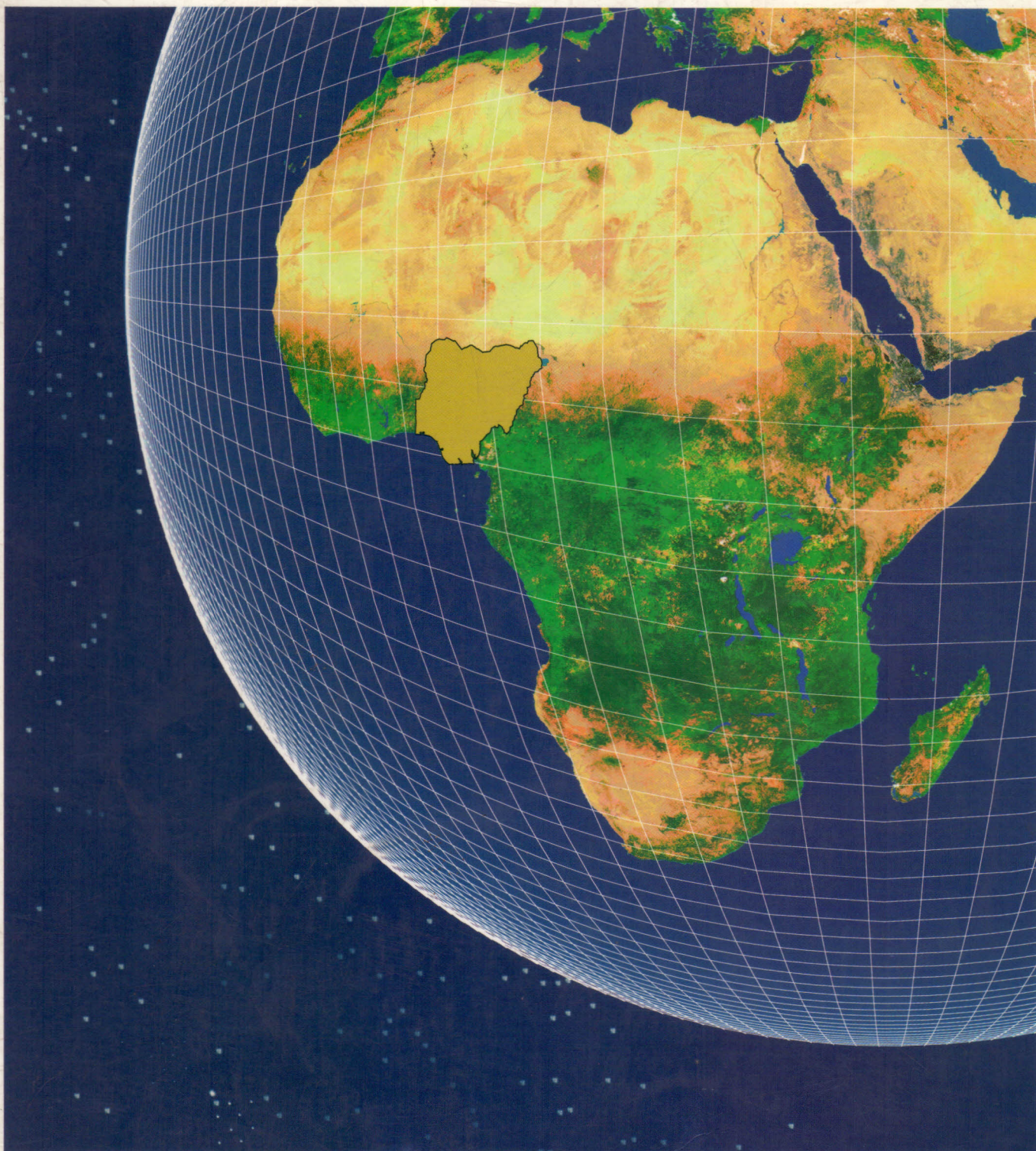


AFRICA



ATLASES

N I G E R I A



LES ÉDITIONS J.A.

Lagos

by Dr Olatunji Babatola

Lagos (over 10 million inhabitants), otherwise called Eko, and Nigeria's erstwhile capital is the most populous and foremost urban centre in Nigeria. Founded in the 15th century, the city has witnessed considerable changes aided by its peculiar geographic situation and initial political and economic advantages. Early immigrants settled at Ebute-Metta, moved next to Iddo and later to Lagos Island where the Oba's palace is at Idunganran. The development of modern day Lagos can be traced back to the Afro-European Atlantic coastal trade which commenced in the 15th century. Lagos merchants and rulers prospered substantially from the slave trade economy. Their belligerence against its abolition attracted the wrath of the British Naval force and the imposition of colonial rule in 1851.

Geophysical setting. Lagos occupies a low-lying site generally below 17 metres, except at the northernmost end of Greater Lagos, where local altitudinal rise commences. The southern portion bordering the Atlantic Ocean comprises islands, lagoons, creeks and extensive swamps. Prominent among the islands are Ikoyi, Victoria Island and Lagos Islands. Sand bar formation across the natural harbours led to the construction of the East and West Moles. Ironically, these features have been linked with the periodical occurrence of ocean surge flooding many parts of the islands, particularly Victoria Island. This island has a wide natural bar beach for recreation and tourism.

Metropolitan development and population growth. The name Lagos, initially referred only to Lagos Island; but now, it is loosely used for the entire metropolis or Greater Lagos. Major urban enhancement schemes started during the colonial period aimed at improving on housing capacity and environmental health of the proposed Federal Capital. The first exercise in 1925 involved the development of Ikoyi and Victoria Islands as residential areas for Europeans and government officials by the Lagos Executive Development Board (LEDB). The same body cleared the slum in the heart of Lagos Island between 1956 and 1959. The exercise though stiffly opposed by the residents, involved the relocation of about 200,000 people to Surulere, an adjacent mainland suburb of Lagos Island, giving it a befitting facelift as a Federal Capital. Hence at independence, metropolitan Lagos comprised of the three Islands and Apapa extending to Yaba and Ebute-Metta on the mainland. Other parts of Lagos to the north of Yaba and Ebute-Metta belonged to the then Western Regional Government.

In 1967, political restructuring gave birth to Lagos State. It covered some areas such as Mushin, Ikorodu, and Epe, formally in the Western Region. Central Lagos retained its Federal Capital status, administered as Lagos Municipality. The administrative restructuring paved way for the expansion of the original Lagos metropolis beyond the confine of the municipality. Many erstwhile separate settlements from Lagos municipality were rapidly absorbed aided by rapid rate of rural-urban migration into Lagos, estimated to account for 78 % of the metropolitan population growth. Thus, the metropolitan area barely 2.4 km² in 1818 increased to about

1056.42 km² in the nineties, with population density of about 5850 persons/km² in 1992 encompassing 11 of the 15 Local Government Areas of Lagos State. Taking away the wetlands, inundated and scantily built-up areas in Ojo and Eti-Osa Local Government areas, the effective population density approximates 8,100 persons/km². Population density varies. Highest in Mushin (44,849 p/km²) and Surulere (21,810 p/km²) and lowest in Eti-Osa (921 p/km²). The metropolis is a mosaic due to the absorption of unplanned outlying traditional centres. Besides, development even in many new areas contravene Town Planning regulations, hence, a number of slums have developed. The major ethnic groups in Lagos metropolis is Yoruba, followed by the Igbo, the minorities and the Hausa/Fulani groups.




Development problems. The immediate Atlantic littoral of Lagos is swampy. Hence in the first Republic, when different political parties controlled the Federal and the Western Regional Governments, the expansion of the metropolis was restricted as the control over the regions north of Mainland belonged to the opposing regional government. Hence, the Federal Territory could only expand by land reclamation at exorbitant costs. Though the creation of Lagos State removed this dichotomy, the relative concentration of economic activities on the erstwhile Federal Territory is noticeable. Hence, transportation congestion is usual on the three primary road arteries connecting the Islands section with the Mainland especially in the busy hours. This will aggravate in the absence of integrated metropolitan transport system. Housing conditions vary across the metropolis. Available space falls far short of demand despite government efforts in public housing and infrastructure. Average room occupancy rate is generally high, attaining 3.9 and 4.7 persons respectively in Somolu and Ojo Local Government Areas. There are 12 urban blights in the metropolis where housing condition including refuse disposal, health facilities and access to public utilities are very low. Many parts of Ajegunle exhibit typical slum conditions.

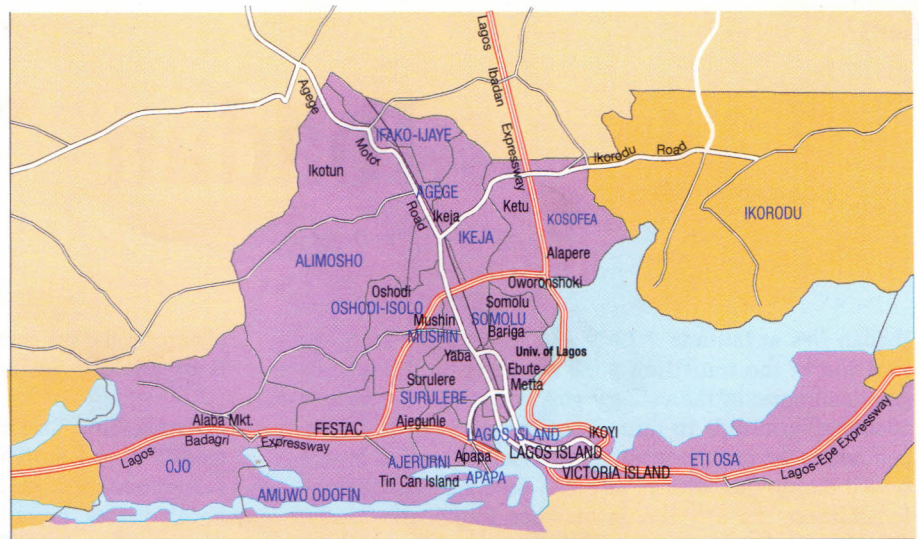
Industrial and commercial activities. The Lagos metropolis has the single largest concentrations of Nigeria's commerce and industrial activities. It had over 1,100 manufacturing establishments distributed among its 18 industrial estates in 1990 accounting for at least half of Nigeria's value added by manufactures. Ikeja (24.1 %) tops the list, followed by Mushin (20.2 %) and Lagos Mainland (10.0 %).

Lagos Island is the traditional core of commerce, where a great number of the financial institutions have their headquarters in Broad/Marina Streets dominated by skyscrapers, with other outlying business districts including Alaba (Ojo LGA), Mushin and Oshodi (Oshodi LGA). Victoria and Ikoyi Islands accommodate nearly all the Embassies and main offices of international agencies that have not relocated to Abuja, the current Federal Capital Territory. Apapa and its adjacent Tin Can Island ports handle the dominant share (80 %) of Nigeria's maritime trade.

The metropolis has 2 Universities and 3 Polytechnics, besides

Lagos and its region

- MAKO/IJAYE LGA Name (Local Government Areas)
- Ikotun Urban Area Name
-  Water Body
-  Other LGA
-  Metropolitan LGA



many vocational Institutions and numerous Secondary and Primary schools. Enrolment both in Primary and Secondary schools respectively exceeds 0.5million. Lagos has many notable 5-star hotels such as Sheraton, Eko Le Meridien and Ikoji hotels, among others.

Development corridors. Lagos transportation corridors are its primary development arteries along which development fluctuates in response to perceived connectivity and accessibility advantages and the ease of access to land for property development.

Abeokuta road took the initial lead; revealing the early advantage of the rail line. Expansion is greatest along this axis sprawling into Otta town in Ogun State which has become Lagos foremost industrial and dormitory satellite. Badagri axis followed with the construction of Festival of Arts and Culture (FESTAC) Village, Satellite Town, Trade fare complex and many other commercial and public institutions.

Besides, the axis connects Nigeria to her West African neighbours, encouraging the influx of dominantly commerce-oriented and largely ethnographically mixed population. Development along Lagos-Ibadan axis is dominated by religious institutions particularly the Christian denominations. The Islamic groups are also acquiring large parcels of land for development lately.

Growth was arrested along Victoria Island/Epe axis until the demolition of Maroko, a major immigrant slum. Ever since, expansion along this axis has been very rapid, as government agencies, multinationals, groups and individuals are turning it into another high-brow area.

Expansion along Ikorodu frontier is rather unique. The recently built Lagos-Ikorodu dualised way has stepped up expansion rate as well as massive residential relocation to Ikorodu by rent-chased middle class workers. Ikorodu is more than ever becoming an unrivaled satellite of Lagos metropolis with serious implication for transportation flow in nearest future.

AFRICA



ATLASES

Here at last an atlas of Nigeria, available to students and general public.

Using original, scientifically accurate and user-friendly maps, all aspects of the country's geography are dealt with, including physical relief, hydrography, geology, climate, natural and cultural heritage, population, cities, agriculture, energy, mineral resources, communications, health, tourism, etc...

Already published in this series: Mali, Morocco, Senegal, Congo (French editions only), Burkina Faso (French and English editions), Equatorial Guinea (French and Spanish editions).

ISBN 2-86950-360-1



9 782869 503601

LES ÉDITIONS J.A.