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Nigerian ex nihilo urban mega-developments:

Colonial legacies, urban policy mobilities, and foreign involvement

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Abstract

Since the turn of the 21st century, Nigeria has become a hotspot for the creation of new cities built from scratch, with a dozen currently underway. Nigeria's new cities are promoted by developers as necessary for addressing urban challenges related to the housing deficit and poor transportation infrastructure. While the boom in Nigeria's new city construction aligns with the global proliferation of similar projects, this thesis demonstrates that building ex nihilo cities has a long history in Nigeria dating back to the British colonial era. This thesis identifies 39 ex nihilo urban development projects in Nigeria in three eras: colonial (mid-1800s to 1960), post-independence (1960 to late-1990s), and contemporary (late-1990s until present). For each era, this thesis examines the new cities developed, their strategic locations and rationales, the urban philosophies guiding their creation, as well as the key actors involved. This thesis also investigates how ideas about new cities circulate transnationally through a variety of foreign "experts" and institutions at the helm of the planning, designing, and the construction of urban mega-developments. Many of these foreign actors have received little to no scholarly attention thus far despite bringing with them urban models, practices, and techniques that are shaping Nigeria's urban futures. As such, this thesis critically analyzes the various foreign urban policy actors involved in Nigerian contemporary new city development, including where they originate from and the urban concepts that they circulate. This research also draws attention to the physical and virtual policy tourism undertaken by Nigerian elites involved in the creation of new master-planned cities.

Résumé

Depuis le début du XXIe siècle, le Nigeria est devenu un haut lieu de création de nouvelles villes bâties de toutes pièces, avec une douzaine actuellement en cours de construction. Les nouvelles villes du Nigeria sont promues comme nécessaires par les promoteurs afin de relever les défis urbains liés au déficit de logement et à la mauvaise infrastructure de transport. Tandis que le boom de la construction de nouvelles villes au Nigeria est en conformité avec la prolifération mondiale de projets similaires, cette thèse démontre que la construction de villes ex nihilo a une longue histoire au Nigeria remontant à l'ère coloniale britannique. Cette thèse identifie 39 projets de développement urbain ex nihilo au Nigeria durant trois époques : l'époque coloniale (du milieu des années 1800 à 1960), post-indépendance (1960 à la fin des années 1990) et contemporaine (de la fin des années 1990 à aujourd'hui). Pour chaque époque, cette thèse examine les nouvelles villes développées, leurs emplacements stratégiques et raisons d'être, les philosophies urbaines qui guident leur création, ainsi que les acteurs clés impliqués. Cette thèse examine par ailleurs, la manière dont les idées autour des nouvelles villes circulent au-delà des frontières nationales par une variété d'« experts » et d'institutions étrangères, à la tête de la planification, de la conception et de la construction de ces méga-développements urbains. Beaucoup de ces acteurs étrangers ont reçu peu ou pas d'attention académique jusqu'à présent, malgré l'apport de modèles, de pratiques et de techniques urbaines qui façonnent l'avenir urbain du Nigeria. À ce titre, cette thèse examine de manière critique la variété des acteurs de la politique urbaine étrangère impliqués dans le développement de nouvelles villes nigérianes contemporaines, y compris leur origine et les concepts urbains qu'ils circulent. Cette thèse étudie également le tourisme politique, physique et virtuel, entrepris par les élites nigérianes impliquées dans la création de nouveaux projets de villes.

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Undertaking this thesis research was a generative process full of a great deal of scholarly growth, which I simply could not have achieved on my own. This journey required me to come out of my shell and embrace the tenets of being a researcher despite my more introverted and reserved nature. It also pushed me to be flexible, quick-on-my-feet, as well as to assume the role of an "expert," which I shall admit takes some getting used to.

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Acronyms

CCI – Charter Cities Institute

EAC – Eko Atlantic City

EEC – Enyimba Economic City

FCDA – Federal Capital Development Authority

FZE – Free Zone Establishment

IPA – International Planning Associates

NIDC – Nigerians In Diaspora Commission

NITP – Nigerian Institute of Town Planners

OSMPP – Ogun State Ministry of Physical Planning

SEZ – Special Economic Zone

TOPREC – Town Planners Registration Council of Nigeria

UCDA – Umuahia Capital Development Authority

URA – Urban Redevelopment Authority (for Singapore)

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Chapter 1: Introduction: Nigerian ex nihilo urban development

1.1.   Setting the scene

As a Nigerian, I had engaged in a number of conversations over the years about some of the new city projects underway back home in Nigeria. The sentiments surrounding these new cities were often mixed. Some people viewed them as welcome developments for Nigeria, while others regarded them as distractions from the many social, political, and economic challenges facing Nigeria. My conversations mainly focused on one ostentatious new city project being built off the coast of Lagos, Eko Atlantic City, which has been covered extensively in both domestic and international media. But I was surprised to discover during preliminary research that there were many other new cities being built from scratch in almost every corner of Nigeria. Some of these new urban mega-developments were emerging in regions that were frankly unexpected to me, and their master plans and renderings could often only be found on the official websites of urban planning and architectural firms located very far away from Nigeria.

This master's thesis is the product of my curiosity to understand current urbanization trends in Nigeria, particularly the proliferation of new master-planned city projects in Nigeria, and why this mode of urban development seems to have suddenly become popular across the country. This research is developed around a number of questions: What are the new cities currently being built from scratch in Nigeria? Who is involved in building them? What are the rationales used to justify and promote these projects? How do these projects relate to earlier efforts at planning "ex nihilo"[1] urban mega-developments in Nigeria during colonization and the years following independence? What are the similarities and differences between how new cities were built in the past and how they are built presently? What are the previous scholarship on new city development? What does the study of new city development tell us about Nigeria? And how does Nigeria relate to other places where new cities are also proliferating? In responding to these questions, this master's thesis investigates Nigeria's contemporary new cities, their historical

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[1] The term "ex nihilo" is used within this thesis to broadly describe the approach that city builders take when creating new cities. Although new cities are hardly ever built "out of nothing," their developers generally disregard what existed before in order to rationalize and promote the new city project. In some special cases, such as Eko Atlantic City, the new city is built "ex nihilo" on land reclaimed from the Atlantic Ocean. Furthermore, "ex nihilo urban developments" is used in this thesis as a term that reconciles the differences between new towns, new cities, and new planned areas.

precedents in the colonial (mid-1800s to 1960) and post-independence (1960 to late-1990s) eras; their global dependencies; foreign actors, as well as their place in the world of ex nihilo urbanization.

Since the turn of the 21st century, the building of new cities from scratch has resurfaced as a trend visible all over Africa (Côté-Roy & Moser, 2019; Keeton & Provoost, 2019; Van Noorloos & Kloosterboer, 2018; Watson, 2014) and the Global South (Moser, 2020). In Nigeria, new cities are developed primarily through public-private partnerships focused on tapping into the wealth of Africa's growing middle-class population and their desires for real estate investment (Watson, 2014). New cities built from scratch in Nigeria are generally presented by their developers as ways to redeem the urban infrastructural shortfalls facing the currently existing Nigerian cities. For this reason, new cities are "mirror opposites" (Murray, 2015a) of Nigeria's established metropolises, which are regarded as dilapidated (Michael et al., 2017) and limited in their housing options for middle- to upper-class Nigerians seeking a modern lifestyle (Moore, 2019).

Beyond Nigeria, over 150 new master-planned cities are also under construction globally in over 45 countries (Moser & Côté-Roy, 2021). Following the financialization of real estate in the 1990s (Fauveaud, 2020), new cities rapidly emerged as avenues for developers and investors to tap into the lucrative business of property development (Avery & Moser, 2023; Moser & Côté-Roy, 2021). New master-planned cities are therefore the culmination of the entrepreneurial urges to create new real estate that can attract foreign direct investment and draw out profits (Watson, 2014). These desires appear widely throughout the Global South, resulting in the announcement of over 70 new cities in Africa alone over the past two decades (Van Noorloos & Kloosterboer, 2018). Africa's new city projects rely on a variety of public policy decisions that, on one hand, stimulate land, labour, and capital investments while, on the other hand, normalizing internal displacements, land grabbing, and the loss of fertile agricultural lands for the sake of urbanization (Moser, 2020). In much of the Global South, including Nigeria, new city projects have devolved into "urban fantasies," which prioritize image and prestige over responding to the real and unresolved urban challenges facing their region (Watson, 2014).

A growing body of scholarship has emerged that examines new cities, their intentions, and their realities. Within Africa, scholars recognize new cities as privatized urbanisms that generally lean towards a "smart" or technological agenda (Bandauko & Arku, 2023a; Fält, 2019;

Musakwa & Mokoena, 2017). New cities in Africa exemplify the embrace of neoliberalism among African states in that urban developments can take a range of properties, forms, and functions with minimal governmental intervention (Van Noorloos & Kloosterboer, 2018). Indeed, a number of studies have emerged over the past decade that focus on individual new city projects in a variety of states, including Angola (Benazeraf & Alves, 2014), Egypt (Hafez, 2017), Ghana (Korah, 2020), Kenya (Van Noorloos et al., 2019), South Africa (Murray, 2015b), Zimbabwe (Bandauko & Arku, 2023b), as well as Morocco's national new city-building endeavours, which are backed and executed primarily by the state (Côté-Roy & Moser, 2022). To date, the scholarship on recent Nigerian new cities has been limited to Eko Atlantic City, a land reclamation project off the coast of Lagos that has been examined primarily for its negative socioeconomic and environmental impacts on its region (Acey, 2018; Adedeji, 2021; Ajibade, 2017). Eko Atlantic City is contested by scholars as an elite enclave and "synthetic city" that weakens urban resilience and sustainability (Acey, 2018). Beyond Eko Atlantic City, there are no studies of the other new cities being planned in Nigeria, representing a gap in knowledge that this thesis seeks to fill.

This master's research also draws on the literature on British colonial urban planning and post-World War II new capital cities. The scholarship on British colonial urban planning highlights some of the important planning philosophies, movements, and actors that helped the British assert administrative control over their colonies by developing new cities (Bigon, 2013; Home, 1983; Njoh, 2008; van der Linden, 2017). Nigeria was one of the largest British colonies in Africa and possessed a number of important natural resources for extraction and trade (Geary, 2013). It was the primary testing ground for the doctrine of indirect rule, which significantly changed how the British developed their towns and cities to control their colonies (Crowder, 1964). Moreover, the scholarship on post-World War II new capital cities examines the ways in which newly master-planned capital cities were used as a tool for nation building and for marking a symbolic shift away from the former colonial capital (Croese et al., 2023; Vale, 2008). This form of ex nihilo urban development focused on affirming national identities, showcasing the capabilities of the state to oversee and achieve large-scale development projects, and garner popular confidence in the newly-independent state (Abubakar & Doan, 2017). Alongside filling in the gaps on the various new city projects underway in Nigeria, this thesis seeks to investigate

the similarities, differences, and continuities between current new city-building activities and previous efforts at ex nihilo urbanization in Nigeria.

Recent urban geography scholarship examines the urban policy mobilities that inform urbanization and new city development worldwide (Côté-Roy & Moser, 2019; McCann, 2011). This research unpacks the ways in which urban ideas, models, and best-practices are circulated globally, including the various methods of "boosting" certain urban policies (McCann, 2013). In particular, this body of research focuses on the processes of selling and buying urban policy from planning experts, institutions, and actors in model cities such as Vancouver and Hong Kong (Lowry & McCann, 2011). In relation to Africa, scholars look at the shift in the sources of urban know-how from primarily Europe and North America to places like China, South Korea, and elsewhere (Joo, 2020; Keeton & Provoost, 2019). This upends colonial path dependencies in African urbanization, as a growing number of "uncharted foreign actors" (Moser et al., 2021) from diverse locations are involved in developing new cities. This thesis is informed by the urban policy mobilities literature and seeks to contribute to this corpus by critically analyzing the local and foreign actors circulating urban policies and ideas to Nigeria's new cities.

1.1.1. Nigeria's historical ex nihilo urbanization

Although the proliferation of new cities in Nigeria parallels the dramatic increase in similar projects globally over the past two decades, new city building in Nigeria dates back to the British colonial era (from the mid-1800s to 1960). Within the British Empire, new towns and cities were often developed from scratch on an assumed[2] tabula rasa to serve as colonial administrative centers, trading posts, and residential areas for the British and other Europeans (Bigon, 2013). Several British colonial new towns and cities in Nigeria were located on the coast to help facilitate exportation of natural resources and ensure easy access for British naval or trade ships (Abubakar & Doan, 2010). Through ex nihilo urban development, the British introduced European planning to Nigeria and their other colonies as well as experimented with different ways of governing between the urban core and the rural periphery (Bigon, 2016; Home, 2019).

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[2] British colonial administrators disregarded the land rights of pre-colonial communities and assumed colonial new towns and cities to be built on a tabula rasa (Eze, 2021).

In 1960, Nigeria gained its independence from the British and engaged in a number of ex nihilo urban development projects that were important and highly symbolic parts of its post-independence nation-building efforts. Under colonization, the British arbitrarily drew Nigeria's borders, lumping together over 250 disparate ethnic groups within a territory that upon independence would become the state of Nigeria (Aluede, 2017). To reconcile some of the ethnic differences, high-profile new cities were created in Nigeria in attempts by Nigeria's political elites to affirm the Nigerian nationality as one that encompassed the diverse ethnic and religious groups (Abubakar, 2014; Galantay, 1978). In other former colonies, such as Brazil and India, the new capital cities of Brasília and Chandigarh[3] had been constructed respectively in the 1950s as new capital cities built from scratch for nationalistic reasons, particularly to engender national cohesion, decentralize the economy, and signal an embrace for modernization (Vale, 2008). Similarly, in Nigeria, the new capital city of Abuja was developed ex nihilo by the newly-independent state to symbolize Nigeria's autonomy (Ikejiofor, 1997).

Contemporary new cities in Nigeria are a continuation of this history of ex nihilo urban development projects as top-down master planning has evolved as a tool for elites to change a landscape rapidly and dramatically (Croese et al., 2023; Harrison & Croese, 2023). Rooted in critical urban geography, this master's thesis interrogates the ways in which ex nihilo urbanization is used to assert power or sustain existing power dynamics in Nigeria. This thesis also unpacks what large-scale top-down city building tells us about Nigeria, from being a British colonial creation to now being a fully independent nation-state. New cities serve as a proxy for understanding Nigeria's approach to some of the pressing global issues such as climate change, socioeconomic inequality, and housing. New cities also indicate the visions of progress and modernity that Nigerian elites have; the concessions that they are willing to make for such progress; and the networks of actors they pursue to realize this progress.

There is a dearth of context-specific research that examines historical trends in ex nihilo urbanization and how they have been shaped by local and foreign actors and policies. In Nigeria, scholarship on new cities mostly focuses on Eko Atlantic City in Lagos. This master's thesis therefore aims to fill in the gaps in knowledge by examining the 12 new city projects currently underway in Nigeria. This is significant as Nigeria is Africa's most populous country and has

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[3] Chandigarh's development was also due to the fact that the capital of Punjab, Lahore, was allocated to Pakistan during the Partition of India in 1947 (Perera, 2006).

experienced an urban population growth of 3%, which places stress on major cities such as Abuja and Lagos (Aliyu & Amadu, 2017). Additionally, Nigeria is currently experiencing a housing deficit marked particularly by the lack of housing for its middle-class population (Moore, 2019). There are few studies that have connected new city development in Nigeria to the housing deficit, and there is also little known about the variety of foreign actors, policies, and models shaping new cities in Nigeria. This thesis, by examining Nigeria's new cities in a historical and global context, contributes to the burgeoning scholarship on ex nihilo urbanization in Africa and beyond.

1.1.2. *Foreign urban policy exporters, Nigerian importers*

This thesis argues that Nigeria's current wave of new city projects are inspired by urban policies circulated by a variety of global actors and institutions (Côté-Roy & Moser, 2019). As Nigerian developers seek to create new cities that are modern and technologically-oriented, they rely on the urban norms, approaches, techniques, and policies derived from foreign locations that have created desirable cities or urban landscapes. This is similarly the case throughout the Global South as new city developers are constantly shopping around for urban policies and expertise to buy and implement. Many of these urban policies are strategically marketed and sold by the "experts" using seductive narratives and other elaborate promotional strategies that identify their city as desirable or worthy of emulation (Moser & Côté-Roy, 2021). This search for relevant urban ideas draws Nigerian new city builders into the world of urban policy mobilities, marked by the packaging and transformation of "expertise" from planning institutions and actors to the respective new city project (McCann, 2011).

Some locations such as Dubai and Singapore have emerged as go-to urban models for new cities in the Global South. On one hand, they are viewed by new city proponents as exemplary cities due to their modernist designs and recent histories of rapid urban and economic development (Henderson, 2007). On the other hand, Dubai and Singapore are presented by their respective planning bodies as model cities for other developing nations to study and emulate. This utilizes a form of entrepreneurial urbanism featuring curated showcases, workshops, and seminars on the historical and contemporary initiatives that have been successful for Dubai and Singapore's urban development (Pow, 2014; Sotoudehnia & Rose-Redwood, 2019). Emirati and Singaporean actors strategically draw on the attraction of their respective cities to profit off the sale of "expertise" and present themselves as more knowledgeable and experienced at

developing modern, smart, and high-functioning cities (Phelps & Miao, 2020). For this reason, a significant portion of the new cities in the Global South, including in Nigeria, are planned or designed by firms based in either Dubai or Singapore.

While Dubai and Singapore are widely regarded as urban models, other lesser-known foreign urban actors are also involved in new city building in Nigeria. Scholars of urban policy mobilities in Africa have noted the widespread presence of Chinese actors in constructing new cities and urban infrastructures (Croese, 2012; Ehizuelen & Abdi, 2018; Moser et al., 2021; Murphy et al., 2018; Myers, 2020). China has been accused of "debt-trap diplomacy" and "neo-colonialism" through large loan offerings which are attractive to certain African states despite their inability to repay them (Carmody, 2020; Zheng, 2010). These accusations have drawn a great deal of scholarly and popular attention to the involvement of China in African urbanization, obfuscating the reality that there are, in fact, many foreign actors engaged in creating new cities in Africa and the Global South, most of which have received little scholarly attention to date.

By examining Nigeria's new cities in a historical and global context, this thesis contributes to the burgeoning scholarship on ex nihilo urbanization in Africa and beyond. It also identifies and examines the wide range of foreign actors from Africa, Asia, and elsewhere that are contributing to, financing, planning, and designing new cities in Nigeria, including the policies, models, and philosophies that they export. Additionally, this thesis investigates the ways in which Nigerian new city developers are active seekers and buyers of urban policies and modelling from a foreign elsewhere, highlighting the policy tours embarked on as well as the forms of physical and virtual "travelling" in which Nigerian new city developers engage in when developing their new cities.

1.2.   Research focus and objectives

It is estimated that by 2100, Lagos, Nigeria will be home to the world's most populous city (Bearak et al., 2021) so it is imperative for Nigeria to carefully prepare for this potential future. The creation of new cities from scratch appears to be one strategy that the Nigerian government is encouraging to help manage the urban population growth and to relieve the subsequent pressures on housing and infrastructure. A number of institutional weaknesses in Nigeria, including inconsistent land-use policies, high corruption, an inequitable legal system,

and deeply entrenched power asymmetries favouring the wealthy elites, stages the ground for private-led urban development projects to be created under the guise of helping manage the urban growth in Nigeria.

In order to understand this growing dependency on the private sector to resolve urban challenges, this thesis investigates the contemporary new city-building activities in Nigeria, identifying and examining the individual projects, their plans, planners, and their stated objectives. This thesis posits that the development of a new city from scratch is not a novel concept and unpacks the history of ex nihilo urbanization in Nigeria since the British colonial era. A historical context helps inform analysis on the antecedent forms of new city development that current Nigerian developers are either moving to or away from, focusing on the patterns of master planning, privatization, as well as assessing the place of indigenous Nigerian urban approaches within new city plans.

This thesis additionally explores the political and economic factors driving contemporary new city development, which encourages entrepreneurialism and foreign actors to circulate urban policies to Nigerian new cities. In so doing, I highlight some of the "uncharted foreign actors" (Moser et al., 2021) in Nigerian new city building in order to understand the ideas that are influencing Nigeria's urban futures and where these ideas originate. Drawing from urban geography principles, this thesis seeks to better understand how African new cities have been planned in the past, and what this tells us about the present and future of African new city development. This analytical section of this thesis is made up of the two following manuscripts, which have been submitted to peer-review journals for publication:

1. In the first manuscript, I provide a historical overview of Nigeria's new city development in three main eras: colonial (mid-1800s to 1960), post-independence (1960 to late-1990s), and contemporary (late-1990s to present). In each of these three eras, I identify the ex nihilo urban development projects carried out, including the planners and institutions that helped implement them (Table 1; Fig. 2). The primary research questions for this manuscript are: *What is the state of ex nihilo urbanization in Nigeria today? How is the current new city-building trend in Nigeria similar to or different from earlier efforts at ex nihilo urbanization?* I suggest that during the colonial era, the British colonial government and town planners developed ex nihilo urban projects on the basis of

exclusivity, particularly to monopolize trade and industry in Nigeria. In contrast, during the post-independence era, the notions of national unity and inclusivity guided the Nigerian federal government's commissioning of new cities. In the contemporary era, the norms of entrepreneurialism have shifted new city development away from the notions of inclusion and ever more towards exclusion and elitism.

2. In the second manuscript, I take a deeper look into the foreign actors involved in building new cities and the urban policies and aesthetics they are circulating to new city projects in Nigeria. The guiding research question is: *In what ways are foreign actors shaping and transforming urban policies and models for new cities in Nigeria?* I argue that foreign involvement in Nigeria goes beyond that of Western and Chinese actors. I also argue that foreign involvement in Nigerian new cities is secured by some Nigerian developers who seek out foreign urban planning, policy, and development expertise. In this manuscript, I highlight the lesser-known foreign actors engaged in building new cities in Nigeria as well as the various pathways for urban policy mobilities to Nigeria's new cities.

This thesis contributes to the scholarship on colonial urban planning, post-war new capital cities, and urban policy mobilities in the Global South by situating Nigeria in the larger trend of building new cities from scratch for ideological and discursive purposes. Nigerian new cities embody the variegated dynamics associated with ex nihilo urbanization, as they are sites for implementing new urban ideas, approaches, and techniques. While moral and ethical assessment of Nigeria's new city development lie beyond the primary scope of this thesis, there is the necessity to highlight the implications of the proliferation of new city projects in Nigeria, including their impacts on local institutions, peoples, and politics.

Besides Eko Atlantic, most new cities in Nigeria are largely unknown in published work, which obscures the fact that Nigeria is one of the most active new city-building states in the world (Table 1; Fig. 2). This thesis therefore represents the first overview of new city development in Nigeria as well as the first study to investigate ex nihilo urbanization in Nigeria from the British colonial era to the present-day. I argue that the features of contemporary new city building in Nigeria are unique, considering the growing urban population in Nigeria, as well as Nigeria's housing economy, rising middle-class and diaspora populations, and the increasing

reliance on private institutions to deliver what should be public goods, particularly within and around new and existing cities.

1.3. Thesis structure

This thesis examines new cities in Nigeria past and present through six chapters. Following this introduction, Chapter 2 provides an overview of the four bodies of scholarship that inform my research on Nigerian ex nihilo urbanization: colonial urban planning, post-World War II new capital cities, contemporary new master-planned cities, and urban policy mobilities. Chapter 3 outlines the research methodology I took, the adjustments I made over the course of research in terms of scope and methods of data collection, and some reflections on my positionality as a Nigerian living in Canada doing research on Nigerian urbanization.

Chapter 4 provides a historical overview of the three eras of ex nihilo urbanization in Nigeria, the primary urban philosophies driving each era, as well as the foreign actors that shaped them. This chapter identifies the new cities developed since the advent of British colonialism in what is now Nigeria, and also draws out the similarities and differences in the discourses and planning techniques employed within the three eras.

Chapter 5 critically investigates the uncharted foreign actors involved in Nigerian new city development. Unpacking the mechanics of urban policy mobilities to Nigeria, this chapter seeks to understand how, why, and to what effect foreign "expertise" is involved in new city building in Nigeria. Further, this chapter examines foreign involvement in African infrastructural development and also explores the ways in which Nigerian new city developers actively participate in the search for urban policies from a foreign elsewhere.

Chapter 6 concludes this thesis by discussing the findings of this research and highlighting the wider implications of Nigeria's historical and contemporary reliance on foreign urban expertise for other African and Global South locations building new city projects. This chapter underscores the significant similarities that Nigerian contemporary new cities have with the colonial era, and how current new city building actors reject post-independence notions of inclusivity that attempts to unite Nigerians of different backgrounds. Finally, this chapter suggests some directions for future research on new cities in Nigeria and expresses some of my concluding thoughts on the future of urbanization in Nigeria.

Chapter 2: Literature Review: New cities in Nigeria and the Global South

2.1.   Introduction: Overview of Nigerian ex nihilo urbanization

This chapter contextualizes my thesis research within the scholarship on new cities and urban policy mobilities, both of which I assess and contribute to using the case study of Nigeria. The overarching aim of this research is to critically analyze how new cities have been developed since British colonialism as well as how they have been shaped by foreign actors, both known and unknown. As such, I outline the relevant strands of scholarship that have informed this thesis (Croese et al., 2023; Harrison & Croese, 2023). These are grouped into the literature on colonial era ex nihilo urbanization and planning, post-independence new capital city building, contemporary new cities, with a focus on Africa, and urban policy mobilities. Further, I conclude this chapter by identifying some gaps in scholarship and how this thesis on Nigeria's new cities aims to fill them.

Global South urbanisms have generally received far less scholarly research than their Global North counterparts. This is even more pronounced considering the emphasis placed on Global North cities for informing global urban theory (Roy, 2009; Watson, 2009). In aiming to help balance perspectives, this thesis aligns with postcolonial urban scholarship that seeks to undo Global North parochialism by bringing Global South urban epistemologies and experiences to the fore of urban studies (Myers, 2020). I assess the variegated political, social, and economic factors that have defined Nigerian ex nihilo urbanization since 1861. Additionally, I draw out the ways in which Global South new cities provide opportunities for "experimental international" (Robinson, 2011) comparative analyses on urban policy mobilities that differ from the traditional North-South view of urban policy transfer. This is all embodied within this Literature Review chapter, wherein I present a critical discussion of the scholarship on historical and contemporary new city building in the Global South as it relates to Nigeria.

2.2.   British colonial urban planning in Nigeria

The scholarship on ex nihilo urbanization in colonial Nigeria does not coalesce on a set understanding of what characterized "ex nihilo urbanization" in Nigeria. There is a substantial

literature on pre-colonial urban settlements in present-day Nigeria (Ikhuoria, 1987; Olukoju, 2004; Ozo, 2009), with some historic cities, such as Kano, described as a "commercial metropolis" with significant trade activities (Mabogunje, 1965). The formal colonization of Africa is regarded as a result of the Berlin Conference of 1884-1885, which laid out the rules for European powers to declare "effective occupation" over an African territory (Uzoigwe, 1984). However, British colonial rule in Nigeria is generally agreed upon to have taken root in 1861 following the annexation of Lagos (Ehrensaft, 1972; Ojo, 2014; van der Linden, 2017). Some scholars also regard the annexation of Lagos as the starting point for colonial ex nihilo urbanization in Nigeria because, to enforce administration over Lagos, the colonial British cleared the pre-existing "native"[4] settlements and began constructing new "luxurious" housing, schools, streets, courthouses, government houses, and cemeteries, as well as established a police force and began to regulate the markets (Adesoji et al., 2019: 111). This pattern of destroying pre-existing settlements to develop new administrative urban centers became characteristic of British colonial ex nihilo urbanization in Nigeria, with numerous political and trading posts created in a manner that deemed the native peoples there nonexistent (Bununu et al., 2015; Ikhuoria, 1987; Izeogu & Salau, 1985). Other colonial ex nihilo urban development projects, particularly in Northern Nigerian locations such as Lokoja, Zungeru, and Kaduna, were in the form of capital cities which received more resources for their spatial layout, urban amenities, and transportation networks compared to other newly-established administrative centers in Nigeria (Home, 2019).

Scholars identify the proliferation of the railway as another major catalyst for colonial ex nihilo urbanization in Nigeria (Obiakor & Agajelu, 2016). The first railway in colonial Nigeria began construction in 1896 between Lagos and Ibadan, and was accompanied by a number of urbanization processes, including the creation of railway stations, road networks, mining towns, and an emerging urban working class (Falola & Salm, 2004). Geological surveys were carried out extensively during this period by British geologists to identify regions in Nigeria that held natural resources useful for trade to Britain and elsewhere (Eze, 2021). Jos, Enugu, and later Port Harcourt were developed as colonial cities following the discovery of tin, coal, and later

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[4] "Native" is used to refer particularly to all non-European local Nigerians; it is also the legal term utilized by the British for local Nigerians (Home, 1983). This differs from "indigenous" which refers to person(s) of a specific ethnicity tied to a specific region within present-day Nigeria.

petroleum, which was amplified by colonial investments to connect them by railway (Eze, 2021; Izeogu & Salau, 1985; Morrison, 1977). The cotton industry in Nigeria also skyrocketed in production following railway development, with "steam ginneries at Ibadan, Oshogbo, and Lafenwa in Southern, and at Zaria, Lokoja and Ibi in Northern Nigeria" (Duggan, 1922: 203), accelerating urban development. Scholars interrogate the relationship between resource extraction and urbanization in Nigeria, and Africa more broadly (Deckard, 2019), with some noting that certain colonial new port cities would not have been created if not for the need of exporting resources out of Nigeria (Hofmeyr et al., 2016).

Following the amalgamation of the Northern and Southern Protectorate of Nigeria in 1914, scholars identify ex nihilo urbanization as becoming particularly segregationist, owing to philosophies, policies, and laws that separated native areas from British reservations (Home, 1983; Livsey, 2022). The doctrine of indirect rule, a system of governance that allowed traditional rulers to oversee their traditional lands while loosely supervised by the colonial administration, is highly cited as having greatly shifted urbanization in Nigeria towards uneven developments along primarily race but also class lines (Home, 1983; Obi-Ani & Isiani, 2020; Oyovbaire, 1983). Specifically, the doctrine of indirect rule lead to the creation of "Townships," which were exclusive British enclaves administered by the British colonial government, juxtaposed with traditional lands which were administrated by their respective Native Authority (Home, 1983). This was further affirmed through the Township Ordinance of 1917, which assigned the statuses of First, Second, and Third Class Townships to specific cities, ranking their importance as well as the amount of resources that the British colonial government deemed necessary for their development (Home, 1983).

The literature on ex nihilo urbanization in colonial Nigeria also points towards the Garden City movement's influence on the new urban developments in Nigeria. This movement derived from the British planner, Ebenezer Howard, and his 1898 concept for a Garden City featuring a cluster of satellite towns that would allow citizens to enjoy the benefits of both town and country life (Ward, 2005). The Garden City was intended to be egalitarian and communal, with opportunities of employment for citizens of all classes (Ward, 2005). However, within the British Empire, the Garden City was bastardized by town planners, such as Charles Reade and Albert Thompson, who focused on maintaining the aesthetics of a well-curated "garden," while abandoning the egalitarian aspects (Home, 1990). Among Nigerian colonial new towns, the

Garden City approach manifested in exclusive quarters for the British elite marked by "wide tree-lined streets, villas with verandahs and an abundance of vegetation" (Bigon, 2013). This enshrined the patterns of uneven development in urbanizing colonial Nigeria as newly-developed British reserved areas received disproportionately large planning attention and resources in order to realize their ideal garden cities, while primarily native areas were left neglected (Bigon, 2013).

2.3.   Post-independence ex nihilo urbanization

Following World War II, the majority of former European colonies gained their independence and began decolonization throughout the 1950s and 1960s (Lao-Montes, 2013). To mark this shift of power away from European colonial administration, many Global South states took to developing new master-planned cities to underscore their autonomy (Armstrong, 1986). New capital cities, such as Brasília (Brazil), Chandigarh (India), Dodoma (Tanzania), Gaborone (Bostwana), Islamabad (Pakistan), and Lilongwe (Malawi), were built from scratch as nation-building strategies to garner popular confidence in their respective governments and assert a post-war and post-colonial national identity (Abubakar & Doan, 2017; Perera, 2006; Vale, 2008). These new capital cities embodied the modernist urban planning of the era, featuring world-renowned architects and urban planners such as Le Corbusier, Oscar Niemeyer, and Constantinos Doxiadis (Rego, 2021). Additionally, new capital cities were intended to showcase the technological capabilities of the independent state while also generally redirecting the seat of political power to central locations that were deemed less contentious for the many ethnic identities in post-colonial states (Pfaff, 1988). This reoriented urban development away from the colonial port cities which were created to facilitate resource extraction out of the colony (Abubakar & Doan, 2017). This is contested by some scholars who deem the post-independence new capital cities as costly decisions that under-utilized existing urban infrastructure (Potts, 1985).

The literature on Nigerian post-independence ex nihilo urbanization echoes that of the other Global South locations. Abuja was created as the landmark new national capital city as a departure from the colonial capital of Lagos (Abubakar, 2014). It was planned in the modernist fashion by a consortium of American planners, called the International Planning Associates (IPA) who were in charge of the regional planning of the Federal Capital Territory (Abubakar, 2014).

The Japanese architect Kenzo Tange was commissioned to design Abuja's Central Business District, using symbols and monuments that harkened to the various identities and cultures in Nigeria (Elleh, 2017). Abuja was developed both as a "symbol of greatness" for Nigerians as well as a way of placing the national political administration in a central location deemed ethnically neutral and less conducive for conflict (Abubakar & Doan, 2010). The development of Abuja is contested among scholars who deem it a necessary shift away from the congested and overcrowded Lagos (Ikejiofor, 1997), while others regard it negatively for displacing pre-existing communities and widening socioeconomic and housing gaps (Adama, 2007; Danbaba et al., 2016; Ikejiofor, 1996). Besides Abuja, the new state capital of Owerri was also established during the post-independence era, particularly following the Nigerian Civil War from 1967 to 1970. Owerri was comprehensively master planned by a Swiss firm, taking into account the increasing housing demands by civil servants and the need for rebuilding Nigeria's cities following the civil war (Galantay, 1978).

Moreover, now an established new master-planned city, the scholarship on Abuja assesses the project's plans and its current realities (Abubakar & Doan, 2017). Abuja's master plan highlights the criteria for development, listing centrality, climate, land availability and use, security, low population density, ethnic accord, physical planning convenience, and electricity resources as necessary (Ikejiofor, 1997). While scholars generally approve of this criteria especially in regard to Lagos' shortcomings, they do also note the urban issues that Abuja has yet to ameliorate, some of these include solid waste management (Adama, 2007) and the shortages of public services (Abubakar, 2014). Additionally, scholars place a special spotlight on Abuja's failure to reflect the breadth of cultural diversity in Nigeria, with the foreign-led master plan resulting in a polished though placeless capital city with limited references to Nigeria's urban heritage (Elleh & Edelman, 2013).

2.4. Africa's new cities: Entrepreneurial urban ventures

Since the turn of the 21st century, new master-planned cities have proliferated all over the Global South particularly as entrepreneurial projects seeking to attract real estate investment (Moser & Côté-Roy, 2021). Scholars attribute this to the financialization of real estate in the 1990s as well as the global embrace of neoliberalism (Fauveaud, 2020; Harvey, 2007). In Africa,

there are over 70 new cities under construction which have received varying degrees of scholarly attention (Van Noorloos & Kloosterboer, 2018). These new cities manifest as satellite cities (Splinter & Van Leynseele, 2019), privatized urbanisms (Fält, 2019), technological centers (Bandauko & Arku, 2023a), as well as new middle- to upper-class housing (Benazeraf & Alves, 2014). Africa's contemporary new cities are often presented by their promoters as discursively and functionally distinct from existing cities, which they view as derelict and congested (Acey, 2018). Thus, throughout the African continent, several new cities are proposed as innovative urban development projects utilizing digital visualization tools, such as computer generated images and master plans, to sell the new city as modern, sophisticated, and "shiny" (Côté-Roy & Moser, 2019; Watson, 2020). With very few of these new city projects able to convert their high-tech plans into reality, some scholars regard Africa's new cities as "urban fantasies" (Watson, 2014).

This contemporary trend of building new cities in Africa is echoed throughout the Global South, particularly through national visions for the future. In Kuwait and Saudi Arabia, new city construction is articulated within the Vision 2035 and the plan for four new "Economic Cities" respectively as a means towards economic diversification, particularly a shift away from oil dependency (Asmyatullin et al., 2020; Moser et al., 2015). Some of the new cities proposed in these national plans are modest in scope, while others are high-tech and fantastical, such as NEOM in Saudi Arabia which aims to develop a floating city and a ski resort town in the desert (Yusuf & Abdulmohsen, 2022). Similarly, in Morocco, over 15 new cities are constructed as part of the national Villes Nouvelles strategy intended to spur economic growth and manage uncontrolled urbanization (Côté-Roy & Moser, 2022). This makes Morocco the leading African new city-building state, with Nigeria trailing behind (Côté-Roy & Moser, 2022).

Most of the scholarship on Nigeria's contemporary new cities coalesces around the Eko Atlantic City, a public-private urban mega-development project that was proposed south of Lagos in 2003 (Ajibade 2017; Mendelsohn 2018; Olugboyega 2016). There have been brief mention of other new city projects in Nigeria, such as Centenary City (Chidume et al., 2014), as well as some scholarship highlighting the various new urban development projects surrounding Lagos (Olajide & Lawanson, 2022). Nevertheless, there is a significant gap in the literature on Nigeria's contemporary new master-planned cities, including their developers, urban policies, and socioeconomic implications. Nigeria is a rapidly urbanizing nation, with its cities estimated

to become some of the most populous in the world by 2100 (Bearak et al., 2021). This suggests that the current wave of new cities in Nigeria largely indicate the direction of Nigeria's urban futures, especially in terms of accommodating the growing population and the effects that will have on infrastructure and services (Idowu, 2013). Thus far, the scholarship on contemporary Nigerian urbanization generally fit into the categories of land and housing, violence, the informal sector, urban management, and gender (Onibokun & Faniran, 1995). While these categories shed light on the processes of urban development in Nigeria as well as the day-to-day realities of Nigerian urban dwellers, increased scholarly attention on Nigeria's new urban mega-development projects is necessary for better understanding how new cities restructure the patterns of housing, infrastructure, and socioeconomic organization in Nigeria.

2.5.   Urban policy mobilities: Towards a "South-South" transfer

Urban policy mobilities is understood as the transfer and appropriation of urban knowledge, ideas, and expertise from one geographical context to another. This process is generally "structured by embedded institutional legacies and imperatives" which streamline the circulation of urban policy to be adopted as quickly as possible (McCann, 2011: 109). Scholarship on urban policy mobilities generally identifies cities such as Dubai (Watson, 2014), Shanghai (Lowry & McCann, 2011), Singapore (Pow, 2014), and Vancouver (McCann, 2013) as the current epistemological leaders for other cities to learn from and emulate. These particular cities are deemed "successes" due to their modern planning, effective implementation of technology, and transit connectivity among other essential features (Echendu, 2022; McCann, 2011). They also are sold by their respective governments and planning institutions as world leaders in smart or sustainable urban development, using a series of visual marketing strategies to present their urban landscape as desirable (Pow, 2014; Sotoudehnia & Rose-Redwood, 2019). Some scholars argue that contemporary processes of urban policy mobility are "anti-political" as institutions and actors seek to avoid contentious issues as well as create generalizable policies that circumvent "site-specific political struggle" particularly in the recipient location (Clarke, 2012).

Though policy transfer has historically followed a North-South pathway, growing connections between Asia and Africa indicate a South-South turn in urban policy mobilities (Van

Noorloos & Leung, 2016). There is no scholarly consensus on what characterizes the "Global South," though some scholars view the Global South to largely encompass "regions where a vulnerable majority population resides in conditions of comparable marginality" (Myers, 2020: 2). In regard to a South-South transfer of urban policy, scholars identify the Chinese Belt and Road Initiative for its pointed infrastructural investments in Africa, through the development of airports, railways, manufacturing factories, as well as new cities (Benazeraf & Alves, 2014; Myers, 2020). Chinese actors have been involved in developing Eko Atlantic City in Nigeria (Olugboyega, 2016), Kilamba New City in Angola (Buire, 2017), and Modderfontein New City in South Africa (Brill & Reboredo, 2019), and are frequently listed as financiers for urban development projects throughout Africa. While the scholarship on the involvement of Chinese actors in urbanizing Africa is robust, there are other salient Asian players also developing new cities in Africa albeit to far less scholarly attention. These "uncharted foreign actors" (Moser et al., 2021) from places such as South Korea and Malaysia usually circulate urban models, techniques, and approaches to African new city projects based on their respective homegrown urban epistemologies.

2.6.   Conclusion: Addressing gaps in the literature on Nigeria's new cities

This thesis contributes to the broader literature on urban policy mobilities during the colonial, post-independence, and contemporary eras, using Nigeria's new cities as a case study. Thus far, the scholarship on urban policy mobilities in Nigeria generally coalesces around colonial and post-colonial urban policy mobilities between Britain and Nigeria (Craggs & Neate, 2017) as well as some recent studies indicating how Nigerian cities can adopt the strategies of other "successful" cities (Echendu, 2022; Olaniyi & Oniru, 2017; Paul & Joseph, 2021). Regarding the African continent more broadly, there is research that investigates the persistence and evolution of urban master planning in Ghana, Tanzania, and Malawi from the colonial era till today (Croese et al., 2023). However, there are no known scholarly publications which examine Nigerian ex nihilo urbanization throughout these three eras, identifying the projects developed, the actors involved, as well as the guiding policies and philosophies influencing their creation. Additionally, there are no studies highlighting the specific "uncharted foreign actors" (Moser et al., 2021) involved in contemporary Nigerian new cities. As such, this thesis aims to position the

processes of Nigerian ex nihilo urbanization within a historical and global context, drawing out the path dependencies that have informed the development of new urban spaces in colonial, post-independence, and contemporary Nigeria.

This thesis underscores Nigeria's place in the contemporary new master-planned cities phenomenon. There is an under-studied boom in the proposition and construction of new cities in Nigeria, with the majority of new city projects informed by the plans and designs of various foreign actors. The urban policy mobilities literature highlights the flow of urban models and information through human and non-human actors which uphold the circulation of new city-building expertise from one location to another (McCann, 2011). Beyond scholarship on China's involvement in African new cities, there is a significant gap in research on the mosaic of foreign actors building new cities particularly in Nigeria. This thesis therefore seeks to fill in these gaps in the literature by identifying and examining ex nihilo urban development projects in Nigeria since colonialism, their similarities and differences, as well as the range of foreign actors circulating urban policies, plans, and designs to Nigeria's contemporary new cities.

Chapter 3: Methodology

3.1. Introduction

This chapter presents the methodology employed for this thesis research. I outline the qualitative methods used to identify and examine the new city projects created in Nigeria since British colonialism as well as to investigate the foreign actors involved in Nigerian new cities and the urban policies and models that are transferred to Nigeria. Based on conceptual and theoretical frameworks in critical urban geography, I consider the particularities of conducting historical research on Nigerian ex nihilo urbanization, my fieldwork logistics and experience, and the process of soliciting and conducting semi-structured interviews (Appendix Table A). Moreover, I reflect on the influence of positionality and personality on this thesis research, as well as the methodological challenges that arose from researching these elite, and frankly ironclad, new cities during the tail-end of COVID-19 lockdown protocols.

In an earlier iteration of this thesis research, I focused particularly on the impact of Singaporean actors on Nigerian new cities, as the Singaporean state-owned urban planning and architectural firm Surbana Jurong is one of the most active foreign actors in Nigerian new city development. This investigation included a field trip to Singapore, where I conducted ethnographic study, site visits, and some elite interviews. The data collected from this particular fieldwork was useful for understanding the "Singapore model" (Pow, 2014) of urban development and what Nigerian developers are seeking to emulate, but it proved insufficient for providing enough data to critically analyze how Nigerian new cities were shaped by Singaporean actors. To remedy this, the second analytical section of this thesis was broadened to focus on all the foreign actors involved in Nigeria's contemporary new cities, including those from Singapore.

Furthermore, the new city-building phenomenon in Nigeria demands investigation into the reiterative processes that make new cities worthy of construction. It also is worth understanding the foreign actors at play and the planning policies, models, and techniques that they bring with them. This thesis research unpacks the colonial, post-independence, and contemporary development of new cities in Nigeria in an attempt to understand the direction and shape that Nigeria's urban future might take. In so doing, I unpack policies, practices, and actors that have shaped Nigerian ex nihilo urbanization for the past two centuries. I understand ex

nihilo urbanization in Nigeria to be a primarily top-down process, as the importation of urban "expertise" from an often distant elsewhere necessitates that local urban epistemologies and politics be rendered secondary (Clarke, 2012). This research assumes Nigerian new city developers to be active importers of foreign urban policy using various forms of physical and virtual "travelling" to gain inspiration and identify best practices. In my methodology, I aim to underscore the implications of the sustained importation of urban policy in Nigerian ex nihilo urbanization, including the ways in which urban policies are packaged and transformed by foreign actors and Nigerian new city builders.

This research therefore combines (1) document and textual analytical methods in urban studies, planning history, and policy mobilities with (2) semi-structured interviews conducted with elite urban planners and architects. I provide detailed explanations regarding the choice of these methods and their role in my thesis research. First, I discuss my investigation of the history of Nigerian ex nihilo urbanization through analysis of historical records, planning doctrines, secondary interviews of planners, as well as guiding planning documents of the colonial, post-independence, and contemporary era. Second, I delve firmly into the contemporary era, examining the process of urban policy mobilities to Nigerian new cities, particularly the importer-exporter relationship between local developers and foreign partners. Third, I present the methods of participant recruitment and data collection, particularly for conducting elite interviews. Fourth, I review my methods of data analysis and conclude this chapter with reflections on my positionality as an African researcher based in Canada, and some of the methodological challenges and research limitations accompanying this thesis research.

3.2. Historical dimensions of urban research on Nigerian new cities

3.2.1. The chronology of new city development in Nigeria

The first section of my thesis provides a comprehensive historical overview of Nigerian ex nihilo urbanization during the colonial, post-independence, and contemporary eras based on document analysis. That said, the establishment of "new cities" in Nigeria date further back than colonialism, with several cities established as trading posts before and during the slave trade (Olukoju, 2004). This thesis investigates the primary planners, philosophies, and ex nihilo urban development projects of each era. This is with the understanding that the colonial era was the

first time that planning was viewed a "professional" and "rational" method for shaping and re-developing cities (Home, 2013). To begin the chronology, I defined the time period for each era, considering the colonial era in Nigeria to be 1861 to 1960, the post-independence era to constitute 1960 to 1999, and the contemporary era to run from 1999 to today. The year 1861 was selected as the beginning of the colonial era because this was the year that British colonial administration over what would become Nigeria was first established, following the annexation of Lagos on August 6, 1861, as well as the declaration of Lagos as a "British possession" (Hopkins, 1980). The annexation of Lagos involved the British destroying pre-existing settlements in order to clear land for the creation of colonial urban infrastructure such as courthouses, schools, and government buildings (Adesoji et al., 2019). This would maintain until Britain effectively occupied the Northern and Southern Nigeria Protectorate after the Berlin Conference of 1884-1885. In 1914, the two protectorates were amalgamated into a single colony with the borders that we recognize today as Nigeria. Following this amalgamation, a number of town planning policies and doctrines were adopted in Nigeria to develop planned areas and cities. Several natural resource extraction sites were also identified around this time, with new cities developed as mining and industrial towns to facilitate trade.

Nigeria gained its independence from the British on October 1, 1960. A few years later in 1967, a civil war broke out between Nigeria and the secessionist state of Biafra in the Southeast, a region with a majority Igbo population. Upon the war's end in 1970, Nigeria's leading politicians sought to build national cohesion through various strategies, including the development of the new national capital city of Abuja, as well as new master-planned state capital of Imo state, Owerri, among other less administrative new cities. Abuja was proposed as a way of moving administrative functions to a central location away from Lagos, the colonial capital which was located in the Southwest in a region with a Yoruba majority. With its central positioning, Abuja was intended by Nigeria's elites to send the message of political neutrality and to foster "ethnic accord" (Ikejiofor, 1997). The development of the new capital of Abuja was completed in 1991. Since the 21st century, there has been a boom in new city development due to the financialization of real estate, lax or lacking housing laws and policies, and the embrace of neoliberalism. The new cities developed since 2000 form the contemporary era of ex nihilo urbanization in Nigeria.

3.2.2. *Analysis of historical actors, documents and plans*

For the colonial period, I used a mixture of historical and content analysis, looking first at what other scholars had written about colonial urban planning in Nigeria, and more broadly in West Africa, and then identifying specific documents, books, laws, planning individuals, and planning institutions that I needed to investigate further. To identify the ex nihilo urban development projects in Nigeria, I looked through the list of all the existing cities in Nigeria and investigated their historical formation and their importance during the colonial era. I also looked for evidence of the destruction of existing native settlements to build colonial infrastructure as well as the discovery of a natural resource; establishment of industry; development of railway or road networks; and any other evidence of colonial infrastructural investment in an area.

Certain books were particularly helpful for identifying the years that a new city was established in British colonial Nigeria, particularly *Nigerian Cities* (Falola & Salm, 2004) and *Historical Dictionary of Nigeria* (Falola et al., 2018). Besides these, the dates of an ex nihilo urbanization project were discovered through reading through scholarly articles on the development and histories of each existing city in Nigeria. For understanding colonial-era planning policies and doctrines, Ebenezer Howard's *Garden Cities of To-morrow* (1902); Lord Lugard's *The Dual Mandate In British Tropical Africa* (1922); Dr. P.S. Selwyn-Clarke's *Report on the Yellow Fever Conference at Dakar, 1928* (1929) were very informative. The publications by Robert Home (2013, 2015, 2019; 1983) on town planning policies in Nigeria, particularly the Township Ordinance of 1917 was also very useful for framing my understanding of spatial and master plans in colonial Nigeria. Beyond that, I consulted books by leading Nigerian urban geographers, particularly Akin Mabogunje's *Urbanization in Nigeria* (1969). I also found historical maps, grid plans, and images of different planned areas in Nigeria which helped with understanding the differences between British colonial planned areas and "native" residential areas in Nigeria.

To understand the post-independence era, I selected Abuja as the primary new city to investigate. There are other new cities which were constructed between 1960 and 1999 in Nigeria, including New Bussa (1962), Owerri (1976), and Festac Town (1977). However, Abuja (and to a lesser extent, Owerri) was the most salient for my research because it was politically significant as the new master-planned capital city of Nigeria and embodied the inclusive planning ethos guiding this era of ex nihilo urbanization. I delved into the literature on the

foreign actors involved in the creation of Abuja, finding it to be the International Planning Associates (IPA) which was an American consortium of planners that were consulted to create the regional plan for the Federal Capital Territory of Nigeria, and the famed Japanese architect Kenzo Tange who was in charge of designing the buildings for Abuja's Central Business District (Elleh & Edelman 2013). There were also later contributions by Doxiadis Associates and Albert Speer and Partner. Nnamdi Elleh's *Architecture and Politics in Nigeria: The Study of a Late Twentieth-Century Enlightenment-Inspired Modernism at Abuja, 1900-2016* (2017) was particularly useful for setting the scene on Abuja's development, including the perspective of planners, planning styles and symbols adopted, and the urban models that shaped Abuja. This book also contained several images of the master plans created for Abuja, providing the necessary visual information to understand Abuja's genesis.

3.3.   Global influence on Nigeria's contemporary new cities

Nigerian new cities are part of a global trend of contemporary new city development shaped by models, individuals, and institutions from a distant elsewhere. McCann (2011: 113) identifies "interviews with key transfer agents involved in mobilizing policies; and ethnographic observation of where transfer occurs or is facilitated, including public meetings, conferences, site visits, seminars, and lectures" as important methodological tools for research into the circulation of urban policy. Over the course of writing and reformulating this thesis, I conducted (1) interviews with key transfer agents, (2) ethnographic observations of where transfer occurs, and (3) site visits. The latter two methods were employed to gather data when my thesis was focused primarily on Singapore-Nigeria urban policy mobilities but ended up being useful for my analysis into the urban policy tourism carried out by Nigerian new city developers. Beyond these, the rest of my research on the contemporary new cities in Nigeria drew from online research, including official websites, social media platforms, and opinion blogs.

3.3.1. *Online research, document analysis, and social media*

My research on contemporary new cities in Nigeria started with identifying the new city projects that were underway. I employed several strategies for identifying new cities, including scholarly literature review, simple Google searches, and consulting Nigerian peers to see if they

were aware of any new cities in their region. The International New Town Institute's website was a useful starting point for identifying some new cities in Nigeria, albeit incomplete. Through online research, I came to find 12 new cities in Nigeria, each with varying degrees of information online. Following their identification, I analyzed their official websites and press releases, as well as social media posts (most particularly on Twitter or "X") and news articles written by, or featuring, Nigerian new city developers and actors.

Some of the new cities had official websites which were very useful for gathering useful data such as their year started, partnerships and developers, and development progress. These websites also sometimes contained their official plans alongside renderings and neighbourhood maps of the new city. This online research was important for identifying similarities and differences between the new cities, particularly the discursive and ideological narratives employed to boost the profile of the new city project. It was also very useful for understanding where the new city developers situated their new city project in relation to Nigeria's existing cities. For the sake of urban policy mobilities, some official websites listed the foreign partners involved in the project which helped with further investigating the nature of foreign partnerships in Nigerian new cities as well as identifying when some actors were involved in other projects in Nigeria.

Beyond the official materials by the new city developers, I also searched for individual new city projects on social media. This often provided more details on the project, including the specific actors involved and their public profiles. In some cases, I was able to find and analyze the posts of key local actors who had undergone policy tours, investment pitches, or generally shared their visions for the new cities. These posts also enabled me to understand the way that new city developers "sold" their projects as well as to read through reactions to the plans, which often ranged between approval and disapproval. As most of the new cities in Nigeria are currently in progress, with very few that have broken ground, most of the details for them were presented in piecemeals spread throughout the internet.

3.3.2. Semi-structured interviews: Participant recruitment

In order to understand the new city projects beyond the data gathered from online research, I conducted several semi-structured interviews with specific actors involved in new cities (Appendix Table A). The interviews were intended to confirm the online information, gain

the perspective of the developers' inspirations and ideas, as well as ask questions about what was happening on the ground. Participant recruitment for interviews occurred primarily through social media platforms such as LinkedIn and Twitter (now "X"), and through email correspondence. This recruitment targeted an elite population of managers, urban planners, architects, and real estate agents employed at the new cities. My recruitment also included planners working for the public sector in regions nearby a proposed new city as my research also sought to analyze the impact of new cities on Nigeria's existing cities and their denizens.

This participant recruitment yielded mixed results as many contacted individuals did not respond. That said, LinkedIn proved to be very useful for locating individuals working in a new city project, and it also contained posts by actors related to the new cities that were outside the official channels. Using the premium features on LinkedIn, I was able to cold recruit relevant employees and management involved in new city projects in Nigeria, some of their profiles included how long they had been working in the project, some of their responsibilities, and their achievements, which made it easier to tailor my recruitment script to their individual profiles. Some of the people interviewed also put me in touch with others in the company that had different expertise and access to the other aspects of the new city's development than they did. Besides LinkedIn, I also was able to recruit one interviewee through Twitter by commenting on their posts and another through a cold email explaining my research and why I contacted them.

The majority of the interviews were video calls, with some audio calls, and one e-mail correspondence. The video calls were generally straightforward to organize due to the pandemic and people getting used to conducting meetings remotely. These calls were great for better explaining my research further; getting to know the individuals, their career paths and involvement in the new cities; as well as having the flexibility to discuss various aspects of urban development and real estate in Nigeria. Although my recruitment script proposed a meeting of around 15 minutes, all my interviews were longer than that with the longest lasting nearly 1h30m.

3.3.3. *Elite interviews*

My first interview took place was in October 2022 with the last one in December 2023. During this period, I conducted 12 interviews with individuals who were urban planners, architects, managers, land surveyors, and scholars. My interviews covered individuals working

on four new city projects in Nigeria. Two of these were also employees at Surbana Jurong and Rendeavour, which are two of the leading planning institutions developing new cities in Nigeria. My earliest interviews revealed that some companies had specific protocols for their employees discussing the projects with non-employees, particular those working in media. Different participants had different loyalties to this protocol depending on their view of my research. The interviewees that I was successful with generally regarded my research as a student project for university and were willing to ignore the media protocol out of the benevolence of helping out a student. In some cases, I had to clearly state that my research was not associated with any news publication, and in others, I only received conditional consent as long as I did not mention their name or professional status in my scholarly publications.

Tapping into this benevolence of the interviewees, I often highlighted my student status and contextualized my research as a university project, as well as offered some minor anecdotes about my academic journey. I also started my interviews by briefly asking about the academic paths of the participants and what drew them to their fields, which was quite effective in assuaging their anxieties during the interview. The semi-structured interview format was therefore very useful for ensuring that I had a prepared set of questions that I had to cover while also having room to adjust to the topic areas that participants brought up whenever necessary. This format combined with my heightened status as a student meant that a lot of the participants were open to "showing off" their projects, sharing details about their involvement in the projects and what they were excited about. One of my interviews went particularly well because the participant, an architect, had also conducted semi-structured interviews during his own master's research, so he was very willing to share photos, discuss the plans, and the ways in which they had been re-structured over time.

There were instances where participants were reticent because they viewed my research and my questions as intrusive. One participant in particular noted that he was reluctant to respond to my questions because he was worried about competitors. In this case, I had to remind him that I was only asking about details publicly available on the new city project's website. This did have a negative impact on the data I was able to gather as I wanted to know more about their master plan as well as the foreign actors involved, since these require giving away very specific detail, this participant refused to discuss them.

As most of the new city projects in Nigeria are not yet fully built, I had to broaden my participant recruitment to include interviews with planners working in the same regions as a proposed new city, as they would be able to assess the impact that the new city project would have on their work. These interviews with local Nigerian planners were very informative as I learnt a lot about the local initiatives underway, the strategies used by Nigerian planners to develop more inclusive urban infrastructure, as well as some of the politics of representation that Nigerian planners face while trying to propose policies or try out new urban ideas. In these interviews with local Nigerian planners, new city developments were only regarded as beneficial for the potential investments that they may draw into a region. However, all the Nigerian planners suggested alternative ways that the funds allocated for new cities could be used to meet pressing urban needs within their communities. The Nigerian planners interviewed were very open to the involvement of foreign planners if they would focus less on the extravagant new cities and more on day-to-day urban infrastructure.

3.3.4. *Fieldwork, ethnographic observations, and site visits in Singapore*

Though my research came to focus less specifically on Singapore and Nigeria urban policy mobilities, I did conduct fieldwork in Singapore with the goal of understanding the "Singapore model" (Pow, 2014) of urban development, how this was sold, and how Nigerian new city developers were enticed to try to replicate Singaporean urbanism in their new cities. This fieldwork also initially focused on understanding the role of Surbana Jurong as a Singaporean state-owned urban planning company developing new cities in Nigeria. However, despite the shifted focus, my fieldwork did help with informing how policy tourism operated in the Singaporean context which was very useful for understanding the narratives presented by Nigerian new city developers who had visited Singapore.

I spent about a month in Singapore conducting site visits around the city and partaking in tours organized by Singapore's Urban Redevelopment Authority (URA), the institution most responsible for Singapore's urban planning, design, and building conservation efforts. I first did my own personal tour of the URA's City Gallery, which contained some interactive display of Singapore's urban development history, some of its future plans, as well as a prototype of the city. A couple days later, I attended an official guided tour of the City Gallery organized by the URA to see how Singaporean representatives "sold" the city to visitors and to get a sense of what

details were highlighted or glossed over. The official tour by the URA is one of the tours attended by Nigerian new city developers when seeking inspiration from Singapore for their projects and so I was able to get a direct idea of what they were engaging with. This particularly helped with analyzing the social media posts written by policy tourists following their trip, as I could take note of what they regarded as important to share with their audiences.

Fig. 1. Prototype of Singapore's Central Business District taken during official tour at the URA. (Source: Authors).

My general observations of Singapore as an urban model for Nigeria were that the more easily replicable items were often far less glamorous than that which new city developers focused on within their posts on their trip. I found that sites such as hawker centers were exemplary for Nigeria's cities, as hawker centers served as both cultural and economic locations where people could buy and sell a diversity of cuisines at an affordable rate. The hygiene rating system at hawker centers was also another factor that made them very interesting as an urban idea that could be transferred to Nigeria. Indeed, none of the social media posts by Nigerian new city developers and policy tourists mentioned hawker centers at all.

3.4. Reflections and limitations

3.4.1. Positionality

In conducting this research, my positionality manifested through several aspects of my identity as I am a young, able-bodied male; Black African (particularly Nigerian); student at a prestigious Canadian university; English-speaking, with a hybrid of a British and North American accent; and I come from an educated, upper middle-class background. These features of my identity strongly influenced how I was received by participants during my interviews as well as site visits in Singapore. Various facets of my positionality, including that I am Nigerian, living in Canada, with a Western accent, made me somewhat of an enigma. Towards the end of one interview with a local Nigerian planner based not too far from my hometown of Port Harcourt, I was asked, "Please can I know your country [of origin]?" To which my response that I was Nigerian was received with, "But you don't sound like one." Thought said lightheartedly, this comment indicated that interview participants saw me as more of an international figure than a local one. In some ways, that was positive as it meant that they were getting some form of international recognition on their work, to which some did express gratitude. Other times, this was met with concern about where the information shared in the interview would be going.

My time in Singapore was the most interesting regarding the influence of my positionality on my research. When I first arrived in Singapore, the taxi driver who picked me up from the airport struck conversation with me, asking immediately, "Where are you from?" In North America, it is often believed that this question should be asked with delicacy as it is often used to "other" a perceived non-local individual (Cheryan & Monin, 2005). Being in Southeast Asia, I believed the question to be innocent and thus I replied, "I'm Nigerian but I live in Canada, in Montreal." To which the taxi driver replied, "Oh, I hope you are not one of those rowdy Africans." Struck by the crassness of this response, and wishing to placate the situation, I lightly giggled and replied, "No, I am not. I'm just visiting Singapore. It's my first time in Southeast Asia."

During my guided tour of the URA, I mostly remained quiet and attentive, listening to the tour guide and sometimes asking clarifying questions. My particular aim was to observe the difference between my two tours, as well as identify how Singapore was "sold" to visitors. At the end of the tour, I stayed behind to speak with the tour guide about if any Nigerian urban planners had been a part of their tours and if the tour guide had any idea on what other Nigerian attendees

generally wanted to learn from Singapore. I foregrounded this by saying, "Although I live in Canada, I am originally from Nigeria, and I was wondering if you had ever guided any Nigerian planners through the URA?" Upon revealing my Nigerian identity, the tour guide's demeanour immediately stiffened in reaction. After a couple seconds, they said that they had not been the guide for any Nigerian planners, rather their "only experience with Nigerians was negative" as they had once gotten scammed. Left in this awkward position, I sighed and replied with a light tone something to the effect of, "Unfortunately, that happens." Thankfully, the fact that I lived in Canada lightened the moment, as the tour guide followed that up by sharing a story of a friend who had relocated to Alberta. In saying our farewells, the tour guide made an unusually tight and prolonged handshake, which I felt was a way of assessing my intentions as the only other Nigerian they had met.

Although I had this unexpected encounter during my site visit at the URA, I believe that this did not greatly affect the data I collected since the tour guide only found out that I was Nigerian at the end of the tour. In interviews with Nigerian new city developers and local planners, my positionality played a role in legitimizing me as a researcher but there were also times that it made participants visibly cautious and reticent. Overall, my interactions with participants were straightforward as it was all with English-speakers who were mostly male (and one female), and all able-bodied.

3.4.2. *Research limitations*

Studying Nigerian ex nihilo urbanization using a historical and global approach came with a lot of roadblocks. Historical geography research is generally difficult especially in the African context due to the lack of written texts, particularly by locals (Dennis, 1984). This meant that my study of Nigerian ex nihilo urbanization during the colonial and post-independence era relied mainly on secondary sources that were digitally available. For the colonial era, it was especially time-consuming to pin down specific dates of projects due to the lack of precise records as well as the conflicting information between colonials and natives. My reliance on secondary sources meant that I was constrained to what was already published. I could not ask additional questions and certainly had no access to the town planners involved in Nigeria's colonial new towns and cities.

Regarding the global dimensions of contemporary Nigerian new cities, my analysis was limited by the fact that many of the new cities in Nigeria are yet to be built. This often meant that there was a sense of secrecy around the plans for development and my investigation into the new cities had to occur primarily through online research. Besides the difficulties of doing online recruitment particularly for an elite population, there were barriers to information on the status of the new city developments, their exact locations in Nigeria, and the extent to the involvement of the foreign partners. During my interviews, it was also revealed that some of the foreign partnerships were forged decades ago and there had been no continued engagement between the new city developers and the foreign planners since. This meant that I was trying to ask questions about the details of an urban policy mobilities which people had simply forgotten about.

I also began carrying out this research during the tail end of the COVID-19 pandemic which presented a lot of challenges and worries about what was feasible to study. During the earlier part of my studies, the scope of my topic changed several times before landing on Singapore-Nigeria urban policy mobilities. My fieldwork in Singapore, however, did not yield enough data to formulate a robust argument about the mechanics of urban policy circulation between Singapore and Nigeria. I rectified this by focusing on all the avenues of urban policy mobilities to Nigeria with a focus on the Global South, although this meant that my analysis would become less pointed than had I investigated a single actor and their role in Nigerian new city development.

Preamble to Chapter 4

The new master-planned city phenomenon has taken root in Africa as the continent is now viewed as the "last development frontier" for real estate. Recent scholarship has brought attention to new city building schemes at the national level, focusing on the role of the state and the public sector in pushing for new city development. This chapter builds on this scholarship by examining the new cities trend in Nigeria and by highlighting what makes Nigerian new city development unique and noteworthy. Understanding that "new cities" are merely the contemporary iteration of ex nihilo urban development, this chapter presents the new towns and cities built from scratch during the colonial and post-independence eras in Nigeria. It identifies the particular new city projects carried out and assesses the similarities, differences, and continuities between the different eras of Nigerian ex nihilo urbanization.

In the context of this thesis, this chapter provides a historical overview of the patterns of ex nihilo urbanization in Nigeria since the advent of British colonialism in the mid-1800s. It also underscores the uncoordinated nature of Nigeria's contemporary new cities, which differs from other African and Global South states that develop new cities as part of a cohesive national plan. This following chapter represents the first scholarly examination of the new city projects currently underway in Nigeria.

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Favour Daka (lead author): Contribution of original research material; conducted the historical and document research and analysis; conceptualization of original draft, including theoretical framework, structure, and argument; writing of original draft, review, and editing.

Sarah Moser (second author): Support for conceptualization and analysis; guidance on original draft, including the theoretical framework, structure, and argument; assistance with revisions, reviews, and editing.

Chapter 4: Ex nihilo urbanization in Nigeria: Colonial legacies, privatization, and foreign actors

Abstract

Over the past two decades, Nigeria has become a hotspot for the creation of new cities, with a dozen currently underway. Much like the new city projects in other parts of the world, new cities in Nigeria are promoted as necessary for addressing urban challenges plaguing cities, including overcrowding, housing deficits, a lack of amenities, and poor transportation infrastructure. While the boom in Nigeria's new city development tracks with the global proliferation of similar projects, this paper demonstrates that building ex nihilo new cities has a long history in Nigeria dating back to British colonialism. This paper identifies 39 ex nihilo urban mega-developments carried out in Nigeria since the British colonial era and examines their strategic locations and rationales, the key actors involved, and the urban philosophies guiding their creation. Although recent scholarship on new cities focuses largely on current projects, this article investigates Nigerian ex nihilo urbanization in three distinct eras – colonial, post-independence, and contemporary – in order to understand the continuities and differences in new city development over time.

Key words: new cities; Nigeria; colonialism; post-colonialism; social exclusions; privatization; foreign actors

4.1.   Introduction

Over the past two decades, there has been a rapid growth in the number of ex nihilo urban mega-developments promoted as new "cities" under construction. More than 150 new cities projects have been launched in over 45 countries, almost exclusively in the Global South (Moser, 2020). Africa alone is home to approximately 70 new city projects in countries such as Morocco, Egypt, Tanzania, Kenya, South Africa, and Ghana (Keeton & Provoost, 2019; Moser & Côté-Roy, 2021; Watson, 2014). The current new cities boom in Nigeria aligns with the global proliferation of such projects, which are promoted by their developers and stakeholders as a panacea to the urban challenges facing major cities, including overcrowding, housing deficits, poor transportation infrastructure and sanitation, and a lack of amenities and services (Idowu, 2013). These new city projects intend not only to be distinct from existing metropolises, but to also be their "mirror opposites" (Murray, 2015a): clean, green, spacious, and orderly, as a counter to the perceived chaos and dysfunction of established cities.

In some emerging economies, the construction of new cities is part of a national or regional development strategy. Saudi Arabia launched two waves of new city projects to help diversify its economy away from oil dependency (Moser et al., 2015): first, four new master-planned "economic cities" were announced in 2005, then a series of new cities and urban mega-developments were announced under the umbrella of NEOM (Yusuf & Abdulmohsen, 2022). Similarly, Kuwait, in alignment with its Vision 2035 for a "new Kuwait" is developing 12 brand new cities to fulfill the state's legal housing obligations and diversify its economy away from oil (Ali & Moser, forthcoming). Egypt's Vision 2030 highlights the construction of a new administrative capital city as a way of boosting the economy and easing congestion (Ali, 2022). In 2004, Morocco introduced its Villes Nouvelles strategy, which has resulted in the launch of 19 new cities intended to spur economic growth and manage uncontrolled urbanization (Côté-Roy & Moser, 2022). Likewise, Ecuador's Yachay City of Knowledge is a state project intended to create the "Silicon Valley of Latin America" (Forest & Moser, 2020: 152) in the economically depressed north of Ecuador in order to leapfrog the economy from agriculture to a knowledge economy. In contrast to these state-driven new city-building programs, this paper demonstrate that Nigeria's current wave of new city projects are largely driven by the private sector, with limited involvement from the state and are conceived of as singular urban mega-development projects divorced from any national plan.

Builders of new cities in Nigeria emphasize the novelty of their projects in promotional material, arguing that they are "unprecedented" (EAC, 2024) and "revolutionary" (Centenary City, 2023). However, this paper argues that the current wave of ex nihilo urban projects in Nigeria recall urban development approaches introduced in the British colonial era (mid-1800s to 1960), when new towns and cities were constructed on a tabula rasa to serve either as colonial administrative centers or as residential areas for European elites. We investigate the current wave of new city projects underway in Nigeria, examining the discourses they draw upon, the problems they seek to address, as well as the key actors involved. In so doing, we place the current wave of new cities in Nigeria within a broader historical context to unpack continuities from the colonial and post-independence (1960 to late-1990s) eras of ex nihilo urbanization in Nigeria. Our research is shaped by several questions: What is the state of ex nihilo urbanization in Nigeria today? How is the current new city-building trend in Nigeria similar to or different from earlier efforts at ex nihilo urbanization in colonial Nigeria? What does Nigerian ex nihilo

city building tell us about processes of urbanization and about how urban planning is employed, by whom, and for what purposes? To this end, we identify 23 colonial, four post-independence, and 12 contemporary ex nihilo urban mega-developments, and analyze their goals, development strategies, policies, and key actors. We also draw some comparisons between the guiding planning frameworks and philosophies of Nigeria's contemporary new cities and that of other African or Global South states also building new cities.

This paper is the first to date to provide an overview of Nigeria's post-colonial new cities, and to investigate the temporal changes in Nigerian ex nihilo urbanization since professional planning was introduced by the colonial British. Through studying ex nihilo urban planning, we investigate the prominent politics and developmental logics that shape Nigeria's political and economic centers and that currently set the trajectory for Nigeria's urban future. Additionally, in examining the recent proliferation of new city projects, this paper seeks to expand the scholarship on Nigeria's current new cities beyond Eko Atlantic City, which is the only contemporary new city project in Nigeria to receive scholarly attention to date (Acey, 2018; Adedeji, 2021; Ajibade, 2017; Bolarinwa, 2023; Olajide & Lawanson, 2022; Olugboyega, 2016). Taking a comparative historical approach, we argue that British colonial urban principles, practices, and institutions mandating the segregation of British elites from "native" Nigerians in colonial towns and cities bear similarities with the socioeconomic exclusions in contemporary Nigerian new cities. We also interrogate the assumptions by Nigerian elites that high-profile urban development ideas and expertise must originate from elsewhere.

Our analysis is informed by published research, official websites of new cities and planning institutions, official master plans, and semi-structured interviews with planners and new city-building actors. To identify ex nihilo urban development in colonial Nigeria, we focused on the creation of new urban infrastructure by the British, the declaration of colonial administrative headquarters, as well as the implementation of a grid or spatial plans in a region of Nigeria. In the post-colonial eras, "new cities" were identified as such based on evidence of their developers promoting them as either new or distinct from an established city, as well as through official websites and documents that contain details about the new city, including visual renderings, master plans, and the project timeline. Through these methods of data collection, we identified 39 ex nihilo urban development projects and new cities in Nigeria since the mid-1800s.

Following this introduction, this paper is structured into five sections. First, we provide an overview of recent scholarship on new cities in the Global South and in Africa in particular, with a focus on Nigeria. Second, we investigate the colonial and post-independence eras of ex nihilo urbanization in Nigeria and highlight the contrast between exclusionary urban planning during colonialism to (ostensibly) inclusionary policies following independence, as well as the key actors involved and planning objectives in both eras. Third, we examine contemporary new city building in Nigeria and highlight the 12 new city projects launched over the past two decades, the actors involved, their stated objectives, and the promotional rhetoric they employ. Fourth, we discuss the key continuities and differences in Nigerian ex nihilo urbanization over time. Finally, we conclude with some final thoughts on the implications of Nigeria's new city projects and suggest directions for future research.

4.2. African's new master-planned cities: Policies, practices, and actors

4.2.1. Colonial urban planning in sub-Saharan Africa

Planned urban settlements have been built from scratch for millennia, with notable spikes in development during European colonialism (Ross & Telkamp, 2012) and the post-World War II independence era (Vale, 2008). In sub-Saharan Africa, colonial ex nihilo urbanization was introduced to facilitate mining and port activities to extract resources from the colonies and ship them back to Europe (Home, 2015). These towns were created as "modern" planned areas reserved for European colonial elites, and were characterized by their orderliness and their prohibition of native peoples (Bigon, 2013). Colonial new cities projected an image of prestige and exclusivity, using botanical gardens, parks, and various expressions of horticulture as aesthetic markers of wealth (Bigon, 2016b; Home, 1990; Njoh, 2009). Additionally, professional town planners trained in Europe were circulated among colonies to develop these ideal colonial urban settlements, implementing policies and master plans that strategically pushed Africans out to the urban periphery while also excluding them from the process of urban development (Bigon, 2016a; Home, 1983; Njoh, 2008).

Although colonial segregationist urban policies were contested and eventually repealed after independence, the use of master plans for developing new cities remained a central feature of post-independence ex nihilo urbanization (Armstrong, 1986). In the 1960s, independence

prompted the creation of a number of capital cities throughout the African continent, including in Botswana, Malawi, and Tanzania as symbolic departures from the colonial past as well as visual markers of the autonomous state's visions for the future (Abubakar & Doan, 2017; Beeckmans, 2018). The notions of inclusion, unity, and accord were strongly associated with post-independence new capital cities, which were often constructed near the geographical center of their respective countries to signal political neutrality as well as foster ethnic cohesion (Abubakar & Doan, 2017; Ikejiofor, 1997). Much of this post-independence new city planning was carried out by foreign architectural and planning institutions consulted by African states for their modernist approach (Abubakar & Doan, 2017). The features of modernism such as skyscrapers, highways, and streets laid out on a grid helped to project an image of economic development and order necessary for instilling popular confidence in the independent government, particularly in contrast to the colonial administration which was seen to have planned its cities unevenly (Abubakar & Doan, 2017; Elleh, 2017; Harrison & Croese, 2023).

4.2.2. *A wave of new city developments in Africa*

The contemporary wave of new city projects in Africa represent a contemporary iteration of the trend of developing new cities from scratch. Contemporary new cities in Africa are "comprehensively planned self-contained enclaves" (Van Noorloos & Kloosterboer, 2018: 1224) that are promoted using digitally visualized master plans to attract primarily wealthy investors (Watson, 2020). Much more variegated in their missions than the preceding eras, contemporary ex nihilo urbanization projects in Africa are conceived as public-private partnerships intended to rectify housing deficits (Moore, 2019), infrastructural shortfalls (Idowu, 2013), economic downturns (Côté-Roy & Moser, 2019), as well as encourage entrepreneurialism (Carmody & Owusu, 2016). Contemporary new cities in sub-Saharan Africa have been developed as elite enclaves (Fält, 2019), hyper-privatized real estate developments (Murray, 2015b), as well as centers for technological experimentation (Bandauko & Arku, 2023a), while also being promoted by developers as strategies to combat the climate crisis (Keeton & Nijhuis, 2019).

The scale of their aims and proposals, and their inability to realize them, which has become increasingly apparent, has resulted in scholarship that criticizes Africa's contemporary new cities as "urban fantasies" (Watson, 2014). In grappling with the history of colonialism, many new cities in Africa are justified as strategy to "catch up" with the West and framed by

their builders as necessary for "development" and "progress" (Côté-Roy & Moser, 2019). Recent scholarship questions whether new master-planned cities are needed at all and suggests that they are an inappropriate approach to spark urban and economic growth in Africa (Balkaran, 2019; Murray, 2015a; Watson, 2014), especially as new cities largely encourage speculative urbanism and result in social, economic, and environmental harms (Côté-Roy & Moser, 2019; Splinter & Van Leynseele, 2019; Watson, 2014).

There is a growing scholarly consensus that Africa's contemporary new cities are largely urbanization projects that prioritize profit and prestige over democratic participation and inclusive urban and economic growth (Moser & Côté-Roy, 2021). Contemporary new cities in Africa reproduce geographies of socio-spatial exclusion due to the state-led evictions and land grabbing that occurs to clear way for their development (Acey, 2018). Although this occurs elsewhere in the Global South such as in Indonesia and Malaysia (Moser, 2020), these acts of dispossession are justified by proponents of new cities through a "right to development" logic in which Africa "deserves" to have its own shiny new cities, even if they negatively impact the poor and are high-risk endeavors (Côté-Roy & Moser, 2019). In the context of Nigeria, scholars have criticized how Eko Atlantic City exacerbates environmental degradation and worsens socioeconomic inequalities (Ajibade, 2017; Mendelsohn, 2018), destroyed housing, increased flooding, damaged biodiversity, further disenfranchised the Nigerian urban poor, despite optimistic solution-oriented rhetoric used to promote the project (Adedeji, 2021; Ajibade, 2017; Bolarinwa, 2023).

Beyond Eko Atlantic City, there is a significant gap in the scholarship on Nigeria's many other new city projects. This also a lacuna in the literature on the variety of actors involved in all stages of conceptualizing, designing, planning, and constructing new cities in Nigeria. Recent scholarship on African new cities explores the "uncharted foreign actors" involved in building new cities from countries such as South Korea and Malaysia consulted to plan multiple new cities in Africa (Moser et al., 2021). In the Nigerian context, there is just one study that tracks the various foreign actors involved in Eko Atlantic City (Olugboyega, 2016). We aim to fill several gaps in the literature by providing an overview of the 12 ex nihilo urbanization projects underway in Nigeria. We place contemporary new city building in Nigeria within a broader timeframe to investigate the similarities and differences in policies, practices, and actors since

the colonial era. Moreover, we seek to contribute to the scholarship on lesser-known foreign actors involved in Nigeria's contemporary new city projects (Moser et al., 2021).

4.3. Ex nihilo urbanization in Nigeria: From colonialism to independence

Since the onset of British colonialism in the mid-1800s, 39 ex nihilo urban development projects have been created in Nigeria by a number of actors, including the British colonial administration, colonial companies, the independent Nigerian state, and foreign private firms (Fig. 2, Table 1). These projects include colonial administrative centers, new towns to support colonial extractive enterprises, post-independence seats of power, and contemporary satellite cities, all of which require large-scale infrastructural investments from either the public or private sector. Spanning all regions of Nigeria, ex nihilo urbanization projects encompass a variety of urban forms, concepts, and objectives.

Fig. 2. Map of ex nihilo urban developments in Nigeria from the mid-1800s to present. (Source: Authors)

	Name	Year	City builder(s)	Other key actor(s)	Primary purpose	Projected population
				British colonial era (1861 to 1960)		
1.	Lagos	1861	British colonial administration	Lagos Executive Development Board [planning institution]; Albert Thompson [planner]; Frederick Lugard [governor-general of Nigeria]	Colonial capital	Unknown
2.	Sapele	1891	British colonial administration	Claude Maxwell Macdonald [commissioner and consul-general]; Henry Gallwey [deputy commissioner and vice-consul]	Consular district	Unknown
3.	Warri	1891	British colonial administration		Administrative center	Unknown
4.	Ibadan	1893			Administrative center	Unknown
5.	Benin City	1897			Administrative center	Unknown
6.	Abeokuta	1898	British colonial administration	Nigerian Railway Corporation [railway developer]	Trading post	Unknown
7.	Lokoja	1900	British colonial administration	John Eaglesome [director of Department of Public Works]; Royal Niger Company [established constabulary camp]	Capital of Northern Nigeria Protectorate	Unknown
8.	Yola	1901	British colonial administration		Provincial headquarters	Unknown
9.	Zaria	1901	British colonial administration	West African Frontier Force [established garrison town]	Colonial government station	Unknown
10.	Calabar	1902	British colonial administration		Administrative center	Unknown
11.	Zungeru	1902			Capital of Northern Nigeria Protectorate	Unknown
12.	Ilorin	1903			Provincial headquarters	Unknown
13.	Jos	1903	British colonial administration	Royal Niger Company [financier/prospector]; Naraguta Tin Mining Company [mining subsidiary]; Anglo-Continental Mines Limited [mining enterprise]; Bisichi Tin Company [mining enterprise]; Henry William Laws [engineer, established first mining camp]	Mining town	Unknown
14.	Katsina	1903	British colonial administration		Administrative center	Unknown
15.	Kano	1905			Provincial headquarters	Unknown
16.	Osogbo	1907	British colonial administration	Nigerian Railway Corporation [railway developer]	Trading post	Unknown
17.	Maiduguri	1908	British colonial administration		Provincial headquarters	Unknown
18.	Minna	1908	British colonial administration	Nigerian Railway Corporation [railway developer]	Trading post	Unknown
19.	Enugu	1909	British colonial administration	A. E. Kitson & E. O. Thiele [geologists]	Mining town	Unknown
20.	Kaduna	1912	British colonial administration	Frederick Lugard [governor-general of Nigeria]	Military post, later capital of Northern Region of Colony of Nigeria in 1916	Unknown
21.	Port Harcourt	1912	British colonial administration	Frederick Lugard [governor-general of Nigeria; H.L. Ford [planner]; Port Harcourt Planning Authority [planning institution]; Shell [oil and gas enterprise]	Port city	Unknown
22.	Umuahia	1913	British colonial administration	Nigerian Railway Corporation [railway developer]	Trading post	Unknown
23.	Makurdi	1927	British colonial administration	Nigerian Railway Corporation [railway developer, electricity provider]	Provincial headquarters	Unknown
				Post-independence era (1960 to late-1990s)		
24.	New Bussa	1962	Nigerian federal government	Fry, Drew and Atkinson [architecture/planning] (UK)	Urban resettlement scheme	3,000
25.	Abuja	1976	Nigerian federal government	International Planning Associates [planners] (USA); Kenzo Tange [architect] (Japan)	National capital	3,000,000

26.	Owerri	1976	Imo state government	C. Fingerhuth and Partners [planners] (Switzerland)	State capital	268,000
27.	Festac Town	1977	Nigerian federal government		Federal housing estate	45,000
Contemporary era (late-1990s to present)						
28.	Eko Atlantic	2003	Lagos state government; South Energyx Nigeria Limited [private developer]; Eko Development Company [city developer]	MZ Architects [architecture/planning] (UAE); Dar Al-Handasah [engineering consultant] (Lebanon); Royal HaskoningDHV [engineering consultant] (Netherlands); China Communications Construction Company [contractor]	Satellite city of Lagos	250,000
29.	Lekki New Township	2005	Lagos state government; Mixta Africa [private developer]	Surbana Jurong [planning] (Singapore)	Satellite city of Lagos	120,000
30.	Land of Honey City	2011	Abuja Film Village International [joint venture partner]; Kohath Property Development Company [joint venture partner] (Nigeria); Land of Honey City Development Company [city developer]	Saraiva + Associados [architecture/planning] (Portugal); HKR Architects [architect] (UK); GEG [engineering consultant] (Portugal); RED-i [sales consultant] (South Africa)	Satellite city of Abuja	500,000
31.	Anam City	2012	Dr. Aloy & Gesare Chife Foundation [financier/developer] (USA)	Low Design Office [architecture] (USA); DSGN AGNC [architecture] (USA)	Rural municipality	30,000
32.	Centenary City	2013	Nigerian federal government; Eagle Hills [private developer] (UAE); Julius Berger [construction partner] (Nigeria); Centenary City FZE [city developer]	Emaar Properties [developer] (UAE); Greg Wright Architects [architecture/planning] (South Africa); PwC [financial advisor] (UK)	Satellite city of Abuja	200,000
33.	Enyimba Economic City	2013	Abia state government; Crown Realties [private developer] (Nigeria); Enyimba Economic City Development Land Owners Trust Fund [city developer]	Surbana Jurong [master planning] (Singapore); CBRE [land use planning] (India); Escher Silverman Global [engineering consultant] (UK); China Civil Engineering Construction Corporation [engineering consultant]	Urban pole	1,500,000
34.	Oranmiyan New Town	2014	Osun state government		Urban pole	80,000
35.	Iberekodo Industrial Town	2015	Lagos state government		Industrial satellite of Lagos	61,000
36.	Jigna	2015	Rendeavour [private developer] (Russia)	Skidmore, Owings & Merrill [planning] (USA)	Satellite city of Abuja	30,000
37.	Mitros City	2016	Ogun state government	Placemake [architecture/planning] (UK)	Urban pole	180,000
38.	Alaro City	2019	Lagos state government;	Skidmore, Owings & Merrill [planning] (USA)	Satellite city of Lagos	30,000

		Rendeavour [private developer] (Russia)			
39. Asaba Waterfront City	2023	Delta state government; Asaba Waterfront City and Management Development Limited		Satellite city of Asaba	Unknown

Table 1. Ex nihilo urban development projects in Nigeria since mid-1800s. (Source: Authors)

4.3.1. *Colonial ex nihilo urbanization in Nigeria: Profit, control, and socio-spatial separations*

The development of new cities was instrumental to British imperial control and distinguished Britain as "greatest creators of towns" and "the chief exporter of municipalities" among history's imperial powers (Morris & Winchester, 1983). Throughout the British Empire, planning was utilized as a "scientific" (Home, 2013) discipline that provided tools for colonial administrators to deal with perceived urban challenges related to hygiene, safety, control, and resource extraction (Bigon, 2016a). Ex nihilo new cities allowed the British to create their ideal living environments while ensuring physical separation from native Nigerians who they deemed dangerous, insanitary, and difficult to control (Davies, 2022; Home, 2019). Some of these views held by the British were informed by colonial pseudoscience such as the miasmatic theory, which posited that native peoples were more prone to tropical diseases, such as yellow fever and malaria, and were therefore more immune to these diseases than Europeans (Nightingale, 2012). The primary priorities of ex nihilo planning within the British Empire, and more specifically within Nigeria, was to develop new towns and cities that as points of administrative control spread across the colony while also ensuring that interactions and cohabitation between the British and natives were either entirely banned or significantly limited (Home, 1983; Livsey, 2022).

The majority of new urban developments in Nigeria were British administrative centers in which the land was cleared to establish government residences, police stations, schools, and courthouses (Adesoji et al., 2019). A number of British colonial ex nihilo urban development projects in Nigeria were economic centers built around a trade or an extractive resource that grew into cities following the construction of railways, roads, and electricity grids (Falola & Salm, 2004; Phillip, 2005). In Northern Nigeria, new towns or "sabon garuruwa" were created by the British colonial administration to house non-local African labourers engaged in railway and other industries (Albert, 1996; King, 2003). Some cities, including Calabar and Ibadan, were

formally planned as colonial administrative centers for the British to experiment with and enact indirect rule, which fragmented control between traditional rulers and the colonial government (Chokor, 1986; Home, 1983; Uyanga, 1989). Others, such as Enugu and Jos, were built by private actors as coal and tin mining towns connected by rail to ports for export to Britain and elsewhere (Eze, 2021; Morrison, 1977). The colonial new cities of Kaduna and Port Harcourt had no historical precedents and were fully established from scratch in 1912 on agricultural land by the then-governor of the Northern and Southern Nigeria Protectorate, Frederick Lugard (Bununu et al., 2015; Izeogu & Salau, 1985). While Kaduna was initially developed as a garrison town, Port Harcourt was created as an ex nihilo port city to facilitate the shipment of coal out of Nigeria (Izeogu & Salau, 1985).

As a colonial port city, Port Harcourt was inextricably linked to the mining towns of Enugu and Jos. The very existence of Port Harcourt was a result of the discovery of coal in Enugu in 1909, as Frederick Lugard sought to build a port to support industrial expansion in the region (Edem et al., 2012). A railway system was established in 1916 between Enugu and Port Harcourt, improving the export and general transportation links between the two cities (Eze, 2021). As a tin mining town since 1903, Jos received significant infrastructural investment from the British colonial administration as well as the British government-owned Royal Niger Company,[5] which created the Naraguta Tin Mining Company as a subsidiary for its tin ore exploration in Nigeria. Other private firms such as the Anglo-Continental Mines Limited and Bisichi Tin Company were also invested in the tin industry in Jos and its surrounding areas and profited off the tin boom (Bridge & Fredriksen, 2012; Fell, 1939) (Table 1). The discovery of petroleum in Port Harcourt in 1956 shifted the pattern of colonial ex nihilo urbanization towards corporate exclusivism, with major oil companies like Shell creating gated compounds reserved only for their employees and executives, such as the Shell Residential Area (Edem et al., 2012).

As the colonial capital, Lagos received the most amount of planning attention and resources from the British out of all the cities in Nigeria (Bigon, 2013). Some of Lagos' planned neighbourhoods, such as Ikoyi, were designated government reserved areas (GRAs) and were exclusive enclaves for British elites and their European visitors. Ikoyi was particularly distinguished through its orthogonal street layout and modern villas, as well as its urban

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[5] The Royal Niger Company operated under a charter granted by the British government and possessed some administrative powers in Nigeria, including the ability to establish military and mining camps.

amenities including public parks, golf courses, tree-lined avenues, and lawn tennis courts (Bigon, 2013). Lagos' planned areas were separated from the nearest native residential areas by building free zones spanning 440 yards, which the colonial British believed was the longest distance that insects like mosquitos could travel while still carrying diseases (Home, 1983). Following an outbreak of bubonic plague in 1925, British colonial investment in Lagos' planning intensified, with the appointment of Nigeria's first resident professional town planner, Albert Thompson, in 1927 (Akeem & Samuel, 2017), and also with the creation of the Lagos Executive Development Board (LEDB) in 1928 (Home, 1983). Albert Thompson was invited by the British colonial administration to Nigeria from South Africa, where he worked in designing Cape Town and Durban's pinelands garden suburb (Home, 1990). In Nigeria, he assisted the LEDB in slum clearance and swamp reclamation projects, as well as in building new suburban estates for the native Nigerians whose residences were marked and demolished by the colonial government as being "plague foci" (Davies, 2022: 281).

4.3.2. *Post-independence ex nihilo urbanization in Nigeria: Modernism and inclusivity*

Following independence from the British in 1960, ex nihilo urbanization served as a way for Nigeria's political elites to "wipe away the colonial imprints" (Abubakar & Doan, 2017: 549). Building new cities from scratch demonstrated the autonomy of the Nigerian state and signalled political will for national development, economic growth, and modernity (Vale, 2008). The first post-independence ex nihilo urbanization project in Nigeria was New Bussa, created in 1962 to accommodate the people relocated to make way for the creation of the Kainji Dam, itself an expression of Nigeria's embrace of modernization in the form of infrastructure mega-projects (Smith, 1967). New Bussa was intended to grow into a tourist center and provided a variety of urban amenities, including a telephone system, electricity, paved roads, a post office, and a cinema, all of which distinguished the new city as "modern" in comparison to the old Bussa, a relatively obscure colonial town that was buried under Kainji Lake (Smith, 1967).

Other post-independence ex nihilo urbanization projects in Nigeria took the form of new master-planned state capitals, many of which were existing towns that later acquired the status of state capital following the post-colonial creation of Nigeria's 36 states (Galantay, 1978). To accommodate the administrative demands of being a state capital, some cities were comprehensively master planned by foreign agencies, with a focus on accommodating the civil

servants who relocated to the new state capitals in droves (Galantay, 1978). For example, Owerri was master planned as a new state capital by the Swiss firm C. Fingerhuth and Partners according to the modernist principles of orthogonal grid street networks, landmark plans, and separate zoning of residential and commercial land to enhance efficiency (Galantay, 1978). The announcement of a new state followed a great deal of national debate and deliberation due to the heightened ethnic tensions surrounding the Nigerian Civil War from 1967 to 1970 (Suberu, 1991). The Igbo regions in the south east, which had initially attempted to secede from Nigeria during the war, requested the creation of several new states that would be accompanied by new capitals, which the Igbos believed would help equalize their political standing in Nigeria with that of the Hausas and the Yorubas (Suberu, 1991).

Against this backdrop, the new master-planned capital city of Abuja was proposed in 1976 by the Nigerian federal government to ease tensions between Nigeria's three major ethnicities, as well as put Nigeria on the path of modernization and national development (Abubakar, 2014). Abuja followed in the footsteps of Brasília (Brazil), Chandigarh (India), and Islamabad (Pakistan) in being an ex nihilo capital city built for nationalistic reasons (Vale, 2008). Abuja was envisioned as a foil for Lagos, which had come to represent all the shortcomings of colonial urban practices and philosophies, and resultant inequities (Ikejiofor, 1997). As the colonial capital, Lagos was regarded by post-independence Nigerian elites as overpopulated, congested, dilapidated, and biased in favour of the Yorubas due to its location within their historic lands in southwestern Nigeria (Ikejiofor, 1997). Abuja was planned to be the "mirror opposite" (Murray, 2015a) of Lagos: modern, spacious, and inclusive, and at the geographical centre of Nigeria in a region broadly perceived as a neutral area that favoured neither the Hausas, Igbos, nor the Yorubas (Ikejiofor, 1997).

To oversee Abuja's development, the Nigerian state created the Federal Capital Development Authority (FCDA) and put it in charge of selecting the site of the Federal Capital Territory (FCT), in which Abuja would be built. The FCDA lists 13 important criteria for the FCT, 6including centrality, land availability, low population density, as well as ethnic accord (Ikejiofor, 1997). The Nigerian state commissioned high-profile foreign planners and architects for Abuja, believing local planners to be a source of "political complications" that would hinder the progress of Abuja's construction (Moore, 1984). As such, the FCDA consulted the International Planning Associates (IPA), a consortium of three American planning and

architecture firms, to create the comprehensive master plan for the Federal Capital Territory in 1979 (Abubakar, 2014). The FCDA also invited several of the most well-regarded architecture and planning firms in the world at the time to contribute to Abuja's design. The world-renowned Japanese modernist architect, Kenzo Tange, was invited by the FCDA to design Abuja's central business district, and then-leading planning firms, Doxiadis Associates (Greece), and Albert Speer and Partners (Germany) were hired to provide planning expertise (Elleh, 2017; Rego, 2021).

Although Abuja was developed by Nigerian political elites as a national seat of power to signal autonomy, modernity, and inclusivity, there were some salient socioeconomic exclusions surrounding the new capital city's construction. The land Abuja was built on was initially inhabited by around 300,000 indigenous peoples from over 500 villages (Abubakar, 2014). These groups were displaced from their lands to make way for Abuja, with the federal government promising to recover the losses in housing and livelihood once Abuja was developed (Obiadi et al., 2018). Although some reparations have been made through the provision of housing for indigenous groups, the FCDA continued to demolish informal settlements and evict low-income households (Morah, 1992). To make matters worse, the FCDA justified these land grabs, forced evictions, and displacements as necessary for the proper implementation of the Abuja master plan (Amba, 2010). Presently, Abuja falls short of the goals of inclusion and modernity that Nigerian political elites set out during its creation as the new capital is now facing rapid slum growth, irregular water supply, and poor solid waste management (Abubakar & Doan, 2017; Adama, 2007).

4.4.   Contemporary new cities in Nigeria: Foreign-planned elite enclaves

Since the turn of the 21st century, 12 new cities have begun construction in Nigeria, representing the most active period for ex nihilo urbanization in Nigeria since the British colonial era (Table 1). The majority of the new master-planned cities in contemporary Nigeria are singular projects financed and master planned by the private sector, with the state mainly granting land rights and permissions for construction (Odenigwe, 2015; Interview, urban planner in Abuja, October 2023). The expanding presence of the private sector in ex nihilo urbanization in Nigeria is unprecedented, and mirrors similar trends globally following the financialization of

real estate in the late 1990s (Fauveaud, 2020). Optimistic narratives from financial institutions such as McKinsey & Company that Africa is "rising" (Watson, 2014) as an emerging real estate market foregrounds this increased interest by the private sector in African property development and new city construction. For this reason, contemporary Nigerian new cities are diverse in their real estate offerings and take on many forms: enclaves of middle-class or upper-class housing; commercial and mixed-use development; technology, knowledge, or innovation hubs; and Special Economic Zones for industrial activities (Van Noorloos & Kloosterboer, 2018).

The new city projects emerging in Nigeria today are intended to be profitable for their builders under the guise of resolve regional housing and infrastructural shortfalls and providing safe living environments. This is the case with Eko Atlantic City, which states on its website to be a "solution to the chronic shortage of prime real estate in Lagos" (EAC, 2023). Likewise, Enyimba Economic City seeks to provide "high grade access roads, rail, airports, and seaports" to transform Nigeria into a "manufacturing and industrial powerhouse" (EEC, 2023b). Lekki New Township is planned by the Singaporean firm Surbana Jurong using the Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design (CPTED) approach intended to "increase security" (Surbana Jurong, 2023). The growing involvement of the private sector in Nigeria's contemporary ex nihilo urbanization is captured in this promotional language and the responsibility that private-sponsored urban developments have in ensuring residents safety. The growth of privatized new city projects is due to Nigeria's growing middle class, which increasingly seeks to invest in real estate (Corral Rodas et al., 2015), as well as a widespread distrust in the public sector's capacity to rectify housing and infrastructure gaps (Roelofs, 2019). As enterprises, therefore, Eko Atlantic City's website offers exclusive investment advice for property buyers and Enyimba Economic City's website presents the benefits of investing in the new city, which underscores that many new cities in Nigeria are primarily for-profit business rather than formal municipalities primarily intended to address housing deficits and provide homes (EAC, 2023; EEC, 2023a).

Contemporary new cities in Nigeria are mostly satellite cities located close to an existing metropolis. Lagos has the largest number of satellite new cities with five – Alaro City, Eko Atlantic City, Festac Town, Iberekodo Industrial Town, and Lekki New Township – while the capital city of Abuja has three nearby new cities: Centenary City, Jigna, and Land of Honey City. Beyond these satellite new cities, Mitros City and Oranmiyan New Town are located in southwestern Nigeria, respectively in the states of Ogun and Osun, which both lie north of Lagos

state. Anam City is located in the Southeastern region of Nigeria, in the state of Anambra, and Enyimba Economic City is planned in for Abia state in the southern Niger Delta region near Port Harcourt. Furthermore, in Nigeria, there is a pattern of new city developers describing their new city project as "world-class" or "first class" (Fig. 3) in contrast to the nearby existing city. Centenary City's website states that the new city will "accommodate world-class multinational and domestic businesses in a world-class environment" (Centenary City, 2023). Similarly, Land of Honey City's developers describe the project as a "world class city on 1,767 hectares of land" (Land of Honey City, 2011). Both of these projects are on the periphery of the city of Abuja and are promoted by their respective developers as commercial and residential counterparts to Abuja (Centenary City, 2024; Land of Honey City, 2024).

Fig. 3. A page within Centenary City's *Abuja Rising* brochure (Source: Centenary City, 2024)

The majority of contemporary new master-planned city projects in Nigeria are developed by the private sector, which accounts for the bulk of Nigerian new city planning, design,

financing, and construction. A significant number of the private actors are foreign, hailing from places such as Singapore, Lebanon, Russia, the United States, and South Africa. In some Nigerian new cities, including Centenary City and Enyimba Economic City, the public sector is limited to creating the legal foundations for the new city's development either through the creation of a Special Economic Zone or Free Trade Zone, or through the implementation of governmental policies and laws that expropriate land for the new city.[6] Beyond that, the planning, designing, and engineering of the new city is typically advanced by foreign private actors. There are some foreign planning firms involved in new cities in Nigeria that have also built new cities elsewhere in Africa, including Rendeavour, a multinational firm founded in Russia, which promotes itself as "Africa's new city builder" (Moser & Côté-Roy, 2021) and is planning Jigna and Alaro City, as well as Surbana Jurong, a Singaporean firm, which is planning Lekki New Township and Enyimba Economic City (Harrison & Croese, 2023).

The consultation of primarily foreign firms for the planning and design of new cities in Nigeria is contested by local urban planners and scholars (Mendelsohn, 2018), particularly as there are nearly 500 registered planning firms in Nigeria (TOPREC, 2023a). Nigeria has a number of urban planning associations, including the Nigerian Institute of Town Planners, which is one of the leading associations for urban planners in Africa (NITP, 2023). To become a town planner in Nigeria, one is required to have a post-secondary degree or an accredited professional diploma from an institution recognized by the Town Planners Registration Council of Nigeria (TOPREC) (TOPREC, 2023b). Future planners also must go through an examination and oral interview to have full professional accreditation as an urban and regional planner (TOPREC, 2023b). This accreditation process indicates that local Nigerian planners are capable of planning and designing new urban mega-development projects, making their complete absence in new city projects particularly conspicuous. It also highlights deep-seated beliefs that Nigerians are less capable of creating urban environments that are prestigious and modern (Interview, town planner, Abia State Ministry of Lands, Survey and Physical Planning, September 2023).

Furthermore, Nigeria's contemporary new city developers are designed to attract middle to upper class residents, preventing the vast majority of Nigerians, who are poor, from living in new cities. The current prices for apartments in Eko Atlantic also demonstrate this exclusivity as

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[6] Similar practice occurs in other Global South new cities such as Cyberjaya in Malaysia (Yusof & van Loon, 2012) and King Abdullah Economic City in Saudi Arabia (Moser & Côté-Roy, 2021).

it costs up to ₦3,294,104,783 (approximately US$4 million) for a three-bedroom flat (Nigeria Property Centre, 2023). With the estimated average annual salary in Lagos ranging from ₦792,000 to ₦4,200,000 (approximately US$998 to $5,294), the housing provided by Eko Atlantic City is totally out of reach for the vast majority of Lagosians (Jesusegun, 2022). About 70% of Lagos' residents live in slums or slum-like housing conditions, some of which were demolished by the state to clear the area for Eko Atlantic City's development (Ajibade, 2017). Similarly, the Lagos state government banned the use of motorcycles and motorized rickshaws (colloquially called "keke") as commercial transportation in a series of policies intended to foster a prestigious image of Eko Atlantic (Oyeleke, 2020). These exclusionary actions and policies are symptomatic of the legacies of colonial urban segregation in Nigeria, as the average Nigerian is priced out from living in the new city while their housing is destroyed, resulting in the discriminatory selection of a new city's residents by their class and economic status.

4.5.   Continuities and key themes

British colonial objectives surrounding resource extraction resulted in colonial new cities being far more dispersed throughout Nigeria based on the location of mines and other emerging extractive industries (Fig. 2). The goal of establishing effective occupation over Nigeria also meant that British administrative centers emerged throughout the Nigerian colony, although the most important seats of power were the port cities like Lagos located near the Atlantic Ocean. Post-independence-era new cities in Nigeria largely retained the administrative characteristics that defined many colonial new cities, as some were new master-planned capitals for newly formed states. The most important shift within the post-independence era is that the most politically significant new city project, Abuja, was planned and constructed in-land, right in the center of the country in a region deemed "neutral" (Ikejiofor, 1997) and less susceptible to ethnic or regional conflict. The contemporary wave of new cities in Nigeria are primarily clustered around existing major cities, such as Lagos and Abuja, which provides the opportunity for Nigeria's elites to reside in close proximity to, albeit outside, the established city centers where they work. Contemporary new cities in Nigeria do not cater to emergent industries,[7] nor do they

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[7] Although it does not cater to an emergent industry, Enyimba Economic City's website states that the new city seeks "to transform Abia State, Nigeria into a manufacturing and industrial powerhouse" (EEC, 2023a). Enyimba Economic City's developers have also built a shoe factory (@HartNG, 2021/11/11).

serve administrative functions, instead, they are enclaves promising the modern urban amenities and "uncompromised security" (EAC, 2024b) that established cities in Nigeria may lack.

In many ways, contemporary Nigerian new cities bear more discursive similarities with the segregationist new town planning of the colonial era than they do with the post-independence notions of promoting national unity, ethnic accord, and symbolic and physical inclusivity. While post-independence new cities such as Abuja were not without their own exclusionary and discriminatory practices (Amba, 2010), this was often masked by discourses of national development, modernity, and inclusivity. Contemporary Nigerian new cities have so far accelerated the demolition of informal housing, subsequently widening the gap between urban elites and the urban poor (Ajibade, 2017). This growing class inequality surrounding Nigeria's contemporary new cities is apparent in Centenary City, a new city founded in 2014 to celebrate Nigeria's formation as an amalgamated territory in 1914. Due to its intention to celebrate Nigeria, Centenary City should be the most inclusive of contemporary Nigerian new cities, yet one of the exhibition labels at Centenary City's Sales Center describes the new city project as an "exclusive community" (CentenaryCity, 2021, 01:24). As a contemporary new city located next to Abuja – the original beacon of "inclusive" urban development in Nigeria – Centenary City exemplifies a regression in the planning philosophies underpinning new city projects in Nigeria and an embrace of exclusive, segregationist urban development.

The style of housing provided in most contemporary Nigerian new cities does not represent the vernacular urbanism and architecture of Nigeria. Colonial elites regarded vernacular Nigerian housing as inferior, instead enforcing the use of European building materials to create tropical villas that generally ignored Nigeria's local climate and geography (Immerwahr, 2007). In some colonial Nigerian cities, housing was categorized into 5 types based on the materials used for the walls, floor, and roof, as well as the number of rooms and the estimated cost of building. The type of housing preferred by colonial elites used cement concrete, corrugated iron, and cost above £200 (Davies, 2022: 279). In contrast to vernacular Nigerian houses, which used mud, bamboo, and sometimes corrugated iron for the walls and roof and would generally cost £88 to build (Davies, 2022: 279). Indeed, the housing proposed in contemporary new cities, including Centenary City, Jigna, and Alaro City similarly forgoes consideration for locally sourced materials in favour of buildings that are created out of the Western standard of concrete, steel, and insulated glass (Interview, city manager, Alaro City,

September 2023). Abuja's planners also did not attempt to use local materials, which indicates that the colonial inferiority complex ascribed to locally-sourced building materials continued and became normalized even after independence.

The Nigerian context reaffirms the importance of studying new city development at the national level. As mentioned, Morocco's new city development is a coordinated effort by the state to encourage economic development and address housing deficits (Côté-Roy & Moser, 2022), meaning that the Moroccan government is primarily responsible for the execution of new cities as part of its national Villes Nouvelles strategy (Côté-Roy & Moser, 2022), and could potentially be held accountable for its failures. In contrast, the creation of new cities in Nigeria is uncoordinated as private developers, mostly foreign, have vast control over the planning and execution of new city projects. The manifests in new cities in Nigeria competing with one another (Interview, IT implementation manager, EEC, May 2023) whereas Morocco's new cities, at least ostensibly, support national development goals. The lack of a national strategy guiding contemporary new city development in Nigeria indicates both an embrace of neoliberalism (Olajide & Lawanson, 2022) and a growing willingness to outsource urban development and cede urban governance to the private sector. The Nigerian state is willing to take a backseat (Odenigwe, 2015), limiting its role to the creation and maintenance of regulatory frameworks for a new city's development and to "allocating rights to (…) private investors" (Interview, urban planner in Abuja, October 2023). Whether the new city is exclusive or inclusive is up to its private developers, and so far, there is a consistent tendency towards exclusivity.

4.6.   Conclusion

Nigeria's new city projects are part of a broader global and African trend of ex nihilo urban mega-development and mirror other new city projects that embody the privatization of urban development, land grabbing by the state, and the increasing presence of foreign actors in new city construction. While in some states, new master-planned cities are a key component of a cohesive national plan to diversify the economy, manage urbanization, and fulfill housing obligations (Asmyatullin et al., 2020; Côté-Roy & Moser, 2022; Moser et al., 2015), in Nigeria, the development of new cities is uncoordinated and ad hoc, as well as dominated by foreign firms. Despite being promoted by their developers as "new cities," contemporary Nigerian ex nihilo urban development projects belong to a long legacy of new towns and cities built from

scratch as far back as British colonialism and the years immediately following Nigeria's independence.

Presently, the 12 contemporary new city projects underway in Nigeria bear significant similarities and differences with the policies and practices of the previous eras of ex nihilo urbanization. Contemporary new city developers in Nigeria define their projects as "exclusive communities" (CentenaryCity, 2021), although not primarily along racial lines as in the colonial era but more along class lines. Both overt and covert strategies are used to restrict the access of the urban poor to contemporary new cities in Nigeria. Policies are instituted that dispossess the urban poor, demolishing their self-built housing in order to elevate the image of prestige surrounding new cities (Ajibade, 2017). The elitist nature of Nigeria's contemporary new cities also means that they come at an unaffordable price even before they are physically built, limiting access for average Nigerians also seeking housing.

Nigeria's contemporary new cities have not sustained the discourse on inclusion that characterized the preceding post-independence era. Instead, contemporary new cities in Nigeria are standalone entrepreneurial projects designed to maximize profits by catering to Nigeria's growing middle- and upper-class population seeking a "modern," luxurious, and exclusive urban lifestyle within the confines of a securitized enclave. This entrenches social exclusions as the urban poor are disregarded by new city developers and the Nigerian state, which is less committed to ensuring housing access for all Nigerians as well as to creating and maintaining public spaces. The increased privatization of contemporary new cities in Nigeria marks a departure from the administrative functions that the colonial and post-independence era new cities had and signals the weakening of state regulations and oversight in new city construction. As private city developers seeking to fill in the gaps of the public sector, Nigeria's contemporary new city builders are ever more divorced from the political responsibilities and democratic requirements that accompany the creation of new urban landscapes from scratch.

Our research on ex nihilo urbanization in Nigeria during the colonial, post-independence, and contemporary eras makes three main contributions to the burgeoning corpus on new master-planned cities in Africa. Firstly, we demonstrate that the current wave of new city projects in Nigeria is troublingly similar in discourse to the colonial era, especially in regard to the emphasis on excluding certain members of the urban population (Moser, 2019). Contemporary new city projects do not even make a pretense of aiming to be inclusive, but instead are promoted as

exclusive and luxurious enclaves for elites. This dynamic recalls colonial-era urbanism designed to provide amenities, electricity, and green space within private enclaves, and not for the greater good or for public use. Secondly, the Nigerian case demonstrates a growing reliance on the private sector to be the primary new city builder. This dependence on the private sector results in a set of new cities that are uncoordinated, individual, and profit-driven, differing greatly from other new city-building African states such as Morocco and Egypt that create their new cities as part of an articulated national strategy (Ali, 2022; Côté-Roy & Moser, 2022).

Lastly, contemporary new cities maintain the colonial and post-independence feature of building housing according to "modern" standards that neglect local tools, materials, and epistemologies. Since independence, ex nihilo urbanization in Nigeria has not incorporated vernacular architectural techniques or locally sourced building materials, which are increasingly necessary for encouraging sustainable urbanization. Although the future of global urbanization is complicated by the climate crisis, specifically rising sea levels, a deeper understanding of the temporal and global dimensions of ex nihilo urbanization can help in pinpointing obstructive historical planning hangovers and identifying useful strategies for producing resilient cities especially in vulnerable regions in Nigeria, Africa, and elsewhere.

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Preamble to Chapter 5

The previous chapter identifies and examines the new city projects in Nigeria, including the policies, practices, and discourses surrounding their development. It highlights the uncoordinated nature of Nigeria's new cities as indicative of the embrace of neoliberalism and the acceptance of the private sector as a driving force for new city creation not only in Nigeria but throughout Africa. The previous chapter draws on the historical iterations of ex nihilo urbanization in present-day Nigeria to highlight the similarities, differences, and continuities in how new towns and cities were conceived and implemented following the advent of British colonialism in the mid-1800s; Nigeria's independence in 1960; and the financialization of real estate in the late-1990s. It argues that contemporary new city developers in Nigeria view their new city projects as "exclusive" elite enclaves for the wealthy, forgoing post-independence notions of inclusivity and instead recalling colonial-era policies of segregation in planned areas.

This next chapter builds on the historical comparative analysis of Nigerian ex nihilo urbanization by focusing on the global dependencies, models, institutions, and actors that influence and shape contemporary new master-planned cities in Nigeria. This following chapter is a response to calls by scholars to investigate the "uncharted foreign actors" developing new cities in Africa. It traces the individual foreign actors involved in Nigeria's new city projects and highlights their respective roles. It also follows the policy tourism and virtual travels that Nigerian new city developers embark on when seeking out foreign sources of inspiration and "expertise." This chapter is rooted in the literature on urban policy mobilities and addresses some of the emerging pathways for urban policy circulation, especially those between Nigeria and other Global South locations.

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Favour Daka (lead author): Contribution of original research material; conducted the data collection and analysis; conceptualization of original draft, including theoretical framework, structure, and argument; writing of original draft, review, and editing.

Sarah Moser (second author): Support for conceptualization and analysis; guidance on original draft, including the theoretical framework, structure, and argument; assistance with revisions, reviews, and editing.

Chapter 5: Urban policy mobilities and global partnerships in Nigeria's new cities

Abstract

This paper examines the contemporary trend of new city development in Nigeria as significant for understanding the future of urbanization in Africa. Situated within the urban policy mobilities literature, we explore the global dimensions of Nigeria's new cities, including the involvement of foreign "experts" in their planning, designing, and construction as well as the international search for inspiration that Nigerian elites embark on when developing new cities. Furthermore, we unpack the transfer of policy between foreign consultants and Nigerian new city stakeholders, which is often encapsulated in the use of a range of visual and discursive tools to present new cities in Nigeria as a necessary step forward for the Nigerian real estate and property development sector in the face of a housing deficit and infrastructural shortcomings. By investigating this relationship between Nigerian new city developers and foreign private corporations, this paper responds to scholarly calls to deeply examine the "uncharted foreign actors" shaping contemporary ex nihilo urbanization in Africa.

Key words: new cities; Nigeria; urban policy mobilities; entrepreneurial urbanism; Africa

5.1.   Introduction

Since the turn of the 21st century, Nigeria has witnessed a sharp rise in the number of new cities either announced or under construction. International financial institutions, such as the World Bank, have declared Africa to be the "last development frontier" (Watson, 2014: 216) opening the door for planning investment firms to propose new master-planned cities as a means of accessing the real estate market. As Africa's largest economy, new city developers in Nigeria are also seeking to take advantage of the investment opportunities, focusing particularly on the growing Nigerian middle-class population. These developers partner with foreign urban planning and architectural agencies for the master plans and urban designs of their new cities. They are also engaged within a network of urban policy actors and institutions that are packaging and circulating urban ideas and models from foreign locations to Nigeria.

Foreign-led development of new urban infrastructure in Africa has most strongly been associated with the Chinese Belt and Road Initiative in recent years (Ehizuelen & Abdi, 2018; Liu et al., 2020). Scholars interrogate the roles that Chinese actors, such contractors, consultants, and banks, play in shaping African urbanization through their investments in urban

infrastructure, as well as in new cities (Carmody, 2020; Were, 2018; Zhang et al., 2022). Beyond China, there are a number of other foreign actors also deeply involved in the business of new city construction in Nigeria and elsewhere, although this has received little scholarly attention. With 12 new city projects currently underway, Nigeria is one of the most active countries in the world building new cities after China (Woodworth & Chien, 2022), Morocco (Côté-Roy & Moser, 2022), and Kuwait (Asmyatullin et al., 2020). The majority of Nigeria's 12 new cities are public-private partnerships generally configured to include a local governmental partner, a major local private partner, and a host of foreign planning, architecture, and construction contractors. While China is also engaged in Nigeria's new city-building activities, its presence is largely outnumbered by the host of other foreign players involved, most of which are also based in the so-called "Global South" (Dirlik, 2007).

The scholarship on the recent rise in new city development in Africa is small but growing. Much of this literature examines the various socio-economic, political, and environmental impacts of new city construction in Africa and focuses on a shift towards entrepreneurial and enclave urbanism (Carmody & Owusu, 2016; Lumumba, 2013). Scholars have studied how new cities exacerbate and normalize class inequalities, environmental degradation, land grabbing, and social displacement (Murray, 2015a; Olajide & Lawanson, 2022). There is also a growing body of literature that investigates the circulation of urban policies from elsewhere to Africa, with the presence of Chinese actors in African new city development increasingly contextualized with the involvement of other foreign actors particularly from the Global South (Olugboyega, 2016; Van Noorloos & Kloosterboer, 2018).

This paper investigates the ways in which Nigeria's new city-building activities are shaped and transformed by urban policies from elsewhere. We attempt to balance the scholarly attention placed on Eko Atlantic City, an urban mega-development being built on reclaimed land off the coast of Lagos, which has been the focus of the majority of scholarship on Nigeria's new cities. Building on the urban policy mobilities literature, we argue that the involvement of foreign actors in the development of Nigerian new cities largely deprioritizes the inclusion of local expertise. Nigerian new city developers often outsource their models of urban development and draw resources away from the infrastructural needs of established cities. This paper seeks to contribute to the urban policy mobilities literature by underscoring the importance of Nigeria's new cities in informing the direction of African urbanization in the face of rapid and often

unplanned urban growth; the need for creating sustainable and resilient cities in Africa; and the shift towards a "South-South" (McCann, 2017) circulation of urban policy.

This analysis is informed by 10 semi-structured interviews conducted with elite actors involved in Nigerian new city development as well as in Nigerian urban and regional planning more generally. Some of the individuals interviewed are key policy agents engaged in the transfer of urban policy to Nigeria. Others represent important figures advocating for Nigeria's existing cities and the policies required to make them sustainable, resilient, and inclusive. In addition, we utilize textual analysis of the master plans of Nigerian new cities, as well as their official websites, press releases, and social media posts by actors. Using the data gathered from these interviews, we identify the multiple modes of urban policy mobilities to Nigeria by way of both human and non-human agents, how this shapes Nigerian cities to be solely recipients of "expertise," and how new cities affect the work that local urban planners and architects in Nigeria have to do in Nigeria's existing cities.

5.2.   Urban policy mobilities, reconfigurations, and reconstitutions

Over the past decade, scholars are increasingly focused on understanding how urban models, ideas, and policies circulate from one location to another (Clarke, 2012; Kennedy, 2016; McCann, 2011). This body of research investigates the mechanics behind how urban planning "best practices" mobilize globally and identifies the multiplicity of actors and institutions that facilitate the transfer of urban policy (McCann, 2013). Deriving from the political science concept of policy transfer, urban studies scholars examine the ways in which contemporary urban policy mobilities rely on a coalition of imperatives, including "long-standing policy paradigms, path dependencies, ideologies, and frames of reference" (McCann, 2011: 109) as well as national cultures. Similarly, scholars argue that effective urban policy transfers are "reterritorialized elsewhere" (Clarke, 2012: 27) in ways that circumvent site-specific sociopolitical struggles to maintain the authenticity of the urban policy and idea. This act of reterritorializing urban policy is carried out by a series of human and non-human agents who serve as the creators, sellers, and buyers of urban policies (McCann, 2011). As such, much of the research on urban policy mobilities and assemblages seeks to draw out the web of actors and institutions either exporting or importing urban ideas, philosophies, and expertise elsewhere.

Within the global urban policy mobilities literature is an emerging body of research that focuses on the urban policy exchange between Asia and Africa, with China being the single most studied actor involved (Buire, 2017; Goodfellow & Huang, 2022; Keeton & Provoost, 2019; Shin et al., 2022). The study of Asia-Africa urban policy mobilities deviates from long-held views of "Global North" cities in Europe and North America as the central authority on urban planning knowledge and best practices (Bunnell & Das, 2010; Moser et al., 2015; Myers, 2020). It also indicates that developing cities in Africa and elsewhere are increasingly looking to other developing or recently developed cities as places to learn from (Moser et al., 2021). This body of literature hones in on China's involvement in African urban development, with studies on China's debt-trap diplomacy (Shinn, 2023); neo-colonialism (Li, 2017); and development of "ghost towns" in Africa (Benazeraf & Alves, 2014). This is further fueled by scholarship on China and Africa that examines the extensive presence of Chinese actors in the development of new cities in Angola, Egypt, Ethiopia, Ghana, and South Africa (Keeton & Provoost, 2019).

While these studies of China's role in urbanizing Africa are a significant contribution to the scholarship on South-South urban policy mobilities, they obfuscate the reality of a more elaborate mosaic of Global South actors distributing urban policies to Africa. They also pay scant attention to the active role that African new city-developing elites play in seeking out urban "expertise" from a Southern elsewhere. Beyond China, there is limited scholarship that identifies and interrogates the role of "uncharted foreign actors" (Moser et al., 2021) from Turkey, South Korea, Russia, and Morocco in circulating urban policies to African new cities. Some scholars have also briefly mentioned the urban policy mobilities between Singapore and Nigeria (Pow, 2014) as well as listed the foreign actors involved in specific Nigerian new city projects such as Eko Atlantic City (Olugboyega, 2016: 2-3).

This paper therefore seeks to employ the Nigerian case study as an analytical tool for examining urban policy mobilities from "uncharted" foreign actors in African new city development. We argue that Nigeria's new cities reveal a great deal about Africa's urban futures and how it is affected by foreign urban actors as well as local developers, planners, and urban dwellers. Additionally, we seek to expand the literature on Nigeria's new cities away from just Eko Atlantic City to include the other 11 new cities currently underway. By highlighting the other 11 new cities underway in Nigeria and profiling the range of foreign actors involved, we aim to contribute to the burgeoning body of research on urban policy mobilities in Africa as well

as address gaps in the literature on Nigeria's new cities, particularly the new city projects that have been overlooked to date.

5.3. Foreign partnerships

New cities in Nigeria are developed by a diversity of global actors who serve as planners, designers, builders, financiers, consultants, and general partners. There are 12 contemporary new cities, namely Alaro City, Anam City, Asaba Waterfront City, Centenary City, Eko Atlantic, Enyimba Economic City, Iberekodo Industrial Town, Jigna, Land of Honey City, Lekki New Township, Mitros City, and Oranmiyan New Town (Table 2). As is the case in other African new city-building locations, Chinese actors are the most prominent partners in Nigerian new city development. The land on which Eko Atlantic City is currently being built was reclaimed by the China Communications Construction Group, one of the largest dredging companies in the world (Seymour, 2010). Similarly, Enyimba Economic City (EEC), a new city slated for development in southeast Nigeria lists two Chinese actors, Brilliance Company Limited and China Civil Engineering Construction Corporation (EEC, 2023a) as part of its project team, and has 12 Chinese enterprises registered within its special economic zone (SEZ) (EEC, 2023b). Besides China, there are other major Global South actors involved in Nigerian new city building, hailing from places like India. For example, Enyimba Economic City also has two Indian firms listed on the main project team, with 26 Indian enterprises currently registered in its SEZ (EEC, 2023b).

Name	Year	Foreign partners
Eko Atlantic	2003	BNP Paribas Fortis (Belgium), China Communications Construction Company (China), Dando Drilling International (UK), Dar Al-Handasah (Lebanon), Dredging International (Cyprus), Gensler (USA), HOK Architects (USA), KBC Group (Belgium), Royal HaskoningDHV (Netherlands), Tabet Atelier d'Architecture (Lebanon)
Lekki New Township	2005	China Harbour Engineering Company (China), Surbana Jurong (Singapore)
Land of Honey City	2011	Arqui300 (Portugal), GEG Engineering (Portugal), HKR Architects (UK), Kingston International (UAE), REDi (South Africa), Saraiva + Associados (Portugal)
Anam City	2012	Dr. Aloy & Gesare Chife Foundation (USA); Low Design Office (USA)
Centenary City	2013	Emaar Properties (UAE), Greg Wright Architects (South Africa)
Enyimba Economic City	2013	Brilliance Company Limited (China), CBRE (India), China Civil Engineering Construction Corporation (China), Crescendo Worldwide (India), Escher Silverman Global (UK), InstaToll Africa (South Africa), International Finance Corporation (USA), KPMG (Netherlands), Surbana Jurong (Singapore)
Oranmiyan New Town	2014	N/A
Iberekodo Industrial Town	2015	N/A
Jigna	2015	Moriyama Teshima Architects (Canada), Rendeavour (Russia), SOM Architects (USA)
Mitros City	2016	CGCE Shahin (Egypt), Placemake (UK)
Alaro City	2019	Rendeavour (Russia), SOM Architects (USA)
Asaba Waterfront City	2023	N/A

Table 2. New cities in Nigeria and the foreign partners involved. (Source: Authors)

In two Nigerian new cities, Lekki New Township and Enyimba Economic City, Surbana Jurong, a Singaporean state-owned infrastructure and urban development consultancy is in charge of creating their respective master plans (EEC, 2023a; Surbana Jurong, 2023). Surbana Jurong's master plan for Lekki New Township encompasses the 1,560-hectare space that the new city occupies, intending for residential neighbourhoods to be developed using the Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design technique to improve security and quality of life in the proposed new city (Surbana Jurong, 2023; Fig. 4). For Enyimba Economic City, Surbana Jurong created a master plan in support of the intention by developers for the new city to be a manufacturing site in Nigeria (EEC, 2023c). This master plan won the Charter Cities Business Plan Contest (CCI, 2019), which is celebrated by some of Enyimba's staff for beating out "new cities coming from Australia and Russia" (Interview, IT implementation manager, EEC, May 2023) and for 'convincing' foreign organizations such as the Charter Cities Institute that the new city is well-planned, upholding international standards and best practices for urban development (Interview, IT implementation manager, EEC, May 2023).

Fig. 4. Lekki New Township Master Plan by Surbana Jurong. (Source: Surbana Jurong, 2023)

Likewise, the Abu Dhabi-based real estate development company, Eagle Hills, is the private partner responsible for developing Centenary City, a new city project next to Abuja announced as part of the centenary celebrations of Nigeria's amalgamation into a single entity in

1914 (Centenary City, 2023a; Chidume et al., 2014). Spanning over 1,260-hectares, Centenary City intends to become the "new heart of Abuja" through its proposed development of over 2,000 villas and 10 waterfront retail centers (Centenary City, 2023b), as well as urban safari park and the tallest building in Africa (CentenaryCity, 2021). This partnership and the scale of its planned developments are echoed by Eko Atlantic City (EAC), which is planned and designed by the Lebanese company Dar Al-Handasah Consultants in collaboration with South Energyx Nigeria Limited, a firm founded by the Lebanese-Nigerian billionaire brothers, Gilbert and Ronald Chagoury (Ajibade, 2017). Projecting to attract 250,000 residents and a daily commuter surplus of 150,000, Eko Atlantic's master plan is superabundant, proposing the development of seven districts, including three ocean front zones, and an "inspirational" boulevard, a marina, and a downtown district that will be surrounded by canals for "alternative water transport" (EAC, 2023). In addition to the planning and designing, Dar Al-Handasah has provided environmental planning guidelines, water supply and distribution analysis, road and signage design, and a range of engineering services for Eko Atlantic City (Dar, 2023). This makes Dar Al-Handasah the most widely involved foreign partner in a Nigerian new city project.

The role of local governments in encouraging foreign partnerships in Nigeria's new cities is varied. In one of the smaller new city projects in Nigeria, Anam City, the local government and community is largely a recipient of the philanthropy of the Dr. Aloy & Gesare Chife Foundation, which implements social initiatives with the help of American non-profit organizations such as the High Noon Rotary Club in Colorado (Anam City, 2012). Anam City is also centered around social education geared towards ecology and technology, with the Dr. Aloy & Gesare Chife Foundation granting travel awards to students from prestigious schools, such as the Harvard University Graduate School of Design, to conduct research and help develop affordable housing in the new city (GSD, 2011). This differs from other new cities such as Oranmiyan New Town and Iberekodo Industrial Town, which are spearheaded by their respective local governments to accommodate the "high influx of people" into Osun state (The Nation, 2014) as well as to "provide an industrial location with complimentary residential areas" that will help decongest central Lagos (Alao, 2015). Due to these objectives, neither Oranmiyan New Town nor Iberekodo Industrial Town's development is reliant on foreign private partnerships, instead, these two new cities are entirely public sector driven.

5.4.　Urban policy tourism and travels

The circulation of urban policy from a foreign location to Nigeria involves site visits, relocations, and other methods of policy tourism and virtual "travelling" (McCann, 2011) to and from a model city or destination. In this regard, Nigerian new city-building elites are particularly engaged in China, Egypt, South Africa, Kenya, Singapore, and the UAE, as they travel to these locations to secure foreign investments, garner inspiration, and learn from their urban peers. Sam Hart, an Enyimba Economic City associate, details on social media his travels to China to seal investment deals and visit key sites (@HartNG, 2018/09/14). Hart's policy tours to China focus on learning about the Chinese approach to manufacturing, which is especially important for Enyimba Economic City's objectives of becoming a "manufacturing and industrial powerhouse" in Nigeria (EEC, 2023a). Indeed, following a site visit to a factory in Yinchuan, Hart describes what he saw as "the ultimate projection" for the initiatives planned for Enyimba Economic City (@HartNG, 2017/08/08). Alongside travels to China, key stakeholders in Enyimba Economic City, including former Abia state Governor, Okezie Ikpeazu, have conducted "pitch drives" in Egypt and South Africa to convince major investors to invest in the new city (@HartNG, 2018/09/14).

For an Alaro City actor, travelling to China takes a virtual form, by way of watching videos of how "developments are being built in China," including the process of leveling mountains "for just the construction of an airport" (Interview, Alaro City, 2023). Otherwise, the physical travelling carried out by Alaro City's proponents are largely within Africa, as stated by the City Manager regarding a forthcoming trip to Kenya:

> I'll give you an instance: I'm going to Tatu City in Kenya to try to build capacity with my colleagues there in Kenya. The whole idea is to come together for a 'lesson learnt' session to share resources from our separate experiences because whether we like it or not, there are some socio-cultural factors that come into play in terms of our developments across borders, and what would be obtainable in Kenya, for instance, might not be obtainable in Nigeria. (Interview, city manager, Alaro City, September 2023)

This process of knowledge and resource-sharing among Nigerian and other African new city projects, in the case of Alaro City and Tatu City, relies on the fact that they are both developed by Rendeavour, a formerly Russia-based firm founded by New Zealander businessman, Stephen Jennings. Rendeavour is now headquartered in Lagos and has a portfolio

of seven new cities across Africa, two of which, Alaro City and Jigna, are in Nigeria (Rendeavour, 2023). Similar to Rendeavour, the Singaporean state-owned urban planning consultancy, Surbana Jurong, has provided master plans for two new cities in Nigeria. With two each, Rendeavour and Surbana Jurong are the leading planning institutions involved in Nigerian new city projects. While Rendeavour is now headquartered in Nigeria, Surbana Jurong attracts Nigerian new city developers because it is Singaporean. Regularly regarded as a "success story" (Adeniji, 2020), Singapore has become an urban and economic model to emulate for many Global South locations, including Nigeria. A number of scholarly articles (Echendu, 2022; Gulesh, 2016; Umezulike, 2016), news publications (Ojoye, 2017; Utomi, 2020) and social media posts (Adejo, 2020; Adoga, 2019) by Nigerians point toward Singapore as an exemplary city, calling for Nigerian policymaking elites to learn from Singapore's sustainable urban planning practices, history of development, and technocratic and pragmatic leadership. This was also corroborated by interviews conducted by the first author with urban planners in Nigeria citing Singapore as a source of inspiration (Interview, urban planner, UCDA, November 2023).

Nigerian new city developers also conduct policy tours to Singapore to learn about Singapore's history and development. In a recent set of Twitter (now "X") posts, Sam Hart details his experience going on "an official tour of Singapore" (@HartNG, 2022/12/08). Hart notes Singapore's cleanliness, greenery, shipping industry, lack of inter-tribal conflict, and housing policies as some of the city-state's strengths while also indicating where Nigeria falls short. In particular, Hart emphasizes the "efficacy" and "tenacity" of Singapore's first president, Lee Kuan Yew, in creating this Singaporean success story partly through his "fanatical" zeal to protect Singapore's heritage and establish a national ethos of excellence (@HartNG, 2022/12/08). In a separate Twitter thread, Hart contrasts Singapore with Nigeria, arguing that Nigerians "do not have that culture of excellence" (@HartNG, 2023/01/07). Policy tours such as this, and the narratives shared, help to position and legitimize Singapore and other foreign locations as the definitive source of urban inspiration for Nigerian new cities, which developers present as the remedy for the failures of Nigerian urbanism. Aligning with McCann's arguments (2011: 117), "travelling" is a form of social learning in which Nigerian new city actors "can think with and beyond their standard reference points," which are mostly the existing cities in Nigeria. These physical and virtual "travels" produce and consolidate urban policies to be actively and

passively circulated to Nigeria by the policy tourist through "coherent stories (…) about what they learned" (McCann, 2011: 118).

Expanding on this view of "travelling," Nigerian new city developments are also informed by diasporic individuals who relocate back to Nigeria and bring with them a baggage full of experiences, networks, and ideas. The marketing manager for Centenary City lived and worked in Dubai for five years as a property consultant and marketing executive before returning to Nigeria and taking up post at Centenary City. On this relocation, he remarks that "working on the Centenary City project, all that I've learnt in the UAE, I've been able to transfer it, of course, to the project" (Interview, marketing manager, Centenary City, September 2023). Beyond just utilizing the knowledge acquired during his time in Dubai, he has also maintained contacts and connections that help shape promotional materials and business ventures that Centenary City developers seeks to implement for their customers (Interview, marketing manager, Centenary City, September 2023).

The Nigerian diaspora accounts for over US$ 20 billion dollars in personal remittances sent back to Nigeria annually (World Bank, 2022). This flow of foreign monies is highly sought after by Nigerian new city developers, who make their new cities as lavish as possible to incentivize the Nigerian diaspora to consider investing. In a 2017 event themed, "Taking Nigeria to the World," Eko Atlantic's parent company, South Energyx Nigeria Limited, in partnership with the British real estate agency Fine & Country, held a showcase in London to present Nigerian real estate as viable for investment (EAC, 2017). This event was targeted at "Nigerians in Diaspora and other international investors" and attempted to reassure potential investors that Nigerian real estate projects, including Eko Atlantic City, were trustworthy investment opportunities. In the press release for this event, it is made clear that the showcase was specifically for the "affluent and high net-worth individuals and astute investors in the Diaspora" (EAC, 2017). With an estimated population of 17 million (NIDC, 2021), the Nigerian diaspora is a significant population for which new city stakeholders are trying to tap into. Nigeria's new cities are intended by their developers to provide the amenities and lifestyles that would draw wealthy diasporans to consider relocating back to Nigeria and settling in their respective new city projects.

5.5.   Implications on Nigeria's existing cities

In Nigeria, the circulation of urban policy for a new city's development often excludes local urban planners in ways that are under-studied within the urban policy mobilities literature. Several scholars of urban policy mobilities indicate that policy transfers engage the local public sector within the process of "learning" (Clarke, 2012; McCann, 2011; Peck & Theodore, 2010). However, since most new city projects in Nigeria heavily involve the private sector, Nigerian public sector officials, urban planners, and architects are usually removed from the process. Regarding Mitros City, which is slated for development in Ogun state, an urban planner working for the Ogun State Ministry of Physical Planning (OSMPP) comments, "Though I've heard of it, but I don't have enough information" (Interview, urban planner, OSMPP, October 2023). The nature of new city development in Nigeria is surreptitious as several urban planners interviewed had vague ideas surrounding their nearest new city project, even though they acknowledge that the new city's development will affect their work (Interview, urban planner, OSMPP, October 2023). While most Nigerian new cities are public-private partnerships, there is limited public consultation in their creation beyond the necessary governmental approvals for land acquisition and zoning. This lack of public involvement has resulted in civil society backlash for new city projects like Eko Atlantic, which received the ire of the Occupy Lagos protests in 2020 for some of the restrictive policies implemented in order to boost the new city's image and prestige (PM News, 2020).

Some Nigerian urban planners regard new urban mega-development projects as "diversions" away from the infrastructural needs of existing Nigerian cities (Interview, urban planner in Abuja, October 2023). They argue that Nigeria's cities are currently facing various challenges related to slum growth, road dilapidation, waste management, precarious housing, and informal settlements, all of which are ignored by new city developers and their governmental partners. For an urban planner at the Umuahia Capital Development Authority (UCDA), the extravagant proposals for new cities in Nigeria overlook the smaller items that would make significant improvements to the lives of Nigerians (Interview, urban planner, UCDA, November 2023). This is further explained by Mohammed Lawal Shaibu, an urban planner based in Abuja and the creator of the YouTube channel *Nigerian Urbanism*, who argues that Centenary City and Jigna

are diverting the need or the process of infrastructure provision [away from] the main city … what the City should do is direct those investments to where the city is, and say: OK, we already have a plan of how this place should be, why don't you take this portion of the city and provide the infrastructure, and do your development there? But what's happening instead is that the Department of Land Administration within the FCDA is taking pockets of space around the city—and that's where the city is losing its structure; the sprawl is crazy—it's taking out this pocket of space and basically allocating rights to those lands to these private investors. (Interview, urban planner in Abuja, October 2023)

In the case of Centenary City and Jigna, the undemocratic allocation of land rights occurs on the backdrop of unresolved land disputes following the displacement of indigenous ethnicities during Abuja's development, and further forced evictions between 2003 and 2007 (Amba, 2010). The developers of Centenary City, Jigna, and the other new city surrounding Abuja, Land of Honey City, all intend to bypass this "site-specific political struggle" (Clarke, 2012) still ongoing in Abuja as their developers view their respective new city projects as completely separate entities from Abuja.

When asked what gaps in the Nigerian real estate market that their proposed new city fills, new city proponents generally underscore the upscale lifestyle (Interview, marketing manager, Centenary City, September 2023; Interview, city manager, Alaro City, September 2023) and the premium location (Interview, Alaro City, October 2023) as the main pull factors for particularly middle-class Nigerians. This creates a divergence between what Nigerian new city builders and local Nigerian urban planners regard as pressing needs for Nigerians, suggesting a serious lack of dialogue between the two parties. For Nigerian urban planners and scholars, new cities take attention and resources away from the low-income, informal sector workers who are facing immense housing precarity. Taibat Lawanson, a professor of urban and regional planning at the University of Lagos, argues that Nigeria's new cities ultimately "cater to a clientele that is not really facing the housing and infrastructure challenges" which the vast majority of Nigerians are contending with (Interview, October 2023). For local planners and scholars, the working-class stratum of the Nigerian population takes immediate priority largely because of estimates that Nigeria is facing a housing deficit of around 18 to 22 million units (Moore, 2019). In particular, there is an acute shortage of affordable housing in Nigeria for low- to middle-income families due, in part, to the inadequate funding of housing development; increasing rural-urban migration; and the lack of housing and transportation policies (Moore, 2019). From the perspective of the local Nigerian urban planners working to tackle and rectify these

shortcomings, new urban mega-development projects promising a luxurious lifestyle at a premium location weaken progress.

During interviews, Nigerian urban planners detail their career journeys and agree that they have the requisite knowledge community connections to develop Nigeria's urban and rural settlements in beneficial ways. They point to an "inferiority complex" by developers regarding the prioritization of foreign actors and urban policies in new city projects. In the view of local planners, the needs of Nigeria's cities are more easily implementable than developing high-profile new cities from scratch. These needs include clear and stable policies surrounding densification, integration, and transportation, as well as investments in infrastructure that will support the businesses and livelihoods of informal sector workers. There is a "Nigerian angle" on urban planning and development that new city-building elites and their foreign partners have failed to adopt. This is eloquently expressed by the UCDA urban planner:

> For foreign planners to make positive contributions to our own atmosphere in the realm of urban and regional planning, they have to, first of all, view our profession from our own perspective. They have to understand what we as a people need. (Interview, urban planner, UCDA, November 2023)

5.6.   Conclusion

Over the past two decades, a dozen new cities have either been announced or begun their construction in Nigeria. Several of these new city projects are planned, designed, and financed by foreign private actors, a lot of which are also based in the Global South. This represents a "Southern turn" (Myers, 2020) in the partnerships shaping ex nihilo urbanization in Nigeria as more and more urban policies, models, and ideas derive from other developing or recently developed cities. The scholarship on Nigerian new cities has thus far coalesced around Eko Atlantic City, an urban mega-development project on reclaimed land off the coast of Lagos, which is largely critiqued for its negative socioeconomic and environmental impacts. There is also a growing body of literature that broadly investigates Africa's new master-planned cities and the various foreign actors involved in them. Chinese actors stand out as the leading foreign partners and developers of new cities and urban infrastructure in Africa, through protracted investments accompanying the Belt and Road Initiative.

This research provides an overview of Nigeria's new city development, which is one of the most active in the world following China, Morocco, and Kuwait. As Africa's largest economy and most populous state, the new city-building trend in Nigeria indicates the future of urbanization in Africa, including the policies and philosophies that will affect sustainable and resilient urban development on the continent. Nigeria's new cities are generally promoted by their developers as solutions to housing deficits and infrastructural shortcomings, as well as opportunities for real estate investments for the Nigerian growing middle- to upper-class population. This follows an overarching view that the established metropolises in Nigeria are dilapidated, over-congested, and best remedied through new master-planned cities.

Situated within the urban policy mobilities literature, we draw out the types of foreign partnerships, urban models and ideas, and policy tourism that guide Nigeria's new cities. Our research bears four main contributions: First, we identify and investigate all the new city projects currently underway in Nigeria, expanding the focus away from Eko Atlantic City to include the other 11 new master-planned cities under development in Nigeria. Second, we draw attention to several "uncharted foreign actors" (Moser et al., 2021) involved in Nigerian new city development, including those from not just China but also India, Singapore, South Africa, and the UAE among others. Third, we trace the mechanics of urban policy circulation to Nigeria, detailing the policy tours and virtual "travels" undertaken by new city developers to seek out inspiration, acquire international funding and investment, as well as create narratives that new cities in Nigeria are necessary. Fourth, we highlight the broad impacts that these 12 foreign-planned new cities have on the maintenance of Nigeria's existing cities, which require a great deal of planning attention, resources, and investments that is instead being funnelled towards tabula rasa urban mega-development projects.

These observations from Nigeria's new cities demonstrate that the new city phenomenon is informed by a number of profit-oriented local and foreign actors. There is, however, room for future research on the mechanics of urban policy mobilities to other African new city-building locations in order to unearth the lesser-known planning institutions, individuals, and policies that are laying the foundations of Africa's urban futures. Deeper understanding of how foreign planners and policy actors influence sustainable and resilient urban development within the African continent is also important for identifying the ways in which these actors can positively contribute to African urbanization.

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Chapter 6: Discussion and conclusions

6.1.   Overview and chapter findings

This thesis examines the 21st century boom in new master-planned city building in Nigeria. Nigeria's new cities are proposed by their developers for a variety of reasons, including as avenues for investments, solutions to housing deficits, and as remedies to infrastructural shortcomings in established cities. I investigate this topic through two investigations. First, I outline the historical patterns of ex nihilo urbanization in Nigeria, focusing on three main eras: colonial (mid-1800s to 1960), post-independence (1960 to late-1990s), and contemporary (2000 to today). Second, I examine the circulation of urban policy mobilities to Nigeria's contemporary cities, including the types of foreign partnerships informing new city projects, as well as the policy tours undertaken by Nigerian new city developers. This concluding chapter underscores the historical and global dimensions to new city development in Nigeria as well as the policies, philosophies, institutions, and actors that inform Nigeria's new cities past and present. The key arguments and conceptual contributions of this thesis are summarized below, as well as the directions for future research and my final comments.

In Chapter 1, I introduced the context behind this thesis research on Nigerian ex nihilo urban mega-developments, their historical precedents, and their global influences. I presented the driving questions behind my investigation on the proliferation of new cities in Nigeria, including my interest in the rationales offered by new city developers; the previous phases of ex nihilo urbanization in Nigeria; the similarities and differences in new city development across eras; the local and foreign actors involved, where they come from, and their methods of circulating urban policies. I also briefly outline the objectives of this thesis which are to identify and examine the specific ex nihilo urban development projects in Nigeria, including the planners, doctrines, and institutions involved, as well as investigate the mechanics of urban policy mobilities to Nigeria's new cities.

In Chapter 2, I situated this research within the scholarship on new master-planned cities. I reviewed the literature on colonial and post-independence ex nihilo urbanization in Nigeria; contemporary new cities in Africa; and urban policy mobilities, with a focus on the Global South. I also presented the gaps in these strands of scholarship and highlighted the contributions that I seek to make to each era using Nigerian new cities as a case study. I discussed the lack of

research on the various new city projects in Nigeria and how these projects bear some notable similarities to previous eras of ex nihilo urbanization in Nigeria. I also drew attention to the fact that there are no known scholarly publications examining the circulation of urban policies to Nigeria, particularly the range of foreign partners, the methods of policy tourism, and the urban models that Nigerian new city developers are inspired by.

In Chapter 3, I presented the methodology employed to conduct this research, as well as a discussion on my positionality and research limitations. More specifically, I explained my use of document and textual analysis of official documents, master plans, maps, books, and the grey literature related to Nigerian new cities. I also used semi-structured interviews to gain more detailed perspectives from elite professionals engaged in Nigerian new city development or urban planning. To get insights into the policy tours carried out by certain Nigerian actors, I analyzed posts on social media, particularly Twitter (now "X"). This chapter touched on the evolution of this research and some of the previous methods used, such as my fieldwork in Singapore which helped shape my perspective on urban policy mobilities to Nigeria but did not yield as much data as initially expected. To this point, I discussed the influence of my positionality on this research and the methodological limits to my investigation of new cities in Nigeria.

In Chapter 4, I examined the new city development trend as it manifests in Nigeria. I categorized Nigerian ex nihilo urbanization into three distinct eras: colonial, post-independence, and contemporary, and drew out the similarities and differences in the overarching philosophies and discourses driving new city development in each era. In this chapter, I listed the ex nihilo urban development projects in Nigeria since the mid-1800s and unpacked their political and economic importance for Nigeria's regional and national development. I put forward three main arguments. First, the contemporary wave of new city projects in Nigeria bears troubling discursive similarities to the colonial era, particularly with their emphasis on socioeconomic exclusivity. Second, Nigeria's new cities rely increasingly on the private sector which results in uncoordinated and profit-driven urban mega-development projects which differ greatly from other active new city-building locations which articulate their new city projects as a national development strategy. Third, Nigeria's contemporary new cities reiterate colonial and post-independence focus on "modernity" while neglecting locally available tools and resources for urban development in Nigeria. This chapter underscored the need to investigate the temporal and

global dimensions of ex nihilo urbanization globally in order to identify the planning hangovers that might be negatively influencing global urban futures, especially with the looming threat of global warming.

In Chapter 5, I critically analyzed the mechanics of urban policy mobilities to Nigeria, focusing on contemporary new cities, the foreign partners and "experts" shaping them, and policy tours undertaken by Nigerian developers, and the implications of foreign-planned new cities on Nigeria's existing cities First, this chapter identifies and investigates the 12 new cities currently underway in Nigeria. Second, this chapter highlights the "uncharted foreign actors" (Moser et al., 2021) involved in Nigerian new city development, particularly those from the Global South. Third, this chapter traces the mechanics of urban policy circulation to Nigeria and details the policy tours and virtual "travels" undertaken by new city developers when seeking out inspiration, funding, and social endorsement in their new city projects. Fourth, this chapter uses data collected from interviews to unpack the broad impacts that foreign-led new master-planned cities have on the maintenance of Nigeria's established cities in terms of funnelling resources away from where they are most needed. This chapter also presented the importance of a "Nigerian angle" to urban planning that can help inform urban development projects that will bring about positive impacts for Nigerian cities and urban dwellers.

6.2.   Research contributions and significance: Nigerian new cities in view

First and foremost, this thesis contributes to the burgeoning scholarship on new master-planned cities, an urban development trend that manifests globally but is most visible in the Global South (Moser & Côté-Roy, 2021). This thesis investigates of Nigerian new city-building activities and relates them to other scholarship on national new city development strategies in Morocco, Saudi Arabia, and Kuwait (Asmyatullin et al., 2020; Côté-Roy & Moser, 2022; Moser et al., 2015). Despite being Africa's largest economy and most populous state, the new cities under development in Nigeria have received relatively little scholarship, especially considering that there are 12 new city projects underway in Nigeria. This places Nigeria as the country with the second most new cities in Africa, behind Morocco which currently has 19 new cities underway as part of its Villes Nouvelles strategy (Côté-Roy & Moser, 2022). There is no national strategy for developing new cities in Nigeria even though several levels of government act as public partners in them. Nigerian new cities are neoliberal and entrepreneurial in nature, making

them top-down projects that are individual and uncoordinated. This thesis identifies this feature of new city building in Nigeria to be a marked departure from the scholarship on other national city-building agendas that underscore the deep involvement of the public sector.

In this thesis, I understand the contemporary new cities boom in Nigeria to be staged on a history of similar ex nihilo urban development projects. New cities have been developed since antiquity, but the most recent proliferations in new city construction from scratch emerged in a number of phases which I categorize as a colonial, post-independence, and contemporary eras. By investigating the policies, philosophies, and actors in contemporary Nigerian new cities, this thesis examines the discourse of exclusivity that developers and planners alike espouse. Contemporary new cities in Nigeria are recognized by their promoters as exclusive communities that "would not be housing poor people" (Ajibade, 2017). Their pricing, visual renderings, and grand proposals are primarily geared towards attracting affluent and high net-worth investors. There is a protracted effort by Nigerian new city proponents to create foreign-planned elite enclaves that offer amenities and lifestyles inaccessible to the majority of Nigerians.

These discourses and policies of exclusion break away from post-independence values of unity, accord, and inclusion, and instead harken to colonial planning philosophies and doctrines of segregation and socioeconomic separation. Following independence from the British, Nigeria's political elites proposed and developed new cities from scratch as a nation-building effort to inspire ethnic cohesion, encourage post-colonial economic development. The new national capital city, Abuja, was developed as an emblem of this value and other state capitals, such as Owerri, were also created to relief ethnic conflicts. As demonstrated in Chapter 4, contemporary new cities entirely forgo these considerations for inclusion. Colonial ex nihilo urban developments, on the other hand, were intended to further British control through the destruction of pre-existing native settlements in order to build colonial administrative and trading posts. Planned areas in colonial Nigeria were exclusively for the British and their European business partners, and they banned native Nigerians from living in them unless they were domestic workers (Livsey, 2022). Built in the Garden City tradition, colonial-era ex nihilo urban developments used construction materials that were expensive and inaccessible for natives, with very limited resources allocated for the planning of native residential areas (Bigon, 2013).

The historical precedents for new cities in Nigeria are further contextualized with analysis of the global urban policy mobilities. Several actors involved in planning, designing,

and financing new city projects in Nigeria are foreign private institutions, many of which are also based in Global South states such as India, South Africa, and the UAE. This indicates an increasing diversity in the foreign actors circulating policies to not only new cities in Nigeria, but in Africa at large. Recent scholarship on foreign involvement in African new cities has focused on the presence of Chinese actors investing in and actively building new urban infrastructure through the Belt and Road Initiative (Benazeraf & Alves, 2014; Keeton & Provoost, 2019; Murphy et al., 2018). This thesis uses the Nigerian case study to demonstrate that Chinese actors are often accompanied by a number of other "uncharted foreign actors" (Moser et al., 2021) also engaged in new city development. My investigation into Nigerian new city projects reveals that the networks of urban policy mobilities extend from Portugal to Belgium to Lebanon and so on. In addition, this thesis underscores the active role of Nigerian new city promoters in seeking out these diverse foreign private partnerships through policy tourism, virtual "travels" for inspiration, and diasporic repatriations, all of whom facilitate the smooth transfer of urban policy and ideas to Nigerian new cities.

As Nigeria continues to urbanize, new cities indicate one of the directions that things are headed. The global challenges of rising sea levels and climate change warrants sustainable, resilient, and inclusive urbanization, particularly in vulnerable regions throughout Africa. By highlighting the historical precedents and global urban policies mobilized for Nigerian new cities, this thesis research pinpoints the planning legacies and institutional pathways that inform the contemporary shift towards enclave urban mega-developments in Nigeria. The Nigerian context also makes clear that new cities are shaped by urban policy connections that are at once unprecedented as they are surprising. Foreign involvement in Nigerian ex nihilo urbanization since British control has spanned the planet, with partnerships emerging out of newer locations with each project. Nigerian new cities affirm some of the patterns of urban development already identified in previous scholarship as well as provide a nuanced perspective to the historical legacies and global consultations influencing African urbanization today.

6.3. Directions for future research

This thesis provides an in-depth examination of contemporary new cities in Nigeria, including the historical precedents and the global connections that help shape them. As discussed in Chapter 3, there are some limitations to this thesis which open up ground for future research

on new cities in Nigeria, as well as in Africa. Firstly, there is room for further qualitative study on the impacts of Nigeria's new cities on nearby residents. While this thesis sheds light on some of the reactions that local urban planners have to new city developments in their respective regions, future research can look more into how ordinary individuals, especially informal sector workers, are affected by the construction of "exclusive" new cities close to their residences. Besides few brief scholarly mentions of the civil society protests against Eko Atlantic City, more research is needed on the methods of resistance to new urban mega-development projects in Nigeria, both through formal and informal channels. This understanding of how ordinary individuals and civil society respond to new cities in Nigeria will help with providing more insights that go beyond the elite circles. It will also indicate the ways in which Nigerians are exercising their rights to their cities and neighbourhoods in the face of a rapid proliferation of enclave urbanization through new city projects.

Secondly, future research could investigate the historical patterns in the ways that ex nihilo urban development projects have taken form in other parts of Africa. This thesis highlights some of the policies, philosophies, and planners that have shaped Nigerian ex nihilo urbanization since British colonialism in the mid-1800s. However, it contains limited comparative analysis on this because there is a dearth of research on similar contemporary new cities and their historical precedents in African countries colonized by another European power. The way that French colonial town planners, for example, developed new towns in francophone Africa differs greatly from anglophone Africa (Njoh, 2008). Further research can unpack this difference and perhaps underline the ways in which different African regions might approach new city development due to their own colonial history. This may also provide empirical evidence for similarities in patterns of new city development that circumvent or neglect colonial planning legacies and approaches.

Thirdly, there are opportunities for research on the growing intra-African exchange of urban policies and ideas. Previous scholarship underscores Morocco's position as the leading new city-building state in Africa as well as some of the urban policy exchanges that Moroccan actors facilitates within the African continent. In Chapter 5, this thesis also identifies the relationship between Alaro City developers in Nigeria and Tatu City developers in Kenya who engage in knowledge-sharing sessions by way of their mutual employment at Rendeavour. More studies on the connections and engagements between different African new city developers

might help with better understanding how the partnerships and sources of inspiration for new cities are getting closer to home. It may also help with investigating the ways in which African new cities might successfully or unsuccessfully be sold by their developers as cities to be studied by other African locations with similar histories and geographies.

6.4.   Final comments

At any given moment, new master-planned city projects are emerging and collapsing throughout the Global South. This makes these urban mega-development projects very volatile to study as they are actively evolving and transforming in their proposals, plans, partnerships, and designs. Investigating new cities in Nigeria came with these set of challenges, alongside the lack of clarity on the progress of certain new city projects, if they had been abandoned, and what newer actors were involved but unannounced. These research difficulties are even more poignant when examining new towns and cities developed in the distant past. Much time was spent verifying timelines, dates, and the histories of ex nihilo urban development projects in Nigeria. As most of Nigeria's contemporary new cities are still in the state of proposal and construction, it remains to be seen which, if any, will fully manifest as they have been currently planned and designed, and if they will be effective in drawing in the high net-worth buyers that they are targeted at.

Being Nigerian myself, conducting this research made me confront the ugly realities that make new city projects attractive developments. Be it the history of British colonization, dilapidation of existing cities, lack of maintenance, the inferiority complex, or the simple desires to have clean, modern, efficient cities in Nigeria. During my interviews, I was able to discuss the vernacular architectural and urban planning practices being experimented with by Nigerian planners and architects, as well as some of the sociopolitical hurdles to implementing them. For better or for worse, new urban mega-development projects appeal to some Nigerians because they are enviable, "shiny" cities that are not vernacular. It is unfortunate, however, that many developers are willing to sacrifice the livelihoods of the urban poor to have a chance at creating these "urban fantasies" (Watson, 2014). This thesis is an attempt to shed light on a current phase of Nigerian urbanization with the understanding that the historical legacies of urban planning can be evaluated and changed to encourage inclusive development. This thesis also seeks to bring attention to the complex body of actors formulating urban policies to Nigerian new cities in ways

that either circumvent or exacerbate local struggles for land rights, economic volatilities, as well as class-based inequalities. By problematizing the new master-planned cities currently underway in Nigeria, the opportunity arises to envision an urban future that is more conducive to the needs of Nigerians.

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Appendix

Appendix Table A: List of interviews conducted

	Date	Title / Description, if stated	Name(s), if stated	Organization
1.	2022-10-03	Urban planner	Not stated (confidential)	Surbana Jurong
2.	2023-05-11	Landscape Architect	Dapo Adesiyun	Lagos New Town (part of Lekki New Township)
3.	2023-05-16	IT Implementation Manager	Michael Jidael	Enyimba Economic City Development Company FZE
4.	2023-09-14	Head of Marketing	Ahmad Muhammad Al-Amin	Centenary City FZE
5.	2023-09-15	New City Manager	Ovie Avwenaghagha	Alaro City
6.	2023-09-28	Planner	Elekwachi Ikeh	Abia State Ministry of Lands, Survey, and Physical Planning
7.	2023-10-04	Professor of Urban and Regional Planning	Taibat Lawanson	University of Lagos
8.	2023-10-08	Planner	Mohammed Lawal Shaibu	Nigerian Urbanism
9.	2023-10-15	Not stated (confidential)	Not stated (confidential)	Alaro City
10.	2023-10-16	Planner	Gabriel Bankole	Ogun State Ministry of Physical Planning
11.	2023-11-27	Planner	Asuzor David	Umuahia Capital Development Authority
12.	2023-12-15	Head of Sales and Business Development	Andrea Cameron-Cole	Lagos New Town