Collectively Remembering and Living an Emerging Nigerian National Identity

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Collectively Remembering and Living an Emerging Nigerian National Identity
by
Golda Kosisochi Onyeneho

A dissertation presented to
The Graduate School
of Washington University in
partial fulfillment of the
requirements for the degree
of Doctor of Philosophy

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May 2018
Dedicated to my Nigerian research informants.
ABSTRACT OF THE DISSERTATION
Collectively Remembering and Living an Emerging Nigerian National Identity

by
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Doctor of Philosophy in Anthropology
Washington University in St. Louis, 2017

Professor James Wertsch, Chair
Professor Shanti Parikh, Co-Chair

This dissertation explores Nigerian national identity through the lens of collective memory and national narrative studies, arguing that an emerging Nigerian national identity draws from a behavioral template I call the Nigerian National Narrative Template. Giving attention to emerging, grassroots nationalism is important because much scholarly work on Africa discusses either sub-national tribal conflict or failed states. This contrasts with other prominent anthropological work on the importance of globalization and national boundary transcendence. More work needs to be done on emerging forms of nation-state identity, particularly in Africa. The present work seeks to remedy this using by collective memory and national narrative studies. After outlining my methods, I provide historical background, an overview of the importance of collective memory, evidence of informant belief in great Nigerian potential, examples of how informants perform the above national narrative template in speech, and illustrations of how my informants deploy this national template in action.
Introduction

In the fall of 2014, while conducting fieldwork on identity performance and collective memory in Enugu, Nigeria, I asked a set of high-school teachers originally from different parts of the country to participate in a focus group where they would work together on activities concerning Nigerian history. I was in the country researching how Nigerians of different backgrounds spoke about Nigeria. The teachers in my focus group said they had grown up speaking different languages, including Yoruba, Igbo, and Izion. They were of different ages, and economic backgrounds. A few were there for a one-year National Youth Corp assignment, performing service to the country. College graduates have to do a year of community service through the Nigerian National Youth Corp before becoming eligible for coveted government civil service jobs. Other teachers in the group were older and had worked at the school for many years. Despite their diversity, they all worked together as colleagues and, while at work, spoke English, Nigeria’s national language.

After laying white banner paper in front of the group, I asked them to work together on a trendline graphing the level of good infrastructure (I allowed them to define “good” however they chose) over time from the 1950s to 2014, while I videotaped, audio recorded, and observed their interaction. At the beginning, their conversation was relatively civil as they carefully produced a graph while engaging in detailed back and forth interaction. Some participants tried to bring up problems in the country unrelated to infrastructure, but their colleagues quickly brought them back to the topic of the activity.
After finishing this first activity, I asked them to complete another trendline mapping the level of corruption in Nigeria over time. Immediately, the diverse participants shouted and began cracking jokes with each other. One participant said, “Wow!”

Another man ribbed, “Are we corrupt at all? This one will be just flat,” sparking increased giggling.

The first commentator then tented both hands in the air over his head to indicate how the graph would go up to the top, “Corruption, corruption will be like this.” The other members chuckled in agreement and looked even more engaged. Responses to the beginning of this activity were about twice as loud responses to the beginning of the first graph activity and involved increased bouts of laughter.

A Yoruba-speaking man interjected, “1960. That should be the lowest.”

An Igbo speaker corrected, “There was corruption then. It was even high then.” They continued on like this, the conversation increasing in volume and becoming even livelier. Other teachers in the building began to peek through the window of our room to observe what the growing commotion was about. As they filled in the graph, they marked the level of corruption as increasing with each decade. My participants heatedly debated which military dictator stole more money and introduced more corruption to Nigeria – 1980s and ’90s dictator Ibrahim Babangida or the late 1990s dictator Sani Abacha, with some arguing Abacha was not in office long enough to affect levels of corruption to the degree Babangida did.

“It was high, but not as high as Babangida!” shouted one participant

“Abacha is the highest!” countered another one.
“Babangida is the highest!” countered a third.

“Let me eat!” two men bellowed in unison, initiating another round of laughter from the group, while associating this phrase with the clearly notorious former ruler Babangida. The group became so engaged and raucous in their discussion that two teachers previously observing the conversation and yelling their recommendations from the sidelines eventually joined the group. The group spent a long time deciding who was more corrupt, their discussion heated and energetic, eventually moving onto the topic of present-day corruption.

“[President] Goodluck. Goodluck is not even fighting corruption,” said one Igbo-speaking teacher, “corruption is even – ”

“Corruption is as it was,” another man interjected.

“Corruption has not reduced. It’s even increasing,” said the original man.

“They are even asking NYSC [National Youth Service Corp] to pay before entering NYSC,” said a young NYSC teacher, circling a pointed index finger next to his temple. At that moment, another teacher walked into the room, in route to an office. Observing the focus group conversation on corruption, she smiled and remarked to me, “Nigerians are talking.” Still smiling, she continued on her way.

Her statement struck me. What did it mean to say, “Nigerians are talking,” and what would prompt a fellow teacher to make that remark after observing my focus group in deep discussion about government mismanagement and corruption? Yet, statements made by my informants such as, “Nigerians are talking,” point to an imagined “Nigerian” ethnic group with a recognizable speech pattern. When people use the term, “Nigerian,” they do not necessarily
mean “Igbo,” “Efik,” “Hausa,” or other linguistic groups associated in different ways with “Nigeria.” Why hadn’t the passing teacher said, “Teachers are talking,” or mentioned some other group apart from “Nigerian?” This statement made by a passerby piqued my interest because I had read other Nigerianist scholars who had argued that due to failures in government leadership and long-standing inter-ethnic animus in the country, residents of Nigeria did not readily care about or imagine Nigerians as an identity group (Watts 2004a; Falola and Aderinto 2010). However, my data contradicted the conclusion of these scholars because the passing teacher easily identified a group of “Nigerians.” I encountered this and many other pieces of evidence that raised serious questions about how Nigerians imagine community and identity performance.

When Nigerians spoke, what did they tend to talk about that made it recognizable to others as “Nigerian?” When we look at what the passing teacher pointed to as the way Nigerians talk, the example is marked by engaged, high volume, and lively discussion about corruption in “Nigeria,” which members of the Nigerian government have either introduced or done little to reduce. Using examples of government looting and NSYC exploitation, the speakers indicated that, through their mismanagement, members of government have impeded Nigerian national potential with regard to human and monetary capital. The speakers associated such national impediments with “corruption.” When they critiqued the current president for not doing enough to stop “corruption,” they expressed a desire to eliminate this barrier to national prosperity. To review, from this example, “Nigerian talk” is marked by an acknowledgement of Nigerian potential, lament that the government mismanages this potential, and hope that Nigeria will eventually reach its promise.

Throughout the year, I collected oral histories asking people to tell me their versions of Nigerian history. This provided further evidence of how residents of the country spoke about a
possible Nigerian imagined community. Such interviews gave me more routinized versions of Nigerian Talk. In the following oral history excerpt, a bright and smiley 30-year old woman responded thus when I asked her in an oral history interview, “Please provide me with the story of Nigerian history – to the best of your knowledge:”

Okay. Nigeria is a nation - basically … there are a lot of diversity in Nigeria. Different ethnic groups make up Nigeria. Before now, we were in… in dark. I would call it in dark when we were not, we have not been civilized, colonized – so, before the … British came and colonized us. So, it’s Lord Lugard that named us Nigeria… after the [Niger] River…and called us Nigeria. Before then, we were …grouped as Northern and Southern protectorate. Each protectorate was governed by a different entity before they now pulled us together. [With increased voice volume, she laughingly says] He did it without our consent, but we accepted it. Yeah, because we didn’t have any other option, because they were the people colonizing us. So, from there, we started growing…. (clap) Along the line, (clap) there was war (clap)… because we were fighting for independency [sic]. ‘Cause, the Nigerian people thought that they have to be free from all this colonial rule. So, they fought for their independency, so that they could be on their own and pilot their affairs by themselves. So, they fought, and later they got that independency. Now, they are ruling themselves.

Despite the fact this is a historical narrative, when we look at its plot, we see similarities in how both this narrative and my focus group discussion described Nigeria. In other words, when Nigerians talk about Nigeria, they often draw from a similar story structure.

When discussing Nigerians, my informant used the term- “we.” The young woman begins by describing Nigeria as rich in diversity and says “Before now, we were in… in dark, I would call it in dark when we were not, we have not been civilized, colonized.” By saying this, she argues that the country is on a path of progress or “civilization” colonialism initiated and that, “before now,” the country began with potential for civilization.
Next, the young woman describes a barrier that Nigerians needed to overcome – in this case, colonization: “Along the line, there was war … because we were fighting for independency [sic]. ‘Cause, the Nigerian people thought that they have to be free from all this colonial rule.” She argues that during British colonization, Nigerians experienced a lack of agency: “The … British came and colonized us. … Each protectorate was governed by a different entity before they now pulled us together. He [British Governor Lugard] did it without our consent, but we accepted it. Yeah, because we didn’t have any other option, because they were the people colonizing us.” The “we” in this historical narrative experiences manipulation at the hands of British colonizers and greatly lacks agency. She subtly begins her narrative by describing how Nigerians have received the brunt of negative behavior rather than Nigerians initiating interactions with others. The young woman implies that at this point in history, Nigerians lacked agency. Eventually, in her laughing voice, she later explains Nigerians responded to this oppression by fighting against unjust systems and regaining power over their destiny: “Cause, the Nigerian people thought that they have to be free from all this colonial rule. So, they fought for their independency [sic], so that they could be on their own and pilot their affairs by themselves.” Even in a more stolid historical description, my informant described Nigeria as going down a path of great potential, having that path blocked by government mismanagement (in this case, colonialism), but the Nigerian community eventually overcoming this obstruction (through independence) and continuing on a path towards reaching its potential.

Again the similarities between the historical narratives I collected and more spontaneous forms of Nigerian talk were arresting. In fact, after my interviewees warmed up to speaking about Nigerian history, they eventually often started to employ Nigerian Talk more informally to discuss Nigerian community. Toward the end of her interview, the young woman above
remarked, “Nigeria – because of the diverse nature of Nigeria, from time to time, we have some problems. But, by God’s grace, we manage it to our – our little best.” Again, we see a motif of Nigeria experiencing obstacles but eventually overcoming them. During these interviews, I often recalled a statement made by the acclaimed Nigerianist author Chinua Achebe in his book *The Trouble With Nigeria*: “Whenever two Nigerians meet, their conversation will sooner or later slide into a litany of our national deficiencies. *The trouble with Nigeria* has become the subject of our small talk in much the same way as the weather is for the English” (Achebe 1984:2).

In Nigerian Talk, my informants described Nigeria as a character with potential for greatness who experiences government obstacles, but who agentively overcomes these obstacles to continue achieving its promise. Apart from speech about Nigeria more abstractly, I also found that my informants described how they, as members of a Nigerian community, live out this story in their daily lives. They used the aforementioned framework as a strategy to respond to Nigerian environments they encountered every day as members of a “Nigerian group.” The following excerpt provides an example of this.

Several months before the aforementioned focus group, I interviewed Charles, a forty-year old television political pundit. During the interview, Charles mentioned something I had heard explained in different ways throughout many of my interviews. We were sitting under a palm tree on plastic chairs outside of the television station where he worked. Bright sunlight broke through our shade as we conversed. He said:

> On what basis do we really as Nigeria come together and say, ‘We the people of Nigeria?’ … What we have here is Nigerian factor. The Nigerian factor is a negative factor. If you are driving on the street, and you beat security, you say, ‘Ah! This is Nigerian factor, man!’ If you get a contract and inflate it by 200 percent, they say, ‘Oh man, this is Nigerian factor, man.’ So, anything you maneuver around, Nigerian factor. Any small political appointment that should have been given based on equity and justice,
and then you maneuver to get it yourself, ah! This is Nigerian factor man. If a babe – woman – has access to people in power, and these are people that are supposed to be paying civil servants well, and then the lady comes around and um [uses] her beauty as a woman to get money you say, ‘This is Nigerian Factor, man.’ So, all the Nigerian factor you hear about is always tailored towards the negative maneuvers we do and get along. You get?

I responded with a nod.

What is the Nigerian Factor? Given the history of protests to ensure these amenities driving to work without encountering compromised police officers or receiving a paycheck in full appear to many as necessary rights for living a good life in many contemporary postcolonial societies (El-Mahdi 2011; Seidman 1994; Constable 2009; Goldsmith and Dinnen 2007; Ismail 2012). What Charles described in the excerpt above could be called petty corruption. Some positioned in powerful international development contexts would consider the actions he describes morally “wrong,” even if people use petty corruption to do things necessary to live a “good life” (Lambsdorff 2007; Transparency International 2012; Fischer 2014). According to my analysis, the Nigerian factor is a non-verbal behavioral pattern that follows the template we saw in Nigerian Talk – Nigerians getting on a path towards success, facing obstructive government dysfunction, but finding ways around these blockages to continue on towards a great destiny.

Charles called this way of acting and decision-making “Nigerian.” He began by invoking a community called “Nigeria” comprised of “the people of Nigeria.” He then said, “What we have here is the Nigerian Factor,” indicating a place where a type of environmental interaction (the Nigerian Factor) takes place. When providing examples of the Nigerian Factor, Charles described 1) a weak system that is not working as expected for “the people of Nigeria,” and 2) how “the people of Nigeria,” or citizens, respond to this dysfunctional system. He called the behavioral interaction with these broken systems “The Nigerian Factor.” This informant
described flaccid and unimpactful systems, which my focus group had argued leaders had corresponded through mismanagement. Charles maintained that broken systems present obstacles to Nigerians and block their agentive path, but Nigerians use their agency to overcome these obstacles and reach their goals. He explained that ordinary Nigerians responded to these corrupted systems where they lived with behaviors and decision-making patterns development organizations and others have called petty corruption, but that he termed, “the Nigerian Factor.” Again, the resemblance between the Nigerian Factor and different forms of Nigerian Talk are uncanny.

In Nigerian Talk, we see this process of leaders stymying great Nigerian potential, but Nigerians overcoming this obstacle and continuing to chase their full potential. Nigerian Talk laments mismanagement of Nigeria by its leaders, subsequent corrosion or corruption of the country, and hope for a leader who can help the country fulfill its potential. We also see a template of halted and regained potential in descriptions of the Nigerian Factor. Nigerians encountered challenges that stopped them from pursuing work or otherwise being who they wanted to become. In response, they used creative strategies, or petty corruption, to get around these obstacles and regain their agency.

Through these different aspects of verbal explanation and performance, my informants painted a dynamic picture of what it means to be “Nigerian.” This indicates that there is a powerful and shared Nigerian identity for this relatively new country. In this dissertation, I use collective memory and national narrative studies to argue that Nigeria has an emerging and grassroots national identity my informants referred to as, “Nigerian,” and that its template follows this structure concerning who Nigerians are, the Nigerian environment they face, and how they respond to that environment:
1) Nigeria is a diverse and divided amalgamation of groups with enormous potential for greatness.

2) Oppressive government elites manipulate Nigeria for personal gain, causing problems within Nigeria.

3) Nigeria gains freedom from oppression and continues on as one.

This template is the Nigerian National Narrative Template or, abbreviated, the Nigerian Template. I argue this is the schematic rule set my informants raised in the country often drew from to describe Nigeria and live out their daily lives as Nigerians. This template does not necessarily explain what has objectively happened in either Nigerian history or the daily life of my informants, but rather how informants socialized in a Nigerian context described Nigeria and verbally conceptualized their actions as “Nigerians.” In studying this, I pay attention to an emerging grassroots form of national identity in Africa’s most populous country, second largest economy, and a major, but often misunderstood, player on the world stage. In the following contextualization, while acknowledging the importance of inter-ethnic strife and global human movement, I explain identity and point to the fact that how people associate and affiliate with their national communities plays a large role in both subnational identification and migration. It thus deserves unique attention.

**Identity**

Due to its grassroots nature, it was necessary to utilize collective memory and national narrative studies to deduce the Nigerian Template, summarized as diverse Nigerians having great
potential, experiencing hardship, but agentively overcoming obstacles to eventually achieve their potential. Particularly since this identity system acts as a response to the behavior of Nigerian national leadership and involve aspects of official Nigerian historical demography, “Nigerian” identity overlaps with the internationally-recognized Nigerian nation-state. Speech samples from throughout the country confirm this (Obadare 2016; Pierce 2016; Trovalla and Trovalla 2015; Larkin 2008; Smith 2006).

A bit of background on how this dissertation conceptualizes community and identity may be in order. Individuals imagine communities when a mechanism, such as language or mass media, allows them to imagine others using this mechanism simultaneously with them (Anderson 2006; Nugent 2010). Such shared activity can take the form of gestures, movement, dance, story plots, and music (Askew 2002; Moorman 2008). These shared items index the social group using them. M.M. Bakhtin calls such shared language a “social language.” He argues that many social groups such as physicists or designers have their own languages or jargon (Bakhtin 1986). Dell Hymes expands from spoken language and argued physical gestures and actions also served as indexes for social groups (Hymes 1972; Hymes 1977). He argued that people communicate and advocate with more than simply words, for example they also use actions. Others agree (Eckert 2012; Denzin 1992; Goffman 1959; Gumperz 1982). Pierre Bourdieu (1991) argues something similar in his work Language and Symbolic Action. Members of social groups often use symbolic actions in politically (or self-motivated) ways to get what they want (1991), as Charles illustrated people in Nigeria do through the symbolic behavioral interaction Charles called the Nigeria Factor. One entry point to understanding a social group involves paying attention to what people who are associated with the group indicate as common languages and shared actions or behaviors.
Such processes of social identification and shared social rules happen on national scales, as several studies indicate (Brennan 2010; Askew 2002; Moorman 2008; Anderson 2006). National narrative templates are the schematic plots that structure how members of a national group agree to collectively remember their history. They help us to see how members of a nation have been socialized to conceptualize their nation and members of it. To better understand the verbal and non-verbal performance of national identities, such as Nigerian, it is helpful to analyze templates citizens use to speak about the nation and act as members of it.

My discussion of national identity views the phenomenon as performative and in line with performance theory, sociolinguistics and ethnomethodology (Goffman 1959; Hymes 1977; Gee 2005; Gumperz 1982; Garfinkel 1964). Identity is dialogic and changes according to the responses of actors involved. It is a conversation. I use collective memory studies to understand the semiotic rules of national identity performance (Wertsch 2008). This conceptualization of national identity departs from Ruth Benedict’s notion of national culture as a homogenous set of national characteristics (Benedict 1934). My conceptualization embraces dynamism and closer to work on national culture that emphasizes performativity, struggle, interaction, and the changing but dominant nature of human perception (Fanon 1963; Herzfeld 2005; Coe 2005; Brubaker 2004b; Holland et al. 2007). I employ the concept of collective remembering to capture this (Wertsch 2002). While utilizing a narrative template, each individual Nigerian history narrative, informal form of Nigerian Talk, or exercise of the Nigerian Factor is unique, but contributes to a living, negotiated, and yet collective Nigerian story. This study seeks to understand what makes certain performances recognizable as Nigerian, while appreciating that configurations of how people perform the Nigerian Template always vary by the person and instance.
National Groups

While viewing Nigeria as its own ethnic identity group, distinct from others associated with it, may be apparent to some readers, such points concerning the importance or stability of identities tied to nation-states are contested. Many researchers have argued that Nigeria, like many countries in Africa, currently experiences instability and lack of community due to ethnic divisions engineered during colonization by European countries in the 19th and 20th centuries and perpetuated by post-colonial politicians and elite (Davis and Kalu-Nwiwu 2001; Bah 2005; Suberu 2001; Naanen 1995; Davidson 1992; Mamdani 1996). They argue that although Nigeria is a country recognized on the geo-political world map, its name and borders have minimal meaning in terms of identity to the people living there because ordinary Nigerians have little feeling of national solidarity and are not proud of being Nigerian (Watts 2004a; Falola and Aderinto 2010; Smith 2006). Watts (2004b) points out that the country’s vast oil wealth exacerbates this lack of national togetherness because subnational political groups fight over claims to oil revenue.

Conversely, other scholars argue that the subjects of globalization and mobility greatly outweigh national identity in importance (Gupta and Ferguson 1992; Ferguson 2014; Appadurai 1996; Appadurai 2011; Tsing 2011; Piot 1999). From this self-reflexive and postmodern stance, many scholars rightly argue that people have never been particularly enamored with staying in one location; and that throughout human history, people have been incredibly mobile, dispelling the pertinence of national boundaries (Gupta and Ferguson 1992). Other scholars have added that today, humans move around more than ever, also discounting the importance of borders (Brubaker 2004a; Lindquist 2009).
While these claims have immense merit, it is hard to ignore data such as an onlooker to my focus group so easily saying, “Nigerians are talking” or an interviewee describing, “The Nigerian Factor.” Apart from Achebe (1984) and myself, many Nigerianists encounter situations where Nigerians discuss their country and Nigerian people at length (Obadare 2016; Smith 2006; Bastian 1998; Apter 2005; Pierce 2006). Globalization and mass movement of people are certainly a reality throughout the world and particularly in Nigeria. Yet, I found that even migrants had much to say about countries they were leaving, and to which they were travelling (Onyeneho 2016a). Other authors corroborate the importance of migrant national attachments (Glick Schiller and Salazar 2013; Ong 1999).

Sub-national ethnic groups are important. Anthropology, African Studies, and media representations often focus on ethnic sub-national groups in places like Nigeria. The trope of tribal conflicts leading to a “failed state” in Africa is common and is part of some of the most sophisticated scholarly work about identity on the continent (Pierre 2013; Mamdani 1996). Still, while some scholars are tempted to label Nigeria a “failed state;” in the cultural sense of the word state, and from the perspective of ethnic identity, has it really failed? While other scholars argue that Nigeria is not a relevant category, is that true? Nigerians currently call themselves Nigerian and attribute particular characteristics to themselves. However, in the midst of failed state in Africa and globalization discussions, these qualities have gone relatively understudied even by the most renowned scholars of the country.

With the rise of popular nationalism globally, it is important to pay attention to how people associate with their national communities in different parts of the world and particularly in Africa. Africa is a region where national identity deserves more attention due to rampant characterizations that it is filled with divisive tribalism. Nigeria is a huge economic power
regionally and internationally because of its oil wealth and population size. As a member of OPEC, the International Organization of Petroleum Exporting Countries, it is one of the largest oil producers in the world, while also holding the status of the most populous country in Africa (United Nations 2017; Press 2017; OPEC 2017). Important conversations about what it means to be Nigerian are currently taking place in the country. If scholars do not pay adequate attention to popular forms of national identification in a country often described as “the giant of Africa” (Apter 2005), they may miss warning signs of movements with the potential to cause costly conflict as well as disrupt international stability and balances of power.

This dissertation explores how people living in Nigeria experience and express Nigerian national identity, as opposed to subnational ethnic identities in the country such as Hausa or Ibibio. Several scholars have argued that Nigeria is so ethnically-divided and diverse that no Nigerian national identity exists (Watts 2004b; Falola and Aderinto 2010). Yet, the ethnographic examples outlined above suggest that Nigerians do recognize themselves as Nigerian and describe norms of a Nigerian group, which is not to dispute that they also see themselves as belonging to subgroups as well. Subnational ethnic identities are important areas of study in their own right, but my evidence points to Nigerians performing a Nigerian national identity separate from these. This dissertation seeks to understand how Nigerians imagine and enact a Nigerian national community and why. Utilizing my experiences living with “the people of Nigeria,” I argue that Nigerians imagine community using a mutually agreed upon template called the Nigerian Template:

1) Nigeria is a diverse and divided amalgamation of groups with enormous potential for greatness.
2) Oppressive government elites manipulate Nigeria for personal gain, causing problems within Nigeria.

3) Nigeria gains freedom from oppression and continues on as one.

Namely, I argue my Nigerian informants saw themselves as experiencing obstacles but tending to overcome these obstacles in order to achieve great potential.

Overview of Chapters

In Chapter 1, I provide an overview of the methods I utilized to conduct this study, my locations of study, and some key findings. In Chapter 2, I discuss the history of Nigeria as the backdrop for the Nigerian narrative template and national identity performance I observed during study. I also describe my reasons for utilizing the lens of collective memory and national narrative studies to conduct my research and analysis in this context. In Chapter 3, I examine interview and literary data from my informants in which they describe Nigeria as having great potential they wish it to fulfill. I argue this provides data validating the first part of the Nigerian Template. In Chapter 4, I discuss how my informants utilized the aforementioned grassroots Nigerian narrative template in their Nigerian oral history interviews and history surveys to describe Nigerian as a character that possesses great potential stymied by its leaders, but eventually overcomes its obstacles and moves forward towards reaching its potential. This data supports parts two and three of the Nigerian National Narrative Template. In Chapter 5, I describe how my informants performed this grassroots Nigerian narrative template in their daily lives by pursuing idealized Western-styled existences, experiencing environmental obstacles on their path put there by government mismanagement, but circumventing these barriers through
creative strategies such as the Nigerian Factor or petty corruption to achieve their goals. After this, I conclude the dissertation by summarizing my findings and providing some closing analysis.

From the previous vignettes, we see that my Nigerian informants associated “Nigerian” behavior with potential as well as agentively using alternative strategies to overcome government-induced obstacles. In this dissertation, I use collective memory studies and national narrative templates to explore an understudied, but emerging Nigerian national identity. One can deduce then that corruption, in terms of large-scale “corruption” or corrosion of Nigerian systems at the hands of ill-intentioned elites as well as the agentive petty corruption Nigerians utilize in response to this, plays an important role in Nigerian imagined community. It is important to pay attention to these emerging, grassroots national identity groups, as at any moment, they may burst more forcefully onto the international stage.
Chapter 1: Methods and Ethnographic Setting

This chapter outlines how I approached collecting and analyzing data on Nigerian collective remembering and national identity performance. I base my findings on fifteen months of comparative, multi-sited ethnographic fieldwork in the major southern Nigerian cities of Lagos and Enugu and the rural local government area of Mbaise. I conducted long-term ethnographic fieldwork during 2014, a year which marked the country’s 100th anniversary of Nigeria’s creation under British colonial rule. This fieldwork lasted ten months, from February to December. Findings are also based on six years of archival and media research. During fieldwork, data collection included close to 100 Nigerian history, life-history, and key informant interviews with Nigerian citizens across multiple axes of diversity; classroom observation in six public and private school history, civics, and government classrooms; participant observation in local government offices including the National Orientation Agency and National Broadcasting Commission offices in Enugu, as well as in a radio station; participant observation at different homestays; over 300 surveys collected on Nigerian and ethnic-group history with students and adults across multiple axes of diversity including place of residence and first language; focus group discussions with teachers who grew up in different parts of Nigeria and who grew up speaking different languages apart from English; as well as cultural domain analysis tests. In this chapter, I will provide an overview of my research locations, methodologies, results, procedures for analysis, my decision to use oral histories, and how I handled ethical concerns.
1.1 Location

1.1.1. Research Sites

Figure 1.1 Map of main data collection sites between 2011 and 2014. Main research sites designated by stars. The site closest to Port Harcourt is Mbaise.

Between 2011 and 2014, I conducted fieldwork in multiple sites within southern Nigeria, namely Lagos, Enugu, and Mbaise, Nigeria. During the summers of 2011 and 2012, I spent half of my time in Lagos, the most populous city in Nigeria. Lagos is located in western Nigeria. I spent the other half of these field visits in Mbaise, a rural local government area in southeastern Nigeria. I sought to compare data from rural communities against data from urban areas, as well as results from urban contexts with high linguistic diversity against results from rural areas with dramatically less linguistic variation. My plan was to see if the stories Nigerians told about Nigeria or the way they acted in Nigerian bureaucratic contexts differed based on these variables. This was because, apart from Nigerian public spaces, the two regions – Lagos and Enugu,
contained different non-Nigerian identities that may have influenced how people chose to behave. Differences would include, Yoruba language use or Islamic calls to prayer in Lagos versus widespread Igbo language use in Mbaise. Examining how Nigerians behaved in such divergent locations, with little in common except that they were Nigerian, helped me ascertain if a Nigerian national identity could exist in the midst great subnational ethnic diversity within the country. I was especially interested in exploring the effects of Igbo identity stimuli in the Southeast because if there was anywhere that citizens would differ in how they discussed Nigeria, it would be in Igbo-speaking areas that historically fought to secede from Nigeria during the Biafra War from 1967 to 1970.

During my next field season in 2013, I conducted comparative fieldwork in two urban locations, ethnically-diverse Lagos and more ethnically-uniform Enugu. In 2014, I conducted research largely in Enugu, while making shorter research visits to Lagos and Mbaise. I began research in Nigeria in 2011, which is the year Boko Haram anti-Western militants began bombing parts of Northern Nigeria. To understand life in Northern Nigeria, I relied on the oral histories of migrants from Northern areas, archival research, and recent data from researchers working in northern Nigeria. I compared this to my data from southern Nigeria. Along with rural verses urban comparisons, the elements of diversity I assessed included language use, which served as a proxy for ethnic identification, age, income bracket, and gender.

In Lagos, I found high levels of linguistic diversity. While collecting Nigerian history interviews, a few of the Nigerians I met discussed their beliefs in imagined stereotypical differences between ethnic groups. While such focus on stereotypes was not common, all of my Nigerian informants generally recognized the country is culturally diverse and that there was some level of ethnic tension. What interested me for this study was whether informants
considered Nigeria as an ethnic entity, and if they recognized or performed Nigerian identity. Apart from imagined subnational ethnic groups, I wanted to know if an imagined Nigerian ethnic group and identity existed as well as what it looked like.

1.1.2 Homestays
My homestay in Lagos was with a woman named Margaret who would identify as middle class, making less than one million naira in a year. She was the headmistress of a school and her husband worked for the transportation industry. At the time, her children were employed but seeking higher-paying jobs. She also had two young people living with her, who almost acted as servants. In Nigeria, I found many people practiced a form of foster care, where if a family had trouble disciplining children, they would send them to stay with relatives they believed could stamp out problem behaviors. Nigerians in films, newspaper articles, gossip, and other forms of popular culture often discussed how foster parents could easily exploit these children because there was little oversight over this process.

In Mbaise, I spent time in two villages with families who lived surrounded by their relatives. My informants called these extended family living units compounds. In Enugu, I stayed with the upper-middle class family of a former civil servant who, as a retiree, ran a small business to support himself and his family. He started the business to provide income in case the government did not pay him his promised pension. Such high-level government deception is common in Nigeria and a popular topic of discussion. This family was more overtly focused on class-consciousness and whether they looked “good” or “normal.” However, all of the families with whom I stayed from the least to most socioeconomically wealthy worried about whether others considered them well-to-do. They simply expressed this desire in different ways.
According to my research informants, appearing well-to-do in Nigeria looked like owning appliances, having access to at least some state of the art technology, raising a wholesome family, and having children attend private, not public, schools. It meant having a refrigerator, air-conditioning or at least several fans, and nice cars. In many ways, the Nigerian Dream looks very much like the American Dream or Ukrainian Dream. This again, may be due to British colonialism and Western influence. Today, family achievement looks similar from country to country. However, in Nigeria it involved living gated-community lifestyles valued as upper class in European and American societies, and supplanting these breakaway societies in wider decaying Nigerian landscapes that my informants found difficult to control. Due to the lack of effective police protection, instead of a “white picket fence,” many Nigerians sought heavy-duty, decorated gates with guards.

1.2 Methodology

1.2.1 Research Methods, Data Collected, and Reasons For Methodologies Employed

1.2.1.1 Research Methods and Data Collected

I used the following techniques to collect data for this study: 1) Semi-structured interviews about Nigerian history and the life history of my interviewees; 2) Participant observation; 3) Archival/media research; 4) Key informant interviews; 5) Surveys on Nigerian history and the history of subnational ethnic groups; 6) Interviewing children about Nigeria (open-ended interviews) – socialization; 7) Interviewing members of an immediate and extended family- socialization; 8) Radio broadcast participant observation; 9) Cultural Domain Analysis interviews; and 10) A focus group graph-making exercise.

The main data collection technique I used was collecting semi-structured interviews on Nigerian history and interviewee life history. I asked interviewees to tell me a version of
I then asked them to tell me about 12 specific events in Nigerian history. I ended by asking interviewees to tell me about themselves. This included asking them about their backgrounds, life histories, and values, while leaving out information that could identify them. I collected 64 Nigerian history interviews – my goal was to collect 50 interviews over the course of the year. I collected 38 interviews in Enugu (medium-sized urban location), 22 interviews in Mbaise (rural location), and 4 interviews during a short trip to Lagos (large urban location). In Enugu, I collected the most interviews from people who did not identify as Igbo – for example, those who identified as Ibibio, Yoruba, and Hausa. The other interviewees in Enugu identified as Igbo. In Mbaise, I collected interviews only from people who identified as Igbo.

I collected interviews along different axes of diversity. I gathered interviews from: 26 people who do not identify as Igbo and 38 people who do identify as Igbo; 42 urban and 22 rural residents; 23 female interviewees and 41 male interviewees; 8 people 60 years of age or older and 56 people under the age of 60 [Nigerian life expectancy is 52 years - 92% of the population is under the age of 54]; 45 people earning less than $6,500 (1 million naira a year) and 19 people making $6,500 (1 million naira) a year or more. Nigeria’s population is mostly poor. The 2016 Gross National Income Per Capita was $2,450 (The World Bank Group 2017). About 53.4% of Nigerians earn less than $2 per day and about 72.3 % of the working poor make at or less than $3.10 per day (UN Development Program 2017). In many ways, such categories can be superficial – yet, they helped me obtain a larger spread and make sure I was doing appropriate judgment sampling. The average interview time was approximately one hour. I conducted 63 interviews in English, the national language of Nigeria, and one interview in Igbo.
In conducting participant observation, I kept field notes of activities and observations I made for every day of fieldwork. I often included both descriptive field notes and analytical field notes. Analysis was highlighted with red text, while descriptions were left in black text.

For survey data, during 2014, I collected 150 surveys from Enugu university and high-school students asking people to recall the five most important events in Nigerian history. From this same demographic, I also collected 109 surveys that asked participants to write the five most important events in the history of their ethnic group. I collected these to better compare national and subnational collective memory processes. During 2011, I collected 69 Nigerian history surveys resembling the 2014 Nigerian history survey, but differing in that it lacked a few demographic questions. In total I collected and analyzed over 300 history surveys.

The largest portion of my archival and media research occurred beginning in May 2014 when I began to make almost daily posts on the website Tumblr.com, and use it as an official research website. The website includes pictures, news articles, audio, and video from Nigeria during my time there in 2014, the country’s centenary year. I also shared links to the website on Facebook so that my online communities could comment, learn, and engage with the research. During 2014, I made 246 posts on the website. During 2015, I posted more videos and pictures from research that I did not have sufficient Internet access to upload during my stay. In addition to this trove of data, I have other audio and video clips particularly of centenary celebration broadcasts along with digital archival data I have continued collecting beginning in 2010 until 2017.

I collected government civil servant and media key informant interviews on topics ranging from Nigerian sports, education, what it means to be a “good” family, as well as infrastructure and “development.” In Enugu, I conducted open-ended interviews with five
children ages six, seven, eight, ten, and twelve from two families. I had interviewed their parents earlier about Nigerian history. I asked the children to tell me about Nigeria. I also interviewed a dependent from one of the families who had reached the age of 18 through my normal Nigerian history interview process. I did this to better understand how people in the country are socialized (or taught) to speak about Nigeria, and the impact of families make on this process.

In Mbaise, I was able to interview members of a large extended family about Nigerian history. For example, I interviewed a father and his children. Then, I interviewed that father’s sister and her children, etc. This technique is also helpful in better understanding the impact of families and socialization in families for collective memory processes – (i.e., whether national narratives are similar within families). It also helps us more carefully track generational differences in the retelling of national narratives. This is because researchers may assume there are little differences between family members (in terms of where they live, what they eat, etc.) apart from their ages and the experiences that come with living through different periods of history.

In addition to more standard forms of participant observation, I also conducted participant observation during a radio interview in Enugu. I was invited to speak on the radio about what life is like for Nigerians living in the United States. During that time I was able to interact with the listening audience about why Nigerians want to leave Nigeria for other countries. Broadcasting is a major link in how certain individuals create collective memories and national narratives that serve as the basis for imagined communities. Not only did I gain key information about Nigerian national identity from the topic of the interview, but I was also able to embody and better understand what it is like to be a broadcaster from this experience, a crucial
role in any collective memory process. I have the audio recording of the interview and also have my field notes about the experience.

I also utilized cultural domain analysis interviews to gather data. During interviews, but also separately, I asked several individuals to explicitly describe words such as “corruption,” Nigeria” and “history” and use them in sentences for me. Such exercises help provide a better understanding of how informants conceptualize and mentally visualize particular concepts of interest. This method is taken from Bernard (2011). George Lakoff and Mark Johnson’s book, The Metaphors We Live By (2008) also informed the way I asked these questions.

Finally, as showcased in the introduction, I also asked a focus group from Enugu to collectively graph the amount of “good” infrastructure has fluctuated over time and also how the amount of corruption has fluctuated over time in Nigeria between 1950 and 2014. I video and audio recorded their interaction during the exercises, and photographed and video recorded their results. I also video recorded their reflections on the exercise afterwards. I drew inspiration for this activity from Parkih’s use of trendlines (see Parikh 2015 for more information).

1.2.1.3 Reasons For Methodologies Employed

Regarding methodology, I text to understand national identity in ways similar to James Wertsch (2002) in Russia and post-Soviet states. He has found that in these places, governments make concerted efforts to control propaganda as well as how people think and talk about their countries (Wertsch 2002). In Russia, although corruption lament does exist, it is sidelined in public discourse by persistent government propaganda positively depicting the Russian nation. Wertsch surveyed Russian public secondary school children and observed public secondary school history instruction. He argued that it is possible to distill the different stories he
encountered about Russia into a basic template or recurring plot involving the country. This plot about Russia encapsulated how Russians discussed their country. Regardless of whether they employed state-sponsored or private rhetoric, Russians seldom departed from this plot when discussing Russia.

I began my work in Nigeria with a plan based on these findings. My goal was to better understand how Nigerians told stories about Nigeria – in other words, I wanted to grasp if Nigeria had a national narrative template, and if so, what it looked like. To be clear, I sought to examine if there was a plot everyone used to talk about Nigeria, where if they did not use this plot, they would be essentially describing another country. It would be similar to discussion about a person – where they lived, their age, talents, or habits. If one changed any of these intrinsic qualities about a person, they would be describing another person. Was there a uniform way of talking about Nigeria that did not change between stories? I set out to visit Nigerian public secondary school classrooms to answer to this question and get my hands on some textbooks.

On my first research trip to the country, I found that history classes were rare commodities in public schools located in all of my research sites. Nigerian public secondary school students I observed did not use history textbooks. My teachers who served as key informants reported that most public schools did not utilize history textbooks. They explained that schools typically required students to purchase their textbooks, and most students could not afford to buy the number of textbooks they needed for history courses. Additionally, instruction about Nigeria in the few history classes I could find, as well as more prevalent government and geography classes, generally did not discuss Nigeria in a patriotic light. Teachers were more likely to criticize the Nigerian government than praise it. I returned to St. Louis thinking that
Nigerians may not have a Nigerian national identity, as Watts (2004a), Falola, and Aderinto (Falola and Aderinto 2010) had postulated. At the time, I equated nationalism to positive and effusive patriotic pride.

It was only a few months later while interviewing a St. Louis-based Nigerian expat for an assignment that it clicked. The man, who was knowledgeable about Nigerian political history, claimed that while living in Nigeria, he had been involved in politics. Although it was a fascinating interview, during it, he constantly bashed the Nigerian government, arguing leaders had not provided enough for their citizens. During this interview, it hit me that I had heard this rhetoric before among Nigerian family members, friends, and interviewees. “Nigerians were talking about Nigeria. What are they saying about it?” Not only were Nigerians talking about their country, but they were doing so in a surprisingly uniform way. In this case, I had initially assumed a prevailing archetype of what patriotism and national identity looked like, and I needed to expand my perspective and listen more carefully. Here, Nigerian nationalistic speech lamented government mismanagement and oppression. From there, I realized that I could not use history textbooks. Given the general lack of government management, most Nigerian students were not reading them. With regard to their nation-state, students listened to their teachers, other Nigerian citizens, in settings with relatively little government oversight. In my research setting, rather than investigating government-produced textbooks to understand nationalistic speech and performance, I realized I would need to go where Nigerians were most frequently hearing stories about Nigeria – other Nigerians. I needed to collect oral histories about Nigeria across a wide array of Nigerians.

My research team of advisors, Shanti Parikh, Jim Wertsch, and I decided that because oral histories are so rich in data, 50 interviews across multiple axes of diversity spanning
multiple locations would allow me to sufficiently paint a picture of national community speech performance in the country. This was the main methodology I employed during 2014, the year I conducted long-term field research in Nigeria. This year also auspiciously coincided with the 100th anniversary of Nigeria’s creation in 1914 under British colonial rule. In 2014, many Nigerians busily discussed the state of Nigeria. Before this year, previous research trips consisted in performing interviews, surveys, and participant observation of how Nigerians discussed the country and what they considered to be symbols of the country. During this time, I continued receiving confirmations that my initial hunch about Nigerian national lament was correct. It was an identifier for a wider identity system. I soon also realized that the system did not only involve speech. It also comprised other forms of behavior in Nigerian contexts.

Ultimately throughout my research, I conducted 64 oral history interviews and close to 40 key informant interviews. I also collected over 300 surveys asking people to list the most important events in Nigerian history and the history of their ethnic groups; a focus group with an ethnically diverse set of teachers in Enugu; media and archival research through which I developed an online media archive; participant observation in five public secondary schools and one private primary school; cultural domain analysis interviews; as well as participant observation recorded through field notes of day-to-day observations of my surroundings. I was particularly interested in watching how the Enugu family with whom I stayed and who sought to be well-to-do good Nigerian citizens interacted with symbolic Nigerian bureaucracies and infrastructures. I identified my interviewees and research participants through snowball sampling. This means, I found them though navigating social connections. If an individual fit a particular set of demographics I needed and they were willing to participate, I allowed them to. For example, if I was looking for younger, female, Igbo-speaking women residing in Mbaise,
and I was able to identify one through a former male interviewee, I would allow the woman to participate.

I found informants by asking friends and relative strangers for interviews and asking if they knew of anyone who fit a particular demographic I was looking for. I need to thank one research collaborator in particular who assisted me greatly in finding a large number of diverse research interviewees in Enugu.

One could make the argument that snowball sampling does not allow a random sample. I would concede that it was not random. I remedied this by intentionally targeting varying demographics of Nigerian residents and conducting research in areas of the country that were distant from each other and diverged along lines of ethnic diversity and urban-rural status. I also collected data across time, going back and researching this topic over several years and have compared my data to that of others who have conducted research in the country. Almost all researchers have noticed the tendency among Nigerians to engage in behaviors I have recorded, such as lament and in certain petty corruption. The effect size of what I tested was strong. My study confirmed the existence of behaviors other Nigerianist scholars have discussed for years as occurring in the country. The difference is that I am interpreting these behaviors through the lens of national identity and citizenship.

In order to conduct interviews, I used digital tape recorders and sought to interview people alone, one-on-one. Interviews were not always conducted in a room. Sometimes, I conducted them outside. I sought to make the interviews as private as possible. The one constant throughout all of the interviews was that I conducted them.
I did not use research assistants because I wanted a constant interlocutor for comparative purposes. I recognized myself as a symbol creating a particular identity context that could elicit certain behaviors. Since this was the case, I wanted that symbol to remain constant. I also tried to retain privacy because of the sensitive nature of the topic. National history, on its face, appears harmless, but I knew from experience people often quickly veered into lamenting the government and complaining about corruption and government ineptitude. People have been killed in oppressive regimes for criticizing their governments. That is why, as much as possible, I tried to make the interviews private, one-on-one conversations. For my long-term field work, I also collected verbal consent, not written consent. Electric and IT infrastructure was poor during 2014, and Nigerians I observed relied greatly on their signatures for identification purposes, for example at banks. I did not want to collect these.

During the oral histories, I began with, “Please tell me your version of Nigerian history.” I meant this to elicit what people personally thought about Nigeria and provide speech samples for how they talked about Nigeria. For surveys, I asked research participants to list the five most important events in Nigerian history, which I did to encourage them to tap into a collective consciousness and wonder, what Nigerians generally would agree are the five most important events in Nigerian history.

1.3 Results and Analyses
I had collected a great deal of data on how residents of the country discussed Nigeria, Nigerians, and also interacted with infrastructures and bureaucracies they labeled as symbolic of Nigeria. Because I chose to analyze this data from a collective memory and national narrative studies perspective, I needed to assess if any consistencies or contradictions existed across performative data collected from my informants. This is in contrast, for example, to focusing on
the specific phenomenology or experience of one, or a few, particularly intriguing informants. The array of informants from whom I collected data occupied multiple axes of diversity including place of residence and time of data collected. In fact, the one thing they all had in common was that they grew up and currently resided in Nigeria. Following the tenets of collective memory and national narrative studies, in order to understand the dynamics of national identity, I needed to assess narrative and survey data on Nigerian history to uncover a narrative template. This narrative template would provide a window into how residents of the country conceptualized, organized, and imagined “Nigeria” and other items related to Nigeria.

1.3.1 2014 Transcript Results

In 2014, I collected Nigerian oral history interviews from sixty-four residents of the country who lay across multiple axes of diversity. In order to understand if there was a national narrative template present in this set of specific narratives, I needed to assess for consensus in the form of a recurring plot across narratives, contradictions across narratives, as well as nullity. I wanted to understand if there were any events in Nigeria’s history that a majority of my informants mentioned and, if so, how my informants knit these hallmark instances of Nigerian history into a plot. I analyzed the Nigerian oral history transcripts in several ways. One way I analyzed them was seeing how many people mentioned different historical events. This would help me understand what kind of events were most salient in the minds of my informants and thus what kinds of events may serve as key aspects of a potential schematic national narrative template. Another way I analyzed my oral history interview transcripts was by cataloguing how my informants described Nigeria, Nigeria as a physical object, Nigerian things, and Nigerian
people. Both methods helped me understand how my informants characterized Nigeria in their narratives. The results of this analysis are shown in Chapter 4.

I also analyzed how my informants conceptualized Nigeria in different ways. This included how they finished the phrase “Nigeria is,” “Nigerian (things) are,” and “Nigerians are.” I also paid attention to how they described Nigeria after objectifying it in their speech. I coded their responses into similar categories. One of my 64 interviewees stopped during his interview and pointed me towards a book he wrote, *The Minji Trial*, which he wrote to be an allegory for Nigerian history. I did not include this informant interview when computing frequencies of Nigerian history events or Nigerian concepts my informants mentioned. For these analyses, I assessed my 63 standard Nigerian history interviews. After analyzing these 63 oral history interviews, I found that interviewees who mentioned these different aspects of, “Nigeria” conceptualized it in the following ways:

**Table 1.2** Codes for how informants conceptualized Nigeria

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Nigeria as an object is:</th>
<th>Nigerians are:</th>
<th>Nigerian things are:</th>
<th>Nigeria is:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A country</td>
<td>Rational</td>
<td>Mishandled</td>
<td>A good country</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>An amalgamation of different parts</td>
<td>Conservative</td>
<td>Often mishandled by self-serving people</td>
<td>An amalgamation of different parts</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A fractured whole.</td>
<td>Living in poverty</td>
<td>Dysfunctional</td>
<td>Diverse</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>An entity, in which things are dysfunctional</td>
<td>People in need of work</td>
<td>Insane</td>
<td>Divided</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A place selfish leaders have oppressed</td>
<td>People who are not very united</td>
<td>Not what Nigerians want</td>
<td>Nigeria faces challenges</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>An entity that threatens to divide or fall apart</td>
<td>People who face challenges</td>
<td>Things people in Nigeria do not know a lot about (i.e. Nigerian history, constitution)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>An entity people hope</td>
<td>People who, apart</td>
<td>Things people are not</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

33
During my research in addition to paying attention to Nigerian concepts used in oral histories, I also analyzed how the Nigerian federal government utilized Nigerian concepts. The following chart compares the most frequent codes associated with Nigeria both from the oral histories I collected from informants and Nigerian government propaganda posted online. Entries highlighted in gray have a matching counterpart in both columns, indicating the potential presence of a national narrative template.

**Table 1.3** Ordinary Nigerian Verses Nigerian Government Conceptualizations of Nigeria. Entries highlighted in gray have a matching counterpart in both columns, indicating further consensus and potential presence of national narrative template.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Nigerian Government</th>
<th>Ordinary Nigerian</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Nigeria is</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Diverse</td>
<td>• A good country</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• An Amalgam of ancient kingdoms and societies</td>
<td>• An amalgamation of different parts</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• 56 years old</td>
<td>• diverse</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• divided</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Nigeria faces challenges</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nigeria as an Object</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Existed before British Colonization</td>
<td>• An amalgamation of different groups</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Is diverse</td>
<td>• A place British colonists put together</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Contains multiple ethnic groups</td>
<td>• A thing that often has actions done to it.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Is divided into 36 states</td>
<td>• An entity in which things are dysfunctional</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Was amalgamated/put together by Lugard</td>
<td>• A place that is disorganized</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• An area in which Lugard did some things like raise the Union Jack and the Sokoto Caliphate a British</td>
<td>• An entity that threatens to divide or...</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>protectorate</strong></td>
<td><strong>fall apart.</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>----------------</td>
<td>---------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Is blessed with natural and human resources</td>
<td>• An entity people hope will one day achieve success.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• A place in need of unifying factors, such as sports</td>
<td>• A place that experienced British occupation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Something that voted for independence from Britain</td>
<td>• A place still manipulated by the military and foreign donor countries.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• An entity that declared its independence from Britain</td>
<td>• A place that is hindered by government corruption</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• A place that suffered from a lack of democracy</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Something that is pushed around and manipulated by its leaders</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• An entity that faced severe economic problems</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>Nigerian Things</strong></th>
<th><strong>Mishandled</strong></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• Impact not only Nigeria, but the rest of the world.</td>
<td>• Often Mishandled by self-serving people</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Dysfunctional</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Insane</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Not what Nigerians want</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Things people in Nigeria do not know a lot about (i.e. Nigerian history, constitution)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Things people are not interested in</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>Nigerian People</strong></th>
<th><strong>Rational</strong></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• Come from over 250 ethnic groups and languages</td>
<td>• Conservative</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Hold English as their lingua franca</td>
<td>• Living in poverty</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Are religiously heterogenous</td>
<td>• People in need of work</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• People who have experienced problems.</td>
<td>• People who are not very united</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• People who, “reflect on issues, concerning the economic, social and political development of the country”</td>
<td>• People who face challenges</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• People who emotionally remember October 1, 1960</td>
<td>• People who, apart from independence, have things done to them by elites</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• People who deal with corruption</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

After analyzing the transcripts, I found that this narrative fits the Nigerian national narrative template:

1. **Nigeria is a diverse and divided amalgamation of groups with enormous potential for greatness**
2. Trouble: Oppressive elites manipulate Nigeria for personal gain, causing problems within Nigeria.

3. Nigeria gains freedom from oppression and continues on as one (Onyeneho 2016c).

One thing I encountered a great deal was that people I asked to interview or survey often reported that they did not know much about Nigerian history. Many told me that they were not history experts, and I should ask people who were. This indicates these individuals believed they were educating me about Nigerian history because they assumed I was a novice in the subject. Some even asked me why I did not simply study books on Nigerian history. This again indicated that I, and my questions, symbolized certain things to them, and perhaps a 70-year-old Igbo man conducting this research, for example, would have gotten a different response.

Several of my interviewees also may have responded as they did because they were not used to receiving questions about Nigerian history. When interviewing and asking interviewees to please tell me their versions of Nigerian history, I allowed them to start the story where they wanted. Some began during pre-colonial eras. Others started with either independence or amalgamation (See Appendix A for Nigerian Oral History Story Arcs). When coding this particular table, I cross-checked my codes with another scholar, my advisor James Wertsch. For this particular chart, I did not include narratives that did not begin with either amalgamation or independence. Those that fell into this category are marked with NA. Additionally, when I could not discern a narrative arc in a interviewee’s responses to the request, “Please tell my your version of Nigerian history,” I also marked their slot with NA.

After individuals had responded fully to this question, I asked them follow up questions about specific events in Nigerian history, namely: Amalgamation, colonization, independence,
Nigeria becoming a republic, the Nigerian-Biafran Civil War, Reconstruction, The discovery of oil, Military Rule, The death of Moshood Abiola, The transition to democracy, Current democratic rule, and the Centenary celebrations taking place that year. As I moved on through the research, I added questions at the end inquiring for their opinions on Goodluck Jonathan’s Transformation Agenda and what life was like for average Nigerians. I invoked average in order for them to think about Nigerian norms. The oldest person I attempted to interview was 100 years old, and the youngest person was 18. I also checked my findings from the transcripts against my 2014 survey results in a process of triangulation.

1.4 Survey Results

1.4.1 2011 Survey Data Results

I surveyed, 69 Nigerians citizens across ethnic group and rural/urban place of residence. 60.8% of respondents (42 out of 69 people) listed independence from the British as the most important event in Nigerian history. Out of 69 respondents, 25 people or 36% listed the Civil War. At a distant third, 22% or 15 out of 69, mentioned Democracy Day. Democracy Day occurred on May 29, 1999 – it is the day Nigeria returned to Civilian rule after thirty years of almost uninterrupted of military dictatorship. In addition to these findings, I found that many informants at the time warned me that they were not experts in history and may not be the best people to fill out the survey for me. It was difficult for people to list the five most important events in Nigerian history. They were a bit unsure about what the agreed upon “most important historical events” were, even though they are able to list some historical events. They also often listed events that were important to them personally, such as the current Boko Haram crisis or the Sosoliso Plane crash of 2005. It took many people quite a long time to complete the survey -
very few people finished the survey quickly. With regard to gender, for the first, second and third most important events in Nigerian history, females provided a wider variety of responses about history than males did. It took many people quite a long time to complete the survey - very few people finished the survey quickly.

Slightly more than fifty percent of my informants said they learned about Nigerian history in schools (39 out of 69 or 56%). However in total, people reported learning Nigerian history from a variety of sources - at least 22 sources of information ranging from first-hand witness, the media, oral tradition, to pastors. Thus, people are getting information about Nigerian History from a number of sources, and not just from school.

1.4.2 2014 School Survey Data Results

In 2014, I asked 49 secondary school juniors (also called SS2 students) at a local government high school in Enugu to complete a variation of the same survey I had administered in 2011. The only differences in this survey were a few demographic questions. I asked them to list the five most important events in Nigerian history and also indicate what they thought was the most important event out of those they listed. I also asked 99 members of the Catholic Student Union at the University of Nigeria, Enugu campus (UNEC) to complete the same Nigerian history survey I had given the younger, secondary school students. I worked with the Catholic Student Union because I had access to this large group of students. Another 100 UNEC students completed an unrelated survey on the history of the subnational linguistic group, with which they identified. This second survey was used as a sort of placebo for comparative purposes.
1.4.2.1 Summary

Most of the people I surveyed in 2014 were Igbo. Most were young – 25 years old and under. They were largely students. Gender was rather equally split. For this group Independence was clearly the most important event in Nigerian history because it marked freedom/a break from colonial oppression and was commonly a watershed moment taught in schools. For both (SS2 and UNEC) groups, about half of respondents listed independence as the first most important event in Nigerian history. Under THE MOST important event in Nigerian history 77% of SS2 students listed independence and about 46% of UNEC students listed Independence.

This is also striking because the sample is largely Igbo. One would guess that as a highly traumatic event for the Igbos, Igbo-speakers would have listed the Biafran War, but they did not. It may be that students were addressing Nigeria as a whole, and acting in a “Nigerian” mode when completing this survey not an “Igbo” mode – i.e., enacting a Nigerian identity vs. an Igbo identity. This would make sense, since the question specifically asked about the most important events in Nigerian history not in Igbo history. This may also be the case because I surveyed them in a more formal setting (public school) verses an informal setting (i.e. home) (Scott 1990).

Based on discussions of free listing by Russell Bernard (Bernard 2006:304), items that are most salient are listed first and listed most frequently. Independence was listed first the most times and was listed most frequently overall. The vast majority of people also explicitly listed Independence as the most important event in Nigerian history. About 115 people out of 148 (over 77.7%) people mentioned Independence in their list of most important events in Nigerian history. Independence is thus, by far, the most salient event. The Nigerian-Biafran Civil war was the second most frequently listed event. About 76 people out of 148 mentioned the Nigerian-Biafran Civil war as one of the most important events in Nigerian history (about 51.6%). This indicates it is the second most salient event. For the third most salient event, there was a split
between older University of Nigeria students and younger secondary school students. If taken across both groups, Amalgamation is the next most salient event in Nigerian history. Thirty-eight (counting one from the SS2 group) out of 148 (about 25.7%) people mentioned Amalgamation. The next most mentioned event was Nigeria’s Transition to Democracy with thirty-two out of 148 people mentioning the event (about 21.6%). Both university and secondary school students mentioned Nigeria’s transition to democracy. If split is taken into account, for secondary school students, Children’s Day (7 people) is about tied with Democracy Day (6 people). For UNEC, 26 people mentioned Democracy Day and 6 people mentioned Children’s Day.

Interestingly, these aggregate frequencies across survey respondents mapped onto what respondents reported as the single important historical event in Nigerian history. A large number of informants listed the following four events as the most important in Nigerian history. As these overlap with the most frequently mentioned events overall, these survey responses will likely help us understand the national narrative template.

Most important event in Nigerian history:

- [UNEC - Independence in 1960: 42 people, 42.4% ] [SS2- Independence in 1960: 38 people, 77.6%]
- Biafra War [from 1967-70]: 9 people, 9.1%
- Amalgamation in 1914: 7 people, 7.1%
- Transition to Democracy in 1999: 5 people, 5.1%

Table 1.4 Demographic Summary for 2011 and 2014 Surveys
1.4.4 Results from 2014 Nigerian History Survey of UNEC Students (For all answers, I have not included in this report historical events mentioned by two people or less):

Table 1.5 Summary of all Survey Findings

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>First Most Important Event</th>
<th>2014 Survey of Students at the University of Nigeria Enugu Campus</th>
<th>2014 Survey of Enugu Senior Secondary School Students</th>
<th>2011 Survey of Lagos and Mbaise Residents</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Independence (N=46, 46.5%)</td>
<td>• Independence (N=28, 57.1%)</td>
<td>• Independence (N=19, 28%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Civil War (N=14, 14.1%)</td>
<td>• Civil War (N=6, 9%)</td>
<td>• Civil War (N=6, 9%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Amalgamation (N=10, 10.1%)</td>
<td>• Colonialism (N=4, 6%)</td>
<td>• Colonialism (N=4, 6%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• Aba Women’s Riot (N=3, 4%)</td>
<td>• Aba Women’s Riot (N=3, 4%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• Amalgamation (N=3, 4%)</td>
<td>• Amalgamation (N=3, 4%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Second Most Important</td>
<td>• Civil War (N=21, 21.2%)</td>
<td>• Independence (N=8, 16.3%)</td>
<td>• Independence (N=11, 16%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Independence (N=6,</td>
<td>• Civil War (N=6,</td>
<td>• 1963 Republican</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>16.3%)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Third Most Important</td>
<td>Fourth Most Important</td>
<td>Fifth</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>------------</td>
<td>----------------------</td>
<td>-----------------------</td>
<td>-------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Amalgamation (N=7, 16.1%)</td>
<td>Amalgamation (N=4, 12.2%)</td>
<td>Democracy Day</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Transition to Democracy (N=5, 5.1%)</td>
<td>Children's Day (N=4, 8.2%)</td>
<td>Worker's Day (N=3, 6.1%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Military Coup (N=5, 5.1%)</td>
<td>New Yam Festival (N=3, 6.1%)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Republican Status 1963 (N=5, 5.1%)</td>
<td>Democracy Day (N=3, 6.1%)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Children’s Day (N=3, 3%)</td>
<td>Independence (N=3, 6.1%)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Civil War (N=15, 15.2%)</td>
<td>New Yam Festival (N=3, 6.1%)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Amalgamation (N=12, 12.1%)</td>
<td>Children’s Day (N=3, 6.1%)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Independence (N=10, 10.1%)</td>
<td>Democracy Day (N=3, 6.1%)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Democracy Day (N=8, 8.1%)</td>
<td>Independence (N=3, 6.1%)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Republican Status (N=6, 6.1%)</td>
<td>New Yam Festival (N=3, 6.1%)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Transatlantic Slave Trade (N=4, 4%)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Children’s Day (N=3, 3%)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Civil War (N=11, 11.1%)</td>
<td>Democracy Day (N=3, 6.1%)</td>
<td>Democracy Day</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Democracy Day (N=6, 6.1%)</td>
<td>Worker’s Day (N=3, 6.1%)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Republican Status (N=6, 6.1%)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Amalgamation (N=4, 4%)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Independence: (N=4, 4%)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Death of Abacha (N=3, 3%)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Democracy Day</td>
<td>Ebola Outbreak</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Ebola Outbreak</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Transition to</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Democracy Day</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
1.5 Other Data Results

Above, I have covered data that are most relevant to collective memory and national narrative analysis. However, as mentioned above, I engaged in triangulation to cross-check my results. In total, I utilized and cross-checked thirteen different points of data. I have attached my research reports and analysis for each of these points of data as appendices.

1.6 Oral Histories Versus Textbooks

Though I wanted to understand how people taught Nigerian history in schools, it was impossible to answer this question using textbooks because children in the schools I visited did not use history textbooks. Lagos was the only one of my three field sites where I found a public school history class. There, children could not afford to buy history textbooks. Their teacher told
me history students would have needed to purchase a large number of books. I was extremely fortunate to have found a school that taught history at all. In order to learn, students copied down notes the teacher made on the board and studied from those.

I got to know the history teacher in Lagos, who was a detailed instructor and engaging lecturer. I interviewed her several times. She said that her school did not distribute history textbooks to students. She noted that as compared to schools in other states, the government in Lagos did a good job at funding educational institutions and providing for student needs. Yet, she lamented, public schools in the state still looked like they were falling apart [See Figures 2 and 3 for images of her school]. The government in Lagos, she argued, unlike other state governments, did provide students with free textbooks for other subjects, but did not provide textbooks for history. When I asked several key informants why history education currently takes a back seat in Nigeria’s educational system, they typically responded that the government did not think that it was as important as other subjects. They also argued that students did not like to take history because they had to remember a lot of dates.

In some ways, it was almost as though Falola and Aderinto (Falola and Aderinto 2010) were onto something in saying that the government purposefully did not want to talk about history because the history of Nigeria was so rife with government oppression and attempts at division, which undermines the very idea of Nigeria itself. Some theories of genocide and war argue that it takes about forty years before a country becomes comfortable discussing a conflict (Wajnryb 2001; Cesarani and Sundquist 2012). These theories discuss periods of “silence.” It may be that Nigeria is currently experiencing an age of silence when it comes to their civil war and the history, which caused it.
1.7 Ethics

1.7.1 Protecting Participant Data

In addition to verbal consent processes to protect the identity of my informants, my computer where I stored my files was password protected, and I did not allow anyone to touch any of my research devices. No one has heard my raw files except for a few advisors on my research team and myself. I also did not collect any names and anonymized all of my informants and interviewees by listing them in my notes with letter and number combinations. For key informants, I used pseudonyms. My Washington University in St. Louis IRB Clearance ID for work in 2014 is 201307096. My IRB clearance number for work conducted between 2011 and 2013 is 201105424. I gained Nigerian IRB clearance for work conducted between 2011 and 2013, as well as work conducted in 2014 through Washington University in St. Louis’s IRB use of cultural reviewers.
Chapter 2: Nigerian Academic History Verses Nigerian Collective Memory

This chapter provides historical background on the political situation in Nigeria as well as why and how the Nigerian public environment came to symbolize a fall from grace (or falling short of future grace) for Nigerians I interviewed for my dissertation. Not taking desires for Westernization as a given, I begin with historical background tracing how postcolonial desires to pursue Western lifestyles became so widespread in Nigeria. I use both academic historical records and oral histories to do this. I first lay out the academic historical record on the history of Nigeria based on secondary historical and anthropological sources. I then make the distinction between history and memory. After this, I explain what collective memory is and how it is different from the more analytical historical account I had just provided. I finally make the case for utilizing collective memory and oral historical accounts in African Studies to understand identity performance and the state in Africa.

In this dissertation, I view collective memories and the narrative templates that structure them as tools that provide key insights into the nature of identity systems. I apply this analysis to the Nigerian national identity system, as opposed to other ethnic ones. Using collective memory and national narrative templates as a spring board, in later chapters, I analyze this collective memory project among Nigerians and find that lack of agency, followed by agency serve to frame the Nigerian national narrative template, how my Nigerian informants spoke about their country, and how my informants interacted with symbolic and decaying Nigerian infrastructures in their daily lives.

2.1 Part I: Academic History-Telling
2.1.1 Nigerian Colonization

In this first section, I trace an academic history of Nigeria in order to provide a backdrop for this study. I also provide some needed demographic information. Nigeria is located on the coast of West Africa between Cameroon and Benin, has over 250 politically-recognized linguistic groups, and is the most populous country in Africa, with over 180 million people (CIA 2016a). Three linguistic groups are the most populous and have served as major players in the folk stories of Nigerian history that I collected – the Yoruba, Hausa, and Igbo.

British business and military interests formed Nigeria at the turn of the 20th century through often violent political and military conquest. For several centuries before the British colonial period, various forms of governance, imagined communities, and identity existed. Pre-colonial polities in the region had been undergoing clashes and demographic changes. For instance, in the early 1800s, before the British colonized this region, Usman dan Fodio and his Fulani army had colonized and conquered Hausa-speaking kingdoms and villages near the Sahara desert creating the Sokoto Caliphate. Dan Fodio and his army then moved southward and colonized Yoruba and Nupe territories (Morton-Williams 1968). By the mid-1800s in these conquered areas, sultans and emirs led subject populations using theocracies and Islamic laws. They employed Islamic education and their sultans ruled autocratically (Falola and Heaton 2008; Metz 1991a).

In areas further to the southwest not colonized by the Fulani, kings called *Obas*, led what was left of the Yoruba kingdom. Obas ruled less autocratically than their sultan counterparts to the north (Metz 1991a). In areas to the southeast, people largely lived in democratically-governed villages shaped culturally and politically by competitive market economies and long-standing
coastal trade networks. The slave trade heavily influenced conceptions of the good life in both Yoruba areas and village networks further east. At this time, the lavish lifestyles of Yoruba Oyo royalty depended in part on income from the transatlantic slave-trade income (Morton-Williams 1968). Additional preexisting trade relationships with other nations, for example through trans-Saharan trade networks and later, European-African palm oil trade, greatly influenced the trajectories of local economies and symbols of prestige for centuries (Falola 2008a). However, most ordinary citizens of these areas lived relatively far-removed from the horrors of slavery and the details of mercantile trade. Nothing changed how ordinary citizens of these nations saw themselves and measured achievement of the good life as dramatically as British colonization and its accompanying development rhetoric.

Though the British military had already colonized parts of Asia, East, and Southern Africa, by the mid-1800s, they had yet to invade parts of West Africa. Growing industrialism in Europe caused the British Foreign Office to establish consulates in the Bights of Biafra and Benin in 1849, where they conducted exploitative business practices for raw materials. Many regard this as the beginning of British colonization in what is now Nigeria (Falola and Heaton 2008).

The British created two protectorates on either side of the Niger River, one in the North and one in the South, ruled by a Governor General, Frederick Dealtry Lugard along with his subordinate District administrators and officers (Metz 1991b). Lugard believed taxing palm oil trade in Southern Nigeria could help financially support his colonization efforts in Northern Nigeria. He and his advisors concluded that as a unit, both areas could make the newly-created, “Nigeria,” a domain rich in natural resources the British could easily exploit.
The word, name, and idea “Nigeria” were British and were from the beginning. Lugard joined the Northern and Southern protectorates into one unit in 1914, not only for aforementioned economic reasons, but also to in order to more easily recruit Nigerians for World War I. Flora Shaw, Lugard’s wife, picked the name for this new area cradling British-named River Niger: Nigeria (Falola 2008b). British colonists fought, killed, raped, and over-taxed Nigerians, while exploiting the regional resources such as palm oil, until 1960 when Nigerians gained independence from the British (van den Bersselaar 2004; Brown 2006; Falola 2008a; Ekechi 1981; Pierce 2006). In the intervening years, under colonization, Nigeria remained a loosely connected amalgam of different ethnic groups struggling to find a common identity under the British (Falola 2008a). British colonists devised ethnic groups to consolidate power by sowing division among colonized populations (Comaroff and Comaroff 2009; Hobsbawm and Ranger 2012; Mamdani 1996; Pierre 2013). For this reason and others Nigerians experienced large amounts of ethnic tension prior to independence (Oliver 2005). However, Nigerians such as 1960s nationalist leaders found common ground in their desire for a sovereign Nigeria (Falola 2008a). People in the region strongly celebrated their independence in 1960 as well as Nigeria’s gaining republican national status in 1963. Soon afterwards, however, they and their countrymen fell into civil war.

2.1.2 Attempted Unity: Nigeria at Independence

At independence, Nigeria had three nationalist leaders, Nnamdi Azikiwe, Ahmadu Bello, and Obafemi Awolowo. They each presided over one of three regions in Nigeria – Azikiwe, or Zik, over the eastern largely ethnically Igbo section, Awolowo over the Western chiefly Yoruba section, and Ahmadu Bello over the northern, mainly Hausa section (Falola 2008a).
Nnamdi Azikiwe was one of the main architects of the Nigerian independence movement. In his youth, he gained inspiration from the Garveyism movement, which encouraged people of African-descent to unite and develop their own communities, rather than waiting for the government. He studied in the U.S. at Storer College, Howard University, Lincoln University, and the University of Pennsylvania. While abroad, he became involved in several newspapers including The Baltimore Afro-American, the Philadelphia Tribune, and the Associated Negro Press of Chicago. He wrote articles pushing ideals of Garveyism and Pan-Africanism that helped form the foundation for nationalist agitations within Nigeria (Akyeampong and Gates 2012; Azikiwe 1970). Upon his return, he continued publishing articles criticizing colonialists, joining with other nationalist leaders such as Funmilayo Ransome-Kuti to oppose increasing British manipulation of the Nigerian constitution and government.

The Nigerian colonial government passed a constitutional change in 1951 providing the country with a path to independence. This occurred at about the same time fellow West African British colony, the Gold Coast (later named Ghana), experienced a similar agreement making it possible to move towards sovereignty. Yet, independence took Nigeria three more years than Ghana because of the extreme inter-regional differences Nigeria experienced (Oliver 2005). Azikiwe, while simultaneously advocating for freedom from the British fought against the 1951 constitution because it advocated a more homogenous system of government, similar to the unitary style Ghanaians eventually embraced. Azikiwe desired for Nigerian regions to retain their power. He and fellow constitutional reformers pushed for and achieved a new constitution in 1954 which allowed for a federal system of government. In this system, while the federal government received clearly-defined powers, the regions exercised all other powers. Even at this stage, as compared to other West African colonial states, Nigeria’s unity had to be carefully
negotiated due to internal divisions that had been encouraged by colonists and seemingly accepted by Nigerian nationalists (Oliver 2005).

After protracted pressure from Azikiwe and other nationalist leaders working in different sectors of society, the British handed Nigeria over to national leaders in a bloodless transfer of power in 1960. Azikiwe served as the premier of the Eastern region, Governor General of Nigeria, and later as ceremonial president. At independence, another politician Tafawa Balewa served as the Prime Minister, Amadhu Bello served as premier of the Northern Region, and Obafemi Awolowo as premier of the Western region.

2.1.3 Nigerian-Biafran Civil War

The civil war within Nigeria, and events surrounding it, are pertinent not only to discussions about Nigerian ethnic groups but also to discussions about the way Nigeria was imagined as a whole, even a weak and fragile whole. The sovereignty, federalized unity, and stability that leaders sought to form at independence had become visibly fractured. The country did not get to realize the future for which its nationalist leaders had hoped.

During the post-colonial Nigerian-Biafran Civil War from 1967-70, the predominantly Igbo southeastern region of the country tried to secede from the rest of the country. Leaders of the movement wanted to create their own ethnically-Igbo state of Biafra. These individuals sought to reimagine Nigeria into different autonomous regions, or even states. They proclaimed that this new division would make lives better for Igbos living in the southeast, enabling them to finally become citizens of a modern nation (Ojukwu 1967).

Before Igbos, or Biafrans, decided to secede, taking minority groups in the Southeastern region with them, Northerners killed over 30,000 of them between May and September of 1966,
with the campaign reaching its peak on September 29th 1966 (Falola 2008a). This event raised questions not only about the loss of innocent lives but whether Nigeria was or could ever be a modern, united nation. Half a decade prior, victims and their murderers had mutually celebrated Nigeria’s freedom from demeaning British oppression and the opportunity to make the country one. These deaths, which came so soon after independence and resulted from inter-ethnic suspicion make up one factor that led Nigerian citizens to question the functionality of Nigeria and the possibility of Nigerians’ living modern lives (De St. Jorre 1972; Odling-Smee 1970; Nwachuku and Uzoigwe 2004; Achebe 2012; Smith 2014; Falola and Aderinto 2010).

Political actors operated behind the scenes both encouraging and discouraging the Biafran secession attempt. A major development occurred in 1956, before the civil war or independence, when British prospectors discovered oil in southeastern Nigeria. Nigeria reaps approximately 95% of its export earnings and 70% of government revenue from the oil sector (Federal Ministry of Budget and National Planning 2013; CIA 2016b; Watts 2013; Vogel 2011). This points to one reason the U.S., British, Nigerian central governments, as well as other ethnic groups may not have wanted the southeastern portion of the country, Biafra, to secede (Siollun 2009; Davis 1973; Jorre 2012). As for the U.S. and British, they were benefiting from existing arrangements for trade with Nigeria at that time and did not want to do business with a new state (Uche 2008). Igbo leaders also wanted to strip control over newly-discovered oil away from any other region of the state and put it under their own control (Siollun 2009). The company Shell Darcy, later renamed Shell-British Petroleum, discovered oil around 1956 the Niger Delta Oloibiri Oilfield, a largely Ijaw-, not Igbo, speaking area. Attempts by Biafran leaders to take over their areas without consultation and declare the entire Eastern region an Igbo state disenfranchised many minority groups.
The Nigerian-Biafran Civil War itself was bloody and brutal. There were 100,000 military casualties. At least two million Igbo and non-Igbo minority Biafrans died, largely due to starvation (De St. Jorre 1972; Rees 1995). As one war tactic, the Nigerian federal side of the war utilized food blockades against Igbo civilians. They cut off all shipments to Biafran ports, including shipments of aid. Many Igbos, and especially children, died from this. (Jorre 2012; Rees 1995; Frederick and Forsyth 1977; Achebe 2012). The rest of the country outside of Biafra did not experience the violence and starvation of the war, as most of the fighting occurred in Biafran strongholds (De St. Jorre 1972; Frederick and Forsyth 1977).

Nigerians to this day recall the terrors of the Nigerian-Biafran Civil War. During the war, due to the control the federal side had in Nigeria, the U.S. and U.K. backed the federal side, including their use of a food blockade. Ivory Coast, Canada and France were among the countries that supported the Biafran side. Observing the extreme starvation of their Igbo compatriots, Biafran leaders abandoned their dream of an ethnically-Igbo state and surrendered to federal forces on January 15, 1970. The Nigerian federal side had defeated the Biafrans, arguing they had kept the country united.

2.1.4 After the War

After this bloody civil war, Nigeria had a great deal of oil and much to reconstruct. Military general Yakubu Gowon, an Ngas from the Northern Nigerian state of Plateau, had risen to national power during the war. At the call of a ceasefire, Gowon found himself as a young man in charge of a nascent and fragile state. Between independence from the British and the post-colonial civil war, the government did not have the chance to strengthen public laws and infrastructures. They had also not sufficiently practiced procedures of democratic governance,
considering the corruption and colonialism in government prior to independence. Gowon had emerged as a military ruler, and democracy was not on the agenda (Metz 1991c).

The Nigerian government had much to accomplish in 1970 to transform the wounded country from a conglomeration of ethnic and religious identity groups to a functioning, modern state. At this historic moment, which people I interviewed discussed as a time the nation had much to do in order to finally realize “modernity,” young Gowon is famously believed to have inexplicably pronounced, “Nigeria’s problem is not money, but how to spend it!” (Obadare 2016). In reality, it was most likely his Central Bank president, Clement Isong, who when commenting on Nigeria’s growing number of oil-backed foreign currency reserves remarked Nigeria “had nowhere to invest them properly” (Investors Chronicle 1975; Nwachuku and Uzoigwe 2004). From a historical vantage point, these comments, regardless of who exactly said them, proved incriminating for Gowon.

In the early years after the war, Gowon spent enormous amounts of money building infrastructures. He famously declared, “No victor, no vanquished,” signaling a desire to heal national fissures and encourage national unity. Historical evidence suggests, however, that Gowon did not back up his words with action. Unfortunately, he oversaw post-civil war leveling of Biafran wealth and seizure of Igbo properties, from which Igbos had fearfully fled during the pogroms and war (Achebe 2012).

Although Gowon’s government made efforts to reconstruct Nigeria, it also allowed for limited transparency, and there were early accusations of monetary mismanagement and corruption. In the mid-1970s, Gowon erred in a way many Nigerians remember to this day and that encapsulated his government. An event often mentioned by historians is Gowon’s role in
asking Nigeria to host an expensive global event. Gowon spent millions of British pounds on a
glitzy international party called FESTAC or the Festival of Black Arts and Culture. It was the
second such festival. Senegal hosted the first one in 1966. The festival was intended to unite the
black world, utilizing concepts from Negritude. Gowon predominantly used it to introduce
Nigeria to the world as the greatest black nation on earth.

FESTAC planners invited dignitaries, performers, and spectators from different countries
to Lagos, Nigeria to showcase their cultures and enjoy those of others. Gowon did this to
highlight Nigeria’s growing position of global, black prominence. Andrew Apter (Apter 2005)
provides a description of his experiences at FESTAC in his book The Pan African Nation.
Gowon spent the equivalent of $1.2 billion for this party. At the time, in 1977, Nigeria’s GDP
was about $36 billion (The World Bank Group 2017). The Nigerian press labeled the event
“Squandermania” (Kulla 1976). The government used a lot of this money on a village in Lagos
called the FESTAC village, where they housed visitors for the event. The whole operation was
akin to a country hosting the Olympics. Young Gowon never experienced the fruits of his
planning. General Murtala Muhammad deposed him in a bloodless coup in 1975, two years prior
to FESTAC. Squandermania continued as planned to the dismay of many on-looking Nigerian
citizens.

Soon after this international bash consuming millions of dollars of Nigerian wealth, the
global oil economy crashed in the mid-1980s. When it did, Nigerians noticed that neither Gowon
nor subsequent military and civilian governments after Muhammad were deposed, even though
they had not developed the country as much as was needed to deal with new challenges. Areas in
the south remained decimated from bombing during the Civil War.
When he began his tenure, Gowon proposed a nine-point plan for infrastructural and government development that, he had argued, once completed, would help the military safely transfer power to civilian rule. The proposal included items such as implementing a national economic development plan and eradicating corruption. Critics complained that the plan was too broad and unrealistic, contending Gowon’s real motive was to stay in power forever. Gowon never accomplished all aspects of his plan, and in 1975 when Gowon proposed staying in power to accomplish his plan, Murtala Muhammad unseated him (Metz 1991c).

Beginning with Gowon and throughout Nigeria’s life under military rule, government officials began to pilfer national oil wealth for personal gain (Cooper 2002). This began a process where officials focused more on increasing Nigerian oil revenue to the neglect of other Nigerian industries. At around the same time as oil prices fell in the mid-1980s, Nigeria agreed to participate in the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and World Bank structural adjustment programs. In exchange for international aid, the Nigerian government took out huge loans, shackling their country to repay international banks for years into the future (Falola 2008a; Cooper 2002).

However, by the 1980s, with inflated oil prices and a global recession, the country’s oil bubble burst. Growing government kleptocracy and mismanagement of national oil revenues exacerbated the disastrous economic effects of the oil bust. Inflation increased, and due to an over-focus on oil, the government neglected to attend to agricultural technologies and support other sustainable industries at home. The military government also began to invest less in infrastructure and institutional enforcement, which would support alternative industries, a tax base, and previously promised reconstruction and development initiatives. As a response to this economic downturn and spurred by a drop in oil prices, Nigeria instituted the International
Monetary Fund’s Structural Adjustment Program (SAP) in order to reduce the size of public sector jobs and purportedly encourage private sector growth. The SAP, however, caused mass unemployment, dramatic deflation of Nigerian currency, and a further weakening of already fragile Nigerian public institutions and infrastructures (Watts 2004a; Uchendu 2007). These events frustrated many Nigerians and fueled perceptions that Nigerian government officials exploited Nigeria using their positions of power (Apter 2005).

In the meantime, after the beloved, but short-lived military leader Murtala Muhammad overthrow of General Yakubu Gowon in a 1975 bloodless coup, a series of military leaders came to power competing with one another in several coups. This pushed Nigeria into a period of persistent and oppressive military dictatorship for almost 30 years. During this period, dictators and their regimes not only stole unprecedented amounts of national wealth garnered primarily from oil revenue, but persistently and senselessly imprisoned, murdered and harassed Nigerian citizens (Nwogu 2007; Smith 2006; Human Rights Violations Investigation Commission 2002). Dictators included, Murtala Muhammad [1975-6] who although loved for his decisiveness was killed shortly after he came to power; Olusegun Obasanjo [1976-9], Shehu Shagari [1979-83]; Muhammadu Buhari [1983-5] Babangida [1985-93]; Sani Abacha [1995-8], and Abdulsalami Abubakar [1998-9].

All of the military dictatorships, along with the depressed economy, caused great amounts of hardship, yet the harsh rule of some dictators became more memorable than that of others. In the early 1980s, Buhari sought to strictly enforce the rule of law during his term and is known for some of his hardline policies against corruption, but these policies also impinged on individual freedoms. His army chief of staff Ibahim Babangida ousted Buhari in another bloodless coup in 1985 (Metz 1991d; Falola and Heaton 2008; Kirk-Greene and Rimmer 1981).
Babangida retained power over Nigeria’s government from 1985-1993. Babangida had said that in 1993, he would allow a transition to civilian rule, however after a relatively free and fair election that favored his opponent, Moshood Abiola, his administration nullified the election and continued to hold onto power until pressure from both Nigerian citizens and international governments forced him to resign. Abiola later died in government custody. Many of my Nigerian informants remember this debacle clearly and lament the unfair death of a leader popular with, and chosen by, the Nigerian people.

Sani Abacha’s rule is renowned for its brutality, especially against political dissidents. To the horror of the Nigerian community, Abacha’s government publicly hanged oil activist Ken Saro-Wiwa for stating that oil exploration was bad for the environment (Falola and Aderinto 2010).

All of these military dictators were able to support their autocratic governments with oil money (Mitchell 2011). They fed off of Nigeria’s increasing overdependence on oil, and on the sale of oil to countries like the United Kingdom and the United States.

Consistent experiences of military victimization and oppression only ended in 1999, with the eventual election of Olusegun Obasanjo. Yet, Nigeria’s oil dependency government divestment, infrastructural decay, and institutional neglect only continued. Some of my informants argue that it became worse under democracy. Obasanjo garnered popularity because of his reputation for relinquishing power at the end of his term. This time, despite Obasanjo’s attempt to amend the constitution to allow him to run for a third term, he ended up leaving office in 2007 when the Nigerian National Assembly refused to ratify his amendment (Falola and Aderinto 2010). Although Obasanjo’s administration exercised wanton corruption, it did begin Nigeria’s current situation of democratic and civilian rule. Next in line was Umaru Yar’Adua,
who in 2010 died from an undisclosed illness. After his death Goodluck Jonathan, Yar’ Adua’s vice president took over. Later on April 18, 2011, Nigerians elected Goodluck Jonathan to serve as their president. All of the above democratic candidates were affiliated with the People’s Democratic Party. Yet, unexpectedly in 2015, Nigerians elected Muhammadu Buhari who is a member of the All Progressives Congress, a competing political party. Many argue Nigerians elected him to help them suppress ongoing sectarian violence in northern Nigeria conducted by Boko Haram. Yet, though Nigerians entered a long-awaited phase of democratic rule in 1999, their experiences have been bittersweet. Many argue that atrocities have not entirely stopped and it is clear that government officials continue to steal large amounts of money from taxpayers (Falola 2008a; Human Rights Violations Investigation Commission 2002).

Today, many scholars argue Nigeria experiences an environment of government divestment, as well as growing institutional and infrastructural decay and neglect largely because of oil (Foster and Pushak 2011; Vogel 2011; Smith 2006; Larkin 2004; Trovalla and Trovalla 2015). At the same time, Nigerians expect their country, and their lives within it, to be like those in the West (Obadare 2016). British colonialism helped instill these development expectations formed before the discovery of crude oil. Promises of oil wealth after Royal Dutch Shell discovered oil only further Westernized their expectations about citizenship and their country, evidenced by the Festival of Black Arts and Culture.

2.2 History verses Collective Memory

So, far I have provided an academic historical account of the country Nigeria. While this provides key contextual information, an important organizing concept in my research is
collective memory, or rather, collective remembering, which differs from academic historical accounts. I focus on collective remembering because it more closely speaks to issues of identity performance.

Wertsch and Roediger (Wertsch and Roediger 2008:318) propose collective memory as “a form of memory that transcends individuals and is shared by a group.” Collective memories are grassroots representations of the past held in common by members of a social group, in other words, an identity group. The identity group can inform that representation in the minds of individuals and, through political action, members can change how the identity group views its memory (Wertsch 2002; Olick, Vinitzky-Seroussi, and Levy 2011; Reese and Fivush 2008). Yet, Wertsch and Roediger argue that the term “collective memory” implies stasis regarding the images communities hold of the past. They advocate thinking of community memories as coming about and constantly changing through a process they call “collective remembering.” They argue different members of the community argue and debate over what version of history is correct (Wertsch and Roediger 2008). In doing so, members of the identity group seek to define and police the boundaries of meaning and what their community signifies.

In order to heatedly debate the past, members of an identity group must have a common language. Everyone must know what each other is talking about. They must have a common set of linguistic tools that greatly facilitate inter-speaker communication. When it comes to exchanging complex ideas, such as memories, speakers must share not only syntax or grammar, but also meaning, and an important way people share ideas, such as memories about their groups, is through stories or narratives. We can call these specific narratives. Wertsch (2009:128) writes that specific narratives shaping a society “may be non-fictional accounts of the past, or they may be parables or fiction such as those in the western tradition,” with heroic kings, queens, or
wicked stepmothers who try to steal inheritance, etc. He writes that “regardless of their claims to truth, the point is that such stories refer to specific settings, characters, and events” (Wertsch 2009:128).

One key way to identify the meaning in narratives is through plots or schematic narrative templates (Wertsch 2009). Schematic narrative templates, or simply narrative templates, provide a way of organizing meaning across a set of specific narratives so that observers can understand the purpose those narratives serve within a society (Propp 1968; Bartlett 1967). Wertsch (2009:129) writes that 1) narrative templates, “are not taken to be some sort of universal archetypes. Instead, they are specific to particular narrative traditions that can be expected to differ from one sociocultural setting to another.” 2) “Narrative templates are not readily accessible to the conscious reflection of those using them.” Finally, he clarifies that 3):

Schematic narrative templates function to exert a conservative, yet often unrecognized force on collective memory, making it quite resistant to change. This reflects the fact that they are deeply embedded, both in the sense of being transparent and nonconscious and in the sense of being part of deeply held identity commitments (2009:130).

When the identity group in question is a nation and people are telling stories about the nation, such as national histories, we call these templates “national narrative templates” (Wertsch 2008). These national narrative templates help us understand how people conceptualize and relate to their national groups as citizens of that group and at a deep level. Collective remembering, collective memories, and national narrative templates help us understand how citizens produce and reproduce their national identities. When considering the history of Nigeria, academic national histories based on evidence and rational adjudication of claims and counterclaims can provide important information, but collective remembering and the national narrative templates
behind it help us how Nigerians practice their Nigerian national identity even if is not historically accurate. As Ernst Renan noted in 1881, “Forgetting, I would even go so far as to say historical error, is a crucial factory in the creation of a nation” (p.11).

Some argue that there is no satisfactory way to draw a neat line between history and collective memory. In this view, regardless of how hard they may try, professional historians will always add a perspective to their history writing thanks to the narrative organization they employ, which is likely to reflect what their social group believes (Mink 1978; White 1990). While this is true, several theoreticians have sought to point out key differences (Lowenthal 1997; Novick 2000; Nora 1989). For example, Lowenthal (Lowenthal 1997:33) argues that unlike academic histories, and similar to personal histories:

Collective … memories likewise resist correction by others. Sharers of a communal legacy must accept some agreed notion of its nature. But each treats that corporate bequest as his own. Like personal memory, it is valued for being opaque to outsiders.”

Because we alone understand our own legacy, we are free, or maybe bound, to construe it as we feel it ought to be. "We often choose to remember mistakenly what we need to remember," comments a historian, "to preserve our individual and collective identities.” Wertsch (2009:127) provides a table showing some key differences between collective memory and history. Below is a table summarizing the differences between history and collective memory.

Table 2.1 Adapted “Collective Memory Verses History Table” from Wertsch (2009, 117–37).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>History</th>
<th>Collective Memory</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>&quot;Objective&quot;</td>
<td>&quot;Subjective&quot;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Distanced from any particular perspective</td>
<td>Single committed perspective</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reflects no particular social framework</td>
<td>Reflects a particular group's framework</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Critical, reflective stance</td>
<td>Unself-conscious</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Focus on historicity</td>
<td>Impatient with ambiguities about motives and the interpretation of events</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Differentiates the past from the present</td>
<td>Denies &quot;pastness&quot; of events</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Views past events as "then and not now" | Links the past with the present
---|---
Historical voice | Commemorative voice
Museum as a forum | Museum as temple
Disagreement, change, and controversy as part of ongoing historical interpretation | Unquestionable heroic narratives

### 2.2.1 History Verses Collective Remembering in a Public School History Classroom

The following vignette from my participant observation notes of a secondary school classroom provides an example of history versus collective memory. In this vignette the teacher tried to teach about history but then switched to collective memory and myths about Africans. Similar vignettes unfolded several times during my oral history interviews in Nigeria. I would ask people to tell me their version of Nigerian history. They would typically answer dubiously saying they were not experts in Nigerian history. After providing a brief overview of key events of Nigerian history, they often proceeded to tell me additional stories, myths, and jokes about Nigeria, mainly engaging more directly in collective remembering.

In the Lagos public secondary school where I performed participant observation during the summer of 2013, I watched as the experienced history teacher, who had worked at the school for over a decade, taught her fidgety teenaged students about the Transatlantic slave trade. The teacher, Ms. Obi began by teaching the students a more formal and academic form of history. According to my notes, she taught the following:

The reason Europeans visited Africa in the first place was because they wanted to construct the Suez Canal. Otherwise, they would have gone to India to obtain whatever they wanted. The people who discovered Africa were the Portuguese.

- She wrote on the board, Portuguese Voyage – Gronzalves 14\textsuperscript{th} [ by 14\textsuperscript{th}, she means 14th century].
- She said, Gronzalves saw that West Africa had everything Europe needed and was very rich.
• In 1460, Gronzalves took 10 slaves from Africa and gave them to Prince Henry the Navigator as a gift. She asked the class, “Have you ever seen someone giving humans as a gift?” People in the class shook their heads.

She then said that Prince Henry found that Africans are very strong. Ms. Obi asked, Did the Europeans like Africans? She and the class said no? She repeated, did the Europeans like Africans, she and the class again repeated, No. She said the Europeans came here for... She and the class said, for economic reasons.

At this point, Ms. Obi began to make some claims that did not correlate with academic history but corresponded with how she and the students viewed themselves.

“Why are we strong?” Ms. Obi then asked her students, “Because of our environment. We are used to a harsh environment. Suffering is our middle name.” She said this last sentence with a laugh, and some of the students around her laughed in response. She asked the class, “How many of you ate a balanced diet this morning?” Some students raised their hands. However, their friends nearby laughed and said, “Put down your hand! You know you like Egba (i.e., ground and fried cassava, which many consider the food of working people or the poor)!” Other students tried to raise their hands, but got a similar reaction from other classmates telling them to put their hands down, correcting them that they did not get, or even want to eat, a balanced diet.

Ms. Obi continued explaining, “Prince Henry found that Africans were strong and could survive on very little food. Their bodies were resistant. They never got sick,” gesturing to herself and the class that they were included in that group (Onyeneho 2016b).

Here, we can see that Ms. Obi pivoted from academic histories to a myth about Africans. By using “we” as well as gesturing to herself and the students, she includes herself and her listeners in a group who “are used to a harsh environment.” She says, “Suffering is our middle name.” These statements about Africans are “subjective” and “link the past with the present,” (Wertsch 2009:127). They correlate with what we know about collective memory. They are not “objective” parts of history that work to “differentiate the past from the present” as academic history does (Wertsch 2009:127). The narrative here has to do with Africans being strong and able to withstand harsh environments and maltreatment from leaders, such as colonial leaders.
The pivot Ms. Obi makes in a public school history classroom, where academic history would typically reign supreme, shows the power of subjective, narrative with a single, committed perspective over memory, as opposed to history, to shape how we tell stories and histories about our social groups.

2.2.2 A Fictional Account of Nigerian History

Another example demonstrates the difference between collective memory and history. Early on in my 2014 field research, I interviewed the dean of a local professional college, asking him to provide me with his version of Nigerian history. One of my contacts introduced me to him telling me that although he was the dean at a local professional school, this man’s passion was for sociology, history, and storytelling. After explaining my desire to learn how people talk about Nigerian history, my contact thought he would be a great person for me to meet. We sat down at the desk and I gained permission to record the interview, at which point the dean stopped and asked me point blank, “Do you want to know about the academic history or do you want to know the real version?” I responded, “The real version.” He said, “OK,” and began telling me his thoughts on the situation in Nigeria. He then stopped again and said, “In fact, I have already written a book about all of this. You can read it and get exactly my thoughts on the history of Nigeria.” He then pulled out the book entitled, The Minji Trial. He said that it was a work of fiction that he wrote that explained his thoughts on the topic. At the time, I was concerned. I was in the business of getting factual historical narratives, not works of fiction. I needed him to talk about Nigeria, not Minji Land – the subject of the book. I kept asking him questions about what he thought about Nigerian history, but he continued to point me to his fiction book. After he, my
contact, and I had continued exchanging pleasantries, and the dean sent me off with a warning to read the book, my contact and I left, thanking him.

Reading his book was quite eye-opening. The book is actually a play. It is a mythic tale about a place called Minji Land whose leaders caused its people to suffer from preventable causes while enriching themselves. In it God takes a young boy named Marcel, who died from doctors’ giving him fake and dangerous medication and hospitals’ subsequently rejecting him. In the play, Marcel is an angel and God then sets up a trial to defend the boy and prosecute the leaders, and the land, who made his death possible. The book ends with the leaders of Minji land receiving harsh sentences.

The following is the preface of the book:

If all had been well with the black man all over the world, this book might not have come into existence. If the people of the tropics have been naturally progressive, there might have been no need for any trial such as contained in this book.

But there have been various manifestations of negative developments (in every sphere of life) among the blacks of the tropics. These vices range from abject poverty to economic mismanagement, political instability and incessant controllable deaths and killings of innocent people due to religious intolerance. Robbery is on the increase.

There have been hunger, abuse of natural talents, ethnic feuds, and diseases resulting from lack of medical facilities in most parts of the tropics. Indiscipline is devastating the fabric of moral life. There have been several cases of abortion, drug abuse and various forms of discriminations, intimidation and victimization, in offices, in the streets, in motor parts and in the households.

Marcel died of one or many of these vices and appeared before God at an unripe age. While on trial Marcel leveled these allegations against the people of the tropics especially the giant Minji land.

The beginning of the book provided an important picture of how the dean views Nigeria and Nigerian history:
VOICE OF HOLISAH:

“… who shall go for me … who shall I send? Today is the Date; a date I personally arranged that the entire races should account to me … who shall I send; to gather from blacks a prominent person from one large tribe in the tropics; at least, let us begin with them … who shall I send?

Marcel: Father! Please send me. I shall go for you!

Holisah: Little boy, I know your name as Marcel!

Marcel: I am Marcel…. I come from a tribe in the tropics. My land is at the helm of affairs in her own corner of the world.

Holisah: You say your land is large enough to represent the black race?

Marcel: Yes, Father!

[Marcel then explains to God or Holisah that he died due to a doctor giving him unvetted, fake medication which government monitoring could have prevented.]

Holisah: Thank you my son. Thank you, I would have sent you back to your family once more to complete your life onto grey hairs. I would not do so however, because of the numerous charges you have brought against them. Or, would you like to go back there again?

Marcel: Father, I would have loved to go back but conditionally. No! I would not like to. If I have to go back, it means I would have to start again. Father, you remember, I told you that Humble loved me. If I have to go back to the world, he wouldn’t recognize me again. It may not be possible to go in through my former mother who is now old. You can see life may be more difficult for me now that cost of things have been rising steadily in my land. My village has not received any attention from the government. Many children now abandon some privileges like good education because of lack of fund or sponsorship. Those who were lucky to receive formal education suffer severe unemployment. By the time I was there, it seemed things were better.

Holisah: My ears are filled. I am sorry you had such experiences in the midst of bountiful natural resources. Stay here. Enjoy yourself and rest. I send you to garden of rest. At a time appointed, I will send you again from this garden. I will make better, your destiny. Rest my son. Rest in my Holy bosom Marcel!
From even the beginning of his narrative, we can see the dean views Minji land as a place of great potential and resources. In fact, Minji Land is seen as adequately representative of the black world. We also see that Minji’s leaders have squandered and mismanaged the land’s resources, leaving innocent people of Minji Land, like Marcel, to suffer. The dean proposed this fictional story to me as a replacement of his version of Nigerian history. It shows the power of a national narrative to organize our conceptions of groups, such as nations or countries. These templates organize our understanding of groups so much that we can create fictional accounts where details differ greatly from reality, but can still recognize the story as being about the same identity group.

We see that in these collective memory accounts, the suffering and oppression of local people by self-interested leaders, colonial or otherwise, is clear. Also, both accounts discuss the great wealth of the identity group, Africa. Minji Land is argued in the second account to be a microcosm of Africa and the dean argues that Minji Land is an allegory for Nigeria.

2.2.3 The Case for Collective Memory in African Studies

By all indications, and especially after viewing the academic history account at the beginning of this chapter, much of the African studies literature views Nigeria as an unfortunate prototype of the “Failed State in Africa” narrative. The failed state in Africa narrative argues that African governments and civil societies will fail due to hapless or ill-intentioned leaders who look after their own self-interests at the expense of their citizens. Basil Davidson (Davidson 1992) discusses some of this in his book the Black Man’s Burden. He argues that African governments fail because they received political structures left over from extractive and exploitative colonial governments (Davidson 1992). Others such as Gus Liebenow (Liebenow 1986) also famously present pessimism about the fate of African nation-states.
In the realm of political anthropology, with roots in the study of African kinship or identity systems, scholars have traditionally viewed identity or ethnic groups as interchangeable with states (Evans-Pritchard 1940; Fortes, Evans-Pritchard, and Dempster 1955; Radcliffe-Brown and Forde 1950). In more recent iterations of identity arguments, Benedict Anderson (Anderson 2006) argues that communities are “imagined.” Identity scholar Rogers Brubaker agrees that cognitive and psychological approaches to identity, which emphasize perception, best capture the they dynamic nature of identity (Brubaker 2004b). Anderson argues that identity groups such as states live in the minds of people and are mediated by language, performance, the media, and symbolism.

Drawing insights from Anderson (2006), many scholars have sought to fight against this pessimistic view of African states, arguing such skepticism does not reflect the productivity and political engagement they see at the grassroots level. They instead argue that perhaps failed state in Africa theorists are looking for African states in the wrong places. They argue that rather than only looking at top-down elite control or machination, they should pay attention to grassroots politics, performance, and civic participation. For example, Kelly Askew details how Tanzanians imagine and perform their national identities at multiple levels, in the form of helping unknown strangers recognized as fellow citizens, Swahili musical performances in intimate spaces, and government chest-beating ceremonies filled with conspicuous pomp (Askew 2002). Similarly, Moorman (Moorman 2008) discusses how Angolan music over radio broadcasts allowed citizens to share nationalist fervor and created a space for a new anti-colonialist state to form. These and other authors provide data that demonstrates the state or national groups may not originate from elites in power or through traditional means such as schools, written laws, or textbooks, but may
be more grassroots and come about through under-the-radar symbolic forms such as music and performance (Brennan 2010; Coplan 2008; Nugent 2010)

When it comes to Nigeria, some scholars have gone so far as to argue that the state no longer exists (Watts 2004b; Watts 2004a; Falola and Aderinto 2010). Watts writes:

Nigeria as a modern nation-state has become a machine for the production of ever more local political institutions, and this process is endless. The logic is ineluctable and of course terrifying. What sort of national governable space emerges from such multiplication, in which incidentally the political entities called states or LGAs (local government areas) become vehicles for massive corruption and fraud that is to say the disposal of oil revenues? The answer is that it works precisely against the creation of a national imagined community of the sort that Ben Anderson saw as synonymous with nationalism. Nation building, whatever its imaginary properties, whatever its style of imaging, rests in its modern form on a sort of calculation, integration, and state and bureaucratic rationality which the logic of rent seeking, petro-corruption, ethnic spoils politics, and state multiplication works to undermine systematically. (Watts 2004a:74)

Falola and Aderinto write:

Why is memory an issue? Why does the government oppose the retelling of history? The answer is clear enough: there is no consensus on national history, just as there is no consensus on the idea of the nation. To talk about the nation may be to revive the memory that could destroy the nation. A historical review may not necessarily lead to strategies to create a stronger Nigeria, to build a stable government that will take care of the basic needs of all the citizens, to initiate a developmentalist ideology, or to create a “relevant state.” Rather, a serious historical review promises to lead to, at worst, fragmentation or, at best, a federal system with a weakened center and greater autonomy for the component units. With a strong center gone, the autonomous units may again take up the idea of secession. (Falola and Aderinto 2010:239–40)

Both of these authors argue that ethnic division predominates in Nigerian national identity and that, for different reasons, including a failure of national leadership, a collective Nigerian state does not exist. While making important points about the political climate in Nigeria today, both authors are looking for efforts at making the Nigerian state, purely in the halls of Nigerian government. Not seeing any real Nigerian nationalist leadership there, they argue a Nigerian state does not exist.
Yet, if one follows the logic of people imagining states and identity groups, such as
countries, existing in the minds of people, this failed-state-in-Nigeria concept implies that people
living in Nigeria no longer regard the Nigerian state or view the state as having governing power
over them. If the Nigerian state did not exist, people living in the country would not call
themselves Nigerian and would not have anything to say about Nigeria. However, evidence
shows they do. How can this be?

Some Nigerianist studies scholars have followed the lead of people like Moorman (2008)
and Askew (2002) and rather than pointing towards official government for an analysis of the
Nigerian state, have looked towards grassroots political sensitivity and speech in the country.
Obadare (2009) has discussed the preponderance of political joke-telling in Nigeria as a fertile
space, in which Nigerians exercise and grow civil society. Others have discussed the role of
rumor and political commentary, particularly in Nigerian market places, as well as pointing to
nation-wide moral economies involving bribery or corruption (Pierce 2016; Bastian 1998).
Works such as these point to the vibrant grassroots political and economic activity pulsing
through Nigeria, which scholars may undervalue if they focus solely on official acts of
government in creating the Nigerian state. Yet work such as this investigating the state in Africa,
and Nigeria particularly, by paying attention to grassroots rhetoric could benefit from further
methodological imagination, which collective memory and national narrative studies can offer.
My data demonstrates that careful analysis of Nigerian collective memories shows Nigerians
experience strong levels of consensus about what Nigeria is and how Nigerians act. Thus,
grassroots forms of data collection, as well as collective memory and national narrative analysis
can help scholars understand the nature of emerging national identities and nationalisms. This is
particularly helpful in countries where federal governments have ceded responsibilities for state-
making to average citizens, as they have in Nigeria. Collective memory studies can provide a more rigorous framework for understanding identity, which can readily contend with discussions about the “Failed State in Africa.”
Chapter 3: Nigerian Potential

The Introduction and Chapter 2 explained how collective memories, and the national narrative template rules structuring them, provide a window into how people verbally and physically perform national identities. The aim of this chapter is to provide evidence for the first part of the Nigerian National Narrative Template: 1) Nigeria is a diverse and divided amalgamation of groups with enormous potential for greatness. This portion of the Nigerian National Narrative Template describes the main character of the Nigerian stories I collected—Nigeria, a protagonist who undergoes experiences outlined in the remainder of the template. As described in the previous chapters, the Nigerian National Narrative Template is a particular form of speaking, which Nigerians often use to narrativize their country, its citizens, and Nigerian behavior. This form of speaking constitutes and is constituted by Nigerian identity. While my informants listed particular historical events, the importance here is to notice the plot that organizes these events. This way of organizing events or talking about Nigerian history was expected and comprised a sort of mnemonic community, or community of speakers, socialized to speak in this way. To this end, it is important to recall that the transcripts I analyze in this chapter are more about national memory, storytelling, and mythmaking within a speaking community than they are an analytical account Nigerian history. The analysis here is not about how accurate the speakers were when recounting history, but rather about common ways of talking within a “Nigerian” ethnic group as opposed to within an “Igbo,” “Yoruba,” or “Hausa” ethnic group.

The Nigerian National Narrative Template is not only a template of the Nigerian story, but a cognitive template for how my informants raised in the country could use to discuss and acted out their daily lives in Nigeria. Templates require characters and plots. In this chapter, I
argue Nigerians viewed Nigeria as a character with high potential. They showed this in multiple ways, particularly semantically with their speech. My informants tended to describe Nigeria as an ironic character highly gifted with great potential, but who continually faced blocks causing it to stumble. My Nigerian informants often argued that God had richly blessed Nigeria with an abundance of resources, such as oil, but that greedy government leaders block Nigeria’s progress causing the country to cyclically experience a fall from grace. They widely deployed this concept of stymied potential, or a fall from grace, within their national narratives. In this chapter, I will analyze text from informant interview transcripts and one informant’s book manuscript to demonstrate how they conceptualized Nigeria as having great potential that should have led to a prosperous future, but did not, due to government mismanagement.

The following table provides a representative list of statements my informants made about Nigeria in their oral histories:

Table 3.1 Sample Statements About Nigeria From Informants

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Interview Number</th>
<th>Nigeria in Statement</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1A</td>
<td>Nigeria is a wonderful nation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5A</td>
<td>I can say that Nigeria is an emerging African country that is progressive, it is productive.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>29A</td>
<td>Nigeria is a country located at um… part of the West Africa, part of the West Africa, and it happens to be the giant of Africa, and currently moving towards one of the largest economies in Africa, currently, by World grading.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>21A</td>
<td>Nigeria is a…-a great country.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>28A</td>
<td>Nigeria is the largest black nation in Africa, or partly in the world.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3C</td>
<td>Well, as history told us, Nigeria is richly blessed in crude oil.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5B</td>
<td>Nigeria is a very good - is a good country.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>19B</td>
<td>Nigeria is known as the giant of Africa</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20B</td>
<td>Nigeria is progressing every year.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
One third of my informants specifically described the character “Nigeria” as either good or having potential for greatness. This does not include people who did not specifically refer to “Nigeria,” but used more general terms such as “the country.” They perceived the main character of the Nigerian Narrative Template as endowed with resources and potential. My informants described Nigeria as a character endowed with potential for greatness, despite facing difficulties.

While remarking on the character of Nigeria itself, several also alluded to what this gifted character goes through. For example, a seventy-year-old Igbo woman from Mbaise said, “Before, it’s good. Nigeria is good. Now, they have turned it up- upside down.” She indicated that Nigeria was inherently good from the beginning before others, “they” in her story, “turned it upside down.” Others such as a young woman in Enugu said things such as, “Nigeria is good enough to fight their – fight their rights.” This suggested that Nigeria had qualities that enabled it to fight for its rights against oppression – perhaps the oppression that had turned Nigeria “upside down.” Despite the differences in how they spoke about Nigeria, my informants largely specified that Nigeria was essentially good and had gifts allowing it to progress.

My informants provided more evidence of this in their Nigerian oral histories as well as in their more schematic forms of collective remembering such as jokes and plays about the country. The following provide a few examples:

“So, it's - it's a development, and uh, government is beginning - I believe transformation will come when we have successful democratic regime. As we're moving like this, one day, everything will transform to normality, but, if there's no interruption by military or anybody, Nigeria will be at that promised land. Thank you.” [8A, 39-year old banker and father of five living in Enugu]

“Ah… our country is good. Very very good. Blessed by God. The - the people in it are good, but what we need are just a little more effort on certain areas. And you’ll see it will
be like boom! Every - all of us will sing another song, a good one. That is just what it is. Goodluck is trying his best. Though, they are not giving him that chance because of all these problems, but I believe this country will one day be what we expect it to be. …[laughs].” [7A, 40-year old host mother in Enugu]

It is very difficult to find two people from different backgrounds coming to fully agree on issues. There will always be gray areas in terms of agreement on national issues and all of that. Um, by and large, by God’s Grace, Nigeria has remained one um nation, and um despite the disagreement and all of that, we still love ourselves and we know we are one people. We do things. There is the, the - policy of um nationalism here. Uh huh, so in every federal government policy, there is this kind of um, national integration where people from different backgrounds come together, you know, to pursue a common cause, so in all of the ministries, the federal ministries in this country, you find people from all different ethnic groups, all the states, and all the regions of this country all for the purpose of national integration. So, despite the challenges, despite the disagreements, there are issues we agree on and um, we are moving on. [24A, 28-year old Igala-speaking man living in Enugu]

I am always a pro-Naija, I’m a pro-Nigeria. I love this country. I believe in Nigeria - although so many things are happening now, but I then believe in Nigeria. Because for anything to happen, I’m- I’m a Christian, and for anything to happen, I believe it’s for a purpose. If it wasn’t going to work - if Nigeria wasn’t going to be something great, God wouldn’t have allowed anything to bring us together in 1914….I appreciate Nigeria. And so many things we have been through. Right now, we have been through a lot, but then I believe that when something good is about to come out from something, you must have to pay for it. You must have to pay for it. I know the American Revolution didn’t come easy. No revolution, no big country in this world got their freedom or anything they have now - their civilization -without gore. No, they had to go through something, they had to go through all those, they had to fight! Blood was shed for it. So, I think that’s what happened- that’s -that’s what is happening now, and we’ve been through it. We’ll get through it. Yeah. [13A, 23-year old intern working in Enugu]

Such excerpts allude to how clearly my informants perceived Nigeria as an inherently good character. They saw this character as facing challenges that impeded its potential.

A sharp, thirty-two-year-old teacher in Enugu said the following in his national narrative:

OK, OK. Well! When you talk about Nigeria and the history of Nigeria, it’s all over the place. Nigeria is a country that is um located in West Africa. It’s a um beautiful country, very … most populous black nation in Africa. Uh, at the moment, we are up to 150 million people in this nation. So, Nigeria is a democratic country. Nigeria gained her independence in 1960, and so far, we practice uninterrupted democracy from 1999 till date, that basically about 15 years now. I can say that Nigeria is an emerging African country that is progressive, it is productive. Um, it’s most importantly peaceful. We are a peace-loving
people. We are blessed with abundant natural resources. We have culture. We have people who are friendly. So, once you … find your way through this country, you will… - you’ll kind of feel- be relaxed, be happy.

This excerpt allows us to put descriptions of Nigeria as a character into a wider context. He describes “Nigeria” as “a beautiful country,” the “most populous black nation on earth,” and “blessed with abundant natural resources.” He says, “We have culture. We have people who are friendly.” His statements as well as others outlined previously surprised me when I first heard them. Many authors have discussed how Nigerians lament and complain about their country and rarely effuse national pride (Apter 2005; Pierce 2006; Smith 2006; Obadare 2009; Bastian 1998). Well-known books have been written about how Nigerians lament their country (Achebe 1984; Soyinka 1996). Yet my informants consistently made statements bucking this theory. They argued Nigeria was inherently good. Their lament seemed to enter the picture more when it came to what happens to this character. Immediately after describing Nigeria in glowing terms, the young man continued by saying:

Although, I can- I cannot tell you that everything is alright with Nigeria. Nigeria still has um it’s fair share of hard- her fair share of um problems, though it’s not peculiar to Nigeria only. At the moment, we have some issues to battle with. T-talking about security, though …just pockets. Um… insecurities in part of the country, which I believe the …current administration is battling hard to maintain the situation. The situation has been contained, we have law enforcement, against trying to make sure that things are in order. Although, it’s just like a storm in a teacup. We may misunderstand ourselves. Some of our youths are aggrieved. They are not happy, but the problem is that they don’t know how to express their grievances. [Sigh] Uh, the problem - they took to arms!”

In the second half of this excerpt, right after extolling the qualities of Nigeria, the young man discusses the problems Nigeria faces, which stymie its progress. He discusses mainly the threats posed to Nigeria, at the time, by violent Boko Haram militants murdering villagers and causing instability in Northern states. He says, “Although, I can- I cannot tell you that everything is alright with Nigeria. Nigeria still has um its fair share of hard- her fair share of um problems,
though it’s not peculiar to Nigeria only. At the moment, we have some issues to battle with, T-talking about security…..” Assessing his statements schematically, the young man argues that Nigeria inherently has great potential, but currently faces challenges that, at the moment, hinder their national progress.

In another example, one young man in Lagos specifically discussed oil wealth in Nigeria as a source of potential that self-interested leaders are currently squandering. His story points to Nigerian potential blocked by poor leadership. He paints a fall from grace or burgeoning potential extinguished:

 Well, as history told us, Nigeria is richly blessed in crude oil. In the early years of independence, we used to have the oil in abundance, and that was what gave us the position we are in Africa today because of our wealth then. But, I have to tell you, I have to be honest to you, the wealth is no longer there because of bad leadership. Then, I could say, the leaders who were - who preceded the colonial rulers were a little bit honest then, and I can say they were managing the economy well. But the present leaders and the recent past leaders we have- we had, they have not been managing the economy well- up to the present one, and that has reduced our status in Africa, mostly in West Africa. So, we are- I can say, we are not living by our past glories. The name you are hearing today, Nigeria, the giant of Africa, I don’t believe that anymore. It’s no longer the giant of Africa because we have derailed in so many areas than we used to be.

The informant focuses his story around the discovery of oil in Nigeria, discussing Nigerian potential, but how this was oppressed by poor post-colonial leadership. Looking at the main schematic points they make in their narratives, my informants use a similar narrative template, even when discussing different time periods for Nigeria. The young man profiled first in this chapter discussed present-day Nigeria, the challenge of Boko Haram, and the how their government had trouble quashing it completely. The young man above addresses dilemmas Nigeria faced near the turn of the 21st century, as well as presently, with regard to government mismanagement of oil resources. In both this excerpt and the last one, my informants argued that Nigeria itself, as a story character, is blessed. However, they also narrativized that this story
character faces the challenge of self-interested leaders who cause problems for the character and stymie its progress.

Of course, not all of my informants strictly followed this narrative rule of Nigeria as a good character facing challenges. For instance, during his Nigerian history interview, I asked my host father Michael what first came to mind when he thought about “Nigeria.” The conversation proceeded as follows:

**Kosi:** … When you think of the word Nigeria, what comes to mind?

**Michael:** The word Nigeria, well… It is tells me instantly that it’s a … marriage of three tribes. Three people of different character, different culture, different ideology coming together to…- it’s like marriage life …. A man will go to another compound entirely that was –the training of that … was quite different from his. And he goes there to pick her, and talk about marriage. They start living together. Or a woman marrying a man of a different family background, ideology – everything is different, and they start living together as husband and wife. It’s what Nigeria tells me, that it’s a- it’s a marriage of three core tribes that ordinarily…they shouldn’t have become one, but three are trying to fuse themselves into the other. And it’s not helping matters.…

You see, you look at our … national anthem. Alright? Ah, if you look at our national anthem, it was equally included there. That uh, tongues and … color may differ. Tongues and tribe may differ, but we’re still one country.

What is a nation? A nation are the makeup of people that –understand themselves using the same … language and same dialect. Alright? They haven’t the same culture and be a nation, alright? And if the nation, they should be able to be on their own… They have economic resources to stay on their own, and I told you on the first, this thing, segment that the Hausa, the north, was known as groundnut pyramids. Alright? …which means groundnut can sustain them. That culture can sustain them. Yoruba, it was known as a cocoa – area for cocoa. Cocoa … is a cash crop. It can sustain them. While the east, which is Igbo, is known as palm, palm oil – it can sustain. They have the sources. The nation that has resources to sustain them - as a nation should – can – be on their own. They have their own independence.

So, the fusion of these three people into one is what is called Nigeria. And remember the name Nigeria came from the River Niger. Alright? Uuh. Given by the wife of uh Lord Lugard who was the – I think the last governor of this… of the country ruled by Britain. … So, that is what made me to say that …. It is, you may use another word, unholy marriage.
Describing Nigeria as an “unholy marriage” is much different from conceptualizing the country as a single gifted character with potential for success. By alluding to the British, my host father argued that Nigeria was forced, and that those who created it, almost like an inept marriage matchmaker, did consider the compatibility between those they sought to join. When he was asked to describe “Nigeria” outside of a narrative context, my host father problematized the Nigeria, wondering if it should exist at all. He said Nigeria is, “a marriage of three core tribes that ordinarily… shouldn’t have become one, but … are trying to fuse themselves into the other.” By referring to Nigeria as a marriage, regardless of how poorly matched, my host father argued that the country was a whole entity, but contained fissures that threatened to break it apart. He blamed the British for not thinking about compatibility before putting different nations together to form Nigeria.

Yet, despite this, my host father still alluded that different parts of Nigeria were endowed with resources: “I told you on the first … segment that the Hausa, the north, was known as groundnut pyramids … which means groundnut can sustain them…. Yoruba, it was known as a cocoa – area for cocoa. Cocoa … is a cash crop…. The east, which is Igbo, is known as palm, palm oil…. They have the sources.” Earlier in his interview, my host father had explained:

The economy when they started by, before 1960 or sort of, … was dependent on three core areas of the economy. The north was identified as groundnut pyramids. Groundnut were produced in the north. In the … southwest, which is Yoruba, produces cocoa. East produces … uh palm oil. So, you find out in those old days in the early, early days of Nigeria, there were three regions of Nigeria. It was called regions Northern region, western region, and Eastern region. And those regions were identified on economical basis with northern region with groundnut, western region with cocoa, and eastern region with –eh- palm oil. That is what were dependent on. And those things were used. Whatever produce…came from them financially was used to build something to be identified with. Groundnut pyramids was used to build uh … Amadu Bello University OAU, which is now called Ife- whatever … this university. Then, the Yorubas, identified with cocoa, built … Awolowo University. Then the East built –eh- University of Nigeria Nsukka.
So, … it was the … the profit that was made from those economic was used to identify specific thing identifiable with the people of that area – until 1958, oil was discovered in Nigeria. It was discovered …– in the east –eastern region. And the eastern region,…the state in the eastern region is Rivers – present Rivers state. OK, so, the oil now took over the … economic base of the country and up till today, it has ranked as the most … economic … survival of the country that gives [the] most – up to 95% – of their revenue.

Despite criticizing the main character of his historical narrative and appearing unconvinced of its legitimacy, my host father still spent a great deal of time describing how the country was endowed with resources. He described how three founding leaders of Nigeria used the country’s natural resources to build great universities and infrastructures. However, after Nigeria discovered it had oil, he argues that oil became large part of its economy. To retrace his story, he argues that the entities, which became Nigeria were endowed with various profitable resources. However, British colonists inconsiderately bunched the entity together in a way that has caused problems ever since. Despite critically analyzing Nigeria as potentially illegitimate, my host father followed the narrative rule I profiled earlier, that Nigeria is “good,” in this case rich in resources,” but due to ineptitude displayed by its leaders, faces challenges. My host father fell more clearly into using this rule later in his interview when, at one point, he retold what he argued was a popular story in the country about Nigeria:

... There was a journalist – the family father of Newswatch Magazine in Nigeria, called Deleguwa…. Governorship problem is our, is a problem here. So, he wrote in one of his papers, Nineteen-1985. … It was 1985. I bought that magazine, but it’s like I lost it. He said when God created … the world, … he now summoned the whole nations for a meeting to share his wealth … to the nations. So, it was given, there are some countries he gave white vegetation, yellow vegetation, black vegetation, green vegetation – and vegetation means rich in agriculture. So, he gave Nigeria green vegetation. They’re people, they’re countries he gave… snow. Snow may fall three months in a year, and if snow is falling, … there won’t be any grass to grow. Alright? …

He didn’t give Nigeria that type of weather. He gave us seasonal weather: dry season, rainy season, OK, which is another blessing. Then he was sharing his uh, minerals, alright? He gave Nigeria all minerals – gold, aluminum, silver, name it. And, … in God’s uh classification, according to the journalist, he said government is the last to share…. Green vegetation was third to the last, oil was the second to the last, and
government was the last. So, when he was doing that, he gave us – reaching on the third – he gave Nigeria green vegetation, and the other nations started to grudge, “After giving them gold, mineral, aluminum mineral, ore, zinc, they’re still giving them green vegetation?” According to the write-up, God didn’t mind their … grudges. So, he [was] now on the second one to share petroleum, crude oil. He gave Nigeria this crude oil, and the nations around him revolted against God, that they can’t have it, “He has given Nigeria so much things that – Ah! How can he give them oil again? Crude oil to add to the blessings he has already!” The man said, God called them back, that they shouldn’t revolt, that they shouldn’t grudge, He is God, and He distributes His uh resources according to His will. That they should wait and see the type of government He will give Nigeria. So, the writer stopped there. … And our problem today is the type of government we have. That’s the only problem Nigeria has. The entirety of all these things that are happening in this country is the type of government God has allowed us to have. Alright? (Interview 2A)

Similar to the previous excerpts, it is clear from my host father’s story that he believes Nigeria possesses a great number of natural resources. My host father argues God has blessed Nigeria abundantly, and perhaps more than other countries. The main characteristic of Nigeria is having potential for greatness and development. Likewise, my host father recites that Nigeria has one problem hindering it from reaching its full potential – its government. In some ways, my informants are correct. Nigeria contains over forty mineral resources, oil, natural gas, and other forms of capital (Central Intelligence Agency 2017; Federal Republic of Nigeria 2017). Yet narrative templates are not about reality, they are about stories. My informants may not have known how many mineral resources Nigeria has within its borders or their names. These minerals may not have been immediately useful. It was the idea of Nigerian potential that animated and drove their stories more than the facts. Yet, one natural resource did stand out, crude oil. This is partly because of how valuable crude oil is internationally. Several authors have written about the uncanny ability of oil to raise expectations citizens have of their countries and its resources. My informants often followed this pattern. Yet, unlike phenomena, for example in Venezuela, my informants did not focus solely on oil as a way to explain Nigerian wealth. They often pointed to many resources. They even lamented the role oil had played in
creating a mono economy and capturing the total attention of their government. This is exemplified in the following the statements Michael’s wife, Agnes, made during her Nigerian history interview. Before her interview, Agnes, a 40-year old Igbo-speaking mother of four warned me that she did not know a lot of specific information about of Nigerian history, but did have a Nigerian story to tell:

Um… the country is blessed, naturally. In fact, we have blessings from God in terms of human and material, OK? Natural resources are there in quantum. God blessed us. I know that this country is a blessed country. The only problem we have, the only little problem we have is administration, and if things can be put in place, this country will move forward. Everybody knows that. So, we are blessed. People from here are rich, OK? And when it comes to the natural… endowments, we have our oil - and in fact, that is what is sustaining this country, but personally I don’t like the emphasis we are laying on oil because it’s like without oil, something terrible will happen. That’s our mentality here.

So, I- I will suggest, or I am of the view that we should diversify our economy. Shift a little from oil. We know God has given us the oil for us to - you know, help ourselves, but the problem we are experiencing as a result of that, the-the problems are really enormous. So, let us try as much as possible. This is my personal view. We have a lot of other things. I remember when I was young, we used to go to pick cocoa from different farms, you know, around us. Today, you can’t see cocoa again! In fact, my children don’t even know what cocoa is all about.

Again, Agnes describes Nigeria as endowed with great potential that Nigerian leaders are squandering. In Agnes’s case, government mismanagement took the form of leaders failing to diversify the Nigerian economy away from a sole focus on oil. The informant-authored play, The Minji Trial, from Chapter 2, provided another glimpse of how my informants perceived Nigeria. The author argues Nigeria (represented by Minji Land) has great potential. In fact, the gifts given to Minji Land set the tension and propels the Minji Trial story forward. Taking another look at this story can provide a clear case of how my informants characterized Nigeria and positioned this character in their stories. The Minji Trial is a divine court hearing against leaders who woefully, ironically, and tragically, mismanaged Minji Land’s wealth. This story involves
several important characters when it comes to the country’s blessings: God; Minji Land itself; Marcel, an innocent Minji citizen, and the country’s leaders. The list of characters is as follows:

MARCEL – A young Minji boy who died because of poverty
HUMBLE – A young Minji undergraduate who loved Marcel
HOLISAH – The Almighty God
ELY – Founder and wiseman of the sunrise tribe
AAYAH – Founder and leader of the hill tribe
YAN – Founder and leader of the sunset tribe
1st COUNSEL – Personal guardian Angel of Ely
2nd COUNSEL – Aayah’s personal guardian angel
DEFENCE COUNSEL – Neutral perfect legal luminary from the celestial court.

Chapter 2 describes the beginning of the dean’s play. The play begins with Marcel, a blameless Minji, telling Holisah, God, that he received fake drugs from a doctor, suffered from poisoning, and eventually died. Marcel explains how his leaders mismanaged natural resources and society, leading to his untimely death. The play proceeds as a trial by Holisah against the leaders of Minji Land, accusing its leaders of mismanaging the great resources of a land Holisah calls, “the giant of the tropical forest.” After the angel Marcel finishes his sad tale, Holisah says, “My ears are filled. I am sorry you had such experiences in the midst of bountiful natural resources.”

At the end of the dean’s play, Holisah holds a trial against three founding leaders of Minji Land: Ely, Yan and Aayah. As Holisah reads out his conviction, he lays out Nigeria’s endowment of natural resources, the country’s potential, and how the country’s leaders had mismanaged its potential.
JUDGEMENT

Voice of Holisah!

My noble men of the jury, I have listened carefully to both the prosecuting and Defense Counsels…. The counsels cited various successful countries where men settled many years after I have given civilization to the tropics. Not only this, the resources, which I have bestowed to the accused and his descendants cannot be exhausted forever. But out of incivility and skull-druggery, they have abandoned them. They are therefore guilty of neglect of talent, which contradicted a vital section of my Holy Book on prima-facie ground.

The author seems to reference a theme from the famous story my host father told, that God blessed other countries with less, but they are doing better due to leadership. Holisah laments that “the people of the tropics” have not done more with what he has given them. Yet, the author does not only address a failure to manage valuable, inexhaustible natural resources, he also addresses human resources. Holisah continues later:

I observed with dismay that poverty has broken family life. Children wander about in the street because of increasing immorality. They lack money to go to school because of increasing immorality. They lack money to go to school because parents find it extremely difficult to feed them owing to skyrocketing costs of living. There is an alarming rate of illegitimacy and growing violence, which erupt not only in politics but in other spheres of life. Life in the township is becoming too dangerous. There is increasing wave of robbery and children I send to the world are being indiscriminately killed and also constrained by the use of artificial gadgets. This is very bad and therefore, contradicts my divine will.

Just see what the leaders do. The present generation has devised a strategy to remain in power in perpetual succession with the members of their families. The born-to rules? Only very few, just very few out of three founders of this land respect the rights of others.…

I am worried over the wickedness of the present generation of administrators…. I am Holy. My people must be Holy as well. I hold Ely, Aayah and Yan responsible, and found them guilty of the allegations leveled against them by my noble the cherub Marcel, and many other young children of the land who died because of offences of their ancestors, fathers, and the present leaders of Minji land.

I therefore sentence the three accused persons to everlasting torture in eternity. However, to execute of this judgment depends on how fast the children of the accused were able to adjust for better. They should remain in detention till there were positive charges based on justice and equity; Habeas Corpus observed.
This is the harshest punishment that could exist. Everlasting punishment is requisite payment for failing to utilize inexhaustible resources to the detriment of the most innocent citizens – children like Marcel. Holisah continues:

I would have sent disaster to their children in the world. But for the lucid application of the Defense Counsel. I will uphold the fourth request of the prosecution – that gnashing of teeth be continued in that land till they were able to feed themselves and appreciate what I have endowed them with…. For the next few decades or so, my wrath will visit the Minji people. Sleep will go out from the eyes of the leaders. Their children will know the rights and the forces of human will encourage them. The peace will come….

In his argument, the Defense Counsel observed that the prosecutors fail to refer to any judicial precedent. Let me therefore, remind all about the case of Sodom and Other vs. The Almighty God. So shall it be for the Minji if my proviso were not met by the youths of the land. Let me make my point clear to you on the issue of the national unity. Before the earth came into existence the Angels of the sea and the angels of the two major rivers on which you rested your name met. They resolve that love must be passed to your children for exemplary action. The two rivers got married and became one at the middle of the flow. They forgot their individual differences so that three pieces of land with a tail came out of the union. They formed tripod, which when stood well, can never fail. You eat the fish and drink the water of this supernatural marriage, but yet refused to learn the importance of national unity. I have to inform you that as long as you hated each other, probably on ethnic and religious grounds, my anger must surely come upon you.

This play, set as a trial, speaks to the perceived injustice of national leaders not effectively mobilizing Nigeria’s potential. This failure harms ordinary and innocent Nigerian citizens, such as Marcel. It also agonizes Nigerians to watch the ironic tragedy unfold. This is represented by Marcel’s friend Humble who had to watch Marcel die [see Appendix B for full text of the play].

My informant, who was the author of this book depicted Nigeria as a place rich in resources, and having great potential. In fact, one of the main characters – Marcel - is an example of the great potential of Nigeria as embodied by a Nigerian child. However, in the story, greed, mismanagement and ineptitude on the part of Minji Land (Nigeria)’s leaders stifle the country’s future and kill potential encapsulated in young people, such as Marcel. In this story,
the character of Nigeria and Nigerians like Marcel have great potential and promise. He argues that the characters experience stumbling and oppression on their path due to inept leaders.

One would assume that the story would end there, yet the author continues that if the children of the founders, i.e., the people of Nigeria, work hard to better their society, he will free them from the calamity caused by their leaders. Additionally, the author ends with a call for national unity. The author ends with, “You eat the fish and drink the water of this supernatural marriage, but yet refused to learn the importance of national unity. I have to inform you that as long as you hated each other, probably on ethnic and religious grounds, my anger must surely come upon you.” This shows that as a Nigerian citizen, the author believes unity is desirable; contributes to Nigeria’s riches; and that unity is part of what God destined for Nigeria. In the trial, God argues that he will punish Minji people if they do not reach for their destiny, putting an urgency to the need to achieve greatness and overcome stumbling blocks put in place by the country’s leaders. The play encapsulates the importance of Nigerian potential and the urgency my informants felt to overcome government roadblocks to reach this potential.

While this story template may appear strange to non-Nigerian readers, it follows the Nigerian National Narrative Template and logic for how many of my informants described the country. A character with great potential, Nigeria and Marcel, are oppressed by self-interested leaders, but Nigerians leave the shadow of this oppression by fighting for their freedom. It even includes the hope that Nigeria can one day be one.

This story also demonstrates how the National Narrative Template, and not mere chronology, serves as the main organizing rule for how my informants told stories about Nigeria. The author writes that Minji Land experienced poor leadership in the past, but also pens that God
hopes Minjis will free themselves from this hardship in the future. This author situates his tale not only in the past, but also in the future. He did not use the National Narrative Template to tell a story about Nigeria completely constrained to the past. In the next chapter, we will see how informants do discuss the whole Nigerian National Narrative Template unfolding in Nigeria’s past. As many specific national narratives exist as there exist people to tell them (Wertsch 1993; Bakhtin and Holquist 2008). This includes differences in when they situate their tales, including situating their tales (or aspects of them) in the future. Within a community, the unifying aspect of national narratives is the organizing concept and inter-recognizable national narrative template (Wertsch 2002, 2008). It is a rule, like any other mutually-agreed upon linguistic rule, such as a community’s linguistic grammar, phonetics, or morphology. National narrative templates serve as a semantic rule within a national language community.

The following informant interview serves as an excellent example to demonstrate how informants described Nigeria as a place with great potential while also questioning the colonial creation of Nigeria and inverting time scales – preferring to adhere to the Nigerian National Narrative Template. This again demonstrates that Nigerian narratives take different forms, but all adhere to the same national narrative template, which paints Nigeria as a character with great potential for greatness. My informant, a 29-year old Isoko-speaking woman working in Enugu, discussed pre-colonial Nigeria and the coming of colonialism. Her response helps readers understand how my informants framed colonialism as an oppressive force. Below is the transcript for a portion of the interview I had with her.

**Kosi:** So, please tell me your version of Nigerian history.

**11A:** I thought you wanted me to tell you the part that I found interesting.

**Kosi:** [laughs] Exactly.
11A: OK, uh, I prefer pre-… independent Nigeria.

Kosi: OK

11A: As far back as … before 190…3 when the British conquered in the Southern Nigeria - Northern Nigeria, rather and 1905 when they conquered Southern Nigeria, before we were amalgamated in 1914. The reason is…um, …I wasn’t born then, but I got to understand that each tribe have their own…system of government. I love the fact that…the northerners were…subservient. They obeyed. They were Muslims of course. They followed Allah and they followed Islam’s teachings…. Their emirs were like Gods to them. I’m not saying that’s right or wrong, but it was just them. That was how they lived in their society.

And then you had the Westerners – the Yorubas. They were kind of in-between. They had an oba who was the king, but they also had checks and balances to see if, “OK, he’s overusing his powers” or “He doesn’t have the right to do this.” Even if he’s a king, there’re also king makers who can subdue him when he’s becoming too arrogant.

And then, the Igbo society where it was more of a - I will call it a democratic system of government, where they had a lot of checks and balances. Because you were the obi, because you were ahead of the village, didn’t make you God. You could offend … an ordinary individual, and he or she had people to report to and say, “See what obi did to me! See what the king did to me! Why is this happening to me?” And there would be people to actually defend you or stand for you and say, “No, don’t allow this,” or, “This shouldn’t be.” Now, of course this is before the…Christian era. But I was fascinated by the fact that they had Amjoha the god of thunder that would strike you if you stole or took another person’s wife, and we didn’t have the whole, “I’m a Christian, you’re a Muslim,” and all.

These were societies that were together. We weren’t joined as Nigeria then, so we’re basically units. But…I want to say we were…contented. I want to use that word. They didn’t know what was happening outside, but they were ruling themselves…. From what I read – everything was peaceful. The Yorubas had their own gods – they had shotgun and all – that would deal with miscreants of the society – people who felt they had the power to do anything they wanted. So, instead of prison and jail and going to court, and all, you had traditional ways and things were working out, as far as I read. And that’s the part of Nigerian history that I really, really love….

You know that by 1914, they amalgamated the north and the south and we became one, and it- it was just - I don’t know if it was brilliant to bring these different people together and say, “You are one. We’re going to rule you.” Not considering the backgrounds and their religious faiths, you know? But, it was done in 1914. We will not reverse it, and I don’t pray that we split because Nigeria now, it’s like a force to reckon with. No matter how bad a reputation we have, there’s still that pride of being, “I’m a Nigerian.”

Kosi: [laughs]

11A: You know, where, if we don’t have anything, we have the number –
Kosi: [laughs] OK

11A: Yes! We’re many! So -

Kosi: - OK

11A: That’s the part of Nigerian history I really like.

Kosi: OK. Awesome. That’s the part that you like, but can you also tell me your version of like, the whole history, like how would you kind of like say… you know, the story of Nigeria.

11A: OK, um… the story of Nigeria started in 1914 because before then, we were not Nigeria. When it was amalgamated by Lord Lugard. From there…of course, indirect rule came, uh…the rule of divide and conquer- I don’t know if you’ve heard of that – where the British would play us against ourselves, you know, and subdue us that way? Uh…from then on, I don’t know. I told you that what I really like is pre-Nigeria. But, from 1914, I think it was downhill, all the way. I think it was…. If you think about it, or if you read about it, you see the way we constantly tried to…come out from the rule of the foreigners. You know, it’s one thing to be ruled by your own persons. It’s another thing to be ruled by someone who doesn’t look like you, who doesn’t talk like you, who doesn’t even understand your ways and he comes and tells you that his way is best. So, there was a lot of agitation, you know, protests, “We want to be on our own.”

The young woman paints the order of pre-colonial Nigeria to portray the potential of Nigeria. She describes a static, idyllic past, as untouched by man as oil still in the ground. The pinnacle of her story is the British amalgamation and mismanaging the country through colonial rule. She even identifies the peak of her narrative arc when, after mentioning the colonial creation of Nigeria in 1914, she says, “from 1914, I think it was downhill, all the way.” At first glance, the young woman sounds like she does not think Nigeria is a good character or good idea. Like my host father, she indicates that it was an “unholy marriage.” Yet upon further inspection, the young woman does think that in its oldest state, Nigeria was in a golden age and did have potential, but that this potential was stymied. This may seem confusing because even in her own words, the young woman notes that what she describes is not specifically “Nigerian history.” She describes a time before 1914 when the British formed and colonized Nigeria: “The story of Nigeria started in 1914 because before then, we were not Nigeria.” However, she consistently
reiterates that pre-colonial Nigerian history is, “the part of Nigerian history I really like.” How can we explain this?

This blurring of chronology attests to the power of national narrative templates to organize how my informants think about their country. Telling Nigerian history using the prevailing national plot was often more important than privileging accuracy or chronology. Collective remembering is not academic history because while in academic history, accuracy and chronology matters, in collective remembering, people can pull together material from different points in time to tell the story of their country. The only rule, which makes the story recognizable, is the national narrative template.

Going back, what is it that the young woman likes so much about pre-colonial Nigerian history that she would rather discuss this as Nigerian history, than events post 1914? She says, “I want to say we were- we were contented. I want to use that word. They didn’t know what was happening outside, but they were ruling themselves, and… so from what I read- like I said, I was not there - everything was peaceful.” A key reason why she argues that Nigerians were “contented” was because they were “ruling themselves” and “everything was peaceful.” She spends a great deal of time at the beginning of her narrative discussing the legal systems of pre-colonial and pre-Nigerian societies as a sort of golden age because they were able to rule themselves. Interestingly, she argues that although the entities were split into different ethnic groups, they still remained in peace. This may infer that given the right leaders, it is possible to have peace and diversity at the same time.

The second part of her narrative describes colonialism almost as a challenge to this period of imagined “Nigerian” functionality and peace. She says, “You know that by 1914, they
amalgamated the north and the south and we became one, and … I don’t know if it was brilliant to bring these different people together and say, ‘You are one.’” She continues later, “I told you that what I really like is pre-Nigeria. But, from 1914, I think it was downhill, all the way.” She blames inept colonial leadership for why she believes Nigeria “went downhill” beginning in 1914. Despite the challenges the young woman believes Nigerian faces and also despite its apparent fall from grace, the young woman expresses pride in the country and her belief that Nigeria is strong, “But, it was done in 1914. We will not reverse it, and I don’t pray that we split because Nigeria now, it’s like a force to reckon with.” She continues, “No matter how bad a reputation we have, there’s still that pride of being, ‘I’m a Nigerian.’”

The woman’s Nigerian history narrative is complex largely because it spans beliefs of pre-colonial and post-colonial Nigeria. Yet, looking at her narrative schematically, the young woman follows the Nigerian National Narrative Template. She argues that Nigerians are capable of having functional and peaceful systems of government, yet poor leadership, such as that displayed by British colonists, stifled Nigeria from exercising this. Somewhat surprisingly, at the end she mentions that today, even in the midst of oppressively poor leadership, Nigeria still has great potential for greatness. This is why she states, “it’s [Nigeria’s] like a force to reckon with,” and that it is poor leadership that suppresses it.

The specific Nigerian narratives my informants provided differed as widely as the people who told them. The main experience tying all of my informants together was that Nigerian institutions, including the institution of language, had socialized them. The chief occurrence binding their Nigerian narratives was the Nigerian National Narrative Template. My informants spanned those who tended to criticize Nigeria’s existence to those who tended to laud it, yet they all told a story where Nigeria was situated with God-given potential. My informants regularly
stated that God had blessed Nigeria. Invoking God meant they essentialized Nigeria’s potential and found it innate – Foreigners, such as the British, did not give Nigeria its potential, God did. This positions British colonizers – the people who pieced Nigeria together – as prospective obstructionists to Nigerian destiny, not as benefactors to the country. This is important when analyzing why current and historic Nigerian leaders, such as British colonial leaders, took a certain role in the Nigerian National Narrative Template. My storytellers argued leaders were mishandling potential God had given, and that few if any leaders had been fit for the task of managing Nigeria’s potential. The following are examples of informants invoking God and “blessings” from the excerpts:

My host father: “When God created the world, … He gave Nigeria green vegetation…. He gave us seasonal weather.

Interview 3C: “Well, as history told us, Nigeria is richly blessed in crude oil.”

God in the The Minji Trial: Not only this, the resources, which I have bestowed to the accused [leaders of Minji Land] and his descendants cannot be exhausted forever.

Interview 7A: Ah… our country is good. Very very good. Blessed by God.

When informants argue God has blessed Nigeria, they imply that Nigeria, as an amalgamated country, began its story endowed with great potential. They also argue that Nigeria has a destiny. This concept of blessing indicates a plan or destiny for Nigeria. The concept of divine blessings indicates a positive destiny if its recipients use their blessings wisely. The Minji Trial demonstrates this reasoning. If my informants had argued God had, for example, cursed Nigeria, they would have logically indicated that Nigeria’s destiny was not positive.
In the following chapters, we will see that Nigerians place great importance on the idea that Nigeria and Nigerians should overcome oppression and achieve their destiny. Put in the context of their larger narratives, my informants argued that Nigerian greatness was God-given but that different manifestations of poor Nigerian leadership inhibited the country from destined greatness. They said this in different ways. At first glance, some even seemed to criticize the existence of Nigeria itself. Yet after analyzing the semantics of their statements in context, my informants invoked the Nigerian National Narrative Template consistently across their interviews and stories. This chapter outlined how my informants described the main character of Nigerian national narratives, Nigeria itself. The next chapter will utilize semantic, grammatical, and survey analysis to further explore how my informants explained what happened to the main character, Nigeria.
Chapter 4: Narrativizing Nigeria’s Agency

The previous chapter outlined how my informants frequently described Nigeria as a character in their Nigerian histories. The largest group of individuals described Nigeria as a character imbued with God-given potential. This set up a tension at the beginning of their narratives which drive the remaining two portions of the Nigerian National Narrative Template: namely, how poor government leadership tragically blocks Nigeria’s potential, but how Nigeria ultimately triumphs. In this chapter, I provide evidence for the last two portions of the Nigerian National Narrative Template, and provide evidence that all three aspects of the template belong together. The previous chapter alluded to the next two pieces of the narrative template, a fall from grace and struggles to regain agency.

Anthropologists have tended to vigorously debate the meaning of agency. Ahearn (2001:112) concludes that agency is the, “the socioculturally mediated capacity to act,” arguing for the importance of social structures in impacting, and even restricting, how people express themselves. She argues that human performance is complicated when it occurs in the real world, and that notions of agency as expressions of free-will are too simplistic (Taylor 1985). Yet, stories are not the real world. National narratives and myths are simplified (Wertsch 2002; Wertsch 2008). This is often because community-focused linguistic rules such as national narrative templates structure national myths. They serve as cultural heuristics or crutches people use to more efficiently operate in the real world, for example, by helping them communicate with people they most frequently to encounter (Kahneman 2011).
Simplistic constructions such as enemies oppressing protagonists and protagonists defeating enemies are concepts that frequently occur in national narratives as well as stories more generally (Wertsch 2009; Garagozov 2008). Such concepts involve characters either expressing or suppressing free will, and characterize free will as a sort of directed action or agency. Duranti (2004:453) provides a definition of agency that fits narrative imaginations of agency I came across in my research:

(1) Agency is here understood as the property of those entities (i) that have some degree of control over their own behavior, (ii) whose actions in the world affect other entities’ (and sometimes their own), and (iii) whose actions are the object of evaluation (e.g. in terms of their responsibility for a given outcome).

The latter part of this definition, concerning evaluation is particularly relevant as my informants remembered, ruminated about, and made value judgments on the actions of individuals within their stories.

In this dissertation, I view agency as the freedom and ability to make decisions and act on them. When people experience obstructions on their paths, it limits the number of decisions they can make to move forward and thus reduces their agency. Obstructions can also create new and creative pathways to reach destinations when people find ways around them. Yet, finding new opportunities and paths requires struggle, as it necessitates overcoming often-difficult obstacles. My informants described Nigeria as stumbling due to the obstacle of government mismanagement, which caused it to experience low agency in the midst of its giftedness.

In this chapter, I provide additional textual evidence for the second and third portions of the Nigerian National Narrative Template arising from my informants’ speech: 2) Oppressive
government elites manipulate Nigeria for personal gain, causing problems within Nigeria. 3) Nigeria gains freedom from oppression and continues on as one. To paraphrase these narrative elements, the second part of the Nigerian National Narrative Template is that Nigeria undergoes government oppression, which causes it to experience low agency. The final piece describes Nigeria struggling to regain freedom from oppressive rule so that it can choose to follow a predestined greatness. In this chapter, I also provide evidence that all three aspects of the Nigerian National Narrative Template operate together. Again, national narrative templates do not mirror actual chronological historical events. Such templates provide a more methodological way to understand how people imagine their nations.

To make my arguments in this chapter, I draw from survey and transcript data. For both types of data, after coding their statements, I examined how many people mentioned various historical events as well as the frequency of people who conceptualized Nigeria in certain ways. I did this to determine if consensus, or evidence for collective remembering and imagined speaking communities, existed. Both survey and interview data collection solicited free responses. While informants provided a wide array of responses, I focused on cases where 30% or more of the people mentioned something.

For the transcript and survey data, I conducted semantic analysis. For transcript data, I also examined the syntactical construction my informants used when describing Nigeria and “Nigerians.” I performed this syntactical analysis to apprehend how my informants subtly placed Nigeria in an object (objectified) position, or subject (more powerful) position, within sentences that had subject-object constructions. When my informants placed Nigeria in an object position, this indicated they were imagining a time when Nigerians experienced low agency and self-determination, often under oppressive leadership. When my informants placed Nigeria in a
subject position, this indicated a time when they imagined Nigeria displaying high agency, with the freedom to choose its destiny (see Duranti 2004). Analyzing multiple data points, including speech syntax, allows us to understand how my informants conceptualized the Nigerian story across multiple dimensions of behavior. Such triangulation allows us to compare findings from different data points and come to more rigorous conclusions overall.

One major finding after doing the analysis outlined in this chapter was that, in both interviews and surveys, the largest number of people mentioned Independence from British colonial rule in 1960 as an important event. This means that an event where Nigerians struggled to regain freedom and agency after colonial rule was highly salient for my informants. The next most frequently mentioned items after Independence were amalgamation, the Nigerian-Biafran Civil War, Boko Haram, and colonialism. These events correspond with periods when Nigeria experienced either low agency or fought to regain agency. In this chapter, I argue that the Nigerian plot my informants told was one in which a highly-gifted character, Nigeria, faced oppression and experienced low agency at the hands of other story characters, but struggled to overcome this obstacle and regain its agency.

4.1 “Nigeria” Concept Analysis

One way I analyzed the data was to examine the concepts my informants used to describe “Nigeria” and whether a large percentage of people (30% or more) used certain concepts. I did this to better understand if consensus existed, and if so, how my most of my informants conceptualized Nigeria. To approach this work, I utilized Lakoff and Johnson’s (2008) book Metaphors We Live By, which reviews how to perform concept analyses of terms. This involves paying attention to the metaphors people use when they liken concepts. It also involves attending
to the verbs speakers use when positioning the idea of interest, in this case Nigeria, as the subject or object of sentences.

In order to analyze specifically how my informants conceptualized Nigeria, I sorted out all phrases in my transcripts where my informants mentioned Nigeria. I then coded each of these phrases for overall semantic meaning. After analyzing and coding 63 of my oral history interviews, I found that interviewees who mentioned Nigeria or things having to do with Nigeria, most frequently vocally conceptualized Nigeria in the following ways. (I coded only 63 of my Nigerian history interviews because the author of the Minji Trial interrupted his interview to point me towards his book, where he told his version of Nigerian history through allegory.)

**Table 4.1 Summary of Nigerian Concept Analysis Coding.**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Code</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>Percentage out of 63 People</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Nigeria is fractured whole.</td>
<td>46</td>
<td>73%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Selfish leaders oppress Nigeria</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>60%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nigeria faces challenges</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>43%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nigeria has potential to be a great country</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>33%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nigeria gained independence from the British</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>30%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

These are the concepts most of my informants mentioned. The list contains elements of a story about Nigeria, something I outlined in the previous chapter. The list also describes what Nigeria goes through. In the list, people describe Nigeria as a fractured whole that has potential to be a great country. However, selfish leaders oppress Nigeria and the country
faces challenges. Ultimately, Nigeria gains independence from oppressive leaders. Again, this reflects the Nigerian National Narrative Template.

4.2 Frequency of Mention

In addition to determining a consensus of concepts, I also sought to determine if any consensus existed with regard to events. In order to do this, I assessed how many of my informants mentioned certain historical events in their Nigerian oral history interviews and Nigerian history surveys. For interviews, I assessed interview transcripts. Both my Nigerian history interviews and surveys were semi-structured. This means that respondents could answer questions however they wanted, making it harder for consensus to occur. Seeing a large proportion of people mentioning the same concept or event in such a context is important as it would provide evidence for the existence of a shared Nigerian speaking and acting community. In other words, it would indicate that a community of people with similar thoughts and behaviors exist within Nigeria across linguistic, economic, regional, and other lines. It would indicate a Nigerian identity.

4.2.1 Frequency of Events in Interview Transcripts

The following table lists how many out a diverse set of 63 interviewees mentioned particular historical events or actors:

Table 4.2 Number out of sixty-three informants who mentioned certain events in Nigerian history

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Nigerian Event</th>
<th>Number 63 Informants Who Mentioned Event</th>
<th>Percentage of Informants Who Mentioned Event (only included events with 30% or more mentioning)</th>
<th>Examples of How Informants Described Independence In Transcripts</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Independence</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>57.1</td>
<td>“Then as a Nigerians began to study”</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

| 100 |
and educate, so time came that some began to fight for independence. Yeah, and with that, at last, Nigeria gained independence, that should be 1960” (Interview 19A).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Event</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
<th>How the Majority of Interviewees Described Nigeria When Discussing Event in Interviews</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Civil War</td>
<td>36.5</td>
<td>“But then there was this thing that almost broke Nigeria apart, and that was the Civil War that came in 1967. 1967 the Civil War came because of clashes” (Interview 13A).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Amalgamation</td>
<td>34.9</td>
<td>“Along the line, they decided to merge the southern and the northern Nigeria” (Interview 12A).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Colonialism</td>
<td>34.9</td>
<td>“British, they are the people who colonized us” (20A).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Boko Haram</td>
<td>33.3</td>
<td>“You know, eh, here in Nigeria, there are full of Boko Haram, so they’re killing innocent people. Every day, you’re hearing about Boko Haram people, they throw bomb in so so so places like this” (Interview 35A).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Military Rule</td>
<td>30.2</td>
<td>Then, within that period, something, uh Nigeria was going accordingly until the military took over the- uh-uh government, and then in a military coup.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 4.3 How my interviewees described historical events with regard to Nigeria

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Historical Event</th>
<th>How the Majority of Interviewees Described Nigeria When Discussing Event in Interviews</th>
<th>Percentage of Low Agency Descriptions</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Independence</td>
<td>High Agency</td>
<td>83.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Amalgamation</td>
<td>Low Agency</td>
<td>86.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Colonialism</td>
<td>Low Agency</td>
<td>86.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Boko Haram</td>
<td>Low Agency</td>
<td>71.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Military Rule</td>
<td>Low Agency</td>
<td>57.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Civil War</td>
<td>Low Agency</td>
<td>56.5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Several other events were also mentioned in the transcripts, but at such low frequencies that I do not analyze them further here. For each of the events listed, I analyzed how my informants described it with regard for Nigerian agency (see Table 4.3). My informants described the majority of their most frequently mentioned events as times when Nigeria experienced low agency. This would include the Amalgamation, the Civil War, Colonialism, Boko Haram, and Military Rule. Table 4.2 provides examples of how they described each event and whom informants argued was oppressing whom.

During my analysis, I noted instances where informants described Nigeria’s involvement in events differently, apart from Nigeria experiencing low or high agency. For example, a significant percentage of people who mentioned the Civil War described it as an event where Nigeria was passively involved (35%). One 23-year old Igbo-speaking interviewee described the Civil War passively with regard to Nigeria, “…in 1967, that was when the war started.” A significant percentage of my informants who mentioned Military Rule described its onset as an event where Nigeria experienced agency (31.6%). A 26-year old Ibibio-speaking man said, “I know there’s a time where we have the military rule. You know? We had those terrible presidents like Abacha and uh, and now we have the civilian rule.” He describes how Nigerians “had” presidents, indicating agency by placing Nigeria as the subject of a subject-object construction.

While these findings are fascinating and worth mentioning, such instances outside of those listed in table 4.3 did not reach a majority. The majority of those mentioning the Civil War
and Military Rule described Nigeria as experiencing low agency during these historical periods. A majority of my informants mentioned Independence when telling stories about Nigerian history. Most of the people who mentioned Independence described it as an event where Nigeria exercised agency to free themselves from the British. When analyzing the events the majority of my informants recalled during their Nigerian history interviews, we see that they listed events where Nigeria experienced low agency oppression as well as an event where Nigeria sought freedom from oppression and demonstrated agency. This dynamic of experiencing low agency and struggling to increase agency matches parts two and three of the Nigerian National Narrative Template, namely the path the gifted character, Nigeria, passes through.

4.2.2 Surveys

In 2011 and 2014, I conducted surveys, in which I asked participants to list what they thought were the five most important events in Nigerian history. I also asked them to pick which event they felt was most important and explain why. Many informants chose independence as the most important event in Nigerian history. When describing why they chose independence, respondents overwhelmingly described independence as a key event where Nigerians obtained freedom from foreign colonial oppression. Below are a few of their free response survey answers.

Interestingly, the events my informants mentioned the most frequently in their oral histories roughly corresponded with responses different sample sets gave in their surveys (see Table 4.4 below). In 2014, I asked 49 secondary school students at a local government high school in Enugu to list the five most important events in Nigerian history and also indicate what they
thought was the most important event out of those they listed. Table 4.4 below shows the events most frequently mentioned and the events the respondents listed as the most important in Nigerian history. It is evident that overlap exists between the transcript and survey results, given that many people across both results mentioned Independence, Amalgamation, and the Nigerian-Biafran Civil War. In 2014, I surveyed 99 students at the university of Nigeria, Enugu campus to complete the same Nigerian history survey I had given the younger, secondary school students. The University of Nigeria has a rigorous admissions process, and typically only students with the highest college entrance exam scores gain admission, and hence there may have been a difference in access to information that the secondary school and university student received over their lifetimes. Also as these students were older, they had, over time, received more information about the world and instruction than the secondary-school students. Results for this survey can be found in Table 4.4.

I conducted the same survey study in Lagos and Mbaise, Nigeria three years prior during the summer of 2011. At that time, I surveyed, 69 Nigerians citizens across ethnic group and rural/urban place of residence. Many informants at the time warned me that they were not experts in history and may not be the best people to fill out the survey for me. Once again, I found that informants listed independence more than any other event. Democracy Day occurred on May 29, 1999 – it is the day Nigeria returned to Civilian rule after thirty years of almost uninterrupted of military dictatorship. Even though this survey occurred three years prior to my major 2014 survey and in two completely different areas of Nigeria, we see an overlap in the events listed – Independence from the British, Democracy Day, and the Nigerian-Biafran Civil War.
Contrary to arguments made by Watts (2004a), Falola, and Aderinto (2010) about there being no collective Nigerian consciousness, there does seem to be some indication of consensus.

Table 4.4 Simplified summary of 2014 and 2011 surveys

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Most Frequently Mentioned Overall</th>
<th>University of Nigeria Enugu Campus - 2014</th>
<th>Enugu Senior Secondary School - 2014</th>
<th>Lagos and Mbaise Snowball Sample - 2011</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Independence</td>
<td>78.7%</td>
<td>85.7%</td>
<td>60.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Civil War</td>
<td>63.6%</td>
<td>Civil War: 20%</td>
<td>Civil War: 36%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Amalgamation</td>
<td>39.4%</td>
<td>Democracy Day: 20%</td>
<td>Democracy Day: 22%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Democracy Day</td>
<td>30.3%</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Listed as Most Important Nigerian History Event</th>
<th>University of Nigeria Enugu Campus - 2014</th>
<th>Enugu Senior Secondary School - 2014</th>
<th>Lagos and Mbaise Snowball Sample - 2011</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Independence</td>
<td>42.4%</td>
<td>77.6%</td>
<td>Independence: 36%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Civil War</td>
<td>9.1%</td>
<td></td>
<td>1963 Republican Status: 6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Amalgamation</td>
<td>7.1%</td>
<td></td>
<td>Transition to Democracy: 6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Democracy Day</td>
<td>5.1%</td>
<td></td>
<td>Civil War: 4%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Not only did survey data taken from three sets of people over time correspond with one another, but the survey data overlapped with data from my transcripts of people narrating Nigerian history. Of particular interest is that in the case of events that received highest consensus as important within the survey Nigerians acted with high amounts of agency: Independence, the Nigerian-Biafran Civil War, and Democracy Day. This is particularly the case with Independence, the event garnering the most consensus and where, historically, Nigerians fought an oppressive outside force for the longest period of time. Overall, the high agency historical events listed in surveys comprised instances where Nigerians fought or gained
freedom from forces seeking to oppress or break up the country. While the surveys are geared towards moments of Nigerian agency, all of these historical moments came as a reaction to periods of forced or threatened low-agency. Looking at the transcript data, there is a counterbalance of low and high agency events a significant amount people mentioned in their narratives. The transcript excerpts also depict how people narrativize dichotomies of low and high agency. Further examination of transcript data through previously discussed concept frequencies, as well as assessing passage semantics and syntactical constructions also reinforce these findings.

4.3 Analysis of Syntactical Structure and Semantics

In Chapter 2, I described how I collected 64 semi-structured oral history interviews. In addition to analyzing the frequency with which people mentioned certain events, I examined the grammatical construction and semantics of sentences, within my informants’ Nigerian oral history narratives, where they referred directly to Nigeria or Nigerian people. I did this to document dimensions of agency. In this chapter, I use the concept of “high agency” to mean that the country or its people play an active role in the story. In high agency roles, Nigeria has, “some degree of control over [its] own behavior,” and its, “actions in the world affect other entities’ (and sometimes their own)” (Duranti 2004:453). We can typically see this when storytellers place the country or its people as the subject of sentences that contain subject-object constructions. I utilize the idea of “low agency” to indicate the opposite. In low agency Nigerian statements, other story characters control Nigeria’s behavior as well as act upon Nigeria and Nigerian people. We see this when narrators place the country, in this case, Nigeria, as the object of a sentence. Another way speakers indicate low agency is when Nigeria is the object of a
sentence constructed in passive voice. This means that, though they do not explicate who did so, another character acted upon Nigeria. Finally, this section provides semantic analysis of a Nigerian national narrative to demonstrate how the speaker utilizes all aspects of the Nigerian narrative template to tell stories about the country. The following section provides evidence that, through their syntax, my informants told stories, in which other characters often acted upon Nigeria, oppressed it, and reduced the country’s agency.

4.3.1 Low Agency Syntax and Semantics

Many of my informants placed Nigeria in an object position during their oral history interviews. In fact, 33 out of 64 informants or 51% specifically placed Nigeria in an object position at least one time during their history interviews. This is consistent with the idea that collective experiences of oppression are an important part of the Nigerian story. As evidence of this, I analyze several interviews.

While conducting Nigerian history interviews, I asked a 30-year old woman who worked for a local government utility office to tell me her version of Nigerian history. Below is the first portion of our conversation. In this and subsequent excerpts in this section, I have underlined the low agency subject-object constructions that involve Nigeria or Nigerians. I have done this for sentences constructed in active voice as well as those in passive voice.

1A: Okay. Nigeria is a nation - basically … there are a lot of diversity in Nigeria. Different ethnic gr- groups make up Nigeria. Before now, we were in… in dark. I would call it in dark when we were not, we have not been civilized, colonized, so, before the … British came and colonized us. So, it’s Lord Lugard that named us Nigeria… after the Nile River. He extracted the name from the Niger-

Kosi: -OK.
1A: -and called us Nigeria. Before then, we were … grouped as Northern and Southern protectorate. Each protectorate was governed by a different entity before they now pulled us together. He did it without our consent, but we accepted it (says with louder voice, and with laughter in voice).

Kosi: (laugh) OK.

1A: Yeah, because we didn’t have any other option, because they were the people colonizing us… (emphasis added).

In this excerpt, the woman places others in hegemonic roles over Nigeria and Nigerians, which take the object, or subordinate, position (see underlined points in the text). This implies others controlled or influenced Nigerians. By not giving Nigerians agency in her sentences, the speaker implies others exerted some form of control over Nigerians, limited their freedom, and thus exerted oppression. “The … British … colonized us. So, it’s Lord Lugard that named us…. He [Lugard]… called us Nigeria…. They were … colonizing us.”

In several instances, my informant does put Nigeria in the subject position. This initially appears to contradict the claim that my informants often placed Nigeria in object positions within sentences. At this point, it makes sense to take a step back and look at the semantics of this excerpt or what meaning my informant sought to portray with the subject-object constructions in this paragraph. Some linguists, such as conversation analysts, have argued that researchers should look solely at the linguistic details of a conversation and ignore context (Chomsky 2014; Chomsky 1986; Schegloff 1991; Ten Have 2007). Yet, sociolinguists have convincingly argued that language exists in cultural contexts (Eckert 2012; Hymes 2003; Gumperz and Hymes 1972;
Gee 2011; Goffman 1983; Wooffitt 2005). This would include Nigerian ones. We must pay attention to the context of this conversation (for example, an informant telling an interviewer a story about Nigeria), as well as to the overall meaning and semantics the interviewee sought to convey in the paragraph.

My informant placed Nigerians in the subject position of two sentences. She says, “we [Nigerians] accepted it,” and “we [Nigerians] didn’t have any other option.” The first statement is part of a larger sentence where she says, “He [Lord Lugard] did it without our consent, but we accepted it.” The “it” is a reference to the phrase, “pulled us together,” in the previous sentence, which refers to British colonists amalgamating Nigeria in 1914. She argues that Lord Lugard amalgamated Nigeria without the consent of Nigerians, but that “we [Nigerians] accepted it.” When she laughs and raises the volume of her voice as she says this, she conveys that she finds this part of her story ironic. Additionally, the phrase “without our consent,” signals this is a moment when Nigerians had less freedom to make decisions and less agency. To summarize, in context, when my informant used the phrase, “we accepted it,” she means that Lugard removed agency from Africans by creating Nigeria, but that Africans inexplicably accepted this. While “we accepted it” places Nigerians in a subject position, when observing context, it refers to a periods where Nigerians experienced low agency. This also correlates with the wider context of this paragraph, in which my informant largely places Nigeria as the object of subject-object sentence constructions.

The second phrase, “we didn’t have any other option,” exists in a larger sentence where my informant says, “Yeah, because we [Nigerians] didn’t have any other option, because they [the British] were the people colonizing us.” Again, agency is the freedom to make decisions. When my informant says, “we didn’t have any other option,” she is describing a time when
Nigerians had fewer choices, less freedom to make decisions, and thus experienced low agency. Such a situation is akin to someone pinned down by a rock or locked in a room. In both contexts, something or someone suppresses an individual. While the oppressed person does have a set of options, another actor has greatly reduced the size of that set. When my informant said, “we didn’t have any other option,” she describes a time when something suppressed or oppressed Nigeria.

Later in the sentence, she explains what suppressed the country: “…we [Nigerians] didn’t have any other option, because they [the British] were the people colonizing us.” While my informant places Nigerians in the subject position, when we look at the wider meaning and context of the phrase, she argues that the British were suppressing Nigerian freedom to choose its destiny because they were colonizing Nigerians. Both syntactic and semantic analysis of this excerpt supports the claim that Nigerians tell a story where Nigerian leaders (another character in the story) suppress the agency of Nigeria, reducing its autonomy and decision-making power.

Others informants also placed characters in superordinate roles over Nigeria in their stories. For instance, in his oral history interview, my host father Michael said:

…the country was ruled by –by-uh… Britain. And the name Nigerians was, we were told was given by the British women- chose the name Nigeria …for us.

Here we see that my informant used a mixture of both active and passive voice to describe British occupation of Nigeria and how British women gave Nigeria its name. My informant placed Nigeria as the object of his sentences, again subtly indicating a time when Nigeria experienced low agency. For example, in the last sentence where Michael says that, “British
women chose the name Nigeria for us,” he reiterates that the British took away some of Nigeria’s power to determine its own destiny. This indicates a reduction of choice and characterizes the people who obstructed Nigeria’s desired path.

A young Igbo-speaking woman from Mbaise said, “Lady Flora Shaw [British Governor General Lugard’s wife] gave Nigeria its name - “Niger - area” because of the water around the place.” In retelling Nigeria’s origin, she, like Michael and others, placed British colonist Flora Shaw in the agentive position and Nigeria as an object upon which Flora Shaw acted. This provides further evidence that my informants viewed British colonial rule as a time when Nigeria experienced low agency, oppression, and limited ability to determine its own destiny.

While my informants argued that British colonialism reduced Nigerian agency, several claimed that colonialism did help Nigerians “develop” or become more “Western” – even if it was against their will. This distinction is key. Agency is not necessarily the same as progress. It is simply the ability to determine one’s own destiny (or end point).

When I asked a 37-year old television host residing in Enugu, to tell me more about colonialism, he argued:

Yeah, colonialism….This is my personal uh opinion. I was like, had it been the whites are still here managing some of our facilities, I don’t think we could have gotten … this backwards that we are now! You get me? So, I was like…. You look at South Africa,… uh… they were able to maintain this status now and because the oyibo, the whites, were there for a very long time and were able to help them to manage some of their… um… institutions. But here in Nigeria, we – we claim to have known it all, claim to have seen it all. We have -we claim to have - I mean, we have the power, the ego, everything to manage our institutions and resources, but you find out that … we failed it. Most of these institutions that were left by the whites have gone down the drain.

Talk of the railway lines, talk of the hospitals…. You see all our- all our leaders, they’re flying themselves abroad to get medications, and you begin to wonder, what is - what have we gotten wrong here? We have all the facilities, we have the intelligence. We have
everything it takes. So, why can’t we build our home? What everybody is interested in is how much I can get from the country – how much I can grab. You are made governor today, you become a billionaire here. No schools. Most of our leaders that went to public schools now, … none of their children is in public school. They have strangulated the public schools, build private schools and make millions of naira from there. So, I believe that the white, the colonialism, helped us a lot. In as much as nobody would want some other person to … rule you or control you, but I think we’re still half-baked. We’re babies in managing our institutions (Interview 12A).

Another 23 year old, young man living in Mbaise pondered:

When you come to the world today, and you check statistics, you find out that Nigeria is growing, but they are not developing. That’s the problem. What are the factors that hinder this development? It’s corruption, bad leadership, and so on. You know? Nigeria is growing. When it comes to growth, you come and do business in Nigeria. You prosper, but corruption. Make a business, and OK, there’s no light…. The light is not really constant…. Some people [Nigerians] don’t believe in Nigeria again because of the corruption. They say, “Ah! The same people!” Once you enter politics, they’ll mark you as … as sort of a dingbat…. But if you leave the politics for the bad boys, it means it will ever be bad unless with God’s intervention. So, the good ones should join. The only thing, you pray for them not to be influenced by the bad ones. Like today, you can’t really tell that there’re good people there [in Nigerian politics], but if there are, they are very few. I can use the - eighty to twenty percent: eighty bad, twenty good, and they’re being influenced. And a situation whereby eighty is bad, the group will not really make much impact [on Nigeria] because at the end of the day, it’s democracy and majority carries the vote…. So, that is why Nigeria is a question mark…. You get my point, so. Nigeria is growing, but we are not developing. So, I don’t know if the independence was a mistake. I think I will … I don’t know, but I think we need to deliberate on that again. We need to think it over, because assuming the British really helped us to handle our resources, I think to some certain extent, then we can also say, “Yes, we can also stand on our own.” Now when independence came, there was no sensitization on what you should look at in independence, that independence is coming. There was no sensitization. You know, so, it's really affecting us today (Interview 22B).

Semantically, we can see that both individuals concede that their opinions appear somewhat heterodox. The first speaker says, “This is my personal uh opinion…” before proceeding. The second speaker says, “So, I don’t know if the independence was a mistake. I think I will … I don’t know, but I think we need to deliberate on that again. We need to think it
over.” Yet, they both make largely similar arguments. They argue colonialism gave Nigeria bounty and potential, which later leaders squandered or misused. They contend that if the British had stayed longer or if Nigerians had been better prepared for Independence, Nigeria would have come closer to reaching its potential:

12A: “I was like, had it been the whites are still here managing some of our facilities, I don’t think we could have gotten … this backwards that we are now! … You look at South Africa,… they were able to maintain this status now and because the oyibo, the whites, were there for a very long time and were able to help them to manage some of their… institutions…. I believe that the white, the colonialism, helped us a lot.”

22B: “I don’t know if the independence was a mistake. I think I will … I don’t know, but I think we need to deliberate on that again. We need to think it over, because assuming the British really helped us to handle our resources, I think to some certain extent, then we can also say, “Yes, we can also stand on our own.” Now when independence came, there was no sensitization on what you should look at in independence, that independence is coming. There was no sensitization. You know, so, it’s really affecting us today

They both also blame post-Independence leaders for squandering potential that colonists gave Nigeria. They both argue that Nigerian leaders botched Independence, because Nigeria was not ready for it. They contend that, since Independence, Nigerian leaders have made poor decisions that stifle the freedom of ordinary Nigerians. They reason that modern-day Nigerian leaders obstruct Nigeria. The last point, lamenting a lack of “light” or electricity, refers to government bureaucrats failing to provide infrastructure. For these individuals Independence does not signal Nigeria’s freedom from oppression, but rather, Nigeria entering into a period of oppression due to government mismanagement.

Notice also that in their statements, both individuals employ fall from grace narrative transitions mirroring parts one and two of the Nigerian narrative template. They describe Nigeria as a place of great potential, which colonial leaders have bequeathed but that current leaders have
obstructed. While some interviewees described God as the source of Nigerian potential and colonial leaders as the villains of leading part two the narrative template, these informants viewed colonists as the source of Nigerian potential and current leaders as the villains leading part two. Again, while the results may appear shocking or counterintuitive, the main organizer for national narratives is the national narrative template and story plot, not other discursive organizers such as chronology, spontaneous moral judgment, or academic history.

While these interviewees argued that colonialism helped Nigeria to progress, their syntactical constructions reveal they believe that both colonial and indigenous Nigerian leaders deprived Nigeria of opportunities to make decisions, thus lowering the agency of the character Nigeria. This emphasizes the difference between agency and “progress.” They are not necessarily the same. While my informants say that colonists “helped” Nigerians progress or “develop,” moving Nigeria towards a goal of achieving its full “potential,” they do not say this happened with Nigeria’s permission or that Nigerians experienced freedom under colonialism. They argue that during colonialism the actions of oppressive colonists happened to overlap with the actions they desired Nigeria to make for itself. While my informants argue colonists were benevolent in providing resources, they still imply they oppressively prevented Nigerians from making their own decisions. My informants also indicate that indigenous Nigerian leaders have not been as benevolent, but have been as oppressive as colonists. When they place Nigeria and Nigerians as the subject of their sentences, the semantics of the statements indicate Nigeria experiences low agency because poor leadership strangles its potential to make decisions that will lead it towards progress.

12A: backwards … we [Nigerians] are…. we claim to have known it ... [we] claim to have seen it ... we claim to have … the power.... we failed it.... We have… facilities, we have … intelligence. We have everything …. why can’t we build…? … everybody is
interested in how much I can get from the country… we’re [Nigerians are] … half-baked. We’re [Nigerians are] babies.

22B: Nigeria is [currently] growing, but … not developing [determining its progress], Nigeria gave light to Ghana… We [Nigeria] gave palm fruit to Malaysia…. They [Ghana and Malaysia] are … doing better than us…. Nigeria is a question mark.

All of this is a strong indictment of current leadership, arguing that Nigeria is currently suffering in phase two of the Nigerian national plot, or Nigerian National Narrative Template (see Bissell 2005 for more discussion on colonial nostalgia). Another informant pointed to current indigenous Nigerian leaders as characters oppressing Nigeria and causing it to experience low agency. This 23-year-old Hausa-speaking man originally from the northern area of Sokoto, but residing in Enugu not only pointed to current Nigerian leaders but even personified their corruption, making it an agent that attacked the country:

Corruption is disturbing Nigeria. That is the only thing. Many people talk of, “revolution, revolution, revolution, revolution.” Who will do the revolution? When is it the right time for the revolution? … Obama went to Ghana. Well, why didn’t he come to Nigeria? It’s not that we don’t have the money. We have the money. But because of the corruption. And the leadership. Everything is corrupt. Corruption. It’s what’s killing us down here in Nigeria. Y-you can see a boy of eighteen. When you go to Abuja, you see a boy of eighteen driving Maserati, Phantom, Bentley, Mustang because the dad is a senator or minister. You see them having convoy. I don’t want to start calling top guys who are into government now. If you go and see their children’s collection, you see cars worth of – worth of – worth of ten million dollars, twenty million dollars. They’ll go to club, they’ll pop champagne, they do whatever they like.

When he says, “Corruption is disturbing Nigeria,” or “Corruption. It’s what’s killing us down here in Nigeria,” the young man makes corruption the subject of his Nigerian sentences, arguing government-led corruption has power over Nigeria, and oppresses it. He implies government-led corruption has more power to determine Nigeria’s destiny than Nigeria does itself. Placing former U.S. president Barack Obama in a sentence subject position over Nigeria in his phrase, “why didn’t he come to Nigeria?” This implies that he sees Obama as acting upon
Nigeria and thus having more power than the sentence object: Nigeria. When looking at the larger context of his phrase, “We [Nigerians] have … money,” it is in the context of a larger phrase: “Obama went to Ghana. Well, why didn’t he come to Nigeria? It’s not that we don’t have the money. We have the money. But because of the corruption. And the leadership.” He communicates that although Nigeria possesses potential in the form of money, corruption prevents powerful international leaders from honoring Nigeria with state visits. Through this sentence construction as well the wider context of his sentences, he argues that corruption is agentive and oppresses Nigeria.

The three vignettes analyzed above provide good examples of the variety of sentences and narratives my informants used to explain Nigerian experiences of low agency. They demonstrate that my informants pulled form different time periods to create a narrative that fit part two of the Nigerian national narrative template, a fall from grace. To hone this point, I provide further narrative examples below.

When observing his syntactic and semantic construction, a young Igbo man, also from Mbaise, subtly but rapidly indicated colonialism was a time when Nigerians experienced low agency at the hands of British colonizers.

Nigeria started for a long time, which was located and then established by Western - by British people, sorry. So, those British people, it was a first person who came into this Nigeria, so that person was named as the father of Nigeria. Which was uh, Fredrick Lord Lugard. So, he named the country Nigeria, due to - he derived the name from the uh, rivers that surround Nigeria, so and uh through the badge and the- the coat of arms, he draw- he derived and then showed the shape of the rivers there…. So, after that, he named the country Nigeria [Interview 6B].
The interlocutor consistently places “British people” or Lugard as sentence subjects doing things to Nigeria the sentence object. This indicates that British colonizers, not Nigeria, had the power to make decisions determining Nigeria’s destiny. Again, through his syntactical constructions, this informant places Nigeria in low agency positions implying it had fewer opportunities to make decisions regarding its future. Semantically, the young man places Frederick Lugard and other British colonizers in heroically paternalistic agentive roles over Nigeria throughout this excerpt. He even says the British were the first people to enter Nigeria and calls Lugard “the father of Nigeria.”

A 30-year old Urhobo-speaking man living in Enugu described the Berlin Conference and British colonization of Nigeria in the following excerpt:

"So, they [British colonizers] need to put this [Nigeria] together. With the North [northern Nigeria], they will secure this part and then from there, they fit them there. That was their interest. You know? So, they were not about those they were trying to put together, and that took place 1914, the Amalgamation."

His last sentence, “they were not concerned about those they were trying to put together,” for example, both syntactically and semantically depicts British colonizers as agents manipulating an objectified Nigeria.

A Yoruba-speaking woman originally from Ogun state said: “(laugh) like I told you earlier that I don’t really know much about Nigerian history, but … (sigh) I got to know that…Nigeria was under slavery before we got independence ….” Semantically, her use of the term “slavery” here is telling because it implies there was a period of history where Nigeria as a country did not experience freedom or agency. Syntactically, she places this sentence in passive voice, leaving out the subject of her phrase “Nigeria was under slavery.” Who put Nigeria under slavery and from whom did Nigeria gain independence? She does not say this explicitly, but one
could deduce from historical information that the subject of this sentence could be “the British.” Hence the phrase would be, “The British placed Nigeria under slavery.” This phrase syntactically places Nigeria in a low agency object position to the British.

In another example, during her Nigerian history interview, a 56-year old Igbo woman from rural Mbaise said, “I know that the white people came and um amalgamated Nigeria. …They [white people] are the people that gave Nigeria its name. …So, from Niger area, they uh turned it to Nigeria.” Again, this interlocutor places “white people” in a subject position within her sentences, implying that in situations such as amalgamation or the country’s naming, “white people” had the power to force their decisions onto Nigeria, removing opportunities to make these decisions for itself.

In an attempt to describe the effects of British agency on post-colonial Nigeria, a 35-year old television host from Plateau State residing in Enugu said, “What I got to understand is probably the Brits didn’t really organize the - the Nigerian concept…. I would still go back to the Brits not being able to, you know, make us as a country connect, and yet they wanted us to be together.”

While he puts the British as a subject in his Nigerian sentences, for example by saying, “the Brits not being able to, … make us as a country connect,” he would contend with other profiled informants who argued that British colonists helped Nigeria develop. Through his statement, this informant argues that, though British colonizers put Nigeria together, they did not think through the implications combining different groups of people into one group. This informant would mark colonialism as an example of poor leadership profiled in phase two of the Nigerian National Narrative Template. While people differ as to when, the majority of my
informants agreed that despite possessing great potential Nigeria did experience times of low agency. Again, 51% of my Nigerian oral history interviewees placed Nigeria in low agency object positions during their interviews, indicating that in their stories they argued other characters oppressed Nigeria and reduced its ability to make decisions regarding its future. In the next section, I argue that while my informants frequently indicated Nigeria experienced low agency at the hands of oppressive story characters, importantly they also argued that Nigeria fought back against this oppression in order to regain ability to choose a positive destiny.

4.3.2 High Agency Syntax and Semantics

If we consider subject-object sentence constructions in my informants’ historical narratives, my informants also asserted that Nigeria fought back against oppression. They communicated that Nigeria displayed high agency by choosing to overcome oppression. They also indicated that Nigeria exercised a high level of agency in order to obtain an expected level of agency or freedom to make decisions concerning its destiny. This would represent part three of the Nigerian National Narrative Template: 3) Nigeria gains freedom from oppression and continues on as one. In this section, I describe how after analyzing the historical narratives my interviewees gave me, I found subject-object sentence structures that depicted Nigerians in subject positions either overcoming and breaking free from story characters who had formerly oppressed them or making decisions that determined their future. During their Nigerian history interviews, 64% of my informants or 41 out of 64 interviewees placed Nigeria in an agentive role as the subject of their Nigerian sentences. This indicates that my informants told a story where Nigerians made decisions that determined its future, often as a reaction to previous oppression by
other story characters. The following excerpts provide examples of this. As in the previous section, I underline subject-object constructions within Nigerian sentences.

During his Nigerian history narrative, a 32-year old Igbo-speaking man in Enugu remarked, “So, Nigeria is a democratic country. Nigeria gained her independence in 1960, and so far, we practice uninterrupted democracy from 1999 till date, that basically about 15 years now. I can say that Nigeria is an emerging African country that is progressive, it is productive.” Not only does he place Nigeria in an agentive subject position, he even feminizes Nigeria, not dehumanizing or objectifying the country by making it an object of a sentence, but rather anthropomorphizing it. When we look at the phrase, “Nigeria gained her independence,” it can also be assumed that “she,” the sentence subject, gained independence from an unsaid sentence object. In this case, the sentence object would be the British. A 28-year-old Igala-speaking man originally from Kogi State and residing in Enugu similarly placed Nigeria as the subject of a sentence where Nigeria freed itself from the British. He also added additional agency to Nigeria by anthropomorphizing the country. Nigerian independence from the British: “Nigeria as a country got her independence in 1960, first October, to be precise.” Other examples include the following.

A 22-year old Igbo-speaking woman from a rural village in Mbaise, Nigeria: “Nigeria had their independence on 1960, October 1st, the year 1960, that was the day that the Nigeria have their independence.”

A 28-year old Izion-speaking national youth service corps volunteer stationed in Enugu, but originally from Bayelsa State (located in the Niger Delta), began his Nigerian oral history this way, “Nigeria got their independence 1960.” He later continued to place Nigeria in subject
position, reporting, “…That is [in] 1999, Nigeria changed power from the military to the
civilian.” As discussed in Chapter 2, his later statement indicates the year when Nigeria
transitioned to democratic civilian rule after living through a 33-year almost uninterrupted string
of military dictatorships. Their syntactic constructions indicate that both Nigerian Independence
and Nigeria’s transition to democracy in 1999 were both moments when Nigerians exercised
agency after periods of oppressive leadership.

We see discussion of independence again from a 24-year old Yoruba-speaking man from
Lagos:

I will say, uh… Nigeria got independence in October 1st, 1960, and that one does not
come in a very - on a platter of gold is because it’s due to some struggle of Nigerians, like
the likes of uh, Chief Obafemi Awolowo, Nnamdi Azikiwe, Amadu Bello. Those were
the ones that struggled for Nigeria’s independence.

In this interview excerpt, the young man not only places Nigeria in the subject position
of, “Nigeria got independence in October 1st, 1960,” but also emphasizes that they gained this
freedom, or agency, by struggling against their source of oppression. The act of freeing oneself
from oppression is highly agentive because it requires more willpower, or free will, than
normally required to actualize one’s choices for the future. As the interviewee explains, gaining
independence from oppression required Nigerians to, “struggle,” and when struggling, people not
only use more willpower, they also repeatedly choose to implement their will against an obstacle
for a longer period of time than they normally would to make decisions. Describing
independence, he says, “and that one does not come in a very – on a platter of gold because it’s
due to some struggle of Nigerians, like the likes of of uh, Chief Obafemi Awolowo, Nnamdi
Azikiwe, Amadu Bello.” In their interviews, my informants contested that Nigerians agentively
engaged in struggles, such as independence, in order to ensure they could determine their own futures, futures devoid of oppression, more easily in the future. My informants seemed to talk a great deal about Independence because it marked a moment when Nigerians united as one to exercise high levels of agency against British colonizers.

For example, a 24-year-old man residing in urban Enugu, originally from Bayelsa State said this: “The country got its independence from the British in 1960, and became a full republic in 1963. The British were no longer our colonial British.” Not only does the young man completely describe colonial encounter while keeping Nigeria in the subject position, he even says, “They were no longer by our colonial British.” It is semantically significant that the informant says, “… our colonial British,” in a larger statement arguing that “the country” at one point possessed the “colonial British.” While talking about Independence, the informant increases the agency of Nigeria to such an extent that he argues that at one point Nigeria possessed the “colonial British.” Both in his syntax and semantics, the interviewee describes Nigeria as expressing high degrees of agency during Independence; a point when Nigerians gained freedom from a character that had visibly oppressed them in the immediate past.

A 26-year old Ibibio man residing in Enugu said the following, “All I basically just know is that Nigeria is fifty-four years old. In 1960, we gained independence…. I know there’s a time where we have the military rule. You know? We had those terrible presidents like Abacha and uh, and now we have the civilian rule, and it actually looks like - it’s like Nigeria is getting worse, you know?”

Several things occur in this excerpt, including many narrative cues we have covered before. Again, he places “we,” or Nigerians, as the subject of several sentences, indicating that in
these instances, Nigeria (or Nigerians) experiences agency. He uses the same subject-verb construction when discussing military and civilian rule: “We have… military rule,” and “we have …civilian rule.” The similarity in sentence construction for means the informant equates both events as similar. He places these phrases in the larger phrase, “…there’s a time where we have the military rule. You know? We had those terrible presidents like Abacha and uh, and now we have the civilian rule, and it actually looks like - it’s like Nigeria is getting worse….”

In his excerpt, he indicates that civilian rule came after military rule, which he indicates was a time of poor leadership, “there’s a time where we have the military rule. You know? We had those terrible presidents like Abacha.” Sani Abacha was a military leader known for violently limiting Nigerian freedom of speech and annulling an election. Abacha is known for reducing the agency of Nigerians to determine their collective destiny. The man uses Sani Abacha to as an example for how Nigerian military rule was oppressive and reduced Nigerian agency. He says, “and now we have the civilian rule.” By using the term “now,” differentiating past and present events, he indicates that civilian rule should have been different than military rule. However, when the informant says, “…now we have the civilian rule, and it actually looks like - it’s like Nigeria is getting worse,” the term “actually,” indicates surprise at what he is about to say next – essentially that, under civilian rule, “Nigeria is getting worse.” It now makes sense that the man equates military rule to civilian rule. In many ways, he expresses that current Nigerian civilian leaders oppress the ability of Nigerians to choose a beneficial future for itself. He subtly argues current leaders do this similarly to the way military leaders did in Nigeria’s past.

Strangely, in this construction, the man uses the possessive term “had” or “have” to describe periods of what he argues are Nigerian oppression – military rule and civilian rule:
…we have … military rule…. We had those terrible presidents like Abacha … now we have … civilian rule….” In doing this, he seems to imply that Nigerians expressed agency during these events and thus chose them. The informant does not argue that during military or civilian rule Nigerians experienced high levels of agency, but rather that Nigerians chose these events to occur, even if they did not eventually give Nigerians the freedom they desired. Academic historians generally agree with this formulation that while the majority of Nigerian people agentively chose military and civilian rule, neither resulted in giving Nigerians high degrees of agency.

When I asked my 50-year old Igbo-speaking host father, Michael, about Nigeria’s transition to democracy he apparently agreed with his fellow countryman. He elaborated:

…The democracy brings about freedom of speech, freedom of movement. We have recognized that, but not total. In those days, in the military…people don’t talk freely as well. But it’s now since … the Obasanjo era, nineteen eighty [ninety]-nine, to date, that you may see people grouping together, talking, even challenging some government authority…. So, during the democracy period, … as you see, the assessment of any achievement is the quantum of freedom you have to make use of your resources. That’s the assessment. In either of them, whether military or civilian, they have that freedom to make use of the resources – freely, and achieve the utmost. And what is the utmost? It’s the people you are governing to be happy and feel free. The military did not achieve. They had that quantum of economic resources, yet they did not achieve expected program, alright? … So we believe that the military could have achieved more….

But in this case, both of them are not giving us as much as—…. You cannot believe that with the quantum of money claimed to have in this country there are people of this country that no access to clean water. What does it take to build a water -borehole? … It’s – these things are not there! But as they called it, corruption is the bane of our – of our d-downfall. So, democracy is OK.

Michael puts Nigeria in subject positions at different points in this narrative. Each instance of this mirrors the larger semantics of his statement. In the sentence, “We [Nigerians]
have recognized that, but not in total,” “that” refers to a statement in the previous sentence – “freedom of speech, freedom of movement” from a larger statement, “… The democracy brings about freedom of speech, freedom of movement.” When he places Nigeria in the subject position of the phrase, “We have recognized that, but not in total,” he states that under democratic civilian rule Nigerians have not fully experienced freedom of speech and movement or agency. This mirrors statements from the previous interlocutor who used the same syntactic construction for oppressive military rule and civilian rule, indicating they were the same. Michael’s statement, “In those days, in the military, people don’t talk freely as well,” emphasizes that he sees civilian rule and military rule as similarly oppressive of Nigerian freedom of decision-making and agency. Later, when Michael says, “… we believe that the military could have achieved more…” he indicates Nigerians have collectively decided the military did not reach the expectations they had of allowing Nigerians, in other words Nigeria, to freely decide its destiny.

A 26 year old Hausa man who had fled Boko Haram terror in the North and was residing in Enugu, provides another critique of leadership under civilian rule. The man argues that today, under civilian rule, “we’ve [Nigerians have] been suffering.” He explains that this is because currently, “I don’t think whether we have government in Nigeria now because they are not doing their duty.” It appears that the man believes the Nigerian government is failing in its duty to prevent Nigerians from suffering or forms of oppression. His perspective is poignant as, he had recently escaped Boko Haram, the terrorist organization ravaging Northern Nigeria, a group the Nigerian government had failed to suppress. By forcing the man to flee from his home in northern Nigeria to a new environment in the south, Boko Haram limited the decisions this man could make for his future. Yet, because the Nigerian government allowed Boko Haram to
oppress him, the man argues the Nigerian government is complicit in reducing his agency and likely that of other Nigerians who are, for various reasons, “suffering.”

In this section, I have provided examples of statements in which my informants placed Nigeria in syntactic and semantically agentive roles. Through this analysis, I found that my informants frequently discussed events, such as Independence, where Nigeria struggled to regain agency after experiencing a lack of agency at the hands of other story characters. I also found that while Nigerians described events such as the transition to democracy or even the institution of military rule as events where Nigerians exhibited high agency in choosing their leadership, that under these regimes Nigeria experienced low agency due to self-interested leaders who caused problems for the country. In many ways, this progression of Nigerians experiencing high agency, loosing agency, but regaining agency mirrors parts of the Nigerian national narrative template, namely part two and three. This attests to the cyclical nature of national narrative templates. When my informants argued Nigeria overcame oppression, they frequently argued Nigerians did so collectively in order to keep the country united and free to make decisions concerning its destiny. We see their indication that Nigerians sought agency collectively in frequent references to terms such as “we.” Statements concerning Independence such as, “… Chief Obafemi Awolowo, Nnamdi Azikiwe, Amadu Bello. Those were the ones that struggled for Nigeria’s independence,” also attest to this. These three individuals represented the three largest ethnically-based regions of Nigeria at the time (Sklar 2015). All of this signals the ability of national templates to narratively organize multiple periods of a nation’s history for those who retell it.
4.3.3 Narrative Analysis: Low, then High Agency

The following is one entire response someone gave me to the question, “Please tell me your version of Nigerian history.” I asked her follow up questions after this response, and this excerpt serves as one speech act where an individual tries to tell a story about Nigeria. In this section, I point out where she employs different aspects of the Nigerian National Narrative Template and how she follows the Nigerian National Narrative Template pattern several times throughout her response. She does this whenever she discusses Nigerian history specifically. This analysis helps us see how elements of the Nigerian National Narrative Template all appear within one response. These multiple narrative examples communicate an overall message of the Nigerian story, which follows the Nigerian National Narrative Template. In the following section, I underline and provide bracketed notes to indicate where the informant semantically expresses components of the Nigerian National Narrative Template. Again, for reference, the Nigerian National Narrative Template proceeds as follows:

Part 1: Nigeria is a diverse and divided amalgamation of groups with enormous potential for greatness.

Part 2: Oppressive government elites manipulate Nigeria for personal gain, causing problems within Nigeria.

Part 3: Nigeria gains freedom from oppression and continues on as one.

A middle-class 30-year-old Igbo mother of five from Enugu began her Nigerian history this way:
Hmm, Nigerian history, from what I learnt when I was in school, primary school. Basically – it was, it was interesting. The history was interesting ‘cause during the period of Lord Lugard, who were the, should I say, the founder of Nigeria, it was- they were the ones that amalgamated the north and southern part of Nigeria, southern protectorate – North and Southern protectorates – bringing it to become Nigeria [Part 1].

And it was the wife of Lord Lugard that named it Nigeria [Part 2].

We’re taught that in primary school in our civic education classes. So, from there, we had great people like uh, Obafemi Awolowo from the West, Nnamdi Azikiwe from the east, or should I say, the south - the east. Then, Amadhu Bello from the north. All these men played key role in the formation of the country Nigeria [Part 3].

There are three different – we have three basic ethnic languages in Nigeria, which is Yoruba, Hausa, and Igbo. And these three basic languages, that is where these men came from. OK, Sir. Amadhu Bello is from the north, Hausa-speaking protect- side of Nigeria. Nnamdi Azikiwe is from the south – or east, the Igbo-speaking part of Nigeria, and uh, Obafemi Awolowo is from Yoruba. So, those are the three key languages we have in Nigeria. We have over 200 languages, but those ones are just minor, minor religions, or minor groups.

Then, from what I learnt, these three when they came together, to work as one, entity, irrespective of their languages, they said to come together to see to the growth and development of the country Nigeria [Part 3 continued].

They, have confi – they kind of uh have structures on how they will meet discuss, deliberate, on issues that have to do with Nigeria, and they really, from what I learnt, they really did well. They did well. They had good intentions for Nigeria [Part 1].

It’s just the military that just came from nowhere and cut all these their good works short by planning coup, overthrowing the civilian government and the rest of them [Part 2], from what I learnt.

Then, when I was in – Nigeria, Nigeria is not a bad country, because they’re not even having any kind of natural disasters like other countries. Even uh, political crises is not as severe as it used to be in other countries. We still understand ourselves. A typical Nigerian man loves himself, nobody would like to die for another [Part 3]- you know?

And uh, majority of us like should I say we are patriotic in a- in – in a way. It’s just that due to economic problems, people feel that this one is eating big, while I’m eating small, nobody wants to like wait and say OK, to get my turn tomorrow. Or even following the right path to get to where that person finds him or herself. So, all these things are the things that we say, OK, it’s a kind of bringing Nigeria- taking Nigeria back. And some of our leaders, the previous leaders, they don’t want to embrace civilian, uh, European, or English culture in totality. And some of them are so critical about – they don’t even want any foreign interference in their affairs, yes. It was even part of them –should I say what took us back. When it comes to education – hmm? They really, they’ve really – like in the west then, they used to give us free books. All our textbooks were free. All our textbooks were free, but these
days, hmm, it’s no longer like that. You know we, Nigeria, has grown so big that even the one we’re getting is not enough to take care of their masses.

Then, when it comes to the issue of security, the same – just out of politics, this security issue just came out of politics, you see some want to be a leader, that self – sacrifice is no longer there. They’re the - those three men had in mind that let’s grow this country [Part 1].

Yes. But these other people now want to enrich their pockets, take titles, become the chiefs and you know you know, everywhere, ride the best cars. Mhmm. So, those are the things that really made our people to go into, say, hire uh, kind of having a group that they train and use those groups as thugs to fight their political opponents, and the rest of them. At the end of the day, they make things difficult for everybody because of the crime they commit [Part 2].

So, Nigeria, Nigeria is a good country. I love Nigeria, because I’m free, unlike other countries, where you don’t even have freedom to move around, talk to somebody, for you to talk to talk to someone, you have to take permission. But in Nigeria, you’re free to even abuse someone. In short, do whatever you like, nobody quizzes, “Ah, why are you (laughs) doing that?” Once you can defend yourself, you find your way and go [Part 3]. But there are some areas where we are not really getting it. But I know it’s time. It’s really, really time that will tell. Everybody wants to be rich. It’s everybody want to you know- everybody just doing anything, just to become rich. Irrespective of that, Nigeria is a good country. I love Nigeria. I will remain in Nigeria. I don’t even pray to travel out of Nigeria. [Interview 9A]

The informant almost cycles through all elements of the Nigerian national narrative template. The takeaway from her larger narrative is that Nigeria is a diverse combination of several groups with great potential, largely because of the work of its three founding leaders. However, military rule and government corruption exercised by current civilian leaders prevented Nigeria from reaching its full potential. Despite this, she ends her narrative by emphasizing that she loves Nigeria and would not even want to leave it because individual Nigerians have self-determination and are free to choose their destinies. The larger message of her narrative includes mention of Nigerian potential, suppression of that potential by leaders, and Nigerians ultimately having freedom. It follows the previously described Nigerian National Narrative Template.
Distilling the information from this chapter, we see that a Nigerian narrative template exists and looks something like the following:

1) Nigeria is a diverse and divided amalgamation of groups with enormous potential for greatness.
2) Oppressive government elites manipulate Nigeria for personal gain, causing problems within Nigeria.
3) Nigeria gains freedom from oppression and continues on as one.

The first portion of this template, which says, “Nigeria is a diverse and divided amalgamation of groups with great potential for greatness,” alludes to the origin story of Nigeria or where it came from. We see this mentioned for example, in survey responses listing amalgamation as an important event within Nigerian history as well as statements my informants made in the previous chapter about God richly blessing Nigeria with great natural and human resources. Yet, when analyzing the entire template’s trajectory, most of my informants ultimately expressed a yearning for Nigerian unity and stability not division, with requisite in-fighting and instability. They desired a peaceful and fully united country, not an amalgam of loosely connected sub-national ethnic groups. In other words, they desired progress. My informants expressed concern that leaders in their government had not yet stabilized the country and were instead introducing infrastructural failures and bureaucratic malfeasances further destabilizing the country and prevent it from reaching its full potential of unity, freedom from oppression, and progress. They described a fall from grace, or falling short of potential grace. Yet, they still hoped Nigeria would accomplish part three of their national narrative template.
In this chapter, I first outlined concept analysis I conducted on Nigerian oral history interview transcripts. There I discussed how I found that the largest number of my informants conceptualized Nigeria as a fractured whole with a great deal of potential. They also expressed that Nigeria experienced oppression at the hands of self-interested elites, faced challenges, but eventually freed itself from oppressive leadership. I next described events that the majority of my informants mentioned in their oral history interviews as well as in the Nigerian history surveys. I found that my informants listed events when Nigeria experienced low agency, such as colonialism, but also events when they experience high agency, such as Independence. I also found that most informants across data collection instrument, location, and time reported Independence, Democracy Day, and the Nigerian-Biafran Civil War. All of these events are high agency events where Nigerians fought for and gained agency from oppressive leadership. In the final section of the chapter, I conducted semantic and syntactic analysis of interview passages. In this section, I revealed how my informants subtly described Nigeria, a highly gifted character, as undergoing low agency under oppressive leadership and then expressing heightened agency by fighting back against self-interested leaders in order to regain a normal level of agency. I finally depicted how an informant utilized all sections of the Nigerian National Narrative Template to tell her Nigerian national narrative.

Conceptualizations of a community through national templates do not only have implications for how people speak about the communities, but also for how they act within them. When my informants outlined a behavioral template for Nigeria through the Nigerian National Narrative Template, they not only described how Nigeria interacted with its environment (for example other characters it encountered) in the past, but also how they expect Nigeria to interact with its surroundings in the future. Additionally, when they spoke about Nigeria, they were in
effect speaking about Nigerians, the people who animate the Nigeria and give it its decision-making capabilities. Distilling this logic, the Nigerian National Narrative Template outlines how my informants expect Nigerians to behave. The next chapter explores how this Nigerians utilize the Nigerian National Narrative Template not only in speech, but also when acting “Nigerian” in their daily lives.
Chapter 5: Performing the Nigerian National Narrative Template in Daily Life

The last two chapters analyzed how my informants told stories about Nigeria and answered survey questions concerning Nigerian history. Through this analysis, I uncovered consensus in the form of a Nigerian national narrative template, namely: 1) Nigeria is a diverse and divided amalgamation of groups with enormous potential for greatness. 2) Oppressive government elites manipulate Nigeria for personal gain, causing problems within Nigeria. 3) Nigeria gains freedom from oppression and continues on as one.

In this chapter, through analysis of interviews and participant observatory data, I show that this template also shaped how my informants acted non-verbally in contexts they associated with Nigeria – Nigerian contexts (see Baugh 1983). This provides more evidence that my informants practiced a Nigerian national identity. While the previous two chapters described what the Introduction called “Nigerian talk.” This chapter explores what in my introduction, Charles called, “the Nigerian Factor.” This Nigerian Factor described how they viewed individual Nigerian people, such as themselves, what Nigerian people can expect to encounter in daily life within Nigerian contexts and how Nigerian people navigate these contexts. In what follows, I first describe how my informants described individual Nigerians. Next, I describe what they described as Nigerian contexts. I then use participant observatory data to explain how my informants navigated these contexts.

I ultimately argue my informants followed the Nigerian template when speaking about themselves and others as Nigerians and when acting in Nigerian contexts within their daily lives. My informants who resided in Nigeria conceptualized acting Nigerian in the same way they understood speaking Nigerian. Such a finding is important as, through it, scholars may be able to
predict how people in an identity group will act by how they talk and tell stories about their identity group.

5.1 Describing Nigerian People

My informants described individual Nigerians in the same way they described Nigeria. They described Nigerians as diverse and as people who have potential for greatness. My informants described Nigerians as people who recognize their subnational ethnic affiliations, but also understand they are still connected to each other.

My informants largely described individual Nigerian people as ethnically diverse and divided from one another, but as individuals who have great potential for success. Of my twenty-three informants who specifically described Nigerian people in their Nigerian history interviews, the largest percentage of them, thirty-four percent or eight individuals specifically described Nigerians as diverse. While describing Nigerian people as diverse, in one way or another, my informants indicated Nigerians were still united to one another. The following provide examples of how my informants phrased these statements on individual Nigerian diversity:

“And so, because, the average Nigerian, let me tell you, this is just the truth, the average Nigerian sees himself or herself as an ethnic entity. It’s either you see yourself from Ni - anyway, Igbo, Yoruba, or Hausa.” (33A, Igbo woman, age 51).

“You know, it’s good to be in a unite [sic], you understand, because we … Nigerians, we just … like you know we have Hausas, Igbos, and Yorubas.” (22A, Yoruba woman, age 28)
“Nigerians are not really those who willingly said they want to live together, but the government, the government made that situation possible and I see the politics played by the colonial masters before the independence.” (19A, Igala man, age 31)

“I will say an average Nigerian love each other, though … maybe when they ..are at home, they may like, “I don’t like you, you don’t like me,” but it is when you go outside there that you know that they love each other, and they care for each other…. an average Nigerian does not want Nigeria to separate, they want Nigeria to be one” (27A, Yoruba Woman, age 27).

In each of these excerpts, my informants discuss how they and other Nigerians see themselves as a group of ethnically-varied individuals. While acknowledging that Nigerians do recognize themselves as ethnically-homogenous, they also seemed to emphasize that Nigerians still see themselves as one group. This conceptualization of an ethnically-diverse whole matches the beginning of step one of the Nigerian National Narrative Template: “Nigeria is a diverse and divided amalgamation of groups.”

With regard to potential for greatness, my informants described Nigerians as people who ruthlessly pursue wealth and success, arguing that Nigerians think they have potential for great success, even if they do not work for it. They argued that Nigerians see themselves as people automatically “destined” for and deserving of success. First, it is important to describe how my informants described success or the good life, within a Nigerian context. The following is an excerpt from a local language textbook that illustrates what the good life looks like in Nigeria. I have also included comments on the excerpt from one of my key informants, a secondary school Igbo language teacher, Tom:
Second Comprehension: Mr. Ugonna is a good person. He has many items in his house like a seat-back chair, an air conditioner, a freezer, a phone and a radio. His wife’s name is Nnenna. She gave birth to three children. Their son’s name is Emeka. Emeka is older than their daughter Ezinne. Their youngest child is named Nkechi. They have a dog they call Okwute. Emeka is eight years old. He has many items like a book box, a notebook, a belt, and pants. Ezinne has chalk, a blackboard, a drawing book, and a book bag. Mr. Ugonna’s wife has a Western-style stove, a soup pot, an iron pot, a spoon for serving soup, plates, and a motor and pestle. Mr. Ugonna’s family lives in peace. They are a good family. (Ihejirika 1997:90)"

I asked Tom what he thought about this family. He said quote:

Yes, I said I think it’s a good family because the writer also said it’s a good family, and I believe in what he said. It’s a good family because…Look at what they have as their material for schooling. You find out that they are averagely equipped for studies in school. So, that makes it a good family. It’s a good family, again, because there is nothing that shows that this family is lacking in anything. …They live in peace. …They have these modern things that can help one. Even when you come from work, you enter your house, you sit comfortably on a chair. You have a radio to listen. You have a refrigerator to cool down the temperature of the day. They have all these things. They have all these things in their house. So, that makes it a good family. … A beautiful family.”

This literal textbook description of a “good” Nigerian family depicts people who are well-educated and have functioning appliances. According to my key-informant, “They are not lacking in anything.” They had everything they wanted. They owned modern appliances, could afford to send their children to school, and according to my informants, lived “comfortably” in a “house.” In order to comfortably run their modern appliances such as an air conditioner and freezer, they would require a steady supply of amenities such as electricity. This excerpt provides us with one example of what Nigerians learn and what my informant described as a good life in Nigeria.
My other informants often argued that Nigerians sought to pursue this kind of life/level of success, and perhaps even success surpassing what the textbook author described in his passage. My informants argued that Nigerians feel they deserve, and often do anything they can, to live a life where “they are not lacking in anything.” The following excerpts are excerpts from interviews, field notes, and classroom observations I compiled during fieldwork in Lagos and Enugu Nigeria between June 2013 and December 2014:

Field Notes 06/23/2013 – Lagos, Nigeria

I asked Ed [an older key informant in Lagos] about social values. Ed said that all Nigerians care about today, and teach their kids to care about is wealth – and making money- without regard to how people make that money. He said that in the past when his generation was growing up, Nigerian parents taught their kids the Nigerian values of respecting elders, being honest, working hard, having integrity, and having honest dealings with one another. He said, now parents ask their kids, “Where is your money?” without caring how the kids get it. He said, a son may try to work to get money. He said, if that didn’t work, the son would try to do 419 scams and cheat to get money. If that doesn’t work, a son may kidnap someone to get his 2.2 million naira.

He said that there was social degradation and social decay in Nigeria. That values are eroding, including family values. Auntie A agreed with him. She said, ‘Things are not the way they used to be. There is social decay.’ Ed said, ‘Let me just say it this way, Nigeria is decaying. Things are not as they should be.’

Field Notes 06/24/2013 – Lagos

On the way back from the school, Allison [a teacher and key informant at a local private school] told me that … all Nigerians care or think about is wealth. She said that all Nigerians care about is making money – and they do not really care how they make it.
Field Notes 06/27/2013 – Lagos

Later in the day, I also had a conversation with the civics education teacher…. Their job is to teach students how to act in society, and to teach them good morals…. He said that a lot of the children who go to public schools are household helps [servants]…. The teacher said that he used to be in the same situation as many of the students in this school, but that he tried to help himself…. The teacher said that during the most recent period [when] he taught the students, he taught them about capitalism - mainly exploiters and the exploited. He taught the students that they should desire to be exploiters and not the exploited ones. He said he taught students they should desire to be the ones in charge and not to have a low class job like being a gateman to their juniors. He taught them that they should not drop out of school so that they can be exploiters and so that they can employ people and people will serve them…. He said that in Nigeria, Nigerians ask what the government is doing for them. Instead of like in America where people ask what they can do for their country and people say God bless America. He said in Nigeria, people don’t say anything like that. He said that in Nigeria, everyone wants a white collar job, but no, students need to realize that they can create their own jobs…. He said young people want to emulate our leaders who are wealthy. Young men want to get that money at all costs. He said young people are not sure they are going to get jobs they need so they don’t focus on education…. 

Participant Observation 06/28/2013 - Lagos

I came to school and immediately followed the history teacher to class…. The history teacher began by giving the students an announcement, … that they [I am not sure exactly who “they” are] were told to tell the students that there is a place where people are buying blood for 2000 naira. She said that several students have gone to this place to sell their blood and that students have gotten sick or died. She said that there was another place where girls were selling their bodies for 500 to 1000 naira. She said that once you did the first thing – selling your blood, you were dead. She said, once you did the second thing, selling your body, you were gone. She also said that both of these places were relatively nearby the school… She said, you might as well sell your blood to your family so when you die, they can at least use the money. If you give your blood to these other people, they will be living a good life with the money they made off of your blood. They will be bubbling, their children will be happy, they will be eating and happy at your expense while your family
is in poverty. She asked, “Is it not true?” There were some giggles in the class and students responded, some laughing, “Yes.”

Field Notes 07/01/2013 – Sunday

I went to church in the morning…. During the homily, the priest asked the parishioners what the lesson was last week… One of the parishioners yelled the answer. After the priest did not hear him, he stood up and said loudly, “That Christ told us to leave everything we have, carry our cross and follow him.” The priest again told the assembly that people seem to not know who God is. That the assembly seems to think he is someone who is going to give them free things, or things that they like…. The priest [taught] the assembly that we cannot look to worldly things or wealth to make us happy, we need to look at God and the kingdom of heaven in order to have eternal life….

…That night, … Ed told me that the trouble with Nigeria was that everyone was after wealth. The only value Nigerians have is making money. Young men will want to make money, and they do not care how. They could steal to do it. He said Nigeria used to teach young people so many values, but now all people care about is making money. Wealth and a desire for money, seems to be a recurring theme in all of the venues I have thus visited –socialization at school – with the statement that Africans are greedy, socialization at Church with the priest encouraging people not to seek after wealth, and socialization in the private sphere among friends.

Field Notes 07/04/2013 – Wednesday

Civics Class:

The civics teacher... said the topic of the day was going to be poverty…. He said, “Your generation is a bad generation. They are lazy. They don’t want to work with their hands. They want wealth quickly. They want to ride big cars, but don’t want to work hard. That is why there are a lot of dropouts.”

Participant Observation Excerpt 9/30/2014

… This morning, an older woman who lived in our compound asked me for 100,000 naira to pay for bills that are piling up. She said that a teacher at her school, who tutors
her kids, was asking her to settle him for payment. She said she was worried about losing
face in front of him and her other co-workers. She said people at the school see her as
rich and like that job and its income is not a big deal to her, and that she would like for
them to keep thinking of her that way. She said that children’s school fees also needed to
be paid, etc. She said she could tell that her husband was not happy and guessed that he
was going through some financial difficulty. She said she didn’t want to approach him for
money right now, and so was coming to me to see if I could loan her some money. I
freely gave it to her….”

Interview 12A

While speaking about Nigerian politicians commemorate Nigeria’s 100th anniversary, one
of my interviewees used them as an example to make a wider generalization about
Nigerian pursuit of wealth:

One hundred years anniversary. You can imagine that our dear president called back
these people that looted our economy, that put us in the dark, that put us on the sick bed
because they cannot fix our hospitals, that put us to road accident because they cannot fix
the roads, that pulled us ou –our children out of school because they cannot put –fix the
school (began a quiet almost a whispering voice between “looted” to “dark” ). Called
them back and started honoring them with s-so flamboyant awards and - it’s ridiculous. I
must tell you, very very ridiculous to me. That’s my personal view of it, the whole thing.
So, … I think uh the-the one hundred years should have been a time of us to look back,
you know how far have we gone, where are we not getting things right what- I mean what
has been happening, and call on these leaders, “You’ve been here. What do you think
you’ve not gotten right?” Because, being if- some of - most of them, if you allow them,
they will still want to come back and rule. That’s – that’s Nigerian man for you. They
never get tired of amassing wealth for themselves.”

As I noted on July 1, 2013, I witnessed a pattern in how my informants described
Nigerians – as constantly in pursuit of wealth:

Wealth and a desire for money, seems to be a recurring theme in all of the venues I have
thus visited –socialization at school – with the statement that Africans are greedy,
socialization at Church with the priest encouraging people not to seek after wealth, and
socialization in the private sphere among friends.
According to my informants, who had grown up and been socialized within Nigeria, Nigerians greatly desired reaching a certain endpoint. They argued this end point was having a great deal of money. In describing Nigerians this way, they argued that Nigerians were extremely focused on what they could become in the future. The Oxford English Dictionary defines the noun form of “potential” as, “Something which is possible, as opposed to actual; capacity for growth, achievement, future development or use; resources able to be used or developed” (OED 2017). Consider a diagram in which individuals at point A seeks to reach a point B. These individuals see themselves as having “potential” because by seeking point B, they view themselves as having the potential to reach point B. My informants described Nigerians as people who are seeking a particular future.

Not only did my informants describe Nigerians constantly in pursuit of a particular future, the future which my informants described Nigeria as seeking was one filled with wealth and desirable items. The Civics teacher I observed told his students that their generation desired “wealth quickly” and, “... want to ride big cars.”

My informants insisted Nigerians highly valued making money, even above other potential objects of value or virtues. In the previously mentioned diagram, add details in which the individuals at point A seek to reach a point B where they are extremely wealthy. This diagram encompasses how my informants, such as Ed and Allison, described Nigerian people. Because the individuals in the diagram desire the future at point B and actively seek it, they view themselves as having potential for success, or an end they desire. This end is not only wealth, but great wealth. This description of Nigerians as seeking after large amounts of wealth and viewing themselves as having potential for great success matches the second portion of step one in the Nigerian National Narrative Template: Nigeria as having “enormous potential for greatness.”
Nigerian informants described individual Nigerian people way similarly to how they described Nigeria the country in their Nigerian historical narratives.

My informants emphasized this point when they lamented how individual Nigerians experienced unemployment. In doing so, they not only argued Nigerians viewed themselves as having potential for great success, they also argued individual Nigerians had latent capacities for greatness, which the Nigerian government underutilized. The following interview and participant observatory excerpts provide key examples of how my informants conceptualized Nigerians in this way.

Interview 10A

“But, that Nigerian man, that Nigerian common man on the street. That street man on the street, if he has a father that is 100 years old and he’s still alive, would he be proud to call him that Nigerian (stresses proud)? Will he celebrate his father, let’s say if he has a father that is alive, Nigerian, with all this trouble, poverty, all this fines, all these injustice? … Is it not better to say, “OK, let’s give 100,000 Nigerian youths work? … So, for me, I would have taught the positive nature of the hundred years, which is maybe make it a symbolical number, instead of giving hundred awards Nigerians are making noise…. Hundred Nigerian youths… -OK, if you can’t make 100,000 - hundred - each state, hundred - must be engaged this year - must be engaged and gainfully employed…. Hundred hospital health centers will be thoroughly equipped in Nigeria to stand as an e-hospital…. Are you getting me? (Charles, Igbo man age 40)

Interview 30A

The daily life for the average Nigerian today is just what we are still looking upon for governor Goodluck Jonathan to still improve on that part Because there is still very vital things that he - he needs to do. There is still – there is too much for him to do again, because we still have much unemployed in our country. For example, I’m a corper. By next year, July, I will be through for my service year, and we should be expecting to have a job – to to start somewhere, so that we will not be loitering around. Presently we have more than 10,000 unemployed youth, and mostly are the f- young graduates. That is what we are still looking upon, and also pray, asking God to touch the mind of the leaders
and even our president to still look on that part and make the average Nigerian to at least live very averagely. (Boki man, age 25)

Field Notes 07/04/2013 - Wednesday

The history teacher said 99% of everyone in Nigeria is in poverty. She said there is no employment, no industries, no light. She said, “If there was constant electricity, people would be self-employed.” She said that in Nigeria, there are no new industries. She said the government is not building infrastructures. She said, we want to import everything. We don’t produce these things – she pointed to everything in the room, indicating that the country imported everything in the room. She pointed to one object and said, if Nigerians made this thing themselves, wouldn’t it be better?

She said, the country is sick. There is no light. There are a lot of mineral resources that are ‘sleeping’ – i.e not being used or developed at all. She said that the country is rich and blessed with mineral and human resources but that no one is developing them. She talked about different mineral reserves in different parts of the country, particularly ones with precious metals that the country has not exploited. She said that they have huge coal reserves as well which no one is using.

She said that people are also not making use of the human resources the country has. The history teacher said that class is a, “very, very big deal in Nigeria.”

Field Notes 03/15/2014

Also, on the news, we found out that at least 7 people died in stampede that occurred at a job recruitment session for the Ministry of Immigration in Abuja. There were 65,000 job applicants in attending the job application session held in a stadium (I can’t remember if it was Eagles Stadium or not.) there was only one gate opened to let people out. There was a stampede and several people were injured and 7 people killed. It is now international news. The same thing happened for the job application session in at least 2 other sites in the country, where similarly large groups of applicants, 20,000 + in each site, ended up in a stampede. I have video of this. People are using this for [a] political chip against [the] PDP. It is a pretty bad visual, representing possible mismanagement.
Participant Observation 03/26/2014

Around 4, Michael was going to take me to a local radio station to speak on air about what life is like in the United States…. So, I went. I got to talk to the presenter that I would be working with…. After meeting her producers, we then went on air. It was fun. A lot of people seemed upset about the lack of employment opportunities for young people in Nigeria, and several people referred to the immigration stampede that happened last week, as an example of this.

As we see in these excerpts, many of my informants complained about the Nigerian government not making use of human resources and allowing Nigerians to remain unemployed. When the first two interviewees discuss daily life for the average Nigerian they immediately complain that average Nigerians experience unemployment. When trying to paint pictures of what an average Nigerian looks like, they invoke young Nigerians who experience unemployment. Invoking young Nigerians emphasizes Nigerian potential because, as a trope, young people have longer futures to which they can look forward. Utilizing unemployed youth to describe the average Nigerian indicates my informants conceptualized average Nigerians as having great potential.

Additionally, informants such as the history teacher equated Nigeria’s natural resources with that of human resources. I wrote that she indicated, “There are a lot of mineral resources that are ‘sleeping’ – i.e. not being used or developed at all. She said that the country is rich and blessed with mineral and human resources but that no one is developing them.” To lump Nigerians (human resources in the country) together with Nigerian mineral resources in the same sentence indicates this informant viewed Nigerians as having as much potential to create a positive future for the country as Nigeria’s mineral resources. These excerpts provide further evidence that my informants viewed Nigerian people similarly to the way they conceptualized
the country of Nigeria in their Nigerian history interviews, as, “a diverse and divided amalgamation” that has “enormous potential for greatness.”

5.2 Nigerian Contexts

My informants not only described Nigerians in a way similar to how they described Nigeria in the Nigerian national narrative template, but they also tended to act according to the Nigerian template in Nigerian environmental contexts. Recalling the discussion about identity from the introduction, people perform group identities in contexts that remind them of their group. In Chapters 3 and 4, I described how my informants spoke when discussing Nigeria and telling the Nigerian story. The context of discussing, “Nigeria” and more specifically Nigeria’s story, or Nigerian history, is one identity context that reminded my informants of the Nigerian group. We found that my informants spoke in a particular pattern when speaking about Nigeria. They spoke about it according to the Nigerian National Narrative Template. This template is one rule that defines Nigerian National identity performance.

As indicated in the introduction, people signify their identity in many ways, not only through speech. For example, people signify their group identity, or feelings of group membership and belonging, through clothing and behaviors as well. People signify their identity to other members of the group and to people outside of the group. Nigerian identity occurs not only in contexts where people discuss, and become reminded of Nigeria. It also occurs other contexts that reminded my informants of Nigeria. In order to see Nigerian identity occur in other contexts, I had to understand what other contexts my informants associated with Nigeria and study their behavior in these settings. Another way to understand what contexts my informants associated with Nigerian identity was to analyze where they said “Nigerians” operated or acted.
When telling stories about “Nigerians,” in what setting did my informants argue that story took place?

During their Nigerian history interviews, my informants repeatedly deployed certain contexts as cultural tools to help them tell Nigeria’s story. Some even told stories about Nigerian citizens navigating through certain contexts as narrative devices to help them tell a larger Nigerian story. Deciphering symbolic contexts and contexts in which they set Nigerians helped me understand which contexts my informants typically associated with Nigeria and thus which contexts served as settings for Nigerian identity performance.

When looking back at previously profiled speech excerpts, I found my informants frequently invoked structures and institutions attached to governments in order to tell their stories about Nigeria. In other words, they spoke about government infrastructures such as roads and institutions such as public schools as symbolic examples for what was happening to Nigeria - or the Nigerian story. The following are examples from previous interview and book excerpts.

In dissertation Chapters 2 and 3, the author of the book The Minji Trial, who served as one of my informants, decries government-managed hospitals and schools. In Chapter 2, The Minji Trial begins because Marcel died in a hospital. The author indicates that Holisah blames Minji Land (Nigeria)’s leaders for mismanaging hospitals, such as the one that caused Marcel’s death. This allegory for Nigeria hinges on actions that took place in a government-institution. In response to Marcel’s death story, Holisah asks, “There was not enough health-care services. Many people were suffering from poverty. Simple ailments could take away lives and “untrained” men were doing the work of trained doctors?”

Marcel answers, “Yes Father!”
In Chapter 3, the author uses another institutional setting – school, to explain as a tool to explain the current state of the country. In the book, Holisah says, “I observed with dismay that poverty has broken family life. Children wander about in the street because of increasing immorality. They lack money to go to school because of increasing immorality. They lack money to go to school because parents find it extremely difficult to feed them owing to skyrocketing costs of living.”

In Chapter 4, when describing Nigeria’s transition from military rule to democracy, my host father said:

…In this case, both of them are not giving us as much as…. You cannot believe that with the quantum of money claimed to have in this country there are people of this country that no access to clean water. What does it take to build a water-borehole? … It’s – these things are not there! But as they called it, corruption is the bane of our – of our downfall. So, democracy is OK.

When discussing this moment in Nigerian history, my host Father referred to government-managed water infrastructure as a gauge for how the country was doing either under military rule or democratic rule, making water infrastructure representative of the country.

During his Nigerian history interview, Interviewee 12A discussed government-managed institutions and infrastructures at length. For example, in the following history interview excerpt, I underline every time he mentions a government-managed institution or infrastructure:

Yeah, colonialism….This is my personal uh opinion. I was like, had it been the whites are still here managing some of our facilities, I don’t think we could have gotten … this backwards that we are now! You get me? So, I was like…. You look at South Africa,… uh… they were able to maintain this status now and because the oyibo, the whites, were there for a very long time and were able to help them to manage some of their… um… institutions. But here in Nigeria, we –
we claim to have known it all, claim to have seen it all. We have - we claim to have - I mean, we have the power, the ego, everything to manage our institutions and resources, but you find out that … we failed it. Most of these institutions that were left by the whites have gone down the drain.

Talk of the railway lines, talk of the hospitals…. You see all our- all our leaders, they’re flying themselves abroad to get medications, and you begin to wonder, what is - what have we gotten wrong here? We have all the facilities, we have the intelligence. We have everything it takes. So, why can’t we build our home? What everybody is interested in is how much I can get from the country – how much I can grab. You are made governor today, you become a billionaire here. No schools. Most of our leaders that went to public schools now, … none of their children is in public school. They have strangulated the public schools, build private schools and make millions of naira from there. So, I believe that the white, the colonialism, helped us a lot. In as much as nobody would want some other person to … rule you or control you, but I think we’re still half-baked. We’re babies in managing our institutions (Interview 12A).

The following are several additional examples. While interviewing a 23-year-old Hausa man, originally from Sokoto, he interjected about how the country was in crisis. He used electricity outages to illustrate his point:

If you check, you see a lot of poor people where – we-we have oil, we’re – rich, but I don’t know what is going on. It’s only leaders and their family members. If you check out now. OK, Nigeria now, you can’t boast of we have– electricity power supply for like 24 hours. Just like a week. We can’t – we can’t boast of boast of there was electricity in our house a week. You didn’t on [turn on] your generator, for like a week. It’s not possible…. Even in Aso Rock [the Nigerian equivalent of the White House], they normally take light sometimes.

Similarly, at another research site, a 21-year-old Igbo man, originally from a rural village southern Nigeria also reflected on the same topic of Nigerian history. His village, Mbaise, is on the opposite side of the country from the previous interview excerpt, Sokoto. He and many
others deftly used failing electricity infrastructure as a tool to help him make a larger, important point about Nigeria:

Well, Nigeria has suffered, and I think they will continue suffering. Corruption has entered the blood. It has gone beyond blood, it has entered the DNA. It can’t come out again. So, it’s no- there’s no…. The only time I will believe that Nigeria is getting better is when NEPA can bring light for seven days without it blinking, like my eye. Seven days, but till then, even though there is light at home, I will still plug into gen [generator] outside where I know that once they take light, they on their gen.

The resemblance in rhetoric from these two men is notable – even down to the use of “seven days” or “a week” to describe an appropriate length of time for uninterrupted electric power. These different Nigerian individuals similarly utilized electricity to help them explain the state Nigeria meaning that contexts involving Nigerian electricity reminded them of Nigeria.

It is not only Nigerian young men who use electricity to talk about Nigeria. Well-known Nigerian author Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie, who grew up in Nigeria, uses electricity as a tool to paint a Nigerian community in a recent *New York Times* article:

I cannot help but wonder how many medical catastrophes have occurred in public hospitals because of “no light,” how much agricultural produce has gone to waste, how many students forced to study in stuffy, hot air have failed exams, how many small businesses have foundered. What greatness have we lost, what brilliance stillborn? I wonder, too, how differently our national character might have been shaped, had we been a nation with children who took light for granted, instead of a nation whose toddlers learn to squeal with pleasure at the infrequent lighting of a bulb (Adichie 2015).
A 30-year old young mother living in Enugu at the time of my field research echoed Adichie’s sentiment. She also discussed publicly run infrastructures as a gauge and symbol of Nigeria. Like my host father, she discusses infrastructure under military rule and democratic rule.

Military dictators ruled Nigeria after the civil war from 1970-1999, with only one short interruption between 1979 and 1983 when democratically-elected Shehu Shagari presided over the country:

Ah! When the military was ruling Nigeria, oh! Ha! I must tell you. Like in my village, we had constant light and water. But now, we don’t even have light. We don’t have water in my village. Yes. It is as if things were working better. As in, the military will tell you, “If I’m giving you this contract, you have to do it and do it well.” But these days, they will just give them a contract, [and] they will eat it all – they will just eat the whole money. [They will] just come and tell the village, they’re coming, but you won’t see them again. You know things have really, really deteriorated in some parts.

This statement on infrastructure reflects another dimension of the Nigerian national narrative, namely how elites mismanage Nigeria for their own private interests and thereby create oppressive burdens and challenges in the daily life of citizens. This echoes part two of the Nigerian National Narrative Template: 2) Oppressive government elites manipulate Nigeria for personal gain, causing problems within Nigeria. In her Nigerian oral history interview, my 40-year old host mother Agnes, living in Enugu who identified as upper-middle class, told the following story about a Nigerian. She used the story to help her make a larger point about the Nigerian story:

OK, the Nigerian government generally. There is both federal, local, and state. They are not really doing the best. We expect more from them, and um, if things are put in place
the way they should be, crime will be minimized. I’m telling you honestly. Crime will be highly minimized. We are not talking about erasing it completely, but at least it will be minimized to an extent. Let our children be employed, let us have the basic needs, at least hunger will go. People are still talking about what to eat in this country. Other countries are talking about how to place infrastructure and the rest of them. They’re no longer talking about the common little food that- some cannot equally afford uh three square, as they call it. So, some are still feeding from hand to mouth. Some of these people are graduates.

I remember there was a time I entered an okada [motorcycle taxi]…. We reached a point where we had um … these, um, security lights [traffic lights], and we were meant to stop because it was already showing red. We were meant to stop, so as to allow other people to cross. You know, it was a junction. So, I asked the young man to stop. He didn’t even listen to me! He meandered and passed.

I wasn’t happy. So, when I confronted him, “Nna (“father” and a term of endearment in Igbo)! Why now? Always- for your life and the life of your passenger, always adhere to this instruction.” He was a kind of not happy with me, “Ah! Aunty, please, please I don’t want to hear that sermon! They want me to obey the traffic light, which one are they doing for me?” That was the young man’s statement. So, when I noticed he was not happy, the way he responded, we were still going. So, I didn’t say any other thing until I alighted from the okada. I was a kind of, “Nna, young man, I’m still serious with my statement, always adh-.” He said, “Aunty please, let me tell you,” (clap), “I am not happy that I am an okada man.” I became interested. He said, “When I remember this country, it makes me unhappy. Do you know, aunty, do you know that I am a graduate, and I’m riding okada?” I said, “What? You’re a graduate?” Either - I can’t just remember the field he graduated from.

So, but because of no job, and instead of staying idle and maybe committing crime and the rest of them, he decided to buy okada, at least to use that to help himself. So, he was a kind of telling me that if he had known, he wouldn’t have gone to school. That it’s useless - the years he spent in school were like years thrown into the bush because his mates who did not go to school, who entered into business, became self-employed are really doing well today. But, he decided to go to school, go to the university. He tried to tell me how he suffered to train himself. It was like he lost one of his parents, something like that. So, he struggled to pass out of the university and today, there is no job for him still. So, he was kind of - the interpretation I gave it was, this young man doesn’t want to have anything to do with this country again. It’s like he’s now hopeless, ‘Why should I obey the rules and regulations of this country when they cannot equally provide me with the basic things I need in life?’ So, I felt bad. I was touched by the expression on the young man’s face. So, you find out that if we have two, three, four young men like that,
they may gang up to start doing something else because they are not happy. They went to school and came out without doing anything. So, there are opportunities for government to really enhance, in order to bring in these children. What they are doing is kind of accumulating for themselves, then….

Look at our educational system, generally, nothing to write about! The university lecturers are always on strike. It doesn’t make us happy. The other day, they spent how many months, tell me, what will be the outcome or the products of such - of such education. The… polytechnics are still on strike as I speak - since December last year [I interviewed her in April]. Nobody is talking about it. In a country like this, they’re supposed to take education as a priority. Nothing is happening. Higher education is in a mess. Are we talking about the private uh -secondary school? It’s the private schools that are doing well because most - personally, I cannot take my child to government school again, because that one is in shamble…. I attended government school, [back] then!
Second, primary - secondary schools, governments, but those days are gone. Today, I don’t know what is happening in government schools again. Private schools are now flourishing because they will give you what you want….private primary school - private secondary school, private university. Ahah! Then, what else is the government doing? Personally, I don’t really - I can’t really say.

Generally, or should I say, in conclusion, Ah… our country is good. Very very good. Blessed by God. The - the people in it are good, but what we need are just a little more effort on certain areas. And you’ll see it will be like boom! Every - all of us will sing another song, a good one. That is just what it is. Goodluck is trying his best. Though, they are not giving him that chance because of all these problems, but I believe this country will one day be what we expect it to be.

This informant used a story about a traffic incident and a young motorcycle taxi driver to tell a story about Nigeria at-large. Agnes sets this Nigerian story at a public, government-run intersection and road. The climax of the story occurs when the young man disobeys, or circumvents, a traffic light. Still placing herself and the young man within the Nigerian setting of a public road, she describes the young man as complaining, “They want me to obey the traffic light, which one are they doing for me?” Traffic lights stand in for police officers who would typically use stop signs to moderate traffic flow. Traffic lights serve in the place of bureaucrats
for the state. The traffic light is a Nigerian bureaucratic setting. The public road is a Nigerian infrastructural setting. Agnes argues these settings remind the young man of Nigeria when she said, “It’s like he’s now hopeless, ‘Why should I obey the rules and regulations of this country when they cannot equally provide me with the basic things I need in life?’”

When the young man says “they,” in his rebuke of the light, he refers to the government who put the traffic light there and expresses frustration with this government, who at that moment had asked him, through the traffic light, to stop. The young man asks, “…which one are they doing for me,” pointedly wondering what the Nigerian government is doing to help him along his path to reach his desired end. In this Nigerian setting, the young man views the traffic light telling him to stop as an government-initiated obstacle in his path, which prevents him from getting to where he wants to go. However, instead of remaining in a perceived low-agency position, or stopping along his path, the young man in Agnes’ story chooses to circumvent this perceived obstacle.

Agnes recounts that the young man also says, “I am not happy that I am an okada man.... When I remember this country, it makes me unhappy.” These two sentences use similar adjectives, invoking the same base term “happy.” Looking closely at both statements, “I am not happy that I am an okada man” and “It makes me unhappy when I remember this country” have an extremely similar construction. The narrator describes the young man as placing both sentences next to each other. All of this indicates that the storyteller equates being an okada driver who spends time on public roads with remembering or conceptualizing the “country,” Nigeria.

In her Nigerian example, Agnes not only describes the Nigerian man as young, which as
mentioned before signals potential, she also describes him as a college “graduate,” meaning he is bright and has even more potential than normal, making her story of his unutilized potential even more tragic. These tropes resonate with the argument made earlier in this chapter about how Nigerians view Nigerian people as possessing great potential.

Agnes situates this Nigerian person in another Nigerian government-run institution – education. We know she is situating the young man in a government-run school because she places blame for his poor experience at the feet of the government, “So, there are opportunities for government to really enhance, in order to bring in these children. What they are doing is kind of accumulating for themselves.” She also describes the “educational system” as one where “lecturers are always on strike” and later compares this dysfunction to the relative order she sees in private schools: “Higher education is in a mess. Are we talking about the private uh - secondary school? It’s the private schools that are doing well because most - personally, I cannot take my child to government school again, because that one is in shamble.”

She describes how the young man operated within this publically-run Nigerian and educational environment: “He decided to go to school, go to the university. He tried to tell me how he suffered to train himself.... So, he struggled to pass out of the university and today, there is no job for him still.” Here, she describes how the young man “struggled to pass out” of a Nigerian bureaucratic environment, indicating he faced, but overcame obstacles in order to reach his goal of graduating. She then compares experiences in Nigerian spaces such as government-run public schools, to what people who were not the focus of her story experienced in private businesses when she says, “The years he spent in school were like years thrown into the bush because his mates who did not go to school, who entered into business, became self-employed are really doing well today.” This comparison between public and private space – public schools
and business – underscores the fact Agnes seeks to make about the struggle residents of the country experience in Nigerian contexts.

While trying to explain Nigeria in her Nigerian history interview, my host mother invoked government-run infrastructures and bureaucracies as settings for prototypical Nigerian action. In his Nigerian history interview, another informant also described Nigerian people and specifically set them in public institutional and infrastructural settings:

The problem we have in the judiciary is that the criminals are in the streets and innocents are in the prison. Why? Because the prisoners were able to be bailed. The criminals were able to be bailed by their parents or relations or their colleagues. But the poor ones are there. Nobody could bail them. Even the suspects stay in the prison for years in the name of awaiting trial, nobody talks for them. If you go to Nigerian prisons here, you run. You'll cry. A prison meant for 1,005 persons is there with 7,000 persons! There are no amenities now. Nothing is working there. That's why we have jail breaks easily. They can jump out if they want, but the point is that we can get all these things solved….

Nigeria has [the] highest number of universities - they are dunking out people, rolling out students every hour still there’s no job for these 10 million youths…I can’t see where a professor will be teaching a class and be sweating. A professor will ask his student to be fanning him with a book or a hand fan! To enable him to check his or her project, in Nigeria, if a professor wants to teach, you go and buy a generator and put diesel and put fuel there, so that you can project your materials on the board. That’s Nigeria! The schools are there, [laughs] but students are not there! Students are there, the teachers are not there! Everybody is there but there is no material, no research! Though they claim the money for research, if you give money for research, you go and build houses. They don’t use that money for anything. They start building houses and buying cars. Sometimes, you may even go and get married more and go overseas for holidays, and these are the people that are supposed to tell the nation the basics of where we're heading to....

The problem again in Nigeria is that we emphasize on the issue of politicians. These are politicians. I believe, in [the] developed world, [that] we have part-time politicians. If we have house of assembly, [or] have house of parliament, we don't live there! You don't live there. You do it and go back to your office. But in Nigeria, once somebody is elected, he will have ten thousand and one aides. Some will even be moving with gun and terrorizing people. If somebody is moving from here to [a nearby] market, [he indicated a market close to where the interview was conducted. Meaning, the location he is referencing is the
road near his house] he will roll out ten cars, fuel these cars, use fifteen policemen to
follow only one person or two persons, and as they're doing that, there's robbery
everywhere. So, nobody will be there! The police will be busy with one person! So, these
are challenges. We have not prioritized our needs as a nation because we don't have right
people at the right place. It's affecting us.

In the first paragraph, my informant uses “Nigerian prisons” to help him explain Nigeria
as a whole. In the second paragraph, he, like Agnes, describes schools in Nigeria, and their lack
of funding for certain amenities. He even equates Nigeria with the bureaucratic dysfunction he
describes when he says, “That’s Nigeria!” In the third paragraph, my informant invokes police
who rather than preventing crimes are overprotecting well-paid politicians. At one point, my
informant says, “If somebody is moving from here to [a nearby] market, he will roll out ten cars,
fuel these cars, use fifteen policemen to follow only one person or two persons.” The informant
places the site of government bureaucratic activity and dysfunction on the road connecting where
the interview took place and nearby market. He uses this description of police and political
activity to help explain Nigeria as a whole and the setting is a public road. He indicates that
public roads serve as sites where prototypical Nigerian activity occurs. Within his Nigerian
history, this informant invokes both Nigerian government-run bureaucratic contexts such as
prisons and schools, as well as public roads, as settings where modern-day Nigerian people act.
Figure 5.1 Students at their junior secondary school in Lagos, Nigeria.
Figure 5.2 A photo I took of police speaking to drivers at a local intersection near my homestay in Enugu. As a passenger, I had witnessed officers ask my host father and keke drivers for bribes at this intersection.
We see in these examples that my informants discuss locations such as “government schools,” universities such as government “polytechnics”, traffic lights, and government-managed prisons. My informants also mention bureaucrats such as police officers, as well as teachers and professors at public schools. They often attached these settings and contexts to “government” or “politicians” saying that they run these settings and institutions. My informants were speaking about government contexts. They used these settings, and what occurred in them as symbolic tools to help them tell stories about Nigeria. Analyzing this, we see that they discuss infrastructures such as roads and traffic lights, as well as bureaucracies such as schools and prisons.

In my research, I observed how my informants acted in infrastructural and bureaucratic contexts moderated by the government – environments that reminded them of the social group Nigeria and that I argue served as symbolic contexts sparking Nigerian identity performance. I found that the way my informants behaved, including non-verbal behavior, followed the Nigerian national narrative template. They argued that they experienced oppression and low agency in these everyday “Nigerian” contexts due to government mismanagement. I witnessed and recorded notes about their struggles. They also argued that they freed themselves from this regularly-experienced oppression and regained their agency through struggle in order to lead lives where they felt whole, and were “not lacking in anything.” I noted this dynamic in participant observation notes from my yearlong fieldwork in 2014. In the following section, I showcase how my informants acted within public infrastructural contexts. They often described themselves as experiencing oppressive infrastructural dysfunction due to government
mismanagement. I recorded most of the following field notes while staying with my host family in Enugu.

03/02/2014

After the interview… I …started watching a greatest man award on Silverbird TV. They were giving the president of Rwanda an award for being a great president who cleaned up the country of Rwanda.... Later, the president of Silverbird Television, who introduced himself as a leftist and, according to Michael, tried to run for president, but was not successful, basically thrashed leaders of Nigeria. He said that the country was corrupt and that leaders were failing and not doing what they were supposed to do. He pointed to the poor infrastructure and electricity.

03/10/2014

Michael was in a nearby room watching TV and I could hear some of the program. It was a political rally for Goodluck Jonathan located in the Southeast, among the Igbo, I think Anambra state. Pres. Jonathan was inaugurating the beginning of the Second Niger Bridge construction. It was what they called a “Flag off” ceremony as well as a political rally… Michael was watching the rally. He came out and said, “Nigeria is dirty. Nigeria is a dirty country.” He said this several times.

He said this because right as the president was about to ceremoniously flag off the bridge after all of the speeches, the power to the house went off, and the TV went black.

Michael also mentioned that all of those politicians are only answering a name or title, and do not really know anything. He said that this is because none of them had mentioned that the first Niger Bridge is the longest bridge in all of Africa and the longest bridge in all of West Africa. He said that they had failed to mention this really important fact…. He seemed excited though, about the opening of the second Niger Bridge, but clearly [he] was not as excited about the things he had pointed out –the power going out, and the fact that an important piece of information was missing.
03/12/2014

There was no electricity all day until about 7pm. The water also ran out.

03/27/2014

Michael and Agnes [my host father and his wife] have asked me several times if there is constant running water and constant electricity in the United States. I’ve said that yes, there is, as long as you pay for it. They said that even in Nigeria, though, even though you pay for water and electricity, you do not get a constant supply of them.

04/05/2014

I did laundry today, but the water ran out. I feel like it may have been my fault, that maybe that is why we ran out of water. When we ran out of water, I just felt this sense of dread, like, here we go again! … I keep asking them if this is normal, just running out of water …. I asked M3 and W2 if we had run out of water faster than normal. They said no. I don’t know how they do it. It is like they are constantly trying to avoid or deal with crises. Maybe this is why people get high blood pressure here. It is one thing not to expect running water. You can then, perhaps just rely on going every morning to fetch water. Life is predictable, and more calm that way. [The following are analytical field notes – not descriptive] Although it may be difficult to go and fetch water. At least you can prepare for it in advance and you know what to expect. But this… All of a sudden water just runs out. People have to scramble to figure out how they are going to cook dinner – if they have enough bottled water on reserve – how they are going to take a bath the next morning…. They kick themselves for not refilling the large plastic oil jugs that serve as water reserves when there is no water from the GeePee, even though they are very heavy and burdensome to refill, and it is understandable that they may have dallied.

04/07/2014

I spent a lot of time helping [Agnes, my host mother] on the computer. She does not really know how to use a computer. She has a laptop, but she does not really know how to use it. I had helped her the night before, and we kept rushing to print different pages she needed before the lights went out again, and the printer didn’t
work. Even if her laptop worked, drawing from battery power, the printer wouldn’t work if there was no electricity in the house.

05/13/2014

There was still no running water today.

05/14/2014

Interestingly enough, our neighbor came over with the cute baby again. I was complaining about how there had been no water supply for the past week, (even though we were paying for that supply). The neighbor girl and Tracy [Michael’s oldest daughter] who was in the kitchen laughed and said, “Past week? Try for the past month!” Tracy continued complaining. The neighbor girl said she saw that a water pipe along the main road was broken, and squirting out water, and so maybe that was the cause. Tracy said, “Well then they should remedy it, they should provide us with a water tanker for free!” Neighbor girl, who is also her friend, said, “In this country?” laughing “They can’t do that in this Nigeria.”

I said, “They could at least let us know what is happening.” I asked, “Were there lawyers and suing in Nigeria a lot in the past? I feel like I am seeing that here more. What if we just sued them for not bringing us water?” The two of them just stared blankly at me for a second. The neighbor girl laughed and said, “In this country, people are used to not having electricity and water. They aren’t going to now go and sue for not having these things. They are used to it. They just go and find an alternative.”

08/26/2014

Michael still hasn’t solved his problem at his work. He is still looking for a machine operator who can blow bottles for him at the price he can afford. All the while, he has been getting customers who want bottles – but he doesn’t have any. On top of that, there has been no electricity since Monday, which means that- because they don’t have a generator, they can’t work. Michael looked really sad and deep in thought this afternoon. Why hadn’t they brought light yet, was one of his questions/concerns.
Figure 5.3 A local power station in Enugu that my informants regularly passed on their way to work or the market.

These previous excerpts display in real-time the oppression my informants faced in Nigerian contexts which reduced their agency and ability to determine their desired futures. This oppression manifested itself in the form of unexpected public power outages and public water shortages in public infrastructural Nigerian settings. This unpredictability of infrastructural failure made government-managed infrastructures much more noticeable in the lives of my informant, almost like an embedded, constant commemoration of Nigerian state. From being unable to power their businesses, watch the news, or use water as they desired, government neglect of symbolic public infrastructures reduced the amount of agency informants experienced in their everyday lives. As demonstrated in the excerpts above, my informants themselves described this infrastructural failure as oppressive and problematic to them. They also often described government leaders as the cause of these infrastructural failures, arguing these
government infrastructural problems served as a stumbling block on their paths to fulfilling their potential of living accomplished lives.

While my informants regularly experienced infrastructural obstacles when seeking fulfilled lives – obstacles that reduced their agency, they also struggled to gain freedom from this oppression and regain their agency by seeking alternative strategies to public infrastructural failures.

Both this oppression and struggle for freedom from oppression, which my informants experienced in their daily lives mirrored the oppression and freedom discussed in Parts 2 and 3 of the Nigerian National Narrative Template: 2) Oppressive government elites manipulate Nigeria for personal gain, causing problems within Nigeria and 3) Nigeria gains freedom from oppression and continues on as one.

In their daily lives, instead of a part three where Nigeria gains freedom from oppression and continues on as one, informants in these Nigerian settings utilized alternative strategies to regain freedom from government-caused infrastructural failure. They did this in order to whole lives where they did “not lack anything.” My informants sought to reach the Nigerian expectation of the good life and not violate those expectations.

The following are excerpts from my 2014 field notes demonstrate ways the same family sought to regain their agency by implementing alternative strategies in the presence of malfunctioning Nigerian infrastructures. Alternative strategies to infrastructural failures included using private fuel-powered electric generators as well as voltage regulators and electric source switches as part of private household electricity systems, Large GeePee water storage containers and complicated personal hydraulic systems for homes, electric powered LED flashlights, as well
as oil jugs fetch water and large buckets to store water. Use of each of these techniques was widespread in my research sites of Lagos, Enugu, and rural Mbaise Nigeria. I also saw evidence of these technologies popularized in Nigerian films. This provided evidence that these particular alternative strategies were institutionalized solutions to public infrastructural failure in the country and that residents of the country experienced public infrastructural oppression and attempts to regain agency from this government-imposed oppression in similar ways.

03/20/2014

Today was interesting. I spent the morning filling up Jerry cans because we finally had water flowing from the water spout out back. Michael helped me too….

03/22/2014

Today, a man came to clean out the Gee Pee. …. They are the big water tanks in the back of houses people use to pump water into their houses.

03/27/2014

There is now water running in the house, from the faucet. The work the plumber did to the GeePees worked. It allowed the bottom GeePees to fill up quite a bit, enough for us to pump water up to the GeePees on the top floor, which supply water to the house faucets.

04/05/2014

I did laundry today, but the water ran out. I feel like it may have been my fault, that maybe that is why we ran out of water. When we ran out of water, I just felt this sense of dread, like, here we go again! … I keep asking them if this is normal, just running out of water …. I asked M3 and W2 if we had run out of water faster than normal. They said no. I don’t know how they do it. It is like they are
constantly trying to avoid or deal with crises. Maybe this is why people get high
blood pressure here. It is one thing not to expect running water. You can then,
perhaps just rely on going every morning to fetch water. Life is predictable, and
more calm that way. [The following are analytical field notes – not descriptive]

Although it may be difficult to go and fetch water. At least you can prepare for it
in advance and you know what to expect. But this… All of a sudden water just
runs out. People have to scramble to figure out how they are going to cook dinner
– if they have enough bottled water on reserve – how they are going to take a bath
the next morning…. They kick themselves for not refilling the large plastic oil
jugs that serve as water reserves when there is no water from the GeePee, even
though they are very heavy and burdensome to refill, and it is understandable that
they may have dallied....

[Analytical notes continued:] While using the flashlight that Michael gave me, I
realized how much more advanced it is than flashlights I use in the US. I don’t
really use flashlights in the US, but they do use them a lot here, I guess. The
flashlight is blue and black. It has three settings – off, medium light, and highest
(brightest) light, that you go to by clicking a black button up to each setting. It is
not battery powered. You charge it in an electric outlet, - it has two metal prongs
built in to fit into the Nigerian (British) power outlet. It is pretty advanced for a
flashlight. The simple flashlight I bought from the US for 5 dollars is pretty
shoddy in comparison. It is small and black with a keychain attached to it. It uses
AAA batteries, which I noticed seem to go out pretty fast. The light is this pale
yellow light, that almost barely illuminates the space in front of you....

I think they have more advanced flashlights than we do in the US because there is
a greater need and demand for such flashlights versus the US, due to the
infrastructure here –due to the lack of electricity.... There are also different types
of flashlights. There are some that are long and give a lot of light to a room. There
are some kind of shaped like an iron that that people use to study. I also have a
mosquito bat, combination flashlight. It also has three settings: off, mosquito bat
electricity on, and mosquito bat electricity on/light on. All of these flashlights also
have very powerful, bright, white LED lights....

I also brought an LED lamp, that my dad gave me for Christmas in preparation for
my trip. It looks like a kerosene lamp, but it isn’t. It requires to D batteries.
However, even though on the carton, it is advertised to have “LED Lights!” even
the lights on this lantern are not as bright as the lights from the flashlights here.
We went to church this morning…. There was no water in the house so Kevin and Tracy [my host brother and sister] had to go and fetch water. They used a wheelbarrow and carried three water jugs at a time in the barrow to a neighbor’s house. This neighbor has a GeePee and pump just like we do, but apparently, their water supply runs more frequently than does ours or our next door neighbor’s. They then charge people 10 naira each to fill up each water jug.

I then went with Kevin to go and fetch water. We were able to fill 9 cans of water. By the time we were done it was almost 3pm.

There was a lot of rain that night. I filled up a bucket with water from the roof. However, I had to be careful, because the house has asbestos roofing and the water is really toxic.

A young man was brought in to fix our [electric] generator.

I think in the morning the guy who came to fix our generator was back again because the generator was still not working.

We went home. And there still was no water. I did dishes while Tracy and Kevin went to go and fetch water in big plastic oil jugs. As I had written about before, it is really hard labor. We are really lucky that there are people in this house who are able to do such difficult work. If not, we would be spending 5000 Naira
regularly on calling a water truck. Too bad the Water Board cannot provide water constantly.

Figure 5.4 An image of the generator used by my host family in Enugu.

07/24/2014

[At a local shop] …since there was no light, they had to use a generator. I had to pay extra because they needed to use a generator. I ended up paying them 1000 naira total [$6] - about 600 [$2.5] more than I initially would have paid them.

12/12/14

Anyway, as we were walking home, we saw that rain was coming in, which is unusual because this is Harmattan, or dry season. The rain came eventually. We were trying to turn on the generator for our house which I guess took four men to do …. They had to connect the generator and also add fuel. Also, they moved it from the ovu [Igbo outdoor veranda] to the inside of our house.
Figure 5.4 The types of flashlights present in my Enugu host family’s household.
Figure 5.5 In this image, one can also see the brightness of the LED lights. The small black one in the front is the one I brought with me from the U.S., which was much weaker light source because it would be less commonly used. Some had run out of charge and did not work at the time, however one can still see a contrast in the brightness between the Nigerian and American flashlights displayed.
Figure 5.6: An entire aisle of voltage regulators at one of the newer local Shoprite malls.

Figure 5.7: The voltage regulator in my host family’s house. My host family also owned a voltage regulator, similar to the ones pictured above at the mall. This is because when public power came back on, it often surged and fluctuated in ways that could damage electronics if a house did not have a regulator to stabilize the flow of electricity.
Figure 5.8: The electricity source switch in my host family’s house. This allowed them to use the more powerful and inexpensive public NEPA power when it was available or to use generator power when public power was not available. This switch helped my informants to continue living the lives they desired regardless of public power supply.
Figure 5.9  GeePee brand Water Tank. People used these throughout my multiple field sites in Nigeria as water storage solutions.
If they could afford to do so, people elevated GeePee tanks to get water pressure for their houses. They relied on this in the absence of public water supply or when the public water supply was too weak to enter the internal plumbing systems of their houses.
Figure 5.11 A water pump my host family used to pump water from their GeePees into their houses. Because it required more electric power than a private generator could create, the water pump could only work if there was public power supply.
Figure 5.12 The repurposed oil jugs my host family tried to keep filled as a strategy to tide them over in the event of a water outage. Many households use this method.
The particular types of jugs shown above provided a standard way to fetch water in the country. In fact, when fetching and paying for water from neighbors or a community well, vendors priced according to these specific vegetable oil jugs, almost as a way to standardize payment for water. Similar to vendors providing private electric generators, Gee Pees, and voltage regulators, an institutionalized alternative market centered on “fetching water” had arisen in response to government failures in infrastructural Nigerian contexts.

I viewed my informants in both rural and urban areas utilize these exact jugs to fetch water. These jugs also feature prominently in Nigerian, or Nollywood, films and thus are an important part of Nigerian popular culture. These jugs were part of the narrative of daily life in Nigeria – they represented people pursuing their dreams regardless of government-managed water failure. My informants typically utilized a wheelbarrow to carry these jugs back and forth, and pushing this wheelbarrow required a great deal of physical strength. In the following
excerpts from my field notes, I describe how my host family and I struggled to use this alternative strategy in order to function in the midst of challenging infrastructural failures.

While it was an everyday task for my informants, fetching water was not an easy one. What made it more difficult was that my informants often hoped for running water, but many days that hope was dashed. I lived with them through this experience, and noticed how our days were shaped not only by infrastructural failures, but the activities required to overcome those failures so that my host family could continue to live the kind of life they expected to live.

Figure 5.14 An image of a girl a basic water drum, in which people typically store non-drinkable water for washing clothing or doing chores.

In this section, I described how my informants strategically placed mechanisms in their homes to circumvent oppressive problems government mismanagement had caused in Nigerian contexts, such as encounters with government-run infrastructure. The way my informant sought
and used tools such as private fuel-powered electric generators, Gee Pees, standardized water jugs, and sundry rechargeable high-watt LED flashlights provided tangible proof that my informants sought ways to free themselves from oppressive government failures within Nigerian contexts they encountered in their daily lives. Their experiences in infrastructural Nigerian contexts of government oppression, yet finding ways of freeing themselves from this oppression in order to regain agency over their lives mirrored parts two and three of the Nigerian National Narrative Template. My diverse informants viewed themselves as having the potential to live lives where they were “not lacking in anything.” They sought to free themselves from government oppression in order to live those lives. The institutionalized nature of markets and products in Nigeria intended to overcome oppressive government-caused infrastructural failures by providing amenities needed for the good life, such as electricity and water, attests to the fact that people around the country were living out the Nigerian National Narrative Template in Nigerian contexts they encountered within their daily lives.

The ubiquitous nature of alternative markets providing amenities, which undergird the good life indicates Nigerians expected one another to utilize alternative strategies in Nigerian contexts, such as Nigerian public infrastructural contexts, in order to live certain kinds of lives. The sustainability of these markets shows that Nigerians selling in these markets are right. This peer expectation signals the presence of an identity process, and also portrays the overlap between social identity and market behavior. In the next section, I describe how my informants behaved another Nigerian context for identity performance – government-led bureaucracies. I not only describe how my informants behaved in these environments, but also their experiences of peer pressure to follow the Nigerian National Narrative Template within Nigerian contexts.
5.3 Government Bureaucracies: Using Nigerian Institutions as Cultural Tools in Storytelling

In addition to publicly run infrastructures, my informants also pointed to publicly-run bureaucracies as “Nigerian” contexts. They used public institutions as tools to help them explain the Nigerian story during their Nigerian history interviews. In this section, I provide vignettes for how my informants behaved, and described themselves as behaving, within these Nigerian settings – publicly run Nigerian bureaucracies. I found that, similar to how they responded in Nigerian contexts ushered in by public infrastructures, in bureaucratic Nigerian contexts, my informants also experienced and followed the Nigerian national narrative template. In those contexts, my informants experienced government-initiated oppression, which reduced their agency. Yet, because they saw themselves as having potential to live great lives, they struggled to regain their agency and live good lives by using alternative means. When they acted in this way within Nigerian contexts, they followed parts two and three of the Nigerian national narrative template.

Members of the International community have often accused Nigerians of engaging in petty corruption when they chose to use alternative strategies in the face of government bureaucratic dysfunction. Yet, here I argue that rather than seeing propensities towards alternative norms as immoral, it may make sense to view it “Nigerians” living through and acting out a Nigerian template in their daily lives.

In this section, I also provide evidence that the Nigerian National Narrative Template shaped Nigerian identity performance in daily life because when my informants working in Nigerian bureaucratic contexts sought to break the rules of this template, for example by refusing to circumvent unenforced bureaucratic laws, other Nigerians chastised them for this and
encouraged them to find alternative strategies. The following are vignettes of instances where my informants utilized the Nigerian National Narrative Template as a way to navigate Nigerian contexts and what happened to them when they did not.

5.3.1 Deftly Navigating Everyday Bureaucratic Corrosion

One day, Michael, my host father decided to bring me along on his errands. He drove me around potholes and erratic traffic, avoiding unpredictable cars and close accidents in his path to the first of three stops, the local government Water Board. It is an unspectacular complex of low white government office buildings on a dusty plot with tufts of drying grass growing in no particular order. There was nothing especially notable about the inside of the building either. It was a square structure of white-washed walls sparsely covered except for a few calendars. An older woman with ebony skin, a braided up-do, a bright flowery shirt, and smile lines etched into crows feet around her eyes and laugh lines around her mouth, sat at the front desk of the stuffy building, two male colleagues conversing behind her. The most notable part of the building was that this woman was systematically trying to appease a lineup of customers with similar complaints. Each of the four people in front of us complained to her that their water bills did not accurately reflect their low or absent water supplies.

On our way over in the car, Michael had explained the reason for his visit. He said he wanted to complain because the Water Board had sent him a water bill even though earlier out of frustration he had asked them to completely shut off his public water supply. He had reasoned that if the Water Board was not planning to provide his household with water, he would rely purely on alternative means. Michael threatened these bureaucrats that he would sever his relationship with the government when it came to water provision.
The Water Board had not consistently provided his house with water. When they unexpectedly did provide water, it trickled in slowly and its pressure was not strong enough to supply running water to the bottom floor of his duplex, not to mention the top floor. He said he had experienced this problem for 32 months. I lived with them and knew we had not received a descent supply of water since I had arrived a month prior. Michael explained to me that ideally pipe borne water would rush into his house every day with enough strength to provide his taps with running water, and that this had happened with some degree of regularity in the past. Yet, now, public water only came sporadically once every two or three weeks. When it did, it was a paltry stream that barely filled his lower Gee Pee, part of a separate, privately constructed hydraulic system. I had observed many lower-middle to upper-class use these devices to construct systems to circumvent what my informants often described as a public water supply system in which there was frequently “no water.”

So, instead of allowing the Water Board to send him bills for water he had never received, Michael described how in the past he had decided to use an alternative strategy of threatening them that he would cut off public water supply to his house altogether. If he really needed water, he had proposed he could have his children buy water from neighbors who, at the moment for some reason, either had a more steady supply of public water or who were able to dig a bore hole onto their property. However, this option was not as efficient – it did not provide enough water. He could also call and order water from a water truck, however that option was more expensive. It had been a difficult decision for him to make.

Yet, this strategy of asking for a disconnection has not worked. The board kept charging him as if he had not asked to have his water disconnected and as though he received a full supply of water every day. Because his water supply was already almost non-existent, Michael could not
tell if they had actually shut off his water. So, we were at the Water Board that day for him to
complain again and find another way to resolve his problem with the Water Board.

When he explained his complaint, the lady at the desk insisted that they were indeed
sending water to his house, and this was why they were charging him. He disagreed and again
floated the idea the Water Board should shut off his government water supply and stop billing
him. After using this strategy, Michael then started to speak to the woman in Igbo. The shift was
sudden. He said they had attended an event together in the past when he was working for a
government agency like her. He told her jokes to gussy her up and succeeded in making her and
her officemates laugh. In Igbo, he introduced me to the woman as a PhD candidate from the U.S.
The woman sized me up, looking me up and down. The woman finally gave in and said she
would put Michael in contact with a manager who could help him sort out his problem. We left.

Later, when I asked Michael why he had introduced me to the woman, Michael said it
because he was showing me off as a way of making a stronger connection with the woman. He
explained that I could never know if they had someone who may want something from me, like
marriage, or if I may need something from them in the future. In his own words he said my visit
 gained prestige and respect for his family in the eyes of this woman. I eventually realized that his
use of Igbo, reminding the government bureaucrat they shared a similar social class, holding out
the potential for kinship with an American, and also the possibility of a patron-client relationship
with him were strategies Michael employed to overcome government-initiated oppression and
regain agency within a Nigerian context. Gaining water supply for his house would allow him
and his family to begin to fully achieve the potential upper middle-class life they desired. The
Water Board was a public bureaucracy, a place my informants had indicated reminded them of
Nigeria and set as a place where Nigerians act or perform Nigerian identity. Within this
emblematic Nigerian context, my informant experienced oppressive bureaucratic dysfunction and a lack of government oversight.

As described in Chapter 2, the Nigerian government’s over-focus on oil has led to a situation where government agencies at all levels neglect to maintain infrastructure, but also neglect fail to effectively enforce official written laws. This lack of government law enforcement is particularly noticeable in government bureaucratic environments, as bureaucracies are typically environments even more regulated by government laws than other contexts. This is because they represent the government at the more local level (North 1990). Unwritten informal laws exist, which typically govern behavior and contracts in ethnic identity contexts. Members of ethnic communities enforce them informally through informal corrective measures such as verbal correction and shaming. However, bureaucracies are typically where written laws dominate.

When Michael found that bureaucrats at the public bureaucracy of the Water Board did not enforce laws effectively – enforce a contract, in which customers receive water, for which they pay – he described the situation as frustrating. Lack of law enforcement at this government agency served as an obstacle preventing him from achieving the kind of life he desired, one where he had regular access to clean water. Yet, I observed Michael try to utilize several alternative strategies in order to free himself from oppressive government dysfunction as well as receive the clean water supply and kind of life he desired.

Rather than utilize oppressively unenforced government contracts, Michael used informal unwritten laws that typically governed other ethnic identity contexts. He used informal contracts in this government bureaucratic space in order to get what he wanted from the Water Board
bureaucrat, for example expectations of kindness and reciprocity between Igbos and civil servants. He even sought to set up a patron-client connection. The act of using informal laws in a Nigerian context, such as a government-run bureaucracy, to gain freedom from government oppression is itself an informal, unwritten legal structure governing a social identity group – the Nigerian National Narrative Template.

After visiting the Water Board, we went to the local government CAC – Corporate Affairs Commission, which services limited corporations and helps corporations file their tax returns among other bureaucratic tasks. Michael was really frustrated because he had already visited this office twice to accomplish the same task. This was his third time visiting simply to find out if he had filed the tax returns for his company correctly. The first time, the secretary at the front desk sent him to go see a woman who worked there. The woman told him to come back, that she would look for his company in their files and let him know. The second time, something similar happened – after searching for a while, she again told him that she would get back to him. This time around, initially, the woman was not in her office when her secretary asked us to sit down in it and wait for her. Michel and I waited. Suddenly Michael leaned over to me and whispered, “This woman is a Catholic.”

Puzzled, I responded, “OK.”

“Also,” he added, “She must be Igbo.” I asked him how he knew these things. He pointed to the stylized crucifix on her desk as well and her name plaque, which carried a grammatically Igbo-looking name. He said, “It is important look out for these clues in order to get what you want in these places.” I was really confused by that point. I hadn’t realized Michael was looking around for clues. I simply nodded.
When the young woman finally arrived in her crisp grey suit, braided hair, and asked what she could do for us, Michael began by pleading with her, “I know we don’t know each other, but I can see you are a Catholic or at least a Christian. In the name of our common Christianity, if not for the fact we are both Igbo, please help me.” The woman looked a bit caught off-guard. She listened to Michael explain the problem and the run around he was experiencing in her office.

She avoided eye contact, but she kept a smile plastered on her face and started fiddling with her computer. She said she was not able to gain access to the documents Michael needed and told Michael to go and talk to her secretary, who she assured would help him. Michael explained he had already gone to see her secretary, and her secretary had directed him to where we were now. Her knit brows betrayed a whiff of sympathy, but her smiling mouth said, “I’m sorry. I’m not the one to help you. The secretary is the one who has access to all of the files you are looking for.” With apparently no further path of recourse, Michael instructed me to get up and we went back to the main lobby. After explaining what he needed to the secretary again, she agreed to try and look for the documents. After sitting down at her computer for a while, her face began to crunch up a little. We waited fifteen minutes for the secretary to give us the next set of instructions. She finally stood up sheepishly and said to us, “I’m sorry, the computer network is not working. I need the network in order to get you your documents.” She told us to come back. Michael was complaining as we left that place.

In the last example, Michael was simply trying to see his business taxes to ensure he filed them correctly. Doing so would allow him to make sure anyone who audited him would not find a simple mistake and inordinately fine his business. Yet, in the process of doing so, he faced incredible obstacles and challenges. In an effort to free himself from oppressive government
dysfunction in Nigerian contexts, Michael pursued informal laws with the CAC manager in an effort to free himself from government initiated oppression in this Nigerian context and obtain what he desired in order to live a good life. He sought to use expectations of reciprocity in Igbo culture and charity in Christianity based on what he perceived as the manager’s potential common Igbo heritage and Christian faith. In this other Nigerian context, Michael lived out a narrative where he faced government oppression but fought to overcome this oppression and regain agency over his life and destiny. Exercising his agency and using these alternative strategies, he sought to fight the possibility of becoming destroyed financially for making a simple mistake on his taxes. My informants did not only use alternative strategies to regain agency in the face of challenging government bureaucratic failure. They also received pressure from other Nigerians utilize alternative strategies, as the next section shows.

5.3.2 “Are You a Special Bus Driver?”

Anthony was a teacher who worked at a local secondary school at one of my field sites and served as a key informant. One day, he spoke to me about police, security, and how these social organizations play out in Nigeria. He told me about how, a few weeks prior, he had been riding a bus to his village when the police stopped his bus. A police officer asked the bus driver for a 50-naira bribe. However, my informant said because the bus driver was, “a mature man,” the bus driver refused. The officer then asked the bus driver to get out of the bus and proceeded to do a security check on everyone who was on the bus, which is apparently what he was supposed to do in the first place to catch armed robbers or anti-government militants.
Apparently, everyone on the bus, except for my informant and a retired police officer sitting in front, yelled and verbally abused the bus driver. They vocally chastised him for not paying the bribe. “Are you a special bus driver?” they asked. “Are you different from everybody else? Just pay the bribe so we can go on our way!” They complained they had other things to do. Anthony said he then tried to ask the police officer to relax and stay calm. Yet, the police officer, who Anthony noted looked like a young man, yelled and threatened Anthony to stay back, asking, “Who do you think you are? Do you think you can talk to me? Stay back, otherwise, you’ll see what I will do to you! Even – if it weren’t for this retired police officer here, I wouldn’t have had patience.” The other people on the bus also yelled at Anthony saying, “Are you crazy? Stop talking to him! You need to avoid trouble, oh! Leave him alone,” in reference to him speaking to the police officer.

According to Anthony, other Nigerians viewed his unwillingness to give in to bureaucratic dysfunction as gravely non-normative and strange. The police officer is a government bureaucrat who, according to written laws, must enforce government policies. However, in this case the police officer requested that the bus driver pay him an illegal bribe before the officer would allow the bus and its passengers to continue their journeys. In this bureaucratic Nigerian context, the Nigerians in Anthony’s story experienced state-led oppression, which lessened their agency. By the police bureaucrat literally stopping the passengers and demanding an unreasonable bribe, the officer initiated a hurdle preventing passengers from reaching their potential, desired destinations.

The officer and other Nigerians on the bus expected the Nigerian bus driver to respond to this state-led oppression by finding ways to regain his agency and free himself from government-caused oppression. In this case, that would be by paying the bribe demanded in order to continue
working and reaching his desired destination. This would follow the Nigerian National Narrative Template and the structure for Nigerian national identity performance in Nigerian contexts such as this.

When the bus driver refused to pay the bribe, which would help him overcome the government hurdle placed in a Nigerian environment, other passengers, as well as the police officer, started verbally berating the driver. They lambasted the driver for not following one informal law governing Nigerian contexts, requiring people to gain freedom from oppression, which is part of the Nigerian National Narrative Template. Instead of struggling to gain freedom from a government-initiated challenge, the bus driver sought to remain in the challenging environment and not free himself from it. Not only did this appear “odd” or “special” to the other passengers, but the driver’s decision incensed them even more because it prevented the passengers from reaching their desired destinations as well. When Anthony sought to stand up to the police officer and warn him against threatening the bus driver in search of a bribe, others swiftly corrected Anthony telling him not to shake the social order of this Nigerian context. The passengers could have easily tried to call other police officers when they saw this officer initiating a bribe. They could have joined Anthony in chastising the police officer for initiating an illegal transaction. They did none of those things. Rather, they sought to put Anthony and the bus driver back in their expected, rightful places within this interaction order (Goffman 1983).

Within identity contexts, it is typical for identity group members to pressure other group members to conform to the behavioral rules of the group. We see that here. Nigerian behavior in Nigerian contexts is internationally recognized. Charles called this behavior the “Nigerian Factor.” Groups such as Transparency International call it petty corruption. In the first edition of its globally recognized and anticipated Corruption Perceptions Index, Transparency International
ranked Nigeria as the country perceived as the most corrupt of the countries it measured (Transparency International 1997). Books such as A Culture of Corruption by Daniel Jordan Smith (2006) also detail how “Nigeria” has been internationally associated with corruption – or rather, exercising agency by circumventing oppressively unenforced laws in order to live up to one’s believed potential. In the next vignette from my field notes, I describe an example of informal law enforcement and identity group conformity that I witnessed myself.

5.3.3 A Teenaged Outcast

While staying in one of my rural Mbaise, Nigeria research sites in December of 2014, one of my informants, Tom, came to visit me. I wanted to speak with him because he was in trouble with his family. I had heard from his mother and other members of his village that his parents had paid for him to take the West African Examinations Council (WAEC) exam the previous year. They had also paid for him to go and take the Joint Admissions and Matriculations Board (JAMB) exam. WAEC and JAMB were both important qualifying exams required to enter Nigerian federal universities. However, when Tom left home to take the JAMB exam, he redirected, going somewhere else instead. I was dumbfounded when I heard he had done this and I wanted to speak with him to get his perspective.

Tom is a sweet kid with a small afro and a big toothy smile. He is slight and has dark skin and always wears trendy clothes. He told me he was hesitant to tell me what had happened, because whenever he told other people what he was going through, they called him “foolish.” Tom said that they all thought that he was a “fool” because of what “was motivating him,” and
that everyone around him told him this including his friends, parents, and other members of his village community.

He said he had committed exam “malpractice” (or, cheated) on his first exam, WAEC. He recalled that during his WAEC exam, one of his trusted friends had told him not to cheat but that he had goofed around and instead followed a crowd of students who also cheated on the exam that day. While he had received a good exam score after engaging in malpractice, he eventually felt remorse. Later, he told his parents what had happened, that he felt guilty about it, wanted to rescind his WAEC exam score, and had decided to retake the WAEC.

Despite his sincere remorse, he said his parents did not listen to him and insisted that he simply needed to prepare for the next college entry exam, JAMB. He said he wrestled with this issue internally and kept trying to talk to his parents about how he felt. Yet, his parents told him that his cheating did not matter and that he should go take his JAMB. On the day of the JAMB exam, he left home under the pretense of taking the JAMB. In reality, he went somewhere else entirely and spent the day hiding out with a friend. When his parents and other members of his close-knit village found out, they were infuriated. Not only did he miss his exam, but it was notoriously difficult for many Nigerian families to pay the registration fee for JAMB. According to his critics, Tom had not only unbelievably missed his JAMB exam, but squandered his parents’ money. I had spoken to several people in the village prior to my conversation with Tom and can verify members of his community were baffled by his decision and that it was widely-known. I did not encounter anyone who applauded Tom for attempting to make a moral decision. Instead informants, including Tom’s family members, all thought he had made a horribly immoral decision.
Tom said he was hesitant to tell me what he was thinking of doing next because,

“Whenever I tell people what I am thinking, they call me a fool.” He proceeded, “You know that I am Deeper Life. You know Deeper Life church?”

I confirmed that I did.

“At my church,” he said, “We have this thing called restitution.”

“What is that?” I asked.

“I spoke with my pastor and he told students in the congregation that exam malpractice is wrong. He said that if anyone does exam malpractice, they should go to the appropriate authorities and submit their falsified exam, and then go and retake the exam. That is restitution.”

From the perspective of someone who had not grown up in Nigeria, I told him that I agreed that this would be the best course of action. He said, “I really want to do this, but I’ve spoken with my parents about it, and they do not want me to do the restitution. They just want me to take my JAMB. They said that they do not have money to pay for another WAEC exam, and I should just take JAMB.”

He sounded very adamant about wanting to do the restitution process. He continued, “I am the topic of conversation at meetings in the village. People talk about me as the boy who had a perfectly good WAEC score but refuses to take JAMB. I used to be cutting hair just to keep busy, but I recently quit that and am now studying for my JAMB, because my parents are making me.” Later he resumed, “Here in Nigeria, exam malpractice is just normal. Whether you cheat on an exam and get a score or you take it yourself and get the score you need, it doesn’t matter. No one cares. It is just part of the system.” He kept saying, “You don’t know what
education is like here. I don’t think you understand what education is like here. Do you understand what people do here when they take exams?”

It struck me that he had said whether you take an exam or you cheat on an exam it did not matter to most people here - that exam malpractice is just part of “the system.” Even his parents told him to forget about the guilt he felt about his malpractice and just take the next exam. I wondered what his parents are more worried about: the money, his not telling them that he was going somewhere else instead of taking the exam, or the idea of the restitution. Either way, there was widespread acceptance of exam malpractice among his village and family.

As the young man mentioned, in the Nigerian context of government-run state exam halls, people do not care if young test takers cheat. The exam itself poses a challenge to all test takers, which they must overcome in order to achieve the future they desire. However, when government-employed proctors do not adequately guard against cheating, it can reduce the agency of students taking the exam. My young informants, for example, Michael’s high-school aged daughter Tracy, told me stories of exam malpractice ranging from students buying cheat sheets in exam halls to rich, well-connected parents paying exam administrators for the high scores of well-deserving students in order to give those scores to their underperforming children. When such things happen; or even if they do not but, but the possibility is there; it reduces the agency of Nigerians in these contexts. The students no longer have control over their futures. Their futures are in the hands of corrupt elites who may or may not give them their actual exam scores. They need these exam scores to pursue college and fulfill their desired futures.

One way to regain agency over this situation where a lot of students and families feel they have little control is to buck the system and engage in exam malpractice. By doing so, in
their own way, they agentively overcome a situation that stripped them of their agency and
regain control over their futures in this bureaucratic Nigerian context. In cheating, they get the
score they desire and are able to use this to fulfill their full potential. Again, this process of
Nigerians experiencing low agency in Nigerian contexts, but exercising high agency in order to
fulfill a desirable future matches the Nigerian National Narrative Template.

The exam hall was a Nigerian context because it is a government-run bureaucracy. In this
Nigerian context, Tom encountered a situation where other students were easily cheating off of
each other. In addition to his prior understanding that this space contained lax proctoring, seeing
others actively engaged in cheating additionally signaled a low agency situation. This prompted
him to engage in what Charles called the Nigerian Factor. Tom decided to join a group openly
cheating and gain agency over his destiny. He did this in order to ensure he received a high
score. He decided to perform Nigerian identity and overcome obstacles in a Nigerian context.

Tom describes how after the exam, another ethnic context socialized him, his Deeper Life
church. According to the rules of this identity group, cheating was wrong in Nigerian contexts
and if someone cheated they should engage in restitution – in other words, retake their exam and
nullify their ill-gotten score. When Tom decided to act “Deeper Life” and not Nigerian in a
Nigerian bureaucratic context by going back to the exam offices to nullify his old WAEC exam
and take a new one, other Nigerians who had not been adequately socialized into “Deeper Life”
thinking balked at this. They argued he was “the boy who had a perfectly good WAEC score, but
refuses to take JAMB.” They pressured him to act Nigerian in this bureaucratic Nigerian context
– to do whatever it took to fulfill his potential and overcome a government-initiated low-agency
situation. His refusal to do so and to stick with acting “Deeper Life” instead caused conflict
between him and others. It also caused Tom a great deal of stress as his community pressured
him to act “normally” in a Nigerian context. According to Tom, “Here in Nigeria, exam
malpractice is just normal. Whether you cheat on an exam and get a score or you take it yourself
and get the score you need, it doesn’t matter. No one cares. It is just part of the system.” This
social sanction to find alternative strategies in the face of low agency situations within Nigerian
contexts is another sign that Nigerian identity exists and is framed by the Nigerian National
Narrative Template.

In this chapter, I demonstrated how my informants lived out the Nigerian National
Narrative Template in their daily lives. In the Nigerian National Narrative Template, Nigerians
encounter obstacles that reduce their agency and subsequently struggle to regain their agency.
They go through this process because they see themselves as possessing potential for great
wealth and success. They seek to achieve that potential. When encountering oppressive
government failures within Nigerian contexts, my informants countered government-initiated
oppression with creative solutions in attempts to regain their agency and live the lives they
expected and desired. In fact, when my informants who encountered the police and tried to
retake their WAEC, sought to work with dysfunctional legal systems, Nigerians around them
chastised them for not utilizing extra-legal strategies, outside of those systems, to achieve agency
and the good life. All of this provides evidence that the Nigerian National Narrative Template
my informants used to tell stories about Nigeria as a country, also shaped how they performed
and made decisions within other Nigerian contexts such as in their encounters with Nigerian
state-run infrastructures and institutions.
Conclusion: Narrative Templates - Versatility and Impact

In academia, interest in national identity has grown to a peak due to recent nationalist movements in the U.S., Europe, and other parts of the world. In Africa, often the focus has been on subnational ethnic identities to the neglect of other forms of group identity often because of beliefs in state failure (see for example Pierre 2013; Mamdani 1996). In Nigeria specifically, authors have argued national identity cannot exist because of tensions between ethnic groups and individuals driven by a desire by groups to control Nigeria’s vast oil resources (Watts 2004).

In this dissertation, using collective memory and national narrative studies, I have shown evidence for the existence of a Nigerian national identity across ethnic groups. By utilizing collective memory and national narrative analysis, not only did I find evidence of similarity in how my informants performed in contexts evocative of Nigeria, I was also able to identify a particular pattern, or if-then algorithmic construction, for how my informants performed Nigerian identity in Nigerian contexts. The pattern followed this rubric:

1) Nigeria is a diverse and divided amalgamation of groups with enormous potential for greatness.

2) Oppressive government elites manipulate Nigeria for personal gain, causing problems within Nigeria.

3) Nigeria gains freedom from oppression and continues on as one.

As discussed in Chapter 5, when my informants broke from this rule format in Nigerian contexts, other Nigerians chastised them and tried to correct them back to using the
format. This is typical for how identity works (Gumperz 1982; Hymes 1977; Hymes 1972; Goffman 1959; Garfinkel 1964).

One may contend that perhaps Nigeria does not overlap with “the nation,” or nation-state of Nigeria. For example, Nigeria may be an organic geographical identity group that overflows national borders or exists in pockets within the country. My informants, who often interchanged terms such as “Nigeria” and “this country” within the same interviews and interview segments, contested this. For example, during their Nigerian history interviews:

My host father Michael said, “That’s the only problem Nigeria has. The entirety of all these things that are happening in this country is the type of government God has allowed us to have. Alright?”

A twenty-three year old television intern working in Enugu said, “I am always a pro-Naija, I’m a pro-Nigeria. I love this country.”

A forty-year old mother of five said:

You know we, Nigeria, has grown so big that even the one we’re getting is not enough to take care of their masses. Then, when it comes to the issue of security, the same – just out of politics, this security issue just came out of politics, you see some want to be a leader, that self – sacrifice is no longer there. They’re the - those three men had in mind that let’s grow this country.
As two of the examples show, they also often interchanged “Nigeria,” and “this country,” with “us” or “we,” indicating their personal affiliation with Nigeria.

Along with the mere existence of national group identity, belies overwhelming scholarship on Nigeria, identification of a Nigerian national narrative template shaping Nigerian identity makes two other important contributions.

First, it shows that national narrative templates concurrently reflect and shape not only how members of a national group speak about their nation, but also how people non-verbally make decisions and behave in contexts reminding them of the national group – in this case, Nigerian public infrastructures and bureaucracies. This discovery has many ramifications and real-world impacts. It can help economists, for example, better predict the decision-making and buying behavior members of self-professed target markets may carry out in contexts related to the target market. The same goes for social scientists seeking to predict other critical forms of decision-making such as voting patterns or medically relevant choices.

Apart from rational choice models, economists have previously loosely called identity performance in decision-making contexts “the cultural factor,” understanding that this factor often causes individuals to behave in ways difficult for them to understand. Exploring how members of groups narrativize their group, as well as narrative templates that exist across group members can help social scientists more rigorously determine this “cultural factor.”

The second important contribution this finding provides is within the field of collective memory studies itself. Many collective memory studies scholars have argued that collective memories have as much to do with how people conceptualize the present and future as they do
with how people imagine the past. In Chapter 5 of this dissertation, I demonstrated that my informants painted themselves, members of Nigeria, similarly to how they judged the “Nigeria” they described in their national stories. They regarded themselves, like Nigeria, as having great potential. They viewed themselves as encountering, but through struggle gaining freedom from, state-sponsored oppression – not succumbing to this maltreatment. They did not envision themselves as subjugated by other countries or global hemispheres as is seen in other national narrative templates, for example those of Russia, Azerbaijan, and China (Wertsch 2008; Garagozov 2008; Duara 1995). They saw themselves as experiencing oppression by self-interested government elites – a highly specific similarity between how they perceived their present day-to-day predicaments and problems Nigeria experienced, as a whole, in the past. This accusation of government mismanagement indicates Nigeria’s national narrative template has grassroots origins, and does not originate from official government initiatives.

This interplay between how my informants made decisions within and conceptualized the present, as well as how they spoke about the past, raises a Sapir-Whorfian paradox: does speech affect thinking or does thinking affect speech (Sapir 1929)? Does speaking about Nigeria affect how people act within it or does what people see themselves as experiencing in Nigeria affect how people speak about it? As Daniel Kahneman (2011) argues, past experiences can create templates and heuristics for what people expect to experience in the future. Yet, where do people obtain the overriding concepts, which help them conceptualize the past?

My evidence shows that how people speak about the past, as well as how they conceptualize and make decisions in the present, is a group phenomenon within identity contexts. It is unique to a particular group of people, according to my informants in this case, a
country or nation-state. I saw evidence of this group phenomenon when my informants received corrections from other Nigerians when they spoke about or acted in ways that deferred from the Nigerian national template in Nigerian contexts. The impact of groups is in line with Bakhtinian thinking - that no utterance is new or unique – they all originate from a lineage of previously uttered speech and ideas passed down through communities (Bakhtin and Holquist 2008).

My answer to the aforementioned questions supports my original point regarding the importance of national identity groups in Africa. A national identity group had the power to shape how my informants conceptualized their past, experienced their present, and imagined their futures. Beyond this power to affect individual lives, through implicitly endorsing their such templates, people can politically mobilize national identity groups to affect other nations or the international community (see Wertsch 2008; Garagozov 2008; and Duara 1995 cited above as well as Garagozov and Kadyrova 2011). National identity groups, including organic ones in “failed” African states not only have the ability to police group citizens, but millions on a global scale.

In this dissertation, after introducing the conundrum of national group identity in Nigeria, I went on to outline my research methods for this study, namely multi-sited Nigerian oral history interviewing, Nigerian history survey collection, and participant observation of residents of Nigeria across multiple axes of diversity as well as over time. I then provided background information about Nigeria and explained the difference between academic history and collective memory. After doing this, I provided transcript and survey data showing that my diverse Nigerian informants shared a narrative template they used to narrativize Nigeria’s past. I
then showed that my informants use this same Nigerian template to guide their decision-making in present Nigerian contexts.

This dissertation provides evidence that a governing national identity exists in Nigeria despite what many Nigerianists have described as a lack of government involvement. By examining how my informants framed their Nigerian collective memories and behaved in Nigerian contexts, this study presents proof that national narrative templates serve as useful tools for social scientists who desire to understand more precisely how people imagine and animate communities.
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Wooffitt, Robin
Appendix A

When coding this particular table, I cross-checked my codes with another scholar, my advisor James Wertsch. For this particular chart, I did not include narratives that did not begin with either amalgamation or independence. Those that fell into this category are marked with NA. Additionally, when I could not discern a narrative arc in a interviewee’s responses to the request, “Please tell my your version of Nigerian history,” I also marked their slot with NA.

Nigerian Oral History Interview Story Arcs For: “Tell Me Your Version of Nigerian History

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Gender</th>
<th>Age</th>
<th>1st Key Event</th>
<th>2nd Pinnacle Event</th>
<th>Third Key Event</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Female</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>Amalgamation</td>
<td>Fight for Independence</td>
<td>Current Democratic Rule rather than Military</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Male</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>Amalgamation</td>
<td>Civil War</td>
<td>After War, Nigeria reunited</td>
</tr>
<tr>
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<td>50</td>
<td>NA</td>
<td>NA</td>
<td>NA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Male</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>Amalgamation</td>
<td>Civil War/Military Rule</td>
<td>Current Democratic Rule</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Male</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>Independence</td>
<td>Transition to Democracy in 1999</td>
<td>Current Democratic Rule</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Male</td>
<td>70</td>
<td>Colonization</td>
<td>Amalgamation</td>
<td>Current cultural fusion of English &amp; Nigerian cultures</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Female</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>Independence</td>
<td>Buhari purportedly said he would make Nigeria Ungovernable under Goodluck Jonathan</td>
<td>Boko Haram crisis</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sex</td>
<td>Age</td>
<td>Event</td>
<td>Period</td>
<td>Current Issue</td>
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<td>-----</td>
<td>----------------</td>
<td>----------------------</td>
<td>------------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Male</td>
<td>39</td>
<td>Amalgamation</td>
<td>Civil War</td>
<td>Current social inefficiencies and lack of togetherness</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Female</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>Amalgamation</td>
<td>Nationalist Movement</td>
<td>Civil War/Military Rule</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Male</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>Independence</td>
<td>Civil War</td>
<td>Political Creation of more states</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Female</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>Amalgamation</td>
<td>Independence</td>
<td>Civil War, coups and subsequent threat of division</td>
</tr>
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<td>Male</td>
<td>37</td>
<td>Colonists came</td>
<td>Amalgamation</td>
<td>Current northern insurgency</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Female</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>Amalgamation</td>
<td>Civil War</td>
<td>Ethnic division/superiority complexes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
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<td>Amalgamation</td>
<td>Civil War/and Political coups</td>
<td>Current instability</td>
</tr>
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<td>NA</td>
<td>NA</td>
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<td>NA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
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<td>30</td>
<td>Amalgamation</td>
<td>Divison due to British leaders and Civil War</td>
<td>Current lack of unity and instability</td>
</tr>
<tr>
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<td>31</td>
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<tr>
<td>Male</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
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<tr>
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</tr>
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<td>Currently one country, but with notable ethnic divisions</td>
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<tr>
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<td>23</td>
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<td>NA</td>
<td>NA</td>
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<td>NA</td>
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<tr>
<td>Female</td>
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<td>Independence</td>
<td>There is a current rumor that Nigerians want to separate, but she argues they really love each other</td>
</tr>
<tr>
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<td>29</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
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<tr>
<td>Male</td>
<td>24</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
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<td>18</td>
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<td>NA</td>
<td>NA</td>
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</tr>
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<tr>
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<td>NA</td>
<td>NA</td>
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<td>NA</td>
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<td>Event</td>
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<td>100</td>
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<td>NA</td>
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<td>NA</td>
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</tr>
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</table>
Appendix B

Text of The Minji Trial. This book is included as an appendix because it is not widely distributed or readily available for purchase.

The Minji Trial by Pat Anigbo

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Dedication

To

The memory of Marcel and to the glory of God

Generally, the book offers interesting readership to various realms of society: for students of literature, it is reference point in the study of allegory and parody; for the political class, it is psychological soul-searching piece for the study of a society that operates carelessly along a sociological continuum.
The book is captivating and makes an interesting reading, especially to students of legal studies.

C.C. NJEZE, Ph. D

FOREWARD

The Minji Trial is a carefully woven survey of a decadent society where the human mind is persistently besieged by strong forces of politico-socio oblivion. It outlines, with dynamic imaginative evocation, the dilemma of a society where the poor are neglected in an excruciating clash of political cum social poverty.

The book carries with it powerful psychological effusions of negligence of the individual, politically and economically. This culminates in absolute frustration that weighs down on the downtrodden hoi polloi in a tense and disorganized society where anything goes. Various governments fail in their duties of fostering the interest of citizens; parents can no longer cope with the volcanic eruptions of the political negligence and children can no longer trudge under the heavy weight of unwholesome upheavals.

Above all, it is an allegorical presentation of the forces of good and evil in a society that cares less for the poor – a dramatization in most cynical and satirical landscape with the forces man had to contend with in a geo-political entity where the winner takes it all.

CHARACTERS

MARCEL – A young Minji who died because of poverty
HUMBLE – A young Minji undergraduate who loved Marcel

HOLISAH – The Almighty God

ELY – Founder and wiseman of the sunrise tribe

AAYAH – Founder and leader of the hill tribe

YAN – Founder and leader of the sunset tribe

1st COUNSEL – Personal guardian Angel of Ely

2nd COUNSEL – Aayah’s personal guardian angel

DEFENCE COUNSEL – Neutral perfect legal luminary from the celestial court.

PREFACE

If all had been well with the black man all over the world, this book might not have come into existence. If the people of the tropics have been naturally progressive, there might have been no need for any trial such as contained in this book.

But there have been various manifestations of negative developments (in every sphere of life) among the blacks of the tropics. These vices range from abject poverty to economic
mismanagement, political instability and incessant controllable deaths and killings of innocent people due to religious intolerance. Robbery is on the increase.

There have been hunger, abuse of natural talents, ethnic feuds, and diseases resulting from lack of medical facilities in most parts of the tropics. Indiscipline is devastating the fabric of moral life. There have been several cases of abortion, drug abuse and various forms of discriminations, intimidation and victimization, in offices, in the streets, in motor parts and in the households.

Marcel died of one or many of these vices and appeared before God at an unripe age. While on trial Marcel leveled these allegations against the people of the tropics especially the giant Minji land.

**DRAMATIZATION**

_Holisah put the ancestors of this great land on trial and found them guilty of many offences. He pronounced doom for the nation if there were no positive changes within the nest few decades._

**ACKNOWLEDGEMENT**

No good Book would ever be achieved by a single individual’s effort. Books are written but by the combined efforts of people.

This is why I sincerely acknowledge the contributions of the following persons: - Miss Nkiru Amalu, S.O. Nwafor, Mrs. Onuoha, Dom Ude and R.N. Eze – stenographers who saw to the
typing of the manuscripts in the preliminary stage of this work. My beloved wife, Ijeoma is specially placed here for her patience and love.

Others are Dr. T.D. Nwala of the Philosophy Department, University of Nigeria,Nsukka, Dr. H.I. Uzoewulu of St. Martins Hospital, A.E. Ijah and Niyi Ogunbowale; of the Federal School of Dental Technology and Therapy, Enugu for their academic and professional supports in seeing this book though. The roles of Dr. C.C. Njeze (in writing the forward to this book) and Sam Egwuatu of IMT, Enugu are hereby appreciated.

I thank the Kelu Publishing Company for their good work.

Also Rev. (Dr.) Osmond Anigbo, S.B.N. Anigbo and Emeka W. Egwu are highly thanked for their moral and financial supports in my endeavours.

Finally, I owe a lot of thanks to all my friends, especially those who forced me to be more careful in life. May God Almighty be praised for his care.

Pat. Anigbo

Scene 1

Session 1

A CALL FOR JUDGEMENT

The day was very gloomy. It was already Nine O’clock in the morning, yet, the sun refused to rise. The earth was quiet while every creature was amazed by the appearance of early morning rainbow in the East. Trees stood motionless in a clear absence of moving wind. Men wondered if an eclipse was about taking place. At the time stars still appeared visible in the sky which made not only the tropics, but the people of the Minji land afraid of leaving their homes for the daily businesses and engagements.
In the spiritual realm, a great event was taking place – the judgment of the land.

**VOICE OF HOLISAH:**

“… who shall go for me … who shall I send? Today is the Date; a date I personally arranged that the entire races should account to me … who shall I send; to gather from blacks a prominent person from one large tribe in the tropics; at least, let us begin with them … who shall I send?

Marcel: Father! Please send me. I shall go for you!

Holisah: *Little boy, I know your name as Marcel!*

Marcel: I am Marcel…. I come from a tribe in the tropics. My land is at the helm of affairs in her own corner of the world.

Holisah: *You say your land is large enough to represent the black race?*

Marcel: Yes, Father!

Holisah: *But you are too young to be here! … What brought you into this place at an age when you were expected to be in the world?*

Marcel: Father! It is not my fault. I fainted one day as a boy “died” and was about being returned to you. I became sick. My parents were very poor. There were no good hospitals around my village. There was a boy who loved me. His name is Humble. He said he was going to take me to a hospital located at the hilltop. My parents were afraid of what it would cost, no money! Humble was in the University then, and could not do anything apart from giving suggestions. When he left, my parents took me to a man who claimed he was a medical doctor. The
man gave me tablets, which made me begin to sleep. I slept and woke up one day after. When Humble returned I told him that I was being hallucinated by the type of drug that man gave me.

Holisah:  *Then what happened?*

Marcel: Father! I could recall that Humble tried all he could do to save my life. He called a man named Crescent and two of them took me back to that man for more attention. It was on the way that I knew that my chances of surviving was little. This was because; humble was very emotional in advising me to be manly. I could still remember that at a certain point on our way, I stood up on the motorcycle, which was conveying me. It was then that Humble became worried. He told me not to disappoint him. I also heard him tell Crescent that this boy is well only that the problem is becoming “psychological.” I was further confused by the word; “Psychological.” I thought he meant that there was no hope for my survival. I told them that I wouldn’t go further. I told them to take me back home, since I was going to die. I took us some time of debate for Humble to convince me that the word “psychological” did not mean that I was dying. To cut it short, Father! Humble took me to that “hospital.” We met that man who started quarreling on why o should brought back before the date he gave. I was rather happy because Humble argued enough to prove to the man on why he must bring me back for attention. I was then taken to a place, which the man said was the permanent site for his hospital. He told Humble and Crescent that he would take care of me and advised them to go. Oh God! I am sorry. I think this is the name the white man call you … you know I came from the tropics, my tribe calls you

Holisah:  *Don’t worry my son, continue.*

Marcel: So when Humble and Crescent were about to go, something informed me, we might not meet again. I thanked Humble for his kindness and concern over my affair. This, no other one in my family has shown. I promised him I was going to remember him whether I was alive or dead. To this, Humble looked at me with deep feelings and said, “Marcel, why do you talk of death at this age? I am sure God wouldn’t allow any bad thing to happen to you.” He promised to arrange for my transfer to the hospital on the hill-top. I was convinced he made this
arrangement but the rest of the family living at that hill-top did not come in time. Two weeks later, Humble was taking a rest in his room at the University when I appeared to him in his sleep; to inform him that “I am now free.” It didn’t occur to me that I am now here and not in the world. I was expecting Humble to smile over the information. Instead, I saw him suddenly woke wept. I was confused. He hurried to a boy called Segi on whose brother’s burial I fainted. He told him that Marcel was about dying or dead. Both of them wept.

They immediately travelled home only to confirm that I have been buried.

That was what happened. Since then, I noticed I am no longer in communication with those I loved….” Before my departure, I lost contacts with my parent and siblings.

Holisah:  
*It is okay my son. I have heard you. So, that was the situation your land by the time you left the world?*

Marcel:  
Yes Father!

Holisah:  
*There was not enough health-care services. Many people were suffering from poverty. Simple ailments cold take away lives and “untrained” men were doing the work of trained doctors?*

Marcel:  
Yes Father!

Holisah:  
Then, what happened to the local people… I mean the herbalists whom I made to be born in your land. Were they no longer doing their jobs? What about the roots of the evergreen forest, which I endued with the power to cure all kind of diseases? Your forefathers used them. What happened?

Marcel:  
Father! Since I was born, that was about eighteen years ago, what I noticed was that more people now pay attention to the Whiteman’s kind of medicine.
Very few people practice the traditional medicine and even those who do that were no more regarded as such. So, if a family lacked money, life in such a family simply depended on providence. The worst is that government do not accept or welcome any invention of its own people in the area of traditional medicine. They have been bribed by the Whiteman never to consent to the genuineness of such invention – for scientific reasons.

Holisah: *Now my son, you are too young to answer vital questions about your people - the giant of the tropical forest. Among your forefathers, who do you think was a very wise man before he left the world and whom you think was capable of answering for your people?*

Marcel: He was a man called Ely. I saw him a few days ago. He hailed from the sunrise. I also know of another wise man from the sunset. He was called YAN. Again, there was the other from the Hills. His name was AA YAH. He was brave and wise.

Holisah: *Now, who among the three do you feel could give a good account of your giant tribe of the tropics?*

Marcel: Father, I think Ely could do that very well. This is because he is now over here. Moreover, it was his great-grandchild who invented the rest of the two, with the help of the whiteman to a common dining table; over three decades ago. Since then, they had been eating and sharing together those things, which you gave us. So he could give account of the black race especially those in the tropics.

Holisah: *Then my son, I now send you to invite Ely to my court. Also invite Yan and Aaayah as the second and third respondents respectively.*

(Marcel flapped his wings and within a twinkle of an eye left the presence of the Jury Presided by Almighty Holisah. He returned afterwards with three coffins. One belonged to Ely, one to Aayah, and one to Yan. They were not all that fashionable, but portrayed all that showed the burial of the nobles in their time.
Marcel: Father, I have brought them. Here they are!

Holisah: *Thank you my son. Thank you, I would have sent you back to your family once more to complete your life onto grey hairs. I would not do so however, because of the numerous charges you have brought against them. Or, would you like to go back there again?*

Marcel: Father, I would have loved to go back but conditionally. No! I would not like to. If I have to go back, it means I would have to start again. Father, you remember, I told you that Humble loved me. If I have to go back to the world, he wouldn’t recognize me again. It may not be possible to go in through my former mother who is now old. You can see life may be more difficult for me now that cost of things have been rising steadily in my land. My village has not received any attention from the government. Many children now abandon some privileges like good education because of lack of fund or sponsorship. Those who were lucky to receive formal education suffer severe unemployment. By the time I was there, it seemed things were better.

Holisah: *My ears are filled. I am sorry you had such experiences in the midst of bountiful natural resources. Stay here. Enjoy yourself and rest. I send you to garden of rest. At a time appointed, I will send you again from this garden. I will make better, your destiny. Rest my son. Rest in my Holy bosom Marcel!*

Marcel: But Father, I have also lost my former appearances. I have developed wings, which were never there before I arrived here. Am I now a Cherub?

Holisah: *That’s the implication my Son. That is a perfect feature for a life-well-spent. Good ones put on this appearance when he return to me in paradise.*
SCENE 2
SESSION 2

THE COURT

Serene is the only word suitable for the court scene. The entire place was dazzling with the illumination, which showed the presence of the Almighty; the eye that sees the world. And seated were the class of men that left the world hundred thousands of years ago. They looked very strong and healthy. One could imagine their ages though their beards that have grown down to their knee levels, adorned with shiny snow-white look. Also their heads could throw any human observer into hypnosis as they reflected like magic mirrors. Their wisdom seemed to have gone above chicanery. Present also were the Cherubs with their innocent look. They were rather far-seated from the dazzled scene. By each of them was the Seraph.

Then at the middle of the court was a golden throne – the type that never came into the imagination of man. The throne was filled up with the glory of the Almighty, the all knowing God. None of the celestial beings could behold his face.

Kilometers away were the sea of graves of those who died as a result of bad government, mismanagement of natural resources and tribal feuds in the giant country of the tropical forest. Others whose graves were less significant were those who died as a result of poverty, hunger and absolute deprivation. All these were exhibits to be tendered against Ely and his colleagues. There were the ‘living-dead’ who still possess the power to connect those alive with those now in the spirit land. They were there to witness the proceedings so as to send signals to those who are now leaders in the giant land of the tropics; So as to prevent a disastrous future against the people.

Then entered the prosecuting witnesses. To prosecute Ely was his personal spirit, and guardian Angel, the architect and protector of his destiny. He was leading two other counsels who were
supposed to be the divine conscience of both Yan and Aayah. They were seated. Ely’s personal spirit or ‘Chi’ had a red cap, a wrapper round his waist, the elephant tusk wrist-wear, and a chain of beads round his neck. He wore a stern look which suggested that he had many points to support his prosecution.

There were also sounds of gritting of teeth from some graves. It was observed that such graves were chained while the dead bodies in them tried by all means to get out. They had wishes that were unattended to before they died in either accidents or condemned to death by the law and killed by firing squad all for economic reasons. That class of dead people normally disturbed for years and in their respective graves. But the day’s proceedings were not meant for them. They have to wait in the grave until the last day when there would be either resurrection of all dead who are worthy, or eternal damnation for all filthy lives.

THE TRUMPET SOUNDED

Then, the trumpet sounded again and again for seven times. At the seventh time, a very loud voice echoed all over the court ….

VOICE OF

Holisah:  
**Marcel! Marcel!! Marcel!!**

Marcel:  
Father, here I am

Holisah:  
*May I see the coffins opened, for the accused person(s) to appear in the witness box?*

Marcel:  
Yes Father. (The first coffin rose, then a skeleton walked out of it, staggered, and then remained still). Father! There is the accused.
Ely mechanically entered the witness box. There were the eyeballs in the eye socket but his flesh had given way – eaten up by maggots. He was all bones; an appearance very horrible to ordinary human sight.

SCENE 3
SESSION 3

THE CHARGES READ

In a legal procedural ethics, the Wiseman of the court rose from his seat to read the charges against Ely. The other two accused were also made to rise from their coffins and join Ely in the witness box. There in the box were three skeletons standing trial for the giant of the tropical forest of the world.

From a far distance, there came the sound of drumbeats while the Seraphim paraded round the throne – seven times and seven times. For the ONE that seated on the throne, no one could behold his face. A wonderful illumination represented his presence. Then a loud voice from the throne began!

“This is HE who made us all. He is the only maker of mankind. He gives life. He give them hope and will. He holds in his hands the power and the right to perfect judgment. Praise his Holy name! After him, no appeal. Amen! Amen! Amen!”

Holisah: *Wisemen of the jury. Today is a date only known to me but, which was made known unto you through the innocent Cherubs. The blacks are here represented by the ancestors of the tropics. Now read the noble charges against them, that an account may be rendered, on their conducts over the years and*
those of their children and children’s children. Here, Ely and others were sworn to oath.

Wiseman: Almighty! Jahova! Elishada! Elohin! Wonderful Counselor! Alpha and Omega, I adore you by your most Holy names. By your powers, I hereby present the following charges against Ely, Yan and Aayah and their children. The first charge my Most Holy One is this: you created Ely, Yan and Aayah very noble and strong. You provided them with the sun more than any part of the world. The essence of this was that they may have abundant food to eat. Yet today, many people are over here in the spirit-land because of hunger.

Ely, Yan and Aayah at a certain time in the 19th century abandoned their local talents, crafts, herbal gifts, and the laws of the land of the tropics and went after that of those that are white. This is contrary to why they were made to be blacks.

Ely, Yan and Aayah in the recent past, left their children, grandchildren and great-grand children, to be engulfed by greed, avarice, bribery and corruption. What was meant for all now goes into the pocket of a few. This is contradicts the principle of equality, which is laid down at birth and the death, of all that were alive. Equity is not found in their land anymore.

My Holy one! Ely Yan and Aayah in the seventies mismanaged the sea of wealth you provided for the well-being of their tribes. They called it “boom” and spent all the revenues on dancing and organizing dances for the rest of the tropics.

Today, your children are suffering from unending inflation because of abuse of opportunities. They abandoned food production to swim in oil wells. Even at that the oil wells are being vandalized by the same people.

During the years you set them on trail-to fight and learn how to love, you revealed to them the art of scientific inventions. Again, you have consistently shown their children the secret of science and technology so that they could develop on their own. But because of nepotism, tribal discrimination and prejudice, they have
deliberately ignored your efforts. This is absolute disloyalty to the Maker of the universe. May I continue My Holy one?

Holisah:  

Plea upheld!

Counsel: Then the sixth charge is this: Ely, Yan and Aayah were created the very strongest the world over. You had once sent a wrestler from the Ely kingdom to teach the world that the strength in the bone of man I a demonstration of the determination of the heart. He went round and beat the world. Even at that time, it would require four to five dollars to wrestle with their currency. But today, it would require over a hundred and fifty units of their “Romina” to wrestle with a dollar, a pound sterling and up to sixty units to face the Dutch Mark. The euro is a no go area. They are hereby accused of bad economic planning and shortsightedness. This is punishable under a vital section of your Holy book.

Ely, Yan and Aayah collaborated and abandoned traditional medicine that cures tropical diseases. They deliberately refused to support researches into the area. Upon this, they have not been able to provide necessary infrastructure an health care delivery enough for the people.

The reason people return to you My Holy One, before they attain a ripe age. I refer to the case of Marcel who is a complainant in this court today. He left the world because of poverty and lack of care. Ely, Yan and Aayah in collaboration with their children, out of political tricks, deceived the citizenry by introducing programmes, which they claim would better the lives of the people whereas in the real sense, such programmes were aimed at enriching those that rule others, so that the rich gets richer and the poor; poorer. This contradicts the stipulation of Section V of your Ten Commandments, and punishable by Divine injunction and Karmic laws. My Holy One, the above eight count charges are for mention.

Furthermore, My Holy One; “The maker of my life,” the count charge Number nine is that this man Ely and his colleagues have in many occasions and places violated the principles of love which is the greatest in your laws, by converting religion into tools for destruction by lives of your innocent creatures; tools for
disunity; tools for accumulation of wealth. They have resorted to your worship via various mediums that are dubious before you.

Again, Ely, Yan and Aayah have, through tribal feuds, introduced several policies that were maliciously meant to deprive those my Holy One had made brilliant, talented in various fields of life’s endeavor - thus placing a cog in the wheel of progress of the people of the giant Minji of the tropics.

Throughout this nation under trial, in no measure does equity exist. To balance up population density, the accused had, in many times in the past, criminally counted lower animals as part of the human race and inflated figures just to attract more portions of those things my Holy One has given to its people. Therefore, I would round off my submission by informing my Holy One that Ely, Yan and Aayah had been very wicked, dangerous, unrealistic and unreliable.

In their land, to rise in office is to maliciously remove one’s immediate superior. To be good and noble is to insist on helping only one’s own people. To be just is to misinterpret the laws and misapply them. They are purported to have made many laws and enacted many decrees but wrongly implemented them. To execute the law is to extort money from the poor masses. Children under the ages of six are being charged transport fare in the same way as elders.

Simply to obey the law guiding the over loading of means of transport and even after over loading same, the capacity and mechanical condition of the vehicle is taken into consideration.

There is the law on freedom on movement, and that is why herds of cattle have the right to block high ways. They cause road accidents and have ultimately brought your children untimely creatures to this celestial land, My Lord. Animals are left uncontrolled and thus they break into farms and destroy crops. This is the freedom of movement as interpreted in the Minji land. This is a serious offence because all over the world, the temperate and Arctic regions such were never the same.
The system of government in this land sounds very strange My Holy One. Instead of Theocracy, they introduced “Cliquecracy,” instead of gerontocracy, they have adopted “Youthocracy” and in place of Democracy, the Minji introduced “Familiocracy.” With these strange systems of government, they have succeeded in turning down your divine will to their respective family interests; by perpetrating and perpetuating their family members in power everywhere in the land. This is a grave offence against the principle of equality and equity.

In conclusion, I hereby submit the aforementioned as the cases before the court of the Almighty today.

Holisah: Ely, Yan and Aayah, are you guilty or not guilty?

Ely: I plead not guilty for myself and on behalf of my fellow Wisemen of the giant of the tropics - The Minji people. I am not guilty because the dead do not have influence on the living, but a little. I lived according to your will. My children should answer for their own deeds.

SCENE 4

SESSION 4

THE RE-EXAMINATION
Holisah: Now that issues have joined, I hereby invite the interested parties in this suit for cross-examinations.

1st Counsel: Ely, you claimed and as one of your children in this court had observed, to be the wisest of the fathers of the tropics!

Ely: Yes!

1st Counsel: Now! Look at my face very well and know if you recognize me.

Ely: I have done so. I recognize you as my personal Divine spirit, maker and preserver of my destiny.

Counsel: Do you feel you can effectively represent the giant of tropics in this Supreme Court of the Universe, which is eternal and everlasting?

Ely: Yes! My Lord!

Counsel: Are you actually the giant of the giant tropics? If so, could you sufficiently inform this court what makes you and your descendants the giant of the tropics?

Ely: If I claim to be a giant, I make such claim not because of my own powers, but because, you my guardian spirit had in the beginning of the world, created me a giant. You provided me with enough human and material resources more than my colleagues in the tropic. You have made me to lead them in various occasions in the past. So, I feel I am a giant because My God made me to be so.
Counsel: Ely! Just cast your mind back to Anthropology and tell this court where this science established that man was first created.

Ely: L. S. B. Leakey and Brothers who excavated the Olduvai Gorge provided to the world that man first developed in the tropics. He was then known as Australopithecus Africanus. This was the theory of Charles Darwin.

Counsel: You answered well. Now can you also cast back your into history and inform this court who gave civilization to the rest of mankind!

Ely: Herodotus and his colleagues have convinced mankind that their civilization came from the tropics – the art of writing, irrigation, mysticism and the secret of all the sciences. I am sorry to inform you that the above talents are now a stolen legacy.

Counsel: Stolen legacy? Who stole them?

Ely: The Greeks, the whitemen… the Medes….

Counsel: Ely! May I put it to you that you and your children were very lazy. You never appreciated what My Holy One has given to you and for this reason you have defiantly neglected your destiny. This is an abuse of talent and you can never be forgiven for that.

Ely: No My Lord! It is not a neglect of one’s destiny. You could recall that there was a time the whitemen invaded the ancient temples in our oldest city, Egypt. They looted all the books, artefacts and hidden powers of the tropics. They later returned and carried away my sons and daughters into slavery. All these years, the tropics was stagnated in terms of enhancing means of living and this is why our children are now asking the world for compensation or reparation for damages done to us during the slave trade.
Counsel: They are ingrates. They never believed in developing what was given to them. They sold their birthrights to the acceptance of what is alien to them. Now! To you Ely, did my Holy One not give you all the secret powers in the world? You were able to make and control lightening and thunder, which destroy enemies with indeterminable speed that cause devastations? Were you not gifted with the powers to make rain and cause floods, which could sweep away anything? Were you not endowed with the power to reach your destination at will and without boarding any man-made craft? You were also given the power of invisibility, which up till now remains a mystery in the world of science Were all these not so?

Ely: They were so! My Lord!

Counsel: Now let’s go back to the charges of bad economic planning and economic policies. Could you recall that the tropics is synonymous with the land of sunshine?

Ely: It is My Lord!

Counsel: Could you recall that the sun is the sole source of energy in the area of food production world over?

Ely: Yes! My Lord!

Counsel: Now, may I put it to you that it is the foundation of laziness, which you laid for your children that destroyed the beautiful plans, which My Holy One has for you. You stupidly rushed after the things of the white who had no solid foods to eat in their own land. This has caused you to lose sight of how to plan the use of the abundant natural resources with which you were endowed.

(At this juncture Ely looked sideways. He gazed at the sky and tears filled the bones of}
his cheeks. Yan saw the tears as Ely wept bitterly in the court. He suddenly collapsed in
the witness box. The court was thrown into confusion as the skeletons broke into
pieces.)

Holisah: Marcel! Marcel!

Marcel: Father! Here I am

Holisah: Gather the bones of Yan and put them back into the coffin. He has lost the hope
of surviving and that’s why his conscience killed him the second time. This is
the second death. He will not live forever. His descendants may now amend his
errors quickly in order to rise in the throne of the Minji land. Their stability
depends on how his grandchildren in power were able to be upright and do the
right thing whenever in control of the affairs of man.

(Marcel smiled, bowed before the Holy Throne and carried out the order)

Ely: My Holy One, let your will be done. But it is desirable that Yan should live to see
the end of this Trial. We pray in your mercies and compassion, let him live.

Holisah: Now my noble and wise Counsel, can the proceedings continue? Let Yan live.

Counsel: As you please My Holy One! Even in this twentieth century Ely, a sea of oil was
shifted to your land that you may sell and recover from the trial war of equity
fought among your tribes seven decades ago. Your children got large amounts of
revenue from it, but instead of ploughing it in meaningful projects, they initiated
the pseudo-cultural festivals where the monies were squandered. Did they not?

Ely: They did … but … We have to show the tropics we are rich.
Counsel: Can you inform this court what had been going on since the year nineteen hundred and seventies, I mean in the giant of the tropics?

Ely: I think Aayah is in position to inform the court. This is because after my child left the leadership of our land it had been the children of Aayah that had the guns to clinch power and had been more stable in the polity of the Minji land.

Counsel: Aayah! Now tell the court what your children have been doing in the land under trial since independence.

Aayah: My Lord, after the war, my children had been trying to keep the land united. They made it possible for each tribe to eat together again. And even recently, more tribes were recognized. They have in various times since the seventies introduced one program or the other, to make life better for the people.

For instance, they tried to feed the people. They tried to develop the river basins in the land for agro purpose. They tried to make the people behave well. They also tried to reduce the rate at which people return to this land in accidents before a ripe age. My children have tried to make the people to survive by themselves… and many many others.

2nd counsel: Aayah! May I put it to you that you were never a sincere person and so are your children. Those efforts you told the court were all meant to favour themselves to the deprivation of others.

Aayah: But who are you my Lord?

Counsel: You should recognize me as your personal guardian angel—the maker and protector of your destiny. I am present in this court to testify against you. Could you recall that you advised your children to move the center of the land to another pace that would favour them more? Now the charge on religion and religious
violations are directly against you. Can you tell this court how many thousands of people you sent back to the spirit land? Could you recall how partially other parts of the land are being treated when they reside in your own area? What are the gains of violence to you? What policy have your children made on education, especially entry into institutions of higher learning? You share it among the mediocre and deprive those that merited it. What belief do your children have on the leadership of the land? Who is qualified to take employment in your own part of the land and under what condition?

Indeed Aayah, may I put it to you that you are not the right person to represent the hills in this trial.

Counsel: My Holy One! Yan is now dead (though he lives by your mercy) the second time for self-guilt. Now Ely and Aayah are both insincere. They are both hopeless and not proud of themselves. They lack the spirit of self-reliance. Based on this My Holy One! May I please request that the windows of this heavenly court be ajar to enable me establish my arguments with fact?

Defense: Objection My Lord!

Holisah: Let the windows be ajar, Objection over-ruled!

Counsel: Now Ely and Aayah could you please look out through the noble windows of eternity and tell this court what you saw?

(The two skeletons peeped through the window.)

Ely: This, we have done my Lord and protector of your destinies.
Counsel: Now, tell this court what you have seen.

Ely: We saw the countries of the world.

Counsel: Which countries precisely?

Ely: We saw Japan, Korea, Taiwan, China, and India. I also saw America!

Counsel: candidly speaking, I like to inform you that you had better opportunities than these countries. They were once dominated and colonized as you were. Again nature endowed you with everything sufficient enough to attain even a greater height than they have. Unfortunately Ely and Aayah, you have failed-giving more attention to things that do not pay. Your learned men and women devote much time debating on how to start exterminating the unborn by making laws on abortion, homo-sexuality and on how to contradict My Holy One’s plan on creation of man by the use of artificial means. Japan which you just mentioned, become what she is today by the efforts of her people. Taiwan is the same. You buy goods made in India and Korea, but despised any one made in your own land. Let me tell you, you once suffered human slavery for neglect of your natural talent, which you could have used to repel external enemies. Now you are bathing in economic slavery for failing to recognize the brains of invention, which the maker of the universe, out of compassion, continued to send to you. The foreign doors are open again to redraft your children into slavery through “free visa lottery.”

Since the time your national currency failed in the international arena, items had consistently gone out of the reach of your people. Today how many of your children dream of having houses of their own? How many takes three square meals a day? Starting from the time your currency lost its punch, price of things go up yearly without coming down and you say you are hoping for a better tomorrow. You say you are restructuring your economy and you do this through indebtedness to foreign countries of the world and under foreign mandates. I now make my submission My Holy One as follows: -
1. That you invoke that section of your Holy Book which recommends the withdrawal of talents not well utilized. This is because these people have bluntly refused to appreciate your gifts and this is why any of them die.

2. I also solicit the courts to hold this people responsible for conspiracy and murder. This is because through their various policies many people have died while trying to eat by means available to them.

3. Your court should not sympathize with this people for introducing religious discriminations with its attendant fanaticism, which had led many souls to their graves untimely.

4. That the gnashing of teeth which began in this land as a result of inflation be maintained until they were able to realize the need to develop their land by themselves and for themselves.

I behold you Glory My Holy One, for your upright judgment. From your glorious throne, you look down with your all-seeing eyes and observe the very suffering of your creatures in this land and see for yourself, you much harm the leadership of this land had done. Much atrocities had been committed by the accused persons all punishable under the relevant sections of Holy Books of life. I make my admission My Holy One!

**SCENE 5**

*SESSION 5*

**DEFENSE**

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I now call on a Defense Counsel to rise and tell this court if the prosecuting counsels have erred in law or in the logic of presentation or for any reason why the punishment pleaded by the prosecutions should not be upheld.

(Defense Counsel rose. His head glittered with baldness, which represented his age and how clever he was in the logic of natural Laws)

Defense: My Holy One! I address this court with utmost supplications to your divine will and that your impartiality remains forever.

Based on the above My Holy One, I disagree with the submissions made by the prosecuting counsels because of certain irregularities and misconceptions in their understanding of the course of human development and that of the society. In the first place My Holy One, the prosecution failed to remember that man never makes his destiny and therefore, all the charges against the accused nation remain nonsequito as whatever happens to a man depends on the ability of his personal Angel to direct him. Again the accused land was a victim of circumstances. My Holy One could recall that the people in the primordial stage in the development of her society were ignorant, uncivilized and naked. It was the whites when they are not being compared with, that gave them cloth to put on, and who taught them what is “good.” It can therefore, be concluded that the accused is under age and therefore, cannot be charged as an adult with full responsibility of offences she never committed.

Thirdly, the children of Aayah are totally innocent of virtually all the charges. This is because, since last two decades, they had been trying to keep the land as one.

And recently, one of his kids has tried in his best capacity to ensure that happiness returned to the people. He introduced many programmes including that of restructuring the battered economy. He gave recognition to many neglected tribes to ensure justice and fair play. Effort is in the final stage to wipe the land of bad government by giving chance to the younger generation who are more energetic; under the principle of Democracy.
Fourthly, My Holy One! This land under trial happens to be the best organized in the tropics and therefore, should rather be eulogized than punished. She succeeded in bringing sanity into her land and even gone across the boarders to give peace to neighbours.

In furtherance of this argument my Holy One, it seems that the prosecuting Counsels were blind about the objective and subjective historical, social and political realities that circumscribed not only the people of the tropics but the blacks as a race.

What may have taken place in the past, may be the result of their theological and metaphysical stage in development or the intervention thereabout by the whites, which changed the course of their developmental processes. But on realizing those plights some patriotic children of the accused ignited the fire of revolution for cultural identification.

They won independence for a greater number of nations in the tropics. They made several moves in the world assembly to stop racism and colour bar policies all over the world; they are currently part of the policy makers of the world. They now serve as chairman secretaries and representatives in various world organizations. These attainments started when once they realized that man is equal at birth and at death.

My Holy One, it is clearly an unwholesome idea to start laying blames on the entire people of the tropics for bad economics planning when it is known that such misdemeanor was committed by an individual or group of bad administrators who were hell-bent on ruling the people at all cost.

Again, there is this allegation on shifting of the center of this nation. May I put it succinctly to the prosecuting counsels that the plan for such action was duly proposed, discussed and approved by an executive of the committee giant land and not by the descendants of Aayah in that occasion? The committee unanimously agreed that the previous location of the center was improper as it
was very amenable to external invasion, not being at the heart of the land and therefore, posed a lot of security problems for other tribes of the land.

My Holy One, I adore you in the most pronounced revered name. Based on the above facts, and from the fact that the idea on neglect on natural talents cannot be substantiated, I see the entire argument posed by the prosecuting witnesses as not well researched upon. The gift of traditional herbalism is still on. In a situation where about fifty percent of the populace still goes by the native customs and practices, it cannot be sufficiently established that their talents have been abandoned. What they have is the juxtaposition of native and foreign culture. This is because, the only thing that never …. Changes in culture is that it is migratory, it is dynamic. Its dynamism is in continuum. Therefore, whatever that may have happened cannot, I repeat cannot be logically regarded as utter neglect in one’s identity. The giant of the tropics is actually doing her best. Most progressive is the present generation of leaders among them.

Finally My Holy One! This giant of the tropics has given an identity to the rest member of the tropics in the international scene. In many capacities, they are representing the tropics and are likely to do better tomorrow, if given a benefit of doubts.

I will therefore solicit My Holy One to quash the above cases and declare them null and void and of no effect. And whereas My Holy One’s law remains immutable, I implore My Holy One to give his people the benefit of the doubts for few decades because all the charges against hem cannot be proved beyond tall reasonable doubts. I wish to finally observe that the prosecution failed to advance their claims with any judicial precedents. Marcel himself lacks the locus stand to petition against the ancestors of this and because he was not most affected. He was just one among many. He is not the most qualified to bring the problems of the Minji people to this eternal and everlasting jury.

*I rest my submission My Holy One!*

**SCENE 6**
SESSION 6

JUDGEMENT

The trumpet sounded and all rose. For about twenty minutes, the court was quiet while the glory of the maker of the universe was in full.

Then, the trumpet sounded again and the drumbeats echoed in the background. It later stopped. By this time and Aayah who have been standing for quite a long time were almost dead with fatigue. Their skeleton stood agape while the visible eyeball now sank deeper into the skull. Their upper and lower jaws remained wide open without the tip, which had fallen off many centuries ago.

Then, the Rainbow appeared.

Voice of Holisah!

My noble men of the jury, I have listened carefully to both the prosecuting and Defense Counsels. Both parties have proved sufficiently to be legal luminaries. I however, appreciate the submissions of the prosecutions because they were both the personal spirit Angels of the first accused Ely and the second and third accused Aayah and Yan. The counsels cited various successful countries where men settled many years after I have given civilization to the tropics. Not only this, the resources which I have bestowed to the accused and his descendants cannot be exhausted forever. But out of incivility and skull-druggery, they have abandoned them. They are therefore guilty of neglect of talent, which contradicted a vital section of my Holy Book on prima-facie ground.

I would have shown mercy to the accused based on the argument of the defense counsel. That is, “that man is not the maker of his destiny.” I would not however, because of the enviable fact that man is the builder of his destiny, the architect of his fortune and misfortune. This is
evidenced in the saying that “one who yields to a circumstance had solicited co-operation from his personal guardian Angel.”

More essentially, for the fact that in the land under trial, no one could yet answer the following questions:

Why has there been so much hunger in the land?
What has happened to unemployment over the years?

What has promoted to inequality over the years?
I observed with dismay that poverty has broken family life. Children wonder about in the street because of increasing immorality. They lack money to go to school because of increasing immorality. They lack money to go to school because parents find it extremely difficult to feed them owing to skyrocketing costs of living. There is an alarming rate of illegitimacy and growing violence, which erupt not only in politics but in other spheres of life. Life in the township is becoming too dangerous. The are increasing wave of robbery and children I send to the world are being indiscriminately killed and also constrained by the use of artificial gadgets. This is very bad and therefore, contradicts my divine will.

Just see what the leaders do. The present generation has devised a strategy to remain in power in perpetual succession with the members of their families The born-to rules? Only very few, just very few out of three founders of this land respect the rights of others. To the, I have called to Glory. I mean, the accused persons should look around and tell the jury which of the families that ruled the land since after your liberation from the colonial powers, has actually allowed others to participate in the governance of the Minji land. Just few! And such family went out humiliated.

I am worried over the wickedness of the present generation of administrators. I am worried because they have totally abandoned the true application of relevant concepts such as “retirement” from service. There are many retire citizens who had put in their youthful ages in the methodical service to humanity. Today, they are relegated to the background. All their right and privileges are denied them –no pension, no gratuity. At sixty, and sixty-five, they are treated as useless. They die in hunger and starvation. Is that what should obtain? No my Divine will
would eventually overtake the veil doers. As the sky is high above the earth, so is my will over the will of men. I am Holy. My people must be Holy as well. I hold Ely, Aayah and Yan responsible, and found them guilty of the allegations leveled against them by my noble the allegations leveled against them y my noble cherub Marcel, and many other young children of the land who died because of offences of their ancestors, fathers and the present leaders of Minji land.

I therefore sentence the three accused persons to everlasting torture in eternity. However, to execute of this judgment depends on how fast the children of the accused were able to adjust for better. They should remain in detention till there were positive charges based on justice and equity; Habeas Corpus observed.

I would have sent disaster to their children in the world. But for the lucid application of the Defense Counsel. I will uphold the fourth request of the prosecution – that gnashing of teeth be continued in that land till they were able to feed themselves and appreciate what I have endowed them with. But my wrath will not fail on individuals who initiated and natured any act of indiscipline in the land. I will use men on them. I will use nemesis on them. Karma will crush their ill-begotten possessions. I will make their children unyielding to the dreams of progress and good instruments for destroying every wealth ill-gotten by their fathers.

I have noted a new wave of evil which the bad eggs in the Minji land are exporting all over the world and this has made me to put iron in the fire against their clever arts. My angels are on guard, visiting few divinely selected leaders and would-be-leaders of the land who now would apply these hot irons to pluck out evils from the bad ones. I will send hatred of the world on them.

Hot knives are ready to cut off their dragnets. Light will fail out of their sight. Hunger will strike them because I will shut down their evil means of living. Though, spiritual revolution had begun in this land, there are very few devotees with genuine intention to worship their creator. There are still many wolves in the sheep’s clothing. They have established many spiritual houses where Satan and his agents rule. They kill, they maim, there are many souls deprived of seeking my ordinance because of their mischievous practices.

Finally, I will hold all leaders of this country responsible for any of my children who dies of hunger, unemployment and inequality. For the next few decades or so, my wrath will visit the
Minji people. Sleep will go out from the eyes of the leaders. Their children will know the rights and the forces of human will encourage them. The peace will come. I am justified to do this because, today, I have granted the accused land the right of “Andi Alteram partem” the same I granted to the first man Adam when he erred the garden of Eden. I have however, how to achieve a little violation of the principle “Nemo judex in cause sua” because, I am the alpha and Omega all cases belong to me and I, forever remain the judge of all.

In his argument, the Defense Counsel observed that the prosecutors fail to refer to any judicial precedent. Let me therefore, remind all about the case of Sodom and Other vs. The Almighty God. So shall it be for the Minji if my proviso were not met by the youths of the land. Let me make my point clear to you on the issue of the national unity. Before the earth came into existence the Angels of the sea and the angels of the two major rivers on which you rested your name met. They resolve that love must be passed to your children for exemplary action. The two rivers got married and became one at the middle of the flow. They forgot their individual differences so that three pieces of land with a tail came out of the union. They formed tripod, which when stood well, can never fail. You eat the fish and drink the water of this supernatural marriage, but yet refused to learn the importance of national unity. I have to inform you that as long as you hated each other, probably on ethnic and religious grounds, my anger must surely come upon you. I love you but you refused to love each other – Bad! Here is the supernatural jurisdiction. Whoever lives in the hill should be free as though he lives in his home own. This applies to whosoever lives in the sunrise or the sunset and the river basins.

THE APPEAL

Marcel: Father! Please remember that Humble loved me and he is still in that land. I feel that the judgment passed on them would affect him and also hurt his people if executed.

I therefore, use your Holy Name to appeal that the sentence be revoked unconditionally. My Holy One, may your will reign forever remember there is no god other than you. You never judged unjustly. Your justice has its source in strength. Your sovereignty over all makes you lenient to all. You show your strength when your sovereign power is questioned and you expose the insolence of those who know I, but in exposing of such strength, you are mild in judgment; you govern us with great leniency.
For you have only to will and your power is there. By acting thus, you have taught a lesson to your people how virtuous man must be kind to his follow men, and you have given yours the good hope that after sin you will grant repentance.

My prayers: Do onto the people of Minji this favour.

Holisah: *My noble cherub. My beloved Marcel. My judgment is immutable. My case has no appeal. I will therefore make you appear to Humble in a dream. Tell him to put down all the proceeding of this trial and to circulate the same. And where he fails, I will then invoke the wrath of my divine laws on lazy people that are guilty of the above charges that brought you and many others back to this land at an unripe age. Most importantly. Know that I send my spirit to help men in their weaknesses. For when you cannot choose words in order to pray properly, the spirit himself expresses your plea in a way that could never be put into words and I, who know, everything in your heart, knows perfectly well that I mean and that the plea of the saints in your land can reach me in prayers. Let them pray!*

DREAM

*(Marcel appeared to Humble in a dream)*

Marcel: Humble! Please recall that I promised to remember you if I died. Now, have these proceedings and circulate to your people. It is the eternal judgment of the maker of the universe. Make sure you bear the message.

Humble work up and behold, it was only a dream. The dream world is up too. There may be resemblances with the real but they are not fact. The dream therefore, renders all names, issues, and places in this book fictitious.
Anthropology: The study of fossils or the remains of bioorganic debris of ancient ages. Anthropological research was concerned with the evolution or the origin of man and how man developed or metamorphosed from microorganism to more complex, more heterogeneous nature.

Archaeology: Study of ancient culture and its values

Australopithecus-

Africanus: This was the name given to the oldest human skull discovered in the alluvial deposit in the olduvai-gorge-Tanzania, East Africa. The archaeological age of the skull was over 10 million years.

Audi Alteran

Partem-in law: This implies the right of fair hearing.

Charles Darwin: A scientist who contended that man evolved from the lower animals (See theory of Evolution).

Cherub: A young Angel (male)

Cliquecracy: Government by a clique

Dollar: The currency used in U.S.A. etc.

Dutchmark: The currency used in Germany

Democracy: Government of the people by the people and for the people.
Equity: This is a principle in law, which established that a view remains the same when events of similar nature take place even at different periods.

Familiocracy: Leadership system where members of the same lineage or blood cling to power. A government of family favor.

Genrontocracy: Government of the people by elders or the aged.

Habeas corpus: In law, this implies the right of the accused to know why he or she is being detained. Or what offence she committed.

Herodutus: He was regarded as the oldest historian born in Greece.

Holisah: The name of the Almighty God in Minji land.

Karma: Law of retributive justice.

L. S. B. Leakey: An anthropologist who devoted his lifetime in search of the missing link. He and his team carried out the excavation of the olduvia gorge. They discovered the oldest human skull said to be the link between man and Ape.

Metaphysical: Above ordinary physical matter.

Nemo Judex
In causa sau: The principle that one cannot be a judge in his own case.

Non-sequito: Logical conclusion that does not proceed from the original premise.

“Okike:” Creative force behind existence

Pound sterling: Currency used in U.K.

“Proviso:” Already stated conditions

Romina: A kind of currency in Minji land.

Seraphin: A young Angel (female)

Stolen Legacy: The ancient Books of wisdom and philosophy of civilization were aid to have been kept in the oldest Egyptian Temple. This temple was later said to have been vandalized by the Greeks and Medes. All the books and legacies bequeathed to the tropics by their ancestors were stolen. Also see the book, Stolen Legacy.

Theocracy: Government by the Church or ordained men of God.

Theological: About God and the worship of Him.

Zamani: Land of living for the department ancestors who were morally and spiritually upright in their lifetime. Eternity for those who lived according to the will of Holisah.
Appendix C

2014 Transcript Report

Currently after analyzing the transcripts, I believe this narrative fits the Nigerian national narrative template:

4. Nigeria is a diverse and divided amalgamation of groups
5. Trouble: Oppressive elites manipulate Nigeria for personal gain, causing problems within Nigeria.
6. Nigeria gains freedom from oppression and continues on as one.

Transcripts

Independence: 36/64 or 57.1%
Amalgamation 24/64 or 38.1%
Civil War: 23/64 or 36.51%
Boko Haram: 22/64 or 34.92%
Colonialism: 21/64 or 33.33%
Military Rule: 19/64 or 30.16%

Here, I am seeing things line up pretty well with a story about oppressive leadership. It lines up with the story I was able to ascertain after going through the rest of the data. * “Bad leaders formed Nigeria out of selfishness. Nigeria has experienced bad leadership throughout its history. This bad leadership makes Nigerians want to separate from Nigeria, making the country unstable. Nigeria is waiting for a good leader to lead it into a better age.

Metaphors Summary:

Nigeria is:
A good country
An amalgamation of different parts
diverse
divided
Nigeria faces challenges

Nigeria as an object is:

- An amalgamation of different groups
- A place British colonists put together
- A thing that often has actions done to it.
- An entity in which things are dysfunctional
- A place that is disorganized
- An entity that threatens to divide or fall apart.
- An entity people hope will one day achieve success.
- A place that experienced British occupation
- A place still manipulated by the military and foreign donor countries.
- A place that is hindered by government corruption

Nigerian things are:

- Mishandled
- Often Mishandled by self-serving people
- Dysfunctional
- Insane
- Not what Nigerians want
- Things people in Nigeria do not know a lot about (i.e. Nigerian history, constitution)
- Things people are not interested in

Nigerians are:

- Rational
- Conservative
- Living in poverty
- People in need of work
- People who are not very united
- People who face challenges
- People who, apart from independence, have things done to them by elites
- People who deal with corruption
Survey:

The Most Important Events in Nigerian History [need to clean up these percentages to make them totally exact]

[Colonization is lurking in the background of this story]

Question. What happened during each of these events. List in order of salience.

1. Independence: Over 115 people out of 148 (Over 77%)
   - Gained freedom from oppressive colonial rule. It was a collective, honest defeat of corrupt leadership. Ethnic groups worked together to do this.

2. War: 9 people, 9.1% (about 51.35)
   - The country tore apart for a while. It was the beginning of major infighting.

3. Amalgamation: 7 people, 7.1% (about 25.7%)
   - The country was forced together by colonists, who Nigerians viewed as oppressive.

4. Transition to Democracy: 5 people, 5.1% (about 21.6%)
   - The country gained freedom from oppressive military rule in the form of democracy.

What is the common thread? It is oppression and social constructionism that does not work. Gaining freedom from that.

It’s like freedom from this forceful hand that keeps oppressing them.

* * * * *

-Ethnic tension is a sign of mismanagement by colonists.

* * * * *
Other Ideas of Possible Narrative Templates That Do Not Seem to Fit Both What Informants Say and What Government Propaganda Says:

- Nigeria has been struggling against oppressive leaders since it’s inception and is waiting for good leaders.

- Inept leaders have formed Nigeria and keep messing it up. Nigeria has the potential to be great, but is weak because of poor leadership. The Nigerian people are waiting for leaders that will make the country fulfill its great potential.

- Inept leaders have formed Nigeria and keep messing it up. Nigeria is weak because of poor leadership. The Nigerian people are waiting for leaders that will make the country great.

- Nigeria was formed under inept and selfish leadership. It has continued to experience inept and selfish leadership. These leaders have stolen wealth/resources from Nigeria. The Nigerian people are waiting for leaders who will harness the country’s resources and lead Nigeria to fulfill its great potential.

- * Bad leaders formed Nigeria out of selfishness. Nigeria has experienced bad leadership throughout its history. This bad leadership makes Nigerians want to separate from Nigeria, making the country unstable. Nigeria is waiting for a good leader to lead it into a better age.

- Nigeria is a diverse amalgamation of different groups. It has a lot of potential. British colonists put Nigeria together. Since then, Nigeria has threatened to fall apart. It has been pushed around by its leaders and has faced severe economic problems such as corruption.

- Initial situation: Nigeria is a conglomerate of diverse groups patched together by British colonists. Nigeria has the potential to be great and autonomous. Trouble: Internal and external leaders oppress and manipulate Nigeria for personal gain. Nigeria faces serious
challenges and threatens to fall apart. Nigeria desires better leaders who will help it reach its full potential.

Stray Notes:

-People use poor infrastructure to talk about something else. In their speech, they use it as a symbol or example of bad governance. This points to it’s symbolic use.

Everyone agrees that:

Nigeria is an amalgamation of parts put together by British colonists
Nigeria is diverse
Nigeria threatens to fall apart
Nigeria could be a great nation, but faces challenges
Nigerians within Nigeria face challenges
Nigeria has been pushed around and manipulated by bad leaders for much of its history.
Nigeria is a diverse fusion of different groups put together by British colonists. Nigeria has a lot of potential to be a great nation. However, internal and external leaders have oppressed and manipulated Nigeria for personal gain for much of Nigeria’s history. Nigeria now faces serious challenges and threatens to fall apart.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Nigeria is</th>
<th>Grassroots</th>
<th>Nigerian Government</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Nigeria as an Object</td>
<td>• A good country</td>
<td>• Diverse</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• An amalgamation of different parts</td>
<td>• An Amalgam of ancient kingdoms and societies</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• diverse</td>
<td>• 56 years old</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• divided</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Nigeria faces challenges</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• An amalgamation of different groups</td>
<td>• Existed before British Colonization</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• A place British colonists put together</td>
<td>• Is diverse</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• A thing that often has actions done to it.</td>
<td>• Contains multiple ethnic groups</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• An entity in which things are dysfunctional</td>
<td>• Is divided into 36 states</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• A place that is disorganized</td>
<td>• Was amalgamated/put together by Lugard</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• An entity that threatens to divide or fall apart.</td>
<td>• An area in which Lugard did some things like raise the Union Jack and the Sokoto Caliphate a a British protectorate</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• An entity people hope will one day achieve success.</td>
<td>• Is blessed with natural and human resources</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• A place that experienced British occupation</td>
<td>• A place in need of unifying factors, such as sports</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• A place still manipulated by the military and foreign donor countries.</td>
<td>• Something that voted for independence from Britain</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• A place that is hindered by government corruption</td>
<td>• An entity that declared it’s independence from Britain</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• A place that suffered from a lack of democracy</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• Something that is pushed around and manipulated by its leaders</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• An entity that faced severe economic problems</td>
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<tr>
<td>Nigerian Things</td>
<td>Nigerian People</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>-----------------</td>
<td>-----------------</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Mishandled</td>
<td>• Come from over 250 ethnic groups and languages</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>• Often Mishandled by self-serving people</td>
<td>• Hold English as their lingua franca</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Dysfunctional</td>
<td>• Are religiously heterogenous</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Insane</td>
<td>• People who have experienced problems.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Not what Nigerians want</td>
<td>• People who, “reflect on issues, concerning the economic, social and political development of the country”</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Things people in Nigeria do not know a lot about (i.e. Nigerian history, constitution)</td>
<td>• People who emotionally remember October 1, 1960</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Things people are not interested in</td>
<td>• People who, apart from independence, have things done to them by elites</td>
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<tr>
<td>• People who face challenges</td>
<td>• People who deal with corruption</td>
<td></td>
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<td>• People who, apart from independence, have things done to them by elites</td>
<td>• People who are not very united</td>
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<td>• People who deal with corruption</td>
<td>• People in need of work</td>
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<td></td>
<td>• Rational</td>
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<td>• Conservative</td>
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<td>• Living in poverty</td>
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<td>• People in need of work</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• People who are not very united</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The Nigerian Things table highlights issues and challenges faced by Nigeria, while the Nigerian People table describes the characteristics and experiences of the Nigerian population.
Appendix D

2011 Survey Data Report

* 42 out of 69 people listed independence from the British as the most important event in Nigerian history – about 60.8% of respondents, a far larger number of respondents listed this event than any other event in Nigerian history.

Independence was listed the most, followed by the Nigerian Biafran Civil War. People don’t know what the agreed upon “most important historical events” are, even though they are able to list some historical events. Perhaps the events they listed were important to them personally – like Boko Haram or the Sosoliso Plane crash. It was difficult for people to mention what were the five most important events in Nigerian history.

Data Overall

- Independence was listed the most 42 times. Out of 345 opportunities to answer questions, people did not provide responses (coded NA) 25 times. Total responses in this section was 320 answers. People listed Independence 42/320 responses or 13% of the time.
- The Biafran-Nigerian Civil war was next listed 23/320 opportunities to list or 7% of the time.
- 42 out of 69 people listed independence from the British as the most important event in Nigerian history – about 60.8% of respondents, a far larger number of respondents listed this event than any other event in Nigerian history.

- Overall, as found before, people seemed to list Independence more than any other event hands down, even more than the civil war by wide margins. Out of 320 mentions, they listed independence 42 times, or about 13% of the time, far outnumbering other events.

- The next closest event was the Nigerian-Biafran Civil War of 1967, where an ethnic bloc of Igbos tried to secede, which they listed only 25 times or about 7% of the time.

- 42 out of 69 people listed independence from the British as the most important event in Nigerian history – about 36% of respondents, a far larger number of respondents listed this event than any other event in Nigerian history.

- Apart from Independence and the Nigerian-Biafran Civil War, there seems to be little convergence overall. For the most important events in Nigerian history, respondents provided 76 different answers – this is of 69 respondents, and there was very
little overlap. Even for the First Important Event in Nigerian History, citizens listed at least 29 different events. When it came to the most important event in Nigerian history, people freely listed.

- **This shows that people don’t know what the agreed upon “most important historical events” are, even though they are able to list some historical events. Perhaps the events they listed were important to them personally – like Boko Haram or the Sosoliso Plane crash.**

**Data For Gender:**

- What was interesting was that for the First most important event in Nigerian History, the Second most, and then The most important event, females provided a wider variety of responses about history than males did. Perhaps this coincides with research arguing that women tend to have wider vocabularies than men? Does this research exist? What does this mean for how women remember history differently than men? This may mean that their understanding of history or collective memory is more detailed or nuanced. It is rather striking when you look at the graph. It may also just be my sample of women.

**Other Points:**

- People often told me they didn’t know much about history and that I should ask an expert.
- This may have been because of the way the question was framed.
- The question seems to allude to events that are nationally agreed to be the most important events rather than the individual’s personal opinion.
- I especially think this is where the hesitation came in because most people DID eventually fill out the form.
- This means they may have had events in mind, but didn’t know what everyone else thought.
- It took many people quite a long time to complete the survey - very few people finished the survey quickly.
- This indicates that they either did have a hard time remembering any events in Nigerian history or that they had a hard time figuring out which events were the MOST important – i.e. important to everyone.
- I had intended the question to allude to a collective agreement on most important events.
- I frequently had to come back the next day or a few days later to pick forms up. The question was: “In the spaces provided below, please write down the five most important events in Nigerian history”
- **Most people said they learned about Nigerian history in schools** (39 out of 69 or 56% percent, and what number out of what number).
• However in total, people reported learning Nigerian history from a variety of sources - at least 22 sources of information ranging from **First-hand witness, the media, oral tradition, to pastors**. Thus, people are getting information about Nigerian History from a number of sources, and not just from school.

• For world history, respondents listed 71 different responses.

• When you look at this, at first, it seems that there is little convergence, except for independence. and that would be all. However, look deeper at the data.

• In their explanations, they discuss a freedom from the British or “Colonial masters” as the key event. (cite the individual who discusses this.)

• -There seems to be little convergence overall. Even for the First Important Event in Nigerian History, citizens listed at least 29 different events.

• -Most people listed that they learned Nigerian history in schools. However, they also listed 22 other sources. Why then is there so little convergence in what they report they learned. Is this lack of convergence abnormal?

• Also, in Lagos, we saw slightly more events discussing the institution of democratic processes than we did in Mbaise. – Typically it would be that 3 or more people in Lagos would mention these processes, but no one in Mbaise mentioned them.

• In Mbaise, More people seemed to mention the Aba Women’s Riots and events associated with the Biafran War.

• These trends are interesting. – may show that a more cosmopolitan and ”Nigerian,” spirit, sentiment exists in Lagos.

• (I have not yet tested for significant differences though).

• I didn’t see any striking information in terms of Age.
Appendix E

2014 Survey Data Report

Summary

Most of the people I surveyed in 2014 were Igbo. Most were young – 25 years old and under. They were largely all students. Gender was rather equally split.

For this group Independence was clearly the most important event in Nigerian history because it marked freedom/a break from colonial oppression. For both (SS2 and UNEC) groups, about half of respondents listed independence as the first most important event in Nigerian history. Under THE MOST important event in Nigerian history 77% of SS2 students listed independence and about 46% of UNEC students listed Independence.

*This is also striking because the sample is largely Igbo. One would guess that as a highly traumatic event for the Igbos, Igbos-speakers would have listed the Biafran War, but they did not. It may be that students were addressing Nigeria as a whole, and acting in a “Nigerian” mode when completing this survey not an “Igbo” mode – i.e. enacting a Nigerian identity vs. an Igbo identity. This would make sense, since the question specifically asked about the most important events in Nigerian history not Igbo history.

Based on discussions of free listing by Russell Bernard (2006:304), Items that are most salient are listed first and listed most frequently.

“They assumed that the nearer to the beginning of a list a kin term occurs, the more salient it is for that particular informant. By taking the average position in all the lists for each kin term, they were able to derive a rank order list of kin terms, according to the variable’s saliency. They also assumed that more salient terms occur more frequently.” p. 304

Independence is listed first and is most frequently mentioned. The vast majority of people also explicitly say/list it as most important. About 115 people out of 148 (over 77.7%) people mention Independence in the 1-5 most important events in Nigerian history. Independence is thus, by far, the most salient event.
The Biafran-Nigerian Civil war is the second most frequently listed event. About 76 people out of 148 mention the Biafran-Nigerian Civil war in the 1-5 most important events in Nigerian history (about 51.35). This indicates it is the second most salient event.

For the third most salient, there is a split between UNEC and SS2.

If taken across both groups, Amalgamation is the next most salient event in Nigerian history. About 38 (counting one from the SS2 group) out of 148 (about 25.7%) people mention Amalgamation. (Perhaps Amalgamation is just an example of another bad decision by bad leaders, and not necessarily a pivotal event)

Next is Transition to Democracy with over 32 out of 148 people (about 21.6%), with mentions in both the UNEC and SS2 group.

If Split is taken into account, for SS2 Children’s Day (7 people) is about tied with Democracy Day (6 people). For UNEC, 26 people mentioned Democracy Day and 6 people mentioned Children’s Day.

Interestingly, this analysis based on numbers across individuals maps onto what respondents reported as the single important historical events for Nigerians period. It seems that the following four events are the most important in some way and are indicators in the national narrative template.

Most important event in Nigerian history:

[UNEC- Independence: 42 people, 42.4% ] [SS2- Independence: 38 people, 77.6%]

Biafra War: 9 people, 9.1%

Amalgamation: 7 people, 7.1%
Transition to Democracy: 5 people, 5.1%

Notes Blue/UNEC Students Enugu Blue - UNEC Catholic Students: Nigerian History
Nigerian History/Date 11/24/2014

99 People completed the survey

Age range was 16 to 35, but the median age was about 21 with the highest ages reporting 20 (14 people at 14.1%) and 22 (14 people at 14.1%).

50.5% Female
49.5% Male

Igbo was the first language for 72 People or 72.7% of respondents. English was the first language for 20 or 20.2% of respondents.

93.8% reported receiving Tertiary education – Since this was a UNEC Catholic group, perhaps some high school students were present or some people did not list themselves as having tertiary because they were still in the process of completing their degree?

88 people or 96.7% listed themselves as having attended public school at some point in their life. 59 people or 64.5% listed they had attended private school.

84 people or 90.3% named school as one place they had learned Nigerian history. 22 people or 23.7% named parents/home. 14 people or 15.1% named books.
First most important event in Nigerian history (For this and all answers, I have not included in this report historical events mentioned by two people or less)

Independence: 46 people, 46.5%
Biafra War: 14 people, 14.1%
Amalgamation: 10 people, 10.1%

Second most important event in Nigerian history

Biafra War: 21 people or 21.2%
Independence: 16 people or 16.1%
Amalgamation: 7 people or 7.1%
Democracy Day (Transition to Democracy): 5 people, 5.1%
Military Coup: 5 people, 5.1%
Republican Status 1963: 5 people, 5.1%
Children’s Day: 3 people, 3%

Third most important event in Nigerian history

Biafra War: 15 people, 15.2%
Amalgamation: 12 people, 12.1%
Independence: 10 people, 10.1%
Democracy Day: 8 people, 8.1%
Republican Status: 6 people, 6.1%
Transatlantic Slave Trade: 4 people, 4%
Children’s Day 3 people, 3%
Fourth most important event in Nigerian history

Biafra War: 11 people, 11.1%
Democracy Day: 6 people, 6.1%
Republican Status: 6 people, 6.1%
Amalgamation: 4 people, 4%
Independence: 4 people, 4%
Death of Abacha: 3 people, 3%

Fifth most important event in Nigerian history

Democracy Day (Transition to democracy): 7 people or 7.1%
Biafra War: 6 people, 6.1%
Military Coup: 4 people, 4%
Amalgamation: 4 people, 4%
Ebola Outbreak: 4 people, 4%

Most important event in Nigerian history

Independence: 42 people, 42.4%
Biafra War: 9 people, 9.1%
Notes Red/SS2 Students Enugu: Nigerian History Survey/Date: 11/25/2014

49 people completed the survey.

Most of the students were 16 years old (24 students or 49%). The next age was 17 year olds (10 students or 20.4%). Next was 15 year olds.

53.1% Male, 46.9% Female.

41 students or 83.7% said that their first language was Igbo. 3 students said English was their first language or 6.1% of students.

100% were attending a private secondary school at the time of the survey because that is where I conducted the survey, though about 11 students or 23.4% mentioned having attending private school at some point in their life.
64% or 31 students said one place they had learned Nigerian history was from school. The next highest, 29.2% said one place they had learned Nigerian history from home or from their parents.

First most important event in Nigerian history (For this and all answers, I have not included in this report historical events mentioned by two people or less)
-the vast majority of people 28 students or 57.1% listed Independence first

Second most important event in Nigerian history
Independence: 8 people, 16.3%
Biafra-Nigerian Civil War: 6 people, 12.2%
Children's Day: 4 people, 8.2%
New Yam Festival: 3 people, 6.1%

Third most important event in Nigerian history
Biafra War: 3 people, 6.1%
Boko Haram: 4 people, 8.2%
Children’s Day: 3 people, 6.1%
Democracy Day: 3 people, 6.1%
Independence: 3 people, 6.1%
New Yam Festival: 3 people, 6.1%

Fourth most important event in Nigerian history
Democracy Day: 3 people, 6.1%
Worker’s Day: 3 people, 6.1%

Fifth most important event in Nigerian history

Ebola Outbreak: 4 people, 8.2%

Most important event in Nigerian history

Independence: 38 people, 77.6%
2014 Participant Observation Report

These are my thoughts on my experiences in the field. I will foreground my participant observation in this report. However, since I conducted all of the research listed below, they also comprise my in-person experiences, which influenced how my observations and takeaways from the field. Initial takeaways and thoughts after collecting these other forms of data are also thus included in this participant observation report.

Participant Observation:

Tied to development and modernity, failing infrastructure seem to serve as commemorative monuments reminding people of corrupt leadership and a country that has not yet met expectations for development. These expectations are of course driven by the country’s huge oil wealth and how people expect revenues from oil wealth to be spent (though the influence of that oil is now falling, which will be fascinating to witness). The lack of functional infrastructure is also a result of the country’s huge oil wealth.

Key Points:

• In summary Nigerians want their country to be a modern country. They desperately want that although they are living in a time of hardship and lack of government accountability.
  
  o If people were honestly mourning the death of Dora Akunyili and saying these things about her, then making Nigeria a better place, and the thing she did to do that, must be very important to people here.****

  o Conceived differences between Nigeria and the West
  o There is a desire for Modernity.
  o Infrastructiral failures and local frustrations about that.
  o Lack of knowledge/educational knowledge which is indiciative of institutional failures- schooling not knowing technology, certain people not having bank accounts or knowing how to navigate banks?
- Heated discussions about politics by people I was living with and about government
- May be a difference between the government and the people – these may be the two main oppositional players in the Nigerian story.
- Nigerians are more patriotic and care more about each other than people seem to give them credit for – hairdresser who really wanted to know that she had done good by me. Marketers who trusted me and wanted me to trust them back.

Participant Observation Data Summary:

a. Centenary events seemed to mainly take place in Abuja and under high security. I did not personally attend these events because I was not invited. Informants reported that individuals needed invitations to attend centenary events, otherwise they were not allowed inside. Informants attributed this to threats from Boko Haram. I was able to record centenary broadcasts that aired on television. I also observed and interviewed members of a middle class family while they watched this programming.

b. During 2014, the Nigerian government called for a national conference – in which representatives from different states and interest groups around Nigeria gathered to discuss the state of the country and a way forward. I also documented developments from this conference, and have a copy of their recommendations.

c. I observed that people do not seem to get much government assistance with almost anything. Electricity often went out unexpectedly and stayed out for long periods of time, only to come on unexpectedly. If people had pipe born water provided by the government, it only seemed to come once a week from my locations, and again sporadically or unexpectedly. Most roads in my locations had potholes, often serious ones, caused by erosion. Informants complained that they were not well constructed to begin with, and then were not maintained. From electricity, to water, to roads, to security, it seems like people were their own mini governments. Many people bought gasoline or diesel-powered generators to provide their own electricity when government electricity went out. Again, several individuals owned Geepees (see my website), or had dug boreholes, and had created complex hydraulic systems to provide their homes with pipe born water. This is if they could afford such systems. If not, they had to go and retrieve water from people who had enough water to sell. Such things often occurred in cities, where there is pipe infrastructure (though likely in disrepair) in place – but where governments fail to regularly provide water.

d. In villages, where communities seem to have more control over construction, communities or individuals may try to work together to fund the rehabilitation of roads, but it is difficult and expensive to do this.
e. Almost everyone had high fences around their houses or housing compounds. Some people also owned guard dogs. Neighbors tended to work together to lock gates at night. This occurred in both cities and rural areas. This is to provide some semblance of security. Many informants said that the police were often more corrupt and dangerous than criminals themselves, and were generally unhelpful. People were thus reluctant to call the police.

Raw Participant Observation Analytical Notes - *After analyzing analytical Notes make note of what I want to know more about and scan all field notes

02/21/2014

I wonder why I was still a little nervous? Was it because of the stories my parents and loved ones had told me and what, through their stories, I was taught to expect? Did these expectations persist even in the face of my lived experience? Were they perpetuated by stories of corruption I’ve heard from Nigerian nationals and others, in spite of my personal experiences?

My dad had warned me about the Lagos airport and how you had to pay for a cart with 100 naira (which I guess had increased to 150-200 naira since he had last calibrated this) and how you had to be careful otherwise they may try to bribe you, asking for more money for the cart, and how there would be people flocking me asking me if I needed help with my cart—so that they could get paid money. Although these experiences were partially true, they were never as bad my dad or others had made it sound. Yes I think once a lady at the cart station in Lagos had asked me for extra money, but she said it kind of jokingly and with a smile. When I smiled and somehow told her no, she left me alone and still gave me the slip I could use to get a cart. This time, when I went to the airport bathroom before entering the baggage area, there was a lady manning and cleaning the bathroom. As I was freshening up, she told me in the characteristic saccharine pleading voice if I had brought anything for “them” to Nigeria. I told her I didn’t. She asked again and said please. I told her again, that I didn’t have anything for her and asked her to pray for me. I smiled and left. That was it. No one came running after me to get a bribe or get anything.

…

I gave a mental smh. E+ is a customs officer and he has told me that they often have to say things to appease passengers, but really?

….
Why isn’t it the reverse, that officers give Nigerian citizens a pass and give foreigners from the U.S. a hard time? Perhaps it is because there is little Nigerian national pride? Think of Ben Afflicks’ recent movie about the Iranian hostage affair. Argo. But anyway, those foreigners, in the midst of a highly nationalistic Iranian moment, had a really hard time.

02252014

However I think I really need to make sure that I’m reading a lot about citizenship and what that means. I especially want to know how people conceptualize citizenship in the literature and if it is just one of many identities or faces, people perform. Or, if citizenship is an allegiance to a group, in other words if it is another word for identification with an imagined community. Therefore, you could have citizenship in a group of Ralph Lauren consumers. You could have citizenship in the society of Zimbabwe, etc. Maybe people don’t conceptualize it in any of those ways, but in a different way. I really need to find out.

02262014-whole thing is impt.

It amazes me that these commercials are airing at a time when Boko Haram has committed a string of these heinous attacks, there is also currently a fuel shortage, and motorists in many cities, starting from Lagos, but spreading throughout the country are having a hard time finding fuel to fuel their cars, or are paying higher fees on buses. This is in addition to the national conference where people apparently want to talk about federalism and peaceful secession. “In our diversity lies our unity, … through adversity, we are one…” I wonder if they are just trying to convince the listening public that this is true. Also, although these commercials keep talking about unity in diversity, I don’t think that is the main problem in Nigeria. The main issue in Nigeria is about modernity. People are concerned that the country is not modern enough and that its leaders have not lived up to their promises to make Nigeria a more modern nation. I wonder if the government knows that it is deflecting this point. People want to secede not because they hate other ethnic groups. Boko Haram is not exacting violence because it hates Christians. All these people are doing this because they think they can stake out better countries that are more functional and operate more fairly and be more modern than the current Nigeria.
I just wonder though, what it will take for the government to make the appropriate changes and if “Nigeria” ever could really survive the changes that need to be conducted.

02/28/2014

I Would love to contribute an article giving an example of how a lack of operable infrastructure is symbolic in Nigeria and serves to propel collective memories and conversations about Nigeria and how the country keeps tripping on its path towards modernity. The stories would serve as evidence of this. I guess now, I just need to better understand modernity- I guess I can read expectations of modernity and James Ferguson’s reading of it. I also need concrete evidence that this is taking place, but I think I already have this evidence. **Nigerians seem to tell the same story about how their country is not where it should be, is not developing fast enough. In these stories, or explanations, they talk about infrastructure like dilapidating roads, “no good roads,” limited electricity “No light,” no running water, and the tons and tons of educated youth without jobs. They talk about infrastructure within their stories, pointing to it as though it symbolizes the country’s stumbling in its development and modernity. People also keep throwing around the term modern- This is emic at this point. I guess I need to find out what “modern” means in the Nigerian context.**

Next, I will also need to talk about this in light of Nigeria’s status as an oil economy. They may have expectations for modernity, partly because of oil wealth. It may be a very similar situation to that of Zambia.

Next, yes, although there are collective stories and memories around a lack of development, there are also behaviors. This is the real contribution.

While stories about dilapidated roads and government graft are the stories that circulate in a place with dilapidated infrastructure, corruption comprises the kind of interactions that take place in a place with dilapidated infrastructure. This is simply because it is easier to get things done by circumventing the system, not by abiding by it. Yes people want this to get easier and to go away. As, they indicate in their stories. However, there aren’t a whole ton of moral ambiguities attached to trying to get around a ditch by taking a short cut, even if there is a sign ahead you, behind the ditch that says, “keep straight.”
OK, so you you have a setting where the infrastructure is supposed to be modern (like that of the US and other global northern countries), but it isn’t.

What are the collective stories that arise in this environment? Negative corruption stories

What are the behavioral norms that arise in this environment? “corrupt behavior-
circumventing…”

Are these things really immoral or simply a product of the environment? The question may be then, what is actually immoral? Perhaps actions that cause harm to other people either directly or indirectly. However, if you are simply trying to jump the hoops, even by going around a dilapidated system, this is probably not immoral.

03/07/2014

These pieces of writing can definitely overlap. What will the title of my dissertation be? Like Itai said, I can’t take the document too seriously. Well, here are some themes:

Modernity
Desires for modernity
Expectations for modernity (very similar to James Ferguson in that regard, I guess) because of oil instead of – what was it in Zambia – copper?

That is what this centenary year is all about… expectations that new initiatives by the government will finally bring about modernity.

However, what are they speaking against? They are speaking against what life is like right now.
You can definitely connect this to an ethnography of life in an oil dependency-expectations for modernity in Nigeria because of the promises of oil wealth... (Apter)

But, it isn’t just expectations for what is to come, there is commentary on what there is now, and there is some doubt that modernity will come.

– this is the crux of the matter. This is what is moving things right now, like Boko Haram – that doubt that modernity will come and doubt in the promises Westernization promised to bring.

Yes, there are expectations for modernity, but what is life like now?

The dissertation will talk about the ethos and culture in a country where the promises of modernity have not been met – in terms of a nation, national identity, citizenship, publics, etc, AND infrastructure, amenities, and access. Instead of looking at such a situation as the absence of culture, the dissertation will argue that such a situation does create a kind of citizen, does create a kind of infrastructure, and does create a kind of culture and system in which people act. This culture does things, has an effect on the world. – for example with Boko Haram.

Instead of saying that there is no culture here, the dissertation questions our preconceived notions of culture in the first place. Culture is not classical, is not the height of an evolutionary path, and does not have to be like anything we have ever seen before, and does not have. Culture, of course has many definitions, but one, upon which I will lean heavily is that it is simply a system of rules people follow so that they can coordinate their movements with others in a social group, without bumping into other people or making those people mad. That is it. Therefore, this system of rules can encompass quite a bit.

If there is already an infrastructure (or environment) in place, people, like ants, will simply work with it, especially if they feel like they are unable to change it. Just as there are a plethora configurations and indentations in infrastructure, there are just as many types and configurations in the rules needed to move peacefully and effectively through and over it. Similar to ants, people have simple objectives – to eat, sleep, gain comfort and companionship, provide for their families and imagined families. If there is a hill in the way between them and their objective, they will climb the hill to reach their objective, they will climb that hill to reach it. If there isn’t a
hill and there is flat land between them and their objective, they will walk across the flat land. If that landscape is all they know, they won’t know anything else exists in terms of the path to reach their objective. However, if they do know, then things can get interesting. Also similar to ants, many people are trying to coordinate their movements around other people as each person tries to achieve different objectives. Humans like ants, rarely bump into each other. Human beings have their ways of making sure that they avoid conflict with each other and are able to cooperate with each other. Commonly understood rules is that way. Language is a system of rules as well.

It will describe what this culture is – how it is reproduced. How it is enacted. And how it is mobilized. How it builds solidarity.

*I would argue that modernity (or Westernization,) in the form of roads, banks, schools, etc. have already arrived in Nigeria. I would also argue that the true promises of oil wealth (i.e. government neglect and anxiety) have also already arrived. There isn't an absence of modernity or oil wealth in Nigeria, it is here, and together it has created its own cultural configurations, complete with modes of storytelling. This is what I am interested in looking at more.

03/10/2014

It is strange to me that Okonjo keeps talking about the financial details of the country, while the president doesn’t seem to even touch this. Isn’t he briefed? Can’t he at least summarize some of the financial details Okonjo is stating? It isn’t there is going to be a question and answer session, where he is questioned about what he knows.

The bridge, Okonjo said, will finally bridge the South-South and the Southeast to the rest of the country and will bridge historic divides.

The third speaker, who was the chairman of the house committee on works, said that with the recent work on roads in the Southeast and South-South and this new bridge project, the people affected by these developments would vote for Goodluck Jonathan.
The fourth speaker talked about the Biafran war, and said after the war there was a slogan that there would be “no victor, no vanquished.” He said, however, that this slogan has only become a reality after Goodluck Jonathan was elected. He said that there had been many infrastructural developments in the Southeast, and that finally, people in the Southeast were being included in developments in the country. This speaker said he was very happy that residents, and apparently also “Igbos,” can fly directly into the southeast, through Enugu. He said that the building of the second Niger Bridge would alleviate the suffering of the Nigerian people. Several of the speakers mentioned the aviation minister, who is Igbo, and apparently also from Anambra state, and how Enugu now has an international airport, which people would have said could never be done (?). Apparently the aviation minister and the upgrades she has made to airports around the country, including in the Southeast, is something people are really happy about. The speakers thanked the president for appointing this minister of Aviation. I flew in through Enugu, so I can detail this experience.

Many of the speakers also began their speeches with the typical “Igbo Kwenu!” greeting, clearly pandering to the crowds.

-It really seems that what maps onto Igbos is the conception that they bear the brunt of a lack of infrastructural development that is happening throughout the country because of the lack of southeastern development following the Biafra War. Maybe Igbos are also interesting because they map for something (perhaps disenfranchisement) in a stronger way that is occurring throughout the country.

....

He said that they should not have held this rally in a tent. He said that it was tradition that such rallies should be open air events. He also said that many of the people who had voted Goodluck Jonathan into office before, were not allowed into the event. He said something like only 200 people were in the tent, when there were like 2 million people in the state who had voted for him. He said that if they were worried about security, Anambra people would keep him safe. They would be his security and make sure nothing happened to Goodluck. They had voted him in en mass.

He later made the statement that “Goodluck’s reforms had made Igbos Nigerians again.”
-See this in regard to my previous statement. Are Igbo experiences only a stronger version of what is going on across the country? The only way to tell is to see how people from other parts of the country talk about their experiences – particularly Yorubas.

03/14/2014

I was reflecting too. I don’t think it would be as bad, if we expected not to have those amenities. However, when they are just suddenly shut off, or suddenly gone, it kind of leaves you feeling a little bit helpless or at a loss. *You really have to recoup and try to find another way to do things immediately otherwise essential things like cooking, bathing, or perhaps in extreme cases like mine, drinking water, just may not happen, and that result just cannot happen. It is like you always have to be prepared with a plan B or feel comfortable resorting to plan B or C. Like, whenever I take a bath at night, I often bring a flashlight with me, just in case the lights go out while I am taking a bath. Today, I actually had to use it. I was bathing and the lights just went out in the middle. *When you expect certain infrastructural amenities, their loss makes it so much worse. It is totally a reminder or harbinger of modernity in Nigeria. If they didn’t expect it, it wouldn’t be as bad, but especially because of oil, they expect it.

03/21/2014

I guess governmentality is getting set to come to Nigeria. I Wonder if the Boko Haram threat is behind some of this.

03/26/2014

I have a recording of the discussion and will try to transcribe it, because it provides an interactive discussion about people’s frustrations in Nigeria and why they might want to leave, what they think of their country, and what they think of other countries in comparison.

03/27/2014

Just as an added note, M1 and W1 have asked me several times if there is constant running water and constant electricity in the United States. I’ve said that yes, there is, as long as you pay for it. They said that even in Nigeria, though, even though you pay for water and electricity, you do not get a constant supply of them.
There is now water running in the house, from the faucet. The work the plumber did to the GP’s worked. It allowed the bottom GP’s to fill up quite a bit, enough for us to pump water up to the GP’s on the top floor, which supply water to the house faucets. It really feels like a luxury to have water running from the faucets and to be able to just flush the toilet after not having that amenity for almost two weeks – and most people in this country, don’t have GP’s or have these amenities at all. Even the poorest household owners in the US at least have access to constant electricity and constant running water if they pay for it. So, is this really about reneging of contracts? Perhaps it isn’t really about infrastructure but about the reneging of some sort of agreement – the citizenship agreement – pay for amenities you get them and government enforced contracts? It is probably part of the system of government absence.

04/05/2014

Although it may be difficult to go and fetch water. At least you can prepare for it in advance and you know what to expect. But this… All of a sudden water just runs out. People have to scramble to figure out how they are going to cook dinner – if they have enough bottled water on reserve – how they are going to take a bath the next morning…. They kick themselves for not refilling the large plastic oil jugs that serve as water reserves when there is no water from the GP, even though they are very heavy and burdensome to refill, and it is understandable that they may have dallied.

You still see the look of annoyance on people’s faces who have lived here for years, when they are watching a television program and the electricity just goes out – no explanation, the looks of embarrassment hosts exchange or people looking away from guests when the light just goes out when you are entertaining guests. It is just this national embarrassment – this jarring and recurring reminder that Western amenities and development infrastructure, are not living up to what you expect them to be. It is a sharp reminder. The lights even went out in Shoprite the other day – the place that is supposed to be this oasis of modernity and Western shopping. When you talk about symbols –these things are also symbolic, likely hugely symbolic of what Nigeria is like today – a place where westernization is just clearly not working. … as expected

A few notes – while using the flashlight that M1 gave me, I realized how much more advanced it is than flashlights I use in the US. I don’t really use flashlights in the US, but they do use them a lot here, I guess. The flashlight is blue and black. It has three settings – off, medium light, and highest (brightest) light, that you go to by clicking a black button up to each setting. It is not
battery powered. You charge it in an electric outlet, - it has two metal prongs built in to fit into the Nigerian (British) power outlet. It is pretty advanced for a flashlight. The simple flashlight I bought from the US for 5 dollars is pretty shoddy in comparison. It is small and black with a keychain attached to it. It uses AAA batteries, which I noticed seem to go out pretty fast. The light is this pale yellow light, that almost barely illuminates the space in front of you. You can adjust the brightness by rotating the cap at the top, which holds the lense of the flashlight. It literally reminds me of the flashlight I had to make for 10th grade physics class. Very simple (the positive end of the wire much touch the negative end, and then there is light!) The light that comes from this flashlight is paltry in comparison to the light from the blue flashlight, which is bright, white, LED light that comes from the blue flashlight.

I think they have more advanced flashlights than we do in the US because there is a greater need and demand for such flashlights versus the US, due to the infrastructure here –due to the lack of electricity. It is likely prompted by environmental conditions. People have a desire to see. These flashlights help them do that. If the lights were on constantly as of tomorrow, I predict people would discard many of their flashlights, or settle for less advanced versions. There are also different types of flashlights. There are some that are long and give a lot of light to a room. There are some kind of shaped like an iron that that people use to study. I also have a mosquito bat, combination flashlight. It also has three settings: off, mosquito bat electricity on, and mosquito bat electricity on/light on. All of these flashlights also have very powerful, bright, white LED lights. I’ve never seen a mosquito bat in the US. *Though it is possible that poorer people in Nigeria have never seen one either.* Mosquitos that carry malaria come about because of potholes filled with water, open gutters, etc. that help to breed mosquitos. If they fixed those today and sprayed everywhere for mosquitos like they did in the southern united states when they faced the same problem, we could eradicate mosquitos and malaria from the country too. Environment plays a huge role in culture and in the artifacts people create and use, I am guessing. It is kind of like how Eskimos have so many words for snow. It is because of their environment, and the environment they have to work with. I also brought an LED lamp, that my Dad gave me for Christmas in preparation for my trip. It looks like a kerosene lamp, but it isn’t. It requires to D batteries. However, even though on the carton, it is advertised to have “LED Lights!” even the lights on this lantern are not as bright as the lights from the flashlights here.

….

Today, M3 began a spontaneous story about Nigeria. He said that “That is why people call Nigeria a useless country!” Again, “That is why people call Nigeria a hopeless country!” M3 is
9 years old. He was said that the government is banning the import of rice from other countries into Nigeria and encouraging people in the country to grow rice and other products. He said that this was silly because, “What if people don’t want to do agriculture and grow rice?! That is why people call Nigeria a useless country.” Etc. It wasn’t the most convincing argument, for example. I think many people in the country would give the government at least some credit for wanting to build up Nigeria’s economic and food independence. I think he is practicing this form of storytelling and rhetoric about Nigeria. I’ve found that he and other people in the household do like telling stories. I interviewed him two years ago about Nigeria. He had said it was a nice place to live, and the government was good and the president was good. Now, he is sounding more and more like W1 and M1. I wonder if he is being socialized to speak about Nigeria in a certain way. I’ve never heard American children call the United States a hopeless or useless country. Maybe I need to spend more time around US kids?

04/08/2014

People around me keep remarking that since NEPA (the Nigerian electricity provider) had become privatized, service has become worse than when it was public. However, I can remember last summer not having electricity literally for days, in the summer. They had said that it was unusual and that there was a system failure somewhere, that it was not the direct fault of the provider. Right now, people are saying that public was 100% better than NEPA now under private ownership. IDK. All I know is how grateful I feel for any of these amenities. Maybe though, as my theory goes, it is better not to expect them at all. However, one of the people close to people in the household used to work for NEPA, when it was public. Maybe that is why?

4/27/2014

In my mind, this did not make a lot of sense. Market women haggle over prices with viciousness sometimes — they always get a good price for something. Women who buy at the market also know how to get a great deal. I’ve been told that men don’t go to the market, and that men don’t know how to bargain — they would prefer to stay above bargaining and just accept any price. This then, seems like a contradiction, and desperate attempt by M1 to make his case against the ruling. M1 seems to think very little of women, for some reason. I wonder why.

4/28/2014

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Also, while I was interviewing something that 7B said, made me think that religion is kind of like a law or norm-giver for people. Just like any culture would be.

05/04/2014

It is interesting that they seem to have similar meetings like that here in Enugu – in the township, away from the village. Maybe part of it is that it makes home seem closer?

05/07/2014

I never realized before, but it might be a good thing that I am in Enugu because I really fit in within an Igbo place given my background, than I would in, say, a purely Yoruba or Hausa place. It makes doing ethnography just a little bit easier.

I told her that I had paid her, so I wasn’t sure why she was not happy. She said, “no, aunty, that is not right.” She later said, “I am not happy.” As she walked past me again on her way back from whence she came, she still gave me and the hairdressers plaiting my hair a troubled look – it was like she was seeing a heresy take place. I waved at her and was able to get a little smile. Apparently, in this case, Andrew Apter is wrong. People in Nigeria don’t just care about getting money. They don’t just care about getting a share in the national cake. They also care about their craft and take pride in the work that they do. Otherwise, after telling this woman that I had paid her and her colleagues, she would have been totally fine, and walked away. There is more to Nigerians than I think many give them credit for. I think Catholic Social Teaching is more right on here – people find dignity in working, and they don’t want that dignity taken away.

…. 

Again, I think people care more than I am giving them credit for. W1 cares about me and is trying to treat me like she would treat her own daughter. I get confused sometimes because I am not her daughter, but I think that is where her concern about how I spend my money and what I do is coming from.

…. 

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I was surprised that W1 was defending the government. *One criticism people have about people who mention “the government” is that it is not specific enough. “The government” is like this mythologized entity, and when critiques like this arise, it often seems, at least to me, that it is when people are criticizing “The government.” Wertsch and Garagozov argue that countries unite when people have a common enemy. Maybe the common enemy in Nigeria is “the government.” That would make why people are often not specific about “the government” make much more sense. It is this mythologized entity with particular qualities and actions that are attacking “the masses” or “ordinary people. Interviewees also often used the term “political class,” “political elites,” and “elites.” I need to check though, if it is me who is using “the government” or if my interviewees/key informants are. Also what about when they talk about specific people in the government – Goodluck Jonathan for example. Do they talk about Jonathan differently than they do “the government/political elites/elites?” What role does Jonathan have to “the elites” and what role does he have with regard to the “Nigerian people”/citizens?

She usually is rather critical of the government, but in this case she decided to defend the president. I wonder where the change came from. Maybe I’ll inquire more into that. Maybe it is because she is a mother with kids at boarding schools, and she would prefer to believe that the government is making every effort to keep them safe? Maybe it is because she works at a school, and would like to think that schools are competent enough to keep their students safe and can’t believe that the boarding school in Chibok had made such a grievous error in allowing their students to go back to the school to take an exam? I am not sure. I will inquire more.

…..

It is just interesting to see two individuals W1 and M1 and how they react to life in Nigeria differently. They each have their different backgrounds and their background intermingles with these events that take place in their country. W1 has said repeatedly that she avoids trouble from others and that she does not really care about what the government does, because she does not really see the government as making any serious effort to move the country forward. While, M1 seems to try to confront trouble and problems head on – he sees himself as a “social cleaner,” and really seems to care about what the government is doing. He watches news regularly and invites me to record government programming like centenary programs etc. M1’s background in his family etc, may have also played a role in how he acts today, but they both confront the problems in the country a bit differently, yet they both say that the country has problems. Two days ago, when M1’s accident had happened, W1 complained. She said that one of these days
M1 was going to make someone really mad and get in trouble. She was inferring that his recurring stubbornness while driving on the road what had caused him to hit that boy. She said that she, although through the grace of God, had never gotten into an accident, except when someone had hit her bumper once. She said that when she is driving on the road, she stays away from trouble. When someone tries to cut in front of her, she moves and makes way for the person, because she wants to avoid an accident. She would rather back down and avoid the problem and the aggressor than risk her safety and those of her loved ones.

05/08/2014

I had two theories that someone in charge of the transitions was hired from nepotism, or that Nigeria did not have the institutions available to train people. He said “I see your theories, but you’re wrong on both counts. You’ve been in Nigeria for like two months now right? So, you’re starting to notice things and you are starting to think like us.” He said implying that I was starting to acculturate. I see your hypotheses, but you’re wrong. Let me tell you. The real reason why that happened on the TV is because people operating it don’t care. OK? They don’t care how they do it, they don’t care what happens. They just do it any how. It may even be that the man operating it was sleeping and wearing headphones, and that when he heard that the sound was too loud, he woke up and quickly turned down the volume. The problem is that when these things happen, no one says anything and no one corrects it. If it had been that if such an error occurred, someone got fired – or let’s say. This problem with the sound happened and that man was fired because of this incident. The next man who is hired will know why the last one was sacked and will never allow such a thing to happen. These people know that nothing will happen to them if they do this program anyhow. It is a dirty system. I’m telling you. It is a dirty system.

I thought this was interesting. It was interesting that M1 said that I was now acculturating and that my full acculturation would eventually mean understanding that people produced rubbish because there was no accountability for the work they were doing.

....

M1 was sitting with us, but did not say much. He did say that he was surprised at our neighbor, who was a woman, and called her a politician. He agreed with the APC statement however. He also reiterated what he had said earlier that why do people care so much about the Chibok girls?
Was it because they were girls? Would people care this much if boys were kidnapped? Sometimes I don’t know what world M1 is living in.

I do find it fascinating that people here think that this could all be a hoax. They don’t seem to have much faith in what the mainstream AIT-like media is reporting. I at least have not heard on AIT that this may all be a conspiracy. Maybe they are getting this idea from other media channels, or maybe not. It is just interesting that they are so cynical. It is also interesting that they are supportive of Goodluck Jonathan. Yes, it seems that what makes “conspiracy theories” possible- i.e. alternative explanations of news events possible, is a lack of trust placed in authorities – but where do authorities get their authority – isn’t it from the people? These conspiracy theory issues and “fake news” is also becoming an issue here in the United States. This could be a good article to write eventually.

05/09/2014

Those are definitely American prices – about 33 cents for 1 Avocado. While I suppose I shouldn’t have complained in my mind, in the village, I was able to buy 6 much larger avocados for 100 naira total. I wonder why the difference.

….

Someone was interviewing a man – who I think was a normal civilian in a northern state, protesting the abduction of the Chibok girls. He said that the Boko Haram insurgency was like the Biafran War. He said that just as the military and the Nigerian government had pulled up its might to fight the evil of Biafra, the Nigerian military and government had to fight the evil of Boko Haram. He said that our country is at war. It was a term I kept hearing repeated on the news recently.

…

I thought it was rather strange that a president would say on television, without any trepidation, that his country was not capable of holding large-scale events.

05/10/2014
He said he had spent thousands of Naira on her education, but W3 still did not know that what she had used was not correct Standard English. He asked me “Is that good?” I had to acknowledge that if the intent of some of her education had been to teach her correct Standard English grammar, then no, it was not good.

In a way, W1’s use of Nigerian pidgin or Broken English, and her lack of understanding that what she was using was not Standard English does in fact reflect something broken. Yes, Broken English, but also another brokenness – it reflects a broken system – an educational system that is not giving the returns it has promised, that is essentially broken down. Even though M1 had paid thousands of naira, and W1 had been in boarding school for 6-7 years, not including her primary school education, she still did not know that this simple sentence was not Standard English, despite the fact that she was meant to learn Standard English in her education. It shows that there was a breakdown in the system somewhere, and alludes to my previous ideas of corruption – corruption talk, pidgin, and the cognitive idea of brokenness and something that has been corrupted or allowed to corrupt. – Right, people are not getting what they paid for. There is a contractual agreement that was again broken or not overseen/enforced? – perhaps through examination fraud or something? Citizenship

05/11/2014

We went home. And there still was no water. I did dishes while W3 and M3 went to go and fetch water in big plastic oil jugs. As I had written about before, it is really hard labor. We are really lucky that there are people in this house who are able to do such difficult work. If not, we would be spending 5000 Naira regularly on calling a water truck. Too bad the Water Board cannot provide water constantly.

05/14/2014

Now, here I am. There was no light for most of the day until M1 came back around 5:30pm. Also, there was still no water. The light was off from around 10am to 5:30pm. Whenever the light turns on there is this loud whining sound of electricity. If you pay attention to it, you may have a clue that electricity is about to turn on. Also, whenever the light turns on, you will hear people, especially children yell “NEPA!” That’s another clue. There are false starts though. Like sometimes, W3 or I will hear the whining sound, but no electricity flows to the house. Sometimes, you will hear it like twice succession, but still no light. It is almost NEPA is trying to get the power to us, but something is wrong in the system somewhere. For kids or others yelling. Sometimes, very rarely though, kids will yell NEPA, and there is actually no light. It seems like
when that happens it is when they hear the whining sound or when light does actually come to the house, but only for a second or two and then goes away. By the time someone checks for electricity supply, the supply is gone.

05/16/2014

I apologized on my behalf for not helping her as much as I should have. It does seem though that in Nigeria, young women are expected to do a lot of household work. I’ve actually heard M1 compare W3 to a servant – saying that if W3 was a household help, she would have sent her packing a long time ago because the work she does is not up to snuff. I am not sure where that cultural tradition has come from, but I wonder how much stress and burden it puts upon young people, especially those transitioning to college. I know W3 had been in boarding school throughout her adolescence and has just been at home for the past couple of years. Maybe she is not used to this amount of work? Either way, I see with my own eyes that she has to do a lot of work every day.

05/18/2014

I had to help M1 and W1 print something though. They were having a discussion about the Magi and wanted me to print out a web-page for them. During the discussion, M1 admitted to me that he did not know how to copy and paste and wanted me to teach him. I told him that I could, but that I had also taught W1 and she could also teach him. Sometimes I really feel like Nigeria is like thrown back to the 1990’s. I just watched this video on Facebook today (Early morning Tues. May 20th) with Jennifer Aniston and another member of Friends learning how to use Window’s ’95 in this instructional video. Sometimes I feel that with the lack of technological savvy- likely due to lack of constant electricity, and infrastructure, etc. Nigeria is in many ways thrown back to the 1990’s.

06/02/2014

However, since the meeting was cancelled, I didn’t have anything else to do today. I also had a hard time bringing myself to do anything that day. I think I was so nervous about the meeting at NOA, that I just didn’t know what else to do when the meeting was cancelled. So, I ended up watching some of the National Conference proceedings on AIT. I think they were discussing the recommendations made by the committees. They were talking about the fuel subsidy. One man who was a Muslim talked first about how removing the fuel subsidy would be
a bad thing. The next man, who looked like he was a southerner and was someone who I think was a delegate for Civil Society – countered this and said that we wouldn’t need a fuel subsidy, or be discussing one, in the first place if the government had kept its promise in 2012 of repairing existing oil processing plants and building two new ones. He said the reason why we need a fuel subsidy is because we export our crude oil for processing in other countries and sell the final product back in Nigeria – that the subsidy basically is to cover that cost. Another woman from Anambra state later came up after another woman - an noble stateswoman from the north spoke briefly. The woman from Anambra state basically reiterated the statements made by the Civil Society minister and also said that we needed to tackle corruption in Nigeria. She said that corruption is something that effects all sectors of our society. She said that putting a few people in jail who are committing gross corruption in the government is not enough. She said that we needed to “uproot” corruption from our society. She said corruption is not just people stealing money that it is a systemic problem. She said that if the confab could come up with ways of effectively eliminating corruption from Nigerian society, they would have done a lot to secure a good future for Nigeria. The conference then broke for lunch.

06/04/2014

I had asked a taxi outside of the store to wait for me. I took the taxi to NBC and after meeting the director and having my contact make a photo copy of the letter, I headed back home. The light in the house was fluctuating - meaning that it was going on and off. I was kind of worried about our electronics. It may have also just been a low voltage flow. When I tried to turn on the TV … the TV kept flicking on and off, and I got scared, because there is a lot of satellite and antenna equipment involved in making sure the TV works in the house – we don’t get satellite TV for nothing. Also, there is like a power box that everything is plugged into – I think this is to make sure that if there is an electricity surge, it doesn’t effect the TV, DVD player, stereos etc. W3 was at our neighbor’s house…. Oh also though, this morning, water flowed to our house! Yes!!! 😊😊

06/07/2014

W1 and M3 started digging into the ice cream. They were squealing and fighting over some of it, it was cute and I think they found it to be a nice treat. Now, I am off to eat dinner. … former Ministry of Information Dora Anuyiili died today from cancer in India. Everyone in the country is mourning her death. It is a huge deal and was all over the news. When M1 told me about it after reading it online this afternoon – he looked genuinely upset. Everyone W1, W3 too were upset about it. I had told M1 that I didn’t know who the woman was. But this is the woman that I had been researching years ago, I just didn’t remember her name immediately,
when it was spoken. Wow. It was all over the news. On the news, AIT, they said that she was a woman who really had wanted to make Nigeria a better place and had worked to make it a better place, and that she is sorely missed. It is literally all over Nigerian media. I will attach news articles about it. I will let you know if anything else happens. It is 9:48pm and the electricity just went out. * If people were honestly mourning the death of Dora Akunyili and saying these things about her, then making Nigeria a better place, and the thing she did to do that, must be very important to people here.****

The light came back on around 10:15pm and it is still on – it is 11:12pm right now. America is playing Nigeria in a soccer match. I really should watch, but I think I might just see the reactions after the game?

06/09/2014

Today, I had a meeting at the NOA to pick up a letter of invitation to work with them. …. Essentially, MASSOB had attacked a radio station in Enugu, and one police officer had been killed in the melee. The director was angry with a member of his staff because he had not submitted a report on the incident in a timely manner. The staff had apparently not actually been at the scene of the incident but had received a text message with information about the incident from someone – maybe a source or colleague. The staff had not thought that a text message was sufficient for writing a report and had said at least that he had been waiting for more information before writing and submitting a report. The director was angry because although the incident had occurred on Friday (when apparently he was out of the office) and today was Monday, he still hadn’t received a report. He was worried that the central NOA office in Abuja was going to come down on his Enugu branch of the agency (i.e. be really upset with them). He was even more upset that news outlets had picked up on and reported the story before his office had reported on it. He was complaining that it made their office look bad, like it didn’t know what was going on in its own zone and wasn’t taking care of the problem. Interestingly, a person I had interviewed who works in media told me about this story on Friday, apparently when it happened.

06/10/2014

This Tuesday, we went to the University of Nigeria, Nsukka. … She asked me where I was from – what part of Mbaise/Igbo land – which is such a normal greeting here. Maybe this place really is segregated. Maybe it is just a way people use to place you or know more about you? Either way, what about people who aren’t Igbo? …. M1 wasn’t happy that I had gone out after the trip
to drop off the letter. However, he likes keeping his word, and I also wanted to keep my word, at least that time. I also asked her some other questions I had. I had been trying to call my Mom since yesterday about the UNN arrangement. I finally got her on the phone. She thought it was crazy for me to try to drive to UNN three times a week. The roads are dangerous – there are like no dividers on the road so lorries come at you from the opposite direction and you have to almost swerve to avoid them. It is not enjoyable. This is in addition to the potholes – however, admittedly, on the way to Nsukka, I didn’t see that many potholes in the roads, which is really good. I actually saw and tried to take pictures of construction taking place on a new road they called a “shortcut,” but in my mind was not a shortcut, but a new road. A shortcut is like a path through the bushes or something. Maybe they called it a “shortcut” because people are so used to the road taking so long…? I don’t honestly know – but a sign actually called the road a shortcut.

06/20/2014

Today, I woke up and knew I needed to pack because we are going to the village…. There were outdoor tented roofs and chairs already set up – the traditional marriage was taking place the next day, on Saturday…. Women were the ones doing it. It reminded me that maybe physical strength is an important part of Igbo female identity, just as important as mental acuity.

06/22/2014

No one asked me to help with anything either. However, I think M1 and W1 might have been annoyed that I wasn’t helping – WHY WOULDN’T THEY SAY SOMETHING THEN?? O di kiewe (it is annoying). What is honestly kind of annoying though is that whenever I do try to help with something like cooking or cleaning, people just assume that I can’t do it. They say things like, “Oh wow! You can do that… but wait you’re doing it wrong. Let me help you. I can just do it for you.” The previous morning, I was literally helping W1 pluck leaves- water leaves off of a stem and someone sitting nearby actually had the gall to say, “Oh, Kosi, don’t pick off the flowers! Oh, let me help you.” I was confused because I was clearly not picking off flowers from the stem, I was picking off leaves. I said, “What?” confused. W1 had to step in and say, “She knows how to do it. She’s not picking off the flowers. I thought her how to do this, so leave her.” Points for W1. So annoying though – like do they think I am an imbecile or something because I came from the United States? It really is sort of a twist to this international relation thing. Yes, people here are envious of Americans, want American’s money and want to go to America – they hold Americans in high regard maybe because they think that Americans/Westerners have a lot of money and capital. However, in my experience, they assume that they don’t know how to do anything in their culture. However, for me, my parents raised me immersed in several aspects of Igbo culture. I also have studied Igbo culture. It’s not like I don’t
know anything. There are several things about their culture that I do know, but they just assume that I don’t know it. People are usually very willing to help me out, but they ASSUME that I don’t know anything. They don’t assume that I know what to do.

I think it is strange for me, because I do occupy a liminal space between the two cultures – I am from America, and I don’t know how to speak Igbo very well, however, I do know a bit about Igbo culture, more than they think.

I think part of it may have to do with the fact that I can’t speak Igbo language fluently - and their dialect of it. I think that If I did, people wouldn’t question the authenticity of my Igbo identity as much, and my ability to do things. That’s the interesting thing about Nigeria. Almost everyone I’ve met can speak English – English is the lingua franca – even if they can’t speak it very well. However, people are also expected to know other regional languages – they are expected to belong somewhere where they can speak an indigenous language with a circumscribed local community. It is to the point where I almost don’t know which language knowledge is more important to Nigerians – being able to speak English well or being able to speak a local language well. *I think it depends on the context Nigerians are in – at school or court- probably English. At a village meeting, probably the local language. At the market in a large/diverse city like Lagos, probably pidgin?

…

M1 got into an argument with a bunch of the men seated there. Apparently, these men, many of whom were older used to follow M1, but ever since a younger man from the village was made into a district commissioner “overnight” (W1 was telling me this), the men had left M1 to follow the commissioner. W1 called the men sycophants. Apparently, there is a patron-client thing going on here – these men had left the sycophancy and patronage of M1 to follow this new commissioner.

06/28/2014

After we had finished filling out the application, there was suddenly an error and the whole thing just vanished. When we had tried to register W1 on the Nigerian foreign affairs government website, it had said, once we were finished, that it would send a confirmation email to W1’s email inbox. Once we received that email, we needed to open it and follow a link that would allow us to apply for the job. However, the email never came. We just went back to the website
and logged in with the username and password we had created and it worked. Go figure. It was just a really bad website. I wonder if people check it.

07/02/2014

The tech assistant was worried because the word kept showing a red squiggly line under it in Microsoft Word, meaning that it was an incorrect spelling. On a side note, this seems like evidence that non-native English speakers may actually use Microsoft Word to learn English. I repeated, “Attestify? Attestify is not even a word. The word should be attests.”

07/03/2014

Yesterday, I didn’t do much. We didn’t watch TV or anything like that because there was no electricity for most of the day. We had a few short bursts of electricity that went out really quickly, but nothing more than that. Luckily it rained yesterday. And I think that is why today (July 4th) we’ve had pretty constant electricity for most of the day…. Oh yes, M3 was home from school today because apparently in school today, all the kids are doing is “playing,” according to him. So, he was allowed to stay home. I think it is post exams…. This past Wednesday, I think, while I was in the kitchen helping to fetch water from outside, he even asked W3 in front of me why she didn’t exploit my knowledge of computers to help herself (while scolding her). My question is – why didn’t W3 learn how to use computers in school?

07/04/2014

I later at dinner – soup with what seemed like fresh vegetables, that made my stomach feel better. It is raining now. Yes, we have had light for basically the whole day – I am not sure if it is because of the rain. *I was beginning to notice/look for patterns in the electric power coming on.

07/06/2014

(I wonder if now that the doctors are gone, the nurses think they can just run the whole place? We have never had a problem before visiting my uncle. I am not sure why that is happening now.)
07/07/2014

W3 tried to microwave something in the new microwave we were using. W1 had won it almost a year ago. A couple of months ago, our old microwave stopped working, so we brought in this one. However, now, this microwave is not working. It will turn on and look like it is working, but it did not heat our food. *Hmm, instead of “they” for my host family, I am starting to use “we.” At first I thought maybe we just had low voltage or something, but when I asked W3 and M3 about it, they said it wasn’t low voltage, that the microwave was just broken. I am amazed that it broke so fast. What could have caused that? I have a feeling that because of the light going on and off all the time or the differences in voltages, the electricity sometimes destroys appliances. . . . *In the case of my power cords it did mess up my appliances. Luckily I don’t think the electricity surge affected my computer.

The keke that brought me here was the first reasonable one I’ve ever taken, and charged me 50 naira to go to about ½ a mile to the market, so I am not sure why he charged me 250. I am pretty sure he decided to charge me more because he thought I was an “onye ocha.”

07/09/2014

I think the relationship a lot of Nigerians have towards their country is one of skepticism. They are holding out hope that their country will get better, but they’re not counting on it. This is almost reflective of the way people talk about Africa, around the world. The symbolic meaning behind some of these places is interesting.

07/14/2014

So, I decided after careful deliberation and the fact that I didn’t want to handwash my laundry, that I would use the washing machine. I washed my clothes there (adding a little isol to the load because the clothes had been in my bathroom for a long time). However, when I walked about 30 minutes after, I saw that the washing machine had stopped, even though we still had electricity. I assumed that the load was done, so I took out my clothes to hang outside. They felt really soapy,
however, I just assumed that it was because I had added too much soap. I realized though today, after going back to the washing machine area to plug in the pumping machine (they both use the same socket and you have to unplug one to plug in the other) that the load had not finished washing. I think what may have happened was that we had electricity that day, but it was low voltage, and too low of voltage to carry a major appliance like the washing machine.

07/16/2014

I made a joke about how in Nigeria, it seems that life flourishes – i.e. for insects, etc. My lesson teacher asked more about that. I said that in America, yes, we have ants and insects, but mostly in forests and maybe if you have an infestation in your house, but that in Nigeria, it is like you cohabit with insects and plants, it is hard to separate your life in your house, from them. *Also, ironically, the houses in which I stayed in Nigeria were not insulated from the outside, while other houses in Nigeria are. He then said that it is because the government in America makes life easy for people there and hard for insects. He followed up by saying that in Nigeria, the government makes life hard for people and easy for insects. I laughed. I said, if only the government would provide constant electricity, good roads, and water, then life would be the same here, in Nigeria as it is in America, that that is the only difference between the two countries – the provision of electricity and water. He said “yes, I know. With that water and electricity, you can then clean your house and kill the insects, etc. That is why I said in America, they make life easy for people and hard for insects, but in Nigeria, they make life hard for people and easy for insects – it’s our governments.”

07/24/2014

She prepared akara, which I could smell wafting out to the front stoop where I sat with the teacher. We discussed oil in Nigeria yesterday after our lesson. Today, we talked about education in Nigeria and how Nigerians are dealing with similar problems in education that Americans are – i.e. public versus private schools, and the government not providing enough funding for public schools. … I only came out much later and ate some corn and ube with W3 and M3. I then went back to my room and started writing field notes from the past three days. Oh, there was no light when I was eating corn and ube with them. When I went into my room at first, I saw that my computer was charging – the charging light was on, even though the power strip was not lighted and when I turned on the light to the room, the light wouldn’t turn on. I told M3 that there was light, but that it was low voltage and that someone should go and change the voltage setting for the house. Our house has three settings, but I am not sure if all houses do. I feel like M1 said that
his was different because he had requested those three settings – he used to work for NEPA, so I guess, if this is true, he may have known what to ask for.

Anyway, M3 disagreed. He said, no, there was no light. Even though I showed him how when I turned off the switch to the outlet, my computer stopped charging, and when I turned on the switch, my computer continued charging. Anyway, he told me to go and talk to W3 to change the voltage setting. That took a while, but eventually, I think they both went outside and did that. I should really do that, just to see what it is like.

July 30, 2014

Today, I had my Igbo lesson. It was good. My Igbo teacher said (I think partially in Igbo) that he thought that when people have white weddings in the US, they only invited a few people and had just a little bit of food. He said that he thought it was only in Africa that people invite a lot of people and have a huge feast, that it is only in Africa that they do things in excess. He said that he thinks that the US is more civilized. I soon informed him of shows like bridezilla and Say yes to the dress, and said that the amount of attention given to weddings in Nigeria and in the US seem rather similar, but I thought this was interesting because it shows his conception of modernity. He thought that Nigeria was not as civilized and this had to do with the idea of excess and waste and that in the US, they were more “civilized” because they conserved. We were just sitting in the front of the house trying to make up sentences from Igbo vocab words he had taught me. I asked him about the wedding he said he had attended this weekend, and he said that apart from a little rain, which stopped, the wedding was perfectly fine. It was sad though, because last week he told me that the mother of one of the people getting married had died during the week. I am glad that the wedding went Ok and pray that the woman prayed for them from above. I told him that I was going to a white wedding for one of my neighbors – trying to use the word for white wedding in Igbo – I think Agbamakwukwo. That was when he asked me if I was going to an oriri – i.e. a feast in Igbo, at this white wedding. I told him, yes, I thought so. He solemnly nodded. Then, he asked me in Igbo: he heard weddings in the US were affairs where only a few people were invited with only a little bit of food served. Was that true?

Apart from that the lesson was fine. I got a call from E1 during it, which definitely reminded me of this weekend.
After that, I ate moi moi and watched the kids play outside. After that, I made power pasta – i.e. spaghetti for M2, M3, W3, and W4 for lunch - W4 and M2 were home!

After that, the lights came on and we ate power pasta while watching a south Korean film W4 had bought at the nearby market. It was about teenagers, about a poor girl at a rich school with 4 really rich boys who own the school – but apparently, she is the only one willing to stand up to these boys. It is called boys before roses or something. I actually enjoyed it. It is interesting how the people in the house keep buying Filipino films and now a Korean film. There is definitely some international exchange going on.

07/31/2014

I then took a bath and then went to the market to buy a wedding gift for the people wedding on Saturday. I thought it would be cute if I got them material to make matching traditional attires (the bride and groom, I mean) for later in their marriage. The woman who sold me the cloth was sweet. She really tried to help me find good cloth. She asked me about where I was from. Without waiting for me to answer, she said that her sister was in the US and that her daughter was studying medicine in London. I told her that I was from the US doing an anthropology PhD. She was surprised. She asked me how old I was, I told her 27. She just looked me up and down in surprise. She said that she was going to call her son to come and marry me. Earlier, she had asked me if I was married. During the conversation, and while shopping for cloths in her shop (she was the first clothier I visited) I didn’t really see a print that jumped out at me as the right one. There was one I liked, but I don’t think she had two of that same cloth. With the other cloths, she showed me the one that she had on display in her shop and when I asked for it’s match, (i.e. another 6 yards of a fabric) she called to one of her neighbors who also sold cloth to see if they had the same one. That is how I eventually got the two 6 yard bolts of cloth I did. Anyway, I told her that none of them were jumping out at me and that I was thinking of just shopping around first and then coming back to her. She said no, that it was not right – a mother like her – that she had a daughter just like me and that she wouldn’t cheat me. She said that there is no way that she would try to cheat me that she is only showing me quality prints and new prints, and that I could ask anyone. I told her that I believed her, but that it was just that I didn’t see a print that I really loved. She eventually convinced me. It is interesting that she assumed that I thought she was trying to cheat me. I knew she wasn’t. I am not sure how, but I just knew. I guess I especially knew because I saw a cloth there that W1 had suggested I buy about a week or so ago. When I picked out that one, she said that it was of lower quality, and that it was a
common print – that the couple may have it. I think she might have been right about it. Her assessment that the quality was lower was confirmed by the prices she gave me for each one. She also told me that the price of that one was 1700 naira. When I asked her the prices of hi target ones, she said 2500, which I also knew was accurate. So, I believed her.

08/06/2014

After the lesson, my lesson teacher told me that at the first bank he visited with my check to cash it wouldn’t accept it because my signature was not consistent enough. He had had to go to another bank’s main branch to cash the check, and when he went there, they didn’t even ask him about the signature. I thought that was interesting, when I had first opened a bank account, M1 had complained about my signature not being good enough. I now realize that maybe here, because there are not really social security numbers yet, signatures are really important. Maybe I should work harder on mine. ***

08/23/2014

After that, I got up and spoke with W1 about M1 leaving for college. She started getting teary-eyed at one point. She also said that W3 had said that she liked the name Damilola and that she was worried that W3 would come back with a Yoruba-speaking husband because his name was Damilola. She also advised W3 to definitely make friends with Igbo girls, because then at least they would “speak the same language.”

08/26/2014

During the lesson, I spoke with him about Ferguson, MO and the protests going on there. He said that here in Nigeria, people get killed like that by the police all the time. He said that if one argues with the police, the police can just shoot the person and go away. He said that it is really frequent. He said that just recently sanitation workers – the people who clean up and do environmental around the city, had killed a boy, and apparently there was no punishment. Or that no one did anything. He said that they had caught the boy and beat him until he died. I told him about the video I watched recently of a mentally ill man who a policeman shot in St. Louis after the man had stolen 2 energy drinks from a convenience store. In response, my teacher said that although there is impunity in killing in the police force in Nigeria, he said though that if there is a situation in which there are a small number of police and a relatively larger number of onlookers and a police officer kills someone, that many of the onlookers will go and attack and kill the offending police officer. He said that somehow or another people will go from behind the police
officer and struggle him down and kill the man. That is how people in Nigeria get justice for unjust police brutality. They gang up on the offending police officer and also kill that police officer – especially if there is no other police officer around to provide the first with back up.

…

I think after this, he then commented that many of the things members of government are doing, things that are very unjust had affected the traditional Igbo views of the world. He said that he agreed with me that Igbos typically stand up for what is right and love justice, but that the dirty things members of government do have made Igbos to change their ways and just throw up their hands. He said that these things members of government do cause Igbos not to follow up with injustices they see because they don’t think it will go anywhere. He said that there is no recourse for righting injustices, that the system is not working. He said, as my Igbo teacher, who had studied Igbo language, that it was changing how Igbos do business, - that Igbos don’t do anything to right injustices anymore.

…

The woman who had plaited my hair on Monday called W1 (who had introduced me to her) and told her that she was unable to cash the check at the bank. Although she had told me at the time that she accepted checks – I even showed her the check book and asked her if that form of payment would be OK, before I wrote it out to her (to make sure she knew what I meant) and she agreed, and I wrote a check for her. However, she called W1 and told her that she was unable to cash the check at the bank because she did not have an ID card to show the bank and because she did not have a bank account. She didn’t even know where to get an ID card. I realized that I had missed something and assumed something the day I wrote her the check. I had assumed that most people in Nigeria had bank accounts. But W1 laughed at me that Monday and asked me why I had given a check to the woman who plaited hair –someone who had not even gone to school. She said that you don’t give checks to those people. Which people? I thought, who exactly and how many people don’t have bank accounts in the country. I realized that I am really missing something. *I spent most of my time with college-educated people in Nigeria. They were generally lower to upper middle class people in Nigeria. That has to be the focus of my dissertation. I cannot really speak to the situation of poor people. Though, even these middle/upper middle class or “educated” people

08/27/2014

As I was walking up the road to my house, I saw these two NYSC officers. Since, I had been taking pictures purposefully during my walk, I decided to ask these two for a picture of them in their NYSC get up. They were two really young looking girls, they were sweet. I told them that the photos would go up on my website and asked for their names. I told them that not a lot of
people visited the site, so it was probably OK. They actually agreed to the photograph and I took a picture of them. Then I asked them what they were doing there. They said they were going door to door looking for housing. They said that NYSC had not provided them with housing and so they were scrambling to find accommodations. At first, I was really worried because I thought that they didn’t have anywhere to spend the night, and it is really bad for young women to be at risk and vulnerable like that (I know, as a young woman myself that that would be scary). So, I told them that they could follow me to my compound, that I live on that street and I could ask W1 or our neighbor if they had accommodations for these corpers. On the way I told them about myself, that I was an anthropologist working on national identity in Nigeria – i.e. nation-building. I told them that they normally shouldn’t follow strangers to their accommodations, but that I was safe. W1 said she didn’t have a room to let. Our neighbor said the same thing. They both said a nearby road was a better bet, but that overall this area wasn’t the best. I called a couple of friends including W2 to see if they knew the names of places these girls could stay, and I gave them my number just in case they ran into any trouble. I was really worried about them. I wanted them to have a safe place to stay for the night. We eventually parted and said our goodbyes, but it is sad that NYSC can’t do more to prepare people beforehand for finding accommodations. W1 said that NYSC does pay the people a stipend, that they often get stipends from the federal, state, and local governments, separately, so they should be fine, but still. If NYSC officers are in a desperate rush to find accommodations, then NYSC is doesn’t seem to be giving them perhaps as much support as they needed. For example, one of the girls, when asked said that when she learned that they wouldn’t be provided with accommodations she almost cried.

09/03/2014

During the lesson, I saw that there was a water truck coming into the compound. It was ours! Literally I was so happy. It was so great to finally have water running from the faucets – it really felt so great. I mean, we have faucets, we should be able to use them right? It would be different if we didn’t have faucets, indoor plumbing, and other infrastructure for running water. In that case, there is no expectation of running water (i.e. that certain amenity) and you can probably live a very content life around a bucket. Seriously. Knowing you need to fetch water, bathing from a bucket, washing dishes using a bucket of water, and creating a system where you have fresh buckets of water daily (as long as you have access to fresh water, it’s probably do-able, though I don’t know for sure since I haven’t lived through that sort of life to know if it is comfortable too. It is probably not comfortable for the people who have to go and fetch water every day or whenever they do have to fetch it. M1 told me that his mom used to have a big, big container for water and he and his sister would periodically fill it up. They would drink from that, perhaps cleaning it with alom or some other traditional method, and they would probably have a separate container for water used for other purposes).
09/09/2014

We went to go and eat out with friends, the oldest daughter of whom, is going to the U.K. to study human resources management and return …. I got to sit next to the daughter. She is really nice and sweet, and considerate. We talked a lot about films popular in Nigeria. She asked me a lot of questions about what it is like abroad. Although I told her that I had never really been to the UK, that I was from the US, she said that they were both Western countries and that it would be similar enough that she wanted to know. So, I told her, even though, I knew that what she may face might be quite different, and I warned her about that. I told her that she might have difficulty understanding her accent and she theirs. I told her that she can expect the roads to look pretty nice, and the buildings to also look rather nice as well. I also told her to expect a lot of secularism, but to stay strong in her faith – that those who believe in God are in the right in every way. It was a good convo.

09/23/2014

The thing about the water is that you never really know when it is coming. You can fill up your Geepee with a tanker and have enough money to buy these things, but I still didn’t know when the water was coming, and I wasted money. I wonder if this is how it feels like for wealthy people. They don’t know when or if they can rely on the waterboard for water. I wonder if the uncertainty stemming on a reliance on the government for these basic amenities cuts across economic classes. I guess that’s why a lot of them just create boreholes. …. M3 has gone back to his private primary school today. I am not sure why the house chose to have him resume today, when his school actually resumed on Monday. He said that when he went into his school he and all the students had to be scanned for their body temperature, as well as other precautions about ebola. He also joked and warned me that he had to wash his hands, (as I was preparing indomie/ramen in the kitchen) because he had just come back from school and he may have ebola. W1 yelled at him from the living room and said that he should not wash his hands in her kitchen because he might be carrying ebola. She said that he should wash his hands in the bathroom. She repeated this instruction. He sounded sad. I don’t blame him. What a response. Oh well.

09/29/2014
When W1 came home from work with M3, she was really upset because she had to contest a fine that these road workers corporation in our city had made her pay. My Igbo teacher said that these people had become a public menace in our state. He said that the governor had created this office in order to give young people jobs in the state. Our governor, in this Southeastern state, tries to do a good job. The people are basically supposed to stop motorists who are driving badly and make them pay a fine. However, now, these people are abusing it. They fight motorists who disagree with them. They charge 15 -20,000 naira fines, when the fines are not supposed to be that high. They call people out for minor and ridiculous infractions like having your car a little bit over the white paint on the road that says “Stop.” Apparently while W1 and my lesson teacher were talking in Igbo, W1 said that M1 had gotten stopped by these motor safety workers and they wanted to charge him 15,000 naira on the spot or take him to their office and charge them 20,000 naira. M1 said no, at most I am either going to pay you 2000 naira here or you can also take me to your office so I can understand what I did and you can charge me 20,000 naira there. So, apparently, they all got into M1’s car to drive to that office, but along the way, they stopped M1, and said that it was OK, that he could just pay them 2000 naira, meaning, they were probably bluffing. My Igbo teacher laughed at this. W1 was really upset about this though, and was shouting. My Igbo teacher also said that these motor safety people and those like them only stop men, and suck men dry. They don’t usually stop women. My Igbo teacher is a man though, so I wonder if that is just from his perspective. We spoke about how these are collective experiences, how these are things that affect both the rich and poor in our state.

09/30/2014

So, when I was having my lesson, W1 came back with M3. She said that her day had gone well, but said that she had had trouble cashing my check at the bank. She said it was because I cross my zeroes. I learned that from my Algebra teacher in 7th grade. I didn’t know it would cause problems for me now. I also, don’t think it has caused problems for me in the past. However, here in Nigeria, W1 said that the bank called her and questioned her, because it looked like I had stricken out the amount I gave her, leaving her with only 1 naira, (this is despite the fact I had written the amount in words on the check). In the past, my Igbo teacher said that he has had trouble with my check because the signature I used to sign the back “didn’t look the same” as the signature I have on the computer. Again, the woman who braids my hair who I gave a check once for 4000 naira had trouble cashing one of my checks because she didn’t have a bank account and didn’t even know what was involved in cashing a check. She also didn’t have an ID of any sort. I think all of these problems though multidimensional, may come from the fact that there are no real social security numbers in Nigeria - there are no real identification numbers in the country to track people. So, with things like banking that touch or involve money, things that are sensitive – your signature becomes incredibly important as a form of identification. Also, crossing out zeros is paid more attention to here, because what you write is more important.
Perhaps they have less ways of tracking you down to confirm that is the amount you paid out – I don’t know – they are just much more of sticklers here. Also, on a check, whenever I cross something out, I have to sign my signature next to the crossout to confirm that it was me who crossed it out! I don’t think I’ve ever done these things in the United States. Your signature seems extremely important, whereas in the US, your signature is not as important. You need to have an ID card, etc. Anyway, I told my Igbo teacher that I would write about that experience in my notes, so I am.

10/03/2014

While speaking with Sam, he told me that he has been to many African countries, and that they all have less power than Nigeria has. However that the thing about Nigeria is that the power outages are so sporadic and unpredictable. In the other countries, you know what time you will get power and when you will not. It is like rationed and predictably on at a certain time of the day. In those other countries, you can plan. However, in Nigeria, you just can’t plan. It definitely fits my theory. Oh also, we were about to see a movie on Wednesday called October 1st. It is a thriller. Vivian just emailed me that she has already seen it and it was really good. It was directed by a Yoruba man who apparently makes a lot of films. I want to see it. Apparently, it is about October first and independence day in Nigeria, but a thriller? IDK.

10/12/2014

Today, in the morning, we went to church. It was raining. People were squeezing under the canopies outside to keep out of the rain, but it is hard to make the plastic lawn chairs we were using, fit under the canopies. The homily was good. At the end, there was a public health announcement – this time about free vaccines that WHO was giving out to fight polio and meningitis. I wonder if WHO and other health organizations feel that spreading the word about Ebola through churches worked so well that they are doing the same thing with other diseases. What they probably don’t realize is that people may stop paying attention to these announcements if it is not about something urgent like Ebola and if it happens like every week. It did seem like an unnecessary invasion of the WHO into our Sunday morning church service. However, at the end of the announcement, the priest read out “prevention is better than cure.” It was only then that I saw someone ahead of me nodding in agreement. I don’t think she was nodding before. That was like the only physical response to the announcement I saw in the audience.
I spoke to a seminarian about doing confession. He gave me instructions for how I could beg the priest to do confession. He said that there was benediction (adoration) soon. He was surprised at my accent and asked me questions about America. He asked why it was that whenever people went to America, it always really affected their accents. I told him that I was born there, and he got it…. After that, I spoke with the seminarian. He asked me if I was staying for mass. I told him that I really wanted to, but that I didn’t want to travel at night or when it got dark. He asked me if I had a personal driver. I said no, I can’t afford one. He stopped a little, but still asked me to stay for mass.

October 31, 2014

It was interesting going to a spare parts place. One guy sitting there said he liked my accent and was joking around. The guy who fixed my phone also fixed his generator before coming to fix my phone. Pretty cool. Very techy. The loudmouth guy was surprised that I knew any Igbo. He said that he would have to stop talking. I am not sure what that is supposed to mean. I went home by catching the bus from old park/ogbete market.

November 5, 2014

Yesterday, I ate soursop in the morning. It was raining, but I went to try out this restaurant I had seen about 0.5 miles away from where I am staying. I bought an umbrella first. The lady I bought it from said she liked my accent and everything about me. Oh, strangely, the day before, the girl and her mother, from whom I buy cloth handkerchiefs approached me. The daughter approached me and asked me if I could help her find a job. I am not sure why she thought I could help her do that. … The cab driver asked if I had come from abroad I asked him why he was asking me. He said it was because of my accent. I don’t think I gave him a kind response. I don’t think I said a lot to him in response. If I did, I would just further incriminate myself or make myself look different. I took a cab because I was tired, but I didn’t want the wine glass I had bought to break or the wine itself to break.

Nov. 9, 2014

I walked back home. I wanted to avoid taking cabs or anything. I had taken a taxi there though for 30 naira. The taxi picked up at least one other person on the way. Interestingly, taxis and keke’s can act sort of like buses and ask for the same low price as bus fares in certain
circumstances – I think when they are already going in the direction you are requesting. It is nice. I wish I had known that before. However, I wonder why they do this.

Friday 12/12/14

He said that he is the topic of conversation in people’s meetings in his village. He said, people talk about me as the boy who had a perfectly good WAEC score but refuses to take JAMB. He said that he used to be cutting hair just to keep busy, but that he recently quit that and is now studying for his JAMB, under his parents request. He said that here in Nigeria exam malpractice is just normal. He said whether you cheat on an exam and get a score or you take it yourself and get the score you need, it doesn’t matter. No one cares. It is just part of the system. He kept saying, “You don’t know what education is like here. I don’t think you understand what education is like here. Do you understand what people do here when they take exams?” That struck me – that he said whether you take an exam or you cheat on an exam it does not matter to most people here - that exam malpractice is just part of the system. Even his parents are telling him to just forget about his guilt about his malpractice and just take the next exam. Wow. I wonder what his parents are more worried about – the money, him not telling them that he was going somewhere else instead of taking the exam, or just the idea of the restitution – i.e. they think a falsified WAEC is fine? I don’t know.

Saturday 12/13/2014

He said that he didn’t want to attend the event on public transportation, like an okada bike because people would be gawking at him and it wouldn’t look good. Maybe because he is like a big man in the village? The way that class is so embedded in people’s lives here and also tied up into “tradition” i.e. elder status and age status is interesting and definitely something worthy of further study.

Monday 12/15/2014

The older man said that he had told his kids that he wanted a simple burial. The expat said that, yes burials are expensive. He said that it wasn’t so much the men, but that the women involved demanded everything.
I went inside to interview someone. Then, I came back outside and I spoke with my cousin’s wife. She told me about herself. Then she quite shortly asked me how my father and I were living in there, i.e. the house. She asked me how we were eating. “Did I cook?” she asked. I said yes, I cook — I know how to cook Nigerian food. She looked surprised. During my time here, I’ve found that people have a lot of preconceptions about American women, as well as myths. For example, earlier one of my cousins commented about how she was happy that I was cooking and cleaning and knew how to do those things and was making an effort to do that. However, some of her other cousins who were born in Nigeria did not know how to do those things – i.e. cook or clean, but had servants who had always done those things for them. She said that she knew of some other white people, who had maybe come to do research as well who were like me, who had also tried to cook and clean and get involved in the culture. I said that maybe it was because sometimes people from here want to show off their wealth and power by not doing house chores, while people from abroad don’t really care. I can’t remember what she said, I think she just concluded that her cousins were lazy or something.

Preliminary Data Results/Analysis

2. Interviews
   Analysis:
   a. It generally seems that people do not feel like they know much about Nigerian history. Again, this may not reflect the reality, but rather their perception of it. As I asked people more specific questions about historical events, most people could come up with responses to them. It did seem as though history was not important to most people and informants offered several reasons were offered for this. There seems to be a lot of sectarian sentiment in the country along ethnic lines. However, people do identify themselves as Nigerian and discuss a Nigerian group that includes people of different ethnic groups – i.e. it overlaps with documented Nigerian citizenship. Informants seem to care a lot about development, to the point that some said they would not have minded having the British around longer- though they seem to want to use the British exploitatively to further their own development. Development and ideas of modernity will likely play a key role in my dissertation, along with ways in which collective memories have fueled sectarian tensions in the country – for example, memories of the Nigerian Civil War still seem to fuel tensions between Igbos and non-Igbos.
When I interviewed informants, many began by saying that they did not know much about Nigerian history.

During several interviews, instead of historical events, people began by discussing contemporary Nigeria, particularly social problems in Nigeria today. As described earlier, I probed one interviewee about how she was conceptualizing “history.” She seemed to say that it was anything that has happened in the past and not necessarily events that occurred a long time ago. To her, history could even include an event that occurred last week. This differs from how I would immediately conceptualize “history,” i.e. I would think of formative events, usually ones that occurred a several years in the past.

Initial original Nigerian history narratives were typically rather short, usually under 10 minutes. As I asked specific questions about different events in Nigerian history, it joggled people’s memories, and interviews lasted longer.

Some individuals provided excuses for why they did not know much about Nigerian history or were not Nigerian history experts. Some of these informants reported that they did not like to think about Nigerian history because the history of Nigeria upsets and disappoints them. Others said they did not know much because they did not specialize in history or other “arts” [social science and humanities] courses during their secondary or tertiary education. The remaining mentioned that they and other Nigerians do not know much about Nigerian history because they are busy trying to work and survive.

Individuals generally seem to describe “Nigeria” and “Nigerian people” as passive recipients of actions, while leaders – both colonial and Nigerian – were active agents doing things to Nigeria and Nigerians. This is not necessarily referential or a reflection of reality. The way people talk often “creates” reality for them and provides insights into how they understand their past and present social landscapes.

Everyone said that Nigeria needed more development to fulfill the expectations they had for the country.

More than half of informants described Nigerian leaders as totally failing to develop Nigeria – or help it reach its full potential. They usually
attributed this to corruption. Less than half of individuals described Nigerian leaders as trying to make a difference in improving infrastructure in Nigeria – i.e. that leaders were trying to help make Nigeria reach its potential.

h. Many people said that they would have liked British colonists to stay in Nigeria longer so that they could have helped to develop Nigeria more. They pointed to examples of South Africa and how apartheid ended only recently, and South Africa was more developed.

   i. This was surprising to me on first, and I am still not entirely sure what to make of this. However, upon further inspection, and actually looking at the terminology informants used, it seems that Nigerians want to use the British or pluck their brains for ideas. Kind of like the brain drain, but opposite? They want to use the British for development similarly to how the British used Nigeria for their own development.

   j. Several informants described Nigeria in terms of infrastructure. They said that infrastructure like electricity, water, and roads had fallen into disrepair because of corrupt leadership.

   k. Individuals also discussed Nigeria in terms of the Nigerian people. They said that Nigerians were forced to make corrupt choices because institutions, for example education, were marred by corrupt practices already.

   l. In their interviews, when discussing amalgamation (i.e. Nigeria’s formation when colonists put different ethnic groups together to form one country), and other events, it seemed as though Igbos were generally more enthusiastic about Nigeria splitting into at least two or three parts than people of other ethnic groups. It also seemed that Igbos of different ages were more likely to remember and discuss the Biafran-Nigerian Civil War and also describe it in more detail than people of other ethnic groups.

   m. Some non-Igbos in Enugu described experiences of marginalization and discrimination among Igbos in Enugu. Igbos seemed to describe historical discrimination against them by other ethnic groups, especially instances in which Igbos were targeted while living outside of southeastern Nigeria, or what they call “Igboland.”

   n. When I asked them about Nigeria’s centenary in my interviews, most people did not know that this year, 2014, was the centenary at all. Several individuals said that they did not know what Nigeria was doing by celebrating turning 100 years
old. They said that it was shameful that the country had not accomplished more in its 100 years of existence. Some others said that they were pleased that Nigeria had turned 100 years old and compared Nigeria to countries like the United States, asking, “What did the United States look like when it was 100 years old? We need to give Nigeria more time to develop. It is on the right track.”

n. It is also important to note that these individuals were all speaking to me, a Nigerian-American visiting Nigeria, during these interviews. That social context may have affected their responses. I as the interviewer, as well as the interview questions and techniques, did serve as a constant throughout the interviews.

3. Archival and Media Research
   Analysis:
   
a. The fact that politicians across parties are gasping onto ideas and narratives of transformed infrastructure and the eradication of corruption signal that these are important ideas and narratives to the majority of the Nigerian public. It shows, as some social theorists would argue, they are politically using these ideas and cultural tools to their own advantage, and that such ideas are part of a larger system of meaning in Nigeria.

   Data:
   
b. Similar narratives to those in the participant observation I’ve addressed above.

c. It also seemed that politicians used ideas of corruption and degrading infrastructure in Nigeria to their benefit. For example, I uploaded several campaign videos for current president Goodluck Jonathan in which narrators explained that he was transforming Nigeria, particularly in terms of infrastructure. I also have pictures of campaign posters in which politicians promised to instill good governance in society.

4. Key informant interviews
   Analysis:
   
a. The sports example particularly shows that there actually is potential for Nigerian patriotism and unity, but that it may be highly dependent on Nigerian success. Before that success, Nigerians are waiting to see if Nigeria will succeed. This seems to mirror the larger experience of living in Nigeria – waiting for Nigeria to succeed.

   Data:
   
b. Seemed to often reiterate the notion that Nigerians often have to rely on themselves and not on the government for basic amenities.

c. Also, Nigerians seem to collectively root for Nigerian teams when the Nigerian teams are doing well. However, when the Nigerian teams are doing poorly, they begin to blame team members who are not of their own ethnic group.
5. Surveys
Analysis:
   a. People completed the surveys pretty well. People do not seem to know or remember the history of their ethnic groups as much as they do that of Nigeria.

Data:
   b. Many people were able to complete the surveys, however some said that they found it rather difficult.
   c. On initial observation, it seems as though people generally knew less about the history of their ethnic group than they did about the history of Nigeria.

6. Interviewing children about Nigeria (open-ended interviews) – socialization
Analysis:
   a. The young children I interviewed generally did not speak about Nigeria in the same way as adults, including their parents. For example, young children didn’t say much about Nigeria at all, and they generally concluded that Nigeria was good. However, the older dependent I interviewed from one of the families did seem to have a lot more to say about Nigeria and seemed to make similar conclusions as her caregivers. It demonstrates that information about Nigeria may not be something heavily emphasized in the lives of those children, both at school or at home. However, perhaps with age and greater exposure to conversation topics, people become socialized to speak about the country in a certain way. Again, this demonstrates that how people are speaking about the country is not necessarily directly reflective of reality or the environment, but is a socially cultivated.

Data:
   b. This seems to link to observations I made during preliminary research in public and private schools in different areas of Nigeria. Teachers in these schools actually taught students schools that Nigeria is corrupt and still needs to reach its full potential.
   c. Young children said that Nigeria was good (age 6-10). One child, aged 10 gave more detail and mentioned that Nigeria had problems that it needed to work on. The 18 year old described Nigerian leaders as corrupt and Nigeria in need of development. She came from a family that identified as Igbo, and she also discussed Igbo marginalization.

7. Interviewing members of an extended family- socialization
Analysis:
a. Family seems to make at least some impact - for example, people seemed know and discuss the same influential family members when they told national narratives, and thus share at least some of the same repertoires when remembering and talking about Nigeria and it’s history.

Data:

b. From initial observation, it seems as though none of the members of the family spoke of the Nigerian government positively. This is despite the fact that there are individuals outside of the family, within Mbaise, who did say positive things about the Nigerian government. Additionally, members of the same family often mentioned family members who they believed played pivotal roles in Nigerian history and often described similar events in Nigerian history.

8. Radio Analysis:

a. Whatever broad national sentiment exists, it is such that many informants are eager to leave the country. Perhaps the idea of a lack of modernity and access in Nigeria is balanced by a myth of abundant development in other countries.

Data:

b. I was struck by how many people wanted to leave the country and how this was even the chosen interview topic. Several callers said it was just too difficult to succeed in Nigeria and that the country was corrupt. This was why they wanted to leave. In terms of embodiment, it was weird to know that my own personal ideas and message was being broadcast to thousands of listeners simultaneously – it was both a little frightening, but I also felt kind of powerful in that moment.

9. Metaphor Analysis

Analysis:

a. Several interviewees described corruption as taking public goods and using it for private gain (i.e. to enrich oneself and one’s family). The interesting thing was that they said that corruption was “spoiling” “ruining” “corrupting” Nigeria and Nigerians. Some people described corruption as a “cankerworm” or “disease” “eating away” at Nigerian society. Basically they described corruption as something that caused decay.

Data:

b. People seem to say that corruption (using public goods for private gain) is literally eating way at Nigerian modernity and development. This may be what people on the ground in this oil-dependent country see as happening. This says a lot about how they see their built environment, and reasons behind why they believe the built environment is the way it is.
10. Graphs

Analysis:

a. One fascinating thing about this was that I had them discuss infrastructure in Nigeria first and create a graph that mapped out the levels of good infrastructure in Nigeria over time. Towards the end of that discussion, they had already started to talk about corruption in Nigeria. Immediately after that graph was completed, I asked them to map out levels of corruption over time. They yelled in happiness and recognition because they had just been talking about corruption. The discussion about corruption over time was more lively, loud, and contentious than the discussion of infrastructure over time. A lot of yelling was involved. At one point, while they were eagerly discussing corruption in Nigeria, a woman came into the room and after greeting me said “I see that Nigerians are talking.”

Data:

b. Discussion about corruption seems to be extremely animated and is described as typically “Nigerian,” as evidenced by the woman who said, “I see that Nigerians are talking.” To better understand this phenomenon, I wonder if such a statement would be made in another country like Mexico or America under similar circumstances. Also, how likely is it that such a raucous conversation about corruption in government and society would even occur in the first place in countries like say the United States? I am guessing that this phenomenon occurs in many countries of the global south and that Nigeria is an exemplary case study.
Appendix G

2014 Focus Group Discussion Report

Focus Group Discussion/Chart Activity From November 17, 2014

Summary

• The discussion about corruption was much more lively. More people joined to observe this conversation.
• Someone walking into the room during the corruption chart discussion and activity said, “Nigerians are talking,” which seems to indicate this is a typically Nigerian thing to do – debate about corruption in society.
• In the corruption discussion, everyone was engaged. In the infrastructure discussion – the younger individuals and the lone woman did not seem to talk as much. However, in the corruption discussion, everyone was talking much more than before.
• They do not like colonists. They see them as people who stole from and cheated Nigerians. They say they treated Nigerians like slaves – i.e. were oppressive. They see colonists as people who were the original ones to bring corruption to Nigeria.
• They think that there are higher levels of infrastructural development now than at any time in the past. They think Goodluck Jonathan is really making headway with his transformation agenda.
• They think that there are extremely high levels of corruption now and that Goodluck Jonathan is not doing anything to tackle corruption.
• These two previous points do not correlate with the assertion they make at the end that corruption and poor infrastructure beget each other.
• They had a hard time deciding who was the one who brought more corruption to Nigeria – Babangida or Abacha.

Amount of Good infrastructure in Nigeria Over Time

• First activity, hesitantly starting.
• Discussing the infrastructure when oil was discovered and when it wasn’t. They ask themselves what people were using to build and get money for infrastructure before oil was discovered? They discuss cocoa, and other things.
• 1954 when oil was being discovered.
• Person originally videotaping with my phone wants to join in.
• The conversation is very hushed here as people analyze. But they are still discussing
• Some person even yawned.
• The volume of the discussion is low. They sound a bit unsure about when infrastructure was built.
• Say state creation in “60’s” did not necessarily mean infrastructure was done.
• Said colonists did development during development era to convince Nigerians to remain colonized in the 1960s.
• When the former videographer joins in, the conversation becomes a bit more lively. Videographer is a 30-something year old Igbo-speaking man.
• They decide (mostly Igbos though) that the civil war destroyed a lot of infrastructure in the Eastern part of the country by the 1970s.
• Time 18:51 Part 2: “But I know that this period, between 70 and 75 was the peak of our our oil boom when um Gowon said that uh we had excess money, and Nigeria had excess money at that time. He didn’t know where to –to spend it. [others laugh as he says this last sentence – older Igbo man speaks with him, “invest it”]. So, there were many infrastructures being built then.”
• 1975 they argue by then Gowon had done reconstruction so, there was a slight uptick in infrastructure building].
• They discuss the oil boom.
• They talk about bridges being built in Lagos.
• Said British allowed them to get independence. They were all talking about independence. They say the British were manipulative and stole from Nigerians. Everyone shows signs of agreement. They say the British treated Nigerians like “slaves.”
• They are saying infrastructural development was very high in 1975 - more than any time previously, even in the development era.
• Younger participants seem disengaged. One is from the South-South. The other is Yoruba. South-south asks the Yoruba man when the group brings up the 1980 date, “Were you born then?” The Yoruba man says, “No!” They laugh. South-south leaves to make a phone call.
• They say the infrastructure Nigeria had in 1983 was maintained by Buhari and Idiagbon because they were “honest” and tried to instill discipline. This was after democratic rule ended and was stopped in 1983. They said Buhari and Idiagbon also tried to build other infrastructure.
• They say Abacha introduced corruption – everyone laughed.
• In 1980, they’re talking about IMF restructuring and how it may or may not have affected infrastructure and how Babangida introduced it. They are saying Babangida was in charge of that and embezzled the money and did not put it towards infrastructure.
• Two older Igbo men who’ve the oldest, most senior men present, are talking to each other a lot and dominating the discussion.
• One of them says Babangida oversaw the boom in oil prices during the U.S. Gulf War and Kuwait and that IBB misused that money too (the increase in oil money Nigeria would have gotten with higher prices).
• They said 1995 was a mess - the mess continued – “A lot of strikes.”
• Into the mid 90’s, the younger men (NYSC) are more engaged.
• Infrastructure goes down on the graph during the mid 90s
• Discussion about whether state creation in mid 90’s equals infrastructure creation.
• One person mentions oil spills everywhere.
• Said Shonekon didn't do much. HE was listening to people to carry out an agenda.
• 1999-2005 massive road construction, gutters, schools – equipping the schools.
• International games Nigeria had some international games.
• Power infrastructure.
• Integrated Power something
• 2014, still the peak of infrastructural development in their eyes.
• A young man (south-south) even quipped “Transformation Ambassadors…”
• People were saying “Goodluck’s doing something” repeating this → this man is from the Delta region.
• Younger ones: they said government built infrastructure for international games and then after the games, the government used that as an excuse not to build more infrastructures.
• One man from Bayelsa said he loved Abacha for giving Bayelsa people a state. An Igbo woman said, “Ahh! So that’s why you love him?”
• An 30-something Igbo man (one of the oldest men) adds states began to open up and infrastructures were built, even gutters and everything.
• They say GSM came in
• One talks about Ppwer infrastructure, integrated power structure.
• 2010 – “Yar’adua was a transformation ambassador”
• A young man Bayelsa man says “His transformation agenda, he never completed one.”
• “He was just coming in and he went to the hospital,” another man says of Yar’adua.
• 2014 is the peak.
• The 30-something Igbo man points to the south-south man/Bayelsa man and said “Your man is-“
• -“Transformation Ambassador,” the south-south Bayelsa man finishes.
• The 30-something Igbo man laughs along with the others and says, “Your man is doing something.”
• “Yes Goodluck is doing something.”
• Bayelsa man says, “You can see that Goodluck will be the best president.” He claps, but no one else looks enthusiastic. He says, “Goodluck will be the best.” He says, “It's the first time an automatic ticket has been given to a sitting president.”
• 30-something Igbo man says, “It’s the first time that kind of manipulation has been given to a [indecipherable]…”
• Checking their work after: They rearranged by making 1965 and 1970 the same.
• National theater in Boron, they agreed that it was Gowon who built it.
• They said, “But then money laundering was very rampant, even armed robbery.”
• The woman then said when you come to where they are located, you can see people collecting people’s blood, packing all of it.
• Another man, who I don’t think is Igbo comes in to see and then walks away.
• Younger Bayelsa, south-south man: Boko Haram – “Nigeria has not come together to fight Boko Haram, that’s why. We came together to fight Ebola.”
• 30-something Igbo man: “Who made us come together? Who made us come together to fight Ebola?”
• Oldest Igbo man – other senior, “It was death that motivated us.” Younger 30-something Igbo, “It was death, A bi?”
• Younger Bayelsa man, “We were afraid. You know Boko Haram is affecting one side of the country, but this one (Ebola)-“
• Oldest Igbo man, “But this one doesn’t know whether you are rich or poor!” People agree. They are laughing.
• Bayelsa: “There are people beind Boko Haram. Buhari mentioned it that he is going to make this country ungovernable.”

Level of Corruption in Nigeria Over Time

• When they see the next graph, one says, “Wow!” Another man says, “Are we corrupt at all? This one will be just flat.” And everybody laughs.
• The first comes and uses both hands to point to how the graph will go up to the top, “Corruption, corruption will be like this.” When he says this, everyone laughs and looks engaged – they laugh in agreement.
• They’ve already warmed up and understand the activity now and their response to seeing the level of corruption in Nigeria over time is that of laughter and being about twice as loud as they were at the beginning of the first graph activity.
• The youngest Yoruba person says, “1960, that should be the lowest”
• 30-something Igbo says, “There was corruption then. It was even high then.”
• Oldest Igbo man, “No, it wasn’t high.”
• They agree that corruption in the 1960s, “was low compared to now.”
• “Because they have not discovered oil. They have not discovered most of the …” “And the whites were in charge.” “The whites were even corrupt” “Unless it depends on what we count as corruption because it was even corruption that made them be here.”
• [This conversation is much louder and more lively than the last one].
• They are describing colonists as people who cheated Nigerians and didn’t even treat them as humans. They are discussing this as corruption.
• One Igbo man says, “Remember, there were a lot of [building – I think hard to decipher] resources that they got there that they didn’t use to build infrastructure in our village now. So, was that not enough corruption?
• The Bayelsa man knows when oil was discovered – 1954. He says, “That is why I don’t like white people. They are wicked.” Someone else, “Very crafty people!”
• Young Yoruba man indicates that corruption will be growing over time on the graph. Others laugh in agreement.
• They are debating about whether 1960-65 was corrupt. 30-something Igbo man says no – Azikiwe, Awolowo, and Bello, were they corrupt?
• Older Igbo man responds that the ministers around them and people in the House of Assembly were very corrupt. This Igbo man then tells the younger 30-something Igbo man should recall, “Man of the People.” These two then discuss Chinua Achebe’s book AMn of the people – younger Igbo man says, “But this Man of the People…” and discusses which time Achebe set the book.
• Another man joins.
• Each year is getting higher.
• They are now debating who introduced more corruption- Babangida in the 1980s or Abacha- some arguing that Abacha wasn’t in office long enough to affect levels of corruption as much as IBB was.
• “It was high, but not as high as Babangida!”
• “Abacha is the highest!” “Babangida is the highest!”
• “Let me eat!” That is a phrase two Igbo men associated with Babangida.
• They spend a lot of time discussing who was more corrupt, Babangida or Abacha – it is very heated and lively. You can only be this lively if you have lived in Nigeria. Even I couldn't participate in this discussion with this much vim.
• One admits that they can’t decide who was more corrupt than the other. He goes on to suggest that they should perhaps just go on who was in office longer to determine who was more corrupt.
• They have been stuck on the time 1980 for a while.
• One is arguing Babangida is more corrupt because he killed Abiola, Abiola’s wife, and his family.
• The other said IBB was called Maradonna for a reason.
• They say corruption was low under Buhari. They were recovering from Obasanjo.
• One man said there was a $40 billion master plan for the development of Nigeria under Murtala Muahmmad, that Obasanjo inherited it, “but as a Yoruba man, he didn’t know what to do with it.” Everyone laughs. The only Yoruba (a Young man there) says “No! No!” shaking his finger and laughing at the man who made that comment, the man who recently joined.
• The man continues, “They like party, now!” Another Igbo man interjects and says “It’s not true” in response to the Obasanjo statement. “I disagree with you.”
• Some argue now that FESTAC was a foreign policy move to help liberate other black nations from colonialism and help them usher in independence. Or help other black nations in general. Oldest Igbo man reminds the newcomer the phrase “Nigeria: Giant of Africa” “didn’t start today.”
• The Newcomer asks, “was that in the master plan?”
• 1990 – corruption was high and they point to Babangida as being the cause of that.
• More and more people have joined the group now to observe. What began as a group of 5 is now a group of 8 with additional people coming to observe, the discussion, but not staying.
• 1990 – Babangida’s reign was what they used to gauge the level of corruption
• 1995 – Abacha’s reign
• 2000 – Obasanjo’s reign. Even though he created the EFCC, they agree it was a ruse.
• 2010: “Unemployment came in,” one man adds and repeats this statement.
• “Yar’adua came in” “But he ahd not started fighting corruption before he died.”
  “Goodluck. Goodluck is not even fighting corruption,” says one Igbo man, “corruption is even-” “Corruption is as it was,” another man interjects. “Corruption has not reduced. It’s even increasing,” says the original man. Someone agrees. “He is doing well in other things, but corruption, he allows it.”
• “They are even asking NYSC to pay before entering NYSC,” says a speaker, indicating this is crazy with a gesture towards his head.
• A woman comes in to the room, observes the focus group conversation on corruption and says to me, “Nigerians are talking.” This is time 0:44 on focus group discussion video part 4
  “Corruption is very, very high.”
  “Very high! Very high!”
• “Nigerians, their eyes have opened,” says the newcomer middle-aged looking man, “They see that the people on top are eating our money.”
• Woman, “That’s it! That is corruption, now! If every average man had something [to eat- I think, but can’t totally decipher], I don’t think that is corruption, if they have enough.”
  Yoruba man, “That is still corruption.” Woman, “Yes!”
• Another person, “But did you know that Goodluck is not fighting corruption in any way?” “Yes, he’s not!”
• Once the activity is over, the Yoruba man says, “We could continue talking about corruption.”
• I ask the group, “Is corruption a bigger challenge than infrastructure?” “Yes.” “Yes,” from everyone in the group. The 30-something Igbo man says, “Two of them are even – one begets the other.”
• “Corruption begets lack of infrastructure,” 30-something Igbo man.
• Igbo woman, “This one gave rise to the other one because if not because of corruption, the other one would be taken care of.”
• Later, someone says, “Goodluck may not be corrupt himself, but those who surround him.”
• “The wife is a criminal. Mama Peace!”

Reaction after the activity.

“Team work. I liked it.”

It allows us even to come down.
You see chart, especially of the corruption now, um we had a peak of it in 1980 and 1985 - [corrected by others] 1990 to 1995. Then, you can look at the end, at 2014, it’s rising. We didn’t like it. We want it to come back to .. so low. Even if it- even if it- if we don’t have it at all, we will be happy. Even if it is not going to be possible, let it be reduced as in 1985.”

That was when we had honest government.
Appendix H

Government Official National Narratives Report
December 2, 2016

Overall Summary – Key Points

In the Ministry of Information series on “This Day in Nigerian History,” 83.1% , 59 of the 72 events the authors listed centered as events in Nigerian history discussed something negative happening in Nigeria. Their discussion of Nigerian history does talk about colonialism, - Independence from colonialism, specifically.

The documents by the Nigerian Centenary and the Nigerian Government proper sound like the authors are trying to re-write Nigeria’s history by making Nigeria sound like it is NOT a colonial creation. Why? What is so dangerous about knowing that Nigeria is simply an invention of colonists? Perhaps it delegitimizes Nigeria and that is not what they want if they feel Nigeria is pulling apart at the seams due to ethnic tensions, a persisting “lack of government accountability” from the military era (Nigeria Centenary 2014), or as the Ministry of Information admits, people simply questioning Nigeria’s progress?

However, the Ministry of Information discusses how Nigeria freed itself from foreign enemies during Independence and this is unifying. Why not take this tack? Maybe apart from delegitimizing the Nigerian project and in the process, the necessity for current Nigerian politicians, they also do not want to mention colonialism because they don’t want to portray Nigeria as being necessarily doomed from being created as a mistake or by leaders with bad intentions.

83.1% , 59 of the 72 events the Ministry of Information listed in Today in Nigeria’s History centered as events in Nigerian history discussed something negative happening in Nigeria.

Metaphors:

Nigeria is:
• Diverse
• An Amalgam of ancient kingdoms and societies
• 56 years old

Nigeria as an object:

• Existed before British Colonization
• Is diverse
• Contains multiple ethnic groups
• Is divided into 36 states
• Was amalgamated/put together by Lugard
• An area in which Lugard did some things like raise the Union Jack and the Sokoto Caliphate a British protectorate
• Is blessed with natural and human resources
• A place in need of unifying factors, such as sports
• Something that voted for independence from Britain
• An entity that declared it’s independence from Britain
• A place that suffered from a lack of democracy
• Something that is pushed around and manipulated by its leaders
• An entity that faced severe economic problems

Nigerian things are:

• Impact not only Nigeria, but the rest of the world.

Nigerian people:

• Come from over 250 ethnic groups and languages
• Hold English as their lingua franca
• Are religiously heterogenous
• People who have experienced problems.
• People who, “reflect on issues, concerning the economic, social and political development of the country”
• People who emotionally remember October 1, 1960

Each document contains striking omissions:

1. - In the Centenary website version of Nigerian History, The authors of this document are trying to re-write amalgamation and argue that Nigeria – including its borders, is ancient history and was always an “amalgam of states.” They don’t want to say that British
Colonists created Nigeria.

a. The author writes, “Nigeria is an amalgam of ancient kingdoms, caliphates, empires and city-states with a long history of organised societies, that it was a pre-colonial amalgam of ancient kingdoms, it’s boundaries were drawn by long-standing trade in addition to European interests and the Berlin conference. They don’t talk explicitly about Frederick Lugard. They say that the name Nigeria “was adopted” - not that Nigeria was named by colonists. They are using passive voice throughout to erase the actions of certain actors people. They don’t discuss how the British created the Northern and Southern protectorates. These protectorates just suddenly exist. Apparently The protectorates were merged. No, Lugard merged the protectorates. There is literally no mention of colonialism explicitly except from what Nigeria was named. “The Colony and Protectorate of Southern Nigeria” or the “Colony and Protectorate of Nigeria.” They don’t even mention that Lugard was a colonists. In this document celebrating the Centenary of Nigeria’s Amalgamation, they don’t want to mention that Nigeria was created as a colonial entity.

2. -The Ministry of Information website really seems to want to emphasize unity – including rallying behind the fact that Independence allowed Nigerians to free themselves from “foreign” entities. Why are they emphasizing unity – is there disunity? The author also says that it is normal for people to criticize the progress of Nigeria as a country. It ultimately normalizes the complaint. By normalizing it, they may either be trying to make it seem like a less urgent problem or be trying to call attention to it. This is especially since the other entries in ‘sin Nigerian History seem to be largely negative events.

3. -The official government website does not even talk about Nigerian history. It discusses pre-colonial Nigeria history and avoids Nigerian history. It literally skips over Nigerian history! Other pages on the site talk about different aspects of Nigeria, but not it’s history.

• The next question to ask is who they are speaking against – who are the commentators the MI is speaking against?
Notes:

- A huge use of passive voice throughout. The author either does not want to make the British look like conquerors of people, doesn’t want it to look like the British and local people fought against each other during colonization, or like Nigeria was created out of colonial conquest. See highlights on primary document for examples of passive voice.
- There is a lot of discussion here already of precolonial countries. The federal government’s story begins with somewhat vague descriptions of pre-colonial Nigeria – there is no way you could be that detailed about so many countries. Then their story ends at Lugard Amalgamating the northern and southern protectorates in 1914 – except they write that these “were amalgamated.” What happened to the rest? Where is the rest of the story – like actual NIGERIAN history. So far, this is the history of countries that existed before Nigeria even existed. So, the federal government does not even want to talk about Nigerian history when presented with the opportunity on their website? That is insane.

1st October in Nigeria’s History - Federal Ministry of Information and Culture

(Osanyintolu 2016)

This is an article among others the Ministry of Information publishes called: This Day in Nigerian history.

Summary:

It definitely sounds like in this document they are trying to encourage national unity. They also want do discount naysayers questioning Nigerian progress by normalizing it. In this document, they seem to, in some ways, emphasize colonial oppression and freedom from it as a unifier, for example, statements saying that Nigerians achieved their freedom from a foreign entity.

Notes:

- There is still a lot of discussion about gaining independence from Britain.
- “Today, Nigeria is 56 years! Hurray!!!” Really trying hard to sound excited. Hurray
with three exclamation points? Even exclamation point after 56 years is a bit unusual for a government document.

• “On this particular day and month in 1960, the nation, acclaimed to be the ‘giant of Africa,’ got her independence from the British Colony.” OK. This was published after the Centenary in 2014. This is dated for 2016. However, they are acknowledging that at some point Nigeria was dubbed the “Giant of Africa,” yet, the centenary publication did not.

• This history is also very short. But I suppose it is singularly the history of independence. This further demonstrates that Independence is an important event in Nigeria - for unity, and democracy/fairness. It is actually longer than the other excerpts for the series, This Day in Nigerian History, they are producing. It think it may be the longest entry. So, it’s brevity may not imply much.

• “Many popped champagne with the freedom from the colonial masters…. From then, Nigerians took over the reigns of leadership from foreigners. I keep seeing this term - “Colonial masters” in the surveys too Almost sounds like “slave masters.” Colonists denied Nigerians their freedom.

• “Recognising the country’s particular multi-ethnic configuration or diversity, the British government had established for Nigeria a federal structure of government, with three regions.” Here they allude only shortly to Nigeria’s multi-ethnic configuration or diversity. I think the MIA’s job is to build national pride and in Nigeria that really means to create unity. Perhaps they only post about the history of Independence on their website (I tried looking for a full Nigerian history, but couldn’t find one, which was odd for an agency advertising Nigeria) because this moment is a unifying memory or unifying moment. It is really about freedom from people/invaders from the outside and not freedom from oppressive military/political leaders on the inside who attached to particular ethnic factions. Critique of those leaders could lead to anger among their ethnic faction and more ethnic tension - perhaps. However, if that is the case, why are they alluding below to a weak central government and strong governments for the three regions?

• “Critical observers will today, as usual, ponder and reflect on the journey so far. Like in previous anniversaries, Nigerians will reflect on issues, concerning the economic, social and political development of the country.” 1) The fact that the Ministry of Information for the Country is even talking about criticisms about the country is remarkable. It must mean they think it is salient, including for their readers. 2) They are responding and in dialogue with these “critical observers.” They are saying what these observers said. They respond that it is normal for Nigerians to reflect on “on issues, concerning the economic, social and political development of the country.” By doing this, they literally stop speculation as to why Nigerians would ponder/reflect on the
progress of their nation. They normalized it and in many ways imply it’s no big deal.

*Today in Nigeria’s History* – an website publication series by the Ministry of Information

83.1%, 59 of the 72 events the authors listed centered as events in Nigerian history discussed something negative happening in Nigeria.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Nigerian Ministry of Information</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Web Series: Today in Nigeria’s History</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>All Stories Published in 2016</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Centered on Positive Nigerian Event</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2012 July 2: Federal Ministry of Industry Trade and Investment said Nigeria signed a Memorandum of Understanding with US-based Vulcan Petroleum Resources Ltd., to build six oil refineries in a project worth 4.5 Billion dollars.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1934 July 13: Akinwande Oluwole “Wole” Babatunde Soyinka was born. He is a Nigerian playwright and poet. He was awarded the 1986 Nobel Prize in literature, the first African to be honored in that category.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2011 July 19: Former British Prime Minister, David Cameron, from 2010 to July 13, 2016, who was succeeded by Theresa Mary May, visited Nigeria, as part of his working visit to Africa. He was earlier in South Africa where he held talks with President Jacob Zuma. He was in Nigeria to push a message of trade and democracy before making an early return home to deal with the spiraling phone hacking crisis. David Cameron took part in 2008 July 2: The Federal Government charged two former Aviation Ministers with misuse of $165-million fund set up to improve air safety after three airplane accidents.</td>
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in a press conference with former President, Goodluck Jonathan at the State House in Lagos.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Event Description</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2007 July 25</td>
<td>The Federal Government filed suit against three leading tobacco companies, seeking more than 40 billion dollars (29 billion euros) in damages for the cost of treating smoking-related diseases.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2010 July 3</td>
<td>Gunmen attacked two cargo vessels off the coast of the oil-producing Niger Delta, killed one crew member and kidnapped twelve (12) foreign workers.</td>
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<tr>
<td>2013 August 12</td>
<td>Nigeria became the first African country to sign the UN Arms Trade Treaty marking “resolute and unyielding” efforts to deny arms to terrorists, pirates and bandits.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2011 July 3</td>
<td>In Maiduguri, assailants threw a bomb at drinking spot near a police barracks. Eight (8) people were killed and fifteen (15) were wounded.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1960 October 1</td>
<td>Nigeria’s Independence Day. Nigeria gained independence from Britain, with late Abubakar Tafawa Balewa as the Prime Minister leading a coalition government of parliamentary system.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2011 July 7</td>
<td>In Maiduguri, motorcycles were completely banned.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1979 October 1</td>
<td>Alhaji Shehu Shagari was sworn in as president. Thus, the Second Republic began on this day.</td>
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<tr>
<td>2007 July 4</td>
<td>In southern region, armed men kidnapped five foreigners, the same day the most prominent militant group announced it would end a truce with the government.</td>
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<tr>
<td>2014 October 20</td>
<td>Nigeria was declared free of Ebola by the World Health Organization on 20th October 2014</td>
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<tr>
<td>2008 July 4</td>
<td>Hundreds (100) of soldiers who served as United Nation (UN) peacekeepers in Liberia went on rampage in Akure, protested against military authorities’ refusal to pay their allowances.</td>
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<tr>
<td>2003 October 24</td>
<td>Nigerian health workers began an emergency drive to immunize some 15 million children against polio.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2008 July 5</td>
<td>Police deployed troops in the remote state of Ebonyi after fourteen (14) people were killed and scores of buildings destroyed in clashes between rival groups.</td>
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<td>Date</td>
<td>Event</td>
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<tr>
<td>2009 October 25th</td>
<td>Oil-rich Nigeria’s main militant group (MEND) called an indefinite cease-fire to encourage dialogue with the government.</td>
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<tr>
<td>2010 July 5</td>
<td>Anti-human trafficking agency, ruled that it lacks sufficient evidence to criminally charged Senator Ahmed Sani Yerima forty nine (49) years old for marrying a thirteen (13) year old Egyptian girl, the daughter of his driver, to whom Yerima allegedly paid a $100,000 dowry.</td>
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<tr>
<td>2004 October 28</td>
<td>A contingent of 50 Nigerian soldiers arrived in Darfur, Sudan, aboard a US military plane, the first of 3,000 extra African Union troops deployed to monitor a shaky cease-fire. Nigeria has been an active participant in UN peacekeeping missions, deploying military contingents, unarmed military observers, military staff officers, formed police units, police advisors and civilian experts to over 25 UN missions. Nigeria is currently one of the largest UN contributing countries with military and civilian personnel deployed in ten UN peacekeeping operations and the African Union Mission in Somalia (AMISOM).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1967 July 6</td>
<td>The Biafra War erupted. The war which lasted more than two years, claimed six hundred thousands (600,000) lives. The war broke out when the Igbos launched a rebellion to form a separate state following allegations of ethnic cleansing. This led by late Emeka Odumegwu-Ojukwu</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2013 November 8</td>
<td>Golden Eaglets Wins FIFA U-17 World Cup in Abu Dhabi defeating Mexico 3 goals to nil. On this day, Nigeria through the Golden Eaglets became the first country to win the FIFA U-17 World Cup for the fourth time.</td>
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<tr>
<td>2006 July 6</td>
<td>A Dutch oil worker was kidnapped by armed men from a Royal Dutch Shell gas plant and he was released in July 10, 2006.</td>
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<tr>
<td>1998 July 7</td>
<td>Nigerian opposition leader, Chief Moshood Abiola died of heart attack while he was in prison. Late Chief MKO Abiola’s death sparked rioting in Lagos, that left at least nineteen (19) people dead.</td>
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<td>Date</td>
<td>Event</td>
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<td>2003 July 8</td>
<td>Trade Unions accepted a Government compromise on fuel prices, and ended a crippling eight-day strike</td>
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<td>2007 July 8</td>
<td>In Southern region, a British toddler was released by gunmen and reunited with her parents.</td>
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<tr>
<td>2009 July 8</td>
<td>Nigerian MEND militants blew up two key oil pipelines, as they stepped up attacks in response to Government’s amnesty offer.</td>
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<tr>
<td>1998 July 9</td>
<td>The military government commuted the death sentence of General Oladipo Diya and five other men convicted of plotting to overthrow Abacha. In 1997, Oladipo Diya and dissident soldiers in the military allegedly planned to overthrow the regime of Sani Abacha. Over the alleged coup uncovered by forces loyal to Abacha, Diya and his cohorts were jailed.</td>
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<tr>
<td>2007 July 9</td>
<td>In southern region, gunmen attacked two southern oil installations, kidnapped two senior Nigerian employees of Royal Dutch Shell PLC and two foreigners.</td>
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<tr>
<td>2000 July 10</td>
<td>In the villages of Adeje and Oviri-Court in the Niger Delta, Over one hundred (100) people were burnt to death after a damaged gasoline pipe exploded.</td>
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<tr>
<td>2008 July 10</td>
<td>UN special envoy, Ibrahim Gambari resigned as chairman of a planned peace summit for the oil-rich Niger Delta following opposition from regional leaders.</td>
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| 1991 July 11| A Canadian-chartered DC-8
<table>
<thead>
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<th>Date</th>
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<tr>
<td>2010 July 11</td>
<td>In southern region, four journalists were kidnapped by gunmen. The kidnappers made a ransom demand of $1.67 million, but the journalists were later released on July 18, with no ransom paid.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2003 July 12</td>
<td>Former President Bush met with former President Olusegun Obasanjo in Nigeria. They discussed the circumstances under which former Liberian President, Charles Taylor would live in exile in Nigeria. Wrapping up a five-day tour of Africa, Bush said it would not be permitted for terrorists to use the continent as a base “to threaten the world.”</td>
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<tr>
<td>2006 July 12</td>
<td>In Bayelsa State, two explosions hit oil installations belonging to an Italian oil company, along two Agip pipelines.</td>
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<tr>
<td>2011 July 14</td>
<td>German Chancellor, Angela Merkel met with President Goodluck Jonathan, after her trip to Angola the previous day sparked controversy over an offer to sell patrol boats. Markel was with the former President to discuss energy and African security matters. The German Chancellor was welcomed by a military guard at the Presidential palace in Abuja.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2013 July 14</td>
<td>Sudanese President, Omar al-Bashir came to Nigeria for an African Union summit on HIV/AIDS, as his hosts chose to ignore an International Criminal</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

plane, carrying Muslim pilgrims crashed at Jeddah, Saudi Arabia international airport, killed all two hundred and sixty one (261) people on board.
<table>
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<tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2011 July 15</td>
<td>In Maiduguri, some persons suspected to be from the Boko Haram sect threw a bomb at a police patrol car and wounded seven civilians. Colonel Victor Ebhaleme said a bomb was planted and a police van drove over it, the bomb exploded and injured eight policemen.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2000 July 16</td>
<td>Between the villages of Ifie-Kporo and Ijala in Delta State, oil pipeline blast killed over hundred (100) people.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2008 July 16</td>
<td>In Rivers State, about thirty (30) armed men in speedboats attacked a navy vessel that was guarding key oil facilities. Three militants, a naval serviceman and a civilian were killed.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2006 July 17</td>
<td>Federal Government signed a deal with AIDS Charity, set up by former President of USA, Bill Clinton to make cheap AIDS drugs available to fight the disease in the country. The agreement was to help expand access to treatment for children, and raise funds to fight AIDS in Nigeria, which was the third highest case load in the world after South Africa and India. The signing was witnessed by Bill Clinton, who said testing for HIV/AIDS was crucial to curbing the infection rate in the country, where about 3 million people were living with the virus.</td>
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<tr>
<td>2007 July 17</td>
<td>Anglo-Dutch oil giant, Shell was unable to fight a major fire along a key oil supply pipeline because of unrest in Ogoniland, Rivers State.</td>
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<tr>
<td>2007 July 18</td>
<td>Former President Olusegun Obasanjo was accused of corruption by a...</td>
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top Nigerian lawyer, he asked the Economic and Financial Crimes Commission (EFCC) to investigate his financial activities while in office.

2012 July 18: Federal Government lifted a state of emergency in four States following a wave of attacks blamed on the radical Islamist group Boko Haram.

2006 July 19: In Lagos, a four-story block of flats collapsed overnight. Red Cross officials confirmed that at least twenty four (24) people were killed. It was discovered that the accident was caused by poor construction also the building was under three years old. The building contained thirty six (36) apartments and one hundred and eighty (180) people, and there were several businesses on the ground floor.

2007 July 24: President Umaru Yar’Adua ordered the release of funds belonging to Lagos State Government, seized in previous years by his predecessor.

2008 July 24: In the main city of Lagos, a petrol tanker exploded into flames, killed twelve (12) people, and left several others with severe burns.

2000 July 23: In Delta State, pipeline fire broke out, near the port of Warri and left forty (40) fuel scavengers dead. 2007

2007 July 23: In South-west, six people were killed and several trapped when a three-storey building, under construction, collapsed.

2008 July 25: Two oil workers, one
<table>
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<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Event</th>
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<tr>
<td>2005 July 26</td>
<td>In Southwestern region, a ferryboat carried passengers between remote villages sank, and killed at least eighteen (18) people.</td>
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<tr>
<td>2005 September 20</td>
<td>Federal Government</td>
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<tr>
<td>2007 July 26</td>
<td>Court sentenced former Bayelsa State Governor, Diepreye Alamieyeseigha to two years in jail on charges of corruption and money laundering and ordered him to forfeit millions in property and cash.</td>
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<tr>
<td>2006 August 10</td>
<td>In Southern region, gunmen, in military fatigues, seized two foreign oil workers.</td>
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<tr>
<td>2007 August 10</td>
<td>In Port Harcourt, gunmen kidnapped an American manager from oil services firm Hydrodive, as he traveled to work in the city.</td>
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<tr>
<td>2010 August 11</td>
<td>In Abuja, condemned building collapsed and killed twenty (23) people.</td>
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<tr>
<td>2014 August 11</td>
<td>In Borno, about three hundred (300) women, and five hundred (500) children gathered at the gates of a military base, claimed that their spouses were ill-equipped to take on the Islamist militants.</td>
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<td>2012 August 12</td>
<td>A senior officer said troops killed twenty (20) suspected Boko Haram Islamists in the city of Maiduguri. Military commander, Victor Ebhaleme said one soldier was killed and two others were injured in the raid.</td>
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<tr>
<td>2005 July 26</td>
<td>Nigerian and one Filipino, were kidnapped in the Niger delta.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Date</td>
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<tr>
<td>2007 September 21</td>
<td>The presumed head of the Nigerian armed group the Movement for the Emancipation of the Niger Delta (MEND), Jomo Gbomo was arrested in Angola.</td>
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<tr>
<td>2012 September 21</td>
<td>Central Bank of Nigeria banned two airlines from receiving any additional loans over their massive outstanding debts</td>
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<tr>
<td>1992 September 26</td>
<td>A Nigerian Air Force C-130 transport plane crashed in Ejigbo near Lagos shortly after takeoff, Killed all 163 people aboard.</td>
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<tr>
<td>2010 September 27</td>
<td>In Abia State, gunmen hijacked a school bus and kidnapped 15 children on board. Later the hijacker demanded for a $130,000 ransom for their released. 2010 October 1, a joint military and police taskforce rescued the children and no ransom was paid to the gunmen.</td>
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<tr>
<td>2001 October 1</td>
<td>Former President, Olusegun Obasanjo announced the formation of a National Security Commission to address the issue of communal violence.</td>
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<td>2014 October 23</td>
<td>Former Nigerian First Lady, Mrs. Stella Obansanjo (59) died in Spain.</td>
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<td>1996 November 7</td>
<td>Wole Soyinka</td>
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<td>Date</td>
<td>Event</td>
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<tr>
<td>November 10, 2010</td>
<td>Nigerian trade unions called off a strike protesting the minimum wage across the oil-rich nation, one day into the planned 3-day action the strike</td>
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<td>was called off at the end of the negotiations where the government of the day made promises to raise the wage. The minimum monthly wage then was 7,500</td>
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<td>Naira.</td>
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<td>November 23, 2011</td>
<td>Nigeria’s president unexpectedly fired Farida Waziri, the female head of the lead anti-corruption agency and appointed agency deputy Ibrahim Lamurde</td>
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<td>as the commission’s acting chairman.</td>
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<td>November 25, 2003</td>
<td>Nigeria’s President Olusegun Obasanjo said he will surrender ousted Liberian leader Charles Taylor to face a war crimes trial if Liberia asks.</td>
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<tr>
<td>November 26, 2008</td>
<td>Nigeria’s food and drug control agency NAFDAC said 25 children have died in the last fortnight after taking a teething mixture discovered to contain</td>
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<td>a harmful substance. Laboratory tests on the drug found out that it contains a killer element known as diethylene glycol. The agency shut down the</td>
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<td>premises of the Nigerian manufacturer. The death count soon rose to 34 as more children lost their lives after being given “My Pikin” teething syrup</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>contaminated with diethylene glycol, blamed for causing kidney failure.</td>
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stepped in to stop a long-running strike by university lecturers, ordering an immediate end to the dispute and vowing to sack teachers who refused to cooperate.

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<tr>
<td>Total</td>
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<td>12</td>
<td>59</td>
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<td>Percent</td>
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<td>16.90%</td>
<td>83.10%</td>
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**(Nigeria Centenary 2014)**

- The author writes, “Nigeria is an amalgam of ancient kingdoms, caliphates, empires and city-states with a long history of organised societies.”
The authors of this document are trying to re-write amalgamation and argue that Nigeria has always existed—that it was a pre-colonial amalgam of ancient kingdoms, its boundaries were drawn by long-standing trade in addition to European interests and the Berlin conference. They don’t talk explicitly about Frederick Lugard. They say that the name Nigeria “was adopted” - not that Nigeria was named by colonists. They are using passive voice throughout to erase the actions of certain actors people. They don’t discuss how the British created the Northern and Southern protectorates. These protectorates just suddenly exist. Apparently The protectorates were merged. No, Lugard merged the protectorates. There is literally no mention of colonialism explicitly except from what Nigeria was named. “The Colony and Protectorate of Southern Nigeria” or the “Colony and Protectorate of Nigeria.” They don’t even mention that Lugard was a colonists. In this document celebrating the Centenary of Nigeria’s Amalgamation, they don’t want to mention that Nigeria was created as a colonial entity.

The author clearly decided to organize this by republics. However, the Civil War is the only section not labeled as a republic. Clearly, even for them, this was a turning point in the story of Nigerian history. Interestingly though, the story still hinged on:
- Pre-colonial “amalgam” that was later named?
- Independence,
- Civil War,
- Military Rule,
- and Democracy.

From the narrative it seems that Nigeria was on its way to democracy and then whoops there was civil war because of mean Ojukwu and military rule exemplified by Abacha, and then a transition to democratic rule. Micro-narratives include after the civil war, “the end of the second republic” which indicates the end at either attempts at democracy or an end to attempts to eradicate corruption. The latter seems like it may be likely because they excluded FESTAC and Gowon’s early 1970’s corruption (not sure if this was an oversight), perhaps because it wouldn’t have fit into their narrative about the end of the second republic being the end of government attempts to stave off corruption/keep corruption out of government.

Another one is the evil of military rule, which reached it’s height during Abacha’s regime. – not really during babangida’s. I say this because they do not discuss Babangida’s human rights abuses and corruption at all, but Abacha’s crimes are listed. Apart from Ojukwu and Shagari, he is the only one who is labeled as making bad decisions – and this list occurs during the military era. Large amount of time is spent discussing Abacha in the military section as well.

Another other mini narrative is the amalgamation issue discussed at length above.

Notes:

• “However, the military government he instituted was unable to quiet the ethnic tensions that plagued the country or produce a constitution acceptable to all regions. Most fateful for the Ironsi government was the decision to issue Decree No. 34 on 24 May 1966.” Here the author says Ethnic tensions were real and here are the reason for the split. The government is not the reason - it is pre-existing conditions and the people.

• “In 1967, Major-General Yakubu Gowon moved to split the four existing regions of Nigeria into 12 states. However, the military governor of the Eastern Region, Colonel Chukwuemeka Odumegwu Ojukwu, refused to accept the division. Coming on the heels of a number of massacres of Igbos in several northern cities, he viewed the move as a plot to destabilise the region, and declared the Eastern Region the independent Republic of Biafra” This is the only time we are talking about how anyone views something. This is strange. How do they know what someone is thinking? In the case of Ironsi and Gowon, the author talks simply of their actions - removing - focus from their morality and somewhat absolving the possibility of moral blame. But here, they presume to know that what Ojukwu was thinking and that HE distrusted (emphasis on distrusted) others. i.e. the rest of the country.

• “End of the Second Republic” Title:
  o The name of this section is also odd. Why label this section “The End of the Second Republic” when it is actually just a discussion of the Second Republic. The name is different from the other headers. Maybe because the end of the second republic is important for their overall narrative. There is a big, “However,” in this section, and those are important. Were there particular hopes that were alive before the end of the second republic that were dashed or something? I think during the second republic, there was some promise of democracy that was dashed by Babangida moving the country into military rule. Also, Babangida introduced huge amounts of corruption and possibly decay, while Buhari was trying to eradicate corruption or social deviance from a Western model through his War Against Indiscipline. Buhari back in the day actually sounds a bit like Duterte these days.

• “End of the Second Republic” Section:
  o This is quite odd. Where is FESTAC? Where is mention of Gowon using oil money to fund a (criticized as wasteful) global party? Where is discussion about how Gowon prematurely proclaimed Nigeria as the most powerful black nation? *Apparently this is the time when Corruption grew most in the Nigerian government and was one of the reasons for Gowon’s overthrow. Is this why this pivotal time is just totally skipped over? Where is discussion of the oil collapse in the late 1970’s that dispelled those promises? Literally 1970-79 is erased in this centenary narrative. What are they hiding? Is it because they are going by
republics? But then finish off the 1st Republic. Are they trying to not piss certain people off here?

- “However, the Shagari administration was ejected from power on New Year's Eve, 1983 by a military coup led by high-ranking military personnel. They accused the civilian government of economic mismanagement, widespread corruption, electoral fraud, and administrative incompetence as well as a general lack of concern for the problems of Nigerians.” It is amazing to me though that they - in this centenary document are mentioning corruption and government mismanagement at all. This is a document purportedly to celebrate Nigeria and Nigerian history. Corruption and administrative incompetence must be important then.

- “The Third Republic: After an eight-year rule and several promises of a return to democratic rule, President Ibrahim Babangida.” No discussion of corruption, some of my informants think IBB to be the one to enlarge and fatten corruption in Nigeria the most. I would love to compare this document’s timeline of corruption- when they do mention it at all, with the chart from the focus group.

- “However, on June 23, for reasons that have never been quite clear, President Babangida annulled the election, throwing Nigeria into turmoil. Several thousands were killed in riots protesting the decision until Babangida agreed to hand over to an interim civilian government led by Ernest Shonekan, a prominent nonpartisan businessman, on August 27, 1993.” They make Babangida look unreasonably nice. Like he happened to just annul the election and whoops! there was turmoil, and then he tried to fix it by installing Shonekan.

- “Abacha's government was accused of numerous human rights abuses, including infringements on freedom of speech, assembly, association, travel, and violence against women. He died of heart failure on June 8, 1998, and was replaced by General Abdulsalami Abubakar” Abacha's government was accused of numerous human rights abuses, including infringements on freedom of speech, assembly, association, travel, and violence against women. He died of heart failure on June 8, 1998, and was replaced by General Abdulsalami Abubakar. In terms of the narrative arc of the military rule mini-story of military oppression, he is the focal point.

- “On April 21, 2007, following a controversial general election, Umaru Yar'Adua of the PDP was elected President. Following Yar'Adua's unexpected death on 5 May, 2010, his vice-president Goodluck Jonathan became the third president of the Fourth Republic.” Again, it is like the people who are dead are treated more harshly than people who are alive. That is except for Murtala Muhammad. Muhammad still has a lot of popular support though.
• The narrative ends with, “On September 15, 2010, Jonathan announced on Facebook that he had decided to run for re-election; he was the first Nigerian president to declare his re-election bid via social media. On April 18, 2011, Jonathan was re-elected as the nation's 14th head of state.” The social media part is a random turn in the narrative. Is this all they can say about Jonathan’s accomplishments? By 2014, it had been four years by this point since Jonathan had taken office.

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TRANSFORMATION OF NIGERIAN ROADS

TRANSFORMATIONAL LEGACIES OF PRESIDENT GOODLUCK JONATHAN

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World Bank

Yale University Press
Appendix I

School Observational Research Report

Summary
Overall, teachers did not tend to speak about Nigeria or Nigerians positively. One warned about the country eventually dividing. This speech was demonstrated in their teaching and in their private conversations with me.

See this excerpt from classroom observatory notes about from a public secondary school civics class lesson from July 4, 2013:

Civics class

[The civics teacher, like I mentioned before, said he was doing an “emergency class,” just for me. He wouldn’t have felt the need to do an emergency class, though, if he had given me his correct time table, and if he taught regularly.

Anyway, he began the class period by walking into one of his normal classes, when it did not seem to be taught by anyone. I am pretty sure that in Nigeria, students stay in a class and teachers move around, but I could be totally wrong about that.

Anyway, he told the class that this was an emergency session. He said the topic of the day was going to be poverty.]

He asked the students what poverty was.

One student responded, “a state of wretchedness.”

Another responded, “a state of being poor.”

Another, “A state where you are financially lacking.”

The civics teacher gave the answer, “ A state when human beings are not sufficient in the basic things you need in life.” He said you are not poor when you don’t have a big car or you don not have a big house. You are poor when you are lacking in the necessary things you need in life.

He said poverty has very negative effects. What are the effects of poverty?

One student answered, you cannot take care of your health.
Another student said, you will steal or do criminal activity because you will want things to clothe yourself.

Another student said, you cannot eat.

Another student said, you are not yourself.

The civics teacher said, yes, people become a problem to society – they are disturbing the peace of society – area boys do this – they become a nuisance and are a source of embarrassment to the society. They can then take to stealing.

What leads to poverty? Lack of knowledge- lack of knowledge of who you are or of the environment you are in. You want to be aware of ways to help yourself and do something for yourself. If you know that in your family, you have 8 people sleeping in one room, you have to move the dining table at night and roll out the bed, you need to recognize that your family is poor. You do not want to continue in this way. You need to tell yourself that you will not continue in this way.

When you don’t have focus, you will often remain in poverty. Poverty is a gradual process, it is not immediate, it is a gradual process.

Not taking education seriously is training in the path of poverty.

He said, is your father a gateman? It is because he has no education and no knowledge.

Is your mother in poverty? Maybe she gets a man friend at night and you cannot tell her that it is wrong. It is because she does not have an education.

When you impact your community, that is important. You don’t just help yourself – people will then always be asking you for things and depending on you. However, if you help your community, and invest in your community, people around you will ask you for less and everyone will be OK.

He said, Nigerians are waiting for you (by you he meant the students). He said, Nigeria is waiting for you to deliver. That is how we reduce poverty in our society.

He said being rich means having enough to eat and wearing nice and decent clothes, not riding in a big jeep.

He said, “But your generation is a bad generation. They are lazy. The don’t want to work with their hands. They want wealth quickly. They want to ride big cars, but don’t want to work hard. That is why there are a lot of dropouts.”

He said, “Ebenizer (I think maybe a musician) had a record that was popular for 30 years.” He helped his community by making this album. You should ask yourself similarly, how do I make
improvements in my family – at least start there. That is what this is all about [I think he meant this class] – not exams, but application and changing your community.

A July 2013 excerpt where a public secondary school history teacher discusses her teaching:

The history teacher said laughing slightly, the only thing is that if you are born in Nigeria, you are a citizen of Nigeria. She said, “I do not teach students to love Nigeria or fight for Nigeria. Unless in civics. But me, I do not do that. . .. Nigeria has not done anything for me, so I will not do anything for Nigeria.”

The only thing is that I teach them to be good citizens of Christ. I teach them the Gospel – but not to be good citizens of Nigeria. Only civics teachers teach that.

She said that she will teach them that what white people may have written about Nigeria in the books – slurring against the country, and saying bad things about Nigeria is incorrect and wrong. She will teach them the truth about what actually happened using other documents. For example, she said that the Arabs kept documents of different empires in what is now Nigeria.

From Nigerian Stories and their Impacts on Nationhood (Onyeneho 2012):

“Every person I interviewed or with whom I spoke during preliminary data collection this summer described Nigeria using a corruption narrative. In classes, during the discussion of Nigerian history, history teachers recounted Nigeria’s history as one rife with corruption, particularly at the level of government, starting with colonizers and ending with current governmental regimes. When interviewing one secondary-school history teacher in Lagos on the causes of the Nigerian civil war, he actually interrupted himself in his description and encouraged me to focus on the politics of corruption for my research” (Onyeneho 2012).”

“Chapter 6. Preliminary Field Work Data and Observations

Schools

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1. Discuss the socialization of Nigerian youth using these Nigerian narratives

From observing classroom instruction, it seems that during history lessons, teachers discussed the corruption of national leaders and the fact that Nigeria has a lot of problems. There does exist an official national narrative where Nigeria “must be one” or “united,” however this narrative usually includes a conflicted point that Nigeria is corrupt, which seems to undermine the effort. Along with the lack of frequency with which Nigerians use this more positive narrative, the inclusion of the anti-government corruption narrative significantly weakens its ability to convince.

A friend, who works as a teacher in Lagos, Nigeria as a public primary school teacher in a heavily populated section of the city, secured a copy a social studies textbook titled, Social Studies for Primary Schools, Book 5: National Primary Education Commission (NPEC), (World Bank – Assisted Project). At the bottom of the front cover is labeled “Property of the Federal Government of Nigeria.” Teachers use these books today as instruction guides in their classrooms and in order to form lesson plans, and I did not see any students take these books home. I observed teachers reading directly from these state-sponsored books and students taking notes in their own notebooks. These text and practices, provide a perfect demonstration of the weak, state-sponsored narrative. In Unit 4 on page 9, we see the first mention of Nigeria as a nation after several pages describing diverse marriage customs and how to avoid marriage failure, likely an intervention from the World Bank’s involvement in this publication. Unit 4 is labeled “Unity in Cultural Diversity.” On its first page, we read, “

In Nigeria, there are many ethnic groups. These groups speak different languages and have different styles of dressing and other customary practices. In the West, for example, Yoruba is the main language while Edo, Ijaw, and Egun are some of the other languages. In Eastern Nigeria, Igbo is the main language among many others including Ibibio, Efik and Ikwere. Hausa and Fulani are the main language in Northern Nigeria where Gwari, Fulfude, Jukun and Tiv are also spoken, among other languages.

In a situation where people with different languages and cultures come together to make a nation, there is a need for unity. This unity is possible only when we could communicate and interact with one another. To do this well, we need a common language….

English is the official language in Nigeria. This is because:

1. It is the language of our colonisers (the British).
2. Only one language could be the official language where there are many languages
3. We have not agreed on the use of any Nigerian languages as official language
4. English is an international language we could use to communicate with other countries…

English is Nigerian national language. It is however not an indigenous language. If we have an indigenous national language, we will have these advantages:

1. We will be proud of an official language that belongs to us.
2. It will be easier to understand because of similarities it may have with other languages.
3. We will understand one another’s culture better.
4. We will feel at home in any part of the country.
5. There will be greater cooperation, unity, peace and progress.
6. It will improve our economy since we will have a common language to transact business.

There may however be these disadvantages:

1. Other ethnic groups whose languages are not chosen may find their languages neglected. [Won’t that happen anyway with English?]
2. The people whose language is chosen may become too proud and domineering.
3. It will limit our interaction with many countries of the world because we may not be able to communicate with them without interpreters.

Choosing an indigenous language as national language

Considering its many advantages however, an indigenous national language may be necessary in Nigeria…. We should preserve only customs that make us live together in love, mutual respect and unity (Quarterly et al. 1992).

Reading the passage, as even the authors themselves acknowledge, it may be a good idea for Nigerians to speak indigenous languages even though this flies in the face of current government policy, which encourages people to speak English to facilitate national unity. In fact, the authors acknowledge that English was the language of oppressive Nigerian colonizers. From this government-sponsored passage, there seem to be few reasons to support use of English, an apparent symbol of national unity. However, at the end of the passage, the authors re-emphasize the need for unity, although they provide no material to help conceptualize how this unity would come about. In fact, after the authors explain Nigeria’s great ethnic and linguistic diversity, they suddenly emphasize the importance of Nigerian unity and cooperation without explaining how Nigerians will achieve any unity if English is not an adequate lingua franca.

The specific narrative this book provides about the Nigerian national language closely follows the state-government’s unity in diversity narrative, but it also reveals a weakness the
The idea of unity in diversity, with no clear explanation about how this unity will come about is contradictory. It is like saying that, “Black is actually white,” or “1 is actually 2.” It just does not make any sense, without a rational explanation as to how this would be the case. The message these authors provide, therefore, is conflicted and confusing for adults, let alone for their intended 10-11 year-old audience. It is hard to see teachers wanting to use such a narrative to explain history in classrooms.

Unit 8, titled Leadership and Political Parties has also warns against social ills that it feels compelled to mention:

All elected leaders should do what they promised to do and listen to the grievances of their people…. The representatives of one party contest elections with those of the other parties. One wins the election and the other loses. The loser should take the defeat in good faith. He should not cause trouble. Politicians should not use thugs. They should not rig elections. They should be understanding and peaceful in all they do (p. 20-1) (Quarterly et al. 1992).

Page 22 continues:

A good leader should be honest, truthful, and hardworking. He should be impartial, friendly with his people and ready to solve their problems. He takes advice and lays good examples for his people. A bad leader is a problem to his people. This is because he

(a) tells lies.
(b) Does not listen to advice.
(c) Is proud and does not mix with his people.
(d) Fails to do the things he promises the people he will do.
(e) Embezzles and misuses funds (Quarterly et al. 1992).

It almost seems as though the authors are speaking from experience with which they feel the students can relate, of corrupt national rulers. The admonitions against malpractice in government in a primary 5 social studies textbook, meant for 10-11 year olds, seem striking when one considers the likely contents of a social studies textbook somewhere like the United States. It seems that these textbooks are written as part of a dialogic response and rebuttal to stories students can be expected to know well.
In many instances, classroom instruction seemed to emphasize government corruption as well. Below is an excerpt of instruction in the secondary-school described above. I gained permission from a young, sharp government teacher and his principle to video tape, observe, and record his classroom interactions. Observing from my seat at the back of the classroom, this is how the teacher taught the 1953 Nigerian Kano Riots to his students.

**Teacher:** It began [using circular churning motion with both hands revolving around each other] …in fact, from that time, we now – every time… we start the .. we now see each other as eh… not as one, but eh.. … enemies.

**Some students:** [both interrupt and echo with] enemies

**Teacher:** The average southerners saw the northerners as supporters of - who don’t ah, want them to become independent.

**Students:** [say at the same time] independent!

**Teacher:** The northerner saw the, these people as arrogant people, people who don’t have respect. And they want to – these are people who want to continue ruling us, after… the British have left.

**Students:** [echo] have left.

**Teacher:** And from…[indecipherable word]. For those of you who will go out after these people and uh study university, maybe social sciences, it started a particular- it created - in fact, we- I don’t think we, that Nigeria-we will not be able to get out of that… move.

**Some students:** [echo] move.

**Teacher:** Because in last election, you see -the… you saw… you see… the northerners voting for Buhari [In his position facing students, he uses his left hand to point to up and slightly left above his head]. People from the West and the East [uses right hand to point down almost below his knees to the right as he says “West.” He then switches and uses his left hand to point straight left as he says East.].

**Some students:** oh…!

**Teacher:** -voting for …

**Students:** Jonathan.

**Teacher:** …voting for… Jonathan.

**One student:** I hate him.
**Another student:** Hate [drags this word out slightly] him!

**Teacher:** And later, what happened? [says this with increasing angst] We had riots. [Shaking his left hand in the air, his face looks frustrated.] People were being killed…

**Student:** And there was a bomb blast [he raises and drops arm listlessly. He seems to want to portray a sense of ambivalence.]

**Teacher:** Because of that… you notice … a progression [moves his raised left hand with index finger extended in a cyclical motion]

**One student:** [In a gesture of recognition, snaps his left fingers away from his head and next to his left ear.]

So far, in this excerpt, we see that the teacher connects historical violence in Nigeria to violence that occurs today. He even calls this violence a “progression.” This characterization makes violence and corruption in Nigeria seem like an inevitable and unchanging part of Nigerian experience. One student even adds to this litany of historical violence by mentioning the Ikeja bomb blast that occurred in Lagos, Nigeria, in 2002. This blast occurred in at the Ikeja military base, near where their school is located and near where they live. During the summer of 2011, in addition to interviews and classroom observation, I also conducted a survey asking Lagos residents and those living in Eastern Nigeria to list what they believed were the “five most important events in Nigerian history.” Many young people and students I surveyed in Lagos also mentioned the Ikeja bomb blast, however no Eastern Nigerians did. These students list this violent event as one of the most important events in Nigerian history. Although the event did take place in their neighborhoods, and would thus be more salient to them, it is strange that they would list this event as the most important event in the entire history of their country. This could mean not only that the students see no difference between the chaos in their lives now and disorder of Nigerian history. It could also mean that they have already accepted the national narrative template of exploitation talk, which argues that Nigeria is a tarnished and corrupted place, hence, this bomb blast more easily fits into their national schema.

**Teacher:** They did-for the duration of that… Kano Riot, but for those of the - at that time, those stuff was called- was disputed. Unfortunately, who are supposed to be-…. When you have a football match, you have- you are going to have a referee.

**One students:** Yes

**Several other students echo:** Yes.
**Teacher:** And these will be accepting…

**One student:** …generally…

**Teacher:** At that time - can somebody who is a very wise man talk about who is supposed to be referees.

[The teacher and students at the front of the class, exchange some ideas, but it is mostly indecipherable from my position in the back of the room]

**Teacher:** [in response to student on left] They are both Nigerians.

**Teacher:** [Turns to his right, points, and bends down to listen] Eh?

**Students in front of the class:** [response and interaction that I cannot decipher]

**Teacher:** Yes, yes. Who are supposed to be the referees? Know, referee is not supposed to be supporting one side. Who are supposed to be the referees?

**Several students:** The East…

**Other students:** [echo] the East

**Several other students:** The West

**Teacher:** [response that I cannot decipher. He extends his hand to student slightly] minorities…. Yes, but at that time, the minorities went with their… people. The minorities they now went with the north. The-the people who were supposed to be referee were the British! [He says this emphatically, the last word, slowly and with emphasis]

**Several students:** [shout] Yeah! Yes! [The class becomes excited and people are moving around].

**Boy to my right in the middle of the room:** [stands up smiling and shakes his pointed hand in the direction of the teacher in agreement says.] Yes!

**A boy sitting behind him:** [shoots out his hands towards the teacher, quickly puts them on his head, and shakes his head.]

**Several students in classroom:** [shouting] Yes!

**Some students:** [Produce five loud thumps by pounding their desks with their hands.]

**One boy:** [Earlier, he mentioned a bomb blast. He now thumps his right hand on his desk three times.]
The boy: [Had hands on head earlier. Twists side to side, dancing in his seat. He claps his hands and sings,] Mamba, mamba!

Teacher: [in response] You just missed two hundred naira [smiling].

[The class jokes around for a bit]…

Teacher: So, the British, they were supposed to be the … referees that [muffled]. Eventually, what happened?

Some students: They died.

Teacher: At the end of the … sovereignty, they have to [muffled] Nigeria… could not meet. [raises his left hand and starts shaking it] The northerners said, “we can no longer be- we are no longer coming to…Lagos. The last time we-

Students: [still chattering]

Teacher: [Shushes them and gives the side of the class to my left a stern look]

Teacher: “The last time we came to Lagos, the area boys, they were jeering us. In fact, we don’t want to come back. In fact, we want to have our own country. [says this while pointing up above him, to the north]. So the British – but at that time, the British – they are supposed to be referees [shakes his left hand in a motion signaling ambivalence], impartial. But the British were… partial [opens his hands slowly in a gesture towards the class]

One student: “Oh!...”

Teacher: … on the side of the… [points up to his right to the north]

One or two students: North.

Teacher: Is it be that the British, dey say a, these are people that we can … that can- we can eh… [shakes left hand in a motion signaling ambivalence and then moves his hand from left to right]

One student: Can control.

Teacher: [picks this up] We can control! These people in the East and in the West, they’re too… [moves his hand towards his head in an opening and grasping motion] … Their grammar is too much.

Teacher: We can not give them that support. So the effect of the Kano Riots, you have the- the – it had bad effect and the … the bad effect, part of the bad effect: death of people, loss of property, eh… then most especially, the… division that, we have not been able to cement, we have used all the cement in the world, but it is always coming undone. We are not one country.
**Students:** [echo] Not one country.

**Teacher:** That time you see them [points up and left] going one way, and the other side [points down diagonally and to the right] going another way.

**Teacher:** [Voice brightens and becomes brisk again] But, the good event was that it led to the fall of the Macpherson Constitution….

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Here the teacher identifies the cause of Nigerian corruption – the British. In this narrative, because of British selfishness and willingness to side with northerners, the British leaders caused Nigerian infighting, which lead to the degraded and violent status of Nigeria today. Clearly, although the students did not know the details of the specific story the teacher tried to tell, from their yelling, clapping, and mass agreement, they understood the plot. Reinforcing this point is a lecture a primary sixth school teacher gave in a Lagos, Nigeria private, Christian school. It is important to note that, although this school is a private institution, teachers owned the government-sponsored teachers manual and referred to these books in class. Here, the teacher refers to the current Nigerian president, Goodluck Jonathan:

**Teacher:** Okay, (smacks cane pointer on a desk) Listen. That was how, uh, Goodluck Jonathan became the president.

**Students:** (repeating after teacher) President

**Teacher:** So, he now concluded the four years of Yar’ Adua

**Students:** Yar’ Adua (repeating after teacher)

**Teacher:** That is this year (places vocal emphasis on ‘this year’ and gestural emphasis by pointing to ground with hand and pointer). And election was conducted again, and the man said, “Vote for me, I will only spend four years (vocal emphasis placed on ‘four years’ – says this more slowly. Gestural emphasis: raises and bats right hand back and forth while raising four fingers). Me, I will not go for second term (Gestural emphasis: shakes right hand with four fingers raised, left and right – in a negative gesture that says ‘no’).” That’s what Goodluck said before he was voted in. He said, “I will not go for a second term.” But meanwhile, his party had to conduct what you call, primary election (says ‘primary election’ slowly for teaching emphasis).

**One student:** Yes (calls in response to teacher).

**Teacher:** In the primary election now, there are three. (He raises his left hand and uses his cane pointer to count on his left hand). Himself, Jonathan--
Students: Jonathan, Babangida

Teacher: Babangida,

Students: (repeating) Babangida,

Teacher: and then uh…

Students: Abubakar

Teacher: … Atiku Abubkar. So, the three of them now --

One student: (echo) Three of them…

Teacher: They conducted the primary election. Those two, (raises two fingers on his left hand, pauses for added emphasis) they failed. He was (points to the board with his pointer) chosen as the … as the

Student: (helps him) flag …

Teacher: … flag bearer (hard to decipher if this is the term used). That was how he contested the election. The election was held and, uh, he won (vocal emphasis on “he won”). A bi?

Students: (in unison) Yes.

Teacher: He won the election. So, he starts using his own  (pauses and quickly uses both hands to point to the ground, pumping his raised arms up and down in a movement that looks like someone declaring territory) mandate. This one, he contested, (points to ground with both hands in one direction), he won the election (points to ground with both hands in the opposite direction). He was voted for. People … vote for… him (vocal emphasis placed on ‘him’), and he’s now the president and commander-in-chief of the --

Students: -- (seeming to echo an earlier lesson) armed forces.--

Teacher: --armed forces… of the Federal Republic of Nigeria

Students: (echo the teacher) Nigeria.

This lesson took place in June of 2011, two months after the April election of Goodluck Jonathan’s second term. In order to understand this lesson, one needs to understand that in the political history of Nigeria. Most modern Nigerian leaders, particularly military leaders, have
overstayed their terms in office, often reneging on earlier promises. Nigerians are keenly aware of possibility, and their vigilance about this issue is almost palpable during election season.

In this clip, it the teacher argues that the presidency of Goodluck Jonathan, the current Nigerian president, is illegitimate. He argues this by describing how Jonathan lied. He says that Goodluck Jonathan promised only to serve for only four years after, as vice president, he assumed leadership following the death of former president Umaru Musa Yar’ Adua in 2010. Yar’ Adua died of an illness. In Nigerian political lingo, by using the phrase “only serve four years” the teacher implies that Jonathan promised to only merely complete Yar’ Adua’s term and not run for re-election. However, the teacher laments that Jonathan put himself up for re-election, anyway, through his party’s primary. The teacher says that surprisingly Jonathan wins the primary, while two potentially new leaders from his own party lose. The teacher then goes on to explain that after Jonathan wins the general election, Jonathan uses the term “mandate,” to his election in light of previous statements he had made.

Thinking back to the first example, in the federal government laments comments upon the inadequacy of Nigeria’s current national language, there is, however, an indigenous language that all Nigerians seem to share, - this is Pidgin English. Teachers used the term “A bi?” in Lagos schools and in schools in the Southeast, however, the teacher just profiled used the term a great deal.

This is only one of several instances when this particular teacher teaches his students that the Nigerian government has experienced corruption in its past. The following is a history teacher in a third school, a neighboring secondary school, who also tells of corruption by Nigerian leadership in times past – near the origin of Nigeria as a country:

Teacher: “…and you know what happened?”

Students: (some respond listlessly) No.

Teacher: As of that time, when these people came, majority of them no longer continued with the activities of the Christians. So they dropped activities of the Christian thing (mimes his hands as if he is putting a package down on the right side of himself) and they jumped into business (arcs his hands to his left as he says this) (adds a hiss on the s of business – makes the word sound subterfuge) --

Some students: --Boo --

Teacher: -- (long pause for emphasis) because Nigeria was booming (he says this slowly. He circles his raised hands forward as if trying to make an obvious point). Can I know somebody?

Students: Aye!
Teacher: They left what, what they came here to do and started doing business. And that is why Christian activities in Nigeria was not as strong (vocal emphasis on ‘strong’) as what, as what it ought to be. Now aside this (speaks to student in front of class, mumble) …. Aside this, we also note that these people, they uh, affected a majority part of our lives. We talked about sanitation … (turns to the board and for a moment says something indecipherable for 3 seconds). They started building schools, mission schools. What is their aim, of building schools? (Listens to response from student)

One student: To . . . communicate with them— (however, sound makes student response hard to hear).

Teacher: No, their aim was to train, people, who will take up jobs from them. All right? They, you know, it’s another thing, we have a lot of illiterates everywhere (expands his hands as he says ‘illiterates everywhere) - So, nobody to read Bible, nobody to help them calculate money, and so on and so forth. So, they decided to start teaching the three R’s (raises his right hand and raises three fingers on his hand. He pauses for a while and, after, turns to the board to start writing). What are the three R’s? The [undecipherable] R is, writing, reading, and arithmetic (vocal emphasis placed on word as he writes on the board). These are the three things they started doing in order to build up priests, uh (what sounds like “bank” but indecipherable) officers, and interpreters….

In this example, the teacher tells his students through words, specific speech genres, and gestures that Christian missionaries, people who began many Nigerian institutions, had also engaged in corrupt behavior that hurt the country. He tells them that missionaries stopped evangelizing and began businesses in Nigeria, once they realized that they could make a profit from the country. After saying this, we hear some students in the room boo. This teacher uses a corruption narrative template to shape a specific national narrative, a collective memory of Nigeria’s past. Interestingly, this story is about Nigeria’s beginnings in the mid 1800s. His narrative argues colonial-era leaders also practiced corruption and exploited Nigeria as a nation. This specific national narrative has similarities to other specific narratives we have seen in schools. They all use the same Nigerian corruption narrative template. This teacher uses the deep Nigerian corruption narrative template, which laments exploitation, to explain the past to his students. In fact, he even uses a bit of Pidgin when he asks his students, “Can I know somebody?” a question similar in nature to “A bi,” “Do you feel me,” and in unison, his students answer, “Aye!” His many students had not coherently answered in unison until that point. This instance of collective memory of corrupt behavior touches upon how Nigerians see their colonial history as rife with corrupt leaders who wanted to plunder the countries riches as much as current leaders do. It seems that Nigerian teachers use a corruption national narrative template to teach their students about the past and about their country. How does this national narrative template affect students in their perception of Nigerian citizenship?
There is also evidence that students reproduce these negative national narratives. In a survey, asking Nigerians (adults and adolescent students) the five most important events in Nigerian history, young students consistently wrote about negative personal experiences or events. One female student, aged 13, wrote:

1. The death of a journalist named Dlelgwea was bomb blasted
2. 1993 June 12 Abiola's died the day he was to be declared governor of Lagos State
3. 117 people died on plane crash in Ogun state on 27th Oct. 2005
4. Engineer Funsho Williams, the PDd constant for Lagos state governorship was assassinated on 27th July
5. The deaths of corpers on election day through bomb blast that

She indicated that the most important event in Nigerian history was: “1993 June 12 Abiola's died the day he was to be declared governor of Lagos State.”

Here is her reasoning:

Abiola died on 1993 June 12. The day he died was a memorable day. People were harassed; raped and killed. Lives/souls were lost who would have change the future of this corrupt country but now souls are been destroyed for just a man. People's source of income were destroyed. This day was a memorable day of the people of Nigeria till today.

The events this young adolescent listed show that she does not necessarily know about wars or other events in Nigerian history. She is trying to explain her experience, but she does seem to know and cogently express that Nigerian history and experience is bad. Later, she laments the state of the “corrupt country,” of which she knows she is a member.

**Nigerian National Youth Service**

As students continue their education in Nigeria, they continue to learn about their nation through the corruption narrative template. Teachers propagate this narrative template in primary schools and secondary schools. However, after they graduate from college, Nigerian youth must accept a year of mandatory service to their country. This service is called the Nigerian National Youth Service Corps or NYSC. During this experience, it seems that Nigerian institutional leaders finally teach youth the Unity in Diversity national narrative template, in full force.
The government instituted the NYSC in 1973 at the end of the Nigerian-Biafran war conflict. It primarily aimed to socialize youth and make them more patriotic and sympathetic to the state. However, the government also intended young people in the NYSC to aid post-war reconstruction efforts. Since its inception, and influenced by the events of the civil war, its national narrative template has been unity in diversity. Its website states:

The NYSC scheme was created in a bid to reconstruct, reconcile and rebuild the country after the Nigerian Civil war. The unfortunate antecedents in our national history gave impetus to the establishment of the National Youth Service Corps by decree No.24 of 22nd May 1973, which stated that the NYSC is being established "with a view to the proper encouragement and development of common ties among the youths of Nigeria and the promotion of national unity".

Even today, the National Youth Service Corps sends college-educated youth, typically their first year out of college, to regions of the country, where they do not originate. Once in this new region, the youth perform community service work and infrastructure building. By introducing youth to other areas of the country, they hope the kids will appreciate the diversity of the country. They do this to encourage national unity, and the initiative fits nicely with the unity in diversity narrative: “Nigeria is united in spite of its ethnic and religious diversity.” It even seems that some people seem to accept the aspirations of the NYSC. For example, on the online Nigerian forum, nairaland.com, a user named FBS posts:

Re: NYSC: Now Your Suffering Commences Or National Youth Service Corps

« #6 on: February 28, 2009, 03:17 PM »

Its not totally useless to be honest. The scheme has its own numerous benefits.

-It gives you a starting point after graduation
-Work experience and sometimes full time job
-you get to see different cities of your country
-you get to meet different people (some people do actually meet their future husbands and
wives).

- It gives you a sense of belonging

- The allawi maybe small but it is still something.

If properly managed/upgraded, me thinks it is a very nice idea…

This poster wrote this, even after reading the heading of the discussion: “NYSC: Now Your Suffering Commences Or National Youth Service Corps.”

However, the originator of the discussion, money4cash (a self-described male), wrote this:

did you know that the statics shows that not less than 200 NYSC members lost their lives in the process of serving their Nation, yet the job availability after a year of National slavery is not even 5% guaranteed. what happen to the family that spent so much money on their children on the account of coming back to take care of them, and what they recieve as trophy for their long awaiting effort is the grave of their children. if this service is enjoyable as many thought, tell me where does Yar'Adua's sons or daughters serve, or other notable Nigeria leaders yet their sons and daughters work in a reputable offices. Arise oh Nigerian youths and students for your right, arise oh the sons and daughters of the common masses. arise i said for the movement towards the emergence of NEW NIGERIA. NEW DAY NEW HOPE!

do you still support NYSC or not? post your opinion

People did post their opinions. One poster named dayokanu, another self-described (m) male, wrote this:

National Year of Sex and Comfort should continue. Dont miss it
Pepeye, a self-described female writes:

NYSC has outlived its usefulness it shud be scrapped, honestly the scheme is a waste of human material resources

It’s no longer relevant in the scheme of things, it currently downright dangerous project that’s putting some of the country’s best hope in harm’s way.

A nightmare to young graduates

Jarus (self-described male) writes:

The most adventurous/challenging period in my life was my service year in Sokoto state, 2007-2008.

I support the programme continues, or at most, be made optional.

Ojubi, a self-described male posts:

A copper friend of mine that study computer science in university of calabar was killed by a vehicle in yola on Wednesday last week. As i am typing this thread his burial is taking place in the village.

To hell with NYSC.

To hell with the initiators of this lifetaking programme.

From observing this discussion we see that there are conflicting feelings about this program that engenders national unity. After so many years of learning about Nigerian corruption and ineptitude in their society and in their schools, do Nigerian youth buy the unity in diversity narrative template, enough to sacrifice their lives in service of their country? Some Youth corps members lament the danger of going to certain dangerous parts of the country where partisan politics makes youth corpers a target. Also, although the NYSC infuses Nigerian nationalism into the lives of youth for a short period of time, there are no jobs afterwards for the
young people, which is another reminder of the corrupt state of Nigeria. It seems as though, despite the nationalistic rhetoric, youth are reminded of this. Yet, some of them do seem to accept the Unity in Diversity narrative, encapsulated by the NYSC program itself – as the poster Jarus puts it, perhaps for young people, this narrative, just like the program is in some way, “optional.”

Field Notes largely on School, also on NYSC and Family Socialization

06232013 – Sunday

I went to mass today at 6:30am because Auntie A had given a mass intention for me at that mass. The homily was pretty good. The priest was Igbo and he talked about suffering. He told the parishioners that some of them do not know who Christ is. The Gospel discussed how Jesus asked his disciples, “Who do people say that I am?” Some said that Christ was a prophet, but only Peter replied correctly that Jesus was the Son of God. Jesus explained further about how He was to suffer and rise again after three days. His disciples may have thought Jesus would be a messiah that would come and destroy – a king that would wipe out Jewish oppressors, but Jesus came as a lamb slain, one who was to suffer. The priest said that people in the parish similarly do not know who Jesus is, that they keep hopping around to different churches that promise them freedom from their suffering. He implored the parishioners to carry their crosses and follow Jesus and stay in the Catholic church. It was a good homily. The church celebrated Father’s Day that day. So they had a collection for Fathers, in addition to the normal collection. They also had at least one more collection. There were a lot of collections. They also had an offering where parents wanted their daughter to be blessed or were giving thanks for something, and brought up some bottled water and toilet paper, and I think yam up to the altar. During past research trips to Lagos, I’ve seen people bring up chickens too.

After mass, I spent time at home and ate.

I watched animal planet.

Then I took a nap.

Then, I went to go house viewing.

Then I came back. I went to a friend Freda’s house. I asked her about the curriculum for public schools. She said that she teaches at a primary school. She wasn’t sure about the curriculum they
taught. She asked a girl that works in her house, a young girl. The girl said that they did not teach history at a lot of schools in Nigeria, that only big private schools offered history. People have generally said that government is offered. The girl said that schools are given the option between offering government or history and that schools often opt to teach government instead because students are not very interested in history because they have to remember a lot of dates, and it seems boring.

We then watched Big Brother Africa – two people were eliminated, a Botswanian girl and an Ethiopian girl. My friend Freda was rooting for the Nigerian contestants and wanted to know who they were. The girl who worked for her, Cassidy, told her who they were. Auntie A then came over and also watched. Auntie A also wanted to know who the Nigerians were. Then a friend Bastian came over to Freda’s. Bastian was into business. He said that Lagos and Nigeria were great and full of potential. That there were a lot of opportunities there for you as an investor. Freda and Auntie A vocally disagreed with him. Bastian then reverted to a saying that was apparently acceptable in the Lagos context, that “If you work hard in Lagos, you can make it.” and definitely survive. At the time, I felt that he was so alone in this contention, that I let him know that I agreed with him.

Later on, I had a conversation with Ed in the living room. Ed was saying that there is little to nothing that unites Nigerians together. He said, maybe soccer was one thing. At first he was confused about what I needed and he and Auntie A kept directing me to the national archives. I then told him that I was interested in Nigerian national identity, or what holds Nigerians together, i.e. what could he talk to another Nigerian about – who happened to be of a different tribe and background from him, but who was still Nigerian? He said that he did not know. He talked about how Nigeria is very tribalistic. He said Nigerians only tend to do business with their own people. Ed’s children were in the room as he was telling me this, by the way. He said that apart from soccer, there was little that untied Nigerians together. Auntie A agreed.

I asked Ed if he was talking to another Nigerian on the street in Lagos who was Yoruba or Hausa, and not Igbo like him and who was a stranger to him – he knew nothing else about the person other than that he or she was a Nigerian, would he speak to the person in Pidgin or English? He said he would use Pidgin English, i.e. Nigerian Pidgin. He said that if you really want that person to understand what you are saying, you use Pidgin. He said that using English would be a joke – people would not take you seriously and would not really understand you. He said that Pidgin is a language all Nigerians understand. He said that people in the East or Igbo part of Nigerian speak and understand Pidgin, just as well as people in the Northern or Hausa part, and everywhere in Nigeria.

He said that Pidgin, was informal, though. It was kind of unofficial and not regarded highly.
I agreed with him and told him that Pidgin was a language that came up from the grassroots level, and was something that united Nigerians that the government did not invent or even necessarily endorse. However, it was something that seemed to unite Nigerians together. I asked him if he could think of any other examples besides Pidgin. He said that apart from Nigerian football, he could not think of anything else.

I asked him if he or anyone else would ever speak Nigerian Pidgin with anyone else who was from outside of Nigeria - a foreigner. Like me for example. He said no. It is true, no one really speaks Pidgin to me.

Ed said that the worst thing that ever happened to Nigeria was oil. That oil produced greed at the top that never filtered down to everyone else.

Ed said that if I wanted to understand Nigerian history, I should look at Abiola’s death. He said that was a pivotal point in Nigerian history. He said that I could understand a lot about Nigeria today, by looking at that event. Apparently Abiola’s election was a fair election, in which people did not pay attention to tribal affiliations, or the tribal affiliations of the candidates. People paid attention to the person. Abiola apparently won a landslide victory, with Nigerians from all walks of life voting for him. However, the prior president, Babangida, annulled the election. Abiola was later killed. He said that after this event, Nigerians focused a great deal on tribal affiliations. He said that before this event, Nigerians did not worry as much about that and were unified.

I asked Ed about social values. Ed said that all Nigerians care about today, and teach their kids to care about is wealth – and making money- without regard to how people make that money. He said that in the past when his generation was growing up, Nigerian parents taught their kids the Nigerian values of respecting elders, being honest, working hard, having integrity, and having honest dealings with one another. He said, now parents ask their kids, “Where is your money?” without caring how the kids get it. He said, a son may try to work to get money. He said, if that didn’t work, the son would try to do 419 scams and cheat to get money. If that doesn’t work, a son may kidnap someone to get his 2.2 million naira.

He said that there was social degradation and social decay in Nigeria. That values are eroding, including family values. Auntie A agreed with him. She said, “Things are not the way they used to be. There is social decay.” Ed said, “Let me just say it this way, Nigeria is decaying. Things are not as they should be.”

This was the night the Nigerian Eagles played Spain. Nigeria lost 0-3. Ed said he had predicted it. He is good at following trends.

06242013 Monday
I woke up late. I had told Auntie A that I would wake up by 5am or something. I ended up waking at 6:30 and we had planned to leave the house around 7am. We ended up leaving around 8am. I was ready by 7am, but just barely. I will need to wake up earlier.

My guest gave us a ride and we arrived at a school. I was introduced to Allison. Allison was a student but was also a teacher – she taught little kids.

I was told to interview Allison, that she would be a good contact.

Allison said that she had never taken history in primary or secondary school, and had only studied history in college. She said that in government classes in secondary school, she never learned any of the details of history, only about the different constitutions, democracy, and functions of government and politics. She said that she was surprised and learned new things when she took history in college. She said that in government classes, they did not discuss the civil war or anything like that. She said that conversely in college-level history, she learned about pre-colonial history to the present day history of Nigeria. She liked history because she liked hearing and learning stories.

Allison said that Nigeria was corrupt though. She said that even her professors will extort money from students. For example, professors will ask students to pay like 2000 naira just to buy a 20-page handout that doesn’t really help the student – it may only include material the professor lectured on. If students do not buy this handout, professors threaten to fail them. It was just really sad. It was interesting because the way she phrased it was, “Nigeria is corrupt. The extort you greatly.” That is when she went on to describe how the professors extort students, and make them pay for unhelpful packets. However, did she mean that Nigeria is corrupt or that just professors are corrupt. If she meant that it was the professors who were corrupt, wouldn’t she have just said that? It was like she was providing one example out of many.

Allison knew a lot of people at another school at which I wanted to do observations. We visited the school. We met a government teacher there. We also met some teachers in a teacher’s lounge who I had met before. One of them asked Alison in her native language that I had done research at their school, but never paid them. Allison laughed and translated this.

On the way back from the school, Allison suggested that I bring a small gift for people, like 1000 naira for the teachers to buy malta to show my gratitude and thanks, but bring something special for teachers I wanted to work with specifically. I learned that they still taught history and government at this school, however, this was pretty rare at a public school.

Also on the way back from the school, Allison told me that Nigerians are all corrupt, that even the young ones are corrupt, that they won’t do work in class sometimes unless Allison bribes them saying that she will give them a biscuit if they do their work. She said that all Nigerians care or think about is wealth. She said that all Nigerians care about is making money – and they do not really care how they make it. Allison was nice. She said that tomorrow she, along with
Auntie A, would help me to LASU to meet the HOD of the history department there. Hopefully, I can get a departmental affiliation, where I can have a place in Lagos to ask people more questions about national ID and also history. It would also be good to find more institutional affiliations in Lagos, and in Nigeria more generally.

I helped out in Allison’s class during the day. They were so cute and small. Everyone had eager faces and sweet demeanors at that age. They were counting 1-150. The kids were really young, yet were able to do this, I was really impressed. Some were even able to do dictations. There was one girl in the class whom Allison said she has tried to help learn, but who was having a lot of trouble. I asked her if she had a mental disability or learning disability. Allison said she was not sure. She thought maybe she just had a low IQ. She said, she thought the girl was intelligent, but the girl just did not seem to be catching on to what I was saying when I was trying to teach her. I tried to help her fill out a number table from 1-80 at least, but the girl really struggled. She is still young though. I hope these things click for her.

Also, Allison asked the children to sing a song they had learned before, called the Indomie song. This was in addition to standards like Mr. Sun, Sun, Mr. Golden Sun; and A Sailor Went to Sea Sea Sea. I was amazed. The Indomie song went something like this, “I.N.D.O.M.I.E. I.N.D.O.M.I.E. Indomie, Indomie, Yeah!” It was crazy. Indomie has really captured the market in Nigeria. It is also strange that they also manufacture a lot of educational materials like posters and other materials from which children learn. They are targeting and capturing children when they are young. SMH.

I spoke with Ed that night. He said that a lot of Nigerians born in the US are not interested in coming back to Nigeria or investing in Nigeria. That they are comfortable in the US. However, he said that he likes Lagos, and got used to it over time. He said that people get used to living in Lagos and Nigeria and never want to leave. He said, “what is in the UK anyway? What is in America anyway?” We were in the midst of a conversation about the UK’s 3000 pound levy on visas to the UK. People kept saying, if I had 3000 pounds, why would I spend it on going to the UK? I could go to Victoria Island to stay. I could do so many other things, why would I waste it on a visa to the UK? I could go to so many other countries.

06252013- Tuesday

Today, I went to school. I met Allison in her class. I went with C to a secondary school and through God’s loving grace received permission to do fieldwork at the school this year and next year as well. I will have to be at the school really early every morning. I will need to be there for morning assembly at 7:30 am, and then I can observe teachers in their classrooms throughout the day. I plan to do this for two weeks during this visit until their exams, and then next year again. I then met with Allison and C and we met Allison’s friend Sharp and we went to visit the head of a department I wanted to work with at Allison’s school. Sharp was talking about how his wife is currently in the US because she won a lottery ticket. He never wanted his wife to leave Nigeria,
and seemed sad that she was gone. It also seemed like Sharp’s wife did not want to return to Nigeria. Both Sharp and Allison are finishing their undergraduate degrees and say it has taken them a long time to do this because they both had to change schools because of an institutional impediment. Sharp wants to be a diplomat. I told him the best way to do that is to go to an American institution, especially since his wife is over there right now. They all feel that history is important. The head of the department was really helpful and said I should send a letter to Lagos Ministry of Education to get permission. She, Kayla, seemed to joke around a lot with students. She was nice. She said she would introduce me to people at private secondary schools so I could compare the research. It was a really long day with a lot of traveling. I was super tired and had not even showered that morning before I left. I helped Auntie A make pepper soup and pounded yam, it was really great.

Everyone keeps talking about the UK’s recent decision to make immigrants from Nigeria, as well as Pakistan, India, Ghana, and other countries, pay 3000 pounds in order to get a visa to simply visit the UK. They said that it may have been because a lot of people from these countries were overstaying their visa’s in London. They said that people had to pay the 3000 pounds up front as a deposit, and that when they leave back to their home countries, they will get the money back. I will need more information about this. It seems right now like another example of how people clamp down on boundaries and seem to make it hard for people to travel outside of groups they do not like or feel is not going anywhere.

06262013 – Wednesday

I visited the school and gave a talk at morning assembly. I told the students that it is important to invest in whatever community you find yourself. I said that I am Nigerian and decided to invest in this community in whatever small way that I could, and that they should do the same with whatever skills they have. The teachers said they liked the talk, and understood everything that I said, which was good, because Auntie A and others have joked that they often cannot catch what I am saying in English because I tend to talk very quickly.

Apparently, I missed the morning prayers. Muslims lead morning prayers and assembly on Thursdays and Fridays. Christians lead it I think other days of the week. Also, today was Yoruba day. Because we are in Lagos, on Wednesdays teachers lead assembly speaking only in Yoruba and expecting students to respond in Yoruba. The teachers are also supposed to teach all of the students in Yoruba that day. In the school, the students are expected to learn another language apart from English. Because we are in Lagos, the other language is Yoruba [It is interesting that they have this power-sharing arrangement even in the school].

After that, I followed the history teacher to her class. She said that she had to teach outside because the school did not have enough classrooms, although the government was doing renovations and building another structure for the students. She also shared a period with the government teacher, teaching the same grade level as the government teacher because the
government had said that students have a choice between government and history, so the two periods share the same time slot. Also, the history teacher said that fewer students took history than government mostly because they couldn’t afford all of the books required to keep up. In Lagos public schools, education is free. Additionally, books for most subjects are free, for example biology, math, English, and even government classes had free textbooks. However, the textbooks for history were not free. The teacher was not quite sure why.

Anyway, around 8:30am, the history teacher taught period 1 and 2, which I think may have been combined. The assembly cut in to her teaching time, so she taught the remainder of period 1 and then period 2. She was teaching about Shaka Zulu and precolonial, as well as colonial South African history.

After explaining Shaka’s life and how he had a rough childhood, she went on to talk about Efakan wars. She said that Shaka Zulu started a phenomenon known as Efakan wars where young warriors would go to someone’s town and totally destroy it. They would take men as soldiers and women as wives and concubines. Some men from the town that was razed would organize themselves and do the same thing to a neighboring village. She said that because of Efakan, a lot of people died and there was a lot of free land for occupation in the Southern region of Africa, as well as other parts of Africa. There were no more farms, because there were no people to tend them anymore. Efakan also created a beggar class of people. Particularly old people who no longer had anyone to care for them. There were fewer people. It was total destruction and left waste in its path.

The history teacher asked the class why Africans continued to destroy other people’s villages through Efakan. The history teacher said that Africans kept razing other people’s villages through Efakan because Africans are greedy. She said Africans wanted power. They wanted more and more. She said this total destruction and devastation in Africa occurred because Africans are greedy. [Perhaps the teacher is using the lens of the present to explain the past].

Later on, while trying to explain that Africans were motivated to pursue Efakan, the teacher used students as an example of why people are motivated to do things, and asked the students why they are in school. The one student answered, “To learn.” Another student answered, “to learn, as she said, and to gain manners.” The teacher said, yes, to get manners and become civilized and socialize with other students.

Another said, to learn in order to obtain his vision for his future.

Later on, while talking about the Boer’s migration from the Cape Colony to the Transval and Orange area, the history teacher talked how the English, or British, wanted to change everything about African culture – including the language, clothes, hair styles, and food in order to make it more British, and that the Boers did not like this. While saying this, she sounded adamant and angry. She said Africans had their own culture- their own education – i.e. learning a trade from
one’s parents, clothes–wearing a wrapper, hairstyles – for example, using thread instead of using attachments. She said, once the Boers did not like this British oppression, and they realized they couldn’t overtake the British, they decided to leave the Cape Colony. They decided to leave for the Transval area and Orange area. They used Trek parties. These people were the Voltrekkers.

The history teacher continued angrily. She said that the British introduced and promoted the English language, especially through their educational institutions. She asked, “Why can’t Nigerians use one of their own native languages?” She said if the British had left them alone, they would have their own formal educational system and would be speaking Yoruba or some other native language as the national language today.

She said the only way Hausa, Igbo, Yoruba, Kanuri … can understand each other is through English. (she seemed to indicate that this was a shame). She said “we wear English clothes like suits (she touched her suit) or gown, (she motioned towards me I was wearing a dress).” She said, “Young people today cherish foreign things more than native things.” She said that anything that is foreign, we cherish it. She used hip hop music as an example and said that kids listen to hip hop music today more than native music.

Later on, she said, “Discrimination in Nigeria is very strong.”

The history teacher said that most of the students in Lagos public schools are actually household help. i.e. children brought to relatives houses who work almost as child slaves in the houses of their relatives. The relatives promise in exchange to school and train these children. As public schools are populated by mostly these students, this means that you have a whole class of people socialized to go to a school with shoddier facilities. Although I have heard that the teachers in public schools are better, the facilities are not as good, there do not seem to be that many teaching materials. Also, the class sizes are really huge, the classes are noisy because there are no separators between classrooms, only chalkboards separate each classroom. It is really a mess.

The students in public schools, who apparently are household help, end school at 2pm to go home in time to clean the house before the or the homeowner’s children, who go to private schools, [come home?] at 4pm. The parents see private schools as better. They usually have better facilities and more resources for the kids. However, the teachers in private schools are not as well qualified as those in public schools, and they are often paid less than those in public schools. This is bad because, the public school teachers, with whom I spoke, said they are not paid much, maybe upwards of 200,000 naira a year. She said that if parents are nice, they will spend money to school their household help to go to private schools, but that this is rare.

In the schools in the east, for example, you have to pay for everything when it comes to school – for example school fees, and children are used to buying books. She said you need a lot of books for history and in Lagos, because education is free, children and their parents do not want to spend the money to buy history books for their kids. However, she said that the governments will
buy textbooks for biology classes, government classes, and many other textbooks and provide them to students free of charge, but that for history, the government does not buy textbooks. I should find out why this is the case.

The history teacher said that private school children of parents/homeowners are typically younger than students in public school because their parents start their schooling much earlier. I don’t know how much younger they are though. I feel like students in public secondary school are like 15-18 y.o. – Are private school students really younger? I will ask the history teacher for more information. The history teacher said that if people are poor, they may also send their kids to public school. At 2pm, when they get out of school, she said that these students will typically go to help their parents, perhaps in the market or with a trade.

Also, both girls and boys have shaved heads. I think this may be a legacy of colonialism.

There were not a lot of people at morning assembly this morning. I think people may have ended up coming late for whatever reason. I should ask the history teacher more about this.

I spoke with the history teacher at length after my class with her. She spoke about Nigeria and said that there were a lot of problems in Nigeria. She talked about how there was a lot of discrimination in Nigeria. She seemed to indicate that things were better in the US. However, I told her that there was also discrimination in US, and talked to her that we were still trying to recover from the rifts caused by slavery.

She told me a story about a white girl she knew from the UK who thought that black people had tails. She said she had learned that black people were still evolving and evolved from monkeys. The white girl wanted to see the history teacher and her friends’ tails. This all happened when the history teacher was younger and was at some sort of camp. The history teacher and her friends along with the girl went to the shower and the girl said she wanted to see their tails, so the history teacher and her friends said they took off their pants and sat on the girl’s head laughing. They told the girl that black people do not have tails and that if she ever asked them that again, they would deal with her. The history teacher was laughing and giggling as she said the story.

The government teacher said that Nigeria is a nation that practices a bicameral legislature. I should ask him what Nigerian national identity is. He said that Nigeria is a typical example of a country that practices bicameral legislature. He said the US is another example.

He said that a bicameral legislature protects the interests of minority groups and that it prevents dictatorships.

06272013 – Thursday

….I spoke to the fine arts teacher then. He began by telling me that teaching art requires a conducive environment.
He said that there were repairs going on in the school – one of the structures teachers used to use was being redone. The history teacher had said the same thing. Apparently, these repairs were causing a lot of problems for teachers- forcing them to teach some of their classes outside, in different classrooms, and was affecting the school schedules – i.e. when each person had their classes. They seemed to be making due until the building was totally repaired.

Apparently, what had happened was that someone had done a shoddy job building the new structure. They were afraid that the structure would hurt the students, so they contracted for someone to build an entirely new structure, and they demolished the old structure.

Anyway, the art teacher complained that he did not have a studio, and really needed a studio in order to teach the students. He said that if he did not get a studio after renovations, he may just move to another place where he felt appreciated. He seemed very expressive, blunt, and loquacious.

He said that artists have a certain role in society. When I asked him what that role was. He said that it was to provide a means of communication to pass on a message to the people.

Later on in his class, he taught the students calligraphy, but he said that they may have to improvise a calligraphy pen. He said that they could tie two pens together with a rubberband and use that – writing at an angle. One could then paint in the letters. He said, “you can do it if you don’t have the money, but it is not the best.” One student did bring a set of calligraphy pens. One student used this and was not successful. Interestingly, his students were more successful at calligraphy using the improvised method than using a calligraphy pen.

He talked about how there are some similarities between Nigerian art forms but also major differences. For example, Yorubas have a sort of textile making process they call tie and die, and the Hausas have die pits. However, they both use plastic bowls to accomplish this method. He says however, that the patterns in each differ.

I asked him if there was anything like Nigerian art, not Hausa art, Yoruba, or Igbo, or Ibibio art, but Nigerian art? He said that there was a Lagos State Art Festival where people showcase all of their art. He said that this also exists at the national level at the Abuja festival.

Again I asked the art teacher if there was anything like Nigerian art.

The art teacher said that when students create art, their background will influence what they produce and will make it very varied. He said the same is true for musicians we see in Nigeria today. For example, the hip hop artists in Nigeria, the Igbo ones, the Yoruba ones, the artists will all have different styles influenced by their backgrounds.

The art teacher told me to go to Oshun State and see the permanent sites. He told me to look at Ulli Beier – German Jewish artist and his wife Susan Wenger, and Georgina Beier.
He said that when Uli Beier first came to Nigeria he may have come with Susan Wenger – his first wife and later with Georgina – Uli Beier’s second wife whom he married after he divorced Susan Wenger. He said Uli Beier made a lot of contributions to Nigerian art. Tie and Die and Batik textiles were things Susan Wenger studied.

The art teacher said that in African art, one rarely sees people using floral patterns only African patterns and motifs.

The art teacher spoke about Amadu Bello University – Zaria – abbreviated, ABU - The art teacher said that this was the school he attended.

The art teacher said that the people who founded the art departments in the University of Nsukka and University of Ife were from ABU Zaria. He said that the Zaria rebels came from ABU.

The art teacher said that the artist Tayo Adenike @ Nsukka seemed unusual because he was a Yoruba person attending Nsukka which is in an Igbo area. He said that Tayo did very well for himself, incorporating Uli motifs. He is even going abroad.

Oneisa

The teacher also said that it was unusual for artists and teachers who were not Yoruba to attend University of Ife.

The art teacher talked about natural synthesis and mentioned Uche Okeke.

He said that traditional African arts is good. He said however, to boost what we are doing today and make something creative and new, natural synthesis can help you make something unique.

I asked him what he thought of Ghana’s cultural education program. He said, “Ghana is a more homogenous society.” He said that because of this they could pull off a unified cultural education program like that. He said, “In Nigeria, it is a very heterogeneous society. In Ghana, it is easier for them to have a unified goal and cultural program.” He said that, “In Nigeria, each tribe wants it to go their way.”

He said that it was also important in African history to study the influence of African Art on European art. He discussed how Picasso came to Africa and studied African art, and that African art helped to create modern European art in Europe and America. He emphasized this.

The art teacher said something very interesting - that his students always want to copy his examples. He said that they are not inclined to be creative. [Maybe this is because of the educational style here. Is this style the same in all Nigerian schools?]

Government Class after 11am:
I am in this government class right now and they seem to be discussing very bare bones things. I feel kind of bored. There is no historical or anecdotal information. Mainly the structure of government in Nigeria.

The class is now talking about the judiciary. The teacher is teaching them about the grand Khadi and the Sharia Courts of Appeal.

He also teaching them about the Federal Court of Appeals and the presidency.

However, he seems to be juxtaposing the two and separating the two while he explains them. He said the Supreme Court is the head of the judiciary court. He said the Khadi is the head of he Sharia Court.

He is discussing how the judiciary punishes law breakers.

He seems to be teaching the students whatever the government would want him to teach.

Functions of the Judiciary – what he wrote on the board:

Settlement of disputes

Punishment of offenders

Protection of the constitution

Interpretation of the constitution

Protection of fundamental human rights. [This seems rather basic.]

He said that the judiciary is there to restore the rights of an individual whose rights have been taken away. He said that the judiciary protects an individual’s fundamental human rights from being violated.

He said that, “The judiciary is the last hope of the ordinary man. Why? Because the government will take away your rights like under military rule.” So you have to go to the courts to defend your rights.

The judiciary checks both the executive and the legislature.

He said that acts are laws or decisions. The courts can determine if a law or decision is null and void, i.e. it goes against the constitution.

He talked about Writs – He discussed the writ of Habbeus Corpus and the Writ of Mandebus.

The judiciary uses orders to stop the executive from doing unlawful acts. (one student in front of me is complaining that the teacher has said too much for the day.”
The teacher also talked about the Writ of prohibition.

Later in the day, I also had a conversation with the civics education teacher- yes, there are civics education teachers! I couldn’t believe it. Their job is to teach students how to act in society, and to teach them good morals. Yep. I need to stick on this class like white on rice.

I spoke with the head Civics education teacher. He said that students should try to be leaders of today not tomorrow. He said that students should try to be responsible.

He said that a lot of the children who go to public schools are household helps. He said the students can’t lead at home, how will you lead in the wider society (public spaces).

He said that problems in Nigeria did not just manifest today, they have been around for a long time and have been a long time coming.

He said that politics are not inherently dirty [something with which I would contend, but shrug*]. He said leaders choose to make politics dirty. He said leaders choose to steal money and be unjust. He said, “our nation is the way it is today because of our national leaders.”

The teacher said that he used to be in the same situation as many of the students in this school, but that he tried to help himself.

He said that he is happy that he is affecting his society.

He said all education should positively affect you and your generation. He said nobody is useless. He said, “Society is eagerly awaiting them. Nigeria is eagerly awaiting them.”

The teacher said that civic education is meant to illuminate the mind and heart of a learner. He said the government introduced civic education to the junior secondary schools and then introduced it to senior secondary school, after realizing it is not the same as government or social studies.

According to this teacher, in primary schools, civics education is called general studies.

The teacher said that civics education started in junior secondary schools about five years ago. He said that the government introduced civics education to senior secondary schools about two years ago.

The teacher said that civics education overlaps with government education and economics. He said that civics education is not the same as cultural education.

The teacher said that during the most recent period he taught the students, he taught them about capitalism - mainly exploiters and the exploited.
He taught the students that they should desire to be exploiters and not the exploited ones. He said he taught students they should desire to be the ones in charge and not to have a low class job like being a gateman to their juniors. He taught them that they should not drop out of school so that they can be exploiters and so that they can employ people and people will serve them.

I asked the civics teacher about his training. I was curious what degree he had that qualified him to teach what amounted to moral education. He said that he had studied humanities. He said that he read education for his first degree and then obtain a degree in humanities at the University of Ilorin.

The civics teacher said, we are in a democratic environment now. He said, current Nigerian leaders are neurotic. They don’t know what democracy is all about. He said that for example, the relatives of former military leaders are now in power (we can assume through some form of nepotism). He said that these relatives go back to the former military rulers for advice on how to lead the country. The teacher said that the government and those who instituted the civics education course want the current generation to have a clean mind about democracy so that when they become leaders they will lead the country in a better way.

He said that in Nigeria, Nigerians ask what the government is doing for them. Instead of like in America where people ask what they can do for their country and people say God bless America, He said in Nigeria, people don’t say anything like that.

He said that in Nigeria, everyone wants a white collar job, but no, students need to realize that they can create their own jobs. I am not exactly sure what that means, but I think he means people can learn a trade or simply start their own business.

He said students need to understand the value they have in themselves in the home (?)...

He said, when you see something wrong fix it. When you see an old woman trying to cross the express or carrying something, help her.

He said it is important to help your community. He said for example, a student can call his fellow young men together to go and cut grass if they see the grass is too long.

He said young people want to emulate our leaders who are wealthy. Young men want to get that money at all costs.

He said young people are not sure they are going to get jobs they need so they don’t focus on education.
He said, in order for leaders to lead right, society needs to hold them accountable. He said that justice, truthfulness, and loyalty to the nation will help leaders lead right.

The civics teacher said, if leaders lead right, there will be peace and no more conflict that we are dealing with.

He said, in the 1950s, we had committed leaders – We [I think he means Nigeria] were seen as the giant of Africa. He said that Azikiwe, Awolowo, and Herbert MacCauly were visionary leaders and that this was why they were able to fight for independence.

He said, “but the kind of leaders we have today are self-centered, wicked, and greedy [he used other negative adjectives as well that I did not write down.] He said that the civil servants who ask for bribes are wicked because they get allowances, a car, accommodations, but still ask for bribes.

He said that Nigeria not in want of resources – that Nigeria has an abundance of resources, but that they are not evenly distributed.

At the seamstress’s place, I seemed to get more confirmation that people really seem to think that things from China are of inferior quality. C said this about phones, when I wanted to buy a phone he told me not to buy a cheaper phone because it may be a China phone and thus break easily.

As the seamstress was explaining different types of cloth to a patron, she said, “This one is satin. This one be China.” She said the last sentence with a scrunched and disapproving face.

06282013- Friday

I came to school and immediately followed the history teacher to class. I am glad I caught her on her way to class.

The history teacher began by giving the students an announcement, “The country is not at peace.” She said again, “You all know that the country is not at peace?” The slight majority of students in the very large and somewhat rambunctious class replied “Yes.” She said, “If you don’t know, check the papers.” She said that they [I am not sure exactly who “they” are] were told to tell the students that there is a place where people are buying blood for 2000 naira. She said that several students have gone to this place to sell their blood and that students have gotten sick or died. She said that there was another place where girls were selling their bodies for 500 to 1000 naira. She said that once you did the first thing – selling your blood, you were dead. She said, once you did the second thing, selling your body, you were gone. She also said that both of these places were relatively nearby the school.
She said this to warn the students and told students to warn their brothers, sisters, and friends not to go to these places, and that if their friends tell them to follow them to anywhere like that, not to go.

She said, you might as well sell your blood to your family so when you die, they can at least use the money. If you give your blood to these other people, they will be living a good life with the money they made off of your blood. They will be bubbling, their children will be happy, they will be eating and happy at your expense while your family is in poverty. She asked, “Is it not true.” There were some giggles in the class and students responded, some laughing, “Yes.”

She said, not only will you die if you do these things, but there will be hell fire waiting for you. She said, you will die and immediately after this will be Judgment. Many of the students in the class agreed with her, saying, “Yes.”

She also said that there was a 419 occult website, she gave its name, but I can’t remember. She said once you clicked on the website and entered in your pin you were enrolled for life, you could never leave. Several students looked worried. She told the students thus, not to do 419 activities online, like she knew some of them liked to do and to be careful while they were browsing online.

She then began the topic of the class for the day. The topic was: Early European Contact with Nigeria.

She said colonists/Europeans explored river Niger not because they loved Nigeria it was for economic motive. They explored the coast of Nigeria for trade. Their main aim or motive was an economic motive. They went to Africa in search of goods and products they used in Europe, which included spices such as green pepper, onions, nutmeg, and ginger [even though onions and green pepper are not seen as spices in other places but as vegetables, but shrug*]. She said that such trade occurred in the 14th century between Europeans and coastal states.

The coastal states she was discussing included: Calabar, Iokoja, Bonny, Kalabari, Ijaw, Benin, Asaba, and Onitsha.

She said that the Europeans tried to trade: cloths, beads, trinkets, cowerie shells, guns, gun powder, and gin. She said that Nigerian trade goods to the Europeans included: Gold, ivory, stoves, pepper, ostrich feathers, spices, and gum. She wrote most of this information, particularly the lists on the board. She said that the students already had most of this information, but that she was writing it down on the chalkboard so that the class could review.

They then discussed the consequences or impacts of the trade, which included the following:

The development of trade between Nigeria and Europe
It brought people in the hinterland to live permanently at the coast.

Trade at the coast reduced the volume of the Saharan trade.

Portuguese names were given to many places, e.g. Cape Verde, Eliminah, Cape Palmas all in upper Guinea. Words such as dash (give), sabby (to know) were used in Benin etc. (and are now words we use in Pidgin English today.) She said that many words in Pidgin English are actually from Portuguese.

It led to the introduction of European crops especially those they took from Asia and South America (e.g. sugar cane, maize, paw-paw, plantain, banana, sweet potatoes, guava, tobacco, pineapple, cassava, etc.)

She said that Europeans came to Nigeria and Africa as a whole for economic reasons.

She said that the development of the coastal trade made the coastal areas to be very rich.

The teacher then spent about five minutes disciplining a group of three students. The class had gotten a bit rowdy and those three students had been misbehaving.

She said, “Our pidgin English is dominated with Portuguese words. Up till tomorrow, words like dash and sabby are still in use in the Benin palace.

None of those Portuguese crops were in Africa before they introduced these crops.

The class ended after she had disciplined those students and wrapped up.

After the class, I spoke with the art teacher, who had told the history teacher that he and I had unfinished business. He wanted to make a distinction between traditional Nigerian art and contemporary Nigerian art, which he felt he had not made yesterday.

He said that Benin art is court art for kings. Tsoede art is the largest bronze art.

He said that I should check out the national museum and national theater.

He said that art before the coming of Europeans and tribal art, that bookmakers call it “traditional Nigerian art.” He doesn’t know how they came to call 1914 art traditional Nigerian art. This was after I asked him how this could be so, since Nigeria did not exist before 1914, though the cultures that are now in Nigeria did exist.

We also talked about Ekwete cloth, which apparently is also Igbo cloth.

I later talked more with the history teacher. She said that there are a lot of vices in Nigeria. I asked her about Civics education classes and her opinion about it. She said that Nigeria used to
have civics education classes around the year 2000, but that the government stopped these classes, because they thought they were not necessary.

After some time, they apparently realized that they needed to bring it back. She said that Lagos no longer does Christian Religious Education or Muslim Religious education, but that they used to do these classes. They at least used to have Christian Religious Education. She said that civics education was important. She said that a lot of the kids at the school come from broken homes – a lot of their parents are divorced. She said that they then come to stay with other people, who do not have time to teach them morals. She said that they clean all day, and the parents are usually away from home working all day. She said often these children do not even go to church, because the people with whom they stay make them clean all day on Sunday. She then asked me, where else will they learn morals except for at school? She said that although she does not teach civics education and does not know the content of it, that she thinks that it is important. She said that what she did at the beginning of her class was essentially civics education, teaching the students good morals, about right and wrong, and about faith.

She told me, that in class they will use their phones and watch nude movies. She said that the students she had chastised in class, that she had confiscated their items. She said that she had confiscated their phones because they were watching nude movies on their phones. She then confiscated their phones. She said that she has to do confront the students in class and not after class, otherwise the students may deny that they were doing anything wrong.

After this, I found the government class. I wanted to observe the civics education class, but the civics ed. Teacher said that the vice principal needed to speak with him and he would not be teaching at least one of his classes. I looked for him and his class later in the day, but could not find him. I found out that there was another civics education teacher who would be teaching during the last period. After walking around, I caught the end of the government class. I then followed the government teacher to another class he was teaching.

During the class period, he talked about legislatures and bills. He said there were two types of legislatures. They discussed what bills were – that they are proposed laws lying on the floor of the house. (that is from memory, because they repeated this so much in class). They then discussed the steps towards passing a bill.

During class, the teacher was interrupted and told that the students needed to prepare for their upcoming exams. After leaving the class and returning to find the civics teacher, the teacher said that students would be preparing for exams, so she would not be teaching her class today. I told her I would try to come back next week.

After this, I visited the seamstress again. One of the seamstress’s friends was there. The friend was surprised that I was from America. After talking for a while, the friend said that she knew
people who did not want their kids to be raised in America, but sent them to Nigeria to be raised in Nigeria, because only here would they learn how to behave properly, particularly how to respect their elders.

The seamstress and I later went to visit a mutual friend who had just given birth. She was doing well, we returned. I had earlier given the husband a gift for him, her, and the new baby.

06/30/2013 – Saturday

Someone said, “These people must have modernized their bread. It is better.”

I went back to the salon today to take nail polish off of my nails and saw the girls who did my hair. I got lost on my way the first time, and then eventually found my way there. The fashionable young girl who said she wanted to go to London was there. I asked her and her friend what they thought about the UK’s recent decision to make Nigerians pay 3000 pounds for a visitors Visa to the UK. The looked at each other and then at me and said, “No money.” Meaning they did not have money to go. Her friend laughed and said, “Maybe you can give me money to go.” The girl laughed too and said, “Yes, give me.” With a smile.

There was another lady in the salon doing her hair - the friend was doing her hair, while the girl who wanted to go to London was doing my nails. The woman in the salon and the friend discussed how many dollars this was in English/Yoruba. They agreed that it was about 6500 dollars. The woman later remarked that what the UK had done to impose a 3000 pound fee on Nigerian visitors to the UK was not fair and not right. She said that Goodluck Jonathan was also going to impose a fee on visitors from the UK, and that UK visitors are often here doing business.

Today, I heard Auntie A speaking to a Yoruba man in Pidgin English. The Yoruba man had come to fix her husband’s car. She spoke to him in a mix of English and Pidgin English. She is Igbo.

Last night, I heard my guest, who is Igbo, speaking to a Yoruba man in pure Broken (i.e. Pidgin English). An Igbo woman was also there and spoke to the man mainly in English. The man was someone who did dry cleaning in the neighborhood.

Notes to self:

National Archive – Enugu

Igbo Studies Association – talk show conference Chinuea.
07/01/2013 – Sunday

I went to church in the morning. I thought I was late for mass, but I wasn’t I saw the women I had met earlier in the week. They all now know I am associated with a certain family. I didn’t want that.

During the homily, the priest asked the parishioners what the lesson was last week. There were several mumbled answers. One of the parishioners yelled the answer. After the priest did not hear him, he stood up and said loudly, “That Christ told us to leave everything we have, carry our cross and follow him.” The priest again told the assembly that people seem to not know who God is. That the assembly seems to think he is someone who is going to give them free things, or things that they like. The assembly was acting just like the people in the gospel – who did not know who Christ was. They were following Christ because God gave them food and seemed to provide for their temporal needs. Jesus then had to explain who he really was – that he had to suffer on a cross and die for us and rise again after three days. The priest said, Jesus had to suffer. He asked us to carry our crosses and follow him. He reminded the parishioners of that.

The priest then discussed this week’s Gospel and how Jesus asked 4 people to follow him, but none of them were ready. They each wanted to go back and tend to things of this earth – family, their fields, etc. Jesus, said, “Whomever puts his hand to the plow and looks back is not fit for the kingdom of heaven.” The priest told the assembly that we cannot look to worldly things or wealth to make us happy, we need to look at God and the kingdom of heaven in order to have eternal life.

After mass, it was raining, so I ran back home trying to cover the hymn book and bulletin I was carrying. I stayed inside for most of the day.

I found a newspaper that talked about the people donating blood that the history teacher had spoken about in class the other day.

One of Ed’s friends stopped by, Rex. Rex had a really loud voice and was very expressive. I was in my room playing hearts on the computer. I overheard Ed and Rex discussing football and Brazil’s chances. That day was the final day of the FIFA finals.

That night, after some goading and some internal encouragement, I joined Ed and some other guys to watch the FIFA finals between Brazil and Spain. Brazil won 3-0. I actually started to get in to it after a while. My competitive side came out and there were some pretty interesting plays. Soccer just doesn’t fascinate me too much because I am not sure how it helps the world in any way. Maybe if I figure that out, I will be more engrossed.

During the game, I read an article about a mystic Catholic nun in Nigeria. It was an interesting article.
Ed told me that the trouble with Nigeria was that everyone was after wealth. The only value
Nigerians have is making money. Young men will want to make money, and they do not care
how. They could steal to do it. He said Nigeria used to teach young people so many values, but
now all people care about is making money. Wealth and a desire for money, seems to be a
recurring theme in all of the venues I have thus visited – socialization at school – with the
statement that Africans are greedy, socialization at Church with the priest encouraging people
not to seek after wealth, and socialization in the private sphere among friends.

07/02/2013 – Monday

I did not go to school that day. I stayed home. My guest came and we ate moi moi together for
breakfast with a corn-starch water mixture. I forgot what it is called, but it starts with an A. It
was a really good breakfast, probably one of the best I’ve had in Lagos so far.

After that I went shopping for some things I needed.

After that, Auntie A and I went to her friend’s Pen Down (retirement ceremony). It was a really
great event.

People danced with and welcomed her at the beginning of the event. They sang songs for her too,
in a way that seemed kind of similar to another huge ceremony like a wedding.

People talked about how honest she was, and how she was really a person of integrity. Auntie A
confirmed that everything they said was true.

Everyone was encouraged to bring a pen to the event. If you did not have one, they provided one
to you. At one point in the event, everyone was asked to raise their pens up in the air, and after a
congratulations, they lowered their pens down.

At the end of the ceremony, the woman celebrating the Pen Down got into a car and people
pulled her car out of the school yard into the street. She was accompanied with much fanfare.
She was a teacher, and the ceremony was held in the school courtyard. All of the students were
just milling arounds, some were upstairs next to their classrooms. They didn’t seem to do
anything all day during the ceremony.

Traffic was long after that.

….  

After the event, I was pretty tired and decided not to do too much at the end of the day.

07/03/2013 – Tuesday
I woke up and heard that there were two strikes going on today. There is a university professors strike and there is also a petrol workers strike.

I did not go to school again today. I still needed to work on the proposal and read articles. I spent most of today reading two articles. Luckily there was enough light for enough of the day to power my computer so I could read the articles.

I learned from my guest that there was a rumor that there would be a fuel scarcity, so he went to a petrol station to fill up his car.

After a while, Auntie A asked if I wanted to go to a pen down retirement party, I said that I would stay back.

I went with my guest to get my passport pictures – at night. I don’t like traveling at night. We got the pictures. The guy at the photo place was friends with my guest and was complaining about women. Apparently someone he knew complained to him that he helped people too much. He said, yes I help people but. .. (exasperated) maybe she is right and I shouldn’t do that because some people are (he pointed to his head in a circular motion indicting crazy).

We came back home and here I am. …

07/03/2013 Wednesday

I went to school that day around 9am….

I talked to the history teacher about getting the teaching schemes for different subjects. She brought me the teaching schemes (i.e.) curricula for ss1 and ss2. I copied down the Civics curricula and Government curricula for both grade levels. I took pictures of the history schemes and schemes for all other subjects for both grade levels.

I asked the history teacher whether the Lagos government provides teachers with curricula, she said, “yes.” I asked her where it was and if I could see it. She said that what teachers do is look at the WAEC exam and they work backwards from that to figure out what students need to know for the test.

I think they also get schemes from the government –for example, I saw one for the civics courses and also for arts courses. I will ask the history teacher and other informants more about this.

The students did not have classes that day. They had a state-wide exam for Lagos public schools. The exam tested what they had learned for the whole year- in core subjects, particularly biology, math, and English. Apparently the test was commissioned as part of a World Bank Project. The World Bank gave the Lagos State Government 1 billion dollars for their public schools. The World Bank apparently gave the schools white boards, computers, and projectors to help teachers. The Bank gave schools money to renovate and make new school buildings and
classrooms. Apparently, the construction going on at the school is from World Bank Funding. The World Bank wanted to test how these improvements and money impacted student performance in at least those three subjects. That is why the students had the test.

07/04/2013 – Today is 4th of July in the US….

Today, I went to school. First, I spoke with the history teacher at length. I then visited a government class and then a civics class. The civics teacher performed the class because I think he thought I had asked him to. I did not do that though. I just expressed to him that I felt bad that I had missed his classes previously, and that I would try to make sure that I made his classes afterwards.

During my conversation with the history teacher, she discussed the World Bank Project. That is how I got the information about the World Bank Core project for yesterday’s notes.

She said that the World Bank project by donating computers, whiteboards, and projectors would help expose students to the civilized world. She said all of the school’s conditions, if you look around are uncivilized. She said this with a disgruntled face. She said the world bank project would expose us to the Civilized world like that in the UK, America and developed world.

I asked her what she meant by civilized. She said that by civilized, she meant third world. She said look around us, we are not developed. By uncivilized I mean we are a third world country.

The history teacher said that the government does not recognize the hard work that Lagos public school teachers are doing. Instead, they are apportioning blame to public school teachers for the poor quality of public education in Nigeria.

She said that poverty is what is making public school education in Nigeria difficult of poor quality. She said that in public schools, they only hire graduates. However, in private schools, although private schools have all of the facilities, they don’t hire highly qualified teachers because they are worried they will not be able to pay them enough.

The World Bank gave Lagos Public Schools $1 Billion to help fix public education at least in Lagos State. They did the exam that Wednesday to test and see the effect of their donation on student performance in the core subjects English, Math, and Biology.

She said that the World Bank too does not seem to be recognizing the work of teachers. The World Bank does seem to be addressing the lack in facilities.

She said that the Lagos State government has been providing students in Lagos with free education for 20 or 30 years. She repeated what she had stated earlier that the government provides free books in most subjects, particularly the core subjects – except for history and literature. She said, maybe the government thinks teachers themselves will provide the materials.
She asked, “Am I going to buy books for all of my students? I already make copies for them. Am I going to provide books too?

She said that the government is incredibly easy on the students, but hard on the teachers. She said that if any student complains that a teacher did anything wrong or inappropriate, the teacher will immediately be fired. However, if students do not come to class or do inappropriate things, they are not punished. She said, they cannot even really cane the students except if they do something exceptionally bad.

She said the students get everything, but the teachers are left with very little.

She said though that the teachers understand that a lot of the students are household helps, so the teachers are also rather easy on the students. She said that the teachers understand that the students do not have time to read.

She said that although she knows the students do not have enough time to read, the teachers still have to “talk,” i.e. scold, the students.

She said that the level of poverty in the country is what is bringing education down.

She said that the Lagos State government is blaming teachers for the bad quality of education. The government, however, forget teaching is a give and take. She said, no one wants to blame the students for anything. The government and the World Bank think the students have no fault – they do not place blame or accountability on parents either.

There is no accountability to the children. It should be that if you fail as a student, you should be banished from the school or have to pay school fees, or that teachers now have to use cane (i.e. beat the children with a cane stalk).

This lack of appreciation for teachers is similar to what one of the assistant headmistresses said at the Pen Down ceremony, during her speech. *

The history teacher said that poverty is the cause of all of the problems we see today.

She asked rhetorically, “If you had a job, would your child become a household help?”

I asked the history teacher more about poverty and how it is implicated in education.

The history teacher said 99% of everyone in Nigeria is in poverty. She said there is no employment, no industries, no light. She said, “If there was constant electricity, people would be self-employed.” She said that in Nigeria, there are no new industries. She said the government is not building infrastructures. She said, we want to import everything. We don’t produce these things – she pointed to everything in the room, indicating that the country imported everything in the room. She pointed to one object and said, if Nigerians made this thing themselves, wouldn't it be better?
She said, the country is sick. There is no light. There are a lot of mineral resources that are ‘sleeping’ – i.e not being used or developed at all. She said that the country is rich and blessed with mineral and human resources but that no one is developing them. She talked about different mineral reserves in different parts of the country, particularly ones with precious metals that the country has not exploited. She said that they have huge coal reserves as well which no one is using. She said that people are also not making use of the human resources the country has.

The history teacher said that class is a, “very, very big deal in Nigeria.”

I said, but you said that 99% of people in Nigeria are poor, so how can class be a big deal?

She said, poverty is relative. She said, class is a big issue because the rich can always get away with everything. The rich can bypass the law. If you are poor, you can’t get away with bypassing any law. If you cross the law at all, the police will beat and chasten you, but for the rich, the police do not do anything. She asked, what is the difference between a politician stealing money and a common thief? Nothing, right? They are both stealing. However it is the thief who will be punished.

She said, also in this country, the rich are very rich and the poor are very poor. Look at places like VGC in Aja, the VI, and she named a few other places. She said that some of those places cost up to 1 million naira a year to rent. She said, I don’t even make up to 1 million naira in one year.

She also said, people respect rich people because they want to eat and they want money from them. She said that if you are poor, even if you have all of the wisdom in the world, people will not respect you.

Another teacher then walked up to me then. She was wearing a hijab. She said, “Poverty is Nigeria’s middle name.” both she and the history teacher laughed when she said this. She said, that it was true. That poverty was rampant in Nigeria. She said that she had been listening to the history teacher talk and that the history teacher was giving me the low down. She agreed that poverty was a huge issue in Nigeria. She said that the country was not developed and that the leaders were not doing anything for the people. She said that the country needed help, like people expatriots to go outside and bring in NGOs to help the country. She asked what I wanted to do with this project and if I was planning on giving back to Nigeria or bringing an NGO. I told her that I was a student and that I hoped that in some small way my project would help the country. I said that the work that the teachers did at the school seemed much more impactful – changing the lives to students and helping- than what I was currently doing. She re-emphasized that she was hoping that people can bring in NGOs and outside help so that the country could change. I may talk to this teacher further later. She had darker skin than the history teacher. The history teacher had said that she teaches her students about Christianity and morals, while this teacher was wearing a hijab and may have been muslim. Yet they both held similar views.
about Nigeria. The other teacher had said that the history teacher had given me the “low down” on Nigeria and she had also said that she agreed with what the history teacher was saying.

I then asked the history teacher if what Nigeria’s national identity was.

The history teacher said, “There is no national identity in Nigeria. There is even no nation in Nigeria.” She said that Nigeria was an artificial British creation. She said the country was composed of different ethnic groups. She said that there were educational differences and disparities according to region. She repeated, that means if you get 0, no university, 1, no university, but 2 yes you get to go to university. She said that in the north people have to beg students to go to school, but that people in the south value education. She tied this to historical reasons. When the British came, people in the West accepted education, people in the East accepted education, but people in the north did not allow education, and that is why it is like this today. She said that in Lagos state, you need to get 120 on WAEC to go to university, in Anambra it is like 130, in Mbaise it is like 138, but in the North, you need to get 2. She said, how then are we a nation if even our educational system is so divided. She also mentioned job disparities.

When I asked her if other people would agree with her idea about Nigerian national identity, she said, “Everyone here knows there is nothing like Nigeria. We are just pretending.” She said this with a smile of irony.

The history teacher continued. Tribalism is everywhere.

I asked her if there is anything that unties people across tribes in Nigeria.

She said there is nothing that unites us across tribes, except football. She then shook her head a little, and said, “even football, self, I’m not very sure.”

After thinking for several seconds she then said,” The National Youth Service Corps, but if you send people to the north, they will not go.

I asked her, “what about politics?”

She said in a somewhat hushed voice, “I am sorry to say it, but politics is corrupt.” She said politicians are corrupt. She was speaking more loudly at this point. She said politicians fight with one another. The are deceitful. In politics it is survival of the fittest.

The history teacher said laughing slightly, the only thing is that if you are born in Nigeria, you are a citizen of Nigeria. She said, “I do not teach students to love Nigeria or fight for Nigeria.
Unless in civics. But me, I do not do that. .. Nigeria has not done anything for me, so I will not do anything for Nigeria.”

The only thing is that I teach them to be good citizens of Christ. I teach them the Gospel – but not to be good citizens of Nigeria. Only civics teachers teach that.

She said that she will teach them that what white people may have written about Nigeria in the books – slurring against the country, and saying bad things about Nigeria is incorrect and wrong. She will teach them the truth about what actually happened using other documents. For example, she said that the Arabs kept documents of different empires in what is now Nigeria.

The government teacher then arrived and took me to his class.

In the government class, the teacher continued teaching about the function of the judiciary.

He taught about the importance and conditions of an independent judiciary:

- to be able to make decisions without being influenced.

The judiciary should be able to perform its functions without the influence of the other two branches of government (this is a principle).

- There should be no unnecessary control or influence of the judiciary by the legislature and the executive.

To allow judges to work without “fear of favor,” “i.e. fear of bribes.”

He is talking a lot about the need to protect the integrity of members of the judiciary.

The integrity of the judiciary helps to protect the judiciary – helping it to be the last hope for the common man. Helps the judiciary to ensure the betterment of human life.

- Uphold the principles of separation of powers.

You want the judiciary to check the other 2 organs of government.

In Nigeria, judges are chosen by an impartial and independent body called the judicial service commission. In other nations, it can be called by another name.

Judges stay until retirement and can only be dismissed if they have done gross misconduct like corruption or embezzlement.

Judges have judicial immunity – cannot be questioned.
Remuneration of judges – their salary should not be tampered with and should be enough to take care of all of their needs so that they are not forced to take bribes- their salaries should be enough.

They [judges] require extra security. Extra security should be provided to protect the judges. If judges commit a serious crime like murder, they can be impeached by the legislature.

The teacher – like the history teacher – left time within the lesson and at the end of the class for questions from students too. *

I found out this week that two of the people in the teachers lounge where I typically go are youth corpers, I am going to speak with them.

Civics class

The civics teacher, like I mentioned before, said he was doing an “emergency class.” Just for me. He wouldn’t have felt the need to do an emergency class, though, if he had just given me his correct time table, and if he taught regularly.

Anyway, he began the class period by walking into one of his normal classes, when it did not seem to be taught by anyone. I am pretty sure that in Nigeria, students stay in a class and teachers move around, but I could be totally wrong about that.

Anyway, he told the class that this was an emergency session. He said the topic of the day was going to be poverty.

He asked the students what poverty was.

One student responded, “a state of wretchedness.”

Another responded, “a state of being poor.”

Another, “A state where you are financially lacking.”

The civics teacher gave the answer, “ A state when human beings are not sufficient in the basic things you need in life.” He said you are not poor when you don’t have a big car or you don not have a big house. You are poor when you are lacking in the necessary things you need in life.

He said poverty has very negative effects. What are the effects of poverty?

One student answered, you cannot take care of your health.

Another student said, you will steal or do criminal activity because you will want things to clothe yourself.
Another student said, you cannot eat.

Another student said, you are not yourself.

The civics teacher said, yes, people become a problem to society – they are disturbing the peace of society – area boys do this – they become a nuisance and are a source of embarrassment to the society. They can then take to stealing.

What leads to poverty? Lack of knowledge- lack of knowledge of who you are or of the environment you are in. You want to be aware of ways to help yourself and do something for yourself. If you know that in your family, you have 8 people sleeping in one room, you have to move the dining table at night and roll out the bed, you need to recognize that your family is poor. You do not want to continue in this way. You need to tell yourself that you will not continue in this way.

When you don’t have focus, you will often remain in poverty. Poverty is a gradual process, it is not immediate, it is a gradual process.

Not taking education seriously is training in the path of poverty.

He said, is your father a gate man? It is because he has no education and no knowledge.

Is your mother in poverty? Maybe she gets a man friend at night and you cannot tell her that it is wrong. It is because she does not have an education.

When you impact your community, that is important. You don’t just help yourself—people will then always be asking you for things and depending on you. However, if you help your community, and invest in your community, people around you will ask you for less and everyone will be OK.

He said, Nigerians are waiting for you (by you he meant the students). He said, Nigeria is waiting for you to deliver. That is how we reduce poverty in our society.

He said being rich means having enough to eat and wearing nice and decent clothes, not riding in a big jeep.

He said, “But your generation is a bad generation. They are lazy. The don’t want to work with their hands. They want wealth quickly. They want to ride big cars, but don’t want to work hard. That is why there are a lot of dropouts.”

He said, “Ebenizer (I think maybe a musician) had a record that was popular for 30 years.” He helped his community by making this album. You should ask yourself similarly, how do I make improvements in my family – at least start there. That is what this is all about [I think he meant this class] –not exams, but application and changing your community.
07/05/2013 – Friday

In the morning, I wrote out my specific objectives for the day.

- Talk to youth corpsers – get more information about youth corps in Lagos and their experiences in the Youth Corps.
- Observe civics class.
- Ask government teacher about national identity.
- If I am able, observe a history class.

- What I want to get is information about national identity in Nigeria from people of different backgrounds (also ages), but also expectations about how children should act.

I completed three out of the 4 tasks, which is not bad.

In the morning, I was walking over to the assembly when three teachers sitting on the step next to the administrative buildings told me to stop because the students were singing the national anthem. They said that whenever you hear someone singing the national anthem, you have to stop and also sing it. They asked me if I had yet memorized the national anthem. I said, yes I knew it. I told them that in the US it is similar, we have to stand still and put our hands on our hearts and sing the national anthem as well. They said yes, and in Nigeria we also do the same, make sure to do that. I told them that I would.

I made it to the end of morning assembly. I met the history teacher and other teachers there. I had missed the morning prayer though, that was done in the Islamic tradition on Thursdays and Fridays. It was drizzling that morning as we watched the students. The history teacher had a small umbrella and she let me share it as well as a younger female teacher whom I initially thought was a youth corper because she looked younger than the others, but later learned was a normal teacher. I also found out later that she was a little smart alec – y. Once the assembly was over, the students marched out of assembly in single file lines. There were not a lot of students at morning assembly. I would say there were about 60 students present out of hundreds. I followed the teachers to the teachers lounge after assembly was over and met with the history teacher again.

I asked her if the students at the assembly were ones who were not household helps, because they made it in time for school. She said yes. These students were children of responsible parents or parents who left for work early, and thus, brought their children and dropped off their children early.

I asked then if the kids who came in later were household helps. She said, yes, that the students you saw trickling in sometimes had to clean the house and drop off the children of their
guardians before they went to school. I asked if you could almost do a study comparing students of different backgrounds by simply interviewing students who attended morning assembly and those who did not. The teacher said that yes, that would be possible.

I waited for about 15 minutes after assembly with the history teacher. She taught first and second periods. We were waiting for enough students to come in. The history teacher said, I don’t like to teach twice, and if there are not enough students, I will have to teach twice.

When we went to the class, she noted that there were still not enough students. She asked all of the students to move to the front of the class so that they could hear her well. She said that if any students came in late and tried to push students sitting on benches in the front of the class to make room for themselves at the front, students should not let them. She said these students should know well enough to sit at the back of the class if they are now late.

The teacher taught on origin of the transatlantic slave trade.

The teacher used 10 sec. activities at the beginning of the class to make sure the students were alert and awake. She asked them to stand up and shake around a bit. I sat on one of the student benches with another student, near the front of the class. I had given up on trying not to take a student’s seat. The classroom was noisy because there were classes next door so it was hard to hear the students and sometimes even the teacher, but I observed thus.

She taught this:

Impacts of contact with the Europeans – the slave trade was one of these consequences.

She said that slavery was “the exchange of full-fleshed, full-bodied human-beings with gun, gin, gun powder, and cloth.”

She said that slavery was an exchange between Europeans and Africans.

She said that Africans provided the people Europeans provided the gin, gun powder, cloth, and guns.

She said that slavery existed in Africa before European contact, but that it was not at all like what Europeans did.

She used acting/a skit to demonstrate the slave trade in Africa before European contact. How parents would exchange children for money or a loan, giving the child to rich people for money. When they could repay the money, they got back their child. If they could not repay the person becomes the other person’s property.
For girls, they could become the rich person’s wife if the parent could not pay off their debt in enough time.

She said that some children who were slaves in Africa before the Europeans rose to positions of prominence in their communities. She said that Jaja of Opobo is an example. Jaja was an Igbo boy who his father gave to rich people in Opobo. As a slave, in a far away place, he was able to work and accumulate wealth and eventually became the king of Opobo.

She used the example of modern-day household helps. She said, some of you – your parents said I have a lot of children here to care for, let me send one of my children to their aunt to work for their aunt and so the aunt can pay for their school fees. She asked the class, “Is there a problem with this?” The class and the teacher gave a resounding, “No.” While she was demonstrating this domestic form of slavery, the teacher lifted a male student up and handed him to another male student and asked the other student for 50 naira in exchange. For the girl example, she raised up a girl and when she said that the girl could potentially be married off to the rich neighbor, everyone in the class laughed, some at the girl, and the girl sat down in embarrassment.

The teacher asked, Did the Europeans like Africans? She and the class said no? She repeated, did the Europeans like Africans, she and the class again repeated, No. She said the Europeans came here for… She and the class said, for economic reasons. The Europeans visited Africa in the first place because they were trying to construct the Suez Canal, otherwise, they would have gone to India to get whatever they wanted. The people who discovered Africa were the Portuguese.

She wrote on the board, Portuguese Voyage – Gronzalves 14th [ by 14th she means 14th century]. She said, Gronzalves saw that West Africa had everything Europe needed and was very rich.

In 1460, Gronzalves took 10 slaves from Africa and gave them to Prince Henry the Navigator as a gift. She asked the class, “Have you ever seen someone giving humans as a gift?” People in the class shook their heads.

She asked the class, “Why are we strong?” she asked “Because of our environment. We are used to a harsh environment. Suffering is our middle name.” She said this last sentence with a laugh, and some of the students around her laughed in response.

She asked the class, “How many of you ate a balanced diet this morning?” Some people raised their hands. Their friends however laughed and said put down your hand “you know you like Egba (i.e. garri, fried and ground cassava which many consider the food of working people or the poor). You could tell though that the students were being socialized into seeing themselves this way. Several raised their hands indicating that they had eaten a balanced breakfast, however
some students shakily and kind of fakely laughed telling them to put their hands down, that they
did not even get or even want to eat a balanced diet.

The teacher continued saying, that Prince Henry found that Africans were strong and could
survive on very little food. Their bodies were resistant. They never got sick. (The teacher seemed
to be indicating that today Nigerians were like that. Therefore she was using modern-day
examples to teach history.)

She said, “In Africa, before Europeans came there was nothing like selling human beings. No.”

She said, “The Europeans were tricky and wicked. They sold Africans gin instead of money
because they knew gin made Africans act funny -like something was wrong with their head (she
said this pointing at her head and making a circular motion the American gesture for crazy).

She used modern-day examples of people at bus stops drinking gin and people who used drugs
and drink gin at or before coming to school.

She indicated that the Africans did not even know what they were doing when they drank the
 gin.

She said that at first, Africans gave slave-traders bad children who misbehaved. Then, however,
they started kidnapping children for the slave trade. She used the example of following your
mother to the farm and all of a sudden someone kidnaps you.

She stopped the lesson for the day and asked the students if they had any questions. She left time
for questions.

The first student question was how Europeans and Africans communicated with each other. The
teacher responded, “Africans were not educated at that time, they could not speak English. So
how did they communicate? Through sign language.

Next student: “How old were slaves that they wanted?”

History teacher responded,” They did not want old people or children. From 16-38 was the
average age. They did not want old people like me. They wanted people of your age set.” She
pointed to the whole class, the whole class groaned and laughed and covered their heads with
their hands.

The next student asked if that meant that African Americans are Africans?

The teacher responded “Yes, their great-grandfathers were Africans.”

I found out today that Oyibo = white people. That is what the teachers and my neighbors have
been calling me. Great.
The history teacher continued. She said, “In Africa as slaves you could rise, but with Oyibo, you could not rise.” Even some slaves sold to the palace [African palace at Aja where people African slaves worked prior to European contact] didn’t want to go home. There is affluence in the palace, at their home they are poor.

Student: “How did they transport slaves to the coast?”

History teacher: “They walked now [now being pidgin for don’t you get it yet.?] Some students laughed.

History teacher: and they tied chains.

Students gasped.

History teacher: I’ll show you pictures.

Students were looking and talking to one another. One student behind me said, “Ha, those people are wicked!”

A student asked a question I could not really hear. She said that in Aja, there were primitive settings. Sometimes people warred with each other and the victors would take people as slaves.

The teacher then went into a sort of moral education lesson.

She said, “at least here, we beat you and talk to you so you can become useful. You have to rise. It is an abomination for your children to become servants like you.” You have to work hard and rise.

This was on the board on the right-hand side of the separation: Spanish people established sugar plantation

Canary Islands

West Indies and America – I think they are discussing these items next week.

After class, we went back to the teachers lounge. I was then informed that the teachers were going to spend time flogging students who had misbehaved during the week. Then, I was informed that they were actually going to plant trees. It seems that sometimes there is some miscommunication.

I asked the history teacher about this. She said that Lagos State Government has commissioned that schools in Lagos should plant trees in their school yards. The history teacher said that the trees provide ventilation, people can sit under them and lean against them and when they are
planted next to buildings, when it rains, trees prevent the wind from blowing off the roofs (she emphasized this part).

She said that today is July 5th so all over the world, today is tree planting day.

Because of the tree planting, 4-6 period had no teaching. During 7th period, I went around looking for the civics teacher who apparently was not teaching and was instead fixing his car, with the help of some of his students. I was able to observe a civics class the female civics teacher taught, but that was later.

In the meantime, the history teacher approached a youth corper, I guess explained who I was and motioned for me to come over, that I could now interview him. I had expressed my interest to speak to a corper.

The youth corp member said that he was from Kogi State. He said that he went to Kogi State University. He said that Kogi State is in the middle belt of the country. He was 24 years old. He said that the Youth Corp did not admit anyone under the age of 30, something that I already knew. I guess the history teacher had told him I was foreign.

He immediately began to tell me that the Youth Service Corp’s aim was for students to learn about Nigeria and learn more about other parts of Nigeria you had not been to.

He said that he was in his 6th month out of 12 months that he was required to serve. He came to teach at the school in April, and would finish in February of next year. He went to a Youth service camp in Lagos for a 3 week NYSC camp and orientation. He said that the orientation taught him how to fit into new environments. He said he did the camp in March of 2013, and began work in April.

I asked him how he liked NYSC. He said, “It is OK so far.” He said, “However, my counterparts in the North are having challenges because of Boko Haram.”

He said that he stays in contact with his colleagues in the North through phone and social media like Facebook. When asked, he said that not all of his colleagues are from his state. He said that his colleagues are ones he met at camp. Some of them are from his university.

He said that his colleagues with whom he is I contact are from everywhere – all over the country, some from the north.

He said that one had to do NYSC in order to get a government job in Nigeria. Laughing he said they were forced to do it, that it was compulsory.

I asked him what he thought of NYSC. He said that he was excited about NYSC. He is loving it. He said it gives him a chance to meet more people. [This is a sentiment I’ve heard lot of young people say about NYSC].
I asked him if he was afraid. He said that NYSC is, “Just like a normal thing to me.” After a few moments he said, “The only thing I was afraid of was for them no to take me to the North.” He made the analogy to a soldier waiting to be commissioned for service and being posted to Afghanistan. That is what scared me.

He said that his friend was posted in Gombe state, he said that there was no light and that his friend could not even leave his house for security reasons because of the crisis in the north.

I asked him how he got posted to Lagos (I had heard before that sometimes people bribed their way into not getting posted to the north). He said that he was lucky he got posted to Lagos. He said that he found out about his posting from his posting letter.

I then asked him what Nigeria’s national identity was. He thought for a moment, looked confused and said, can you say that again? I asked him again what he thought Nigeria’s national identity was, i.e. “what does Nigeria stand for, or what are it’s values?”

He said, “to the international community, Nigeria is full of corruption.” (He said this to me in a kind of hushed voice). He then said in a little bit louder voice, “They think bad things happen in Nigeria, that all Nigerians are terrorists. They are painting us black.” He said this last sentence with a kind of laugh. I also reciprocated this short laugh.

He continued, “But I don’t believe that. I see Nigeria as a country full of promise. I feel with the changes the government is making, Nigeria is going to get better.”

He gave an example of one of his friends that had recently tried to travel to Canada and had tried to get a visa. He said that his friend was searched so much before he could go to Canada. He said that they just think that all Nigerians are bad or terrorists., but that we are not like that. He repeated, we are not like that. He said, they are just painting us black.

I asked him again about the aims of NYSC. He said that the government is trying to push youth corp members who studied medicine in college into the public health sector-i.e. government run hospitals, to serve out their youth corp year. He said similarly, that the government is pushing people who studied agriculture in college to serve in places where they will research how to get the best yield out of strains of crops they plant in the country, like cocoa and to research things like how to protect people from certain diseases during planting season. He said those of us who studied education, like me, I read chemistry, or my colleague who read insurance, they will post in government run schools, public schools to teach – he said, for example, he teaches chemistry at the school and his colleague teaches commerce. He said that in Nigeria, everyone is focusing on oil, but the government is pushing people into these other sectors just in case we exhaust the oil.

I then asked him what he learned at NYSC camp.
He said that at NYSC camp, he learned how to settle down where he stays and to greet people you live around and be nice [ I think in regard to where students are posted].

He said that at NYSC, they also teach skill acquisition programs. He said, for example, the government teaches girls to cook shwarma, sewing, or bake cake so that if they unfortunately cannot find a job after their youth service, they can at least work for themselves.

He said they also teach computer IT. He said he himself, in addition to this teaching job is also learning web-design.

I asked him, did you learn a lot about Nigeria at the camp? He gave a long pause while he thought, with a concerted look on his face.

He said, they taught us about the year NYSC was introduced-1975- but he forgot the month.

He said one of the objects of the program was to teach young people to be creators of jobs instead of job seekers. He said instead of searching for a job, they want you to be the one employing people. He said, “They want all Nigerians to be self-employed.”

He said, “They said the labor market is too competitive and there are too many graduates who are unemployed.”

During three weeks, they were also taught military drills - military soldiers came and taught them drills, it was a part of the program. He said the aim of this is to enlighten you to overcome any danger in your place of assignment.

I asked him what he thought about the idea that all Nigerians should be self-employed. He thought it was a good idea.

He said for example, the Lagos camp had 2500 people in it. If there are only 1000 jobs available in Lagos, what will the other 1500 do? He said it was better if they create 3 or 4 jobs and are self-employed. He said, “It is a welcomed idea.” He said, “It will reduce the rate of violence in the country and the rate of atrocities in the country. I asked him if they said this at the camp, and he said yes, this is what they taught at the camp. He said that they think that an idle man is a devil’s workshop and that people should have something doing.

I asked him if he had learned anything about the Nigerian government or infrastructure at the camp. He said. We heard the government had plans of improving the program. They want to maybe secure jobs for the graduates but that because of incomplete finances, they can’t really do that now.

He said that the government said they had plans of restructuring the program. For example, they want to make it more enjoyable for graduates, but, he said, we have not seen that yet. He said it
was “just a promise, but it has not yet been fulfilled.” He said this with a smile filled with irony and slightly sad.

For example, he said, most graduates are supposed to be given a place to stay, but that is not what typically happens. Usually Corpers have to find a place to stay themselves and have to pay rent. Even he was not given a place to stay in Lagos. He said he is currently staying with an uncle who lives in Lagos. He said that in the North, NYSC members are supposed to be provided with security, but they have not gotten that yet.

The youth corper had to help another teacher, so I let him go, but he said that if I had any more questions, I should feel free to ask him. He said this with a friendly smile.

In the teacher’s lounge, while I was waiting to observe the civics class, I saw that Indian movie playing again. It was the same Indian movie/tv show that was playing last week. It was playing on AIT, which is a network that has the word African in it. The show was called Kamini Damini. Teachers were kind of paying attention to it, but some seemed to have been following the show and were watching it. It had English subtitles and characters spoke in a language I did not understand, but may have been from India.

I saw another Indian program with English voice over on Galaxy TV network, and it was interspersed with commercials including Indomie commercials.

During the civics class the female civics teacher was teaching. She was pregnant. I was really impressed that she was able to hold the class’s attention so forcefully and well, even though she was clearly very pregnant, on her feet, and short of breath. The students clearly respected her.

The topic of the class was Agencies Responsible for Protection of Human Rights.

It seemed like pretty straightforward information, and it seemed that the students may have just been reviewing. It was not as conversational as the other emergency civics class I had observed it was much more like a recitation.

These were some of the points the teacher wrote on the board:

International organization

Independence Human Rights Commission

United Nations Bodies

Non-governmental Organization

She also talked about the Nobel Peace Prize and how that was awarded.
Fundamental Human Rights

She said – one organization helps people to mix together so they won’t say, I am Yoruba, I will go to one side. I am Igbo, I will go to one side, (she motioned to different sides of the room). She said, no, “we are all one,” we must all mix together.

07062013 – Saturday

Nothing much. I worked on my budget. I don’t think I went anywhere. Oh yes, I worked on writing down field notes from the past few days. I was trying to catch up.

07072013 – Sunday

Nothing much. – The preaching today was interesting. The priest called out a lot of parishioners on things they were doing wrong in the church. He said that some people abuse their wives and some people abuse their husbands and that they should stop. That they come to church and sing about peace, but outside of church, they do bad things. Also, on the back of the bulletin, I saw some prayers to end corruption in Nigeria. There were a lot of collections and two harvest events.

07082013 – Monday

I first had an interview with the history teacher about her Nigerian-ness.
Appendix J

2014 Government Imagery Report

Just the fact that Goodluck Jonathan launched a “Transformation Agenda,” purportedly to help him win his re-election, tells you everything you need to know.

The government didn’t say that the infrastructure was good. They said THEY were the ones that would transform it and make it “modern.” That was Goodluck’s major selling point.

Broken infrastructure is a cultural tool or a bargaining chip people use to do certain things. It has great cultural significance.

Notes:

**TAN commercials:**

These commercials aired on AIT television in 2014, which was during the run up to Jonathan’s announcement that he would run for re-election in 2015. I have included analysis of a sample below. However, there are at least 6 such commercials entitled:

- Transformation of Nigerian Roads
- Transformational Legacies of President Goodluck Jonathan
- Solid Minerals Transformation in Nigeria
- Mass Housing Scheme
- Airports Transformation
- Agricultural Transformation

These commercials were also uploaded onto YouTube. That is where I captured them. In Nigeria, it is likely only middle class and wealthy Nigerians only have access to satellite television and were able to see these commercials in Enugu. I am not sure if these commercials aired on other networks apart from AIT. Different satellite providers air different channels and not all middle class and wealthy Nigerians watch AIT. Satellite provision in Enugu seemed to
differ from cable providers in Lagos. *Therefore, although these commercials aired on television, it is likely their reach was limited.

These commercials were also uploaded onto Youtube. Internet is extremely expensive in Nigeria because it is provided by cellphone carriers that charge by the MB and GB. There is not widespread optical chords connecting people to the Internet through cable in the country – at least anywhere I stayed. People used satellite dishes to gain access to television channels. Most of the people with whom I interviewed did not frequently stream videos online due to the prohibitive cost of doing this.

- The TRANSFORMATIONAL LEGACIES OF PRESIDENT GOODLUCK JONATHAN video by TAN, as of December 6, 2016 has 94 views on Youtube and zero likes or dislikes (TRANSFORMATIONAL LEGACIES OF PRESIDENT GOODLUCK JONATHAN 2014).

- As of December 6, 2016, the TRANSFORMATION OF NIGERIAN ROADS video has 895 views on YouTube and 3 likes (TRANSFORMATION OF NIGERIAN ROADS 2014). Both videos were posted on March 25, 2014.

*With Nigeria’s population of about 160 million people, these YouTube videos have not been viewed a proportionate number of times. Their targeted audience (the videos address Nigerians directly) have not viewed these videos. This may mean that the modes of information transmission the government sought to use did not work well. We also have to consider that these politicians may be targeting likely voting populations, which at least from key informant information about vote rigging spans socioeconomic class. My poorer rural informants have discussed how rich politicians have bribed rural poor people to vote for them in elections, for example. A key informant in 2014 discussed trying to get his National Identification Card to enable him to vote and he was poor, while a middle class neighbor actually worked for the national identification agency working to distribute such cards.

TRANSFORMATION OF NIGERIAN ROADS (TRANSFORMATION OF NIGERIAN ROADS 2014)

“Nigerians, it is true that president Goodluck Jonathan has constructed world class bridges and roads across the country.” At the end “For one vision, Nigeria.”

TRANSFORMATIONAL LEGACIES OF PRESIDENT GOODLUCK JONATHAN (TRANSFORMATIONAL LEGACIES OF PRESIDENT GOODLUCK JONATHAN 2014)
The video looks like a kind of slideshow. Most of TAN’s commercials look this way.

The color scheme of green and white is used throughout the commercial –

Green colors against a white background during transitions.

Green text and white background – green and white are the colors on the Nigerian flag.

Song: Nigeria, Nigeria, our joy and pride, support Goodluck’s giant projects. Arise and shine, Nigeria, arise and shine, Nigeria. It’s time to grow, Nigeria, from Strength to strength, Nigeria. Support Goodluck Jonathan, president of Nigeria. Support Goodluck Jonathan, for good luck of Nigeria. This message is brought to you from Transformation Ambassadors of Nigeria. For one vision, Nigeria.

Text throughout video overlaid on relevant images:

- Goodluck Initiative and Agenda for National Transformation
- GIANT
- The Successes & Achievements of President Goodluck Jonathan
- Transforming Nigeria to a ✓ [a pictured checkmark] GLOBAL ECONOMIC POWER
- Successful Privatization Of The Power Sector ✓ IMPROVED POWER SUPPLY
- Availability of ✓ PETROLEUM PRODUCTS
- Total Overhaul Of The ✓ AVIATION SECTOR
- Total Reform Of Our ✓ HEALTH SECTOR
- Unparalleled Agricultural ✓ DEVELOPMENT
- 1 VISION NIGERIA [Logo]
- GOODLUCK NIGERIA
- TAN Transformation Ambassadors of Nigeria
- For 1 VISION NIGERIA [Logo]

NEMA Pictures:

Pictures of serious disasters- many of which are flooding due to erosion (indicating poor infrastructural development that would prevent this), building collapses (which implicate poor building standards/regulations in that area – they were not caused by bombs or earthquakes for example], Boko Haram victim relief (which indicates lack of security in northern areas), a few plane crashes.
Appendix K

2014 Grassroots Imagery Report

Tumblr Blog:

- Most of the imagery I found during the year were of infrastructural decay. I commented about this at length in my blog. I had a hard time finding public infrastructures that did not show evidence of decay.
- I did see one setting in 2014 that did not show signs of infrastructural decay. That was in a private residence.
- Additionally I have photographs of a major government building that was under construction in Enugu in the GRE area.
- Shoprite was another western-styled structure in Enugu that did not show immediate signs of wear and tear – however it did power outages.
- The newly built Enugu International airport was another building that did not show immediate signs of wear and tear, i.e. decay.


- Memes are meant to be funny and so don’t all talk about infrastructure or politics. Many discuss family or relationships. However, there were several memes on Nairaland.com that discussed how Goodluck Jonathan was ineffective as a president.
- Another meme on Nairaland showed Obasanjo as having taken Nigerian money abroad (Golda Kosi Onyeneho 2016b).
- Several on Funniest Pictures on Nairaland (1) (Golda Kosi Onyeneho 2016a) discuss cheating in class.
- Nigeria memes had several commenting on Nigerian 419 (Golda Kosisochi Onyeneho 2016e). This may have been because I searched from a U.S. location. If I was in Nigeria, I may have retrieved different results due to the different location of the Internet server.
- The Nigeria Memes Google image search also had at least one reference to poverty – see “meanwhile in Nigeria” and “We’re going to starve to death. Niger please! (Golda Kosisochi Onyeneho 2016e).” I did not see a reference to poverty in either the America, USA, American, Ghana or Ghanaian Google search (Golda Kosisochi Onyeneho 2016a; Golda Kosisochi Onyeneho 2016b; Golda Kosisochi Onyeneho 2016; Golda Kosisochi Onyeneho 2016c; Golda Kosisochi Onyeneho 2016d). Overall the Google Image search Nigeria memes referenced 419 corruption and disparaging
comments about Nigeria more than either the Ghana meme search or America and USA meme search on Google Images (Golda Kosisochi Onyeneho 2016e; Golda Kosisochi Onyeneho 2016c; Golda Kosisochi Onyeneho 2016a; Golda Kosisochi Onyeneho 2016).

- Examples of corruption and 419 Meme comments include:
  - Nigerians be like… I’m only 19 [picture of a middle aged looking man]
  - I will burn my money. Those White people never answered my emails.
  - Sad prince of Nigeria. No one takes his emails seriously.
  - So you’re telling me a Nigerian prince offered you millions of dollars and you said no it might not be real?

- About politics:
  - Why must I hire these dumb Nigerian youth? They keep recycling us like IBB says they are not ready to rule Nigeria.
  - Goodluck Jonathan with a pensive look: “Don’t know where these girls are but… America will know.”
Appendix L

Nation, Culture, and Lamentation on the Nigerian Radio

Introduction

Reports of African immigrants risking their lives at sea, as well as over desert and air, for the chance to live “abroad” in Europe (Editorial Board 2015; Seamark 2012; Ball and Moloney 2015; Harris 2015) have become a familiar trope of the African experience in the 21st century. Apart from massive illegal immigration to Europe, approximately 200,000 African immigrants live illegally in the United States, either through expired visas or by traveling to the U.S. through Mexico (McCabe 2011). A key example of this problem can be seen in Nigeria, and also a main origin country for illegal immigration. In 2014, while conducting fieldwork in Nigeria, I went on a radio program and interacted with callers about why so many Nigerians decide to leave the country, often through illegal means, as well as what life is like for Nigerians living in the United States. This radio broadcast provides public data concerning how citizens in a country with high illegal immigration discuss their country and reasons for emigrating. It sheds light on how citizens in such contexts understand their relationships to their countries, what dynamics have made illegal immigration in Nigeria and other countries “normal,” and how emigration is conceived by those left “at home.” Such questions resonate far beyond Nigeria, particularly given increased debates surrounding the current Syrian refugee crises and concerns about illegal immigration in countries around the world. In many ways immigration is intimately tied to understandings of national identity and relationships of citizenship in immigrant home countries,
something this paper explores. This paper is accompanied by edited audio from the radio broadcast.

**Radio Background**

While conducting long-term ethnographic fieldwork in southeastern Nigeria in 2014, one of my research contacts approached me and asked me to speak on a popular radio station in Nigeria. On its website, Dream FM describes itself as “an urban hit music & information station, targeted at a wide audience demographic,” and a “full-service station, complete with sports, topical news, entertainment news and great music.” Dream FM broadcasts from Enugu, a large and growing urban hub in southeastern Nigeria. In Nigeria’s ethnically regionalized cartography, many people residing in southeastern Nigeria identify as Igbo. Though, due to religious and political violence driving refugees from northern Nigeria to locations further south, Enugu’s demographics are changing. Announcers broadcast mostly in English, but also air programs in Nigerian Pidgin and Igbo. On their website, they label themselves as “the mouth piece of the South-East,” assuring “Dream FM is set to making [sic] your dream a reality.” Announcers interview guests from a wide variety of backgrounds, from government ministers to pop stars.

My contact first arranged for me to meet the host of a popular public affairs program at the station called People’s Forum. The show grapples with topical social, political, and economic issues in the country. The host typically poses a topic, discusses the subject with an invited guest, and solicits opinions from listeners by asking them to call in and air their thoughts on the live broadcast. The program introduces itself as “People’s Forum – your platform to air your views on prevalent matters around you. Contribute to the development of your society by sharing your views and making your voice heard.” Since I was a graduate student at the time, with no
significant radio experience, I was initially confused at being asked to speak on the radio. My contact explained he had simply asked because I was a researcher from abroad. Although this response alluded to unwarranted privilege I felt uncomfortable realizing, I accepted his invitation.

While meeting Gloria, the radio host with whom I would work, I explained my interest in Nigerian national citizenship and identity. I saw the confusion on her face and watched as she thought of what I could speak about. Right in front of me she decided the program would be about why Nigerians, especially youth, are deciding to leave the country in droves to live abroad. She said it was a topic she had wanted to discuss for a long time and one she felt her listeners would find engaging. She asked me to speak about what life is actually like for Nigerians who move abroad to the U.S. I agreed, and went home to prepare for the interview.

While preparing, I felt that if I spoke about Nigeria in positive terms and tried to reduce the difference between Nigeria and the U.S., which is my country of origin, I would give my audience something new to think about. The radio host, Gloria, seemed to mirror my intentions. She had been to the United States before. She also knew people who had been deported from the U.S. back to Nigeria, losing everything they had gained. When the day came, and we were in prep, she also mentioned a desire to help shake people away from a mode of thinking she said seemed to be pervasive. After prep, we walked to the studio to begin the broadcast.

**The Broadcast**
The program begins with its standard introduction and popular song called “Overseas,” by a trendy Nigerian musician named Davido. In the whimsical song, a seemingly cosmopolitan man lures a woman to join him on a globe-trotting adventure to places like Paris and Dubai, while promising to buy her diamond rings.

Gloria then provides the following short monologue and series of questions for the audience:

The song we played earlier was by Davido “Overseas,” and he was trying to lure a beautiful lady - the whole idea of the song, you know, “I’ll take you overseas.” And interestingly that is a fantastic thing for a lot of Nigerians. In fact, going overseas, going abroad, going to Yankee … leaving the shores of Nigeria to another country always seems to be the attractive thing to a lot of people, especially Nigerian youths. Everyone wants … greener pastures, and a lot of young people believe greener pastures dey [Pidgin for “are”] abroad…. And for that reason, a lot of young people are willing to do whatever it takes to cross over to different countries, the United States, the UK being our places of choice, some places in Europe as well, and these days, Asia and the Middle East are becoming very very attractive to a lot of Nigerians. They’re willing to sell their property to give consultants - these people who promise you everything when you get to these countries – and they are willing to live in these countries illegally, running every day after day from immigration, and some are so willing to do menial jobs that they would not take back here in Nigeria. These are some of the things young people do.

And to think about it, there are people who die en route to these places, we’re talking about illegal immigration where some people try to cross the desert to get to another country. People die in the
canaries, day after day we’re hearing. People uh die - drown in various seas trying to get overseas.

And the question is, is it really worth it? Is it really worth it? Why are so many young people in Nigeria, yes, why are so many young people in this country eager, dying, doing everything within their power to work, live, or study abroad at the risk of living in these places illegally? How can we deal with this trend because obviously we are losing a lot manpower, we are losing a lot of brains out there who don’t entirely end up becoming super duper millionaires as they hoped. So how can we control this trend?

Why do you think so many young people go abroad…want to go abroad? And you that’s listening, if you had the opportunity, would you just go abroad? That’s a question. I mean, hey, somebody comes up to you and says, “You know what? Ah! I can get you visa go abroad. Wettin’ you see, you take [whatever you see, you get].” Will you take that option? Do you think that’s a better option? So, those are the things we’re discussing today on People’s Forum. Let’s have your thoughts.

Gloria then introduces me and asks me to explain what life is like for Nigerians in the United States. I go on, trying to downplay the differences between life in Nigeria and the U.S. We exchange dialogue about the positive aspects of Nigeria and the “realities” we had both seen of America. After this, Gloria opens the phone lines, and we get feedback about what we have discussed.
After the first call drops, the second caller explains that, “A lot of youths want to travel abroad mostly because there are no opportunities in Nigeria - or let me say that there are very few opportunities in the country.” He then refers to the 2014 immigration office recruitment tragedy in which 6.5 million Nigerians stormed stadiums around the country to apply for 4000 positions. Sixteen Nigerians died in stampedes as crowds tried to exit (Abimaje et al. 2014). He says, “They feel that if they travel abroad, there’re going to be a little bit more, uh a few more options open to them. This may be true. This may not be true, but that is the perception.”

After listening to this caller, Gloria reads this comment from online:

Good evening. I think traveling abroad from a social point of view means different things to different people. Average Nigerians believe traveling abroad boosts their status in life, your wellbeing is secured and the mere fact that you have lived abroad means you can have anything in Nigeria. That’s why many guys abroad have robbed many poor guys of their heartthrob in Nigeria because an average girl in Nigeria cannot say no to a Nigerian guy living abroad. It’s a general assumption that being abroad is automatic wealth or you are assured of all the goodies of life and considering the level of poverty, almost every Nigerian wants to travel abroad…. I will advise Nigerians wishing to travel abroad to critically weigh their options, [and] consider their life goals before venturing abroad. Otherwise, they may face unintended outcomes. And to those that are not finding things easy abroad…, most especially because of current economic crisis is to come back home, rather than live there illegally with their exposure, education skills, etc. I’ve no doubt that
they will get something to do or even create jobs for the population of unemployed youths.

Gloria and I then discuss this comment. I generally agree with the commenter. Gloria says that Nigerians appreciate people who have gone abroad. She then teases me, saying that some man from Nigeria may want to marry me because I am from the United States. She explains that Nigerians like exotic things – i.e. things (which apparently includes people) from abroad.

The third caller asks for advice on how to apply to a PhD program in the United States.

Caller four decries the social situation in Nigeria, comparing the present to his youth:

Yeah, you know most of people try - are trying to look for a way out of Nigeria because Nigeria is too frustrating. I remember early eighties, let me just say seventies and eighties, before you graduate, before you come your graduation, you’re going to be employed, you’ll be given a car. And now, the politicians have taken over the day. If you don’t belong to the political class, you are nobody.
If you don’t have someone to pay somebody, you can’t get a job…. In Nigeria, we decided to go and suffer abroad and come back. When you make a little money abroad – … ten dollar abroad is big money in Nigeria.

Nigeria is rejecting its people. That is the problem. And instead of living like a poor man in your own country, you go outside and live like a bush man, a laborer than living in Nigeria with no hand [help], people will be tormenting you because of this or that….

The people that are in Abuja, how much a-are they earning? They earn so much! Look at the lecturers! Look at first-class Nigerians in Nigeria [first class means students with the best grades in their school]! They can’t get job because they have nobody. But then, when you know you are going to suffer, you make up your mind to suffer and die or make money. These are two things. You go there either to make money and die or you don’t make money, you die there, than dying in a poor country like Nigeria. You trek abroad.

In response to Caller Four, Gloria remarks, “You know, this is really generally the mentality of a lot of young people in Nigeria. They’d rather… work and slave and die abroad.”

The fifth caller thanks Gloria and her team for their work, causing Gloria and I to laugh a bit.
The sixth call drops. At this point Gloria complains about Nigeria saying that one of the problems the country faces is its phone network and how it constantly drops calls. I add that it is an infrastructural problem. Gloria agrees.

Caller seven seems to agree with Gloria and me that the United States is not necessarily better than Nigeria. He argues, “Give an average Nigerian what you give to an average American, and Nigerians will not travel abroad,” and that “the only problem we [Nigerians] have is the mentality.”

Gloria next reads two online comments. The first comment includes the following:

It’s a pity that many Nigerians are so eager to work, study, and live abroad…. This is because they do not appreciate their own country. Well, you don’t blame them ’cause it’s the condition of this country that … because of low development. We have so many reasons, both political, educational, as well as social, even economical reasons. You know, some people give high emphasis on high standard[s] of living. It’s often seen that some rich parents in Nigeria send their children abroad to attain a better lifestyle.

After becoming frustrated with the grammar used by this commenter, Gloria moves on to read the next comment:
Living abroad, probably suffering, is not the big deal. The worst of it all is when you are deported ’cause you’ll start all over. I think most of these travelers are ignorant about it. They don’t know the consequences of what they are about to face and they don’t believe in themselves, ’cause the money and fame they’ll earn there - they can still make it here if they are well able.

Gloria proceeds to tell a story about how one of her family members lived in the United States illegally when, one day, immigration officers caught him in a supermarket. She says that her relative was not able to go home and take anything with him, and that immigration deported him back to Nigeria merely with whatever he had carried with him to the supermarket. When he arrived in Nigeria, he ended up living with his sister who was married with four kids.

After this, Gloria continues to take calls. Caller eight says:

There are several reasons why our youths will run away for greener pastures abroad…. One, our economy is too bad, and the crisis in Nigeria is very worrisome; and furthermore, it looks like the disparity in the dollars to naira difference will also make people to go abroad; and furthermore, the potholes on our Nigerian roads, the lack of drinkable water – all those things would make somebody to go abroad. But I’m begging on our government to wake up from … slumber and do something better so that our working population will remain at home…. They’re now making it more difficult for us. So, thank you.
Caller nine, the only woman to call in, remarks:

Going abroad is not the problem, and for me, I would like to travel because here in Nigeria, we find it so difficult to (unintelligible) jobs, and because of that, the Nigerian youths, we like to go outside. … So, we have to talk to Nigerian government.

**Analysis of Interaction**

Noticeably, the responses over the phone sound strikingly similar. One gets the sense the speech callers use over the phone, not withstanding individual variations, is doing rather comparable work, in perhaps providing justifications for why Nigerians choose to move abroad, particularly Nigerian youth. Callers seemed to list problems that exist within Nigeria, particularly the lack of job opportunities, and how certain countries “abroad” do not have these problems. They also blamed politicians and their government for those problems. Of the five callers who directly contributed to the discussion at hand [this excludes caller three who asked for graduate school advice, and caller five who called to thank us], four out of the five callers complained about problems in Nigeria, while also mentioning the government or politicians. All four, in different ways, also mentioned either a desire to go abroad or a perception that there are more resources abroad. Here callers justify the choice to illegally immigrate by listing a litany of problems in Nigeria and implicating the government in these problems. They also indicate that such problems do not exist “abroad” in places like the U.K. or U.S.
Gloria and several callers discussed a prevalent way of thinking or “mentality” as a primary reason many Nigerians, particularly young people, illegally travel to other countries. These callers did not necessarily list natural catastrophes, wars, or conflict as reasons driving massive-scale illegal immigration out of Nigeria, but a “perception,” “mentality,” and “general assumption” – a particular way of viewing the world – as a major reason their fellow citizens make the risky decision to illegally emigrate.

A deeper analysis of caller and commenter responses show that they used three words most frequently: abroad (twenty-four instances overall), Nigeria (fifteen times), and Nigerian (eleven times). Callers seemed to describe “abroad” as, for example: 1) a place with more opportunities and options, 2) a place where one could suffer and try to make money, 3) a place where people would not travel if they had more opportunities at home 4) a place where the currency is stronger and where people can retreat from crumbling Nigerian infrastructures like potholed roads. Abroad seems to be a place that has a great deal to do with the status of another place – home, and in this case, Nigeria. What did respondents say about Nigeria?: 1) A place with no opportunities within it, 2) A place where, paradoxically and with a whiff of betrayal, people seem to value what is from abroad more than what is from the country, 3) A place people find a way out of, 4) A place where achievement and hard work are not honored. 5) A place where no one helps you, 6) An entity that rejects its own people.

What do they say about Nigerians?: 1) People who need certain things that are available to Americans and would not go abroad if they had those things 2) People with beliefs about the value in Nigeria of traveling abroad, 3) People who are eager to work, live, and study abroad because of the conditions of their own country 4) People who want to travel abroad considering the level of poverty at home.
In many ways, what these callers and respondents are communicating is that Nigerians are immigrating because of Nigeria. At first, this may appear like postcolonial mentality and symptomatic lament. There is a belief that places abroad are better off and have more to offer than Nigeria, which is a postcolonial country. This may simply be a reflection of orientalism or neocolonial and development logic (Said 1978; Edelman 2005). Perhaps this is the case, but this seems to go deeper. This is more about the country itself than about places abroad. It seems these callers indicate that promises of citizenship – that the government will provide basic amenities, support job creation, and enforce laws while citizens follow laws, pay taxes, and participate in the civic life of the country – has been broken. They also seem to argue a disconnect from the Nigerian “nation” itself. Scholars have described national identity as a feeling of belonging to a national group (Tajfel 2010; Huddy and Khatib 2007). It may be that though these callers recognize they and others belong to a Nigerian national group, but that this imagined group of people, or the even the land on which the group resides, experiences serious problems (Anderson 1983; Malkki 1992).

It is also possible they justified leaving simply due to a lack of job opportunities. Economic refugees exist around the world. However, if this was only the case why argue that Nigeria is “rejecting its people” or appeal to the government, pointing to government neglect? Nigeria has its particular issues, which make this “lament” even more apparent. However, in many ways, this lament is not necessarily unique.

British colonizers formed Nigeria a little over 100 years ago and Nigerian nationalists gained independence from the United Kingdom in 1960. The country is postcolonial. For many observers, Nigeria’s internal politics derive from its oil economy (Al Jazeera English 2015; Watts 2004a; Sala-i-Martin and Subramanian 2003). About 90% of Nigerian exports and 75% of
the national budget relies on oil (World Bank 2015). Oil wealth typically stays at the top of a socioeconomic pyramid among what commentators often call “the political class.” Stemming from this over-reliance on oil, scholars and other stakeholders have argued that many officials in Nigerian government tend to neglect maintenance of public institutions and infrastructure (Smith 2006; Apter 2005; National Conference 2014). Institutions like education, the judiciary, and healthcare also seem to suffer from this neglect (National Conference 2014; Sala-i-Martin and Subramanian 2003). In many ways, the Nigerian government has not kept its end of a citizenship relationship. At multiple levels of governance, due to its oil economy, it fails to enforce laws and provide amenities, and thus fails to support job growth. This helps contextualize the lament on the radio, but it does not explain why the lament seemed so similar across individuals.

Along with infrastructures and aforementioned insititutions, the oil economy has also led to a neglect of another Nigerian institution, namely official histories or official ways of talking about the country (Watts 2004b; Falola and Aderinto 2010, 239–65). While Nigeria does have a cultural policy it created through UNESCO in 1973, and does have national orientation agencies geared towards the development of national pride, scholars argue these efforts have either not been fully implemented or effective. In 1977, the country hosted a Festival of Black Arts and Culture, where it promoted a narrative of Nigeria as the most powerful black nation on earth, subsequent Nigerian governments have not successfully distributed an official national narrative, for example, through cultural programming, history curricula, and textbooks in public schools – an institution also withering under general government neglect (Samuel and Chimeziem 2012; Watts 2004b; Alapiki 2005; Apter 2005; Falola and Aderinto 2010).

I have conducted ethnographic research in Nigeria on the impact of their oil economy on expressions of national identity and citizenship for several years. I have found that in the face of
infrastructural failures of public electricity and water, to the institutional failures of public schools, hospitals, and even official histories, citizens in Nigeria have created and spread grassroots solutions that have evolved over time. In the case of intermittent public water supply residents have created complex private water hydraulic systems and other pre-defined alternative strategies. When faced with years of little distribution of official histories, in Nigeria, it seems citizens have created a particular way of talking about the country that seems to be widely accepted.

Problems of neglect, broken promises of citizenship, and negative national identity are not unique to Nigeria. Lament about such realities can move in and out of mnemonic speaking communities and at varying moments can comprise powerful discourses that affect popular political culture. Scholars have discussed lament of this sort in various ethnographic contexts (Ries 1997; Ferguson 1999; Gupta 1995). However, it seems that the lack of official national narrative to counteract this lament in Nigeria has made Nigeria’s lament notable in that it has risen above the level of discourse to become a norm. This normal way of speaking seems to be what callers deployed on the radio and what I and other scholars seem to have come across in our research (Onyeneho 2014; Onyeneho 2012; Pierce 2016; Achebe 1984; Smith 2006; Apter 2005). Callers used this cultural artifact to justify decisions to leave the country, even in dangerous circumstances. This artifact also reflects a relationship citizens of Nigeria seem to argue they have developed with their government and nation over time – one in which members of government have abdicated responsibilities to citizens and the nation is no longer hospitable or a home. This widely accepted artifact is used as a justification to emigrate.
Conclusion

We need more research into the cultural norms, or ideas, people use to justify their decisions to illegally immigrate, particularly those circulating in major origin countries for illegal immigration, like Nigeria. Large-scale illegal immigration out of Africa currently poses a major policy conundrum. We have a great deal of literature on how natural and human-made disasters contribute to massive migration, but little on the cultural forces driving large-scale immigration (Afifi et al. 2012; Drury and Williams 2012; Ngai 2014). For example, at the time of the radio broadcast, Nigeria was embroiled in a serious humanitarian crisis due to violent militants in Northern Nigeria called Boko Haram. Despite this, respondents did not mention Boko Haram once in their answers as a justification for why Nigerians would decide to immigrate. This is apart from one allusion to “crises” in Nigeria. Respondents instead used the aforementioned artifact lamenting a breakdown of Nigerian citizenship and of their relationship to Nigeria itself. I emphasize that they used artifact to justify life-threatening attempts at illegal immigration.

Approximately 15 million Nigerians live abroad, primarily in other African countries, the U.K. and the United States (Carling 2006). At 25.5%, Nigerians comprise the largest percentage of West Africans living in Europe (Ikuteyijo 2012). Also, apparently as of 2008, 59,000 Nigerians without valid travel documents were residing in northern African countries waiting to immigrate to Western Europe. This number seems to be increasing (Mberu and Pongou 2010; Ikuteyijo 2012). A large proportion of those dying on their journeys abroad are, in fact, Nigerians. Since 2014, approximately 5,144 migrants have died en route to Europe from the Middle East and Africa (Peter 2015). More research is needed on the cultural drivers of phenomena such as mass illegal immigration. This radio broadcast demonstrates the power of
discourses, language, and connections to home countries to instigate the widespread movement of peoples.

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TRANSFORMATION OF NIGERIAN ROADS

TRANSFORMATIONAL LEGACIES OF PRESIDENT GOODLUCK JONATHAN

Watts, Michael

World Bank

Yale University Press
Appendix M

2014 Centenary Commercials and Advertisements Report

Overall Summary

• These centenary ads are less about celebrating Nigeria then they are about making the case for why Nigeria’s citizens should not try to secede from the union.

• There is a lot of emphasis in these centenary advertisements and program on how Nigeria needs to be united. They talk about “One Nigeria.” I think a new slogan for the country seems to be, “one Nigeria, great promise.” The “This Land” song kept repeating, WE are one! They argued too that Nigeria is blessed with many resources and has a great future/promise ahead. They kept bringing out/showing children in these ads, which for adults is probably meant to make them ask themselves what kind of legacy they would leave to their children if they tried to secede or separate. The children were all acting in a patriotic fashion, trying to instill the idea that the next generation will be patriotic.

Nigerian Centenary Calendar (see: Nigeria Federal Ministry of Information 2014)

Notes:

• Cover page:
  o Pictured: Goodluck Jonathan waving wearing a green and white banner.
  o Here, Goodluck is admitting that Nigeria is not peaceful and prosperous yet- or at least not as much as people would like it to be. He says a greater Nigeria is on the horizon. Greater than it is now? I thought they were calling Nigeria “The giant of Africa.”

  o Here Goodluck is also emphasizing the importance of unity. He is arguing against people who would want to divide the nation. Maybe Boko Haram?

• January
• Pictured: Colonists walking on the streets of what look like Lagos with African soldiers stationed at one side and on the other side, what looks like civilians looking at the colonists. The image is black and white
  o They are not shying away from talking about amalgamation here.

• February
  Pictured: nationalist leaders
  o They are also not shying away from talking about Independence.

• March
  o Pictured: What looks like Nnamdi Azikiwe giving a speech on a covered dias in the presence of a packed field of people.
  o They literally have two months devoted to talking about Independence, but Independence from what? They do not go into colonialism at all. None of the government narratives do. Why? Why not want to set up oppression from Dark outsider Britain and then sudden defeat against them by Nigerian nationalist heroes - clear good guy, bad guy scenario. Maybe they don’t want to piss off Britain, as they are actually still part of the Commonwealth. Maybe they also do not want to anger their donor countries.

• April
  o Pictured: Picture of Abuja Business District, undergird with other pictures of I am assuming Lagos and Abuja buildings.

• May
  o Pictured: Famous Nigerian women (Patience Jonathan at the center)
  o ‘Kay. Is this an effort to make sure Patience Jonathan was included in the Calendar? She is front and center in the picture.

• June
  o Pictured: Nigerian Soccer players cheering that they’ve won the world cup.
  o Here, they are talking about sports because it is “unifying” (see June). The title of the page is literally, “Sports: a unifying legacy.” The second sentence is, “Sports has proved to be the most potent unifier and a source of inspiration of national consciousness among Nigerians.” Is national consciousness like a problem for Nigeria? Or is it a certain kind of national consciousness that is a problem?

• July
  o Pictured: Images of Nigerian (not Biafran) troops during the Civil War
  o I’m seeing use of passive voice, which government authors have used in other instances to dance around/avoid issues.
  o Later, they switch to active voice, when they discuss Yakubu Gowon and efforts to “reunite a divided nation.” If they wanted to reunite so badly, why did they only give Igbos 20 lbs each and erase Igbo steal wealth before their eyes?
  o Here, they don’t list events in the civil war. They list largely international events where Nigerian military positively contributed?? I guess they really don’t want to detail what happened in that war. We are still living through its consequences.

• August
**September**
- Pictured: Men working at the Innosion Vehicle manufacturing plant in Anambra state. Other pictures of money, people holding green and white bags, Goodluck Jonathan, and another plant underneath.
- They have a whole month devoted to discussing the economy, with images indicating job creation. However, their text doesn’t discuss job creation. It discusses natural resources.
- This may be why they don’t want to talk about colonialism, because that is the legacy of current presidents. Also, Nigeria is still part of the Commonwealth so they may just not want to piss off the UK or donor countries in the dear UN.

**October**
- All presidents/leaders starting from Frederick Lugard, ending with Goodluck Jonathan. They are numbered too. Frederick Lugard is #1.
- This may be why they don’t want to talk about colonialism, because that is the legacy of current presidents. Also, Nigeria is still part of the Commonwealth so they may just not want to piss off the UK or donor countries in the dear UN.

**November**
- Pictured: The prominent picture is of a crowd of people entering a green and white train. Underneath this prominent picture is a picture of a paved road, an up-to-date power plant, what looks like the inside of an airport, African men wearing red construction caps talking to a white man wearing a white construction cap. What looks like Goodluck Jonathan agreeing to a deal.
- Infrastructure is actually so important that they have devoted an entire month to talking about how governments are tackling it. Huh. They also talked about the UN and how Nigeria has helped other countries, though, so maybe they are just trying to fill up space?

**December**
- Pictured: a bricolage of pictures of well-known Nigerians artists – literary and otherwise. At the very bottom we see some images for FESTAC.
- They list Wole Soyinka first and then Chinua Achebe next in their text. Both people are front and center in the featured picture. But both of these intellectuals were highly critical of Nigeria in their writing, feeding the popular consciousness with messages of disunity and corruption in Nigeria hat the government is trying to counteract. Achebe disliked the current state of Nigeria so much, during his lifetime; he apparently refused to accept awards from the government.
Live Centenary Awards Night Broadcast (AIT Television)

Notes

Visuals:

- At the top of the television screen are two broadcasted stickers/logos – one to the left and one to the right. The one on my left is the “AIT” logo, which says, “ait.” The one on the left is a bricolage of three broadcast stickers saying, “LIVE”, which is in a red box to the left of the “ABUJA” sticker in a white box. The time is shown in a red box above the white “ABUJA” box.
- The emblem of the Nigerian centenary is emblazoned against a paneled white background.
- There are many children dancing on the stage in a coordinated fashion. They are wearing the attire of different ethnic groups.
- They are dancing what looks like a traditional dance of some kind. (Did the choreographers try to invent a “traditional Nigerian dance” with all of the attires of different tribes represented? This would be an attempt to engender unity)
- Suddenly, one little boy wearing white traditional attire goes to the middle of the stage and begins break dancing.
- Three boys in white come out and simultaneously break dance again. They are interspersed evenly across the stage.
- After the three break dancers leave and the children finish yelling, the children start shaking white handkerchiefs affixed to their wrists up and down as they move their hands from their ears to their waists while dancing bent over.
- They all suddenly sit down.
- The video moves to the crowd clapping. They show someone who looks like Lagos Governor Fashola.
- At the bottom of the screen, they have a half banner which says Centenary Anniversary Awards Nite/Dinner
- There is a white square immediately above that, outlined in green with the Nigerian centenary logo in the middle and at the bottom of the square, it reads “Congrats Nigeria.”
- As female speaks, two young boys, one on right wearing traditional Hausa attire, one on left wearing a green suit and white bowler hat which looks traditional of a particular either Igbo or south-south tribe. They are holding a cardboard cut out of Nigeria painted in green on one side, white in the middle, and green on the other side, reminiscent of the Nigerian flag. The Hausa-dressed child is standing to the left of the audience facing the
audience, while the Igbo-dressed child is standing to the right of the audience facing the audience.

- A girl with a, I’m assuming Edo attire (replete with hair tie) gets up and walks to the front of the stage. She is holding a chorded microphone, and begins speaking into the microphone. After she is done talking, she walks over to help the two original children hold the cardboard cut out of Nigeria.

- On the opposite side of the stage, a girl wearing a gele and apparently traditional Yoruba attire gets up and walks to the front of the stage with a chorded microphone and begins to speak. She uses a lot of flourish and hand gestures whiles speaking. Once she is done, After she is finished, she goes and helps the now children hold the cardboard cut out of Nigeria and the microphone is handed over to a boy with attire from Sokoto State who walks up from a place close to the where the Yoruba child representative was originally standing on stage. He begins speaking into the microphone. Towards the end of his words, he bows slightly. Afterwards, he goes to help the four children hold the cut out of Nigeria.

- Off screen but to the audience’s right, we can tell someone else has just gone to the front of the stage. It is a girl and she begins talking. She says she is from Benue State. A girl apparently wearing Benue State attire goes and helps the five children carry the cut out of Nigeria.

- A boy walks out and takes a chorded microphone. The screen cuts out to a man and woman seated at a table wearing attire that looks like it may be traditional Hausa attire. The video cuts back to the boy who is speaking. He begins to speak. He says he is from Borno State. After speaking he also helps to hold the cut out.

- There is a wide shot of everyone in the room. Then a close up shot specifically of the man in Hausa attire from before who was seated with his wife.

- There is a close up of a girl in green attire with a green hair tie, as well as green and orange traditional beads. She raises her right hand in a fist and immediately lowers it, while the left hand is holding the microphone.

- After she is finished speaking, she hands the microphone off to a taller girl. The video then flashes to the Fashola look-alike. It then flashes to the taller girl talking. She still has handkerchiefs around her wrists. She is wearing a green lace traditional shirt and a small white turban. She extends her right arm, palm facing upwards and immediately puts it back down again while saying her first sentence. After speaking, she steps back to her spot. Then, a boy in white attire and a green cap comes out with his left arm outstretched, holding the chorded microphone in his right hand and begins talking into the mic. After he is done speaking. The camera stays on him as he rubs his nose.

- The camera next shows a shorter boy wearing a traditional Igbo white and red-striped cap and the black and gold printed velvet attire of chiefs. He holds a microphone close to his mouth as he speaks into it. After he is done speaking, he looks behind him. The screen goes to a wide shot and a teenager walking up to join the children at the front of the stage. Those at the front are either carrying the cut out of Nigeria or standing in line on either side of the cut out. Everyone else is seated in a single-file line at the back of the stage.

- The teenager wearing a green traditional shirt and orange traditional beads grabs the microphone from the child who had previously discussed corruption. He begins to speak into the microphone while looking and gesturing with his hands towards the children.
lined up at the front of the stage. After teenager is finished talking, he joins the children lined up at the front of the stage.

- The camera switches to another teenager who has emerged wearing a black bowler hat, a white button down glasses with thick black rims. His attire is likely that of a particular Igbo tribe. He is speaking into a microphone.

- After showing all the teens and children on the stage who have now formed a single file line across the stage. They held hands and raised their linked hands up as they said, “Happy Centenary,” the camera flicks to show President Goodluck Jonathan and his wife, Patience, sitting at a table clapping, but with serious analyzing expressions on their faces.

- While the “Happy Centenary, oh!” song plays, the children previously seated in the back have gotten up to continue dancing on the stage together in a coordinated fashion waving the white handkerchiefs affixed to their wrists in the air as they dance. The children already in the front who were holding the cut out of Nigeria remain standing there. Behind them someone is waving a large Nigerian flag in front of the emblem for the Nigerian Centenary.

- The music cuts out and you hear a child yell, “One Nigeria!” The other kids punch one fist in the air and yell “Great promise!” Again, you hear a child yell, “One Nigeria!” The other kids punch one fist in the air and yell “Great promise!”

- The one child then yells, “Goodluck, Nigeria!”, the children then bow and accept applause smiling.

- [The rest of the program is basically an awards program ]

Video Audio:

- African sounding flute is playing. In the background there is the sound of hand drums. This is the music to which the children are dancing.
- After the break dance, we hear drums only. During this, the children start doing a traditional call out for the boy – not shouting words but making traditional shrieks of encouragement.
- Louder flute playing
- Children shriek in encouragement (in a traditional way that often accompanies traditional dance) when the three boys come out and break dance.
- After this, the children start yelling.
- A flute is playing a different melody as they dance this new handkerchief dance. Suddenly, the music stops and they sit down.
- Clapping
- A female voice, “And now, [the sweet?] end of the celebration. What commitment are you willing to make to see our dear nation become our dream land? What do you see in Nigeria?
- Girl wearing Edo attire: “I’m from the Southeast Edo state, c___. I pledge my rich mineral resources to protect our dear country ____ [unintelligible]
- Another girl representing Lagos State. She says, “I’m from the Southwest, Lagos State. City of excellence. I designed my seaport, international airport, and world trade centers to forge our dear country into the seat of greatness!
• Boy representing Sokoto State: I am from the Northwest, Sokoto State, city of the Caliphate. I come with my mineral resources, cattles, hides and skin, to see our great country to our promised land.” After this, members of the audience start clapping.

• Girl representing Benue State: “I am from Benue State, the food basket of the nation. I will supply my food to feed our nation.”

• Boy representing Borno State: “I am from the Northeast, Borno State, home of peace. From henceforth, we pledge to obtain peace in our great nation.” The crowd gives him a big applause even before he has finished talking.

• During the wide shot and shot of the man from before in white Hausa attire, we hear a girl say, “I am from the South-South, our oils here have never run dry. I give it to us to make our country the world’s greatest!”

• Green attire girl: “I see a Nigeria where the rich lend a shoulder to the poor, and the destitute and less privileged truly find a place to call their home.

• The girl with the small white turban: I see a Nigeria void of ethnic and religious rivalry, a home of peace and hospitality.

• The boy with the white attire and green hat: “I see a Nigeria where corruption is greeted with disdain and the labors of our heroes past shall not be in vain.” He says this with great dramatic flourish. After he says this, there is just a tiny amount of applause somewhere in the back of the audience.

• Boy with red and white stripped cap: “I see a Nigeria standing tall in a comity of nations so great that her children shall be proud to call her blessed!” This gets a bit more applause than the one right before him, but still not a lot of applause

• Teenager: while facing the children at front of stage, “Of course, our beauty is in our diversity.” He then faces the audience. “And our strength,” he curls his right hand which is free while saying strength (holding microphone in left hand) “is in our unity.” He says unity while turning back to the children at the front of the stage and gesturing to them with a now outstretched right arm.

• Teen with the glasses: “Indeed, there is no place like home, and the ground is greener where you water it, and together in unity, we make bold to say, ‘Happy Centenary!’” He is joined in saying “Happy Centenary” by all the other teens and children on the stage who have now formed a single file line across the stage. They held hands and raised their linked hands up as they said, “Happy Centenary!”

• After this, a song starts playing, which goes, “Happy Centenary, Oh, yeah yeah! (I am in, I am in) Happy Centenary! Happy Centenary! (I am in, I am in) Happy Centenary, oh! (I am in, I am in, I am in one Nigeria!) [unintelligible] yeah, oh! (I am in, I am in) Happy Centenary ohh! (I am in, I am in) Happy Centenary, oh! (I am in, I am in, I am in one Nigeria!) Happy Centenary, Oh yeah, yeah! (I am in, I am in) Happy Centenary! Happy Centenary! (I am in, I am in) strength of the flowering race! (I am in, I am in, I am in one Nigeria!) One Nigeria! Etc...

• The music cuts out and you hear a child yell, “One Nigeria!” The other kids punch one fist in the air and yell “Great promise!” Again, you hear a child yell, “One Nigeria!” The other kids punch one fist in the air and yell “Great promise!”

• The one child then yells, “Goodluck, Nigeria!”

• After the kids bow, the crowd yells out in cheers, whistles, and applause.
• Tinkling music that sounds like it has African beats then starts playing once the applause is over.
• That music cuts out.
• A man comes out and starts speaking. He is wearing glasses and dark gray traditional attire. He says, “Your Excellencies, distinguished ladies and gentlemen, for these wonderful children, the future is indeed very bright. For these wonderful children, the current administration is looking to weed off insincerity, weed off all kinds of negatives so that the next one hundred years will be one that will make them dance, rejoice, and shout of our wonderful Fatherland. Can you put your hands together for these wonderful children as we celebrate our country!
• A woman comes out and says all the former heads of state in attendance in the audience. She asks the audience to give them all a round of applause. The audience does.

Audience Member Audio:

• W2: All the ethnic groups are here! (commenting on the children dancing).
• After the three break dancers leave and the children finish yelling, W2 starts laughing at the screen
• Kosi to W2: What do you think of it.
• W2 to Kosi: (Laughs) They are performing well.
• After boy with Igbo attired boy with stripped cap, black and gold velvet speaks, W2 says: Exactly. Exactly.
• After teenager speaks, W2: Exactly.

Centenary Music Video – Centenary commercial 1 captured on AIT Television using my camera on February 26, 2014

Summary Notes:

• Interestingly, they had the lyrics of the song, displayed on the screen. Maybe to make it easier for viewers to follow along? The older woman was moving around, dancing, and gesturing enthusiastically throughout the song and at one point seemed to be inviting or teaching the audience. Showed pictures of famous Nigerians, including Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie - I didn’t realize that Adichie was such a famous Nigerian and national symbol already. I mean, she along with Chinua Achebe, who they also displayed on the screen (did they get the
permission of these authors to show their pictures?) were highly critical of the Nigerian government and the status of Nigeria. I mean, Achebe did not even receive national honors from the government and wouldn’t until the government instituted reforms.

• The singer is stressing unity.
• She calls Nigeria a sure foundation on which we stand, which makes the country sound stable.
• She repeats “One Nation, one nation.” Over and over again.

Visuals:

The woman – I think perhaps Onyeka Onwenu, sang the entire song dressed in fancy traditional Nigerian attire. There were captions of the lyrics playing at the bottom of the screen.

Audio:

(Shine a light, shine a light….)

You are our guide. You are our light. Our only restoration. A sure foundation, on which we stand… uh yeah… Ohh, You are the o…ne! Our di…fference is… our strength…. (Our difference is our strength!) In our diversity (in our… diversity) li-e-ies our unity…. There may be many tongues, (there may be many tongues), but… one voice… (but one voice, one voice, yeah). One na …tion u…nder G…od(!) Our difference (Our difference!) i…s our strength (O…ur difference is our strength!). In our diversity (in our diversity) lies our unity. (Lies our unity!) There may be many tongues (there may be many tongues!), but one voice… (but one voice, oh one voice!). One na…tion (one nation) u…nder G…od! Whoo! One nation, one nation (oh yeah!). One nation, one nation. (Mmhmm). One nation, one nation, (Nigeria is…) one. One nation under God…. One nation, one nation (oh-oo-oh-oo-oh!). One nation, one nation (oh-oo-ohh!). One nation, one nation (Nigeria is…) one. One nation under God. One nation, one nation. (oh-ooooo!) One nation, one nation. One nation, one nation, one.
One nation under God! (Ehh-yeah!) One nation, one nation. One nation, one nation ( Nigeria, Nigeria, Nigeria, Nigeria, my Nigeria is … ) one nation, one … One nation under God!

Subtitle at the end of the music video read: “This is my GIFT to you NIGERIA. Let there be peace.”
Granny: Mm, nketchi nwam. O bu k’am Maramma

Kosi: [laughs.] Granny did you like that?

Granny: [laughs and smiles at Kosi and camera. nods her head and gives an unintelligible response]

Kosi: uh, no, OK.

Granny: Old mamma, don’ sing.

Kosi: laughs.

Transcription 02272014 Centenary Commercial 2 Music Videos and Household Reactions

Notes:

They are trying to remind people that one day their children will grow up (hence adult attire) and that kids like Nigeria.

They are also trying to intersperse these images with splashed images depicting demonstrations of Nigerian patriotism.

Visuals:

• Young children who seem to be between the ages of 7 and 10 wearing Nigerian traditional attire typically meant for older people.
For example the little girl can be seen wearing a hair tie/gele and beads. The boy is wearing traditional beads and the black bowler hat meant for grown Delta men. The traditional attire the two main children are wearing changes. I think it may be meant to depict the different cultures of Nigeria.

- There are also children wearing full face paint with either extreme of their face in green paint and the center colored white – this is symbolic of the Nigerian flag.
- They are waving their arms and singing this song.
- Interspersed between clips of these children singing this song is one clip of adults dancing a traditional-looking dance in a public setting wearing costumes colored in green and white, and another clip of grown military men marching while holding guns.

Partial Lyrics:

Eh, Eh…. Eh, Eh… One people for a century, one [unintelligible] forever. Nigeria, (eh, eh…) Nigeria (eh… eh…) Nigeria…. (eh… Eh…) Nigeria… Ahh, sound the alarm. (unintelligible)…For the day has come, yeah, the bright tomorrow. Let the joyful …. 

W1: Which one are you conferencing?

Kosi: Laughing

W1: Nonsense!

Kosi: Laughs louder

W1: This one is nonsense, oh!

This Land - Nigerian 100 Years Celebration Song Music video:
“Title: THIS LAND – Celebrating One Hundred years of Nigeria

The Official Video for “THIS LAND – Celebrating One Hundred years of Nigeria.”
[1914-2014] ONE NIGERIA. GREAT PROMISE!
Produced by Wole Oni and Directed by Clarence Peters.
Words and Music by Onyeka Onwenu
For Nigeria’s Centenary Celebration.
Featuring: Eben, Ayo (Project Fame 2012 Winner), Jodie, Zakky, Tosin Martins, Omawunmi
Source: GospoGroove” (Arisenigeria 2012; Alfred Obiora Uzokwe 2013)

Summary Notes:

• The song was clearly meant to instill patriotism, hope for the country, and unity.
• It also sang about retaining hope for Nigeria’s future – that better days for the country are ahead.
• Showing kids in military uniforms was also meant to instill patriotism.
• Continuous repetition of key phrases like “we are one” and “standing tall” were meant to emphasize these phrases– as these would be the phrases listeners would repeat the most if they were signing the song to themselves (It is in the chorus and it is repeated in the chorus).
• Everyone looks extremely happy in the video – it is meant to engender positive feelings.
• Adding beloved national celebrities is also meant to engender positive feelings, and by association positive feelings about the subject of their song – Nigeria.
• Having people in outfits from different cultures all singing and dancing together is supposed to engender unity. This reminds me of the image on the Ministry of Information Website.

Notes on Visuals:

• The video begins with an image of Nigerian infrastructure – an overhead view of a city
• The video then shows people wearing traditional attire (straw skirts, face paint) playing traditional African flutes
• It then cuts to an all-African orchestra (I think most of the members of the orchestra were male) They are all wearing black tuxedos with white button downs underneath. A couple have hints of green color against the white (hard to decipher what those green objects are).
• The video also shows snapshots of moments in Nigerian history in both black and white and color. They also show Nigerian leaders. They showed Obafemi Awolowo, Nnamdi Azikiwe and Ahmadu Bello in three black and white panels side by side.
• The first person to sing is a famous Nigerian singer – an older woman
• This video featured a lot of well-known (and liked) Nollywood actors of different ages.
• I believe it also featured famous singers apart from the first woman.
• When singing about unity in diversity, they have a bunch of people in traditional attire of different tribe standing together singing together.
• They showed young children wearing military-esq green uniforms saluting (this may be because they wanted to show the next generation will be loyal to Nigeria. It may also be a reflection of the fact school children in Nigeria march in military-style ways during holidays such as independence day. I have video from the Independence day event.
• The video looks very glossy. The pixel size is smaller than that of many Nollywood movies.

**Audio/Lyrics:**

Western orchestral music combined with African sounding flutes at the beginning.

“Ah, this land of mine, Nigeria, on my mind. Born in diversity, blessed beyond compare.

Oh! This Land of mine
Nigeria on my mind
Born in diversity
Blessed beyond compare.

Ooo, All through these hundred years
Our struggles and through all our fears
We’re strong in our unity
Peace our destiny.

**CHORUS** (*call and response/echo repeat of each line of chorus. This is consistent each time the chorus is sung. For example: Chorus sings: Here we are. Singer sings: (here we are) Chorus: standing tall Singer 1: (standing tall) Singer 2: (we’re standing tall) Chorus: Through adversity Singer 1: we are one Chorus: we are one Singer 3: we are one! ** Interestingly, most choruses do not repeat the line “Through adversity.” *):
Here we are
Standing tall
Through adversity
We are one
One hundred years of unity
Nigeria
We will stand.

Oh! This Land of mine
Nigeria on my mind
I pledge to you my loyalty
My love
My ability

Oooo, and as we celebrate
Ourselves we shall re-dedicate
Ahh, to serve a new Nigeria
For a better land for all.

CHORUS:
Here we are
Standing tall
Through adversity
We are one
One hundred years of unity
Nigeria
We will stand.

REFRAIN:
Tell it on the mountain
Shout it in the valley
Nigeria has come a long long way
On the journey to our future
Of brighter and better days
Together we will make it
Strong and invincible
We are on our way
One nation, indivisible
Nigeria is here to stay

CHORUS:
Here we are (we are standing tall as a nation)
Standing tall
Through adversity
We are one
One hundred years of unity
Nigeria
We will stand.

Chorus (this chorus, there isn’t a repeat of every line –perhaps since it is the last chorus)
Here we are
Standing tall
Through adversity
We are one (we’re still together!)
One hundred years (one nation) of unity (one country)
Nigeria (Nigeria)
We will stand.

Other examples of repetition at different points:

- We are one! (We are one…!). One hundred years…of unity (of unity!). Nigeria (Nigeria!), we will stand! (We will stand!) Ohhh…, (ohhh!) this land of mine (this land of mine). Nigeria, on… my mind (on my mind!). I pledge …to you my lo…yalty, my love, my loyalty…. Ohh and… as… we… celebrate, o…our cele—

- And dedicate… (yeah!) to serve ( a new Nigeria…! For a better land for all!) Here we are…(here we are) standing tall (standing tall) through adversity… (through adversities) we are one … (we are one). (unintelligible) –unity…. Nigeria… We will stand!

Feedback from Nigerian arents who are expats in United States:

Mother, while making dinner:

“Huh! Congrats. (sarcastic tone) while glancing over at the music video on my laptop….. Huh! Nigeria. Congrats (sarcastic tone)” Towards the end, starting swaying a little.

After: “I liked it. I danced to it…. This is great!:

When asked why the sarcastic sounding comment – she sai, “They are saying it is one, but I don’t think it is. There is division and people are suffering.”
Father:

Smiled and looked rather engaged throughout. Excited about all the different actors and singers he saw that he recognized. The older woman who began – he recognized her and said she was a singer from the seventies, with a smile.

During: “They are lying. There was no unity. They fought a war. “

After: “That is good.

We fought a war. We really suffered during the Biafra war….

They are taxing us – even to get a passport, you have to pay three times…. Taxing their citizens! They are not making it easy for us! We pay for their hotel stay, we pay for everything….We had to pay fifty, fifty dollars. (referring to the tax he had to pay in order to begin the process of getting his passport for him and other family members renewed)….Imagine! Other countries send people from their embassies to every state once a year. MIND (a Minnesotan group advocating for Nigerians in Minnesota) had to bring ours here. …

Well. At least one good thing from Nigeria. That is a good thing to say.”

**Youtube Video Title: NIGERIA CENTENARY CELEBRATION – uploader: TAN TV**

*(NIGERIA CENTENARY CELEBRATION 2014)*
Notes:

I located this on YouTube on May 25, 2014. It was published on YouTube on April 22, 2014. As of December 7, 2016, it has 20 views. I did not view this on television in Nigeria in 2014.

Text (on different slides):

- TRANSFORMATION AMBASSADORS OF NIGERIA, TAN
- “LET US USHER IN A NEW ERA OF PEACE. TAKE MY HAND AND LET US PULL TOWARDS PROGRESS TOGETHER AS ONE INDIVISIBLE NATION UNDER GOD.” GOODLUCK EBELE JONATHAN GCFR PRESIDENT FED. REP. OF NIGERIA
- “I <3 NIGERIA” [in green banner being held in the background. Held by a man wearing flamboyant green and white clothing. People wearing green and white clothing.] ONE NATION [overladen on image in yellow]
- 100 NIGERIA
- CELEBRATION
- 100 Nigeria. BOUND IN UNITY
- NIGERIA CENTENARY 100 YEARS (on Nigerian Centenary Logo). ONE NIGERIA. GREAT PROMISE.
- ONE INDIVISIBLE NATION.
- SUPPORT TRANSFORMATION AGENDA
- SUPPORT PRESIDENT GOODLUCK JONATHAN
- TAN – TRANSFORMATION AMBASSADORS OF NIGERIA
- 1 VISION NIGERIA (Logo)

Audio:

- Transformation Ambassadors of Nigeria, TAN, wishing Nigeria a happy centenary celebration.
- Song played in the background is “Celebrate!” by Kool & The Gang 1980. Instrumentals and lyrics.
- Happy Centenary Celebration, Nigeria.
- Let us Remain One Indivisible Nation.
- Let us Support the Transformation Agenda of President Goodluck Jonathan
- This message is brought to you courtesy of Transformation Ambassadors of Nigeria, TAN. For one vision, Nigeria.
Appendix N

Nigerian Textbook Analysis Report

-Taken from Nigerian Stories and their Impacts on Nationhood (Onyeneho 2012)

“A friend, who works as a teacher in Lagos, Nigeria as a public primary school teacher in a heavily populated section of the city, secured a copy a social studies textbook titled, Social Studies for Primary Schools, Book 5: National Primary Education Commission (NPEC), (World Bank – Assisted Project). At the bottom of the front cover is labeled “Property of the Federal Government of Nigeria.” Teachers use these books today as instruction guides in their classrooms and in order to form lesson plans, and I did not see any students take these books home. I observed teachers reading directly from these state-sponsored books and students taking notes in their own notebooks. These text and practices, provide a perfect demonstration of the weak, state-sponsored narrative. In Unit 4 on page 9, we see the first mention of Nigeria as a nation after several pages describing diverse marriage customs and how to avoid marriage failure, likely an intervention from the World Bank’s involvement in this publication. Unit 4 is labeled “Unity in Cultural Diversity.” On its first page, we read, “

In Nigeria, there are many ethnic groups. These groups speak different languages and have different styles of dressing and other customary practices. In the West, for example, Yoruba is the main language while Edo, Ijaw, and Egun are some of the other languages. In Eastern Nigeria, Igbo is the main language among many others including Ibibio, Efik and Ikwere. Hausa and Fulani are the main language in Northern Nigeria where Gwari, Fulfude, Jukun and Tiv are also spoken, among other languages.

In a situation where people with different languages and cultures come together to make a nation, there is a need for unity. This unity is possible only when we could communicate and interact with one another. To do this well, we need a common language….

English is the official language in Nigeria. This is because:
5. It is the language of our colonisers (the British).
6. Only one language could be the official language where there are many languages
7. We have not agreed on the use of any Nigerian languages as official language
8. English is an international language we could use to communicate with other countries.

English is Nigerian national language. It is however not an indigenous language. If we have an indigenous national language, we will have these advantages:

7. We will be proud of an official language that belongs to us.
8. It will be easier to understand because of similarities it may have with other languages.
9. We will understand one another’s culture better.
10. We will feel at home in any part of the country.
11. There will be greater cooperation, unity, peace and progress.
12. It will improve our economy since we will have a common language to transact business.

There may however be these disadvantages:

4. Other ethnic groups whose languages are not chosen may find their languages neglected. [Won’t that happen anyway with English?]
5. The people whose language is chosen may become too proud and domineering.
6. It will limit our interaction with many countries of the world because we may not be able to communicate with them without interpreters.

Choosing an indigenous language as national language

Considering its many advantages however, an indigenous national language may be necessary in Nigeria…. We should preserve only customs that make us live together in love, mutual respect and unity (Quarterly et al. 1992).

Reading the passage, as even the authors themselves acknowledge, it may be a good idea for Nigerians to speak indigenous languages even though this flies in the face of current government policy, which encourages people to speak English to facilitate national unity. In fact, the authors acknowledge that English was the language of oppressive Nigerian colonizers. From this government-sponsored passage, there seem to be few reasons to support use of English, an apparent symbol of national unity. However, at the end of the passage, the authors re-emphasize the need for unity, although they provide no material to help conceptualize how this unity would come about. In fact, after the authors explain Nigeria’s great ethnic and linguistic diversity, they suddenly emphasize the importance of Nigerian unity and cooperation without explaining how Nigerians will achieve any unity if English is not an adequate lingua franca.
The specific narrative this book provides about the Nigerian national language closely follows the state-government’s unity in diversity narrative, but it also reveals a weakness the narrative holds. The idea of unity in diversity, with no clear explanation about how this unity will come about is contradictory. It is like saying that, “Black is actually white,” or “1 is actually 2.” It just does not make any sense, without a rational explanation as to how this would be the case. The message these authors provide, therefore, is conflicted and confusing for adults, let alone for their intended 10-11 year-old audience. It is hard to see teachers wanting to use such a narrative to explain history in classrooms.

Unit 8, titled Leadership and Political Parties has also warns against social ills that it feels compelled to mention:

All elected leaders should do what they promised to do and listen to the grievances of their people…. The representatives of one party contest elections with those of the other parties. One wins the election and the other loses. The loser should take the defeat in good faith. He should not cause trouble. Politicians should not use thugs. They should not rig elections. They should be understanding and peaceful in all they do (p. 20-1) (Quarterly et al. 1992). 

Page 22 continues:

A good leader should be honest, truthful, and hardworking. He should be impartial, friendly with his people and ready to solve their problems. He takes advice and lays good examples for his people. A bad leader is a problem to his people. This is because he

(f) tells lies.
(g) Does not listen to advice.
(h) Is proud and does not mix with his people.
(i) Fails to do the things he promises the people he will do.
(j) Embezzles and misuses funds (Quarterly et al. 1992).

It almost seems as though the authors are speaking from experience with which they feel the students can relate, of corrupt national rulers. The admonitions against malpractice in government in a primary 5 social studies textbook, meant for 10-11 year olds, seem striking when one considers the likely contents of a social studies textbook somewhere like the United States. It seems that these textbooks are written as part of a dialogic response and rebuttal to stories students can be expected to know well.”
Appendix O

Popular Nigerian Intellectuals Report

These are three of the most well known Nigerian writers/intellectuals. However, they all seem to lament and critique the state of the country – out right calling the country corrupt.

No Longer At Ease

(Achebe 1960)

“No Longer at Ease (1960) is a tragicomic postscript to the moving events of Achebe’s first novel. The central character is Obi Okonkwo, son of Nwoye and grandson of Okonkwo, and the action takes place in Nigeria in the 1950s, in a world which is the result of the intermingling of Europe and Africa whose original confrontation we witnessed in Things Fall Apart. In this world Achebe traces the decline of his hero from brilliant student to civil servant convicted of bribery and corruption. It reads like a postscript to the earlier novel because the same forces are at work but in a confused, diluted and blurred form. Allegiances are not clearly defined, and attempts at redefinition are cynically abandoned. The forces of Christianity which officially superseded the old tribal ethic are themselves shown to be on the wane in the new generation, and no new creed appears likely to take their place. The downfall of the hero in this perplexing world is presented as neither tragic nor surprising” (Carroll 1990).

“In this brilliant and intriguing novel, Chinua Achebe uses the ‘fall’ of one man to depict the birth of a whole new age in Nigerian life; a powerful, disillusioning age of corruption.” (Achebe 1960, Back-Cover)

The Trouble With Nigeria
“‘The trouble with Nigeria is simply and squarely a failure of leadership. There is nothing basically wrong with the Nigerian character. There is nothing wrong with the Nigeiran land or climate or water or air or anything else. The Nigerian problem is the unwillingness or inability of its leaders to rise to the responsibility, to the challenge of personal example, which are the hallmarks of true leadership.’

In this book Chinua Achebe broke silence at the time of the 1983 Nigerian elections. The style and wit in part cover his deep desperation. Did this message have an influence on the actions of the leaders of the 1983 New Years’s Eve coup in Nigeria?” (Achebe 1984, Back-Cover)

“The eminent African novelist and critic, here addresses Nigeria's problems, aiming to challenge the resignation of Nigerians and inspire them to reject old habits which inhibit Nigeria from becoming a modern and attractive country. In this famous book now reprinted, he professes that the only trouble with Nigeria is the failure of leadership, because with good leaders Nigeria could resolve its inherent problems such as tribalism; lack of patriotism; social injustice and the cult of mediocrity; indiscipline; and corruption” (Jumia Nigeria 2016)

Anthills of the Savannah

(Achebe 1988b)

“In the fictional West African nation Kangan, newly independent of British rule, the hopes and dreams of democracy have been quashed by a fierce military dictatorship. Chris Oriko is a member of the cabinet of the president for life, one of his oldest friends. When the president is charged with censoring the oppositionist editor of the state-run newspaper—another childhood friend—Chris’s loyalty and ideology are put to the test. The fate of Kangan hangs in the balance
as tensions rise and a devious plot is set in motion to silence the firebrand critic.” (Penguin Random House 2016)

“Unlike his previous novels, Anthills features characters who are concerned neither with negotiating a way between black society and white government (as in Things Fall Apart, No Longer at Ease, and Arrow of God) nor with making a direct transition from colonialism to self-government (as in Man of the People); instead, these characters are occupied with finding a way of establishing and maintaining a successful form of postcolonial self-government. Rather than trying to fill in the skeletal structure of government left by colonialism, they attempt to construct a new government out of their history, a contemporary African government. The relation between knowledge and power in Anthills, then, is particularly problematic, for the characters have a great deal of various kinds of knowledge, and they believe that they have a certain amount of power as well. But they recognize that the possession of that knowledge and power is not necessarily enough to ensure either their own well-being and survival or those of their society. They are almost perpetually in a state of confusion because the extent of their knowledge and power is always in question, not only in their own minds but in the minds of others as well. Thus the trope of storytelling and Achebe's own storytelling also demonstrate that confusion. Each of the main characters—Chris, Ikem, the president, and Beatrice—participates in the storytelling. Unlike the stories we find in the earlier novels, these stories are not seen as sources of solutions to problems; no one views them as coherent wholes that offer reassurance or advice. The stories in Anthills only suggest more questions for the characters. Thus the concept of knowledge is problematized; what makes for knowledge, how it is acquired, how it is or should be used—all are questions with which the characters, and Achebe himself, struggle throughout the novel” (Ikegami 1991).

A Man of The People
(Achebe 1988a)

“In Chinua Achebe's novel, A Man of the People, two contrasting groups of people from a political and social aspect based in West Africa. The groups are the old and the new generations of politics and two characters represent them. Odili, the narrator, represents the new intellectual generation, while Chief Nanga, Odili’s former teacher, represents the old style of bush
The conflict between the old and new ways is portrayed through the two characters as they not only disagree and quarrel over political views but also women. The story ends with a military coup that foreshadows the Nigerian Revolution of 1966. "Chinua Achebe proved to be a better prophet than any of the political scientists"(K.W.J. Post, xiii). Achebe captures the inside reality of the lives of the contrasting characters as he demonstrates energy and brightness as well as violence and corruption.” (Ferris 2002)

“A very funny satire on the sad corruptions that threaten careerist politicians ... Chief the Honourable M.A. Nanga, MP, is a beautifully realized comic portrait of a fraudulent, arriviste, demagogic universal charmer. Set against Mr Nanga is the uncorrupted, sensual, self-inquiring young narrator Odili, and the real subtlety of the book lies in how perilously close Odili, the attractive, unidealized hero, comes at moments to the absurd, revolting Nanga, and it is exactly Odili's most attractive quality, his sensual zest for life, that puts him in the greatest peril of becoming yet one more Mr Nanga, the deflated demagogue who ends on the rubbish heap. Modern comedy.” (Achebe 1988a, Back-Cover)

The Open Sore of a Continent: A Personal Narrative of the Nigerian Crisis

(Soyinka 1997)

“The events that led up to dissident writer Ken Saro-Wiwa's execution on November 10, 1995, mark Nigeria's decline from a post-colonial success story to its current military dictatorship. Few writers have been more outspoken in decrying and lamenting this decline than Nobel Prize laureate and Nigerian exile Wole Soyinka. In The Open Sore of a Continent, Soyinka, whose own Nigerian passport was confiscated by General Abacha in 1994, explores the history and future of Nigeria in a compelling jeremiad that is as intense as it is provocative, learned, and wide-ranging. He deftly explains the shifting dramatis personae of Nigerian history and politics to westerners unfamiliar with the players and the process, tracing the growth of Nigeria as a player in the world economy. And, in the process of elucidating the Nigerian crisis, Soyinka opens readers to the broader questions of nationhood, identity, and the general state of African culture and politics at the end of the twentieth century. Here are a range of issues that investigate the interaction of peoples who have been shaped by
the clash of cultures: nationalism, power, corruption, violence, and the enduring legacy of colonialism. Soyinka concludes with a resounding call for the global community to address the issue of nationhood to prevent further religious tyrannies and calls for ethnic purity of the sort that have turned Algeria, Rwanda, Bosnia, and Sri Lanka into killing fields.

An important and timely volume, The Open Sore of a Continent is required reading for anyone who cares about Africa, human rights, and the future of the global village.”

Of Africa

“A member of the unique generation of African writers and intellectuals who came of age in the last days of colonialism, Wole Soyinka has witnessed the promise of independence and lived through postcolonial failure. He deeply comprehends the pressing problems of Africa, and, an irrepressible essayist and a staunch critic of the oppressive boot, he unhesitatingly speaks out.

In this magnificent new work, Soyinka offers a wide-ranging inquiry into Africa's culture, religion, history, imagination, and identity. He seeks to understand how the continent's history is entwined with the histories of others, while exploring Africa's truest assets: "its humanity, the quality and valuation of its own existence, and modes of managing its environment—both physical and intangible (which includes the spiritual)."

Fully grasping the extent of Africa's most challenging issues, Soyinka nevertheless refuses defeatism. With eloquence he analyzes problems ranging from the meaning of the past to the threat of theocracy. He asks hard questions about racial attitudes, inter-ethnic and religious violence, the viability of nations whose boundaries were laid out by outsiders, African identity on the continent and among displaced Africans, and more. Soyinka's exploration of Africa relocates the continent in the reader's imagination and maps a course toward an African future of peace and affirmation” (Yale University Press 2012)

The Interpreters

(Soyinka 1965)

“The Interpreters, Soyinka’s first novel, was greeted by critics as a critique of the postcolonial state, as one of the so-called novels of post-independent disillusionment. This article does not deny this aspect of Soyinka’s social vision. The impulse behind the novel may well be the desire
to expose the internal contradictions of the Nigerian nation: political independence without prosperity; the inability of the ruling class to displace the political and cultural hegemony of the colonizers; the failure of the state to forge an alternative economic or social path for the nation—all of which undermine the nation’s claim to relevance. However, the article goes beyond Soyinka’s critique of the Nigerian state to argue that, to situate Soyinka within the spectrum of postcolonial writers and thinkers, The Interpreters should be construed as a narrative rupture with the national model by presenting the nation as an ongoing interpretive project of participants in a social and political order. The nation thus emerges as a ground for dispute, a polyphonic conversation made up of contending ideologies and paradigms, which forms the basis for national regeneration.” (Ngaboh-Smart 2010)

*Season of Anomy*

(*Soyinka 1988a*)

“The principal subculture featured in this novel is the isolated, neo-pristine rural community of Ayiéró by which Ofeyi, the chief protagonist, is inspired to attempt his scheme of political liberation of his oppressed country. In the words of Pa Ahimé of Ayiéró about the Ayiéró "farming and fishing community" (11), "[i]t works, it is upright and balanced because we have made it so" (8). But to Ofeyi, this "pocket Utopia" (26), this "tiny pond" (6) ignores "the hideous hunger of the living world" (25). Despite Pa Ahime's warning to him that "sowing the wind" may mean "reaping the whirlwind" (24), Ofeyi is convinced that "[t]he waters of Ayiéró need to burst their banks" (6). His grand political plan is to use Ayiéró's wholesome identity to inoculate the "old stock" of the decadent and exploitative society - the country at large. The plan is vague but simple: to forge solidarities across ethnic and provincial boundaries in the workplaces across the country where the men of Ayiéró have employment, to re-inspire the demoralised society on whom the power-mongers have a stranglehold of domination and to charge the people's consequent despair with a new hope. An equally simple brutality on the part of the oppressors is more than a match for Ofeyi's idealism, however, as the teaching of one of the four grotesque rulers (at a "champagne dinner" for his three cohorts) makes clear. He (Batoki) is the most brutally direct of the four rulers and it is said of him that "the genius of their language was Batoki himself" (139).” (Gagiano 1999)

*The Man Died: Prison Notes of Wole Soyinka*

(*Soyinka 1988b*)
A record of 27 months of imprisonment of a Nigerian writer held as a political prisoner in 1967-1969 at a time of civil war and secession of the state of Biafra (Soyinka 1988b, Back-Cover).

_The Lion and the Jewel_  
_(Soyinka 1963)_

This play "is set in the Yoruba village of Ilunjinle. The main characters are Sidi (the Jewel), 'a true village belle' and Baroka (the Lion), the crafty and powerful Bale of the village, Lakunle, the young teacher, influenced by western ways, and Sadiku, the eldest of Baroka's wives. How the Lion hunts the Jewel is the theme of this ribald comedy."--Jacket. The play is a commentary on how African society has experienced corruption and how young people should reach back and use older African traditions instead.

“Nigeria’s Failed Promises”

(Adichie 2016)

“LAGOS, Nigeria — I was 7 years old the first time I recognized political fear. My parents and their friends were talking about the government, in our living room, in our relatively big house, set on relatively wide grounds at a southeastern Nigerian university, with doors shut and no strangers present. Yet they spoke in whispers. So ingrained was their apprehension that they whispered even when they did not need to. It was 1984 and Maj. Gen. Muhammadu Buhari was the military head of state.”

“Lights Out in Nigeria”

(Adichie 2015)

“LAGOS, Nigeria — WE call it light; “electricity” is too sterile a word, and “power” too stiff, for this Nigerian phenomenon that can buoy spirits and smother dreams. Whenever I have been away from home for a while, my first question upon returning is always: “How has light been?” The response, from my gateman, comes in mournful degrees of a head shake.

Bad. Very bad.”
Appendix P

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