the issue highlighted. Conversely, in Ajegunle, an outlet for rainwater runoff is not the issue as it is bordered by canals. However, because of the accumulation of waste that prevents the flow of rainwater, the canals are not functioning optimally. The actions taken in the cases discussed are counter-productive, undemocratic, and promote marginalisation because they are conducted without considering their compounding effects. So, even though some reprieve is achieved, it is temporary and only beneficial to a select few, making it ultimately unsustainable. The current system of drainage infrastructure facilitated through privatised initiatives is just one reflection of how fragmentation can produce both negative and positive consequences. One community being resilient to the detriment of other communities does not translate to what we mean by resilience.

Is Lagos resilient?

From the assessment of flooding incidents at Lekki and Ajegunle, Lagos might seem not to be resilient. It is vital that the status quo is not celebrated, because the current state of the urban system in Lagos is inadequate.

It is obvious the creation of resilient cities requires a collective and multi-scalar approach in the production of urban space. To achieve this, a collaborative model which creates synergies between the fragmented actions being implemented is required – a role that the state government should take responsibility in nurturing. The outcome could be the formation of a spatial governance apparatus that proactively identifies, assesses, and documents these privatised initiatives, as a basis to provide advisory services to both the state and local communities on how best to maximise their efficiencies in responding to challenges and changing demands. Engaging with local communities is a more effective way for spatial governance to foster the co-development of innovative initiatives which are less detrimental to the urban system, rather than the current *laissez-faire* approach where infrastructure development does not match the most pressing needs of Lagosians.

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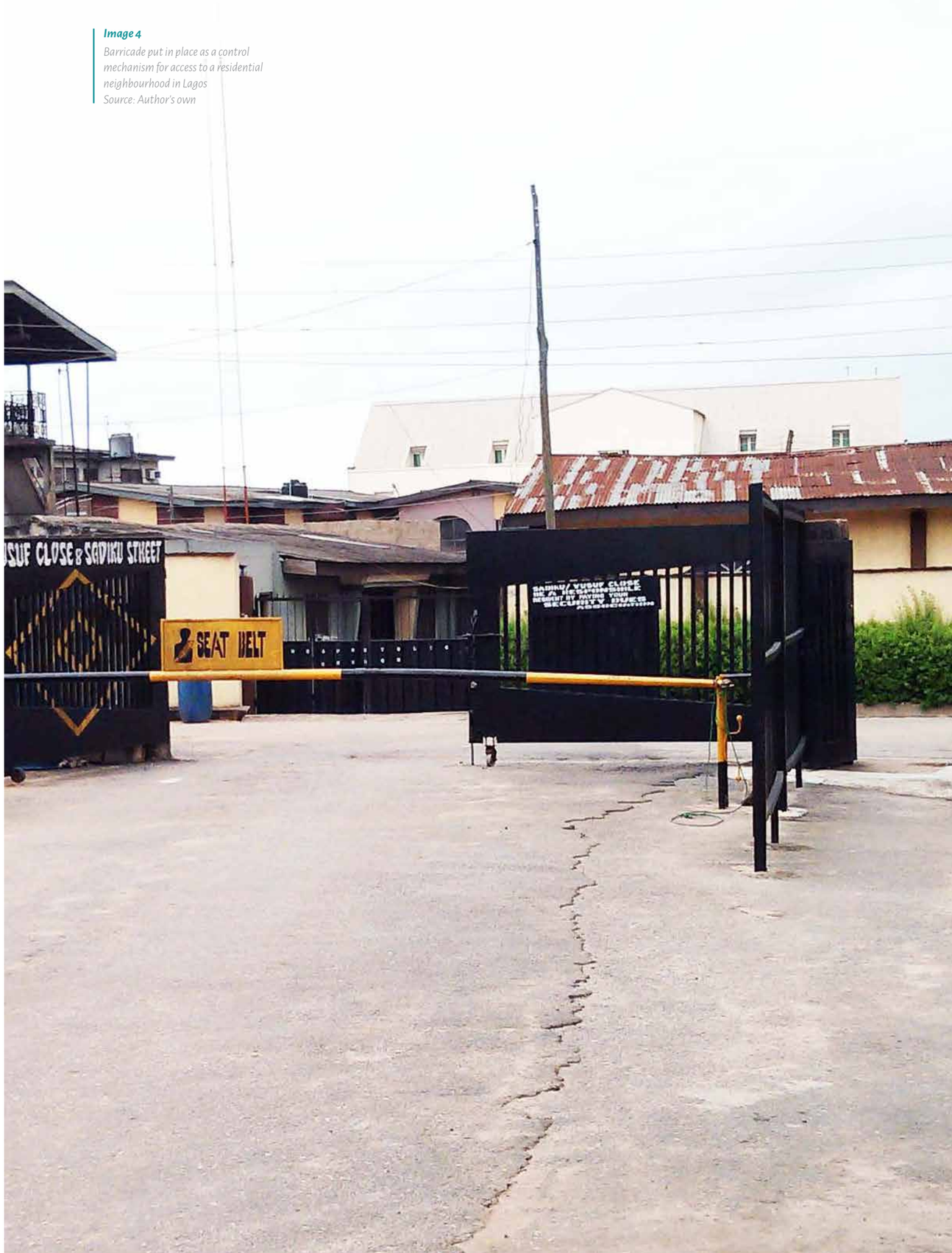
Image 4
Barricade put in place as a control mechanism for access to a residential neighbourhood in Lagos
Source: Author's own



by Seyi Bolarin

The Resilient Ones

Stills from the author's ongoing documentary work showcase the subtleties of everyday life in Lagos, highlighting the dissonance between reality and idealised notions of resilience

"[we] are illegally resilient to issues affecting [us], resilience is the issue."

The attribute of being resilient is praised and expected, especially in a city like Lagos. It is a term which has become so ubiquitous that it has lost its meaning. But what does it mean to be resilient in a society and global system designed for insecurity and catastrophe?

The Resilient Ones is a documentary which follows four (4) individuals living in Lagos and explores the bittersweet realities of everyday people defined by resilience. These routine feats of endurance illuminate life in a postcolonial city and question the inherent good of resilience.

"Being a Nigerian means you have to be resilient, for me, I have to be resilient. I have to find an alternative way of getting things done; I have to think ahead of my government, I have to have a mindset of solving my own problems. And erm, I don't have to ever give up, that's the crazy part of being a Nigerian." - Tunde

Much of the literature critiquing resilience focuses explicitly on economic neoliberal systems which cause insecurity. In Resilient Life – The Art of Living Dangerously, scholars Evans and Reid pertinently discuss the ways these global liberal systems do not seek to solve the

issues of precariousness, but actively work to dismantle the very possibility of security in our minds, teaching individuals and groups to willingly embrace danger. However, during my conversations, I was made aware of the ways these systemic structures intertwine with relational and spiritual structures which are also present in the city.

Images 1, 2

Surulere: Tunde's shoe factory. During this shoot, the importance of conversing in the individual's mother tongue struck home, as one of Tunde's workers opened up hugely when I spoke the little Yoruba I can, and asked the other workers to translate. This is still one of my favourite interviews

When I first had the idea for this documentary, I believed it was going to be overtly about neo-colonialism and its manifestations across the lives and spaces of everyday city dwellers. What I have found so far is that neo-colonialism is but one of the many things to be resilient against in Lagos. During a conversation about the present state of music being made in Nigeria, a DJ complained about the content of Nigerian music, which in his opinion did not reflect the dire circumstances of the country.

Image 3

Festac Town: as I progressed, I found I got far more of the intensity and details I wanted in sit-down interviews, where we just filmed my conversation with each of the individuals. By this stage, I'd also started figuring out how much time I had to spend with each interviewee before bringing the camera out. It differed for each person, but this interview ran the smoothest. Natural lighting features through the whole film.

His descriptions of Nigerians as 'illegally resilient' stuck in my mind for a few days, and started shaping the way I was thinking and asking questions.

This film emerges from my position as an outsider and insider. I am British-Nigerian and a frequent visitor to Lagos. As I have progressed with this film, I've come to see it as a way for me to begin asking the kinds of questions which have amassed in my mind over the years. Having grown up around many Nigerians, and identifying strongly with two cultures, this documentary is an exploration of the intersections and interactions between both cultures.

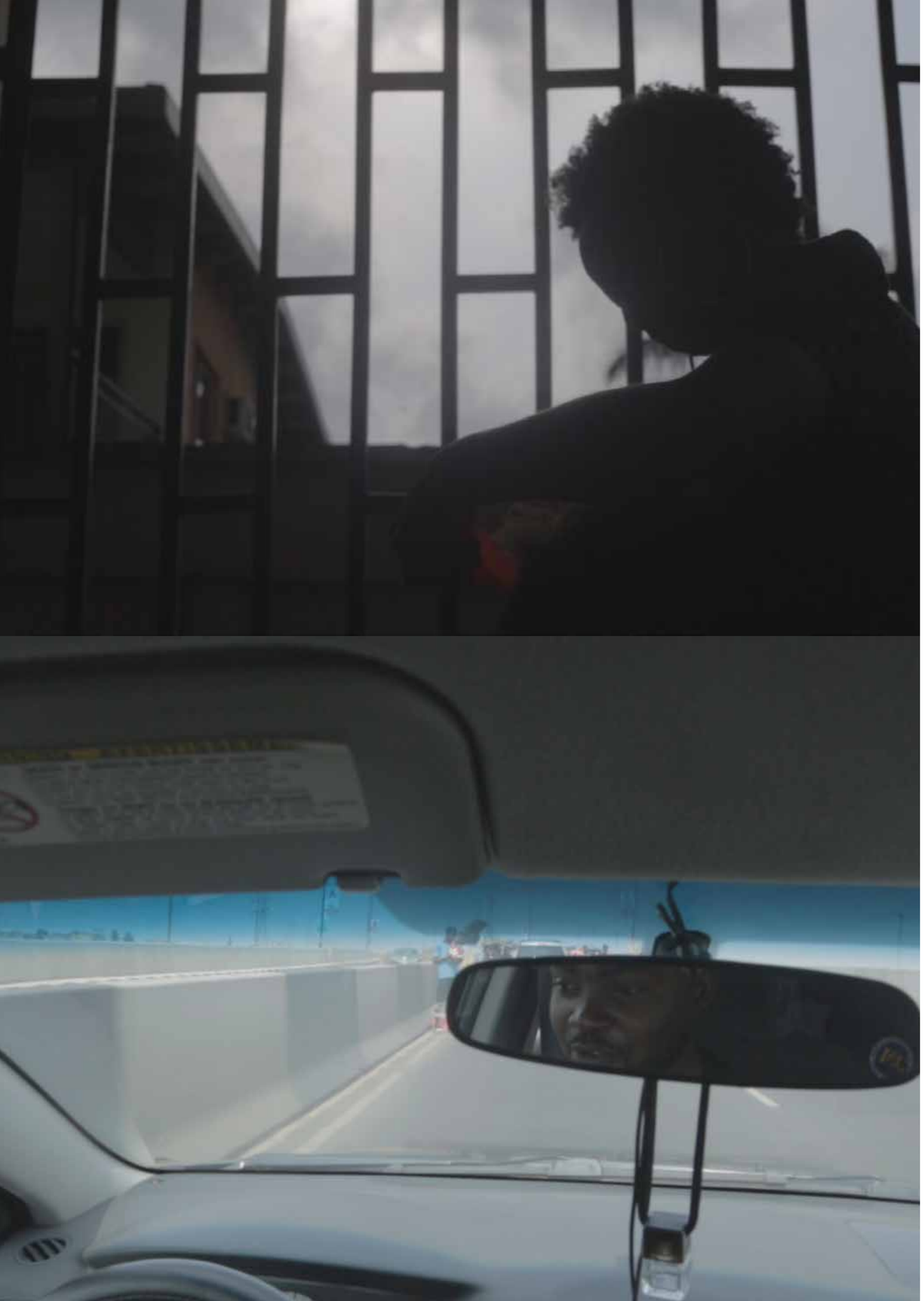
I started thinking about this documentary in 2015 when I was drafting my undergraduate dissertation, which explored notions of modernity in Lagos' music culture. The conversations I had during this fieldwork gave me insight into a much more tempered and deliberate side of the city. Travelling through Lagos with a camera and sound kit slows the city down for me. Instead of rushing to my destination, the process has made me take in my surroundings in a way that is new and more challenging. I followed each person around for a few days, trying to get into their world. As I spoke to each person they all defined their existence in Lagos, and Nigeria more generally, as marked by resilience in some way. I asked a range of questions, touching on money and power in the city, their love lives, and spirituality.

Tunde is in his late twenties and owns a small shoe factory in Surulere and a showroom in Sura shopping complex. He embodies the energy and drive of, as he puts it, an aspiring 'Lagos Big Boy'.

"... see I'm that guy, I don't blame my problems on people, or saying somebody caused it. The country is like this, and people are still rising. I rose from nothing, shey you get? So, if I can, to where I am, I think everybody can rise, educated or not educated, inasmuch as you've got a skill." - Tunde

His comments about surviving and thriving in Lagos underlined the prominent narrative of simply bearing with hardships and coming out triumphant. What does this say about those who do not make it? In his piece titled The Postcolonial Burden of Resilient Life,

Image 4
Balogun Market: choosing what to capture with the drone was difficult but important, as I tried to maintain the personal feel I'd been striving towards interviews.



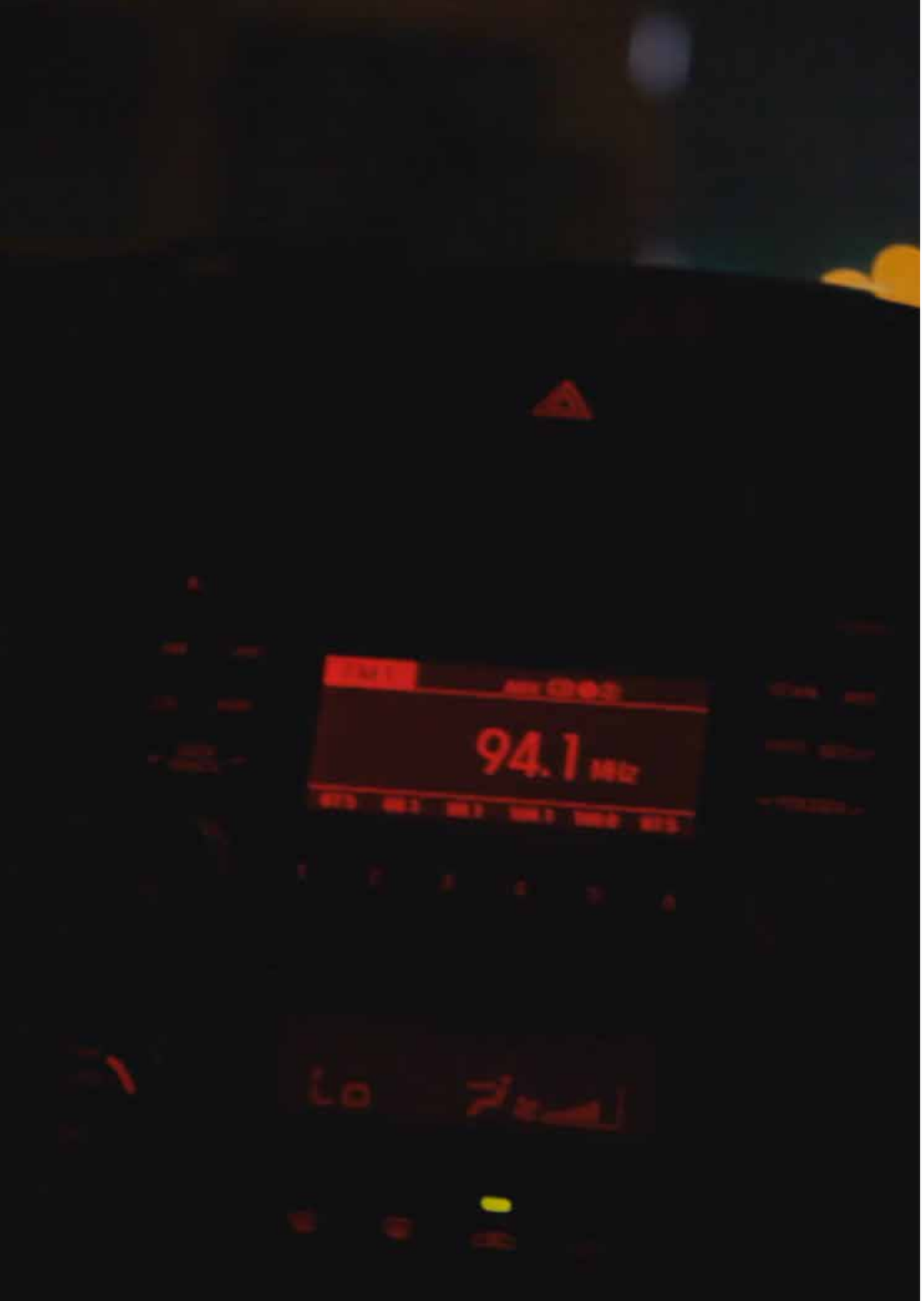
Ranabir Samaddar describes postcolonial life as one marked by "precariousness, continuing uncertainties, dangers and fortitude - all summed up in one word, resilience". It is both unhelpful and untrue to depict Lagos as a lawless city. However, focusing the events and phenomena individuals and societies are told to be resilient against is of much value. Viewing resilience as an idea which in conjunction with more positive depictions helps to unpack what it means when we implement policies, build programs, policies and spaces with faulty notions of resilience embedded into them.

I am deeply interested in the tension and harmony between notions of fate and capitalist rhetoric of hard work resulting in success. In conversations about resilience, it is tempting to singly categorise religion and spirituality as things which help people become more resilient against issues of life. However, the entanglement of the physical and the spiritual in Lagos means the spiritual does not serve the 'natural' but stands as a reality in and of itself. This reality encompasses forces and strongholds which people battle against in a variety of forms.

"...So, some of them, they don't really know they are suffering. Sometimes if you know something is happening to you, it's good, because you try to fight it. But when you don't know at all, that is total blindness. So, you might just see the same pattern in a family, all of them are like that, so that is the spiritual aspect of it"

When I think of resilience, I think of materials which have the physical makeup to spring back into the shape. I imagine agility and flexibility. Much resilience discourse finds its roots in natural ecological systems theory. But when I think of this term with regards to an entire society, I am drawn to think of people who were not as 'resilient', and did not make it. Something in this rhetoric removes the fragility of our humanity, and as a result, describes us as less human – able and willing to withstand insurmountable pressures.

In his research about sustainable urban development in Jamaica, David Howard explores colonial and postcolonial narratives of vulnerability and resilience in the city. He questions the repeated use of notions of resilience and vulnerability as integral to sustainable urban development in policy and academic debate. Howard argues that ideas of resilience are used uncritically, without seriously investigating whether those from low-income populations can continually be resilient against neoliberal forms of governance and economic policies. He importantly differentiates between resilience from environmental shock which saves lives and resilience against an economic system designed to deprive the majority. In their discussions about vulnerability, Evans and Reid outline it as "the characteristics of a person or group and their situation that influences their capacity to anticipate, cope with, resist and recover from the adverse effects of physical events". However, this sits uneasily with me, due to the emphasis once again on natural phenomena as opposed to government policies or foreign exchange fluctuations. It is important to ask what a resilient society or city looks and behaves like. How is resilience shaped or warped when it falls outside of the ecological framework within which the discourse began? Is it ethical to continue to ask this of people? It is crucial to keep the everyday person's concerns, aspirations, and practical needs in mind when abstractly praising resilience.



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All photos are stills of footage taken from author's documentary work

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Boomtown Mubi: Home of Peace and Civil Defence

by Andrea Staeritz

How does a town that has been ravaged and emptied by insurgency start to grow again? Its residents pull together. Mubi is a great reflection not just of what other recovering parts of North-eastern Nigeria could achieve, but of what it takes to grow, survive, and be resilient as a town or city.

Mubi, a trading hub that dates back centuries, emerges stronger than ever due to the massive influx of refugees and business people from surrounding towns attacked by Boko Haram. However, in contrast to common perceptions about refugee camps, Mubi, like other camps in Adamawa State, is not crammed with people. Citizens open their houses to give shelter, chiefs and rich business owners distribute land to the Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs) who are employed as farmers, and the vivid market welcomes new labour and new businesses with open arms. Traders, religious leaders, and self-defence youth groups work to maintain the town's traditional reputation as the "Home of Peace".

"Mubi is a boomtown," Abdulkabir Musa, head of the Chamber of Commerce, Mubi, cheers. "We accommodate people from Cameroon, we accommodate people from Maiduguri. And we are living peacefully and in harmony with them. One day Mubi will stretch from Maihar to Michika, which is 50 kilometres away."

Image 1
Children play in Furore
Source: Author's own

Strategically located on the banks of Yedseram River, a stream that flows north into Lake Chad, Mubi, and its cattle market, is the economic nerve of Adamawa state in the Northeast of Nigeria. Together with the cattle market economies of Potiscum (Yobe State) and Maiduguri (Borno State), Mubi was one of three towns to show economic growth during Nigeria's 2016 recession.[1] This paradoxical growth was the result of several factors such as the increase in purchasing power of international organisations and the influx of refugees. Cross-border trade with Chad, Niger, and Cameroon,[2] and the decline of the Naira which encouraged traders who bought with CFA – the basic monetary unit of Cameroon – also boosted the economic expansion of the town.

Traders, religious leaders, and self-defence youth groups work to maintain the town's traditional reputation as the "Home of Peace".

Mubi's Trauma: Boko Haram Invaded and Looted the Town – Thousands Left Their Homes

The first attacks of Boko Haram date back to 2007. Cameroonian traders stopped frequenting the market when attacks became more regular. In 2012, when a massacre of Igbo traders from the Southeast of Nigeria claimed the lives of 45 victims, many business owners packed their bags and left.[3] Unfortunately, the attacks did not end there, and Mubi faced its most traumatic setback when Boko Haram invaded the town in October 2014.[4] Most of the population fled across the border to Cameroon, where the insurgents continued to attack them. The military retook the city some 40 days later, but it was not until February of the following year that the Emir, Alhaji Abubakar Isa-Ahmadu, called his people to return and resume their businesses.[5]

Mubi's Population More Than Tripled in the Last 25 Years

Mubi used to have some 130,000 inhabitants in 1991 when Posticum and Maiduguri emerged to be the leading cattle markets. By 2006, when the last general census was conducted, the population had already doubled to just over 280,000.[6] Estimations suggest that the population had been around 350,000 when the insurgents hit the town. According to projections, Mubi's population in 2016 should have reached approximately 370,000.[7] However, the continuous stream of refugees and IDPs added 100,000 to the town after it was liberated and the population returned.[8]

Boomtown Mubi – Cross-Border Trade is profiting from Cheap Naira

Today Mubi can boast of being a vibrant and energetic town. Along the main road at the market, trucks are lined up and goods are carried on tricycles, barrows, or bare heads to be piled up onto the loading space. Although motorcycles were once the predominant means of transportation in Adamawa State, they have been banned in various local governments as they are considered the preferred means of transportation for Boko Haram.[9] This ban has completely disrupted a whole segment of livelihoods in the town. According to the Chief of Staff for Mubi-South LG, Kabiru Buba Isa, motorcycles can be purchased for 80 or 120,000 Naira. However, an increase in the import of bicycles and tricycles has led to an increase in the cost of transportation and a loss of jobs: "When I buy a tricycle, you find tomorrow 15 to 20 youth begging me to drive it to survive", says Isa. "It is only the rich who can afford to buy the tricycle, it is almost 700,000 naira now. And if you buy it, you can give it only to 1 person to survive with it. For this cost of a tricycle you could give 5 people [motorcycle] jobs to survive".

With the shrinking value of the Naira, traders from the neighbouring countries buy grain and cattle at a very favourable price. Additionally, the increased spending from the arrival of international donor organisations and the State Emergency Agency (SEMA) has infused more money into Mubi. Farmers, the demographic most affected by the insurgency, are unable to farm at the capacity they used to and are hardly able to satisfy the increased demand of the local market. "The market has developed beyond expectations", says Kabiru Buba Isa. "The business of Gwoza, Bama (both in Borno State), and Maidagali (in Adamawa State), all have come to Mubi. They transfer everything to Mubi. That's why the market is growing and growing. Today is a market day, you see 50, 60, 70 trucks going out to Cameroon. Unlike before. Before there were only 20 or 30 vehicles going."

Despite these triumphs, Mubi has also suffered some setbacks. The Igbo business owners who evacuated after the killings in 2012 have unfortunately never returned.

Inflation Devours Profits

With accelerated business activity, inflation has also hit the town. "The rich get richer, the poor poorer" decries Isa. Prices of staple food items have increased by about 30 percent. Mubi, having faced prolonged infrastructural neglect, has never had a functioning water distribution system. Water is still carried around and sold to residents in jerry cans, but the price has doubled. Neighbours have to pool personal resources to fix electricity lines and boreholes. This means that freshly acquired profit from growing economic opportunities is immediately swallowed up by the equally growing costs of basic needs. Another important factor that cannot be overlooked when examining the push-pull factors of growth and inflation in Mubi is its real estate market. About 100,000 new arrivals in a city of 350,000 means at least a quarter of the city's population is looking for accommodation, putting tremendous pressure on the rental market. There has also been an observed boost in economic activity around new constructions, contributing to the increase of GDP. However, inflation is shocking. International organisations settling in the state are ready to pay rent five times higher than any indigenous person. "When you rented a house earlier, you would pay 20,000 or 50,000 Naira. Today international organisations rent houses for 250,000 Naira. So you see there is a clear difference," explains Kabiru Babu Isa.

Mistrust All Over - Security is Priority

Besides economic harms, Adamawa has been hit in its core values of peace and hospitality. Harun Furu, Permanent Secretary of SEMA and the IDPs, is putting into words everybody's concern in the liberal, religiously mixed society of Adamawa: "We used to trust each and every one. We used to trust visitors, we received people from anywhere, anyhow, anytime. But now, you have to look at it critically. Who are you receiving? Which social places are you visiting? Even the markets are no longer safe, you don't know who is standing next to you." Where there was once trust and solidarity there is now suspicion. It is difficult to admit the participation of Mubi youth in the looting of local businesses during the outbreak of the atrocities, but covertly everybody knows about it.

Despite this erosion of trust, the representative of the Emir in the market, Danladi Abubakar, says "I am not mediating conflict, but peace." Abubakar is the appointed mediator of the Emir – a long-standing traditional position tasked with ensuring peace and harmony in the Fulani-Hausa community. The position is also a joint initiative with the Chamber of Commerce, and as such Abubakar has worked on higher security awareness and a reporting system. "Security is not only the task of the military but of all citizens. Whenever they sit together, I am encouraging people to be their neighbours' keeper. Watch what is happening around. Any newcomer you see, watch his movement! If he intends peace, he is welcome. If you notice anything of questionable character, you alert the authorities. When we became refugees ourselves, the good lesson we learned is that we should all be our neighbours' keeper. Everybody is security conscious now." Hence, their collective tragedy has birthed a stronger sense of community. With heightened awareness come strengthened and close-knit localities with a sense of dependency that might be greater than what they previously had.

Yet mistrust breeds another dilemma. Military and police have tightened their controls. Arbitrary arrests are the order of the day. Mohamed Isa is a 25-year-old driver from Banki, a border town in Borno

"When we became refugees ourselves, the good lesson we learned is that we should all be our neighbours' keeper."

Images 2,3,4
(from top to bottom)
2. Women Group in Furore
3. Abdul Ibrahim, Cook in Community Kitchene Furore
4.Church of Brethren Mubi
Source: Author's own

Images 5,6,7
(from top to bottom)
5. Aisha Mohamed embroiding
6. Clinic Furore camp
7. Bombed Bank UBA in Mubi
Source: Author's own

"We had to adapt to the situation, we did not have any alternative."

State. He was arrested five times before he found out about the Joint Task Force (JTF) Banki, in Mubi. This group of youth has been formed to defend themselves and support each other. The elected chairman of the task force, Dahiru Musa, is cooperating with the police forces and drawing their attention to suspicious youth. In return, members of his JTF have been issued identity cards and are protected from arrest or detainment with him acting as a guarantor. Quite the inscrutable mechanism, this system of surveillance relies on subjective estimations. Mohamed admits that the criteria are vague: "Those who ran away when Boko Haram invaded, we don't suspect them to be insurgents, but those who have been living under Boko Haram, we don't know whether they have been influenced". The youth is under constant suspicion, he adds: "I am having a really difficult time, there is mistrust in the society, in the neighbourhood. We find it difficult, to mingle into the mainstream society here. Now we have all joined the JTF. If you know anybody who is Boko Haram, we will call the security and they will arrest the person."

Corruption and Petty Crime

Trucks and even tricycles overloaded with yellow jerry cans filled with petrol rattle along the road to the border of Cameroon. The subsidised petrol is highly valued in neighbouring Cameroon. The decay of the Naira has made the smuggling business even more lucrative. Along the road, police and military collect a share of the profits claiming they have to fuel their own cars as well. A member of the local government, Abdul Muhammadu, admits rather freely, that there is an arrangement between the marketers and the police about fuelling police cars to limit the bribes on the road as "we are not able to pay for the increased volume of petrol needed for the tight control on the streets due to the tight security situation". He also mentions, "The police is fully concentrating on the security threats caused by the insurgents. Hunting small thieves is beyond their capacity."

In fact, the local government is bankrupt. "Administration cannot collect taxes", confesses Kabiru Buba Isa. "We are in a state of lawlessness", he adds. Everybody knows that the traders and business owners lost a lot during the attack and the looting of Mubi in October 2014. Shops have been plundered and burnt down, goods stolen and destroyed. Electricity lines were cut, transmitters and transformers smashed, telecommunication antennas destroyed. "Business has not been restored like it used to be", says Isa.

Interreligious Dialogue and Healing of Trauma

Civil Society in Mubi is a predominantly face-to-face affair. A lot of Civil Society Organisations (CSOs) have emerged in the peak of the crises according to Harun Furu. A year and a half after the peak of the crises, the state government started to register and teach the CSOs about regulations and organisation among themselves in order to avoid overlapping activities.

Such coordination is facilitated informally by the Bishops of the three predominant churches in Yola – the Anglican, Catholic, and Lutheran churches. The American University of Nigeria in Yola, Adamawa State, is spearheading reconciliation and interreligious peace-building, which has a strong tradition in the region. Bishop Amos Yakubu, Lutheran Church of Christ in Nigeria, stated that the task of peacebuilding is a new one. Reverend Dean Harrison in Mubi, talks about the need to address the mistrust and suspicion that crept into Mubi when inhabitants slowly began to return to the town after the October 2014 Boko Haram invasion. He describes how people learned that among the refugees were members of their extended families or members of the same churches, and step by step they opened their houses when they saw the suffering. Reverend Harrison himself started to organise trauma workshops. "We know people are full of trauma, as a church, what we did, was starting to heal the trauma". These workshops have become a regular exercise by the Lutheran Church, which is the biggest denomination in Adamawa state.

Staying or going? Integration via land distribution

Safrat Ayuba, who recently arrived in the Mubi Transition Camp, has one priority: land for farming, whether back home or in any other place. Giving out land is a good way to integrate refugees and IDPs. In Daware, Adamawa State, more than 2000 families have been settled. Fufore camp close to Yola has a population of 1300 IDPs. Initially, the refugees found security, shelter, and food at the camps. However as months went by, they started to farm on land given out by the traditional rulers.

They come from villages that have been unsafe to return to for two or three years. "Very soon, these people will intermarry and are ready to stay", says, Maliki Hamidine, a project coordinator of the International Organisation for Migration (IOM). "Once they are farming, they are good to stay". These arrangements between host communities and refugees have been taking place without any intervention from the government. For the moment, the support is generous and helpful. "But now the government has to come in, the sudden increase of population can create crises in future, if the population is doubled and no provisions in schools, health facilities, policing, and other social services are taken care of" adds Hamidine.

"We Had to Adapt – We Didn't Have Any Alternative"

Civil Society and private business have had to shoulder a large portion of responsibility in responding to the crises. The population of Adamawa State was roughly 4 million people. They were required to accommodate 800,000 displaced people, although they only had official shelters for 20,000 people. Asked how they managed, Reverend Dean Harrison in Mubi simply said, "we had to adapt to the situation, we did not have any alternative". For the most part, families helped to accommodate the refugees.

In July 2015, the newly elected Buhari government announced it would borrow US $2.1 billion USD from the World Bank to reconstruct the North East. In March 2016, the Bank announced it would "earmark 800 million USD"[10] for the task. In February 2016, the chairman of the Presidential Committee

"We Voted for Change – and Surprisingly the Change is Coming" - First Signs of Reconstruction are Visible

Abdulkabir Musa remembers that the elections in 2015 were conducted under the impression of returning to a destroyed city. "We voted for change. Of course, everybody was disappointed about the lack of support from the former Governor and the Federal Government". But in contrast to former times, when everybody knew that promises made during the election campaign never materialised, this current Governor is perceived as one who is delivering. About 100 road projects in Adamawa State are sending a strong sign of renewal and new beginnings. The construction is providing thousands of jobs. Mubi is getting street lights, a modern face – at least on the main roads. The fertile rains this year contribute to a bumper harvest, not necessarily to the Governor's credit, but it fits into the times of confidence.

Members of society from residents to business owners opened their doors to incoming refugees and IDPs and used what they had to create a home of which they could all be proud.

Images 8, 9, 10
(from top to bottom)
8. Mubi busy market street Tricycle
9. Trader from bama resettled to Mubi - Aliyu Mohamed
10. Reverent Harrison with son in compound
Source: Author's own

Images 11, 12, 13
(from top to bottom)
11. Transitcamp Mubi
12. Training in Furore
13. Sleeping place in Burnt Bricks Factory Trasit Camp Mubi
Source: Author's own

on the North-East Initiative (PCNI) had estimated that the reconstruction would cost US $56 billion in total. Instead, huge amounts of the funds have allegedly been funnelled into private pockets. A Senatorial Committee investigating the expenditures of PCNI stated in December 2016, that the committee is not able to account for US $7.9 million.[11]

But neither the state nor the federal government has helped the business owners compensate their loss of goods or helped to fix the damaged houses according to Abdulkabir Musa. Reconstruction is left to the private sector. Many banks have returned but moved to smaller buildings. All the bombed buildings are still silent memorials, reminders of the aggression of 2014.

Surviving, Despite the Odds

How does a town that has been ravaged and emptied by insurgency start to grow again? Its residents pull together. Mubi is a great reflection not just of what other recovering parts of North-eastern Nigeria could achieve, but of what it takes to grow, survive, and be resilient as a town or city. In the face of great adversity, no one would have been surprised if the once vivacious town succumbed to circumstance like many smaller towns in the region. However, the community pushed beyond their obvious handicap to grow and rebuild. It has become a haven for its neighbours and an avenue for a growing and sustainable economy in the region. Members of society from residents to business owners opened their doors to incoming refugees and IDPs and used what they had to create a home of which they could all be proud. Their unity has done more to regenerate the economy and population of the town than the silence of the government.

There is a case to be made for social innovation, and for the knowledge that comes from living in a place for generations. That, however, does not excuse the neglect of the government on federal, state, and local levels. Despite the best-combined efforts of residents, business owners, and Civil Society Organisations, there are still obvious gaps that can only be best filled if the government pulls its weight. If the government joins in with these efforts, who is to say just what kind of town Mubi can be?

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Image 14
Tricycle HT petrol carrier
Source: Author's own

If Ebola Strikes Again: How Lagos is Building Preventative Resilience to Health Crises

Four years later, after basking in the glory of beating Ebola the question remains: how can Nigeria apply the knowledge from Ebola to other health crises affecting citizens ?

by Maryam Kazeem

Mosquitoes, open sewage, and contaminated water from steep floods come to Lagos in seasons. Sometimes residents are prepared, but more often Lagosians do their best to manage the consequences of these potential threats to their well-being and livelihood. That contaminated water and mosquitoes carry infectious or viral diseases is a fact that is reacted to, rather than prevented. However, when ECOWAS official and Liberian national Patrick Sawyer left his sister's funeral in Liberia and came to Lagos on July 20, 2014, allegedly in search of a miracle cure, there was no room for error – local government officials, the state government, and healthcare experts made the swift decision that Ebola would not stay in Nigeria, the deathly virus would not be managed - it would be expelled. Ebola had already wreaked havoc on neighbouring Sierra Leone, Liberia, and Guinea. Between March and June, through the National Centre for Disease Control and Prevention (NCDC), the Nigerian government had already initiated a series of trainings for health professionals on surveillance and medical procedures, in case the disease ever arrived in the country. Even though the virus was relentless in these other countries and had garnered global attention, they have smaller populations, while Lagos is the largest city on the continent.

For ***The Conversation Africa***, Folasade Ogunsola notes, "The diagnosis of the first case of Ebola in Lagos, Nigeria in July last year set off alarm bells around the world.[1] The fear was that it would trigger an apocalyptic epidemic that would make the outbreaks in Liberia, Sierra-Leone, and Guinea, where 1322 cases were reported and 728 people had died within five months[2], pale in comparison." With a population of over 150 million, Ebola in Nigeria was a nightmare many hoped would never come true. "This fear was very justifiable. Lagos has a population of over 21 million[3] with a population density in

Image 1
AO meeting at IgboElerin Market
Source: EpidAlert

built-up areas of about 20 000 people per square kilometre. In some areas it is as high as 50 000 people per sq km," she continues. Yet in spite of the fear, Lagos managed to execute an actionable plan to contain the outbreak. In an interview with ***New African Magazine*** just a year after the WHO declared Nigeria Ebola-free, then Minister of Health, Onyebuchi Chukwu underscores that unlike the other nations dealing with the virus, Nigeria had a health infrastructure, "when I came into office, for the first time in the history of Nigeria, the government established a centre for disease control [which] never existed before I became a minister."[4] Ugochukwu Osigwe, one of the doctors who carried out contact tracing, an emergency response tactics to Ebola, says things were "relatively calm" the week after Sawyer's death because the Ebola crisis is exactly what they trained for at the Nigeria Field Epidemiology and Laboratory Training Program (NFELTP), a partnership between Nigeria's Federal Ministry of Health, Ministry of Agriculture, and the United States Center for Disease Control.

Seven months before Ebola arrived in Lagos, the first Ebola death was recorded in Guinea, and it took three months before the World Health Organization (WHO) officially declared an outbreak. According to a Humanitarian Policy Group (HPG) special report, "The Ebola Response in West Africa", it was only after Ebola arrived in Lagos that the WHO officially classified the outbreak "a public health emergency of international concern." Before that point, there were no roadblocks, quarantines, curfews, or enacted by-laws in any of the countries dealing with the virus. Rather, the receiving health systems in Liberia, Guinea, and Sierra Leone were in the process of being rebuilt after civil war and instability. The epicentre of the virus in these countries was often rural, where qualified health workers were far and few. Liberia, Sierra Leone, and Guinea didn't fail at handling the Ebola crisis because of gross negligence or incompetence – as the disease would have challenged the capacity of wealthier countries.[5]

"The diagnosis of the first case of Ebola in Lagos, Nigeria in July last year set off alarm bells around the world."

Ebola's capacity to wreak havoc on a nation depends on certain circumstances. In Lagos, Ebola arrived by air on a flight with recorded passengers, which made it much easier for health officials to carry out contact tracing, the identification and diagnosis of people who may have come into contact with an infected person. If Ebola had arrived in the country through a border town for example, in a state where officials may have had fewer resources than Lagos and fewer qualified specialists, the story of how Nigeria tackled Ebola would have been different. Yet that Nigeria beat Ebola has become a talking point for an exemplary moment and performance from our healthcare system. For ***The Guardian (UK)***, Calestous Juma argues, "this was possible because Nigeria had the state capacity [and human capacity] to undertake such a massive effort in a timely manner."[6] However, Lawal Bakare, Co-founder of Alert Clinic and member of the official Ebola communications response team during the outbreak, would insist that any conversation about Nigeria's Ebola success story necessarily include innovation as a key success factor.

Bakare can still remember the smell of chlorine and soap in the Emergency Response Center in Yaba. Every morning from July 24th until the end of August, when it seemed the country was getting a hold on the virus, Bakare would wake up in the morning, take a bath with Dettol and get dressed before rushing to the space he shared with colleagues from the public and private sector. "We didn't rest," he shares. "We were there every day, there was no time to go to church or the mosque on Sunday because we knew our roles were critical." There were hundreds of hand sanitizer bottles in the room and every time Bakare and his colleagues remembered why they were there, they would apply the liquid up to their elbows. Ebola was in Lagos, and it would be months before anyone would know whether the coordinated efforts of government officials, the private sector, and health workers had been successful. "There were times I thought I wanted to stay at home just to be sure I hadn't been infected but I couldn't because I just had to keep going," Bakare says.

On October 24 when Nigeria was declared Ebola-free, experts wondered how especially considering that it would take two years for Liberia to declare the same. In an interview with "Quartz Africa", Faisal Shuaib, a Nigerian physician and public health expert who works for the Nigerian Ministry of Health as the deputy incident manager of the country's polio eradication program, explained that the key to Nigeria's plan to curtail the virus from spreading came from a four-pronged coordinated effort. Shuaib notes: "Supported with funding from the Gates Foundation, we established about four teams: A point-of-entry team, screening passengers coming into the country and those traveling out, anybody who has any symptoms or a fever; an information-dissemination group; a case-management group; and the fourth group [was] a contact-tracing group, an epidemiology surveillance group, this group was very, very important for the kind of success that we achieved."[7]

Bakare emphasizes that being innovative and creative about how to share information with the public was essential. The rumours circulating around social media were endless and the communications team had to act quickly. The Ebola response team put up signs around the city informing people to make sure to wash their hands, they set rumours straight online and even created an online group on Facebook for health and communications experts around the world to participate in what was happening in the country. The call response centre wasn't just important for disseminating information, it was also critical for ensuring accountability. For example, when the Federal Government announced that they were checking people at the borders, the Ebola response team asked people on social media channels to confirm that this was actually the case. Citizens trusting the public sector was not a frivolous desire, it was essential. In Guinea for example, despite pledges by political parties to depoliticise the issue, deep political divisions hampered the response, particularly in opposition areas where distrust of the central authorities remained high.[8] It was crucial that Ebola did not become a political issue in Nigeria.

For Osigwe things finally shifted in August. "When Dr. Adadevoh said she was [feeling feverish] and was unresponsive to the medication she was taking, everyone was in a real scare. It made everything real," Osigwe shares. A few days before that Osigwe and the rest of his team took five samples, and three turned out to be positive. These weren't strangers, these were people he had been working with and communicating with throughout the contract tracing. "We started thinking about everything, every last handshake," he continues. But after the initial shock of Dr. Adedovah's tragic passing, things started to shift. Nigeria had recorded its first survivor, and they finally felt that all the hard work they were putting in was working. "It made me realize Nigerians wanted a country. It was the one time politics was not an issue and it gave everyone hope," Bakare shares.

Four years later, after basking in the glory of beating Ebola the question remains: how can Nigeria apply the knowledge from Ebola to other health crises affecting citizens? Early in 2017, there was a meningitis outbreak in Zamfara state, which took over 1000 lives. In

"We didn't rest. We were there every day, there was no time to go to church or the mosque on Sunday because we knew our roles were critical."

Images 2, 3, 4
(from top to bottom)
2. Deputy Incident Manager addressing journalists
Source: WHO / Andrew Esiebo
3. Market women at Igbo Elerin market in Lagos listening to an Alert Officer during an enhanced campaign on food safety and hygiene
4. An Alert officer, engaging students at a holiday coaching class in Lagos.
Source: EpidAlert

Images 5, 6, 7
(from top to bottom)
5. Screenshot of Ebola LiveChat applied by during the Ebola outbreak.
6. Alert Officer at a small business point visit in Ikeja Lagos
7. Alert Officer at a local mosque in Agege area of Lagos
Source: EpidAlert

April of 2017 according to Premium Times, the Governor of Zamfara, Abdulaziz Yari, "said the outbreak of Type C CSM is God's way of showing his anger against Nigerians for turning their back on him."[9] His office later clarified to ***The Vanguard*** that the Governor simply asked: "Nigerians to move closer to God and plead for his mercy to [avoid] further infectious diseases and other health crises in the state and Nigeria since God has an answer to all challenges."[10] However, many accuse the government of being unprepared and being slow to act.[11] This echoes the challenges faced by Guinea, Sierra Leone, and Liberia – a lack of capacity and slow action from the government. While the articulated response to Ebola was efficient and effective, it doesn't change the fact that in Lagos and the rest of the country there are a number of other viral diseases and illnesses the health sector has struggled to have a similar impact. There are thousands of suspected cases of Cholera in the northeast of Nigeria due to Boko Haram's insurgency in the region. These instances underscore that in spite of a health infrastructure that made it possible to handle Ebola, Lagos and Nigeria still have a lot of work to do. However, Osigwe would argue that it's hard to compare a viral outbreak like Ebola to malaria, "just one case of Ebola is a state of outbreak." As evident from Sierra Leone and Liberia, the impact on the population can quickly become catastrophic.

While the articulated response to Ebola was efficient and effective, it doesn't change the fact that in Lagos and the rest of the country there are a number of other viral diseases and illnesses the health sector has struggled to have a similar impact.

In spite of the ongoing challenges with other viral diseases, one of the legacies of the Ebola call centre is Ebola Alert – a call centre service that provides accurate real-time information on Ebola, according to the website. Bakare also founded Alert Clinic, a risk communication and surveillance medical platform, which is part of the Ebola Alert umbrella. Both an offline and online service, Alert Clinic focuses on four diseases: Lhasa fever, malaria, diarrheal diseases, and acute placid paralysis (polio). The website lures users in through a three-step call to Lagosians: join the network of informants, start reporting events near you, and finally, everybody's efforts add up.

Bakare believes that the best way for Lagos to get to where it should be, is by being proactive and predictive – by taking key lessons from the Ebola crisis, Bakare has designed a platform that focuses on centralized message dissemination and feedback generation. "A lot of the diseases that impact Lagosians have seasonal and predictive patterns. If there's open sewage in your community and you see people that are stooling, it could be the beginning of a major cholera outbreak." Perhaps the clear lesson from Ebola is that if Nigeria can handle Ebola, we can handle more**.** Lagos is better positioned than any other state in the country. Calestous Juma observes, "One of the most decisive aspects of the [Ebola] campaign[12] was the role of the Lagos state government under the competent leadership of Governor Babatunde Fashola. The state was able to draw relevant lessons from previous campaigns against polio. Equally important was the biomedical capacity in the teaching hospital of the University of Lagos, which completed tests in 24 hours." Yet the combination of the competent leadership and especially qualified health professionals within the state are still struggling to manage malaria. 97 percent of Nigeria's population is at risk of getting malaria. With one hundred million malaria cases each year, there are an estimated 300,000 deaths per year even though there are preventative measures people can take to protect themselves and fortify their environment.[13]

The continued existence of Ebola Alert and former Governor Fashola's appointment of Dr. Adekemi Oluwayemisi Sekoni as Chief Scientific Adviser (CSA), demonstrates that Lagos is prepared should Ebola ever return to the state. But beyond that, the better question is how can Lagos continue to use the lessons from Ebola to create a better city, where our resilience is demonstrated by the foundations we build, as well as how we respond to threats.

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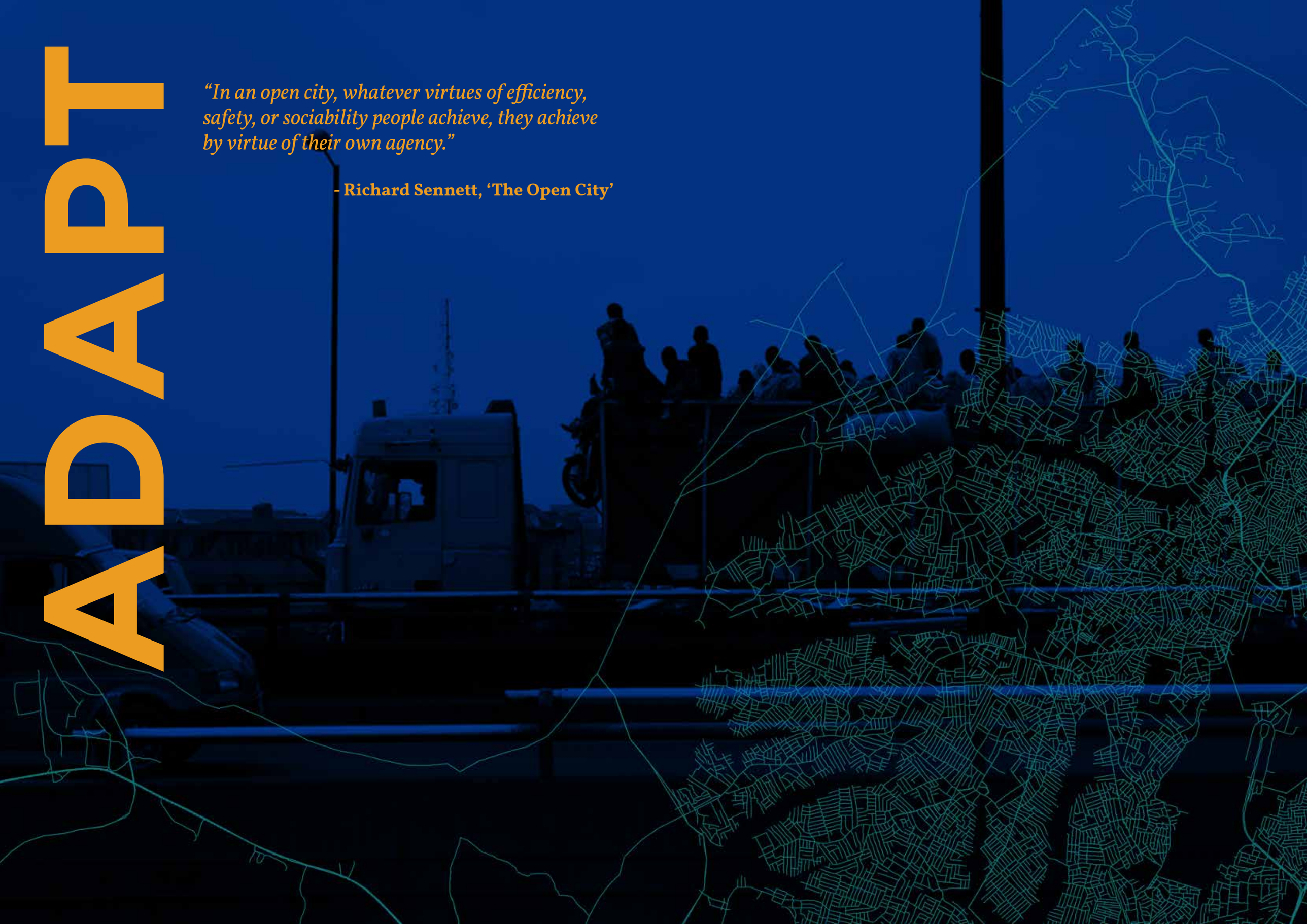
ADAPT

"In an open city, whatever virtues of efficiency, safety, or sociability people achieve, they achieve by virtue of their own agency."

- Richard Sennett, 'The Open City'



City Changes in the Face of Collective Memory

by Kola Tubosun

How do the aesthetics of the real estate market and current land grabbing processes being driven by international aesthetics contend with urban resilience in local communities. Whose responsibility is it to maintain a national monument that is also a residential property?

My return to Lagos in 2012 coincided with an emergence of megacity culture which had been brewing underground years before. The administration of Governor Babatunde Raji Fasola had been in contact with the family of Daniel Omolona Olaiya for a proposal to transfer their family building on Bamgbose Street to the Government of Lagos State and the Government of Brazil.[1]

Angel House or Casa do Fernandez, more popularly known to locals as Ilojo Bar, was built in 1855 and strongly reflected the Brazilian heritage of the former slaves who had returned to that part of Lagos. The late 19th century mass migration of recently freedmen, merchants, and other Afro-Caribbean nationals who decided to relocate to Lagos permanently has been well documented[2] online[3] and in print. What they brought with them, along with money and social class, was a peculiar skill of masonry. The buildings they erected in that part of Lagos had the architectural patterns of Brazil from where they had come, and it added a certain character to the Lagos landscape, especially in the part of Lagos now called Brazilian Quarters.

Ilojo Bar, so-named by its last owner after his own hometown of Ilojo in Ekiti State[4], was one such building. It was so unique and its location so central and iconic that in 1956, in the final days of the colonial government's hold on the country, it was acquired and declared a national monument.[5] That acquisition, however, was nominal. The owners of the building were neither compensated nor relocated. They still technically owned the building and were subject to all laws relevant to its maintenance, security, and care. The only requirement was that they don't alter the building in any way without necessary permits from the Federal Government of Nigeria.

Image 1
The Highrise at 15 Military Street (Onikan)
Source: Author's own

This disarray gave an excuse to the former faction to, under the cover of darkness on September 11, 2016, pull down the building unceremoniously.

the spike in property values on the island has driven people with otherwise good intentions into making rash decisions about the historical structures under their watch.

This created a conflict when in 2010, the first notice came from the Lagos State Building Control Agency (LABCA) that the building, now old and decrepit, had contravened a newly enacted law concerning the care of old buildings. Ilojo Bar, the law said, had come to present a type of risk to people living in and around its premises and may cause its owners and occupants fines and liabilities if nothing was done.[6] The building had to be repaired or refurbished either of which would contravene the directive from the Federal Government to whom the building was a historical monument which could not be altered.

The stalemate was further complicated by a schism in the family between two factions: those to whom the obligation to the Federal Government was a needless burden and those to whom the historical nature of the building was something of pride and sentimental value. This disarray gave an excuse to the former faction to, under the cover of darkness on September 11, 2016, pull down the building unceremoniously.[7]

No one has yet been punished for the act, though a number of lawsuits are pending in the Nigerian courts. But its very occurrence points to a number of issues currently bedevilling the historical real estate market on Lagos Island. Primarily, the pursuit of wealth by real estate traders has trumped the value typically placed on the permanence and relevance of historical structures. Additionally, the spike in property values on the island has driven people with otherwise good intentions into making rash decisions about the historical structures under their watch. The seeming impunity with which Ilojo Bar was demolished has likely done more to add to the perception that one can simply do whatever one wishes with their property, regardless of the place it holds in history.

It is a constant battle.

There is a third element that is equally problematic: the role of governments in preserving these structures for posterity. In the case of Ilojo Bar, the inability of the state and federal governments to agree on the status of the laws protecting the building and the delegation of responsibility for its care was at the core of its demolition. LABCA sees itself as chief of all matters relating to the structure of buildings in Lagos. But that came in conflict with the Federal Government's role in maintaining and caring for all national monuments. Whose responsibility is it to maintain a national monument that is also a residential property? What role do the resident families have? What about the state and federal governments? How do they ensure that their individual mandates regarding historical structures across the country do not come in conflict with each other?

A few weeks after the demolition of Ilojo Bar became public, it was revealed that the Lagos State Government had also demolished the J.K. Randle Memorial Hall and Swimming Pool located across from the National Museum at Onikan. According to reports, the government has designated the location for building a new Yoruba Language Centre named after J.K. Randle, who had granted that space to the government in trust.[8]

Two issues immediately came up. First, did the government have the right to restructure another man's property without permission even if it had good intentions? The other was whether a new Yoruba Language Centre was the proper use of the space that once housed a swimming pool in which many Nigerians of that generation first learnt to swim.[9]

The second issue is easily resolved. The state was in need of such a Centre. Language teaching in Nigeria today has fallen to the lowest priority level[10], the likes of which have not been seen since the British insisted that our languages were vernacular. Having a place for the archiving, teaching, and documentation of languages is of cultural import. The question of whether the government had the right to repurpose the building is the more consequential one. When I spoke with Chief Randle, the surviving head of the family, he was not pleased. According to him, his grandfather,

The question of whether the government had the right to repurpose the building is the more consequential one.

Image 2
Photos on the wall at the Kalakuta Museum, Ikeja, Lagos
Source: Author's own

Image 3
The Demolition of Ilojo Bar on September 11 2016
Source: Author's own

Some would say that the influence of international aesthetics is at the core of many of the renovations happening here, and there is some truth to this.

Joseph K Randle (1909-1956) had donated his fortune in real estate to the government in trust. He was not convinced that this gave the government the right to demolish and reconstruct the Memorial Hall. After all, one of the pleasures of heritage is the delight in seeing things as they were as a tribute to history. The state believed otherwise.

Some would say that the influence of international aesthetics is at the core of many of the renovations happening here, and there is some truth to this. The house currently on Number 15 Military Street Onikan is a prime example.

The small but spacious bungalow that used to be on that spot belonged first to Azariah Olusegun Ransome-Kuti. His two siblings Reverend I.O. Ransome-Kuti and Mrs. Ẹniola Soyinka were the parents of Fẹla Kuti and Wole Soyinka respectively, so the house inevitably played host to these famous nephews of his in the sixties when he lived there. "He was 'Uncle Segun" to most of us", the Nobel Laureate told me in an email exchange. He explained further during a later interview: "[The house] was representative of what I called the bungalow architecture of that immediate... postcolonial [time]. It was one of these small beautiful bungalow architecture which I liked very much. The open frontage, flowers of course. Everything... I lived there for the simple reason that my parents were very scared of me being let loose in Lagos."[11]

There were other famous residents in that perimeter. In the adjoining Ajasa Street, a building that almost touched the bungalow with its back was a house in which the second Premier of the Western Region, Chief Samuel Ladoke Akintola, lived. The contiguity of both houses and the eventual clash of their political fortunes created intense human connections some of which were recorded in chapter seven of Wole Soyinka's 1994 memoir Ibadan: The Penkelemes Years.

On the spot where the bungalow used to stand, there is now a white high rise building about six stories tall. Its development started in 2008 when the Kuti Bungalow was pulled down by its new owners who were intent on building something else in its place. That something else is a modern office space with open studio floors, an elevator, and a parking lot held safely under the structure by about half a dozen pillars. It is, by all standards, a modern structure. It occupies all the space in that plot with no parking spaces except in the basement of the structure. Unlike the bungalow before it, it is now a commercially viable venue that attracts the upwardly mobile middle and upper middle-class of the city. The first time I was there was in July 2017 to attend a spoken word poetry event hosted by Titilope Sonuga who confessed she had discovered the space almost by mistake. She describes it as "a space juxtaposed with the rich history of Lagos Island."

But whose history is it? Nowhere on, or in, the new building does it indicate what else used to be there. Nowhere does it say that the bungalow it replaced was the location for Professor Olikoye Ransome Kuti's first paediatric clinic, a rehearsal venue for some of Fẹla's first band attempts, or an early Lagos residence for Africa's first Nobel Laureate when he got his first job at the Medical Stores of the Government Medical Department. And so, little by little, history is being erased and re-written with each new laid brick.

The uproar that greeted the demolition of Ilojo Bar and JK Randle Memorial Hall is notable in its passion. On October 22, 2016, at a town hall event organized by Legacy, a non-governmental organisation, in collaboration with the Lagos at 50 Committee, and convened by Professor Wole Soyinka at Freedom Park, descendants of the Aguda community on Lagos Island shared memories of their childhood and how the changes brought on by modernity through various forms of human intervention had impacted their psychological landscapes. If erecting buildings in a certain style helped the initial returnees from Brazil better adapt to the new environment by being visual representations of a past they wanted to carry with them, then demolishing them over time and turning them into more

The uproar that greeted the demolition of Ìlọ jọ Bar and JK Randle Memorial Hall is notable in its passion.

Image 4
Paper machie images of Samuel Clemens (Mark Twain) at the Mark Twain Childhood Home and Museum in Hannibal, Missouri. United States
Source: Author's own

Image 5
The space where Ilojo Bar used to be
Source: Author's own

What we agree on as being of public value is not always in perfect sync.

"modern" structures must come with its own drawbacks.

One man, Eric Awobuyide, burst into tears in front of the room. His mother was one of the direct descendants of Daniel Omolona Olaiya, the owner of Ilojo Bar. Eric himself ran a shop from within the building and lost properties when the sudden demolition happened while he was away.[12] Others were distraught for mere sentimental purposes. Even with no direct relationship to any of the other historical structures on Lagos Island now facing the double-edge threat of collapse from years of neglect and deterioration or the intrusions of modernity, a few were present to call on the government to put in place rules to make sure that future changes to the Island aren't as abrupt.

What does the future hold? When young Nigerians for whom much of our literature and history textbooks are written eventually grow up, what will they find as markers to that history? When foreigners come to Nigeria in search of part of their personal and collective history, what will they find?

A resident of Lagos Island lamented to me that the changes have not been complementary to history. "A friend came from New Orleans a while ago", he said "to learn more about slavery and the role of Lagos in it. He was looking for markers of where the slave markets used to be. We don't have any markers to that." This is true. A visitor to Lagos will see nothing pointing to that abhorrent part of our history, with the exception of Badagry. Even there, as I discovered during a reportage in 2010[13], only descendants of slavers have preserved anything. There seems to be a perverse element to having people whose ancestors already profited from slavery being allowed to continue to profit from the exploitation of its memory.[14] But this is a different subject.

The financial element in these conflicts is also worthy of exploration. As with Ilojo Bar, where the family conflict revolved around the value of the land on which the property stands as opposed to the long-term

Image 6
The tomb of Fela Kuti at Kalakuta Museum, Ikeja, Lagos. Nigeria
Source: Author's own

historical value of the building itself, owners of historical properties will have to assess what their interests are and where they are best protected. Projects like Freedom Park on Lagos Island, a public recreation facility created out of the ruins of a historical colonial prison, have shown the prospects of well-executed tourist projects created with the appropriate narrative. The Mark Twain Boyhood Home in Hannibal, Missouri, in the United States, is one of many examples of a private property turned public and commercial with appropriate balance between what is of public and historical value and what is private and profitable. The set of buildings that make the museum are currently designated as National Historic Landmarks, hosting thousands of tourists from all around the country and the world every year. The landmark has been open to the public since 1912, making it one of the earliest historic house preservation efforts in the country.[15] When I asked Prof. Soyinka about the replacement of his uncle's private bungalow with a commercial high rise, he didn't sound as bothered as I'd imagined, nor did he see it the same way as I did. "Development is development and it is not a historic building as such..." As long as it is not a forced demolition by agents of state, he is understanding of the need for things to eventually change.

And so it comes down to a matter of interest, government responsibility, and value for matters of history. As I realised while trying to convince Professor Soyinka of the historical value of his uncle's house on the sole basis of him having lived there with Fela Kuti and Professor Olikoye at different times, what we agree on as being of public value is not always in perfect sync. "I believe the future of the buildings depends on who is occupying it and for what purpose the building will serve," says Adenrele Sonariwo who runs the popular Rele Arts Gallery in a repurposed building on Military Street. It will come down to the balance we are able to strike between individual needs, public good, and the interest of state and federal governments in preserving history. And in the case of private properties, the situation is often, sadly, a very complicated affair.

If erecting buildings in a certain style helped the initial returnees from Brazil better adapt to the new environment by being visual representations of a past they wanted to carry with them, then demolishing them over time and turning them into more "modern" structures must come with its own drawbacks.

Image 7
Mark Twain's house
Source: Author's own

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The Makoko Oko-Baba Wood Merchants

Beyond the veneer of a successful business hub of activities, environmental, safety, and economic concerns pose a real threat to the Makoko Oko-Oba Market and those who benefit from it, and if the market does not survive, can it be classified as a true success?

by Yemisi Adegoke

In many ways the Makoko Oko-Baba wood market is a typical Lagos success story.

Situated in the Ebuta Metta area of Lagos State, Nigeria, the market's existence dates back to the 1930s, where it started with little or no government support. Its growth has been exponential and today, the sprawling space deals in every aspect of the wood business from procurement to sales. The market supplies wood for use all over the country and employs thousands of people. Its impact is felt far beyond the shores of Lagos.

As is common in many developing countries, Nigeria relies heavily on wood as a fuel source. In Nigeria's case, unstable power supply and a high poverty rate have heavily contributed to reliance on wood as an energy source. A study into wood consumption in Kaduna State acted as a microcosm to reveal a clear correlation between poverty and the use of wood as a fuel source across the country. The study presented a theory that people will continue to turn to wood for fuel as long as government-supplied energy remains unstable and petroleum products continue to be subject to price fluctuations [1].

Other uses for wood in Nigeria include construction material and, in paper and paperboards production [2]. Such demand has made the wood business a lucrative one and the market boasts many rags-to-riches stories of merchants who came into the market with nothing but are now millionaires. However, in the midst of this lies a growing number of issues that threaten the very survival of the business and the thousands of livelihoods it maintains.

"We only cut, we don't plant. Our forests are going"

There are many players in the wood business. It all starts with sawyers, like Goodluck Pemi, who are considered an integral part of the

process. Goodluck has been in the business for over a decade. But before him, and like many others that work in Oko-Baba, his grandfather was in the trade as were his uncles, his father and his older brothers. It was probably inevitable that he would follow in their footsteps and become a sawyer.

The role of a sawyer is to finance the entire process.

They pay bush contractors who go into the forests of Bayelsa, Cross River, Ondo, and Delta and fell wood.It can take three months to a year for trees to be felled and transported to Lagos.

After the wood is taken out of the forest, it's transported to Lagos by towing vessels. The journey is a long one. Towers - as members of the team who transport the wood are called - battle against the elements, the tide, and at times life-threatening danger in their small but sturdy tugboats that can take up to 2,500 pieces of wood. When the logs, which are sectioned into rafts, arrive in Lagos they are met by the sawyers who measure them to determine their worth. Pullers later manually pull the rafts of wood to one of the entrance points of the market where the rest of the process starts.

Bamidele Akolo started coming to Oko-Baba as a JSS3 student. He carried planks of wood to raise money to pay for his junior WAEC exams.

He later dropped out of school to join the business full time and went from carrying planks of wood to selling them. Now he owns his own sawmill and employs roughly 20 people but is worried about the future of the business.

"Somewhere near Ijebu Ode [a town in Ogun State, south-west Nigeria], around 1981, '82, '83 you would see seeders planted by the Europeans. But today, that place has been destroyed completely," he says. "Government says to cut one tree, you plant three, but we don't do that. We only cut and we don't plant. Our forests are going."

According to the Food and Agriculture Organization of the UN, Nigeria loses "350,000 to 400,000 hectares of land to deforestation" annually [3]. Nigeria's forest cover is 6% while the recommended cover for every nation is 26% [4], and rapid urbanisation has been cited as one of the major reasons for felling trees. Further deforestation holds serious implications for the environment and could prove devastating to the wood business.

In 2007, former Lagos State governor Babatunde Fashola launched a tree-planting program in a bid to meet a target of 10 million trees planted in the state. His successor Governor Akinwumni Ambode has continued this program and in the ten years since its inception, the state has planted over 6 million trees [5]. There are also penalties in place for those who fell trees in Lagos without permission, that include the offenders themselves planting trees.

However, given that most of the trees used in Oko-Baba are not from Lagos State, it is immediately apparent that the state governments of Bayelsa, Cross River, Ondo, and Delta also need to commit to tackling deforestation. Fortunately, almost all of these states have made some form of commitment to the matter. Cross River, which houses much of Nigeria's rainforest, seeks to become home to the largest forest in Africa by planting 5 million trees over 100.000 hectares of land[6]. In 2016 Delta State began planting 50,000 trees across the state and Ondo State banned logging in 18 local government areas[7].

In addition the Federal Government is also said to be working on a bill to ban felling trees [8].

Despite these efforts, one of the major problems remains Nigeria's reliance on wood as a fuel source with no viable and affordable alternative readily available to those who cannot meet the expense of any other means. According to World Bank statistics in 2010, 53.5% of Nigerians live in extreme poverty[9]. Unfortunately, without addressing this pressing issue of energy, planting more

trees will simply be a buffer as opposed to a lasting solution.

Sawdust: A Hazard for the Workers and the Environment.

Once the wood has been transported by the pullers to Oko-Baba market it is picked up by the rollers, who roll the logs to the machines, where they are cut down to size by the cross-cutters. This is done hundreds of times a day and as a result, the market is covered in sawdust, another environmental cost associated with the wood business.

Nigerians are yet to fully tap into the uses and benefits of sawdust, particularly as a fuel source, and as a result Oko-Baba market sees tonnes of sawdust burned every day, the effects of which are potentially hazardous for the workers and for the surrounding environment.

A 2012 study by ROA Adelagun, E.P Berezi and O.A Akintunde explored air pollution in the sawmill industry, using the Oko-Baba market as their case study. When measuring the level of air pollution, it was discovered that "CO levels ranged from 30-720ppm, NO2 was 0.73-0.84PPM and SO2 were 0.23-0.60ppm," numbers that "far exceed approved limits by the Federal Ministry of Environment" [10].

The study went on to cite the serious effects of the pollutants: "...the smoke emanating from the burning of the sawdust causes impairment of respiratory organs, reduction in visibility for both pedestrians and motorists on the Lagos 3rd Mainland Bridge, which could lead to accidents. The burning of the sawdust also causes discolouration and weakening of the pillars of the bridge due to acid rain" [11].

The study recommended alternative methods of disposal of the sawdust from Oko-Baba such as "the usage of the sawdust for landfilling, poultry dropping sinks, particle board and wood filling" [12]. An NGO called Sustainable Research Action For Environmental Development (SRADEV Nigeria) won an award in 2011 for its project to turn waste sawdust in Oko-Baba to clean briquettes. The idea for the project was to train sawmillers to collect and convert sawdust into fuel briquettes [13].

To further boost this initiative, the government must play an active role to ensure the appropriate disposal of sawdust. Better still, the public can be educated about the uses of sawdust as a fuel source and encouraged to explore this as a means of alternative energy.

"Economically, things are not the same in Nigeria again"

The rise in the cost of business in Nigeria is squeezing profit margins at all levels of the wood industry, with the sawyers who invest the money to finance the operations especially feeling the pinch.

Sawyers invest roughly N3 million for each wood procurement trip and usually send multiple groups into the forest at once to minimise the risk of solitary journeys. "If you have just one group coming in this big river and [a] storm just blows them away, everything is gone," says Goodluck Pemi. "Your money is gone and you can't hold anyone responsible for that. But if you have seven or eight groups, even if there's a natural disaster, there will be survivors."

The 2,500 wood pieces that each boat carries is then divided into rafts of wood consisting of 36 or 42 pieces, which can be sold for anywhere between N250,000 to N500,000. Pemi says returns on the initial investment can take up to another year.

However, after deducting the money for the various services: towers, pullers, carriers (who carry the wood into and around the market), the rollers, the cost of using the machines, the cross cutters, and many other expenses, sawyers are left with N40,000 - N50,000 profit per raft. With the current economic climate of the country, this profit margin is getting slimmer.

"Economically, things are not the same in Nigeria again," says Pemi, who has worked at Oko-Baba for over a decade. "Everybody is complaining about one thing or another and the cost of the business is higher. Even feeding is expensive and woodworkers can finish a bag of garri in a week because we eat a lot of eba."

"Without the sawyers, this business will not exist," says Pemi." The sawyers take the risks in this business by bringing out their money to send people to the forest. "

A Threatened Future?

Bad roads, poor infrastructure, outdated machines, and little governmental support also don't create the best environment for the market to continue growing.

"Look at these machines now. They call them CD4, CD6. These are outdated machines produced in France in the 60s," Pemi continues. "These are the machines we still rely on. You push them before they move, before they can saw, but we have no choice than to use what is available for us to saw our logs."

But while these concerns play on the minds of workers at Oko-Baba, they are committed to staying on in the work they have done for decades.

"You can't go out of it (leave the job). It is better to stick to it and manage what you have in your hand than staying idle," says Pemi.

But realistically, in light of these issues, how long can the business survive?

Beyond the veneer of a successful business hub of activities, environmental, safety, and economic concerns pose a real threat to the market and those who benefit from it, and if the market does not survive, can it be classified as a true success?

Success in Lagos is arguably often a result of extreme resilience against the absence of government support, and in the face of economic changes and environmental factors. Just opposite the Passport Office in Ikoyi there is a very big pothole, it has probably been there for many years, drivers that know the road simply drive around it - day in, day out. This is what it means to survive Lagos. Resilience is often touted as a virtue, a sign of strength and courage. But at what point does it change from a positive attribute into a negative one? At what point do cracks stop being papered over and real changes made?

The Makoko Oko-Baba market succeeded in typical Lagos fashion but has failed to adapt to changing times. These adaptations could save time, money, the environment, and lives. Better infrastructure, a commitment to planting for each tree felled, trains, mechanized boats, new machines. These improvements would not only reduce accidents and allow for the expansion of the enterprise but would give the business a real chance at sustainability over mere resilience.

Note

This report is an adaptation of a three-day investigative report earlier published by The Guardian Nigeria (print and online).

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by Eseosa Ikponmwosa

Faces of Ajiran

These portraits provide a window into life in an informal settlement in Lagos, uncovering the more gritty side of Lagos' urbanisation in a bare-knuckled presentation of the comings and goings of its inhabitants.

The concept of the flâneur as a custodian of city secrets, an urban observer-cum-street life connoisseur, and an embodiment and offshoot of the modernising industrial city garnered attention in the early 20th Century. Flânerie has since been hailed by many scholars as one of the best ways to engage and read a city. While photographer Eseosa Ikpomwosa in black jeans, a white football jersey, and nondescript baseball cap hardly conjures the image of the archetypal 19th Century Parisian gentleman, Eseosa and his work represent what one might call a transmutated version of flânerie as a product of alterations across time and space. In his series, Abandoned in Lagos, he probes neglected, unused spaces that reveal the nature of a city in flux. In this series, he makes a more personal investigation into lives behind the scenes of the city's urban stage. While considerably broad in thematic coverage, his work reflects the multidimensional nature of the city he explores – Lagos, Nigeria. Though the location is different, the technologies have changed, and the media is almost completely modified, one can argue that flânerie is very much alive and is still a useful tool to aid our understanding of contemporary cities.

Lagos is a city of contrasts. Words like paradox, juxtaposition, and hybrid are often used to describe the coexistence of various societal, cultural, and economic extremes within the city. Unskilled versus skilled, rich versus poor, ordered versus ad hoc, reflective versus reactive. At a first glance, these dualities might seem like issues with which all cities have to contend. However, considering Lagos' development over time its current urban trajectory gives significance to this discourse and points to the tenuous condition of the city's urban landscape. In Faces of Ajiran, Eseosa captures one of Lagos' extremes in a collection of portraits.

"I was drawn to their enormous will to survive despite living in harsh conditions."

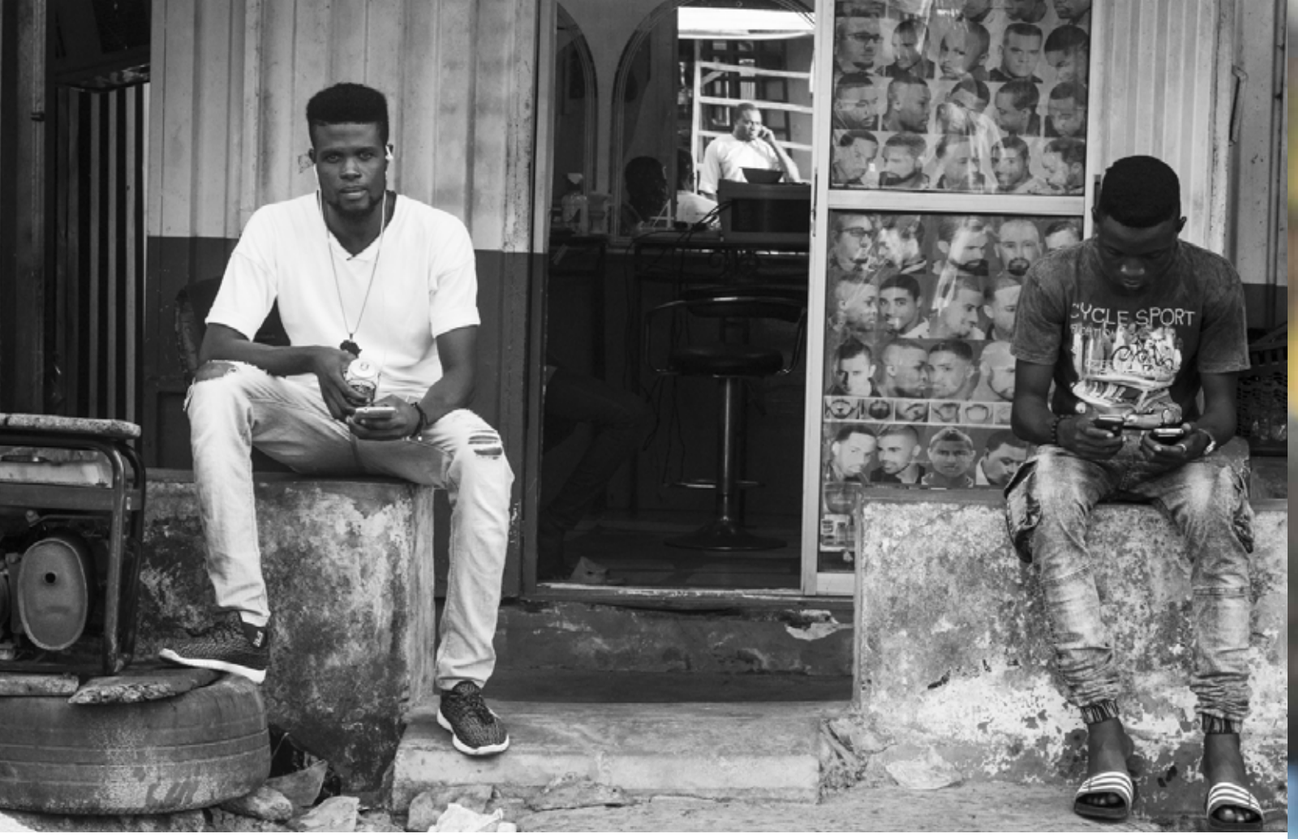
Ajiran is a community a few metres from one of the more affluent housing estates in Lagos. It is the home base of some of the low-skilled and domestic workers that serve the adjacent estate as well as the place of employment for other vocational workers who live elsewhere. For Eseosa, a resident of the aforementioned housing estate, outings to Ajiran began as a way to sharpen his observation and photography skills in this community just a stone-throw. The community was ripe fodder for his blossoming photography career. Soon, as he discussed his second love—football—with Ajiran's residents and hung out in his new friend's barbershop, the community and its people drew him in. It is interesting to note that Ajiran's patrons also include the affluent estate residents, as Eseosa mentions that his father regularly visits one of the mechanics for car repairs, and his mother regularly patronises one of the tailors there. It would seem that this community is a juxtaposition in and of itself.

From Shehu, a young apprentice tailor, to the drinks seller known as Dubai, who is very much in-the-know about all things related to popular culture, to Emmanuel, a barber who has dreams of making it big in rap music, Ajiran is a community built on hopes and strength of

Image 1
Shehu the apprentice tailor

Image 2
Barber-cum-rapper, Emmanuel

Image 3
Dubai, affable drinks trader



will. These smiling portraits are almost a veneer of the tough living conditions, a thin layer that could crack at any time. It could be a land grab, forced eviction, a flood, or political upheaval that causes the splinter. It might be next month, or it might be never. In this place where barbing salons are a surprisingly abundant feature, the future is uncertain, the conditions are fragile, but its people keep striving.

"Everybody there is a barber"

These photographs, and the people and place they depict illustrate a determination of Lagosians, indeed of humans across the globe, to identify opportunities and make a living despite contrary and/or unfavourable forces. And although thrive might seem very far off, each day is a step closer for the inhabitants of Ajiran and other neighbourhoods or settlements like it.

"By 6 o'clock every morning, everyone is up and at it for the day."

From Shehu, a young apprentice tailor, to the drinks seller known as Dubai, who is very much in-the-know about all things related to popular culture, to Emmanuel, a barber who has dreams of making it big in rap music, Ajiran is a community built on hopes and strength of will. These smiling portraits are almost a veneer of the tough living conditions, a thin layer that could crack at any time. It could be a land grab, forced eviction, a flood, or political upheaval that causes the splinter. It might be next month, or it might be never. In this place where barbing salons are a surprisingly abundant feature, the future is uncertain, the conditions are fragile, but its people keep striving.

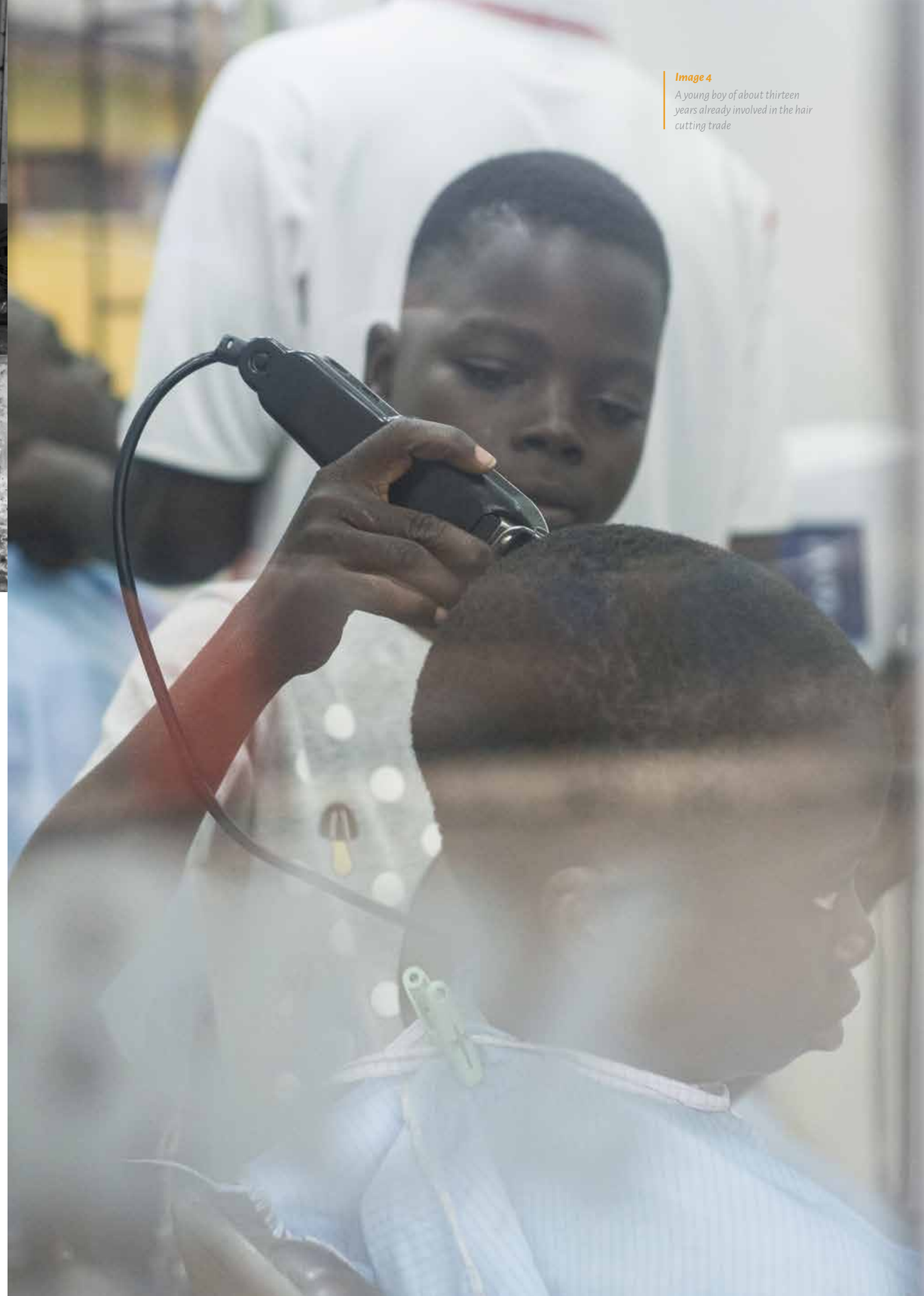


Image 4
A young boy of about thirteen years already involved in the hair cutting trade


OTTOGI


WESTFALIA
LAGOS

Image 1
Panoramic view of the Ebute-Metta Railway Compound in its context
Drone photo: Toms Kampars

This Land is Not for Sale: Exploring the Nigerian Railway Compound in Ebute-Metta, Lagos Mainland

by Baerbel Mueller

In the midst of Lagos' constantly-evolving urbanity exists an 'island', an ensemble of unused and barely used spaces: the Nigerian Railway Compound in Ebute-Metta, Lagos Mainland. Its socio-spatial qualities and interaction with and separation from its immediate environs illustrate forms and expressions of resilience in the city.

Lagos is shaped by incredible contrasts. Lagos is ambiguous. Lagos is vibrant. Lagos is demanding. All at once, Lagos is constantly growing and renewing itself, and teetering on the edge of a possible crisis. There seems to be no escape from a fate of urbanity, or 'cityness'.[1] However, there exists a resilient 'island', a place to breathe, lushly green, with an ensemble of (apparently) unused and barely used spaces: the Nigerian Railway Compound in Ebute-Metta, Lagos Mainland. This large, open space is located in Yaba, surrounded by a dense, intense neighbourhood, thick with heterogeneous activities (such as buying, selling, dwelling, and passing through). We tried to map the fragility, beauty, and potential of the vast, walled site. We tried to identify and emphasize its spatial isolation, relationships, connections, and atmospheres through cross-readings and temporary interventions: starting from its Running Shed as an architectural object, to the Railway Compound as an ensemble and urban island, which again is a national and continental waypoint, with a railroad track leading to Kano, and further.

The [a]FA Lagos Legacy lab was about identifying and testing the potentials and appropriation of this space and terrain through spatial and artistic interventions. It was a joint project between [applied] Foreign Affairs and Legacy 1995. A two-week residency took place on-site in February 2017. Informed by Legacy 1995´s agenda and location, namely its dedication to the built heritage of Lagos and its base in the refurbished Jaekel House within the Railway Compound, [a] FA Lagos Legacy was conceptualized as an experimental laboratory, with a speculative and artistic approach. The intention was to identify the spatial, programmatic, and socio-cultural potentials of the Railway Compound as a kind of enchanted terrain with intriguing, abandoned structures in

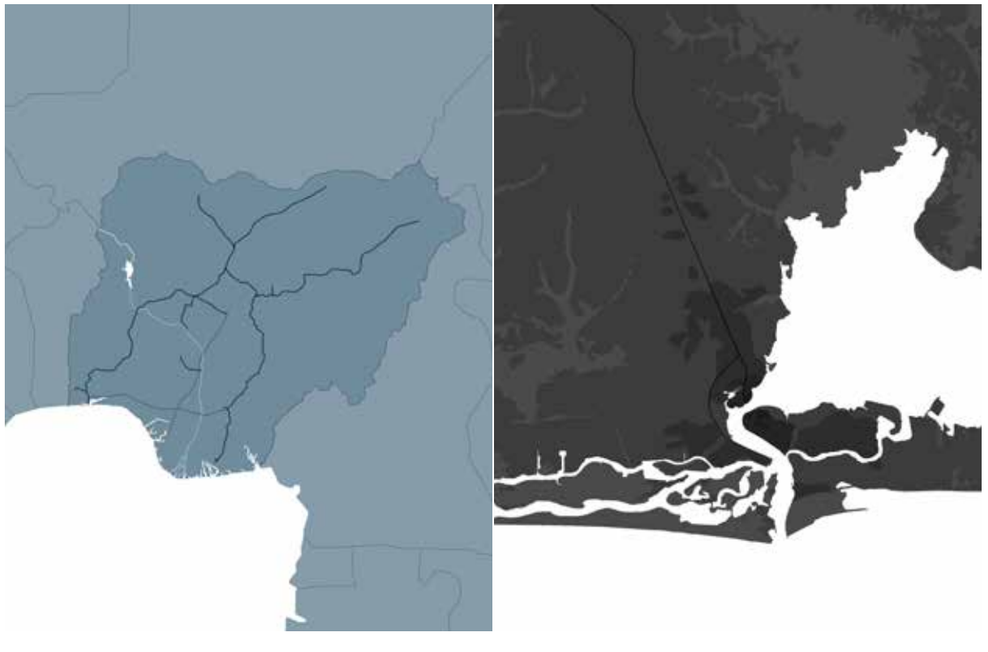
The Railway Compound largely embodies an unproductive zone within the urban centre which runs contrary to the desired image of a developing, prosperous, planned Lagos.

Nowadays, it is (to a large extent) an infrastructural wasteland, with a strong historical imprint and heritage.

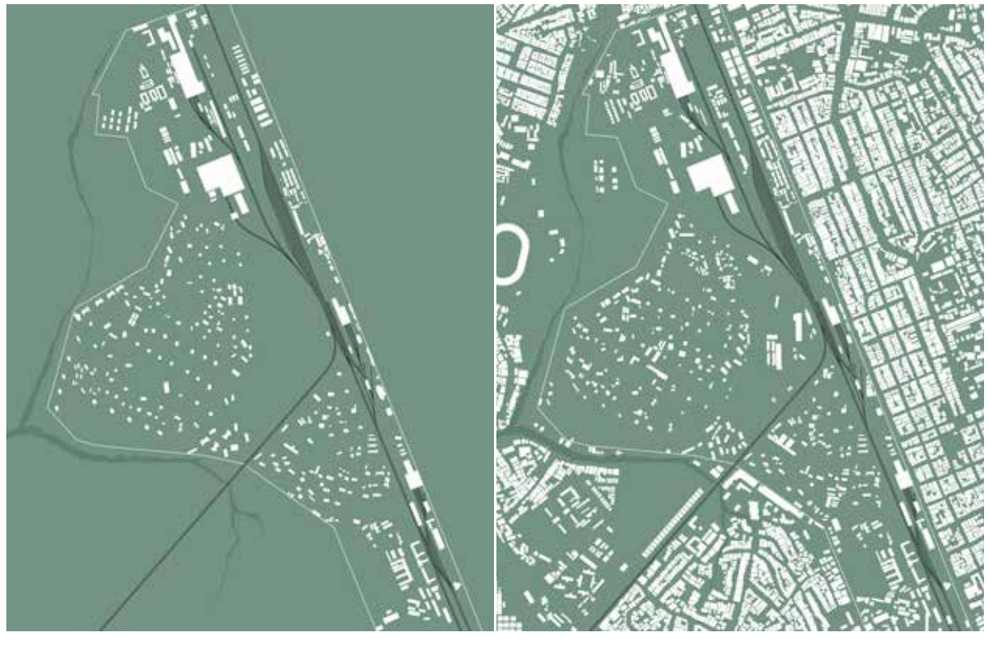
dense Mainland Lagos. Legacy's Running Shed had thereby been the "node" of interest from which the lab was started in a playful, transdisciplinary manner. An international team of five students of architecture and art collaborated with three Lagos-based artists. Navigating between field research, spatial articulations, and artistic interventions, questions of urbanity, space, history, identity, resilience, and agency were addressed. Working in this way also served as a kind of trial arrangement for experiencing the pure scale of the given site, and its potential future programming as a recreational space - accessible to diverse user groups and without commercially driven or exclusive interests. As a conceptual starting point, the lab centred around three topics: Heritage, Scale, and Terrain Vague.

By coining the French term "Terrain Vague" (1995), Spanish architect and philosopher Ignasi de Solà-Morales defined his interest in the concept of absence in the 'contemporary metropolis'. This interest focused on abandoned areas, obsolete and unproductive spaces, and buildings, often undefined and without specific limits. Other than the usual policy of reincorporating these places into the productive logic of the city by transforming them into reconstructed spaces, de Solà-Morales insisted on the value of their state of ruin and lack of productivity. He claimed their potential as spaces of freedom that serve as an alternative to the lucrative reality and demand for efficiency prevailing in the capitalist city.[2] Clearly, de Solà-Morales´s theory refers to the 20th-century, post-industrial, European metropolis. Projecting it onto the 21st-century African megacity might seem questionable. But looking at the Ebute-Metta Railway Compound, and trying to read its status quo, its past, and its potential future(s), the 'terrain vague' concept matches on several levels: its aura of decay, its status as a place of history, its hybrid condition between the wild, the urban, and the natural, the state of its ramshackle architectures and rusty infrastructures, which seem to enter into a kind of symbiosis with the existing vegetation. The Railway Compound thereby largely embodies an unproductive zone within the urban centre which runs contrary to the desired image of a developing, prosperous, planned Lagos. It punctures the ideal of order and consumption generally associated with urban prosperity, and its potential as "other" space has not yet been unfolded.

British colonial powers brought the railway to Nigeria during the second half of the 19th century. The railway became "the life-line of national economic development and the pioneer in the opening up of the country to development and contact with the outside world".[3] It was the railway that carried agricultural products to the ports, moved people and materials over long distances for trade, and made military operations possible – not to forget, all primarily for the benefit of the colonial ruler and imperial exploitation. The line from Lagos to the North was started in 1896 and opened in stages with the first passenger train rolling into Kano in 1913. The Railway Compound and train station in Ebute-Metta was a prominent node in this network. Nowadays, it is (to a large extent) an infrastructural wasteland, with a strong historical imprint and heritage. At the same time, it is "a marvellous representation of colonial architecture" [4] and a physical reminder of a colonial past of alienation. Legacy 1995 is interested in identifying, protecting, and restoring the built heritage of Lagos and Nigeria, whereby the notion of heritage is not limited to a specific historical epoch or cultural allocation, but comprises all of them: Yoruba, Brazilian, British colonial, and tropical modern architectural (master) pieces, monuments, and sites. Having successfully restored Jaekel House, a piece of colonial architecture dating back to 1898, which was built as a residence for the general manager of the Railway, the Running Shed has been on Legacy's agenda as a larger scale restoration project. The Shed still shelters old trains and wagons that once actively served the Nigerian railway, and the ambition has been to transform the impressive space into a railway museum. With this programmatic aim in mind, Legacy has worked on concepts for both the restoration of the structure and its redesign and reprogramming as



Figures 1, 2
The NRC railway network today: The NRC has ambitious plans to build new connections from east to west and from south to the central part of Nigeria / Lagos today: the urban sprawl of Lagos has reached unprecedented scale, while the railway tracks established more than a hundred years ago still remain in place.
Drawings: Toms Kampars



Figures 3, 4
Left: The Railway Compound as established by the British at the turn of the 19th and 20th Century, the beginning of railway infrastructure in Nigeria.
Right: Today the compound remains mostly separated from the rest of the city, which has densely developed far into Lagos Mainland.
Drawings: Toms Kampars

"Negotiations take place between landowners, property developers, the Lagos State Government, communities, artists, historians, and, rarely, the residents or users of a space."

a museum. Due to the lack of funds, the museum dream has stagnated. However, the decayed, iconic space has been successfully been host to some recent events, such as photo and fashion shoots, and a promotional fair [5]. These temporary activities led to the finding that there might be an alternative future for the Running Shed and the open space around it.

Against this backdrop, we focused our investigations in the course of our on-site lab first and foremost on the (spatial) status quo of the given site. Equipped with Solà-Morales´s 'terrain vague' text, and critical reflections on the topic of Lagos´s historic identity and built heritage, the question of scale was opened up. Navigating within the spectrum of all scales implies a shift from top-down urban planning perspectives and object-defined readings of architecture and infrastructure to relational approaches, which are so desperately needed for understanding any contemporary (African) urban condition. But where to begin: from the human body, the architectural object, the ensemble of historic buildings, the sum of all physical structures, or urban scale? From built-up spaces, open spaces, landscapes, or infrastructures, or all of them at the same time? Interrogating the Railway Compound from inside or outside, or both?

Her fascination with its border situation, the relation between inside and outside, was what made Katerina Joannides (one of the architects in the team) look carefully at the eastern edge of the Railway Compound, which is separated from Yaba´s Murtala Muhammed Way by a wall. In her work, the Running Shed is perceived as a mystical, empty stage, a cinematic void within the city, a collector of memories, events, and happenings. Adjacent to it stands an abandoned billboard, hanging over the wall that separates the site from "chaotic Lagos". To her, "this intermediate entity acts as a flagship, a representation of the space within the Running Shed, a showcase of its rich, atmospheric spatial quality" [6]. Casting the negative space between two train coaches and displaying it on the billboard for the outside

Image 2
THIS HOUSE IS NOT FOR SALE
Source: Mathias Juul Frost

to see, brings the interior to the exterior and turns the collected memories into tangible matter. "The memories are substantialized, condensed, and made visible, as a fragment of previously undistinguished space; the negative into the positive, the forgotten into the reclaimed". [7] Indeed, the compound wall marks a sharp border, which separates two worlds: the lived city with all its trade and traffic and the neglected, sleepy Railway Compound – and vice versa. The resilience of this extraordinary, peaceful 'island' somehow seems secured by its being hidden behind a wall, being isolated. For sure there are other factors at play – such as land ownership – which have saved this terrain from being swallowed up by the surrounding city, its historic structures being demolished, and its green zones being erased, up until now. All could easily be exchanged with, and transformed into, a dense, large-scale developer's project. For the sake of profit and the imperatives of capitalist urbanization, elsewhere in Lagos, the merciless elimination of the existing and historic is taking place, painfully enough. As architect and curator Papa Omotayo emphasized in a conversation with us, "negotiations take place between landowners, property developers, the Lagos State Government, communities, artists, historians, and, rarely, the residents or users of a space. However, these negotiations are not hinged around the value or worth of a heritage building but instead around how much profit one can receive." [8] According to this logic of development and (commercial) exploitability, rather than being valued as an inner urban refuge that encompasses the notions of history, tranquillity, and continuity, a place like the Railway Compound symbolizes stagnation. Urban activist and author Olamide Udoma-Ejorh uses even harsher words: "The urban development message that the state government pushes on both the local and international media is an aspiration towards being a modern city, a megacity, a shiny and glossy city where there are no flaws or blemishes. However, this city has no soul, no diversity, no culture, and no heritage. This is not the right approach for a multicultural city, where culture is very important. A light needs to go on to change

The young men, who have claimed the Running Shed as their place to 'chill', see themselves as protectors of the old carriages. They bring vitality to the rusted railway museum.

Image 3
In the archives of the NRC in the Railway Compound in Ebute-Metta
Source: Baerbel Mueller, Katerina Joannides

The Running Shed seems to secretly serve as a catalyst for process and transformation already.

the way Lagosians (on all levels of society) value our heritage. Whether we decide to focus on restoration and renovation, like with Legacy 1995, or appreciate the terrain vague, a switch must be flipped for the spaces that hold our history to be negotiated in a way that benefits not just one party but all parties and the city as a whole." [9]

The physical insularity or porosity of (the border of) the Railway Compound, and therefore the situation of the site itself in regards to its inclusiveness or exclusiveness, is not easily fully understood. Arriving by car, one needs to pass through the main gate of the Nigeria Railway Compound, which is 'controlled' by security, preventing uncontrolled access to cars and other vehicles, such as Okadas and Kekes, where pedestrians are free to pass through and enter. The nearby (historic) building complex is in official use and houses offices and archives of the Nigerian Railway Cooperation. When it comes to the seemingly abandoned, decayed structures onsite, there exists a parallel, informal world of inhabitation and appropriation – which is not surprising in the context of Lagos – but which one doesn't necessarily perceive at first glance. It was the intention of the artists Stephanie Rizaj and Tito Aderemi-Ibitola to reject reading the Running Shed as an emptied physical relict, and instead trace its existence as a lived, social space. Spending days inside the structure allowed them to get in contact with its users and inhabitants. Tito Aderemi-Ibitola invited members of the local community, who utilize the Running Shed as a kind of living room, to tell their stories through music, poetry, and collected interviews. "The young men, who have claimed the Running Shed as their place to 'chill', see themselves as protectors of the old carriages. They bring vitality to the rusted railway museum. Their dreams extend past the constraints of their situation and their aspirations as large as those who first mapped the Nigerian railway system." [10] One of these young men is Nature Boy, who came to the place eight years ago, living and working there ever since: "What I have learned from this place has gotten me this far. I do art for living. That's what I do. [10] I do graffiti to improve and inspire Nigeria. Not to think art as hobby, but as a means of sending a positive message to other people."[11] The Running Shed seems to secretly serve as a catalyst for process and transformation already. It creates room for certain kinds of informal inhabitations and interventions that have to do with empowerment and the making of shared space.

The Running Shed (and its immediate surroundings) is not the only a building or locality inside the Railway Compound that carries the aura of the terrain vague and urban wilderness but is also appropriated and programmed by its self-proclaimed agents with their own rules, demands, and time-scapes. This interplay of absence and presence of utilization generates a kind of heterogeneous environment, which is neither natural nor man-made, neither rural nor urban, neither productive nor consumptive, but a hybrid of all. Reading, narrating, and cherishing the Railway Compound in this way - as an interstitial space and a liminal condition - might offer alternative interpretations and more inclusive projections for its future. In this sense, the most radical spatial and programmatic strategy for the Running Shed as a structure would be to think of it as a space whose use is constantly changing, without changing its form, but rather changing its occupancy; actually a strategy with which Lagos is – although not aware of and not everywhere – already familiar with.

In his 1995 essay on terrain vague, de Solà-Morales stated that: "When architecture and urban design project their desire onto a vacant space, a terrain vague, they seem incapable of doing anything other than introducing violent transformations, changing estrangement into citizenship, and striving at all costs to dissolve the uncontaminated margin of the obsolete into the realism of efficacy." A way out is "attention to continuity: not the continuity of the planned, efficient, and legitimized city, but of the flows, the energies, the rhythms established by the passing of time and the loss of limits…." [12] Both the Ebute-Metta

Reading, narrating, and cherishing the Railway Compound in this way - as an interstitial space and a liminal condition - might offer alternative interpretations and more inclusive projections for its future.

Image 4
MEMORIES MATTER
Katerina Joannides, Installation,
Source: Katerina Joannides

Image 5
MEMORIES MATTER
Katerina Joannides, Installation,
Source: Katerina Joannides.

Railway Compound as an urban island and the Running Shed as a powerful, fragile attractor desperately deserve such an "attention to continuity", beyond all idyllic romanticism, truly offering space for coexistence and diversity, truly allowing for productive friction, creativity, and a moment of calm; thereby epitomizing a place of resilience, a territory of emancipation.

Endnotes

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Credits

[a]FA Lagos Legacy is a joint project between [applied] Foreign Affairs and Legacy 1995. A two-week on-site lab took place at the Nigerian Railway Compound in Ebute-Metta in February 2017. With: Adeola Olagunju, Aderemi Adegbite, Baerbel Mueller, Cansu Ergün, Frida Robles, Jon Krizan, Katerina Joannides, Mathias Juul Frost, Mogbolahan Ajala, Sola Akintunde, Stefanie Theuretzbacher, Stephanie Rizaj, Tito Aderemi-Ibitola, and Toms Kampars.

[applied] Foreign Affairs is a laboratory at the Institute of Architecture of the University of Applied Arts Vienna that investigates spatial, infrastructural, environmental, and cultural phenomena in rural and urban sub-Saharan Africa.

Legacy 1995 was formed in 1995 by a group of professionals. Legacy has seen itself become the foremost historical and environmental interest group of Nigeria. The objective is the gathering of committed Nigerians and non-Nigerians for the common cause of preserving and promoting the character and appearance of historic monuments, the environment and cultural entities in all parts of Nigeria.

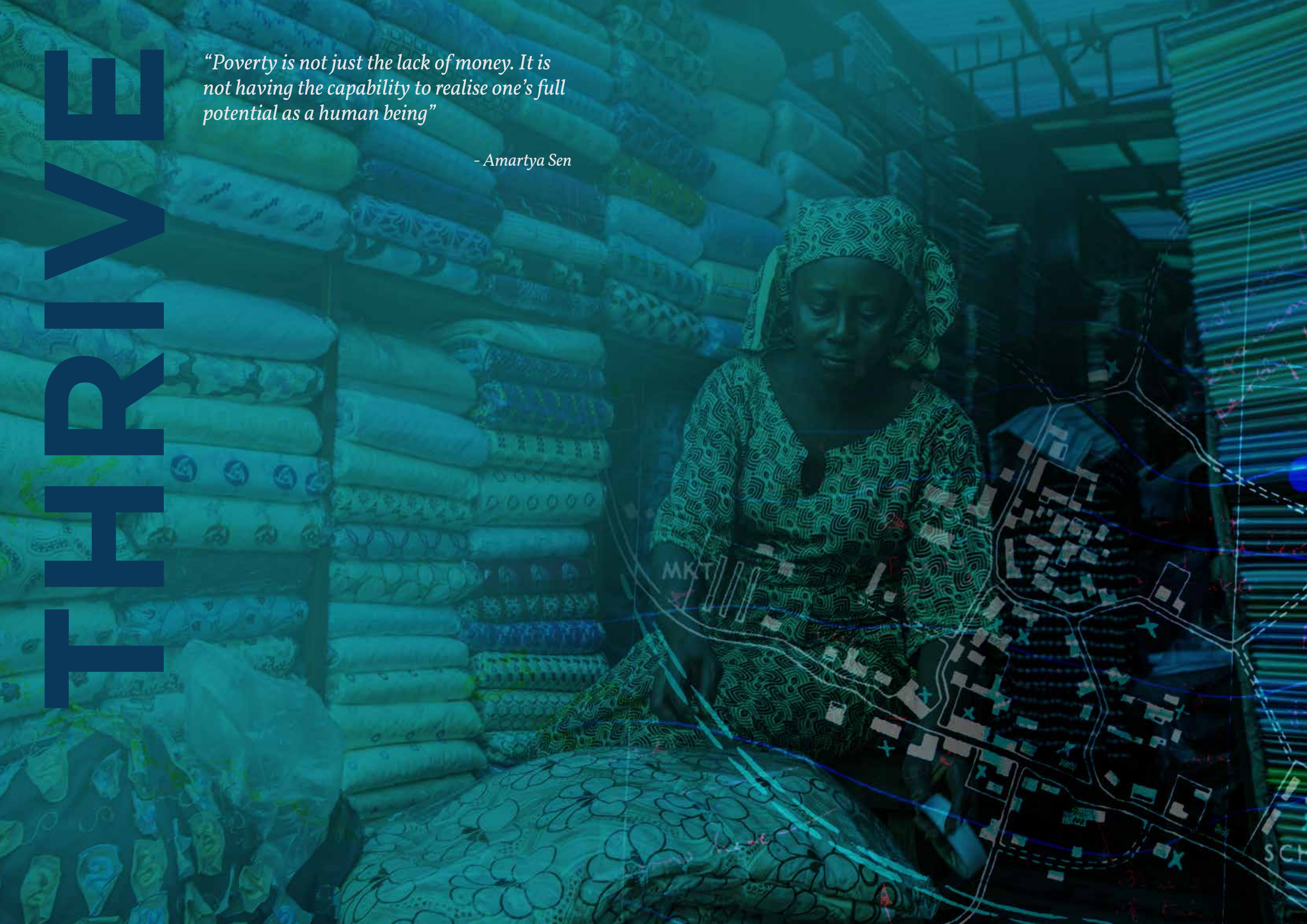
Baerbel Mueller is an architect and founder of nav_s baerbel mueller (navigations in the field of architecture and urban research within diverse cultural contexts), which has focused on projects located on the African continent since 2000. She is head of the [applied] Foreign Affairs lab at the Institute of Architecture, University of Applied Arts Vienna.

Image 6
INTERSTICES, Adeola Olagunju, Video work exhibited in one of the train carriages
February 25, 2017
Source: Allyn Gaestel

DRIVE

"Poverty is not just the lack of money. It is not having the capability to realise one's full potential as a human being"

- Amartya Sen



Achieving Resilience Through 4P: A Nigerian Cities Network Model

by Luqman Rabe

Evidence exists that Nigerian local governments are being encouraged to take action, but lack of monitoring has resulted in a failure to build and capitalise on the early initiatives. Local governments need to understand that they must create an enabling environment for innovation to flourish.

On my Twitter feed, I often see tweets from Justice and Empowerment Initiative (JEI) about recent forced evictions in the city of Lagos in a bid anchored by the Lagos State Government to develop and redevelop the city's waterfront. These forced evictions have resulted in rendering over 30,000[1] inhabitants of waterfront communities homeless and are presented as viable urban solutions justifiable by the eventual benefits of proposed redevelopment projects and the security concerns they allegedly address.

Image 1
Forced Eviction in Otodo Gbame
Source: Justice and Empowerment Initiative (JEI)

This was a common response during the 1970s and 1980s, particularly in political environments predominated by centralized decision-making, weak local governance and administration, non-democratic urban management, non-recognition of civil society movements, and lack of legal protection against forced evictions.[2] However, this method fails; it simply forces slum dwellers to settle elsewhere thereby creating new slums.

With an estimated 48.6% of Nigeria's population living in urban areas[3], Nigeria is not only one of the most populous countries in Africa, it is also highly urbanised. Between 1965 and now, the population of Nigeria grew from 50 million to about 200 million according to UN population data and is expected to be the third most populous country in the world by 2050 overtaking the United States. By 2050, Africa is projected to reach 1.2 billion urban dwellers. Nigeria, in particular, is projected to contribute 8 percent of the world's population growth (212 million out of 2.5 billion)[4].

As the country's population grows, cities will grow and most of the urban growth will be noticed in established urban settlements like Lagos, Kano, and Abuja. The city of Lagos is a

The "informal" in Nigerian cities are innovative responses to the needs of the people; it adapts to local conditions and traditions.

Cities are shaped by people and are where people meet to exchange ideas, trade, and make innovations.

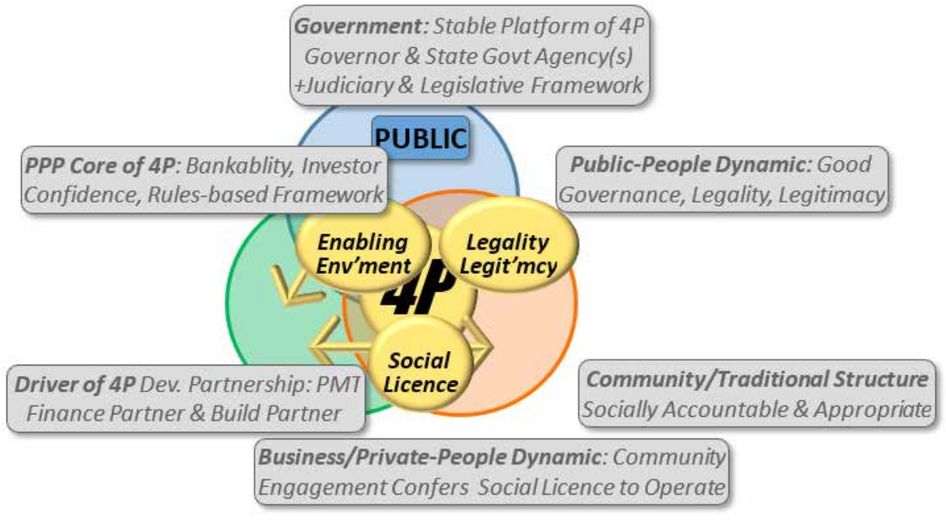
magnificent city with an estimated population of 23.3million and an annual growth rate of 3.2% according to the Lagos Bureau of Statistics[5]. The city will most likely continue to face a rise in population at a phenomenal rate due to the movement of people into cities in search of economic opportunities. With growing cities come deepening inequalities, and many of the sources of these inequalities are not intrinsic to the cities themselves but are linked to the operation of the global economy in relation to the kinds of skills that are rewarded and those that are constantly undervalued.

The fault line in Nigerian cities is the difference between the formal and the informal – of which every city has a mix. Formality is observed (regularised) in form of settlements that were planned by the government (affordable housing units, land allocations for development schemes), while informality is expressed in choices made by the residents. These choices are expressed as a reflection of the cultural, social, and sometimes economic aspirations of the people.

Recently, the Lagos State Government implemented a total ban on street hawking and trading, resulting in the loss of livelihoods for many who rely on street trading as means of living. Informality is often viewed as illegal, mainly because it is not fully regulated by the government and other public authorities. Informality however also presents opportunities. An estimated 50–65 percent of the GDP in Tanzania and Nigeria was accounted for via the informal economy[6].

The "informal" in Nigerian cities are innovative responses to the needs of the people; it adapts to local conditions and traditions. The informal housing sector in the city of Katsina is an example of this local approach, based on the Emirate Land Tenure system, which is outside of the law. The Mai Unguwa or local Ward Head, appointed by the Emir, acts as the witness and adjudicator of sales transactions[7]. Local developers and local investors, in turn, develop cost-effective houses that reflect local conditions and traditions.

Figure 1
NRCN 4P Governance Model[11]



The challenge for Nigeria's cities is that they already struggle to meet base performance standards – utilities, transport, infrastructure, and housing. There is no one size fits all model for how to manage rapid urbanization, but cities need to work for everyone in a holistic and inclusive way. How does Nigeria deal with the rate of growth of its cities? How can cities in Nigeria perform better under pressure of population growth and urbanisation?

Nigeria Resilient Cities Network

The Nigeria Resilient Cities Network (NRCN) is a local platform for interaction of ideas and processes that will advocate for resilience and be a place for knowledge sharing and experiences within the Nigerian context.

In 2014, the city of Enugu became successful in its bid to be part of the 100 Resilient Cities (100RC) created by the Rockefeller Foundation. 100RC helps cities around the world build resilience to physical, social, and economic challenges. The cities of Kaduna, Kano, Katsina, and Lagos also submitted their bid to be part of the foundation's programme in 2015 and the city of Lagos was successful.

Realistically, the 100RC programme cannot accept all bids, and consideration for the unsuccessful bids of cites like Kano and Kaduna birthed the idea for a national network for the promotion of resilience. The central idea was to incorporate the existing conceptual basis of the Rockefeller Foundations Resilient Cities programme with local resources and strategies[8]. With the support of Department for International Development (DFID) funding, the Nigeria Infrastructure Advisory Facility (NIAF) formed the core of the NRCN which can now be found at the Centre for Spatial Information Science (CSIS) in Ahmadu Bello University, Zaria.

The NRCN is a local platform set up through the Effective Cities work stream of NIAF to help build resilience to rapid urbanization, physical, social, and economic challenges in Nigerian cities. The NRCN will facilitate resource sharing, learning, and support among urban communities in Nigeria.

During its inaugural workshop held at Ahmadu Bello University (ABU) Zaria, on 14th July 2016, the "Zaria Declaration" was made to represent a shared vision for better and resilient cities. In a second workshop held in Abuja in November 2016, the declaration was endorsed by representatives from Lagos, Kaduna, Kano, Bauchi, Minna, Katsina, Enugu, and Port-Harcourt.

NRCN 4P Governance Model

Cities are shaped by people and are where people meet to exchange ideas, trade, and make innovations. As the cities grow, they in turn lead, shape, and influence what people do within a city. Ambitious cities, like Masdar city in Abu Dhabi and Lavasa in India, are developed from scratch, with a goal of hubs of economic growth. But as these new cities are developed they must allow for change over time and accommodate the needs of their inhabitants.

With cities growing at an unprecedented rate and changing the way we live and work, this could be a golden age of city planning.

The NRCN operates as a "network of city networks", aimed at providing a people-oriented approach to city governance and development through its governance model known as 4P: Public-Private-People-Partnership.

The 4P approach was born from research and consultation with CSIS and NRCN[9] in the city of Katsina[10]. The model is based on the ideology that the people are not to be considered an afterthought as they are the users of the city. It is generally recognized today, that increasing the level of stakeholder participation in city planning processes results in greater focus and builds more productive, liveable, and resilient cities. Successful cities cannot be built by the government alone, the people and social component of the city need to inform decisions and not to be considered as an afterthought.

The 4P is an innovative governance model, which bridges the gap between the formal and informal economies, the State and the People, planning and financing of urban development, affordable housing and service provision. Where the government lacks the means and capacity to provide adequate services, it is necessary to engage the community directly and tap into the self-help capacity. 4P engages communities, instead of neglecting or ignoring their needs[12].

An example of a city that has applied the people approach in its governance is the city of Katsina. The city of Katsina is one with dual townships. It consists of the old traditionally planned city and the modern planned area comprising mostly the GRA, commercial, and residential layouts. It is a city that has sprawled uncontrollably with an increasing number of informal settlements. Though there may be some semblance of planning, these settlements are considered informal and or illegal due to the absence of approved plans. These settlements are characterised by insufficient infrastructure provision.

Where the government lacks the means and capacity to provide adequate services, it is necessary to engage the community directly and tap into the self-help capacity.

The city of Katsina is host to a lot of informality but is not without a working process. In an effort to reduce the lack of infrastructures within the city's informal settlement, urban planning interventions retrofit basic infrastructure (drainage, electricity) through the direct engagement of the community and by tapping into the self-help capacity of the residents.

Current Activities That Support 4P

The German agency for international cooperation (GIZ) is supporting the Unslumming Minna 4P urban governance project to promote resilient, inclusive urban development in Minna, Niger State. The NRCN is working together with the Niger State Geographic Information Systems (NIGIS)

This project will focus on Gidan Kwano 'Students Village', an informal settlement opposite the main gate of Federal University of Technology Minna. The project approach is to apply the 4P governance model bringing together the urban land market stakeholders; the Government, financiers, and local people and traditional rulers into a partnership process, to drive sustainable development[13]. The project is expected to produce a slum strategy plan that will reduce the growth and spread of slums in the city.

The NRCN governance model advocates effective participation among relevant stakeholders of a city. This includes the private sector and civil society as well as representatives of persons with disabilities, academic institutions, migrants, and cultural associations in an effort to

Image 2
Open space in front of the Emir's palace in Katsina, utilized as a microenterprise
Photo: Simon Cusah

identify opportunities for urban economic development, as well as identify and address existing and emerging challenges within the Nigerian context.

Making Cities For Everyone

With cities growing at an unprecedented rate and changing the way we live and work, this could be a golden age of city planning. Cities in Nigeria need to recognize that top-down strategies do not work. Decision-making, planning, and implementation processes must engage from the neighbourhood and community level, up to the local government and state government level in an integrated and socially inclusive way.

In his essay Housing as a Verb, John Turner argued that housing is what people in communities do together to build their community. There is no one single prescription for improving urbanization and achieving sustainable development, but in order to achieve vibrant economies and governance as well as cities that are inclusive and affordable, urban planners in Nigeria need to create conditions in which mobility, access, and accommodation within a city is not determined by how wealthy you are.

To achieve resilience, Nigerian cities must employ a participatory approach in planning through consultation with, and the participation of, the citizens, their leaders, and representatives. The plan cannot be imposed from without; it must be generated within the city itself.

Image 3
Open space in front of the Emir's palace in Katsina
Source: Simon Gusah

Endnotes

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Climate Resilient Communities and Local Governance

Evidence exists that Nigerian local governments are being encouraged to take action, but lack of monitoring has resulted in a failure to build and capitalise on the early initiatives. Local governments need to understand that they must create an enabling environment for innovation to flourish.

by Kofo Adeleke

In the 21st century, the stresses faced by cities are too numerous to mention but there are some significant ones, especially in developing countries. These include rapid population growth in vulnerable areas such as coastlines and floodplains; poor drainage and solid waste management systems; degradation of natural wetlands and vegetation that provide flood and erosion protection; deteriorating infrastructure; poor emergency services; and impacts of climate change such as extreme weather conditions. Cities are also vulnerable to political, social, and economic change, which can produce a different set of risks, such as civil unrest, terrorism, and other forms of instability, which have to be managed to ensure equilibrium in urban ecosystems.

The impact of human activity on the earth's atmosphere will have an effect on the environment and our communities for a very long time. Preparation must be made for a different world where weather patterns are going to be far less predictable. Local governments have always had to consider making provisions to minimise risks in a range of areas but now must take a much more enlarged perspective and consider global warming and the risk of climate change. In the face of this, cities are now being judged on how resilient they are and how prepared they are to face these uncertainties and minimise risks.

But what does Resilience really mean?

Just in the same way the term 'sustainability' has become rather stretched, and some may argue overused, the term 'resilience' is also being used in many different contexts. Resilience has several meanings in academic discourse, and is derived from the Latin term resilire, which means, "to bounce back." It is a term borrowed from ecology and has been used in many disciplines such as science, medicine, and psychology to identify the

Image 1
Fuel Efficient Stoves: Safer for Women and Saving the Environment
Source: CCDI

Local governments have always had to consider making provisions to minimise risks in a range of areas but now must take a much more enlarged perspective...

Image 2
Building Resilience Brings New Opportunities
Source: CCDI

'ability to recover'. In disaster management, it is being used to describe how communities, urban systems, and the built environment recover from natural and human-induced disasters. Although there is not one single agreed definition, there is broad consensus that cities must become resilient to a wider range of risks and stresses in order to be prepared for climate change. Building resilience must include sound and equitable urban development.

The term 'resilience' really took hold with national governments in 2005 when The Hyogo Framework for Action was endorsed by 168 members of the United Nations, to ensure that reducing risks to disasters and building resilience to disasters became priorities for governments and local communities. 'The priorities for action are to build institutional capacity, to know your risks, to build understanding and awareness, to reduce underlying risk factors and be prepared and ready to act'.[1]

What does a Resilient City Look Like?

A resilient city reduces disaster occurrences, has an inclusive approach to governance, good knowledge of where the risks and vulnerabilities are in the community and encourages participation in decision-making. Monitoring and early warning systems, and technologies are integrated into the city's systems and used to anticipate and mitigate the impacts of disasters, to protect infrastructure and community assets, including cultural heritage. A resilient city responds quickly and implements speedy recovery strategies to restore basic services so that social, institutional, and economic activities can resume quickly in the event of a crisis. A climate resilient community is one that takes proactive steps to prepare for and help reduce the vulnerabilities and risks associated with climate change.

Increasing resilience helps to save lives and money before an event occurs and builds stronger, safer, and more secure communities. Building resilience helps in

Image 3
Growing Food at Home in Small Spaces
Source: CCDI

understanding current levels of exposure and potential impacts from adverse events, thereby helping a community take responsibility for its own disaster risk. Putting measures in place to increase resilience helps gauge the community's capacity to cope with adverse effects and identifies where improvements are needed. It fosters a culture of self-sufficiency and cooperation among all members of the community in working towards a common goal.

Local Governance under the Spotlight

Hurricane Harvey brought unprecedented rainfall and flooding to parts of Texas in the United States in August and September of 2017, highlighting concerns about how the affected communities cope and recover from the disaster much like Hurricane Katrina in 2005. Local governments are the first responders to such disasters and should know and understand the communities they represent. Actions to prepare for climate change need to fit the conditions of different communities. It is at the local level that climate change impacts are most felt and can be understood best. The democratic mandate of local government, its close proximity to citizens through the services it delivers, and its regulatory and planning responsibilities, all indicate a frontline position for tackling climate change. Also understanding and utilising local knowledge is vital.

Being prepared for climate change means that actions have to fit the needs of each community and local governments are in the best position to take on this role. Local governments have always had to consider making provisions to minimise risks in a range of areas but now they need to take a much more enlarged perspective and consider global warming and the risk of climate change. In the Philippines for instance, the important role of local government in managing risks and building resilience has been underlined by government legislation. The 2010 National Disaster Risk Reduction and Management Act requires local governments to allocate 5 percent of their

The overall response was very successful; some of the participants showed impressive initiative and were growing pineapples, yams, and herbs in very small spaces in their yards.

total revenues to disaster risk response with a priority on preparedness.[2] Many countries' and organisation's wealthy regions have invested heavily in developing frameworks and strategies to influence policymaking at the local level on resilience and disaster risk reduction.

Actions to Build Local Resilience

Compared to the vast amount of information available from western countries, there is very little information about measures being taken specifically at local government level in Africa to prepare for climate change and reduce disaster risks. However, some notable steps are being taken in some localities across Africa. For example, Kenya recently enforced a plastic bag ban in a bid to fight pollution;[3] and in Cape Town (South Africa), there is an ongoing cross-sector project – in line with national policy encouraging community action – to improve living and safety conditions in densely populated informal settlements targeted specifically at building resilience through partnerships.[4] These are the beginnings of resilience awareness being mainstreamed into national and community policy frameworks and planning mechanisms.

The overall goal of the project activity was to gather support and commitments to implement climate change adaptation interventions at the local level

Mobilising Local Governments in Lagos State

The Lagos State Government, under Governor Fashola, also invested time and effort in raising awareness and encouraging action on climate change at the local level. Evidence exists that Nigerian local governments are being encouraged to take action, but lack of monitoring has resulted in a failure to build and capitalise on the early initiatives. The Lagos State Government joined forces with bodies such as the Clinton Climate Initiative and established relationships with important organisations like the International Council for Local Environmental Initiatives (ICLEI) who have provided a lot of policy assistance and technical expertise to governments all around the world. Lagos is also a member city of the 100 Resilient Cities, which is a Rockefeller Foundation initiative, 'to help cities around the world become more resilient to the physical, social and economic challenges that are a growing part of the 21st century'.[5]

The crucial role of local government characterised the collaboration between Community Conservation and Development Initiatives (CCDI) and Heinrich Boell Stiftung (HBS) to identify local mitigation and adaptation strategies that enhance local development agendas in Lagos State local governments.[6] Top-down strategies at the federal and state level are as necessary as bottom-up approaches at local community level. CCDI, with assistance from HBS, decided to support action on climate change at the local level by building capacity within local governments to develop expertise in preparing communities for climate change. The overall goal of the project activity was to gather support and commitments to implement climate change adaptation interventions at the local level, which can improve livelihoods and build the capacity of local government and communities to take action and participate effectively in influencing climate change policymaking.

A series of training workshops and stakeholder forums were organised which covered topics such as climate change, transport, sea level rise, public health, waste management, energy efficiency, sustainable buildings, food security, agriculture, urban greening, water management, disaster risk reduction, and eco budgets. After an assessment of needs and priorities within the local governments, a number of possible climate change mitigation and adaptation actions and strategies at the local level were developed

The activities took place in three local governments with known vulnerabilities: Eti Osa, Lekki, and Yaba. All are situated in low-lying vulnerable coastal locations and characterised by fragile ecosystems, rapid population growth, limited resources and, social inequalities. The chosen activities, which community members and local government officials considered as priorities, could be described as the 'low hanging fruit', in terms of availability of funds, time constraints, and accessibility.

Fuel Efficient Stoves Protect Women and the Environment

About 95 million people in Nigeria, representing approximately 67% of the population depend on wood for daily cooking, which is predominantly through the traditional open fire method. This results in about 90% of energy loss. It is also dangerous to women's health and the long hours spent sourcing fuelwood inhibits their social and economic development.[7] In many developing countries, women are predominantly responsible for sourcing fuelwood and food preparation. The inefficiencies of cooking with wood and the negative impact on environmental conditions in Nigeria and women's health are well documented. Deforestation and desertification are major concerns and wood demand for household energy largely exceeds the available renewable wood biomass.

Quite fortuitously, the timing of the fuel-efficient stove project coincided with the entry of a range of heavily marketed fuel-efficient stoves into the Nigerian market. So, instead of presenting the stoves as the subject of slideshows in environmental workshops as in times past, CCDI ran three demonstration workshops in three selected local government areas in partnership with the stoves' distributors. The women in these local government areas were directly involved in the practical demonstrations and tested all the stoves by cooking commonly eaten foods such as rice, beans, and stew. Through participation in a question and answer session, they found that the new stoves would save them time and money, be less detrimental to health and lessen the impacts on the environment. They also learnt about opportunities to market the stoves themselves through joining a cooperative.

Local governments in Lagos have a regulatory responsibility for food vendors. Local government officials raised the idea of introducing food vendors to fuel-efficient stoves, and also the possibility of making the use of them mandatory to improve air quality and general conditions within local governments.

Growing Food at Home

Food security was another one of the priorities that came out of the local climate action plans. Climate change is affecting a number of economic sectors, including agriculture, and horticultural activities in urban areas should be encouraged for future food security. Over the years, communities in Lagos have increasingly witnessed shortages of staples such as tomatoes. Sometimes this has been as a result of poor harvests and severe weather conditions in other parts of the country. Political upheaval, conflicts, and insurgencies can also result in food shortages. Ikota, a low-income community located in Eti-Osa Local Government in Lagos State, embraced urban horticulture by growing their own vegetables in pots and buckets.

Over a six month period, about 14 Ikota households were involved in this climate change awareness and adaptation activity, to encourage and highlight the opportunities for growing vegetables in homes where

space is extremely limited. The participants, both female and male and of different age ranges, planted pepper and okra in pots and buckets. Funds were made available for the purchase of seeds, topsoil, and gardening pots, and the local chief, who has extensive farming knowledge, supported the activity. Local roadside horticulturalists were on hand to teach the participants how to plant the vegetable seeds in the pots. Over the six month period, CCDI made a number of inspection visits to monitor the project and provide guidance to the participants. Momentum grew, more volunteers joined, more seeds and topsoil was added and people started to add their own broken buckets for planting use.

The overall response was very successful; some of the participants showed impressive initiative and were growing pineapples, yams, and herbs in very small spaces in their yards. Press coverage of the initiative created a demand for more information, and a step-by-step guide to growing food at home was produced to fill the gap.

With further support and encouragement, the project has the potential to be scaled up considerably, especially with a little private sector support.

One component of the Growing Food at Home project was supposed to involve Eti-Osa Local Government providing a very small parcel of land, which could be sub-divided into small strips to demonstrate the urban allotment system for growing vegetables. However, the land could not be procured.

This shows, on one hand, the high premium placed on land in urban areas, but also the inability to fully grasp the urgency of prioritising climate change adaptation and building community resilience.

A resilient city reduces disaster occurrences, has an inclusive approach to governance, good knowledge of where the risks and vulnerabilities are in the community, and encourages participation in decision-making.

Factors Affecting Uptake of Local Actions

Over the course of the project, there were many barriers that hindered the implementation and effectiveness of suggested local actions to increase resilience. One of the most significant was land use. Many of the activities required land. Waste management, and sorting and collection activities, which could have boosted local revenues, require space, as well as allocation of land for allotment systems to grow food. Also, the successful establishment of Local Emergency Management Committees (LEMCs), whose objective is to anticipate and prepare for disasters and assess and recover from them, needed a small amount of budgetary support to be functional.

Many responsibilities that are traditionally given to local governments such as waste management, transport, and emergency management have been centralised by the state government. Opinions from the focus group discussions were very much aligned with the view that decentralisation of administrative functions can improve efficiency and equity in service delivery, and also improve policymaking. However, the current system of centralisation of key functions of managing waste and green spaces, amongst others, has really weakened the ability of local governments to identify, manage, and safeguard the environment and critical natural assets. Concentration of power at state level stifles local government initiatives but the style of local government leadership, which also concentrates power and decision-making, also stifles the ability of local government officers to perform their duties and make educated decisions. Although the Lagos State Government continues to stress the autonomy of local governments, the reality is that they are constantly waiting for directions or permissions from the state level.

As a consequence, their experience and capacity for policymaking, project implementation, and management have been greatly curtailed.

Participation is the Key

Participation in the planning of the activities and the opportunity to dialogue with government officials was highly valued by the community members involved in the project. When people are fully involved in trying new initiatives it gives them greater vision into the problem to be solved. But it does seem that democracy, in which public participation is enshrined, ends once the local elections are over and only begins when the next campaign is announced. There are clear social divisions in many local governments.

Public participation and a strengthening of relationships can be achieved in communities if individuals across income, social, and class strata unite their voices in demanding greater participation in local government issues, leading to better services and sound land use planning practices.

Gated communities are springing up in Lagos with much more frequency, where they organise their own water and power needs, their own tree planting schemes and road maintenance, and in effect run 'mini local governments' within these estates.

However, the truth is that these gated communities cannot remain immune to the environmental threats and degradation going on all around, and it is very much in their own interest to be concerned and more vocal about local vulnerabilities and poorer neighbourhoods so that their communities remain strong and safe. After all, Western governments, realising that weak communities in developing countries can in the long-term affect the economic and social stability in their own countries, are actively producing policy recommendations and guidance aimed at developing resilience for rapidly urbanising communities in Africa, Asia, and Latin America.

Making cities more resilient is a huge opportunity to make improvements in many areas, such as health, social equity and sustainable economic development, job creation, and clean energy technologies to name a few. Making cities more resilient is not easy or cheap but it is urgent. It is very difficult to eliminate risks, but with collaborative planning and participation they can be reduced. Best practices in resilience and disaster risk reduction must be part of urban design. Building resilience comes from the active participation of citizens in local communities. Residents should work in collaboration with the local government, and with support from the private sector.

Local governments need to understand that they must create an enabling environment for innovation to flourish. The barriers to doing this need to come down, and policies put in place in tune to support local efforts to establish adaptive actions. They need to show more leadership and be more supportive of initiatives that can protect the community and make them more resilient in the face of risks.

Image 4
Real Democracy is Community Participation in Decision-Making
Source: CCDI

Endnotes

1 UNISOR Making Cities Resilient: Summary for Policymakers: A global snapshot of how local governments reduce disaster risk – April 2013

2 UNISOR Making Cities Resilient: Summary for Policymakers: A global snapshot of how local governments reduce disaster risk – April 2013

3 https://www.theguardian.com/environment/2017/aug/28/kenya-brings-in-worlds-toughest-plastic-bag-ban-four-years-jail-or-40000-fine

4 UNISOR Making Cities Resilient: Summary for Policymakers: A global snapshot of how local governments reduce disaster risk –April 2013 p. 10 https://www.preventionweb.net/files/33059_33059finalprinterversionexecutivesu.pdf

5 100 Resilient Cities www.100resilientcities.org

6 CCDI 'Mobilising Local Governments for Climate Action' (2011)

7 Henrich Böll Stiftung. 'Improved Wood fuel Stove Workshop and Exhibition 'Fueling the MDGs' (2007)

About the Project

Open City Lagos (OCL) is a project developed by the Heinrich Boll Foundation, Nigeria and Nsibidi Institute, Lagos to explore perspectives and experiences of inclusion and responsiveness in Lagos and other cities across the globe - in terms of migration, mobility and access to urban services, or the ability sustain a living, influence local development and participate in public and civic life. Over the last three years, the OCL project has served as a cross-cultural, multidisciplinary platform for knowledge exchange centred around the socially inclusive development of contemporary cities. The first phase of this exploration culminated in the maiden publication which was launched in March 2016. A series of events focused on multiple facets of urbanisation – from glaring issues such as transportation deficits to the more nuanced and sensitive issues of gender and religion – have also been organised under the OCL umbrella.

In 2017, the focus of OCL was shifted to investigate the emerging concept of urban resilience as a key to unlocking sustainable urban development. Considering that many developing cities survive and thrive by the sheer tenacity, versatility and innovation of their inhabitants, the theme was selected to examine the seemingly relentless adaptability of cities in the face of the weathering forces of migration, climate change, housing and transport challenges. One of the main objectives of the project was to examine, in practicable terms, the potentials and limitations of resilience implementation to effect responsive urban planning and governance in developing cities like Lagos. Central to this is the belief that people are the lifeblood of cities – fundamentally and intricately linked to the success of the spaces they create and populate. As such, the starting point of this study was an investigation into the ways resilience can be found and learned from the everyday practices of city inhabitants.

Researchers, urbanists and creatives were invited to think critically about a number of questions and submit their ideas in broad and interactive formats. A joint symposium and workshop was also held to further probe real occurrences within the city sphere and possible resilient answers to these situations. Some of the issues addressed include resisting and pre-empting urban vulnerabilities with design, spatial justice as a propagator of secure citizenship and the role of cultural appreciation in building propitious city character. These thoughts and ideas were collated and synthesised; and now, they make up the anthology you are currently reading. This publication explores resilience in its diverse forms, mechanisms and outputs as well as highlights important factors that influence urban resilience considerations. It uses a people-centred lens to zoom in on the complexities and implications of embracing resilient frameworks in city planning. The OCL team hopes that it will stir up even more critical thinking on the subject and inform the formation and implementation of urban planning and policy schemes and systems.

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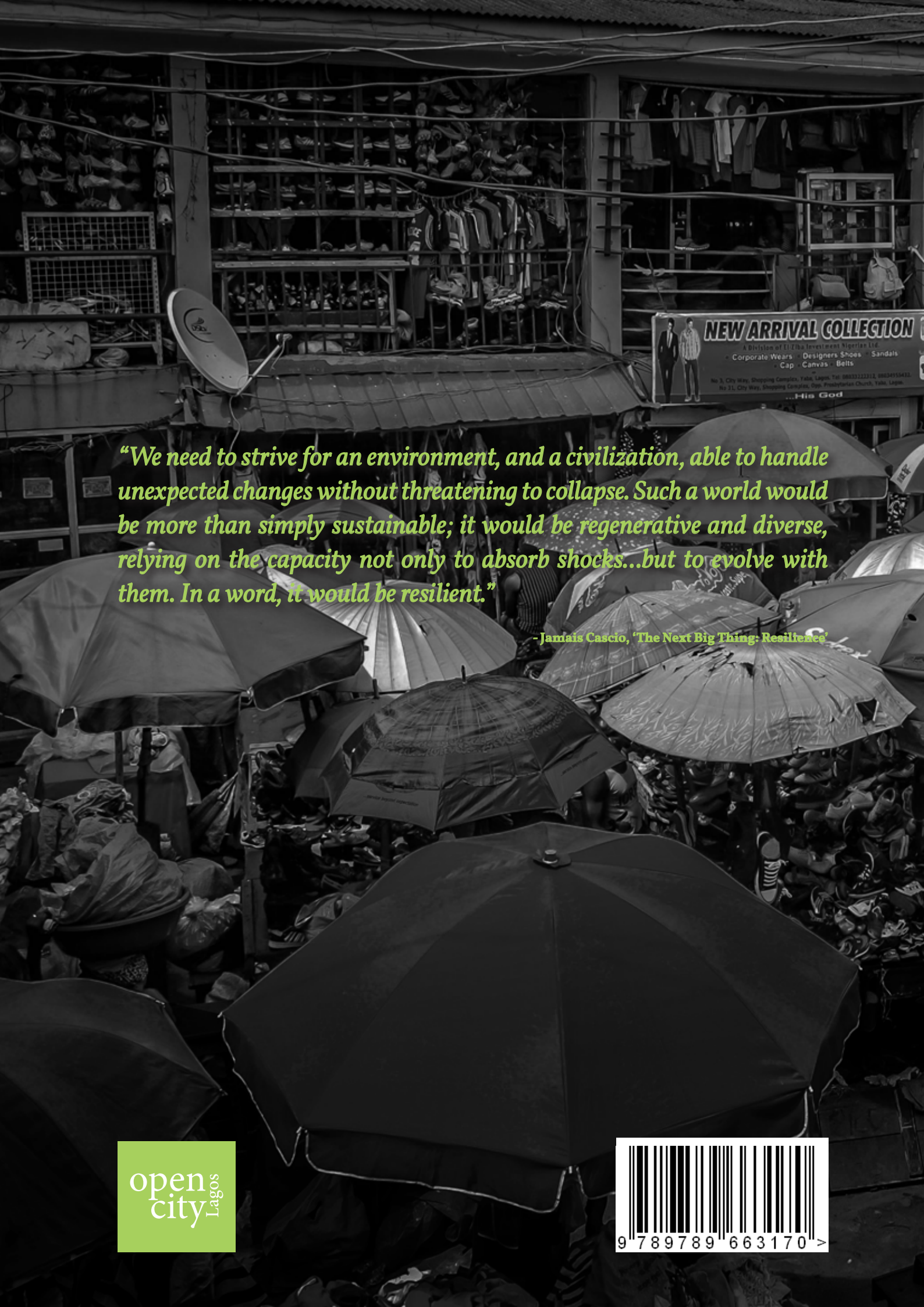

"We need to strive for an environment, and a civilization, able to handle unexpected changes without threatening to collapse. Such a world would be more than simply sustainable; it would be regenerative and diverse, relying on the capacity not only to absorb shocks...but to evolve with them. In a word, it would be resilient."

-Jamais Cascio, 'The Next Big Thing: Resilience'

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