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ARTICLE



Slum upgrading in the era of World-Class city construction: the case of Lagos, Nigeria

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ABSTRACT

The paper examines the tensions that accompany slum upgrading in the era of world-class city construction. The focus is a slum upgrading project in Lagos, Nigeria. The paper observes the intertwining of modernist and neoliberal ideologies in world-class city construction and in slum upgrading projects. The entanglement centres on a number of shared interests; the prioritization of infrastructure and notions about urban space, participation and citizenship. As documented, the project and by extension world-class city construction fails to acknowledge the livelihoods of the poor and is undermined by protests. Historical legacies and systemic failings of governance present additional obstacles. The paper seeks to broaden the scope of world-class city research by acknowledging the local context, but at the same time recognizing the global links. Along these lines, the paper suggests that slum upgrading provides an opportunity to examine how the local is inserted into the global.

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Introduction

Much has been written about how dominant models of successful urbanism, largely inspired by Western planning ideals circulate globally, influence policy and inspire interventions in disparate cities across the globe (Robinson 2002; Prakash 2008; Ong 2011; Roy 2011a). The discourse on the world-class city has been instrumental to the debate. The concept draws attention to the role of global capital in shaping the positionality of cities in the world economy. With a message promising economic growth and progress, the world-class city concept has captured the imagination of state officials, businesses and media elites across the globe (Paul 2004). Though it has a global appeal, the concept is criticized for privileging Western experiences of urbanization and economic globalization (Robinson 2002). Furthermore, it is accused of being vague and failing to acknowledge the nature and impacts of neoliberalism (McDonald 2008). In spite of the criticisms, McDonald sees the world-city hypothesis as relevant to the South

because it provides useful insights into contemporary urbanization, insights that apply to varying degrees in almost every city in the world. Similarly, Surborg (2011, p. 326) acknowledges the narrow and biased framework of the world-class city concept, but sees it as relevant if it recognizes that cities in the South occupy 'a very specific position in the world economy, each one of them a unique place'. For our purposes, the positionality of cities is important because it can have dramatic consequences for urban policy (Sheppard 2002 cited in Surborg 2011) and in turn for government programmes such as slum upgrading.

As is the case with elite projects, the world-class city is a 'utopian image' that 'presupposes a better society and improved future' (Ghertner 2011, p. 301). In practice, such projects often fail to achieve the stated objectives and tend to be accompanied by tensions. As Roy (2011a) points out, the implementation of the world-class city necessitates the deployment of socio-spatial technologies, notably slum evictions, the development of peri-urban new towns and Special Economic Zones. Characterized by poor

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housing conditions, deplorable services and infrastructure, slums are considered obstacles to a world-class aesthetic (Ghertner 2011). Furthermore, slums tend to occupy prime land making them obvious targets. It is common for governments to intervene in slums in order to seize control of land and then sell the land to private entities. The practice is described as 'one of the primary jobs of world-city government' (Goldman 2011, p. 232). The potential for conflict is high because slums also offer vibrant spaces of entrepreneurial initiative to the residents (Roy 2011a). In this battle of opposing or conflicting interests, the state tends to prioritize the interests of capital over that of slum dwellers. A notable outcome as Roy points out is that the implementation of the world-class city is 'accompanied by a violent urbanization' that has led to the destruction of homes and livelihoods of the poor to make way and make space for new elites (p. 259).

There has been a slight decline in global urban slum population in recent years, but sub-Saharan Africa continues to have the highest incidence of slum conditions (UN Desa (United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs 2015 cited in Smit et al. 2017). Lagos, Nigeria is one of the fastest growing cities in the world with an estimated population of over 15 million. Several factors account for the growth of Lagos from a small farming and fishing settlement along the Atlantic coast to a megacity. In addition to the natural increase in population, Lagos is the economic nerve-centre of Nigeria and the West African sub-region. This has encouraged migration from within and outside the country (George 2009). The phenomenal growth in population has created enormous problems including traffic congestion, infrastructure decay, urban sprawl and slums (Ilesanmi 2010). Interestingly, Lagos enjoyed huge investments in infrastructure at the height of Nigeria's oil boom in the 1970s, but decades later, the city has over two hundred slum settlements (Ali and Rieker 2008). As Nigeria's capital from the colonial era until 1991 and the centre of economic activities, Lagos has a high political and economic significance that puts it at the forefront of Nigeria's modern aspirations (Omezi 2014). Successive governments have sought to address the problem of slums largely through modernist planning (Gandy 2006; George 2009). The most recent is the Lagos Megacity Project (LMCP), launched in 2005. The LMCP aims to transform Lagos into a world-class city through state of the art infrastructure facilities, landscaping and beautification, with the private sector expected

to play a dominant role (Oresanya 2008). At the same time, the government declared a commitment to re-engage the citizens, regain their trust and ultimately instil wider aspirations to make Lagos the most dynamic megacity in sub-Saharan Africa (Omezi 2014). The LMCP led to a number of projects, notably, the construction of a new town 'the Eko Atlantic City' and a series of Public-Private Partnership initiatives on roads, bridges, housing estates and shopping malls (Adama 2018). Slum upgrading was also high on the agenda. The Lagos Metropolitan Development and Governance Project (LMDGP) was launched in 2007 with a loan from the World Bank. The major aim was to increase access to basic services in nine identified slums through investments in infrastructure. The project came with the promise of improving the lives of the affected communities but as noted earlier, elite projects tend to be mired by controversies. In the context of world-class city construction, the paper examines what is driving the planning and implementation of slum upgrading in Lagos, Nigeria and the tensions that emerge.

The paper is structured into three major sections. The first examines the evolution of slum upgrading approaches. It highlights what has changed and what has remained constant and why. The second section, the context, draws attention to historical and contemporary urban governance processes in Lagos. It sets the background for understanding slum upgrading in the era of world-class city construction. The third and final section presents the empirical findings based on the case study of a slum upgrading project in Makoko area of the city.

Methods

The primary data is based on fieldwork that took place between 2013 and 2015. Semi-structured and in-depth interviews were conducted with the relevant stakeholders. State officials based at the Ministry of Environment, Ministry of Waterfront Infrastructure Development and the Lagos State Urban Renewal Authority were interviewed to obtain information on urban policy and planning trends, particularly those related to the LMCP and the LMDGP. World Bank project staff provided valuable data on the planning and implementation of the slum upgrading project in Makoko. Representatives of community and market associations were interviewed to obtain data on issues centering on community participation, notably the nature and level of their participation in the slum

upgrading project. Personal observation was useful in observing the state of the environment, the quality of infrastructure and services and the aftermath of the evictions.

The evolution of slum upgrading approaches

The word 'slum' has acquired global status but it is largely a European phenomenon traced to the German word *Schlamm* which means mud and the English word 'slump' meaning marshy place (Huchzermeyer 2014, p. 86, emphasis original). Thus right from its origins, slums were associated with environmental degradation. Unsurprisingly, the need to improve access to health and sanitation were the main motivations behind early slum upgrading approaches. However, it soon became clear that there was a much broader agenda with the emergence of modernity as a major driving force. The modernist influences in slum upgrading date back to the English Town Planning movement of the 1960s (ibid.). The movement was highly influenced by the Garden City philosophy championed by the City of London stenographer Ebenezer Howard. The Garden City is regarded as the first successful modern attempt to exploit planning principles that prioritize spaciousness, environmental quality and greenness (Johnston et al. 2000). Cities expected to be clean, orderly and efficient. Along these lines, slums were regarded as the antithesis of the ideals of the English Town Planning movement (Huchzermeyer 2014). Thus, while there were attempts to improve health and housing conditions in slums, at the same time, there was a determined effort to get rid of them entirely. The modernization efforts that followed encouraged demolition and the eviction of poor tenants. Subsequently, the influences found their way to British colonies and beyond.

The slum upgrading approach was made popular in Africa by the World Bank in the 1970s and 1980s. The early projects were highly influenced by the Bank's views, particularly on the role of the state and community participation. It was the era of arguments in favour of a minimalist state and greater community participation. However, Werlin (1999) sees the assumption that a minimal and often weak state would be able to address the problems encountered in slum upgrading as a dangerous illusion. Similarly, there were reservations about the perceptions around community participation, a core objective of slum upgrading. Community participation is considered crucial to the success of slum upgrading projects as observed in the Philippines

where the gains made in upgrading could not have been possible without the strong role played by civil society groups (Minnery et al. 2013). This does not by any means suggest that community participation would be successful in all cases. Werlin (1999) believes that the Bank ignored the difficulty of achieving community participation. Werlin specifically cites the deep rooted social and economic divisions in communities as a factor to consider.

The first generation projects implemented by the World Bank in the 1970s prioritized housing and physical development, land tenure and poverty alleviation (Gulyani and Basset 2007). They covered extensive geographic areas and were intended to serve large segments of the target city's population. The second-generation projects that came after the 1980s were not as ambitious in terms of coverage and tended to focus on one or two interventions. For our purposes, it is worth noting that infrastructure and land tenure were common to both the first and second-generation projects. Nonetheless, over time, slum upgrading programmes began to move away from what was considered the complex and difficult process of land tenure to the easier strategy of investments in infrastructure. A major argument was that improvements in infrastructure would lead to land tenure security. In practice, as Gulyani and Basset point out, this meant a shift from title deeds to pipes and roads. As aptly summed up:

"... upgrading has shifted from being conceptualized as an intervention to one that is quintessentially about infrastructure – that is, the focus is on improving access to basic infrastructure and services" (Gulyani 2007, p. 489).

The various criticisms labelled against the early slum upgrading approaches, including the failure to problematize the role of the state and community, in addition to being seen as expensive enterprises with limited positive impacts and doing little to address the structural problems affecting slums, made slum upgrading unfashionable through the 1990s (Werlin 1999; Gulyani 2007).

Slum upgrading received a new lease of life largely due to one of the pledges of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) to significantly improve the lives of at least 100 slum dwellers by the year 2020 (Jones 2012). The MDGs may have put slum upgrading back on the agenda, but the development led to another criticism, the undue influence of modernist ideology. Giovannini (2008) likens the MDGs to the

modernization ideology advanced by the Bretton Woods Institutions, an example of a modernist project that promotes a top-down approach at the expense of civil society. The modernist influences in slum upgrading predate the MDGs, but the role of the MDGs is particularly important due to its global popularity and the influence on urban governance in developing countries. For example, Roy (2008) alleges that the MDGs has been appropriated by some governments to justify evictions and demolitions by the use of the slogan 'Cities without slums'.

The modernist influences in slum upgrading continues and has become more pronounced in the era of world-class city construction. The role of public or urban space provides a useful starting point. As Ghertner (2011, p. 281) points out, a world-class aesthetic is disseminated through 'a compelling vision of the future' and accompanied by 'normative assessments of urban space'. The normative understandings of urban space, reflected in the notions of order and disorder, where order is associated with modernity and progress and disorder with chaos and retrogression has been crucial in shaping access to urban space (Mitchell 2003). Of note, the world-class city philosophy reinforces the dualism of order/disorder, legal/illegal and formal/informal. As Ghertner (2011, p. 280) puts it, if a project looks 'world-class', it is declared planned even it contravenes planning regulations but 'if a settlement looks polluting, it is seen as unplanned and illegal'. This sets the stage for state intervention in slums since they are often characterized as disorderly, informal and illegal.

Beyond modernity, neoliberalism is at the core of the world-class philosophy as reflected in the definition of world-class cities. Such cities are defined as places where 'a disproportionate part of the world's business is conducted' (Hall 1966, p. 1 cited in Surborg 2011, p. 317). The quest for foreign capital has led to immense competition between cities and the adoption of market-friendly policies. Slums are implicated as reflected in the argument that the dirty and crowded megacities in the South can only become like those in the North through market friendly policies (Sheppard 2014). Such arguments promote the commodification and privatization of public space. This has consequences for slums because they are often located on prime land. As Roy (2011a, p. 262) observes, the freeing up of such land has turned into 'a violent process' of evictions and symbolizes 'homegrown neoliberalism'. Homegrown neoliberalism is defined as the 'ways in which global circulations

of market rule find a home in national contexts of development' (p. 262). An example is the restructuring of urban governance promoted by the World Bank. Homegrown neoliberalism manifests at the urban level. The forced removal of poor residents to make way for profit maximization often followed by projects such as riverside cafés and bijou restaurants catering to the needs of monied classes (Amin and Thrift 2002) is an example.

A world-class city perspective on slum upgrading not only highlight the dominant influence of modernity and neoliberalism, but also how the two intertwine. In a slum upgrading project in Recife, Brazil, 'high modernism' combine with neoliberalism and leftist ideology to produce a regime of spatial ordering (Nuijten et al. 2012, p. 158). Infrastructure provides a useful avenue to address the close relationship between modernity and neoliberalism. Infrastructure is at the core of modernist and neoliberal projects and central to world-class city construction. From the neoliberal viewpoint, infrastructure is closely associated with private capital (Mitchell 2014). It is a popular strategy or tool for attracting private investments often through the launch of megaprojects (Adama 2018). Investments in infrastructure and an investor-friendly environment are highlights of the imagined world-class city (Roy 2011a). Goldman (2011, p. 230) puts the importance of infrastructure to the neoliberal agenda into perspective by noting how 'competing cities have leveraged their urban infrastructures' to attract private capital. Infrastructure is also crucial to the modernist agenda. The centrality of infrastructure is reflected in the attention to physical conditions and aesthetics. In the aforementioned slum upgrading project in Recife, Brazil, the authors note the paved streets that 'convey the promise of order and progress, in contrast to messy habitations ... that stand for backwardness and decay' (Nuijten et al. 2012, p. 158). The appeal of infrastructure is particularly evident in cities in the South where governments copy projects from elsewhere so they can take part in a 'contemporaneous modernity' (Larkin 2013, p. 333). From the modernist perspective and in the world-class city context, infrastructure is key to the dream of achieving beautiful, clean and functional cities (Ghertner 2011).

Notions about urban space is another factor that points to the intertwining of modernity and neoliberalism. Urban space occupies a central role

in the two ideologies and in world-class city construction. It is crucial to achieving the modernist ideals of aesthetics and functionalism. Urban space is also at the centre of the neoliberal logics of commodification and privatization of public space intended to attract private investments. Undoubtedly, urban space features prominently in world-class city construction. Among others, Roy (2011a) cites deregulation of urban space as one of the highlights of the world-class city. The role of urban space in the intricate and entangled relationship between modernity and neoliberalism in the context of world-class city construction is aptly captured in the notion that a beautiful, clean and orderly city is more likely to attract foreign investors because they offer comfortable and liveable spaces (Ali and Rieker 2008; Adama 2018).

In addition to infrastructure and urban space, notions about popular participation and understandings of citizenship also point to the intertwining of modernist and neoliberal agendas in world-class city construction. In the neoliberal notion of public and private responsibilities, the state is to play a minimal role, while communities take responsibility for their environments and cooperate with official participatory procedures (Nuijten et al. 2012, p. 158). Similarly, the modernist notions of participation and citizenship require the production of modern citizen-subjects, a term that connotes some sort of social engineering and behaviour modification (Mitchell 2003). Along these lines as Larkin (2013, p. 33) points out, people 'participate in a common vision and conceptual paradigm of what it means to be modern' even if the projects entail negative outcomes. For example, in Kinshasa, Congo, individuals were willing to make sacrifices, even when modernization necessitated the destruction of homes and evictions of slum dwellers (De Boeck 2011). Reminiscent of the neoliberal and modernist understandings of participation and citizenship, the world-class aesthetic necessitates 'the making of world-class subjects' (Ghertner 2011, p. 281). Crucially, this 'enables state intervention into an otherwise ungovernable terrain' (p. 282). Ultimately, world-class city making requires citizens to make sacrifices in order to fit into 'the idealized imagery' of a particular vision or model (Goldman 2011, p. 230). In practice, the strategy is deployed through government programmes to guide 'the population's' conduct towards 'suitable ends' (Foucault 2007, p. 96 cited in Ghertner 2011, p. 282).

In spite of the ideological machinations, world-class city making can be undermined, fractured or contested. The dream of turning Mumbai into a world-class city 'literally went down the clogged drains' in July 2005, when water flooded the city after heavy rains (Prakash 2008, p. 181). Protests constitute popular resistance strategies. As Roy (2011a, p. 259) points out, the 'imagined dynamism of the world-class city, a space inserted into global circulation of capital' can be 'encircled by protests'. Issues related to the neoliberal notions on urban space, particularly the use value of space is at the centre of the conflict. Drawing on Lefebvre, the concept of use value sees urban space as contested terrain with conflict between those that are primarily concerned with 'the exchange value or profit potential of urban space, and urban residents for whom the value of space derived from lived experience' (Devlin 2015, p. 45). Interestingly, resistance may be rooted in the world-class city philosophy itself. World-class city construction presents obstacles to slum dwellers, but it also offers opportunities for resistance. Slum residents can adopt 'world-class aesthetics' to locate themselves in the city and frame their own 'world-class aspirations' as observed in Delhi where the slum is envisioned as a space of hope and slum dwellers celebrate their potential to become property owners (Ghertner 2011, p. 281). Hence, the world-class aesthetic offer 'particular interpretations through which urban subjects come to inhabit space', thereby operating as a contested arena allowing subjects to come up with new political visions and demands (p. 281).

Finally, it is problematic to have a discussion on world-class city construction in the South without a reference to informalization, a dominant feature in cities. The term 'informal' is applied to housing and settlements, infrastructure, economic practices and social processes (Lombard and Meth 2017, p. 159). Spatial informality is particularly relevant to the discussion due to the focus on space, which as noted earlier plays a central role in modernist and neoliberal ideologies and world-class city construction. Spatial informalities are associated with informal housing and settlements and incremental service provision (p. 159). Informalization may be the norm in many cities, but it has and continues to pose a threat to world-class city making. The inability of city governments to meet the basic needs of residents leave the poor with little choice, but to resort to the informal sector for access to services. This development is very

pronounced in the housing sector (Myers 2011). The problem is that housing obtained through the informal sector are often sub-standard and contribute to the emergence or proliferation of slums. The frequent demolition of informal structures point to the prevalent and persistent nature of the phenomenon. Beyond housing, another informal activity that is widespread and has been at the centre of the conflicts between the state and the urban poor is street trading. As a study in Lagos shows, street traders are routinely accused by governments of dirtying the environment and causing traffic congestions and thus inimical to the dream of achieving world-class city status (Omoegun et al. 2019).

The context

A historical examination of urban policy and planning processes and slum upgrading approaches in Lagos is necessary in order to fully understand the world-class city perspective. A number of factors including colonialism, modernity, neoliberalism and urban governance practices have shaped urban governance processes in the city with implications for slum upgrading. It is difficult to separate colonialism from modernity because modernist planning in Lagos dates back to the colonial era. The British colonial administration sought to transform Lagos into the 'Liverpool of West Africa' (Gandy 2006, p. 375). To this end, a major decision was the creation of the Lagos Executive Development Board (LEDB) in 1928, a move referred to as the beginning of modern planning in the city (George 2009). The LEDB initiated an extensive slum clearance targeting the African parts of the city as part of an overall modernization effort. However, the project reinforced a clear disparity in living conditions between the European elites and the local population (Gandy 2006). Unsurprisingly, it was met with protests from the local media and political elites (ibid.). The spatial disparities, protests and limited financial commitment by the colonial government undermined the effort resulting in what Gandy refers to as a 'truncated modernity' (p. 377). Nigeria obtained independence in 1960 and in the immediate postcolonial period, there was an attempt to 'articulate a distinctively African modernity', but the problem of inadequate infrastructure overwhelmed the limited resources available (Gandy 2006, p. 378). The 1970s was marked by 'a disjuncture between facade of modernity reflected in the construction of prestige

projects' (Ilesanmi 2010, p. 246). The 1980s coincided with the global recession and the introduction of the Structural Adjustment Programme. It witnessed an extensive infrastructural collapse. In response, the Lagos State government launched an ambitious UN sponsored plan that culminated in the report, 'Master Plan for Metropolitan Lagos 1980–2000'. The study produced an urban growth strategy, but the implementation of the master plan fell well short of expectations in part due to lack of personnel, equipment and inability to cope with the phenomenal growth in population (George 2009). The plan marked the end of attempts to address the city's problems in an integrated manner until 2005, when the Lagos Megacity Project (LMCP) was launched (Ilesanmi 2010).

The LMCP sets out a vision of a megacity that is sustainable, organised, liveable, and business and tourism friendly (Lagos State Government Ministry of Physical Planning and Urban Development 2012). The key ministries identified to implement the LMCP include the Ministry of Physical Planning, and specifically the Lagos State Urban Renewal Agency (LASURA), which is under the supervision of the ministry. The vision of LASURA is to bequeath an enduring modern environment at all times. The Ministry of Environment is another key actor. The ministry is mandated to secure a clean, healthier and sustainable environment conducive for tourism, economic growth and the well-being of the people. Another is the newly created Ministry of Waterfront Infrastructure Development. It is charged with providing infrastructure and services at the Lagos waterfronts by harnessing resources to ensure well-protected environment that is attractive to tourists and observers. It is important to note that Makoko, the case study presented later is located on the waterfront (Figure 1).

The modernization effort that has occurred in Lagos in recent years, and particularly the prioritization of infrastructure has taken place under the regime of Fashola, the governor of the state between 2007 and 2015. The LMCP was launched before Fashola became the governor of Lagos State, but it gained momentum under his stewardship. Fashola sought to appropriate and redefine notions of modernity and Lagos became 'the laboratory for a series of public-private initiatives and interventions of landscape beautification'. Fashola's government unveiled the Lagos State Development Plan 2012–2025 highlighting a vision for the future with a focus on infrastructure with Fashola noting that 'it is practically impossible to

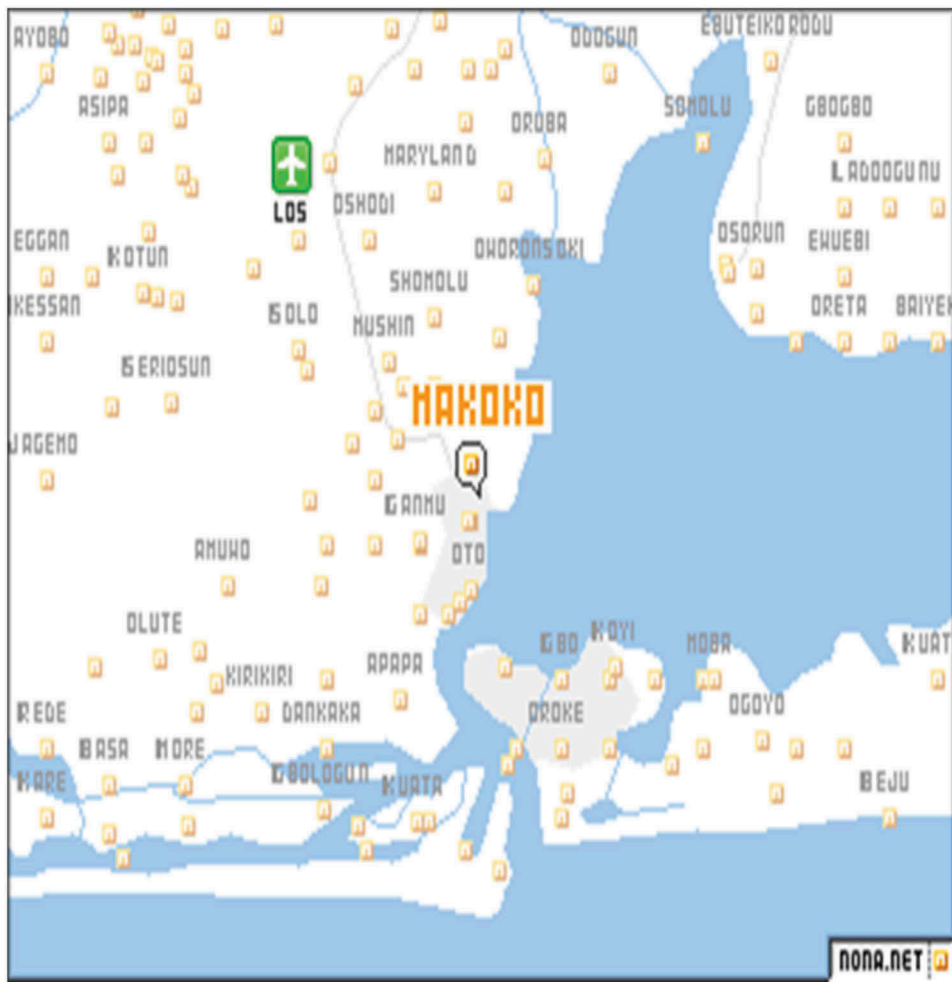


Figure 1. Map of Lagos. Notice the location of Makoko along the lagoon. The map also shows the location of Oshodi to the north. Notice the proximity of Oshodi to the airport.

Source: nona.net/features/map/placedetail.2253343/Makoko

survive without infrastructure’ (Alao 2014, p. 31). Of note, Fashola created the aforementioned Ministry of Waterfront Infrastructure Development a month after he took over as governor in May, 2007.

As noted in the introduction, the government made a commitment to engage the citizens in the process of transforming Lagos but to the contrary, under Fashola, there was large-scale demolition of informal settlements and major attempts to eradicate street trading, with little or no consultation with the people affected (Omoegun et al. 2019). Basinski (2009) attributes the strong desire to eliminate slums and street trading to the ambitions of Fashola to turn Lagos into a world-class megacity capable of attracting foreign investments and promoting tourism.

Following the demolition of informal structures and eviction of traders in Oshodi and the search for answers (Figure 1), Fashola is reported to have been unhappy that the first thing foreign visitors see on arrival at the international airport in Lagos is a slum and wondered why an investor would want to come back after seeing such chaos (Oyibo 2009). Oshodi is seen as key to the agenda of transforming Lagos into a world-class city due to its strategic location and scale (Omoegun et al. 2019). By the time Fashola left office in 2015, he had earned a reputation nationally and internationally as a leader who had somehow managed to transform a notoriously complex city like Lagos. Fashola was given an award by the International Crisis Group (ICG) for his commitment to

resolving social, economic and security challenges in one of the world's most challenging urban environments (Olaniyi 2015). On the national scene, his exploits as the governor of Lagos State yielded some political gains. President Buhari took the unprecedented step of creating the new Ministry of Power, Works and Housing, essentially a merger of three ministries and put Fashola in charge. Infrastructure remains a pre-occupation with Fashola. When inspecting a federal government road project, Fashola noted the contribution of infrastructure to national development and national unity since infrastructure, notably roads and bridges bring people together (Vanguardngrnews.com 2018).

In what can be seen as a paradox, alongside the evictions and demolitions, the government has been involved in slum redevelopment and upgrading. Some projects were to be implemented with private sector funding and carried out in collaboration with property owners and tenants of affected areas (Filani 2012). In interviews with officials of LASURA in 2012, they cited two ongoing projects. The first, a largely private sector driven project, but with the government providing roads, drainages, health and educational facilities. The second, a pilot scheme funded by the government. The sub-standard properties were to be developed into high-rise buildings in order to leave enough land for roads, drainage and open spaces and to avoid the displacement of residents. When posed the question of how the residents of the affected areas would be handled, the officials noted that there were plans to offer residents temporary accommodation and relocation allowances during the redevelopment. The plan was to reallocate the flats to the residents upon completion. Of particular interest, state officials added that the government was determined not to go the way of Makoko. This is noteworthy because the interview took place a few weeks after the government had embarked on a demolition exercise in Makoko, a move that attracted a lot of criticisms, nationally and internationally. In a related development, state officials recalled that the French Development Agency had made the decision to delay slum upgrading in four slum communities until assurances were given that the projects would not involve forced evictions.

Slump ugrading in makoko

Makoko is located in a prime area of Lagos, bounded in the east by the Lagos Lagoon and in the south by the

third mainland bridge (Figure 1). The settlement began as a fishing village in the 18th century. A headcount conducted in 2007 recorded a population of over 85 000, but government officials acknowledged that the settlement has witnessed a huge growth in population since the exercise. Referred to as the 'Poor Man's Venice' (Fortin 2012), Makoko is a sprawling community lying below sea level. This, in addition to problems such as blocked drainages make flooding a perennial occurrence. Because of its location on the shoreline and flooding, much of the settlement rests on constructed stilts on the Lagos Lagoon. There is an obvious high level of environmental and infrastructural decay. Houses are sub-standard, roads in very poor conditions, tap water almost non-existent and only two waste collection points serve the population. Furthermore, Makoko is particularly known for its smoked fish. This, in addition to wood burning, an activity associated with the production of charcoal used for cooking are notable contributors to the fumes of smoke that constantly hang over the settlement. Makoko is one of nine communities selected for upgrading under the Lagos Metropolitan Development and Governance Project (LMDGP). According to World Bank officials, the LMDGP was launched in 2007 with a World Bank loan of Two hundred million US dollars. The project consists of three major components: infrastructure; public governance and capacity building; and urban policy. Infrastructure is allocated the largest share of US \$165.35 million. Out of this amount, US\$ 40.15 million was set aside for the upgrading of the nine identified slums. The intervention was primarily aimed at facilitating economic activities and private investments in the area in addition to tackling problems related to drainage. Particular attention was to be given to investments in roads, drainage, water and sanitation, markets and recreation facilities.

An elaborate structure was put in place to facilitate dialogue between the different stakeholders, notably state and local government officials, World Bank staff, representatives of communities, civil society organizations, international development agencies such as DFID and the private sector. Community participation was linked to sustainability and seen as crucial to the success of the LMDGP. Sustainability was to be enhanced through an organized transfer of the facilities to the communities. As a result, there was hope that the project would survive beyond the project period of five years. The importance of community participation and sustainability is underscored by the

decision to allocate the sum of USD1.25 million to a 'Social Sustainability Programme'. According to a project staff, there was a declared intention to tap into existing community structures and form new ones where they did not exist. A number of meetings were held with traditional rulers and representatives of market organizations, unions and Community Development Associations (CDAs) in Makoko in order to explain the objectives of the project and solicit their support. Individual organizations and associations were encouraged to hold town hall meetings with their members to appraise them of the project and ask for their cooperation. On their part, the project staff promised that the community would be meaningfully engaged in the project under a partnership framework. Another promise was that there would be no evictions but if it was deemed unavoidable, it would be temporary and the affected persons were to be compensated financially. To buttress the need to avoid evictions, the LMDGP was to use the World Bank's Resettlement Action Plan as a guide. The plan allowed for evictions only in exceptional circumstances and in such cases, the interests of the community was paramount. As a point of clarity and emphasis, where there is conflict with local and

national laws during the course of implementation, the World Bank's plan takes precedence. Above all, the promises were deemed crucial in gaining the trust and cooperation of the community.

Prioritizing infrastructure

Makoko was allocated the sum of US\$3.2 million under the LMDGP. The project entailed the construction of boreholes, mobile toilets, rehabilitation of public schools and health centres and installation of solar powered street lighting systems. In addition, about 3.3 kilometres of roads was to be rehabilitated. The upgrading of Makoko market stood out as the most anticipated project. The market is at the centre of economic activities in the settlement. By the end of the project period, the market had witnessed a huge transformation. Underscoring the transformation, project staff and representatives of the traders were quick to point out that the site of the market used to be a waste dump. Following the intervention, the waste had been cleared, the surface paved and drainage provided. In addition, what was described as 'modern' stalls had been built for traders (Figure 2). The most



Figure 2. A section of the upgraded Makoko market. Notice the 'modern' stalls in the background and the traders operating in the open in the foreground.

Source: The Author (2013)

celebrated improvement is the renovation of the road leading to the market. Hitherto, the market was largely inaccessible especially during the rainy season due to the poor state of the road. The road was reconstructed and paved (Figure 3). According to the chairperson and secretary of the Asejere market association, an organization representing a motley of smaller associations, the volume of trading had increased largely due to the road improvement. This led to a decision by the association to operate two shifts to cater to the increased volume. However, as Figure 2 shows, operating two shifts has not solved the problem of congestion. There is not enough stalls to accommodate everyone and the majority of traders continue to operate in the open. Accompanying the increased volume in trade is the diversification of the goods traded and an increase in the number of product-based associations. On the negative side, according to the representatives of the market association, the uptake in activities coupled with an increase in the value of the facilities made the market more attractive to criminals. The need for increased security led to a decision by the market association to employ personnel to maintain order and safeguard properties.

Interestingly, rather than question the inability of the government to ensure security in the community, the association saw the employment of security staff as a positive outcome of the upgrading project since it points to an increase in employment opportunities.

The upgrading project provides insights into certain aspects of community life in Makoko. For example, there are obvious gender dimensions to the activities in the market. As noted earlier, fishing is the main economic activity. The men go out at night in their canoes to fish and come back very early in the morning with the catch. The fish is collected by the women, in many cases the wives, and taken to the market to sell. Both the project staff and representatives of the market association surmised that women in particular had benefited from the upgrading of the market. In addition to an increase in the number of women selling fish, they have also benefited from the diversification of the activities. They form the majority of traders dealing in household utensils, fruits and vegetables.

Above all, the upgrading of Makoko market was aimed at attracting private investments and facilitating local economic growth. The project recorded some positive results on this front. Of particular



Figure 3. The upgraded road leading to Makoko market.

Source: The Author (2013)

note, is the visit by the governor of the Central Bank of Nigeria to Makoko market to open a new branch of Sterling Bank in November 2013. A visit by the Central Bank governor to any occasion anywhere in the country is a big deal. For Makoko, a community on the fringes, it was particularly a notable event. The traders were very proud of the visit and the attention the community got as a result. Crucially, the visit was credited to the new road. As the chairperson of the Asejere market association put it,

The road has made a lot of difference. CBN governor came a week ago, he would not have come when the road was bad because he will not be able to access the place (personal communication, Chairperson, Asejere Market Association, 3 December 2013).

The visit of such a high profile national figure and the opening of a bank with promises to offer loans to traders further cemented the new 'modern' image of Makoko and the potential for private sector investments.

The upgrading of three primary schools sharing a common compound (Figure 4) is the second major project undertaken in Makoko. Adekunle Anglican Primary School is the largest of the three with a population of 1024 pupils. According to the principal of the school, a storm destroyed some structures towards the end of 2011. The incident prompted

project officials to begin the renovation work in 2012. The projects to be implemented included the renovation of classrooms and the provision of drainage, electricity and water. Drainage was to be given high priority because the area is waterlogged. By the time the author visited the site in 2013, a year after the project had officially ended, it was evident that a lot still had to be done. Drainage was still a problem and the compound had not been paved (Figure 4). Electricity and water had not been provided. The borehole and overhead water tank had been constructed, but was not functioning because the contractor claimed he had not been paid the full amount. By the time the author went back two years later in 2015, the problems had not been solved.

The promise of community participation

As noted earlier, community participation was a core objective and was to be facilitated through partnership arrangements. Certain partnerships did emerge within the two projects. In the market upgrade, an example is the partnership between the state, represented by Lagos State Waste Management Authority (LAWMA) and the traders, represented by the Asejere market association. The main aim was to keep the market and the



Figure 4. The upgraded schools showing the shared compound. Notice the water tank in the background and the uncompleted work in the foreground.

Source: The Author (2013)

surrounding area clean. The market association was charged with the responsibility of putting a system in place. It began by coming up with a strategy to raise funds. A decision was taken to charge a monthly maintenance fee of one hundred Naira (N100) from each of the 350 members. The money was used to employ people to sweep the market three times a day. In addition, an 'environmental day' with all traders expected to take part is held every Thursday to ensure general cleanliness. On its part, LAWMA's responsibility was to collect waste for disposal three times a week. A visit by the author to the market in September 2013 revealed that the arrangement and partnership was still functioning.

The partnership formed around the upgrading of the schools faced major challenges. It was made up of World Bank project staff, the school administrators, contractors, the Local Government Education Authority (LGEA) and the Makoko Community Development Association (CDA). The World Bank staff were to supervise the project; the contractors to implement according to the agreed stipulations; the LGEA to ensure educational guidelines are adhered to; and the CDA to monitor the progress of the project. Accounts suggest that it was difficult for the CDA to fulfil its duties. The chairman of the CDA accused the project staff of taking arbitrary decisions and ignoring the wishes of the community. For example, a major source of contention centred on the construction of a new fence around the schools. The schools are located close to a canal and the old fence was very close to the canal. World Bank representatives insisted that there must be a buffer zone between the new fence and the canal. The chairman of the CDA and representatives of the State Universal Basic Education Board (SUBEB) disagreed, but their objections were overruled and the original fence was destroyed. In addition to the new fence not being completed, the buffer zone has been turned into a football field by youths. School authorities complained that it is common for windows to be damaged by youths playing football. According to the chairman of the CDA, he made repeated visits to project officials to raise a number of issues, but the visits yielded little or no positive results. The school administrators took up the complaints of the CDA and other issues related to electricity supply, toilets and drainage by writing a letter to the LGEA. The administrators kept on the pressure through monthly reports, but nothing was done. On their part, officials of the LGEA acknowledged that the renovation of the schools was not properly done. However, they argued that they should not share any blame because the agency was not contacted during the

planning phase even though it is a member of the partnership formed. They added that they felt compelled as supervisors of the schools to make their observations and complaints known to the World Bank staff and did so.

By all accounts, the failure to follow through on initial promises contributed to the unravelling of the partnership and greatly undermined community participation. In addition to the failure to consult, the promise to hand over completed projects to the community, deemed as crucial to ensuring sustainability was not fulfilled. For example, a visit to the site in 2015 revealed that even though a generator had been procured and installed in the school, the building housing the generator was padlocked. The school administrators confirmed that the generator had not been officially handed over to them for reasons that could not be ascertained. In the end, as aptly summed up by a school administrator, the project staff appeared to have been more interested in aesthetics than promoting meaningful community participation.

All we can say is that the school structure has been changed and we can say all they did was [sic] facelift of the school (personal communication, School Administrator, 8 June 2015).

Figure 4 confirms the effort made towards making the buildings look beautiful and giving a good first impression. The walls were painted with vibrant colours. The inside of the classrooms were also painted and new tables and chairs added. Summing up, according to a World Bank official, the Bank's assessment of the project noted that some progress was made in areas where there was a strong interest by communities. This confirms the importance of community participation in slum upgrading projects. However, the assessment failed to acknowledge the many obstacles that made community participation difficult. It is rather simplistic to assume that interest by the community alone is enough to guarantee the success of any project. For example, based on the interactions with the representative of the Makoko CDA and the school authorities, it seemed they were very much dedicated and interested in the success of the school upgrading project but as documented above, compared to the market, it was less successful.

The evictions

On 12 July 2012, the Ministry of Waterfront Infrastructure Development issued an eviction notice giving Makoko

residents 72 hours to vacate illegal structures. The government maintained that a letter was written to a traditional leader, the Baale of Makoko earlier giving two weeks' notice, but the traditional ruler said he never saw it (Busari 2012). The second letter giving 72 hours' notice, pledged to destroy all unwholesome structures on the waterfront. Three days after the notice was issued, a team of armed police officers stormed the settlement to carry out the evictions. Residents alleged that a traditional leader was killed in the ensuing melee. The incident was reported in several newspapers but official government accounts, confirmed in interviews maintained that no fatalities were recorded during the exercise. Evidently, the promise not to carry out evictions was not kept. When questioned about why a decision was made to carry out evictions, a World Bank project staff said the state government did not inform them and they had no part in it. This is another example of arbitrary decisions and the failure to consult. More crucial, the question is why the government bypassed the rules and regulations governing the implementation of the LMDGP. As summed up by Sessou and Adingupu (2012), why would the government take a loan to develop

a community and then turn around and destroy it? The answer depends on whom you ask.

The official reasons given by the government for the evictions centred on the safety of residents and the effect of illegal structures on drainage facilities. On the issue of safety, some parts of the settlement fall under the high-tension national grid (Figure 5). There were reports of fire incidents in 2010 and 2011 in an area directly under the third Mainland Bridge and close to the high-tension grid (Figure 6). The government said it was even more determined to carry out the evictions because of the fire and especially since as alleged, residents had disregarded several directives not to live or operate within 100 metres of the power grid. In the case of drainage, as noted earlier, it is indeed a major problem in Makoko and according to the government, the situation in Makoko is affecting other parts of the city. The argument was that a further expansion of the settlement would affect the shoreline of the Lagoon, which provides adequate drainage for some parts of the city. In responding to the safety concerns raised by the government, some residents said they were not necessarily against the evictions



Figure 5. Economic activities along the waterfront: Notice the fishing in the background and firewood production in the foreground. The national power grid is highly visible overhead. Notice the third Mainland Bridge in the background to the right of the picture.

The Author (2012).



Figure 6. The aftermath of the evictions. Notice residents operating under the third Mainland Bridge. Also notice the informal structures directly under the bridge to the right of the picture The Author (2012).

but argued that they should have been offered alternative accommodation.

Even if the government wanted us to leave, it should have provided a convenient place for us to move to. Our occupation is fishing so we need to stay close to the water to do our business (The Baale of Makoko cited in Busari 2012).

The majority of residents were not convinced by the reasons given by the government. For example, residents alleged that houses that fell outside the 100-metre mark stipulated by the government were destroyed. Some speculated that the government was evicting them in order to reclaim the land and then sell it to the rich as had occurred in other parts of the city. To buttress the suspicion of residents, a couple of journalists covering the crisis said they were in possession of copies of the plan to develop Makoko and the plan is silent on the plight of the residents (Sessou and Adingupu 2012). Above all, the evictions was linked to a grand plan, specifically, the desire to transform Lagos into a world-class city.

The people do not give them the benefits to make use of the waterways for developmental, economic or recreation project and that in order to meet up with the mega-city status

of Lagos, they had to get rid of houses of that nature (Makoko Youth Leader cited in Balogun and Sessou 2012).

In the above excerpt, the Makoko youth leader is clearly linking the evictions to the Lagos Megacity Project. Echoing the same sentiments, Ibiwoye (2014) reports that the government sees Makoko as an obstacle to the economic and gainful utilisation of the waterfront. In this context as Ibiwoye puts it, Makoko is seen as undermining the ambitions of the government to transform Lagos into a world-class city. Interviews with state officials seemed to confirm the hidden motives of the government. It emerged that there were plans to turn the waterfront part of Makoko into a resort accessible by boats and with high-class restaurants aimed at tourists.

In the aftermath of the evictions, some of the affected residents took refuge under the third Mainland Bridge, others in open spaces or in their canoes along the Lagoon shore, while a few lucky ones were accommodated by those whose houses were not destroyed (Busari 2012; Sessou and Adingupu 2012). Human rights groups including the Social and Economic Rights Action Center (SERAC) organized a protest march a few days after the evictions. The director of SERAC described the evictions as

unlawful (Sessou and Adingupu 2012). In addition, some concerned Nigerians took the government to court. Makoko residents appealed to the governor to reconsider his position.

We can't fight the government; we don't even have money to prosecute such a case. What we are doing is to plead with Governor Babatunde Fashola to reconsider his policy on the Makoko community (The Baale of Makoko cited in Busari 2012).

Residents may not have had the resources to fight the government in court, but there were not helpless either. By the time the author visited Makoko a few months after the evictions in 2012, life had returned to 'normal'. Residents had resumed their livelihood activities, notably fishing and firewood production (Figure 5). Another visit a year later in 2013 revealed similar results. Residents were operating along the waterfront under the third Mainland Bridge, the same space where the fire had taken place and which according to the government prompted the evictions. This is a clear example of residents disregarding government directives. In the end, the resistance by residents with the support of other groups evidently yielded results. The Commissioner for Waterfront Infrastructure Development had threatened that he was committed to the complete destruction of Makoko (Sessou and Adingupu 2012) but obviously this did not happen. The Makoko case is another example of how the seemingly powerless challenge the government in this case through protests and the continued encroachment and appropriation of urban space.

Conclusion

The paper examined slum upgrading in the era of world-class city construction, with particular attention to the underlying processes and tensions through a case study of a slum upgrading project in Makoko, Lagos, Nigeria. A notable observation is the intertwining of modernist and neoliberal ideologies in world-class city construction and in slum upgrading. The entangled relationship is traced to a number of shared interests, notably infrastructure and notions about participation and citizenship and urban space. Slum upgrading is accompanied by benefits, notably improvements in infrastructure and an increase in economic activities, but it also produced tensions stemming largely around urban space. Aided by

modernist and neoliberal ideals, world-class city construction make huge demands on urban space and there are implications for slums. It begins with the location of slums on prime land as the Makoko case shows. The waterfront in particular, is seen by the government as highly valuable in the bid to attract private investments. The problem is that the waterfront is at the heart of informal livelihood activities in the community. Thus while the reasons given by the government for the evictions bordered on safety, to the residents it was an attempt by the state to displace them, take control of the land and then sell to the highest bidders. With their livelihoods under threat, the residents supported by various groups embarked on protests and the eviction was suspended. For our purposes, the struggle over urban space provide useful insights into how and why world-class city construction is contested and undermined. It also points to the relevance of urban governance processes in the South to the world-class city discourse as taken up below.

At the broadest level, the paper addresses some concerns raised about world-class city construction, particularly the neglect of the local context. Associated with this is the lack of sensitivity to urbanization processes, particularly the role of informalization, a defining feature of urban governance in cities in the South. Informalization provides insights into contemporary urban governance processes, specifically those around urban planning, state practices, livelihood activities and survival strategies. It is at the centre of the ongoing conflict between the state, private interests and the urban poor. Acknowledging the role of informalization is crucial to understanding how world-class city construction plays out in the South. As the Makoko case shows, the neglect of informalization means a failure to acknowledge the livelihoods of the urban poor. This is central to the tensions that emerged. A related argument is that a neglect of informalization also downplays the negative impact of neoliberalism, another criticism of the world-class city philosophy. In Makoko, the struggle over public space and the evictions that followed is an example.

Another issue highlighted is the relevance of historical processes. In this context, the paper draws attention to colonial rule and the issue of socio-spatial exclusion. Spatial inequalities is noted as a colonial legacy. This means it existed before the era of world-class city construction. What has changed

is the nature of the problem. During the colonial era, socio-spatial inequalities manifested largely as a race issue, with distinctions between the European and African parts of the city. In the era of world-class city construction, the problem manifests largely as a class issue. To fully understand the current situation, it is necessary to acknowledge how the socio-spatial exclusionary tendencies accompanying world-class city construction feed into an already existing problem or pattern. This also raises the question of specific contemporary urban governance practices and the necessity to look beyond the role of colonialism, modernity and neoliberalism. On this, the paper highlights the structural and systemic failings of governance. In Makoko, this is aptly demonstrated in the case of community participation. The conditions for effective state-community relations and community participation were lacking.

Finally, the paper shows that acknowledging the local context does not necessarily mean ignoring global forces. Both the local and global are important because they intersect to produce the outcomes. In the era of world-class city construction, it is particularly interesting to see how slum upgrading has evolved from the early approaches that had a narrow focus aimed at achieving specific objectives in targeted communities. Today, slum upgrading has a very broad vision, one that view slums as crucial to enhancing a city's position in a competitive world market. The slum upgrading project in Makoko addressed specific issues in the community but it fits into the broader vision of transforming Lagos into a world-class city. This way, slums can enhance or undermine a city's global aspirations. Ultimately, while slums are an urban or local problem, they play an important role in the route to being global. In the context of world-class city construction, the paper suggests that slum upgrading is useful in examining how the local is inserted into the global.

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