



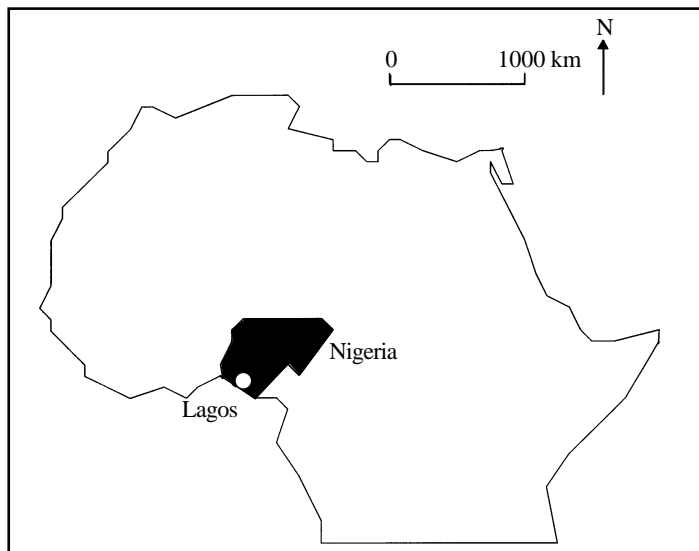
# LAGOS

This Factsheet will examine in detail the population growth rate, urban morphology and urban growth problems of Lagos.

### Introduction

Lagos is situated on the southern coast of Nigeria (Fig 1). It was founded as a fishing and farming settlement over 300 years ago by Yoruba settlers from the north. The Yoruba, unusual among African peoples south of the Sahara, have a long tradition of building cities. In the eighteenth century, Lagos was incorporated into the kingdom of Benin. In 1851, British colonists captured Lagos.

Fig 1. Location of Lagos



Lagos became an important commercial centre early in the twentieth century. The city is sited in an area of lagoons, sandbars and islands, so is a natural harbour. Lagos grew due to its initial advantages as a **port**. The early development of an inland trunk railway line northwards from Lagos allowed the export of agricultural and mineral products. Until 1983, Lagos was the capital of Nigeria. The capital has now been moved to the new town of Abuja.

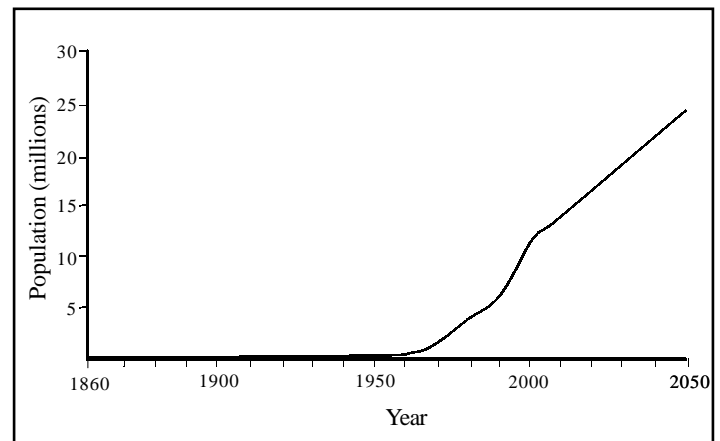
### Population Growth

Fig 2 shows population growth since 1860 and projected growth up to 2050. Growth was slow before 1890. From 1890-1930, the population of Lagos grew from 10 000 to 1.5 million. Growth was less rapid during the period 1930-1960. From 1960-1999, the population increased from 1.5 million to 11.4 million (U.S. Census Bureau). The mean annual population growth rate was 3% in 1999. It is estimated that Lagos will have a population of 24.4 million in 2050. It will be among the five largest cities in the world.

According to the rank-size rule, the population of a city is inversely proportional to its rank in a country. The largest city in a country is twice as large as the population of the second-largest city. Urban primacy is where the largest city in a country is more than twice the size of the second largest.

Nigeria's rank-size distribution is an example of urban primacy. The largest city, in this case Lagos, is known as the primate city. The population of Lagos is ten times as large as the second largest city in Nigeria (Ibadan). Primate cities are more common in less developed countries. There are limited resources in less developed countries, so most economic activities concentrate in one place.

Fig 2. Population growth of Lagos



Rapid urban growth is always due to two processes: in-migration from elsewhere and a high rate of natural increase. Migration from the surrounding countryside can be explained in terms of push factors and pull factors.

**Exam hint:** questions on migration are often split into two sections: the causes and the effects of migration. Stronger candidates will divide their answers into push and pull factors, then discuss the advantages and disadvantages of migration for both the donor region and the recipient region.

### Push factors

Push factors are the reasons that people move from a certain place:

- Mechanisation of farming - the more widespread use of tractors and mechanical diggers reduces the demand for agricultural labourers.
- Greater use of land to grow cash crops for export (e.g. groundnuts) - as Nigeria's debt becomes greater, more land is required for crops. This land used to support small farmers.
- Environmental hazards - rainfall is unreliable in semi-arid central and northern Nigeria.
- Lack of rural investment - the government has invested in prestige urban projects (e.g. motorways and land reclamation in Lagos Island) rather than in less glamorous small-scale rural development.
- Tribal unrest - the large increase in the late 1960s is due to in-migration of refugees from the Biafran War (1967-1969) in the east of Nigeria.
- Sedentarisation of nomadic farmers - the movement of nomadic pastoralist Fulani and Hausa tribes is now restricted by new cash-crop plantations.

- International migration - refugees from wars in nearby African countries (e.g. revolutions in the 1970s in neighbouring Benin).
- Oil production in the Ogoniland - the Ogoniland in southern Nigeria is scarred with over a hundred oil wells and two oil refineries. Oil pollution has caused serious problems in the surrounding farmlands. In 1990 a village was razed to the ground and its inhabitants fled. The Nigerian government has tightened its grip on the region to control Ogoni militants. Some Ogonis have migrated to Lagos.

### Pull factors

Pull factors are the reasons that people move to a certain place:

- Availability of jobs - 70% of Nigeria's industrial investment is in Lagos. The city is a major international port for the import of raw materials to, and the export of manufactured goods from, many countries in West Africa. Oil production increased seven fold during 1965-1973. By 1978, metropolitan Lagos accounted for 40% of Nigeria's external oil trade.
- Perception of less overcrowded housing - there are few shanty towns and many areas of new government housing in Lagos. 90% of people in Lagos have access to electricity supplies.
- Expectation of higher wages - the city's wages are higher than the national average.
- Movement to join family members who have already migrated to Lagos.
- Expectation of more education opportunities - adult literacy rates in Lagos are the highest in the country; 94% for men and 79% for women in 1995.
- Perception of improved healthcare - there are fewer people per doctor than anywhere else in Nigeria. Treatment at government hospitals was free from 1979 to 1988.

Migration to Lagos is not a simple process. Rural dwellers, particularly men, will often visit the city before moving permanently. They may stay with relatives in the city when coming for healthcare. Urban dwellers may take frequent holidays in their home villages. Elderly people return to the countryside to retire.

**Exam Hint:** strong candidates will make it clear that long-distance migration is not a single event but involves complex decision-making by the migrant.

The rate of natural increase in 1998 was +29 per 1000 (US Census Bureau). Crude death rates has fallen in recent decades but crude birth rate is still high. Nigeria is in Stage Two of the Demographic Transition Model.

### Why is birth rate still high?

- Contraceptives are not widely available. Many people are not aware of how to use contraceptives correctly.
- Many in-migrants still respond to the high infant mortality rate of the countryside by producing many children, in the hope that some will survive.
- Polygyny, a husband having more than one wife, is traditional.
- Lagos has a youthful population. 50% of the population is under 15. Many people are within, or near to, the most active reproductive ages.
- Children are needed to provide security and protection for the parents in their old age. It is a Yoruba tradition that partners separate in old age and live with their families.

**Exam hint:** the best answers include an annotated sketch map of the places being discussed. Always include a north arrow and scale.

### Why is death rate falling?

- There are fewer deaths in childbirth. 88% of births took place in hospitals or clinics in 1987.
- Improvements in medical facilities. UNICEF, UNESCO and WHO provide vaccinations against contagious diseases. In 1990, only 0.01% of malaria sufferers died after attending hospital.
- Calorie intake has increased and there is less malnutrition.
- Lagos has a youthful population. 50% of the population is under 15. Fewer people can die of old age.

In the 1990s, birth rate began to fall slightly. High unemployment and rapid inflation, caused by international debt and political unrest, has reduced incomes. Birth control is also being used more widely.

### Urban Morphology

#### (a) Central Business District

The CBD of Lagos is found on the southern part of Lagos Island. It is the oldest part of the city. It contains retail, wholesale, financial, education, administration and entertainment facilities. The CBD has a core and frame structure. Skyscrapers (e.g. NITEL House, Africa's tallest skyscraper) and modern shops, in the core, are found in the south-west of Lagos Island (e.g. Broad Street and Tinubu Square). The core is surrounded by a frame of smaller offices and markets (e.g. Sandgrouse Market and Jankara Market in the north and west of the island).

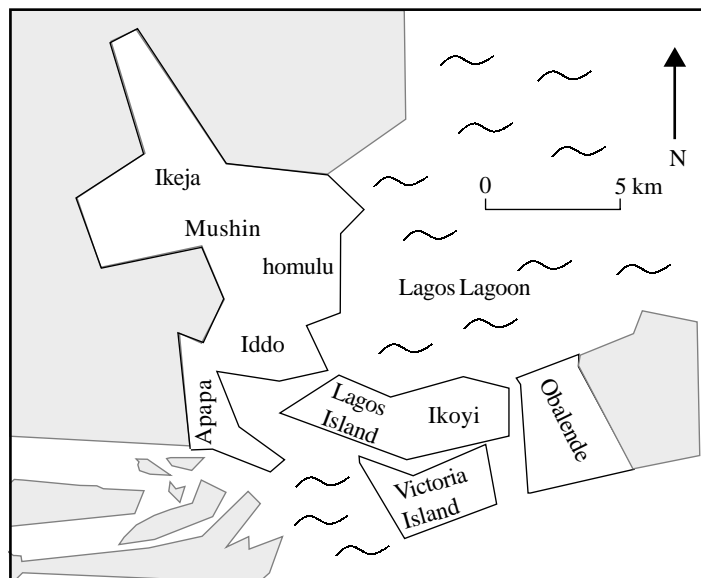
Parts of the CBD have recently been redeveloped. Office and retail development has occurred in the north of the island after slum clearance. The north of the CBD is the zone of accumulation. The Brazillian Quarter, for example, was built by returned former slaves in the early twentieth century. It is slowly being restored. Nearer to Lagos port, the quality of shops, restaurants and offices is declining, so this can be described as the zone of discard.

Lagos Port is a natural harbour. It has been dredged to increase the depth for ocean-going ships and it is protected by two large harbour walls. Much of Nigeria's agricultural and mineral products are exported from here.

#### (b) Industrial areas

Manufacturing industry is dispersed throughout the city because the majority of businesses are very small (often one family only). Transnationals have located in Apapa, close to the port (see Fig.3). There are heavy industries (e.g. car assembly) and light industries (e.g. food processing).

**Fig 3. Plan of Lagos**



Ikeja, in northern Lagos (see Fig.3), has many metal-working, chemicals and electronics factories. Light industry is increasingly located in new industrial estates on the urban fringe.

Retail, commerce and office services are concentrated in the CBD. There is not a large tourist industry, as in some other African cities (e.g. Cairo). Although Lagos is no longer the Nigerian capital, several government ministries remain, and provide employment for civil servants. The centre of Ikoyi is the administrative district, and contains the former State House contains and many foreign embassies.

#### (c) Residential areas

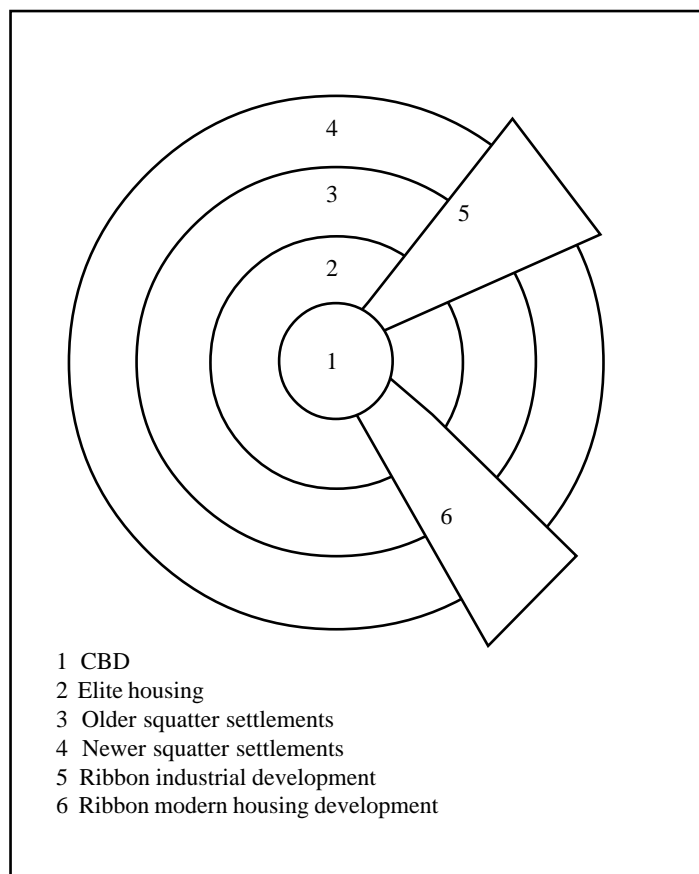
There are clear divisions in housing quality between different residential areas.

Housing density is low in Victoria Island and Ikoyi. Each house has on average 1.5 hectares of gardens. These houses were built for colonial administrators. Now they are home to business-people and senior civil servants in the city. New elite housing has recently been built in Apapa. Ikoyi is now linked by land to Lagos Island, as the swamps that used to separate the islands have been drained.

The suburban satellite towns of Shomulu and Mushin are examples of very densely populated areas dominated by rural in-migrants. Most homes are built with concrete floors and cement-block walls and have limited space, light and ventilation.

#### (d) How useful are models of urban morphology?

### Fig 4. Urban morphology of Lagos



Lagos does not fit fully with the ideal ecological model of a city in a less developed country. This is partly because the model must make assumptions to generalise between different cities.

#### Ways in which Lagos fits the ecological model

- CBD is in the oldest part of Lagos.
- Some industrial development is concentrated in certain corridors (e.g. near Lagos Port).
- Elite housing is near to the centre of the city (e.g. Victoria Island).
- Slums are on the edge of the city.

#### Ways in which Lagos does not fit the ecological model

- Lagos is not built on an isotropic plain, but on a series of islands. Growth is restricted in certain directions.
- Most industry is dispersed. New industries have been built on the urban fringe (e.g. Ajegunle).
- Some elite housing has been built on the urban fringe (e.g. edge of Apapa).
- Slums are on the edge of the city.
- Slums are not new spontaneous settlements but are older towns which have been incorporated into metropolitan Lagos.
- Most housing is formal. Self-built squatter housing is rare. There is no simple decline in housing quality with distance from the city centre.

#### Problems of Urban Growth

##### (a) Housing

Lagos needs 10 000 new homes per year. New houses are needed for new migrants and to replace older houses which have become unfit for human habitation. As the population growth rate accelerated in the 1970s and 1980s, the problem became more severe every year.

In the slums of Shomulu and Mushin, there are over 4 people per room. Only 1.5% of households are sole occupiers. Homes are underlit and badly ventilated. Water is supplied by tanker and standpipe. Electricity supplies are limited. Footpaths and roads act as open-air sewers.

##### (b) Employment

The unemployment rate has increased because industry is now shedding workers. The official unemployment rate was 28% in 1999. As more rural migrants arrive, the competition for jobs becomes more intense. An increasing proportion of people are underfed and underemployed. This has led to political unrest.

Job security is falling, even in middle and upper income groups. In 1975, the populist President Murtala Muhammed instigated "Operation Deadwood" to cut out corruption. Ten thousand jobs were lost as a result. There were large-scale redundancies from the civil service and army. Muhammed was later assassinated by dissatisfied soldiers. Households spend two-fifths of their income on food.

The informal sector of employment is growing in size. Informal jobs include flower-selling, car-washing, shoe-shining, scavenging, drug-selling, prostitution and begging. Informal jobs are characterised by their ease of entry, low capital and lack of requirement for qualifications.

**(c) Transport**

The bridges between the CBD on Lagos Island, where people work, and the suburbs on the mainland, where people live, are major traffic bottlenecks. There are few passenger railway lines. Many people rely on buses and taxis, which contribute to road congestion. Stationery and slow-moving traffic is a local source of air pollution. It takes 2-3 hours on average to travel 20 km in the city.

**(d) Crime**

Lagos is notorious for its high crime rate. The port is the main point of export of illegal drugs, such as heroin and cocaine, from West Africa to the rest of the world. Drug use in Lagos is very widespread. Handguns and other weapons are used by gangs to control many slum neighbourhoods. Armed robberies are very common, despite the mandatory death sentence, and night-watchmen are often killed. Thefts from stationary cars at police roadblocks can occur.

**(e) Health**

The demand for health facilities is growing fast. The government withdrew free hospital treatment in 1988 because it was too costly. Outpatient numbers have since dropped by 30%. The quality of healthcare in Lagos is determined by ability to pay. There are around 10 000 quack doctors in Lagos. They sell false drugs in the streets. Some of these drugs are traditional cures, other drugs are deadly. The use of unqualified pharmacists and healers has increased in the 1990s.

**(f) Status of women**

Females are traditionally subservient to males in Yoruba society. A man may have several wives but a woman can only have one husband. Lagos has a culture of machismo, in which men are admired for their drinking, gambling and number of wives. As a result, women's wages are lower than men's wages. Female workers are actively targeted by some employers, who believe that women are more docile, hard-working and easier to exploit. In general, women are still expected to stay at home during the day.

**Practice essay questions**

1. Assess the extent to which models help to explain the land use pattern in an urban area you have studied. (20 marks)
2. For an urban area you have studied, discuss the factors which influence the rate of urban growth. (20 marks)

**Suggested answers**

1. The key part of the question is "assess the extent to which ..." The essay should consider the strengths and weaknesses of different models. Frequent reference to places in a real city will quickly gain marks. The strengths of the ecological model for Lagos are that the CBD is in the oldest part of the city, there are areas of low-quality housing on the outskirts, elite housing near the centre and some ribbon development of industry. The weaknesses are a lack of squatter settlements, the complication of the site of Lagos and new developments on the urban fringe. The CBD has a dynamic core and frame structure. A sensible conclusion would be that models are useful but do not, and cannot, take into account all geographical differences between cities. Strong candidates would point out that models are most useful at the whole-city scale and that change over time is inadequately modelled.
2. This is a "factors" question. A good candidate will assemble a list of factors relevant to a real city and use a paragraph for each factor. The key phrase is "the rate of urban growth". It is not sufficient to discuss those factors which lead to urban growth. Instead, candidates should consider how rate changes over time, e.g. rapid rate of increase, slow rate of increase, static, slow or rapid rate of decrease. It is difficult to see how this question could be adequately answered without a sketch graph of urbanisation in a real city (Figure 2 is excellent). The factors to be considered are: migration push factors, migration pull factors, birth rate and death rate.

**Exam hint:** when asked to discuss urban problems, many candidates focus solely on housing and employment. A weak description of shanty towns and shoe-shining is not sufficient. Broader and deeper answers are required.

**Acknowledgements;**

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