



Textile #1

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**From Rural to Urban Community:  
Historicizing Colonial Legacy, Indigenous Ini-  
tiatives and the Transformation  
of Ikorodu Metropolis, Lagos, 1894-1999**

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**Abstract**

The enduring impact of colonial administration and indigenous initiatives, as well as the phenomenon of migration and settlement patterns, have been one of the most important factors influencing urbanization and the transformation of Ikorodu metropolis of Lagos. Indeed, colonial legacy and the increase in migrant settlers in Ikorodu, occasioned by a combination of socio-political and economic activities of the various Nigerian groups that settled in Ikorodu, have gradually and steadily contributed to the transformation of the metropolis from a mere farmland and fishing centre of the early twentieth century



to an enviable city of tremendous opportunities. It is against this background that this article examines the nature, pattern and impact of colonial, post-colonial and how development and proximity of Ikorodu to Lagos contributed toward the transformation of the area. Building on the existing literature, this article presents fresh perspective on the transformation of city, which has been largely neglected on the historiography of Lagos while adopting the distinctive historical research methodology and using a style of presentation is both descriptive and analytical. It also analyses the challenges militating against total and effective transformation of Ikorodu during this period. This paper maintains that the colonial legacy was a precursor to the transformation of Ikorodu and concludes with some recommendations regarding effective collaboration between government and private initiatives to address inadequate infrastructures in order to sustain the progress already achieved in this area of Lagos.

**Keywords:** Colonial legacy, migration, urban, transformation

## Introduction

Transformation refers to a change in something. It may also mean qualitative change; a marked change in size or character, especially one for the better. Cities and their environments all over the world are continuously changing. This process has, in many respects, over the years, led to the transformation of areas that were “pepper farms” into urban centres. This fittingly illustrates the history of Ikorodu, a city that lies on the Lagos Lagoon, Bight of Benin, northeast of Lagos State, Nigeria, which is the focus of this paper. Some work has been done on the history of Ikorodu but its primary focus has been on the tradition of origin, the Bini conquest, the British conquest, annexation as well as the administrations of Ikorodu during the colonial period as evident particularly in

Tunde Oduwobi's <sup>1</sup> Babatunde Agiri<sup>2</sup> and Boge Faruq<sup>3</sup> whose periods terminate in 1960 respectively. This paper focuses on the impact of colonial legacy, indigenous initiatives as well as socio-economic and political factors that foster the transformation of Ikorodu which have been generally neglected on the existing literature of Lagos as the fastest growing urban centre in Africa. Building on the existing works though, this attempt is an advance on them in terms of scope, methodology and focus. Furthermore, the story of transformation of Ikorodu is worth telling within the wider narrative of Lagos because, Ikorodu has become one of the most attractive and expanded parts of the five divisions that made up modern Lagos State.

Geographically, Ikorodu is bounded in the north by the Sagamu Local Government Area of Ogun State, in the west and east by Kosofe and Epe Local Government Areas of Lagos State respectively. The town stretches from Gbasemo (Aga) and Oriya in the south to Agbala/Itokin road in the north. The Majidun River also bound it in the west and in the east by a straight line that connects Itamaga to Igbogbo-Ipakodo road. Ikorodu Local Government has been in existence since the creation of Lagos State in 1967. Attempt at splitting Ikorodu into six Local Government areas in 2003 under the administration of Asiwaju Bola Ahmed Tinubu could not materialize, as the exercise was declared inchoate, null and void by the Supreme Court of Nigeria, which compelled the Lagos Government to revert Ikorodu to a single Local Government Area.<sup>4</sup>

1. Tunde Oduwobi, *Ijebu under Colonial Rule 1892-1960: An Administrative and Political Analysis* (Lagos: First Academic Publishers, 2004).

2. Babatunde Agiri, “Lagos-Ikorodu Relations 1894 – 1950”, in *History of the Peoples of Lagos State*, eds. Ade Adefuye, Babatunde Agiri and Jide Osuntokun (Lagos: Lantern Books, 1987), 204-21.

3. Faruq Idowu Boge, “An Administration History of Ikorodu, 1894- 1960,” *Lagos Historical Review* 14 (2014): 135-150.

4. Boge, “Administration History of Ikorodu,” 136.



The transformation of Ikorodu as an urban area within the bigger narratives of Lagos can be traced back to 1894 when the territory was annexed by the British colonial government in Lagos as part of the Lagos colony.<sup>5</sup> Prior to this development, though, Ikorodu had been an important trading post of the Remo Kingdom lying along the trade route between Lagos and Ibadan as well as into the hinterland of Yorubaland. Its strategic location along the Lagos Lagoon had also made it a significant trading port after Lagos during the closing years of nineteenth century. These factors essentially made the town a centre of commerce before event of 1894 shaped the foundation for the subsequent change. Whereas these factors among, others led to the transformation of Ikorodu, its proximity to Lagos also resulted in its development into an urban area. Thus, the urbanization of Ikorodu is also connected to the urban sprawl in Lagos.

### **Ikorodu before Annexation/ Evolution into Settlement**

Ikorodu was founded between 1600 and 1650 by an Ijebu-Remo prince, Oga, who was a hunter. It was nevertheless conquered by the Bini in the period shortly after its settlement and a Bini chief Oliha now corrupted to Olisa, was stationed there perhaps for the collection of tributes.<sup>6</sup> The economy of Ikorodu during this period was diverse thus encouraged farming, fishing, hunting and trade. The Bini conquest though, did not bring about any administrative connection with Lagos which had been conquered by the Bini earlier; it nonetheless promotes links between the two communities. As such Lagos was able to supply salt to Ikorodu and via that routes to the interiors, the Ijebu were equally able to export their native clothes through Ikorodu to Lagos to as far as Europe. And

during the peak of the Trans-Atlantic Slave trade, Ikorodu became an important trading port and transit point for interior communities in Yorubaland. However, following the conquest of Lagos by the British in 1861, which subsequently affects the slave trade in Ikorodu, settlers that peopled the community intensified their efforts on the cultivation such crops as yam, maize, vegetable. Thus Ikorodu as a farm settlement subsequently expanded into a market town where merchants from Ijebu-Ode, Sagamu, Epe and other towns converge to transact business.<sup>7</sup> The description of Ikorodu as a farm settlement is quite apt because the etymology name, Ikorodu is a corrupted version of “Okoodu” (farm of variety of vegetable). Subsequently, as the volume of trade grew, the town of Ikorodu also developed in prominence. The population of the settlement gradually increased as people of other ethnic group apart from the Yoruba such as the Isoko, Ijo, Urobo, Igbo, just to mention but a few began to migrate and settled down in different part of the town.<sup>8</sup>

As more people moved into the town, it expanded into all direction and even ate into other settlements. Basically, Ikorodu is made up of core groups or nuclei referred to as ‘Itun’, each of which has an exact boundary defining it from another.<sup>9</sup> Itunmaja, for instance, was populated mainly by people from Idowa, an important historical Ijebu town. Itunwaiye was settled by people from Iwaiye in present day Ogun State. Itunsoku was settled by people from Isokun quarters in Sagamu, then Layeode was peopled by Ode-Remo, Itagbodo by people from Oke Godo, Itun Elepe is a quarter containing Elepe

7. Interview with Oba S. A. A. Oyefusi (The Ayangburen of Ikorodu till date), 31<sup>st</sup> July 2016.

8. Faluyi Kehinde “ Migrants and the Socio-Economic Development of Lagos From the Earliest Times to 1880” in *Lagos Historical Review* 1 (2001): 68-71.

9. Ibid Interview with Chief Mathew Ayodele Awolesi (Former Chairman Ikorodu Local Government), 14<sup>th</sup> August, 2016 .

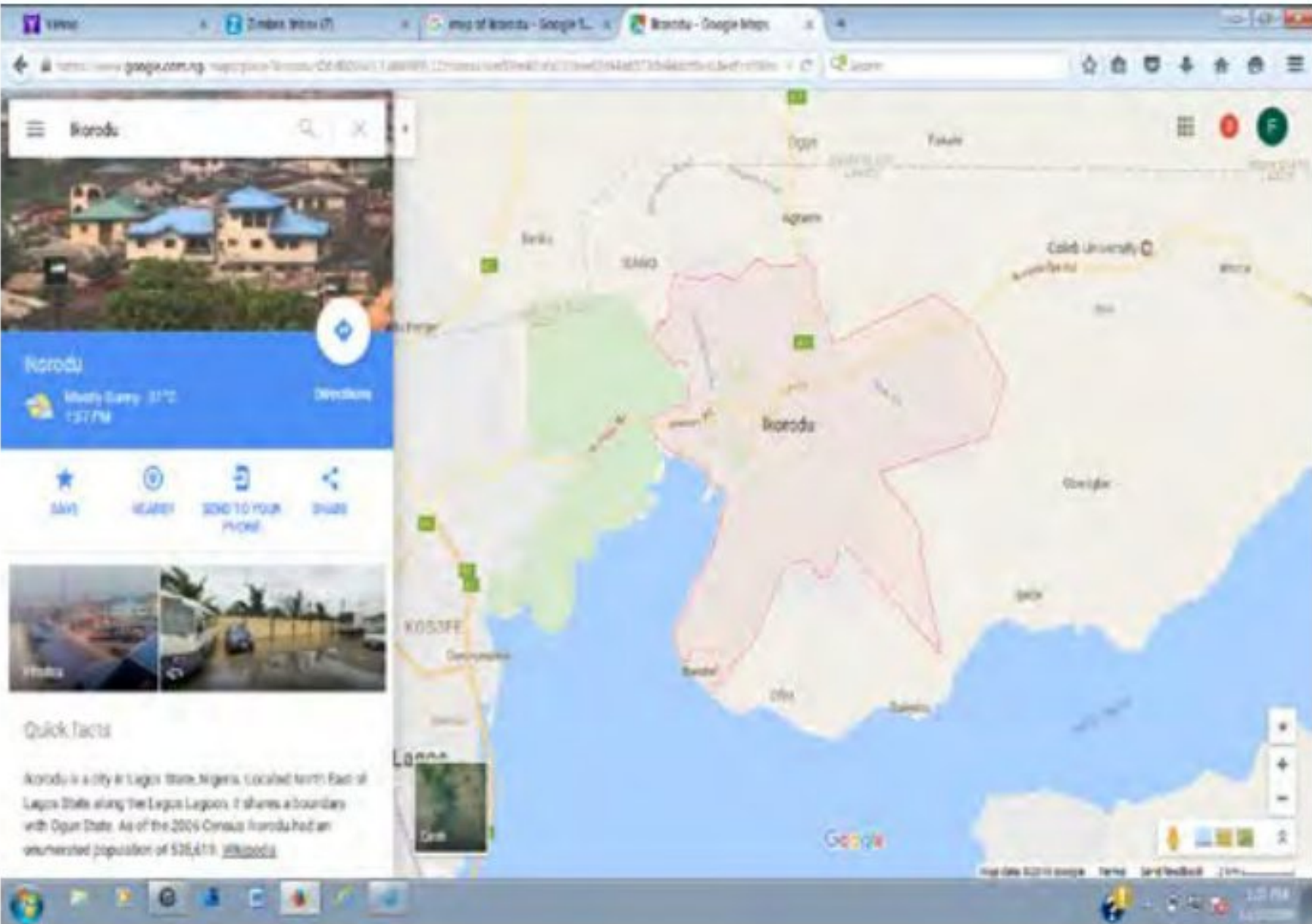
5. NAI, Ije Prof. 2C32/1,8..

6. Agiri, “Lagos-Ikorodu Relations”, 206.



(Sagamu) descendants.<sup>10</sup> As a consequence, the process of urbanization developments in Ikorodu has spread into its surrounding towns and villages so much so that some of these villages like Ipakodo, Igbogbo, Ibeshe, Owode, Ishawo, Majidun, Ijede, Baiyeku, Oreta, Ofin, Ebute Ige etc. are considered as important parts of Ikorodu. The 1894 annexation and merger with the Lagos Colony incorporated all these communities that made of Ikorodu.

Map showing Ikorodu Local Government Area of Lagos State



Source: Google. Accessed 23 December 2019.

**The Transformation of Ikorodu**

Indeed, following the Cession Deed of August 4, 1894, Ikorodu, its surrounding communities and people became British subjects and fully integrated into the Lagos colony. The hitherto native political institutions such as the Oloja and the Osugbo seized to exercise official power. During this period, these formal political rulers became agent of the colonial government but strictly as stipendiary administrative officers.<sup>11</sup> The development continued until 1901 when a Central Native council was established for the Ikorodu District. Many of the native chiefs such as the Balogun, the Oloja functioned in advisory capacity to the colonial Resident Officer who has the responsibility to maintain law and order.

By the opening years of the second decades of the twentieth century however, Ikorodu and its environs were administered under the Epe-Ikorodu District between 1913 and 1938. It was during this period that Ikorodu assumed a 3<sup>rd</sup> Class Township status, including the Beach Market said to have been founded by Oga’s brother, Sekunmade.<sup>12</sup> However, by April 1 1938, Ikorodu Native Authority was founded as a result of disagreement between Ekpe and Ikorodu. Gradually and steadily, Ikorodu began transforming into an urban centre since the opening years of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. By the beginning of the twentieth century, Ikorodu and its environs had begun to witness qualitative change in every sphere as a result of increase in different forms of trade in the society. The transport section became very attractive to all sorts of persons who were interested in the business.

10 . Mathew Ayodele Awolesi, “Ikorodu Yesterday Today and Tomorrow”, (keynote address at the 2<sup>nd</sup> Ikorodu Oga Day, Ikorodu, 19-27 November, 1993); 47.

11. Boge, “Administration History of Ikorodu,” 140.  
12. NAI, CSO.26/51045 (Report for 1918, 1919 and 1920 on the Districts of the Colony).



By 1920, as a means to fully take advantage of the growing commercial activities in Ikorodu, boat and ferry services were introduced to transport people from Ikorodu to Lagos. This opened up Ikorodu to greater commercial opportunities as both foreigners and indigenes of Ikorodu started to invest in the economy of the town. In addition, investments were also made into the textile and ceramic industries.<sup>13</sup> By the 1960s, the number of industries established in Ikorodu has risen above five.<sup>14</sup> This development further attracted more people to the town, especially in the Odogunyan and Odo-Nla areas of Ikorodu which were until now suburbs. Moreover, the construction of the Lagos-Ikorodu road in the early 1950 makes Ikorodu more accessible.<sup>15</sup>

As previously noted, the expansion and transformation of Ikorodu was also influenced by socio-political and economic developments in Lagos. It should be recalled that the Lagos port was and still the most visited Nigerian port during the colonial period and even after independence. It was also a former capital. All these brought tremendous development and boosted the development of Ikorodu. And when the post-independence state government decided to create industrial estates all over the state, land was set aside at Odogunyan and Odo-Nla areas of Ikorodu for this purpose.<sup>16</sup> Thus, the establishment of industries encouraged people to move to the area to purchase land for residential and industrial drives.

13. Agiri, "Lagos-Ikorodu Relations," 204-21.

14. Interview with Alhaji Mufutau Ajisebutu (Ikorodu Party Chairman for Peoples Democratic Party) 10<sup>th</sup> August, 2016.

15. Interview with Comrade Ayodele Elesho (Former Commissioner for Information, Lagos State), 4<sup>th</sup> September, 2017.

16. Interview with Alhaji Lateef Sulaimon (Former Local Government Counselor, Owode, Ikorodu, Lagos), 21 November, 2015

New residential areas developed in and around the industrial areas. The advent of civilian administration following the exit of the military gave rise to the development of housing estates by the Jakande and Shagari administration of 1983, which brought large number of people to Ikorodu to acquire these houses, thereby bringing larger number of people to Ikorodu. Consequently, the population increased from about 70,000 in 1963 to about 300,000 in 1990 and to over a million in 2000 a jump of over 200 percent.<sup>17</sup> Whereas in the 1980s, the Lagos end of Ikorodu was at the Government College Ikorodu, but by the 1990s new towns have emerged at Agric, Owotu, Agbede and other areas. By 1999, which is the terminal date of this paper various degrees of transformation had taken place. All the known features of an urban area have become conspicuously evident.<sup>18</sup>

### Colonial Factors that Led to the Transformation of Ikorodu

Indeed, the transformation of Ikorodu began in the period shortly after the town and its environs were ceded to the British on August 4, 1894. This was the consequence of several treaties signed by the Akarigbo that saw to the cession of certain territories in Ijebu-Remo (including Ikorodu to Great Britain).<sup>19</sup> Thereafter Ikorodu became an administered part of the Lagos Colony, cutting it away from Sagamu and Ijebu-Ode.<sup>20</sup> With the establishment of Ikorodu Native Authority in 1901 by the British Colonial Administration to include Ikorodu town and independent villages of Agura, Ebute, Aga, Ibeshe, Ashashe, Oshorun, Isin, Oripodi and Ipakodo, Ikorodu began to experience some

17. Leo C. Dioka, *Lagos and Its Environs* (Lagos: First Academic Publishers, 2001), 164.

18. Interview with Alhaji Tufegboye Adewunmi (Former Chairman Ikorodu Local Government), 14<sup>th</sup> August, 2015

19. Oduwobi, *Ijebu under Colonial Rule*, 40-43.

20. Friday Aworawo, "A History of Isawo Community and Its Environs, Ikorodu, 1900-2002," (Unpublished Bachelor of Arts Degree in History and Strategic Studies, University of Lagos, 2007), 2-7.



developments, which led to its transformation beginning from the 1950s.<sup>21</sup>

As noted in the aforementioned, the construction of the Lagos-Ikorodu road in 1953 opened up the town for easy and faster movement of people and goods between Ikorodu and Lagos. By the turn of the second half of the twentieth century, the transformation of Ikorodu had no doubt, been aided by a number of related factors ranging from social and economic to political factors; a phenomenon that has transformed Ikorodu from a mere vegetable farm into an urban community.

### **Socio-Economic Factors**

The transformation of Ikorodu, which has implication for social life in the area, is partly as a result of the revolution that had taken place in the transport network between Ikorodu and Lagos. The opening up of Ikorodu had tremendous effects on the town and connecting towns of Igbogbo, Ipakodo and on the far away Imota and Ijede. Thus, one of the factors that led to the transformation of Ikorodu was the construction of Lagos-Ikorodu road in 1953; an achievement of the colonial master.<sup>22</sup> Prior to this period, the evacuation of palm produce, food crops and fish from Ikorodu and its surrounding lagoon settlements to Lagos depended on the rowing boats. These were slow and prone to the winds and storms causing them to capsize in which many lives were lost.

In 1919, Mr. Joshua Ricketts, the fourth son of the Reverend John Edwards Ricketts of the Agbowa enterprise, went into the business boat building. By 1921, he had built the

first motor launched named “Letitia” after his mother, and introduced the first motor launched linking Lagos to Ikorodu and other important Lagoon ports.

The introduction of a motor launch service by Mr. Ricketts revolutionized lagoon transportation during the colonial period. Letitia could carry as many as twenty-five passengers and, at a speed of 8 miles per hour covered the distance between Ikorodu and Lagos in one and a half hours. The service was therefore, a marked of improvement and ensured speed and safety in water transportation on the Lagoon. From the early beginning, particularly between 1921 and 1923, Mr. Ricketts had no serious competitors. His fleet augmented to five during the period. In 1925 however, Mr. Ricketts transport service began to face a tough competition from Mr. Osinubi, an indigene of Ikorodu, who had acquired speed boats for the transportation business with a trade name “Owolowo”.<sup>23</sup> However, just exactly half a decade into the business, one of the Owolowo boats, named Iyalode, capsized in the Lagoon as a result of overloading. The colonial government, thereafter, imposed stricter controls over the operation of the steam boats which were essentially done to guarantee the safety of passengers. As such it became mandatory for each boat to carry life jackets during voyages. Furthermore the operators have to hire the services of experience sailor and obtain marine license. And yet another was that, the boats were subjected to regular inspections to ensure that they were seaworthy. These measures certainly reduced accidents on the Lagoon and boosted passengers confidence on the use of water means of transportation.

Unfortunately though for some of Mr. Ricketts’ competitors that could not meet

23. Agiri, “Lagos-Ikorodu Relations,” 212.

21. Oduwobi, *Ijebu under Colonial Rule*, 40.

22. Abiodun Naimot Allison, “Ikorodu and her Neighbours in the Nineteenth Century: A Study in Intergroup Relations”, a Final Year Project of the Department of History, University of Ibadan, 1982, 24.



the new requirements sold off their boats and fortunately too Mr. Ricketts was the main beneficiary. As a consequence, by 1939, the Rickett's fleet had increased to twelve despite the stiff competition from the Owolowo Company. Many Ikorodu people despite the stiff competition still preferred to journey in the Owolowo boats, as Mr. Rickett's services was perceived as European dominated.<sup>24</sup> Notwithstanding, however, these two prominent companies continued to function side by side to the benefit of all.

However, in just twelve years after the first major boat capsize involving Olowolo Company in 1932; another accident once again took place in 1942. Specifically on 15, January that year, another Iyalode, of the Olowolo Company was involved in another sea disasters caused again by overloading. This event compelled the government to adopt yet again stricter measures against congested boat service in the lagoon. Not even Mr. Rickett's fleet was excluded. The Owolowo Company was compelled to reduce the number of boat in its fleet. This finally gave Mr. Ricketts an edge over his competitor. Perhaps the most significant consequence of the 1942 boat disaster was the impetus it gave to the planning and construction of the overland route from Lagos to Ikorodu. The death toll in the accident aroused the anger of people in Ikorodu, Epe, Sagamu and Ijebu-Ode. A committee of concerned citizens of these towns was formed to raise funds for the construction of the road, which was eventually completed with Federal Government Support in May 1953.

The construction of the road was the last straw that broke the camel's back. This development introduced the automobile as yet another effective means of transportation.

24. Interview with Tajudeen Lawal (Retired Civil Servant, Ikorodu Local Government), 7<sup>th</sup> August, 2019.

The implication was that the fleets of Ricketts now have to contend with vehicles meant to ply Ikorodu-Lagos road. Between 1953 and 1956, however, six out of the seven boats on Mr. Ricketts' fleet had been declared not seaworthy by the government. And indeed, by that time, the boats only plied the Ebute Ero to Ebute Meta route.<sup>25</sup> The continuity and change in the transport sector thus fostered transformation of Ikorodu. The Ikorodu-Lagos road, which was completed in 1953 opened up Ikorodu to Lagos and thus to the outside world more than ever before.<sup>26</sup> It would be recall that Ikorodu's location has always proved to be strategic as far back as the era of slave trade during, which the Egba among other trading partners fought for its control.

With the completion of the Lagos-Ikorodu road, it took less time to travel from Ikorodu to Lagos vis-a-vis. Moreover, more goods and services were then exchanged between the two locations. Thus, Ikorodu started to serve both as a place of work and a place of residence for people as well as for many industrial establishments, though on a small scale. Many indigenes and settlers of Ikorodu who were working in Lagos also returned to Ikorodu to sleep on a daily basis. As time went by, many Ikorodu indigenes took the opportunity of the road transport to engage in different forms of trade and apprenticeship. The road link thus enhanced hometown commitment on the part of the indigenes. With the completion of the road, other people especially traders from neighbouring town such as Oyo, Abeokuta, Ondo, Ekiti and as far as the Eastern part of Nigeria began to settle permanently in Ikorodu in order to ensure easy trading activities

25. Agiri, *History of the Peoples of Lagos*, 204-205.

26. Ibid.



with the people of Ikorodu as well as with Lagos.<sup>27</sup> Indigenes, migrants, settlers among others thus settled in Ikorodu.

Another factor that led to the transformation of Ikorodu into an urban community was the establishment of industries.<sup>28</sup> With the opening up of the Lagos-Ikorodu road in 1953, industrial establishments, though on a small scale, now began to take off. These efforts of indigenes such as Late Chief S. O. Gbadamosi and late Chief R.A. Allison were quite remarkable. Before this period, Mr. S. O. Kamson and his brother, Mr. J. F. Kamson in the 1930's both from Ikorodu, established in the textile business in Lagos and manufacturing of singlet. Their success encouraged many from Ikorodu to seek employment under them. By the 1940s, S. O. Kamson's modest factory along Adeniji Adele II Street had become a regular point of call for Ikorodu indigenes seeking employment in Lagos and apprenticeship. Meanwhile J. F. Kamson also established a factory at Isolo, which later moved to Akoka (now acquired by the University of Lagos). He, like his brother, also employed many Ikorodu indigenes.<sup>29</sup>

Among prominent Ikorodu business families in Lagos in the 1940s and 1950s were the Bensons and the Gbadamosis. The Benson family engaged in transport business in the city, while the Gbadamosi family also manufactured singlet and later went into ceramic manufacturing, this time in Ikorodu. S. O. Gbadamosi thereafter started a partnership business with his cousin Chief R. A. Allinson under the trading name of

27. Interview with Jimoh Shonoiki (Civil Servant, Ikorodu Local Government Council Secretariat), 19<sup>th</sup> August, 2015.

28. Ibid.

29. Interview with Alhaji Nurudeen Oluguna (Civil Servant, Ikorodu Local Government Council, Lagos), 19<sup>th</sup> August, 2016.

Ikorodu Trading Company in 1935 was very remarkable for manufacturing and famous in the transport sector.<sup>30</sup> This firm engaged in the importation of cheap Japanese goods and other commodities from Germany. The Ikorodu Company Limited later turned into a manufacturing outfit, producing woven and textile materials. This brought it into keen competition with the United African Company (U.A.C), which was then running a similar venture. The United African Company later sold off its underwear factory to the partnership of S. O. Gbadamosi. The Ikorodu Company Limited also diversified into ceramics production in 1943, but the venture never succeeded.<sup>31</sup>

At the time the garment factory was at its peak, it has 2,000 employees on its payroll. With the establishment of these indigenous industries, more people came to Ikorodu in search of employment. There was also the establishment of foreign industries, such as Nichemtex (now United Nigeria Textile Company, the largest textile manufacturing company in Africa), Peterson and Zochonis (P.Z.) Industries Ltd, and Cussons, Spintex, Ocean Fisheries, Facility and a host of other smear industries, all of which except Nichemtex were located in the industrial estate at Odogunyan (Ikorodu North).<sup>32</sup> With the establishment of both indigenous and foreign industries, Ikorodu witnessed an increase in population, as many people came in from neighbouring towns and beyond. These industries and the concomitant population increase resulted in rapid urbanization of Ikorodu turning it from a mere vegetable farm into an urban settlement.

Another factor that accounted for the rapid transformation of Ikorodu is its nearness

30. Ibid.

31. Interview with Comrade Elesho, op. cit.

32. Interview with Chief Segun Shoipo (an Indigene of Ikorodu), 4<sup>th</sup> September, 2015.



to Lagos. Due to its geographical proximity to Lagos, Nigeria's foremost commercial and until recently its administrative capital, Ikorodu enjoyed a strategic position, which makes it more attractive to people who wanted direct connection with Lagos.<sup>33</sup> Ikorodu town has changed a lot. In terms of areas, it has extended beyond the inner circular route (the old city wall). In other words, the whole of that area called 'Aiyeluja', both sides of Ayangburen Road extending to Solomade, Etunrenren, Lowa, Olori (both sides of Lagos road). The Ojogbe area, Gbasemo, Oriwu Hotel area to Oluwakemi and Adaraloye Streets, both sides of Igboogbo Road including Owode, and Oriwu College, Mabodu area including Solafun etc. The 1991 provisional census figure for Ikorodu Local Government area was 181,900. Out of this, at least 100,000 would be for Ikorodu town, more or less. About 60% of the town population are engaged in trade and other businesses in Ikorodu or in the greater Lagos metropolis.<sup>34</sup>

Also, as a result of the nearness of Ikorodu to Lagos, Ikorodu women became particularly prominent traders in Lagos, where they dominated the textile business, especially in the vibrant 'Gota' area, Ita Balogun, Alakoro, Apongbo etc. It has been estimated that about 90% of Ikorodu people dominated the economic life of Lagos. About 98% dominated trading activities in Mosalashi, Gota, Ereko, Apongbo, and Obun-Eko markets while about 40% dominated trading activities in Jankara and Alaporo markets. It has been estimated that Ikorodu women folk are so successful in business that they own about 60% of the wealth of all Ikorodu sons and daughters put together.<sup>35</sup> All of

33. Lai Olurode, *Social Change in Ikorodu Division (Ikorodu, Imota, Igboogbo, Ijede and Ipakodo): A Profile of the Elites* (Lagos: Unilag Consult, 1993) 27.

34. Awolesi, "Ikorodu Yesterday, Today and Tomorrow", 50.

35. Interview with Mrs. Mercy Adetokunbo (A Trader Living in Ikorodu since 1981), 7<sup>th</sup> August, 2016.

these were enhanced by the nearness of Ikorodu to Lagos.

The relatively high cost of living in Lagos is yet another factor that has led to the transformation of Ikorodu. The position of Lagos as a natural harbour and ultimately the terminal of land routes in South Western Nigeria made it a significant place in terms of population.<sup>36</sup> The availability of port faculties, lagoon and marine transportation greatly facilitated industrialization, which made Lagos the most industrialized city in Nigeria. Consequently, the population of Lagos continued to grow and this led to the need for more food to feed the rising population. Since Lagos could not provide enough food for its teeming population, it was compelled to seek the cooperation of some of its neighbours. This phenomenon influenced the relations between such neighbours as Ikorodu, Egba and Lagos. Thus, Ikorodu began to experience daily influx of people. More significantly, as the bad economy condition of Nigeria in the 1980s became difficult, landlords attempt to passing on the effect of the Structural Adjustment Programme (SAP) of the government to tenants generally.<sup>37</sup> As such, many who had settled in Lagos began to Ikorodu as alternative area to acquire relative cheap accommodation, which does not, compromised the contact with Lagos.

The choice of Ikorodu became more appealing, particularly to low income earners, because the cost of living was relative low. A number of civil servants, some of whom are indigenes of Ikorodu as well as migrants in Lagos relocated to Ikorodu because of low

36. Kehinde Faluyi, "Migrants and the Socio-Economic Development of Lagos From the Earliest Times to 1880," *Lagos Historical Review* 1 (2001): 68-71.

37. Aworawo, "History of Isawo Community and Its Environs," 2-7.



rents.<sup>38</sup> Some rich also preferred to acquire landed properties in Ikorodu because they were cheaper compared with what obtained in Lagos. As at 1992, a room and parlour cost between ₦100,000 and ₦150,000 in the choicest part of Ikorodu and the adjoining town of Ipakodo whereas the same would cost between ₦300,000 and ₦350,000 in Lagos.

Generally, food prices are lower in Ikorodu area than in Lagos metropolis. At Imota, which is about 15 kilometres from Ikorodu, a bunch of plantain that would cost ₦500; in Mushin, Lagos, it may cost ₦1,500. The same goes for fruits.<sup>39</sup> The cost of living in Lagos thus led to influx of people into Ikorodu.

Another factor that led to the expansion of Ikorodu into a commercial urban centre was the efforts of some of its indigenes towards the development of the town.<sup>40</sup> Basically, the development of a town can be traced to the activities of individuals who have given practical expression to their sentiment, to ensuring that their town moves forward. Ikorodu in this respect was fortunate to have such citizens who fought to bring about social change and transformation in the town. Before the opening of the Lagos-Ikorodu road, Ikorodu could not provide employment opportunities for its people because of the weak economic activities there.

The pull to Lagos was stronger, as almost six out of every ten adult males from the town migrated to Lagos. The pull had significant effect on Ikorodu. One of the early

effects was the influence of some of the indigenes of the town, who were based in Lagos brought socio-political development in Ikorodu. These men had formed an association in Lagos about 1920. They then contacted the Oloja and his chiefs and proposed the building of a new palace for the ruler. This meant removal from the former palace in the centre of the town and since the project did not disturb British rule in the town, it went on unhindered. By 1936, the new palace was opened with the ruler assuming the new title Ayangburen.<sup>41</sup>

New ideas continued to filter back to Ikorodu and its environs through the activities of the youth of the area who were schooling in Lagos. For example, student societies or associations played a significant role in the implementation of the reforms of local government authorities from 1938 to 1950. Their social impact was also evident in the movement for secondary school education in Ikorodu Township. For example, S.O. Kamson among others, was very prominent in the building of Oriwu College in the town.<sup>42</sup> It is therefore worthy to note that the contributions of these people are crucial since development project may fail to take off in a community if efforts are directed at reaching the grassroots. Thus, the contributions of some of the indigenes of Ikorodu to the town led to the transformation of Ikorodu to an urban community.

The establishment of schools was another factor that led to the transformation of Ikorodu.<sup>43</sup> Prior to the establishment of the first secondary school in Ikorodu, Ikorodu

41. Agiri, *History of the Peoples of Lagos*, 203.

42. Ibid, 205.

43. Interview with Chief Olusegun Adeyemi (Vice-Chairman for the Peoples Democratic Party (PDP), Lagos East Senatorial District), 21<sup>st</sup> August, 2016.

38. Olurode, *Social Change in Ikorodu Division*, 51.

39. Interview with Chief Shodipo.

40. Agiri, *History of the Peoples of Lagos*, 205.



indigenes and others who had settled in Ikorodu took their children to Lagos for the continuation of their studies after their primary school education in Ikorodu.

The first primary school did not come to Ikorodu Local Government until 1892. This was the Methodist Primary school. Thus, between 1892 and 1994, when the first post primary education institution was founded in Ikorodu, Ikorodu pupils had their post-primary education in Lagos and other neighbouring towns. Therefore, the establishment of Oriwu College, served the post primary education needs of the people of Ikorodu. Thereafter, more schools were established. For instance, when Late Otunba Adeniran Ogunsanya was appointed the first Attorney General of the newly created Lagos State, and later as the State's Commissioner for Education, Government Teachers Colleges were created in the five divisions of the state and Ikorodu was a beneficiary. However, much later, Government Teachers College Ikorodu was changed to the Lagos State Model College, Igbogbo, which is one of the best post primary school institutions in the state.<sup>44</sup> In addition, the Technical College made possible by Commissioner Reuben Olorunfunmi Basorun when he was appointed as the Commissioner for Education in Lagos State in 1992 also provided Ikorodu settlers the opportunity to acquire technical knowledge and skill while still living within Ikorodu for residents. As at 1991/92 academic year, Ikorodu has 54 primary schools with a total enrolment of 38,301 pupils and 23 secondary schools with a total enrolment of 20,645 pupils.<sup>45</sup> With the establishment of schools, Ikorodu has experienced influx of people who settled in the town for the educational developments of their wards.

44. Interview with Demosu Amojor (Head of Land Owner at Owode, Ikorodu), 4<sup>th</sup> August, 2016.

45. Olorode, *Social Change in Ikorodu Division*, 54.

With reference to accommodation issues noted in the aforementioned, the eviction and demolition of Maroko was another factor that contributed to the transformation and expansion of Ikorodu.<sup>46</sup> In July 1990, the prevailing military government of Lagos state ordered the demolition of Maroko community. The demolition of the entire community was carried out after a seven-day quit notice announced over the radio and led to the forced eviction of an estimated 300,000 people from their homes of several decades. Thus, thousands of these internally displaced persons found solace in Ikorodu, which offers some similar occupation opportunity such as fishing, trading, farming just to mention but a few to these new comers.

The dualisation of the Ikorodu road project was another factor that brought about qualitative change in Ikorodu.<sup>47</sup> This was a major factor that led to influx of people into Ikorodu, particularly Owutu (Ikorodu West) and Odogunyan (Ikorodu North). Commenting on the advantage of the dualisation of Ikorodu road, Colonel Mohamed Buba Marwa on April 2, 1993 promised that dualisation would save people travelling time. According to him at the foundation laying ceremony of terrace bungalow at Owutu housing estate in Ikorodu, eventual allottees would be lucky as dualisation of the Ikorodu road project would further reduce the time and stress associated with moving from Ikorodu to the Lagos metropolis.<sup>48</sup> With its ability to save people's travelling time as well as control omission of pollutants from vehicles the dualisation of the Ikorodu road project brought more people into Ikorodu leading to its rapid transformation and development.

46. Interview with Comrade Eleshio, op. cit.

47. Interview with Chief Karbiru Afolabi Aboki (Asiwaju of Isawo, Ikorodu, Lagos) 15<sup>th</sup> December, 2015

48. Ibid.



## Political Factors

The creation of Lagos State on May 27, 1967 engendered resonate tremendous urbanization in Ikorodu. Prior to this period, the metropolitan areas (colony province) of Ikeja, Agege, Mushin, Ikorodu, Epe and Badagry were administered by the Western Region.<sup>49</sup> At the creation of Lagos State, indigenes and settlers was divided into two and this has to do with whether to go with Lagos or remain a part of Western region. But majority of Ikorodu citizens, who realized the economic advantage offered by Lagos and as a result of its nearness to Lagos chose to be part of Lagos.

The annexation of Ikorodu to the newly created Lagos resulted in population explosion as Ikorodu started enjoying benefits like the establishment of court and schools by some of its indigenes, who were appointed members of the new Lagos state administration. Late Otunba T.O.S. Benson, in his capacity as the Federal Government Minister of Information, brought the transmitting station of the Voice of Nigeria to Ipakodo in 1962.<sup>50</sup> Similarly, late Otunba Adeniran Ogunsanya, the first Attorney-General and Commissioner for justice of Lagos State, brought the transmission for the Federal Radio Corporation of Nigeria to Ikorodu.<sup>51</sup> The creation of Lagos State as well as the political influence of some political holders from Ikorodu led to the rapid transformation of Ikorodu..<sup>52</sup> Since then, lands have also being acquired for staff of different organizations such as the West Africa Examination Council (WAEC), University of Lagos (UNILAG), the National Electricity Power Authority (NEPA now PHCH), Caleb University and

so on; this further brought many people working in Lagos to Ikorodu and accordingly transformed this area of Lagos State.

## Conclusion

By and large, we have thus far attempted a comprehensive analysis of continuity and change in the transformation of Ikorodu since the colonial period when the area was annexed and integrated with the Lagos colony. Though, Ikorodu had already been an important community because it offered opportunity as a transit point and corridor to interior hinterland to other Yoruba states before, during and in the post-colonial era. Despite this obvious significance, however, the colonial period was a watershed in the transformation process. A development that cannot be devious from the British era.

The article equally demonstrates how indigenes of Ikorodu as well as the development in Lagos also shaped and strengthened socio-economic and political development in Ikorodu. Thus the paper highlights a combination of factors; colonial legacy, indigenous initiatives, development in Lagos, political, social and economic factors that led to the transformation of Ikorodu from a mere vegetable farm to an urban centre. To this end, one can safely conclude that a combination of all these factors activated the process of urbanization, which in turn contributed to the transformation of Ikorodu. Despite the above however, Ikorodu is still confronted with the challenges of infrastructural deficits. For example, linking Lagos from Ikorodu is through one road. The situation has contributed to traffic congestion for commuters and business activities. The idea of the fourth Mainland Bridge to link Ikorodu with Victoria Island has remained a white-

49. Dioka, *Lagos and Its Environs*, 164.

50. Interview with Chief Adeyemi, op. cit.

51. Ibid.

52. Boge, "Administration History of Ikorodu," 135-150.



Elephant project. Lack of proper planning, bad drainage system, waste management, slum clearance, town planning just to mention but a few are still begging for serious attention of the Lagos Government.<sup>53</sup> To overcome all these therefore, the Lagos Government must be genuinely committed to the improvement of infrastructural facilities in Ikorodu cum private sectors in view of the financial challenges of the state. By so doing, Ikorodu an important part of the state would continue to contribute to the overall transformation of Lagos as the fastest growing urban city in Africa.

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