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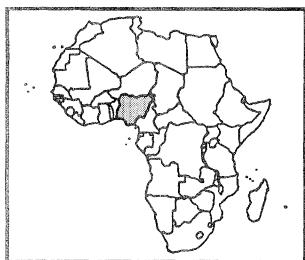
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Promoting community based approaches to social infrastructure provision in urban areas in Nigeria

N.O. Uduku

SUMMARY: *This paper points to the inadequacies in the provision of social infrastructure (including schools, health care facilities and water and sanitation) in urban areas of Nigeria but also to how little attention has been paid to long-established traditions of self help and community organization that formerly provided such infrastructure and that continue to do so in some instances. It presents a historical and regional perspective to infrastructure and service provision in urban areas, covering the pre-colonial, colonial and post-colonial periods. Case studies are also given for infrastructure and service provision in an urban centre from each of Nigeria's main regions: Lagos (from the south-west), Kaduna (from the north) and Umuahia (from the south-east). The paper then considers different possibilities for improving infrastructure and service provision and the institutional changes they imply and discusses possible areas for further research.*

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I. INTRODUCTION

"The current urban crisis (thus) revolves around the sense of anomie which most urban residents exhibit in matters connected with their own long-term interests in the city.... in the face of an incompetent, inefficient, and exploitative bureaucracy which cannot supply electricity steadily, provide water regularly, cleanse the streets systematically and maintain security for persons and property continuously, (this) derives from a failure of organization and a near fatalistic belief in the hopelessness of the present situation."⁽¹⁾

THE PROBLEM OF grossly inadequate social infrastructure provision in Nigerian cities today has become critical. Urban areas in Nigeria have existed from pre-colonial times; historical records

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1. Mabogunje, A. (1990), "The organisation of urban communities in Nigeria", *International Social Science Journal*, Vol. 125, pages 355-366.

2. See for example descriptions of Lagosians in Victorian Lagos in Echeruo, M.J. (1977), *Victorian Lagos*, Macmillan, London; and Macmillan, A. (editor) (1993), *The Red Book of West Africa*, Spectrum, Nigeria; and, more recently, lectures by "radical" Africans such as A. Maja Pierce carry on the tradition.

3. Hodgkin, T. (1975), *Nigerian Perspectives: An Historical Anthology*, Oxford University Press, England.

suggest these early cities were highly organized and were provided with the necessary social infrastructure for the civil society of the time. There is a common explanation given by many social commentators in the past and critics of today for the poor state of social infrastructure in Nigerian and other African cities. This is that Nigerian city dwellers remain attached to their "primitive" origins and are therefore inherently disorganized and disinterested in the urban environment. The urban dweller is thus unable to appreciate the need for organized urban social services.⁽²⁾ From an historical perspective this is untrue. Infrastructure provision in urban Nigeria, however, is much superior to the situation found in most rural areas, putting the national scale of the problem in perspective. Despite this poor state of affairs, there are some examples of the successful provision of infrastructure in both urban and rural locations that show possible directions for the future.

This paper argues in favour of regional community based approaches to the provision of social infrastructure in urban Nigeria. It suggests that the historical organization of cities and rural areas, achieved through community based development, was a successful model that deserves renewed consideration and can be adapted to address the needs of today's cities. "Social infrastructure" is a term used to describe a variety of built structures and public utilities that are considered necessary for the physical well-being, health, comfort, and overall development of the population. Housing and public utilities, for example, fall within the definition. Within the context of this discussion, however, the broad scope of the term has been limited to schools (primary and secondary), health care facilities (hospitals, clinics, dispensaries), and sanitation (pipe borne water supply and waste disposal). This paper considers the provision of these in Nigeria, with specific regard to urban areas.

II. THE HISTORICAL PERSPECTIVE

"The houses stand beside each other built in an orderly way as here in this country, displaying handsome fronts and verandahswith washing and polishing they are made as smooth and even as any plastered wall in Holland and as shining as a looking glass... each house furthermore has a fresh-water well "⁽³⁾

THE LAND MASS that is now Nigeria has been occupied by many empires and city states in the past. Northern Nigeria made up part of the earlier empires of Mali and Kanem-Bornu. The aftermath of the *jihad* led by Uthman dan Fodio (in 1806) and the subsequent establishment of the Sokoto Caliphate effectively consolidated the Islamic city states which included Kano, Zaria, Katsina and Sokoto.

Early travellers recorded the high level of organization in these cities. They noted also the existence of (Koranic) schools and public utilities such as local, community maintained hand-drawn wells. Of equal importance were the status, symbolism and ac-

4. Various historical extracts exist from the diaries of early Arab travellers to northern Nigeria, such as Ibn Batuta. Hodgkin's anthology gives a varied set of concise accounts of early Nigeria. See reference 3.

5. The main historical references consulted were Edwards P. (editor) (1969), *The Life of Olaudah Equiano*, Vols. 1 and 2, Cassell, London; Isichei H. (1976), *A History of the Igbo People*, Macmillan, London; and Northup D. (1978), *Trade Without Rulers, Pre-colonial Economic Development in South-Eastern Nigeria*, Clarendon Press, London.

6. Igwe S.O. (1987), *Education In Eastern Nigeria, 1847-1895*, Evans, Nigeria.

7. Ajayi, J.F. (1965), *Christian Missions in Nigeria, 1841- 1891: The Making of A New Elite*, Longmans, London .

8. CMS Grammar School Lagos was founded with mainly "Saro" support in 1876, whilst King's College (the first government secondary school) was founded in 1908. For a full account see Ajayi, J. (1963), "The development of secondary grammar school education in Nigeria" in the *Journal of the Historical Society of Nigeria*, Vol II, No. 4, pages 517- 535.

tivities of traditional and mystic healers in the society.⁽⁴⁾ Although these cities were centralized and hierarchical in authority, local area heads remained in control of the daily activities at a communal level. In south-western Nigeria, the old Yoruba empires of Oyo, Ife and Benin had similar organizational structures to those in the north. These empires were, however, less Islamic in authority.

Traditional Yoruba culture, which also incorporated religion, had specific organizational systems through which the basic social infrastructure, such as houses and market places was laid out through communal effort; traditional education systems were also in existence. South-eastern Nigeria, in contrast, was populated mainly by dispersed rural communities, and such pre-colonial urban areas did not exist. However, within this rural community structure, there was also an indigenous education system, and communal labour was well developed in many local activities such as house construction and village cleaning projects.⁽⁵⁾

With the advent of coastal trade the localities close to the coast, such as Calabar, Bonny and Badagry, became the first modern "urban" centres to evolve. Initially, these locations were only stop-over venues for traders or slavers and their cargoes. However, this soon changed. After the slave trade, the towns became the bases for missionary and trading expeditions into the hinterland. The need for adequate housing and other social amenities for this group initiated the urban development of these areas. Until colonial rule was fully established, basic social infrastructure such as schools, minimal health facilities and rudimentary sanitation in these towns was exclusive to mission "compounds" and some large trading concerns which represented official foreign interests. Such infrastructure was initially totally financed by these private interests.

However, the coastal indigenous population, once converted to Christianity and sufficiently interested in education, was made to contribute to the funding and construction of schools and churches.⁽⁶⁾ With the demand generated for Western development, mainly through education, the growing indigenous elite in much of the south agitated for, and got, more schools. In Bonny, the local chiefs, with the help of the government consul, built a school for the local boys and petitioned that they be taught trading skills such as measuring palm oil.⁽⁷⁾ The resettlement of repatriated slaves in the 1860s from the Americas and Sierra Leone, (the Saros and Agudas) in Lagos and elsewhere in western Nigeria created a new and better educated group of Nigerians.

Their educational and economic advantage over the local "Lagosians" ensured they were better able to acquire wealth and power. Thus, this group successfully pressed for, and helped financially and otherwise in, the funding of the first secondary schools in Lagos well before the colonial government.⁽⁸⁾ In northern Nigeria, however, the traditional Islamic societal structures remained in place and there was only a limited establishment of Western-style infrastructure such as schools and hospitals. The reason for this was that Western development was seen as syn-

9. For the history of early Western education in northern Nigeria see Graham, S. (1966), *Government and Mission Education in Northern Nigeria*, Ibadan University Press, Nigeria.

onymous with Christianity, which most Muslims saw as a religious threat. Also, the colonial administration was willing to discourage such developments in deference to the Muslim rulers' wishes.⁽⁹⁾

With the amalgamation of northern and southern Nigeria in 1914, the colonial government became much stronger in structure. Thus, it was more able to provide some social infrastructure such as government schools, hospitals, and sanitation projects. Such infrastructure was mainly provided for the earlier existing towns and other newly-founded colonial "townships". Thus, the early infrastructure was mainly urban in location.

However, the existence of a sizeable number of missionary and community funded schools formed the most widespread form of infrastructure found throughout the south. These schools were essentially community built and funded with administration being provided by missionary bodies. Such schools received limited government assistance through "grants-in-aid". Mission hospitals followed along similar lines. Wholly privately run independent schools also existed at this time, such as the Boys High School (Ibadan) and Kalabari National College (Buguma); however, they were in the minority and generally lacked academic prestige and recognition.

The advent of colonial rule created an increasingly cash-based economy. The payment of levies, which had become law, and aspirations towards a Western education for one's child for example, required a source of income unlikely to be found through subsistence farming. Thus, only the few large-scale farmers growing the main cash crops, such as cocoa, oil palm and groundnuts (in the west, east and north, respectively) were able to gain a commercial income from their agricultural produce.

This helped instigate the migration of many Nigerians from villages in all regions, especially from the south, to cities throughout Nigeria, in order to find money-paying jobs and thus join the cash economy. This concentration of persons "abroad" or away from their hometowns resulted in the formation of local village development unions amongst many southern ethnic groups such as the Yorubas, Igbos and Efiks.⁽¹⁰⁾ As the name suggests, these unions had as their main objective the development of their local villages. Such development drives took on various forms, such as funding the education of poor, promising local children up to university level, school and hospital building, and water borehole projects.⁽¹¹⁾

The consolidation of colonial rule from the late 1920s until the 1950s produced regional government and forms of development. Although the country had been officially amalgamated in 1914, the northern, western and eastern regions had different laws and legislation. Thus, in education, the first unified education act was passed in 1948 but even after this, up until the 1970s, substantially different educational systems were adopted in the three regions. Social infrastructure development in other spheres also followed this pattern. The more urbanized areas in the southern region in general, such as Lagos, Enugu and Port Harcourt, were the most endowed with infrastructure such as schools and public utilities, whilst rural villages and vast areas

10. "Abroad" in the context of the community development association is taken to mean any location away from the village; Aba, a city 40 miles from Umuahia, and Chicago in the USA would both be considered locations "abroad".

11. See Isichei (1976) reference 5; also Ayandele, E. (1966), *The Missionary Impact on Modern Nigeria, 1842-1914, A Political and Social Analysis*, Ibadan University Press; and, more recently, see Igwe (1987) reference 6.

12. Gale, T.S. (1989), "Lagos: the history of British colonial neglect of traditional African cities" in *African Urban Studies*, No. 5, pages 11-24.

13. Meek, C.K. (1937), *Law and Authority in a Nigerian Tribe, A Study in Indirect Rule*, Humanities Press, USA, chapter ix, pages 197-200, devotes a chapter to the discussion of the phenomenon in an anthropological context. More recently, Igwe, S.O. (1988), "Community financing of schools in eastern Nigeria" in M. Barry and K. Lillis (editors), *Community Financing of Education; Issues and Policy Implications for Developing Countries*, Pergamon Press, pages 106-107 discusses age grade contributions to education finance in general and in his hometown, Irem, in eastern Nigeria.

of the north were less fortunate. In the towns, municipal councils were created to oversee the adherence of the urban population to government by-laws governing, for instance, health, sanitation and public nuisance. Thus, to some extent, official areas of the designated "townships" were fairly well provided and cared for. It is instructive to note, however, that most of this infrastructure in cities such as Lagos was heavily taxed, unevenly distributed, and only provided in non-European areas after consistent petitioning by the local elites.⁽¹²⁾

Rural villages in the south were thus the main beneficiaries of the town based development unions which contributed to school construction, water projects and other schemes. In south-eastern Nigeria, these development unions often developed from the traditional "age grade" systems. Age grades are associations made informally amongst groups of usually male village *indigenes* in their late teens. They tend to socialize together, and have village responsibilities to perform as a group. For example, a youth age grade might be responsible for clearing the area around the local market, and an older age grade might be charged with ensuring discipline is kept in traditional court gatherings.⁽¹³⁾ The subsequently formed community development unions sometimes incorporate the age grade associations amongst their members abroad but also have more comprehensive village development related agenda such as infrastructure building projects.

In the north, however, there was a less active community development drive due to the more prevalent conservative or traditional cultural outlook of the region. Thus, infrastructure in northern cities was generally poorly distributed outside of the residential areas for strangers (the *Sabon Garis* for non-locals - mainly southerners) and Europeans (the European Quarters). Northern villages were the most poorly provided for, as few community development unions for northern villages were instituted.

Nationalist agitation for independence from colonial rule, which culminated in the Richards constitution in 1948 instituting regional self-rule and ended with the granting of Nigerian independence in 1960, further "regionalized" development. This further widened the gap between the north and south of the country, as regional spending was determined by regional policies which were ultimately more conservative in the north in comparison to the more populist policies of the rival eastern and western regions. Thus, in the western and eastern regions, free primary education policies were initiated which involved substantial spending on the construction of more schools whilst in the North emphasis was placed on adult literacy which involved less expenditure due to its lower infrastructure requirements and coverage.

At Nigeria's independence in 1960 there was little change in such policies as the country remained regionally governed, although the cost of infrastructure to the regional governments soon made its provision more dependent on local community initiatives than had been the case previously with community built schools, and water boreholes in the eastern region. Also,

14. See Igwe (1988) reference 13; also Eze A. (1983), *Economics of Education - the Nigerian Experience*, New Africa Press, Nigeria and interview with the secretary of the Old Umuahia Development Union, Mr M. Omereonye on 11th March, 1993.

15. A cash grant was given to householders who modernized their flush toilets. Information on this area was given through interviews and documents consulted at the ministries of health and education and also at the World Bank, Nigeria Mission.

the new Nigerian elite in towns moved into the old European areas and newly designated upper-income areas of town, and also to the university campuses. This group was, therefore, also able to ensure they had adequate infrastructure.

In 1966, after a military coup d'état, the country became a 12-state federation with regional government being decentralized to the states, and with strong central government in overall authority. This was also the prelude to the Nigerian civil war. The ensuing chaos further intensified rural development, in south-eastern Nigeria particularly. Indigenous Igbos, Efiks, Ibibios and other groups fled the urban areas where they had been living and working, out of south-eastern Nigeria. They returned to their local communities within the "Biafran" enclave which became the battleground for the war. The aftermath of the 30-month war saw the destruction of most of the region. Although the military government gave some help in the reconstruction effort, most reconstruction was done by community self-help projects.⁽¹⁴⁾ The funding of such self-help work inevitably came from the local communities themselves and also from richer *indigenes* who, at the end of the war sought, or returned to, paid employment abroad.

With increased revenues derived from the oil boom, which began immediately after the civil war, through the 1970s up until the early 1980s, there was a boost in government investment in social infrastructure. In health facilities, investment was mainly concentrated in towns where hospitals and teaching hospitals were built. The development emphasis was heavily in favour of centralized medicine and the need for large specialist medical buildings, as opposed to primary or basic health care facilities such as immunization clinics. Water projects were also initiated with large bank loans and assistance from organizations such as the World Bank and the UNDP. These projects mainly concentrated on upgrading inadequate town waterworks and providing limited numbers of boreholes in some rural areas. Also, up until the 1970s, urban waste disposal largely depended on the bucket latrine system for human waste, and private arrangements for other domestic refuse.

The bucket system was abolished by decree in 1977, and government incentives were given to homeowners to install septic tanks and flush toilets.⁽¹⁵⁾ Also, many urban areas, through the public health authorities, set up organized waste collection services.

In education, the government "take-over" of most primary and secondary schools (1974-76) and the initiation of the Universal Free Primary Education system (UPE) in 1976 resulted in considerable provision of new infrastructure. UPE classrooms were government constructed for the near 100 per cent increase in the primary school population brought about by the policy, and many government secondary schools were hastily built to accommodate subsequent increases in secondary school enrolment. In housing and amenities, this period saw state government attempts being made at providing shelter for the masses. This was as a corollary to the "shelter for all" by the year 2000 declaration made at the 1976 Habitat conference.

16. Figures obtained from Olayiwola J. and L. Oluwoye (1990), "Evaluation of (the) Nigerian housing in the light of the housing problems", in Onajide M.O., B.O. Adedeji and A.M. Awotokun (editors), *Revitalising the Urban and Rural Centres of Nigeria*, Obafemi Awolowo University Press, Ife Nigeria, pages 174-180; Okoye, T.O. (1990), "Historical development of Nigerian housing policies with special reference to housing the urban poor", in Philip Amis and Peter Lloyd (editors), *Housing Africa's Urban Poor*, International African Seminars, Manchester University Press, pages 73-85; and Awotona, A. (1987), "Housing policy in Nigeria - government policies for housing Nigeria's urban poor and the working class", *Habitat International*, Vol. 11, No. 2, pages 89-103; also Awotona, A. (1990), "Nigerian government participation in housing: 1970-1980", *Habitat International*, Vol. 14, No. 1, pages 17-40.

17. See Marris, P. (1966), *Family and Social Change in an African City - A Study of Rehousing in Lagos*, Routledge and Kegan Paul, London for a research account on the social effects of the relocation.

18. An exception to this would be "Festac" town Lagos, which had its own centralized power and sewage system. It was, however, dependent on the Lagos waterworks for water. The power system worked well until there was lack of spare parts for maintenance. Since then, the estate experiences the normal Lagos power cuts and the water situation remains poor.

Nigerian housing policy was initiated in the First National Development Plan (1962-68) in which the government centred its attention on a housing development scheme for Lagos in which 24,000 housing units were to be built. In the Second National Development Plan (1970-74), the federal government disbursed funding to the states to enable them to finance local housing programmes. The Third National Development Plan (1975-80) aimed to provide a total of 203,000 housing units nationwide, whilst the fourth plan (1980-86) hoped to build 44,000 dwelling units annually. In practice, all plans for which there are data show that the government has been unable to deliver the housing units proposed. The first plan resulted in only 1.06 per cent of the housing units being built, the second in less than half the funding proposed being spent and the figure being even lower amongst the states. Less than a fifth of the planned housing units were built in the third plan, the last for which figures are available. From the foregoing, it is likely that the fourth and subsequent development plans have been equally unable to meet their projected targets.⁽¹⁶⁾

The dwelling units that did get built were planned as housing estates, mainly as suburbs of capital cities. The first government built and serviced post-independence housing estate for Nigerians was "Surulere" on the Lagos mainland, initiated by the Lagos state government as a means of providing replacement accommodation for Lagosians who were being moved from designated "slum areas" in central Lagos which were to be "re-developed" during the urban renewal programme in the early 1960s.⁽¹⁷⁾ Generally, the housing estates were fully or partially built and had government provided services and infrastructure. However, such utilities often proved inadequate as they had been planned with little regard to the existing town's usually poorly functioning central utility network.⁽¹⁸⁾

The federal and state government housing estates were not built as public housing to be rented out. The units were to be owned by the person who received them who then purchased them, either directly or with mortgages guaranteed by their employers (invariably the state or federal government). In later housing estates, site and service or core building schemes were also initiated, with World Bank loans to state governments, with a view to further attracting the low-income earners.

The two main factors that have worked against all mass housing projects in Nigeria have been their prohibitive cost for the income groups for which they were intended and also their limited quantity in terms of units built. Mortgages in Nigeria are only available to those who can produce evidence of considerable collateral and guaranteed job security, which very few of the lower-income groups can provide. Furthermore, the prohibitive repayment costs mean that few apart from the rich can afford this. The scarcity of these houses, as shown by the failure of all housing policies to meet their set targets, has ensured that market forces have further inflated house prices. Thus, even if a mortgage were arranged at its cost to the government, the inflated costs mean these houses remain out of reach of the poor.

19. For example, Agbara estate, founded in the 1970s by Chief A. Lawson, and the various "new layouts" in towns such as Enugu (independence layout) and Kano (Bompai layout).

20. Even these were not provided in all communities. Bray, M. (1981), *Universal Primary Education in Nigeria - A Study of Kano State*, Routledge Kegan Paul, London evaluates the Universal Primary Education scheme in Kano State, northern Nigeria and also gives an objective overview of its success in Nigeria.

It must be noted, however, that, even with the improved conditions brought about by the substantial government investment in social projects at the time, a number of the "well-to-do" elements of the urban population went on to found autonomous income stratified housing estates.⁽¹⁹⁾ These high-income estates had organized associations which, through member contributions, ensured that most of the required public utilities in the estates, such as electricity and pipe-borne water had priority supply from the central utility companies. Many also had electricity generation plants and privately commissioned water boreholes, which worked as a back-up service for the unreliable public infrastructure or independently in areas where such services did not exist.

The relative wealth of the country ensured the growth of industries, companies and a large civil service in the towns. This translated into jobs with high incomes for workers and fuelled the intensified rural urban drift for employment. On purely economic grounds the government's emphasis on urban infrastructure was logically founded. The cash economy in the cities required a healthy workforce in order to be most productive, so emphasis was placed on adequate social infrastructure to improve urban living standards and the urban economy took precedence over the rural economy. Also, since 1976 the number of Nigerian states has increased from 12 to 31 which has meant the creation of new "state capitals" or administrative headquarters. This has been viewed as a political move to ensure development reached the "grassroots". The urban implications were that more small-scale towns with political importance were provided with some government infrastructure, which often proved inadequate as the central government's revenues shrunk and regional politics over revenue allocation continued.

In rural areas the only infrastructure provided in many communities were the Universal Primary Education classrooms.⁽²⁰⁾ Thus, the self-help community groups funded by their town based development associations remained the main providers of rural infrastructure in southern Nigeria. In northern Nigeria the situation was different, with little development in the region. This was due, probably, to the different ethos of community in the north, which remained highly traditional, believed in hierarchic authority and was slow in accommodating change. Thus Northern communities were possibly less interested in the introduction of self-help schemes to acquire the benefits of perceived "Western" forms of development in areas such as (secular as opposed to Koranic) education. Also, for public utilities provision, they were willing to wait for government sponsored initiatives, a precedent set by the Northern colonial system.

From the mid-1980s, with the decline of the Nigerian economy, until the present day, the provision of social infrastructure has undergone further transformation in both rural and urban areas. Declining government finances and the subsequent introduction of economic structural adjustment, as prescribed by the International Monetary Fund to help "cure" the Nigerian economy, has drastically reduced government spending on social infrastructure. Also, the ethos of the structural adjustment

programme, as adopted by the Nigerian government, favours the "self-help" ethic. Essentially, it encourages rural and urban community development associations, with minimal government assistance, to invest money, time and labour into all aspects of development, including social infrastructure provision, in order to bring about "grassroots" development locally and reduce the burden on the government.

The gradual shift towards the privatization of the former large national parastatals such as the National Electric Power Authority (NEPA) and the State Water Boards has already begun. Implicitly, with World Bank support, the government is divesting itself of responsibility for these public utilities. Previously, in towns all public utilities were exclusively run by government owned companies called parastatals. However, with the move towards privatization, private companies in urban areas are becoming further involved with the provision of private services. Currently, such incursions remain in the high technology sphere of telecommunications but the trend is set to continue. Although access to land in Nigeria remains a major constraint for all, there are already a number of exclusive housing estates, (for the rich and for corporate personnel) which are being built, often with autonomously provided social services and utilities such as local power, sanitation, and health care facilities. Advertisements for similar speculative housing projects mainly in Lagos and Port Harcourt also abound.⁽²¹⁾

In education, the lifting of the government ban on independent schools has further fuelled both community and private participation in school provision. In rural areas, the original joint community and religious funded schools, as with religious owned schools in urban areas, are likely to revert to their former owners.⁽²²⁾ Development unions in south-eastern Nigeria, however, had been involved in school building for many years, well before current government policy and, as such, the initiative was not new.⁽²³⁾ In urban areas, neighbourhoods of similar income or ethnic origin now often contribute towards local primary education facilities either by helping in classroom construction or with funding staff. However, the most common addition to urban infrastructure development is the rapid establishment of private schools, particularly pre-primary and primary institutions.⁽²⁴⁾ These are privately run but are given considerable funding from the elite communities (through trusts, PTAs, and alumni associations) whose children are the main beneficiaries.

Health infrastructure has also become much more private sector dominated, especially in the urban areas. The inability of the government to sustain the facilities in the large hospitals of the 1970s, and the obvious commercial gains to be made from private practice, means that in many urban areas, especially in the south, the community is served by an abundance of private medical facilities.

The official World Health Organization and UNICEF supported policies on primary health care involving specifically maternal and child health care and mass immunization are also being adopted. In an ideal situation such activities would be set up and run by local community social and health workers. In real-

21. The (Nigerian) Guardian newspaper's Thursday edition has a property section which regularly displays such advertisements.

22. This is still being negotiated by the religious leaders. It had earlier seemed likely the civilian government, which was to have been installed in 1993, would accede to popular demand; this has not yet happened.

23. See Isichei (1976) reference 5; also Igwe (1988) reference 13 and author's interview (reference 14).

24. Various articles are written in the Nigerian press on this phenomenon, for example the Nigerian Economist leader story "Nigeria's Special Schools..." *Nigerian Economist*, Vol.3, No.22, August 6th, 1990.

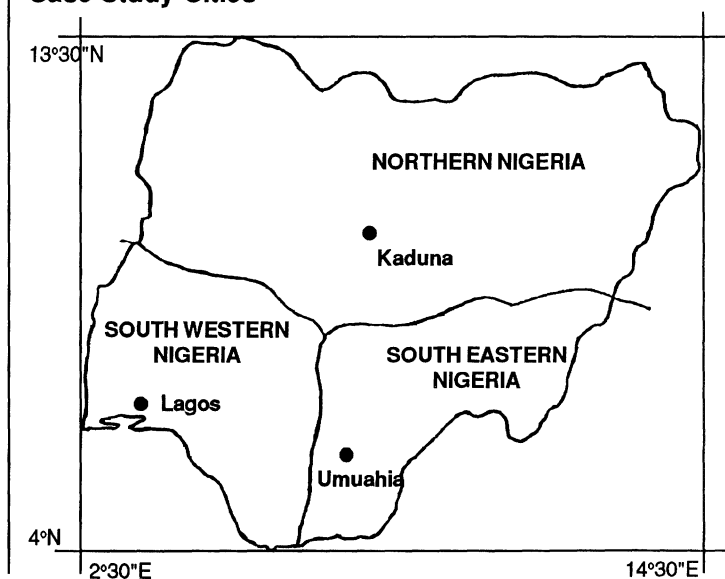
25. In Old Umuahia, a village three miles from the town of Umuahia, the only permanent health care facilities available were two private maternity homes and one private clinic. The nearest government hospital was in Umuahia. Villagers, however, said that in an emergency they would go to a private hospital in town.

ity, health workers are often drafted in for immunization campaigns in temporary mobile units. The effectiveness of such strategies in the long term is, therefore, likely to be limited if immunization levels are to be sustained with external campaigns (which are vulnerable to central politics and finance) and, at best, only apathetic local support.

Similarly, there is low community participation in the actual construction or running of more permanent facilities in all areas of Nigeria, due in part to deliberate official policies. Even in the more community focused south-eastern rural communities, interest in the provision of new primary health care facilities is low in comparison to earlier times, when both community and joint (mission and community) hospitals were built.⁽²⁵⁾ Thus, the privately funded, urban based hospital has gained pre-eminence in most aspects of health provision today.

This is especially true in the south. In the north the case is somewhat different. Here, there is an inadequate number of medical facilities throughout the region. Government facilities are few in comparison to the estimated population (current census figures put the population in the North at approximately 40 million) and the size of the region (see Figure 1). Private and missionary owned facilities are even fewer. Like education, missionary hospitals were difficult to establish in most of the north on religious and cultural grounds, although their obvious health benefits to the community made them more welcome. The few private hospitals tend to be concentrated in urban areas for economic and logistic reasons. The cosmopolitan urban population understands the significance of health care, and is thus more willing to pay for medical services. Furthermore, from a practical viewpoint, the non-existent or poor level of public utilities in rural areas make private medical facilities impossible or substantially more expensive to run at a profit.

Figure 1: The Three Regions in Nigeria and the Three Case Study Cities



Thus, in summing up the historical facts, in pre-colonial times, the community help ethic existed in some form in all Nigerian societies; its use ensured that all societies had adequate social infrastructure. Western involvement in urban society through missionary and trade activities transformed the type of social infrastructure demanded; from traditional initiation houses and medicine shrines to schools and hospitals. Also, with the changed societal structures, urban areas became locations of change whilst rural locations stagnated. Social infrastructure was concentrated in towns at the expense of development in the rural areas. Furthermore, major regional differences became clear in infrastructure provision.

The form of infrastructure provision also changed: from historical community self-help efforts to foreign missionary or company efforts, with the later contributions of the local elites. With colonization, social infrastructure provision came further under government control. The spread of the urban cash economy heightened the demand for infrastructure in urban areas which consequently received more government attention. In contrast, there was little productive industry in rural areas. They received little government attention and thus generally achieved minimal infrastructure development. However, development minded communities in south-eastern Nigeria and elsewhere used self-help efforts and the contributions of community development unions abroad to provide infrastructure in rural villages.

At independence, the bitter ethnic politics and the ensuing civil war meant that in communities in the south-eastern region there was a further heightened sense of ethnicity and identity. This reinforced the local self-help ethos and the role of the "age-grades" and community development unions which remain the main providers of such infrastructure in the region. Elsewhere, the oil boom ensured further government investment in infrastructure provision. This was concentrated in urban areas specifically, for political and economic reasons.

The country's current economic crisis forced a change in government policy on infrastructure provision. The cash-strapped military government, in acquiescence to World Bank recommendations, is divesting itself of real responsibility in many areas of infrastructure provision. Thus in south-eastern Nigeria, where self-help has been well established, such infrastructure provision is continuing with the blessing of the state. Also, the urban "well-to-dos" have created their own communities and pooled collective resources to provide private social infrastructure for their constituents. Elsewhere there is a distinct lack of development. The government's official efforts to redress the problems of these poorer urban and rural communities, who are less organized than those discussed, through well publicized self-help programmes such as "Better Life for Rural Women", the "Directorate of Food Roads and Rural Infrastructure, and Movement for the Mass Mobilization of Social and Economic Resources have all met with limited success in real terms, as the next section highlights in its case studies.

III. THE CASES TO CONSIDER

THE REGIONAL AND cultural diversity of Nigeria ensures that generalizations in local research findings are difficult to make. However, with reference to previous research undertaken on education in Nigeria, a cross-regional analysis was considered appropriate to further consider the problem.⁽²⁶⁾ A brief discussion of infrastructure provision in three regional locations of varying urban concentration is given. Lagos in the south-west, Kaduna in the north and Umuahia in the south-east are the towns considered (see Figure 1).

a. Lagos

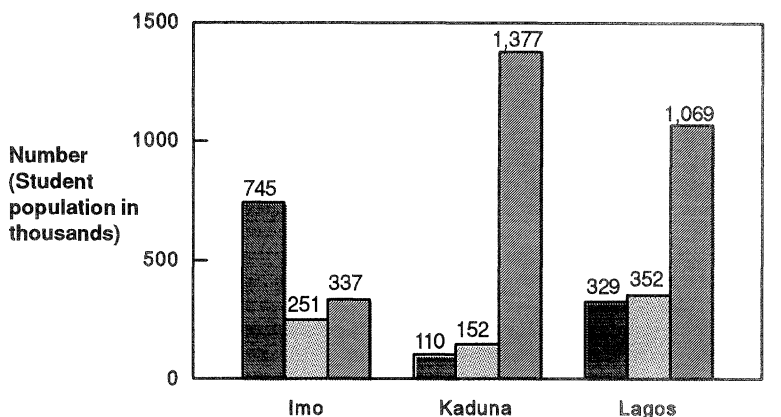
Lagos is amongst the oldest colonial urban areas in Nigeria. However, Badagry, now a small town approximately 40 miles from Lagos at the perimeter of the metropolis had, until the nineteenth century, pre-eminence over Lagos in the coastal region, in both its slave market and as the initial base for both the Methodist and CMS (Anglican) missions in their "evangelization" mission into south-western Nigeria. Lagos then existed as "Eko", a small coastal fishing village discovered by the Portuguese in the fifteenth century. It achieved its strategic status when the administrative power of the church and the local chieftaincy moved from Badagry to Lagos and the colonial administration decreed it the administrative capital of the first British protectorate in Nigeria, in 1861. Later, it became the capital city of the Protectorate of Western Nigeria, and then the capital of the United Protectorates of Northern and Southern Nigeria, in 1914. Its status as capital city continued until 1977 when the then military government decreed that a new federal capital city was to be built at Abuja in central Nigeria. The seat of government eventually moved to Abuja in 1991 but Lagos (now only a state capital) remains the most developed urban metropolis and the commercial nerve centre of Nigeria.

The population of Lagos (5.7 million according to the 1992 census) highlights the city's metropolitan status. In terms of social infrastructure, being the foremost city, Lagos is relatively well provided for through mainly government investment. In reality, however, its urban government schools are overcrowded and a large number of private fee-paying schools have sprung up in the metropolis (see Figure 2 that contrasts education indicators for the states in which the three case study cities are located). In the area of water and sanitation, the city has the most extensive water works and sewage network in Nigeria. However, 53 per cent of the population has no access to pipe-borne water.⁽²⁷⁾

Recent World Bank funded water and sanitation projects, if not superseded by population growth, aim by 1995 to have provided water and sanitation services to only limited areas of high population density which are currently without facilities. Government efforts at providing organized sanitation through waste disposal and sewage have been considerable. However, they remain inadequate in many areas due mainly to government bu-

26. Uduku, N.O. (1992), "Factors affecting school design in Nigeria", University of Cambridge unpublished PhD thesis.

27. Access to pipe-borne water implies the presence of pipe-borne water in any form, i.e. private taps in the household or public taps in yards or public places. World Bank (1988), *Staff Appraisal Report; Nigeria - Lagos Water Supply Project*, April.

Figure 2: Education Indicators in Lagos, Kaduna and Imo State

Note that these statistics are for the state level with Lagos city being in Lagos State and Kaduna city being in Kaduna State. Umuahia was formerly part of Imo State.

State

- Number of schools
- Student population
- ▒ Average ratio students/school

Source: Federal Ministry of Education, Lagos, 1990.

28. For example Elf (Oil) staff quarters Lekki Peninsula Victoria Island or the Central Bank staff housing estates throughout Lagos.

29. This is more true of industries as Lee's study highlights; see Lee, K. (1988), *Infrastructure Investment and Productivity: A Framework for Policy Study*, discussion paper, Water Supply and Urban Development Division, World Bank, Washington DC.

30. Water is often bought from vendors at a price or fetched from areas at great distance.

31. Aina, T. (1989), "Many routes enter the market place: housing sub-markets for the urban poor in metropolitan Lagos", *Environment and Urbanization*, Vol. 1, No. 2, October 1989, pages 38-49 describes conditions in Iponri, a deprived informal settlement area in Lagos, in great detail.

reaucracy and inefficiencies. Local politics also play a significant part in the issue. Company and privately owned housing estates in exclusive areas of the city are self-reliant for sanitation, water, electricity and, often, primary education.⁽²⁸⁾ Often such enclaves pay token fees to the utility boards but rely heavily on the autonomous provision of these facilities.⁽²⁹⁾

The most socially deprived urban areas which often lack, or have grossly insufficient, social infrastructure also exist in the metropolis. Such areas, which are often officially classified as "illegal" settlements with no legitimate authority are, on these grounds, denied provision of public utilities or facilities such as schools. In such areas as, for example, the now demolished "Maroko" informal housing area in Victoria Island, "legitimate" spokespeople for the community did exist but they were unable to mobilize their "electorate" to successfully lobby against the destruction of their homes or for their relocation elsewhere.

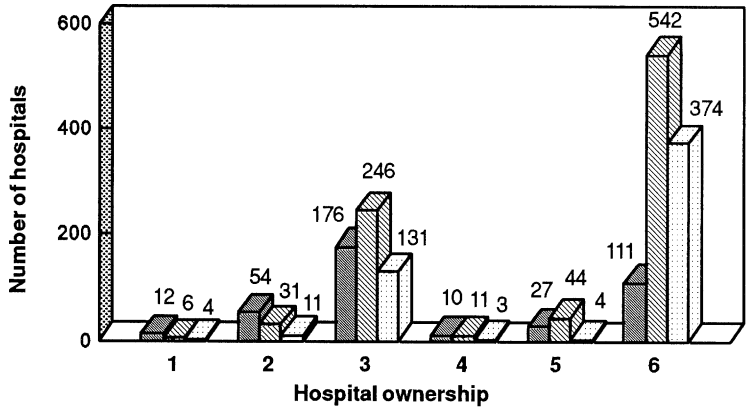
This is perhaps not surprising when they could not organize self-help groups to help petition for the government provision of much needed social infrastructure prior to their eviction, which would have given weight to their settlement claims. Even within these areas of informal housing, dwellers who are rich enough buy individual electricity generators and water tanks to store purchased water, whilst others risk death to illegally "tap" electricity and water from distribution outlets. The majority however survive with "bush" (kerosene) lanterns, fetched pails of water, and no sanitation facilities.⁽³⁰⁾ Communal poverty does not necessarily foster unity.⁽³¹⁾

Infrastructure for health care possibly remains the most elusive even in this highly urbanized city state. The state has the largest number of private clinics, hospitals and dispensaries in Nigeria (527 in total). As Figure 3 shows, the figure given is for "private" as distinct from community or mission owned facili-

32. Figures 4 and 5 give data for the state or administrative region of the town as more detailed data could not be found.

ties. Although Lagos also has the largest number of medical facilities, its large population means that these facilities remain inadequate.⁽³²⁾ Although better than in many rural areas, house indicators such as availability of pipe-borne water, flush toilets, and electricity are poor.

Figure 3: Hospital Ownership in Lagos, Kaduna and Imo States



Key for hospital ownership

- 1. Federal government
- 2. State government
- 3. Local government
- 4. Community/NGO
- 5. Mission owned
- 6. Privately owned

- Kaduna
- Imo
- Lagos

Current data on hospital ownership was not available for the case study cities. Thus, these statistics are for the state level with Lagos city being in Lagos State and Kaduna city being in Kaduna State. Umuahia was formerly part of Imo State.

SOURCE: Federal Office of Statistics, Lagos, 1991.

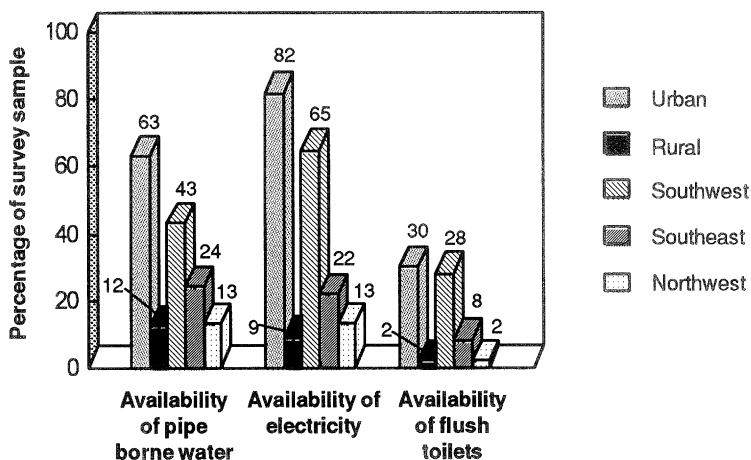
b. Kaduna

Kaduna is a relatively new city in comparison to Lagos. Situated in northern Nigeria in Kaduna state, this city was founded in around 1917 by Lord Lugard, the first governor of the amalgamated Nigeria. In typical northern Nigeria city fashion, however, it is zoned into ethnic residential areas and also, in deference to colonial planning, neighbourhoods are class stratified. Its population (estimated at 0.4 million in the 1992 census) is cosmopolitan. Being a relatively new city, and due to the historical opposition to Western (Christian) education by the local indigenes, educational facilities in general are poor in comparison to Lagos (see Figure 2). As is usual though, the local elites have a few fee-paying schools for their offspring.

Water supply in Kaduna should not be problematic as its site was chosen due to its proximity to the river Kaduna. However, the city encounters serious water and sanitation problems. Only the higher class residential areas and some older local neighbourhoods have pipe-borne water, other areas rely on wells.

Also, sanitation is poor. Many lower-class neighbourhoods do not have proper waste disposal facilities. Human waste and domestic refuse are seen frequently at indiscriminate waste tips and in public places such as footpaths along railway lines. Health facilities are also poor in comparison to Lagos (see Figure 3). Besides the inadequate number of government health-care facilities, there are relatively few private or missionary founded hospitals in existence to help alleviate the shortage. Community or joint hospitals are also not recorded. The poor performance in the provision of social infrastructure in the wider region within which Kaduna is located (Figure 4) would suggest the generally low availability of social infrastructure has some connection with this.

Figure 4: Provision of Household Social Infrastructure by Region and by Rural and Urban Areas



c. Umuahia

Umuahia is a new state capital in south-eastern Nigeria. It did however exist as a colonial administrative centre in the years preceding Nigeria's independence. Its urban core, therefore, has a smaller area than either of the previous case study cities. Educational facilities in Umuahia, for its population of 0.2 million, are relatively numerous. All schools in the old urban area are state (government) owned, having been taken over from their missionary founders in the 1970s. Also, community built schools are government owned. In the greater metropolis, the same is true except for a private, Anglican run, girls' seminary school.⁽³³⁾ This is likely to change, however, with the return of many schools to their previous owners, a scheme which is expected to be given government approval in the near future.

Pipe-borne water and sanitation are limited. Water supply in the town is generally erratic because the local water treatment

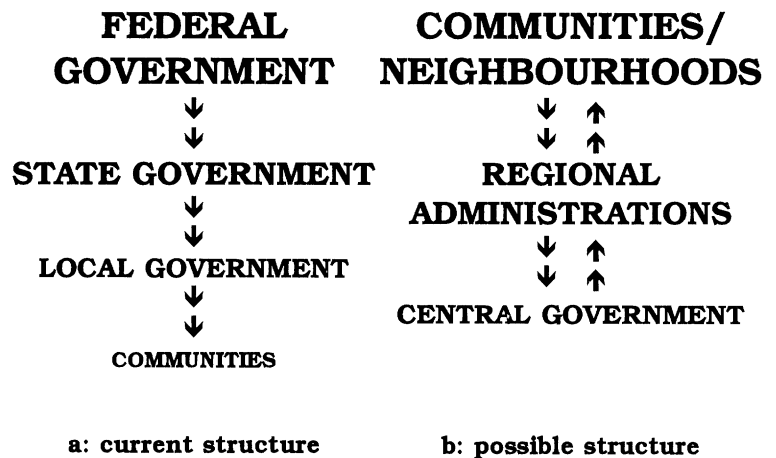
33. Since the town achieved capital status, an enlarged master plan of Umuahia has been charted which increases the current town size and incorporates surrounding villages.

34. A World Bank assisted water project started in the early 1980s was finally completed in 1990 but was unable to make much difference to the poor water supply in the town.

works is unable to supply the amount required for the growing population.⁽³⁴⁾ Sanitation services, such as regular refuse collection, drainage channels, and the availability of proper human faeces disposal facilities (generally flush toilets with septic tanks) are adequate for the current population. This means that the organized regulation of waste disposal and sewage has remained efficient for the present although, with the town's new administrative importance, an increased population might test the adequacy of these facilities further.

Health facilities in Umuahia are also well provided for. Both public and private (including community and mission built) hospitals are well represented, although the missionary funded hospitals are the oldest in existence. Recently, however, private health facilities predominate (see Figure 4). Regional statistics show the area performs well in comparison to northern Nigeria, although the south-western region is much stronger in overall development standards (see Figure 5).

Figure 5: The Current and a Possible Organization of Social Infrastructure Provision in Nigeria



In the villages surrounding Umuahia, however, great development efforts have been made in the provision of rural infrastructure. Community provided boreholes, water pipelines, schools and electricity supplies, can all be found in most villages. These developments have been made possible largely through the efforts of the village "development unions". Old Umuahia and Ubakala development unions jointly part contributed to the costs of a borehole provided with limited (then east-central) state assistance. They then fully funded the costs of piping the borehole water to their respective village communities in 1976.

Olokoro and Old Umuahia development unions, in the aftermath of the civil war, had to reconstruct school buildings bombed during the unrest and continue to contribute to the upgrading of the facilities, the most recent contribution being the construction of workshop blocks in respective high schools. The Old

35. Further to the north of Umuahia, however, in Abiriba, age grades are known to take on development projects. Thus age group A might decide to build a town hall, whilst age group B might decide to provide a library.

Umuahia development union has also contributed to the cost of running telephone cables from the town to the village.

The various development unions of the villages around Umuahia are based abroad. "Abroad" meaning elsewhere in Nigeria, in the USA and the United Kingdom mainly. The financial support and backing given by the international development unions can be considerable, given the economic strength of "hard currency" against Nigeria's devalued currency unit, the Naira. Thus, most of the development projects cited were initiated and funded by these unions, generally through consultation with local elders at annual Christmas meetings held in village halls. Age grades in these villages contribute less to development activities as they are more involved in ceremonial tasks at official gatherings.⁽³⁵⁾

This "development" situation is significant because, in the greater Umuahia city "master plan", many of these villages are within the "Umuahia metropolis". Effectively then, the development of such areas has already been achieved through organized community development efforts prior to either government or foreign assisted intervention. This represents a somewhat novel style in urban infrastructure provision.

The three towns discussed show the varying levels of infrastructure provision in Nigerian urban areas. The wide diversity, as confirmed with the national household survey figures presented, shows the strong regional variation in development. Generally, urban areas in Nigeria are poorly served with infrastructure, although rural infrastructure provision is much worse. The problem of how to alleviate the situation seems elusive. However, in some towns, predominantly in the south-east (e.g. Umuahia), the situation is different. Due largely to the self-help efforts of local village development associations, substantial infrastructure has been provided with minimal or no external help. The reasons for the mostly negative state of urban infrastructure development are discussed in the final section of this paper and the possible future of urban infrastructure development is considered.

IV. DEDUCTIONS, FORECASTS AND CONCLUSION

"...The issue is certainly about making the supplies of services more responsive to consumer demands. It is about (local) government giving the private sector a greater role in both decision-making and in service provision and increasing their influence in determining priorities ... But *this* private sector is made up of low-income citizens and their community organizations - and the non-profit professional groups who pioneer new ways of working with them."⁽³⁶⁾

THIS PAPER HAS tried to present a broad perspective of social infrastructure provision in Nigeria. The Nigerian city, as elsewhere in sub-Saharan Africa, is in a state of continuous transition between its essentially indigenous origins and the modern-

36. Hardoy, J., D. Mitlin and D. Satterthwaite (1992), *Environmental Problems in Third World Cities*, Earthscan Publications, London.

ized Western cities to which it aspires. Much emphasis has been placed on the community "self-help" structures which did, and still do, exist in many rural or non-urbanized areas of the country. From the analysis undertaken and the cases presented, this approach seems appropriate.

a. Deductions

The typical Nigerian city dwellers are concerned with the quality of urban social infrastructure provision but distance themselves from any involvement with ensuring the improvement of its provision. Ethnic or indigenous village social infrastructure development, and not urban development of city social infrastructure, is of greater importance. The town, for most, remains an anonymous habitat that cannot be identified with in the same way as can an indigenous village.⁽³⁷⁾ Only amongst the richer sections of the population does the collective spirit produce substantial local infrastructure development. In other sections, where paradoxically much more could possibly be gained by such community action, there is a reluctance to do so.

The failure of many government initiated programmes to foster such activities would suggest that it is difficult to mobilize individuals to become self-motivated enough to participate in urban development programmes. Without any uniting ethos, ethnic, ideological, religious or other, such interventions seem destined for failure in today's climate. This has to do with the lack of accountability and authority many such government projects portray to the city dweller. Thus, there is a national decree declaring the first Saturday of each month a "sanitation" day. Even with this decree, in many urban areas this law is openly flouted. In contrast, in many southern villages the "age grades" who were traditionally delegated to ensure the cleaning of the village footpaths and market places still perform this task. The same is true of religious organizations and their approach to the cleaning of their premises.

The government's publicly acknowledged role as main provider of urban infrastructure therefore remains unlikely to change in the current climate. Despite the bureaucracy, politics and disorganization found in most government owned utility companies, urban dwellers in general expect to have government provided (and subsidized) social infrastructure. Thus, the current moves towards the privatization and, in some cases, the deregulation of these services might not solve the deeper rooted problems of social infrastructure provision. There is a need to understand what factors influence and determine local society's perception of, recognition of, and interest in, social infrastructure provision. The autonomous (or possibly anarchic) development of social infrastructure in the surrounding villages in the Umuahia case, however, shows what can be produced by the positive effects of community self-help in extremis.

Where there is poor and ineffective government, development minded communities will carry on with development. Also, amongst the upper classes and the rich, self-interest ensures self-preservation in all situations. The latter group, being a (privi-

37. Gugler, J. (1991), "Life in a dual system revisited: rural ties in Enugu", *World Development*, Vol.19, No.5, May, pages 399-410, in his return survey of Enugu shows this phenomenon prevails in south-eastern Nigeria.

leged) minority, is of little concern to this discourse. The morality of social class based or élitist enclaves is not a question for this discussion. The development minded community within the urban context is, however, a possibility worthy of note.

b. Forecasts

From the study undertaken and the findings presented, there seemed to be little real change in infrastructure provision in towns. The commercialization drive and possible deregulation (deregulation in this context refers to the divestment of government control over the quality and type of social infrastructure provision) that is currently being pursued is unlikely to benefit the average city dweller. It might also cut off such state subsidized services to the poor. Without seeking to be too categorical, there would seem to be three possible "futures" for social infrastructure.

The first "future", and the most likely, would be the no-change "business as usual" scenario. The haphazard provision of social infrastructure in cities would remain the *status quo* and, being the form most people know, would be unlikely to cause immediate problems. However, in the long term this could lead to the total breakdown of public infrastructure as has been seen elsewhere in the continent, such as in Sierra Leone, Zaire and Mozambique. Within reason, due to the government's ineptitude and administrative inefficiencies, in the current arrangement the poor pay less than they would in an efficient profit motivated commercial environment. Also with no organized controls, the average and better placed in society are assured of fairly cheap, albeit unreliable, social infrastructure such as pipe-borne water which they may choose to use or to reject in favour of more expensive private arrangements.

The second "future" would be the implementation of true full-scale nationalization, with total and effective central government control and subsidization of all infrastructure provision. In its current economic predicament this is a solution that the Nigerian government cannot afford to pursue. Also, with the global unpopularity of socialism, highlighted by its collapse in Eastern Europe, this is the most unlikely and unworkable scenario. Such a strategy, if it were economically possible and applied faithfully, would ensure equity but in a highly stratified country such as Nigeria it would prove difficult to implement for administrative, social and political reasons.

The total deregulation and privatization of social infrastructure would be the third, similarly unrealistic, scenario. Such an approach implies that there would be no government form of control of infrastructure provision, and private companies would supply such infrastructure on a commercial basis to urban and rural dwellers alike. In no country in the world has this been fully adopted. Given the high level of poverty in Nigerian cities this would be impossible to implement at a profit. The rich, the only section of the population who could afford this alternative, in any case are already, to a large extent, independently served with private infrastructure.

A more workable third scenario, involving the localization of social infrastructure provision, would be the ideal and therefore an equally unlikely scenario. This would entail the creation of regional government bodies to provide public utilities and regulate social infrastructure provision. Such bodies would work to ensure that a regulated environment existed for the organized and equitable provision of such infrastructure on a regional basis (akin possibly to the three old regional divisions, north, east and west). They would also guarantee that the credit facilities and subsidies some operations might need could be provided.

Democratically elected community associations in rural areas and municipal councils in urban areas would, in this case, become responsible for the organization and provision of their local social infrastructure. These municipal councils in urban areas are not new: Lagos state municipal council was created in 1919 and similar councils were created in the "second-class" townships of Calabar and Kano.⁽³⁸⁾ These municipal councils would liaise with local neighbourhood associations to ensure the organized provision and running of community infrastructure such as schools and medical centres. Finally, as representatives for poor communities, they would present cases for government subsidies or assistance to the regional authorities. The authorities in turn would be able to fund these by cross-subsidizing utility costs amongst richer communities or other revenue-generating strategies (see Figure 5).

Although this alternative is considered unlikely, the autonomous village development example cited in Umuhia shows that more radical aspects to the approach do already exist. Also, in cities such as Lagos and Ibadan, some civic minded neighbourhood groups have organized night security networks. These groups, through local contributions, set up security fences on streets and employ private night guards with whom the local police force work to help combat crime. In both these cases a common interest in community welfare existed. How to transform them into an urban community ethos is the final problem that needs to be addressed.

V. CONCLUSIONS

"... What is needed, far more than generalizations, is an understanding of the ways in which particular societies and the structure of their economies, their income and asset distributions, and the role of the state shape the (social infrastructure) sub-markets..."⁽³⁹⁾

SOCIAL INFRASTRUCTURE IS essential for development. In urban centres, this is especially so, as the cash economy demands a healthy literate work force. In the past in Nigeria, there is evidence to suggest that communal responsibility and interest in forms of social infrastructure provision existed in both the rural dwellings and in the first towns. During the various social transformations to the current day, urban areas have been the most endowed with infrastructure through government

38. See Macmillan (1993), reference 2, pages 50 and 52.

39. Paraphrased from Aina (1989) see reference 31, pages 38-49.

support, however, even they remain poorly served. An adaptation of the community approach as it is still adopted in some areas of the country for rural development would seem the most successful model for future development. However, without understanding the interests (social, cultural, and other) of the urban community in focus, this is unlikely to work.

There is, therefore, a need for research into the social dynamics of the Nigerian city. The diversity of the subject and the various aspects it entails suggest that a multi-disciplinary research approach is imperative. Also, the complexity of Nigeria means that such research should aim to contribute towards a framework for further local or regional assessment strategies. This is in contrast to the creation of a general "national policy" on urban community development, a favourite government solution, which would fail to address the case specific local problems of many urban areas.

The significance of the socio-cultural norms, values and aspirations of the urban dweller's perception of the urban environment needs to be considered. For example, what is it about the city that makes the dweller unable to transfer his village loyalties to it, or show keen interest in its development? How does one finance urban infrastructure development? The effect of gender and age group on such perceptions also requires closer examination.

It is common nowadays in the city for both partners to be in paid employment and the "housemaid" is rapidly disappearing. Who then is in charge of cleaning up? What takes the place of the traditional age grade system in towns? How do these urban trends influence government attitudes towards urban sanitation projects? There is a need to rationalize the social infrastructure requirements of urban areas, especially in recognition of the fact that most of the population in Nigeria remains rural (65 per cent of all Nigerians live in rural areas). In the same vein, although there are three highly concentrated cities in Nigeria, namely Lagos, Kano and Ibadan, many more urban centres with smaller populations and of less political significance are often neglected in urban social infrastructure planning.⁽⁴⁰⁾ Thus, what is required is the development of clear measures to ensure the correct identification of social infrastructure needs in urban locations by means of developing better reference criteria.

A consideration of cost and of "appropriateness" for social infrastructure provision is also of importance in Nigeria. As in other Third World countries, the initiation of expensive large-scale national public utility schemes and public building projects are hard to justify if they cannot be run efficiently or be locally sustained in today's economic climate. Economies of scale work best where there is good organization and relative homogeneity and these conditions are hard to come by at a national level. The centrally controlled national power grid, for example, is fraught with problems, mechanical, administrative and financial. Some of the pre-independence regional power stations in areas such as Bukuru, near Jos, are being re-commissioned to improve regional supply. The rural electricity generation schemes

40. Hardoy, Mitlin and Satterthwaite (1992) reference 36 highlights this point.

in some northern states also act independently of the national grid. There is thus a case for regionalizing the power network to gain higher efficiency levels and closer accountability.

Furthermore, more research information should be available to local and international planners involved in social infrastructure planning to ensure informed decisions are made in the choice of social infrastructure for urban areas. Thus, on a practical level, unsustainable facilities such as the provision of flush toilets in areas without pipe-borne water cannot be expected to improve the poor sanitation situation. The UNESCO promoted "VIP" pit latrine is a less used but much cheaper, more workable interim solution to the problem.

In conclusion, there is a definite need to consider the decentralization of social infrastructure provision in Nigeria, from its current over-centralized nature to possibly the more manageable regional divisions (north, west and east) of the past. Furthermore, if due attention is to be given to local community development strategies, then these regional level bodies, which in Nigeria's case correspond closely to socio-cultural groups are likely to be more workable as they share much more in common than the current national bodies. This advocated creation of strong *meso* or regional level organizations and urban municipal councils would thus aim at organizing, co-ordinating and strengthening the current number of fast-growing "micro" level (state government or privately owned) infrastructure concerns which government privatization policies seem to encourage.

The macro or federal government level should thus serve in a more administrative capacity and be willing to devolve its power to properly constituted regional bodies. Such bodies would be large enough to promote and organize but small and cohesive enough to be accountable for the running of medium-scale infrastructure schemes such as regional power provision or school building standards enforcement inspectorates. The daily organization of such schemes and major financial contributions towards their costs would be taken on by local communities which, with a regionalized system in place, would identify more with, and have a greater interest in, the development of the local urban (and/or rural) communities to which they belong.

This approach has further possible applications elsewhere in Africa where regional disparities are considerable or where administrative areas are unwieldy in size or structure. In its reverse application, a number of smaller nations might benefit from similarly structured regional groupings to provide more rational and cost effective social infrastructure planning. Given the amorphous and changing structure of current African, and indeed global, politics, the problems associated with inadequate social infrastructure provision need to be continuously addressed. This needs to be undertaken using various forms of inter-related research, social, historical and political, if the varied needs of the African urban population are to be realistically determined.