Nationalism Can't Be Built: The Story of Abuja's Creation

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Official Name: The Federal Republic of Nigeria
Capital City: Abuja, Federal Capital Territory (FCT)
Population Size: 186,053,000 People (2016 Census), most populous country in Africa
Size of Country: 356,669 mi² (Larger than Texas)
Main Ethnic Groups: 250 ethnic groups in Nigeria and the four main are the Hausa-Fulani, Yoruba, Igbo & Hausa
Main Religion: No official religion, majority of individuals are either Christian or Muslim
Language: English official language
See Figure A, B, C, D for maps of Nigeria and the Federal Capital Territory (Abuja)¹

Introduction

“The [Abuja city] gate plays the same role memorial bridge did in Washington D.C.;” remarked Ambassador John Campbell sitting in his office chair at the Council on Foreign Relations. Campbell regularly drives from Nnamdi Azikiwe International Airport, past the off-white gate with “you are welcome” written on the gate in large black block letters, and onto Independence Avenue. The off-white gate marks his entrance to Nigeria’s capital, Abuja. Worlds away from West Africa, Campbell’s drive from Ronald Regan Washington National Airport and into Washington D.C. is not unlike his journey into Nigeria’s capital city. Both take the driver on a predestined loop into the city rushing past dramatic memorials and symbols of national unity. The similarities exist because of five men: Pierre Charles L'Enfant, David Wallace, Ian McHarg, Bill Roberts, and Thomas Todd.

In 1791, President George Washington hired Pierre Charles L'Enfant to envision a capital city for the new country. L'Enfant arrived in Philadelphia in August 1791 to present his master plan based on a European urban design model for the newly democratic American government. Just under two hundred years later, David Wallace, Ian McHarg, Bill Roberts, and Thomas Todd of their self-named architecture firm Wallace, Roberts, McHarg, and Todd (WRMT) would be peering over their desks in Philadelphia trying to evoke similar feelings of nationalism in the

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5 C.M. Harris, "Washington's Gamble," 529.
master plan for Abuja, Nigeria’s new capital city. While the end results were dramatically
different, the beginnings were eerily similar.

The magnitude of Abuja’s creation is hard to comprehend. This project was six times the
size of Brasília in land area, as the professor of architecture Nnamdi Elleh noted, but it receives
little attention in academia. 6 When prompting for a substitutive answer as to why it perils in
attention compared to Brasília, Elleh remarked how “Nigeria’s bad publicity overlooks the
architectural significance of the project.” 7 In addition, Nigeria is not a tourist destination, and
therefore few westerners visit Abuja. It is a forgotten tale. While today the story of Abuja rarely
makes it into urban planning anthologies, Elleh believes that soon urban historians will evaluate
it on equal footing with other planned capital cities. 8

The creation of Abuja is also the story of how Western architecture is used to create
nationalism in postcolonial countries. Urban planners and the infrastructure they choose to
implement has considerable effects on cities. This thesis, namely, argues that the architecture
firm WRMT was unable to understand the needs of a post-conflict population. As a result, their
master plan over-relied on ecological planning principles, assuming that these principles would
invoke the type of city Nigerians wanted. In 1969, McHarg created the concept of ecological
planning, “based on an understanding of both biophysical and social systems. Ecological
planners operate within the framework of a biophysical culture.” 9 Meaning, the planner maps out

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6 Nnamdi Elleh (professor of architecture) in discussion with Taylor A. Tobin, April 2017.
7 Nnamdi Elleh (professor of architecture) in discussion with Taylor A. Tobin.
8 Nnamdi Elleh (professor of architecture) in discussion with Taylor A. Tobin
the characteristics of the land and then creates an overlay system (or map) which represents the entirety of the areas biosphere. The overlay system was not without biases, as David Hamme remarks, McHarg believed “urban development, including emerging suburbs, were excluded from this investigation since it was assumed that these areas had destroyed all ‘natural’ components.”

Ecological planning was as much about controlling the future as about preserving land.

Ecological planning was a response to industrialized cities in the West, and the need to make a city more livable. It was never a response to domestic strife. While the Nigerian government mistakenly assumed creating a centralized national capital – Abuja – would be able to unify the country after the Biafran Civil War (July 6, 1967 – January 15, 1970), a vast majority of failures trace back to an unjustifiably praised master plan. Shortly after Abuja’s launch, rapid urbanization and an urban area that favored the wealthy emerged because of the unintentional effects of their design choices.

Abuja’s existence as a postcolonial planned capital in the “Giant of Africa” is meaningful. The decision to move the capital to spur a sense of nationalism is an expensive decision not without enormous hurdles. Why did Nigeria take on a fifteen-year development project when a significant portion of the population lived in poverty? In its four chapter, this thesis will explore that question over a forty-year period from the Civil War through the implementation of Abuja’s initial master plan. It will rely on government speeches, ecological

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planning tools, interviews, and multiple master plans and analytical reports to create a comprehensive picture of the creation of Abuja.

This thesis is a melding of the two areas: urbanism and post-colonial Nigerian history. Many pieces of historical scholarship cover urban planning but few mention Abuja. Historical scholarship omits Abuja because of both the implementation issues and an over-appreciation of western cities. Even major historical scholarship on Nigeria overlooks Abuja. This thesis will attempt to fill in these gaps.

**Historiography: Urbanism**

Since Adam and Eve, communities and dwellings had existed in varying shapes and sizes, far before the ever-changing urban design field existed. Lewis Mumford, an American historian, traces the existence of the city and its future by asking the question: “will the city disappear or will the whole planet turn into a vast urban hive?” He challenges the claim that an archeologist has to find the first city. As he writes, “Before the city there was the hamlet and the shrine and the village: before the village, the camp, the cache, the cave, the cairn; and before all these there was a disposition to social life that man plainly shares with many other animal species.” He cites the first city coming together as the villages “in Mesopotamia and the Valley of the Nile between, say, 9000 and 4000 B.C.” The basic forms of a city existed in

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13 Mumford, *The City in History*, 5.
Mesopotamia: homes, public spaces, worship sites, and graves. While the first conglomerate of villages came together in Mesopotamia, the first planned city was the Roman Empire. He writes, “under the Empire, for perhaps the first time since the foundation of cities, Western mankind had a brief glimpse of what it would be like to live in a completely open world, in which law and order everywhere prevailed, and citizenship, in every sense, was the common human heritage.” Mumford’s explanation of the planned Roman Empire serves as a definition for planned cities. They are ideals, a mixture of architecture and emotions, carefully articulated onto a geographic plane.

While urban design has long existed, the theory behind it developed much later. Urban design is the implementation of urban theory. John Rennie Short’s seminal work created in 2006 is about the concepts of urban theory making him one of the first historians to synthesize the multiple sets of existing urban theories together. He defines “urban” as “an umbrella term that relates to cities and city living.” It was first used in English in the early seventeenth century when urban living was associated more directly with a commodification of society and a capitalization of the economy.” He defines theory as “a contentious term. It derives from the Greek, meaning ‘looking at,’ ‘to behold,’ ‘spectacle.’” Short defines the complete urban theory as

14 Mumford, The City in History, 205.
15 Mumford, The City in History, 206.
17 Short, Urban Theory, 2.
18 Short, Urban Theory, 2.
19 Short, Urban Theory, 1.
A formalized set of ideas but also as a response to the spectacle of the city, and theorizing as a dialectic process between seeing the city and representing the city, viewings, and representations eliding and interacting, shifting and changing – sometimes in concert, at other times delayed and contested. The narrative of urban theory is not simply what ideas represent the city but how changes in the city provoke and inaugurate, contest and undermine theories of the city that in turn try to grasp the ever-changing urban realities.\textsuperscript{20}

While his definition is still unwieldy, he understands that with the creation of urban areas comes “seismic shifts” in society.\textsuperscript{21} Urban theory is always adapting because the city and what it encompasses is constantly under construction.

Unlike the ever-changing urban theory, the Progressive Era (1890-1920) created urban planning as it is known today. The Progressive Era through its focus on public health, as Jon A. Peterson writes, “yielded a body of accumulating experience and precedent centered on large-scale, special-purpose efforts to reshape urban settings. Water supply, sewerage, public park systems, civic art, landfill, rapid transit, and still other concerns became focal points for nineteenth-century undertakings.”\textsuperscript{22} The McMillan Plan (1900-1902), an effort to remake Washington D.C. exhibited the characteristics of early urban planning taking advantage of both civic art and park system design.\textsuperscript{23} The McMillan plan had a direct connection to another pivotal movement in the Progressive Era, the City Beautiful Movement. As Peterson writes about the movement “emerging in the years 1897-1902, in the wake of the mid-nineties economic depression, this diffuse but remarkably potent cause sought to upgrade the appearance of the

\begin{footnotesize}
\begin{enumerate}
\item Short, \textit{Urban Theory}, 3.
\item Short, \textit{Urban Theory}, 3.
\item Jon A. Paterson, \textit{The Birth of City Planning in the United States, 1840–1917} (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2003), xvi.
\item Paterson, \textit{The Birth of City Planning in the United States}, 98.
\end{enumerate}
\end{footnotesize}
nation’s towns and cities by drawing eclectically from virtually the entire national stock of urban aesthetic ideas.”

Peterson firmly implants planning history as part of the larger American culture, an important distinction.

Sixty years after the Progressive Era, Kevin Lynch’s *The Image of the City* (1960) is one of the first modern guides to building and rebuilding cities. Previously other architects had written down processes, but Lynch's guide was truly for everyone. He created his seminal guide after he carefully studied the form of three cities: Los Angeles, Boston, and Jersey City (see Figure E for his drawing of Boston). He carefully examined how people map out their city internally, coming up with five elements: "paths, edges, districts, nodes, and landmarks." Each of these cities, according to Lynch, have a “well-managed panorama” which gives the city dweller delight. Moreover, he zones in on the environment, writing “the physical scene symbolizes the passage of time.” From these observations, he creates the term imageability; "that quality in a physical object which gives it a high probably of evoking a strong image in any given observer." He urges urban planners to invoke imageability, and it has worked its way into multiple master plans, including Abuja.

Lynch redefined urban design and in the years post-1960 it has taken on a variety of methods. Michael Larice and Elizabeth MacDonald outline urban design over eight historical

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27 Lynch, *The Image of the City*, 44.
periods. Both are professors in urbanism, and their anthology is considered the preeminent resource for the study of urban design. Therefore, what Larice and MacDonald choose to leave out is just as relevant as what they want to include. They write "urban design is flourishing in those places where centrally organized governments have both the budgets and the unencumbered freedom." Western urban planners like Jane Jacobs are featured prominently throughout the city section. Jacobs observes that "there must be a clear demarcation between what is public space and what is private space. Public and private spaces cannot ooze into each other as they do typically in suburban settings or in projects."

Larice and MacDonald’s anthology spurred a creation of how-to books. They responded to a demand for a summation of the essential urban theory texts, in part because it is a subject that covers multiple disciplines. Mark Childs aims to create a set of tools for urban designers, focusing on community building. He continues this conversation by asking “how can civil designers - architects, landscape architects, civil engineers, public artists, city council members, and others - collaborate in the collective work of creating environmentally sound, socially resilient, and soul-enlivening settlements?” His work looks at alternative means from traditional urban design.

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32 Larice and Macdonald, *The Urban Design Reader*, 104.
34 Childs, *Urban Composition*, 12.
In 2008, Stephen M. Wheeler and Timothy Beatley created a similar anthology for sustainable urban development. Even so, they understand the ambiguity of the term writing "there is no single, universally acknowledged manifesto that by itself sets out a sustainable urban development agenda. The 1996 United Nations Habitat II Conference, the “City Summit,” sought to produce such a document, but…has not attached a wide following."³⁵ Included in their edited anthology is Ian McHarg’s concept of ecological planning, a later precursor to today’s Geographic Information Systems (GIS) computer-based methods.”³⁶

Before McHarg’s ecological planning tools, there was Frederick Law Olmstead (1822-1903) in Central Park. Justin Martin writes how Olmstead is considered the founder of landscape architecture.³⁷ He worked during a period where specialization was not yet required therefore the lines between landscape architect and environmentalist were blurred. He cemented his status as a landscape architect through the creation of central park. There, among other creations, “Olmsted developed a signature hourglass shape, narrow in the middle and flaring out at each end. The shape was achieved by planting trees around the edge of the meadows.”³⁸ Olmstead made these unusual shapes over and over again across college campuses and other areas.

Later, McHarg would blur the lines between landscape architect and environmentalist again through academia. McHarg used his position at the University of Pennsylvania, as Anne

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³⁶ Wheeler and Beatley, The Sustainable Urban Development Reader, 64.
³⁸ Martin, Genius of Place, 151.
Spirn writes, “to develop his ideas on environmentalism and landscape architecture.” He believed it was possible to meld the two. Simultaneously, he created WRMT in 1963 which developed into one of the leading landscape planning firms. Spirn points out that the “the university studio was a place of theoretical experiment; the professional office, a place to test ideas in actual places, with real clients and programs.” In 1975, WRMT produced the *Pardisan Plan*, a master plan for an environmental park in Tehran. The park showed McHarg at his best, able to take full advantage of the surroundings (see Figure F for a map of the park from the master plan). WRMT wrote, “the metaphysical view represented in Pardisan is the unity of man and nature. Its purpose is to understand and celebrate this unity and interdependence.” While the Pardisan Plan was received positively, McHarg’s work has been harshly critiqued, especially by Ignacio Bunster-Ossa who works at the now named WRT. Bunster-Ossa finds that much of McHarg’s work contributed to urban sprawl. Moreover, many of McHarg’s “idyllic developments at the edge of nature turned greenfield sites into suburban communities.” Wheeler and Beatley also take issue with McHarg’s approach, writing “McHarg may be seen as taking an overly optimistic view of the power of ecological science to order urban development, 

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40 Spern, “Ian McHarg,” 103.
41 Spern, Ann. “Ian McHarg,” 103
a view better fitted with a technocratic approach toward sustainable development.” The criticisms of McHarg's work point to the potential pitfalls in urban development.

The downfalls of cities exist in two concepts: high modernism and speculative urbanization. The two theories were developed in the post-1990s, mostly to explain planned cities and developments. James Scott defines high modernism theory as the desire to create a society that is in accord with scientific laws. High modernism has “a heaving reliance on visual images of heroic progress toward a totally transformed future.” High modernism is essentially the desire to create the perfect modern city, void of imperfection and inadequate infrastructure. He uses Brasilia, Abuja, and Dodoma as examples of high modernist cities gone wary. Christopher Marcinkoski defines speculative urbanization as when urban development is out of sync with financial reality, creating empty plots of land or half-done cities. This phenomenon often appears in authoritarian governments. These two concepts explore the less than ideal consequences of planned projects when even a significant budget could not save the city. The perfect city under the current economic landscape may never come to fruition.

While there is a breadth of information on urban planning and history, few scholars have written on urban planning’s relationship to colonialism in Sub-Saharan Africa. Ambe J. Njoh and Carlos Nunes Silva are two of these scholars. Njoh argues how a “substantial portion of the

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socioeconomic problems of Sub-Saharan African countries can be explained by physical and spatial planning schemes that were introduced by colonial officials and continue to be vigorously maintained by indigenous authorities.”51 Urban planning is as much a form of control as a type of design. Silva takes a similar angle, arguing that “Europe’s cultural and legal diversity, as expressed in the planning laws and in the planning models adopted in European countries since the nineteenth century until the independence of the African states, were somehow cloned in the European colonies in Africa.”52 The “colonial inheritance” appears in post-independence planning, a phenomenon present in the Abuja master plan.

**Historiography: Nigeria**

Before 1991, Lagos was the capital of Nigeria. Abuja is in the Federal Capital Territory (FCT) and was declared the capital of Nigeria on December 12, 1991.53 While Lagos remains the financial capital, Abuja holds the seat of government over 700 kilometers away.54 The Nigerian government claims that the country is split evenly across the Christian and Muslim religions, but Ambassador John Campbell remarked that it was a fact created under President Mohammed to manage religious differences. John N. Paden writes on Nigeria's relationship with religion.55 He argues that because Nigeria manages to house two official religions Muslims and Christians, it

serves as a model for interreligious dialogue, but it is also a reason for misunderstanding abroad.\textsuperscript{56} Paden calls on other nations to show greater tolerance towards Nigeria.\textsuperscript{57} While Paden’s argument is strong, it does not comment on how government corruption plays into the global perception of Nigeria.

Corruption is part of Nigeria’s culture, with government bribes as seemingly ordinary and internet scams part of everyday language. Daniel Jordan Smith writes on this often painful reality.\textsuperscript{58} He writes about how ordinary Nigerians are most affected by corruption; “national resources are looted and squandered by a relatively small group of criminals, international investors are extremely wary of Nigeria, and Nigeria’s global reputation is smeared to the point where many honest Nigerians living, travelling, or doing business abroad are assumed to be criminals until they prove otherwise.”\textsuperscript{59} Corruption entrenches its way into daily life, making it difficult for the average Nigerian to succeed.

Lagos is a mishmash of culture and traffic situated on the coast of Nigeria. It was the capital of Nigeria from 1914-1991 and is still the financial capital of the country. Kaye Whiteman writes on Lagos and its evolution into the megacity it is today.\textsuperscript{60} Lagos is a city of unimaginable size for most western audiences.\textsuperscript{61} In contrast to Whiteman, the World Tourism Organization (WTO) offers a sociological view on tourism as a tool in urban areas. According to

\begin{itemize}
  \item \textsuperscript{56} Paden, \textit{Faith, and Politics in Nigeria}, 2.
  \item \textsuperscript{57} Paden, \textit{Faith, and Politics in Nigeria}, 2.
  \item \textsuperscript{59} Smith, \textit{A Culture of Corruption}, 28.
  \item \textsuperscript{60} Kaye Whiteman, \textit{Lagos: A Cultural History} (Northampton: Interlink Books, 2014), 3.
  \item \textsuperscript{61} Whiteman, \textit{Lagos: A Cultural History}, 3.
\end{itemize}
the WTO, tourism can create sustainable development and help Lagos overcome some present-
day problems.\textsuperscript{62} Without mentioning McHarg, the WTO recalls back to his ideology. The WTO
believes that similar to urban development, tourism can also be done sustainability.

While these historians put forward one view on Nigeria centered on a multi-dimensional
country that struggles to reach a position of stability, much of their data sits on inconsistent
numbers. Morten Jerven argues that earlier academics were misled by skewed data, in actuality
“most African economies grew from the 1950s to the 1970s and then contracted with a debt
crisis and other shocks in the 1970s.”\textsuperscript{63} Moreover, he writes “understanding African economies
is not just a matter of getting the history right: the policy implications of fluctuating growth and
institutional change are radically different from the implications drawn from theories of chronic
growth and static institutions.”\textsuperscript{64} The planners of Abuja made their predictions based on Nigeria's
inconsistent data.

There is little literature on Abuja itself. The majority of sources on Abuja identify
particular issues with the urban area rather than reviewing the entire city itself. Nnamdi Elleh is
the most often cited academic on Abuja and one of the few to view it in the context of Nigerian
history. Having written on Abuja since the mid-1990s, Elleh has approached it from multiple
angles including as a form of power and as the self-described “Single Most Ambitious Urban

\textsuperscript{64} Jerven, \textit{Africa: Why Economists Get It Wrong}, 5.
Design Project of the 20th Century.”  

Elleh has written about the architecture time and time again, citing it as a form of international modernism. Few Nigerians openly criticize Abuja in part because it was supposed to be a point of pride, therefore, finding sources about the city is challenging.

**Thesis Roadmap**

Abuja should have been a model city, a rarity on the continent. Instead, it has turned into a city with the fastest growing slum in Nigeria. This thesis will answer the how over four chapters using the perspective of both Nigerian history and urban planning concepts.

Chapter 1 argues that the brutal Biafran War created a foundation for a new type of development project. After Nigeria had gained independence from Great Britain on October 1, 1960, dozens of individuals wanted to claim a leadership title in the new parliamentary style government, outside investors were entering the country quickly, and oil was discovered just four years before independence, creating tensions in the country. These tensions resulted in the Igbo people succeeding and creating Biafra on May 30, 1967. Shortly after Biafra succeeded, the Biafran Civil War began on July 6, 1967. The war ended on January 15, 1970, and Nigeria desperately needed to bring the war-torn country together. The end of the war combined with an

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increase in money from oil led Nigeria to want to do something on a global scale. Unlike other countries, the Nigerian government had the ability to afford a large-scale rebuilding. The most expensive piece of development policy was moving the capital from Lagos to the Federal Capital Territory (FCT).

Chapter 2 reviews how the Abuja master plan invoked McHarg’s ecological planning principles. More specifically, this section argues that nationalism in urban design led to the creation of ecological planning. Nigeria called on a consortium of three American firms to build the perfect city with WRMT leading the planning of Abuja.67

Chapter 3 picks up where WRMT transitioned off of the project; Kenzo Tange replaced them to implement sections of Abuja. Despite WRMT’s removal from the project, this chapter argues that the structures of the original master plan carried through. Simultaneously, the building of Abuja began using the original master plan. It was an incredibly costly project and on a scale previously unheard of on the continent of Africa.

Chapter 4 looks at how upon Abuja’s launch the city failed. Shortly after Abuja officially launched on December 12, 1991, housing and solid waste management systems gave out. Abuja was unable to support the vast majority of the population; Ian McHarg’s use of ecological planning ignored housing shortages, water scarcity, and traffic congestion.68 How the average Nigerian citizen lives in a post-conflict world was ignored.

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67 Andrew Leemer (architect) in discussion with Taylor A. Tobin, November, 2016.
Chapter 1: A Brutal War Creates a Foundation (1966-1976)

“The real tragedy of our postcolonial world is not that the majority of people had no say in whether or not they wanted this new world; rather, it is that the majority have not been given the tools to negotiate this new world.”

-Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie, Half of a Yellow Sun

Nigeria gained independence from the British on October 1, 1960, the twenty-sixth African nation to gain independence, and like others adopted a parliamentary system. In *A Personal History of Biafra* Chinua Achebe, a famous Igbo Nigerian recounts the years leading up to the Biafran War. He says “by independence in 1960, Igbo people dominated commerce and the public sector in a land where the three biggest ethnic groups (the Yoruba, Hausa, and Igbo) were jostling for supremacy.” While undeniably biased, Achebe’s pride in Igbo dominance speaks to the tension over Nigeria’s modernizing economy. In 1963, Nigeria redrafted the constitution ridding the British queen from the symbolic head of government and replacing her with an American style democracy.

Simultaneously, during this period other nations were investing in Nigeria. For example, the United States government through USAID gave significant grants to Michigan State, Wisconsin State, Kansas State, and Colorado State to establish colleges of agriculture in

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1 Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie, *Half of a Yellow Sun* (New York: Anchor, 2007), 129.
4 Falola and Oyeniyi, *Nigeria*, 68.
Nigeria. The grants resulted in the creation of the University of Ibadan, University of Nigeria-Nsukka, Ahmadu Bello University-Zaria, and the University of Ife. For Nigeria, this was a period of intense change. While the country received new investments, it only complicated a government that was still trying to find its footing. Although an irony, colonialism brought together Nigerian peoples under a common cause: freedom. Independence allowed for individualism; therefore tensions started to emerge as military leaders vied for power.

This chapter will explore how the Biafran War created the foundation for a new capital, Abuja, through five sections. The first three sections will review how the Biafran Civil War played out from three different angles. The first section examines it from a domestic perspective; the second section explores how the Cold War had an effect on the ostensible internal conflict, and the third section reviews how the conflict is also a humanitarian crisis. The fourth section looks at how petroleum revenues allowed Nigeria to take on development projects, an unusual proposition for many post-war countries. The fifth section looks at how Abuja became Nigeria’s largest post-war development project.

*The Path After Independence: A Civil War*

The 1966 military coup and countercoup turned ethnic tension into a full-blown civil war. *Newswatch* magazine, the most prestigious Nigerian magazine, produced a special issue of the

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6 “History: Nigeria.”
Biafran Civil War on January 6, 1986, agreeing with that evaluation. While *Newswatch* saw the coup as the primary creator of the Civil War, their opinion (or any media during this period) is controversial. Ndaeyo Uko writes that *Newswatch* controversially named General Ibrahim Babangida, a commander in the Biafran Civil War, its “Man of the Year” (1989). The Babangida regime lasted from 1985 until 1993. Under his rule, he wanted to turn the "press into a poodle," in large part because of the human rights violations he committed during the Civil War. *Newswatch* made the decision to feature him prominently potentially for press protection after a letter bomb killed their editor-in-chief. A free press was not a guarantee in Nigeria thus this thesis will not feature media articles prominently.

On January 15, 1966, five military leaders with the rank of major staged an initial coup. Kaduna Nzeogwu, E. Ifeajuna, D. Okafor, C. I. Anuforo, and A. Ademoyega led the coup with the goal of ending corruption. They murdered the Prime Minister, along with leaders in the western and northern regions. The coup provoked upheaval, with the majority of leaders now dead. Power fell to the next in the chain of command, Major General John Aguiyi-Ironsi. Aguiyi-Ironsi was Igbo, and to some, in the North, he appeared to be heavily favoring them. On May 34, 1966, he created Decree no. 34, which replaced the federal system with a unitary style of

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government. Many believed the change was a power move to place more Igbo officers in the government.

On July 29, 1966, northerners, fearing Igbo domination, launched a counter-coup. A group of military officers kidnapped and murdered Aguiyi-Irons. In the wake of the coup, for three days Nigeria lasted without a head of state. Finally, military leaders were appointed to each area of the country to appease the varied ethnic groups and provide representation including Colonel Ojukwu has been named Igbo military governor of the Eastern Region. The Nigerian government named Lieutenant-Colonel Gowon the Supreme Commander of the Armed Forces, and therefore the new head of state.

Within a few days of his appointment, Gowon repealed Decree no. 34 and returned the government back to a federal structure. Gowon attempted to reunify Nigeria under the reinstated system of governance, but Lieutenant Colonel Ojukwu questioned Gowon’s intentions. The constant change in leadership only intensified already existing ethnic tensions.

In the early months of 1967, Ojukwu began to make moves that pointed to eastern succession. In March, he announced that beginning in April the eastern region would run independently. Taxes, administrative duties, and finances would take part separately from the rest of the country. By now, Gowon had given up on the possibility of unity and placed sanctions

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on the Eastern Region. By May 30th, 1967 Colonel Ojukwu established the Republic of Biafra and therefore fully succeeded from Nigeria. His action officially commenced a civil war.\(^\text{18}\)

The war quickly intensified, and brutal killings began. Colonel Ojukwu led the Igbo people, refusing to concede and declaring complete separation from Nigeria. Colonel Gowon represented Nigeria as the head of state throughout the war.\(^\text{19}\) Ojukwu wrote in a public statement about the Igbo people, “in the main centres hideous massacres took place as mobs, sometimes led by army men and native police officers, raged through the Sabon Garis hacking, spearing, cutting, chopping and shooting any Easterners they came across.”\(^\text{20}\) Despite the murders, Igbo people continued to idolize Colonel Ojukwu’s leadership. Newswatch wrote, "he was eulogized and lionized by his fellow Igbos who hailed him as the new David set to liberate his people from Philistines."\(^\text{21}\) Over the course of the war, Biafra was cut off from its oil fields and therefore its primary source of revenue. Without the funds to import food, an estimated one million civilians died as a result of severe starvation.\(^\text{22}\) The Biafran stronghold weakened and on January 11, 1970, Nigerian forces captured the provincial capital of Owerri.\(^\text{23}\) Colonel Ojukwu was forced to flee to the Ivory Coast, and four days later, Biafra surrendered to Nigeria.\(^\text{24}\) This simplified review of the Biafran Civil War aligns with how the Nigerian media discussed the war but mistakenly paints it as solely domestic.

\(^\text{18}\) Toyin Falola, *Writing the Nigerian-Biafra War* (Suffolk: James Currey, 2016), 84.
\(^\text{19}\) Falola, *Writing the Nigerian-Biafra War*, 122.
\(^\text{24}\) Baxter, *Biafra the Nigerian Civil War*, 102.
A Proxy War?

Foreign forces heavily influenced the Biafran War because of Nigeria's oil reserves. Arua Oko Omaka writes about how foreign powers dragged the Civil War to unnecessary heights.\textsuperscript{25} The United Kingdom had just lost 25 percent of its oil supply because of the Six-Day War in the Middle East, and the country desperately wanted to increase their use of Nigerian oil from 10 percent to upwards of 25 percent.\textsuperscript{26} Shortly after the United Kingdom's announced their desire to increase investments in Nigeria, “Shell-BP announced a huge expansion scheme involving the investment of as much as 52 million” while the Civil War occurred.\textsuperscript{27} Shell-BP incorrectly assumed that if they (the corporate entity) stayed neutral, investments could continue. Initially, Shell-BP planned to keep the money in a trust with no Nigerian access during the conflict. Geographically this idea was impossible to execute because of the oil reserves location in Biafra, but the British government had signed contracts with Nigeria.\textsuperscript{28} Moreover, the majority of the Shell-BP staff were Igbo.\textsuperscript{29} Shell-BP decided to give Biafra a "token payment," but this was blocked months later when the British government wanted the amount to go to Nigeria.\textsuperscript{30} It was more important for the British to maintain a relationship with Nigeria than for Biafra to receive

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\textsuperscript{26} Arua Oko Omaka, \textit{The Biafran Humanitarian Crisis}, 50.

\textsuperscript{27} Omaka, \textit{The Biafran Humanitarian Crisis}, 50.

\textsuperscript{28} Omaka, \textit{The Biafran Humanitarian Crisis}, 50.


\textsuperscript{30} Raji, “Oil and Biafra, 16.
\end{flushleft}
its share. Shell-BP's decision made during the peak of the Civil War was intensely political because Biafra was cut off from their oil reserves, resulting in mass famine.

Moreover, other countries funded arms for Nigeria. The USSR supported Nigeria, and the United States stayed mostly neutral but still provided significant humanitarian aid. The USSR provided weapons to Nigeria in hopes of preventing a second Katanga. Katanga was a part of the Democratic Republic of the Congo and succeeded in 1960. Omaka writes that “by August 1967, the Soviet government started shipping weapons, including MIG 17 interceptor aircraft and Delfin light strike trainers, to Kano Airport” in Nigeria. The USSR was the first country to so transparently provide arms and technical support, which forced Biafra to create an arsenal. The USSRs arms support was their “biggest involvement in Africa affairs south of the Sahara after the downfall of Kwame Nkruma” in Ghana.

France then stepped in and began supporting Biafra. On September 9, 1968, at a press conference in Paris, De Gaulle said on the topic of Biafra “France, in this affair, has done what was possible to help Biafra. She has not performed the act which, to her, would be decisive, of recognizing the Biafran Republic, because she regards the gestation of Africa as a matter for the Africans first and foremost.” On November 20, 1968, an article in the Paris Match “claimed that it was an ‘open secret’ that French arms were reaching the Biafrans. Essentially, these arms

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31 Omaka, The Biafran Humanitarian Crisis, 50.
32 Omaka, The Biafran Humanitarian Crisis, 50.
33 Omaka, The Biafran Humanitarian Crisis, 51.
34 Omaka, The Biafran Humanitarian Crisis, 51.
35 Omaka, The Biafran Humanitarian Crisis, 50.
were flown into Biafra from neighboring Gabon and Portuguese territories under the cover of darkness.” For France to be making such a public statement within a year of the start of the Civil War is telling of their design to attain natural resources and compete with the USSR.

The First Advertised Humanitarian Crisis

While humanitarian aid became necessary towards the end of the war, it only added to the number of international players in a seemingly internal conflict. The outcry abroad to provide assistance was so intense that the concept of humanitarian aid developed during the Biafran war. William Haven North, the USAID's then Director of Central and West Africa Affairs, saw the public outcry as a tipping point. He said in the Foreign Affairs Oral History Collection interviews:

And with this disruption came the most extraordinary outcry in Europe and the U.S. to provide relief to those, particularly within Biafra, who were suffering and dying from famine and disease. I don’t believe there has been anything quite like the breadth and depth of feeling about a crisis of this kind before or since, although one might include the African-wide famines, or the Somalia and Bosnia crises as comparable—although these crises don’t seem to have the breadth and intensity of feeling that we experienced during the Biafran affair.

In the way that the Vietnam War was the first televised war, Biafra was the first publicized humanitarian crisis (see Figure G for a widely publicized image of starving children in August 1968).

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39 North, interview by the United States Foreign Assistance Oral History Program.
The crisis reached its penultimate point when John Lennon returned his Member of the Most Excellent Order of the British Empire (MBE) because of the Civil War. John Lennon returned the award in 1969, writing “I am returning this MBE in protest against Britain’s involvement in the Nigeria-Biafra thing.” Biafra was now embedded into the popular culture far before the days of Live Aid aligned celebrity with a cause. It would take something beyond national reconciliation for Nigeria to change its public perception, especially among western nations.

*Money from Oil Is Not That Simple*

Biafra surrendered on January 15, 1970, bringing Nigeria into a period of reconciliation. The Head of State Yakubu Gowon marked off this period with his now famed speech, “The Dawn of National Reconciliation” on the day of surrender. Gowon now had to not only unify a country but rebuild its infrastructure after a brutal war. His speech was meant to bring about feelings of nationalism, the first step of unification just moments after the war ended. He spoke of a new Nigeria; “the tragic chapter of violence is just ended. We are the dawn of national reconciliation. Once again, we have an opportunity to build a new nation.”

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41. Yakubu Gowon speech paints him in a positive light, but he is a controversial figure in Nigeria. In a *History of Nigeria*, Toyin Falola and Matthew M. Heaton write, “on the political level, however, these tensions were overshadowed by the fact that the military remained in power after the war. Committed to unity and order, the military government was by no means democratic. In fact, the military learned that it could ignore the public almost completely in the years after the civil war, becoming every bit corrupt.”

phrase, “once again” refers to Nigeria’s independence just ten years earlier. Within a decade, Nigeria had to rebuild twice. Gowon’s speech was also poignantly marked with economic references

I am happy that despite the war, Nigeria has maintained a strong and expanding economy. Plans are also far advance for faster economic modernization. Our enormous material resources and our large dynamic population will make this possible. We are pledge to ensure rapid development for the benefit of the Nigerian people themselves. It will be much easier to achieve reconciliation and reintegration in increasing prosperity.44

The bulk of Nigeria’s material resources was crude oil. Beginning in 1938, while still under colonial rule, Shell and British Petroleum (BP) received a license to look for oil throughout the country.45 In 1956, Shell D’Arch drilled for oil successfully at Oloibiri.46 Two years later, Nigeria successfully shipped crude oil for the first time.47 Shortly after those other corporations began drilling including Texaco Overseas, Elf, and Nigeria Agip Oil Company.48

By 1970, Nigeria had a significant contingent of companies vying for their oil resources.49 While petroleum provided incredible opportunities for the country’s revenue stream, it simultaneously made it ground zero for corruption. Within ten years, Nigeria had achieved independence, undergone a civil war, run through multiple leaders, and increased their dependence on natural resources. It should then be of little surprise that shortly after his speech,

44 Gowon, “Declaring a Twelve State Structure for Nigeria.”
47 “History of the Nigerian Petroleum Industry.”
48 “History of the Nigerian Petroleum Industry.”
49 “History of the Nigerian Petroleum Industry.”
Gowon nationalized oil. The act of nationalizing an industry both redirects the bulk of profits and the control back to the government. Nationalization appeared to provide a path towards stability.

Nigeria nationalized oil through multiple steps, including joining the Organization of Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC) in 1970.\(^5\) Founded in 1960 during the Baghdad Conference, OPEC is an intergovernmental organization.\(^5\) Its mission is that “through collective action, petroleum producing countries can achieve the best possible prices and policies.”\(^5\)

Moreover, OPEC had strict requirements for member nations. They required members to control 51% of their oil and take part in all areas of the industry.\(^5\) Therefore, Nigeria created a nationalized oil company, or a government holding group, called the Nigerian National Oil Company (NNOC) and the company took over British Petroleum's (BP) interests.\(^\) The redirected profits gave Nigeria newfound stability.

Through the 1973 oil shocks, Nigeria experienced enormous profits from crude oil. The Organization of Arab Petroleum Exporting Countries (OAPEC), an offshoot of OPEC, met on October 16, 1973, to put an embargo on crude oil shipments to countries that were supporting Israel during the Yom Kippur War.\(^5\) OAPEC's embargo caused a significant increase in oil

\(^{50}\) “Brief History,” OPEC, accessed April 27, 2017.
\(^{51}\) “Brief History.”
\(^{52}\) “Brief History.”
\(^{54}\) Genova and Falola, "Oil in Nigeria: A Bibliographical Reconnaissance," 133-56.
\(^{55}\) The Yom Kippur War (also referred to as the 1973 Arab–Israeli War) lasted from October 6 - October 25th, 1973. The war was fought between a group of Arab states and Israel, with a central point of tension being the reopening of the Suez Canal.

prices thereby dictating how the market should function well passed when the embargo ended in March 1974. Arthur Burns, then Chairman of the Federal Reserve, described the ramifications: “manipulation of oil prices and supplies by the oil-exporting countries came at a most inopportune time for the United States. In the middle of 1973, wholesale prices of industrial commodities were already rising at an annual rate of more than 10 per cent...and many major industrial materials were in extremely short supply.” Simply put, the oil shocks had global ramifications (see Figure H for an image of the gas shortages in the United States). The increase in prices also had benefits for some. Nigeria was now experiencing previously unheard of petroleum revenues.

The increase in oil revenues led to rampant government corruption. Gowon organized a national census in 1973, to create a way to distribute resources according to population size. The results of the census were outlandish: Nigeria’s population had supposedly grown 43% in ten years. Rather than reorganizing the census, Gowon rejected the results. The general population viewed this action as a sign of Gowon’s hesitation to begin the democratization process. Moreover, in 1974 two of his comrades were involved in corruption scandals. Gowon refused to fire them, and allowed corruption to continue in his cabinet. On July 29th, 1975, while Gowon was at the OAU summit in Uganda the military staged a coup, primarily army officers

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56 Mohammed E. Ahari, "OPEC," 111-32.
58 Falola and Heaton, A History of Nigeria, 182.
59 Falola and Heaton, A History of Nigeria, 182.
60 Falola and Heaton, A History of Nigeria, 186.
from the north. In the wee hours of the morning, the military cut off external communications, suspended all Nigeria Airway flights, and surrounded the Lagos airport. Garba announced the coup over the national radio, and just like that, Nigeria ushered in a new government. Eventually, word got back to Gowon about the coup at the OAU summit. He attempted to bring the government back together, but upon realizing that was impossible, he accepted defeat and called a press conference. He opened with a simple line: “All the world’s a stage, and all the men and women merely players. They have their exits and their entrances and one man in his time plays many parts.”

He summarized his nine years of leadership through William Shakespeare’s *As You Like It*. After all, Gowon entered and exited office through a coup. He ended his speech with a few parting words to Nigeria:

As a Nigerian, I am prepared to serve my country in any capacity, which my country may consider appropriate. I am a professional soldier, and I can do any duty that I am called upon to do. May I take this opportunity to thank all the people of Nigeria and friends of Nigeria for the support and cooperation that you all gave me during my tenure of office and call upon all of you to give the new government of our nation the same support and cooperation in the interest of our beloved country. Long live one united, happy and prosperous Nigeria. Long live the Organization of African Unity. May God bless you all.

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64 Siollun, *Oil, Politics and Violence*, 181.
Gowon then went from Uganda to London where he joined his wife Victoria, the former First Lady of Nigeria. She became a nurse, and he enrolled in classes at Warwick University. An image of him sitting with university students in the cafeteria, just months after the coup, was sensationalized (see Figure I for said image). He sits quietly among a group of students who appear to care more about their lunches than the world leader. The image is representative of 1975 Nigeria. They were still shuffling through playbooks, unsure of how to handle a still alive ex-president. He was on his own.

*New Beginnings: Decree No. 6*

Just one plane was allowed to fly into Nigeria amidst the coup, the plane carrying Murtala Muhammed. Muhammad was Machiavellian, a hero from the Biafran Civil War and Gowon’s main adversary. Revered by many, he was chosen by the leaders of the coup to be the next head of state. Before taking office, Muhammad was the communications minister. He assumed office on July 29, 1975, the same day as the coup.

General Mohammed entered office with the Civil War now as a piece of history but still cemented in people's minds. Therefore, he was able to create sets of reforms to assist the transition to civilian rule. The influx of capital from the oil boom gave him an opportunity to

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67 Philip, “Yakubu Gowon, Nigeria's Wartime Leader.”
pursue development projects starting on his first day of office. Mohammed created a “Committee of the Location of the Federal Capital” on August 9.  

Mohammed required the committee to:

(i) examine the dual role of Lagos as a Federal and State Capital and advise on the desirability or otherwise of Lagos retaining that role; (ii) in the event of the committee finding that Lagos is unsuitable for such a role to recommend which of the two Governments (Federal or State) should move to a new capital; (iii) in the event of the committee finding that the Federal capital should move out of Lagos to recommend suitable alternative locations having regard to the end for easy accessibility to and from every part of the Federation and (iv) to examine all other relevant factors which will assist the Federal Military Government in arriving at the right decision.

The committee produced a report published on December 20th, 1975. The report did not include plans for the future city but rather reasons for moving it, seeing the (unplanned) future city as a far greater alternative to the crowded Lagos. The Nigerian government accepted the panel's report with few alterations. On February 4th, 1976 it was turned into the Federal Capital Territory Act (No.6) of 1976.

The Decree formed the Federal Capital Development Authority (FCDA), a new federal agency in Nigeria. In under six months, General Murtala Muhammed made the decision to move the capital. Once the concept was in motion, there was little stopping it in part because the Act gave the newly formed government agency complete oversight and financial control over the project. A new capital was set into motion.

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Chapter 2: Planning the “Neutral” Capital (1976-1979)

“It was the first city to be designed to go from 300 people to over 1 million”
-David Hamme, Project Manager for WRMT

Ten days after General Murtala Muhammed signed the Act to create the federal capital territory, he was killed in a coup led by Lieutenant Colonel Buka Suka Dimka. He was assassinated on February 13, 1976, having served just six months. Despite his short term, Mohammed was a popular leader, and the Act was now not only signed into government but considered part of his legacy. Abuja was going to be created.

Lieutenant General Olusegun Obasanjo, Mohammed's second in command, became the head of state. By Nigerian standards, the transition to leadership was peaceful. Today, many scholars write about the two regimes as one, writing simply the "Mohammed/Obasanjo regime." Beyond writing the Decree for Abuja, the regime made other efforts to improve nationalism in the country. Obasanjo created seven new states to promote sub-nationalism. His action brought the total number of states to nineteen, in a country about twice the size of California. Every state lay claim to petroleum revenues. Therefore, more states were equated with a better division of resources.

In Nigeria, the general population defines nationalism as believing in the country’s unity and acting in the interest of that unity. It is about each Nigerian laying claim to the identity as a

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1 David Hamme (architect) in discussion with Taylor A. Tobin.
3 Falola and Heaton, A History of Nigeria, 191.
4 Falola and Heaton, A History of Nigeria, 191.
point of pride, separate from their colonial history. Nigeria continued to receive enormous profits from petroleum through 1978, for a period it seemed like anything was possible for the western African nation. In 1978, Nigeria fell from producing 2.1 million barrels per day (BPD) to 1.5 million BPD.\(^5\) Not yet fearful of a day without petroleum revenues, Obasanjo only introduced small-scale austerity measures.\(^6\) While revenue continued to decrease, Obasanjo oversaw the first elections. In 1979, Alhaji Shehu Shagari came to power through an election. The four-year constitution drafting process, started by Mohammed, created the voting process. The drafted constitution was voted on in 1978 by the Constituent Assembly, which then led to the federal elections. Shagari entered office with the powers at play more defined than ever.

This chapter will look at how the Abuja master plan was created through five sections. The first section will look at how nationalism and urban design became intertwined, specifically through the Athens Charter and Harvard’s School of Design. The second section will look at how Ian McHarg, part of WRMT, created ecological planning using the urban design foundation he learned while attending Harvard. The third section will look at how WRMT was able to plan Abuja. The fourth section will review their master plan for the new nationalistic capital. Finally, the fifth section will look at fundamental failings in the master plan through the presence of colonialism in the urban form.

The Foundations of Nationalism in Design

The creation of new capital cities in post-colonial countries was a typical trajectory for many African nations. The concept of a city without divisions was popular; both Tanzania and the Ivory Coast moved their capitals in the years following independence. Tanzania moved their capital from Dar es Salaam to Dodoma, to remove itself from the legacy of slavery. The city was designed by American architects, with the master plan submitted by James Rossant in 1986. Similar to other capital cities, Dodoma's master plan has a long rectangular road marking off the central government area (see Figure J for the master plan drawing). Dodoma struggled to reach Rossant's planned dreams because of colonialism. A city would never erase what Tanzania inherited before launching Dodoma. Paul Nugent, a historian, describes this concept writing, "the inheritance consisted both of what we left behind when the tides of empire receded and the configurations which emerged in the course of achieving liberation. For that reason, decolonization could never have simply been the negation of colonization—a return to what existed before."

Benedict Anderson created the theory of an “imagined community” to explain how nationalism exists in cities. His theory also works to explain how citizens can adopt a planned city and call it their center for national pride. Anderson writes, "it is imagined because the members of even the smallest nation will never know most of their fellow-members, meet them, 

8 “Projects: Dodoma (Tanzania)”
or even hear of them, yet in the minds of each lives the image of their communion.\textsuperscript{11} Anderson continues to explain nationalism through the example of the Unknown Soldier, a structure that exists in Abuja. Anderson remarks how "the public ceremonial reverence accorded these monuments precisely because they are either deliberately empty or no one knows who lies inside them, has no true precedents in earlier times" and yet thousands of nations hold such tombs.\textsuperscript{12} Anderson’s theory relies on the belief that citizens feel a connection to their fellow citizens.

Nationalism relies on a pre-existing condition: citizenship. What happens then when nationalism has to be developed simultaneously while a country is trying to recreate itself? Before the post-colonial period across the continent of Africa in the 1960s, academics had not seen this pattern. The African studies professor Benyamin Neuberger writes about this period and how it is far different than any previous model seen in a set of nations.\textsuperscript{13} As Neuberger writes

\begin{quote}
African statesman and nation builders are in a very different situation, for they operate in an age in which nationalism has become a major ideology. Africa’s leaders consciously aim to build nations on the foundation of the existing states. While for the absolute monarchs of Europe, the nation-state was a product or byproduct of policy, for African leaders it is a target of policy.\textsuperscript{14}
\end{quote}

Nationalism as a deliberate policy is incredibly foreign to most Americans where the feeling of patriotism just exists. Nationalism is an inherent bond—it can make someone help a stranger or stop on the street in a foreign country to discuss their home state.

\textsuperscript{11} Anderson, \textit{Imagined Communities}, 8.
\textsuperscript{12} Anderson, \textit{Imagined Communities}, 9.
\textsuperscript{14} Hutchinson and Smith, \textit{Nationalism}, 65.
African leaders fell to architecture because it is so difficult to create nationalism through policy. Either through monument building or the creation of new states, these were inorganic policies meant to create organic emotional ties. Nationalism is a connector when used correctly. The concept of creating nationalism is incredibly difficult but has historical precedents, most notably through Washington D.C.\(^{15}\) Charles-Édouard Jeanneret, known colloquially as Le Corbusier, was one of the first architects to see building as both an economic and political tool.\(^{16}\) In 1928, he was able to circulate his ideas through the association Congrès internationaux d'architecture moderne (CIAM). Sigfried Giedion founded CIAM in Switzerland in 1928 to bring together architects to reframe how planners create the contemporary city.\(^{17}\) A group devoted to urban planning issues was highly unusual at the time. The CIAM valued “functional approaches” above all else.\(^{18}\) Their ideas created a set of architectural standards. Nigeria, Côte d'Ivoire, and Morocco all used elements of their European-inspired ideology as a way to build national identity.

Through manifestos like *The Athens Charter*, the CIAM presented their newfound analysis on town planning. *The Athens Charter* was created during the CIAMs fourth congress (CIAM IV) held from July 29 through August 14, 1933.\(^{19}\) While the document was for intents and purposes created in 1933, Le Corbusier was charged with distribution. He waited till 1943 to

\(^{15}\) C. M Harris, “Washington's Gamble,” 530.
publish the document in part because of the beginnings of World War II. The Athens Charter laid out four functions which essentially created the standard for modern architecture.\textsuperscript{20}

Urbanism has four principal functions. First, to assure mankind of sound and healthy lodging, that is to say, places in which space, fresh air, and sunshine — those three essential conditions of nature — are abundantly available. Second, to organize places of work in such a way that instead of being a painful subjugation, work will once more regain its character as a natural human activity. Third, to set up the facilities necessary to the sound use of leisure time, making it productive and beneficial. And fourth, to establish links between these different organizations by means of a traffic network that provides the necessary connections while respecting the prerogatives of each element.\textsuperscript{21}

After the Charter had been published, it was evident the CIAM purposely excluded traditional urban formalism. They replaced the “existing urban pattern in favor of widely spaced high-rises set in greenery along the lines laid down by Gropius and Le Corbusier and shared by Neutra, Bourgeois, and the other members of the CIAM.”\textsuperscript{22} Mumford is an urban design historian who traces the impact of the CIAMs discourse.

While Walter Gropius played a crucial role in the CIAM, he is most profoundly well known for founding the Bauhaus movement. He put together two schools—the Weimar Academy of Arts and the Weimar School of Arts and Crafts—to create the Bauhaus school, which formed the architectural style.\textsuperscript{23} Bauhaus is a form defined by geometrical shapes, primary colors, smooth lines, and modern materials.\textsuperscript{24} In 1928, Gropius stepped down as director of the


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school. He continued to practice on his own until he fled Germany in 1937. After fleeing Germany during World War II, he became a professor of architecture at Harvard.\textsuperscript{25} Multiple renowned architects became professors at Harvard during World War II, creating a medley of architectural thought in Cambridge. Gropius became chair of the architecture department in 1938 and held that spot till he retired in 1952. One of his students was Ian McHarg. There he studied landscape architecture, at a time when Bauhaus dominated the school.\textsuperscript{26} His classes centered on the four functions of the modern city and Gropius's more theoretical take on architecture. McHarg eventually went on to earn B.L.A. in 1949, a M.L.A. in 1950, and a master's degree in city planning in 1951 at Harvard.\textsuperscript{27} After Harvard, McHarg went to the University of Pennsylvania to teach architecture.\textsuperscript{28} He taught from 1954 through 2001 there he developed theories on the foundation of Gropius’ methodologies.

McHarg was an advocate of cities, which placed him within the same circles as urban influencers like Jane Jacobs. A few years into his career at the University of Pennsylvania he wrote \textit{The Humane City: Must the Man of Distinction Always Move to the Suburbs}?\textsuperscript{29} He argued the city should be the place where the greatest aspects of civilization exist, asking "why to allow

\textsuperscript{25} Parker, \textit{Urban Theory and the Urban Experience}, 63.
\textsuperscript{26} Frederick R. Steiner, \textit{Design for a Vulnerable Planet} (Austin: University of Texas Press, 2011), 69.
\textsuperscript{28} Steiner, Frederick R. \textit{Design for a Vulnerable Planet}, 70.
our derelict and ugly cities to become our memorials?" McHarg wrote the piece in 1958 when urban plight was considered a significant issue as the middle class relocated to suburbia.

McHarg was arguing for a new definition of cities, where every nation reveres their cities. He wrote The Humane City with the importance of Federal-Aid Highway Act of 1956's in mind. Two years before McHarg's writing, President Dwight D. Eisenhower signed the bill into law on June 29, 1956, and with that, the interstate highway system expanded to 41,000 miles of road. The transformative act created a network and re-envisioned how Americans travel, with few Americans realizing the concept dates back to The Athens Charter. The CIAM wrote in the Charter that “the city and its region must be equipped with a road network that incorporates modern traffic techniques and is directly proportionate to its purposes and usage… Traffic thus regulated becomes a steady function, which puts no constraint on the structure of either habitation or places of work.” The Federal-Aid Highway Act was an urban planners dream. For a brief moment, the Act placed greater importance on the formation of the city.

The Creation of Ecological Planning

Ian McHarg emerged from urban theorism to a leading architect through his theory, ecological planning. The environmental movement emerged alongside McHarg. In 1962, Rachel Carson published Silent Spring, marking the start of environmental awareness among the general

population. Alongside his Harvard classmate planner-architect David A. Wallace he created an architecture firm. Shortly after, William H. Roberts and Thomas A. Todd joined the mix, and WRMT formally launched in Philadelphia. Within six years, McHarg published Design with Nature (1969). The book described ecological planning, a method that breaks down a region ecologically or creates “map overlays.” It is a concept that would lay the foundation for geographic information systems (GIS).33

In Design with Nature McHarg analyzes the Richmond Parkway, a highway development (see Figure K includes a portion of the maps that show McHarg’s overlays). As McHarg writes, “the method is explicit in the identification and ranking of physiographic opportunities and limitations to a highway corridor.”34 His analyses of the Richmond Parkway allow governments to make a decision based on what will most properly align with the surroundings.

McHarg believed there were six necessary elements to accomplish proper ecological planning. The set of requirements for map overlays is a definition of sorts. The set is as follows: "1. Ecosystem Inventory 2. Description of natural processes 3. Identification of limiting factors 4. Attribution of value 5. Determination of prohibitions and permissiveness to change 6. Identification of indicators of stability or instability.”35 This analysis is seen throughout multiple WRMT master plans. His set of requirements provided a way to interact with the physical world

33 “A geographic information system (GIS) is a computer system for capturing, storing, checking, and displaying data related to positions on Earth's surface. GIS can show many different kinds of data on one map. This enables people to see, analyze, and understand patterns and relationships more easily. "GIS (geographic Information System),” National Geographic Society, last modified October 09, 2012, accessed April 27, 2017, http://www.nationalgeographic.org/encyclopedia/geographic-information-system-gis/.
34 McHarg, Design with Nature, 22.
as planners. His set of requirements fits into the functionality for which the Bauhaus school and the Athens Charter called to.

Simultaneously, McHarg became the chair of landscape design at the University of Pennsylvania. It was there that he honed his methods, a practice that would become central to both the firm’s existence and American environmental policy. He applied ecological planning to highway creation, beyond just his writing in Design with Nature.\(^{36}\) The work evolved into his 1968 work, A Comprehensive Highway Route Selection Method.\(^{37}\) McHarg laid the foundation for the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) of 1969. NEPA required federal agencies to “utilize a systematic, interdisciplinary approach which will ensure the integrated use of the natural and social sciences and the environmental design arts in planning and in decision making which will have an impact on mans environment.”\(^{38}\) Because of McHarg’s work, ecological planning was now built into policy.

WRMT’s New Client: Abuja

WRMT found their next client through a phone call. Abraam Krushkhov, a colleague from Archisystems International, called Thomas Todd in September 1976. Archisystems International is a subsidiary of the Howard Hughes Corporation.\(^{39}\) According to Todd, Krushkhov’s then “agent in West Africa had gotten an advertisement, published by the Nigerian

\(^{36}\) McHarg and Steiner, To Heal the Earth, 221.
\(^{37}\) McHarg and Steiner, To Heal the Earth, 268.
\(^{38}\) McHarg and Steiner, To Heal the Earth, 227.
\(^{39}\) The Howard Hughes Corporation is a large commercial real estate company in the United States. Their portfolio includes master planned communities as well as other assets.
Federal Capital Development Authority, asking consultant candidates to submit qualifying credentials for the preparation of the master plan for the new capital city of Nigeria.” Todd flew alone to Nigeria to present on their proposed team. Shortly after his presentation, WRMT received a call that they had won the competition with Todd as the lead organizer for the project. The swapping of project heads was typical for WRMT; Todd notes the ultimate objective was to be multi-disciplinary.

While landscape architecture grounded their practice, the four architects allowed WRMT to tackle projects not just in the realm of a landscape architect. Traditionally, landscape architect and urban planner are not interchangeable titles. The practices style also meant that WRMT was in a position to lead multiple teams.

One of WRMT’s first examples of ecological planning at work is seen through their 1976 project titled, Toward A Comprehensive Landscape Plan for Washington D.C. Working alongside D.C. government, the plan was created to figure out a method to allow the city to create a “comprehensive landscape plan.” The eventual document was essentially a plan to create another plan. While that may sound seemingly insignificant, the plan dictated the methods Washington D.C. should follow. Sticking within the guise of Design with Nature, the plan naturally pushed the envelope. Throughout the plan, WRMT has a clear respect for L’Enfant’s

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40 Elleh, Architecture and Politics in Nigeria, 175.
42 Elleh, Architecture and Politics in Nigeria, 175.
original plan, at times even replacing Washington D.C. with “the L’Enfant City.”\textsuperscript{45} The plan analyzes both the natural landscape and the physical buildings, proving a two-pronged analysis (see Figure L for a WRMT’s drawing of the Capitol using their recommended changes). Within the first two pages under a section titled “Work Program to Undertake Comprehensive Landscape Plan” lies a list of seven requirements that is an almost copy to McHarg’s original list in Design with Nature.\textsuperscript{46}

WRMT’s continuous use of McHarg’s “definition” of ecological planning through the Washington D.C. plan is a clear indicator of his leadership within the firm. The plan concluded with multiple recommendations and next steps for Washington. The most significant recommendation was the emphasis on protection. WRMT wrote, “the plan will locate and describe the most critical and expressive elements of natural identity, as continuous structure, which should be preserved, extended or enhanced. These could be protected by Federal or District policies.”\textsuperscript{47} Just six years into the creation of the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), WRMT’s recommendation was radical. Ecological planning would come to define WRMT.

The Nigerian government choose WRMT to lead the American team of architects for Abuja, in part because of their work in Washington D.C. The American team was also in charge of creating the master plan for the soon to be built capital. In essence, WRMT set the design foundation for Abuja. The consortium of architects was known as the International Planning

\textsuperscript{45} Wallace, McHarg, Roberts, and Todd, Toward a Comprehensive Landscape Plan for Washington, D.C., 3.
\textsuperscript{46} Wallace, McHarg, Roberts, and Todd, Toward a Comprehensive Landscape Plan for Washington, D.C., 2.
\textsuperscript{47} Wallace, McHarg, Roberts, and Todd, Toward a Comprehensive Landscape Plan for Washington, D.C., 2.
Associates (IPA). In addition to WRMT, Archisystems International and the Planning Research Corporation narrowed out the team of planners. Planning Research Corporation, according to Richard Bartholomew, handled the logistics and management aspects. While Archisystems International placed the call to WRMT, they were not the leaders on the project. The Nigerian government officially commissioned IPA in June 1977 and given just eighteen months to plan the city of the future.

While WRMT worked on the master plan for the Federal Capital Territory or FCT, Nigeria picked the name for the capital. The city was named Abuja, after the smaller city nearby. Therefore, the original Abuja was renamed Suleja. The city of Abuja sits within the Federal Capital Territory, an 8,000-square-kilometer area. While colloquially Federal Capital Territory (FCT) and Abuja are used interchangeably, the former is the territory that houses the city. Unlike Washington D.C., there is land that sits outside of Abuja (see Figure M for a map of the FCT).

The First Master Plan

The Report No. 2: Site Evaluation and Site Selection (1978) was crucial in deciding how Abuja would be formed. The document was part of the larger master plan section of documents. Ian McHarg led the work for the report, with the main purpose of it to conduct their technical review of the land using ecological planning tools. Because the Federal Capital

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Territory was such a large piece of land, the planners were left with the decision of where to place the city. Therefore, regardless of any future plans, McHarg's work would continue to matter. They choose the Gwagwa Plains within the Federal Capital Territory as the location of Abuja because of its ecology. As IPA writes, “the dominant park savanna vegetation is ideal for a Capital City landscape. Riverine complex and rainforest provide opportunities for natural erosion control, buffer zone, and limited timber and fuel.” Topographic diversity in the area was the key reason for choosing the location. The Nigerian government accepted the IPA’s recommendation without hesitation.

McHarg was the first person to map out the Federal Capital Territory through *Report No. 2: Site Evaluation and Site Selection*. Construction companies later used his maps (see Figure N for one of McHarg’s maps). Throughout the report, the IPA uses Lynch's "imageability" to describe the type of city they wanted to create. As they write "in almost all cases, capital-city design in the past has compromised efficiency or flexibility to achieve a strong order of symbolic meaning to government functions.” Using ecological planning purposes, the IPA believed they could create a city that is the exception to that rule. McHarg mapped out multiple elements of the area including bedrock geology, elevation, slope, and drainage density. He believed diversity of ecology in the area could provide the necessary flexibility. If that were to fail, the IPA listed four ways the city could later overcome problems. The four reasons were: overbuilding,

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supplementation and replication, rebuilding, and new technology. While McHarg's maps were extensive, the reasoning for choosing the Gwagwa Plains fell flat. Beyond his maps and base level evaluations, few extensive tests were done.

In addition to the site evaluation report and the master plan, the IPA put forth four other reports. The reports were Report No. 1: Capital Development Program, Report No. 3: Draft Regional Plan, Report No. 4: Draft Capital City Plan, and Report No. 5: Design and Development Plan. Report No. 1 listed out the project planning phases, later repeated in the master plan (see Figure O for an image of the three planning phases from the master plan). These phases were followed throughout construction and by 1990 Abuja had reached Phase 3. Report No. 3 and No. 4 were part of the larger master plan document. Report No. 5 was listed as more of a design manual.

The Master Plan for the Capital City followed a set of design principles throughout the plan. The IPA wanted to include a “contiguous urban mass,” a central government area rather than multiple areas throughout the city, a central area near Aso rock, and the residential sectors on either side of the central area. Together these forms would create a unified capital that represented Nigeria. The vast majority of their master plan focused in on the central area of Abuja. The main pieces of the federal government sat in the central area.

56 Wallace, McHarg, Roberts, and Todd, Master Plan for the Capital City, 2.
57 Wallace, McHarg, Roberts, and Todd, Master Plan for the Capital City, 2.
58 Wallace, McHarg, Roberts, and Todd, Master Plan for the Capital City, 2.
59 Wallace, McHarg, Roberts, and Todd, Master Plan for the Capital City, 2.
60 Wallace, McHarg, Roberts, and Todd, Master Plan for the Capital City, 5.
The Central Area of the Capital City is composed of three major elements organized on an axis directed toward Aso Hill and at right angles to the two transportation corridors and the parkway. The three elements consist of the seat of Federal Government and its ministries, lying closest to Aso Hill; the commercial center of the City along an extension of the Federal core mall; and the major institutional center of the City directly to the southwest.  

The focus on Aso Rock was because of McHarg’s ecological planning principles. It flanks the city in a similar way the Parthenon overlooks Athens. Aso Rock is imposing and beautiful but prior to Abuja’s creation held little meaning to the average Nigerian. McHarg choose for Aso Rock to become a symbol of the capital. It was a preservation tactic because while Aso Rock sits within the city the area around it is difficult to build near. In addition, 32% of land area in Abuja was saved for open and parks which is very unlike most African cities. McHarg used his ecological planning principles to impact an ideology that is foreign to most Nigerians.

Moreover, the assumption that Abuja’s central area represents democracy comes from a familiarity with Washington D.C. WRMT had just finished their work on Washington D.C., therefore it is of little surprise that Abuja so closely assembled America’s capital. IPA writes “it is conceived as being less formal than other well-known governmental open spaces such as the mall in Washington, D.C. It is intended to serve as the chief organizing space in the Governmental area of the City and symbolic of the unity of the nation.” Washington D.C. is a model city but Nigeria did not need another Washington D.C. in order to create nationalism. Nigeria needed IPA to be their L’Enfant who would form a unique layout.

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Presented in 1978, the plan was meant to last through 2003.\textsuperscript{65} IPA planned on the central area reaching completion far before the other pieces of Abuja. IPA wrote “the design objective is to create early in the life of the new Capital a center by concentrating facilities along the spine to convey a sense of completeness and urbanity even though large parts of the Central Area would remain unbuilt for some time.”\textsuperscript{66} Their decision to have the Central Area completed prior to the other areas make sense. Construction projects are formed in phases. That said, to enter into a plan knowing much of the city would not be built “for some time” is foolish. The IPA worked out of Lagos and understood that in order for Nigeria to create a new capital city, the timeline had to be short. Nigeria’s government and realities changed daily.

Later, Thomas Todd when discussing the plan said “I should note that one of the basic objectives of WRT has always been to try to organize the succession of projects so that one becomes the basis for the next. Ultimately the objective is to begin to have a comprehensive effect.”\textsuperscript{67} While it is incredibly common for architects to want to have a symbiotic profile of work, the vast majority of WRMT’s work was in the United State. Therefore, the very notion that Abuja’s master plan should fit within their larger body of work implies a bias for western planning and a disregard to how Nigerians live. The Nigerian government wanted a capital akin to Washington D.C., and therefore fully accepted the plan.

\textsuperscript{65} Wallace, McHarg, Roberts, and Todd, \textit{Master Plan for the Capital City}, 16.
\textsuperscript{66} Wallace, McHarg, Roberts, and Todd, \textit{Master Plan for the Capital City}, 16.
\textsuperscript{67} Elleh, \textit{Architecture and Politics in Nigeria}, 158.
Chapter 3: Building the Neutral Capital (1979-1990)

“If anyone says that Kenzo Tange designed Nigeria’s new capital city, you can say emphatically that Kenzo Tange did not design Abuja. Kenzo Tange was invited after to detail our design for the Central Area of the City”  
-Thomas Todd, 2007  
Founding Member of WRMT

Shagari entered office on October 1st, 1979. His term marked the end of military rule in Nigeria. For thirteen years Nigerians were unsure if the entering democracy was possible. Unfortunately, Shagari struggled to set a clear agenda. He continued the development projects started by the first regime. Shagari also added new projects, including a large-scale federal housing development.  
He also tried to add a new federal radio and television station. Simultaneously, the Nigerian government continued to build the Federal Capital Territory.  
Because of the sheer amount of projects and little oversight, corruption once again seeped back into the government. The examples of corruption started to become outrageous. For example, from April 1979-December 1980, a manager in the Nigerian National Supply company stole 1.9 million.

Widespread corruption combined with a drop in oil prices cause significant problems for Shagari's term. While prices dipped in 1978, the price drop in 1981 threw Nigeria into a recession that lasted a decade. In 1980 the oil revenues were N12.3 billion and declined to N7.3 billion.

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68 Elleh, Architecture and Politics in Nigeria, 266.  
69 Falola and Heaton, A History of Nigeria, 203.  
70 Falola and Heaton, A History of Nigeria, 203.  
71 Falola and Heaton, A History of Nigeria, 203.
billion in 1983.\textsuperscript{72} Rather than trying to restructure the government or scale back on development contracts, instead, Shagari sought out aid to replace the drop in revenues. The federal government took out just over $4 million in foreign aid from the International Monetary Fund (IMF).\textsuperscript{73} In addition, Shagari borrowed N400 million from Saudi Arabia.\textsuperscript{74} Borrowing had massive effects on the economy, as Toyin Falola and Matthew M. Heaton describe, "Nigeria's foreign reserves declined from N5.462 billion to just N.798.5 million, not even enough to cover one month's imports in 1983, while external debt doubled, growing from roughly $9 billion in 1980 to $18 billion by 1983."\textsuperscript{75} Inflation skyrocketed, and many Nigerians lost their jobs, resulting in an increase in crime and the creation of an extensive black market.

Shagari desperately searched for a scapegoat, a way to prove that the government was still functioning. He expelled 2 million African workers, primarily Ghanaians, who Nigerians blamed for taking unskilled labor away from the working class. Through this action, Nigeria violated the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS), which allowed “the free movement of goods and person between ECOWAS member states.”\textsuperscript{76} The expulsion provided little relief, and thousands of workers continued to go on strike like it was part of their job description.

Simultaneously, the religious tension was appearing in Nigeria in new ways. The government was debating whether to include \textit{shari’a} law in Nigeria, with Christians vehemently

\begin{itemize}
\item\textsuperscript{72} Falola and Heaton, \textit{A History of Nigeria}, 204.
\item\textsuperscript{73} Falola and Heaton, \textit{A History of Nigeria}, 204.
\item\textsuperscript{74} Falola and Heaton, \textit{A History of Nigeria}, 204.
\item\textsuperscript{75} Falola and Heaton, \textit{A History of Nigeria}, 204.
\item\textsuperscript{76} Falola and Heaton, \textit{A History of Nigeria}, 204.
\end{itemize}
opposed. Ultimately, the government decided that local shari’a courts could exist in primarily Muslim areas.\textsuperscript{77} If any of those cases reached the appellate court, a judge who understood shari’a law would be allowed to sit-in on the case. The decision had cultural ramifications resulting in widespread riots. In 1982, Muslims burned Christian churches throughout the Kano area.\textsuperscript{78} Beyond some symbolic gestures, the government did little to settle the dynamics at play.

Despite widespread feelings of voter fraud, Shagari won the election on September 3, 1983. Just months later on December 31\textsuperscript{st}, 1983 Shagari was removed in a coup.\textsuperscript{79} The military removed Shagari and replaced him with Major General Muhammadu Buhari. Nigeria had now, once again, transitioned to a military regime. Buhari worked to eliminate corruption in Nigeria by essentially installing a military state in the country. For example, he created the National Security Organization (NSO) to spy on government officials and instituted the death penalty for smaller crimes.\textsuperscript{80} While Buhari successfully installed an oppressive police regime within a year, he failed to deal with Nigeria's economic problems. Buhari refused to work with the IMF or other debt relief programs. His decision angered Nigerians and therefore on August 27, 1985, Buhari left office through a coup.\textsuperscript{81} Major General Ibrahim Badamasi Babangida replaced Buhari.

Babangida signed onto a Structural Adjustment Program (SAP), which had long-lasting effects on Nigerians. In June 1986 Babangida worked with the World Bank to establish new lines of credit and to perform debt scheduling. While the annual debt repayments fell from 38.7% of

\textsuperscript{77} Falola and Heaton, \textit{A History of Nigeria}, 205.  
\textsuperscript{78} Falola and Heaton, \textit{A History of Nigeria}, 206.  
\textsuperscript{79} Falola and Heaton, \textit{A History of Nigeria}, 208.  
\textsuperscript{80} Falola and Heaton, \textit{A History of Nigeria}, 210.  
\textsuperscript{81} Falola and Heaton, \textit{A History of Nigeria}, 210.
federal revenues to 30% of revenues in 1988, unemployment skyrocketed.\textsuperscript{82} Citizens could no longer afford necessities as per capita income declined from $778 in 1985 to only $105 in 1989.\textsuperscript{83} Throughout the country, there was a feeling of despair. Nigeria entered the next decade with many half completed development projects, the days of massive petroleum revenues was a distant reality.

This chapter will look at how the capital was built throughout the 1980s using the master plan through three sections. The first section will look at how the land was resettled in the early 1980s to build the capital; later this would cause housing issues. The second section would look at how Kenzo Tange replaced WRMT on the project. Tange created an area that resembled Washington D.C. within the confines of the pre-existing master plan meaning the ecological principles from McHarg still stood. Finally, the third section will look at how the first group of Nigerians reacted to the new capital.

\textit{Resettlement}

McHarg's \textit{Report No. 2. Site Evaluation and Site Selection} the land selected the are for Abuja. The idea that Abuja was an entirely empty plot of land in the center of the country was a lie perpetuated by the government. The "Gwari" people, an indigenous group, occupied the area. Their history does not align with the American definition of indigenous because other groups

\begin{footnotesize}
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\item \textsuperscript{82} Falola and Heaton, \textit{A History of Nigeria}, 216.
\item \textsuperscript{83} Falola and Heaton, \textit{A History of Nigeria}, 217.
\end{itemize}
\end{footnotesize}
occupied the land before them. A. Carl Levan and Josiah Olubowale write about the Gwari population and the role they play in Abuja's displacement history.

The earliest evidence of human activity in the area dates to 500 BCE, the dawn of Nok culture, which disappeared in 20 CE. From there followed centuries of apparently brief settlements. Mass movement into the area and the formation of Islamic Emirates started after a jihad by the Fulani people conquered a key Hausa Emirate in 1804. Gade, Koro, and Gwari peoples subsequently borrowed from Hausa administrative traditions. As northern Hausa-Fulani emirates spread southward in the nineteenth century, resistance by these groups resulted in discontinuous territories that posed governance problems for the Sokoto Caliphate, based in the north-west.  

While they are referred to as Gwari colloquially, the politically correct term for the indigenous population is “Gbagyi.” The word “Gwari” derives itself from the Hausa word for “unintelligent person.” The “Gwari” people continued to settle in the area through the 1970s.

Originally, the Gwari people were supposed to be entirely resettled. Citing cost, General Obasanjo decided that anyone who fell outside of the first phase of construction area could stay in their settlement. Construction companies were instructed to build around them. The master plan outlined three options for Gwari relocation. The master plan wrote, “relocation within the FCT, to villages which already have some of the basic community facilities. This is probably the most reasonable option, since it might better address the potential socio-cultural preferences of the population involved, and might increase the numbers of people who could potentially be

85 Carl Levan and Josiah Olubowale, “I Am Here Until Development Comes,” 391.
86 Carl Levan and Josiah Olubowale, “I Am Here Until Development Comes,” 391.
served through existing community facilities.” Ultimately, the Federal Capital Territory resettled a total of 50,000 people from 264 settlements.

The first section of settlements was moved to outside the Federal Capital Territory to an area called New Wuse. Other settlements were transferred to the New Nyanya and the New Karu area. By 1984, most resettlements had taken place, and construction occurred around settlements through a plan know as the "integration policy." The goal of the integration policy was to blend pre-existing settlements together that sat on the outskirts of the capital city. Later, this would contribute to rapid urbanization.

The Second Master Plan

Shortly after Shagari took office in 1979, his cabinet decided not to renew WRMT's contract. While the master plan had been accepted and put into motion, Shagari brought in Kenzo Tange (1913-2015), a Japanese architect, to add detailed design to the central area. David Hamme, a staff manager for IPA, remarked how the decision to pick Tange was for reasons far beyond design choices. Hamme said, “We did not realize that we should make a payoff.” IPA never bribed anyone throughout the planning process, nor did the US government. According to

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87 Wallace, McHarg, Roberts, and Todd, Master Plan for the Capital City, 132.
89 Carl Levan and Josiah Olubowale, “I Am Here Until Development Comes,” 402.
90 David Hamme (architect) in discussion with Taylor A. Tobin.
91 David Hamme (architect) in discussion by Taylor A. Tobin.
Hamme, Nigerians approached the US government about a bribe for IPA’s renewed contract, but America felt it was “imperialist.” 92 As Hamme said, “It really was a clean operation.” 93

The Nigerian government charged Tange with the detailing of the Central Area, which includes the Supreme Court, National Assembly, and the Presidential Complex. 94 Le Corbusier’s work deeply inspired Tange and pushed him to become a student in Tokyo University’s Architecture Department. 95 In 1946, Tange was commissioned to design the Hiroshima Peace Center and Park. 96 The center’s massive reinforced concrete building was a reference to Le Corbusier’s design principles. His design speaks much more to modernism and a new Japanese future, rather than recalling the past.

In 1960, Tange created a new master plan for Tokyo titled Plan for Tokyo. 97 The master plan received enormous amounts of attention for its use of man-made structures, such as man-made islands, to enhance the city. 98 He wanted to create a plan that would allow Tokyo’s design to adapt over time. Beyond the supposed bribe, the Federal Capital Territory (FCT) likely picked Tange because of the Tokyo master plan. While Tange was a highly revered architect, that said his beliefs did not align with creating nationalism in urban form. Tange once said

Architecture must have something that appeals to the human heart, but even then, basic forms, spaces, and appearances must be logical. Creative work is expressed in our time as a

92 David Hamme (architect) in discussion with Taylor A. Tobin
93 David Hamme (architect) in discussion with Taylor A. Tobin.
94 Elleh, Architecture and Politics in Nigeria, 310.
96 “AD Classics: Hiroshima Peace Center and Memorial Park / Kenzo Tange.”
97 “AD Classics: Hiroshima Peace Center and Memorial Park / Kenzo Tange.”
98 “AD Classics: Hiroshima Peace Center and Memorial Park / Kenzo Tange.”
union of technology and humanity. The role of tradition is that of a catalyst, which furthers a chemical reaction, but is no longer detectable in the end result. Tradition can, to be sure, participate in a creation, but it can no longer be creative itself. The greater Nigerian population wanted a capital that spoke to their culture, regardless of the Biafran Civil War. The Nigerian government was trying to balance both new traditions with the preservation of culture; therefore Tange's work appealed to officials.

Kenzo Tange partnered with Urtec to form KTU, and together they created their master plan. They submitted their final report in 1981. While WRMT was trying to replicate portions of Washington D.C., KTU preferred modern avant-garde styles. According to Tange, urban design should have three aspects throughout the work, "first, technologically intelligent elements, second human emotional and sensitive elements, and third, social, communicational structural relations." Unlike WRMT, KTU valued the structural elements of a particular area rather than understanding how everything fits together. KTU renamed WRMT’s central zone to the three arms zone, to better invoke the architecture of Chandigarh and Brasilia. KTU kept the National Assembly Complex where the original master plan had placed it; he then added the Presidential Complex to the left and the Supreme Court to the right of the structure. Tange initially proposed that the National Assembly Complex have a “pyramidal cap for the roof.” His modern design was rejected by the Nigerian government on the basis that it appeared like the two arms of the

99 “AD Classics: Hiroshima Peace Center and Memorial Park / Kenzo Tange.”
100 Elleh, Architecture and Politics in Nigeria, 364.
National Assembly were fighting. Tange was still dealing with a post-conflict Nigeria. KTU went back to the drawing board and shifted the design to domed roof.

Ultimately, Tange’s greatest contribution to the area is the adding of the curve. To accomplish this new architectural form, KTU curved the end of the three arms zone moving the focus to the center (see Figure P for a rendering of the curve). Therefore, the name "three arms zone" better reflects the new form. Tetsuo Furuichi, who had supervised the construction for KTU, said: "Tange's urban design at Abuja was a continuation of the scheme that Todd and the IPA team had prepared." Tange’s new reformed a portion of Abuja that said WRMT’s original contributions shined through. McHarg’s ecological planning was still creating a control over the land.

In 1982, Abuja hosted the 22nd Independence Day celebration. It was the first time the celebration took place outside of Lagos and pointed to how Shagari viewed Abuja. The ceremony marked the symbolic move to the capital, that said in 1982 Abuja was by most definitions a large construction site (see Figure Q for an image from the independence day celebration). Shagari spoke in a 1983 national address about both how meaningful the celebration was and how modern the new capital was:

There is an international airport, an airport expressway, an ultra-modern expressway, and a ring road. The Jaji Dam is in full operation and the lower (Osman) Dam is under construction. Power supply is available in areas one and two of the District. The Federal

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104 Goomsu Ikoku, “The City as Public Space: Abuja - the Capital City of Nigeria” (Postgraduate Research, University of Newcastle upon Tyne, UK, 2004), 35.
Government administrative complex is now operative. Three five-star hotels are under construction. Indeed Abuja is a reality. For all these, let me thank the people and workers of Abuja for their cooperation and at once congratulate all political party leaders for attending the 22nd anniversary of Nigeria’s independence celebration held at Abuja, thus indicating our drive for a new and unifying capital for the people of the Federal Republic of Nigeria.  

In 1983, Abuja was still in its very initial stages. Few permanent structures existed, and President Shagari was still not spending a significant amount of time in Abuja. Later in 1983, Doxiades Associates, the Nigerian subsidiary of Doxiades Associates International, created a Regional Development Plan. The plan was designed to assist with construction, despite rarely being mentioned in primary sources.

In 1984, Tange was removed from the project after Shagari left office through a coup. Throughout 1984, General Buhari paused the Abuja project. The cranes stopped, and for a moment it looked like Decree No.6 might never be actualized. Then on May 24, 1985, General Buhari created the Ministry of Federal Capital Territory. The Federal Capital Territory (FCT) now had a ruling body, able to represent the project long-term.

_Turbulent Beginnings_

The name “Julius Berger” became synonymous with Abuja starting in 1984. Julius Berger Nigeria plc is a construction company out of Germany who would come to build the

106 President Shagari, “Shagari Delivers National Address.”
107 President Shagari, “Shagari Delivers National Address.”
108 President Shagari, “Shagari Delivers National Address.”
majority of Abuja (see Figure R for an image of the building in 1985).\textsuperscript{109} In a book published by Julius Berger Nigeria plc, they write:

\begin{quote}
[Julius Berger] prioritized a holistic approach to potential contracts, tackling them in terms of the big picture, while establishing which parts could be handled in what development phase. In keeping with renowned architect Miles van der Rohen's maxim 'less is more,' they insisted that it be meaningful to adapt the contract as awarded to the phasing.\textsuperscript{110}
\end{quote}

Using McHarg’s original maps, Julius Berger created a construction planning document database.\textsuperscript{111} His 1979 maps were truly a foundation for the City. Julius Berger relied heavily on the master plan in part because of the change in leadership in Abuja’s government.\textsuperscript{112} The master plan was often the only consistent element in an otherwise wieldy project.

The master plan oversimplified the realities of constructing on previously unmitigated land. In the initial stages of construction, Julius Berger came across many surprises. The construction company had an uphill battle when building Abuja, which required far more extensive land clearing than any blueprints could have dictated.\textsuperscript{113} On the upper level of Abuja’s soil was solid weathered rock which reached down approximately 6 or 7 meters and could withstand the strength of a four-story building.\textsuperscript{114} From the offset, Julius Berger needed heavy construction materials.

\textsuperscript{109} Jeremy Gaines and Dieter Blum, \textit{Abuja 30 Years} (Abuja: Julius Berger Nigeria, 2006), 20.
\textsuperscript{110} Jeremy Gaines and Dieter Blum, \textit{Abuja 30 Years}, 20.
\textsuperscript{111} Jeremy Gaines and Dieter Blum, \textit{Abuja 30 Years}, 20.
\textsuperscript{112} Jeremy Gaines and Dieter Blum, \textit{Abuja 30 Years}, 22.
\textsuperscript{113} Jeremy Gaines and Dieter Blum, \textit{Abuja 30 Years}, 22.
\textsuperscript{114} Jeremy Gaines and Dieter Blum, \textit{Abuja 30 Years}, 22.
In 1985, General Babangida altered aspects of Tange's recently created master plan. He designed a new presidential palace, replacing the work on the Presidential Complex. Ambassador John Campbell remarked in an interview how he never knew what happened to the construction work that was done on the Presidential Complex; Babangida just started a fresh project. General Babangida also added military barracks to the forest reserves and the national park for security purposes. Babangida added his anxieties into the master plan and then hired Albert Speer and Partner (AS+P) to review Tange’s work. Nigeria's unsettled feelings were apparent through the hiring of AS+P. AS+P never created a master plan for the area in 1986, that said whatever plan they would have created still would have sat within the confines of WRMT's work. WRMT created a level of control by dictating the shape of Abuja and ensured it would be innate to the city itself.

In 1986 Abuja hosted the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) Conference. Hamza Abdullahi, the then Minister of the Federal Capital Territory (FCT), agreed to host the conference to speed up construction in the city. Just six months before the conference, Abuja decided to organize it and contracted Julius Berger for the majority of the construction. Abdullahi justified his seemingly rash decision, as he said: “we need to make the city a symbol of unity, to ensure its acceptance, to make certain its image is likewise its

115 John Campbel (ambassador) in discussion with Taylor A. Tobin.
116 John Campbell (ambassador) in discussion with Taylor A. Tobin.
117 Elleh, Architecture and Politics in Nigeria, 82.
118 Elleh, Architecture and Politics in Nigeria, 82.
119 Jeremy Gaines and Dieter Blum, Abuja 30 Years, 55.
The conference occurred from June 30 through July 1, 1986, and Julius Berger created accommodations and a conference center in time. The conference was successful, and Abuja went on to host it again.

Shortly after the 1986 conference the Ministry of International Affairs and the Ministry of Trade and Industry relocated to Abuja. This marked off the first government relocation to Abuja. In 1987, AIM Consultants were hired to prepare Phase 2 of the master plan for construction. Phase 2 consisted of the second half of the central area, from Olusegun Obasanjo Way to the National Stadium. Under the leadership of engineer Amin Moussalli, he added pedestrian walkways on street level and moved car garages above ground.

After the 1986 partial relocation, the city continued to go under construction with some structure already built. In 1988, the Presidential Villa and many ministry buildings were still under construction. There were some government houses but the main attraction in Abuja then, with its relatively cheap flights from Lagos, was just watching Nigeria try to pull off a project of this magnitude. There was one structure that was entirely built in 1986, the Nicon Hotel. It was the superior hotel in Abuja and still stands today under different leadership (see Figure S for an image of the hotel in 1987). Ambassador John Campbell recalls staying in the hotel from

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120 Jeremy Gaines and Dieter Blum, *Abuja 30 Years*, 55.
121 Jeremy Gaines and Dieter Blum, *Abuja 30 Years*, 55.
122 Jeremy Gaines and Dieter Blum, *Abuja 30 Years*, 56.
123 Jeremy Gaines and Dieter Blum, *Abuja 30 Years*, 56
124 Jeremy Gaines and Dieter Blum, *Abuja 30 Years*, 56.
125 John Campbell (ambassador) in discussion with Taylor A. Tobin.
126 John Campbell (ambassador) in discussion with Taylor A. Tobin.
1988-1990.\textsuperscript{127} It was a prestigious hotel; owned by the Swiss and modeled after a European hotel. It had “lots of burnt orange and black, very 1980s.”\textsuperscript{128} The Nicon Hotel's creation amongst an empty city recalls back to the concept of the Nigerian Project. The Nigerian Project was a concept that developed in the late colonial period and was the idea that culturally Nigeria would compete with any major European city.\textsuperscript{129} It was the "Giant of Africa" and would present itself that way, regardless of expenses. Today the has been renamed to the Hilton Transcorp Abuja and former President Obasanjo is a partial owner.\textsuperscript{130}

\textsuperscript{127} John Campbell (ambassador) in discussion with Taylor A. Tobin.
\textsuperscript{128} John Campbell (ambassador) in discussion with Taylor A. Tobin.
\textsuperscript{129} John Campbell (ambassador) in discussion with Taylor A. Tobin.
\textsuperscript{130} John Campbell (ambassador) in discussion with Taylor A. Tobin.
Chapter 4: Failed Implementation (1991-2006)

“Working from formulas about density, green space, and transportation may produce narrowly efficient outcomes, but it is unlikely to result in a desirable place to live.”

- James C. Scott, Seeing Like a State

Babangida struggled to face the realities of SAP. He created a set of programs to offset the effects including the Directorate of Food, Roads, and Rural Infrastructure (DFRRI). The program was created to spur rural development and create long-promised infrastructure. Nigeria continued to invest in development programs as the solution despite its long history of failures.

Simultaneously, Nigerians reinvested in religion as a solution to their financial woes. Christian organizations also began to enter the political realm, lobbying for the government to be more responsive to the community. This conflicted with longstanding Islamic groups, like the Supreme Council for Islamic Affairs (SCIA) which had existed since the 1970s. While religion has been removed from the census to avoid conflict, the state sponsors pilgrimages to both Mecca and Jerusalem. The federal government, and therefore Abuja, is secular and freedom of religion is in the constitution. But unlike the United States, each state government tends to promote the dominant religion of the area. Despite these shifts towards a more secular nation, many Christians felt Babangida unfairly supported Muslims.

The other response to Nigeria’s financial problems was immigration. Highly-educated or wealthy populations began to leave Nigeria in mass during the 1990s. This trend was seen across other African nations who had undergone SAP and is commonly referred to as brain

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1 Scott, Seeing Like a State, 4.
2 Falola and Heaton, A History of Nigeria, 220.
3 Falola and Heaton, A History of Nigeria, 221.
4 Falola and Heaton, A History of Nigeria, 221.
6 John Campbell, “Ambassador Campbell Visit to Class.”
7 John Campbell, “Ambassador Campbell Visit to Class.”
drain; “by 1993 there were an estimated 21,000 Nigerian doctors practicing in the United States alone.”\textsuperscript{8} The mass migration of Nigerians not only hurt the economy but also hindered Nigeria’s public perception, fostering the impression of a country people often leave.

Combined with financial problems, Babangida had to oversee a peaceful transfer of power. The presidential election to decide Babangida's replacement took place on June 12, 1993.\textsuperscript{9} The "transition process" began six years prior in January 1986; Babangida had constant push back to a transfer of power.\textsuperscript{10} Despite the long transfer of power, the 1993 election is considered the most peaceful and fair election in recent history. Chief M. K. O. Abiola, a Yoruba businessman, won 58\% of the vote.\textsuperscript{11} But Babangida annulled the results of the election on June 23, claiming multiple reasons including faulty election machinery.\textsuperscript{12} Throughout the summer of 1993, Nigeria experienced unrest.\textsuperscript{13} Citizens were furious over the events that had conspired after a finally free election.

On August 27, 1993, Babangida handed over power to an Interim Governing Council.\textsuperscript{14} There was a loophole; the leader was his friend Ernest Shonekan. Shonekan's barely existing governing body was dissolved on November 17, 1993, through a coup.\textsuperscript{15} General Sani Abacha, a man who had long wanted to be president, declared himself both the head of state and

\textsuperscript{8} Falola and Heaton, \textit{A History of Nigeria}, 223.
\textsuperscript{9} Falola and Heaton, \textit{A History of Nigeria}, 223.
\textsuperscript{10} Falola and Heaton, \textit{A History of Nigeria}, 223.
\textsuperscript{11} Falola and Heaton, \textit{A History of Nigeria}, 225.
\textsuperscript{12} Falola and Heaton, \textit{A History of Nigeria}, 225.
\textsuperscript{13} Falola and Heaton, \textit{A History of Nigeria}, 225.
\textsuperscript{14} Falola and Heaton, \textit{A History of Nigeria}, 227.
\textsuperscript{15} Falola and Heaton, \textit{A History of Nigeria}, 227.
commander-in-chief.\textsuperscript{16} Abacha ruled the Third Republic with an iron first. He quickly abolished all political institutions, electoral bodies, and imprisoned many political leaders. He even jailed Obasanjo over a supposed coup.\textsuperscript{17} He also arrested Abiola, who stayed in prison until his death in 1998.\textsuperscript{18}

With a nearing election, Abacha created six new states to win over support. Nigeria now had thirty-six states; Abacha also added 138 new local governments and brought in five new political parties\textsuperscript{19}. This move to bring more leaders to the supposed table allowed Abacha to win over temporary support. The actual consequences of Abacha's decision were never seen because he died on June 8, 1998.\textsuperscript{20} To this day, there is debate over how he died with some claiming heart attack and some claiming foul play. In the months following his death, the enormous level of corruption by Abacha was revealed. He and his family had embezzled over $3 billion stored across the world, primarily in European banks.\textsuperscript{21}

On February 27, 1999, former head of state Obasanjo won the presidential election. He was sworn in as president on May 29, 1999.\textsuperscript{22} Obasanjo’s three main objectives were to diminish Nigeria’s foreign debt, increased privatization, and attain more foreign investments.\textsuperscript{23} Under these objectives, Obasanjo won re-election in 2003. The GDP rose from 2.9 in 2000 to 4.9 in 2004. The naira began to decline at a slower rate, and inflation dropped considerably to 8.9% in

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\textsuperscript{16} Falola and Heaton, \textit{A History of Nigeria}, 229.
\textsuperscript{17} Falola and Heaton, \textit{A History of Nigeria}, 230.
\textsuperscript{18} Falola and Heaton, \textit{A History of Nigeria}, 230.
\textsuperscript{19} Falola and Heaton, \textit{A History of Nigeria}, 231.
\textsuperscript{20} Falola and Heaton, \textit{A History of Nigeria}, 232.
\textsuperscript{21} Falola and Heaton, \textit{A History of Nigeria}, 232.
\textsuperscript{22} Falola and Heaton, \textit{A History of Nigeria}, 232.
\textsuperscript{23} Falola and Heaton, \textit{A History of Nigeria}, 233.
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2006. The oil sector continued to shrink, but the non-oil sector continued to grow. In 2006, Obasanjo paid off a significant amount of Nigeria's debt through a deal with the Paris Club. While Obasanjo oversaw economic success, corruption normalized in the early 2000s. Paying police at checkpoints, falsifying government documents, and internet scams are part of the day-to-day. "419," the legal code number for prosecuting corruption, is used colloquially to refer to corruption. In just forty years, Nigeria changed enormously all while a capital city sprung up in the background.

This chapter will look at how Abuja launched and then failed through four sections. The first section will discuss how new cities form and the administrative needs it has. The second section will go over the inauguration day, the day Abuja officially launched. The third section will review the infrastructure problems that ensued shortly after December 12th, 1991. The final section will consider the two most recent master plans which are a reflection of the original.

What Does A City Need?

A brand new city sounds almost comedic with the sheer amount of services needed to keep it running. A master plan dictates the future, but it’s the people on the ground that determine a city’s effectiveness. And while citizens have to believe in the city, the city also has to allow for a certain level of “user modification.” The “user” or resident has to be able to make the city their own. For example, “a grid of streets…allows pedestrians to choose their routes,

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whereas a hierarchy of cul-de-sacs, collectors, and arterials makes that decision for them."  

A combination of choices and predisposed decisions creates a sense of comfort while still allowing the resident to experience self-determination.

When a planned community removes choices, it results in something like Celebration, Florida. Celebration is a planned community built by Walt Disney Company and similar to Abuja was created to be the “community for tomorrow.” In an interview, Sarah Stellwag discusses how there are "only six kinds of styles of houses that can be built and a really strict homeowners association." It “feels incredibly homogenous and similar to the Truman show, but there is also a strong sense of community and sense of safety.” The concept of “community” was as much a part of post-colonial design as it was in Disney’s New Urbanism. The design is meant to illicit feelings of togetherness and idealism.

The ideal master plans are often created for the upper-class. Stellwag continues the conversation, saying "there are glaring socio-economic issues and it's basically this picturesque microcosm of the quintessential American suburb smack in the middle of suburban poverty and tourist traps." Celebration produces a feeling of community because of its homogenous residents. Celebration is small with just 8,000 residents. Abuja is 1500 times the size of Celebration.

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26 Sarah Stellwag (Celebration resident) in discussion with Taylor A. Tobin, April 2017.
27 Sarah Stellwag (Celebration resident) in discussion with Taylor A. Tobin.
28 Sarah Stellwag (Celebration resident) in discussion with Taylor A. Tobin.
For a city of the magnitude to elicit feelings of community, the residents have to see them as dependable. The City of Abuja and its social services are directly administered by "the Federal Capital Territory Administration (FCTA), which is headed by a minister appointed by the president."^29 The FCTA is one of six local area councils created within the entire Federal Capital Territory, with the others being Abaji, Bwari, Kuje, Gwagwalada, and Kwali. In the master plan, the IPA wrote “next to housing and the availability of employment opportunities, the most important element of a city is the quality and access of a wide variety of public services.”^30 The FCTA supervises the Abuja Water Board, the Abuja Environmental Protection Board, the Abuja Geographic Information System, and the Transportation Secretariat. Within a few years, Abuja had to both launch and establish dependable social services. Before the creation of Abuja, the FCTA was just a group of four letters. Now, the FCTA had to carry out a policy of nationalism.

*And One Day We Launched*

General Babangida moved the federal government to Abuja on December 12, 1991, through Decree no. 51. Decree no. 51 stated, "The Federal Capital Territory, Abuja, shall as from the commencement of this Decree, be the Capital of the Federation…As from the commencement of this Decree, the Territory known as Lagos shall cease to be the Capital of the Federal Republic of Nigeria."^31 With this legislation, the new capital city had officially launched.^32

^31 Jeremy Gaines and Dieter Blum, *Abuja 30 Years*.
Babangida rushed the launch of the city for security reasons. In April 1990, Major Gideon Orkar staged a coup and tried to remove Babangida from office. Babangida narrowly escaped the coup, as he said in a later interview, “we went out of Dodan Barracks and we went to a safe house where we got in contact with loyal troops…I got in touch with [Sani Abacha, chief of army staff] and we sat down and talked on what we were going to do. Abacha and I rallied the loyal troops and then I left my safe house and joined Abacha in his house. That was how I escaped.”

The coup rattled him. Babangida moved into the highly secure Presidential Villa in Abuja. The newly completed Presidential Villa sat below Aso Rock in a large protected compound. While not particularly beautiful, its location below the inaccessible Aso Rock makes it nearly impossible to harm the Villa from above (see Figure T for an image of the Villa with Aso Rock in the background). It should then be of little surprise that there have been few coups since 1990.

On December 12th, 1991, General Babangida hosted an elaborate inauguration celebration. The off-white City Gate sat at center stage. The City Gate is located at Kukwabe National Park, “a rolling landscape crossed by the north-south highway at the end of the Phase I Development Area, but at the beginning of the Phase II Development Area.”

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33 John Campbell (ambassador) in discussion with Taylor A. Tobin.
horses, dancers, and Nigerian dignitaries. It was a ceremony filled with pageantry, with two temporary viewing stands sitting on the sides of the Gate. There were also temporary flower beds and structures; all painted white and green to match the Nigerian flag.

As Babangida walked through the gate, it symbolically marked off the government's move to Abuja. He marched through the new civic space for the people of Nigeria. Near the city gate was the national assembly building, courthouses, and other cultural buildings. The first widely circulated images of Abuja in action would be Babangida walking through the gate and into the new capital. For a brief moment, WRMT had accomplished their goals. The president was in the new capital city, an area which previously had little national importance.

On December 13, 1991, Abuja revealed its true self. The pomp and circumstance fell away, as did whatever feelings of nationalism. In an interview Olugbenga “Bunmi” Aina, a Nigerian professor, remarked how in 1991, “everything about Abuja felt artificial: from the layout to the buildings and roads; nothing connected with me on a visceral level as having occurred naturally.” Abuja fell short. Despite McHarg's emphasis on ecological planning as a tool to elicit a strong human emotion, the execution of the master plan felt artificial. Within Report No. 2. Site Evaluation and Site Selection, WRMT writes “the climactic and topographic nature of the recommended site for the Nigerian Capital will have a strong influence on plan form.”

Bunmi was not looking for an urban environment that called to The City Beautiful Movement but rather

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38 Elleh, Architecture and Politics in Nigeria, 91.
39 Olugbenga “Bunmi” Aina (Gallaudet Professor) in discussion with Taylor A. Tobin, April 2017.
40 Wallace, McHarg, Roberts, and Todd, Report No. 2 Site Evaluation and Site Selection, 16.
a place the elected feelings of home. Throughout the design process, the congestion and overlapping feel in Lagos were seen as a flaw rather than a cultural mark.

The American response to the move was seemingly ironic as Abuja was partially based on their capital, Washington D.C. In 1999, Gilbert A. Lewthwaite wrote in The Baltimore Sun about the new capital; “Abuja is custom-built, the ultimate politically correct capital, slap-bang in the middle of the nation where all 108 million Nigerians can get to it with equal difficulty. This is the Brasilia of Africa, an architectural playground on the eve of the 21st century, where the skyline is dotted with almost as many construction cranes as occupied buildings.”\(^\text{41}\) Lewthwaite fails to mention Washington D.C. but his use of the very American term “politically correct” to describe Abuja relates to the city’s to be devoid of offense. He continued in his article, writing “Lagos remains a place Nigerians choose to love or hate, but Abuja is a capital of which they can all be truly proud -- even if most never manage to set a foot in it.”\(^\text{42}\) Lewthwaite understood that the pomp and circumstance would be short-lived, with few Nigerians truly being able to access the city.


\(^{42}\) Gilbert A. Lewthwaite, “Nigeria builds a `city of unity,'”
**Infrastructure Problems**

While Babangida formally launched the city on December 12th, portions of the city were still under construction. Abuja had just started the third phase of the master plan. Babangida launched an incomplete city but required public sector workers to relocate. Therefore in 1991, over 200,000 public sector workers and staff from foreign embassies and international agencies were transferred to Abuja. The vast majority of available housing units were unaffordable to the recently moved public sector workers. Quickly realizing the lack of housing, the National Hosing Policy estimated that as an entire country Nigeria needed five million new housing units in urban areas by 2000. By 1994, Abuja added 23,571 residential units.

Despite the effort to quickly improve infrastructure because Babangida launched before the city's completion, Abuja started to struggle. The city experienced overcrowding, rising rents, and informal settlements throughout the city. These housing problems resulted in a phenomenon known as "rapid urbanization." Within Abuja's context, urbanization is defined as

> Urbanization is the physical growth of urban areas as a result of rural migration and even suburban concentration into cities. It mainly occurs because of the movement of people from communities concerned chiefly or solely with agriculture, to other communities generally larger, whose activities are primarily centered in government, trade, manufacture, or allied interests.

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Rapid urbanization is when the “movement of people” happens above the average scale. In Africa, “the annual average growth rates were estimated to be 4.7% and 4.6% between the period of 1960 and 1980, and 1980 to 2000 respectively.” Beginning in 1991 Abuja’s growth rate has been at 9.28%. Not only did the master plan incorrectly predict Abuja’s growth rate but the infrastructure was not in place to handle mass migration. Abuja jumped from a population of 378,671 in 1991 to 1.4 million in 2006. Housing and solid waste management problems are the two most prominent areas of failure in Abuja.

Housing in Abuja differs from the rest of Nigeria. In an interview with Olugbenga “Bunmi” Aina he remarked how “it actually felt like something trying to impose a different identity and a different way of thinking about how cities are built in Nigeria.” He continued to say, “Nigerian towns and cities don't have neighborhoods divided along the lines of uptown, downtown, posh, ghetto, etc. Rather, neighborhoods are created around extended family compounds, on family land, so that you have a mix of all characteristics according to the status and business of the family occupying a particular compound. Abuja departed from this in that sense.” Aina's observations are of little surprise because the master plan placed little importance on family compounds. In interviews with Westerners, few have commented on the layout of Abuja as "un-African," which speaks to the different familial expectations. The

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50 Olugbenga “Bunmi” Aina (Gallaudet Professor) in discussion with Taylor A. Tobin.
51 Olugbenga “Bunmi” Aina (Gallaudet Professor) in discussion with Taylor A. Tobin.
reinterpretation of housing in Abuja through the use of ecological planning principles set up the city for long-term housing rights issues.

Abuja has incredibly complicated housing rights. In Nigeria, there is no such thing as land ownership. Rather everyone is buying the “use of land” from the government, meaning the government has ultimate authority over the land. In 1978, Obasanjo made “use of land” uniform across Nigeria through the passage of the Land Use Act. The Land Use Act gave total power to the government, and therefore governors could now set rental rates and alter rights of occupancy. Therefore, the Nigerian government favored a master plan that gave little attention to the dynamics of an urban area. The fewer structures and obligations within the land make it more amenable for the governors.

Moreover, wholesale clearing of slums or squatters and forced evictions are incredibly common in Nigeria and therefore Abuja. Abuja has used the master plan as a defense against evictions. In 2006, the Nigerian Minister for Ruby Rabiu and Abdullahi M. Gulloma said, “since those affected choose to embark on illegal development without recourse to the provisions of the Master Plan, which is the legal instrument for administering development control in the city, their removal was on the ground of maintaining the rule of law.” The master plan holds no legal authority. Rather, the master plan along with President Shagari’s rush to construct Abuja allowed informal housing developments to sprung up along the edges of the capital city.

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52 John Campbell (ambassador) in discussion with Taylor A. Tobin.
53 John Campbell (ambassador) in discussion with Taylor A. Tobin.
54 John Campbell (ambassador) in discussion with Taylor A. Tobin.
The starkest example of rapid urbanization in Abuja is the Nyanya labor camp (or slum). Nyanya, the fastest growing slum in Nigeria, is just a 10-minute drive from the city center where Kenzo Tange's designs sit prominently. It is located within the Abuja Municipal Area and sits under the authority of the Federal Capital Development Authority (FCDA). While the area was created to house entry-level public servants and construction workers temporarily, it has developed into a permanent structure. The government was supposed to provide permanent housing for the low-level public servants, but that reality never came to fruition, and development started to occur naturally. Nyanya started off as a rudimentary labor camp, which speaks to the type of housing that is within the slum. Nyanya quickly became a set of permanent adobes because of a dramatic lack of housing (see Figure U for an image of Nyanya).

Nyanya is one of many slums outside of Nigeria but receives the most attention because of its population growth. In 1991, Nyanya population was 20,278 people. In 2001, the population was 78,737 people. The population more than tripled in ten years. Therefore, "only 17% of respondents are owner-occupiers where they reside, while majority of the respondents (61%) do not have houses of their own, they are tenants." The increase in (non-traditional) housing has had some positive effects. Nyanya is not all negative. Professionals can access employment in the central business district, work at construction sites, and sell their goods in Abuja to the wealthier class.

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Solid waste management issues prevent Abuja from being an actual modern capital. According to an interview with the Assistant Director to the Abuja Environmental Protection Board (AEPB), "Abuja has not put in place a system of urban waste management that can cope with Abuja...there is no uniform administrative system." The AEPB manages solid waste services in Abuja, including garbage and sewage. Therefore, the assistant director's comment is particularly striking.

A solid waste management system is a complicated vehicle. The AEPB is charged with "waste storage, collection, and transport, resource recovery and recycling, waste treatment and disposal." Together those four elements make up the complicated system. These systems are expensive with most developed countries spending on average 20-30% of a municipal budget. In contrast, developing countries spend just 5% of their budgets on a waste management system. While these statistics are new, WRMT envisioned a waste management system that was unable to come to fruition. The master plan included a “properly sited engineered landfill” to be included on the outskirts of the city. Today, there are no landfills in the FCT.

The symbolic character of Abuja is connected to waste management. Ambassador Campbell quipped how in the Niger Delta they like to say they “water but no bridges” whereas in Abuja they have “bridges but no water.” Abuja's problems have entered into everyday

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57 Adama, *Governing from Above*, 105.
60 A. Imam et al., “Solid Waste Management in Abuja, Nigeria,” 471.
61 John Campbell (ambassador) in discussion with Taylor A. Tobin.
language. In developed countries, the question has become how to create a sustainable waste management system whereas in developing countries the issue is still on consistent collection and disposal. Abuja will never be on a global scale until it has a consistent system. The city's ability to influence a global economy requires a functioning waste management system for visitors. David Jemibewon, a military general in the Biafran War, discussed how few public services were provided; “basic things such as public toilets, play grounds, and public parks for sports and recreation were not provided for.”

Abuja will never be the modern capital once dreamt of until every resident gets his or her trashed picked up.

While trash pick up is not equated with modernism, without it a city is still in progress. The reasons behind Abuja’s infrastructure problems evokes Scott’s high modernist theory. Scott describes the concept of idealized planned cities as “high modernist theory.” Specifically, how high modernist theory fails urban areas because it ignores the on the ground realities of a culture. Rather, the future and all other modern schemes take precedent. Scott writes, “these urban planners backed by state power are rather like tailors who are not only free to invent whatever suit of clothes they wish but also free to trim the customer so that he fits the measure.” It is why Abuja was able to come to fruition and yet fail to accomplish basic civic needs.

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63 James C. Scott, Seeing Like a State, 145.
64 James C. Scott, Seeing Like a State, 145.
History Repeats Itself

After Abuja’s launch in 1991, construction continued to dominate the landscape. Phase 3 and 4 continued to be developed and by the new millennium, Julius Berger had “put in place infrastructure for close to 65% of the gross surface areas in the residential zones.” From 2001-2006, Julius Berger placed an updated road in the city; “three lanes (14 meters wide) over approx. 14.5km (widening Ring Road 1) and handled the extension work for three lands for Ring Road 2.” Despite the constant building Abuja struggled to find its footing which sat symbolically between Mumbai and Washington D.C.

From 2006-2008, AS+P reviewed and redesigned the master plan. While they never produced a master plan in 1986, they were re-commissioned in 2006 to revisit the plans, in a similar manner that Washington D.C. hired WRMT in 1972. They were appointed to review the central area specifically, often referred to as the three arms zone. According to AS+P, the end goal of the plan was to identify constraints within the urban center

Land use, urban design, and infrastructure have been adopted as to facilitate further successful development. This work contained the review of the land use plans and the development controls; a concept for the vitalization of the central roads (boulevards concept); test layouts for relevant development zones (e.g. railway station, parks, the capital mall, central square, high-rise zones); traffic and access concepts for the entire area.

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65 Jeremy Gaines and Dieter Blum, *Abuja 30 Years.*
66 Jeremy Gaines and Dieter Blum, *Abuja 30 Years.*
According to AS+P, after the revised master plan Abuja will have an improved visual layout (see Figure W for an image of their master plan). Under their plan, the central area would have a grid system providing clearly designated areas for divisions of government. Despite the apparent desire to move away from the original master plan, AS+P plan clearly values the natural landscape. The long central with more green space and better spacing between buildings intentionally disregards rest of Abuja. As seen through the new master plan, the Federal Capital Development Authority blames the central area for Abuja's problem while forgetting to look beyond Independence Avenue.

Ultimately, the federal government was only concerned with the three arms zone. The price tag attached to the AS+P contract could have provided improved infrastructure to Nyanya or an improved solid waste management plan. Similar to the first plan created by WRMT, Nigeria puts too much of a focus on the government areas. Where daily life happens, in the schools or the markets, is entirely ignored. To date, little has publicly come of these plans. Few press releases exist about the AS+P master plan and construction has yet to start.

From 2013-2014, AS+P created a master plan for a planned community within the Federal Capital Territory. Separate from their central area master plan, the development named Centenary City is meant to sit on the outskirts of Abuja. It is currently the largest real estate development across Africa, costing an estimated $18.6 billion (see Figure X for an image of the

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68 “Review of the Master Plan.”
Centenary City master plan). Nigeria hired Eagle Hill, Abu Dhabi-based developers to execute on the master plan. Construction started recently on the project, which is a public-private partnership between Eagle Hills and the Federal Capital Territory. Created to encourage business, the area will be a free-trade zone and operate under a different set of tax regulations.

According to the Financial Mail, a South African magazine

> The entire city is designed to include efficient transportation, biomimetic water and waste management, and finance, commerce, science, sports, medical and cultural facilities. It will be independent of Abuja, thanks to its 500MW gas-fired power station. It is scheduled to be operational and occupied by 2024.

The development will also include retail and a created waterfront area. Centenary city is meant to work in harmony with nature, recalling Ian McHarg’s *Design with Nature*. While the development is supposed to create community, it excludes the majority of Nigeria's who cannot afford to live in the Centenary City. Julius Berger recently signed onto the project, keeping with the firm's tradition of building the majority of Abuja. The project has already run into controversy. The indigenous Izzi were forcibly removed from the land to build Centenary City. They were forcibly removed begging the question: did Nigeria not learn a lesson the first time?

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74 Michael Schmidt, “Ready-Made Towns Changing Skylines Across Africa.”
WRMT never fulfilled their promise of a modern capital because they created a city that excluded the vast majority of Nigerians. Nigerians did not need to reconnect with the natural world; they needed housing and infrastructure development. Centenary City is just a repeat of the first master plan with 21st-century upgrades.
Conclusion

Abuja is failing; as rapid urbanization latched onto the city, it was clear that it would not disappear. As Abuja's failures became apparent, the ability to implement nationalism through a new capital disappeared. The master plan, created through ecological planning, was ill-equipped to provide for a nation undergoing post-conflict rebuilding. While this thesis argues that Abuja's failures are chalked up to poor urban planning and execution, it is worth asking: how much of these failures were inevitable?

The organism of a city will always be a combination of the desirable and undesirables. Moreover, the way a population takes to a new city is nearly impossible to predict. While this thesis argues that basic needs, like housing, were ultimately required more than a beautiful park some Nigerians may disagree. The contrasts and ironies in a city are what make them desirable places to live and challenging places to create.

Long after Ian McHarg created the theory at the University of Pennsylvania, other architects are still using his work. A group of Japanese architects formed the Japanese Architects for Peace and Environment team to wrestle with the concept of ecological planning. Using a five-part checklist of the main features (Nature, Resource/Energy, Lifestyle, Human Aspects, and Town/Community) they created the three-generation ecological house in Japan. Made for the Maebashi City in Japan, the house is positioned as the future of public housing by fully
integrating with the environment around it.\textsuperscript{1} Ironically, the Abuja master plan was once listed as the future of urban planning. Abuja failed to uphold to those standards or even build enough units of public housing. The three-generation ecological house was built for eventual demolition; "designs facilitate the demolition of the building when it is time to dismantle it. Some materials are reused, e.g. fittings and sliding doors."\textsuperscript{2} Unlike WRMT, the set of Japanese architects understood that all design has an expiration date someone will want to dismantle it.

Will there ever be a perfect city that is both functional and inclusive? Or is that left to the admirer to decide? It is worth noting that the opinions in this thesis reflect only a portion of residents. It would have been impossible to account for every resident's feelings towards Abuja whose to say there is not a resident in Abuja infatuated with the architecture. This thesis if nothing else, is a love letter to cities everywhere. The concept of a city is nothing new, but the contents inside are ever moving and evolving.

\textsuperscript{1} Dick Urban Vestbro, \textit{Architecture as Politics: The Role of Design and Planning for Peace and Sustainable Development} (Stockholm: ARC•PEACE International Architects Designers Planners for Social Responsibility in collaboration with Built Environment Analysis, Division of Urban Studies, Department of Infrastructure, The Royal Institute of Technology, 2002).
\textsuperscript{2} Vestbro, \textit{Architecture as Politics}. 
Appendix

Figure A Map of the African continent with Nigeria in Red

Courtesy of Deboomsfotografie Blog
Figure B Map of Nigeria with current state borders

Courtesy of focusafrics.gov
Figure C Map of the Federal Capital Territory (FCT)

Courtesy of Google Maps
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Courtesy of Google Maps
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Courtesy of Kevin Lynch’s *Image of the City*
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Courtesy of WRMT
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Courtesy of Getty Images
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Courtesy of the Office of the Historian, Bureau of Public Affairs
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Courtesy of Terapeak Inc. Images
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Courtesy of James Rossant’s Master Plan
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Courtesy of Ian McHarg’s *Design with Nature*
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Courtesy of University of Pennsylvania Architectural Archives
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Courtesy of Nigeria’s Biomedical Science Journal
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Courtesy of University of Pennsylvania Architectural Archives
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Courtesy of University of Pennsylvania Architectural Archives
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Courtesy of andrewlemer.com
Figure R The First Independence Day Celebration at Abuja

Courtesy of nairaland.com
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Courtesy of nairaland.com
Figure T Horse’s Stand in front of the Abuja City Gate on the Inaugural Day

Courtesy of Nnamdi Elleh’s *Architecture and Politics in Nigeria: The Study of a Late Twentieth-Century Enlightenment-Inspired Modernism at Abuja, 1900–2016*
Figure U Presidential Villa with Aso Rock in the background,

Courtesy of Raf E via Google Photos
Figure V Nyanya (2016)

Courtesy of the Nigerian Herald
Figure W AS+P’s rendering of the central area

Courtesy of AS+P
Figure X Centaury City master plan

Courtesy of AS+P
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