

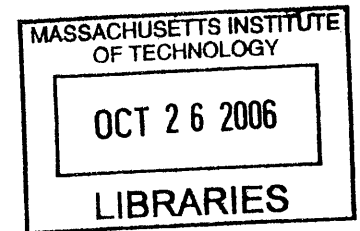
**City Design and Social Exclusion:  
Abuja, Nigeria in Review**

By: Ifeoma N. Ebo

Bachelor of Architecture  
Cornell University, 2002

Submitted to the Department of Urban Studies and Planning  
In Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for the Degree of

MASTER IN CITY PLANNING  
at the  
Massachusetts Institute of Technology  
June 2006



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Signature of Author

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be "Ifeoma N. Ebo", written over a horizontal line.

Department of Urban Studies & Planning  
May 17, 2006

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**ABSTRACT**

This thesis investigation explores the relationship between city design and social exclusion, and more specifically, how modernist principles of urban design and development policy have contributed to social exclusion in Abuja – the capital city of Nigeria. This study is facilitated through reading the city and its unique and common characteristics. Based on my experiences in the city over a three month period, I use my understanding of urban development, and relevant documents to examine the nature of exclusion in the Abuja plan and process of development. From the results of this analysis the presence of exclusion in Abuja is enhanced by the use of colonial policies and selective use of modernist planning/processes of development. Furthermore, the relationship between social exclusion and city design in Abuja is the continuation of a legacy of colonial urban development and divisive urban form in traditional Nigerian cities.

Thesis Supervisor: Larry Vale  
Title: Professor of Urban Studies & Planning



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## Chapter 1: Introduction

### Background

Nigeria, a nation deeply scarred by a history of colonialism and a civil war, has created a new capital city to physically symbolize “a break from her colonial past into a future of pioneering growth in the interior and in the realm of urban development” (Agba 1986: pg.26). Abuja, now in its 26<sup>th</sup> year of development, is Africa's first modernist capital city and follows in the tradition of planned capitals that exist in Brazil (Brasilia), USA (Washington, D.C.) and India (Chandigarh). In contrast to the former capital of Nigeria (Lagos), Abuja is visually appealing, with manicured lawns, non-congested roads, and buildings infused with a nouveau African-centeredness. The Nigerian government has established for the nation an African utopia in the heart of the country. However, in Abuja, an interesting disparity exists.

The majority of people who are able to live in the city are wealthy, while the poor live at the periphery in satellite towns. In the wealthier parts of Abuja, there are paved roads with

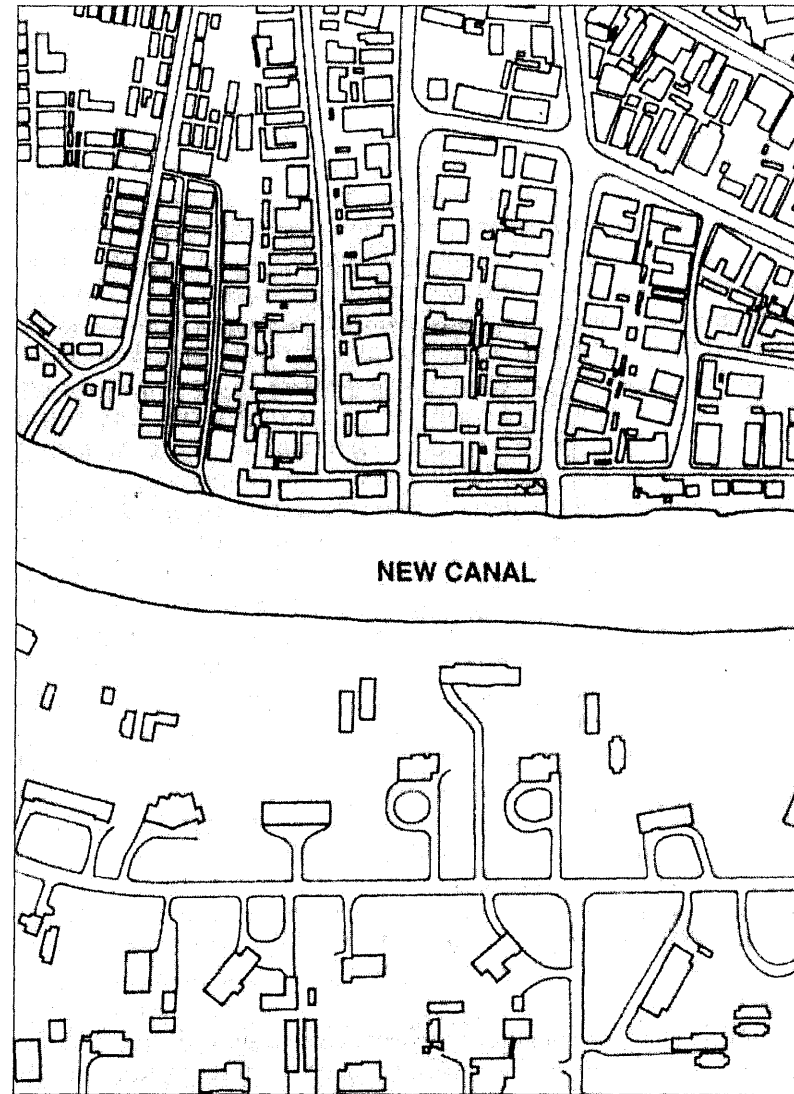
street lamps, a regular power supply, an adequate water supply, infrastructure and amenities. In addition, the housing stock and physical condition of the built environment are of better quality.

However, there is an incredible contrast at the periphery, where low-income Nigerians reside. There is generally poor provision of infrastructure, housing, water and power supply. As such, one can suggest that the poor live in places that can be described as slums. These slums (also known as “satellite towns”) do not receive the same development treatment as the city center. There are other observed inconsistencies that exist in the built and social environment that relate to both religious and ethnic differences. The above-mentioned observations are surprising because Abuja’s city planners initially intended to create a city for all Nigerians, part of the justification behind the removal of the capital city from Lagos.

Lagos is a city grounded in colonial ideals focused on social control, domination and subordination. Pre-independence, through the design and management of the city, Europeans were able to segregate themselves from Nigerians. Many Nigerians in Lagos lived in high-density satellite

towns that embodied the characteristics of slums. Colonial governments were unwilling to spend money to rectify the desperate situations in the satellite towns and considered sanitation and safe water supplies for 'natives' uneconomic (Peil 1991: pg. 8). The city became divided unequally, where the realm of the African stood neglected while the cities' financial resources benefited the domain of the colonists and eventually the Nigerian elite.

One such satellite town by the name of Ajegunle, populated by low-income workers, is located outside of the central business district and separated from the city by several major highways. Ajegunle is infamously known as the "Tiger Town" because of its characteristics of crime-ridden areas; "low income and education, overcrowding and unemployment" (Peil 1991: pg. 131). The Ajegunle Canal separates Ajegunle from the Apapa estate, "a low-density housing development built in the colonial era for expatriate industrial and commercial executives" (Peil 1991: pg. 27). These physical separations (major highways and an urban canal) prevented Nigerians, specifically the poor, from gaining



*Map 1 above: Ajegunle and Apapa: The New Canal separates the poor high density housing development Ajegunle (above) from the more affluent low density area - Apapa estates.*

access to employment in the commercial and industrial sectors of the city. In that respect, colonial planning in Lagos not only contributed to racial segregation, but it also enhanced ethnic and class-based divisions. After Nigeria's independence in 1960, the areas previously developed for the Europeans were taken over by the Nigerian elite. In addition, the number of slums in Lagos has grown, and the conditions in such areas as Ajegunle have worsened. These methods of exclusion, which promote unequal development and establish physical barriers to access, continue to permeate the way in which the government manages and regulates the city.

Over 60% of Lagos' population is Yoruba (a Nigerian ethnic group), locally born or immigrant, which has led Nigerians to identify Lagos as a Yoruba town (Falola 2003: pg. 282). As a result of the cultural imbalance, "conflicts between indigenes and immigrants are a regular feature of urban life. They arise mainly from the fear, real or imagined, of the indigenous population of losing political and economic advantages to immigrants" (Falola 2003: pg. 286). Lagos was established not only as a colonial city, but a Yoruba city with

a cultural heritage and daily pattern that can only be identified with one ethnic group. Yoruba people have had an advantage in terms of land ownership and opportunities because of their involvement in the foundation of Lagos. This advantage inevitably led to the marginalization and concentration of minority ethnic groups to areas in the city that possessed the poorest conditions.

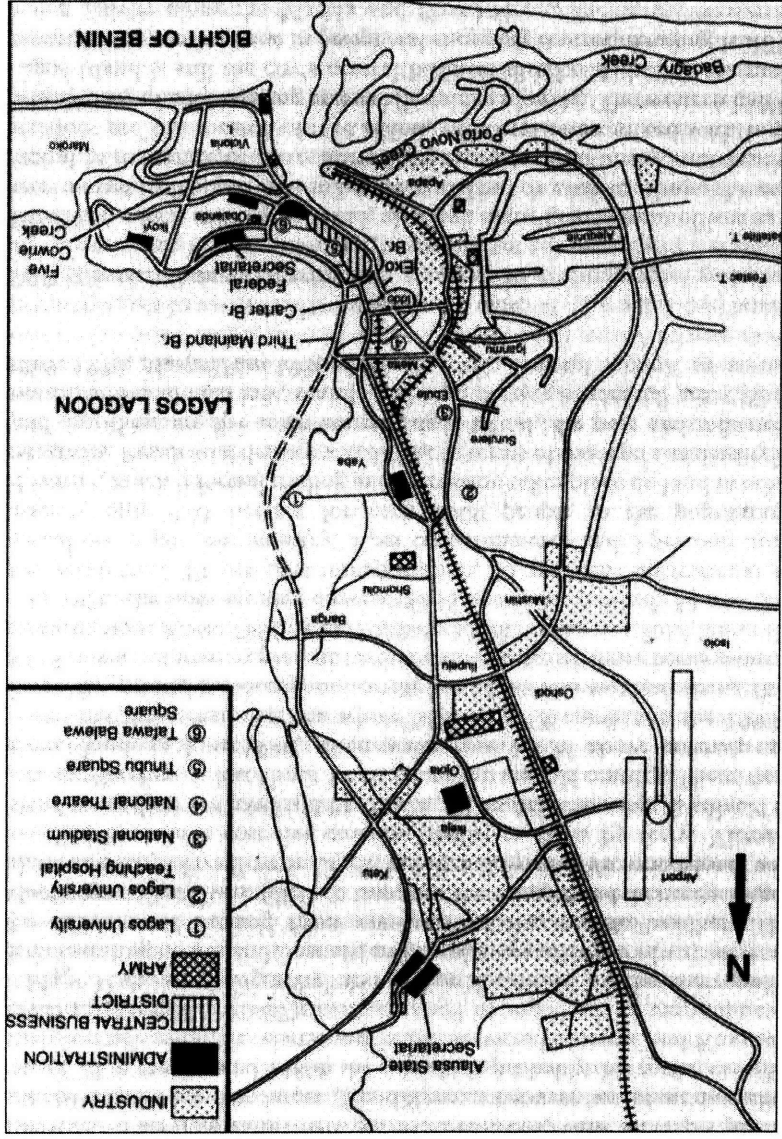
Ajegunle is the only area in Lagos where the Yoruba are a numerical minority, though they remain the major house owners (Peil 1991: pg. 44). For those in power, the satellite towns and the strangers that inhabited them were out of

*Image 1 below: Sanitation workers pour garbage to fill up the swamps in the streets of Ajegunle.*



sight and therefore "out of mind". Areas such as Ajegunle were neglected because they were peripheral to the city and inhabited by strangers. Furthermore, the treatment and location of such satellite towns not only supported the hegemony of colonialists, but also the maintenance of Yoruba empowerment in Lagos. However, the colonial forms of exclusion also served to promote social cohesion among the underclass.

The missionaries and colonial authorities introduced new ways of praying and making money, but allowed many traditional customs to survive (Peil 1991: pg 29). Within the social enclaves in the satellite towns of Lagos, the poor were able to continue their cultural practices as long as they were not performed in the domain of the colonialists. This selective freedom in effect allowed people of like minds to congregate and collaborate on ways to improve their conditions. The independence movement rose quite naturally among a people who wanted to improve themselves and their families and saw how this could be done (Peil 1991: pg 29). Segregation of the poor encouraged a level of social cohesion that led to the country's independence in 1960 and the eradication of the



Map 2 above: Land Use Map of Lagos illustrating the isolation of Ajegunle by physical barriers such as railroad tracks, and major roads separating it from the Central Business District.

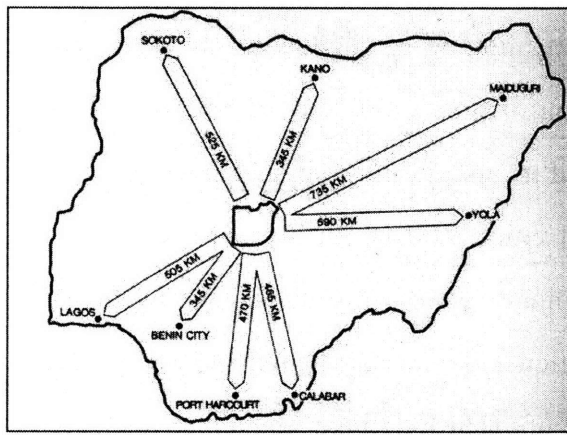
colonial regime in appearance, but not in regulation.

These social conflicts can be partly attributed to the colonial standpoint of “divide and conquer”, in which social divisions in society are enhanced in order to gain greater control over the people. Exclusion was an important issue in social, political and economic relationships. Furthermore, these conflicts were a fundamental reason for the location of the new federal capital in a “neutral territory -- to heal the wounds of the civil war” (Elleh 1997: pg. 318). Although the territory was equidistant from all edges of the country in theory establishing its location as “neutral”, in reality the northern part of the country, is heavily influenced by Islamic

culture. Despite the contrast between realities and intentions, the creation and design of Abuja was a way for Nigeria to rid itself of its colonial mentality and “of undoing everything the colonials had done wrong in Lagos” (Elleh 1997: pg. 318).

The Committee on the Location of the Federal Capital of Nigeria was created in 1975 to carry out “an extensive examination of the dual government role in Lagos, its suitability as a national Capital, and as an alternative, a possible New Capital City elsewhere in the country.” According to their conclusions, Lagos was incapable of functioning as a Federal Capital because of the “inadequate land space for development” and “identification with predominantly one ethnic group.” The site of Abuja was appealing because it was “centrally located” with “easy access to all parts of the Federation.” All of these characteristics were perceived as essential to “generating a new sense of national unity” (FCDA 1979: pg. 27). Consequently, Abuja had the major task of accommodating the needs of all Nigerians.

The Federal Capital Development Authority (FCDA) is the main organization responsible for the development and



*Map 3 left: Map illustrating the “neutral” location of the Federal Capital Territory.*

management of the new Federal Capital for Nigeria. Despite all of the above-mentioned knowledge of social conflict in Lagos, the FCDA could not avoid the similar conditions of exclusion in Abuja. In the same way that Lagos belongs to one ethnic group, Abuja belongs to the Nigerian elite. Similar to the way that minority ethnic groups, which also included a majority of the poor, were marginalized to satellite towns, so too are the poor in the new capital city. Social exclusion exists in Abuja; however, those racial and ethnic lines have become economic, religious and extremely profound. It seems that no matter what solution to a problem of urban design and governance is offered, another problem will arise with respect to social interaction. Can designers/planners truly create a framework for the development of a socially inclusive city? If we can determine the aspects of city form and development that enhance exclusion, we might better understand why disparities exist in cities. This study analyses the plan and development of Abuja, particularly its modernist components, to determine the aspects that contribute to the presence of exclusion in the city.

## **Research Questions**

Along the way this research will need to answer these key questions:

- What are the design principles in the plan for Abuja and where are they derived from?
- How have the designed cities elsewhere dealt with the issue of social inclusion/exclusion?
- What development strategies were used in Abuja and how do they contribute to social exclusion?
- What recommendations can be made to formulate a socially inclusive strategy for Abuja or other planned capitals?

## **Methodology**

This investigation was facilitated by spending a considerable amount of time in the city of Abuja, constantly reading the city and its unique and shared characteristics with comparable capital cities. Based on my experiences in the city over a three-month period, my understanding of urban development, intuition and relevant research have been used to examine the nature of exclusion in the Abuja plan and process

of development. Existing literature and theory, on Abuja and social exclusion, have been reviewed as they relate to city form and development. Interviews with planners in the Federal Capital Development Authority were conducted to determine the challenges that Abuja faces in development. This study was limited by the availability of national census data and detailed information on particular policies used in relationship to the social and built environment in the Federal Capital Territory. However, inferences were made from documented information from other comparable cities, the news, and other research sources.

### **Thesis Structure**

Chapter 2 provides a review of relevant literature on social exclusion in cities and theories on Abuja's design and development to arrive at the specific design and/or policy decisions that contribute to social exclusivity. The interconnected relationship among social exclusion, national identity and modernism is explored in the context of a country historically grounded in colonialism. This chapter is intended

to ascertain the relevance of the three issues (exclusion, identity, and modernism) to disparities in Abuja's built environment.

Chapter 3 explores the design of Abuja in order to identify the social intentions encoded in the Master Plan. This chapter identifies the models of inspiration behind the plan for Abuja and their implications regarding exclusivity. Religious division is analyzed as it relates to the architectural character and urban design of the city. The final goal is to determine if the designers/planners adopted formal strategies to promote social exclusion.

Chapter 4 identifies the aspects of traditional Nigerian city forms that were adopted in the Master Plan juxtaposed with Abuja's modernist city form to determine how each has the potential to contribute to social exclusion.

In conclusion, Chapter 5 summarizes the work and reflects on the important points of the thesis. This chapter answers the primary research questions as stated above, and provides directions for future research.

## Abbreviation List

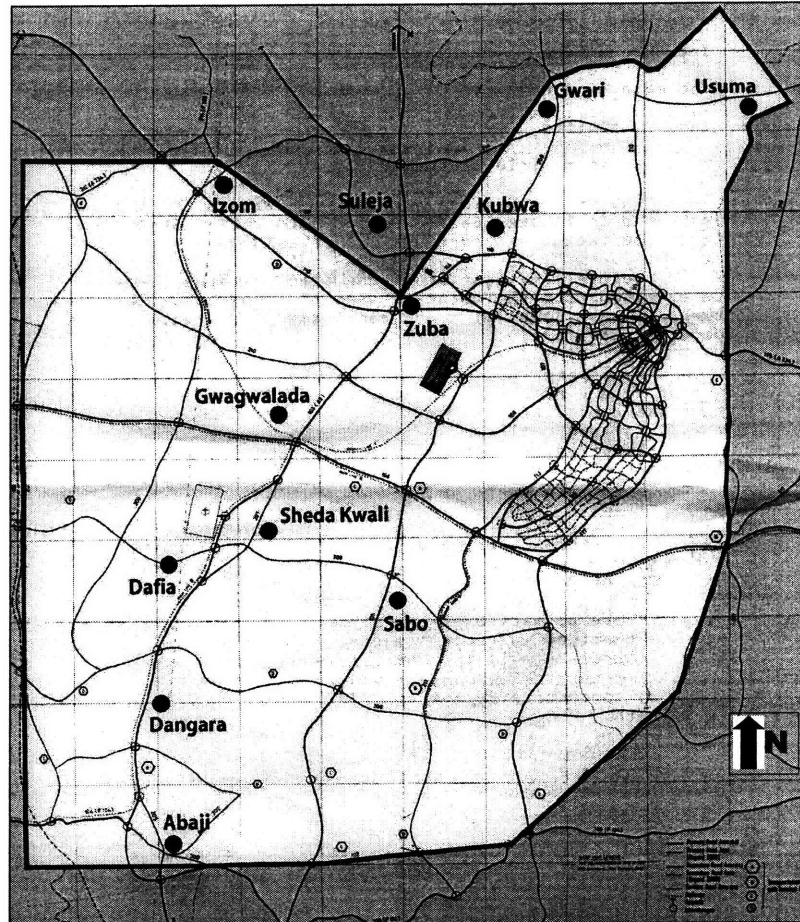
CIAM Congres Internationaux d'Architecture Moderne

FCDA Federal Capital Development Authority

FCT Federal Capital Territory

FCC Federal Capital City

IDB Inter-American Development Bank



*Map 4 above: The map above illustrates the relationship between the Federal Capital Territory and the Federal Capital City. The FCC is the area in the northeast illustrated in a crescent shape. The surrounding towns demarcated by the black dot are known as satellite towns. These towns grew out of some of the original villages that existed before construction of the Capital City.*

## **Chapter 2: Modernism, Identity and Exclusion**

Social exclusion, as a result of the design and development of cities, is a frequent subject in literature on city design. For the parameters of this study, the term ‘social exclusion’ focuses on class, culture and religion. In Nigeria, class, culture and religion characterize the polarized nature of social enclaves on a national and regional scale. The country is culturally divided between three major ethnic groups (Hausa, Yoruba and Igbo), and each group is concentrated in a particular region: the north (Hausa), southwest (Yoruba) and southwest (Igbo). Furthermore, the ethnic/spatial divisions also reflect the religious divisions where the north is predominantly Muslim while the south is Christian. After the end of colonialism, class replaced race as the main form of social stratification as the Nigerian elite replaced the British in positions of power. Nigeria’s history is saturated with social conflicts and these divisions play a major role in the formulation of the Nigerian national identity. This chapter investigates the connection

and conflict between national identity, modernism and social exclusion.

### **City Design and Social Exclusion**

The Oxford Dictionary defines exclusion as the act of “keeping out from a place, group, and/or privilege”. The Inter-American Development Bank (IDB) relates exclusion to city development in its definition of exclusion as “a chronic scarcity of opportunities and access to basic and quality services, - physical conditions and adequate infrastructure”. In addition, the IDB stresses the high correlation between poverty and social exclusion due to the severely restrictive access to services and jobs (IDB 2005). Social exclusion can be orchestrated in various ways, but is most often attributed to an intervention of some form or policy. In South Africa during the Apartheid regime, exclusivity was attributed to social policy dividing people along racial and inevitably economic lines. Exclusivity can be encoded into a plan both intentionally and mistakenly. Particular strategies to maintain order and control in Abuja seem to create a greater sense of division among the

residents of the city. Security and its manifestation in urban design contribute to social exclusion. There are various indicators that suggest the codification of exclusion in city design and development.

In his book entitled Segregation in Cities David Kaplan explores the different indicators of exclusion that can be identified in a city plan or neighborhood enclave. Distance is a fundamental indicator when it exists between the two groups under analysis especially when there is an imbalance of power between them. If separation is desired by both groups (rich and poor for example) then they will each “maintain the barriers between them.” However, often separation is not desired by all (especially in Abuja) and “when the process is asymmetrical, one individual seeks to narrow the social distance while the other maintains it” (Kaplan 1998: pg 6). There is clear evidence of this indicator in the relationship between the satellite towns and neighborhoods in Abuja.

One of the challenges to development is the illegal development of residential and/or commercial properties near the central area of the city. According to a presentation

by members of the Federal Capital Development Authority (FCDA), “illegal developments which violate planning control laws – are slated for outright demolition.” The measures to “correct physical distortions to the plan” seem to focus on keeping undesirable development at the periphery (FCDA 2005). In contrast to this illegal development policy, the FCDA uses land allocation as an incentive for development in the satellite towns. Free land is allocated to those who desire to build residential or commercial properties. However, most free land is located at the periphery and not in the city. Whether it is an incentive or a penalty the main goal is to exclude the poor from developing close to the city center.

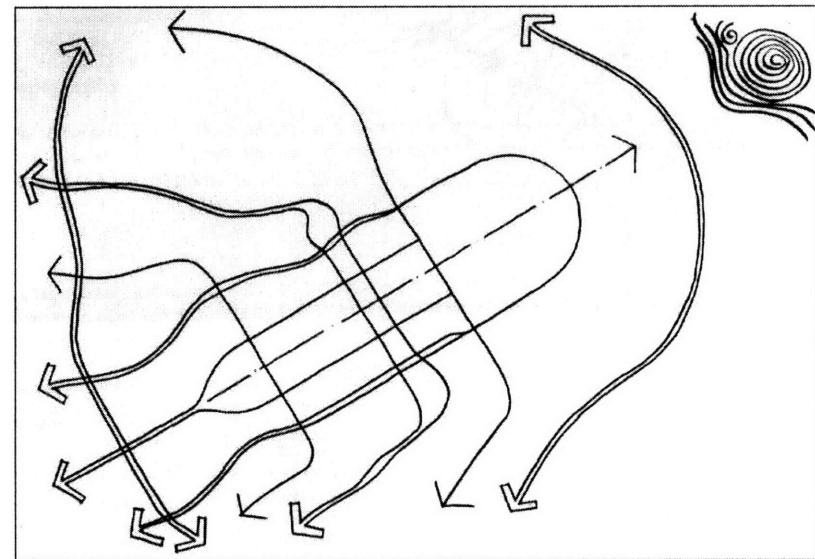
The residential isolation of ethnic groups as a factor of social distance is expressed spatially. To enhance spatial distance, the gap between neighborhoods may be enhanced with a railroad track, a highway, an industrial zone, or even members of another ethnic group considered less objectionable (Kaplan 1998: pg. 7). Similar to the separation between the residential areas for the colonialists and that of Nigerians in Lagos’ colonial plan, the Abuja plan embodies a similar

dichotomy. Distance between the rich and poor residential areas is enhanced through highways and vacant land. In addition, “economic barriers make it impossible for members to purchase or rent housing in much of the city” (Kaplan 1998:pg. 7). Therefore, the isolation of poor residential areas is reinforced through physical and economic means. In Abuja, when one satellite town can no longer accommodate the population increase, another town is created rather than complete the development of low income housing close to the city center. As the poor population increases, so does spatial segregation. At times, segregation is also reinforced by the marginalized group.

Although the infrastructural conditions and housing stock were poor in the satellite towns there was a particular level of freedom that was absent from Abuja’s city center. People sell cooked meat, clothes and other necessities on the street. Children play soccer in a makeshift soccer field. Residents that live in the satellite towns are free to express themselves and their culture by their own terms. In contrast, most of these outdoor activities in the central area, especially



*Image 2 above: Long road and miles of vacant land separating city from satellite town. Image 3 below: Abuja Plan diagrams of highway and transit framework illustrating the use of transportation networks as a physical barrier to the city. The outer roads surrounding the city create a 4 lane barrier for passengers on foot.*



street vendors are prohibited. Separation may not only be desired by the dominant group, but can also be preferred by the non-dominant group. Kaplan describes these versions of separation as two forces in which “the forces that account for the origin of segregated patterns may be different from those that maintain segregated patterns” (Kaplan 1998: pg 42).

Development and land use policy is used as a means to incite the emergence of an elitist community in Abuja. In his article “The Nigerian New Capital City: from Lagos to Abuja”, Olu Sule explores the rise of an elitist society in Abuja through the lens of urban policy. In the final two terms for the Abuja Land Allocation policy created in 1981, the terms imply that land allocation would be egalitarian, but the way in which they are set up contradicts its social intentions. For example, the 4th term states that land allocation will occur where possible “first come - first served”, this implies that those who were in the city first (i.e., the builders, blue collar workers) would have priority in the land allocation process. However, the third term which states “to allocate lands on capacity and ability to develop” reveals the true definition of the first come first serve premise.

As long as one has the financial stability to develop and “comes first” only then will they be allocated land. Therefore, only the wealthy of the country will have access to developing land in the capital city and inevitably the city would become an elite community. According to Sule the growth of this “elite community” will inevitably “undermine the social fabric on which Abuja is founded” (Sule 1985: pg. 344). Since the wealthy are the ones with access to development in the capital city, they therefore will have primary say as to the nature of diversity in the built environment.

The presence of exclusion in Abuja is enhanced by barriers. Such barriers can be constructed in terms of land use policy or design guidelines for the built environment. They can also be constructed through the absence of adequate housing for those with low income. Barriers come in many different forms and strategies, but their effects are quite visible in the end. The barriers can also be physical, in terms of distance. Architecturally, they can be the creation of compound walls around a housing development to keep out those who don't live in the compound. The implications of these barriers are

increased by their ability to “reinforce differences that already exist and [their] capacity to victimize some groups while [they] profit others” (Kaplan 1998:pg. 115). The actual divisions in society are already apparent, but the design/layout/image/management of the city can increase or reinforce the nature of these divisions.

### **National Identity**

Nigerian national identity played an important role in the planning of Abuja. The designers/planners for Abuja had the challenging task of incorporating Nigerian ideals into the design and process’ of development. However, for a country that has relied on western influences for the development of its management structure, there may also have been a desire to return to western roots. In his book Architecture, Power and National Identity, Lawrence Vale investigates the use of architecture and urban design in Abuja to express political power and control. Vale does touch upon the fact that the design of Abuja contributes more to divisiveness than to unity, however his notion of divisiveness is explored

through a political as opposed to a socially based frame of analysis. The government intended to create a city that was the physical embodiment of democracy. When defined, the term democracy brings to mind a society where the people control the government. However, through Vale's analysis of the plan we understand that the opposite was encoded into the design of the city. Abuja’s “Three Arms Zone” (the National Assembly, the Presidential Complex, and the Supreme Court) including the residence of the president is “to be a separate zone for government, divided from the rest of the city by distance and by topography” (Vale 1992: pg 140). I would argue that the similar tools are used in the master plan to separate the affluent residents in the city from the poor. Vale does discuss the presence of social segregation in the city and explores the relationship between the government and the people; I intend to explore the same tools as they relate to the relationships between the wealthy and poor in Abuja.

According to Vale “Abuja is planned without much regard for Nigeria’s poor” (Vale 1992: pg 146). The city is designed to accommodate the desires for an affluent social



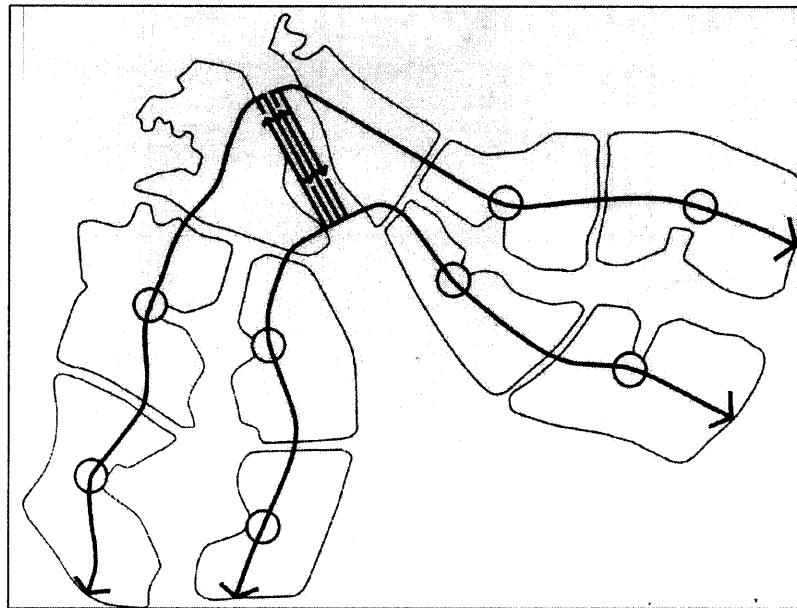
*Image 4 above: Monumental core of city illustrating separation between “Three Arms Zone” and the rest of the city. The “zone” is indicated by the three buildings in the upper portion of the image that are separated from the lower part (Central area).*

status. The common Nigerian, who does not have the resources to buy a car or a home, is separated from the spaces in the city that can serve as an impetus to achieve middle class dreams. The location of luxury homes close to the National Assembly and away from the city neighborhoods reveals the master plan's advocacy of residential segregation by income. There are numerous examples that reveal this codification of exclusion in the master plan. For example, several satellite towns are created specifically for employees for various companies including Shell, and Julius Berger (Construction Company) in phase two of the Master Plan. Despite the fact that the conditions in these towns are poor, only the employees of these companies are provided housing while those without employment must deal with “self-help” initiatives. In the original master plan document for Abuja it is stated that the development authority must “develop a housing policy and program tailored to the needs of the Capital’s population” (FCDA 1979: pg. 174). However, in reality the “houses intended for the low income population could be afforded only by [the middle to upper class]” (Vale 1992: pg. 146). In

addition to the affordability factor, Vale also suggests that the “proposed layout of the transit way corridor acts to promote the unequal distribution of income groups with respect to the capital complex” (Vale 1992:pg. 146).

Vale suggests that the street grid and transportation system create two different ways of approaching and migrating through the city. The outer transportation corridors on each side of the crescent seem designed to go first to the ministries and commercial facilities along the mall before terminating in

*Image 5: Diagram of Abuja transit corridor creating barriers to access to employment sectors of the city.*



the Transportation Center at the base of the Central Area; by contrast, the two inner transportation belts go directly to the Transportation Center without passing any of the other areas affording employment in the Central Area (Vale 1992: pg. 147). These two modes of migration reflect and differentiate the way the affluent and poor have access to the city. However, Vale made these implications at a time when the city was not built. Future development of the city, including the completion of transportation networks can determine the validity of his statements. Abuja’s present stage of development does reveal that the design represents the separation of the power of government from the power of the people. Furthermore, it also represents the realm of the affluent and the realm of the poor. Where and how the two forms of separation relate to one another speaks to the overall codification of exclusion in the master plan for Abuja.

Although Vale does make brief mention about the presence of exclusion enhanced by housing policy and transit layout he does not relate these issues to principles of modernism, which seem to be the foundational ideas behind the design and

development of the master plan for Abuja. In contrast, Vale states that “the existence of Abuja cannot be understood apart from the history of European colonial presence” (Vale 1992: pg. 134). Therefore it is important to understand the history of European presence in Nigeria and its relationship to modernist principles in the design of Abuja.

### **Modernism as the Return to Colonialism**

According to Nezar Alsayyad in his book Forms of Dominance “the dilemma in post-colonial societies today is how to avoid perpetuating patterns of colonial domination through architecture and planning” (Alsayyad 1992:pg. 15). Planning, regulation, and the direct exercise of power became “tools of control” and a means to spread the ideals of colonialism. The ideals of the Abuja master plan intended to avoid the mistakes of colonialism, however the adoption of modernist principles appear more regressive than progressive in their implications. Modernist city design seems to be a derivation of colonialism and the tool of which the Nigerian government has used to complete the final step of complete

colonial domination – to colonize the interior. Even though the process of creating a modernist city is similar to colonialism, the structural tools that are used to reinforce spatial separation are different and contribute differently to separation.

The model modern city was a prototype developed by the Congres Internationaux d’Architecture Moderne (CIAM) in the early 1940s using architecture and planning as tools for social control and transformation. In his book The Modernist City, James Holston explores the notion of CIAM modern city and its social impacts on the residents of Brasilia - the Capital city of Brazil. According to Holston, CIAM identified eight essential principles to develop a city that can facilitate the

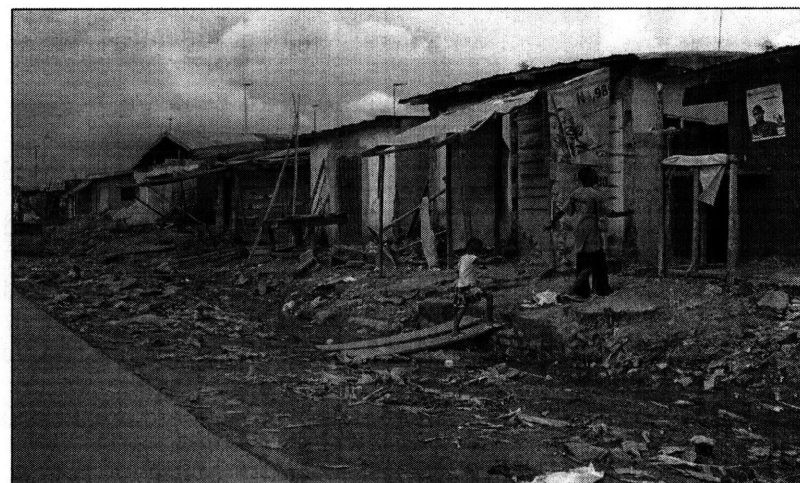
“management and political control” of the people:

- (1) anticapitalist and egalitarian basis,
- (2) machine metaphor and totalizing rationality,
- (3) redefinition of the social functions of urban organization,
- (4) development of building typologies and planning conventions as instruments of social change,
- (5) decontextualization and environmental determinism,
- (6) reliance on state authority to achieve total planning,
- (7) techniques of shock, and
- (8) conflation of art, politics, and daily life (Holston 1989: pg. 43).

The methods of creating a modernist plan seem democratic and domineering by definition and their selective usage can contribute to social inequality. Modernist planning appropriates colonialist issues of emigration, settlement and dependency; without the European establishment of the city. In his definition of modernism Edward Shills states that “modern means being Western without depending on the West” (Shills 1975:pg. 485).

### **Modernism Promotes Unequal Development**

The modernist city is more prominently placed in the landscape of Abuja than the institution is placed within the culture as evidenced by the disparities in the evolution of neighborhoods in the satellite towns as opposed to those in the city center. In the colonial city the colonial and indigenous populations were often geographically separate. The natives lived in conditions that “compared unfavorably with the posh circumstances of the intruders” (Kaplan 1998:pg. 32). Planners for Abuja were selective in where and how the modern city was implemented in effect creating a dual city. Abuja visually



*Image 6 above: Neighborhood in Kubwa (Abuja satellite town) in large contrast to residential street in Asokoro (neighborhood in city) Image 7 (below). In the satellite town image (above) sidewalks are incomplete, plot sizes are smaller, and generally poor infrastructure development. Infrastructure cannot support the amount of people in the allotted plots. However, in the neighborhood image below, the plot sizes are larger, with landscaped streets, and infrastructure supports the housing density.*



represents two faces of a modernist national identity, that of poverty at the periphery and affluence in the center.

According to Anthony King in his essay “Rethinking Colonialism”, European colonialism “has marginalized and silenced two other sets of voices: the voices of resistance and the voices of – the vernacular” (Alsayyad 1992:pg. 343). While the city is designed and managed by the professional elite who have the desire to compete with the world of the developed, the poor are mainly concerned with the basic necessities (food, water, shelter) – living in the moment as opposed to the future. In addition to difference in social ideals, the design of the separate spaces is not equal. Differentiation occurs in the character of the street, plot sizes, neighborhood density, and infrastructural provision to name a few. Furthermore, the satellite town becomes the realm of the “vernacular” - not in an attempt to preserve culture but only because those that live there cannot afford the luxuries of modernist building.

### **Modernism Negates Culture**

Through the design and development guidelines the FCDA is very selective in the aspects of indigenous culture that are

manifested in the built environment. Buildings that can be claimed to represent “cultural based design” are relegated to particular parts of the city and only serve to reduce “architecture to a three-dimensional government-sanctioned billboard advertising selected aspects of indigenous culture” (Alsayyad 1992:pg. 327). For example, the only buildings that try to incorporate an African aesthetic are the state houses along the Cultural axis by the Central Business District. In other parts of the city, the level of western culture embodied in the urban landscape is not limited, but encouraged and promoted. The

*Image 8 right: Lagos State House - Abuja Cultural Axis: Inspired by African art, but this kind of architecture can only be seen along the cultural axis near the Central business district.*



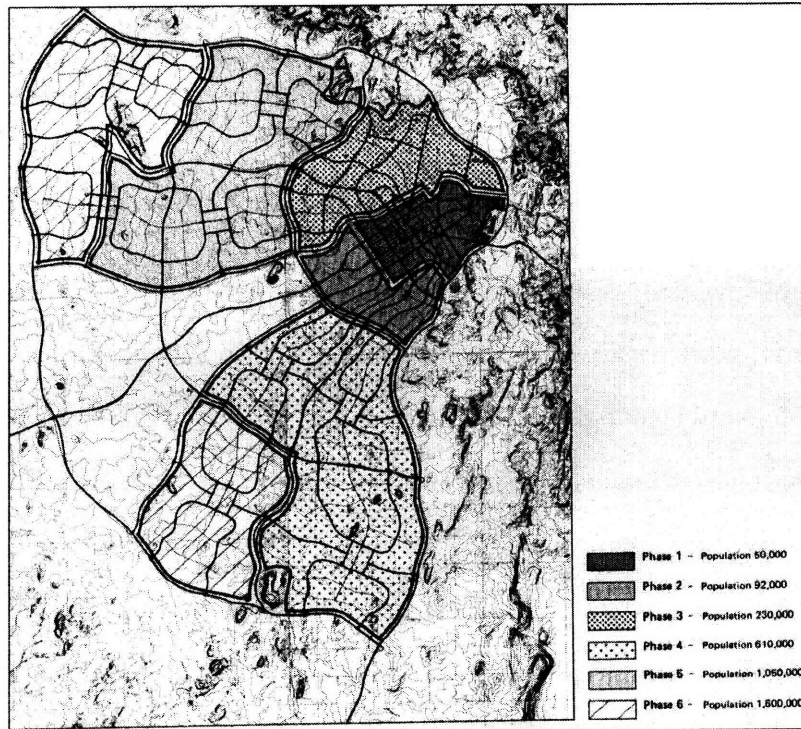


*Image 9 above: View of the city from a hilltop in the neighborhood of Wuse. Visually similar to a colonial town in any developing country.*

development control regulations create a framework for the establishment of “single family bungalows, garden houses with large front and back yards” and “contemporary architectural design over traditional and cultural styles” (Sule 1985: pg. 344). What results is the re-appearance of the colonial town in the heart of Nigeria. The implication of this new Euro city is greater because of its presence as the symbol for the identity of the Nigerian nation. That identity embodies ideals of separate but not equal, affluence, westernization and exploitation.

### **Modernism Encourages Exploitation**

The planners for Abuja tried to suppress the existence of builders in the city by neglecting to provide housing for them (see Colonial resettlement policy in Chapter 3). Holston discusses the significance of this neglect in relationship to the myth of the modern city. According to Holston “as an imagined utopia, [the master plan] remains silent about the details of the city’s construction, settlement, and organization, for these would have negated its objective: freedom from existing conditions, from what was inadequate and unacceptable in [the country]” (Holston 1989:pg. 199). The plan for Abuja was developed in stages. However, the first stage was fully developed for government employees, but had no plan for housing the people who would actually construct the first phase. This reveals the nature of exploitation embedded in the process of developing Abuja. Even the satellite towns were constructed after the first phase further emphasizing the fact that provision for the lower class was an after thought even though they would be the first true residents of the new city.



*Map 5 above: Footprint of the different stages of development. The first actual residents of the city were not included in the first phase population forecast.*

In the colonial city “as separated as they were legally and socially, slaves were spatially integrated within the residences of their owners and lived among the dominant members of society” (Kaplan 1998:pg. 29). Many housing developments in Abuja include a “boys quarters” for the servants/nannies of government employees. In the beginning stages of city development, housing was not provided for the builders of the city, but housing compounds for government employees were fully designed with additional housing for servants. This illustrates the fact that the city is designed to benefit the affluent and exploit the poor population. In addition, the population in the satellite towns are needed for other forms of labor (janitorial, drivers, sanitation etc) but kept at a distance so as not to pollute the image of the city.

For Nigeria and many other post-colonized societies, modernism like colonialism represents foreign ideas and actions. The evidence mentioned reveals that colonialism promoted social and cultural segregation. Abuja embodies a similar form of segregation, however the dividing line “lies between those who have access to economic resources and

those who do not” (Elleh 2001:pg. 73). Modernist planning is the next stage of colonialism; the Nigerian elite have adopted the colonial mentality to the point where Government planners have planned an entire capital using similar designs as a colonial city. In this sense, the development of Nigeria’s former Capital (Lagos) served as an educational institution in which future Nigerian planners/developers learned the tools of separation, exploitation and dominance.

## Chapter 3: Design Intentions, Inspirations, Implications

The genesis of Abuja brought out and symbolized several different intentions both for the new territory and the people that would eventually inhabit the city. The Abuja Master Plan focused on three goals to be achieved through the design of the city. The three goals (imageability, efficiency, and flexibility) arose after planners reviewed the success and failures of previous planned cities and categorized solutions for basic problems in city planning and implementation (FCDA 1979: pg. 61). There are trade-offs when planning a new city that has the burden of transforming perceptions of a country to the world. Equity is a fundamental principle of the CIAM modern city, but it was not included among the goals for Abuja. Nigerian government planners may not have intended to enhance exclusion; however in their selective use of modernist planning principles several design elements used were exclusionary in nature. This chapter explores the design of Abuja to determine its intentions, inspirations and

implications.

### Intentions

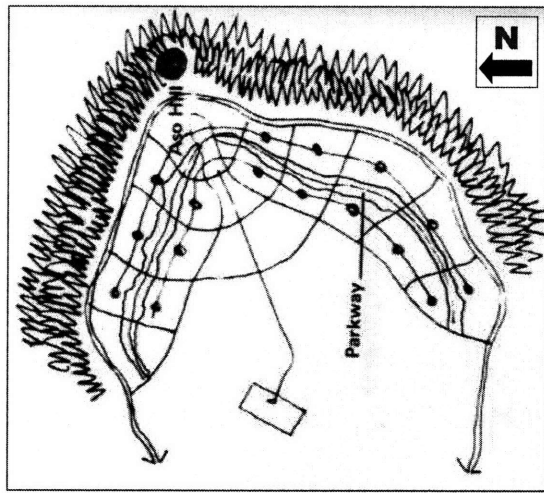
In a 1983 interview, the then Minister of the Federal Capital Development Authority (Alhaji Iro Dan Musa) claimed that the government wanted the new capital city in Nigeria to “belong to all Nigerians” and this could best be achieved by “starting afresh in Abuja” (Africa 1983: pg. 62). Musa’s claim begins the myth of Abuja as a clean slate where every problem that Nigeria has had in its past can be erased. In reality, the city did not start “afresh”, but reflected a continuation of the legacy of colonialization in modern form. Musa describes the ideals of the city design as embodying a “Nigerian character”, reflecting the “culture of the Nigerian people, national cohesion and integration”, and expressing the “unity of Nigeria”. Furthermore, the meaning of Abuja is to “provide a home for all Nigerians and a symbol of – national unity” (Africa 1983: pg. 63.) These statements bring images to the mind of a city that would reflect African greatness. At no point does he mention Eurocentric influences or a focus on elitism. The

public is made to believe that the city will be all inclusive and that the rich, poor, Christian, Muslim, Igbo, Yoruba etc. can lay claim to their new capital. An investigation of the design of the city is necessary to explore the realities behind those lofty intentions.

**Design**

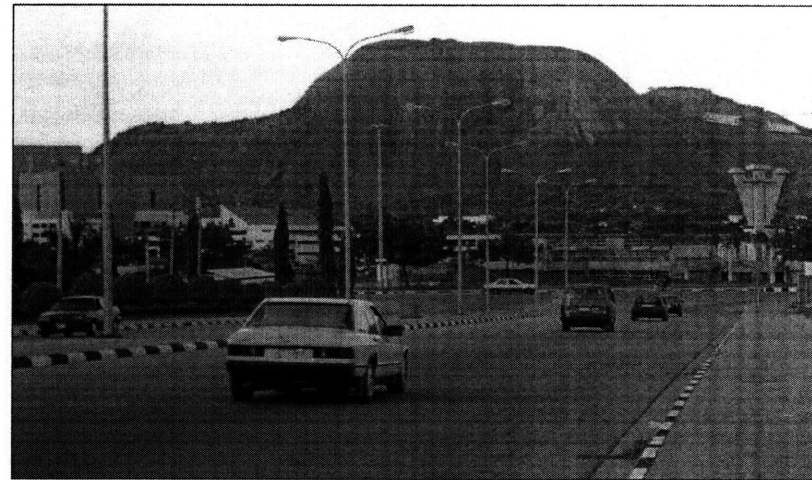
Abuja is planned around a central area extending east-west, with the residential areas to the north and south. The city is spatially broken into three separate and distinct spheres – The Central Area, Three Arms Zone, and City Districts (residential areas). Security and containment is an important driver behind

the design of Abuja and is emphasized in the spatial orientation of the city in relationship to the natural boundaries of the site (Aso Hills). The crescent shape of the hills influenced the same form in the design of the city and also serves as a security barrier for the Presidential residence, Three Arms Zone and prevention of uncontrolled development in this area. The relationship between the city and the Aso hills promotes an environment in which many of the squatter settlements surround the ring roads opposite to the Aso rock. In effect, the settlements are concentrated in one area, are easily identifiable and accessible. Furthermore, their location at the edges of the



*Image 10 left: Design sketch of Abuja illustrating the plan form derived from the land form.*

*Image 11 right: View towards Aso Hill from the Central Area. Aso Hill is the most prominent natural feature of the city. Most areas of the city are bounded by the Aso Hills.*

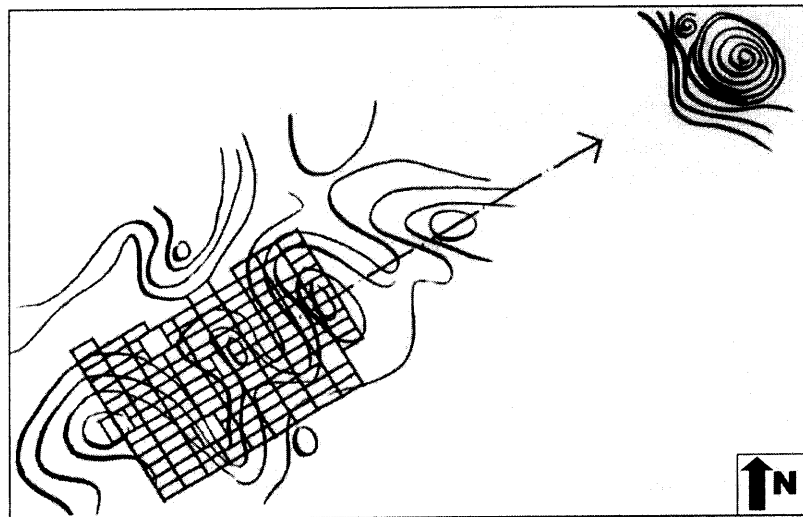


city do not infringe upon the operations of the administrative and commercial districts in the central area.

### The Central Area

The Central Area has a layout in the form of a grid and is divided into four zones – The Three Arms Zone, Ministries Zone, Cultural Zone, and Central Business District. The separation of uses into zones pays tribute to the modernist influences in the design of the city. Their spatial relationship forms the shape of a cross with the Cultural Axis running

*Image 12 below: Design diagram of Abuja illustrating the use of a grid layout in the central area. This diagram represents the area within the first ring in the image above located adjacent to Aso Hill.*



along the north-south direction and the Civic Axis in the perpendicular direction oriented east-west.

The Three Arms Zone, Ministries Zone and Central Business District are located along the Civic Axis. Two ceremonial roads, parallel to and on either side of the Civic Axis, run from the airport expressway into the heart of the city. The two roads (Independence and Constitution Avenue) were “envisioned as the most important roads in the new capital” and represent two elements in the nation’s history that brought about the change for a new capital (KSA 1983: pg. 106). Independence from colonialism and the creation of a new constitution grounded in democracy. The two roads are adopted from the design of the civic core of Washington D.C. and represent the symbolic connection to the United States Capital as the premiere planned Capital City.

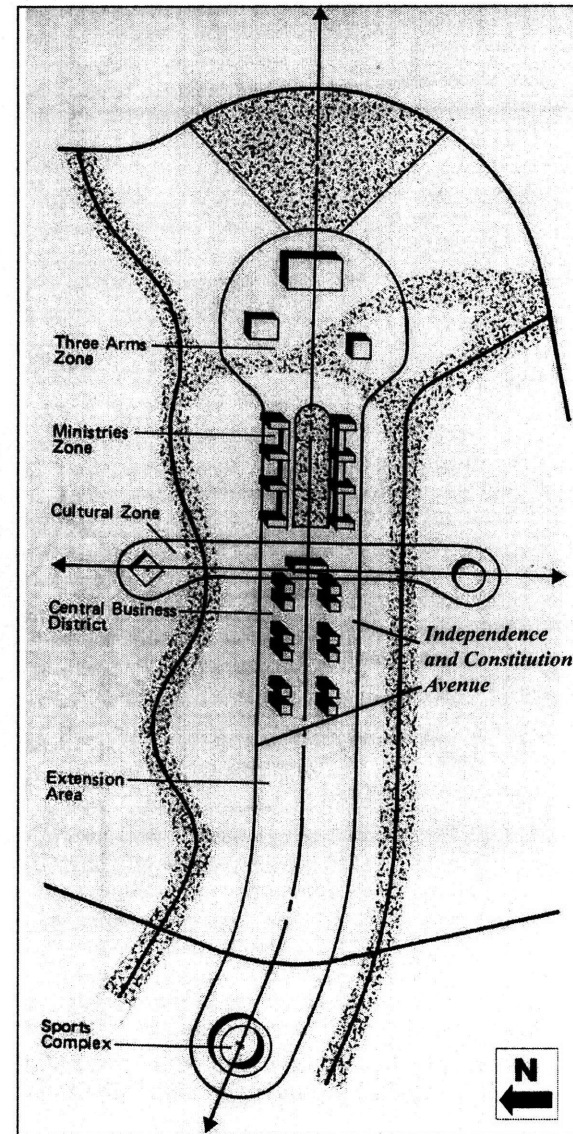
The National Museum, National Theater, National Library, National Church, National Mosque, Nigerian Television Authority, and International Conference Center are all located along the Cultural Axis. This is the only area in the plan that is demarcated as a zone for culture as if all of Nigerian

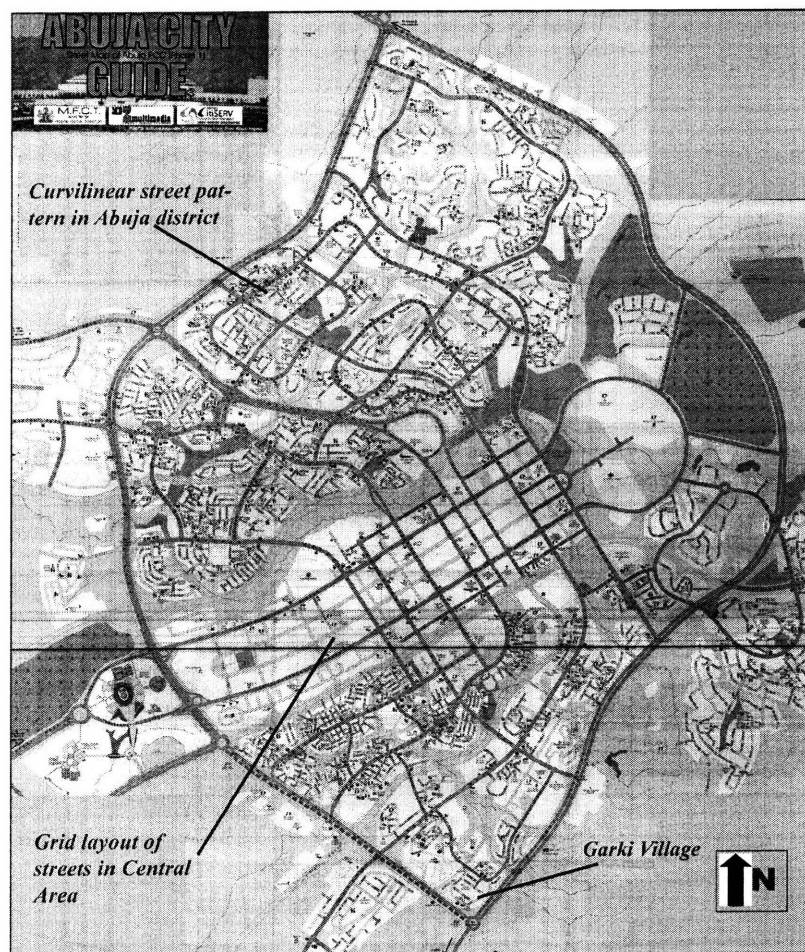
culture can be collapsed into one zone and summarized in seven buildings. The National Mosque and Church are located on either side of the Cultural Axis reflecting the duality in the nature of Nigeria’s colonization and religious division. The Cultural Axis runs north-south placing the National Mosque in the north and National Church in the south. This has a direct correlation with the high concentration of Muslims in Northern Nigeria (practicing Sharia law) and Christians in southern Nigeria. In its spatial placement the Cultural Axis reflects the social divisions in Nigeria on a truly national scale. Future exploration will reveal if this division finds itself in neighborhood politics.

### Three Arms Zone

The “Three Arms Zone” represents the realm of supreme government (Presidential Complex, National Assembly, and Supreme Court) and is spatially separated from all others parts of the Capital city by natural boundaries (water), distance, a series of security fences and guard checkpoints. Some scholars believe that the separation of this zone from the city reflects a contradiction to the democratic nature of the new constitution

*Map 6 right: Figurative plan of the Central Area of Abuja. Independence and Constitution Avenue are illustrated by the looping road running east to west.*





*Map 7: Abuja City (Phase 1) Guide Map illustrating the difference in street design in the central area (grid layout) and surrounding districts (curvilinear) located in the north and south of the map.*

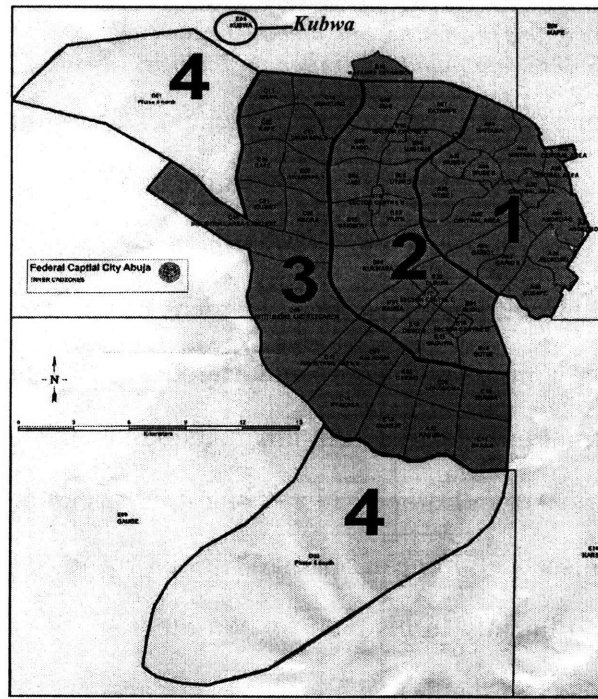
and stated intentions behind the master plan. The separation also reflects a departure from traditional Nigerian cities in which important administrative buildings are located in the center.

### **City Districts**

The city is separated into four residential districts: Wuse, Maitama (north of the Central Area), Asokoro and Garki (south of the Central Area). The street layouts for the residential districts differentiate them from the Central area. They are designed in a curvilinear pattern with no particular orientation. The extent of the residential districts is delimited by the inner and outer expressways (KSA 1983: pg. 90). In addition, four rings roads that intersect with the Civic Axis separate the first, second, third and fourth phases of the plan. The expressways and “ring roads” not only serve as physical barriers for access to the city, but they also serve to limit the amount of growth that the city can possess. The “ring roads” create a choke hold on the population that resides within the confines of each phase of the master plan. As the population of each phase grows, people need to move farther away from the

center of the city. Furthermore, many of the areas in phase two are not completed yet, but satellite towns in the fourth phase are presently inhabited by those who cannot afford to live in the main city. The financial implications are profound as Kubwa residents (fourth phase) have to pay exorbitant transportation fees to get to work in the central city.

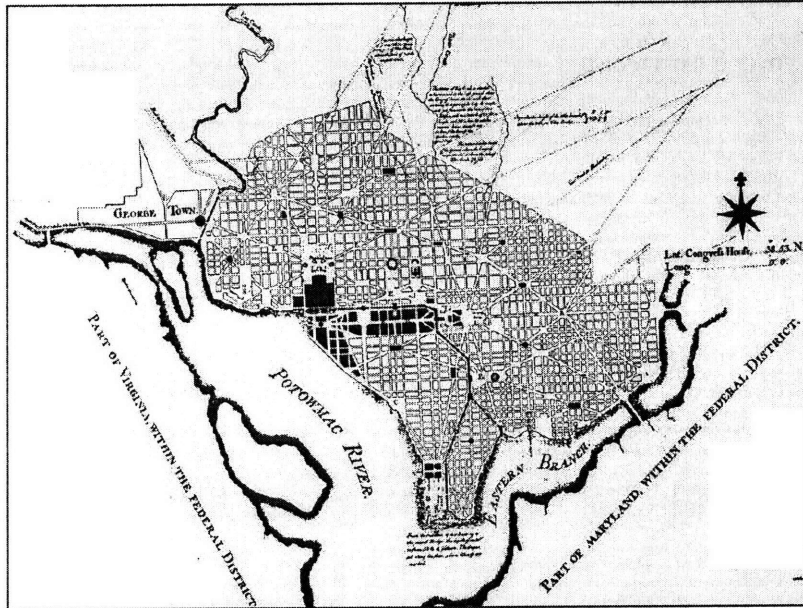
*Map 8 below: Federal Capital City Map illustrating the four phases of the Master Plan. Phase 1 is the Central City (see map 7). Phases 2-4 are described as satellite towns. Kubwa is located right outside of Phase 4 in the northern area of the map.*



## Inspirations

### American Dreams

According to Nnamdi Elleh in his book African Architecture: Evolution and Transformation, the Federal Government established for Nigeria a federal capital territory that was an “African version of the District of Columbia” (Elleh 1997: pg. 318). As the first postcolonial designed capital, Washington DC stands as a model to be replicated by many nations faced with the same turning points in their own history. The city of Washington was formulated at a time in American history when exclusion of people was acceptable and planning served as a tool to promote that culture. At its inception, Washington was a conflicted city in a conflicted nation in which its “status as a slave territory linked its experience with the South, but its subjugation to federal power left it open to the influence of Northern abolitionists.” Similar to Abuja, the city represented a “central battleground for [social] relations in the country” (Gilette 1995: pg. 27). The following is a comparative analysis of the plan for DC and Abuja to decipher what elements of DC were adopted and the implications of

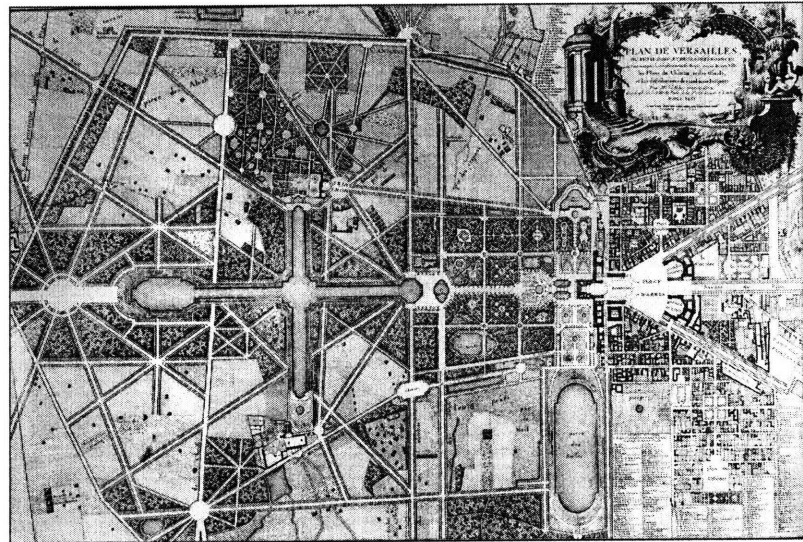


Map 9 above: Plan of Washington DC by Pierre Charles L'Enfant: 1791

those elements to social exclusion.

### Urban Layout

A French engineer (Pierre Charles L'Enfant) is the main visionary behind the design of Washington DC. His intention was to create a city to “inspire respect through the realization of an aesthetically powerful and inspiring physical presence.” L'Enfant attempted to achieve this through a layout of great avenues to reflect the “greatness which the Capital of



Map 10 above: Plan of the Town, Chateau, and the Gardens of Versailles France where L'Enfant found inspiration for the Washington DC

a powerful Empire ought to manifest” (Gilette 1995: pg. 6).

L'Enfant may have found baroque design influences from his experiences in Versailles at a young age where he “became thoroughly familiar with the magnificent gardens of the royal chateau” with its “combination of grid and diagonal streets and its wealth of formal open spaces both urban and landscaped.” L'Enfant’s experiences in Europe had a strong influence in his work as he established a European centered “design vocabulary which he used so fluently in his plan for Washington” (Reps 1967: pg. 5). Many of the design elements were also used in

the design for the central area in Abuja.

In the same fashion of Washington DC, the design of the Central Area in Abuja is made up of great avenues and monumental buildings. Constitution and Independence Avenues in Washington D.C. are literally replicated in the Abuja plan in the same fashion. The Mall in Washington, designed with a rectangular street pattern to provide interrupted views to and from the Capitol, was also perceived as a “fire barrier, which keeps segregated and apart areas that should in fact be more closely joined” (Mumford 1961: pg. 404). The Central Area is designed in the same fashion, to provide uninterrupted views from the Three Arms Zone to the National Stadium. Although the central area does not segregate neighborhoods, it does provide a considerable distance between the edge of the city (where the satellite towns exist) and the centrally located important administrative buildings. Furthermore, the plan for Washington was based on “topographical conditions” in which the Presidents house was located on higher ground to take advantage of the views provided by topography (Bartholomew 1958: pg. 10). Designers of Abuja used the undulating terrain



*Image 13 above: Aerial view of Washington DC showing Constitution and Independence Avenue on either side of the state Capitol.*



*Image 14 right: Physical model of the core of Abuja showcasing Independence and Constitution Avenue running up to the Three Arms Zone.*

of the site to bring attention to the important buildings on the cultural and civic axis. Collectively the design of the two cities symbolically highlighted the important aspects of government and its ideology.

Even in Washington's beginnings it had the ambitious task of representing ideals that the nation had not completely met socially or politically. Washington set a tone for the future design of Capital cities. The city became the battleground for conflicts that emerged between different corners of the country. Whether it's the slave owners of the south against the abolitionists of the North (in the US), or the Muslims of the North against the Westernized Christians of the south (in Nigeria), the capital city, centrally placed, represents a central (and not necessarily neutral) ground where each side will fight for the right to claim the country. Possibly this is why the intentions had failed in D.C., in part because the society had not completely reached the level of democracy that the plan intended to impose. But does a society need to reach that level before a plan can be put in place, or is the plan a tool to push society into a new realm that it had yet to move to? An

exploration of the implications of Abuja's design will reveal how the design intentions were/were not realized.

### **Colonial Resettlement Policies**

In 1976 when the Nigerian Government decided to move the Federal Capital from Lagos to Abuja the first policy statement was "for the complete relocation of the entire inhabitants outside of the new Federal Capital Territory (Approximately 150-300,000 people). This was aimed at freeing the territory from any primordial claims, and to enable Government to take direct control, plan and develop the new city without any encumbrance" (Jibril 2006: pg. 1). The policy implementation strategy was in the form of "sites-and-services" and "dates from colonial times whereby government had adopted the method of acquiring large tracts of land, laying out, and providing the necessary infrastructure before allocating the serviced plots to individuals or corporate bodies for development" (Adedeji 2002: pg. 6). This fact established the foundation of Abuja in a colonial process, and guaranteed that, upon initial construction, the Federal Capital would be a 'neutral' territory. Through a series of policy changes, the

development of Abuja began with inequality.

The first policy change in 1978 stated that only those “not affected by the first phase” of development could remain in their location. The government initially intended to clear the entire territory to build exactly as the master plan indicated. The initial resettlement strategy was abandoned because the high cost of compensation “would have delayed the development of the new capital.” The only area that was cleared was the first phase of the master plan (Federal Capital City). All other indigenous people who resided outside of the first phase of the Master Plan were to remain in their village or seek housing elsewhere without compensation. In effect, the villages that existed were incorporated into the satellite towns, without any change in infrastructure or development. At the edge of Abuja was a rural environment that had to accommodate the needs of existing villagers and rural-urban migrants.

The Nigerian Government intended to move the Federal Capital in 1986. In order to house the construction workers and laborers, an “Accelerated District” was envisaged to “prevent the emergence of shanty towns in the periphery of the capital

city” (Jibril 2006: pg. 8). Before the Accelerated District was developed the government decided to move the date forward from 1986 to 1982/83. As a result, a series of shanty towns and squatter settlements emerged “by workers and the growing service population in such places as Karu/Nyanya, Karmo and Gwagwa” all located at the periphery of the FCC. These settlements developed rapidly and were generally unplanned, overcrowded and lacking in basic amenities and infrastructure (Jibril 2006: pg. 8).

In 1992, the government changed its resettlement policy again and opted for an “Integration Policy for those who chose to remain in the FCT as against complete resettlement” (Jibril 2006: pg. 4). As a result, Garki Village in the Garki District was integrated into the city limits. This is the only area of village integration in the FCC because of the third policy change of 1999 in which the Integration Policy was reversed for return to the complete resettlement strategy. However, housing that was created for the resettled villagers were overtaken by the Nigerian police force leaving many people to find their own means of shelter. In 2003, yet another policy change brought

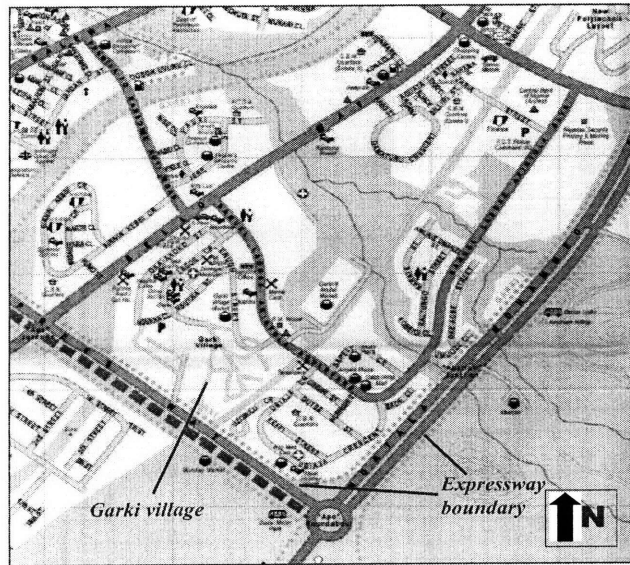
the restoration “of the original provisions of the Master Plan” which involved the “complete resettlement of all areas hitherto earmarked for resettlement by the Plan” (Jibril 2006: pg. 6).

## Implications

### Neglected neighborhoods

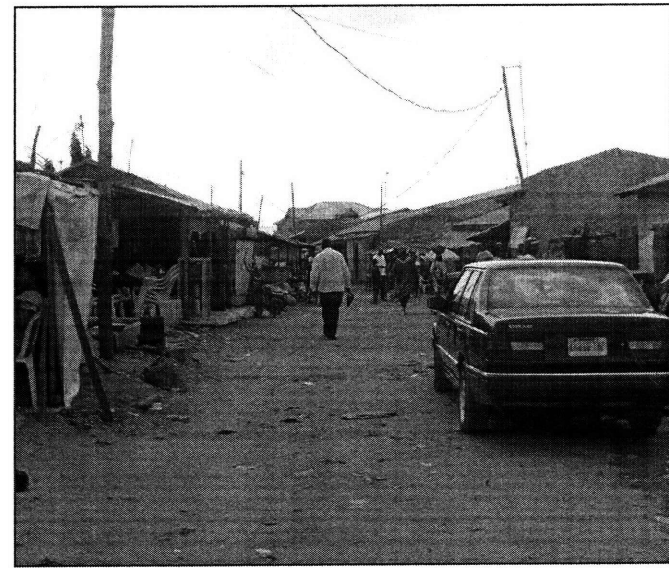
As a result of the Integration Policy of 1992, Garki village maintains its original form, including the chief’s palace. However, its physical conditions do not equal those of other neighborhoods in the FCC. The entire village

is bounded by wide streets that are typical of the city layout. These streets physically isolate the village from its surrounding environment. Within Garki village, the streets are narrow and unpaved, buildings are poorly constructed, plot sizes are smaller creating higher density, and the sewer systems are exposed. Cars can barely move into the village creating further separation between Garki village residents and neighboring districts. The village is an eyesore in Abuja; and has become “a major strain to the orderly development of the City. It has affected the entire network of the master



*Map 11 left: Map of Garki Village illustrating its isolation from other neighborhoods. Village is bounded by two expressways and two major city roads creating a pocket of poverty in Phase 1 of the Abuja Plan. See pg. 38 for location on city map.*

*Image 15 right: A typical street in Garki village located in phase one of the Abuja master plan.*



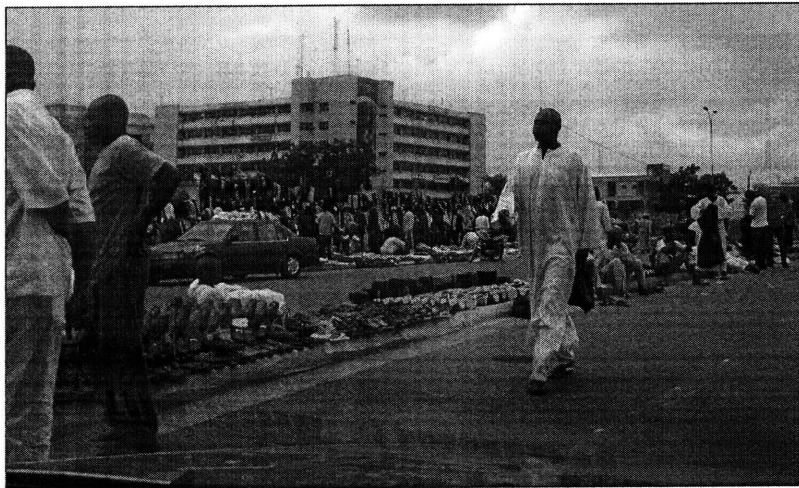
plan.” Furthermore, its presence has accounted for the “associated urban menace like slum development, illegal structures, traffic hold ups, sewage and drainages etc” (Adedeji 2002: pg. 2). Changes in government policy have also led to other disparities in Abuja.

The FCC also known as the first phase of development is surrounded by a beautiful landscape to the east and slums to the west. As a result of the constant policy changes in the resettlement stage of development many Nigerians “perceived movement into the Territory as license to enter into any parcels of land without any restriction.” Furthermore, the “massive influx of people into the territory coupled with weak development control apparatus, contributed also to shortage of houses, and subsequent growth of squatter settlements” (Jibril 2006: pg. 10).

### **Cultural Exclusion**

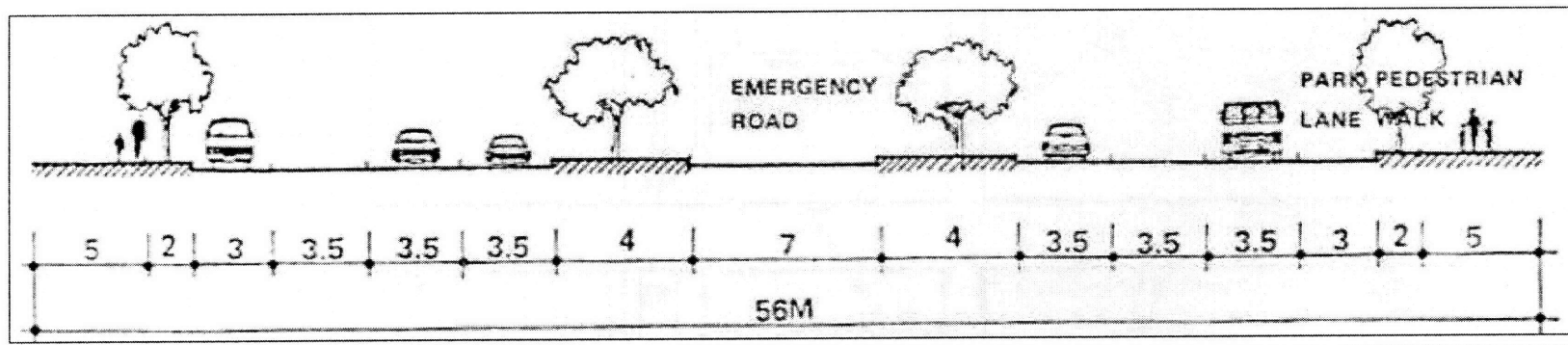
I return to the cultural axis in the central area of the Abuja plan. Through its name this axis should reflect the “Nigerian character” that was emphasized by Minister Musa in

his statements of intentions. However, the character of this axis leaves me to question what exactly is “African” culture. There are two versions that are represented in the city; however one is more accepted than the other. The architectural character of the buildings along the axis can be described as embodying an African aesthetic, in which the design is influenced by African art, or culture. However, the buildings do not necessarily respond to the cultural needs of the people. Along the axis I observed several street merchants that set up informal and temporary stalls along the street. Many of their customers are employees that work inside the buildings that make up the cultural axis. Eventually these stalls will be torn down because the zoning does not allow for commercial activity on public sidewalks, but their existence and daily use is evidence that they are very necessary. Designers/planners for Abuja did not include any physical accommodation for this kind of activity on the cultural axis. This “cultural zone” remains exclusive to the “culture” of Africanized modernism.

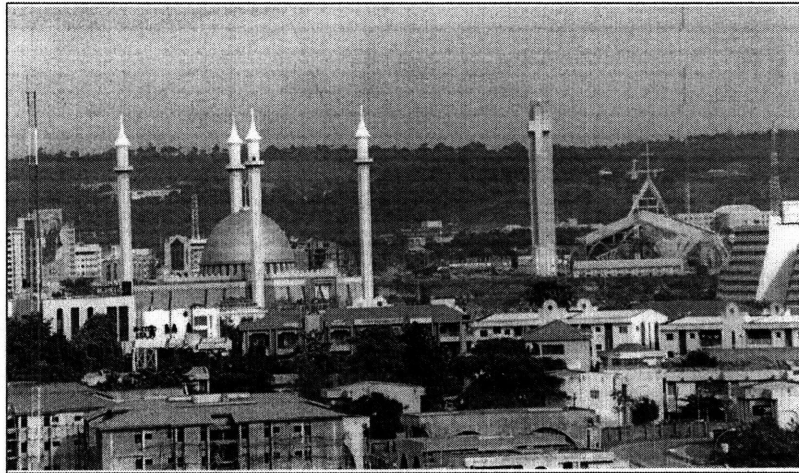


*Image 16 above: Friday Market along the cultural axis in the central area.*

*Image 17 below: Cross section of central area illustrating ample sidewalk space that can accommodate commercial activity. Based on this section, the sidewalks in the central area are approximately 7m (22 ft).*



Another example can be found every Friday near the National Mosque. There is an informal “Friday market” established by the Muslim community that surrounds the area. Merchants sell many items that are necessary for Muslims and any other Nigerian at an inexpensive price. They lay their items on the sidewalk because there are no market stalls for this kind of activity. According to the master plan document, sidewalks (average 4m - 7m), provide ample space for commercial activities to take place. However, the zoning restrictions prohibit non-stationary commercial activities in the Federal Capital Territory. Informal street commerce is a part of Nigerian urban culture that occurs in various areas but is not accommodated structurally or institutionally.



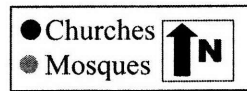
*Image 18 above: View of National Mosque and National Church from a hill top.*

### **Religious Inclusion**

An important component of Nigerian nationality and social conflict is religion. The relationship between religious affiliation and social division sets Abuja apart from other planned capital cities. Presently, the most prominent buildings in Abuja are the National Mosque and Church. Their presence reflects the importance of religion to Nigerian culture and nationality. They also reflect the diverse nature of colonization that took place in northern and southern Nigeria.

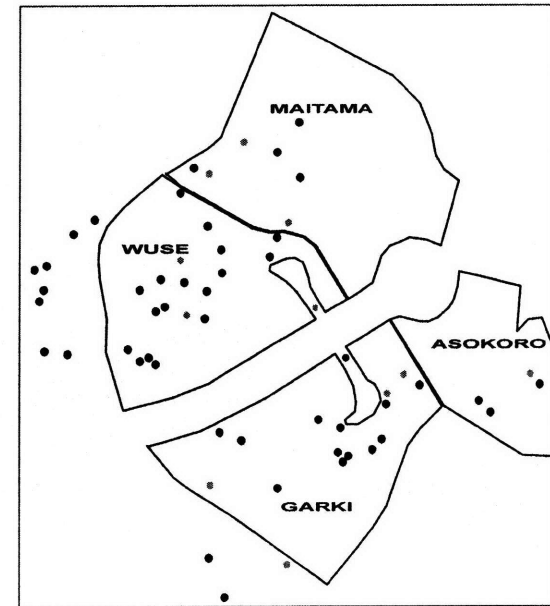
Although both buildings began construction at the same time, the National Mosque is fully completed, while the National Church is still under construction. The completed Mosque juxtaposed next to the half completed National Church may give the visitor the impression that the presence of Muslims in Abuja is greater than that of Christians. However, when you actually look at the plan for Abuja and extract the number of churches and mosques present in the city a different image of the city arises. I will attempt to explore the implications of these two major landmarks in the dispersion of both Christians and Muslim communities throughout the city. I intend to use the concentration of churches and mosques as indicators of both communities in this analysis.

My primary assumption in this analysis is that the religious buildings not only represent the places where people worship, but the location of these buildings in a district indicates the presence of a community aligned to that particular religion. For example, Wuse District (located on the Mosque side of the Cultural Axis) has the greatest number of churches indicated by the satellite imagery and city maps. Based on my



*Map 12 left: Abuja city map extracting the location of churches versus mosques in the city. Based on this map, there are a greater number of churches than mosques in the city.*

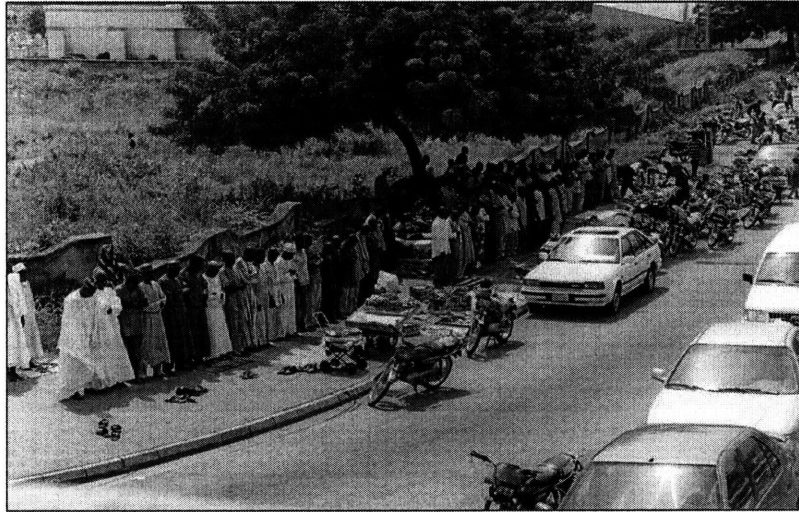
*Map 13 right: The same information isolated.*



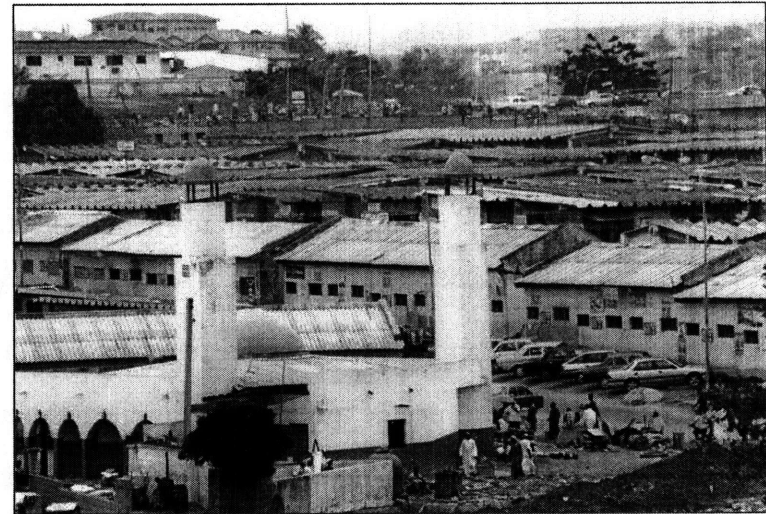
assumptions, the greatest numbers of Christians live in this area and have been able to establish a large number of churches. This information on the map can either illustrate that there are a greater number of Christians in Abuja, or that Christians in Abuja have made a greater effort to construct their own places of worship.

Another assumption before conducting this analysis was that the number of mosques and churches would correspond with the location of the National Mosque and Church along the Cultural Axis. Based on the available data, my assumptions

are incorrect. Although limited, there are an equal number of mosques on either side of Abuja. However, based on my observations, many Muslims worship in large numbers on the street. Many of these areas are near the northern side of Abuja where the National Mosque is located. In addition, the number of people who use mosques may be higher than those who use a similar sized church. This observation illustrates the point that even through there is a limited number of Mosques in Abuja the presence of Muslims in the city is still great.



*Image 19 above: Muslims pray on the streets of Abuja.*



*Image 20 above: Illegal mosque built in Wuse Market*

I focus on the availability and location of places of worship because of the importance of religion to Nigerian culture and social relationships. It has played a role in the civil war and continues to play a role in social conflict throughout the country. The management of the city has also affected the relationships between religious groups, their structures and the city. Among the many illegal buildings being torn down in the city to maintain the master plan, a small percentage of them are religious structures. According to Daramola Adedeji in an article entitled “Planning Policies and Affordable Housing

in Nigeria” many structures that are depicted as “illegal does not indicate that the structures were poorly constructed, or have poor structural failures. The illegality is simply from the location. Many of them were built on the sewage and water line; others were on green areas or areas of wrong land uses” (Adedeji 2002: pg. 9). An example can be found in the old Wuse Market, an informal market that has been formalized. A Mosque was built illegally in the market premises, but in the future this mosque is in jeopardy of being torn down because of it is located in a zone specified for open recreation. This

example has occurred throughout the city, and is the topic of much debate at town hall meetings between the administration and community leaders.

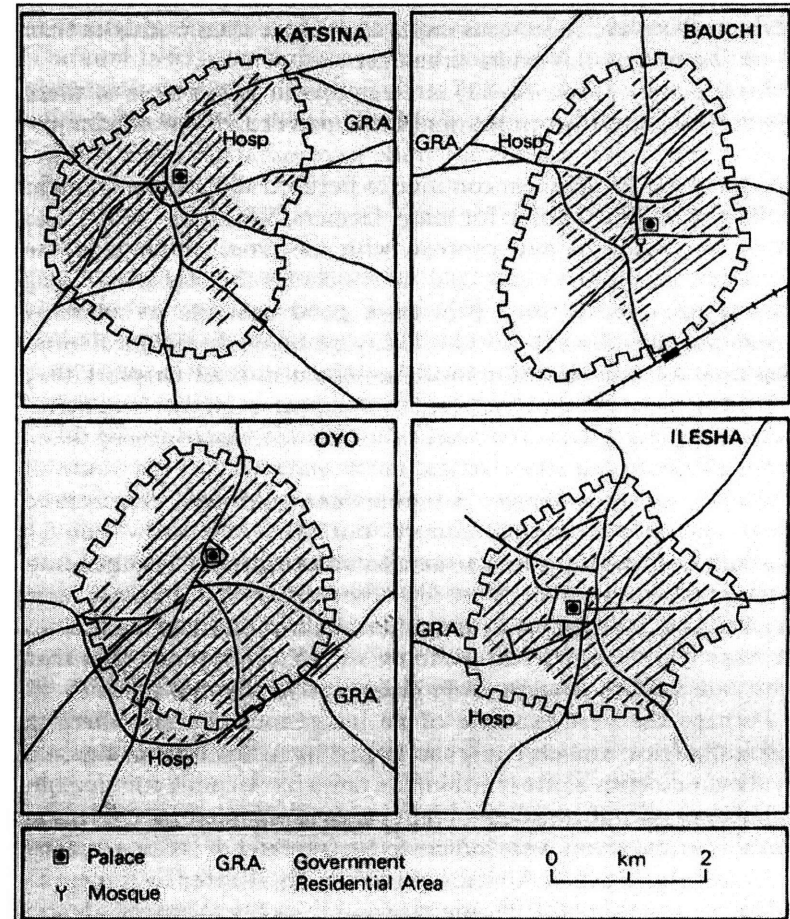
My observation at one particular town hall meeting revealed that the tearing down of religious structures in the city is causing much conflict between Christians and Muslims. At times the FCDA will decide to tear down an illegally built Mosque, but leave an illegally built Church standing. Although the buildings are torn down for the greater public good (because they are often built in hazardous areas), the public can never discern if the removal of a building is an environmental or political decision on part of the government planners. The flexible nature of urban management is very necessary in this cultural context, but with it comes social conflict.

The location of the National Mosque and Church on different sides of the Cultural Axis seems to affect the spatial dispersions of Muslims and Christians in Abuja. As illustrated in the image, there are an equal number of Mosques on either side of this axis. In contrast, there are a greater number of churches in Abuja and a higher concentration of them in

the Northern part of the city (Wuse and Maitama District collectively). Symbolically, the presence of a major church and mosque reflects the inclusion of Nigerians with different religious affiliations, however the large number of churches in relation to mosques suggest that Abuja has a majority Christian population.

## Chapter 4. Cultural Critique

An important objective behind the design of Abuja was to create a city that reflected the “culture of the Nigerian people” (Africa 1983: pg. 62). According to the Master Plan, planners felt that the new Capital City of Nigeria “must preserve and build on that which is unique and valuable in Nigeria’s urban tradition” (FCDA 1979: pg. 65). In addition principles of modernism were very important to those designing the structure of the city. Can the two intentions coexist? I am interested in understanding how the plan for Abuja adopts both the principles of Modernism and elements of traditional Nigerian city form. The planners for Abuja may have indicated in the Master Plan that the above mentioned principles were integrated, but what forms have been derived to serve these two intentions? Is their incorporation relevant to the presence of social exclusion in Abuja?



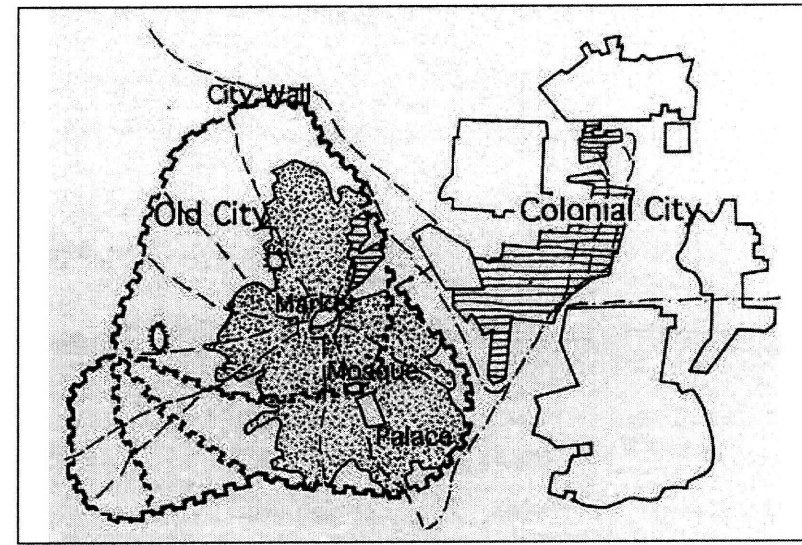
*Image 21: Northern and Southern traditional Nigerian city form. The maps illustrate the importance of the wall and center in facilitating social divisions.*

## Security

Several Nigerian cities have prominent physical barriers in the form of walls that define the city's edge; they are used for security purposes, and create separation between different groups in the city. In Northern cities such as Katsina and Bauchi, the center of the city is characterized by the king's palace, a mosque and open space for festivals. The design of the northern city emphasized the importance of security, religion, recreation and control through the character of its urban design. In a typical south western (Yoruba) city such as Oyo and Ilesha the center is characterized by the king's palace, a market and an open space. In contrast to the Northern city, southern cities do not have a religious building at the center, but the open space was used for major religious and ritual functions (Falola 2004: pg. 3). Observing the nature of the typical northern and southern cities reveals a pattern to Nigerian urbanism. The perimeter wall and central open space were major elements in the design and influenced the nature of social relationships. In Northern Muslim cities, such as Kano, the wall enhanced the social divisions

present in the city that aligned with both racial and religious separation. The wall surrounding the city demarcated the realm for Muslims, while the Europeans lived in a different territory (Government Residential Areas) outside of the confines of the wall. In addition, the non-Muslim residents also lived outside the confines of the wall in a separate area. The religious and colonial influences in the city manifested themselves in the physical separation of different groups. The perimeter wall played a vital role in the character of the city center.

*Map 14: Map of Kano illustrating the city wall creating a division between the city for Europeans and city for Muslims.*

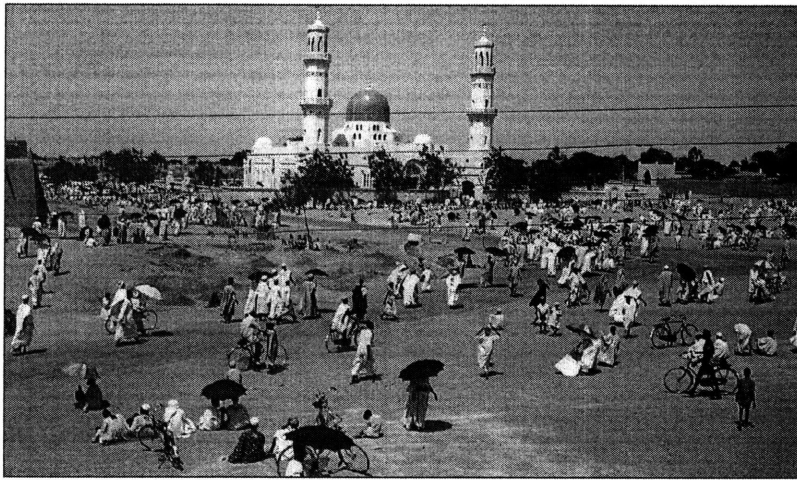


Kano's urban center, characterized by a mosque and open space, is perceived as a leisure area where people "hold meetings at different locations within the square - and children play in the moonlight" (Elleh 2001: pg. 302). In addition, the mosque and its surrounding area served as a space for contesting power in the city. The center is the most prominent area in the city, and when Muslims fill the space during Friday prayer their presence makes a major political statement. This public display of worship provides a way for Muslims to make their presence felt by the city as traffic

and most activities in the city stand still as a result of the congestion at the center. The same activity occurs around the National Mosque every Friday in Abuja. However, the effect is different due to the expansive nature of the modernist plan. The wide avenues and large amounts of vacant land between buildings overpower the number of people praying in the street and make it hard for Muslims to create any friction in the daily routine of the city.

The perimeter wall facilitated the privatization of the city center for Muslim activity. An important element of

*Image 22 below: Central Square in Kano reflecting the dual nature of the center as a place for prayer and recreation.*



*Image 23 below: Aerial view of Kano reflecting the Mosque as the most prominent and central figure in the city.*



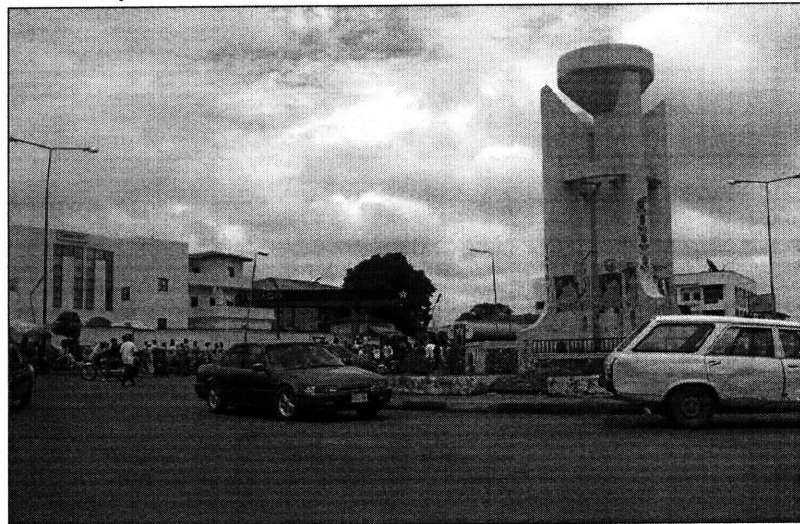
Muslim sacred space is for it to be private. Private public domain is very necessary since prayer can take place both indoors and outdoors. Furthermore, the location of the mosque at the center and the wall at the edge created an environment that excluded those that were not of Muslim faith. Kano is a city that, similar to Lagos, still embodies physical manifestations of the segregations that permeated the city during its dual colonial reign.

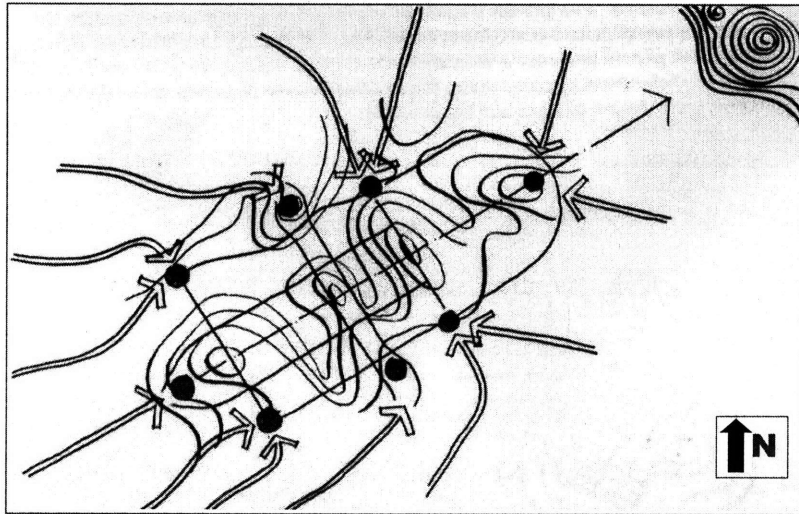
Kaduna (another northern city) was founded - by the colonial government to serve as the capital of the protectorate of Northern Nigeria (Falola 2004: pg. 5). Kaduna also embodies its own form of social segregation. Although Kaduna does not have a wall that enhances the social division, the city's social and economic divisions orient themselves around the natural boundaries such as the river. The river divides the city into north and south: the north has the industrial, commercial and educational advantage, while the working class and poor immigrants inhabit the south. The use of natural boundaries to facilitate social divisions is also found in the Abuja plan.



*Map 15: Map of Kaduna illustrating the Kaduna river that separates affluent and poor areas of Kaduna. This map also illustrates the use of roundabouts in the plan as gateways.*

*Image 24: Round-about intersection in Kaduna surrounded by commercial activity.*





*Image 25: Illustration of traditional gateways incorporated into the Abuja design plan.*

Abuja's plan is oriented to the Aso hills to prevent uncontrolled development near the city center. In addition, the road system in Abuja is also used as a barrier similar to the walls surrounding the cities of Kano and Oyo. Although the "ring" road surrounding Abuja does not create a visual impediment at the periphery in the manner of a wall, its width and character of traffic creates a major barrier for outsiders to enter the city on foot. Furthermore, similar to the wall of traditional cities, the ring road demarcates an established realm for the Nigerian elite.



*Image 26: "Gateway" roundabout in Maitama district. Gateways do not embody similar activities as traditional cities and the grandiose nature inhibits them as points of social interaction.*

### **Street Design**

The design of Abuja incorporates formal aspects of traditional Nigerian cities; however the incorporated elements do not promote the same cultural patterns. Kaduna embodies various forms of colonial development however today the city has adapted those forms to suite Nigerian culture. For example, the round about is widely used in Kaduna at intersections as a method of controlling traffic. Today, these round-abouts exist as vibrant centers of commercial activity.

In Abuja, most of the roundabouts are located at the edges of the city as gateways. The Master Plan describes them as “echoing the traditional gateways to historic Nigerian cities” (FCDA 1979: pg. 12). However, the quality of the environment around the “gateways” in Abuja does not embody the same kind of vibrancy that you see in Kaduna. The gateways in Abuja are much larger, with massive roads surrounding them in effect neglecting the close-knit social setting that gateways in traditional cities promote.

In the traditional Nigerian urban context the street is the point of exchange between people, residence, commerce and traffic. The idea of street corners, and places where people congregate and create neighborly relationships is absent from modernist planning. Holston describes this absence as the “death of the street” in which all the life and vibrancy is stripped from the public realm via zoning and urban policy in effect killing the soul of the street and inevitably the public realm. Abuja’s city center embodies a different form of street culture. The sidewalks are considerably large and can accommodate the various activities

that Nigerians conduct on the street. However, most streets in Abuja are up to four lanes wide inhibiting the possibility for Nigerians to participate in various cultural activities that occur on the street such as markets and cultural festivals.

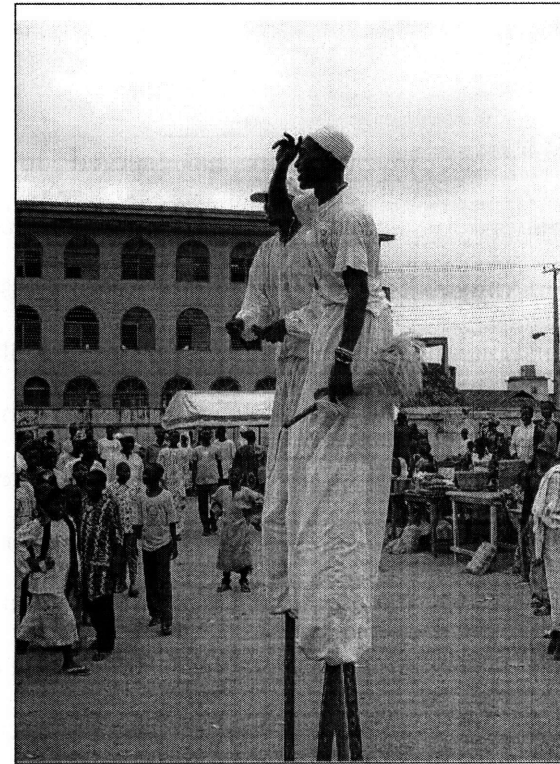
There is a contrasting image in the satellite towns of the Federal Capital Territory. In Kubwa, phase four of Abuja, the street culture that is an important characteristic of Nigerian cities is revived and very necessary to daily life. Although the physical conditions are poor, people continue to sell food on the street and congregate to socialize. The urban street is an important element in Nigerian cities, not only for aesthetic purposes, but also for the act of social exchange.

Abuja is the continuation of a long line of city development that accommodates social division through religious, colonial and indigenous influences. Settlement patterns in the traditional city reflect power and social hierarchy. The ruling class and its associates occupied the central portions of the city while the less privileged lived on the fringes (Falola 2004: pg. 12). The planners for Abuja did incorporate design elements from traditional Nigerian cities.



*Image 27: Street merchant in Kubwa (Abuja satellite town). Vibrant street corner facilitate social cohesion in traditional Nigerian cities.*

However, the design elements used were originally intended to facilitate the segregation of different groups (Europeans, Nigerians, Muslims, and Non-Muslims). In addition, the integration of various traditional design elements, into the design plan for Abuja, does not foster the same sense of social cohesion and interaction. It seems that the divergent nature of modernist and traditional design prohibits their coexistence in an African city.



*Image 28: Cultural festival in streets of Osogbo (southern Nigeria). The street is an important elements for the facilitation of Nigerian cultural festivals.*

## Conclusion

This thesis investigation has served to explore the contributions of design to the enhancement of social exclusion in Abuja. The primary finding of this research is that modernist planning/development is the direct continuation of colonial development. However, it is continued by a new and non Europeans form of power; the elite of Nigeria who have historically stepped into the shoes of the colonizers and continued to manage the country in a similar fashion. In the interim stages from independence to the establishment of a new capital city, the effects of colonialism seem to characterize both the reordering of the national government and the meaning behind the new capital city. Inadvertently, Abuja represents the complete penetration of colonialism to the center of Nigeria. Planning and the development of cities was a way for the colonists to exploit the resources of Nigeria. Today, Abuja represents the same form of exploitation; however it is the Nigerian people abusing their own resources. In its design and development, Abuja reflects a contradiction to the intentions

behind its creation.

The selective usage of modern and traditional principles contributes to the exclusive nature of plan. Principles of modernism are both egalitarian and controlling. The controlling nature of the CIAM modern city focuses on the use of planning as a tool for social control and transformation. In addition, the modernist process of planning is focused on a top down approach in which all decisions are based on “state authority”. However, the CIAM model is also grounded in egalitarian development which planners for Abuja did not seem to adopt in the plan and strategies for development.

As a newly formed city and capital of Nigeria, Abuja represents all of the ideals that the government has for the entire country. In hopes of presenting a modern face to the world, the city of Abuja embodies the eradication or suppression of patterns of development in existing cities for a new model, a modernist model. However, in their efforts to avoid the ills of typical city development, planners seemed to have encouraged social ills. Abuja is not divided along lines of color, but along lines of class and religion.

These religious and economic differences in Nigeria inform an elitist society that claims ownership to Abuja. In effect, those who do not belong are excluded from the spaces and activities of the elite. The very establishment of the city and the creation of a neutral territory add more weight to the exclusive nature of the process of development. The resettlement policy influenced by colonial development was used in order to establish a neutral territory in which none of the original inhabitants of the area could lay claim to the Federal Capital Territory. Furthermore, housing and urban policy maintains the barriers for the poor to have access to city resources.

In the development of new capital city, especially in Nigeria, the main question that arises is: Who truly stands to gain from the establishment of a new city? In the final years of Lagos' position as Capital the land was not enough for the Nigerian elite to live prosperously. Abuja symbolized an expansion of wealth and a means to escape the poverty of the developing world. At some point in their careers, the leading politicians were apart of the Nigerian military. A prime

example is the current President Obasanjo, who previously led the country under military rule. There is a strong connection between the end of military rule and the nature of elitism in Abuja.

## **Recommendations**

There are forces that bear weight on the success and failures of a design plan. Especially in relationship to the creation of cities in developing countries, social economic and political forces can provide obstacles for the realization of a plans intention. Abuja is a prime example of the conflict between a countries desire to progress through city design and a people's inability to adapt to new patterns of urban form. These forces cannot be suppressed or ignored, but should be dealt with extreme importance. Ignorance begets serious consequences for the inhabitants and overall physical development of the city.

Participatory planning and urban management is a positive method for the mitigation of the above mentioned forces. Working with communities through the formation of

neighborhood associations can be used as tools to determine where problems may arise in future development. This process of planning and design was not used in Abuja and is not a part of the planning process in Nigeria. If planners for Abuja are truly concerned for the welfare of all inhabitants of the city and surrounding territory, then they will make a greater effort to involve all stakeholders in decisions affecting housing and urban development/policy.

There are two forms of exclusion that is enhanced by the design and process of development. Social exclusion can arise from government actions that are made to either promote exclusion directly or as an indirect result of a policy/plan. The colonial resettlement policies used in the initial stages of development directly exclude the indigenous ethnic groups from residing in the city out of fear of future land claims. Furthermore, the provision of housing exclusively for government officials by default excludes non-government employees from living in the city and having access to its resources. The Nigerian government did not consider the social consequences of such policies and actions during

implementation. A participatory approach to the planning process might also serve as a necessary method when defining the parameters of urban policy.

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