URBAN PLANNING IN A MORE GLOBALISED AND COMPETITIVE WORLD

GLOBALISATION AND METROPOLISATION IN ACCRA/LAGOS CONTINUUM

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The urbanisation of West Africa, following the slave trade and the European penetration took place at the expense of coastal cities. The most important cities, capital cities are concentrated alongside the coastline. The strongest city concentration are Accra, Lomé, Cotonou and Lagos.

Stretching over 400 Km, those cities are part of a same ethno linguistic unit and have gone through a common history. They were part of a network of cities thanks to which slave trade and the colonial penetration operated. The influence of most cities of the network progressively decreased with the end of slave trade and the birth of modern African states.

These zones represent a geographic, ethno linguistic, cultural and economic continuity. This continuity took place alongside the gulf of Guinea over centuries .This zone is one of the most important access way to the Black Continent and currently constitutes one of the most important population zones

On this Slave Coast, a new urban system on the African continent is developing nowadays in favour of economic, social and political disruption caused by the globalisation process. This urban system covers 400 km and links the capital cities of the 4 countries, among which Lagos is the most populated one on the continent

 What geographic, historic, anthropological and cultural factors underlie this original urban and territorial configuration?

 What impacts has the globalisation of economy, which motivates the most important current changes and adjustments produced on the reorganisation of these urban and territorial stakes ?

How does this phenomenon progress ? What are its current consequences and how should this new dynamic be faced?

The strip of land stretching eastward between Accra and Lagos was mainly populated by Akan, Ga, of Aja-Ewé, Fon and Yorouba people. Ibos that are riverside residents of this zone, will be latter on one of the most influential ethnic groups.

The historic links that unite the different populations of this area (and also alongside the interior of these countries), are of remarkable strength; in the historical account of most of these cities, as well as in the customs in usage, the marks of these historical contacts recurrently come back. The history of Aneho, a city located at the border of Togo – Benin, between Lomé and cotonou, but the founder of which came from the Accra region, is one of the best illustration of this fact.

The Ga, Anlo, Guins, Yorouba and Afro-Brazilians people, will then create on the slave coast, a prosperous group of trading cities of which Accra, Ada, Keta, Petit Popo (Aneho), Grand Popo, Ouidah, Porto Novo, Badagri, Lagos and others... All these cities will know an appreciable economic boom, until the end of the slave trade.

With the constitution of colonies (British Gold-Coast, German Togo Land, French Dahomey, British Nigeria), the cultural and economic zone constituted by this city network will go through the process of balkanisation between the different entities issued from the colonial sharing out. This balkanisation will be pursued after the independence thus, among other things, the failure of attempts to constitute large regional groups or the unity of the African continent.

One of the consequences of the reorganisation of this area will be the emergence of capital cities (Accra, Lomé, Cotonou and Lagos) which will literally empty other coastal cities of their substance, centralise political and economic utilities.

Accra, capital city of Ghana, is an important commercial and industrial centre as well as an important knot of communication. It is equipped with an international airport and an important railroad network. The city forms a conurbation with the artificial harbour of Tema, developed in 1962, which shelters the majority of the country's companies (assembling of automobile and household equipment, petroleum refining, metallurgy, textile, food stuffs companies). Accra is a sprawling city where office blocks mix with colonial buildings and typical African constructions.

The Portuguese occupied the site of Accra at the end of the 15th century. They were driven away by the Dutch, the Danish and the English in the 17th century, that founded rival trading posts. In the 19th century, Great Britain bought from the Dutch and the Danish the right to dispose of the region and in 1876, the trading post of Christiansborg became the capital of the Gold Coast. The trading post and the neighbouring villages developed little by little, then were brought together to form the city of Accra.

The urban planning roughly conceived in the 20's has known a decisive improvement after the independence under the governance of President Nkrumah. Accra draws it's current architectural aspect from this legacy.

After 1960, the development of Accra, took place according to the national and international state of things, notably the migrations between Ghana and Nigeria, Togo and Côte d'Ivoire, and those out of the continent towards Northern America and the north-western Europe (Great Britain, Netherlands, Germany). There is a certain correlation between extra-territorial mobility and internal mobility (redistribution of population within the urban areas).
Thus the popular neighbourhood of New Town (or Lagos Town) has been the settling point of migrants returning from Nigeria.

The urban morphology of Accra opposes spontaneous evolutions to planned mechanisms. The latest are noticeable in the district of Tema : this "ville nouvelle" that shelters harbour and industrial facilities, is linked to Accra by a highway, of 20Km. In the city, we equally notice "residential mobility" of households following the historical structure of the city and the different territorial organisations, since the old centre (old Ga core and inner-city) towards the peripheral areas, then towards the urban fringe, and nowadays, towards the rural areas of *greater Accra*.

The population of Accra has gone though changes between 1960 and 1990 from 343.000 habitants to 1.038.00 habitants. The *greater Accra* (1.763.000 of Habitants), urban region which comprises Accra, its suburbs and "new cities" has seen its urban population increase from 70% in 1960 to more than 80% in 1990. The social, political and economic conditions, as well as the numerous adjustment policies and the political and economic rupture of the 80's (economic Recovery program, decentralisation process) have undoubtedly influenced these changes in the structure of the city.

Lome founded at the end of the XIX century is the last born of the colonial coastal cities ; it will however profit from the end of the slave trade and the decline of the old trading cities. It will equally benefit, (this is a new fact), from exchanges stemming from the introduction of customs barriers between the British Gold coast and the German Togoland. It is in fact to make the British customs of the Gold coast operable that tradesman of Anlo de keta and of Aflao founded the city of Lomé with Afro-Brazilians and Mina people.

Lome is therefore a city of cross-border vocation.

Its development started in 1897, when the capital of German Togoland became an export harbour of raw materials. It went under control of the allies after the first world war (1914), then under French control from 1922 to 1960, before becoming the capital of independent Togo in 1960. Since 1960, Lomé has an average annual growth of 6%. In 1960, It grew to 610.000 habitants. It has largely exceeded its communal limits and from now on merges with the prefecture of the golf. In 2002, the population of the area is estimated at 1.117.000 of inhabitants.

Cotonou is born out of the decadence of the ports of Ouidah and Grand Popo, important commercial centres and crossroads of the slaves trade in the XVIIIe century. It was founded on boggy lands by the French that, in 1930, established a military post as a basis for gradual occupation of the region. In 1885, the French constructed a channel that links the city to the sea then a wharf, in 1891, that enabled the commercial and industrial development of the harbour and of the city . During the colonial times Cotonou, will become an important evacuation zone of agricultural products extracted from inside the country. The transit towards sahelian countries is, nowadays, one of the main activities of the city.

The actual development of the city of Cotonou is linear : trapped between the sea and the lake Nokoué, it is submitted to pressures of the coastal erosion, the city overflows on occidental zones, on the coast and inside (plateau of Abomey calavi) and on oriental zones towards Porto-Novo and Seme Kpodji (from now on linked to the highway). The city is a conurbation made up of four districts mentioned above. However, there is no planning scheme at the level of conurbation.

Since 1960, the town of Cotonou has known an average annual growth of approximately 8,5%, in 1990, it was up to 810.000 inhabitants. The Town of Porto-Novo counted 200.000 inhabitants in 1990, with an average annual growth based on 30 years of 4%. Presently the population of the conglomerate Calavi-Cotonou Porto-Novo-Sémé is estimated at 2,5 or 3 million inhabitants.

Lagos is located on the site of an ancient Yoruba settlement inhabited by fishermen and hunters who then named it "Oko". Some Portuguese traders settled there in 1472 and renamed the town "Onim" and then "Lagos". They developed important trading activities in the city. From the 16th to the 19th century, Lagos was under the domination of the Benin Kingdom. In the 19th century it became a city specialised in slave trade with the complicity of Yoruba Kings (Oba) until the British annexed it in 1861. The city became a colony in 1886. It then had 25,000 inhabitants.

After the unification of northern and southern Nigeria in 1914 Lagos became the capital city of the colony and went through a rapid and regular period of development after the independence of the country in 1960. The State of Lagos is created in 1967. In conformity with a plan dating from 1975-1976, the Federal government left Lagos for Abuja in December 1991.
Numerous confrontations took place in this metropolis in constant evolution. In fact, Lagos perfectly illustrates, the evolution of a third world city subdued to an anarchic urban development and to unsolvable demographics growth problems.

Although numerous administrative bodies have been transferred to Abuja the new capital city, Lagos remains the main economic centre of Nigeria. The city plays in fact the role of a hub for Nigerian imports and exports

Lagos is a metropolis that never ceases to extend and that suffers from a disproportionate demographic growth, of congested urban structures, of narrow unfitted streets to huge traffic and of excessive pollution. Official numbers state, in 1990, a population of 4. 337. 000 habitants for the city of Lagos and of 6. 066. 000 habitants for the same state (with an urbanisation rate of more than 90%). At the present time, Lagos is considered the third biggest city in the world, with a population of approximately 13 millions habitants.

With the constitution of colonies (English Gold coast, German Togoland, French Dahomey…) the cultural and economic space constituted by this network of cities will be balkanised between the different entities resulted from the colonial sharing. This balkanisation will be pursued after the independence and we will note the failure to create great regional bodies or to unify the African continent.
Thus national personalities accentuated by colonial heritage will appear (official language, culture …). So will border conflicts and the more or less pronounced alignment in favour of one or the other bloc during the cold war.

Governments' priorities are other than the development of the Accra / Lagos continuum. However it is an area to develop and upgrade on the entire coast line so as to think of a great regional unit for the West African coast line. It is an area that must be object of reflection in order to find the proper development process that will take into consideration the specificity of the different borders and the customs of the countries. These capital cities present similarities that must be highlighted so as to rise interest from West African populations.

In these compartmentalised national spaces, urban development will be conceived even for these big cities that already belong to a bigger network, on the country's scale, according to the way the leaders perceived their mission and to the way citizens express their culture and mentality. Fundamentally there is no difference between the implemented techniques, African countries being submitted to the same theories and strategies suggested by the founders community and the delegation of technical assistance.
Conceptually however, inspired differences can result from socialist-related, conservative ideologies or from the urban or traditional land tenure culture.

Land tenure and urban development ("square" parcelling in Cotonou, controlled urbanism and zoning operation in Accra, spatial segregation in Lagos, or the liberal land tenure in Lome …) are imputable to these different options.
The architecture and the urban morphology are not less different: "Revolutionary" Architecture in Accra with wide commemorative places, monuments, impressive buildings, while Lagos, is presented as a centre for business affairs and of excellence, Lomé is distinguished by its weakness in remarkable places and axis.

Culture and urban life have also been modelled inside these areas and have also created very noticeable urban personalities. From Accra to Lagos , we meet different types of urban units, and each of them describes others as being dealers, aggressive and crafty.

Beyond all these facets, it is important to note that no apprehension of the development of these cities on a regional scale had been undertaken. Each of these cities organised itself within it's own national zone, without any consistency with the general unit.

 In this regard, the management of these cross-border spaces is the most important obstacle that we can reproach to the logic that has prevailed. The borders not only separate populations of same ethnic group, but also urban entities that are destined to develop intense relations. They are perceived as simple transit zones while in reality they live as real parts of the cities: the borders Nigeria – Benin, Benin – Togo, and worse, the border Togo – Ghana, that limits the capital city of Togo, are not paid any attention apart from the military and customs constraints.

Lome, has in fact the particularity of being situated on an artificial border established at the end of the first world war after the sharing out of the German colonies between
the allies. After the independence this border was considered a dangerous zone because of it could be a passage point for mutual destabilisation attempts. The management of this space has therefore only been seen from a military security point of view, without regards to urban activities, to their requirements and to the external inputs.

That is how an illegal zone devoted to illicit traffic, criminality and prostitution. ... was constituted on the fringe of economic transactions boosted by the difference in monetary exchange between Togo (CFA Zone) and Ghana. The importance of the phenomenon covers in it's perception all the western neighbourhoods of the city.
Even in the logic of city planners in Lome, the western border of the city is a vast forbidden zone not to be thought about. North-west of Lome, a good part of the city, even though situated on the Togolese territory, outside of the no man's land, has been for a long time deserted by the population because it is located on the wrong side of an axis alongside the border.
The Togo- Ghana border has been thus for a long time perceived as a small Berlin wall, an « artificial » border that bars the western horizon of the city and acts consequently as an element of unbalance…

From the beginning of the 90's, a series of events will provoke the end of the compartmentalisation of these areas.

First of all they include the fall of the Berlin wall, the "vent de l'est", and the fight for the democratisation against one-party rule regimes in place. The political controversy of these years has had the merit of leading a pathway from one-party rule systems to pluralistic ones and of establishing democratic transitions followed by political alternation or by situations of lasting crisis. The warming up of bilateral relations between States, that became a necessity thanks to the end of the cold war, has resulted to the abolition of border constraints (since then the border Togo- Ghana is open 24h/ a day.)

In this regard, globalisation cannot be dissociated from these events for, on the one hand the populations' aspiration to live under democratic regimes is one of the fundamental aspects of globalisation and on the other hand, it is this claim and this crisis that have enabled the opening of these areas and the spreading of the globalisation phenomenon.
The story of the egg and the chicken…

This political state of things has then had for consequence the abolition of border constraints and according to cases a strong extraversion of spaces and societies : in countries were the process of transition was a success, liberalisation, the opening up to foreign funding and products, new ways of living, took place.
In countries where she crisis was lasting, the attraction of foreign countries was reinforced and resulted in a strong migration of the youth and the middle- class people, or in their strong mental extroversion. The local identity is generally scorned and a forced tendency towards foreign standards is adopted, reinforced by a violent rejection of local misery (cultural, social, economic, political...).

The phenomenon of osmosis also occurs on a regional level; there is a migration in the double sense, some of the idling jobless people leave areas in crisis (Lome), for more prosperous and active zones (Cotonou, Lagos, Accra) in the same way the business mentality of Anglophone people is exported towards Francophone countries, or some hedonist come from prosperous zones to seek within areas of crisis, the luxury and pleasures hence out of local populations' purchase power.

To this extent, the massive invasion of Benin cities and especially Togo cities by **Ibo** people from Nigeria, and the lot of criminality and xenophobia, that derive from them, is one of the most striking drawbacks of globalisation. The presence of Ibo traders in the cities of Benin and Togo is an old reality; what is new in the current phenomenon, is the extent of their immigration and their spatial distribution : while they were for a long time confined in downtown trading areas, the Ibo people now indifferently settle all over the urban space, up to the suburbs. Social tensions related to the introduction of new values and the apparition of new financial powers rise from this state of things. The increasing of the cost of living (for example, to acquire housing, thanks to their financial possibilities the immigrants pay in advance their rent for one year, at a high rate, thus encouraging the land lord to hike the price in such a way the natives cannot afford), caused by the immigrants, their aggressive and ostentatious behaviour, their more or less evident involvement in suspicious trafficking reinforce the hostility of natives.

On the regional system level, one can explain that cities of average dimension absorb the excess of aggressiveness produced by the big cities of Nigeria without having been prepared to it.

The economic and social tensions, as well as the culture clash that follow this phenomenon constitute a resurgent problem to be dealt with for the next decades.
Globalisation here is lived in its aspect of spontaneous, irreversible and uncontrollable phenomenon.

The physical continuity of the urban areas from Accra to Lagos is being realised at an appreciable rhythm, but more important, the metropolisation of the space is being organised thanks to the power of informal circuits, of extraterritorial family ties, of the intensity of exchanges, of the easiness of connections. More and more important circuits permanently relate the continuum at the expense of border constraints.
An unique urban personality, generated by the synthesis of different mentalities and local cultures and dominated by the globalising culture will without any doubt emerge and create a feeling of belonging to the same entity within the populations of the Accra/ Lagos continuum.

On the spatial level, the coastal tendency, the linear extension of cities along the coast will go on and densify the area of the continuum. This natural tendency of extension of cities will probably be accentuated. City people's choice of residential localisation, has for a long time been governed by their ethnic or regional membership (thus, they had the tendency to live alongside the axis leading to their region of origin). An upheaval of these values is very probable, due to the social personalisation of the urban area, to the affirmation of spatial segregation (Accra, Lagos, or even Lomé already know their immigrants neighbourhoods), to the import of western values (immigrants have the tendency to build rivieras following the example of the seaside metropolis of their home country, and this will reinforce the attractiveness of coastal areas) and this change will be happen in favour of the coastal fringes that will attract investment in real-estate...

Globalisation is giving birth to an urban monster, the melting of several " macro cephalic " big cities and capitals across 4 Anglophone, and Francophone countries: how should we face this new situation in urban development issues ?

Assume the outputs of globalisation and enhance them especially when they are in line with the objectives of the regional integration of the African union. The right thing is thus to pursue the initiatives of the customs union launched within the ECOWAS.

Imagine, on the basis of these outputs, new solutions for a better integration of urban entities, for example the development of the cross- border zone of Lome.
Develop the cross- border zone by constructing for example, a highway system necessary to harmonise the traffic of the west part of Lome (because of the narrowness and traffic jam of in-coming streets of the western part of the city's road system), this is desirable also to brighten up the cross- border zone and favour the development of more sane activities. Bilateral legal agreements could also lead to a better securing and exploitation of this zone.

Define management structures on the level of the regional system to address more urgent problems : security issues, inter- urban transportation problems and the coastal erosion already called upon the authorities of the concerned cities and countries.

Others issues that are more subtle also appear; they are related to the tensions existing between the supply and demand in housing, to the site of economic activities... in fact to the coexistence of different entities of the urban system and to its equilibrium.

Finally, to handle the invading external values, the extraversion and the identity crisis that are the consequences of globalisation, there already exist some more or less affirmed attempts to create an African "Architecture", symbiosis of the universal style and of the elements and concepts stemming from the symbolic and traditional African Architecture.

Attention can be paid to elements of urban facilities : gas stations for example, currently represent one of the most remarkable components of African urban landscape. These equipment have been one of the signs of modernisation of the urban space, and of opening to outside world; in countries of socialist obedience where the sale of gas was a monopoly of national companies, gas stations have for a long time shown a pale figure, thus testifying to the absence openness of the country. In comparison with liberal market countries where foreign companies are present, they conveyed the world wide image of their companies reproducing models conceived in consulting offices at London or Paris. In the beginning of the 90's these forms and spaces could be regarded as an intrusion of a certain idea of modernity and universality.
Formerly, elements of modernity and universality in confined areas, it would be very well inspired today to render them a shelter for culture and local personality in globally configured spaces.

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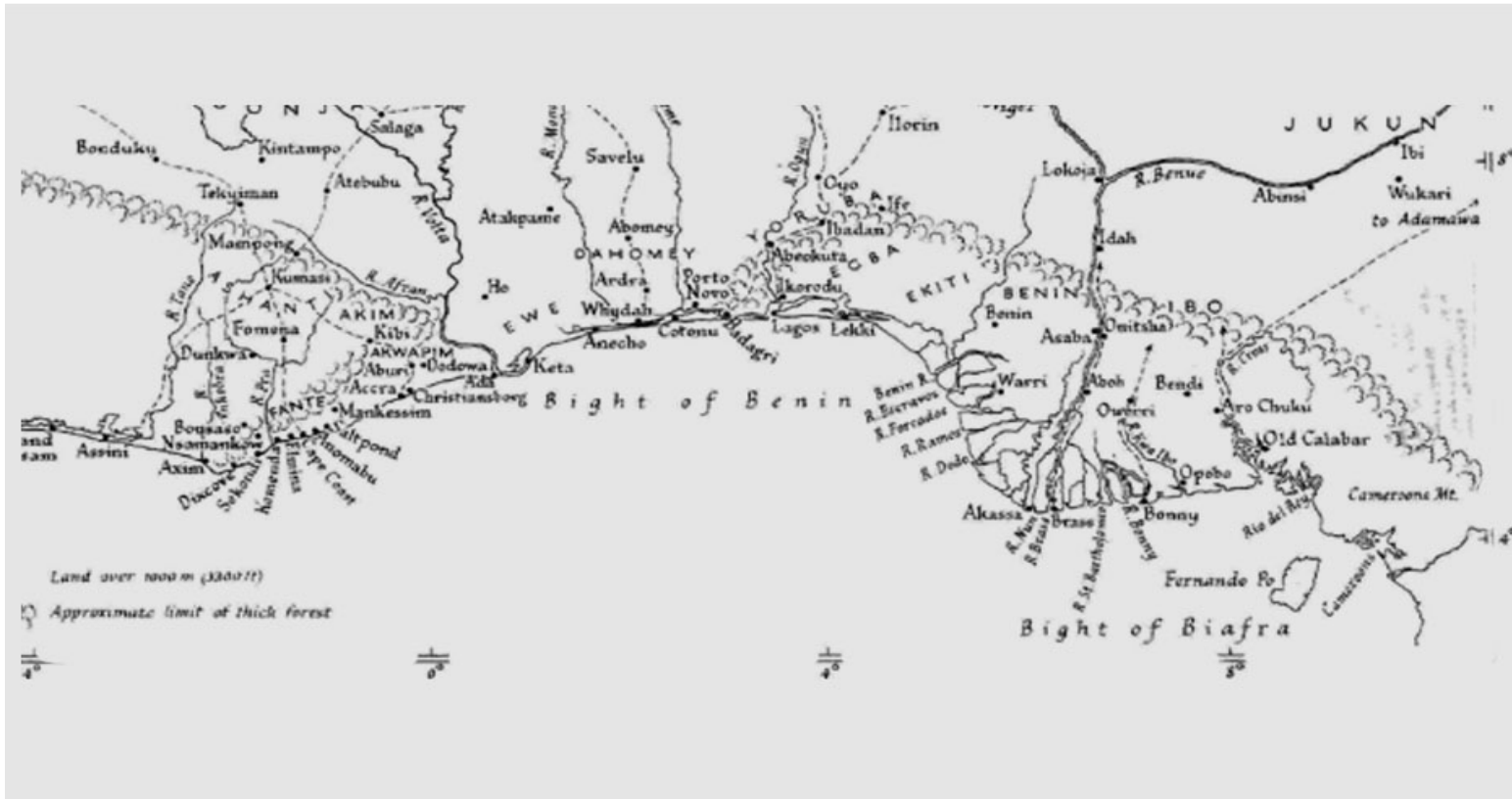VELZ, P.,(1996), *Mondialisation, villes et territoires : l'économie d'archipel.* Paris : PUF.

Fig.1 : The Gulf of Guinea in the XIXth Century

source: FAGE, JD., VERITY, M., (1978)

Fig.2: The Accra/Lagos continuum, along the Gilf of Guinea

source: adapted from www.multimap.com
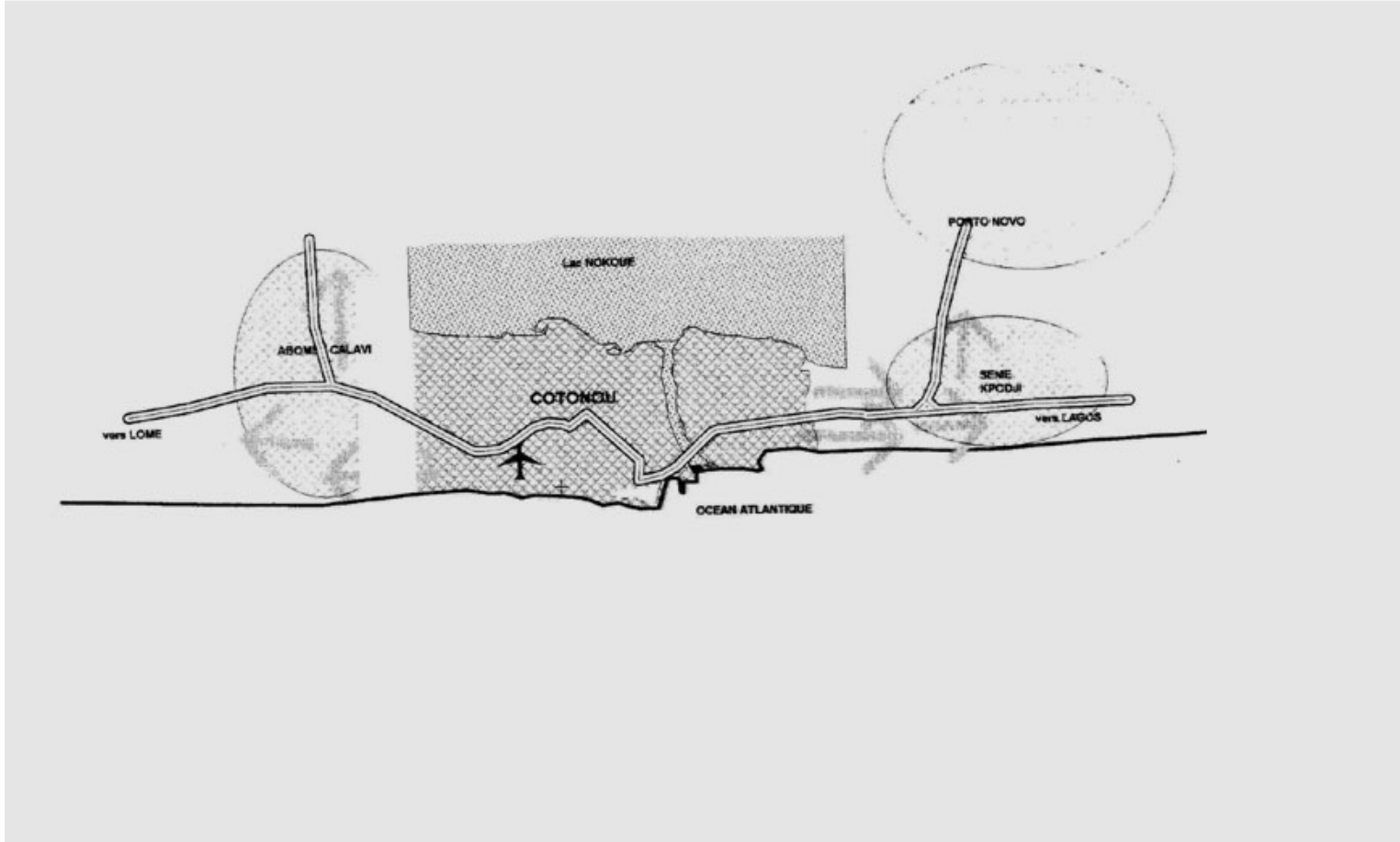
Fig. 3: Cotonou metropolitan area and spatial growth trends

source: authors

Carte: la ville de Lomé, et les contraintes à son extension spatiale

Fig. 4: Lome, a border-town and it's spatial growth constraints

source: authors
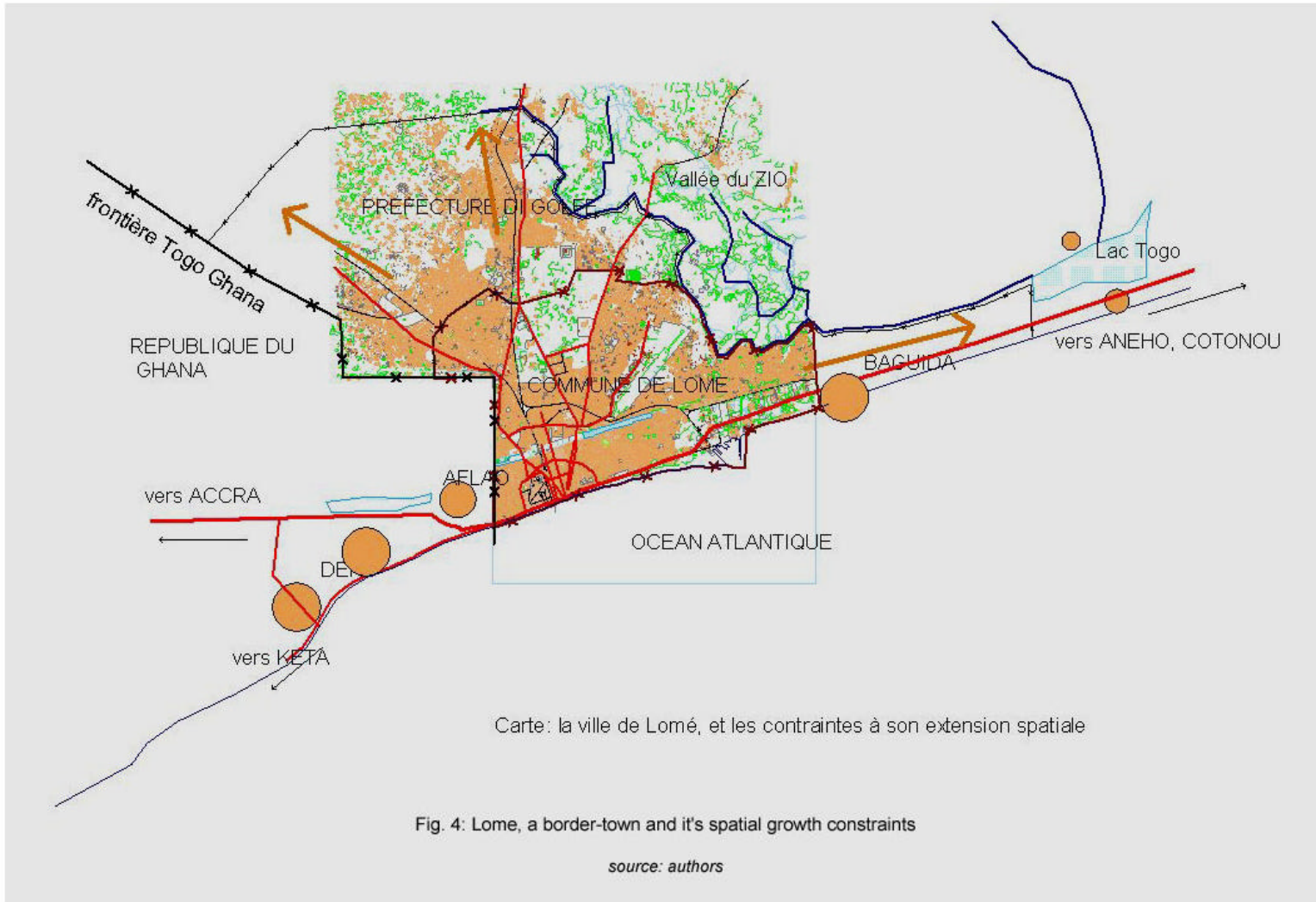
1. Freedom and Justice Arch, Accra

2. pollution, Cotonou

5. Accra by night

8. Aerial view of Accra
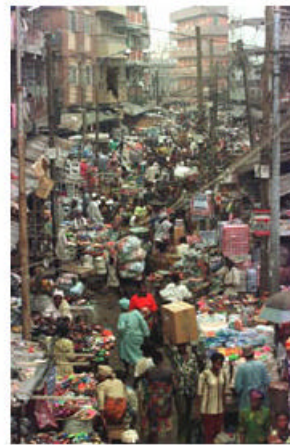
9. market, Lagos

stal erosion, Cotonou

4. children with boat on beach, Accra

6. wreck, on the slave coast beach

7.

7 & 10 traffic jam, Lagos

Fig. 5: views from Accra, Lome, Cotonou and Lagos

urces: 1,4,8: Ghana survey department; 2,3: MEHU (Benin); 5: authors; 6,7,9,10: www.realnigeria.org

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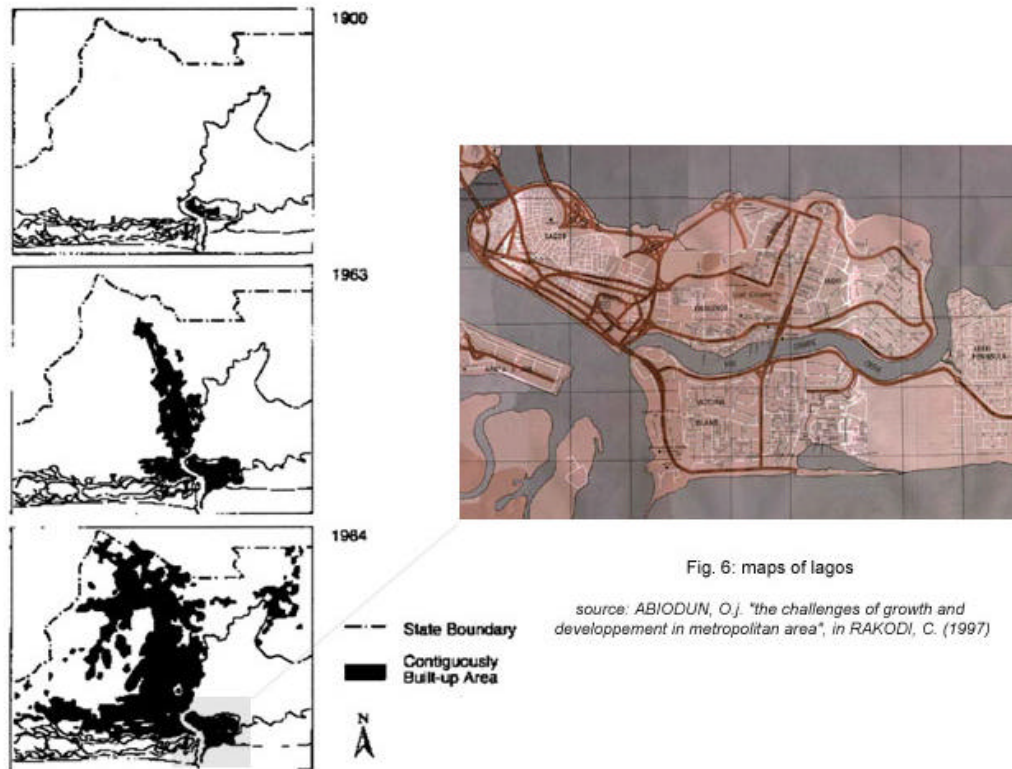## 6 The challenges of growth and development in metropolitan Lagos

Fig. 6: maps of lagos

source: ABIODUN, O.j. "the challenges of growth and developpement in metropolitan area", in RAKODI, C. (1997)
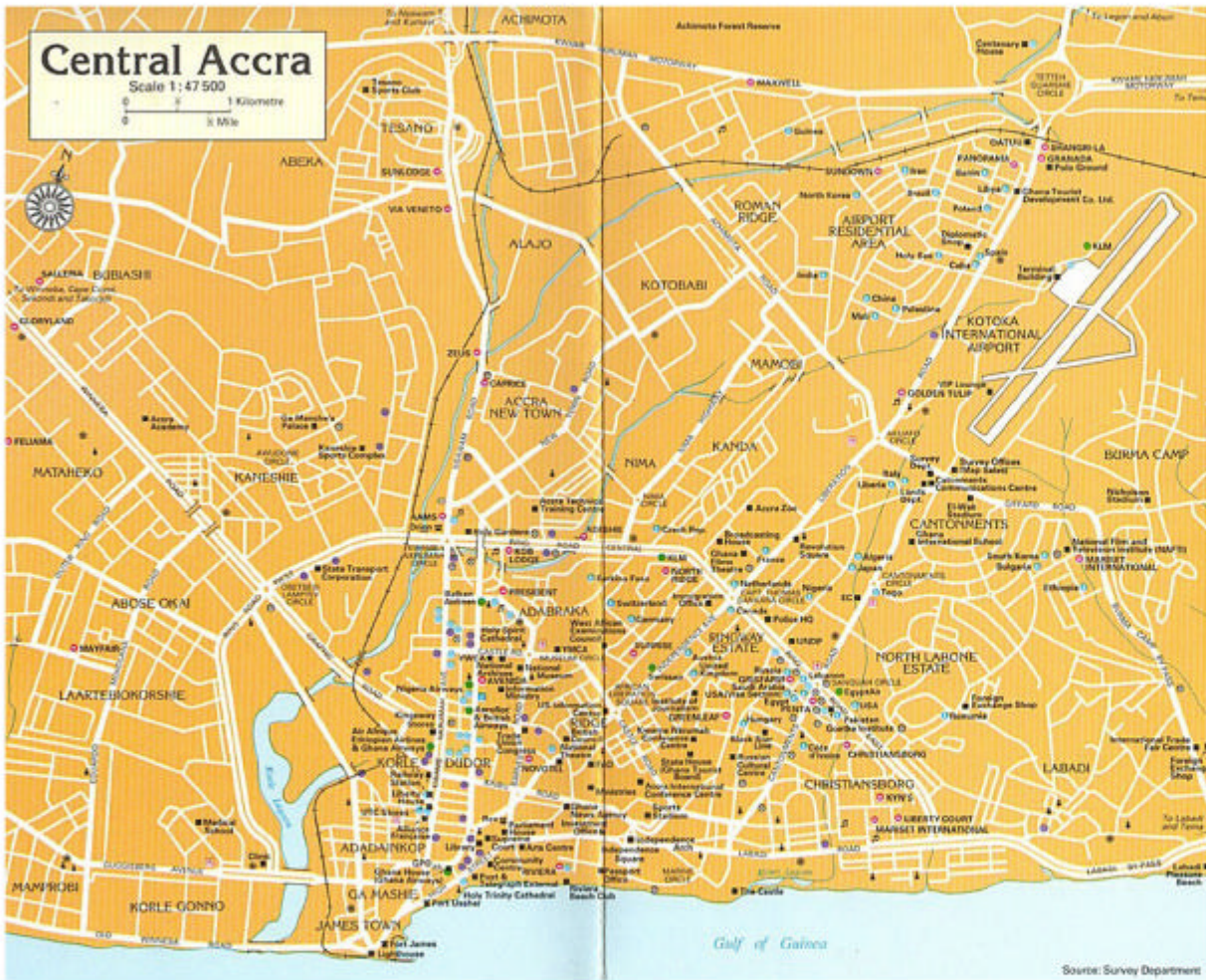
Fig. 7: map of Central Accra

source: Survey Department, Rep. of Ghana