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List of Abbreviations

AfDB	African Development Bank
BBC	British Broadcasting Corporation
CBO	Community-based organization
CofO	Certificate of Occupancy
COP	Conference of Parties
CSO	Civil society organization
ICT	Information and communications technology
IDP	Internally Displaced People
JEI	Justice and Empowerment Initiatives
LAMCOFOR	Lagos Marginalized Communities' Forum
LASPPDA	Lagos State Physical Planning and Development Agency
LCDA	Local Council Development Area
LEBD	Lagos Executive Development Board
LGA	Local Government Areas
LMCP	Lagos Mega City Plan
LMDGP	Lagos Metropolitan Development and Governance Project
LSDP	Lagos State Development Plan
LSG	Lagos State Government
MCP	Model City Plan
MDG	Millennium Development Goals
NGO	Non-governmental organization
NHF	National Housing Fund
NHP	National Housing Policy
NHRC	National Human Rights Commission
OECD	Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development

PPP	Public–private partnership
SERAC	Social and Economic Rights Action Center
SDI	Slum Dwellers International
SDG	Sustainable Development Goals
UCLG	United Cities and Local Governments
UN	United Nations
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNFCCC	United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change
UN-Habitat	United Nations Human Settlements Programme
UNCSD	United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development

1. Introduction

Urbanization describes rural-urban migration as well as rapid population growth in urban areas. By 2030, half of Africa's population is expected to live in cities, and in line with this trend, Nigeria is urbanizing at a high rate. Three years after gaining independence in 1963, one out of five Nigerians lived in a city, while more than 50 years later, almost half of Nigeria's population (47%) lives in urban areas, with a projected rise to 65% by 2020 (AfDB et al. 2016a: 12). According to projected figures from UN-Habitat, Lagos will become Africa's largest city with up to 18.9 million residents by 2025 followed by Cairo (14.7 million) and Kinshasa (14.5 million) as the pace of urbanization has accelerated in recent years (UN-Habitat 2014). At the same time, the growing population has put the already inadequate urban infrastructure under pressure. National urban planning efforts, often framed within the larger context of international aid agencies and carried out via technocratic master plans, do not significantly improve the quality of life for the majority of urban residents and remain largely ineffective. Sometimes, living conditions for the urban poor even worsen when urban development interventions take a wrong turn.

Between 1990 and 2015, the LSG (LSG) carried out a series of evictions mainly targeting low-income settlements. Many of the evictions were carried out in order to implement a larger master plan for the city, or were intended to clear land to claim it for more profitable activities. The starting point of my investigation is the large-scale demolition of Makoko in 1990, an informal settlement adjacent to the central urban areas of Ikoyi and Victoria and close to the up-and-coming Lekki peninsula. The 1990s evictions under then-governor Raji Rasaki led to an estimated 300,000 residents losing their homes and was one of the largest, most forceful and violent evictions in Lagos' history. The evictions of Makoko in 2012, which sparked international media attention and more recently, of Badia East in 2015, frame the case study of this thesis. The idea for the subject first came up when I remembered the Makoko evictions from a visit to Lagos in July 2012, when a large informal settlement built on water close to the Third Mainland Bridge, which connects the Nigerian mainland and the airport to the city's rich island districts, was declared illegal by government authorities and demolished after a period of only 72 hours' notice. The evictions partly

took place in the light of a World Bank backed urban development program that the government used as a pretext to clear the land at the up and coming waterfront.

The evictions can be understood as an expression and result of a biased engagement with African cities on both a practical policy level as well as on an academic or scholarly level. This approach understands the condition of African urbanization as something that must be and can be fixed by a series of activities, such as infrastructure measures. The ambiguity, resourcefulness and complexity of African urban livelihoods and the specific historical and cultural context remains largely ignored. The focus of this thesis will be how urban Africans make live viable in the city through their daily practices.

The research project therefore was designed as qualitative case study to identify how everyday practices and interactions evolved or changed around the series of evictions. These strategies utilized by residents and other involved actors can be understood as a way to answer back to the “insistence that there is a rational policy fix for the multitude of urban development crises” (Pieterse 2010: 206). With the intention to give a more rounded analysis of urbanization and to put the continuous policy-oriented assumptions about the urban nature of African cities into perspective, the thesis will begin with a short description of the dimension of urbanization in Lagos and the specific background of the case study. This will be followed by a secondary literature analysis to discuss the different dominating discourses framing the perception of Lagos’ urban context, including a digression on literature on the city.

The theoretical framework is based on the one side on Long’s interface analysis to combine an actor-oriented approach and discourse analysis, as the “dominant discourses belong very often to the state or its agencies, international institutions or the local community, but it is the actors who use, manipulate and transform them, the encounter between actors and dominant discourses” (Long 2001: 53). This approach is embedded in an alternative, deconstructed conception of African urbanism, which makes an attempt to understand the complexities of urban livelihoods. These two approaches are used to analyze the five vectors of everyday practices proposed by Edgar Pieterse (2009) to in the light of the critical interface of the evictions. Social interfaces, a concept coined by Long (1999, 2004), are understood in a double sense as critical linkage points, in this case on the first level around a series of evictions. However, these processes cannot be comprehended

without knowing the larger interfaces at play, e.g. the historical legacies, policy considerations and urban planning policies that shape the governments' engagement with informality and the attempts to establish what is considered 'normality.' How urban residents in these contexts attach meaning to their life worlds, exercise agency under precarious, uncertain circumstances and negotiate access and control over knowledge, resources and power will be explored along the lines of senses of belonging, zones of contact, attachment, deal making and lines of movements using data from interviews collected during field research in 2014.

While the selection of social phenomena for study is very often influenced by cultural and discursive assumptions, it tends to focus on the extreme and spectacular, neglecting the everyday and routine (Rakodi 2014). Therefore, I want to keep in mind that "most residents, most of the time, [...] get by" and that their everyday life and challenges are negotiated through social interactions (Rakodi 2014: 85).

2. Problem Definition

Lagos, the city in which most of Nigeria's urban growth is taking place, is put under massive pressure by its population dynamics. The absolute numbers and influx of people constantly transforms Lagos' urban landscape. While the city is the social and commercial hub of Nigeria, the existing urban management system is hardly able to adequately accompany the increasing demands of the growing population. The city, still struggling to come to terms with its colonial legacies and authoritarian past under military rule, is facing immense physical and socio-economic challenges. The rapid population growth has resulted both in spatial expansion and an increasing population density and leaves Lagos one of the megacities on the African continent.

Lagos' ongoing transition manifests itself across diverse sectors (housing, water, energy, transport, water, education, etc.) as demand for these sectors increases. The Lagos State and the Nigerian government try to control and shape this transition with different city development programs, while at the same time non-governmental actors such as private investors, local residents, citizen's groups and others also make an effort to influence the space they invest or live in. Similarly, to

other African cities, Lagos is characterized by “overlapping and competing systems of power”, such as federal and local government, local authorities, market associations, ethnic or religious communities, etc. (Pieterse and Parnell 2014: 10).

Since the 1980s, technocratic programs backed by the UN and the World Bank were supposed to improve urban development and fight poverty through strict urban planning, but these have only been moderately, if at all, successful. Instead, the social issues exacerbated by the scale and speed of the ongoing urban transformation are still largely approached with a modernist, technocratic understanding of urban governance and politics. At the same time, the Nigerian federal government and the LSG are making efforts to provide the financial capital of the country with infrastructure, housing, tourism, and development, partly with the help of private investors. The complex, dynamic and hybrid characteristics of urban daily practices are rarely reflected in the policies and interventions targeting the city’s development and development interventions therefore remain largely ineffective. Over all the years, urban planning in Lagos has been conceived mainly in terms of physical interventions implemented through ‘master plans’ and has ignored the complexity of the different communities and how they interact with the city at large.

The research on African cities has for a long time been marked by an “epistemological dualism” and overall “epistemic troubles in the production of knowledge about urban Africa” (Pieterse 2010: 205, 208). Robinson observes that this parallel development comes from a ‘geographical division of urban studies between urban theory, broadly focused on the West, and development studies, focused on places that were once called “third world cities”’ (Robinson 2002: 531). Thus, this division in the knowledge production between cities of the West and the rest leads to a measuring of urbanization processes of non-Western cities against those of the West, with the latter being set as a standard to be aspired. Non-Western cities are therefore often considered un- or under-developed, unorganized, simple, static and immature as compared to their Western counterparts (Pieterse 2010: 207). As Pieterse explains, they are generally described by their “absences and wanting, even if fuelled by a moral agenda to alleviate material deficiencies” (ibid.).

Scholars such as Filip de Boeck, Mamadou Diouf, Achille Mbembe, Sarah Nuttall, and AbdouMaliq Simone have come up with an alternative form of theoretical and empirical engagement with African cities, which is, just like this thesis, largely approached through case

studies of specific cities and micro-level analysis of phenomena. Mamadou Diouf, for example, analyzed the role of Senegalese urban youth in political processes and public spaces, whereas Philip de Boeck explores youth and the politics of culture, urban infrastructure, and the transformation of private and public space in the urban contexts of Senegal and the Democratic Republic of Congo respectively. AbdouMaliq Simone has taken on a more comparative approach and has worked extensively both on African and Asian cities. Achille Mbembe and Sarah Nuttall have drawn on a variety of fields such as literature, politics, urban studies, architecture, journalism, anthropology, and art in their engagement with the South African city of Johannesburg.

While there is certainly a need for a more rounded conceptualization of African urbanism, this thesis will follow the aforementioned case study approach of other scholars, as there has been no engagement with Lagos through this kind of research yet.

The aim of this thesis is to contribute to ongoing research on Lagos' urbanization and to a critical discourse on African cities' development and the respective visions of modernity and management strategies upon which urban planning processes are commonly based. It will look at the relationship between urban governance and different actors with various ideas about a city's and a community's development inequality, vulnerability and exclusion, using the city development projects, and their impact on selected marginalized communities. The primary focus will be on how the different actors involved mediate this process in their everyday practice. It is also influenced by a strong personal interest in combining my two fields of study, African studies and development studies, which leads to a trans-disciplinary perspective on the research topic. The background in African studies explains the strong focus on the historical context and discursive practices around African urbanization processes and the analysis of a specific form of cultural production, e.g. literature written about Lagos. The analysis of urban development processes and policies derives from a critical engagement with development theories and practices during the course of the development studies program.

The dominating Western-based discourses, which also represent a large field of academic engagement with African urbanization, will be discussed in Chapter 2.2 to elucidate how African urbanization is widely perceived, as these common assumptions also influence urban planning and

policies, which will be discussed in Chapter 4. However, as this thesis will draw on alternative conceptions of African cities for its theoretical framing, they will be discussed in Chapter 3.

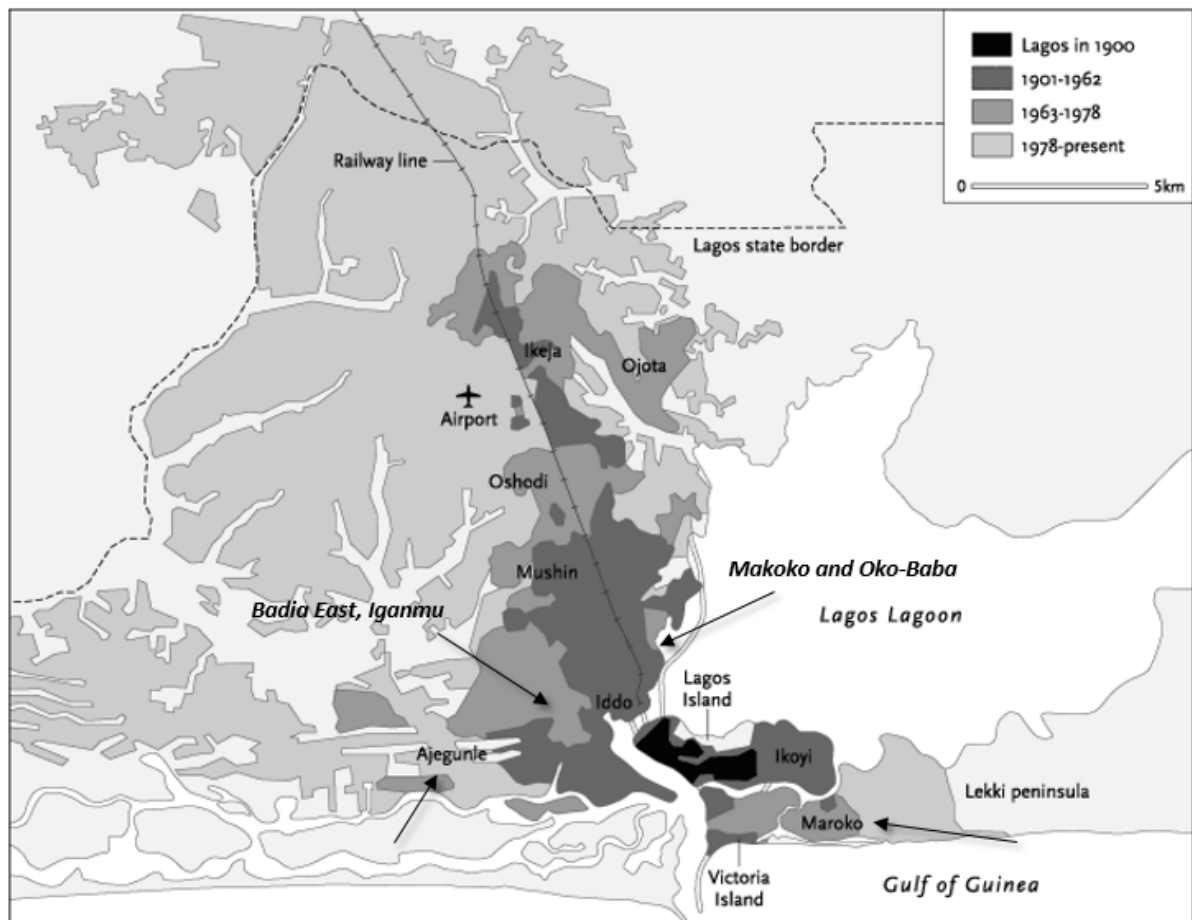
One of the resources for this alternative understanding can be engagement with African literature, as it blazed a trail for a cosmopolitan comparativism and deals with the differences of and within African cities in the sense of diversity instead of hierarchy. An analysis of how the city is perceived in fictional literature can support the recognition of the complexity and variety that is characteristic of African urban life. This aspect will be explored in a short digression later.

In the following sub-chapters, the epistemic troubles/epistemological dualism in the knowledge production about African urbanism will be explored. However, it is first necessary to explain the dimensions of urbanization in Lagos.

2.1 Dimensions of Urbanization in Lagos

In 2011, Lagos was the 19th most populous city in the world with a population of 11.2 million people. By 2025, Lagos is projected to rise to become the 11th most populous city in the world with an estimated population of 18.9 million (UN 2012 in Opoko and Oluwatayo 2014). The city has also experienced rapid spatial and demographic growth.

Spatial and temporal map of informal settlements across the Lagos metropolitan area later mentioned in the texts (Gandy 2005, adapted by the author):



Since the 1900s, Lagos has expanded from its original core on Lagos Island to the Mainland, which today contains the largest proportion of residents in the Lagos State metropolitan area, and more recently to the Lekki Peninsula in the Gulf of Guinea.

Despite the rapid population growth, there are indications that the average annual rate of change has slowed down recently, from 6.08 % in the period between 1970 and 1990 to 4.08 % from 1990 to 2011.

Average annual rate of population change for the period between 1970 and 2025 (UN 2012 in Opoko and Oluwatayo 2014):

Population (millions)				Average annual rate of change (percentage)		
1970	1990	2011	2025	1970-1990	1990-2011	2011-2025
1.4	4.8	11.2	18.9	6.08	4.08	3.71

Source: (UN, 2012)

By 2007, 72.3% of households in Lagos was estimated to live in one-room housing units, with an occupancy ratio of 8-10 persons per room, which explains “population density of about 20,000 persons per square kilometer in the built-up areas” (Opoko and Oluwatayo 2014).

2.2 Knowledge Production about Urban Africa

Representations of Lagos have been affected by the geographical division of knowledge production on African cities and different conceptualizations of urban and social development (Pieterse 2010: 207; Robinson 2002). This dualistic approach also still prevails in the general discourse on Lagos reflected in the representations of the city, both from outside and from within.

The predominating view of Lagos is the one of the “archetype of the megacity”, as journalist George Packer states in his coverage of Lagos in the *New Yorker* in 2006, when he took it upon himself to ‘decode’ the “chaos of Lagos” (Packer 2006: 62). Before giving the reader any fundamental information about the largest city in Africa, he immediately starts describing how the Third Mainland Bridge “snakes over sunken piers just above the water of Lagos Lagoon” and “passes a floating slum”, which is the settlement of Makoko. In the first paragraph, he sets the tone for painting Lagos as a city of nameless ‘slums’¹ and continues to zoom in on the informal interactions in the city, such as roadside stalls, and the overall degradation and pollution. However, he paints a more balanced picture than his colleague Robert Kaplan, who describes West African cities such as Lagos as the dystopian future of an urban apocalypse (Kaplan 2000: 5-15).

¹ Although the term ‘slum’ may have derogatory connotations, it is somehow difficult to avoid it. Some community associations prefer to use it in order to positively reclaim the term (such as Slum Dwellers International); others accept it to receive possible advantages that come along by being officially classified as a ‘slum’. During my field research, my interview partners and especially residents from informal settlement rarely used the term ‘slum’ to describe their settlement. It is therefore used only in quotation marks.

He is part of a long tradition of (foreign) observers and researchers obsessed with the poverty and decay of the ‘third world city.’ This tradition encompasses the BBC 2 documentary *Welcome to Lagos* (2010), which focuses on Lagos’ ‘slums’ and follows residents of various impoverished settlements across Lagos; it was perceived as being “condescending” and “colonialist” by Wole Soyinka, Nigerian author and political activist as well as Nigerian politicians (Dowell 2010).

One of the triggers for the increasing popular engagement with Lagos as a megacity was Mike Davis’ controversial book *Planet of Slums* (2006), which paints a catastrophic urban future and starts off in one of the more than 200 ‘slums’ of Lagos:

“Sometime in the next year or two, a woman will give birth in the Lagos slum of Ajegunle [...] The exact event is unimportant and it will pass entirely unnoticed. Nonetheless it will constitute a watershed in human history, [...]. For the first time the urban population of the earth will outnumber the rural. Indeed, given the imprecisions of Third World censuses, this epochal transition has probably already occurred.” (Davis 2006: 1).

The increasing homogenization and problematizing of ‘slums’ since 2000 (Huchzermeyer 2011: 4) is also reflected in the discourse on global policy development. The United Nations Conference on Environment and Development (UNCED) in Rio 1992 categorized urban growth as problematic and called for more integrated planning and a strengthening of local authorities and stakeholders. This conception was reinforced by an increasing attention paid to megacities and their role as “growth centers” (Parnell 2016: 534).

The ‘megacity and slum’ discourse, according to Pieterse, is “closely related to policy literature that spells out a comprehensive package of governance, infrastructural and managerial reforms that are up to the task of arresting and reversing the crises of urban poverty” (Pieterse 2010: 207). Following Habitat II (1996), Good Urban Governance and Public Private Partnerships (PPP) should make cities such as Lagos more inclusive and ensure social sustainability.

In the case of Lagos, PPPs have become the go-to strategy for the LSG to tackle urban development projects in the housing, transport, waste management, and lifestyle facilities sectors, and even the development of a whole new part of the city (LSG 2016). This approach is closely linked to

presenting Lagos as a city of investment opportunities, aspiring to become a ‘centre of excellence’, as the official slogan of the LSG goes.

Competitiveness on a global level has become one of the drivers of the city’s government, in which the political and economic elite in particular see their purpose as working for the global instead of the local or even the poor (Huchzermeyer 2011: 48p). Cities Alliance, the organization which promotes “Cities without Slums”, has opened up one of the “most problematic liberal paradox of in urban policy: the simultaneous drive to achieve global urban competitiveness and a supposed commitment to improve ‘slum dwellers’ lives” (Huchzermeyer 2011: 3). The aspiration of the LSG is for Lagos to become a neoliberal Model City, a Global City, which is internationally competitive and in which ‘slums’ are not attractive to the eyes of international business consultants on their way from the airport to the business district. The Lagos State Physical Planning and Development Agency (LASPPDA), responsible for design, planning and management has therefore also issued location-specific planning guidelines known as Model City Plans (MCP) according to the Lagos State Model City Plan (2009) with the intention to turn Lagos into a model city-state backed by a Cities Alliance Report 2012 (Filani 2012).

The image of Lagos as an investment opportunity is dominated by a late modernist discourse which is focused on technology and infrastructure development. This discourse is fueled by international consulting companies such as the Monitor Group, now Deloitte, or McKinsey. In its 2009 report, *Africa from the Bottom Up* from Monitor Group, African cities such as Lagos are depicted as “platforms for growth” (Monitor Group 2009: 22). In the case of Lagos, the report identifies the finance and telecommunication sector as promising investment opportunities and states that “thriving informal sectors face obstacles from inappropriate regulatory frameworks” by the government (Monitor Group 2009: 41).

Indeed, the African Economic Outlook 2016 identified Lagos, along with five other African cities, as centers of investment due to their predicted share of GDP growth, and one of seven megacities with high potential for innovation and job creation in areas such as infrastructure, ICT, and retail trade (AfDB et al. 2016a). Former governor of Lagos State Babatunde Fashola (2007-2015) described his vision of Lagos as “Africa’s Model Mega City and Global, Economic and Financial

Hub that is safe, secure, functional and productive” in the Lagos State Development Plan 2012-2025 (LSDP) (Lagos State Ministry of Economic Planning and Budget 2015).

As of late, LSG even aspires to become the first Smart City² on the African continent. In a statement by current Lagos State Governor Akinwunmi Abode it is clear that African cities’ governments no longer see Western cities as their models, but rather city states in emerging economies such as Hong Kong, Singapore and others: “A Smart-City Lagos will be the pride of all Lagosians just as we have Smart City Dubai, Smart-City Malta and Smart-City Kochi (India)” (LSG 2016).

The focus on innovation and creativity can be partly understood as an act of re-discovering and re-owning the city and its representation. However, this discourse also supplies the idea of competitiveness and a capitalist form of neo-communitarianism (Roy 2005: 148). When innovation and creativity become idealized through the imagery of self-help, they obscure a government’s responsibility to provide for its citizens.

Dutch architect Rem Koolhaas’ engagement with Lagos culminated in the Harvard Project on the City (HPC) on *Lagos: How it Works* with the documentary *Lagos Wide and Close* as one of the outcomes. His ahistorical analysis displays Lagos as the essential (West) African city and calls it a “paradigm and the extreme and pathological form of the West African city” (Koolhaas et al. 2000 cited in Fourchard 2010: 43). Lagos is understood as a city of self-regulatory systems and its informality celebrated as a herald of a new form of urbanism: “Lagos represents a developed, extreme paradigmatic case-study of a city at the forefront of globalizing modernity” (Koolhaas et al. 2000 cited in Fourchard 2010: 43). His depiction of a “slum pastoral” (Hecker 2010), mainly filmed from a helicopter, derives from a portrayal of poverty through an aesthetic realism that is largely indifferent to a social critique and ignores the influence of partisan politics (Fourchard 2010) and the structural and historical factors that shaped the city (Gandy 2005, 2006).

The aforementioned representations have been mirrored in urban policy development since the second Rio Conference (Rio+20, United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development,

² A smart city includes an urban development vision in which ICT technology is used to allow sustainable urban growth while dealing with sectors such as transport, energy, health care, waste management and urban administration.

UNCSD), in which cities evolved to “centers of economic, social, and ecological productivity in a global city system”, but also into “innovation spaces”, “development agents” and “leaders of climate action” (Parnell 2016: 534).

The environmental perspective becomes more and more important in light of discourses on sustainability and political ecology. Urban expansion often takes place on agricultural or forest land, in the case of Lagos even on wetlands, and is usually followed by increased energy use and air, water and noise pollution (Braimoh and Onishi 2007: 502). The conversion of land also leads to fragmented landscapes and a reduction in wildlife habitat and biodiversity; this turns the process of increased urbanization into an environmental challenge (Braimoh and Onishi 2007: 502p).

In his vision of Lagos State as a Smart City, current Governor Abode explains that: “Lagos [...] will become an important centre for innovation in smart technologies, wellness and destination for green tourism” (LSG 2016). Ecological sustainability is strictly conceived of in terms of economic growth here.

With this in mind, the next chapter intends to explore first, how fictional literature reflects the changing discourses on the city and second, how its analysis can be understood as a precursor to comparative urbanism with a focus on daily practices. By writing about everyday realities, these authors attempt to put an alternative understanding of the Western-based ideas of Lagos on the map.

2.3 Writings from Within – Narrating Lagos

Insights into the dynamics of everyday life in Lagos can come through literary works, films and TV shows by drawing attention to aspects of urban life otherwise obscured in academic discourses on cities. In a sense, writings on African cities are an act of writing back to the center – in this context to the center of knowledge production about African cities. The writings represent a different view on African urban realities than the previous perspectives. They allow to incorporate nuances and ambiguities, an approach that will be also utilized in the empirical part of this thesis.

In 2004, Mbembé and Nuttall pointed out that in order “to overturn predominant readings of Africa, we need to identify sites within the continent, entry and exit points not usually dwelt upon in research and public discourse” which “provide the reader with a sense of the worldliness of African life in general and of the African metropolis as a compositional process that is displaceable and reversible by the act of reading and deciphering” as “a gesture of defamiliarization” (Mbembé and Nuttall 2004: 352). Davies and Boehmer (2015) argue that literary and other cultural narratives can give us points of insight into how to “navigate, decode and in some cases re-imagine the infrastructures that organize urban life” (Davies and Boehmer 2015: 395).

African city-fiction has long been both at the core and origin of African postcolonial studies as space has always been a highly contested affair, as was especially true in colonial times. The urban experience offers a framework in which postcolonial issues are explored in fiction, for example, how the specifics of colonial infrastructure shape lives in present African cities. African postcolonial writers often conceive the city through sensory experience, as an unreadable fragmented and chaotic space in which people negotiate their daily life.

Writings from within the African city help sharpen our ability to understand how larger socio-economic, political and historical issues are reflected in the localized, everyday actions of ordinary people. Writings on the African city do not approach it in an exclusively spatial sense: African novelists have been imagining the city from within and, more recently from outside perspectives as well, as writers of a growing diaspora who ended up in another global city. In this sense, Lagos has been a trope and setting of many novels, short stories, poems, films, plays and songs.

The “nationalist impetus” to fiction in the 1950s and the dualistic depiction of urban and rural life has not been a phenomenon specific to Lagos (Whiteman 2012: 92). The city has been a place for critical intellectual discussions on nation-building since the newly-acquired independence of the 1960s. In the works of many writers, Lagos represented a place of alienation and simultaneously the possibility to invent a new identity (Cyprian Ekwensi’s *People of the City*, 1954, Chinua Achebe’s *No Longer at Ease*, 1960, Flora Nwapa’s collection of short stories *This is Lagos*, 1971).

Later works move away from the rather dualistic and simplified description of Lagos and its characters. Dunton identifies certain continuities in the depiction of city life in the works created from the 1950s to the present:

“the hybridity of its population, the size of its informal economy (and the fragility of this for individual participants), the lack or breakdown of infrastructure and the misery this causes citizens (a paradigmatic image here: the stress, loss of energy and amount of time spent in getting to work), the attractions of the city’s nightlife for those who can afford it, the callousness and rapacity of (different levels of) government and its administration” (Dunton 2008: 70).

Lagos’ poverty, political oppression, violence and rising crime rates, and the fragmented and rudimentary urban infrastructure coexist alongside explorations of the city as a place of hope and joy in Wole Soyinka’s *The Interpreters* (1965) and *The Beatification of an Area Boy* (1990), Ken Saro-Wiwa’s play *Transistor Radio* (1964), Ben Okri *Dangerous Love* (1996) and Helon Habila’s *Waiting for an Angel* (2002).

Maik Nwosu’s (2001) *Invisible Chapters* portrays the demolition of Maroko in 1990, along with the hardship and deprivation of life in Lagos and the stress it puts on its ordinary citizens in their daily lives: “no job, no money, no electricity, no tap-water, nothing” (Nwosu 2001 cited in Whiteman 2012). The setting of Chris Abani’s 2004 novel *GraceLand* is also Maroko. In the novel, the impending eviction offers the protagonist’s father the chance to become a spokesperson for the community (Abani 2004: 248).

Migrating to Europe or the USA is shown as a path many young people from Lagos choose to escape the narrowness and forlornness of the city in search for salvation: in *Retail Therapy* (2005), a short story by Belgium-based author Chika Unigwe, the unnamed narrator describes how she fell into the hands of a human trafficker:

“His stories fed my dream of a better life away from the dust of Lagos. From the mosquitos that bite with viciousness in the rainy season. From the smell of death and decay which pervaded my father’s face-me-I-face-you apartment where I still lived, cheek by jaw with rats and cockroaches. Three years after graduation, I was still unable to get a job as my

father did not know anyone who knew anyone who knew anyone influential enough to get me a job.” (Unigwe 2005: 215)

The writings on Lagos show a city becoming more and more unreadable to its own inhabitants, a place where information is very often difficult to obtain and life is constantly negotiated. At the same time, the works also emphasize Lagos as a place of opportunities, full of possibilities for cognition and action (Dunton 2008: 73). The next generation writers of turn away from the dualism of glorification or dystopian imagery and focus on the diverse reality of urban life, as Habila does in an essay for the BBC-series *Sense of the City*:

“There is something almost magical about Lagos. [...] It's not seen as an enemy now. It's just a fact of life. I just show people going about their lives in Lagos. You can actually live there. You can be good or bad there.” (Habila 2003).

Apart from the novels, plays and short stories mentioned here, Lagos is subject of poems and songs, especially by the Afrobeat musicians Fela Kuti and Tony Allen, who carried the sound of Lagos into the world. In *No Accommodation For Lagos* (1979), Tony Allen discusses the notorious housing problem in the city; in *Never Expect Power Always (aka N.E.P.A.³)*, he touches upon the unreliable electricity supply of the city. Kuti and Allen mainly use Nigerian Pidgin in their music, an English-based *pidgin* and creole language spoken as a lingua franca across Nigeria, including in Lagos (Whiteman 2012: 213 pp).

The writings from within give a deep and close insight into an understanding of cities and their mundaneness, and how the residents navigate their life through the challenges with daily practices. The concept of regarding cities and their processes as mainly ‘ordinary’ and the impact this has on the research questions, the theoretical framework as well as the methodology and research design will be approached in the following chapters.

³ NEPA is a backronym for the organization which governed the use of electricity in Nigeria formally known as the National Electric Power Authority, later replaced by the Power Holding Company of Nigeria, which was quickly assigned P.H.C.N., *Problem Has Changed Name* or *Please Hold Candle Now*. In 2013, following a privatization process of the electricity sector, the Nigerian Electricity Regulatory Commission (NERC) was established.

3. Research Questions and Theoretical Framework

The complex, dynamic and hybrid characteristics of urban daily practices are rarely reflected in the policies and interventions targeting Lagos' development. This deficient approach is not unique to discussions about Lagos, but derives from a tendency that can be observed in the general theoretical engagement with African cities that is focused on a 'modernist' or 'developmental' understanding of their urban development and which puts Western cities at the center and African cities at the peripheries of their analysis. This geographical division of knowledge production about African urbanism has been identified in the previous chapter.

3.1 Research Questions

In Lagos, urban development has mainly been thought of in terms of physical interventions implemented through 'master plans' and has ignored the complexity of different communities and how they interact with the city at large. Thus, the research questions in relation to the aforementioned epistemic divide and situational background are: How can a more critical, grounded engagement with African urbanism be developed? How can aspects of everyday practices carried out by different actors around a critical urban interface such as the series of evictions in Lagos State be analyzed, taking into account the following issues: senses of belonging, attachments, zones of contact, deal making and lines of movement?

3.2 Theoretical Framework

The theoretical framework of this thesis draws on a relational understanding of African urban geographies in an attempt to respond to the epistemic divide identified before. AbdouMalik Simone's approach to African urban realities and their inventiveness, Jennifer Robinson's conceptualization of 'cityness' and Achille Mbembé and Sarah Nuttall's circulatory understanding of African cities, along with Edgar Pieterse's five lines of enquiries, which represent the key

elements of analysis of the larger empirical part (6.) and will be explored in the following paragraph.

3.2.1 Alternative Perspectives on African Cities

In recent years, a ‘relational turn’ in the field of urban geography which elucidates how cities are constituted through “parts of elsewhere” (Allen and Cochrane 2007) can be observed. This understanding is a step towards a postcolonial perspective on African urbanism; one that takes into account how cities are engaged with each other through relations and flows of people, goods and information on different levels and in multiple directions.

An alternative to the aforementioned biased representations of cities such as Lagos is postcolonial discourse, which takes into account the impacts of colonialism and imperialism on the society, economy, society, spatial formation and architecture of African cities. In this regard, ‘ordinary cities’ is a concept used by Robinson in an attempt to postcolonialize urban studies and bridge the epistemic divide. It describes cities all over the world as “dynamic and diverse, if conflicted, arenas for social and economic life”, emphasizing the “diversity and complexity of all cities” (Robinson 2006: 1). While labelling African and other ‘non-Western’ cities as complex and diverse is not new, Robinson also takes a look back to ‘Western’ cities, which can also not be reduced to certain ‘Western’ features, but are characterized by various differences among them. With her concept of ‘ordinary cities’ Robinson tries to close the divide between imaginations of cities as purely ‘Western’ or ‘Third World’ and also overcomes the dual-cities phenomenon (King 2009: 2). A ‘cityness’ approach to understanding cities can help to shape awareness of the specificity of particular places and their multiple rationalities, practices and modernities. How these diverse urban modernities are deconstructed and remade can be explored through an analysis of everyday practices of actors from different lifeworlds, engaged at critical linkage points by external or internal factors or a combination of both, and they reveal how urban life is remade and aspirations are negotiated.

This dualistic approach is reflected in the normative use of the concepts of ‘modernity’ and ‘developmentalism,’ which tend to lead to a narrowed perspective and Othering when dealing with aspects of global urban life, as Robinson explains:

“By urban modernity I mean the cultural experience of contemporary city life, and the associated cultural valorisation and celebration of innovation and novelty. And by development I mean the ambition to improve life in cities, especially for the poorest, along certain policy-informed paths. A political investment in development, and the institutional promotion of development as a way of improving life in poor countries, following Escobar (1995), we can call, ‘developmentalism’. These two concepts are closely entwined. Together they work to limit both cultural imaginations of city life and the practices of city planning.” (Robinson 2006: 4)

Instead, Robinson argues for an exploration of how those cities have had to develop their own creativity, their own ‘modernity,’ in order to conceptualize what kind of future lies ahead for them (ibid.). She calls for a deconstruction of the very structure of the field of urban studies and overcoming the divide between theory and practice.

This dichotomy is also reflected in the application of the terms Global City and Megacity. Global Cities, a concept coined by Saskia Sassen in 1991, describes centers of informational capitalism that are part of a transnational global network and which are aspirational for the rest of the world (Sassen 2005). While Global Cities are considered to come from the Western part of the world, Megacities are “big, but not powerful”, and characterized by a condition of crisis (Robinson 2002: 540).

There is an urge to bridge the gap between policy-oriented research and theory production. One strategy is to apply a transdisciplinary approach to and engage with the ‘cityness’ and ‘worldliness’ of African cities. This approach will be explored further, using the discourse on Lagos as an example (Robinson 2002, 2006; Mbembé and Nuttall 2004).

This concept is in line with Mbembé and Nuttall’s critiques and continues a long tradition of urban inquiry on “spatial dislocation, the class differentiation, and the racial polarization” of post-colonial African cities. They argue that by choosing only these dualistic foci, the studies remain

undeveloped in terms of comparison (Mbembé and Nuttall 2008: 356). Instead, they propose to examine how everyday practices and imaginaries constitute urban spatiality through their circulatory and reterritorialized characteristics. The African “continent has been and still is a space of flows, of flux, of translocation, with multiple nexuses of entry and exit points” (Mbembé and Nuttall 2004: 351). This implies that the focus of inquiry about African cities should be on the “multiplicity of the pathways and trajectories for change” (Mbembé and Nuttall 2004: 349). In the case of this study, this means that an examination of that which emerges at the crossroads and intersections of different lifeworlds will be explored through a close examination of everyday practices.

AbdouMalik Simone manages to apply a comparative urbanism by analyzing “the production of livelihoods and the construction of meanings and understandings adherent to the prevailing images and impositions of what urban life should be” according to the ‘Western’ concept of cities and by drawing connections between cities from Southeast Asia to West Africa (Simone 1997: 1; 2010). In this sense, a postcolonial discourse on African cities can starkly highlight the ways in which these cities are understood and represented. His understandings of urban processes and change will be used as guidelines in the analysis of this study.

As does Rakodi, Simone points out the agency and constructive powers that urban African actors have had to develop through a network of social relationships and practices which allows them not only to survive, but to engage with a world at large, and states that “urban Africans have long made lives that have worked” (Simone 2005: 1). However, whole schools of thought pertinent to the engagement, research and practice of international urban development do not fully recognize African expressions of urbanization as a means by through which viable cities have been built. This “structural invisibility” of the multiple forms of urbanities can be traced back to a lack of historical perspective which results in understanding cities simply as “embodiment of accommodation, social engineering or the spatial fix of economic growth” (ibid.). Therefore, a historical analysis will be included in Chapter 5.

Instead, Simone argues for conceptualizing urban transformation as the way in which African cities mobilize their own resources and develop specific resiliencies to cope with a lack of infrastructure, formal employment opportunities, large investments and complex economic

entanglements. He understands the city as a “laboratory of change” where processes of configuring urban life are concretized in practices of everyday life (ibid.).

Those social interactions and organizations are at play with the larger world and require the construction of “various survival strategies, specializations and social identities,” but they are also rooted in specific historical conditions and cultural modes, and complex, often contradictory, heterogeneous and fluid social arenas (ibid.). However, focusing on these aspects of changing processes does not adequately address the challenge of translating this inventiveness onto a broader level. African cities are influenced by a history of external powers and interests in their perpetuation and transformation, as engagement with the historical legacies and development policies will show. These interests shape the spatial and social realities of African cities and are negotiated in struggles for opportunities. Overall, these cities are defined by a “certain marginalization from prevailing trajectories of urbanization” (Simone 2005: 2).

The theoretical implications of conceptualizing African cities through a focus on their ‘cityness’ and the practices of everyday life are structured around five vectors of everyday practices proposed by Edgar Pieterse. These are intended to open up a dialogue on how research on livelihoods in African cities can be used to create new concepts and representations and a more grounded engagement with ‘cityness’ and are: senses of belonging, attachments, zones of contact, deal making and lines of movement, and they encompass sets of questions and issues along which everyday practices can be explored and which will be presented briefly in the following paragraphs (Pieterse 2009: 15).

Pieterse understands senses of belonging as something “ordinary cityzens feel, display, mobilize, invest in and invariably ambiguate when the need arises” and which are at play with the specific context of the city and the circumstances of their everyday lives (ibid.). Senses of belonging is understood as something that is exercised by what people do and how they attribute meaning to their actions. This can take on forms of support and affiliation as well as distinction and segregation, and must be remade if the center around which these senses of belongings were built dissipates, transforms or is taken away. In the context of this study, it will be analyzed how senses of belonging change and are changed through the transformation of spatial reality, i.e. the series of evictions, and how new senses of belonging are formed in the course of the impact of these

critical events. Closely related to the previous line of enquiry is the issue of attachments and how they are displayed, rated, intertwined and embodied. Again, as with senses of belonging, attachments are exercised in various ways.

Pieterse also raises questions regarding ‘zones of contact’ and ‘lines of movement’. He argues that zones of contact can evolve across boundaries in the search for opportunities and knowledge, and even emerge between parties that are considered to be in conflict or enemies (Pieterse 2009: 16). He does not attribute this term to anyone in particular, but the concept is often attached to the work of literary theorist Mary Louise Pratt. In her 1992 book *Imperial Eyes*, she describes contact zones as “social spaces where disparate cultures meet, clash, grapple with each other” (Pratt 1992: 20). Pratt explains her use of the concept as:

“an attempt to invoke the spatial and temporal copresence of subjects previously separated by geographic and historical disjunctures, and whose trajectories now intersect [...] in interaction, interlocking understandings and practices, often within radically asymmetrical relations of power” (ibid.).

Pratt’s notion of asymmetrical relations of power refers to the legacies of imperialism and colonialism and how their dynamics are constituted in encounters between “the historically colonised and their (former and or present) colonisers” today (Conway 2011: 220). In the case of Lagos, this can also be applied to the dynamics between the actors around the evictions in the struggle for power and knowledge. Pratt’s and Pieterse’s concept of contact zones will be further explored in the very similar concept of critical interfaces by Norman Long in the following chapter.

The concept of contact zones is closely linked to the question of lines of movement. Pieterse understands them as a “geography of connectivities [...] and movement” (Pieterse 2009: 16). They may be defined by open and closed spaces, and by the way that people exercise their attachment to the city and their belonging to a place. In the dynamics of urban development activities, crossroads can emerge when previously unrelated people come into contact and interests are contested and negotiated. Simone describes the nature of these temporal interactions among different actors and events as ‘passing through’ each other, where sometimes conditions can

change very quickly or where the interactions have no results at all – making “African cities appear dynamic and static at the same time” (Simone 2005: 3).

Central to these vectors of daily practices is the question of deal making, which is an intrinsic part of social interactions at critical linkage points, where interests are mediated and alliances are (temporarily) made between actors of different hierarchies and constituencies. Being at the right place at the right time to gain access to the right people and establish a space for negotiation is a process that is possible only for those with some degree of time and resources. These “elaborate and intricate processes that are embarked upon to come to agreements to cooperate to achieve some modest access to cash, information, favors, goods, the possibility of a reciprocal turn in the future (a kind of futures trading of sorts)” are marked by a fragility and uncertainty of outcome (Pieterse 2009: 16).

In the context of this study, the crossroads at which life worlds intersect and engagement is carried out are approached through the lenses of social interface analysis, which will be explained in the following chapter.

3.2.2 Norman Long’s Social Interface Approach

The methodological and theoretical groundwork of this study is rooted in Norman Long’s ‘social interface approach’ which provides an actor-oriented analysis to understanding and conceptualizing development policy and interventions as transformational processes played out by a wide range of social actors. These interfaces are constituted by linkages and networks characterized by evolving complex and multiple encounters between individuals and parties, “containing within them many different interests, relationships and modes of rationality and power” (Long 1999: 1). Development interventions, such as urban planning activities, are understood as arenas of struggle where processes of negotiation, manipulation and competition take place simultaneously and on multiple levels.

The actor perspective

The social interface approach argues for an actor-oriented analysis for the explanation of “cultural diversity, social difference and conflict” rooted deeply in development policy and intervention (1999: 1). The actor perspective in sociology shows a dissatisfaction with theories that draw largely on structural and institutional forces alone as causes for social interaction (Long 2004: 14). Instead, Long’s interface approach puts central emphasis on ‘human agency’ and processes of self-organization among the different actors (Long 2004: 15). These processes and interactions are mutually shaped by so-called internal and external elements and relations, which can take on structural or institutional forms. This approach implies that life worlds and their interlocked ‘projects’ and interests should be the analytical focus when attempting to elucidate the underlying “social meanings, purposes and powers” that are at play in these social interactions (ibid.). However, to understand these processes it is important to explore the ‘battlefields of knowledge’ that inform the relationships between the different actors, including the researcher him- or herself, so appropriate qualitative methods and a certain level of reflection on the part of the researcher are therefore essential (ibid.).

‘Battlefields of knowledge’

Long understands arenas in which values, interests and power are mediated, negotiated and played against each other as the place where conflicts over social meanings and practices occur (ibid.). These struggles neither take on a linear development nor do they necessarily imply a two-sided form of confrontation. Instead, they are often shaped by “different rationalities” and reveal “social and cultural discontinuities and ambiguities” of the actors (ibid.). These factors can emerge in the form of unusual alliances, compromises and contradictions and can also be found in the everyday practices of urban residents who pursue “different livelihood strategies, cultural interests and political trajectories” (ibid.).

This standpoint also allows for the incorporation of larger structural and institutional issues into the analysis. It shows how macro-phenomena, such as urbanization in an African megacity, can be reduced to the “complex interplay of specific actors’ strategies, ‘projects’, resource endowments (material/technical and social/institutional), discourses and meanings” (ibid.). This shows the

strength of the interface approach in analyzing the complexity of urban development and everyday practices, as it can be used to explore how historical, institutional, political and discursive factors shape and are shaped by the interactions between different actors in urban development interventions.

Long's approach also takes a clear epistemological stance: knowledge is understood as a strategy for constructing the world and its meaning and is therefore "always essentially provisional, partial and contextual in nature" (ibid.). It reflects how knowledge reflects the "'multiple social realities'" which result from a "complex interplay of social, cognitive, cultural, institutional and situational elements" (ibid.). The methodological implications of the interface approach on the research design of this study will be further discussed in the next chapter.

4. Methodology and Research Design

As Pieterse and Satterthwaite point out, the absence of sound quantitative data and city-specific data calls for a trans-disciplinary approach when trying to understand the specific complexities of a place and setting (Pieterse 2009; Satterthwaite 2007). This study does not attempt to generate general hypotheses, but aims to draw attention to the complex context and hybrid nature of Lagos' changing urban realities by providing insight into the dynamics of everyday practice. In the case of Lagos, I have not encountered any research that attempts an in-depth actor-focused qualitative approach to urban development issues thus far.

Research methodology

The research methodology for this study consisted of a triangulation of methodology and data collection methods conducted to capture the different dimensions of the phenomena of evictions. In this case, triangulation takes place on two levels. On a first level, the research process was defined by a mix of methods and methodology using a case study approach combined with Grounded Theory and qualitative content analysis. The research process began by drawing on Glaser and Strauss' Grounded Theory (1967) which is to say without predefined hypotheses or a

theory. Through a preliminary analysis of secondary literature on the topic of urban development issues in Lagos and initial outreach to the first group of interview partners, the research interest was narrowed down to the question of complexities of daily urban life around urban social interfaces in Lagos. This exploratory method meant that the interview partners were selected following a theoretical sampling which helped to identify an initial group of people with whom to speak. Based on this first data collection and analysis along with a review on existing literature, further interview partners were selected. The continuous collection and analysis of data and engagement in a theoretical sampling process are critical aspects of the constant comparative analysis that Glaser and Strauss describe (Glaser and Strauss 1967). This approach fulfills the need for openness in Long's interface approach when understanding everyday practices, which are often shaped by discrepancies, discontinuities and ambiguities (Long 2004: 16).

Following the suggestions from Rakodi and Flyvbjerg, the analytical frame for this research topic was defined using a case study approach, which is understood as a broad set of methods that utilize qualitative methods alongside critical analysis of some existing quantitative data and secondary data analysis, as well as literature review to understand the particular setting with all its complexity and enable in-depth engagement with the issue (Flyvbjerg 2004; Rakodi 2014): The phenomenon of a series of forceful evictions undertaken by government officials in Lagos between 1990 and 2015 provides an analytical framework within which the following study is conducted as well as context for the questions of complexity in an urban development setting predominated by a modernist understanding of urbanization. At the same time, this approach opens up a critical point of intersection according to Long's interface approach, as it shows how "different fields and levels of social organizations" struggle over "values, interests, knowledge and power" in the context of the evictions (Long 2004: 16).

The triangulation approach was further enhanced by analyzing the collected data using Mayring's qualitative content analysis rather than continuing with Glaser and Strauss' Grounded Theory. Due to constraints of time and resources which will be explained further, the Grounded Theory concept of analyzing the collected data through codes and memos until comparative analysis reaches saturation was dismissed. Instead, Mayring's systematic, theory-guided approach using a category system that emerged during the engagement with theoretical literature was applied.

On a second level, the data itself was triangulated by using different data materials collected through a variety of methods, including interviews, participatory observation, and newspaper and online media analysis. Kohlbacher goes even further and describes the combination of a method with a research design not originally intended for this purpose, such as using qualitative content analysis with a case study, as triangulation (Kohlbacher 2006).

The case study approach, mixed methods and triangulation of Grounded Theory, and Mayring's qualitative content analysis go along with Long's social interface approach, which focuses on an "actor-oriented and social constructionist form of analysis as opposed to structural, institutional political economy analysis" alone (Long 2001: 1)⁴. The case study approach sets the frame for understanding the specific setting around the evictions in Lagos while the parts taken from a Grounded Theory approach explore the social relationships and social processes of groups and go beyond a surface perception of reality to understand the underlying processes in individuals' daily lives. The Grounded Theory approach also leaves room for different rationalities and desires which drive social actions in order to analyze how the "heterogeneous social and discursive practices" are "enacted and interpreted by social actors" (Long 2001: 49). The openness and flexibility of the Grounded Theory approach can then be combined with the theory-guided analysis and context of Mayring's qualitative content analysis. In order to capture the perceived realities of the different actors, as well as my own role in the research process, I tried to apply both emic and etic perspectives (Kottak 2008).

Research process

When the question of a master thesis topic arose in 2014, I followed up on the history of the Makoko settlement and came across a whole series of forced evictions, relocations and demolitions from all over Lagos, mainly targeting so-called 'slums' or 'informal settlements'. A preliminary literature review on the topic of the evictions led to a first theoretical sampling of interview partners including evicted residents, local NGOs, local authorities, representatives of city government, representatives of international organizations such as the World Bank, and others engaged with the

⁴ Actor-network theory or critical urban assemblage theory are other possible ways of analyzing and understanding urban processes in the latter approach, in these cases at the public/private or national/global interfaces.

same topic including researchers, city planners, architects and journalists. I established a first connection with a Nigerian professor in Ibadan, Nigeria, via email; she undertook research in Makoko on the topic of urban sustainability and directed me to the local NGO SERAC.

SERAC (Social and Economic Rights Action Center), a local NGO supporting the victims of eviction and forced relocation since 1995, became my first and main point of contact. I approached them via email to introduce my research interest and requested an interview and possible referrals to other interview partners. I was then referred to one of their community advisors, who agreed to support my research and provide me with further contacts upon my arrival.

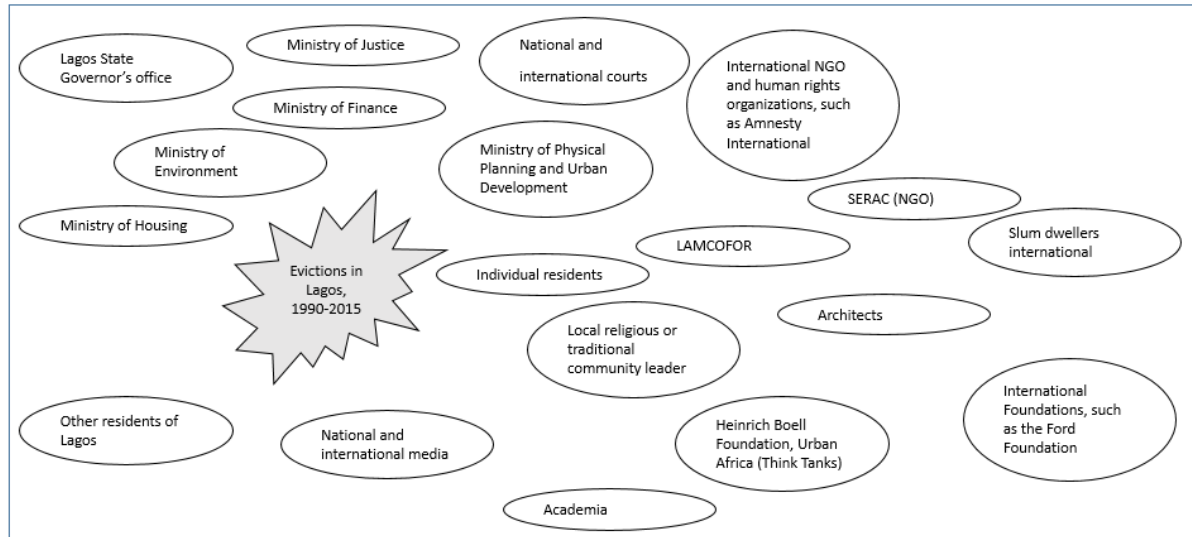
The actual research took place between October and December 2014. My contact left SERAC without giving me notice just before my arrival in Lagos, and I had to restart my request to the organization once I arrived, which caused some delay in the research process. Nevertheless, SERAC was still open to supporting my research project. The first interview took place with a staff attorney from SERAC, who not only gave an interview, but also supported me in actor-mapping which helped me identify further actors and interview partners, such as the Ministry of Physical Planning and Urban Development and a former staff member who now works for an urban think tank and is an urban activist. SERAC also facilitated my visit to Makoko and put me in touch with a community representative, the headmaster of a local primary school and younger brother of one of the Baale⁵ of Makoko. The initial actor mapping included more actors than I was finally able to reach and talk to.

Actors mapping

A list of possible relevant actors was established before entering the field through a first literature and media articles review. In the course of the first interview with the staff attorney from SERAC, this initial mapping was reviewed together and became more elaborate. However, this actors mapping is far from being complete and does not include the type of relationship the different actors have with each other. Indeed, one of the assumptions of the interface approach that the set of actors and their relationships with each other is understood as dynamic, sometimes contradicting and temporal, parallel and simultaneous. The aspects of individual relationships will therefore be

⁵ The Baale is a traditional chieftaincy line of the Yoruba.

explored later. This mapping is utilized to show the variety of actors involved to my best knowledge.



Interview process and interviews

In the sense of an open sampling the scope of interview partners was dealt with flexibly. The openness and flexibility of the Grounded Theory approach allowed me to adapt and develop my research question accordingly, when I realized I would not be able to talk to all the actors identified during the actor mapping due to time constraints. Another factor was that I got the impression during my second interview, which included a community visit to Makoko, that the area had already been visited by a fair number of journalists and researchers. While I was welcomed warmly by my interview partners, who took time to show me around and answer my questions, some bystanders and other members of the community I encountered during the boat trip reacted distantly or were even displeased with the fact that once again a foreigner was being shown around their community. This reaction, and the information that Makoko had already been under some scrutiny led to the expansion of the field of interview partners to encompass some from other 'informal' communities.

Through SERAC, I was consequently able to attend a bi-monthly meeting of LAMCOFOR (Lagos Marginalized Community Forum), a city-wide forum of community representatives established by SERAC to act as ‘middlemen’ between SERAC and the general populations of marginalized settlements. After attending the meeting and taking the opportunity to direct my questions to the group, I was invited to a site visit at Maroko by one of the representatives. Contacts with government officials from the Ministry of Physical Planning and Urban Development as well as the Lagos State Governor’s office were established with the help of local friends and family. Requests for an interview directed at the World Bank representatives in Nigeria were left unanswered. The sampling of interview partners included people of different social status, age and of both sexes pursuing different livelihood activities, to avoid an undue focus on political activities rather than on a vast system of social relations (Goodwin/Jasper 1999: 35).

After a desk review of the history of demolitions and evictions in Lagos, I decided to set the time frame for the study at the span of a generation, roughly 25 years between the landmark large-scale eviction and demolition of Maroko in July 1990, and the demolitions in Badia East shortly before my field visit in October 2014 which continued until 2015. This decision was also influenced by the fact that I was able to undertake a site visit to Maroko with someone who experienced the 1990 eviction directly.

After agreeing to be interviewed, the time and place where the interview was conducted was decided upon by the interview partner. This is important, as daily commutes in Lagos are time- and resource-intensive and no monetary compensation was offered for the interview.

The type of interview was a more or less semi-structured, open interview in English and Nigerian Pidgin, and in some cases Yorùbá translated into English by other participants. For the first interview, a guideline was developed in line with preliminary research questions which was later adapted on an ongoing basis depending on the setting and the interview partner(s). The interviews with the NGO representatives and government officials contained more specific, directed questions, whereas the questions asked during site visits and at the LAMCOFOR meeting were more openly addressed to gain an understanding of everyday practices and motivations and gather information on social interactions (Dannecker and Vossemer 2014: 154). As some of the interview partners talked about events and experiences that dated back more than 25 years, this case study

also calls for understanding the interviews as oral history accounts: they show how the interviewees personally experienced the events, and integrate aspects of change and continuity as interviewees reflect on events, and how they make sense of what happened and why.

A detailed list of the interviews used for this study is provided below. The number of actual interview partners is higher, as some of the interviews were conducted with more than one person at the same time. Participatory observation occasionally accompanied the interviews, during site visits for example (Lüders 2000). The presence of a family member played an important role as the family member acted as an intermediary between the interviewer (me) and the interview partners particularly when it became clear that the family member was not involved in a self-serving capacity and that I was part of a Nigerian family through marriage. Nevertheless, constant reflection of my role as a white, European female researcher was necessary.

During the first contact, usually via email or phone, and later at the beginning of the actual interview, the purpose of the interview and my research project were discussed, as well as questions of anonymity. With the exception of all but one bystander, the interview partners did not consider it necessary to make their statements anonymous. As it was not possible to reach all of the interview partners to confirm this decision almost two years after the interviews took place, the full names of the interview partners will not be used. The purpose of the research project was also discussed to establish a relationship of trust and to make clear that as a researcher, I do not intend to take sides or take on the role of an advocate. To prove that I had no previous affiliation with the government, the interviews with SERAC, LAMCOFOR, Makoko community members and the Maroko evictee were conducted before the I met with government officials.

All interview partners were asked beforehand if the interviews could be recorded and the findings published in an academic paper. As this will be shared with all interviewees and supporters, it is written in English.

Overview of interviews and participatory observations conducted in Lagos, October to December 2014

	Method	Interview partner(s)	Place	Date	Duration
1	Semi-structured interview	Staff attorney Emmanuel N. from SERAC	SERAC office, Ikeja, Lagos	29th October 2014	65 min.
2	Semi-structured interview and boat trip around the community	Chief Francis A., Head of the Baales in Makoko/Iwaya axis and Headmaster of Whanyinna primary school, Mr. Noah S.	Makoko, Lagos	31st October 2014	Interview: 50 min., overall trip appr. 3 hours
3	Semi-structured interview and participatory observation of meeting	Several members of LAMCOFOR who decided to speak (men and women, different age)	Ebute Metta West, Lagos	5th November 201	90 min.
4	Semi-structured interview and participatory observation	LAMCOFOR Maroko representative Mrs Titilayo A.	Maroko, Lekki, Lagos	11 th November 2014	60 min. interview, plus walk around the site
5	Semi-structured interview	Special Advisor on Infrastructure to the Governor of Lagos State, Eng. Ganiyu J.	Lagos State Secretariat, Alausa, Ikeja, Lagos	28 th November 2014	30 min.

6	Semi-structured interview	Staff engineer from the Department of Physical Planning, Ministry of Physical Planning and Urban Development, N.N.	Ministry of Physical Planning and Urban Development, Alausa, Ikeja, Lagos	5 th December 2014	60 min.
7	Semi-structured interview 10.12.2014,	Olamide U., urban activist and researcher	Ikeja, Lagos	8 th December 2014	80 min.

Communication process

The fact that I was usually accompanied by a Nigerian family member helped both in getting access to interview partners and in the communication process. The interviews were usually conducted in English/Nigerian Pidgin, depending on the setting and background of the interview partners. My knowledge of the latter allowed for people to speak more freely, even though it was probably not their first language, but at least a form of *lingua franca* in which everyone was able to communicate. I translated the Nigerian Pidgin into Standard English only slightly, if at all, in the quotes used in the empirical part of this study. The data was collected via audio recording, filming, conversation notes, pictures, and field diary and consent to do so was obtained beforehand. It was also ensured that there was enough space for discussion and questions after the official interview was over and the recording device was switched off, in which case notes were taken immediately afterwards. In general, previous knowledge or assumptions on the research subject were not articulated during the interview in order to avoid influencing the interview partners.

Data analysis

While the research process and data collection started off with a Grounded Theory approach, a different approach was used for the actual in-depth data analysis. In a first round, the interviews were coded and attached with memos according to the coding process of the Grounded Theory

approach. After deciding on Pieterse's proposition of five lines of enquiry ('vectors of the everyday') as theoretical categories along which the complexity of the city should be explored, the Grounded Theory approach was dismissed and Mayring's qualitative content analysis applied instead (Pieterse 2009; Mayring 2000). This allowed the actual themes and ideas of the text, as well as the context of the interview and the socio-cultural background to be taken into account (Mayring 2000). At the center of the analysis were the aspects of the text interpretation which followed the theory-driven categories established to answer the research question. They were revised in going back and forth between theory and empirical data in a sort of feedback loop (ibid.). In this study, the approach of deductive category application was selected as it deals with previously formulated, theoretically derived aspects of analysis, in this case the vectors of daily practice as suggested by Pieterse, and connects them to the text (ibid.). In order to determine under which conditions a text passage can be coded with a category, explicit definitions, examples and coding rules had to be established for each deductive category and revised during the analysis process by going back and forth between data material and theory (ibid.).

The majority of the interviews were transcribed more than a year after they took place due to personal reasons. Context was retrieved using the memos from the first round of analysis and field and conversation notes. The transcription of the interviews themselves was sometimes made difficult by loud background noises. Nevertheless, the long time between the interviews and the actual data analysis may have influenced the perception of the text.

Due to the fact that urbanization and questions of urban development are highly contested, complex, and characterized by the aforementioned epistemic troubles, a wide-ranging review of interlinked factors such as an analysis of the discursive practices, the historical context and urban development politics and policies had to be conducted. Hence, both primary as well as secondary resources were analyzed. The latter consisted of academic texts, relevant media sources, and publications of international development organizations. A review of local online available newspapers helped to gather further insight in the ongoing discourses of the different actors.

Role of the researcher

Another part of sound qualitative research is the reflection on the role of the researcher as the continuous interaction with those being researched inevitably influences and structures the research process and its outcome; the researcher must undertake this task with strong sensitivity and self-reflection. Being associated with SERAC and having them to refer me to people made contact with community residents and representatives relatively easy, and I was not under the impression that they took over the function of a gate keeper. Nevertheless, it was challenging at times to explain my position as a researcher and to negotiate expectations. I made sure to explain in various, appropriate ways the purpose of my research and the limited effect this research will probably have on the larger issue of evictions to people with varying educational backgrounds. In some cases, the expectation that their 'intelligence' is traded against my supposedly 'influence' was not easy to maintain. In with interactions with government representatives and officials, the researcher and the NGO lawyer, my role and their expectations were clearer. I was initially careful in my interactions with interview partners from the government, but quickly realized that they were open to critical questions as well. On another level, this study was undertaken from a position not just as a Development Studies student, but also as an African Studies graduate, which means the focus on the cultural and historical context is probably stronger than would otherwise be anticipated. Throughout the research process, I tried to reflect on how I as white, female, European researcher partook in the generation of a small social interface as part of the research process itself, in which social interactions and negotiations took place and roles were exercised and defined. At the same time, I had to consider to what extent my observations were shaped by my own biographical and theoretical assumptions.

Limitations of research

The research encountered a number of constraints and limitations. First of all, the research focus and question had to be adapted after the visit to Makoko due to the impression that doing sound research and establishing relationships of trust would take much longer than anticipated. Initially, the intention was to conduct a case study on the Makoko community and its Floating School itself and use it as a counterpoint to the Eko Atlantic project, a largely privately constructed and administered artificial island off Lagos' coast with high-end real-estate development. During the course of my research, my focus shifted from structural economic and political questions to the

practices of everyday life and the lines of interactions between different actors at the intersections of urban life. This shift in research happened due to practical constraints such as time and other resources but also in the course of continuous literature review. Another constraint on the research process was that access to more interview partners, especially members of a local governments or international organizations, such as the World Bank, could not be obtained. Other practical constraints were limitations of time and resources, personal safety considerations, weather conditions and the then-upcoming elections of February 2015.

In the following chapters, the theoretical assumptions and methodological approaches will be put into practice. In this regard, when choosing a postcolonial approach, the legacies of (pre-) colonial and postcolonial history must be considered. Demissie explores the connection between the colonial past and postcolonial present and the impact that has on the “production of meaning, the inscription of power and discipline and the dynamic construction of identities” (Demissie 2007: 1). African towns and cities have always reflected the complex and diverse cultures and vast landscapes of its continent and urban settlements therefore defy any simple classification (Anderson/Rathbone 2006: 2). Nevertheless, urbanization has long been overlooked in engagement with African history (Anderson/Rathbone 2006: 11p; Coquery-Vidrovitch 2005). The following chapters intend to gap this bridge by having a closer look at the historical and diverse context of African urbanization.

5. Interfaces in the Context of Lagos’ Urban Development

The challenges of urban government and administration are manifold in urban centers where the precolonial and colonial past is still closely intertwined with the urban realities of today. On the one hand, the LSG is confronted with the question of how to govern a chronically underfunded growing city, and on the other hand, which form of (local) governance is possible and desired (Esser 2012: 398). How power is distributed in urban centers can provide an overall understanding of a country’s democracy, especially when this city is the historically-evolved economic and political center of the nation. Cities are politically contested sites, and the outcomes of these

contestations also frame policy outcomes. This is not just a local-national process, but one influenced by international development actors, such as NGOs, interest groups and aid agencies (Esser 2012: 399).

The interface approach can be used to explain development policy narratives or planned interventions. The relevant social interfaces must be identified as critical points or linkages, even networks, which emerge during conflicts or negotiations and which explore how “social interest, cultural interpretation, knowledge and power are mediated and perpetuated or transformed” (Long 2004: 16). In the context of this study, the social interface is understood in a double sense: on the one hand, the social interactions that developed around the evictions 25 years ago are seen as a critical network, in which different actors fight over compensation and negotiate different understandings of urbanism and urban governance.

On the other hand, these social interactions around a very specific series of events, partly the outcome of planned urban development interventions, can only be understood in the framework of larger, global interfaces such as urban development directives, as well as city-specific planning processes and the historical context of this heterogeneous city. Before these larger interfaces can be explored in the following chapters, key elements of the social interface approach as developed by Long (1999, 2004) are highlighted in the following paragraph.

Interface as an organizing entity interlocking relationships and intentionalities

In the course of continuous engagement, boundaries are established and expectations, some of them contradictory, are shared. Through linkages and networks, which can be described as continued social interaction over time, the interface itself becomes organized and marked by “interlocking relationships and intentionalities” (Long 1999: 1). In the case study, the LSG has been interlocked with some of the evicted residents through certain rules of engagement over the space of 25 years. For example, the interface between LSG, SERAC and LAMCOFOR and the evicted residents “persists in an organized way over time with rules, sanctions, procedures and ‘proven’ practices for handling conflicting interests and perceptions” (Long 1999: 2). The government actors are framed through the roles accorded to them by official laws and regulations,

the NGO and LAMCOFOR through a kind of hierarchy of patron-client engagement and the latter through shared interests in the fight for their rights.

Interface as a site of conflict, incompatibility and negotiation

Though interactions at the social interface imply a certain degree of shared interests, they also have the tendency to become arenas for conflict and contestations over diverging interests and goals or asymmetrical power relations (ibid.). The interactions and negotiations at the interface are sometimes carried out by actors who take on a representational role for “particular constituencies, groups or organizations” (ibid.). This role puts them in an ambivalent and sometimes contradictory middle position between the interests of those for whom they are speaking and the expectations of their negotiating partners. Some of them are able to use this position for their own economic or political advantage when they act as “intermediaries or brokers” between different social domains (ibid.).

At the interface between LSG and the evicted communities, the issue of representation is highly hierarchically organized: SERAC interacts with the government officials on behalf of the evicted residents and represents their interests in court. LAMCOFOR acts as an intermediary between the individual residents themselves and SERAC. Interactions between LAMCOFOR or individual residents and the government do not really take place. This grouping of different levels of representation has its advantages, as it makes a ‘united front’ in interactions with the government possible, but it also opens up several interfaces within itself, where contestations over what is of interest to whom and how goals should be pursued can take place. Long points out that one has to empirically establish how and to what extent representatives act on behalf of the group they represent and that one should not assume loyalties based solely on class, ethnicity, or gender (ibid.). In the case of Nigeria, one has to consider the nature of patron-client relationships and the issue of corruption, as the country is regularly ranked as one of the least politically transparent nations in the world by Transparency International in its *Corruption Perceptions Index*⁶.

Interface and the clash of cultural paradigms

⁶ <http://www.transparency.org/cpi2015>, 1.11.2016

The social interface approach is helpful to comprehending the ways in which different worldviews or cultural paradigms are produced, perpetuated and transformed. At situations of social interface interactions, individuals or groups have to define and articulate their own “cultural or ideological positions vis-à-vis those espousing or typifying opposing views” for the first time (Long 2004: 29). For example, beliefs on urban development expressed by urban planners, policy makers and residents of poor informal settlements rarely fully match, and the same is true for those working for a single state government. In the case of Lagos, this is aggravated by overlapping competencies of ministries and other authorities, a centralization of decision-making and resources, and a mandate that is translated into fragmented policies (5.3). Hence, the definition and agreement on the relevant problems and priorities alone poses a challenge, which can lead to a “clash of rationalities” when actors with different professional and social backgrounds encounter each other (ibid.). This can be further enhanced by the coexistence of contradicting, ambiguous organizational principles or cultural models which leave “room for manoeuvre in the interpretation and utilization of these cultural values or standpoints” (Long 2004: 30). The circumstances that lead to specific definitions of reality and future visions must therefore be identified and analyzed in order to understand opposing cultural and ideological standpoints (ibid.).

The centrality of the knowledge process

The centrality of the knowledge process has already been explored in the theoretical framing of the social interface approach (3.2.2) and in the analysis of the epistemic divide between knowledge production and perceptions of urban Africa (2.1). In the context of the following analysis of the larger interfaces at play, it becomes clear how knowledge evolves out of interaction and contestations of meaning and includes struggles for authority, control and power (Long 2004: 30).

Power as the outcome of struggles over meanings and strategic relationships

Like knowledge, power is the outcome of complex contestations between different actors and their constituencies over authority and resources. In these struggles, social status and opportunities are negotiated. The arena of these contests can contain varying degrees of “room for manoeuvre”, which define how flexibly actors can behave in specific situations and to what extent they can develop strategies to do so (ibid.). The creation of “room for manoeuvre” implies a certain consent

between the actors, a negotiation basis and “thus a degree of power, as manifested in the possibility of exerting some control” (ibid.). How this power “inevitably generates resistance, accommodation and strategic compliance as regular components of the politics of everyday life” will be explored in the engagement with the vectors of daily practice in Chapter 6 (ibid.).

Interface as composed of multiple discourses

The concept of interface helps to understand how powerful discourses are affirmed, reconstructed and contested. They have been explored in the chapter on the epistemic gap that defines the knowledge production on urban Africa (2.1) and theorized in the discussion of the “battlefields of knowledge” (3.2.1). In the course of this study, discursive practices and how they emerge at critical linkages between actors’ lifeworlds and how knowledge and power shape these processes are explored (Long 1999: 4).

In Lagos, as in many other African cities grappling with their colonial and authoritarian past, the form of governance is highly centralized, often ambiguous and contradictory and not easily distinguishable from urban management. Which forces shaped the city of Lagos before the establishment of colonial rule, how later colonial government formed its urban administration and what impact this has on the way the city is governed and managed today will be explored in the following chapters.

5.1 (Pre-)Colonial Legacies

The fact that African cities have been neglected in the research on African history for a long time has contributed to the perception that Africa is a predominantly rural continent. African cities of the 1950/60s became a favorite research field for geographers, sociologists and political scientists, who discussed cities mainly in the context of post-independence nation-building processes. This process was closely aligned with modernization theory, perceiving cities as ‘modern anomalies’ which would in the long run represent the drivers of modernization, where education, modern wage opportunities and class consciousness would lead to a break with the traditional, rural Africa (Eckert 2006a: 238p, Anderson/Rathbone 2006: 10). However, the speed and scale of Africa’s

urbanization led to a spatial turn in the dealings with Africa's urban past, acknowledging that urbanization has been an important aspect of African history for over two thousand years (Anderson/Rathbone 2006, for research history on African cities: Coquery-Vidrovitch 1991). The main focus in the historical research on Lagos has been on the second half of the 19th century with the start of formal colonization and the post-independence period. The time between World War I and the 1970s is relatively underdeveloped in historical research. The colonial encounter in this historical context is understood as a critical point of linkage in the history of Lagos from which whole networks emerged which are still active today. The history of the city itself is therefore conceptualized as a critical interface and described in the following section.

The growth of a heterogeneous city

After the scramble for Africa and the establishment of European colonial rule, the reordering of urban space aimed at creating or enforcing colonial order and racial segregation, with very little to no regard for the multilingual and pluri-ethnic settings of African cities and their diverse cultural and historical characteristics, commenced. However, coastal towns were particularly influenced by links to other (African) cities through commercial trade and (temporary/labor) migration practices. This did not necessarily lead to a 'melting pot' society; however, it became an important feature of African cities in the mid-20th century, especially when ethnic differences and historic rivalries were brought up in the fights about jobs, space or power and led to the exclusion of newcomers or already marginalized communities.

Lagos is approximately 400 years old and experienced the beginning of its colonial period around 1860. At the time of its independence in 1960, it had evolved from a fishing village to a slave trade town to a metropolis. The earliest settlement in modern-day Lagos can be dated back to the 15th century and were created by the Awori, a subgroup of the Yorùbá that settled on Lagos Island and across the lagoon from Lagos Island. Their descendants had the habit of wearing white caps and are known as the White Cap Chiefs; they have held their authority through ownership of the land to this day (Olukoju 2004: 273, Aworawo 2004: 280p, Peil 1991: 5). From its early beginnings, non-Awori Yorùbá and non- Yorùbá groups, such as the Bini of the Benin empire, also moved to Lagos. Awori and Bini aristocracies still play an important role in Lagos politics today. The Egun peoples from Badagry up to what is now the Republic of Benin also came around that time to settle

in the area west of Lagos Island, and they are still represented by their descendants, the inhabitants of Makoko. Many of the arrivals were integrated through their extended stays and intermarriage, others, such as the Hausa from the North, for example, came to Lagos for trade on a more temporary basis (Olukoju 2004: 274).

In the 1760s, the Portuguese began trading at Lagos, which led to the rapid growth of the slave trade (Peil 1991: 6). Later on, freed slaves were repatriated from Brazil and Freetown in Sierra Leone to Lagos. The transition from the slave trade to 'legitimate' commerce led to the rise of Lagos as one of the commercial centers of West Africa and attracted more people to the city. The population of Lagos doubled from 5,000 around 1800 to 10,000 only ten years later and grew to 25,000 in 1850 (Olukoju 2004: 275).

After gaining independence from Britain in 1960, the population in the capital city of Lagos exploded, although only 20 % of the total Nigerian population lived in urban areas (AfDB et. Al 2016a: 12). The population in Lagos grew from 665,000 in 1963 to over 6 mio in 1988 (Eckert 2006a: 247). The Biafra war from 1967 to 1970 had little effect on the rapid expansion of the industrial sector in Lagos, which was also fueled by oil boom due to the Middle East crisis. The oil boom period from 1973 to the end of the decade created vast business opportunities and led to a significant rise in the numbers of Lebanese, Indian and Chinese immigrants in the city, which adds another layer in the very complex identity issues of Lagos. At the same time, immigrants from neighboring countries such as Togo, Benin, Niger and especially Ghana joined the heterogeneous population of Lagos. Many immigrants from other West African countries continue to live in Lagos today (Olukoju 2004: 279).

Initially, revenue from the oil price increases was invested in improving urban infrastructure, including water and adequate roads (Braimoh and Onishi 2007: 506). However, the 1986 oil price collapse and the Structural Adjustment Programs (SAP) of the West led to privatization of public assets and municipal services, particularly expenditures that are considered crucial for the urban poor such as social housing. With economic decline due to the implementation of the SAP, rural-urban migration temporarily slowed (ibid., AfDB et. al 2016a: 13). In the 1980s, Lagos, like many African cities, was defined by growing poverty and a collapse of urban services. In 1991, Lagos lost its capital status to Abuja, but Lagos remains the economic center of the region, despite the

fact that political power is now concentrated in Abuja. Currently about half the Nigerian population lives in urban areas, which is predicted to rise to 65% by 2020. The recent conflict in the North has also increased the scale of urbanization there, as people flee their villages to seek refuge in cities.

Lagos initially experienced slow demographic and physical growth up which increased significantly in speed and scale during and after World War II, a process that can be linked to colonial economic policies. This trend continued into the form of an 'urban bias', which favored the urban over the rural sector (Eckert 2006: 201pp., Eckert 2006a: 246). Infrastructure, however, did not keep up with the scale and speed of urbanization in Africa that took off during World War II.

Spatial issues

Colonial practices were inscribed not only onto the bodies of their colonial subjects, but also on the architecture and landscape of their cities. Colonial spatial tactics were used to construct a society's spatiality (Myers 2003: 8). Yet, Lagos cannot be seen exclusively as a 'dual city' "because colonial societies cannot be understood by the simple dichotomy 'European v. Indigenous'" (Cooper 1994 in Eckert 2006: 213). In 1907, the local British Governor and medical doctor William McGregor ordered large quinine-prophylaxis measures targeted at both colonial and local populations. Instead, the colonial administration attempted to establish an exclusive European settlement in the center of Lagos under the pretext of sanitary segregation, which encountered vivid protest by the African population, part of which managed to remain (Eckert 2006: 213).

During colonial rule, the city suffered from insufficient housing and overcrowded streets, poor sanitation and endemic diseases due to constant growth, but no government found it necessary to significantly improve this situation. Governor McGregor was a notable exception who tried to improve general hygiene and combat diseases such as malaria. Sanitation and safe water supplies for 'natives' were seen as uneconomical and a sewage system was never installed (Peil 1991: 8). Like in many African cities during colonial times, residential segregation based on racist assumptions, masked behind fear of violence and medical concerns was established as means of

control over the African population, and used to regulate accommodation of a growing urban population. The government continues to resort to similar arguments even today to justify evictions (5.5).

The segregation palpable during the 20th century in African towns and cities did not arise from colonialism alone. African towns and cities often had a long tradition of segregated spaces – whether to separate royal or religious communities from the commoners or slaves, men from women and children, tradesmen according to occupation or specialization, or indigenous from immigrated communities. The settlement arrangement reflected power and social hierarchy (Olukoju 2004: 12). Nevertheless, those segregated spaces were always contested, subject to conflict and change, where identities were made and negotiated (Anderson/Rathbone 2006: 7).

In the case of Lagos, the establishment of a land register by the British Governor in 1863 to allocate land titles laid the groundwork for using land as investment and reinforced conflicts around land (Eckert 2006: 219; Eckert 2006a: 242). Land that was previously available in abundance and therefore uncontested, became a commodity: of the 3500 Crown Grants issued, about 100 grants went to Europeans, 1100 to Christian Africans and the rest to indigenous Lagosians. By 1880, land in Lagos became subject of speculation as Crown grants were also used as security for trade grants (Eckert 2006: 220).

Land ownership became the most common reason for wealth. White Cap chiefs, traders from the interior, and repatriates from Brazil, Cuba and most of all Sierra Leone evolved into a class of rentiers who could not keep up with trade any more, but ensured the education of their children through their rental income (Eckert 2006a: 242p). Immigrants from the rural hinterland used family ties or chiefly/local families to obtain land use rights. Others settled wherever there was space available. Social interaction between the colonial settlers and the indigenous population, who lived in separate areas, was minimal (Aworawo 2004: 281).

However, the majority of access to housing and control over land lay in the hands of the more indigenous citizens and was fought over along ethnic and ‘tribal’ lines. In 1950, 73% of the 230,000 residents of Lagos identified as Yorùbá Awori and other Yorùbá groups, while only 12% called themselves Igbo. Only 37% were estimated to have been born in the city, with a further 39%

originating from the Western region and only 11% and 8% from the Northern and Eastern region respectively. The longer-established residents with larger communities to support them guarded access to accommodation and jobs and other economic and political advantages against 'newcomers' and minorities, which further contributed to the isolation and exclusion of the 'newcomers'. (Anderson/Rathbone 2006: 8; Eckert 2006a: 244, 246p; Aworawo 2004: 282). Officially, British law applied to land questions in colonial Lagos, but colonial administration soon also took 'traditional/customary' law into account, which led to conflicting interpretations by local elites, enforced by a still-incomplete land register. This situation is characteristic for Lagos today and opened the door for land and property speculation, which often took on criminal forms.

Urban administration

'Indigenous' Lagosians struggled to maintain their share of control over administration, trade and land under British colonial rule, which was characterized by a system of 'indirect rule' and frequently-changing structures and administrations (Peil 1991: 8). Until 1900, no distinction between the local and central administration of the colony and the protectorate of Southern Nigeria was made. In 1922, the inauguration of the Legislative Council gave local elites chances to participate politically, but only in Lagos. It also allowed for Nigerians in other parts of the country to participate in Lagos politics. Voting was restricted to males with a certain income, which then and now was rarely announced (Peil 1991: 9). In 1953, Lagos became the capital territory and the political power became officially concentrated in Lagos. In 1967, communal associations succeeded in regaining power over local administration through the creation of Lagos State. The complex and contradictory structure of federal and state-level administration and conflicting authorities remains a feature of Lagos politics today.

The British started a colonial development program in Nigeria and preferred Lagos in the allocation of administrative power and institutions. Therefore, even more people moved to Lagos in the hope of finding a white collar job in the formal sector. Very few succeeded and the informal sector subsequently grew. After the end of colonial rule, postcolonial elites hoped that Lagos would be one of the drivers of national and African development. Many projects were undertaken, such as the construction of an airport, universities, hospitals, highways, bridges, apartment buildings and banks to mark the way to modernization and modernity. With time, the idea of Lagos

became associated with the ‘national project’ and the postcolonial state began to disappear. Despite the continuing influx of people, urban development was pushed to the margins of political consideration (Demissie 2007: 2).

In summary, Lagos can be described as a heterogeneous place that has attracted immigrants from all over the country and region for a long period of time, a city in which the constantly diminishing access to and control over land has always been contested, and a large part of land ownership remains unclarified to this day. It can be understood not so much as a melting pot but more as an assemblage of various identities and interests, which has been heavily shaped by its colonial past and strong Yorùbá heritage. The more recent urban planning processes in Lagos will be analyzed in the following chapter, which will introduce development policy perspectives on African cities.

5.2 International Development Policy Perspectives on African cities and Lagos

Urban development played a minor role in the global scale of development politics up until the year 2000. City development tended to be excluded from the imperial agenda as it was seen to be covered by colonial control over urban settlements (5.1) and the focus was on the development of rural areas instead (Mamdani 1996 cited in Parnell 2016: 530). Indeed, whenever the attention of the international community was directed at urban development, it served mostly the interest of colonial powers and local elites. When dealing with cities, sectoral issues (such as transport, housing, health, water, electricity) continued to be approached separately long after the colonial period had ended. The only common urban issue that received continuous global attention was that of disease control and the provision of basic health facilities (Demissie 2013 cited in Parnell 2016: 530). Later, the nation-building agenda led to a further neglect of urban policy development and planning and to a disregard for the role local governments can play.

The policy vacuum of the 1960s and 1970s ended only when a first global debate on urban policy was attempted with Habitat I in 1976, which was largely shaped by the perspectives of the World Bank. The UN Habitat conferences have developed into an institutional mechanism that has afforded voices concerned with sustainability and urban questions a growing influence despite the

Habitat conferences' preoccupation with questions of social sustainability in the face of growing ecological risks⁷ (Parnell 2016: 531).

In its yearly report on the state of world cities, *The World Cities Report, Urbanization and Development: Emerging Futures* from May 2016, UN-Habitat calls for the establishment of a *New Urban Agenda* at Habitat III, the United Nations Conference on Housing and Sustainable Urban Development, in Quito in October 2016. Depending on how urbanization is planned and managed, according to the tone of the report, it can be unsustainable and lead to increased inequality, the growth of slum settlements and destructive impacts on climate change (UN-Habitat 2016: iv). The role ascribed to cities in the global system and the specificity of urban settlements, and what the urban future implies for ecological challenges, will be up for discussion.

Despite a clearly-marked transition from “development in cities” to “cities in development”, the *New Urban Agenda* will probably not be so new after all – many issues have been raised in the two previous documents of Habitat I (Vancouver) & II (Istanbul) (Parnell 2016: 532). Forty years ago, Habitat I (1976) committed to a safe and sufficient water supply, the large-scale upgrading of poor settlements and a land management system that serves the common public interest. Twenty years later, Habitat II (1996) called for more coordination and cooperation in the implementation of the Habitat agenda. At Habitat II in Istanbul, the right to housing was anchored in the Istanbul Agreement and Habitat Agenda and a key issue in the debate. As a consequence, the UN Human Settlement Programme (UN-Habitat) was established to promote housing rights. The United Cities and Local Governments (UCLG), an international umbrella organization for cities, local governments, and municipal associations calls the “main weakness of the Habitat II Agenda [...] the unclear means of implementation” (UCLG 2016).

UCLG and other platforms call for the inclusion of the “Right to the City” as the foundation of the *New Urban Agenda* and are backed in this approach by Brazil and Latin American countries, who have more influence now than 20 years ago (Parnell 2016: 532). The rights-based approach has its intellectual roots in an idea first proposed by Henri Lefebvre in *Le Droit à la Ville* (1968) and calls

⁷ These tendencies also explain the fact that there is a relatively large academic corpus on environmental sustainability and health issues of urban Lagos.

for a shift in urban development paradigm when demanding the adoption of “the right of all inhabitants, present and future, to use, occupy and produce just, inclusive and sustainable cities, defined as a common good essential to a full and decent life” (Global Platform for the Right to the City 2016: 2).

The increasing attention directed at urban development collides with the global rise in the use of the term ‘slum’ since the year 2000 (Huchzermeyer 2011: 2). That year, the member states of the United Nations (UN) adopted eight international development goals, the Millennium Development Goals (MDG). The MDG can be interpreted as how cities across Africa, Latin America and Asia were approached through specific targets by policy makers without a comprehensive urban policy agenda behind them, such as the significant improvement of the lives of at least 100 million so called slum-dwellers by 2020 (Parnell 2016: 530).

Although ‘slum upgrading’ is promoted as best practice in the MDG and previous outcome documents of the Habitat conferences, in which a clear warning against ‘slum eradication’ is given, the practice of ‘slum demolition’ continues. Huchzermeyer traces this back to a practice of miscommunication and misinformation between UN-Habitat and national governments, which are under the impression that they must achieve ‘slum-free cities’ (Huchzermeyer 2011: 2). Indeed, she points out, the target of improving living conditions for one-tenth of the global ‘slum dwellers’ population has turned into a “repressive, late modernist political agenda and fueled efforts at ‘slum demolitions’ (Huchzermeyer 2011: 3). These processes can also be observed in the case of Lagos, even though the scale and frequency of demolitions and evictions has decreased in recent years.

In September 2015, the member states of the UN adopted a new set of goals to end poverty, fight inequality and ensure climate protection as part of a new sustainable development agenda with specific targets to be achieved over the next 15 years. The Sustainable Development Goals (SDG) include an urban-specific goal for the first time: SDG 11 is exclusively about cities and human settlements and how to make them “inclusive, safe, resilient and sustainable” (UN 2016). But this is not the only novelty. As Parnell points out, the SDG shifted the focus from the living conditions of ‘slum-dwellers’ to a single universal principle, strengthened the role of subnational and local governments and put more emphasis on ecological limitations and the threat of climate change (Parnell 2016: 529). More practical questions such as financing instruments (e.g. through Public

Private Partnerships) and data collection are also addressed. Poor data quality and availability is a major issue in research on African cities and new technologies could set much needed incentives to promote data collection and analysis.

The Paris Agreement of the COP 21 (Conference of Parties) to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) from December 2015 followed suit and stresses the role of non-Party stakeholders, including cities, local communities and other subnational authorities, in addressing climate change (UNFCCC 2015). These developments show that the rise (or return) of city-states as global actors is acknowledged by the international development community. The question as to what is driving the evolution of an urban-specific agenda and the surrounding policy shift remains open for assessment.

Although civil society has had extensive influence on the Habitat I & II processes and the formulation of the MDG and SDG, its increasing participation does not mean that the epistemic divide has been overcome, even in policy formulation from within the continent (Parnell 2016: 532). Cities are painted as engines of economic growth, climate change adaption and mitigation, and as drivers of development if there is a rise in employment that accompanies infrastructure investment by the African Development Bank's (AfDB) Urban Development Strategy. This strategy revolved around infrastructure delivery, governance and private sector development (AfDB 2011). The *African Economic Outlook 2016* with its special theme on urbanization compiled by AfDB, OECD and UNDP, places emphasis on inclusive growth, job creation, improved housing and social safety systems, and appropriate links to rural areas to increase development in cities (AfDB et al. 2016).

In the case of Lagos, the *African Economic Outlook* on Nigeria calls for an “integrated approach to urban planning” to make use of the potential for innovation and job creation in sectors such as ICT, infrastructure construction and trade. Income inequality and rising unemployment are identified as the major threats to sustainable development due to meager urban planning and inadequate links between structural transformation and the rapid urbanization.

The agendas of these development policies are still deeply rooted in a largely Western-based, deficiency-oriented understanding of African urbanization processes in which rapid urban growth

has largely been seen as the cause of urban problems without paying attention to the cities which, despite undergoing massive growth in population, managed to maintain a high quality of life (Satterthwaite 2010). In developing countries, urbanization is still primarily associated with the image of population growth, the influx of people from rural areas and “economic and political processes associated with globalization” (Braithwaite and Onishi 2007: 502).

Cities as specific actors in the development process have long been ignored by the larger international development community, who only recently began to recognize the role of non-traditional actors such as cities, local communities, civil societies and the private sector in their agendas and develop an ‘urban agenda’. Lately, cities have been commonly identified as both some of the culprits and victims of climate change and are supposed to reduce their carbon emissions while at the same time enhancing their climate-resilience. Through adaptation and mitigation measures, national and local governments are seen as the drivers of this transformation. The everyday practices through which urban residents navigate their lives and make city life actually viable, receive neither recognition in international development policy approaches nor are they reflected in the urban planning policies and laws in Lagos.

5.3 Urban planning policies and laws in Lagos: Planning and (I)n(f)ormality

Global urban policy was neither comprehensive nor universal until the establishment of a city-specific target in the MDG in the year 2000. This is also partly reflected in local urban policies. The policy vacuum of the 1960s and 1970s and the World Bank-shaped urban policies of the 1980s are reproduced in Lagos’ urban policy development. Over the years, urban planning in Lagos has been mainly conceived in terms of physical interventions implemented through ‘master plans’ and ignored the complexity of the different communities and how they interact with the city at large. Planning processes focus on the overcoming of informality – in housing, transport, waste collection, and employment – and are oblivious to the fact that many informal practices actually constitute viable urban normality.

The LSG 's approach to urban development today can be described as a business model in which the city is run like a company and PPP and (foreign) investments are sought after to finance urban development. Informal settlements still tend to be 'invisible' in socio-economic surveys and data on Lagos tends to be fragmented and somewhat questionable (Pugalis et al. 2014: 520). In addition, Lagos State is organized in a centralized and highly hierarchical manner and "all the state-led provision, policies, and initiatives have to go through the bottleneck of state government institutions" (Heinrich Boell Foundation 2016: 9). The 20 Local Government Areas (LGA) receive little budgetary support and have minimal power over their development.

Official urban development programs directed at the poorer areas of the city are marked by a "stereotyped assessment" with little or no attention paid to their specific socio-spatial-temporal characteristics and a general discrepancy between community and place-based needs and potentials and the respective interventions (ibid.). The respective government institutions and agencies often face institutional and financial weakness, in addition to overlapping and conflicting functions and incoherent implementation strategies, not only on the state level, but also between the State and Federal Government (Heinrich Boell Foundation 2016: 220). Operational procedures are not clearly defined and urban planning laws are not mainstreamed into urban planning and administration.

The development and growth of Lagos has been administered by various legal, policy and institutional structures and schemes which have had little recorded success thus far compared to the funds and measures invested in them (Pugalis et al. 2014: 524).

In 1929, the colonial government established its first official urban planning authority, the Lagos Executive Development Board (LEBD), in response to the outbreak of the bubonic plague, which resulted in the demolition of 'slum' houses and facilitated a separate residential area for Europeans through resettlement and forceful displacement of the former residents (Peil 1991: 167).

The Nigerian Town and Country Planning Ordinance of 1946 can be labelled as the start of a coordinated action to control and organize the growth and development of Nigerian cities. The act limited urban planning activities to mainly estate development and building control and can be understood as part of the build-up to independence and the desire to make the city worthy of the

new nation (Immerwahr 2007: 171). The LEDB supported this approach through the “Lagos Slum Clearance Scheme” mainly to develop a central business district on Lagos Island and to ‘sanitize’ the city (Peil 1991: 168-70). The LEDB’s first ‘Master Plan for Lagos Metropolitan Area 1965-1985’ remained a draft.

Access to land

The statutory land tenure system in Nigeria had its roots in two systems: The Law of England, and Local Legislations in Nigeria, with the latter being the predominant form of land tenure until the 1970s (Aina 1992 cited in Braimoh and Onishi 2007: 506). It was supposed to ensure low-income earners access to land without their having to illegally occupy it (Rakodi 1997 cited in *ibid.*). The statutory system was intended to protect individuals’ tenure rights and enable the state access to land through the power of acquisition. Increasing population pressures, however, led to increasing speculation in urban land and housing tenure and benefitted influential groups, such as traditional leaders, politicians and landowners. The statutory land tenure system proved to have little effect on the housing situation for low-income earners, as the state hardly ever allocated land to them. Instead, government-owned land is used to build housing estates for the elites (Aina 1992 cited in Braimoh and Onishi 2007: 506; Heinrich Boell Foundation 2016: 220).

The Land Use Act of 1978 was supposed to solve the issue of customary land allocation, render the administrative system more efficient and put a stop to land speculation. As a consequence, state governors received control over land in urban areas, whereas local governments controlled rural land. Where there are no statutory rights on the land, customary rights of occupancy can be granted for residential or agricultural purposes (Braimoh and Onishi 2007: 506). Braimoh and Onishi point out that in practice, the Land Act was unable to distribute land more equally, mainly due to the inefficient issue of Certificates of Occupancy (CofO) and an inconsistent and bureaucratic implementation of the legislation. Rather, the Land Use Act improved State access to land and therefore favored wealthy individuals and companies who were well-connected and able to influence government officials (*ibid.*). In the 1980s, after the oil price shock and the introduction of the SAP, the prices for building materials and property maintenance increased and landlords transferred rising costs to their tenants. Thus, low-income earners must to rely on an informal and

highly commercialized tenure system, as there is an acute shortage of public housing and the government does not keep its promises.

The Emergence of Master Plans

In the 1980s, the Lagos State Regional Plan (1980-2000) and the Lagos State Metropolitan Master Plan in 1981, both technocratic programs backed by the UN and the World Bank, were supposed to lead to urban development and fight poverty through strict urban planning (Peil 1991: 166). However, they were never fully implemented due to the military dictatorships from 1983 to 1998.

In 1991, the National Housing Policy (NHP, revised in 2006 and 2012) was announced with the goal of rehabilitating the housing sector and setting appropriate housing standards with the support and participation of the of private sector. Low-income households should be able to acquire loans through the National Housing Fund (NHP) in order to own their own homes (Braimoh and Onishi 2007: 506). Buckley et al. identify several deficiencies within this scheme both on the side of the potential beneficiaries as well as the institution itself: land ownership and a “reliable collateral and stable income” are preconditions to accessing the fund, well as yearly mortgage payments affected by high rates of inflation prove to be insurmountable hurdles for the target group. Furthermore, the “mortgages institutions themselves are weakly capitalized” and provide a loan amount that does not cover the high costs of construction (Buckley et al. 1993 cited in Braimoh and Onishi 2007: 506).

With time, the urban planning agenda was pushed to the periphery of policy development and regarded as an extension of economic planning with little commitment to the implementation of the few established master plans. The first nationwide urban development policy was not established by the Federal Ministry of Works and Housing until 1992, when a national and regional development commission was appointed along with urban and regional development boards for states and local governments as well as cost recovery mechanisms for urban infrastructure and further involvement of the private sector (AfDB et al. 2016a: 14). The financing capability of the concurrently- established Urban Development Bank of Nigeria, which provides loans for infrastructure projects, remains weak due to insufficient support from its stakeholders (ibid.).

While the Nigerian authorities have set standards for adequate housing, their implementation remains fragmentary, underfunded and contradictory.

In 2005, the Nigerian Federal Government initiated the Lagos Mega City Plan (LMCP) (Lagos Megacity Project) to provide infrastructure, housing, tourism, and development in Lagos (Ilesanmi 2010: 247). One year later, the World Bank-assisted Lagos Metropolitan Development and Governance Project (LMDGP, 2008-2013) was established, aiming at upgrading precarious settlements by providing basic infrastructure with “moderately unsatisfactory outcomes” (World Bank 2014). According to the World Bank, the project failed primarily due to poor implementation by state government agents. Superficial up-front community participation and engagement, poor data collection, as well as discrepancies in understandings of how the project was supposed to be implemented also contributed to its failure (Heinrich Boell Foundation 2016: 221). There are indications that funds were ‘misdirected’; and side effects, such as the government using violence to clear designated areas without adhering to common procedures and community consultations, were neither taken seriously in a timely manner nor followed up upon properly; examples include the Makoko evictions (Pugalis et al. 2014: 521). In this regard, it is not only the government that is to blame, but also the World Bank’s approach to urban development, which goes after the infrastructure ‘fix’, as well as large-scale development projects, where “generalised capital investment is applied rather than responding to place-based needs” (Pugalis et al. 2014: 525).

Nevertheless, the World Bank continues to extend loans and credits to the LSG (LASG). The current “Lagos State Development Plan (LSDP) 2012-2025” reflects the World Bank’s approach in aiming to creating economic growth and employment to increase tax revenues.

5.4 Informality in the City: Land Use, Housing and Informal Economy

Informality is used as pretext for demolition, relocation and eviction by the LSG. From the point of view of a city government, urban informality can be described as everything unplanned, unregulated and out of an authority’s control in city sectors such as land use, housing, the economy, infrastructure, transport and waste. It can be understood as a complex process, which when

interrupted by imposed changes to livelihood such as eviction, makes adaptation to new circumstances necessary, for example in terms of jobs. Furthermore, one paradox of urban planning policies is that they tend to initially create more informality rather than reducing it, simply by ‘formalizing’ previously informal activities and conditions and forcing those who cannot comply to take on different informal activities. If government fails to provide a functioning alternative for those people, their new informal strategy again becomes permanent. In this sense, informality is not the negating of urban planning policies, but an expression of their failure to address the needs of a city’s population.

Roy identifies two contrasting frameworks for the discussions on informality, which are also reflected in the discourse on Lagos, namely “one of crisis and the other of heroism” (Roy 2005: 148). While the framework of crisis is mainly associated with urban population growth fueled by migration and ungovernable cities, the latter paints an image of “heroic entrepreneurship” in which poor people compensate for the state’s failure to attend to their basic needs by coming up with innovative and creative solutions on their own (ibid.). According to Roy, both frames have significant shortcomings: They equate informality with poverty and fail to note that informality is embedded in “varying degrees of power and exclusion”. In addition, they represent concepts in which informality and poverty are seen as consequences of being isolated from the global capitalistic system (Roy 2005: 148). This conceptualization is even more problematic is when it turns ‘helping the poor to help themselves’ into an obligation for poor to lift themselves out of their impoverished condition, thereby releasing the state from its responsibility towards its citizens (ibid.).

A lesson on this form of neo-communitarianism can be learnt from the case of the famous Makoko Floating School: the school is a much acclaimed yet somewhat controversial award-winning urban design project by Nigerian architect Kunlé Adeyemi and was built using local materials in 2013 with the support of the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), the German Heinrich Boell Foundation, the Federal Ministry of Environment Africa Adaptation Programme, Yaba Local Council Development Area (LCDA) and the Makoko waterfront. The building, which was intended to function as a primary school as well as a community meeting center, had allegedly opened to students in October 2015 but was not in use during my visit at that same time. Despite

the large number of students, the school was only able to host 60 students at a time. In June 2016, the three-story high building collapsed in a storm. Students were not affected as they had been moved away from the school three months earlier, due to safety concerns of parents. The community now blames the architect for leaving the responsibility of maintenance with them, and the architect in turn considers this version of the school to be only a “prototype” (Okoroafor 2016). By leaving the task of building and maintaining a school with an architect or the community the state is withdrawing from its responsibility to provide adequate educational facilities to its citizens. The global attention the school received is an example of an “aestheticization of poverty” which equates “upgrading with aesthetic upgrading rather than the upgrading of livelihoods” or capacities (Roy 2005: 150). Going back to Roy’s critique of the dualistic approach to informality, I choose to instead follow her proposition that informality is “a *mode* of urbanization”, which describes urban informality as “an organizing logic, a system of norms that governs the process of urban transformation itself” (Roy and AlSayyad cited in Roy 2005: 148). In the next paragraph, I want to focus on constructions of informality in the areas of land use, housing and jobs as they represent a significant share of urban economies (Roy 2005: 148).

Land use and housing

‘Slums’ are usually informal settlements, but not all informal settlements are slums. In many cities, squatter settlements and upper-class housing co-exist in close proximity to each other. Illegally erected upscale housing constructions on land not declared for residential use can also represent a form of illegal housing but embodies a “very different concretization of legitimacy” (Roy 2005: 149). Informal settlements in cities are often equated with the existence of ‘slums’ and poverty and form the antithesis of an aspired city (Huchzermeyer 2011: 6). The only globally-conducted assessment of housing deficiencies is done by the United Nations, which also uses the term ‘slum’ (Hooper and Ortolando 2012: 100). In the UN-Habitat Global Report on Human Settlements, *The Challenge of Slums*, ‘slums’ are described as a “wide range of low-income settlements”, specifically to urban settlements characterized by conditions such as:

“lack of basic services, substandard housing or illegal and inadequate building structures, overcrowding and high density, unhealthy living conditions and hazardous locations,

insecure tenure, irregular or informal settlements, and poverty and social exclusion as well as a minimum settlement size” (UN-Habitat 2003: 11).

UN-Habitat further establishes more specific categories of slums according to their socio-spatial-temporal characteristics, such as origin and age, location and boundaries, size and scale, legality and vulnerability, and state of development (Pugalis et al. 2014: 523).

The obsession with ‘slums’ in urban development policies can obscure other, more pressing issues. In 1990, Peil argued that in terms of urban planning, the development and provision of infrastructural services is more crucial than housing. She suggests that housing problems are easier for people to deal with themselves, privately and according to local practices (Peil 1991: 166). Indeed, she continues, in Lagos

“there has been much less squatting [...] than in eastern Africa or Latin America because the low level of government control over construction meant that legitimate houses could be easily and profitably built: housing the poor was good business [...] the safest investment available, producing a quick return on capital” (Peil 1991: 146).

Even renting out unfinished buildings can be a common way of avoiding squatters while making enough money to continue building.

In some cases, the demands for space from the poor urban population are ignored assuming that it will result in a large influx into the city. However, Huchzermeyer argues that poverty comes to a large extent from *within* the city due to decreasing formal working opportunities and inadequate city governance, and that rural-urban migration often remains circular (Huchzermeyer 2011: 4).

Many informal settlements in Lagos can be found in what are declared ‘high-risk’ and ‘vulnerable’ areas by the urban government, such as near dumpsites, in flood-prone areas or under high tension cables, often at the outskirts of the city. While the designation may often be justified, the classification of an area as ‘unsafe’ by the LSG happens arbitrarily in the eyes of the residents and often serves a different purpose, then the one stated, for example when the area is suddenly deemed to be an eyesore or intended for industrial or upscale residential development. Declaring ‘slums’ unhygienic, unsafe or a risk to the environment is a time-honored city government strategy to clear unwanted informal settlements. In the case of the Makoko evictions in July 2012, the campaign by

the LSG to remove one of the oldest parts of Lagos was justified by “unsanitary conditions”, violation of environmental legislation and a lack of discipline, while critics argued that it “embarrassed local officials” (Okoroafor 2016; Interview with Emmanuel N., 29.10.2014).

Urban informal economy

The demolition of houses and the forceful evictions from settlements also deprives residents of their livelihoods. Many of the (evicted) residents of Makoko play a small, but integral part in Lagos’ overall economy, from the women who smoke and sell fish to the whole segment of the settlement occupied with various aspects of the wood logging industry. This approach continues the practice of discounting local and indigenous practices of trade and the distinctive features of an urban economy.

With an estimated ‘informal sector’ of 50-80%, Lagos’ economy still consist very much of unregulated activities which nevertheless fulfill important functions: first, they are a source of employment in a low-capital environment where one does not need an established shop but can start selling on the street or from home with very low overhead costs to shoulder. The second is the importance of proximity to home and easy accessibility in a city where the daily commute can easily take up to eight hours. In this case, it is necessary to be able to purchase goods while in line for a bus or on the walk home. Third, petty trading and production represents an income opportunity for women, youth and children, and newcomers to the city (Immerwahr 2007: 173; Peil 1991: 86-89).

The strategy of removing ‘undesired activities’ by street traders from public spaces is supposed to leave the impression of an organized, controlled space and follows modernist planning principles of separated land use (Omoegun 2015: 125). Activities perceived as being part of an unorganized and informal economy are intended to be replaced by formal market structures which many of the vendors cannot afford (Immerwahr 2007: 174). Governments’ meticulous attention to the appearance of highly frequented and strategically-located public spaces can be explained by the presumed conclusions that will be drawn about the overall function of the city and its attractiveness for investments (Omoegun 2015: 136). Scott calls this an expression of “high modernism: the

search for a rational order in aesthetic terms, the belief that an efficient city is one that looks regimented and orderly” (Scott 1998 cited in Roy 2005: 150).

In the case of Lagos, the Lagos State Parks and Gardens Agency (LASPARK) runs a Beautification and Design Department responsible for tree planting, landscaping and beautification projects and takes this approach literally. Under former Governor Fashola, the LSG gradually began making the face of the city green. The “Fashola flowers” were met with initial skepticism, as the following statement from a newspaper article shows: “Why Fashola dey waste money to plant flower, na flower we go chop?”⁸ (Nwanne 2015). However, the city government is known for implementing their development ideas with more forceful measures, as the next chapter will explain.

5.5 Regulations and enforcement: a generation of evictions

In the editor’s introduction of the 1994 edition of *Environment & Urbanization*, the authors describe evictions as the forceful “transfer of high value land from poorer groups [...] to middle or upper-income groups or the freeing-up of land to [...] benefit wealthier groups” through commercial and industrial development and high-end real estate development (Unknown author 1994: 4). This transfer also marks the transition of use-value to exchange-value of land. It will be shown how, in the case of Lagos, evictions mainly serve the purpose of clearing land for redevelopment.

Audefroy shows how governments can play a double role in terms of evictions by initiating or sanctioning them and using a variety of justifications which resemble the arguments of colonial governments: improvement/beautification measures, the depiction of ‘slums’ as centers of social problems (crime), health issues such as water-borne disease and hygienic risks, and the redevelopment of strategically-located sites (Audefroy 1994). As in the case of the evictions taking place in Lagos, these justifications are often manifold and interchangeable. Most times, the affected communities are, if at all, only notified shortly before the evictions.

⁸ Why is Fashola wasting money to plant flowers, are we going to eat them? (Translation by the author).

LSG is currently occupied with several large-scale, capital-intensive infrastructure projects targeting transportation, mobility and the development of whole new city districts for industrial and high-end residential purposes. Many large scale infrastructure projects in Lagos tend to displace the poor and rob them of their livelihoods. Unemployment and rising poverty are some of the consequences. As the resettlement and relocation offers by the government are hardly ever adequate for the number of people and their needs, 'slums' and squatter settlements start to mushroom elsewhere in the city and fuel a vicious cycle of displacement and the creation of more informal settlements (du Plessis 2005). Another result of mega projects is the impact they have on the environment: increased flooding, due to wetland reclamation, for example, puts whole communities under water in the rainy season.

The consequences of an eviction process on individuals, households and communities are diverse. People tend to lose not only their homes, possessions and the businesses they invested in, as they usually have no safety of tenure, but also their social community network, which is affected by the sudden dispersal of its residents. In addition, landowners and landlords in Lagos prefer to rent out their land or property instead of selling it. Some influential groups in Lagos such as the White Cap Chiefs are especially able to acquire wealth through this practice that dates back to end of the 19th century (5.1). In times of population pressure and rising prices for land and property, they are able to control their profits (Peil 1994: 176). In 2016, middle-income households in Lagos are rarely able to purchase land within the state and have to resort to buying land in the neighboring Ogun State if they want to build their own house.

If the population is resettled, the government-assigned areas often do not have adequate infrastructure available. Evicted or resettled residents are in weaker financial positions, are therefore rarely able to fight eviction legally and are reliant on the support of non-governmental organizations (NGO) or pro-bono lawyers (Environment & Urbanization 1994: 4). In some cases, physical violence, arrests and even death are the results of evictions. In the case of Makoko (2012), the assistant Baale of the community was shot by police (Okogie 2012). Many others are said to have died as a consequence of the stress and shock, especially elderly or sick people, as reports from Badia East (2013) and Maroko indicate (Amnesty International 2013: 38; Interview with Mrs Titiloya A., 11.11.2014).

LSG attributes relatively little effort to the development of ‘slum’ areas or ‘informal settlements’. Rather, residents mainly feel the presence of the State government in the face of demolition and eviction by government officials when the land they live on has been designated for one of the city’s mega projects. These projects are characterized by a high demand for land resources and increase the pressure on an already congested and densely populated city (Heinrich Boell Foundation 2016: 179p).

The history of evictions and forced relocations shows which strategies the government uses to implement urban change in places where they expect resistance from the local inhabitants. This resistance is channeled into social organizations focused on supporting the poor population in fighting for its rights, which will be explored in the next chapter. Braimoh and Onishi define urban change in a double sense: the change coming from the people and change implemented by government, both of which lead to a change in the urban landscape and possibly to an alternative vision of African urbanization that takes everyday practices into consideration (Braimoh and Onishi 2007).

5.6 Organized Actors of Urban Change

Lagos can be characterized by its heterogeneous city life: many people still have rural backgrounds, moved to Lagos only recently and still maintain close ties to their village. The more than 500 different languages of the country are spoken in the city as well as the many others brought in by migrants from the region. The colonial footprints on urban structure, law, government and multinational imperatives are syncretized by the population for their own needs.

Religion is firmly based in local culture, and it is not unusual to see a mosque right next to a church, providing direction and support in a life otherwise dominated by everyday struggles. In Lagos, primary and secondary education is usually shared and interfaith marriages are not unusual. Many churches, especially Pentecostal and Charismatic branches of the faith, are run like a business, and feed into the narrative of entrepreneurship as the way out and provide social ties and business connections. Religious activities are a way of spending leisure time and structure social

relationships. Politically active fundamentalism has not been a major issue in Lagos so far, and Christians and Muslims cooperate for their mutual benefit according to situation and interest. Religious tensions, otherwise quite common in the rest of the country, are relatively rare in Lagos. The terror group Boko Haram has not yet carried out a major open attack in Lagos, nevertheless crime and violence rates are high.

The megacity is a place of many interest groups, where leadership is not necessarily pluralistic and is frequently organized along class lines. Communal and economic interests are pursued by religious, political and community leaders, who tend to be brokers, patrons, landlords and family elders all at once (Peil 1991: 193). The Oba of Lagos and lower traditional leaders (or people who claim the title) from the Yorùbá communities still have influence in state politics and to a larger extent in local politics (such as the Baale), and are sought out before election time to mobilize their supporters although they do not hold any actual political power. Now, the city is too large to control. At the same time, fewer and fewer areas are owned by their indigenous owners and land is main object of speculation (*ibid.*).

Political instability after independence in 1960 and 25 years of repressive military regimes and dictatorships between 1983 and 1998 have encouraged people to use the system strategically rather than attempting to overthrow it (Peil 1991: 194). Again, this belief is fueled by the growing numbers of Pentecostal and Charismatic churches in which entrepreneurship is presented as the prime opportunity to get ahead in life. In this highly hierarchical society, opportunity is considered far more important than equality⁹ (*ibid.*). Political organizations and unions are often run like businesses with the intention to make profit. Even private education and healthcare are recognized as sources of employment, especially since the state spends relatively little on those sectors and entrepreneurs provide services to those who can afford them in order to provide for themselves in turn (Peil 1991: 195). Despite targeted harassment during the military regimes and dictatorships and occasional suppression during democratic times, Nigeria has a vibrant and outspoken press culture, with numerous daily newspapers, radio and TV stations and more recently, online media

⁹ This discourse is also reflected in the growth of evangelical churches, especially since the depression years of the 1980s.

outlets such as blogs and social media accounts. The history of demolitions and evictions is therefore well documented and was quickly brought to the attention of the population of Lagos.

Since the 1990s, one can observe the establishment of more and more urban 'slum'/shack dweller associations and saving groups across the globe: Nigeria was not exempt from this trend (Satterthwaite 2016: 6). In the case of Lagos, the Social and Economic Rights Action Center (SERAC), a Lagos-based non-governmental organization established in May 1995, plays a major role in mobilizing people from various informal settlements, supporting them through legal assistance in their fight for compensation and promoting the economic, social and cultural rights of marginalized sections of the population (SERAC 2014). SERAC and the Justice and Empowerment Initiatives (JEI), which also supports poor and marginalized communities in Lagos and other parts of Nigeria, are part of a larger national and global network of 'slum' and shack dweller platforms, such as Shack / Slum Dwellers International (SDI), a network of community-based organizations of the urban poor across Africa, Asia and Latin America, which is in turn is also a member of the Cities Alliance partnership.

On a national level, the Nigerian Slum/Informal Settlement Federation is supported by JEI whereas on a state level, SERAC has supported the creation of citizens' group Lagos Marginalized Communities' Forum (LAMCOFOR), an umbrella body that brings together 'slum', evicted and marginalized groups and communities across Lagos state and which is also associated with SDI. These organizations follow a rights-based approach and support the communities through legal assistance and strategic advocacy. Both SERAC and JEI have brought forced eviction and land grab cases before the National Human Rights Commission (NHRC) and the African Commission on Human and Peoples' Rights in Banjul, Gambia, respectively. The organizations have also supported capacity building and the establishment of community-based savings groups. Nevertheless, these organizations can by no means be described as social movements with a clear political agenda and they operate more like classical NGOs with specific goals to support certain communities, even though they are addressing and representing the needs of a large part of the marginalized population. Even LAMCOFOR, in which residents of the affected areas are represented, takes on more the role of a 'middle man' between the 42 member communities and

SERAC than it speaks to the government for itself. Protests and rallies, or the commemoration activities around the anniversaries of the evictions are undertaken only with the consent of SERAC.

The “Right to the City”-movement positioned itself globally ahead of Habitat III in October 2016. The concept behind the “Right to the City”-movement is based on Henri Lefebvre, who proposed the “demand...[for] a transformed and renewed access to urban life” for the first time in his work *Le droit à la ville* in 1968 (Lefebvre 1996: 158). David Harvey explains it as the collective right of urban residents over the use and production of urban space:

“The right to the city is far more than the individual liberty to access urban resources: it is a right to change ourselves by changing the city. It is, moreover, a common rather than an individual right since this transformation inevitably depends upon the exercise of a collective power to reshape the processes of urbanization. The freedom to make and remake our cities and ourselves is, [...] one of the most precious yet most neglected of our human rights.” (Harvey 2008)

However, it has been criticized for lacking an in-depth analysis of actual political, economic, social and cultural processes that perpetuate poverty and exclusive structures (Omoegun 2015: 4). Nevertheless, the concept could help to re-adjust the perspective on contemporary urban management, empower public authorities to protect the broader interests of their populations, and open up room for the discussion of the use of public urban space.

In the case of Lagos, this approach finds hardly any reflection in the demands of SERAC and JEI, and had little resonance with the interview partners during field research, who were more interested in practical urban management questions than visionary ideas. However, Omoegun discusses this concept in regards to the displacement of street vendors across Lagos by government officials as part of a fight against informality (5.4).

In the case of Nigeria, Peil’s statement from 1990 is still valid: “there are many problems in getting accurate population statistics in Nigeria, because numbers are a key to power” (Peil 1991:18). Organizations such as JEI have realized the boost that access to accurate data could give their cause. In the case of Lagos, they support SDI’s *Know Your City* campaign and have volunteers undertake community-based data collection activities such as “mapping, profiling, house

numbering, and enumerations” to “assist communities to ‘put themselves on the map’” and to be better prepared in negotiations with government officials and others (JEI 2014). The collected baseline data is being paired with GPS boundary maps, and available services are geo-tagged. The importance of information is highlighted in both JEI’s and LAMCOFOR’s slogans: “Inform – Organize – Empower” and “Information is power” respectively (JEI 2014; Interview LAMCOFOR 5.11.2014).

Alternative proposals for urban development are usually dedicated to specific sectors or areas, like the “Makoko Regeneration Plan” submitted by the Heinrich Boell Foundation and others in 2014 (Heinrich Boell Foundation 2014). It is an example of a place-based plan developed with active community participation (Pugalis et al. 2014: 521). The plan was submitted upon request to LSG after it came under fire for destroying parts of Makoko and the issue had sparked international media attention. So far, it has not received an official response and it remains unclear if this was just a diversionary tactic or if it represents serious interest in an alternative development.

Although a top-down approach to urban development still prevails, there is an increasing recognition among architects and others concerned with the planning agenda of megacities that grassroots organizations and NGOs cannot be ignored and that a decentralization of power and responsibilities is necessary. As Jiboye explains, rapid and large-scale urbanization poses a threat to sustainable urban development and calls for ‘effective urban governance’. He acknowledges the central government, state government, local authorities, NGOs, community-based organizations (CBOs), and the private sector as actors in this process, and defines urban governance as “the sum of many ways individuals and institutions [who] plan and manage the common affairs of the city” (Jiboye 2011: 213). However, the influence of community-based movements should not be overemphasized. As Meagher shows, the effects of decentralization and informalization are reshaping urban governance, but governments remain seemingly unable to give more substantial power to informal associations and marginalized people. Instead, the overemphasis on participatory processes threatens to obscure larger, structural or institutional powers (Meagher 2011).

Lagos is a perfect example of the fact that that protest does not always have to be organized and channeled through conventional instruments such as rallies and street protests. With its history of

military dictatorships, “many residents simply ignored ill-fitting government regulations and expectations” as their own private form of protest (Immerwahr 2007: 174). Bayat coined the term ‘uncivil society’ for this form of resistance by the ‘informal people’ in which they assume an autonomous, ordinary way of organizing their livelihoods when their demands to the government are shut down, ignored or take too long to be fulfilled (Bayat 1997). In the next chapter it will be discussed which shapes this organization and negation of daily urban life can take on.

6. Vectors of Daily Practice in the Urban Laboratory

Simone’s conceptualization of cities as “laboratories of change” understands the urban arena as one characterized by how urban life is configured in everyday practices (3.2.1). Simone, an investigator into urban social fields in Africa, reveals how uncertain living conditions, contradictions, and everyday struggles are constantly negotiated, often through unexpected alliances between seemingly opposed groups, as they interact in their search for opportunities and intelligence (e.g. Simone 2004).

In his inaugural lecture at the University of Cape Town, Pieterse called for a more “grounded, spatially attuned and phronetic research that can potentially yield the microscopic details of everyday practices as imagined and experienced by the contemporary protagonists of the city” (Pieterse 2009: 8). He draws up five lines of enquiries along which a kind of research could “flesh out the aesthetic-functional spectrum of cityness: senses of belonging, attachments, zones of contact, deal making and lines of movement” (Pieterse 2009: 15). As an in-depth enquiry into those issues was not the initial intention of my research but rather evolved during my engagement with the collected data and the works of AbdouMalik Simone, the following analysis should be understood as an explorative attempt to open up the proposed vectors of everyday practice.

Most of the studies done on social urban movements in comparable poor settlements in other African and non-Western cities focus on the motivations, dynamics and strategies of those groups and to a lesser extent on the individual drivers of engagement and characterizations of interactions. Hooper and Ortolando’s study of mobilization on the slum dwellers’ motivations for social

movement participation in Kurasini, Dar es Salaam, identified “payoff, identity and connection to place” as the primary drivers for participation in social engagement around evictions; these categories are also reflected in the following analysis of the vectors of daily practice (Hooper and Ortolando 2012: 99).

Long’s actor-oriented social interface approach (3.2.2) is used to identify the linkage points at which “struggles over social meanings and practices” take place (Long 2004: 15). This approach includes a wide range of actors with different strategies, interests and backgrounds and their “lived experience, livelihoods and everyday social practice” in regards to the evictions (Long 2001: 15). The eviction of residents and the different strategies they adopt to deal with and make sense of these changes, as well as the interactions between government authorities, NGOs, residents and others, can then be seen as a critical interface: a “site for conflict, incompatibility and negotiation” where different values, social norms and ideas of urban planning and living are debated on an ongoing basis (Long 2001: 69). Here, the social interface approach helps to explore “how discrepancies of social interest, cultural interpretation, knowledge and power are mediated and perpetuated or transformed at critical points of linkage or confrontation” (Long 2004: 16). It conceptualizes how small-scale interactional settings, which can be found in the city’s informal settlements, interlock with the wider framework of the city of Lagos, and with resource fields and networks of relations (Long 2001: 49).

The collected empirical data will now be analyzed according to the five vectors of everyday practices proposed by Pieterse (senses of belonging, attachments, zones of contact, deal making and lines of movement) to elucidate the complexities, contradictions and ambiguities of urban life by using the setting and actors of the case study as an empirical example.

6.1 Attachments and senses of belonging

In the following analysis of everyday practices proposed by Pieterse, the first two topics are drawn together. Senses of belonging is here understood as a sub-level of attachment to a place as the two are closely linked together.

When asked about where exactly they came from in Lagos, people usually added ‘community’ to precisely define where they came from (LAMCOFOR, 5.11.2014). It shows how a place is not only understood in spatial terms defined by exact coordinates, but also by the social aspects associated with it, e.g. the social relationships and interactions. However, when long standing communities are effected by evictions and their members forced to disperse across the city, individuals tend to lose not only their physical possessions, businesses, education and other investments, but also the support network of family members, friends and neighbors which allowed for the sharing of tasks, and provided support in taking care of children, elderly and the ill, or in case of loss of income (Khan 1994; Murphy and Anana 1994). This attachment is also reflected in Mike Nwosu’s *Invisible Chapters* (2001). In the novel, the reader learns how the demolition of Maroko “tears apart the threads of vital cognition and meaningful action its inhabitants have succeeded in pulling together” (Dunton 2008: 73).

During the boat tour around Makoko, Chief Francis A., an elderly man and one of the locally-anointed chiefs who also experienced the evictions, took it upon himself to show me around. He seemed to be very proud of his community and made an effort to explain to me how members of the tight community look out for each other:

“We don’t have police station here, we don’t fight. Leave your things here, you will see. Our canoes, nobody chain it. You just tie it with a rope and leave it. So the community, the people, they work hand in hand. So today now, how will I fight with you? I will see you tomorrow. Even if there is an issue, it will be settled. That’s why we cooperate with each other. If you want to go somewhere now, the owner, you will ask him, I want to use it. He will give it to you, he will know that you come back. So yes, we assist each other, so for example if you want to construct a house now, they will come and join you, make sure you did it. They [...] can’t just look at you. So if they come, they will call their brothers, while you will do this one, they will finish the other one, so that you can finish. So they are very, very cooperative.” (Makoko, 31.10.2014)

Throughout the trip, he took on a representational role for his community, whereas the other interview partner, Noah S., the much younger headmaster of Whanyinna primary school in Makoko, explained the specific actions of government officials and expressed his resentment more

openly than the elderly chief did. When asked if the government offered them any land on which to settle after the demolitions, Noah S. explained that the immediate response by government authorities when asked where to go now after their houses had been demolished was that they “should go back to [their] region!” (Makoko, 31.10.2014). However, the current residents, though referring themselves as originating from somewhere outside of Lagos in the direction of Badagry towards the Benin border, do not actually have ties to that place any more. They feel that they belong to Makoko and are attached to this place. However, that it was suggested that they leave shows that despite being inhabitants of one of the oldest parts of Lagos, in a city where more or less everyone has ties to another part of the country, the inhabitants are not understood to be an integral part of the city in the eyes of some government officials, who feel that they do not ‘belong’ there. In Makoko, this sense is aggravated by the fact that the settlement is clearly visible from the Third Mainland Bridge, which connects the mainland and the airport with the business district. This is further amplified by the settlement’s specific physical appearance, as part of the settlement consists of houses built on stilts in the Lagos Lagoon. In the case of Makoko, their specific ‘urban location’ and unique history plays a special role, as urban residents reconfigure and remake their urban world, “deploying their own form of urbanity born out of their historical and material circumstances” (Demissie 2007: 1).

For people already permanently evicted, a sense of attachment can also evolve from a shared experience of eviction and a common struggle for compensation and justice. LAMCOFOR, the platform established by SERAC for people from marginalized communities, holds bi-monthly meetings at their center in Ebute-Metta. It provides an interface for members of different communities across the city. The meeting I attended had an associational and religious ‘feel’ largely influenced by its chairman, a pastor. The members of the platform started and ended the meeting with prayers, accompanied singing and seemingly ritualized forms of engagement, including a slogan which was repeatedly used during the conversation. The familiarity with the rituals seemed to create a sense of unity among the group which consists of members from affected communities across Lagos: “My daddy here is from Bar Beach, Madame is from Makoko, I’m from Ajegunle, he is from Makoko, [...] and he is from Badia, and so many many places”

(LAMCOFOR, 5.11.2014). One of the purposes of LAMCOFOR is to support each other in facing the consequences of the eviction, as the chairman of the platform, a middle-aged pastor, explains:

“LAMCOFOR was found in a matter to solve some people’s problem [...] to come and see their problem in the way we are seeing it and help them solve the problem. [...] You would see me now, by the time they demolished my house, my house was demolished [...] without quit notice. They came in the morning, and they started with bulldozers and [...] and there was nothing I can do. The same thing, she herself has a problem also about twentysomething years ago. They have been to court one by one. The man you see there has their problem. Everyone has a problem. Every individual you see here has their problem.” (Chairman, LAMCOFOR, 5.11.2014).

The platform supports a sense of belonging among those who shared the experience of eviction, a saga that seems to be without end for many including Titilayo A., an elderly woman who experienced the eviction from Maroko in 1990 and lost her husband as well as several properties in the demolitions. Later during my stay, I had the opportunity to visit the site of Maroko with her. During a walk around the area, it is explained how the community holds both the memory of the evictions and the connection to the place alive through affective and cognitive as well as behavioral attachment:

“Yes, we do our meeting, every 14th of the month. Since 1990. [...] we have the meeting at the Maroko information center, that hall, that Felix Morka¹⁰ built for us. We will start from 10. Anyone can come. People have been coming.” (Maroko, 11.11.2014)

That senses of belonging are also based on the exclusion of others who are even less privileged was made evident during an incident in Maroko, where a heated discussion erupted when a bystander questioned the purpose of the visit and was met with a question by Titilayo A.: “Are you one of the landlords here?” (Maroko, 11.11.2014). She gave the impression that only previous landlords, e.g. previous property and land owners, had the right to speak in this specific interview situation. Indeed, only landlords and people who can provide a Certificate of Occupancy (called C of O), are legally entitled to government compensation. Regular tenants, who very often lack even

¹⁰ Felix Morka is the Executive Director of SERAC.

a basic written notice proving their rental agreement, have no claim. In this regard, NGOs such as SERAC can only legally fight for those who have proof of their physical attachment in the form of ownership. However, others who only rented a room or an apartment might also feel as if they belonged to the place, especially if they lived there for a long period.

Attachment to a place in terms of affective, cognitive and behavioral dimensions is tight and therefore defended against unwanted interventions from outside, especially in long standing communities (Scannell and Gifford 2009: 3). In Makoko, one of the strategies applied on a community level is the participation in the LAMCOFOR platform and the interaction with NGOs such as SERAC.

In environmental psychology, place attachment is defined as the “bonding that occurs between individuals and their meaningful environments” (Scannell and Gifford 2009: 1). Scannell and Gifford conceptualize place attachment as a three-dimensional organizing framework with “person, psychological process, and place dimensions” (Scannell and Gifford 2009: 2). In their concept, attachment to a place can be formed both by an individual and by a community. On an individual level, attachment to a place can occur through the achievement of personal milestones and experiences had in one’s life that are connected to personal memory. For the community, a place attachment is formed through the collective historical and cultural values assigned to it and may be based on religious meanings. These levels can be overlapping with varying degrees of significance.

The next aspect of the concept describes how the attachment is facilitated by the different individual and collective actors. Scannell and Gifford draw on the components of affect, cognition, and behavior to understand the nature of the psychological process. An individual or collective bond to a place does not necessarily involve a positive emotional connection to a place, but can manifest itself in a variety of emotions “from love and contentment to fear, hatred, and ambivalence” (Manzo 2005 cited in Scannell and Gifford 2009: 3). In this regard, the (forceful or violent) displacement of the evictions can result in feelings of longing, sadness or even grief (Fullilove 1996 cited in Scannell and Gifford 2009: 3). The second dimension concerns the display of attachment through the association of cognitive elements such as memories, beliefs, meaning and knowledge to a place, which therefore creates a personal connection. Personal-place bonds

may even be incorporated into one's self-definition. In the third dimension, attachment to a place may be expressed through actions which can be described as "proximity-maintaining behaviors" (Hidalgo and Hernández 2001 cited in Scannell and Gifford 2009: 4).

The last dimension concerns the place itself and defines the social and physical place attachment exercised through the use of amenities or resources (Scannell and Gifford 2009: 5). While the social attachment becomes clear in the aforementioned social ties and interactions, specific physical features of a place play a major role as well. In the case of Makoko for example, the environmental context of the settlement shaped the identity of the residents into a distinctive fishing community with its own infrastructure. Their work of attachment to the place is exercised through their specific way of living (e.g. using canoes not only for fishing but also as means of transport).

Participation in social movements or platforms may not only be politically and physically risky but can also be time-consuming. Hooper and Ortolando identified three different types of motivation in 'slum' dweller social movement participation, such as "payoff, identity and connection to place" in their research on the micro-dynamics of individual participation in grassroots social movements (Hooper and Ortolando 2012: 99). The 'connection to place' is therefore here applied as one dimension a 'sense of belonging' can take on.

The ways in which sense of belonging is expressed or associated by the former evictees does not mean they have not formed a sense of belonging within their new location. However, it shows how even 25 years after having experienced eviction from Maroko, a sense of belonging to place and community can form part of an expansive set of attachments that takes shape in if not in a daily, at least in a monthly practice of meeting with other evictees and commemorating the events. The evictions form the critical interface through which the residents are bound to other actors, such as SERAC and LSG, as the fight for their compensation has not been settled and they are in continuous negotiation with each other.

6.2 Zones of contact and lines of movement

Zones of contact can be understood as critical linkage points that Long characterized as social interfaces at which conflicting interests can be negotiated, whereas lines of movement are understood as the spectrum along which these interfaces occur. In the following paragraphs, two aspects of interaction at a social interface will be analyzed: an opportunity emerged from a zone of contact between parties considered to be in conflict with each other and the multiple zones of contact in search for intelligence and points of leverage.

One of the zones of contact between apparent ‘enemies’ lies in the dynamics of the long-planned relocation of a part of Makoko called Oko-Baba. It is home to a variety of saw-milling activities and adjacent businesses and has been hit by fires several times. Since the late 1980s, official plans have existed to relocate the businesses and residents of the settlement as the existing site became too small for the growing number of traders. In the light of the evictions of 2012, and following a fire in 2013, the interests of the community and LSG crossed again. LSG accelerated the implementation of the relocation plans as they were eager to remove the community from the original site, and the community members were also supposedly ready to move as yet another fire had destroyed their saw-milling businesses. As a consequence, some of the residents of the area were relocated by the government to Agbowo¹¹ as Internally Displaced People (IDP). This is the location of the new saw-milling operations, as one of the staff engineers of the Department of Physical Planning at the Lagos State Ministry of Physical Planning & Urban Development explains:

“There is a program for the movement of the people out of that place. [...] You see the saw mills has been there for years. And they for years have been complaining for expansion. Because you cannot put a saw mill on top of each other. [...] There is no land available, the whole land they have there is 25 hectares, and government is bringing them to a land that is an area of 240 hectares where they can make a proper plant for them, room for expansion over the years. And then they have the advantage of this coastal area and the supply of the timber products. That is a very suitable location because most of their supply

¹¹ Agbowo/Ikosi is part of Ikorodu Local Government Area in Lagos State.

come from the water. And the activity on the water is minimal, in relation to what is happening in the Oba area there.” (Staff engineer, 5.12.2014)

The ministry’s representative claims that the decision for the relocation was unanimous:

“There was a lot of ground work. There were meetings with them, there was dialogue, there was stakeholder meeting, and at the end of the day, there was a Memorandum of Understanding between the various parties.” (Staff engineer, 5.12.2014)

Despite that, not all members from the Oko-Baba community are content with the relocation, explains a young man from Makoko and who is a LAMCOFOR member on behalf of an elderly woman from the Oko-Baba part of Makoko, who also belongs to LAMCOFOR:

“She is from [the] community in Oko-Baba, where they do planks [...]. Several times, their houses have been erased and burnt down by powerful forces and sometimes by the influence of government; they have been trying to evict them from that area and they had to get their life together. And because they continue to cause problem that’s why they joined this body.” (LAMCOFOR, statement made in Yorùbá and translated by another participant, 5.11.2014)

In this case, it seems that in the overall conflict between LSG and the Makoko community, the government and the saw millers’ associations from Oko-Baba have found a common zone of contact. In the process of relocation, LSG can continue to clear the land for residential and industrial purposes and the saw-millers receive a whole new site for their businesses. The government’s plans are backed up by several traders’ associations¹² but not by the community, of which not all residents are involved in saw milling and associated trades. It shows how when it comes to the interests of a very specific group, the concerns of the larger community can be traded in for the group’s own advantage if they find a common ground. Long pointed out that social interactions at the interfaces do not necessarily involve conflict, as sometimes a certain set of actors

¹² <http://punchng.com/traders-back-relocation-from-oko-baba-sawmill/>,
<http://thenewsnigeria.com.ng/2016/04/relocation-oko-baba-sawmillers-dissociate-from-suit-against-lasg/>

can find a common ground for negotiation and pursue their specific interests, even if those seem contradictory to the interests of the larger community (Long 1999: 3).

Another aspect of the zones of contact and lines of movement is their crucial role in the knowledge process which is central in encounters and negotiations at the interfaces (Long 1999: 3). The question of how and where to gather information about what is *actually* happening and who follows which strategy is one of the major concerns of LAMCOFOR. SERAC is also able to stay up to date about recent developments in the respective communities through LAMCOFOR and its respective members. LAMCOFOR understands that access to information as power, as it states in its slogan: “LAMCOFOR! Information! Power!” (LAMCOFOR 5.11.2014). The first step for many members was to learn that their community was not the only one affected:

“You know as poor persons as we are, we are not privileged to know that people across the state have common problems. We had to discover ourselves through the organized program of SERAC and then we formed LAMCOFOR.” (LAMCOFOR 5.11.2014).

In a next step, the platform also collaborates with similar groups across the country and becomes part of a global network. On an international level, members from the community and affected citizens were invited to speak at conferences, which can represent a “site for the encounter, transformation and agglomeration of movement knowledges arising from subaltern struggles rooted in specific social and geographical locations and identities” (Conway 2011).

The platform is used also by members of other marginalized communities who have not yet been affected by demolitions and evictions but who hope to be able to anticipate the government’s plans by being members of LAMCOFOR:

“I am from the Sari-Iganmu community. [...] If we run this type of organization, all the things the government is doing to harass us will not happen anymore. From Sari there is no any demolition in our area, but we know if such things happen in some areas, which we know, we will not be exempted if the time comes and that is the reason why we come here.” (LAMCOFOR 5.11.2014).

In this sense, residents can figure out particular vantage points through the platform of LAMCOFOR and the possibilities created by SERAC by its residents:

“Networks become key elements in these processes for gathering information, forming opinions, legitimising one's standpoint, mobilising resources, and for bridging, defending or creating social and political space within or transcending specific institutional domains.” (Long 1999: 21)

The researcher (me) was not exempted from the search for intelligence and leverage, as questions were asked repeatedly during the LAMCOFOR meeting and the site visit to Maroko to use this research in support of their cause. At one point it was even hinted that by granting the researcher (me) access and information through SERAC, they also expected something in return. This aspect has been discussed and reflected in Chapter 4.

The lines of movement and zones of contact can also be shaped by other government interventions, as the ban on hawking in specific areas shows:

“You know before, most of our women place their goods very close to the road, because you know, if you go the market, any market, where you see women selling fish, all of them are from this community, all of them. Anyone you see in Lagos selling fish, smoked fish, dried fish, fresh fish, they are from this community. And he affected the women, for example now, this road, some of the women might put their goods there, and there is now a law, that anybody puts any markets there again, and they brought the Mobile Police, they are in charge of arresting the people around the road. And instead of doing this, [...] they are not providing alternatives.” (Noah S., 31.10.2014)

The lines of movement are navigated not only by people, but also by material goods. By deeming the practice of selling fish by the road as informal and illegal, the city government temporarily closed a zone of contact between the fish-selling women of Makoko and the larger part of Lagos, as they usually cannot afford an official stall at a market. Nevertheless, “they have to come up with something else. It was really affecting our women. But now I think they have found some other place” (Noah S., 31.10.2014).

The lines of movements and zones of contacts still remained very ambiguous and fluid during the research. Further interviews over a longer period of time with a more grounded set of actors would be necessary to elaborate on these sets of topics.

6.3 Deal making

In his proposed vectors of the everyday, Pieterse also talks about the different practices of deal making. Indeed, negotiations at the public/private interface, in the light of incidents such as evictions, can be multi-faceted. For many residents, this marks one of the few times they feel that their presence acknowledged by the government, as Emmanuel N., staff attorney at SERAC, explains when he talks about Makoko: “There is no government presence, not even a school. So the only single visible government presence is demolition” (Emmanuel N., 29.10.2014).

LSG itself engages in different levels of deal making with the communities and other actors. Depending on the context, they come to offer information, resettlement, and compensation, whereas in other cases they demolish houses without warning. In some cases, they end up with a special deal with selected community members or a very specific part of the community. The practice of decision making is marked by different actors who pursue and form multiple and varied alliances. Even in the case of continuous community engagement, one has to look at who is speaking for whom, as a researcher explains:

“you know when you have this kind of consultations, it is really the chief of the area, so you know... *they* have agreed to move [laughs]. And so they are gonna move. But a lot of people do not want to move.” (Olamide U., 8.12.2014)

Just as in the case of the saw millers from Oko-Baba, the participatory approach here, especially when not followed through thoroughly, reveals “the paradoxical nature of planned intervention of all kinds”: space for negotiation and initiative for some groups is opened up, while the “interests, ambitions and political agency” of others are curtailed (Long 1999: 24).

In regards to the demolitions, the government authorities do not always abide to the law by giving the residents notice about the planned demolition. The conflict over room for maneuver is essential to the affected community members, who are aware of their rights, as one young woman from Badia East argues:

“Because what they did they violated our right, the demolition of the whole community without a due process, without notice, without anything, we were all pushed out. We were not getting anything from the government.” (LAMCOFOR, 5.11.2014)

In other cases, in which the government gives notice, the residents still have nowhere to go and suffer severely from the trauma experienced, as the case of a member of the Maroko settlement showcases:

“In 1990, July 14th, to be precise, the government gave them seven days quit notice to vacate their land. The 7th day, the 7th day, they make sure it’s seven days, they came with bulldozers and caterpillars. That was in 1990. And they cleared the whole place off and for three months, people were completely homeless. They were sleeping in the open and so on and so forth without house, without shelter. Because of the trauma they went through, that led to the death of her husband. Her own husband died because of the struggle and many people also died.” (LAMCOFOR, 5.11.2014)

This shows that the space in which residents can operate remains relatively small, even when they are informed about the planned demolitions, as they have little or no alternative in where else to go. However, the founding of LAMCOFOR and the involvement and support of SERAC in the fight for compensation has opened up a space for representation and future negotiations. This space for an expanded range of transactions provides some of the involved actors with the opportunity to take on a more significant role for their community.

As mentioned before, some of the member communities of LAMCOFOR have not experienced demolition and evictions yet, but participate in the meetings in some sort of future trading. They offer their time and involvement in rallies and protests in case they might need support in the future. In a context of great uncertainty, the outcomes of this “practice of anticipation” are not clear, and the practice may be accompanied by risks, for example when government authorities become aware of the community’s positioning, which might lead to less engagement in areas where they expect informed resistance and to more direct ways of dealing with the process of relocation (Simone 2010: 291). Despite these risks, the “politics of anticipation” remain important to many inhabitants, as Simone argues:

“anticipation entails a way of thinking about what is taking place, of positioning oneself in relationship to events and places in preparation to move quickly, to make one’s situation and actions more visible, or to maintain them under some radar. It is a way of reading the anticipated maneuvers of stronger actors and forces and assessing where there might be a useful opportunity to become an obstacle or facilitator for the aspirations of others.” (ibid.)

In Makoko, the room for positioning shifted for the government itself when, in addition to the resistance met from the community, the evictions received significant media attention, all the way up to a global level. In response, the government offered the community and SERAC the opportunity to come up with their own plan:

“I’m sure the LSG never believed it would be this massive. So just to let the government know you cannot just do it without the people. And it was at that rally that the LSG for once acknowledged that we really need to work with the community. So what they asked is the community to liaise with them and fashion out a plan of how to develop the community. So what SERAC did was also to mobilize the community and we did now start to look for experts. So we did now what we call Makoko Regenerational Plan. That Plan has been drawn up, submitted to LSG and waiting for their approval. That is where we are today.” (Emmanuel N., 29.10.2014)

To the best of my knowledge there has not been an official reaction to the plan submitted in 2014. Of course, this could be interpreted as a strategy by the government to keep some of the actors occupied and at ease. On the other hand, it may also show that some of the government actors are open to alternative development, especially if it can be used to showcase creativity and innovation. This shift in the approach towards Makoko shows how the interface is defined by an “entity of interlocking relationships and intentionalities” of the different actors, as the non-governmental actors involved, such as the Heinrich Boell Foundation and others, also have their own agenda in positioning themselves (Long 1999: 1).

The interface that manifested itself in the process of the evictions can be understood as being “composed of multiple discourses” and sometimes even a “clash of cultural paradigms” (Long 1999: 2, 4). The deal making process in the face of evictions includes not only negotiations over

material and spatial realities, such as the demand for compensation, but also includes contestations over meanings and values which are often ambiguous even to the actors themselves and therefore more difficult to mediate. The former Special Advisor on Infrastructure to the Governor of Lagos said he supports the idea of 'slum eradication' in the course of the development into a modern megacity, but at the same time understands that this process needs to take all citizens into account:

“But what they did there, is to develop, to make those destitute, develop along the line and make their life better. But in Lagos, they want to do it, they want to do a 360-turnaround [sic]. When you talk of mega city, look at Dubai, those modern mega city, that is what they are looking at for Lagos. That is what they are not able to see, the plight of those people there. So they are trying to implement the Master plan of turning Lagos in a super-mega city, based on United Nation standard.” (Special Advisor on Infrastructure to the Governor of Lagos State, 28.11.2014)

At the Department for Physical Planning, the staff engineers were more outspoken about the intentions of LSG:

“Because now once there is organization, you cannot leave them there and wasting the land. Those are our own assets. Because in Lagos, land is our gold, is our oil. [...] they will now clear the land there, what is it called the community, Oko Baba, because it has been subjected to abuse. There is a lot of deterioration, abuse there, so we need to clean it up if we are going to put up some new structures there. [...] we will now put a wall along the coast so that we can construct defeating structures there. We will build industrial structures, commercial structures, residential structures [...].” (Staff engineer, 5.12.2014)

The staff attorney from SERAC explains how government authorities created a narrative of deterioration and abuse to justify the evictions: “And along the line, Makoko on water became problematic, because the government has seen them as causing nuisance” (Emmanuel N., 29.10.2014). Community members deny these allegations and point out that the government is not taking on the responsibility to take care of them and is thereby leaving them no choice but to revert to informal practices: “if we don't do it, government will not come and do it. We can't wait for government” (Noah S., 31.10.2014).

In the process of positioning before the UN-Habitat III conference in October 2016, the demand for the “right to the city” was discussed intensively. The “right to the city” was not applicable in Nigeria, because people don’t feel acknowledged as citizens who can exercise their full rights, as the interview partner from a think tank explains:

“I don’t think they have it in Nigeria. Yeah, in Nigeria, in Lagos, yeah no, like I said, there is this complete divide between people and decision making. And until you get that right, people will claim the city, people will demand more or less of the city. And the thing is Nigerians, or people who live in Nigeria, you have to take care of yourselves, they are their own government. However, you can’t do much on a wide scale with that mentality. Like you still need government to do their job, you need them to do something. So you know you need their participation. And they need your participation. But at the moment, no one has it. [...] But even then I also feel like people – and this is a general Nigerian thing including Lagos – people are not, people don’t see themselves included in decision-making. So therefor, whatever happens, everybody is just like, ok, that’s what’s gonna happen and we just have to continue doing what we are doing. And rather than questioning, or changing, or even trying to learn what the government is actually planning. And if they are trying to learn what the government is planning it is really just for economic gain. [laughs] And not for any other reason.” (Olamide U., 8.12.2014)

Simone explains that fighting for a universal right may not be the priority and may even seem to be a kind of privilege in a place of uncertainty where people are used to taking “advantage of the provisional itself” (Simone 2015: 376):

“Whether infrastructure is a right or can be made right are questions that tend to disappear in the exigencies of how to raise the money to do what is needed or to showcase the latest of designs” (ibid.)

Another aspect of urban conflict is the shift from control over land and infrastructure to the control over knowledge and the capacity to produce it. NGOs such as SERAC and JEI are already making use of this by undertaking their own data collection. By producing their own intelligence on ‘slums’ and other informal settlements, they have leverage on international donor organizations

and on the scale and nature of financial aid and can use this opportunity at the crossroads for their own agenda. Noah S., who started his own school in Makoko at the age of 19, understands education as one of the key factors for being able to represent yourself and as a consequence to participate in the knowledge production process on behalf of your own community:

“Even if I am not here, if I am living, I move or I should die, [...] there should be something representing us in this community. But they can never represent us if without them go to school. They can only represent us if they go to school, they have right to speak. Right now, I can speak. I know that the children that go to school, go to college now [...]. For them to graduate from university, they have rights [...] Why did they start the demolition? Because we don’t have anybody representing us in the government. If we have anybody representing us in government, they can’t just come and demolish.” (Noah S., 31.10.2014).

The aspect of deal making is probably the most interesting and diverse issue that has been explored along the lines of everyday practice as proposed by Pieterse. It shows which struggles some of the actors have to undergo in order to create space for negotiations in the first place, and on a second level, which strategies they apply in order to achieve something. Usually these sites of interactions are characterized by a conflict over power, interests and resources. In the case of Lagos and the series of evictions, these conflicts are expressions of a larger conflict at a global level over the definition of what makes urban life viable and which vision of a city is desired.

7. Conclusion

The aim of this given study was to explore a more critical, grounded engagement with African urbanism. Hence, the epistemic divide in the knowledge production about African cities had to be revealed first, to gain an understanding which discourses predominate the engagement with cities in Africa. African cities have often been depicted as chaotic, dystopian, dysfunctional, and violent or ignored, “banished to a different, other, lesser category of non-quite cities” or used as an example of “what can go wrong with cities” (Myers 2011: 4). Most studies are still built on Western concepts, which are in many cases not adequate or sufficient to explain urbanization

processes in Africa. They tend to use the “lens of development” (Myers 2011: 1) and situate them “between modernity and development” (Robinson 2006). The general depiction of African cities can be divided in two dominant approaches. The first one evokes an apocalyptic scenario dominated by uncontrollable growth, poverty, violence and disease, in “a state beyond recovery and rehabilitation” (Demissie 2007: 8). The second one celebrates African cities as centers of conviviality and their alternate, self-regulatory systems, paying less attention to the cities shortcomings in terms of development than focusing on the city as a cybernetic organism (Ilesanmi 2010: 246). The former often finds its expression in technocratic policy programs which ignored the complexities of everyday urban life.

In order to overcome this epistemological gap in the knowledge production about African urbanism where chosen. Alternative African urban studies as conducted by Robinson, Mbembe and Nuttall, Gandy, Simone, Pieterse, and Demissie also include a postcolonial approach to urban studies. They discuss the economic causes of the current crisis, reflect on the colonial legacies and the impact of globalization, and also draw attention to the inventiveness and mundaneness of the urbanites themselves. Indeed, debates about postcolonial urbanism have begun within and from the continent, as the digression on Nigerian writings on Lagos were able to show.

In order to gain more insight into the aspects of everyday practices and how they are carried out by different actors, a critical urban interface such as the series of evictions in Lagos State was analyzed. The social interface approach by Long was applied in a double sense: One the one side colonial legacies, international urban development policies and their local impact on urban planning policies and laws in Lagos were understood as larger interface, along which contestations over dimensions of urban development took place, e.g. how informality is understood in an urban context. These interactions sometimes took on forms of (violent) conflict, for example when the LSG pursued to implement their understanding urbanism through forced evictions. Some of the more organized actors, who resist to these imposed changes were also presented, and later appeared again as interview partners.

On the other hand, the second set of interfaces was analyzed in the course of the empirical study and focused on the everyday practices along a set of enquiries proposed by Pieterse: senses of belonging, attachments, zones of contact, deal making and lines of movement were utilized to

show how “the production of livelihoods and the construction of meanings and understandings” can take place in the negotiations between different actors (Simone 1997: 1).

Hence, the empirical study reveals the into account the following issues: The senses of belonging and attachments are exercised and upheld by some of the interview partners through everyday practices, such as regular meetings with former members of the evicted community, who hold monthly remembrance and participate in platforms, in some cases over a long period of time which dates back to the evictions of Maroko in 1990. The closer analysis of zones of contact and lines of movement revealed how opposing parties, such as the Lagos State Government and an informal settlement, in this case the community of Oko-Baba, can find common interests in the course of their interactions and negotiations, while the community at large remains in conflict. They on the other hand have to explore multiple zones of contact and lines of movement in search for intelligence and points of leverage in order to identify space for negotiations. Once established, various practices of deal making are taking place in order to open up and maintain this ‘room for manoeuvre’. Practices such as future deal making, in which time and resources are invested into an unsecure outcome are applied mainly by the evictees in order to maintain a certain degree of agency. The most prevailing contestation however did not take place over material resources such as housing and land alone, but over the question who controls and contributes to the knowledge production about their city, and therefore is able to represent the respective understanding of how urban development should look like in the case of Lagos.

The social interface approach by Long has been useful to describe the critical linkages and networks over space and time between different actors. However, the five sets of issues by Pieterse have to be explored more critically and have to be narrowed down and conceptualized theoretically, and would require further research over a longer period of time. A focus on one of the vectors of everyday practice, such as the issue of deal making, would be more feasible. Hence, this thesis marks only an exploration into what a critical engagement with urban daily practices in Lagos could look like.

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9. Appendix

Abstract English

The absolute growth and influx of people constantly transforms Lagos' urban landscape. While the city is the social and commercial hub of Nigeria, the existing urban management system is hardly able to adequately accompany the increasing demands of the growing population. Instead, the social issues that have accelerated the scale and speed of the ongoing urban transformation are still largely approached through a modernist, technocratic understanding of urban governance and politics. The complex, dynamic and hybrid characteristics of urban daily practices are rarely reflected in the policies and interventions targeting the city's development. This trend can also be observed in the knowledge production about urban Africa.

With the intention to contribute to a bridging of this epistemic divide, the study draws on Norman Long's actor-oriented social interface approach to explore everyday practices through a qualitative case study set around a series of evictions across Lagos over the past 25 years. While the discursive practices, historical forces and planning approaches can be explained in the context of larger interfaces, the evictions are seen as a critical linkage through which a wide range of actors with different motivations, strategies, and backgrounds mediate and transform discrepancies of interest, knowledge and power. Some details of these interactions are revealed along five lines of enquiry proposed by Edgar Pieterse (2009): the analysis of these "senses of belonging, attachments, zones of contact, deal making and lines of movement" are used to explore the complexities and contradictions of everyday urban practices.

Abstract German

Das absolute Wachstum und der Zustrom von Menschen verändern kontinuierlich das städtische Erscheinungsbild von Lagos. Während die Stadt das soziale und wirtschaftliche Zentrum Nigerias ist, ist das bestehende Stadtmanagementsystem kaum in der Lage, dem steigenden Druck der wachsenden Bevölkerung nachzukommen. Sozialen Herausforderungen, die durch das Ausmaß

und die Geschwindigkeit des städtischen Wandels verstärkt werden, wird weitgehend ein modernistisches, technokratisches Verständnis von urbaner Governance und Politik entgegengebracht. Die komplexen, dynamischen und hybriden Merkmale der urbanen Alltagspraktiken spiegeln sich selten in der Politik und den Interventionen wider, die auf die Stadtentwicklung abzielen. Dieser Trend lässt sich auch in der Wissenserzeugung über das urbane Afrika beobachten.

Mit der Absicht, zur Überbrückung dieser epistemischen Kluft beizutragen, stützt sich diese Arbeit auf Norman Longs akteursorientierten Interface-Ansatz, um die Interaktions- und Aushandlungsprozesse sowie Handlungsstrategien in Alltagspraktiken, die sich rund um eine Reihe von Zwangsräumungen in den vergangenen 25 Jahren in Lagos ergeben, durch eine qualitative Fallstudie zu erforschen. Während die diskursiven Praktiken, historischen Kräfte und Planungsansätze als Kontext größerer Schnittstellen erklärt werden können, werden die Räumungen als kritische Schnittstellen betrachtet, an denen eine Bandbreite von AkteurInnen mit unterschiedlichen Motivationen, Strategien und Hintergründen Interessenkonflikte austrägt und um Wissen und Macht ringt. Einige Details dieser Interaktionen werden entlang fünf von Edgar Pieterse (2009) vorgeschlagenen Untersuchungskategorien genauer betrachtet: Die Analyse der „senses of belonging, attachments, zones of contact, deal making and lines of movement“ wird verwendet, um die Komplexität und die Widersprüche von alltäglichen urbanen Praktiken aufzuzeigen.